BEING IMMIGRANT AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF SENSE OF BELONGING AND ETHNIC IDENTITY: THE EXAMPLE OF AHISKA TURKS

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Abstract

Throughout history, people have migrated from their homes for many reasons. Today, migration and immigration debates concern how, in general, perceptions of identity and belonging are transformed into multicultural societies where, depending on social interaction processes, individuals can reproduce their identity and sense of belonging. However, such rebuilding processes are not the same for every subculture in mainstream society. Problems migrants experienced in other societies, special links shared with the homeland, and memories shared with other group members generally determine identity and sense of belonging. Additionally, with development of mass media and transportation, subcultures have preserved their ethnic identities and maintained important links with their homelands. In particular, this study researched how Ahiska Turks, who were subject to forced migration and who returned to their homeland after many years, retain their ethnic identity and sense of belonging to their homeland despite their lives in different societies.

Keywords: *Ethnic identity, migration, sense of belonging, Ahiska Turks*

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GÖÇMEN OLMANIN ETNİK KİMLİK VE AİDİYET ALGISI ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ: AHISKA TÜRKLERİ ÖRNEĞİ

Öz

İnsanlar tarih boyunca pek çok farklı nedenden dolayı yaşadıkları yerlerden göç etmişlerdir. Günümüzde göç ve göçmenlik tartışmaları ise genel olarak kimlik ve aidiyet algılarının çokkültürlü toplumlarda nasıl ve ne şekilde dönüştüğü üzerinedir. Çokkültürlü toplumlarda sosyal etkileşim süreçlerine bağlı olarak bireyler kimlik ve aidiyet algılarını yeniden inşa edebilmektedirler. Ancak; bu inşa süreçleri her alt kültür grubu için aynı şekilde gerçekleşmemektedir. Alt kültür gruplarının geçmişten getirdiği ana vatanları ile olan bağı, grup içinde diğer üyelerle paylaştıkları anılar, farklı toplumlarda yaşadıkları sorunlara bağlı olarak kimlik ve aidiyet algıları belirlenmektedir. Ayrıca kitle iletişim ve ulaşım araçlarının gelişmesiyle alt kültür grupları göç ettikleri anavatanları ile olan bağın canlı kalmasını sağlamış ve etnik kimliklerini korumuşlardır. Bu çalışma kapsamında anavatanlarından zorunlu olarak göçe tabi tutulan ve yıllar sonra tekrar ana vatanlarına dönen Ahıska Türklerinin farklı toplumlarda yaşamalarına rağmen ana vatanlarına olan aidiyet duygularını ve sahip oldukları etnik kimliklerini nasıl korudukları araştırılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Etnik Kimlik, göç, aidiyet, Ahıska Türkleri*

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Throughout history, people have migrated from their homes for many reasons. Indeed, migration and immigration have significantly impacted understanding of society and social groups. After the concept of nation-states and nations emerged in the modern era, perception of multicultural society revealed the belief that different ethnic, religious, and community groups could survive together in the postmodern period. Especially in postmodern societies, the policy of assimilation, which had been the modern nation-state's integration policy, was abandoned in favor of the salad-bowl model. From nation-states' perspective on different subcultures, the only way for such groups to exist had been to integrate completely into mainstream society by relinquishing their ethnic identity and adopting a mainstream identity. In this context, the obstacle of assimilation posed a problem for immigrants from various ethnic backgrounds. Because other subcultures might not be ethnically rooted, multicultural community structures remained on the second plane of integration problems. Among immigrant groups, the quality of their connection with mainstream society has greatly influenced both the rebuilding of individuals' identity perceptions and the improvement of their sense of belonging to mainstream society. In fact, immigration and migration concepts are most discussed in multicultural societies, and those discussions concern, on the whole, how perceptions of identity and belonging are transformed within those societies. Changes in feelings of identity and belonging due to individuals' various ethnic, religious, and gender backgrounds have influenced the emergence of new identities and belonging. In recent decades, salad-bowl modeling has been a facilitating political influence in formation of hybrid identities and sense of belonging. In general, hybrid identities, within which differences coexist, have replaced classical identity because, in contemporary societies, individuals are no longer born into a single culture. Relationships with individuals having different lifestyles (e.g., religion, language, culture) change individuals' perceptions of, for instance, free-time activities, groups of friends, and musical styles. Such new identities are multicultural societies' most prominent feature. At the same time, perceptions of identity and belonging can be reconstructed within a framework of relationships with other subcultural groups and mainstream society, depending on these groups' varying social interaction processes. But these processes of reconstruction are not the same for every subculture in multicultural societies. Ethnic groups forced to migrate from

4

Being Immigrant and the Understanding of Sense of Belonging and Ethnic Identity:
The Example of Ahiska Turks / Barış ÇAĞIRKAN

their homelands have continued to exist within their groups, and this situation increases their solidarity, especially when it is based on difficulties they experienced during migration, common blood, language, and cultural ties. One of globalization's recent and most significant influences is the rapid development of mass media and easy transportation; such factors help migrant subcultures maintain close ties with their home countries.

This study explores Ahiska Turks' sense of belonging and understanding of identity after living away from and then returning to their homeland many years later. Their forced immigration, first to Uzbekistan, then to Russia and the Ukraine, ended in May 2016, with their resettlement in Turkey, which they regard as their home country. Despite having to live in three different societies, Ahiska Turks were able to protect their identity and sense of belonging (to Turkey). For the study, data collection was conducted with Ahiska Turks located in the Ahlat district of Bitlis province. After receiving permission from the necessary institutions, the study's purpose was explained to potential participants and, afterward, an information form was presented for participants to sign before interviews began. In the study, interviewees' age distribution varies from 18 to 78. The main objective of this distribution was interviewing not only those who migrated from Ukraine to Turkey, but also for those who had lived in Uzbekistan and Russia. The age distribution also increased the study's reliability, especially for understanding relationships among younger, middle, and older generations. Generally, the open-ended interview questions related to demographic information, identity, belonging, homeland perception, and perception of other societies. The researcher varied the questions asked depending on participants' previous answers. Interviews generally lasted from 20 to 30 minutes and were voice recorded, with an assigned number to protect participants' personal information. For analyzing the collected qualitative data, the thematic content analysis method was most appropriate. Interview voice recordings were first transcribed into text form, and then the researcher read them repeatedly to extract specific items and to code them. Next, the researcher analyzed the coded items in order to categorize them into themes. Finally, the researcher consolidated the analytical results depending on the extracted themes.

Introduction

Increasing mass communication and transformation technology have a direct influence on both the speed and level of immigration. The world's migrant population has been gradually increasing past over the years. Due to the Syria war, over 5 million people have migrated to the other countries. This is the one example of the migration's affects of societies in our world today. Changing the places where people used to live is not just as simple as to find a better place. This situation has got an influence both understanding identity and sense of belonging to the community. This process has some common affects like globalisation's standardisations' affects on people's identity and sense of belonging.

Giving a thought about what is the definition of identity is that basically based on many factors to define people themselves. For instance, the definition of ethnic identity is related to how an individual connects to an ethnic group/groups and depends on similarities in values, social beliefs and behaviours. Religion is also one of the most significant factors for many people to identify themselves. Martin (1995) points out that the dynamic nature of identity is "the production and utterance of an identity narrative transform the very group it means to preserve and defend" and his brief conclusion is that "identity means change" (Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins, 2002).

Analysing from this perspective that "identity and an individual's sense of belonging are actively produced, then reproduced, and transformed through a series of social processes" (Martin, 1995, p. 15). Religion and ethnic background are considered to main things to have a sense of belonging to particular communities. However, individuals are finding different ways to "build identities which are called hybrid identities, and having a sense of belonging to the various communities, groups, and organisations in postmodern societies" (Kahani-Hopkins and Hopkins, 2002). On the other hand, some ethnic minorities do not abandon to define their identities based on their national or ethnic background. Ethnic origin is still a significant arbiter for those groups. Thanks to mass communication tools and transportations, they can have a chance to connect their home country, this helps to keep their ethnic identity and sense of belonging to their countries of origin.

This study was designed to comprehend to understand Ahiska Turk's identities and sense of belonging to Turkish community and their host countries which are Russia, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine.

Immigration and Immigrant

The main interest of human history is basically changing the places for many different reasons. People have been able to displacement all the time voluntarily or involuntarily. Each group of people have changed their places least one in their lifetime. This displacement has an impact on their social life, personal life and other people which they joined their community. These displacements are to have much more global affects on today. Many social scientists are seeking to understand the what kind of affects have this process. In general, scientists have the definition of immigration which can be made; "all displacements that occur within a long distance and will make a significant impact within particular time" (Erder, 1986, p. 9). The certain group of people or individual, which are changed the places long distance and live there, are called as an immigrant.

Immigration and immigrant have been in human history; even primitive tribes migrated to some places for some reasons. Thanks to these displacements which begun with immigration, people carry their culture, language, religions, beliefs; these people interact with other people who are from different cultures and communities. Through this social process, multicultural societies are created, and people have a chance to meet other civilisations (Guvenc, 1999, p. 122). Multicultural societies are the suitable environment for building different identities and sense of belonging to societies. These sub-immigrant groups come from different cultures, and they bring their cultures with themselves. When they begin to live in different communities, they do not have a sense of belonging to mainstream society. These small group can build their immigrant identity, or they can create their hybrid identity to have a sense of belonging to mainstream society.

Different scientific disciplines explain immigration in a different way. Immigration is interpreted as a classic assimilation theory in many sociological perspectives. Briefly, assimilation theory is that "the process that ethnic minority is getting to be part of mainstream community" (Alba and Nee, 1997, p. 828). Immigrant identity will see as a temporary identity

because of the end of the assimilation process; immigrants change their identity as mainstream community's identity. At the end of this process, immigrants become the part of a community, and they are not immigrants anymore. The process of building and changing identity shows that people can be considered differently in different places. People have particular identities before the immigration; however, they question their identity, where they came from and who they are, when they immigrate to new societies, countries (Ilgin and Hacihasanoglu, 2006, p. 60).

Sense of Belonging and Identity

The basic sense of identity can be described as the features of something that make it identifiable and recognisable among others. "Identity" is defined as the distinguishing feature of any individual, or it can be shared by all members of a particular social category or group" (Pembecioglu, 2012, p. 49). Depending on the group in which the formation of individual lives, identity can be reduced the colours, numbers, and gender. Furthermore, it can be interpreted as complicated identity version; such as ethnic, religious, professional, cultural identity. The social process which occurred in the past changed the building immigrant identities and adaptation process (Hattatoglu and Yakushko, 2014, p. 27).

In sociological theories focuses on two classic identities' perceptions, which are religious and ethnic identity. Ethnic identity: the individual is identified him/herself the relationship between him/herself and other ethnic group/ groups. Moreover, ethnic identity depends on the similar social beliefs and norms. On the contrary, religious identity is the self-identification of individuals through a belief system. As individuals, people feel connected to religion, and that religion defines them (Martin, 1995). These identities are to focus negative part of the people's nature. People are asking themselves simple question which is "who am I?" to understand what they are. There are two ways to have an answer this situation. First of all, individual can define what they are; for example, I am Jewish, black, male, tall. On the other hand, the same individual can ask him/her self I do not know "who I am" but I do know what I am not; for example, I am not Buddhist, white, short, female. Those two different answers make two different ways to build identities. Second way to build identity is used mostly in multicultural societies today. People have been living with different ethnics, religions,

colours, and genders. That is why each subculture groups can build their identity depending on what they are not compared to other subcultures or groups in society. Building a hybrid identity in multicultural society creates another question which is how these subcultures can have a sense of belonging to mainstream society and they can manage to do integration into the mainstream society.

There might be number of different ways to have a sense of belonging to mainstream society for each subculture, different religious or ethnic groups, and other genders' groups. American social scientist Schlesinger (1987, p. 235) pointed out a particular formulation for the process of building an identity; "identity is an exclusion as well as sharing similarities inclusion". Therefore; what has been defined the ethnic group or groups regarding other ethnic groups is a social boundary between other ethnic groups, it is not a cultural reality which is located within these boundaries (Schlesinger, 1987, p. 230).

It is import to say that building a hybrid identity or creating a way to have a sense of belonging to mainstream community occurs in society and the features of the society has a significant role in the process of building the identity of the individual. In today's multicultural societies, individuals tend to create their identity according to hobbies, jobs, personal beliefs, and so on. In classic identity perspectives, people have learnt some social norms and beliefs via their parents, the environment, and the socialisation processes, but this process is different in today's multicultural societies because people spend more time with peers or colleagues than parents or relatives.

Another way to say that we are not raised by our parents any more today. Children see their teachers and friends more than parents and spend more time with online game friends from other side the world than parents as well. People have an opportunity to be online everywhere and share common sense, idea, and life style from other people all around the world. This is the way that world sees imagined as a global community, and people can decide their building identity process according to hobbies, peer's effects, gender, etc. (Anik, 2012, p. 41). Differentiating depending on these processes, the individuals are creating their unique sense of belonging. Unlike the others such as a religious and ethnic sense of belonging, this new sense of

belonging has a special way to have a sense of belonging to mainstream society (Anik, 2012, p. 75). Compared with other ways to have a sense of belonging to society traditional societies, postmodern societies give the opportunity to build hybrid identity and have a special sense of belonging to mainstream society. At this point, it is important to note that the more subcultures create a hybrid identity the more will be ways to have a sense of belonging to mainstream society.

Research Design and Methodology

The research is focused on Ahiska Turks' identity and sense of belonging. In this study, ethnic and religious identity, sense of belonging, cultural and historical links, community life, the relationship with immigrated countries have been examined. Ahiska Turks immigrated from Ahiska which is located in the West part of Georgia, and Ahiska consisted of 220 villages (Zeyrek, 2001, p. 6). After Ahiska was occupied by Russian Army in 1828, Ahiska Turks forced to immigrate other countries (Zeyrek, 2001). Through out the immigration process, Ahiska Turks had been in three different countries which are Uzbekistan, Russia, and Ukraine. After the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, Turkish government invited Ahiska Turks their native country to Turkey. 772 Ahiska Turks families immigrated to Turkey, and 72 of them were settled down Ahlat, which is located Bitlis province.

Ahiska Turks are the special group to study identity and sense of belonging because they had been in three different countries, they had met so many different cultures, languages, and they considered the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Furthermore, Ahiska Turks had lived some terrible social trauma in these host countries. Through this sociological process, Ahiska Turks have some memories about their community history inside their identity. Ahiska Turks have migrated so many different countries and places in the history. These countries and areas are very diverse and multicultural. The understanding of identity and sense of belonging could be sophisticated in multicultural societies because each sub-ethnic minority has a particular link to mainstream society. This link leads to having a unique sense of belonging and create a special identity. Arguing the Ahiska Turks, they have a special link in historically, religiously and ethnically to Turkey, but they have never been to Turkey in their life, most of them were born in Uzbekistan and Russia.

The nature of this study required a qualitative research method to understand the relationship between identity and sense of belonging entirely, and a semi-structured interview was chosen to collect all data. The main reason for using the semi-structured interview is that it facilitates a conversational atmosphere. This method is to give a chance to the interviewee to feel free to talk at length without being interrupted or guided by a certain agenda (Longhurst, 2003). During the study, the interviews were done face-to-face. Doing face-to-face interview has some advantages; for instance, the researcher can explain complex questions to the interviewee and the interviewer can control the context (Seale, 2012). There is a chance that interview might go out of control, and it is possible to digress the interview purpose. To keep the interviewee focused around the main themes, the interviewer might need to take control of the interview. The essential point to doing a semi-structured interview is that the researcher needs to ask open-ended questions. Open-ended questions allow the interviewees to answer without presented or implied choices (Lichtman, 2014). The researcher prepares an interview guide before the interview. Those questions are prepared before the meeting, but also the researcher asks some more questions, depending on the interviewee's responses, and their experiences and memories. In this study, whole interviews were conducted between 15 and 30 minutes.

The thematic content analysis is used to interpret all collected data. The thematic content analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data (Seale, 2012). Guest, MacQuenn and Namey (2012) elaborate that thematic analysis is probably the most common qualitative data analysis method in the social sciences because the data in social sciences needs to be interpreted. The thematic content analysis allows the researcher to focus on categories and themes, which are chosen from the data. In other words, thematic content analysis involves looking across the data set rather than within one case. The thematic content analysis will often focus on what a phenomenon, event or social interaction 'looks like' to the individuals of interest (Rivas, 2012). The process of thematic content analysis consists of reading through data, i.e. an interview transcript, and then identifying themes in the data, following that they will code those themes, and finally interpret the structure and content of the themes.

Results and Findings

The data I have collected for this study was designed to provide information about Ahiska Turks who lived Uzbekistan, Russia and Ukraine. Those Turks have been three different countries and they do protect their culture and language. The researcher collected data including demographic information about each of the interviewees as well as responses to the questions aimed at understanding their sense of belonging to countries in which they have been, identity, and community life in Ahlat. These immigrants came from Ukraine to Ahlat. Ahiska Turks firstly immigrated to Uzbekistan, after that they moved to Russia, and finally, they migrated to Ukraine. They worked as a farmer, driver, worker, and so on in those migrated countries. They were living in Ahiska which is a town that is so close to the Turkish border in Georgia. The researcher had done 30 interviews which are 17 of them are women, and 13 of them are men. The researcher had also chosen to do an interview with people who have migrated three different countries because it is important to be in three countries and meet different cultures to understand their identity and sense of belonging. Ahiska Turks had lived 27 years in Ukraine then migrated to the Turkey which they have been seeking to come back though out their life. Some of the interviewees were born Ukraine, but the majority of them were born Uzbekistan which was the first place to migrate.

Identity and sense of belonging

A large part of Turkish society is based on the heritage of the Ottoman Empire, which means some different nationalities are still living in Turkey. Some of them have a various ethnic identity; for example, Kurdish, Arab, and so on. Furthermore, some identities are religiously different; such as Alevi, Christian-Orthodox, and Yezidi. Asking question about identity was the most challenging topic because interviewees had been in three different countries, and it was almost a hundred years they had to leave Ahiska. Analysing the Ahiska Turks identity that Ahiska was an Ottoman Empire's city in that time. Those people were living in Turkish land. They did not need to introduce themselves Ahiska Turks because they are Turks and not necessary to use town name. However, they had forced to migrate Uzbekistan, and they used the first time term Ahiska to differentiate their identity with other people in Uzbekistan. For instance, when they were living in Uzbekistan, they were

residing in a muslim community, but they still used the term Ahiska Turks as their identity. The total number of interviewees are 30, and all of them called themselves as Turks. Furthermore, they used Ahiska and muslim identity to identify themselves when they were in Uzbekistan and Ukraine. For example, interviewee 11, 23 years old male, told that:

> *"I was born in Ukraine, and I have not been to Ahiska in my life, but I always introduce myself as Turkish. My parents raised me as Turkish. It is my identity; I feel myself as Turkish because I always live according to Turkish culture and muslim rules. I went to school in Ukraine; and have had so many Ukrainian friends. I learnt Russian and Ukrainian language, but I never accept their culture and lifestyle. I have never had a sense of belonging to Ukrainian community because when I come back to home and close door. I am Turkish; my parents are Turkish, and they speak the Turkish language to each other at home; I cannot change this reality."*

It can be derived from this answer that Ahiska Turks have never given up to live Turkish culture in immigrated countries. The majority of them said that they did not use Ahiska to determine their identity until 1989 to migrate to Ukraine. Ahiska, as a term, does not have a meaning to determine their identity. It is only a town name which they had to leave in the beginning of the 19th century. After they had migrated to Ukraine, other groups used the Ahiska to identify this Turks because there are other Turkish groups which have been living in Ukrainian community. When they immigrated to Turkey, Turkish government used Ahiska as a term to identify them because of the same reason in Ukraine. They are not Turkish citizen, and they have been living in foreign country for a while. Turkish government identified them as Ahiska Turks. This discrimination is not about ethnic it is only geographic.

In this research, Ahiska Turks is used to describe Turks who came from Ukraine according to Ukrainian-Turkish Agreement. They are accepted by Turkish authorities, and they have a legal right to immigrate to Ahlat. This makes a difference between other immigrant and Ahiska Turks because Ahiska Turks are seen as Turkish, and they have a Turkish heritage. Most of the interviewees said that they had been abroad, and they come back to their native shore. Moreover, they stated that they were citizens of the

Ottoman empire, and now they wanted to be the Turkish citizen. Interview 8, 77 years old male, said that:

> *"I have immigrated to twelve different cities and three countries. I come to Turkey as thirteen places to live because Turkey is my home, it is my native land. We did not have a native land when we were in Uzbekistan and Ukraine. I always wanted to come to Turkey. I always have a sense of belonging to Turkey. It was weird because I have not been to Turkey in my life but it was an intense feeling to come to Turkey. I have never had a sense of belonging to Ukrainian or Uzbek society because they were not our country. I had lived about 75 years in Uzbekistan, Russia and Ukraine but I always wanted to come to Turkey, not only me but also all of Ahiska Turks wanted to come to Turkey because we always considered as Turkey our country. We finally got back to our country."*

Another female interviewee, number 20, said that:

> *"I am an Ottoman Turk, and I protect this identity everywhere through the migration. When we were in Uzbekistan 1989, Georgian Government told us that we are going to accept all of the Ahiska Turks but all of you will be accepted as a Georgian. We did not accept it. Why I will accept it, I am not Georgian; I am an Ottoman Turk. I was born in Uzbekistan and emigrated to Ukraine. I had lived a long time in Ukraine. I have not been to Ahiska in my life, but I always want to back to my native country, which is Turkey."*

Those responses indicate that Ahiska Turks have a strong sense of belonging to Turkish community. They believe that Turkey, as a country, is a new form of Ottoman Empire. They were Ottoman citizens, and they think that being Turkish citizen is the same thing. Through immigration process, they always want to back to Turkey. They did not want to back to Ahiska because Ahiska is a Georgian town now. It does not matter to back to their ancestor city, but it is a matter back to Turk and muslim country. Being Turkish and being muslim are the same thing for Ahiska Turks. When somebody asks them "Who are you?" They prefer to use Turkish and muslim for the

Being Immigrant and the Understanding of Sense of Belonging and Ethnic Identity:
The Example of Ahiska Turks / Barış ÇAĞIRKAN

14

same meaning. From this point of view, religious and ethnic identity can contain each other for Ahiska Turks. However, this argument can be used in non-muslim countries because between Ahiska Turks and other groups in non-muslim countries, Ahiska Turks might be the only muslim and Turk group that could be reason why other people think being Turk and being muslim are the same thing; for example, Ahiska Turks were living in a small village in Ukraine, and they were the only Turkish and muslim group in that village. It is concluded that ethnic and religious identity can be melted in the same pot. They bring together their ethnic and religious identity, but they have never mixed their identity with other non-muslim and non-turkish groups' identity. For example, they had changed three countries, but they never had anything with other cultures. They always protected their culture; for instance, they never let their children marry with other non-muslim and Turkish groups. Interviewee 2, female, stated that:

> *"I never let my children marry with Ukrainian or Russian girls or boys because they are not muslim and Turkish. I have two sons. One of them was married to Ahiska Turk in our family. The other one is single. I want to have a bride from Ahlat. I hope he is going to get married in here, and he is going to live here with us. I can let him get married a girl from Ahlat because Ahlat is Turkish town and people are muslim here; moreover, we are sharing the same culture. This is crucial for us."*

It is another thing to discuss that Ahiska Turks had lived about 200 hundred years in non-muslim and non-turkish countries. Why did not Ahiska Turks have a sense of belonging to these countries? This question is a key to understanding why people have/have not a sense of belonging to some communities. Ahiska Turks forced to leave their town about 1828. Firstly, they migrated to Uzbekistan. When they went to Uzbekistan, it is also the same in Russia and Ukraine; they were insulted by Uzbek local people. Uzbek residents, who were living around Ahiska Turks, humiliated them by using some bad words, nicknames, or describing them by using their skin colour. Interviewee 7, 74 years old male, told that:

> *"We immigrated to Uzbekistan via train which is used to use carry animals. When we arrived in Uzbekistan, Uzbek people called us "trene tutunup gelenler" which means people who come*

by hold train hand. Furthermore, some people in Uzbekistan and Russia called us "surka", which means wood. They saw us like useless people or things. They considered us ignorant people that are why they called us "surka". Especially in Russia, other people called us surka or "corni". Corni means black because our skin colour is darker than their skin. They used this difference to insult us. People in Russia and Uzbekistan always used some nickname to humiliate us."

Ahiska Turks were insulted in Uzbekistan and other countries; this is the main reason why these people did not have a sense of belonging to these countries. They did not get integrated into mainstream communities. As a part of these discriminations, Ahiska Turks always live altogether because they could only trust each other in other countries. They protected their culture, language, and religion. They did not find the way to have a sense of belonging to mainstream society. Ahiska Turks made a low interaction with other groups or people in countries they have immigrated because of insults and discrimination. It could be stated that it was safe to be people who share the same cultural background and easy to communicate, understand, and etc.

Conclusion

Population movements have always been one of the prevalent aspects of human life. Movements of individuals and groups from one location to another have been taking place since the origin of man (Brickner, 2013), and migration has emerged as a dominant force throughout the world especially over the last three or four decades. Mobility and individuality are considered as new social drivers in the contemporary era. Because of the migration process, many homogeneous societies have been transformed into multicultural communities in which people from different cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, and religion live together (Martens, Dreher and Gaston, 2010).

People have lived in the diverse societies, and they need to build their identity depending on the social process. In the contemporary era, people create their identity based upon new social changes, social institutions, and innovations. For example, some people use films or video games to identify themselves in diverse countries. However, for some small ethnic

groups; for instance, keep their ethnic background to determine their identity. Globalisation is changing the immigrant accounts of identity development and their adaptation processes to host country drastically compare to the previous generations in contemporary societies (Adler and Gielen, 2003; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). The main reason for this new kind of way to stay connected to the home country is technological improvements is allowing contemporary immigrants' ability to stay connected with their countries of origin while interacting with diverse cultures in their host country (Arnett, 2002; Kivisto, 2001).

Diversity and globalisation do not have the same effect on all minorities in contemporary societies that small ethnic groups are getting to lose their ethnic background, and they will be part of mainstream society through the social identification process. Modern views on migrants as transgressors, not just of borders, but also of laws and values, draw on deeply held attitudes toward people on the move as disruptive (Papastergiadis, 2010, p. 245).

Migrants take their cultural and social background of themselves. When they meet up other cultures, they might have a chance to exchange their cultures, values, laws, so on. But it is not going to happen for all sub-cultures. The process of the building identity and having a sense of belonging is getting more complicated in contemporary societies because different sub-ethnic groups use different things to create a sense of belonging to mainstream society.

Identity and sense of belonging have also been transformed into different meanings for people today. Some small ethnic groups are also keeping their ethnic background to be together and create their unique sense of belonging to the native country. Sub-cultures are seen as a colour in diverse postmodern societies, and thanks to globalisation and mass communication tools, it is easy to build a hybrid identity. Ethnic identities are considered as a modern way of building an identity. Modernity has focused on the nation-state, and ethnic identity was the primary social structure to build a nation state. Nations were distinguished from each other depending on their ethnic background. On the other hand, postmodernity is mostly using diversity, multiculturalism, and subcultures. The ethnic or religious background is not primary structure to interpret postmodern societies and social institutions.

Ahiska Turks were one of the minor groups in Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Russia. They immigrated to in three different countries, but they never gave up to identify themselves based on their national background. Having a sense of belonging to host country was not created by Ahiska Turks. They have always differentiated themselves from other ethnic and religious groups in countries they migrated. Their ethnic identity was the main thing to introduce themselves. As contented before, ethnic identity is that people identify themselves based on their ethnic background, and differentiated themselves, from other ethnic groups. Having a sense of belonging is clearly essential to feel an attachment to an ethnic group or groups. All participants were born outside Turkey, but all of them have a sense of belonging to Turkish community. Even their original town which is Ahiska is not as important as Turkish cities now. They have feelings about because Ahiska was an Ottoman city except for that Ahiska does not have to mean for participants. The study also shows that Ahiska Turks did not use ''Ahiska'' until 1989, they always used only ''Turk'' to introduce themselves. Migrating from Ahiska is not main things to identify themselves.

The research indicates that Ahiska Turks did not allow their children to get married from host countries' people. All participants stated not to let his/her child marry a person who is not Turkish and muslim. Arguing that having the same ethnic background of others in the groups allows code switching to take place. This, in turn, becomes one of the reasons behind the choices made in building identity and having a sense of belonging to host country. While not all the participants stated preferences for their children but bride or groom need to share religion, culture and language to definite preferences for their children's marriage. This argument supports the claim that cultural attachment is crucial for migrant marriage choices (Ruhil and Daing, 2011). In order to protect the groups' future, getting married with the same ethnic background is essential.

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