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THE INTEGRATION OF TURKS INTO AMERICAN CULTURE

**M.A THESIS IN AMERICAN STUDIES
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I hereby declare that all the information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct. I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

The United States has been the land of opportunities and dreams for Turkish settlers since the nineteenth century. Since Turks first began immigrating to the U.S in 1820, almost 300,000 Turkish immigrants have arrived in the country according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. This number proves that there has been mass immigration there. Besides this, it shows that there are factors which push Turkish settlers to live and work there for an extended period of time. In this study, the different waves of Turkish immigration are focused on since the factors which push and pull immigrants are directly related to the time period in which the immigration occurs. Moreover, the sociological perception of immigration is referred to in order to understand the main reasons why Turks have left their homeland. In this respect, settlers' observations of America are applied to the six stages models of assimilation by Elliott Barkan to determine if the Turks have assimilated or integrated into the American way of life.

ÖZ

19. Yüzyıldan beri Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Türk göçmenleri için rüyalar ve fırsatlar ülkesi olmuştur. Ulusal Göçmenlik Servisinin raporuna göre, yaklaşık olarak 30,000 bine yakın Türk, Amerika'ya 1820 yılında göç etmiştir. Bu sayı, Amerika'ya yoğun göç dalgası olduğunu kanıtlıyor. Ayrıca Türkleri orada yaşamaya ve uzun vadede çalışmaya birçok nedenlerinin olduğunu gösteriyor. Bu çalışmada, Farklı Türk Göç dalgalarının olduğu döneme göre ve bununla ilişkili olarak göçmenleri iten ve çeken nedenler araştırılmıştır. Daha da ötesi, Türklerin anavatanlarını bırakmalarına neden olan başlıca sebepler, sosyal olgu açısından incelenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Amerika'da yaşayan Türklerin toplumla bütünleşmiş ya da asimile olup olmadıklarını karar vermek için Elitoll Barkan tarafında ortaya koyulan asimilasyon modeli uygulanmıştır.

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INTRODUCTION:

The Historical Background of Turkish Immigration to the United States:

The history of Turkish Immigration the United States had begun with the Melungeons. They primarily settled down in eastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia, eastern Tennessee, and southern West Virginia. There was no document about their arrival to America, but their official entrance was by the Anglo-Saxon settlers from Europe, governor, John Sevier in 1774. Even if they had identified themselves as Portuguese or Turkish origin, they were documented as a mixture of white, Indian and Negro heritage.

U.S. statistics show that between 1820 and 1920 about 1.2 million people left Ottoman territory to settle in North America. According to Karpas, at least 15% of these immigrants (200,000) were Muslims, including 50,000 ethnic Turks. Due to the harsh control of the United States immigration officials at the port of entry to the country, the Muslim Turks presented themselves as Christian Syrians or Armenians. The Turks were concerned that they would not be accepted due to their faith so they took on Christian names and were registered this way by the officials at Ellis Island. For instance, "Huseyin became Sam, Kayma became Ali, and Ahmed became Frank, and so forth" (Ahmed, 1986). In addition, since at that time the Ottoman Empire had expanded onto three continents, there were, as İlhan Kaya states in his dissertation, "Turks from the Balkans who registered as Albanians, Bulgarians or Serbians at the time of entrance" (Kaya, 2003:49).

The first wave of immigration occurred during the last period of the Ottoman Empire. The Immigration and Naturalization Service reports that 291,435 Turkish immigrants arrived in the United States between 1900 and 1920 (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service Statistical Yearbook, 2001). After 1925, the immigration policy changed. A new law enacted by Congress in 1925 imposed a national quota system. Until 1965, only 100 immigrants from Turkey could enter the U.S. per year. This act aimed to reduce the overall number of unskilled

immigrants, allowing families to reunite as many of these unskilled workers decided to return home due to homesickness and difficulties adapting and balancing the proportion of the population. The government feared that the national character of the country would change. Between the 1930s and 1980s, mainly because many young Turks had died during the war, only 29,000 Turkish immigrants arrived in the U.S. Prior to World War I, Detroit was the city with the most Turks at 2,000. There were also 500 Turkish immigrants in Cleveland. In 1938, there were 30,000 Syrians, Armenians and Greeks in New York City.

Socially, the Turkish immigrants were quite different from the Christians who easily adapted to the new culture. In contrast, the Turks who immigrated after World War I failed to thrive in social organizations; they had issues related to community and cultural affinity with the Americans. Indeed, influenced by their Islamic traditions, the Turks had stereotyped the Western Christian traditions. Rather than desiring to join American society, they only wanted to preserve their cultural traditions. While there was some prejudice about the Western lifestyle, some organizations allowed the Turks to participate to community affairs and helped develop Turkish interests in the United States. For instance, the Turkish Aid Society was headquartered in New York, but it also had branches in Detroit, Cleveland and Chicago. In 1922, the first branch of the aid organization Red Crescent was set up by the Turkish community in Detroit.

The Turks first established lobby activities in 1923, the year the Turkish Republic was founded. This event led to great support for the Turks in the U.S. The Turkish government prepared a six page memorandum addressed to the American government and leaders of Congress titled "To the leaders of the country of the Free; A Brief from the Turks in America". This letter was developed into a brief titled "The Treaty of Amity and Commerce" which was signed in 1924 in Lausanne by the Turkish and American governments; the content of this treaty was the basis for political relations between the United States and

Turkey. Birol Akgün states in his article titled “The Turkish Diaspora in the United States and its Role in Promoting Turkish American Relations” that:

“The content of the letter refutes the Greek and Armenian allegations arguing that Turkish-American relations should be re-established on the basis of mutual interest. It refers to the fact that Turks in America are law-abiding and taxpaying citizens, that they are involved in very little criminal activities, and that the new democratic government in Turkey deserves to be praised and supported by peace loving Americans.” (Akgun, *The Turkish Yearbook*, Vol. XXXI)

In 1965, the quota system was dismantled and a new wave of Turkish immigrants came to the U.S. The goals of these immigrants were different than the immigrants who had arrived earlier: they sought to get a good education and improve their economic condition. Beginning in 1969, many Turkish tailors arrived in Rochester, New York, where they opened schools, mosques and social organizations as a way to create a cultural space for the Turks in America. They also held a Turkish Day Parade and a Turkish Cultural Festival as a means to establish a Turkish community. According to statistics from the 1990 census, New York had the most Turks at 200,000, followed by California (13,000), New Jersey (7,519), Florida (5,809), Texas (3,273), Illinois (2,778), Virginia (2,673), Pennsylvania (2,340), Maryland (2,366), Massachusetts (2,336), Ohio (2147) and lastly Alaska, which had 66 Turks. These numbers refer to legal immigrants. In addition, there were also illegal Turkish immigrants who overstayed tourist and student visas who survived by working in gas stations, as truck drivers, and in factories or restaurants. For example, in New York, Turks run more than 150 gas stations. These Turks did not have much social contact with the community apart from shopping in the local stores and patronizing the coffee houses.

However, the Turkish immigrants who left Turkey as part of the brain drain after World War II were engineers, doctors and other professionals. Their literacy rate was higher and in comparison to the other immigrants they rarely returned to Turkey. They tended to join professional groups; fifty-four independent organizations were founded by local Turkish

communities which are actively involved in the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA).

The Turkish diaspora gained importance in the 1960s due to the arrival of highly-skilled immigrants who were professionals, educators or held a university degree in Turkey. The Turkish diaspora tends to follow or be actively involved in the political developments in Turkey; Turks are concerned about the political issues in their country. For example, they often write letters to politicians or share their opinions via email or online on the Armenian genocide or Cyprus issue.

This study examines how the Turkish Diaspora is related to globalization and how it has caused the Turks living abroad to become more united. The first generation of Turks to move abroad were not concerned with Turkey's political issues; however, the second and third generations were much more interested in Turkish current affairs and Turkey's international policy. The first generation, which mainly consisted of unskilled workers, did not know much English. They only moved to America temporarily and returned home as soon as they had earned enough money to be able to provide a better life for their families. For this reason, they never thought of themselves as representing Turkey on the international stage or of defending their political rights. In contrast, the second and third generations of immigrants, who moved to the U.S. after World War II, were mostly highly-skilled workers and well-educated professionals. Karpat claims that they were more interested in political and cultural issues between America and Turkey because

“The political rapprochement between Turkey and the United States that started with the Truman Doctrine in 1947 and the country's inclusion in NATO in 1952 gave a new momentum to the Turks' search for professional specialization in the United States”. (Karpat, 1995: 238)

The first wave of Turkish immigration to the U.S. took place between 1800 and the early 1900s. Almost 300,000 immigrants arrived in America between 1820 and 1920 according to Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) report; only 50,000 of these

immigrants were ethnic Turks. After the outbreak of World War 1, some of them returned home; those who stayed assimilated into American culture (Kaya, 1986). The second wave arrived in the beginning of the 1950s. Up until that time, the pace of immigration was slow. However, with Turkish membership in NATO and American military and economic to Turkey and Greece via the Truman Doctrine, this resulting political progress between the U.S. and Turkey in turn increased the number of Turkish immigrants to the U.S. Moreover, the liberal changes in American immigration law in 1965 had the biggest impact on the rising rate of immigration. The last wave came to the United States in the 1980s due to the influence of globalization. In addition to this, Turks were influenced by the new outward looking policies of Turgut Ozal, who was the prime minister at the time. The Ozal government signaled the start of a new era in the 1980s in terms of a close political relationship with the United States. The ideology of modernization was introduced to Turkey in the 1960s when the country began to transform and this transformation continued in the 1980s. The political situation in Turkey in the 1960s and 1980s will be briefly discussed as these events prompted Turkish immigrants to leave the country.

Stuart Hall said that “Migration is a one way trip. There is no ‘home’ to go back to” (Champers, 1994:9). Migration is a one way journey that forces a person to leave behind his cultural heritage and values which shape his identity; therefore, immigrants struggle to find their own way or their “home” in a foreign country. One reasons why Turks immigrated to other countries was to find a more secure and peaceful place to live; however, other factors also influenced their decisions to move abroad. Immigration can also be a social act and the status of immigrants is related to their level of adaption and the struggles that come about during this process.

The Turkish immigrants’ notion of belonging stems from the cultural norms, the social network, and the attachment to a place. In order to facilitate this sense of belonging,

immigrants have constructed the “diaspora” as a way to maintain a common identity as the non-natives in a foreign country. The Turkish diaspora was strong during the first wave of immigration in the nineteenth century. After World War II, the profile of the Turkish Diaspora in the United States, comprised of the second and third waves of immigration, became more diverse.

The era of globalization emerged in the beginning of the 1980s and the shifting cultural norms led most of the second and third generations of Turks to reconsider the idea of immigration to the New World from the perspective of a member of the “global diaspora”. But what does this mean and why is it important for immigrants? McGrew, who pioneered this idea, claims that in most countries democratic movements and political leaders manipulate the Enlightenment ideals of the basic human needs. For example, in Turkey in the 1980s, Prime Minister Turgut Ozal put importance on Turkey's political relationship with the United States. He also pointed out that the world had become financially, technologically and ecologically interdependent. According to Ozal, who led Turkey during the collapse of the Soviet Union, people around the world were united in their strong belief of the singularity of the planet. The rapid spread of knowledge, images, communication, crime, culture, capital, etc. have crossed territorial boundaries creating a global society.

The Turkish immigrants who arrived in the U.S. after World War II did not have access to such telecommunication devices and social networks. In the following section, the kinds of problems the Ottoman immigrants faced after arriving in America, as a result of the difficulty in communicating with their homeland, will be discussed. However, the second and third generations who had access to the telephones and internet were more mobile as they could organize groups or communities as a means to fulfill their need for attachment to a place.

In his book *Global Diasporas*, Robin Cohen, a globalist theorist, mainly refers to basic outcomes of globalization and how they have affected cross-cultural boundaries. He points out the importance of the diaspora as a tool against globalism in terms of culture or losing distinctiveness. He suggests that the emergence of the diaspora emphasizes the priority of the native culture in a foreign land so that the traditional values and social identity are not forgotten. He highlights the diaspora as a whole, rather than focusing on those who organized it, but provides an in-depth analysis of international immigration, the creation of cosmopolitan, local cultures and deterritorialization of social identity, which are the extensions of globalization.

Looking at the first factor, international immigration en masse was triggered with the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Eastern Germans poured into Western Germany and as a result the economy boomed due to increased trade and social contacts. The collapse of the Soviet Union also impacted international immigration. Referring to international immigration, Sheffer focuses on the global transformation of states politically in terms of emerging wars such as the Gulf War. Sheffer defines diaspora from the angle of the Modern diaspora. He explains that:

“Modern diasporas are ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries, but maintaining strong, sentimental and material links with their countries of origin - their homelands.” (1986:3)

Secondly, neither local cultures nor the deterritorialization of social identity can be studied separately in terms of their effects on shaping the core of the diaspora; these concepts are interconnected and the result of the diaspora. Indeed, the main factors leading to the circumstances of the immigrants are displacement and relocation. Rob Shields states that, “The emergence of 20th-century diasporas delinks identity and culture from one’s immediate locale or neighborhood and disrupts the anchoring of culture in the landscape, material culture and face-to-face encounters” (Shields, 1999:306). In his opinion, immigrants around the

world have united under the diaspora due to material motives so that they can construct their identity based on their needs in their new location.

There are strong links between the members of the Turkish Diaspora, particularly in the first generation of Turkish immigrants who were loyal to their nationality and native culture. While they asserted their identity, they also had to deal with their displacement. In addition, as their stay in the United States was only short-term, they lacked the institutions, mosques and communities that would have helped them to better adapt. As the first wave of Turkish immigrants were not loyal to the American institutions and governments, legal diasporic institutions were lacking; therefore, the social diaspora created during this wave will be looked at in this study. For instance, Turkish immigrants preferred to gather in coffeehouses where they felt a connection to their homeland and could speak their native language rather than having to use their limited English. However, the second and third waves of Turks were different in terms of the Turkish Diaspora because they were more knowledgeable and conscious of both their native land and their host culture. They were more interested in adapting to their new culture rather than sustaining a connection to their prior home.

In this thesis, international immigration is related to different elements of migration theory. In the next section, this concept will be briefly explained and tied to the question at hand. Secondly, globalization theory and transnationalism which frame the phenomena of immigrating to another country will be explored.

Migration theory is concerned with international immigration as a topic in social science. In William Peterson's article "The International Immigration", he states that there are two kinds of immigration: internal and international immigration. For example, when a tribe in one region of western Africa moves to another region it is referred to as "internal immigration". An example of international immigration is the large fourth wave of

immigration to the United States. Today, the immigrant population stands at approximately 26.3 million, approximately 9.8 percent of the total population. (Brettell and Hollifield, 2000:1)

Migration theory contains a variety of disciplines and methodologies. Its two core elements are the sociological and historical background of immigration. In this study, the experiences of the Turkish settlers in the United States is analyzed from a sociological and historical perspective as sociological theory asks the following relevant questions: What explains immigration? How can experience of immigrants be explained? Why do immigrants move, when do they move and who decides to move? These questions are related to the social mobility of an individual and the consequences of the movement of population. In addition, sociologists research the occurrences of immigration and try to apply the social theory of mobility to the period of immigration.

The first book to comprehensively explore the history of immigration was Roger Daniels' 1990 book titled *Coming to America*. In this book, Daniels looks at the long history of immigration in the United States, starting with the first settlements. He suggests that migration theory can be used to explain the experiences of the immigrants in the United States. Later, E .G. Ravenstein, in the first chapter of the book, claims that the laws of migration shaped the flow of immigration and the demographic structure of the country whereas historical geographer David Ward points out that the entry of the settlers to America couldn't be restricted by law and that other issues played a role such as distinctive location patterns and the experience of groups and individuals. Marcus Hansen conducted a study in the 1930s on the factors which motivate immigration. His study focused on the following questions: who moves? For how long? Why do some people move while others do not? How do they decide where to go? How does the act of leaving one place and relocating to another affect them culturally? These questions will be addressed in the first section of this thesis

where the Turkish immigrants' experiences are classified based on the time period and characteristics.

Another point is that sociology theory deals with is the social network that affects the process of the immigration. The issue of the Turkish Diaspora is addressed as it is the main realization of a social network which was established with the goal of maintaining the ties of the Turks living abroad to Turkey. This is related to the sociological aspect of the immigration process, but the immigrant's financial condition also plays a role.

Massey et al. (1993) label this the micro economy of individual choice. In the article "The Origins of Immigration" Massey et al. explains the strong link between immigration and economic factors which lead immigrants to leave their home countries for a better life and future. While focusing on individual migrants, the factors that influence their decisions must also be considered. The immigrant usually chooses where to live based on land and labor. For instance, many Turks decided to settle in the United States because of the availability of high paying jobs and the increased opportunities. Massey et al. states that:

"Potential migrants figure the total future increase in earnings they can expect as a result of migrating to a higher-paying job, weighted by the probability of obtaining that job and discounted by a factor reflecting the lower utility of earnings in the future. From this expected gain they subtract expected costs. If the balance between anticipated gains and costs is positive, a person decides to migrate". (Massey, 1990: 6-7).

The brain drain which occurred as Turks left Turkey for America is an example which illustrates the Turks' economic conditions. However, the first generation of immigrants, which immigrated to the U.S. before the 1960s, immigrated for financial reasons. They did not have enough skills or the educational background to survive in America like the second and third waves of immigrants did. The immigrants among the first groups pinpointed certain areas to live in before they departed as a way to ensure that they could continue their lives. In his dissertation titled "Shifting Turkish American Identity Formations in the United States", İlhan Kaya states that:

“Turkish immigrants who have limited skills often move to certain neighborhoods such as Paterson and Clifton, New Jersey or Sunnyside in Queens upon their first week of their arrival in the U.S. where they find the lowest-wage jobs in restaurants and grocery.” (Kaya, 2003:129)

For these reasons, this thesis analyzes the material forces that are directly linked to the Turkish immigrants’ experience in the U.S. In the second chapter, the effect of the capitalist economy in the United States and how it framed the global economy is looked at, focusing on globalization theory which defines the reasons which encourage immigration to the United States. Appadurai (1998) believes that the market, media and migration are the most important factors in defining today’s global world and subjectivity. With the help of mass media and advanced technology, immigrants have an idea of what their life will be like before they immigrate. For example, a comparison of the responses of participants in the survey conducted for this thesis and the people interviewed on a program on the Turkish television channel TRT shows that a great deal of Turkish immigrants decided to immigrate to the U.S. because they were fascinated by the technological developments and civilized lifestyle in America. Furthermore, the mass media and Hollywood have put the idea of the “American Dream” into people's heads, creating a picture of life in America illustrated by large houses, ideal families and an attractive populace. In this respect, the electronic media, namely television, has shaped both identities and the cultural space and cultural world. Because of this, Turks have viewed the United States as a place where everything is possible with the help of the mass media and global market.

The issue of transnationalism and its close link to Turkish immigration to the U.S. will also be examined. In brief, transnationalism refers to the post-immigration era and the immigrants’ connection between their homelands and new host society. The first wave of immigration to the U.S. after World War I and the second wave of immigrants after the 1960s are focused on because of the remarkable differences in terms of their conditions and views of America.

Before looking at the differences, the reason why transnationalism emerged will be discussed. Why do Turks move to the West and what does the West symbolize for them? What about the West fascinates the Turks? What does the American myth mean for an immigrant? This thesis aims to answer these questions through an analysis of the responses to a questionnaire and the participants in a program on TRT. Donna Gabaccia's essay gives a clear definition of transnationalism: "Its circularity, continuity, and multi-directionality and the ties immigrants develop between the local places of origin and colonies." (Gabaccia, 1997). She highlights that transnationalism and globalism go hand in hand in respect to constructing the immigrant's experience in a foreign land; the Turks who went to the U.S. after the 1960s with the aim of participating actively in the global system, meaning "people, money, goods and information" are an example of this (Bauböck, 2003:3). In return, they continue to stay in the U.S. since they are treated with respect by much of society. They were surprised by this so that they neither wanted to return nor stay for a long time. Another scholar, Nina Glick, defines transnationalism in terms of immigrants. They migrate from the borders of their homeland; as a result, they develop "simultaneous incorporation" and systematic participation in "social fields" in both countries as a way to link their homeland and host land at the same time. This allows them to begin to plant their roots in that new land.

In this thesis, transnationalism is examined from the aspect of the social integration of the Turks who immigrated into a new community. Transnationalism, which continues the critique of the bipolar models of migration (Rouse 1992), is defined as a social process whereby migrants operate in social fields that transgress geographic, political and cultural borders (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc, 1992). With the help of transportation and modern telecommunications which are part of the global system, the social distance between the sending and receiving societies has been eliminated. From a transnational perspective, migrants have no longer "uprooted" from one place but move freely across national borders.

For example, Turks in the second and third waves of immigration were able to move freely after the 1980s whereas the first wave of Turks could not benefit from modern telecommunications and transportation; as a result, they were unwillingly uprooted in their new environment and could not overcome feelings of isolation or acquire local cultural knowledge.

The main reason the theory of transnationalism is used is that it is another manifestation of globalization. As the global system consists of a financial and cultural network between sending and receiving countries, transnationalism becomes part of the larger global system. In this sense, the cultural and social web has been activated within the transnational social spaces for immigrants. But how? Several scholars have defined transnational spaces as a “strategy of survival and betterment” (Faist 1998: 217). When looking at the first generation of Turks, their mobility stems from the need to survive in the United States, in terms of having access to material benefits. These settlers left villages in Anatolia where there were few opportunities. Frank Ahmed (1986), who wrote about the stories of first settlers in America, states that “The vast majority of these early Turkish immigrants were Anatolian farmers and shepherds, most of whom had never seen a city or even a large village” (Karpat, 1986: xv). However, the aims of the second and third waves of immigrants were different; they strove to better their lives rather than solely to survive in America. The effects of self-development and career progress are evident in these two generations. Karpat (1995) estimates that the number of professionals between 1948 and 1980 ranged from 10,000 to 50,000. The last wave of immigrants consists of graduate students who went to the United States for professional training as well as skilled and semi-skilled workers. İlhan Kaya states that:

“The number of Turkish students enrolled in U.S. institutions reached 15,000 in 2003 and Turkey ranked the ninth in terms of the number of international student enrollments in American educational institutions”. (AA, 2003)

To conclude, theorists of transnationalism and globalization tend to define the social mobility of the immigrants in the twentieth century in terms of economic benefits and professional self-development. When immigrants leave their countries, they bring the crisis of ethnic, national and local identities with them. As immigrants settle abroad, they begin to participate in different aspects of political and social life while maintaining their ethnic identity at the same time; for example, Turkish citizens have run for Congress. This is also a vehicle for them to be able to better defend their rights. The data in this thesis shows that the first wave of immigrants kept their national and local identity in the host country while the second and last generation of Turkish immigrants are better integrated into the core society because of political reasons. As Horrocks and Kolinsky state that:

“Turks in the United States are more integrated to the larger society as a result of high levels of education of the immigrants and American policies towards citizenship and diversity”. (Horrocks and Kolinsky, 1996).

The Theories of Assimilation

In this thesis, the main question at hand is whether or not Turkish settlers have completely assimilated or integrated into American society. In order to answer this question, the six stage model “From Contact to Assimilation” that was first defined by Eliot Barkan in his article “Race, Religion, and Nationality in American Society: A Model of Ethnicity” is applied. In this model, Barkan explains the stages of assimilation into the dominant culture. Before summarizing the stages, the difference between assimilation and integration must be delineated as the second and third waves of Turkish settlers are trapped between these two elements. Sociologists Park and Burgess describe assimilation as follows:

“Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life”. (Milton, 1964: 62)

Barkan states the importance of integration because it plays a crucial role in the initial step of assimilation. He explains integration as becoming part of a larger society, becoming bilingual and blending with the members of the dominant society. The first step on the path of integration is “Contact”. In this step, the newly arrived immigrants begin to come into contact with members of different ethnic groups, but still remain more involved with their own groups. The second step is “Acculturation”. In this step, immigrants preserve their cultural and religious identities by congregating in social environments. They are not involved with political participation as they are still strongly linked to their homeland. The third step is “Adaptation”. This is the step between those foreign born and native born within the ethnic group. Barkan states that:

“Substantial acculturation (with greater use of English) takes place, especially among the native-born generations, and, of course, changes to the ethnic subculture continue to occur”.(Barkan, Vecoli, Alba and Zunz, 1995:55)

Also in this step, immigrants tend to intermarry with individuals of mixed ethnic heritage and participate in social activities such as sports, school organizations and dating.

The fourth step is “Accommodation”. In this step, the immigrants become distant from their native language and begin to integrate with the host culture. The immigrants in this stage substantially change with regard to religious affairs, occupational status and geographical mobility. The fifth stage is “Integration”. The immigrants appear to be included in the larger society even if they retain their cultural and symbolic identification, holidays or language. The last stage is “Assimilation”. The immigrants are fully adapted to the new culture and no longer define themselves as a member of a particular ethnic group because they are part of the

core society. They do not feel the need to publish magazines in their native language or to organize activities related to their native culture aside from religious ceremonies.

An Introduction to Assimilation Theories

An analysis of the responses to the survey and the documentary program on TRT indicate that immigration to another country is accompanied by rules which are to be obeyed for the sake of full assimilation into the new culture. However, in order to be assimilated, immigrants must be aware of the melting pot and what it means for a foreigner. The structure of America is based on liberty, equality and republicanism. These ideologies are imposed on the immigrants so that they will be motivated to work harder and stay in the United States longer; the case of the Turkish immigrants is similar.

In this study, the Turkish immigrants are divided into three categories: the first wave of immigrants, the second wave of immigrants and the third wave, the brain drain wave. The immigrants are divided into such groups because of the different time periods in which they arrived in the U.S. and their different characteristics. For instance, this thesis claims that the first wave of immigrants did not assimilate. In addition, they returned their homeland after the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923. The second generation of immigrants which arrived after World War II adapted to the new culture and accepted the host society's norms; they learned the language and customs of the society. The last generation which arrived after the 1980s had already adapted to the new culture through the aid of the mass media and technological advancements. They felt they had enough knowledge about America based on Hollywood movies and educational programs about studying or starting a career there. This wave was influenced by globalization, as pointed out in the section on globalization theory and its resultant brain drain of highly-skilled workers from the home country.

The Melting pot

The first immigrants to America were Europeans and Eastern Europeans. Europeans, particularly those who did not speak English as their first language, such as those from France, Germany, and Switzerland, were influenced by American social life, resulting their identities being melted into a pot where they began to lose their distinct identities. In order to understand what a melting pot offers for the immigrants, the ideology behind the melting pot must be understood. In this respect,

“The melting pot idea suggests that American culture is quick, powerful, and seductive so that in a few generations immigrants are assimilated and become indistinguishable from the population as a whole.” (Kaya,2003:27).

The discourse on the melting pot theory dates back to Israel Zangwill’s play *The Melting Pot* which was first performed in Washington D.C. in 1908. This theory discusses the host society in a foreign land. Hector St. John Crevercaouer states that:

“Here individuals of all the nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.”(Milton,1964:116).

There are a variety of ideas about positive changes on immigrant’s social life as Hector claims. He thinks that the melting pot brings a variety of new ways of thinking so that ethnic groups inevitably feel the need to change and adapt to the host culture. Apart from this, the melting pot theory became the central theme used for ethnic and race studies by scholars who believed that ethnic and racial differences would disappear, or at least be minimized, in an industrial society. This seems to be a positive outcome of the melting pot but can also be viewed as an illusion if the ethnic diversity of the United States is considered. But still, there are ethnic groups which have not been able to melt into society which cannot be ignored. As Sarah and Berkowitz point out, being aware of diversity does not mean that all ethnic groups have the same rights to accommodation; therefore, instead of defining America as a “melting

pot”, it should rather be called a “mosaic”. Within the ideology of diversity, the host groups play a crucial role in the American cultural context.

Turkish cultural values and ethnic differences are less moldable when compared to those of European immigrants. The integration of the Turks could take longer and be more difficult as the Turks have to find ways to adapt to the mosaic culture and to be considered “American”. This is not a simple classification as it is also related to the distribution of power. While America offers limitless choices on the other hand, there are also obstacles for the Turks. They are disadvantaged in terms of religious, cultural and ethnic affiliations when compared to white Protestant or Western societies. For that reason, in this thesis the melting pot theory is used as the assimilation of the Turkish immigrants is focused on. The question of whether the Turks have abandoned their identities and cultural background as a way to improve their social lives and follow the American Dream or keep their national identity through participation in the Turkish Diaspora is examined.

Cultural Pluralism

The emergence of cultural pluralism was first used in political science to describe an “open society” where every individual can freely express his opposite so as to bring variety to the government. However, social scientists disagree about the definition of pluralism; sociologists and anthropologists describe it in a different way:

“In Furnivall’s original formulation, a plural society consisted of sharply differentiated cultural groups bound together chiefly by a common economic link, the market”.(Furnival,1948).

M. G. Smith claims that cultural variation is not enough for cultural pluralism. This kind of society can be referred to as a “heterogeneous society”. He states that:

“To Smith a plural society must contain differences among cultural groups in their basic institutions, such as “kinship, education, religion, property and economy, recreation and certain sodalities.” (Haug,1967:294)

As the United States is a mixture of different ethnicities, religions and shared experiences, the theory of cultural pluralism, which is part of assimilation theory, is applied in this thesis.

Moreover, Furnival points out the vitality of an economic link and the market as a common element for immigrants; therefore, the main reason Turkish immigrants prefer to live in America is based on pursuing the American Dream and expressing themselves in an open society. In this thesis, it is claimed that assimilation is losing its impact on immigrants, as Turks naturally integrate themselves into American culture, supporting cultural pluralism as it serves prosperity and self-development. For this reason, the theory of cultural pluralism is used.

Method

In this thesis, the survey method is used in order to learn about the experiences, ideas, and expectations of Turkish immigrants regarding life in the United States before and after immigration. Eight people who have been living in the U.S. for more than five years were contacted via email. All highly-skilled workers, they immigrated to America with the aim of starting a career or being offered a job. They were asked about their expectations of their new life before they immigrated and what happened after they arrived. Were they totally separated from their cultural values and customs? Have they integrated or assimilated since moving there? Can they be considered American or have they become Americanized? What does the American Dream represent according to Turkish immigrants? Do they feel alienated or like they do not belong when they visit their own county for a short period? These questions are the center of this study. What motivated the immigrants is important in order to determine why they prefer to live in the United States instead of Turkey and the factors which influence this decision.

The idea of belonging to a place refers to a dilemma the Turkish settlers experience as immigrants. Apart from this, in order to gather more information about the experience of Turkish immigrants in the United States, different groups of Turks who have been working and studying in the United States for several years have been analyzed. Tülin Sertoç's 2007 program "To be a Turk in America" on the television channel TRT is also used. Sertoç interviewed Turkish immigrants living in different parts of the United States. The DVD is a total of thirteen chapters and is a helpful source as it shares the stories of different immigrants, allowing conclusions regarding the factors which influence international immigration to be drawn.

This study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter focuses on the general properties of the first, second and third waves of Turkish immigrants. Their educational, cultural and expectations before coming to America are compared and the differences between these groups are looked at. The second chapter focuses on the political situation in Turkey which was a motivating factor for immigration to another country. The impressions and motivating reasons of the Turkish immigrants in the survey and those in Sertoç's documentary are examined, drawing the conclusion that the main motivating factor for them is the American Dream. What the American Dream really means for immigrants is discussed and the immigrants' personal anecdotes related to the American Dream are included. While some of them feel they have achieved the American Dream, others are still waiting for their dream to come true. As a result of this, they want to return to their homeland. The third chapter examines if the Turks have integrated into their new culture or if they have become assimilated or Americanized.

CHAPTER 1

In this chapter, the three waves of Turkish immigrants who arrived in the United States with the aim of making dream and goals come true are looked at. Immigrants who arrive in New York first notice the Statue of Liberty, the symbol of America, which represents the hopes, dreams, expectations and the future of the immigrants. However, after living there for some time, they often come to the conclusion that the stories of the land of promise told by their friends who had immigrated earlier are no more than fairy tales.

The Turkish immigrants will be categorized according to time period. The first wave of immigration occurred during the Ottoman Empire, the second after World War II, and the third was the brain drain of immigration following the 1960s. These waves are placed into two categories due to the differences they exhibit in terms of the expectations of the Turkish settlers and the political conditions which influenced their decision to immigrate.

1.1 The First Generation of Turkish Immigrants to America

President Franklin Roosevelt said that “All of our people, except full-blooded Indians, are immigrants or descendants of immigrants”. The foundation of the United States was built upon liberty and the salvation of immigrants from Europe, Eastern Europe and other regions. Different ethnicities, religions and groups united under the American flag with the goal of progress and success in a new land.

By the 1900s, the Ottoman Empire had expanded into three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. The Ottoman Empire's authority weakened with the rise of World War I. The Turks began to immigrate to other countries during Ottoman rule; this continued after the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923. There were two main reasons why the first wave of Turkish immigrants was willing to leave their native land. First, they desired better economic conditions and to live in a welfare system. Moreover, due to the worsening economic conditions in Europe people preferred to go to the United States.

This time period starts with the establishment of the Turkish Republic in the 1920s. During this time, Armenians and Greeks also immigrated to what was referred to as the land of prosperity. After crossing the Atlantic Ocean on a steamship, the Turks, Armenians and Greeks first landed at Ellis Island, from where they could see the Statue of Liberty which symbolizes hope and freedom, especially for the Turks who came from the Anatolian part of Turkey.

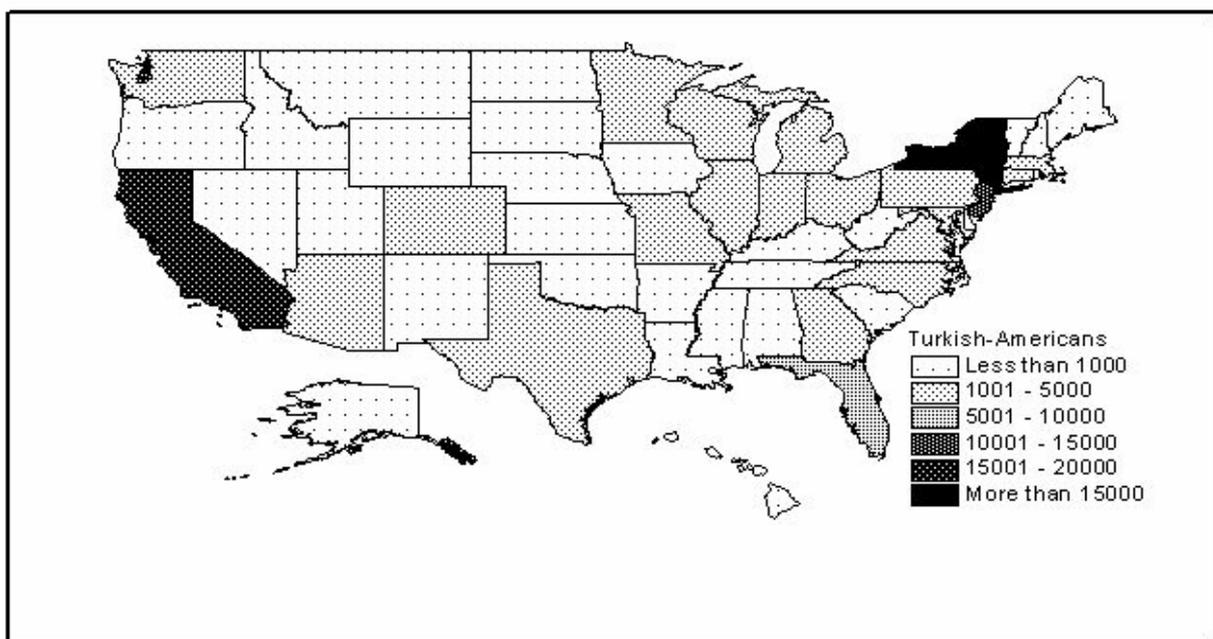
The immigrants were disappointed by the brutal treatment they experienced after their arrival. A Bulgarian immigrant named Jak Farhi who arrived in New York in 1912 said:

“We live in New York. It is a messy place. We work like slaves and have no time for anything since we work from morning to night. We live in bad conditions; we don't eat good food and don't have nice clothes. We cannot go to parks because we don't have enough money to spend. We only use our money on living expenses or we send it to our relatives in our country. We are wasting our youth by working very hard here.(Bali, 2004:89-90)

Apart from this, the health exams on Ellis Island were brutal and caused intense fear for the newcomers. They had been examined by the immigration officers to determine if they had any communicable diseases. If they appeared to be ill, the doctors sent them to the hospital or quarantined them. Even in these tough conditions, the Turkish immigrants remained positive and strove to achieve the American dream for the American Dream meant the will and desire to be successful. In James M. Jasper's book *Restless Nation*, he deals with the European and non-European perception of the American Dream and how this perception is constructed. The goal of the first generation of immigrants was to earn enough money for their family so they would feel proud of themselves upon their return home. In addition, they had heard the positive impressions of America from the other Turks working there. They painted the United States as an ideal country where anything is possible. As Mahler put it:

“Virtually all of my informants left their homeland with idealized visions either of the United States itself or the lives they would lead there, only to realize shortly thereafter that these visions were fantasies. Some still expected to find so much money that one could sweep it up off the streets”. (Mahler, 1995:83)

After arriving at Ellis Island, the most apparent obstacle for the Turkish Ottoman immigrants was the differences in the culture, language and social attitudes in the West. Besides this, the Turks were concerned about practicing their religion, Islam, in a Christian-oriented society. For these reasons, Turkish Ottoman immigrants created their own communities, living in family groups in overcrowded houses where they spoke their native language. As a result of this, they were unable to adapt to the culture socially or speak English. Therefore, they became tailors or ran small businesses thus achieving a higher standard of living than their fellow countrymen who remained in Turkey. According to 2000 Census data, New York State (23,674), California (15,104), New Jersey (12,396), and Florida (9,615) have the largest number of Turkish-American concentration.



With regard to socialization, from 1905 until the 1920s, the Turkish settlers usually lived in rooming or boarding houses. The rent was low and the Turks could eat their traditional foods such as lamb, soups and tea. As they learned how to speak English, they became more involved in the community.

As stated above, the living conditions of the first wave of Turkish immigrants improved gradually. Due to their familiarity with different ethnic groups and openness to new experiences, the Turks were able to easily adapt to Western culture. The Ottoman Empire

controlled different ethnic groups for 600 years so the Turks were used to living in harmony and integrated with different cultures. As Adlai E. Stevenson said, “Tolerance is the key to peace, for there can be no peace unless there is mutual tolerance between differing peoples and systems and cultures.” In the beginning, the Muslim Turks felt strange and insecure being in a different culture. They rarely left home or communicated with other immigrant groups; they seemed intolerant to the culture. It is also possible they behaved like this because they were viewed as alien since their way of life was different from that of the local culture. *The Salem Evening News*, a local newspaper, featured a headline describing the “Turkish presence in its community, under the banner of Men of Many Nations at Work in Peabody Tanneries; Difficulties in Handling Them” (Ahmed, 1986:38). The difficulties that the Turks encountered in the U.S. were due to the Turkish social structure, traditions and customs: they were completely different from American culture. The Turks were referred to as a “puzzle” because it was difficult to understand the Turkish “Mohammedans”. They preferred to live together so that they would not face any problems in their social lives. They were not educated or conscious of their legal rights compared to the second and third waves of Turkish immigrants.

These Turks only strove to earn and save enough money for their families. They then planned to return home. For instance,

“It is said a Turk can live at ease on the income of a few hundred dollars in his homeland. He will be looked upon as a rich person among his people. A tribesman from Turkey, perhaps a Kurd, once told his foreman in broken English that he intended to go home just as soon as he saved enough money to buy entrance to a tribe of brigands.” (Ahmed, 1986:38)

Moreover, Turks were portrayed as traditional people and the men grew beards because of their religious beliefs. While Greeks, Bulgarians, and Christian Arabs also had mustaches, they were not viewed as different by society. However, the Turks overcame the negative opinions of them through their contributions and with their determination and adaptation to the American way of life.

The adaptation of the Turks who came during World War I was facilitated through their marriages to first and second generation Irish, Italian, and French Canadian women. These Turkish had grown up with Anatolian culture, in which hospitality is the most important tradition. In his book, Frank Ahmed states that due to the Turkish tradition of hospitality the Turks opened their homes to their brothers in law. Their American wives became accustomed to having dinner with her husband's friends. Ahmed explains that "hospitality is still a Turkish characteristic, as natural in the offering and acceptances as breathing" (Ahmed, 1986: 55).

In conclusion, after settling down in America, despite having to work difficult jobs which require physical strength the Turks who immigrated during World War I never lost faith in achieving the American Dream. Therefore, they congregated in coffee houses so as to not lose their identity; they tried to create a sense of belonging.

1.2 The Second Wave of Turkish Immigrants:

The second wave of immigration occurred after the 1960s as Turkey started to become unlivable due to the military control of the country. Turkey was gradually becoming less modern and less democratic. Karpat (1995) estimates that the number of such professionals for the period between 1948 and 1980 ranged from 10,000 to 50,000. As a result, the number of immigrants peaked after the 1960s. In the second chapter, the factors which influence the decision to immigrate will be analyzed. Before that, the characteristic properties and problems of the Turkish immigrants after they immigrated to America will be discussed.

To start, the Turkish settlers who moved to the U.S. after the 1960s were highly-skilled and knowledgeable before they arrived in the U.S. Moreover, this category also includes those who were born in the United States as the children of the first generation. The first generation did not have issues related to their ethnicity whereas the second generation

was brought up with the dilemma of which ethnic community and larger society to belong to.

They are at ease in the social environment and have no problems communicating but live in

two worlds: that of their parents and that of their American peers. In his article, “Identity

Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study”, İlhan Kaya states that:

“The Turkish community in the New York City metropolitan area consists of two worlds. One is made up of a predominantly Turkish population, such as the Turkish neighborhoods in Paterson, Sunnyside, or Brighton Beach, while the areas outside of the main Turkish enclaves are more diverse, offering anonymity and encouraging autonomy in the context of the urban area”.(Kaya, 2009:627)

İlhan Kaya also points out the second generation's identity crisis, which especially affects the

children who practice Turkish customs and traditions since they live in a neighborhood of

mostly Turks. For instance, Cindy, who works in public relations in New York, struggles with

her parents:

I felt that I had to live two different personalities in my life and that was not easy. It was the old-fashioned upbringing. Living in this country, my parents did not accept a lot of things I was a part of. Until my late 20s, I was still fighting with them about, you know: ‘I am an adult. You cannot treat me like I am a 12-year-old. It was very difficult.’ It still is. I lived with my parents six months after I moved back to New York from DC, where I lived a long time. I stayed with them because I needed to settle down to figure out where I was going to go. As an example, my parents were telling me, ‘No, we want you to be home by 11 o’clock.’ I was like, ‘Wow, I am 30 years old.’ Still, you know, you don’t want to upset the family balance. I think it has something to do with where they are from and how they grew up (Kaya, 2009: 628).

Cindy has completely adapted to American culture and does not consider Turkish culture her own culture. When compared to the first generation, the second generation is more integrated in society and feels more secure in the dominant culture rather than in their home culture. This will be discussed in more detail in the section on assimilation theory.

There are also Turks who were not born in the U.S., but they immigrated there with the aim of starting a career or studying. This type of immigration is referred to as “brain drain immigration”. The brain drain from Turkey to the U.S. started after the 1960s. In the 1970s, the number of highly-skilled workers in the U.S. increased rapidly due to political reasons.

Turkey refers to this immigration as “brain loss” since the country gradually lost its most talented and intelligent professionals who would have been beneficial to the government and public. The political turmoil and economic crises in the 1980s and 1990s seriously influenced the decision of academicians to go study abroad and possibly settle abroad too.

The Turkish media also call brain drain the “fetish of the successful Turk abroad”. Many articles were written about these Turkish scholars and students, claiming that “if they didn’t return in the future, it would be disaster for Turkey”. Another reason why the brain drain peaked was due to the slow absorption of the young graduates into the Turkish labor force:

“Labor force participation rates have not kept up with the pace of growth of young population in Turkey, leading internal migration for unskilled and international immigration and brain drain for the skilled”. (Akçapar, 2005-2006:27)

Eight highly-skilled people who immigrated to the U.S. for work or to study in an MBA or Ph.D program participated in the survey. The first question asked to them was regarding their motivation and expectations before moving to the U.S. Sinan Ottoman moved to the U.S. for education and professional opportunities. He said that:

“I had no “grand plan” per se before coming to the U.S. My main objective was to start my graduate education. After I finished my Ph.D. I chose to stay on because the professional opportunities in the high-tech industry were far more attractive in the U.S. than anywhere else”.

Sinan is a highly-skilled person who plans to continue his life in the U.S., not in another country or in Turkey. In the second chapter, the factors which push and pull Turks toward the decision to immigrate will be discussed.

In sum, this section has briefly indicated the properties of the first and second waves of Turkish immigration to the U.S. The most striking point is that the first generation did not identify themselves as Americans while, on the other hand, the second generation, due to having been born in the U.S., experienced an identity crisis in terms of being trapped between

the homeland and dominant society. However, the group of highly-skilled workers identify as Turkish-American. Due to the working conditions and increased academic opportunities this group decided either to stay longer or to postpone their return to their homeland.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction to Push and Pull Theory

The push and pull theory deals with economic, political and social matters. This theory relates to the sociological or cultural effects of immigration. There are many factors that shape the pull and push theory. The first issue is the immigrant's economic motivations. The attractive economic opportunities in a country can be a real pushing factor for them. America offers foreigners new opportunities and a chance at a successful career which Turks cannot find in their own country; thus, they decide to move another country to improve their future. For instance, during the Ottoman Empire some Turks decided to immigrate to America to escape the First World War. As stated above, this was a political matter. The second wave of Turkish immigrants in the 1960s immigrated for mainly financial reasons and to have access to better education. For these reasons, the causes of immigration can be tied to financial reasons and also the desire to achieve the American Dream.

The motivation of the first generation of Turkish immigrants was to earn enough money and then return to their country. In contrast, the second generation wanted to extend their horizons in terms of their career. Both the survey conducted for this thesis and the TRT program "To be a Turk in America" prove that the main pulling factors are the possibility of success, prominence in business life, and of achieving their dreams. The push factor for immigration is the political condition of Turkey, particularly the periods of unrest and military coups in the 1960s and 1980s. The democratic movement in the 1960s specifically brought about the proliferation of scholars and writers; however, the military intervened against this. During the 1980s, Turgut Ozal's government brought democracy back to Turkey and stabilized the economy aided by the effect of globalization around the world.

2.1 THE FACTORS WHICH PULL TO TURKS TO INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRATION

2.1.2 The Transformation of Turkey after the 1950's: Modernization

The May 14, 1950 election brought Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes, president between 1950 and 1960, into control of the Democratic Party. This election was a turning point for political and social life in Turkey; with the help of this transformation, social mobility became possible. In his article “Studies on Turkish Politics and Society: Selected Articles”, Kemal Karpat points out that:

“The new government in 1950 had targeted bringing social democracy to the public, but the military ended their rule formally in 1961 by adapting a broadly based social and political order and new construction”. (Karpat, 2004: 33)

Before the military coup in 1961, Turkey had experienced much chaos related to political changes and economic matters. Especially after 1946, the distribution of income and cultural and social classes had become unbalanced. There were discussions about rapid modernization and the establishment of an egalitarian scientifically-minded society. This transformation was useful for the middle-class. Between 1946 and 1959, the middle-class debated this topic with their opponents.

On the other hand, remarkable progress was made in the political parties and a new welfare philosophy took hold. Turkey's political structure started to change and people became more aware because of journalists and intellectuals who published articles about the transformation of Turkey into a modern country. This movement was considered the exhibition of “the freedom of expression”. This ideology affected Turkish society positively in terms of freedom of expression. In addition, these changes led to new visions and opportunities to discuss subjects that were once taboo such as religion. Turks started to evaluate themselves as individuals; they began to look past their Turkish Muslim identity. As

Karpat put it, “On the surface every principle, every tradition and norm was challenged criticized including secularism, reformation, westernization, nationalism and religion.” (Karpat, 2003:37) These ideologies must be deeply analyzed in order to develop socially and culturally on a universal level. This was the first step for a modern Turkey.

The Democratic Party and Republican Party were in power in Turkey. The rise of modern Turkey gradually slowed for bureaucratic and economic reasons. The rural groups, semi-rural towns, and a small group of capital owners clashed with the large group of entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs were associated with the ruling party, the Democrats. They had political power which they could use to manipulate the economy of country; the rich and landed families had joined the Republican Party.

On the other hand, the Democrats were totally against the military and bureaucracy as supporters of the Republican Party. In addition, Turkish society was in chaos after the military took control of the government. After the 1950s, the Enlightenment of Turkish society started when writers began to teach what true democracy meant to the public. The rulers who represented the state ignored the citizens. Even though the Democrats lost seats in the parliament and votes, they had popular support. In 1959, Democrats were opposed to a dictatorial system and supported democracy and the continuation of Ataturk's reforms; however, but the military coup in the 1960s was inevitable not only for the politicians but also the public who were not ready for such a system. As Democrats were the supporters of Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes and Ismet Inonu was the leader of Republican Party. They had both aimed at establishing motion a new process of leadership selection, social mobilization and broader popular participation. But, the military attack in 1961 had prevented social change for a short time.

2.1.3 The pushing factors for Immigration:

The political and social situation in Turkey did not create a hopeful atmosphere or the grounds for success for the Turkish people; this resulted in mass immigration from Turkey to Europe and also the United States following World War II. Moreover, at that time, America and Europe had more developed labor market and civil rights. As Karpat explains,

“The Turkish immigration to U.S after World War II was conditioned by American policies, the growing surplus of labor in Turkey and the vicissitudes of the European labor market.” (Karpat, 2003: 623)

Due to the liberalization of American immigration policies in 1964, the country experienced economic growth. In 1965, the civil right movements and protests against racism led to immigration from non-European countries. Turkish citizens also decided to immigrate due to the new immigration policies. Karpat indicated that “The Immigration Act of 1990 made the most significant revision of the original immigration act of 1924 and 1952 and opened door for higher immigration from Turkey” (Karpat, 2003:625). The most important aspect of the 1990 Act was the restrictions on employment for Turks; immigrants from European countries were still welcomed and easily admitted according based on their educational skills and language abilities. The Turks were negatively impacted by a points system which favored the European countries. As a result, the Turkish government was more receptive to sending Turks to the European labor market rather than to America. For example, Turkey sent 203,576 workers to Europe in 1961-67 and 569,306 in 1967-73. Between 1976 and 1986 the attractiveness of the European market decreased and Turkish immigrants began to look for a new land of opportunity. For this reason, after the 1970s, they decided to immigrate to the U.S. Karpat states that the factors that caused the Turks to settle in a foreign land are, “The saturation of the European Market, interest in higher standards of living, the

social prestige of consumerism, the high inflation rate and the skyrocketing cost of living.” (Karpat, 2003: 627).

These reasons are considered the push factors for Turkish immigration. In 1990, the European labor market could no longer accept Turks; therefore, the United States became the principle target for immigration. Upper, middle, and lower class Turks would follow their “American dream”, i.e. success, welfare and the pursuit of happiness. Furthermore, educated Turks left the country with the aim of attaining a high income and social position, rather than the sheer poverty which motivated the unskilled workers. In the survey conducted for this thesis, a participant named Edip, now a professor at Arizona State University, moved to the United States fifty years ago. He states that the possibility of being successful academically motivated his decision to immigrate:

“In my case, I came to the U.S. to do my graduate work at the university and I found a good challenging job and stayed here. My intention and my motivation was not to immigrate, but to utilize the available opportunity to improve myself professionally as well as socially be a good Turk wherever I am. I believe that I made the right decision 50 years ago and I am happy with that decision. My expectation before coming was that America is a fascinating country and it was good to me. I think that I made the right decision”.

Before moving to the U.S., Edip was attracted to the prosperity and opportunities to be found in the country. In his book *The Intellectual Construction of America*, Jack P. Greene writes: “Immigrants are those best equipped to take advantage of American economic opportunities, those most likely to succeed.” (Greene, 1993:25).

In sum, while there are also other pushing factors which influence the decision to immigrate to America, the desire to have a fresh start, find a better community, and escape from restrictions and obligations are the fundamental motivating reasons.

2.2 The Political Situation in Turkey in the 1980's:

On September, 12, 1980, a military coup, led by General Kenan Evren of the National Security Council (NSC), took over the government of the Turkish Republic. As Ahmad

explains, “The military regime crushed the terrorist movements and closed down all the political parties and simultaneously produced a new quasi-presidential constitution as well as new political parties and electoral laws (Ahmad, 1984:2). The military allowed the formation of a new government in 1983. Only three political parties were able to survive the post-September 12 regime so an election was held in 1983. The election provided a better solution for Turkey’s future in terms of becoming more modern and democratic as a military regime would have held Turkey back. The military intervened and decided to punish the political parties for causing trouble in the country. In 1983, the election resulted with Turgut Ozal’s victory, who was the leader of the Motherland Party at that time. The army agreed to work with Turgut Ozal’s government. He took on a difficult job since he had to restore the democracy which had been damaged by the military coups in 1960 and 1980. The council aimed at bringing welfare to the society because of the recession in the country. The 1961 Constitution had resulted in the politicization of Turkish society, but the 1982 Constitution rejected the intervention of politics in society. For instance, journalists, students, lawyers, architects, in short the educated, were expected to stay out of politics. In other words, the intellectuals were prohibited from freely expressing their ideas. For this reason, many were highly interested in going abroad, especially to America, at that time.

Turgut Ozal’s government tried to build a new democratic system. He strove to expand economically in a global economy and develop relations with Europe and the United States in order to create economic stability. Due in part to Ozal’s entrepreneurs and professional diplomats, Turkey became a strategic country for the U.S. Ozal redirected the economy from import substitution towards exports and decided to work with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), creating an efficient, reasonable and competitive market for the country. During the 1980s, the Ozal government was faced with ups and down as Turkish society was not entirely ready for the reconstruction of democracy in Turkey. Most Turks

stayed in the country to experience the transition, but some immigrated to America to achieve their American Dream. In addition to this, Ozal enabled Turkish people to go forward financially and open up to the West. Turkish society was gradually prepared thanks to his efforts to look more like the West because of his good political relationship with America.

2.3 Globalization Theory:

The emergence of globalization theory dates back to the capitalist hegemony in the late 1980s. Capitalism radically changed the stable power and cultural elements. Especially after the Soviet Union collapsed, societies had weakened in terms of their labor forces and social politics. The free market movement expanded around the world. In order to perceive the depth of the meaning of globalization, the structure of communities and the relation of time and space should be analyzed. Brian Longhurst deals with the issue of globalization in his book *Globalization and Belonging*, where he refers to Gidden's comment on Meyrowtiz's argument:

“The new media generated no sense of place, with people defining their salient relationships not in terms of face to face contacts but in terms of media characters and celebrities.” (Meyrowitiz, 2004:2)

Having no sense of place encourages communities to immigrate or move to new places, but they cannot forget the feeling of not belonging anywhere.

In the beginning of the 1990s, global theory was concerned with the division of religion and ethnicity. When globalism emerged in the 1980s, it at first seemed to be a widespread notion which influenced a society's structure and social network; however, in the 1990s, there was a shift in globalization in terms of focusing on mobility and the erosion of identifying with a place. As Robertson explained: “This situation is very obscured by saying that 'opularized as “glocalisation', where 'globalization has involved the reconstruction of 'home', 'community' and 'locality.’”(Robertson,1995:30).

Doreen Massey highlights the importance of the “sense of place”. People constantly feel the need to move or emigrate from one place to another; this is concerned with the place and mobility. Massey explains that a sense of place refers to the phenomena of time and space. It organizes social mobility and relationships with the help of telecommunications. In the article “A Global Sense of Place”, Massey points out that: “Time and space compression refers to movement and communication across space, to the geographical stretching out of social relations and to our experience of all this” (Massey, 1994:2). She suggests that the production of time and space is the result of capitalism that leads to people working in either legal or illegal ways. They have to travel or immigrate in order to find a stable job since they cannot find one in their own country. In a way, the diverse cultures which meet due to the forces of capitalism sell their own culture to the other communities. For example, Turkish immigrants in the United States opened kebab houses as a means to present and introduce their culture to Americans. This is a clear relationship between labor and capital.

Countries with strong economies which dominate the world, such as the United States, cause people to leave their homelands in order to benefit from opportunities found in such countries. Huseyin Bostancı, a participant in the survey who lives in Florida, left Turkey wishing to experience new things and develop his career:

“I did not have very high expectations in the first place. My expectations were basically to gain a different life experience, expand my horizons, and advance my career. Over the time, I actually started to appreciate the opportunities available. Real life is certainly different than the one portrayed in Hollywood movies, but smart, hardworking, patient people can find various paths to reach their goals”.

Another point that globalization theory examines is the new demand for cheap labor in developed countries and the fast globalization of economic and financial markets. As Massey explains:

“Although the causes of immigration may be primarily economic, in a globalized economy, once set in motion migration patterns are sustained and perpetuated by well

established regional networks of trade, production, investment and communication.”(Brettell and Hollifield, 2000:87)

The rapid development in technology, especially in travel and communication across national borders, also enables the maintenance and spread of transnational networks created by the immigrants themselves. For instance, Turks started frequently traveling to the United States after the 1980s when Turkish Airlines began to fly non-stop to New York. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, owing to the lack of technology, the only way to travel was by steamship across the Atlantic Ocean; it took weeks to arrive in the United States.

Turks have also been part of commercial, financial and cultural networks. For instance, in Turkey, after the expansion of global system in the 1980s, successful Turkish students from some of the best universities such as Bilkent University, Bosphorus University and Middle East Technical University were given scholarships from the United States for study. On the program “To be a Turk in America”, Tülin Sertoç interviewed Turkish students who were studying at well-known universities in the U.S. Mustafa Kalafat, who graduated from Middle East Technical University, went to the United States to pursue his PhD in Mathematics; he is studying at the University of Oklahoma. He talks about the education system and how America is advanced in terms of academic research and opportunities, mainly since American universities attract the most successful students from around the world.

In sum, globalization theory analyzes the outcome of the immigration process in depth from the aspect of time, space and global connections, i.e. communication and technological advances. In the global era, the Turks began to encounter global culture which brought with it the free market and logic of capitalism. They had opportunities in the U.S. which were difficult for them to achieve in the past. Technological improvements helped them travel long distances and extend their vision. They began to construct new homes in a different land.

2.4 Transnationalism and the Sense of Home for Foreigners:

International immigration has also brought up the question of two competing metrological temptations: nationalism and transnationalism. Metrological temptations refer to foreigners who have immigrated to another country to search for a home and attachments to the new land. As a result of this, immigrants respond pragmatically to the career or cultural opportunities. In the survey and the program on TRT, the most striking point is that the Turks face the dilemma of belonging neither to America nor Turkey. They are trapped between their old culture and new culture. Even if they have lived there for many years and adapted to the new culture, they do not feel homesick.

The participants in the survey were asked if they had ever felt a sense of attachment to a place or searched for a real home. One participant, who preferred that her name not be used, indicated that:

“I did and I still feel homeless. I know I belong to Turkey and I know I am “only” here for the better living standards. As far as adapting to American culture, I cannot say I had a very hard time since I was pretty young when I first came here, but I remember frequently asking myself “why am I here and what am I doing here”.

Another participant describes how he felt lonely when he first moved to the U.S.:

“I came to the U.S. by myself, without any family or friends. So when I came here the first time I felt really alone and it was really hard for me to start a life here. My advantage was that I started working the same week I arrived which kept me busy for a while until I got used to the life and culture here. When you come to the U.S. for the first time you start from the beginning. You need to find a place to live, to buy a car, to get car insurance etc. When you rent an apartment, they ask for your credit history in the U.S., when you buy insurance they ask for your driving history in the U.S. and since you don't have either, they don't sell you the insurance or ask very high prices. At some point you feel that it is enough and you want to go back to Turkey. But after settling you start to get used to life here, make new friends and your life becomes just like in Turkey. Only problem is that you still miss your family, friends and the food in Turkey”.

Most of the Turks had problems adapting and missed home when they first arrived. After spending some time in America, they began to enjoy living there because they started to socialize with others.

However, some were unlucky because they were illegal immigrants. Transnationalism deals with the policy of immigration. Today, the flow of illegal immigration cannot be prevented. The line between the citizens and aliens is blurred. Moreover, the illegal immigrants have the motivation to rebuild their lives and mobilize without the diaspora. The diaspora plays a crucial role for the settling-down of the immigrant and the establishment of social networks among themselves. As stated in the introduction section about the Turkish Diaspora, it is a strong communication tool that enables immigrants to feel secure and at home. In the survey, the participants were asked if the Turkish Diaspora is common or not in America. Most of the participants were either not aware of the Turkish communities or they were prejudiced toward the social organizations. There is no continuity because Turkish immigrants enter the country for a variety of reasons; some of them work, study or career. On the other hand, the transnationalism approach has shed light on the myth of the classic countries of immigration. The settlers suppose that settlers arrive in another country to start a new life, when in fact most immigrants want to reap the benefits of the host country. They wish to earn enough money to survive and return home. This case is for the first generation of Ottoman Turks who arrived in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The second wave was more aware of their purpose and reasons for coming. They sometimes needed to return home because of family or friends. Glick Schiller explains the situation of the second wave of Turks in America very well: “Movers who opted neither to return home nor sever ties but rather engage with countries of origin and of destination” (Glick Schiller et al., 1992). Schiller explains that the immigrants want to take advantage of the opportunities in the host land. For

instance, in the survey, Serap Kaftan is happy to live in the U.S. as the country since she has health insurance and enough money:

“ I was expecting a high quality university education for my children and now they have graduated and they are working on their PhDs right now. My expectations are become realized now. Also since I have full health insurance, I feel more comfortable here”.

As several scholars have discussed, the transnational communities or transnational social spaces offer a strategy of survival and betterment. Serap Kaftan sees her health insurance as a survival tool so that she can feel secure in the host land. This stems from Turkey’s economic condition which lacks the variety of choices offered in America. In this regard, Portes explains:

“Remaining ensconced in dense immigrant communities, especially those that have gone transnational in their strategy for economic adaptation, may not be a symptom of escapism, but rather a rational strategy for capitalizing on the moral and material resources that only these communities can make available.”(Bretell and Hollifield, 2000:88)

As a result of this, based on the survey and interviews, it can be concluded that Turkish settlers moved to the U.S. not only for financial reasons, but also due to the moral attitudes and social behavior that frames their American Dream. Their dream is to have a peaceful life and become a successful person in their career life.

2.5 The Emergence of the American Dream:

The United States has become a starting point even though Europeans and non-Europeans immigrants sometimes had bad experiences there. America symbolizes different meanings that have been burdens throughout history. The term the “American Dream” was first used by James Truslow Adams in his 1931 book *The Epic of America*. He explains that:

“The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is difficult dream for European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth position.” (Truslow, 1931:214 - 215)

The term became increasingly important with each major war: the Civil War, World War I and World War II. These wars brought about dramatic changes which shaped the American way of life. The most striking example was during the Great Depression which is associated with poverty, unemployment, ethnic friction, crimes, slum areas and population problems with mass immigration. These problems dominated American social and cultural life in the first and second half of the twentieth century. The people coped with the difficulties and post-war the American way of life improved. As a result, this standard of life is called the “American Dream”.

Apart from this, the American Dream inspired American literature on the immigrants’ good and bad experiences and hopes before arriving. Most of the immigrants had an idea or fantasy of what life would be like. Some describe America as a door that opens to unlimited freedom and a land of promise whereas others fail in this journey or cannot find a chance to start over. However, their stories do not mention the bad experiences as they do not want to spoil the American myth. In the next section, the Turkish perception of the American Dream their motivation to settle in America will be looked at.

2.6 The American Dream from the Perception of the Turks

Migrants from Europe and other countries leave their homeland to find happiness and money in another land. America is the best model for how they want to live or risk their lives for the dream or fantasy in their mind. A Dutch historian claims that:

“America became the place onto which all identification and interpretation, all dissatisfaction and desire, all nostalgia and idealism, and idealism seeking expression could be projected.” (Baudet, 1965:55)

As the Dutch historian states, America is an image that represents the perfectionism and idealism that is reflected everywhere, especially, in California as this is where most Hollywood films are produced and famous actors or actresses live or spent time. For these

reasons, an image is created in the minds of the Turks before they even arrive. They find optimism and wealth in the United States. Moreover, Bernard Bailyn defines America dream as follows:

“The American dream, even at the top, quickly came to be one of individual advancement, not social engineering. From the start, it was a vision based on maneuvering in economic markets”. (Bailyn, 1976:125).

The program “Being a Turk in America” examines the American Dream from the Turkish settlers’ first experiences and misperceptions. In Hollywood movies, America is portrayed as a place with large and beautiful houses, clean streets and good looking people. Most of the films end happily or the characters in the movie achieving their dreams, a Cinderella story. In Turkey, people are fed up with the bureaucracy and social norms that place barriers and rules on an individual. In addition to this, they believe that they can remake their lives by pursuing happiness. One of the survey participants wanted to rebuild his life there. Tuncay Çoban, a computer programmer, left Turkey for New York:

“I arrived in the U.S. because it is a developed county in terms of computer programming and engineering. I had great admiration for this country before immigrating. I travelled everywhere in order to experience the life in the Hollywood movies. To see the huge buildings in Manhattan and New York was fascinating for me until I noticed that I had run out of money. My American dream turned into a nightmare when I had to work in restaurants as a waiter and cleaner. This was the real America for me. I worked in a Turkish restaurant as a cashier. One day, the owner’s computer crashed. I offered to help. At first, he didn’t believe that I could repair it. But I did. After that, I started to fix the computers in the restaurant. One day, I realized that I can also create computer program for restaurants. I tried the program in the restaurant where I worked then I began selling it to other restaurants”.

In this case, he was able to start his life over and get a job thanks to his talent and experience.

Many are not as lucky as Tuncay due to their immigration status. Alin Mangiyan, who lives in New York, faced difficulties because she could not get her green card in four years. As a result, she could not visit her country:

“I was working as an executive assistant in a company in Turkey. I came to America to forget the past and turn a new page. I couldn’t get a green card for a long time so I missed my family a lot. I learned how to survive on a limited budget in America. Because I didn't have a green card, I became depressed. I ate a lot and I got fat. I was weary of life then I started to lose weight because I was determined to succeed here.”

In America, the reason why Turks prefer to stay even if they have bad experiences or stories is because they feel respected and valued; in Turkey, it is hard to encounter these attitudes. In the U.S. there are unlimited opportunities and open doors for hardworking and intelligent people like Tuncay. On the other hand, New York especially faces a dilemma regarding shelter. Dogan Uluc, a journalist in New York, explains:

“The American dream is not only hope and optimism. On the other face of it, there is poverty and the number of homeless people is gradually increasing. If you adapt to the capitalist system, one day you can be tired or work less and find yourself on the street. In this country, there is no mercy. In the morning, you wake up as a millionaire, but you can finish the night as a loser. This is the logic of capitalism system that gives and takes from you”.

Since the twentieth century there have been homeless people. The number of homeless increased from 48,000 to 1,500,000 in less than ten years. This indicates that the American dream is only valid in Hollywood movies. The Turks who have set foot in this country have had different experiences. They have realized that the United States rewards success but also punishes failures, as is evident with the many homeless in the streets.

To conclude, economists tend to explain the reasons of immigration using the “push and pull” logic whereas sociologists prefer the theories of transnationalism and social networks. In this chapter, the reasons and outcomes of the Turks’ social mobility in terms of the two disciplines as attractive offers and the capitalist system have motivated the Turks’ decisions to immigrate are examined. George Borjas and Julian Simon state that:

“The Welfare state, especially in the U.S., can be strong pull factor for immigrants. Before deciding to move another place, they look for opportunities that will be gainful employment. However, after the advent of generous social policies in the principal receiving countries, like the U.S., even migrants with low levels of human capital were willing to risk the move, confident in the fact that they would be cared for by the host society.” (Borjas, 1990).

When the immigrants arrived, they struggled in terms of integrating into the society; starting over is not easy. They have struggled with adapting to the dominant culture by

reconstructing a new identity in the melting pot as a result of the multicultural society and dealing with Anglo conformity. In the following chapter, the process of assimilation relating to the Turkish settlers in America will be examined.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Assimilation Theory

Assimilation theory is viewed as a part of sociology concerned with ethnic relations. It focuses on the ethnocentric and patronizing demands placed on minorities in order to preserve their cultural and ethnic integrity. In other words, assimilation aims to eradicate the minority culture. In America, different ethnic groups came together in order to form the government of the United States; these ethnic groups form the core of American life and society.

As the United States is open to different races and ethnic groups, the government should take into consideration the legal status of immigrants in order to facilitate the harmony of the country financially and socially. However, a struggle between the country's common values and beliefs and its history has evolved. When some European and non-European immigrants arrived at Ellis Island, they actually thought about returning home due to the unreasonable legal procedures. This country later became the site where immigrants fomented many changes in the world.

These great changes mainly occurred because of immigrants from Europe, especially from Britain. But, some other ethnic groups, such as African slaves and Asians, also were involuntarily melted into the pot. The descendants of American slaves were responsible for dramatic changes which affected the black population with regards to equal economic and political rights. The issues the black population and the other immigrants can be explained using assimilation, amalgamation, the melting pot and cultural pluralism in terms of immigration theory. In other words, there is a parallel between the experiences of the African-Americans and the Turkish immigrants regarding assimilation.

These groups have had to face the reality of assimilation in everyday life. The birth of country dates back to a time when African slavery in the United States was prevalent in some areas and the black population was mistreated; the guilt and resentment from these events

forced Americans to become more conscious and knowledgeable about their history. Another positive effect on the blacks and other ethnic groups has been the development of the common culture that has been shared since the founding of the country. In this respect, Cornell and Hartmann state: “The melting pot --both local and global-- would work its magic, and the peoples of the world would be more integrated into a broad stream of shared culture and social relations” (Cornell and Hartmann, 1998:7). Likewise, Emerson (1845) states that:

“In this continent – asylum all of nations – the energy of Irish, Germans, Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, and all the European tribes, of the Africans, and of the Polynesians, will construct a new race, a new religion, a new state, a new literature, which will be as vigorous as the new Europe which came out of the melting-pot of the Dark Ages”. (Milton,1964:117)

Emerson questioned who was to be assimilated or if the melting pot was created for the sake of a new race and nation after the Dark Ages. He points out that in order to integrate into American society; the immigrants from Europe had to abandon their religion, race and other traits.

Multicultural theorists oppose the melting pot theory as it favors whiteness in a country. They posit that minority groups lose their linguistic competence in such an environment. For instance, out of six million of American citizens of German origin, only one million has basic knowledge of their mother tongue according to the 2000 census. This suggests linguistic assimilation which also negatively affects the subgroups.

There is another opinion on assimilation. Park suggests that a person from a different culture may feel isolated and alien in the society until he is exposed to social assimilation. In 1921, Park defined assimilation as relating to social assimilation. In the *Encyclopedia of Social Science*, he clearly explained this:

“Where social assimilation was the name given to the process or processes by which peoples of diverse racial origins and different cultural heritages, occupying a common territory, achieve a cultural solidarity sufficient at least to sustain a national existence.” (Alba and Nee,1997:828)

The minority groups struggle with their identity in the face of cultural hegemony. It is difficult for them to isolate themselves from their national existence. Social assimilation theory is defined as the “the process of growing alike and once again”; Giddens explains that it is the method by which foreigners in American society become Americans. There are different opinions on how to define social assimilation.

A look at the history of the study of assimilation starts with Robert Park and the Chicago School, the founders of modern sociology theory in the early twentieth century. Park and his colleagues mainly examined ethnic relations and race in their local environment where there was mass immigration from Europe and black immigrants from the southern parts of the U.S. Park concluded from his early studies that the main aspect of sociological theory is based on race and ethnic change. Park and Burgess defined the central themes of accommodation and assimilation:

“Accommodation...is a process of adjustment, that is, an organization of social relations and attitudes to prevent or to reduce conflict, to control competition, and to maintain a basis of security in the social order for persons and groups of diverge interests and types to carry on together their varied life activities...Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life”.
(Hirschman,1983:399)

They also discuss the "contact hypothesis" as part of the theory:

“As social contact initiates interaction, assimilation is its final perfect product. The nature of the social contacts is decisive in the process. Assimilation naturally takes place most rapidly where contacts are primary, that is, where they are the most intimate and intense, as in the area of touch relationship, in the family circle and in intimate congenial groups. Secondary contacts facilitate accommodations, but do not greatly promote assimilation. The contacts here are external and too remote.” (Hirschman,1983:400)

Park points out that these elements are connected linearly: the first step is contact, followed by competition, then accommodation, with assimilation as the final step. The two elements that play the biggest role in moderating the flow of assimilation are ethnic antagonism and inevitable divisions; as a result, after contact social competition will occur in the core society.

On the other hand, Gunnar Myrdal (1964) highlights the moral dilemma in the contrast between the American ideal of equality and the practice of racial discrimination. The effect of industrialism and modern business will become useful in banning the competitive atmosphere. But, due to the capitalism system that runs American's social and economic life, there is cutthroat competition which is completely based on the financial market. He believes the only way to stop assimilation is with political agreements.

There are also other views of assimilation theory. Gordon's (1964) landmark works provided a much needed clarification of the concepts that have guided much of the subsequent empirical research in the field. He identified seven types of assimilation: cultural (acculturation), structural, marital (amalgamation), identificational, attitude receptional (the absence of prejudice), behavioral receptional (the absence of discrimination), and civic (the absence of value and power conflict).

Applying assimilation theory to the Turkish case, it can be said that Turks have become Americanized socially and have become part of the melting pot in the multicultural American society. To determine if the Turks have indeed been socially assimilated, some questions must be answered: have Turks socially assimilated or integrated in order to survive or continue living the American life? Are they able to easily adapt and integrate into the dominant culture? In this section, these questions will be answered using the responses from the survey, the interviews on TRT and İlhan Kaya's article.

But first, the factors which lead to assimilation, as defined by Elliot R. Barkan in his article "Race, Religion and Nationality in America", should be examined. Barkan puts forward a model that illustrates the initial step from contact to assimilation in America. Which step are the Turkish settlers on? Are they in the first stage or the last stage? The following section will examine the factors that lead to assimilation.

3.2 STAGES OF ASSIMILATION:

Stage 1: Contact

The contact stage refers mainly to the immigrant groups who arrived as either slaves or recently conquered persons. For example, the Latinos in the southwest in 1848 never were in contact with their homeland; they were expelled from their own country. They never wished to create an explicit group consciousness in the host country. Their native language is predominant and they prefer socialize with their families or in other familiar environments. Some of them decided to stay in the U.S. while others returned home.

When the Contact stage is applied to the case of the Turkish immigrants, the first generation that should be discussed is that of the Ottoman Turks who left the country between 1900 and 1920. Turks, Kurds and ethnic minorities such as Armenians and Greeks immigrated to escape the Civil War, but others were motivated by the desire to work hard abroad to return home rich, at least by Anatolian standards. The non-Turkish citizens, such as the Greeks, Jews, Armenians and Syrians, first left the Muslim Ottoman Empire for the U.S. The Empire had begun to fall apart and corruption was rampant; this motivated these groups to find a way to escape from the country. During the contact stage, it was difficult for the Ottoman Turks to build relationships with other members of society so they clustered in coffeehouses, where they relaxed after having worked all day. The coffeehouses helped them feel at home and there they did not have to deal with the language barrier. When they came in contact with American society, they felt like they did not belong to the dominant culture.

These reasons demonstrate that the first wave of immigrants to the U.S. had more contact problems with the core society since they faced a language barrier and were unskilled workers. In contrast, the immigrants in the second and third waves are more educated and learned English; they have fewer problems socializing. İlhan Kaya discusses how while conducting research in Paterson, New Jersey, in the summer of 2002 he met many first

generation Turkish immigrants who found a job in Manhattan in the first week they arrived thanks to their relatives or fellow townspeople. The publisher of *Jon Turk* magazine, Fatih Yılmaz, stated that:

“Since there are no formal institutions in place to guide those newcomers, much of the help is received through informal contacts or from fellows from particular towns or cities in Turkey. He goes where fellow Corumeans or Yagliderelians go.” (Kaya,2009:6)

To conclude, it is clear that the first generation experienced difficulty in adapting to the social norms in a new environment so they preferred to socialize with fellow Turks or Turkish friends from their village in Turkey.

Stage 2: Acculturation

The term “acculturation” is widely accepted among American anthropologists as referring to those changes set in motion by the coming together of societies with different cultural traditions. Barkan defines this stage as an initial step proceeding the adaptation process. In this stage, the members of the ethnic group live together and work together and establish legal institutions and organizations that support native language publications. As a result of this process, the dominant culture and language is adapted by the ethnic group. For instance; in the mid-nineteenth century, German, Irish and Scandinavians lived and practiced their religion together. Their social network relied upon the standards of their ethnic community. The ethnic communities find jobs and local leaders emerge during this phase such as middle class businessmen, clergymen and possibly labor activists.

If this stage is applied to the Turkish experience, the acculturation among the first generation of Turks is quite striking. The second and third waves of immigrants were more literate and knowledgeable about America from the movies and mass media. The first generation had decided to leave Turkey due to advice from their friends in their Anatolian village who encouraged them to move there to work in better conditions. As they did not know the language and were not able to travel much, they remained surrounded by Turkish

culture and traditions even while living in the United States. For example, the documentary program on TRT about Turks in America points out the city of Paterson which is known for its abundance of Turkish restaurants, hairdressers, coffeehouses and record stores selling Turkish folk music instead of the typical rock or jazz. Ibrahim Cabuk, who was interviewed for this TV program, explains:

“In this city, Turkish people feel like they are at home. They eat at Turkish restaurants. They go to mosques and they watch Turkish TV and listen to Turkish radio programs. They go to Turkish Community School”.

Apart from this, acculturation involves legal organizations that enforce the old culture instead of emphasizing the new culture. Every May since the 1980s, Turks in New York have walked on the streets of New York wearing traditional Turkish clothes and holding a portrait of Ataturk. This is an example of how they have created opportunities to adapt the dominant culture to their own culture. In addition, there are institutions that help to preserve the Turkish identity and culture heritage such as Youngturk, the Turkish Center in New York and the local communities in different states. In the survey, the participants were asked if these organizations and communities are examples of the Turkish voice in the United States. One participant, Ali Vural, explains the culture of these organizations:

“There is really no help from them at all unless if you know one of them closely already. The community network is not strong as I expected. Turkish people like to be together in small groups. Many of them hide from others”.

Huseyin Bostancı complains that the communities’ primary goal is not to live Turkish culture:

“It is hard to say that social network among the Turks in the U.S. is strong. Overall the existing network is not well organized and therefore its visibility, voice, and involvement with the local and federal government is not effective enough. There are some groups which focus on their own professional or political agendas however”.

Edip Kırdar implies that the community has strong goals when compared to the Jewish

Chinese or Armenian communities:

“The Turks have a social network but it is not strong in my community. The reason, in my opinion, is that being Turkish is very good but it is not enough to have a strong social network. You need to have a common objective, values and interests to have social network”. These quotes from the participants indicate that Turks are at the level of adaptation as they lack the setting in motion of their goals, but not exposure to the dominant society.

Stage 3:Adaptation

The adaptation stage represents a crucial point for the foreign born ethnic groups because they are exposed to the dominant culture. The foreign born groups are more tied to the dominant society and culture than to their home culture. However, social status is still usually linked to the ethnic community. The second and third generations in particular begin to make necessary the adjustments to their lives such as joining sports teams and unions and dating. They marry people from other ethnic groups. Moreover, they have improved their socioeconomic status by moving out of their ethnic enclaves. Joshua A. Fishman explains the adaptation stage as follows:

“Here is a greater numerical balance between the foreign born and native born within the ethnic group. Substantial acculturation (with greater use of English) takes place, especially among the native-born generations, and, of course, changes to the ethnic subculture continue to occur.” (Barkan,Vecoli, Alba and Zunz,1995:55)

The painful experience of adaption is seen in the second and third generation of Turks, especially in the foreign born children. The main reason for this is that the first wave of Ottoman Turks were more secure and assured about their ethnicity whereas the second and third generations were brought up and exposed to different ethnic communities in a multicultural atmosphere. The second and third generation of Turks who came with the brain drain wave of immigrant and those who were born in the U.S. are trapped between two worlds, between their family's expectations and those of the dominant culture.

On the TRT program, İlhan Kaya states that the reason Turks have started to adapt to the new culture is because they have started to play sports, such as golf or tennis, in their free time; in Turkey, it is very uncommon to play golf. In addition, Burhan Kalsın, who works in

film production, states the importance of exercise. He had difficulty carrying sandbags in a film set and noticed that his co-workers who were older than him were able to carry them. On the other hand, Hatice Erman, who came to America in 1933 with the aim of working in a factory as a tailor, explains that:

“I was full of energy and life when I first arrived here, but I lost all my motivation after I started living in America. I had hard times in my job in the factory owing to the language barrier. I cried all the time”.

While Hatice never adapted to the expectations and norms of the host culture, Burhan was able to turn the negative effects of his culture into positive results by introducing exercise into his life.

Stage 4:Accommodation

Accommodation concerns a small portion of the foreign born groups since it relates to third and fourth generations who were born in the United States rather than in the country where their parents were born. As a result of social mobility, they have lost their traditions and loyalty to their country; they rarely use their native language. Moreover, in this stage, they are more likely to marry and have social contact with other ethnic groups.

Barkan states that in this stage, the educated people, professionals and trained immigrants are seen as property of this group. They rapidly advanced to this stage as they came in contact with the dominant culture. The Turkish immigrants who came to America after the 1960s and also the 1980s with the brain drain wave of immigration were generally highly-skilled or from the intellectual portion of Turkish society. The political shift in Turkey from democratization to less modernization is a result of the military coups in 1960 and 1980 compelled the most successful and talented academicians to move to another country. The brain drain initially began in the 1960s and continued in the 1970s, when the number of highly-skilled people in the U.S. peaked. This population movement is referred to as a “brain

drain” in Turkey because the country was gradually losing its professionals. The political and economic downturn which continued in the 1980s and 1990s seriously influenced the decisions of academicians to go study abroad and possibly settle there. Another reason why the number of highly-skilled workers was high was due to the slow absorption of young graduates into the Turkish workforce:

“Labor force participation rates have not kept up with the pace of growth of the young population in Turkey, leading to internal immigration for the unskilled and international immigration and brain drain for the skilled.”(Akçapar,2005-2006:20-21).

On the other hand, some members of the first generation of the Turks who settled in America decided to stay because they married American women, something they had not planned. They had to work hard to be able to send money to their family. As this often took more than ten years, they inevitably became integrated in the host society. Barkan points out how this shift appeals to members of an ethnic group:

“There is by now considerable occupational, social class, educational, and geographical mobility as well as more intermarriage and possibly even significant changes in religious affiliation”. (Barkan,1995:21).

A few Turkish men faced various obstacles in their marriages to Christian women. In the beginning of the nineteenth century in Turkey this social engagement was not acceptable. These Turkish men married native-born Americans of European heritage. After their marriage, they no longer planned to return home and they only sent money to their families and children from their first marriages. Instead of wanting to return home, they now desired to start a new life in the U.S. Frank Ahmed states that a remarkable number of Turks married Americans:

“There were dozens more in New York and the New Jersey area, clearly the largest center of Turks in the United States. There were several married Turks in the Chicago metropolitan area, and an equal number of Turks married to Americans in the Dearborn and Detroit area. The most accurate estimate would have to be limited to a maximum of two hundred throughout the United States.”(Ahmed, 1993:37-38)

As a result of this stage, the individual becomes more integrated in the core society and decides to settle permanently.

Stage 5: Integration

In this stage, members of ethnic groups coalesce with society but continue to practice their traditions, celebrations and behavioral characteristics. However, in this stage, substantial structural assimilation is inevitable from the perspective of an individual as they are included in intermarriage, social associations and residential dispersion. The Turks in America are at the stage of integration, not assimilation. Turkish settlers have been trying to fulfill their responsibility to their country in terms of celebrating their holidays or participating in Turkish foundations such as the ATAA, FTAA, etc. Their main problem is their lack of unity. Based on the evidence provided in this thesis, it can be concluded that the Turks are part of the larger culture in America as they appreciate the American life conditions and are content with their involvement in this system.

The “melting pot” has also helped the Turks to integrate into the core culture easily. In his article “Melting Pot Literature”, Carl Wittke explains the expectations of immigrants groups before they left their country:

“The United States was born of the satisfying experiences of our forefathers who came from many lands and dedicated this nation to the principle that men of diverse racial and national origins and creeds can build a society based on liberty, equality, opportunity, and tolerance for individual differences.” (Wittke, 1946:89).

The survey and the interviews on TRT indicate that the immigrants have desired to be treated as valuable members of society, to be satisfied with their jobs, and to live peacefully in their own country. However, they could not attain these things in Turkey. They believed that the United States was the only place where these dreams could be realized. These social motivations have fostered their objective of integrating easily and rapidly in the new environment. In the research collected for this thesis, those interviewed generally complain

that Turkish society is resistant to change in terms of social norms. One of the respondents states:

“My personal ideas did not change; however, now I am having difficulty understanding why our country cannot be more like the United States. Our society is a clever one, they can improve but some things never change. One basic example is being polite. Here everyone tends to at least they try, while in Turkey it seems like everyone is mad at everything every day. That might even be the starting point to change some things”.

She is on the path of integration into her new culture because she does not approve of the rudeness prevalent in her own culture. One participant who wished to remain anonymous explains:

“Over the 11 years, I have gotten more patriotic about Turkey mainly because I am away from my country. Most of the time, I wish I had all of these resources and opportunities around me and I could be in Turkey at the same time. On the other hand, I still wish Turkey were a more livable place. There is still corruption in Turkey which makes me and many other Turkish immigrants think that after living in the U.S. For such a long time, we cannot survive in Turkey – especially in professional life”.

On the path to integration, the member of ethnic group undergoes structural and cultural transformations that influence his or her way of life. The participants become self-consciousness about their social customs and choices. For instance, on the TRT program İlhan Kaya highlights that:

“The third generation of Turks who live in America have taken up doing sport in their free time. However, in Turkey, they never thought of playing tennis or golf as the social life doesn't oblige you to do it”.

Burhan Kalsın also describes his cultural change:

“I got used to going my appointments on time. I cannot be late because this behavior is unacceptable. I start to respect myself more when I regularly go to the gym. Moreover, I understand that I have to solve my problems without losing control here”.

However, there are also Turks who have experienced difficulties on the path to integration.

For instance, a respondent to the survey from Florida describes the problems that she encountered when she first arrived in the country:

“I came to the U.S. by myself and I didn't have any family or friends with me. So when I came here the first time I felt really alone and it was really hard for me to start a life here. My advantage was that I started working the same week I came to the U.S. and

it kept me busy for a while until I got used to the life and culture here. When you come to the U.S. for the first time you start from the beginning. You need to find a place to live, buy a car, get car insurance, etc. When you rent an apartment they ask for your credit history in the U.S., when you buy insurance they ask for your driving history in the U.S. Since you don't have either of these things they don't sell you the insurance or ask very high prices. At some point you feel that it is enough and you want to go back to Turkey. But you start to get used to the life here, make new friends, and your life becomes just like in Turkey. The only problem is that you still miss your family, friends and the food in Turkey”.

On the other hand, Tülin Sertoz's documentary deals with the importance of Central Park in American culture. She states that this park is a place where Americans spend free time after a long and tiring day. The first generation of Turks in particular had hardly ever sat in the park reading a book because they were not accustomed to doing so in their Anatolian villages. Thus, it was rare to see a Turk in Central Park; however, the second and third generations prefer socializing in their free time.

The survey shows the cultural transformation of the Turkish immigrants has had a positive effect on their self-esteem and character, not only in their personal life but also in their career. Furthermore, they have had positive experiences at work and have been praised and received constructive criticism which motivates them to improve even more. İlhan Kaya was also surprised by his hardworking and upstanding students:

“I have never witnessed my students cheating in the exam. Everybody here tries to do her or his job very well. For example, in a bank, the bank clerk welcomes you with a smile. This behavior makes you integrate more into this culture”.

One of the participants in the survey defines the integration in terms of being lucky and successful or managing to survive even when faced with difficult conditions:

“I do believe America is a land of opportunity for immigrants but not for all immigrants. I have been living in the States for 11 years. Over these years I have had so many Turkish friends and only a handful of them were able to survive in America. The immigrants in America, especially the Turkish immigrants, try their best to survive until they find themselves living the same or worse life standards than they were living in Turkey just before they emigrated from Turkey. Then they tend to lose their hopes and go back home and never come back. However, for the ones that got lucky and successful, who live in better conditions,

tend to become accustomed to America and call it their second home or even their “home” in some cases”.

One of the participants has become more nationalistic while away from her country despite being integrated into American culture:

“Over the past 11 years, I have gotten more patriotic about Turkey mainly because I am away from my country. Most of the time, I wish I had all of these resources and opportunities around me, and I was in Turkey at the same time. On the other hand, I still wish Turkey were a more livable place. There is still corruption in Turkey which makes me and many other Turkish immigrants think that after living in the U.S. for such a long time, we cannot survive in Turkey – especially in professional life”.

From the results that, it can be seen that the common feature of the Turkish settlers is that they have assimilated culturally in order to integrate easily. This may not be true for the first generation of Turks, but the second generation has had difficulty in following their customs since they were born in America. They accepted the new culture, facilitating their assimilation. İlhan Kaya also claims that the second generation identifies as American and are part of the core culture:

“The second generations Turkish Americans are on the path of Americanization. Their social and cultural preferences are quite different from those of their parents. Their families do not limit their acculturation, as their peers at school and the media also contribute to their socialization. They speak perfect English, many of their friends are Americans and they know American culture much better than their parents do”. (Kaya, 2009:629)

The next section will look at the last phase of the model which is assimilation.

Stage 6:Accomodation

In this stage, the members of the ethnic groups blend in with society at large culturally, socially and personally. They no longer want to identify themselves as part of a distinctive ethnic group; they view themselves as part of the general society. However, the ethnic groups may prefer not to be assimilated as this choice belongs to the individuals in the groups. In his article “A Model of Ethnicity”, Barkan claims that, “Although persons may retain a knowledge of their ancestry, they no longer see themselves as ethnic members” (Barkan, 1995:22).

Individuals who have not assimilated are not willing to participate in any celebrations or organizations except for religious ceremonies. Applying this stage to the Turkish immigrants, can it be argued that they have fully assimilated or are molded into the core of the society? The lack of institutions and organizations, cultural centers and mosques in the United States cause the first generation of settlers particularly to integrate and accept American culture, although this process was lengthy. What was the point of imposing American culture on new immigrants until World War II? Is assimilation the same as becoming Americanized? What was the effect of this ideology on the first wave and second wave of Turkish immigrants? Is there a difference among these two generations? The section will explore the answers to these questions.

The characteristics of Americanization resulted in many discussions regarding the founding of the country. The definition of the country does not point to its ethnic diversity; indeed, it is preferred to refer to the country's citizens as "Americans". Beside this, the modern countries define themselves as having an "identity". What is the American identity? What is the importance or priority attached to being an American? Many Turkish settlers involved in this study, including those who have been living there for many years, are proud of stating "I am American" or "I am Turkish American". In his article "Is Assimilation Dead", Nathan Glazer refers to Erikson, who in an autobiographical account published 20 years ago, described the "identity "and "identity crisis" which seemed to grow out of "the experience of emigration, immigration, and Americanization" (Glazer, 1993: 123). Moreover, in this survey, Sinan Othman states that he is happy to live in America and appreciates the host culture; due to these beliefs he can be labeled as assimilated. He believes that living with other ethnic groups has a positive influence on immigrants in terms of understanding:

"Assimilation requires sensitivity to one's surroundings and the cultural values of the new host country. It is a **process**, not a sudden event in one's life. After almost 30 years of living in the U.S., I feel comfortable saying "I'm an American." [I should add here that the

U.S., since its independence, has generally been more hospitable to immigrants than anywhere else in the world”.]

This shows that the ideology of the American national identity is related to immigration and ethnicity. Othman does not need to belong to any particular ethnicity, religion, national or religious background to be American; in this respect, it can be said that he has assimilated.

Emerson illustrates the path of becoming Americanized in terms of the melting pot. What did he really mean when he first used the term “melting pot”? He actually argues that the ethnic groups were more than melted; they were brutally forced to lose their national identity for the sake of the emerging American nationalism. So, does being American means showing respect to the diversity of cultures in America or that these cultures should disappear? Serap Kaftanoglu also questions who Americans are, referring to history of the country. She can also be categorized as assimilated. She appreciates the melting pot because it is part of being American:

“Who are Americans? They have come over here maximum 200 years ago. They don’t even have a culture unity that’s why they say “Diversity is the richness”. They have established the rules and have been very strict about them, but they respect the personal freedom and that brings respect between the individuals. In order to be happy here, you have to learn the American way of living and respect them, because they respect everybody’s way of living. You must communicate with your colleagues, neighbours, join their parties and invite them to your house, introduce your culture, cuisine and way of living to the Americans. The more they learn about you, the more friendly they become. If you don’t join them in any occasions, and socialize with only the Turks then, in the long term you will feel lonely and unhappy”.

When questioning “who are Americans”, the blacks should be looked at as they were the first ethnic group, but they were never treated equally by the Europeans in history. As a result, the blacks were unable to blend perfectly with society so they did not take part in the diversity which offers personal freedom and equality. The aim of Americanization was to make only

the newly arrived immigrants adapt to the culture and participate in politics. The government tried to help the newly arrived immigrants adapt to the culture with language classes. At that time, the Ottomans Turks, including the Armenians and other ethnic groups, learned English but they never were able to find a job in the U.S. The government has feared that the immigrants who had not learned to speak English would rebel against government which could cause trouble for them. Later, this approach changed after the Civil Rights Movement in 1965.

The first generation of Turkish settlers did not experience the identity crisis as youth because they arrived in the New World with limited abilities and language knowledge. They felt compelled to work and adjust to their new cultural environment. In contrast, the children of the first generation had to cope with the new and old cultural in order to find their own way. Frank Ahmed highlights the loyalty to the government the first Turkish settlers displayed, referring to them as “The Naturalized Turk, Now an American”. Those who stayed there married Europeans, particularly Irish, Italian, and French Canadian women; however, this number is fewer than one hundred. This is one way of assimilation and is related to the ancient Ottoman law that did not allow Turkish settlers to leave the country. Frank Ahmed justifies the assimilation of the first generation:

“In the end, Turks who elected to become naturalized Americans often became more fiercely patriotic than many natural born Americans. They wore their new citizenship with pride and passion, for they had achieved much in the years since they left their Anatolian villages.”(Ahmed, 1993:56-57)

When applying the assimilation process to the second generation and third generations, it is hard to conclude that they assimilated, particularly the children of the second generation. They kept their national identity as they grew up, learning two cultures. Moreover, the assimilation process depends on individual choice and the person's background. The position of this group is interesting as İlhan Kaya explains: “Second generation Turkish Americans

tend to assimilate to a greater degree, as they experience higher levels of acculturation and ethnic origins are less significant to them” (Kaya, 2009:630).

Ilhan Kaya also gives an example that supports this argument: Ayten is a 17-year-old second generation high school student with religious parents and two older sisters. She covers her head, although her older sisters do not. She states that:

“I am Turkish-American. I feel more Turkish, but I also do feel that I am American. But when people ask me ‘Where are you from?’ I say Turkey. I also say that I am Turkish, but I was born and raised here. Whoever lives here is American. In America, everyone is from somewhere. Nobody is 100% American.”(Kaya,2009:629)

The participants in the survey were asked if the Turks in the U.S. have assimilated or not. Edip Kırdar, an immigrant from the second generation, prefers assimilation to being alienated in American culture. He also says that assimilation is individual’s preference:

“Assimilation or isolation depends to the immigrant’s personality, education, culture and expectations. When my wife and I decided that we are going to stay in America and make our home here, we also made a decision to be part of our new society and community. We volunteered in various ways to help our new community and our work was appreciated. We made new friends and we became part of our new community. In short we accepted assimilation rather than isolation. We found out we need to give before we receive.”

Turkish settlers are happy to live in America due to the standard of living and the system. They work hard for their future and most aim to have successful careers. To have a good career and to earn living are the main reasons they prefer to stay in the U.S. They usually become “Americanized” in terms of language proficiency and cultural traditions. For instance, many enjoy celebrating Christmas and Halloween. However, many still miss their country and customs but are afraid of returning home as they will not be able to find similar conditions, with regards to work and standard of living, in Turkey. In this study, most of the Turkish immigrants display patriotic emotions toward Turkey and hope to return one day once Turkey has resolved its political and social issues. There are also some Turks who have kept

their customs and traditions. To determine if they are still loyal or not to Turkey, they were asked if their ideas changed after immigrating to America. Ali Vural points out that:

“I became more nationalistic than I was before. I am interested in learning Turkish history better so I can tell people who ask about Turkey’s past. I always want to go back to Turkey one day because I miss everything in Turkey after being away for more than 10 years from our beautiful country.”

Another participant responds:

“Definitely yes. Before coming to the U.S. I thought that Turkey was the center of the universe because of the education system and the media in Turkey. Now I can look at the issues that we have in Turkey from a more objective point of view.”

Sinan Ottoman believes that:

“Watching Turkey from afar (though visiting frequently) I’ve been impressed by the country’s economic progress. Personally, I was also pleased to see the “Yes” vote prevailing so resoundingly in the recent referendum.”

Edip Kırdar states:

“No, my ideas have not changed about turkey. I do not encourage anyone to immigrate to America but if they want to then they need to be part of this country and that is why they need to investigate and make their decision. I strongly believe that Turkey is also land of opportunity and great place to live and be proud of. I would like to see more people come to America and live here for few years and then go back to their country. Immigration is different than living or working for few years, it is a big decision for the long-term.”

To sum up, in this study, the survey results and the participants in the TRT documentary indicate that the second and third generation is on the path to cultural or behavioral assimilation. They can be put in this category based on their experiences and utterances about America which show a change in their cultural patterns. They integrate with the other ethnic groups rather than just other Turks and are not part of the Turkish diaspora since they are not very involved in the Turkish communities. Secondly, they intermarried. In the documentary, some Turkish men preferred to marry women from Latin America. Thirdly, they have developed an Americanized sense of ethnicity. As stated below, this is related to the government's desire to ascribe a meaning to the immigrants in order to facilitate their rapid adaptation to the new culture without feeling a sense of not belonging. Another important

point is that they moved to a country where they encounter little discrimination or prejudice. In this survey, the participants were asked if they had experienced racial discrimination as a Muslim after the September 11 attacks; they responded that they did not experience any isolation or discrimination as a Turk. Edip Kırdar does not consider what he experienced to be discrimination and avoids using this word; instead, he says there was a “reaction” against Muslims:

“As a Turk or Muslim, neither I nor my family has experienced discrimination in America. I do realize that some have had such experiences due to their dress or actions or lifestyle or political views. Naturally, after 9/11 Muslims and Islam had a bad name because the terrorists activities were done in the name of Islam. Unfortunately, there was no public outcry toward the terrorists by the Arab Muslims. I do not justify discrimination but I do understand the reaction toward Muslims”.

In addition to this, another reason that they integrated well into the dominant culture is that most Turks immigrated to the United States voluntarily (except for refugees) and before they left Turkey they strongly desired to rebuild their lives; as a result, they were in some way ready for assimilation. James M. Jasper, in his book *Restless Nation*, supports this argument: “Most have been volunteer migrants rather than involuntary refugees, immigrants to America have chosen to abandon their communities and cultures in the hope of finding better ones in the United States” (Jasper, 2000:53).

CONCLUSION

The topic of the Turkish immigrants' experiences in the United States is important as there are not enough resources on Turks when compared to other ethnic groups. The number of Turkish settlers in the United States has increased enormously and they find the country alluring and attractive in terms of opportunities. But, there is an important question which must be answered: is America a place where dreams come true or is it only an illusion? In order to answer these questions, the immigrants' impressions of the land of dreams and the pulling and pushing factors for immigration should be considered. Besides this, the general properties of Turkish immigrants should be looked at in order to analyze their observations about their new culture.

In the first chapter, a brief historical background of the first, second and third waves of immigration to compare their personal stories are provided. The first generation consists of low-skilled workers from Anatolian villages who immigrated for the purpose of earning enough money so he could return to his homeland. The second and third generation were foreign-born or highly-skilled workers such as academicians, professionals, doctors etc. and who immigrated in order to study or start a career. After the Turks are classified according to their properties, their motivation for immigrating is looked at. While some Turks left their country due to political reasons, particularly between the 1960s and 1980s, others left in order to pursue the American Dream.

In the second chapter, the economic and political turmoil in Turkey due to the military coups in 1960 and 1980 is explored. A look at the experiences of the immigrants who came after the 1960s shows that their pushing factor was the desire to find a peaceful atmosphere and freedom of expression. Following this, their concept of the American Dream is examined, both before they immigrated and how it changed after they arrived. It can be concluded that these immigrants were in search of material values and the pursuit of happiness which was

fostered by the mass media and in Hollywood movies. These immigrants left their belongings, culture, language and beloved ones behind to experience this social mobility. As James Jasper states:

“Like all mobility, immigrants success come from a combination of individual and structural factors. Among the former are education skills and restless ambition. These are the much-vaunted character traits. Those who wanted material success more than anything, enough to travel thousands of miles for a chance it, are most likely to get it.” (Jasper, 2000: 50-51).

Structural factors enabled them to work harder than they did in Turkey. They recognized that if they worked hard and followed the rules, they will be rewarded and are likely to succeed.

Therefore, this can be categorized as one of the pulling factors. They define America as the land of opportunity and a chance for self development. Furthermore, they have contributed to American society by joining charitable organizations. This proves that the Turkish immigrants are becoming Americanized as this behavior fits in with the cultural attitude of the dominant society. For that reason, in the last chapter, the question of whether Turks are integrated or assimilated is addressed.

In the last chapter, the research collected shows that most Turks define themselves as Turkish-Americans, but some of them refer to themselves as Americans. This raises the dilemma of assimilation or integration. They are trapped between two cultures, especially the third generation and those who were born in America. But, some from the second and third generations decided to live temporarily in America, not permanently, because they noticed that their values were gradually depreciating. The capitalist system requires hard work hard, in order to earn enough money to be able to enjoy life for a short period. They fear the possibility of losing everything one day, especially in a system where the number of homeless people is increasing. They also recognize that in order to be successful in a foreign land, you need to give before you receive. Working hard and being professional in your field positively affects one's career. The assimilation process demands that old habits and customs be given

up in order to ensure a better future for the future generations and also to allow other ethnic groups to live in harmony in a multicultural atmosphere.

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