THE 1989 MIGRATION FROM BULGARIA TO TURKEY:

NATIONALISM AND IDENTITY AMONG THE MIGRANTS

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Thesis Abstract

Habibe Şentürk: "The 1989 Migration from Bulgaria to Turkey: Natonalism and Identity Among the Migrants"

This thesis mainly explores the process of identity construction among the migrants who migrated to Turkey from Bulgaria in 1989. It analyzes the migrants' attachment to nationalist discourse in Turkey and the ideological and practical conditions of the migrants' anti-Kurdish attitude. Migrants' belonging to Bulgaria as their birth place, and belonging to Turkey due to their identity as Muslim Turks is crucial in this process of identity construction. The process of identity construction always presumes the other and the relationship between self an other is grounded in difference. The migrants, who had been the others in the Bulgarian context, arrived in the Turkish context where the 'sovereign self' established itself in relation with the Kurdish other. The anti-Kurdish discourse has enabled the migrants to establish their identity as Turks it helps them identify with other Turks in the Turkish context. This anti-Kurdish attiutude is reinforced by 'nationalist' and 'orientalist' discourses and it can be observed in migrants' perceptions about the Kurdish people and their refusal to have relations with the Kurds.

Tez Özeti

Habibe Şentürk, "Bulgaristan'dan Türkiye'ye 1989 Göçü: Göçmenlerde Milliyetçilik ve Kimlik"

Bu tez temel olarak 1989 da Bulgaristan'dan Türkiye'ye göç eden göçmenlerin kimlik oluşumu sürecini ele almaktadır. Türkiyedeki mevcut milliyetçi söylemi benimseyen göçmenlerin hem ideolojik hem de pratik düzlemde Kürt karşıtı oluşlarının koşullarını incelenmektedir. Göçmenlerin doğup büyüdükleri yer olan Bulgaristan'a, Türk ve Müslüman oluşlarından ötürü ise Türkiye'ye duydukları aidiyetin, göçmenlerin kimlik oluşumu sürecinde önemli bir yeri vardır. Kimlik oluşumu süreci daima bir ötekini varsayar ve kendi ve öteki arasındaki ilişki farklılığa dayanır. Bulgaristan'da öteki olan göçmenler 'egemen kimliğin' Kürt öteki üzerinden kurulduğu bir Türkiye ortamına geldiler. Kürt-Karşıtı söylem, göçmenlerin Türkiye'de Türk olarak kimliklerini oluşturmalarında ve Türkiyedeki diğer Türklerle özdeşlik kurmalarını sağlamıştır. 'Milliyetçi' ve 'şarkiyatçı' söylemlerden beslenen bu Kürt karşıtı tutum, göçmenlerin Kürtlerle ilgili algılarında ve Kürtlerle her türlü ilişkiden kaçınmalarında gözlemlenebilir.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the question of *identity*, *belonging* and *nationalism* of the Turks who migrated from Bulgaria in 1989. Clearly, geographical movement from Bulgaria to Turkey had an impact on the questions of belonging and nationalism as well as *self-identification* processes of the migrants. Theoretically, it is argued that the identity is a relationship of self and the other grounded in difference, and as such *self* always presupposes the *other*. Therefore, identity can only be perceived in its relation to the other, that is in relation to the differences which define the identity of the other. These differences as such define the boundaries of the self; they are its constitutive outside.

It is the contention of this study that the changes in the migrants' perceptions of homeland render changes in their process of identity construction and hence their construction of the other. The Turkish migrants arrived in the Turkish context where the 'sovereign self' already had the Kurdish population as its principal 'non-sovereign other'. This enabled them not only to define and establish their identity as Turks, but also at the same time identify with native Turks in Turkey[1]. In this study, I will try to examine the process of identity construction of the migrants focusing on the manner in which this process is reinforced by 'nationalist' and 'orientalist'

[1] I use the term "native" as the migrants themselves use the term. It refers to the Turks who had been born and who had always lived in Turkey.

discourses. The analysis of the narratives of the participants in selective unstructured interviews will form the basis of this investigation. I will try to analyze the mechanism by which these discourses are grounded in migrants' relations with the Kurdish people as well as their perceptions about the Kurds.

I think it is essential to state here that the project of this thesis has resulted from my personal experiences as a member of a migrant family from Bulgaria. My impressions are that Turkish nationalism as an ideology is realized mostly in migrants' attitudes towards the Kurds. I have been familiar with such nationalist attitudes around our family circle. Parents insist on their children to have friends among migrant families. Other friends are tolerable as long as they are not Kurdish. Parents tend to warn their children against making friends with Kurdish children and they do their best to abstain from any contact with Kurdish people. They base their warnings not only on nationalistic claims that the Kurds are threats to the unity of the country but also on mainstream prejudices that the Kurds are backward, ignorant and religious obscurants.

I heard that "events are dust" sometimes, but individual life stories are always contingent on events, constituting together what we call history. I found myself at the conjunction of the personal and social when having a Kurdish boyfriend was welcomed by my parents' anger and castigation. It was, and it still is, the biggest mistake I could ever make, being so close to a Kurd. When I shared my experience with friends, the children of the migrant families stated that my father had behaved in a manner most expected of him as head of a migrant family. I have also heard other examples of migrant parents being strictly opposed to Kurdish friends and there are examples of parents who even used violence to prevent their children making friends

with Kurds. This led me to imagine these reactions as instances of social antagonisms creating racist traumas for migrant communities.

This can be termed “symbolic violence” which serves to conceal the existing power relations by legitimating, humiliating and insulting attitudes and narratives through prejudices, bias, stereotyping and stigma. It is a mode of domination that prevails in everyday relations and modes of action. This form of violence perpetuates existing power relations enabling the dominant group to maintain discriminatory attitude towards the dominated. In other words, it is re-production of institutional and state-led discourses and practices in daily life.

Seeing that my experience was not unprecedented, and that my parents’ reaction was seen as the “expected” reaction by other migrants, I concluded that this was not an individual case but what I experienced was embedded in a specific mode of domination. My experiences were contingent on events but these events were also contingent on certain political and historical conditions. Relying on personal experiences, I felt the need to explore and explain the conditions and processes that make the other of the process so undesirable and repulsive for the migrants.

Being an “insider” to the community has provided me with the knowledge produced by my personal experiences and observations. Thus, in addition to the nine interviews, I made use of participant observation. At that stage, it should be born in mind that this particular study has turned my life experiences into “participant observation,” which are scattered throughout the thesis. This has been helpful in that it has enabled me to contextualize the narratives of the interviewees and made it easier for me to contact and communicate with them.

This study mainly addresses the question of nationalism and nationalist sentiments among 1989 Turkish migrants from Bulgaria and examines their anti-Kurdishness. It is divided into three chapters a follows:

Chapter 1 provides a brief historical background to the Turkish presence in Bulgaria focusing on the waves of migration to Turkey since the foundation of Bulgaria as an independent state. The analysis of the political and social status of the Turks in Bulgaria and the changes in the policies of the Bulgarian state regarding the minorities before and after the transition to communism constitute the foci of this chapter. The Turks constituted an ethnic-religious minority community in Bulgaria and were as such the non-sovereign other of the sovereign identity in the Bulgarian context. The theoretical framework deployed for the analysis of the process of construction of identity, the interrelatedness of self and other and the pivotal role of difference in this process was informed by a number of sources but mainly William Connolly's *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*. Particular attention was paid to the power relations embedded within this process of identity construction. Foucault's theorization of the status and functioning of racism in relation to the working of bio-power presented in his *Society Must be Defended* forms another major element of the theoretical framework of this study. The analysis draws of his discussion of racism as the representation of the persistence of sovereign power, power over death, in modern society where bio-power prevails through the techniques and practices of governmentality.

Chapter 2 covers the interviewees' responses to questions about their migration, the question of being a Turk in Bulgaria and in Turkey comparatively, and arrival in Turkey. Some of the migrants termed the exodus as migration to the

ancestral homeland whereas for others Bulgaria was their homeland but they migrated only because they had no other choice. This experience seems to have been crucial in shaping migrants' identification in the Turkish context resulting in differences in their sense of belonging. The last part of this chapter focuses on the analysis of the developments in Bulgaria after the big exodus of 1989, especially those related to the terms and conditions of citizenship. The opportunity for double citizenship and its impact on the migrants' perception of homeland and belonging is also discussed.

Chapter 3 focuses on the lives of the migrants after they are settled in Turkey. The discussion here raises the question of the migrants' "encounter" with the Kurds. This encounter with Kurdish people and the extant nationalism in Turkey that bases itself on anti-Kurdishness have resulted in migrants' identification with the sovereign identity in the Turkish context resulting in their attachment to the prevailing nationalist discourse. In order to analyze anti-Kurdish attitude of the migrants, I also address the social, political and economic conjunctures conditioning migrants' relations to the other. Here the study also considers the issue of "nostalgia" but mainly in conjunction with the main body of the analysis exploring the place Bulgaria occupies in the migrants' narratives after their settlement in Turkey. The aim is to understand the implication of this feeling of nostalgia for the question of homeland and belonging.

The ethnographic part of the research includes nine informal interviews with participants from İzmir and İstanbul. Four of them were women and five of were men. Among the interviewees there were three second generation migrants whose accounts included combination of their own memories from childhood in Bulgaria

and their parents' experiences. In addition to these interviews, I made use of my observations of my large family especially in terms of their perceptions of and attitude towards the Kurdish people.

Nevertheless, this ethnographic endeavor has been challenging at times. The first of the nine interviews and the last of them made me question my *position in the field* as my questions were met by tears. The first respondent refused to talk when the recorder was on and throughout the interview she cried the more she remembered what they had experienced in Bulgaria. In another interview, the interviewee kept on crying and constantly expressed the difficulty of talking about such memories. Even if most of the interviews I made were seemingly easier in that sense, I always had difficulty in imagining the effects of my questions or the impact of reminding the participants of the sufferings they had gone through.

These two experiences with different participants left me paralyzed leading me to question the potential effects of reminding people of their memories. These narratives mean much to the interviewees constituting their life stories. These life stories constitute what we call history and micro level analysis of the narratives enables us to analyze macro level political and social changes. However, extracting these narratives and using them as tools for academic research seems challenging. During brief encounters with the interviewees, I as the ethnographer invite them to narrate and then leave them behind with the *re*-called memories. In this respect, I have rethought and reconsidered the consequences of my questioning for the interviewees and have found my position as the interviewer fairly problematic. Despite the obvious burden of this issue on mind during and after my encounters with the interviewees, I have not been able to find an alternative way to carry out this

part of my research. But this experience has led me to work out a personal approach by trying to avoid questions that would inflict pain on the respondents and cause them distress.

In the process of writing this thesis when using the respondents' narratives directly or in the construction of my arguments, I used pseudonyms for the interviewees, which only disclose their gender. Throughout this work I attempted to contextualize the excerpts from the narratives without revealing the identities of the interviewees.

Literature Survey

At first, I had difficulty in finding secondary sources about this subject. There are primary sources written about the Turkish population in Bulgaria but they mainly focused on the sufferings of the people or the policies of the Bulgarian state. These include several books by Bilal N. Şimşir. He wrote *Bulgaristan Türkleri* and edited *The Turks of Bulgaria in international fora Documents*. Another source is the work of Kemal H. Karpat: *Balkanlarda Osmanlı mirası ve ulusçuluk* and an edited book entitled *The Turks of Bulgaria : the History, Culture and Political Fate of a Minority*. *Turkish and other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria* by Ali Eminov has also been a helpful and informative source. These sources have all proved useful since I often referred to them for quantitative data required to substantiate my analyses. However, as these books lay emphasis on nationalistic concerns of the Turks in Bulgaria, they have not been quite useful for the development of my analytical approach.

I have also referred to a book Ismet Topaloglu: *Rodoplarda Türk Kalmak*. Topaloglu himself is a migrant as well and his study offers a narrative of the life of a Turk in Bulgaria. The book has been helpful in the analysis of the impact of policies of the Bulgarian state on Turkish population in Bulgaria. How these policies have reinforced Turkish nationalism reveals the place Turkey occupied as the symbolic homeland for the Turks in Bulgaria and this can clearly be seen in the accounts regarding arrival in Turkey which is presented like a salvation.

In addition to this, there are other sources that analyze the experiences of the immigrants after their migration to Turkey. Antonina Zhelyazkova's edited volume *Between Adaptation and Nostalgia: The Bulgarian Turks in Turkey* is an example. It is an ethnographic study involving interviews with the migrants, and it provides a detailed analysis of the efforts of the migrants to survive in their process of adaptation in Turkey. It includes narratives of migrants and their experiences in Turkey offering a substantial qualitative study on the subject.

There are also two theses written by METU (Middle East Technical University) students on different aspects of the identity construction processes of the immigrants in Turkey. İlhan Zeynep Karakılıç wrote "The Work Strategies and Experiences of the Wave of 1989 Immigrants from Bulgaria Settled in Ankara". In this thesis she studied the work strategies of the migrants. Karakılıç analyzes these strategies as a process in two phases, first is finding jobs benefiting from the migrant associations along with the provisions of the state, and the second is maintaining jobs with the help of work ethic and skills they gained in Bulgaria.

Another thesis from METU is written by Eliz Ismil Tefik. It is entitled "Dynamics of Social Citizenship and Identity Perceptions: Immigrant Turks from

Bulgaria in Northern Cyprus". Focusing on the shifting identity perceptions as a result of migration, Tefik explores how the immigrants are included or excluded from social citizenship based on the conditions of their socio-economic and cultural environments in both Bulgaria and northern Cyprus.

Aside from these studies, three articles by Ayşe Parla have been very influential especially in the analysis of the question of homeland and belonging. In "Irregular Workers or Ethnic Kin? Post-1990s Labour Migration from Bulgaria to Turkey," Parla analyzes the invisibility of the migrants arriving after 1989 and she argues that these migrants are considered as "return" migrants whereas their migration is caused by other factors. This work has enabled me to compare the 1989 migrants with those who came in post-1990; the latter has been "invisible" whereas those who came in 1989 were defined as *soydash* and were welcome by the Turkish state. As I am studying the 1989 migrants, I relied more on another work of Parla namely "Locating the Homeland: Bulgarian-Turkish 'Return' Migration in Transnational Perspective." This has contributed to my analysis considerably enabling me to depict the particularities of the 1989 migration. In a more recent article, entitled "Remembering Across the Border: Postsocialist Nostalgia Among Immigrants from Bulgaria," Parla analyzes the experiences of Turkish immigrant women and cross-cultural gender regimes in both countries. It explores the marginalization of the immigrants in Turkey after migration and the "postcommunist nostalgia" among them and the article offers an understanding of the "gender" and "labour" under communism based on the experiences of the migrants.

Another influential source is Magdalena Elchinova's article named "Alien by Default: The Identity of the Turks of Bulgaria at Home and in Immigration." Elchinova discusses how the identity of the Turks has been affected by changing policies of the Bulgarian state and by changing contexts after migration to Turkey. The article assesses the shifts in the process of identity construction among the Turks how the other of this process changes depending on the context. The impact of the assimilation policy on the self-other relations between Turks and Bulgarians is analyzed. Moreover, Elchinova points out to the fact that upon arrival in Turkey, the indigenous Turks turn out to be construed as other, which reveal that the identity of the migrants is far from emphasizing ethnic or national creed; but rather it is constructed as cultural one. I appreciate the author's approach in this article and the way she discusses how identities are unstable and contingent on specific conditions; but I tend to disagree with the argument that the identity of migrant Turks is established as a cultural formation since I as I have shown in this study Turkish nationalist discourse is appropriated by the migrants in their identification process.

All these sources have been helpful in various ways. They have contributed to my analysis providing me with the framework to think the subject of my investigation and articulate my thoughts in my analyses. I have tried to deploy the appropriate theoretical tools to understand the historical and political contingencies of the issue and tried to blend the conclusions with the ethnographic study. By doing that, I attempted to come up with the analysis of the nationalism of the migrants and their relation with the other. However, in the process of conducting this research I also tried not to treat migrants as a homogeneous group with a uniform identity. It

should also be noted that this study includes the narratives of the participants and I attempted to disclose the implications of these interviews for the larger community.

This study has some obvious limitations both in terms of the scope and the range of investigation. The migrants arriving in Turkey after 1990 have not been included in the analysis. The argument that 1989 migration was *political* could have been propped up if a comparative analysis of the experiences of 1989 migrants with those who had migrated before and after 1989 could be carried out. However, I focused only on the narratives of the1989 migrants considering the political specificities of the late 1980s with regard to the Kurdish question and its effects on the identification process of the migrants. I have also omitted the experiences of the women migrants and their identification processes in Turkey and the distinctive features of their experiences. It would be a more extensive analysis if the feminist perspective were included and discussed. Nevertheless, considering the scope of this thesis, I preferred to analyze male and female respondents' narratives as a totality, avoiding gender differentiation and related issues.

I sincerely hope that this research with its limitations and strengths will contribute to our understanding of this complex subject, especially nationalism of the migrants, and will prove helpful to those who embark on studies on this or similar subjects.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL SETTING AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Migration

Throughout the twentieth century, nation-states have used migration as a vital means in their projects of homogenization of population. Imagining themselves as ethnically homogeneous nations living in geographically determined territories, nation states have attempted to enforce and maintain a high degree of cultural and ethnic unity. As mainstream definitions of the concept of the nation state emphasize territoriality and national homogeneity, ethnic and cultural differences are excluded. They do not feature in theses definitions. However, ethnicity, religion and race have been the main factors determining which sectors of the population will be affected by population moves and migration policies. Thus, ethno-religious minorities which have been perceived as a threat to the unity or homogeneity of the nation-state have usually been vulnerable groups[2] within the territory and migration succored in order to preserve cultural homogeneity of the nation state. Therefore, it can be argued that ethnicity and religion along with the changing definitions of citizenship have been decisive in determining who will migrate and/or be displaced, and this has served as a safety valve for nation-states.

[2] Nergis Canefe, "Modern Türk Toplumunda Zorunlu Göçlerin Mirası," (n.p.), p.1.

Although the question of sovereignty and the discourse and practice of representation of sovereign identities has been prominent in determining the subjects to migration policies, the attempt on the part of the nation-states to preserve their unity and homogeneity by means of migration has other dimensions as well. There is a *sending* country that relegates part of its population for its own interests and there is also a *receiving* country that decides whether or not to admit that population. It can be argued that, the question of national sovereignty as well as the relationship of sovereign nations to one other lays the ground for migration. Hence, the issue of migration is intimately related with the sovereign identity of the sending countries but it also concerns the identity of the receiving countries, as they both have an impact on the identification processes of the migrant groups.

In the light of this brief discussion, I will try to analyze the 1989 migration of some 350,000 Turkish people from Bulgaria to Turkey. The migration waves from Bulgaria to Turkey throughout the twentieth century are not exceptions in the sense that they have been the result of aspirations of these particular nation states to implement homogenization projects. It will be shown that these migration waves have been closely related to specific political situations in Bulgaria and Turkey. I shall try to explain the distinctive features of the 1989 migration in this study.

This chapter will mainly focus on the brief discussion of the historical background to the Turkish population in Bulgaria with an emphasis on its development since the foundation of the Bulgarian nation state. This will be followed by the theoretical discussion of the question of identity and how process of identity construction. It will be argued that identity is never 'being as presence', but it is

always marked by difference which presupposes another. Difference is the constitutive of identity. It defines its relationship to the other.

The Historical Setting: Minorities in Bulgaria and Policies of the Bulgarian State towards Them

In order to understand the 1989 migration wave from Bulgaria to Turkey, it is necessary to analyze the changes in the policies of the Bulgarian government regarding the ethnicities, especially the Turkish and Muslim communities in Bulgaria. The analysis of the policies regarding different ethno-religious groups will lead us to the understanding of the question of sovereign power and identity in Bulgaria and the migrations resulting from their assertion in the national political field. The 1989 migration wave from Bulgaria to Turkey can be seen resulting from the policies of Bulgarian state which ended up with the migration of a large number of Turks to their presumed homeland –approximately half of the Turkish population living in Bulgaria.[3] Since its foundation in 1878, the Bulgarian state had attempted to implement different strategies of integration or exclusion against Turkish population living in Bulgaria. These strategies varied widely depending on the way Bulgaria *imagined* itself as a nation and the way Turkish minority was seen as a threat to that imagination.

[3] Darina Vasileva, "Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return," *International Migration Review* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1992), p.342.

In addition to the Turks, there were Pomaks who are of Bulgarian origin and converted to Islam during the Ottoman era and maintained their Bulgarian language. Pomaks were usually subject to the same policies as the Turkish community, especially during the communist rule, since religion was the constitutive of the Pomak otherness. There were also Jews, Gypsies, Armenians and Gagauzes, a Turkish speaking Christian community, and these communities, at different periods, were either recognized and given rights or were suppressed by the state. Among these groups, The Turkish community had been the dominant group in terms of its size constituting about 10 % of the total population.[4]

Having lived under the Ottoman rule for almost five centuries, at the end of Russo-Turkish War in 1878, Bulgaria was assinged the status of an autonomous principality under the Ottoman sovereignty. It became a sovereign state in 1908. During that time, the political action in Bulgaria geared to creating "[t]he national ideal... that a nation could develop fully and adequately only within independent national borders which would encompass all members of the nation."[5] In those early years of the independent Bulgarian state, more than % 20 of the population were from different ethnicities, including Turks, Greeks and Jews.[6] Towards these minorities, the Bulgarian state tried to observe the requirements of the Treaty of Berlin which guaranteed freedom of religion to the citizens of Bulgaria. Under the newly founded Christian state, there were *muftis* and *kadis* who were granted the

[4] R.J. Crampton, *Bulgaria,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 425.
[5] Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria,* (London: Hurst, 1997) quoted from Todorova (1992:29), p.5.
[6] R.J. Crampton, *Bulgaria,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 424.

right to administere the religious activities of the Muslim population.[7] This was particularly due to the law enacted in 1919 which also encouraged education amongst Turks and schools which taught in Turkish. Despite this freedom, particularly with the Bulgarian-Turkish aggreement in 1925, about 10,000-12,000 Turks migrated to Turkey before 1940.[8]

After World War II, Bulgaria became a communist state and in the first years of the new regime, minorities could enjoy the freedom to speak their own languages, to be educated in their schools and develop their culture.[9] The minorities were not seen as a threat at the time. This is because the communist regime was after developing a socialist\communist society and the government held class over ethnic identity and aspired to "the class unity of all groups" in the struggle for the socialist ideal.[10] However, this freedom did not last long. In the 1950s, the drive towards the assimilation of individuals and institutions started. Bulgaria pursued assimilation policies and aimed at cultural and economic homogenization of its multi-ethnic population. In line with this policy objective the Bulgarian government chose to deny the ethnic origin of the Turkish population claiming that Turks were originally of Bulgarian descent, but had been assimilated and Islamized by the Ottoman Empire. This claim, grounded in official discourse, served as one of the main basis for the justification of assimilation both at that time as well as later in 1980s. The Turks were thus forced to adopt Bulgarian names and Muslim religious practices, prayers

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 427.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 431.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 436.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 436.

and rituals, were curbed. This phase in the process of assimilation was also witnessed the official termination of the right to education in Turkish in schools.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, economic concerns dominated the agenda of the Bulgarian government. Collectivization of agriculture that started in early 1950s was said to be complete by the end of the decade. [11] This collectivization drive, had forced the minorities to abandon their homes and farms and move to towns in search of better economic conditions. This process which was gaining momentum in the early 1960's split up some of the main minority communities thus facilitating their assimilation.

The assimilation process reached its peak in 1984 when Todor Zhivkov, the nationalist leader, initiated the "Revival Process", a campaign allegedly meant to restore to the national minorities their "true" national identity. This campaign, also known as "rebirth campaign" or "regenerative process", mainly targeted "the alleged disloyalty of the Turkish population, which was seen as inevitable as long as they retained their distinct ethnic identity"[12], and was intent to use to form a different mode of collective identification[13]. Thus, the campaign started with renaming of the Pomak population, and continued with renaming of the Turks; speaking Turkish in public was thus strictly prohibited and the Muslim population was disallowed to profess and practice their religion and worship in public as such activity was duly declared criminal.[14] In the report prepared by Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Hilal

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 348.
[12] Vesselin Dimitrov, "In Search of a Homogeneous Nation: The Assimilation of Bulgaria's Turkish Minority, 1984-1985," *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, (December 2000), p. 13.
[13] *Ibid.*, p.20.
[14] *Ibid.*, p.15.

Ibisev, a member of Bulgarian parliament at the time states that in January 1985, he was called to the local headquarter of the Communist Party and a representative of the secret police told him that all Turkish names of Arabic origin were going to be changed to the Bulgarian ones, and that this was the decision of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. Ibişev goes on saying that this very night phone his lines were cut, the town was surrounded by tanks and in three days all Turkish Arabic names were changed to Bulgarian names. On the fourth day radios ceased to broadcast in Turkish and the fifth day witnessed the shutting down of the Turkish newspaper "Yeni Işık" –meaning The New Light.[15] Those who resisted the drive for assimilation were detained and sent to the labour camp in Belene and some were killed during protests against assimilation. In 1989, the safety valve was eventually opened and the Bulgarian administration allowed Turkish citizens to leave Bulgaria. This short but rapid assimilation process was followed by the migration of some 350,000 Turks to Turkey.[16]

After 1989, the migration from Bulgaria to Turkey continued though not regularly. The irregular episodes, as opposed to the previous more regular periods, were subject to different rules and regulations: the migrants, those arriving after 1989 were granted tourist visa and given less permanent residency. These irregular episodes also had a different dynamics. The push factor was mainly economic as these migrants came to seek jobs in Turkey. However, the migrants arriving in post-

[15] Norveç Helsinki Komitesi. *Bulgaristandaki Türk ve İslam Azınlığa Baskı,* tran. Yaşar Yücel, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), pp. 5-6.
[16] Some sources state this number as 320.000. See Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria,* (London: Hurst, 1997) quoted from Todorova (1992:29), p.79.

1990s blended in rather quickly and have since been "invisible"[17] due mainly to the "ethnic affiliation" with 1989 migrants. Although they are not part of the 1989 migration, they are not specified in accounts of irregular migration as they are considered as "return" migrants[18].

All in all, in the early years of modern Bulgaria, the period between 1878 and 1912, nearly 350,000 Turks migrated from Bulgaria. In 1925, the governments of Bulgaria and Turkey signed an agreement enabling the citizens of both states to go and dwell in each others countries. Following this agreement, almost 100,000 Turks migrated from Bulgaria to Turkey. Between 1950 and 1952, more than 150,000 had migrated until another agreement was signed in 1968. The 1968 agreement led to the migration of more than 100,000 Turks in the name of uniting the members of dispersed families. After that, there was no migration from Bulgaria to Turkey until 1989.[19]

Among the other migration waves from Bulgaria to Turkey, the one that took place in 1989 stands out for its peculiarities. This wave, it is variously said, continued in the following years with all its peculiarities. As opposed to the previous waves, there are several features that make this migration unique. To begin with, the number of people migrated within the first few months in 1989 equals the total number of immigrants throughout the twentieth century before 1989. Furthermore, not only the number of the migrants but the political conditions that caused the migration and ended in the arrival of the Turks from Bulgaria in Turkey were

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[17] Ayşe Parla, "Irregular Workers or Ethnic Kin," *International Migration 45, no.*3, (August 2007), p.157.
[18] *Ibid.*, p.159.
[19] Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria,* (London: Hurst, 1997), p.79.

different from the others. Given these specific feature, it is little wonder that this wave has been the subject of scrutiny, investigation and discussion more than any other wave since the immigration from Bulgaria started in earnest. It has meant much to both countries both in terms of the conditions that led to the migration and its consequences.

Although explaining the assimilation policies by attributing it to the aims and intentions of one political leader's might be misleading, apparently "Revival Process" has a lot to do with the nationalism of Todor Zhivkov. He became the prime minister in 1962 and in 1971 when eventually the Zhivkov Constitution was adopted by the parliament 1971 he became the chairman of the Council of State, that is, the president of the republic. The previous constitution which was known as Dimitrov Constitution and had been in force between 1947 and 1971 and had recognized the existence of minorities in Article 54 stating that "national minorities are entitled to be taught in their mother tongue and develop their national culture."[20] However, the laws adopted in Zhivkov Constitution in 1971 were attempted to drop all references to minorities[21] but still citizenship rights for all were guaranteed by the state. Although in the 1971 Constitution Article 35 stated that "all citizens of the People's Republic of Bulgaria are equal before the law," Bulgaria was nonetheless criticized for not observing the Constitutional law and suppressing the democratic rights of citizens by subordinating it to the nationalist ethos of Zhivkov's policies.

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[20] Lilia Petkova, "The Ethnic Turks in Bulgaria: Social Integration and Impact on Bulgarian – Turkish Relations, 1947-2000," *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 1, no. 4, (June 2002), p.42.
[21] *Ibid.*, p.42.

Questioning the motives behind the repressive policies of Bulgarian government towards the Turkish population in 1980s requires a discussion of the international atmosphere at the time. The shift in the attitude of the Bulgarian government and the advent of the new repressive measures against the Turkish community coincided with the fall of the Soviet power and the ending of the cold war. The Iron Curtain had fallen and the Soviet influence in the Balkans had been significantly reduced. During the cold war the relationship between Bulgaria and Turkey was tense as is witnessed by a former Turkish Ambassador to Sofia. Omer E. Lutem was the Turkish ambassador when the Soviet Union collapsed and the cold war came to an end. Turkey, he argues, was emboldened by the disappearance of the Soviet power and was nearly declaring war on Bulgaria protesting against the repressive policies leading to the new and unprecedented wave of migration in 1989.[22]

In contrast with the preceding migration waves to Turkey from Bulgaria, 1989 migration was a *political* migration. It was motivated by political reasons namely escaping political repression and repressive policies of the Bulgarian state targeting their ethnic and religious identity. Generally speaking, in so far as displacement and migration is concerned, the most vulnerable groups are those whose presence threaten or violate the ethnic, cultural and religious unity of the nation and national identity. That is, the sovereign identity which is the locus of political authority and legitimacy usually codified in the constitution of the state. It is the official imposition of the sovereign identity on the non-sovereign ethnic and

[22] Hüseyin Bağcı, 17 February 2001, "Balkans: Heavensgate for the EU Stability," http://www.foreignpolicy.org.tr/documents/hbagci_170201_p.htm [20 Octoboer 2010].

religious identities, measures to protect and promote the political unity of the nation, which turns non-sovereign ethnicities, cultures and religions to the other of the sovereign. Hence, their increasing vulnerability, insecurity and eventual displacement and migration which is a fairly common feature of the imposition of the juridical and political framework of the modern nation-state on multi-ethnic, multi-cultural societies inspired by domination and control. In the context of this study, the non-sovereign and subordinate ethnic-religious identity was the Turkish Muslim community in Bulgaria.

The waves of migration from Bulgaria have also been perceived and represented as the realization of a long standing and almost intrinsic desire to return to the Turkish ancestral home land. The underlying idea being that the Turks living in Bulgaria had left their home land, were displaced, and always hankered for it and longed to return to it. Turkey was always their "true, ancestral homeland."[23] The issue of "homeland" in this context is complicated for the reason that the Turks had left their homeland not for a foreign land but simply for another home in their homeland. That is, they had moved to Bulgaria, or had converted to Islam when Bulgaria was part of the western territories of the Ottoman Empire and they were its subjects. Therefore when Bulgaria gained independence from the Ottoman Empire, the juridico-political identity of the Turkish community changed and Turks became subjects of the new Bulgarian state. Independent Bulgaria was a sovereign state. It tried to establish the foundations of its sovereignty by creating a "territorially, culturally and linguistically unified nation state". The political, military and cultural

[23] Ayşe Parla, "Locating the Homeland: Bulgarian-Turkish 'Return' Migration in Transnational Perspective," (n.d.), p.2.

processes and practices of the construction of a sovereign territorial state as such, required eliminating ethnic and cultural diversity." What complicates the concept of "homeland" is that the Turks who migrated were actually living within the borders of Bulgaria, that is, in the context of the Ottoman empires loss of Balkans. This makes Bulgaria their homeland whereas their ethnicity is that of the Turkish state, making it the ancestral or presumed homeland. With regard to migration, the issue of homeland arises as the home country that is left behind and the result is mostly homesickness.* However, with the Bulgarian migrants, the homeland is Turkey where they settle in the end and then Bulgaria turns out to be the object of nostalgia.[24]

Identity and Difference: the Formation of the other

The question of identity has been a ubiquitous issue in modern philosophical and political discourse since the advent of modernity and associated forms of socio-economic, political and cultural processes and practices began to destabilize and displace the old sense of the *self* and the host of relations which served to anchor it in the community/society. The consideration of this issue has in turn posed the question of modern forms of identity, their discursive formation and the historical conditions of their development. Critical responses to the philosophical and political discourse of modernity, ranging from post-structuralism to different strands of post-modernism too have been preoccupied with the question of identity. In fact, it is no exaggeration to say that the theorization of identity and the conditions of its

* The sentiment of homeland and nostalgia will be analyzed in the second chapter.

possibility constitutes the point of departure in the contemporary critical responses to philosophical discourse of modernity, underpinning their conceptual structure. The main thrust of the much contemporary critique rests on the idea that the philosophical discourse of modernity identifies 'being' with 'presence' and is as such unable to account for the constitutive role of 'difference' in the construction of identity.

In this study, I shall follow the main thrust of the contemporary post-structuralist approach to the theorization of identity emphasizing its relationship to difference both in the discussion of the construction of identity and in the analysis of the formation of otherness which is central to my investigation as a whole. Drawing on William Connolly's work on the issue, I will take up the central argument of his analysis that "identity and difference are bound together"[25], that they presuppose one another in their construction and formation. This means that identities are never given or fixed but always constructed, relational and fluid. That identity is a relationship of self and other in difference. Difference defines the boundaries of the self and the other. It is the site of conflict, struggle and negotiation between self and other which means that difference is neither absolute nor fixed. It is constituted by power which is the relationship between the self and the other. Difference is the constitutive outside of identity, all identities are marked by difference, and all differences are grounded in power, that is, the relations of force which define the relationship between the self and other.

This argument means that identity is never a fixed presence; it always presupposes another to define itself, it is inconceivable without it. It testifies to the

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[25] William Connolly, *Identity/ Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p.44.

constitutive role of difference in the construction of identity as well as in the oppositional relationship between self and other and their subsequent estrangement from one another. An identity presupposes a series of differences and the knowledge of these differences are necessary for the knowledge of self. These differences are outside it, they define the identity of the other. This in effect means that the differences defining the identity of the other define boundaries of the self and their exclusion/suppression/denial is necessary for the definition of the identity of the self.[26] These differences are converted into otherness to guarantee the boundaries and the existence of the Self. Staying in the realm of a consistent identity is largely based on devaluation/dehumanization of the other as evil, abnormal or irrational. What is excluded by this mechanism, in effect, defines the self, its constitutive outside. It is essential to the truth of powerful identity but it is also a threat to the permanence of its being, the certainty of the self within its own boundaries. It is a threat not only by the possibility of defeating the surety of the self, but also by the possibility of its mode of being as other.[27] Thus, self needs to dismiss the other with its possibility of being and tries to establish itself as the true identity.

Trying to establish itself as *true* identity, each identity ethicizes itself and it tries to be the dominant identity in a society. As identities are contingent formations, there is "[t]he demand to *ethicize* or universalize the entrenched contingencies on the grounds that they flow from a true identity" which turns out to be the "recipe for repression of difference." Connolly contends that one is ethically implicated with others in three ways: through "sharing identity," through "stirrings of unpursued

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[26] *Ibid.*, pp.36-37.
[27] *Ibid.*, p.66.

possibilities in oneself that exceed one's identity" and through "engagement with pressures to resent obdurate features of the human condition." Reflection on the fact that life exceeds the bounds of identity leads to depending on the other for the self. When that ethical bond encompasses the agonism of difference, this ethicality and capacity of it exceeds the boundaries of identity and "[e]thicality flows into agonistic appreciation of difference."[28]

In the context of modern nation states, this *true* identity is the identity of the nation state, and the other becomes the object of strategies of the dominant identity, which are conversion or conquest. A nation state is imagined to be the state of a homogenous nation and it is mostly defined in religious and ethnic terms. The unity of the state is largely based on how it unites its members around the hegemonic identity. When it comes to the other, they are usually the object of assimilation and their inclusion is correlated with the extent to which they accept assimilation.

In order to maintain its own identity, the self needs the other, but it also perceives the other as a threat to itself. This is because the presence of the other is the conditions of the possibilities of different identities. Thus, when an identity becomes powerful and dominant,

> …it will strive to constitute a range of differences as *intrinsically* evil, irrational, abnormal, mad, sick, primitive, monstrous, dangerous, or anarchical–as other. It does so in order to secure itself as intrinsically good, coherent, complete or irrational and in order to protect itself from the other it would unravel its self-certainty and capacity for collective mobilization if it established its legitimacy. This constellation of constructed others now becomes both essential to the truth of powerful identity and a threat to it.[29]

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[28] *Ibid.*, pp.166-167.
[29] *Ibid.*, p.66.

What this explanation reveals is that, the other is a threat from which the self needs to protect itself, and in order to guarantee its own being, the dominant identity attempts to oppress and repress the other.

Collective identity-Power-Racism

The forgone is a series of theoretical reflection on the specificity of identity on the individual/subject level. They do not cover the issue of collective identity, that is the construction of identity on the level of community or society. In this respect Connolly argues that collective identity is necessary to the individual identity, it sustains and ensures individual identities[30], which means that it also sustains and reproduces the differences embodied in the other. Connolly further argues that the relation between personal and collective identity lies at the heart of the relationship between the individual and the state. The fact that the state signifies/represents *us* as citizens means that the collective identity and the state share a common other.

In his analysis of "collective identity", Connolly argues that "the state is the ultimate agency of self-conscious political action" and adds that "[o]ther institutions and affiliations, such as family, corporations, crime rings, religious entities, regional groupings, racial divisions, gender identifications, and ethnic affiliations, provide

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

other sites of identification and produce aggregate social effects through their actions and transactions."[31] As the state is after organizing its legitimate members and,

> [t]his artery linking personal identity to collective identity through the medium of the state is surrounded by the flesh and bone of social commonality. In sharing a culture, a set of institutionalized roles, and a language, we share, albeit variably and imperfectly, a set of preliminary understandings, proclivities, and repugnancies that infiltrate the structure of perception, judgment, and decision. My identity is fixed within this setting, drawing some elements from it and reacting negatively to others.[32]

The state relies on these elements of identity to construct and maintain the self-identity, which is the bearer of sovereign power. Being the most fundamental division between inside and outside, the state maintains and preserves what should be included and excluded. In relation with the questions of nation states and identities, the nation of the state by definition is the dominant identity which determines the boundaries of the self and other and the other turns out to be the constitutive outside for the hegemonic identity.

Racism is a crucial instrument in maintaining the homogeneity and unity of the nation states. Although the general assumption is that race was at the heart of the wars in the eighteenth century and then it started to disappear, Foucault opposes that assumption and claims that race now shows itself as 'state racism'. According to Foucault in the 18th century we witness a crucial change in the mode of operation of power: power over death, the sovereign right to kill, turns into power over life. Rather than killing or letting live, power starts to exert itself over life through its mechanisms of control and discipline. Various administrative techniques make the

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[31] *Ibid.*, p. 201.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

regulation of population possible. These techniques are grounded in a new order of rationality informed by *biopolitics* of the population.[33] At that point, Foucault asks: how could a power whose objective is to improve life can kill?

What enables political powers to kill is racism. Foucault suggests that race is an important mechanism in controlling and regulating the population and biopolitical techniques incorporate racism and racist practices into state mechanism. Foucault thus argues that,

> It is indeed the emergence of this biopower that inscribes it in the mechanisms of the state. It is at this moment that racism is inscribed as the basic mechanisms of power, as it is exercised in modern states. As a result, the modern state can scarcely function without becoming involved with racism at some point, within certain limits and subject to certain conditions.[34]

Racism is "the break between what must live and what must die."[35] Racism is the way to fragment the groups in a population, which is creating caesuras within a population. Apart from that, for the health of a part of population, the "other" must die. This death is not through killing in a war, but through racist practices for as the other dies, the inferior and abnormal part of the population, which is a threat to self's biological safety, is erased. Not only the safety of the self is guaranteed, but death of the inferior race makes life in general healthier and purer.[36]

The theoretical arguments offered by Connolly and Foucault set the ground for a constructive approach to the pivotal issue of identity in this study. The Turks in Bulgaria had been the other of the Bulgarian state for as long as they lived under its

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[33] Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, (1975-76).* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 2003), p.254.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 254.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 254.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

rule, but this otherness was left behind with the arrival in Turkey, where they began to fulfill/realize their identity as Turks, to redefine their new self. Although they see themselves different even from the indigenous Turks in Turkey, there is an other that they share with the Turks. Migration to the homeland where Turkishness can be preserved brings raises new questions. Having experienced discrimination and oppression in Bulgaria, the migrants expect smooth integration to the society in Turkey. However, as they are usually perceived as Bulgarians, Turkishness remains as an object of desire for these migrants as they are yet fulfill this desire completely. There is always something preventing them from being Turks fully – as they are called *muhacirs*, because, being Turk is only possible for them insofar as the other subjects accept them as Turk, i.e. national identity always seems to be an inter-subjective process, at least in its political-cultural making. I am a "Turk" only when you call me a "Turk". Migrants are never perceived as genuine Turks, or even called so by their others; their Turkishness always remains lacking, and this lack is still creating a fantasy for them: A fantasy of Turkishness. This fantasy "provide[s] satisfaction, then, not only by presenting a wish but also be presenting the failure of a wish if latter has undergone repression."[37] As the desire is "more a setting out of lack, of what is absent, than a presentation of having, a being present" and "desire itself comes into existence in the representation of lack, in the production of a fantasy of its becoming present."[38] This desire shows itself in the fantasy of Turkishness and it is thought to be fulfilled with arrival in Turkey.

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[37] Elizabeth Cowie, "Fantasia," in *Visual Culture: The Reader. Edited by* Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, (London: Sage, 1997), p. 363.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 361

In their narratives, the interviewees constantly emphasize the sufferings they had gone through in Bulgaria because of their ethno-religious identity. Staking their claims on the sufferings that being a Turk in Bulgaria entails, the fantasy of Turkishness meets another obstacle and goes through the second marginalization in Turkey. Being marginalized in Bulgaria as Turks, they are now marginalized in Turkey being considered Bulgarians. Upon arrival in Turkey, they need to answer the questions and convince the others that they are of Turkish origin. Thus, the Turkishness can not be fulfilled even if the arrival in the symbolic homeland is achieved.

Žižek's conceptualization of ideology helps us to explore and understand this fantasy, what is concealed by it and the desire Turkishness. As their Turkishness is not fully realized or complete without being fully identified and accepted as Turks by the other Turks, anti-Kurdishness seems to be a way of consolidating that identity. It seems to me that the agents of the repressive dictatorship they were exposed to are now embodied in their attitude and their hatred of the Kurds. Thus, the fantasy for Turkishness as displayed in this attitude serves to conceal that agent which subjugated them and in turn enables them to subjugate some others.

The theoretical approach thus developed in this study could throw a different light on the complex issue of identity in this context enabling us to argue that the Bulgarian Turks need to realize their Turkishness in the Turkish context. Connolly, we have seen, offers us a new perspective for the theorization of identity: identity is the relationship of self and other in difference, and the construction of the self always presupposes the other standing in a relationship of difference to it. When the Turks arrived from Bulgaria, they did not insist to emphasize their differences from the

Turks but only from the Kurdish people which they thus turn to their others. This argument has two implications. It enables the migrants to construct their identity in the Turkish context and also share the same other with the indigenous Turks helps them prove their Turkishness to other Turks.

Migration is accompanied by construction of new identities, new definition of the self and other of the migrants in the context of a new nation state, a new national entity, where they encounter new notions of insider and outsider. The main reason why the Kurdish minority is in particular the object of hatred and dehumanization can be better explained if we contextualize the exact tome of the arrival of the Bulgarian migrants and locate it in the reality of Turkish politics. In order to analyze what exactly the anti-Kurdish tendencies among Bulgarian migrants might mean to them, what subject positions these tendencies render and what implications they sustain for the attachment to the ancestral homeland, it is essential to see the how the difference between what is happening in Bulgaria is represented and the way the Kurdish population in Turkey is perceived. 1984 may be taken as the point of comparison for it marks not only the advent of the assimilation drive in Bulgaria but also the onset of the armed struggle by the Kurdish forces in south east Turkey. This was just a few months before the Revival Process was initiated in Bulgaria. Turgut Özal, the Turkish president, was able to hit several birds with one stone; there were abundance of news about Turks in Bulgaria, their sufferings, their resistances, hunger strikes, protests informed the public about what is happening while remaining silent about Southeastern Turkey where the population was fundamentally composed of Kurdish population . The Turkish media, however, was far from being silent. It was eagerly presenting a wide and entirely selective coverage of the new developments in

the southeast focusing exclusively on the atrocities committed by the PKK, and chose to use terms such as betrayal, traitor, murder, thirst for blood etc. whereas the terms attributed to the kindred Turks in Bulgaria were the brave people struggling for their rights.[39]

The Turkish mass media was covered by the images of the Kurdish population represented as fundamentally, base, evil and inhuman; characteristics which were attributed to them for having nurtured blood thirty armed terrorists. The Turkish community in Bulgaria, on the other hand, was portrayed as the oppressed next of kin who were suffering oppression for their ethno-religious identity. This was all very clear that this sharp contrast in the media representations of the Kurdish and the Bulgarian Turkish communities could not be unintentional in so far as the relationship between them was concerned. The media, it could be argued with some justification, was dropping very strong hints, if not showing the way, to the migrants that this anti-Kurdishness could be a appropriate means to attach themselves to official Turkish nationalism and Turkish national identity.

[39] İsmail Beşikçi, *Bilim-Resmi İdeoloji, Devlet-Demokrasi ve Kürt Sorunu,* (Ankara: Yurt Kitap Yayın, 1991), pp. 186-192.

CHAPTER THREE

MIGRATION TO TURKEY:

IMPLICATIONS FOR QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Every country is home to one man
and exile to another
-T.S. Eliot

In this chapter, I will try to offer a micro-level analysis of migration from Bulgaria to Turkey. Relying on the narratives, I will comparatively discuss being a Turk in Bulgaria and being a Turk in Turkey. At the end of the chapter, the developments in Bulgaria with regard to the rights and statuses of the remaining Turks and the issue of citizenship will be studied.

Fieldwork

I have made nine interviews with interviewees in Istanbul and Izmir between April 2008 and February 2010. There are four women and five men interviewed at ages between 19 and 62. One of them was a second generation migrant who was born just after the migration and two of them were children when they migrated. The younger interviewees provided a more critical stance with their accounts as they narrated both their own experiences and their families' viewpoints.

Being a member of migrant community proved both to be advantageous and disadvantageous during the fieldwork. The former is due to the ease at which I could communicate with them as they regarded me an "insider" and it was not difficult for me to understand the idioms they use. Besides, it enabled me the participant observation that my research question sprang from and the knowledge that I could rely on. The disadvantages on the other hand were related to the very perception of the interviewees as they considered me as an "insider." This sometimes led to gaps in the narratives since they, sometimes verbalized but sometimes did not, thought that I already knew or in a way familiar with some parts of the story.

Apart from these I experienced a major difficulty during the "fieldwork" mostly related with being a member of a migrant family. They asserted that it was my mission to report their sufferings to the audience in the academy. When I started with the questions that were to criticize and analyze their ideological and nationalistic perspectives, this positioning became more difficult to handle.

In addition to the narratives of the interviewees, I made use of a book called *Rodoplarda Türk Kalmak* (*Remaining a Turk in Rhodopes*). As the name of the book suggests, it is about being a Turk, actually remaining a Turk in Rhodopes highlighting the sufferings in Bulgaria due to the ethno-religious identity. The book was written by İsmet Topaloğlu who was born in 1955 in Bulgaria and migrated to Turkey in 1989. In the "Preface" he expresses that one day an instructor from a university arrived and then this instructor listened to his memories about Bulgaria and asked him to write such a book. Topaloğlu mentions that the reason for him to write this book was that he wanted future generations to know what the Turks had experienced in Bulgaria.

Based on the way the author writes about his experiences in Bulgaria, it can be said that the life of Topaloğlu is presented as a metaphor for the troubles of Turks in Bulgaria. At the beginning of the book, he asserts that "The sufferings of the Turks of Bulgaria actually started a few years after my birth."[40] He presents his life story as if what he goes through in Bulgaria becomes representative of the experiences of other Turks living there. When I talked to Topaloğlu hoping to make an interview with him, he replied that whatever he was going to narrate was already written in the book. Thus, I made use of the book as the author himself is a 1989 migrant and the book reveals the experiences of the Turks in Bulgaria highlighting the nationalism of the Turkish population in Bulgaria.

Migration: Return to the Homeland

Migration has boundaries of nation states as its marker; it is roughly a population movement across boundaries of nation states. Moving from one nation to the other entails the question of homeland and its implications for the migrants. Transnational migration studies argue against a dual conception of migration as a movement between a sending and a receiving country, and focuses on the identification processes of the migrants which lead to a different conception. Transnationalism argues that migrants develop ties to more than one country, which arouses the need for "alternative terms ... for the recognition that migration cannot

[40] İsmet Topaloğlu, *Rodoplarda Türk Kalmak* (İzmir: Akademi Kitabevi, 2006), p. 10.

simply be viewed as the unidirectional uprooting and re-rooting of identity in a new, national, territory." [41]

One of the facets of transnational studies is the de-territorialization of identity. It points out to the challenge to the congruence of identity and territory. As Gupta and Ferguson asserts, "Something like a transnational public sphere has certainly rendered any strictly bounded sense of community or locality obsolete. At the same time, it has enabled the creation of forms of solidarity and identity that do not rest on an appropriation of space where contiguity and face-to-face contact are paramount."[42]

However, the concept of "homeland" is still ensconced in migration studies and is still pertinent to the identity question of the migrants. For migrants, homeland is the country where they had lived until migration and in the end left behind. It turns out to be the object of nostalgia and the question of homeland has an effect on the identification processes of the migrants in the new residual areas. For the Bulgarian migrants -not particularly for 1989 migrants but for all Turkish population migrated from Bulgaria to Turkey- this concept of homeland requires a different analysis since Turks in Bulgaria perceive the migration as a *return* to their homelands.

What complicates the concept of "homeland" is that the Turks who migrated were actually living within the borders of Bulgaria, which makes Bulgaria their homeland whereas their ethnicity is that the Turkish state founds itself on, making Turkey the *ancestral* or *presumed* homeland. With regard to migration, the issue of

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[41] Parla, "Locating the Homeland: Bulgarian-Turkish 'Return' Migration in Transnational Perspective," p. 18.
[42] Steven Vertovec, "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 2, (1999), p. 2.

homeland arises in a way that the home country is left behind and the result is mostly homesickness. However, based on the narratives of the Bulgarian migrants, although most of them had not even seen it before migration, it can be claimed that the homeland is Turkey where they settle in the end. The accounts of the migrants reveal that migration and arrival in Turkey is appreciated as a "homecoming."

When they call Turkey as their homeland, they clearly refer to the Ottoman which they term as their ancestors. This sense of continuity based on the roots from Ottoman Empire provides them the genealogical tree they need to preserve and maintain the identity. This referring back to the Ottoman inheritance is reiterated in the interviews as the migrants constantly base their Turkishness on the argument that they were the descendants of the Ottoman.

Turkey is perceived as the historical homeland by the migrants as a second generation migration, İnci, talks about the experiences of her mother and reveals,

> But even before that [their migration] there had always been the dream of Türkiyecilik. The chewing gums from Turkey were precious for us. She tells that in their childhood if there is somebody coming from Turkey, we used to mob around him. For one chewing gum. To see whether it has the picture of Orhan Gencebay or Hülya Avşar. Whoever. These were very precious for us. She says that they used to keep them. There used to be such a dream. Also, although they had not been there once, although it had been a far away place, although they had been born in Bulgaria, their actual homeland was Turkey. There is no such thing as to return to Turkey because you had been born in Bulgaria but they make it out of returning. To return to Turkey, to return to the actual homeland. There is no such thing. But they built up their existence in that way.[43]

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[43] Ama onun öncesinde de sürekli bir Türkiyecilik hayali var. Oradan sakızlar bizim için çok değerliydi mesela diyor. Anlatıyor çocukluklarında. Biri Türkiyeden falan gelmişse çevresine üşüşürdük. Bir tane sakız. Sakızın içinde artık Orhan Gencebay fotoğrafı mı olur, Hülya Avşar mı olur. Kim olursa. Bunlar çok çok değerli şeylerdi bizim için. Saklardık onları falan diyor. Hep böyle bir hayal varmış zaten. Bir de hani hiç içlerinde bulunmamalarına rağmen, tamamen uzağında gelişen bir yer olmalarına rağmen sanki, Bulgaristan da doğmuş olmalarına rağmen, asıl vatanları Türkiyeymiş. "Geri dönmek" geri dönmek yok aslında sen zaten Bulgaristanda doğmuş büyümüşsün

Similar to what İnci states, when I ask Besim whether they had always wanted to migrate to Turkey before 1989, i.e. whether there had been Türkiyecilik even before the assimilation policy, responds saying, "it always exists, existed. In people's minds...Turkey used to be regarded as the heaven on earth."[44]

In *Remaining as a Turk in Rhodopes* Topaloğlu describes a kind of heroic struggle for the identity which goes on until he arrives in Turkey. The arrival in homeland Turkey is expressed in these words: "We walked, even running to the Turkish flag in front of us, without looking back, only with two bags we were allowed to take. We are proceeding in a state of fear as if someone can say 'Stop!' at any time. Once we arrived in Turkish land, I had a sigh of relief. "[45] He states this arrival as "the biggest dream of his life."[46] Thus, the whole narrative is that of an escape from "being a Turk in a foreign land."[47] The book turns out to be the quest for the original homeland since it ends in that arrival.

On the contrary, some of the migrants assert that Turkey had not been such a taken for granted destination. This group constitutes those who used to live in cities and who were more integrated in the Bulgarian society. Being professionals, these migrants were pleased with their lives in Bulgaria and did not have intentions to migrate to Turkey before the assimilation, "What was I saying, when everything was going well, suddenly I felt my parents' discontent with the political conditions. And

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ama Geri dönmek üzerinden kurarlardı kendilerini. "Türkiye'ye geri dönmek" Asıl vatanına geri dönmek. Yok böyle bir şey. Ama hep böyle kurmuşlar hayatlarını.

[44] O her zaman var, vardı. İnsanlarda..Türkiye ye yer üstündeki cennet gözüyle bakılıyordu.

[45] Topaluğlu, *Rodoplarda Türk Kalmak*, pp.458-459

[46] *Ibid.*, p.459

[47] *Ibid.*, p.460

suddenly they started talking about going to Turkey and that they wanted to go to Turkey"[48] Cemile says, and she argues that her family was happy with their lives in Bulgaria and that they had never thought of migration before.

It is my contention that the perception of homeland and whether Turkey had been regarded as a destination depended relatively on the socio economic conditions of the Turks in Bulgaria. Among those I interviewed, the ones who used to have good jobs verbalized more or less the same account as quoted from K. above. Consequently, it can be argued that subsequent to the assimilation in Bulgaria in 1984-85, Turkey turned out to be the inevitable destination for the Turks in Bulgaria. For some Turks, as they state, they had thought that they had been in a vulnerable position being Turks in Bulgaria and arrival in Turkey had already been a dream for them. On the other hand, those who had been professionals and living in urban areas were more integrated to the Bulgarian society and decided to migrate to Turkey as a result of the assimilation.

The fact that the perceived homeland is Turkey for the Turks living in Bulgaria has lead to the discussion of the concept of homeland. It discloses that the migration wave from Bulgaria to Turkey in 1989 demands challenges to the concept of return migration. The fact that "return migration is defined as the movement of migrants back to their homelands to resettle,"[49] Turkey could be identified as the homeland. Besides, the collective vision or myths about, and political and economic commitments to the original homeland and the expectations of an eventual return,

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[48] Ne diyordum, öyle çok güzelken her şey, böyle birdenbire babamların böyle politik durumlardan kaynaklı böyle huzursuzluklarını hissetmeye başladım ve birdenbire bir Türkiye ye gitmeyle ilgili söylentiler ve hani gitmek istediklerine dair.

[49] George Gmelch, "Return Migration," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 9 (1980), p. 136.

accompanied by a certain alienation from the host country[50] label Turkey as the original and ancestral homeland, which also makes the migration a return migration.

As opposed to a definition of homeland which signifies the territories where the migrants had lived until migration, in this case the homeland is not Bulgaria but the Turks in Bulgaria are Diaspora Turks whose homeland destination is Turkey. However, such conception does not resolve the challenges as it involves questions about how to locate Bulgaria as the homeland. Then the question arises: If we term Turkey as the homeland, how should Bulgaria be made part of the analytical framework being the object of nostalgia?

The answer to the question reinforces the equivocal position of homeland for the analysis and renders the sentiment of *belonging*. Akhil Gupta asserts that "we need to investigate processes of place making, of how feelings of belonging to an imagined com-munity bind identity to spatial location such that differences between communi-ties and places are created." What is it that makes Turkey the homeland to be arrived for a Bulgarian migrant?

The historical accounts and the narratives of the migrants might shed light on the perception of Turkey as the homeland. The migrants trace their history back to the Ottoman period and label Turkey as the ancestral homeland. The interviewees' responses and the meanings they attribute to two countries can provide us the empirical basis for the analysis.

Meral, who arrived in Turkey leaving her parents behind, responds to the question about her life in Turkey and starts talking about her feelings about Bulgaria

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[50] Parla, "Locating the Homeland: Bulgarian-Turkish 'Return' Migration in Transnational Perspective," p. 6.

and Turkey and how she sees both countries as her homeland. At the beginning of the interview she says that she was happy with her life in Bulgaria until the assimilation started. During the interview, when she talks about her first visit to Bulgaria; what Bulgaria means for her, whether she perceives Bulgaria or Turkey as her homeland is expressed in a poetic language revealing her feelings,

> Now I can not deny that I miss it, I love it [Bulgaria]… Yes I love it, I was born there, I can not deny. They, those who took us there long ago and gave the lands to other people, should be ashamed. We did not go there [to Bulgaria] for no reason, we did not spring up among the Bulgarians. We are Turks and in a way we had arrived there. Some had gone there during Ottoman Empire and deserted. That is to say, the place where you were born, the land you walked on, how can I say, the flowers, the beetles, they are all very beautiful for me. I cannot see the autumn there[Bulgaria] in here[Turkey]. First, I went there in autumn, green, yellow hues, the leaves pruning[talking about her first visit after migration]. You can not see leaves here because it is a concrete jungle. There [in Bulgaria] in the park, there are lots of flowers. So beautiful. It is such a nice thing. We kissed the soil when we came here, I would kiss it there [in Bulgaria] if I could. It is my homeland and this is also my homeland too, I mean I do not want anybody to blame me, they should take this in stride.[51]

What complicates the question of homeland further is the fact that after the exodus almost half of the migrants who arrived in Turkey in 1989 went back to Bulgaria before September 1990.[52] It can be argued that, among other factors, Turkey did not prove to be the 'heavenly homeland' they had expected, which makes return to Bulgaria possible. Ayşe Parla indicates that this challenges the question of

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[51] Şimdi ben inkar edemiyorum ki … özlüyorum orasını, seviyorum. …evet seviyorum, orada doğdum inkar edemem ki. Şeyler utansın, bir zamanlar oraya bizi götürüp de sonra orayı ellere verenler utansın diyorum. Çünkü biz oraya durup dururken gitmedik, Bulgarların arasından türemedik. Ya biz Türküz bir şekilde oraya varmışız. Kimi Osmanlı zamanında oraya kadar gitmiş sonra bırakıvermişler. Yani doğduğun yeri, bastığın toprağı ne bileyim çiçekleri böcekleri böyle çok güzel geliyor bana. Ben ordaki son baharı burada hayatta göremiyorum. Ben sonbaharda gitmiştim ilk zaman, yeşilin her tonu, sarının her tonu, yapraklar dökülmüş. Burada yaprak göremiyorsun çünkü taş beton yığını. Orda parkın içini, yürüyemiyorsun yapraktan. O kadar güzel ki. O kadar hoş bir şey ki. Gelirken öptük burayı, giderken de müsait olsaydı öperdim orayı. O da vatanım bu da vatanım, yani hiçbir kimse suçlasın istemiyorum, doğal karşılansın.

[52] Vasileva, "Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return," p. 348.

homeland for the migrants and that it makes the situation more complicated with the labor migration that has been taking place since 1990. As there are not researches on those who migrated back to Bulgaria, we can not clearly state the motivations or an analysis of the issue would be inadequate. However, it enables us to say that taking different factors into consideration, for the Bulgarian migrants or those who migrated back to Bulgaria the concept of homeland may refer to *either* to Bulgaria *or* Turkey or to *both* depending on the context.

Some migrants who stayed here after the exodus tend to see those who migrated back to Bulgaria as those who *could not make* it. Halil, who came quite old to Turkey and made his living despite the difficulties says that those who went back were not happy with their decision and he even argues that one of the migrants who went back died only because of grief,

> Some people went back[to Bulgaria]. Once I visited Bursa after I came to Turkey, there were some neighbors helplessly saying "What will we do?" I said "What happened to you?" I said because they did not give us anything there [in Bulgaria], of course, we would have difficulties. We have to be patient; I said. Some of them went back, saying that they could not live in these conditions, they went back. Those who went back came again [to Turkey]. They were threatened there [in Bulgaria]. I mean, I tried to persuade them not to go but they went. Those who went back became ill, one of them even died. He came down with illness because of grief as he went back. They could not come back here [to Turkey] either.[53]

Although individual factors or motivations might vary, it should be stated that the developments in Bulgarian economy and the fact that Movement of Rights and

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[53] Bazı insanlar burdan dönen oldu, hatta Bursaya gezmeye vardım geldikten sonra, bazı komşular vardı, nolcak bizim bu halimiz. Ne olmuş beya sizin haliniz dedim. Çünkü dedim bize ordan birşey vermediler elbette zahmet çekeceğiz dedim. Biraz sabretmemiz lazım dedim ben. Bazıları döndüler ya, bu vaziyette biz yaşayamayız dediler döndüler. Dönenler gene geri döndü gene. Orda da görünüvermişler gene. Demek dönenler ben dönmesin diye uğraştım da bazı insanlar döndüler. Dönenler hastalandılar hatta biri hayatını bilem kaybetti. Hastalığa tutuldu kahrından neden geldim neden geldim diye. Buraya da gelemediler.

Freedom (*Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi*) that represents the Turkish population in Bulgaria became part of the coalition government. This might have influenced return to Bulgaria as many people hopefully believed that the minority status of the Turks would have got better.

Socio-economic position of the Turks in Bulgaria

The Turks in Bulgaria did not use to have the opportunity to have high positions as they mostly dropped out of the educational system after the eighth grade (considered as basic education in Bulgaria). The statistics reveal that 54 % of the Bulgarian Christians attended high school and 20.2 % were university graduates whereas the numbers are respectively 24.6% and 2.0% for Ethnic Turks.[54] The interviewees constantly state this fact as is expressed by Besim, "…although officially it is not mentioned, but, of course there is, for the high positions they would definitely prefer the Bulgarians."[55] Although it is not an official regulation, the fact that Turks were not allowed to be in administrative positions or there were few skilled workers of Turkish descent points out to the type of discrimination going on before the assimilation policy. The migrants point out this fact to highlight the

[54] E.P. Mitev, I.Tomova, L. Konstantinova, "The Price of Procrastination? The Social Costs of Delayed Market Transition in Bulgaria,"in *Poverty, ethnicity, and gender in Eastern Europe during the market transition* edited by R. J. Emig, I. Szelényi, (New York: Preager Publishers, 2001), p. 48.
[55] Resmi olarak pek öyle bir şey zikredilmiyordu ama, var tabi, mutlaka, belli bir yere gelmek için Bulgar tercih edilirdi.

secondary position they used to have and they argue that there had been an ongoing discrimination against the Turks even bore the assimilation.[56]

The fact that Turks in Bulgaria were dropped off the education at an earlier level is mutually affected by the fact that they were predominantly living in rural areas. The Turks living in Bulgaria concentrated mainly in two regions, the north and southern regions divided by the mountains of Balkan range. Although some of the Turkish inhabitants settled down in urban areas such as Haskovo, Razgrad and Varna; the overwhelming majority were living in rural areas.[57] The image attributed to the Turkish population was that they were mainly living in rural districts with an emphasis on their backwardness. Moreover, high birth rates of the Turkish population in Bulgaria were causing fears among Bulgarians - whose birth rate was the lowest among Europeans- which had also been one of the reasons for previous migration waves.[58]

This rural-urban dichotomy is also apparent in the accounts of the migrants. When migrants talk about their birthplaces or hometowns, I have heard that those who are from a town or city look down on the villagers. The account of a second generation migrant, Remzi, talks about this issue with regard to the birthplaces of her parents and their differences. His father was from a town whereas his mother was from a village in Bulgaria. I want to quote from his speech here as it is representative of the case of the Turks in Bulgaria in terms of the spatial differences and their implications for the ethnic identity.

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[56] This question of other ethnicities and the opinions of the migrants about this will be explored in the third chapter.
[57] Vasileva, "Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return," p.344.
[58] *Ibid.*, pp.343-346.

> Actually these are two different cultures, even though there is only 50 kilometer distance between the two, they are separate cultures…in my father's town people do not reveal their ethnic identity that much. They are milder. They have a lifestyle closer to the Bulgarians. Besides, his friends et cetera; they can have more intimate relationships with the Bulgarians. That's why my father talks about Bulgaria in a more positive way…On the other hand, if we look at my mother, my grandfather, my mother's father is a bit political…Actually, at that period, in a communist country, my grandfather is someone that can be labeled as fascist…My grandfather, is more after perpetuating Turkish identity, Turkish culture, especially prefers speaking Turkish to speaking Bulgarian.[59]

In another interview, with Besim, when we were talking about the renaming, I accidentally asked him what happened in his village. He immediately responded to correct me saying that he was living in the city not in the village.

The urban-rural differences and looking down on people living in the village meant "being a Turk in Bulgaria." That is to say, the Turkish population was associated with rural lifestyle by Bulgarian people. Living in a village implies the prejudices and brings them with the stereotype that Bulgarian people attribute to Turks. Thus, for those who used to live in cities, emphasizing that they were urbanites enables them to reject the stereotype attributed to Turkish people.

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[59] Bunlar aslında iki farklı kültür, her ne kadar aralarında 50 kilometre mesafe de olsa aralarında bambaşka kültürler…babamın yaşadığı yerde sanki böyle insanlar çok da fazla böyle etnik kimliğini çok da fazla bağırarak söyleyen insanlar değil. Daha ılımlılar. Hani daha böyle Bulgar a yakın bir hayat sürüyor. Onun dışında arkadaşları falan yine çok daha yakın ilişkiler kurabiliyorlar Bulgarlarla. O yüzden babam daha iy bahseder Bulgaristan'dan…Onun dışında anneme bakarsak, benim dedem annemin babası biraz politik yönü olan bir insandı…aslında o dönem komünist bir ülkede dedem faşist diye nitelendirilebilecek bir adam…dedem de daha böyle Türk kimliğini, Türk kültürünü yaşatmaya çalışan bir insan, özellikle Bulgarca konuşmayı filan, Türkçe konuşmayı yeğleyen bir insan…

Religion: The Effects on Identity Formation

As can be seen in the analysis so far, the question of identity for the Turks in Bulgaria is essentially about being Turks. Although the assimilation tended to erase ethno-religious identity, the religion –both in the narratives and statistics- is of secondary importance. The statistics display that from 1946 onwards as a result of the policies of the communist state which intended to diminish the effect of religion for all citizens of Bulgaria, religious practices tended to diminish in the lives of the Turkish population. One of the interviewees, Besim, refers to this subject and illustrates how the state attempted to erase religion from the lives of its citizens,

> I did not use to believe, I do not believe now either. However, the elderly are quite pious. The middle-aged, they just know [but do not fulfill religious practices]. We were brought up as atheists. Not by my parents but the system brought up as such. It was already foridden to go to churches and mosques. There was a mosque where only the elderly could go. It was forbidden for the young to go. A friend of mine went to the church to look for her grandmother, he is christian and Bulgarian, and he was expelled from school. He just went there to see his grandmother not even to pray.[60]

The interviewees express that, religion had a symbolic place in their lives but it did not function to organize their daily lives. They usually describe themselves as Turks without mentioning the religious identity. They confirm that religion did not play a crucial role, but it was in the form of traditional practices. Based on the accounts of the migrants, it can be said that the elderly were more likely to maintain

[60] Ben inanmazdım, ben zaten şimdi de inanmıyorum bilmem ama yaşlılar tabiki çok dindar. Orta nesil, yani biliyorlar ama eh işte babamlar falan. Biz hiç zaten ateist yetiştirildik. Anne babam tarafından değil sistem seni öyle yetiştiriyor. Zaten yasaktı kiliseye camiye gitmek zaten yasaktı. Cami vardı yaşlılar gidiyordu. Gençlerin zaten girmesi yasaktı. Benim arkadaşı annenannesini aramak için kiliseye girdi hristiyan bulgar çocuk okuldan attılar. Ki anneeannesini aramaya girdi kiliseye dua mua falan değil yani.

Islamic practices whereas the young seemed to neglect religious practices. As even Christian practices were diminished and banned for the young, it can be contended that this affected the situation. Living in rural areas and more closed societies, the elderly turned out to be the ones who embraced religion. However, in the final analysis it can be observed that even if the migrants are defined as Muslim Turks and the oppression was targeted at that ethno-religious identity, the ethnic origin was more in the foreground for the Turks in Bulgaria.

Being a Turk in Bulgaria: Before and During the Assimilation

The status of Turks in Bulgaria and the attitude of authorities towards the ethno-religious identity show variations over time.[61] The changes in the way Bulgaria imagined itself as a nation had a direct impact on the Turkish question as Mary Neuburger affirms : "[a]ll of the primary political turning points in Bulgarian history— quasi-independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, the dawning of the communist era in 1944, and the post communist period beginning in 1989—have required a re-positioning of Bulgarian national, cultural and political postures on the so called 'Turkish question'".[62] How Turkish population is included or excluded from national imagination at discursive level found reflections in the practice.

[61] The policies of the Bulgarian state towards the minorities were explained in Chapter 1.
[62]Mary Neuburger, "Bulgaro-Turkish Encounters and the Re-imaging of the Bulgarian Nation (1878-1995)," *East European Quarterly* 32, no. 1, (March 1997), p.1.

The attitude of Bulgarian state to the Turkish population has revealed variations over the twentieth century yet even different policies and approaches were laying the groundwork for the assimilation which reached its peak when the names of the Turks were forcefully changed with those of Slavic origin. Official theories about Turkish population found their final expression in the words of Bulgarian Communist Party leader Todor Zhivkov who declared that "There are no Turks in Bulgaria."

This expression "There are no Turks in Bulgaria" finds itself in practice via changing of the names, which means "killing" one part of the population, killing in the sense that ethnic cleansing by the use of signifiers of ethnic identity. As Foucault discusses in "Right of Death and Power Over Life" the Roman right of the father to dispose life was inherited by the sovereign as the right to kill or refrain from killing. It was the "right to *take* life or *let* live." However the mechanisms of power has undergone a change in the West and started to work to monitor, control and organize life. The right of death has turned to the right of life; the wars are waged in the name of the life of the people. It was deemed necessary to kill the "other" for the sake of their own life. Foucault argues that race was at the heart of the wars in the eighteenth century but from then on it is thought that death ceases to torment life with the help of an increase in knowledge concerned with life. Opposing that, he asserts that race is now part of something different, which is State racism.[63]

With the nineteenth century, sovereignty's right of death and power over life goes through a transformation and becomes the right to make live or let die. The

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[63] Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, (1975-76)*, pp. 254-256.

disciplinary technology of the power which established in the 17th and 18th centuries was now accompanied by a new technique. This new technique called biopolitics was to be applied to life, so that the multiplicity of people could be kept under surveillance. Biopolitics' object of knowledge included birth rate, mortality rate, the rate of reproduction and so on. The appearance of the element of "population" is significant in that sense. Power started to deal with the masses rather than individuals or individual bodies. In the nineteenth century, power's hold over life enabled 'State control of the biological.' The sovereign used to hold the power over life and death, that is, the sovereign could kill or let live which meant that the power of the sovereign determines the right to be alive or dead. Actually, this is the right to kill since sovereign can kill, or let live. This new form of power is concerned with life, optimization of life, intervention to make live and it is continuous and it is the power to make live. This new form of power is as Foucault would call it, the power of regularization and it is making live or letting die. [64]

In that, State arises as the combination of disciplinary as well as regulatory mechanisms. But, the question is, how can a power which is based on making live can kill? The answer, as Foucault puts forth lies in Racism. The birth of biopolitics lets racism into state mechanisms. Racism is "the break between what must live and what must die." Racism is the way to fragment the groups in a population, which is creating caesuras within a population. Apart from that, for the health of a part of population, the "other" must die. This is not through killing in a war, but as the other

[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 240-242.

die, the inferior abnormal part of the population which is a threat to self's biological safety is erased.

As opposed to the traditional understanding of racism the analysis of Foucault introduced us to another dimension. Racism is generally thought to be the hatred and antagonism between two groups. However, Foucault argues it is more than that traditional perception; but it is not a totally new thing. This modern racism is bound up with the technique of power, it is related with biopower. State uses race in two ways, purification of one race and elimination of another. This is where we can see the traces of old sovereign power.

To exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power."[65] Benjamin's essay on "Critique of Violence" pertains to this discussion. Benjamin investigates the two functions of violence. The sanctioning of violence for military ends reveals the *lawmaking* character of violence. Settling the new condition through violence brings along the new "law" of the victor. There is no original law. In addition to that, there is *law-preserving* character of violence. Thus, the latter affirmed by Benjamin with the words that "Militarism is the compulsory, universal use of violence as a means to the ends of the state."[66]

The form of violence applied during the so called "Revival Process" includes physical assimilation and the denial of identity by forced assimilation. The assimilation started in the Kurdjali, situated in southern Bulgaria and spread to other locations in the south and the north densely populated by Turks. The migrants state

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[65] Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture 15*, no. 1 (2003), pp. 11-40.
[66] Benjamin, *Critique of Violence*, p. 284.

that before changing the names, the leading figures in the districts were taken by the police so that they would not resist or organize resistances. Islamic practices and speaking Turkish were strictly forbidden.

The people were forcefully made sign papers that they were asking to change their Turkish names with those of Bulgarian or Christian origin of their own will. Those who did not want to sign or reacted against the orders were taken to the camp called *Belene* concentration camp or imprisoned. In Bulgaria people used their fathers' names as the second name and they had a family surname which was that of a forefather. Thus, changing the name of an individual meant changing the names of three generations including the father and the great-grandfather. Changing of the names included those on the tombstones, which was seen as cleansing and erasing a history.

All of the migrants I talked to, stated that they had predicted that the assimilation, as it happened in 1984, was going to take place one day. Apart from that, they point out to the fact that there had been an ongoing process of assimilation and that some of them were already assimilated to a certain extent. It should be necessary to make a distinction among the interviewees at that point. Having Bulgarian friends, speaking mostly Bulgarian –both in public and private spaces-, not having problems due to ethnic identity are the issues stated by those who lived in cities. On the contrary, the interviewees living in rural areas and having a more traditional life style used to speak Turkish except for public places and have concerns about their ethno-religious identity.

Meral used to live in the city and work as a teacher of Bulgarian Language and Literature. She was not willing to migrate to Turkey but felt that there was no

other choice, argues that the policy of forced assimilation resulted in a national awakening and strengthened ethnic consciousness,

> For example, speaking Turkish is forbidden, well that prohibition did not make a change for me, I used to speak Bulgarian all the time, that we were not allowed to wear shalvars, I did not use to wear it, or worshipping was prohibited, I did not use to worship. I can not say it was a great shock for me. But of course, in time when the names were started to be changed, it was difficult to tolerate. You have been Ayşe for twenty years suddenly being Anelya. Apart from being somebody else then you. We, the young could have overcome but as it was the case for the old. Changing the names on the gravestones was the straw that broke the camel's back. That makes person…There you feel, an awakening, I do not know something like national awakening or feeling national identity, we were shocked. Like what I am, you feel like you have to protect something. Consequently, that collective enthusiasm absorbs you. You start to look from a different perspective.[67]

Although, nationalist policies of the Bulgarian state were not unprecedented "the strengthening of the ethnic identity", which was apparently an unintended consequence of the assimilation was probably unpredictable for the government. Starting with the first years of communist regime, the more Turkish population were deprived of freedom of language, religion and identity the more they remained in the "only organized form of life they were left with was the community [which] based on a common language, religion, family links and alienation from the majority."[68]

The resistance against the so-called "revival process" was in the form of demonstrations and hunger strikes. Most of them were crushed by the police. On the

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[67] Mesela, Türkçe konuşmak yasak, e o yasak bana bir değişiklik getirmedi, ben zaten hep Bulgarca konuşuyordum, ne bileyim işte şalvar giymicen ben zaten giymiyordum veya ibadetini yapmıcan zaten yapmıyordum. Hani beni çok sarstı diyemicem. Ama tabi zamanla o isim olayına girince, o çok ağır geliyor insana. Yani 20 senedir Ayşemişin birden işte Anelya olmak, senin olmanın dışında hadi biz gençler daha çabuk atlatabilirdik de yaşlıların bu şekilde olması. Mezar taşındaki isimlerin değiştirilmesi belki en son damlaydı. O insanı artık..Orda bir uyanış, artık milli uyanış mı ne bileyim milli kimliğini hissediyorsun, bir sarsılıyorsun. Ben neyim diye hani, bir şeyleri korumak zorundayım diye hissediyorsun. Haliyle o toplu heyecan o toplu tepki seni de içine alıyor mecburen. Farklı açıdan bakmaya başlıyorsun…

[68] Milena Mahon, "The Turkish Minority Under Communist Bulgaria-Politics of Ethnicity and Power," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 1, no. 2 (1999), p. 156.

other hand, there were attempts to escape or hide from the campaign hoping that they would not let their names be changed. There were bombings of the railways at a railway station and at airports.[69]

It would not be gratuitous to distinguish the lives of Turks in Bulgaria before the assimilation and after as the narratives of the interviewees all reveal a contrast between the two. As H. states, "It used to be good beforehand. We used to have Bulgarian friends, I would leave the children to them. Afterwards, of course it is not their fault but they tended to be distant."[70] Although the interviewees argue that they had not faced major difficulties due to identity before 1980s, they provide contradicting accounts with memories from 1970s. Therefore, the assimilation constitutes a transitional phase for the migrants allowing them to reconstruct and recollect a peaceful past.

During the interviews I asked about their lives in Bulgaria before the assimilation to understand the place assimilation occupies in their narratives. Borrowing the term from Victor Turner, I conceptualize the assimilation as the *liminal phase*. For Turner, liminality is the transitional phase between two stages and in the first stage of that liminality, the subjects are "betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial."[71] The individuals do not belong to the society that they used to belong and they are not re-

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 158.
[70] "Öncesinde gayet iyiydi. Bulgar arkadaşlarımız vardı, çocukları onlara bırakırdım. Sonra tabi bu onların suçu değil ama onlar da yani uzak davrandı."
[71] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process,* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995), pp. 94-95.

aggregated into it. Referring to a "change of state or social position,"[72] *liminality* is marked by three phases, namely *separation, margin (threshold)* and *re-aggregation.* Victor Turner applies the term to the analysis of ritual metaphors whereas I will try to deploy the term to understand the meaning ascribed to the assimilation by the migrants.

The accounts reveal that, although at times there used to be inconvenience due to the intensification of the oppression, the situation was more or less "normal" until 1980s. Especially with regard to the 1980s, the interviewees say that their life as well as their relationships with the Bulgarians started to change. Handan says that "we used to get on well with the Bulgarian friends until 1985. Once the names were changed, they turned their back on us. Even our neighbors looked askance at us. When the regime made it such, we were at odds."[73]

Relying on the narratives, it can be claimed that the assimilation period which started at the end of 1984 constitutes the *breach* for the Turks in Bulgaria. As Jerome Bruner suggests, *breach* is the violation of the normal, it is a break in the order of the things. The "precipitating event," or the moment when "an implicit canonical script has been breached, violated, or deviated"[74] makes the whole narrative of migration and narrative of settlement in Turkey possible.

The assimilation is the *breach* because it is when their identity is challenged; that is, the seeming order of the things is *breach*ed. The Turks in Bulgaria find

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[72] Victor Turner, "Passages, Margins, Poverty," and "Social Dramas and Ritual Metaphors," in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 231.

[73] 85 yılına kadar orda Bulgarlarla iyiydik. Ne zaman adlar değişti, onlar da yüzünü bizden değiştirdi. Karşımızda komşu bile bize yan gözle bakıyordu. Ne zamanki rejim o hale getirdi biz onlarla çok bozuldu aramız.

[74] Jerome Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 18, (1991), p. 11.

themselves in a liminal position because the existence in Bulgaria is questioned implying their relations with Turkey due to ethno-religious identity whereas their history relates them to Bulgaria. When I call this as *liminality*, I am referring to the threshold between staying and being in Bulgaria on the one hand and migrating and being in Turkey on the other, which is mainly the result of assimilation.

Arrival in Turkey: Arriving in "the Garden of Eden"[75]

The arrival of the Turkish migrants from Bulgaria to Turkey has different implications for both states and for the migrants themselves. In the analysis of the *arrival to the homeland* I will try to explore how the exodus and arrival arose at discursive level which shapes and also is shaped by practices. That is to say, the analysis of state discourses will provide us the framework within which individuals (re)construct their narratives. Arrival in the Turkish land is significant since it appears as the moment that resolves the sufferings of the Turkish population in Bulgaria and it was consequential not only for those who migrated but also for the remaining Turkish population in Bulgaria.

Four years after the assimilation, in 1989, Zhivkov made a statement revealing that "If Turkey wants to take the Muslims, she should open her borders."[76] In June 1989, "partly in response to international outcry, and partly because it was

[75] Halil defines Turkey as "cennet bahçesi" (garden of Eden) and Besim calls it "yeryüzündeki cennet" (heave on earth).
[76] Milliyet, 30.05.1989.

expedient publicity,"[77] as Ayşe Parla defines the decision, The Prime Minister Turgut Özal announced that Turkey was going to open its borders to the Turks saying that "We are ready to embrace our kinsmen who may be sent out by Bulgaria".

Despite seemingly welcoming attitude, the statements of the authorities vary on the issue of accepting the migrants from Bulgaria. Whereas some claim that Turkey is ready to welcome the *soydash* Turks (meaning ethnic kins) and that it should; others emphasize the economic difficulties that migration of so many people and their employment might cause.[78] In his speech of February 27th 1985, just after he emphasized that they would embrace the kinsmen, Özal, responds to that question of employment and problems migration of so many people might cause. He notes the concerns, "Can we admit our kinsmen in Bulgaria in as large numbers as before? This is what some have said in this connection: When you are faced with receiving 300,000-500,000 people, you should consider already existing unemployment. How are you going to settle them? What if our economy is upset?" Then he immediately replies saying "Our country is powerful. Our people do their best to help in such situations. We are not afraid of such problems. Let them send more than 500,000 if they want. We shall welcome them, embrace them."[79] Regardless of the problems that might have been caused by this particular migration, the state proved to be efficient to welcome, accommodate and employ the migrants. Hence, the migrants tend to be grateful to the Turkish state as well as to Turgut Özal, who they think has saved the oppressed Turkish population in Bulgaria.

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[77] Parla, "Locating the Homeland: Bulgarian-Turkish 'Return' Migration in Transnational Perspective," p. 5.
[78] Milliyet, 30.05.1989, p.3
[79] *Milliyet*, 28 February 1985. Quotedin Şimşir "The Turks of Bulgaria and the Imigration Question" p.58 in *Thew Turkish Presence in Bulgaria* in Ankara, 1986

Considering all the migrations that have taken place, we see that different terms are used to name the ones came in 1989 and those who had migrated earlier. This difference in terminology is significant as it discloses the conditions of migration as well as the ways the migrants are perceived. The migrants who arrived via previous migration waves were called *muhacir.* The word literally means "the one who migrates" and sometimes used to refer to the Turkish population who remained outside of her borders after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.[80] Calling 1989 migrants as *soydash* lays the emphasis on blood kindred and reinforces the perception that their homeland is Turkey. Welcoming the Turks as *soydash*, the nationalist discourse prioritizes "the place of origin" over the "lived homeland" and the nationalist discourse highlights the "shared blood" with the ethnic kins. [81]

With regard to the arrival of the migrants in Turkey, the press accounts were highlighting the images of the migrants arriving to the Turkish land and kissing the earth. Contentment with the arrival is expressed by another migrant in these words,

> Being Muslims, the reason for our arrival in the Turkish state is that, we feel ourselves as Turks, from our ancestors knowing that we are Muslim Turks we came to that Muslim country Turkish state.[82]

And another migrant states that,

> I am pleased with my life. I am pleased that I came here. When we were there, we people used to say that, we would go barefooted but still we would go.[83]

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[80] *Muhacir diye küçümsenenler, tarihin yazdığı savaşlarda en geriye kalanlar, yani "Düşmanla sonuna kadar dövüşenler". Çekilen ordunun ri'cat hatlarını sağlamak için kendilerini feda edenler ve düşman karşısında kaçmak, çekilmek nedir bilmeyenlerdir. Muhacirler kaybedilmiş ülkelerimizin milli hatıralarıdır. M. Kemal ATATÜRK 17.01.1931*

[81] Parla, "Locating the Homeland: Bulgarian-Turkish 'Return' Migration in Transnational Perspective," p. 5.

[82] Biz Müslüman olarak, Türkiye devletine gelmemizin sebebi, biz kendimizi Türk, dedelerimizden Türk Müslüman olduğumuzu bilerek Müslüman ülkesine mesela Türk devletine geldik.

However, the meaning migrants attribute to their arrival show variations. As mentioned earlier, for some migrants the motivation to come to Turkey had always existed while some ended up in migration because of the adversities of the assimilation. Contradicting the migrants who kiss the earth once they arrived, not all of the migrants were happy with their arrival. One of the migrants who was reluctant to come to Turkey talks about her first impression,

> I did not find Turkey pleasant, especially when you are coming through Çanakkale. In Bayraklı, you see the *gecekondu*s ["slums"] alas my God where have we come, our city was so beautiful. It was not so developed yet it was simple but nice. Clean, luminous. Completely dark, grim and stacks scared me more. [84]

Another migrant summarizes his perception of Turkey in these words,

> …but having come here, many people saw the miseries, ignorance, wretchedness, lack of education, ignorance.[85]

It can be argued that the life in Bulgaria and whether they had intentions to migrate to Turkey before is in line with their comments about Turkey and arrival. Those who had always wanted to come to Turkey feel relieved to come whereas those for whom escaping from assimilation was the main reason for migration did not feel pleased when they left their lives there and came to Turkey.

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[83] Memnunum hayatımdan. Memnunum geldiğim için. Oradayken, biz insanlar dedik, yalın ayak gideceğiz ama gene gideceğiz.

[84] Türkiyeyi çok hoş bulmadım, bir de özellikle o taraftan Çanakkale taraftan geliyorsun, Bayraklı sırtları gecekonduları görüyorsun, eyvah Allahım biz nereye geldik, bizim şehrimiz çok güzeldi. Çok gelişmiş değil ama çok sade ve şık. Temiz, aydınlık. Kapkaranlık çirkin rengârenk üst üste beni daha da ürküttü.

[85] ama sonra bir sürü insan buraya gelince burdaki gelip sefaleti cahillliği görünce, sosyal düşkünlüğü, eğitimsizlik, cehalet

Migration from a Socialist Country to Turkey

Darina Vasileva in her article called "Bulgarian Turkish Migration and Return" suggests that the exodus is unprecedented both in the history of Turkish migration and also it was the most massive exodus from a socialist European state to a non-socialist country. Arriving from socialist Bulgaria to Turkey which emphasized free market economy adds an economic dimension to the migration. Vasileva bases her arguments on sociological analysis in arguing that the migrants' motives were not only to escape from violence but also they migrated with the hopes of a better life that Turkey promises.[86]

This can be found in the narratives of the respondents in two ways. One is that they recall their lives in Bulgaria which was better in terms of economic conditions when they did not have difficulty in getting by and that the health care and education was much better when compared to Turkey. On the other hand, they express that there was a limit on the amount of property one could have. This makes them perceive Turkey as a better place since one can have as much as (s)he wants.

As Faruk reports,

> Well I lived in communist regime for thirty years and we have nothing. Look at what I have accomplished in twenty years in Turkey. There, there we worked a lot. Whole family. We worked day and night. We had nothing. In twenty years in Turkey you see that if you do your job honestly and can assess your money and draw in your horns… Who can imagine, for example I built my house, bought a car, now my goal is to buy a farm…There the position of our people, you work for thirty fifty years in the end you are at

[86] Vasileva, "Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return," p. 348.

> naught state, you have nothing but here imagine what you can have in fifteen years.[87]

Just like Faruk, Besim also accounts what they used to think about Turkey,

> In Turkey, there is not an upper limit to what you may possess. Thus, for example, my uncle had a Mercedes and it was thought that there is wealth and prosperity.[88]

On the other hand, he points out to the advantages of living in a communist country saying,

> Well, communism etc. but when there was no television in Turkey, there was in Bulgaria. And those in Turkey used to watch Bulgarian channels. Also, we were superior in terms of education. Bulgaria is really good in education and health. Even now it is very good. For example now there are state nurseries, it is inherited from communism.[89]

Hence, it can be argued, when compared to those who migrated back to Bulgaria, for those who stayed here in Turkey, they were able to take advantage of the migration to Turkey due promises free market offered.

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[87] Şimdi ben otuz sene komünist rejimde yaşadım elimizde hiçbir şey yok. Yirmi senede Türkiye'de bak başardığıma bir bak.Orda, orda çok çalıştık.Bütün aile. Gece gündüz çalıştık. Elimizde hiçbir şey yok. 20 senede türkiyede bir bakıyorsun demekki Türkiyede dürüst çalıştıktan sonra bir de eline geçen paranın değerini bildikten sonra, yönlendirmesini yapabildiğin takdirde …kimin aklına gelir, mesela ben ev yaptım araba aldım şimdi hedef tarla bende...oradaki insanımızın pozisyonu, otuz elli sene çalışıyorsun en sonunda geldiğin nokta sıfır, elde var sıfır ama burda çalışıp on on beş senede geldiğin yere bak.

[88] Elde ebileceğin mal mülk miktarının üst sınırı yok Türkiye de. Dolayısıyla mesela ne bileyim adam mesela benim dayım dayımın mercedes i vardı ve orda bir zenginlik bir varlık var diye düşünülüyordu.

[89] Tamam komünizm şu bu ama Türkiye de devlet televizyonu yokken Bulgaristan da vardı. Ve Türkiyedekiler Bulgar televizyonunu çekip seyrediyorlarmış. Halbuki eğitim olarak çok daha üstteydik. Bulgaristanın eğitim ve sağlık konusunda önüne geçilmez yani. Şu anda halen önüne geçilmez. Yani şu an devlet yuvası var mesela o komunizmden kalma bir alışkanlık.

Developments in Bulgaria after 1989: Movement for Rights and Freedoms (Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi)

On the night of the demolition of the Berlin Wall on November 10th, 1989, Todor Zhivkov resigned from his position as head of the state and in January, 1990, communist rule came to an end in Bulgaria. Todor Zhivkov's fall was followed with the accession of Petar Mladenov who used to be the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Just after his accession, Mladenov emancipated the Turks who were imprisoned during the assimilation because they joined demonstrations or resisted against the assimilation. Then he started meetings with Turkish intellectuals such as Ahmet Doğan, who later became the president of Movement for Rights and Freedoms, to discuss the reforms to improve the status of the Turkish population in Bulgaria. In the same year, Mladenov declared that the Turks were going to retrieve their Turkish names and that he is going to lift the ban on cultural and religious practices along with speaking Turkish in public[90], and these were realized to a large extent after 1990.

In 1990, Movement for Rights and Freedoms (*Hak ve Özgürlükler Hareketi*) was officially established. It started by the name Turkish National Freedom Movement (*Türk Milli Kurtuluş Hareketi*) as an underground movement during 1980s when the Bulgarization policies were started to be implemented. It mainly

[90] Kader Özlem, "Bulgaristan Türklerinin Tarihsel Süreç İçerisinde Dönüşümü, AB Üyelik Süreci ve Türk Azınlığa Etkileri," *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 1, no. 2 (Winter 2008), pp. 353-354.

constituted members of Turkish origin and has been after the rights of Turkish population in Bulgaria.

The fall of Teodor Zhivkov marked the end of communist rule in Bulgaria. The first free election of post-communist era since 1939 was held in 1990 and MRF participated in the elections. The voting took place on June 10 and 17 and among the parties represented in the assembly, the first was BSP (Bulgarian Socialist Party) – the successor of Bulgarian Communist Party- with 211 seats, the second was an anti-communist party UDF (Union of Democratic Forces) with 144 seats and the third was MRF (Movement for Rights and Freedoms) with 23 seats.[91]

In the opening of Grand National Assembly, there were protests and demonstrations against the presence of MRF. The attempts to disenfranchise MFR from the assembly proved to be futile. Then when the GNA agreed upon a new constitution in July 1991 and aspired to be a democratic state with complete separation of powers, a new election was held in October 1991 under the new constitution.[92] The second multi-party elections were also marred by protests against MRF on grounds that it was unconstitutional contravening article 11 (4) of the constitution which bans parties formed "on ethnic, racial or religious lines."[93] Although almost all its supporters were Turkish or Muslim people -ethnic Turks constitute 90 per cent of the Movement and the rest include Pomaks, Gypsy Muslims, Tatars and others include Bulgarians-[94] MRF argued that it was an independent party working for the unity of Bulgarian citizens spelling out that it

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[91] Crampton, *Bulgaria*, p. 392.
[92] *Ibid.*, pp.393-395
[93] Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria*, quoted from Sofia Press Agency 1991:6, p. 167.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

aimed to "contribute to the unity of the Bulgarian people and … unequivocal compliance with the rights and freedoms of mankind and of all ethnic, religious, and cultural communities in Bulgaria"[95] and the court rejected the petition in April 1992.

Although there are other Turkish political factions, MRF is the leading movement that has been able to mobilize the Turkish and other Muslim population to articulate their rights.[96] The Movement is concerned with the restoration of the rights of Turks who fled communist oppression, the optional teaching of Turkish and Islamic theology at schools, and restoration of cultural and ethnic institutions.[97] These issues have adequately been addressed as Eminov reveals.

The impact of MRF in the politics of Bulgaria is limited. However, it has had an astute role in representation in the parliament and speaking out the rights and concerns of the Turkish and Muslim population. The existence of MRF in the parliament influenced the migrants who went back to Bulgaria after the migration in 1989. It pointed out to a change in the status of the minorities living in Bulgaria and gave hope to those who were yearning for their life in Bulgaria and dreaming of going back. It can be argued that representation of the Turkish population in the parliament and the positive changes in the rights and statuses of the Turks in Bulgaria had an impact on the decision of those who did want to return to Bulgaria after migration to Turkey.

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[95] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[96] *Ibid.*, p. 168.
[97] *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

The Opportunity to Belong to Both Homelands: Double Citizenship

Despite the fact that Turks in Bulgaria had not been excluded from the citizenship rights, in reality however the existing political mechanisms excluded them from enjoying the rights and privileges of a Bulgarian citizen. Considering that,

> becoming a citizen depend[s] on membership in a community. The nation-state is the combination of a political unit that controls a bounded territory (the state) with a national community (the nation or people) that has the power to impose its political will within those boundaries. A citizen is always also a member of a nation, a *national.* [emphasis original][98]

Fulfilling the condition of "membership in a community" was undermined by the fact that they did not share the ethnic and religious creed with the sovereign identity. The imagination that they were members of Turkish nation endorsed the idea that Turkey was their *real* homeland and the idea that they should be citizens of Turkey.

On the other hand, while the shared language and culture attach them to Turkey and the Turks living in Turkey, their history makes it indispensable for them to be bound to Bulgaria and arrival in Turkey brought along a new question. Even if the migrants arriving during the big exodus obtained citizenship and citizenship in Turkey has ensured *formal* inclusion[99] to the migrants, it has not necessarily meant *de facto* inclusion. That is to say, the integration to the society has not been smooth.

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[98] Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging*, p. 12.

[99] The migration continued even after 1989. Many people migrated to Turkey illegally. For those who arrived after the big excursion in 1989, citizenship has been a major problem since they have not been able to have citizenship for years. As this is out of scope of this thesis and the discussions here, I have not included this issue and its analysis.

The Turks living in Turkey argue that the migrants are different from them while migrants themselves also state that they are different from the native Turks in Turkey, which in a way leaves them in minority status even *at home*. Castles and Davidson analyzes the question of ethnic consciousness among the migrants and they argue that there are four variants of the issue. *Assimilation* of the migrants into the dominant society; *separatist consciousness* which is the feeling that minorities feel that they are excluded from the mainstream culture; *diasporic consciousness* in which migrants identify themselves with the ancestral homeland, and *transcultural consciousness* in which migrants develop new forms of culture and identity interacting with groups in the receiving country.[100] It is possible to trace all of these variants for the migrants from Bulgaria which leaves them as an migrant and minority group even in the homeland and point out to the unevenness of attachment to their *own* culture.

Defining the *homeland* and analysis of the issue of *belonging* has been challenging with regard to the case of the migrants from Bulgaria; the issue of citizenship makes it a more subtle question. Particularly with the membership of Bulgaria in European Union in 2007, the sentiment of citizenship has brought along new aspects with regard to homeland and belonging. Those who had double citizenship became citizens of European Union whereas those who did not have Bulgarian citizenship tried to meet the case in order to have Bulgarian citizenship, therewith that of European Union. Among the migrants I have interviewed among those I know, there are very few who resist having double citizenship claiming that

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[100] Castles and Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging,* pp. 138-139.

they do not want to maintain their ties with Bulgaria while it is treated as a golden opportunity by many others.

Some 250,000 of 500,000[101] who migrated after 1989 have Bulgarian citizenship which provides them the opportunities of European citizenship. Those who do not bother to obtain double citizenship are either against maintaining formal ties with Bulgaria and protest having it, or they do not have relations with Bulgaria, that is, they do not have relatives there and do not travel. The migrants who tend to obtain Bulgarian citizenship have relatives living in Bulgaria and being a Bulgarian citizen makes it easier for them to travel to Bulgaria without dealing with visa requirements. For those who visit their relatives, double citizenship facilitates travelling to Bulgaria. There are also some migrants who mainly include the young tend to have difficulty in finding jobs in Turkey and double citizenship provides overseas employment opportunities. Apart from that, when the migrants obtain double citizenship, they are required to vote for the elections in Bulgaria. However, the interviewees do no disclose any interest in the political developments in Bulgaria. When there are elections in Bulgaria, those who have double citizenship can either flock to the polls in Turkey or there are free couches that take the electorates to Bulgaria. The migrants perceive the latter as an opportunity for cost-free travelling and reveal that they are not interested in the elections.

Having double citizenship –thus, EU citizenship– and rejecting or not having Bulgarian citizenship have implications for the sense of belonging. Discourse on migrants argue that the migrant groups in a transnational context create a sense of

[101] Nurdan Bayrak, Nail Kahraman, Oben Kırdök, Ali Güleryüz, *Bulgaristan göçmenleri 2014'te Tam Haklara Kavuşacak*, http://www.rumeliturk.net/haber/08012007.htm [23 March 2010]

belonging including aspects from both receiving and sending countries and turn out to be a new hybrid form. It can be claimed that the migrants tend to belong to both countries. And hey maintain their ties with Bulgaria. They term themselves as Turks when they want to emphasize the ethnic origin and argue that Turkey is their homeland. Nonetheless, when they want to highlight their differences from other Turks in Turkey they either identify themselves as migrants or use the term "European Turks." Whichever they appropriate, Bulgaria comes out as the homeland symbolizing days of yore whereas Turkey has been the recent homeland to which they are bound by ethno-religious identity. Thus, the sense of belonging arises from the contradictions of past and present homelands. Whether they live in Bulgaria or Turkey, the questions of identity and belonging can be traced in-between the two homelands and existence trails "longing for the homeland."

This chapter relies mainly on the narratives of the interviewees and provides the ethnographic research. One of the main issues pointed out in this chapter is the question of homeland with reference to belonging. While Bulgaria is associated with images and moments from the past and is the object of nostalgia that migrants tend to remember peaceful times, Turkey is more represented as the inevitable destination that the identity will be realized. This belonging which renders love for both countries is now embodied in the opportunity of double citizenship which enables the migrants to maintain relations with both countries.

CHAPTER FOUR

ENCOUNTER WITH THE OTHER: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

What was being built rested on ensuring that crushed minorities forgot the history of their own oppression.

– Renan, 1992, (pp. 41-42 in Castles p.46)

When I first intended to write this thesis, I wanted to explore the anti-Kurdish discourse and attitude among the Bulgarian migrants. Based on the observation that the migrants were nationalists, I was curious about how they turned out to hate so much from the Kurdish population in Turkey. This does not seem strange considering that the nationalism in Turkey bases itself against Kurdish identity. However, for a population that experienced oppression in Bulgaria and finds the same ideology operating against the Kurds, one expects empathy and I, myself, have had difficulty in understanding lack of such empathy. When I term it as anti-Kurdishness, I am not only talking about the view which perceives Kurdish population as a threat to nationalistic imaginations but I am also referring to hatred which literally can not bear the existence of the "other," has no relationship with "them" and can not tolerate "them" who have a *different* language and a *different* culture from the "self".

Though I had intended to focus mainly on the fact that the Kurds have been the others of the process of identity construction of the migrants from Bulgaria, I felt

the need to reformulate the research question. The migrants I had interviewed at the beginning did not reveal that anti-Kurdish discourse in the interviews although as a member of that migrant community, I have been able to observe that recurring anti-Kurdish discourse in their daily lives. Both realizing that the migrants would not help me with their narratives in line with my subject matter and realizing that the anti-Kurdishness of the migrants should be part of a more extensive analysis of *nationalism*, *identity*, and *belonging* made me analyze the anti-Kurdish discourse of the migrants embedding it in the analysis of the process of identity construction after migration to Turkey.

The historical background and the theoretical ground for the analysis of the issue are laid out in the first chapter and the second chapter of the thesis includes the accounts and narratives of the interviewees and focuses on the migration. Given the fact that the process of construction of 'self' always presupposes an 'other,' this chapter mainly focuses on the relationship of the migrants with that 'other' of the identity construction process in Turkey. The impact of changing political processes and practices on identity construction along with the re-construction of the 'other' and the nationalism migrants have attached themselves after arrival in Turkey will be studied.

Migrant Settlements in Turkey

The narratives of settlement of the migrants show some similarities. The differences are based on whether they had a definite place to go to arrive. Those who

had relatives previously migrated to Turkey opted for those cities where their relatives had settled and those who did not have relatives and acquaintances were more or less settled in the places the government suggested them.

The migrants of 1989 migration got access to houses built for the migrants.[102] The Governor of İzmir, Nevzat Ayaz suggested that each migrant family should be settled in a village. Claiming that this would be a solution for the accommodation problem of the migrants, he argued that this can be applied in every village in Turkey.[103] Even if this is not applied in each village, in cities like İzmir and Bursa residential areas were built for the migrants. With regard to employment, big companies (such as Koç Holding) of Turkey were requested to give priorities to the *soydash* Turks in their drive for recruitment.[104] In addition to this, the government stated/promised to pay for housing rents of the migrants out of the Welfare Fund for one year.[105]

The fact that the migrants were given jobs and housing got reactions from Turkish citizens with claims that Turkish economy was not ready to employ and find solutions for the accommodation problem of so many people. When people from Turkey were asked their opinions many of them agreed Turkey had to prevent the migration of so many people and that she should not have opened the borders.[106] Besides, Turkish citizens find it unfair of the government to help the migrant Turks when those are not given the opportunity of settlement and when there are so many unemployed people.

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[102] *Milliyet*, 10 December 1989.
[103] *Milliyet*, 30 June 1989.
[104] *Milliyet*, 20 July 1989.
[105] *Milliyet*, 20 July 1989.
[106] *Milliyet*, 17 June 1989.

The migrants I interviewed and also others I have had the chance to have conversations are against these claims saying that the fact that they were given jobs was not only for the good of the migrants but also for Turkish economy. Claiming that those who were unqualified constituted the cheap labor force, the migrants argue that the economy benefited from their recruitment in various ways. The professionals on the other hand think that they provided benefits with their labor force without costing anything to the state. Bulgarian press on the other hand accounted that the migrants were mostly dissatisfied with the kinds of jobs they were offered. Claiming that they were being paid less and were given unskilled work, the employers benefited from "unorganized labor force of the newcomers."[107]

The Conflux of Migrations

In terms of the settlement types of the migrants, it can be argued that those who did not have access to the houses built by state have built their own houses. "Building houses" is the first objective of an migrant after arrival. Rather than buying apartments or flats, migrants tend to build their own houses. The first years of the life in Turkey is allotted to saving and gradually building the house, which embodies the settling process and establishing lives in Turkey. Existence in Turkey and belonging is materialized, guaranteed and rendered more permanent for the

[107] Vasileva, "Bulgarian Turkish Emigration and Return," p. 349.

migrants once they built and have houses of their own.[108] In the cities they arrived, mainly Bursa, İstanbul and İzmir, they established ghettos where they could have migrants as their neighbors. This provided the solidarity networks with other migrants while it also limited encounters with *others.*

1980s and 1990s were the years when several hundred of thousands of Kurds were displaced from their towns due to the "low intensity conflict" between the Turkish army and PKK.[109] The bulk of the internally displaced Kurds migrated to cities like Adana, Antalya, İstanbul, Kocaeli, Mersin, Ankara İzmir, Manisa.[110] Among these İstanbul, Kocaeli and İzmir were the cities where also the migrants from Bulgaria arrived in large numbers. This brings along the issue of "encounter" between these two communities since they encounter on the need to share dwelling and job opportunities. In its simplest terms,

> [c]ity life thus embodies as the contrary of the face-to-face ideal expressed by most assertions of community. City life is the "being-together" of strangers. Strangers encounter one another, either face to face or through media, often remaining strangers and yet acknowledging their contiguity in living and the contributions each makes to the others. In such encountering, people are not "internally" related, as the community theorists would have it, and do not understand one another from within their own perspective. They are externally related, they experience each other as *other*, different, from different groups, histories, professions, cultures, which they do not understand.[111] [emphasis added]

It can be argued that for the migrants from Bulgaria, this encounter turns out to be the means to consolidate the self and intensifies the prejudices about the Kurds and they literally remain "strangers" as will be discussed below. I should state it

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[108] This argument is based both on the interviews and participant observation.
[109] Bilgin Ayata and Deniz Yükseker, "A Belated Awakening: National and International Responses to the Internal Displacement of Kurds in Turkey," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 32 (Spring, 2005), p. 14.
[110] *Ibid.*, p.16
[111] Emily Honig, et. al, *Feminism and Community,* (Temple University Press), p. 252.

beforehand that here I am talking about the attitude of the Bulgarian migrants. Needless to say, this encounter could be analyzed better if the accounts of the Kurdish people were also included. However, for the scope of this research this discussion will be limited to the attitude and perspectives of the Turkish migrants from Bulgaria.

There are also economic factors that position the emigrants against the Kurdish people. Both the emigrants from Bulgaria and Kurdish emigrants came from rural areas. This turned them into cheap labor force in the urbanized centers. Besides, these two communities arrived in same cities during the same years therefore they had to share the employment opportunities in big cities and mostly in informal sector, which turned the other into rivals in their employment procedures in urban areas.

This encounter does not yield to relationship with the Kurds but instead it results in fortification of the walls between the two groups, that is, the prejudices became more rigid to block any relationship. In cities such as Bursa and İzmir, the two migrant groups settled in the suburbs where they built up *göçmen mahallesi* (migrant streets) next to *Kürt mahallesi* (the streets where only the Kurdish people live). For instance, next to our street in İzmir, there is another one where the Kurds live. Let alone the communication, even passing from their streets is avoided. Although it is the closest one, nobody goes to their grocery. The children are constantly warned that they should keep away from the Kurdish children so that they might not be harmed. They have never had problems with the Kurdish neighbours but those Bulgarian migrants are persist in perceiving Kurdish people as potential threats and what is permanent is the fear from the Kurds.

In an interview, İnci points out to this issue saying that the migrants have established *ghetto*-like streets where they would have the least contact with others, and narrates,

> For example, as a total you can call Hamitler a district where migrants predominantly inhabit, and also where Kurds mainly live. When you want to refer to a place where both the Kurds and migrants live, you can name Hamitler. But they do not contact in any way. For instance, in our street there are both many native Turks and migrants. They live together, but just across our street there are Kurds. The migrants get in touch with other migrants and the Kurds with other Kurds.[112]

She compares it to "oil and water" claiming that despite the spatial proximity, the Kurds and the migrants do not interact with each other. No matter how close they are, they remain as two distant communities with no interaction at all. Based on my participant observation and also the empirical research, I can claim that the migrants have the responsibility for this lack of interaction. Another exemplary case is that, there is a house built behind ours in İzmir. When my parents heard that the plot was sold to a Kurdish family, they started to feel worried about being close to the Kurds. In spite of the fact that my parents realized that that family were "good" people, they seem surprised with the fact that they have not done any wrong and insist on expecting harm from them. They are cautious about the existence of that Kurdish family, and they tended to develop strategies not to communicate with them. When

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[112] …mesela bir bütün olarak Hamitlere hem göçmen mahallesi diyebilirsin, bahsederken hem göçmenlerin çok yoğun yaşadığı bir yer, hem göçmen mahallesi diyebilirsin, hem Kürtlerin çok yoğun yaşadığı bir yer, Kürt mahallesi diyebilirsin. İkisinin de yoğun olarak yaşadıkları yerleri sayarken Hamitler diyebilirsin. Ama hiçbir şekilde ilişkilenmiyorlar. Mesela bizim sokakta bir sürü yerli var, ama bir sürü de göçmen var. Ama diğer yerlere göre bir arada yaşıyorlar. hemen ona paralel çapraz bir sokak, nerdeyse tamamı Kürt. Bütün komşuluk ilişkileri o sokakta göçmenler varsa kendi aralarında Kürtler varsa kendi aralarında kurulmuş.

those neighbors say hello to my parents, they pretend not to have heard or they do not go out to the balcony when the neighbors are there.

The Nationalist Discourse in Turkey and its non-Sovereign others

In order to understand nationalism of the Bulgarian migrants, first I will analyze the nationalist discourse and the essential questions of nationalistic imagination in Turkey in the period under consideration. Identity is relational and can be defined in terms of difference. The construction of 'self' always presupposes an 'other' and definition of self in terms of the other always involves the affirmation of the self by the denial and suppression of the other. In the context of the modern nation-state, often marked by multi-ethnic and multi-cultural populations, this "other" is usually the ethnicities that are *different* from the ethnicity on which nation-state bases itself.

The hegemonic identity in the Turkish state is that of a Sunni-Muslim Turk and since its establishment, there have been various "others" depending on either religion or ethnicity with the multi-ethnic and multi-religious population inherited from the Ottoman Empire. Non-Muslim groups and the Kurds have been termed perceived and represented as the others with varying degrees at different periods. However, Kurdish question has never ceased to occupy the key position in Turkish national discourse.

Starting from the mid-1920s up to 1980s, Turkish state tended to imagine that there were no Kurds in Turkey. This denial had to accept the existence when faced

with armed resistance by PKK, (*Kurdistan Workers Party,* or as is known in Kurdish *Partiya Karkerén Kurdistané)*. Nevertheless, Kurdish question has not been viewed and accepted as an "ethno-political question" but along with the Kurdish resistance, the Kurds have been treated as Kurdish tribes, Kurdish bandits making it an issue of reactionary politics, tribal resistance or the reasons rooted in regional backwardness, superstition and religious obscurantism, basically all that which is considered as "all the evils of Turkey's pre-modern past".[113]

That each identity establishes itself with reference to difference from the other leads us to question the concept of "power." In the context of nation-states, this identity is the sovereign identity and the other turns out to be the ethnicities that are different from the sovereign identity. Foucault's understanding of "power" provides us the guide to analyze and understand the power relationship between Turkish self and Kurdish other. In order to consider "self", we need to grasp how Foucault conceptualizes "power." In "Subject and Power," Foucault asserts that,

> The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome. Basically power is less a confrontation between two adversaries or the linking of one to the other than a question of government… "Government" did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It did not cover the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection, but also *the modes of action*, more or less considered and calculated, which were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others.[emphasis added][114]

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[113] Mesut Yeğen, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 4 (October 1999), p. 555.

[114] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and power," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* edited by H. L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow, (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1982), p.221.

Thus, since power needs an "other" to be exercised upon, this other should be legally free, which appears as a precondition for the effective working of power. Power is not to be found exclusively in institutions but it is embedded in the relations of force in the social and political field. The attitude of the migrants and their hatred towards the Kurds can be viewed as a reflection of the prevailing discourse about the Kurds. The identification with the discourse of power structures *the modes of action* in the sense that the migrants abstain from any relationship with the Kurds believing in the representation of the Kurdish people created by the hegemonic discourse.

When the hegemonic discourse in Turkey had already been saturated with the image of the Kurds as backward, tribal and violent; this anti-Kurdish discourse was intensified in 1980s when the armed resistance of PKK started. From then on, the Kurds have been perceived as the object of denouncement embodied by the PKK, condemned as the cause of hostility and appears as the "Evil Personified."[115] The Kurdish population has been responsible for all the evils of Turkey. In the chapter called "Responsibility for Evil" Connolly argues the issue referring to Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew.* Through Sartre, Connolly expresses that construing the Jew as responsible for all evils serves essential functions:

> First, it allows the anti-Semite to dissociate himself from responsibility for those things about himself or his condition he finds demeaning. "The anti-Semite is afraid of discovering that the world is ill-contrived, for then it would be necessary for him to invent and modify…Thus, he localizes all responsibility in the Jew."…Second, … "Underneath the bitterness of the anti-Semite is concealed the optimistic belief that harmony will be re-established once evil is eliminated." Sartre (pp.40-44) Third, it allows him to defer critical examination of the good he endorses…Finally, it licenses him to ignore the law in fighting the evil he has identified, allowing him to

[115] Slavoj Žižek, "The Spectre of Ideology," in Žižek (ed.) *Mapping Ideology*. (London: Verso, 1994), pp. 4-5.

> humiliate, degrade, or kill the other in the name of the good he refuses to examine. [116]

In the Turkish context, the "responsibility for evil" is imposed on the Kurdish population and it enables the Turks to dissociate themselves from the "evils" and purge the identity of the "other."

The hegemonic discourse is accompanied and reinforced by Orientalist discourse. In terms of the representation of the Orient and their durable effects, looking at Edward Said's explanation of three dimensions of Orientalism might shed light on the issue. In the simplest terms, Orientalism comes as a field of study brought about by the Western researchers. The second one, closely related with the first, is that this field of study has been a tool for the pragmatic aims of the Western imperialists. Last but not least, the contrast between the Orient and Occident is based on the epistemological and ontological dichotomies which are included in Self - Other dichotomy.[117]

Self is defined as the exact opposite of the essentialized Other. The effects of the representations of that Other are profound since *saying* means *actualizing*, as Said asserts quoting Nietzsche,

> a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms- in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are.[118]

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[116] Connolly, *Identity/ Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*, p. 100.
[117] Shelley Walia, *Edward Said ve Tarih Yazımı*, translated by Gürol Koca, (İstanbul: Everest, 2001), pp. 48-49.
[118] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 203.

Upon that, Said argues that Orient was only a word at the beginning which later on turned out to be a field of meanings that do not refer to the real Orient but to the associations loaded to the word.[119] In that way, East is turned into a discursive Orient which exists through the representations of the West.

In that way, East is turned into a discursive Orient which exists through the representations of the West. Homi Bhabha explores that representation issue with regard to colonialism highlighting dependence of colonial discourse on 'fixity' in ideological construction of other. He focuses on the discursive strategy that produces the colonized as a fixed reality and how this discourse about the other enables the colonizer to establish system of administration and instruction. Apparently, Bhabha refers to the administration and domination of the colonies.[120] It can also prove to be an effective tool to understand the Turkish context in the sense that the eastern parts of the country densely populated by the Kurdish population are seen and represented in the way the colonizers perceive their colonies and the image of the Kurdish people reveals the strategies of the discriminatory power. This is true for the Turkish context in which the Kurds exist through representations of the Turks and these representations highlight the responsibility of the Kurdish population for the evils.

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[119] *Ibid.*, p. 203.
[120] Homi K. Bhabha, "The Other Question: Homi Bhabha Reconsiders The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse," in *The Politics of Theory* edited by Francis Barker, (Colchester: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 18-36.

Dialogue with Ideology: Fighting for/against the "Bulgarian Model"

As Žižek puts it, "Ideology can designate anything from a contemplative attitude that misrecognizes its dependence on social reality to an action-orientated set of beliefs, from the indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to a social structure to false ideas which legitimate a dominant political power."[121] I want to draw upon an exemplary case which discloses the attitude of the Bulgarian migrants towards the Kurds and how they embody the dominant political power in Turkey. In November, 2007 Nurettin Demirtaş, who was the party leader of Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, DTP) at the time, made a speech and asked for the "Bulgarian model" to be adopted as a policy regarding the minorities, particularly the Kurds, in Turkey. He referred to the multicultural democracy of Bulgaria and the rights and freedoms bestowed on its minorities. With regard to Turkish minority in Bulgaria, these policies ensured the rights to identity, freedom of religion, and the study of Turkish language at schools. Demirtaş stated that Turkey should pursue the same path by giving the rights and democratic autonomy to Kurds and ensuring this in the constitution.[122] Upon that, Federation of Balkan Turks Migrant and Refugee Associations (*Balkan Türkleri Göçmen ve Mülteci Dernekleri Federasyonu*, BGF) issued a press release criticizing Demirtaş of making an analogy between the Kurds in Turkey and the Turks in Bulgaria. The

[121] Žižek, "The Spectre of Ideology," p.4
[122] *Milliyet*, 9 November 2007.

federation alleged that the Turks in Bulgaria did not intend to divide the country. The arguments of the federation were based on the claims that Demirtaş was a member of a party that made the demands of a "terrorist" organization public – without explicitly mentioning PKK.

The Turks arriving from Bulgaria to the longed for ancestral homeland are attached to the nationalist discourse in a way that the Kurds are perceived as a threat to the unity of the homeland. Only after migration, they could now own their state, and therefore, they feel to have strong claims to preserve it through homogeneity as is apparent in BGF's statement:

> In Bursa and across the country, the meetings that took place with the participation of the people from east, west, north and south have been the latest signs of our national unity and solidarity, love for Turkey, and our indivisible unity… To the imperialist powers and their "puppets" who attempt to spoil these; the discreet democratic reactions of our nation and "we are all soldiers if needed," "we are all Mehmetçik" [a name used to refer to any enlisted man in the Turkish army] have been the latest warnings showing that we are losing patience…We are vigorously condemning those who are trying to divide the country we founded together with discourses and actions that have nothing to do with the historical and current reality…We are asking these persons and groups to grasp the dignity of "single country," "single flag," and "single state" and to give up being the puppets of those who have designs on our country.[123]

In the statement, BGF obviously refers to Demirtaş, and the Kurds, but using the word Kurd, Kurds or Kurdish is apparently avoided. Although it is definitely

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[123] Bursa'da ve ülke çapında, doğulusunun, batılısının, güneylisinin ve kuzeylisinin oluşturduğu tüm sivil toplum örgütlerinin katılımı ile düzenlenen mitingler, Türkiye sevgisinin, birlik ve beraberliğimizin, bölünmez bütünlüğümüzün en son göstergesidir…Bunları bozma çabasında olan emperyalist güçlere ve "kuklalarına" milletimizin bu sağduyulu demokratik tepkileri ve "gerekirse hepimiz askeriz", "hepimiz mehmetçiğiz" sözleri sabrımızın taştığını gösteren son uyarıdır…Hep birlikte kurduğumuz ve yaşadığımız bu ülkeyi tarihi ve günümüz gerçeklerinden uzak söylem ve eylemlerle bölmeye çalışanları şiddetle kınıyoruz…Bu kişileri ve grupları, "tek vatan", "tek bayrak", "tek devlet" olmanın değerini idrak etmeye ve topraklarımızda gözü olanların kuklası olmaktan vazgeçmeye davet ediyoruz. BGF (Balkan Türkleri Göçmen ve Mülteci Dernekleri Federasyonu) (2007) *B.G.F. Basın Açıklaması 12.11.2007* Retrieved from: www.bgf.org.tr [14.03.2008].

about the Kurdish issue, the Kurds is only mentioned once when referring to the mainstream discourse that embraces "others" and erases the differences in the name of working for the country since its establishment.[124]

This is to offer identification with the nationalist discourse to the Kurds and throughout the statement the Kurds are rendered visible only when they serve the nation and can be appropriated to the nationalist discourse. This is not unusual since the claims that the Kurds do not exist are accompanied by the ones that refer to the War of Independence claiming that the Kurds fought with the Turks on the same fronts.

In an academic research called "The Migrant: Problems of the Identity and Adaptation of Bulgar-born Turks after their Migration in Turkey" the migrants are defined with their loyalty to the state and that loyalty is based on anti-Kurdishness. As the expression in the article summarizes the subject matter of this thesis, I would like to quote as it is, "[t]he migrants make everything to proof their loyalty. They actively involve themselves in the political life; work at the police; go to fight with Kurdish rebels, happy for the chance to give thanks with their lives to the country that has accepted them as a true motherland."[125]

This discussion of how the subjects echo the arguments of the state takes us to Althusser's theory of ideology. Althusser argues that wherever you locate

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[124] Türk Silahlı Kuvvetlerindeki ve birçok devlet kurum ve kuruluşundaki geleneğini köklü tarihten alan, Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün önderliğinde kurulan cumhuriyetimizin tarihi boyunca hiç bir etnik tartışma ve ayrım yapmadan "Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene" ilkesi ile devletimizin en alt yönetim kademelerinden başlayarak, başbakanlık, cumhurbaşkanlığı ve genelkurmay başkanlığı gibi en üst kademelere kadar Türkü, Çerkezi, Kürdü, Gürcüsü görev yapmış ve yapmaktadır.

[125] "The Migrant: Problems of the Identity and Adaptation of Bulgar-born Turks after their Migration in Turkey", p.133

ideology, you should bring in the question of consciousness. Ideology is both *for* the subject and *by* the subject. That is to say, there is no ideology without subject and vice versa. This double constitution makes ideology and subject essential for each other. Ideology is the imaginary form of relationship of the subject to his/her conditions of existence. While the conditions of existence are real, ideology is representational. The materiality of this representation can be found in the practices of the subjects. The individual person becomes a subject when *interpellated*, i.e. constituted in the social relations of ideology.

"There is democracy in Turkey"

As mentioned above, when I asked the migrants their opinions about the status of other ethnicities in Turkey, at times explicitly mentioning the Kurds especially with regard to Demirtaş's asking for Bulgarian model, they tended not to speak about the issue. The answer common to all the migrants I interviewed was that: "There is democracy in Turkey" and that the Kurds or others who are not of Turkish origin are not exposed to any sort of oppression. The migrants highlighted that their experiences cannot be compared to those of the Kurds or any others.

If they speak about the issue, the migrants seemed as if they all agreed to say the same thing:

> Now you are talking about DTP, there is no oppression in Turkey against the Kurds like the one we were exposed to there [in Bulgaria]. Here, the Kurds they are esteemed. How? For example if you wanted to attend university in Bulgaria and if you had a Turkish name, you are not admitted no matter how high your grades are…Here [in Turkey], if a Turkish citizen or a Kurdish

> citizen wants to study there is no such thing. OK they [the Kurds] might ask for it [the Bulgarian model]. I would accept it if they were exposed to oppression like the one in Bulgaria.[126]

Perceiving their experiences and those of the Kurds incomparable, the migrants tend to term theirs as unique and they blame the Bulgarian authorities for their sufferings in Bulgaria whereas they blame the Kurds in Turkey on the grounds that they resist when there is no reason for resistance.

Basing their arguments on the idea that all the Kurds are traitors and deeming their own experiences unique provide the migrants the grounds for being against the Kurds. The migrants argue that the atrocities of the Bulgarian state has nothing to do with the anti-Kurdish discourse and practices in Turkey. Contending that there is democracy in Turkey and the Kurds are resisting without case, enables them to encumber the Kurdish population with the responsibility for evil.

"'We' are Not *Bulgarian Turks*"

When I ask the interviewees about the perceptions of the denizens of Turkey about the migrants, the interviews reveal that it was more or less a smooth encounter. That is, the participants state that although there were prejudices against them, they made an appearance and proved to be good citizens. On the other hand, there is an

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[126] Şimdi DTP liler için söylüyorsun, bize oradaki yapılan zulüm burada Kürt vatandaşlarına yapılmıyor mesela. Burada Türk vatandaşından çok çok önem verilmiş onlara. Nasıl, mesela Bulgaristan'da bir üniversiteye gidecek olsan bir kere ismin Türk ismi oluncasıya, bir kere kabul edilinmiyor, notun ne kadar da yüksek olsa…burada bir Türk vatandaşı, bir Kürt vatandaşı okuyacam dese burada o çeşit şeyler yok. Ha onlar isteyebilir. Mesela Bulgaristanda bize yapılan zulümler bunlara olsa ha onlar o zaman tamam derim.

aspect that needs analysis. The migrants note that when they are identified as "Bulgarian Turks" (*Bulgar Türkleri*) they immediately object to such identification. The migrants claim that calling them as Bulgarian Turks is due to lack of knowledge as the fact that they are not of Bulgarian origin should be known by Turkish people. The migrants themselves use definitions such as *soydash*, migrant or Turks of Bulgaria but they are strictly against the definition as "Bulgarian Turks." In a group interview, they start discussing this expression,

> Faruk: Good, Bulgarian Turk. Does (s)he know what Bulgarian Turk is? Then why should a Bulgarian be here? Right, we came from Bulgaria but we are the descendants of Turks. We are not Bulgarians.
> Hakan: We are the descendants of the Ottoman.
> Figen: Call it Turks who came from Bulgaria. It is obvious that we are not Bulgarians.
> Faruk: We are Turks, why should someone who is not a Turk be here?[127]

While they disaffirm being called as "Bulgarian Turks," they do this underlying the ethnic origin. That is to say, they articulate that calling someone as "Bulgarian Turks" eradicates the Turkishness and thus they call for alternative terms such as Turks of Bulgaria (*Bulgaristan Türkleri*) or *soydash*, *muhacir* or migrant.

[127] F.T.:Güzel Bulgar Türkü. Bulgar Türkünün ne olduğunu biliyor mu? O zaman Bulgar'ın burda ne işi var. Doğru biz Bulgaristandan geldik ama biz Türk oğlu ve Türküz. Bulgar değiliz ki.
H.S.: Osmanlının torunlarıyız biz.
F.S: Bulgaristandan gelen Türkler deyin ya. Bulgar olmadığımız besbelli.
F.T: Türküz biz, Türk olmayan adamın burda ne işi var?

The anti-Kurdish Discourse: Attachment to Nationalism in Turkey

The Kurds have increasingly becoming the object of hatred since the Turks from Bulgaria migrated to Turkey. The migrants arrived in a context where there had been an ongoing oppression against the Kurdish population. The similarity of the experiences with regard to the form of oppression, it should be highlighted in the sense that just like Turks in Bulgaria, the identity of the Kurds was denied in Turkey. As the names of Turkish origin were replaced with the Bulgarian ones, Kurdish people were not allowed to give names which include letters from Kurdish alphabet. Speaking Kurdish in public was banned just like speaking Turkish was banned in Bulgaria. In brief, being the others of different nation states, both Turks in Bulgaria and Kurds in Turkey have experienced oppression whereby they have both been to be purged of their ethnic identity.

However, as those migrating from Bulgaria were Turks and they were arriving in the homeland where they can realize, actualize and fulfill their Turkish ethnic identity, they used the existing hegemonic discourses and practices to transform it to national identity and there was nothing confusing in the way they adopted Turkish nationalism. The main principle of nationalism in Turkey was anti-Kurdishness and the migrants did not hesitate to embrace that nationalism. As the national identity of the Turkish sovereign depends on denial of the non-sovereign other, this anti-Kurdishness has been essential for the transformation of the migrants' ethnic identity to national identity and it has been the means to share the identity of the sovereign.

This chauvinism or so-called nationalism is pertinent to the fact that in the identification process of the migrants, attachment to the extant nationalism in Turkey has sustained being recognized as Turks. It is also closely related with the construction of the self and fulfilling the fantasy of Turkishness. There is no place for empathy towards other ethnicities, basically towards the Kurds, in that fantasy. On the contrary, they have been viewed as a threat to the object of desire.

This desire shows itself in the fantasy of Turkishness and it is thought to be fulfilled with arrival in Turkey. A 1989 migrant, who was only two years old when she arrived in Turkey, narrates that her parents and the Turks in Bulgaria regarded Turkey as a place that would embrace them. They imagined that exclusion and marginalization would come to an end when they arrive in Turkey[128] and that most of them realized that arrival was accompanied by a new form of marginalization.

But the fantasy of sharing the identity of the sovereign, i.e. fantasy of Turkishness, encounters another obstacle leading to further marginalization. Being marginalized in Bulgaria as Turks, they are now marginalized in Turkey as Bulgarians. The narratives reveal that, upon arrival in Turkey, they need to answer the questions and convince the other Turks that they are true Turks. Thus, the Turkishness can not be fulfilled even if the arrival in the symbolic homeland is achieved.

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[128] Tamamen beni kucaklayacak bir yer olarak görmüşler Türkiyeyi. Bulgaristan da dışlandım, ezildim, ötekileştirildim… Beni kucaklayacak; halbuki buraya gelince gerçeğin hiç de öyle olmadığını. Hani tamam, Türklükten dolayı bazı ayrıcalıklara sahipler aslında olmaması gerekse dahi ama. Ekonomik durum zaten hayatımızda böyle en temel şey. Her ne kadar biraz romantik yaklaşsalar da. Hayatın tokadını yiyince yani ıııı falan olmuşlar. Geldik de ne gördük moduna girmişler. Çoğu gelmekten çok pişman. Annemler değil ama onların teyzeleri falan orda kalsaydık diyo.

Turkishness does not cease to be the object of desire even after arrival in Turkey as it is the *lack* which constitutes this fantasy. The migrants continue to be others in Turkey being usually called *muhacirs*. Although they find it acceptable and use even when they talk about other migrants, they cannot tolerate when they are called and/or perceived as Bulgarians. As fulfillment of Turkishness depends on being called Turks, their Turkishness always remains a lack, a fantasy for them: a fantasy of becoming fully fledged Turks, becoming part of the sovereign identity and sharing sovereign identity, so that they would be recognized, accepted and respected as Turks by the other.

The fact that their desire for Turkishness, the desire to be considered as true Turks, part of the sovereign identity in their 'homeland', remains largely unfulfilled makes their hatred of the 'other' more intense. Desire is always determined by the object of desire, and this object is always external to it. Therefore, the desire can never be fulfilled.

> Desire "takes off" when "something" (its object-cause) embodies, gives positive existence to its "nothing," to its void. This "something" is the anamorphic object, a pure semblance that we can perceive clearly only by "looking awry." It is precisely (and only) the logic of desire that belies the notorious wisdom that "nothing comes from nothing." In the movement of desire, "something comes from nothing." It is true that the object-cause of desire is a pure semblance, but this does not prevent it from triggering off a whole chain of consequences which regulate our "material," "effective" life and deeds.[129]

[129] Slavoj Žižek, "Looking awry," *October* 50, (Autumn 1989), p. 34.

This "object-cause of desire" is in this case the Turkishness which appears as the object of desire. It can never be fully satisfied and it remains as a lack in reality and underlying the lack is a fantasy rooted in the desire for power and recognition.

Being a Turk in Turkey

In his analysis on "The Politics of Territorial Democracy" William Connolly explores the relationship between identity and state. Connolly makes a summary of this relationship based on the questions of functionality of collective identity and analyzes it as the means to secure "self". He argues that the relations between an identity and collective identity underlie the dangerous and dignified connection between the individual and the state.[130] With regard to the question of identity and state, Connolly identifies that state is the official center of self-conscious action. It is the dignified entity that represents *us* and that is responsible for *us* while it tries to put into practice what we attempt to be.[131] Being the object of collective resentment when it humiliates or challenges the actions of collective identity, in this case the state from which migrants dissociate themselves is the Bulgarian state whereas the dignified agent that represents the *self* is the Turkish state with its institutions and symbols.

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[130] Connolly, *Identity/ Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox,* p. 252.
[131] *Ibid.*, p. 255.

Faruk, who used to be a history teacher in Bulgaria and who has been professing this job here in Turkey, talks about how Turkish flag is precious for him and says that,

> Our people respect the state and the flag. They can not dispense with their state and flag. For us, state and flag. Because we are a society which had troubles for these. [He is talking about the first time he went to the city center in İzmir] Then I saw a soldier for the first time, I was so happy. I gave money and bought a flag. Can you imagine, we have so little money in our pockets? When I moved to my own house, the first thing I bought was flag.[132]

His narrative was replete with the love for the state and he constantly emphasized how proud he was being a Turk. The love for the state which is embodied in this narrative in the Turkish flag is true for other migrants as well. Thus, nationalism of the migrants is disclosed in their association of themselves with the state and its symbols and it assures membership of the nation.

Nostalgia: Longing or Belonging?

This difference in the experiences in Bulgaria manifests itself in the way Bulgaria is now remembered. As Roland Barthes explains, "facts are representations of the raw material of life; facts are generated through a process of encoding which has a cyclical structure: that which is noted derives from the notable but the notable only makes sense with reference to that which is noted."[133] In that, relying on my

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[132] Bizim insanımızın içinde devletine ve bayrağına karşı saygı vardır. Kesinlikle devletini ve bayrağını bir yana bırakmaz. Bizde devlet ve bayrak. Çünkü biz bunun sıkıntısını yaşamış bir toplumuz…o zaman ilk kez asker gördüm o kadar mutlu oldum. Ben para verdim bayrak aldım. Düşünebiliyor musun para yok cebimizde. Evime taşındığımda ilk aldığım şey bayraktır.

[133] Anne Fuchs, "Towards an Ethics of Remembering: The Walser Bubis Debate and The Other of Discourse," *The German Quarterly* 75, no. 3, (Summer 2002), p. 235.

observations as a participant observant, I want to point out to the *silence* regarding the life in Bulgaria. Narratives, memories or stories regarding, not their life there, but the sufferings in Bulgaria do not have part in their daily life. During the interviews I realized that they do not mention their Bulgarian names, even unintentionally. This reminded me of my childhood memory regarding the arrival of my relatives from Bulgaria. I and my brother used to ask them their Bulgarian names and were in a way liked the names which were similar to those we used to hear in foreign movies. The elders were reluctant to tell whereas children of our age would tell when we insisted. At times we called them with their Bulgarian names but they did not like being addressed in that way would have a grim expression. Even if I grew up in this migrant community, I realized that I had known only little about the events until I decided on this subject matter. I can say that it is not my unwillingness to learn but the "paradox of silences".[134] Despite the fact that the experience of violation is essential for the existence, the survivor becomes silent about it.

> This is so not so much because of the difficulty of reporting what happened but more so because of the alternative logic of the body which houses these proto-memories and plays out the violation as something that is both ever-present in the body and yet distanced from the self. Such memories can-not easily be integrated into the story of the self because if they were included they would threaten to destroy it.[135]

The reports regarding the assimilation and the changing of the names operates at the level of "collective memory as a socially engendered and troped master

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[134] Roberta Culbertson, "Embodied Memory, Transcendence and Telling: Recounting Trauma, Re-Establishing the Self," *New Literary History* 26, no. 1 (Winter 1995), p. 170.
[135] Anne Fuchs, "Towards an Ethics of Remembering: The Walser Bubis Debate and The Other of Discourse," p. 240.

narrative which addresses *present identity needs* rather than past events."[136] Thus, the memories and the silences are with the present context where the identity as Muslim Turks can be realized and perpetuated.

> The period immediately prior to the most severe trauma - the renaming - is obscured in the pink haze of "happy, peaceful times" in the mind of practically each emigrant. In their words, it was true that they were earning little money with little work, but they made a living, their work was appreciated, they were not made to feel like strangers, moreover, they had Bulgarian friends, they visited one another, went to parties, enjoyed themselves, - life was following its regular course. And then out of the blue, in 1984 the landscape changed drastically: friends were no longer friendly; nobody would look them in the eye and show sympathy; people preferred not to address them even, because using either their former Muslim or their current Slavic names involved taking a stance. All in spite of the fact that they were, so they claim, thoroughly Bulgarianised by now, their children barely spoke Turkish, they had neglected their religion and lived like "everybody else."[137]

The memories regarding life in Bulgaria is apparently show a sharp contrast between those before the assimilation and after. They insistently express that beforehand the relations with Bulgarian friends never made them feel that they are "different." Whether it is through forgetting that the past is reconstructed in a more positive way, whether they are longing for "a loss of a better past"[138] cannot be exactly known apart from the narratives that these reconstructions of the past memories enable. However, it should be stated that these memories render "the memory of living in a securely circumscribed place, with a sense of stable

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[136] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

[137] Zhelyazkova, A."The Social and Cultural Adaptation of Bulgarian Immigrants in Turkey," in *Between Adaptation and Nostalgia: The Bulgarian Turks in Turkey* edited by Zhelyazkova. Retrieved from: http://www.omda.bg/imir/studies/nostalgia_1.html.

[138] Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia," *Public Culture*, 12, no.1 (Winter 2000), p. 215.

boundaries and a place-bound culture with its regular flow of time and a core of permanent relations" which "have staying power."[139]

The use of word "suddenly" to describe the turn in the experiences that comes with the assimilation marks the shift. The interviewees' accounts reveal that they had not had troubles due to their minority status in Bulgaria before the assimilation whereas there are contradictory explanations regarding that period. H.'s words saying "It was really good beforehand"[140] and another interviewee reports that he used to hear such things as "'He is a good boy. You can not believe he is a Turk' as if they are complimenting."[141]

Therefore, the term nostalgia for the Bulgarian migrants can be used to refer to the memories regarding the period before the changing of the names. The assimilation apparently brings the happy life to halt which substantiates the fact that "[l]onging on a large scale is what makes history."[142] This is collective amnesia caused by the trauma of the changing of the names which in turn leads to idealizing the period before 1985 and triggers nostalgia.[143]

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[139] *Ibid.*, p. 215
[140] "Öncesinde gayet iyiydi."
[141] Şey derlerdi mesela "Türk'tür ama iyi çocuktur" falan "Türk ama görsen türk demezsin" falan. İltifat ediyor sana bu şekilde.
[142] William Cunningham Bissell, "Engaging Colonial Nostalgia," *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 2 (2005), p.215.
[143] Sait Öztürk, "Devletler Arasında: Bulgaristan Türklerinin Ölümü ve Yeniden Doğuşu," (n.p.), p. 21.

Silence

Apart from that, they constantly emphasize that the Bulgarian migrants are typically silent submissive and even if they are exposed to an injustice, they are inclined to keep silent. In a conversation with an migrant of my age, he defined this characteristic as "socio-phobia" arguing that the Bulgarian migrants are afraid to speak in public either about their opinions or when they need to say something. Most of the migrants who speak about this tendency to remain silent relate it with the oppression of the regime in Bulgaria, which is in a way verbalized by Faruk,

> Our people are silent, in a position where they can not complain or express themselves because we were grown up like that in our villages. Who can reveal their problems in front of others? In addition to this, think about the Bulgarian coercion and oppression. Not claiming one's rights. You will go to any government office, and, it's impossible. Even if you go nobody will talk to you. You already know that.[144]

And at another point of the interview, he talks about the fact that Bulgarian migrants are quite hardworking people and then switches to this issue saying,

> [Referring to other people's words there] Although some can call it the best thing the regime taught us, actually in my opinion it is not, not claiming one's rights via suppressing is not a good thing. Not claiming one's rights. They impose you a characteristic and you obey that.[145]

Language involves both what is spoken and unspoken. Silence is also part of the language and power is concealed in what is unspoken. As the language of other is

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[144] Bizim insanımız sessiz, kendi derdini anlatamayacak pozisyonda çünkü biz köylerimizde öyle yetiştik. kim kendi derdini konu komşu ortasında açığa vurur?bunun yanında bir de bulgar baskı ve zulümünü şey yap. Hak aramama. Devlet kapısına gidip de sen gideceksin, bir düşün mümkün değil. Zaten gitsen de seni kimse Kabul etmez. Onu biliyorsun zaten.

[145] Ama rejimin bize yaptığı en büyük iyilik diyorsunuz ama aslında bana gore işte böyle sindirerek hak aramama. Hak aramama. Sana belirli bir kalıp biçmiştir, o kalıbın dışına çıkamıyorsun.

never possible under judiciary power, despite the willingness to speak the continuation of power and oppression can be traced in silences.

Whether it is related with this silence they attribute to themselves or not has not found an answer. Nevertheless, when they are asked about their political stances and opinions about Turkey, they usually tend not to speak. The responses to the questions about the political conditions especially pointing out to other ethnicities in Turkey, they insistently cut it short claiming that there is democracy in Turkey.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to show that he anti-Kurdishness of the migrants from Bulgaria can be analyzed provided that it is embedded in the nalysis of nationalism in Turkey. How sovereign identity establishes itself in the Turkish context is decisive in how these migrants construct the Kurds as the others of their identification processes. However, when we include particularities of the Turkish nationalism and the dichotomies of east and west, we see that Orientalism rooted in power relations reinforces this nationalism. Being of European origin, migrants tend to associate themselves with these discourses to construct their identities.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In the light of the theoretical discussion of identity combined with empirical research including interviews and participant observation, I attempted to examine the nationalism of the 1989 Turkish migrants from Bulgaria and their anti-Kurdishness. The discussion of the process of identification in general has revealed that *self* is established in relation with the *other*. Each identity constructs itself through estrangement from the other, which serves to draw the boundaries of the self. My concern has been to investigate how differences are articulated at the personal, relational and collective levels in the formation of migrant belonging and in the process of identity construction.

Considering the Turkish identity in particular, it can be argued that the sovereign Turkish *self* constructs itself against the Kurdish *other*. Anti-Kurdish discourse has been one of the main principles of the nationalist discourse in Turkey and Kurdish people have been regarded as the other of the Turkish identity. In a similar vein, Kurdish identity has been the other for the migrant Turks whose identity construction has been marked by passage from one country to another. The geographical movement yields to *deterritorialization* and *reterritorialization* of identity, a process fuelled by yearning for belonging. In their attempts to establish their identity in the Turkish context, migrants appropriate this anti-Kurdish discourse and turn into agents of Turkish nationalism.

Nationalism is paramount to identity formation in Turkey and it secures attachment to Turkish identity for the migrants. However, the fact that the migrants are more nationalist than other Turks in certain cases with regard to the Kurdish question and that their anti-Kurdish discourse is more intense at particular moments has alerted me to the ways in which Turkish migrant identity is signified and constructed. An understanding of how nationalist discourse is reified in the experiences and interactions of the migrants can be offered if political, economic and social dimensions of the issue are analyzed.

The sentiment of *homeland* is crucial in order to understand the sense of *belonging* among the migrants. Turkey had been considered as the ancestral homeland for Turks in Bulgaria. The empirical research discloses that those who used to live in rural districts were more concerned with ethno-religious identity. On the other hand, those who used to live in cities were more integrated to Bulgarian community and their accounts revealed that signifiers of ethno-religious identity were not so implicated in their lives. The former group express that they had always had the intentions to migrate to Turkey, whereas the latter say that they were left with no other choice but to migrate to Turkey in the wake of the imposition of the assimilation policy. However, for both groups Turkey represented the country to which they thought they were connected by ethno-religious identity. The narratives reveal that the concept of homeland started to refer to both Turkey and Bulgaria after the migration. Turkey turned out to be the homeland where they could live and realize their Turkishness upon migration, whereas Bulgaria turned out to be the

homeland representing their past they had left behind and as such mostly turned into object of nostalgia.

Regarding the identification processes of the migrants after their arrival in Turkey, the narratives indicate for the most part that they were not given a warm welcome by the other Turks when they arrived in Turkey. There was confusion about whether these migrants were of Bulgarian origin or whether they were Christians and the migrants had to respond to these questions. These questions and responses to them point out to the fact that the migrants felt the need to prove their Turkishness to other Turks by fulfilling/realising their identity as Turks. In their narratives, the migrants constantly emphasize that they are Turks, which signifies that migration to the ancestral homeland has not resolved the identity question. The need to prove Turkishness is constituted by the desire for the identity that is to be pursued. At that point, anti-Kurdish discourse arrives as the means to accomplish Turkishness enabling the migrants to attach themselves to nationalism in Turkey as well as to other Turks.

Examining the specificities of the time of migration, we should note that late 1980s were the years when anti-Kurdish discourse was getting increasingly more intense. The migrants arrived in a context where armed conflict between the Turkish army and the PKK had started and the media was displaying the images of Kurdish resistance fighters threatening the nationalistic imagination. The Kurdish people were represented secessionists with the intention to divide the country, an image which has endured over the years. Given these conditions there are therefore reasons to argue that the migrants did not hesitate to adopt the Kurds as the other of their

identity in the process of trying to belong to the ancestral homeland and become fully-fledged Turks.

In addition to these factors, we should also take into account the fact that both the Turkish migrants from Bulgaria and the Kurdish people who were displaced and driven away from their hometowns and settled in the same cities in large numbers. This was not a smooth encounter as both of these communities *had to* leave their place of origin and to make their living in big cities such as Istanbul, Izmir and Bursa. It may be argued that Kurdish and migrant people constituted cheap labor force in these big cities. Sharing job opportunities turned these communities into rivals for employment and turned this encounter into competition. Thus, it can be argued that financial concerns have also appeared as a factor pitting these two communities against each other, as competing forces for economic resources in the Turkish market place.

Restating the hypothesis offered at the beginning of this research, it can be stated that the contingency of social, political and economic conditions result in the fact that, even though the Turkish community in Bulgaria may have been subjected to repression by Bulgarian regime, upon arrival in Turkey these migrants turned into the agents of official Turkish nationalism trying to justify their belonging by taking part in the suppression of the others. Migrants' view of Turkish politics, largely a product of the official nationalist discourse, enables them to justify their anti-Kurdish discourse. During the interviews, I asked the migrants about their experiences in Bulgaria and argued that their experiences resemble those of the Kurds in Turkey. In an attempt to point out to the specific form of oppression migrants had gone through

in Bulgaria, I tried to reveal that the Kurds are also being oppressed because of their ethnic identity in the Turkish context. Their response was that the Kurds in Turkey are not exposed to any sort of discrimination. The migrants' claim that unlike Bulgaria "there is democracy in Turkey", should be seen as an attempt to render invisible the oppression of the Kurds in Turkey.

The argument of the migrants in this respect reveal their desire to express that they do not want to believe that the Kurds in Turkey are devoid of certain rights which they had been deprived of when they lived in Bulgaria, an argument which brings forth the image of a peaceful Turkish context in which the Kurds live but threaten to subvert without having any legitimate to do so. Turkish migrants either *can not* compare their experiences with those of the Kurds or when they do, they emphasize the fact that in Bulgaria they did not attempt to divide the country, they did not threaten the territorial integrity of the state. Arguing that the Kurds are pose a threats to the territorial integrity of the Turkish state despite the fact that they enjoy the rights and freedoms given by the Turkish state to all citizens, enables the migrants to see their experiences as incomparable to those of the Kurds thus effectively blocking the way to empathy towards the other.

The discourse of the migrants about the Kurds and their status in the Turkish nation-state is also grounded in 'orientalism' which reinforces the nationalist discourse intensifying their hatred against the Kurdish people. The nationalistic claims that the Kurds are charged with intentions to divide the country are also supported by orientalist characterization. For migrants, a Kurdish person represents the evils in the country, and this evilness is a common trait which is then attributed to

the people from the eastern regions. The migrants constantly tell stories about the Kurdish people in which orientalist notions pervade. The Kurds are seen as the exact opposite of what the migrant as a "European Turk" represents.

Both the findings from the interviews and participant observation have unraveled that this anti-Kurdish discourse prevails in daily lives of the migrants. However, in this respect I should also state that, in addition to the findings of the interviews, I have also relied on my observations in the present and final analysis. This I thought was necessary primarily due to the prevailing tendency among the migrants "not to speak" about political issues in the public. The focus has been on individual experiences rather than institutional practices of identity, and I tried to scrutinize the narratives of the migrants using them as the means to explore their process of identity construction and to explain their anti-Kurdish attitude. The arguments suggested in this thesis should be considered as the findings of the fieldwork. These conceptualizations and judgments have sprung from definite observations along with conducted interviews and it should be born in mind that will not remain static but will evolve, and in so doing they may change and show variations over time.

After having conducted this research, I think that there are certain questions that could have helped to enrich the analysis this study. A comparative study with the migrants that had arrived during previous migration waves would be useful to reveal the similarities and differences in their perceptions of the nation and nationalism and tell us more about the anti-Kurdishness of the 1989 migrants. In addition to this, I feel if I had been able to include accounts of the Kurdish people about the migrants

and make the voice of the other heard, the scope of analysis would be broader lending itself to a more substantial study. The inclusion of the migrant associations and their effects on migrant integration processes in the study as well as the inclusion of institutional accounts could have further enriched this study. I tried to focus exclusively on the narratives of the 1989 migrants in an attempt to understand their discursive formations and the ensuing processes and practices.

Leaving these as questions to be pursued and included in future studies, I hope I could say with reasonable confidence that this study, with all its limitations and shortcomings, will help to enhance our understanding of the identification process of this particular migrant group. In this thesis, presenting the theoretical and historical of the processes and practices leading to the 1989 migration, I tried to analyze the narratives of the respondents through the lens of definite theories that rendered the analysis of migrants' nationalism possible. Embedding individual accounts within the wider framework of the analysis helps to focus on the contingency of political, social, and economic conjunctures and enables us to explore the anti-Kurdish discourses and practices among the migrants.

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