

## DIASPORA STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES: MODERNITY, POWER AND IDENTITY

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*A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of the earth, for the labors men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home a familiar unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge... The best introduction to astronomy is to think of the nightly heavens as a little lot of stars belonging one's own homestead.*

George Eliot

### ABSTRACT

In recent years there is an increase in the field of social sciences regarding the concepts of identity and diasporas. These concepts also take place in the fields of history, social psychology and sociology as a major concept of their own agendum. Minorities living in a different environment constitute their own existence and identity through constituting knowledge regarding “who” and “what” they are and/or they are not. Despite that, central authorities aim to obtain social integrity in order to provide order. Thus social and symbolic borders must be leak proof. The effort to obtain order is one of the most important aspects of nation-states as well as of social sciences. In this paper, the development of the concept of diaspora as a main theme in social sciences along with the increase of studies related to the concepts such as otherness, hybridism, cultural diversity and group classification is being focused on with special reference to the usage of knowledge in modernity.

**Key Words:** *Diaspora, Modernity, Power, Knowledge, Social Sciences, Identity.*

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## SOSYAL BİLİMLERDE DİASPORA ÇALIŞMALARI: MODERNLİK, İKTİDAR VE KİMLİK

### ÖZET

Günümüzde sosyal bilimlerde kimlik ve diaspora çalışmalarında bir artış vardır. Bu kavramlar tarih, sosyal psikoloji, sosyoloji gibi alanların kendi gündemlerini tesis ederlerken kullandıkları ana kavramlardır. Farklı bir çevrede yaşayan azınlıklar, kendi varoluş ve kimliklerini, kim ve ne oldukları ve/veya olmadıklarına dair bilgi aracılığı ile oluştururlar. Buna karşılık merkezi otoriteler ise düzeni sağlamak için sosyal bütünleşmeyi temin etme yollarını ararlar. Düzen sağlama çabası ulus devletlerin olduğu kadar sosyal bilimlerin de en önemli niteliğidir. Bu çalışmada sosyal bilimlerin temel kavramlarından biri olan diasporanın gelişimi, ilgili diğer kavramlar olan öteki, melezlik, kültürel çeşitlilik ve grup ayırımına odaklanılarak ve modernitede bilginin nasıl kullanıldığı ele alınacaktır.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Diaspora, Modernite, İktidar, Bilgi, Sosyal Bilimler, Kimlik.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years notion identity emerges as an important discussion field. It became a critical subject on national, nation-cultural and ethnic (macro) level and on the individual level (micro). For, the answer to the question of with which (political, cultural and ideological) relationships social bonds are to be built, lay in the identity discussions. Modern age, which is claimed of being finalized by some theoreticians and not by others<sup>1</sup>, is the source for the main conditions of social sciences. The dominant factors of identity in modern times are nations and nation-states. Affiliation, which was characterized with the identification with a monarch or with being the subject of a monarch before modernity, now characterized with an ethnically based notion of a nation or citizenship related with a nation-state. Although based on the idea of Enlightenment, this notion of membership bears a transcendental quality. For, it hasn't got the legitimacy of the religious-communitarian notion of identity which was refuted by it. In fact nation and nation state citizen identity are both outcomes of the efforts of modern state to reinstate itself as strong (profound) as the *anciént regime*. These efforts somehow succeeded. In this respect national identity came to the meaning of being 'one in sentiment, one in loyalty, one in self-abnegation' in spite of

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<sup>1</sup> J. Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society, Translated by Thomas A. McCarthy, Beacon Press, Boston & Mass., 1984; A. Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1990.

many differences between its members.<sup>2</sup> This state of union is fictional rather than being natural. It depends on the assimilation of different and diverse ethnic origins into a national identity under the pressure of legal-political and economic constraints. In this regard it is possible to assert that this nation building process depends on a kind of historical perception/understanding which is intermingled with myths. In other words concepts of nation and national identity do not depend on the recollection of a real past; rather it depends on forgetting the past that is full of diverse, different and heterogeneous qualities of numerous ethnic groups.<sup>3</sup> However this Eurocentric notion of nation building became a world system in the course of colonialism.

The relationship between the development of social sciences and the emergence of nation-states coincide with the same process. In this regard the main subject of early social sciences, sociology in particular, is nations. The relatively late emergence of the concepts such as ethnic groups and ethnic cultures exemplifies this situation. This can also be seen in the nation-states' pursuit of loyal citizens throughout the world.<sup>4</sup> In this, nation-states especially differ from their neighbours according to the official languages they have formed and/or adopted. While this process of formation is supported by scientific institutions, at the same time minority languages have been assimilated into the official language of the nation-state. Conscription and compulsory educational services also took part in this process of nation building. Masses were educated in the official language and the minority cultures, languages and local loyalties were weakened in favour of nation-states.<sup>5</sup> This nationalist trend has had echoes in the field of social sciences. It is true to assert that social sciences, sociology in particular, provided an infrastructure for the nationalist program. The dominance of positivism in the early times of sociology paved the way for nation-states by moulding masses into a uniform shape in order to mobilize them easily.

The process of nation building is seen as one of the main indicators of modernization. The emergence of social sciences and the concepts of modern nation-state are symmetrical. Major subjects of early modern social sciences were frequently related to nations and nation-states. The parallelism between the emergence of sociology and nation-state and the political developments of the era constitutes the main cause for this situation. These developments also provide an international system encompassing the national borders. Modernity imposed this organization type and ideology to

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<sup>2</sup> I. Wallerstein, "The End of What Modernity?", *Theory and Society*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1995, p. 478.

<sup>3</sup> M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, Sage Publications, London, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> For information regarding Turkish experience see F. Üstel, "Makbul Vatandaş"ın Peşinde II. Meşrutiyet'ten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Wallerstein, *ibid*, p. 479.

the lands under its sovereignty, especially in the colonialist era. In this, non-western societies developed nationalistic views under western sovereignty; their life worlds have not required this kind of uniformity though. In this regard non-western societies have begun to refer themselves as races, nations and etc.<sup>6</sup>

The emergence and development of social sciences also can be best understood from the perspective of colonialism. In this, it is possible to relate the emergence of social sciences and the colonialism -and orientalism as an aspect of it. Most of the studies of the era mostly have taken nations and national cultures as different entities in a comparative manner. In this regard most of the social scientific attention paid to the subjects such as differences and the limits of the cultures and the relations between them until the second half of the 20th century. The emergence of ethnic groups, their differentiating characteristics was not taken seriously.<sup>7</sup> The natural quality of ethnic groups was neglected and nation, as an imaginary category which is defined by state, covered the organic reality. This approach denotes the assimilation and if it is not possible then to marginalize the different elements with their different cultures, languages and traditions take place under the imaginary communities (nations). Cultural minorities have been neglected politically as well as scientifically through the modern era.

## **2. ETHNIC, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES IN THE GLOBALIZATION PROCESS**

In the course of globalization which is characterized by the development in the communication and transportation technologies, nation-states exposed to new challenges never experienced before. The modern notion of national citizenship which is the direct outcome of modern nation-state also exposed to the challenges today through the identity politics. The return of religion as well as the adoption (and maybe the invention) of new and transnational identities by religious groups, ethnic and minority groups different than the existing national identities became possible in this epoch. These weakening developments also caused erosion on the homogenizing quality of nation and allowed cultural minorities to express their differences.

Another important process alongside the regression in the nationalism and the formation of new identities is the inclination of people from different cultures to live side by side with other people coming from other cultures in the same space. In this regard today the concepts such as national minorities, ethnic groups, religious minorities and the identity

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<sup>6</sup> A. Giddens, *Sociology*, Polity Press Cambridge, 2006, (5th Edition), p. 487.

<sup>7</sup> F. Barth, "Introduction", *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries the Social Organization of Culture Difference*, (Ed.) Fredrik Barth, Little Brown and Company, Boston, 1969, p. 9.

representations of these groups became obvious. Contemporary increase in the importance of identity in the contexts of religion, culture, politics, ethnicity and feminism studies are also symmetrical with these developments. The first quarter of the 21st century bears the characteristics of a postmodern age. In this context the concept of nation lost its importance regarding the concepts like identity and culture and through this, our information related to the ethnic groups and minorities grows day by day.

Another important concept in this process is the diasporic groups which are not in line with the national identity contours and have growing relations and common identity characteristics with their cognates in other political systems. In etymological context the term diaspora emerges first in the Old Testament. The concept consists of the words *dia* (through) and *speirō* (means to plant, distribute or to spread).<sup>8</sup> The diaspora concept was used for the colonisation undertakings of the Greeks in antiquity across the Mediterranean. Although the term was formed by the negative developments such as city wars, population increase and poverty, the term does not have a negative meaning at all in the usage of Ancient Greeks. In this, the dominant character of Ancient Greek Diasporas is looting, military conquest and immigration.<sup>9</sup>

The term diaspora had its current meaning through the historical experiences of Jewry. In 586 BC Empire of Babylon seized Judaea, sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the great tabernacle. The occupation and the demolition of the tabernacle incorporate with the negative sentiments such as liquidation and slavery in Jewish imagination. Zedekiah lead Jews against the Babylon occupation however Nebuchadnezzar harshly repressed the uprising. After the repression, Jews were deported to Babylon. In this regard “the use of the word ‘Babylon’, alone was enough to evoke a sense of captivity, exile, alienation and isolation. Collectively, Jews were seen as helpless chaff in the wind. At an individual level, diasporic Jews were depicted as pathological half-persons, destined never to realize themselves or to attain completeness, tranquillity or happiness so long as they were in exile.” These traumatic experiences echo in the literature, arts and religion of the Jews.<sup>10</sup>

The meaning that the term diaspora connotes reminds the term with a negative meaning which can be demonstrated by the term *victim diasporas*. The term victim diaspora implies an outcast ethnic group driven from its original homeland through a traumatic set of events and forced to live in an

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<sup>8</sup> S. Vertovec, “Diaspora”, Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations, (Ed.) Ellis Cashmore, Routledge, London, 1996, p. 99.

<sup>9</sup> R. Cohen, “Diasporas and the Nation State: From Victims to Challengers”, International Affairs, Vol. 72, No 3, 1996, p. 507.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*, p. 508-509.

alien environment and cultural setting. In this context it is possible to refer to the Jewish, African, Armenian and Palestinian Diasporas as victim diasporas.<sup>11</sup>

African diaspora as an example alike emerged as an outcome of the traumatic events of the millions deported from African continent to the western societies as slaves. However black people as a diasporic group couldn't find the opportunity to keep their own culture and language instead they formed new forms of belonging and identity that their cognates in Black Africa lack.<sup>12</sup>

In the context of these examples diasporic groups can be defined as such: ethnic groups that were forced to leave their ancestral homelands, forced to accommodate alien lands and orient themselves to new cultural and political circumstances while preserving their distinct cultural heritage as far as possible. An almost common characteristic of these groups is that they all exposed to the traumatic immigration stories such as war, liquidation, deportation or genocide. This tendency to relate diasporas to the traumatic events also relates it to some certain historical events. This constitutes the traditional approach towards diasporic communities.

However the term diaspora enlarged in meaning in the course of time. The term which was related to the Jewish, Armenian and African historical experiences now bear the connotations regarding immigrants, guest workers, refugees, exiles, overseas and ethnic groups and etc.<sup>13</sup> Shain and Barth define the diaspora for the groups originated from the same source although they are forced to live in different environments separately outside their original homelands.<sup>14</sup> The reason of the enlargement in the meaning of the term diaspora stems from the ever increasing communication and transportation technologies. The erosion in the citizenship and identity politics of the nation-state accompanies these developments. The diasporic groups that have been referred in the traditional approach had the opportunity to express their rights and differences through these developments as they direct the attention of social scientists towards themselves. Meanwhile the assimilationist culture and language politics of nation-states began to be seen out of date. Different groups in the context of racial, ethnic and cultural diversities had the opportunity to express their diversities. However this enlargement in meaning had also caused an ambiguity in special reference to

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p. 512-513.

<sup>12</sup> K. Koser, "New African Diasporas an Introduction", *New African Diasporas*, Routledge, New York, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> K. Tötölian, "The Nation State and Others: In Lieu of a Preface", *Diaspora*, 1-1, 1991, p. 4-5; J. Clifford, "Diasporas", *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 9, No.3. *Further Inflections: Toward Ethnographies of the Future*. American Anthropological Association, Wiley, 1994, p. 303.

<sup>14</sup> Y. Shain - A. Barth, "Diasporas and International Relations Theory", *International Organization*, 57-3, 2003, p. 452.

the criteria regarding the term diaspora as to know which groups are diasporic and which are not. In this regard there occurred a need for the definition of the term diaspora.

Another definition for the term diaspora is made by William Safran. He uses a set of criterias to distinguish diasporic groups from the others. According to him, members of a diaspora retained a collective memory of 'their original homeland'; they idealized their 'ancestral home', were committed to the restoration of 'the original homeland' and continued in various ways to 'relate to that homeland'.<sup>15</sup> Jewish experience constitutes Safran's comprehension of diasporic groups. However even Jewish diaspora doesn't match Safran's criteria in terms of return to the homeland.<sup>16</sup> Another point in the discussion regarding the criteria for diasporic groups is the tendency to return to the original homeland. Many analysts stress the confining characteristic of the return-homeland quality in determining diasporic groups. Many immigrant groups don't have a tendency to return to their original homelands, if this condition is taken as a criterion than all these groups cannot be taken as diasporic groups. Diasporic groups as an outcome of immigration networks strengthen by global-transnational developments loose the tendency to return to the original homelands as from third generation<sup>17</sup> and form new hybrid identities.<sup>18</sup> The sophistication in the technologies regarding communication and transportation allow diasporic communities to form mediation between their original homelands and the host countries.<sup>19</sup> In this regard transnational networks made imaginary or real homelands unnecessary for diasporic groups. Decentred and lateral connections are now as important as the formations formed around teleology of origin/return.<sup>20</sup> The condition for return cannot be a major criterion for diasporic communities. Paul Gilroy for example takes Black and Jewish diasporic patterns in the same context. For the former commercially self-sustaining, the latter caught up in colonial/neo-colonial forces but they are in common in the lack of returning tendency. African/American, Caribbean/British cultures are to be taken as semi-diasporic communities when compared to the criteria used by Safran. Amitav Ghosh also states that

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<sup>15</sup> W. Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return", *Diaspora*, 1(1), 1991, p. 83-84.

<sup>16</sup> Clifford, *ibid*, p. 305.

<sup>17</sup> In order to compare the issue to the case of Turkish immigrant workers in Germany see A. Kaya - F. Kentel, "Euro-Türkler: Türkiye ile Avrupa Birliği Arasında Köprü mü? Engel mi? Almanya-Türkleri ve Fransa-Türkleri Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çalışma", İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Araştırma Raporu, 2005.  
[http://goc.bilgi.edu.tr/euro\\_turk.html](http://goc.bilgi.edu.tr/euro_turk.html) 12.12.2013.

<sup>18</sup> D. Thelen, "The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History", *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 86, No. 3, 1999.

<sup>19</sup> J. N. Pieterse, "Globalisation as Hybridisation", *International Sociology*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1994.

<sup>20</sup> Clifford, *ibid*, p. 306.

Asian diaspora doesn't have an intention to return to the homeland.<sup>21</sup> However all aforementioned communities are diasporic groups trying to preserve their cultural diversities and identities in an 'alien' environment.

William Safran acknowledges that a diaspora often illustrates deracination, oppression and painful adjustment.<sup>22</sup> In this regard his approach has a negative tone. But when focused on the aforementioned negative diaspora examples, it can be seen that the current situation is not negative for them at all. Despite of their traumatic histories, the members of these communities have better conditions and opportunities when compared to their cognates back at their original homelands. The experiences of victim diasporas in alien environments in fact had an enriching effect. Jews for example could not have current intellectual and spiritual qualities in a narrow tribal society like ancient Judea.<sup>23</sup> Armenians alike benefited from the Land of Opportunities. Exiled Palestinians are wealthier and more prosperous than the cognates left in the occupied homeland. African diaspora members are also more successful than the Africans living in the continent in the fields of fine arts, literature and etc.<sup>24</sup>

Cohen classifies the academic approaches toward the concept of diaspora in order to define the concept with its enlarging meaning in the course of time. This classification shed light on the formation processes of the term in pre-modern, modern and post-modern ages. He evaluates these approaches in four groups: first one consists of traditional diaspora which is best characterized in the Jewish experience; second one consists of Africans and Armenians as victim diasporas; third one consists of labour and imperial diasporas depending on the indentured Indian labour and the British; fourth and the last one consists of commercial and business diasporas of Chinese and Lebanese...

Cohen also classifies and analyses the scientific interest among diasporas. In this regard, he makes remarks on four phases of scientific inquiry regarding diasporas. First one depends on the inquiry of the traumatic effects of Jewish experience; the Greek experience because of not having traumatic effects is seen as secondary. Second phase consists of the enlargement in the meaning of the concept which emerged after the 1980's. Cohen's classification of 'expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities' as diasporic groups mark this phase. In this, it is possible to count approximately one hundred diasporic groups. Third phase consists of the critical evaluation of the social

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<sup>21</sup> Clifford, *ibid*, p. 306.

<sup>22</sup> R. Ben-Eliezer, "Diaspora" -Entry in *Sociopedia Isa*- Sage, 2010, p. 3.  
<http://www.sagepub.net/isa/resources/pdf/diaspora.pdf>. 11.12.2013.

<sup>23</sup> R. Cohen, *Global Diasporas an Introduction*, Routledge, London, 2008, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> Cohen, "Diasporas and the...", p. 513.

constructionists regarding the second phase which emerges through the mid 90's. The researchers taken here were inspired from the postmodernist readings, criticizing the views of the second phase researchers. Through this critique, these researchers deconstruct the concepts of 'homeland', 'religious and ethnic groups' which limits the diaspora concept of the second phase. According to them, the identities were de-territorialized or being built or rebuilt in a situational and flexible atmosphere. In this context the term diaspora must be rebuilt according to this sophistication. The last phase consists of the current consolidation process of the meaning of the term diaspora. Despite of the accepted claims of the social constructionists, this phase evaluates their undermining effect on the term. Although the concept of homeland became invalid for the minority of the diasporic groups, it is still an important aspect for the majority.<sup>25</sup>

In this respect, contemporary concept of diaspora on one hand must be as narrow as not to include all minority groups and must be wide enough to include new identities that emerged through the globalization process on the other. Here a need for a new definition of diaspora occurs. In this context, Cohen updates Safran's definition by adding three more items to it. According to him, a group is considered as diasporic when 1) Dispersed from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions. 2) Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions. 3) Must have a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements. 4) Must have an idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation. 5) There must be a development regarding a return movement which gains collective consent. 6) Must have a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate. 7) Must have a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group. 8) There must be a sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement. 9) Must have the possibility of a distinctive yet creative and enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.<sup>26</sup> However Cohen also states that none of the diasporic group bears all these qualities alone.

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<sup>25</sup> Cohen, *Global Diasporas...*, p. 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> Cohen, "Diasporas and the...", p. 514-515.

### 3. DIASPORA VERSUS NATIONAL IDENTITY

The discussions regarding diaspora identities appear on two normative levels. First one is nation-state norms, the other one is the autochthonous claims of native groups.<sup>27</sup> The identity of host societies or majority groups has a role in the identity formation process of diasporic groups as well as the characteristics of immigrant groups' cultural conditions. In such a way, there always remain a tension between the identity of diasporic groups and the host society. The reason for that is the vital tendency of diasporic groups of expressing their distinctiveness from the majority culture. As for the majority nationalism tends to erode this sort of distinctiveness. In fact diasporic identity occurs when interacting with the majority culture. In this context the diasporic culture or identity takes its shape in the tension with the host society-majority culture, having *sui generis* characteristics very different from the culture in the original homeland. For example the African diaspora whose ancestors were brought as slaves from Africa originally did not have a common language, identity and culture, however in the course of time and in the face of the major values of the host culture they developed a common 'Black' identity that their cognates do not have in the original homeland as distinct as theirs. The African Americans, who see Africa as their original homeland, developed a distinct ethnic identity based on the skin colour in relation to the segregationist attitude of the White American society. Meanwhile because of not having this sort of conjuncture in Black Africa there occurred heterogeneous identities separated by borders of numerous nation-states after the independence movements. So, there is no homogeneous black identity in Black Africa.

In this context it is true to say that diasporic identities are not essential but rather contingent/historical, dynamic and dialogic in nature. As mentioned before, the third generation of the Turkish population, whose ancestors were immigrated to Germany as guest workers, now formed a hybrid culture fully compatible neither to their original homeland Turkey, nor to their host country Germany. A German rap music group of Turkish descent expresses this ambiguity with their lyrics as 'vatanımızda almancı, burada yabancı'<sup>28</sup>

It is possible to make a similar statement regarding the relationship between autochthonous claims and diasporic group claims. There is always a tension between autochthonous and diasporic identities. Diasporic groups often constitute a substantial relation to their homelands however this does not correspond to a political programme. If this tendency coincides with a

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<sup>27</sup> Clifford, *ibid*, p. 307.

<sup>28</sup> Can be translated as "Germanites at motherland, strangers in here" (which is referring the negative attitude towards Turkish diaspora members in Turkey and in Germany). Karakan, *Yetmedi mi*, Cartel, Polygram, 1995.

nation-state then it can cause a liquidation (based on the rights of being first on the land) of the autochthonous groups on a land.<sup>29</sup> The Israelite experience emerging on the first example of diasporic cultures as an irony of history became the perpetrators of one of world's tragic diasporic experience: Palestine.<sup>30</sup> Some segments of Armenian diaspora took part in the Nagorno Karabagh conflict also displayed that kind of an attitude towards Ethnic Turks as being the sole heirs of antique rights and territorial claims. This ideological condition resulted in occupation and liquidation or ethnic cleansing of Azeri Turks from the land.

Diasporic identities often choose to adapt to host society without relating itself to a political aim and without transforming a political subject. Especially diasporic groups who have traumatic immigration histories often prefer not to stress their ethnic-cultural distinctiveness. These kind of diasporic groups especially starting from the first generation of immigration tend to suppress their distinct ethnic characteristics if they were encountered with majority nationalism in the host countries. Kaya states that, especially through the Republic experience of Turkey, Circassian diaspora in Turkey has chosen to be assimilated willingly as an existential strategy.<sup>31</sup> According to him, assimilation was willingly chosen by Circassians in order to avoid segregation. In this context it is possible to say that being assimilated is not always equal to passiveness in the face of national identity politics rather these groups actively take initiative by choosing assimilation. This preference results in the accommodation to the reigning national identity on the macro level on one hand and adopting a critical attitude towards the national identity on the level of daily life and individual manners on the other.

While national identity dominating the public sphere, ethnic cultural traits can live through the spaces out of reach of this identity. This attitude is called as fugitive power<sup>32</sup> in the related literature. In those social settings diasporic minority communities carry on their distinctiveness while accommodating to the majority culture.

Diasporic communities who were willingly or unwillingly suppressed during the modern era by nation-states found the suitable settings to flourish in the so called post-modern period. After the collapse of Soviet Block and Cold War mentality, the suppressed diasporic characteristics found room to revive in a global world. In the globalization era the renowned conflict between Liberalism and Communism began to fade away and new modes of

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<sup>29</sup> Clifford, *ibid*, p. 311.

<sup>30</sup> Cohen, "Diasporas and the...", p. 513.

<sup>31</sup> A. Kaya, *Türkiye'de Çerkezler. Diasporada Geleneğin Yeniden İcadı*, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011, p. 35.

<sup>32</sup> Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2006.

conflict proposed by some writers.<sup>33</sup> The bloody conflicts occurred in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechnya, Rwanda and Kosovo between ethnic and religious identities which were defined under one national identity in the modern era. The common aspect among these conflicts is that national identities encompassing distinct ethnic groups which were produced in modern age couldn't manage to erase ethnic tensions. The importance of the effects of these ethnic, religious, linguistic, tribal conflicts is reflected on the identity policies in multi-cultural Western countries. These conflicts enforced a discussion regarding the concepts such as constitutional citizenship, majority nationalism, multi-culturalism, tolerance. These concepts became more prominent after the terrorist attacks such as 9/11 2001 and London bombings (2005) which were a direct outcome of transnational terror networks occurred through the wars in Afghanistan in 1980's and Chechnya in 1990's. These developments can be taken as a proclamation of failure of the Liberal integration concept. These discussions became more sophisticated in the nation-states like Germany where some problems regarding identity politics and minorities already exist. The remark which was made by Chancellor Merkel regarding the failure of Germany's integration/multiculturalism policies can be seen as a part of this process. The result of this process is the re-emergence of modern concepts such as majority nationalism and minority rights. In this, the borders between distinct cultures that coexist together in the same environment are being underlined.

The problems regarding identity had more serious consequences in non-western world with numerous examples. In Turkey, for example, after the 1980's the Kurdish movement rejecting Turkish national identity started a terror campaign against the state which cost thousands of lives. In Sri Lanka alike a civil war erupted between the Sinhalese government and Tamil Tigers promoting Tamil independence. This does not mean that all conflicts result in an armed aggression. Recent developments in Turkey for example caused a discussion atmosphere regarding the concepts such as dialog, democratization and transforming majority nationalism into a constitutional citizenship. In Turkey the government efforts regarding the identity problems of Alawite, Romani/Gypsy and Kurdish communities can be seen as an outcome of this atmosphere. These developments have also eased national minorities and diasporic communities in Turkey expressing their existence and identity. Especially for some diasporic communities in Turkey who do not have a realistic sense of homeland before the collapse of Soviet Block, now get the opportunity to contact to their homelands through transnational opportunities such as media, communication and transportation. These new autonomous and semi-autonomous states in question can be shown as former Yugoslavian states of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo; former

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<sup>33</sup> Especially see S. P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs*, 1993.

republics of Soviet Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and present semi-autonomous states as Adygea, Ossetia, Abkhazia, Ingushetia, Chechnya, Karachayev-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria. The establishment of these autonomous and semi-autonomous republics contribute to some diasporic groups living in Turkey in the efforts of reinventing their identity. For instance, in this process, ethnic-diasporic communities in Turkey once called Caucasians or Cherkess, transformed into distinct diasporic identities such as Georgians, Chechens, Ossetians, Irons, Adige, Abkhaz and etc.<sup>34</sup> In this, homeland became a reality which was once an imaginary and fantastic entity. The armed conflicts took place in the homelands in question also triggered this identity distinction (Bosnian War for Bosnian identity, Abkhaz-Georgian conflict for the Caucasian identities and Serbo-Kosovar Albanian conflict for the Albanian identity in Turkey). In spite of the assimilation and integration took place in the host country (Turkey in this case), these developments caused an energetic and fast revival in the diasporic identities in question. The progress in the opportunities of communication, cyber relations and transportation technologies caused resurgence in the cultural traits and images such as cuisine, folk dances, music, language skills and etc. Then, these images and traits are used in the reconstruction of diasporic identities. In this respect the information revolution started in the 1990's became a prominent media for diasporic communities to rebuild or even to reinvent their lost traditions, language, culture namely their identity apart from majority. In this process the national identity became less effective and ethno-religious identities with the help of images exchanged through the cyber media became more prominent.

The diasporic communities which occurred as an outcome of territorial expansion or compulsory migration have changed in relation to the recent developments. Voluntary travel and migration are also taken among the causes of diasporic communities now. However the settlement of an alien community into a host country is not enough to call it as a diaspora. As mentioned before, if ethnic, linguistic and religious diversities of a group is expressed in the course of a time period in a new identity pattern then the community can be called as a diasporic one.<sup>35</sup> This identity formation process is set up imaginatively as Hall<sup>36</sup> points out. Cyber space has a very important function on this process. Transnational networks are constructed through culturally shared imaginations in the cyber age.<sup>37</sup> Some writers such

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<sup>34</sup> Kaya, *ibid*, p. 76, 78.

<sup>35</sup> R. Marienstras, "On the notion of diaspora", *Migration, Diaspora and Transnationalism*, (Eds.) S. Vertovec & R. Cohen, Edward Elgar Pub., Massachusetts, 1999.

<sup>36</sup> S. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, (Ed.) Patrick Williams & Laura Chrisman, Columbia University Press, 1994.

<sup>37</sup> T. Faist, "Diaspora and Transnationalism: What Kind of Dance Partners?" *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*, (Eds.) Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2010.

as Hall, Held, Hubert, and Thompson take fragmentation and pluralization in identities as a side effect of globalization.<sup>38</sup> Diasporic identities strengthen their relations with the homeland on one hand and enlarge their identity references on the other via transnational networks. While diasporic individuals can be American and African (Chinese, Hispanic, Armenian and etc.) at the same time they may adopt hybrid identities in this process. And this makes them local while attending transnational networks.

#### **4. KNOWLEDGE, IDENTITY AND DIASPORA POLICIES**

“Knowledge” is one of the important means of modern state system in coordinating controlling and manipulating the society under its sovereignty. States control the production and formation processes of knowledge via several certain institutions. Pre-modern state structures did not have the means to control the society as modern states. However the means of power formed by modern states relates all the fragments of society and directs them towards one common aim at the same time. In this, coordination and cooperation between individuals, groups, institutions and communities are being provided. This situation depending on the cooperative quality of modern society, results in the homogeneous unity of each actor of society in long term.

However continuous change becomes an inevitable part of life in modern conditions. Setting and maintaining one certain system in long term is much harder in modern societies than the pre-modern ones. For, modern state must continuously arrange its stance and functions by taking other factors into account. This causes a continuous renewal of society. Modern state which is interconnected to the other modern states through an international network, revises its own political system according to the other’s actions. It is vital to renew the data regarding the transformation of social structure under these conditions which reduce the formation of isolated social structures. The prevalence of diaspora studies must be taken in this framework. In the last century some parts of the world got the opportunity to grow industry and this directed qualified labour to there. In addition to this, several political problems caused some ethnic, religious and cultural communities to immigrate to countries other than their native homelands. These communities transformed the demographics and labour structure as well as the division of labour in host countries. All these changes and transformations leave the modern state with a lot of problems. There are a plenty of studies ranging from the effects of newcomers on the class

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<sup>38</sup> S. Hall, D. Held, D. Hubert, and K. Thompson (Eds.), *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, Wiley-Blackwell, 1995.

structure of the societies<sup>39</sup> to the effects of them to the international system stemming from the desire of modern political system to control and manipulate the social structure.<sup>40</sup>

There are a number of studies that analyse the historical processes of diasporas. The work of Ages<sup>41</sup> who takes diaspora problem into account with its historical stages is one of these studies. Ages, focusing on the diverse experiences of Jewish Diasporas regarding cultural, religious and economic factors, show how the problem is complicated. Like Ages, Hourani<sup>42</sup> focusses on how the spread of Palestinian Arabs in the world affected Arabs living in the homeland and diaspora as well. There are several studies regarding the Armenian diaspora in the same manner<sup>43</sup> As can be seen in the studies mentioned here that modern state systems are deeply affected by the existence of diaspora communities. For the existence of diasporic communities force nation-states to restructure their identity and citizenship policies in one hand and force them to adjust their place in the newly formed transnational equilibrium.

Some works focus on the effects of diasporic communities on the social and political systems of US and European countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>44</sup> In these works the major anxiety is on the problem of providing order in the nation-states under the threats and challenges of transnational networks and diasporic communities. This situation can be seen also in the growing number of sociological researches regarding minority (and diasporic) communities in order to reduce the possibility of a conflict between the members of native and alien communities that would threaten the order in modern political systems. The possibility of a conflict may cause

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<sup>39</sup> S. Castles - K. Godula, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1985 (Second edition).

<sup>40</sup> P. Dicken, *Global Shift: The Internationalization of Economic Activity*, Paul Chapman Publishing, London, 1992 (Second edition).

<sup>41</sup> A. Ages, *The Diaspora Dimension*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1973.

<sup>42</sup> A. Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1991.

<sup>43</sup> D. M. Lang, J. W. Christopher, *The Armenians*, Minority Rights Group, London, 1987; S. Der Nersessian, *The Armenians*, London: Thames & Hudson. 1969; K. Tölölian, "The Armenian Diaspora and The Karabagh Conflict", *Diasporas in Conflict: Peace-Makers and Peace-Wreckers*, (Eds.) Hazel Smith and Paul Stares United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 2007.

<sup>44</sup> S. C. Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant: The American Image of the Chinese 1785-1882*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1969; C. Liebman, *The Ambivalent American Jew*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1976; D. Gabaccia, *Militants and Migrants: Rural Sicilians Become American Workers*, Rutgers University Press. New Brunswick, Nj, 1988; M. J. Herskovits, *The New World Negro: Selected Papers in Afro-American Studies*, Indiana university Press, Bloomington, In., 1961; E. Hu-Dehart, "Rethinking America: the Practice and Politics of Multiculturalism in Higher Education", *Beyond a Dream Deferred: Multicultural Education and the Politics of Excellence*, (Eds.) Becky W. Thompson and Sangeeta Tyagi, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993; C. Peach, "Trends in Levels of Caribbean Segregation Great Britain 1961-91", Paper Presented at a Conference on Comparative History of Migration within the Caribbean and to Europe, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, 1995.

harm on the coordination of the subjects of the modern state system, so modern nation-states pay much attention to the process.

The increase in the number of communities living outside of their homelands intensified the cultural interaction in a global scale. This interaction happens not only on the level of traditions but on the level of politics and economics at the same time. The process of globalization or internationalization which is called by some as the expansion of capitalism depends on the mutual cooperation of a numerous international organizations.<sup>45</sup> One of the main factors that make it feasible is the possible experience individuals may have in the post-modern era. Inevitably religion is one of the major aspects of culture. It is vital in the identity building process of individuals and groups. In this context the religious conditioning and characteristics of immigrant and refugee communities have some problems in the western host countries. The religious diversities and distinct qualities that make immigrant groups depart from host country's identity causes threat for segregation that would be a challenge to the governmental legitimacy of the state. The religious differences also cause some new problems in the western societies such as legal issues. For instance, British policy that gives British Muslim community (which can be classified as a diasporic community as well) the right to judge according to the Sharia Law in intergroup issues caused a public and political debate regarding numerous notions ranging from nation-state, legitimacy and tradition to problem of representation, religious freedom and etc. This policy shattered the idea of interfering state model in special reference to the problem of order which is the main problem of modern sociology and politics. Although having a positive effect on intragroup relations, policies of this sort may cause the individualistic nature of nation-states in favour of a communitarian system. This debate is triggered after the 2005 London bombings which were disclosed as an act of Muslims of British nationality focusing on the liberal quality of the state towards minorities and especially religious ones.<sup>46</sup>

As mentioned above, religion is a very resistant factor in preventing diasporic communities to adapt to the majority culture. In addition to this, individuals may choose the religious distinctiveness of their culture as a functional tool to express their identity. The problem of religious education

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<sup>45</sup> S. Selka, "Religion and the Transnational Imagination", *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 5-10, 2013, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup> J. J., Weissman, et. al., "American Religion and the Old and New Immigration", *Religion and American Culture: a Journal of Interpretation*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 2012; J. Hoskins, "Diaspora as Religious Doctrine: an "Apostle of Vietnamese Nationalism" Comes to California", *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2011; P. Werbner, "The Place which is Diaspora: Citizenship, Religion and Gender in the Making of Chaordic Transnationalism", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 28 (1), 2002; J. Kotkin, *Tribes: How Race, Religion and Identity Determine Success in the New Global Economy*, Random House, New York, 1992; R. Robertson, "Religion and the Global Field", *Social Compass*, 41(1), 1994.

is another problematic issue regarding diasporas and the nation-state. The debate is located on the critical equilibrium between the right to reproduce ethnic, religious identities and the need to adapt at least to the reigning culture and identity.

Another factor effective in the increase in the diaspora studies is identity problems emerging from the divergence between the homeland and the host country.<sup>47</sup> For the individual communicates with others in order to adjust him/herself to the society. In doing so, (s)he forms his/her identity, social status and roles by using the feedbacks coming from the others regarding him/herself. This process at the same time depends on the inclusion of “reciprocal knowledge” practically into the life. However the members of diasporic communities face two distinct societies in their life worlds. This duality generates problems in the identity formation processes in terms of sociology and social psychology. When these two social structures coincide with the opposite values regarding life, intersex relationships and religion then the problems deepen. The individual facing two distinct sets of values is strained in choosing one, or the other. “Reciprocal knowledge” which is constructed in distinct cultures and which is maintained by the subjects includes several oppositions. In this, the individual facing two distinct data systems first in the course of his/her private life and then in public life, suffers serious problems regarding adaptation. Consequently the adaptation process is not only a matter of time, it is also a process in which immigrants freely constitutes their life worlds and according to this, it is vital to meet political, cultural and economic requirements of the immigrant community. Because of this, it is not a coincidence to see many social scientific studies regarding immigrants who are trying to exist with contradicting values and life worlds in the course of adaptation process.

In modern times in which politics have functions as well as economy on a global level it is impossible for societies to exist without interaction. Thus the popularity of academic works regarding other societies and diasporic communities grows. The increase in the attention of societies regarding others’ cultural characteristics affects the formation process of scientific knowledge regarding the diasporas. The knowledge which is used to maintain integration and cooperation between communities, groups and

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<sup>47</sup> J. Rex, “Ethnic Identity and the Nation State: The Political Sociology of Multi-Cultural Societies”, *Social Identities*, 1 (1), 1995; S. Harney, *Nationalism and Identity: Culture and the Imagination in a Caribbean Diaspora*, Zed books, London, 1996; S. Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity”, *Modernity and Its Futures*, (Eds.) Stuart Hall et al., Polity Press in Association with the Open University, Cambridge, 1992; H. Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*, Grove Press, New York, 1978; D. Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1994; D. Boyarin - J. Boyarin, “Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity”, *Critical Inquiry*, 19 (4), 1993.

individuals, takes the relationship between science and power to a new dimension. Formerly science as a means to seek the truth transforms also a means to organize the administration more effectively. Undoubtedly living in the time of pluralisms has become key aspect of individuals' life worlds<sup>48</sup> and as a side effect of modernity; it is a necessity to maintain these pluralisms without serious conflicts. The diaspora studies must not focus on the governmental issues they rather focus on the capability of diasporic groups' life style and identity formation processes.

From this standpoint another fact in the diaspora studies emerges as the problem of separation between private and public spheres in modernity. Modern individual lives conscious of numerous potential factors that may have effects on him/her. Modernity separates private and public spheres and forces individuals and groups that have distinct qualities regarding religion, culture and ethnicity to interact in order to create cooperation. However as a politically motivated separation, it causes individual to feel alone in the society in the conditions of modernity in which pluralism is an inevitable situation. Individuals in former society structures with strong relationships with the community in terms of face to face communication has become isolated in the course of modern separation of private and public spheres.<sup>49</sup> Public sphere with its numerous sophisticated actor and factors in interaction erodes the borders and reduces effectiveness of private sphere to a minimum. The situation regarding the diasporic individuals who were constrained to live in ghettos in order to preserve their identities displays that identity can be best carried on through the communication between the similar- ones. In the conditions which were characterized by the sophistication of division of labour, it is difficult to relate one's private public lives. Thus private and public spheres become polarized.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It was usual to see the utilization of science as a means to construct better administration in the pre-modern period. The tendency to relate science and power dates back to the Ancient Greek times in Aristotle's tutelage to Alexander the Great. This cooperation between the two provided political power with the ability to use science as a tool for designing itself in a more sophisticated manner. Modern science conveys this relationship to a new dimension.

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<sup>48</sup> P. Berger et. al., *Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1974, p. 62.

<sup>49</sup> Berger, *ibid*, p. 63.

Modernity with its civilization model, displays a globalizing quality.<sup>50</sup> Modernity arranging relationship between the states in a mutual integration and cooperation depends on the belief of the validity of its model in all circumstances. Thus a comprehension, depending on the possibility to construct a system of politics, economy and culture by integrating localities into a centre, became common. However all Universalist and centralist apprehensions like modernity, undermines the reality that man apprehends and lives in different styles. Life is a sophisticated and resourceful entity that cannot be reduced into a single dimension. In this regard the political and economic systems are to be arranged according to this multiplicity. Otherwise human existence would show its capacity to resist all power systems which constrain itself to live on a single dimension.

Modern comprehension neglects the relationship and connection between mankind and the space by asserting the applicability of all its procedures to all times and space. Modern thinking as an expression of Hobbes' concept of a mechanical world depends on the belief regarding the applicability of its systems in spite of human conditions. A clear expression of it can be seen in the diaspora studies. In modernity, nation building is a major goal. The nation building process starts with the forced integration of diverse localities to a political unity. In order to do this a certain economical field must be defined. In the same process a cultural union is also emerges. The aestheticization regarding what is good and bad, what is to be aimed at, follows this step. In doing so it become impossible to suggest an alternative other than the styles and ideals previously determined. The individual in the field of modernity which is determined by the cultural, economic and political necessities gives him/herself in to the necessities of the system. Although it is stated that distinctiveness and differences in a society can be seen as abundance, system constrains the self to be a part of the masses. As the individual carries on his/her existence through interaction with whom (s)he cannot come together or face to face, (s)he begins to be determined by the masses. Diasporic communities are the most resistant groups to these sorts of conditions.

There were numerous differing local identities and groups around the centres of political power in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Europe where the nation states began to emerge. These identities integrated and reduced to politic and cultural centres and modern societies formed. These developments took a very long period of time in an evolutionary mood. However through the industrialization process there emerged a mass immigration movement towards the industrialized world. As an outcome of this process, diasporic communities, whose integration to greater societies became a key concept of

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<sup>50</sup> A. K. Bayram, "Modernlik ve Sosyal Bilimler: Bilgi, İktidar, Etik ve Toplum", Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, Cilt: XI, Sayı 1, 2009, p. 3-4.

discussion, occurred. The distinctiveness and the diversities of diasporic communities regarding race, culture, language and religion became burdens in the integration process.

Diaspora studies focus on the problems of diasporic communities' in modern world system in which immigration became an inevitable key aspect. However there is not a single perspective regarding the diasporic communities' cooperation with the majority in new environments where they have partaken exists. The emergence of cosmopolitan urban areas where numerous cultures come together produced much data regarding diaspora studies. Human beings have the ability of creating fields of sovereignty by putting their diversities forward. Thus they need the other in order to identify themselves.<sup>51</sup> This causes a problem on the foundation of cooperation between diasporic communities and the majority. Social sciences develop means mediating the interests of the two sides depending on mutual understanding and consent. Thus social scientist often tried to limit the activities of the state by criticizing some of its policies theoretically. For, a comprehension that the problems of diasporas stem from the applications of nation-states exists in diaspora studies.<sup>52</sup>

However the problem consists not only of the coercive policies of nation-states. At the same time there occurs some racist and segregationist tendencies from the majority towards diasporic communities. When the maintenance of order becomes a necessity for the individuals of a majority then diasporas might began to be seen as a threat to the so called order. In this context, diaspora studies tries to maintain and sustain the social order while suggesting solutions to secure the identity and distinctiveness of diasporic groups from others.

Recently in the course of globalization, diaspora studies are being fulfilled on the field ranging from how the political systems must be constructed in order to solve the identity problems<sup>53</sup>, to the role of race, religion and identity on the success in a global economy. The effects of immigrants on the globalization process<sup>54</sup> and the disunity/ fragmentation of the self<sup>55</sup> and social mobility on the transnational space<sup>56</sup> are some prominent issues among the diaspora studies. The extension of the field regarding

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<sup>51</sup> Z. Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 75-84.

<sup>52</sup> R. Cohen, "Diasporas and the..."; R. Marienstras, *ibid.*; Y. Gorny, *The State of Israel in Jewish Public Thought: The Quest for Collective Identity*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1994.

<sup>53</sup> D. Jacobson, *Rights across Borders: Immigration and the Decline of Citizenship*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1996.

<sup>54</sup> R. Cohen, "Creolization and Cultural Globalization: The Soft Sounds of Fugitive Power", *Globalizations*, 4 (3), 2007.

<sup>55</sup> D. J. Goldberg, *The Divided Self: Israel and The Jewish Psyche Today*, London, I. B. Tauris, 2006.

<sup>56</sup> M. Sökefeld, "Mobilizing in Transnational Space: A Social Movement Approach to the Formation of Diaspora", *Global Networks*, 6 (3), 2006.

diasporas stems from the fact that the problems affecting modern societies such as immigration, minority and identity problems. Colleagues studying diasporas theoretical solutions to the problem of change in modernity problem of order in modern societies and the problems of diasporic communities who are willing to preserve their rights, distinct identities and freedom. Thus often in diasporic studies the complex issues caused by the harsh dilemma are being observed.

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