

**TRANSNATIONAL RELIGIOUS MOBILIZATION: THE CASE OF  
UZBEK IMMIGRANTS IN ISTANBUL**

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BY

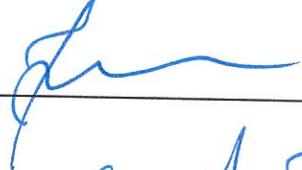
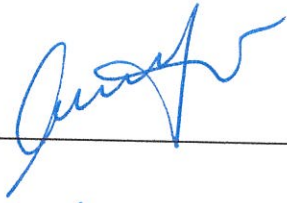

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and standards of ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and standards, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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## ABSTRACT

### TRANSNATIONAL RELIGIOUS MOBILIZATION: THE CASE OF UZBEK IMMIGRANTS IN ISTANBUL

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This thesis aims to examine the social significance of Uzbek madrasah in Istanbul in the context of immigration and community experience of the Muslim Uzbeks. The data of the study was collected from fieldwork. Adopting the purposive sampling method, semi-structured interviews are done with seven prominent figures of Uzbek diaspora in Istanbul. Almost all of them are religious leaders from the immigrant Uzbek community in Başakşehir. In the analysis, following qualitative research methods are employed: Narrative analysis, textual analysis, and coding. Transnationalism and diaspora concepts are also alternatively applied to support and reflect the emergent results and theoretical model produced through grounded theory approach in the study. “Formation of society around madrasah” has appeared as the central phenomenon. Consequences of different interaction strategies of the Uzbek group lead to improved globalization of religious life which is also an intervening condition for these strategies. This study aims to make a contribution to the literature of immigration, religion and relevant studies in Turkey.

Keywords: Immigration, madrasah, diaspora, transnationalism

## ÖZ

### ULUSAŞIRI DİNİ MOBİLİZASYON: İSTANBUL'DAKİ ÖZBEK GÖÇMENLER ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu tez, İstanbul'da Özbek medresesinin sosyal önemini, Müslüman Özbeklerin göç ve toplum deneyimi bağlamında incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, veri toplamada saha çalışması düzenine sahiptir. Farklı nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmaktadır: Amaçlı örnekleme, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme (alan çalışmasında), anlatı analizi, metin çözümü, kodlama ve temellendirilmiş teori yaklaşımı (tahlilde). Özbek azınlığının bir önde geleni ve Başakşehir'deki göçmen Özbek cemaatinin altı dini lideriyle olmak üzere, toplamda yedi mülakat gerçekleştirildi. Beliren sonuçlar ve teorik model için destekleyici ve yansıtıcı kavramlar olarak ulusaşırılık ve azınlık kavramlarına başvuruldu. “Medrese çevresinde toplumun yapılanması” merkezi bir olgu olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Özbek topluluğu tarafından gerçekleştirilen farklı etkileşim stratejilerinin sonuçları, bu stratejilere müdahale edici bir koşul da olan dinsel yaşamın küreselleşmesini geliştirmiştir. Bu araştırma, göç, din ve Türkiye'deki ilgili çalışmaların literatürüne katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç, medrese, azınlık, ulusaşırılık

*To my mother and father...*



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I have always been interested in different societies and cultures. But this time, I had to go beyond curiosity and it excited me even more. More often than not, what a person has to do is clear, but exactly what to do and how to do is unknown. That is what I am in when I am doing my master degree. For example, I could not determine the thesis topic. I just could not make up my mind. However, it became so simple and unexpected. With a homework I made to pass the course, and the advice that I got about it, I focused on the subject of this thesis with the question of why not. After that, the people and social environments that I have been passing by have been a curious field of research for me. In fact, I felt like I could not see the subject under my nose in this process. The subjects that constitute the main theme of the thesis had already attracted me before, but as a researcher, I had to go through some personal experiences and processes before to decide.

Ultimately, the people I shared the same city, the same neighborhood, the same streets, and perhaps the prayer in the same mosque took me to different questions, environments, and contexts. After all, immigration and community issues gradually came into my own agenda. It is now possible to think that a local social reality may have extensions in the global sphere, and an important communal experience may lie behind the practices and discourses that seem “normal” in daily life.

Immigration and community issues have apparently become so important all around the world every single day. Migration in the global world is very effective and constantly on the agenda. It is not just something the immigrant experienced, it also becomes the experience of the homeland and host societies through daily interactions. I had such an interaction, met with an Uzbek community and I did this study. In recent years, the

effects of migration have been felt also in Turkey. As a researcher in social sciences, I am interested in one of the immigrant Muslim Uzbek ethnoreligious communities in Istanbul. Almost every migration state has a story. The Uzbek group I studied have a story too. There are reasons for this and Uzbeks have a life-bearing traces of these reasons. So, I went after these tracks. My study begins with the primary research target of social significance of religious institutions for Uzbek immigrants in Istanbul in the context of migration and communal experience around madrasah and their transnational mobilization. I began with my primary research question and used qualitative research techniques through purposive sampling and semi-structured interview, and narrative analysis, textual analysis, and coding within grounded theory approach. Transnationalism and diaspora concepts are used to reflect findings within related contexts and literature. In this section, I try to introduce an overview of the first chapter of my master dissertation. Its parts consist of topic and rationale of thesis, literature review and outline of the study.

### **1.1. Topic & Rationale of Thesis**

There is a personal story behind the reasons for how and why I decided to study the Uzbek community in Istanbul for my master's thesis. Everything has started with a phone call in 2016. One of my friends invited me to join tarawih prayer with him in a masjid which is located in Zeytinburnu, Istanbul. I would learn later that it was actually an Uzbek madrasah<sup>1</sup>. It was crowded and the ambiance was good in terms of the social environment. I personally found a sincere environment at the masjid. I went there regularly and met with people of the madrasah who were mostly immigrant Uzbek people who immigrated from Central Asia to Turkey many years ago and some new Uzbeks were continuing to do that. There were some other people who are ethnically Turkish, Kurdish, Chechen, etc. The madrasah in Zeytinburnu district was so active and vivacious when I compared it to typical mosques and masjids in Istanbul. It was at the

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<sup>1</sup> A religious educational institution in which pupils can get onto the first rung of Islamic scholarship. See more at: <https://eurasianet.org/uzbekistan-hopes-islamic-education-is-the-antidote-to-extremism>

center of their life in which they were sharing the same beliefs, experiences, practices, and troubles. Around the same time, I was taking a quantitative method course and I needed to decide a topic and an observation site for the final project of this course. Eventually, I decided to study this madrasah for my final project.

Through the paper I wrote for the quantitative course, I realized that there is more to learn about the madrasahs of the Uzbek community. After a little while, “Reina Attack” was done at the end of 2016<sup>2</sup>. It shook the whole country because 39 people were killed in one night through the course of terror acts in which time, place and targets were chosen specifically. Concerning our matter is that murderer was ethnically Uzbek and seen in Zeytinburnu before the attack<sup>3</sup>.

Following days, security operations were done, some immigrants from Central Asia (“foreign national”) were arrested<sup>4</sup> and deported from Turkey. There were totally 7 Uzbek madrasahs in Zeytinburnu and I had just worked on one of them. After these developments, all of them were sealed due to security concerns. I was dumbfounded because I had spent my months to access some immigrant Muslim Uzbeks and gain their confidence.

In the following months, Uzbeks and immigration remained on the agenda of media and my mind. Hence, I decided to study the role of religion and religious institutions among the Uzbek community in Istanbul for my master’s thesis. In recent times, some of my Uzbeks friends who have resided in Zeytinburnu helped me to find another immigrant Uzbek madrasah in Istanbul.

The new one is placed in Başakşehir, specifically in its Altınşehir district. Then, I went to Kayaşehir due to move of the community work. I observed that it is more than just being

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-38636095>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/38507952>

<sup>4</sup> <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201701271026972121-zeytinburnu-isid-operasyonu-gozalti/>

madrasah and there are new branches of it. Therefore, I changed my research field and passed to the Ikitelli Sanayi area of Başakşehir ultimately. Even the community is multi-ethnic just like before, its members are again largely immigrant Muslim Uzbeks. I went with a reference that helped me to achieve access and trust issues rapidly. In that sense, it made me think about how my previous work was easing the process for me at that time. I met with one of the chief Muslim Uzbeks. He said that he is glad to hear for my attention to his community.

After immigration of Syrians to Turkey since 2011, migration and coping with social crises arise from migration, and accommodation of immigrants become a more important problem (Erdoğan, 2014). When it comes to Uzbeks case, despite being one of the oldest immigrant communities of Turkey, they are not getting the primary attention. Maybe the reason is that immigrant Uzbeks had not taken pride of place for years unlike others, but I think this ethnoreligious group, many are now citizens of Turkey, can be approached in the context of migration and religion. I chose Uzbek madrasah; the religious, social and educational institution, as my focal point to make the topic peculiar. Yet, there are also other reasons that led me to focus on this subject. The first reason is that immigration and religion topics are mostly worked in the context of western countries such as USA, Canada, and Germany, but not for peripheral countries as much. To make it clear, academic works in the context of immigration and religion will be referred in the following section. Besides, Muslim immigrant groups and minorities in a Muslim-majority country like Turkey could not find enough place for themselves in the academic literature. In recent years, this matter has flared up with Syrians' emigration as I mentioned above.

The second point is that Muslim Uzbeks have experienced forced migration for years. They have an official blockade and because of this, they cannot turn to Uzbekistan easily even they still have links with their relatives. Thus, there is no pure transnationalism case in here. Transitions are prevented. Forced migration concerns have usually been worked

in the context of global social transformation, state control and discipline, nationality, ethical and methodological problems, diasporas, transnationalism, geography, international relations and law, history, colonialism, geopolitics, environment, policymaking, gender, political theory and ethics, and of health and human rights around the world. However, the religious problems and motivational parts are not being adequately explored in the analysis of forced migration. My point of departure is that the role of religious motivation and background should be emphasized much more in the literature of forced migration, and this is also the case for Turkey.

As far as I know, Muslim Uzbeks are studied in Turkey directly on the constitution of their immigrant community through religious and survival occasions. A related study, “Türkiye’ye Göç Eden Özbeklerin Kimliklerinin Muhafazası” was published by Ahmet Salih Bıçakçı (1996) in the history discipline. Moreover, Uzbeks were studied on the topics of historical and political relations between Ottomans and Uzbeks, Uzbek post-Soviet matters, Uzbek culture and history, Uzbek language and literature, Uzbek nationality and so on. But none of these studies is about immigrant Muslim Uzbeks and their settlement and doing religion efforts through religious motivations and institutions such as Uzbek madrasah and domla (religious topliner). I intend to address these contexts mostly in my research about Uzbeks in Turkey.

Madrasah as a religious institution in Turkey is generally approached in the context of Turkish and Kurdish madrasahs in history books. For instance, Ali Kemal Saran tells his memories about Laz madrasahs in his book of “Omuzumda Hemençe” (2013) and “Şark Medreselerinde Bir Ömür” (2003) by Sadrettin Öztoprak discusses a subject of Kurdish madrasahs historically. These works are done in the context of history and memory. Therefore, they are lack of projecting madrasah as a social institution. Instead, they both took madrasah normally as a classical religious educational institution which tries to survive against sanctions of Turkish Republic for many years.

Last but not least, I try to learn socio-religious formation and reconstruction of Muslim Uzbek community in a specific neighborhood in Istanbul. So, it was crucial for me to stay bias-free as much as I could since I tried to reveal the socio-religious web among immigrant Muslim Uzbeks. Furthermore, I have an intention to refer their socio-historical narratives. By this way, I hope that my research will find out the basic motivation behind Muslim Uzbek immigration and social factors, styles, ways of living, implications, socio-religious activities in building and reflecting a new ethnoreligious community.

## **1.2. Literature Review**

With its untouched content and issues, this study is at the center of various considerable, close and divergent literature; involving immigration and religion, forced migration, religious institution, transnationalism, and the diaspora. Secondly, this chapter involves studies conducted in Turkey about Uzbeks, immigration and religious institution or facility. Therefore, the research tries to contribute both to these fields respectively and to interdisciplinary work within the grounded theory approach. In the first sections, scrutiny on comprehensive fields such as immigration, religious institution, and migration is provided concisely. Following chapters are dedicated to more specific fields of religious activities in Soviets, Uzbek quests in Turkey, immigration and madrasah in Turkey, and so on. Overlapped contents are not mentioned twice as certain literature is interbedded.

### **1.2.1. Immigration and Religion**

Certain discussions on migration and religion issues for immigrant congregations in the United States are presented in this section. First of all, Foley and Hoge sociologically discuss how community patterns are differently developed in the United States in order to accommodate old and new immigrants (2007). For instance, some immigrants joined already existing religious communities and some others formed new communities in their own way (Warner and Wittner, 1998). In Foley and Hoge's book "Religion and the New Immigrants", they state that religious institutions of immigrants are more active



and supportive when compared with American Churches in terms of providing social services and developing civic engagement skills (2007). Ebaugh and Chafetz state that immigrants also brought new resources and traditions as well as new challenges to their congregations (2000). It is the main impetus for the mobilization of immigrant resources and challenges in the United States. Furthermore, Fred Kniss and Paul Numrich, in their book "Sacred Assemblies and Civic Engagement", (2007) look at sixteen different immigrant communities in Chicago metropolitan area and explore these communities' civic engagement mold. While doing this, they use three concepts to state the distinctive features of these congregations: These are sectarianism, the locus of moral authority, and moral project. The authors discuss how these three characteristics influence civic engagement designs of the immigrant congregations that they study.

There are different studies that handle immigration and religion from different aspects. Peggy Levitt's book "Good Needs No Passport" is one of them. She suggests that individual backgrounds, as well as sending countries' socio-economic and political backgrounds, needs to be carefully studied as a package in order to better understand immigrant religious experiences (2007). Additionally, borders and boundaries of belonging have changed with the increasing transnationality of religion. For immigrants, religion does not only provide spaces in host countries. Most religious institutions accommodating immigrants are linked through international networks, and they provide transnational connections, networks, and spaces for their members.

All of the aforementioned studies give primacy to the immigrant congregation itself. However, my aim is to mainly focus on the religious institution in the limitations of this research. I will also look at the style of formation of the community from the point of immigrant and religious experiences via personal and collective levels. Hopefully, the research would contribute both to the Turkish and international academic world through publicizing immigrant Uzbek community in Başakşehir, Istanbul.

### **1.2.2. Forced Migration**

Due to the oppression on religious life and security concerns, Uzbeks have to leave Central Asia. Thus, their case can be named as forced migration. The main subject of my study can be briefly defined as forced displacement. There are theoretical, methodical and ethical discussions in the literature as much as case-oriented examples. For instance, S. Castles (2003) asserts that forms of forced migration, such as refugee flows, internal displacement, and development, have risen considerably in quantity and they have political and social significance. He suggests (2003) that forced displacement should be analyzed as a social continuum in which human agency and social webs play a huge part. In that sense, sociology of forced migration has to be interdisciplinary; adopting a transnational undertaking. It is argued that many current pieces of research on forced migration are based on improper methodology and data and subsequent policy discussions are often incomplete or ethically suspicious already (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003). On the other hand, M. Eastmond (2007) highlights that stories are important reflections of lived experience and researchers must be careful about their role in the production of narrative data and the (re)presentation of lived experience as a text; since narratives are not renditions of clear 'truth' but repercussion of a dynamic interplay between story, experience, and life.

On the other side, it is claimed that the question of 'stateless person' should be searched in politics in the context of forced migration. Departures from the homeland can never be attributed to a single reason and categorizations such as 'internally displaced persons' or 'illegal immigrants' are inadequate in this sense (Agier, 2010: 189). So, building real international co-responsibility to maintain citizenship for all those who lost the protection and acknowledgment of their state should be thought instead of a policy rejecting and demonizing those migrants. When it comes to the case examples of forced migration, immigrant women researches draw attention. One of these researches is done in Sweden. It is Viktoria Zander's thesis of "Challenges in Supporting the Struggle for Sense of Control" for the doctoral degree. The utter goal of this thesis is to enlighten

the perceived reasons of musculoskeletal pain and accumulating trauma experienced by women from Iraq and suggestions for rehabilitation measures to be able to help identification of needs of Middle East diaspora women (Zander, 2016). Mixed methods and studies are used within a grounded theory approach. Interviews and questionnaires are done with respondents from Middle Eastern diaspora and professionals of primary healthcare. Both women who lost their sense of control and healthcare staff in the research field think that the pain is complex and related with past traumas and difficult experiences, but forced resettled women add that the pain includes physical causes calling for physical treatment and operation (2016: 24). The findings show that increased collaboration between healthcare service and authorities within society is needed. Enhanced knowledge and organizational changes should be combined to avoid putting the patient as a disadvantage (2016: 39). Also, the person-centered approach and intersectionality are advised for the education of healthcare professionals.

For me, religion should be studied better in the context of forced migration because religious conflict and religious persecution can be the reason for forced migration. People are forced to migrate to live their religion freely. We do not know very well how those who have been subjected to forced migration for religious reasons live and mobilize in the host country with their religion. I want to shed light on this in this research by adopting the grounded theory method.

### **1.2.3. Religious Institution and Migration**

Religious institutions or structures and migration issues are mostly discussed within the context of globalization, transnationalism, education, religious participation, and terrorism. To examine religious participation in churches in the United States, R. Finke focuses on four different time period via an ecological approach: 1850, 1890, 1926, and 1980 (1989: 45). He argues that both migration and demographical composition of an area's population impresses the church's ability to retain and attract members (Finke, 1989). It is shown that migration, natural increase and sex ratio all influence the rate of

adherence to a religious institution in a given area. What is more, increased transnational religious structures challenge the nation-state (Levitt, 1998: 74). The continuous connection between communities of origin and destination creates a reciprocal relationship in which people, resources and social remittances are constantly exchanged.

There is a powerful link between a religious institution and migration in the Islamic world as stated in the article of J. Armijo on Islam in China. For instance, Chinese Muslim students have traveled abroad to further their level in Islamic knowledge (Armijo, 2008: 169). By the help of immigrant Chinese students, Muslim educational institutions can have a linkage with religious institutions abroad (2008: 187). This helps to give the Muslims of southwest China a sense of identity in the context of a Muslim minority under pressure for assimilation by the Chinese state.

In the other case, Shi'i communities in Pakistan sent their best female students to madrasahs of Qom in Iran after the Iranian revolution in 1979 (Zahab, 2008: 123). This movement created and strengthened transnational networks which connect Pakistani Shi'is with other Shi'is in Iran and elsewhere through migration and exchange of students and colleagues between Shi'i religious organizations (2008: 133). Similarly, most of the students emigrated to Pakistan from Afghanistan since 1980 for seeking Islamic education. In the 1990s, many of these madrasahs would also be used to recruit and educate the fresh members of the Taliban who plays a key role in Afghanistan and Central Asia (Noor, 2008: 141). After the attacks on the US on 11 September, US invasion of Afghanistan in 2002 and the London bombings in 2005, security concerns emerged in Pakistan about foreign students who migrate from one country to another, and what might happen to them in the madrasahs they visit in Pakistan (2008: 143). Pakistan started to monitor madrasahs and radical Islamic groups within the phobia of foreign students.

#### **1.2.4. Transnationalism and Diaspora**

Diaspora and transnationalism frequently go hand in hand with migration themes in literature. My study is about a part of Uzbek diaspora in Istanbul and their transnational organization evolved after the context of forced displacement. My aim is to understand the role of religion and religious institutions in community building in this research. To investigate this, I apply to qualitative research methods in fieldwork design and grounded theory approach for the analysis part. Findings show that forced migration mostly ends up with never returning back to the homeland; leading to transnational consequences. Actually, transnationalism and diaspora are not directly deduced from the findings; yet contexts, strategies, and conditions related to the findings lead me to that thinking.

Hence, transnationalism and diaspora shape the discursive framework of my findings heavily and make them more meaningful in the literature. At first, religious life is affected globally as transportation and communication technologies advance and become more affordable (Levitt, 2004: 409). Technical developments allow us to go beyond our provincial environment, to increase our awareness about the outer world, and to become more acquainted with human communities and cultures around the world. As a result, migrants and global religious institutions extend and deepen these cross-border ties and thicken the globalization of religious life (2004: 409). Organizational contacts (re)created by migration reinforce already-global aspects of the religious life of communities and transform religion into the strong, unexplored sphere of transnational belonging (2004: 418). In a globalized world, attempts should tend to figure out how identity and belonging are changed and (re)defined via the transnational centrality of religion. In Peggy Levitt's book of "Gods Need No Passport", she states (2007) that American religious life and diversity are shaped by both local and global forces. What happens in America is not just made in America. People who belong to religious communities or faith-based global movements can coexist easily with their national and ethnic identities in the US (Levitt, 2007: 13). Belief and culture are mixed and do not stop

at the borders of America but diffuse in as they transcend the boundaries of time. Social and religious impacts of newcomers are much bigger than their quantities (2007). Universally shared faiths and values are translated in local contexts and religion make its followers connected to shared memory and timeframe wherever they are. By this way, human lives, borders, and boundaries of belonging become transnational and should be redefined in new social and cultural studies.

When it comes to diaspora literature, there are various kinds of works but certain communities', and media cases will be mentioned as examples. In Feher's work (1998), Jewish Iranian diaspora in Los Angeles is studied through their community experience, exodus, changes and new challenging ways for "Americanization". Jewish Iranian youth started to become Jewish-Iranian Americans and the main goal of diaspora was changed to a balanced life in the host society (Feher, 1998: 72). Struggle for managing three identities of American, Iranian and Jewish simultaneously is processed on Iranian Jews' adaptation to the US, their community history and a migration story. Religion is one of the most important identity markers employed by immigrant groups under IJF (Internation Judea Foundation) to protect self-awareness and group cohesion (1998). IJF was starting to raise funds and establish institutions for building its own diaspora and community organizations in order to create "home away from home" for their kids within the concern of identity (1998: 87-88). Being Jewish is the most important identity of the diaspora and helps to balance identity especially for youths. The community employs education, magazines and community centers to reach their youth and other people from the host society. Iranian Jewish Americans have a few ties with the homeland and usually look toward the future (1998: 90). They have tried to pave the way for their children in American society. In other respects, the congregation of the Mission and its adaptation process to US society in Brooklyn is a different example of cultural assimilation. In this case, their immigrant mosque undergoes structural changes in order to adapt to the diaspora in the United States and to preserve their faith and identity there (Abusharaf, 1998: 236-237). The formalization of the governance structure in the

Muslim community and the professionalization of the clergy is seen as adaptive changes in response to forces in the host society (1998: 237). Abuharaf asserts that Afro-Caribbean congregation turned over to Yemeni-dominant congregation ethnically. Even this immigrant community has an interrelated process of ethnicization and changed through the years (in the 90s), struggling to maintain essentials of faith and good attributes of traditional culture have still performed (1998: 258). This congregation has been continued to be an occasion for immigrant Muslims who (re)build their communal identity in diaspora, thus safeguarding their ethnoreligious environment in America. What makes them different is that the more modification and adjustments they achieved, the more realization they have about their distinctive identity (1998). So, the Mission is not an incidence of inevitable assimilation, but rather (re)negotiation of roles and alteration for effective adaptation.

Diaspora and media literature is one of the prominent literatures within the migration context. Muslims living in the diaspora, especially in the West, has many diverse ethnicity and nationality. Among these multiple levels of differences, people try to figure out the meaning of Islam and the concept of ummah according to P. Mandaville (2003: 135). A sense of being ummah and community can be achieved through diasporic media in which identity, meaning, and boundaries of the diaspora are permanently reconstructed and debated. Media means more than just being a tool that exchanges information of interests in a given society, or serves images of a community to the wider society. (Mandaville, 2003). New information and communication technologies enable global discussions and discourses on Islam and a sense of “virtual ummah”. Media and Internet allow Muslims to join a new form of imagined community and faith (2003: 145-146). These technologies support the embodiment of the concept of the ummah (2003: 146). Conceptions of Muslim identity and discourse in the diaspora can also find alternative ways thanks to the influence of the media (2003: 136). Notably, young Muslims who live in the West follow new media actively to communicate with each other globally and share comments on Islam to publicize the concerns and needs of their confidential

situations. When viewed from this aspect, diasporas represent “the leading edge of globalization” (Safran, 2004: 10). Migrants have organizations and means to reflect their view of culture and religion.

Lastly, R. Robertson’s article of “Glocalization: Time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity” (1995), “Transnationalism From Below” (1998, edited by M. P. Smith & L. E. Guarnizo), T. Lyons’ text of “Diasporas and Homeland Conflict” (2006), “Diaspora and Transnationalism” (2010, eds. R. Bauböck & T. Faist), “Moving Subjects Moving Objects” (2012, edited by Maruska Svasek), “Media and Communication in the Chinese Diaspora” (2016, edited by W. Sun and J. Sinclair), “Mediatized Migrants: Media Cultures and Communicative Networking in the Diaspora” (2012) by A. Hepp, C. Bozdog and L. Suna can be exemplified as the other useful sources in the literature of diaspora and transnationalism.

This study examines the religious institutions of Uzbeks and the place of religion in their community construction with a grounded theory approach. Since the grounded theory framework is chosen as the theoretical part of this study, no other existing theory is used in it. Rather than the verification of existing or pre-existing theory such as migration theories, an analytic process like grounded theory promotes theoretical emergence and development. It is an inductive method. Also, certain conceptual frameworks like “transnationalism” and “diaspora” also emerge from the study.

These are not preconceived theoretical models but related conceptual projections in order to reach a core category/selective code through axial coding (Holton, 2007). These are the memoed ideas which fit in both literature and emerging theory. Hence, I also wanted to benefit from these conceptual categories briefly in theoretical sampling. Some definitions of transnationalism and diaspora are made from the literature, believing that these definitions can be helpful when the meaning is extracted from the data via coding. Both of these terms are important to understand how Muslim Uzbeks organize



themselves as a new ethnoreligious immigrant community, how they fit in host society in Istanbul, how they construct and constitute their boundaries, and how they reshuffle their own identities in getting into a new nest. These two terms will be discussed in the following paragraph.

**Transnationalism** can be defined as to broaden and thicken the globalization of religious life (Levitt, 2004: 409) in the context of contemporary migration. Migrants deepen and extend cross-border ties by doing their every-day religious practices transnational. According to a transnational perspective, all layers of social life simultaneously and mutually inform each other. It recognizes that some social processes occur in nations while many others, though rooted in nations, also pass over their borders (Levitt, 2007:23). On the other hand, **diaspora** can briefly be defined as a religious institution and immigrant congregations which are communities of commitment and, therefore, arenas of change. Often founded by laypersons and always dependent on voluntary support; their structures, leadership, and service have to be shaped to meet demanding human needs (Warner & Wittner, 1998: 21). Diaspora mixes, and overlaps with, meanings of words like *migrancy*, *exile*, and *expatriate* to constitute 'an unruly crowd of descriptive/interpretative terms' that *converse* and *jostle* in the modern dictionary of migration studies (Clifford, 1994: 303).

Actually, there is no clear separation between the terms of transnationalism and diaspora because they often coincide with each other and even interchangeable (Bauböck & Faist, 2010: 14). Even so, the conceptual comparison is an opportunity to make crucial questions clear about cross-border mechanisms. First, all cross-border concepts are sometimes linked with globalization approaches but they have differences in reality. Transnational social movements and diaspora are studied as an example of globalization but human mobility may recreate and reinforce reverse effects such as patriarchy, ethnonationalism, sectarianism, etc. Yet, diaspora and transnational perspectives emphasize strong connections to national or local territories, especially in

the case of migrants (Bauböck & Faist, 2010). For instance, Uzbek immigrants are usually interested in local problems of Muslim people in Uzbekistan. Cross-border social phenomena have a bare territorial reference and are thus also local and national in their focus and goals (Lyons, 2006). Uzbeks sometimes demand political asylum that often refers to a global norm. By this way, the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism are closely related to *glocalization*, which combines the notions of localization and globalization (Robertson, 1995).

What is more, there are some similarities and differences between the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism. An important similarity is that both are extremely elastic terms, and somehow concern sustained cross-border ties including regions of origin, destination and lateral ties to other places in which migrants reside (Bauböck & Faist, 2010: 20). Both of these are busy with homeland ties and the incorporation of people living abroad. Moreover, diaspora generally emphasizes the cultural distinctiveness of social groups, the relationship between homelands, dispersed people and destination countries (Dufoix, 2008) while transnationalism extensively focuses on integration, migrant corporation and transnational practices (Bauböck & Faist, 2010).

When it comes to differences, 'transnationalism' is a broader term than 'diaspora' in two aspects: First concern is the scope of groups. Diaspora relates most often to religious, national and ethnic communities, whereas transnational approach connects to all type of social formations like social movements and businessmen networks (Bauböck & Faist, 2010: 21). So, transnationalism encompasses diaspora but not vice versa. The second dimension concerns mobility and identity. Transnational ideas emphasize cross-border mobility, while diaspora approaches take their cue from the respects of collective identity and 'construction of shared imagination' (Bauböck & Faist, 2010, 2010). For the transnational perspective, however, these identity issues are regarded as being reproduced from the cross-border mobility of persons. Furthermore, transnationalism and diaspora concern different emphasis on the time dimension. Scholars using the term

*diaspora* frequently refer to a multi-generational pattern, while *transnationalism* deals with recent migration flow and mostly on one generation (Bauböck & Faist, 2010: 22). The long-time distance distinguishes former from the latter.

In this study, concepts of transnationalism and diaspora will be used to incorporate several other concepts just as descriptive-analytical notions in the analysis part of the study. As a researcher, I am a bit prescriptive but not quick-tempered. Glaser (1998) recognizes that reading the literature formerly is problematic while Strauss and Corbin (2008) expect most experts are familiar with the literature in the field. Without doing a complete literature review, theoretical ideas above are just taken from the literature at a certain stage of findings as like in vivo terms of participants which are chosen to be used sometimes.

#### **1.2.5. Religion and Religious Activities in the Soviet Union**

The relationship between Soviets, and religion and religious practices of Uzbeks following the two parts' interaction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, will be the focus of this part. Under Soviet Communist ideology, P. Froese claims (2004) that there were two main vying lines in the religious sphere – repressed Orthodox Church and alternative atheist “church of science” promoted officially. Scientific atheism could not replace existing religious belief and practices because the system of belief required more than coercion and promotion to become accepted (Froese, 2004). Furthermore, Communism and its atheistic propaganda could not eradicate Islamic faith and activities, especially in the Central Asian republics where Islamic culture has been overwhelming (Subtelny, 1989). For M. Atkin, Soviet Tajikistan is one of the best examples of the survival of religion under Soviet dominance (1989). Soviet Muslims have found paths of teaching Islam to next generations, and they continued to practice their rituals since coming under Soviet governance despite nearly seventy years of Soviet antireligious policy and publications (Atkin, 1989). So, ideological (re)construction against religious beliefs and practices were failed in Soviet Socialist Republics, and Islamic belief and activities have maintained for

generations. At this point, works of Hayit (1987), Dailey (1990) and Taheri (1991) on the status of Islam and religious institutions in the Soviet period can be applied to as helpful literature.

#### **1.2.6. Migrations to Turkey**

Migration and refugee issues in Turkey have become more important day by day. At the same time, apart from usual regular migration to Turkey for education, health and so on, there is also a recent reality of transit migration in Turkey according to A. Icduygu and D. Yukseker (2010). Also, other forms of migration like for irregular labor also exist in Turkey. As characters, goals, sources, and flows of migrants have become more different in the last three decades, some parts of the world are very much affected by this “new age of migration” (Icduygu, 2005). A. Icduygu states that Turkey has also become a major country of migration and of transit (2005). From the beginning of the 21st century, Turkey has been getting thousands of transit migrants from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and some other African and Asian countries; whose aim is to go to European countries from Turkey (2005). This intensifies cooperation between Turkey and the European Union on irregular migration.

Nowadays, Turkey also receives irregular migrants from all over the world, particularly from Syria, whose aim is to stay in Turkey rather than passing to EU countries from there. Irregular migrants are those who stay or work in the receiving country without necessary documents. Thereby, two diverse patterns coexist in the irregular migration in Turkey: a) Transit migration and b) Circular (or shuttle) and labor migration (Icduygu and Aksel, 2012: 20). Moreover, refugees and the flow of asylum seekers involve irregular border crossing again and again. The growth of the Turkish economy and increasing social and political rights make Turkey a popular and preferable address for the new migrants. Sirkeci, Cohen, and Yazgan assert (2012) that immigration to Turkey includes returnees as well as second and third-generation Turks, Kurds and their children from Germany where these people emigrated to over the last five decades.

Besides all these, obtaining reliable qualitative and quantitative data in order to examine migration movements is still problematic in Turkey. So, according to my search, there is no academic or non-academic text in the literature directly related to my topic. There are only some works that give a general idea about the topic; yet having indirect relation with my research. For example, Ayhan Kaya's article (2018), "Refugee Studies in Turkey: Challenges and Prospects and Challenges", is one of these works for this research. Kaya summarizes the current status of refugee studies in Turkey and states that scientific studies on refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants do not meet the expectations in terms of demonstrating the wills of these people in Turkey; just being restricted to retrospective analysis that discusses past refugee experiences in the country (2018). Moreover, there are some news report and columns on the issue but they are mostly about deportee Uzbeks. In Turkish academia, immigrant and religion issues are mostly about Turkish immigrants in Germany and Syrian newcomers. Bezanis' work of "Soviet Muslim emigres in the Republic of Turkey" (1994) and "Haricdeki Özbekler" (1992) by Hayitov and Sabirov can be informative works about Uzbek migrations to Turkey.

#### **1.2.7. Madrasahs in Turkey**

Despite madrasahs are mostly found in Istanbul and Bursa, when it comes to talking about madrasahs in Turkey, two specific regions come to mind directly for this research. These are the Black Sea region and South-Eastern Anatolia. Madrasah movement in these places has popularly continued throughout the Ottoman and Republican periods. For this reason, there are notable studies about the madrasahs in these two regions.

Sadreddin Öztoprak was born in 1919 or 1920 in Mardin, Turkey. He was a famous scholar who took education in madrasahs in the east of Turkey. In his book of "Şark Medreselerinde Bir Ömür", he narrates (2003) his pupilage and gives information about eastern madrasahs from the early years of the republic to nineties. For centuries, there have been large and small madrasahs in every village and district in the eastern and South-Eastern regions of Anatolia. These madrasahs were called as "hücre" (cell). They

have elementary, high school and higher education levels (Öztoprak, 2003: 42). Arabic and Islamic sciences and methodologies have been taught in these educational structures. Eastern madrasahs have one or two rooms. There, 10-15 or 60-70 students were staying in the madrasah, who were named as “faki” (“fakih” or “fakke” in some regions). Foods and all other needed material were met from outside, by the villagers or locals. Daily foods were called “tayin” or “ratıp” (2003: 43). Facilities were always very poor and limited. Cleaning, laundry and other similar domestic works were done by students and their teachers in regular turn. Education and training continued in various ways from early morning to evening (2003: 44). A great graduation ceremony was held when a person graduates from the madrasah and guests from surrounding madrasahs were invited to this ceremony. The size of the banquet in graduation ceremony has varied according to the welfare level of the folk around madrasah who were supporting scholars and students (2003: 45). Grad students were sent by their teachers to towns and villages in which there are no madrasah or mosque. Then, they have started to settle in there and establish a new madrasah as founders (2003: 45-46). This new madrasah has been filled with children from that region and around. When political pressure has occurred, some scholars momentarily have gone to madrasahs in Syria close to Syrian-Turkish border<sup>5</sup>.

In the book of “Omuzumda Hemençe” (2013), Ali Kemal Saran, who was born in Trabzon-Of county in 1934, tells that even people of the region have a variety of hardships, almost every village and town have madrasah and masjids. Many of the elements described above were also valid for the other madrasahs in the Black Sea region. However, there are some differences. Madrasahs in Trabzon were mostly built next to the mosques (Saran, 2013: 99). Mosques were practice areas for madrasah students. In the mosque, they tried to practice what they learned theoretically in madrasah (2013: 100). Mosques and madrasahs were always intertwined with each other in the Black Sea. If mosques

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<sup>5</sup> See more at: <https://www.dunyabizim.com/kitap/kurt-medreseleri-nedir-nasil-orgutlenmistir-h24786.html>

were lack of imams, graduated madrasah students were officially appointed to these mosques by the will of villagers, community council and religious office of mufti (2013: 101). Memory training of Quran was more prominent in madrasahs of the Black Sea compared to the Eastern Anatolia. Relations between madrasah teachers and statesmen have been very tight in that area (2013: 104-105). Saran says (2013) that the education system in madrasah was closing the important gap in the religious and scholarly field in the conditions of early Turkish Republic. Madrasahs and teachers were well-equipped in the Black Sea when compared to the madrasahs and their staff in southeast Anatolia. Both of these madrasahs in different regions were loyal to the Ottoman curriculum in Islamic education. Today, madrasahs, which belong to Turkish citizens, are not as active as before neither in the Black Sea nor in the Eastern Anatolia.

According to my search, the first Uzbek madrasah was established by Hacı Harabati (a benefactor) in Ovakent, Hatay in 1998. According to the master dissertation by E. Gocmez, this madrasah has fifteen cells (rooms) and seven teachers who are called as *meydaker* (2008: 163). It has forty students, some of whom are boarding students. Here, the important point is that all of these students were also going to public elementary school together with getting madrasah education (Gocmez, 2008). Thus, the curriculum of the madrasah was prepared in coherence with the official Turkish curriculum in primary school (2008: 164). Arabic language education and lessons on Qoran training were the main courses in the madrasah.

Other than madrasah, there is another form of religious foundation which also belongs to Uzbeks previously. It is Ozbekler Tekkesi (Uzbeks Lodge) in Istanbul, Uskudar. In the late Ottoman and early Republic era, Uzbeks Lodge functioned as madrasah and rest house for Uzbek immigrants and neighbors around. For more information about Uzbek lodges in Turkey, G. Smith's work of "The Ozbek Tekkes of Istanbul" (1980), G. Jarring's study of "The Turkestan Tekke of Tarsus" (1983), M. Altun's article of "Ozbekler Tekkesi"

(2003), “Ozbekler Tekkesi I-II” (1984) by C. Bektas and A. Ozcan’s text of “Ozbekler Tekkesi Postnisini” (1992) might be supportive.

### **1.2.8. Uzbeks in Turkey**

There are dozens of studies on Uzbeks in Turkey. F. Solak’s bibliographical work of “Türkistan ve Kafkasya Bibliyografyası” (2007) and National Thesis Center in Turkey (Ulusal Tez Merkezi) are very helpful for my scanning. All studies are bibliographically separated as dissertations, articles, and books in Solak’s book (2007). It has a very rich resource on Uzbeks and on other ethnic societies in Turkestan region. Main themes of these three kinds of texts in Turkey are categorized in detail beneath.

Main themes of dissertations on the Uzbeks: *Ottoman-Uzbek relations* (Budak, 1987), *Uzbek political formations* (Kılıç, 1999), *the Uzbek language* (Aynur, 1999; Koraş; 1998), *Uzbek literature* (Çelik, 1998), *Regional Uzbek dialects* (Rai, 1976), *Uzbek identity* (Bıçakçı, 1996; Eraslan, 2015; Alimova, 2017), *Turkish language education of Uzbek students in Turkey* (Açık, 1995), *A history of the Uzbeks* (Çavdar, 1982; Füsün, 1999) and *Uzbek culture* (Zihnioğlu, 1971; Gocmez, 2008).

Main themes of books on the Uzbeks: *Uzbek khanate* (Alpargu, 1994), *comparative popular beliefs* (Kalafat, 1994), *a history of Uzbek Turks* (Saray, 1993; Yıldız, 1997).

Main themes of articles on the Uzbeks: *Turkish language education* (Şen, 1994), *Uzbek folklore* (Ahmedov, 1997), *Uzbek language* (Mahmudov, 1994), *national publications* (Kocaoğlu, 1990), *Afghani Uzbeks* (Merçil, 1966; Erol, 2001), *Uzbek nation and nationalism* (Kafalı, 1976; Ersanlı, 2000; Gündoğdu, 2002), *national history* (Malikov, 2002; Gündoğdu, 2002), *identity of Uzbek in post-Soviet term* (Shahrani, 1996; Zanka, 2002)

The closest works as articles, books, and thesis to my subject of study are: M. Saray’s book of “Özbek Türkleri Tarihi” (1993) and “Özbekler ve Türkistan Milli Mücadelesi”



(1997) by H. Yıldız. In journal articles, D. Cevik's study of "Türkiye'de Yaşayan Kazak, Kırgız ve Özbeklerde Halk İnançları" (2001) and G. Cosnahan's "İstanbul'da Özbek Toplumu" (1991) are relevant examples for the history of Uzbek immigrants, faith and Uzbek community in Istanbul.

When it comes to the works in Turkish academia, undergraduate thesis of "Özbek Kültürü" (1971) by F. Zihnioglu and "Özbek Tarihi Hakkında Bibliyografya Denemesi" (1982) by S. Cavdar, master thesis of "Türkiye'ye Göç Eden Özbeklerin Kimliklerinin Muhafazası" (1996) by Bıçakçı, "Özbekistan'dan eğitim-öğretim amacıyla Türkiye'ye gelen öğrencilerin dil-kültür-uyum problemleri ve çözüm teklifleri" (1995) by F. Acık, "Afganistan'dan gelen göçmen Özbekler'in sosyo-kültürel ve dini hayatları üzerine sosyolojik bir araştırma (Hatay ili Ovakent beldesi örneği)" (2008) by E. Gocmez and of "Türkiye Özbekleri gündelik yaşam, kimlik ve bellek (Adana ve İstanbul örneği)" (2017) by D. Alimova and A. Eraslan's doctoral thesis of "Antakya'da yaşayan Özbeklerde kimlik ve aidiyet" (2015) are most recent studies in the Turkish literature.

Some of the aforementioned works will be elaborated more within the aim of this research. A. Bıçakçı (1996) approached to Uzbek immigrants in the context of immigration and identity. He used the methodology of oral history and technics of critical edition within the historical primary sources such as memories and history books related to Uzbeks. He also used sociological methods of fieldwork, in-depth-interview, and observation (Bıçakçı, 1996). This is the closest work to my study in terms of the topic and rationale of this study. It is a very comprehensive research in which immigration, adoption, political orientation, social and religious life, institutions, tradition, economic situation, publications of immigrant Uzbeks in Turkey are covered exhaustively (1996). This study is a masterpiece of Uzbek immigrants which is written in the Turkish language. As a researcher, I have benefited greatly from this dissertation which has incisive analysis and a rich bibliography.

Apart from that, another most-related study is done by Gocmez (2008), focusing on the Uzbek community in a different city and township. Rather than the activities of the madrasah, Gocmez focuses more on the content of worship and on the sources of education. His research is somehow weak in reconciling religious life with the social sphere and its social impacts, but it is a very good resource for addressing the issue separately and in volume. Other dissertations made by Alimova (2017), Eraslan (2015) and Acik (1995) are also voluminous sources. However, they are not directly related to my thesis; focusing more on identity, culture, history and everyday life of Uzbeks.

All in all, I have tried to cover all the literature that is either directly or indirectly related to my research. It can be concluded that there are few studies directly related to my research. In this respect, it can be argued that the research interest of this study is quite fresh and untouched in the literature.

### **1.3. Outline of the Study**

This study is composed of four chapters. The first chapter encapsulates nearly the whole study; including an introduction to the major issue of the dissertation, literature review on immigration, religion, forced migration, religious institution, transnationalism and diaspora which focuses on the emerging theoretical framework. Both of these concepts are just discussed as conceptual reflections but not a preconceived conceptual framework for analyzing the results of the study. Transnationalism and diaspora are defined one by one, and the similarities and distinctions between the two are described. Then, literature review continues with the religion in Soviets, migrations to Turkey, madrasahs in Turkey and finishes at relevant researches about the Uzbeks in Turkey.

The second chapter contains parts of the methodology. In the beginning, qualitative research design, methods, and ethnography are mentioned briefly. Then, the research question and sub-questions around it are given. Qualitative research techniques of purposive sampling and semi-structured interview are introduced together with

research questions used in the fieldwork. Later, narrative analysis, grounded theory method, textual analysis and kinds of coding are explained to describe the format of the analysis in research.

In chapter three, certain parts of the collected data are introduced as findings. Headings of sections are concepts decided through the open coding process. In the first part, succinct history of the immigrant Uzbek community, their exit from Central Asia or Turkestan area, and transient host countries which are provisional accommodation for immigrant Uzbeks stayed are represented. In the second part, orientation of Muslim immigrant Uzbeks after the migration is discussed in the light of their formation of transnational religious community or event, and on identity and belonging contexts learned through the experience of respondents. Representative forms like a religious institute of madrasah and religious practices are demonstrated in the last section with instances and new cases from the research field. How immigrant Uzbeks can be able to keep their Islamic belief in their diaspora and how the globalization of religious life occurs as an intervening condition in the context of this research are some questions tried to be answered in that chapter.

In conclusion, the review of basic findings, action strategies, causal and intervening conditions, and the context of the central topic is covered. Emergent case of Uzbek diaspora is discussed through certain arguments of transnationalism. Obstacles/inhibitions faced in the research period and implications for advanced research are stated in the end.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This qualitative research is conducted in Istanbul, Başakşehir, mostly through semi-structured interviews with the purposive sampling method. Fieldnotes are collected during the intervals between interviews and summons; the same is valid for the participant observation also. Yet, it should be noted that participant observation and field notes have secondary importance in terms of their contribution to the data. For this reason, I do not prefer to go into the details of taking field notes and making participant observation in this part. I was planning to adopt a more systematic and fruitful participant observation strategy for the sake of data; yet it somehow turned into a rather random and not-so-fruitful one, since my interviewees are quite busy people in their environment, spending their days in a constant rush. As a result, observations became frequent, yet intermittent. Few fieldnotes were taken during the interviews, informal conversations and gatherings. As for the other methods, I also applied to narrative analysis, textual analysis, and coding within the Grounded Theory approach for data analysis. Qualitative research method submits an explanation of the fact in its inherent setting by explicating data collection with a focus on views, meanings, and experiences of the participant in order to improve understanding of society via social research (Bailey, 1994: 40). Hence, the qualitative research provides, in this example, narratives of the male members of the Muslim Uzbek community in the light of their own experiences, views, and prioritizations.

This study is designed as an ethnographic fieldwork; believing that it is a suitable methodology for the research question of this study. Ethnomethodology is frequently benefited as a way to understand and describe social realms (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). By this means, one can realize how people make sense of their daily activities and how they behave in socially acceptable ways. In this research, I tried to apply qualitative

research methods; aiming to get the meaning behind the issue, and to understand it thoroughly, not to make big assumptions about it. Ethnographic research basically has two distinct parts: First, a researcher enters into a social world in order to know the people involved in it. Second, the ethnographer writes down systematically what she learns and observes while participating in the daily life of others (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). Even the first step -usually called as participant observation- was secondary in my research process, latter step –called as writing ethnographic fieldnotes- was quite fruitful in terms of narrating the social world of a group of Muslim Uzbeks in Istanbul through the local meanings, indigenous interpretations, and individual experiences. In this sense, as suggested by Clifford, ethnography converts experience into text (1986: 115).

This research aims to reveal the features and characteristics of the research object rather than making quantitative reasoning about it. So, there is no experiment in this research; since it needed a flexible research design which is impossible in quantitative research methods. For small and purposeful sampling, it was not suitable for me to use random and highly extensive quantitative samples. What is more, the research object, being located between the immigration issue and religious structures, is a case-specific one; preventing me to make large generalizations and to use deductive-statistical methods. As an ethnographic caseworker, one need to seek what is ordinary in happenings, in settings and in expressions of value (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

### **2.1. Research Questions**

More precisely, the main research question of the study is “What is the social significance of Uzbek madrasah in Istanbul in the immigration and community experience of the Muslim Uzbeks?” As for the supporters, the following questions and sub-questions are studied respectively during the research:

- “How is the experience of Muslim Uzbeks in immigration and community is affected and (re)constructed around their madrasahs in Başakşehir, Istanbul?”

- “What is the role of madrasah in religiousness and immigration of Uzbeks?”
- “How are an experience of immigration, family, ethnoreligious community, religion, and religious education are reproduced through religious institution?”
- “What else is socially constructed by madrasahs in the Uzbek community?”
- “How is a social web of immigrant Muslim Uzbeks around madrasah?”

The other sub-questions are the following:

- “Why did they choose to come to Istanbul, Turkey?”
- “What happened to these Uzbeks when they try to come here?”
- “What do they do to integrate themselves into here and what is the major factor herein?”
- “Do they have ties/connections with Uzbekistan and other Uzbeks in Turkey?”
- “What is the difference of Uzbek madrasah in Istanbul from other madrasahs in Turkey and Central Asia?”

Interview questions are explained below in detail.

## **2.2. The Fieldwork**

I have nearly spent two years in the field to get trust, information, referrals and personal contacts of some immigrant Muslim Uzbeks in Istanbul. From Zeytinburnu to Başakşehir, my adventure to trace the immigrant Uzbeks was rough. In the research, interviews are designed as semi-structured and participants are picked within purposive sampling.

As a widely used technique in qualitative research, purposeful sampling gives a chance for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most efficient use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). It is an intentional selection of informants based on their capability to explain a specific concept, theme or phenomenon (Robinson, 2014). So, purposive sampling implies that sample should be related to researchers’ objectives (Palys, 2008). Since my aims are to reveal past and current experiences, events,

conditions, and mobilizations which Muslim Uzbek immigrants have had, particular Uzbek individuals are recruited for the study. These informants have similar qualifications in terms of ethnicity, religion, culture, space, religious skills, gender, background, occupation, and age. The most important thing is that Uzbek people who are picked from the population have similar experiences and contexts. So, specific set of participants who have shared characteristic are collected. In a way, it is homogenous sampling. They are also very few in number. The purposive sampling method is very effective and only appropriate method available in lack of people who can serve as main data sources because of the hard nature of research design and objectives. Furthermore, it is one of the most time-saving and cost-effective sampling methods and has the wide range of sampling techniques such as critical case sampling, snowball (or chain) sampling, and expert sampling that can be used across different qualitative research designs.

In one sense, my sampling method can be named as snowball sampling even attendants are few. Snowball-sampling is adopted to reach the most suitable immigrated Muslim Uzbeks for the effectiveness of the research. In asking some people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases (Patton, 1990). Thusly, this sampling method called as a snowball. Fortunately, I already had one male Uzbek acquaintance from Zeytinburnu to gain some other Uzbek people to get acceptance for meeting and make interviews with them. In this respect, it is also an expert sampling because the sampling process in this study has started with this proficient and knowledgeable Uzbek guy who knows Uzbek diaspora in Istanbul very well. Actually, I have to accept what he points because I do not know what he knows about Uzbek immigrants and I do not have a chance to select different units from Uzbek diaspora.

In earlier, I did not want to use purposive sampling because it has a high probability of involuntary researcher bias. So, bias cannot be controlled or measured (Acharya, 2013: 332). If each sample is completely based on personal judgment, it might become

impossible to reach the desired population which fits the topic of study in a real sense. In this case, I had to appeal purposeful sampling due to the lack of proper information sources, hard conditions of the field such as access and gaining trust, special context of the research topic, and snowballing was the best of all purposive options for the saving of time and improved representativeness of the sample. On the other hand, it can be said that critical case sampling is done together with snowball sampling because one case is chosen for investigation in this study and I hope that examining this will give me insights to understand and project other similar cases.

My sampling method could not be theoretical sampling, despite its suitability to grounded theory because data collection and analytical strategy are not applied at the same time in the research process. Also, the research question and topic were not identified before the sampling but in the research process and that is not concurrent with theoretical sampling. My data analysis might be more suitable for theoretical sampling in terms of comparison of settings, events, places, and conditions. However, the analysis phases of this project were usually done after all data is collected. I had to finish the data collection because of lack of proper attendants, not due to the point of theoretical saturation as Glaser describes (1978: 71). "Once a category is saturated it is not necessary to theoretically sample anymore to collect data for incident comparisons" (Glaser, 2001: 192). Also, theoretical sampling is led by developing explanation and theory as one goes through, and data collection proceeds together with data analysis. My data collection process is not led by the emerging theory, even I had the emerging conceptual thoughts and did early memoing.

As I mentioned before, one of my disadvantages is that Muslim Uzbeks are so strict about male-female interactions. Therefore, I could not find female interviewees even I tried hard; I think this is an ethical problem for male Uzbeks. As a result, the research turned into somehow a male-dominant one. Anyway, snowball sampling made the research process fast and flexible. In general, it is very helpful to meet suitable participants (spot-



on) especially in the case of lack of contact, time and of human resources. Furthermore, it is better than other sampling methods in establishing connection easily and suitably between the research topic and design. However, snowball sampling tends to over-select similar organizations or those inserted in a certain network while under-representing those outside of the web (Bleich and Pekkanen 2013: 87). Yet in my case this was an advantage since the research object is a quite specific group of people.

There are of course disadvantages of purposive sampling because all different types of purposive samplings have a vulnerability to researcher or selection bias and errors in judgment. Because of this, it is also called as judgmental, subjective or selective sampling. What is more, generalizing results of the research is so hard in purposive sampling because generalized assumptions may not convince others for representativeness. Put it differently, it is hard to persuade readers that judgment principal which is used in order to select units to research is proper. It is difficult to defend choices for participants by researchers who use purposive sampling, even if they try to destroy selection bias to the best of their ability. One audience can question whether general findings are still true if different options or units of measurement are used. "There is no one best sampling strategy because which is best will depend on the context in which researchers are working and the nature of their research objective(s)" (Palys, 2008).

Before to mention a semi-structured interview, I need to explain my personal concern in reliability and validity for data. It has been always in my mind from the beginning of the research. I am not sure that the volume of *transferability* or *applicability* of my findings in different contexts because it is a special case in Başakşehir with seven Uzbek immigrants who are chosen with characteristics relevant to the study. They are thought to be most informative and relevant to the wider population. Maybe results can be applied widely in Istanbul to other parts of Uzbek diaspora but different spaces and contexts can not be suitable to generalize the findings. With same data, other

researchers can slightly find same results if the study is repeated because I believe that human (or bias) factor and background of the researcher is very decisive in the research. However, same observation, evidence, and coding can be occurred more than once in this study even if the same human instrument or sample is used. In this sense, I tried to be very rigorous for the *dependability* or *consistency* of my data and emergent results. Also, I do not fear from peer review to check or control the researcher bias. Of course, it is impossible to be absolute unbiased researcher, but I tried to prepare my suppositions compatible with the collected data and with the way of the research in order to hold grounded theory approach and protect *confirmability* of the study in general. My research aims and emergent results can be so different at the end of research process, and I guess I am ready for that. For increased *credibility*, data reduction is applied via coding, lived stories and matrix figure are displayed, and some sharp and lucid information which can be checked by doubtful readers are given in the findings. By the way, ethnography and phenomenology are contained to a degree in my methodical approach and mixed with the grounded theory approach which is at the center of my methodology. Now, away from all these important worries for trustworthiness and rigor, semi-structured interview is handled below.

By interview, one can learn foreign places where he could not go and social settings in which one has not lived yet. Interviewing can inform people about the nature of social life (Weiss, 1995). Interpretation of knowledge does not have to rely on 'total immersion in a setting' therefore, and can happily support a study which uses interview methods for example, where the aim is to explore people's individual and collective understandings, reasoning processes, social norms, and so on (Mason, 2002). Through interviewing, people's interior experiences, what they perceive and how they interpret their perceptions can be learned (Weiss, 1995). At the end of the day, events affect people, their feelings and thoughts. Past events can also be learned through the interview method. One can picture what happened via interviewing the people who were there (Weiss, 1995). What is more, people have so many events in their life but

they also forget most of what and how they lived. From this point, doing interview rescues events that would otherwise be lost (Weiss, 1995). Most of the important cases of social veranda can be known to us just through interviews.

In this sense, semi-structured interviews play a big role to find out intellection and social code of immigrant Uzbeks with in-depth information and fertile narratives which come insight in interviews. Both pre-prepared questions and some spontaneous questions were used in the course of conversations. By doing so, an interactive setting is achieved between the researcher and interviewees. Semi-structured interviews offer control over the validity of the answers and disable misunderstandings and give time to make re-question for clearance. The interviewer can be sure that all the questions are answered and remove or add questions depending on the clarity of the answer (Baily, 183). The research essentially relies on semi-structured interviews to obtain subject stories for narrative and grounded theory analysis. To inquire about the prominence of Uzbek madrasah and socio-religious operations of the community in the immigration context, seven semi-structured interviews were done to collect and commentate knowledge. Due to political and safety-related problems immigrant Uzbeks have in Turkey, they do not want to participate in any activity which seems suspicious for them. They fear the potential of being jailed or deported from Turkey. Hence, the number of attendees remained low.

In behalf of the way of investigation, almost all interviews were done with some of the male masters of the Uzbek madrasah who ensure the building of community via religious activities within societies. Some of these masters are also university students aged between 32-65. One of the interviewees gives support to others economically and the other one supports them socially and juridically in Istanbul. All interviews were tape-recorded and semi-structured questions were covered with a list during the interviews. Transcripts of records made ready before the analysis. In the transcription process, pseudonyms were used to refer to attendants' names in order to publish an only

anonymized version of them and those versions will be used throughout the work. Because all interviews were done in Turkish, quotations are translated by me. In addition to formal interviews, some overhearings and informal talks are noted in the field and to enrich the existing data.

These are the main interview questions asked to interviewees:

- Could you please introduce yourself?
- Could you tell me your story of coming here? How did you come to Turkey? Did you come with your family?
- How did you meet with the immigrant Muslim Uzbeks and their groups in Istanbul?
- How did you meet at Madrasah? How often do you go to the madrasa? Would you like to talk about the importance of the madrasa for Uzbeks?
- What do you know about the madrasas in Uzbekistan? What can you say about the other Uzbeks and madrasahs in Anatolia?
- Why did you want to set up a madrasa here?
- What does the madrasa mean to you? What kind of place does the madrasa and your activities in the Uzbek community have? How did the madrasah? What was done before in the madrasa? What is it now?
- How does the connection of the madrasa to the non-Uzbek? Is there an educational activity or cultural activity? What does it matter to you?
- Who is benefiting from Uzbeks and who does not? Why do they come and why don't they come to madrasah? How do the Uzbeks see the madrasah?
- What are the main objectives of the activities here? Do these activities only have a religious role or are they playing different roles also?
- How are the girls' activities? When are their programs? Do girls and boys use common space?

- What kind of function does domla perform? Are there women versions? Is there any difference between domla in Turkey and domla in Uzbekistan? According to you, which one comes first? Madrasah or domla?

### **2.3. Analysis**

To explain findings clearly, I preferred to use narrative analysis, since most of the answers were given in narrative format during the interviews. Most of the time, interviews were tape-recorded in order not to miss any detail. Narrative analysis is helpful to reveal the meanings of cases, life stories and events from experienter's own narration. It also enables the researcher to catch deep details from the ordinary stories of different lives and experiences. Narratives present the reality itself, and it might give striking points about cultural values, concerns and some other patterns related to the case. Kathy Charmaz (2006) says that gaining rich data means seeking 'thick' description, such as writing extensive field notes of observations, collecting respondents' written personal accounts, and/or compiling detailed narratives (such as from transcribed tapes of interviews). The thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis. The fine description takes the reader into the (social) setting being described (Patton, 1990). For this reason, narratives of immigrant Uzbeks, full of with rich details, are focused to depict their immigration and accommodation experiences and their socio-religious environment. In the narrative analysis, my mind traveled around these questions:

- “What does this narrative tell about its’ experienter or his/her environment?
- “How can this narrative be interpreted to understand and shed light on the life and culture in which it is produced?

At this point, I want to make a brief explanation about what is achieved through narrative analysis: To be able to concentrate on events and the meaning of that (given) narrative for one who experienced it, and to get striking points and deep details from ordinary

stories in order to catch everyday life experience and to understand social reality much better. J. Mason says that people, and their life stories – which can be told verbally, or in documentary or visual ways – are the data sources. Usually, then, these approaches are highly interpretive. Some use the wording of individual lives as a way of reading social, cultural and economic history (2002). Regarding methodological aspect, it is better to use narrative analysis if the researcher aims to approach people as social agents in daily life. If we all agree that social life is somehow constructed, then it is impossible to ignore human narratives as a rich research data. To achieve a biographical and humanist approach to social issues, autobiographies and narratives are crucial in seeing and interpreting people as the actors of social actions. I also want to mention certain handicaps/ short-comings of this kind of research. For instance, people may make too much exaggeration while telling their life stories. This, of course, affects the reliability and validity of research data in a negative way. Thus, researchers should be careful and skeptical while doing narrative analysis. The researcher needs a deep understanding to differentiate the reality from the imagination. At this point, I have to say that immigrant Uzbeks were quite honest in telling their stories. I think the reason was that they wanted to become “visible” to bring about some positive changes in the lives of potential new-comer Uzbek immigrants in Turkey.

Research experience and methodological accuracy are very important for a consistent and systematic study. Therefore, I wanted to make coding and textual analysis from the immigrants’ narratives about their family lives, economic issues, immigration experience and so on. At this point, it became necessary to combine qualitative and quantitative data with the help of a social methods and statistics program. I preferred to use NVivo<sup>6</sup> to analyze information and produce qualitative findings within conducted work; making the research methodology somehow mixed. This also helped to make a more accurate and smooth evaluation. Coding is the main methodology of grounded theory. Therefore, it will be explained more after a brief introduction of the grounded theory.

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<sup>6</sup> A computer software for qualitative data analysis

Grounded theory method is based on the idea of symbolic interactionism. This idea advocates that human action takes place in a situation all the time that confronts the actor and the actor acts on the basis of defining this situation that faces him (Blumer, 1997: 4). That is to say, no actor acts unconsciously in any case. Our social actuality is not senseless. It has intrinsic symbols. Social reality is an interpreted sphere, not a literal world, under symbolic construction forever (Altheide and Johnson 1994: 489). By the means of grounded theory, researchers, who have an assumption of interaction as a key feature, try to analyze cross and intense interactions between actors, actions and symbols such as meaning, act, attribution, value, and circumstance.

In both methodological and theoretical level, this dissertation specifically depends upon grounded theory. This theory is methodologically developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. Their research on hospital patients who were near to death directed them to make the work called "Awareness of Dying" in 1965. In their research, a perpetual method developed; called as a "Grounded Theory Method" later. Glaser and Strauss define their method as integrated theory about a fundamental topic like "dying" (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). It should be noted that their theoretical analysis is only the beginning of the search for successful ways of understanding, explaining and controlling relations which concerns to dying patients (1965). In a word, Grounded Theory is the building of theory via methodical collection and systematic data analysis. It is an inductive theoretical model in which study can begin with a question or a gathering of qualitative data; then continue with constant comparison of data and coding.

Glaser and Strauss systematically figured out the concepts, types of death expectations, and contexts in awareness. The framework for these contexts was also built by themselves. Therefore, their concern with death expectations and awareness guided the primary data collection; the organized formulation of these concepts and of the pattern governed further data collection and the ensuing analysis; and their piece completes the formulations on the theory of awareness of dying (1965). For this reason, grounded

theory is very different from another classical model of research in which researchers choose an established theoretical framework, and only then collect data to show whether the theory does or does not apply to the phenomenon worked on. Within this methodological model, researchers try to minimize their pre-conceptions and disable directive effects of existing theories. As researchers review the collected data, repeated factors, concepts or ideas become obvious and are tagged with codes that have been extracted from the data collection. As more data is gathered and reviewed, codes can be put into concepts, and then into categories. In time, these categories might become the basis for a new theory which is tried to be developed within the grounded method.

Grounded theory is one which is inductively arisen from the studying of phenomena it represents (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 23). Rather than having specific theoretical ideas beforehand, we need to focus on producing theories from the data. In order to achieve this analytic approach, reflective reading of texts via textual analysis and the application of codes via coding are needed.

First, the text is something that meaning is derived from. When we interpret the meaning of something such as book, magazine, journal, newspaper or movie, we behave it as a text (Mckee, 2003: 4). So, textual data is systematically collected material in which written, printed, or electronically published words, typically either purposefully written or transcribed from speech (Benoit, 2011). By this textual data, we try to get information about how people make sense of their world in a particular culture or context. Researchers use textual data to describe and interpret the characteristics of this recorded data or visual message (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). It is called as *textual analysis*. The goal of the analysis is to define the structure, content, and functions of the messages contained in texts (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). It is one of the methods for data analysis that closely examines either the content and meaning of the texts or their discourse and structure (Given, 2008). When narrative analysis focuses on the process of developing the case, textual analysis is considerate to choose favorable texts for the



topic and specific approach to employ for analyzing. To study immigration experience and religious activities of the immigrants after forced migration, grounded theory approach is preferred to use and the existing literature of the issue is applied to as much as possible according to the research theme.

Secondly, the conceptualization of collected data is the basis of grounded theory development (Holton, 2007). Constant comparisons of incidents are also very basic for grounded theory to get saturation. In the comparisons of further occurrences to the emerging concepts, codes are sharpened to achieve the best fit while advance properties are generated until the concepts are confirmed and theoretically saturated (Glaser, 1978: 65). In order to produce theoretical ideas from the data, concepts and categories are needed. Incidents articulated in the data are coded and analyzed with the constant comparative method to create initially substantive, and later theoretical categories (Holton, 2007). These categories have properties and dimensions. We are talking about “types of, kinds of, sorts of, reasons for, settings for” that distinguishes codes from each other. Memo-writing is very useful to organize and separate different codes. So, properties and dimensions are presented on a continuum in categories.

All required conceptualization can be acquired through different coding procedures. According to Strauss and Corbin (2008) and most of the researchers, coding has three different stages:

1. Open Coding: A stage to develop patterns/categories/themes of concepts of phenomenon/information. It is the process of summarizing and labeling the meanings emerged from data. It is the initial coding which can be also done through Nvivo program by creating and organizing files, memos, and nodes.

2. Axial Coding: It is a procedure for linking categories. Axial coding consists of identifying relationships among open codes<sup>7</sup>. It is basically exploring the relationship between categories to make connections among them. It is important to decide a focus for this level of coding because causal conditions, phenomenon, strategies, context, intervening conditions, action/interaction, and consequences are looked for to apply a model. This theoretical model will demonstrate the interrelationships/connections between axial codings.

3. Selective (Theoretical) Coding: A process to figure out the core variable and its story that contains and connects all data abstractly. Propositions or hypotheses about the core category or relationships about core categories are developed by identifying a single category as the central phenomenon. Then a narrative is constructed around this core category through conceptualization which is systematically relating the core category to other categories. Selective (theoretical) codes conceptualize how the substantive (open) codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into the theory (Holton, 2007).

In brief, the grounded theory process is initiated with the research question and data collected via ethnography, interviewing and textual analysis. Then, initial (open) coding is done to generate properties and categories emerged on focused coding in which comparing incidents, axial and selective coding are done. After, relationships between the core category and other saturated categories are examined with axial and theoretical coding to build up theoretical statements. As can be seen, findings are inseparable from both the data collection/observation and analysis processes. What the ethnographer finds out is inherently connected with how she finds it out (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997). Due to this, one must be meticulous about her methodology when doing research. Glaser (1967: 224) suggested that criteria of judgment should be based on the detailed

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<sup>7</sup> See more at: <https://prpost.wordpress.com/2013/07/22/an-example-of-how-to-perform-open-coding-axial-coding-and-selective-coding/>

elements of the actual strategies used for collecting, coding, analyzing, and presenting data when generating theory, and on the way in which people read the theory.



## CHAPTER 3

### FINDINGS

I approached Uzbek madrasah in the context of community formation and migration experience within the grounded theory method. In this chapter, results of coding and collected data will be discussed through narratives, textual information, in vivo terms and their implications. From axial coding to selective (theoretical) coding, some emergent core categories construct the storyline of findings. These are featured codes which are categorized. In the first part, the short history of Muslim Uzbeks is told from Uzbekistan to Turkey. “Exodus” and “Transient Host Societies” compose core or sub-core categories of this part. In the second section, the adaptation issue is demonstrated after immigrant Uzbeks arrive in Istanbul. “Adaptation” is a core concept here. To constitute an immigrant organization in a transnational context and to solve problems of boundaries and borders, ways of actions and matters are included as much as possible. In the last part, the narrative is handled around the core concept of “institutional forms and religious activities”. How Uzbeks keep the Islamic faith in the context of diaspora and globalization of religious life through media case and academy which are specific instances belong to our Muslim Uzbek team are discussed. “Maintaining the continuity of Islamic faith” and “globalization of religious” life are sub-categories/concepts here. The core categories of adaptation and institutional forms and religious activities are treated in the context of transnationalism and diaspora. At last, the theoretical model via axial coding is developed and core phenomena are identified and this core variable is related to other core categories through selective coding in order to build a theory.

#### **3.1. A Brief History of the Immigrant Uzbek Community**

To understand the construction of Uzbek society in Istanbul deeply, it is better to briefly talk about the history of the immigration and historical cases in Uzbekistan and Turkestan basin. Lots of historical information and narrative available in data sets. Some

of these narratives will be referred in the following parts. Before to start, it must be clear that immigrant Uzbek community composes of immigrants from Uzbekistan in general, Uzbek people who immigrated from Uzbekistan to Turkey in private and new immigrants from Uzbekistan who live in Istanbul and constitute a part of Uzbek diaspora in there more specifically.

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the Soviet Union are chosen as starting point historically because they are referenced too much in exhaustive data collected from interviews. One simple example: “Ben Taha Abdullah. Bizde soyisimler, eskiden (Sovyet) Rus zamanında sonu ‘yev’ ile sonuçlanıyordu. Abdullahev olarak tanınıyorum.”<sup>8</sup>

Of course, before coming to the immigrants, it is necessary to talk about migration and its reasons. One of the important factors that lead to the mobility of the world population is undoubtedly the phenomenon of migration. Also, there are reasons and aims to migrate from one place to another. No one ever wants to leave their own land without any reason. From this point, one should ask the question of “Why did Uzbeks choose Turkey to immigrate?” Answers are tried to be shown in the next parts.

By and large, there have been four different waves of immigration in time from Turkestan basin and Uzbekistan to Turkey. It is seen that the migrations from Turkestan took place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bıçakçı, 1996: 20). Turkestan basin consists of the following countries: East Turkestan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Uzbeks spread all over Turkestan. Unlike others, Uzbek people migrated from both East and West side of Turkestan that made their migration exclusive (1996: 22). The first migration occurred after 1908 with students and political elites from Uzbeks. This was limited in number and scope. Before and after the Second World War, the first mass immigration from Turkestan basin became fact, especially started in the

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<sup>8</sup>I'm Taha Abdullah. We have surnames used to end with ‘yev’ in the (Soviet) Russian era. (Therefore) I am known as Abdullahev.

In vivo explanations of the attendees from the research field are translated to English by myself.

1950s. The third wave of immigration took place after the 1980s because of the war between Soviet Russia and Afghanistan. Most of immigrant Uzbeks who lived in Afghanistan came and stayed in rural sides of Turkey. Last and most important migration wave came true in the late 1990s and continuing after the millennium. Immigrant Uzbek body in Istanbul, the focus group of this thesis, pertains to this last wave. The historical conditions, causes, and contents which cause and shape the migration of the Uzbek community and affect the background of the core phenomenon are explained in detail in the next sections.

### **3.1.1. Exodus from the Homeland**

In this part, the main category is described as *exodus* because there were collective and continuous migrations of Uzbeks, in addition to individual instances of migration. These individual and collective migrations have constituted a total migration inflow from Uzbekistan and Turkestan in recent history. Thus, the conceptualization of exodus (from the homeland) is deemed appropriate. The reasons, specific experiences and different sorts of immigration to Turkey will be discussed following the explanation of historical incidents and effects.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Hokand Khanate was destroyed and the influence of Russian Tsarism was increased on Turkestan area (Bıçakçı, 1996: 23). The center and countryside of today's Uzbekistan came under the control of Tsarist Russia. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, great developments took place and industrialization in Russia increased (1996: 25). As a result of colonization policies, Russian migrants were made to Uzbekistan and overall Turkestan region. This disturbed the local public and political turmoil rose until the revolution in February in 1917. People were executed and their goods were looted by Russians. They even threatened the people of the region to destroy mosques and madrasahs (Baysun, 1943: 18-21). After the collapse of Tsarist Russia, the Republic of Bukhara was declared on October 6, 1920, at the first Bukhara People's Congress and recognized by the new Russian government (Hayıt, 1975: 264-

265). At the second phase of Congress, Osman Hocaoğlu elected as president for the Bukhara Republic. Between 1917 and 1920, Osman Hocaoğlu and Abdurrauf Fitrat, one of the prominent figure of *Jadidism Movement*<sup>9</sup>, established student committees in Istanbul within the framework of Jadidism movement (Togan, 1981: 354-355). Abdurrauf Fitrat established “Buhara Ta’imim-i Ma’arif Cemiyeti” in Istanbul to develop the education system in Bukhara and Turkestan. One goal of this education society was to prepare the infrastructure for young people of Turkestan to receive education in cities such as Istanbul, Berlin, and Moscow (Erşahin, 1999: 237). On 9<sup>th</sup> December 1921, Osman Hocaoğlu and Enver Pasha became an ally. Enver Pasha’s *Basmachi Movement*<sup>10</sup> in the region and manner of Russian rule ended Bukhara People’s Republic and Jadidism movement. Then, Uzbekistan and other parts of Turkestan were occupied by the Soviet Union in 1922.

Migration can be defined as the relocation of individuals or communities from one country to another in order to settle because of economic, social and political factors<sup>11</sup>. Uzbeks had to migrate to Turkey for different reasons. Uzbekistan is located geographically at a strategic and central point. Therefore, the relationship and communication on the Istanbul-Bukhara line have always existed. It is known that there are intellectuals and political leaders who travel between Istanbul and Bukhara because of this interaction (Baysun, 1943: 63). Due to the change of political administrations in Uzbekistan; these intellectuals, Uzbek students and politicians had to stay in Turkey even they did not want to do.

Before Russian occupancy, political balances had been upset and migration of Uzbeks started for the first time due to educational and political reasons. The decision was made by the society of Jadidism movement to send students to Istanbul and Germany in order

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<sup>9</sup> The first Turkish enlightenment movement in the area based on the modern ideas of İsmail Gaspirali (1851-1914). It was very similar to the movement of Young Turks in late Ottoman period.

<sup>10</sup> Officially called as Turkestan Liberation Organization by Muslim people which uprising against Russian Imperial and Soviet domination in Central Asia.

<sup>11</sup> “Migration” article, Great Larousse dictionary and encyclopedia, vol. 9, p. 4655.

to improve their education and make reform in the educational system of Central Asia. The first group of Uzbek students from all over Turkestan basin was sent to Istanbul in 1911 (Bıçakçı, 1996: 32). They were fifteen. Later on, the number of students per year continued to increase exponentially. Students who come to Istanbul were hosted at the Bukhara Dervish Lodge in Sultanahmet (Bıçakçı, 1996: 33). Some of these student groups in line with education politics of members of Jedidism could not return to their countries after the October Revolution<sup>12</sup> in 1917. When the Soviets founded the Republic of Uzbekistan in 1924, Uzbek students abroad were declared as traitors and forbidden to return home (Devlet, 1993: 323). Returnees were killed. Then, some of Uzbeks studying in Germany and could not enter Uzbekistan came to Turkey such as Ahmedcan Okay (geologist) and Tahir Çağatay (sociologist).

This first group of immigrants included statesmen who had to leave their homeland because of the political status quo in the Uzbek region. This immigration started in 1920 until 1924. The pressure of the Bolsheviks increased in the days when the Bukhara People's Republic was established (Bıçakçı, 1996: 36). Then Osman Hocaoğlu, the leader of Bukhara People's Republic, tried to form an army of the Republic within the scope of Turkestan liberation movement. In this army, officers from Anatolia took part and provided training (Bıçakçı, 1996: 36). Meanwhile, the prominent figure of Enver Pasha and his assistant officers tried to organize Basmachi Movement but Enver Pasha could not meet with Osman Hocaoğlu in Asia in one way or another.

Osman Hocaoğlu together with the delegation which also comprised the two assistants of Enver Pasha, Ali Rıza ve Hacı Sami Bey, went to Afghanistan to seek political help (Bıçakçı, 1996: 39). However, they could not get help as they hoped even they were welcomed very well. When Osman Hocaoğlu and others decided to go back, they heard that Enver Pasha was dead (Baysun, 1943: 141-142). Thereafter, they changed their plan and decided to go to Turkey over the way of Iran. In the first month of 1924, the group

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<sup>12</sup> The Bolshevik Revolution in Tsarist Russia.



reached Ağrı, Beyazıt. They were twelve-person in total. All of them registered as refugees and they were given identity cards in Beyazıt (Bıçakçı, 1996: 43). After then, Osman Hoca and his friends decided to stay in Turkey due to the good treatment they faced. So, they continued their struggle in Turkey. Later, Mustafa Çokayoğlu came to Turkey and started to publish the journal of “Milli Türkistan” with the help of Osman Hocaoğlu but he was forced to move to Germany because of the one-party regime in Anatolia (Bıçakçı, 1996: 44). Uzbeks continued to organize under the leadership of Mustafa Çokayoğlu in Europe and Osman Hoca in Turkey. Especially Osman Hocaoğlu made great efforts to organize the people from Turkestan. With his death in 1968, no one remained from the first group of immigrant leaders.

As can be seen above, the first Uzbeks coming to Anatolia and Istanbul were political leaders and students during and after the First World War. However, their numbers were so low to count this as a migration wave if it is compared with the next ones. Of course, it was not mass and large migration. Nevertheless, I could not pass without mentioning that because it was the first wave and it had intellectual and political reasons and special limits.

When it comes to Soviet control in Central Asia in 1924, Basmacı movement was completely oppressed and political domination was established in Uzbek lands (Bademci, 1975: 189). Collectivization plan on agricultural lands could be applied after the 1930s because the insurgency of Uzbeks continued in some places. The law of collectivity for lands, called *antidehkanlık* by Uzbeks, was enacted in 1932 by Joseph Stalin (Bıçakçı, 1996: 45). Both the decision and its application were very vicious and many people were displaced from their homes and lands (Hayıtoğlu, Sabirov & Legay, 1992: 12). Hunger and deaths had risen among Uzbeks (Felek, 1965: 119-121). Thence, hungry and homeless Uzbeks left Uzbekistan. There were great difficulties and deaths on roads and deserts during this migration. As a result, migration started before the Second World War because of the agricultural policy by the Soviet Union. Uzbek migrants preferred Eastern

Turkestan and Afghanistan in the first place because the one-party rule in Turkey did not allow their immigration to Turkey (Bıçakçı, 1996: 47). At that time, however, there were also individuals who sneaked in Turkey despite all the risks.

People from Turkestan area began to emigrate to Turkey en masse at the end of the Second World War. During the Second World War, Soviet Russia began to recruit people of Turkestan and sent them to fronts against Nazi Germany without any military training (Bıçakçı, 1996: 48). Some of them were captured by Germans and were sent to prison camps in Europe. Unhealthy conditions in the camps were very severe (Caroe, 1953: 247). For instance, Mustafa Çokayoğlu got typhus when he visited these camps in Germany and died because of typhus. In 1942, Germans decided to recruit Turkestani captives under the banner of Legion of Turkestan. They were promised by the Nazis to take their independence after the war (Mühlen, 1984: 53). Unfortunately, Germans started to deport members of Legion of Turkestan to the Soviet Union through the Yalta Conference after the war (Armaoğlu, 1984: 414). This meant death for Turkestanis. Until November 1945, Uzbeks and other people from Central Asia were sent back to Russians under compulsion. Later, 800 captives from Legion of Turkestan remained from 6-7 thousand captives and they had the opportunity to come to Turkey (Bıçakçı, 1996: 51). Some of them stayed in Europe and some others tried to migrate to the United States from Turkey due to economic potential. Most of these former prisoners immigrated to Turkey between 1947-1949 and they settled in big cities such as Istanbul, Izmir, and Adana where Turkestani people were dense in the population (Andican, 2009: 502).

Majority of Uzbek immigrants in Turkey have used Afghanistan as a starting point of the migration route (Merçil, 1966: 269-271). Thanks to its multi-ethnic society and geographical location, Afghanistan won that favor in immigrants' eyes. It has always been the safest exit point for the east and west of Turkestan. Afghanistan is a place where immigrants stop and recover themselves economically (Bıçakçı, 1996: 53). It is observable that individuals who have reached an adequate economic level prefer to

move to countries such as the United States, Germany, and Turkey from Afghanistan. In this sense, Uzbeks who wanted to pass to Turkey through northern Afghanistan in the 1930s have lived in Afghanistan until Adnan Menderes, who came to power in 1950, allowing their immigration (Andican, 209: 502). Following the decision of the Council of Ministers taken on May 1952, Uzbeks in two large groups, by way of Pakistan and the Persian Gulf, were brought to Turkey through Iraq and were settled in Adana. It is the last part of the second immigration wave and really high in number.

Because of the war between Soviets and Afghanistan in 1982, many different ethnic groups such as Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Uighurs, Uzbeks in that region immigrated to Turkey (Bıçakçı, 1996: 53). As I remembered from my unofficial talks, notes and other different researches in the field, Kyrgyz were settled in Van, Turkmen were settled in Tokat, Uighurs and Uzbeks were settled in Konya, Hatay, Şanlıurfa and Diyarbakır in that time. Moreover, Germany made an official request in which Uzbeks and other groups from Afghanistan could be recruited as workers and placed in Germany. However, most of the people from the Turkestan region rejected this chance and chose Turkey to emigrate.

The last wave of immigration to Turkey happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of Uzbekistan. Due to political oppression of Islam Kerimov, former president of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic and Uzbekistan after independence, religious and economic needs, some Uzbek have started to migrate from Uzbekistan to abroad. By the way, there is another motive of *hajj*<sup>13</sup> for permanent Uzbek migration but it is a narrow-scoped one compared to the first reason. The number of Uzbek groups that come to Turkey in this way is not high (Bıçakçı, 1996: 54). At the end of the 90s, the latest and ongoing wave of immigration started due to state pressure, welfare status and ban on religious life most importantly. There are also other reasons for migration which will be explained in details with the unique experience of Uzbek participants from the research field. The immigrant Uzbek group subject to this study

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<sup>13</sup> One of the five pillars of Islam.

started to immigrate from Uzbekistan after 2012. To try to understand and explain the causes of leaving their homeland thoroughly, we need to focus on their own discourse and knowledge. One of the interviewees summarizes the reasons for an escape from Uzbekistan as such.

Eskiden gelen Özbekler. Bunlar Sovyetlerin ilk dönemlerinden başlayarak, 1950'li yıllarda ikinci bir göç furçası olmuş. Bir de 1980'lerde Afganistan'daki Rus işgalinden sonra buraya gelenler olmuş. Şimdi bu dördüncü göç dalgası şu anda İslam Kerimov'un zulmünden kaçan, Tacikistan'ın, Kırgızistan'ın zulmünden kaçan, Batı Türkistan'dan gelen göçmenler. Yaklaşık 1991 yılındaki bağımsızlıktan sonra, güya bağımsızlık oldu ama, diktatörlük Sovyet döneminden daha şiddetli olduğu için, dini baskılar özellikle, Özbekistan'dan ve Tacikistan'dan ağırlıklı olarak, çok büyük bir göç olayı oldu. Bunun yanı sıra Türkmenistan'dan, Afganistan'dan gelenler... Bunun dışında ekonomik sebeplerle gelenler var Orta Asya ülkelerinden. Bunlar tabii, Orta Asya ülkelerinde ekonomik durum çok kötü olduğu için, özellikle Özbekistan'da, Kırgızistan'da, Tacikistan'da ekonomi çok kötü durumda.<sup>14</sup> **(Burak)**

When we look at the individual and social experiences, the main factors to go out of Central Asia are pressure on religious (Islamic) way of life, cruelty, financial difficulties, and political violence. In this context, the era of Islam Kerimov was even worse than Soviet Russia as described: "Ben Özbekistan'dayken imamlık yapıyordum. Sovyetlerin devrilmesinden sonra kısmi bir rahatlama olduysa da (dini hak ve hürriyetler anlamında) zamanla değişik hadiseler yaşandı."<sup>15</sup> **(Tarık)**

"Camiiler Kırgızistan'da çok mesela elhamdulillah. Özbekistan'da da çoğaldı. Bu Sovyetlerden özgür olduğu zaman çok çoğalmıştı ama sonradan hepsini kapattılar

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<sup>14</sup> Old Uzbeks. These became a second fury of immigration in the 1950s, beginning in the early Soviet period. And after the Russian invasion in Afghanistan in the 1980s, there were those who came here. Now this fourth wave of immigrants is now immigrants from Western Turkestan who have escaped the persecution of Islam Karimov, who escaped from the persecution of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan. After independence in about 1991, there was supposed to be independence, but since the dictatorship was more severe than the Soviet period, religious oppression was a major event of immigration, especially from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In addition to this, there are those who come from Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. Other than that, there are those coming from Central Asian countries for economic reasons. Of course, the economic situation in Central Asian countries is very bad, especially in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, the economy is very bad.

<sup>15</sup> I was an imam when I was in Uzbekistan. Although there was a partial relief after the overthrow of the Soviets (in terms of religious rights and freedoms), different incidents occurred over time.

Kerimov döneminde.”<sup>16</sup> (Arif). Here is an answer stating the reasons of migration from Uzbekistan to Turkey as opposite views about religion and politics.

Biz aslında Özbekistan’dan gelip de burda artık sınır dışı edilme tehlikesi ile yüzyüze kalmış grupların varlığını gördük. Bu Kayaşehir ve Pendik’te büyük gruplar vardı. O gruplarla tanıştık. Hepsi dini sebeplerle Tacikistan ve Özbekistan’ı terk etmişler ve ağırlıklı olarak Özbekler. Ama içlerinde Tacikler de var. Onların dışında tabii akış devam ediyor. Yani 91’den, özellikle 2000’den sonra gelenler çok çoğalmış. Yani bağımsızlıktan sonra bi 10 sene falan içerde bi muhalefet yapmaya çalışmışlar. Artık muhalefet yapma imkanı kalmayınca 2000’den sonra göç olayı kitleselleşmiş.<sup>17</sup> (Burak)

In other words, there is no way for political solution in new regime after the end of Soviet Union. Still, basic factors in the exodus from Uzbekistan and Turkestan in general seem to be depend upon religion and economy. “Bilmiyorum yani siz tarih okudunuz mu ama çok kötü şeyler oldu. O yüzden (Özbeklerin) hepsinin dini ilime ihtiyacı var ve dini ilmi seviyorlar. Bi taraftan da yani ekonomik kriz var orada. İnsan ekonomik kriz oldukça nereye gider? Sonuçta Allah Allah diyor.”<sup>18</sup> (Arif)

To examine the factors of leaving Uzbekistan step by step, religious reasons are reviewed first. After Uzbekistan declared its independence in 1991, the pressure on religious life began to diminish in part but Islamic way of life and education became problematic beforelong: “Bu aralar çeşitli sebeplere göre Özbeklerimiz daha çok gelmeye başladılar (Türkiye’ye). Esas sebep, bizim Özbekistan’da dini yaşam konusunda sorun vardı. Yani

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<sup>16</sup> Many mosques in Kyrgyzstan, for example, elhamdulillah. In Uzbekistan also increased. It was multiplied when it was free from the Soviets, but later they closed all of them during the Karimov era.

<sup>17</sup> We actually saw the presence of groups who came from Uzbekistan and were now in danger of being deported. There were large groups in Kayaşehir and Pendik. We met those groups. All of them have left Tajikistan and Uzbekistan for religious reasons and are mainly Uzbeks. But there are Tajiks inside. Apart from them, of course flow continues. In other words, after 91, especially after 2000, multiplied. In other words, they tried to make an opposition after independence for 10 years. When there is no longer the opportunity to make an opposition, after 2000 the immigration has become mass.

<sup>18</sup> I don't know whether you read history, but very bad things happened. That's why they all (Uzbeks) need religious science and they love it. On the other hand, there is an economic crisis there. Where does the human goes in quite economic crisis? After all, he says Allah Allah!

başörtüsü, dini eğitim, çocukların eğitimi, bilmem Kur'an kursları... O yüzden mecburiyetten çok insanlar memleketi terk edip gidecekleri yer arıyorlardı.”<sup>19</sup> (Tarık)

Tarık, 44 years old, was an official imam in a mosque in Uzbekistan aforesaid. The Uzbek regime's approach to Muslim women and the demands of intelligence on the headscarf of Uzbek women shocked him. Security members of intelligence wanted him to talk with the Muslim Uzbek women to remove their headscarfs. There is a sad story that caused him to leave Uzbekistan.

Kimseye de bir şey demedim, görevden de ayrılmadım. Sadece gidiyorum, Türkiye'ye gidecem dedim, böyle çıktım, geri dönmedim. Böyle kaldım yani. Çünkü 7-8 sene çalıştım. Gittikçe hakkı anlatmak için, hakiki İslam'ı anlatmak için, alan o kadar daraldı ki, bir şey bırakmadılar artık yani. Biz buraya (Türkiye'ye) girdik/geldik, belki burda/bunda bi fayda vardır. Türkiye'ye taşınan Özbeklerin hali, hepsi benim dediklerime benzer haldir. Ben hocaydım. Benim kızlarım, benim eşim, benim kendi ızdırabım, saklanmak... Ben resmi hoca olduğum için, orda kimse bana dokunamazdı. Ama normal vatandaşın kızı, eşi, başını kapaması, namazı yapması veya uzun giymesi, bu artık suç sayılmaya başladı. Bizlerde binlerce adam, binlerce böyle, sadece sakalı olduğundan 10 yıl, 15 yıl hapiste oturuyor. Binlerce adam var bizde, sadece kadınlarımız başörtüsü sebebinden hapiste oturuyor. Milyonlarca adam var orda, kızlarıdır, şeyleridir, eşleridir, dışarıya çıkartamıyor yani. Öyle bi durumlar oldu ki, dışarda, çarşılarda, sokak başlarında, polisler başörtüsü olduğu için insanları, para cezası, beş gün on gün hapis cezası, yani nefes vermiyorlar yani! Ne yapmak gerek? İnsanlar da taşındı, kaçtı, geldi.<sup>20</sup> (Tarık)

As can be seen, any social detail about Islam is considered as a crime and oppressed in a bad way. It sounds like secular vice squad against Muslim Uzbeks. According to Tarık, this

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<sup>19</sup> Our Uzbeks, for several reasons, began to come more (to Turkey). The main reason was the problem of religious life in Uzbekistan. In other words, headscarf, religious education, children's education, I don't know, the Quran courses... That's why people were looking for a place to leave and go.

<sup>20</sup> I didn't say anything to anyone, and I didn't quit my job. I'm just going to Turkey. I just said I'll go, I went out like this, I did not come back. So, I stayed like this. Because I worked 7-8 years. In order to tell the truth, to tell true Islam, the area has become so narrow that they have left nothing. We are here (in Turkey), maybe there is a benefit in that. The state of Uzbeks moved to Turkey, all similar to what I said. I was a teacher. My daughters, my wife, my own anguish, hiding... Because I was the official teacher, nobody could touch me there. But the normal citizen's daughter, wife, head covering, prayer or long wearing, this is now considered as a criminal offense. Thousands of us, thousands of people like us, 10 years, 15 years in prison because he has a beard only. We have thousands of men, only our women live in jail because of the headscarf. There are millions of men out there, their daughters, their wives, he can't get them out. There have been such situations, outdoors, in the bazaars, on the streets, people are fined by cops due to a headscarf, five days and ten days in prison, so they do not breathe! What to do? People moved, fled, came.

is why people fled from Uzbekistan. Of course, these are not the only reasons to move out. There is also economic inducement: “Bunlar çoğunluk. Ekmek peşinde yurdu, memleketi bırakıp çıkanlar var yani.”<sup>21</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**). “Yani sadece çalışmaya gelmiş mesela, ticaret için gelmiş. Çalışıyor, ticaret ediyor, seyahat ediyor, geziyor...Öyle.”<sup>22</sup> (**Şevket**)

Many Uzbek agree that Uzbek immigrants mostly exit for economic reasons. Religious sensivity is not at the same level in all Uzbek public. This topic will be mentioned in detail afterward. Sometimes, Uzbek people have to go out not because they lack of wealth but convicted: “Buraya gelenler şimdi zorluk içerisinde ama onun memlekette kalacak yurdu var, ekecek tarlası var, bilmem birçok serveti vardı. Bırakıp gelmek zorunda kaldılar yani. Gelmeselerdi hapse girerlerdi, bilmem başka sıkıntılar yaşardı. O açıdan geldiler yani.”<sup>23</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

Additionally, Central Asia is an ethnically mixed region. Uzbeks do not just live in Uzbekistan but all around Asia. They also live in countries like Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. In the west of Uzbekistan, there are ethnically Kyrgyz people and there are ethnically Uzbeks in the east of Kyrgyzstan. While there is a political tension between Uzbek and Kyrgyz people in the east of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbeks decide to move from there because they feel they are a second class citizen. According to one respondent, the Kyrgyz state is not fair to Uzbek citizens and this is why they want to emigrate: “Evet. Bir çeşit gerilim, tartışma ve rekabet var. Polisler, kanunlar hep Kırgızların tarafında, onlardan. Mesela bir cinayet olsa, Kırgız işlese 4 sene yatar, Özbek olsa 25 sene ceza alır. Bu tarz siyasi sorunlar var işte, vatandaşlıklar arasında. Yani o öyle. Biraz Kırgızistan'ın şeyliği...”<sup>24</sup> (**Arif**)

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<sup>21</sup> These are the majority (of immigrants). So there are those who leave the country for the bread.

<sup>22</sup> So he just came to work, for example, to trade. Working, trading, traveling...

<sup>23</sup> Those who came here are now in difficulty, but he has a home to stay in, he has a field to plant, he had many wealth. So they had to leave. If they hadn't come, they'd have gone to jail. They came because of this.

<sup>24</sup> Yeah. There's some kind of tension, debate and competition. Cops, the law is always on the Kyrgyz side. For example, if there was a murder, the Kyrgyz would be charged for 4 years, and Uzbek would be

Types of migrants according to their goal can be classified into three different categories: Political, religious and economic. Religious and economic aims seem to be more prominent than political problems for Uzbek migrants. It should not be forgotten that these needs are not totally separate from each other. One immigrant has both political and religious causes to escape from Uzbekistan. The number of Uzbek migrants in Istanbul is given as 200.000 and others in Anatolia is given as 500.000 by some members of Uzbek diaspora in Istanbul.

Şimdi yaklaşık tabii, kesin rakam verebileceğim zaman, 200 bin civarında insan İstanbul'da, Orta Asya ülkelerinden gelmiş, ağırlıklı olarak Özbekistan, Doğu Türkistan, Tacikistan, Türkmenistan ve Kazakistan'dan gelmiş 200 bin civarında insan olduğunu tahmin ediyoruz. Bunun belki 10 bin civarında insan dini sebeplerle ya da siyasi sebeplerle ya da işte gazeteci olduğu için, yazar olduğu için, onlar çok az tabii, böyle bir elin parmakları kadar sayıları az insanlar var böyle. Ama çoğunlukla dini hassasiyetlerinden dolayı orda barınamamış gelen insanlar var. Bunlar 10 bin civarında. Geri kalanlarının hemen hemen hepsi şeydir, ekonomik sebepler, iş aramak için gelmişler ve çalışıyorlar Türkiye'de. Biliyorsunuz her yerde var şimdi (Özbek) kadınlar, erkekler.<sup>25</sup> (**Burak**)

Distribution of number above may not be accurate but it is a very clear and nice summary for the exodus and its reasons. It is also very confidential categorization done by an Uzbek who was born in Turkey but has his own immigration experience via his parents and grandparents. Burak, 65-years old from Hatay, knows the problems, needs, experience, and imaginations of immigrant Uzbek communities in Istanbul very-well and continues to deal with problems of Uzbeks in Turkey. He is at the center of Uzbek diaspora in Istanbul. He basically defines types of immigrants as being immigrant due to political-religious problems, due to economic goals and due to illegal jobs.

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sentenced to 25 years. There are such political problems among citizens. So it is the fault of Kyrgyzstan a bit...

<sup>25</sup> Now, of course, when I can give an exact figure, we estimate that there are around 200,000 people in Istanbul from Central Asia, mainly from Uzbekistan, East Turkestan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. This is probably about 10,000 people for religious or political reasons, or because they are journalists, because they are writers, they are very few, of course, the number of fingers of such a hand. But mostly there are people who come there because of their religious sensitivity. These are around 10,000. Back is something almost all of the remaining economic reasons, they came to look for work and working in Turkey. You know there are (Uzbek) women everywhere now, men.



Üçüncüsü de gayr-i meşru dediğimiz, kanun dışı sebeplerle gelenler var. Bunlar da kendi içinde ikiye ayrılır. Birisi silahlı-terör, silahlı siyasi grup diyelim biz terör demeyelim de, siyasi gruplara mensup olanlar. DEAŞ filan gibi veya Özbekistan İslami Hareketi gibi silahlı gruplara mensup olanlar var. Bunlar gidip Suriye’de, iç savaşın içerisinde yer aldılar. Bir de narkotik ve fuhuş çeteleri içerisinde yer alanlar var. Bunlar da kanun dışı gruplar olduğu için, illegal gruplar diye. Hepsini birarada mütalaa ediyoruz, Deaşçılarla, narkotikçileri birarada mütalaa ediyoruz. Bunlar da üçüncü bir kategori. Bizim ilgilendiğimiz dini sebeplerle gelen insanlar ama imkan oldukça diğer vatandaşlara da yardım etmeye çalışıyoruz.<sup>26</sup> **(Burak)**

All in all, the first coming minority Uzbek immigrants has political and educational reasons to migrate to Turkey. Second mass migrant groups escaped from Germany, Turkestan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan before and after of Second World War. The third migration after the Soviet-Afghan war was also huge in size. The last and ongoing wave again depends on religious and economic reasons. In fact, if we look carefully, illegal reasons for Uzbek migrants explained above are also based on political, religious and economic reasons. Therefore, these three are essential migrant themes and causes for Uzbek migration. It can be more inclusive to call the category of illegal reasons as other reasons for the outrun from Central Asia. The third group who have illegal causes actually use Turkey as a transient host country to do their illegal jobs and leave or turn back to where they come. So, if we need to add a fourth reason or category for Uzbek immigration to Turkey, transition with various reasons might be defined as another category for the ones who do not aim to stay in Turkey as a final destination.

Now, intermediate countries like Turkey will be analyzed below. These countries are transient host societies which are previously preferred by Uzbek people as a destination for some reason. In this sense, Turkey can be called as ultimate transient host. Which countries are chosen and for what reasons they are more preferable for the immigrants?

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<sup>26</sup> Thirdly, there are those who we call illegitimate for illegal reasons. These are divided into two in itself. One is armed-terrorism, armed political group, let's not say terror, but those who belong to political groups. There are some members of armed groups such as ISIS or the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. They went and took part in the civil war in Syria. There are also those involved in narcotics and prostitution gangs. Because these are illegal groups. We consider them all together. We consider the Deashists and narcotics together. These are a third category. People who come for religious reasons we are interested in, but we try to help other citizens as much as possible.

### 3.1.2 Transient Host Societies

Transient host societies are preferred countries before arriving in Turkey. Host society term is one of intervening conditions for interaction strategies which will be mentioned in the next chapters. Uzbeks often do not come directly to Turkey from Central Asia or Uzbekistan. They come from some intermediate stops. So, Uzbeks' previous experiences of immigration are conceptualized as transient host societies. These different journeys, and the experiences before settling in Turkey are explored in the research field and extracted from collected data. The link between these countries and Turkey is tried to be revealed based on immigrant Uzbeks' experiences and their meaning world. I think, through that, reasons for the preference of Turkey will become more explicit.

Saudi Arabia is the first country opted for migration by Uzbeks. The main reason for this is the departure from Uzbekistan on the occasion of hajj (pilgrimage). Among the people from Turkestan, we see that Uzbeks are more dependant on the requirements of religion (Devlet, 1993: 343). Indeed, they are more religious than other people in the Central Asia region. For this reason, Uzbeks frequently go to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage and some of them make the decision to live in there. When they go to hajj with religious thought and see their fellow countrymen, those who remain in Saudi Arabia are not few (Hayitov, Sabirov & Legay, 1992: 18). When I ask Uzbeks in interviews which countries do you prefer to emigrate first, they generally mention about Saudi Arabia: "Arap ülkeleri öncelikleri ama oralarda da kucak açıp karşılayan kimse yok. Tabii ki Mekke-Medine herkesin ilk aklına gelen, kiblemiz yani, (herkes) oraya gidicem der."<sup>27</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

Another reason why Saud preferred more is education opportunities in Islamic sciences: "20 yaşında üniversite sınavlarını kazandım. Medine İslam Üniversitesi'ni. Ordan Medine'ye gittim. 2003-2004 yıllarında mezun oldum. Biraz sonra, mezuniyetten biraz

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<sup>27</sup> The Arab countries have priorities but there is no one there to welcome them. Of course, Mecca-Medina comes first to everyone's mind, it is our qibla, (everyone) says I'll go there.

sonra orda biraz, bazı hayat kurdum. İHH gibi vakıflarda çalıştım.”<sup>28</sup> (**Necmeddin**). “Burda ilahiyat diyorlar. Orda ‘kulliyetu’ş-şeria’. Şeriat fakültesinden mezun oldum. Sonra biraz orda kalıp çalıştım, okudum. Sonra 2016’da buraya (Türkiye’ye) geldim. Medine İslam Üniversitesi. Evet. Şeriat fakültesinde, fıkıh alanında. Böyle elhamdulillah.”<sup>29</sup> (**Arif**)

Although Saudi Arabia is the first choice, it is not a country that the Uzbeks can easily get used to. They have difficulty in merging with the social structure of Saudi Arabia. They feel that they are strangers in there. Some of them cannot turn back to Uzbekistan due to the political and juridical violence on Muslim Uzbeks. They cannot take Islamic education and trade freely. Necmeddin, 41 years-old, an Uzbek contractor, even still express this oppression silently and barely.

Sonra 2010’da Türkiye’ye geldim. Tecrübe kazanmak için, orda (Suudi Arabistan) bilirsin, yabancılarla çalışmak zor. Türkiye’ye geçme sebepim, çünkü bizim biliyorsun kültürlerimiz benzer. Özbekistan’da biraz zulüm vardı bize. Biliyorsun. Herkes durmadı orda, geldi. Bilirsin. Ondan dolayı Özbekistan’a (geri) gitme şansım yoktu. Ama çocuklar büyüyor, eğitilmesi lazım, okutulması lazım, yerleşmem lazım. Biz... Orda şey gibisin yani, kaynaşamıyorsun. Sosyal durum Arabistan’da çok kötü. Yabancılar (göçmenler) var ama yani genellikle ama... Öyledir.<sup>30</sup> (**Necmeddin**)

It is seen that Arab countries are generally preferred to learn Islamic sciences and do business. Arif told that he passed to the United Arab Emirates after Saudi Arabia for trade but then he migrated to Turkey eventually because of the high cost of living and could not turn back to Uzbekistan due to conflict between Uzbek and Kyrgyz people in 2010.

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<sup>28</sup> I passed the university exams at the age of 20 for Islamic University of Medina. From there (Uzbekistan) I went to Medina. I graduated in 2003-2004. A little after graduation, I made a life (for myself). I worked in foundations such as IHH.

<sup>29</sup> They call it theology in here. In there, ‘kulliyetu’ş-şeria’. I graduated from Sharia Faculty. Then I stayed there for a bit to work and study. After 2016, here (in Turkey) I came. Islamic University of Medina. Yeah. Shariah school, Islamic law department. Alhamdulillah like that.

<sup>30</sup> Then I came to Turkey in 2010. To gain experience, it's hard to work there (Saudi Arabia), you know, with strangers. The reason I go to Turkey, because we know you like our culture. There was some persecution in Uzbekistan. You know. Everyone didn't stop there. You know. Because of it, I had no chance to go back to Uzbekistan. But children are growing up, need to be educated, settled. We're ... You're like something there, so you can't mix. The social situation is very bad in Arabia. There are foreigners (immigrants) but that is usually but ... It is.

He also thought that he could not manage in United Arab Emirates because he felt Muslim immigrants are excluded both morally and materially by locals.

Sonradan yani oralarda da yani Müslümanlar, Müslüman şekli çok sevimsiz görülmeye başladı. Sonradan yani düşündük ki onlar, yani haliç bölgesi 50 sene yaşasak da orada bir vatandaş olma umudu yok. Yer de zemin de satın almaya umud yok. O yüzden yani biz dilimiz de dinimiz de mezhebimiz de yakın diye Türkiye'yi tercih ettik. Bize Türkiye her açıdan daha uygun diye buraya göç ettik yani. Oralarda (İmarat) okul pahalı, kira pahalı. Ama büyük çocuklar orada çalışıyor hala. Ben kendim burdayım.<sup>31</sup> (**Arif**)

He emphasizes that it is more probable to get work and earn money comfortably in Turkey. Rents are also cheap when compared with Arab countries. He added that those who have a lot of money is migrating to United Arab Emirates, but poorer Uzbeks are coming to Turkey. Secondly, Arab countries, India and Pakistan are chosen to get Islamic education:

“Çünkü bizimkiler (Özbek muhacirler) yüksek eğitim görmüş. Medine İslam Üniversitesi'nde, Mısır Ezher Üniversitesi'nde ya da Suriye'deki birkaç İslam Üniversitelerinde, Pakistan'daki üniversitelerde, Hindistanlarda tahsil görmüş, yani yurt dışında talim gördükleri için Özbekistan içerisindeki hocalarımızdan farklı olabilirler. Bakışları, bilmem bazı düşüncelerinde farklılar.”<sup>32</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

However, Uzbeks have to migrate to Turkey when they get trouble in their education process because they generally could not turn back to Uzbekistan due to the persecution on religious people. Taha Abdullah already likes Turkey and this made his immigration easy.

2010'da Mısır Arap Cumhuriyeti'ne sefer ettim. Orada da Birleşmiş Arap Liga'sı var, Arap devletlerinin ligası var. Onların tasarrufu altında büyük bir üniversite var: “Mahadu'l-

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<sup>31</sup> Subsequently, there too, Muslims, the Muslim form began to be seen as very unpleasant. Afterwards, we thought that we had no hope of becoming a citizen even if we lived in the estuary area for 50 years. There is no hope of buying the place as well as the land. That's why we preferred Turkey that it is also close to the our religion, our sect, and our language. Turkey is appropriate for us from every angle so we moved here. School is expensive, rent is expensive (in UAE). But older kids are still working there. I'm here myself.

<sup>32</sup> Because ours (Uzbek immigrants) are highly educated. They may be different from our professors in Uzbekistan because they have studied at Medina Islamic University, Azhar University in Egypt or several Islamic Universities in Syria, universities in Pakistan, India, so they are trained abroad. Their understandings, I don't know, are different in some of their thoughts.

ulumi'l-Arabiyye" derler. Orada magistir okudum. 2010-2013 arasında orada okumuş oldum. 2013'te de Mısır biraz karıştı. Ordaki yani darbeden sonra. Yani okulum bitmedi. Hâla diplomamı almadım. Mecbur oldum ordan taşınmaya. Memlekete de dönemedim. Biraz bizim memlekette sıkıntımız vardı. Bizim için ikinci vatan, en bizim sevdiğimiz, yerimiz Türkiyedir tabii ki. Buraya kardeşlerimiz arasına geldik, yerleştik yani.<sup>33</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

Countries like Afghanistan and India can also be a transit route for Uzbeks for another important reason. İkbal, 31-years old, a young madrasah teacher, moved to India with his family because of sickness. His little boy was ill and his treatment lasted one year in there. Later, they directly came to Istanbul from India for medical need. This time, the cause of first immigration is due to health: "Temiz hava için. Çocuğun hastalığı antibiyotik ile geçmez dedi ordaki (Hindistan'daki) doktorlar. Temiz bir hava lazım. Sizde denizler çok. Bunun yüzünden geldik. Öyle burdayız işte."<sup>34</sup> (**İkbal**)

Furthermore, one of the most preferred transient host society is Russia. It is also very close to countries in Central Asia which Uzbeks live in for decades. However, some Uzbek refugees with Islamic sensitivity do not stay there long. They keep Russia at a distance even when they try to explain the causes of migration. Russia is a transient host society used for practical needs like visa renewal and citizenship application: "Yok Rusya'ya sadece vatandaşlık almak için gittim. O Özbek-Kırgız şeyi, savaşı varken, Ruslar gelin diye kucak açtılar. Rusya vatandaşlığı aldım ama kendim. Çocuklarımla değil. Çocuklarımla da yani Rus vatandaşı olmasını pek istemiyorum."<sup>35</sup> (**Arif**)

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<sup>33</sup> In 2010, I traveled to the Arab Republic of Egypt. There is also the United Arab League, the league of the Arab states. There is a great university under their control: "Mahadu'l-ulumu'l-Arabiyye". I read master there. I've studied there between 2010-2013. In 2013, Egypt was a little confused. After that coup there. So my school isn't finished. I still haven't got my degree. I had to move from there. I couldn't go back home. We had a bit of trouble in our country. For our second home, we love most, our place is Turkey, of course. We came here among our brothers, so we settled.

<sup>34</sup> For fresh air. The doctors (in India) said that the child does not get well with antibiotics. He needs fresh air. You have lots of seas. That's why we came. We're in here now.

<sup>35</sup> I just went to Russia to get citizenship. When the Uzbek-Kyrgyz thing was at war, the Russians welcomed us. I got Russian citizenship, but myself. Not with my kids. I don't want my kids to be Russian citizens.

Arif is a 57-year old Uzbek hodja from the west of Uzbekistan, so close to Kyrgyzstan. He was one of the masters in Uzbek madrasah before. He is also a Ph.D. student in the department of Islamic sciences in Istanbul. He does not like Russia because he thinks that Russia blocked development of Uzbekistan after it was separated from Soviet Russia.

Sovyetlerden ayrıldıktan sonra hiç ilerleme, ilim olmadı. Sadece dini ilimleri kastetmiyorum, dünyevi ilimler de dahil buna. Rusya bizim bu halde kalmamızı istedi. Sadece Özbeklerin değil, tüm diğer Asya için böyle istediler. İlimi, okuması olmayan insanlar sırf fuhuş için Rusya'ya gittiler (göçtüler). Filmlere, dizilere kandılar. Sonradan da yani gelenek var bizde. Düğün olurken öncesinde hep Rusya'ya gidiyor. Orda meşakkatle para kazanıyor. Sonra geliyor burda hepsini harcaıyıp saçıyor. Yani cehalet... Hatta ve hatta ilim için hiç sarfetmiyorlar.<sup>36</sup>

From America to India, Uzbeks are scattered around the world. Lucid and total numbers of Uzbek immigrants are unknown. Nevertheless, they can still specify which countries they continually go and the total number by themselves: "Tabii ki bizim yani Özbekistan, yani Özbek halkının şu an devletin takdiratlarına göre 7-8 milyon, yani 5 milyonun üstündeki bir rakam yurt dışında. Bunlar çoğunluk çalışma, yani ekmek peşinde. Rusya'ya, Avrupa devletlerine, Güney Kore'de, Arap memleketlerinde bi de ağırlıkla Türkiye'de."<sup>37</sup>

**(Taha Abdullah)**

Taha Abdullah, 42-years old, one of the prominent people in Uzbek community in Istanbul. He is very active and his organization skill is so high. He usually helps other immigrant Uzbeks to build a "team spirit". Thus, he is also very popular among immigrant Muslim Uzbeks. He is master in Islamic sciences and one of madrasah teachers. He

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<sup>36</sup> After leaving the Soviets, no progress was made (in Uzbekistan). I don't mean only religious sciences, including worldly sciences. Russia wanted us to stay like this. Not only for the Uzbeks but for all other Asia as such. They wanted improvement for them. People who were illiterate, went to Russia just for prostitution (they migrated). They've been fooled by movies and serials. Then we have (a bad) tradition. (Men are) always going to Russia (before) the wedding. He makes money there. Then he comes in here and he spends it all. In other words, (it is) ignorance.

<sup>37</sup> Of course, our state of Uzbekistan, the Uzbek people, according to the state's estimate of 7-8 million, a figure above 5 million abroad. They are mostly working, that is, for have a job. Russia, the European countries, in South Korea, mostly in Arab countries and in Turkey.

summarizes the situation of transient host countries very well; also adding why Uzbeks prefer Turkey ultimately.

Birçoğu Türkiye'ye geldiler. Rusya'ya gidenler oldu, Avrupa'ya gidenler oldu, Arap memleketlerine... Yani Özbeklerimiz, dindar olanları, dünyaya dağıldı gitti her tarafa. Ama bu meselede Türkiye tabii ki aslan payını aldı. Çünkü Türkiye kendi memleketimiz gibi bir yer. Dilimiz, dinimiz, her tarafımız, kültürümüz birbirimize yakın. Gelme gitme, vize konuları, çok kolaylık var. Başka, eee... Türkiye'de (Özbekler) çok çoğaldılar yani son zamanlarda. Biz de yani Özbekistan'da yapamadıklarımızı artık, madem burda müsaade varken, burda güzel bi nimet içindeyken, artık çalışalım diye, medreseler açmaya cür'et ettik.<sup>38</sup> **(Taha Abdullah)**

Uzbeks, of course, do not break ties with the transient countries in which they are hosted afore. Sometimes they prefer these transient host societies only to recover their economic situation or to reach other countries. For instance, Uzbeks settled in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, migrate to Turkey after they buy the estate from Turkey through improving their economic level in these transition places (Bıçakçı, 1996: 54). Eventually, this does not interfere with their ties with previous transient host regions.

Turkey is chosen mostly because of religious, economic reasons and cultural closeness. Sometimes, Uzbek immigrants do not plan to come to Turkey in the beginning but they have to do because of forced displacement issues like Kyrgyz-Uzbek conflicts which disable them to turn back to their homeland. On the other hand, Uzbeks can come to Turkey in a planned and gradual manner without having to take refuge in, and other countries before Turkey can be seen as "intermediate formula". They can rarely immigrate to Turkey with arbitrary preferences but mostly with basic social needs like performing religion, politics, and trade easily. So far, the background context of the main phenomenon has been demonstrated. Presently, what Uzbek immigrants are doing, how

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<sup>38</sup> Many of them came to Turkey. There were those who went to Russia, those who went to Europe, to the Arab countries... In other words, our Uzbeks, the religious ones, scattered all over the world. But of course it took the lion's share of Turkey in this matter. Because Turkey is a place like our own hometown. Our language, religion, all sides, our culture are close to each other. Arrival and departure, visa issues, there's a lot of convenience. Another, uh... In Turkey (Uzbeks) have sprung up so much lately. We can not do that in Uzbekistan, now, if you have permission here, here in a beautiful blessing, let's work now, we dare to open madrasas.

they are doing, how they are getting used to Istanbul, how the belonging and borders are drawn with their own acts will be examined.

### **3.2. Adaptation of Muslim Uzbeks in Istanbul**

In this section, I will try to project which adaptive strategies immigrant Uzbeks follow via their own agency, how they act and what they are going through in Istanbul. The meaning of immigration and adaptation experience for Muslim Uzbeks are reflected. Before to define adaptation, where did they come first in Turkey and why they chose Istanbul should be mentioned shortly.

It is seen that the Uzbek migrant groups coming from different places at different times do not act collectively. That is why they are distributed to many different cities in Turkey. Because Uzbeks are accustomed to a permanent settlement, they have no difficulty in adapting to Turkey in general. Izmir, Adana, and Konya have first inhabitants of immigrant Uzbeks. Hatay, Urfa, Antep, Antalya, Diyarbakır, Bursa, Ankara and Tokat are other cities in which Uzbek immigrants are dense. Istanbul has the most crowded Uzbek population. Early Uzbek migrants concentrated in these districts of Istanbul: Bahçelievler, Merter, Bakırköy, Usküdar, and Ataşehir. Latecomers located in the districts of Zeytinburnu, Pendik, and Başakşehir. Uzbek immigrant group analyzed in this study is mostly nested in Başakşehir.

Socio-economic possibilities such as the price of the house, rent price, career opportunities and familiar contacts from Uzbeks, of course, have a huge impact on the choice of immigrants. Uzbeks are good at trade. Uzbek immigrants choose metropolis like Istanbul and Izmir to use their commercial capabilities (Bıçakçı, 1996: 65). So, it is not strange for Uzbek person to decide to live in Turkey's biggest city.

On the other part, adaptation can be defined as “the mutual interaction of individuals and collectivities and their responses to particular social and physical environments” (Warner & Wittner, 1998: 250). It provides an understanding of how agencies, beliefs,



and influences of Uzbek immigrants affect their daily experience and host society context they are in. Also, this conceptual setting is helpful to understand how immigrant diaspora is affected by the social context in which they try to season, survive and produce legitimacy for themselves. Adaptive strategies are influential mechanisms for gaining legality in the host society (Warner & Wittner, 1998: 251). As understood, the aforementioned immigrant Uzbek community has also taken actions for adaptation and their agenda and problems in Istanbul are reflected below in this context.

Before forming a group or congregation together, some Uzbek immigrants individually make a predilection and meet in the same neighborhood from time to time. The name of this neighborhood is Kayaşehir. It is a new quarter in Başakşehir district and rents are still low there. After 2010, some Uzbeks immigrated to Istanbul and settled in there. Others heard this and also came to Kayaşehir because of cheapness in the quarter and acquaintanceship.

Açıkcası benim geldiğim zaman Özbekler o kadar çok değildi burda. Ben Kayaşehir semtine yerleştim. Yani 15-20 aile vardı burda. Benim bildiklerim yani. Zeytinburnu, Fatih gibi bölgelerde de varmış ama sonradan tanışmış olduk. Ama biz Kayaşehir’de, zaten Kayaşehir 2010 senesinde açılmış bir semt, çok şey yani, uzun bir tarihi yok. Geldiğimizde evler hep boştu orda. Kiralık o kadar çoktu ki. Hem de ucuzdu, şeydi. Oraya yerleştik.<sup>39</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

Dediğim gibi önceden gider gelirdim (İstanbul’a). Sonradan duydum ki bazı insanlar, içinde bizi tanıyanlar da var tanımayanlar da var, onlar Kayaşehir’e gelmiş diye duyduk. Bazıları Mısır’dan geldiler, bazıları şeydeyken, İmarat’tayken, Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri’nde deyken giderdi gelirdi. O yüzden buraya geldik. Orada da Özbekistanlıklar için bazı sıkıntılar oldu. Özbekistan anlaşma yaptı emirlik ile tutuklayıp veriniz diye. Orada çalışan bizim çevremizdeki Özbekler buraya kaçtı. Onlar gelip burda Kayaşehir’e yerleşti. Ben de bir sene düşündüm gideyim mi gitmeyeyim mi, Mısır’a mı gideyim, ne yapayım diye. Sonradan

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<sup>39</sup> Frankly, when I arrived, the Uzbeks weren't so much here. I settled in Kayaşehir district. So there were 15-20 families here. That's what I know. Zeytinburnu, Fatih, (Uzbeks) also existed in such regions, but later we met. But we were in Kayaşehir, Kayaşehir is already a district opened in 2010, so many things, it does not have a long history. The houses were always empty when we arrived. The rental was so many. It was cheap. We settled there.

Türkiye'ye geldik elhamdulillah. Direk İstanbul, Kayaşehir'e gelip burda ev kiraladık.<sup>40</sup>  
(Arif)

In 2010, it was easy to get a visa, take residence and Turkish citizenship for Uzbeks. Turkish people, Başakşehir Municipality and charity organizations helped Uzbeks to take up their residence. It was a surprising experience for the Uzbeks because they do not expect any help from official authorities. It is understandable when compared with their situation in Uzbekistan. Therefore, too many Uzbek families came to dwell in Turkey. As soon as they arrive, some Uzbeks enroll in various educational institutions such as a university or academic courses and do jobs like publishing. They want to improve their speaking ability in Turkish: "İlklerden (Kayaşehir'e) ben geldim 2010'da. Çok az vardı Özbekler bu merkezde. Ben bilmiyordum. 3-5 kişi vardı. 2010'da ben buraya geldim. Ondan sonra, biraz dil öğrenmeye çalıştım. Ondan sonra FSM vakıf üniversitesine kayıtlı oldum, yüksek lisans için okudum."<sup>41</sup> (Necmeddin)

Başakşehir'e çantamızla gelmişiz, hiçbir şeyimiz yok. Param da kalmamıştı. Başakşehir Belediyesi olsun, komşular olsun, biraz komşular bize yardımcı oldular o zamanlar. Evet, (eve) baktılar doldurdular. Gerçekten bizim yeni olduğumuzu, şey olduğumuzu yazdılar. İmza atıp çıktılar. Ondan sonra, üç beş günden sonra, eşyalar geldi eve. Buraya getirdiler. Devlet... Acayip güzeldi yani. Öyle şey, duygulandım yani. Resmi kurumdan, devletten mesela böyle bir şey gelmesini ben hiç beklememiştim.<sup>42</sup> (Necmeddin)

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<sup>40</sup> As I said, I used to go to Istanbul. Later I heard that some people, there are those who know us, there are those who do not, we heard that they have come to Kayaşehir. Some of them came from Egypt, some of them used to come when they were in the Imarat, in the United Arab Emirates. That's why we came here. There was also some troubles for Uzbekistanis. Uzbekistan made a deal with the Emirates to arrest and give (Uzbeks). The Uzbeks around us who worked there fled here. They came here and settled in Kayaşehir. I thought for a year whether I should go, to Egypt? What to do? Later we came to Turkey alhamdulillah. We rented a house here in Istanbul, Kayaşehir.

<sup>41</sup> I came first (to Kayaşehir) in 2010. There were very few Uzbeks in this home base. I did not know that. There were a few people. I came here in 2010. After that, I tried to learn some language. After that, I enrolled in FSM Foundation University and studied for master's degree.

<sup>42</sup> We came to Başakşehir with our bags, we have nothing. I had no money. Başakşehir Municipality, neighbors, some neighbors helped us. Yes, they looked at (the house) and replenish. They really wrote that we were new, that we were... They signed and left. After that, after three or five days, things came to home. They brought them here. State .. It was wonderfully beautiful. I mean, I'm touched. I never expected anything like this from the government.

Adaptation processes are easy for some immigrants and hard for others. There are both internal and external problems which create obstacles for the adaptation. Muslim Uzbeks either take individual or collective actions against their problems; mostly trying to act collectively to facilitate the adaptation process. They meet with each other around religious structures of mosque, madrasah and in wedding or funeral.

Gurbet öyle bir şey ki ister istemez insan kendi yakın çevresini aramaya başlıyor. Sonra iş nedeniyle oraya, medreseye hoca olarak girdim ve ders vermeye başladım. Ee medresedeki çocuklar da Özbek, ana babaları da Özbek. Tabii ki biz tanıştık onlarla. 3 yıl geçti. Medresedeki birinci seneden sonra Başakşehir’de Arap Dili ve İslami İlimler Akademi’sine kaydoldum. Orada eğitim aldım bir sene boyunca.<sup>43</sup> (**İkbal**)

Biz Özbekler açıkçası, şeyde, uyum sağlama konusunda o kadar sorunumuz yok Türkiye’de. Çünkü Türkler bizim soydaşlarımız, dindaşlarımız. Hatta örf, adetlerimiz, geneleksellerimiz, mezhebimiz, dini kültürlerimiz, çok çok şeylerimiz birbirine o kadar yakın ki, bu konuda bi zorluk yaşayacak bir şey yok yani. Hatta bir Özbek Türkiye’ye geldikten iki ay sonra rahat rahat konuşur, rahat rahat anlaşılabilir yani etrafla. Biz önceden çok gidip geliyorduk çocuklarla (Türkiye’ye). Bizim evde mesela her zaman Türk kanalları, uydu her zaman bağlıydı. Benim çocuklarım Türkiye’ye gelmeden önce de Türkçeleri çok güzeldi.<sup>44</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

Adaptation experiences in Istanbul are not always easy or successful as described above. After Reina Attack in Istanbul at the end of 2016, all Uzbek immigrants became suspicious in public space just because the attacker has Uzbek origin. At that time, the meetings among Uzbeks were always postponed by themselves due to security problems. They started to live watchfully and faced with the hazard of being deported to Uzbekistan.

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<sup>43</sup> Gurbet is such a thing that inevitably one starts to search for his immediate surroundings. Then, because of work, I entered the madrasah as a teacher and started teaching. So, the children in the madrasah are Uzbeks and their parents are Uzbeks. Of course we met them. Three years have passed. After the first year in the madrasa, I enrolled in the Academy of Arabic Language and Islamic Sciences in Başakşehir. I studied there for a year

<sup>44</sup> We Uzbeks, we have no problem to adapt in Turkey. Because the Turks are our kins, our coreligionists. In fact, our customs, traditions, sects, religious cultures, so many things are so close to each other that there is nothing to have a problem in this regard. Even after came to Turkey, Uzbek can talks (Turkish) in two months comfortably, comfortably be able to agree on with others. We were very early with the kids going and returning (to Turkey). In our house, for example, Turkish channels and satellite were always connected. My children were very good at Turkish language before coming to Turkey.

This problem still limits their mobility but they try to identify and solve this through their pre-established institutions.

Buraya gelenler, burdaki göçmenler, tabii onların birçok problemleri var. Problemlerini çözebilmek için bu derneği kurma ihtiyacını duyduk. Ben başlangıçta onların problemleriyle ben münferit olarak ilgileniyordum. Fakat baktık ki bugün Ahmet'in, öbür gün Mehmet'in problemi, bunlar bitmiyor, çok ciddi problemler. Daha kurumsal bi kimlikle ilgilenmek gerekiyor. Ondan dolayı biz bu derneği kurma kararı verdik. 2013 yılında Türkistanlılar Derneği diye bilinen *Uluslararası Türkistanlılar Dayanışma Derneği*'ni kurduk. Beş sene oldu.<sup>45</sup> **(Burak)**

"Her tarafta operasyon vardı. Operasyonlarda da kimde oturma izni var kimde yok demeden polis müdahale ediyor, hatta ırkçı bir uygulama da yapılıyor, biz bunu her zaman söylüyoruz. Adamı gözü çekik diye alıyor. Arabayı durduruyor, bakıyor ki arabada gözü çekik adamlar var, indiriyor bunları. Öbüründekilerin gözü çekik değil, ona geç diyor."<sup>46</sup> **(Burak)**. After all, it can be said that most of the Uzbeks are satisfied with their settlements in Istanbul. It seems that many of them are successful in producing the tactics needed to adapt to the region they live in and overcome the problems they face. Immigrants do not solely seek help and gain acceptance from their new location and the host society, but to achieve and sustain the cultural and religious principles from their societies of origin (Warner & Wittner, 1998: 238). Thence, they promptly tried to build religious organization after fixing vital needs and problems in adaptation to Istanbul. It is also useful to achieve solutions for emergent difficulties and requirements in the migration course.

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<sup>45</sup> Those who come here, the immigrants in here, of course they have many problems. We felt the need to establish this association in order to solve their problems. In the beginning, I was dealing with their problems individually. But we looked at Ahmet today, the next day Mehmet's problem, all of these do not stop, very serious problems. There is a need for more corporate identity. Therefore, we decided to establish this association. In 2013, we established the International Turkestani Solidarity Association, known as the Turkestani Association. It's been its fifth year.

<sup>46</sup> There was an operation all around. In the operations, the police intervenes without taking into consideration who has a residence permit and who does not, and even a racist practice is being done, we always say this. He's taking the guy out of sight. He stops the car, looks at the guys with the slant eyes, pulls them down. The others are not slanted, he says "pass".

### **3.2.1. Creation of Transnational Religious Organization**

One of the good ways to analyze Uzbek society and immigrant groups is to examine the social structure, institutions, and organizations. The relationship between groups in society and the structure that maintains this relationship is called social structure (Haviland, 1990: 31). There are associations that provide this relationship among Uzbek immigrants. One of them is the arrangement of madrasah for religious education. Especially, it can be seen that those madrasahs were mostly established in the last wave of Uzbek immigration to Turkey. The research shows that these last Uzbek immigrants, who started to appear in 2010, came together in the districts where they migrated such as Pendik, Zeytinburnu and established religious-educational structures in these regions. Among the immigrants, the Uzbeks are at the forefront of those who give the highest importance to education (Bıçakçı, 1996: 75). This is considered as a need, and new Uzbeks from abroad are also included in this organization over time. There are concerns like not being able to raise children well and not giving enough information about religion. This interest in new generations is about being assimilated and getting away from Islam. Only because of this worry, people came from different quarters of Istanbul and from other cities of Turkey, and even from abroad to Başakşehir.

Right here, to set up a Turkey-based organization with immigrant support within extending cross-border relations and effects direct us to understand migration as a transnational process. Concordantly, this social establishment can be defined as a (re)created a transnational religious organization. It is a non-affiliated immigrant Muslim Uzbek group that simply bring what they need from Uzbekistan and from other countries to carry out their religious practices but that does not belong to a particular organization (Levitt, 2004: 416). We should take a closer look at this organization and try to figure out how they become a part of the transnational dimension with their interaction strategies via the creation of the social, educational and religious structure.

Taha Abdullah, 42-years old Uzbek immigrant, is one of the prominent figures of Uzbek community in Başakşehir that is a part of wider Uzbek diaspora in Istanbul. He is also a co-founder of madrasah and other religious foundations. In 2013, Taha Abdullah and his wife attempted to open religious course under the Hz. Hüseyin Camii in the center of Kayaşehir. They asked the imam of the mosque that whether they could use the empty basement of mosque to give children Islamic education. When they got permission, they repaired the rooms in the basement a little bit and started to educate children, majority of whom were Uzbeks.

Bizim birkaç aile, Özbekler, herkesin çoluk çocuğu var. Evet (buradaki) okullara gidiyorlar, okuyorlar ama Özbek olarak kendi kültürümüz, kendi medeniyetimiz, kendi yani bizim kendiliğimiz için has, mahsus olan bazı şeylerin muhafaza edilmesi açısından onları bir araya toplamak, bir dernek kurmak, onların böyle bi eğitim çalışmalarını onların üstünde sürdürmek gibi bir ihtiyaç gördüm. Hz. Hüseyin Camii'si var Kayaşehir merkezinde. Oranın imam-hatibi vardı, Muhammed Hoca. Hocamızdan yardım istedik. Hocamız da -Allah razı olsun- camiinin alt katında sınıf odaları varmış. Hiç kullanılmamış, tertemiz, yepyeni bir haldeydi. Hocamız da oranın anahtarını bana verdi. Ben de orda yavaş yavaş çocukları topladım. Ondan sonra kız çocukları... Eşimle beraber yavaş yavaş eğitim faaliyetine başladık.<sup>47</sup> **(Taha Abdullah)**

Turkish and Kurdish children from the same district also joined the course. After three months, the number of children attending the course exceeded one hundred. As the attendants became crowded and the mosque community started to be disturbed, they moved to another building which was purchased by immigrant Uzbeks at an affordable price in Altınşehir quarter. They opened "Orta Asya Eğitim ve Kültür Derneği" in this place and enhanced their education level to madrasah.

O zamanlarda binalar çok ucuzdu. Toplumun oturduğu yer (Kayaşehir-Bayramtepe) inşaata kapalıydı. Çok ucuzdu, bedavaydı! Eski bir bina aldılar. Çökmüş gibiydi. Kimse giremezdi oraya. Orayı biz aldık, sonra tamirini kendileri yaptılar Özbekler. Çok ucuza mâl oldu. Orda

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<sup>47</sup> Our few families, Uzbeks, everyone has offspring. Yes, they go to schools, they study, but as Uzbek our own culture, our own civilization, some things that are unique to our own self, to gather them together, to establish an association, to carry out their educational activities for them is needed. Hz.Hüseyin Mosque is in the center of Kayaşehir. There was an imam-orator, Muhammad Hodja. We asked our hodja for help. Our hodja (allowed), Allah willing, had class rooms on the lower floor of his mosque. It was in a brand new condition, never used, immaculate. Our imam gave me the key. So I slowly gathered the children there. After that, girls... My wife and I slowly started training activities.

şuanki, halihazırdaki binayı yaptılar Özbekler kendileri aralarında. Orda çocukları eğitmeye başladılar, Kur'an kursu, medrese şu bu diye. Her türlü Özbeklerden gelen oldu. Hepsini tanımıyorum tabii ki. Ama çok istifade eden insan oldu herhalde.<sup>48</sup> (**Necmeddin**)

By the time of progress, this social and religious construction is supported by Turkish charity organizations such as IHH, and by Arab rich because Turkish and Arabic people also started to send their children to the religious course and madrasah program of immigrant Uzbeks. They liked the quality of education in this institution. Then, other madrasah instructors are joined to Taha Abdullah such as Arif, Şevket and İkbal hodjas. They gave a full-time lesson six days a week. After a year, the number of students exceeded three hundred. Working in the madrasah had an impact on the immigrants.

Sabah 8-9'dan öğlene kadar 7-10 yaş arasındaki çocuklara Kur'an eğitimi veriyordum. Yaklaşık 20 talebem vardı. Buraya eğitim ya da medrese için gelmemiştim aslında. Geldikten sonra oldu bunlar. Oğlum iyileştikten sonra tekrar dönmeyi planlıyordum. Abiler bu kursu, medreseyi tavsiye ettikten sonra iş olarak ben de dedim burda çalışmam lazım zaten işsiz duramam. Yani kalma nedenim medrese veya hocalık değildi ama burdaki zorlukları benim için hafifletti tabii bunlar. İnsan akrabasından, abi kardeşinden, anne babasından ayrı kalsa, buraya gelse burası gurbet yani. Buraya alışmamda bu eğitim işlerinin çok etkisi var bu manada. Sonuçta burda bir sosyal yaşam ve eğitim sürüyor. Beni biraz teselli etti buraya alışırken.<sup>49</sup> (**İkbal**)

"Burda (medresede) Türkiyeliler de vardı yani. Onlarla konuştuk, onlara eğitim verdik. Hem bana hem onlara faydası oldu."<sup>50</sup> (**Şevket**). "Ben medrese sayesinde kendime çalışma yeri buldum. Bana maaş verdiler sonuçta. Yani oraya buraya gitmesem de iş de

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<sup>48</sup> At that time, the buildings were very cheap. The community residence (at Kayaşehir-Bayramtepe) was closed to construction. It was cheap, it was free! They bought an old building. It looked like it collapsed. Nobody could get in there. We took it there, then they repaired it themselves. It cost very cheap. They built the current building in there, the Uzbeks among themselves. There they began to educate the children, the Quran course, the madrasah that. It was all sorts of Uzbeks. I don't know them all, of course. But many people benefited a lot.

<sup>49</sup> I was teaching Quran to children between the ages of 7-10 from 8-9 in the morning. I had about 20 students. I didn't actually come here for education or madrasah. It happened after I arrived. I was planning on coming back after my son recovered. Brothers recommended this course, madrasah after work as I said I have to work here already, I can not stay unemployed. I mean, my reason for staying was not madrasah or teaching, but it alleviated my difficulties here. Human relatives separated from his parents, if you come here, that is expatriate. This education has a lot of effect on me getting used to this. As a result, a social life and education continues here. He comforted me a little while getting used to it.

<sup>50</sup> There were also Turkish people in (madrasah) here. We talked to them, educated them. It helped both me and them.

çok değildi. Kendimi ilmime veriyordum. Sevdiğim şeye. Vakit ayırabiliyordum kendime. O açıdan iyi oldu. Sadece Pazar günü tatil. Diğer altı gün ordaydım. Onların da hepsi yani Kur'an, Arap dili vs böyle derslerle geçiyordu."<sup>51</sup> (**Arif**). All of the students are not Uzbek. There are Palestinian, Syrian, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Chechen, Daghestani and Tatar students in madrasah. Still, the Uzbek language is dominant than Turkish and Arabic in education because most of the Uzbek students have difficulty in speaking other languages in the beginning and this does not create a problem to the other students due to their accustomedness to the Uzbek language. Apart from the Islamic sciences and Arabic language, there were different courses in madrasah such as mathematics, physical sciences, and Uzbek language and literature. In the beginning, the four-story building of madrasah is both used for male and female students at the same time. Female students are separated from boys at the beginning of 2018.

Alt, yani giriş katı ve birinci kat kızlar içindi. Diğer üç kat erkeklerdi. Ama son zamanlarda sayının artmasından dolayı bu biraz imkansız oldu. Şimdi Kayaşehir'den bi yer kiraladık. Orda kızlarımız için ayrı bir çalışma başlattık. Evet. En son iki katta, 40-45 civarında yatılı okuyan çocuklarımız var. Ama aşağı katlarda sabah geliyorlar, 8 saat, 7 saat, 5 saat her türlü yani eğitimini alıyor çocuklar. Servislerimiz var, getiriyoruz götürüyoruz getiriyoruz. Tabii ki bunların hepsi para karşılığında değil. Az bi para alıyoruz. O da servisi için, yemesi-içmesi için. Başka hepsi hayır için yapılmış işlerdir.<sup>52</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

The madrasah creates an atmosphere of fusion for the newly arrived Uzbek refugees from abroad. Meetings, marriage negotiations among families, an invitation for traditional Uzbek pilaw and other kinds of social programs are done in madrasah. Also, financial aid is provided to Uzbek students studying at universities in Istanbul. This is important in the eyes of Uzbek madrasah hodjas because they think that these students

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<sup>51</sup> I found myself working place thanks to the madrasah. They paid me. I mean, even if I didn't go here, there was not many jobs. I was giving myself to (Islamic) knowledge. What I love. I could spend time on myself. It was good in that respect. Just holiday on Sunday. I was there in the other six days. All of them, the Quran, the Arabic language, etc., such lessons were done.

<sup>52</sup> The lower floor and first floor was for girls. The other three were for males. But due to the recent increase in number, this has become somewhat impossible. Now we rented a place from Kayaşehir. There we started a separate study for our girls. Yeah. At the last two floors, 40-45 around the boarding children is studying. But they come downstairs in the morning, 8 hours, 7 hours, 5 hours kids receive all kinds of education. We have services, we are making swap. Of course, this is not all for money. We get a little money. It's for serving, for eating cost. All is done for charity.



will turn back to their homeland in the future and become political leaders of Uzbekistan. So, they should be good Muslims through the effect of a madrasah atmosphere. Teachers from different countries such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia were teaching in different ways according to the method they learned there. These different styles, activities, and origins shape religious organization beyond national boundaries. Broadly, Uzbek immigrants are trying to come together and to be in solidarity in local conditions but within transnational manners.

Yeni gelenler için, tabii biz de bu işlere başlarken, (niyetimiz) hepimizin bir araya gelmesi, çocuklarımızın bir arada olması... Tabii ki çok uyum sağladık bu şekilde. Hususen yeni gelenler, birçoğu, şöyle diyim, medresenin burda olması, çok çok insanların buraya gelmesine sebep oldu. İnsanlar duyuyorlar ki İstanbul'un böyle bi yerinde medrese varmış. Böyle böyle hocalar, böyle böyle dersler oluyormuş. Duyuyorlar. Direk buraya akın ettiler yani. Bu 2015 yılında, evet. Bu medresenin var olması, çoğu insanın Başakşehir'e, Kayaşehir'e kastedip, buraya gelmesine sebep oldu. Gerçekten. Çünkü medresemizin faaliyeti genişledi. Mesela okul servislerimiz vardı. Başakşehir, Kayaşehir, Bayramtepe, Fenertepe, bu bizim bölgeler, bizim bu Özbeklerin yoğun olarak bulunduğu yerlerden. Her sabah buralara araba gidiyor çocukları alıyor, medreseye getiriyor, tekrar dağıtıyor. Böyle hizmetlerimiz olduğundan, tabii ki oraya, buraya geliyorlardı. Bi de buralardan ev tutmaya çalışıyorlardı. İsteyebilir, ben gideyim başka bir yerde kalayım diye ama çocuğu okula gidemez, medreseye gidemez, oraya servis gelmez, uzak, bilmem ne... Ondan dolayı, mecbur hissederek bu bölge içerisinde yerleşmek tercihinde bulunanlar çok oldu, evet.<sup>53</sup>

**(Taha Abdullah)**

The objectives of a religious organization are simple but they achieve much more than expected. Immigrants want to educate their children and youngsters. In order to protect children from vice and ignorance, deficiencies in Islamic knowledge and culture must be completed. Some Uzbeks really fear that if they send their children to Turkish public

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<sup>53</sup> For newcomers, of course, when we started these works, (our intention) we all come together, our children get together... Of course we have adapted very much in this way. In particular, the newcomers, many of them, I say, the fact that the madrasah is here, has caused many, many people to come here. People hear that there is a madrasah in this part of Istanbul. Such teachers, such lessons are such. They hear it. They flocked directly here. This is in 2015, yes. The existence of this madrasah, has led most people to come Başakşehir, Kayaşehir, to here. Really. Because the activities of our madrasah expanded. For example, we had school buses. Başakşehir, Kayaşehir, Bayramtepe, Fenertepe, this is our regions, where these Uzbeks are densely located. Every morning he goes to the car, takes the children, brings them to the madrasah and distributes them again. Since we have such services, of course they came here. They were trying to get a house around here. He may ask, I go to stay somewhere else, but the child can not go to school, can not go to the madrasah, there bus does not come, far, do not know what... Therefore, there are many who prefer to settle in this area because they feel they have to do, yes.

schools, boys can become immoral. Islamic education is lacking in Uzbekistan and Uzbek immigrants have the advantage to sustain the proper education through their formation in Turkey. Some Uzbek immigrants do not have Turkish citizenship, others are so poor to send their children to anywhere for education. For these reasons, the creation of transnational religious organization is very important to provide such an opportunity to the Uzbeks who are away from home.

En önceden (hedeflenen) şey, çocukların eğitimi yani. Çocuklar sokaklarda gezerlerdi yani. Bir şey yok. Kimin babası anası evde bir saat tutar, tutamaz. Maça gider, sokağa gider. Yani bir şey yok. Yani önemsiz. Boş boş kalıyorlardı. Onlar (anne-babalar) sevindi (medreseye başladıklarında). Sonradan bazı insanlar hatta kendisi Rusya'da olmasına, yaşamasına rağmen getirdi çocuğunu buraya koydu. Dediler ki yani güzel çalışıyor burası diye. Buradaki Özbeklerin içinde dindarı var. Dindar Özbekler içinde de (medrese) şöhret oldu. Meşhur oldu yani. Geldiler. Bazıları ama gelmedi yani. Farklı yani. Bazı insanlar beğendi bazıları beğenmedi.<sup>54</sup> **(Arif)**

Since 2015, madrasahs, kindergartens and other associations which belongs to the Uzbek community are under public pressure. Thereupon, Uzbek society is labeled in the public eye as "potential terrorists" after Reina Attack at the end of 2016<sup>55</sup>. These Uzbek unions are not fully legal. So, they are constantly raided by the Turkish security forces. Uzbek diaspora no longer holds the old big meetings in these institutions.

Yani medreseleri biz dernek olarak yasal hale getirdik. Tam olarak şey yapamadık, Diyanet İşleri'ne başvurduk. Kur'an kursu haline getirelim diye. Ama henüz onu tam sağlayamadık. Okul yapamadık. Okul yapalım dedik, şeydeki, Kayaşehir'deki medreseyi. Orası zannediyorum şuan dernek temsilciliği statüsünde. Ve bu dernekler zaman zaman operasyonlara maruz kalıyorlar çünkü hiçbirisi (tam olarak) yasal değil. Yasal olmadığı için çünkü, ya Kur'an kursu olması lazım bunların, ya okul olması, Kur'an kursu ve Diyanet'e, müftülüğe bağlı olması, okulsa milli eğitime bağlı olması lazım. Kreşe yine ilgili kurumdan ruhsat alması lazım. Yasal olmadığı için zaman zaman başları derde giriyor. O zaman da bize soruyorlar, bizim derneğe medreseyi. Polis geliyor bize soruyor filan diye. Yahut da

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<sup>54</sup> The most advance (targeted) thing is the education of children. Kids used to walk the streets. There is nothing. Whose father's mother keeps an hour at home, or can't. He goes to the game, goes to the street. So nothing. So it's nothing. They were idle. Their parents were delighted (when they started the madrasah). Some people even brought her child here, even though he was living in Russia. They said that it works fine here. The Uzbeks here are pious. (Madrasah) became also famous for devout Uzbeks. So he's famous. They came. Some of them didn't come though. Different. Some people liked it, some did not.

<sup>55</sup> See more at: <https://www.amerikaninsesi.com/a/turkiyedeki-orta-asya-kokenliler-endiseli/3687938.html>

komşular şikayet ediyor. Diyorlar burda adamlar zaten yabancı, bi sürü terör olayı yapıyorlar, bi de burda medreseler var, ne yaptıklarını da bilmiyoruz diye şikayet ediyorlar.<sup>56</sup> (**Burak**)

Immigrants have started these educational activities in the adjustment procedure. Later, they needed to have a formal identity and formed an association. It is processed from the Quran course to the madrasah and from there to the association exactly. Orta Asya Association (Orta Asya-Der) was temporarily closed in 2018 due to security concern. Because of this, Uzbek society gives importance to legalization and try to do their best. Even so, male, female madrasahs and kindergartens are still operative in different neighborhoods of Başakşehir. There are younger teachers, who are students of older Uzbek hodjas, in the madrasah now. Male madrasah is in Altınşehir, Bayramtepe street. The female one is in the center of Kayaşehir. Total numbers of students and teachers decreased. Educationally, Uzbeks focus on the Quran memory training for children. This is a paid education around three hundred new Turkish liras for boarding students and eighty new Turkish liras for externs. There was no charge in advance, but now Uzbeks are in financial difficulties. Aids from Turkish citizens, non-governmental organizations and wealthy Arab benefactors are lower in number.

By the way, Uzbek immigrants do not forget their sending countries such as Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. They check the political, religious and social environment of their homeland and try to seek their legal rights to turn back without any serious problem. In other words, the immigrant experience is not linear, luster and passive. Their memberships are reciprocal. The more their lives are steady in legal systems on both

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<sup>56</sup> In other words, we have made madrasahs legal as an association. We didn't exactly do anything, we applied to the Religious Affairs. So we can turn it into a Quran course. But we haven't been able to provide him yet. We couldn't do school. We said, let's make a school, the madrasah in Kayaşehir. I think it's in the status of association representative. And these associations are subject to operations from time to time because none of them is (fully) legal. Because it is not legal, it must be either a Quran course or a school, a Quran course and the Diyanet, the mufti and the school must be connected to national education. In kindergarten, the relevant institution must obtain a license. Sometimes it gets into trouble because it's illegal. Then they ask us, the madrasah to our association. The police come and ask us. Or the neighbors complain. They say the guys here are foreigners, they do a lot of terrorism, there are madrasahs in here, we do not know what they are doing, people are complaining.

sides of the border, the more likely it is that their transnational lives will endure (Levitt, 2007: 24). A growing number of incomers will not fully assimilate or remain entirely focused on their homelands but will continue to adopt some combination of two (Levitt, 2007: 25). The immigrants of Uzbek origin open educational religious institutions, cultural and solidarity associations in order to prevent assimilation neither by being embedded in the Central Asian agenda nor by immersing themselves in daily life in Turkey. They pay attention to the natural formation process of their identity and belonging between diverse boundaries and borders.

### **3.2.2. Identity and Belonging**

Uzbeks are one of the ethnic groups in Turkey. They can be taken into the ethnic category as a particular ethnic group. Peter Andrews defines ethnicity that we understand the concepts, emotions, and thoughts, the way they act that characterize ethnic groups. These define characteristics that do not overlap with other groups within a state (1992: 9-10). This view is agreed and Uzbeks are identified as a separate ethnic group since the beginning of this study. In this section, identity, and belonging which is the context of the adaptation process and strategies are discussed. Answers are sought to questions such as how they define themselves, how they define group identity and belonging after immigration, what limits and identity of new generations mean to them, what problems do they have in this regard, what problems they face in balancing identity for Uzbek youth. Rather than discussing the definition of identity, we look at how they define themselves and their social relationships.

Identity and belonging are redefined via religion in this more and more global world (Levitt, 2004: 419). So indeed, identity and belonging in Uzbeks intertwined with religion. Islam has a great impact on the boundaries and belongings of Uzbek immigrants. In detail, Uzbeks in Turkey are Sunni Muslims who belong to Hanafi<sup>57</sup> sect. There is a large group of Uzbeks living in Turkey in the traditional Islamic faith (Bıçakçı, 1996: 121). They

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<sup>57</sup> It is one jurisprudence school of four religious maddhab followed by Sunni Muslims.

do not only experience religion but also try to keep it alive in every moment and area of life. Uzbek immigrants see Islam as the most integral part of their identity: “Biz Özbekleriz yani biz kimiz? Bin senedir Müslümanlarız. Rus istilacıları gelene kadar biz kimdik?!... Ruslar geldiler, Koministik rejim üstümüze geldi, ondan sonra her şey bozuldu yani... Biz, 100 senede bizi bozdular. Artık biz yavaş yavaş toparlanıyoruz, kendimize geliyoruz.”<sup>58</sup> (**Tarık**). “Biraz şey yapıyorum (özet geçiyorum) ama sonuçta hepsi burda İslami kimliğinden dolayı kaçıp gelen insanlardır. Çünkü zaten gelenlerin de birçoğu İslami kimlikle orda (Özbekistan’da) yaşayanlardı. Orda mesela devlete, üniversitelere giremiyorlar. Ya da girmiyorlar. Girse de resmîyetle, resmî eğitimle çok kaynaşamıyorlar.”<sup>59</sup> (**Necmeddin**)

In general, being Muslim is the main determinant for Uzbeks. This makes easy to adapt the conditions of Turkey with other shared values like language and customs. Together with original elements from Uzbekistan, Uzbek outlanders have created a reconciliatory identity that can be used in Turkey and adapted to life in a short time (Bıçakçı, 1996: 133). So, they comfortably fit in Turkey. After Uzbekistan, their second sense of belonging is mostly for Turkey.

Bizim için ikinci vatan, en bizim sevdiğimiz yerimiz Türkiyedir tabii ki. Buraya kardeşlerimiz arasına geldik, yerleştik yani... Biz Özbekler açıkçası, şeyde, uyum sağlama konusunda o kadar sorunumuz yok Türkiye’de. Çünkü Türkler bizim soydaşlarımız, dindaşlarımız. Hatta örf, adetlerimiz, geneleksellerimiz, mezhebimiz, dini kültürlerimiz, çok çok şeylerimiz birbirine o kadar yakın ki, bu konuda bi zorluk yaşayacak bir şey yok yani.<sup>60</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

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<sup>58</sup> We are Uzbeks, so who are we? We have been Muslims for a thousand years. Who were we until the Russian invaders came?! ... The Russians came, the Communist regime came upon us, after that everything broke... They broke us in 100 years. Now we are slowly recovering, coming to ourselves.

<sup>59</sup> I'm doing a little bit (summarizing), but they're all people who run away because of their Islamic identity. Because many of those who came there already lived there with an Islamic identity (in Uzbekistan). There, for example, they can not join the state, can not enter universities. Or they do not. Even if they enter, they do not formally fuse with official education.

<sup>60</sup> For our second home, our place we love the most is of course Turkey. We came here amongst our brothers and sisters, so ... We Uzbeks, obviously, something in, so we have no problem to adapt in Turkey. Because the Turks are our kinsmen, our coreligionists. In fact, our customs, habits, traditions, sects, religious cultures, so many things are so close to each other that there is nothing to have a problem in this regard.

Uzbeks suppose that Turkish society is their fellows and agreed with Turkish people easily. Turkish citizens help them in their adoption process. Yet, Uzbeks in Turkey are still very much miss the Turkestan zone, and they want to return to Uzbekistan if necessary conditions is achieved. Şevket, the oldest Uzbek informant I have ever met, came to Istanbul in 2016: “2017’de bir deęişiklik oldu. (İslam Kerimov) gitti, yenisi geldi. O yüzden oraya dönmedik ama şimdi olabilir yani dönmeye çaba gösteriyorum. İnşallah olabilir yani.”<sup>61</sup> (**Şevket**)

Uzbeks have a stronger bond with Uzbekistan and there is still a desire to return, but of course, they think of their youth who are raised in Turkey and accustomed to the country more than the older. They even think about the people in their country. They are worried about what the future will bring them. “They are looking into the future and paving way for their young people” (Warner and Wittner, 1998: 90). Uzbek young mingle with other different cultures in Turkey. Parents feel that there is a risk of forgetting identity, culture, and belonging. They inevitably worry about their children.

Bizde kültür, adetler, dededen ve nineden geçer daha çok. Söz ve amel ile geçer. Bizlerde maalesef bu pek yok. Çocuklarımızın, bebeklerimizin annemiz babamız yani dedesi ninesi olmadan büyüüp gelişmesi bizim için farklı bir tecrübe oldu.Öyle sadece telefonda konuşuyorlar ama bu yüzden Özbek kültürünü unuttu biraz çocuklar. Neden? Çünkü burada yaşayıp okuyorlar artık. Buranın kültürü ile karıştılar. Ben babasıyım annesi de var ama biz kendi kendimize anca okuyup çalışıyoruz. Yeterli olamıyoruz bu yüzden.<sup>62</sup> (**İkbal**)

On the other hand, there are no multiple identity problems for Uzbeks in qualitatively, even they seem to have from outside. They do not have any big concern of being Turkish Muslim or Turkestani Muslim as a more inclusive category even they feel to belong both Turkestan and Turkey. Their concerns are more about embodying and protecting their

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<sup>61</sup> There was a change in 2017. (İslam Karimov) went, a new one came. That's why we didn't go back there before, but now it could be, so I'm trying to. I hope so.

<sup>62</sup> In our culture, customs pass more from grandfather and grandmother. Pass with words and deeds. Unfortunately, we do not have much. It was a different experience for us to grow up and raise our babies without our grandparents, our parents. Why is that? Because they live here (in Turkey) and read. They were mixed with the (other) culture in here. We are her father and her mother, but we are barely enough to ourselves. We can't be enough (for them) in this way.

identities. Uzbek immigrants also make their own distinctions in this sense: “Dediğim gibi yani, bizde öğrenci olan insanlar gelip giderdiler İmarat’a. Bazılarını tanıyorduk yani önceden. Sonra bazı ilim adamları vardı Mısır’dan gelmiş. Yani hepsi Özbek yani. Tacikistanlık Özbek var, Kırgızistanlık Özbek var, Özbekistanlık Özbek var... Hep ilim adamları.”<sup>63</sup> (Arif)

Sadece Özbekler değil, hepsi yani. Kazaklar da Kırgızlar da. Ama Kazaklar şey. Onlar ne demek, ne diyebilirim yani... Özbekler deyince, Özbekistan bölgesi yani Orta Asya’nın en yüreği. Çünkü Özbekler içinde Tacik de var Türkmen de var Kırgız da var Kazak da var, hepsi. Yani bu Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Kazakistan bunlar, bizde bedeviler gibi. Ama Özbekistan içindeki hocaların içinde Kırgız varsa da daha medeni. Bizimkiler daha medeni. Bizde medeniyet var yani. Merkez var.<sup>64</sup> (Arif)

Besides, there can be a lack of confidence sometimes among Uzbek immigrants. They find it too difficult to reveal their identities to each other. Because of their certain experiences, it is also difficult to establish sincerity in social relations. Uzbek identity has been developed somehow as a product of the reaction and a siege mentality (Bıçakçı, 1996: 125). They sometimes hide their real identity from each other.

Pek olmadı. Çünkü ben... Birçok Özbek’te bu şey var. Bunlar hızlı kaynaşamıyorlar. Niye? Çünkü ordaki (Özbekistan) siyasi şeyden dolayı. Bi Özbek geldi mi, genelde, kendi huyumdur, bi Özbek’ten sonra kalkar adın kim, şu bu dersin, hemen böyle kasılır böyle. Her Özbek’in iki tane üç tane adı vardır mesela. Bazen şaka yapıyorlar. Adınızı söylediğinizde ikincisi mi üçüncüsü mü diyorlar... . Ben diyorum en son. En sonu söyle ki seni onunla çağırayım. Gerçeğiyle isim yok diye şakalaşyoruz böyle. Şimdiki adını ver diyoruz. Öyle yani. Abdullah ise Mehmet diyor. Mehmet ise Abdullah diyor. Korkuyor. Öyle şeyler. Onlarda var yani. Çünkü korkuyorlar. Böyle direk ilişkiye geçmek Özbeklerde genelde biraz zor olur. Bu şeyden, bu siyasi baskılardan dolayı.<sup>65</sup> (Necmeddin)

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<sup>63</sup> Like I said, the people who were students came and went to İmarat. We knew some of them before. Then there were some scientists from Egypt. That is all Uzbek. Tajiki Uzbek, Kyrgyz Uzbek, Uzbeki Uzbek ... All scholars.

<sup>64</sup> Not just Uzbeks, that's all. Both the Kazakhs and the Kyrgyz. But the Kazakhs thing. What do they mean, what can I say ... Uzbeks, Uzbekistan region, which is the heart of Central Asia. Because in the Uzbeks there are Tajik, Turkmen and Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, all of them. So this is Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, these are Bedouins among us. But if there are Kyrgyz among the teachers in Uzbekistan, it is more civilized. Ours are more civilized. So we have civilization. We have centre.

<sup>65</sup> Not really. Because I... Many Uzbeks have this thing. They can't fuse fast. Why? Because of the political thing in there (Uzbekistan). One Uzbek came, usually, my own habit, one Uzbek after you get up who's your name, this course, it will strain like this immediately. For example, each Uzbek has two or three names. Sometimes they make jokes. When you say your name, they say the second or the third?... I say

In Turkey, Uzbek identity and belonging have been characterized by integration, but not total segregation. They feel they are not away from home. They materially recreate their homeland aura in Istanbul within some districts.

İşte şimdi şu an gidin Aksaray'a, Laleli'ye gidin. Sanki Özbekistan'a gelmiş gibi hissediyorum kendimi. O kadar çoklar. Hatta pazarlar oluşturmuşlar. Bizim şey satıyorlar orda yani, Özbekistan'da ne varsa her şey var şu an orda, yiyecek olarak, şey olarak. Evet onların buraya gelirken dertleri tabii ki ekmektir yani. Dini için gelen adamlar değil onlar yani. Ama aynı zamanda ben bununla onları ne diyim yani, ayıplamak, suçlamak da istemiyorum.<sup>66</sup>  
**(Taha Abdullah)**

In migration waves from Central Asia to Turkey, Uzbeks have the highest intellectual density among other immigrant groups. On account of this, reformation of communal identity in the Uzbek diaspora become not so hard. They easily find solutions for their new problems in Turkey. They maintain continuity with their traditional culture. The religious organization that Uzbeks have continues to be a vehicle through which immigrants reconstruct their communal identity in the diaspora, thus preserving and safeguarding their ethnoreligious and cultural landscapes (Warner and Wittner, 1998: 236).

Lastly, there is a close relationship between Islam and Uzbek ethnicity. Also, their culture in Turkey is developed within partial protection in the aspect of culture. Uzbek immigrants are more committed to their country of origin and tend to retain their identity. In this respect, they pay attention to their mobilization in the adaptation process. Uzbeks care about gathering among themselves and reminding their identity and belonging to each other. They may seem asocial or silent from the outside, but truly

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last. Tell me the last one so I can call you with it. We're just joking that I don't have anything to do with the true one. Give us your current name. I mean, it is. Abdullah says Mehmet. Mehmet says Abdullah. He is Afraid. Things like that. So they fear. Because they're scared. It is often a bit difficult for Uzbeks to have such a direct relationship. Because of this thing, this political pressure (in Uzbekistan).

<sup>66</sup> Now go to Aksaray, Laleli. I feel like I've come to Uzbekistan. So many (Uzbeks). They even created markets. They sell our stuff there, so what's in Uzbekistan is everything right there, as food, as stuff. Yes, their troubles on the way here are of course bread. That's not the guys who come for their religion. But at the same time, I don't want to blame or accuse them for that.



they are not. Sometimes they can be misrepresented and victimized politically and ethnically in the public sphere because of their different looks: “They are Chinese and terrorists (from ISIS), they all look alike!” The proximity to language and culture between Turks and Uzbeks helped to establish identity and prevented a conflict among host and guest identities. Old and new Uzbek immigrants are counted as Turkish descent and gain admission in Turkey through that. Uzbek immigrants have a desire to go back across borders, but for now, they tend to cross all known boundaries in order to appeal to Uzbek language speakers.

### **3.3. Institutional Forms and Religious Activities**

Uzbeks coming to Turkey for a variety of reasons comfortably accord in our country. They institutionalized in Turkey in a very short time and tried to make their voice heard worldwide. This is another interaction strategy that the immigrant Uzbeks perform with their own agency. In this section, we will look at the development of religious activities, the institutional and non-institutional forms of representation, religion in the Uzbek diaspora, and how religious life has gained a transnational extent in the context of immigration experience. I would like to indicate that the concept of “institutional forms” is used in the sense of representative forms slightly. Plus, religious activities are used for several religious practices of immigrants which produce institutional forms and produced in these forms.

Uzbek religious leaders called as *domla* (means hodja) usually came to Istanbul where there were significant numbers of Uzbeks and set up Turkey-based organizations, like madrasah as a local level corporate body, with other Uzbek immigrants’ support. Uzbeks inside and outside of Turkey contribute financially to these immigrant religious groups, raise funds to support their local and transnational activities (Levitt, 2004: 411). Other religious activities start with religious knowing people and develop in institutional forms such as Quran course or madrasah. Host and homeland traditions combined in religious institutionalization process (Levitt, 2004: 412).

Şimdi bu insanlar zaten dindar oldukları için gelmişler buraya. Ve burda da kendi çocuklarına bi dini eğitim vermek istiyorlar. Ve kendileri de bi dini bilgi almak istiyorlar. Bunu nasıl yapacaklar? Üç aile, beş aile varsa bi yerde, hemen içlerinden bilgili olan birisini, en fazla İslami konulara vakıf olan birisini, *domla* diyoruz biz, domla demek öğretmen demek, domla olarak görevlendiriyorlar. Eğer daha çok kalabalık olurlarsa, sayı artarsa bi yer tutuyorlar. Burada medrese oluyor ismi. O domla artık kendi tarzı, veya daha önceden kendisi bi yere gitmişse, öğrendiği bi tarz varsa, o tarza göre çocuklara ders veriyor, dini bilgiler veriyor. Yani bizim Özbeklerin, Taciklerin, Orta Asyalıların bulunduğu her yerde hemen medreseler oluşuyor. Hemen medreseler oluşuyor ve öbek öbek herkes yakınlığına göre, geldiği yere göre ya da eğilimlerine göre, sufidir selefidir, hemen bi medrese kuruyor.<sup>67</sup> (**Burak**)

Şimdi biz domla deriz. Domla hoca demek. Sizde hoca efendi derler bizde domla derler. Domla derken esas şeriat bilimlerinden haberi olan insanlara denir. Ama son dönemlerde üniversite hocaları, okuldaki hocalarımıza da bu tabir caiz oldu yani. Şimdi domla diye herkese müracaat ediliyor. Ama gene de domla, böyle açık söylendiği zaman dini-şerî ilimi, bilimi olan insanlara denir. Aynı zamanda kadınlardan domlalarınız var mı dediniz. Kadınlardan var tabii ki ama onlara domla denilmiyor. Onlara atun, atunay derler, atın derler bizde. Bu da memlekette eskiden öyleydi. Ama şu an Türkiye’de biz artık o sözden uzak olduk. Şimdi erkeklere hoca diyoruz, kadınlara da aynı şekilde hocalar diye müracaat ediyoruz. Ama domla kültürü, tabii ki biz memlekette ya domla ya da molla deriz. Molla da dini hoca domla da dini hocalara denir. Domla veya molla farketmez.<sup>68</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

Domla is an important religious figure and representative among the Uzbeks. They are at the center of religious activities. Institutions are established and operated constantly by their efforts. They also participate in the activities of the association established after

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<sup>67</sup> Now these people have come here because they are already religious. And here they want to give their children a religious education. And they want to get some religious information. How are they gonna do that? If there are three families and five families in one place, we call someone who is knowledgeable, someone who has the most Islamic knowledge, domlalar. If they become more crowded, if the number increases, they hold a place. Here is the name of the madrasah. That domla is now his own style, or if he has gone somewhere before, if there is a style he has learned, he teaches children, religious information according to that style. In other words, there are madrasas everywhere in which there are Uzbeks, Tajiks, Central Asians. Immediately, madrasas are formed and according to their proximity to each other, according to their place or tendencies, sufism or salafism, they immediately establish a madrasa.

<sup>68</sup> Now we say domlalar. Domla means (religious) teacher. You say master, we say domla. They say people who are aware of the Shari'a sciences. But in recent years, university teachers, teachers in the school has been so to say. Now everyone is applying for domlalar. But still, the domla, when it is said explicitly, is called the people of religious-sharia science. You also ask that whether you have domla of women. There are women, of course, but they're not called as domla. They call them atunay, they call it atunay, we call it atunay. This used to be in the country. But the moment we are in Turkey now that the so-called remote. Now we call men teachers, women in the same way we apply as teachers. But the domla culture, of course we call it either domla or mullah in the country (Uzbekistan). Mullah is also called religious teachers. It doesn't matter if it's called as domla or mullah.

the course and the madrasah as a representative of district community they live in with other Uzbeks and seen as representative and authoritative of the Uzbek diaspora with the Uzbek representatives in the Uzbek associations. In this sense, TURKISTANDER (INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATION OF TURKESTANS-Uluslararası Türkistanlılar Dayanışma Derneği) is established in 2013 to represent and protect civil, social and political rights of immigrant Uzbeks and Turkestani people. It is the voice of the immigrant Uzbek community for the Turkish and Uzbekistan governments. When any government officials need information about Uzbeks in Istanbul and Turkey, they make a request to representatives of this institution. It is like a representative office for Uzbek diaspora in Istanbul. Therefore, most of Uzbek domla join the meetings in the Turkistander as representative participants. Some of them are already official membership of the fraternity.

Domla Uzbeks and association volunteers or officials help each other. All of them are transnational and unofficial lobby of Uzbek government in Istanbul. Uzbek government receives support from Uzbeks' various diaspora associations like Turkistander about the situation of Turkey and Uzbek immigrants. Turkestani people protect and support also religious activities which are under the control of Uzbek Muslim scholars. These people direct the local and big associations of Uzbek diaspora in Istanbul to get help for themselves and Uzbek immigrants, especially for newcomers. Associations built by old and new Uzbek immigrants really can help Uzbek community in official documents, civil lawsuits, etc for their civil rights, religious institutions, and activities.

Ben emniyetle görüştüm. Emniyet demişti ki biz şikayet olduğu zaman işlem yapmak zorundayız. Siz bunları yasallaştırın. Yasal hale gelsinler diye. Ama bizim dışımızda da yine medreseler var. Yani bize (derneğe) bağlı olmayan medreseler. Onlarla da biz mesela, elimize bi imkan geçti bi zekat dağıtma ya da bir iaşe dağıtma imkanı olursa, Kurban bayramlarında, bayramlarda, bir yardım dağıtma imkanı olsa, yine hepsine aynı yardımı ulaştırmaya çalışıyoruz.<sup>69</sup> **(Burak)**

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<sup>69</sup> I've met with police forces. Security forces said that we have to take action when there is a complaint (about your institutions and religious actions). You must legalize them. To make it legal. But there are also madrasahs outside of us. In other words, madrasahs that are not connected to us (our association-Turkistander). With them, for example, if we have the opportunity to distribute a zakat or distribute a

In religious foundations and movements, legality and legalization process is most common problems for immigrant Uzbeks. If they open Quran course or madrasah, it should be affiliated to Department of Religious Affairs (DIB in Turkey). If schools or kindergartens are erected, they should be affiliated with the Ministry of National Education to achieve legalization in Turkey. Foundations formed by immigrant Uzbeks are already low-level when they are compared with Turkish instances which are established to make a gain. For example, there is one kindergarten of Uzbeks in Başakşehir and it is a branch of Uzbek association in order to be seen as a legal corporation. Uzbek female staff works there to educate children up to six years old.

Aynı zamanda ailelere yardımcı oluyoruz. Çünkü anne babalar çalışıyorlar. Bizim kreş yani orası sabah saat 9'dan akşam saat 5'e kadar yani. (Aileler) rahat çalışabilecekleri için böyle bir düzenimiz var. Çocuğu bırakıp işlerine gidiyorlar. Akşam da gelip alıyorlar. Kreş değil. Türkiye'deki anlamında değil. Niye? Çünkü bizim işimizi yapan teşkilatlar (çocuk başına) aylık 1200-1500 tl karşılık alıyorlar. Biz orada sadece remzi olarak (sembolik) 250 tl şey karşılığında sadece oranın kirası ve orada çalışan ablaların ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için böyle bir çalışmamız var. Şu anlık 50-55 civarında çocuk barınıyor orda gündüzleri.<sup>70</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

In kindergartens, male and female children receive the same education such as Quran lesson or a course in morals. However, they get different education in madrasah system when they grow up. Especially, girls' education has differentiated from boys whose numbers are decreased. Primary and secondary school girls take courses according to the Sudanese curriculum to finish public school lessons in addition to Islamic lessons in madrasah.

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subsidy, if the opportunity to distribute a help during the Eid al-Adha, we are trying to give the same assistance to all of them.

<sup>70</sup> We also help families. Because parents work. Our nursery is there from 9 am to 5 pm in the evening. We have such a scheme because (families) can work comfortably. They leave the kid and go to work. They come and get her in the evening. It's not a nursery, not in the sense in Turkey. Why? Because the organizations that do our job (per child) are receiving a monthly return of 1200-1500 Turkish liras. We got there just as symbolic payment for 250 TL for nothing, only for the rent and have such a work to meet the needs of the sisters working there. There are about 50-55 children sheltering there during the day.

Evet aynıydı. Aynı aynı. Ama sonradan şimdi biraz farklı. O kızlar büyüdüler. Şimdi onlara bence Sudan okullarının kitaplarını getiriyorlar. Arapça biliyorlar yani. Türkçesi pek az, Arapça biliyor. Bu okullara (devlet) gitmeyenler var. Onlar Sudan okullarının kitaplarını okuyorlar. Sudan elçiliğinden şey geliyor, sorular. Sınav yapıyorlar. Sonradan okulu bitirdi diye varaka (diploma) veriyorlar. Sudan şeylerinin hepsini aldılar yani. Matematik filan hepsini aldılar. Orda şimdi Arap öğretmenler de var. Iraklı, Suriyeli, Mısırlı filan öğretmenler var.<sup>71</sup> (Arif)

To acquire a balanced or established identity for their youth, Uzbek immigrants go for existing Uzbek community which provide safety, education, religious and cultural home for newcomers. Though, some Uzbek people choose to participate educational exercises outside their own community with various reasons. This enables new immigrants to set up bridges into other established communities (Warner and Wittner, 1998: 87). In the previous chapters, the example of Turkish public schools and their effect on language, communication, and adaptation on Uzbeks have been seen merely. This time, there is a different example of the influence of Arabic schools.

Benim bildiğim böyle bir iki aile var (bizim medreseye göndermeyen). Onlar şeye gittiler yani. Kendisi de Fatih'e yakın. Fatih'te böyle güzel okullar varmış. İsmi... Sonradan bu öğrenciler, öğretmenler hepsi bayan. Küçük çocuklara yani bayanlar çok hızlı şey yapıyor. Duydum böyle Özbekler vardı. Diyor ki "siz sert öğretiyorsunuz ama orada güzel talim veriyor." Ben size imkansız olan Özbekler ya da çocuğuyla, dinle ilgili olmayan Özbeklerden bahsetmiyorum. Kendisi dini adam. Sadece nasıl kirayı ödiycem, nasıl bunlara ekmek getürücem diye düşünen ama imkanı olmayanlar, onlar (imkanı kısıtlı olanlar) çocuğunu (bize) verdi. Ama parası olan, işi gücü iyi olan, gittiler Fatihlere verdiler. Hatta paralı olanlara verdiler.<sup>72</sup> (Arif)

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<sup>71</sup> Yeah, it was the same. It's the same. But it's a little different now. Those girls grew up. Now I think they bring the books of Sudanese schools. They speak Arabic. He speaks little Turkish and Arabic. There are those who do not go to these (public) schools (in Turkey). They read books from Sudanese schools. Something comes from the Embassy of Sudan, questions come from there. They're (Sudanese officials) doing an exam. Then they give a diploma because they have (passed exams and) finished school. So they took all of the Sudanese courses. They took math and everything. There are Arab teachers now. There are Iraqi, Syrian and Egyptian teachers.

<sup>72</sup> I know there are two such families (who did not send their children to our madrasah). So they went to the thing. He is close to Fatih. There are such beautiful schools in Fatih. Its name is ... Then these students, teachers are all ladies. Young children, ladies do things very quickly. I heard there were such Uzbeks. He says "you teach hard but she gives good practice there." I'm not talking to you about the impossible Uzbeks or their child, the Uzbeks that are unreligious. He's a religious man. Only those who think of how to pay rent, how to bring bread to (home), but who have no means, they gave their child (to us). But who has the money, whose the work force is good, they went to the Fatih. They even gave it to mercenary (schools).

“Arap medreseleri var. Bazıları da çocuğunu oralarda okutuyor. Farklı medreseler var. Onları tercih edebiliyorlar.”<sup>73</sup> (**Şevket**). The level of religious activity seems to have fallen compared to previous years. The participation rate is also an effective factor in this. Of course, there are multiple reasons for low-level participation both in teachers and students. The very first reason is that Islam Kadirov is no longer at the rule and new president, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, called Uzbeks in abroad to turn back their homeland. Thus, most of the Uzbek family turned back to Uzbekistan with their children. In the beginning, there were more than three hundred students in Uzbek madrasahs of Kayaşehir. Now, the number has dropped to less than a hundred per institution approximately in six years. There are teachers who do not participate in madrasah activities too.

Belki korkuyorlar. Korkuyorlar yani. Vahhabi diye korkuyor olabilirler. Çok tanımıyorlar. Özbekistan’da dini insanlarla ilgili kurmak demek kendisini adeta hapse tıkmak demek. O yüzden de korkanlar olabilir. Hatta ‘vahhabi’ diye düşünmese de tedbiren yaklaşmıyor olabilirler. Tamam özgürlük kendisi seviyor. Müslümanım ama diyor. Ama namaz kılmıyor. İçki içebilir, mümkün fahş da yapabilir ama kendisini Müslüman sanıyor. Dini insanlarla da ilişki, irtibat kurmak istemiyor. Çünkü yaptığı zaman ona problem olur. Veya öyle düşünüyor.<sup>74</sup> (**Arif**)

“Bi ara geldiğim zamanlarda, çünkü Özbekler çok azdı, hoca mı öğrencileri mi ne duyunca benim Medine Üniversitesi mezunu olduğumu, şuymuş buymuş, gelin hocam dediler. Ben hocalık için yok dedim, burda akademisyen olurum, üniversite okurum filan dedim. Gitmedim. Şu anda medreselere zaman ayıramam dedim.”<sup>75</sup> (**Necmeddin**). “Burası

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<sup>73</sup> They have Arab madrasahs. Some of them have their children read there. There are different madrasahs. They may choose them.

<sup>74</sup> Maybe they're scared. They're so scared. They may be afraid of “Wahhabi”. They don't know much. To establish a relation with religious people in Uzbekistan means putting him in jail. So there may be those who are afraid. In fact, even though they do not think about us as they are ‘wahhabi’, they may not be approaching with caution. Ok he loves freedom himself. I'm Muslim, but he says. But he doesn't pray. He can drink, make possible prostitution, but he thinks he's a Muslim. He does not want to make relationship with religious people, does not want to contact. Because when he does, he's a problem. Or so he thinks.

<sup>75</sup> When I arrived (to Turkey), because the Uzbeks were very few, the teacher or students heard what I graduated from the University of Medina, that's what they said, my dear teacher come to us. I said no for teaching, I would be an academician here, I would go to university. I did not go. I said I can't take the time to the madrasahs right now.

(Seyhun Eğitim Derneği) açıldığı zaman ben medreseden buraya geldim. Medrese şimdi nasıl pek bilmiyorum yani.”<sup>76</sup> (Arif). Seyhun Education Association now manages madrasah and other similar social and religious activities in Kayaşehir. Islamic cultural channel of Registon Tv (on Youtube) and various websites has been developed as new religious projects in Seyhun Eğitim Derneği. The new institutional academic form, online madrasah system (e-madrasah) will also be opened under the name of “Ebu Hanife İslami Akademiyası”. These educational and religious organizations trigger at regional but not national level in Turkey because they broadcast in the Uzbek language. Also, they affect international organizational structures and mobilize Uzbeks’ agency in a transnational worldwide web of sending and receiving countries in the context of immigration. What makes religious activity alive and easy is shared denomination (Hanafi branch in here) which enables Uzbek migrants to know how to participate these projects and treats them as members wherever they are (Levitt, 2004: 411). These immigrant assemblies function like what Manuel Castells (2000) has described as a network society – decentralized, flexible yet connected networks that provide customized services and goods. They and their global effects will be mentioned in detail upcoming episodes.

### **3.3.1. Maintaining the Continuity of the Islamic Faith in Diaspora**

In this chapter, the context of religious activities and institutions, and religious authority as one of the intervening conditions for these agent strategies will be explained. To process the continuity of Islamic faith in the diaspora, the way of Muslim Uzbeks in maintaining this before migration is demonstrated. For Uzbeks, Islamic believe simply is not an issue of personal preference but a traditional culture and religious heritage from the homeland society. Due to this, it should be preserved and maintained in the new host country. Now, the historical knowledge explained below was learned through the fieldwork.

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<sup>76</sup> When this place (Seyhun Education Association) was opened, I came here from the madrasah. I don't know how madrasah is now.

Throughout history, Uzbeks' classical religious education system has adhered to tradition and customary rituals. Arabic education and scholarly works on the Quran were always been in the center. Uzbek madrasahs have been very famous in Islamic theology. For instance, Buhara, one of the historical city in Uzbekistan, has been popularly a basis for Islamic madrasah which belongs to Sunni-Hanafi sect (Bıçakçı, 1996: 123). Various schools, artworks, old buildings, and libraries have also been established around the same region, but all Islamic education and works nearly came to an end during the Soviet Russian period.

In 1943, Soviets accepted a request by Uzbek public that "Religious Administration of Muslims in Central Asia and Kazakhstan" was opened in Tashkent. Then, this administration opened one madrasah in Bukhara (namely Mir Arab) and another in Tashkent (Imam Bukhari). Only these two madrasahs had survived in the area until the end of the Soviet Union and they were under the tight control. Because of the oppression and prohibition on religious activities, Uzbek people have taken religious education via the *hücre*<sup>77</sup> system. They started to come together secretly and taught each other Islamic sciences in their houses.

Özbeklerin örf ve adeti, kültürleri dinlerine çok bağlıdır. Din, medrese vs bizim için vazgeçilmez bir şey. Sovyet zamanında çok çetin bir süreç yaşadık. Duyduğumuz kadarıyla medrese, mescid ve camiiler meyhane yapıldı, ahır yapıldı Sovyetler döneminde. Dinle açık bir mücadele veriliyordu. Dine savaş açmışlardı. Kısacası diyebiliriz ki Özbeklerin diniyle ve kültürüyle savaşmışlar yani yok etmek için. Böyle bir medrese, İslami ilim ve eğitim alabilecek yerler kapatıldığı için "hücre" dediğimiz odalarda eğitim almaya başladı o dönem Özbekler. Gizlice, bir sıkıntı çıkmasın, yakalanmayalım diye evlerde eğitim verilen dönemlerden geçmişler.<sup>78</sup> (İkbal)

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<sup>77</sup> Room in English.

<sup>78</sup> The customs and traditions of Uzbeks are highly dependent on their religion. Religion, madrasah etc. are indispensable for us. We had a very difficult period in Soviet times. We hear that madrasah, masjid and mosques were converted to taverns, stables were built during the Soviet period. Listen, there was an open struggle. They waged war on religion. In short, we can say that they fought the religion and culture of the Uzbeks to destroy it. Because of such a madrasa, Islamic sciences and education places were closed, Uzbeks began to receive education in the "cell" rooms at that time. Secretly, in order to avoid a hardship, they went through periods of education in homes.



“Her insan kendi evinde bir oda ayırıyor. Orda 2-3 çocuk saklıyor. Hocalar gizli gizli gidiyor, orda ilim öğretiyor. Anladınız mı? Bu tarikle insanlar dininden geri kalmadı, dinini sakladılar yani. Bazıları kalıyor, bazıları günlük gidip geliyordu. Ben mesela öyle bi eğitimden geçtim. Hücreden iki ay üç ay çıkmazdık. Yani elhamdulillah.”<sup>79</sup> (Arif). Since Uzbek culture is devoted to Islam, they made sacrifices on that path to preserve their religion and not lose tradition of religious education. Everyone was educated secretly around teachers or family elders with their own means. On the way to *hücre* classes, religious books were hiding in clothes. Required books were provided on the occasion of foreign Muslim students from Afghanistan, Pakistan etc. and even from Syria. The quality of *hücre* education was not bad and women had a great role in this home schooling.

Komünizm döneminde, Sovyetler birliği zamanında dahi, evlerinde medrese eğitime devam etmişler, hiç ara vermemişler. Yani Orta Asya’daki dini eğitim geleneği evlerde devam etmiş, yani Lenin’den, Stalin’den sonra tamamen yok. Ama evlerinde devam etmişler. 91 yılında üç kişi gelmişti buraya (Türkiye’ye). Özbekistan daha yeni bağımsızlığını almıştı. O zaman üç kişi geldi, üç tane genç adam, 20’li yaşlarında. Buraya geldiler ordan. Ve baktım hepsi de Arapça konuşuyor. Hayret ettim ya, siz dedim Sovyet Rusya işgali altından çıkmış gelmişsiniz, nasıl oldu bu? Biz dediler Seyyid Kutub’un Fi Zilal’il Kur’an’ını Arapçası’ndan okuduk ders olarak. Bizim hocalarımız bize bunu, Sovyet döneminde burdan ders verdiler. Türkiye’deki İslamcılar hiç Arapça bilmiyor. Onlar da bize hayret ediyor ya nasıl İslamcısınız siz Arapça bilmiyorsunuz, diye. Orta Asya’dan gelmiş adam... Annelerimiz dedi, bizim öğretmenimizdir. Annelerimiz, geleneği sürdüren annelerimiz oldu. Sovyetler döneminde, evlerimiz medrese oldu ve annelerimiz bizim domlalarımızdır, öğretmenlerimizdir.<sup>80</sup> (Burak)

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<sup>79</sup> Every person has a room in their house. He's hiding 2-3 kids there. Teachers go undercover and teach science there. Do you understand? With this way people did not lost their religion, they hid it. Some were boarding, some went on and off daily. For example, I went through such training. We wouldn't leave the cell for two or three months. So alhamdulillah.

<sup>80</sup> During communism, even during the Soviet Union, they continued their madrasah education at home and never stopped. In other words, the tradition of religious education in Central Asia continued at home, there was nothing after Lenin and Stalin. But they went on at home. In the 1991, three people came here (to Turkey). Uzbekistan had just gained its independence. Then three people came, three young men, in their 20s. They came here from there. And I looked at all of them speaking Arabic. I was surprised, I said that you came out of the Soviet Russian occupation, how did that happen? They said that “as a lesson we read Sayyid Qutb's Fi Zilal’il Qur'an in Arabic. Our teachers taught us this from there in the Soviet era.” Islamists in Turkey does not know Arabic. They are amazed at us or said “how Islamist you do not know Arabic?!”. The man from Central Asia... “Our mothers” he said, “our teachers”. “Our mothers who continued the tradition”. In the Soviet era, our homes became madrasahs, and our mothers are our domla, our teachers.

When Uzbekistan declared independence in 1911, a great atmosphere of freedom occurred and spread in terms of human rights and religious matters. Hundreds of madrasas and masjids were opened all over the country. All of these religious institutions were official organizations. Until 1994, this pleasant state for Muslim citizens continued like that. After that, some Uzbek people and Republic of Uzbekistan started to have problems with each other. The state brutally oppressed most of Muslim Uzbeks because the head of government did not want to share the rule with any power groups.

Daha doğrusu şimdi Özbekistan özelinde konuşursak, Özbekistan'da zaten Sovyetlerden sonra kısa bir dönem bir özgürlük ortamı oldu. Bir seneden belki biraz fazla sürdü. İlk seçimlerden sonra İslam Kerimov diktatörlüğünü ilan etti. Ve bırakın dini grupları, yani kendisine yakın çizgideki siyasi muhaliflerini bile tasfiye etti. Yani hepsini ya hapse attı ya da ülke dışına çıkmak zorunda bıraktı. Dolayısıyla da ülkede hiçbir özgürlük ortamı kalmadı, medrese de dahil buna.<sup>81</sup> **(Burak)**

There were around forty thousand mosques and masjids in Uzbekistan. Only two thousands of them remained open. The rest were all closed. For example, there are just two big mosques in the city of Andijan. Further, all systematic madrasah activities were stopped. All institutions are now under state control. Giving religious education in homes and mosques are banned. Educational facilities for Islamic teaching are good in quality but very bad in quantity. So, they are incapable of responding to needs.

Özbekistan'ın hali hazırda 33 milyon ahalisi var. Türkiye'nin yaklaşık üçte biri ama Orta Asya için iyi bir nüfus. Bu nüfus için 12 tane İslami İlimler kursu var sadece. Bir tanesi bayanlar için ayrılmış. Bu (resmi) medreseler, yıllık sadece 24 öğrenci kabul ediyor, yıllık! Ki 500 kişi arasından başvurup kabul almak gerçekten zor. Yükseköğretim fakültesi sadece bir tane. Yani aralarında üniversite seviyesinde diyebileceğimiz sadece bir medrese var. Kalanı kurs seviyesinde. Kolej de diyebiliriz. Bu İslam Kerimov'dan sonraki gelen başkan özel Kur'an kurslarına izin verdi ama bu medreseler de yine devlet takibinde. Dokuz tane

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<sup>81</sup> In fact, if we talk about the situation in Uzbekistan now, Uzbekistan has already had a short period of freedom after the Soviets. Maybe a little over a year. After the first elections Islam Karimov declared dictatorship. And not only religious groups, that is, but also rectified political opponents in line with him. So he either put them in jail or forced them to get out of the country. Therefore, there is no environment of freedom left in the country, including the madrasah.

filan ama ücretli bu (özel) kurslar. Mesela kayıt olabilmek için 18 yaş üstünde olmak şart vs.<sup>82</sup> (**İkbal**)

There were two types of educational institutions in the Idil-Ural region: School (primary school) and madrasah (middle and high school).<sup>83</sup> The same is true in Uzbekistan. Middle and high schools are called as a madrasah. Eight of these official madrasahs are middle schools and two of them are at the high school level. On average, three hundred to five hundred students graduate from these schools annually. This is a very low number compared to the population of the country. "Sadece kabul azdı. Ben onu demek istiyorum. Kabul etmeleri çok az. Bir de bitirdikten sonra onlara verilen haklar da az yani. Sadece imam olabilir, sadece müezzin olabilir, sadece öğretmen olabilir. O kadardır yani."<sup>84</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**)

In general, half of the education given in madrasahs is in the form of theology and the other half is physical sciences, but the rate of science lessons was reduced and religious ones were increased in recent years. The curriculum of madrasahs is well-organized and based upon Hanafi-Sunni school. Some Islamic scholars who gave Islamic education unofficially in civil society were abducted and assassinated such as Abdulveli Kâri and Abid Kâri in the 90s. Religious education was thus completely monopolized by the state.

After overcoming all these compelling processes, Muslim Uzbek people are not only more comfortable but also more sensitive in Turkey. They have faith in themselves and their immigrant community but not to new living conditions. They are worried about

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<sup>82</sup> Uzbekistan already has 33 million inhabitants. Approximately one-third of Turkey's population, but good for Central Asia. There are only 12 Islamic Sciences courses for this population. One for the ladies. These (official) madrasahs accept only 24 students annually, annually! It is really difficult to apply and get acceptance among 500 people. Only one of them is in higher education. In other words, there is only one madrasah that can be called at the university level. The rest is at course level. College, maybe. The president after Islam Karimov has allowed special Quran courses, but these madrasahs are still in the state follow-up. Nine or so, but these are paid (private) courses. For example, one should be over 18 years of age to register etc.

<sup>83</sup> See more at: <https://mamer.biz/volga-ural-bolgesinde-egitim-reformu/>

<sup>84</sup> Only admission was few. I mean that. Very little to accept. And the laws that are given to them after they finish are less. It can only be an imam, just a muezzin, just a teacher. That's it.

their new generation because Uzbek youth did not experience exactly what their parents experienced in Uzbekistan. So, Islamic education and nurture are more important than ever to protect belief and morals. "Talimsiz olmaz yani. Okula gitmese, medreseye gitmese ne olur? Sadece internet kalır. Çocuklar bozuluyor. Çocukların eğitim almaları lazım. Kendilerini de Allah'ı da tanımaları lazım. O yüzden açmışlar yani medreseyi. İlmî, Allah'ı tanımak için, adap ahlaklar için çok önemi var. Bir kişi Allah'ı tanımazsa ondan her şeyi bekliyorsunuz yani. O yüzden önemi var çok."<sup>85</sup> (**Şevket**)

In Uzbek diaspora, the Islamic faith is protected and maintained by immigrants through three different ways: Institutions (such as madrasah, course, kindergarten, and association), Islamic scholars (*domla* with classical methods) and parents (family or domesticity). A man of God named as *domla* or *mullah* has a very central role in the spiritual and social life of immigrant Uzbek groups. They are involved in almost all social relations and religious activities.

Bizde domlalar çok önemli. Cenazeler, merasimler, sünnet düğünleri vb birçok mevlüt gibi şeyler oluyor. Adak adanıyor mesela yeni çocuk doğduğunda. Hepsinde domlalar vardır. Onlarsız olmaz. Bizdeki düğünler biraz farklı olur mesela. Çok kalabalık olur toplantılar. En az beşyüz kişi. Genelde çok kalabalık oluyor. Eskiden evlerde oluyordu, şimdi salonlarda oluyor ama. Düğünlerde, kalabalık alanlarda, cenazelerde, farklı farklı birçok etkinlikler domlasız geçmez. Domlaların ehemmiyetleri çok büyük. Domlaların rolü o kadar önemli ki domlasız düğün düğün değil, domlasız cenaze cenaze değil, domlasız etkinlik etkinlik değildir. Yapılacak programın zamanı, uygunluğu hep domlalar tarafından belirlenir. Hatta bu böyle nikahta, bu onun boşanması da domlasız geçmiyor. Mahkemeye geçene kadar, yani geçmeden önce domla müdahale ediyor diyelim. Çok önemli yani.<sup>86</sup> (**İkbal**)

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<sup>85</sup> Not without training. What happens if she doesn't go to school or madrasah? Only the internet remains. The kids are deteriorating. Children need education. They should know themselves and Allah. That's why they opened the madrasah. Lore, to know Allah, is very important for the moral values. If a person does not know Allah, you expect everything from him. So it's very important.

<sup>86</sup>Domlalar are very important to us. There are things like funerals, ceremonies, circumcision weddings etc. Vow is made, for example, when the new child is born. They all have domlalar. Not without them. Our weddings would be a little different. Very crowded meetings. At least five hundred people. It's usually very crowded. It used to be in homes, now it's in halls. Weddings, crowded areas, funerals, many different events do not pass without domla. Domlalar are very important. The role of domla is so important that without him weddings are not weddings, funerals are not funerals, events are not events. The timing and suitability of the program is always determined by domlalar. In fact, domla is available in such a wedding, there is no divorce without him. Let's say the domla intervenes until we go to laq, that is, before we do go. (He is) very important.

So, religious men of, domla, is a very key figure in the Uzbek community. Some Uzbek hodjas give Islamic education to elder people, who are mostly parents of students in madrasahs, in Turkish mosques and masjids of Uzbeks without any organizational tie. Others play a very crucial role to organize and apply the curriculum in social and educational establishments of Uzbek diaspora. Institutions cannot work without them because they are opinion leaders of Uzbek immigrants to take action. By domla initiative, madrasahs, kindergartens, and other associations show huge effort to educate and sustain Islamic faith in Turkish society: “Minik çocuklar ahlakını biliyor. Yemek üstünde, tuvalete giden de, dışarı çıkan da, büyüklerle karşılaşan da, otobüse binerken... Yani kreşte verilebilecek ne varsa İslami açıdan biz bunu sağlamaya çalışıyoruz.”<sup>87</sup> (Tarık)

Ben kendim, kendi çocuğuma evde Kur’an’dan ders verirsem eğer ve bu dışarda bilinirse, hükümet bunun haberini alırsa, beni sorumlu tutardı. Beni hapse atabilecek bir dereceye gelmişti o zaman. O yüzden medresenin bizim Özbeklerin nezdinden önemi çok büyük yani, gerçekten çok büyüktü. Tabii ki Türkiye’ye geldiler. İkameti, resmiyeti yerinde olan insanların çocukları bizim medresede okumakla aynı zamanda okullara gidiyorlar, Türk imam-hatip olsun, başka okullar olsun, gidiyorlar, okuyorlar yani. Ama medrese esas. Medrese esastır çünkü... Bizim tarihimizde, kültürümüzde yeri var. Biliyorsunuz yani bir şeyi insana yasaklarsanız, yasaklanan şey insana daha cazip olur, ilgisini daha çok çeker yani. O yüzden buraya gelen arkadaşlarımızın esas dertleri, memlekette çocuklarına İslami hayat, İslami eğitim, İslami kültürü verememiş olmaları medresenin şeyini, kadrini daha da arttırmış oldu. Allah’a hamd olsun. Bir şeyler yapmaya çalıştık. Medresemiz genellikle çocuklarla ilgilendi yani. 6-16 yaş arası çocuklarla ilgilendik. Ama aynı zamanda veliler, anneler babalara da mümkün olduğu kadar onlara da bi mesaj, bi terbiye, bi hatırlatma gibi bişeyler yapmaya çalıştık.<sup>88</sup> (Taha Abdullah)

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<sup>87</sup> Little kids know their morals. On the food, going to the toilet, going out, encountering the adults, while getting on the bus... So what we can be given in the nursery, we are trying to provide this from an Islamic perspective.

<sup>88</sup> I myself, if I taught my own child from the Qur’an at home, and if it was known outside, if the government heard about it, it would hold me responsible. That was enough to put me in jail. Therefore, the importance of the madrasah for our Uzbeks was very big, so it was really big. Ofcourse they came to Turkey. The children of the people who have residence and formalities go to the schools at the same time as our madrasah, Turkish imam-hatip other schools, they go, they read. But madrasah is essential. Madrasah is essential because... It has a place in our history and culture. You know that if you forbid something, then the prohibited thing is more attractive to people, so it attracts more attention. So the main problems of our friends who came here, Islamic life, Islamic education to their children in the country could not give Islamic culture, madrasa's thing, has increased the cadre. Praise be to Allah. We tried to do something. Our madrasah is usually interested in children. We took care of children between the ages of 6-16. But at the same time, parents, mothers and fathers as much as possible to them a message, a training, we tried to do something like a reminder.

In the madrasahs, classes are held from morning to noon and from afternoon to mid-afternoon. Turkish, Arabic, Uzbek, and Russian language are taught. In addition to Islamic lessons and courses of Uzbek culture like Uzbek cuisine for female students, sciences such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc. are given. Competitions, sports activities, and travels are also held from time to time. In parent-teacher meetings, some families request to get more Islamic education than other social activities and some other parents claim vice versa. Besides this, unexpected problems might occur between the Uzbek community while they try to ensure the continuity of Islamic faith among themselves. Some immigrant Uzbek groups have diverse opinions on Islamic belief and because of this, one can make an acquisition against the other from time to time. Discussions on the truth about Islam have a deceptive impact on people of all ages. Religious teachers also deal with false thoughts on Islamic belief and try to beat off wrong comments on Islam by different mullahs. This causes moral struggle among immigrants who have different views on Islam. To keep Uzbek society together all the time is not an easy task. Production of legitimacy in host society and protection of not only Islamic faith but also immigrant Muslim community need perpetual attempts. In this direction, Uzbeks have an effort to be moderate Muslims. They also care about making contact with persons from the host society and get help. Sometimes, they call Turkish people from official authorities to their madrasahs in order to learn the Turkish language, sciences and formal procedures in Turkey.

Thirdly, Uzbek culture and Islam are studied in the immigrant family via parents. Some Uzbek families think that the child can get into society and adapt it quickly if she is educated in the domestic sphere by father or mother. Hereby, they do not send their children to any Uzbek organization or religious activity for education. These families are not afraid of assimilation for their sons and daughters but legitimacy and public acclaim in identity. Maybe those parents whose children go to Turkish public schools feel like a stranger in Turkish society and does not want the emergence of same matter for their generations. "İyi yaptılar bazıları. Dini olarak kendisi evde öğretiyor. Diyor ki 'benim

çocuğum şey, insanlardan, toplumdan arka kalmasını istemiyorum.' Okula gitsin diye. Ben kendim de, benim oğlum geldiği zaman Suriyelilerin okuluna gitti sonradan Türklerinkine. Evde yetiştirdim ben onu sonuçta."<sup>89</sup> (Arif)

Since they could not be able to get religious education in Uzbekistan, immigrants feel themselves incomplete in terms of religion. Accordingly, they demand religious education of good quality in Turkey and do not like public schools in this sense. Uzbek religious teachers and communal organizations like madrasah are seen as an opportunity. Right here, the question of religious authority become a current issue because religious authority is developing as an intervening condition within the context of the continuity of faith. In this part, I will try to find an answer to the following question: Who is the primary and mostly-desired authority for Uzbeks after immigration: Domla (person) or madrasah (institute)?

The answers given on this subject are various but basically, there are three answers: Some think that domla is at the center of everything, so he is the most important figure for the Uzbek community in Istanbul. It is the domla who takes most of the decisions and transfer culture and religion from the root society.

Daha çok, medreseden çok öne çıkan domla kavramı, hocalardır. Bunların müthiş bir otoritesi var (Özbek) halk üzerinde. Dindar halk bunların sohbetlerine katılıyor, dinliyor ve her domlanın tabii kendine göre bir izleyici kitlesi var. Onlara en fazla bu medreselerde diyelim ki haftada bir, haftada iki defa bu domlaların sohbetleri, vaazları, dersleri oluyordu. Bunlara da o bölgedeki halk katılıyordu. Ama mesela Zeytinburnu'ndaki bir domlanın dersine, Kayaşehir'de oturan bir vatandaş gelip dinliyor. Ya da Kayaşehir'deki bir domlanın dersine Zeytinburnu'ndaki birisi katılıyor. Yani şey gibidir bu, serbest kürsü gibi. İsteyen istediğine, kim kimden gıda alabiliyorsa, istifade edebiliyorsa ona gidiyor.<sup>90</sup> (Burak)

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<sup>89</sup> Some of them did well. He teaches his child himself religiously at home. He says, "My child is, well, I don't want people to be excluded from the society." To go to school, myself, when my son came he went to the Syrian school, then to the Turks. I raised him at home.

<sup>90</sup> The concept of domla, which is more prominent than the madrasah, is the teachers. They have great authority on the (Uzbek) people. Religious people participate in their conversations, listen, and each domla of course has its own audience. Let's say to them at most these madrasahs that once a week, twice a week these domlalar had conversations, sermons and lessons. The people in the region participated in these. But for example, a citizen sitting in Kayaşehir listens to the lesson of a domla in Zeytinburnu. Or someone

On the other hand, some domla thinks that madrasah as a foundation precedes domla because the systematic organization is more important for maintaining the continuity of religious life. There is a risk for the end of activities and interactions if domla moves away.

Ben hep yani birincisi (medrese) olması için çalıştım. Bizde Özbeklerde maalesef böyle bir durum var. Türkiye’de de bunu gördüm. Yani hoca efendi merkez oluyor. Ben şahıs olarak ben hep bunu eksik gördüm. Kendi adıma hiçbir zaman, kaç senedir Özbekistan’da çalışırken kendi adıma kimseyi çağırmadım. Aynı şekilde biz burda teşkilat olarak çalışıyoruz. Parlak Medya, Seyhun Derneği olarak çalışıyoruz. Hiçbir zaman hocalarımıza böyle bir izin vermedim ki yönetici olarak, biz teşkilatız. Biz bir müesseseyiz. Ben bir gün varım, yarın yokum. Taha var Taha yok. Hiçbir şey değişmemesi gerek. Sen varsın sen yoksun. Bir şey değişmemesi gerek. Bu filan hocanın talebeleri veya medresesi diye bir şey, bir ad bana lazım değil. Siz de bunu kendinize dava edemezsiniz. Çünkü bizim işimizin geleceğinin olması için bu iş müessese şeklinde, teşkilat şeklinde başlaması gerek. Sonuna kadar öyle devam etmesi gerek ki biz bugün varız yarın başkaları gelir bizim rolümüzü devam ettirir.<sup>91</sup> **(Taha Abdullah)**

On the other hand, others think that the combination of domla and madrasah or other institutes is necessary. So, both religious leader and institute are so important and they complete each other: “Her ikisi de çok öncelikli. İkisi de çok büyük bir şey ki Özbekler etrafında toplanıyor. Bence öyle. Birbirlerini tamamlıyorlar gibi. O sebeple bir ayrım yapamıyorum.”<sup>92</sup> **(Şevket)**

When it comes to comparing the madrasah in sending country with the one in the receiving country, madrasahs in Uzbekistan seem more rooted, systematic and durable than Uzbek madrasahs in Istanbul. However, madrasahs in Turkey are more civil than

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in Zeytinburnu attends the lesson of a domla in Kayışehir. I mean, it's like, like a free lecturer. Whoever wants, who can take supply, who can benefit from it goes.

<sup>91</sup> I always tried to make the (madrasah) first. Unfortunately, we have such a situation in Uzbek. I also saw same of it in Turkey. So, the master becomes the center. As a person I have always seen it missing. I have never called for myself, for many years while working in Uzbekistan. Likewise, we work here as an organization. Parlak Medya, Seyhun Association as we are working. I have never given such permission to our teachers, as managers, we are the organization. We're an institution. I'm one day in here, but I'm not tomorrow. There's no Taha. Nothing should change. If you're not there, things shouldn't change. There is no such thing as his students or his madrasa, I don't need a name. You can't sue it to yourself. Because for the future of our work, this work has to start in the form of a venture and organization. It has to continue until the end that we are here in today and others will continue our role tomorrow.

<sup>92</sup> Both are top priority. Both of them are a big thing that the Uzbeks gather around. I think it's like that. They seem to complement each other. That's why I can't make a distinction.



madrasahs in Uzbekistan because these madrasahs of the homeland directly pertain to Uzbek state. The same goes for domla in two different countries. Religious teachers are more independent in Turkey than instructors in Uzbekistan. At the same time, one domla has to be more active in Istanbul compared to domla in Uzbek cities. The religious authority of these people is more sustained in Uzbekistan. In Turkey, Uzbek people may not care about religious instructors as they care and follow in Uzbekistan. So, immigrants in Istanbul mostly take their own decisions themselves without conferring with domla group. Religious masters in Uzbekistan are more vulnerable to cultural values and customs even if they are non-Islamic. They can face public pressure to join some rituals even if they do not want to. However, immigrant religious leaders are comfortable in this respect. They also have a different pedagogical formation for Islamic sciences taken in different countries such as Pakistan, India, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. They can easily find a job, financial support or join high education in universities such as master and doctorate programs. These make domla in Istanbul more powerful in his participation in political and public discussions. Mullahs in Uzbekistan cannot talk about politics so much because of care for livelihood. They are readily under pressure of the Republic of Uzbekistan. For that matter, most of domla who decide to be silent under state pressure is disfavoured by the Muslim society in Uzbekistan.

On the other side, female domla, *atunay*, are so low in number compared with domla. They are Uzbek women teachers who give Islamic lessons and talks to women of the Uzbek community. *Atunay* literally means woman master or woman teacher. In Islamic memorial service and conversations among Muslim women, *atunay* is always ready in there. It is hard to raise woman religious teachers because they are mostly busy with domestic affairs or children, but Uzbek women are eager to learn Islamic faith so much. There are no distinct differences between *atunay* in the society of origin and *atunay* in the new host society: "Kültür... İnsanın kültürü aslında dininin altında yatar. Kültürde esasların sultanı aslında dindir. Bir hristiyanın kültürü mesihiyedir. Müslümanın kültürü

ise İslam kültürüdür. Bu açıdan, bu şeyhlerin kültürümüzde çok büyük yeri var. Tüm (Özbek) Müslümanlar onları çok sever.”<sup>93</sup> (Arif)

Both *domla* and *atunay*, they are all respected in Uzbek culture. All of these mobilizations and actions mentioned above has the main motivation of keeping the persistence of Islamic belief in Uzbek diaspora. This goes with a wish to achieve legitimacy in their new location and maintaining the cultural and religious principles from their society of origin (Warner & Wittner, 1998: 238). Past experience and memories from the Soviet Union and Uzbekistan, cultural values of Central Asia and religious education plays a vital role in the realization of fundamental goals by immigrants.

Normal Müslüman bir hayatı istiyoruz. Başka bir şey hedeflemiyoruz. Hayatın amacı nedir, gayesi nedir? Buna uygun yaşamak ve buna uygun yetiştirmek istiyoruz çocukları. Annem babam Özbekistan’dan arıyorlar telefonda konuşurken burda ezan okunuyor. Onu telefondan duyduklarında ağlıyorlar. Niye? Çünkü bizde ezanların sesi kesik. Dinin sesi kesik. Bana ‘bugün nereden geldin’ diye soruyorlar diyorum ‘Kur’an öğretyordum kursta ordan geldim’. Bunu dediğimde duygulanıp ağlıyorlar. Siz düşünün...<sup>94</sup> (İkbal)

Due to the financial crisis, security concerns and new migration wave to turn back Uzbekistan, madrasah activities are low today. Elder religious teachers leave madrasahs to young teachers who are raised by these masters. Domla group in Başakşehir now is engaged in new projects. They are now trying to maintain the faith not only locally in the diaspora but also globally in social media. These individuals and organizations play a spiritual, communal and communicative role at the same time. This new phase will be discussed in the last section of this chapter.

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<sup>93</sup> Culture... The culture of human actually underlies his religion. The sultan of the principles in culture is actually religion. The culture of a Christian is the Messiah (culture). Muslim culture is Islamic culture. In this respect, these sheiks have a great place in our culture. All (Uzbek) Muslims love them.

<sup>94</sup> We want a normal Muslim life. We're not aiming for anything else. What is the purpose of life, what is the purpose? We want to live and raise children in accordance with this. My mom and dad are calling from Uzbekistan while the call to prayer is spoken here. They cry when they hear him on the phone. Why? Because the voice of our prayer is muted. Religion is muted. They ask me “where did you come from today?” I answered that I was teaching the Qur'an and I came from there on the course’. When I say that, they feel and cry. Imagine...

### 3.3.2. Globalization of Religious Life

So far, it is seen that religious activities of Uzbek immigrants are conveyed through an institution such as madrasah or a religious representative person like *domla* traditionally. Now, these activities are transnationalized and globalized in many aspects through the media channel and an online academy. Institutionalization has evolved and every day religious practices and discourses are expanded via global religious institutions. By doing so, cross-border ties are extended and globalization of religious life is intensified (Levitt, 2004: 409). Immigrants are connected to their homeland and remain to be integrated into the host country and boundaries are more intermingled.

Adaptation strategies, creation of huge religious organization within institutions and practice come up with new results for Uzbek community in Başakşehir. These results are a new media case and online madrasah organization. Now, Uzbek mullahs, religious teachers and technicians endeavor to enlarge and transmit their media channel. They also try to establish an online Islamic course. Still, Qur'anic course, madrasah, kindergarten works, and assembly projects in associations continue at a low level in Kayaşehir neighborhood. This ongoing process will be mentioned below with its causes, meanings, and effects in the context of globalization and transnationalism. Outcomes of the new developments for the study will be discussed in the following pages through a detailed figure.

To begin with, the channel name is Registon TV<sup>95</sup>. It is an internet tv channel started broadcasting on Youtube in 2018. The name of Registon comes from Registan which is a historical area in Samarkand. Registon Tv is defined in the Uzbek language as “madaniy, ma’rifiy, diniy kanal”<sup>96</sup>. It has Telegram, Instagram and Facebook profiles. All of these works are operated under the company of “Parlak Medya”. The format of establishment is taken from another channel, namely Alif TV<sup>97</sup>. This channel has lots of branch offices

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<sup>95</sup> See more at: <https://www.registon.tv/>

<sup>96</sup> It is a civil, educational and religious channel.

<sup>97</sup> See more at: <https://alif.tv/>

in different countries and makes Islamic videos for Russian-speaking people around the world. Because the staff of Alif TV is neighbors with Uzbeks in Başakşehir, they give Uzbek immigrants idea to initiate an internet media project like themselves. Uzbek community agreed with it, and Registon TV has been opened.

It seems that internet media is a newly spreading phenomenon. It is necessary to remind that there are also different teams in the Uzbek diaspora and we focused on just one of them. So, there are also other internet media channels belong to Uzbek immigrants in Istanbul such as Ixlos Tv<sup>98</sup>, but not enough information is taken from them. Media channels are basically a means of communication for communicating and exchanging interests and information to wider networks of societies. Additionally, these media can be understood as spaces of communication in which the identity, meaning, and boundaries of the diasporic community are continually created, debated and reimagined (Karim, 2003: 135).

“Registon İslami kültürel internet kanalımız var. Birkaç aydır internet üzerinden yayınlar yapıyoruz. Bu da hem dini hem kültürel hem sosyal mevzuatlarda programlar yapıyoruz, yayınlıyoruz. Bu hem Özbekistan içerisinde, hem Türkiye, hem dünyanın her yerinde olan Özbeklerimiz bundan çok memnunar.”<sup>99</sup> (**Taha Abdullah**). Uzbek media is globally effective on religious ideas and practices on Islam. Diasporas in different countries are affected by changes in the international environment (Kokot, Waltraud & Tölölyan, 2004: 21). Global culture and institutions form migrants’ transnational religious practices (Meyer, Boli, Thomas & Ramirez, 1997). Globalization of religious life needs to be understood in this sense. This worldwide flow raises questions of “What is the purpose of life?”, “How should we understand Islam?”, and “Why we need to change our daily life according to religion?”. Media institutions which belong to immigrants contribute to

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<sup>98</sup> See more at: <http://ixlos.org/>

<sup>99</sup> Registon. We have Islamic cultural internet channel. We've been broadcasting over the internet for a few months now. We make programs in both religious, cultural and social theme. Both in Uzbekistan and in Turkey and all over the world, our Uzbeks are now very satisfied.

produce and shape global culture about the meaning and daily life via reaching a lot of people both locally and globally: “İnsan ilk önce inancına bağlıdır. Yaşamaktan bir maksadımız olmalı. Bildiğimiz az bir şey olsa dahi onları insanlara bildirmek, başkalarına ulaşmak... Burada da böyle bir imkan sağlandığı için, sadece bir kişiyle değil bir ekiple ve kurumsal olarak, o sebeple hiç tereddüt etmeden bu yolu seçtik.”<sup>100</sup> (İkbal)

At the same time, preparing Islamic videos and broadcasting itself is seen as a religious practice by Uzbek religious masters. By this way, it becomes transnational religious activity and migrants stay connected to their homeland society, most especially to the public in Uzbekistan. Registon channel functions as a global religious foundation in ways that allow immigrants to maintain ties to their sending country (Levitt, 2004: 413). Religious education is now given through social media and feedbacks come from Uzbek speakers on the internet.

Tabii ki bu proje eğitim için. Bizim temel gayemiz en büyük maksadımız eğitim. Niye? Çünkü her şey eğitime bağlı. Biz yurdumuzun ayağa kalkmasını istiyoruz. Yurdumuzun çok az zaman içerisinde hem iktisadi, hem siyasi, hem askeri her türlü güçlü bir ülkeye dönüşmesini istiyoruz. Onun için de çıkılacak yol sadece eğitimidir. Biz, benim şahsım ve benim etrafımdaki ekip bu kanaatteyiz ki eğitimden başka türlü bizim çıkış yolumuz yok.<sup>101</sup> (Taha Abdullah)

Uzbek speakers are not only live in Uzbekistan. Most of them are in Uzbekistan but some are all over Turkestan, Central Asia. There are also many people around the world who know the Uzbek language. No one has to be Uzbek ethnically to watch Registon TV, any person who knows the Uzbek language can benefit from this media service.

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<sup>100</sup> First, one depends on his belief. We must have a purpose of living. Even if there is a little thing we know, to inform them to people, to reach others... Because this opportunity is provided here, we chose this way (media) without hesitation, not only with one person but with a team and institutionally.

<sup>101</sup> Of course this project is for education. Our main goal is education. Why? Because everything depends on education. We want our country to stand up. We want our country to turn into a powerful country of all kinds, both economic, political and military. For this, the only way out is education. We, myself and the team around me, believe that we have no other way out of (Islamic) education.

Yani bizim gayemiz, şeyimiz o. İnsanlara dinini öğretmek. Özbek dilinde yayın yapmak. Sonradan Özbekistan içinde 35 milyon olsa, Kırgızistan'da da 2 milyon var. Kazakistan'da da var. Afganistan'da, Tacikistan'da, her yerde Özbek var. Özbekçe bilen de çok Özbek asıllı olmayan. Sonradan Uygurlar. Uygurlar yani bizim Uygurlarla anlaşmamız kolay. Tıpkı siz nasıl Azerilerle, Türkmenlerle konuşuyorsunuz öyle.<sup>102</sup> (Arif)

So far, Registon TV has about thirty thousand followers. In five months, the channel received several million likes and three million views in total. It started a little weak at first, but now it is widely known. Sometimes, interesting feedbacks and questions are coming for the QA (question-answer) program.

Mesela orda bize sorular geliyor programdan önce. Biz de cevapları hazırlayıp yayın yapıyoruz. Birisi soruyor: "Ben Japonya'da çalışıyorum. Bi odada beş kişi kalıyoruz. Onlar içki içiyorlar ben ise namaz kılıyorum. Onları namaza davet ettiğim zaman birileri beni sevmiyor birileri de korkuyor" diyor. Bakın namaz kılmaya Japonya'da korkuyor. Japonya'da namaz kılmaktan korkuyor adam. (Özbekistan'a) döndüğü zaman onu istihbarat tutar "neden namaz kıldın?" diye korkuyor adam.<sup>103</sup> (Arif)

There are generally Islamic lessons and talks in the channel such as the life of Prophet Muhammad, *hadith*<sup>104</sup>, *fatwa*<sup>105</sup>, and Quran reciting. Various Islamic issues are discussed in different tv programs. Islam is represented innovatively by this new media style. Tv and Internet all become sources of Islamic knowledge now (Karim, 2003: 136). What's more, classic textual sources of Islamic scholars are reread and reassessed in different contexts. Thanks to media facilities, these texts available to a wider constituency (Karim, 2003: 137). Classic religious sources and works are made available as possible for learning (Karim, 2003: 145). And so, audiences can pick, watch and listen whatever they

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<sup>102</sup> So it's our purpose, our thing. Teaching religion to people. Broadcasting in Uzbek language. Afterwards, there are 35 million (Uzbek) in Uzbekistan and 2 million in Kyrgyzstan. There are also in Kazakhstan. There are Uzbeks in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, in everywhere. Speaking Uzbek is also very common among non-Uzbek origin. Later Uighurs. Uighurs are easy to deal with. Just like how you talk to Azerbaijanis and Turkmen.

<sup>103</sup> For example, questions come before the program. We prepare the answers and broadcast. Someone asks: "I work in Japan. We are five people in a room. They drink and I pray. Someone doesn't like me when I invite them to pray, and some people are scared." Look, he's afraid to pray in Japan. He's afraid to pray (even) in Japan. When he returns to Uzbekistan, he fears that the intelligence keeps him and ask him "why did you pray?"

<sup>104</sup> Actions, words and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad in an inscriptive format.

<sup>105</sup> A legal decision according to Islamic law given by a qualified Islamic scholar, mufti or imam.

want or wonder in the visual media format. Islam becomes something which could be represented and open to a public discussion without any prohibition (Eickelman, 1989). In short, Islamic knowledge started to become “commodified” or “objectified” that is available for public interest and debate. This effort of transposition of Islamic studies is seen necessary and needful to teach the minimum level of Islam: “Temel hedef... Bakın insanlara düzgün olan, yani aşırı değil, mutedil olan İslam’ı anlatmak. Sonradan insanlara biz diyoruz ki, farz-ı ayn diyoruz farz-ı ayn, insanlara farz-ı ayn olan ilimleri sağlamak.”<sup>106</sup> (Arif). “Bu da öyle yani. Yani millete öğretmek yani. Sadece müsülmanlığını öğretmek.”<sup>107</sup>

### (Şevket)

Moreover, there are different kinds of programmes in Registon Tv such as Turkish and Uzbek food recipes, presentation of Istanbul, Uzbek culture and decency. In my unofficial talks in the data collection process, Uzbek scholars said to me that they want to make interviews with Turkish scholars but could not arrange that. They want to organize joint events with other Uzbek immigrants and different local communities. They seek different organizations to invite their representatives to speak and have a talk on particular issues in broadcasting. While protecting their identity and belongings for not to be assimilated, Uzbeks want to learn, to open up, to be recognized and increase their legitimacy both in host society of Turkey and in sending the country of Uzbekistan.

As well, the immigrant Uzbek community tries to produce “a reverse missionary movement” for sending countries as well as Levitt describe for different case and groups (2004: 414). Through new media and online madrasah project, which is not ready yet, it is aimed that multiple levels of links reproduced and consolidated between Uzbek community in Istanbul and Uzbek language speakers all around the world, especially various communities in Central Asia. Non-Islamic faiths are spreading around fastly in

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<sup>106</sup> “The main goal... Look, to explain people, what is proper, not excessive, moderate Islam. Then we say to people, we call it is obligatory, it is obligatory, to provide people requisite (Islamic) sciences.

<sup>107</sup> So this is. To teach people. Just teaching their muslimism.

Turkestan area for different reasons like limited numbers of Islamic institutions in education and missionary works of Christians.

Asgari seviyede olsa yeter. Yani insanlar da bu da yok şimdi. Şimdi meselen Hristiyan olan Özbekler var. Kazaklardan olan çok. Kazaklar, ben şeyde, ne diyordunuz, sayma var ya sayma. Sayma yaparlar ya devletler. He evet, nüfus sayımı. Sayıma göre Kazak ilinden sene 2000'de, 2000-2001 arası 250 bin Hristiyan olan vardı. Evet. Yani Kazakistan'da böyle Hristiyanlık yayan şeyler, misyonerler, çok çok! Bunlar parayla geliyor. Özbekistan'da da varlar. Ama Özbekistan kapalı olduğu için biraz daha az. Kolay kolay misyonerlik yapamıyorlar orda. Kazakistan gibi değil.<sup>108</sup> **(Arif)**

On the other side, online madrasah program will be opened by the same staff of *domla* when it is ready. It will be named as Ebu Hanife İslami Akademiyası. In addition to Registon Tv project, this online academy will boost globalization of religious life. It is a unique Islamic project beyond borders and limits. People who are Uzbek language speakers can join it all around the world. They just need an internet connection and qualification in order to get the application. It is an electronic online madrasah format in which Islamic sciences and scholarship are thought.

Bir de hala bitmeyen bir çalışmamız var. O da Ebu Hanife İslami Akademiyası'nı kurmaya çalışıyoruz. O da bitme aşamasında. Birkaç ay içerisinde inşallah bunun da açılışını yapacağız. O da uzaktan eğitim yani internet üzerinden dünyanın neresinde olursa olsun bu akademiye yazılabilirler, girebilirler. Ve orda inşallah okuyup diplomalarını alabilecekleri bir imkan olacak.<sup>109</sup> **(Taha Abdullah)**

If it can be done, it will be the first distance education service in the Uzbek language. There is no similar or same format even in Uzbekistan. Ongoing educational courses and

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<sup>108</sup> It's a minimum. So people don't have this either. Now the issue is the Uzbeks, who are Christians. A lot of Kazakhs. Kazakhs, I'm, uh, counting, you know, counting. They count or states. Yeah, census. According to the census, there were 250 thousand Christians from the Kazakh province in the year of 2000 and between 2000-2001. Yeah. In other words, things like Christianity, missionaries, so many! These come with money. They also exist in Uzbekistan. But this is a bit less in Uzbekistan because it is closed country. They can't easily do missionary there. Not like Kazakhstan.

<sup>109</sup> We also have an unfinished work. We are also trying to establish the Islamic Academy of Abu Hanifa. It is in the last phase. In a few months, I hope we will open this. One can also be entered into this academy from anywhere in the world via internet. And I hope there will be an opportunity for them to study and get their diplomas.



curriculum are stable but do not have any transnational capability to reach needy people who want to learn Islam in a strict training without obstacles such as the nation-state, borders, official permissions, and other bureaucratic barriers. Devotion, Uzbek language, internet connection, and sufficient interest and level are enough. In this manner, immigrant Uzbek religious leaders in Başakşehir will address both the world's Muslims and the world's Uzbeks. This global educational service can be benefited as an online madrasah (“e-madrasah”) wherever people may be. Hereat, religious life, knowledge, and practices will be globalized in the transnational dimension. It is planned that a total of eight courses will be given: “Akademi hala başlamadı. Başladıği zaman bizde sekiz fen olacak. Biri Matematik, diğeri Özbek edebiyatı, diğeri altısı: Kur’an, hadis, Arap dili, adap-ahlak, fikh, akaid.”<sup>110</sup> (Arif)

So, academic knowledge is going to be given in online religious education. This is the last step of religious activity has been developed from classical madrasah organization. Abu Hanife Islamic Academy is another part of reverse missionary movement of Uzbek diaspora together with the media case, but still, it is just a plan, not a real establishment. Diaspora is not merely a society of minority, it is said that it represents “the leading edge of globalization” (Kokot, Waltraud & Tölölyan, 2004: 10). Immigrants have not just emigrated from their homeland to host lands bodily but practically, ideationally and transnationally. It is argued that many of migrants have retained a myth of return back to their native countries (Safran 1991; Chaliand and Rageau 1995; Cohen 1997). However, this assertion is not always valid and realistic. Immigrants do not always worry about getting full acceptance by the host society. Though they are committed to their survival as a distinct society, they have institutions which reflect something of a homeland culture and religion (Kokot, Waltraud & Tölölyan, 2004: 10). This is helpful for them to get full or temporal acceptance which they demand. They also somehow proceed to relate in some practical or symbolic way to their motherland. Over and above,

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<sup>110</sup> The (online) academy still hasn't started. When it starts, we'll have eight sciences. One is Mathematics, the other is Uzbek literature, the other six: Qur'an, hadith, Arabic language, morality, fiqh, belief/creed.

when Islam is reimagined and re-approached in a diasporic context, it is inevitable that various processes of cultural translation are set in motion (Karim, 2003: 146). The resultant harmonies and conglomerations give rise to new comments on Islam, identity, education, Muslim communities, immigration, adjustment, globalization, transnationalism, culture, and so on. All of these give rise to lasting making/doing of Islam and (re)formation of communities around it.

In conclusion, all titles and themes discussed so far in different chapters are subjects derived from the coding process through the grounded theory approach. Before to make a theoretical explanation, coding model or framework matrix, which is an operation to link categories and identify relationships between them, will be presented below:

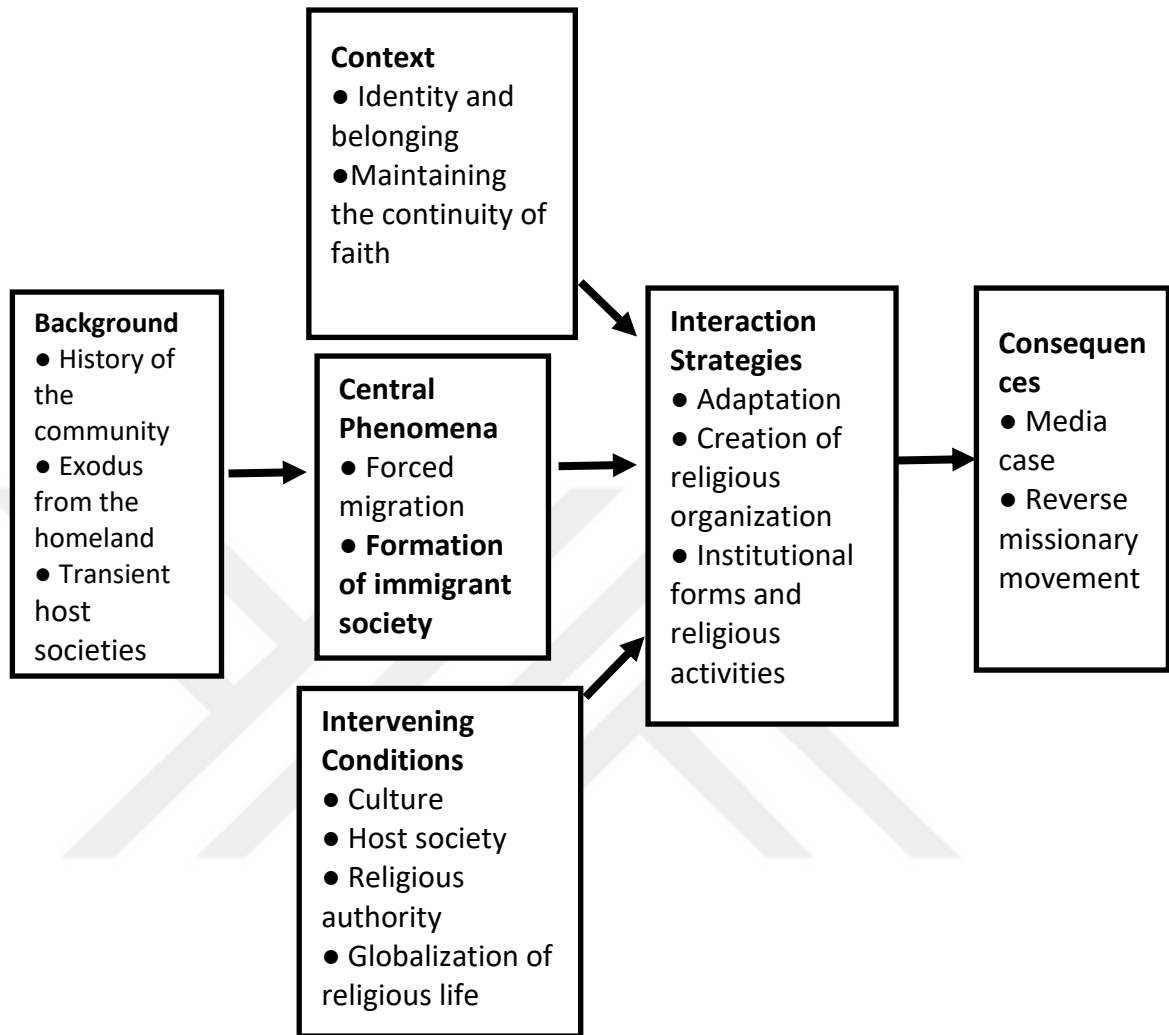


Figure 1.1. Framework Matrix

At the end of selective coding, “formation of immigrant society around madrasah” is identified as a central phenomenon. It is the primary event about which a set of interactions are directed and related. It is indeed where I start my research in the field, namely the madrasah. Nevertheless, I did not expect that to happen. Other weaves or web of relations are pulled around this core category. I started with the question of “what is the significance of madrasah in the life of immigrant Uzbek community in Istanbul?” and then, my study showed that *forced migration* issue is also in existence as a central theme. I thought that the madrasah would be the main institute, while the matter is not just a single institution. There are institutions, assemblies, organizations,

and activities. This is a needed activity that is (re)constructed by Uzbek immigrants from scratch within experienced nurture.

The background that influences the central phenomenon consists of the *history of the community*, the *exodus from the homeland* and *transient host societies*. At the bottom, the last two categories might be regarded as the total parts of the history of the community but causal conditions are more than these two. Therefore, the separate category is formed. *Adaptation, creation of the religious organization and institutional forms & religious activities* are conceptualized as interaction strategies in which current tactics by immigrant Muslim Uzbeks, who live in Istanbul, are not static but purposeful. They mobilize with their own agencies. They develop themselves in transnational scope. Strategies of adaptation and creation of religious organization are located in the special context of *identity* and *belonging*. The other context of *maintaining the continuity of faith* is clarified for institutional forms and religious activities. Categories of *culture, host society, religious authority* and *globalization of religious life* are intervening conditions which formalize, restrain or promote action strategies that take place in these contexts. In findings, the title was not opened as an extra chapter for culture and religious authority because they are weak with regards to the content. They are like sub-categories by comparison with the host society and globalization of religious life. Alternatively, they are mentioned in different parts of findings from place to place. When it comes to outcomes of interactions, *media case*, and *reverse missionary movement* are seen. In point of fact, the reverse missionary movement contains media case and academy plan. The online academy did not become a fact yet. Due to this, it is not conceptualized and reverse missionary movement is categorized to include both of them.

Consequently, the formation of society around madrasah is not a simple community building. It is a mobilization of immigrant actors affiliated with a particular diaspora within their own agencies. Muslim Uzbeks in Başakşehir are part of the transnational

sphere between sending and receiving countries. They both maintain this fluid-structure and form part of it. They are like a social movement and this movement includes also the media. After adaptation to Istanbul and the creation of the religious organization, which is a bit similar to the congregation, institutional forms and religious activities have the main role for consequences. These results of media and reverse missionary movement have a transnational impact on interaction strategies. So, globalization of religious life cyclically conditions institutions, associations, assemblies, practices, activities, and discourses around them. In this manner, media incident, online madrasah draft, and reverse missionary movement interrelate with transnationalism and globalization of religious life circuitously.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CONCLUSION**

This thesis aims to examine the formation of immigrant Uzbek community and (re)created socio-religious life around religious institution/organization in Istanbul. Başakşehir is taken as the field of research, and the focus group is specified as one part of Uzbek diaspora. Importance of madrasah as a religious institute for Uzbeks is the main point of the study. At the end of 2016, madrasahs belong to immigrant Uzbeks in Zeytinburnu were closed by the state due to security concerns. With the credentials of Uzbeks there, my adventure has continued towards Başakşehir district.

Studies in religion and immigration contexts are more than ever in the world. Literature in Turkey is weak in this sense. Muslim minorities and ethnoreligious groups like Uzbek immigrants are not taken seriously. Nowadays, the focus group is migrants from Syria. However, forced migration of Uzbek communities is an older event than that. Also, religious effects, adjustment, and belonging issues, global mobilization of transnational organizations are a lack of analyses on forced migration. Another subject is that academic and non-academic works on madrasah, as a religious, educational and social establishment, are mostly about local madrasahs in the north and east Anatolia. They are often studied in terms of their historical backgrounds, but not of the social side. This study is more phenomenological than being historic. Actually, I tried to reveal socio-religious relations, motivation sources, past experience, identity and community formations, expectations, goals, structures, practices, discourses, and interactions in the Uzbek diaspora in Başakşehir without bias as much as possible, since I saw a gap in this research area and context.

Eight potentially pertinent and intercepted literature researchs are applied in this thesis: Immigration and religion, forced migration, religious institution and immigration,

transnationalism and diaspora, Soviets and religious activities, migrations to Turkey and related studies in Turkey. In the literature review, it is seen that just a few works are directly related to our study, and the most relevant ones are done in Turkey. However, studies made in Turkey are lack of grounded theory approach; of diasporic and transnational context as opposed to the foreign works of literature. When viewed from this aspect, the research subject and its scope are still untouched in Turkish academic sphere.

Concepts of *transnationalism* and *diaspora* discussed in the relevant heading of the literature review. They are elaborated as reflective ideas that are helpful to make sense of emergent case and theory from the field data. Both are not used to conceive conceptual framework beforehand to analyze collected data, but to project results and to make them meaningful in the light of the literature. The subject is approached via the grounded theory method. Since the current method is inductive, transnationalism and diaspora cannot be taken as a pre-conceived theoretical or conceptual framework to explain or interpret findings. They are descriptive notions to place the research in a specific context. While transnationalism or transnational can be identified as social operation and globalization which pass over its locality or birthplace, especially in the context of religious life, diaspora is defined as an immigrant congregation or united congregations and religious institutes belonging to societies/groups of engagement, and thus, the ground of change.

Research questions, fieldwork methods and ways of analysis are mentioned in the methodology. The qualitative investigation is performed in Başakşehir, Istanbul. It is field research in which what we sustain, particularly suited to authenticating social life as a process, as emergent meanings are erected in and through social interaction (Blumer, 1969). The essential research question is “*what is the social significance of Uzbek madrasahs in Istanbul in the immigration and community experience of the Uzbek Muslims?*”

To collect data, semi-structured interviews are done with six Uzbek religious teachers (domla) and one leader of Uzbek diaspora. The purposive sampling method is preferred instead of theoretical sampling because of certain limitations and lack of possibilities in terms of the focused group. Fieldnotes are also taken, and very restricted participant observation is done. Because their contribution to collected data is so limited, they are not mentioned above in detail. To analyze data, narrative analysis, textual analysis, and coding are utilized within the grounded theory method. Collected narratives are associated with relevant texts and other sources to reveal experiences, views, and meanings of respondents. Coding and systematic comparison of collected data are inevitable for grounded theory work. It is based on the understanding of symbolic interactionism. Systematic application of grounded theory methods will progressively incline towards more abstract analytic levels (Charmaz, 1983). By this way, backgrounds of phenomena, central phenomenon, interaction strategies derived from the phenomenon, contexts, intervening conditions and implications of these strategies are achieved via inductive conceptualization and categorization within open, axial and selective coding processes. In this study, grounded theory approach opened the way not from theory to data, but from (collected) data to (emergent) theory.

When it comes to findings, causal conditions come to the forefront immediately. When Soviet Russia was established, a span of independence occurred in Turkestan but lasted a short time. First but very spontaneous immigrations done from Central Asia to Turkey and to Europe by Uzbek students and political leaders. The second wave of Uzbek immigration occurred during and after the Second World War from Germany to Turkey by Turkestan legions. The third phase was come after the 1980s, in the time of Kenan Evren. The last and on-going Uzbek immigration started at the end of the 90s until today. Fourth time is the biggest one. Uzbeks from our focus group came to Turkey after 2010. Their escape from the homeland, specifically from Uzbekistan and generally from Central Asia (because of mixed ethnic diffusion in the region), caused mostly by two factors: Oppression on religious life, faith and practices, and economic hardships. There are other



reasons in that such as being political dissident, illegal jobs and healthcare needs. Before coming to Turkey, some Uzbek immigrants stopped over transient host countries like Saudi Arabia or India for a length of time. Most of Uzbeks who participated in the interviews of the study stayed in different Arab countries. Also, some Uzbek immigrants do not see Turkey as the last stop because they want to pass to Europe on Turkey.

After the target group came to Istanbul, most of them did buy or rent a house from Kayaşehir quarter in Başakşehir, because prices were very low back then. Municipal employees and neighbors voluntarily assisted immigrant Uzbeks, and that made their adaptation easier. Then, Uzbeks were allowed to open the Quran course in the basement of Hz. Hüseyin Camii in Kayaşehir. They were just seeking to give religious education to their children, but they gained more favor in the eyes of people than their expectations. Therefore, the Uzbeks started to come from abroad and began to settle in that region. Not only Uzbeks but also Turkish citizens from different ethnic roots also started to send their children to Uzbeks' course. As the number of children and demands increase, an old and cheap building in Kayaşehir was purchased by Uzbek immigrants and then, madrasah program has started for both male and female students. Furthermore, Orta Asya Eğitim ve Kültür Derneği (Central Asia Education and Culture Association) was opened at the center of Kayaşehir. Uzbeks and different ethnic groups, such as Arabs, Caucasians, etc, from all over the world began to immigrate to Başakşehir region in order to enjoy qualified Islamic education in madrasahs opened by immigrant Uzbeks. The dominant language in training was the Uzbek language. If we look at the foundation of this migration, it is seen that there are economic and ethical concerns such as not being able to raise children well and not providing sufficient information about language and religion (Bıçakçı, 1996). Later on, Orta Asya Eğitim-Der started to create ties with Uluslararası Türkistanlılar Dayanışma Derneği which is the center of Uzbek diaspora in Istanbul. Herewith, Uzbek community in Başakşehir became a part of Uzbek diaspora and completed to create a transnational religious organization via its own religious, social and educational institutions. One of the underlying reasons for this coming together is

that new migrants have a desire to achieve legitimacy in their new place while maintaining the cultural and religious principles from their societies of origin (Warner and Wittner, 1998).

Madrasah project and religious activities made a contribution to adaptation period, identity formation and belonging problems of Uzbek newcomers. Immigrants from many different places have had to adopt already founded organizational forms which have supported them to negotiate the transition from their socially marginal position as newcomers to a position of full inclusion in their new host society while retaining essential cultural practices from their old ones (Warner & Wittner, 1998). Religious education and institutions are one of these substantial cultural units in Uzbek society. While migration scholars now normally acknowledge the saliency of migrants' economic, social and political transnational activities, we have largely overlooked the ways in which (religious) identities and practices also enable migrants to maintain memberships in multiple locations (Levitt, 2003). It was already an advantage of the partnership of religion, language, and culture with Turkish citizens for Uzbeks. On top of that, when they live their religious life comfortably and live in safety with their families, they accepted Turkey as their second homeland. All immigrants live transnational lives not to perpetrate atrocities but to obtain something better for themselves and for their families (Levitt, 2007).

Başakşehir turned into a multi-centered place ethnically and educationally, but not limited to this, the district is opened up to the world by different ethnoreligious groups and became globalized. Arab, Chechen and Uzbek immigrants started to give transnational educational services in their official schools, associations and unofficial institutional forms such as madrasah, kindergarten and Quran course. These are kinds of the congregational site not only as a place of worship but as a site where the group is reconstituting itself and its ideologies (Warner & Wittner, 1998). The identity formation, religious activities or practices has continued within these different organizations.

However, there is an outstanding figure of *domla* in Uzbek culture. *Domla* means religious teacher (hodja). Without him, it is impossible to create an educational institute like madrasah or to start any religious activities, because he has the Islamic sciences and knowledge. Thus, *domla* plays a very crucial role in Uzbek community for transmission of Islam to new generations/youth.

Without religious teachers, it is nearly impossible to maintain the continuity of the Islamic faith in the diaspora. It is understandable that immigrants show so much interest in madrasahs to reconstitute a communal life, to live together as an ethnic group, immigrants have built-in exact and revealing terms the key institutions of their native land and its ancestral but ever-changing social order. To reconstitute one's way of life is to establish, reinvent such as specific institutions (Klass, 1961). Yet, religious leaders are important as well as a madrasah, but sometimes they decide to educate people individually without any religious institution or form like madrasah. Occasionally, institutions and processes are portrayed as if they were unconnected to any locality, in fact, they are rooted in particular territories but also transcend their borders (Levitt, 2007). In the current atmosphere, Uzbek diaspora in Başakşehir initiated a Youtube channel, namely Registon Tv. This media case enables Uzbek religious leaders to call out to all people in the world who know the Uzbek language. There are various shows on Islam, Islamic sciences and Uzbek culture. Religious activities in madrasahs are fell at a low level and Uzbek hodjas devote themselves much more to social media facilities. The institutional ties that migration generates and that reinforce and are reinforced by the already-global aspect of religious life, convert religion into a powerful, unexplored site of transnational belonging. The extended and negotiated transnational religious organizations allow immigrants to stay connected to their sending communities (Levitt, 2004). Without any border and limit, religious speech and practices have global effects now. The religious life of Uzbek immigrants are globalized and this also affects action strategies of the Uzbek community in Başakşehir. These strategies have led to the idea of another transnational, world-wide project. The immigrant *domla* group is preparing

online madrasah program which will run on the internet. It will be called as Ebu Hanife Islami Akademiyası (Abu Hanifa Islamic Academy). Hereby, most of the people lack Islamic knowledge will access Islamic sciences and certificate at the end. Together with Registon Tv, Immigrant Uzbeks see this new project as a reverse missionary movement, especially for Uzbekistan, highly effective at no cost. Religion has never obeyed ethnic or political boundaries (Levitt, 2007). Because of limited possibilities to get Islamic education and missionary movements of Christians in Uzbekistan, these two projects will be helpful to teach Uzbek public what Islam and what ancient Uzbek culture is. Immigrant Uzbeks believe that social change can just be achieved via individual change. So, individuals should recognize God and his religion by the help of wisdom.

Immigrants bring a much broader understanding of what religion is and where to find it to the table (Levitt, 2007). This new result will also improve globalization of religious life for immigrant Uzbeks, folks in Central Asia and people from different ethnicities in different countries. Global religious institutions, which are a locus where globally diffused models of social organization, form the transnational migration experience (Levitt, 2004). Media case and the new electronic madrasah plan are results of interaction strategies of immigrant Uzbeks in Başakşehir. The biggest change that immigrant Muslim Uzbek community has made to adapt themselves to the new foreign environment (Başakşehir, Istanbul), then, has been in the increasingly wide-ranging and professionalized role of its religious leader (Warner & Wittner, 1998). All of these consequences are locally and globally effective for many diverse immigrant people and for local groups and residents in different countries. Globalization of religious life is both the result of the mobilization of Uzbek immigrants by their own agency and one of the intervening conditions of the interaction strategies of the Uzbek community.

To sum up the overall discussion:

1. Causal Conditions: History of the community, Exodus from the homeland and Transient host societies
2. Central Phenomena (led by causal conditions): Forced migration, “Formation of society around madrasah”
3. Interaction Strategies (caused by central phenomena): Adaptation, Institutional forms and religious activities and Creation of religious organization
4. Context (of interaction strategies): Identity and belonging, Maintaining the continuity of faith
5. Intervening Conditions (of interaction strategies): Culture, Host society, Religious authority, Globalization of religious life
6. Consequences (caused by interaction strategies): Media case, Reverse missionary movement

In order to present the aforementioned categories, the grounded theory method is applied to start from open coding, then proceeding with axial coding, and ultimately finalized with selective (theoretical) coding.

#### **4.1. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

There were several limitations to this study as one can imagine. I could be able to reach the research group very much easier than a non-Muslim would probably do; attending prayer together with Uzbek for instance. However, as a researcher, I know that there were limitations for me to gather data from female members of the Uzbek community.

I could not interview with any woman or *atunay* (female religious teacher) from Uzbek diaspora. I got some information from males but it was not possible because of strict relations in “the birds and the bees”. In this aspect, the research is male-dominated.

Second, I could not do theoretical sampling as it is supposed to be in a grounded theory method. In theoretical sampling, the researcher can continually adjust the control of data collection to ensure the data’s relevance to the emerging theory (Glaser & Holton, 2004). However, I could just move through emerging conceptual thought within the coding process because I had to do purposive sampling. It was almost impossible for me to act according to the development of the data analysis step by step and find proper respondents according to this. Hence, I acted with as much information as I could find from informants. Finding participants was a problem in itself. For that reason, I was able to make an interview with a few people (seven in number).

Thirdly, I tried to reflect all the datum, narrative, knowledge, etc I gathered from people and various written sources inclusively, but I had a lot of difficulty in this. Because of Uzbek immigrants are tight-lipped, I’ve had trouble extracting reliable, valid data concerning the issue from lots of off-topic information. Sometimes, they even gave wrong or insufficient information deliberately. Uzbek society in Istanbul is a little tight-knit community because of the high value placed on keeping conflicts and difficulties “in the family” (Warner & Wittner, 1998). This is understandable because of Uzbeks’ past experience, traumas caused by the state cruelty in Uzbekistan. Anyone who wants to make a research on them should keep this in mind and be careful, and confirm the information he/she has collected from different sources. Questions should be asked boldly and repeatedly if necessary.

I will conclude with a few tips about the method and then some advice on the subject. Researchers try to be at the center of social web of what they search for. Field researchers should seek to be close to other agents in order to understand their ways of

life, understanding, experience, discourse, practices and of attributed meanings. If we want to meet with people in the field and gain their trust, we must also share their problems and help them in order to get closer. Researchers should not think that everything always has to rely on mutual interest. Moreover, “doing” ethnographic fieldwork is not completely distinct or separate from “writing” (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). But rather, they are directly related, mutually constitutive and concomitant activities. Thus, one must be careful in both parts of the research process. The writing itself is an interpretive process and the first step of textualizing. This textualization creates a world on the page and shapes the final text. Cases, occasions and happenings cannot be simply put into sentences. As a researcher, one must be sensitive in doing these “invisible” works.

One has to search organizations, ways of individuals and groups without supposing that they smoothly fit within the national case and conditions. They can be multiple kinds of cross-border relationships and phenomena. All experiences, processes, and structures are not comparable because they differ in style and level of strength. Diversities and contradictions are not insignificant. For instance, not all migrants are same in nation, ethnicity, belief, class, race and so on. Further, a study on “the local” also promote a transnational view (Levitt, 2007). Everyday lived experience in a particular place is driven to be linked with the larger social processes that penetrate it. Without making universalistic generalizations, one should notice that local agency, knowledge, and cultural practices still matter. A transnational perspective starts with a world that is borderless and boundaryless and then discovers what kind of limits and boundaries exist, and why and how they arise in specific periods and places (Levitt, 2007). It tries hard to not underline the local or the global but to hold these two social spheres, along with everything among both, in plentiful intercourse with each other.

Bıçakçı (1996) claims that Uzbek immigrants, who could not find what they seek in Turkey, prefer to do outward migration from Turkey to Saudi Arabia and America. He

also asserts that Uzbeks who are settled outside of Turkey (in short, other countries) better protect their identity (1996). These two arguments are not proven truths yet. Further research can question one of these allegations and its reasons. Comparative studies can be done for these and similar topics. In any case, migration stories or immigrant narratives should not be reduced simply to tender spots between malefactors and superheroes. Researches on immigrants should help them to raise their voices and demonstrate how “the social” changes in the head.





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