Religious Identity and Integration of Armenians as an Ethnic Group in Germany

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ABSTRACT

Through overall developments and movements, migration has spread throughout the world, causing concurrence and amalgamation of heterogeneous and culturally different societies. Present day societies are culturally even more diverse: individuals live in numerous cultures, speak in various languages, and have different identities. Despite the fact that the movement of Armenians previously existed in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and Armenians have made numerous networks around the world, the considerable flow of relocation and the modern term of the Armenian Diaspora has developed because of the First World War after the Armenian Genocide in 1915, more explicitly, it comprises mostly individuals who survived the Armenian Genocide. The current research investigates the lives of the Armenian Diaspora in Germany, more specifically, the ones that have moved to Germany from Armenia, Iran, and Turkey. Studying the lives of the Armenian ethnic group in a host society, it discusses the issues of living in heterogeneous societies and cultures, the role that religion plays in the migration and integration context, affiliation and attachment to various cultures, hybrid cultural, religious and social identities: how Armenians perceive themselves and different societies in Germany, what it feels like to be away from their homeland and live in various cultures simultaneously, to what cultures they have a sense of belonging, how they endeavour to retain their ethnic, religious, and cultural identities, what assists them in the integration process, and how they assess their lives in Germany.

The research applies three methods: participant observation, semi-structured interview and Stefan Huber's questionnaire "The Centrality of Religiosity Scale". Religion plays a vital role in most of the interviewees' lives, depending on various circumstances, such as a spiritual nourishment, a psychological support, closeness to one's ethnicity or ethnic group, access to the host society, etc. According to the current research results, the Armenian interviewees in Germany perceive religion as an inseparable part of their culture, since their religious, ethnic, and cultural identities are intertwined and regarded as an inseparable unit: religious identity – Christian, ethnic identity – Armenian, cultural identity – customs and traditions. Christianity is perceived and practiced by the Armenian interviewees as a 'cultural religion' for the following reasons. They consider themselves to be Christians, but are not actively engaged in religious rituals or prayers. Christianity played an important role in the history of Armenians since it helped them preserve their ethnic identity and culture throughout history. Christianity has become an inseparable part of their culture since many Armenian customs and traditions are tightly connected to it and play an important role in their ethnic, national, cultural and religious identities. Interestingly enough, even those, who consider themselves to be atheists, conceive Christianity as an indispensable part of the Armenian culture and identity.

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1. Introduction

I should like to see any power of the world destroy this race, this small tribe of unimportant people, whose history is ended, whose wars have all been fought and lost, whose structures have crumbled, whose literature is unread, whose music is unheard, whose prayers are no longer uttered. Go ahead, destroy this race. Let us say that it is 1915 again. There is war in the world. Destroy Armenia. See if you can do it. Send them from their homes into the desert. Let them have neither bread nor water. Burn their houses and their churches. See if they will not live again. See if they will not laugh again. See if the race will not live again when two of them meet in a beer parlor, twenty years later, and laugh, and speak in their tongue […].[1]

The indigenous population of the Republic of Armenia is much smaller than the Armenian Diaspora living in numerous countries of the world, and as William Saroyan[2], the author of the quote above, wrote back in 1936, the Armenians have created their small homelands in foreign lands on different continents. Saroyan's life very much reminds of the lives of the Armenian Diaspora worldwide: born elsewhere but tightly connected with their home country. Saroyan was born in Fresno, California in 1908 in an Armenian family that migrated to Fresno from Turkey in 1905. He was always in touch with Armenia, and in his story "First Visit to Armenia" he mentions that he started visiting Armenia as soon as he could earn enough money.

The cornerstone of the present research is the study of the lives of the Armenian Diaspora in Germany, more particularly, the ones that have migrated to Germany from Armenia, Iran, and Turkey[3]. Examining the lives of the Armenian ethnic group in a majority society, it revolves around the issues of living in hybrid cultures, the role of religion in the migration context, sense of belonging, ethnic, religious and cultural identities, integration in the host country: how Armenians perceive themselves and other cultures in Germany, what it feels like to be away from their home country and live in two or several cultures at the same time, to what culture or cultures particularly they have a sense of belonging, how they retain their religious, cultural and ethnic identities, what role religion plays in their lives, what helps or hinders their integration process, and how they evaluate their lives in Germany.

1.1. The Outlook and Perspectives of the Research

Through worldwide movements and relocations, migration has spread all over the world, resulting in cohabitation and coexistence of heterogeneous and culturally diverse societies. Modern societies are culturally even more diverse: people live in many cultures, master several languages, and have

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[1] Saroyan, W. (1936): *Inhale & Exhale*. New York: Random House, pp. 437–38.

[2] William Saroyan – (31.08.1908–18.05.1981) an Armenian-American playwright, novelist, short story writer.

[3] The preliminary aim of the research has been to involve Armenians from various regions that have migrated to Germany at least 10 years ago. As a result of encountering mostly Armenians from Armenia, Iran and Turkey in the Armenian communities in Germany, as well as finding volunteers among those groups to participate in the research, the research group involves only Armenians from the above-mentioned regions.

various identities[4]. The concept "super-diversity"[5] denotes the heterogeneity of the word migrant, which encloses not only people of different cultural backgrounds but various and manifold migration stories, biographies, life experiences. In connection with this, a vast number of concepts, such as migration, globalisation, hybridisation, diaspora, religion, culture, identity, ethnicity, integration, majority and minority societies are extensively investigated and discussed in many contexts in all social sciences worldwide, as well as engaging other spheres like politics, church, etc. The above-mentioned concepts are considered in the research in connection with the life experiences of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany.

Like many other nations, Armenians are also spread all over the world: they can be found anywhere: "We are everywhere" is considered to be a half-serious, half playful joke, feeling proud to be everywhere, at the same time being sad, remembering the history and the reason of being away from their homeland. Armenians' migration can be related to several reasons, among them genocide, deportation, political and religious oppression, war, economic disadvantage, education, crises, social conflicts, and natural disasters[6]. Even though the migration of Armenians already existed in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, and Armenians have created many communities worldwide, the greatest flow of migration and the modern term of the Armenian Diaspora per se started to establish as a result of the First World War after the Armenian Genocide in 1915, more specifically, it consisted mostly of people who survived the Armenian Genocide. Consequently, the establishment of the Armenian Diaspora in Germany is the result of three historical events, namely, the Armenian Genocide survivors from 1920-1940, the migration of Armenians from Turkey, Lebanon, Iran and Syria from 1960 to 1970, and the migration from the Republic of Armenia and the Post-Soviet countries in the 1990s[7].

As a result of migration and globalisation, people of various cultures, languages, and religions live together in the same environment. In these societies, one can differentiate between majority society culture and different minority cultures, that have been living together for many years. Minority groups, being in constant and close social interaction with the majority culture and other cultures within it, through school and later on through other institutions, voluntarily and involuntarily acquire new features, characteristics, and lifestyles, at the same time transferring some of their particular cultural attributes to the majority society.

The coexistence of culturally plural societies has created a hybrid world. The concept of hybridisation is used with the implication of mixed and blended cultural experiences. Cultural hybridisation has been considered in the discourse of migration, putting emphasis on ethnic

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[4] See Berry, J.W. (2011): "Integration and Multiculturalism: Ways towards Social Solidarity". *Papers on Social Representations*, Volume 20, 2.1–2.21, p. 2.2.

[5] Vertovec, S. (2007): "Super-Diversity and its Implications". *Ethnic and Racial Studies 30*, 6, pp. 1024–1054.

[6] See Karakashian, M., Poghosyan, G. (2003): *Armenian Migration and a Diaspora: A Way of Life.* In Adler, L.L., Gielen, U.P.. (2003): *Migration, Immigration and Emigration in International Perspective.* Westport, Conn.: Praeger, p. 239.

[7] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier in Deutschland: Geschichte und Gegenwart.* Vortrag in Erfurt, pp. 30-32.

identities (Bhabha H., Appadurai A., Hall S., Said E.), and viewing hybridisation as a migration melange, where second-generation migrants demonstrate various cultural features, including the ethnic culture and the culture of the resident society[8], and as a result, nations are all considered to be cultural hybrids[9], and these culturally mixed experiences create hybrid identities[10].

As a result of the coexistence of heterogeneous societies, people end up having hybrid identities which are more strongly and vividly demonstrated among minority groups who can be more aware of their hybrid identities than other strata of the society since they are representatives of several cultures at the same time[11]. Moreover, awareness of hybrid identities can be more perceivable among migrants who have moved to a current destination from other countries than their own homeland or were born in a foreign land and grew up in a family from a minority culture that itself has lived in another country than its homeland before arriving in the destination country.

Since globalisation and hybridisation denote positive and negative aspects, correspondingly, migrants go through various experiences, demonstrating diverse cultural features, lifestyles, and behaviour. Depending on the circumstances of how migrants perceive and experience globalisation and cultural hybridisation, some mix with the majority culture without hesitation, others tend to adhere to their roots. In both cases, the historical background, social and religious aspects, as well as the current relationship between the majority and minority cultures should be taken into consideration: if the minority culture is accepted and appreciated by the majority culture, the former may tend to blend with the latter, and in the opposite case, the former may choose to stick to its own culture. Whether migrants adhere to their culture or strive to merge into the majority culture, in both cases, they cannot avoid having hybrid identities, as a result of living in different cultural and social contexts. People usually have as many identities as there are social groups that they belong to. Hence, migrants not only have personal, role and group, but also mixed identities, which comprise their ethnic identity, as well as the identity of the country of residence, which can also be referred to as "hyphenated identities"[12]. There are numerous identities in one person, and a certain identity may prevail under different circumstances and in various situations. The numerous identities can be compared to a network of dispositions which are not stable but are subject to a constant change[13], and "bicultural identity"[14] is inevitable, since people are connected not only to their local culture but the global culture as well.

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[8] See Pieterse, J.N. (1997): "Globalisation as Hybridisation". In Featherstone, M., Lash, S., Robertson, R. (eds.) (1997): *Global Modernities*, London: SAGE Publications, 45–68.

[9] See Hall, S. (1990): "Cultural Identity and Diaspora". In Rutherford, J., (ed.) (1990): *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

[10] See Bhabha, H. (1994): *The Location of Culture*. London, New York: Routledge.

[11] See Burke, P. (2009): *Cultural Hybridity.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

[12] Hutnik, N. (1991): *Ethnic Minority Identity: A Social Psychological Perspective.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 157.

[13] See Schäfer, H. W. (2015): *Identität als Netzwerk: Habitus, Sozialstruktur und religiöse Mobilisierung.* Wiesbaden: Springer.

[14] Hermans, H.J., Dimaggio, G. (2007): "Self, Identity, and Globalization in Times of Uncertainty: A Dialogical Analysis". *Review of General Psychology,* Vol. 11, No. 1, 31–61, p. 34.

In the context of the term globalisation, another term has emerged: localisation. In spite of the fact that both terms are considered to be mutually exclusive in the sense, that in case of localisation migrants adhere to their ethnic groups to protect themselves from globalisation, in reality, they are mutually inclusive since globalisation cannot exist without the local elements in it[15]. In this respect a new term has been introduced, glocalisation, which denotes the global aspects in the local[16]. In order to avoid negative aspects of globalisation and hybridisation, such as uncertainty, no sense of belonging, dissolution of values, great competition in all life spheres, etc., people with a migrant background usually seek contact with their ethnic communities, which are mostly located in social, cultural and religious institutions, where migrants have regular access and contact with other members of their ethnic group. In case an ethnic group tries to preserve its culture, ethnicity, and religion, has a dream homeland and always yearns to return there one day, it can be called a Diaspora[17]. Moreover, because of experiencing the negative aspects of living in hybrid cultures and having hybrid identities, migrants keep close to their religion, and through religion, they can be near their ethnic group and ethnic culture, and in this regard, religion can play an important role, since in ethnic and diasporic identities religion and religious structures are considered to be vital domains[18].

Notwithstanding the postulation that religion will lose its significance in the course of time, and societies will become more secular[19], the current situation in the world shows the opposite: religion plays a vital role in all the corners of the world, especially among migrants[20]. In case religion has been practiced since childhood, the child cannot avoid having a religious identity[21], since children usually adhere to their parents' religious faith and practice, and even though they might choose to be non-religious in their later adult life, their perception of life will differ from those who have been raised in a non-religious family[22]. The community can also play an important role in one's religious identity if a person esteems the community highly, and both share the same goals and perspectives.

Moreover, ethnic and religious identities can become stronger among minority groups: they become more aware of their cultural uniqueness or religiousness when compared with other cultures and religions, and as a result, their sense of belonging to their religion may sharpen. Moreover, for the Armenians living in the Republic of Armenia, issues with ethnicity and religion might not be as significant, as for the Armenians living in Diaspora, who are ethnic groups in different countries

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[15] See Hermans, H.J., et al. (2007): "Self".

[16] See Robertson, R. (1992): *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage.

[17] See Kokot, W., Tölölyan, Kh., Alfonso, C. (2006): *Diaspora, Identity and Religion: New directions in theory and research*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

[18] See Stepick, A. (2005): "God is Apparently Not Dead: The Obvious, the Emergent, and the Yet Still Unkown in Immigration and Religion". In Leonard, K.I., Stepick, A., Vasqeuz, M., Holdaway, J., (eds.) (2005): *Immigrant Faiths: Transforming Religious Life in America*. New York: Altamira Press, pp. 11–37.

[19] See Durkheim, E. (1957): *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

[20] See Stepick, A. (2005): "God".

[21] See Hall, M.C. (1996): *Identity, Religion and Values: Implications for Practitioners*. Washington, D.C.: Taylor & Francis.

[22] See Knudten, D.R. (1967): *The Sociology of Religion*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

worldwide. Religion can also be perceived as a cultural religion[23] when one identifies himself with a religious heritage but does not participate in religious rituals or consider himself a strong believer, since every group can have a religion but not believe in God or supernatural powers, and religious belief is considered to be more a social or cultural identification than an intellectual judgement[24]. In the research, the concept religion is considered from a cultural perspective, where migrants, more particularly, the Armenian ethnic group in Germany, perceives religion as an inseparable and indistinguishable part of their culture: ethnic, cultural and religious identities are closely bonded, and religious identity is considered to be an orienting and discernible part of the Armenians' ethnic identity. Moreover, in the framework of my research, religion is considered in both individual and social perspectives, where people adhere to religion as a personal practice, as well as concerning their ethnic group or other religious groups. The role of religion in the migration context can be related to such aspects, as psychological support in difficult situations, means of finding consolation and encouragement, the paradigm of coping, assistance with identity issues, creation of *home*. Religions usually move and have a dynamic nature, and as a result, go through hybrid processes and are practiced in diverse situations, as well as have a locative approach when they are practiced in particular contexts and environments[25].

In connection with the investigation of the migrants' lives in a majority society, many necessities arise to investigate issues related to their psychological, cultural, religious, socio-economic and political participation in the host country, since the opportunities or the circumstances under which migrants live differs from country to country: people can find a new abode in a host country, which is eager and ready to assist them, but this is not always the case: there is a great variety of different policies in different countries. Depending on the perception and the attitude of the host society towards migrants, the latter demonstrates a particular integration style. Integration styles are usually manifested by taking into consideration the migrants' attitude towards both their ethnic culture and the majority society culture, but whether migrants will eventually choose to stay inside or outside their ethnic group is based not only on their own preference and predisposition towards both cultures, but the attitude and disposition of the majority society towards migrants should also be taken into consideration. How does the Armenian ethnic minority group live in Germany? To what culture or cultures do Armenians in Germany have a sense of belonging? How secure and comfortably do they feel living in hybrid cultures, and how strong or weak is their ethnic and religious identity? Answers to these questions can be found on the following pages of the research in respective chapters and subchapters.

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[23] See Geertz, C. (1973): *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

[24] See Demerath, N.J. III (2001): *Crossing the Gods: World Religions and Worldly Politics*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, p. 108.

[25] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press.

1.2. State of the Art

The current research has been initiated with the aim of broadening and enriching the literature and information about Armenians in Germany and putting emphasis on other issues than the Armenian Genocide, namely, to investigate life experiences of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany, in view of their identities, sense of belonging, religion and integration. A vast amount of literature on the Armenian Genocide encompasses uncountable books, articles and discussions, written by German and non-Germans authors, that can be found in the libraries and in Internet, which include but are not limited to famous classical works and novels by Johannes Lepsius[26], Franz Werfel[27], Edgar Hilsenrath[28], etc. Notwithstanding the fact that the literature on the Armenian Genocide is immense, there are still modern writers and authors who continue writing about it.

On the other hand, the literature on the Armenian ethnic group in Germany is very limited. The most recent work on Armenians in Germany has been a research conducted by the sociologist Astghik Chaloyan[29], which investigates the transnational ties among the first and second generations of the Armenian diasporic group in Germany, namely, what transactional activities persist through generations, and how they influence their sense of belonging and identification.

A biographical book has been written by Haig Dolabdjian[30], whose father was Armenian and mother was German. Interestingly enough, the present research also touches the concept of mixed identities that the author ponders upon: who he actually is – an Armenian, who does not speak the Armenian language, or a German, who is quite often treated as a foreigner. Moreover, his father's biography also reminds of the lives of Armenians in Germany who migrated from another country, in this particular case, Turkey, and started his life anew: went to school without speaking German, later studied medicine, became a specialist, encountering many obstacles and difficulties in the process.

Detailed data on the Armenian migration to Germany and the current Armenian organisations and the Armenian Church in Germany can be found in the book of the historian Azat Ordukhanyan[31]. Caroline Thon[32] writes about the Armenian Diaspora in Hamburg, namely, how successful the

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[26] Lepsius, J. (1915): *Der Todesgang des armenischen Volkes: Bericht über das Schicksal des armenischen Volkes in der Türkei während des Weltkrieges*. Potsdam: Tempelverlag.
  – (1919): *Bericht über die Lage des armenischen Volkes in der Türkei*. Potsdam: Tempelverlag.
  – (1986): *Deutschland und Armenien 1914–1918: Sammlung diplomatischer Aktenstücke*. Bremen: Donat & Temmen.

[27] Werfel, F. (1933): *Die vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh*. Berlin, Wien, Leipzig: Zsolnay.

[28] Hilsenrath, E. (1989): *Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken*. München: Piper.

[29] Chaloyan, A. (2017): *Fluctuating Transnationalism: Social Formation and Reproduction among Armenians in Germany*. Wiesbaden: Springer.

[30] Dolabdjian, H. (2012): *Mein Vater, der Armenier: Eine Biographie*. Frankfurt, M.: Hay-Media-Verlag.

[31] Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier in Deutschland: Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Vortrag in Erfurt.

[32] Thon, C. (2012): *Armenians in Hamburg: an Ethnographic Exploration into the Relationship between Diaspora and Success*. Münster: LIT Verlag.

Armenians, living in Hamburg are. Tessa Hofmann[33] has written many books and articles on the history of Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora in Germany[34].

What is also very important is that in comparison to the Armenian Diaspora in the USA, France, Lebanon and Syria, the Armenian Diaspora in Germany is relatively young[35]. Moreover, it is important to note that the current research can be a great asset to the literature on the Armenian ethnic group not only in Germany but in other countries as well in several facets. *First*, it involves Armenians that have migrated to Germany from three different regions (Armenia, Iran, Turkey), and it is interesting how the three groups are similar and differ from each other. Moreover, the three groups entail first and second generations, i.e., Armenians who were born and have grown up in other countries before arriving in Germany, and Armenians who were born or were very young when they arrived in Germany. The research sheds light upon differences between the two generations in various aspects, concerning self-perceptions and self-categorisations, practice of religion, sense of belonging, integration, etc. *Second*, a new academic field is being researched in connection with the lives of the Armenians in Germany from the perspective of hybrid cultures, religious, ethnic and cultural identities, integration aspects. *Third*, from an ethnological perspective, this research contributes to the Armenian identity preservation as a minority group in a majority society: the number of Armenians in Germany is not small (approximately 50.000[36]), and the preservation of the ethnic identity is crucial for Armenians, at least, for some part. This research investigates whether the ethnic background of the Armenians in Germany plays a significant role to them, and what initiatives they take to remain Armenian. *Fourth*, from a religious perspective, it is compelling to investigate what role the religion plays in the lives of migrants. The current research demonstrates the role of religion in the lives of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany, according to their own narrations and stories about their own experiences in connection with religion. Plus, a questionnaire on the centrality of religiosity is used to bring more data into the field. *Fifth,* from a diasporic perspective, the research elucidates the sense of belonging and attachment to the homeland: whether it grows or weakens in the course of time, and whether the younger generations demonstrate strong diasporic identity and consciousness as their parents and grandparents. *Sixth*, from a migrational and societal perspective, the research can be a helpful tool for other countries engaged in the matter of migration and integration of minority groups, since it demonstrates what positive or negative evaluations the Armenian ethnic group members prescribe to the process of

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[33] Tessa Hofmann – Scientist in Slavic Studies, Armenian Studies, Migration sociology, Comparative Genocide Research.

[34] Hofmann, T. (1997a): *Annäherung an Armenien; Geschichte und Gegenwart*. München: Beck.
 —— (1997b): "Diaspora, Migration und Sprache: Am Beispiel der Armenier in Deutschland". Dum-Tragut, J. (ed.): *Die Armenische Sprache in der europäischen Diaspora*. Graz: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Uni. Graz, pp. 37–57.
 —— (2005): *Armenier in Berlin – Berlin und Armenien*. Berlin: Der Beauftragte des Senats von Berlin für Integration und Migration.
 —— (2011): "Kollektivgedächtnis und nationale Identität. Eine Studie aus und an Armenien". *ADK 4*, pp. 63–65.
 Hofmann, T., Wolfensberger, A. (2008): *Armenien: Stein um Stein*. Bremen: Ed. Temmen.

[35] See Dreusse M. (2008): *Die Armenische Diaspora in Deutschland: Ihr Beitrag zur Entwicklung Armeniens*. Eschborn: GTZ, p. 13.

[36] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier,* p. 25.

their integration, what hinders them from a successful integration, and what causes an unsuccessful or failed integration. The research also covers this gap, which will help develop special strategies that will make the integration process of Armenians and other minorities in majority societies easier and with fewer complications. *And the last but not least*, from a cultural and political perspective, Armenian culture awareness can expand in Germany, which will lead to the mutual contribution and support in political discourses.

1.3. The Methodological Framework of the Research

As already indicated above, the focus of attention of the present research is the lives of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany. A key point to take into consideration is the presence and consideration of the concepts hybrid cultures, diverse identities, sense of belonging, religion, integration in relation to the narrations of Armenians about their life experiences in Germany, i.e., how they live in different cultures, what role the religion plays in their identity preservation as an ethnic group, whether it becomes stronger or weaker in the course of time, and what helps or hinders the integration process. Among others, this research measures the religiosity levels of the participants, as well as focuses how they evaluate their lives in Germany as an indicator of integration into the majority society.

1.3.1. Research Objectives

The methodology of the research is primarily qualitative. It measures the levels of religiosity and different dimensions of integration of Armenians in Germany. The research answers the broad question: What are the religious, cultural and ethnic identities of Armenians, living in a different culture and society, and how integrated are they into the German society?

The religious and ethnic identities of Armenians are intertwined, since religion is mostly practiced as a "cultural religion"[37], when people identify themselves with a particular religion but are not involved in religious activities personally or publicly. The focal point of the concept religion in the research is connected to the understanding that religious identities are expressed through social and cultural standpoints, through various rituals and symbols. The research hypothesis is related to the concept of *cultural religion*, practiced by the Armenian ethnic group in Germany for various reasons, primarily to retain their ethnic identity. The hypothesis reads as follows:

> Religiosity of Armenians in Germany is not high: they rather take recourse to the forms of *cultural religion* to preserve their ethnic identity.

The hypothesis is followed by the following research questions and objectives: 1. <u>How do Armenians conceive of their identity or identities?</u> As an ethnic group in a majority society,

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[37] See Demerath, N.J. III (2001): *Crossing*.

Armenians in Germany demonstrate diverse identities that have been acquired as a consequence of living in heterogeneous social and cultural contexts (the mixture of their culture with other cultures in the majority society, including those of other minority groups living within it). The research demonstrates what identifications, self-perceptions, self-categorisations, sense of belonging to one or more cultures Armenians in Germany have. 2. <u>How do they perceive their ethnic background, and what initiatives do they take to preserve their ethnic identity?</u> Religious, ethnic and cultural identities help the migrants distinguish themselves from the majority society, and as a consequence preserve their ethnic identity. The research shows how the respondents from the Armenian ethnic group appreciate their ethnic background, and what initiatives they take to remain Armenian living in Germany. 3. <u>How do they evaluate the role of religion in their lives, and how religious they consider themselves?</u> The role of religion in the migration context is seen as a supportive tool not only in helping migrants distinguish themselves from the majority culture, but also in finding solace and comfort in times of crisis. The research reveals how the Armenians evaluate the role of religion in their lives, whether it helps or hinders their integration process. Moreover, people evaluate their religiosity levels differently. The research shows how religious the Armenians in Germany consider themselves, which is also double-checked by a questionnaire, which measures the centrality of religiosity levels. 4. <u>What do they recount or relate to as helpful or hindering factors in their integration process?</u> There are many factors that contribute to or hinder the integration process. The research demonstrates what Armenians in Germany consider contributions and encouragements vs. impediments and hindrances in the integration process, taking into consideration both the ethnic group members' attitude towards and perception of the majority society, and the attitude and perception of the majority society in relation to the ethnic group.

Throughout the analysis and based on the qualitative findings, an actor-oriented approach is pursued. One of the advantages of this approach is the possibility to give various explanations and answers to identical and similar situations, where "the differential patterns that arise are in part the joint creation of the actors themselves"[38].

1.3.2. Research Methods

Three methods are applied in the research: two of them are qualitative, one is quantitative.

Qualitative methods are the following:

- <u>Participant Observation</u>: general observation, constant communication, active engagement and involvement with particular members of the research group.
- <u>Interview</u>: semi-structured interview with a series of systematic questions on the three dimensions of integration: cultural (religion, culture, ethnicity, language), socio-economic and political roles.

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[38] Long, N. (2001): *Development Sociology: Actor Perspectives.* London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, p. 13.

Additionally a quantitative questionnaire is implemented to identify the centrality of religion for the actors:

- <u>Questionnaire</u>: the Centrality of Religiosity Scale[39] (intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice, religious experience), which measures the levels of religiosity of the participants[40].

1.3.2.1. Participant Observation

First of all, I would like to indicate that the observation of the Armenian communities in Germany has begun long before I have started doing this research: my great interest in the investigation of the lives of the Armenian ethnic group has been provoked by the observations in relation to their religious identity and integration levels. Armenians in Germany usually have community gatherings once or twice a month in churches, depending on what city the Armenian church is located: the gatherings and meetings can be on a weekly basis in case it is a big city, or there is an official Armenian community, where Armenians gather to participate in religious services held by Armenian priests on a regular basis. While attending such services, my observations have started resting on the assumption, that the level of religiosity is not very high among the Armenians in Germany, nevertheless, they are persistent in attending the church services. I was eager to find out the reason and the first motivation of attending the church: are they present with the purpose of participating in the religious practices or do they want to be among their ethnic group? Moreover, being in constant contact with some of the Armenian community members, I have made some observations connected with one's religiosity and integration levels: the more religious seemed to be less integrated which, among other things, could be related to one's being more in contact with his/her ethnic group members than the majority society representatives. Thus, the starting point of the research was my interest and curiosity to find out the primary motivation of the Armenians of attending the church gatherings, to learn how religious they are, and whether the role of religion plays any role in hindering or helping the integration process.

Furthermore, I have known some interviewees before conducting interviews with them. In order to meet new Armenians, I have visited several cities and have been in constant contact with the Armenian communities there: what the Armenian communities usually do, what cultural events they usually organise, what pretensions Armenians have in connection with the community's religious, cultural or social lives, how they evaluate their lives in Germany, etc.

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[39] The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) is a measure of the centrality, importance or salience of religious meanings in personality. The five dimensions public practice, private practice, religious experience, ideology and the intellectual dimensions can together be considered as representatives for the total of religious life.

[40] See Huber, S. (2009): *Religion Monitor 2008: Structuring Principles, Operational Constructs, Interpretive Strategies.* In Bertelmann Stiftung. *What the World Believes: Analyses and Commentary on the Religion Monitor 2008.* Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh, pp. 17-53.

1.3.2.2. Interviews and their Transcripts

In the framework of the research, I have carried out altogether 37 interviews, out of which, 29 interviews were conducted in person in the period from August 8 to December 22, 2016, which were all recorded and transcribed, except one because of the unwillingness of the interviewee to be recorded. The other 8 interviews were conducted in the period from April 20 to May 7, 2018, out of which 6 were conducted in person, 2 interviews were conducted per Skype. Out of 8 interviews held in 2018 only 5 have been transcribed (some partially transcribed) and analysed, since the other three interviews have been conducted with Armenians who have been living in Germany for less than ten years, and because of their short length and insignificant content have not been analysed. Moreover, the shortest interview lasts 16 minutes, the longest two hours. The average duration of most interviews lasts approximately from 45 minutes to an hour. Before conducting interviews, the interviewees have been told that the interviews will be anonymised, and no personal data will be demonstrated anywhere, and therefore have been encouraged to be frank and sincere in their answers in order to achieve accurate results of the data. In the quotes from the interviews, the names of the interviewees are fake, and the names of the cities where the interviews have been held are not indicated. The age, gender, and the country of origin are indicated to make the picture more vivid and interesting. It is most vital to point out that the results of the interviews cannot be generalised to all the Armenians in Germany, since the interviewees belong to several specific groups (Armenians from Armenia, Iran and Turkey), with whom the contact has been made in the Armenian communities in Germany. Consequently, the results and analysis of the research cannot be spread over those Armenians who are not in contact with any of the Armenian communities in Germany, since the picture can be totally different in connection with their ethnic or religious identity preservation, integration, etc.

In connection with making the interview sample, through the covered literature I have come to the conclusion that the political and economic dimensions of integration are not difficult to measure, and the most complicated aspect about measuring the integration of a migrant is the socio-cultural dimension, where the relationship and interaction between the host society and minority groups are taken into consideration. Since the social and cultural dimensions include such spheres, as cultural values, beliefs, religions, languages, habits of people, certain indicators should be made to measure the cultural integration. Moreover, the social and cultural dimensions of integration are important in the sense that in case the host society and minority groups are not in social interaction with each other, their adaptation to each other will be very difficult if not impossible.

The Armenians in Germany are an ethnic group in a majority society, with their specific religious, cultural and ethnic identities, entangled and blended with other cultures of the countries they have lived in before migrating to Germany. In order to find out how the Armenians estimate their lives in Germany, what is their interaction, communication and relationship with the host society, their cultural values, beliefs, languages, habits, to what extent they endeavour to retain their ethnic,

religious and cultural identities, what role religion plays in their lives, based on the covered literature, specific series of questions have been developed for the interviews, including questions about the relationship with the host society, ethnicity, religion, language, etc.

Thus, the interview questions focus on the following main dimensions: 1. Evaluation of life experiences by the Armenians in Germany (social status (work/education), values, life experiences, friend circles, psychological factors, discrimination cases) and perception of the German society (differences and similarities, acceptance, rejection or comparison of some cultural traits); 2. Importance of ethnicity (to what extent and how it is endeavoured by the Armenians in Germany to retain their ethnic identity); 3. The role of the religion in the lives of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany.

The questions of the semi-structured interview have been prepared preliminary "to delineate and control the topic of discussion"[41]. The participants have been given systematised questions to follow the research objectives. Depending on how open and communicative a particular interviewee has been, the questions have been asked in a particular order (semi-structured) or without sticking to this order and following how the conversation goes further (in-depth). To facilitate the conversation, I have demonstrated friendly manners, used simple language and open gestures to help the interviewees feel comfortable during the interviews. After the interview, the interviewees have been asked to fill in the questionnaire "The Centrality of Religiosity Scale" to find out the centrality of their religiosity levels.

The first attempts to contact Armenians via online media have not been very successful. Instead, I have contacted the Armenian churches in various cities in Germany and appeared there in person. This step has been more successful, and many volunteers have agreed to take part in the interviews. The interviews have been held mostly in Armenian, with several exceptions: one interview has been conducted in English, two interviews in German, some interviews with the mixture of the Armenian and German languages. Quotations from the recorded interviews are always presented verbatim, with some exceptions, where I have removed some utterances or skipped using many *hmm*s or throat cleaning and laughters which, from my viewpoint, are not relevant in perceiving the text correctly. The interviewees speak both Eastern and Western Armenian (Armenians from Armenia speak Eastern Armenian, Armenians from Iran speak Eastern Armenian dialect, Armenians from Turkey speak Western Armenian). Each interview has its uniqueness in the sense that when reading the original text without translation I can hear the voice of the person who has been interviewed, and it makes the interview very unique and one of its kind. On the other hand, the translation cannot give all the nuances and fine distinctions of the language since some expressions and words have no equivalents in another language, in this case, in the English language. I also use some Armenian words and expressions in brackets to make it more comprehendible and interesting for the readers who master the Armenian language. Some German words have been used by the interviewees

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[41] Edwards, R., Holland, J. (2013): *What is Qualitative Interviewing?* London: Bloomsbury, p. 53.

during the interviews which are only indicated randomly in the translated texts not to make the text confusing and difficult to read by overloading the narrations with additions of German words in brackets. Moreover, some interviews are analysed much more comprehensively and detailed than others, since the former provide more relevant and interesting data, in comparison to the repetitive and contentless utterances of the latter.

Furthermore, I have used a hermeneutical approach in the qualitative analysis and the interpretation of the texts, first of all, to be free in describing and processing the understanding of the meaning of the whole text and the small parts and paragraphs in it, i.e., to be able to understand "the whole through grasping its parts, and comprehending the meaning of the parts divining the whole"[42], secondly, to be more flexible in using different approaches that would be necessary in the course of analysing the interviews, since hermeneutic interpretation of the data is an ongoing process, which consists of comprehending the whole, understanding the parts of the whole, and going back to the whole again, which consists of the interpretive process of the data of the analysis by the researcher[43]. In one word, in analysing the texts, the following logic of question and answer has been used:

> The logic of question and answer is special to the hermeneutic sciences. […] They do not build generalizations from particulars in a linear, incremental, and inductive manner, but rather begin with the whole, the general, the prediction and work toward the part and then return to the whole again.[44]

Coding interview transcripts is broader and more complex since they usually consist of many diverse expressions, concepts, notions and ideas, provoked by the questions of the interviewer. Henceforth, during the coding of the interview transcripts, one should focus on cases and concepts since it includes context, experience and interpretations of responses[45]. In other words, instead of just taking into consideration what the interviewee answers to a particular question, it is more effective to understand and interpret what is actually meant between the lines. Nevertheless, the original text of the interpreted interviews should be included in the research text to avoid misinterpretation or subjective attitude to the meaning of the narration, that is the reason that many quotations from the interviews have been included in the research apart from the interpretation.

At the beginning I have used broad coding, reading and segmenting the texts and marking the passages in the texts, breaking the text into short paragraphs, which have been considered to be relevant for the analysis. Later on I have generated codes or themes not by working phrase by phrase but sorting data from the interviews into 5 main themes or categories: hybridity, identity, religion, ethnicity, integration (in the final phase the category of identity has been mixed in the

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[42] Crotty, M. (1998): *The Foundations of Social Science Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process.* St. Leonards, New South Wales: Allen & Unwin, p. 92.

[43] See Gadamer H. (1981): *Reason in the Age of Science.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

[44] Weinsheimer, J.C. (1985). *Gadamer's Hermeneutics: A Reading of Truth and Method.* New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 22.

[45] See Bazeley, P. (2013): *Qualitative Data Analysis: Practical Strategies.* Los Angeles, London: SAGE, p. 145

other four themes). I have focused on the details of the marked paragraphs, putting them again into different categories, marking with different colours to be able to distinguish between them later for analysing the paragraphs in detail or quoting them in the research text. The quotations from the interviews, which have been found important to be included in the research, have been translated from Armenian into English by me, except for Interview 5, which is originally in English.

The validity and reliability of how the data of the interviews have been perceived and interpreted can be depicted by the following steps that have been taken before, during and after conducting and analysing the interviews: **1).** The interview questions have been constructed by me, conducting a preliminary research in literature and getting acquainted with the theoretical framework of the concepts being investigated. **2).** Two pilot interviews have been conducted, followed by the categorisation of the data into different themes as coding. **3).** Interview questions are general questions, at the same time categorised into particular themes which helped me keep the research questions and aims in mind, as well as proved to be a solid basis for the later analysis of the data. **4).** Without any assistance from a third party, I have been completely and unreservedly involved in the preparation of the interview questions, data collection, conducting and transcribing the interviews, segmenting, marking and analysing the data. **5).** Each interview has been transcribed and saved as a separate file that comprises all necessary information about a particular interviewee, including the interview number, date and location, the interviewee's age, gender, country of origin, parents' country of origin, years in Germany, family status, citizenship. **6).** After each interview I have written a paragraph or two as a general evaluation or a short overview of the interview, to be able to follow some obvious discrepancies in some particular answers during the analysis. **7).** The organisation and implementation of the interviews, transcript, coding, translation have been implemented with great motivation and without any time or deadline pressure.

The quotes from the interviews are followed by fake names of the interviewees (I have mostly chosen Armenian names, also some foreign names that are commonly used in Armenia), followed by the gender, age, and the country of origin.

1.3.2.3. Questionnaire: the Centrality of Religiosity Scale

Among others, the broad concept of religion is also defined and measured in my research taking into consideration Stefan Huber's[46] revised five-dimensional model of religiosity and the general salience of religion. I have chosen this particular model taking into account its empirical investigation, coverage of different dimensions, heuristics based categorisation, multi-language and religious context application. It is a psychological-quantitative tool, representing the measurement of various dimensions of religion, which helps enhance the qualitative approach of the research.

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[46] Huber, S., Huber, O.W. (2012): "The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)". *Religions*, 3, pp. 710–724.

The Centrality of Religiosity Scale measures the centrality, intensity and importance of religious matters in human's life. Accordingly, there are five dimensions[47]: the intellectual dimension, ideology, public practice, private practice, religious experience. Each dimension plays its vital role in depicting an individual's level of religiosity. The **intellectual dimension** is demonstrated as the capacity and knowledge of a person to talk, discuss and interpret his/her views about religion and transcendence, the indicator of which is how often an individual thinks about religious matters. The dimension of **ideology** is related to the beliefs and convictions of religious individuals, the indicator of which is whether an individual finds the existence of a transcendent reality probable or plausible, which, in other words, can be depicted as a "basic-belief"[48]. The dimension of **public practice** is related to the public participation of an individual in religious rituals and services, as well as belonging to a certain religious institution or group, the indicator of which is measured by the frequency of one's participation in these rituals and activities. The dimension of **private practice** is whether an individual is devoted to the transcendence, considers religion as a private practice and organises individual activities in connection with it, the most common practices of which are considered to be the prayer and meditation, and the measurement is indicated by the intensity of the private practices. The dimension of **religious experience** is related to the contacts and dialogues with transcendence and divinities in private space, the indicator of measurement being the frequency of "one-to-one experiences" or "experiences of being at one"[49]. More detailed information can be found in Subchapter 4.3.

The Centrality of Religiosity Scale is constructed as a universal measurement of one's religiosity and can be applied in different religious contexts and traditions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism)[50]. The questionnaire as such cannot be found in books or internet files any more (Bertelsmann Stiftung, Religion Monitor used precisely this scale, which is not available publicly in its full length any more), and it has been reconstructed into a full questionnaire by me, taking as a reference the book "What the World Believes"[51] and categorising the data into questions and answers. The respondents have filled in the questionnaire after the interview, and have been told beforehand that the results will be anonymised.

1.3.3. Data on the Research Group and Research Location

Age Groups and Gender

Altogether, 37 Armenians have participated in the research, both female and male, as a result, there are 19 female and 18 male

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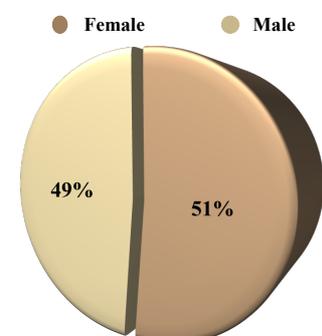
[47] See Huber, S., Huber, O.W. (2012): "The Centrality", pp. 714–715.
[48] Huber, S., Huber, O.W. (2012): "The Centrality", p. 714.
[49] Huber, S., Huber, O.W. (2012): "The Centrality", p. 715.
[50] See Huber, S., Huber, O.W. (2012): "The Centrality", p. 719.
[51] Rieger, M. (ed.) (2009): *What the World Believes: Analyses and Commentary on the Religion Monitor*. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung.

participants. The age of the former ranges from 21 to 77, the age of the male interviewees ranges from 23 to 69. Thus, the youngest among the interviewees is 21 years old, the oldest is 77 years old. The indicated data is illustrated below in pies and charts. In comparison to the age of the male respondents, the average age of the female respondents is older.

Female Age Group

Age Group: 21–77 years old

21, 25, 28, 36, 37, 38, 38, 41, 43, 47, 48, 53, 54, 56, 56, 62, 65, 75, 77

Male Age Group

Age Group: 23–69 years old

23, 23, 24, 24, 29, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 37, 39, 41, 50, 50, 52, 69

Arrival in Germany

Year of Arrival

2012
2011
2010
2007
2006
2005
2004
2001
2001
2001
2001
2000
1999
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1998
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1970
1965

1960 1965 1970 1975 1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015

Among 37 Armenians, there are four who were born in Germany (not included on the charts below), others have come to Germany from Armenia, Iran and Turkey during different periods. As a result, I can indicate that the interview data cover information on Armenians not only from three different countries but also from three generations, taking into account the age groups of the respondents (21–77 years old). In case we take into account the generation in the context of migration, my research group can be divided into the first and second generations: the former embraces Armenians that migrated to Germany from other countries, the latter refers to Armenians who were born in or have migrated to Germany with their parents at a very young age. The above-mentioned chart "Arrival in Germany" comprises more detailed information on the subject.

Citizens and Residents
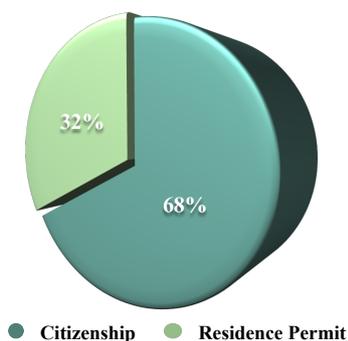
Among 37 respondents, there are 25 citizens, and 12 people with a residence permit. Those who have a residence permit have been living in Germany for minimum 11 and maximum 16 years. Among citizens there are people who have been in Germany for minimum 9 years and maximum 51 years. The chart to the left shows the distribution among citizenship and residence permit in percentage.

The Place of Birth

The pie on the right and the chart below depict the places of birth of the interviewees and their parents. The parents' birth of place has also been taken into account, since several of the interviewees were born in Germany, and it is important to take into account in what cultural contexts the respondents have grown up. Among those 4 Armenians who were born in Germany, one does not speak Armenian at all but is fluent in German and Turkish (presumably the parents at home cannot speak Armenian), one speaks very little Armenian but is fluent in German and Turkish, one is fluent in Armenian, German,

The countries the interviewees migrated from (Armenia, Iran, Turkey) and were born in (Germany)

Turkish and Persian, and the last but not least, one of them is fluent in German and Armenian, also speaks a little bit Turkish. As for other respondents, those who come from Armenia and Iran speak Armenian and can express themselves in Armenian from moderately to mother-tongue level, among those who come from Turkey, one can differentiate between those who are fluent in Armenian and those who have learnt it in Germany, that is the reason they do not master the language on a mother-tongue level, and there are some who do not speak Armenian at all, or mix Armenian and German languages during the conversation.

	The number of the Interviewees			
Armenia	17			
	17			
Iran	8			
	8			
Turkey	8			
	12			
Germany	4			

■ Interviewees' Place of Birth   ■ Interviewees' Parents' Place of Birth
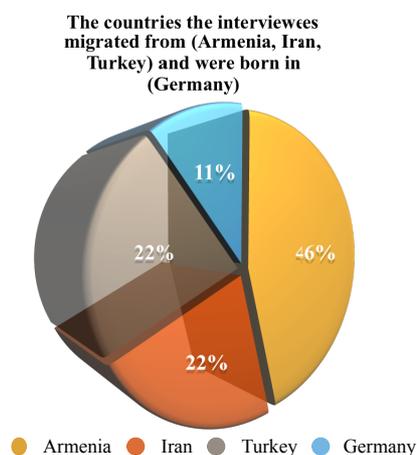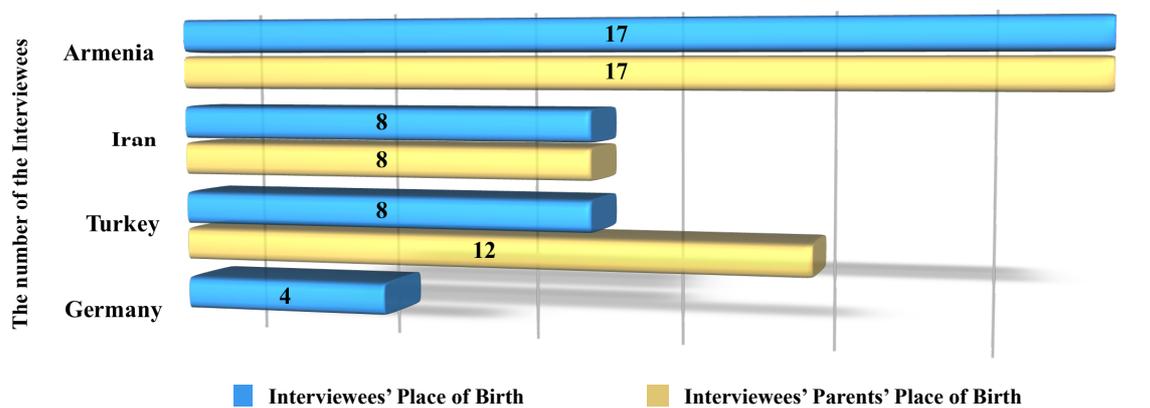
The Research Location

The research has been conducted in different cities (thirteen) in Germany. The cities have been chosen randomly, except for several cities where there are official Armenian communities. The names of the cities are not indicated in the publication of the research to keep the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

1.4. Research Outline

As already indicated, the present research focuses on the lives of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany in connection with hybrid cultures, identity issues, ethnicity, religion and integration. *Chapter 2* depicts the outline of the history of Armenians and the Armenian migration. It starts with the general historical overview about the origins of Armenians, the history of migration, the establishment of the Armenian Diaspora, the adoption of Christianity and the establishment of the Armenian Church. Further it delineates the Armenian culture, including manuscripts, architecture, literature and language. And the last but not least, the Armenian Diaspora in Germany is outlined, where different Armenian communities, organisations and churches are represented.

Instead of constructing a theoretical chapter before the empirical analysis, I have chosen to split the systematic agenda into three main chapters (Chapter 3, 4 and 5), which include both the theoretical and empirical parts of the research respectively. In *Chapter 3*, the concepts of migration, globalisation and cultural hybridisation are discussed. Through worldwide movements and relocations, migration has spread all over the world, and culturally diverse and hybrid societies have become an inseparable part of the modern world. The concepts of globalisation and hybridisation, their positive outcomes and negative impacts in relation to ethnic groups in a majority society are discussed, how migrants live with hybrid identities in diverse cultures, in one word, living in-between. To demonstrate how diverse and multifaceted the identities can be, the theoretical analysis of the term identity is discussed minutely, talking about personal, role, group, ethnic, and hybrid identities. The depiction of the theoretical concepts is followed by the empirical findings in connection with the lives of the Armenian ethnic group living in Germany: hybrid self-perceptions and self-categorisations, awareness of their cultural hybridity and positive and negative evaluation

of their lives in hybrid cultures, various categorisations within their ethnic group, differentiation between their ethnic group and the majority society, usage of different languages in their families on a native-speaker level, etc.

The theoretical frameworks concerning the concept religion are further discussed in *Chapter 4*, where religion is considered in the context of migration, in connection with its individual and social aspects: people use religion as a personal practice, as well as in social circles together with their own ethnic group members or other religious groups in the majority society. Migrants might not be so much aware of their religiousness or their cultural uniqueness unless confronted with other cultures and religions. Religion is described in relation to movement and location, and how it can help migrants with identity issues, support and console in difficult situations, create *home* for them, through which they can regain a sense of belonging. The concept of religion is also explained in particular relation to this research, and a new explanation of it is demonstrated. Further, the chapter elaborates by demonstrating the narrations of the Armenian ethnic group about the role of religion in their lives, about their religious and cultural identities, how they evaluate the role of the Armenian church and the Armenian community in Germany, why they participate in the church services, why they keep contact with the Armenian community, what role religion has played or plays in their integration process, etc. As a continuation of this chapter, the analysis and results of the questionnaire "The Centrality of Religiosity Scale" are depicted in charts and pies, processed by the programmes Numbers (Apple) and SPSS.

Furthermore, the realms of the broad concepts of integration, diaspora and ethnic groups are depicted in *Chapter 5*. Definitions, different perceptions, modes, dimensions and levels of the concept integration are portrayed, together with adaptation and adjustment problems, which further elaborates into the theme of Diasporas and ethnic groups, which are discussed in the context of drawing comparisons between differences of minority groups and ethnic minority groups or Diasporas, and why some groups choose to merge and blend with the majority society, while others prefer to stay inside their ethnic group. The Chapter further depicts the lives and experiences of the Armenians in Germany: adaptation to new life situations, hindrances in the integration process, perception of the majority society and evaluation of the latter's attitude towards them and other members of their ethnic group (prejudices, stereotypes, discrimination cases, etc.), their attitude towards their ethnic group, different generations and their identities, preservation of their ethnic identity, etc.

The conclusion of the research is in *Chapter 6*, which comprises discussions of and reflections on the general results of the analysis of the research in relation to the hybrid identities, ethnicity, religion and integration of the Armenians in Germany. The conclusion is followed by the references of the research under the title *Bibliography*. At the end of the research, there are 3 Appendixes, which include respectively the interview questions, the questionnaire "The Centrality of Religiosity Scale", information on the illustrations, figures, charts and pies, used in the research.

2. The Outline of the History of Armenians and the Armenian Migration

2.1. The Historical Overview: the Origins of Armenians

> We were peaceful like our mountains,
> You invaded like ferocious winds.
>
> We confronted you like our mountains,
> You growled fiercely like ferocious winds.
>
> But we are eternal like our mountains,
> You will perish like ferocious winds.[52]

The present Chapter illustrates the origins, historical background, migration history and culture of one of the ancient people in the world[53] – Armenians. Why are Armenians dispersed in the entire world? Why is the Armenian Diaspora much bigger than the indigenous population in the Republic of Armenia? There is but one answer: due to historical events, which are considered to be grievous pages about Armenians, who did not perish but were able to survive and perpetuate their history and culture, notwithstanding numerous wars, earthquakes, innumerable deportations, attempts of extermination, countless invasions from neighbouring empires, kingdoms, as well as different tribes and races.

> Other nations have also suffered bleak times. What makes the Armenian predicament different is that many of the bitterest experiences that they have been through are unknown, or to a great extent unacknowledged. In some cases, Armenian experiences are systematically denied by the enemies of Armenians, and by their client academics in some universities and places of higher education, as well as by professional political lobbyists in Washington, London and elsewhere, who have sometimes tried to conduct historical discourse through such media as advertisements in national newspapers.[54]

Walker[55] calls Armenians migratory merchants and wealthy entrepreneurs and maintains that the history of Armenia with numerous invasions, attacks, deportation, migration mostly depends on the location of Armenia, as well as the general attitude towards Armenians who are perceived to be wealthy and prosperous: "In their history, the Armenians have rarely played the role of aggressor; rather, they have excelled in agriculture, arts and crafts, and trade".[56] As Armenians would very often say: we encounter so many difficulties and obstacles in our lives since Armenia is a mountainous country where we have to struggle and strain every sinew to make bread.

Due to the historical background of Armenians, a vast amount of valuable historical evidence has been destroyed, nevertheless, there is still a considerable number of various works about them.

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[52] Hovhannes Shiraz – Armenian poet (April 27, 1915 – March 14, 1984). The Impromptu was written in 1941.

[53] See Redgate, A.E. (1998): *The Armenians.* Oxford: Blackwell Publication.

[54] Walker, Ch.J. (1991): *Armenia and Karabagh: the Struggle for Unity.* London: Minority Rights, p. 2.

[55] See Walker, Ch.J. (1991): *Armenia*, p. 8.

[56] Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History of the Armenian People. Volume I. Pre-History to 1500 AD* California: Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, p. 1.

> Armenia has a claim on our attention as one of the principal homes of ancient metallurgy, beginning at least five thousand years ago. Later on, Armenia became the first extensive kingdom to adopt Christianity as a state religion, pioneering a style of Church architecture which anticipates our own Western Gothic. In these and other respects, Armenia has enriched the civilised world to an extent for which this long forgotten and much ravaged land is seldom given credit.[57]

Armenians call themselves not Armenian, which comes from Greek, but *hay* (in Armenian: Հայ) and their country *Hayastan* (in Armenian: Հայաստան)[58]. There are different interpretations of the names "hay" (Armenian) and "Hayastan" (Armenia). The first one is related to the Armenian legend, which is based on the earliest references of Moses of Khoren[59] (Movses Khorenatsi), according to which Armenians originated from the epic forefather Hayk, a son of gods. Later on in the Christian times this legend has been changed, according to which Armenians are perceived to be the descendants of one of Noah's sons Japheth. After the Great Flood, the ark landed on the Biblical Mountain Ararat (Genesis 8:4), and Noah settled down with his family first in Armenia. Noah's generation later is supposed to have moved to Babylon. In 2492 BC, Hayk, Noah's great-great-grandson, a descendant of Japheth, and the eponymous patriarch or ancestor of the Armenians, rebelled against the king of the Babylonians Bel and defeated him and settled down with his family. His generation spread in the Armenian highlands, and the country and the nation were called after him[60]. The legend of Noah plays a vital role in the Christian religious identity of Armenians.

The second interpretation of the names *hay* and *Hayastan* can be referred to the second millennium BC. Among the tribal unions of the Armenian highlands, Hayasa tribe played a central role, which is considered to be the main base of the ethnic formation of the Armenian nation[61]. Hittite inscriptions provide information about the Hayasa or Hayasa-Azzi tribal unions (XIV-XIII centuries BC), where Hayasa is mentioned to be a kingdom, which was situated on the territory of Upper Armenia (the first province of Greater Armenia), with the neighbours Hittite kingdom in the west, Hurrians in the Mitanni kingdom in the south. The inhabitants of Hayasa were Armenians, and their language pre-Armenian[62]. The root of the word "Hayasa" is "hay", and the "asa" suffix, which in Hittite language means "the land where Armenians (hay) lived", which is Hayk, Hayastan. Thus, Hayasa people are considered to be the ancestors of the Armenian nation[63].

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[57] Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia: Cradle of Civilisation.* London, Allen & Unwin, p. 9.

[58] See Panossian, R. (2006): *The Armenians: from Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars.* London: Hurst, p. 106.

[59] Moses of Choren (Movses Khorenatsi) – Armenian historian (ca. 410–490s AD) and the author of the "History of Armenia".

[60] Panossian, R. (2006): *The Armenians: from Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars.* London: Hurst, p. 106.

[61] See Walker, Ch.J. (1991): *Armenia*, p. 9.

[62] Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia,* p. 114.

[63] See Sargsyan, A., Hakobyan, A. (2004): *The Armenian History: from Ancient Times to Our Days.* Yerevan: "Chartaraget", pp. 18-19. Original in Armenian: Սարգսյան Ա., Հակոբյան Ա. (2004)՝ Հայոց Պատմություն Նախագույն շրջանից մինչև մեր օրերը: «Ճարտարագետ», Երևան:

The origins of Armenians have also been mentioned by different foreign writers of various centuries. Hayastan was first called with the name "Armenia" in the Behistun famous inscription (6th century BC, c. 517 BC) by the Persian King Darius I (reigned 521-486 BC)[64]. The names "Armen" and "Armenia" are also related to the Armenian King Aram (the sixth king after Hayk)[65], with whose name the foreign nations called the Armenians and their land[66]. Among others, Hecataeus of Miletus (c. 480 BC) mentioned about Armenians, and according to Herodotus (5th century BC), Armenians are related to the Phrygians[67].

The territory of the historic Armenia is considered to be one of the unique regions where human beings already existed more than one million years ago[68]. Inhabitancies of prehistoric men were discovered on the mountains of Artin (Talin region), in the surroundings of Arzni, Nurnus and Fantan villages, in the Hrazdan Canyon, in Malatia, in Kars (historical Armenia, present-day Turkey), and other regions. The stone instruments and weapons found in the mentioned districts date back to about 800 000 years[69].

> Christian Armenia was the heir to a long tradition of ancient lore and learning. From prehistoric times, Armenia had been a meeting place for the civilisations of East and West, and a market place for the exchange of the products of Europe and Asia, after being a focal point of important Neolithic and Bronze Age cultures. It was not surprising that the great empires of the ancient world sought constantly to extend their sway into the Armenian highlands. From the west came the impact of the civilisations of Troy and of the Aegean world, while the highly evolved culture of Urartu was largely the product of the inventive genius of ancestors of the Armenians of today.[70]

The First Kingdom of Armenia, Urartu (c. 870-590 BC), is believed to have been created as a result of the mixture of Indo-European speaking Armenians with the Urartians and other smaller tribes in the mountainous area of the southern Caucasus, where Armenians and their language began to dominate and by the eight century BC, they formed the first kingdom in the territory which later became to be known as Armenia[71]. In 782 BC, the Urartian king Argishti I built a fortress on the region of Ararat and called it Erebuni, the present-day city of Yerevan, which is considered to be "one of the oldest continuously-inhabited urban centres in the world"[72]. The year of the Erebuni Fortress construction is considered to be the year of the foundation of the city Yerevan (782 BC).

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[64] See Walker, Ch.J. (2005): *Writings on Armenia: Visions of Ararat.* London: I.B. Tauris, p. 1.

[65] See Robinson, E.J. (1917): *The Armenians*. London: The Frederick Printing Company, Ltd., p. 3.

[66] See Sargsyan, A., et al (2004): *The Armenian,* p. 19.

[67] See Stone, N., Stone, M. (2007): *The Armenians: Art, Culture and Religion*. Dublin: Chester Beatty Library, p. 19.

[68] See Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 47.

[69] See Sargsyan, A., et al (2004): *The Armenian*, pp. 13-14.

[70] Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 263.

[71] See Walker, Ch.J. (1991): *Armenia*, p. 9.

[72] Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, p. 14.

According to modern archeological findings, the Armenians were not an Indo-European group that came from the Balkans with the Phrygians and later were part of the Urartian confederation, eventually taking rule over Urartu and creating a kingdom and the Armenian nation, but the Armenians were part of the original inhabitants and not immigrants into the region, meaning that Armenians were Caucasian tribes, living on the territory before the arrival of Indo-Europeans. Thus, it is believed that Indo-European languages originated in Transcaucasia, and the Armenians, adopting part of their language from Indo-European arrivals, mixed with other tribes and eventually created the Kingdom of Urartu. The consideration of the Armenian language as a unique branch of the Indo-European language and the origin of the words *Hay* and *Hayastan* may well be referred to the above-mentioned[73].

> Many of the older historians give a rather over-simplified account of the origin of the modern Armenian nation. According to Herodotus, the Armenians entered Asia Minor from the west in company with the Phrygians, to whom he regarded them as closely allied ethnically. However, the findings of modern archaeology and linguistics show that a simple migratory theory cannot fit the facts. Many features of Urartians civilisation in particular are perpetuated in ancient Armenian culture.[74]

Notwithstanding the fact that the present-day Republic of Armenia is a relatively small country, historically, Armenia covered a much larger territory, which has varied considerably through centuries, reaching its peak during the reign of King Tigran II (Tigran the Great) in the first century BC (140 – 55 BC), which is considered to be one of the proudest pages of the Armenian history. During his reign, Tigran the Great expanded the kingdom from the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea[75] (in Armenian: ծովից ծով Հայաստան, literal translation, *Armenia from sea to sea*). In present-day geographical terms, historical Armenia was composed of most of eastern Turkey, the northeastern corner of Iran, parts of Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as the entire territory of the Republic of Armenia. The present Republic of Armenia is situated in the Near East, specifically, south of Russia and Georgia, north of Iran, east of Turkey, and west of Azerbaijan.

Generally, the historic-political life of the Armenian nation lasted in three main historical administrative-territorial unities, namely in Greater Armenia (in Armenian: Մեծ Հայք/Mets Hayk), Lesser Armenia (in Armenian: Փոքր Հայք/Poqr Hayk) and Cilicia (in Armenian: Կիլիկիա). The Armenian highland mostly corresponds to the historic-geographical concept of Greater Armenia, which occupied more than 300.000 square kilometres, whereas the present Republic of Armenia occupies only around 30.000 square kilometres, i.e., only 1/10 of the territory of historical Armenia[76].

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[73] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, p. 21.

[74] Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 112.

[75] See Melqonyan, A. (1998): *Armenian History*. Yerevan: "Hayagitak", pp. 22-23. Original in Armenian: Մելքոնյան, Աշոտ (1998) Հայոց պատմություն: «Հայագիտակ», Երևան:

[76] See Sargsyan, A., et al (2004): *The Armenian*, p. 11.

Despite the fact, that during its history, Armenia has been constantly under a foreign rule, such as Romans, Persians, Greeks, Arabs, Mongols, Mamluks, Seljuk Turks, Ottoman Turks, Russians, the Armenians had their own kingdoms, namely, Yervanduni (Orontid) Dynasty (VI-III BC, c. 585-200 BC), Artashesian (Artaxid) Dynasty (II-I BC, c. 189 BC - 10 AD), Arshakuni (Arsacid) Dynasty (I-V AD, 66 - 428 AD), Bagratuni (Bagratid) Dynasty (885-1045 AD), Artsruni Dynasty (907-1020 AD), Rubinian and Hetumian Dynasties/ Cilician Kingdom (1080-1375). Greater Armenia, also called Armenia Major, was a kingdom that existed from 321 BC to 428 AD, during which the following Armenian royal dynasties reigned: Yervanduni (Orontid) Dynasty, Artashesian (Artaxid) Dynasty and Arshakuni (Arsacid) Dynasty. Lesser Armenia, also called Armenia Minor, was a part of historic Armenia, which received its name to be distinguished from much larger historic Armenia[77].

After the fall of the Cilician kingdom in the 14th century, Armenia has been independent only twice, more particularly, Armenians proclaimed Independent Republic of Armenia on May 28, 1918, even though they were in the crisis of annihilation. Already in 1920, the situation changed again: by Soviet-Turkish agreement, it was occupied by the Turks from the south, and the Soviet from the north. The Turkish Nationalists were in cooperation with Communist Russia, the former had the aim to eliminate the Armenians, the latter had the intention to attack (advance on) Armenia from the east. Since the physical survival of Armenians was in great danger, they surrendered to the Red Army, on November 29, 1920, Armenia was proclaimed Sovietised and united with Russia. The fierce regime of Stalin killed and silenced Armenian intellectuals of those times who had made some contributions to the education and restored some knowledge of the past, namely, Avetik Isahakyan, Hovhannes Tumanyan, Hrachya Acharyan, Martiros Saryan, Yeghishe Charents and others, with the help of whom the Armenian literature "began filling the void of the missing identification between people and state"[78]. The situation deteriorated when the Soviet Union was invaded by Nazi Germany in 1941. Even though Armenia did not suffer any demolition territorially, 174000 Armenians died till the end of the war, and the country was left only with one and a quarter million population. After the war, the relationship between Armenia and the Soviet Union improved, since Armenians had fought courageously: "Soviet Armenia was now seen as an integral and constitutive element of a larger system"[79]. This change of circumstances also opened opportunities to connect with the Armenian Diaspora, who were persuaded to immigrate to Armenia. Progress could be noticed in industry, economy, educational system, and notwithstanding the fact that there were many obstacles, national identity of Armenians strengthened, the first demonstration of which was on April 24, 1965, when Armenians gathered in Yerevan to commemorate the Armenian Genocide: after this event a memorial dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, Tsitsernakaberd, was constructed[80]. The Soviet Armenia was considered to be an *independent* Soviet Republic, while the south was totally included into Turkey, causing assimilation

[77] See Melqonyan, A. (1998): *Armenian,* pp. 28-41.
[78] Adalian, R.P. (2010): *Historical Dictionary of Armenia*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, p. 53.
[79] Adalian, R.P. (2010): *Historical*, p. 54.
[80] See Adalian, R.P. (2010): *Historical*, pp. 50-68.

and migration of a great numbers of Armenians, making them minority in their own country. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia became independent again in 1991, occupying now only a small area.

Towards the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the question of Karabagh started agitating Armenians. In the period from 1988 to 1991, after successful battles, Karabagh became independent. On September 21, 1991, Armenia gained independence from the Soviet Union, which resulted in severe economic conditions in Armenia, suppressed by Azerbaijan and Turkey because of the Karabagh conflict. In this period, Armenians suffered immensely because of unemployment, lack of electricity, food, and thousands of Armenians left their homeland in search of jobs in other countries[81].

Since the independence, Armenia has gone through many upheavals and changes, but the situation in the country could not be improved as much as to be able to stop the growing migration. In spite of the fact that some minimal changes have been made, the three presidents of Independent Armenia did not succeed in building a just, fair, economically stable country and satisfy the elementary needs of the population: the separation between the rich and the poor has been growing constantly in the last thirty years.

2.2. The Armenian Migration and the Establishment of the Diaspora

Historically occupying politically and geographically significant territory, Armenia has always been in the centre of its neighbour countries' attention[82]. Armenian voluntary and forced migration started already in the 4th century and became an integral part of the history of Armenians: after the fall of the Arsacid Armenian Dynasty in 428 AD, the first Armenian Kingdom came to an end, and Armenia was divided between Greater Armenia under the Iranian rule, and Lesser Armenia under the Byzantine rule. Already in the 3rd to 4th centuries, a great number of Armenians were deported to Iran, as well as countless deportation of Armenians was carried out by Byzantium to the West.

One of the most memorable historical events of this period is the battle of Avarayr. In 451 AD, Armenians were forced to fight against Persians, since the latter were trying to impose their faith, Zoroastrianism, upon the already Christian Armenians. As a result, the Battle of Avarayr took place, where with the leadership of the General Vardan Mamikonyan, Armenians were able to preserve their identity and religion, and even though they had dreadful losses, they caused so much damage to the Persians, that they stopped their attempts to convert Armenians. The Battle of Avarayr is considered to be one of the heroic pages of the Armenian history, and the Armenian Church has canonised the warriors who had fallen in the battle, and "Vardan Mamikonyan is numbered among

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[81] See Adalian, R.P. (2010): *Historical*, pp. 50-68.
[82] See Walker, Ch.J. (1991): *Armenia*, p. 8.

the saints of the Armenian Church, and the anniversary of the Battle of Avarayr is among its main festivals"[83].

The Armenian migration also occurred in great numbers in the period from the 7–14th centuries upon the attacks and invasions of different tribes (Arabs, Seljuks, Mongols). The Arab invasion in 640 AD, the domination of which lasted till 884 AD, was different from previous invaders, since they did not settle in Armenia but only had political control. In case of Arabs, the picture was totally different: they started living among Armenians. Other nomads such as the Kurds, Turks, Mongols and Turkmen followed Arabs' example for the following eight centuries, and as a consequence, Armenians started emigrating in significant numbers which considerably affected the history of Armenia[84].

The second Armenian Kingdom was created only in the tenth century with the Bagratid Dynasty, which ruled in Greater Armenia for approximately two centuries (this period coincided with the formation of separate states in Germany, France and England[85]) and is considered to be a prosperous period for Armenia, during which the art and literature prospered, and Ani[86] became the capital of Greater Armenia, developing its architecture more and more. By the middle of the 11th century, the Bagratid Kingdom started losing its power, and eventually Armenia was captured by the Seljuk Turks in 1049.

> The amazing resilience of the Armenian people is nowhere better illustrated than in the saga of Cilician Armenia. This artificial entity, founded under the conditions of the utmost difficulty in an alien land, managed to survive and often to flourish for nearly three centuries, outliving most of the Crusader states of the Franks, and leaving behind pockets of Armenian culture and population which exist up to the present day.[87]

The Cilician period is usually considered to be unique in the history of Armenians, since it was the the first and the last time that Armenians "created an independent state outside their homeland"[88]. When Byzantium reconquered Cilicia from the Arabs, it pushed the Muslims out of the territory and brought Armenians from Lesser Armenia, to repopulate the land with Christians. Because of the Byzantine and Turkish invasions, more Armenians settled in Cilicia with their entire families. With the coming of the crusades, the Armenians had political and strategic means to eventually form a kingdom. In the meantime, some Armenian lords (the Rubinians and Hetumians) could achieve independence, and as a result, Levon I was crowned as Armenian King in Cilicia in 1199, which was referred to as Little Armenia or Armenia Minor. During his reign, the commerce grew a lot, and Armenian merchants created trading houses in China and Europe, and according to the records of

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[83] Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 168.
[84] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, p. 92.
[85] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History,* p. 105.
[86] Ani – once a magnificent and rich Armenian "City with 1001 Churches", presently a ruined medieval city situated in the Turkish province of Kars near the border with Armenia.
[87] Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 200.
[88] Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, p. 117.

European missionaries, at these times, "Armenian churches were being built as far away as China"[89].

> Lesser Armenia during the medieval period was a district of north-western Armenia, adjoining what is now the Turkish-Kurdish city of Erzinjan. From the 11th to the 12th centuries, there existed an important Armenian kingdom in Cilicia. This Kingdom was ruled by the Armenian dynasty of the Rupenids. It fell to the Mamluks of Egypt in 1375. Cilicia is also known as "Little Armenia".[90]

The fall of Cilician Armenia was the consequence of the following events. During the Turkish, Mongol and Turkmen invasions, the Armenians and Byzantines fought against the enemies not united but separately, which eventually caused Byzantine empire's end, and the Armenian Bagratuni Kingdom, which was destroyed by the Byzantines several years ago, was now captured by the Turks, and as a result, "many cities were looted, churches destroyed, trade disrupted, and the population forcibly converted or enslaved"[91]. Since Armenia then was under Byzantium's rule, Armenia suffered by the attack of the Turks greatly: Armenians lost the cities Ani in 1064 and Kars in 1065, and in 1071, the Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantium, and all Armenia was left to Turkish rule[92]. Nowadays, numerous seminaries and churches exist in the Republic of Armenia, Karabagh, Georgia, Anatolia, Turkey and Azerbaijan which are in ruins. Fortunately, *nakharars*[93] of some mountainous regions, such as Artsakh (Karabagh), Syuniq (Zangezur), Gugark (Lori), Sasun and others, managed to remain independent[94].

Nomadic invasions, that lasted four centuries, made Armenians a minority in their own homeland, forcing them to search abode in different parts of the world, trying to revive their culture and traditions away from their home country. Due to the invasions by the Mongols, Tatars, Seljuks and Ottoman Turks, the Armenian Kingdom was consequently dissolved and ceased to exist in the 14th century[95], and the Armenians lived under the Ottoman rule for centuries: "At the turn of the 20th century, the majority of Armenians lived in central Anatolia in Turkey, the historical Lesser Armenia, in Iran, and in Russian held territories, east of Turkey, the historical Greater Armenia".[96]

Starting from the 16th century, Armenians began spreading to different countries with trade reasons, playing a correlating role between the East and the West in trade matters, establishing Armenian communities in the countries where they established commercial companies. In the beginning of the

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[89] Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, p. 124.

[90] Walker, Ch.J. (1991): *Armenia,* p. 7.

[91] Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, p. 135.

[92] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, pp. 113-115.

[93] Nakharar System: The prevailing sociopolitical order in medieval Armenia characterised by a military aristocracy dominated by a host of powerful territorial princes whose families exhibited striking dynastic continuity. (Adalian, R.P. (2010): *Historical Dictionary of Armenia*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, p. 465).

[94] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, pp. 133-135.

[95] See Baliozian, A. (1975): *The Armenians: Their History and Culture: A Short Introduction*. Toronto: Kar Publishing House*,* p. 51.

[96] Karakashian, M., et al (2003): *Armenian*, p. 227.

17th century (1604), Shah Abbas I moved Armenians from their city Julfa in Armenia to Iran and settled them in Isfahan, which he named New Julfa. Consequently, being engaged in the silk trade, Armenians spread to India, Indonesia, Singapore, Ukraine and Poland. Armenians under Ottoman rule moved to Palestine, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, and as far as China, where "Armenian travellers left graffiti on European cathedrals in the Middle Ages"[97].

According to the archives at the National Library in Yerevan, Armenia, Armenians emigrated from the Ottoman Empire to the USA and Europe already in 1895, and in 1917, almost 202 migratory settlements (*gaghtojakhner,* or migration homes) existed in Madras, India, Australia, Argentina, Ethiopia, North America, Europe, Russia[98]. The first newspaper, published in the Armenian language, was *Azdarar*, which was established by the Armenian priest Harutyun Shmavonyan in Madras, India in 1794[99]. It was a monthly newspaper, covering mostly historical and cultural topics, the existence of which proves that there was an Armenian community during that period[100].

As it has been indicated above, even though the Armenian Diaspora already existed in Antiquity and the Middle Ages and has established many communities worldwide, the greatest flow of migration and the modern term of the Armenian Diaspora started after the Armenian Genocide in 1915. Moreover, the Armenian Diaspora increased greatly as a result of migration not only from the Ottoman Empire, but also from Russia, Caucasus, and Iran, and Armenians found a new abode in Middle Eastern countries, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Western Europe, North and South America, Russia, India, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Myanmar, Hong Kong, China Japan, the Philippines, Sub-Saharan Africa, namely Sudan, South Africa, Ethiopia. The countries, that have the largest number of Armenians are the following: Russia, the USA, Georgia, France, Ukraine, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Argentina and Canada[101].

As a result of the Turkish rule on the Armenian territory, a significant flow of migration happened during the years from 1894 to 1922. In 1894, the Turkish government and the local Kurdish rulers designated extremely high taxes for Armenians, since they were Christians and were considered to be a low class without civil rights. In Sasun[102], eastern Turkey, Armenians refused to pay taxes, and as a result, the residents of 25 villages were massacred, which was followed by the massacre of 4000 Armenians who demonstrated against the massacres of the population of the villages of Sasun in Constantinople. In 1895, a rebellion was organised, and massacres happened in Zeytun and the surroundings. In the Armenian history, the Armenian Massacres of 1894-1896 are also called the

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[97] Stone, N., Stone, M. (2007): *The Armenians,* p. 36.

[98] See Poghosyan, G. (2014): *Armenian Migration: Articles and Research Findings of Recent Years on Migration Issues in Armenia*. Yerevan: Europrint, p. 18.

[99] See Robinson, E.J. (1917): *The Armenians*, p. 7.

[100] See Karakashian, M., et al (2003): *Armenian,* pp. 227-228.

[101] See Poghosyan, G. (2014): *Armenian*, pp. 19-20.

[102] Sasun – part of the historical Armenian Highland, the setting of the Armenia's national epic *Daredevils of Sasun,* which plays a very important role in the Armenian culture and history.

Hamidian massacres after Sultan Abdul Hamid II. The number of the perished Armenians in the period from 1984 to 1986 reaches 200.000[103].

In 1909, the Adana province massacres caused deaths of almost 30.000 Armenians. The British ethnographer William Ramsay declared in 1897: "The Armenians will in all probability be exterminated except the remnant that escapes to other lands"[104]. It is estimated that between 1894 and 1896, approximately 100.000 Armenians migrated to other countries.

> The execution of the genocide of the Armenians in 1915 was preceded two decades earlier by widespread massacres perpetrated by Sultan Abdul Hamid between 1894 and 1896. These massacres, which aroused the horror of Europe, may be regarded as an overture or perhaps as a dress rehearsal for the 'final solution' of 1915.[105]

The Armenian Genocide, also called among Armenians *Great Crime* (in Armenian: Մեծ եղեռն/ Mets Yeghern), is considered to be April 24, 1915, since on this day, the Ottoman Turks imprisoned, deported and killed Armenian leaders and intellectuals, and later on men were imprisoned in the towns and villages, who were later killed or buried alive. It is estimated that 2.623.000 Armenians lived in Ottoman Turkey in 1915[106], and even though the number of the perished Armenians varies, it is estimated that along with other Christian minorities minimum 1.5 million Armenians were murdered as a result of the Ottomans' plan to exterminate the minority Armenians in their own historic homeland.

> The Ottoman genocide perpetrated in 1915 against the Armenian citizens of Turkey was the first systematic attempt in modern times to bring about the complete, deliberate extermination of a nation. The genocide ('murder of an entire people') was ingeniously planned and brilliantly and effectively carried out, making the fullest use of terrain, climate and the auxiliary aid of local populations who were jealous of and hostile to the victims.[107]

The Battle of Sardarapat[108] of Armenia, which took place on May 18, 1918, is one of the most important battles in the Armenian history: if not this battle, Ottoman Turks would have completely exterminated the Armenian nation: "it is perfectly possible that the word Armenia would have henceforth denoted only an antique geographical term"[109]. Armenians won the battle and prevented the Ottomans to advance to the rest of Armenia, and could create a small independent state.

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[103] See Poghosyan, G. (2014): *Armenian*, p. 18.

[104] Ramsay, W.M. (1897): *Impressions of Turkey During Twelve Years' Wanderings*. California, G.P. Putnam's sons.

[105] Lang, D.M. (1981): *The Armenians*, p. 1.

[106] See Karakashian, M., et al (2003): *Armenian,* p. 230.

[107] Lang, D.M. (1981): *The Armenians*, p. 1.

[108] Sardarapat – is located in the present-day Armavir province in Armenia, that is only 40 kilometres away from Yerevan, the capital of Armenia.

[109] Walker, Ch.J. (1990): *Armenia. The Survival of a Nation*, 2nd edition. New York: St. Martin's Press, pp. 254–255.

The independence of Armenia lasted for only two years, since in 1921, the Republic of Armenia was taken by the Russians, and the Soviet Armenia was eventually formed. The entrance into the Soviet Union resulted in other grievous historical events that had come into action and last up to date: with the decision of Stalin, Karabagh (Artsakh) and Nakhijevan regions of Armenia were given to Azerbaijan, in spite of the fact, that Armenians were against this decision. In 1923 Karabagh was occupied by 94.4% Armenians, where they have lived for centuries[110]. Moreover, in the period from 1920 to 1930s, thousands of Armenian nationalists in Soviet Armenia were exiled by Stalin to Siberian labour camps. As a result, another wave of migration took place to different countries of the world.

In 1922, the great fire of Smyrna was organised to get rid of the Armenian and Greek population of Smyrna (modern name Izmir in Turkey), and as a result, approximately 100.000 Armenians and Greeks died. The organised fire destroyed the Armenian and Greek quarters of Smyrna, but somehow the Muslim and Jewish quarters were not damaged. This event was followed by a strong wave of migration, which was mostly towards Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, France, the United States, Argentina, Australia, etc. After World War II, an Armenian program was initiated to displace people, and there was a great number of Armenians in Nazi Germany. Armenian prisoners from the Soviet Army escaped the Holocaust with the help of negotiations, claiming the Indo-European origin of Armenians[111].

Armenian migrations occurred in 1947, when the Palestinian section of Jerusalem was taken by Israel to create a new Jewish state, and Armenians had to leave for the Jordanien section of Jerusalem. During the Arab-Israeli war in 1970, Armenians had to migrate from Lebanon to Europe, United States, Canada and Australia. It is estimated that in the course of twenty years out of 250.000 Armenians, only 120.000 were left. In the 1950s, Armenians, who were wealthy entrepreneurs in Egypt, had to leave the country when Gamal Abdul Nasser came to power, in order to be able to save their property, and migrated to Canada, the United States or other Middle Eastern countries[112].

Armenian migration took place from Azerbaijan from 1988-1992. The Azerbaijani government organised the Sumgait pogrom against Armenians in 1988 (February 27-29), during which Armenians were attacked and killed in their homes and on the streets in the presence of the Azerbaijani police[113]. This massacre happened when the Karabagh movement[114] (also Artsakh movement, in Armenian: Արցախյան շարժում) just started. Another such massacre was organised towards Armenians in the city of Kirovabad, Azerbaijan, which occurred in November, 1988, and is

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[110] See Rost, Y. (1990): *Armenian Tragedy.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, p. 8.
[111] See Karakashian, M., et al (2003): *Armenian,* p. 232.
[112] See Karakashian, M., et al (2003): *Armenian,* pp. 233-234.
[113] See Walker, Ch.J. (1991): *Armenia*, p. 124.
[114] A nationalist movement in Armenia and Karabagh from 1988 to 1922 to unite with the Soviet Armenia.

known as the Kirovabad pogrom[115]. From January 13 to 19, 1990, the Baku pogrom was organised towards the civilian Armenian inhabitants of Baku, Azerbaijan. During the pogrom Armenians were robbed, tortured and killed. A great flow of migration followed these horrible events, and hundreds of thousands of Armenians migrated to Armenia, Russia, the United States. In the period of 1988-1992, the number of Armenians who migrated from Azerbaijan to Armenia varies from 375.000 to 500.000[116].

The earthquake in northern Armenia on December 7, 1988, which is also known as the Spitak[117] earthquake (in Armenian: Սպիտակի երկրաշարժ), was another reason of the Armenian migration to other countries. The earthquake devastated the country, killing at the very least 25.000 people and leaving hundreds of thousands of people without shelter. Many Armenians from the regions, where the earthquake was the strongest, were evacuated to Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, to receive medical treatment, and a great number left for other countries for the same reason. According to the statistics, 130000 Armenians went to other Soviet Union countries, and 70000 left for other countries[118].

After World War II, the Armenians who survived the Genocide, moved from central and eastern Anatolia to Constantinople, now called Istanbul, and from there migrated to Europe and North America in the 1950s. And in the 1960s, Armenians migrated from Syria and Lebanon because of the civil war and instability in Lebanon in 1958 and the foreseeing change of the Syrian government. Armenians migrated mostly to France, Germany and the United States, where they later created organisations like Hamazkain Cultural and Educational Association and the Tekeyan Cultural Association[119].

In the 1st years of independence of the Republic of Armenia (1991), due to the collapse of the economy, numerous large and small industrial enterprises were dissolved, agriculture suffered immensely, a great number of economic difficulties (lack of industry, gas, very limited electricity and public transportation) arose, and hundreds of thousands of people were left without jobs and resources for living, and due to all these facts a mass migration from Armenia started[120]. Armenians left mostly for Russia and post Soviet states, and up to 20% left for Europe and the United States. In the period of 1990 to 2000, approximately 900.000 Armenians left their homeland, Armenia, to settle down in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the USA, Europe, namely, France, Austria, Spain, Greece, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands and Poland. The migration to Germany was not successful, since asylum applications were rejected[121].

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[115] See Walker, Ch.J. (1991): *Armenia*, p. 128.
[116] See Karakashian, M., et al (2003): *Armenian*, pp. 234-235.
[117] Spitak – a town in the north of the Lori Province in Armenia.
[118] See Karakashian, M., et al (2003): *Armenian,* p. 235.
[119] See Karakashian, M., et al (2003): *Armenian*, p. 237.
[120] See Simonyan, H.R. (2012): *The History of Armenia.* Yerevan: Yerevan State University, p. 855. Original in Armenian: Սիմոնյան, Հր. Ռ. (2012)՝ Հայոց պատմություն: ԵՊՀ հրատարակչություն, Երևան:
[121] See Poghosyan, G. (2014): *Armenian*, pp. 22-23.

Today large Armenian communities exist in Russia, the USA, Canada, in the CIS states, in the Middle East (the largest in Lebanon), in Europe (especially, Western Europe, particularly in France), not to speak of smaller communities which can be found almost anywhere in the world.

Table 1. The Main Countries of the Armenian Diaspora[122]

Country	Number of Armenians
1. Russia	2,200,000
2. USA	1,200,000
3. France	450,000
4. Georgia	350,000
5. Ukraine	130,000

Armenians are spread in many countries of the world, but Armenian communities and Armenian cultural life do not exist in all the countries where Armenians live. For instance, since 1930s, the Armenian Apostolic Church has been functioning, and in Singapore, several dozens of Armenian families live, there is a church, even Armenian cemetery, but there is no Armenian community life. The same refers to some countries, like Yemen, Chile, several countries in Africa. In the countries, where there is Armenian community life, one of the outstanding characteristics is the struggle and efforts for the national-ethnic identity preservation[123].

One of the most recent initiatives, organised by particular members of the Armenian Diaspora, is the Aurora Prize[124], which brings a new perspective to the history of the Armenian Genocide. Aurora Prize is an annual grant for those individuals from all over the world who have been engaged in humanitarian activities and preservation of human life. The inauguration of the Aurora prize took place in Yerevan, Armenia on April 24, 2016, on the commemoration day of the Armenian Genocide (April 24, 1915). The prize was named after Aurora Mardiganyan, who was a survived witness of the Armenian Genocide. She was born on January 12, 1901, and could escape from the Ottoman empire to Los-Angeles, California, where she wrote the book "Ravished Armenia: the Story of Aurora Mardiganian, the Christian Girl, Who Survived the Great Massacres (1918)".

Even though the history of Armenia has immense numbers of sad pages, and the situation in the Republic did not seem very promising, the revolution in the Armenian government has given the Armenian population to hope for the best and opened a fair prospect for Armenia. The revolution was organised and led by the Opposition Leader Nikol Pashinyan, who, as a result of massive

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[122] See Poghosyan, G. (2014): *Armenian*, p. 46.

[123] See Dallaqyan, K. (2004): *The History of the Armenian Diaspora*. Yerevan: Zangak-97, p. 174. Original in Armenian: Դալլաքյան, Կ. (2004՝ Հայ սփյուռքի պատմություն: «Զանգակ-97», երևան:

[124] Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity – https://auroraprize.com/en/.

demonstrations in different cities in Armenia, was elected Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia on May 8, 2018. It is said that the Armenian population has never experienced so much happiness and bliss for the last 30 years, suffering under the previous corrupted governmental regime which has led Armenia to severe poverty, economical instability, distrust, ignorance, loss of values, which in its turn brought with itself a devastating emigration: thousands of Armenians have left the country during this period. Currently, the situation in Armenia seems to improve daily, and every Armenian wants to hope for the best, "for the future destiny of this remarkable people and their much ravaged but ever hallowed land – a veritable cradle of human civilisation"[125].

2.3. The Adoption of Christianity and the Formation of the Armenian Church

> Armenia's geographical position and the adaptable nature of its people enabled it to maintain a unique place in the ancient, classical, and medieval periods. Armenia produced a number of dynasties, developed its own art and architecture, language and literature, and was one of the first states to adopt Christianity as its official religion, a decision that affected the rest of its history.[126]

In the first century, Christianity was already practiced in the Roman provinces of Palestine and Syria, from where it had spread to Armenia. From the second century on, even though secretly, Christianity was already being practiced in Armenia, together with Hellenistic beliefs, as well as the dualistic belief Manicheanism. Obviously, after the adoption of Christianity in Armenia as a state religion, paganism persisted for a while, and even some Armenian Church leaders were martyred, eventually Christianity was forced upon everyone[127].

The history of Christianity as an Armenian state religion was reported by the ancient historians of the 5th century, mainly by Agathangelos[128], as well as Movses Khorenatsi[129] and Pavstos Buzand[130]. According to "The History of the Armenians" by Agathangelos, in 287 Tiridates III winning the war against Persians, returned to the city of Vagharshapat in Armenia with victory, accompanied by the Roman legion. On his way back to Eriza, in the province of Ekegheats, the king brought sacrifices to the

Figure 1: Khor Virap - groundbreaking in 642, completion in the 17th century

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[125] Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 296.
[126] Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History,* p. 145.
[127] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, pp. 62-64.
[128] Agathangelos – an Armenian historian of the 5th century.
[129] Movses Khorenatsi (ca. 410–490s AD) – Armenian historian from the period of Late Antiquity.
[130] Pavstos Buzand – an Armenian historian of the 5th century.

Goddess Anahit[131], while one of his soldiers, named Gregory, refused to join in the sacrifice, claiming he was a Christian[132]. Not only did it infuriate the king, but he also found out that Gregory was the son of Anak who had killed his father, the king Khosrov II. As a result, Gregory was imprisoned in Khor Virap[133] (*see Figure 1*[134]) for 13 years, which was then an underground prison for the people sentenced to death.

In 13 years, Gregory was released under the following circumstances. Some Roman Christian virgins, named Hripsime, Gayane, Shoghakat and many others, the number of which reached approximately 40, were tortured by the Roman Emperor Diocletianus and escaped to the East. Eventually, they settled near the capital of Armenia, Vagharshapat, where the king Tiridates was infatuated by the beauty of the virgin Hripsime and wanted to marry her. Being rejected, the king ordered to kill all the virgins in 300. After the martyrdom, the king got a serious nervous disorder, and nobody could heal the illness. In her dreams, the king's sister was notified that only Gregory, who was imprisoned then, could cure the king's illness. Eventually, the king was cured by Gregory, after which the king Tiridates proclaimed Christianity as a state religion in Armenia, and St. Gregory the Illuminator became the supreme head of the Church and was sent to Caesarea in Cappadocia to be consecrated and ordained by a Greek bishop[135].

Upon his return, he baptised the Armenian nobility, and the pre-Christian temples were replaced by churches, among them, the temple of the Goddess Anahit in Vagharshapat was replaced by the Cathedral of Ejmiatsin (*see Figure 2*[136]). The name Ejmiatsin literally means 'where the Only Begotten Son descended'. It is now the seat of the Catholicos of All Armenians, the head of the Armenian Church. Traditionally, the Armenian Church is called apostolic, since the first preachers of Christianity and the founders of the Armenian Church in Armenia

Figure 2: The Cathedral of Ejmiatsin (4th century)

were two of the 12 Apostles of the Christ, Bartholomew and Thaddeus, who started preaching Christianity in Armenia already in the 1st century (Thaddeus approximately 35-43, Bartholomew

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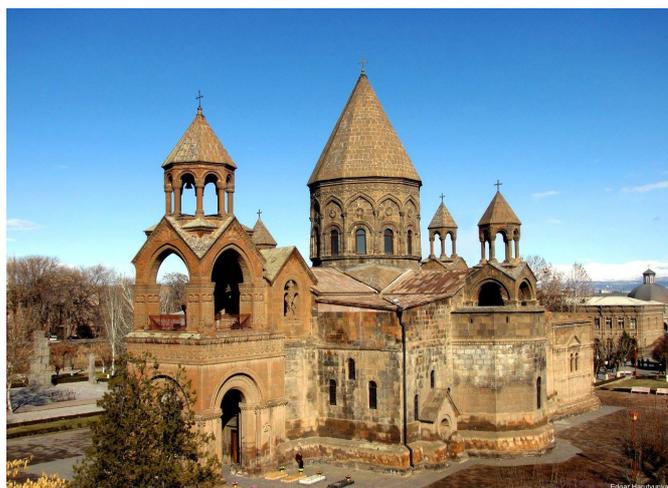
[131] Anahit – Goddess of fertility, birth, protection, beauty and water in the Armenian Mythology.

[132] See Nersessian, V. (2001): *Treasures from the Ark: 1700 Years of Armenian Christian Art*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, p. 115.

[133] Khor Virap (meaning "deep pit" or "deep dungeon") – an Armenian monastery (groundbreaking in 642, completion in the 17th century). One of the most visited and popular tourist destinations in Armenia, which located near the border of Turkey and Armenia, where there is a wonderful view of the Mount Ararat.

[134] Figure 1: *Khor Virap - groundbreaking in 642, completion in the 17th century* – Photo from Armenian Geographic.

[135] See Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 155–158.

[136] Figure 2: The Cathedral of Ejmiatsin (4th century) – Edgar Harutyunyan Photography.

approximately 44-69). Churches dedicated to the virgins killed by Tiridates were built in later years (Saint Hripsime Church), built in 618, Saint Gayane Church – in 630, Saint Shoghakat Church – in 1694)[137].

In 387, Armenia was divided between Byzantium and Persia, and the Christian services were consequently conducted in two languages – Greek and Syriac. Since these two languages were not comprehensible by the common people, it was crucial for Christianity to be preached in the native language. Moreover, there was a threat of eventual assimilation with Greeks and Assyrians in the course of time. As a result, Mesrop Mashtots[138], supported by the Catholicos Sahak Parthev (389-439), created the Armenian alphabet in 405, which consisted of thirty-six letters (three other letters were added in the 12th century). His innovation was to devise the 36 letters that represent the sounds of the Armenian language[139]. The first sentence written in Armenian by Mesrop Mashtots is from Solomon's Book of Proverbs, 1:2: "To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding" (in Armenian: Ճանաչել զիմաստութիւն և զխրատ, իմանալ զբանս հանճարոյ).

Meanwhile, the best students of the Catholicos were sent to Odessa, Alexandria, Athens, Constantinople, Amida and other cities to master Syriac and Greek in order to translate the Bible and other theological works. The Bible was first translated into Armenian from Syriac, afterwards from Greek. At the same time, schools were established in different parts of Armenia, where the Armenian language and literature began to prosper[140].

If one wants to understand Armenian Christianity, one should acknowledge the role of the church in the intellectual and spiritual activities of Armenia. During the Turkish, Mongol and Turkmen invasions, monasteries, as before, were designated for learning, where monks created and developed intellectual and spiritual tradition. Tatev (*see Figure 3*[141]) and Gladzor monasteries in Syunik are considered to be proto-universities, where different subjects were taught, among others, religious studies, arts, philosophy and
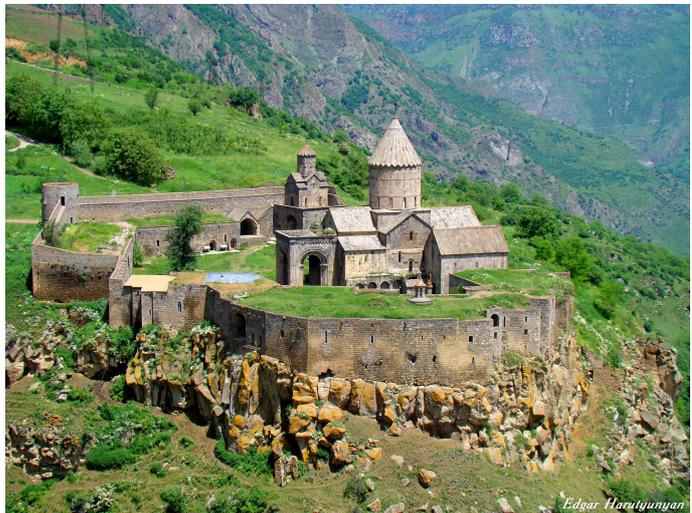
Figure 3: Tatev Monastery

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[137] See Petrossian, Y. (2001): *Armenian Holy Apostolic Church.* Etchmiadzin: Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, pp. 6-11.

[138] Mesrop Mashtots (362 – 440) – the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, cultural worker, preacher of Christianity, theologian, linguist, statesman and hymnologist.

[139] See Petrossian, Y. (2001): *Armenian*, pp. 12-13.

[140] See Petrossian, Y. (2001): *Armenian*, pp. 14-17.

[141] Figure 3: *Tatev Monastery* (foundation in the 4th century, completion in the 8th century) – Edgar Harutyunyan Photography.

other sciences[142]. These monasteries' role was also significant in limiting Latin influences in Armenia: they fought against Catholic missionaries, who (the Dominicans) managed to convert some Armenian laymen and clergy in Nakhijevan and found the *Fratres Unitores* (in Armenian, *unitork*), an Armenian Catholic branch of the Dominican order[143].

Armenian religion and spirituality were more often expressed in poetry as well. Among other famous religious poets, St. Gregory of Narek (Grigor Narekatsi, c. 945-1010) was a monk at Narek monastery by the Lake Van (in modern terms, in Turkey), whose famous prayerbook "The Book of Lamentation", that seeks salvation of the soul and unification with God, is considered to be a masterpiece in the world poetry[144]. Moreover, many prayers in the Armenian Church are from the *Book of Lamentation.* Among others, St. Nerses the Gracious (Nerses Shnorhali (1102-1173, the Catholicos of Armenia from 1166 to 1173) is a famous religious poet with his many volumes of poetry, as well as theological works.[145]

Presently, the Armenian Apostolic Church has two Catholicos, namely Garegin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians and the leader of the Armenian Apostolic Church, with his seat in Ejmiatsin, as well as Aram I, the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia. The Mother See of Holy Ejmiatsin, which is located in the city of Vagharshapat, is the seat of the Catholicos Garagin II. The Catholicosate of the Great House of Cicilia is located in Antelias, Lebanon. Even though there are no doctrinal or liturgical differences in both churches, during the period of the Soviet Armenia there was a division between the Mother See of Holy Ejmiatsin and the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia, during which the latter was strongly against the Soviet approach to the church. Moreover, under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of All Armenians, there are two Patriarchates, namely, the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, that has jurisdiction over the Holy Lands and the Diocese of Jordan, as well as the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople and All of Turkey[146].

As for the relationship between the divine and human natures in Christ, Armenians accept the decision of the Council of Ephesus, according to which Christ has "one nature, united in the Word Incarnate"[147]. Armenians share common theological doctrine with the Coptic Church, the Ethiopian Church, the Syrian Jacobite Church, and the Indian Malankara Church. Armenians reject both the Nestorian position, according to which there are two natures in the Incarnate Christ, as well as the Monophysite approach, according to which there is only the divine nature in Christ.

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[142] See Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 279.

[143] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History,* p. 142.

[144] See Stone, N., Stone, M. (2007): *The Armenians*, p. 34.

[145] See Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 273.

[146] The Armenian Church: Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin – http://www.armenianchurch.org/index.jsp?sid=1&id=7746&pid=3&lng=en.

[147] See Waterfield, R.E. (2011): *Christians in Persia: Assyrians, Armenians, Roman Catholics and Protestants*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, p. 24.

The Mother See of Holy Ejmiatsin is composed of:[148]

- The Mother Cathedral of the entire Armenian Church;
- The monastery and monastic brotherhood;
- The residence of the Catholicos of All Armenians;
- Various religious and cultural institutions, such as the Kevorkian Theological Seminary and a museum.

The Armenian Church has seven Sacraments (Խորհուրդ):[149]

1. Baptism (Մկրտություն)
2. Confirmation (Դրոշմ)
3. Penitence (Ապաշխարություն)
4. Communion (Հաղորդություն)
5. Ordination (Ձեռնադրություն)
6. Holy Matrimony (Պսակ ամուսնության)
7. The Unction of the Sick (Վերջին օծում կամ կարգ հիվանդաց).

The hierarchy of the Armenian Church has three main orders, namely, the priesthood, the bishop, who can obtain the title of archbishop, Catholicos. Two minor orders belong to clerk (dpir) and deacon[150].

Armenia is one of the unique countries in the world where the majority of the population, approximately 98%, is mono-ethnic, the majority of which belongs to the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Armenian Diaspora also belongs to the Christian world, with a small number of Catholic and Protestant denominations, except the Armenians (Hemshins, Hamshenahay in Armenian, literally translated "Hamshen Armenian")[151], who were islamised under the threat of physical extermination during the Armenian Genocide.

> The vast majority of Armenians living in the world today belongs, in multiple forms and with varying intensity, to the Christian religion. Among the denominations currently associated with Armenians, the Armenian Apostolic Church is seen overwhelmingly as *the* national Church, the endemic tradition that almost all Armenians are born into. This unique Church tradition, with its special liturgical language and order, aesthetics, texts and practices, claims a great and uninterrupted antiquity and is often considered the main pillar of Armenian identity.[152]

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[148] The Armenian Church: Eastern Diocese of America – http://www.armenianchurch-ed.net/our-church/holy-etchmiadzin/.

[149] See Petrossian, Y. (2001): *Armenian*, pp. 44-45.

[150] See Petrossian, Y. (2001): *Armenian*, pp. 50-52.

[151] See Cheterian, V. (2015): *Open Wounds: Armenians, Turks and a Century of Genocide*. Oxford University Press.

[152] Agadjanian, A. (ed.) (2014): *Armenian Christianity Today: Identity Politics and Popular Practice*. Surrey: Farnham, p. 1.

Throughout its history, the Armenian Apostolic Church has always played a central and vital role in the preservation of the national and ethnic identity of Armenians. Starting with the creation of the Armenian alphabet, together with numerous translations of various foreign works, creation of countless pieces of Armenian literature, unique architecture with thousands of historical churches, monasteries and monuments, a great variety of illuminated manuscripts, are all related to the Armenian Church. Even today, the Armenian Church plays an important role in the Armenian Diaspora life, where Armenian communities worldwide stay united with the help of the church.

2.4. Armenian Culture: Architecture, Manuscripts, Language and Literature

Like the Urartians before them, the Armenians, who inhabit one of the most picturesque countries in the world, are blessed with a strong aesthetic sense. Their art and architecture throughout the ages combine the beautiful and the useful to an outstanding degree.[153]

Architecture

In Armenia, the only pre-Christian monument that exists is the Temple of Garni (*see Figure 4*[154]). It was built in the first century AD (c. 77), which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1679 and was reconstructed in the 1970s. Armenian paganism had lots of monuments, but after the adoption of Christianity, pre-Cristian temples were replaced by churches.

Figure 4: The Temple of Garni (2nd century BC)

Armenia was under Persian and Byzantine rule for two centuries (428-640 AD), and in spite of this fact, science, literature, art and architecture blossomed in this period. A great number of churches were built, among them St. Hripsime and St. Gayane Cathedrals in Ejmiatsin, the Cathedrals of St. John in Mastara, Avan, the Churches of Odzun, Aruchavanq (Cathedral of Aruch), the village of Aruch in the Aragatsotn Province of Armenia.

One of the most significant monuments in the 7th century is the Zvartnots Cathedral (643-652 AD) (*see Figure 5*[155]). Although it was destroyed in the 10th century (the reason of destruction is unknown), its remains are available up to date. Another triumph of the Armenian architecture is the Cathedral of Ani[156] in the ancient city of Ani,
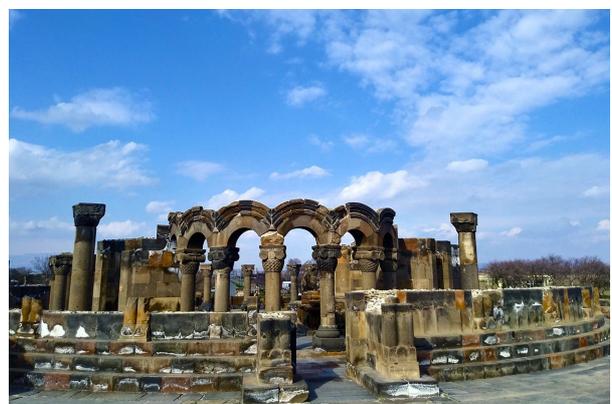
Figure 5: Zvartnots Cathedral (643-652 AD)

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[153] Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 212.
[154] Figure 4: *The Temple of Garni* (2nd century BC) – Photo from Armenian Geographic.
[155] Figure 5: *Zvartnots Cathedral (*643-652 AD) – Photo from Armenian Geographic.
[156] The Cathedral of Ani is in ruins in the Eastern part of Turkey in border with Armenia.

which was the royal capital and the richest city in Armenia in the 10th century, the construction of which was completed in 1001.

In medieval times, hundreds of monasteries of the Armenian Apostolic Church existed, engaged in religious, scholarly, spiritual education, preserving the Armenian cultural and intellectual heritage, at the same time developing it. In the Bagratid period (885-1045 AD), such educational and intellectual monasteries were created in Haghpat, Sanahin, Tatev, Gladzor, and Ani. An Armenian Apostolic monastery exists nowadays only in Jerusalem[157].

Figure 6: Khachkars (cross stones)

Khachkars (*see Figure 6*[158]) or cross-stones play a unique role in the Armenian culture. They are mostly designated to be placed in the walls or near the churches and monasteries, as well as in graveyards and cemeteries. They can be of various sizes and designs which first appeared in the 9th century AD, reached their zenith in the 14th century[159], and were still produced in the 18th century. The revival of making cross stones started again in the 20th century[160]. The variety of khachkars is immense, and they are all unique and specific: even among thousands of khachkars one cannot find duplications.

Figure 7: The Holy See of Gandzasar in Karabagh

The difficult period in Armenians' life from the 10th to the 13th centuries (invasions by Turks, Mongols, Turkmen) did not stop them from constructing numerous churches and engaging in trade activities. With the help of the Armenian wealthy merchants, the Holy See of Gandzasar (*see Figure 7*[161]) in Artsakh (Karabagh), the churches of Noravank, Khorakert, Areni, Eghvard and some churches in Ani, as well as several monasteries were constructed, such as: Sanahin, Hovhannavank, Harijavank,

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[157] See Bournoutian, G.A. (2006): *A Concise History of the Armenian People: From Ancient Times to the Present.* Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda. p. 90.

[158] Figure 6: *Khachkars* (cross stones) – Edgar Harutyunyan Photography.

[159] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, p. 115.

[160] See Petrosyan, H. (2001): *The Khachkar or Cross Stone.* In Abrahamian, Sneezy N. (eds): *Armenian Folk Arts, Culture, and Identity.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, pp. 60-70.

[161] Figure 7: *The Holy See of Gandzasar in Artsakh (Karabagh)* (1216-1238) – Edgar Harutyunyan Photography.

Haghartsin, Spitakavor, Tegher, Kecharis, Goshavank and Geghard[162].

During the twelfth century, the nobility in Cilicia had western preferences, tending both towards Byzantium and Rome, which was strongly opposed by the Armenian Church from Greater Armenia. In spite of this fact, the catholic missionaries succeeded in converting some Armenians, and as a result, an Armenian Catholic Church and monasteries were founded by the Dominican branch (Uniting Brothers). In 1717, Mkhitar Sebastatsi[163] built a monastery on the island of San Lazarro[164] near Venice which functions up to date, and another Mkhitarist house in Vienna. The monasteries engaged themselves in the editing and publishing the ancient and medieval Armenian texts, and Venice was an important centre of the Armenian printing. Moreover, an Armenian Evangelical Church was founded in 1846[165].

Manuscripts

Armenian manuscripts have a special tradition in the Armenian culture, the study of which is only at the very beginning, and they are kept in museums and libraries. Besides folklore and the oral epic of David of Sasun, Armenian manuscripts have played an important role in obtaining information about Armenian's historical past. The earliest Armenian manuscripts date to the 5th and 6th centuries, the Golden age of the Armenian literature and art.

It is estimated that there are 30.000 Armenian manuscripts today. The most important collections of manuscripts are in the Mashtots Matenadaran[166], Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, Armenia (11,000 manuscripts), Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem (4,000), in the Library of the Mkhitarist Brotherhood at San Lazaro (4,000), the Library of the Mekhitarist Brotherhood in Vienna (1,200), the Armenian Catholic Monastery of Bzummar in Lebanon (1,000), the Armenian Monastery at New Julfa, Isfahan (1,000). Some important collections of about 1,000 manuscripts are kept at the Catholicossate of Ejmiadzin, the Oriental Institute, Leningrad, the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Bodleian Library, Oxford, the British Library, London, the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, the Catholicossate of Cilicia, Antelias, University of California, Los Angeles, and the Vatican Library[167].

The largest Armenian manuscript, called "Msho Charyntir" ("Homilies of Mush"), was created in the period 1200-1202. The manuscript includes orations, ethics, historical excerpts, martyrology,

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[162] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, p. 142.

[163] Mkhitar Sebastatsi (in Armenian: Մխիթար Սեբաստացի) (1676 - 1749) – an Armenian Catholic monk, theologian, scholar, the founder of the Mkhitarist Order on San Lazaro in 1717.

[164] See Robinson, E.J. (1917): *The Armenians*, p. 7.

[165] Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, pp. 277–278.

[166] Unesco: The Mashtots Matenadaran Ancient Manuscripts Collection – http://www.unesco.org/new/en/member-states/single-view/news/the_mashtots_matenadaran_ancient_manuscripts_collection/.

[167] Internet Archive Wayback Machine: Armenian Miniature Schools – https://web.archive.org/web/20030915064129/http://www.matenadaran.am/en/heritage/miniature/index.html.

etc. It weighs 28 kilograms with 604 sheets (each sheet 55.5 cm wide and 70 cm long) and 1208 pages and is preserved in Matenadaran[168]. The smallest Armenian manuscript is a Church Calendar (in Armenian: Տոնացույց) which has 104 pages, is 3x4 cm and weights 19 grams[169].

A great number of manuscripts disappeared because of many foreign invasions and attacks, even though it is said that many Armenians risked their lives to save some of them. It cannot be exactly estimated how many manuscripts were destroyed by the Ottomans during the years of the Genocide, but it is believed that the number of the perished manuscripts reaches several thousand. The manuscripts before the tenth century, which survived up to date, are mostly Gospels written on a parchment. Interestingly enough, even though the first Armenian book was printed in Venice in 1512, the tradition of literary manuscripts continued till the nineteenth century. Numerous manuscripts were created especially in the 13th and 14th, as well as in the 17th centuries[170].

Language and Literature

Before the creation of the Armenian alphabet, there was a pre-Christian oral epic in Armenian, some parts of which have survived to our days. Because of the lack of their written language, Armenians had to use Greek and Syriac for educational and liturgical purposes, and consequently, Armenian land under the Byzantine rule spoke Greek, and the part under the Persian rule spoke Syriac, which is considered to be an Aramaic dialect, one of the ancient languages of Christianity, that was mostly spoken in Mesopotamia[171].

After the invention of the Armenian alphabet by St. Mesrop Mashtots in 405[172], first the Bible, and afterwards other liturgical, as well as secular books of Greek and Syriac were translated. Unique Armenian translations can be categorised under a number of important philosophical and scientific works in Syriac and Greek which have been preserved only in their Armenian translations[173], such as the lost treatise *On Nature* by Zeno of Citium (335–263 BC), 300 manuscripts with the works by Aristotle, the works of Theon of Alexandria (1st century AD) on the science of rhetoric, the religious writings of Hermes Trismegistus (3rd century AD), Timothy Aelurus' (Patriarch of Alexandria, 5th century) *Polemica[174]*, Hippolutus' *Commentaries on the Benediction of Moses,* the complete text of Ephraim's *Commentary on the Diatessaron,* the first part of the *Chronicle of Eusebius,,* and *The Romance of Alexander the Great* by Pseudo-Callisthenes[175].

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[168] Matenadaran- The Masrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan.
[169] See Winterbotham, N., Avagyan, A. (2018): *Museums and Written Communication: Tradition and Innovation.* Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, p. 11–12.
[170] See Stone, N., Stone, M. (2007): *The Armenians*, p. 44.
[171] See Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 266.
[172] See Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 266.
[173] See Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 269.
[174] See Lang, D.M. (1970): Armenia, pp. 269–270.
[175] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, p. 72.

The Armenian literature is not only composed of the translated works. The original Armenian compositions have a very rich tradition, especially the fifth century is considered to be the "Golden Age" of the Armenian literature. One of the valuable works is the *History of the Armenians* by Movses Khorenatsi, since it depicts data about the origins of Armenians and the period before adopting Christianity till the year 440 AD, the "History of Armenians" by Pavstos Buzand (6 volume book, two of which were lost) depicts the fourth century events (330-387), and was either originally written in Greek in the 4th century and later translated into Armenian, or was written in Armenian in the 5th century. Among others, "The History of the Conversion of Armenia" by Agathangelos, "The History of Vardan" by Yeghishe, "The Life of St Mesrop Mashtots" by his student Koryun, Yeznik Koghbatsi's treatise "Against the Sects", and David Anhaght's philosophical treaties are famous[176].

As a result of the Arab invasion from 640 to 884 AD, the popular Armenian national epic *the Daredevils of Sasun* ("Sasna Tsrer") was created, which is mostly called by Armenians by the name of the main hero, David of Sasun, which is only one of the four acts of the epic. The oral form of the epic dates back to the 8th century, which was later written by Garegin Srvandztiants[177] in 1873. David of Sasun holds victory against the stronger forces of the Arabs, which represents "a struggle between good and evil"[178]. Moreover, one of the most important things of this period is the illustration of the Gospel dated 862 AD.

In the seventh century, Armenian scientist, philosopher, mathematician, astronomer and geographer Anania Shirakatsi (Anania of Shirak (610–685 AD)) wrote books on geography, astronomy, cosmology, arithmetic, chronology, the lunar cycle, weights and measures[179].

After the creation of the Armenian alphabet, the classical Armenian (*grabar*/գրաբար in Armenian) prevailed from the 5th to the 12th century. All the works, as well as translations were written in *grabar*, and *grabar* was used for liturgical activities. Even though *grabar* dominated in this period, there were efforts to modernise the language in Greater Armenia, as well as the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, and as a result, the Middle Armenian came into being, an example of which is the "The Book of Lamentations" by Gregory of Narek (Grigor Narekatsi, 951-1003)[180]. Not only did Gregory of Narek change the literary style of the Armenian language, but opened the path of including secular themes, thus enriching the Armenian language vocabulary. It is worth mentioning, that even though stylistic and syntactic modifications were made, there were not any considerable changes in the basics of the morphology and the grammar of the language.

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[176] See Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, pp. 268–269.
[177] Garegin Srvandztiants (1840-1892) – an Armenian folklorist, philologist, ethnographer.
[178] See Bournoutian, G.A. (1993): *A History*, p. 101.
[179] See Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 269.
[180] See Lang, D.M. (1970): *Armenia*, p. 270.

The modern Armenian is divided into two groups: Eastern and Western. Eastern Armenian is mostly spoken in the Republic of Armenia (including the different spoken dialects of it in different regions of Armenia), as well as in Georgia, Iran and the CIS countries. Western Armenian is spoken particularly in Turkey and the Middle East, as well as in other countries, where different generations of the Armenian Diaspora exist. Even though the modern Armenian prevails both in the Republic of Armenia and the Diaspora, the classical Armenian, *grabar*, is used in the liturgy and official church publications. There are morphological differences in Eastern and Western Armenian, as well as some consonants are pronounced in a different way.

2.5. The Armenian Diaspora in Germany: Communities, Organisations, Churches

In contrast to other countries (Russia, the USA, France, Lebanon, Syria), the establishment of the Armenian Diaspora in Germany is not so much connected to the Armenian Genocide, but is relatively a new phenomenon: it started after the World War II. Armenians in small numbers started living in Cologne, Hamburg, Berlin, Stuttgart, Munich, Frankfurt am Main and some other big cities and their surroundings. Before long, it was not so easy to talk about Armenian communities in Germany, since Armenians mostly lived separately and individually, before the number of the Armenians grew, and the Armenian Apostolic Church in Ejmiatsin created an Armenian Apostolic Church Diocese in Germany, to help the communities with their daily problems[181].

In European countries, the number of Armenians reaches approximately 2.5 million. It is considered that Germany is the second country in Europe (after France where the number of Armenians reaches approximately 500.000 people) where the majority of Armenians have found residence with approximately 50.000-55.000 people[182]. This number cannot be quite accurate since the number of ethnic Armenians can be much bigger, taking into consideration the great number of Armenians, who migrated to Germany from Turkey, Iran and other countries with the citizenship of the respective countries. Many thousands of Armenians with Turkish citizenship in the first years of their arrival in Germany have founded church communities, and since 1960s the Armenian community in Germany is in the process of constant growth in community numbers[183].

Referring to the history of migration of Armenians, the Armenian migration to Germany can be considered the resettlement of Armenians in Germany from the Republic of Armenia, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Turkey, as well as from the Post-Soviet countries since 1960. In 1970s, many Armenians migrated from Syria, Lebanon and entire Near East to Europe because of the Middle East Conflict. The next big migration of Armenians to Germany was due to the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. Moreover, at the end of 1980s, hundred thousands of Armenians were obliged to leave Armenia because of the political and economic situation there, to pursue job opportunities in

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[181] See Dallaqyan, K. (2004): *The History*, pp. 253-254.
[182] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier,* p. 25.
[183] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier*, p. 30.

Russia, West European countries, the USA and many other countries, and the situation became even more severe because of the Armenian-Azerbaijani war, where Armenians had to fight for their mother land: many Armenians found a new abode in Germany during this period[184].

Since the beginning of 1990s (till 2000), thousands of Armenians came to Germany from Turkey, Lebanon, Syria and other countries. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenian families migrated from Russia, Georgia, the Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Moldova, Baltic States, from almost all CIS countries. Among the immigrants from the former Soviet Union, the ones that migrated from Azerbaijan are considered to be a special group, since they have migrated because of the massacre on Armenians in Baku, Sumgait, Kirovabad and other regions in the period of 1988-1992 and spread all over the world, and a part of them came to Germany[185].

Like every Armenian community in the world, the Armenians who migrate to Germany, can also be classified to Armenians who migrated from their homeland and Armenians who came to Germany from third countries. Thus, there is no accurate distinction and definition of the first, second, third and fourth generation of Armenians in Germany. The first generation can be approximately referred to 1920-1940, during which Armenians, who migrated to Germany, were born or lived here in this period. As a rule, the children and grandchildren of these people are not very much connected to the Armenian culture and lifestyle and are not in any way connected to the Armenian communities. The second generation can be referred to Armenians who migrated to Germany from Turkey, Lebanon, Iran and Syria during 1960-1970. This generation established in Germany, and the third generation came out of it, which attended German schools and is fully integrated into the German society. To this third generation also belong the Armenians who have migrated from the Republic of Armenia and the post Soviet Union countries since 1990. Migrants from Armenia are especially found in culture sectors: soloists, choir or orchestra members in different operas and theatres. Among them many are scholars, researchers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, interpreters, as well as film and theatre actors, directors, journalists, artists, sportsmen, as well as small and middle class businessmen[186].

There are more than forty Armenian organisations and institutions of different activities in Germany, most of which are located in the Federal Republic of Germany, with the exception of "Mesrop Armenian Studies Centre" at Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg. In comparison to other cities, the majority of the Armenian communities, as well as Armenian organisations in Germany are located in Berlin and Cologne, with the latter having the largest Armenian community (almost 5000 Armenians) in Germany. Moreover, the online radio "HayFM: Voice of Armenians" was created by some young Armenian people from Cologne on July 1, 2006[187].

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[184] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier*, pp. 30-31.
[185] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier,* p. 32.
[186] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier*, pp. 36-38.
[187] Hay FM: Voice of Armenians – http://www.hayfm.de.

One can distinguish between religious and secular Armenian communities in Germany which are mostly members of two institutions, namely the Central Council of Armenians in Germany and the Armenian Apostolic Church, represented by the Armenian Diocese in Germany. Besides the Armenian Diocese, there is an Archbishop, a Bishop, six priests and fourteen deacons and subdeacons. Fourteen organisations are directed by the Armenian Apostolic Church, and approximately 20 secular institutions and organisations are mostly engaged in cultural, social, sport and research activities[188].

The Armenian Church in Germany has official communities in the following cities (alphabetical order):[189]

- Berlin
- Bielefeld
- Braunschweig
- Bremen
- Cologne
- Duisburg
- Giessen
- Göppingen
- Halle/Saale
- Hanau
- Kehl
- Mainz
- Munich
- Neuwied
- Nuremberg

The Armenian churches in Germany hold services on a regular basis for the Armenian community members. The church services take place every Sunday in the cities where there are official and registered communities and a membership fee. In non-official communities, for instance, the Armenian community in Göttingen, gatherings are held mainly on special events, such as church holidays, feasts and festivals, memorial and historical events, discussions of daily issues related to the community life or Armenia in general. It is worth mentioning that the Armenian priests are usually invited from the big church communities to small cities without official communities to hold services during the major church holidays, or alternatively, Armenian communities from small cities may visit the official church communities to participate in major church holidays. In most cities, churches are rented to hold services, except the Armenian church in Cologne (where the residence of the Archbishop is), in Halle/Saale (the Armenian church in Halle is a special one, since it belongs to the Armenian community), as well as in Göppingen.

The Armenian communities in Germany take active participation not only celebrating happy events, but are also actively engaged in expressing their dissatisfaction with the governmental decisions of the Republic of Armenia by organising gatherings, demonstrations and protests and making it public for the Armenian audience in the Republic of Armenia via media, as well as supporting Armenia in any possible way during the times of crises. As an example of some recent events (the four day war from April 1-5, 2016, as a result of the sudden attack on Karabagh by Azerbaijan), the Armenians in Germany were not only taken aback and tried to support morally and psychologically, but financial assistance was also provided to the families of the soldiers who fell in the war.

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[188] Armenische Kirchen- und Kulturgemeinde Berlin e.V. – http://www.armenierberlin.de/?page_id=24.
[189] Diözese der Armenischen Kirche in Deutschland – http://armenische-kirche.de/diozese/informationen/.

Moreover, a great number of the Armenian Diaspora voluntarily left for Armenia to participate in the military actions or support its nation in any possible way. Another example can be the demonstrations prior to the revolution in Armenia in May, 2018, when many Armenians from Germany left for Armenia to fight for their rights, freedom and justice with their fellow-countrymen. Moreover, almost all the Armenian communities in Germany have special groups in social networks where they share information with each other, posting news, upcoming events in cultural and social spheres, invitations, requests, etc.

One of the most distinguishing features of the Armenian community in Germany is the usage of different languages, which in some cases causes hindrances in their communication and interaction with each other. For instance, Armenian migrants from the Republic of Armenia speak fluently in Armenian (Eastern Armenian), the ones that migrated to Germany from Russia and post Soviet states, are more fluent in Russian than in Armenian. Some differences are also observed among the old and the new generations. The old generation is fluent and has no difficulties in expressing their thoughts in Armenian, whereas some part of the younger generation, even though they master Armenian, are quite hesitant expressing their thoughts fluently in Armenian. In relation to the language issues, a special emphasis should be made on Armenians who migrated to Germany from Turkey: there are many, who do not speak Armenian at all, and the communication with the Armenians from other regions takes place only in German, and among each other in Turkish. Nevertheless, the matter cannot be generally spread to the majority of the Armenian migrants from Turkey since a considerable number of them are perfectly fluent in Armenian (Western Armenian).

The largest and famous Armenian associations in Germany are the following:

- *Armenian Academics Union 1860* was founded in Leipzig in 1860 and is considered to be the oldest association in German-Armenian society. It organises cultural programs, such as lectures of Armenian professors in Ruhr-University-Bochum, book presentations of German writers and poets, establishes one-day schools in a great number of German cities. The Union established the Institute "Aram Khachaturyan" for musical education in Dortmund in 2004. The Union has members who are mostly university students, opera singers, musicians, artists, doctors, painters, economists, philologists and people of many other professions. One of the requirements for the membership of the Union is a university or high school graduation degree[190].

- *German-Armenian Society* (German: Deutsch-Armenische Gesellschaft, DAG) was established by Johannes Lepsius[191] (German protestant priest and first chairman), Paul Rohrbach (German journalist and later chairman) and Avetik Isahakyan (Armenian writer) in Berlin in 1914, to support Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and prevent the total extermination of the Armenian nation. In 1956, after the death of the chairman Paul Rohrbach, the Society was closed, but was

[190] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier*, pp. 52-53.
[191] It is particularly thanks to Johannes Lepsius' efforts that the Armenian Genocide became known in Germany..

reopened again in Frankfurt am Main in 1972, and since 1973 publishes the quarterly journal Armenian-German Correspondence[192].

- *The Central Council of Armenians in Germany* was established at the end of 1960 to support the Armenian Diaspora in identity preservation and development of different Armenian cultural programs. It is considered to be the largest structure of the communities in Germany which carries out cultural, social, political activities, contributes to the solutions of problems related to Armenia and Armenians. The most significant action of the Central Council of Armenians in Germany was the Petition of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide[193], directed to German Federal Parliament in April, 2000. German, Armenian, Assyrian, Greek, Jewish and Turkish human rights organisations, political, scientific and cultural institutions and individuals from all over the world joined Armenians in Germany for this event. Altogether 17000 signatures were collected for the Genocide recognition. In 2005, German Federal Parliament made a resolution, where the forced displacement of Armenians and the victims of the massacre in 1915 were remembered, without using the word "genocide"[194].

- *Armenian Doctors' Union in Germany* was established by the Armenian doctors in September, 1990, as a result and contribution to the destructive earthquake in Spitak (Armenian city in the Republic of Armenia) in 1988, to provide humanitarian and medical help. The association supports a great number of medical programs that are carried in Armenia, providing with medical equipment and devices[195].

- *The Diocese of the Armenian Church in Germany* was established on April 15, 1991 by the appointment of the Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church Vazgen I (active Catholicos in the period of 1955-1994). The Diocese was created to coordinate the activities of the Armenian communities in Germany, whose number was already 20000 in the beginning of 1990s. The centre of the Armenian Diocese in Germany is the Catholic Sahak-Mesrop Church in Cologne, which is rented by Armenians. The Armenian Diocese in Germany is considered to be one of the stable pillars of German-Armenian communities. The Diocese organises church services and arranges other church festivities for the communities on a regular basis[196].

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[192] Deutsch-Armenische Gesellschaft (DAG) – http://www.deutscharmenischegesellschaft.de.

[193] The recent major events in Germany in connection to the Armenian Genocide centenary were the following: the special session in the German Bundestag on April 24, 2015 with the participation of the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel and others, where some deputies stated that the historical events should be named "Genocide", the presentation of Varouzhan Voskanian's "The Book of Whispers" in the House of Literature in Berlin (April 21, 2015), the 40 hour reading of Franz Werfel's novel "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" in Nuremberg State Theatre (April 22, 2015), the march through Berlin on April 25, 2015, with the demand to recognise the Armenian Genocide, performances of musical pieces of Armenian composers by "Gayane Choir", as well as various events in the churches with speeches held by both Armenian and German representatives in different cities in Germany to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. Moreover, one of the recent remarkable events was the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the German Bundestag on June 2, 2016.

[194] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier*, pp. 44-48.

[195] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier*, p. 50.

[196] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier*, p. 49.

In the last thirty years, Armenians together with German partnership have founded several scientific institutions that investigate different aspects of Armenian history and culture, which are, among others, the following:

- Research on Armenian Architecture Organisation (RAA) (1969)
- Institute for the Armenian Question (founded by the members of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) in 1977)
- Institute for the Diaspora and Investigation on Genocide in Ruhr University Bochum (1995)
- Mesrop Armenian Studies Centre at the Leucorea Foundation (University Halle-Wittenberg 1998).

The latter deals with the interpretation of classical Armenian literature, philology, theology and the history of the Armenian Church. As a result, Johannes Lepsius' archive was published, which contains thousands of priceless documents related to the Armenian Genocide (among the most important ones "Report on the Situation of the Armenian People in Turkey" (1916), "The Death Corridor of the Armenian People" (1915)), to clarify the Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-German relationship and to reveal the history of the end of 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries[197].

It is also worth mentioning, that in some German cities, there are Armenian *khachkars* (cross-stone), namely, in Berlin, Halle (*see Figure 8*[198]), Jena, Bremen, Exter, etc. Armenian *khachkars* in Germany are usually dedicated to the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide victims, and the Armenian communities gather near them annually on April 24 with a priest, deacons and other guests for praying and commemorating.

Figure 8: Khachkar in Halle (2015), dedicated to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims

Notwithstanding the fact, that the Armenian Diaspora has always been surrounded by other dominating cultures and societies, it has always been able to create, prosper, preserve national and ethnic identity, even during the most difficult times of being under foreign rule. Each community in the Armenian Diaspora today has unique features: "they differ along many registers: in terms of social behaviour, language, and culture; in demography and economic prosperity; in terms of internal institutionalisation and ideology"[199]. The Armenian communities worldwide have hybrid identities, meaning that "diaspora

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[197] See Ordukhanyan, A. (2008): *Armenier*, pp. 55-60.

[198] Figure 8: *Khachkar in Halle* (2015), dedicated to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims – The Photo taken by me.

[199] See Armenian Diasporas and Armenia: Issues of Identity and Mobilisation: An interview with Khachig Tölölyan, 3 | 2014: Juifs, Arméniens : un siècle d'État – https://eac.revues.org/565.

Armenians can have more than one "homeland" which can alternate between, or simultaneously be, the *host*-land, the current home-*land*, the *ancestral*-land, or the diaspora condition itself as *home*-land"[200]. Nevertheless, despite these divisions and differences, there is but one thing that combines them all: the love for their homeland and yearning to see the bright, prosperous, and sustainable future of Armenia.

Sometimes we feel we straddle two cultures;
at other times, that we fall between two stools.
– Salman Rushdie, Imaginary Homelands

Migration is a one way trip.
There is no 'home' to go back to.
– Stuart Hall

3. Theory and Practice: Migration, Globalisation, Hybridisation

3.1. Theoretical Frameworks

3.1.1. Migration, Globalisation and Culturally Plural Societies

Worldwide movements and relocations have existed in human life from times immemorial. Whether caused by cataclysms, such as natural disasters, wars, invasions, severe economic situations, or induced by scientific inventions, economic growth, better life conditions, and other developments that would consequently attract people to move from other territories to a particular destination, people have always migrated. In case previously one had the chance to read about relocations and movements of people in the historical and fictional books or later on learn about it via media, because of globalisation, migration has reached its climax and is experienced almost everywhere in the world: the infrastructure, technology, economy have developed considerably and seem to have made the whole world into one single spot where one has access to everything and everywhere at the same time, and it is inevitable to notice to what a large extent and by what an immense rapidity people move worldwide nowadays.

Consequently, as a result of migration and globalisation, culturally diverse and heterogeneous societies can be found in every corner of the world: "All contemporary societies are now culturally plural; no society is made up of people having one culture, one language, and one identity"[201]. Voluntary or forced migration is one of the main reasons of multicultural societies which comprise local people, immigrants, refugees. Many migrants crossing borders live in several worlds and territories at the same time: having spent more than half of one's life in a destination country, one works and leads his daily life, physically being there, but mentally and spiritually living with his family, friends or relatives in the home country.

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[200] See Herzig, E., Kurkchiyan, M. (2005): *The Armenians: Past and Present in the Making of National Identity*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, p. 241.
[201] Berry, J.W. (2011): "Integration", p. 2.2.

What are the definitions of the concepts migration and migrant? Steven Vertovec[202] invented the concept "super-diversity" to depict the massive variety of the concept migrant, where not only migrants themselves as individuals should be taken into consideration but also the diverse migration stories with various durations and vastly diverse people with their unique reasons of migration, as well as different aims, biographies and life experiences. According to the Council of Europe, the term migrant refers to migrant workers, family members, asylum seekers, refugees, illegal immigrants, international students, seasonal workers or cross-border commuters[203]. According to the Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt), migrant background refers to people who migrated to Germany's after 1949, were born in Germany as a foreigner, as well as people who were born in Germany and whose one parent is a foreigner, i.e., who migrated to or was born in Germany as a foreigner[204].

Migration processes are mainly differentiated between the following types: internal and international migration, voluntary and forced migration, temporary and permanent migration. Internal and international migration refers to migration within a country and migration between different countries respectively, which is defined by as "the movement of people to another country, leading to temporary or permanent resettlement"[205]. Temporary migration is linked to international students or guest workers, whose stay in a particular country is not absolutely certain since they may return to their home countries once their studies or work contracts are over, in spite of the fact that this determination may change in the course of time and become a permanent migration. The latter includes people who arrive in a particular country with a certain aim to settle there permanently or who already hold residence permits. It is vital to take into consideration that in case of temporary migration the individuals are usually less integrated or it takes them longer to integrate into the new society, since they primarily did not have the aim of settling down in the host country[206]. Voluntary migration refers to people who choose to live in another country because of the good climate, economic stability, better life conditions or other particular reasons, whereas forced migration takes place as a result of natural disasters, wars, persecution, genocide, etc.

As mentioned above, culturally diverse societies can be found almost in every corner of the world, consequently resulting in globalisation, a phenomenon that exists practically everywhere and is one of the most debatable topics in academia and non-academia. Moreover, as a result of globalisation, not only people move around the world, but also their cultural peculiarities, traditions, habits, values, norms, religions, lifestyles, languages, and other cultural and social phenomena. As

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[202] Vertovec, S. (2007): "Super-Diversity", pp. 1024–1054.

[203] See Council of Europe (1997): *Measurement and Indicators of Integration*. Community Relations. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, p. 9.

[204] See Bijl, R., Arjen, V. (eds.) (2012): *Measuring and Monitoring Immigrant Integration in Europe, Integration Policies and Monitoring Efforts in 17 European Countries*. The Hague: The Netherlands Institute for Social Research, p. 147.

[205] Bartram, D., Poros, M.V., Monforte, P. (2014): *Key Concepts in Migration*. Los Angeles; London; New Delhi; Singapore; Washington DC.: SAGE Publications Ltd., p. 4.

[206] See Bijl, R., et al (2012): *Measuring*, pp. 32–33.

Appadurai states about globalisation, not only people, ideas, goods, images move but also *"imagined worlds,* that is, the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe"[207].

Globalisation is seen as "a result of increasing demographic, economic, ecological, political, and military interconnections on a global scale"[208], "the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole"[209], "global cultural flows"[210], "the formation of a worldwide historical field and […] the development of global memory, arising from shared global experiences"[211], "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa"[212], and eventually "all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society"[213]. This particular definition of the term globalisation demonstrates the process of developing social interconnections globally, referring to the history of humankind. Globalisation not only means that everything is joined together, but that there is a common horizon, where differences are obvious[214].

Presently, people cannot avoid globalisation in the sense that even if they have never travelled worldwide and even if they have not left their small town for a single day, globalisation is unavoidable: the country they live in is already globalised through not only television or internet, but migration of others, with their own particular cultures, habits and lifestyles: "globalization begins at home"[215]. Moreover, people who migrate not only just settle down and integrate into the majority culture, but spread their own culture: some migrants do not stay in the circle of their own communities, but expand their settlement in the new country by creating restaurants, shops, firms, churches, mosques, educational centres, religious and social organisations, which is not only restricted by the attendance or membership of the particular ethnic group members, but extended to involvement of the majority culture and other minority cultures within it: we should not forget that almost in all major societies numerous minority communities exist which have impact on both one another and the majority society as well.

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[207] Appadurai, A. (1990): "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy", in Public Culture, Vol. 2:2, Spring. In Beynon, J., Dunkerley, D. (eds.) (2000): *Globalization: The Reader.* New York: Routledge, pp. 92-99, p. 95.

[208] Hermans, H.J., et al. (2007): "Self", p. 31.

[209] Robertson, R. (1992): *Globalization*, p. 8.

[210] Appadurai, A. (1996): *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 31.

[211] Pieterse, J.N. (1997): "Globalisation", p. 52.

[212] Giddens, A. (1990): *The Consequence of Modernity.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, p. 64.

[213] Albrow, M. (1990): "Introduction", In Albrow, M., King, E. (eds.) (1990): *Globalization, Knowledge and Society*. London: Sage, 1–13, p. 9.

[214] See Tschernokoshewa E., Pahor M.J. (2005): *Auf der Suche nach hybriden Lebensgeschichten: Theorie, Feldforschung, Praxis*. Münster: Waxmann Verlag GmbH, p. 22.

[215] Bhabha, H. (1994): *The Location of Culture*. London, New York: Routledge, p. XXV.

In most cases, especially in the modern understanding of the migration world, the basic idea of the coexistence of the majority and minority societies is to create opportunities for the minority groups to integrate into the majority society, by learning the language, following the rules and laws, adapting and adjusting to a new culture, acquiring new habits and life-styles, struggling with particular stereotypes and prejudices in connection with other cultures and traditions. Nevertheless, the history and the current situation in the world show that in most cases the integration of minority groups into the majority society is not so easy as it might seem from the first sight. In spite of the fact that the migration history of individuals in various societies can be considerably different, all these people go through acculturation and adaptation processes, of course, with different pace and outcome, each facing some similar and some different complications, and as a result having various sequels and modes of acculturation, establishing *third-space* interfaces and *sub-cultures*.

Thus, from my standpoint, globalisation is a direct and natural result of migration: because of people's movements around the world, contact with other cultures, exchange of ideas, thoughts, food, styles, ways of life, etc., even if once in a slower rhythm in comparison to the rapid pace of every single activity of the modern world, globalisation has become an inseparable and inextricable phenomenon of the present. In the world of globalisation, coexistence and co-residence of culturally plural societies have created a culturally hybrid world, where it is not easy to distinguish one's cultural characteristics from other cultures.
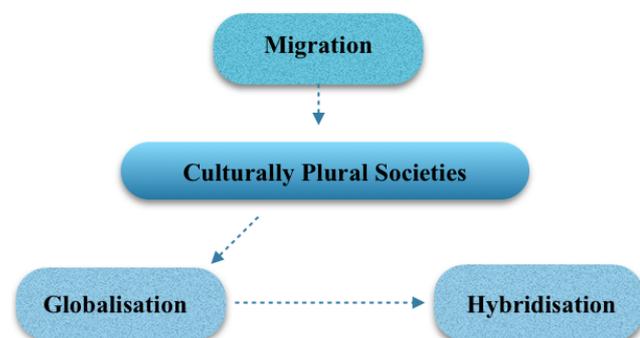
> If you want to make beautiful music, you must
> play the black and the white notes together.
> – Richard M. Nixon

3.1.2. Hybridisation Defined: A Global Melange

In everyday language, the term hybridity or hybridisation can be used with the implication mix, mixture or blend. The term hybridisation has recently gained popularity in the discourse of migration, comprising discussions of ethnic identities, particularly in postcolonial studies (Homi Bhabha, Arjun Appadurai, Stuart Hall, Edward Said, etc.). The concept is discussed in the framework of ethnic identity because of the increasing interest in studying the migrants' lives in hybrid cultures. The word hybrid or hybrid identity is used to capture transformations, occurring anywhere in the world, travelling and moving in different locations. Hybridisation is defined as "the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices"[216] and "the making of global culture as a global melange"[217]. Hybridisation is a

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[216] Rowe, W., Schelling, V. (1991): *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America.* London: Verso, p. 231.
[217] Pieterse, J.N. (2004): *Globalization and Culture: Global Melange.* Lanham, Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield,, p. 77.

relationship between old and new things, it can also be two consciousness, two voices, two accents mixed together. It is also seen as a process and conditions, the process of cultures in different contexts, talking about hybrid life stories, where the mixture of different traditions are significant, where various discourses and technologies can fit[218]. In fact, Homi Bhabha explains the concept from the standpoint of an identity of the postcolonial self, i.e., every kind of identity is already hybridised since there is no authentic or pure identity in any nation, race, individual[219]. Moreover, he states that there is a passage "in-between the designations of identity" and "this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy"[220].

Another phenomenon is hybridisation as a migration melange, where second generation migrants demonstrate diverse cultural features, "a mix of a home culture and language (matching the culture of origin) and an outdoor culture (matching the culture of residence)"[221]. Referring to the situation of mixed identities among migrants, Stuart Hall, et al. indicate that there are no nations in Western Europe that have pure cultures, ethnicities or people: "Modern nations are all cultural hybrids"[222]. As Edward Said states, cultures are not waterproof and they usually consist of "appropriations, common experiences, and interdependences of all kinds"[223]. To put it another way, cultural practices and traditions are more or less related with other "alternative traditions"[224], where cultural identity cannot be stable and fixed but is rather hybrid[225].

Hybridity as a concept does not mean "either – or" but has the "either – and – or" model, by the latter meaning the junction of conceptually different categories: inside and outside, here and there, own and foreign[226]. The hybridity paradigm is not about eliminating the cultural differences, but about indicating the varying experiences and sensibilities, introducing a new comprehension of a community: to be different and at the same time belong there. It can also be said, that the concept of hybridity is a recognition of differences, on the one hand, and an attempt to combine such concepts as differences and similarities, otherness and likeness, diversity and equality, on the other[227]. In this sense, I highly appreciate the terminological coinage 'transdifference', which "refers to whatever runs 'through' the line of demarcation drawn by binary difference"[228]. Transdifference refers to

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[218] See Tschernokoshewa, E., et al (2005): *Auf der Suche*, pp. 16–20.

[219] See Bhabha, H. (1994): *The Location*.

[220] Bhabha, H. (1994): *The Location*, p. 4.

[221] Pieterse, J.N. (2004): *Globalization*.

[222] Hall, S, Held, D., Hubert, D., Thompson, K. (1996): *Modernity: an Introduction to Modern Societies*. Wiley: Blackwell, p. 617.

[223] Said, E. (1993): *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatoo & Windus, p. 261.

[224] Burke, P. (2009): *Cultural*, pp. 102–103.

[225] See Hall, S., Morley, D., Chen, K.H. (1996): *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, p. 502.

[226] See Tschernokoshewa, E., et al (2005): *Auf der Suche*, p. 24.

[227] See Tschernokoshewa, E., et al. (2005): *Auf der Suche*, pp. 26–28.

[228] Breinig, H., Lösch, K. (2002): "Introduction: Difference and Transdifference". In Breiig, H., Gebhardt, J., Lösch, K. (Ed.) (2002): *Multiculturalism in Contemporary Societies: Perspectives on Difference and Transdifference*. Erlangen: Universitäts-Bund Erlangen-Nürnberg, 11-36, p. 23.

people of plural ethnic or other affiliation and considers that both "difference and sameness"[229] are important and inseparable part of life with contingency where difference is seen as "the distinction between self and other as indispensable and inevitable in the reduction of world complexity"[230].

Anthropologist James Clifford[231] uses the word "travel" to indicate the movement of/and between different cultures: "practices of crossing and interaction that troubled the localism of many common assumptions about culture"[232]. One of the most important aspects of hybridisation is the dynamic character of it, the diverse cultural processes that occur in the lives of migrants, living in various social, political and economic contexts, creating a new reality, learning new languages, acquiring new skills and qualifications, going through new experiences, making new friends, living *here* and *there* at the same time, with the former meaning physically settled somewhere, but mentally and psychologically living somewhere else – in their homelands. As a result of leaving their homeland for another foreign country, migrants acquire new identities, and in the course of time it becomes complicated to differentiate who one really is: German, Armenian, German-Armenian, European, etc., which can be depicted by the assertion of the term hybridity as "in-betweenness" which "means going beyond dualism" and "binary thinking"[233].

Hybridisation

∗ "in-betweenness"
∗ "binary thinking"
∗ "double consciousness"

∗ The making of global culture as a global melange.
∗ The ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices.

To sum up, the mixed cultural interactions and the experience of "in-betweenness" and "double consciousness"[234] among migrants create hybrid identities. As already indicated, in the world of globalisation one can hardly find any country that consists solely of an indigenous population. In the context of hybridisation, the concepts native and foreign, similar and different, here and there, inside and outside, mine and yours are unequivocally and decisively blended, where the dissimilarities and differences are mixed but are quite vivid to be pointed out. Hybridisation processes consist of traditional and cultural patterns, as well as gaining new experiences in the foreign structure: attending language courses, getting to know new people, living in a different society and culture, changing professions and getting new ones, going through new life experiences, changing some values and norms, forgetting their own customs and traditions or subconsciously

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[229] Breinig, H. (2010): "Transdifference in the Work of Gerald Vizenor". In Madsen, D.L. (ed.) (2010). *Native Authenticity: Transnational Perspectives on Native American Literary Studies*. State University of New York, Albany, p. 125.

[230] Breinig, H. (2010): "Transdifference", p. 125.

[231] Clifford, J. (1992). "Traveling Cultures". In Lawrence Grossberg, L., Cary Nelson, C., Paula Treichler, P., (eds.) (1992): *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, pp. 96-116.

[232] Clifford, J. (1997): *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 3.

[233] Pieterse, J.N. (2004): *Globalization*, p. 110.

[234] Bhabha, H. (1994): *The Location*, p. 12.

mixing them with the newly acquired ones, acquiring new identities, living in different cultures and worlds at the same time, in other words, living in-between. However hybrid the identities of migrants can be, they could differentiate themselves from others with the help of their ethnic identity, irrespective of the fact how *pure* or *authentic* an ethnic identity can be.

3.1.3. Globalisation, Hybridisation and their Side-Effects: the Global and the Local

As mentioned above, globalisation has reached every corner of the world, where through media all the events in the world, both positive and negative, become a common problem or victory of humanity everywhere. Not only in the migration context, but generally all the people are obliged to adapt and adjust themselves not only to their own environment, social norms and standards, but to the global world requirements as well. As a result, the extensive globalisation process has both positive and negative impacts on individuals and the whole societies in every sphere and discipline. People do not belong to a particular *pure* culture which can be juxtaposed with other cultures but are closely related with them, and this phenomenon not only brings different people and cultures together, but as a consequence, different cultures and hybrid identities can be encountered in one single person nowadays: "Different cultures come together and meet each other within the self of one and the same individual"[235]. As the concept of transdifference indicates, in the binary constructions of difference, people swing between two polarities where similarities and differences are intertwined but can be taken as a point of reference[236]. Now the question arises whether hybridisation is a positive or a negative phenomenon. What does it mean to have two mother tongues? Is living in two or more cultures a favourable thing?

Globalisation as a positive or constructive phenomenon can be referred to better possibilities of self development, education, career, individuality, freedom, release from conservative traditions, etc. Other favourable indicators of cultural hybridisation can be mastering different languages, having better intercultural communication skills, knowing different cultures profoundly, living and experiencing different cultures in all the spheres of life: "the process of globalization [...] offers increasing possibilities of international contacts and fosters economical, ecological, educational, informational, and military forms of cooperation"[237]. As mentioned above, globalisation refers to various processes by which everybody is integrated, at least, partly, into a "global society"[238], and since these processes are plural, globalisations are also in the plural, including "economics, international relations, sociology, cultural studies, political economy, foreign affairs, etc"[239].

Negative aspects of globalisation are mostly related to uncertainty, rapid and hasty life-speed, great competition and transnational exploitation in labour market and other spheres, materialism,

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[235] Hermans, H.J., et al. (2007): "Self", p. 35.
[236] See Breinig, H., Lösch, K. (2002): "Introduction", p. 23.
[237] Hermans, H.J., et al. (2007): "Self", p. 32.
[238] Pieterse, J.N. (1997): "Globalisation", p. 45.
[239] Pieterse, J.N. (1997): "Globalisation", p. 45.

dissolution of values, etc. Cultural hybridisation as a negative phenomenon can be related to an uncertain self-perception and self-categorisation, having nothing authentic, feeling of belonging everywhere but in reality having the feeling of belonging nowhere.
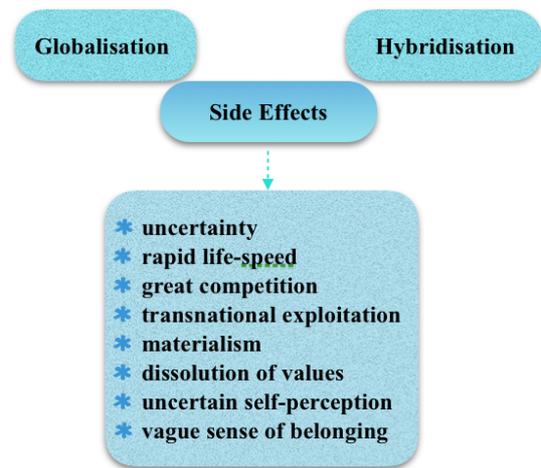
Furthermore, not every person can live in a hectic world full of constant competitions and become a multicultural person. Even though globalisation can bring some positive aspects in one's life, the negative aspects of globalisation, where everything in the very sense of the word is mixed and blended together, make people insecure and unsafe, thus resulting in distress and suffering. When confronted with these problems, people tend to get rid of the threatening influence of globalisation on self and identity and as a result create spaces of "localization": "uncertainty is typical of a globalizing word [*world*] in which selves and identities are shifting between global and local positions"[240]. Perhaps because of the negative aspects of globalisation and endeavours to cope with difficulties people with a migrant background seek contact with their ethnic communities, to feel at home and comfortable, with a high self-esteem and a positive self-perception, sometimes even becoming more religious than they used to be in their own homelands, in that way feeling close to their ethnicity. Moreover, a person who practices religion can at the same time belong to a certain religion, and thus belong to a global religious community, fitting in the local and the global aspects of the religious tradition[241]. Thus, in the world of globalisation, a person with a migrant background will usually look for something local, where one can feel secure and safe, not trying to follow the constant rapid world pace.

There is a tendency to consider globalisation and localisation as "mutually excluding components"[242], that the latter stands in resistance or opposition to the former, when migrants turn to their own communities to protect themselves from globalisation and find shelter in localisation, but in reality globalization is closely related to locality, and they rather appear as "two sides of the same coin"[243], which can be illustrated as a movement between two positions as a member of both the global world and a local community[244], since the global cannot exclude the local. Robertson therefore suggests the *hybrid* concept "glocalization" to illustrate the global aspects within the local: "the form of globalization is currently being reflexively reshaped in such a way as to increasingly

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[240] Hermans, H.J.M., Hermans-Konopka, A. (2010): *Dialogical Self Theory: Positioning and Counter-Positioning in a Globalizing Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 22.

[241] See Schreiter, R. (2004): *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local.* New York: Mary Knoll, Orbis Books, p. 80.

[242] Hermans, H.J., et al (2010): *Dialogical*, p. 23.

[243] Hermans, H.J., et al (2010): *Dialogical*, p. 23.

[244] See Hermans, H.J., et al (2010): *Dialogical*, p. 23.

make projects of glocalization the constitutive features of contemporary globalization"[245]. One can discern the term glocalisation in relation to minorities or local populations who are involved in transnational networks: "Identity patterns are becoming more complex, as people assert local loyalties but want to share in global values and lifestyles"[246].

Moreover, the concept glocalisation can be seen as a threat to seeing and appreciating individualistic, cultural or group differences that exist in different contexts, i.e., "valuing the opposite pole (the other individual, group, culture) in its own merit, history and aims"[247], and I would agree with Herman's suggestion to avoid "global optimism"[248], since "both globalization and localization have their shadow sides"[249].

> Whereas globalization challenges people to extend their selves and identities beyond the reach of traditional structures, this extension implies the pervasive experience of uncertainty. Intensification of this experience motivates individuals and groups to maintain, defend, and even expand their local values and practices by establishing a niche for the formation of a stable identity.[250]

Thus, migrants tend to localisation in order to protect themselves and get away from the globalisation, expressed in their return to their original or ethnic communities. This can be vividly expressed with the example of migrants who encounter numerous difficulties not only before or during migration to another country, but also in the process of adapting to new lifestyles and conditions, adjusting themselves to a new society, which can be quite the opposite of the culture they used to live in, in one word, experiencing globalisation negatively. As a result, in order to avoid uncertainty and chaos, they mostly turn to their smaller communities, spaces or locales, where it is possible to relive one's culture, feel at home and communicate not only in the same language, but be among people with the same *destiny*.

In fact, individuals are in the centre of globalisation because they cause globalisation with their movements around the world, blending with other cultures and nations, and both enjoying the positive aspects of it and suffering from the negative ones. The concept of globalisation is also discussed in connection with the identity formation and the self. Even though globalisation can help people have access to as many different things in the world as informational, economical, educational and ecological spheres, international contacts, it creates a feeling of threat and uncertainty to their own understanding of their world perceptions, values, convictions and perspectives[251]. Since globalisation and hybridisation have direct impact on people's identities, I

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[245] Robertson, R. (1995): "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity". In Featherstone, M., Lash, S., Robertson, R. (eds.) (1995): *Global Modernities.* London: SAGE Publications, 25–44, p. 41.
[246] Pieterse, J.N. (2004): *Globalization*, pp. 64–65.
[247] Hermans, H.J., et al (2010): *Dialogical*, p. 25.
[248] Hermans, H.J., et al (2010): *Dialogical*, p. 26.
[249] Hermans, H.J., et al (2010): *Dialogical*, p. 26.
[250] Hermans, H.J., et al (2007): "Self", p. 34.
[251] See Hermans, H.J., et al. (2007): "Self", 31–61.

find it important to talk about the formation and different types of identity on the following pages, to demonstrate how complex and diverse they can be, especially and particularly among people with a migrant background.

> When I discover who I am, I'll be free.
> — Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man

3.1.4. Identities in the Context of Migration: Analytical Frameworks

Over a century ago William James mentioned about the complexity of describing or defining the term identity, calling it "the most puzzling puzzle with which psychology has to deal"[252]. The term identity was initially used in its current meaning and application in psychology and social sciences, which was defined by Erikson as "the immediate perception of one's selfsameness and continuity in time; and the simultaneous perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity"[253]. In social realia, people are always eager to classify themselves into various social groups and categories, among others gender, ethnicity, religion, social status, social roles, age, etc. This categorisation plays a significant role in the formation of identity.

Personal, Role and Social Identities

Personal identity, "the perception of one's unique characteristics as an individual"[254], is usually formed based on the interaction with significant others and relevant social relations which makes them socially constructed. People's actions are based not only on their own selves, but also on others, which can be vividly illustrated in the case of childhood, where the child is expected to perform some duties and obligations and tries to fulfil the expectations of significant others[255]. In the later years the matter becomes even more complicated due to the relation of the personal identity to different institutions that one encounters in the course of life, consciously or subconsciously controlling one's actions in accordance with the norms and values of different institutions[256]. Identities are not entities that people can possess but are rather formed through socialisation, therefore making identity "an ongoing and adaptive process of identification"[257].

In identity theory, the personal identity is linked to the role identity through meanings, and both are considered to overlap one another with similar meanings. Both role identities and personal identities should be maintained since they are interconnected, and their demands should be balanced: "An

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[252] James, W. (1890): *The Principles of Psychology*. New York: Holt, p. 330.

[253] Erikson, E.H. (1959): *Identity and the Life Cycle*. Selected Papers. New York: International Universities Press, p. 23.

[254] Dolon, R., Todoli, J. (2008): *Analysing Identities in Discourse*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, p. 12.

[255] See Luckmann, Th. (2004): "On the Evolution and Historical Construction of Personal Identity". In Peter von Moos (ed.) (2004): *Unverwechselbarkeit: Persönliche Identität und Identifikation in der vormodernen Gesellschaft*. Köln: Böhlau, 185–205, p. 192.

[256] See Luckmann, Th. (2004): "On the Evolution", pp. 189–191.

[257] McGill, J. (2016): *Religious Identity and Cultural Negotiations: Toward a Theology of Christian Identity in Migration*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, pp. 16-17.

individual cannot simply be guided by role identities and have person identities unaffected by them"[258].

The social identity of the person develops in relation with other people with whom one shares common values, or at least they are of importance to the individual[259] and is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups)"[260]. Social identities can be generally related to such social wide categories as religions, ethnicities or cultures, at the same time, social identities also refer to different social groups, like school, clubs, organisations, etc. People have as many social identities as there are groups that they belong to, and these social identities accentuate the general features with other members in an in-group and the differences with other groups[261], delineating group activities and relations[262].

An individual's social identity is also distinguished between two categories: externally designated by others and internally recognised by the individual him/herself, using the terms "alter-ascribed" and "ego-recognised" social identities[263]: "One's social identity is threatened when other people view oneself as a member of a social group in ways that are grossly discrepant from one's own view of self as a member of that group".[264] Cases of discrepancies between an alter-ascribed and ego-recognised social identity can be illustrated by the example of a Turkish speaking Armenian who is recognised to be a Turk by the German society. In some cases, alter-ascribed social identity may be rejected by a person who tends to assimilate into the new society and who is not proud of his/her ethnic background.

Ethnic Identity[265]

The identity of a person who lives in a mono-ethnic society can be described in terms of personal, role and social identities. Nevertheless, in case of individuals who have a migrant background, the task is much more complicated and multifaceted, since there can be a clash of identities with "'others', which can include the identity of the country of residence, the homeland, as well as identical diasporic communities, spread all over the world"[266]. In ethnic identity four components can be present: ethnic awareness (one is conscious of belonging to a particular ethnic group in

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[258] Stets, E.J. (1995): "Role Identities and Person Identities: Gender Identity, Mastery Identity, and Controlling One's Partner", *Sociological Perspectives 38*, 129-150, p. 143.

[259] See Erikson, E. H. (1968): *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: Norton.

[260] Tajfel, H. (1978): *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations.* London: Academic Press, p. 63.

[261] See Dolon, R., et al (2008): *Analysing*, p. 12.

[262] See Hogg M.A., Terry, D.J., White, K.M. (1995): "A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory*". Social Psychology Quarterly,* Vol. 58, No. 4, 255–269, p. 255.

[263] See Weinreich, P., Saunderson, W. (2003): *Analysing Identity: Cross-Cultural, Societal and Clinical Contexts.* London: Routledge, p. 62.

[264] Weinreich, P., et al (2003): *Analysing*, p. 62.

[265] Ethnic identity is discussed here in connection with the concept ethnicity and ethnic minorities. The latter are not defined in this section but depicted on the following pages, more particularly, in Chapter 5.

[266] Kokot, W., et al (2004): *Diaspora, p. 7.*

comparison to others), ethnic self-identification (one identifies himself with a particular ethnic group), ethnic attitudes (the feelings towards one's ethnic group), ethnic behaviours (specific behavioural patterns belonging to an ethnic group)[267].

A person has a positive or negative social identity based on the appreciative and complimentary relationship with the group. In case individuals have a positive social identity inside the group, they will remain there, in case the opposite is true, they may leave the group or try to change the structure of the group[268]. In case of minority groups, it can be a difficult and challenging task, since minority group individuals usually do not have positive social identity compared to the majority, which, of course, is a psychological matter and cannot be absolutely true among all minority groups, especially those, that are considered to be ethnic minorities. The opposite can also be true as the historical events of Jews and Armenians, who share very similar histories of prejudice and deportation of Holocaust and Genocide because of the fact that they were considered to be clever and competent people in the eyes of the opposite parties, and there existed stereotypical representation of religious minorities.

Attachment and devotion to one's group does not play such a vital role in ethnicity appreciation and ethnic identity preservation than association and communication with the members of the outside groups: "A heightened sense of ethnic solidarity occurs among minority immigrant groups who have achieved considerable socioeconomic assimilation but whose pathway to total acceptance and equality remains blocked"[269].

Ethnic minority identity can be most vividly illustrated by taking into consideration the new identities demonstrated by the second generation, which differ immensely from their parents' identities, as well as from identities of the coevals from the majority society[270]. Moreover, social self-categorisation plays a vital role in ethnic identity. Liebkind differentiates between bilingual language proficiency and bilingual language identification[271]. Mastering several languages does not imply having also several identities in connection with these languages. A vivid example can be the case of Armenians who master both the Armenian and the Turkish languages but do not identify themselves with the latter at all, in this case just having bilingual language proficiency. In connection with this example, another case can be brought with the same group (Armenians who migrated to Germany from Turkey), who are absolutely fluent in Turkish, and do not master the Armenian language: even in this case they do not identify themselves with the Turkish language and consider themselves nothing but Armenians. This same example can be illustrated in case of

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[267] See Phinney, J.S., Rotheram, M.J. (1987): *Children's Ethnic Socialisation: Pluralism and Development*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., p. 13.

[268] See Tajfel, H. (1978): *The Social Psychology of Minorities*. London: Minority Rights Group.

[269] Porter, J.R., Washington, R.E. (1993): "Minority Identity and Self-Esteem". *Annual Review of Sociology,* Vol 19, 139-161, p. 145.

[270] See Liebkind, K. (1983): "Identity in Multiple Group Allegiance". In Jacobson-Widding, A. (ed.) (1983): *Identity: Personal and Socio-Cultural.* Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, Atlantic Highlands, Humanities Press.

[271] See Liebkind, K. (1995): "Bilingual Identity". *European Education*, 27(3), 80-88, p. 80.

Armenians who migrated from Iran: they demonstrate only bilingual language proficiency without bilingual language identification. The ones among these groups who are also fluent in the German language and have been living in Germany for a considerably long time, do not identify themselves with the language (with several exceptions). The lack of wish to identify oneself with a language group is related with the identification conflicts which can be considered in relation to ISA (Identity Structure Analysis), where the bilinguals may be in historical, cultural and psychological conflicts with the language bearers of the majority group, which may also be related to the fact of avoidance from assimilation into the majority group[272].

In case people identify themselves with their ethnic group, they should be eager to participate in different activities within the circle of the ethnic group, be proud of their ethnic identity, share common cultural and behavioural patterns with the other members of the group. In case people claim to belong to an ethnic group, but have no interest or wish to participate or be part of the ethnic group life in their daily routine, these individuals belong to their ethnic group only through self-concept and self-categorisation. In the new generation stemming from ethnic minority families, who were born in the majority country or whose parents moved to the majority country when they were very young, the children cannot help identifying themselves both with the ethnic group and the majority group, in some cases giving more preference for the one than the other: "Ethnic minority identity is not necessarily a singular, fixed, inflexible given but may be constituted of hyphenated identities that indicate varying degrees of identification with both the ethnic minority group and the majority group"[273].

Ethnic identity is usually considered not only in connection with people's identification with their own ethnic group, but also with their identification with the majority society. According to these two types of identification, various cultural adaptations styles can be defined, which are: acculturative, assimilative, dissociative and marginal styles[274]. When members from a minority group demonstrate acculturative style, then they favour both the majority and the minority groups. In case of assimilative style, the minority group members deny their ethnic group and only favour the majority group. In case of demonstration of dissociative style, people identify themselves with their ethnic group and separate themselves from the majority society. Marginal style is demonstrated among people who identify themselves with neither the majority nor the minority groups. In spite of the fact that different individuals demonstrate different levels and degrees of the four strategies, it is not unreservedly stable but may undergo constant changes and alterations in the course of time[275].

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[272] See Hayden, M., Levy, J. Thompson, J. (eds.) (2015): *The SAGE Handbook of Research in International Education.* Second Edition, Los Angeles, London: SAGE Publications Ltd., p. 192.

[273] Hutnik, N. (1991): *Ethnic,* p. 157.

[274] See Hutnik, N. (1991): *Ethnic,* p. 158.

[275] See Hutnik, N. (1991): *Ethnic,* p. 160.

Hybrid Identity

Even migrants with strong ethnic identity end up having mixed identities in a couple of years of inhabitance in the majority society: "The notion that identity has to do with people that look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same, is nonsense"[276]. The concept of hybrid identities can be considered, referring to Heinrich Schäfer's[277] definition of identity as a network, a network of dispositions, which cannot be fixed and tends to transform in the course of time. Referring to French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, social conditions in life may become a part of our "habitus"[278], and as a result, human cognitive, emotional and corporal dispositions can change. According to Bourdieu, such dispositions are a result of socialisation, education, experience, etc. Consequently, new dispositions can be added to our old dispositions and create a network of different identities, which both can change over time, as well as show stability and continuity. Some dispositions can be central in our network and not change so easily, others can be marginal and insignificant and incline to transformation[279].

Resting on the interviews conducted with Armenians living in Germany, among whom there are some who were born and grew up in Armenia, some in Iran, Turkey and in Germany, I can readily presume that the host country culture, whether it is democratic, authoritarian, culturally pluralistic or culturally monolithic, plays a vital role in the formation of an ethnic minority individual's identity, way of thinking, behaviour, attitude and many other factors. In spite of the fact that the influence of the foreign culture is quite often rejected by ethnic minority individuals (not by all the interviewees), since on a conscious level perhaps they are more apt to believe that they have preserved their ethnic identity, on a subconscious level their behaviour and lifestyle can be easily compared to those of the people of the host country, including the language, preference in culinary art, music, movies, etc. (detailed analysis of this phenomenon can be found in the section of the analysis of the interviews in Chapter 3.2): "intensive communication between diasporas and homelands illustrate that never in the history of humankind have global connections had such a broad reach and deep impact on the selves and identities of an increasing number of people"[280].

The hybridity or variety of identities can also be linked to the phenomenon that they cannot exist apart from a group. If identity is constructed based on the relationship with different social groups, then one can count numerous identities within a singular person: "Cultural identities […] undergo

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[276] Hall, S. (1997): "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity". In King, A.D. (ed.) (2000): *Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 41–68.

[277] Schäfer, H. W. (2015): *Identität.*

[278] Bourdieu, P. (1990): *The Logic of Practice.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.
According to Bourdieu, habitus is composed of "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them" (Bourdieu, P. (1990): *The Logic,* p. 53).

[279] See Schäfer, H. W. (2015): *Identität.*

[280] Hermans, H.J., et al (2007): "Self,", p. 31.

constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power"[281]. In the world of globalisation, people cannot avoid having a "bicultural identity"[282], which is related to one's own local culture and generally the global world, or "a hybrid identity, successfully combining elements of global and local situations in a mix"[283].

Certainly, identities are hybrid, especially and more particularly in the context of migration. While having different types of identities, a certain identity can become more important depending on the context in a specific situation: people's ethnic identity may be much more prevalent when they are among their ethnic community members, than in a workplace where most of the coworkers are from a majority culture. Demonstrations of different identities in various contexts can be linked to the fact that we all live in a society which dictates its social rules, preferences and expectations. In this sense, this or that identity may become quite relevant and salient in case the majority society sets some specific rules in employment policy, for instance, where it is very important to be religious and particularly belong to a specific denomination. Thus, migrants perceive and experience globalisation and hybridisation negatively, endeavour to get back to their ethic identity, ethnicity and ethnic group.
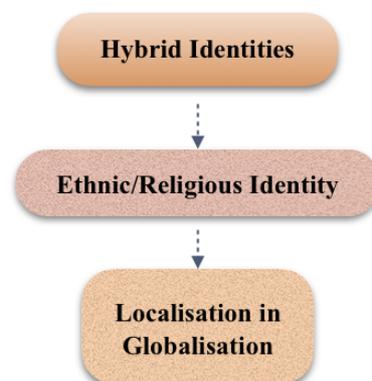
Concluding Remarks

Thus, as indicated in the previous paragraphs, culturally diverse and hybrid societies are inseparable part of the modern world. As a result of migration, globalisation and hybridisation have reached their climax in the sense that in every corner of the world people of diverse cultures, traditions, nations and races reside next to each other in the same environment. There is no possibility to avoid globalisation since different countries are not only globalised through media but by the migration of others together with their cultural peculiarities, habits, values, languages, religions, and other cultural and social phenomena: people who migrate spread and share their own cultures with the majority societies and other minority groups residing within the host countries.

As a result, the concept of hybridisation is discussed in the framework of migrants' ethnic identity, i.e., demonstration of diverse cultural features and characteristics, double consciousness, hybrid life stories, mixture of different traditions and habits. And since cultures are not static but change constantly, new alternative traditions arise, as a result of which migrants live with hybrid identities and hybrid cultures, in one word, they live *in-between*.

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[281] Hall, S. (1990): "Cultural", p. 225.
[282] Hermans, H.J., et al (2007): "Self", p. 34.
[283] Hermans, H.J., et al (2007): "Self", p. 34.

As a result of living in hybrid world, people experience both the positive and negative sides of globalisation and hybridisation. By positive, I refer to better life opportunities in connection with self development, education, career, freedom, individuality, intercultural communication skills, first-hand experiences of different cultures simultaneously, broader horizon, etc. Negative sides of globalisation are uncertainty, hasty life-speed, great competition, dissolution of values, uncertain self-perception, vague sense of belonging, etc.

Hybridisation and globalisation have a direct impact on the identity formation and the self. In case people live in more or less mono-ethnic society, their identities can be mostly related to their personal, role and social identities. The hybridity or variety of identities can also be linked to the fact that they cannot exist apart from a group. If identity is constructed based on the relationship with different social groups, then one can count numerous identities or identity facets within a single person: Moreover, people with a migrant background may experience a clash of identities, since ethnic identity is usually considered not only in connection with people's identification with their own ethnic group, but also with their identification with the majority society and other minority groups within it. Moreover, while having hybrid identity agglomerations, a certain identity element can become more important depending on a certain life situation: people's ethnic identity plays a more important role when they are among their ethnic group members, whereas at workplace their identity as a part of the majority culture can be prevalent.

In the following paragraphs, the hybrid lives and mixed identities of the Armenian ethnic group members living in Germany are reconstructed, based on the findings of my qualitative research. As we will see, the theoretical frameworks discussed above are supported by the empirical findings of Armenians' lives in Germany, with their hybrid self-categorisations, positive and negative evaluation of their culturally hybrid lives, different categorisations within their ethnic groups, usage of different languages in their families on a native-speaker level, etc.

3.2. Empirical Findings

3.2.1. Heterogeneous Self-Perception and Self-Categorisation

As an outcome of cultural integration, the conditions of living in the host society play an important role: what opportunities in all life spheres are given to migrants. The end effect can be mostly evaluated by taking into consideration the lives of the second generation migrants. Since they have grown up within their families and the migrant community, they are not only closely familiar with their own ethnic culture, but with the culture of the host society as well, since they have been in close relationship with the latter since childhood and have been active in social, cultural and public institutions. In case this "double process of socialisation"[284] is carried out positively under

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[284] Penninx, R. (2005): "Integration of Migrants: Economic, Social, Cultural and Political Dimensions". In Maruca, M., MacDonald, A.L., Haug, W. (eds.) (2005): *The New Demographic Regime: Population Challenges and Policy Responses*. New York, Geneva: United Nations, 137–151, p. 143.

favourable circumstances, in their later life they can be at ease in both cultures, having diverse identities and lifestyles[285]. The second generation Armenians have been living in Germany not only since childhood, but some were born in Germany, henceforth, they speak German on a native-speaker level, have received higher education at different universities, are well employed and lead economically stable lives. In case we put in a global and local context, they have hybrid identities that are a mixture of both their local culture and the global cultures, more particularly, including those cultures where the interviewees have lived before migrating to Germany, as well as different minority cultures that exist in the German society.

Ethnic and cultural identities among migrants are pertained differently among various generations in the course of time. For instance, different generations of Armenians in Germany are considerably different in their self-categorisations and self-perceptions, as well as in life-style and values. The difference can be even significantly bigger especially when drawing comparisons between the indigenous population of the Republic of Armenia and Armenians who migrated to Germany from third countries. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned, it can be postulated that a new culture among ethnic groups is created from generation to generation which may have certain similarities with their ethnic culture but with significant new elements and components from other cultures within it. Having lived in a particular country for many years, cultural features are involuntarily adopted from the different strata of the society. In case of the interviewees of the current research, not only their own ethnic culture and the host society culture should be taken into consideration, but the cultures they have lived in before arriving in Germany as well: in case of Armenians from the Republic of Armenia, new cultural attributes have been acquired by the interviewees having lived in the period of the Soviet Union, and the interviewees from Iran and Turkey have been influenced by different cultures existing in those countries. Already having lived in different contexts and hybrid cultures, the above-mentioned groups ended up living in Germany. After a considerable time, they have also gained some features that are typical of Germans or of other minority groups living in Germany.

One of the most conspicuous and interesting phenomenon in connection with self-identification of ethnic minority individuals is the incongruence and discordance between the self-categorisation and the cultural adaptation. In many cases, those ethnic minority individuals who seem to be fully assimilated into the majority culture and claim not to have anything in common with their own culture and traditions, their behaviour, manners, attitudes and habits prove the opposite: there are vivid characteristics that prove they belong to their ethnic group in uncountable dimensions. The opposite can also be true: ethnic minority group individuals may entirely and completely identify themselves with their ethnic group, claiming to have preserved their ethnic identity, but in their behaviour and manners be absolutely assimilated into the majority culture. This phenomenon is certainly the result of cultural hybridity, where in one case the majority society has had so much influence on the migrants that the latter have completely lost their ethnic culture but continue

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[285] See Penninx, R. (2005): "Integration", p. 143.

categorising and identifying themselves with it, whereas in the second case, the ethnic minority group member has hybrid identities as a result of living in a host society, in this case the latter has less influence on the ethnic culture. Whether the ethnic identity disappears or persists in the course of time depends not only on the individual characteristics of the person, but also the social contexts the person lives in.

In the narratives of the interviewees, portrayed below, several situations are depicted, when people cannot help acknowledging and wondering why they have different identities, cultural features, customs and habits, preferences and inclinations. Having lived in different social systems for a considerable time, the social system of the country where they had lived before seems intolerable and unacceptable. The interviewees end up categorising themselves into different groups, evaluating being different positively on the one hand, and self-reflecting on their life experiences, on the other hand. The latter leads to various self-perceptions and self-categorisations, which can sometimes be disorientating since they feel themselves Armenian but acknowledge that they are different from other Armenians. Moreover, these individuals not only feel themselves different from other Armenians, but have other identities with the society where they have lived before. While reading the following narrations, it is important to keep in mind that the interviewees have grown up or spent considerable years in other third countries or Germany and already demonstrate mixed cultural features and habits, acknowledging and admitting hybridity in their self-identification, and perhaps unaware what particular culture dominates in their daily lives, since cultures are all hybrid, and some habits, preferences and inclinations can be considered to be universal.

Even though the following interviewee may feel himself Armenian, he cannot avoid acknowledging that he has gained different features living in different contexts, and not only two but three cultures are deeply rooted in his personality and mentality: Armenian, Russian and German. In the following narration, the interviewee tells about his fondness of the different languages that he masters, about the warmth and sympathy for those cultures that he has lived in, analysing some situations where he thinks in a particular language, etc. He has been living in Germany since 1991, and even though he usually seeks contact with Armenians in different cities, his daily routine is mostly related to the German environment: German colleagues, German neighbours, German friends, etc. As a result, his speech in Armenian is overloaded by some words and expressions in German, and even though he endeavours to express his thoughts only in the Armenian language, he cannot succeed. He is usually homesick, but he is so much used to living in Germany, that he admits that he cannot live in Armenia any longer:

> "Of course, I feel myself Armenian, but I also feel how strange it is, how alien I am… perhaps I feel the cultural differences, when I consider some aspects. I understand that this shouldn't be like that, why are people this way? There are some things that really attract you, some other things… the system, I cannot live in this system (*the system in Armenia*). […] Not only I feel myself Armenian or German, there is also Russianness in me to some extent. I have loved the language since childhood, I don't know, maybe it's the richness of the language that I feel so attracted to the Russian language. I love Russian songs and feel warmness towards Russia. I

also served in the Soviet Army. Besides, I was in contact with Russia as a field worker. I often catch myself in the middle of considering why my thoughts are mostly in German, why I don't think in Armenian about this topic, then I realise that in Germany the usage of the Armenian language is very much limited, that is the reason, that I think more in German, since most of the day I am among Germans and I speak German, and then automatically my thoughts are also in German" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

It is not an easy task to be subjectively and objectively categorised as a member of a specific ethnic group when one belongs to a minority group in a country. Being born into a particular culture where there are distinguishable differences of countenance and appearance between the ethnic group and the majority society, and in the course of time also different cultural characteristics arise, it is not an easy task to refer to oneself with some particular attributions. The following interviewee sees these differences apparently since he is not considered by other Armenians to be absolutely Armenian, and by Germans to be absolutely German. He considers himself a mixture of many cultures he has lived in and points out that certain features are taken by Armenians from the countries they have lived in: Armenians from Armenia have been grossly influenced by the Russian culture, and Armenians in the Diaspora from certain countries share more common features with each other than in comparison to Armenians from the Republic of Armenia, since the former have gone through similar experiences and situations, such as, living in Muslim countries, sharing the same history of being a minority in a majority society, etc. In the mixture of different identifications and categorisations, he eventually considers himself an Armenian-European:

> "In my daily life, as I said, we mix, we like mixing cultures, so I wouldn't separate it so strictly. For my German friends, I am not super German, for my Armenian friends, I am not super Armenian, so I am a mixture of both cultures, and hmm, I'd say I have the…, at least I am trying to have the advantages of both cultures, so it's like a filtered mixture of both cultures. […] Since Armenians in Istanbul took a lot of beneficial attributes from the Greek, from the Syrians, even from the Turks, from everybody they lived with, from the Jews, and incorporated that into their culture, so Armenians in the Diaspora aren't like Armenians in Russia. Most people who live in Armenia today are basically from Russia, so they have the Russian culture inside, too, so, you can't compare them so easily. So, that's how I would describe my culture, I am hmm, from my experience I am culturally closer to Syrian Armenians than *Armenian* Armenians, because they suffered the same thing, Genocide, living in a Muslim society, all the difficulties that are combined with that, so they are more grounded, that's why I would describe my culture or the mixture… so I am a European basically, I am an Armenian-European, that's the closest thing I would describe myself with" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

In spite of the fact that during the interview the following respondent has expressed no anxiety about his losing his ethnic identity in the course of time, and he mostly has shown concern about the coming generations, he has also indicated that certain features are taken from other cultures being in constant and close interaction with them, and there are certain features that are similar among Armenians and the people with whom the former have been in close and long interaction, like a Lebanese-Armenian and a Lebanese, a Syrian-Armenian and a Syrian, etc:

"Living with them (*Germans*) for some time, being among them, you already take some features from their character, the same happened in all the countries. For instance, if you take the Diaspora into account, there are some general features among a Lebanese-Armenian and a Lebanese, a Syrian-Armenian and a Syrian, an Iranian-Armenian and an Iranian and others, like among American-Armenians and Americans, you … how should I put it, you interact with them every day, and you become like them to some extent, although you have some fundamental differences from them, which is not wrong" (*Tigran – male, 29 years old, from Iran*).

The interviewee continues talking about cultural mixes which Armenians have acquired while living in various countries, a distinctive example of a migration melange, i.e., a mixture of one's ethnic culture and the culture of other countries[286]. And even though modern societies are considered to be cultural hybrids, where there are no pure cultures[287], the interviewee is eager to get rid of all the external cultural influences and find the *pure* Armenian culture. To *purify* one's culture among so diverse "alternative traditions"[288] is going to be an unfeasible task and fruitless endeavour, since cultural identity is not static and is apt to a constant change[289]. Nevertheless, living in different cultures gives the interviewee an opportunity to reflect on certain cultural features and habits and select those that seem to be more favourable to him:

"What is really Armenian? There are many things that are not Armenian, we have just taken it living in a certain country, we have taken some Muslim customs because we lived in that region, and those things I always try to get rid of […]. Some things we consider Armenian, but there are things that we have taken from others, being under the influence of others, and there are many bad habits that we have, and we should get rid of them and always try to look for the real, *original, pure* Armenian, all the rest to put to another side. […] Having lived in Germany I could or I had the opportunity to judge myself, reflect on me, as well as Germans. I could always see myself as a mirror, what is wrong in our habits, what bad features an Armenian has, why we don't succeed in something that Germans succeed, or what is wrong among Germans and right among Armenians" (*Tigran – male, 29 years old, from Iran*).

Even if the following interviewee has a strong ethnic identity and considers himself an Armenian, he acknowledges that he has acquired some features that he can refer to as being typical for a German, which have also become a part of him as a result of interacting with the German society:

"But there are situations when you feel that some things are very German inside you, for example, when I am in Armenia, I do something and then I realise, huh, now this is German, such as trust, or how Germans plan everything, or when they are going to celebrate something, they write down and prepare everything, these small things, that I have learnt at work" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

The mixture of different identities and identifications is also present in the following narration, where the interviewee considers himself both Armenian and German with Armenian roots. He was

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[286] See Pieterse, J.N. (2004): *Globalization*.
[287] See Hall, S, et al. (1996): *Modernity*, p. 617.
[288] See Burke, P. (2009): *Cultural*, pp. 102–103.
[289] See Hall, S., et al (1996): *Stuart Hall: Critical*, p. 502.

born in Turkey, and he came to Germany when he was an infant and grew up among Germans and other minorities in Germany. The German society does not consider him German, his family and friends do not consider him utterly Armenian, since he considers that he has some characteristics and discipline matters that are more German than Armenian. Even if he speaks German on a native-speaker level, he has graduated from a university and is very well employed, he is not considered to be German by the German society because of his having different appearance and countenance. The family of the interviewee speaks Turkish at home, he has lived almost his entire life in Germany, and he has culturally hybrid features but does not identity himself with the Turkish language. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that the interviewee is very proud to be fluent in German and perhaps will not even object to be called and considered to be German by the German society, if not his Armenian features and countenance. As for his ethnic identity, he visits Armenia on a regular basis and takes online courses to learn not only Western but Eastern Armenian, since the latter is more comprehensible during the interaction and communication with the Armenians from Armenia:

> "I would define myself as an Armenian, but also as a German. I mean, I was born in Turkey, my parents are also from Turkey, of course with Armenian roots, history, but I grew up and, hmm, how should I put it, I don't… my parents tell me, that I have other character traits that are more related to the German culture than to the Armenian, oriental culture. I believe that here in Germany I don't favour myself in comparison to other young people, I am a part of the society, I also see myself that way. Of course, I have my identification, my own culture, be it the church, the language, the food, habits, different things, one's relationship with family members, etc., and it also plays an important role. Of course, I also feel myself somewhat German, when here in the community one says "Come at 13:00" (*laughs*), most of them come too late, I am always punctual, I have the feeling that it is actually typically German to be punctual and, hmm, maybe also, I don't know, some say, that Germans like order, but I think, that Armenians are also decent and orderly, of course, also the appearance, one can easily see that someone is not original German" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

As a result of living in close relationship with at least two cultures (I say at least, since there are even more cultures within one single family), migrants end up having hybrid identities. It is noteworthy to mention that in comparison to other interviewees, the following interviewee has grown in the culturally most hybrid family: he was born in Germany into an Armenian family, where the mother has migrated to Germany from Turkey, and the father from Iran, who himself was born in Russia and grew up in Iran. Both parents have Armenian ethnic identities, mixed with Persian (perhaps mixed with Russian) and Turkish cultural features, who have lived in Germany at least 30 years or more, according to their son's age. As a consequence, the interviewee speaks 5 languages: Armenian, German, Persian, Turkish and English. Here is how he describes his family situation:

> "I was born in Germany, my father is from Iran, he was born in Iran, my mother is a Turkish-Armenian, they got acquainted here and got married" *(p. 188)* (*Hayk – male, 29 years old, born in Germany*).

This interviewee is also unique in connection with various and hybrid religious experiences that he has gone through related to his family's life experiences, in comparison to other interviewees who were born and have grown up in religious (Christian) or non-religious families. His mother and his grandmother have grown up in a Christian family, but his father belonged to an atheist family, that later came closer to Christianity through other religions. He further talks about the discrepancy between self-perceptive ethnic identification and categorisation by others, or in other terms, "alter-ascribed" and "ego-recognised" identities[290], when certain Armenians consider themselves to be strongly attached to their culture but their behaviour is evaluated as non-Armenian or European by the outsiders or other members of their ethnic group. This phenomenon is not unrepeatable (see Subchapter 3.2.3), where the Armenian respondents distinguish themselves from Armenians that have come to Germany from other regions:

> "Certainly Armenian. I can unfortunately say about our young generation that most of them say that they adhere to the Armenian culture, but with their lifestyle they are more German or globalised standard young men, whose lifestyle is European. Hmm, I try to live as an Armenian, in accordance with Armenian culture, language, religion, that is to say, our belief, preserving our religion…" (*Hayk – male, 29 years old, born in Germany*).

The following interviewee was born in Germany, in an Armenian family who migrated to Germany from Turkey. Discrepancies in his self-identification are also present, since he identifies and feels himself an Armenian because his lifestyle is Armenian, but at the same time observes very easily that he is different from the Armenians from Armenia, and relates this fact to his being an Armenian from the Diaspora. Moreover, he has also mentioned during the interview that he studies at the university away from home, where all his friends are German. As a consequence, he is more fluent in German than in Armenian, even though he is eager to improve his Armenian and takes many initiatives, such as, taking online courses, taking every opportunity to communicate in Armenian with those Armenians who can speak the language, etc. It can be supposed that he identifies himself mostly as an Armenian because of the fact that his features are typical Armenian, and he is perceived as *different* by the German society, notwithstanding the fact that he is constantly among his German friends:

> "I feel more Armenian than German since I don't live like a German, and I can't live the way they live, I feel more Armenian. But when I am in Armenia I understand I am different, and I feel then more German than Armenian from Armenia but it can be because I am Armenian from the Diaspora, that is to say, I have lived in two cultures. But I feel more Armenian than German, that I can say" (*Vahagn – male, 23 years old, born in Germany*).

The narration below is about a family where the parents are Armenian and German, thus, the children have not only German and Armenian identification but mixed ethnicity. As the interviewee mentions herself, everything is mixed in her family. During the interview she constantly mentions that her children consider themselves half Armenian, half German. It is worth mentioning that the

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[290] Weinreich, P., et al (2003): *Analysing*, p. 62.

children have accentuated Armenian features, and if not told otherwise, no one could suppose of their having German ethnicity in their blood. It can also be one of the reasons that the children necessarily indicate that they are Armenians.

> "My children's father never says that we are German, and my children are half German, then they should live according to the German rules or behaviour, no, because all is mixed in our family, we divided everything, he got used to it, and so did I (*laughs*)" (*Yeva – female, 43 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, the above-mentioned quotations from the interviews have portrayed the heterogeneous self-perceptions and self-categorisations of the Armenian respondents in Germany. Ethnic and cultural identities are retained differently among various generations. For instance, most of the interviewees, whose narrations have been quoted above, were born in Germany or have migrated to Germany at a young age. Henceforth, it can be speculated that diverse self-perceptions and self-identifications are more salient among the second generation migrants who were born or have been living in Germany since childhood. The same phenomenon is not so vividly demonstrated by the older generations who have moved to Germany as grown-ups, whose ethnic and cultural identities are stronger.

In addition, the interviewees acknowledge that as a result of living in different social and cultural systems, they have acquired diverse identities, cultural features, habits and preferences. Another phenomenon is related to discrepancies between an alter-ascribed and ego-recognised social identity, when people perceive themselves and are perceived by others differently. As a result of living in different cultural contexts, the respondents are not only considered to be different by the German society, but by themselves and the members of their ethnic group as well. They are not considered to be utterly German by the German society, and they are not perceived as completely Armenian by their ethnic group members. Among the interviewees, there are Armenians who were born in Germany in Armenian families who themselves migrated to Germany from Turkey or Iran, and have been living in several cultures. As a result, they feel themselves Armenians but culturally different from other representatives of their ethnic group.

3.2.2. Positive and Negative Evaluation of Hybrid Cultural Features and Habits

All the institutions that a person is a member of through his/her life, beginning with family and school, ending with social, cultural and economic infrastructure, play a significant role in creating concrete norms and values of an individual. Being born and having grown up in different social, cultural and economic realia, the Armenian interviewees in Germany have culturally mixed features and characteristics. Even though ethnically they are all Armenians, culturally they are exceedingly plural and hybrid, which the interviewees acknowledge themselves. As already indicated in the pervious Subchapter and demonstrated on the following pages in the current Subchapter, the Armenian interviewees from the Republic of Armenia claim to have lots of cultural impact from the period of living in the Soviet Union, the Armenian interviewees from Iran have taken features and habits from those of Iranians, those from Turkey from other cultural minorities that exist in Turkey.

The interviewees themselves feel these differences and bring examples from their own experiences in this context. It is more vividly expressed in their narratives about their current life in Germany, which is constantly compared and contrasted to their lives and habits in Armenia, Iran and Turkey respectively. On the other side, having lived in different cultures and being in constant interaction with the host society and the minority groups living there, Armenians in Germany end up having hybrid identities which creates uncertainty and chaos for them, as well as misunderstandings among their ethnic group members, and thus is evaluated negatively by some interviewees.

Interestingly enough, some of the interviewees evaluate these cultural differences positively, mentioning that they have broader horizon since they have been in constant and direct interaction with different cultures at the same time, having the opportunity to compare and contrast their own culture with other cultures, thus being able to differentiate between *good* and *bad* habits and customs. As a result, they claim to have taken the favourable sides of different cultures and got rid of unfavourable ones that exist in their own culture. The hybridity has been evaluated positively only by three interviewees, which is mostly connected to one's ability to reflect on various habits and customs in different cultures and take those that are more beneficial and complimentary. Moreover, one of the interviewees that evaluates living in hybrid cultures highly also contradicts himself in the sense that he also notices the negative sides of it, not understanding who he really is. Besides him, there are two other interviewees, who consider hybridity a negative phenomenon in connection with their mixed and vague self-perception.

As already indicated in the previous Subchapter, the following interviewee was born in Germany and raised by parents who were born and grew up in Turkey and have been living in Germany for already more than 35 years. He has been raised in culturally different contexts: his ethnically Armenian family has lived among different minorities in Turkey and has been able to take the good features of various cultures, and as a result, the interviewee evaluates cultural hybridity positively:

> "My family as an Armenian family tries to teach you to see the better in all the cultures, so […] here you take the best things that you can get in Turkey from the Greeks, from the Jews, from the Turks even, then come to Germany, take the beneficial parts of Germans, like being punctual, very precise what you are doing, always give hundred percent, and all this cultural mixture enhances our cultural genetic pool basically, and that's what brought me to where I am, because we are very open-minded since we are always a diaspora in one way or another. We have always been in a cultural mixture, we have absorbed the benefits of all cultures that have been living around us to enhance ourselves" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

An Armenian woman from Iran also talks about taking good features from different cultures, differentiating between her mentality and discipline, the former one belonging to her Armenian ethnicity and the latter to the German culture:

> "My way of thinking is Armenian, but my discipline is German, that is to say, I have always tried to take good things from both of them…" (*Mariam – female, 48 years old, from Iran*).

Having lived in different cultures and being in constant and first-hand interaction with various nationalities is evaluated positively in the sense that one gains a broad horizon:

> "What is an advantage for us is that we are in a foreign land […], we had the Armenian culture with Iranians, then we came to Germany, the first years with Arabs, Africans, Albanians… You have something from every culture, you have a broad horizon, since you have been among people from different cultures" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

On the other hand, the same interviewee also notices that he has no concrete self-perception, and cannot clearly understand who he is. He defines himself as an Armenian, but cannot help wondering who he actually is and where he belongs. Even though he claims that he has been brought up in an Armenian family with a strong ethnic identity, even indicating that he received a "patriotic upbringing", he has mixed self-perceptions. Throughout his interview, he has constantly mentioned about the various preferences and habits of Armenians from different regions, which bothers him immensely, since most of them do not know anything about the Armenian culture, but call themselves Armenians. He makes efforts to remain Armenian, since it is not an easy task living in Germany, where the only opportunity to speak Armenian and be with Armenians is his family, with whom he spends only a few hours a day since everybody is at work, communicating and interacting with the German society. The following quotation demonstrates his diverse self-perception:

> "Ok, you are not German, you are not absolutely Armenian either, so who are you? When I would go to Armenia, I would also notice that I don't come from Armenia" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee was eleven years old when she moved to Germany with her parents. Even though she considers herself Armenian and has raised her three children with strong ethnic identities (her three children are married to Armenians and visit Armenia every year, after living in Germany for more than forty years, she still wonders who she actually is. She also feels that she is not German, but she is not hundred percent Armenian, especially when she compares herself with Armenians during her visits in Armenia.

> "Sometimes I sit and think, who am I? Am I German? No! Do I come from Armenia? No!" (*Seda – female, 62 years old, from Turkey*).

As in previous quotations, the following interviewee also wonders about her diverse identities. She is not sure whether to consider hybrid identities favourable or unfavourable, but she mostly ponders over this issue when she has difficult periods in her life. Throughout the interview, she has also indicated that she has no problems living in the German society and does not make any differentiation whether she is among her Armenian or German friends, and even sometimes forgets that she is Armenian, unless reminded about it by Germans. She expresses her thoughts about her hybrid identities, in her own view having at least three identities, wondering who she actually is, where she belongs to, and consequently, she does not know her real identity:

"That is the question that I keep asking myself for many years, especially when I have a difficult period in my life, when I begin to think, why is this so, why am I here, who am I generally, and many times I think that I already don't know my real identity, because I grew up in the Soviet (*Soviet Armenia*), during that period we were both Armenians and people of the Soviet, that is to say, the Russian culture, I went to a Russian school, read in Russian, but I lived in an Armenian family in Armenia. Here one has somehow two identities, I hear Russian songs, I cry, I hear Armenian songs, I cry, now when I hear German songs, I cry (*laughs*), so I don't know who I am. Maybe it's also a good thing, I mean, I am already… for me it's as if I have three identities" (*Anush – female, 53 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, among the interviewees, some Armenians evaluate their culturally hybrid lifestyles and mixed identities positively, taking advantages of the benefits of all the cultures they have lived and live in, having the opportunity to make comparisons between different cultures and enhancing themselves by getting rid of some adverse features and adhering to the favourable ones. Among the interviewees there are some Armenians who experience cultural hybridity in a negative way, having no sense of belonging, having troubles of living in many cultures and adjusting to the mentality and cultural differences in those countries. Moreover, even those who evaluate cultural hybridity positively, they also talk about the negative sides of it in connection with their indefinite and indistinct self-perception in comparison to other members of their ethnic group. It is worth indicating that it is apparent from the interview quotations, that the interviewees cannot avoid facing problems with their self-identification, related to the fact of living in hybrid cultures.

3.2.3. Different Categorisations within the Same Ethnic Group

Living in a hybrid world, it is impossible to avoid the self-perception of individuals as being different from other groups, at the same time feeling closeness and attachment to a special ethnic group to which they belong. In this sense, different generations demonstrate various life-styles and various degrees of identification with their ethnic groups and the majority society and as a result, an individual may preserve one's ethnic values and norms, adopting some cultural traits from the majority culture[291].

In case one's ethnic identity is taken into consideration, it is defined by both the personal identification of the individual with the ethnic group, and the recognition of that individual as a member of an ethnic group by other members of the society. It is vital to differentiate between the terms ethnicity and ethnic identity/identification. In case of the former, one can quite clearly indicate whether a person belongs to a particular ethnic group, and this is a fixed and stable concept and cannot be changed, taking into consideration the bloodline or the biological roots: one is Armenian, German, or German-Armenian. In case of ethnic identification, the concept is not stable and can be given a higher priority or less importance, becoming stronger or weaker under different

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[291] See Hutnik, N. (1991): *Ethnic,* p. 20.

life circumstances: one can be German-Armenian but identify himself only as an Armenian or a German, depending on the context of his life situation.

In spite of the fact that people belonging to a social group have common social identification, they are free to put themselves in this or that social categorisation, feeling in accordance with some members of the group, in this case categorising them as in-group, as well as feeling discordance with other individuals from the same group, and, as a result, putting them into the out-group category[292].

Moreover, when talking about ethnicity and ethnic identity, it is important to take into account two aspects: the inner and the outer. By saying inner aspects of ethnicity, I refer to one's attitude, worldview, perspective and feelings as a member of a particular group to one's own ethnic group, by outer aspects of ethnicity, one's behaviour and actions that can be observed by the outsiders belonging particularly to a certain ethnic group. Having lived in different social and cultural contexts, the Armenian interviewees in Germany often encounter difficulties in identifying themselves with Armenians who have come to Germany from different countries. The first and foremost issue seems to be the language, but as indicated by many of them, they cannot come to an agreement with one another because of different cultural perceptions. The language issue is related to the fact that many Armenians who have come to Germany from Turkey do not speak Armenian. Mastering the Armenian language is considered by the interviewees to be one of the most important attributes to preserve one's identity in the Diaspora, and in case some cannot speak the language, they cannot experience the Armenian culture at first hand. The problem also lies in the preference of music, food, films, TV programmes and other innocent inclinations and dispositions, that have been inherited by the Armenians having spent almost their entire life in Iran or Turkey, thus having acquired habits and customs that differ from those Armenians living in Armenia or other countries in the world. As a result, the behaviour, worldview and habits of an Armenian from Turkey or Iran can be interpreted as non-Armenian by an Armenian from the Republic of Armenia, which consequently results in detachment, separations, disagreements and clashes between Armenians who acknowledge that they have common ethnicity but categorise one another differently, putting different labels and attributions to each other.

In the Armenian reality, both in the Republic of Armenia and in the Armenian Diaspora, it is a common thing to refer to Armenians from different regions, adding the prefix of the name of the country Armenians live in, such as Iranian-Armenian, Turkish-Armenian, Lebanese-Armenian, American-Armenian, etc. Perhaps those who have never interacted in person with Armenians, who were born and grew up in different countries in the world, it cannot be so obvious how different they all culturally are, except those who have had direct communication with them. The interviewees, who have migrated to Germany from different regions, observe these differences and point them out.

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[292] See Penninx, R. (2005): "Integration".

Thus, the interviewees make different categorisations between themselves and the Armenians that were born and grew up in other countries and even talk about collisions and psychological uneasiness being among the Armenians from different countries. The following interviewee talks about collisions between the Armenians from various regions which has made her beware of that issue, and has also become a hindrance for her to attend the Armenian meetings on a regular basis, since she has felt uncomfortable there. According to her interview, she has been more active in the Armenian community life in the first years of her stay in Germany. Later on the connection has weakened, which can also be connected to the fact that she has married a German. At home only German is spoken, consequently, the children do not speak Armenian. She mentions about different misunderstandings during the Armenian meetings, which she has sometimes experienced:

> "To tell the truth, it was awkward sometimes, because there were different Armenians, hmm, Iranian-Armenians, Turkish-Armenians, Armenians from Armenia, and the collision was a little bit too strong, and I was confused and I would sometimes say to myself, this is not… I don't feel good here…" (*Anna – female, 37 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee complains about the language issue, related to the fact that she usually yearns to meet Armenians to be able to communicate in the same language and can drive many kilometres to be able to do it but the fact that there are many Turkish speaking Armenians in different cities, hinders her from communicating in Armenian. In spite of the fact that the interviewee tries to justify the fact that some Armenians from Turkey cannot speak Armenian, it is obvious in her narration that she makes a differentiation between herself or other Armenians coming from Armenia, and the Armenians, who have come to Germany from Turkey, more particularly, calling them "Armenians with Turkish customs". In this respect, the interviewee talks about the subjective and objective categorisation: Armenians from Turkey see themselves as Armenians and are even considered by other Armenian groups to be patriots, nevertheless, their behaviour and lifestyle is very different from other Armenian groups:

> "As I have mentioned earlier, there were only Turkish-Armenians there (*an Armenian community in Germany*), who were speaking Turkish, and your yearning for… you run there to meet some people with whom you can speak Armenian, when you are in a foreign land, it is pleasant to speak Armenian, without thinking where to put the verb in the sentence, just to speak without thinking, to enjoy the pleasure of speaking. […] If you go to that community now, 99% of the Armenian community is Turkish-Armenian, you cannot hear Armenian there, they speak only Turkish […]. You cannot blame them because they lived their whole lives in an environment, it was forbidden to speak Armenian, they spoke Armenian at home and Turkish outside, of course, they understand that they are Armenian, but with their Turkish customs, the society forced them to become Turkish, but deep in their hearts they know they are Armenian, and they are even somehow patriots" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

The language issue is not considered to be so strong, as the cultural differences among Armenians who arrived in Germany from different countries. They may speak the same language but culturally

they can be so different that they cannot interact with each other. The following interviewee has migrated to Germany from the Republic of Armenia, and being engaged in the Armenian community activities for some years, he has experienced some collisions between Armenians from various regions quite often, which he relates to the fact that even though they are all Armenians, culturally they are absolutely different, which hinders them from interacting with each other properly:

> "I was the president of the community for a couple of years, and it was very difficult to run this community, and although it was very difficult, I was always present in the community with great pleasure every Saturday. The difficulties were such: there were Iranian-Armenians, Lebanese-Armenians, Turkish-Armenians, Armenians from Armenia. Hmm, the people did not understand each other… they understood the language, but culturally they did not understand each other" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

Labelling and categorising one another under certain groups is another issue among the Armenian interviewees in Germany that can cause misperceptions and misunderstandings. The following narration illustrates the situation vividly where people of the same ethnicity may quarrel about the usage of a language, preference of music, etc. Of course, this phenomenon may be more common among Armenians from Turkey who have more problems with Armenians from other countries because of the Armenians' prejudice against the Turkish language. Nevertheless, the same thing can be very much observed among Armenians from other countries, who are under the strong impact of various cultures. The reason why some Armenians from Turkey do not speak the Armenian language is illustrated in the following quotation:

> "The women from Armenia do not call us, the women from Turkey, Armenians, they call us Turkish-Armenians. […] I have to say, that Armenians here, there are some who don't know any other language but Turkish, and it happens that this person wants to listen to Turkish music, and Armenians object to it, saying, you should listen to Armenian music, but this person grew up in Turkey, he is 70 years old, doesn't know Armenian, what should we do? Should we beat him? Should we throw him away? They are not like us, but they are Armenians, can an Armenian beat an Armenian? Something like that can never happen. […] My husband, my sister, my brothers, they cannot speak Armenian, because they had come from a village in Turkey, and they learnt only Turkish there, they didn't go to school" (*Arevik – female, 56 years old, from Turkey*).

The issue of hearing Turkish spoken by Turkish Armenians seems to bother all Armenian groups, irrespective of what country he comes from. In Iran, Armenians have an opportunity to attend Armenian schools, even if it is limited to a specific grade. In Turkey, the situation is different: Armenian schools exist only in big cities, and for those Armenians who were born in small towns and villages, there are no opportunities to attend Armenian schools. In spite of the fact that the interviewee acknowledges the fact that the Armenians born in villages in Turkey have limited access to learning Armenian, hearing Armenians speak Turkish still bothers him:

> "In Iran I grew up in the community, and we had that opportunity to attend a school, a church, and you cannot blame Turkish-Armenians, but it bothers you when they speak Turkish. Now I

can speak Armenian with you fluently, even if it is a little bit different from the Armenian spoken in Armenia, in that sense" (*Arsen – male, 52 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee talks about different social systems that Armenians have lived in, and considers that the difficulties that arise between them is due to the fact of growing up in socially and culturally different systems:

"And then difficulties between Armenians from Armenia, Armenians from Iran and Turkey arise, because they are… because they have grown up in different systems: communism against more autocratic system" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

The inclinations and preferences of music and the languages spoken by the Armenians from various countries are not accepted by the following interviewee as well. This innocent inclination of hearing an Arabic song perhaps could be evaluated not so unfavourably if that preference has been expressed by an Armenian from the Republic of Armenia. In case of Diaspora, every step and gesture seems to be criticised by those Armenians who have grown up in different regions. It is important to point out that the preferences of Armenians to hear Turkish and Arabic songs are criticised not only by the following interviewee, but some others as well, at the same time, no interviewee has mentioned or talked negatively about Armenians who prefer listening to American, Russian or German songs.

"We are all Armenians from Armenia in the community, and only recently Armenians from Syria have joined us. They speak Arabic to each other, and we are not used to that, and now when the refugees came it's already different. During different events they turn on Arabic music, it's not ours, we don't like it. They speak Arabic a lot, and we don't like it. Maybe it's because they came from an Arabic country, but I cannot enjoy Arabic music during our gatherings, it's not ours, we are not used to that. On January 6, we were celebrating Easter, they started asking the DJ to turn on Arabic music, and I got angry and asked the DJ to change the song. I don't know, I don't understand it. For instance, in the future, I am going to make my children learn Armenian (*laughs*)" (*Yester – female, 25 years old, from Armenia*).

In this particular community, the Armenians have gone so fas as to divide between different groups even officially: Eastern Armenian community and Western Armenian community. An interviewee expresses his anxiety and concern about the matter, considering the unity and collaboration of Armenians very important. According to my observations during the visits to a church event and also the Armenian choir meetings, the majority of the Armenian community in Cologne consists of Armenians who have migrated to Germany from Turkey, with a small number of Armenians from Armenia.

"We have two communities here, Eastern Armenian community and Western Armenian community. Before there was only one community here, and later another community was created where Iranian-Armenians started to go, and they can speak Eastern Armenian, and this is good, I am not saying anything. But it's somewhat a pity because they were divided into groups, and in my opinion, Armenians should unite and stay together, since we are all

Armenians. But it's also understandable, because it is a little bit different, hmm, they have different opinions and cultures. Here there are more Turkish-Armenians, that is why, perhaps they wanted to be a little bit alone (*laughs*)" (*Vahagn – male, 23 years old, born in Germany*).

Thus, the interviewees often encounter difficulties in communicating and interacting with Armenians who have migrated to Germany from different countries. It might seem that the complications with the communication are related to language issues, but this is not the case: the misunderstandings occur because of cultural dissimilarities and diverse habits and practices. Armenians from different regions have various preferences of cultural and social aspects which results in collisions during the Armenian community meetings. The issue is also related to the subconscious and self-justifying preference of cuisine, music, films and other cultural diversions. I use the word self-justifying, since it is claimed by some Armenians that they did not have the chance to learn the Armenian language in smaller towns and villages in Turkey, as a result, they justify their predisposition to enjoy Turkish music, food, films, etc. In other countries, the Armenians have had an opportunity to attend Armenian schools, have learnt the language, nevertheless, they also prefer Iranian and Arabic films, songs, food, etc. As already indicated above, in comparison to the critical attitude towards the preferences of Armenians to hear Turkish and Arabic songs, the predisposition of Armenians towards European or American music and films has not been criticised by any interviewee, only with the exception of several hints by some interviewees that the Armenian Diaspora should retain to its culture and first of all learn about its culture and live according to it.

The impact of external cultures can be so strong, that people involuntarily acquire those habits and proclivities that are typical of the majority group where they have spent most of their lives. Consequently, the interviewees cannot avoid disagreeing with one another in simple matters, such as choice of the spoken language, preference of music or film, which results in misunderstandings and collisions, causing splittings and divisions into various groups. Moreover, divisions can be observed also inside the same community, where Armenians from different regions are gathered around separate tables: Armenians from the Republic of Armenia around one table, Armenians from Iran around another one, Armenians from Turkey around a third table. What has also been observed, the older generation communicates with one another in Armenian (of course, the ones who master the language, otherwise, the Turkish language is very much heard in the Armenian communities in Germany, since the majority of the community members, visited by me, are Armenians who have migrated from Turkey), the younger generation communicates with each other mostly in German, and to the question, why they do not speak Armenian, they respond that there are some among them who do not understand Armenian, that is the reason they speak German, so as everybody can understand one another.

Furthermore, the usage of Turkish by the Armenians from Turkey and Arabic by the Armenians from Syria is criticised by most of the interviewees. They claim they go to the Armenian community gatherings to communicate in Armenian but are discouraged by mostly hearing Turkish.

Thus, in spite of the fact that the respondents acknowledge that they have the same ethnicity and belong to the same ethnic group, they cannot help but putting themselves and other Armenians into different categorisations which results in collisions and misunderstandings between the groups because of diverse cultural identities, habits, customs and lifestyles.

3.2.4. Hybrid Cultures and Usage of Different Languages on a Native Speaker Level

Growing up in hybrid cultures leads not only to gaining different lifestyles and worldview, but also to mastering several languages on a native-speaker level. What languages do Armenians in Germany speak – Armenian or German? Not only: Armenians in Germany speak not only Armenian and German, but Russian, Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic and many other languages. Taking into account the Armenian Diaspora that is spread worldwide, it is a common phenomenon that Armenians, that have migrated to Germany, speak different languages on a native speaker level. As indicated in Subchapter 3.1.4. about identities, proficiency in several languages does not imply that the person also has identification with those languages, i.e., there is a difference between bilingual language proficiency and bilingual language identification[293]. In case of Armenians from Turkey, even those who speak Turkish and do not know Armenian at all, do not have language identification, but only bilingual language proficiency. Lack of identification with a language among the bilinguals can be either related to cultural, psychological and historical conflicts with the language of the majority society or be an indication of avoiding to assimilate into the majority culture[294]. Nevertheless, as already indicated above, in spite of the fact that the bilinguals do not have language identifications with all the languages they are proficient in, they cannot avoid gaining cultural habits and inclinations from majority societies where they were born and have been living in diverse cultural contexts for a considerable time. Many interviewees tell interesting narrations about the usage of different languages in their families which is depicted in the following paragraphs.

The Armenian language usage issue is very much present not only among Armenians from Turkey but also among the second generation migrants who have complications in expressing themselves confidently and correctly in Armenian, which, of course, cannot be generalised, since there are some who are very much fluent and grammatically correct in expressing themselves in the native language. In spite of the fact that Armenians from all generations identify themselves as Armenians, the German language is a mother-tongue for many second generation Armenians, who are more fluent in it than any other languages that are spoken in their families. This phenomenon has also been discerned during the participant observation, as already indicated above, that most of the younger generation communicates with each other in German.

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[293] See Liebkind, K. (1995): "Bilingual", p. 80.
[294] See Hayden, M., et al (eds.) (2015): *The SAGE*, p. 192.

As a result of migration of Armenians to Germany from different regions, Armenians from different countries can be found within one single family (an Armenian man from Armenia is married to an Armenian woman who has migrated from Turkey), where three different languages (Armenian, German, Turkish) are spoken, depending on the member of the family one holds a conversation with:

> "The wife of my sister's son is Armenian, Turkish-Armenian, she speaks Armenian to us, to her husband, my sister's son doesn't speak in another language, sometimes they speak German together, but mostly they speak Armenian at home, but she and her sister speak German to each other, their parents speak Turkish to each other, and Armenian to their daughter and son-in-law (*laughs*)" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

A language can be selected to be spoken in different situations. What is worth mentioning, is that the knowledge of the Armenian language is evaluated as important for the future generations, and the interviewee himself mentions about teaching his future children the Armenian language. Moreover, the interviewee has grown up and has been brought up in an Armenian family that has migrated to Germany from Iran, but Persian is not spoken at home:

> "If I sit somewhere with an Armenian, and we discuss a matter that is neutral, doesn't refer to anything, we speak German, but when we discuss personal matters or it is something that we don't want others to understand, we speak Armenian. In the future I am going to speak Armenian with my children and teach them Armenian" (*Tigran – male, 29 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee has migrated to Germany from Turkey at an early age, later married an Armenian who has also migrated from Turkey. Even though she has been living in Germany since 1965, she speaks Armenian (Western Armenian) fluently. Nevertheless, she expresses a concern that she has not spoken Armenian to her children but also brings justifications and excuses for her behaviour: she did not want her children to go through the same difficulties that she had had in her childhood with the German language. She speaks Turkish with her husband because she finds it an easy language to communicate, but tries to avoid speaking it in her children's or grandchildren's presence. In her family they also speak three languages, one of which (Turkish) is avoided under certain circumstances:

> "Unfortunately, I spoke only German with my children at home when they were young, because I didn't want them to go through the same problems as I did once. Now I speak Armenian with my children, we mix the German and Armenian languages, my husband and I speak three languages together, Armenian, Turkish, German, because Turkish is a very easy language, one can express oneself more quickly, but generally I don't use it, especially in front of the children we never speak it" (*Seda – female, 62 years old, from Turkey*).

Like in the above-mentioned families, a particular language is chosen to be spoken, depending on what member of the family one speaks to: there is a certain language that the interviewee speaks to each parent separately, and another one when they are all together. Moreover, it is worth mentioning

that this person speaks fluently three languages: he speaks German on a native-speaker level since he went to school and educational institution in Germany, fluent Armenian since his mother speaks Armenian to him, and fluent Turkish since his father speaks Turkish and understands very little Armenian. His parents speak Turkish to each other, and he also speaks Turkish to his parents when they are all together. He also does not have language identification with all the languages he speaks, more particularly, with the Turkish language:

> "My mother and I speak Armenian, my father has come from Turkey, and since he didn't go to school after the Genocide, I mean, he is Armenian, but didn't have an opportunity to learn Armenian, I speak Turkish to him, but he understands Armenian a little. […] When the three of us are at home, I mean, my parents and I, I speak Armenian to my mother, Turkish to my father, but generally we speak Turkish, so as my father can understand" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*).

Even though the following interviewee has always spoken Armenian to her both children, already grown-ups, living and studying in other cities and being in constant interaction with German speaking colleagues and friends, they lack the ability to speak Armenian properly, hesitating in picking up some words and phrases, mixing their speech with German words, even speaking Armenian with an accent. In this family Armenian and German are spoken, again depending on what member of the family one speaks to, more particularly, the parents always speak Armenian to each other and to their children, and the brother and the sister always speak German to each other. Moreover, the parents have language identification only with Armenian, but the children have bilingual language identification. Even though it is not an easy task to teach one's own children Armenian in a foreign country where there is no opportunity to attend Armenian school, some parents make efforts to fill this gap on their own initiative, struggling, persuading, inducing and pressing. The interviewee further tells about all her endeavours to teach her children Armenian. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that her children speak the language but cannot read or write in Armenian:

> "My children were here the other day: I would ask them a question in Armenian, they would reply in German. When they don't speak Armenian for a long time, they forget. Not that they forget, it comes automatically, They don't even realise they answer in German. When they visit us, we speak Armenian to them, they answer us in Armenian, but brother and sister speak German to each other. […] My daughter went to France to meet other Armenian children from all over the world. The workers there were also Armenians, and there were Armenians from many countries, hmm, Greece, even Russia, and when she went there, she had to speak Armenian, nobody could understand German, and if she didn't know Armenian, how could she communicate with them, and later I told her, you see, how good it is that you have learnt Armenian, and you can speak Armenian to those people there. Yes *(sighs)"* *(Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia)*.

In this family the usage of the Armenian language is appreciated a lot, and in spite of the fact that most of the family members are outside the whole day, studying and working in the German

language, once at home they are obliged to speak Armenian, even if it takes some time to translate the thoughts and sentences from German into Armenian:

> "Everybody goes to work, everybody leaves in the morning, stays outside for eight or nine hours, and when everybody is outside, they speak German, then they come home, they have to try to speak Armenian, the children translate the sentences from German into Armenian and then reply in Armenian" (*Gor – male, 37 years old, from Armenia*).

The mixture of different languages at home is also specific in the following family, in this case mixing Armenian, Iranian and German. As encountered among many interviewees, the following interviewee also uses German words in her Armenian speech:

> "Outside we speak German, at home we speak only Armenian. Maybe I don't speak pure Armenian or forget some words, and we use Persian words, as you use Russian words, and sometimes it is difficult, but 90% we speak Armenian, the other 10% is sometimes Persian (*laughs*), sometimes German" (*Gayané – female, 38 years old, from Iran*).

Like many other ethnic minorities in the world, the Armenian respondents in Germany are also bi- and multilingual, speaking not only their mother-tongue but mastering several other languages on a native-speaker level. In some families minimum three languages are used on a regular basis. In spite of the fact that proficiency in a language does not necessarily imply identification with that particular language, especially in case there are historical and/or psychological conflicts in connection with that language, in case of the second generation Armenian migrants the picture is different: for many German is considered to be a mother-tongue, and they also claim to have gained some features and habits that are typical of the German society. To what extent the Armenian respondents have bi- or multilingual language proficiency and language identification cannot be estimated, but one thing is certain: they all have culturally mixed habits, customs and inclinations, as a result of living in culturally hybrid societies.

Concluding Remarks

Thus, the Armenian respondents in Germany have heterogeneous self-perceptions and self-categorisations. It is worth mentioning that diverse self-identifications are more starkly observed by the second generation migrants, in comparison to their parents or grandparents (among the first generation Armenian respondents a stronger ethnic identity is observed), since most of the interviewees who have talked about diverse self-perceptions were born or came to Germany in early or late childhood, with the exception of several interviewees who have arrived in Germany as grown-ups. This tendency can be related not only to individuals' reflections on and estimations of their life perceptions and experiences, but also to the constant observations of the members of their ethnic group and the majority society about their not belonging to a particular culture, i.e., some respondents are not considered to be utterly Armenian by their ethnic group, and absolutely German by the German society, resulting in heterogeneous self-perceptions. One of the reasons that the

presence of diverse identities can be more strongly perceived by the second generation Armenian respondents can be the following: they have gone through bi- and multicultural experiences since childhood, and cultural hybridity has been present in the course of their entire life not only as a phenomenon, but also confirmed by the remarks of their ethnic group and the majority culture of their being different, which has certainly more and deeper influence on children than grown-ups.

Having culturally hybrid lifestyles is evaluated positively by a number of Armenians, where they see such benefits, as having the opportunity to draw comparisons between different cultures and take the favourable attributes and features from them, having broader horizons, enhancing themselves by using the complementary characteristics of all the cultures that they have been living in. On the other hand, there are some interviewees for whom cultural hybridity is a negative experience because they do not have a sense of belonging, for some it is difficult to adjust to some situations and circumstances in the majority society culture.

Since the interviewees have lived in diverse cultures and have hybrid identities, they acknowledge not only themselves to be heterogeneous, but their ethnic group members as well, categorising one another under different groups in accordance with the country the ethnic group member has lived in before migrating to Germany. They see and feel cultural differences which are expressed in the preference of the language, music, food, habits, and other innocent inclinations. Consequently, the Armenian respondents end up having discrepancies in their alter-ascribed and ego-recognised identities, when their self-perceptions do not correspond to how they are perceived inside and outside their ethnic group. As a result, misunderstandings and collisions occur between different members of the Armenian community, which are not only connected with the language issues (as already indicated above, Armenians from different regions speak various languages, some who have migrated from Turkey do not speak Armenian at all) but being culturally diverse. Among the interviewees, the usage of the Turkish language (in a singular case the Arabic language) is usually criticised, supposedly in connection with the historical events. The collisions have gone so far in the Armenian community in Cologne, that they have split into two different groups, where Armenians from various regions gather together, as indicated by the interviewee, into Western and Eastern Armenian communities.

Thus, diverse cultural habits, lifestyles and preferences are demonstrated by the Armenian respondents in Germany who lead culturally hybrid and diverse lives. Understandably, since they have migrated to Germany from different countries, several languages can be spoken in one single family. Even though almost all the interviews, except three of them, have been conducted in the Armenian language, the usage of other languages in the Armenian communities in Germany is a common thing: besides Armenian, the German and Turkish languages dominate there, the former particularly used by the younger generations, the latter, obviously, used by those Armenians, who have migrated from Turkey. Thus, the Armenian respondents in Germany not only speak in different languages, but have hybrid self-perceptions and diverse lifestyles and habits. The cultural

differences between them can be so strong that they may encounter severe obstacles in communicating with each other, as a result, separations and divisions can occur among the same ethnic group members.

<div align="right">
Religions designate where we are from, identify whom
we are with, and prescribe how we move across.
– Thomas Tweed
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4. Theory and Practice: Religion and Migration

4.1. Theoretical Frameworks

4.1.1. Religion in Shaping Identities

Through their dogmas, convictions and principles, religions play a vital role in creating and shaping identities. Religions may play a decisive role in making an individual humble or aggressive, kind or indignant, patient or impatient. These characteristics may be attributed not only to religions but also upbringing and individual temperament and characteristics which are usually shaped through religion *and* culture.

As it is usually described in social identity theory, people see themselves as members of a particular group, where the notion of in-group is born in comparison to out-group[295]. In relation to this, religious identity can be included in social identity theory: individuals in a social group share common features, values and perspectives, accompanied by their particular role identities, as people with religious identity share common religious values and notions. Religious identity can be defined in connection with two dimensions: individual religion which comprises personal practices and beliefs, and institutional religion, when people have a sense of belonging to a religious group or considers themselves a part of a religion.

Religious identity primarily elaborates and advances through the significant others. Children cannot think of religious matters and practice religion in case their parents are not religious, since they usually identify with and imitate their parents in connection with their values and behaviour, which is also illustrated in their religious commitment: "The religious faith and practice of the parent generally forms that of the child"[296]. Thus, one can hypothetically say that a child born and raised in a religious family has a stronger religious identity than a child born and raised in a non-religious family: a child who goes to the church with the family every Sunday cannot avoid acquiring religious identity as a grown-up, irrespective of the fact whether a person will be a strongly religious or a non-religious person later in life: "Although the early agency of socialisation is the family, it loses primacy as the child grows to maturity"[297]. Being away from the family helps making relatively individual choices, I say relatively, since the upbringing and culture can have

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[295] See Dolon, R., et al (2008): *Analysing*, p. 12.
[296] Knudten, D.R. (1967): *The Sociology*, p. 188.
[297] Knudten, D.R. (1967): *The Sociology*, p. 179.

such a strong impact on individuals, that they subconsciously make decisions and choices in later life, based on cultural and social values nurtured in them since childhood. Even if individuals from religious families choose to be non-religious as adults, they cannot escape and erase the religious identity completely which can be expressed in their particular perceptions, perspectives, stereotypes and worldview. For example, in case a Christian chooses to be non-religious and in some time becomes a complete atheist, his/her worldview and life perception will be more identical with those from the Christian than the Muslim, Jewish or Hindu world: "Even though people may have an intellectual understanding of themselves as free moral agents, much of their behaviour is reactive, and their automatic reactions result largely from the conditioning they received through their family emotional systems".[298]

The community can also have a strong influence on identity formation, especially for the ones who live in another country by themselves, without their families. Religious identity influenced by the community may occur in later years but be as strong as the identities that have been formed in childhood. The strength of the community's influence on one's religious identity can be measured by the individual's worldview in concordance with the community perspectives and outlooks: in case they both share similar principles and have the same goal, the influence will be stronger[299].

The concept "cultural religion"[300] means "an identification with a religious heritage without any religious participation or a sense of personal involvement per se"[301]. Religious identities can vary in different contexts since religious belief is more a social and cultural identification than an intellectual judgement, and in this sense one can be called culturally religious without being a strong believer or participating in religious rituals[302]. In other words, through its symbols and rituals, religions contribute to religious identifications which in the modern society has a strong implication not in a theological sense but in a social context. This phenomenon is very much applicable in the Armenians' perception of religion as an inseparable part of their culture and ethnic/cultural identities, where one can easily avoid categorising religious, ethnic, cultural identities separately but rather perceive it as a conglomeration of all of them, since they are entangled and perceived as one inseparable unit: religious identity – Christian, ethnic identity – Armenian, cultural identity – customs and traditions.

I would also like to speak briefly about the words 'religion' and 'religious' in the Armenian language. 'Religion' is *kron* (կրոն) in Armenian, nevertheless, the adjective 'religious' has two connotations in Armenian: the first is *kronakan* (կրոնական), the root of the word is *kron* (religion), the second is *havatacyal* (հավատացյալ), the root of which is connected with the word *havat* (հավատ), which means both faith and belief. Thus, in case we use the expression 'religious

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[298] Hall, M.C. (1996): *Identity*, p. 63.
[299] See Hall, M.C. (1996): *Identity*.
[300] Demerath, N.J. III (2001): *Crossing*.
[301] Demerath, N.J. III (2001): *Crossing*, p. 59.
[302] See Demerath, N.J. III (2001): *Crossing*, p. 9.

identity', in Armenian it sounds *kronakan inqnutyun* (կրոնական ինքնություն), on the other hand, in case we want to refer to a person who is religious, we say *havatacyal.* Moreover, the same word *havatacyal* can also be a noun with the meaning of a 'believer'. To avoid being confused in these expressions, below a short clearer description is presented:

Religion	*Kron* (կրոն)
Faith/Belief	*Havat* (հավատ)
Religious	1. *kronakan* (կրոնական) 2. *havatacyal* (հավատացյալ) = adjective
Religious Identity Religious Person	*Kronakan inqnutyun* (կրոնական ինքնություն) *Havatacyal andz (*հավատացյալ անձ*)* = adjective
Believer	*Havatacyal* (հավատացյալ) = noun

Thus, in the Armenian context, ethnic, cultural and religious identities are closely related to each other: in case one says Armenian, the aspect of religion already exists in the concept of ethnicity and culture. Of course, there are Armenians both in the Republic of Armenia and other countries of the world, for whom their ethnicity as an Armenian is only connected to their culture and history, not related to Christianity at all. Nevertheless, since the religious and ethnic identities are mostly mixed and identified as one by the majority of the Armenian interviewees in the circle of my research, I would like to accentuate that religious identity is an orienting and distinguishable part of the Armenians' ethnic identity.

A study of different identities, namely, national, ethnic and religious identities, is discussed in the "The Multicultural Riddle"[303]. Multiculturalism includes not only numerous cultural groups, but various cultural experiences within one single cultural group. As an example, North America and Europe are taken to investigate the different contexts of multiculturalism, which comprises three entities and the correlation between them: state, ethnicity, religion. Culture as such can be illustrated as the mixture of the nationalism, ethnicity and religion.

Similar studies related to identity issues have been made in post-Soviet countries. A survey is devoted to the issue of the conversion process of Kyrgyz Muslims to Christianity, which results in the reconstructions of identities, making their new Christian identity their ethnic identity and legitimising a Kyrgyz Christian identity, namely, what it means to be a Christian Kyrgyz, especially opposed to the established perception of the following Kyrgyz identity: to be a Kyrgyz means to be a Muslim[304].

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[303] Baumann, G. (1999): *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities.* New York, Routledge.
[304] See Radford, D. (2014): "Contesting and negotiating religion and ethnic identity in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan". *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 15-28.

A sociological research has been carried out in relation to the role of religion and ethnicity in the identity formation of the Georgian society, with the hypothesis that religious and nationalistic outlooks in the Georgian society play more important role than the civil ones. An emphasis is made on the construction of social identity which is carried out with the help of religion and ethnicity to determine what positions people have in the social environment, and what opportunities they have to develop in the environment in the future, since the Georgian society goes through transformation processes which have caused intolerance and mistrust among various social groups, which is expressed in the differences of basic identities[305].

Thus, with their specific restrictions and dogmas, religions shape identities. What is very important is that the same religion may cultivate and shape in one particular nation different identities, taking into consideration the cultural and historical contexts of the country. In history almost all the territories and countries have undergone not only territorial changes, but also dramatic alterations in the understanding and perception of religion. It is not necessarily a matter of evolution or development, i.e., one cannot differentiate between good or bad religions. The concept is the same: religion helps people release their anxieties and makes it meaningful due to afterlife or reincarnation concepts, whether religion is expressed through the dogmas of Hinduism, Islam or Christianity, the concept of religion does not have much difference in this connotation. Thus, I further apply and discuss the term religion, not referring to religion as a particular religious institution or a demonstration of a specific belief, but rather its application and usage as a means and method: how people *live* religion, as well as why they keep contact with religious institutions.

4.1.2. The Role of Religion in the Context of Migration

Currently, everybody claims that modern societies are more secular compared to older societies which were more religious: it is debatable to what extent this statement is true. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: in modern times cultures can be secular and religious at the same time, since various strata of the population live in the same country in the same century. Even though Emile Durkheim[306] claimed that religion will vanish in the course of time, and that all societies will be secular, modern times show that quite the opposite is true: religion exists in almost all the corners of the world, even in secular and industrialised societies. Even though Freud considers religious people infantile, and Pargament indicates the importance of religion as a coping method with one's problems[307], religion has a strong power on individuals and helps them be happier. As William James indicates, perhaps religion has power on people because of the mystic dimensions that the concept religion can bring into humans' lives.

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[305] See Chelidze, A. (2014): "Nationalistic, Religious and Civil Components of Identity in Post-Soviet Georgia", *International Journal of Area Studies* 9:2, pp. 113-133.

[306] Durkheim, E. (1957): *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

[307] See Pargament, K.I. (1997): *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice.* New York, London: The Guilford Press.

What is the role of religion in the context of migration? Stepick[308] begins his article contradicting the words of Nietzsche "God is dead", particularly indicating the significant role of religion in the lives of many migrants. Religion and culture are considered to be unique conceptions in one's life, where individuals can identify themselves with some specific characteristics in their own cultural and religious traditions. The importance of one's ethnic and cultural identity is particularly sharpened among minority groups: people might usually not pay so much attention to their religiosity level or see their cultural uniqueness unless compared and confronted with other cultures and religions, or living in a religious or non-religious environment, sharpening their sense of belonging to their own religion. For Armenians in the Republic of Armenia, which is one of the unique countries in the world where the most of the population is mono-ethnic, issues with ethnicity and religion might not be as salient and prevalent, as for the Armenians in Diaspora, who are considered to be ethnic groups in different countries worldwide: "The religious aspect of identity can become more salient for the immigrant in his new country than in his country of origin because of religion's frequent contribution to ethnic identity"[309].

With the help of religion migrants bond themselves with the past[310]. In diasporic identities religion and organisational structures play a vital role, where the community may find its position in the majority society, fight against prejudice and discrimination in the new society[311], at the same time continue to keep in touch with the country of origin, as well as integrate into the new host society[312]. More importantly, putting stress on the significance of religion and religious communities in migrants' lives as a source of emotional support and dignity, it can be indicated that "religious communities oftentimes serve as a safe haven, a place of physical, spiritual and emotional support in a strange land"[313]. A number of reasons of the vital role of religion in the migration process can be indicated, among which: religion can be the reason to migrate, it can help with identity issues, it can support in times of crises, it can help find meaning in the migration process, it can be a source of reconciliation in case one has a negative migration history or experience[314]. Religion can make home for people: "religions […] construct a home—and a homeland"[315], since religious communities are usually perceived as home[316]. Besides, the migration of people and their religious ideas lead to local religious cultures, and, for instance, in the German

[308] Stepick, A. (2005): "God".

[309] Akhtar, S. (2011): *Immigration and Acculturation: Mourning, Adaptation and the Next Generation*. Lanham: Jason Aronson, p. 106.

[310] See Smith, T. (1978): "Religion and Ethnicity in America". *American Historical Review 83,* 5, 1155-1185, p. 1161.

[311] See Stepick, A. (2005): "God", p. 16.

[312] See Kokot, W., et al (2004). *Diaspora*, p. 6.

[313] Frederiks, M., Nagy, D. (2016): *Religion, Migration, and Identity: Methodological and Theological Explorations*. Leiden, Boston: Brill, p. 16.

[314] See Schreiter, R. (2009): "Spaces for Religion and Migrants Religious Identity". *Forum Mission* 5, pp. 155–171.

[315] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 75.

[316] See Frederiks, M., et al (2016): *Religion*, p. 16.

culture there are numerous ethnic-religious communities that create their cultural islands within the modern society[317].

Moreover, religion is usually a source for individuals to find support and consolation in times of crises and in difficult situations. To put it in a simpler way, religion helps to hope: hope for a forgiveness, a favourable life, a better afterlife, a solution of all the existing problems, hope to overcome one's own psychological problems, hope for a better world where peace and love domain. In his definition of the term "promise of salvation", Riesebrodt sees religion as "the ability to avert misfortune, overcome crises, and provide salvation", meaning "preservation or deliverance from harm, ruin, or loss" and not particularly "rescue by God from sin"[318].

Furthermore, religion also plays a vital role in life since it directly touches the human feelings and emotional world. In this respect, the concepts and practices of religion can also be considered significant determining elements in human behaviour which date back to the earliest times, shaping a particular attitude towards evil and good in life, as well as looking for the meaning of life, to avoid suffering, anxieties, fear and even loneliness, and find consolation and encouragement in life through adapting to the life changes by becoming members of different religious communities and participating in different religious practices.

People usually cope with difficulties and problems in times of stress and menaces also by taking refuge to religion and religious practices in a certain way: "faith is a species-wide coping mechanism that has aided humans to cope successfully with life, and has enhanced their chances for physical survival"[319]. To put it in another way, "When misery is the greatest, God is the closest"[320]. Religion may help to find meaning in difficult and unsolvable situations, consequently have control over them, as well as maintain their self-esteem in connection of being able to find a solution overcoming difficult life circumstances: "an explanation of the ultimate meaning of life, […] and how to live accordingly"[321] or "a search for significance in ways related to the sacred"[322]. Moreover, Pargament, et al, identify five main religious functions, which are 1. meaning, 2. control, 3. comfort/spirituality, 4. intimacy/spirituality, 5. life transformation. In accordance with these religious functions, they also distinguish between different religious coping methods[323]:

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[317] See Knoblauch, H. (2003): *Qualitative Religionsforschung: Religionsethnographie in der eigenen Gesellschaft.* Paderborn: Ferdinand Schönling, p. 24.

[318] Riesebrodt, M. (2010): *The Promise of Salvation: a Theory of Religion.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, p. 89.

[319] Hood, R.W., Hill, P.C., Spilka, B. (1996): *The Psychology of Religion: an Empirical Approach.* New York, London: Guilford Press, p. 379.

[320] Koenig, H.G., McCullough, M.E., Larson, D.B. (2001): *Handbook of Religion and Health.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 310.

[321] Swidler, L.J. (2017): *Religion for Reluctant Believers.* Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, p. 7.

[322] Pargament, K.I. (1997): "*The Psychology*", p. 32

[323] Pargament, K.I., Koenig, H.G., Perez, L.M. (2000): "The Many Methods of Religious Coping: Development and Initial Validation of the RCOPE". *Journal of Clinical Psychology.* 56(4):519-43, pp. 521-524.

$$\text{Religious methods of coping}\begin{cases} \text{to find meaning} \\ \text{to gain control} \\ \text{to gain comfort and closeness to God} \\ \text{to gain intimacy with others and closeness to God} \\ \text{to achieve a life transformation.} \end{cases}$$

Cognitive frames and re-framing processes are active in such coping procedures, especially cognitive evaluations and attributions connected with specific events. The schemata, depicted in the following pages, illustrate how the attribution theory functions, as well as the interrelation between the attribution theory and religion. Under the concept "attribution theory", it is understood that people tend to give explanations to experiences and events in their lives by attributing and ascribing them to certain causes. Why do people use attributions and ascriptions to life events? – to find meaning in the world and to control and predict events, and as a result, have a high self-esteem[324], which are inseparable parts in coping with problems and difficulties in life. Even though the attribution motives of meaning, control and self-esteem might seem to be unrelated at first sight, they are interrelated with each other, since finding meaning in an event allows to have control over it, which, in its turn, leads to a self-esteem. People usually tend to apply attributions to various life experiences in case their meaning-belief system is challenged, which results in the confrontation of their feelings of personal control and predictability of events, thus precipitating alteration in self-esteem[325].

> Attributional processes are initiated when events occur that (1) cannot be readily assimilated into the individual's meaning-belief system, (2) have implications regarding the controllability of future outcomes, or (3) significantly alter self-esteem either positively or negatively.[326]

Moreover, the satisfaction of the meaning, control, and self-esteem motives after being given an attribution depends on four aspects: 1. what characteristics the attributor has 2. the context of the attribution of the event, 3. what characteristics the event has, 4. the context of the event[327]. People (even atheists that live in religious cultures and/or in atheist countries) may give religious attributions to events, since "cultures provide them ready-made"[328]. Religions are considered to be an important sphere of giving meaning to events since they provide answers to "unanswerable"[329] questions. People can also predict and control events by their prayers, rituals, trust in God, etc., tending to believe that God is in control of everything. Self-esteem in religious attributions can be

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[324] See Spilka, B., Shaver, P.R., Kirkpatrick, L.A. (1997): "A General Attribution Theory for the Psychology of Religion". In Spilka, B., McIntosh, D.N. (ed.) (1997): *The Psychology of Religion: Theoretical Approaches.* Boulder: Westview Press, p. 155.

[325] See Spilka, B., et al (1997): "A General", p. 157.

[326] Spilka, B., et al (1997): "A General", p. 158.

[327] See Spilka, B., et al (1997): "A General", p. 159.

[328] Spilka, B., et al (1997): "A General", p. 159.

[329] Spilka, B., et al (1997): "A General", p. 159.

referred to the unconditional love and regard by God, as well as opportunities to experience spiritual growth. Whether a religious or a non-religious (naturalistic) attribution will be given in a certain situation depends on the following categories: 1. the attributor (whether the attributor has intrinsic (utter commitment and inner dedication to religion) or extrinsic (selective application of religion for self-serving purposes) orientation in religious matters), 2. the attributor's context, 3. the event being explained, 4. the event's context. All the four categories can also trigger religious or non-religious attributions, depending on the attributor's naturalistic and religious meaning-belief systems, effectiveness of these systems to control events, and the significance of the systems in one's self-esteem[330].

Schema 1: Attribution Theory[331]

ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Explanation of experiences and events by attributing them to causes (causal attributions)

Why?
Motives:
1. Meaning (to seek meaning in the world)
2. Control (to increase the positive outcomes and avoid negative outcomes)
3. Self-Esteem (to protect both the physical self and the self-concept against threat)

When?
When occurring events challenge:
1. Meaning-belief system
2. Personal control and predictability of events
3. Self-esteem (events cause self-esteem alterations both positively and negatively)

1. Characteristics of the attributor
2. The context of the attributor
3. Characteristics of the event
4. The context of the event

What factors influence the degree to which a given attribution will satisfy the meaning, control and self-esteem motives?

Schema 2: Attribution Theory and Religion[332]

ATTRIBUTION THEORY AND RELIGION

1. Religion is a major source of meaning, especially in tragic events and crises.

2. Religion satisfies the need to predict and control future events.

3. Religion helps maintain and enhance self-esteem

DETERMINANTS OF RELIGIOUS AND NONRELIGIOUS ATTRIBUTIONS TO EVENTS

Attributor Characteristics

Context of the Attributor

Characteristics of the Event

Context of the Event

Each comprises meaning, control, self-esteem components.

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[330] See Spilka, B., et al (1997): "A General", p. 161.
[331] Spilka, B., et al (1997): "A General", pp. 153-159.
[332] Spilka, B., et al (1997): "A General", pp. 159-170.

To conclude the above-mentioned notions of the coping paradigm of religion in emotionally unstable situations and personal crises, religion plays a salient role because it offers people meaning, control and self-esteem: "it provides individuals with personally useful meanings for upsetting circumstances", "it offers opportunities for an enhanced sense of power and control over what is taking place", and "the result of both of these tendencies and of faith itself is a buttressing of self-esteem"[333]. Religions can play a significant role in the context of migration, since they help migrants with identity issues and sense of belonging. Moreover, religious communities can play an important role in supporting migrants spiritually and emotionally[334], construct home for them[335], support them in times of crisis.

> Religions […] involve finding one's
> place and moving through space.
> – Thomas Tweed

4.1.3. Religion Defined: Movement and Location

As Patrick H. McNamara[336] says, try to define religion, and you invite an argument: one is never safe to talk about religion, even more unsafe to define it. Yinger also mentions that "many studies of religion stumble over the first hurdle: the problem of definition"[337]. Even more than hundred years ago William James realised that it is most improper to define religion in a concrete and limited way, taking into account its huge complexity and variety of definitions and categorisations: "The field of religion being as wide as this, it is manifestly impossible that I should pretend to cover it"[338].

Religions can be considered both from an individual and social perspectives. From psychological-individual perspective, I can refer to James, who defines religion as "[…] the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine"[339]. Religion is considered individually through the religious experience, which people might or might not have in the course of their lives. On the other hand, Durkheim emphasises more the social aspect of the religion: "A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, i.e., things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community"[340]. Moreover, the anthropologist Geertz[341] developed a social-scientific approach to religion, denoting the cultural aspect of religion, which suggests that every group may have a religion, even if no one in the group believes in God or

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[333] Hood, R.W., et al (1996): *The Psychology,* p. 401.

[334] See Frederiks, M., Nagy, D. (2016): *Religion, Migration, and Identity: Methodological and Theological Explorations.* Leiden, Boston: Brill, p. 16.

[335] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 75.

[336] Patrick H. McNamara (1894–1966): a politician, professor of theology, author of a number of books.

[337] Yinger, J.M. (1969): *Religion, Society and the Individual: an Introduction to the Sociology of Religion.* Toronto: Macmillan, p. 5.

[338] James, W. (1902): *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature.* Edited and annotated for the World Wide Web by LeRoy L. Miller, p. 34.

[339] James, W. (1902): *The Varieties*, p. 36.

[340] Durkheim, E. (1957): *The Elementary*, p. 44.

[341] Geertz, C. (1973): *The Interpretation*, pp. 87–125.

supernatural powers. According to him, every group has a religion within the group which gives meaning in human affairs, guides their life and behaviour. He states that religions help "to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating a general order of existence"[342]. In other words, religion helps to establish home and perceive the world as a cosmic order. Geertz alludes to the home-making issue by quoting Santayana:

> Any attempt to speak without speaking any particular language is not more hopeless than the attempt to have a religion that shall be no religion in particular… Thus, every living and healthy religion has a marked idiosyncrasy. Its power consists in its special and surprising message and in the bias which that revelation gives to life. The vistas it opens and the mysteries it propounds are another world to live in; and another world to live in – whether we expect ever to pass wholly over into it or no – is what we mean by having a religion.[343]

The term religion is discussed in the context of movement and location by Thomas Tweed, whose theory of religion has been triggered by studying the religious lives of transnational migrants (Cubans in Miami) where movement, relation and position are in the main focus of attention. He argues that most theories of religions are silent about these themes and provide us with structures that are mostly bound to a specific time and a place, which do not illustrate the hybrid processes and relations of the theory of religion. One of the main focuses on constructing the theory of religion should be the realisation that both the theorists and the theories cannot be stable and constant, but dynamic[344]. It is important to take into account religion's "locative approach" which means that all theories arise from particular categories, situations, locations and social contexts and can only be evaluated and estimated taking into consideration these aspects[345]: all theories are culturally located, and his theory also "emerges from a cultural moment in which movement and relation seem important"[346].

Before going further with Tweed's theory of religion, which he has elaborated with the usage of metaphorical words and expressions, I would like to illustrate briefly what other theorists (discussed by Tweed) have used metaphors in their definitions and theories of religion. According to Tweed, all terms and their definitions are usually located with their own specific purposes, and definitions and theories are connected with tropes, where "definitions […] imply theories and employ tropes"[347]. As an example, he refers to Freud who uses metaphors in his work "The Future of an Illusion" to illustrate his understanding and perception of religion, using definitions, tropes and theories. First of all, Freud considers religion's origin psychic and sees it as a psychological disfunction, going further and calling it a universal pathology of humanity. Secondly, he compares religion with the neurosis of children, thus illustrating that religion stands for a lower stage of development, and

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[342] Geertz, C. (1973): *The Interpretation*, p. 90

[343] Geertz, C. (1973): *The Interpretation,* p. 87.

[344] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, pp. 8-9.

[345] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, pp. 15-28.

[346] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 22.

[347] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 42.

since religion emerges from "the relation to the father", it is subject to have a dependent nature[348]. Thus, the metaphor of defining religion as a psychological pathology leaves the reader with the assumption that religion is connected with abnormality and immaturity and does not insinuate mental, physical and psychological health: "Metaphor can redirect attention because it functions as a mode of transport. It prompts a linguistic crossing that can create associations, stir affect, and prompt action"[349].

Tweed goes on discussing the concept of religion, that has been defined in figurative speech by other scholars, which mostly imply hybrid forms, lacking pure types of it. Religion has been associated with "capacity, organism, system, worldview, illness, narcotic, picture, form of life, society, institution, projection, and space"[350]. It was popular to identify religion not only with psychic capacities (for instance, believing, feeling, willing), but also with affective (connected with feelings like absolute dependence, hopes and fears), intellectualist (a belief in spiritual beings, in an ever-living God, the superhuman, humanlike beings) and volitional (moral or ritual action) definitions[351]. Further, according to Tweed, religion has also been defined as an experience (experience of the Holy, the sacred, the Infinite or invisible things), as well as a concern ("an anxious concern for happiness", "ultimate concern").

> Many influential accounts define religion by pointing to several psychic capacities: religion as belief and feeling (Jastrow) or as emotions, conceptions, and sentiments (Tiele). Some definitions that combine intellectualist, affective, and volitional approaches imagine religion not only as believing or feeling but also as doing – by trading on the notion of religion as will. Consider James's definition of religion as "feelings, acts, and experiences" or Durkheim's account of religion as 'beliefs and practices'.[352]

Other metaphors that are used in the definition of religion are the following: "a system of wilful illusions" (Freud), "a unified system of beliefs and practices" (Durkheim), "a cultural system of symbols" (Geertz), or "a complete system of human communication" (Larson)".[353] Some scholars used other metaphors defining religion as worldview, form of life, pictorial thought, illness, narcotic, others defined it as society, as cultural form, as an institution, "levels of consciousness", "orientation"[354]. Different tropes and metaphors, that are used in defining the term religion, can highlight and indicate some things and conceal and disguise others (individual vs. social, positive vs. negative aspects), as well as the implications connected with metaphors (primitive and civilised, ethnic and universal, lower and higher, etc), that is why it is important to choose cautiously[355].

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[348] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, pp. 42-44.

[349] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 47.

[350] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 48.

[351] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, pp. 48–49.

[352] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, pp. 49–50.

[353] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 51.

[354] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, pp. 51–52.

[355] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 53.

Tweed's own definition of religion, thus, refers to movement and relation, following his observations among Cubans in Miami. His theory is propagated to be practicable in other contexts, places and times and with the help of which it is attempted "to correct theories that have presupposed stasis and minimized interdependence"[356]. His description of religion runs as follows: *"Religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries"*[357]. Moreover, Tweed highlights the use of two metaphors in his own theory indicating that "spatial metaphors (dwelling and crossing) signal that religion is about finding a place and moving across space, and aquatic metaphors (confluences and flows) signal that religions are not reified substances but complex processes"[358].

Tweed uses the word confluences in his theory of religion since he suggests that "fluid mechanics" and "aquatic metaphors" can be specifically helpful because they demonstrate the motion and stability of religion at the same time. He suggests that religions cannot be static since they are in movement across time (eg. generations pass their religion to other generations) and space (eg. missionaries take their faith to other lands), leaving traces and tracks both geographically and historically. At the same time, religions can be both solitary and social, i.e., individualistic and collective[359]. Moreover, Tweed sees dwelling as comprised of three processes: mapping, building, and inhabiting, in other terms, naming it "homemaking": "as clusters of dwelling practices, religions orient individuals and groups in time and space, transform the natural environment, and allow devotees to inhabit the worlds they construct"[360]. Putting in other words, Tweed sees dwelling together with its three processes (mapping, building, inhabiting) in "four chronotopes: the body, the home, the homeland, and the cosmos"[361]. The interpretation of the term crossing is illustrated by the notion that religions are not stable but dynamic since they move across and "employ tropes, artefacts, rituals, codes, and institutions to mark boundaries, and they prescribe and proscribe different kinds of movements across those boundaries"[362]. In other words, religion in migration has a bridge-building and locating function at the same time.

Tweed indicates that his theory of religion is not "omnispective mirroring – a god's-eye view" and that it "offers an interpretation, a positioned sighting of the shifting terrain, a situated account of the complex ways that women and men have negotiated meaning and power through religions"[363]. His approach of defining religion is useful for my research because of its locative approach,

> **Religion and Migration**
>
> ∗ Coping paradigm
> ∗ Movement and location
> ∗ Home away from home.

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[356] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 77.

[357] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 54.

[358] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 59.

[359] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, pp. 59–64.

[360] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 82.

[361] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 97.

[362] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p.123.

[363] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 165.

combined with movement (religion and religious practices inherited by the Armenian ethnic group in Germany from older generations) and relocation (bringing their religion to Germany and practicing it there): with the help of religion, migrants create new homes, moving to different destinations and relocating in various spaces. Further, the religion is also practiced individually and collectively[364] through prayers and church services, and this aspect is also considered in the current research in relation to Armenian migrants' participation in church services and solitary prayers. Moreover, religion is also practiced to "intensify joy" and "confront suffering"[365], which is an inseparable part of religious practices with the help of which people can find solace and consolation in difficult migration processes.

4.1.4. Religion Explained from the Perspective of My Research

Coming across many diverse theories of religion that mirror and reflect the various studies on religion, compare and contrast the theories and definitions from different perspectives, I have considered it important to construct a new formulation for the term religion to accentuate the framework of the concept religion used in the current research, i.e., to elucidate how people experience and live religion. Moreover, I would like to indicate what I conceive by the word religion and the religious: my aim is to mix the social and individual perspectives of the term religion as a construct-system, to elucidate the inner dimensions of the religion and not describe it as an institution. I have used the individual aspects of religion (Huber, Allport, Pargament), as well as cultural dimensions of it (Tweed, Geertz, Demerath). Based on my research in the field, the covered literature, investigation in religious studies, as well as my own experience as a Christian, I have constructed the following definitional approach to religion for the context of my research: *Religion is a dynamic agglomeration of cultural beliefs and practices related to supernatural powers or divinities, which is applied by human beings with varying frequency and intensity to overcome difficulties, as well as find solace and meaning in their lives.*

It would like to accentuate that I have constructed this reformulation of the term religion after having conducted interviews with the Armenian ethnic minority group in Germany, taking into account their responses to the questions about religion generally, i.e., how they *live* and *experience* religion. Thus, the above-mentioned definitional construct of religion is particularly intended for the research and specifically designated in the face of my research participants.

First of all, why is religion *dynamic*? Religious practices, ideas, discourses and institutions are not fixed and static but rather continuously moving and circulating. Interactions between religious individuals, religious institutions and communities move not only locally, but globally: religions are not only located in one territory but they move around the world together with people who travel around the world, resettle in other countries and continue practicing them. Moreover, religions are

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[364] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, pp. 59–64.
[365] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 54.

considered to be dynamic in the sense that the same person may experience and use religion in various contexts differently, adapting to cultural and social changes, adopting other cultural and religious features and characteristics to one's *original* religion.

Why is religion an *agglomeration of cultural beliefs*? As mentioned above, every religion cannot be completely authentic and pure but is blended with certain cultural ideas, notions and convictions. As an example, one can have a strong belief in dreams and pay lots of attention to dream interpretation and analysis. In case we compare and measure whether it is more a religious or cultural perspective, I would suppose the latter prevails. Moreover, religious attributions and explanations of life situations are usually provided by cultures and various cultural inputs, not by religions.

Why is religion an *agglomeration of cultural practices*? People from different regions and countries can practice the same religion in a different way, depending on the cultural elements and components of the certain religion in that area. Religions are so much closely entangled with cultural aspects and features that people who practice religion cannot make a differentiation between the cultural and religious applications and experiences.

Why is religion *related to supernatural[366] powers or divinities*? Human beings are incapable to find explanations to all occurrences in life, as well as solve problems and issues that are beyond human power and control. Such phenomena can find solutions in relation to supernatural powers and divinities who are *in control of every event* and *have the power to give answers* to inexplicable questions that a human being is not able to perceive and comprehend.

Why is religion *applied by human beings with varying frequency and intensity*? Religious people have intrinsic and extrinsic orientation towards religion[367] and are disposed to apply religion with different prevalence and strength, depending not only on the psychological characteristics of the person but the environmental, cultural and social aspects as well. Stefan Huber[368] also measures different dimensions of religiosity by frequency of using or practicing this or that religious aspect. The lifestyle and everyday experiences of a highly religious person will be guided by the religious norms and values (we should always keep in mind that these religious norms and values are not pure religious but mixed with cultural aspects), whereas a middle religious person will apply religion in case of necessity under certain circumstances and in different situations. In order to get a

Religion in the Research

- Dynamic cultural beliefs
- Dynamic cultural practices
- Worship of divinities
- Applied with varying intensity
- Applied with varying frequency
- Applied for consolation
- Applied to find meaning.

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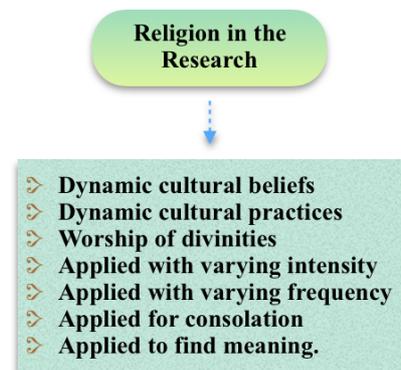
[366] I have chosen the word 'supernatural' to refer to such entities as God, soul, spirit, higher beings, inexplicable manifestations of the universe and the nature.

[367] See Allport, G.W., Ross, J.M. (1967): "Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 5*: pp. 432–443.

[368] Huber, S., Huber, O.W. (2012): "The Centrality", pp. 710–724.

better grip of this individual 'usage' of religion, I have included the questionnaire of "The Centrality of Religiosity Scale" (See Analysis in Chapter 4.3).

Why is religion used *to overcome difficulties, as well as find solace and meaning in lives*? The coping functions of religion are not something new: a series of different experiments and life experiences have shown the salient role of religion in coping with one's life problems and difficulties. As Aristotle states, "all men by nature desire to know"[369], as Fichter postulates, "religious reality is the only way to make sense out of pain and suffering", and as Clark indicates, "religion more than any other human function satisfies the need for meaning in life"[370], it can be clearly indicated that religion is one of the major sources of successful coping and adjustment in difficult situations, and thus, to feel more *at home* in the world despite all contingencies of life.

Concluding Remarks

In spite of the general perception that modern societies are more secular, the real situation in the world shows the opposite: religion plays an important role in all the corners of the world, especially among migrants. Religiosity and religious identity are usually inherited by the significant others, since children cannot avoid acquiring religious identity, if their parents participate in religious practices. Community also plays a vital role in shaping one's religious identity, if mutual understanding, equal perspectives, aims and goals exist between a person and a religious community. Moreover, ethnic, cultural and religious identities can become stronger among minority groups: migrants might not be aware of their religiousness or their cultural uniqueness unless confronted with other cultures and religions, which, as a result, sharpens their sense of belonging to their own religion. For Armenians in the Republic of Armenia, issues with ethnicity and religion might not be as significant, as for the Armenians living in the Diaspora, who are ethnic groups in different countries worldwide.

In case people adhere to religion as part of their culture or cultural heritage, without being strong believers or participating in religious rituals or practices, religion can be viewed as a cultural religion. Thus, not believing in God or any superhuman powers, religion can be only a cultural identification. In the framework of my research, religion is viewed from a cultural perspective, where Armenian ethnic group members in Germany perceive religion as an inseparable and indistinguishable part of their culture, i.e., ethnic, cultural and religious identities are closely related to each other, and religious identity is an inseparable and discernible part of the Armenians' ethnic identity.

Why is religion important in the migration context? Religion can help with identity issues, support and console in difficult situations, help find meaning in the migration process, create *home* for

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[369] Hood, R.W., et al (1996): *The Psychology*, p. 380.
[370] Hood, R.W., et al (1996): *The Psychology,* p. 380.

migrants. The home-making aspect of religion is central to religion at large, and all the more so in the often stressful situations of migration. Religion is viewed in the research from both individual and social perspectives: people use religion as a personal practice, as well as in social circles together with their own ethnic group members or other religious groups from the majority culture. In the migration context, religions are not static but dynamic, which have hybrid processes and are practiced in different situations. At the same time, religions have locative approach, i.e., religions move with the practitioners, in this case, migrants, and are used by them in particular contexts and locations. In the research, religion is viewed as a cultural belief and practice, which is practiced by the believers with different frequency and intensity in connection with various life situations to find meaning in life, release pain and distress, and avoid suffering. The following pages illustrate how a group of Armenians in Germany experience religion, and what role it plays in their lives.

4.2. Empirical Findings

4.2.1. Religion and Significant Others

As it has already been indicated in the theoretical frameworks of the current research, significant others have a strong position in influencing the cultural and religious beliefs and activities of children: the family is the first institution where "children have a continuous contact and the first context in which socialization patterns develop"[371]. Socialization (both intentional and unintentional) is a process of individuals acquiring the knowledge and skills to participate as effective members of the society. Moreover, it is considered by a number of authors (Mindel, et al[372], Isajiw[373]), that the family is considered to be the most important institution for the person's identification with and preservation of one's ethnic culture: "[…] the parents' ethnic identification and the sense of ethnic attachment fostered during childrearing are significant in the formation of the individual's ethnic group identity"[374]. Moreover, depending on the religiousness or non-religiousness of significant others, children's first contact or the lack of contact with religion and religious experiences is possible through their families. Consequently, religious identity develops mostly through significant others, since children usually follow the example of their parents in establishing this or that value and behaviour.

The following quotations from the interviews demonstrate the significant role of the families in the formation of different values, norms and customs, as well as development of ethnic and religious identities among children. In spite of the fact that the impact of the family can weaken in the course

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[371] Elkin, K., Handel, G., (1978). *The Child and Society: The Process of Socialization*. New York: Random House.

[372] Mindel, Ch.H., Habenstein, R.W., Wright, R. (1988): "Family Lifestyles of America's Ethnic Minorities: An Introduction". In Mindel, Ch.H. (ed.) (1988): *Ethnic Families in America: Patterns and Variations,* 3rd Edition. New York: Elsevier, 1–14, p. 8.

[373] Isajiw, W. (1990): *Ethnic Identity Retention*. Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto Press, p. 88.

[374] Keefe, S.E. (1992): "Ethnic Identity: The Domain of Perceptions and Attachment to Ethnic Groups and Cultures". *Human Organisation 51*(1): 35–44, p. 39.

of time, in some cases the influence can be so strong that already grown-ups, people still adhere to those habits or religious rituals that they have been practiced in their childhood.

Religion and faith play a significant role in the following interviewee's life thanks to her parents and grandparents. Both she and her siblings have been raised in a religious family, and even though presently they live on different continents all over the world, they still practice religion and have religious identity, nurtured in them since childhood. She has also raised her children, participating in religious rituals, prayers, reading the Bible, attending the Armenian church in Iran, and with her whole family they are active participants of the Armenian church in Germany.

> "My faith comes from my parents, from our elderly, it comes from my grandmother from my father's side, from my mother's side, it is from the parents. […] Faith has been transmitted to us from our family" (*Anahit – female, 54 years old, from Iran*).

The role of the family and the community in developing religious identity has been important in the following interviewee's life as well, since she has learnt about her culture and religion through them. She was born in Germany in an Armenian family who has migrated to Germany from Turkey. She cannot speak Armenian, and the interview has been conducted in German. Nevertheless, she feels and considers herself Armenian and considers that faith and the religious community play a vital role both in her and her family's life:

> "My parents have raised me very Armenian, I have always come to the community with them and learnt the Armenian culture. […] I have grown up with a faith, we always go to the church, my family, my mother, father or sister, we always go to the church every second Sunday" (*Arminé – female, 21 years old, born in Germany*).

The following interviewee's family has been religious, and she considers herself to be religious, practicing religious rituals and prayers. She has been living in Germany since 1979, and she is almost 80 years old, but still remembers her family practising religion in Turkey, celebrating religious holidays, such as Christmas and Easter. When she draws comparisons between the religiousness of Armenians in Turkey before and in Germany nowadays, she claims that the Armenians were more religious in former times, especially the younger generation is not interested in religion. Nevertheless, she has also raised her children in a religious atmosphere. She claims she is highly religious*,* and even though decades have passed, her childhood memories about experiencing religion in her family are still fresh and alive:

> "My father would take us every night to a church in Diyarbakir[375], it is our Tigranakert (*an old name of the city Diyarbakir*), a big church, now it is destroyed because of the war (*sighs*). Our home was near the church, at two o'clock at night we would get up, for Easter or Christmas, we would go to the church, the sun would rise, and we would return home, it was a very nice place. There were many Armenians then, they were very religious. […] Every night my father would read the Bible to us, I can still hear it. Nowadays when there is preaching in the church, when

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[375] Diyarbakir – a city in south-eastern Turkey.

the priest reads something, in my mind I read it all together with him, it has been transmitted to us from my father" (*Lusiné – female, 77 years old, from Turkey*).

The following interviewee remembers his grandmother in Turkey who has had an influence on the formation of his religious identity. He relates his religiousness with the first experiences of religion, realised through his religious grandmother. In spite of the fact that his grandmother did not know the prayer properly, she was known in the neighbourhood as a religious person who was so kind and generous that would always help others with her prayers, irrespective of the fact what religion those people belonged to. Before arriving in Germany, the interviewee was not very much engaged in religious experiences as a child, but starting getting closer to religion and the religious community in later years in Germany:

> "My grandmother, my mother's mother, was a very religious woman, and every time I stayed at her place or she visited us, we would always say Our Father. My grandma was a very religious woman, although she didn't know the prayer fully, that is to say, she wouldn't recite some part of it, but she did it with such a faith. Just imagine that our Turk neighbours would come to my grandma and say, "Mother, pray for us, because we feel relieved when you pray". And my grandma wouldn't differentiate between people, when somebody would come to her with faith. And it was very interesting to me, because she would take salt in her palm and with this salt in her palm she would pray and make the sign of the cross over the person standing in front of her, it didn't matter, whether he was Muslim, hmm, and nobody would make a sound, and she would give this salt to them and say, "Go, throw it to the sky, and you will be relieved". And 99% of the people who came to my grandma with faith, she would always pray for them in this way, and she would start yawning, as if taking the burden of the person to herself. What I mean is that my grandmother put the backbone of my faith" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*)

Being born in Soviet Armenia, the following interviewee did not experience religion much, especially having been raised by non-religious parents. She has been influenced by her grandmother in gaining some religious lifestyle and habits which persist up to date. It is interesting, how strong the influence has been, that she adheres to some practices and customs inherited by her grandmother, in spite of the fact that many years have passed since then:

> "My grandmother was born in 1919, she witnessed everything *(religious practices)* from her parents, later on the other generations started to be less connected with religion. My father was not religious at all. […] I felt, I saw that my grandmother believed: she would always mention God's name, light a candle every Saturday, she would light a candle again on Sunday morning, and then she would say, for example, that now it is not allowed to do needlework, make dresses, she wouldn't use needle Saturday evening, she would say it was a sin to use needle till Sunday 12:00 o'clock, and it wasn't allowed to do laundry, and other things like that became my habits. I do whatever my grandma did, I cannot stop doing it *(laughs)*: I don't do laundry Saturday evening and do not do needlework after it gets dark *(laughs)*, that is to say, when the sun begins to set on Saturday evening till Sunday 12:00 o'clock, it's interesting" (*Anush – female, 53 years old, from Armenia*).

To sum up the current Subchapter, I would like to point out once again that the role of the significant others can be so strong in childhood, that already grown-ups, people may adhere to the

practices, habits and lifestyles, applied by their parents and grandparents. As we have seen in the above-mentioned quotations, the interviewees have started going through religious experiences in their lives, influenced by their parents and/or grandparents. In some cases the influence has been so strong, that some of them continue adhering to some practices and rituals, that have been delivered to them by their families, up to now, which demonstrates that some habits and practices, inherited by children from the significant others, can be persistent and not prone to disappear in the course of life, and even though the opposite can also be true, it is obvious that "the religious faith and practice of the parent generally forms that of the child"[376].

4.2.2. Religious Identity Embedded in Cultural Identity

The role of religion in the formation and development of a human being's identity can be perceived in multifaceted way, i.e., not only taking into consideration the personal practice, ideological or intellectual dimensions of the individual, but the role of religious institutions in a person's life. For identity issues it can be important for individuals just to belong to a religious group and differentiate themselves from other religions or denominations. In other instances, a religious group may not play a significant role, but personal practices, such as prayer and meditation, can be important. At the same time, it is vital to keep in mind the differences of the concepts of religious identity and religiosity (or religiousness): the former refers to personal belief and one's membership to a religion, the latter refers to the level and amount of the concepts of religion, practiced in daily life of an individual, such as personal prayers, participation in church services, following the commandments, religious experiences, etc.

As already indicated above, the Armenian national, ethnic, religious and cultural identities are intertwined and strongly influenced by the historical events, such as the adoption of Christianity, the invention of the Armenian alphabet, severe treatment by foreign powers, such as the Armenian Genocide and several wars against invaders (for instance, the Battle of Avarayr in 451 A.D., as well as the Battle of Sardarapat in 1918), with the help of which Armenians were able to preserve their religion and culture, as well as survive up to date.

Consequently, in spite of the fact, that a great number of the interviewees have claimed themselves to be non-religious or not particularly religious, their narratives during the interviews, as well as the Centrality Religiosity Scale proved them the opposite. One of the reasons can be that Christianity as a religion has become such an inseparable part of the Armenian culture that being a Christian does not necessarily imply being religious but is perceived as an ethnic/national/cultural identity, as demonstrated in the quotations of the interviews on the following pages. In the quote below, it is claimed that religious belief is more a cultural identification, which makes it possible for people to be *culturally* religious:

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[376] Knudten, D.R. (1967): *The Sociology*, p. 188.

> Within any single faith, labelling oneself a "believer" may mean different things in different settings. This is all the more so because religious belief is generally less a matter of intellectual conviction than a form of social affiliation and cultural identification, which helps to explain why it is possible for an individual to be either culturally religious at one end of the religious continuum or a religious fundamentalist at the other end without partaking of any of the faith's explicit belief or ritual practices.[377]

Among the interviewees, there are some who consider themselves non-religious or even a complete atheist, but have claimed the role of religion important in the Armenians' lives. More particularly, one of them has claimed that the church and religion play a secondary role in his life, and only the Armenian nation is significant to him, and the second one considers himself an atheist, but claims that it is very important to preserve the Armenian customs and traditions, but whatever he names later as being Armenian traditions are religious practices, and in spite of the fact that he does not believe in God or any supernatural powers, he considers that religion is important in Armenians' lives. Henceforth, it can be postulated that people "draw on religion to negotiate collective identity, imagine the group's shared space"[378]. Moreover, religion plays an important role in shaping one's behaviour through religious values and implications combined with cultural peculiarities: "most people adapt their religious beliefs to their lifestyle needs, rather than make religion or religious values the cornerstone of their major or minor decision making"[379].

An interviewee, who has migrated from Iran in childhood and has grown up in a religious family, considers Christianity an inseparable part of the Armenian reality. During his interview he has shared his thoughts about how to preserve one's ethnic identity as a migrant in a foreign land: he himself learns the history of Armenia, the art and literature, etc. When talking about the Armenian culture, he has mentioned the following:

> "For instance, Armenianness and Christianity seem to be the same thing, you cannot think separately about them or divide them, they seem to be directly connected with each other" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

Another interviewee calls Armenians non-religious and considers that religion is a custom in their lives:

> "In my opinion, we, Armenians, are very far from religion, we don't know what religion is, where it comes from. […] As a custom, it is more a custom than a religion" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee has been living in Germany since 1980, and describes in his narration what he and his family have been able to preserve from the Armenian culture. When he talks about

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[377] Demerath, N.J. III (2001): *Crossing*, p. 9.
[378] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, pp. 97–98.
[379] Hall, M.C. (1996): *Identity*, p. 143.

religion, he refers to it as Armenian customs and traditions which are carried out through the church, and which have been transmitted to them from their grand-grandparents:

> "The religion…, we are already Christians, it's the feasts and holidays and so on, faith is personal, in whatever you believe with your heart, it stays with you. The traditions are through the church, for instance, the Assumption of Mary, if you don't celebrate Khaghoghorhneq[380], you cannot eat grapes (*laughs*), they are not tasty, or other feasts, they still remain… in our family we don't fast, I have to tell the truth, so, such traditions and customs that our grand-grandfathers and grandmothers, or other things that we saw from our parents at home and so on, some things have been preserved" (*Areg – male, 69 years old, from Turkey*).

The religious holidays, celebrated by Armenians, and among which there are several, that have pre-Christian origin, are considered to be their traditions by the following interviewee. Moreover, he considers himself a complete atheist: to the question, what role religion, faith and church play in his life, he has answered: "What shall I say? Only one word, I don't have faith". At the same time, he considers religion an important and necessary part of the Armenian reality. From my viewpoint, Christianity is so much intertwined with the Armenian culture, habits and traditions that even non-religious people do not make any differentiation between religious and non-religious holidays since they have become an inseparable part of their lives. Another interpretation of considering Christianity an important part in Armenians' lives can be related to the historical events: Christianity has helped Armenians distinguish themselves from the majority and other minorities during the Ottoman Empire and escape islamisation and assimilation with the Turks (with the exception of the islamised Armenians in Turkey) during and after World War I:

> "Besides, those are our traditions, to gather together, Tyarndarach[381], or the Ascension Day (Համբարձում/*Hambardzum*) or Vardavar[382], to celebrate those festivals together, in order, at least, to preserve our language in the future, it's our obligation, even though our young generations disobey it, our Armenian traditional, hmm…. […] What role can the church play for us? Of course, there should be, we should accept, the church should be, our religion should be" (*Arsen – male, 52 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee has had some hesitations whether to consider herself religious or not. She eventually has indicated that she is not religious, since she does not want to belong to the Armenian church. Later on she expresses her concern that Armenians call themselves Christians but are not quite acquainted with the Bible, and their religiousness is mostly based on what they have received from their parents and grandparents as customs and traditions, without any thorough knowledge about Christianity as a religion itself. Moreover, she expresses a desire to learn

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[380] Khaghoghorhneq – Armenian: Խաղողօրհնեք, literally "the blessing of grapes", the Armenian name of the feast "The Assumption of Mary".

[381] Tyarndarach (Armenian: Տյառնընդառաջ) or Trndez – a celebration of purification in the Armenian Apostolic Church, (40 days after the birth of Jesus). It was originally a pagan fest, when pre-Christian Armenia worshiped sun and celebrated the spring and fertility.

[382] Vardavar (Armenian: Վարդավառ) – an Armenian festival during which people spill water on each other, and even though it has become a Christian festival, it originally belonged to paganism and was related to the deity Astghik, the goddess of water, beauty and love.

something new from the Bible since *it is interesting as a new information*. It can be supposed that the interviewee *has lived* and *lives* Christianity as a part of her culture, as a habit and a tradition, and her concern about the lack of knowledge about the Bible confirms that speculation:

> "Very few of us read the Bible, many of us just remain on the level of the Children's Bible, but, for instance, I enjoy going and listening to what is said, it is interesting, because I know, that I cannot force myself to sit and read, you learn something new, it is interesting as a new information" (*Anna – female, 37 years old, from Armenia*).

As indicated by the following interviewee, Armenians call themselves Christians but do not know anything about Christianity as a religion. Comparison is made between Armenians and Germans: the former call themselves Christians even though they have not read the Bible, the latter can even be baptised but not call themselves Christians. The same speculation can be referred to this interviewee, since Christianity *is lived* by her as a part of her culture in the form of customs and traditions:

> "I have learnt it from Germans, because they have studied it, they are Christians, they read the Bible, the ones that don't read it…, of course, they are baptised, but they don't consider themselves Christians, but we, Armenians, consider ourselves Christians, but many of us don't know a word from the Bible" (*Sona – female, 47 years old, from Iran*).

Some interviewees, who were born and grew up in the Republic of Armenia, narrate about the influence of the Soviet period in Armenia on the religion and religiousness of Armenians. They bring examples from their families, and in their narrations they express their thoughts and attitudes towards religion: the religion was forbidden, nevertheless, they kept practicing it inside their homes, or as a result of the hidden religion, many Armenians do not know what Christianity is, or how it is practiced. Moreover, Armenian traditions and customs are intertwined with their religion where Armenians do not make any differentiation whether a holiday, a custom and a tradition is religious, cultural or secular, and that can be one of the reasons that the religious identity is embedded in the cultural identity.

The following interviewee narrates about her family practicing religion: her grand-grandmothers could not practise religion openly but they would pray secretly and go from the town to a village to participate in the church services in the Soviet period. Those practices of praying have been transmitted to the younger generation:

> "You know, in those years, even the town had no right to have a church inside it, in the northern part of Armenia people were more religious, and it's not that we went to the church, but my grandmother, my grandmother's grandmother from my mother's side, they would, of course, always say Our Father, they would pray or so, and it exists also in us" (*Anna – female, 37 years old, from Armenia*).

Another enthralling example of practising religion secretly in the period of the Soviet Armenia is narrated by the following interviewee. He considers that Armenians have been withdrawn from Christianity in the period of the Soviet Union. In his family the Bible was hidden, and practising religion in his family was also concealed, and as expressed by the interviewee, one did not *live* Christianity outside. Moreover, the Bible has been considered to be a sacred book which no one was allowed to touch or read:

> "There was a New Testament at our place, a hidden one, which our grand-grandparents had left us. Because of the Soviet period, it was hidden, and it was considered to be something sacred. I remember, my sister was young, she read a few lines, and my mother forbade her, saying: "Don't read it, don't enter there, it's sacred". After that I remember, that we had inside a hidden religion, that we have sacredness, there is something, but it was, so to say, really hidden, you didn't live your Christianity outside" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

Living a hidden religion has also been a prevalent practice in the family of the following interviewee. She narrates about her childhood memories about the religion in the period of the Soviet Armenia. As in the previous example, the interviewee's memories about religious practices and church attendance are only related to her grandmother, since her parents have been non-religious. In order to avoid problems and conflicts that could possibly arise at school or outside as a result of her mentioning about religion or religious practices inside her family, no explanations have been given to her: she would go to the church or see her grandmother light a candle, pray, etc., without any clarification. They have started showing interest in religion only when the Soviet Union has collapsed:

> "You know, I grew up in the Soviet period, we didn't have religion officially then. Ok, at home I saw that my grandmother would put the picture of Saint Mary on the table in her bedroom Saturday evening around 5 o'clock, would light a candle or on Sundays mostly would go to the church, sometimes taking me with her, but I would just go, and she wouldn't explain to me much, we would just go. I would see there were many people there, mostly elderly people, they would light candles, cross themselves. Perhaps my grandmother was afraid to explain anything to me, so as I wouldn't tell my classmates later at school, and there would be no problem, I don't know. We started showing interest in religion and faith after the collapse of the Soviet Union, before that it was just an abstract thing" (*Anush – female, 53 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, why is the religious identity of Armenians embedded in the cultural identity? According to the narration of the interviewees, several reasons can be brought. First, Christianity is practiced by some of the respondents as a *cultural religion*, since they are not intensively and actively engaged in religious rituals or prayers, do not read the Bible, but consider themselves Christians. Secondly, the non-religious respondents consider Christianity an inseparable part of the Armenian identity and esteem it highly in Armenians' lives because of the historical background: Armenians could preserve their ethnic identity and culture with the help of Christianity during various invasions and attacks by foreign invaders, taking into account several wars and battles that have been won. Thirdly, some interviewees consider Armenianness and Christianity the same thing, since the ethnic, cultural, national and religious identities of Armenians are tightly connected to each other in view

of their customs and traditions. Fourthly, according to some interviewees, the lack of knowledge of Armenians about Christianity and the practice of religion as an inseparable part of their culture in the face of their customs and traditions is related to the period of the Soviet Armenia, when practicing religion was prohibited, and Armenian families *lived* a hidden religion.

4.2.3. Religion and Church Inside and Outside the Diaspora

It has already been mentioned on the previous pages that socialisation is a dynamic process which can never be completely attained: "Socialisation begins in infancy and ends only in death"[383]. Since one's participation in religious socialisation can have interruptions and upheavals, it is natural that sometimes one's behaviour in connection with engagement in religious activities can modify and follow another path. The latter is not a stable process as well, since religious disinterestedness may become a complete devotion to faith at some point in life.

Religions and religious communities can usually play a vital role in diasporic and ethnic identities, in orienting migrants in the foreign country and assisting them in the integration process: "religious communities often function as guides to the new society; they serve as "training ground" for public participation and integration, a place where immigrants in a relatively safe environment can 'learn the rules of engagement with the broader society'"[384]. Religious communities are also often distinguished as places, where migrants can find emotional, spiritual and physical support[385], moreover, religions help migrants find home[386]. Perhaps that is the reason that the Armenian interviewees in Germany have started attending the Armenian church and showing interest in participating in different cultural events organised by the church mostly after having moved to Germany. This phenomenon is more common among the Armenians who have migrated to Germany from the Republic of Armenia. The Armenians from Turkey and Iran attended the church and participated in the Armenian cultural events on a regular basis also before migrating to Germany. One of the interesting phenomena is that the most active participants and members of the Armenian communities in Germany are the Armenians from Turkey and Iran, not the Armenians from the Republic of Armenia, with the exception of the city Halle, where the Armenian community consists of about 200 Armenians, who all have migrated to Germany from the Republic of Armenia. The interest and eagerness to participate in the Armenian events, organised by the Armenian Church in Germany, can be related to several reasons, among others, preservation of one's religious, cultural and ethnic identity, means of group solidarity and emotional resource, distinctiveness and differentiation from other groups, rejection and non-acceptance by the majority society, feeling lonely and homesick, reflection on the past and history, etc.

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[383] Knudten, D.R. (1967): *The Sociology*, p. 179.
[384] Frederiks, M., Nagy, D. (2016): *Religion*, p. 16.
[385] See Frederiks, M., et al (2016): *Religion*, p. 16.
[386] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 75.

Moreover, as already discussed above, people need religion to find consolation in difficult situations, protect themselves from the natural catastrophes, as well as different disasters in life which cannot be avoided in any other way and can be given explanation mostly through looking into the problem from a religious perspective, blaming or justifying God for the misdeeds in life, escaping the responsibilities of finding further answers and looking for solutions to solve the seemingly unsolvable problems.

In the identity formation of the Armenian youngsters in Germany, religion can also play a crucial role, since the Armenians born in Germany have multiple and more hybrid identities, as many other ethnic groups in the world. Religion can help them in their youth identity development and orientation: "religions take social form in one way or another and are passed on to future generations by institutions like the family, the school, the monastery, the church, and the temple"[387]. In case the cultural aspects are confused among young people, i.e., it can be impossible to distinguish between some aspects that exist inside their family and outside, religion can be more specific in its religious worldview and perspective. This does not only refer to religious young people but also to those who are sceptic about religion but keep attending the church, since it can be the only institution in or near the city they live in to find an Armenian community where they can meet with their ethnic group on a regular basis. Religion can play a significant role in preserving cultural customs and traditions which is obviously the case among the ethnic minority groups living in host societies.

Religion not only plays a crucial role in identity formation, but in helping an ethnic group exist in a majority culture: without religion the existence of an ethnic group in a country is not so easy. In case of the Armenians in Germany, even though there are some Armenian cultural institutions in Germany, the strongest institution that unites and gathers together most of the Armenians in Germany is the Armenian Apostolic Church. This phenomenon can be illustrated in the different narrations of the interviewees about the important role of the church and religion in Armenians' lives, especially by the Armenians from Iran and Turkey, who consider religion an important element and attribute of the Armenian identity, and according to them, the latter can be preserved through Christianity and the Armenian church.

Moreover, the Armenian church communities in Germany not only hold church services but also organise cultural events, such as reading new books about the Armenian history and culture, commemorating different Armenian public and religious holidays and other significant events. Furthermore, events and occurrences are taken into consideration from all over the world, not particularly the ones from the Republic of Armenia, since Armenians in Germany come from different countries in the world. Some Armenian churches have choirs where Armenians learn and sing Armenian songs that can later be performed in other churches in Germany, representing Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora in Germany. Some churches also organise Armenian language

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[387] Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing,* p. 68.

courses for children and grown-ups who do not master the language or are eager to improve it. Most of the interviewees, with whom contacts have been made on the facilities of the Armenian church, share the following view: the Armenian church is the only place where it is possible to preserve one's ethnic identity. I would like to add that this concept has probably been developed as a result of practicing religion and experiencing their culture inside the Armenian churches in Iran and Turkey.

The following interviewee speaks about his first experiences in Germany, related to religion and the church. He did not know what denomination he belonged to, since in his own country (Armenia) the people were only aware that they were Christians and did not differentiate and categorise themselves particularly belonging to a denomination which is also considered by the interviewee to be connected with the Soviet period in Armenia. Since he didn't *live* and *experience* religion in his homeland, his being a Christian had a symbolic meaning for him, and he started attending the Armenian church and learning about Christianity already as a migrant in Germany:

> "Before I came to Germany, I knew we were Christians. Then I was asked for the first time in Germany to what religion I belonged and I replied that I was Christian. They kept asking me, what Christian, and I didn't understand then, what Christian I was, because religion for me was, as in Soviet period, automatically if you were baptised, you were born in a Christian country, then you are Christian. I didn't know whether I am Catholic, Protestant, Gregorian, I didn't know to what branch I belonged. Then in the course of time I understood what religion was" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

The role of the religion and the church became important in the following interviewee's life only after having moved to Germany. It has been indicated above that the interviewee has been influenced by his grandmother in acquiring a religious identity, since she was a highly religious person, and he has received many inspirations from her. Nevertheless, he indicates about the importance of religion and the church in his life only after having moved to Germany as a migrant:

> "Before coming to Germany, the church or the faith didn't play such a big role in my life, as after coming to Germany. Hmm, my parents were religious, but not very much, I mean, they go to the church" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*).

In Iran going to the church and leading one's life in close connection with the Armenian church is a natural phenomenon. Even those, who are not religious, are active participants of the Armenian community life. The following interviewee tells about her feeling a more closeness to God and religion when she arrived in Germany, especially in the difficult times:

> "In Iran we used to go to the church but when I came here, I became closer to God, because I feel that God has helped me in many things" (*Sona – female, 47 years old, from Iran*).

The notion of a migrant being closer to the religion and the church is expressed in the following quotation: the interviewee considers that the Armenians living in Diaspora have more faith in God than Armenians living in Armenia and connects it to the fact that the Armenians in Diaspora live in

foreign lands. This aspect can be related to various aspects of religion and the religious communities in migrants' lives, such as being home for them, giving psychological and physical support, means of consolation, possibility to get closer to one's ethnic identity, regain a sense of belonging, distinguish themselves from the majority culture, etc.:

> "I can honestly say one thing, I have met so many people, Armenians from Turkey, Syria, Iran, Armenians in Diaspora have more faith in God, or maybe it's because we live in foreign countries, foreign lands" (*Anahit – female, 54 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee narrates about the importance of the Armenian church in significant events in his life, and in spite of the fact that he does not consider himself to be very religious, he appreciates the role of the Armenian church in the Armenian Diaspora since he considers it to be the backbone of the Armenian culture that has helped Armenians remain Armenian after the Genocide. It is important to note that the interviewee's parents have migrated to Germany from Turkey, and it is natural that he considers the Armenian church the only institution with the help of which the Armenians in Diaspora can retain their ethnicity and culture, since most of the Armenians in Iran and Turkey are active participants of the Armenian church community, estimating the latter as the most significant establishment, engaged in promoting the Armenians' ethnic identity preservation:

> "My German friends, they don't go to the church, they don't marry in the church, they just go there, eat dinner, and then you are married, done. And for me it wouldn't have been complete without church wedding, so we did church wedding with our families: it wouldn't have been a wedding without a church, and I would like to baptise my children, too, and yeah… despite I am not church crazy and going there every week and praying all the time, I want my future kids to be part of the Armenian society and the Armenian Church because the church is the backbone of our culture, it's what has kept us alive during the Genocide, and that's what's gonna keep us Armenians in the future, we have different struggles" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

The role of the church in the life of the Armenian Diaspora in Germany is evaluated highly also by the following interviewee, since he considers that there are no other secular institutions in Germany that could bring Armenians together. The interviewee also points out that in case there was no Armenian church in Germany, Armenians would not be able to preserve their ethnic identity. The role of the Armenian church is mostly considered vital by the Armenian interviewees in connection with their ethnic identity preservation, experience of one's culture, learning the Armenian language, and not directly indicating other roles that the church could play in people's lives, such as, spiritual and/or religious life, consolation in times of crisis and stress, psychological support, etc.:

> "It is big, very big, because we don't have our traditional Diaspora parties, don't have ombudsman, don't have other benefits that the Diaspora has, we only have the church. That is to say, if there was no church, most of the Armenian communities in Germany would vanish, at least with these church services, at least it gives some pulse somehow, but if we had, for

example, Hay Doun[388], the church would have its role, of course, but it won't be so big" (*Tigran – male, 29 years old, from Iran*).

The Armenian church is perceived as an institution which helps Armenians not only preserve their ethnic and religious identity, stay away from external influences, develop a sense of belonging, but also create some projects together and support each other psychologically. The following interviewee is from an Armenian family that has migrated to Germany from Turkey, where the Armenian church has played a very important role, and his family has built its daily life in close contact with the church, which continues up to date also in Germany, since the whole family of the interviewee is actively engaged in all the church activities and supports it in financial and organisational affairs. The interviewee also indicates that the Armenian church in Germany helps him with his identification as an Armenian, where he finds a sense of belonging. Besides, the Armenian church also helps the Armenian community in Germany get into contact with other churches in Germany:

> "We go to the church, because we consider it the most important identification feature, we try to preserve it, and which in its turn tries to protect us from other influences, external impacts, and with the language it would be another story, because it was difficult to preserve it, and now one tries to catch up on it, and in my opinion, these are the main features to be an Armenian. Also the appearance, one can immediately notice that you come from the south, that you have another ethnicity, and behind all that stands the culture, the religion. Generally, the community, the church, they bring Armenians together, not everyone comes, but the ones who come also develop a sense of belonging together, support each other… One can use these meetings to carry out certain projects, both with the German society, with other churches, because we have, here there is also a Catholic church, an Evangelical church, one keeps a contact also with these churches, and then one can do something together with these groups, maybe have a party, small things" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

The following interviewee is proud to have an Armenian church in Germany and also considers the role of the Armenian church very important in the Armenian Diaspora since the former is the only place where Armenians can meet each other. She has migrated to Germany from Turkey, and since she was accustomed to living inside the Armenian community in Turkey, she was eager to find it also in Germany. She was a teenager when she arrived in Germany with her parents, and has always built her life inside the Armenian community:

> "I would look to the right and say, I am proud that I have a church in this city. It is very important for us, because we, Armenians, are gathered around the church in Turkey, here as well. When we came to Germany, we found each other in the church, the church is very important for the Armenians who live abroad. If there was no church, how would we have all found each other?" (*Seda – female, 62 years old, from Turkey*).

According to the following interviewee, in the preservation of the Armenian ethnic, cultural and religious identities, it is very important to be connected with the Armenian church in Germany, or

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[388] Armenian charitable non-profit organisation, founded in Canada: http://www.haydoun.ca/en/

any other Armenian secular institution that engages in organising and carrying out Armenian cultural events. He also states that the Armenians who are in close contact with the Armenian community life in Germany, are prone to preserve their identities as Armenians:

> "In Diaspora the strongest institution that preserves the Armenian culture, the Armenian religion, the Armenian language is the church, and when someone is in a close contact with the church in Diaspora, in Germany, engages himself in the community life, it is easy to preserve one's identity, rather than having absolutely no contact with the church and the community. The same refers to cultural communities or any other Armenian institution that engages itself with the preservation of the Armenian culture" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*).

The role of the Armenian church is estimated highly by the following interviewee not only for the present generation but the future generations in the Armenian Diaspora as well, since in case Armenians want to preserve their ethnic identity as minority groups in different countries, they should be active participants of the Armenian communities. The interviewee has a German husband, and her concern is mostly connected with the future of her children who might lose their ethnic identity in case they do not keep contact with the Armenian community:

> "It is very important for Armenians to protect and preserve the Armenianness, the school, the church are the only institutions that we should create and protect, otherwise we will be lost forever" (*Yeva – female, 43 years old, from Armenia*).

The small number of the church attenders among the Armenian young generation upsets the following interviewee, and she worries about the future of Armenians in case they stop participating in the church services and community life. She is considered to be an old generation who has migrated from Turkey, and according to her, the only way to remain Armenian is to be connected to the Armenian church: in case they stop participating in the community life, they will eventually lose their identity as Armenians:

> "They don't come to the church, it's very bad, in the future when we are not there any more, there would be no community, because the young people don't come, they don't participate in it" (*Sofia – female, 75 years old, from Turkey*).

Differences in experiencing religion and leading a life connected with religion are pointed out by the following interviewee, who compares the Armenian community in Iran and Germany. In Iran her daily life has been tightly connected with the Armenian church and the community, where *all* Armenians, both young and old, gathered together. In Germany the number of the church attenders has reduced, and she is concerned that the young generation has no interest in the church. Moreover, there are many Armenians in the city where she lives, but very few pay fee to the church, and mostly the Armenians from Turkey support the church in every possible way. A quotation is depicted below to have a grasp of the situation of an Armenian community life in one of the cities in Germany, concerning the number of the church service attenders, the participants of the gathering after the church service, the church fee, etc.:

> "The first thing we do in Iran when we open our eyes, first of all, we study religion at school, besides every Saturday, that is to say, in Iran Thursday night, all Armenians, including young people, go to the church. First of all, for young people it's a place where they meet each other, for adults, for us it's a holy place, a place to pray, but here on Sundays mostly elderly people go to the church. […] In this big city there are more than 500 Armenian families but only 15 people are members of the church. What do we do for the church? Nothing, nothing! Even the membership of 18 euros for three months which is no money in Germany, it's nothing, only 6 euros per month, nobody wants to pay, they say, we don't need the church, and they really don't believe, frankly, they don't have faith. If you come to a church service you will see, maximum we have 15 people, after the service more Armenians come to the gathering, there is cake, they will meet Armenians and talk to them, that's it, elderly people come to the church. Turkish-Armenians keep the church in Germany, I am not exaggerating, they are all members of the church, and I can say that they are highly religious" (*Anahit – female, 54 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee migrated to Germany from Turkey. Her husband could not understand Armenian then and did not want to go to the church services. She forced him to go with her, since it has been the only possibility to get acquainted with Armenians. She is also concerned about the reducing number of the church attenders since it is also estimated by her that in case the Armenians stop attending the church, they will lose their ethnic identity and assimilate into the majority society:

> "During the first week I quarrelled at home because my husband wouldn't come to the church, saying that he didn't understand the language, he doesn't speak Armenian. And I told him it didn't matter, whether he understood or not, he should come and sit there for an hour or two, he should come and hear what the priest said, even if he didn't understand he had to come. If a person wants he will find some time for the church. After my work I go there, but people are different, others consider money or cinema or disco more important, and sometimes people don't come to the church" (*Arevik – female, 56 years old, from Turkey*).

The importance of the role of the religion to retain one's ethnic identity in foreign lands in also indicated by the following interviewee. She considers that her strong Armenian ethnic identity has not allowed her to integrate into the German society. The interviewee considers herself to be a religious person, despite the fact that she does not estimate highly the Armenian church in Germany, which will be discussed in the coming paragraphs, more particularly, in Subchapter 4.2.5.:

> "My Armenianness didn't allow me to integrate, not religion, I don't see any difference, although we say that the religion kept us Armenians, especially in Muslim countries we could separate ourselves as Armenians and preserve our identity" (*Naré – female, 36 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, as it has been demonstrated in the interviewees' narrations, religious disinterestedness can transform, and religion can become salient and play a more significant role in migrants' lives in foreign lands than in their homeland. This aspect can be related to several factors, such as, an attempt to reconnect with one's ethnic group and *relive* their culture, find emotional and psychological support, feel at home, differentiate themselves from other groups, regain a sense of

belonging. Almost all the interviewees have narrated about the difficulties they have gone through upon their arrival in Germany. Some interviewees have talked specifically about the role of religion in their lives only after having migrated to Germany, but many interviewees from the Republic of Armenia have indirectly mentioned about their disinterestedness in the church in their homeland, and a desire to connect to their ethnic group in Germany. In case of the Armenians from Iran and Turkey, the picture is different: they have been active participants of the Armenian church community life already in those countries, and the same is also practiced further, i.e., they are in close contact and relationship with the Armenian community life in Germany.

As indicated above, the Armenian church is considered by a great number of the interviewees to be the only institution in Germany where Armenians can practice religion and connect with their ethnic group on a regular basis. Its role is important since the interviewees connect the preservation of their ethnic, cultural, religious identities with the Armenian church, and in order to remain Armenian, one should be in close contact with it. Moreover, the role of the church has also been pointed out as an institution that helps them distance themselves from the majority culture and keep close to their roots. To sum up, I would like to point out that the role of the religion and the church is estimated highly by the above-mentioned interviewees, at the same time, they also indicate some pretensions and dissatisfaction with the Armenian church in Germany, in connection with the church services, priests, projects and other activities, which will be discussed in detail in Subchapter 4.2.5.

4.2.4. The Main Purpose of Visiting the Armenian Church in Germany

As it has already been indicated in the previous Subchapter, religions and religious communities play an important role in the lives of migrants, in connection with the orientation in the foreign country, assistance in the integration process, physical and spiritual support in difficult situations, etc[389]. Religion has also been viewed as a means for migrants to find a homeland[390]. Religions can also help with religious, cultural and ethnic identity issues, as well as with separation and distinctiveness from external groups, i.e., helping to stay inside their groups.

Since the first idea and interest in the current research has been provoked by the desire to find out the main reason and motivation of the Armenians of visiting the Armenian church in Germany, a separate question has been devoted to this subject. To the question, why they visit the Armenian church, many different answers have been expressed, among which: to get to know other Armenians or meet their friends and acquaintances, feel the atmosphere of the *small homeland*, be among those that share the same worldview and are from the same culture, speak their native language, experience spiritual moments, etc. Moreover, the church is attended by complete atheists as well, who keep coming to the church with only one reason: to meet Armenians and be among

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[389] See Frederiks, M., et al (2016): *Religion*, p. 16.
[390] See Tweed, Th.A. (2006): *Crossing*, p. 75.

them. The psychological factor is also viewed as one of the reasons to go to the Armenian church: to avoid loneliness and be among those who are similar to you. Some visit the church with the aim of learning something about the Armenian culture, or reliving the Armenian culture and talking about common topics which will be forgotten in the course of time if one does not attend the church or interact with Armenians. Of course, the importance of the church as a place where one experiences peace and harmony is also mentioned as one of the purposes of visiting the church, nevertheless, the most widespread motivation of going to the church is meeting other Armenians, making new contacts, *living their culture*, being among those who are similar to them. Some narrations of the interviewees about their motivation and desire to participate in the church services and after-service-gatherings are depicted below.

First of all, there are interviewees who come to the church both to participate in the services and meet Armenians. The following interviewee considers himself a religious person, and as he expresses himself, he leads his life in accordance with the teachings of Christ. Religious rituals and church services are very important to him, but he also highly estimates the gatherings and meetings with Armenians, and is a constant visitor of the Armenian community meetings for his child as well, so as the child can interact with other Armenian children in an Armenian atmosphere:

> "To participate in services, to communicate with Armenians" (*Hayk – male, 29 years old, born in Germany*).

The following interviewee points out in her interview that she is not an active participant of the Armenian community any more, but she has mostly visited the church services to participate in some cultural events organised by the church or to meet Armenians:

> "Hmm, maybe not church-related, no, but when there were meetings where some presentation would be given, or an event dedicated to Armenian authors, or something like that, or a get-together with Armenians, or just spending some time with my friends to feel the Armenian atmosphere" (*Anna – female, 37 years old, from Armenia*).

In the city where the following interviewee lives, there are no Armenian churches, that is the reason, that she and her husband usually drive to other cities to participate in the Armenian community meetings. She does not consider herself to be religious and her first motivation is to be among Armenians, to speak the Armenian language. As it has already been indicated previously, there are issues in the Armenian communities in Germany, related to the usage of the language and the cultural differences among various Armenian groups. That is the reason that the interviewee has stopped being an active participant of the church services, since she drives miles to speak Armenian with her countrymen, but the language she hears is Turkish, spoken by the Armenians who have migrated to Germany from Turkey. Otherwise, the interviewee visits the church to avoid loneliness and interact with people from her own culture:

"Why do people go to the church most of the time? To avoid loneliness, they go to meet people similar to them, to communicate and interact with people who are like them" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

Even though some interviewees have been living in Germany for about 20 years, they still look for a contact with Armenians not to feel lonely. The following interviewee goes to the church because she is homesick, is eager to meet Armenians, as well as to participate in the service. It is important to point out that she is not an active participant of the Armenian community gatherings but is eager to keep contact with it from time to time, perhaps in difficult situations, or whenever she feels homesick, wants to be close to her ethnic group and culture:

"The first motivation… perhaps it is sometimes the homesickness, I want to meet Armenians, also for the service. […] I think it's very good that the church gathers people together, in a way, hmm… maybe people won't feel themselves so lonely here in Germany then" (*Anush – female, 53 years old, from Armenia*).

The notion of finding home in the Armenian church community is expressed by the following interviewee, who visits the Armenian church to be among Armenians and feel oneself *in homeland*. The interviewee spends most of his day among the German society, i.e., at work, doing sport, or other daily activities. He usually seeks contact with Armenians, and even drives to various cities to participate in the Armenian church gatherings:

"I take part… a small homeland, that is important, so as I can be with and among Armenian people, hear Armenian" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee was born in Germany in an Armenian family that has migrated from Turkey. She and her family are constant visitors of the church gatherings, especially important ones, such as religious holidays, when a great number of Armenians can gather together, even Armenian guests from other European countries. She is a religious person and connects her family activities with the church, at the same time visits the church to be with and among Armenians:

"To get together with Armenians. It depends in what life situation I am going through. Sometimes I don't feel like going to the church so much, and I say, ah, the church is there, I can always go there, and then, hmm, to be in an Armenian environment a little bit (*laughs*)" (*Arminé – female, 21 years old, born in Germany*).

Both the following interviewee and his father visit the church and are active participants of the Armenian community, but not for the church services but to be with their friends, among Armenians, to spend a nice day together with their family and friends. The interviewee has been raised with an Armenien ethnic identity and has often engaged himself in different activities to promote the well-being and identity preservation of the Armenian Diaspora in Germany:

"My father himself is atheist, so he goes to the church but not for the church, for his friends basically. So, I was raised very religiously, but I was raised as an Armenian and in a way that I

want to do the youth work, that I want to be active in our community but not for religious reasons. […] For everybody it's different but for me it's like a way to get together with my friends at one day easily. That's a nice way to get together, to get family together. It's like getting family together for Christmas, because it's Christmas everybody comes, that's the same thing with the church. Since there is a big church event, everybody is going because you have to, basically, or it is expected" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

The Armenian church and the community can be the only place where Armenians can speak Armenian since in the interviewee's family, her children and grandchildren do not speak Armenian (at home Turkish is spoken), and she has learnt Armenian in the Armenian community after having migrated from Turkey. Another interesting phenomenon is that the following interviewee is a religious person *(CRS – 4.4, highly religious[391])*, and she indicates that she also visits other churches in Germany to participate in the services, but particularly indicates that she takes part in the Arminian church gatherings to meet Armenians and speak the Armenian language:

"I come here to meet Armenians, where else can I speak Armenian? We come to the community to speak, there is no other place to speak Armenian" (*Nora – female, 65 years old, from Turkey*).

The following interviewee participates in the church services to learn more about his own culture, to meet Armenians, learn the Armenian language. He was born in Germany and has attended special online courses to learn the Armenian language and takes every opportunity to practice it. Even though he is more fluent in German, he has preferred to be interviewed in Armenian so as he takes the chance to use his mother-tongue. He does not consider himself a religious person but is an active participant of the Armenian church community gatherings:

"I am not religious but I am a believer, I enjoy coming to the church, because they tell you about your culture here, they do everything so as you can learn Armenian, meet Armenians, they do everything, and it is very interesting to me and very important for me, that's why I like going to the church, because I want to live this culture, that's why I come here. But I believe in evolution and other things more than whatever is written in the book *(Bible) (laughs)*" (*Vahagn – male, 23 years old, born in Germany*).

The quotation below differs from other quotations above since the following interviewee speaks about his spiritual experiences in the church. The church is a place where he feels calm, in peace and harmony, and in spite of the fact that he does not feel the same way at every service, visiting the church helps him get away from his daily routine:

"To tell the truth, it's not that I participate every time, there are days, I don't want to take part, there can be thousands of reasons but when I go, for me it is not like, not every service brings me inner peace, but sometimes it has happened that I feel calm and peaceful during the service, during the day you might have thousands of thoughts, questions connected with daily routine, money, job, etc, and during those two hours in the church I get away from my problems and relax" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

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[391] The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS): Non-Religious: 1–29 (1–2)/ Religious: 30–59 (2.1–3.9)/ Highly-Religious: 60–75 (4.0–5.0).

The church is considered by the following interviewee to be a place where he finds peace in his heart, and most importantly, he indicates the importance of going to the church gatherings since they bring Armenians together, and some new acquaintances with Armenians can become good friendships. Moreover, as he indicates, in case one does not participate in those gatherings, some aspects of the Armenian culture can be forgotten. The interviewee considers himself to be a religious person, but admits that he has not read the Bible and does not pray. Moreover, he is one of the most active participants of the Armenian church gatherings, taking into account the fact that in his city of residence there are no Armenian communities, and he usually drives to different cities to participate in the church meetings:

> "Well, you communicate with people, learn some news, I mostly go to the church, because I feel good, my heart is in peace, my soul is in peace, mostly for that, and of course, to meet Armenians. For instance, if I hadn't gone to the church, I wouldn't have met my friends, I have good friends, we went to the church and met each other there, and we are very close now, like family, the church helped us in that. And there has been no gathering that I haven't taken part in. […] It seems that Armenians don't get lost, we gather together, meet each other, it's our belief, how should I put it? It's like… you learn new things, you remember some things, if one doesn't go, then one forgets everything slowly, one forgets many things" (*Arshak – male, 39 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, the first motivation and purpose of the interviewees to go to the Armenian church and be active participants of the Armenian community gatherings are different, among others: to meet Armenians and be with and among them, to experience the feeling of being in a *small homeland*, to retain their ethnic identity, not to forget their roots, to have a sense of belonging, to get spiritual nourishment, to speak their own language, to learn new things about their culture and history, etc. In spite of the fact that a couple of interviewees have indicated about the spiritual nourishment or the particular interest in the church service, the majority of them have interest in participating in the Armenian church community gatherings to meet other Armenians, *live* their culture, speak the Armenian language, avoid homesickness, feel in homeland. The first motivation of visiting the Armenian church in order to meet their ethnic group and experience their culture is also indicated by those Armenians who are religious, i.e., for whom prayers and religious rituals play an important role.

The above-mentioned interviewees all interact with the German society and feel comfortable and content with their lives in Germany. Nevertheless, they still interact with their ethnic group by keeping contact with the Armenian community in Germany. Moreover, even though several representatives from the older generation have expressed concerns about the fact that the younger generation does not attend the church services, there are several interviewees who are young and are regular participants of the Armenian church services, as demonstrated above.

4.2.5. The Evaluation of the Armenian Church in Germany by the Research Group

First of all, I would like to draw attention to the fact that even though the majority of the interviewees evaluate the role of religion and the church highly in their lives as an ethnic minority group in Germany, the role of the Armenian church and the Armenian priests is assessed quite differently. In other words, religion and religious communities are generally considered to be significant and necessary in migrants' lives because of various reasons that have been discussed in the previous paragraphs, such as, feeling at home, regaining a sense of belonging, preserving ethnic identity, *reliving* their culture, etc. Nevertheless, there is a considerable difference in general perceptions of religious communities and concrete evaluations of them. The evaluations mostly depend on various reasons and have different grounds which is depicted in the following categorisations:

- What countries the interviewees come from: Armenians from the Republic of Armenia do not evaluate the role of the church in the Armenian Diaspora highly. To be more precise, the role of belonging to a religious community is assessed as an important factor in their lives, but the church and its activities are mostly described in a non–constructive way. Thus, the perception of the church by the Armenians from the Republic of Armenia quite differs from those Armenians who were born and lived in Iran and Turkey. In these countries the church is the only facility where they can feel themselves Armenians, preserve their ethnic identity and remain Armenian. Moreover, it can be the only place where they can learn the Armenian language and get acquainted with the Armenian culture. Accordingly, the evaluation of the Armenian church in Germany differs, taking into account the country where the interviewee was born and has lived many years before having moved to Germany.
- In what cities in Germany the churches are situated, and what priests are responsible for a particular church: the interviewees evaluate the role of the church also taking into account the characteristics of the priest. They differentiate between competent and spiritual priests, as well as those who are not capable of satisfying the mental and spiritual needs of the church attenders.
- The language and length of the church service where the church visitors are not able to follow and understand the priest. Their role is passive, and they get very easily tired and bored during the service which lasts from two to three hours.
- The lack of the interpretation of the Bible is one of the most widespread pretensions of the interviewees toward the Armenian church. They are eager to learn new things about the Bible during the church service and especially hear interpretations of it since it is not so accessible to read the Bible in Armenian. Moreover, hearing preaching in the church, which is in Old Armenian, is not comprehendible for Armenians from Armenia and Iran because the former speak Eastern Armenian, and the latter speak Eastern Armenian dialect. Moreover, a good preaching also lacks: it is delivered inappropriately and improperly, from which the church attenders do not get spiritual nourishment. In defence of the church I would like to indicate that some changes have already been made by the church in accordance with the pleads and requests of the Armenians, where some interpretations of the Bible are delivered to the church attenders.

Moreover, not only Bible interpretation classes but also Armenian language classes are sometimes organised for those children and adults who do not master the language.

- Encouragement and organisation of gatherings where the Armenian language and culture can be taught, since many Armenians, especially the young generation, consider themselves to be Armenian but are very far from the Armenian culture who do not know the history of Armenians except the Genocide (these statements are based not only on my own observations but are based on the utterances and narrations of the interviewees).

Even though it might be generally considered that the ethnic identity of Armenians is strongly connected with their religion, in a considerable number of cases the opposite can also be true: there are some Armenians in Germany who are not active in the Armenian church activities and do not consider themselves religious: nonetheless, they starkly identify themselves as Armenians. They might not have any interest to be active participants of the religious ceremonies or events, but be quite excited about participating in various cultural activities that are organised by different Armenian organisations in Germany, including literature presentations, traditional dance events, sport activities within the circles of their ethnic group, as well as demonstrations that are held against various occurrences and developments in Armenia. An interviewee with strong ethnic identity is not religious at all, even against Christianity and the Armenian church, seeing it as the means of corruption and destroy of their original ethnic identity. These Armenians not only have strong ethnic identity but are very well acquainted with the Armenian history and culture related to art, literature, music, etc. One of the reasons that the Armenian church is not estimated highly by the Armenians from the Republic of Armenia, can be connected to the activities of the Armenian church both in the past and at present.

The paragraphs below illustrate the narrations of the interviewees about their attitude towards Christianity and the Armenian church. The role of the latter is not illustrated positively by the Armenians from the Republic of Armenia in comparison to the narrations of the Armenians from Iran and Turkey. One can easily notice the distrustful and more or less negative perception of the church by the interviewees from Armenia, whose attitude towards the religion may be relatively mild, but quite critical towards the Armenian church generally. The following narrations of the interviewees depict the situation more vividly, where positive evaluations and negative claims towards the Armenian church and the priests can be found.

The following interviewee measures her religiousness in connection with the Armenian church and in this case considers herself non-religious, since she does not want to be connected with the Armenian church. Nevertheless, in case she visits Armenian churches in Armenia where there is no service and no priests, she feels good and considers herself a believer. At the same time, she acknowledges that some Armenian priests in different cities in Germany are appreciated and spoken of positively, around whom people gather and follow them.

"I am not religious in the sense that I don't want to belong to the Armenian church at all, because whenever I have seen priests, from the wedding to baptising, and so on, I have always felt very bad, that such people…, that I should kiss the cross they hold, I don't like such things, even here, when I go and don't feel sympathy towards the priest, I don't approach them at all, because I don't want to be connected with them, I don't want them to pray for me, I can do it myself. I like churches, in Armenia, of course, I visit the churches in the regions, for instance, the Monastery Tatev, the church in Sevan, where you can go sit in silence and feel good, and in those moments I do believe, but mostly, when there is a priest, I feel bad. […] It *(the Armenian church)* mostly disintegrates people, so that they are disgusted with it and don't want to go to the church, this is what the Armenian church does. […] There are places, there are cities where there are good priests, and people like them, and even during those times when Armenia needs some help, people gather around those priests" *(Anna – female, 37 years old, from Armenia)*.

The role of religion is important in the following interviewee's life only personally, that has no connection with the church, since external manifestations are only symbols, and he thinks that one should have faith in the heart. He further states that Armenians living in Diaspora have more faith than Armenians who have come to Germany from the Republic of Armenia:

"Of course, I consider religion important, accept our Christianity but only from inside, personally. I go to the church but do not consider it the home of God. I never kiss the ring or the cross of a priest, because I know that those things have symbolic meaning. A person should have his faith in his heart. […] There was an Armenian church in Germany, but it was a little, hmm, more in a demonstrative way, I wouldn't say with deep faith. There are, of course, people *(Armenians)* who came to Germany from other countries than Armenia, their faith, church is more stable, Christianity is deeper in them, than in Armenians who came to Germany from Armenia, in my opinion" *(Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia)*.

The Armenian church is not only depreciated by the following interviewee but also considered an institution that splits the people because of some rules and regulations of the church: in case Armenians do consider themselves religious or Christians, they cannot be called Armenians. Moreover, the church is blamed for the loss of the Armenian identity since before Christianity there was Armenian culture, Armenian letters which were all destroyed upon the arrival of Christianity in Armenia. She considers it not right to represent oneself as an Armenian through one's religion and the church but through one's culture. Even though it cannot be exactly estimated how many Armenians share this view, but she is not the only Armenian in Germany who considers the Armenian church and the Christianity as the destroyers of the Armenian culture:

"I don't think the church unites Armenians… unfortunately, today the church unites the Armenians, but it's not the church that should unite Armenians. The fact of being Armenian should unite Armenians, that is to say, there are many who are atheists or pagan, so what? If they don't go to the church, then they shouldn't be in contact with each other? […] The church splits the people, the nation, because it puts an accent on, hmm, if you have belief in Christianity, then you are Armenian, if you don't believe, then you are not, and it is absolutely not acceptable for me. Recently the clergymen have started very aggressively, and I don't like it… we all know that there are many pagan holidays, and God forbid when you mention that they are pagan holidays, they can attack you and say, what do pagan holidays to do with the

Christ, they are not related to each other, that's another religion. In one word, I don't accept the role of the church at all, it shouldn't be the one to unite Armenians. For instance, I believe in myself, in the nature, in the sun, for instance, I believe in a creator, essence of the universe, and so on, but not in religious stuff like that. […] It is one of our disadvantages that when we are asked about Armenians, represent yourself as an Armenian, the first thing that comes to our mind is that we are Christians, we were massacred. Don't Armenians have anything else? Is it the religion that should represent you? It should be the culture, it should be other things, one should represent himself to the world with other things, not like… If we go deeper into these questions, I am very much against those things (*laughs*), so… First of all, we had our letters, we had thousands of years old culture which was destroyed by the church. We all know, especially we went to a Soviet school, how the church destroyed and killed, how the religion was, Christianity was adopted in Armenia, not everyone adopted it voluntarily, but through sword and weapon, and our culture, our letters, our everything was destroyed by the church, in one word, the church conduced to the loss of our identity, and up to now we, we wander, we don't know, we are a nation that has lost its identity, unfortunately, but now there is a tendency, we are trying to return to our roots" (*Karinέ – female, 38 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee does not consider himself religious, and religion is demonstrated as a part of cultural habits in his life. It is interesting to note that he considers being a Christian or a non-believer acceptable but points out that in case his nation becomes Muslim, he would not like to be a part of it. Whether it is connected to the historical events in Armenians' life or the general prejudice against Islam, is hard to estimate. He also acknowledges that his disinterestedness in religion can be connected to the fact that he has not grown up in a religious family or environment. Nevertheless, he has a strong ethnic identity, and is tightly connected with the life in the Republic of Armenia, including various activities, occurrences, demonstrations, etc.

"The religion and the church play a secondary role in my life. The most important for me is the nation, but if the nation decides to become Muslim, I won't convert to Islam. Either they should be Christian or non-believer. I go to the church, but not because I am a strong believer, but because it is just done as a habit, it has become a part of our culture. Maybe it's because I grew up in this city where we don't have a church, and the Germans here are very atheist, and the religion wasn't primary in the environment I grew up. My parents visited the church very seldom, the religion didn't play an important role in my life" (*Trdat – male, 24 years old, from Armenia*).

In comparison to Armenians from the Republic of Armenia, Armenians from the Diaspora evaluate the role of the church highly, since it is the only institution that has kept them together and helped preserve their ethnic identity in Muslim countries. In Germany the situation is the same: Armenians from Iran and Turkey support the Armenian church in every possible way, and most of them are members of the church and pay fees. Since the following interviewee has grown up in an Armenian family that has moved to Germany from Turkey, he also considers the role of the Armenian church significant in their lives, since the church is a place where Armenians can experience their culture, learn from each other about their customs and traditions, learn the Armenian language, etc. Moreover, he admits the fact that many Armenians from the Republic of Armenia do not appreciate the church as much as those Armenians, who have lived as an ethnic group in different countries:

"Also to preserve one's identity, because many of us think, ok, we are Armenians, but have no opportunity to experience more about being Armenian. One can discuss it with others, goes to the church, the priest comes and tells you everything, the young people have had some workshops about what Armenian customs and traditions there are, especially for children I think it's a perfect opportunity, or to learn the language, it's already a great thing. […] Many Armenians from Armenia have bad experiences with the church, because they say, here drives the priest or the senior priest in his luxurious car in the surroundings, but I would say, that Armenians from Turkey or Syria, Iran, they have absolutely different picture of the church, because they have been their whole lives connected with the church, and in this case people are also ready to give financial support because if I compare it with my parents now, who have come here from Turkey, you have the Armenian church, which is, first of all, a place where you can go as an Armenian and also meet other Armenians, there is also an Armenian school there, Armenian hospitals and so on, and that's why it plays a more important role, because it is the label in the Armenian community. Here in Germany it is difficult, because it's not accepted by many Armenians, and unfortunately, it is also connected with the fact, I think, that the church doesn't have every competence to satisfy the wishes of Armenians, and secondly, simply personal fault" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

A story is told about an Armenian priest in Germany who takes efforts to convert islamised Armenians into Christianity, which is highly appreciated by the following interviewee. What can be concluded from the following quotation is that, according to the interviewee, Christianity and Armenianness are interconnected, since she particularly indicates that the Islamised Armenians became Christians, henceforth, Armenians again:

"An Armenian family has become Muslim, and he (*the priest*) went to their place, met them, talked with them, baptised them, brought the children… we need more such people, he went there and talked with them, and they all became Christian again, they became Armenian again" (*Nora – female, 65 years old, from Turkey*).

The Armenian church is estimated highly by the following interviewee, who indicates that the Armenian community life is tightly connected with it, since even though some Armenians do not visit the church on a regular basis, they know they belong to the Armenian community and carry out the important events in their lives in the circle of the church and their community:

"Everyone must say something, must intermit, but every second Sunday the church is full, sometimes there are many, sometimes there are few, it also happens that there are many elderly people but the point is that we come together. Even if someone doesn't come to the church during the year, when he gets married or something, it all happens in the church, there are people who get married in a German church, but it's very seldom" (*Arminé – female, 21 years old, born in Germany*).

The following interviewee is dissatisfied with the Armenian church in relation to the services that are held. First of all, she does not understand the old Armenian language used during the services. Moreover, she is eager to participate in church services where preaching is delivered, as well as the Bible is interpreted. She complains about the Armenian church since the latter only holds services

for a couple of hours without any interpretation, and her passive participation seems to her to be a waste of time. To satisfy her spiritual and religious needs she usually goes to a German church where she can hear some parts of the Bible interpreted. It is important to point out that the interviewee has come to Germany from Iran, and belonging to and visiting the Armenian church is an important part of her life, and she is eager to see some changes in the Armenian church to be able to be an active participant of not only the community life, but also take part in the church services:

> "In our churches everything is done in accordance with older times, they hold only service, I mean, it's very important to go to the church, and holding church services comes from older times, I know, but I think that it is not enough for us and our children, because we don't know much from the Bible, and it's very difficult to read and understand our Bible, one cannot just sit and read alone, and it's very important that somebody would interpret the Bible for us. In Iran in Armenian churches the Bible is explained and interpreted, and unfortunately, here Armenians don't go to the church, because only services are held without Bible interpretations, and now the church sees that the number of the people decreases, the young generation goes to other churches in order to learn more about what is written, that's why the church recently organises classes on Saturdays, where we go to hear Bible interpretation, and many people come, even young people, they come, sit and listen, because they are eager to learn. That's the problem with our Armenian churches: you go there, sit for two-three hours. […] Here I also go to the German church, I have learnt many things from the Bible there, because every time they do something, they explain, and you feel that you are also a part of it, besides it has stronger influence on the person, than if you sit in the church and cannot understand anything, and just leave the church like that. Every time they read the Bible and interpret it, and the listeners don't waste their time sitting there, but learn something, so as they can understand why they go to the church" (*Sona – female, 47 years old, from Iran*).

She further speaks about the disinterestedness of her children in participating in the church services because of not understanding what is spoken during the service. The children get easily tired, and it is important to the interviewee that her children go not to a German but an Armenian church. Moreover, she mentions about many holidays, the meanings of which are unknown to her, and she considers it vital to learn from the Bible in order to understand what it is to be a Christian:

> "And our children are not used to it, they would come, sit in the church for two-three hours and not understand a word, they only see how the priest does something, and they get tired and don't come to the church next time. They can read in German, but they want to hear and learn about the Bible in Armenian, they come to the Armenian service to hear Armenian. We have told the priest several times, and he has already read something from the Bible for two or three times. Many of us don't know much about it, many don't know why we celebrate some holidays, including me, I didn't know many things, that's why I want our church to not only hold services, of course, we should also have that, but also to read and interpret the Bible" (*Sona – female, 47 years old, from Iran*).

Even though the following interviewee has no problems in understanding the church services or the Bible, she acknowledges that her younger son and other young people in the community encounter difficulties, reading and understanding the Bible. She considers it important for the young generation to have guidance to be able to comprehend and interpret the Bible:

"I go to church services, I understand it, my elder son understands more or less, but my youngest son and other young people say that they don't understand what is said, and they are not to blame. Every person should be taught to read the Bible for the first time, to get directions, then to read it by himself" (*Anahit – female, 54 years old, from Iran*).

Even though after the church service the following interviewee feels relaxed, she would prefer to understand the Armenian language spoken during the services. It has already been indicated above that the language used during the Armenian church services is Old Armenian which is not comprehensible for all Armenians:

"I don't understand most of it, whatever is said during the service, and it seems to me, some changes should be made there, because they speak in old Armenian which no one understands today, we just stand there, hear, cross ourselves, stand up, sit down again. Of course, I feel better, relaxed, but on the other hand, it would be better if we could understand that language (*laughs*)" (*Anush – female, 53 years old, from Armenia*).

Another interviewee also brings up the language issue during the church services. As a result, he has lost his interest in the services, and claims to be reading the Bible on his own. He belongs to the younger generation, and this example should be taken into account, since he indicates that he does not attend church services, *especially Armenian services*, which is related to the fact that he does not understand the language used during the services:

"Last time I went to the church service, I left earlier, I don't attend church services much, especially our Armenian services, where I don't understand a word. I read the Bible by myself, when I have time, it's not that I have lots of time, but whenever I have some spare time, I read" (*Mher – male, 24 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee indicates that the priests do not seem to have time or ability to prepare proper preachings for the services that would give a spiritual nourishment. Sometimes active attenders of the church distract each other by misbehaving in the church. Every week the interviewee goes to the church with different expectations: sometimes he goes to increase the number of the church attenders. It is important to note that religion and the Armenian religious community are not only a place for the interviewee to meet other Armenians and experience his culture, but religious rituals and prayers also play a vital role, and getting spiritual nourishment from the church services is a primary thing in his life:

"I have expected more spiritual growth from the church services, to tell the truth. I mean, sometimes the priest delivers the spiritual impulse, but people in the church are busy gossiping, which distracts you and takes you out of your spiritual field. Sometimes the spirituality here in Germany, how should I put it, the church must also carry out bureaucratic stuff, and sometimes the priest cannot prepare the preaching properly, it happens that he cannot deliver the spiritual nourishment, and it happens that I say, at least I should go to the service, otherwise, only five grandmothers will be inside, or every week you go there with different expectations" (*Hayk – male, 29 years old, born in Germany*).

A lack of a spiritual preacher also bothers the following interviewee, who wishes to hear preachings from a spiritual teacher and receive lessons from the Bible:

> "I would very much like that we had a preacher, I would like it with my whole heart, a preacher that would come and give us lessons from the Bible, not like a teacher, but as a person with a soul close to God…" (*Anahit – female, 54 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee complains about the non-spirituality of the priests and confirms that she has even mutinied against the church. It is important to take into account that religion plays an important role in her life, and she is only dissatisfied with the Armenian church:

> "I don't appreciate the church, it bothers me a lot that the priests are not spiritual, it seems they don't even have faith, everything is done fictively, they do their job looking for some profits. I have even mutinied against the church, it really bothers my faith, I want to have a pure faith, but they make everything into profit, and they think that the people are sheep who should just follow them. I struggle mentally and inwardly, I also struggle against the priests" (*Naré – female, 36 years old, from Armenia*).

The pastors and priests of the Armenian church in Germany are considered to be non-spiritual by the following interviewee. This matter bothers him since he expects more engagement of the church in the daily life of the Armenian community but the church is most interested in holding services which the interviewee considers only a formality. He considers more important to organise and carry out other events that would engage the youth, teach them about the Armenian church and the religion, since not every Armenian in Germany has the opportunity to talk about religious matters with their parents. The interviewee worries about the future of the Armenian young generations who consider themselves Armenians but are far from the Armenian culture and mentality. That is the reason that he claims that the role of the Armenian church in Germany is big but it does not function yet, since all its activities are more of a formal character:

> "The priest, the Bishop, the Patriarch, they are not spiritual for me, they just read the Bible to me. […] When it's just an ordinary man, it's ok more or less, but when a spiritual man behaves like just an ordinary man, it's not good, I don't think it's correct. […] The role of the church is important but it doesn't function yet, I don't see it, everything seems to be superficial, just a formality. As a formality it's written here, we will hold some services, so what that there are only five people present, the service is the most important, we have held the service, have taken photos, that's it. So, what the church does is not enough… When my parents tell me about the Armenian church in Iran, how with the help of the church they could remain Armenians, the Armenian school, their community life was very much connected with the church. In Germany the church mostly holds services, there are many things that the church could do, to gather the young people, teach about religion, yes, one can read the Bible, but there should be someone who will tell you about the Armenian Apostolic Church, one can also talk to the parents, but not everyone has that opportunity. It's very difficult to read the Bible by oneself. When I first read the Bible, it was like a fantasy book for me. There are many things that are not so easy to understand… I always speak with the priest, ask him questions, questions that interest me, to which I have no answers.

Sometimes it happens that his answers don't satisfy me but I say, it's ok" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

To sum up the current Subchapter, I would like to note that the role of the Armenian Church in Germany is estimated differently by the Armenian interviewees, depending on particular circumstances. First of all, it is important to take into account what countries the Armenians come from, more particularly, whether the Armenian church is estimated by the Armenians from the Republic of Armenia or the Armenian Diaspora, in this case, from Iran and Turkey. Secondly, what Armenian churches and priests in Germany the Armenian interviewees have contact with: some are perceived as incompetent and non-spiritual people who are not able to give spiritual nourishment to the church attenders. Thirdly, the length and language of the church services are problematic, which lasts from two to three hours and delivered in Old Armenian, not comprehensible for most of the Armenians. Fourthly, many interviewees have complained about the lack of the Bible interpretation, as well as a proper and appropriate preaching. Fifthly, the lack of organisation of various cultural projects and events for the younger generation to engage them more in the Armenian community life, help them in the Armenian ethnic identity preservation: its role has a more formal nature and does not function properly. Nevertheless, as it has already been indicated above, generally the role of religion and religious communities is estimated highly in the lives of the Armenian interviewees, even for those Armenians who are not satisfied with the Armenian church and its activities as an institution.

Moreover, both the positive evaluations and some pretensions and claims, that have been depicted above, need to be taken into consideration by the Armenian church in Germany in order to be able to meet the needs and desires of the Armenian community. In addition, it is important to take the feedbacks into account not only to attract more people and increase the number of the visitors and participants of different events, but to make the Armenian Diaspora in Germany feel secure and happy with their situation, have trust in the church, help them preserve their identity, encourage and organise Armenian language lessons, help them get acquainted with the Armenian culture, etc.

4.2.6. The Role of Religion in the Integration Process

As indicated above, the importance of religion in migrants' lives is multifaceted, more particularly, it covers such aspects as giving them a sense of belonging, helping them find a small *homeland* inside their ethnic group, orienting in a new host society, connecting with other churches, finding psychological support in times of crises, etc. Moreover, the role of religion and the importance of religious communities have mostly been discussed in connection with one's ethnic group and ethnic and religious identity preservation. In the following paragraphs it is depicted how the interviewees evaluate the role of religion and the church from the perspective of living in a host society, more particularly, its role in the integration process: whether it hinders or facilitates the migrants' lives in the host culture, narrating about their and other migrants' lives generally. Moreover, it has already been indicated that in ethnic and diasporic identities religions and religious communities serve as a

mediator between the ethnic groups and the host societies, helping the former fight against prejudice in the majority society[392], as well as keep contact with their country of origin and integrate into the host society[393].

Some interviewees consider connection with the church as a hindrance to integrate with the host society since people always yearn to be in contact with their ethnic group members. Others consider that generally religion hinders the migrants' integration, and non-religious people integrate more easily. Some postulate that they live more at ease in Germany, since they consider it a Christian country, considering other strata of the German population as different minority groups with different religious and cultural background that are part of the major society. There are interviewees who consider that the representatives of some religions integrate better than those from other religions. To make the situation more vivid, quotations from the interviews are depicted below.

The following interviewee sees religion and the religious community as a hindrance in the integration process, since in case people practice religion in the circle of their ethnic group, yearn to be with and among them constantly, they do not integrate into the host society. On the other hand, she considers religion important since with the help of it one can identify him/herself as an Armenian:

> "You know, during the integration process it may be a hindering circumstance, since you always try to interact with people who are like you, of course, this already hinders your integration. If you go to the church, communicate only with Armenians, you have Armenian neighbours, you do everything with them, it seems to me, it will hinder. […] But it also plays an important role in the sense that we are together, to identify ourselves as Armenians" (*Anna – female, 37 years old, from Armenia*).

Various religious traditions can have different influences on the integration process. According to the following interviewee, Armenians integrate in both Christian and Muslim countries, at the same time preserve their religion and ethnic identity. Of course, it cannot be generalised since many cases can be brought, that Armenians have lost their ethnic identity and language (for instance, many famous Russian-Armenians who have completely assimilated into the Russian culture, and only their surnames betray that they have an Armenian background). The reason that the interviewee considers that other religious minorities do not integrate into the German society is that they mostly remain inside their groups, not interacting with the host society. In comparison to them, Armenians interact both with their ethnic group and the host society:

> "In my opinion, because many Armenians have been brought up Christian-based, many Armenians or other Christian nations integrate very well here in Germany, but Armenians also integrate in Muslim countries, they preserve their religion but they integrate, and for instance, in Singapore or, hmm, one can see that Muslims or some Buddhist communities cannot integrate. I

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[392] See Stepick, A. (2005): "God", p. 16.
[393] See Kokot, W., et al (2004). *Diaspora*, p. 6.

perceive Germany more as an atheist country, more neutral" (*Hayk – male, 29 years old, born in Germany*).

Christianity makes the following interviewee's life easier in Germany, and she considers that people with no religions live much more easily in Germany since they do not attract much attention. It is important to point out that the interviewee thinks that particularly Muslims do not integrate into the host society. Her prejudice can be related to the fact that many interviewees are perceived as Muslims by the German society because of having dark hair, which is estimated negatively by them. More on the matter can be found in Chapter 5:

> "In my opinion, yes, indirectly, not that I concentrate on it and live according to it, but I feel that it makes my life easier here that I am not Muslim, because I notice that other non-Christian, non-Muslim nations have fewer problems, than the Muslims, for instance, the Chinese, Indians, I don't know, they are more easily, hmm, they are not noticed, I would put it like that, they don't attract attention" (*Anush – female, 53 years old, from Armenia*).

The role of religion is explained in different life contexts by the following interviewee, who considers that every aspect in life should be handled in accordance with the right institutions. Moreover, he indicates that people usually remember God when they have difficulties and have some troubles (faith is a coping mechanism that helps people cope with their problems successfully[394]). Drawing comparisons between different nations and religions, he indicates that strongly religious people do not integrate, and connects this aspect to religion. On the other hand, those who are not religious, integrate into a new society easily. Examples are brought about people who have been living in Germany for thirty years but do not speak the language and live in their circles, without integrating into the majority society. He indicates that in comparison to the migrants from other religious traditions, as a Christian he considers Germany his second homeland, accepts and respects the rules and laws of the country, while other migrants do not try to learn the German language or integrate into the society since they do not accept the host society, but live inside their groups, in spite of the fact that they have been living in Germany for 30 years:

> "Those families, where the religion doesn't play an important role, mix with others, assimilate, that is to say, there is integration. Those, for whom religion is first and foremost, they don't mix. I know people who have been in Germany for 30 years, their children went to school with my son, and they don't speak German, the parents can't speak German. That is to say, they haven't even worked up to now, their children have, they went to school, studied, but their parents speak very poor German, their grandparents don't speak German at all. The parallel society begins here, that they don't see themselves Germans. I don't consider myself German either, I know I am Armenian, but I know that I live in Germany, and if I have chosen Germany as my second homeland, I wouldn't say I have assimilated, mixed and lost my roots, I have my customs, but I consider this country my country, I pay taxes in this country, I live here, I work here, of course, there is a wish to go to Armenia to die one day but I don't think about it yet (*laughs*). [...] Those who understand religion correctly, accept it correctly, and think that they also follow the rules

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[394] See Hood, R.W., Hill, P.C., Spilka, B. (1996): *The Psychology of Religion: an Empirical Approach.* New York, London: Guilford Press, p. 379.

and laws, because, hmm, Jesus brings an example, when asked, whether they should pay the taxes to the emperor, Jesus says, give God what belongs to God, and give emperor whatever belongs to him, right? Here in my opinion, Christian people accept, follow the laws and rules, but I think, religion should never be radical, the human being should never put religion above the law, religion is in the heart, in the soul, out of the law, it's on the path. In case something happens, one should understand, that religion cannot show a way out in this situation, here you need a real help, a court, of course, we talk about difficulties… People remember religion, remember God, when they are in difficulty, immediately they say, God, help us, when they are in prosperity, they forget that God exists*" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

It is usually considered that religion helps people be kind, honest and virtuous, but the opposite can also be true. Religion may be hindering many people to commit crime but religion can have a secondary role in this aspect: morale, that is acquired through family upbringing, education, and social rules, can be more important in this context. It is important to note that the interviewee considers that people's religiosity should not be taken into account separately, but in combination with morality which will hinder them from committing crime and being proper members of the civilisation, more particularly, in relation to migrants, be acceptable members of the host society:

> "Whether a person is religious or not, it's his business, I don't think this person is religious, this one isn't. A human being should be honest, should be god-fearing, pious. […] The belief would hinder people from many things, not that they wouldn't do anything because of fear, if they do it because of fear it's wrong, one should not do anything wrong morally, with understanding" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

Religion can be a helpful tool to be a decent person but it cannot be generalised and considered that all religious people are decent:

> "One shouldn't be religious to do good things, and if you are religious, you don't necessarily do good things" (*Tigran – male, 29 years old, from Iran*).

In the following quotation it is indicated that the expression of religion is considered to help others, but it is not only religion-based feature but a human value:

> "You should help, this is the realisation of religion, the expression of it, of course, this is already a human value, those are human things, religion is already based on human basics, that is to say, both, being religious and humane are human values, one cannot, one shouldn't separate them, in my opinion, but there are people who are not religious but have human values and the opposite (*laughs*)" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*).

Religion is interpreted by several interviewees as a helpful tool to hinder people from committing crime and to be decent members of the society, and as an example, the following interviewee speaks of Iranian-Armenians who may not be strongly religious but have fear of God which hinders them to commit crime and violate the law. Faith in God and religiosity in that case can be a helpful tool to integrate into the host society, since obeying the laws and regulations, and not violating them is one of the most important factors in the integration process:

"Maybe we, Iranian-Armenians, are not strongly religious, but we have fear of God. You know, if they don't help you, they won't do you any harm. The new generation grows a little bit egoistic, the youth, of course, the youth in the whole world is like that, but they get to know God, and they have fear of God, that's the most important. They won't steal, they are not saints, but they won't do it, that is why among Iranian-Armenians in Iran there is perhaps one single crime within a year" (*Anahit – female, 54 years old, from Iran*).

In the integration process, neither the church nor religion, but faith can be a helpful tool:

"The church not at all, religion not at all, faith… everybody has faith to some extent, faith is different from religion, I don't like religion, but I think everyone has faith" (*Kariné – female, 38 years old, from Armenia*).

To conclude the above-mentioned quotations, religion can be a hindrance in the integration process in case people try to have contact only with their religious and ethnic group, at the same time it can help with the identification process. Some religions help with the integration process, while others do not, and it has also been expressed that highly religious people do not integrate so well. This statement is arguable since there are many religious people among the interviewees who are integrated into the German society, taking into account their knowledge of the German language, the interaction and communication with, the perception of and attitude towards the German society, etc. Furthermore, it is postulated that religion has helped Armenians both in their ethnic identity preservation and in the integration process both in Christian and Muslim countries. Others view that the integration process is easier for non-religious people, since they do not attract much attention. Moreover, interviewees consider that religion is closely connected to human values, and being religious does not necessarily indicate one's being a good person: an individual can be non-religious but be decent, honest and kind.

4.2.7. Religion as Access to the Host Society

As it has been mentioned in the previous Subchapter, the role of religion in the integration process is estimated, taking into account different criteria, more particularly, it is not only perceived as a psychological support, relationship and contact with one's ethnic group, but also sharing the same religion (Christianity) with the host society, which they consider to be a privilege: "Although a religious value system may not necessarily serve as the basis for the integration of the total society, it may work to integrate the person into a particular religious group"[395]. Moreover, in the previous Subchapter the role of religion in the integration process has been viewed and discussed from the perspective of the Armenian ethnic group, narrating about their life experiences, comparing and contrasting religious and human values, combining some aspects that usually simulate a successful integration of migrants, such as, respecting the laws in the host society and becoming decent members of it. On the following pages the role of religion will be discussed in relation to the

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[395] Knudten, D.R. (1967): *The Sociology*, p. 83.

German society from the perspective of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany, more particularly, what perception and attitude the German society has towards Armenians as a religious and ethnic minority group in Germany. It is vital to note that the quotations from the interviews are actor-oriented, in other words, what the real and actual perception and attitude of the German society towards Armenians in Germany are, are solely demonstrated from the perspective of the Armenian interviewees.

Many interviewees have expressed the notion that the German society appreciates and is more at ease with Christian minority groups rather than those from other religions. It is worth mentioning, that the consideration of the role of religion in the integration process has been primarily asked in relation to its psychological support and an opportunity to connect with their ethnic community, and the comparison and evaluation of their religion in comparison to other religions have been mentioned and discussed on the initiative of the interviewees, whose quotations are indicated below. Once again I would like to point out that the perceptions of Armenians in relations to the German society's attitude towards them or their religion can be subjective. Moreover, to have an objective evaluation of the real situation, a special inquiry or a research should be conducted to estimate the attitude of the German society towards Armenians and/or Christian and other minorities.

The following interviewee considers that the Armenians in Germany integrate with the German society more easily, since Christian and German values are alike, in this respect, considers it a priority for the Armenians in Germany to be part of the Christian world. The interviewee's parents have migrated to Germany from Turkey, and as many Armenians in Turkey, they also have a Turkish surname. In his social life, he has encountered unfavourable attitude towards him in comparison to his German friends in different facilities, since he has been perceived as a Turk. As a teenager, he has been very sensitive to this phenomenon, and has experienced and had the feeling that he did not belong to the Christian world, because he has been/is treated as a Turk:

> "Since our Christian values are very similar to the German ones, sure it's much easier for us to integrate, we don't have that much restriction compared to Turks, for example. So, it's one of our benefits" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

Being a Christian and feeling free to enter German churches is considered to be a benefit for the following interviewee, since it also gives her a chance to be with and among Germans, i.e., her religion gives her freedom and access to the host society. She has migrated from Iran, where she has belonged to a religious minority group. In Germany, she is an ethnic minority, but she considers it advantageous to belong to the majority society religion:

> "I feel more at ease as a Christian when I enter a German circle, I think it makes difference. Maybe if I were a Persian, I wouldn't go to the church, they mostly go to the church, but I wouldn't be able, I wouldn't. But as a Christian, I feel more comfortable going to a German church or being among them" (*Sona – female, 47 years old, from Iran*).

Some interviewees claim that they have noticed a considerable change in the attitude of Germans towards them as soon as the latter have learnt about their religious orientation. As a result, they consider Christianity as a helpful tool to have access into the German society. Once again I would like to point out that this phenomenon is actor-oriented, i.e., how other religious minorities are perceived by the German society is expressed and demonstrated by the subjective estimation and perception of the Armenian interviewees, based on their life experiences and interactions with the German society. Whether it is related to a religion or is a subjective appreciation of the situation, it is difficult to estimate and state assuredly or confidently, nevertheless, since the topic has been touched by some interviewees, some quotations are demonstrated below. A hypothesis to this phenomenon can also be related to the fact that the Armenian Diaspora has for many years distinguished itself from external influences, especially in Muslim countries, with their religion, and the fact that they are perceived Muslims can be a sensitive topic for them. I have often heard not only from the interviewees but from other Armenians in Germany that they usually wear cross to prove and make it obvious that they are Christians. Several interviewees are bothered and feel sensitive when they are perceived by Germans to be Muslims, because they have dark hair, Persian passports, speak Turkish, etc.

The following interviewee claims that she is usually perceived by Germans to be a Muslim because of her dark hair. She has had some experiences, one of which is quoted below, which is connected to a German customer, whose attitude has changed instantly, as soon as the latter has learnt that the interviewee is Christian:

> "When I go somewhere, since my hair is black, then I should be either Muslim or something like that, and it has happened that at my workplace I had a customer, a German, she entered the shop, and it's my obligation to greet her, because it's my workplace. She looked my way, she looked at me asquint, and I said to myself, maybe she thought that I am Muslim, because they don't like Turks so much. So, what I mean, is that as soon as I have told her that I am Armenian, her attitude towards me has changed, changed a lot, I can say, that her attitude has changed 100%" (*Gayané – female, 38 years old, from Iran*).

It is considered by the following interviewee that the media play an important role in generating this or that stereotype or prejudice in people, and since he has black hair, than he is not perceived positively by the German society on the first appearance. He also claims that once he mentions that he is not Muslim but Christian, the attitude of Germans changes. As he puts, they will not start liking you, but some changes can be noticed in their attitude:

> "If you want to get a job, you should be three times better than your German friends, because it is natural, why should they hire you with your problems, language problems, your appearance. For instance, if I am hired somewhere where the majority of the customers are elderly Germans, who know foreigners from TV, which shows only silly things, you can watch RTR, you can watch it for a week, your opinion about foreigners is already spoiled. Germans who come from villages read about foreigners only in newspapers or see them on TV, and when they see you, they say, are you going to do something wrong to me, kill me or something. […] That is

information from media, and they already make an opinion about people, and if you have black hair, then you are bad, and here your being Christian comes to help, I say, I am Armenian, I am not Turk, I am Christian. They won't start liking you, but you can notice some minimal appeasement in their attitude towards you" (*Tigran – male, 29 years old, from Iran*).

Having black hair and being considered a Muslim has been a problem also for the following interviewee, and he states that the attitude of Germans have changed dramatically after having learnt that he is a Christian. Moreover, he also indicates that these stereotypes and prejudices are not only specific to the German society but the Armenian society as well:

> "Well, you work or get into contact with people, ok, they can get along with you, this or that, but they think you are Muslim, because you have black hair. Then when they learn you are Christian, their behaviour changes dramatically into good. There has been a woman in the bank where I worked, that liked me, and once she asked what country I come from, and I said, Armenia, and we were just talking, and she has learnt that I am Armenian, and she said, 'Oh, now I like you even more' *(laughs)*. But it doesn't have anything to do with a German, everyone is like that, isn't it like that in Armenia? If an Armenian interacts with a person and feels a sympathy towards him, but he thinks that this person is a Muslim, and in case it turns out later, that he is Christian, he will like him even better, won't he? It seems there is artificial tolerance, or maybe they are afraid that in case they are not tolerant they will be called racist" (*Mher – male, 24 years old, from Armenia*).

It has been observed by the following interviewee as well, that Germans' attitude changes towards him as soon as they learn that he is a Christian:

> "I have noticed that sometimes one speaks to Germans, they beware of speaking, with some caution, I felt such moments, but when you say you are Christian, their attitude changes instantly, they start talking more openly and freely" (*Arshak – male, 39 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee also indicates that she is usually perceived to be a Muslim because of her black hair and black eyes, and that can be the reason that Germans have special attitude towards her. Christianity is perceived as a benefit for the interviewee, since with it she has access to and gains positive attitude of Germans:

> "Every time I mention that I am Christian, that we were the first nation to adopt Christianity as a state religion, and I always mention that, Germans' attitude changes, they accept you well. Many of them don't know about it, and they say, oh, we didn't know that the Armenians adopted it first. […] Germans are different, in this part they don't like foreigners more than in other lands. In the cities of West Germany people are more open, kinder, of course, but here they are different. For instance, at our surgery our patients don't know that I am Armenian, I don't say every time, "You know, I am Armenian" (*laughs*), when we speak, and they ask, then I say that I am Armenian, I am Christian, they all say, "Really? We thought you were Muslim", and I say, no, here is my cross (*laughs*). I always wear my cross (*laughs*)" (*Yester – female, 25 years old, from Armenia*).

In spite of the fact that religion does not play an important role in the following interviewee's life, he asserts that it has helped his parents in the integration process, since they have been accepted more easily into the German society, as soon as the latter has learnt that they are Christian:

> "The religion didn't play an important role in my life, but it did in my parents' lives. As soon as Germans learnt that my parents were Christian, they were accepted more easily into the society. At school, we were twenty pupils in my classroom, only one German said he believed in Christ" *(Trdat – male, 24 years old, from Armenia).*

In the German society misunderstandings and misperceptions can occur when an Armenian speaks Turkish and does not know her mother tongue. In some circles the following interviewee is perceived as a Turk because she speaks Turkish, but why does she go to the church then and wear a cross?

> "Many Turks live in Germany, that is why many haven't understood, why I can speak Turkish being an Armenian. I tried to explain why I speak Armenian, some have understood me, many have thought, ok, she is a Turk and that's it, and later, for example, when they saw me going to the church or wearing a cross, they said, no, you aren't a Turk, but some haven't understood it, and so on and so forth" (*Arminé – female, 21 years old, born in Germany*).

The following interviewee compares her life in Iran and Germany: in spite of the fact that she was born and grew up in Iran, she evaluates her life in Germany better because the latter is a Christian country, and she feels herself more secure there. Nevertheless, she would appreciate if she was perceived a Christian by Germans, which is not the case:

> "I have lived in Iran which was a Muslim country, now I live here which is a Christian country, and in my opinion, it's easier for me to live here than in Iran, even though Iran was my birthplace, I grew up there, but in any case it was a Muslim country. Here I feel more secure in the sense that it is a Christian country, but still, for instance, we have a Persian passport, which means that you are from Iran. They don't take into account that you are not Muslim, that you are Christian, that you are Armenian, they don't see that" (*Ani – female, 41 years old, from Iran*).

Thus, religion, in this case Christianity, is evaluated positively by the interviewees because it is considered to be an access to the majority society. In their opinion, the majority society favours more those minorities that have the same religion, i.e., Christianity, sharing their experiences and perceptions. Some interviewees have particularly indicated that they have had experiences when Germans' attitude has instantly changed, as soon as it has been unintentionally or sometimes deliberately pointed out to them that they are Christians. The interviewees blame media that that the Muslims are perceived not so positively as the Christians.

Moreover, it bothers the interviewees to be considered by Germans to be Muslims because of the fact that they have Iranian and Turkish passports or surnames, have dark hair, or in case of Armenians from Turkey, that they speak Turkish. The interviewees can be sensitive to the phenomenon that they are considered to be Muslims by the German society since the Armenian

Diaspora distinguishes itself from the majority society in Muslim countries with the help of their religion – Christianity. Moreover, they consider they belong to the religious majority in Germany, but due to the fact that they are perceived as Muslims, they feel susceptible. If one observes the issue from both sides, it is quite comprehensible that a person, who speaks Turkish, has a Turkish surname and a Turkish passport, is perceived to be a Turk by Germans. How can the opposite be possible? Nevertheless, whether the attitude of Germans changes in reality, upon the realisation that the interviewees with Turkish surnames, passports and dark hair are Armenians and Christians, is questionable, since those can be solely the impressions, perceptions and assumptions of the Armenian interviewees. Thus, suppositions that the German society favours Christians to Muslims, can be either prejudice or reality or both of them interconnected and interwoven together. Further research should be carried out to have a definite and explicit answer.

4.3. The Centrality of Religiosity Scale: Analysis of the Results

The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) measures the intensity, centrality and importance of religious matters or meanings in an individual. I have used this questionnaire in my research for two reasons: 1. Up to now this questionnaire is unique in its approach of covering five dimensions of religiosity of an individual; 2. Even though the results of the answers of the questionnaire seem to be predictable, I find it a helpful supplement to the interview, which has been conducted with the research participants before they have filled in the questionnaire.

Stefan Huber revised Charles Glock's[396] approach to religion, inspired by the ideas of Allport and Ross[397] (intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation) and Kelly[398] (theory of a personal construct).

> A personal construct is a pattern for the anticipation of events. Accordingly the personal system of religious constructs can be defined as a superstructure in personality which consists of all personal constructs which are related to the individually defined realm of religion and religiosity. A personal religious construct is activated when the individual anticipates something with a religious meaning. In relation to this approach, the five core-dimensions can be seen as channels or modes in which personal religious constructs are activated.[399]

As already mentioned in the research methods, the CRS refers to Charles Glock's[400] multidimensional model of religion which includes the intellectual, the ideological, the ritualistic, the experiential and the consequential dimensions. The last dimension (consequential) was later omitted, and the public and private practice dimensions replaced the ritualistic dimension, resulting altogether in five dimensions. All these dimensions have been developed from a sociological

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[396] Glock, Ch.Y., (1973): *Religion in Sociological Perspective: Essays in the Empirical Study of Religion*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

[397] Allport, G.W., Ross, J.M. (1967): "Personal", pp. 432–443.

[398] Kelly, G.A. (1955): *The Psychology of Personal Constructs*. New York: Norton, 2 Vol.

[399] Huber, S., Huber, O.W. (2012): "The Centrality", p. 713.

[400] Glock, Ch.Y., (1973): *Religion*.

perspective but also include psychological approaches of religious matters, like thought (intellectual and ideological dimensions), action (private and public practice) and experience (perception, emotion, etc.). For my research I have used the revised version of the five-dimensional model of religiosity by Huber[401]. Thus, the CRS consists of the following core dimensions: intellect (interest in religious matters); ideology (belief in God or something divine); public practice (church service, communal prayer, spiritual rituals); private practice (prayer, meditation); experience (one-to-one experience, experience of being at one)[402].

The **intellectual dimension** measures the capacity and knowledge of individuals to debate and to interpret their prospects about religion and transcendence, the indicator of which is how often an individual thinks about religious matters. From a sociological point of view, a person should have views about transcendence and religious matters, from a psychological point of view, the person should be able to think and interpret these matters, and how the person deals with the intensity of religious questions. It is measured by three questions, which make the first, sixth, and eleventh questions in the questionnaire: How often do you think about religious issues? How interested are you in learning more about religious topics? How often do you keep yourself informed about religious questions through radio, television, internet, newspapers, or books?

The dimension of **ideology** is related to the beliefs and convictions of religious individuals, the indicator of which is whether an individual finds the existence of a transcendent reality probable or plausible, or in other words, whether an individual has a belief in the existence of transcendence. The general intensity of the ideological dimension refers to the plausibility of or the belief in the existence of a transcendent reality. It is measured by three questions, which make the second, seventh, and twelfth questions in the questionnaire: To what extent do you believe that God or something divine exists? To what extent do you believe in an afterlife? – e.g., immortality of the soul, resurrection of the dead or reincarnation? In your opinion, how probable is it that a higher power really exists?

The dimension of **public practice** is related to the public participation of an individual in religious rituals and services, as well as belonging to a certain religious institution or group, the indicator of which is measured by the frequency and importance of one's participation in these rituals and activities. It is measured by three questions, which make the third, eighth, and thirteenth questions in the questionnaire: How often do you take part in religious services? How important is it to take part in religious services? How important is it for you to be connected to a religious community?

The dimension of **private practice** differs from the public practice insofar as it is conducted in private and refers to the fact, whether an individual is devoted to the transcendence, considers religion as a private practice and organises individualised activities in connection with it. The most

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[401] See Huber, S., Huber, O.W. (2012): "The Centrality", pp. 710–724.
[402] See Rieger, M. (ed.) (2009): *What*, p. 19.

common practice of private practice are considered to be prayer and meditation which have more flexibility and variability of practicing religion. The measurement is indicated by the frequency/ intensity and salience of the private practices. It is measured by three questions, which make the fourth, ninth, and fourteenth questions in the questionnaire: How often do you pray? How important is personal prayer for you? How often do you pray spontaneously when inspired by daily situations?

The dimension of **religious experience** is related to the contacts and dialogues with transcendence and divinities in private space, i.e., how an individual perceives the transcendent reality, being in one-to-one experiences with the divine. The dimension is measured by the intensity and frequency of religious experiences. It is measured by three questions, which make the fifth, tenth, and fifteenth questions in the questionnaire: How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in your life? How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine wants to communicate or to reveal something to you? How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine is present?

4.3.1. Validity and Coding of the CRS

The validity of the CRS test is measured, based on the respondents' CRS scores, which are distinguished between three groups: highly-religious, religious and non-religious. Highly-religious individuals have a central position of the religious construct system, the religious – a subordinated position of the religious construct system, the non-religious – a very little or no religious construct system. The CRS has three versions: CRS–15, CRS–10, CRS–5. For my research CRS–15 is used which consists of three questions for each dimension, that in its turn allows to have a high reliability and accuracy of the results. As already mentioned, the test can be applied in many religious traditions, such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism.

The frequency and importance of the categories are divided into five-level answer-scale:

- Frequency and the points: never (1); rarely (2); occasionally (3); often (4); very often (5).
- Importance and the points: not at all (1); not very much (2); moderately (3); quite a bit (4); very much so (5).

For the frequencies of prayer and participation in religious services, two separate answer scales are given:

- Prayer (frequency and the points): never (1); less often/ a few times a year (2); one or three times a month/ once a week (3); more than once a week (4); once a day/ several times a day (5).
- Participation in religious services (frequency and the points): never (1); less often (2); a few times a day (3); one ore three times a month (4); once a week/more than once a week (5).

4.3.2. Questionnaire Language Preference

The questionnaire has been presented to the respondents in three languages (English, German, Armenian), among which they had the opportunity to choose. Out of 37 respondents, 25 have preferred to fill in the questionnaire in German, 12 people have chosen to do it in Armenian, among which: 10 Armenians from Armenia, 2 Armenians from Iran. The preference of the questionnaire language in the Armenian language has been made by those who have been living in Germany for minimum 6 and maximum 22 years. The questionnaire has been translated into Armenian by myself.
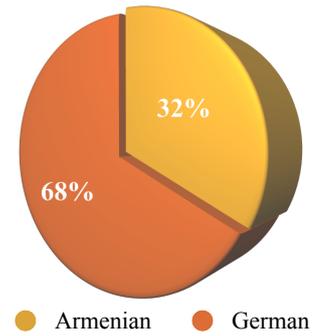

4.3.3. CRS: General Results of All Dimensions
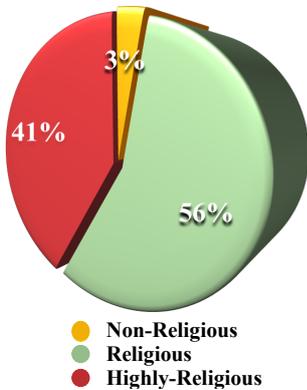
As mentioned above, as a result of the test, three categories can be distinguished: highly-religious, religious, and non-religious. According to the CRS, the Armenian respondents are 41% highly religious, 56% religious and 3% non-religious. In the chart to the left, the percentage of the categorisations is depicted. The questionnaire results have been analysed by both Numbers and SPSS programmes[403]. Moreover, all the charts, pies, graphs and tables have been made in Apple Numbers programme by me.

The chart below demonstrates how many points the respondents have gained as a result of filling in the questionnaire. The points of the categories are depicted in three different colours: non-religious – 1–2 scale = 1–20 points; religious – 2.1–3.9 scale = 30–59 points; highly-religious – 4.0–5.0 scale = 60–75 points.

Religiosity Scale Dimensions: General Results

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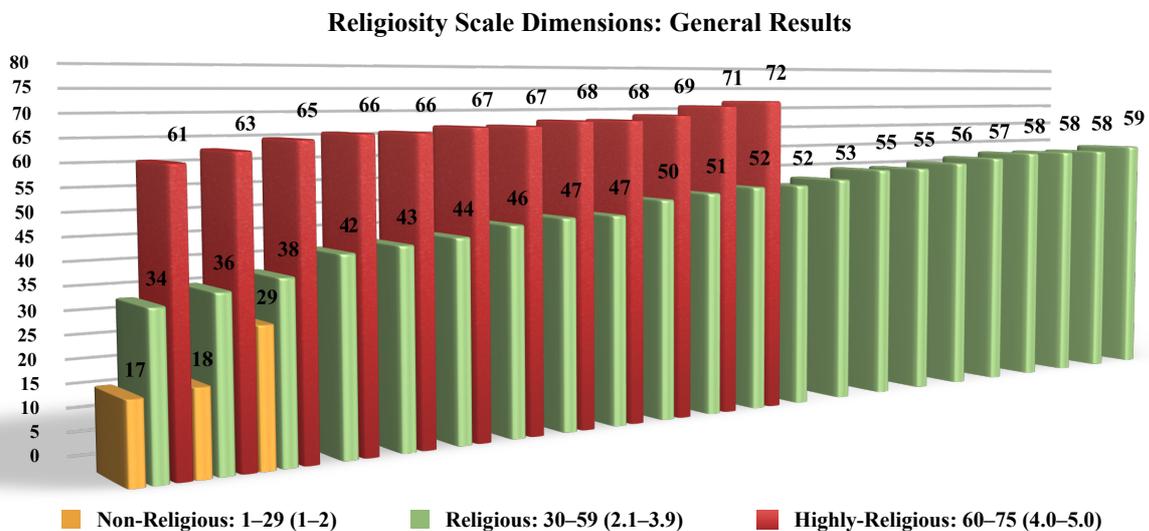
[403] All the charts and pies in Apple Numbers have been made by me. The analysis of the results by the SPSS has been made with the assistance of Dr Igor Khorozyan – Research Scientist at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen.

The following categorisations and rankings have been used for the analysis of the questionnaire results in SPSS programme: the interviewees' place of birth, the place of birth of the interviewees' parents, gender, age, the years in Germany. SPSS analysis has not shown any significant differences between the religiosity levels and the separate dimensions of it in connection with the interviewees' place of birth, the place of birth of their parents, age and the years, spent in Germany. Nevertheless, to have a general overview of the results outcome, religiosity levels (*non-religious, religious, highly religious*) are distributed among the 37 respondents from the four different countries, taking into account that there are 4 participants that were born in Germany (three participants in Armenian families that have migrated from Turkey, one participant whose parents migrated from Iran and Turkey):

Religiosity Level

		non-religious	religious	highly-religious	Total
Place of Birth	Armenia	2	12	3	17
	Germany	0	3	1	4
	Iran	1	4	3	8
	Turkey	0	3	5	8
Total		3	22	12	37

As already mentioned above, there are 19 female and 18 male participants. Among the female participants there are more *highly-religious* in comparison to male respondents. The comparison of religiosity levels of the participants according to gender is as follows:

Religiosity Level

		non-religious	religious	highly-religious	Total
Gender	female	1	9	9	19
	male	2	13	3	18
Total		3	22	12	37

General religiosity level ranks and their dimensions are indicated according to the place of birth of the respondents in the table below. It can be estimated that general religiosity level is higher among the respondents coming from Turkey and Iran in comparison to the respondents from Armenia. As for the dimensions separately, there are not significant differences in the dimension *intellect*, whereas in the dimension *ideology* the highest score is among the participants from Iran, at the same time, the dimensions *public practice* and *private practice* are much higher among the participants from Turkey. And the last but not least, the dimension *religious experience* is higher among the participants that come from Iran and were born in Germany. The following table shows the above-mentioned information in more detail:

Ranks of Religiosity and its Dimensions

|		N	Religiosity	Intellect	Ideology	Public Practice	Private Practice	Religious Experience
Place of Birth	Armenia	17	15.82	19.15	15.71	16.09	15.12	16.47
	Germany	4	19.88	15.63	19.88	20.25	17.88	23.75
	Iran	8	21.88	20.50	25.25	18.00	20.44	21.56
	Turkey	8	22.44	18.88	19.31	25.56	26.38	19.44
Total		37						

In comparison to the above-mentioned analysis of different categorisations, where statistically there are not significant differences, the dimensions *private practice* and *religious experience* are statistically significantly higher among the female participants, compared to the male respondents. Thus, religiosity is higher among the female participants in comparison to the male respondents. In the dimensions *intellect* and *ideology,* there is no significant difference. In public practice the female participants are also more active than the male respondents. The ranks of religiosity and each dimension separately among the female and male participants can be found in the following table in more detail. Moreover, the dimensions *private practice* and *religious experience* are marked in yellow, since both dimensions are *statistically significantly higher* among the female participants in comparison to the male participants. Here it is vital to note that the results of different dimensions of the religiosity levels among the male and female participants differ from the following results in case they are not compared with each other but considered separately. The information can be found on the paragraphs below. In the following table the results of dimensions illustrate the comparison and differentiation between the male and female respondents:

Ranks of Religiosity and its Dimensions

		N	Religiosity	Intellect	Ideology	Public Practice	Private Practice	Religious Experience
Gender	Female	19	22.18	18.76	20.47	21.74	**23.55**	**22.84**
	Male	18	15.64	19.25	17.44	16.11	**14.19**	**14.94**
Total		37						

In case we take into consideration the dimensions of religiosity levels separately, without putting them under different categorisations, such as gender or the place of birth of the participants, altogether among the respondents the highest dimension is *ideology*, the second is *private practice*, the third is *religious experience*, the fourth is the *public practice*, and the lowest of all is the dimension *intellect*. It is vital to indicate, that the differences between the five dimensions are not significant, and only slight tendencies are to be observed. It is discernible that the results are more or less evenly and equally apportioned, and there are no major differences between the distribution

of the dimensions, for which, unfortunately, I do not have any substantiated explanation. The measurement instrument is attested, securely established and reliable, and no possible systematic mistake can have been encountered. Nevertheless, as we can see, the five dimensions are uniformly distributed. The results are depicted in the chart below in percentages, to draw a comparison and have a general overview of the results:

CRS: Results of All Dimensions

● Intellect ● Ideology ● Public Practice ● Private Practice ● Experience
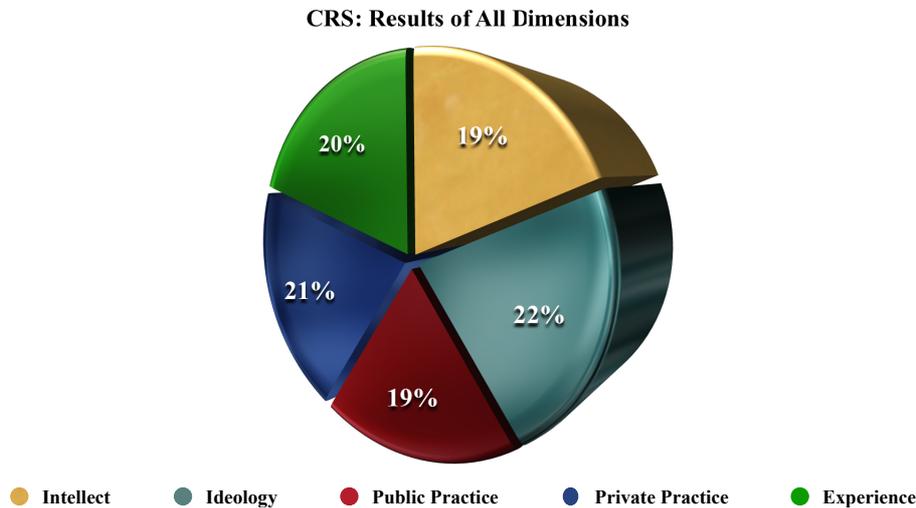
As already demonstrated above, the picture is different in case we draw comparisons of the religiosity scale dimensions between female and male participants separately for each group. Thus, for the female respondents the highest is the *private practice*, then comes the *ideology*, the third position takes the *religious experience*, the fourth is the *public practice* and the last one is the *intellectual* dimension. The data are depicted in the pie to the right in percentages.

CRS: Review of Dimensions for Females

● Intellect
● Ideology
● Public Practice
● Private Practice
● Experience

CRS: Review of Dimensions for Males

● Intellect
● Ideology
● Public Practice
● Private Practice
● Experience
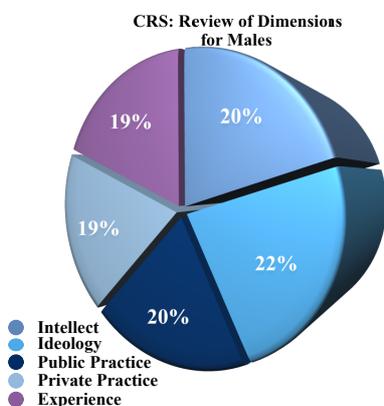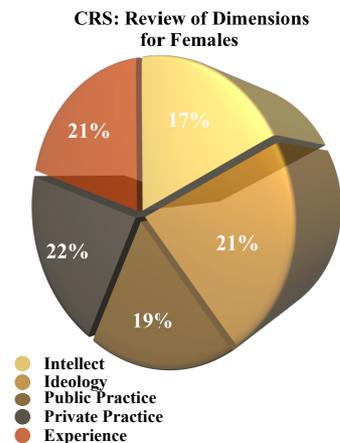
Compared to the female respondents, the results of the religiosity scale dimensions among the male respondents is considerably different: the highest dimension is *ideology*, the second is the *intellectual* dimension, the third is the *public practice*, the fourth is the *private practice*, and the lowest dimension is the *religious experience*. The results of the dimensions are depicted separately in the pie to the left percentages.

According to the results of the interviews, religion is perceived more as a cultural phenomenon, entangled with habits, customs and traditions of Armenians, than as a religious belief or practice.

According to the results of the questionnaire, altogether it can be postulated that the Armenian interviewees are religious with different and varying dimension levels respectively. Religion does play an important role both for female and male respondents, with different preferences and inclinations in the dimensions of religiosity. The main outcome of the CRS questionnaire is the finding of an almost even distribution between all five dimensions with only minor differences: only slight tendencies appear in this regard.

To sum up the above-mentioned, in case we take into account the general results of the CRS questionnaire, out of 37 respondents, 3 are non-religious, 22 are religious, and 12 are highly religious. The comparison of the separate dimensions among the respondents according to the country of origin shows the following picture: the dimension *intellect* does not show much difference, whereas the highest score in the dimension *ideology* is among the participants from Iran, the participants from Turkey have higher scores in the dimensions *public practice* and *private practice,* and the participants from Iran and those born in Germany have higher scores in the dimension *religious experience*. According to the results of the interviews, the participation and involvement of the Armenians from Turkey is also significant in comparison to the Armenians from other regions. They are perceived as patriots who are not only active and constant participants of the Armenian church, but also financial supporters. As for the interviewees from Iran, they indicate in their narrations about having faith in God, even if they are not strongly engaged in praying or religious rituals.

Moreover, the dimensions of religiosity levels among all the respondents, without the differentiation in gender and the country of origin, the highest dimension is *ideology*, the second is *private practice*, the third is *religious experience*, the fourth is the *public practice*, and the lowest of all is the dimension *intellect*. The situation is different in case we compare the religiosity dimensions among the female and male participants. The dimensions *private practice* and *religious experience* among the female participants are statistically significantly higher, compared to the male respondents. Moreover, religiosity is higher among the female participants in comparison to the male respondents. Even though the dimensions *intellect* and *ideology* do not show much difference among female and male respondents, nevertheless, the female participants are more active in *public practice* than the male respondents. Furthermore, both the female and male respondents are religious, among the female respondents there are more *highly-religious* respondents than among the male participants.

In addition, in case the dimensions are compared among the female and male respondents respectively, the picture looks as follows: among the female respondents the highest is the dimension *private practice*, the second is the *ideology*, the third is the *religious experience*, the fourth is the *public practice* and the fifth is the *intellect*. Among the male respondents, the highest dimension is *ideology*, the second is the *intellect*, the third is the *public practice*, the fourth is the *private practice*, and the last dimension is the *religious experience*.

4.3.4. Perceptions and Practices of Religion and Self-Evaluations of Religiosity Levels

In the previous Subchapters, it has been indicated what role religion plays in the interviewees' lives generally. The present Subchapter demonstrates how the interviewees perceive, understand and practice religion. Interestingly enough, they not only differentiate between religion and faith, but also evaluate their religiosity levels differently, taking into consideration various dimensions which include their personal practice (praying and meditating), public practice (participation in church services), ideological dimension (their reflections and deliberations on religious issues), and religious experiences (the presence of God in their lives and how they feel and evaluate it). Based on the narratives of some interviewees (altogether 11), I am going to compare and contrast their self-evaluations of their religiosity levels and dimensions and their understanding and practice of religion comparing and contrasting them with the results of the CRS questionnaire, which can be found in the Subchapter 4.3.3.

Moreover, the interviewees relate their religiosity to various aspects, each pointing out and identifying a specific dimension important. In addition, some interviewees evaluate their levels of religiosity exclusively in connection with the church attendance: they claim themselves non-religious because they do not go to the church. Others, who do not pray and have not read the Bible, consider themselves religious by the fact that they attend the church. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that some interviewees do not consider themselves religious at all, during the interview they keep using such expressions, as "thank God", "if God wishes", etc. Moreover, they usually pray before and after a flight on an airplane, as well as when they encounter problems and difficulties in their lives. The following pages present some narrations of the interviewees, concerning their evaluation and perception of the role of religion in their lives. The scores gained in the CRS questionnaire usually correspond to the narrations of the interviewees about their perceptions and practices of religion (depicted on the following pages).

The following interviewee believes in a higher power and does not consider himself a blind believer. The CRS score of his religiosity level is 3.5, i.e., religious. Taking into account the different dimensions of the religiosity levels in CRS (intellect/*10*, ideology/*10*, public practice/*9*, private practice/*10*, religious experience/*13*)[404], his highest score is in *religious experience*. The following quotation shows how he describes his religiousness:

> "Since my Dad always was an atheist, as a child I was agnostic, so I didn't know, I couldn't prove… I still went to religion class, I went to a protestant school. My teacher was very open-minded: despite saying, maybe God doesn't exist, we always discussed, open discussions, we read the Bible and talked openly about everything. I believe that God exists, I don't know if it's exactly the way the church says it but I believe in a higher power, and I am not a blind believer,

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[404] The highest score of each dimension is 15 points, the lowest score is 1 point.
  Non-Religious: 1–2
  Religious: 2.1–3.9
  Highly-Religious: 4.0–5.0.
  More details in Subchapter 4.3.

I am still a scientist, but science is close to religion, too, so that's where I see the difference between a religious person and me, for example" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

Believing in God and a higher power, the following interviewee claims that it is different from what is presented as a dogma by religions, and she believes in her own way, considers faith a private thing, and appreciates direct contact with God without any institutions in-between. It seems her score in CRS also proves her self-evaluation, since her highest score is in *ideology* dimension (intellect/*8*, ideology/*14*, public practice/*8*, private practice/*9*, religious experience/*12*):

"I believe in God but God for me is not the one that religions present to us as a dogma. I believe in something personal, in a theory, in a power. […] In case by saying religious you mean what the church demands from people, then I am zero. But I believe for myself, because I don't like it, I don't want an institution standing between God and me, which should tell me how to communicate with God. I want my connection to God, if He wants it (*laughs*), to be direct" (*Anush – female, 53 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee considers himself a believer and considers faith to be personal, which should not be demonstrated to others but experienced by the person himself. And if a person is religious, he is not necessarily a good person: religious person should be honest. He usually talks to different people about religious matters, what is also obvious according to his CRS score in the dimension *intellect*. Moreover, the church and prayer are not mentioned explicitly as most vital in his faith, which is observed again in his CRS score in *public* and *private practice*. The highest score of CRS is *ideology* (intellect/*12*, ideology/*15*, public practice/*9*, private practice/*9*, religious experience/*9*):

"I believe in God, but, to tell the truth, faith plays an important role in my life, but it's not like I must go to the church every Sunday. There are many things towards which I have a critical attitude, for instance, I enjoy talking to a priest, I would speak with him for hours. I wouldn't call my mother very religious, but the word religious (*in Armenian: Հավատացյալ/havatacyal*) sounds very strong in Armenian (*laughs*). […] My faith is mostly in me, I don't wear a big cross so as everybody says, hey, look, he is a believer, I wear a cross for me, it could be no gold but wood, I would wear it anyway. Everyone has his belief, and I never tell my friends "Hey, you know, our religion is better, come to us", it's more a private thing. For instance, there are people who have lots of photos in their phones, and others may see and say: "Hey, look, he is a religious person, believes in God, he is a good person", but the real believer should be an honest person" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

Religion is considered to be a private thing by the following interviewee which should not be imposed upon other people, including friends and acquaintances. He names himself non-religious even though he sometimes goes to the church to meet his Armenian friends since religion has an identification feature for Armenians. According to CRS, his religiosity level is 2.9, i.e., *religious,* and the dimensions separately are: *intellect/10, ideology/9, public practice/10, private practice/7,*

religious experience/8. Even though he considers religion to be a private thing, he has gained the lowest score in *private practice*:

> "It's a private thing, I am not religious and I cannot say that I know every citation in the Bible, I know some paragraphs, I haven't read it till the end yet, but I go to the church, well, when there are church services, then I also go there, because I consider it important, on the one hand, because you have your Armenian friends there, or your Armenian acquaintances, so, it's like a place where you gather with Armenians. About religion, I consider it important for us. I think one shouldn't speak about it all the time, telling others if you don't become Christian, you will go to hell (*laughs*), but I find it important and try to preserve it in my life in Germany, because to a certain extent it is also an identification characteristic as an Armenian, but otherwise, it is mostly a private thing" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

When she was younger, the following interviewee practiced personal prayers on a regular basis. Her narration about her perception and practice of religion in her life can be compared to her CRS score 3.3, i.e., *religious*. The dimensions separately – *intellect/9, ideology/14, public practice/7, private practice/10, religious experience/10*, where the highest score is in the dimension *ideology*, which demonstrates that she believes in the existence of a transcendent reality:

> "Before I turned 18, before I finished school, I would pray every night, I don't know, I felt like praying, and in my family, it's not that we would sit and pray together, but we prayed. […] For me it (*religion*) plays a very important role, because when I don't have an answer in my grief, in difficult situations, I begin to pray. Last year my father died, and nothing could calm me down. I would go to the church alone, sit and cry. I cannot talk to people about my problems, no other place calms me but the church" (*Mariam – female, 48 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee talks about religious experience, since he usually feels that he is protected by God, and in order to have faith, he considers it important for others to go through such experiences themselves. According to his CRS score (4.4), he is *highly religious*. In the separate dimensions he has gained the following scores: *intellect/11, ideology/15, public practice/14, private practice/15, religious experience/12*. Thus, he has a strong faith, which shows his score in the dimension *ideology*, and he practices religion privately by prayers and goes through religious experiences:

> "I have always felt God's right hand on me, on my family, that's why, hmm, the other day I told someone that in case somebody says there is no God, I will slap him on the face (*laughs*), because he cannot prove that there is no God, but every person should have his own experience, faith is a matter of experience. If you tell someone there is God, he will say, give me facts, you should feel these facts in your life. And I have felt those things, that is why, faith and the church, where one can experience his faith, play an important role in my life" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*).

God is perceived differently by the following interviewee: *He* should be found in a human-being. The highest score he has gained in CRS are in the dimensions *ideology* and *private practice*. CRS score – 2.8. (*religious*), dimensions separately – *intellect/7, ideology/10, public practice/7, private*

practice/10, religious experience/8. It should be pointed out that he has also mentioned that he does not visit the church on a regular basis, which is also obvious in his CRS score in the dimension *public practice*:

> "I believe in God, yes, I could say I do, but in a logical way, I mean, it's not an illogical belief, I don't see God in the sky, we should look for God in a human-being, I believe in that way" (*Areg – male, 69 years old, from Turkey*).

Religion plays an important role in the following interviewee's life, and her whole family is a constant attender of the Armenian church. Every activity in her life is connected with her belief and religion. Her CRS score is 3.8 *(religious)*. The dimensions separately: *intellect/7, ideology/12, public practice/12, private practice/12, religious experience/14*:

> "Actually, an important role, I have grown up with faith, we always go to the church with my family. I myself don't make it every Sunday, but on important days I am always there, I try to always go there. Faith is very important for me, and whatever I do in my life, I have an exam or a child is born, a christening, a friend is getting married, everything has something to do with the belief" (*Arminé – female, 21 years old, born in Germany*).

The following interviewee first mentions that she is not religious since she does not go to the church. Later she calls herself religious and indicates that she enjoys being in the church without services where she can experience different spiritual and emotional moments. She has also expressed her discontent in relation to the language spoken by the Armenians in the church: she usually drives miles to participate in an Armenian church community gathering to experience cultural moments and speak Armenian with others, but since only Turkish is heard, she has stopped visiting the Armenian church in Germany, which can also be viewed according to her CRS score in the dimension *public practice*, which is not high in comparison to other dimensions. Her highest score in CRS is in the dimension *ideology*, while the lowest is in *public practice*. The dimensions separately: *intellect/8, ideology/12, public practice/6, private practice/8, religious experience/9*:

> "Hmm, no, no, because if I were religious, I would go to the church more often. […] I am religious, and when I go to Armenia, I always go to the church several times. Where should I go here? When I go to Armenia, I enjoy being in the church, last time we went to Ejmiatsin[405] with my daughter, it was so pleasant, not only my visual organs feel good from the different colours, but also respiratory organs, my whole body feels electrified with different emotions" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

In spite of the fact that the following interviewee does not consider herself or her family strongly religious, they would go to the church since she was born in Iran, and the church was the only place to keep contact with Armenians. In the beginning of her narration about the role of religion in her life, she has indicated that it plays a vital role, and she has a strong belief in God. Later on she indicates that she does not consider herself religious, since she does not read the Bible on a regular

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[405] Ejmiatsin – The Mother Church of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

basis, follow a certain path, follow the commandments, which most religious people are supposed to do. Even though she does not consider herself religious, religion is an inseparable part of her daily life. Moreover, her CRS score is 4.5 *(highly religious)*. The dimensions separately: *intellect/ 13, ideology/13, public practice/12, private practice/15, religious experience/15*. She has also indicated in her interview that as soon as they arrived in Germany, they have taken initiatives to create an Armenian community so as they could all gather together as they used to do it in Iran:

> "No, I cannot say strongly religious, not like that, but we went to the church. […] I have a strong faith and I try to pray every day and in case I can, I also read the Bible. […] I believe in God but I don't consider myself religious, because a real believer should do many things right, for example, helping others, loving others, whatever is written in the Bible, I don't know, to follow a right path, so as this person can be called religious, one should read the Bible" (*Sona – female, 47 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee narrates about the presence of God in his life: even though he does not pray, has not read the Bible, he believes in God deep in his heart, since he has gone through experiences which have increased his faith. According to CRS (3.1), he is *religious*. The dimensions separately: *intellect/10, ideology/10, public practice/10, private practice/7, religious experience/10*. The interviewee is one of the most active participants of the Armenian community gatherings, since he visits many Armenian churches in different cities in Germany:

> "I believe in my heart, I feel, that God is always with me. I have gone through difficult times, it seemed there was no solution, and I would soon collapse, but a solution would come along, and this has happened not once, many times I have had such experiences. That is why I have faith. I haven't read the Bible, I don't pray, I just believe deep in my heart, it's not expressed in words or prayers… I go to the church, light a candle, when I go to the church, I relax. I can be stressed or tired, or there can be some problems, when I go to the church, after the church I feel like, hmm, how should I put it, I feel like I don't care about anything any more (*laughs*)" (*Arshak – male, 39 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, the Armenian interviewees have demonstrated their perception and practice of religion in their lives, have expressed their religiousness and religiosity levels in different ways: some feel close to God, going through some religious experiences, others find praying very important, some consider the public practice more important and participate in church services on a regular basis, some have interest to learn more about religion, etc. In one word, the interviewees experience religion in its different dimensions and aspects, which has been compared to their CRS results. It should be pointed out that some interviewees call themselves non-religious, but in their narrations keep talking about God, belief and practice of religion in their lives. There are interviewees, who do not pray, have not read the Bible, but consider themselves religious since they feel God's presence in their lives, going through various religious experiences. The above-mentioned comparisons of the CRS questionnaire results with the narrations of the interviewees have been initiated to demonstrate how sincere the interviewees have been in filling in the questionnaire or vice versa, how sincere they have been in narrating about the role of religion in their lives.

Concluding Remarks

As demonstrated in the previous Subchapters, religion plays an important role in most of the interviewees' lives, depending on various circumstances, such as, in what particular spheres and aspects religion is practised or used by them, i.e., whether it is a psychological support, closeness to one's ethnicity or ethnic group, access to the host society, spiritual nourishment, etc.

First of all, religion has been practiced in many Armenian families since childhood, and the interviewees bring several examples of their first contact with and experience of religion and religious practices through their parents and grandparents. Moreover, the influence of some special practices, delivered to them in childhood by significant others, has been so strong that they adhere to those practices in their adulthood.

Moreover, the religious identity of the interviewees is embedded in their cultural identity, for which several reasons can be brought, among which, Christianity is practiced as a *cultural religion*, since many of them do not practice religious rituals or prayers, but consider themselves to be Christians. Moreover, those interviewees who call themselves atheists, claim that Christianity has played a vital role in helping the Armenian Diaspora preserve their identity and consequently evaluates the role of religion highly in the Armenians' lives. Furthermore, some interviewees consider that Christianity and Armenianness are inseparable, since they both consist of some customs and traditions which Armenians adhere to as parts of their ethnic, national, cultural and religious identities.

As already indicated, religion has started playing a more vital role in the interviewees' lives only after having migrated to Germany. Moreover, differentiation should be drawn between the practice and role of religion among the Armenians from the Republic of Armenia and the Armenians from Iran and Turkey. The former have started practicing religion or showing interest in the Armenian community life and connection with it after having migrated to Germany, the latter has also practiced religion and have been in close contact and interaction with the Armenian communities in Iran and Turkey. Thus, an interest in religion, religious practices and religious institutions can arise and become more salient in the migration context, living away from one's homeland.

With the exception of some cases, the role of the Armenian church is considered to be important in the Armenian community life in Germany. The role of the church is estimated more positively by the Armenians from Iran and Turkey, than by the Armenians from the Republic of Armenia. The latter have gone through different experiences in connection with the Armenian church in Armenia and Germany, which has ruined their perception of the Armenian church. Moreover, many interviewees realise that in case there were other social, cultural or secular strong Armenian institutions in Germany, perhaps the role of the Armenian church would not be so important. Even though the church unites and gathers the Armenians together, there seem to be some gaps that the Armenian church should take initiatives to fill in and improve the situation in connection with giving spiritual nourishment to the Armenian community, developing some curricula devoted to

learning the Armenian language, culture and history, instead of only holding regular church services, dedicate more time and effort to preaching and Bible interpretation lessons, etc. Moreover, the Armenian church in Germany is estimated differently by the interviewees, depending on the following circumstances: what countries the interviewees come from, what Armenian churches and priests in Germany are estimated, the length and language of the church services, the lack of the Bible interpretation and a proper preaching, the lack of different cultural events for the younger generation to raise their interest in the community life.

Furthermore, the interviewees attend the church services and community gatherings for various reasons and with different motivations. Some want to get spiritual nourishment, others are eager to be among their Armenian friends and acquaintances, some want to meet new Armenians, others consider it the only place and means to retain their ethnic identity, some want to speak the Armenian language, and the community is the only place where they can do it. Despite the fact that some interviewees have expressed their interest in the church to receive a spiritual nourishment, most of the interviewees' first motivation to visit the Armenian church community is to meet Armenians, *relive* their culture, feel themselves in a small *homeland*, overcome homesickness, speak the Armenian language. Moreover, even though several interviewees have expressed their anxiety connected with the decreasing number of the church attenders among the younger generation, there are a number of interviewees who belong to the younger generation and are active participants of the Armenian church, certainly, each with his/her own first motivation and purpose to visit it.

In addition, religion is considered to be important in the integration process since it opens access to the majority society: the Armenians can attend German churches and feel more secure and comfortable in Germany because of belonging to the Christian world. This aspect is especially appreciated by the Armenian interviewees who have lived in Muslim countries (Iran and Turkey) before having migrated to Germany. Moreover, according to their own perceptions and life experiences, a change in Germans' attitude towards them is observed, as soon as the interviewees indicate that they are Christians. Feeling this change of attitude, some interviewees have expressed their concern about being recognised as Muslims by the German society because of having black hair, Turkish surnames, or Iranian passports. As it has already been indicated, the assumptions and perceptions that the German society has a special attitude towards Christians, Muslims or other religions, has been expressed by the interviewees, and further research can be needed to estimate the real situation. Moreover, some interviewees have indicated that religion can also hinder the integration process in case migrants only tend to be among their ethic group and have no interaction with the majority society. Moreover, religion also helps them have a sense of belonging and make sure they have the chance to retain their ethnic identity. For many interviewees, religion and contact with the Armenian community are considered to be the only means to retain their ethnic identity, especially and more importantly for their children and the future generations.

And the last but not least, several interviews have been demonstrated from the perspective of the perception and practice of religion in the interviewees' lives, which have been compared and contrasted to the results of the CRS questionnaire. As it has already been indicated above, the results of the questionnaire demonstrate slight tendencies, not a significant outcome. The distribution of the five dimensions is almost equally apportioned. Taking into account the general results of the CRS questionnaire, most of the interviewees are religious *(non-religious – 3, religious – 22, highly religious –12)*. The highest dimension altogether among the interviewees is *ideology*, the second is *private practice*, the third is *religious experience*, the fourth is the *public practice*, and the lowest of all is the dimension *intellect*. In case the religiosity dimensions are compared among the female and male participants, the situation is different: the dimensions *private practice* and *religious experience* are statistically significantly higher among the female than the male respondents. The highest score in the dimension *ideology* is among the interviewees from Iran, whereas the participants from Turkey have gained higher scores in the dimensions *public practice* and *private practice*. It is important to point out that the participation in the public practice (church services) of the interviewees from Turkey is also significant according to the analysis of the interviews, at the same time, the interviewees from Iran have strong faith in God, even if they are not much engaged in religious rituals or prayers. Moreover, it is important to note that the religiosity level is generally higher among the female participants in comparison to the male respondents (there are more *highly-religious* female than male respondents). In addition, among the female respondents the highest dimension is *private practice*, the second is the *ideology*, the third is the *religious experience*, the fourth is the *public practice* and the fifth is the *intellect*, whereas among the male respondents, the highest dimension is *ideology*, the second is the *intellect*, the third is the *public practice*, the fourth is the *private practice*, and the last dimension is the *religious experience*.

5. Theory and Practice: Diaspora, Ethnic Groups and Integration

5.1. Theoretical Frameworks

5.1.1. Integration of Ethnic Minorities in a Host Society

In Chapter 3, the issues of migration, globalisation and hybridisation have been discussed in connection with people with a migrant background who live in two worlds, i.e., between the cultures of the host country and their ethnic group. Some tend to keep contact with their ethnic, religious or secular groups to avoid psychological pressure and regain sense of belonging, which is mostly realised through religious affiliations in local ethnic groups. Even being in constant contact with their ethnic groups, migrants cannot avoid living in diverse cultures (the majority society culture and many other cultures within it) and as a result acquiring various identifications, mixed and hybrid identities. In spite of the fact that in academia the concepts globalisation and hybridisation are used very often recently, in my view, it is inevitable to talk about the concept of integration in its different modes of expression for the following two major reasons:

1. Almost everybody nowadays has hybrid identities, not only in the migration context, but generally in the whole world. For discussing the issue of a migrant's identity, it is most vital to take into consideration its different demonstrations in relation to migrants' attitude towards their own ethnic culture and the majority culture. In case we call all identities hybrid and do not discuss the matter further, we lack the explanation why some migrants have interest in both the majority society and their own ethnic group, others seek contact only with their ethnic group, and some do not wish to be related to either of the groups (why people choose to belong to a certain group and not have anything in common with one another can be related to psychological and social phenomena that have been discussed in Chapter 3). Understandably and unarguably, migrants have hybrid identities, but in case we consider it in connection with integration, we have the following picture: hybrid identities may be more vivid among people who demonstrate acculturative or assimilative integration styles (close, constant and first-hand interaction in minimum two cultures), than among those who have dissociative or marginalised integration styles (their own ethnic culture is more present compared to other cultures).

2. Hybridisation refers to living in diverse cultures and consequently having hybrid and complex identities, but does not demonstrate the relationship between ethnic groups and the majority society. Interrelation between the two entities and the levels of integration can be depicted with the help of discussing the modes of acculturation. Further details about the matter can be found in the following paragraphs.

Thus, what is integration? This question is being discussed from different perspectives almost all over the world, and the literature on the question of what the term integration can be related to is very extensive. Integration is seen as the "the process of becoming an accepted part of society"[406], when immigrants are able to participate in social life in the host country[407], and emotionally feel part of the new society[408]. Integration is usually seen as a mutual or two-way process, where both groups can preserve their cultural identity and at the same time "both add a shared dimension to that identity"[409]: "Successful integration requires meaningful interaction between migrants and the receiving society, which means integration must be conceived as a two-way process"[410]. The pliability and openness of the majority society plays an important role in the integration process, since only in that case integration of the migrants can be successful, where the majority society meets the needs of the migrants, and the latter accept the values and rules of the majority society[411]. The Ministry of the Interior (Bundesministerium des Innern – BMI) also considers a successful

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[406] Penninx, R. (2005): "Integration", p. 141.

[407] See Bartram, D., et al (2014): *Key*, p. 83.

[408] See Taft, R. (2007): "Migration: Problems of Adjustment and Assimilation in Immigrants". In Watson, P. (ed.) (2007): *Psychology and Race*. New Brunswick and London: Aldine Transaction, p. 227.

[409] Bijl, R., et al (2012): *Measuring*, p. 34.

[410] Rudiger, A., Spencer, S. (2003): *Social Integration of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities: Policies to Combat Discrimination.* Brussels: The European Commission and the OECD, p. 5.

[411] See Berry, J.W. (2005). "Acculturation". In Friedlmeier, W., Chakkarath, P., Schwarz, B. (eds.) (2005): *Culture and Human Development: The Importance of Cross-Cultural Research for the Social Sciences*. Hove, New York: Psychology Press, Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 268–269.

integration a bilateral process, "including efforts on the part of the immigrant population to learn the language and to gain a basic civic education, and on the part of the majority population a willingness to live in a tolerant and intercultural society"[412].

Taking into consideration the differences of the concepts integration and assimilation, the former has a more positive connotation, the latter a more negative one: the former encourages the minority groups to integrate into the majority society by pertaining their ethnic and cultural peculiarities and characteristics, the latter assimilates fully into the majority society. Assimilation is "a multi-dimensional process"[413] and is defined as "the process by which immigrants become similar to natives – leading to the reduction (or possible the disappearance) of ethnic difference between them"[414]. In case of complete assimilation there remain "no separate social structures based on racial or ethnic concepts remained"[415]. Although the definitions of assimilation indicate that the minorities become a part of the majority society and even mention about a complete assimilation, one should always bear in mind that in case there are huge cultural and physical differences between the ethnic and the host cultures, it would be impossible to talk about a complete assimilation: we can refer to self-categorisation and cultural adaptation which can differ from each other depending on the self-perception of the ethnic minority member and the perception of the person by the outsiders.

Moreover, the time factor, as well as the psychological factors that may persist through the integration process, are of much importance: people can adapt to new situations in life cognitively, but emotionally they may remain the same, having the same preferences and inclinations[416], i.e., people's behaviour is generally compatible with cultural impacts and influences[417]. This aspect can be best described by the two terms in relation to the re-socialisation of migrants: adaptation and adjustment. Adaptation refers to "the relatively stable changes that take place in individuals or groups in response to environmental demands"[418], i.e., changes in attitudes and behaviour to be apt to live in the new society, whereas adjustment refers to the feelings when a migrant is in harmony with the new environment, which does not imply that a person's social norms or values also change[419].

The second generation may present a solution to this problem, playing the role of a mediator between the host society and their families who are first-generation migrants: they master the new

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[412] Bijl, R., et al (2012): *Measuring*, p. 36.

[413] Yinger, J.M. (1994): *Ethnicity*, pp. 41.

[414] Bartram, D., et al (2014): *Key*, p. 15.

[415] Simpson, G.E. (1968): *Assimilation in International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*. Vol. I, New York: Macmillan and the Free Press, p. 428.

[416] See Penninx, R. (2005): "Integration", p. 143.

[417] See Berry, J.W., Poortinga, Y.H., Segall, M.H., & Dasen, P.R. (1992): *Cross-cultural Psychology: Research and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[418] Berry, J.W. (2005): "Acculturation: Living Successfully in Two Cultures". *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 29, 697–712, p. 709.

[419] See Taft, R. (2007): "Migration", p. 227.

language as native speakers, they know the cultural differences and distinctions, they feel *at home* in both cultures. Even though they might have identification difficulties or more accentuated hybrid identities than their parents, they are much more integrated into the new society than the first generation migrants. A case study with second-generation Chinese in Italy[420] shows that because of attending school in Italy and mastering the Italian language on a native-speaker level, having mixed identities and diverse cultural capabilities, the second generation migrants are able to be active in both Italian and Chinese businesses and seem to play the role of "cultural mediators"[421] between their families and the host society. Another vital aspect to consider is not only the willingness and readiness, but the different abilities and capabilities of individuals to learn new languages, as well as to accommodate and adapt to the majority culture and foreign life-styles, circumstances and experiences, especially in case there are considerable cultural differences. In some cases, in spite of the full integration of migrants, they may still feel non-acceptance of the host society due to their physical characteristics, typical cultural behaviour, national, traditional or religious outfit.

One of the most striking differences in the integration process are the age groups. The younger the acculturating person, the easier and smoother the acculturation process[422]. This phenomenon can be related to the ability of children to adapt to new situations and learn new things more easily than their parents, as well as to the fact that they already grow in two cultural contexts. While the acculturation process of children can be easier, in later years they might also encounter problems due to their ethnic identity and the new identity, acquired living in the majority culture, which in its turn results in hybrid identities. The latter can also refer to adults who have lived in two cultures in the course of their lives, acquiring many identities living in different cultural contexts. Taking into consideration the results of the investigation of the second generation Asians in Britain, Ballard[423] states that even though the teenagers may confront the values and norms of their family, in their later life, already in twenties, they seek to adhere and follow Asian values and norms. This can also be related to Armenians in Germany who seem to be living in more harmony with their peers in the early years than in their later adult life, where the cultural dissimilarities become more apparent, and as a result, the cultural norms and values become of more appreciation.

The process of integration should not only be taken into consideration on the individual migrant level, including education, work, social and cultural life in the new society, but the collective level of the migrant group as well, including different migrant organisations with the help of which the ethnic group may become an accepted part of the society. And other significant institutions that play an important role in the integration process are religious or cultural organisations: they can play a

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[420] See Guercini, S., Ottati, G.D., Baldassar, L., Johanson, G. (2017): *Native and Immigrant Entrepreneurship: Lessons for Local Liabilities in Globalisation from the Prato Case Study.* Cham: Springer.

[421] Guercini, S., et al (2017): *Native,* p. 20.

[422] See Berry, J.W. (1997): "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation". *Applied Psychology: an International Review*, 46(1).5–68, p. 21.

[423] Ballard, C. (1979): "Conflict, Continuity and Change: Second Generation South Asians". In Khan, V.S. (ed.) (1979) *Minority Families in Britain*. London: Macmillan.

specific role in the public sphere, having a relevant impact on the development of migrant organisations, as well as on the creation of different opportunities and restrictions for migrants[424].

As indicated above, integration should be conceived as a process rather final result[425], and in this process there are certain dimensions that help an individual with a migrant background become an accepted part of the host society: economic, legal, political, and social or cultural integration. Economic integration occurs in the labour market in the broad sense of the word, including residential location, education and training, etc., which are inseparable components for the market. The legal integration refers to how the status and life conditions of the migrant are evaluated in the host society. The political integration is related to the participation in public and political spheres in the host country. The fourth category is the cultural integration which is the most complex compared to other integration categories: it refers to cultural values, norms, customs, habits, language, religion and language: "It involves dimensions which are not generally intermediated directly through markets or political processes. Measuring the cultural integration of minority groups implies therefore searching for indicators that essentially relate to all these categories"[426]. Cultural integration can be measured paying particular attention to the psychological and emotional states of migrants in connection with their ethnic group, as well as the majority society: what the individuals feel towards their ethnicity and ethnic culture in comparison to the majority culture.

One of the most important aspects in the integration process is that there is no integration sample that should be followed by the migrants or the host societies to achieve a successful integration: "Integration can take place differentially in different sectors of society"[427]. For instance, in some particular cases migrants have no access to the civil and political life, but are only engaged in the labour sector. In other cases migrants can become citizens, but have no open social and cultural communication with the host society. In these cases, integration can be considered failed and "require different policy responses"[428]. The active role of migrants is very important in the integration process, but the strategies and policies of the host society also play a significant role: this process will not only alter the migrants' personal life, but the general change in the receiving society as well, putting emphasis on the pliability and openness of a democratic society which strives for equal rights and favourable opportunities for human beings[429]: the interaction between the migrants and the receiving society "determines the direction and intermediate and final outcomes of the integration process"[430].

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[424] See Penninx, R. (2005): "Integration", pp. 137–151.

[425] See Penninx, R. (2005): "Integration", p. 141.

[426] Algan, Y., Bisin, A., Manning, A., Verdier, Th. (eds.) (2012): *Cultural Integration of Immigrants in Europe. Studies of Policy Reform.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 21.

[427] Rudiger, A., et al (2003): *Social*, p. 6.

[428] Rudiger, A., Spencer, S. (2003): *Social*, p. 6.

[429] See Penninx, R. (2005): "Integration", p. 151.

[430] Penninx, R. (2005): "Integration", p. 142.

In the measurement of integration mostly labour and education are taken into consideration in many countries, ignoring the socio-cultural integration, which is one of the most significant indicators of a successful integration. In case there is misunderstanding between the host society and ethnic groups, it is mostly related to the fact that personal communication and social participation almost entirely lack in most cases of the social life, which makes the adaptation of both groups to each other very complicated or impossible. Successful integration can happen if migrants are not only involved in labour market but have social interactions and networks with their fellow colleagues: "It is through social contacts and the climate created by the possibility of such contacts that people develop a sense of belonging in a particular social space"[431].

When the attitude of the integrating or acculturating people towards their own culture and identity, as well as towards the majority society is measured, four strategies can be considered, which are based on two issues:

1. the attitude of the ethnic group member towards the ethnic culture and identity
2. the attitude of the ethnic group member towards the majority society.

Accordingly, one can differentiate between four strategies in the integration process[432]: integration (acculturation), assimilation, separation, marginalisation. In case of demonstrating the **integration** strategy, the ethnic minority group members preserve their ethnic identity and cherish the ethnic culture, simultaneously interacting with the majority society and trying to be an integral part of it. **Assimilation** occurs when the ethnic minority group member avoids the contact with the ethnic group and seeks interaction and communication solely with the majority society. In case of **separation**, the ethnic minority group avoids any contact with the majority society and sticks to the ethnic group members and the culture. In case of **marginalisation**, the ethnic group members separate themselves both from the ethnic culture and the majority culture, avoiding interaction with any of the groups, as well as having no interest in cultural heritage and identity.

At the same time, the adaptation styles must be considered not only taking into consideration both the ethnic minority individual's attitude towards the ethnic group and the majority group, but also the level of preferring and the degree of denying this or that group. For instance, a person demonstrating acculturative style of adaptation may enjoy some aspects of the new culture, which is also the case when taking into consideration a person with assimilative adaptation style. The difference is vivid when taking these individuals' attitude towards their ethnic group culture: in case of demonstrating an integrative style, migrants feel at ease and at home with their ethnic group, while in case of demonstrating an assimilative style, migrants try to erase all the connections with their ethnic group.

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[431] Rudiger, A., et al (2003): *Social*, p. 6.
[432] See Rocca, S., Horenczk, G. & Schwartz, S.H. (2000): "Acculturation Discrepancies and Well-being: The Moderating Role of Conformity". *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30, 323-334.

Both integration and assimilation can be possible strategies among the acculturating people in case of the cooperation and collaboration between both the majority and the minority groups: the majority society should be open to accept the minority groups and their cultural differences, and the individuals demonstrating integration or assimilation strategy of acculturation should be aware of the norms and values of the majority society. Separation can in most cases be the result of the non-capability of the ethnic minority group member to adapt to new situations and cultural differences, as well as the non-acceptance of the majority society. Moreover, a person demonstrating separation strategy might have primarily chosen the assimilative strategy of acculturation, but as a result of disregard, discrimination and non-acceptance by the majority has chosen the strategy of separation. In case of marginalisation, the individuals of the ethnic minority group might have experienced non-acceptance by both the majority and the ethnic minority group, as a result detaching themselves from both groups.

Thus, integration is a long-term process, where not only the participation of migrants, but also the active engagement of the host society is of great significance. In case the society is eager to have a mentally and psychologically healthy and peaceful population, both parties should make efforts to be adapted to the new situation: the majority society respecting the cultural differences, the minority society respecting the rules and regulations, as well as social and cultural differences in the host country. In most cases, outcomes of the integration process depend on the mutual collaboration of the two groups. Migrants' arrival in a new country implies not only accommodation, job or education search, but also living in a new social and cultural world, accompanied by different kinds of alterations, complications and difficulties. In case the host society has certain prejudices against the foreigners, the process of integration can imply complications when there is a strong physical difference between the majority and minority societies, and much more difficulties in case of cultural and religious differences.

5.1.2. Diaspora as a Key Concept: Indivisible Realities of Diaspora – Ethnic Groups

The entity of diaspora plays an indispensable role in the world of migration and can be the place where the migrants can find locality in the global world, either by belonging to a religious community or another secular cultural institution. Diaspora is defined as "a dispersed population across more than one territory having a durable and salient relationship […] to a common origin, identity or homeland"[433]. Diaspora can usually refer to ethnic minority groups who are able to preserve their culture, ethnicity and religion. For the definition of the term diaspora one can take into consideration and analyse the historic events of Armenians, Jews and Greeks: "in case of Jews and Armenians, whose language and religion have been weakened through time, their diasporas have been maintained by their history, memory, traumas and the present problems"[434].

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[433] Bartram, D., et al (2014): *Key,* p. 48.
[434] Kokot, W., et al (2004): *Diaspora*, p. 21.

Diaspora communities are defined and characterised in a number of ways, which can be illustrated within the framework of the following attributes: dispersal from an original homeland for foreign regions in search of work or in pursuit of trade; a strong ethnic consciousness; the desire for an eventual return; solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of residence[435]. As it is stated, "being in a diaspora means living one place physically and thinking of another place spiritually and mentally"[436]. Diasporas can be seen both "rooted and routed", where the global and the local come together, and "displacement"[437] takes place. The theory of diaspora shows the concept of displacement where the rootedness becomes a complicated issue since people move incessantly and are displaced through all over the world, and because of this displacement diaspora communities are "sustained in hybrid historical conjunctures"[438].

Many minority communities may assimilate into the majority society in the course of time, completely or partially losing their cultural orientation, religion, traditions, language, conduct as an ethnic group member. Diasporas differ from these minority groups since they usually preserve their religion, culture and lifestyle, feeling more at home inside their ethnic minority group, having the feeling of insufficiency in the majority culture, always living between two worlds, yearning for and dreaming of the home country, always keeping in touch with it. In spite of the fact that the diaspora members seem to be integrated into the majority society and the new culture, they always lack spiritual and cultural connectedness, which is usually not inside the host country but far away in their homeland. Diaspora members are also contrasted to traditional migrants with the notion that the latter usually try to assimilate into the new culture as soon as they arrive in the host country, while the former always keep in touch with their homeland and do not stop living in two worlds[439]. The diasporas can be distinguished from other minority communities, taking into account its "homeland" orientation:

> Although you can never go back to the past, you do have a sense of loss of an intimate connection with a history, a landscape, family, tradition, custom – the vernacular. In a sense, this is the fate of all modern people – we have to lose those connections, but we seem to require the myth, the illusion that we are going to go back to them.[440]

It is generally acknowledged among the Armenians that the Armenian Diaspora worldwide is mostly connected through the Armenian Church, since it has been more engaged and active in gathering Armenians together, especially and most importantly in the Muslim countries where Armenians could preserve their religion and ethnic identity (not all of them, of course, taking into consideration the forced islamisation of Armenians in Turkey).

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[435] See Kokot, W., et al (2004): *Diaspora*, p. 162.

[436] Kokot, W., et al (2004): *Diaspora*, p. 12.

[437] Clifford, J. (1997): *Routes*, p. 252.

[438] Clifford, J. (1997): *Routes*, p. 261.

[439] See Kokot, W., et al (2004): *Diaspora*, pp. 10-16.

[440] Hall, S. (2008): "Cosmopolitanism, Globalisation and Diaspora: Stuart Hall in Conversation with Pnina Werbner". (March, 2006). In Werbner, P. (ed.) (2008): *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism: Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 349–350.

> During the long years of Armenia's subjection to foreign empires, the national Apostolic Church was the one factor which kept the national spirit alive, even if it was dormant. By the late 19th century, the Church had come to be recognized as the vehicle of nationalism and self-defence within the empires. It was through the Church that Armenian leaders sought to educate their people [...].[441]

The picture on the right (*see Figure 9*[442]) is taken in one of the Armenian Churches in Germany. There is the Mountain Ararat[443] in the background of the picture (I would like to point out that an iconic placement of the Mountain Ararat on an altar in an Armenian church in the Republic of Armenia cannot be encountered), which is the symbol of the Armenian history and culture. The depiction of the Mountain Ararat in the Armenien Church in Germany is an iconic realisation of Thomas Tweed's conception of religion in the migration context, that is distinguished not only with religious elements, but also with 'crossings', such as commemoration of the lost home, nostalgia, yearning for their homeland, etc. Moreover, the migration of people, as well as their religious notions guide to local religious cultures, intertwined with ethnic-religious-cultural expressions. As already indicated in the Chapter of the Armenian history, the legend that the Armenians are the descendants of Noah, forms the basis of the Armenian Christian religious identity. Moreover, it depicts the connection of the Armenian Diaspora not only with their home and expresses its homeland orientation, but also the

Figure 9: Picture on the altar in an Armenian Church in Germany

connection with their history and memories, going back to their roots and origins, living in two worlds: physically living in the host country, emotionally and psychologically living in their homeland and yearning for it.

In times of crisis people will often seek protection from other individuals and go back to their roots, since ethnicity plays an indispensable role in reserving one's ethnic identity[444]. Yinger[445] claims that in increasingly growing and rational instrumental world minority individuals have difficulties in identifying with a heterogeneous society, that undergoes such vast, extensive and rapid alterations. An ethnic group helps people preserve a sense of affiliation and belongingness, consider themselves

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[441] Walker, Ch.J. (1991): *Armenia*, p. 12.

[442] Figure 9: *Picture on the altar in an Armenian Church in Germany* – The Photo taken by me.

[443] The Mountain Ararat is a national symbol for the Armenians, in spite of the fact that it is located in Turkey nowadays.

[444] Said, E. W. (1999): *Out of Place: A Memoir.* London: Granta Books.

[445] Yinger, M. J. (1994): *Ethnicity: Source of Strength? Source of Conflict?* Albany: University of New York Press, p. 344.

to be members of a community, to feel at home in a foreign country, to release the shock in relation to the adjustment processes.

Many definitions exist for the concept ethnicity, among which, a specific cultural pattern is to be distinguished which makes an ethnic group unique compared to other groups. The term ethnicity was first used by William Warner and Paul Lunt in 1942 who consider that "ethnicity may be evaluated almost entirely upon a biological basis or upon purely social characteristics"[446]. Strangely enough, the word ethnicity was used in the Supplement of the Oxford English Dictionary only as late as 1972.

Ethnicity refers to cultural characteristics, such as language, religion, customs and traditions[447] and is seen as an identification with common ancestors that possess common physical appearance[448], which embraces "tribes," "races," "nationalities"[449], that see themselves and by their behaviour are recognised by others to belong to a specific culture[450]. Thus, an ethnic group is defined as a social group with a common sense of identity, a common cultural tradition and history, as well as is a subgroup in a larger society with their particular cultural characteristics, such as language, religion, customs and habits that differ from other members of the society and consider themselves to be "a traditionally distinct social group"[451]. Even though cultural distinction is important for an ethnic group, not all the groups that have distinctive culture may be considered ethnic. An ethnic group is supposed to have the following parameters: it biologically exists; has cultural values; has communication and interaction; belongs to a certain category of people that differs from others[452]; there is a group membership consciousness; a homeland orientation; a shared history[453].

Furthermore, even though an ethnic group may change its cultural distinctiveness and cultural features in the course of time, the persistence of ethnicity and the differentiation between insiders and outsiders plays a significant role. In other words, in case the ethnic features such as language, traditions, customs, values of an ethnic group may change, and some signs of assimilation can exist, the identification of an individual with an ethnic group and a strong sense of ethnic identity may pertain further, making comparisons between the members of the ethnic group and the outside groups[454]. Nevertheless, the perception of the outsiders of a member of an ethnic group also plays

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[446] Warner, W.L., Lunt, P.S. (1942): *The Status System of a Modern Community.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, p. 73.

[447] See Hall, S., et al (1996): *Modernity*, p. 617.

[448] See Bartram, D., et al (2014): *Key*, p. 61.

[449] Horowitz, D. (1985): *Ethnic Groups in Conflict.* Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 53.

[450] See Van Den Berghe, P.L. (1975): "Ethnicity and Class in Highland Peru". In Despres, L.A. (ed.) (1975): *Ethnicity and Resource Competition in Plural Societies.* The Hague: Mouton Publishers, p. 72.

[451] Lawman, N. (2006): *Illustrated Dictionary of Sociology.* New Dehli: Lotus Press, pp. 61-62.

[452] See Barth, F. (1969): *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organisation of Culture Difference.* London: George Allen & Unwin, p. 11.

[453] See Fearon, J. (2003): "Ethnic Structure and Cultural Diversity by Country", *Journal of Economic Growth*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 195-222.

[454] See Barth, F. (1969): *Ethnic,* pp. 14-15.

an important role. The members of an ethnic group may choose to persist to their ethnicity and ethnic identity because they are perceived so by the majority culture, the feeling of being other than the majority society not only with an individual's self-perception but the depiction of the ethnic person as such in the eyes of the majority society.

Apart from their common culture, history, nationality, etc., ethnic minority groups stick together and have solidarity because of the common life experiences that they encounter living in a majority society, such as discrimination, prejudice, injustice, inequality, intolerance, etc. In different cases, the members of an ethnic group choose to stay inside the group and be considered a minority, others choose to assimilate with the majority culture, some may prefer to be present in both minority and majority culture, others may abandon their minority status altogether, all depending on the life circumstances (experiences within the minority group and the majority group, as well as the acceptance and self-consciousness in both groups) and psychological factors (family, upbringing, personality).

Moreover, the concept of ethnicity should be taken into consideration from various angles and perspectives. First of all, people sharing the same ethnicity, i.e., stemming from the same ethnic group, heritage and history, nonetheless, growing up and living in different cultures and realities (in case of Armenians who are widespread throughout the world), may be labelled with different behavioural and cultural patterns in their daily lives. Not only can ethnicity become more or less stronger or weaker in the course of time, depending on different life circumstances, but can be considered inessential in certain situations as well, resulting in disinterestedness in one's ethnic identity and complete loss of it in the course of time. Nevertheless, the opposite can also be true: people may seem to have lost their ethnic identity, but may turn to their ethnic background in case of necessity, such as special gatherings with their ethnic group on particular national or religious holidays, or when having a desire to participate in an event within a family or a friend circle. Thus, ethnic group members have different lifestyles and various modes of adaptation in the majority culture. Why do migrants tend to integrate and adapt to new life situations differently, some trying to preserve their ethnicity, others choosing not to be part of it?

5.1.3. Minority Groups: Stay Inside or Outside the Group?

In case cultural dissimilarities between the ethnic group and the majority society prevail, the adaptation process can imply many hindrances and difficulties, as a result of which the migrants may yearn to retain their cultural identity. On the other hand, cultural similarities between the majority and minority societies have the opposite effect, particularly, when the religions are the same: it makes the minority groups identical with the host society, subsequently, the adaptation process is much easier. Nevertheless, it is debatable whether cultural and ethnic identities are maintained longer in monoculture or culturally pluralistic countries. Even though nowadays it is next to impossible to have pure cultural identities, it can be presumed that in monoculture countries, minority groups feel their otherness stronger and keep close to their own cultures and traditions. On

the other hand, in culturally pluralistic countries minorities are apt to lose their ethnic identities more easily, involuntarily merging into the host society culture.

According to Lewin[455], members of a minority group (taking the example of Jews) are usually oriented in two directions in connection with their group: staying inside or outside the group[456]. The minority group members may choose to remain inside the group in case they share common values and goals, as well as experience common issues in life. At the same time, the disagreements with the minority group may force them away from it, especially in case the majority group seems to be more positive and appealing. One of the main principles in his theory is that minority group members will eventually assimilate into the majority group in the course of time because the majority group is socially much advantaged.
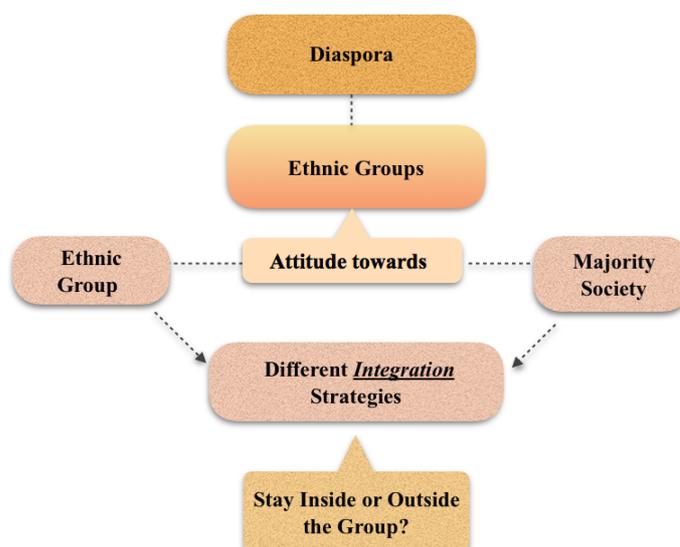
Lewin indicates that it is complicated for the minority group members to cross the borders where they encounter problems and difficulties both staying inside the group, as well as trying to assimilate into the new group. In case individuals try to assimilate into the new society, they may experience self-hatred because of cutting any connection with their ethnic group. The opposite case can also be true: due to the non-acceptance of the majority group, the assimilation may fail, and in this case the minority group member belongs to neither the mainstream nor the ethnic group, which creates psychological conflicts with oneself. As a solution to this dilemma, Lewin supports the idea of one's identification with more than one group and encourages the minority group families to raise their children in this spirit. According to him, this way of upbringing is absolutely healthy since in order to maintain a sense of well-being, individuals should identify themselves with a group.

The idea that belonging to a group and feeling connected to it supports a sense of well-being and positivity was later developed by other researchers as well (Barry, Trimble, and Olmedo)[457]. However, it is vital to take into consideration that even though Lewin advocates assimilation policy and considers that minority group individuals will inevitably assimilate into the majority society because of a low self-esteem and self-hatred, the opposite is also true among other minority groups with a high degree of self-esteem and dignity. Another most important aspect to consider is that even though the concept of cultural hybridisation was not common in Lewin's time,

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[455] Lewin is a classic in this particular approach, and many theorists discuss minority group issues referring to him.

[456] See Lewin, K. (1948): *Resolving Social Conflicts.* New York: Harper and Brothers.

[457] See Berry, J.W., Trimble, J., & Olmedo, E. (1986): "Assessment of Acculturation". In Lonner W., Berry, J. (eds.) (1986): *Field Methods in Cross-Cultural Research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage, pp. 291–324.

he more or less suggested this concept as a solution for ethnic minorities, living in majority societies. In his own time, Lewin also talked about the different strategies of identifications that the minority group members demonstrate, namely, 1. individuals who assimilate into the majority culture and do not have any contact with their ethnic minority group, 2. people who do not feel comfortable in either of the groups, thus become marginalised, 3. individuals who identify themselves only with their ethnic group, thus completely separate themselves from the majority society, 4. people who are able to identify themselves with both groups[458].

Tajfel[459] distinguishes between three types of minorities: the first type tries to assimilate into the majority society but the majority does not allow it; the second is the minority group that encounters hindrances from the minority group to enter the majority group; the third minority group attempts to enter the majority group pertaining some elements of its history, culture and traditions. Like Lewin, Tajfel also maintains that in the course of time the minority group will inevitably assimilate into the majority group, taking into consideration the higher status of the majority which is attractive to the minority group members. Furthermore, ethnic minority groups have been able to preserve their culture and traditions through centuries, and it is debatable whether the minority group will eventually assimilate into the majority culture or not. As a counter approach to Tajfel's postulation of positive social identity, it is arguable whether the minority group member feels positive social identity in connection with the majority or the minority group, since in many instances the minority group member may feel more at ease and comfortable inside the minority group because of the shared values and a better mutual understanding among the minority group members. Moreover, the assumption that minority group members always tend to assimilate with the majority society can be indisputable in case one discusses the cases of minority groups generally, but not the *ethnic minority groups*. In case one derives from an ethnic minority group with a precious heritage, history and culture, one can have a positive social identity and a sense of a high self-esteem even compared to the majority group, at the same time having lower status in the society.

Social categorisation itself creates a huge differentiation between the in-groups and out-groups. The in-group members tend to perceive themselves and their group more positively in comparison to out-groups. In other words, merely categorising people into different social groups already creates negative attitude and also discrimination towards the out-group[460]. This theory can be further developed by making comparisons between different social groups and the person himself: a mistake made by the person himself does not seem so very devastating and harmful to him as the same mistake made by another person: "As people are driven by the need to achieve a positive social identity, they choose to construe their own groups in positive terms"[461].

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[458] See Lewin, K. (1948): *Resolving*, pp. 155–158.

[459] Tajfel, H. (1978): *The Social*.

[460] See Taylor, D.M., Jaggi, V. (1974): "Ethnocentrism and Causal Attribution in a South Indian Context", *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology,* 5, pp. 162–171.

[461] Hutnik, N. (1991): *Ethnic*, p. 151.

In case of ethnic minority groups, social categorisation becomes much more complicated since in their identities both ethnic minority group and the majority group cultures and traditions are present. It mostly depends on ethnic minority group members, whether born in the majority society or migrated into the majority society in early childhood, to decide whether and to what extent they identify themselves with the ethnic minority group and the majority society. For instance, as you will see on the following pages, the Armenian interviewees in Germany strongly categorise themselves as Armenians while being integrated and living comfortably in the new society, having a feeling of solidarity with the German society.

The assimilation of ethnic groups into the majority culture can also be viewed from the perspective of cultural and identification assimilation. According to Gordon[462], cultural assimilation can be independent from identification assimilation in the sense that ethnic individuals may demonstrate the same behaviour, have equal values, attitudes and language with the majority group, at the same time at the level of self-categorisation feel a sense of belonging to their ethnic group. Ethnic group members can be culturally assimilated into the majority society long before they realise they have, still denying the assimilation into the majority culture and pertaining to identify themselves with their ethnic group. Some members of the Armenian ethnic group may categorise themselves as German but be entirely Armenian in their manners and worldview, at the same time, some Armenians may claim to be Armenian but be completely and utterly German in their conduct and habits.

The self-categorisation and cultural adaptation can be considerably varying since people's self-categorisation does not imply their particular behaviour in the new culture: ethnic minorities, which are already considered to be the fourth generation, may not identify themselves with their ethnic culture, but some definite ethnic and cultural features can be an inseparable part of their lives[463]. Armenians who live in Germany may categorise themselves as Armenian and adhere to the Armenian culture, values and norms, but be culturally adapted into the German society. Of course, when the members of the Armenian ethnic group categorise themselves as Armenian and admit their adaptation into the new society in view of their worldview and behaviour, in this case we can find correlation between the cultural adaptation and the self-categorisation.

Whether or not their self-categorisation corresponds to their cultural adaptation styles, special focus should be made on it to find out and depict the dissimilarities. It can be presumed that it would be much better and safer if the individuals, who categorise themselves as fully assimilated and reject their ethnic identity, realise that in case they are not perceived by the majority culture *as full members of the majority society*, they can never be in peace and harmony with themselves because

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[462] Gordon, M. (1964): *Assimilation in American Life: the Role of Rae, Religion and National Origins*, New York: Oxford University Press.
[463] See Banks, J.A. and Gay, G. (1978): "Ethnicity in Contemporary American Society: Toward the Development of a Typolog". *Ethnicity*, 5(3), pp. 238–252.

of the discrepancy between their own self-categorisation and the categorisation and the perception by others.

In order to understand why an ethnic minority individual chooses a specific style of acculturation, two factors should be taken into consideration: 1. Experiences of children from an ethnic minority group with significant others in their lives, that can be family, teachers, peers at school and other children from the ethnic minority group; 2. In the course of life people tend to categorise themselves and choose to be part of this or that group by making comparisons. With the help of these comparisons, one chooses to be closer to both ethnic minority group or the majority group, to choose only one of them, to reject both of them, or to identify himself only with one of them: it all depends on the life-time experiences and interactions with both groups.

Chan Khok-bun illustrates a number of strategies to go through cultural differences in hybrid societies, where people go through diverse experiences, encountering differences between their country of origin and the country they live in currently. Under these circumstances it can be considered that these individuals live in several places at the same time. In the following outline, A stands for the indigenous culture, and B stands for the culture of the current location, the interaction of which depicts the following strategies[464]:

> Essentialising: A <——>B = A/B
>
> Alternating: A <——>B = A+B
>
> Converting: A <——>B = B
>
> Hybridising: A <——>B = AB or Ab or Ba
>
> Innovating: A <——>B = Ab or Ab or Ba ——> C
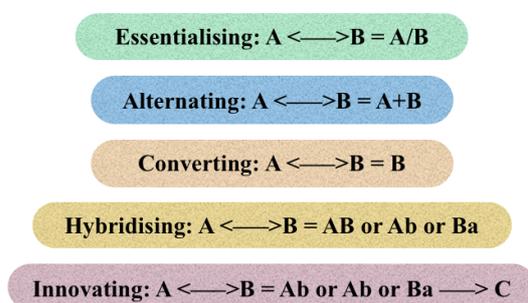
1. Essentialising: A <——>B = A/B – Each culture exists separately, in accordance with their own differences and "unchanging self"[465].
2. Alternating: A <——>B = A+B – Here each culture has taken some aspects from one another and can demonstrate certain features of character, identities and behaviour according to concrete situations: "Identity is thus a matter of positioning – identity as positionality"[466]. We can bring an example of individuals with a migrant background who demonstrate a specific identity when they communicate with the majority culture and another identity when they interact with the people from their ethnic group.
3. Converting: A <——>B = B – This concept can be compared to the negation of one's ethnic identity and to one of the integration strategies called assimilation, where the culture A rejects one's own culture and assimilates into the culture B.
4. Hybridising: A <——>B = AB or Ab or Ba – Both cultural instances can be linked to the cases when people, either voluntarily or involuntarily, do not put much emphasis on preserving their ethnic entity and are open to new cultures and cultural possibilities and experiences, including

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[464] See Chan Khok-bun (ed.) (2012): *Cultural Hybridity: Contradictions and Dilemmas.* London, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, p. 141.

[465] Chan Khok-bun (2012): *Cultural,* p. 141.

[466] Chan Khok-bun (2012): *Cultural,* p. 141.

not only cuisine, music, fashion, but also acquiring and mixing new cultural habits and lifestyles, and consequently, changing identities and sense of belonging.

5. Innovating: A <——>B = Ab or Ab or Ba ——> C – Here the culture C is "a new product, a new culture, a hybrid, a novelty"[467]. Here Chan describes the Innovating type of culture in the following way: "the entanglement and collision of cultures within the mind, the crucible, the cauldron, of the person may take the form of turmoil, trauma, existential pain, a dialectic of the opposites, which may sometimes degenerate into pathology of various kinds"[468].
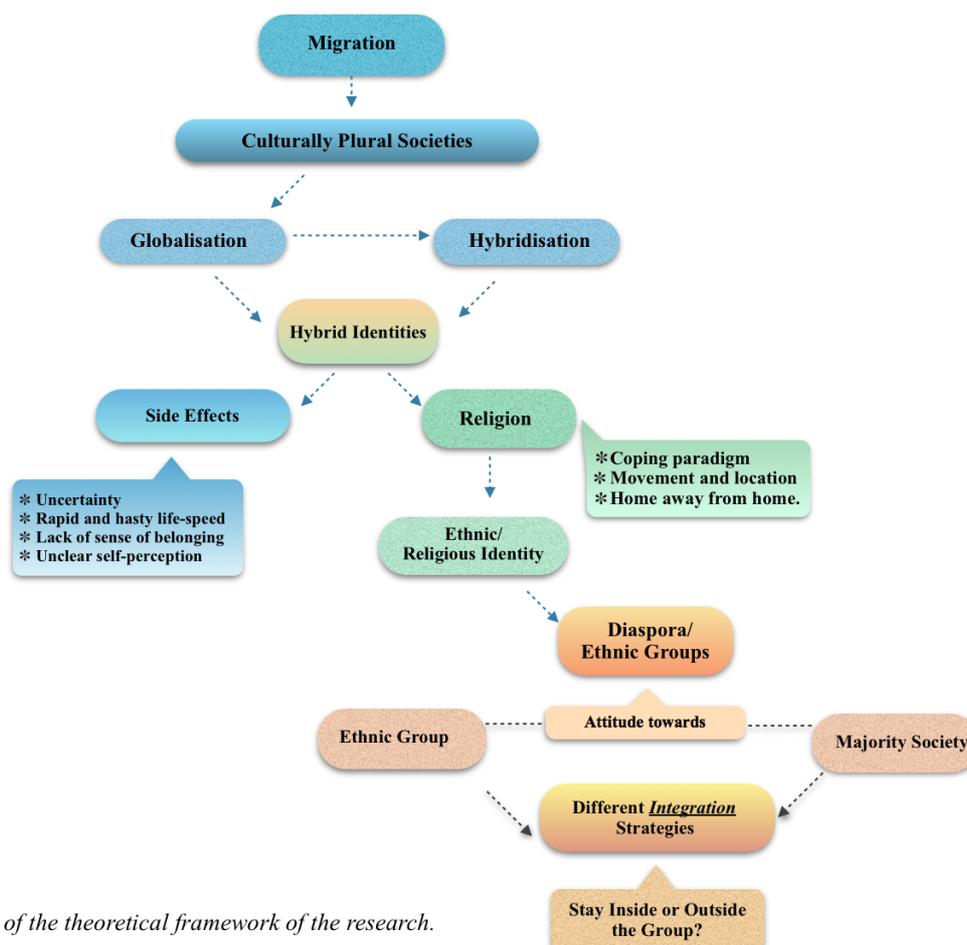
Scheme of the theoretical framework of the research.

Peter Burke states several outcomes of the interrelation of cultures in the future, among which as a result of globalisation there will be homogenisation, i.e., the state of uniformity of various cultures in all the spheres of life: no matter where one lives, virtually everything is available nowadays. Drawing comparisons between different levels: locally we experience heterogenisation, individually we have more choice and freedom in life, globally we experience the opposite: "a narrowing of diversity"[469]: if actors, authors, writers, different companies and institutions were previously engaged in satisfying the needs and requirements of the local public, in the changing world everybody works for the global public. Secondly, there will be "resistance or 'counter-

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[467] Chan Khok-bun (2012): *Cultural,* pp. 141–142.
[468] Chan Khok-bun (2012): *Cultural,* p. 142.
[469] Burke, P. (2009): *Cultural*, pp. 105.

globalization'"[470], which exists also now but will eventually fail in its mission since it is unrealistic "to halt the march of history or to bring back the past"[471]. Thirdly, there will be "'cultural diglossia', a combination of global with local cultures"[472], where people have the choice to demonstrate different cultural traits in various situations, especially in the world where the number of migrants is huge and is still growing. Fourthly, there will be "rise of new syntheses"[473], which he names "the crystallisation of new forms, the reconfiguration of cultures, the 'creolization of the world'" which can be explained as "the creation of a new 'cultural order', a cultural schema on a grand scale"[474].

Concluding Remarks

In this Chapter, the concepts of integration, diaspora and ethnic groups have been depicted. Integration is conceived as a process and not a final result, i.e., the process of becoming an accepted part of a society, where migrants are active participants in the social life and have a sense of belonging towards the host society. Moreover, for successful integration the role of both the host society and the minority groups is important since only with the help of mutual interaction a reciprocal understanding can be achieved between the groups. Thus, integration is a two-way process and should be perceived not as a consequent outcome but rather as a process.

Integration comprises certain dimensions which are: economic, legal, political, and socio-cultural. All dimensions have their own importance and role in the integration process, at the same time, the cultural integration seems to be the most difficult to achieve and also to measure, since it contains many different criteria in it. It embraces not only social and cultural lives of the migrants, but also their psychological and personal characteristics and features, since the migrants can adapt to new situations cognitively, but emotionally they may have the same preferences and inclinations.

Moreover, the time factor plays an important role in the integration process. In case it is more difficult for the older generations to integrate easily, since they have led different lives in their homelands or other third lands, the second generation may present a solution to this problem, since it can play the role of a mediator between the majority society and their ethnic families: the second generation migrants speak the host society language as native speakers, they know the cultural differences and distinctions and feel *at home* in both the host and their ethnic cultures.

Diasporas are an inseparable part of the world of migration, with the help of which migrants can find locality in the global world. The diaspora is seen as a population that lives away from its homeland but has a strong ethnic identity, connection to its origin, roots and homeland. Famous institutions for the Armenian Diaspora in Germany is the Armenian Church community or some

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[470] Burke, P. (2009): *Cultural*, pp. 103–104.
[471] Burke, P. (2009): *Cultural*, pp. 111.
[472] Burke, P. (2009): *Cultural*, pp. 104.
[473] Burke, P. (2009): *Cultural*, pp. 103–104.
[474] Burke, P. (2009): *Cultural* p. 114.

other secular cultural institutions. It is usually considered that in the course of time minority communities usually assimilate into the host society, and Diasporas differ from them since they preserve their culture, religion, ethnic identity, always dream of their homeland and keep in touch with it, feel more spiritual closeness and cultural connectedness with their ethnic group than the majority society.

Thus, ethnic groups, for whom their ethnocultural background is important and they make extra efforts to retain their ethnic identity, are constant participants of the events organised in the framework of their diasporic group in the host society. An ethnic group has a common sense of identity, a cultural tradition and history, with their particular cultural characteristics, such as, religion, language, customs and habits that make them unique in comparison to the host society and other minorities within it. When the cultures and religions between the host society and one's ethnic group are the same, the adaptation process is easier. On the other hand, in case there are considerable cultural dissimilarities between the ethnic group and the majority society, the adaptation process usually implies different kinds of hindrances, which may result in migrants' attempts to retain their ethnic identity.

Ethnic minority group members living in a host society can have two options in connection with their ethnic group: to stay inside or outside the group. Whether they will choose to stay inside or outside the group, depends on several circumstances: the attitude of the majority society towards the ethnic group member, the attitude of the ethnic group member towards the majority society (culture, history, religion, people, etc.), the attitude of the ethnic group towards their group members, the attitude of the ethnic group members towards their ethnic group (culture, history, religion, people, etc.). All these aspects can also be related to social, legal, economical and psychological changes that can alter the situation and the relationship between the ethnic group members and the host society.

The following pages illustrate how the Armenian interviewees in Germany go through the integration process, and whether they have chosen to stay inside or outside their ethnic group.

5.2. Empirical Findings

5.2.1. Arrival in a Foreign Land and Adaptation Processes

Upon their arrival in Germany, most of the interviewees have gone through difficult times, more particularly, they have experienced a culture shock, have had troubles and problems with learning the German language, have felt lonely and confused. In some time the situation has changed, and they have adapted to the new life circumstances in Germany. Adaptation in a cultural context which is quite distant from one's own ethnic culture may be much more complicated than in a cultural context where there are considerable similarities to be found: "Cultural distance […] lies not

uniquely in the background of the acculturating individual but in the dissimilarity between the two cultures in contact"[475].

Acculturation refers to cultural changes, "a process by which the cultural patterns of distinct groups change when those groups come into contact with each other"[476], and adaptation refers to emotional and psychological alterations, encountered among people living in a new society. One can differentiate between many types of adaptation. Among others, psychological adaptation refers to one's psychological and physical safety and wellness, whereas sociocultural adaptation mostly insinuates how good or bad one's life in the new cultural context can be evaluated. I can easily presume that the Armenian interviewees are quite content with their lives in Germany, have had an opportunity to receive education and find good jobs, are economically stable and safe. At the same time, even though they have reached an adequate level of psychological and sociocultural adaptation, some of them, mostly the older generation, do not feel emotionally quite at home in Germany. Moreover, the younger generation has gone through the adaptation process much easier and do not have those particular psychological complications, which are observed among the interviewees from the older generation. More specifically, even though at the beginning most of the interviewees have experienced difficulties in the adaptation processes, through the time those problems have started vanishing among the younger generation, in comparison to those that have lived most of their lives in their homelands or other countries: they still live with the memories about their previous life, especially missing their families and friends. The following paragraphs illustrate the situation more vividly.

Among other things, I would like to indicate that several interviewees have considered it important to mention about their preliminary destination of migration, which includes other countries than Germany, more particularly, England, Russia, and the US. The mentioned countries have been favoured by the interviewees because of the language (they master the Russian and English languages), as well as the presence of their family and relatives in those countries. During the interviews they have not been asked about their initial migration plan, they have started talking about it personally. Here are some narrations of the interviewees:

> "We thought, ok, we are going to Russia, we solemnly took our diplomas and said, we will go there, we'll see, we'll settle there, hmm, work a little and come back" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

> "First of all, I had absolutely no intention to come to Germany, my sister was in England and wanted me to go to England (*laughs*), besides I could speak English, and it would have been difficult for me to learn another language" (*Mariam – female, 48 years old, from Iran*).

> "I came from Iran in 1991, and, of course, the destination was not Germany, I wanted to go to the US (*laughs*)" (*Arsen – male, 52 years old, from Iran*).

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[475] Berry, J.W. (1997): "Immigration", p. 23.
[476] Bartram, D., Poros, M.V., Monforte, P. (2014): *Key*, p. 8.

"My husband is here, but I don't have any relatives in Germany. My sister is in Iran, but my relatives, my family are mostly in the US. I came to Germany, because my husband was here … and since he chose his life here, I also came here (*laughs*)" (*Ani – female, 41 years old, from Iran*).

"It was planned, we didn't come to Germany with the intention to stay here and live here, but that we would stay here for some time and then move to the US, that was the plan […] In the beginning we made our minds that in case we couldn't succeed going to the US, we would go back either to Armenia" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

The emotional and psychological difficulties experienced in the first years of residence in a foreign land seem to improve in the course of time, when the adaptation and adjustment processes are over, and an individual has already built another life somewhere else. Moreover, the following interviewee has overcome all the difficulties so successfully, that in her current life she has no strong contact with her ethnic group members and visits her homeland Armenia very seldom, in spite of the fact that her family (parents and siblings) live in Armenia. She usually mentions in her interview that she has been more active in engaging herself with the Armenian community in Germany in the first years, which has started weakening in the course of time, and her contact with the German society started to dominate in her life:

"For the first few years, for instance, I felt very bad, when I went to Armenia and came back, I took everything very badly, and a friend told me, never mind, wait and see, in ten years you will feel better. I would return from Armenia and for three weeks I would live with those memories, all the time, but later somehow, my friend was right, it improves, especially when you already have a family here, children, it improves, your home is already here" (*Anna – female, 37 years old, from Armenia*).

The obstacles of the language and perception of cultural differences have also been overcome in the course of time, but in this particular case the interviewee finds consolation in the fact that she has Russian friends and relatives in Germany and does not feel herself so lonely, in spite of the fact that she has her own family and two grown-up children. Moreover, she has been living in Germany since 1994 and still considers that her life would have been a tragedy if her sister did not live in Germany. Even though the interviewee remembers her life in Armenia and complains about loneliness and different lifestyle in Germany, she does not consider Armenia her home any more, since she does not have anything there any more: even her family, friends and relatives perceive her as *an Armenian from Germany*. Moreover, she uses the word "tragedy" in her narration, which can vividly illustrate that even though she is reconciled with her new life in Germany, where she has a cosy apartment, her husband and she have jobs, two educated children, they travel to different countries, visit Armenia on a regular basis, psychologically she feels lonely:

"In the beginning there were many problems, especially in connection with communication, the language problem was the biggest barrier, but slowly we have overcome it, but we needed time for that. When we came here, the first obstacle was when we heard the German language spoken, I said to myself, what is this? Where have we come? Then you realise you have come to

a completely different world, absolutely different world. […] It was a shock, the first period was altogether a shock, afterwards within a course of time it worked out. […] I have friends from Russia, we meet, converse, the most important for me is that my sister is here, I am not that lonely here, if my sister wasn't here, it would be a bigger tragedy" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee tells about his life in Germany and in spite of the fact that he has achieved many things, he has no problems with the language or communication with Germans, socially and economically he feels safe and secure both in employment and his friends' and colleagues' circle, he considers life in Germany easy, but psychologically he feels lonely: he misses other kind of human relationships he has had before migrating to Germany, he misses his homeland and his roots. In other words, he has achieved sociocultural adaptation, but psychologically he has not completely adapted, in spite of the fact that almost thirty years have passed since his arrival in Germany. The interviewee belongs to those Armenians who drive miles to visit various Armenian community meetings in different cities. Moreover, in his speech he looks for some Armenian words, cannot find equivalents in his glossary and uses German words, which demonstrates that in his daily life he is tightly connected with the German society, about which he also narrates in his interview:

> "On the other hand, loneliness comes, one feels lonely. Of course, you work, you have your life, you create an active life, but however active your life is, something is always missing somewhere, for instance, a human being needs a group, a society, I miss it (*laughs*). […] I said that the problem lies in my roots, in my country, the warmness of my country, every time I call someone in Armenia, I hear some news, good or bad, I feel sorry, I regret that I am not there and don't take part in it. And then one day you realise that you have become an alien for your people, because many things already reach you belated, a birthday, a baptism, a wedding. However strong the contact is, there are things that should be lived spontaneously, and I feel sorry that I haven't been there with my people, with my relatives, that is why, there will always be something missing for us here. I have been here since 1991, but I feel somehow that my roots are in Armenia. In 2007 I already had everything, home, family, everything, but I felt so lonely here, even though I had friends, acquaintances, relatives, but I felt so lonely that I wanted to return home, I wanted to go back, I was saying, this isn't mine, my heart doesn't get warm towards this country, after living for so many years you feel that something is missing. The dust, the village, the sun, the difficulties, there is something in the blood that says, no, *that* is right, not this. I tried to persuade my elder brother to come here with his family. He came here, saw Germany and said, Germany is like a golden cage for me, it's a golden cage, my home is on the mountain, on a highland, he said, I won't leave my mountains (*laughs*) however good Germany is. I was young, I decided to come to Germany, I was very young then, I didn't understand what I was doing. Maybe it depended on the fact that I had served in the army in Germany, and during the army service I saw only the advantages in Germany, I didn't see the negative sides, I didn't see loneliness, I didn't realise that a day would come that Armenia would attract me much more than all the property, the wealth, or easy life here. But if you consider maybe the life is easier there because you share it with people, it's ours, here everything is foreign" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

In spite of the fact that people can live and interact with different cultures in Germany and get a new perspective in life by living in a European country, living in a foreign land is considered by the

following interviewee to be painful. If for the younger generations the situation is more or less bearable, since they adjust to new life more easily, for grown-ups and elderly people it is very difficult to live in a foreign land and a new culture. It is painful for the interviewee to be away from her family and relatives, she feels lonely and alone, living away from her homeland (she was born and grew up in Iran, but has lived several years in Armenia before migrating to Germany). She has also indicated in her interview, that in the morning before going to work she usually opens her notebook and reads the news about Armenia, and only then leaves for work. Moreover, her daily life is tightly connected with the Armenian community in Germany, and she uses the German language at work and acknowledges that she and other people who have arrived in Germany already grown-ups, do not and cannot master and speak the German language as fluently as the younger generation. In the following quotation, she narrates about her concerns of living in a foreign land, away from the family and home:

> "Besides, an Armenian is strong in Armenia, on an Armenian sole, in my opinion. In these countries people can come and interact with other people, learn about the world, take the good things, receive education, whether it is Europe or America, it doesn't matter, take the good things, study, learn… it is good that the steel curtain was cut, and people could go abroad, but staying there forever is very painful… It is my opinion, but I know many Armenians here, they are glad they are in Germany, it's Europe, a developed country, there are rules and laws that are followed, children study, go to the university, go to school, learn German, interact with people, learn many-many things, but… their parents, elderly people, they are homesick, it is such a pain that cannot be cured with a pill or a therapy, you cannot cure it (*sighs*). […] When I was in Armenia with my kinship, I wasn't afraid, not that I wasn't afraid, I didn't express myself correctly, when I had a difficulty, I had a sister, brother, parents, they were all near me, always helping and supporting each other. When one of us had money, it belonged to us all, we were there for each other, we helped each other in everything, even till now, but now we are in this country, I am all alone in Germany, all alone: me, my husband and two children" (*Anahit – female, 54 years old, from Iran*).

In spite of the fact that life is easy and beautiful in Germany, the following interviewee does not get spiritual nourishment and considers that it is not easy to build up a new life in a foreign land as a grown-up. He has his own family in Germany, is in close relationship with the Armenian community, has a job that he likes, has many friends, but something is missing in his life, which he names "spiritual nourishment". Moreover, he indicates that it is difficult for him to get adapted to all life circumstances in Germany, since he has grown up somewhere else:

> "Everything is very easy here, very beautiful, but when you take your inner world into account, when you should get a spiritual strength, when you feel that you don't get spiritual nourishment, especially us, since we have grown up somewhere else and try to build our career and other spheres in life here, many complications occur, since you don't get a spiritual nourishment, it's not enough" (*Gor – male, 37 years old, from Armenia*).

Human relationships play an important role in the following interviewee's life, and since she does not get the warmth she needs from people, she feels lonely. Moreover, she acknowledges that she does not have many friends in Germany, and has close relationships with some Armenians in

Germany who do not live in the same city. In the beginning she has worked in Germany, after graduating from the university, but once she has created her own family, she has been busy with the upbringing of her children and also claims she has not integrated into the German society since she does not have much contact with them:

> "I lack human relationships, friendship, you can have German friends, but you don't get the warmth, how should I put it, Germany takes my energy, it devours me, you fall into… life is stressful here, if I have to estimate it generally, I can say that I don't feel happy here" (*Karineʹ – female, 38 years old, from Armenia*).

Life in social and economical context is evaluated as normal but the following interviewee is psychologically not happy with her life since she feels lonely without her family, more particularly, parents, siblings, relatives, even though she has her own family in Germany:

> "It's nice living here, but since I am far away from my family, in this sense, the distance, the loneliness, otherwise life is ok in Germany. […] My husband is here, but my whole family, I don't have any relatives in Germany. In Iran I have a sister, buy most of my relatives are in the USA" (*Ani – female, 41 years old, from Iran*).

Some people adapt to new life situations and circumstances more easily than others, and this is mostly related to one's age, as it has already been indicated on the previous pages: the younger the person, the better and the easier the adaptation process. The following interviewee was a teenager when he migrated to Germany with his family:

> "In the beginning it was difficult, afterwards you get used to everything, their traditions, you already create a circle of acquaintants, new friends, everything, and I got used to everything" (*Tigran – male, 29 years old, from Iran*).

The adaptation process seems to be easier also for the following interviewee who arrived in Germany when he was six years old. In spite of the fact that at the beginning he and his family have gone through difficult times, and the German society has been quite different and foreign to them, in the course of time they have got accustomed and have gained some features from the German culture:

> "In the beginning it was very difficult for us, because everything was new, and we weren't ready… for us it was like, where are we? Where have we come? But I am already used to living here, used to Germans, willy-nilly you also become like them. When we came here, Germans seemed so alien and distant, also their culture, they were so cold, especially in the upper part of Germany, but then you live with them, especially for already 15 years, you get used to it, we are already like them" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

As indicated above, the interviewees have gone through difficult times upon their arrival in Germany: they have had issues with the German language, have experienced differences in culture and mentality, have gone through psychological problems, etc. In the course of time, the situation

has improved, and they have overcome the first obstacles and difficulties. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the younger generation, more particularly, those who have migrated to Germany in childhood, has overcome the psychological complications much easier than the interviewees that have spent most of their adult lives in their homeland or other third countries. Economically and socially they are quite satisfied with their situation in Germany but the psychological issues, connected with missing their homeland, families, human relationships, have not been overcome. Nevertheless, even those interviewees, who complain about loneliness and lack of family and friends, also acknowledge that it cannot be easy for them to leave Germany and start their life anew in their homeland or other countries that they have migrated from. What is also interesting is that the interviewees, that have mentioned about psychological problems and a difficult adaption to their lives in Germany, come from Armenia and Iran. Some interviewees, that have migrated to Germany from Turkey, indicate that they miss the district in Turkey where they lived and have some memories with their families and friends, but they do not particularly feel homesick or have not talked about it in their narrations, as the interviewees from Armenia and Iran. The particular phenomenon can only be a coincidence and not have a solid ground for discussion or consideration.

5.2.2. Interaction with the Host Society and the Minority Groups

As it has already been indicated, in order to evaluate one's integration into a new society, political, social, economical and cultural dimensions of integration should be taken into account. In the cultural and social dimensions, the relationship of the migrant with the host society is most important, since integration is not a one-way or unilateral but a mutual process: the level of integration of migrants depends on the mutual attitude and relationship of the migrant and the host culture member. How do the interviewees see and evaluate their relationship with the German society generally, specifically with their German colleagues and friends? The following paragraphs depict the interviewees' attitude towards, perception of and relationship with the host society culture, including other minority cultures that reside in it, i.e., the interviewees narrate about their friend circles, schoolmates, general interaction with the German society, how they perceive and estimate the relationships between them.

In case people do not break laws and lead a decent life, it is possible to gain respect from the German society. The interviewee narrates about his first encounters with the German society, and how the latter has perceived him or his ethnic minority group in Germany. In the beginning the interviewee has felt some reservedness and guardedness towards himself, which he relates to the fact that his behaviour has been alien for the German society, and in the course of time the situation has changed, perhaps depending on the change of circumstances, i.e., the interviewee has learned the language, got used to the German mentality, and has also changed his behaviour accordingly. Moreover, as it is indicated above, cultural changes occur when two distinct groups establish communication and interaction with one another[477]:

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[477] See Bartram, D., et al (2014): *Key*, p. 8.

"During the first years I felt, maybe it was because I didn't know how to interact with them, maybe, hmm… What was the reason that I felt that there was something? I always remember that in those years there was an Armenian community here, everyone said that they didn't like us, Armenians. And my question was, why should they like us? Nobody could answer me why, they would say, we are Armenians, we are Christians, they should like us, why do they like Turks more than us? There were some people who thought they liked Turks more than us, but nobody could answer the question, why should Germans like us. Do we like Germans? We live among them but don't like them, why should they like us? There was no reason. That is to say, it depended on our behaviour, if we behaved well and correctly, we didn't give any reasons to hate us, in that case even if they didn't like us, they didn't hate us, if we had a proper behaviour. That's why during the first years I felt that, but in the course of time I lost that feeling, but maybe there are places where people see me as a foreigner, ok, Germans have this branch, right extremists, they have this feeling, very much the same as it is among us, Armenians, this Armenian feeling that we are Armenian and we are better, the same thing exists among Germans, they say, we are Germans, we are better" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

Having close German friends can indicate that a person is culturally and socially engaged with the host society, and consequently is going through the integration process successfully. In this particular case it is difficult to determine whether one should talk about integration or not since the interviewee was born in Germany. Despite the fact that he was born in Germany, he calls himself a foreigner, the reason for which is that the German society perceives him so. The interviewee claims that his close friends are Germans, and he has some friends from the Armenian church. During his interview he has mentioned many times that he has mostly interacted and interacts with German friends, since at school and at the university he has always been surrounded by Germans, not Armenians:

"I have a couple of Armenian friends from our church, not close friends, my best friends are all German, yeah, but since I don't have, we don't have Armenian school here, so where do you get your best friends, from school, and the university, and there were no Armenians. The only Armenian there was my brother. And sure he is my best friend, too, but he is family. And so all my friends are, close friends are Germans, my brother, friends are Armenian, too" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

During the interviews some interviewees have started talking about integration and assimilation on their own initiative, even have evaluated how integrated they are into the German society. The following interviewee considers himself very well integrated into the German society but not assimilated, since he remembers his roots and keeps contact with the Armenian community. For him it is very important to be in contact with the German society and considers it most vital for other minority groups in case they are eager to integrate into the majority culture. He has actively interacted with the German society since his arrival in Germany: at school, in the choirs and rehearsals at theatres for schoolchildren, etc. And despite the fact that he has been closely connected with the German society, he has never loosened the contact with the Armenian community. Thus,

the interviewee has close relationship with both his ethnic group and the host society and is quite content with his life in Germany. Moreover, he speaks both Armenian and German fluently:

> "Consider that someone is 16 years old and comes to another country, of course, he will accept the rules, mentality or lifestyle of that country, he must do it without losing his identity, that is to say, integrate. In my opinion, I am very well integrated but not assimilated, I mean, I can say that for sure. […] Integration is also knowing people, not feeling good all by oneself in the country, but communicate with people, one can integrate only that way, when you know the language and you have contact with the population of that country. Look, there are thousands, millions of Turks, they interact with one another in their districts, because they don't know the language (*German*), a Turk does shopping in a Turkish shop, and so on, that's why they are not integrated, mostly they aren't, I mean, maybe the new generation is, but not only… Italians are also the same, but in case of Italians it's different because they are Christian, at least they go to the church and so on, they are in contact with other nations" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*).

In comparison to the two previous interviewees, the following interviewee has mostly international friends and interacts with Germans only at work, and chooses friends among those with whom he has similar mentality. It should be pointed out that one of the previous interviewees was born and has attended school in Germany, the second one has been a teenager when he arrived in Germany and also attended school there, whereas the following interviewee arrived in Germany in his adulthood, which can be one of the reasons that his interaction with Germans is rare and only connected with work, and his close friends are from different nationalities:

> "We have had friends of all nationalities, Italian, Greek, Ethiopian, Portuguese, very good friends, and I have never considered them, I never said, they belong to other nations, because, I also belong to another nation, I should also… but German friends as close friends I have never had, I mean, only colleagues. Now if you think about it, I had a very close Greek friend, and it's not only that his mentality is closer to ours, from the religious viewpoint or our customs, we have had much interaction with them than with Germans, we could understand each other very well, but with Germans one should be the way they are, among them you cannot be yourself, just the way you are, we are different" (*Arsen – male, 52 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee tells about his international friends' circle and mentions that he is happy he has friends from different cultures. He particularly points out about the differences of the appearance and countenance, and some unnecessary discussions that can arise in connection with one's being a German or not, taking into account the general perception that in case one has black hair, he cannot be German but a foreigner, notwithstanding the fact that the person was born in Germany. Thus, the interviewee has an international circle and interacts with both Germans and other minorities living in Germany:

> "So, I have German friends, I have friends from everywhere, I mean, they can be from Moldova, also from Turkey, South America, Germany, and it mostly doesn't matter to me, the circle of my friends is very international. There are also people who were born and grew up here and who consider themselves German, but they also have other roots, that is why, I mean… if I

were only with Germans here in Germany, with my dark hair and Germans with their blonde hair, it would be funny (*laughs*). […] Every person has prejudices, as I said, one has his own life experiences and also in the circle of friends one can have some discussions, and I don't know whether I would feel myself comfortable if they all were Germans, when you also have a different appearance, others are not like that, because I have friends that are not like that, but sometimes one has unnecessary discussions, which makes it a little bit difficult" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

Even though the following interviewee has international friends and several German friends, the ones that he trusts and relies on most of all are his Armenian friends, with whom he shares his happy and sorrowful days. Even though the interviewee was twelve years old when he arrived in Germany and has attended a German school, his close friends are Armenians. In comparison with the school years of the above-mentioned interviewees, the following interviewee has attended school more recently, which can be the reason that his classmates were mostly international, and consequently, his friend circle is mostly international. In his childhood he has also gained Armenian friends through the close contact of his family with the Armenian community in Germany:

"I have very good Armenian friends, that is to say, international, it's not that original German friends, but people of different nationalities who grew up in Germany. I don't have many German friends, foreigner-friends are more, but mostly I am close with Armenians, with my family, that is to say, to consider someone a friend is not so easy. If I communicate with someone, for instance, I can be in contact with people of 10–15 nationalities daily, but in case I want to sit somewhere or to celebrate something or during bad days to be with some people, it turns out that those are your friends, one or two German friends that you have and they are always there 100% and they are not bad, but mostly it's the Armenian friends I can rely upon, in case something happens, you expect of an Armenian to be there not a German" (*Tigran – male, 29 years old, from Iran*).

In case in previous years a migrant would be the only non-German in his/her classroom, and consequently be in constant contact and interaction with the German society since childhood, in present times it cannot be the case because of the great number of different minority groups that reside in the big cities of Germany. The following narration illustrates this issue with an example of a school where very few and even no Germans can be found:

"I thought if it was a Catholic school, then there would be only Christians but it turned out there weren't (*laughs*). My child was told in Armenia that perhaps he was the only foreigner at school but it turns out there are no Germans in his classroom, can you imagine?" (*Gor – male, 37 years old, from Armenia*).

Another example from school years: in this case the interviewee started going to school almost twenty years ago, when the majority of the classmates were Germans. He has international friends as well and for each life activity he can choose one friend or another but considers that he does not have any close friends. Thus, he interacts with different nationalities in Germany:

"Till the fourth, fifth grade I was the only foreigner in the classroom, and another boy, all the rest were Germans, and one had to interact with Germans. But after the classes when we would gather with friends, in that case we were with Armenians or with people of other nationalities. […] I cannot say I know very good Armenians and I am very close with them, and I cannot say there are very good Germans and I am very close with them, no. I interact with people of different nationalities… I have German friends, each has his good qualities, for instance, with one you can do this, with the other one you can do that, it's different, it's mixed, that's why I cannot say I am specifically close with someone" (*Mher – male, 24 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee is very frank in his narration: he acknowledges he has not integrated into the German society, and as a result he does not speak the language properly (even though he has been living in Germany since 2005). He has close interaction with Armenians and other minority groups in Germany, with whom he spends most of his time. Even at his workplace most of his clients are minority group members:

"The interaction with Germans is very little, that's why up to now I don't know the language properly (*laughs*)" (*Arshak – male, 39 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, the interviewees interact with both the majority society and other minority groups within it. It cannot be estimated whether the interviewees mostly communicate and interact with Germans or other minorities there, since it is mixed. Some interviewees claim that they interact and communicate more with and consider their close friends Germans, and they have very few Armenian or international friends, whereas most of the interviewees (almost the rest of the interviewees that have not all been mentioned in this subchapter but connections and similar situations can be found in other contexts) assert that they have mixed friend circles and have more interaction with their own ethnic group members or other minorities in the German society. The representatives of the younger generation mostly interact with international people and do not particularly differentiate between friends from their ethnic group or the majority society, nevertheless, the older generation mostly looks for contact with its ethnic group. Moreover, the interaction and communication with the majority society depends not only on the migrants, but the host society as well, i.e., in case the majority society is not ready or open to interact with the minority groups, the contact cannot take place. More data about it can be found in the following Subchapter.

5.2.3. The Role of the Majority Society in the Integration of Ethnic Minorities

It is presumed that when migrants arrive in a new country of residence, they should not only acquire access to different facilities, such as house management, employment, education, health insurance, etc., but also adapt to a new social and cultural life. In case there are huge physical, cultural and religious differences between the migrants and the majority society, and the latter constantly points out these differences, people with a migrant background cannot feel fully accepted by the host society. It can be even much more difficult upon the arrival of migrants because of so many changes

in their lives, since people have their own individual biographies and histories before arriving in a new country of residence.

As already indicated in the theoretical part, integration is conceived to be a process when migrants start feeling accepted by the host society[478] and emotionally feel that they are part of the new society[479]. Moreover, integration should be perceived as a mutual process, when both the host society and the minority groups are able to retain their cultural identities and simultaneously gain some other features from each other[480]. Furthermore, a successful integration usually implies interaction and communication between the minority group members and the host society[481], and only in that case migrants can reach a successful integration[482].

About the non-acceptance and unfriendly attitude of the German society towards foreigners and migrants is quite often narrated in the interviews, and according to the narrations of the interviewees, especially towards the non-Christian world (the matter has been discussed in Subchapter 4.2.7). Since the information of narrations cannot be generalised, some quotations are illustrated from the interviews about several particular cases of the German society's attitude towards them. It is acknowledged that since Germans usually perceive the interviewees to be foreigners, some claim that it hinders their integration process, since they might forget they are not Germans unless reminded about it.

The interviewees quite often mention in their narrations that Germans in one way or another usually point out to the minority groups that they are foreigners. In case one is a temperate migrant or has been living in Germany for a short period of time, it may not play such an important role, but in case a person was born in Germany and has grown up among Germans, has a sense of belonging to the German society, the picture is already different. When it is pointed out to migrants that they are not German but foreigners, it can be usually disappointing and disintegrating in the sense that the person's sense of belonging is detached and destroyed which hinders the integration process. The following interviewee seems to be reconciled with this situation but in case she has mentioned about it during the interview, it means this phenomenon still bothers her. She also mentions that even if the Germans do not directly say into your face that you are a foreigner, they may say it in connection to another minority group members which is usually perceived personally by the interviewee:

> "When you are in contact with them for a longer time, they say something like, of course, they say it indirectly, among other things, and don't say it directly to you, but when they speak of someone else, they say "that foreigner" (*she uses the word Ausländer*). Well, after some years you already get used to it and somehow reconcile with all that stuff, if you don't reconcile, you

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[478] See Penninx, R. (2005): "Integration", p. 141.
[479] See Taft, R. (2007): "Migration", p. 227.
[480] See Bijl, R., et al (2012): *Measuring*, p. 34.
[481] See Rudiger, A., et al (2003): *Social*, p. 5.
[482] See Berry, J.W. (2005). "Acculturation", pp. 268–269.

should respect those people, it's their homeland, if you don't like it, then don't stay, go away" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee feels himself a foreigner in Germany, even though he has been living there since 1980. Moreover, he has studied at an Austrian university and claims to have grown up in a German culture, has many German friends, feels himself at ease with the German society and living in Germany, nevertheless, he indicates that he feels himself a foreigner. He is one of the Armenian interviewees who is particularly sceptic about the preservation of Armenian identity among the future generations, since whatever has been transferred to them, they try to transfer to their children, but how long can that process continue? Thus, despite the fact that he considers himself a full member of the German society, he maintains that he is perceived as a foreigner there:

> "The Germans that I have met, my colleagues and so were, we were a good circle, we had no problems, it was nice, with great respect, but of course, it was so because you had as much knowledge as they, in case you don't share the same knowledge with them, I mean, you know less than they do, you should have the same level with them or even more to gain their respect. […] Generally you should adapt to the situation, you shouldn't force them to get to know you and your history. There are people who are interested but there are such who are not interested in your past or the tragedies of your nation, that is why it is important to find a balance. And I cannot say that the relationships are not normal, what is important is that you feel a foreigner here, and it also happens, it hasn't happened to me, but I know that in some cases it is always, one should be ready, because you will be reminded that you are not from here" (*Areg – male, 69 years old, from Turkey*).

The hindrance in the integration process can be related to the fact that one does not feel accepted by the German society since even if one prefers to be called and treated as a German, the German society does not allow it. Even though the following interviewee usually seeks contact with her ethnic group members, she is mostly surrounded by Germans or other minority group members in the German society. She has pointed out during the interview that she does not distinguish between her Armenian and international friends and feels at ease with all of them. She might as well forget that she is Armenian, but be constantly reminded about it, which hinders her integration process:

> "Many times I feel that I forget that I am Armenian but they remind you of that with their looks and questions. And a little about integration, it becomes complicated when they constantly remind you about it. For me it's not very problematic, to tell the truth, many times they think I am French, and they would say "merci" or speak French to me, they are sure, I am French, I don't know why, but it usually happens to my son" (*Anush – female, 53 years old, from Armenia*).

In case there are noticeable differences in the countenance and appearance, the case can be worse: it is not only mentioned that one is not German but in their gestures and facial expressions some dissatisfaction can be observed:

"They start putting you under a certain categorisation. For example, when they look at me and see my countenance, the first thing that comes is negative, that's the worst thing, and it didn't happen just once, it has happened thousand times" (*Gor – male, 37 years old, from Armenia*).

According to the following interviewee, the attitude of the German society towards minority groups relies on the behaviour and language skills of the latter. In other words, in case migrants speak the German language fluently and show interest in the German culture, follow the German rules, the attitude of the German society can be different:

"I have many German friends, of course, I also have Armenian friends. When Germans see that you speak German well, that you are interested in their culture, that you accept them, their attitude is good towards you. When you don't speak German well, don't follow their rules, their attitude is different" (*Yester – female, 25 years old, from Armenia*).

By a number of interviewees it has been mentioned that in case migrants want to have a comfortable life as foreigners in Germany, they must work twice and thrice as hard as Germans to be able to have equal opportunities in all areas of education and employment:

"Today Armenians live well here, own a car, live comfortably, they can spend vacation wherever they want, and that's because they have worked hard the whole year, even harder than Germans, because you have to be better than them if you want to be allowed to work" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

A different attitude towards foreigners has also been noticed at school because of having different appearances, even though the interviewee does not speak of it assuredly:

"With Germans it is always, in the beginning they see you as a foreigner (*he uses the word Ausländer*). […] At school during the classes, or maybe it seemed to us, I am not sure, but the attitude was different, or maybe we were really talkative and disturbed, well, our temperament is different, right? (*laughs*). Or that we would always make jokes, this and that, or maybe it just seemed to us that the attitude towards us was different, because we were easy to be noticed, since we have black hair" (*Mher – male, 24 years old, from Armenia*).

Getting different evaluations from the teachers at school has made the following interviewee feel different and singled out. Nevertheless, the situation has changed once he entered the university where the work has been evaluated according to other criteria, compared to school, where children are perceived as different and are encouraged to work much harder to have equal opportunities with the German children. Thus, the following quotation from the interview speaks of the situation more vividly:

"I had a French teacher at school, I was then in the 9th or 10th class, and she has told me and even my parents that as a person with a migration background I should work double hard or I should take much more time to get the same notes as Germans. She has said that not because she was going to give me a bad note, she has had good intentions, she has just meant that generally one should work much harder to have similar opportunities with the host society. […]

When I entered the University, when they evaluate your work, they don't look at your name, they take your work into consideration, that's it, that's how your work is assessed. At school everybody knows each other personally, you are given notes also according to your verbal performance, and here you already feel that there are certain differences" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

The following interviewee has a more international circle of friends and interacts with Germans only in case of necessity which he partly refers to the fact that Germans usually behave unsociable and reserved towards foreigners, i.e., his lack of communication and interaction with Germans not only depends on his own choice, but the attitude of Germans towards him as well:

"At school I had German classmates, but I interacted mostly with foreigners. Currently I don't have personal interaction with Germans, only when it's necessary. Actually, Germans always keep to themselves, maybe that's why there wasn't much communication and interaction, our mentalities are very different. They always make an opinion at first appearance, but when they interact a little, they change" (*Ara – male, 31 years old, from Armenia*).

To conclude the current Subchapter, upon their arrival, many interviewees have experienced difficulties in connection with their new life in Germany, including learning a foreign language, experiencing cultural differences, etc. The above-mentioned interviewees consider that the unfriendly and unsociable attitude of the German society towards minority groups hinders the integration process. It has been indicated that Germans usually consider the minority groups foreigners, without taking into account that they were born in Germany and speak the language fluently. Some have claimed that they might not remember their ethnicity but Germans would necessarily remind them about it. Several interviewees claim that Germans consider other nations in their country foreigners, whereas some other interviewees also have experienced different treatment and attitude at school and other facilities in accordance with their proficiency in the German language and their knowledge of or interest in the German culture. It can be presumed that the interviewees can be sensitive to the attitude of Germans towards them since they feel that they are culturally, mentally and also physically different. Moreover, their sensibility to this matter can grow, since during the years that they have been living in Germany, they have gained a sense of belonging to the host country which diminishes or wavers in case the German society demonstrates a reserved and cautious attitude towards the *foreigners*, that were born and have been living their whole lives in Germany. Nevertheless, we should not forget that social categorisation already generates differentiation between different groups, resulting into in-groups and out-groups, which in its turn creates partiality and biased attitude towards one another[483], which is a human feature and does not belong to a particular nation.

5.2.4. Mutual Impact of the Majority and Minority Societies

It is considered that the influence of the culture on human behaviour is quite obvious, i.e., people's behaviour is generally compatible with cultural impacts and influences (Berry, Poortinga, Segall,

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[483] See Taylor, D.M., et al (1974): "Ethnocentrism", pp. 162–171.

Dasen)[484]. As a result of social interaction, both the majority and minority societies have impact on one another, even though in this situation the influence of the majority society on the minority societies is much more considerable. In case individuals with particular cultural traits find themselves in another cultural environment as a result of migration, they may demonstrate this or that behaviour in a new cultural setting, preserving some of their cultural patterns or adjusting to the new environment and adopting new forms of behaviour, demonstrating distinct cultural patterns in the new environment, using certain intercultural strategies: "What is meant by the phrase intercultural strategies is the core idea that groups and individuals (both dominant and non-dominant) living in plural societies engage each other in a number of different ways"[485]. In case we take into account the historical or the present-day migration, the change in two cultures is much more prevalent in the minority group culture than in the majority culture. The majority society might get used to various new cultures existing in it, but not obligatorily adopt many cultural traits from them.

As an ethnic minority group in Germany, the Armenian interviewees share their customs and traditions with the majority society, involving them in different events organised in the circle of the Armenian community events. The following interviewee claims that he has transferred some of his cultural values to his German friends and acquaintances:

> "And I think that in the circle of my German friends and acquaintances I could bring some small Armenian values, inviting them to Armenian concerts or any Armenian religious or cultural programs, or teaching them, that is to say, showing them, what our holidays are, our church or secular holidays, they know it very well that I celebrate Christmas on January 6, and they congratulate me only then" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*).

Armenians celebrate Christmas on January 6. After having lived in Germany for some time, the following interviewees celebrate Christmas twice, i.e., once with the German society, once with her ethnic group:

> "We celebrate Christmas twice, once like Germans, once with Armenians" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

> "It has happened that during the Christmas time in Germany I have called some Armenians and wished them a Merry Christmas, and they said, have you also become a German? What Christmas? It's not here yet *(laughs)*" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

Many Armenians consider it most vital for themselves and other migrants to respect the rules and regulations in Germany, and not violate the systematised obligations and responsibilities or practice violence or crime, but behave in accordance with their habits and traditions. And in spite of the fact that Armenians have a strong ethnic identity and do not consider themselves German, after having

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[484] See Berry, J.W., et al (1992): *Cross-cultural.*
[485] Berry, J.W. (2011): "Integration", p. 2.4.

lived in Germany for many years they care about the country and feel empathy towards and solidarity with the German society and have an inner feeling and yearning to protect Germans in case of non-appreciation of the latter by other migrants and foreign people.

It is acknowledged by the following interviewee that there are huge cultural differences between Armenians and Germans. At the same time, in her opinion, minority groups should adjust to the rules and regulations in Germany not the majority society, since they, the minority groups, have chosen to live in their country:

> "There are nice people, you cannot generalise, it's just the cultural differences, it's a huge difference, you should just respect their rules, traditions, and many times I say to myself, you have come here, you should accept their things, if you don't want it, leave, why should they adjust to you?" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee was born in Germany in an Armenian family that has migrated from Turkey. He has attended a German school, has studied at the university and is very well employed. As mentioned in the previous Subchapter, most of his friends are Germans, and perhaps he would also call himself a German if not reminded by the German society that he is a foreigner. Moreover, in his narration about the German society and the latter's attitude towards minority groups, he calls himself "a foreigner". Furthermore, he has solidarity with and sympathy for the German society since he has a sense of belonging to the country. As a part of the German society, he indicates that it bothers him that Germany has become so open and tolerant towards other minority groups that the latter take advantage of that and misbehave and neither accept the German society nor follow the German rules and regulations:

> "The German society, since the 2nd World War and the Holocaust towards the Jews, the Germans went to the opposite extreme, from being very racist to very open, sometimes even for me as a foreigner they seem too open: they don't tell people what their boundaries are, they don't teach people what the German culture is and don't tell people that you have to… if you live in their country, you have to accept the society, you have to follow the rules, you cannot bring your country's rules to Germany. For example, people coming, escaping East Turkey, because there was no work, there is… life is horrible, you never know, somebody kills his family and comes to Germany and brings… instead of saying, I am a German now, I am so happy that everybody is open-minded and nice and friendly, they bring their problems from their country to Germany and don't switch to the society, they don't accept the German society. For example, if there are some Kurdish, Turkish girls, when they have a German boy-friend, their family says honour killing *(he uses the German word "Ehrenmord")*, that's like killing your own kid is fine because she didn't marry and disgrace the family, and that's ridiculous, that's something like… these people don't have anything to do in this country, that's the problem I see, that the Germans or the German society is too open towards topics like that" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

The impact of the majority and minority societies on each other can be so weak that some minority groups can live in a country for a long period but still live in their own world, in accordance with

their habits and customs, even violating German laws. The narration of the previous interviewee goes further bringing examples of breaking rules by minority groups because they do not know the culture and the history of Germany and do not have any sympathy towards the society: the minority groups live in their own society, not trying to adjust and accept the general rules in Germany:

> "It's like you are driving a car or a sports car in a different country, you have to know the driving rules, that's something that should be a part of the European culture, too, if somebody moves to Europe, they need to learn that, they need to learn European history, they need to learn what it is about, what the past is, what the future is going to be, what Christianity is about, why Europeans work through the way they work, or think the way they think. For example, there are Kurds, they are doing import, export, they are doing illegal things, buying stuff, and returning stuff, and they aren't afraid of jail because they know: in the worst case they are going to be in jail for half a year but there you get food, you get everything, so they aren't afraid of stealing, they aren't afraid of the consequences, because they live in their own society, they don't live in the German society" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

Sympathy and concern for the future of Germany is expressed in the following narration where the topic of the mutual respect is touched: in case the majority society gives freedom to minority groups, the latter should also consider showing respect and tolerance to the majority culture or other cultures living there or in their own countries. His usage of the pronoun "we" when referring to Germany can also indicate that he has a strong sense of belonging to Germany:

> "I am not very much interested in politics, but perhaps they are a little bit concerned that they opened their doors towards foreigners so much. The future will show, but when you give someone freedom, you should consider this freedom from both sides. I mean, if you give a Muslim freedom in your country, you should also take into consideration whether this Muslim gives freedom to others in his own country. If we invite or accept people from Muslim countries and give them freedom, we should also consider whether Christians receive at least the smallest freedom in those countries or not" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*).

An attempt to protect the German society from other minority groups' complaints, dissatisfaction or protests is illustrated in the following narration, which the interviewee has given as an answer to the question, "Have you ever felt yourself German?":

> "Sometimes it happens that I feel myself German when others put so much pressure on the self-esteem of Germans, that I say, hey, give a break. The Germans should be more alert, I mean, shouldn't allow their… others don't have the right to play with German self-respect, of course, they made mistakes as a nation, as people, but in some cases too much pressure is put upon them, I mean, the Jewish lobby, or other, especially the Turkish lobby" (*Hayk – male, 29 years old, born in Germany*).

Thus, cultural influences and impacts can be strong, and the Armenian interviewees have involuntarily acquired some features from the majority culture. In some cases, the interviewees have also shared some of their cultural values with their German friends and acquaintances, at the same time have taken other features from the German society. It is considered by some of the

interviewees that the minority groups in Germany should develop intercultural forms of behaviour, respect, adjust and adapt to the German culture, rules and regulations, not vice versa. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the influence of the majority society on minority groups is much stronger, some interviewees have narrated stories about other minority groups in Germany who live inside their groups and adhere to their old customs and habits, some of which can be even against the German law. Thus, the interviewees feel solidarity with the German society, especially when the latter is vilified or mistreated by other minorities, living in Germany.

5.2.5. Stereotypes, Prejudices and Discrimination Cases

In the process of coexistence and integration process of different cultures, stereotypes usually emerge, "an oversimplified mental image of (usually) some category of person, institution or event", which is mostly accompanied by prejudice and a certain predisposition towards the concerned party[486]. Certain stereotypes may be directed specifically towards some groups, which cannot be so obvious and salient in separate relationships. For instance, a German may have stereotypes against non-Germans, but be in close friendship relationships with a considerable number of them. If a group does not have any distinguishable features from the majority society, it is not so easy to have prejudice towards a specific group, on the other hand, different skin colour, clothes, behaviour and other attributes can betray one's not being from the majority society[487].

The following interviewees are aware that they physically differ from the German society. The differences are usually pointed out by the German society in various ways, depending on the circumstances and based on certain prejudices, which are expressed not only by speech or actions, but also with various gestures and mimics. As a result of various stereotypes and prejudices, some interviewees have also experienced discrimination cases. The discrimination cases as such are not numerous among the interviewees: most of them mention about being and feeling different from the majority society, which is not only a self-perception but constantly pointed out by the German society. Nevertheless, a small part of the interviewees have experienced discrimination. Moreover, the interviewees have experienced discrimination not only by the majority society, but other minorities living there, more particularly, by Turks.

As mentioned by the following interviewee, already having different appearances can bring various types of embarrassment and discomfort: a person feels himself different from the majority society since the latter perceives him that way. The interviewee feels that people are usually put into different categorisations in Germany and treated accordingly: if one has light hair, he is good, if one has dark hair, he is bad. He has been living in Germany since his childhood but still feels he is different from the majority society:

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[486] See Tajfel, H. (1981): *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology*. Cambridge, London: Cambridge University Press, p. 143.
[487] See Knudten, D.R. (1967): *The Sociology*, p. 357.

"I am a very open person and I can live with any culture. One of the advantages is that you live in different cultures, but you feel that you are different. You can go to a football match but you notice that since you have dark hair, and you are the only one that is there for the German team and has dark hair. Also the Germans, they also don't know… there are really open ones, and there are absolutely closed ones. I can put it this way, for instance, if I enter a cafe, I can say that Germans are not happy that I am there, it is a fact. Others don't care whether you are Muslim, Turk, Arab or Armenian, in other places, but for Germans it is always… they seem to need to pigeon-hole everyone: black hair, it means they are Arabs, Turks, Muslims, terrorists, blond hair, then they are good, they always pigeon-hole. Germany is very closed, that's why you always notice that many things in Germany remain behind. In Germany everything seems to be very hard, Germans are very, in any case very different from us, Germans love comfort, quiet life, Armenians are the opposite, they need action (*laughs*)" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

Stereotypes and prejudices create distance between people which hinders close and open relationships with one another. The following interviewee, who has been living in Germany his whole life (his parents migrated to Germany when he was an infant), has had various unpleasant experiences in relation with the German society. He tries to concentrate on people who are open and accept other minorities in Germany, and avoid those who have certain prejudices in relation to various minority groups. He speaks German fluently, knows Turkish a little bit, and currently learns Armenian to be able to communicate with the population during his visits to Armenia. According to his interview, it can be presumed that he has become close to his ethnic group as a result of being singled out as different by the German society, since he has mentioned during the interview that he considers himself both Armenian and German:

"Germans… there are, of course, people, who sometimes have prejudices but don't show it, and are more careful what they say, or maybe not, not careful and say, you are such and such, people from the south are such and such, do you understand what I mean? Then you start keeping a distance, and it's a pity because prejudices create distance between people, that is why… of course, this exists, but there are people, in my opinion, who appreciate who you are as a person, we can go somewhere together, drink coffee or tea together, just like that, very normally, and one concentrates on such people, because when one has a certain opinion about something, it is not so easy to persuade this person or to change him" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

It is a common feature of most of the human-beings to have prejudices and stereotypes against specific cultures because of the history or the current situation in the world. The following narration contains different examples of stereotypical situations that the interviewee has experienced in her life. By sharing her experiences, she tries to justify the stereotypical behaviour of Germans: it is only their first reaction to certain situations which can happen to other nations as well:

"My son has real Armenian lineament, and he has been recently saying that when he walks on the street, people look at me with a frightened glance, especially after this recent incident (*2016 Berlin Attack: a car entered the Christmas market, and people were killed*). Yes, and of course, people aren't to blame, they got frightened, I also got frightened, I don't go to the Christmas market any more (*laughs*). Armenians also, for example, I remember, my mother, when I visited her in 2010, we were walking on the street (*in Yerevan*), it was a narrow street in the city centre,

and there were almost no people around, and a guy around 30 years old was coming towards us, wearing slippers, with clumsy clothes and a phone holding against his ear and talking loudly. We passed him and realised he wasn't speaking Armenian, and my mum said to me, maybe he was Persian or something like that, and my mum said to me: "What is this? Why is he talking so loudly? Why have they all come here and are all around!" When she said that, I felt the blood running to my head, I said, "Mama, people think the same way in Germany when they see us", "Yes! You are right, you are absolutely right, I have never thought about that". You see, she has never thought about it, and when I told her, she started thinking about it, and here as well, maybe here people do it without thinking, that's their first reaction, and yes, it's a very normal reaction" (*Anush – female, 53 years old, from Armenia*).

The interviewees tell many stories about feeling free and open in Germany in comparison to their lives in Turkey, where they have experienced religious discrimination: they would not dare speak their mother tongue outside or tell anyone that they were Armenians. The memories of the uncountable discrimination cases that have occurred to them are still so alive that they keep talking about it even though they have already been living in Germany for many years (from 30 to almost 50 years). Some Armenians are afraid to talk about their religion not only in Turkey but in some specific individual cases also in Germany because of the great number of Turks in Germany. The opposite is also true: the following interviewee rejoices in gaining freedom in Germany and does not miss an opportunity to talk about her ethnicity loudly:

> "I tell Germans, Turks that I am Armenian, I am not afraid. When I lived in Turkey I was afraid to say that I was Armenian, there is a freedom for us here" (*Nora – female, 65 years old, from Turkey*).

Discrimination cases by Turks and Jews is narrated by the following interviewee: he was born in a multilingual family where Armenian, Turkish and German are spoken. At school he has never shown to his Turkish classmates that he understands their language and has experienced discrimination both by the classmates and a Turkish sport teacher at a sport club. Moreover, he has experienced discrimination by some Jews:

> "I have experienced discrimination mostly by Turks, I understand Turkish but I have never told at school that I do, and I have heard many times the word "giaour"[488] used by them about me, or when they have planned to beat me after the classes, I heard the elder ones tell the younger ones at school, beat this giaour after school, but I went home earlier that day and other cases like this. Or an example from the boxing school, where they thought I didn't speak Turkish, there was another Turkish guy, and the trainer always kept speaking Turkish so as we got used to it and sometimes would swear at us, Armenians, in Turkish, but I didn't show I understood Turkish because I didn't want, hmm… And I have also experienced discrimination by Jews who pretend to be Germans. When they have learnt I am Armenian, some teachers and the like have tried to give me bad notes without any reason. […] Or they have kept laughing at my culture, at Armenians and our culture, and have always mocked our history, I have noticed it from some Jews" (*Hayk – male, 29 years old, born in Germany*).

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[488] Giaour – a Turkish adaptation of the Persian *gaur*, an infidel, a word used by Turks to describe non–Muslims, especially Christians (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911).

Discrimination has been observed towards the daughter of the following interviewee at school. She claims that discrimination mostly depends on the fact in what sphere people work. In her opinion, discrimination does not have such a strong influence on adults as on children:

"Of course, a lot. Discrimination is more vividly felt in relation to children, I cannot bring a specific discrimination case towards me because in the sphere I work, it is more international, but outside the academic world one feels the discrimination, especially at schools. My child was told, you are different, we don't like you, because you are different, and there are many other cases among the classmates, and the schoolchildren generally. Well, now it's normal, before I felt very bad, but now… you are not like them, and you don't even need to be like them. In my daughter's class, 95% of the children were Germans, but now it's mixed. It made a very bad impact on her, she would cry, and we would explain that being different gives you more opportunities, etc. Grown-ups are not taken aback a lot, but children are. It mostly depends from the character of your job, I mean, how much discrimination you can experience" (*Kariné – female, 38 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee narrates about discrimination cases that he has experienced by some Germans in his childhood:

"Yes, yes, many times. In West Germany it doesn't happen very often, but the most vivid example was during the public viewing of the football championship. I was there, was supporting Germany, and then comes a German, one of those German Germans, and started misbehaving. And it was so stupid because half of the German football team had a migration background. And another example was in an East Germany village, there was a school exchange program, and we stayed there for two days and stayed overnight in a guest family. I was skating with the son of the guest family and some of my classmates and others from the school, and there were naturally many Nazis around, approximately 10, 15, and they came to me and wanted to start a fight, they didn't want to beat me all together, they just wanted to scare me more, because they were already a little bit drunk. We tried to call the police, and the people who worked there tried to help us, because then there were no cellphones. The good thing was that the guy at whose apartment I stayed overnight, screamed to his father who was away for some minutes, and when the father came, we went out somehow, entered the car, and they were all outside, I was 15 or 16 years old then, the only one with black hair (*laughs*), and there were also two other guys from my class who were half German, and also from the school there were two, three young people… it's sad that something like that happens, that there is discrimination" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

Discrimination cases are narrated by the following interviewee who lives in one of the previous East Germany cities:

"I have noticed that when my attitude is good they are also nice to me. Living in East Germany, once I was walking with my friend, we were speaking Armenian, a man hit me on the shoulder very hard but I ignored him. The second case, I was talking to my husband on the phone in English, two young men hit me from both sides. The pavement was large and not crowded, I am sure it was done on purpose, and 99% because I was speaking English. But I don't feel myself as a secondary person here, of course, there are people who have a bad disposition towards

foreigners, but I try not to give them reasons to speak in a negative way to me" (*Naré – female, 36 years old, from Armenia*).

Stereotypical attitudes and discrimination cases towards foreigners have also been observed by the following interviewee. He particularly indicates that he has not personally experienced discrimination since he speaks German as a native speaker, and the majority society is alert towards him since he knows all the rules and regulations in Germany and can protect his rights. More particularly, he indicates that even though he has not experienced discrimination himself, his father, who does not speak the German language well, has:

> "Since I grew up here (*a city in former East Germany*), it was a normal thing, I didn't feel any difference. But when I was 16 or 17 years old and I started visiting other lands and cities, Bavaria, West Germany, in those cities Germans are different, their character is different. I didn't have any problems, or maybe I had but I thought that it had nothing to do with my being a foreigner, but now I notice that the foreigners are treated badly. They swear at foreigners, say negative things… They didn't do it particularly to me, but it has happened that I was on the tram, and some Germans would say about a black guy, "Look at this black, what do they want from us?". But not everyone is like that, it depends in what circle you work or study. At my university it is not like that, they are all educated people, I didn't notice such a behaviour there. Mostly Germans have a good attitude towards me, but as I grow up I feel that there is much discrimination towards people who do not speak the language well. Since I speak the language well they are more alert with me, since I can make a complaint, because I sound like a native-speaker and consequently know all the rules and laws here. I cannot bring a particular discrimination case against myself as an example, but I am sure that if you speak to my father, he will bring dozens of examples because he doesn't speak German well and thus sometimes becomes a victim of discrimination" (*Trdat – male, 24 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination cases are unavoidable when one lives in a majority society, since there are not only cultural differences, but physical appearances, countenance and lineament also betray that one *does not belong* to the majority culture. The coexistence of the majority and minority societies follows the main concept of creating opportunities for the minority groups to integrate into the majority culture, which can be achieved both by the adaptation and adjustment of the minority groups to the host culture, and the acceptance of the minority groups by the majority society, which also includes struggles with certain stereotypes and prejudices. Struggles with stereotypes and prejudices should be taken into consideration also by the minority groups but more particularly by the majority society, since the non-acceptance of the minority groups by the majority society can be more crucial in the integration process.

The interviewees narrate about various experiences of feeling different from the majority society not only based on their self-perception, but mostly related to the fact that the German society usually puts minority groups into different categorisations, as a result of which the Armenian interviewees feel themselves singled out from the majority society. It is also indicated by some interviewees that stereotypes and prejudices usually create distance between people and result in miscommunication between the majority and minority groups. Moreover, because of feeling

unaccepted by the German society, some interviewees feel hesitant to call themselves German, in spite of the fact that they have lived their entire lives in Germany and would probably not object to be considered and called German. Some interviewees consider stereotypes and prejudices a common human feature, and consider that the German society's stereotypical and prejudicial attitude towards minority groups is a normal and natural phenomenon.

Several interviewees have experienced discrimination not only by the majority society, but other minority groups, such as Turks and Jews, in different cities in Germany. The discrimination cases are not extensive among the interviewees, if we take into account the number of the interviews of the research (37 interviews altogether). Nevertheless, the phenomenon exists und it bothers the interviewees, since it hinders their integration process, especially when their children are taken into consideration. One of the reasons of encountering discrimination seems to be the German language skills of the minority groups, since several interviewees have mentioned about the discrimination cases that are connected to their or their parents knowledge of the language, i.e., discrimination has occurred as a result of using another language by the Armenian interviewees. The appearances and features that differ from the majority society can also be a reason to be singled out and as a result encounter discrimination. As already indicated above, for the successful integration both the majority society and the minority groups should take efforts to respect each other's cultural differences, adapt and adjust to the new situations in their lives, in order to avoid conflicts and disagreements that can occur in the process of integration.

5.2.6. Socioeconomic Integration, Intermarriage Families, Reflections on their Lives

Socioeconomic integration is considered to be "migrants' equal and proportional participation and representation in employment, education, health and housing"[489]. In spite of the fact that it is supposed that both the majority society and the minority groups have equal rights, minority groups cannot avoid being singled out as different from the majority society, as already indicated in the previous Subchapter. Consequently, they go through different experiences, encountering complications and hindrances in acquiring jobs, renting apartments, etc. The socioeconomic integration of the interviewees seems to be tightly connected with certain prejudices, demonstrated by the German society. Nevertheless, the difficulties and hindrances in employment and accommodation have been experienced by a limited number of the interviewees *(two of them)*. The majority of the interviewees seem to be quite content with their socioeconomic situation in Germany. Some quotations from the interviews are brought below about encountering socioeconomic difficulties in the integration process.

Hindrances can be encountered in employment, since according to the following interviewee, an employer would rather hire a German than a migrant, since the latter does not speak German as a native speaker or does not look like a German:

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[489] Rudiger, A., et al (2003): *Social*, p. 15.

"There are many problems because very few firms really want to hire you, especially with big firms it is impossible, because they need a worker who speaks German as a native speaker, they consider that you are an immigrant, this and that, plus your appearance, you have black hair, then you are Muslim, Turk, criminal, this and that, prejudices…" (*Tigran – male, 29 years old, from Iran*).

Difficulties have arisen in connection with employment, which, according to the following interviewee, has been related to the fact that she had a Turkish surname. Even though this incident happened many years ago, the interviewee has found it important to point out that she lives in a German neighbourhood which does not favour Turks and avoids contact with them. Moreover, it is also acknowledged by the interviewee that she has gone through difficulties in her socioeconomic integration not because of being a migrant, but having a Turkish passport and a Turkish surname. She has indicated that as an Armenian she is and has always been in good relationship with the German society:

"But for them it was nothing, we had a Turkish passport, then we were Turks. We would have problems with getting an apartment. I was looking for a job in 1978, the job agency sent me to a student dorm, the manager there told me, he apologised and said that since you were not German, the government didn't allow Turks to occupy administrative positions and the like, and I got very angry, I said, I go to a Turk, I am Armenian, I go to an Armenian, I am a Turk, I go to a German… I told him, but I am Armenian, I am not a Turk. Without waiting for a response, I left. The employer called me later and told me that in case I could prove that I was Christian and Armenian, I could start the job. I took the baptism certificate and got the job. […] Personally I didn't have any problems, only problems occurred because of my Turkish passport and I always told everyone that I wasn't a Turk, and I would always wear a cross. […] They don't like Turks, they wouldn't give us home. When we got married, we were looking for an apartment, I dialled a number and introduced myself with my Turkish surname, and the woman on the other side of the line said that the apartment was already occupied. I called again and introduced myself as a Schmidt, the woman said instantly, that I can take a look at the apartment. We went there, the woman said, I have told you that we don't have vacant apartments, and I told her: "For us you don't have, for Schmidt you have?", and she started: "Yes, we have problems with Turks and so…" At that moment I didn't have my baptism document with me, I showed her our photo from the wedding in the church, mentioning that we are Christians (*laughs*), and after that we got the apartment" (*Seda – female, 62 years old, from Turkey*).

Among other indicators of integration, cultural and socioeconomic indicators are usually taken to measure the integration processes, as a result of which one can estimate whether an integration is successful or failed: cultural integration is "the interaction between the minority and majority population, as well as the activities of institutions in the public sphere which encourage such interaction"[490]. As an example, intermarriage can be taken into consideration, which is an indicator of interaction between the minority group and the majority society, as well as an indicator of the adaptation of ethnic minority groups to the majority culture, and the acceptance of the minority group by the majority society. At the same time, most of the interviewees (both the younger and the

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[490] Rudiger, A., et al (2003): *Social*, p. 14.

older generations) have indicated about the importance of avoiding intermarriages and finding partners inside their ethnic group in order to preserve their Armenian ethnic identity in future.

Among the interviewees there are *four* couples that have intermarriage families: three Armenian interviewees have German husbands, and an interviewee has a German wife. The interviewees with intermarriage families that have children narrate about their children's identities as Armenian and German. In the *first* family only German is spoken, and consequently, the children do not speak Armenian at all and do not have any identification as Armenians, the contact with Armenians in Germany is very rare, visits to Armenia very seldom. In the *second* mixed family, the mother has a very strong Armenian identity. Her German husband has learnt Armenian, and sometimes they speak Armenian together, especially if their young child is around. She is an active Armenian young woman who organises different cultural events for Armenians in her city, is a constant member of the church and community gatherings. In the *third* family, there are no children yet, and the male interviewee is in close and constant interaction with the Armenian community.

In the *fourth* family children can speak Armenian, the contact with Armenia and Armenians in Germany is encouraged, and the children also identify themselves as half Armenian, half German, despite that fact that genetics shows quite vividly that they are only half-blood Germans, since they have dark hair and Armenian features. Moreover, the children's identification as both Armenian and German can be related not only to their mother's cares and efforts to raise her children in accordance with the Armenian culture and mentality, but the attitude of the German society as well: the latter usually points out to the children that they are not *original* German. One interesting aspect to point out is that even though the mother feels to be fully integrated into the German society and many times mentions that her children are half Armenian, half German, when talking about Germany, she calls it "this foreign land". Moreover, in case one has intermarriage, it takes extra time and efforts to raise the children in both cultures, since there are not many facilities where the children can remain in contact with the Armenian ethnic group in Germany:

> "It is very difficult to make children understand what character we have, you should behave this way, you should sit this way, and so on. It was such a great joy for me that I could take my daughter to an Armenian dance lesson with me (*laughs*), if my elder son would have also come, I would have been the happiest. For instance, we go to Yerevan every year, I send them to Yerevan also alone, they are already old enough for that, but they have their life here, and I cannot divide everything, indicating this is Armenian, this is German, I leave it to them, I am not very strict about it (*laughs*). […] They consider German their mother tongue, Armenian comes next (*laughs*). […] The interaction and communication with Armenians is very-very important in this foreign land. If they keep the language, in my opinion, the mentality will be Armenian, if they don't learn the language, they are not interested in either in dances, or other spheres, they have complications, when there is no interaction with Armenians, the parent, however, especially in this case when one parent is Armenian, the other one German, it is very difficult. Irrespective of everything, you also forget how to speak Armenian" (*Yeva – female, 43 years old, from Armenia*).

According to my observant participation in the Armenian communities in different cities in Germany, the number of intermarriages between Armenians and Germans is not very high, but several examples can be brought. Another reason that intermarriage people are not encountered much in the Armenian communities can be due to their disinterestedness in their ethnic background and weakened ethnic identity.

How do Armenians, specifically the interviewees, evaluate their lives in Germany? To what extent does the usage of the German language and culture dominate in their lives? How do they evaluate their level of integration into the German society? Is fluency in the German language enough to consider oneself a German? The interviewees narrate about their life experiences in Germany, the language usage, challenges and achievements. Some consider that they are integrated into the German society but have not assimilated and have preserved their ethnic identity, which can be proved by the fact that the contact with the interviewees has been made through the Armenian church and community where they are constant visitors. Moreover, some interviewees have always been actively engaged in different events within the majority society since childhood and presently have many German friends. The tolerance attitude of Germans in comparison to other nationalities is also indicated by the interviewees who appreciate the fact that they have landed in this country, especially compared to other countries, where it is not encouraged to speak in other languages. And in spite of the fact that some interviewees miss their families and their home country, they consider Germany a fair country where life is evaluated positively.

In case the successful social and economical aspect of a migrant's life is taken into consideration, the following interviewee narrates about his successful life in Germany, and even though he misses his homeland and seeks contact with Armenians in different cities, his daily routine is tightly connected with the German society, and the usage of the German language dominates in his life:

> "German dominates, why German dominates because I am with Germans 90% of the day, at work, outside, in the shops, activities, sport, there are Germans everywhere. […] I have always had this feeling, the assuredness, I was sure I could do it, I have so much strength, so much energy, I have so many opportunities to build my life, and I think the same way also today (*laughs*), and when I look back and see what I have realised in my life and know people who were with me and what they have achieved in their lives, of course, I have achieved many things" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

Germany is considered to be a free and a fair country, and the interviewee is happy to have landed there. He was twelve years old when he migrated to Germany with his family and considers himself a full citizen of Germany, feeling comfortable, having many German friends, in one word, he is quite content with his situation in Germany:

> "First of all, I can say that I am glad I came to Germany, even though it was difficult to leave Turkey because you were born there, you have relatives, of course, a huge family, and it's not easy to separate from a family and leave for a foreign country, certainly, it's not easy, but I have the feeling that it's a free country, I feel myself in peace, of course, there are difficulties, we

hear of war all the time, but at least we live in peace, and it's a fair country" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*).

In comparison to other countries where migrants cannot live in accordance with their own culture and traditions, even have restrictions to use their mother tongue, Germany is perceived as a favourable country. The following interviewee appreciates Germany because she has the freedom to speak her mother tongue with her own children and is able to preserve her ethnic identity, while the situation could be quite different in other countries where Armenian ethnic minorities live. Moreover, she indicates that she is not integrated into the German society since she does not have much interaction with them. Moreover, she does not feel herself happy in Germany, since she does not have many friends and relatives there:

> "If we take the matter of integration, Germany is better compared to many other countries, though I am not integrated. For instance, here they don't bother you much, you can live with your culture, your lifestyle, Germany gives you this opportunity. For instance, in Russia Armenians don't speak Armenian outside, they speak Russian, here I speak Armenian with my children, a German doesn't have a very bad attitude towards it, although there are people who look at us asquint, but I don't pay attention to that. Of course, it is not your homeland, but… I can live here as an Armenian, I would put it like this, it's difficult, but I can, which I cannot say about other countries, for instance, Russia, Ukraine, it's very bad there. I am astonished when I hear that parents don't speak Armenian with their children at home, that is to say, the integration is so strong in Russia, it's awful, we don't face this problem in Germany, thank God. But I would evaluate my life in Germany as bad, since human interactions lack in my life, friendship, etc." (*Karinɛ́ – female, 38 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee was born in Germany, and his *mother-tongue* is German, and as a result, his interaction with the German society is easier than with his ethnic community members in case he has to interact with them in Armenian. On the other hand, he makes efforts to improve his Armenian and takes delight in using the opportunity to speak Armenian. The interviewee studies at a university where he is surrounded only by the representatives of the German society and does not have a single Armenian friend there, and perhaps that is the reason that the usage of the Armenian language is viewed as a challenge and is appreciated by him highly:

> "I can say that my interaction with Germans is easier because my German is better, it comes more easily and I speak much better, but I prefer speaking Armenian because I want to improve it and speak more easily, more confidently, it's more interesting for me than speaking German" (*Vahagn – male, 23 years old, born in Germany*).

In the quotation below, it is expressed that it is impossible to become a German even if one speaks German on a native speaker level. The interviewee has been a child when he migrated with his family to Germany. He has attended German school, simultaneously studies at a German institution and works in a firm, his German is much better than his Armenian, but he still considers that he cannot become a German:

> "However long one lives here, I express my opinion and talk from my experience, I feel that you can never be or become a German. You can know the language very well, not speak Armenian very well, it doesn't matter, you cannot become a German" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

Thus, the Armenian interviewees in Germany lead an economically stable life, and most of them are quite happy and content with their lives. Human rights, orders, rules and laws function very well, and they feel secure and protected in Germany. Only two interviewees have indicated about encountering complications in employment and accommodation due to the fact that they are representatives of a minority group. Moreover, according to one of the interviewees, the hindrances in her socioeconomic integration have been encountered due to her having a Turkish surname and a Turkish passport. Even though intermarriages are usually discouraged among the Armenians in Diaspora, there are four intermarriages among the interviewees. It can be estimated that one of the families does not make any efforts to preserve her ethnic identity, and her children speak only German and interact with the German society, the other two families are tightly connected with the Armenian community in Germany, and the fourth family has no children yet, but the male interviewee is a constant participant of the Armenian community gatherings. Most of the interviewees speak the German language fluently, especially those who were born or have moved to Germany in childhood, and attended kindergarten and school there. In case the general estimation of the life circumstances of the interviewees is taken into consideration, the answers are different, but it can be supposed that most of them are quite content with their life conditions in Germany, especially if the socioeconomic aspect of their lives is taken into account.

5.2.7. Non-Acceptance by the Host Society vs. Strong Ethnic Identity

As already indicated, in some cases, in spite of the full integration of migrants, they may still feel non-acceptance of the host society due to their physical characteristics, typical cultural behaviour or national, religious or traditional outfit. Due to the fact that the non-acceptance by the host society persists in the course of time, it is probable that the diasporic identity of an ethnic minority individual will not only persist, but even sharpen and become stronger[491].

The concept of ethnic identity should be considered and illustrated from both subjective and objective perspectives which makes it a complex, binate and nebulous notion. For instance, for some members from the Armenian ethnic minority group in Germany may be absolutely insignificant to retain their ethnic identity, and they may have a great desire to be considered German. However, these particular Armenians may be perceived as strangers and foreigners by Germans themselves, and in this case the Armenians' categorisation of themselves as Germans may be absolutely irrelevant and inappropriate, and their unwillingness to be called Armenian may simply result in being marginalised to some extent, having no feeling of belonging to any of the above-mentioned groups. During the integration process, the two strategies of acculturation,

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[491] See Kokot, W., et al (2004): *Diaspora*, p. 22.

integration and separation, are called "collective", since there should be cooperation between the members of the ethnic culture group with the aim to preserve their cultural heritage, while assimilation is more "individualistic"[492]. The latter statement is arguable, since for assimilation not only the member of the minority society should have an interest, but the majority group must be interested in the ethnic group member's participation in the society as well. In this sense, assimilation cannot be considered an *individualistic* strategy but quite bilateral: assimilation will also be impossible in case of prejudice and discrimination towards a particular minority culture by the majority society. In case of Armenians in Germany, an Armenian cannot assimilate into the German society, since there is always a gap between *us* and *them*, which cannot be proved from which part it derives: Armenians who feel different from Germans, or Germans who always point out to one's otherness because of different physical features.

Even though people with a migrant background have been living their entire life in Germany, they cannot avoid being called non-German. In spite of the fact that the following interviewee has a sense of belonging towards Germany and would not mind being called and considered German, it is not an easy task for him. The non-acceptance of the German society makes him get closer to his roots and homeland in order to know where he actually belongs to:

> "For example, here in Germany when I say, I am German, then they begin, no, no, you come from somewhere else, and it means…, that is why you are more closely connected to your homeland and to your roots, then I say, of course, Armenian, with Armenian roots, but basically somewhere one can also be German, because you grew up here, I was only an infant when I came here, but when I go to another country, for instance, the US, France, nobody asks you that question. […] You must, when you call yourself German, that's it, so… you work there, you live there, you have always been there, you are like other Germans, done, but in Germany it's a little bit different" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

As a child, the following interviewee has felt himself German till he has grown up and has started being treated as a foreigner. The interviewee can be very sensitive to the matter since his parents have migrated to Germany from Turkey, and they have certain prejudices towards them. It is quite discouraging for his family to be considered and treated like Turks in Germany, since they feel they are not part of the Christian society in Germany:

> "As an Armenian, as a Christian Armenian you grow up a lot like a German would grow up but since, especially we from the Turkish area, we all have Turkish second names, we feel like Germans when we are children, till we get treated like Turks in Germany. Once you are, once you notice that you are treated as a Turk, especially when you are a teenager you get very sensitive towards that, because you wanna go out with your friends, all of my friends are Germans, and you wanna go out with your friends… At a club or in a bar, they check your name and say, no, you are not allowed to come in, and that's the first time when you notice that you are not German, or that you are not part of the Christian community or the German society" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

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[492] Berry, J.W. (1997): "Immigration", p. 11.

Since the perceptions are different, the following interviewee acknowledges that he can never be treated as a German in Germany: you always feel you are different, unlike in other countries, such as the US or France, where Armenians very easily call themselves American and French. The interviewee considers that he can never become a German, and it cannot be given an accurate answer, whether it is only a self-perception or induced upon by the attitude of the German society to minority groups:

> "You notice, of course, I can live here for 30 years, and since I don't look like German, I come from the south and I am definitely not German. If I were in the US, maybe it would be easier to become an American, maybe it would be easier to say that I am American, or for French-Armenians, American-Armenians it is not a problem, there is no specific categorisation of an American, all people who live there say very easily "I am American". If you ask an Armenian in the US "who are you?", they say, I am American, they don't say, I am Armenian. But in Germany everything's different, you always feel that you are different, they are different, you always have this feeling" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee can sometimes feel herself German but the German society does not allow it by creating a distance from her. She was two years old when she moved to Germany with her parents, and when she talks about Germans' good or bad attitude towards herself and others, she uses the word "foreigner". To the question, do you feel yourself German, she has replied:

> "Fifty-fifty. Sometimes I feel, sometimes I don't, it depends. For example, sometimes they treat you differently, they see you have black hair, black eyes, then you are not German, and I notice that they create a distance, and I feel that they don't accept me. But it happens that they accept me and they don't care whether you are a foreigner or not. That's what I feel here in Germany, that there are these two parties, one doesn't like foreigners, the other party doesn't care: people can come here, work, learn the language, study, integrate, it's not a problem for them" (*Yester – female, 25 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, in spite of the fact that some interviewees were born and/or have been living in Germany since childhood and have a sense of belonging to the country, the non-acceptance of the German society changes the situation. Since the interviewees are perceived as *different* and as *foreigners* in Germany, they feel closer to their ethnic groups. Even though an interviewee may feel a sense of belonging to Germany and is eager to be considered a German, the attitude of the German society makes him get closer to his ethnic group by treating him as a foreigner, in spite of the fact that he was an infant when he moved to Germany with his parents. Another interviewee was born in Germany, has only close German friends, but is perceived as a foreigner by the German society, and as a result, he has started considering himself as such. An interviewee feels himself different from the German society and considers that he can never become a German: is it a self-perception of being different or induced upon by the attitude of the German society? Another interviewee considers herself half Armenian and half German, but indicates that she is usually considered to be a foreigner by the German society, notwithstanding the fact that she has grown up in Germany and is fluent in the German language. To estimate the situation, it can be supposed that the Armenian

interviewees feel closeness to their ethnic group not only because of having a strong desire to retain their ethnic identity but as a result of being treated as foreigners by the German society.

5.2.8. Different Generations, their Ethnic Identity and a High Self-Esteem

In spite of the fact that upon their arrival in the host country most migrants miss their homeland and their previous lives there, in the course of time many assimilate into the host society, while others preserve their cultural and religious uniqueness, behavioural characteristics, traditions, etc. In consideration of the concepts ethnic identification and self-esteem, one can distinguish between personal self-esteem and collective self-esteem[493]. When confronted with menaces towards their collective self-esteem, those who have high collective self-esteem are keen to depreciate and belittle those in out-group and support those in in-group. On the other hand, those with low collective self-esteem would not support the in-groups in case of accusations or threats, consequently, individuals' tendency to have a positive social identity can be linked only to people with high collective self-esteem and by no means to people with low collective self-esteem. Moreover, ethnicity may play a significant role only among the ethnic minority group, but it would be crucial and all-important only to a small part of it.

In case the ethnic minority groups do not have social and cultural relationship within the group, they may tend to think more highly of the majority group than themselves, whereas in case the minority group has a long history and rich culture, it is more probable to have a better evaluation and perception of themselves than of the majority group. Moreover, in case the ethnic minority group is a considerably small group, it may have a non-appreciative and negative perception of itself, based on the stereotypical evaluation of it by the majority group. In spite of the fact that ethnic minority identity theories claim that in the course of time the salience of ethnicity vanishes as an unavoidable result of living in a majority culture, and most of the ethic minority groups prefer to assimilate into the majority group, in reality some ethnic groups persist remaining inside their group and favouring it more than the majority group and preserve their ethnic identity through generations. Moreover, not only some ethnic minorities lack the inferiority complex but are quite proud of their ethnic background compared to the majority culture they live in, and ethnic identity may be dignifying and of great importance for some ethnic groups and even be a source of pride and self-esteem[494].

My research covers three generations (taking into account the age groups) of the Armenian Diaspora in Germany, who are all very much fond of and proud of their ethnicity, and in spite of the fact that most of them have been living in Germany their entire lives and have received education, have good jobs, lead comfortable lives, are in close relationship with the German society, they still seek contact with other Armenians or are regular members of the Armenian communities in

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[493] See Crocker, J., Luhtanen, R. (1990): "Collective Self-Esteem and In-group Bias", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 58(1), 60–67.
[494] See Kokot, W., et al (2004): *Diaspora*, p. 21.

different cities in Germany and feel strong ethnic identity. Moreover, most of the interviews have been conducted in the circle of Armenians who are in close relationship with the Armenian community in Germany and make efforts to preserve their ethnic identity and background: some Armenians drive miles to attend a church service and meet other Armenians, some speak Western Armenian but learn Eastern Armenian to be able to communicate freely with the Armenians in the Republic of Armenia, Armenians from Turkey (both old and young generations) who do not master Armenian make efforts to learn it, etc. At the same time, the picture can be different in case a research is carried out with Armenians who are not active participants and constant attenders of the Armenian community gatherings and are not interested in retaining their ethnic identity.

In spite of the fact that the following interviewee has been living in Germany for almost thirty years, he still cares about keeping contact with Armenians, is eager to meet new Armenians, misses his homeland, yearns to speak his native language and to talk with people who share the same history and memories, and considers the small Armenian community in Germany a homeland:

> "I go to different cities to meet Armenians because it's possible that I can meet there someone from my childhood, or army friends, or even lost relatives, if not, it is very much possible to meet interesting people, it makes sense to keep a contact with them. Of course, it is the lack of the homeland, the lack of the language of our country, the lack of our habits, with Germans, how should I put it, you cannot eat our favourite khorovats (barbecue) and khash[495] with them (*laughs*). […] I would, of course, prefer to go out with Armenians only for the atmosphere, only for the memories, it's like a small homeland, however far the person is from the homeland, becomes cold and distant, a small part always remains, remains as a homeland, doesn't get lost. It's more interesting, mostly it's interesting to communicate with people, when you speak about something, he already knows what you mean. You cannot speak about that with Germans. Even a small anecdote is not interesting if you translate it into German (*laughs*). […] Armenians attract me, because this small homeland, that several Armenians gather together, it seems it's already a homeland, this small community…" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee tells about the importance of the Armenian community in the life of her family: once they arrived in Germany, one of the first things they did was to look for an Armenian community. They have been regular members of the Armenian community in Iran and have lived their lives with and among Armenians in order to preserve their ethnic identity. Now in Germany they make efforts to provide their children with an opportunity to remain Armenian and teach their own children the Armenian culture and mentality. Moreover, the interviewee has taken initiatives to create an Armenian community in Germany:

> "From the very beginning when we came, we tried to organise communities for our children because in Iran we always had communities, and we did everything in those communities to gather Armenians together, here as well, so that the children can remain Armenian, to make friends more with Armenians than with foreigners. Outside they have to… because at school their friends are foreigners, but we have tried from the very beginning to gather together with

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[495] Khash (in Armenian խաշ) – broth made from sheep's head and trotters and eaten with garlic, mostly in the cold season – /http://khash.org.

some families so that the children can have interaction with each other. For the New Year, Easter, we always gather and celebrate together so that the children can see and know what it is to be Armenian, what friendship is, what our religion is, our language, everything is important, so as we can be able to preserve, so as they can preserve it later for their own children. So, that's it, once we arrived here, we were able to create a community, so as our children can come here and learn our culture and remain Armenian" (*Sona – female, 47 years old, from Iran*).

Another interviewee who grew up in Germany and did not have a chance to learn about the Armenian history and culture at school or other educational institutions, makes efforts to cover those gaps by constantly engaging himself with learning about the Armenian belief, culture and history to find his identity and remain Armenian:

"Ok, you live here, but when tomorrow somebody asks you, what is the Armenian history, what should I say? It was so embarrassing for me, I had to catch up on everything, documentaries, videos about the history, about Armenian letters, about the wars, about all possible things, about kingdoms, and in this way one finds his identity. In order to remain Armenian you should learn your culture, know your history, you should always ask yourself where you come from, who you are. Being Armenian doesn't mean to keep a flag at home and carry a thick cross on your neck, as if, I am Armenien, let everybody see it, no, it's not that. Among young people you can always see photos with the flag or they keep it at home, but when you don't know your culture, what should you tell others? We have so many things to tell, our history, our culture, our everything. Many think, ok, there was Genocide, there was Karabagh, that's it. But our history doesn't cover the last hundred years, we are so old. I learn our culture, our history, our belief, this is the only way to remain Armenian" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee was born in Germany and learnt the Armenian language in later years. Here how he tells about his experiences of learning the Western and Eastern Armenian:

"I did Armenian virtual college to improve my Armenian a little bit. First I have learnt Western Armenian, but when I went to Armenia, I realised that I couldn't do much with my Armenian, and I started a few years ago, two years ago, no, a year ago I started learning Eastern Armenian, I also learned the letters, the old letters, but it is a little bit difficult. Now I understand very well and can answer but I always have the Western Armenian pronunciation (*laughs*)" (*Vahagn – male, 23 years old, born in Germany*).

In the family of the following interviewee not only Armenian is spoken, but the parents teach their children to read and write in Armenian, learn national songs and dances. In spite of the fact that there is no official Armenian community in the city where they live, they visit different Armenian cultural events in different cities in Germany:

"At home we speak Armenian, we teach our children to read and write in Armenian, national songs and dances… I think communication is very important but we don't have it, for instance, Armenians don't interact with each other here, unfortunately, it would promote when Armenians were together, the children would remain together, sadly, we don't have it" (*Kariné – female, 38 years old, from Armenia*).

Having a mixed family, the following interviewee (the husband is German) is eager to raise her children in accordance with the Armenian culture and mentality, and there was a period when she took her children to an Armenian school in Germany:

> "My children speak Armenian, we even went to an Armenian school which didn't last long, there was one many years ago, they taught children Armenian more or less, everyone would bring their Armenian children, even those families where both German and Armenian was spoken, or both parents were Armenians, still everybody brought their children, and the communication was very good, but later the school closed" (*Yeva – female, 43 years old, from Armenia*).

Upon her arrival in Germany, the following interviewee has always tried to keep a close relationship with Armenians, always participating in community gatherings together with her family. Moreover, all her three children are married inside their ethnic group. She did not have a chance to go to an Armenian school in Turkey and as a result could not read in Armenian. Later when her children started going to school, she started learning Armenian letters together with them:

> "A–ator (*chair*), the pictures are next to the letter, M–mkrat (*scissors*), T–takar (*barrel*), in this way, each letter had a picture, and I said to myself, ok, now I am going to learn the letters. The second day my daughter came from school, we started again, and in three-four months I learnt to read and write in Armenian" (*Lusinē – female, 77 years old, from Turkey*).

Another interviewee shares her emotions and experiences with Armenians and Armenia. She has also learnt Armenian in Germany:

> "I love Armenia. First time I heard the Armenian language on the plane, I started crying, I couldn't speak, the tears were running down my cheeks. […] After the earthquake in Armenia, we helped them a lot, both financially, with medications. […] I didn't know Armenian, I have learnt it in Germany…" (*Sofia – female, 75 years old, from Turkey*).

Having many Armenian friends, the following interviewee gathers with them on a regular bases on different events. He has also indicated that his German language skills are very bad since he does not communicate with Germans. On the other hand, he is close with the Armenian ethnic group in Germany and drives miles to different cities to meet new people from his ethnic group:

> "We always gather together with Armenians, with Armenian tonir (*cylindrical clay oven in the ground*), with beautiful Armenian pictures, with a big cross on the wall, when you enter my summerhouse, you will feel as if you are in Armenia, we always bake lavash (*flatbread*) (*laughs*)" (*Arshak – male, 39 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee has been living in Germany for 20 years, and his friends' circle is mostly international or only Armenians. He has no close relationship with Germans, only deals with them at work. He has a strong ethnic identity and states that he will never change however long he lives

in Germany. Moreover, he indicates that in case there were not any Armenians in his surroundings, he would not be able to live in Germany:

> "However long I live here, I will remain the same Armenian, I haven't changed. I follow the German law, but I have remained the same Armenian, I haven't forgotten and I don't what to forget what it is to be an Armenian, that is to say, I want to and I have remained Armenian. The life I have led changed me as a person, in this sense people are different, but even if I live here for 50 years, I will remain Armenian, and I tell everyone that I am Armenian. If there weren't any Armenians in Germany, I wouldn't be able to live here" (*Ara – male, 31 years old, from Armenia*).

Feeling himself strongly Armenian, the following interviewee does not worry about losing his identity. On the other hand, he worries about the future of his children and the children of the Armenian community in Germany, since there is a big change that they might lose their ethnic identity in the course of time:

> "I am happy when I am among Armenians, I look forward to the events to be with them. Whatever we do in the community is for our children, so as they remain Armenian, it's not for us, we will remain Armenian in any case. I am active in our community for the future generation to help them remain Armenian: there is a danger, that the children will change. I have many Armenian friends, and I have spent most of my life here, but we did not assimilate. It's not easy to remain Armenian, but we have remained. At home, in the community we speak only Armenian, we do everything according to our customs" (*Edgar – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

In the quotation below, the interviewee shares her memories about her childhood: her mother would force her and her siblings to speak Armenian to each other. She would prefer to speak Armenian without an accent, but is proud that she can at least speak her mother tongue:

> "When we were children, maybe 5 or 6 years old, whenever we spoke German with my brother and sister, my mother would come and say, "Speak Armenian, speak Armenian!" (*laughs*). We would go to Armenian language classes to learn how to read and write in Armenian, and I would always ask my mother, "Mum, but why? We live in Germany", but now I understand, so as we don't forget the language. It's already twenty years, and I feel that my Armenian could be better, I speak with an accent. At my workplace when we have Armenian patients who cannot speak German, I always translate for them, and it's good that my manager sees that I am Armenian and haven't forgotten my language and can communicate, and I could say that I am a little proud when I show that I can speak Armenian (*laughs*)" (*Yester – female, 25 years old, from Armenia*).

After having lived in Germany for twenty years, having many German friends, working in a circle of German colleagues, speaking German as a native-speaker, the following interviewee considers herself well integrated into the German society. In spite of the fact that she does not differentiate between her German or Armenian friends, both are equal to her, she always searches contact with Armenians. During the interview she mentions that she is very proud to be Armenian:

"I am very proud and happy that I am Armenian and I am happy that I wasn't born Muslim (*laughs*), because now I realise what freedom we had as Armenians, and also we grew up in the Soviet (*Soviet Armenia*), I also see that difference. For instance, I was told here, that till 1950s women had no right to work without asking permission from their husbands, weren't allowed to have accounts, etc., we were in this sense more, hmm, in more progress. At home, at my grandmother's, I have always witnessed that women had their position in the family and in many cases they even ruled, the man was more a money-maker. It was also a culture shock when I noticed that here one makes a difference whether a position is occupied by a man or a woman, and the woman earns less money, because then in Armenia every position had its price, it didn't matter whether a man or a woman would occupy it, they would get the same salary, it was like that, you don't know because you were young, but I worked during the Soviet period. […] And when I say I am proud that I am Armenian I don't want to make something big about it, I just want to say that I am Armenian and I don't complain about it (*laughs*). I like Armenians very much, of course, we also have bad features (*laughs*), I know it, but what nation doesn't?" (*Anush – female, 53 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee has a positive and strong ethnic identity. She has a German husband who speaks English and Armenian with her. She takes many initiatives to help the Armenians in Germany to keep close to their culture by helping them get acquainted with the Armenian history, literature, music, etc.

"My strong Armenian identity has not allowed me to integrate properly. I work in our community, and I consider it most important to preserve Armenianness. We live in Germany, but need to remain Armenian. I love our Armenianness, our language, history, and I do everything in my power so as people here do not forget they are Armenians, especially children. And when I say Armenian, I mean to acquaint them with the Armenian literature, history, music, culture, and we organise different events in both Armenian and German languages" (*Naré – female, 36 years old, from Armenia*).

In spite of the fact that the older and current generations have strong ethnic identities, the following interviewee expresses his concern and anxiety that the loss of the ethic identity of future generations is inevitable. He claims that very little can be transferred to the new generations, and even this little cannot last long:

"Even if you wish to give your future generations what you have, maybe they will preserve only a small percentage of what you have given: maximum they will learn the language, if you can teach the language, but in case one is born here, the child goes to a German school and grows up more in a German culture which is very natural, and I don't feel obliged, neither I nor my wife didn't force our daughter, "you should be like this", "those are Germans, you are a foreigner", you cannot do it because there is an atmosphere here, they are Christians, friends from childhood, from school, they are all Germans. Of course, we always say, beware of Turks. […] Our daughter is interested in what's happening in Armenia, when something happens she becomes sad, but as I said in her daily life she is very much in German culture. We also don't have a problem, we try to preserve our culture, traditions, but how long?" (*Areg – male, 69 years old, from Turkey*).

It seems to be quite important for the interviewees to express their willingness and readiness to keep close to the Armenian culture which is expressed in particularly indicating that they preserve their cultural habits and traditions, and in spite of the fact that they all have lived and live in a foreign country, inside their home everything is Armenian: they cook Armenian dishes, watch Armenian programmes, etc.

> "Here when I close the door, everything is Armenian. The food, the language, our traditions, only Armenian. I mostly cook Armenian dishes, I marinade vegetables (*in Armenian: թթու դնել*), make jam and confiture, make dolma, other dishes, all is Armenian. And I am Armenian, with our traditions, with my mentality" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee has been living in Iran before she moved to Germany. She lived as an Armenian in Iran, and she does the same in Germany:

> "We live in Germany as Armenians, in the family everything is Armenian, we try to keep it as much Armenian as possible, we preserve it in every possible way, to remain Armenian" (*Anahit – female, 54 years old, from Iran*).

The parents of the following interviewee prefer watching only Armenian television:

> *"*In my family, my parents never watch a German television, they watch only Armenian. We, the young ones in the family, watch German TV to follow the news" (*Yester – female, 25 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, the Armenian interviewees have strong ethnic identity which can be demonstrated in their participation in their ethnic group community gatherings, active engagement in different organisational matters in connection with the Armenian community life, search for contact with Armenians, endeavours to learn the Armenian language, literature, history and culture, concern and attempts to preserve their ethnic identity, as well as initiatives to create opportunities for the Armenian children to learn the Armenian language and retain their ethnic identity. Some Armenian families are concerned about the future generations who might lose their ethnic identity in the course of time, that is the reason that the children are expected and even forced to speak Armenian with the family members.

5.2.9. Diasporic Identity of Armenians/Memories about their Original Homeland and History

As already indicated in the theoretical framework in Subchapter 5.1.2, diaspora communities are usually specified in a number of ways, which include one or several of the following aspects: being away from homeland and residing in foreign lands in pursuit of work or trade; having a strong ethnic consciousness and a desire to return to the homeland one day; having solidarity with their ethnic group members that reside in other countries of residence[496]. In comparison to other minority communities, which may assimilate into the majority society in the course of time, diasporas

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[496] See Kokot, W., et al (2004): *Diaspora*, p. 162.

usually preserve their religion and culture, feel more comfortable inside their ethnic group, feel insufficiency in the majority culture, yearn for their home country and always maintain contact with it. Diasporic groups also share collective memory about their history and culture, and can live their lives in connection with those memories and recollections. They usually feel spiritual and cultural connectedness not inside the host country but in their homeland: "being in a diaspora means living one place physically and thinking of another place spiritually and mentally"[497].

The Armenian interviewees demonstrate most of the characteristics of belonging to a diasporic group: they consider their home the homeland of their ancestors, not only do not assimilate into the host society culture, but keep a close contact with their homeland and their ethnic group, live with their history and have a collective memory, always dream about going back to their homeland, feel close identification with it, as well as feel obliged to preserve their ethnic identity and support their homeland. Some interviewees, who have been living in Germany for almost fifty years, visit Armenia on a regular basis, live in Armenia virtually via media or have regular contacts with their friends and relatives in Armenia, take their children to Armenia to help them get acquainted with their homeland, regret being away from Armenia and not being able to help their own country prosper, feel remorse that they and their children cannot speak Armenian very well, etc. Moreover, the Armenian Diaspora in Germany also plays an important role supporting the homeland financially, spiritually and mentally in times of crisis, which varies from a small financial help for one's family, relatives and friends, to large diasporic groups and organisations which help different institutions in Armenia, from orphanages and nursing homes for the elderly people, to educational facilities and other organisations. In case of political protests and demonstrations they not only actively follow the developments and actions of their people via media, but organise demonstrations in the countries they reside, many even fly to Armenia to support their country in person. Moreover, for several interviewees Armenia is a dream-homeland, since they have never been there but consider it their home country.

Supporting their families in Armenia is a common thing for the Armenian Diaspora. The family plays a very important role in an Armenian's life, as it is indicated in the following quotation:

> "For example, even if I had little money, I could always help my family, my parents, I always help them… if I had 100 mark, I would send half of it (*laughs*) to help them" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

The following interviewee is very homesick, and her daily routine is strongly connected with the life in Armenia through internet, radio or television. She considers it most vital for Armenians to live in and develop their own country. And in spite of the fact that there are Armenians who have been living in Germany for a considerable time, in her opinion, Armenians can never become Germans: their souls will always remain Armenian:

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[497] Kokot, W., et al (2004): *Diaspora*, p. 12.

"Being Armenian for centuries, we gained independence but up to now we are not independent, unfortunately. During these 25 years we could have reached good politics, we should have developed, prospered, grown in number, our feet should have been stable on our land but we became migrants. It is painful, it's a terrible pain, I cannot express it in words, I don't know, for me it's very painful. First of all, an Armenian should live in his country, in my opinion, the Armenian should have lived in Armenia and developed it. Personally, if I tell you my life from the day I was born, my family's life, my parents' life, we lived among Persians, among Muslims for 500 years and remained Armenians. […] We can never, never ever become German… I have acquaintances, their children were born here, they speak German perfectly, like native speakers, but their soul is Armenian, they are not German… I don't know… in my opinion, how we have lived in Iran for centuries, we can never ever become Persian, no way, not because it's a Muslim country, no, the German, the Armenian… now the history shows that many years ago, we were talking about Turkish Armenians, right? They were afraid to speak Armenian and things like that, but today in Turkey Armenians who were turned into Turks, Kurds, I don't know, this third generation Armenians, they all have arisen and started examining the Armenian Genocide, because genes cannot be changed, you cannot turn blood into water, the genes speak for themselves. No, I am not German, and thank God, I am so happy and grateful, that my both children are patriotic, appreciate Armenia, their homeland, in a specific way, Armenia is a sacred place for us. We cannot just quietly live, from morning till evening we follow the news. Once the sun rises, I open my eyes, open the laptop and read the news, it is very important to me, only after that I will proceed with my daily routine, and I am not exaggerating, saying that I am very patriotic or something, no, I am just terribly homesick, terribly" (*Anahit – female, 54 years old, from Iran*).

Having moved to Germany from Turkey as a young girl, the following interviewee has been living in Germany for more than fifty years and yet she has a strong ethnic identity. She has always been encouraged by her family to create her own family with an Armenian: later she was also happy to see her own children marry inside their ethnic group. In the following paragraph she tells about the importance of her ethnic identity, and how she and her family make efforts to remain Armenian. They also keep close contact with Armenia, paying visits on a regular basis:

"Being and remaining Armenian is very important. When my father died in Polis (*Constantinople (Constantinopolis), today's Istanbul*), he would always tell us, "You cannot marry a foreigner, you cannot marry a Turk". And I always had it on my mind. I came to Germany as a young child, it was difficult being among foreigners, but I remember those words ringing in my ears, and my mother would also always say the same, and I did the same thing to my children (*encouraging them to marry Armenians*). […] My daughter can speak and write in Armenian but with difficulties, the same with me, but we are making efforts to remain Armenian, and it is very important for us. In the beginning we had Turkish passports, but when we got our German passports 15 years ago, my husband would go to Armenia more often, but I went to Armenia for the first time 15 years ago, and back then I would return a little bit sad, but now every year we go to Armenia, we stay there for a month and come back. Last week we came back, and now my grandchildren will go there with my son, so that the children also see their homeland, we have a homeland, haven't we? But unfortunately, they don't speak Armenian as fluently as the children in Armenia, it is painful for us that they don't speak well. When I speak Armenian to them, they answer me in German, or answer in Armenian only "yes" and "no", I cannot get an answer from them in Armenian, from the elder ones yes, from the younger ones not possible. […] My son's daughter, she is 8 years old now, when she went to school the first day, she came home and said, "I am German". My son got angry, started telling her the

history of Armenia, that we are not Germans, no one in the family is German, and from that time on every year when it is autumn holiday in Germany, my son takes the children to Armenia and says, this is your country (*laughs*). They go with great pleasure" (*Seda – female, 62 years old, from Turkey*).

It is disputable whether diasporic identities are preserved more easily and longer in culturally monolithic or pluralistic countries: the latter can help minority groups stay closer to their own ethnic culture and even make their diasporic identities stronger, on the other hand, culturally pluralistic countries are open and tolerant, where minorities feel at ease, and their diasporic identity may weaken in the course of time, and they may subconsciously assimilate into the majority society[498]. As indicated by the interviewees, living in Muslim countries helped Armenians keep close to their ethnic group in their daily activities. They would meet Armenians on a regular basis, engage themselves in various events, keep close and constant contact with their ethnic group, which also exists in Germany, but is not particularly strong, since official Armenian communities do not exist in all the cities, as well as Armenians are not gathered in particular cities to be found more easily, but are mostly widespread throughout Germany (out of 55.000–60.000 Armenians in Germany, the largest Armenian community is in Cologne, where 5000 Armenians reside).

The following interviewee narrates about her childhood in Iran which was tightly and strongly connected with the Armenian community:

> "I went to Armenian school till the 5th grade, because in Iran you can attend Armenian school only till then, so till the 5th grade I learnt Armenian. Afterwards we attended Persian school in the morning, after dinner we went to learn Armenian. And also we had our Armenian church, Armenian community, Armenian meetings, I have always been among Armenians in Iran" (*Gayané – female, 38 years old, from Iran*).

The difficulty to remain Armenian in a Christian country is pointed out by the following interviewee who considers it is much easier for Armenians to retain their ethnic identity in Muslim countries. Nevertheless, the interviewees from Iran and Turkey have immediately contacted the Armenian communities in Germany or have taken initiatives to organise meetings with Armenians upon their arrival in Germany, which already indicates about their interest in their ethnic group and their ethnic identity preservation:

> "In a certain way it's easy to live in Syria or in Turkey as an Armenian because you are separate, you are Armenian, you are Christian, you hang around with Armenians, and it's easier to stay Armenian in a hostile environment, basically. In Germany it's harder because we are not in a hostile environment, it's easy to lose your culture, because especially the differences between a German and an Armenian or a French and an Armenian isn't huge, they are very close culturally, so it's very easy to get lost" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

With some restrictions in comparison to previous times, Armenians in Iran have more opportunities to be in constant contact with their ethnic group, compared to the opportunities in Germany in

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[498] See Kokot, W., et al (2004): *Diaspora,* pp. 19–20.

connection with educational facilities and dispersal of Armenians in various cities in Germany, where the contact with their ethnic group usually takes place once or twice a month during the Armenian church services and community gatherings. Nevertheless, the following interviewee finds the contact with his ethnic group very important, and even regrets he does not live in other countries where the Armenian Diaspora is bigger:

> "In Iran we spoke only Armenian with each other, the school, we had exams in Armenian, our language, literature, the Armenian history, we were lucky to have that opportunity. Of course, they learn it now, too, I cannot say anything, but less than we did, the government doesn't allow, they can have Armenian classes only till the 5th grade, if they want, they can attend Armenian school on Sunday" (*Arsen – male, 52 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee was born in Turkey and has been living in Germany since 1970. She is certain she will always remain Armenian in whatever country she lives. Her children are married to Armenians, and it is very important for her family to retain their ethnic identity, and she also expresses her hope and concern that her grandchildren will also marry inside their ethnic group in the future:

> "I lived among Kurds, I lived among Turks and didn't forget my Armenianness, I won't forget it here either. When I came from Turkey, I was asked, why did you come? I said, I was a foreigner there, I am a foreigner here, there is no difference, that's it" (*Nora – female, 65 years old, from Turkey*).

As already indicated above, the representatives of a Diaspora have a collective memory about their original homeland and history. The following pages demonstrate how the Armenian interviewees live with their memories, and how the history can have such a strong impact on people's biographies that they cannot help narrating and retelling about their own experiences, or the stories told by their parents, grandparents and grand-grandparents. These memories haunt them and make an inseparable part of their lives, which are narrated also by the third generation Armenian migrants who were born in Germany and have not lived and experienced the crisis themselves, but have learnt about it through their families and friends.

Different interviewees tell narrations about interesting, at the same time dramatic events that have happened to them, to the members of their families or the Armenians generally, which I consider interesting and engaging enough to devote a few pages to. These narrations include some historic events or some life experiences, told by the interviewees in connection with Armenia, Iran and Turkey. It is worth mentioning that during the interviews no questions have been asked related to the historical events of the Armenian people: the interviewees have started talking about them on their own initiative.

The following interviewee tells about his first and last name and why he has not changed it up to now. Moreover, in spite of the fact that he was born in Germany, his parents gave him a first name

that has a connection with the Armenian history, so as he can tell about the origin of his name and share his history with others:

> "For the Germans, they see my last name and ask me, are you Turkish? Then I can start: actually, I am Armenian, I am Armenian Genocide, that's the reason I haven't changed my second name yet. That's because I want to tell the story, I want people to know about the Armenian Genocide, and I want people to understand where we came from, and that's why I kept my second name, despite, like nobody can read that. […] There are lots of Turks with Armenian grandparents, not parents, but Armenian grandmothers, but why just grandmothers. You would never find anybody saying my grandfather was Armenian because all men were killed, and there were two things basically that could happen to you as a woman: either you got saved by a family, they took you, your neighbours were Armenian, you were always friends with them, and they were in a certain way educated and were critical with the society at that time, so, they took the children, saying that they were their children, for example, because the state didn't know. So, the kids weren't killed, the girls were married to somebody, to a Turk, and so the kid had, the donor had basically Armenian heritage, married a Turk because that way you could save the kid from being killed. And with kid I mean, at that time girls were married at the age of 12, 13. And the other way was the more likely way, especially in East Turkey, where they just got picked out in the death marches, every girl that looked decent got kidnapped and married, lots of them, many killed themselves in the river, a lot killed themselves during the marriage or ran away after a year. So, there are a lot of families like that where girls were kidnapped, forced married" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

Every interviewee has his/her own history and story of migration. The following interviewee remembers the difficult times in her life and shares some details about the reasons of her family's migration to Germany from Turkey:

> "In Turkey we lived financially not badly, but we were afraid that wherever we would go, and they would see we were Armenians, because of the politics, for instance, the police or the hospital, they would give us the cold shoulder. I wanted to name my son Ararat, but I was told that I couldn't name my son Ararat, and to my question, why not, I was told that we were Armenian, Ararat was a political name, I should choose something else. What could one do in that case? One had to choose a Turkish name. […] Armenians say, why did you stay in Turkey? You all got frightened in Turkey and escaped to Armenia, but we stayed, and we had a school in Istanbul in Turkey, hmm, you couldn't work in military, but you could work as a doctor, but other than doctor, you could also become a lawyer, but you couldn't get employed in other places, especially politics. […] Let's say, my husband earned about 10.000 euros, they would come and say, every month you should give us 5000 euros, and in case you protest, saying, I earn that money, why should I give it to you, and these were Muslim people, many Kurds, many Turks in Turkey, and then we came to Germany, here we didn't have any problem. In Turkey those people said, in case you don't give us money, we will take your wife, you won't see her, or we will take your children, and you won't see them any more, we were frightened. […] If it is a Turkish passport, one can read at the bottom "Armenian", we are Christians, all passports, identity cards, I can show them to you, you can see that it is written "Christian". Here in Germany if you are Christian, it's ok, if you are Muslim, problems may arise" (*Arevik – female, 56 years old, from Turkey*).

Narrating about the life of his parents in Turkey, the following interviewee mentions what difficulties they have had before their migration to Germany. Even though he was an infant when his family migrated to Germany, he has a contact with his Armenian relatives in Turkey and usually draws comparisons between the lives in Turkey and Germany: in Germany everybody has equal rights, in Turkey an Armenian is considered to be a person of a second class:

> "When somebody comes from Turkey, for example, in Turkey you should say, whether you are a Turk or not, if you are not, you would anyway be forced, you would do your military service, and it is actually blatant, because you are anyway considered to be a person of a second class, even if you do your military service, it even stands on the passport, whether you are Jew, Armenian or, they make it clear" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

The following interviewee has been living in Germany since 1965, and the time has not swept away her memories about the past: she and her family still live with the recollections and the history of the Armenian people, and their current life and daily routine are connected with the historical events of the Armenian people. She takes every opportunity to talk about her people's history in Germany:

> "A community was created here, and I had the chance to get closer to my Armenian culture, because I was 11 years old in Polis[499], and I learnt about the Genocide here, they wouldn't tell us there. […] It is very difficult for us, I have many friends who came to Germany after us, and they miss Turkey a lot. I also miss my home and district in Turkey, memories, because when we lived in Polis, it was an Armenian district with Armenian families, but when I went there this year again, I said, I will never put my foot here again. I always tell Germans, you like Turks because you have never lived with them, you don't know how bad they are, I tell them everything, and they say: "Yes, you are right". One should just tell the history. For example, my German neighbour, we have a very good neighbourhood, my children visited us that year, my grandchild wrote 1915 with chalk all over the street. When I bought my new car, I took the number 1915, and once my neighbour said, it's interesting, your car has this number, and now the children wrote it on the asphalt, what is it? And I said, that I did it on purpose, so as you would ask me that question and I could tell you what it meant. And she was like, oh, interesting! And after telling her everything, I said, you see, you have learnt about the Genocide from me, if we didn't do it, you wouldn't have asked us that question. And when we bought the car, the woman in the shop also asked, why we needed exactly that number, and I explained it to her as well, told the history, and she said, oh, it's interesting" (*Seda – female, 62 years old, from Turkey*).

Recalling her life in Iran, the following interviewee shares how the Armenian community has lived there, interacting and keeping close to each other, always having contact with Armenia, supporting and helping it in case of necessity, how their families have always tried to keep distance from the majority culture: they interacted with it only at work. Moreover, they even did not allow their wives to work, so as they could stay away from the majority culture and keep contact only with the Armenian community:

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[499] The interviewees who migrated to Germany from Turkey, call the cities in Turkey with their old Armenian names: Constantinople, in Armenian pronounced Constantinopolis, today's Istanbul.

"This goes back to 1950s, 1960s, every family had 6-7 children then, women in Persian-Armenian families in Iran didn't work then, never. First, men were all craftsmen, were able to support their families, secondly, they didn't want their wives to work in Muslim countries, didn't allow, they were more, they were in contact with Persians outside, but they wouldn't keep contact with them together with their own families, and they didn't allow their wives to work. Back then my father, and together with my father all Persian-Armenians, could support their families with their salary, they would send their children to Armenian school, all that cost money, one should have paid money for each child, every family would pay the church a monthly fee, so as the church could survive, to keep the church, at the same time they would necessarily participate in gatherings, they would buy a platter or an Armenian book, would bring them home, read the book or listen the platter, and they knew that the money they had spent on the book or the platter would go to Armenia, help Armenia, which was sent already through Russia" (*Anahit – female, 54 years old, from Iran*).

Coming across Armenians in mostly unexpected places in different countries of the world is a common thing in the lives of Armenians. The following interviewee shares a story about her own experience, rejoicing to have met an Armenian in another country:

"We were in the US, a policeman approached us in a car, and my husband asked me to take a photo of him with the policeman, unfortunately, we couldn't speak English. The policeman asked where we came from, and my husband said, from Germany but we are Armenians, the policeman got off the car (*in a happy voice*), hugged us, he was Armenian (*laughs*). Such things happen very often, we say we are Armenians, and the person opposite us also turns out to be Armenian" (*Seda – female, 62 years old, from Turkey*).

The following interviewee narrates about his joy when the German Parliament accepted the Armenian Genocide:

"You know, when the Parliament recognised the Armenian Genocide, as an Armenian I was happy, but as a German I was proud. I mean, at that moment I said, it's so nice that the country where I am a citizen, finally, however late it is, recognised the Genocide hundred years later, I was very happy as an Armenian" (*Aram – male, 41 years old, from Turkey*).

Thus, the above-mentioned quotations have demonstrated several characteristics which are typical of having a diasporic identity, which is connected with the following aspects and attributes: the interviewees make efforts to remain Armenian, dream about their homeland, keep close to their history and culture, have a collective memory, build their lives in close connection with their ethnic community members, keep in touch with their homeland, live with the memories about their history and take every opportunity to retell the stories and recollections about the past. In spite of the fact that the above-mentioned interviewees have been living most of their lives in Germany, they keep a close contact with their homeland and visit it on a regular basis. Moreover, they take initiatives to tell their children about the Armenian history and take them to Armenia to help them get acquainted with their homeland. Some interviewees share their recollections or stories told by their parents and grandparents on every opportunity, to make the majority society and other minority groups there become aware of their history and culture. Moreover, the interviewees that have migrated to

Germany from Iran and Turkey, have taken initiatives to create Armenian communities in Germany to be able to keep contact with their ethnic group, as well as give their children an opportunity to interact with Armenians and grow in an Armenian atmosphere. Even though it has been disputed that diasporic and ethnic identities are easier to maintain in culturally monolithic than pluralistic countries, most of the interviewees, even those that have been living in Germany for as long as fifty years, are still tightly connected with their ethnic group and do everything in their power to help their children and grandchildren retain their ethnic identity.

Once again I would like to point out that most of the interviews have been conducted with Armenians who are constant and active participants of the Armenian community life in Germany, thus, the picture can be radically and fundamentally different, in case the current research has been carried out with Armenians who are not interested in their ethnic group or in the preservation of their ethnic identity.

5.2.10. Identification as Armenian/Strong Ethnic Identity vs. Armenian Language Skills

To the question, in case you are asked in Germany or other countries who you are, where you come from, almost all the responses without exception are the same, i.e., Armenian. I would like to point out that the answers where it is only indicated "Armenian", "Of course, Armenian", "Only Armenian" are not demonstrated in the narrations that are mentioned below.

A separate subchapter has been devoted to this topic, since an interesting phenomenon has been observed during the analysis: the interviewees find it most important to mention not only about their ethnicity as an Armenian, but the country they were born in, i.e., Armenia, Iran and Turkey. A number of interpretations can be given why the interviewees are eager to be identified and perceived by others not only as Armenians but they also particularly indicate about the country they were born and grew up in. It can be related but not limited to one of the following reasons: 1. to feel more at ease in mentioning the country of their birth since it makes a part of their social identification; 2. to distinguish themselves from other Armenians, since the Armenian Diaspora is a broad concept: Armenians can be found almost in all the countries of the world, and it is a common feature to put themselves into different categorisations, based on the country a representative of the Armenian Diaspora was born; 3. to avoid being misunderstood as a result of not knowing Armenia in reality since it is only a dream-homeland for them. Those Armenians, who were born or moved to Germany in childhood, have no identification with the country their parents were born in, even if they speak the language of that country (Iran or Turkey). For instance, an Armenian born in Germany in an Armenian family that has migrated to Germany from Turkey, does not have any identification with that country, in spite of the fact that he/she cannot speak Armenian and speaks Turkish with the family members. Among the four interviewees that were born in Germany, one interviewee identifies herself as Armenian, two identify themselves as both Armenian and German, and another interviewee feels himself German when the self-esteem of Germans is under threat and vilified by other minorities. Moreover, as already indicated above, even though Armenians have

strong ethnic identity and consider themselves Armenians, they also indicate in their narrations "it is obvious from our appearance that we are not German". In this connection, it is important to note that the reason the Armenian ethnic group members do not call themselves Germans can be related not only to their strong ethnic identity, but be the result of the German society's perceptions of other ethnic and minority groups as non-Germans.

First, the following quotations demonstrate how the interviewees, that have migrated to Germany from the Republic of Armenia, identify themselves:

> "It depends who asks that question, but we mostly say we are from Germany but we are Armenians, we necessarily mention it because they can see it from our appearance that we are not German. In Spain many times they would even talk Spanish to me on the street, thinking that I am Spanish, but we say that we live in Germany but we are Armenians. And no, however long I live here, I am Armenian" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

> "When I was going to Mexico, there was a stopover in the US, and I was asked whether I am German, and I said, according to the papers, yes, but I am Armenian (*laughs*). I say that I am Armenian who lives in Germany. I know that my son would say he is German. He was born here, grew up here, when he speaks of football, he says "we", I say "Germans". In 2007, Armenia played against Germany, after 70 minutes Germans began shooting many goals one after another, and the score was 7-1 or something like that (*laughs*). Of course, I was very sorry about it, but I was glad that Germans couldn't shoot a goal till 70 minutes, and that year the German team was very strong" (*Armen – male, 50 years old, from Armenia*).

> "When I am in another country, I say, I am from Germany, but I am Armenian. People who have German passport say that they are German, but one should feel it with the heart, but since I feel myself Armenian, I cannot say I am German" (*Trdat – male, 24 years old, from Armenia*).

Armenians, who were born in Iran and Turkey and moved to Germany in later years, not only identify themselves as Armenians, but also necessarily indicate the country they were born and grew up in:

> "I say, the first phrase is, I am Armenian, then I say, Iranian-Armenian, because they should know what Armenian I am, there are different Armenians, but the first word is, I am Armenian, that is, I am Armenian from Germany" (*Gayané – female, 38 years old, from Iran*).

> "First of all, when they ask, who are you, we say, Armenian, when they ask, where do you come from, we say from Germany, at the very end, we say, we are Armenians from Iran" (*Mariam – female, 48 years old, from Iran*).

> "I am from Iran but I am Armenian. And it is very important for me to mention that, yes I am from Iran, but I am not Muslim, I am Armenian, it is very significant for me, and I always indicate it" (*Ani – female, 41 years old, from Iran*).

> "I tell Germans that my blood is Armenian, my passport is German, there is nothing wrong here, I was afraid to say that in Turkey, here I am not afraid. I say, I came here from Turkey, but I am Armenian, I am an Armenian from Turkey" (*Nora – female, 65 years old, from Turkey*).

How the Armenians, that were born in Germany, identify themselves is depicted in the following quotations:

> "I am Armenian-Germ…, I am German with Armenian heritage. I am Armenian coming from Germany" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

> "I always say Armenian, also when I go to another country for vacation, Switzerland, the US, I have never said Germany, I always say, I am Armenian. My passport is German, but…" (*Arminé – female, 21 years old, born in Germany*).

> "Sometimes it happens that I feel myself German when others put so much pressure on the self-esteem of Germans, that I say, hey, give a break" (*Hayk – male, 29 years old, born in Germany*).

> "Yes, I have felt myself a little bit German in Armenia. I have many times thought that it would be easier if I were German because you are more free, the prejudices are fewer here and there, but I have always wanted to remain Armenian, and maybe I am a little German, but it's not bad (*laughs*)" (*Vahagn – male, 23 years old, born in Germany*).

Despite the fact that the interviewees have strong ethnic identity, they feel themselves different when they are in Armenia, and in those cases they feel themselves German:

> "When I go to Armenia, in that case I feel myself German (*laughs*), but generally no, in Germany no, we are only Armenians" (*Kariné – female, 38 years old, from Armenia*).

> "Only in Armenia can happen when others say, the guy from Germany (*laughs*), only in that case, but I have never felt myself German" (*Mher – male, 24 years old, from Armenia*).

How the interviewees identify themselves having Armenian and German mixed-marriages is depicted below:

> "We are from Germany, but I am Armenian" (*Anna – female, 37 years old, from Armenia*) .

> "To that question I answer, I am Armenian, I am from Yerevan, I always say that, even my children say Armenian, for instance, my daughter doesn't consider herself absolutely German, she takes it as fifty-fifty, she says, minimum fifty-fifty, she tells everyone that she is Armenian. Wherever we go, everybody sees that I am not German, and I say that I am from Armenia" (*Yeva – female, 43 years old, from Armenia*).

> "By all means I indicate that I am Armenian. Even though my husband is German, I have never felt myself German. It is very important for me, and even if I live my whole life here, I will never feel myself German" (*Naré – female, 36 years old, from Armenia*).

Different components may be referred to one's belonging to an ethnic group, among others blood, ancestry, language, religion, literature, history, food, in-group marriage, etc. Nevertheless, a considerable number of ethnic group members may lack the ability to master the language of the

ethnic group, but have a strong ethnic identity. The same may refer to food and literature: one may prefer the taste of the foreign cuisine or prefer reading foreign literature, which by no means indicates one's lacking an ethnic identity. Moreover, as already indicated in the theoretical framework in Subchapter 3.1.4, people may master several languages but identify themselves only with one of them, i.e., bilingual language proficiency vs. bilingual language identification[500]. For instance, Armenians who were born and have grown up in Iran or Turkey may master the Persian or the Turkish language on a native speaker level, but not identify themselves with the language, in which case it can be postulated that they have bilingual language proficiency without bilingual language identification. As already indicated, the unwillingness to identify oneself with a particular language can be related to psychological, historical and cultural conflicts, that may exist between the minority group member and the majority society[501].

As already mentioned above, four interviewees were born in Germany, whose parents have migrated to Germany from Turkey (the parents of one interviewee come from Iran and Turkey respectively). The first two know Armenian, one of them very fluent since at home Armenian is spoken, the second one has learnt Armenian, first Western, then Eastern Armenian, taking language courses. The third one speaks poor Armenian, and the last one does not master the Armenian language. They all identify themselves as Armenians not merely by words but actions as well, who have participated in different events and activities to promote and help Armenians to be in contact with each other, as well as preserve their culture and language.

In spite of the fact that the following interviewee speaks Armenian poorly, he is actively engaged in promoting the preservation of the Armenian culture by organising different events, taking initiatives to fill the gap and bring about what is missing in the lives of Armenians in Germany, such as language courses, cultural events, etc.

> "If I would speak and write Armenian perfectly it would be better for me as an Armenian to separate myself from other cultures, and that's what it is about, it's about the separation. If you don't speak the language, what's the difference between me and a Turk, that's not the family, they have families too, it's how we treat our children, it's church, it's that we are Christian, it's our history, so it's a multitude of different things that make an Armenian an Armenian. And I am, for example, I go four times a year to church, I am not going more often, but I did youth work for the Armenian community, for all the Armenian people in Germany, so it's how you put your focus on it. […] Everything I did was for our community to get what I think we missed, for example, the Armenian school, it's something that we miss here, at that time we didn't have Armenian youth readings in Germany, so I took some, with some Armenian friends that I have, we organised the whole thing, we said, ok, we have to do something and then we brought that. We are not doing it any more but other people took the torch and kept on doing these meetings, and that's the only way I see to improve the Armenian sphere, to do something" (*Ashot – male, 33 years old, born in Germany*).

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[500] Liebkind, K. (1995): "Bilingual", p. 80.
[501] Hayden, M., et al (2015): *The SAGE*, p. 192.

The following interviewee does not speak Armenian, because her grandparents and parents did not have an opportunity to learn Armenian in Turkey. Her grandmother has learnt to speak Armenian in the Armenian community in Germany, but at home they speak Turkish. Since she speaks Turkish, she is usually perceived by the German society to be a Turk which bothers her, but she claims that she has already got used to it. She considers it most vital to feel oneself Armenian, to live according to the Armenian culture, be actively engaged in the Armenian community life:

> "I think, first of all, it's the culture, the belief that one has received from the parents, in any case it is already a great step for children and grandchildren when one is actively engaged in the community, that one always goes there, that one feels himself Armenian also in Germany, also when one doesn't live in Armenia" (*Arminé – female, 21 years old, born in Germany*).

Another interviewee was only an infant when his parents migrated to Germany from Turkey. At home they speak Turkish because his parents learnt Armenian in Germany and speak Armenian only in the circle of the Armenian community gatherings. After the interview during the conversation he has mentioned that he takes online courses to learn Armenian and visits Armenia on a regular basis and has already started taking courses in Eastern Armenian to communicate more easily with the population during his visits to Armenia.

As it has been indicated above, the short responses of the interviewees about their identity as Armenians have not been demonstrated in the quotations, and more attention has been paid to the interviews that have given some reasons and explanations of identifying themselves as Armenians, or Armenians from Iran or Turkey, German-Armenians, etc. Several interesting phenomena have been observed in the quotations: the interviewees from Iran and Turkey consider themselves Armenians but necessarily mention the country they were born in. Moreover, they usually indicate that they are Armenians and necessarily mention that they are Christians and not Muslims, the reason for which can be related to their desire to be singled out from the majority society in Iran and Turkey, as well as feel closer to their ethnic identity. The interviewees born in Germany also identify themselves as Armenians, two of them sometimes feel themselves German. Several interviewees have indicated that in Germany they always feel themselves Armenian, but during their visits to Armenia they feel themselves German since they acknowledge they differ from the population in Armenia. An interviewee has indicated that even though he feels himself Armenian, his son, who was born in Germany, will identify himself as German. The Armenian families that have mixed families also necessarily indicate that they are Armenians. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the interviewees identify themselves as Armenians, and in spite of the fact that several interviewees do not master the Armenian language or speak the language poorly, they have a strong ethnic identity, are actively engaged in the Armenian community life in Germany, take initiatives to improve their Armenian language skills, organise cultural events for the Armenian youth in Germany, etc.

5.2.11. The Concept of Homeland in the Armenian Diaspora in Germany

It is not an easy task to define the concept of homeland in case one is born as a representative of a minority group in a majority society. People in Diaspora experience mobility and displacement[502] incessantly, moving both locally and globally. As a result, the notion of homeland is mixed and diverse, since many representatives of a Diaspora do not have a physical but only a dream-homeland. One could suppose that minority group members born in western world countries call those countries their homelands but it is not the case. In this very particular case it should be taken into consideration that the Armenian interviewees born either in Germany or Iran and Turkey do not consider the indicated countries their homeland. Many of them feel discrepancy in the concepts home and homeland: they have lost their homeland since Armenia is not their home any more, at the same time, they cannot call Germany their homeland, even though it is their home. Some interviewees have never been to Armenia, but they have a strong ethnic identity and consider Armenia their homeland, which, in this case, is more a dream-homeland. Some interviewees are homesick for Armenia and consider it their homeland but cannot live there any longer since they are accustomed to living in Germany and in German social system. In the following quotations of the interviewees the dilemma of the concept of homeland is depicted.

The homeland is lost for the following interviewee, and she feels herself as a tourist in Armenia since she is treated like a foreigner there. Her children have been young when they have moved to Germany, and for them Germany is a homeland, but not for her and her husband. Even though she does not consider Armenia her homeland any more, Germany is not her homeland either. Her life is closely connected to the occurrences and life in Armenia, but she cannot live there any longer, and in this sense she considers that her homeland is lost for her forever. It can be supposed from the following quotation, that the interviewee has lost her *physical homeland*, and Armenia has just become a *dream-homeland*:

> "It's just that there is no place we can go back to, especially for me and my husband the situation is a little bit different, because we, how to put it, we have lost our homeland and we don't have it here. For our children it is different, they don't know anything else. Armenia is not a homeland for me any more. When I go there, I feel myself alien. First of all, people treat me like a foreigner, because they look at you, as if you have come from another place where you live comfortably, you live well, they don't know about the negative things, that you are alone, the psychological pressure, that you are alone, and it's a bad thing, they don't know about it. They, for instance, even if they have problems, they would go to a neighbour, they would sit together, drink coffee, talk to each other, open their hearts, relax, feel happy, but you cannot experience this here. Here you cannot visit anyone just like that, here you should have an appointment. […] You don't feel good, yes, as a tourist it's very good, that is to say, you are a tourist, you already don't have your home. The homeland, of course, through Facebook, with all those feelings and emotions, especially during those recent outbreaks, you live with all those things, and your heart aches, but how should I put it, I cannot say it's my homeland and I would like to go and live there in the future, no. […] For my children, their homeland is here, they

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[502] See Clifford, J. (1997): *Routes*, p. 252.

don't know anything else. First time we went to Armenia, my daughter was astonished, so to say, she liked Armenia a lot. […] And the most important, you know what she said? She said, I am not a foreigner here. For them Germany is a homeland with all its positivity and negativity because they don't know anything else" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

What country to consider a homeland seems to be a complicated matter for the following interviewee, since she was born and grew up in Iran, has been living in Germany for more than twenty years and has never been to Armenia. She has a strong ethnic identity but seems to be confused and not certain whether to call Armenia a homeland or not:

"I cannot tell you now which one is my homeland because if you consider, Iran is not my homeland, I was just born there, I haven't seen Armenia, so I cannot say… of course, I am Armenian, Armenia is my homeland, it's understandable, but if I am a real Armenian, I should live in Armenia, if you consider it that way, in my opinion, every Armenian should stay in his country, it doesn't matter how difficult the situation is, in that case he will be real Armenian. So, I am Armenian, I will always remain Armenian" (*Gayané – female, 38 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee has been living in Germany for more than fifty years, and in the last fifteen years she has been visiting Armenia on a regular basis. Having spent almost her entire life in Germany, she feels so much warmness and connection to Armenia, that she considers with her family whether they should move to Armenia:

"Till this year when we would return from Armenia, I would say, thank God, I came back to my country. This year I came back with other feelings, and will you believe me, I open internet, watch the streets in Yerevan, and this has begun only recently, this warmness, because I feel there more confident, it's a secure country, I know the language, I would walk on the streets alone, I would do anything I want without any problem. I have many friends who say, I mean, I also say that if you don't have a problem there, if you know the language, in Germany I didn't and don't have any problem, so why Armenia? But I am not sure, in case I go to Armenia, can I live there, we are still considering" (*Seda – female, 62 years old, from Turkey*).

Without the Armenians in Germany the following interviewee would feel very lonely, and even if he does not have much contact with them, he feels better when he knows there are some Armenians around. It seems that he has created his homeland in Germany through his ethnic group members, calling it "a little Armenia":

"There is still a little Armenia here, it would be sad if there weren't any Armenians here, one would feel very lonely. Even if you don't interact much with Armenians, only the thought that there are Armenians here already helps (*laughs*)" (*Mher – male, 24 years old, from Armenia*).

The Armenian community seems to be a small homeland for the following interviewee as well. She is a constant and active participant of different events, organised by the Armenian church and the community. She has been to Armenia several times and misses it, but claims she cannot live there any more. It seems that Armenia is a dream-homeland in her case as well, at the same time, the small Armenian community in Germany is a physical homeland for her:

"I usually look forward to going to the Armenian church, community, I am so happy when we have some celebrations and gatherings. And when we have this Intercultural week in our city, we are all there, presenting our culture by dances, songs, food. […] I always tell everyone that we have our own Armenian church, Armenian community, school, dance club, we always say that we have our small Armenia here, and I am very happy because I can always go to our community, to the church. […] We are not only friends but we call each other brother and sister, we are really close. We stand for each other, during good and bad days we are together, and it is like that up to now, and I am very happy. For example, I don't have aunts and uncles here, but my neighbour is like an aunt to me. Or my grandmother is in Armenia but my godmother's mother is like a grandma to me. […] I miss Armenia, and I can live there for several months, but I cannot live there forever, it's as if we created small Armenia here… (*laughs*)" (*Yester – female, 25 years old, from Armenia*).

Thus, as a result of living on foreign lands, migrants voluntarily and involuntarily come across the problem of differentiating between the concepts home, homeland, home country and host country. Being born somewhere, having grown up somewhere else, and having lived in another country for a considerable time already makes the matter complicated: this problem has been encountered also by the Armenian interviewees in Germany. For some interviewees the concept of homeland is vague, since ethnically they consider themselves Armenians, were born in Iran and Turkey, eventually migrated to Germany. There are some interviewees who consider their homeland Armenia, in spite of the fact that they have never been there. Others were born and lived in Armenia, eventually migrated to Germany, and cannot call either Armenia or Germany their homeland. For some others homeland is a virtual concept, which can be easily defined as a dream-homeland, where they cannot or do not wish to live physically but are mentally and spiritually tightly connected to it. At the same time, they acknowledge that they are already accustomed to living in the social system of Germany and cannot live in Armenia any longer. Moreover, with the help of the small Armenian communities in different cities some interviewees have created their own small homelands in Germany.

5.2.12. Preservation of One's Ethnic Identity: Contact with Armenia and Armenians

As already indicated in the theoretical framework in Subchapter 3.1.4, an ethnic identity comprises four components, more particularly: 1. an ethnic awareness should be present, when people acknowledge that they belong to a certain ethnic group; 2. an ethnic self-identification should be demonstrated, when people identify themselves with a certain ethnic group; 3. ethnic attitudes and feelings towards one's ethnic group are important; 4. people's ethnic behaviours also specify whether they belong to a certain ethnic group or not[503]. Devotion to one's ethnic group, proudness of one's ethnic identity, eagerness to actively participate in the events organised by the ethnic group community, solidarity with the ethic group can be already an indicator whether individuals are interested in pertaining their ethnic identity or not.

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[503] See Phinney, J.S.,et al (1987): *Children's*, p. 13.

While living in Germany, the preservation of their ethnic identity, traditions, and customs is one of the most vital and biggest concerns for almost all the interviewees. Not only are they eager to interact with their Armenian ethnic group in Germany and always keep contact with their relatives and friends in Armenia, but it is usually indicated by the older generation that it is very important for them that their children and grandchildren avoid mixed marriages and create families inside their ethnic group, which is also nurtured in the second and third generations: they have mentioned during the interviews that they would prefer to marry an Armenian, or at least, a Christian. As already indicated on the previous pages, many interviewees or their parents and grandparents have learnt Armenian only after having migrated to Germany from Turkey. Moreover, looking for an Armenian community in Germany has been one of the first things that they have done upon their arrival in Germany. Finding Armenians in their surroundings and keeping contact with them is not only vital to retain their ethnic identity, but the relationship with other Armenians is considered to be very important especially for their children and future generations. Since there are not many Armenians in Germany, some interviewees are ready to become friends also with Armenians with whom they would not be friends in Armenia, and only for one single reason: to be surrounded by Armenians and be in contact with them. Moreover, many interviewees consider that contact with Armenia and Armenians is most important in case one is eager to preserve one's ethnic identity. The following pages demonstrate what initiatives the interviewees take to preserve their ethnic identity, as well as to help the future generations remain Armenian in Germany.

Even though the following interviewee considers herself and her children Armenian, she cannot be sure whether her children will remain Armenian in future. She would very much like to have her children marry Armenians, but in case they do not, the situation will change. According to the interviewee, the only way to remain Armenian in foreign countries is at least to marry inside one's ethnic group:

> "I am Armenian, my children are also Armenian, but I cannot say for how long because I don't know what partners they will have in the future. If they are Armenian, very well, it's my dream that the partners of my children are Armenian, the language, they will remain Armenian, but if they marry Germans or people of other nationalities, after many years they will remember their roots, that they are Armenians by descent, but when the blood changes later, I don't know (*sighs*), the time will show" (*Emma – female, 56 years old, from Armenia*).

Avoiding mixed marriages is not only important for the older generations, but the representatives of the younger generation are also concerned about it. The following interviewee has moved to Germany as an infant with his family from Turkey. He grew up in Germany and still considers it very important to choose a Christian and an Armenian partner:

> "For instance, when somebody says, I want such and such qualities in my partner, I also want my partner to be a Christian with Armenian background, and it is actually very important, it plays much more important role than many think" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

The following interviewee was born in Germany, and his parents have migrated to Germany from Iran and Turkey. He considers it most vital to keep contact with Armenia, since without it the Armenian Diaspora is very much under the threat of assimilation, and only contact with Armenia can prevent Armenian ethnic groups in different countries from losing their ethnicity and help remain Armenian:

> "When there is no Armenia or there is no connection with Armenia, the Diaspora is very much subject to assimilation, because the children, the young people who don't have contact with Armenia, assimilate very easily, it doesn't matter, they can be Turkish-Armenians, Iranian-Armenians, and they can also speak Armenian very well, and they can also call themselves Armenians, but culturally… there are young women, 25 years old, they follow Armenian traditions, and the guy should ask for their hand from their father and things like that, but they speak only Turkish at home, or if we take the culture into account, they are very far from the Armenian culture. The contact with Armenia is very important, to protect and preserve Armenia is very important" (*Hayk – male, 29 years old, born in Germany*).

Being and remaining in close contact with Armenia and Armenians is considered to be very important also by the following interviewee. Even though she has a German husband, she wants her children to have contact with Armenia and the Armenian ethnic group in Germany:

> "Here Armenianness… in case I stay here for another 20 years, and my children are already grown up, and there is no contact with Armenians… At least I have relatives in Yerevan now, we visit them, communicate with them, later my children with their families, with my grandchildren… there will be no contact, if you don't go to the church, do not keep contact with them, do not get acquainted with that mentality…" (*Yeva – female, 43 years old, from Armenia*).

Nurtured in her since childhood, the following interviewee considers it most important to remain Armenian. She was born in Iran, and has always been told by her parents of the importance of retaining her ethnic identity. She lives with her family in Germany and does everything in her power to remain Armenian:

> "We learnt it that way in Iran, maybe because we grew up in a Muslim country like Iran, because since childhood our parents taught us, that we are Armenian, that we should always remain Armenian, we should always retain our culture, and now we are here, and the most important thing for us is to be in contact with Armenians, to remain Armenian, to continue our Armenian culture" (*Ani – female, 41 years old, from Iran*).

According to the following interviewee, in order to remain Armenian, it is important to stay together and participate in the Armenian community gatherings:

> "It is very important to me, because the thing that we gather together, the small number of Armenians that we have remained, it shows that we still protect each other. In case we don't gather together or don't go to the church, or some other Armenian groups, it shows that we separate from each other, which means that it's not important for us what it is to be Armenian" (*Gayané – female, 38 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee has a strong ethnic identity and does not worry about losing it in the course of time. Nevertheless, he is anxious about other Armenians, that do not have contact with Armenia or Armenians, and takes initiatives to help them in ethnic identity preservation process:

> "We make foreign lands and homes prosper, not our own, the same thing in the communities, the same thing in other places. […] I don't have a problem in my family, I mean, that we are afraid to lose our identity, no way. But for others, for those people that didn't have an opportunity to live in Armenia or didn't have an opportunity to know Armenians, to know what it is to be Armenian, for those people to do the minimum, to direct a little bit" (*Tigran – male, 29 years old, from Iran*).

The first thing that the following interviewee did upon her arrival in Germany was to find some Armenians. She has taken initiatives to create an Armenian community in Germany for their children. She continues her life in Germany as she did in Iran – with and among Armenians:

> "In the beginning we got acquainted with some Armenians and became friends with them, with a couple of families, and we have always kept contact with each other. Afterwards my son started going to the kindergarten, and I started working. […] We are used to being together all the time, because we lived like that in Iran, with our families, with our friends, we had our community, the church, the school, all children were Armenians, maybe that is the reason that it is very important for us to find Armenians here" (*Sona – female, 47 years old, from Iran*).

Drawing comparisons between his parents life in Iran and his life in Germany as a minority group member in a majority culture, the following interviewee considers that it was much easier for his parents to preserve their ethnic identity. Firstly, the children have had an opportunity to attend an Armenian school in Iran, secondly, they have always kept distance from the Muslim majority and lived in the circle of the Armenian community in Iran. In Germany the situation is different: one has more freedom and does not yearn to learn the Armenian language or the Armenian culture. For him being and remaining Armenian is of great importance. His wish to be among Armenians is so big that he can also be friends with some Armenians with whom he would not become friends under other circumstances:

> "To preserve my culture, in any case it is difficult, maybe it was easier for my parents in Iran or also for us, because we were young. We have this freedom in Germany, in Iran you are in a Muslim country, the Armenian community does everything, you go to Armenian school, you do everything inside the group. Here in Germany it is easier, actually you have many opportunities here, you have this freedom, and you say, ok, I shouldn't go to an Armenian school now, it's not important, many Armenians think, they say, ok, my parents speak Armenian, I speak a little Armenian, that's it, but it bothers me, and I think also what will happen in 10 years. Or the Armenians that just arrive in Germany, they don't think, I must find an Armenian community now, they think, ok, we came from Armenia, we know everything, we should first earn money. It is difficult to remain Armenian in a foreign land. And you cannot remain Armenian only being with the community, the family is very important, how the parents raise their children, it plays an important role. […] You grew up in Armenia, right? In Armenia you could select friends out

of 100 or 1000 Armenians. In Germany, in our city young people of my age, Armenian guys, they are maybe ten, and one has to select out of ten, that is why it happens that I notice many times, that I catch me with the thoughts, ok, maybe if I were in Armenia now, I wouldn't be friends with this person. And with the age one feels the lack and need of Armenians even more, you want someone to speak Armenian, I am serious, and it happens that I become friends with some Armenians willy-nilly, only because they are Armenian, with whom I wouldn't be friends if I were in Armenia" (*Azat – male, 23 years old, from Iran*).

The following interviewee considers most important to be in constant contact with Armenians and in this case regrets very much that he does not live in France where the Armenian community is much bigger, and there are more opportunities for Armenians there:

"If you are able to be in an Armenian atmosphere at least once a month, whether there is a program or something like that, church-related or other secular gatherings, so as there is some reason to be among Armenians, but unfortunately (*sighs*), in Europe, I can say in Germany, for instance in France the Armenian community is much stronger, and I always say to myself, I wish I were in France instead of Germany, I would prefer Marseille or Paris" (*Arsen – male, 52 years old, from Iran*).

It has already been indicated in the theoretical framework (Subchapter 5.1.1), that the teenagers may confront the values and norms of their family but in their later life, already in twenties, they adhere to their cultural values and norms[504]. This can also be related to Armenians in Germany who seem to be living in more harmony with their peers in the early years than in their later adult life, where the cultural dissimilarities become more apparent, and as a result, the cultural norms and values become of more appreciation.

For the following interviewee being Armenian did not seem to be as significant when he was a teenager than in his grown-up life, when he has started contemplating on identity and belonging issues:

"As a child and a boy I wasn't so aware to be Armenian, it wasn't so important, I think it came with the age, with the identity question, and I started thinking about it more and more. As a boy I had absolutely different interests, sport and so on, and I just didn't occupy myself with the question or I wasn't aware what it is to be Armenian, what is the identity of an Armenian, should I somehow express it or something, all these questions, I just didn't understand them, one is who one is, that's it. […] I don't know whether I can describe it as a feeling, because this feeling of belonging, identification with the history, with other Armenians, yes, it is the feeling of belonging, it can be Armenian music, culture, these are the things that are very valuable for me" (*Davit – male, 32 years old, from Turkey*).

In his childhood, the following interviewee had friends with a Turkish and a Kurdish background, as a grown-up he does not interact with them any more because of ideological and conceptual differences:

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[504] Ballard, C. (1979): "Conflict".

> "Till the age of 22 I had international friends, but I realised later that the older you grow, the closer you get to your culture. Every person has his ideas and concepts and follows that direction, and I saw that our notions have become very different, and one already feels that we are not children any more to discuss trifles. Ideas and perspectives are created, and I cannot interact with many of my Turk or Kurd classmates as I did in my childhood" (*Hayk – male, 29 years old, born in Germany*).

Thus, many interviewees consider that contact with Armenia and Armenians is one of the most important aspects for them and other members of their ethnic group to remain Armenian and retain their ethnic identity. Several even indicate that in case there is no Armenia, the Armenian Diaspora will eventually vanish. Upon their arrival in Germany, some interviewees have immediately started looking for Armenians and Armenian communities in and near the cities they lived in. Some choose to be friends with Armenians, irrespective of the differences in connection with their mentality and perception of life. Both for the older and the younger generations it is very important to create new families and choose partners inside their ethnic group. Even though the interviewees seem to have a strong ethnic identity and make efforts to remain Armenian in foreign countries, it is observed in their narrations that there are many Armenians in Germany, who consider themselves Armenians but are culturally very far away from their ethnic group customs and lifestyles, especially indicating those Armenians who have migrated to Germany from the third countries and do not speak the Armenian language or favour Armenian dishes, TV programmes, films, but are more accustomed to the habits of the countries they were born in. Thus, even though the interviewees have migrated to Germany from various regions and are culturally different from each other, the one thing that unites them all is the desire and endeavour to preserve their ethnic identity, as well as create opportunities for their children and future generations to remain Armenian in foreign countries.

Concluding Remarks

First of all, the preliminary destination of some of the interviewees has not been Germany but some other countries. The preference of a particular country has been mostly related to language issues or has depended on the fact whether they have friends or relatives in those countries. As every person in a new environment, the Armenian interviewees have also gone through difficult times upon their arrival in Germany: problems with the language, cultural differences, mentality, social life, etc. In the course of time, after being in constant interaction with the host society, the seemingly unsolvable problems have started to diminish, and the interviewees have overcome the first obstacles. Nonetheless, the younger generation has overcome the psychological and mental problems much easier than the older generation. Even though they have been living in Germany for a considerable time, they still see many cultural differences. Many of them are already accustomed to those distinctions and consider that they have even adopted some features from the host society. The interviewees, that feel homesick for their homeland and family and friends, acknowledge that leaving Germany and starting a new life in their homeland is not an easy task, and can even be next

to impossible, taking into consideration different factors, such as, social life, family, friends, education, work, etc.

What is considered to be a hindrance for the interviewees in the integration process, is the attitude of the majority society towards different minority groups. The interviewees have gone and still go through different experiences where they are perceived as foreigners, even though they were born or have been living most of their lives in Germany. Some even mention that this attitude hinders their integration process since they sometimes forget that they are not Germans until they are reminded about it. Many also have troubles in connection with their surnames (Turkish surnames) and have had difficulties in getting a job or renting an apartment, going to clubs with friends, etc. Considerable number of the interviewees thinks that the non-positive attitude towards them is demonstrated because the German society perceives them to be Turks and/or Muslims: as soon as the interviewees mention that they are Christian, the attitude of the majority society changes immediately. Some interviewees state that there are general stereotypes and prejudices of which they suffer, and some have also experienced discrimination cases, which have primarily occurred in the cities of former East Germany. Moreover, discrimination cases towards the interviewees have been observed not only by the majority society but other minority groups (Turks, Jews) within it.

It can be presumed from the interview data that the interviewees are in close interaction both with the representatives of the majority society, as well as other minority groups within it. It has been observed that the younger generation interacts with different minority groups more easily than the older generation, which usually looks for contact within their ethnic group. Moreover, as a result of interaction with the majority society and different minority groups, they have acquired some features from them. Although new features have been acquired from the German society, there are other minorities that remain mostly inside their groups and are not active in the integration process, i.e., they do not adapt and adjust to the German lifestyle, with its laws, rules, and regulations, which bothers some interviewees, since they have a sense of belonging and feel solidarity with the German society, and the disrespect of other minority groups towards the German culture bothers them considerably.

Apart from the cultural differences and some general prejudices that they experience in Germany, the interviewees estimate their lives positively, appreciating the social conditions, the operation of laws and regulations, human rights, prosperity and security of the country, etc. In case of speaking of socioeconomic and cultural integration, they are mostly well employed, have received higher education (especially the younger generation), there are intermarriage families, and most of the interviewees are satisfied and reflect quite positively on their life conditions in Germany. Many even mention that even though they miss their homeland, they realise that they cannot live in another country or social system anymore, since they are already accustomed to German rules and orderly life.

Many Armenians have voluntarily and involuntarily mentioned in their speech that they consider themselves foreigners in Germany since they are perceived so by the German society. This aspect has made them get closer to their ethnic group in later years: as teenagers, they did not have problems with identity issues, but as grown-ups, they need to get to their roots and understand who they are and where they belong to. As a result, the interviewees are constant participants of the Armenian community religious and cultural gatherings. Moreover, some may drive many kilometres to participate in a gathering in different cities in Germany, others take the responsibility of organising courses and workshops to give the Armenians a chance to learn the Armenian language, history, and culture. Moreover, several interviewees do not master the Armenian language but have a strong ethnic identity.

The diasporic identity and the concept of the homeland are very strong among the interviewees, who keep close contact with Armenia, pay regular visits, follow the life in Armenia virtually via media, consider the contact with Armenia and Armenians most important to be able to retain their ethnic identity, learn the language, read about the history and culture, visit the Armenian community gatherings to speak the language and relive their culture, in one word, they perceive and feel as "Armenians with a German passport". Almost all the interviewees have identified themselves as only Armenians, nevertheless, it is acknowledged by them that they feel different when they are in Armenia: in that case, they feel themselves German.

Furthermore, the concept of homeland is very diverse: for most of the interviewees, Armenia is a dream-homeland, not only because some of them have never been to Armenia, but also since they acknowledge that they cannot live there anymore, at the same time, they are spiritually connected with it. Moreover, the homeland is also perceived inside the small Armenian communities in Germany. Thus, even though the interviewees have migrated to Germany from different countries (Armenia, Iran, Turkey) and are culturally different from each other, they are all eager and make efforts to preserve their ethnic identity and help their children get acquainted with the Armenian culture and history since it is the only way to remain Armenian in the Diaspora.

6. Conclusions

6.1. General Overview of the Research Theoretical Frameworks

As a result of migration, the modern world consists of heterogeneous and diverse societies, where one can come across numerous cultures and hear innumerable languages spoken in one single country or even city. These multicultural societies comprise local people, immigrants, and refugees. When migrants settle down in a majority culture, they do not stay in the circle of their minority groups but spread their own culture by being in constant contact with not only the majority society but the minority cultures within it as well. As a result, globalisation prevails in the world, where not only peoples move around the world, but also their cultural peculiarities, traditions, religions, and

languages. In the world of globalisation, coexistence of culturally diverse societies has created culturally hybrid world.

The mixed cultural interactions and living in-between can have a dramatic impact on migrants' lives who go through new experiences in a foreign structure, changing some values and norms, failing to adhere to their customs and traditions and subconsciously mixing them with the newly acquired ones, gaining new identities, living in different cultures and worlds at the same time. Consequently, when globalisation and hybridisation are negatively experienced by migrants, as a result of which they experience chaos, uncertainty, rapid life-speed, great competition in labour market and other spheres, dissolution of values, which brings them to uncertain self-perception and self-categorisation, people tend to get rid of the threatening influence of globalisation on self and identity. As a result, migrants tend to create a *localisation* through their ethnic communities, where they can feel secure, safe and comfortable, where it is possible to relive one's culture, feel at home and communicate not only in the same language but be among people with the same *destiny*. Notwithstanding the fact, that migrants have hybrid identities, which include different identities from their homeland, the country of residence, and other minority groups within it, a certain identity can become more prevalent in a specific context and situation. People's ethnic and/or religious identity may be much more significant when they are among their ethnic community members than in an environment where most of the people are from majority culture.

Thus, how do the Armenian interviewees experience locality in a global world? – Through their religious and ethnic identity. As already indicated, religion plays an important role in ethnic and religious identity preservation. What is the role of religion in the migration context? Religion and culture are considered to be unique conceptions in one's life, where individuals can identify themselves with some specific characteristics in their own cultural and religious traditions. The salience of one's ethnic or religious identity particularly sharpens among minority groups when confronted with other cultures and religions. Moreover, religion or ethnic-religious communities in a migrant's life can be not only a source of emotional support and consolation but serve as a *home away from home*. In this context, religion can be viewed from the perspective of movement and location, i.e., migrants and their religions move across space and time and find a place in another location. Taking into account the functionality and practicability of religion in migrants' life, religion is also *a dynamic agglomeration of cultural beliefs and practices related to supernatural powers or divinities, which is applied by human beings with varying frequency and intensity to overcome difficulties, as well as find solace and meaning in their lives.*

Consequently, religions can serve as a haven and home for migrants, through which they regain their sense of belonging. The interviewees with strong ethnic and/or religious identities can practice religion and find home in their religious communities, which seem to be small *homelands* for them. In the Armenian context, these *homelands* are created within the Armenian Diaspora, which

comprises religious and secular communities, where one can be in contact with their local ethnic group members and share practices and narrations related to *being Armenian*.

As a result of interaction of migrants with the majority society and other minority groups within it, people are inclined to have certain attitudes towards and perception of their own culture and the culture of the majority group, and consequently have different modes of acculturation. How integrated a migrant is, depends not only on the migrant's behaviour and attitude towards the majority society but the active engagement and positive disposition of the host society towards migrants is also of great significance, since integration is considered to be a mutual process. Moreover, integration should be conceived as a long-term process rather than a final outcome, which means not only that people integrate or assimilate in different paces and rhythms, but that it depends on the migrants and their relationship with the host society to decide whether they choose to stay inside or outside their ethnic group.

The research has answered the broad question: What are the religious, cultural, and ethnic identities of Armenians, living in a different culture and society, and how integrated are they into the German society? As already observed, the religious and ethnic identities of Armenians are intertwined and more perceived as a *cultural religion*, i.e., they identify themselves with Christianity but are not actively involved in religious activities. The hypothesis of the research (Religiosity of Armenians in Germany is not high: they rather take recourse to the forms of "cultural religion" to preserve their ethnic identity) has been confirmed: 1. the majority of the interviewees consider themselves non-religious or not very religious, since they are not actively engaged in personal or public practices, but are rather related to the Armenian church in Germany to be close to their ethnic group and culture; 2. according to the results of the CRS, the majority of the interviewees are *religious* (among 37 interviewees, 3 are non-religious, 22 are religious, 12 are highly religious), at the same time, it should be acknowledged that Christianity is perceived by most of the interviewees to be an indispensable part of the Armenian culture and identity. In other words, religion is perceived as a cultural religion, when people identify themselves with a religious heritage but are not strong believers or active participants of religious rituals. The Armenian interviewees perceive religion as an inseparable part of their culture, since their ethnic, cultural, and religious identities are tightly interconnected and perceived as one inseparable unit, i.e., religious identity – Christian, ethnic identity – Armenian, cultural identity – customs and traditions. According to the results of the research, Christianity is practiced more by the Armenian interviewees as a cultural religion for the following reasons: they consider themselves Christians, but are not actively engaged in religious rituals or prayers; Christianity played an important role in the history of Armenians since it helped them preserve their ethnic identity and culture throughout history; Christianity has become an inseparable part of their culture since many Armenian customs and traditions are tightly connected to it and play an important role in their ethnic, national, cultural and religious identities.

The answers to the research questions and objectives, connected to the hypothesis, more particularly, how the Armenians conceive of their identities, how they perceive their ethnic

background and what initiatives they take to preserve their ethnic identity, how they evaluate the role of religion in their lives, and how religious they consider themselves, and the last but not least, what they recount or relate to as helpful or hindering factors in their integration process, are depicted below in the following paragraphs.

6.2. The Armenian Ethnic Group in Germany: Concluding Remarks

Like every Armenian community in the world, the Armenians in Germany can also be classified into Armenians who have migrated from their motherland (Republic of Armenia) and Armenians who have come to Germany from other countries. On the following pages, different outcomes and results of the research are portrayed in connection with the lives of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany in order to depict concisely the results of the research in a systematised and structured way, which will be divided into several dimensions, based on the empirical results of the research, more particularly, 1. the concepts of migration, globalisation and hybridisation; 2. religion and migration; 3. diaspora, ethnic groups and integration.

6.2.1. Migration, Globalisation, Hybridisation

Heterogeneous Self-Perception and Self-Categorisation ⇒ As it has already been observed, the interviewees demonstrate heterogeneous self-perceptions and self-categorisations. At the same time, the diverse self-perceptions and self-identifications are more noticeable among the second generation than the older generation migrants, since the former were born or have been living in Germany since childhood, and the mixture of both their ethnic and host society cultures is demonstrated more vividly among them. A salient phenomenon is the discrepancy between the alter-ascribed and ego-recognised identities, when the self-perception of the interviewees differs from how they are perceived by others: they are neither perceived as completely Armenian by their ethnic group representatives, nor recognised as totally German by the majority society. Moreover, the Armenians also feel how culturally different they are from other representatives of their ethic group, who have migrated to Germany from different regions, more particularly, Armenia, Iran and Turkey. The discrepancy between the alter-ascribed and ego-recognised identities of the interviewees sometimes results in misapprehensions and confusions, which in its turn brings complications and issues to recognise and define their identities.

Positive and Negative Evaluation of Hybrid Cultural Features and Habits ⇒ Having hybrid identities and lifestyles is evaluated both positively and negatively by the interviewees. The positive concepts of a hybrid life are connected with enhancing the favourable features and getting rid of negative aspects of different cultures. The negative concepts of having hybrid identities among the interviewees is the incapability of adjusting to new cultures, having no sense of belonging, more precisely, having vague and indefinite self-perceptions and self-identifications, i.e., who they actually are, and where they belong to. Furthermore, the interviewees are aware that they have

mixed identities and in different contexts and situations may experience a clash of identities, since their ethnic identity is not only conneted to their identification with their ethnic group, but also with the majority society and other minority groups within it. Moreover, they not only relate their hybrid identities to their own culture and that of the German society, but are also aware that they have already acquired different identities as a result of having lived in different countries before migrating to Germany: through the social life conditions, education and different life experiences they have acquired new cognitive and emotional dispositions. Even though the Armenian interviewees have different types of identities, a particular identity becomes more salient in different contexts and situations, i.e., inside their ethnic group, their ethnic identity can be more prevalent, than among the members of the German culture, depending on social rules, expectations and preferences.

Different Categorisations within the Ethnic Group ⇒ The cultural differences among the interviewees, based on the fact of having lived in various regions before migrating to Germany, often create misunderstandings and hindrances in their communication, since they have diverse preferences of social and cultural aspects, such as, language, music, cuisine, films, and other diversions. The issue of the language usage is one of the widespread problems in the communication and interaction of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany: it is mostly connected to the usage of the Turkish language by the interviewees who have migrated to Germany from Turkey. The interviewees, who have migrated to Germany from other regions, do not approve of the fact, that the Turkish language is spoken in Armenian communities in Germany. Even though the interviewees disapprove of their ethnic group members' preferences of Arabic, Persian and Turkish songs and films*,* the inclination of Armenians to favour European or American music and films does not seem to be problematic, except by a couple of interviewees, who claim that they should first of all learn about their own culture and history, to be able to retain their ethnic identity and culture. Thus, the impact of the external cultures is so strong, that the interviewees cannot help contradicting one another, which results in collisions and divisions into different groups: Armenians from the Republic of Armenia, Armenians from Iran and Armenians from Turkey.

Hybrid Cultures and Usage of Different Languages on a Native Speaker Level ⇒ Obviously, the Armenian interviewees are multilingual, who master not only Armenian and German, but other languages, used in the countries before they have migrated to Germany. Moreover, the interviewees, that were born in or have migrated to Germany in childhood, speak the language of the country their parents were born and grew up, i.e., Armenians from Iran and their children speak Armenian, Persian and German, whereas some Armenians from Turkey speak Armenian, Turkish and German, and some speak only Turkish and German. As already indicated, many Armenians from Turkey do not speak Armenian, since they did not have an opportunity to attend Armenian schools in Turkey and learn the language. Some of them have learned Armenian, having been actively engaged in the Armenian community life, some have learned the language through online language-courses. Even though Armenian is considered to be a mother-tongue for the older generation, and most of them

(Armenians from Armenia and Iran, and some Armenians from Turkey) speak the language fluently, for many interviewees, especially for the younger generation, German is considered to be a mother-tongue. Moreover, the older generation, who masters the Armenian language, communicates with each other in Armenian, whereas the younger generation tends to communicate with each other in German. In their own words, they speak German since not all Armenians in the community speak and understand the language. Furthermore, even though German is considered to be mother-tongue for some particular interviewees, not all of them have identification with the language, except for some interviewees, who consider themselves both Armenian and German. In addition, even those Armenians, who do not speak Armenian (the ones who have migrated to Germany from Turkey or the ones who have grown up in the families where Armenian is not spoken) have accentuated ethnic identity.

6.2.2. Religion and Migration

Religion and Significant Others ⇒ As already indicated, religious identity mainly elaborates through the significant others The interviewees have experienced religion and religious practices through their parents and grandparents, and some practices have had such a strong influence on them that they adhere to them also in their adulthood. They also acknowledge that even though in childhood they have not actively experienced religious practices frequently, the passive participation and engagement through the significant others have been enough to help them form first religious experiences and shape a religious identity. Among the interviewees, the ones who have migrated to Germany from Armenia have experienced religion in their childhood mostly through their grandmothers. One of the reasons can be that because of *living a hidden religion* in Soviet Armenia, the parents of the interviewees were not as religious as their grandparents. As for the interviewees from Iran and Turkey, they have memories and recollections about the religious practices of both their parents and grandparents since in Iran and Turkey, the preservation of their ethnicity and culture has been and is mostly connected with their religion, that is the reason, that adherence to Christianity is considered to be most vital. Moreover, the first religious experiences of some interviewees have had such a strong impact on them, that as adults, being non-religious or not highly religious, they still adhere to some habits and rituals, nurtured in them since childhood.

Religious Identity Embedded in Cultural Identity ⇒ Christianity is perceived by the interviewees as a *cultural religion* for the following reasons: 1. some interviewees do not pray, do not read the Bible or participate in religious rituals, but claim to be Christians; 2. some non-religious interviewees perceive Christianity as an indistinguishable part of the Armenian identity, since the ethnic identity and culture of Armenians have been preserved with the help of it: Armenians could survive as a nation and preserve their identity in times of crises because of adhering to their religion. 3. Christianity and Armeniananness are viewed as indistinguishable, since they consist of customs and traditions that make an inseparable part of the Armenians' ethnic, cultural and religious identities. 4. having lived in Soviet Armenia, the Armenians could not practice Christianity openly, and many

families *lived* a hidden religion, which resulted in the lack of knowledge of Armenians how to practice religion. As already indicated, religions can be perceived as implications in social contexts and be observed as a cultural religion. Religion is considered to be an inseparable part of the Armenian culture, since ethnic, cultural, and religious identities are closely intertwined strongly influenced by national legends, as well as historical events. The Armenian religious identity has already been embedded in cultural identity from the very origination of Armenians: the legend about the forefather Hayk, who, according to the Christian interpretation of the legend, was Noah's great-great-grandson, who defeated Bel, the king of the Babylonians, and settled down with his family, and his generation spread in the Armenian highlands, created a country and a nation that were later called after him: Hayk (*hay* means Armenian, the letter *k* forms the plural). Christianity is also cherished historically, based on the following events: the adoption of Christianity, the invention of the Armenian alphabet, severe treatment by foreign powers, such as the Armenian Genocide and several wars against invaders (for instance, the Battle of Avarayr in 451 A.D., as well as the Battle of Sardarapat in 1918), with the help of which Armenians were able to preserve their religion and culture, as well as survive up to date. The interviewees mostly identify with their religious heritage without a strong religious participation or personal interest in the religion. As already indicated, the Armenian identity is comprised of the conglomeration of ethnic, religious, and cultural identities that are mostly separately imperceivable and indistinguishable: religious identity – Christian, ethnic identity – Armenian, cultural identity – customs and traditions.

The Religion and the Church Inside and Outside the Diaspora ⇒ Armenian religious communities in Germany have played/play a vital role in assisting the interviewees in the integration process. Religious communities are also perceived by the interviewees to be places, where they can find not only emotional, spiritual, and physical support, but also feel at *home* or in a small *homeland*. Most oft he interviewees from Armenia started showing interest in the church and trying to get into contact with the Armenian church community only after having migrated to Germany. In contrast to them, Armenians from Iran and Turkey have been tightly connected with the Armenian church in those countries respectively. Attending the church and praying have been an integral part of the lives of the Armenians from Iran and Turkey before migrating to Germany, without which, they have always been told by their parents and grandparents, they cannot retain their identity as an Armenian, that is the reason that the connection with the church is highly valued by them. The most active participants and members of the Armenian church communities in Germany are the Armenians from Turkey and Iran. Most of the interviewees are active participants of the Armenian community life for several reasons, among others, union with their ethnic group and culture, emotional, mental and psychological support, preservation of their Armenian identity, means of group solidarity, differentiation from the majority society and other minority groups within it, escape from loneliness and homesickness, a sense of belonging, etc. At the same time, they acknowledge the fact that in Iran and Turkey, the Armenians were more connected to each other, and the church played a much more vital role than in Germany. They mostly connect it to the fact that Germany is considered a Christian and a tolerant country, where one is free to retain one's

religion, identity and culture in comparison to Muslim countries. The freedom in Germany seems to be a threat to some Armenians who are afraid to mix with the majority sector of the population in the course of time. In Iran and Turkey they used to attend Armenian schools, learn the Armenian language and culture: in Germany it is mostly done individually, since there are not so many opportunities. To what extent it is possible to preserve one's ethnic, religious, and cultural identities in case the minority ethnic group shares the same religion with the majority group, can be observed by the example of the interviewees, who have been living in Germany since the 1960s and are still actively engaged in the Armenian community life in Germany together with their children and grandchildren. I would like to point out again that the research has been carried out with Armenians, who are actively engaged and are constant participants of the Armenian community life in Germany: the picture may be different in case a research is conducted with Armenians who are not interested in the preservation of their ethnic identity.

The Main Purpose of Visiting the Armenian Church in Germany ⇒ The Armenian religious communities play a vital role in the lives of the interviewees, since they assist them in the integration process, give spiritual support in difficult situations, help them orient and separate them from external groups in the majority culture and assist with religious, cultural and ethnic identity issues, encourage to stay inside their ethnic group, help them feel at home and in a homeland. Several interviewees drive to various cities to participate in the community events and meet new Armenians, make new friends and acquaintances among the members of their ethnic group. Moreover, non-religious Armenians are also constant attenders of the community life: they do not participate in the church services, but are always eager to join the gatherings after the church service. Only a couple of interviewees have primarily mentioned about visiting the church for spiritual nourishment and interest in the church service. Some interviewees are eager to learn their culture with the help of interaction with the members of their ethnic group. The majority of the interviewees are in constant interaction with the German society, at the same time, they keep close to their ethnic group. Moreover, although some interviewees from the older generation claim that the younger generation has no interest in the church services, among the interviewees there are some who are young and are actively engaged in the Armenian community life and participate in the church services. In one word, even though the Armenian Church is also perceived as a place where the interviewees can get spiritual nourishment, many both religious and non-religious interviewees indicate that their first and foremost purpose of visiting the Armenian church is to meet Armenians and feel themselves in a *small homeland*, speak the Armenian language, avoid homesickness, and *live* their culture.

The Evaluation of the Armenian Church in Germany by the Research Group ⇒ As it has already been observed, the Armenian church and its activities are evaluated differently by the interviewees, based on several factors: 1. what countries the Armenians come from (Armenia, Iran, Turkey); 2. what churches and priests are evaluated (some are perceived to be non-spiritual and incompetent); 3. the length and language of the church service (incomprehensible language and too lengthy); 4.

the lack of the Bible interpretation and a proper preaching; 5. the lack of various cultural events. Most of the interviewees from the Republic of Armenia appreciate the role of an Armenian community in the lives of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany, but express dissatisfaction with the Armenian Church as an institution. It cannot be generalised, since there are Armenians from the Republic of Armenia among the interviewees who speak of the Armenian Church constructively and positively. For the interviewees from Iran and Turkey, the Armenian Church is the most important institution and is evaluated mostly positively. The interviewees draw comparisons between the churches in Germany and the lands they came from (Iran and Turkey), and in this case, they indicate some differences which is not in favour for the Armenian Church in Germany. These differences are mostly connected with the work that the Armenian Church does for the Armenian ethnic group in Germany: in Iran and Turkey the Armenian Church is more engaged in the community life, carries out different projects, engages as many Armenians as possible, offers language courses, etc. The pretensions of the Armenian interviewees from Iran and Turkey towards the Armenian Church in Germany are also connected to the length and language of the church service and lack of the Bible interpretation. The Armenian interviewees evaluate the role of the church also taking into account the characteristics of the priest: some are perceived to be non-spiritual and incompetent, who are not able to deliver with their preaching spiritual nourishment and satisfaction to the church attenders. Even though the Armenian interviewees are eager to be constant attenders of the Armenian Church and hear preaching in their own language, since they mostly do not get spiritual nourishment, they tend to visit German churches. The dissatisfaction with the priests have not been mentioned by all the interviewees, nevertheless, this phenomenon exists and should be given appropriate consideration to fulfil the expectations of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany. Nonetheless, the Armenians from Iran and Turkey are constant visitors of the community events, pay taxes, and are actively engaged in different projects. Moreover, there are certain cities in Germany where the majority of the Armenian community are the Armenians from the Republic of Armenia; otherwise, in most cities the active and engaged community members are the Armenians from Iran and Turkey. Another interesting aspect is that when visiting Armenian Church communities in different cities in Germany, I mostly met Armenians from Iran and Turkey. I got into contact with the Armenians from the Republic of Armenia with the help of some Armenian friends and acquaintances who gave me contacts to get into touch with them. Even though the Armenian church and its activities are not satisfying for some interviewees, the role of religion and religious communities is considered by them to be vastly important in the lives of the Armenian Diaspora: religion and contact with the Armenian community in Germany are considered the only means to preserve their ethnic identity, especially and more importantly for the future generations. It is acknowledged by the interviewees that there are no other big institutions where the Armenians could find contact with the members of their ethnic group, and in this sense, the Armenian Church creates a great opportunity for them to always meet new Armenians and be in contact with each other.

Religion as Access to the Host Society ⇒ The role of religion in the integration process of the interviewees is estimated not only taking into account its different criteria, such as psychological

support, relationship and contact with their ethnic group, but also belonging to the religious majority in Germany. As it has already been indicated, the role of religion in the integration process has been initially discussed, related to the connection of the interviewees with their ethnic community, as well as the psychological and spiritual support. Nevertheless, many interviewees have started on their initiative comparing and evaluating the role of Christianity as the main religion in Germany, and how it helps or hinders their integration process. The role of religion has been considered in relation to how German society perceives Armenians as a religious and ethnic minority group in Germany. It is estimated by the interviewees, that Christianity has given and gives them access to the German society: a considerable change has been/is observed in the attitude of the majority society towards them, as soon as it has been/is indicated that they are Christians. Even though it can be subjective and individual, and has nothing to do with the real attitude of the majority society towards particular religious minority groups in Germany, many interviewees have gone and still go through such experiences, when the attitude of particular members of German society changes when they learn that the Armenian ethnic group members are Christian. Moreover, it bothers many interviewees to be perceived as Muslims by the majority society, especially the ones that have migrated to Germany from Iran and Turkey: they have always differentiated themselves from the majority societies in those countries with the help of their religion (Christianity vs. Islam), and now in Germany they consider that they belong to the religious majority in Germany, but they are mostly perceived to be Muslims. The perception of Armenians in Germany as Muslims can be connected to the Persian passports and the Turkish surnames of those who have migrated to Germany from Iran and Turkey respectively. As indicated by many interviewees, they are mostly perceived as Muslims because of their dark hair and non-German appearance. As already indicated, the interviewees from Iran and Turkey are quite sensitive to this topic in comparison to Armenians from the Republic of Armenia: it is also unpleasant for them to be perceived as Muslims, but they are not as taken aback to be called Muslims as the interviewees from Iran and Turkey. I would like to point out again, that a further research is required to find out what is the attitude of the majority society towards different religious and ethnic minority groups in Germany.

Perceptions and Practices of Religion and Self-Evaluations of Religiosity Levels ⇒ Different dimensions of religiosity levels have also been expressed in the narratives of the interviewees, among which: some feel close to and the presence of God, others go through different religious experiences, some pray, others actively participate in church services, some yearn to learn new things about religion. They relate their religiosity to various aspects, which are connected to specific religiosity dimensions. Some interviewees connect their religiosity to church attendance, claiming to be non-religious because of not attending the church or vice versa. Others do not read the Bible and do not pray, but consider themselves religious since they usually go through religious experiences. Some interviewees claim to be non-religious, but keep mentioning God's name and talking about the role of religion in their lives (praying during difficult times in their lives, etc.). The narrations of the interviewees about the role of religion have been taken into consideration to draw comparisons with the CRS questionnaire results, to demonstrate how sincere the interviewees have

been in filling in the questionnaire or vice versa, how sincere they have been in narrating about the role of religion in their lives. The scores gained in the CRS questionnaire usually correspond to the narrations of the interviewees about their perceptions and practices of religion.

The Results of the Centrality of Religiosity Scale ⇒ As already indicated, the results of the questionnaire demonstrate slight tendencies, not significant results, since the five dimensions of the religiosity scale are almost equally and evenly distributed. Thus, among the 37 respondents, 3 are non-religious, 22 are religious, and 12 are highly religious. The comparison of all the dimensions of religiosity levels among all the respondents has the following results: the highest dimension is the *ideology*, the second is the *private practice*, the third is the *religious experience*, the fourth is the *public practice*, and the lowest of all is the dimension *intellect*. The dimensions compared according to the country of origin of the respondents shows the following picture: the highest score in the dimension *ideology* is among the participants from Iran, the participants from Turkey have higher scores in the dimensions *public practice* and *private practice,* and the participants from Iran and those born in Germany have higher scores in the dimension *religious experience*. The situation is different in case we compare the religiosity dimensions among the female and male participants. The dimensions *private practice* and *religious experience* among the female participants are statistically significantly higher, compared to the male respondents. Moreover, religiosity is higher among female participants in comparison to male respondents. Even though the dimensions *intellect* and *ideology* do not show much difference among female and male respondents, the female participants are more active in *public practice* than the male respondents. Moreover, even though both the female and male respondents are religious, among the female respondents there are more *highly-religious* respondents than among the male participants. In case a general comparison of the results of the CRS is drawn with the interviews, the interviewees, who consider themselves religious, are *highly religious* or *religious* with high scores in the CRS. The interviewees, who claim they are non-religious or not very religious, are *religious* with moderately lower scores in the CRS. Several interviewees that claim they are non-religious or call themselves atheists, are *non-religious* or are *religious* with a relatively low score in the CRS.

6.2.3. Diaspora, Ethnic Groups and Integration

Arrival in a Foreign Land and Adaptation Processes ⇒ As it has already been indicated, the interviewees have gone through difficult times upon their arrival in Germany, such as psychological problems, issues with the German language, culture shock and differences in the mentalities of Armenians and Germans, loneliness and confusion. It has been observed that the psychological and spiritual problems have been overcome by the younger generation much easier than the older generation, since the former has grown up and feels *at home* in both Armenian and German cultures. In case we discuss the concept of acculturation, almost all the interviewees are very well acculturated, since they feel at ease in the interaction and communication with the majority society. As for adaptation, which can refer both to psychological and sociocultural adaptation, the

interviewees from the younger generation and most of the interviewees from the older generation are psychologically and socio-culturally adapted, nevertheless, there are many interviewees, who are still in the process of psychologically adapting to the majority society culture and life. The psychological problems are primarily related to the fact that the interviewees miss their homeland, at the same time, they are content with their social life in Germany.

Interaction with the Host Society and the Minority Groups ⇒ In order to evaluate the integration of the Armenian interviewees into German society, political, social, economical and cultural dimensions of integration have been taken into consideration. As for political and economical integration, in case we take into account that socioeconomic integration implies equal participation in education, employment, housing and health, it can be postulated that the interviewees are integrated, since most of them are citizens of Germany, have received education, and all the interviewees without exception are employed (the younger ones study at different universities and institutions, and those who are currently on a pension have worked their entire life in Germany). The interviewees have not mentioned any complications in acquiring housing, entering universities, or getting employed (except for one case, which happened in 1960s – the interviewee has been perceived to be a Muslim and did not get employed directly: she was able to get the job as soon as she mentioned about her being a Christian. A similar case happened upon getting accommodation). Several interviewees have become very successful in their jobs and professions, who feel proud to have reached so much in their lives as migrants in Germany, especially when they compare their successful career with the representatives of the majority or other minority societies in Germany: they have even reached more than their German coworkers. As for sociocultural integration, the interviewees are very well integrated into the German society, since they are in close interaction with both the majority society and other minorities within it. Moreover, among 37 interviewees, there are four intermarriages – three Armenian women are married to Germans, an Armenian man has a German wife. The three families are in close relationship both with the majority society and the Armenian community in Germany, one family has rare contact with Armenians (the two children do not speak Armenian at all). When we talk about integration, we should always bear in mind that it is a bilateral and mutual process, and in this sense, most of the interviewees have not only coworkers, but also friends from the majority society and other minorities, with whom they are in constant contact. What is distinguishable between the older and younger generations, is that the former mostly tends to interact with the members from their ethnic group, whereas the latter does not make much differentiation between their friends from the host society or ethnic group.

The Role of the Majority Society in the Integration Process of Ethnic Minorities ⇒ As all the migrants in the world, the Armenian interviewees have starting adapting to the new life situation in Germany. They have not only tried to deal with house management, health insurance, employment or education, but have endeavoured to adapt to the new sociocultural life in Germany. As already indicated, in case of physical, cultural or religous differences between the migrants and the majority society, the integration process can bring along complications. Since integration is a mutual process,

the attitude of the majority society towards minorities, as well as the mutual acceptance and understanding between the two parties are of great importance. In case the minority group strives to earn respect and be accepted by the majority society, and the latter does not tend to be cooperative and collaborative, the integration is at risk to fail. As it has been observed, the interviewees have experienced situations when they are confronted with unsociable attitude of the German society towards them, which has hindered and hinders their integration process. They are mostly considered to be foreigners (because of different physical features) or Muslims (because of Turkish surnames and Persian passports), in spite of the fact that they speak the German language on a native speaker level, much better than the Armenian language or any other languages. Some interviewees may forget that they are not Germans until they are reminded about it. The interviewees feel sensitive about this matter since some of them were born or have been living in Germany since childhood and have a sense of belonging towards Germany. Even though the interviewees have gone through experiences when they did not feel accepted by the majority society, they are successfully integrated into the German society, since they are in constant interaction and communication with both the majority and minority societies.

Mutual Impact of the Majority and Minority Societies ⇒ As already indicated, the social interaction between the majority and minority societies creates basis to be mutually influenced from each other. As a result of migration, the interviewees have brought their specific cultural traits from the cultures they have been living before migrating to Germany. Even though some cultural features may persist, these cultural traits are usually mixed with those from the majority society and other minorities within it: they have adopted new forms of behaviour, certain cultural patterns, etc. The alteration of specific features is stronger among the minority groups, and not so vivid in the majority society, nevertheless, the interviewees claim not only to have acquired some features from the majority society culture, but to certain extent they have also shared some characteristics of their culture with the majority society. Furthermore, the German society might get used to new cultures of the minorities living in Germany, but not adopt many traits and feathers from those cultures.

Stereotypes, Prejudices and Discrimination Cases ⇒ Stereotypes and prejudices are inevitable in the process of coexistence of different cultures. Both the majority and the minority societies have a certain predisposition towards different cultures, and they may endeavour to accept or deny other cultures. Specific stereotypes can be targeted at certain cultural or religious groups, which can be distinguished in interaction and relationships with those groups. For instance, the interviewees may have certain prejudices towards certain religions or cultures, but be in close relationships with the representatives of the minorities from those religions and cultures. In case of the majority society, Germans may have prejudices towards foreigners but be close friends with a number of them. Even though the discrimination cases among the interviewees are not numerous, several stereotypes and prejudices are persistent in their lives. The interviewees feel different from the majority society not only as result of self-perception, but by being categorised as different by the majority society: feeling non-acceptance of the German society, some interviewees are hesitant to call or consider

themselves German. Some interviewees would not object to be considered and called Germans, but since they are not perceived as Germans by the majority society, they feel different. Discrimination cases among the Armenian interviewees have been observed at school, at clubs, in a skating stadium, by employment, etc. Several interviewees have experienced discrimination by not only the majority society, but other minority groups (Turks and Jews) within it. In comparison to discrimination cases among the interviewees, stereotypical attitudes and prejudices towards them by the majority society have occurred/occur more often. Even though many interviewees claim that they have got used to such situations, when stereotypical behaviour is demonstrated towards them, for some interviewees it is a hindrance in their integration process.

The Non-Acceptance of the Host Society vs. Strong Ethnic Identity ⇒ Even though the interviewees can be fully integrated, they cannot escape being perceived to be different from the host society. When the non-acceptance by the majority society persists, the ethnic identity of the minority group members can become stronger and more accentuated: this can be the case for the Armenian interviewees as well. Even if some members of the Armenian minority group might not have demonstrated much interest in retaining their ethnic identity and have perhaps preliminarily tried to assimilate into German society, in case they have felt non-acceptance by the majority society, they have returned to their ethnic group. Several examples can be brought, when some interviewees have returned to and became closer with their ethnic group in young adulthood as a result of feeling different from the majority society. As already indicated, it is usually pointed out by Germans that those with non-German features are not Germans but foreigners. As a result, the Armenian interviewees have also started perceiving themselves as foreigners who have some rights to live in Germany. As indicated above, both the older and the younger generations among the interviewees have a strong ethnic identity, and it cannot be given an accurate answer whether it depends on their upbringing and closeness to their ethnic group or the feeling of non-acceptance by the German society. Many interviewees have indicated that they feel different from the majority society, and that they have started showing more interest in their ethnic group in their young adulthood. Being perceived as foreigners, irrespective of the fact that they were born in Germany, they tend to get closer to their ethnic group. Moreover, some Armenians feel they are different from the population in Armenia, and in that case, they feel they are German. It can be supposed that the interviewees feel closeness to their ethnic group not only because of having a desire to retain their ethnic identity but as a result of being treated as foreigners by the German society.

Different Generations, their Ethnic Identity and a High Self-Esteem ⇒ Even though most migrants miss their lives in their homelands, in the course of time many can assimilate into the majority society. At the same time, many migrants preserve their cultures and religions, customs and traditions, etc. Ethnic identification and self-esteem also play an important role in the migration and integration process. Many migrants may have low ethnic identification and self-esteem, which is not the case among the Armenian interviewees. They usually speak highly of their culture and history, are proud of their ethnic background, and make efforts to retain their ethnic identity. The

Armenian interviewees not only have strong ethnic identity, but also a high self-esteem. They are active participants of their ethnic group community gatherings, are engaged in organising different events, usually look for contact with Armenians, make efforts to learn Armenian or improve their Armenian language skills, endeavour to preserve their ethnic identity, and create opportunities for their children to learn the Armenian language and preserve their ethnic identity. Moreover, they always introduce themselves to others as Armenians. Even though they have been living their entire lives in Germany, have received education and are employed, are quite content with their social situation, the three generations (taking into consideration the age groups) of the Armenian interviewees seek contact with their ethnic group. Once again it should be pointed out that most interviews have been held in the circle of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany, that is tightly connected with the Armenian community life in Germany, except for several cases. The picture can be quite different in case a research is carried out with Armenians, who are not in constant contact with an Armenian community or do not have any Armenian friends and acquaintances in Germany.

Diasporic Identity of Armenians ⇒ As most diaspora communities, the Armenian interviewees in Germany are also specified in a number of ways, which are distinctive characteristics of diasporic ethnic groups: they reside on foreign lands in search of work; have distinguished ethnic consciousness; have a desire to return to their homeland; have solidarity with their ethnic group members that reside on other foreign lands. In contrast to minority communities, make efforts to keep close to their culture and retain their ethnic identity, are connected to their ethnic community and feel more comfortable inside their ethnic group than in the majority culture, dream about and always maintain contact with their homeland, share collective memory about their culture and history, and can live with those recollections and memories. Even though many interviewees have been living their entire lives in Germany, they keep close contact with Armenia and visit their homeland or dream-homeland with their children and grandchildren to show them the land of their ancestors. At the same time, the interviewees take initiatives to engage their children in their ethnic group activities, to give them an opportunity to communicate with the Armenian people and get acquainted with the Armenian culture. Many interviewees feel remorse that they are away from their homeland and are not able to make it prosper and develop. Most of the interviewees visit Armenia on a regular basis, and if not, then they keep contact with it vitally via media and internet. Those Armenians from Turkey, who have not had a chance to learn Armenian in Turkey, have learnt the language in Germany. Some are constant visitors of the Armenian gatherings to interact in Armenian, and some also take online courses to improve their Armenian language skills. The Armenian Diaspora in Germany also supports its homeland not only financially, but spiritually and mentally as well: in case of different developments in Armenia, they usually support their people psychologically, virtually or physically taking part in different occurrences and important events, such as, national or religious holidays, some celebrations, demonstrations, etc. As already indicated above, the results of the interviews cannot cover the whole Armenian ethnic group in Germany, since the particular research has been conducted with Armenians who more or less keep in touch with their ethnic group: the picture can be significantly different in case a research is carried out

with Armenians who are not interested in their ethnic group or have partly or completely assimilated into the German society.

Identification as Armenian/Strong Ethnic Identity vs. Armenian Language Skills ⇒ As already indicated, almost all the interviewees without exception have indicated that they introduce themselves in Germany and in other countries as Armenians, and most of them find it important to mention not only about their ethnicity as an Armenian, but the country they were born in, i.e., Armenia, Iran, or Turkey. According to the interview results, the Armenian ethnic identity, even among those who were born or have been living their entire lives in Germany, remains strong through their lives. Almost all the interviewees, even those in intermarriages, identify themselves as Armenians (two born in Germany sometimes feel themselves German). Moreover, another interesting phenomenon among the interviewees from Iran and Turkey has been observed: they not only necessarily indicate about the countries they have migrated from, i.e., they not only indicate that they are Armenians, but mention what country they were born in, but also indicate that they are not Muslims but Christians – a desire to be singled out from the majority society in Iran and Turkey, to keep close to their ethnic identity. An attempt to avoid to be recognised as Muslims in the German society persists up to now, and they are eager to be identified as Christians since they perceive Germany as a Christian country and feel they belong to the religious majority. It can be related but not limited to one of the following reasons: 1. to feel more at ease in mentioning the country of their birth since it makes a part of their social identification; 2. to distinguish themselves from other Armenians, since the Armenian Diaspora is a broad concept: Armenians can be found almost in all the countries of the world, and it is a common feature to put themselves into different categorisations, based on the country a representative of the Armenian Diaspora was born; 3. to avoid being misunderstood as a result of not knowing Armenia in reality since some of the interviewees have never been to Armenia, and it is only a dream-homeland for them. Those Armenians, who were born or moved to Germany in childhood, have no identification with the country their parents were born in, even if they speak the language of that country (Iran or Turkey). For instance, an Armenian born in Germany in an Armenian family that has migrated to Germany from Turkey, does not have any identification with that country, in spite of the fact that he/she cannot speak Armenian and speaks Turkish with the family members. Among the four interviewees that were born in Germany, one interviewee identifies herself as Armenian, two identify themselves as both Armenian and German, and another interviewee feels himself German when the self-esteem of Germans is under threat and vilified by other minorities. During their visits to Armenia, some interviewees have felt that they are different from the Armenian population as well, and as a result, have felt themselves German. Moreover, some interviewees do not master the Armenian language or speak it poorly, but have a strong ethnic identity. Moreover, even though the Armenian interviewees have strong ethnic identity and consider themselves Armenians, they also indicate in their narrations "it is obvious from our appearance that we are not German". In this connection, it is important to note that the reason the Armenian ethnic group members do not call themselves

Germans can be related not only to their strong ethnic identity, but be the result of the German society's perceptions of other ethnic and minority groups as non-Germans.

The Concept of Homeland in the Armenian Diaspora in Germany ⇒ It is not easy to define the concept of homeland in case one is born as a member of a minority group in a majority society, that is the reason, that homeland has different connotations for the Armenian interviewees: it is perceived not only as a physical homeland, but it is a dream-homeland for those, who have never been to Armenia. Armenia is also a dream-homeland for some interviewees, who have migrated to Germany from Armenia: through the years they have lost their physical homeland, since their home is in Germany, and Armenia is already a virtual homeland. Moreover, the interviewees born in Germany, Iran or Turkey, do not consider those countries their homeland, but as mentioned above, necessarily mention about it as part of their identification. Many of them feel discrepancy in the concepts home and homeland: they have lost their homeland since Armenia is not their home any more, at the same time, they cannot call Germany their homeland, even though it is their home. The Armenian communities in Germany are also perceived by many interviewees as *small homelands*. Even though the interviewees feel tightly connected to Armenia, many of them indicate that they cannot live there any more, even though they spiritually yearn for and dream about it. On the other hand, there are some among the interviewees who contemplate whether they should move to Armenia together with their families.

Preservation of One's Ethnic Identity: Contact with Armenia and Armenians ⇒ As already indicated, an ethnic identity is distinguished through one's ethnic awareness, their acknowledgement of belonging to a certain ethnic group, ethnic self-identification, ethnic feelings and behaviours towards their ethnic group. Devotion to one's ethnic group, proudness of one's ethnic identity, eagerness to actively participate in the events organised by the ethnic group community, solidarity with the ethic group can be already an indicator whether individuals are interested in pertaining their ethnic identity or not. While living in Germany, the preservation of their ethnic identity, traditions, and customs is very important for almost all the interviewees: they are not only eager to interact with their Armenian ethnic group in Germany and always keep contact with their relatives and friends in Armenia, but it is usually indicated by both the older and younger generation that it is very important to avoid mixed marriages and create families inside their ethnic group. As indicated by the interviewees, connection with Armenia and Armenians is considered to be the most significant indicator that the Armenian Diaspora will continue existing. Finding Armenians in their surroundings and keeping contact with them is not only vital to retain their ethnic identity, but the relationship with other Armenians is considered to be very important especially for their children and future generations. Thus, it can be postulated that in spite of having hybrid identities and categorising their own ethnic group into different sub-groups with whom they share ethnicity but seem to be very distant culturally, one thing that unites most of the interviewees and seems to play a unique role is their endeavour to retain their ethnic identity and remain Armenian, living on foreign lands.

To sum up, I would like to point out again what results have been found through this research, by answering the research questions once again concisely. Thus, how do Armenians conceive of their identity or identities? As a result of living in different cultures, Armenians in Germany have diverse and hybrid identities, which have been formed through heterogeneous social and cultural contexts, that include the mixture of their culture with other cultures in the majority society. What is unique about the Armenian interviewees, is that they have migrated to Germany not only from Armenia, but other countries as well, in this particular case, from Iran and Turkey, and the cultural hybridity in their case includes their ethnic culture, the different cultures of the majority societies they have been living in, as well as the different minorities in those societies (Iran and Turkey). Their cultural hybridity became more sharpened and distinguished as a result of living in Germany and acquiring cultural aspects not only from the majority society but from other minorities living there. The younger generation also grows up in the cultural mixture through their parents: the Armenian interviewees from Iran and Turkey involuntarily nurture these cultural aspects in their children. What is important is that they all identity and perceive themselves as Armenians, at the same time acknowledge the cultural differences among the representatives of their ethnic group. As a result, they categorise themselves and distinguish between Armenians from the Republic of Armenia, Armenians from Iran, and Armenians from Turkey. These categorisations within their ethnic group can be strong enough to result in misunderstandings and impediments in communication. These differences are not only related to language issues (the Armenian interviewees from Armenia speak Eastern Armenian, the Armenians from Iran – Eastern Armenian dialect, the Armenians from Turkey - Western Armenian), but to cultural aspects as well. They all have various preferences in simple cultural diversions such as music, films, cuisine, etc. Most interviewees demonstrate acceptance and tolerance to Armenians who do not speak Armenian, but can be intolerant when Turkish language is spoken inside the Armenian community in Germany. As a result, the Armenian communities in some cities in Germany are divided into different groups, where Armenians from Armenia and Iran have separated themselves from the Armenians from Turkey. Nevertheless, in some communities they all communicate and gather together without any detachment or separation and are in good relationship. Even though they categorise themselves between Armenian from different regions, they acknowledge and admit that they all have the same ethnicity: they are all Armenians. I would like to point out that almost all the interviewees mention that they do everything in their power to remain Armenian and retain their ethnic identity, religion and culture, the mixture of different cultures is so strong, that there are differences in self-perception and perception by others. The Armenian interviewees from Armenia perceive of the Armenians from Iran and Turkey to be culturally very different from themselves. The Armenians from Iran and Turkey indicate that the Armenians from the Republic of Armenia use many Russian words and some even say that they many of them Russianised during the Soviet period. Because of using different languages and having Persian and Turkish passports, the Armenian interviewees are perceived to be Persians and Turks by the German society. This aspect bothers the interviewees (mostly the Armenians from Iran and Turkey) very much, since they are eager to belong to the religious majority in Germany, but are perceived to be a religious minority. Even though all the

interviewees identify themselves as Armenians, most of them have a sense of belonging to Germany. They do not consider it their homeland but perceive it to be their country. In case other minorities do not think or speak highly of the German society, almost all of them protect the rights of Germans and indicate that they should adjust to German customs and live in accordance to German laws and regulations, not vice versa.

How do they perceive their ethnic background, and what initiatives do they take to preserve their ethnic identity? The ethnic and religious identification of Armenians helps them distinguish themselves from the majority society. Even though in the modern world of cultural hybridisation and globalisation it is not an easy task to have pure culture or fully and completely preserve one's culture and religion, the Armenian interviewees make efforts to preserve their ethnic identity and religion. Being and remaining Armenian is most vital for almost all the interviewees. This aspect can be linked to the history of Armenians who have been living as a Diaspora in different countries on various continents through centuries and have always yearned to be together and retain their culture and religion. In Germany, the Armenian interviewees try to be part of the Armenian community, the active and most engaged participants organise cultural events, language courses and take other initiatives to help Armenians with the preservation of their ethnic identity. Some interviewees learn Armenian, others improve their Armenian skills, some strive to keep contact with Armenians, others drive miles to different cities to meet new Armenians, some learn about the Armenian history and culture, others travel to Armenia on a regular basis to be in constant connection with their homeland.

How do they evaluate the role of religion in their lives, and how religious they consider themselves? Most of the Armenian interviewees evaluate the role of religion in the migration context highly, seeing it as a supportive tool not only in helping them distinguish themselves from the majority culture, but also in finding solace and comfort in times of crisis. Many interviewees are constant visitors of the church services and community gatherings. The participation in community gatherings prevails in most Armenian communities in Germany, because they are eager to keep contact with the representatives from their ethnic group. For many Armenians, especially for those from Iran and Turkey, the Armenian church is considered to be the most important institution to gather the Armenians together and support them in their ethnic identity preservation. It is interesting that many Armenians do not consider themselves to be religious or very religious but in their narrations and as a result of the CRS test they prove to be religious. I would like to point out that Armenians are mostly culturally religious, since Armenian ethnic, religious and cultural identities are mixed. Many of them do not read the Bible, do not pray, do not go to the church on a regular basis, but consider themselves to be Christian. Even though some interviewees are not religious, they consider it important to be a part of the Christian world (one has even indicated that in case Armenians become Muslims he would not like to be part of it). The importance of Christianity as a religion in Armenians' lives is historically based, since the survival of the Armenian Diaspora is perceived to have been or be possible through their religion and religious identification. It has

functioned and functions in Muslim countries to remain Armenian, where the Armenians distinguish themselves from the majority society as a religious minority and through their religion are able to preserve their religious and ethnic identity. The situation can be different in Germany, since the Armenian interviewees belong to the religious majority. Even though the Armenians belong to the religious majority, they are perceived to be *other* by the German society, which can help them remain Armenian through centuries. It is also acknowledged by the interviewees that in case there were other Armenian cultural institutions that would help the Armenian migrants in Germany to keep contact with each other, have regular meetings and organisations of different events, perhaps the role of the Armenian church would not be so important. Moreover, even though the role of religion is valued and perceived as a helpful tool in the integration process, some discontent has been expressed against the Armenian Church by the interviewees. It is mostly connected to the spirituality and competency of the Armenian priests in Germany, the length and language of the Armenian church service, lack of interpretation of the Bible. I deeply hope that the situation will improve, and that the Armenian Church will take initiatives to improve the situation in favour of the Armenian community's wishes and desires.

What do they recount or relate to as helpful or hindering factors in their integration process? The ethnic group members' attitude towards and perception of the majority society, and the attitude and perception of the majority society in relation to the ethnic group plays an important role in the integration process. The interaction of the interviewees both with the representatives of the majority society, as well as other minority groups within it helps them in the integration process. The younger generation interacts with different minority groups more easily than the older generation, which usually looks for contact within their ethnic group. Through this interaction cultural exchange have taken place, and the Armenians have acquired many features from the majority society. They also acknowledge that there are many minorities do not integrate into the German society, but the Armenian interviewees have, since they are in constant contact with both the majority society and other minorities within it. The interviewees generally estimate their social life in Germany. The only complication for the older generation is the memories about their previous lives in their homeland. In case of speaking of socioeconomic and cultural integration, they are mostly well employed, have received higher education (especially the younger generation), there are intermarriage families, and most of the interviewees are satisfied and reflect quite positively on their life conditions in Germany. Many have mentioned that they miss their homeland (or dream-homeland), but do not think that they can live in Armenia, since they are already accustomed to German social system and life. The Armenian interviewees have gone and still go through different experiences where they are perceived as foreigners, even though they were born or have been living most of their lives in Germany, and this is considered to be a hindrance in their integration process: they have a sense of belonging towards Germany, and by being perceived as *other* and *different*, they feel disappointed and detached from the majority society. A considerable number of the interviewees relates the non-positive attitude of the German society towards them to the fact, that they are perceived to be Turks and/or Muslims by the latter. Many also indicate that the attitude of

the majority society towards them changes instantly as soon as they mention that they are Christians. Because of existing general stereotypes and prejudices, some of them have also experienced discrimination both by the majority society and other minorities (Turks and Jews) within it. Being distinguished as *different* by the German society, many interviewees have become closer to their ethnic group and their roots as teenagers. Moreover, the diasporic identity and the concept of the homeland are very strong among the interviewees, who keep close contact with Armenia, pay regular visits, follow the life in Armenia virtually via media, consider the contact with Armenia and Armenians most important to be able to retain their ethnic identity, learn the language, read about the history and culture, visit the Armenian community gatherings to speak the language and relive their culture, in one word, they perceive and feel as "Armenians with a German passport". Furthermore, the concept of homeland is very diverse: for most of the interviewees, Armenia is a dream-homeland, not only because some of them have never been to Armenia, but also since they acknowledge that they cannot live there anymore, at the same time, they are spiritually connected with it. Moreover, the homeland is also perceived inside the small Armenian communities in Germany. Thus, even though the interviewees have migrated to Germany from different countries (Armenia, Iran, Turkey) and are culturally different from each other, they are all eager and make efforts to preserve their ethnic identity and help their children get acquainted with the Armenian culture and history since it is the only way to remain Armenian in the Diaspora.

Thus, the purpose of this research has been to investigate the lives of the Armenian ethnic group members in Germany from the perspective of hybrid cultures, religious, ethnic and cultural identities, the importance of ethnic background, the role of religion in the migration context, impacts on the process of integration. The outcome of the research shows how Armenians in Germany live in hybrid cultures, and how they preserve their ethnic and religious identities. Considering the fact that the number of migrants increases worldwide daily, this research should be given a priority in numerous countries that are concerned about the welfare of migrants in a host society, for ethnic minorities, who are eager to learn more about the integration process, as well as understand what prevents complete assimilation with the host society and promotes preservation of one's religious, cultural and ethnic identities, and are currently looking for strategies for successful integration.

The current research results can considerably vary in case of comparison of the Armenian diasporic communities in other countries, and this assumption is predominantly based on my contact and connection with Armenians from various countries all over the world. Nevertheless, the current research provides a contribution as a general overview of the life of the Armenian ethnic group in Germany, which may open new prospects and awaken insights and inspirations for further researches and studies of the lives of the Armenian diaspora in different spheres and disciplines.

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Appendix I: Interview Questions

<u>**Cultural Aspects**</u>

Customs, Values, Experience (Hybridity)

1. How long have you been living in Germany? Can you please tell me about your life in Germany and your relationship with the German society in this period?
2. How do can you combine the German and Armenian cultures in your life?

Nationality/Ethnicity (Ethnic Identity)

1. What is it for you to be Armenian? What do you do to remain Armenian in Diaspora?
2. In case you are asked in Germany or abroad, who you are, where you come from, what do you answer?
3. Have you ever felt yourself German?

Language

1. What language do you use more often in your daily life?
2. What is the language of your inner dialogue/your dreams?
3. What language do you speak with your Armenian friends who can speak German?

Religion

1. What role do religion, faith and church play in your life?
2. How did you experience religion as a child?
3. Why do you participate in the Armenian (church) community gatherings?
4. How do you estimate the role of the Armenian church in the Armenian community life in Germany?
5. What role does religion play in the integration process?

<u>**Social-Economical and Political Aspects**</u> *(Social Status/Discrimination Cases)*

1. How would you estimate the attitude of the German society towards you?
2. Have you ever experienced discrimination cases?

<u>**General Data on Respondents:**</u>

Age/gender
Nationality of the family members (parents/partners)
Citizenship/Residence Permit
Employment/Education.

Appendix II: Questionnaire: The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)

Centrality of Religiosity Scale

Question	Response options
1. How often do you think about religious issues?	never / rarely / occasionally / often / very much
2. To what extent do you believe that God or something divine exists?	not at all / not very much / moderately / quite a bit / very much so
3. How often do you take part in religious services?	never / less often / a few times a year / one to three times a month / once a week / more than once a week
4. How often do you pray?	never / less often / a few times a year / 1 to 3 times a month / once a week / more than once a week / once a day / several times a day
5. How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in your life?	never / rarely / occasionally / often / very often
6. How interested are you in learning more about religious topics?	not at all / not very much / moderately / quite a bit / very much so
7. To what extent do you believe in an afterlife - e.g. immortality of the soul, resurrection of the dead or reincarnation?	not at all / not very much / moderately / quite a bit / very much so
8. How important is to take part in religious services?	not at all / not very much / moderately / quite a bit / very much so
9. How important is personal prayer for you?	not at all / not very much / moderately / quite a bit / very much so
10. How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine wants to communicate or to reveal something to you?	never / rarely / occasionally / often / very often
11. How often do you keep yourself informed about religious questions through radio, television, internet, newspapers, or books?	never / rarely / occasionally / often / very often
12. In your opinion, how probable is it that a higher power really exists?	not at all / not very much / moderately / quite a bit / very much so
13. How important is it for you to be connected to a religious community?	not at all / not very much / moderately / quite a bit / very much so
14. How often do you pray spontaneously when inspire by daily situations?	never / less often / a few times a year / 1 to 3 times a month / once a week / more than once a week / once a day / several times a day
15. How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine is present?	never / rarely / occasionally / often / very often

Appendix III: Figures, Charts, Pies, Schemes and Tables

All the charts, pies, schemes and tables in the research have been created by me with the help of the Macbook programmes Pages and Numbers. The illustrations used in the work have been acquired from the photographer Edgar Harutyunyan and Armenian Geographic.

Figure 1: *Khor Virap* – groundbreaking in 642, completion in the 17th century – Photo from Armenian Geographic.

Figure 2: *The Cathedral of Ejmiatsin* (4th century) – Edgar Harutyunyan Photography.

Figure 3: *Tatev Monastery* (foundation in the 4th century, completion in the 8th century) – Edgar Harutyunyan Photography.

 Figure 4: *The Temple of Garni* (2nd century BC) – Photo from Armenian Geographic.

Figure 5: *Zvartnots Cathedral (*643-652 AD) – Photo from Armenian Geographic.

Figure 6: *Khachkars* (cross stones) – Edgar Harutyunyan Photography.

Figure 7: *The Holy See of Gandzasar in Artsakh (Karabagh)* (1216-1238) – Edgar Harutyunyan Photography.

Figure 8: *Khachkar in Halle* (2015)*,* dedicated to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims – Photo taken by Lilit Sargsyan.

Figure 9: *Picture on the altar in an Armenian Church in Germany* – Photo taken by Lilit Sargsyan.