

## **The Importance of the Role that Turkish Ethnic Media Played in the Formation Process of Turkish Diaspora in America**

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### **Abstract**

*Turkish migration movement to the United States started early 1890's. The total Turkish population in the US is estimated to be 300 - 400 thousand. Turks who dispersed in the vast geography of America couldn't be able to form an organized community because of geographical distances for many years. In addition to this, Turkish immigrants like the other immigrant communities living in America had to face different kinds of difficulties and lived some painful experiences, too. They had to bear othering efforts of established communities of America. Turkish community has overcome these difficulties through the help of ethnic media. Turkish people living in the United States, with the support of media, managed to form Turkish diaspora. The main purpose of this study was to find out the importance of the role of Turkish ethnic media played in the construction process of Turkish diaspora in America and make an assessment by reviewing all phases of this process.*

**Key words:** Turks, America, diaspora, Türkler, Amerika, diyaspora, Turkish Americans

### **1. Introduction**

Turks like any other peoples of world imagined America as a wonderland where they could live comfortably without spending too much effort. They thought America as a dreamy country. Loaded with these feelings a lot of people from all over the world wanted to go America one way or another. That's why, millions of people immigrated to America by using lawful means and some other millions also entered America illegally. History of Turks in America starts with first wave immigrants who left their beloved families behind and entered America in early 1890's. Later on some of returnees said reality was different. America was not a dreamy country and the sidewalks were not made of gold. They worked 12 hours a day and made only 2-3 dollars only (Bali, 2011, p. 49). Since they were not qualified workers and they didn't speak English they had to work at heavy duty jobs (Sertel, 1987, p. 47). Life was difficult but worst of it the negative image of Turks which would follow them for the rest of their staying in America (Ahmed, 1993, p.7).

Turkish migration that began early 1890's and still continues through the Green Card Lottery and marriages for 123 years. According to Karpat (2004, p. 620) the total Turkish population in the United States is between 250 and 300 thousand. Whereas (Kaya, 2006, p.10) says the number is more than 350 thousand. Turkish immigrants spread all over the United States. Paterson and Clifton cities of New Jersey, The New York City (Manhattan) and Brooklyn borough of New York, Lewittown City of Pennsylvania altogether host the largest Turkish population in America. Besides these regions, Chicago, California, Connecticut, Florida and Massachusetts accommodate a lot of Turkish people.

According to Karpat (2006, p. 171) second wave Turkish immigrants contributed to formation of Turkish community in America by establishing associations. These associations have become the pillars of the community formation process. There's no doubt that establishing associations, schools, businesses and other kinds of social, cultural and economic institutions are all important elements in forming a community. All these institutions were studied extensively by the scholars but the role of the ethnic media in formation process of Turkish diaspora in America attracted very little attention. Whereas the role of ethnic media in community formation process is as much important as the other elements mentioned above.

The main purpose of this study was to find out the importance of the role played by Turkish ethnic media in formation process of Turkish diaspora in America and make an assessment by reviewing all phases of this process. Matsaganis, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach (2011) said: "Every community has its own institutions that help the community to function.... The ethnic media can also be considered a social institution that have relationships with other important pillars of the community (p. 82). In this study, I want to explore the relationships of the Turkish ethnic media with other institutions of Turkish community and find out to what extent it effected the formation process of Turkish diaspora in America. By reviewing the literature and analyzing the interviews I made I will try to display how did the Turkish ethnic media effect the institutions of economy, education, culture, social, religious and political in the formation process of the Turkish diaspora in America. The study proceeds as follow: In the first section a background information on migrations; immigrant communities and identity negotiations; ethnic media: definition and history; diaspora: definition and historical background; ethnic media-immigrants relationships; Turkish migration to the United States and historical process; establishment of ethnic associations and organizations is given. The methods used in this study mentioned in the second section. Findings, discussion and the results take place in the third section.

### **1.1 Migrations, immigrant communities and identity negotiations**

As a result of global migration movements, that started in 19th. Century and continued through the 20th. Century, a lot of people from different countries immigrated to European countries and the United States (Fazal & Tsagarousianou, 2002, p.14). Millions of people who come from different cultural backgrounds left the countries where they born and grown up and immigrated to countries where everything is foreign to them. Both the immigrants and the established communities of the host countries thought that was a temporary situation and the new comers would go back to their motherlands after a certain period of time. That didn't happen. Immigrants who got used to the lifesyels of host countries and majority of them decided to stay. This decision didn't make the established communities happy and then the problems started. People of host countries began to bother immigrants. Vecoli (2006) highlighted this issue as follows:

Such nationalistic views prevailed in nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiographies, which either ignored migrants or portrayed them as "undesirables." Although Americans embraced the Statue of Liberty as the symbol of their country as a refuge for the poor and oppressed, in-the-flesh immigrants have often encountered hostile receptions.... Almost every immigrant group has been the object of some bigotry, ranging from mild prejudice to outright hatred. (pp.7-8).

As a result of this, different kinds of discrimination behaviours such as verbal abuse, harrasment started against immigrants (Pereira, Vala and Costa-Lopes, 2010). At the begining, these racist activities considered as individual actions done by some extremists but that was not the case. Actually, it was a discrimination and othering process of all the immigrants. It is not a matter of causality; it should be understood as a system (Herweg, 2003). Then the immigrants started a defensive actions to protect themselves against the attacks. These counter-actions of immigrants are called identity construction by scholars (Nagel 1994, p.161-162; Sanders, 2002, p.341) During the identity construction process immigrants needed to go back to their history and borrow some cultural values and some traditions which their ancestors had in the past or just imagined. Then they needed to apply them to their daily lives. Media support is necessary in this difficult process.

### **1.2 Ethnic media -immigrants relationships**

The history of ethnic media goes back to 1800's. Freedom's Journal was recorded as the first African American weekly newspaper by Wisconsin Historical Society. (Freedom's Journal, 1827, March 16)."

Ethnic media is a combination of print, electronic publications, TV and radio broadcasts of ethnic communités. Ethnic media can be in the format of newspaper, magazines, flyers, brochures as well as web based news and information sites, social media, radio and TV broadcasts with ethnic content. Immigrants as newcomers in the foreign lands need media published in their mother tongue to adapt themselves to the new environments. Ethnic media published locally or national media with local content may be good guides for them on leraning the basic information about the host country for some time. Ethnic media may also serve as the right news source about the community and motherland for immigrants.

As being one of the building blocks of community formation process, ethnic media help the immigrant groups to find out their cultural values or the imagined ones to construct identities on them and to negotiate them with the established communities of host countries. Referring to the same issue Matsaganis, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach (2011) say: “Ethnic media are the heart of everyday practices that produce and transform ethnic identity, culture, and perceptions of race... People depend on the media for vital information that will help them understand what is going on around them to make informed decisions about their lives (p.15).”

Ethnic media has a founding role in the formation process of communities. All ethnic communities need media support to promote their cultural values and identities in the host countries they are living. “Ethnic media are part of immigrants’ settlement experiences, which take place in the particular context of reception immigrants face upon arrival in their new country (Matsaganis, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach, 2011,p. 54)”.

### **1.3 Diaspora: Definition and historical background**

The concept of diaspora has been used for years. It is generally used to define people who were forcefully been driven from their homeland and migrated to foreign countries because of either political or religious reasons. Original meaning of “diaspora” changed in time. Those people, who migrated to foreign countries by their own will and formed communities there, are also called diasporas. Bruneau (2010, p. 35) explains how the meaning ‘diaspora’ is changed in course of time : “In everyday language, the term is now applied to all forms of migration and dispersion of a people, even where no migrationis involved; this corresponds not only to the development and generalisation of international migrations throughout the World..” Brubaker (2005, p. 3) adds: “From point of view of homeland, emigrant groups have been conceptualized as diasporas..” While explaining the formation steps of diasporas Bruneau (2010, p. 47) says: “They have been formed, over the course of time, by several waves of migration, each of which could have different or several causes at once. It is this long-term sedimentation that makes a diaspora.” It is exactly the same procedures that the Turkish immigrants experienced in the formation process of the Turkish diaspora in America.

### **1.4 Turkish Migration to the United States and Historical Process**

Turks started to immigrate to the United States early 1890’s. First, one by one then in small groups went there loaded with great hopes (Ahmed, 1993, pp. 12,65; Karpat, 2006, p. 169) This migration movement which still continues, dispersed hundreds of thousand Turks in the vast geography of America. Turkish migration to the US is generally examined in three waves.

#### **1.4.1 The first wave Turkish immigrants**

Those who called as the first wave Turkish immigrants entered America at the last period of the Ottoman Empire. Every immigrant carrying an Ottoman passport recorded as Turks upon arrival to the United States. Whereas the vast majority of the first wave of immigrants composed of Ottoman citizens of the Armenians, Greeks, Jews and Syrian Christians (Ahmed, 1993, pp. 12-13; Akin, 2004, p. 7; Acehan, 2006, pp.72-73; Karpat, 2004, p.612; Kaya, 2006, pp.3-6). They were from the rural areas of Antep, Dersim, Elazığ, Giresun, Harput, Rize, Siverek, Samsun and Trabzon. Education level was low and nearly all of them didn’t speak English. They settled down in urban areas in New England, New York, Detroit, and Chicago. Later on, some of them moved to Peabody, Massachusetts. Most of the first wave Turkish immigrants returned to Turkey (Ahmed, 1993, p.11; Akin, 2004, p.8; Karpat, 2004, p.614; Akçapar, 2005, p.34; Altschiller, 2000, pp. 1364-1373)

The research conducted by Veysi Akin (2004) reveals some useful facts about that period, too. According to this study, the foundation of Federation of Turkish American Association (FTAA) which is an umbrella organization of Turkish American associations had been laid by the establishment of the Society for the Turkish Help Committee (Turk Tevaun Cemiyeti). This association which founded by the first wave Turkish immigrants settled down in New York and led by Zekeriya Sertel and his wife Sabiha Sertel for some time (Akin, 2004, p.11 ). Zekeriya Sertel and Sabiha Sertel came to America for university study. Sabiha’s first contact with the Turkish immigrant community began after she received a letter from Turkey. The letter that came from one of her friends wanted help for 90 thousand orphans in Turkey whose fathers have been martyred during the War of Independence. Sertel said: “After that donation collecting request came from Ankara I thought I must organize the Turkish workers. So I started to work. We published a Turkish weekly journal by making use of membership dues of the Society for the Turkish Help Committee (Turk Tevaun Cemiyeti).

That paper helped to connect with other Turkish workers living in different cities of the United States (Sertel, 1987, p.49)". Meanwhile, thinking that a government's special representative would be helpful in collecting donation for orphans, the Society for the Turkish Help Committee (Turk Tevaun Cemiyeti) requested Ankara government to send a representative. Ankara government accepted this invitation and sent Health Minister Dr. Mehmet Fuat Umay to New York. Then the Society for the Turkish Help Committee (Turk Tevaun Cemiyeti) organized charity meetings in New York and all other cities which has a muslim population ( Sertel, 1987; Akın, 2004; Umay, 2006; Bali, 2011).

In 1920's, the total population of Ottoman subjects that were comprised of Turkish, Kurdish, Tartars and Albanians, who were living in New York, Detroit, Worchester, Lawrence, Youngtown, Pittsburg and Philadelphia, was around nine thousand. Some of Turkish immigrants were in the shoe making, hat dry cleaning, laundry management, electric battery manufacturing and import-export brokerage and grocery shop management business. Since all other Turkish immigrants didn't speak English and had no qualifications they generally worked at heavy duty jobs at soap, fur, phonograph, electric and automobile factories and steel foundries. (Sertel, 1987, p. 47; Ahmed, 1993, pp. 71-72). Bali (2011) adds that in those days normal work time was 12 hours and average daily wage of a worker was 2-3 dollars which was well below the poverty line according to a survey conducted in the region at that time (p. 49).

Most of the first wave Turkish immigrants in America returned Turkey (Halman (1980, pp. 992-996; Grabowski, n.d.). On the reasons of their return to Turkey, Karpas (2004, p. 615) says: "One factor compelling Muslims and ethnic Turks to return home was the lack of suitable Muslim women for them to marry in the United States." Halman (1980, pp. 992-996) thinks different. According to him, 86 percent of those Turkish immigrants who came to the US between 1899 and 1924 was back. During the War of Independence there were a lot of martyrs and Turkey needed more male population. This is the the case which stimulated them to return to Turkey. Ahmed (1993, p. 90) comes across with a different reason than Karpas and Halman: "The obstacles they had to overcome to get here and to prevail were immense. The frustrations of not being able to communicate in a common language was one major problem that could have turned the most faint hearted back toward home".

#### **1.4.2 The second wave Turkish immigrants**

The second wave Turkish immigrants came America between the dates of 1950-1980 (Karpas, 2006, p. 171-172; Kaya, 2006, pp. 6-8). This group of immigrants had different characteristics comparing with the preceding group of Turkish immigrants. It may be possible to examine this group, which had a total population of 27 thousand, in three sub-categories:

##### **1.4.2.1 Professionals, high educated people**

They were doctors, engineers and other professionals and their population was between 10-15 thousand. This group labeled as the starters of Turkish brain-drain which was extensively debated in Turkey for years (Ahmed, 1993, p. 85; Kurtuluş, 1999, pp. 47-67; Karpas, 2004, p. 617). According to a study conducted by Kaya (2006, pp.7-8) those highly educated people have married American women and integrated American society rapidly. While commenting on their special characteristics Akçapar (2005) says: "Most professional and first-generation Turkish Americans who came to the U.S. in the 1960's were raised and educated in secular Turkey, therefore religious observance seems to be a minor factor in their identity (p.128)." Karpas (2006) who has similar findings summarise their philosophy as follows:

....the second-wave immigrants were dispersed in small numbers among major and minor cities throughout the United States, they could not form true communities identified with Turkishness in the broadest historical and cultural sense. Instead, they produced professional or cultural associations, especially in the New York area. These associations, in turn, organized celebrations of the national holidays but rarely of the religious holidays, the Bayrams. As a result of their efforts, an annual "Turkish March" is held along New York's Fifth Avenue on a Saturday in May, symbolically marking, at least in the eyes of its organizers, the Turkish presence in America (p.171).

In another study, Bilge (1996) examined the social and economic life of the Turkish community formed by some members of the highly educated group in Detroit and Ontario during the late 1940's through 1960's and their relationships with the motherland Turkey.

Since it is the only study about a Turkish community, one part of which is in Detroit, USA and the other part is in Ontario, Canada, it maybe an important example for future researchers. According to Bilge, Turkish community kept close relationships with each other although there was an international border between them. Bilge (1996) said the core of that Turkish community were the students who came from Turkey to study at universities. While talking about the lifestyles of Detroit & Ontario Turkish community she noted that they all liked American lifestyle. They were not interested in any kinds of ethnic activities such as to form charity organizations like their predecessors did in the past. The only exception was the formation of Turkish American Cultural Association of Michigan (TACAM), which is still active, by a few doctors and engineers (p. 66).

#### **1.4.2.2 People with Profession: Tailors**

Turkish tailors who settled in the city of Rochester, NY may be considered in the second sub-category of the second wave of Turkish immigrants. Turkish tailors brought from Turkey by Hickey Freeman, a garment factory, have formed a Turkish colony there (Bereket, n.d.). Ahmed (1993), who visited this Turkish community, emphasizes that they are willing to integrate to American community as long as they can keep their Turkishness and their religion Islam:

Those who remained in Rochester found that they were able to provide for their families, even to save money and buy houses, but recognized that they needed a Mosque and school so that their children would grow with an understanding of their Islamic faith. They wished to become part of the communities in which they lived .... They did not resist their Americanization if while doing so they could retain their identity as Muslims of Turkish heritage. (Ahmed, 1993,p.86).

#### **1.4.2.3 Outer Turks: Karachays and Tatars**

Turks living outside the borders of Turkey are called “outer Turks”. Karachays live in the Karachai-Cherkesk Republic of the Russian Federation. Tatars live in the Tatarstan Republic of Russian Federation and in the Crimea Autonomous Republic of Ukrain and that’s why, we used the definition “outer Turks” for Karacahays and Tatars who first immigrated to Turkey between the years 1890 and 1945 and then started to come to America towards the end of second half of 1950’s.

Ahmet (1993, p.83) and (Karpat (2004, p.624) mention about Tatars in their studies but there is not enough information about Karachays who have been living in America for nearly 70 years. Karachays began to come to America towards the end of second half of 1950’s. They settled in Paterson City of New Jersey (Yeşil, 2003, p. 5).The main difference of Karachays and Tatars from the highly educated professional group was their commitment to religion. “One of reasons of leaving their native countries, which occupied by Russian army, to immigrate to Turkey was to protect their belief and to continue to practice it (Gegre, 2010)”.

Karachays in Paterson established Karaçay Türkleri Mosque, which was the first mosque of Paterson, in 1965 (Toturgul, 2003, p.67). They founded United Islamic Center, which was the largest mosque and cultural center in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1978 (Özbek, 2003, p. 69). Both of the mosques have been cultural centers, where Qur’an- ı Karim, Islamic knowledge, Turkish and English lessons are offered, all kinds of social, cultural and religious activities of the community are performed, as well as being places for prayers since they have opened (Gegre, 2010). Karachays founded American Karachai Benevolent Association (AKBA) in 1989. It is a cultural association. AKBA’s main aim is to promote and maintain Karachai culture. It offers courses on Turkish, religious knowledge and Karachai folk dances to children. AKBA owns and operates AKBA Hall which serves community as a platform for engagement and wedding ceremonies. AKBA has been a member of Federation of Turkish American Associations for many years and steadily participating all of its activities (Başçı, 2008). Karachai -Turkish community has always helped newcomers from Turkey. Paterson where most of the Karachai people live, has been a helping and supporting center for Turkish people, who come to America, for years. Most of the Turkish immigrants in the United States have visited Paterson at least once in their lifetime. Some came for information and advice, some came for help, some others came for to buy Turkish imported food and halal meat. The total poulation of Karachai community is estimated to be five thousand (Tekelani, 2010)

Tatars live in the Tatarstan Republic of Russian Federation and in the Crimea Autonomous Republic of Ukrain. Some of them immigrated to Turkey first and then came to America. They formed associations to promote and protect their culture and established mosques for prayers. “The Crimean Turks, who bought a building in Brooklyn soon after arriving in the United States and used it as a cultural, educational and civic center and mosque (Karpat, 2004, p. 626)”

### 1.4.3 Third wave Turkish immigrants

Those who came by the Green Card Lottery are the largest group among the third wave Turkish immigrants. Every year, 3,500 family are granted the right to immigrate to America and obtain Green Cards. Besides this lawful immigration some Turks try to enter America illegally. They usually starts to work as crew members on ships and when the ship stop by one of the port cities of America, they leave the ship to enter the city and do not return (Kaya, 2006, p.9). Karpas (2006) defines the last wave Turkish immigrants as born and raised and educated in a different Turkey and they are more respectful to their culture, religion and history comparing with the second wave of immigrants (p.173).

## 1.5 Establishing the pillars of the Turkish diaspora in America

### 1.5.1 Cultural, educational, economical, social, political and religious Institutions (associations and organizations)

Associations and organizations are the building blocks or pillars of ethnic communities. Through these associations and organizations communities can do a lot of useful activities for their fellow members. They can be used as bases for educational, cultural, social and economic activities which pave the way to identity construction of the communities. Turkish immigrants in America had to wait for some time to have strong associations. The first wave of Turkish immigrants couldn't be able to establish long lasted associations. Ahmed (1993) remembers: "In the early years after the Great Depression there was the Anatolian Club in Peabody, with a large hall for general meetings, a small office, modest kitchen and one bathroom. The real name was Society for Turkish Orphans. It was where the Turks from Lynn, Salem, and nearby areas would come at least once a week for their meetings and prayers (p.65)."

Since then Turks living in the United States established a number of associations. Akçapar (2005) says: "Today, there are more than 200 Turkish associations all around the USA, including those of the ethnic Turks (p.82)." Most of these associations are the members one of the umbrella organizations. The first umbrella organization, the Federation of Turkish American Associations (FTAA) was established in 1956. It is the oldest and the most active Turkish organization in the United States. It's headquarters is in the New York City. It organizes Turkish Day Parade and Festival which is the most famous activity in the Turkish American community. The second umbrella organization is the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA) established in 1979. It is located in Washington, DC. Both of these organizations work as powerful tools to defend the rights of Turkish diaspora and to promote Turkey's image in the United States.

### 1.5.2 The role of Turkish ethnic media on the activities of Institutions

All the institutions (associations and organizations) which are the founding pillars of communities needed media support to promote their aims and activities. For his reason, either they published their own media such as newspapers, newsletters and brochures or looked for the support of ethnic media. The first example of this was the Birlik newspaper, which was published by the Society for the Turkish Help Committee (Turk Tevaun Cemiyeti) in 1920 (Akın, 1994). Halman (1980) reported that Anavatan, Türkevi, Türk Dünyası, Yankı published by Turkish associations established towards the end of 1950's.

Turkish immigrants who dispersed in the vast American geography have lived without knowing each other for long years. Turkish immigrants connected to each other through using Turkish ethnic media. Only when ethnic media organs started publication then the Turkish immigrants were aware of each other. During the years 1950 - 1960, when Turkish community was getting organized, some short lived publication such as Yankı, Türk Dünyası ve Anavatan (Amerika'da Türk medyası: iki ileri bir geri, 2010). Aykut Güven, journalist, started to publish a magazine called Turkevi which continued for 100 issues in New York in 1975 (Amerika'da Türk medyası: iki ileri bir geri, 2010). Journalist İskender Songur published a newspaper called TURK Gazetesi in New York in 1985. In an interview conducted a year before his death, he said it was a newspaper which promoted Turks, Turkishness and Turkey and continued publication for 12 years (Kurt, 2010).

Federation of Turkish American Asssociations (FTAA) issued two magazines called Görüş and Visionin New York in 1988 but closed one year later.

The Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA) published a bi-weekly newspaper in English called Turkish Times, under the management of journalist Ugur Akıncı in Washington D.C. in 1989. It was closed in 2004. Then FORUM – The Turkish American Community Newspaper, the longest running ethnic newspaper, started publication in 2003. Four others followed the suit. Besides those mentioned above some magazines were published at different times but they closed after publishing one or two issues. Turk of America has become the longest running Turkish magazine published in New York.

Turkish Voice was the first important radio broadcast in Turkish American ethnic media history. “Faruk Fenik, his wife İnci Fenik and their son started their radio programs in New York in 1967. Turkish community was following the latest news stories from Turkish Hour radio which was broadcasting in WHB1 channel an hour in every week in 1970’s (Türk Avenuel, 2010)”.

Radyo Türküm, started broadcasting as an Internet radio at [www.radyoturkum.com](http://www.radyoturkum.com) in 2007. Ebru TV which is owned by Samanyolu Publishing Group is the only Turkish TV channel broadcasting in English. It is established in 2004 and continues its broadcasting since then. Rapid developments in Internet technology led Turkish entrepreneurs to web news portals and as a result of this, a large number of news sites have been developed. Those which have good ratings are the Turkishjournal.com of journalist Selcuk Acar, Amerikalıturk.com of Deniz Çelik, Turkishny.com of Rıdvan Sezer, Habername.com of Kemal Bozkurt.

Turkish community gain more power when Turkish national newspapers with ethnic content started to send their US editions to New York on the date of October 29, 1981. The first national daily to come to New York was the Hurriyet newspaper (Keşişoğlu, 2012). Sabah (Şafak, 2009) and Milliyet newspapers followed Hurriyet. Then Turkiye newspaper and Zaman newspaper followed the suit (Gülerce, 2005).

“Although they couldn’t survive in the American market, they contributed a lot to the Turkish American community in the formation process of diaspora (Çınar, 2012)”. Turkish national TV channel broadcasts reached in America in 1998. Together with this development Turkish diaspora had the support all kinds of Turkish media.

“When Direct-From-Home Network, Inc.,(DFH), started broadcasting with Show TV and ATV channels on the date of November 26, 1998, Turks living in the US felt home for the first time (Gedik, 2009).” In 2008, another media company introduced Dünya TV to Turkish American TV viewers. They used Internet technology to transmit the programs of Turkish national TV channels to America. Motherland Turkey has become as close as a TV remote control for the Turkish community living in the United States. To access to Turkish national TV channels besides the newspapers changed the lifestyles of people.

The agenda of Turkish people living in America changed incredibly. When you go to a coffee house, you see a lot of people watching a soccer match or a TV serial or a news program. People are discussing either a news story they watched on TV or sharing the details of a speech made by a political leader as if they are living in Turkey...(Batmaz, 2009)

Turkish community, dispersed all over the United States, had the opportunity to connect with each other and with motherland Turkey, through ethnic media that is made up of newspapers, TV- radio channels and web based news sites and consequently community got the media support she needs in the formation process of Turkish diaspora in America.

## **2. The Method**

In this study, I used descriptive literature review, open-ended interviews and fieldwork methods. I carefully reviewed all available related articles, 5 reports, 2 M.A. thesis, 2 Ph.D. thesis, 5 books, 4 magazines, Turkish American Business Directory, 157 issues of FORUM newspaper, two survey reports conducted by DFH Media, that brought the first Turkish national TV broadcasts, and Federation of Turkish American Asssociations, US Census Bureau statistics, Arab American Institute Foundation statistics and analyzed them. I made interviews from the different segments of Turkish American community including President of Federation of Turkish American Asssociations, presidents of Fatih Mosque, Karachais Mosque, United Islamic Center of Paterson and president of AKBA and some of Turkish business owners, media professionals, university professors, lawyers and residents of Paterson and Clifton. I also made use the notes I have taken during 19 years of living in the United States as a journalist and Publisher.

I observed community at work on many occasions such as wedding ceremonies, birthday parties, funerals, special religious days gatherings at mosques, school graduation meetings, yearly election meeting of associations, meeting with community events organized in Turkish Consulate General in New York and social activities in Turkish schools. I took notes. While designing this study these notes have been very helpful for me.

### **3. Findings**

The Turkish ethnic media, one of the building blocks of Turkish diaspora in America, helped the Turkish immigrants to found cultural-educational, economical, religious, political and social institutions in the formation process.

Turkish immigrants connected to each other through using Turkish ethnic media. Turkish immigrants dispersed to many states of America. Only when ethnic media organs started publication then the Turkish immigrants had the opportunity to know each other.

Turkish community gain more power when Turkish national newspapers with ethnic content started to send their US editions to New York.

Turkish ethnic media helped Turkish immigrants gather together to organize campaigns for Turkey. Turkish immigrants used ethnic media to organize donation campaigns to Turkey for many times.

Turkish ethnic media helped in constructing, promoting and defending of individual and collective identity against othering policy of established communities of America by publishing news stories, comments and serials on cultural and religious values.

Turkish ethnic media has been the advocate of the Turkish umbrella organizations in promoting national causes such as Cyprus problem.

Turkish ethnic media opened living spaces for Turkish community. Turkish radio and TV channels helped to connect Turkish community to her cultural, historical roots and to motherland Turkey.

#### **3.1 Discussion**

The history of the Turkish ethnic media goes back the to 1890's when Turks started to immigrate to the United States. The Turkish ethnic media, one of the building blocks of Turkish diaspora in America, helped the Turkish immigrants to found cultural-educational, economical, religious, political and social institutions in the formation process.

According to Matsaganis, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach (2011) ethnic media serve a community as a connecting tool to motherland by publishing news and information on events. Ethnic media also connects the community members to each other through the news stories about the events take place within the community and helps them to learn the rules of the social life of the host country (p.58-59)

“.... I thought I must to organize the Turkish workers. So I started to work. We published a Turkish weekly journal named *Birlik* by making use of membership dues of the Society for the Turkish Help Committee (Turk Tevaun Cemiyeti). That paper helped to connect with other Turkish workers living in different cities of the United States (Sertel, 1987, p. 49).”

“....Turkish families who dispersed in the vast American geography and live hundreds of miles away from each other learned what's been happening in the community through Turkish ethnic media and followed up the activities of leaders and supported them to organize the Turkish diaspora (Çmar, 2012).”

Samsar (2005) said at the opening ceremony of the 100th. Issue Reception of FORUM newspaper held in the New York City, “Newspapers have a task of informing their readers. Through the news stories and informative articles, FORUM newspaper has been serving to Turkish community. It connects community members each other. And it help the Turkish community to keep unity and solidarity.”

Ethnic communities learn most information on elections and voting from the ethnic media published in their mother tongues (Matsaganis, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach, 2011, p.62).

Turkish ethnic media publish information about the candidates during the elections. If there is community decision to support a certain candidate then ethnic media enter the scene. They make interviews and publish news stories about him/her. Turkish ethnic media always supported political activities by Turkish community. They publish news stories and informative articles about any political activity such as marches, protests and parades conducted by Turkish associations. National issues, such as Cyprus problem, Armenian allegations, US-Turkey relations always take place in Turkish ethnic media as the top news items. Turkish ethnic media served the community as a teacher. All ethnic media organs published information or news stories about Turkish cultural, social and religious values from time to time. This helped the construction process of Turkish identity. Turkish community, through its associations conducts a number of cultural and social activities every year. Turkish ethnic media publish the stories about these activities and similar events.

Gülen Cemaati ( a religious group ) opened a number of Turkish schools in the New Jersey and New York. At the beginning there was not much interest in the Turkish - American community. Their newspaper ZamanAmerica and TV channels Samanyolu TV and Ebru TV propagated their schools continuously. Then they had students for their schools. Today they have a lot of students.

Matsaganis, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach (2011) said, ethnic media serves as open platforms in mother tongue and this is being a driving force for the children of immigrants to be bilinguals. Seeing mother tongue language media around affects children positively (p.55). A reader of FORUM newspaper sent an e-mail saying that she was a high school student and she learned Turkish language and Turkish culture from the FORUM newspaper contents. "First of all I want to thank FORUM newspaper for being a good teacher who teaches me my motherland culture and Turkish language.... (Akarsu, 2007).

Turkish ethnic media affect the economic life of Turkish community. Ethnic media organs provide both for employers and employees a good platform with its classifieds and large size advertisement spaces. Turkish ethnic media publishes Turkish American business guides from time to time. Turkish American Business Directory published in 2010 by FORUM Newspaper which is still being used by the business owners. Besides selling ad spaces, ethnic media publishes information on finding jobs and business organizations and business opportunities both in host country and the motherland. As an example of this, ATCOM, American Turkish Chamber of Commerce enjoyed a wide Turkish ethnic media coverage since its foundation in 2008. (FORUM-Turkish American Community Newspaper, July 2013).

Mosques in America, owned by religious associations, are not only the places to pray but the platforms of all kinds of educational, cultural and social activities take place. Turkish ethnic media played an effective role in promoting mosques and their activities, too.

### **3.2 Results**

The main purpose of this study was to find out the importance of the role of Turkish ethnic media played in the construction process of Turkish diaspora in America and make an assessment by reviewing all phases of this process. The study found enough evidences to support that Turkish media have played an important role in the formation process of Turkish diaspora in America.

The findings of this research show that Turkish ethnic media have always been a helping hand for the Turkish community in constructing individual and collective identity. Ethnic media have defended Turkish identity against the othering efforts of established communities of America, the host country. Turkish ethnic media have always supported the Turkish umbrella organizations in promoting efforts of Turkey's image in the United States. Turkish ethnic media opened living spaces for Turkish community. Turkish radio and TV channels helped to connect Turkish community to her cultural, historical roots and to motherland Turkey.

Since the research area is too large to be covered by one study we chose New Jersey and New York as our sample. That is the limitations of this study.

The findings of this study suggest that as an important player in formation process of diaspora Turkish ethnic media deserves more attention from private and public sectors. That's why future studies should focus on finding out the ways to make the ethnic media sector financially strong enough to play its important role.

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Table – 1

Turkish newspapers published by Turkish American community between the years 1890-2013					
Title of Newspaper	Publishers	Periodicity	Beginning Date of Publication	Number of publications	The closing date of the publication
Musavver Şikago Sergisi	Bustani Bey ile Ubeydullah Efendi	Unknown	1893	Unknown	Unknown
Sada-yı Vatan	Ahmet Şükrü Esmet	Unknown	1921	Unknown	1921
Hemşeri	Musa Cömert	Weekly	1922	Unknown	Unknown
Birlik (Unity)	Zekeriya Sertel - Sabiha Sertel	Once every 10 days	August, 1922	Unknown	Unknown
TURK Gazetesi	İskender Songur	Weekly	1985	Unknown	1997
Turkish Times	ATAA ( Uğur Akıncı)	Fortnightly	1989	Unknown	2004
FORUM Gazetesi	Murat Yeşil Ural Yeşil	Semi-monthly	25 November 2003	160	Continues to run
USA Turkish Times	Yunus Aksoy	Fortnightly	2005	Unknown	2007
Turkish Gazete	Faruk Acar	Unknown	2006	Unknown	Continues to run
Yeni Hayat	Cahit Akbulut	Unknown	May, 2011	8	Closed in December 2011
Posta 212	Ekmel Anda	Weekly	May, 2013	9	Continues to run

Table-2

Turkish magazines published by Turkish American community between the years 1890-2013					
Title of Magazine	Publishers	Periodicity	Publication Period	Number of publications	The closing date of the publication
Yankı	Unknown	Unknown	1950-1960	Unknown	Unknown
Türk Dünyası	Unknown	Unknown	1950-1960	Unknown	Unknown
Anavatan	Unknown	Unknown	1950-1960	Unknown	Unknown
Karaçay-Kafkasya	Hamit Botaş	Unknown	1970's	Unknown	Unknown
Türkevi	Aykut Görey	Monthly	1975	100	Unknown
Ayyıldız Express	Hasan Mesut Hazar	Monthly	1994	14	2005
Görüş	TADF	Monthly	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Vision	TADF	Monthly	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Mezun Life	MezunUSA.com	Monthly	2002	Unknown	2004
Turkuaz	Eser Turan	Quarterly	2002	8	2004
Jön Türk	Fatih Yılmaz	Unknown	2002	4	2002
Turkish Cafe Press	Mehmet Yeşilbaş Serhan Bass	Unknown	2003	3	2003
Klass MagazineUSA	Klass MagazineUSA	Monthly	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Aşveriş	Kadri Kaleli Mehmet Özkurt	Bi-weekly	2000	Unknown	2002
TurkofAmerica	Ömer Güneş Cemil Özyurt	Quarterly	2002	38	continues to run
AKBA	Karaçay Türkleri Derneği	Yearly	2003	2	continues to run
Bonbon Çocuk Dergisi	Sıtkı Kazancı	In every three months	2006	Unknown	continues to run
Travition English- Travel Magazine	Fatih Yeşil	Yearly	2010	2	continues to run
TurkTurist Turkish/English Tourism	Murat Yeşil	Yearly	2011	1	continues to run

(Tablo-3)

<b>Turkish radio and TV channels broadcasts in the United States since 1960</b>				
<b>Title of Broadcast</b>	<b>Type of Broadcast</b>	<b>Broadcasters</b>	<b>Beginning Date</b>	<b>Closing Date</b>
Turkish Voice	Radio	Faruk Fenik İnci Fenik	1967	Unknown
Turkish Hour	TV	Faruk Fenik İnci Fenik	1975	1980
Karaçay TV	TV	Erol Bulur	1995	1996
Voice of Anatolia TV	TV	Aliye Ak	2002	2004
Ebru TV	TV	Samanyolu grubu	2004	Continues to run
Turkish Hour	TV	Selçuk Öksüzöğlü Serdar Acar	2005	2008
Turkish American Television	TV	Hürriyet Ok	2005	Continues to run
Best TV	TV	Tunca Group	2008	2010
Radyo Türkün	Internet Radio	RadyoTurkum Group	2007	Continues to run

Table – 4

<b>Turkish Internet media published in the United States</b>		
<b>Title of Site</b>	<b>Publishers</b>	<b>Alexa Rating as of August 20, 2013</b>
Amerikadakitürk.com	AmerikadakiTurk LLC	1,287,905
Amerikalıturk.com	Deniz Çelik	66,625
Habername.com	Kemal Bozkurt	207,037
Turkavenue.com	Turk Avenue, LLC	538,550
Turkishjournal.com	Selcuk Acar	643,897
Turkishny.com	Rıdvan Sezer	17,773