



**In Search of Opportunity:
The Integration Experiences of Three Immigrant Turkmen Women in
California**

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ABSTRACT

Although much previous literature has concentrated on the experiences of male migrants, recent research has begun to shed some light on the role of women in migration processes as well. This research paper explores the integration experiences of three immigrant Turkmen women in California. In addition, the role of networks in the facilitation of the integration process is considered. Within this ethnographic study, the following methods are used to obtain information: semi-structured interviews and participant observations. The concepts of human agency and structure are employed when analyzing the content. The findings illustrated that successful integration is dependent upon the following indicators: education, language proficiency, naturalization, labor market assimilation, and participation in the social sphere. Also, networks of these immigrant women act as facilitators of integration into host society. This particular topic was chosen due to a lack of research in the field of migration in the United States concerning the integration of immigrants, male or female, from Turkmenistan. This research could serve as a departure for a larger future project in the field of migration research.

Key words: *immigrant Turkmen women, integration of immigrant women, cultural integration, structural integration, human agency, structure*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Much of the migration scholarship from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, failed to incorporate the role of women in the migration process. This is largely due to the neoclassical theory which many scholars were influenced by. Pessar (1986, p. 273) states that:

Until recently the term ‘migration’ suffered from the same gender stereotyping found in the riddles about the big Indian and the little Indian, the surgeon and the son. In each case the term carried a masculine connotation, unless otherwise specified. While this perception makes for amusing riddles, the assumption that the ‘true’ migrant is male has limited the possibility for generalization from empirical research and produced misleading theoretical premises.

Women have always been part of the migrant movements, however their presence and involvement has been made evident through recent developments in migration research in the last quarter of the twentieth century (Boyd & Pikkov 2005). The negligence about the role of women in migration was due to the assumption that the typical international migrant is a young, economically motivated male, and ‘ironically, few immigration researchers (and even fewer policy makers) are aware that legal immigration in the United States – still very much the largest of all international flows – has been dominated by females for the last half-century’ (Pedraza 1999, p. 304). Boyd and Grieco (2005, p. 1 of 1) emphasise that ‘over the last 25 years, there has been little concentrated effort to incorporate gender into theories of international migration. Yet understanding gender is critical in the migration context. (introduction)’ It is no longer the 1960s and 1970s when the phrase “migrants and their families” meant male migrants and their wives and children.’

Much research focused on how women's experiences have been impacted by migration, and as a result have changed the status of women in some way or another. These changes range from having amplified control over decision making in the household to having greater personal autonomy, and access to resources within their communities (Foner 1986; Grasmuck & Pessar 1991; Lamphere 1987; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Pedraza 1991; Pessar 1998; Simon 1992). No longer can we side with the early neoclassical theorists who generally perceived women to be passive actors in household decisions. Decisions are no longer made by an 'altruistic male head, who is capable of estimating various economic options and chooses those that provide maximum utility for the household as a whole' (Becker 1994, p. 4), but are very much influenced by women's participation ranging from labor markets to network ties in another country.

In addition, over several decades, the USA has attracted proportionally more female migrants than other labor-importing countries; the majority of women among the USA immigrants are from Asia, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Europe (Donato 1992, p. 159). In the USA, not much is known on the integration of immigrant women from Central Asia. Therefore, I wish to highlight the case of women migrants from the Central Asian country of Turkmenistan as the focus of this study.

This thesis will specifically target immigrant Turkmen women who are currently residing in the State of California. Furthermore, it is an ethnographic study which will explore the integration experiences of this particular ethnic group. The indicators for integration will be cultural and structural. Within the cultural spectrum, there will be a variety of indicators such as: clothing, music, the nuclear family, and certain values and norms that impact cultural adaptation and integration. The structural aspect will explore: housing, labor market, language, and education.

In the second section of this thesis, the women will share their thoughts on actions which led to successful integration. Then, they will be asked their opinion on what were some obstacles to integration that they faced and had to overcome. The reasons why the women were asked such questions was to explore their experiences in the process of integration and whether that process, in their opinions, was successful or not. The three immigrant Turkmen women were found through 'snowball sampling', which commenced with a key informant. Moreover, the purpose of



conducting an ethnographic study, and the goal of being in the field was to get as close to the respondents as possible, and discover and observe their realities; and that is what this research sets out to do.

Last but not least, in the third section, this thesis explored the women's previous migration history, any family remittances, and networks they might have established or retained. The World Bank estimated remittances to developing countries at \$207 billion in 2006, and total remittances including informal transfers at about \$300 billion. Migrant remittances to developing countries have increased from \$57 to \$189 billion between 1990 and 2005, and more than doubled between 2001 and 2006 (ILO n.d., p. 5). Whether the Turkmen women made remittances and the means they used to do so to their family and relatives, will be explored. In addition, although migrants move to new lands, they are still able to find comfort and familiar patterns within their own networks. Findlay and Li (1998, p. 260) emphasise that by bearing in mind the 'effects of various networks – ranging from personal contacts among family members and friends to “migration channels” – on migration we become able to bridge the gap between micro and macro perspectives.' Another aspect to be considered is the extent of these women's networks: i.e. whether it spans from one county to another, from one state to another, or possibly across continents.

Now that all three sections of the thesis have been briefly introduced, I will explain why this particular research topic was chosen. Moreover, it must be noted that throughout this thesis, I will be attempting to solely interpret, find meaning, and understand the experiences of integration of the immigrant Turkmen women, and it is not an attempt to explain this particular phenomenon.

1.1 BACKGROUND

This section provides the reader with background information relevant to this research. The subsections will include: brief information on Turkmenistan, status of women in Turkmenistan, and immigrant population and opportunities in California.

The reason why the integration experiences of specifically Turkmen women were chosen was to raise awareness about this particular ethnic group, and to pinpoint the shortfall of research concerning their integration experiences in the USA. Having said that, the limited empirical material does not allow any general conclusions to be drawn. This, however, does not mean there are not any specific conditions for integration experiences of immigrant Turkmen women. However, this type of conclusion or analysis can be obtained through a greater research project with a larger pool of respondents.

Brief Information on Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan is located to the West of the Caspian Sea and is bordering Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The country achieved its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The government is autocratic, however the rigid isolation imposed by the previous dictator Saparmurat Niyazov has eased a bit after his death in 2006. President Niyazov coined himself *Turkmenbashi*, or Father of the Turkmen, and created a widespread personality cult. In 1999, he made himself president for life, spending large sums of public money on lavish projects while heavily slashing social welfare. His successor, Kurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, set out to a somewhat different approach, while aiming to dismantle the Niyazov cult.

Of the Central Asian republics, Turkmenistan is the most ethnically homogeneous; some Uzbeks to the east, as well as small populations of Russians, Kazakhs, Tatars, and others. When compared to other former Soviet republics, Turkmenistan has been unaffected by inter-ethnic hostilities, however tight tribal allegiances among the Turkmen can be a source of tension.

The country is known to hold the world's fifth largest estimated reserves of natural gas, nevertheless much of its population is still impoverished (U.S. Department of State 2010). Niyazov's government managed to setback the country's social and economic development. In 2004, Niyazov was reported to have ordered the dismissal of an estimated 15,000 healthcare workers and replaced them with military conscripts. Beginning in 1994, the government limited compulsory education to nine years, and it reduced significantly the state-funded health care. Consequently the government banned opera, ballet, the circus, the philharmonic orchestra, and non-Turkmen cultural associations (ibid). Religious individuals, particularly followers of faiths

other than Sunni Islam and Russian Orthodoxy, faced criminal prosecution, police beatings, deportation and, in some cases, demolition of their houses of worship (IRIN 2005).

The state of the education system under the USSR was among the top in the world. While education in the Soviet Union was organised in a highly centralised government-run system, the advantage was the total access for all citizens and post-education employment. The Soviet Union recognised that the foundation of their system depended upon ‘complete dedication of the people to the state through education in the broad fields of engineering, the natural sciences and social sciences, along with basic education’ (Spearman 1983, p. 1 of 1). In Turkmenistan, under the Niyazov regime, the education system spiraled downwards. In 2004, Turkmenistan’s Ministry of Education was to implement President Saparmurat Niyazov’s order (Decree No. 126) to ‘invalidate all higher education degrees received outside the country since 1993 and to dismiss all state workers holding such degrees’ (NEAR 2004, p. 1 of 1).

The Director of Scholars at Risk (an international network of universities and colleges responding to attacks on scholars because of their words, their ideas and their place in society), Robert Quinn, was alarmed about the order and its affects on the 5000 Turkmen students currently enrolled abroad. ‘We are worried that some students may be reluctant to complete their degrees, while others may choose to seek employment abroad rather than return home, which will impoverish the country.’ In turn, ‘for those scholars that do return home’, Quinn said, ‘they are at an increased risk of escalating persecution’ (ibid.). This situation poses an imminent threat to these individuals, for scholars are known to be critical of the government and the Turkmen Government is extremely intolerant of dissidents. Moreover, Rachel Denber (2006, p. 1 of 1) of Human Rights Watch observed that:

The antics of the country's autocratic leader, Saparmurat Niyazov, are certainly bizarre: he changed the names of the months in honour of members of his own family, and he had a gold statue of himself put on top of a building in his capital - a statue that revolves so it always faces the sun...Such absurdities tend to mask the fact that Turkmenistan has one of the most repressive regimes in the world, one that ranks alongside Burma and North Korea but attracts far less international condemnation.

Criticism or dissent was interpreted as treason. Offenders of this were and may still be punishable by long prison sentences, confinement to psychiatric hospitals, and internal banishment to arid salt flats among the Caspian Sea. In addition to that, private conversations were monitored by informers, telephones and emails were tapped, and Internet access was predominantly limited (Rotberg 2008, p. 1 of 1).

However, while all of the previously listed aspects are valid from a human rights perspective, the country of Turkmenistan has positive facets as well. For instance, on December 12, 1995, Turkmenistan was granted the status of neutrality by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. Turkmenistan is the only country that has been granted constant neutrality status in the history of the UN. That status demonstrates the will of a country to follow a hands-off policy and peaceful coexistence with neighboring countries and other countries around the world.

As far as the natural resources, Turkmenistan is the only country in the world where gas, water, electricity, and salt are free of charge for its citizens. The public transportation is subsidised, and flour is given at a discount price to specific individuals such as elders, children, and those in need (Gurbansoltan Eje Clinical 2001, pp. 1-2).

Status of Women in Turkmenistan

Prior to twentieth century, Turkmenistan had been a tribal nation. European observers told of the ‘warlike’ qualities of the Turkmen, while the Soviet nationality polity had viewed the Turkmen people as ‘backward’ with many internal divisions (Edgar 2003, p. 17). The Soviet’s campaign to abolish ‘backwardness’ in Central Asia began with the fight over the fate of Muslim women. The Soviet’s asserted that without freeing women, it would be impossible to build a socialistic society; their goal was to get rid of ‘archaic’ and ‘degrading’ customs. Unlike other Central Asian republics, women in Turkmenistan did not wear the veil, therefore the Communist party Women’s Department (Zhenotdel) aimed on legal reform to modify women’s status within the family (ibid., 2003, p. 132). In Turkmenistan, women faced issues stemming from Islamic law as well as customary law of a patriarchal society. The efforts of the Zhenotdel to emancipate the women of Turkmenistan had proven futile. Their imagination of hoping ‘to leap directly from the

state of nomadic freedom to socialist emancipation, bypassing the feudal and bourgeois stages that led to the oppression and segregation of Muslim women' had failed (ibid., p. 149).

Present day, the reality of women's status seems to reflect on the tension between Turkmenistan's past and the pressure from the international community in the present. Before the Russian presence in the area, the roles of men and women were advised by nomadic customs and later religious practices of Islamic origin. Ancient cultural traditions and customs intertwined with elements of the Islamic faith and regulated women's place and role in society. Officially, Turkmen customary law was maintained in parallel with written Islamic law until the October Revolution of 1917.

It is the norms established by nomadic community life and upheld by *adat* (custom), and the increasingly influential religious norms of *sharia*, which placed men and women on unequal terms. The main achievements related to women's emancipation took place during Soviet times, where the local culture and religion was discredited for being backward and reactionary. For the first time in history, the Soviet leaders put forth a legislation calling for the equality of men and women in family life and society (Liczek 2005, pp. 570-575).

Present day, Turkmenistan has signed on to several conventions protecting women's rights. Article 18 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan endorses the principle of equality between men and women, and prohibits all forms of discrimination. Despite the regulations inscribed by law, Turkmenistan is an 'authoritarian state that obstructs the rights and freedoms of a large proportion of its population. The government does not recognise cases of discrimination and ignores inequalities based on gender' (SIGI n.d., p. 1 of 1). While no gender-specific statistics are available in order to measure the discrimination, various sources indicate that women's rights are often heavily violated. For instance, the Labour Code limits the professional opportunities of women and provides them no protection except in their maternal obligations. Social stereotypes are rampant, and the social position of women is defined according to their role as mothers (ibid.). For instance, in the report of the State Party, page ten states, 'one of the most important cultural traditions of the Turkmen people is the sacred tradition of honouring mothers are keepers of the domestic hearth and guarantors of family stability' (CEDAW 2006, p. 1 of 4). This further shows the stereotypes that women's role is within the home and the family.

In 1996, Turkmenistan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, in 2008, the UN working group that conducts periodic reviews of CEDAW implementation communicated concern that Turkmenistan failed to recognise the need to act against violence against women, stating that national legislations had no protective measures. Moreover, no figures for cases of domestic violence are made public in Turkmenistan, despite the fact that local observers say it is common (IWPR 2010). ‘In Central Asian countries, the problem of domestic violence is still very much taboo,’ remarked a gender studies academic. ‘Thus, conflicts are not solved, and women do not stand up to the violence, but resign themselves to it and learn to put up with it’ (IWPR 2005, p. 1 of 1).

California: Immigrant Population and Integration

In 2008, California became the state with one of the largest and fastest-growing immigrant populations, approximately 1.7 million or more (Migration Policy Institute 2008). California has a higher proportion of immigrants than any other state. A large proportion of California’s immigrants (90 percent) are from Latin America (55 percent) or Asia (35 percent). The three cities where a majority of residents are immigrants with populations of at least 600,000: Glendale, Daly City, and El Monte. The counties with the highest percentages are Santa Clara (36 percent), Los Angeles (36 percent), and San Francisco (34 percent) (Johnson 2011).

Now lets further narrow into statistics concerning immigrants from Central Asia who are living in California. In 2002, the statistics for the country of birth by world region were the following: Afghanistan (557), Kazakhstan (355), Kyrgyzstan (67), Pakistan (1,843), Tajikistan (15), Turkmenistan (27), and Uzbekistan (278). Country of birth of 291,191 legal immigrants to California were: former Soviet Union (375), Afghanistan (557), Kazakhstan (355), Kyrgyzstan (67), Tajikistan (15) Turkmenistan (27), and Uzbekistan (278). The country of birth of refugees and asylees was: former Soviet Union (235), Afghanistan (244), Uzbekistan (124) (Gage n.d., p. c-e). This was one of the few statistics available which includes numbers in California of immigrants originating from Central Asian countries.

There are a few integration measures for immigrants in California. For instance, there is the California Immigrant Integration Initiative (CIII) of Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR). GCIR is a growing network of foundations working on a wide range of immigration and immigrant integration issues. The CIII was organized in 2007 and in partnership with the Institute for Local Government engages municipal and county governments in efforts to advance the civic and economic integration of immigrants (GCIR n.d.).

The state of California also provides four separate safety net programs for qualified, lawful immigrants that fill gaps left by the federal government: the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI), the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP), CalWORKs for Recent Noncitizen Entrants, and Medi-Cal for Newly-Qualified Immigrants and those Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (NQI and PRUCOL) (as cited in California Immigrant Policy Center 2011, p. 1).

Locally, a private non-profit organization Refugee Transitions is dedicated to assisting refugee and immigrant families in becoming self-sufficient in the United States. The organization provides services to help immigrants and refugees attain the English language, life, job and academic skills they need to succeed in their prospective communities. Refugee Transitions has offices in San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose.

The Multilingual Community Outreach Program in Mountain View provides information on city programs and services to residents who are difficult to reach through traditional communication methods. The information is available in the following languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian. The program receives an average of 50 calls per month and reaches out to an average of 10,000 people per year.

Other organizations and partners in Northern California working to support immigrant integration and refugee assistance are: Asylum Access, Chinatown Coalition, International Rescue Committee, Survivors International, Burmese Refugee Family Network, Good Samaritan Family Resource Center, Catholic Charities of Santa Clara, and Unified School Districts.

1.2 PURPOSE OF STUDY

Within the field of immigration in the USA, there is no research on the integration and immigration trends of people from Central Asia. My aim for this thesis was to study the integration of those immigrants arriving from Turkmenistan. Also, I chose to narrow the topic down further and focus my study not generally to all Turkmen immigrants in California, but in particular immigrant Turkmen women. As well, this is an ethnographic study which aims to explore the integration experiences of these women.

Hondagneu-Sotelo (2005) states that gender is one of the fundamental social categories effecting and shaping immigration patterns, however the intersection of gender and immigration has received little attention in contemporary social science literature and immigration research. Women constitute a significant portion of the migration history, and it is thus our duty as researchers to recount their stories just as the stories of male migrants have been told. That is why I wish to explore the integration experiences of immigrant Turkmen women in California, a research that was challenging since this area of study with this particular group of immigrants has not been previously explored.

The main topics of my thesis are organised in the following three sections: I) cultural and structural integration; II) integration successes and obstacles; and III) migration ties, remittances, and networks. Some of the cultural indicators are: music, cuisine, clothing, and attitudes towards raising children. Indicators for structural integration are: English language proficiency, education, access to the labor market, and housing. While the women interviewed will be asked their opinion on what they consider to be successful integration, they will also be asked about obstacles to integration. Thereafter, the role of networks within the realm of integration will be reviewed.

Adopted Approach

I wish to operationally define some terms that will be used throughout this paper. The approach taken by John W. Berry, a cross-cultural psychologist, expanded the meaning of *acculturation* to

include varieties of adaptation, thus coming up with four of the following categories: assimilation (acquisition of the receiving culture and disregard of the heritage culture), separation (rejection of the receiving culture and retention of the heritage culture), integration (acquires the receiving culture and retains the heritage culture), and marginalization (rejects the receiving culture and discards the heritage culture) (Berry & Triandis 1980, pp. 256-260). In addition, the model is based on the principles of cultural maintenance and contact participation. Cultural maintenance is the extent individuals value and wish to maintain their cultural identity. Contact-participation is the extent individuals value and seek out contact with those outside their own group, and wish to participate in the daily life of the larger society (Berry et al. 1997, p. 160).

Furthermore, Berry's model acknowledged the importance of multicultural societies, minority individuals and groups, and emphasised the idea that individuals have an option in the matter of how they do in the acculturation process (Berry 1980). In order to explore which category resonated closely to the experiences of immigrant Turkmen women in California, all of the four categories were considered for this thesis.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions listed below were used for my research. My aim of having these research questions was to facilitate my understanding and interpreting the experiences of the interviewed immigrant Turkmen women.

- What are the structural and cultural integration experiences of Turkmen women in California?
- According to the women themselves, have they achieved successful integration or faced obstacles to integration?
- What is the role of their past and current ties to Turkmenistan? E.g. remittances, migration ties, networks.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recently, there has been a vast amount of research conducted on female migration into the US, especially regions from where large groups of immigrants originate. However, I will include a few of the research examples touching upon immigrants from Russian-speaking countries in this literature review.

2.1 RUSSIAN-SPEAKING IMMIGRANTS IN THE USA

Immigration into the USA is a phenomenon which has been occurring since the discovery of the lands then inhabited by native Indians. Since then, the USA has become a land of immigrants. Originally, this story of migration was recounted as a masculine epic. In the latter part of the 20th century, women began immigrating to America in significant numbers, making the migration story just as much a woman's tale as well (New American Media 2009, p. 3).

Women comprise a growing share of migrants in the USA. In 1960, 46.7 per cent of all people living outside their country of birth were female, and by 2000, this figure rose to 48.6 per cent. Different regions of the world experienced the increases variably; e.g. in North America, the female share of the foreign born stayed about the same between 1960 (49.8 per cent) and 2000 (50.3 per cent). In the USA in particular, the proportion of legal female immigrants admitted into the country each year has increased over the past two decades, rising from 49.8 per cent in 1985 to 54.5 per cent in 2004 (Pearce 2006, p. 3). This phenomenon is a result of the gender balance of international migration flows which is created by immigration legislation, gender-selective demand for foreign labour, and shifting gender relations in countries of origin (Castles & Miller 2003, p. 67). Castles and Miller further underline that the '*feminization of migration*' has been recognised as a tendency at the global level' (ibid). Labour migration and the

independent migration of women in search of work opportunities have steadily risen. In addition, the demand for low-cost labour and profits has furthered women's migration, and resulted in an increase of historically-feminised vocations like domestic service and health care. In those sectors, the machines used do not require physical strength and therefore it was considered that women could be 'the distributors of the service' (Engle 2004, p. 19).

After an exhaustive hunt for research concerning the integration or immigration of Turkmen women in the USA, I realised that there was none to be found. On that account, I will concentrate on research published on Russians or Russian-speaking immigrants. One such contribution is a report titled 'Russian-speaking Newcomers in San Francisco: A Community Assessment Report' which was a Project of the Newcomers Health Program of the San Francisco Department of Public Health in collaboration with International Institute of San Francisco and Bay Area Community Resources. From 1999 to 2000 the Newcomers Health Program implemented several assessments of the Russian-speaking immigrant and refugee population in the San Francisco area. The purpose of the report was to gather information from these smaller assessments into one comprehensive report with information on the current status, strengths and needs of Russian-speaking newcomers in San Francisco Country. One of the limitations of the report was the challenge of identifying who fit into the Russian-speaking newcomer community. This is due to the fact that the immigrants were oftentimes categorised as 'white', with no differentiation by language or country of origin. Hence, we must acknowledge the fact that:

The former Soviet Union consists of over one hundred distinct nationalities, sixteen autonomous republics and thirty autonomous areas. To attempt to characterize Russian-speaking culture would be even more difficult than to characterize American culture. While there are cultural similarities and common experiences that Russian-speaking people from the former Soviet Union share, there are many differences such as ethnicity, history and background, social class, language, religion, and numerous other factors (2002, p. 10).

Despite the limitations, the report provided substantial information about the status of the Russian-speaking community in San Francisco area. The common issue recognised in the assessment was stress and depression about the newcomers. An important note was that

psychological problems are stigmatised in the culture and thus, it is not acceptable to discuss one's problems outside the family. If I were to relate this case to my own research, this type of stigma also extends to Turkmen immigrants as well. Also, the report makes a list of findings which touch upon: diversity, physical health issues, mental health issues, employment opportunities, supportive services, housing, youth issues, and great strengths.

The article 'Russian Jews in American: Status, Identity and Integration' by Sam Kliger provides statistics and insight into this particular ethnic community. Kliger draws from different research reports and sources to look into the ongoing discussion about the size of the Russian Jewish population in New York and Philadelphia regions. Different sources provide different statistics on the numbers. However, the author says that 'if we take into consideration only Diaspora proper, Russian Jews in America comprise the largest Russian-speaking Jewish community in the world' (2004, p. 1). The article looks into the socio-demographic indicators, presence of relatives in Israel, time of residency in particular the USA regions, educational profile, economic profile, self identity, intermarriage, religion, and political integration. How this article relates to my own thesis is that the Russian Jews are also persons originating from different Soviet republics, like Uzbekistan, thus their experience sheds some light on similar situations faced by other Russian-speaking immigrants.

A qualitative study 'The Economic Integration of Ex-Soviet Jews in Baltimore' by Lingxin Hao and Michelle Stem Cook (2000) addresses the economic integration of Jewish ex-Soviet refugees, focusing on the role of public assistance and private support in their efforts to achieve economic sufficiency. The ex-Soviet refugees included persons from: Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and other Soviet republics or newly independent states as well. Their analysis illustrated that the relative importance of external support and individual effort was dependent on age groups, forms of support, and length of support. Although this study concentrates on refugees, their integration experiences can be related to my own research. For instance, anchor relatives providing substantial support to the new immigrants, and at the same time, persons are unable to maintain close communication with their relatives who emigrated because of threat or harassment. This is a situation that immigrant Turkmen women face when

emigrating and leaving family members behind. Thus, most lead their lives in the USA by using precaution whenever discussing matters or criticising the government of Turkmenistan.

Another useful literature piece is the book *Russian Immigrants* by Lisa Trumbauer and Robert Asher (2005), describes immigration from the Soviet Union, in particularly that of the Russian people. The authors note that the story of Russian immigration starts in Alaska, not with the classic story of escape in search of opportunity, but of those Russian fur traders who migrated in search for new animals to hunt. Those fur hunters were called *promysloviki*. The arrival of the first Russians to the North American continent can be traced back to the 1500s and 1600s. Another book entitled *Russian Immigrants in the United States* by Vera Kishinevsky (2004) is useful when studying the different waves and experiences of Russian immigrants. Of the Russian immigrants arriving to the USA in late 20th century, Kishinevsky notes that she was ‘amazed at the different structure of this group which used to consist primarily of Russian Jews and professionals. Now you see Kazakhs, you see Tartars, you see Ukrainians and basically all ethnic groups’ (as cited in Anders 2009, p. 1 of 1).

According to the 2000 US Census, there are nearly 2 million Americans who claimed Russian ancestry, and almost the same number listed USSR from where their family originated. In addition, Russians are today the largest Slavic group in the USA. Kishinevsky, who migrated to the USA 30 years ago, notes that in her youth, ‘Russians left Russia the way people die,’ cutting off all emotional ties to their home country and the people they left behind. Today, she notes, they can travel back and forth as they like, visit their relatives and even watch Russian television (ibid). Kishinevsky is one of the scholars who was able to provide a general perspective into the background of Russian immigrants, allowing many readers to effortlessly comprehend their migration story.

Lastly, I was unable to find information on integration of Turkmen or any other Central Asian immigrants in the USA. There was much research on Russian Jews, and other research on the general Russian-speaking communities. In California, reports pertaining to community assessments of immigrant populations are limited to only Russian-speaking.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the field of social theory, functionalism and structuralism both tend to a) gravitate towards a naturalistic standpoint, and be b) inclined towards objectivism. In functionalist thought, biology was used as the science that provided the closest and most well-suited model in social science and a means of estimating evolution processes through adaptation. On the other hand, the structuralist thought avoided the notion of biological correlation and was aggressive towards evolutionism. Both of the theories discounted the role of the human subject in the social world, as if the social world was the actor and the human subject was the reactor (Giddens 1979, 1981, 1984). For this thesis, while attempting to find a theory which considered agency and structure equally, the *theory of structuration* proposed by Anthony Giddens seemed to be an appropriate choice. The theory of structuration deals with the ‘*duality of structure*, which relates to the fundamentally recursive character of social life, and expresses the mutual dependence of structure and agency’ (Giddens 1979, p. 11). Furthermore, in reacting to the functionalist and structuralist theories, Giddens (1984, pp. 1-3) states that:

One of my principle ambitions in the formulation of structuration theory is to put an end to each of these empire-building endeavors. The basic domain of study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time.

Giddens (1979) further goes on to note that the theory of structuration could be regarded as a *non-functionalist manifesto*. However, a considerable contribution of functionalism was that it gave attention to the unintended consequences of action. Functionalism related occurrence of reproduced social items to ‘societies reasons’, and that is where the theory of structuration disapproves – for, ‘social systems have no purposes, reasons or needs whatsoever; only human

individuals do so' and that 'any explanation of social reproduction which imputes teleology to social systems must be declared invalid' (p. 7).

Thus, this theory was chosen for this thesis because of it gives considerable attention to the bound relationship of structure and agency in the consequences of our lives. In turn, this pertains greatly to the situation of immigrant women, for it gives a ground for looking at how the structures in the receiving country enable or hinder the integration of the agent. Essentially, I used these theoretical concepts in order to understand and interpret what are the experiences of successful integration and were were obstacles to integration. Thus, the concepts are no so much used as an explanatory theoretical framework but more as an explorative theoretical framework.

3.1 WHAT IS STRUCTURE?

The theory of structuration integrates agency and structure. According to Giddens (1981), structures are considered to be 'both the medium and the outcome of the practices which constitute social systems' (as cited in Sewell, 1992, pp. 4-6). This brings forth an aspect crucial to the structuration process, which is the notion of duality of structure. The creation of agents and structures are not to be thought of two separate sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. Giddens (1984) explains that 'structure is not "external" to individuals' (p. 25) and it is not to be equated with restraint, for it is both enabling and constraining. The definition of structure is such, 'rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. Structure exists only as memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledgeability, and as instantiated in action' (p. 377). When the term structure is employed, what it refers to is 'structural property,' or to be precise, to 'structuring property.' Structures are 'virtual' and 'actual', which makes it a process that doesn't exist at any point in time and space; they are made present only through their instantiation. Thus, by being in the world, the actions of human beings produce and reproduce these so called structures.

Likewise, there must be a differentiation made between structure, system, and structuration. Systems are 'reproduced relations between actors or collectives, organised as regular social practices.' Social systems are a 'structured reality,' and structures do not exist in

time-space dimension, apart from in the moments when social systems are created (Giddens 1979, pp. 65-66). The difference between structure and system then is such: social systems are made up of patterns of relationships between actors or collectivities reproduced across time and space, thus are 'situated practices', and structures exist in time-space only as instances repeatedly involved in the production and reproduction of social systems (ibid., p. 26). Moreover, social systems are systems of social interaction, for they contain the situated activities of human beings, and are existent in the flow of time. Giddens further defines social integration and system integration. Social integration is 'reciprocity between actors,' while system integration means 'reciprocity between groups or collectives.' Giddens emphasises that 'integration is not synonymous with "cohesion," and certainly not with "consensus"' (ibid., p. 76). And last but not least, structuration is the process whereby 'conditions governing the continuity of transformation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of systems.' Through the theme of temporality, Giddens attempts to stress the importance of the terms structure, system, and structuration to social theory. The virtual aspect of the process of 'structuration' makes it a becoming rather than a being. The ability of structuration, then, is to 'bind' times and spaces (as cited in Karp 1986, p. 135).

In addition, in order to recognise the presence of structures, we must simultaneously acknowledge that which is not, i.e. the absence contained in presence. Giddens argues the reality of structures by illustrating the absence/presence dimension by actors 'practical consciousness' (i.e. knowledge of 'how to go about' the business of social life). This is illustrated in the example of language. Language exists only in being spoken, however each speech act requires that the actor is capable of bringing together a complex set up of rules and resources inherent in a native language (as cited in Bertilsson 1984, p. 343). This analogy is drawn from Saussure's, a French structuralist, distinction between *langue* (language) and *parole* (speech); structure is to practice as *langue* is to *parole*. Thus structure, like *langue*, is a complex set of rules with a 'virtual existence', while practice, like speech, is an enactment of these rules in space and time. Also, structure binds time and space; therefore they include not only rules but resources as well (Sewell, p. 6). Furthermore, a vital aspect to be considered is the role of agency in the production of structure.

3.2 WHAT IS HUMAN AGENCY?

Human agency and social structure are two ways of considering social action, and not as two separate concepts or constructs (i.e. they are connected to each other). Structure is both ‘the medium and outcome of action.’ Structured systems – hence action – do not exist *in time* and *in space*, but bind time and space (Karp, p. 136). Structure is the unintended result of the agents’ causing effects, and the same time, it is the medium through which those effects are attained. However, ‘unintended’ does not equate to ‘unknowing’ (ibid).

Giddens discusses the ‘knowledgeability’ of human agents, whereby they are capable of changing their social reality within their social order. However, actors do not have entire preference of their actions and their knowledge is limited, however their actions are the factor that recreates the social structure and constructs social change. In one sense or another, humans are constantly in action, i.e. ‘reflexive monitoring’, analyzing their own or another individuals’ actions and acting according to those actions. Human social activities are *recursive*, meaning that just by existing as actors and engaging in activities, the agents reproduce the conditions which make those activities possible. This process of routinization has been vital to the theory of structuration. By maintaining a routinization of social relations, humans are saved from the destructive effects of anxiety. All which is familiar is reassuring, and ‘the familiar in social settings is created and recreated through human agency itself, in the duality of structure’ (Giddens 1979, p. 128). Therefore, human routines are based on rational thought and not on presupposed hidden motivations.

The *durée* of day-to-day life happens as a flow of intentional action. However, these acts may result in unintended consequences, for:

The consequences of what actors do, intentionally or unintentionally, are events which would not have happened if that actor had behaved differently, but which are not within the scope of the agents power to have brought about (regardless of what the agent’s intentions are) (ibid., p. 11).

Giddens (1984) clarifies that agency does not refer to the intentions people may have in doing something, but specifically to their capability of doing that something in the first place. This ‘could have acted otherwise’ gives agency the power of action. Mestrovic (1998, p. 182) states that it is through this decision to act, either consciously or not, change is created within the agency and the structure that one has the influence on.

Action or the ability to act by the agency is always considered as interacting with power. Power is situated in ‘transformative capacity.’ Therefore, power and the social relations through which it is made evident are directly tied to the agents’ ability to act. Giddens (1995, p. 28) notes that power is a ‘necessary implication of the logical connection between human action and transformative capacity.’ This can be related, then, to *rules* and *resources* existent within social systems. Karp (1986, p. 136) further elaborates that ‘it not only enables the production of social forms, it enables the control of others. Thus power is tied to domination, to relations of autonomy and dependence.’ Power relations are continually produced and reproduced in certain context, with the existence of rules and the mobilization of resources. Moreover, going back to the notion of an agent having ‘acted otherwise’ allows him or her for a range of causal powers. Action is heavily dependent upon the ability of the individual to ‘make a difference’ (i.e. to exercise some amount of power) on the current course of events. Nonetheless, Giddens (1984, p. 15) notes that ‘circumstances of social constraint in which individuals “have no choice” are not to be equated with the dissolution of action as such.’

The duality of structure in power relations can be expressed through rules and resources, thus ‘the rules and resources drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social action are at the same time the means of system-reproduction’ (ibid., p. 19). Thus, these rules and resources, structural properties of social systems, have the ability to define identity and situation, and are a means through which action can be enabled. Giddens considers power to be ‘an integral element’ of all social life ‘as are meaning and norms.’ All social interaction which takes place involves the use of power. It is possible to analyze power within social systems by considering the relations of autonomy and dependence between actors, and how the actors are able to utilise and reproduce structural properties of domination (ibid. 1995).

Having considered the theory of structuration, it is now clear how theories of functionalism and structuralism lead to a skewed perspective. They result in either discounting agents' integration experiences or making social structures within society a too important of departure for evaluation of integration. The main point of theory of structuration is that it takes human agency and structure into equal consideration. Thus, I conducted my interviews keeping in mind the aspect of social structure and human agency and how those two interacting factors together have shaped the integration experience of immigrant Turkmen women in California.

3.3 THE ROLE OF NETWORKS

Recently, much research on migration and ethnic communities has begun to reflect on the importance of networks for social organization, resource mobilization, and integration. Unlike the network approach, the previous neoclassical and world-systems approaches do not examine the migrants' experience, in terms of agency and structure.

The network approach highlights that migration is embedded in a series of political, ethnic, familial, and communal relationships and environments, while keeping in mind the border crossings. This approach has a hint of Anthony Giddens structuration theory, in the sense that it takes into account agency and structure; it views migration as a collective process shaped by both agency and structure. Thomas Faist (2000, p. 9) provides a definition to the concept:

A network is defined as a set of individual or collective actors – ranging from individuals, families, firms and nation-states – and the relations that couple them... Network patterns of ties comprise social, economic, political networks of interaction, as well as collectives such as groups – kinship groups or communities – and private or public associations. Network is a concept or strategy to study how resources, goods and ideas flow through particular configurations of social and symbolic ties .

Viewing migration via a network approach allows us to consider the multilevel processes that are taking place. However, networks appear in various forms and range from social to knowledge-sharing networks. Let's consider some of the following research on network ties of immigrants.

Within scholarship on comparative ethnic politics, much concentration is on ethnic groups' dense social ties which affect economic and political outcomes. One explanation is that dense social networks enhance in-group trust and solidarity norms that are at the core of economic subsistence systems (Woolcock & Narayan 1999). On the other hand, there is vast amount of research stating that networks could be potential poverty traps. For example, Fafchamps (2001, p. 110) states that 'communities can find themselves trapped in inferior equilibria where they continue investing in low-income activities because they cannot individually incur the cost of establishing required contacts to penetrate more profitable sectors.' While the previous leans towards the economic aspects of networks and their effect on ethnic communities, networks can also serve as a form of social capital.

Granovetter (1995) discovered that the flow of information within social networks aides in job mobility. This mobility was secured and disseminated. Also, he discovered that professionals rely primarily on their set of personal contacts to obtain information about job-change opportunities rather than more formal or impersonal roads. Moreover, in his article 'The Strength of Ties' (1973), Granovetter states that while strong ties are efficient in promoting information flows about activities within a group, weak ties are important for promoting information flows about activities outside a group, which could be instrumental for securing new economic opportunities. Thus, strong ties matter as well because they 'have greater motivation to be of assistance and are typically more easily available (Granovetter 1983, p. 113). Weak ties matter because 'those to whom we are weakly tied are more likely to move in circles different from our own and will thus have access to information different from that which we receive' (Granovetter in Sasson and Cross 2003, p. 118).

Another widely mentioned concept is social capital. This theory has to do with 'investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace' (Lin 2001, p. 19). So, individuals engage in interactions and networking in order to produce profits. Lin provides four explanations as to why embedded resources in social networks enhance the outcomes of actions:

1) flow of information is made possible, 2) may exert influence on the agents, 3) advance social credentials of individuals, 4) reinforcement of identity and recognition (ibid., p. 20). Light and Gold (2000) state that ‘because the use of social capital tends to reinforce the relationships from which it originates, its consumption may actually increase rather than deplete its availability in a given context’ (as cited in Gold 2005, p. 259).

Lastly, networks can play a variety of roles in the integration of immigrants. The power of social networks to mobilise different capital and resources not only facilitates the integration of immigrants, but also makes an impact on the sending country as well (e.g. ‘social remittances’). Thus, networks can span beyond economic implications to effect the migrants role in transmission of other cultures and shaping certain meanings.

4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In the following section, the data and methodology used for this research will be identified. A holistic approach was chosen as it ties appropriately with the theory of structuration by Anthony Giddens. Next, this section provides information as to how I gained access to the field and the notion of being in the field. I will provide some background information on the women interviewed as well. Then, the section will progress into data collection methods, data analysis, ethical considerations, and last but not least, limitations of this research.

4.1 METHODOLOGY

The holistic approach is utilised for this particular qualitative research. Keesing (1958, p. 3) defined *holistic* as an ‘approach which emphasises phenomena of wholeness or integration.’ Ethnographers use holism to examine things in their entirety rather than in bits and pieces, for instances of observed behavior are parts of a larger picture and cannot be understood out of context. While the term signifies completeness, it also asks for making *connections* between things and not, as Agar (1994) states, tearing them into pieces.

In the book *Holism and Evolution*, Jan Smuts (1926) discusses the unity and continuity in nature. The concept holism was derived from the Greek *holos*, meaning whole, all, entire, total. On Smuts’ holism, Beukes (1989) states, ‘that *wholes* are the real units of nature and as a unity wholes are self-organizing systems and synergistic, thus cooperating units. For him every organism, every plant or animal, and every person is a whole that has a certain internal organization and measure of self direction as well as an individual specific character of its own.’ Moreover, Smuts (1926, pp. 127-128) explained ‘that *wholeness* is the fundamental character of every personality as of every form and structure in the universe. We live in a world and in a universe where everything, as every life and person, always forms a whole. It is a universe of

whole-making, nothing is half-finished, and if it is, it is abnormal and contrary to the purpose of nature as well of all existence. Keeping in mind Smuts' definition of holism, we shall move forward to discuss the type of research study design used for this thesis.

It is obvious given the explorative character of the research, the small number of interviewees, and the novelty of this ethnic group, that the research methodology will be fully qualitative.

Positioning of the Researcher

Turkmenistan, my beloved motherland, my homeland,
You are always with me, in my thoughts and in my heart.
For the slightest evil against you, let my hand be paralyzed,
For the slightest slander against you, let my tongue be lost,
At the moment of my betrayal of my motherland, its president, or its sacred banner, let my breath be stopped (Akbarzadeh, 1999, p. 275).

That is the Turkmen national oath that has been engrained in my brain. As a child in Turkmenistan during the presidency of Saparmurat Niyazov, it is the oath that I sang everyday, if not more, at school. And if the President was passing by our city, thousands of children would be forced to leave school and stand along the sides of the roads, holding the Turkmen flag, singing the national oath, and waiting to catch a glimpse of the President through the window crack of his black limousine. Those are just a few of the memories growing up in communist and post-communist Turkmenistan that remain with me to this day.

I am an immigrant Turkmen woman myself. I arrived to the USA from the second largest city of Mary, Turkmenistan approximately 12 years ago. A few years before me and my father's arrival to the USA, we hosted a volunteer from the United States Peace Corps. The organization's goal was to advance reconstruction and promote sustainability in the city. In my hometown, as I followed her footsteps, she became an inspirational figure for me. I became enthusiastic to pursue learning the English language and eager to discover more about the American culture.

The impetus for my immigration to California was driven by my fathers' visions for my future. His ultimate goal was to remove me from the Turkmen cultural gender subjugations, and

allow me to experience a freedom of equality and the right to pursue higher achievements in the USA. I, myself, as a young Turkmen girl could not fathom the possibilities which existed outside of Turkmenistan. I was accustomed to watching nothing but Bollywood films on television, helping my mother clean, cook, and take care of my baby brother, and attending the nearby school. I had never questioned the customs that we lived by, nor knew that the Turkmen society was driven by a patriarchal domination. It was what it was, and I as a girl simply had to abide by the customs.

Upon arrival to California, I was faced with culture shock of an immense degree. Everything seemed grandiose; the buildings were huge, the roads were paved, McDonalds was to be found on every other block, there were people from all colors of the rainbow, and most of all, women wore whatever they liked. There were so many questions buzzing inside my head, and I was unable connect my knowledge about the world constructed inside my head, Turkmenistan, and the world which I was brought to, the United States of America.

To be able to catch up with the American education system, I was home schooled for about a year. I spent over 10 hours a day concentrating on English grammar, memorization of vocabulary, and the struggle to maintain my Russian language abilities. Over the years, I received some of the top grades in Middle School and High School, and graduated from a university in California with an award, ‘Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award-International Studies Program.’

As for my integration experience, I feel as if I was simply thrown into the American salad bowl, where my whole beginning experience was based on playing catch up with those who had been living here for decades (i.e.: education, employment, lifestyle). After some years, I realised that in the USA it was not only the so-called natives who were competing for a share of the ‘American dream’, but also all other immigrants from around the world. I wanted a slice of the pie, and I was not stopping at any point.

After leaving Turkmenistan, however, it was as if I had been cut off from my own culture and my own people. For approximately 9 years of being in California, I had no knowledge about the existence of any other Turkmen persons in the USA. Upon arrival, I had no comfort of my own ethnic community and/or enclave, which also was an impetus to master the English

language and integrate as much as possible. I started finding about about other Turkmens living in California after some of my family members joined us here.

After 10 years, I visited my homeland, Turkmenistan. I had come to terms with significant changes in my own identity. I could no longer abide by the Turkmen customary gender roles and pretend that I as a woman was, in some way or another, less than a man. I refused to believe that I could be coerced into an arranged marriage. So many relatives pointed fingers and told my mother that I had become an ‘Americanised rebel woman.’ The criticism was endless. Despite this, I went onwards with my goals. I am proud of my roots, yet to this day, I reject boxing myself into one country’s customs and traditions.

4.2 BEING IN THE FIELD AND GAINING ACCESS TO THE FIELD

The *snowball method* was used in finding my interviewees. In this method, the individual with whom contact had already been made used their networks to refer the researcher to other people who may contribute to the study. The snowball method is particularly useful for tracking down ‘special’ populations. According to Hanneman and Riddle (2005), there are two major limitations and weaknesses of snowball method: 1) actors who are not connected (i.e. ‘isolates’) are not located in this method, and the method may tend to overstate the ‘connectedness’ and ‘solidarity’ of populations of actors; 2) there is no guaranteed way of finding all of the connected individuals in the population. On the other hand, the advantage of snowball method is that it is possible to include members of groups where no lists or identifiable clusters even exist (Black 1999, p. 118). Having briefly discussed the advantages and the disadvantages of the snowball method, the next step is establishing how I utilised this method.

The way I came to applying the snowball method for this thesis is through a distant acquaintance whose alias name is Jahan. Jahan, who is in her thirties, arrived to the USA from Turkmenistan approximately three years ago and has been living in California. In fact, Jahan served as a key informant for my study, who ‘like a fairy god-mother to help the forlorn

ethnographer' (O'Reilly 2005, p. 91) helped me gain access to other Turkmen women living in the same area. Thus, Jahan was a significant asset to my research.

Also, I decided to take advantage of the social networking site, Facebook, to get in contact with a Turkmen graduate student, a male in his late twenties. I asked him whether he knew any Turkmen women in California, and if he did know any, how I could get in contact with them. He mentioned that he did not personally know the women but had met their husbands. He was able to provide me with one of the women's emails and another woman's Facebook information. Knowing that those two women would be apprehensive if they received a random email from me, I asked him to send them a brief note saying that I will be contacting them for research purposes. He was able to talk to one of the women's husbands, and notify him of my research. Having done that, I began drafting a letter in Russian to those two Turkmen women, explaining to them about my research and asking whether they would be willing to take part in it.

While participation of women is mentioned throughout, there also needs to be a mention of the women who did not want to participate in the study or declined to participate after agreeing. Gulya was the first immigrant Turkmen woman asked to participate in my study. After finding out about the interview component of the study, she declined to participate. The exact reason as to why she declined is not known, however what I do know is that her and her family were politically active in Turkmenistan. This, in turn, meant that she was sworn to the government there. Additionally, she still had family members working in that sector in Turkmenistan and dissent could mean they would be harmed. To avoid any altercations with Turkmen authorities, even though they were living in California now, Gulya remained cautious regarding her opinions and with whom she shares them with. She had arrived to California with her family approximately two years ago. On the other hand, Bahar had agreed to be interviewed and was thrilled about participating in my study. She had told me how excited she was that someone was finally writing about us Turkmens here in California, and that she would answer any questions necessary. Bahar recently became an American citizen, and had been living in California for nine years now. When I commenced my interviewing process, she notified me unexpectedly that she could not participate in my study due to her demanding and irregular work schedule.

4.3 WOMEN INTERVIEWED

Upon embarking on finding interviewees for my thesis, I discovered that a total of 6 immigrant Turkmen women live in a particular metropolitan area in California. This area has a rampant job market. The area is diverse with persons of all ethnic groups. From the 6 women, 4 of them agreed to partake in my research, and in the end, a total of 3 women participated. For ethical reasons, only the alias names of participants will be used, and they are: Jahan, Aygul, and Dayza. Now let's explore the backgrounds of the women interviewed.

Jahan is in her early thirties, married, has 1 kid, and is employed. She has been in the USA for approximately 3 years and holds a permanent residence (green card) status. In Turkmenistan, Jahan's university degree was related to the banking sector. She speaks Turkmen and Russian fluently, and is learning English. Jahan lives in an apartment with her family, in a middle-class neighborhood. Within their area, the demographics with the highest percentages from the total are the following: White (66.2 per cent), Asian (15.1 per cent), Some other race (8.9 per cent) (U.S. Census 2000). Jahan encountered some Russian women through her daughter's school, with whom she keeps contact and arranges play dates for their children. Currently, Jahan is working as a nanny for an American family, and prior to this, she was working for a Russian family.

Aygul is in her late twenties, married, has 2 kids, and is not employed. She has been in the USA for about 8 years and holds a visa status. In Turkmenistan, Aygul received her university degree in economics. She speaks Turkmen, Turkish, Russian fluently, and is planning to attend English language courses. Her visa status does not allow her to study nor work in the USA, however she is permitted to take language courses. Aygul lives in an apartment with her family in a closed community. The community is reserved for families studying at the nearby university, where her husband is getting his Ph.D. Aygul's neighbors, whom she befriended, are from Turkey. The demographics in her area with the highest percentages from the total are the following: White (59.17 per cent), Asian (16.39 per cent), Black (13.63 per cent), Chinese (7.38 per cent), Japanese (2.25 per cent) (U.S. Census 2000).

Dayza is in her late thirties, has 3 kids, married, and is not employed. She does not hold any degree in higher education from Turkmenistan. She has been in the USA for 7 years and has a permanent resident (green card) status. She speaks Turkmen fluently, Russian conversationally, and has been taking English language courses. Dayza is permitted to work in the USA, however she has been the caretaker of the family and is now is pregnant with her fourth child. Dayza lives in a large house with her family just outside of the metropolitan area. The demographics in the area with the highest percentages from the total are: White (80 per cent), Asian (8.6 per cent), and Black (2.5 per cent) (U.S. Census 2000). There are no Russian or Turkmen persons living in the area, therefore Dayza's family must commute far or plan a gathering in order to get together with fellow Turkmen families.

Now that we have taken a look into the background information of the interviewed women, I must make a few remarks before moving to the next section. The interview questions were formulated in English first, then translated into Russian. The reason why I chose to conduct the interviews in Russian was due to: 1) my own comfort in addressing the topic in Russian, and 2) two out of the three women spoke Russian regularly at home. Moreover, the use of the Russian language in Turkmen families is quite common. Also, some Turkmen individuals were educated in Russian universities and speak Russian regularly with their families.

As for my own linguistic abilities, after arriving to California, in order to retain my Russian language skills, I attended a Russian summer school and spoke to my father in Russian. Within a matter of years, concentrating heavily on learning English, retaining Russian, my own Turkmen speaking ability worsened. Gradually, the conversations held with my family in Turkmenistan switched from Turkmen to Russian.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The goal of this study is to conduct an ethnographic type of fieldwork. Ethnography is a social science research method which involves the application of a variety of methods available to any researcher 'in a way that is obvious to common sense,' it is close to the way we all make sense of the world surrounding us in our daily lives, and at the same time, can be 'scientifically rigorous

and systemic' (O'Reilly 2005, p. 1). Nonetheless, one must be wary of defining ethnography because it is applied in different ways in different disciplines with different traditions. Researchers trained in the field of ethnography rely heavily on up close, personal experience and possible participation, not just observation. Ethnographic methods are a means of exploring local points of view, households and community 'funds of knowledge' (Genzuk 2003, p. 1). Ethnography is an exploratory research which moves from 'learning' to 'testing' (Agar 1996), whilst research problems, perspectives, and theories emerge and modify. In the beginning of his book, Fetterman (1998, pp. 1-2) elaborately explains that:

Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture...The ethnographic study allows multiple interpretations of reality and alternative interpretations of data throughout the study. The ethnographer is interested in understanding and describing a social and cultural scene from the emic, or insider's, perspective. The ethnographer is both storyteller and scientist; the closer the reader of an ethnography comes to understanding the native's point of view, the better the story and the better the science.

The aspects of ethnographic research methods are relevant to my own research goals, thus ethnography is the method chosen for this thesis. As a method, it is an approach similar to what we do every day – observing and making sense of our surroundings. Another factor Fetterman mentions is that an open mind is vital and that ethnographic work is not always orderly. Over the years, many other prominent researchers have discussed further what it means to do ethnography. The following paragraphs include examples of a few of the famous ethnographers in the field, and some researchers' thoughts on ethnography.

Having never conducted ethnographic work myself, this advice is not only helpful but necessary. With enough experience, the researcher may be able to refrain from judgement and be able to listen and observe their research subjects. There are various ways to conduct ethnographic work, and the duty of the ethnographer is to figure out what is most suitable for their research goals. This shall be determined as we move to the methods used within ethnography.

Participant Observation

Le Compte and Schensul (1999, p. 1) note, that the participant observer is the primary ‘tool’ of ethnography. O’Reilly (2005, p. 84) states that the key elements of participant observation are: gaining access, taking time, learning the language, participation and observation, and taking notes. However, a few researchers within the field have stated that the term participant observation is an oxymoron in itself. How do we participate and observe at the same time? The term itself is a paradox which has the effect of further confusing the researcher, especially the case of a novice researcher. Whether we take on more observing than participating or visa-versa, the main aspect of the method is to gain access to the group being studied and to spend some time within that group.

My position as a researcher is that I am an immigrant Turkmen woman myself. Having lived in the United States for approximately 12 years now, I’m viewed by my family and other Turkmen as rather ‘Americanized.’ This *positionality* is made evident during gatherings with Turkmen families. They may discuss politics, cultural habits of the host country, and at times reminisce to how things used to be when they were growing up. While I may comprehend bits and pieces of their conversations, I can not relate wholly to how they perceive their status in the US in relation to Turkmenistan. I arrived to the US at a younger age than them, in turn affecting my behavior towards American customs.

In fact, I can relate more with the American boisterous and outspoken ways, making me unable to no side with the Turkmen obedient and introverted female role. Nonetheless, during gatherings and encounters with Turkmen families, I maintain awareness of the cultural differences and act accordingly. For instance, I may tone down my extroverted behavior and control my opinions in the presence of Turkmen families that I do not know. When at gatherings with a traditional Turkmen family, I engage in the traditional customs; e.g., women and men sitting in different rooms during mealtimes, or the women doings most of the setting up the table and cleaning up everything afterwards, and so forth. While I may not uphold these traditional Turkmen customs any longer, I believe that I must act respectfully in the homes of other Turkmen families.

The participant observation took place during four gatherings of Turkmen families. While the whole family was present at the gatherings, I concentrated more on the behaviors of the Turkmen women. In addition, it is not customary to invite the women without consulting their husband first, thus I had to rely on my own brother and/or father to call the men and invite them and their families to our home. The same was done when we were invited to the homes of any of the Turkmen families, the husband of the family called my brother and/or father to invite us all. Thus, my inability to meet with the women alone resulted in conducting my participant observation during the gatherings. At the same time, I realise that the women acted differently in the presence of the men and their children.

For instance, in the presence of the husband, the Turkmen woman might refrain from speaking openly about personal issues, appearing too opinionated, or defying the husbands' arguments in a discussion. Traditionally, the woman has to cater to guests and/or the family, thus it is not customary for her to get too comfortable, to remain sedentary for a long time, and disregard the needs of others. As for the children, they are closer to the mother than the father, therefore they rely heavily on their mother's presence and help.

Semi-structured Interviews

According to Bernard (1988, p. 5), semi-structured interviewing is best used when you won't get more than one chance to interview an individual. One aspect of semi-structured interviews is that they are low cost, rapid method for gathering information from individuals or small groups. The flexible nature of the written interview allows for the researcher to stay focused on the issue, while allowing the participants to initiate and discuss issues which they consider to be relevant (The World Bank 2011, p. 1 of 1).

However, there are pros and cons of this method which must be kept in mind. Wolcott (1999, p. 56) mentions that interviewing is a time-consuming task and it rarely happens the way we expect it. It can range from obtaining too little information to getting too much material that is then difficult to arrange into coherent writing. Interviewing could mean that the researcher is exposed to many realities, which is comprised of many sections and, at times, a lot of information. Schutz (1967, p. xxviii), a phenomenologist, comments that we must engage in the

process of selecting constitutive details of experience, reflecting on them, giving them order, and thus making sense of them, which makes telling stories a meaning-making relationship. According to Schutz, the way to meaning is to be able to put behavior in context. While keeping the context in mind, semi-structured interviewing is a method that enables the researcher to ask questions from the subjects, attempting to tap into their stories. The method allows some room for flexibility which in turn allows some freedom for the interviewees to answer the questions in the way that is suitable for them.

My *positionality* while conducting the semi-structured interviews was kept in mind. For instance, I considered the fact that the women could view me as an ‘Americanized’ single Turkmen woman, and in turn unable to fully comprehend their situation as an immigrant Turkmen mother. Absurd, yet realistic, is the possibility that it could have crossed the women’s minds whether I was secretly conducting this research for some Turkmen officials. I was unable to meet the women alone at their homes or at another place, thus I had to go around the constrictions of the research and plan a lunch where the whole family could gather. Only after a meal and a relaxed conversation could I ask the women to conduct the interview. In order to deviate from the influence of their husbands on their responses during the interviews, I managed to get the women to a different room, where they could have some freedom and privacy to talk. Most of the time, we sat in a comfortable position, facing each other, with the women anticipating the questions. They had never participated in any similar research and, judging by their behavior, did not know what to expect. After the interviews, we joined the whole family in the living room, as the kids shouted and played games, and continued the post-meal ritual of tea with dessert.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are a vital part of any research process. When finding subjects for my research, I used the principle of voluntary participation, which simply means that the people not be pressured into participating in the research. Upon finding some research subjects, through a

key informant, I achieve informed consent by explaining to them the purpose of my research, the general procedures, and the content of the interview. In addition, in order to reassure the very few participants of the integrity of this study, I was able to obtain a letter of statement from my thesis supervisor Professor Philip Muus. The letter plainly stated the intent of my study, for what University the research is being conducted for, and the contact information of the supervisor.

Moreover, the research guaranteed complete confidentiality and anonymity, by altering the names of the participants, giving an estimate for their age, and safeguarding their residence location by omitting it (e.g. the name of the city/town). Before commencing the interviews, I reminded the participants of the confidentiality and the anonymity of the research. In addition, before recording them on a voice recorder, I made sure to ask their consent. I tried to make the women as comfortable as possible by interviewing them at their own homes and in a place that they picked. By avoiding the ‘interrogation’ type of process, I talked with the women openly first, asking them about their day-to-day lives and so forth. At any point that the participant felt uncomfortable by any of the questions/topics, I made sure to not push it on them and try to keep moving forward to other areas of discussion. Overall, I kept in mind the general well being and the comfort of the women while interviewing, trying to attempt to keep them at ease and relaxed.

Besides, originally I was planning to incorporate politics and religion as some of the indicators for integration, but due to the sensitive nature of those two topics, I had to remove them altogether from my research. The women were cautious at all times when speaking of or responding to topics regarding politics at home, for in Turkmenistan dissidents and at times their families were severely punished. Considering all that, one could only imagine the sensitive nature of politics when interviewing immigrants from Turkmenistan.

4.6 LIMITATIONS

This research was conducted in California only. Although the participants were from a large metropolitan area, there were very few participant numbers; approximately 6 Turkmen women, of which 4 women consented to partake in the study, and ultimately 3 participated. There were various limitations of my study.

Time limitation resulted in recruiting only 3 women for my study. Also, it restricted me from conducting 2nd or 3rd interviews with the same women, not allowing me to explore more indicators for integration. Moreover, the women didn't have much free time due to their own family and work commitments. In addition, the time limitation kept me from comparing the immigrant Turkmen women with other immigrant women in the area, thus allowing for a larger study.

Limitation of funds was another obstacle which kept me from traveling to other states and expanding my study to more than the Turkmen women in California. It is both the combination of time and funds which limited my study to interviews of immigrant Turkmen women who are residing in California. There are many other Turkmen women residing in different states, whether temporary or permanent immigrants and thus this research is not a representation of all Turkmen women residing in the USA.

Another limitation was the lack of plentiful research available on the immigration, let alone the integration, of persons from Turkmenistan to the USA. There is research conducted on the integration of Russian Jews, example in New York and Philadelphia, however there is no research on integration of Russian-speaking persons immigrants. This paucity shows the necessity of further research concerning immigrants originating from the former Soviet Union, currently known as Central Asian blocs.

Also, I am an immigrant Turkmen woman myself and I have lived in California for the past twelve years. This could have influenced the research process and outcome. The women were being interviewed by their own coethnic, thus the product is bound to be somewhat different as oppose to if the women were being interviewed by a researcher who is from another country or cultural background.

Finally, one must bear in mind that this is rather an ambitious topic of study for a novice researcher like myself. I had to learn by trial and error what it takes to produce such a study, especially when approaching immigrant women from such a isolated, patriarchal country such as Turkmenistan.

5. FINDINGS

Ezzy (2002) states that data collection, analysis and writing up (and of course the role of research design and theory) are tightly entangled in ethnographic research. Furthermore, Berg (2004, p. 37) emphasises that:

There is a tension between the theory-before-research model and the research-before-theory model, but this tension can be resolved if we think of research progressing not in a linear way but in a spiral, where you are moving forward from idea to theory to design to data collection to findings, analysis and back to theory, but where each two steps forward may involve one or two steps back.

However, this does not mean that the process is circular; there is a need to split up the time in a linear way in order to achieve results. The analysis of data, as O'Reilly (2005, p. 178) stresses, is ongoing.

Keeping that in mind, in this section, I will discuss the findings from the semi-structured interviews with 3 immigrant Turkmen women and explore which actions, in their opinion, taken led to successful integration and which were some obstacles to integration. Those two topics will be discussed while considering the concepts of structuration theory by Anthony Giddens. Then, I will move onto the third subsection to describe the role of networks in the integration process into American society.

5.1 The Role of Human Agency

The 'agency approach' posits that the only reality we can comprehend is the deeds/actions of individuals. Giddens points out that the actor is an embodied unit, whom in turn possesses causal powers that s/he may choose to act (or not) in the ongoing sequence of events in the world. In the following selected quotations from the interviews, the actions undertaken by the agents will be elaborated.

I was curious to know how the women immigrated to California, whose decision it was, and whether they were happy about their situations. Upon interviewing, when asked whether she chose to immigrate to the USA, Jahan said:

'I did not simply pick USA, my father-in-law lived there already. My husband visited him once and then asked me if I would like to move there as well. He would not have moved there without me. I wanted him to go, and I wanted to break free of my life here in Turkmenistan – of the corruption and being constantly watched by the State, and whether you are being followed or not.'

After taking a short break to think and process, Jahan further continued:

'We moved here for my kid! I did not want her growing up there. In fact, we, those in my age, were the last generation with a normal education in Turkmenistan.'

The women are cautious when sharing their opinion about the reality in Turkmenistan, however they do mention a few aspects during the interview. The power in human agency is made visible in the women's choice to immigrate to California and take measures towards their experience of a successful integration. All of the women seemed to share a common aspect of immigration, which is for the sake of their children's futures. While actively choosing to immigrate, how do these women experience their integration processes.

During the interview, when asked whether she feels integrated into American society, Aygul answered:

'I feel like an immigrant here and I cannot relate to the American culture. I am afraid to say something wrong in front of them. For instance, I do not know their humor, what they like, etc. I have a complex of being around them alone. The barrier exists because of the language and the culture. As they say, I am from another dough.'

To the same question, Dayza said that:

'I can not say that I have integrated fully into the American society, because I do not speak English that well. I still prefer Turkmen food instead of American, I still wear the Turkmen national outfits, but my family is more integrated than I am. My kids are doing well at school, my husband has a good job, and soon we are moving to our own home. Overall, I really like it here, much more than back in my home country where there is constant pressure from the authorities.'

According to Ward and Searle (1990), Ward and Kennedy (1992, 1993a, 1993b), the sociocultural adaptation, measured in relation to the degree of difficulty experienced in the performance of daily tasks, is more reliant on variables such as the length of residence in the new culture, language ability, cultural distance, and the quantity of contact with host nationals.

To the same question above, Jahan gave a detailed explanation to the reasons for her successful integration and the obstacles she faced during the process:

'I feel like integration for me was successful because we do not live in a Russian community (as most Russian speakers do in San Francisco). My husband thought that by living there we could not practice our English language abilities. So many immigrants live in their own group surroundings, no knowledge of the English language; plus, they end up working in the same place, within the same ethnic groups. It is hard to live outside of your own group, but it is better in the long run ...'

The Russian community that Jahan speaks of is the Russian-speaking immigrants to San Francisco are Russian-Jewish people who suffered during the former Soviet Union. Thus, to escape persecution, marginalization, and massacre, many of them escaped abroad. According to the 2000 US Census reports, there are 27,243 (3.5 percent) Russian-speakers from Russian and Ukraine in San Francisco. Between 1990 and 2000, almost 700,000 new immigrants arrived to

the nine-county (San Francisco Bay area) region, and of those there are estimated 31,250 Russians and Ukrainians (San Francisco Department of Public Health, p. 2).

Overall, Jahan felt that she was on her way to a successful integration into American society. One of the reasons why Jahan feels that way could be that she has been working now for almost a year, and despite the fact that she started working for Russian families, she has still been able to practice some English speaking. Working full time, interacting more with other Americans, being engaged in her kids' school events is what shaped her positive experience.

While Jahan has had positive experiences thus far, this is not the same for the other women. The following quote by Aygul shows hesitation in integration:

'Eventually, I want to learn English and get educated here. Also, I do not know any Americans here, I only know some Turkmen and Turkish people (my neighbors). I speak with them in Turkmen and Turkish, we spend time together, so I cannot relate at all, on any level, with Americans.'

An impediment to integration is Aygul's habitual interaction with persons of Turkish, Turkmen and Russian origins. Thus, she is unable to practice speaking English and is not forced to adapt to the American customs and habits. This clustering of coethnics separates those individuals from the natives; while it can provide safety and support, it could have negative consequences as well. In addition, language ability is among the essential indicators for integration.

Using data from the 2000 US Census, Bean and Stevens (2003) stress that among immigrants from non-English speaking countries; only 10 per cent did not speak English at all at the time of the census. In addition, Bean and Stevens discover positive association between a foreign-born person's time in the USA and his or her ability to speak English well (p. 155). The vitality of the English language comes up again and again throughout the interviews with the Turkmen women. Moreover, this importance is stressed not only for the labor market, but even more so for their children. Consequently, 'the language skills of parents in immigrant families have important implications for language acquisition among children because parents provide the

earliest environment in which children learn to speak' (The Center for Social and Demographic Analysis 2009, p. 1). This is illustrated in the following quote by Aygul:

'Knowing English is very important. I want to help my children with their homework, since they actually understand better in English now, even more than in Turkmen or Russian. Plus, reading English books is more interesting for them, so it would be nice for me to read to them as well.'

The women were making effort or planning to learn English for the sake of their children. Their children acquired fluency in English approximately after 6-8 months of studying in a local school. At home, Dayza and Aygul spoke only in Turkmen with their children, while Jahan spoke mostly in Russian and rarely in English with her kid. As well, the children's time between home and school becomes an exposure to two different cultures.

When asked about the differences between American and Turkmen cultures, all three women expressed their discontent with the way American parents were raising their children. Dayza said:

'I think that American parents do not raise their kids properly. Kids do not appreciate their parents and that is where all the problems stem from. When the kids become adults, they stop communicating with their parents as often and send them off to an elderly home.'

To the same question, Jahan expressed the same concern, while adding that:

'In Turkmenistan, our parents live with us until the last of their days. Consequently, our kids learn to spend time with our elder parents at home, such as helping them around the house, aiding to get up. Through this process, kids become understanding and caring. This type of behavior must commence in the home and it is not something that can be taught at school.'

They mentioned that in America there lacks a higher respect for parents and elder people. This is an illustration of the ideals of respect for the elder and the sacredness of the family present in the Turkmen culture. All three women mentioned that they wanted to raise their children with Turkmen values and ethnics, despite the challenges this may cause due to living and growing up in California. The women knew that their children would be influenced by their peers at school, however the leverage they had is that at home the children would be constantly reminded of their own customs. Besides, the women all agreed that the children must visit Turkmenistan whenever the finances allowed.

5.2 The Role of Structure

In structuration theory, Giddens attempts to transcend the dualism of structure and agency. He posits that, rather than representing different phenomena, structure and agency are mutually dependent and internally related (as cited in McAnulla 1998, p. 3). Structure is both enabling and constraining, thus it is ‘not a barrier to action, but essentially involved in its production (Giddens 1979, p. 71). Those two aspects of structure are coined the ‘duality of structure,’ for the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that comprise those systems. Structure only exists through agency and agents have access to ‘rules and resources’ which can enable or constrain their actions. These actions, in turn, can result in the reconstitution of the structure, defined again as rules and resources, which affect future action. There is a bond of interdependency between structure and agency, or as Giddens says, they are in fact two sides of the same coin (McAnulla, p. 3).

Having noted briefly the role of structure, it is necessary to take gender into account when studying the individual lives of women within the migration context. ‘Recognizing gender is simultaneously being structural and a component of individual identity prompts attention to the macro and micro ‘structures’ without privileging one at the expense of the other’ (ibid., p. 29). Both Morokvasic (1984) and Tienda and Booth (1991) concur that immigration brings about changes in gender relations that have complex and uneven effects; it presents women with opportunities and, at the same time, imposes constraints.

In my research, an example of a gender-specific constraint that the immigrant Turkmen women faced was staying at home to raise children and care for the family. And on the opposite side of the spectrum, the gender-specific opportunity one of the women faced was that she was a Russian-speaking nanny, who is also a mother, becoming an asset for Russian families.

The naturalization status of an immigrant could act as a structural barrier or advantage, especially when taking the labor market into consideration. Moreover, scholars note that much of the OECD (2010, p. 2) reviews on the labor market integration of immigrants and their children validate:

That naturalized immigrants often tend to have better labour market outcomes than foreign-born foreigners, even after controlling for other factors such as education, country of origin, and length of stay. While there may be some positive selectivity in the decision to apply for citizenship – those who are better integrated tend to be more inclined to naturalize – improvements in labour market outcomes for those who became citizens are also observed in longitudinal studies following the same people over time.

It is another vital indicator of integration into the host society, ‘signaling both the society’s acceptance of the immigrant as ‘its own’, and the immigrant’s commitment to membership’ (Fix et al. 2005, p. 16).

When asked about her current employment situation, Dayza responded:

‘I don’t work at the moment, and I haven’t worked since I’ve arrived here to the USA, because short after arrival, I had my third baby. Taking care of him and the family didn’t leave me much time to search for work. Recently my son enrolled in kindergarten and I signed up to volunteer there so that I can spend some time with English speakers. Now I’m waiting on my fourth baby and can’t look for work. However, I do hope to eventually start working so that I may help my husband support us.’

Dayza is more traditional than the other two. Legally, she was allowed to work, however due to the birth of her third and now expecting her fourth child, she had no time for anything else. Her primary concern was her children and her husband. To the same question above, Aygul replied:

'I am not working because the visa doesn't allow me to study or work, unless I'm attending an English language school. I am starting to look for studies now, which could help my future career. I have my degree in Economics from Turkmenistan.'

Aygul is not permitted to work due to her visa restrictions, since they arrived as a family for her husband's admittance into a PhD program. Her degree in economics is nearly futile in the USA, since degrees in higher education from Turkmenistan are not recognized. This is yet another case of an immigrant suffering from de-skilling and the nonrecognition of their foreign credentials.

Aygul stays at home, day after day, taking care of the kids. This doesn't allow much exposure to the outside world, although watching American television provides some insight into the American media culture. She does meet from time to time with the Turkish neighbors and a few Turkmens, remaining within her ethnic enclave, in turn, not interacting at all with Americans. She mentioned once of feeling lonely and isolated. She continued:

'I am completely dependent on my husband when it comes to getting around the town for shopping, groceries, and other things. I know that my life would be much easier if I get my own driver's license and use our car to get around town.'

While interviewing Aygul, she was much more reserved, almost afraid of the things that she was going to be asked, despite the constant reassurance of the confidentiality of the research. Most of her answers were rather short. She did not want to discuss any matters pertaining to remittances or her family situation in Turkmenistan.

Jahan is legally allowed to work in the USA, which further facilitates her integration process. When asked about the employment situation, she answered:

'It wasn't hard to find a job; there are many Russians here who need nannies. Russian-speaking nannies are not that demanding as American nannies, and they can pay them a little less. I can find a job, regardless of the circumstances. Besides, if you want to, you can always

find a job in the USA. But it is still necessary to communicate in English, and without that language ability, it is hard to find a job here.'

Recognizing the importance of the English language ability, Jahan is able to find a job rather easily. In addition, due to a large Russian population in California, she recognises the high demand of Russian speaking nannies, and are according to her *'willing to be paid a little less than native American nannies.'* After working for a Russian family for some time, Jahan decided to seek similar employment positions with American families. She mentioned that American 'white' families paid a little more and additionally, she could practice speaking English while at work.

5.3 The Role of Networks

Recent scholarship has begun to consider the vital role of networks in understanding migration processes. Prior to 1960s, most scholarship on immigration and ethnicity rejected the cultural outlooks of migration populations or viewed it as a hindrance to their adjustment to the host society. Light (1984) stresses that 'the study of networks has revealed that resource-providing solidarity and trust is in many cases an outcome of migrants' shared experience of discrimination.' Glazer and Moynihan (1963, p. 18) state that 'those who came in with some kind of disadvantage, created by a different language, a different religion, a different race, found both comfort and material support in creating various kinds of organizations.'

The extent of the networks support and strength is illustrated in the following quote from the interview with Jahan:

'As for the obstacles, if I came here alone without any relatives, it would have been difficult. Thankfully, I came here with having a husband who arrived before me and his dad had been living in the USA for a long time now. It was not a tragedy.'

After a short pause, she continued:

'[sic] everything I know now is because of my husband. However, it must have been very hard for his dad who had no one to help him when he arrived to the USA. Coming here without the support of people is very difficult, for example: knowing where to look for jobs, where to go shopping, where to find this or that, etc.'

Jahan's husband's father had been living in California for a long time. He provided the resources and dedicated much of his time making sure that Jahan's family integrates smoothly. For example, he found an adult school with ESL (English as a Second Language) courses, enlisted them in the course, and drove them there several times a week until they acquired their own driver's license. Jahan had said many times of the indispensable help her father-in-law has provided, and that she was grateful to him for that. Portes and Bach (1985) stated that ties between veteran migrants and coethnics already produced in host societies have long been known to offer potential and new migrants with information, resources, housing, jobs, travel funds, and other benefits.

Additionally, research by Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) and Gold (2002) confirms that immigrants and minority children can be 'shielded from the mean streets and denigrating stereotypes of the host society by spending periods of time in their families' countries of origin' (Gold, p. 265). Along those lines, Jahan stated:

'I want my kid to return to Turkmenistan as much as possible, maybe every other summer, so that she can be with our family who are still there, be reminded of her roots and ties to the Turkmen culture.'

The women seemed concerned with their children forgetting Turkmen history, customs and cultural knowledge. While they could provide some education on this in their homes, they felt as if that was not enough. Aygul responded:

'My children are losing touch with Turkmen culture. For example, our traditional clothing seems strange and foreign for my daughter. The acceptable attire of kids in Turkmenistan is different than it is in America.'

All of the women's children dressed in western clothing (e.g.: jeans, tee-shirt). In California, their parents did not pressure them into wearing Turkmen traditional outfits.

Further in my research, I discovered that the networks the immigrant Turkmen women have, whether before or after arrival to California, facilitate their integration process. Thus, when asked whether she knew any Turkmen before arriving to the USA, Dayza responded:

'Before arriving here, I didn't know any Turkmen in USA. After arrival to California, I actually met them through my husband, and he encountered them when he was living alone in the USA (before my kids and I joined him). We all met each other through others who introduced us and we keep close ties now. We meet up at each others' homes pretty often.'

In the case of these immigrant Turkmen women, the size of the networks did not matter, and the networks did not have to be only social.

As far as financial and social remittances, networks provide a trustworthy means of supplying capital to the home country to support relatives, educate children, and improve local infrastructure (Levitt 2001). At this moment, the only way to make monetary remittances to Turkmenistan is by either Western Union or physically bringing a limited amount of cash when traveling back. It is impossible to send money via banks due to unavailable infrastructure in Turkmenistan and the distrust for the general banking system. When asked whether she sends monetary support back to Turkmenistan, Jahan stated:

'I don't make monetary remittances because my family has enough money. How I help is by sending packages to my family with medicine, electronics, and other things that aren't available in Turkmenistan. Especially medicine, since the imported Russian medicine is either counterfeit or contains uncertain additives.'

All three of the women maintained close ties with their siblings and parents who are still back in Turkmenistan. Two of them make use of the current social media such as Facebook to stay in touch with friends and meet other Turkmens who may be living abroad. Due to the recent spread of the WiFi connection in Turkmenistan, people are able to communicate cheaply via Skype and/or Yahoo messenger. Aygul said:

‘On Yahoo messenger, I speak once a week with my parents, sisters and brother. Also, I make sure to communicate every week with my husbands side of the family in Turkmenistan. I have to keep them all up-to-date so they do not worry about us.’

Remittances are made in the form of a) sending packages with products unavailable in Turkmenistan (e.g.: clothes, medicine, electronics), and b) ‘social remittances’ which are achieved through sharing of music, movies, and fashion between the USA and Turkmenistan. As far as networks, most of the Turkmen families either know each other or know of each other due to the small number of them here in California. All of the three women met other Turkmen families after arriving to the USA, either through their husband or through word-of-mouth.

In summary of two previous sections, the role of human agency is intertwined with the structural components existent in the host society. The level of integration the immigrant woman is capable of achieving is dependent upon a variety of factors: naturalization, language proficiency, availability of networks, joining the labor market, and so forth. However, those factors are also tied to one another in the following ways: for example, without naturalization, there is no legal work to be found; also, inability to converse in English, means difficulty acquiring a competitive job within the host society. Nonetheless, despite the fact that structure possesses enabling and constraining abilities, the human agency, on the other hand, possesses power. This power, thus, allows the immigrant woman to function within the system and find ways to survive. Giddens (1984, p. 9) comments that, ‘agency concerns events of which an individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given

sequence of conduct, have acted differently.’ Using Berry’s model of acculturation, the women seemed to fit into two of the categories: integration and separation. Jahan is the only one would fit into integration category, because of the presence of contact participation and cultural maintenance. Dayza and Aygul fit under the category of separation, because while they kept their cultural maintenance, they did not maintain contact participation.

5.3 Participant Observation

Participating and observing people among my own ethnic group is a challenging process. For weeks, I could not get myself to sit down and come up with coherent explanations of what I witnessed or still witness at Turkmen gatherings. As a result, while conducting research among the Turkmen people, the customs and behaviors that make absolute sense to me are left out in assumption that the reader is on the same page as myself. In reality, this is not so. The reader who is not an immigrant Turkmen woman, as myself, could not possibly understand why we do the things we do. Just because it makes sense to me, does not mean the same for others. For instance, in traditional Turkmen families, it is customary for women and men to gather in different rooms, as the wife of the inviting party is responsible for serving both parties. This holds true even after this traditional family migrated to Western countries. Thus, how do I construct a bridge between my subject (which is in essence my life) and my reader?

A point of departure could be honesty. I am horrified when visiting a Turkmen family or even being in the presence of any Turkmen persons other than my family. Why this is so is not difficult for me to decipher. A significant portion of this fear arises from the fact that over the years, I have lost my ability to communicate in Turkmen. In reality, this is not such a disaster considering most Turkmen individuals are fluent in Russian as well. Maybe it is the pure principle that my inability to speak Turkmen directly correlates with my inability to relate entirely with my own roots. It is a cultural distance shaped by emigrating to the United States at a younger age. I would tell my father that I was ashamed of having forgotten my own mother tongue, and he would respond convincingly that ‘the world is not concerned if you speak Turkmen or not, besides your English is exceptional and you speak French and Russian which

are significant in the international arena.’ He had a good point, however this did not soothe my worries. So, when meeting with other Turkmen, I would speak with them in Russian. If they were to unknowingly switch to speaking Turkmen, I could understand the essence of the conversation, but would go back to responding in Russian. This personal issue, however, did not stop me from participating and observing the immigrant Turkmen women during the gatherings.

Jahan

Jahan is the one woman with whom I spent a lot of time, thus I would like dedicate some time describing what I witnessed when I was around her. I saw her possibly two to three times a week, and spent some weekends babysitting her kid. Jahan is the outgoing type who is not afraid to ask questions and approach individuals, however this was more so with persons of Russian-speaking backgrounds. She would share with me information about the Russian women whom she met through her kid’s friends at school. Thereafter, she started joining forums and online community blogs to discover that there were local Russian-speaking gatherings and community events. She asked me to join her and her kid to one community pool party where Russian-speakers came together to interact, share food, and let their kids play in the pool. I went to this event with her. Some of the people there seemed to know each other and few others, like us, were new to the community. Jahan seemed at ease with the Russian women and was not afraid of joining in conversations, which in this case started with inviting them to try Turkmen food. Also, her kid speaks fluent Russian, so she found Russian kids her age and played with them in the pool for an hour. Although I have had previous exposure to Russian culture and customs, I had never been at ease with their ways. They come off as cold and unreceptive to new people, Jahan would say that this is no big deal since she was used to dealing with Russians in Turkmenistan. After that event, Jahan attended a few other Russian community gatherings.

At her home, Jahan was a mother, a cook, and a financial contributor. When coming home tired and irritable after work, she would often complain that he is unable to cook or care for the home and that she had to do everything herself. Their routine at home had become the following: she gets up around six-thirty in the morning to make breakfast for her husband, then she would wake her kid up and prepare her for school, take her to school, and go to work. After returning

from work, she would cook dinner for the family. The routine seemed to be tiring for her, yet she would not stop doing this at any point because that is simply what she had done for a long time now. Although she was modern in her thinking, she was willing to abide by the traditional role for women in Turkmenistan - the housewife. She would tell me that Turkmen women are wise; that you can not oppose your husband in all matters, that sometimes you just nod and say 'sure honey', even if you know deep in your heart that he is wrong. It seemed to me that Jahan was like a rock - a rock not in the sense that she had no feelings or was cold, but a rock in the sense of strength. She stands unshaken and has bravely faced the difficulties in her life.

I noticed that oftentimes when getting some free time, Jahan would grab her laptop computer and read Russian forums online. During the first year of her arrival to California, she used to watch Russian movies on the computer, which she ceased to do after becoming comfortable with understanding English. This could be due to the fact that her English language abilities were poor, thus watching American television was useless for her. At some point, her husband would tell her to stop watching Russian movies and that her English was never going to get better that way. This caused some friction. She would tell me that in Turkmenistan she did not used to speak Turkmen at all until she met her husband. In her home in California, she would speak in Russian with her husband and kid, unless they were saying something in secrecy and did not want their kid to understand, then they would switch to Turkmen. Her kid had gone from understanding Turkmen while living in Turkmenistan to forgetting her mother tongue and acquiring the ability to speak English at her school in California. After a year of being in an American school, their kid had began to reply and speak to them only in English. Jahan and her husband would jokingly say to their kid that they were going to send her to Turkmenistan to their parent's home so that she could practice speaking Turkmen.

When I would ask if she missed Turkmenistan, Jahan would tell me how happy she was to be living in California and that she would not want to go back there except for visiting her family. She would tell me that she was too progressive of a woman and did not belong in Turkmenistan. She would say 'of course I miss my family and friends, but this is my life now, my priority is my own family.' When feeling homesick, she would often urge her husband to call the few Turkmen families who lived in the area to get together. She enjoyed cooking and was

exceptional in preparing Turkmen traditional cuisine, such as *polow* (rice medley with meat and vegetables), *somsa* (bread pockets filled with either meat, mushroom, or spinach), *manty* (steamed palm-sized thin pancakes with beef or lamb chunk filling), etc. In addition, she would always have a meal prepared when her husband's father was visiting, since in Turkmen customs the daughter-in-law has to cater to the husband's parents (e.g.: cooking, cleaning, etc.).

Although Jahan had studied in the banking sector in Turkmenistan, she would not express her desire to continue that path here in California. In fact, when asking her about careers, she would not mention anything about her past education. At some point, she had asked me to help her find information regarding nursing programs in the area. This idea did not work out due to the high cost of higher education in California, and she began thinking of alternative careers. Some time later, Jahan told me that what she wanted to do is open up a bi-lingual kindergarden. This gave her a double advantage she said, for she loved working with children and having your own kindergarden would supply her with a firm income to live comfortably.

The Gatherings

The four gatherings took place in different Turkmen families homes. I will discuss only the gatherings that provided substantial information about the immigrant Turkmen women's behaviors, conversations, and lifestyles.

I will begin by describing the gathering which took place at Dayza's home. Having never met her previous to this occasion, I had no idea of what type of Turkmen family this was - a traditional or modern one. Upon arrival, Dayza greeted us and lead us women to another room where the food was already prepared. The men went to a different room. She had cooked a traditional Turkmen dish *dowroma* (a special soup poured over bread chunks with pieces of meat and onion), which takes some hours in preparation, and had different salads such as *salat olivye* (traditional Russian salad) and *salat svyokly* (beat salad) to go along with the meal. We sat on the floor with a thin piece of plastic table cover in front of us, where all of the food and drinks were set. This is quite customary in Turkmen culture to eat seated on the floor, although the concept of eating around the table is becoming common for the modern and wealthy Turkmens. Dayza wore her long cotton Turkmen dress which had the *yakah*, a hand-woven colorful design sewn into the

dress and located around the neck area. She remained somewhat reserved, and spoke only in Turkmen with her children. Her children did not speak Russian, however were speaking comfortably in English. Jahan was one of the interviewed women present at the gathering. She wore a traditional long Turkmen dress as well. She is the one who made sure that I felt comfortable among them, and she was the one who was the first to respond to topics in the conversation. There was another immigrant Turkmen woman, Gulya, whom I had met once. She was wearing a traditional outfit just like that of Jahan and Dayza. Gulya is a friendly, outspoken woman in her mid-thirties. She arrived to the USA about two years ago in order to provide a better future for her kid. They had been a very successful and wealthy family back in Turkmenistan.

The women spoke mainly in Turkmen, sometimes converting to Russian. The women discussed their family life, the everyday lives they lead, and the gossip of events in Turkmenistan. The gossip consisted of what is happening in their individual cities in Turkmenistan; for example, who is marrying who, who bought what house or car, who is doing what with their lives, and so forth. Gulya seemed to take on the role of an informal leader, who was not afraid of being opinionated. At one point they turned to me and remarked that I needed to find a nice Turkmen gentleman to marry. Seeing not much of a response from me, then, Gulya moved ahead to plan the future marriage of her now 9-year-old son. Dayza agreed with Gulya, while Jahan joked and said that her son might marry a Philippina or Vietnamese girl. After all, Jahan said, we were living in America where people of all cultures and backgrounds exist. Jahan did not share the same opinion as Dayza and Gulya. She had mentioned to me that what matters is that you love your partner and not so much whether he was of this or that background. Arranged marriages still exist in Turkmenistan., and are a traditional Turkmen custom. However, over the last years, the ‘rebellious’ and well-traveled Turkmens are trying to evade such a marriage and prefer to pick their own partners.

After eating lunch, Dayza set the table for tea and dessert, which is quite common in Turkmen customs to have tea and cookies throughout the day and especially after a meal. In Turkmenistan, conversations and gatherings among neighbors and visiting family members would be held either inside the living room or on casual occasions on the *tapçan* (an outside

seating area shaped like a large short table). The women would share stories about Turkmenistan and express their desire to go visit as soon as possible. Even more than Jahan or Gulya, it seemed as if Dayza was in between two continents – not stranded, but torn between the two. It was the way she talked about Turkmenistan, in a longing way; it was not the longing for the country per se, but the longing for the culture and her family left behind. Recently, Dayza and her family were able to purchase a home and move out of their apartment.

The second gathering took place in Aygul's apartment where she lived with her family. Aygul's family was more relaxed than Dayza's, they were younger and less traditional. Her husband was doing his PhD and was more lenient with the traditional Turkmen male and female roles. For instance, 1) they would both share their opinion equally in front of us, and 2) she was dressed in jeans and a loose tee-shirt. We sat around a table for lunch, and Aygul had prepared a dish common to Central Asia and Russia, *golubtsy* (Russian meat-stuffed cabbage rolls in sour cream sauce).

I made more effort to abide by Turkmen customs since I do not know Aygul and her family that well. Upon entering their home, I did not sit down on a chair or the couch, I was up helping her serve the meals and set-up the table. This usually shows respect to the host, although at times the host would ask the guests to sit down and relax while they served them. The air in the room seemed more relaxed as men and women interacted in one conversation and discussion. The people at the gathering included: Jahan and her family, a Turkmen guy (Maksat) visiting from London, Aygul and her family, and myself.

This time around, unlike at the gathering at Dayza's house, Jahan was dressed in jeans and a sweater. It was a relaxed environment with less pressure on dressing in traditional Turkmen outfits. Everyone spoke mostly in Russian, however Maksat seemed uneasy speaking in Russian since he would respond and ask questions only in Turkmen. Aygul seemed somewhat passive as Jahan would dominate some of the conversations. This did not seem to upset or make Aygul uneasy, her body language rather shifted into opening up to Jahan and look to her opinions in an admiring type of way. Another person who dominated most of the conversations was Jahan's husband. He was a great story-teller with more experience in California, thus his energy

and combination of experience caught attention among the other men. Also, he was rather successful in his field, so he would share his expertise with the other men. The conversation around the table was centered around current politics and events in Turkmenistan. Maksat had been accepted to a university in California and expressed his content of being in the USA. He mentioned that if he was employed in Turkmenistan, they would have fired him for taking a break from the job to go back to school.

At some point, the men went outside to grab a cigarette and chat, as the women stayed around the table. The children were in another room playing games, except for occasional appearances to ask for snacks or food. I tried to not engage in their conversation, but to listen, acknowledge, and watch Aygul and Jahan. The women discussed feminine issues and where to seek health-care for such matters. Jahan offered much advice to Aygul on her experience in matters such as passing the driver's exam, finding the right doctor, shopping for the right price, etc. I could notice that Aygul had become more comfortable around Jahan and seemed calmer now that she had a mutual Turkmen woman her age to discuss matter with. As the men joined everyone in their living room, everyone switched to watching Russian and Kazakh comedy on YouTube. We enjoyed tea with cookies, nuts, and home-made Russian cake, *napoleon*, that Aygul had made. Everyone left home happy, and Aygul invited us all to come back to her home again someday.

6. SUMMARY

The levels of integration of an immigrant woman depend on a host of considerations. This particular thesis has attempted to explore the integration experiences of three immigrant Turkmen women living in California.

Using an ethnographic approach, the methods employed within the research were: semi-structured interviews with 3 immigrant Turkmen women and participant observations during gatherings of Turkmen families on 4 occasions. The theoretical framework was composed of structuration theory by Anthony Giddens which equally considers human agency and structure; where the agents' ability 'to have acted otherwise' illustrates the presence of power in agency and the actions undertaken within structures, both enabling and constraining, around them. Using Berry's model of acculturation, Jahan integration experience corresponds with the category of integration, whereas Dayza and Aygul's experience fits into the category of separation.

The findings from the interviews and participant observations on the experiences of integration is dependent on a variety of indicators. Similar to many earlier studies on immigrant women in the USA, according to the immigrant Turkmen women, successful integration is achieved through: English language acquisition, employment (part time or full time) opportunity, interaction with Americans on a frequent basis, living outside an ethnic enclave, and remaining active in a child's schooling/educational events.

In turn, some obstacles to integration are: the inability or limited ability to speak the English language, interacting often or always with coethnics (persons of Turkmen, Turkish, or Russian descent), not being employed, and staying at home due to consecutive child bearing. These obstacles are directly taken from the interviews and participant observations with the immigrant Turkmen women. However, one must bear in mind that those listed are only few among many possible obstacles to integration into American society.

In addition, for immigrant Turkmen women, networks are vital in the earlier stages of integration. The help that these networks in the host society provide vary from finding housing, adjusting to the new surroundings, and to seeking employment. This help has a major role in

facilitating a quicker and smoother pathway into integration. Without the existence of networks upon arrival into the host society, the women and their families are faced with unfamiliar and lengthy route to integration. The following paragraphs will provide a summary about each woman's integration experience in California.

Jahan was the only one out of the three women interviewed who felt that her integration experience was mostly successful. Much of the success was attributed to having a family member already living in California, who was able to provide her and her family with the resources necessary to alleviate the transition to another country. Another factor is that Jahan is a determined and witty person. She faced structural barriers such as the integration into the labor market and language acquisition, however she used her agency to find a job that will 2) provide income, and b) doesn't require proficiency in English. On her own, she was able to seek internet sites for job postings, discover Russian families living in the area, and proactively secure a position with a decent salary. Now she began working as a nanny for an American family, enabling her to practice her English on a daily basis. Although she is still timid of her English language abilities, she participates in her kid's school activities and volunteers her time at the school. Jahan and her husband's next goal is to buy a house, then she plans to open a kindergarten for Russian-speakers.

Aygul's experience of integration in California was not so positive. Her main issue stemmed from structural constraints, such as the inability to join the labor market due to naturalization factors. While her husband attends a university, she stays at home and takes care of the children. She has no interaction with Americans or English-speakers. The only people she knows are her Turkish neighbors and the few Turkmen people, such as Jahan's and Gulya's families. Unlike Jahan, Aygul lacks confidence and motivation to get involved in community activities, meet other people, and practice her English language skills. It could also be because she is much calmer of an individual. While she expressed the will to eventually pursue some type of education in California, she did not make it sound as if that was her top priority. That is, her family's needs and her husband's education came first for her.

Dayza is the last of the three women interviewed. She was permitted to work in the USA, but chose to concentrate on being the main caregiver of the family. She was more traditional than

Aygul and Jahan in her behavior; for example, she wore traditional Turkmen outfits at all times and maintained the female role as dictated in Turkmen customs. Her children seemed to keep her busy at all times, so much so that her life revolved around taking care of her children. She wanted to learn some basic English to be able to get around but was unsure as to how she would pursue that goal. She seemed happy in California, but happy for the sake of her children.

Overall, the theory of structuration by Anthony Giddens was used for explorative purposes. Agency and structure are interacting at all times, and taking this perspective when approaching my study allowed me to consider how their experiences are shaped by that interaction. The one aspect of the theory which was validated by some of these women's experiences was that agency has power, and this power can be exerted despite structural constraints. While I am unable to generalize on the experiences of only three individuals, the theory was a fruitful approach and could be expanded in a further study.

Finally, the lack of information in the USA on immigrants from Turkmenistan, male or female, provides opportunity for the departure of a larger research in the field of international migration on immigrants stemming from that region of the world. This fresh knowledge would not only contribute information concerning this particular ethnic group, but would also provide insight into the integration processes of immigrants originating from Turkmenistan. Consequently, this research could provide the beginnings of a future doctoral dissertation.

7. FINAL THOUGHTS

Overall, I must mention the difficulty I faced when asking the immigrant Turkmen women to participate in my research. They were apprehensive of the research, assuming that the process of interviewing automatically meant interrogation. The majority of their fear arose from being unable to discuss politics of the home country, due to possible repercussions for their family and relatives who are still living in Turkmenistan.

Due to limitations of this qualitative research, it was based on a small number of interviews and participant observations of immigrant Turkmen women. Research within this particular ethnic group is novel and limited only to a large metropolitan area in California. This research could be further expanded to a larger research endeavor involving other Turkmen immigrants in the USA.

Additionally, if time allowed, I could have taken on a study on a larger scale, where the integration of immigrant women from different backgrounds could have been compared to the integration of immigrant Turkmen women. This could provide an interesting insight into the integration processes of immigrant women from different regions and to explore how the members of particular groups perceive their relative success. What would be the implications for future research and for policy makers? In addition, if I were to consider immigrant women from different states in the USA (e.g.: Chicago, New York, Texas, San Diego, etc.), would this yield similar results?

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9. APPENDICES

9.1 APPENDIX A: The Letter Used to Contact Interviewees

March 1, 2011

Салам _____!

Я знакомая _____ и я вам обращаюсь о научном исследовании. Сперва я вам расскажу про меня. Я родилась и выросла в Мары. Десять лет назад, для учебы, я переехала в Америку (именно в Калифорнию). В 2009-г, я закончила Бакалавр в Международных Отношений из California State University, Long Beach. В течении семестра, я училась в Санкт-Петербургском Государственном Университете – курс обучения, Русская внешняя политика. Очевидно, от учёбы я не устала и решила подать заявку на Магистр в Швеции. Меня приняли на Master's Degree in International Migration and Ethnic Relations (English study). Вот я жила и училась там в течении почти 2-г. У них система и образ жизни был интересным, но всё было дороговато.

Ладнико, я не буду утомлять вас и вернёмся к главному. Для моей диссертации я решила исследовать интеграцию женщин-иммигрантов. Там будут женщину из немногих стран и я хотела и включить Туркменок. Однако, проблема в том что в Калиф. очень мало Туркменов и за-этого мне пришлось к знакомым Туркмен исли они знают других здесь. Данное научное исследование проводится потому-что исследований на западе про Туркменов практически не существует. Самое главное, всё будет анонимно и опубликован только в Швецию. Пожалуйста, ответ-те мне если мы сможем встретиться?

Искренне,

Мая Бабаева

MaYa Babaeva

9.2 APPENDIX B: The Letter by Philip Muus on Thesis Status



Malmö, 14 March 2011

Dr Philip Muus
Associate Professor
Department of IMER
Faculty of Culture and Society
Malmö University
20506 Malmö
SWEDEN

Concerns: Letter of Consent

To Whom It May Concern

Herewith the undersigned Dr Philip Muus, Associate Professor at the Department of IMER (International Migration and Ethnic Relations) at the University of Malmö, Sweden, declares that:

Ms Maya Babaeva is currently conducting a study in the wider Bay Area (San Francisco, USA) among female immigrants from Turkmenistan.

Her study will be carried out according to the current Swedish academic standards of anonymity of the respondents, and her written publication will serve as a Master thesis in the field of Migration Studies at our University.

As her supervisor I can fully acknowledge that Ms Maya Babaeva has the full consent to carry out this academic study, under the conditions stipulated above.

In case you might have any questions about her work related to this research which will serve as a basis for her thesis writing, please do not hesitate to contact me at Philip.muus@mah.se, or at +46-734194862.

Sincerely yours,

Dr Philip Muus

Associate Professor in Migration Studies at Malmö University
(www.mah.se)



9.3 APPENDIX C: Semi-structured Interview Guide in English

SECTION I:

1. **Culture:**

Music: What kind of music do you listen to? Do you ever use YouTube for music?

Cuisine: What kind of cuisine do you mainly cook? What do you mean? If you have family around, what do you cook? Guests? Husband? Where do you go shopping for groceries?

How much time do you spend on this per day, per week?

Clothing: What kind of clothes do you buy when you go shopping? Where do you go shopping for clothes? Which outfit is the most comfortable for you, when you are at home and in public (with American friends, authorities, etc.)?

Raising children: Do you raise your kids in the way you are used to in Tkm? Do you accept certain Americanized behavior of your kids? Examples?

Have they become somewhat Americanized? In which ways?

Do you want them to keep a connection to Turkmen ways?

Being in America, do you feel like the kids are losing touch with Turkmen culture?

Do you mind if your kids date an American guy/girl?

How much time does it take, caring for kids, taking them to school, etc?

No kids: Are you thinking of having kids here?

How do you plan to raise them?

Do you plan to raise them the ‘Turkmen’ way or be more American?

(If not married, are you planning to marry an American or a Turkmen man?)

Nuclear family: Do you eat together with the family at home?

What do you think about the American way of not eating together?

Do you feel like you cook less food here (buy ready-made)?

Do you not like this?

In US, they don’t respect the elderly to the extent as they do in the East, how do you feel about it? How do you cope with your respect for the elderly while you are living in US?

Are you open for new experiences in US or prefer how you were brought up in Turkmenistan?

How do you feel about the American culture?

2. **English Language:** When did you start to learn English?

Did you know it before you came to US?

Do you think the knowledge of English is important or not?
Do you speak other languages?
What language do you speak at home?
What language do you speak with your kids?
Do you wish to improve your English?
If so, how do you plan to do that?

How much time do you spend on this per day, per week? (e.g.: learning English)

3. **Housing:** How did you obtain your housing?
Was it difficult or not to obtain housing here?
Do you like your current living situation?
If living in an apartment, do you wish to eventually own a house?

4. **Education:** What kind of educational background do you have?
Are you satisfied with your educational achievements?
Do you plan to continue your education here?
Or are you studying now?
Are your kids going to school? Do you prefer to keep them at home?

How much time do you spend on this per day, per week? (e.g.: studying)

5. **Job/Labor Market:** Are you currently employed?
What type of job? Self-employed? How many hours a week?
Do you like your job?
Was it difficult to find a job?
If unemployed, are you searching for a job? Or have been searching?
Have you been employed before? What was the job?
Where would you eventually like to work?
Do you feel like your language ability was playing a role when you got a job?

How much time do you spend on this per day, per week? (e.g.: job)

SECTION II:

In your opinion, what lead to a successful integration? What were some obstacles? Elaborate please...

SECTION III:

1. **Remittances:**

Intro: We all know that all migrants transfer money to home... 'total amount of remittances in the world...'

Do you send remittances home? Western Union? Or?

Do you have any brothers or sisters? Do you want to talk about them? What about your parents?

Where do they live?

Are you first to have emigrated?

2. Migration history: Have you emigrated before? Where?

Why did you choose the US?

Why not another country?

3. Communication with home: (Use of social media)

How do you stay in contact with people from Turkmenistan?

Do you use of facebook? Skype?

How often do you communicate with them?

4. Transnational networks:

Before coming to US, did you know any other Turkmens living there?

When you arrived to US, did you meet any other Turkmens? How?

Do you know any other Turkmens living abroad?

Do you keep in contact with them? How?

Do you talk to close relatives or friends too? (No Names!)

How much time do you spend on this per day, per week?

9.4 APPENDIX D: Semi-structured Interview Guide in Russian

SECTION I:

1. Культура:

Музыка: Какую музыку вы слушаете? Вы используете YouTube для музыки?

Кухня: В основном, какую еду вы готовите? (Что вы имеете в виду?)

Для семьи, какие блюда вы готовите?

Для гостей?

А как насчет вашего мужа?

Куда вы ходите за продуктами?

Сколько времени вы проводите на это в день, в неделю?

Одежда: Когда вы ходите по магазинам, какую одежду вы покупаете?

Где вы покупаете одежду?

Как вы одеваетесь дома? в общественных местах?

Какая одежда самый удобный для Вас? (дома? С друзьями? Итд...)

(Примечание: Общедоступные и частные пространства поведения = до держать в доме культуры, норм / значения)

Воспитание детей: Как вы воспитаете ваших детей, то есть как вас воспитывали в Туркмении? Вы принимаете некоторые американизированные поведение ваших детей?

Примеры?

Они уже американизированные? На каком уровне?

Вы хотите чтобы они сохранили связь с туркменской культуры?

Здесь в Америке, вы чувствуете как будто они теряют связь с туркменской культуры?

Сколько времени вы проводите на это в день, в неделю? (Т.е. заботы детей)

Нет детей: Вы хотите иметь детей здесь?

Как вы планируете воспитывать их? По "туркменски" или более американски?

(Если не замужем - ты собираешься жениться на американца или на туркмена?)

Нуклеарная семья?: Вы едите вместе с семьей в доме? Что вы думаете об американском образе не есть вместе?

Вы чувствуете, что вы готовите меньше пищи здесь (покупаете готовые пицци)?

Вы знаете, в Америке нету культура уважения старших. По крайней мере, не до степени

как в восточных культур, где большинство уступают место старшим. Какие мысли об этом?

Насчёт детей, как вы будете справляться с тем что они вырастут? (захотят идти по вечеринкам? Иметь парня или девочку?)

А как насчёт поиска жениха или невесты? Туркменскую свадьбу или Американскую?

Какие из Туркменских манер вы поддерживаете?

Как вы относитесь к Американской культуре?

2. Английский язык: Когда вы начали изучать английский язык?

Вы знали английский до приезда в США?

Как вы думаете, знание английского языка это важно или нет?

Вы знаете других языков?

На каком языке вы разговариваете дома?

На каком языке вы говорите со своими детьми?

Вы хотите улучшить свой английский?

Если да, то как вы планируете это сделать?

Сколько времени вы проводите на это в день, в неделю? (Изучение английского языка, в начале и сейчас?)

3. Жилье: Как вы нашли ваше жильё?

Трудно ли было найти это?

Там вам нравится?

Если проживают в квартире- вы хотите иметь свой собственный дом?

4. Образование: Какое образование у вас?

Довольны ли вы с вашим учебным достижений?

Планируете ли Вы продолжить обучение здесь?

Или вы учитесь сейчас?

Ваши дети ходят а школу? Вы предпочитаете чтоб они дома остались?

Сколько времени вы проводите на это в день, в неделю? (для учебы)

5. Трудоустройство: Вы сейчас работаете? Какая работа?

Нравится ли вам ваша работа?

Сложно ли было найти работу?

Если безработный, вы ищите работу? Или искали?

До этого, вы работали? Кем?

Где бы вы хотели работать?

Как вы думаете, знание английского языка имело значение для рабочей ситуации?

“Вы знаете, что в настоящее время женщины составляют 51 процентов иммигрантов в этой стране, и большинство (53 процентов) Латинской Америки. В 2007 году было 18,900 тысяч женщин-иммигрантов - большинство из них в возрасте от 35 до 49 - в Соединенных Штатах. В исследовании “Immigrant Women: Stewards of the 21st Century”, написано что 97 процентов женщин, которые были женаты в своих странах по-прежнему живут со своими мужьями в Соединенных Штатах. Ещё, исследование показывает, что основные проблемы женщин-иммигрантов "помогат своим детям преуспеть и поддержанию их семьи. Препятствия, огромные. 79% латиноамериканцев, 73% вьетнамцев, 70% корейских и 63% китайских женщины говорят мало или вообще не говорят по английской. Они также сталкиваются антииммигрантских дискриминации, отсутствия медицинской помощи и низкооплачиваемую работу.”

SECTION II:

На ваш взгляд, какие действия привели к успешной интеграции? И какие есть/были некоторые препятствия на пути интеграции?

SECTION III:

6. Денежные переводы:

Для большинства стран Европы и Центральной Азии (ЕЦА), денежные переводы являются вторым по значимости источником внешнего финансирования после иностранной помощи и прямых иностранных инвестиций. В 2004 году официально зарегистрированных денежных переводов Регион ЕЦА составила более 19 млрд. долл. США, эквивалентную примерно 8 процентов от общемирового показателя (US \$ 232 300 000 000) и 12 процентов денежные переводы в развивающиеся страны (US \$ 160 400 000 000). Эмигранты являются основным фактором для всего этого.

Вы посылаете поддержки в Тркм? Western Union? С собой берёте?

У вас есть братья или сестры? Вы хотите о них говорить?

А ваши родители?

Где они живут?

Вы первый, кто эмигрировал?

7. История миграции: Вы эмигрировали раньше? Куда?

Почему вы выбрали именно США?

Почему не в другую страну?

8. Связь с домом: (Использование социальных медиа)

Как вы поддерживаете связь с людьми из Туркменистана?

Используете ли вы Facebook?

Skype?

Как часто вы общаетесь с ним?

(Примечание: скажите им, что вы не заинтересованы в содержании их разговора, просто хочу знать какие средства они используют для общения- например, Skype).

Вы поддерживаете связь с близкими родственниками или с друзьями тоже? (Имена не нужны!)

* Сколько времени вы проводите на это в день, в неделю? (В чате, по телефону)

9. Транснациональные сети:

До приезда в США, вы знали других туркмен проживающих в США?

Когда вы приехали в США, вы познакомились с новыми туркменами? Как?

Знаете ли вы других туркмен, проживающих за рубежом?

Поддерживаете ли вы с ними в контакт? Как?