

INTEGRATION PROCESS OF GEORGIAN MIGRANTS LIVING IN EU AND USA

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This article describes Georgian migrants' lives in a new social environment. According to the last census conducted before the collapse of the USSR, Georgia's population stood at 5.4 million in 1989. Based on the 2014 census, the Georgian population amounted to 3,729,500 people as of January 1, 2015. Georgia faces severe demographic, social, economic, political, and national security problems. Before 2000, a majority of emigrants from Georgia chose to migrate to post-Soviet countries, while after, the EU and North America became more attractive to migrants. This study identifies factors which are important for Georgian migrants in adaptation to new social environments. Based on in-depth interviews with migrants living in Portugal, France, and the United States, the study addresses the following research questions. What were migrants' reasons for choosing the country they migrated to? What type of problems did migrants face with integration? What are the impacts of perception and group categorization in the integration process of Georgian migrants into a new socio-cultural space? What are migrants' strategies of identity in their host country?

Keywords: Migration, integration, identity.

1. Introduction

An estimated 244 million people have migrated across borders around the world. As Castles (2002) noted, they migrated primarily for three reasons: permanent resettlement, labor migration, or to find refuge. According to the United Nations, there have never been more immigrants than today. This is a long-term trend. In 1990, there were an estimated 154 million migrants. In 2000, this figure stood at 175 million. It increased to 232 million in 2013. These migration flows are not restricted to any region. Political crises such as wars, ethnic or religious hostility, and substantial socio-economic differences between regions reinforce these flows. The sheer numbers and growing cultural diversity confront all receiving societies with the complex challenges that result from multicultural societies. Research has recognized this and started to develop ideas and approaches that not only help to understand "minority or immigrant adaptation to a new society, but also may provide evidence that can help policymakers and practitioners" (Titzman & Fuligni 2015).

This paper is the first attempt to explore Georgian migration patterns to Portugal, France, and the United States. Georgia is a small country located on the Old Silk Road. Due to its geographic location, it was an attractive region for various conquerors (Ottomans, Persians, Mongols, the Russian Empire, among others) For many centuries the ethnic group has tried to preserve its identity, as manifested in the preservation of its language and religion (Christianity). Georgians speak a language that belongs to its own language group and has had its own alphabet since 430 AD. Despite many cataclysms, Georgians retained their identity.

Researchers of acculturation (e.g. Berry 1997, Gordon 1964, Camillar 1997) have explored how identity and lifestyle changes for migrants. This paper builds on this work, using qualitative methods to explore Georgian migrants' integration experiences in Portugal, France, and the US. The main purpose of the research is to study identity preservation and social integration among Georgian migrants. The countries were chosen, because of their different geographic locations and languages in addition to the fact that two of them are less attractive for Georgian migrants (according to ICMPD 2015) and one is more popular, enabling country comparisons.

2. Migration Background from Georgia

Massive out-migration is a new phenomenon for Georgia. During the Soviet period, ethnic Georgians tended to remain in Georgia or migrate to other Soviet republics. Most migration was periodic and education-related. Labor migration rarely took place. More than 95% of ethnic Georgians lived on Georgian territory. Migration was primarily within the republic from rural areas towards the capital city (Badurashvili and Nadareishvili. 2012; p. 6).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and independence, there was a long period of political, social, and economic instability in Georgia. Many citizens chose to emigrate to support their families. A sharp increase in out-migration from Georgia occurred in the 1990s, with outflows remaining high from 1992 to 1996. The country's economy at the time was paralyzed due to a lack of energy resources and a highly unstable political situation. Many Georgian citizens decided to leave the country to look for a better life elsewhere, and emigrated in great numbers. More than 1 million Georgian emigrants live and work abroad (WB, 2011). Based on the 2014 census, the Georgian population as of January, 2015 was 3,729,500. The 2014 census showed a population decline of around 640,000 persons since 2002. Comparing the 1989 census to the 2014 census suggests a population reduction of around 1,241,000 (22.72%) (WB 1990-2009, and UNDP 2010). Outmigration continues today.

During the first decade of independence, a majority of emigrants from Georgia chose other post-Soviet countries to migrate to, with the main destinations being Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The knowledge of Russian language, visa-free travel to Russia before 2008, and proximity were the main reasons for migration. The economic embargo of 2006 and the military confrontation between the two countries in 2008 made Russia less attractive for Georgian emigrants. The visa-free regime with Turkey introduced in 2006 made it a major destination for Georgians (Badurashvili and Nadareishvili 2012: p. 4-5, Chindea et. al. 2008: p. 31). Later the EU became more attractive for Georgian migrants. According to "Migration facts Georgia", in 2011 the most popular destination countries were Italy, Spain, the United States, Ukraine, and Greece. Studies demonstrate that there is a broad differentiation between countries in terms of a gendered demand for labor. Greece and Italy as receiving countries mainly attract female emigrants, while men prefer to emigrate to France, Israel, the US, the UK, or Ireland (IOM 2008).

3. Literature Review

Adapting to a new life in a host country and becoming an immigrant often creates a variety of issues and concerns, which newly arrived immigrants must address. Adaptation and integration are complex, since they usually require balancing between maintaining one's own cultural identity, while simultaneously constructing positive relations with a host society. According to a number of researchers (Sam and Berry 2006; Berry 2001; Sammut 2010; Padilla 2004), a multitude of factors contribute to the integration process, including an individual's ability to learn a new language and culture, ability to learn about a culture without resisting the dominant and primary culture within the new environment, and the openness and tolerance of the host society towards new members, among other factors.

Some scholars argue (Fokkema and De Haas 2011) that social integration consists of two components: structural integration and socio-cultural integration. Structural integration means the acquisition of rights and status within core institutions of the receiving society (employment, housing, education, political, and citizenship rights). Socio-cultural integration means cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal changes in conformity to the norms of receiving societies (social intercourse, friendship, marriage, membership in various organizations, and feelings of belonging).

It is important to know how one social group affects and changes the other. Social group relations take two forms: within group (intra-group) and between group (inter-group) relations (Tajfel 1974). Social categorization is the basis of inter-group processes. It starts with looking for common signs between objects, events, and individuals, and ends with the creation of social categories, based on similarities. Social categorization is a mechanical process that helps emigrants to draw conclusions with little information, conserve energy, and to better adapt to a social setting. The tendency of humans to categorize people into social groups according to gender, class, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, etc., enables the organization of the social world in meaningful ways. Categorizations help in adaptation and affect orientation in the social world (Lakoff 1987).

Social categorization plays an important role in relationships between countries, ethnicities, and religions. When immigrants become categorized as "other" groups, people perceive in exaggerated terms both the differences and similarities among their group members. This process is important for migrants to organize and structure their new social environment.

During the process of migration, categorization of the social environment is very common between emigrants. The "Us" and "Them" (new-comers and autochthons) categorization contributes to reinforcing stereotypes about migrants. Perception plays an important role in categorization during the migration process.

For integration, knowledge of the local language is important. In this regard, an individual's linguistic skills, willingness to learn the new language, and willingness to adapt to the new culture can support the migration process (Sam and Berry 2006; Berry 2001; Sammut 2010; Padilla 2004).

The process of adaptation and integration to the new environment affects identity. The formation of identity during the life of an individual is an important process. An individual may have several identities, since in different contexts s/he considers the self as a member of different groups (Schwartz, Luyckx., and Vignoles 2013; Moscovici, 1981).

Constructing identity is a cognitive process. Moscovici's (1981) theory of social representations claims that cognitive structures and processes come together, and as a result "knowledge structures are collectively shared, originating and developing via social interaction and communication" (Augoustinos and Innes 1990; 367). Howard (2000) states that, "giving an increasing emphasis on social processes, one may expect to see continuing recasting of social schemas as more flexible and more grounded in social interaction" (p. 367-393).

Recognition is an element of identity formation that often appears in opposition to other groups or persons. As De Beauvoir (1949) argues, the Self needs the Other to self-represent. As a result, the question concerns how the Other is selected and integrated into the construction of identity. The process of maintenance of identity is also important for humans, be it in an ordinary or new environment. With the construction of new relationships in a new environment, humans try to preserve their identity, which consists of self-identity and collective identity. Usually, in a new society migrants use individual or collective strategies to avoid stigmatization and deprecation of their identity, such as acceptance, denial, or idealization (Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre 1980). One collective strategy is cultural idealization of a migrant's national culture together with the formation of a negative attitude towards "western" civilization. These identity related processes depend on the perception of both the migrants and the inhabitants of the host country.

A variety of tactics of persevering, changing, and transforming identity play an important role in interacting with a new socio-cultural environment. Using different strategies, migrants are able to or

fail to participate in a receiving culture's social interactions, which can support or interfere with their successful integration.

Identity tactics and strategies, which often resort to representations of different ethnic groups, play a unique role in the interaction processes within new socio-cultural spaces. By mobilizing these strategies, ethnic groups engage with the local social-interaction network and move towards integration with the host society. This explains why people of the same ethnic group located in different socio-cultural environments can mobilize different individual and collective identity strategies (Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre 1997).

Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre (1980) identify three identity strategies based on two axes: simple and the complex coherence. In strategies of simple coherence, it is possible to avoid conflicts. The first strategy within the theory is ontological, which is used when the identity of individuals as relates contradictory values is important. People try to avoid conflict with their own traditions. The second strategy is pragmatic, which is used when the individual is placed under great stress from adaptation to the new environment. A "Chameleon" identity helps individuals to switch rapidly between the two axes when circumstances change. In strategies of complex coherence, individuals sometimes create complex rationalizations to reduce the conflict between two cultures.

The individual strategy is an "unnoticed" strategy, when individuals try to demonstrate their best sides while talking, but in society, also try to be quiet and unnoticed. A "transferred negative identity" is when migrants seek to distance themselves from their ethnic group members. The "differentiate identity" or "different corresponding identity" occurs when migrants feel a lack of interest from the local population. As a result, they create distance and are content with themselves. Within this strategy, people support themselves when they have an idea to present.

4. Research methodology

This article follows the general approach of immigration scholars (Kim et al 2001) who proceed from the premise that to understand the depth of immigrants' experiences and sentiments and to capture how they integrate and adapt; qualitative methods are more reliable and multifaceted. The data for this study was collected using face-to-face, qualitative, in-depth interviews in Georgian and participant observation with migrants in three different countries. The interview guide included open-ended questions. The respondents were encouraged to provide their own reflections on the questions.

The questionnaire focused on identifying the reasons people left Georgia. It included three sections. The first section was oriented towards individual self-reflection. Participants were asked about why they chose the host country, and what type of problems they faced in integration. In the next section, the interview included questions about how their perceptions and group categorization affected their integration into the host country. The third section asked questions about ethnic identity and strategies for identity preservation. Participants appeared to be quite comfortable to share information about their family structure, relationships, socialization in the local community, perceptions about migration, their past, future, and ethnic identity.

Ethnic Georgian migrants aged 15-71 were interviewed in Portugal, France and the United States.

In **Portugal**, 21 in-depth interviews were conducted in 2015-2016 in Lisbon's Carrigado suburb. All participants emigrated from Georgia to Portugal after 2001. The interviewees included 10 women and 11 men, between the ages of 29 and 63. The majority of participants live in Portugal with their spouses. Only two men (61 and 63 years old) were living there without family. One woman was married to a Portuguese man.

In France, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted during the summer of 2016 in Poitiers, a western part of the country. The interviewees included 10 women and 5 men, aged between 29 and 45. All participants live in Poitiers with their families.

In the United States, 49 in-depth interviews were carried out in 2017 on the East Coast (New York City, Connecticut, New Jersey, Washington DC, Maryland, and Virginia). This included eight males and 41 females, between the ages of 15 and 71.

Respondents were chosen using snowball sampling. The interviews were held at a convenient location for respondents such as their homes or a cafe. Interviews were conducted in Georgian and lasted one hour on average. All respondents were informed in advance about the goals and methods of the research. All were free to express their concerns and to refuse to answer any question or to stop the interview. All personal data remains confidential, and the anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed.

5. Findings and discussion

5.1. Georgian emigrants' social integration through social categorization

The data show that the most significant problem with communication in all three countries is a lack of knowledge of the host community language. Knowledge of the language is important for finding social networks in the host society for Georgian migrants. According to participants' narratives, the migrants' social network tends to consist of people from the former Soviet Union. They report this stems from knowing Russian better than the language of the host country.

The respondents interviewed in the United States mentioned that even though there are many migrants in the US, they face difficulties with integration. They report this stems from English being a second language and their place of birth. Children born there have fewer problems with integration, as they are considered first-generation Americans. They also reported that integration is easier in more diverse locations.

The Georgians living in the States usually have friends among other ethnic minority groups. Very few have friends from the United States. They highlighted that even their children who study at schools and speak fluent English do not have many friends from the United States. One respondent, a high school student (Female, 17 years old), mentioned that she used to go to a different school, which was more diverse and kids were very friendly. Now she goes to a better school, where only non-migrant Americans go, and she does not have friends. She reports they do not accept her. She is a very good student, and her parents later stated that they might be jealous. This leads to the conclusion that fluency in English is insufficient for integration.

The respondents living in New York City report that, as the city is so diverse, they rarely meet people from the local population. One respondent stated:

New York is a huge city. The majority of the local population are migrants from different parts of the world. We live in Brooklyn, which is very diverse, especially, the part, where we live. [It] consists of migrants from post-soviet countries. When I first arrived, it was not hard to find a job for me, as one of my neighbors was a Ukrainian lady, and she helped me to find a Russian-speaking family to take care of an older women [in a family], as my English at that time was very poor (Female, 47 years old, US).

Respondents living in small towns in Connecticut reported that they mostly use employment agencies to find work. Women mostly work as care givers or baby sitters, while men work as truck or Uber drivers.

Knowledge of English is a significant problem as immigrants with better knowledge of English find better jobs. Young people who go to school speak English with their parents, and their knowledge of Georgian is declining. The parents noted that their children are embarrassed to speak with them in Georgian in the presence of friends from school. As a result, young people are forgetting Georgian. One respondent stated, “My son doesn’t want me to speak with him in Georgian, when I am picking him up or dropping him off at school. He doesn’t want to show his friends that we are immigrants, and I have a ‘strange’ accent for them” (Male, 52 years old, US).

All respondents mentioned that the US has significant opportunities, but that the first generation of migrants always suffers and makes life easier for future generations. Georgian migrants generally might be considered as newcomers, as they started to immigrate only 25 years ago.

In Portugal, the children of Georgian migrants learn the Portuguese language successfully. They study well at school. The parents tend to want their children to be socialized into the local communities and not to face the same language problems they face. One respondent stated, “I am very proud, because my daughter is one of the best students in Portuguese. I try to support her, because I don’t want her to have the same obstacles that I had” (Male, 40 years old, Portugal).

In France, the children also do well at school, and the parents are proud of them. One parent stated, “We, Georgians, have a very good musical ear and our children are speaking with very good pronunciation” (Female, 35 years old, France).

One respondent noted that being “White” and “Christian” eased integration. A respondent in France stated, “French people always are asking you, if you are a foreigner, an emigrant, about your nationality and religion, and after that, they get an answer about our Christianity. They are satisfied when they find a similarity” (Female, 36 years old, France).

The research showed that knowledge of the language of the host society is very important for integration during the migration process, for having social network within the host society, and for becoming part of the society. First generation migrants do everything they can to help their children be successful at school and continue onto tertiary education.

In line with De Haas & Fokkema’s work on social integration (2011), Georgian migrants are not integrated into the countries under study. Structural integration is similar for Georgian migrants in all three countries. They try to give an education to their children, and support them with housing and employment, but they do not feel equal to locals in the host societies in terms of having the same political or civic rights. As for socio-cultural integration, respondents do not experience cognitive, behavioral, or attitudinal changes that would move them in line with the norms of the receiving societies. According to participants’ narratives, social intercourse, friendship, marriage, and parenting are different in their perceptions from local people.

The information and the quotes presented and discussed above suggest an asymmetry in social relations between migrants and host societies. This leads to the conclusion that the process of integration of Georgians goes very slowly.

5.2 Georgian emigrants' perceptions of social categorizations

For integration, migrants need to identify differences between them and the host society (“us” and “them”). Their perceptions vary. They note both positive and negative characteristics of the host society. Perception plays an important role in the process of categorization during the migration process. Logically migrants think about host societies in the form of analogies to their home society.

The host society's perceptions of migrants can make the migrant put the local community in the “others” category. They feel an unwillingness from local people, create distance, and feel like they do not have the right to be better than a local person. A respondent stated:

They are arrogant. They are looking you up and down. You are foreigner. You came later, and you want to be in the same positions. You have to be a maid or a housekeeper, or a nurse or something else, but in a low position. And in this case, they are very supportive. But if you want to become more successful, to climb up to the social ladder, this is not very welcoming for them, and in this case, everything is changing (Females, 35 years old, France).

Social categorization establishes boundaries between “us” and “them” (Deaux 1993; Simon 2004). As a result, individuals choose different attributions of self-description in different situations and contexts (Stryker and Serpe 1994). All participants from the study underlined a noticeable difference between Georgia and their host society in terms of constructs around relationships in the family, the value of relatives, and friends. According to Georgian migrants' narratives, there are more differences than similarities between Georgians and their host communities on these issues.

Friendship. Study participants noted that friendship in Europe and the US is different from in Georgia. As a result, Georgians put the host society in the category of the “others,” and differentiate between migrants and the host society. Almost all respondents noted something equivalent to, “The meaning of friendship is very different between us.” According to one participant, “You are a friend while you are working together... If you change your job, you change your mates as well. As a Georgian proverb says: ‘Out of sight, out of mind’. So, if you suddenly meet your ex-friend in the street, he will probably ask about your life generally and that’s all” (Male, 53 years-old, Portugal).

For Georgians, it is very important to invite friends' home, to introduce friends to family members, to relatives, to cook for them, and to be hospitable. They describe this as part of the Georgian identity. The perception of differences in meaning and the compositions of friendships were slightly shocking for the participants in all three countries. One respondent stated:

They rarely invite you to his or her house. For example, I have known a friend from my work for many years. I know a lot of things about her private life, just like a therapist, but she has never invited me to her house. We take our children together to the pool, and another place, but nothing else (Female, 40 years old, France).

According to the participants, the Portuguese and the French are not as open as Georgians are. They do not like to invite friend's home. They do not have feasts at home like Georgians. One respondent in Portugal reported that she had her wedding in Portugal and invited Portuguese friends, but she has never been invited to their houses. The same situation was observed in France.

The respondents in the US mention friends, but most were new migrants. Many have been living in the host country for nearly two decades, but did not make friends with people from the US. Some of them noted that their American neighbors only say “Hi” to them, and never get into deep

conversations when they meet each other. They report they have never been invited to a neighbor's house or other local acquaintances.

When I go to pick my 10-year-old son up from a friend's house, nobody invites me into the house. They just send him to me in the driveway, and that's all. For Georgians when a guest knocks on the door, you have to invite him into the house and offer something to drink or to eat. In the beginning, it looked very weird to me, but after a while I started to adjust to it (Female, 45 years old, US).

One respondent, working as a caregiver, said that she has only been invited to a wedding once during her twenty years of living in the US. The wedding was for the grandchild of the woman she takes care of. In going to the wedding, she was invited only to help the woman she was taking care of. She felt humiliated, as it was made clear that she did not fit into the same class.

The majority of respondents mentioned that the people from the receiving society do not want to be close to them. They do not invite them home, but are pleased to be invited to the migrants' houses.

Family. According to the Georgian migrants, people from the EU are more similar to Georgians. Children live with family before they get married. A Georgian respondent noted, "Portuguese do not like American people: if you are already 18, leave home" (Female, 38 years old, Portugal). If children have to move somewhere for education, they will not come back. They are similar to Georgians in this case, who tend to live with their children. Georgians also tend to live in extended families.

The participants compared relationships between parents and children, and the system of parenting in France. One stated, "The system of parenting is very different. Most French people take care of their children when they are studying in school. After that, they feel free and without responsibility" (Female, 38 years old, France). This is very unusual and unacceptable for Georgians. One respondent stated, "If it will be possible, I don't want a son-in-law from here, because for me it will be very stressful and difficult to call my daughter and get permission to go to their house to see my grandchildren" (Female, 36 years old, France).

Respondents living in the US underlined that the relationships between parents and children there are unacceptable. As noted above, the majority of female respondents work as caregivers for American families, taking care of elderly family members. They mentioned that it was hard for them to understand that the old people could be sent to nursing homes or assisted living facilities. They highlighted that strangers care for them, while the children come only once or twice a year just to visit them briefly.

In contrast, in Georgian culture, the parents usually live with their children and grandchildren in extended families. One respondent noted, "I am taking care of an 89 years old lady. She is the mother of four children. Three of them live not far from her, but they come and visit her very rarely. During my two-year stay with her, I have seen them only three times – on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and her birthday" (Female, 57 years old).

The respondents like those guests call in advance and ask permission to come. They like that everybody is busy, works, and earns their own money. Young people, after graduating high school, get a job and pay for their education. According to the respondents, this is very good, and would be good to copy in Georgia, so as not to depend on remittances from abroad.

Relatives. People from the three countries have similar perceptions of relationships with relatives. They all report that the relationships with relatives in their host countries are fine, but that they are different from Georgian relations. In Georgia, siblings stay united as a part of the same family for their entire lives. They try to help each other. In contrast, in the host countries, everyone thinks about their own family, which usually does not include siblings and siblings' family members. If brothers or sisters can help each other, they do not feel obliged to do so. They might do so, but this depends on the person. One respondent stated, "We are living with our old parents and grandparents, and look after them at home. There, it is different. I am working at a nursing home, and I know what the difference is. I observe how old people are waiting for relatives to visit" (Female, 45 years old, Portugal).

In France, the participants described the relationships between relatives as rigid. They have to call and get permission to visit their siblings, relatives, children, and parents. This is very unusual and unacceptable for Georgians. One respondent stated, "They could not understand why we worry about our siblings. They love each other of course, but differently I think. They can lose each other over inheritance or property" (Female, 35 years old, France). Another respondent stated:

For me, it was very strange to see the relationships between the siblings. The children of a man, I am taking care of, he has five children. Three of them do not talk with each other, because of his property and the inheritance. But there are different families too. In my previous job, there was a different situation. It depends on people and their characters (Female, 65 years old, US).

The Georgian migrants participating in our study live in different countries, which speak different languages and have different cultures. The migrants try to adapt to these different cultures. However, their perceptions of friendship, family, and relatives are the same. This is likely a self-defense mechanism aimed at maintaining identity. This is more acute and visible for long term rather than short term migrants (i.e., those permanently residing in a country versus visiting for a few months).

5.3. Strategies of identity and social integration

According Camilleri and Malewska-Peyre (1980), migrants in a new society use individual and collective strategies to avoid stigmatization and deprecation of their identities, such as acceptance, denial, or idealization. A collective strategy is cultural idealization of national culture and a negative attitude towards "western" civilization. Georgian migrants express their superiority through focusing on the history and culture of Georgia as an 'ancient nationality'. One respondent stated, "Georgia is a country of ancient culture. Where were they when we existed? But we have hard times now, and this is the reason we are here" (Male, 34 years old, Portugal). Another respondent stated, "When I look at them, it is hard to believe that they discovered America" (Female, 37 years old, Portugal).

The second collective strategy is highlighting general human values and equality. This strategy focuses on values common to Georgian emigrants and Portuguese people. This study found very few similarities that migrants can use according to participants. One stated, "They love eating like us, and they are cooking very well, like Georgians" (Male, 63 years old, Portugal). Another stated, "They respect the dead people as we do" (Male, 34 years old, Portugal). In France, some migrants highlighted similarities between Georgian and French people. A respondent stated, "They are gossip loving people, as we are. They love to talk. They love their family regardless of whether they have a conflict because of an inheritance. All the important dates, they celebrate with their families" (Female, 40 years old, France). Another stated, "They love wine, as we love it. This is a similarity" (Male, 40 years old, France).

The respondents living in the United States felt that America provides a significant number of opportunities. However, they felt that people will never be fully integrated into US society, particularly for the first generation of migrants. According to the research participant's narratives, their American Dreams have not come true over the last twenty years. Yet, they still hope for the best in the future, even though they realize that professionally they would not find a job in line with their education or experience. They are part of the lower social classes. Some respondents strongly dislike this, and consider returning to Georgia, even though this would result in a lower income. One respondent stated:

I used to work as a doctor, a pediatrician in my home country, but during the last twenty years, I have worked as a care giver. Our degrees are not accepted and recognized in this country. But they like to mention that a doctor is taking care of their mother, that she is in good hands (Female, 62 years old, US).

When Georgians talk about their identity, they usually highlight collective components of that identity more than their individual identity. The idealization of collective identity is more visible in the narratives of migrant Georgians. This is likely a mechanism of self-defense in a new environment and is helpful in the process of integration.

5.4. Individual identity strategies

The data show that the simple coherence strategy is clearly expressed in migrants' narratives around the process of overcoming identity conflicts. Georgian migrants' assimilation strategies are characterized by a pragmatic individual identity strategy. They tend to an unnoticed strategy, attempting to be quiet, without reactive behavior and polemic. People also make use of the chameleon strategy, wherein people adapt to circumstances. Within this strategy, individuals attempt to put forward a positive image, but in society, they try remain quiet and unnoticed. One respondent stated, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" (Female, 37 years old, Portugal), implying that when you live in Portugal you have to follow Portuguese norms to fully integrate into society. Another stated, "If you do not argue much and live a tranquil life, everything will be okay and you will live without any problems" (Male, 53 years old, Portugal).

Feelings of integration are complicated. Some participants feel integrated into Portuguese society, but some do not. Sometimes, they feel discriminated against. One stated, "They never trust you." This is also an exclusive characteristic which is for Georgian migrants the basis of putting people into the "other" category. Another stated, "They are always testing you, because you are a migrant and foreigner. Friendship with such people is impossible for us" (Male, 40 years old, France).

One of the collective strategies, negative identity, is manifest among Georgian migrants with idealization of national culture. In contrast, a second collective strategy underlines not national, but general human values. In this study, migrants differentiate their identity from the host society as relates relationships with family, relatives, and friends.

The study also identified a sub strategy called "transferred negative identity." In this strategy, people seek to distance themselves from their ethnic group.

Conclusion

This study finds that Georgian migrants consider adaptation and integration difficult. This impacts migrants' lives. Georgian migrants choose a destination country based on social networks, which help migrants to solve many problems. The network connects individuals (migrants and non-migrants) and trust structures create social links for them in host societies (Curran and Abigail

2001). However, this study shows Georgian migrants' social networks are very limited in the host societies examined. We argue that this takes place, because of a lack of knowledge of the local language, and a lack of willingness to find similarities between Georgia and the host societies.

In analyzing intra- and inter-group relationships in the perceptions of Georgian migrants, the study shows that Georgian migrants are putting host society in the category of "other". They differentiate between Georgians and the host society as relates to friendships, parenting (the relationships between mothers and children), and between siblings.

The study shows that the first generation of migrants try to maintain the old rules of the "imagined community". (Anderson, 1991) They try to give everything to their children, which would be difficult to attain in future. For the second generation of migrants, acculturation to the new social environment is more important than to follow the values which their parents brought to the host country. In this regard, it's hard to identify Georgia is an individualistic or collectivistic culture. While, the lifestyle of Georgian migrants shares more with collectivistic rather than individualistic cultural values. Based on this observation and participants' narratives, it can be concluded that the new social environment and lifestyle in individualistic cultures has not yet an impact on Georgian migrants.

Georgian migrants use a pragmatic identity strategy (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre 1997), including an unnoticed strategy as well as a chameleon strategy. Within the unnoticed strategy, they attempt to remain quiet and unreactive. Within the chameleon strategy, they adapt to circumstances. The latter strategy enables them to switch rapidly between the two axes (unnoticed and chameleon strategies) in changing, culturally-prescribed circumstances.

In this study, migrants use a differentiated identity ("differentiate identity" or "different corresponding identity") strategies (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre 1997), which means differentiation themselves from the host society in terms of relationships with family, parenting, relatives, and friends. The study also identified a sub strategy called "transferred negative identity." In this strategy, people seek to distance themselves from their ethnic group.

The collective strategy of identity (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre 1997) is manifested among Georgian migrants through idealization of national culture. A second collective strategy is underling general human values.

Georgian migrants in all three countries activate collective identity more than personal identity. Georgian migrants characterized themselves not individually, but collectively. The preservation of identity for Georgian migrants, living in the three different countries is very strong, which is facilitated by their strong perceptions and emphasis on social categorization. When a small nation has its own state, language, religion, and identity, it continues to maintain them in a different environment and tries to pass it to new generations.

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