

The descendants of Georgian migrants in the Fatsa district of Ordu Province in Turkey

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The research report constitutes a part of the doctoral research regarding the Georgians living in the *Fatsa* district of *Ordu* Province, Turkey. It was implemented within the framework of the *Farig - Simon Zazadze* grant and represents the first attempt in the Georgian scientific space to study the ethnographic characteristics and contemporary reality of *Fatsa*. Consequently, the research provides new scientific material, which is valuable both from a modern socio-cultural perspective and for its national significance.

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Introduction

The first time I visited Fatsa, one particular detail immediately drew my attention. While traveling through Zegani¹ toward the place where, more than 140 years ago, the first Georgians who had migrated from Kobuleti settled, I noticed a large stone arch. It was neither monumental nor decorative, yet it was rich in symbolic meaning. As I was told, the local people had built this stone arch (gate) to preserve the memory of the place where their ancestors first set foot.

This stone arch prompted me to reflect on how a diasporic community preserves memory through space, everyday life, and cultural practices. It illustrates how an apparently ordinary object can become a carrier of cultural memory, connecting not only with the past but also with the contemporary sense of belonging. The few moments I spent by the arch once again confirmed that memory is not preserved solely in museums or archives. Rather, it manifests itself in everyday practices, ordinary objects, local legends, and community narratives.

The origins of this story lie in the Russo–Ottoman Wars, one of whose most profound consequences was the process of *muhajiroba*, which unfolded periodically throughout the nineteenth century. The term *muhajiroba* (from the Arabic *muhajeret*) literally means migration or resettlement. According to the Turkish Dictionary, *Muhacir* is defined as: 1) a person who migrates to another place for the purpose of settlement; and 2) a name given to those who migrated from Mecca to Medina together with, or after, the Prophet Muhammad.² The first major wave of migration from the Caucasus began during the Russo–Ottoman War of 1828–1829. It was followed by the mass migration of the Abkhazians in 1867, while the largest and final wave occurred after the Russo–Ottoman War of 1877–1878.

On 19 February 1878, the preliminary Treaty of San Stefano was signed, officially bringing the Russo–Ottoman War of 1877–1878 to an end. According to the treaty, Russia was to receive either an indemnity of 1.4 billion rubles from the Ottoman Empire or, alternatively, the territories of Batumi, Artaani, and Kars.³ The terms of the preliminary peace agreement were subsequently reviewed at the Berlin Congress, which opened on 13 July 1878 with the participation of representatives from twenty European states. The Congress confirmed the

¹ The former name of Kabakdağı village.

² Malkhaz Chokharadze, *Geography of the Georgian Language in Turkey*, Book I: The Marmara Sea Region (Batumi: Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University Press, 2016), 7.

³ Vukol Iashvili, *Adjara during the Period of Ottoman Rule* (Batumi, 1948), 142.

transfer of Artaani, Kars, and Batumi to the Russian Empire. It also granted Russia control over several territories that had historically belonged to Samtskhe-Saatabago, including the districts of Batumi, Artvini, Oltisi, and Artaani—that is, Kobuleti, Adjara, Shavsheti, Livana, part of Chaneti, Kola, Artaani, Erusheti, and the valleys of Potskhovi and Jakistskali.⁴ Batumi was declared a *porto franco*. Furthermore, the inhabitants of the annexed territories were granted a period of three years to sell their immovable property and either migrate to the Ottoman Empire or remain in their homeland. In 1878, a commission convened in Constantinople established the official timeframe for migration, setting it from 8 February 1879 to 8 February 1882.⁵ Those who remained after this deadline automatically became subjects of the Russian Empire.

The principal agents promoting the migration were local religious leaders, who encouraged the population to leave on the grounds of religious devotion and solidarity. They promised prosperous living conditions and "mountains of gold" in the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, the Russian Empire pursued its own political interests by actively encouraging the migration of Muslim Georgians to Ottoman territory. While the Ottoman authorities sought to populate sparsely inhabited lands with Georgian *muhajirs*, the Russian administration aimed to replace the Muslim population of the Caucasus with other, politically more reliable, Caucasian groups.

In some cases, demographic factors also contributed to *muhajiroba*. Ethnographic evidence suggests that population pressure within large households often encouraged migration. Extended families frequently divided, with some members remaining while others resettled in the Ottoman Empire. As one informant explained, "For example, out of four brothers, two would stay, while the other two would become *muhajirs*."⁶ Consequently, many of the annexed territories were effectively depopulated.

The Georgian *muhajirs* who settled in the Ottoman Empire, having no possibility of returning to their homeland, were compelled to establish permanent communities in their new environment. They founded new villages while preserving many elements of the social life, cultural traditions, and, most importantly, the language of their homeland. Nevertheless, the passage of time and successive generations have inevitably transformed this heritage. Today, many elements of Georgian culture, everyday life, and language are gradually disappearing. The Georgian language is now spoken primarily by the older generation, while fluency among middle-aged and younger generations has significantly declined.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Shamshe Megreliдзе, *Georgia in the Eastern Wars* (Tbilisi, 1974), 92.

⁶ Roland Topchishvili, *Migrations of Peoples* (Tbilisi: Universali Publishing House, 2015), 229.

The Georgian muhajirs settled throughout western Türkiye, along the eastern coast of the Sea of Marmara, the southern Black Sea region, Istanbul, and numerous other parts of the country.⁷ Today, communities of Georgian descent are found in the districts of Istanbul, Samsun, Sakarya, Kocaeli, Balıkesir, Yalova, Bilecik, Fatsa, Ünye, Ordu, Adapazarı, Bursa, İnegöl, Bolu, İzmit, Gölcük, Gebze, İzmit, Düzce, Amasya, Tokat, and Hendek.⁸

The Georgian communities living along Türkiye's southern Black Sea coast are of particular interest because the majority are descendants of the muhajirs who left Kobuleti during the Russo–Ottoman War of 1877–1878. One of the largest and most concentrated settlements established by migrants from Kobuleti is located in the Fatsa district of Ordu Province. According to official statistics, ⁹Fatsa had a population of 126,775 in 2022. Local Georgians, however, estimate that approximately one-third of the district's inhabitants are of Georgian origin.

The selection of Fatsa as the focus of this research is based on its distinctive historical and demographic characteristics, as the district is almost entirely populated by descendants of migrants who left Kobuleti during the muhajiroba. Equally remarkable is the fact that these descendants have preserved their language, cultural traditions, collective memory, and ties to their historical homeland to the present day. Beyond contributing to the study of Fatsa as an important Georgian diasporic community and bringing greater scholarly attention to this subject, the present research offers valuable insights into contemporary analyses of cultural identities shaped by migration memory. Of particular interest is the way in which Georgian communities in Türkiye have managed to preserve, transform, and transmit cultural elements for more than a century, making this an issue of considerable importance from both anthropological and broader socio-political perspectives.

Research Methods and Methodology

The present study approaches the research topic from the perspective of ethnology and anthropology, employing qualitative anthropological research methods. My interest in the

⁷ Nodar Shoshitashvili, *In Search of Georgia in Turkey: Three Summers with the Georgians of Turkey* (Tbilisi, 2017), 5.

⁸ Niaz Zosidze, *"If Only You Had Come Earlier..."* (Tbilisi: Meridiani Publishing House, 2017), 27.

⁹ "Address-based population registration system (ADNKS) results dated 31 December 2022, Favorite Reports" (XLS). TÜİK. Retrieved 19 September 2023.

subject of muhajiroba dates back to my early years as an undergraduate student. During my academic studies, I became increasingly engaged with this topic and subsequently presented papers on various aspects of muhajiroba at scientific conferences and academic forums. This experience provided a solid foundation for my master's research.

The initial stage of the research involved identifying and defining the research problem through an extensive review of Georgian periodicals, Georgian- and foreign-language literature available at the National Library of Georgia, and scholarly publications related to muhajiroba as a historical migration process. I also examined the Russo–Ottoman War of 1877–1878 and its aftermath in order to understand the causes and consequences of muhajiroba. At the same time, I explored online resources devoted to Georgian diaspora communities - particularly those in Ordu and Fatsa-as well as websites created by Georgian communities in Türkiye, which provided information previously unknown in the Georgian academic context. Through these online resources, I also obtained several scholarly publications in Turkish concerning the history and ethnography of Ordu Province. Prior to conducting fieldwork, I established contact with several local Georgians, who not only agreed to participate in interviews but also expressed their willingness to welcome me in Fatsa and facilitate my research.

The principal stage of the fieldwork was carried out in the Fatsa district of Ordu Province. During this period, I conducted research in six Georgian villages: Kabakdağ, Karataş, Duayer, Çerkezdağ, Salihli, and Jabran. In addition, I observed the Georgian community in the town itself, primarily in Georgian tea houses and shops. I also attended two annual traditional Georgian events held in the village of Kabakdağ: the Gastronomic Competition and the Grain Exchange Festival. Alongside informal conversations and participant observation, I conducted thirteen in-depth interviews.

For the Georgians of Fatsa, everyday life is almost unimaginable without the *çayhane* (tea house). As a researcher, the Georgian tea house became my principal ethnographic field site, where I spent time every day. Aihan'in Yeri, located on the old Georgian street of Sukkoli, is the place where one encounters the largest gathering of local Georgians, particularly members of the older generation who still speak Georgian fluently. The tea house is lively from the early morning hours. Until the beginning of the summer season, many Georgians remain in the town, making it common for them to spend the entire day there. Some even travel from surrounding villages simply to drink tea, play cards or dominoes, and socialize. Unsurprisingly, most of the regular visitors are retirees, for whom the tea house serves as an important social space. It is especially crowded around midday, after breakfast and the morning prayer. Card games often lead to lively arguments and spirited discussions, which, in my observation, reflect

the characteristic passion and temperament commonly associated with Georgian social interaction.

It was here that I began my fieldwork and became acquainted with the majority of my interlocutors. It was also here that I tasted authentic Turkish tea for the first time and listened to the life stories and migration memories shared by local Georgians.

Through participant observation, I sought to understand the significance that local people attribute to preserving elements of Georgian culture, both as intangible cultural values and as material expressions. Particular attention was devoted to celebrations such as the Georgian Grain Festival and the Georgian Cuisine Festival. I attended these festivals throughout the day, selecting several stalls where I spent extended periods observing interactions between vendors and visitors. I paid particular attention to the participation of the Turkish population, who actively purchased Georgian grain seeds and traditional spices. In addition, I sampled every Georgian dish presented at the festival alongside members of the local Georgian community. Informal conversations during these shared meals enabled me to examine their attitudes toward Georgian cuisine, which remains one of the most enduring and visible expressions of Georgian cultural identity in everyday life.

Fatsa proved to be a highly accessible ethnographic field site for me as a researcher. This was largely due to the absence of a language barrier, as my native Kobuleti dialect enabled me to communicate naturally with local Georgians. This significantly facilitated the establishment of rapport with informants and the identification of suitable research participants. Although every interlocutor was regarded as valuable to the study, I nevertheless employed purposive sampling to some extent, with proficiency in the Georgian language serving as the primary selection criterion.

The research was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards. Oral informed consent was obtained from all participants regarding both the recording and use of the information they provided, as well as its audio-visual documentation.

With regard to the overall methodological framework, the study employs, in addition to participant observation and interviewing, the historical research method and the comparative method to examine the ethnographic and geographical similarities and differences between Fatsa and Kobuleti. Furthermore, it incorporates the case study method to explore personal narratives and family histories, visual methods, and content analysis of Turkish websites and social media platforms, alongside other qualitative research approaches.

Short History of Fatsa

Fatsa is situated on the eastern¹⁰ edge of the Central Black Sea Region and forms part of Ordu Province. It borders Ünye and Samsun to the west; Perşembe, Ordu, and Giresun to the east; the Black Sea to the north; Kumru to the southwest; Korgan, Aybastı, and Gököy to the south; and Ulubey to the southeast.

The urban center of Fatsa lies along a long and picturesque coastline, nestled between the slopes of the surrounding mountains. The coastal plain, varying in width from approximately 500 to 1,000 meters, is naturally bordered by the Bolaman River to the east and the Elekçi River to the west. Beyond the urban area, the terrain rises steeply toward the south, forming rolling hills on which Fatsa's villages are located, while further inland the landscape is dominated by mountain ranges covered with coniferous and deciduous forests.

The history of Fatsa is closely intertwined with the history of the Black Sea region. Archaeological discoveries made in the area testify to the region's ancient past. Throughout different historical periods, Fatsa was known by several names, including Fanise, Padnase, Pitane, and Pacha.¹¹

In antiquity, the region of Fatsa and its surroundings was inhabited by indigenous peoples such as the Colchians, Drilae, Chalybes, Mossynoeci, and Tibareni. In 546 BCE, the area came under Persian rule, and later became part of the empire of Alexander the Great.¹² Between 301 BCE and 63 CE, Fatsa belonged to the Kingdom of Pontus. During this period, it was known as Side. In his Geography, Strabo refers to the region as Sidene, corresponding to the area surrounding present-day Bolaman.¹³

Following the death of Mithridates, King Pharnaces II ruled Pontus between 65 and 42 BCE. According to local tradition, Pharnaces I built a fortress named after his daughter Phanizan, from which the region subsequently derived the name Phanizan. After Pharnaces II, the region came under the rule of Polemon I, from whom the name Bolaman is believed to originate.¹⁴ The Kingdom of Pontus was annexed by the Roman Empire in 63 CE, and in 395 CE these territories became part of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire¹⁵.

¹⁰ Geographically, the Central Black Sea Region extends from Sinop to the Melet River, which flows east of the city center of Ordu. The Eastern Black Sea Region stretches from the Melet River to the Georgian border.

¹¹ Ahmet Yuka, "Fatsa's Military Architecture," in *History of Fatsa and Its Surroundings*, Vol. II, ed. Sadullah Gülten et al. (Samsun: Fenomen Yayınları, 2022), 246–250.

¹² *Ibid.*, 222.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 236.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

The arrival of the Turks in Fatsa followed the Battle of Manzikert in 1071. Sevli Bey, commander of Danishmend Gazi, conquered the territory stretching from Samsun to Trabzon, after which the Chepni tribe settled in the region. They later became incorporated into the Principality of Hacı Emiroğulları. As a result of the military campaign of 1427–1428, Fatsa and its surrounding territories were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. Around the same period, Genoese influence in the region also came to an end, despite the fact that Fatsa had previously served as an important commercial center under Genoese rule.¹⁶

During the Ottoman period, Fatsa was administratively subordinated to the Canik Sanjak. Ottoman records refer to the region as Satılmış-ı Mezid Bey (or Nahiye Satılmış-ı Ferid Bey). Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century documents describe Fatsa as the kaza of Satılmış. Between 1851 and 1856 it held the status of a kaza; from 1869 to 1872 it became a nahiye within the kaza of Ünye, and in 1878 it regained its status as a kaza.

Until the Tanzimat reforms of the nineteenth century, the Turkish population lived predominantly in rural areas, where agriculture and animal husbandry constituted their principal economic activities. Following the Tanzimat reforms, they gradually began assuming administrative positions within the urban center.¹⁷

One of the most significant turning points in Fatsa's history was the migration of peoples from the Caucasus. The first Circassian migrants arrived in 1864 and again in 1878. According to the Trabzon Provincial Yearbooks (Salname) for 1870 and 1871, the Circassian population numbered 901 individuals¹⁸. Subsequently, following the Russo–Ottoman War of 1877–1878, Georgians migrated to Fatsa between 1880 and 1887.

The arrival of these migrants, many of whom were employed in the municipal police (zabıta), revitalized commercial activity in Fatsa. Nevertheless, tensions and disputes emerged between the newcomers and the local population—a subject that will be discussed later in this study.

Migration continued into the early twentieth century. During the First World War, Russian forces entered Trabzon on 14 April 1916, prompting thousands of families to migrate westward, some of whom eventually settled in Fatsa. Another wave of Georgian migration followed in 1917–1918 as a consequence of the fall of Batumi during the war.¹⁹ After the Treaty of Lausanne, 801 Muslim migrants from Greece were resettled in Fatsa as part of the population

¹⁶ Cevat Erbil, *History of Fatsa* (Fatsa: Güneş, 2002), 15–17.

¹⁷ Kerem Morgül, *History of the Social Struggles in Fatsa, 1960–1980* (Master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007), 38.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁹ Oktay Güvemli, *On the Eastern Black Sea Region and Ordu* (Trabzon: Orsev Yayınları, 1995), 77.

exchange. However, the majority struggled to adapt to local methods of agricultural production, and ultimately only about thirty percent remained in the district.²⁰

These successive waves of migration created a diverse and multiethnic population consisting of Turks, Georgians, Turkmens, Circassians, and a smaller number of Laz. Religious diversity likewise characterized the region: most Turkmens adhered to Alevism, while the remaining population was predominantly Sunni Muslim. On 4 December 1920, following deliberations by the Grand National Assembly, Fatsa became a kaza subordinate to the Sanjak of Ordu. The municipality of Fatsa was officially established in 1923, alongside the proclamation of the Republic.²¹

Fatsa's geographical location-particularly its coastal position-has played a decisive role in shaping its economic development. Unlike many inland settlements, its favorable climate made it an ideal center for hazelnut cultivation. By the 1950s, hazelnut production had become the district's principal economic activity, and by 1980 Fatsa had become the leading producer of hazelnuts in Ordu Province.²² The town also served as the commercial center for neighboring inland districts. Trade and craftsmanship flourished, while the number of merchants and financial institutions steadily increased. Industrial development was primarily based on hazelnut processing. In addition to the expansion of hazelnut cultivation, Fatsa's strategic location along one of the region's principal transportation routes significantly contributed to its economic importance, particularly during the period before the development of air and railway transport. The town also played an important role in maritime navigation and communications. Fishing, maize cultivation, beekeeping, livestock breeding, and carpet weaving likewise constituted significant economic activities.

Although Fatsa's economic, social, and urban potential expanded considerably during the second half of the twentieth century, the majority of its population continued to reside in rural areas.²³ With regard to its ethnic and religious composition, Fatsa has consistently remained a cosmopolitan town.

The period between 1960 and 1980 was marked by significant social and political struggles. During these decades, Fatsa became a center of resistance against the exploitation of hazelnut producers and usury. Leftist and socialist ideas gained considerable influence throughout the region, supported by intellectuals, teachers, and university students. Several

²⁰ Cevat Erbil, *History of Fatsa*, 24.

²¹ Kerem Morgül, *History of the Social Struggles in Fatsa, 1960–1980* (Master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007), 40.

²² *Ibid.*, 53.

²³ Cevat Erbil, *History of Fatsa* (Fatsa: Güneş, 2002), 15–17.

organizations were established, including local branches of the Workers' Party of Türkiye (TİP), the Village Development Associations (KD), and the Revolutionary Youth Federation (Dev-Genç).

On 11 July 1980, the Turkish military launched an operation known as the "Target Operation." This was followed by widespread arrests, torture, confiscation of property, and, in some cases, extrajudicial killings. Many supporters of the local movement were forced into exile²⁴. Today, Fatsa remains one of the Black Sea region's important maritime and transportation centers.

Everyday Life in Fatsa: Past and Present

Georgian Villages: Kabakdağ

The Fatsa district of Ordu Province consists of 73 villages and mahalles (neighbourhoods). According to ethnographic data, Georgians reside in 20 of these settlements, forming an absolute majority in some villages and a minority in others. Georgian communities are found in Kabakdağ, Karataş, Duayer, Çerkezdağ, Majanak, Duuduk, Tahtabaşı, Hoylu, Sudere, Salihli, Eskiordu, Jabran, Konakbaşı, Hamluk, Bozdağ, Hatipdağ, Yusufu, Sascılar, İlever, and Dod.

As noted in the previous chapter, the first muhajirs initially settled in the area now known as Kabakdağ, specifically in a locality called Zegani, from where they gradually dispersed to other villages. The etymology of the name Kabakdağ is of Turkish origin and is believed to derive from the word kabak ("pumpkin"), known in the muhajirs' dialect as khapi. According to local oral tradition, the migrants brought pumpkin seeds with them from their homeland, which were subsequently cultivated throughout the village: "They brought khapi seeds from there and planted them. The pumpkins climbed up the trees, and when other people arrived later, they began calling it the village of khapi." According to Husein Motskobili, the present-day name Kabakdağ originates from this story.

Unofficial records identify this place as the village of Samebadiri in the Çamaş district. In the Adjarian and Tao-Klarjeti dialects, the word sama (or samoba) refers to dancing and

²⁴ Kerem Morgül, *History of the Social Struggles in Fatsa, 1960–1980* (Master's thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007), 67–132.

festive gatherings. It may also carry a Christian connotation associated with the Holy Trinity (Sameba-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). It is noteworthy that many muhajirs originated from the village of Sameba in Kobuleti. Nevertheless, this explanation appears less convincing, since the migrants who settled here came from several villages, not exclusively from Sameba.

Ahmed Bezhanidze proposes another interpretation, suggesting that the name derives from the old Georgian tradition of Kabakhoba. In medieval Georgia, Kabakhi referred to an equestrian field used for military exercises and public festivities. At the center of the field stood a pole upon which a golden or silver cup, rather than a pumpkin, was placed as a target. Mounted archers would gallop past and attempt to strike the cup with an arrow; whoever successfully hit the target was declared the winner and received the cup as a prize. According to Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, the term qabakhi referred specifically to the central section of the field where the pole was erected, rather than to the entire arena. As the same time Kabakhoba was held during weddings as well as secular and religious celebrations. Bezhanidze supports this interpretation by referring to a historical map preserved in Atatürk's Mansion in Trabzon, where the place-name Khabakhi–Kabakha appears in the location of present-day Kabakdağ.²⁵ Nevertheless, this explanation also appears unlikely, since the tradition of Kabakhoba is not attested either in the ethnographic reality of Adjara and Guria or among the muhajirs. Therefore, the first interpretation linking the village name to pumpkin cultivation appears to be the most plausible.

Located approximately 400 meters above sea level and eight kilometers from the town of Fatsa, Kabakdağ is inhabited almost entirely by Georgians. The customary local rule known as the *ieri's tsesi* ("the rule of the place"),²⁶ established by the first muhajirs upon their arrival, remained in force for more than 140 years. As a result, only a few Turkish families have settled in the village, making Kabakdağ the oldest and most traditional Georgian village in the Fatsa district.

The history of settlement, spatial development, and local toponymy constitutes one of the principal markers of collective identity within the village. This is reflected in the enduring narratives surrounding the village's endogamous character and the continued use of indigenous Georgian place names.

Local residents identify Zegani as the site of the first muhajir settlement. Today, it forms the center of Kabakdağ and contains the first mosque built by the migrants, the village

²⁵ Ahmet Becioğlu, *Kabakdağı Village: This Is Our Story* (Samsun, 2022), 69.

²⁶ No one other than Georgians could settle here.

cemetery, and several Bezhanidze family houses that are more than a century old. In his monograph *The Village of Kabakdağ*, Ahmed Bezhanidze notes that the indigenous Georgian inhabitants continue to refer to this place as Zegani. The same was confirmed to me during an informal conversation with Husein Motskobili, whose ancestor belonged to the first generation of muhajirs and originally settled there: "We have a saying: we call Kabakdağ Zegani. Why Zegani? Because it is higher up. The lower part is called Zavo (land purchased from the aghas). When people ask us, 'Where are you going?' we answer, 'To Zegani.' We do not say Kabakdağ. For us, our village is Zegani." For local Georgians, Zegani remains the authentic historical name of the settlement, whereas Kabakdağ is regarded as a later Turkish designation. As Ahmed Bezhanidze further observes: "There is no other village in Türkiye or in our region called Zegani. Words beginning with ze- in Georgian always refer to elevated places: zegani (high plain), zeda (upper), zetsa (sky), zei (sun), zeniti (zenith), zendidi, and others."²⁷

Kabakdağ also includes the later settlement of Zavo. According to local accounts, as the population increased and agricultural land became insufficient, villagers gradually expanded into the lower areas. Eleven families purchased land from local aghas and beys, resulting in the expansion of the settlement.

Today, Kabakdağ is home to thirty-nine Georgian family names, including Diasamidze, Makharoghlu (Makharadze), Kamatamadze, Inaishvili, Mikeladze, Eliadze, Bajelidze, Meskhidze, Bezhanidze, Khakhutaishvili, Okropiridze, Kakaladze, Menapire, Makharashvili, Gogitidze, Khinikadze, Golomanidze, Motskobili, Machakheli, Chakveli, Tiladze, Bauzhadze, Kenchishvili (Kenchadze), Romanadze, Gorgadze, and Tsenteradze. Surnames ending in the Turkish suffix -oğlu ("son of"), whose bearers are originally from Batumi, include Hiratioğlu, Sosioğlu, Lazoğlu, Hotsioğlu, Halvaşoğlu, Tamazoğlu, Koroğlu, Kadioğlu, Kakuloğlu, Afazoğlu, and Kahvecioğlu.

Today, like most Georgian villages in the region, Kabakdağ remains largely deserted during the winter months. The village comes to life in July, August, and September, when the hazelnut harvest begins. For the rest of the year, most houses remain closed and are opened only on weekends. According to Husein Motskobili, the village school has ceased to function because the villages are gradually becoming depopulated and the number of children has declined significantly. Young people are particularly scarce, as most have moved to larger cities in search of education and employment.

²⁷ Ahmet Becioğlu, *Kabakdağı Village: This Is Our Story* (Samsun, 2022), 66.

The Contemporary House: Constructing the Present through the Past

While studying the phenomenon of belonging, I was particularly interested in identifying the cultural elements that foster a sense of belonging to Georgian culture among the local Georgians. One such element proved to be the traditional house and the Nalia.²⁸ I often asked my informants: "What is it that you look at and are reminded that you are Georgian?" Almost every respondent mentioned their old family house and the Nalia standing beside it, which has gradually lost its original practical function and acquired new emotional, nostalgic, and cultural significance as a carrier of collective memory.

One of the clearest expressions of belonging is the incorporation of architectural elements from the houses built by the first generation of muhajirs into newly constructed homes. "Our family from From our ancestors settled here 140 years ago. When my mother came here and built our first house, the chestnut planks from that house are now part of my current home. Two rooms in my village house are built from those very materials."

The contemporary houses of the Georgians of Fatsa generally follow the architectural principles of the traditional Georgian house, although with certain modifications. These differences are mainly the result of modern construction materials and contemporary architectural design. Nevertheless, the symbolic and functional organization of the house remains remarkably similar to its predecessor. Georgian houses continue to occupy the inner part of the household courtyard and usually consist of two stories, with three-story houses appearing only occasionally. Characteristic features include an external wooden balcony and wooden structural elements incorporated into stone masonry.

The same continuity can be observed in the case of the Nalia. Although it no longer performs its former practical function in everyday life, it continues to occupy an important place beside the house. Today, old Nalia structures are being actively restored and renovated. Muhamer Bey, who invited me to his home in the village of Kabakdağ, told me with visible regret that his family's original Nalia had not survived. Nevertheless, he expressed a strong desire to acquire an old one and stated that he would be willing to transport it even from hundreds of kilometers away if necessary. Besides restoration projects, nowhere else have I

²⁸ Nalia is a traditional elevated wooden granary used in the Black Sea region to store corn and other agricultural products, protecting them from moisture, rodents, and other pests.

encountered as many newly built Nalia as in the villages of Fatsa. Many households proudly display newly constructed Nalia built from chestnut timber according to traditional architectural forms.

When I asked why the Nalia remained so important despite no longer being used in everyday life, the answers were remarkably consistent: "This is our ancestral culture, and it must remain."

Particularly significant is the practice of incorporating foundation stones from ancestral houses into newly built homes. One of my hosts, Fahri Bauzhadze, who is actively involved in tourism, has spent years searching for abandoned Georgian homesteads in order to purchase them and use their building materials for constructing a new house. In doing so, he consciously reconstructs the past within the framework of contemporary life, maintaining an uninterrupted connection with his ancestors. This practice represents one of the ways through which the Georgians of Fatsa preserve their cultural identity.

Ahmed Kenchadze, who built a large villa in Kabakdağ, incorporated stones from his ancestors' house into the foundations and walls of his new residence. During my visit, he was hosting several Turkish guests, to whom he explained that embedding elements of Georgian culture into his home reminded him every day of who he was and where his roots lay. Inside his modern house I observed an old akhori (stable) padlock, which had been carefully embedded into the main glass table in the living room so that it would remain permanently visible. This practice, observed in Kabakdağ, vividly illustrates the important role that material culture plays in creating a sense of belonging and preserving connections with the past.

The incorporation of traditional Nalia structures or building materials from old houses into new homes can be interpreted in several ways. It may represent symbolic continuity-the transfer of ancestral heritage into contemporary life. It may also function as tangible evidence of family history, origin, and belonging. In other cases, it can be understood as a response to the fear of losing the past-the disappearance of an ancestral home and the family history associated with it. Most likely, these motivations coexist. Many informants emphasized that people living in such houses often feel as though the time of their grandparents continues to live within those walls, or that they can still sense the presence and strength of their ancestors. Through such experiences, domestic space becomes a living repository of cultural memory. Ultimately, all these practices lead us back to the concept of belonging. The house itself, as one of the central elements of everyday culture, constitutes an important component of memory, particularly when it carries historical and emotional significance. It has the capacity to shape both individual and collective memory, and upon this foundation, belonging becomes a

continuous and enduring process. As long as cultural memory survives, the sense of belonging to a particular place, community, or shared experience will likewise endure.

This interpretation closely resonates with Benedict Anderson's theory of large-scale belonging. According to Anderson, a sense of belonging can emerge and persist among millions of people who never meet one another face to face.²⁹ Such imagined communities are sustained through meaningful personal connections-including kinship, village life, and even the incorporation of ancestral objects into contemporary homes.

Georgian Surnames

During my ethnographic fieldwork, I visited the Georgian quarter of Sükkoli on a daily basis, as it was the place where the largest number of local Georgians gathered. One of the first things that caught my attention was a car bearing the owner's surname – Bajelidze - written in the Georgian script across its body. This observation makes it essential to examine Georgian surnames in Fatsa and the relationship between surnames and the sense of belonging. How do surnames construct belonging, and how do individuals represent themselves through them? The vehicle mentioned above serves as a vivid example of such self-representation.

As noted in the previous chapter, Fatsa was almost entirely settled by muhajirs who migrated from Kobuleti. Consequently, the surnames found in Fatsa are almost identical to those still common in present-day Kobuleti, most of whose bearers originally came from the Khino and Kintrishi valleys.

The Georgian surnames found in Fatsa include: Mikeladze (Bzikoğlu), Meskhidze, Gogmachadze (Deli İsmailoğlu), Katamadze, Buishvili, Makharadze, Makharaishvili (Makharoğlu), Gogitidze, Golomanidze, Inaishvili, Bezhanidze, Kenchishvili (Kenchadze), Khakhutaishvili (Khakhutoğlu), Eliadze, Okropiridze, Motsqobili, Machakheli, Bajelidze, Bolkvadze, Tkhilaishvili, Kakaladze, Tsetskhladze, Lazishvili, Khalvashi (Khalvashoğlu), Kvesieishvili (Kvesioğlu), Bauzhadze (Bauzhoğlu), Diasamidze, Menapire, Bidzioğlu, Khinikadze, Lomadze, Chelebadze, Shavishvili (Chavuşoğlu), Pataraishvili (Küçükoğlu), Zhghenti, Menabde, Ninidze, Murvanidze, Nogaideli, Jincharadze (Jincharoğlu), Sadaradze,

²⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 6-7.

Ananidze, Nakaidze, Takidze, Koridze (Koroğlu), Gorgadze, Romanadze, Artmeladze, Tsenteradze, Otieishvili (Otioğlu), Ustalishvili (Ustoğlu), Kaikatsishvili, and many others.

The overwhelming majority of Georgians living in Fatsa know their original Georgian surnames. This is largely because the muhajirs, who migrated as cohesive kinship groups, settled according to their family lineages and preserved the tradition of addressing one another by their surnames—a practice that remains widespread in Adjara today. Furthermore, during the surname reforms introduced under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, many families retained the root of their original Georgian surname. For example, Inanlı is a modified Turkish version of the Georgian surname Inaishvili, yet the original root remains recognizable. According to ethnographic evidence, the use of Georgian surnames remained particularly common throughout the first three generations of muhajirs, while the newly adopted Turkish surnames initially served primarily formal and legal purposes.

Today, however, the public representation of Georgian surnames among the Georgians of Fatsa varies considerably. A review of their social media profiles reveals different strategies of self-identification. Some individuals prominently display their original Georgian surname and use it as their primary online identity. Others present both their official Turkish surname and their ancestral Georgian surname, while some avoid publicly using their Georgian surname altogether. This content analysis, combined with ethnographic observations, demonstrates that for many Georgian descendants in Turkey, the surname functions as a powerful ethnic symbol, deeply connected both to collective memory and to a sense of cultural belonging. Others attach less importance to surnames in constructing their identity, although this group appears to be relatively small. Almost every new acquaintance I made in Fatsa began with an exchange of surnames. Since my mother's surname is Katamadze, this unexpectedly provided me with a significant advantage during fieldwork, facilitating closer relationships with local Georgians and making communication considerably easier. I was already aware that surnames function as important markers of origin and belonging, allowing individuals to categorize others as either "one of us" or "an outsider." From a phenomenological perspective, it also became evident that local Georgians instinctively sought to identify every visiting Georgian as belonging to their own kin group or surname lineage whenever possible. I experienced this repeatedly whenever I met someone bearing the surname Katamadze, Tsenteradze, or any other surname connected to my own extended family network.

Some individuals express considerable pride in their surnames and refer to them frequently during conversation. Zati Inaishvili, for example, recalled a family saying that has been preserved through oral tradition: "Our ancestors would say: 'No hodja or haji will ever

come from the Inaishvili family. They eat, they drink, they love women-how could it be otherwise? God made them this way.” My informant often spoke about the history of his surname, which he only discovered after the Georgian-Turkish border reopened. Since then, he has taken great pride in his relatives living across the border and celebrates every achievement associated with the Inaishvili family name.

Like Zati Inaishvili, virtually all of my informants displayed a sense of pride in their surnames. Questions such as "Are there any Meskhidzes there? How many families are there? Are they doing well?" clearly reflected the role that surnames continue to play in maintaining a sense of connection with Georgian identity and with relatives living beyond the state border. During the traumatic period of migration, many extended families were divided into separate households, while others merged through marriage and settlement. Consequently, nostalgia for lost relatives is often reconstructed through the preservation of ancestral surnames. In this sense, the social function of the surname remains highly significant in creating and sustaining a sense of belonging. It continues to serve as one of the strongest cultural markers through which the Georgians of Fatsa maintain their collective identity and connection to their ancestral homeland.

Georgian Cuisine

Gastronomy is one of the most visible and everyday domains through which culture is expressed. Food is not merely a means of satisfying biological needs; it is also an important medium for cultural self-expression, the construction of identity, and the formation of social relationships. Through food, culture becomes materialized and is transmitted across generations. Commitment to particular ingredients, recipes, and methods of preparation is often perceived as a continuation of tradition and a means of preserving collective memory. In this context, gastronomy functions as a powerful carrier of cultural memory.

The case of Fatsa vividly confirmed this observation. During the Grain Exchange Festival in Kabakdağ, I spoke with one of the local women:

- What do you grow in your garden?
- Corn, pkhali, beans, makido (parsley), kindzi (coriander). Turks don't use coriander like we do-that's ours. Cucumbers...
- Mrs. Şükran, don't you grow peas? It's delicious with mchadi (Georgian cornbread).

– Oh dear, how Georgian you are... Of course I grow it! I cook it in broth-it tastes wonderful.

Even this brief conversation clearly demonstrated the important role that particular dishes and ingredients play in fostering a sense of belonging to Georgian culture.

I first met Şükran and the other women in Kabakdağ. Before we left for the village, my host, Husein Motskobili, warned me: "It's the Georgian festival today. There will be many people-work however you think is best." One day before the Grain Exchange Festival, Kabakdağ hosted a Georgian Gastronomy Competition, where participants presented either traditional Georgian dishes or recipes inspired by Georgian culinary traditions. The competition was judged by an official panel. As I was told, the women prepare for this festival throughout the year, and during my fieldwork their enthusiasm and careful preparations were clearly evident. A large room was filled with women gathered around beautifully arranged tables, attentively following the competition. The dishes on display included Georgian black beans (kakali Lobio), pkhal-lobio, mchadi (Georgian cornbread), eggplant with walnuts, dried pkhali, grape porridge (pelamushi), and many other traditional Georgian dishes. The following day, during the Grain Exchange Festival itself, the winners of the gastronomy competition were officially awarded. It was there that I met several key informants from whom I collected valuable ethnographic material concerning the culinary traditions of Fatsa's Georgian community.

At the festival I also tasted the Kobuleti-style yakhni, locally known in Fatsa as kavurma, widely regarded as the signature dish of Kobuleti cuisine. Achma was prepared both with cheese and with a mixture of cheese and potatoes. The tables also featured grape-leaf tolma, baklava, burme, and numerous other traditional dishes. Tasting these foods gave me the feeling of being in a remarkably familiar cultural environment. More importantly, however, I became interested in the symbolic significance that Georgian cuisine holds for the local Georgian population. To explore this issue further, I interviewed one of the competition's prize winners, Muzeina Gogitidze, who provided a comprehensive account of the dishes that continue to be prepared and transmitted across generations among the Georgians of Fatsa. These include: Kavurma (yakhni), Dedluri (rice with chicken), Dzaghe-Dzmari, Bazhe, chicken cooked in oil, Tkemali sauce, black bean lobio, Pkhal-lobio, fresh pkhali, dried pkhali with walnuts, beetroot pkhali with walnuts, milk noodles, milk porridge, chestnut mchadi prepared with leeks, herbs, and walnuts, Melogine's porridge (also known as Boy-and-Girl Porridge), eggplant with walnuts (served without rolling), Kobuleti-style Borano, Khachapuri baked on a ketsi, Tolma, Chirbuli, Malakhto, Georgian salad, Lecheri, Cecervi (both soup and

dry preparation), Ekala with walnuts, Apokhti, homemade pasta, Khamsa prepared with Georgian spices, leek Tolma, pickled vegetables, grape porridge (Pelamushi), Burme, Baklava, Halva, pumpkin (khapi) halva, and assorted dried fruits.

Although Georgian and Turkish cuisines share many similarities due to comparable climatic conditions and geographical proximity, important differences remain. The cuisine of the Georgians of Turkey is distinguished primarily by the extensive use of walnuts and characteristic Georgian spices such as coriander, basil, black caraway, and others. One informant expressed this idea succinctly: "Crush walnuts, coriander, basil, black cumin and garlic together, add them to anything, and it becomes Georgian." In many villages of Fatsa, the Georgian population continues to preserve culinary traditions that remain highly visible in everyday life. The existence of more than one hundred traditional local dishes in Georgian villages clearly demonstrates the continuity of this cultural heritage.³⁰

It is equally important to emphasize the persistence of traditional dining practices, such as sitting on wooden floors and eating from low tables. The etiquette surrounding meals was particularly interesting. There were clearly established rules: elders and guests were always expected to be seated first, while hosts would not leave the table until their guests had finished eating. In some households children ate before the adults, whereas in others it was considered inappropriate for children to remain at the table while guests were present. Hospitality occupied a central place within these traditions. Nearly every household maintained a room prepared for unexpected travelers, and guests were received with exceptional generosity. As one informant remarked: "If you visit a Georgian village, they will feed you-they will make you eat, even by force." These customs, particularly respect for elders and the tradition of hospitality, remain defining characteristics of Georgian culture.

Socio-cultural changes, especially technological developments, have gradually reduced the use of traditional kitchen utensils. Wooden plates have largely been replaced by porcelain, ketsi baking stones are used less frequently, while the traditional family hearth (ojakhi) and its suspended cooking chain have given way to modern stoves. Nevertheless, despite these transformations, Georgian cuisine continues to stand out for its distinctive flavors and remarkable diversity. Women continue to preserve traditional recipes while, in some cases, adapting them to contemporary tastes. Although modern Georgian households in Fatsa have

³⁰ Yılmaz Seçim and Ömer Yüksel, "A Qualitative Study on Georgian Cuisine: The Case of Fatsa," in 11th International Conference on Culture and Civilization Full Texts Book, ed. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Güçlü (Mardin, Turkey: Farabi Publishing House, 2022), 38.

incorporated many Turkish dishes into their everyday meals, traditional Georgian cuisine continues to occupy a central place during festive occasions.

Six years ago, a Georgian restaurant was opened in the village of Duayer in Fatsa District. It remains highly popular among both the local Georgian community and Turkish visitors and tourists. The restaurant is owned by Deniz Inaishvili, whose affection for his mother's homeland inspired him to establish a restaurant dedicated to Georgian cuisine. Having grown up surrounded by his mother and grandmother, he transformed his love of Georgian food into a profession, and today his menu features a wide variety of traditional Georgian dishes.

Another important cultural landmark is the Georgian restaurant "Zafrana" in Kabakdağ, owned by the Bejanidze family. The restaurant attracts numerous visitors, including many tourists. In its courtyard stands the family's century-old ancestral house. The architecture, atmosphere, the restaurant's name, and, most importantly, its cuisine are all deeply rooted in Georgian cultural traditions, making it a source of considerable pride for the people of Kabakdağ.

The case of Fatsa clearly demonstrates that within diaspora communities food functions as one of the principal mechanisms through which a sense of belonging is maintained. National and regional dishes become powerful symbols of identity, while taste and culinary memory create connections between the past and the present. Food practices therefore constitute far more than everyday routines; they are political, emotional, and cultural acts that express belonging to a particular community and preserve cultural continuity across generations.

Return to the Historical Homeland: Visits and the Formation of Relationships

On March 16, 1921, a treaty was signed in Moscow between Bolshevik Russia and Turkey. This agreement established a new border, according to which parts of the historical districts of Artaan (Ardahan), Artvin, Oltisi (Oltu), Chaneti (Çaneti), and part of the Batumi district came under Turkish control, while Batumi and its surrounding area remained within Soviet Georgia. Later that same year, in the Treaty of Kars (October 13, 1921), signed between Turkey and the Soviet republics (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan), the borders defined in the Moscow Treaty were formally confirmed and further specified. This effectively brought

the process of muhajir migration to an end. During the Soviet period, travel to the Republic of Turkey became virtually impossible. The border was first opened in 1988. After its opening, many people managed to establish contact with Georgians who had remained on the other side of the border, thereby restoring historical and kinship ties.

Today, the relationship with the historical homeland-both as an emotional bond and as a physical act of return-plays an important role in post-migration diasporic communities. Visits to Georgia are not merely geographical movements; they are often perceived as a symbolic return to the ancestral homeland. Although the opening of the border revealed symbolic divisions and highlighted differences among relatives, it also facilitated active mobility and increasing social and economic interaction, which led to the emergence of new shared experiences and forms of kinship.³¹

Interest in the historical homeland intensified after relations between Georgia and Turkey improved. Travel between the two countries not only became possible but also easier and more frequent. Among Turkish businessmen investing in Georgia, a significant proportion are of Georgian origin. Visits by Georgian-origin intellectuals have also increased, along with scientific and cultural exchanges with Georgian colleagues. For Georgians in Turkey, information about Georgia's history, their ancestors, and their cultural traditions has become more accessible. All of this has contributed to a renewed return to ancestral roots.³²

Before the border was opened, younger generations of muhajirs knew their homeland only in imagined terms. As one informant explained, "They used to say our ancestors came from there, but we did not know where it was, because there was no road." After the border opened, contacts between the two sides began to develop. The first encounters between previously separated relatives were highly emotional. During these meetings, relatives often noted physical resemblances. This is how Zati Inaiashvili recognized her relatives when two brothers and their mother traveled from Kobuleti to Sarpi to meet her. As she recalled, although they had never seen each other's photographs, they still recognized one another and experienced profound joy. "The 500-kilometer road-I had gone by car with a driver. We sat in the car and talked the whole way; I don't know how those 500 kilometers passed. They asked me, 'Where did you learn Georgian?' I said, 'At home.'"

³¹ Giorgi Cheishvili, "They Have Their Flag, We Have Ours: An Ethnography of the Border, Boundaries and Belonging in the Turkish-Georgian Borderland" (PhD thesis, University of Bergen, 2022), 213.

³² Nodar Shoshitashvili, *In Search of Georgia in Turkey: Three Summers with the Georgians of Turkey* (Tbilisi, 2017), 5.

The opening of the border and visits to ancestral villages felt like a kind of rebirth for every Georgian from Turkey. Informants described the emotions they experienced when visiting Georgian villages. Many noted strong similarities between villages in Patsa and those in the Kobuleti region, which made them feel “at home.”

The opening of the Turkey–Georgia border also brought significant economic benefits. New jobs were created, many people became involved in various cross-border activities, and employment increased in transport companies and infrastructure projects. At the same time, there was a notable outflow of Georgian labor from Georgia, particularly seasonal workers essential to local agriculture, especially tea and hazelnut production, as they represented cheap labor.³³ A particularly large number of seasonal workers went to Patsa, where hazelnut production is well developed. Georgian workers often stayed with Georgian families, forming new relationships that continue to this day. In many cases, these relationships became so close that people still attend each other’s weddings and funerals.

Aydin Gunog̈li Makharadze recalled how he became close to a Georgian family who had been left homeless and deceived in Patsa. A Turkish-Georgian passerby helped the couple, paid them from his own earnings, and ensured their safe return to Georgia. Since then, the relationship and mutual visits between these families have continued to the present day.

For the people of Patsa, one of the most significant dates is 2013, when the President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, visited ethnic Georgians living in Turkey, including the population of Patsa. The meeting took place in the center of Kabakdag̈h village and was highly emotional for Turkish Georgians. President Saakashvili granted Georgian citizenship to 936 local Georgians for their preservation of Georgian culture and language, stating: “To those citizens of Turkey who know Georgian, who have preserved it and love their Georgian identity, who feel themselves patriots of Georgia... we will grant Georgian citizenship, because you are all Georgians.”³⁴

Today, many people from Patsa still feel that they have not seen the land of their ancestors and strongly hope that they will eventually be able to visit it. It is notable that interest is especially strong among younger generations; many members of the new generation visit the historical homeland for tourism, business, or other professional purposes. While some view the future with skepticism and fear that intensified globalization may lead to the loss of Georgian

³³ Giorgi Cheishvili, "They Have Their Flag, We Have Ours: An Ethnography of the Border, Boundaries and Belonging in the Turkish-Georgian Borderland" (PhD thesis, University of Bergen, 2022), 34.

³⁴ The President’s Meeting with Georgians Living in Turkey..., YouTube video, August 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlzqYWY9eF0>

culture and interpersonal connections, others see eased mobility in a positive light and remain hopeful.

Current geographical mobility among Georgians beyond the borders can be described as circular mobility,³⁵ which in this case refers to the periodic movement of Georgians from Patsa to Georgia, where ties with relatives are maintained. This cyclical migration is not a permanent relocation but rather a practice of maintaining social and cultural unity, strengthening connections between two living spaces, and facilitating the transmission of cultural memory and a sense of belonging.

Conclusion

The ethnographic study of Georgians living in the Fatsa district of Ordu Province is ongoing. Moreover, I consider it necessary to gradually expand the geographical scope of the research, which would allow for a much broader understanding of issues related to cultural memory and group belonging. In this presentation, I would like to emphasize that cultural memory is a central mechanism that ensures the maintenance and intergenerational transmission of belonging. As a result of migration, geographically separated communities have managed not only to preserve their ethnic identity, but also to reinterpret and transform it through everyday practices, traditions, language, and symbolic forms.

The research shows that cultural memory is not merely a passive recollection of the past, but an active social practice manifested in family histories, oral narratives, traditional celebrations, and other cultural expressions. It is precisely through memory that a sense of “Georgianness” (Gurjoba) is produced—one that signifies not only ethnic affiliation but also a shared experience and unity of values.

The sense of belonging was particularly strong among earlier generations of Fatsa Georgians, for whom it was not only a connection to the past but also a way of positioning themselves within contemporary Turkish society, where they had to define themselves in the presence of “others.” Cultural memory thus assisted them in constructing self-representation and developing strategies of social interaction. It functions as a tool for shaping and filling the concept of “we” within the group, drawing individuals into a shared history and collective

³⁵ Russell King, Towards a New Map of European Migration, *International Journal of Population Geography* 8, no. 2 (2002): 89–106.

memory. It ensures group cohesion and circulates cultural meanings-language, knowledge, memory, values, experiences, expectations, and interpretations-that together construct a symbolic worldview for the community. This circulation produces a sense of collective belonging. Today, this tendency has slightly changed, and such explicit self-definitions are less publicly articulated; however, shared cultural expressions of difference among the descendants of muhajirs still persist.

It can be argued that, in the case of Georgians of Fatsa, belonging and identity are living processes, continuously shaped through the activation of cultural memory rather than through a static interpretation of historical narratives. This memory lives within everyday life: in language, cuisine, architecture, customs, morality, nostalgia, and most importantly, in the emotional significance attached to visits to the historical homeland.

Through the ethnographic study of Fatsa Georgians, I have sought not only to highlight a significant theoretical issue but also to introduce into the academic space the details of both traditional and contemporary everyday life in Fatsa, along with valuable cultural elements of great national and scholarly importance. Clearly, a more extensive and in-depth exploration of these issues is required in future research in order to examine in greater detail the diverse components of history, memory, and cultural identity among Georgians of Fatsa.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Kabakdağı Village (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 2. The Traditional Georgian House of the Bejanidze Family in Kabakdağı Village (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 3. Coastal Area of Fatsa (Author's photograph).



Appendix 4. Fatsa City (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 5. Omer Bolkvadze and His Wife at a Grain Exchange Festival (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 6. A Georgian Woman Preparing Achma, a Traditional Georgian Dish (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 7. Nalia (Traditional elevated wooden granary used for storing corn and other agricultural products in the Black Sea region) (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 8. The Nalia as a Significant Cultural Phenomenon among the Descendants of Muhajirs, with Many Families Reconstructing It to Preserve Tradition (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 9. Fieldwork with Georgians in Kabakdağı Village (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 10. Interior of the Georgian *Çayhane* (Tea House) in the City of Fatsa. The *çayhane* is the principal gathering place for men, where they spend much of the day socializing and playing traditional board games. (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 11. Interview with Zati Inaishvili at the Georgian *Çayhane* (Tea House) (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 12. At the Georgian Festival (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 13. With Informant Ahmed Bejanidze (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 14. One of the First Mosques Built by Georgian Muhajirs (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 15. Cemetery of Georgian Muhajirs and Their Descendants (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 16. The Padlock as an Example of Cultural and Family Memory (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 17. The Traditional House of Fahri Baujadze (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 18. A Georgian-Style House Built by Muhajirs 140 Years Ago (Author's fieldwork, 2025).



Appendix 19. Kejera Pkhali, a Distinct Element of Georgian Cuisine (Author's fieldwork, 2025)

