

Identity and Integration among Turkish Sunni Muslims in Britain¹

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ABSTRACT

This article attempts to analyze various aspects of ethnic and religious identity configurations among the Turkish Sunni Muslims in Britain and to explore how such social processes influence their socio-political integration. It tries to situate the Turkish community in the context of British Muslim identity politics. Findings in this article are based on in-depth interviews on perceptions and attitudes the Turkish Sunni Muslims have and their implications in the planning of collective activities, especially in the field of education. This study reveals that although the current level of integration among the Turkish Sunni Muslims in Britain is less than expected, neither living in a non-Muslim country nor claiming to have a British identity are perceived as incompatible with Turkish and Islamic values. This paper concludes that educating Turkish youths in ethnic and religious values is a priority, as it is seen as a means to protect against assimilation, while allowing for successful integration.

In Europe, there has been an increasing tendency towards the securitization of immigration regimes² and a retreat away from multiculturalism and integrationism towards assimilationism in immigrant incorporation policies. The main reasons for rethinking immigration policies appear to revolve around Islam and Muslims. This is manifest in the media coverage of Islam and Muslims in general, and some politicians' discourses, while it is mostly latent in government and legal discourses.³ The re-consideration of immigrant-related policies often begins with liberal premises, including the discussion of individual versus group rights and national identity. But, it evolves based on essentialist assumptions attributed to the basic tenets of Islam and its perceived incompatibility with democratic principles. At best, such prevailing beliefs in host societies result in reluctance towards any religious demands put forth by Muslims.⁴ At worst, the anxiety, stereotyping, and numerous prevailing

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essentialist arguments regarding Muslim culture in public debates seem to be further exacerbated in the post- 9/11 environment, in which Islam has become the proverbial “other” of the Western world within the construct of the “clash of civilizations.”⁵ In such a context of marginalization and mounting pressures for assimilation, Muslim immigrants have

sought not only to protect their religious values but also to embrace an Islamic identity that is political in order to claim rights in the host country⁶.

In Britain, such a process started with the events surrounding the Rushdie Affair in 1989, and accelerated following the events of 9/11. In response to the 2001 riots involving the immigrant communities of South Asian origin in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley, the Cantle Report diagnosed these neighborhoods as highly segregated areas:

Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of *parallel lives*. These lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges.⁷

Following such events, Muslims in Britain have been accused of forming “parallel societies,” and were urged to integrate. In some cases, what is meant by integration is in fact tantamount to assimilation, since integration is described as the convergence of the immigrants with the dominant society, rather than a two-sided process. McGhee argues that, after a series of reports on community cohesion, immigration and asylum, which was called “Strength in Diversity” Consultation Strategy (2004), the British government’s orientation towards an assimilationist strategy was solidified with an emphasis on security rather than looking to the root causes that hindered integration. Immigrant communities were expected to show that they were “active” citizens through engagement with the local host communities with the expectation that such relations would lead to “shared values.”⁸ In this context, it is important to understand how Muslim immigrants have sought to preserve and reproduce their ethnic, religious and cultural identity. When these Muslim immigrant communities strive to protect their identity, are they creating “parallel societies” within the host country or are they actually integrating?

Acculturation is a useful concept for understanding transformations of culture and values in immigrant settings. As a part of the assimilation theory, the concept

of acculturation has been criticized for its oversimplification of immigrant and host society cultures, because it is linear and unidimensional.⁹ Berry, however, has sought to remedy the unidimensionality of this concept by taking acculturation as a combination of integration processes working in separate domains (i.e. language, identity, attitudes, values).¹⁰ Acculturation scholars have also sought to overcome the model's limitation in viewing acculturation as one of "...either ethnic maintenance or assimilation" by taking the immigrant's ethnic identity and identification with the host society as two separate domains.¹¹

Based on this separation, Berry divides acculturation strategies of immigrants into four types depending on the importance of one's cultural identity and positive relations with the host society. These categories are 1) *integration* (both host society and cultural identity), 2) *assimilation* (only host society relations), 3) *separation* (only cultural identity), and 4) *marginalization* (neither). Berry and others also take into account the acculturation strategies of the members of the host society¹². There have been attempts to explore the "matching" of host society with immigrant approaches to acculturation, such as the study conducted by Van Ouderhoven in the Netherlands. The results showed that the local population favored assimilation, while they believed that immigrant groups (Turks and Moroccans) preferred separation. However, the immigrant groups, in fact, turned out to favor integration on Berry's scheme.¹³ This study aims to discover the articulation and reproduction of ethnic and religious identity to better analyze integration perspectives in relation to identity, in the case of a specific Muslim group in Britain: The Sunni Turks. Having their roots in a secular and democratic country with a predominantly Muslim population, The Turkish Sunni Muslims are a group that can test the validity of stereotypes and reservations about Islam and Muslims in the West. Whereas the dominant public discourse in Britain suggests a tendency for Muslim communities toward *separation*, illustrated by the "parallel societies" argument, it is worth exploring which acculturation strategy is actually adopted by the Muslims themselves.

As a minority community, British Muslims have developed a "politics of identity" in the past decades. Through an inquiry to determine to what extent they share the main concerns and demands of British Muslim as a whole and to clarify their engagement with Muslim umbrella organizations, this study also attempts to situate the Sunni Turks in the political context of Muslims in Britain.

Muslims in Britain

Large scale immigration of Muslims to Britain started in the 1950s. According to the 2001 census, 3 percent of the population in England and Wales is Muslim,

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a total of 1.6 million. This makes Islam the second largest religion on the island. About 1.2 million Muslims are of South Asian origin, and half of Britain's Muslims were born in the country.¹⁴ Since British citizenship is based on the *jus soli* principle and permits dual citizenship,

it has relatively been easy for most Muslim immigrants and their descendants to have the rights associated with British citizenship. However, the existence of rights does not guarantee that one actually enjoys them. Some immigrant groups have become minorities in the societies hosting them, not just in terms of their numbers, but also because they face discrimination.¹⁵ Muslims have faced a process of "racialization,"¹⁶ defined as construction of a social group as a "problem" and, therefore, legitimization of their discrimination or exclusion.¹⁷ In fact, although it covers racial and ethnic minorities (ethnic and religious identities are supposed to have merged in the case of the Jewish and Sikh communities), British anti-discrimination framework excluded Muslims until the European Directive on Employment took effect in 2003.¹⁸

The Rushdie Affair revealed that, in Britain, there was a lack of mechanisms for Muslims to voice their grievances, resulting in an increased number of radical forms of protests.¹⁹ This handicap, in turn, further paved the way for the perpetuation of stereotypes. With a series of legislation to fight terrorism passed in the aftermath of 9/11, security was prioritized at the expense of basic rights and freedoms.²⁰ In November 2007, the government declared that the measures against terrorism would include counter-radicalization concepts. Via this "Preventing Violent Extremism Strategy," the government increased police powers and placed its support behind moderate Muslim groups.²¹ According to Hellyer, this strategy indicates that the integration of Muslims is now viewed in relation to security concerns rather than an end in itself.²²

In-depth studies of Muslims throughout Europe in the post 9/11 environment show that the negative attitudes of the receiving societies have had a major impact on the self-identification of immigrant groups. This has led these groups towards an increased politicization and polarization. Wharton explains that the (self-)isolation of Islamic communities and the subsequent emergence of Islamic identity politics are primarily a reaction to these developments.²³ In Britain, Muslims' reactions to stereotyping and exclusion have translated into a distinctive politics of identity based on religion. In general, the emergence of such a discourse can be seen by an expansion in the demand for anti-discrimination measures and posi-

tive rights. There is a desire also to see a return to the former inclusive multicultural state policies. For example, a study on moderate British Muslim intellectuals shows that they have similar goals as non-Muslim multiculturalists. Muslim intellectuals, like their non-Muslim

counterparts, appreciate the merits of secularism and conceive of multiculturalism as a ground for mutual respect, dialogue and transformation (rather than a way of perpetuating particularities). Most participants in the study used Western philosophical references as well as Islamic history and the Qranic script itself as sources for their definition of a just multicultural society.²⁴ In their demand for recognition derived from “contemporary Western ideals about equality and multiculturalism” rather than exclusively from Islam or Islamism, Muslim identity politics in Britain has applied a similar discourse as the politics of anti-racism.²⁵

A review of the Muslim media and Muslim umbrella organizations in Britain since 9/11²⁶ shows that the principal concerns of Muslims in Britain include both government policies and host society’s attitudes and reactions. They criticize the following government policies and practices: Anti-terrorism laws and practices perceived as targeting Muslims and being against human rights, lack of adequate mechanisms of representation for Muslims, lack of anti-discrimination measures for Muslims, and the British foreign policy regarding Muslim countries. They are also concerned about negative perceptions of and reactions from the dominant society, such as Islamophobia, an increasing number of violent attacks against Muslims, and the rise of extreme right wing politics - with a discourse perceived to be specifically against Muslim immigrants.

The Turkish Sunni Muslim Community

Turkish speaking communities arrived in Britain in successive waves from Cyprus and mainland Turkey since the 1950s through legal and illegal immigration, as asylum seekers, and as students.²⁷ Most arrivals from mainland Turkey took place during the 1990s²⁸ when the Southeastern provinces of Turkey became centers of political conflict and violence, which resulted in the exodus of people of Kurdish and Alevi origin immigrating or seeking political asylum. Meanwhile, immigration to the UK also emanated from other regions in Turkey, including the Central and Northern provinces, which are known for their conservative Islamic outlook. Indeed, many of the interviewees for this study came from, or had familial backgrounds from these provinces.

In Britain, Muslims’ reactions to stereotyping and exclusion have translated into a distinctive politics of identity based on religion

Many of the Turkish speaking communities in the UK are concentrated in certain boroughs of North-East London (Hackney, Haringey, Enfield, and Islington) and South London (Southwark, Lewisham). Businesses are currently clustered in these areas of settlement. The communities are specialized in a few trades such as supermarkets, restaurants, kebab shops and dry cleaning. This pattern suggests the existence of an enclave.²⁹ The fact that many Turkish immigrants live, work and socialize in the same part of the metropolitan center suggests that there is relatively little need for them to engage with the host society. In fact, it seems possible to live in London without knowing a word of English: Immigrants can handle their communication problems with any administrative body, including courts and hospitals, through translation services provided by the local authority or community organizations.

Although the exact number of Turkish speaking communities in Britain is difficult to determine, estimates vary between 150.000 and 500.000 people. 75 to 90 percent of this population resides in and around the London metropolitan area.³⁰ The number of British citizens of Turkish origin is similarly unknown.³¹ Turkish speaking communities are a minority compared to the South Asian Muslims in number. Therefore, they are less involved in British Muslim politics. There is also a contrast when it comes to their respective religiosity: whereas 90 percent of South Asians in Britain were found to be religious,³² religiosity seems to be much lower among the Turkish speaking communities. Calculating by mosque attendance on Fridays and religious festivals, participants of this study estimated the number of religious Sunnis between a few thousand (*Süleymaniye* and *Aziziye* respondents) and 30 thousand (*Diyanet*). According to Küçükcan's study on religiosity and values of the second-generation youth of Turkish speaking origin in Britain, 64 percent of males and 43 percent of females had religious beliefs.³³ The same study also argues that, for the majority of the Turkish speaking community, Islam appears to be a natural extension of national identity rather than a religious one.³⁴

Methodology and Main Findings

This article draws on findings of a fieldwork study that took place between June and October 2008 involving in-depth interviews with individuals taking active part in the planning or administrating the activities of Turkish Sunni Muslim organizations in Britain. These organizations are based in London, and have been set up or are run by people from certain Sunni groups. These groups are comprised of the major Turkish religious communities representing Turkish social and political Islam. Eight organizations participating in this study cover all major religious groups among the Turkish Sunni Muslim community, most of which

have transnational links. The participating organizations were MUSIAD UK, *Diyanet* (Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs), and various associations, foundations and trusts established by *Milli Görüş* (National View), *Mahmud Hoca*, *Süleymancı* and *Gülen* communities.³⁵

In the second phase of the study, the findings were supported by educational document reviews and participant observations in various organizational activities. Furthermore, fifteen additional interviews were held with editors of community newspapers, local Turkish and/or Muslim politicians and community leaders, local police staff, non-religious associations, and academics working in the field.

Broadly speaking, the research focused on collecting data on the following themes: The Sunni Turkish community life in Britain; inclusiveness of British identity; ethnic and religious identity; integration; political participation; engagement with British Muslims and their identity politics.

One of the key findings of this survey was that the main regional, political, ideological and sectarian cleavages in Turkey are generally reproduced in foreign settings, which bring their own respective separation and intergroup tensions irrespective of British domestic politics. The respondents emphasized the basic divisions as between Kurds and Turks and the secularists and the religious. All are reminiscent of the socio-political polarization in contemporary Turkey. Some interviewees portrayed the Turkish Cypriot community as “Muslim and Turk only by name” and mentioned the *Alevi* as “others.” By “us,” they generally meant mainland Turks with attachment to Sunni Islam, and clearly excluded Kurdish nationalists. Some respondents stressed that their community included Kurdish members, who did not support Kurdish separatism and followed Sunni rituals.

When asked about the social life of the community, the interviewees said that people generally preferred to hang out with like-minded people, or people from the same hometown or locality in Turkey.³⁶ Joint activities or projects with other organizations from the Turkish speaking or Turkish Sunni community were incredibly rare. The interviewees explained this absence by their lack of a common denominator in “vision.” When asked whether differences among Sunni communities were based on their interpretations of the *sharia*, respondents reported that such differences were minor.

Inclusiveness of Britain and British Identity

In terms of religious freedoms, all respondents were satisfied. Most of them found Britain to be more tolerant than Germany, France, and most notably Tur-

key itself. Although critical of Islamophobia, only three respondents (male and female) reported experiences of discrimination or harassment on the basis of religion. Respondents explained the rarity of such instances because Turks do not dress the same way as South Asian Muslims whose clothing is often stereotyped. Some respondents said that they were not targeted because Turks did not engage with extremist groups or activities. Some respondents attributed the rarity of discrimination and harassment to the peculiarity of London as a cosmopolitan space. Some also pointed out the ethnic and religious composition of their neighborhoods, where White Christians remained a minority.

None of the respondents interpreted the existing limitations on immigration as specifically targeting Muslims. They gave economic and structural explanations and some sympathized with the British government, pointing out the right and need to protect one's borders. Nonetheless, some respondents criticized some of the policy applications on entry conditions. It was reported that holding a Turkish passport (*Süleymaniye*, male; *Milli Görüş*, male) or coming from a Muslim country (*Milli Görüş*, male) creates suspicion and slows down the process. The respondents, nonetheless, praised the permission for dual nationality and were not critical of the requirements for citizenship acquisition. Britain was characterized as a country of coexistence between nationalities and tolerance for various religious beliefs. These qualities were attributed to its colonial past and its tradition of democracy - where one's rights were secured by the judicial system. Some respondents compared Britain's approach to immigration and interethnic tolerance with Turkey and said that the level of rights, freedoms and tolerance offered by the former is unimaginable for non-Muslims in Turkey.

The interviewees perceived the British identity to be inclusive. However, they regarded that the British themselves were not. Some respondents even claimed that British society actually harbors racist tendencies. This racism, however, was described as subtle: "They smile at your face but they think otherwise" (*Diyanet* female). They further believe that all public and private sectors were open to minorities as long as they held lower positions. Some said that it was impossible to be considered as "one of them" because of their differences in culture and values. Some respondents justified this tendency for exclusion as a form of "anxiety" by the host society because of the large number of foreign nationals in Britain. As such, they dismissed it as being solely targeted against Muslims.

The respondents did not find Islam and British identity to be incompatible. Although identifying with British identity was not strong even among some of those who held citizenship, interviewees of the second generation said that they

felt a certain belonging to Britain and some of its ways but would not qualify this feeling as patriotism.

Ethnic and Religious Identity

For the group under study, the term “we” encompasses those within the Turkish speaking communities, especially mainland Turks and Kurds who do not approve of Kurdish separatism. The interviewees did not clearly distinguish between Turkish national and Islamic religious identities. Islam was perceived as “one and the same for all Muslims.” Almost all of the respondents expressed the following views at one point or another during their interview: perception of Muslims by the host society; definition of “British Islam”; attitudes about anti-terrorism measures; evaluation of other Muslim communities; integration with the host society. On the question of whether the practice of Islam in Turkey differs from other countries, some respondents pointed out that since Islam is a universal religion, different interpretations would mean a deviation from its main pillars. For others, the existing variances in different societies are a natural product of culture and interpretation. Ultimately, the respondents thought that what made the Turkish Islamic experience different from other cultures was a source of pride.

For example, members of the *Gülen* community expressed that “Anatolian Islam” has democracy, tolerance and human rights at its heart, and, therefore, it should be a model for the entire Muslim world. A similar line of thought about Islam was that it was absolutely compatible with the life in the West. *Milli Görüş* respondents emphasized that the Ottoman legacy was on the exemplary experience of Islam by referring to the Ottoman *millet system*.³⁷ *Mahmud Hoca* and *Süleymancı* communities similarly upheld the Ottoman legacy. This was manifest in their choice of historical sites for the cultural trips to Turkey, which they organized for the youth in their communities.

Integration

Most of the associations participating in this study, stressed the lack of social integration as a major problem for their community. Interviewees distinguished integration first and foremost, from assimilation. For them, assimilation would cause the loss of cultural identity and self-confidence and would ultimately lead to the problems the youth have in their community.³⁸ Their definition of “good integration” included the following: to participate in the economic and political life of the host country; to honor its laws; to contribute to the host society by paying taxes and offering services; to keep and uphold the Turkish and Muslim identity;³⁹ to be knowledgeable and proud of one’s roots and values; and to avoid social “de-

generation.” Only one respondent conditioned integration as a state responsibility (by securing one’s rights and overcoming discrimination - *Aziziye*). Others qualified it either as the immigrant’s duty, or as a natural extension of life in the host country, or even a desired end result.

Whereas some participants, at various points throughout their interviews, said that they found their community to be in a state of isolation, most respondents reacted to the assertion that Muslims lived in “parallel societies,” by arguing that such an idea was not realistic. Some added that if this argument was meant to criticize Muslims for keeping their values intact, it was unfair because nobody should be expected to give up one’s own culture to fit into the host society. Only one respondent agreed with the parallel societies argument for his own community, and stated the following:

Correct. Why doesn’t he step out of the kebab shop? Why doesn’t he become a scientist? Get out of your shell, don’t keep living in the village, you are at one of the capitals of the world, if you show yourself here, the world will see you. His Turkish is broken, his English is broken, he sends his son to the *kahvehane*⁴⁰ instead of the school... (*Milli Görüş*)

Education was stated by almost all respondents as the main problem for their community. Other problems, such as unemployment, poverty, drug addiction and organized crime were seen as repercussions of a lack of education and a loss of values following immigration to Britain. Subsequently, respondents stated educational activities as the most important function of their organizations. All communities have both secular and religious supplementary school programs that aim to improve academic performance at school, teach Turkish language, and transmit religious knowledge and values to the next generations. These programs are combined with extracurricular activities to protect children from harmful influences,⁴¹ to facilitate friendship among those with common Turkish and Islamic backgrounds, and promote the construction of a Turkish-Islamic identity. The respondents defined the goal of their educational programs as “raising role models” who are well integrated into British society without being assimilated. The extracurricular activities are also means for extending the base of the community and reaching the target groups, including women, who remain the best interlocutor and most available parent to address the issues of raising and educating the children successfully.⁴²

Political Participation

Ethnic or religious community organizations have an important role in the political mobilization of immigrants, signaling their incorporation and integra-



Photo: A.A., Dilek Kocabaş

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tion. This is generally explained in the literature by their ability to incorporate civic values and promote engagement of their members while they socialize. If the immigrant group is discriminated against, or relatively lacks social capital, the host society environment does not provide easy access to mainstream political institutions and processes. Then, the socialization function of community organizations becomes vital for sociopolitical integration.⁴³ The organizations in this study perform a similar function, albeit generally at the local/grassroots level.

When asked directly about their political activities, *Süleymaniye* and *Aziyiye* respondents clarified that they were careful not to engage in politics as an organization. Although they declared themselves as “non-political,” most of the organizations engage in politics through voting in elections, involvement in political demonstrations as well as associational membership.⁴⁴ When asked about their view about the Turkish community’s involvement in these three types of political activity, the respondents reported their community to be both ignorant and disinterested in political matters. As a result, the interviewees stated that one of

their goals is to encourage political involvement on the part of their own communities.

Engagement with British Muslims and Their Identity Politics

The respondents shared British Muslims' concerns about Islamophobia. They were critical of the British and Western foreign policy actions towards Muslim countries, and were bothered by the general disinterest in the crimes of humanity effecting the *ummah* throughout the Muslim world. However, the interviewees also accepted this neglect as the "natural state of affairs."

In line with their general satisfaction with their current living conditions as Muslims in Britain - such as being able to open mosques, receiving religious education, performing religious duties, dressing according to their beliefs - the respondents were generally uncritical of the government and mentioned no specific expectations. The respondents did not perceive availability of funds and protection under anti-discrimination legislation for the Jewish community as discriminatory, examples frequently used for comparison by British Muslim actors to demonstrate the existence of discrimination against Muslims in Britain. The respondents thought that the Jewish community, with a much earlier history in Britain, was much better organized and had better internal cooperation among its members. Some respondents said that they had enough economic resources and political power in Western societies to have their demands met. Thus, the respondents concluded that Muslims could not realistically expect the same type of treatment from the British government.

The respondents were asked to comment on the government's two-tier strategy to prevent extremism, comprised of a) more security measures, b) support for an Islam that is compatible with the values of the country. With respect to security measures, most respondents commented that providing national security is the priority of every country and Britain cannot be expected to be an exception to this rule. Therefore, the interviewees regarded practices of profiling Muslims and stop and search as understandable. However, they thought that these measures did not apply to Turkish Muslims since there had been only one instance of a brief detention following the July 2005 bombings. Some respondents argued that the secret services already knew whom they would arrest and the measures were only against those "criminals." Only one respondent complained about such measures as he had a personal experience of extensive questioning at the border (*Milli Görüş*, male). On issues regarding the British government policy of supporting moderate Muslim groups, or attempts to create a British Islam or a Euro-Islam,

the respondents reacted negatively to the term “moderate Islam.” They argued that there is one Islam and its rules are established; Islam cannot be “moderated” or reduced to something else to please anyone since Islam can only be interpreted by Muslims and its interpretation is limited to *Quran* and *Sunna*. They pointed out that any attempts to interfere with Islam by outsiders would not work.

The funding possibilities that come with the British government’s new policy were welcomed by *Milli Görüş* and the Dialogue Society respondents as long as the type of funding corresponded with their purposes. Meanwhile, *Süleymaniye* and *Aziziye* respondents were skeptical of the government’s sincerity and were concerned by the strings attached. For example, they did not want to share their privacy lose control over their activities. One respondent noted that it would be to the advantage of radical Islamists that they were independent from state support. In his view, receiving funds from the British state would raise suspicion and result in a deterioration of the image of the recipient organization in the eyes of Muslims (Dialogue Society). Although some abstained from state funding for private schools or funding through the prevention of extremism scheme, these organizations already received aid for specific projects from local government and/or other resources.

Respondents reported that Turkish Muslims and other Muslim communities lived in separate neighborhoods, mainly because of language and cultural differences. One respondent claimed that since South Asian Muslims and Blacks had a history of oppression and colonialism, they are not self-confident and tend to be more reactive (*Milli Görüş*). As descendants of an empire that had not been colonized, however, Turkish people considered themselves as much more self-confident, moderate, and willing to engage positively with the dominant society (Dialogue Society).

Respondents were mostly skeptical of the effectiveness of the Muslim advisory bodies and Muslim umbrella organizations. Although they expressed a need for Muslims in Britain to unite for common causes, they have found it to be an impossible task due to the diversity of their roots. The only organization (*Aziziye*) that has membership with a Muslim umbrella organization (Muslim Council of Britain, MCB) does not attend its meetings. Other organizations (*Milli Görüş* and MUSIAD) prefer having relations without membership. The reason why Turkish Sunni Muslims are not members is because of their relatively small numbers among Muslims in Britain. This would lead to a disproportion in representation and give the appearance that they were in agreement with and responsible for the statements of these public organizations, when in fact they would have no real say

in the matter. One respondent commented that there is a need for cooperation on issues rather than on identity, if Muslims are to overcome stereotypes (Dialogue Society).

Conclusion

According to Rex, immigrants' private domain enables them to keep their ties to their home country and prevents them from feeling lost:

...the structure of the private domain amongst immigrant communities includes extended kinship extending back into a homeland, a network of associations and a system of religious organization and belief. This structure provides a valuable meaning in an impersonal society of providing a home and source of identity for individuals.⁴⁵

The organizations in this study perform such functions, since they are extensions of homeland-based Islamic communities. Although Turkish Sunni Muslim communities might have interests that clash and have distinctive attitudes, opinions, concerns, practices, and strategies in Britain, there are no discernible differences among them, with two exceptions: on integration (*Gülen* community) and on engagement with Muslim political actors (*Milli Görüş* and MUSIAD). The separation of these organizations rests on their networks or communities rather than in their opinions or values.⁴⁶ There was also no significant difference of the participants' perspectives based on gender, age, and date of arrival.⁴⁷

Contrary to the expectations of the study - informed by Muslim politicization of religious identity in Britain, neither ethnic nor religious identity was found to be the motivating factor for minority mobilization or a source of protest aimed at "recognition." Although respondents underlined Islam as universal and Islamic identity as the most important thing worth protecting in a foreign setting, they valued their ethnic/national identity as equally important and took pride in their Turkish-Islamic heritage. Consequently, despite sharing most of the concerns and grievances that all Muslims in Britain and abroad may have, Turkish Sunni Muslims are not mobilizing around a transnational *ummah* consciousness, or around a British Muslim identity at the organizational level. Although they criticize the West, the government, and the dominant society for their lack of understanding of Muslim culture and their objectification of Muslims, they equally rationalize and sometimes empathize with the state policies that are explicitly to their disadvantage. This was most evident in their evaluation of the immigration regime and can also be traced in their accounts of anti-terrorism measures.

Muslim identity politics in Britain rests basically on a demand of recognition of parity with other religious and ethnic groups in terms of non-discrimination or

positive measures, so that Muslims can overcome their previous disadvantages and receive a fairer share of resources.⁴⁸ It was apparent that the Sunni Turks have not become engaged over these issues. In Turkey, a French model of *laicism* is strictly applied and religious groups are confronted by the secular state elite. In other European countries, Muslim minorities enjoy much less rights - e.g. the ongoing struggle over opening a mosque. In comparison with such circumstances,

The Turkish Sunni Muslims seem satisfied with the current level of “tolerance” in Britain. Most remain disengaged with Muslim umbrella organizations on purpose, due to reasons regarding community image and relative power. In her study on media-viewing of the 9/11 incident of Turkish speaking communities, Aksoy also found that most of her interviewees had no interest in, or engagement with Muslim identity politics. One of her explanations for this is the invisibility of their minority presence in Britain, since it is rather South Asians that have weight in the “national narrative” and therefore reasons to react to it.⁴⁹ While Sunni Turks are aware of their invisibility as a part of the Muslim community in Britain, they seem content with their anonymity. A reason for their satisfaction can be due to the fact that their invisibility in this setting seems to translate into a non-negative image. For instance, they take pride in the acknowledgement by the British state that there are no Turkish Muslim extremists. After 9/11, while *Milli Görüş* was banned in Germany,⁵⁰ Prince Charles visited the *Süleymaniye* mosque, as all *Süleymaniye* respondents reported in pride.

A survey conducted in 1994 revealed alienation and reluctance to identify as British, notably among citizens of South Asian origin. They believed that the majority of White citizens did not perceive them as British, therefore, they were reluctant to identify themselves as British.⁵¹ Findings of this study showed that identification with British-ness is low among the Sunni Turks as well, but not for the same reasons. As stated earlier, most respondents of this study have positive views about Britain, perceive British identity as being inclusive, and generally have had positive experiences, such as lack of explicit discrimination or harassment. A possible explanation for their lack of commitment to the British identity could be due to their later date of arrival. As most of the interviewees were first generation immigrants, their Turkish national identity remains strong. Even the

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second-generation respondents did not fully identify with British-ness. While talking about the British, they referred to them as “others,” and some were critical of the issues they considered part of the British identity, such as the lack of family values. Some interviewees also emphasized that they prioritized their Turkish and Muslim identities over their British identity.

All interviewed organizations and respondents were against assimilation. They all viewed their ethnic and religious community as one in isolation, corresponding to separation on Berry’s scheme. In addition to this assessment of the participants, there is evidence that the “parallel societies” argument is valid for Sunni Turks in Britain. There is a residential and economic concentration, suggesting an enclave. The level of interaction with the British society, or with other immigrant communities, remains very low.

However, the organizations’ self-ascribed role is to overcome problems related to both assimilation and segregation. They all support integration which they define, like Berry, as having a positive engagement with the host society while keeping their values rooted in their home country. Their educational activities are aimed at providing integration, by passing Turkish-Islamic culture and values onto the next generation and by improving their secular knowledge and skills – through the supplementary school – for the creation of successful “role models”.

Endnotes

1. Part of the findings discussed in this study was presented earlier at the *Second International Conference of European Turks: Education and Integration*, Antwerp, Belgium, May 14-16, 2009. The study was conducted with the financial contribution of Jean Monnet scholarship program, under the supervision of Prof. Tariq Modood, Department of Sociology, University of Bristol, United Kingdom.

2. G. Sasse, “Securitization or Securing Rights? Exploring the Conceptual Foundations of Policies Towards Minorities and Migrants in Europe,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 43 No. 4 (November 2005) pp. 673-693; B. Demirtaş-Coşkun, “Migration and Europe: Toward a More Securitized Policy?” *Insight Turkey*, Vol.8 No.3, (July- September 2006), pp. 5-15.

3. For an example of the prominence and stereotyping of Muslims in the image of immigrant women in policy texts, see I. Gedalof, (2007), “Unhomely Homes: Women, Family and Belonging in UK Discourses of Migration and Asylum,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (January 2007), pp. 77-94. For an account of the British Labour government’s latent monoculturalism, see V. Squire, “Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain’: New Labour on Nationality, Immigration and Asylum,” *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol.10 No.1 (February 2005), pp.51-74.

4. J.S. Fetzer and J.C. Soper, *Muslims and The State in Britain, France and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004; T. Modood, *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005).

5. Coined by S. Huntington in "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72 No. 3 (Summer 1993), clash of civilizations thesis assumes international conflict to be based on civilizations in the post-Cold War era. The term became popular following the events of 9/11 to describe confrontation and incompatibility between Islam and the West.

6. R. Kastoryano, *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants in France and Germany*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

7. UK Home Office, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team Chaired by Ted Cantle*, (December 12, 2001) accessed June 15, 2009, <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2001/12/11/communitycohesionreport.pdf>, p.9. The report urged the government to take measures to end the present segregation in the area and prohibit further development towards monocultural environments – such as the establishment of single faith schools (pp. 29-30).

8. D. McGhee, "Getting 'Host' Communities on Board: Finding the Balance Between 'Managed Migration' and 'Managed Settlement' in Community Cohesion Strategies," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.32 No.1, (January 2006), pp.116-120.

9. R. Alba and V. Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," *International Migration Review*, Vol.31 No.4 (1997), p. 834.

10. J.P. Van Ouderhoven, C. Ward, and A.M. Masgoret, "Patterns of Relations Between Immigrants and Host Societies," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol.30 (2006), pp. 640-641.

11. L. Gong, "Ethnic Identity and Identification with the Majority Group: Relations with National Identity and Self-Esteem," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol.31 (2007) p.506.

12. For example, the "Interactive Acculturation Model" which argues that the host state's policies of immigrant integration have a decisive impact on the acculturation strategy outcome for immigrants as well as the majority of the host society. Bourhis, et.al. "Towards an Interactive Acculturation Model: A Social Psychological Approach," *International Journal of Psychology*, Vol.32 No.6, (1997).

13. Van Ouderhoven, et.al., "Patterns of Relations Between..." pp. 641-642.

14. Muslim Council of Britain, "Muslim Statistics," accessed July 10, 2009, <http://www.mcb.org.uk/library/statistics.php#1>

15. Among the various forms of discrimination, Young delineates "cultural imperialism," which she characterizes as othering, stereotyping by the dominant culture of what it perceives as deviant or inferior, to be common to all Muslim immigrants. I.M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 48-60.

16. T. Modood and P. Werbner, "Introduction," Modood, T. and Werbner, P. (eds.), *The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe: Racism, Identity and Community* (London: Zed books, 1997), p.2; Castles and Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, p. 33.

17. S. Castles and M. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (London: Macmillan, 2003, Third Edition), p. 33.

18. A. Favell, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain* (London: MacMillan, 1998), pp.215-222; Modood, *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain*, p.152; P. Statham, R. Koopmans, M. Giugni, and F. Passy, "Resilient or Adaptable Islam?: Multiculturalism, Religion and Migrants' Claims-Making for Group Demands in Britain, the Netherlands and France," *Ethnicities*, Vol. 5 No. 4 (2005), p. 434.

19. Favell, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain*, pp. 218-222.

20. Amnesty International, "United Kingdom: Human Rights: a Broken Promise," (2006) accessed August 12, 2008, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR45/004/2006/en/dom-EU-R450042006en.html>; Human Rights Watch, "Commentary on the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill 2001," (November 16 2001), accessed August 12, 2008, <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/eca/UKleg1106.htm>

21. United Kingdom Home Office, Office for Security and Counter Terrorism, "Preventing Violent Extremism: A Strategy for Delivery," accessed October 15, 2008, <http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications/publication-search/prevent-strategy/?view=Standard&pubID=559320>, pp.4-8.

22. H.A. Hellyer, "Engaging British Muslim Communities in Counter-Terrorism Strategies," *RUSI Journal*, Vol.153, No.2 (April 2008), pp.8-19.

23. B. Wharton, "The Integration of Islam in the European Union: Prospects and Challenges," (September 28, 2007), accessed July 10, 2008, <http://www.eliamep.gr/eliamep/files/op0402.PDF>, pp. 9-10.

24. T. Modood and F. Ahmad, "British Muslim Perspectives on Multiculturalism," *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol.24 No.2 (March 2007), pp. 187-213.

25. T. Modood, "British Muslims and the Politics of Multiculturalism," T. Modood, A. Triandafyllidou and R. Zapata-Barrero (eds.) *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship: A European Approach* (London: Routledge, 2005), p.46. Examples of this approach can be found in various public statements by the Muslim Council of Britain, the largest umbrella organization of Muslims in Britain. In their critique of the government policy and demands from the government, a universal human rights approach and a discourse centered on citizenship are dominant. In their comparative study of Muslim claims-making in Britain, the Netherlands and France, Koopmans et.al. found that group-specific claims comprised less than 10 percent of total claims by Muslims in Britain (p.438). Around 60 percent of group-based demands included Islamic identification (p.439). While the majority of British Muslim groups' demands were "exceptional" (to be exempt from certain rules or receiving special treatment), there also existed a considerable number of "parity" demands (seeking parity with other minorities) that were of "acculturative" nature (congruent with the state's legal framework, revealing a self-identification as citizen), pp. 447-448.

26. Various British Muslim media outlets (Muslim Weekly, Muslim News and Q-News) and Muslim umbrella organizations (Muslim Council of Britain, Muslim Association of Britain, Federation of Student Islamic Societies and Islamic Human Rights Council) were reviewed through their online sources for the period January 2001- May 2008 (where available) in order to monitor themes and events of most common concern.

27. The Consulate General for the Republic of Turkey in London, "İngiltere Türk Toplumu," accessed May 2, 2008, <http://www.turkishconsulate.org.uk/tr/turktop.htm>

28. I. R. Struder, "Do Concepts of Ethnic Economies Explain Existing Minority Enterprises? The Turkish Speaking Economies in London," *Research Papers in Environmental and Spatial Analysis Series 88* (London: Department of Geography and Environment, London School of Economics, December 2003), pp. 11-12; T. Küçükcan, *Politics of Ethnicity, Identity and Religion: Turkish Muslims in Britain*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1999), p. 61.

29. Struder, "Do Concepts of Ethnic Economies Explain Existing Minority Enterprises? The Turkish Speaking Economies in London," p. 12, pp. 24-27.

30. London Chamber of Commerce (2001) data in Muslim Council of Britain, "Muslim Statistics;" The Consulate General for the Republic of Turkey in London, "İngiltere Türk Toplumu;" The

Federation of Turkish Associations in the UK, "Short History", (June 19 2008), accessed October 10, 2009, http://www.turkishfederationuk.com/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=26&Itemid=31.

31. The Consulate General for the Republic of Turkey in London, "İngiltere Türk Toplumunu."

32. T. Modood, "Anti-Essentialism, Multiculturalism and the 'Recognition' of Religious Groups," *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol.6 No.4 (1998), pp. 383-385.

33. Küçükcan, *Politics of Ethnicity, Identity and Religion: Turkish Muslims in Britain*, pp.147-162; "The Making of Turkish-Muslim Diaspora in Britain: Religious Collective Identity in a Multicultural Public Sphere," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol.24, No.2 (October 2004), p. 251.

34. Küçükcan, *Politics of Ethnicity, Identity and Religion: Turkish Muslims in Britain*, p. 129; P. Enneli, T. Modood and H. Bradley, *Young Turks and Kurds: A Set of 'Invisible' Disadvantaged Groups'* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005), pp. 41-42.

35. MUSIAD UK is an association aiming at networking and enhancing of businesses owned by Muslims. Organizations by the *Gülen* community are Axis Educational Trust, Wisdom Primary School founded by this trust, and Dialogue Society, a think-tank aimed at raising Islamic awareness and contributing to interfaith dialogue. The others are registered charities, *Diyanet* being directed by an official of the Turkish state. *Mahmud Hoca* group and *Süleymancı* community have mosque-based charity organizations as well as an educational trust (*Mahmud Hoca* group) and a youth association (*Süleymancı* community). The organizations by these groups will be referred to by the name of their mosques, *Aziziye* and *Süleymaniye* respectively.

36. For a similar observation, see Struder, "Do Concepts of Ethnic Economies Explain Existing Minority Enterprises? The Turkish Speaking Economies in London," p. 12.

37. *Millet system* was a governance approach of the Ottoman state where different *millet*s, meaning religious communities and denominations of Abrahamic faith though the current usage of the term refers to "nation," were allowed autonomy in religious matters and civil law. It is a popular model among Turkish Islamic circles because of its reflection of tolerance of different faith groups.

38. Some participants stated the possible result of assimilation is that the youth could become *kimliksiz* (identitiless) or *mefkuresiz* (aimless). This evaluation is very much in line with the social integration theories and findings of related empirical studies conducted in the Netherlands. As social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (1986) posits, the advantages of belonging to a group, beginning with the feeling of security, increases self-esteem and contributes to the healthy development of the youth. See also P. Vedder and E. Virta, "Language, Ethnic Identity and the Adaptation of Turkish Immigrant Youth in the Netherlands and Sweden," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 29, No 3 (May 2005), pp. 317-337; M. Verkuyten and J. Thijs, "Multiculturalism Among Minority and Majority Adolescents in the Netherlands," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (February 2002), pp. 91-108.

39. British identity was not mentioned in this context. Only four respondents were citizens born or raised in Britain and these interviewees remarked about British identity only when directly asked about "British-ness."

40. A kind of cafe where Turkish men socialize with each other, found typically in Turkey and abroad where Turks live in significant numbers.

41. In the neighborhoods and around the schools, gang violence, organized crime, alcohol and drug abuse by minors, and teenage pregnancy were mentioned as the main problems which the organizations sought to counter.

42. For example, *Aziziye* has specific programs for women teaching Turkish language, English, and job skills.

43. H. Bousetta, "Post-Immigration Politics and the Political Mobilization of Ethnic Minorities: A Comparative Case-Study of Moroccans in Four European Cities," *ECPR Joint Sessions*, Grenoble, April 6-11 2001, Workshop 24, accessed September 2, 2007, <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/grenoble/ws24/bousetta.pdf>; J. Wong, "Thinking About Immigrant Political Incorporation," *Workshop on Immigrant Incorporation, Mobilization and Participation*, Maxwell School of Syracuse University, Campbell Public Affairs Institute, December 6, 2002, accessed September 2, 2007, <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/programs/iwgp/pdfs/Wong.pdf>

44. *Aziziye* has encouraged and supported one of its members to run for local elections. *Süleymaniye* has joined a project for the registration of Turkish voters for local elections and supported "RESPECT" for the election of candidates against the war in Iraq.

45. J. Rex, *Race and Ethnicity* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1986), p. 29.

46. See also Y. Çoştu, "Turkish Community in United Kingdom Their Religious and Cultural Problems and Remedies: The Case of Turkish Religious Foundation of the United Kingdom," *First International Congress of European Turks in the Context of Education and Culture*, Antwerp, Belgium, February 22-23, 2008.

47. However, since the overwhelming majority of the participants were male and from the first generation, data about females and the second generation might contradict studies specifically directed at these groups.

48. Statham, et.al, "Resilient or Adaptable Islam?: Multiculturalism, Religion and Migrants' Claims-Making for Group Demands in Britain, the Netherlands and France," pp. 106-108; Modood, "Muslims and the Politics of Difference," *The Political Quarterly*, Vol.74 Supplement 1 (August 2003), pp. 106-108.

49. A. Aksoy, "Transnational Virtues and Cool Loyalties: Responses of Turkish-Speaking Migrants in London to September 11," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.32, No.6 (August 2006), p. 933.

50. K.P. Ewing, "Living Islam in the Diaspora: Between Turkey and Germany," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol.102, No.2/3 (Spring/Summer 2000), pp. 406-431.

51. Modood, "Anti-Essentialism, Multiculturalism and the 'Recognition' of Religious Groups", pp. 383-385.