

GÜLEN MOVEMENT AS AN INTEGRATION MECHANISM FOR THE EUROPE'S TURKISH AND MUSLIM COMMUNITY: POTENTIALS AND CONSTRAINTS

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Abstract

This paper discusses the potential of the Gülen movement to serve as a mechanism for, in the medium term, the integration of the Turkish community in Europe and, in the long term, the Muslim community as a whole, taking into consideration the obstacles to this process, given the composition of different communities.

Although many of Gülen's ideas are far from conventional theologically, the real novelty of his work is that it motivates people who are at least sympathetic to his ideas to put them into practice: the ideas do not remain theory and aspiration but become a charter or action-plan implemented by members of the movement. The movement's influence on Muslim community is examined from both a theoretical perspective (i.e. the position of Gülen's ideas within Islamic understanding of dar al-Islam and dar al-harb) and a practical perspective (i.e. the activities of the movement in western Europe that have actual and potential effectiveness in bringing about integration).

In order to assess the movement's capabilities, the current situation of Muslims in Europe and their problems in general and the Turkish experience in particular is presented. The movement's potential for enabling integration is then analysed from four complementary perspectives: (1) does the movement propose an alternative view to stimulate the integration process of the Muslim community; (2) has the movement actually operated as a mechanism for integration in western Europe so that its capability is demonstrable; (3) is the European context suitable for the movement to operate effectively; and (4) what does the Gülen movement offer to European member-states by way of a means to sustain a healthy integration process – Turkish community in the medium-run, and the whole Muslim community in the long-run.

Introduction: From Empire's Children to Imported Employees

As a consequence of the two World Wars and following political events created a brave new world for Muslims in which three great empires of sixteenth century carved up to 44 nation-states. This separation caused one third of Muslim population to live as minorities in non-Muslim countries. The number of minorities noticeably augmented after Muslim population have voluntarily migrated to the Western World as well as Australia and New Zealand for expectation of a new and better life.¹ In the European continent Muslim population became an undeniable conglomeration, and according to the estimates of the National Intelligence Council, with contemporary fertility rates, over the next 15 years, European Muslims will double their population.² Although European countries experience social-political problems with their minorities and previous figures intensify their anxiety, they have to continue to the 'minority importation' in order to sustain the continent economic growth. In spite of being unwelcomed by Western society, immigration, therefore, seems to be non-stoppable and irreversible aspect for the Continent. So to speak, if an effective method could not be implemented to facilitate the integration process, a serious problem, if not a social crisis, impends within the European society.

This paper endeavours to analyse the potential contributions of the Gülen Movement to the integration process of Turkish community in Europe in the medium-run and the whole Muslim community in the long-run and the feasibility of this process with references to the existing restrictions in the composition of aforementioned communities. However, it is necessary at this stage to highlight why Gülen Movement has been selected although Gülen is not the first or sole pioneer of integration in the Muslim World: that is the existence of a movement as an embodiment of the Gülen's ideas and the capability of this movement to change its surrounding environment. In other words, in the Muslim world there have been certain Islamic scholars prior or contemporary to Gülen who have formulated certain ideas related to interfaith dialogue and/or integration. What makes Gülen significant is the presence of a movement or people that are at least sympathetic to his ideas and put them into operation. The ideas do not remain in the world of ideas but become the charter or action plan that is pursued by the members of the movement. Therefore, while initially the personal, then communal, organisational and finally societal acceptance and realisation of these notions are required for the remaining scholars, Gülen's ideas bypass the almost first three phases, i.e. personal, communal and organisational acceptance and realisation, and function in order to be recognized in societal level.

Never-ending Story: From 'Islam and Europe' to 'Islam in Europe'

Although the beginning dates of immigrations may vary from one country to another, we can say that, it, in today's sense, started after the World War II. For some countries, the immigration was triggered either by the independence of the of the ex-colonies, e.g. India and Algeria, or treaties for worker importation in order to sustain economic growth after the War, e.g. Federal Republic's First Employment Agreement with Turkey in 1961, or with Tunisia in 1965.³ In the beginning, the majority of the immigrant workers were young men from rural

1 Haddad, Y. (1991) *The Challenge of Muslim Minorityness: The American Experience*, in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, p. 134

2 <http://www.cia.gov/nic>

3 Pauly, Robert J, Jr. (2004) *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalisation?*, Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 67

regions who had low level of education and very conservative opinions on religious or on other social concepts. They were not only deficient in the knowledge on Islam but also they were very uncompetitive in social issues such as language or culture of their new society.⁴ These were, nonetheless, not a trouble for them because their aim was to return home after saving sufficient money for their living expenses in the homeland. They, thus, were only ‘guest’ workers without any intention to reside in Europe.⁵

By the 1970s, this sense of temporariness started to fade out with the family reunifications. The arrivals of wives and children altered and broadened the context of workers’ relationships with their surrounding society. Now, they had to interact with new institutions in the society which they never get in touch with, such as education and social welfare.⁶ They were undergoing the ‘transformation from foreign worker to immigrant’ and to diminish the shock of the process they began to build a number of institutions to defend their traditions.⁷ These institutions, nevertheless, were not established to facilitate their integration process or enhance communication with host nation but to protect their society from outside impacts. In other words, Muslims was pursuing an isolationist and defensive policy. For Joly, this was “not simply the predominance of another religion which caused concern to Muslims; they wanted to safeguard Islam from the growing secularisation” of the surrounding European social order.⁸ In my opinion, this was not a genuine consciousness for the preservation of their religion, but a reflex to protect their different aspects of their traditions which make them different even if they do not live it. Because as Dash asserts, the immigrants have been hardly educated people whose “own culture, way of life and religious beliefs were mocked, derided or desecrated”.⁹

Today, immigrants are concentrated in the *banlieus* of the big cities in the United Kingdom (London, Manchester etc.), the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam etc.), and Germany (Munich, Frankfurt etc).¹⁰ With the illegal immigration in the 1980s and 1990s, the refugees from the revolution in Ira, the Iran-Iraq war, Palestinian conflict and of Kurds from Middle Eastern countries, not only the numbers of immigrants but also national and sectarian variety of the immigration amplified drastically. Religion upholds its position in the social milieu by acting as a protector of the cultural identity – or by being protected in the customs – and providing sense of unity and similarity. This characteristic of religion is vital particularly in Western social context, because for a worker with an Islamic background religion is the only support and “it is the only thing that belongs to him and that he can master”.¹¹ For instance,

4 Sander, A. (1991) *The Road from Musalla to Mosque: The Process of Integration and Institutionalisation of Islam in Sweden*, in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, p. 82

5 Anwar, M., Blaschke, J., Sander, A. (et. all), (2004) *State Policies Towards Muslim Minorities: Sweden, Great Britain and Germany*, Berlin: Verlagsabteilung im Europäischen Migrationszentrum (EMZ), p. 19

6 Nielsen, Jørgen S. (1991) *Muslim Organisations in Europe: Integration or Isolation?*, in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, p. 43

7 Pauly, Robert J, Jr. (2004) *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalisation?*, Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 99

8 Joly, Daniel (1988) *Making A Place for Islam in British Society: Muslims in Birmingham*, in T. Gerholm and Yngve George Lithman, eds., London and New York: Mansell, p. 32

9 Darsh, S.M. (1980) *Islam in Europe*, London: Ta-Ha Publishers, p. 51

10 Nielsen, Jørgen S. (1991) *Muslim Organisations in Europe: Integration or Isolation?*, in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, p. 34

11 Elsas, E. (1991) *Turkish Islamic Ideals of Education: Their Possible Function for Islamic Identity and Integration*

as Yilmaz examined in the daily practises of Turkish community in Britain, “the traditional homeland Turkish culture, identity and diversity are, to a great extent, reproduced and reconstructed in the British context” which even gives rise to the “emergence of the Anglo-Turkish Muslim law”.¹²

Being a Muslim in Europe

Due to the socio-political turmoil that Muslims have experienced in both their native countries and new habitats, their economic, cultural and intellectual backgrounds Muslim community struggle with serious set of overwhelming difficulties which deeply damage the integration process: these are high degree of fragmentation, incompetence, guidance crisis, generation gap, perception of ‘minorityness’ and reciprocal perspective of “the other”.

The Muslim minority in Western Europe suffers from theological (e.g. Sunni vs. Shiite), cultural, national, linguistic, political heterogeneity and “intra- and inter- community rivalry and split”.¹³ Those problems could not be resolved due to the absence of good ‘socialisation agents who would facilitate the integration process. As Pauly rightly describes, in our day, “there are as many as Islams as there are Muslims”.¹⁴ For instance, the mosques and prayer halls are organised as national entities. This is partly because chain migration and village transplantation have caused people with same origin gather same area in the Western Europe, but mostly due to sectarian and ideological differences which grounds contention and resentment among Muslim community.

According to surveys and opinion polls in Western Europe, Muslim migrants represent a cluster which is socio-economically marginalised, geographically dispersed and internally split, and has not constructive asset to share with mainstream European community. Although this result evaluated as a prejudice by Muslim scholars, indeed, first generation, and a considerable proportion of their children in particular, proved mostly incompetent in terms of formal education, vocational skills and language of the host country. Two examples from the Netherlands would suffice to illustrate the point: Firstly, the percentage of people who are officially suspected of a crime is 2.9 among first generation non-Western immigrants and 4.0 among second generation non-Western immigrants, but 1.2 for the total population.” What is considered especially disquieting about these figures is that second generation immigrants appear to be doing worse in terms of social participation than their parents. Secondly, school drop-out rates among students with a migrant background are more than two times higher than among non-migrant groups. This ratio is particularly important as an indicator of the expected future socioeconomic position of second and third generation migrants. As Ali states “these observations contradict the long-held claim from immigration advocates that immigration is a solution to economic questions and that, with time, the integration problems would solve themselves.”¹⁵ Although this exemplification fits for the majority, evidently, this

in Europe, in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, p. 175

12 Yilmaz, Ihsan (2004) Marriage Solemnization among Turks in Britain: The Emergence of a Hybrid Anglo-Muslim Turkish Law in *Journal of Muslim Affairs*, Vol. 24, No. 1, April 2004, p. 59

13 Sander, A. (1991) *The Road from Musalla to Mosque: The Process of Integration and Institutionalisation of Islam in Sweden*, in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, p. 81

14 Pauly, Robert J. Jr. (2004) *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalisation?*, Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 147

15 Ali, A H, *Islam and the EU's Identity Deficit*, *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Summer/ Fall 2005, Volume XII, Issue 1, p.57. For the original set of data, please see Verdacht van Criminaliteit, Allochtonen en Autochtonen

is not the case for all immigrants. Especially, when the colonial states receive migration for their ex-colonies, the migrating people are more familiar with the language, institutions and values of the new society. Of the Muslims who have immigrated to the UK, for example, a fair number already spoke English; or had university/ higher education from an educational system that, from colonial times, was influenced by the British educational system. Some had also gone through higher education in the UK. This assumption is also valid for some of the ex-colonial powers.¹⁶

At the dawn of Islam's emergence in the West, the secular elite had been not only the representative of the migrant Muslim communities, but also the associates of the administration in the struggle to integrate minorities. The same secular elite have evaluated the imam as reactionary people operating for the plans of Islamic country of origins rather than exerting themselves for the minorities to gain more legal rights in their society.¹⁷

In the non-existence of healthy social infrastructure and environment in which Muslims could live their traditions and express themselves to the mainstream European society, the roles of mosques and imams started to rise steadily. Not only with offering religious services but also with generating network of solidarity which lessen the discomfort of isolation, mosques became the indispensable intermediary institutions for Muslims.¹⁸ And in the absence of traditional social settings such as family, acquaintances and neighbourhood, the functions and significance of imams became unquestionable in the community. Nonetheless, the insufficiency in the capacity and number of imams relative to the number of growing Muslim population necessitated the importation of imams from the country of origins. But newly recruited imams couldn't help minorities because they have not necessary double knowledge – about both Islam and the new society – and language. Therefore, new imams have been more helpless than the people who have been supposed to be guided.¹⁹

In current situation, Western Countries have large number of younger generation trying to live in their new 'homelands'. Wherever their parents come from, they experience Islam in a very distinct manner. Islam was not taken for granted part of the social order, and neither their environments nor their practices justify/affirm it. This situation leads a generation gap between parents with traditional background who fail to transmit Islamic identity in an acceptable mode and children who interact with society and suffer from the incompatibility of conventional values and Western life. At that juncture, they prefer to implement two strategies: increasing religious consciousness to find 'true Islam' or secularise their social life.

As a recent research reconfirmed, 'British Muslims have sought to adjust to and accommodate existing institutions and practices, experimenting and negotiating between the actual and perceived demands and values of British society, and the needs, beliefs and practices of

Nader Bekeken, cahier 2005-2 by Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek and Wetenschappelijk Onderzoeks en Informatiecentrum

16 W.A. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld (1991) Institutionalisation and Integration of Islam in The Netherlands, in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, p. 91

17 Leveau, Rémy (1988) *The Islamic Presence in France*, in T. Gerholm and Yngve George Lithman, eds., London and New York: Mansell, p. 114

18 Leveau, Rémy (1988) *The Islamic Presence in France*, in T. Gerholm and Yngve George Lithman, eds., London and New York: Mansell, p. 114

19 Elsas, E. (1991) *Turkish Islamic Ideals of Education: Their Possible Function for Islamic Identity and Integration in Europe*, in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House

Muslims (Ansari 2002: 17). While the widely expected assimilation of English cultural patterns has not occurred and Muslims, and many other minorities, are autonomously evolving their own distinctive lifestyles (Ballard 1982: 190; see in detail 1994; see also Joly 1995: 183).

They have reconstructed ‘a home away from home (*desh pardesh*)’. The older generation of Muslims and their British-born offspring are continuing to find substantial inspiration in the resources of their own cultural, religious and linguistic inheritance, which they have actively and creatively reinterpreted in order to rebuild their lives on their own terms (Ballard 1994a: 5). They have become an integral part of the British society. However, ‘they have done so on their own terms’ (Ballard 1994a: 8). As skilled cultural navigators, Muslims, along with other ethnic minorities, have been meeting the demands of different cultures and laws. Ballard (1994a: 31) explains this phenomenon skilfully:

(j)ust as individuals can be bilingual, so they can be multicultural, with the competence to behave appropriately in a number of different arenas, and to switch codes as appropriate... they are much better perceived as skilled cultural navigators, with a sophisticated capacity to manoeuvre their way to their own advantage both inside and outside the ethnic colony.

After facing with high tension as a result of living their parent’s traditional Islam in a modern secular society, they choose to learn genuine Islam from original sources and construct a hybrid identity as a combination of Islam and Western culture. As Elsas aptly expresses it “the majority of Muslim youths choose a bicultural option with regard to integration: to become full members of the encompassing society without complete identification with its norms and values.”²⁰ In France, for example, despite the assumptions of many French sociologists of religion who once forecast secularisation as the inevitable upshot of individual choice, “a number of young Franco-Muslims are choosing strict religious observance, rather than wholesale abandonment of Muslim attachments, as an expression of personal autonomy”.²¹ They abandon neither Islam nor their social roles; because, on one hand, Islam represents a protection or a shelter from assimilation in secular and foreign culture, and on the other hand, their social roles are everything they have in their new ‘homelands’. Features of this hybrid identity vary according to the state’s policies towards Islam and public perception of the religion. In minor cases, the search for a ‘true Islam’ may later channel them to embrace a radical form of Islam if they are guided to this direction.

In the latter case, by more interaction with their surrounding society, young Muslims are influenced by the secular character of the society. They use some institutions such as sports or youth clubs in order to socialise instead of religion. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, while young Muslims secularise at individual level, they perceive religion as *sine qua non* of their identity. For instance, although over half of the first generation in France performs their daily prayers regularly and this percentage drops to only three percent in second and third generation; the latter group sees Islam as primary element of their identity and downplay French citizenship.²²

20 Elsas, E. (1991) Turkish Islamic Ideals of Education: Their Possible Function for Islamic Identity and Integration in Europe, in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, p. 183

21 Cesari, Jocelyne (2002) *Islam in France: The Shaping of A Religious Minority*, in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, ed., *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 42

22 Cesari, Jocelyne (2002) *Islam in France: The Shaping of A Religious Minority*, in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, ed., *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 43

In February 1997, the Runnymede Commission produced a very controversial consultation paper entitled “Islamophobia: Its Features and Dangers”. The report begins by describing the nature of anti-Muslim prejudice and draws a key distinction between closed views of Islam on one hand and open views on the other. *Islamophobia* is equated with closed views. Though according to some scholars, it is an objective report revealing the problems of Islam and proves its incompatibility of with European context, for Muslim scholars in particular, it is nothing but an attempt “to demonise Islam”.²³ But whatever it aims, it demonstrates some European’s perspective about Islam. Apparently, the closed views are not shared by all Europeans as the features of Islam, but they unarguably reflect some of the Western perception of Islam.

Today, not only a number of Muslims evaluate the West with the experiences of colonial times but some European state and individuals consider Islam according to the parameters remained from the Crusades. And both of the perceptions slow down, at best, and obstruct the process of Muslim integration to the West. For West, Islam and Muslims symbolize a very distinctive “other”, a religio-political force that has engaged the West for centuries with a heritage of salient confrontations and clashes. European countries continue to be guided by their bitter past experiences with Islam, such as the colonial period, Ottoman Expansion, and the Crusades.²⁴ The resultant stereotypes have kept negative images of Islam and Muslims alive. These stereotypes which have led European countries to continue to view Islam as “a threat and a problem” make West feel resentment towards Islam that has survived today.²⁵ The hostile image of Islam has been bolstered and continues to have an effect on the perception of Muslim immigrants and refugees in Western Europe. Moreover, whereas, most immigrants, are employed in particular jobs that individuals in the majority would never consider occupying, after the rising of unemployment in Europe, immigrants as the cheap labour of 30 years ago began to be identified as the reason of job loss of native people.²⁶ In other words, although it is not completely accurate, the majority began to assess Muslim minority as a menace to their welfare and everyday lives. From this perspective, we can say that, in some degree, the principal cultural puzzle of the West today is not only how different cultures will be integrated into the secular society, but also how secular society will form a relationship with European Muslims.

Allievi, on the other hand, made a remarkable contribution to the problem of perception of Islam by the Western society and by the Muslims themselves. As he portrayed, the situation in Europe does “resembles much more the Meccan than the Medinese situation. Specifically, the society and the situation in Europe nowadays, from the religious point of view, resemble that of Mecca before the *hijra*”²⁷. In the Meccan context Muslims were a minority not a dominant clique, or even an influential one. Quite normally, that is the expected situation when

23 Ramadan, Tariq (1999) *Islam and Muslims in Europe: A Silent Revolution Toward Rediscovery*, in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, ed., *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 159

24 Köse, Ali (1999) “East Is East, and West Is West”: Remarks on Muslim Perspectives on Europe and Christianity, in G. Seufert and J. Waardenburg, eds., *Turkish Islam and Europe*, Istanbul: Kommission Bei Franz-Steiner-Verlag, p. 183

25 Esposito, John L. (2003) *Modernising Islam and Re-Islamisation in Global Perspective*, in John L. Esposito and François Burgat, eds., *Modernising Islam: Religion in The Public Sphere in the Middle East and Europe*, London: Hurst & Company, p. 12

26 Pauly, Robert J, Jr. (2004) *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalisation?*, Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 83

27 Allievi, S., *Sociology of a Newcomer: Muslim Migration to Italy - Religious Visibility, Cultural and Political Reactions, Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol.22, Issue 2&3, July/November 2003, p. 142

the novelty of Muslim settlement is taken into consideration. What he sees as a contextual dilemma is: although the current situation for Muslims is more Meccan than Medinese, “the common comprehension of Islam by non-Muslims, as well as by Muslims, is often much more Medinese than Meccan. The whole idea of *shari’a* (Islamic law) and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), as well as the idea of political power influenced by religion, and in many respects the entire Islamic theology ... simply presupposes that Islam is a majority in the population as well as a majority in power.”²⁸

When the migrants’ responses to being minority in the Western world and integration to the society as its expected outcome, it can be asserted that the responses may swing in a pendulum from absolute rejection through cautious engagement to enthusiastic support. On the other hand, for most of the Muslim immigrants, the reply should be, at worst, absolute rejection and, at best, cautious engagement. To understand the reason behind this attitude, firstly two Islamic scholars should be evaluated. Firstly, according to Mawdudi, minorities deserve to experience the bitter consequences of belonging to a minority faith and that they must expect to be mistreated and marginalized.²⁹ From this perspective, Muslims, in order to guarantee their safety and the freedom to practice their faith, are expected to live in areas governed by Islam.³⁰ Secondly, for Kettani, the reason behind this attitude is the sense of ‘minorityness’. ‘Minorityness’ “implies weakness and powerlessness, a condition that he believes is incompatible with Islam.” Islam, he argues, “insists on the health and wellbeing of a community, conditions guaranteed by social and political empowerment.” Hence, Muslims must not consent with minority status as a long-term situation in which they accommodate and submit to those in power. Their ‘minorityness’ is to be understood as a challenge to the community in order to seek methods to correct such a condition and surpass it. To Kettani, if a minority Muslim community faces with repression and cruelty and is not tolerated to observe its faith, then its members have the options of either jihad or emigration.³¹ In other words, according to this frame of mind, Muslim should never accept being under the rule of non-Muslims. For a part of Muslims in the Western countries, these assertions constitute the intellectual backbone of their resistance. However, particularly for younger generations, contrary to their predecessors, the implication of these perceptions is not isolation or ostracise themselves from the society but adapting to the environment in which they live. They have even redefined their religious doctrines (probably not only for the sake of religion) and reoriented the way they carry out social and cultural activities.

As a matter of fact, in modern times, one motivation for rethinking on *ijtihad* was the situation of Muslims in non-Muslim territories. The juristic discourse on Muslim minorities with regard to whether or not Muslims may reside in a non-Muslim territory and under what circumstances, the relationships of these Muslims to *dar al-Islam* and the ethical and legal duties that these Muslims owe to the Muslim law and to their host non-Muslim polity have been debated since the eighth century. Indeed, the juristic discourse on the issue has not been dogmatic (see in detail Fadl 1994: 141-187; see also Masud 1989: 118-128). Other than the

28 Allievi, S., *Sociology of a Newcomer: Muslim Migration to Italy - Religious Visibility, Cultural and Political Reactions, Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol.22, Issue 2&3, July/November 2003, p. 142

29 Mawdudi’s ideas were grounded in the classical Islamic division of the world into *dar al-harb*, the domain of war, *dar al-Islam*, the domain of Islam, and *dar al-sulh*, the domain of treaty.

30 Haddad, Y. (1991) *The Challenge of Muslim Minorityness: The American Experience*, in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *The Integration of Islam and Hinduism in Western Europe*, Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, p. 135

31 Kettani, MA (1979) *The Muslim Minorities*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation

mutually exclusive concepts of *dar al-harb* and *dar al-Islam*, the persistent existence of Muslim minorities voluntarily residing outside *dar al-Islam* challenged this dichotomous view. In that regard, Islamic jurisprudence has developed several mechanisms and concepts that facilitate compromise, such as duress (*ikrah*), necessity (*darura*), and public welfare (*maslaha*). As a result, an understanding of *dar al-ahd* (country of treaty, covenant), *dar al-aman* (country of security), *dar al-sulh* (country of truce), and *dar al-darura* (country of necessity) have come to be recognized as situations and environments in which Muslims may live in non-Muslim territories.

Trying To Live As the Outsider: Evaluation of the Integration Process

Family reunions after the 1970s can be considered as the actual commencement of the institutionalisation of Muslim minorities in Europe. With the arrival of the families, minorities began to interact with wide range of social institutions which force them to feel the necessity to preserve their traditions. In other words, the transition from individual workers to families triggered the establishment of safeguarding institutions for traditional values. This formation of traditional and religious bodies, however, is not independent process; on the contrary, existing European political, economic, social and religious structures have a determinative effect on the profiles, nature and stream of this formation.³²

Although quite distinct categorisations articulated by different scholars, in my opinion, we can sort people with Islamic origins into five types with regard to religious attitude in the European social context. These are first, those who choose to remain distant to the religion and to the religious establishments, second, those who prefer personal piety and devotion but detached from religious organisations, third, those who join to the moderate/mainstream Islamic organisations seeking improvement in the religious consciousness of their members, fourth, those who adhere organised missionary, and fifth, those who adhere militant affiliations.

Today, the Muslims' organisational activities may be classified into three categories according to their origins: first, groups which were composed in the new social framework (i.e. groups formed by the immigrants themselves who were concerned with the conservation (or reconstruction) of essentials of traditional culture and collective continuity and reproduction in the European environment), second, groups arose as the branch or the extensions of the movements or the organisations in the country of origin (i.e. groups formed with the same objective of the previous category but opted to operate under tutelage of powerful organisation originated in the country of origin), and third, groups formed by governments or state-led agencies (i.e. groups or organizations formed in order to control national Muslim minority in Europe and prevent them to connect with informal religious movements considered as rivals).

Whatever the mode of organisations and their strategies are most of them have two common aspects: first, they endeavour to respond the same challenges and offer alternative solutions to those of the West (e.g. such as modernity, social welfare, gender relations, democracy, and human rights), express through an Islamic idiom and legitimise with references to the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*. Second, when restructuring the religious community into a secular

32 LeVine, Mark (2003) 'Human Nationalisms' Versus 'Inhuman Globalisms': Cultural Economies of Globalisation and The Re-imagining of Muslim Identities in Europe and The Middle East, in S. Allievi and J. Nielsen, eds., *Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and Across Europe*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, p. 101

society they try to find an equilibrium point between total assimilation and total rejection. But, even though for some intellectuals they couldn't find effective resolutions for Muslims in Europe yet, we can say that, they are progressively striving to find ways for integration to the European society.

“Turkum... Dogruyum, Caliskanim?”³³: Turks in the Diaspora

For Turks, as the first respondents of the Gülen movement, the picture is not so bright, either. As mentioned, after the formal immigration era started the first generation were hardly educated population who had rural background of Eastern and Western Anatolia. When they experienced a shock after coming Western countries, with the instinct of protection they began gathering in the Turkish ghettos. They had no intention to stay permanently, thus, they didn't feel the necessity to integrate into the society. At the beginning, religion had not any role in the Turkish community. Especially before the 1980s, parallel to the Turkish politics, the greater part of Turkish associations could be categorised according to their position on the continuum of the extreme poles of Turkish society. Turkish political competition, both official and underground, became reflected among the Turks in Diaspora. But transition from temporary migration to permanent settlement, family reunification and Turkish political developments increased the significance of religion in the Turkish community.

However, religion of Turkish community is neither strong enough to mobilise people nor monolithic entity. Turkish community divided into many parts due to sectarian and ethnic disparities. In terms of sectarian variations, Turkish population is mostly Sunni with 88% and Alevi with 11%, which have no large exchanges between them. No Alevi live in Sunni-dominated areas and as was shown earlier, the distinctions are repeated in the composition of the unions. The Alevi and the laicists are unlikely candidates for Islamic religious movements. Moreover, in ethno-national sense, the chief split occurs mainly among people with Turkish and Kurdish origins.³⁴

Whereas total number of Turks in Diaspora reached nearly 4.5-5 million with unofficial migrants, the majority remained surprisingly uninformed and indifferent about them and their religion. Only in Germany are 2400 mosques associations but their cohorts do not feel Muslim in the religious sense of the definition.³⁵ They are mostly cultural Muslims who adjust their religious practices towards ‘folk Islam’, and are little interested in the theological/ideological issues. By and large, – contrary to other Muslims – there is a tendency to join the nearest mosque, no matter which view it represents. Their Islamic way of life is a mixture of “popular religiosity, national customs, Islamic rules of conduct, mysticism, folk knowledge, folklore and magic with Islamic elements”.³⁶ Especially members of the first generation define themselves as Muslims but this is not because of their firm adherence to an Islamic faith but they merge the notion of nationality and the Islam. In other words, they are Muslims because Islam was taken granted with ‘Turkishness’.

Today, the Turkish community outside Turkey suffers from very serious deficiencies which

33 First three words of a passage which is compulsory to recite for Turkish primary schools before the commencement of lectures. Its means “I am Turkish: honest and hardworking” to stress ethical and practical necessities to be ‘a Turk’.

34 Başyurt, Erhan. “Gerçekleşmesi Zor Bir Hayal: Euro–İslam.” Aksiyon 09/2004

35 Başyurt, Erhan. “Gerçekleşmesi Zor Bir Hayal: Euro–İslam.” Aksiyon 09/2004

36 Thomä-Venske, Hans (1988) *The Religious Life of Muslims in Berlin*, in T. Gerholm and Yngve George Lithman, eds., London and New York: Mansell, p. 78

not only obstruct a healthy integration but also threaten Turkish community itself. Lack of formal and vocational education, critical deficiencies in communication in native language, social isolation, animosity and anxiety towards the societal environment, and involvement to crime³⁷ have reached very critical level already. For example, 40% of Turks and 60% of Kurds in Britain have no formal educations³⁸; 75% percent of Turks in Germany lives in ‘ethnic enclaves’ without any interaction with the mainstream society and this problem rises as new generations grows; 81% of the Turkish workforce in 1981 were unskilled and the unemployment rates among Turkish community goes up to three times of the average.³⁹ Even though, Germany’s economic and occupational structures have gone through significant changes, most of the Turks that were originally hired as unskilled or semiskilled labour have remained in unskilled or semiskilled jobs. For some, the worst problem, on the other hand, is that Turkish community does not feel the necessity to integrate to the surrounding society and show no effort to realise this. In fact, the situation is not so desperate since fairly small percentage of the second generation and almost total entity of the third generation of the Turkish community are now struggling to diminish this disadvantaged status. Nowadays, for instance, even it is likely to observe “shining examples” of the Turkish youth in Western context who have achieved academic or professional excellence in nationwide examinations.⁴⁰

Trying to Survive without State’s Approval: the Gülen Movement in Brief

The Gülen movement is a fairly controversial formation with its philosophies and institutions run by its sympathisers all over the world. They are severely criticized by two groups, hard-line laicists who mainly constitute the dominant state-elite and a minor radical group of Islamists whose support are mostly external and politically oriented. Whilst the former group suspect of organising to takeover the state when the conditions met, the latter group are not keen on their tolerant approach to the non-Muslims.

Besides, Turkey’s Kemalist elite who generally keep high posts in the Turkish state has never accepted Gülen movement as legitimate actor in social field. Not political but particularly bureaucratic figures (e.g. members of the military, high judicial organs etc.) see the movement as the most serious threat for Turkey. If military raises the degree of anti-movement claims, the community’s status and position may become unstable, not in public sphere but particularly in political system.

In fact, this is not a surprising reaction by the Kemalist elite as the official Turkish ideology was erected as the “vehemently antireligious tradition of the radical, Jacobin-styled” laicism that emerged in the French Republics.⁴¹ And as the westernization project, Kemalist elite pursued authoritarian, nationalist and “top-down” policies rather than liberal ones.

Kemalism attempted to take Islam apart for two aims; firstly to overcome the religion that used to be institutional basis of Turkish life for more than a millennia; and secondly to subordinate

37 Only in German prisons are 25000 Turks and more than this number involved to the street mobs.

38 Bradley, Harriet (2005) *İlgisizlik ve Dışlanma*, Londra Gazete, February 17, 2005

39 Pedersen, Lars (1999) *Newer Islamic Movements in Western Europe*, Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 155

40 This sort of news have become very common particularly for Europe edition of Turkish newspapers such as Zaman and Hurriyet, or local Turkish newspapers such as London based Haber and Olay newspapers. For examples, please visit www.eurozaman.com/euro, www.habernewspaper.com or www.olaygazete.co.uk.

41 Yavuz, M. Hakan (1999) “Search for A New Social Contract in Turkey: Fethullah Gülen, the Virtue Party, and the Kurds” SAIS Review, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 117

Islam to the interests of the secular nationalist state. Religion was to be decontaminated from its 'backward' constituent and Turkified. Especially, In the 1920s and 30s, to achieve first objective, the Turkish state prohibited all religious institutions assumed as the backbone of Islam in Turkey.⁴² Abolition of the Caliphate, Sultanate, Sufi orders, *madrasahs* (or religious schools) and religious law were few of these institutions. To realise the second aim, all of religious institutions and personalities (mosques, imams etc.), foundations, education and worship were all subsumed under 'the Directorate of Religious Affairs'. All religious codes, alphabet, conducts and ceremonies were also changed with the secular ones.⁴³

With some exceptions between 1950 and 1960, the situation was pretty much the same for faith based organisations. In the history of Turkish Republic, however, the most critical change initiated with the coup of 1980. After the revolution, Turkey initiated a scheme to implement liberal economic policies, on the one side, and to apply traditionalist policies in the cultural and social fields, on the other. Military regime and the ensuing governments reintroduced Islam as a part of Turkey's official ideology in order to dismiss Marxist and other violent movements of the 1970s. By the late 1980s that Turkey began to tolerate the existence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with different cultural and ideological orientations, and their activities. Now, the censored identities such as Islamic and Kurdish organisations found room to operate. The number of the religious institutions, Muslim foundations and schools were increasing with great pace. With change of some significant concept such as Europe, democracy and liberalisation, Islamic groups began approaching Europe and European values with sympathy and criticizing Kemalist regime because of not reflecting European values in real sense. Although Turkish politics experience critical problems even today, the 1980s marks departure from authoritarian-statist attitudes to liberal ones.

Back to the Movement

One of the striking aspects of the movement is its resources administered by the sympathisers to Gülen's ideas. As educational facilities, they run several hundreds of well-known colleges around the world, universities, university preparation and language courses, student dormitories and summer camps. As a media empire, they own a television obtaining high ratings with some of its programs, a radio channel, a daily newspaper that is the leader in terms of the number of circulation, one weekly and four monthly magazines which are the leaders of their genres, as well. Moreover, "the community controls one of the fastest growing financial institutions, Bank Asya (formerly known as Asya Finans).

As Kömeçoğlu argues, the community is not a response of dissidents Muslims of a 'social breakdown' or group of people with lower class background in order to protest social tension.⁴⁴ Contrary, the members of the community are mostly university student and large group of small and big businessmen, professionals from all sectors in the country, especially from academics, media, music and the specialized strata that compose the elite as well as middle layers of the society. Altunoğlu determined seven characteristics of the members of the movement; individually pious, culturally ascetic, politically conservative, idealist in the mission of converting souls, disengaged in active politics, success-oriented 'Otherization'

42 Bonner, Arthur (2004), An Islamic Reformation in Turkey in Middle East Policy, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 84

43 Ahmad, Feroz (1993) The Making of Modern Turkey, London: Routledge

44 Kömeçoğlu, Uğur (1997) A Sociologically Interpretative Approach to the Fethullah Gülen Community Movement, Istanbul, Boğaziçi University, p. 46

and adversary component is weak.⁴⁵ Yavuz adds four additional attributes to the followers' profile: they are "more predisposed to tolerance, electoral politics, moderation, and a market economy than are other Islamic groups in Turkey."

Even though the devotees are enthusiastic believers of their faith, they formulise their mission with humanitarian parameters and believe that salvation "is not only to be 'saved from' sinful activities, but also to be engaged actively in the improvement of the world." They think that serving the society in the narrow sense and the humanity in the wide sense is the most crucial activity to gain God's favour and consent. They do not try to challenge the modernity but demonstrate how to be both good Muslims and modern. They are willing to live in a secular democratic atmosphere rather than rejecting it when they are trying to live their faith.

Following this concise information about the characteristics of the movement and its members, I'll endeavour to articulate its current and potential contributions to the integration process with references to the Gülen's ideas, and finally I'll portray major constraints that define the movement's efficacy in the European context.

Theoretical Incentives of the Gülen Movement for Integration

Initially—and perhaps the most importantly—Gülen's redefinition of West, Western civilisation and Western context in religious terms is an attempt to replace the conventional dichotomy of *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (abode of war). He does not only attempt to alter the Muslims' assessment of West as a natural enemy and their land as the natural places of destruction; he also seeks to substitute the classifications, which give temporal reconciliation, with an unconditional idea of concord. For instance, besides the *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb* dichotomy, Islamic jurisprudence has utilised different concepts—such as *ikrah* (duress), *darura* (necessity), and *maslaha* (public welfare)—and produce some concepts—such as *dar al-ahd* (country of treaty, covenant), *dar al-aman* (country of security), *dar as-sulh* (country of peace), and *dar al-darura* (country of necessity) which denotes that "Muslims can live according to their religion in non-Muslim lands perhaps with difficulty but peacefully."⁴⁶ Quite the reverse, Gülen's term of *dar al-hizmet* (abode of service) requires Muslims to *ad infinitum* perform peaceful manners in their societies to demonstrate Islam's 'true façade'.

The term charges new duty to the believer to portray good example in their everyday lives (*temsil*) without any reservation. It stresses not only necessity but also the obligation of a Muslim to obey legal settings of the new country, not only receiving benefits of the political setting (e.g. pensions, but also perform civic duties (e.g. tax), recognition of other's rights and being fair. Gülen stresses that:

wherever a Muslim is, even outside a Muslim polity; he or she has to obey the *lex loci*, to respect others' rights and to be just. In Gülen's understanding, *umma* is more of a transnational socio-cultural entity, not a politico-legal one. He hopes that this socio-cultural entity will be instrumental in bringing general universal peace.

Thus, by these words, he nullifies the conventional evaluation of the western context, even those giving a conditional status of peace but which are prone-to-change according to conditions. And quite strikingly, he also changes the magnitude of the aforementioned peaceful manner in terms of Islamic theology. Though in the classical dichotomies, the terms do not

45 Altunoğlu, Ebru (1999) Fethullah Gülen's Perception of State and Society, Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, p. 86
46 Yılmaz, I, İjtihad and Tajdid by Conduct: The Gülen Movement, in M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, eds., Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, p. 234

belong to the essence of the faith; Gülen repositioned the peaceful method and obedience to the host country to the centre of a Muslim's personal and religious life and requires him/her to re-designate the complete way of life similar to the commands of the religion. Hence, for his integration becomes intrinsic or integral part of the religion.

Secondly, and parallel to the first set of logic, values of Western civilisation such as democracy and modernity, and re-evaluation of the West's development occupy a one of the focal points in his logic. He does not observe the West and its civilisation from 'our eternal enemy' perspective, and thus, denies the rejection of its values just because 'they are Western'. He sees Western dominance as the result of their obedience to the Divine laws valid in the nature by pursuing scientific knowledge and by developing well-structured methodology. Gülen emphasizes his concern for the basic, tenets of Islam, but he also professes the backwardness of today's Islamic interpretation and livelihood vis-à-vis the requirements of the era. To him, that's why West dominates the Muslim World, while latter fails to understand and perform Islam properly, and disregards the scientific investigation as done by the former.⁴⁷ He promotes this notion with his understanding of *takwah* which mostly understood as the preservation from sins. He sees *taqwah* as a systematic rapprochement to the creation, fulfillment all the requirements of this world (e.g. from science to economics) which concomitant with having a pious and otherworldly character. It seems that this is not a mere justification of modernity and a pursuit of a 'middle way' between being Muslim and being modern; because he accepts Islam itself as the middle way. In this regard, Gülen is searching for an interpretation of Islam that is compatible with and at the same time critical of modernity and tradition. In other words, it is not an effort for grafting Islam with modernity and obtaining a hybrid identity. "What he does is reveal a dynamic interpretation of Islam that is both compatible with and critical of modernity and Muslim tradition."⁴⁸

Thirdly, with his re-reading of dialogue in which dialogue is the natural result of the practice of Islamic ethics falls apart from most of the Islamic scholars. For him, Islam does not reject interaction with diverse cultures and on condition that it does not challenge with the essence of Islam. For all other conditions, dialogue is not a superfluous endeavour, but an imperative which is inherent to the faith. For him "love, respect, tolerance, forgiveness, mercy, human rights, peace, brotherhood, and freedom are all values exalted by religion... [and are the parts of] the messages brought by Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, upon them be peace, as well as in the messages of Buddha and even Zarathustra, Lao-Tzu, Confucius, and the Hindu prophets."⁴⁹ On the contrary, opposition to the diversity or attempts to take measures against the emergence of diverse ideas are, indeed, against God's creation and historical fact.

Gülen Movement in Practice

In the Western context, it appears that, with the theological incentives, physical and intellectual potential, the Gülen movement has the ability to promote integration process of the Turkish people, in the medium-run, and the majority of the Muslim community, in the long-run even this requires a re-identification phase for the minorities. As the religion is the principal identifier for most Muslims, Gülen's re-aligning of individual's role and the re-positioning of host

47 Gülen, MF, *Essentials of the Islamic*, The Light, New Jersey, 2005, p. 251

48 Kuru, Ahmet T. Fethullah Gülen's Search for a Middle Way Between Modernity and Muslim Tradition, in M. Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito, eds., *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003, p. 130

49 Ünal, Ali and Alphonse Williams, *Fethullah Gülen: Advocate of Dialogue*, Fairfax: The Fountain, 2000, p.43

countries in religious context would gradually benefit them to have civic values compatible with the prerequisites of modern states. Since they can diffuse to all levels of everyday life, from schools to magazines, they can influence the population more effectively and efficient. Especially when the movement's success in Turkey, where the operation grounds is so limited due to a fierce rivalry by the Kemalist state elite, is taken into consideration, it can be claimed that the movement is fairly promising in Western context that is characterised by democracy and freedom.

For instance, despite having unpleasant experiences with the Muslim minority presence, Danish society has witnessed a profound change among Turkish population. With the intense exertion of the movement, the politically isolated Turkish minority was convinced participating elections. Now, Turks have an MP in the Danish parliament even though they constitute only 0.7% of the population with scattered residential patterns.⁵⁰

With their moderate message which contains tolerant and friendly messages for the Western world, it can lessen the radical messages of radical ideologies coming from Saudi Arabia and Iran. In the larger context, they can also weaken the impact of Islamism in the Muslim world. This process at one hand, contributes the democratisation of Turkey and Islamic World, respectively via Muslim citizens within European states. And in a possible accession of Turkey to the EU, aforementioned community can significantly facilitate Turkey's adaptation process. The democratisation process of whole Muslim world will undeniably take pretty long time, but even in this situation Turkey can function as a buffer between liberal and democratic Europe and the Middle East. A buffer which absorbs the shock coming from the both sides of the alignment and, hence, would lessen the political and cultural resentment for both sides.

The movement's educational principle that favours the integration into the modern world, can assist the second and third generations of Muslim minorities who undergo severe educational, vocational and language problems. In the Netherlands, for example, one of the countries where the movement well established, are tens of civil society institutions founded by Turks whose cooperation definitely affects the integration process. The positive outcome of the movement's course of action contributes also the Turkish participation to the national politics. In Dutch parliament are five MPs with Turkish origin. Additionally two candidates with Turkish origin succeeded to be elected for the European Parliament. Additionally, with their emphasis of education, it is (hopefully) expected that by 2015, the educational level of Turkish minority will be equalise with the native student's level.⁵¹ Therefore, at one side, with their specialisation in education, they can improve the educational level of Turkish children by paying special care to their specific problems; at the other side since they do not refer any religious and ideological orientation in the education progress, the young generations would not be constrained in terms of interaction to the mainstream society. As Özdalga puts the Gülen movement "may be seen as a training ground, a transition zone in the formation of values and identities suitable for integration".⁵²

The Gülen movement proved itself successful while we particularly take its educational and dialogue activities around the world. But it is noteworthy that the rest of the world is not Europe vis-à-vis political, social, financial and cultural characteristics. Until recently, with some exceptions, the countries where the Movement opened educational or social institutions

50 <http://www.turkembassy.dk/mkt2.htm>

51 Başyurt, Erhan. "Gerçekleşmesi Zor Bir Hayal: Euro-İslam." *Aksiyon* 09/2004

52 "Redeemer or Outsider? The Gülen Community in the Civilizing Process" *Muslim World*, Vol. 95, No. 3, 2003, p. 436

have been relatively underdeveloped to Turkey. Beginning with the 1990, the members of the movement opened have erected many facilities such as colleges, universities and dormitories from Turkic Republics in the former Soviet Union, African countries, to Indo-China. Opening institutions were financially and politically tough, but to be recognised by the host countries were not so testing especially with their successful educational background in Turkey.

The real challenge was to prove the merit of the movement firstly, in Western Europe with a success in education and with a representation of their commitment to the Western values, and secondly, in Muslim world as Muslims. Because in both regions neither states nor societies are expected to be more reluctant to welcome it. In West, not only they have history between the sides or they experience Islamophobia, but also they would fear due to past experiences with Turkish minority in their borders (as happened in Germany) or they simply would not feel the necessity to accept assistance, if not an outsider. So the movement would not be appealing for them. Additionally, Turkish minority's economic, social and intellectually disadvantaged position would cause unwillingness to assist or participate, or their shortcomings (such as incompetence in native language) would prevent them from an efficient participation. At that point, it should be noted that, the history of the movement in Europe and in Muslim World is quite short, but as a beginning, they have a good start in the Netherlands with almost all sorts of institutions and activities, in the United States with a striking rise in the amount of state-financed charter schools and in Kurdish controlled Northern Iraq with seven schools and despite a pretty slippery ground.