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Turkish Migrants, Social Capital, and Culturalist Discourse in Turkey-EU Relations

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Introduction

This chapter addresses the cultural aspect of Turkey-European Union (EU) relations and the potential impact of the Turkish diaspora in Europe on bringing Turkey and the EU closer. Political and technical discussions dominate the ongoing relations and membership negotiations between Turkey and the EU. Yet, there is an emerging culturalist discourse in Europe that emphasizes the differences in religion, identity, and culture. Neither the cultural dimension of Turkey-EU relations nor the role in this process of Turks, at an estimated population of more than 4 million scatted all over Europe, are sufficiently researched issues despite the fact that Turks in many European countries can make positive contributions to the relations between the two sides.

Demographic disparity and the concentration of Turks in a wide European political and public sphere earn them an advantage in establishing closer communication with many nations and peoples in Europe. The Turkish diaspora has an advantage compared to other ethnic and immigrant communities because Turks are resident in almost all European countries whereas Pakistanis, Indians, Arabs, and Chinese, and so on are concentrated only in one or two countries. In addition to their demographic size, the Turks in Europe are increasingly becoming formal citizens of the host countries, participating

in the social, political, and economic life of the societies of which they have become an integral part. A survey, field research, and in-depth interviews among Turks in Holland, where a substantial number of people have a negative view of Muslims (Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007: 23), forms the basis of this chapter, which explores both how Turks see their own and European identities and their views of Turkey's full membership in the EU.[1] Drawing upon the findings, strategies for mobilizing the Turkish diaspora as human capital to bridge the gap between Europe and Turkey and engage them in improving relations as a foreign policy instrument will also be discussed. The challenges Turkey faces, such as accusations of the mass killing of Armenians, its cross border operations in northern Iraq, the Cyprus issue, and its cultural and religious identity perceived as an obstacle for the EU membership, justify a discussion of the potential impact of the Turkish diaspora as a social capital. The Turkish diaspora in Europe constitute a large social capital as far demographic size, human resources, economic investments, and political participation are concerned. This chapter aims at analyzing the cultural dimension of Turkey-EU relations, the Turkish diaspora's perception of Turkish and European identity, and their mobilization to bring Turkey and Europe closer in an increasingly polarized international environment.

Transnational Migrants in the European Public Sphere

Population movements have always been the prevalent aspect of human life. Movements of individuals and groups from one location to another have been taking place since the origin of man (Lewis 1982: 1), but especially over the past three or four decades, immigration has emerged as a major force throughout the world (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, and Tayor 1999: 431). United Nations' estimates indicate that the number of people living outside the country of their birth and citizenship has been growing steadily. Today, almost 120 million people live outside of their state of nationality. According to United Nations' estimates the World's migrant population has also been gradually increasing over the years (statistics cited in Koslowski 2000: 1). International migration has had many destinations, including Europe, which has received millions of immigrants over the years.

Immigration to West European countries resulted in the settlement of foreigners in the receiving countries in increasing proportions against expectation of return to the country of origin. Despite the widespread attempt in 1973/4 to control or prevent further migration, the proportion of foreign workers continued to rise (Cross 1986: 55). Family reunion and the growth of the young generation led to the establishment of organizations and institutions that address the welfare, cultural, and religious needs of the

ethnic communities. Further developments, such as economic investments and demand for political participation in the receiving countries, suggest that guest workers, as they were once called, are becoming rooted in the host societies and becoming a part of them while maintaining their distinct cultural characteristics and religious values, thus changing the cultural and religious landscape of Western cities. It has been observed that "the foreign workers, migrant workers or guest workers of the 1950s and 1960s have become permanent or at least quasi-permanent settlers in the 1980s" (Heisler 1986: 77), and many of these settled migrants are opting for citizenship of the receiving countries, where second and third generations are already a part of the social fabric, contributing to the emergence of multicultural public spheres in Europe. With the arrival of foreigners with their own social customs and cultural characteristics such as different languages, religion, food, and dress, organizations such as Mosques, Synagogues, and Qurdwaras entered the public domain. The large flow of immigrant workers as well as an influx of refugees in recent years, many of whom have chosen to settle, has established heterogeneous and multicultural communities across Western Europe.

The existence of a large migrant population with different cultures, religious affiliation, and languages in European societies has led to an increasing number of people becoming "naturalized citizens," which raises many questions regarding cultural belonging, political loyalty, allegiance, group identity, and the changing meaning of citizenship. The unfortunate 9/11attacks on US targets in 2001 and discussions following this highlighted the demarcation lines on civilizational levels. Samuel Huntington's widely read article (1993) and his book (1996) on the clash of civilizations were circulated once more, and some important figures in Europe and elsewhere such as the then Italian Prime Minister S. Berlusconi made unexpected comments suggesting that the Western civilization was superior and thus its roots should be revived. Speaking at a news conference in Berlin Mr. Berlusconi is quoted to have said, "We must be aware of the superiority of our civilization, a system that has guaranteed well-being, respect for human rights and—in contrast with Islamic countries—respect for religious and political rights" (*The Independent*, October 22, 2001). Migrants who belong to other faiths and cultures are subjected to implicit and explicit condemnation by ill-informed people. Moreover, misperceptions about Islam and Muslims in particular have given rise to the essentialist views of this faith and its followers as fundamentalist, pro-violence, uncompromising, and anti-Western. However, drawing upon long-term research on Muslims in Europe, I argue in this chapter that Turkish Muslims constitute a changing diasporic community defying clichés and common stereotypes about Muslims.

Today, many Western European countries have a sizeable immigrant population of different ethnic, racial, religious, and national origins,

including Turkish Muslims, because of transnational immigration and settlement. The estimated number of Turkish Muslims in European countries is more than 4 million. Contrary to the expectations of the policy makers, the overwhelming majority of the Turkish immigrants who came as "guest" workers decided to settle in their host countries rather than return to Turkey. The Turkish community in Europe is part of the emerging "European Islam" and has its own diversity in the expression of Turkish-Muslim identity. Therefore a proper understanding of Muslim communities in Europe, sociologically speaking, depends on the analysis of multiple "Islams" as a perception and interpretation of a universal religion rather than looking at "Islam" as a static, fixed, and monolithic faith that resists social change. As this chapter suggests, the Muslim diaspora display a great diversity in their perceptions and practices of Islam as well as the ways in which they relate their faith to the larger society. The Turkish Muslim community in this context can play a positive role in bridging the "imagined civilizational gap" between Muslims and the West through the expression and institutionalization of their tolerant, pluralist, and embracing understanding of a moderate Islamic faith that has emerged in Turkey under the influence of Sufi interpretation in interaction with local customs and religious traditions in a frontier state throughout the centuries.

A New Diaspora in the Making: Turkish Presence in the European Political and Cultural Landscape

The presence of Turks in Europe is not a recent phenomenon. Their modern presence dates back to the arrival of Turkish workers in West European countries in the late 1950s and early 1960s. A large-scale labor migration from Turkey to Western Europe started in the late 1950s and early 1960s predominantly for economic reasons. The beginning of organized labor migration from Turkey goes back to October 1961 when Turkey and Germany signed a bilateral agreement for the recruitment of Turkish workers in Germany. Before 1961, participation of Turkish workers in postwar labor migration to Western Europe had, at least officially, not taken place.

The initial wave of Turkish labor migration was mainly directed to West Germany. However, labor migration from Turkey was not only confined to Germany, and several other West European countries such as France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, and Britain also received Turkish labor migrants. It should be noted here that, in contrast to several other manpower-supplying countries, labor migration was a rather new phenomenon for Turkey. There was a colonial background of immigration to France, Britain, and the Netherlands. These countries received

a significant number of migrant workers from their former colonies. Turkey differs in this respect in that, as a labor-sending country it had no colonial links with countries where a large number of Turkish migrant population exists.[2] Whereas, for example, Britain received immigrants from the West Indies, India, and Pakistan, France turned to Algeria, and the Netherlands hosted migrants from Indonesia as colonial or ex-colonial territories, Turkey had no direct colonial relationship with any of the receiving countries. Therefore, this fact should be taken into account when drawing any general conclusions about labor-exporting experiences on the one hand and the social and cultural characteristics of migrants that have important bearings on their relations with the host society and its values on the other hand.

As shown in figure 10.1, the migration and settlement of Turks in European countries steadily increased over the years and their number exceeded 4.5 million in 2003. Apart from those in Europe, there are, according to the official figures, 130,000 Turks in the USA, 30,000 in the Russian Federation, 100,000 in Saudi Arabia, and 52,000 in Australia.

	1973	*1984*	*1995*	*2003*
Austria	30,527	75,000	150,000	134,229
Belgium	14,029	63,587	90,425	70,701
Britain	2,011	28,480	65,000	79,000
Bulgaria	–	–	–	750,000
Denmark	6,250	17,240	34,700	35,232
Finland	–	–	–	3,325
France	33,892	144,790	254,000	311,356
Germany	615,827	1,552,328	1,965,577	2,653,600
Greece	–	–	–	150,000
Italy	–	–	–	10,000
Netherlands	30,091	154,201	252,450	299,909
Norway	–	3,086	5,577	10,000
Romania	–	–	–	35,000
Spain	–	–	–	1,000
Sweden	5,061	20,900	36,001	38,844
Switzerland	19,710	48,485	76,662	79,476
Total	757,398	2,108,097	2,930,392	4,661,672

Figure 10.1 Turks in Selected European Countries.

Sources: SOPEMI (1995), Beauftragte der Bundesregierung fur die Belange der Ausländer (1995), Annual Report, Turkish Ministry of Employment and Social Security, (1984, 1992, 1993), 2003 Statistics on Turkish Migrant: Online report of the Turkish Ministry of Employment and Social Security, TUSIAD Report on Turks in the European Union, compiled from Eurostat and German Federal Office of Statistics figures (the latter two are available at http://www.calisma.gov.tr, and http://www.tusiad.org/haberler/basin/ab/9.pdf respectively).

The Rise of the Culturalist Approach to Turkey's EU Membership

There is increasing emphasis on "cultural," "religious," and "civilizational" differences that one could call "a culturalist approach" on the part of some European leaders as far as Turkey's EU accession is concerned. In this context, Turkey's application for EU membership also raises cultural and "civilizational" issues. Officially and legally speaking, the EU insists that Turkey's application will be judged on the Copenhagen criteria. However, it seems that many Europeans question Turkey's Islamic religious and cultural traditions and their compatibility with European cultural values.

The rise of the culturalist approach can be traced as far back as 1997, when the then former Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo made the following statement: "There is a problem of a large Muslim state. Do we want that in Europe? It is an unspoken question" (*The Independent*, February 7, 1997). The "Judaeo-Christian" foundations of Europe were also rediscovered when Turkey's membership became a more likely project. For example, the former French president Giscard d'Estaing, the former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, former EU commissioner for the internal market Fritz Bolkestein, the CDU (Christlich Demokratischen Union) leadership in Germany (Angela Merkel and Edmund Stoiber) are some examples of those who ascribe a religious dimension to EU identity. The most recent statement against Turkey along similar lines came from French President Nicholas Sarkozy. Shortly before the presidential elections in 2007 he stated, "[t]here is no place for Turkey in the European Union" (cited from www.eubusiness.com, January 14, 2007).[3] Earlier he is reported to have asserted that "[t]he place of Turkey is not within the European Union because it is part of Asia Minor" (cited from www2.gcitrading.com).[4] Following his election in May 2007, President Sarkozy repeated his culturalist opposition to Turkey's accession to the EU. Similarly Ursula Plassnik, who retained her position as foreign minister in Austria's new government, is reported to have repeated her position on Turkish accession to the twenty-seven-member EU, advocating "realism in negotiations with Turkey with full consideration for the EU's absorption capacity" and pushing for "a tailored partnership" between the two parties (cited from www.turkishdailynews.com.tr).[5] Cardinal Ratzinger, before being elected as the successor to Pope in 2005 also adopted a culturalist approach when he asserted that Europe must fight to retain its Christian identity. He is reported to have said, "Europe is a cultural and not a geographical continent ... Turkey always represented another continent throughout history, in permanent contrast with Europe," and therefore to equate the two continents "would

be a mistake." He argued that the roots that formed this continent were those of Christianity and "that bringing Turkey into the European Union would put European culture at risk" (cited from www.cathnews.com).[6] However, when he visited Turkey as the Pope in November 2006, he backed Turkey's desire to join the EU, reversing his statement made two years earlier (www.nytimes.com).[7]

Turkish Civil Associations and Collective Identity Mobilization

Civil society organizations are among the most influential actors in political pressure groups and social transformation processes in modern societies. They have the liberty of criticizing wrong policies while supporting the positive and constructive ones because they are not part of the state machinery and state bureaucracy. Civil society organizations have the potential to mobilize great masses as agents who can contribute to the emergence of participatory democratic structures and a pluralist society where all actors are represented and all voices are heard. These organizations can use their potential power more effectively in welfare societies where individuals are no longer constrained by basic economic difficulties and are decisive in using their civil and democratic rights for criticism. Civil society organizations play an important role in the social, political, and economic reconfiguration of the world today.

Turks in Europe have established numerous civil society organizations. These civil society organizations have a great potential of power as far as their human resources, financial structures, and sociocultural and economic networks are concerned. In recent years, some of these European Turkish civil society organizations have started to invest their efforts in building a positive public opinion on Turkey, transmitting the modern achievements of Turkey to Westerners and establishing a strong bridge between Turkey and Europe. Although there are numerous Turkish civil society organizations and hundreds of activities in many quarters of Europe, research on the nature and mobilization of this large social capital and its wide networks has only recently begun. Cultural, religious, and religio-political organizations also play a role in the construction and maintenance of Turkish identity in the European context. Civil organizations and associations of various kinds have been established and used by the Turkish community in Europe, as a response to changing social and cultural conditions. These organizations have different membership and clientele profiles, different administrative structures, strategies, and purposes.

Turkish civil associations in Europe display diversity in terms of their foundational purposes and subsequent activities. The activities and services made available by the existing organizations address various issues such as welfare, education, social and cultural challenges, and the religious needs of the Turkish community in Europe. These associations cluster around a set of ideals and purposes. The names of the organizations usually indicate their priorities and orientation and the clientele/membership structure of Turkish civil organizations. The classification and categorization of the organizations according to their functions, such as welfare, cultural, educational, political, and religious would be of little use since there is no clear-cut differentiation between ethnic-based formations. There is juxtaposition and proximity across the interests and activities of Turkish civil associations in Europe.

The foundational aspirations and priorities of Turkish organizations, reflected in their activities and functions, reveal that there are both shared and dissimilar, even conflicting, concerns among the Turkish community. This means that the institutionalization of identity politics assumes diverse meanings according to the cultural, religious, and political orientations of Turkish organizations. In the Turkish immigrant community, the process of community formation with its own "cultural boundaries" out of fragmented individuals through family unions and marriages was accompanied by the process of institutionalization in various areas. The *raison d'être* of Turkish organizations lies in the fact that settlement and postsettlement processes have generated numerous problems for the community, and these challenging problems needed to be addressed. The issues around culture, language, religion, welfare, and education of the young generation preoccupied parental and familial concerns. It can be argued that Turkish organizations have emerged in response to these concerns, which are related to the expression of ethnicity and identity.

Turkish Migrants and Civil Associations in a Social Capital Perspective

The following part of the chapter addresses various questions regarding the nature of Turkish civil associations as social actors and social capital in relation to collective identity, integration, self-definition, organizational, and clientele structures in Europe. Drawing upon the Dutch case study, this chapter also analyzes the question of how Euro-Turks can contribute to Turkey-EU relations through their civil society organizations and participation in political life. Through an interdisciplinary approach,

not only views of Turkish civil society organizations but also views of opinion leaders and politicians of Turkish origin on the image of Turks, Turkish-EU relations, perceived identity of the EU, resources, administration, and activities of Turkish civil associations, and dimensions of possible contributions of such organizations (associations, foundations, charities, labor unions, the media, etc.) to Turkish-EU relations during the membership negotiations are also examined.

Broadly speaking, from the perspective of social capital and social network theories,[8] this research will examine the effectiveness of civil organizations that Turks in Holland and other European countries with their power derived from their population, human resources, economic investments, political participation, and civil capacity have founded. Civil society organizations are the most visible and most influential indices of social capital. In this context, social capital theory is derived from the idea that social networks as civil actors have both importance and power in modern and democratic societies.

From a sociological perspective, social capital points to totality of collective values created by the involvement of all social networks and a tendency to do positive things for one another in these networks (e.g., Francis 1995, Lesser 2000). It is observed that civil initiatives and civil organizations constitute a powerful social capital in many countries (Rotberg 2000). Drawing upon sociological research, immigrant communities are also observed to have achieved a similar status and potential power (Portes 1995). This study takes these theoretical developments and current sociopolitical realities into consideration and analyses how and in what capacity Turkish civil society organizations constitute a social capital and social network on the one hand, and how such formations influence Turkey-EU relations today and tomorrow on the other hand.

Research Findings on Aims, Self-description, Perception of EU Identity, Turkey-EU Relations

The findings in this chapter are based on a research project on Turkish civil organizations based in Holland. This research was confined to the study of Turkish civil society organizations in Holland and to the analysis of well-known Turkish opinion leaders in the fields of arts, politics, business, research, education, and the media in this country. Although the research was carried out in Holland, it is expected that findings will shed light on Turks in other European countries with similar conditions and experiences. Two main methods were used for data collection. First

a survey was carried out by issuing a questionnaire consisting of sixty-five questions to one hundred community organizations. Second, twenty people form various areas, professions, and fields of expertise were interviewed in depth.

Aims and Target Groups

Research findings indicate that foundational aims, target groups, and priorities of the Turkish civil associations that participated in the survey vary. There is no monolithic or one dimensional characteristic regarding objectives, clientele, and focus of the organizations. As table 10.1 shows, the primary objectives of the Turkish civil society organizations that participated in the survey in Holland are concentrated on culture, identity, integration, political representation, economic well-being, and basic human rights issues. According to the research findings, 16.7 percent of the organizations were established to promote Turkish cultural values. The primary target group was chosen as Turks first and then the Dutch society at large. What lies behind the idea of the promotion of cultural values are undoubtedly efforts for the survival of cultural values and cultural identity and transmission of these assets on the young generation on the one hand and preventing an identity crisis on the other hand. As far as the survey results suggest, Turks in Holland have a tendency to integrate into the Dutch society while preserving their identity instead of getting assimilated. They want to exist with their identity. Therefore Turkish civil associations try to transmit cultural values such as language, music, and traditions to the young generations on the one hand and to show that these values do not contradict the dominant values in the Dutch society on the other hand.

One of the important aims of the organizations pertaining to cultural identity is the provision of religious needs, as pointed out by 7.4 percent of the sample. It is observed that Turkish civil associations try to prevent cultural assimilation and identity crisis and therefore put special emphasis on the protection of cultural values and religious beliefs, as they are among the important sources of collective identity. There are many associations among other minority ethnic and religious groups with similar objectives.

It is a noteworthy that 9.3 percent of the organizations were established mainly to work for integration in Dutch society and fight against any form of discrimination that Turkish and other communities face. In the light of research data, we can conclude that Turks in Holland are willing to integrate into Dutch society while preserving their cultural identity. They are also willing to participate in the political life of the country and are

Table 10.1 Foundational Objectives of the Organizations

What is the foundational objective of your organization?	*(%)*
To promote Turkish cultural values	16.7
To claim political rights and encourage political participation	3.7
To meet religious needs	7.4
To establish economic organizations	3.7
To fight against discrimination and work for integration in Dutch society	9.3
To defend and protect rights of women	1.9
Other	9.2
All of the above objectives	48.1
Total	100.0

prepared to protect fundamental rights and liberties including the rights of women.

When we look at the target group and intended clientele of the Turkish civil organizations in Holland, we find out that Turks do not want to live in their own world and with their own community only. Rather, they want to share their lives with Dutch society and do not want to isolate themselves from the rest of the society. Research findings indicate that Turks have a tendency to open up to the outside and to become part of the larger society because they do not want to see other groups as "others."

As table 10.2 shows, 42.6 percent of Turkish civil organizations organize activities aimed at both the Turks and the Dutch people, and 42.2 percent of them consider Turks as the primary target group. Given the objectives, ethnic composition, locations, ethnic, national, and cultural characteristics of their members, Turkish organizations seem to have well-chosen target groups for effective operations.

Although in small numbers, there are organizations (1.9 percent) whose target groups are the Dutch people only. In the light of these findings, one can argue that Turkish civil society organizations are targeting their own ethnic groups on the one hand and trying to reach out to the larger society

Table 10.2 Primary Target Groups of Organizations

Who is the primary target group of your organization?	*(%)*
Dutch-Turks, people of Turkish origin	42.6
The Dutch people	1.9
The Turks and the Dutch	46.3
Other	9.2
Total	100.0

on the other hand because of their willingness to integrate in Dutch society. These findings also tend to refute claims that Turkish civil associations isolate themselves from the rest of the society and cannot reach people other than the Turks and have no extraverted characteristics.

Perception of Institutional Identity and Cooperation with Other Organizations

It was pointed earlier that the Turkish civil associations involved in this research have a tendency to be open to other communities and thus try to establish communication with non-Turkish users as well. As far as relations with Dutch organizations are concerned, Turkish associations try to act as a bridge between the two communities. An overwhelming majority (77.8 percent) of the Turkish organizations cooperate with the Dutch institutions as partners and organize joint activities. These findings suggest that civil society organizations can contribute positively to the process of integration.

Turkish civil organizations with their current orientations, attitudes, and activities are a bridge and a line of interaction between the Turkish and the Dutch communities. Therefore, empowerment of these organizations and strengthening their legal, financial, and administrative structures will facilitate effective communication with a great variety of Turkish groups by local and national institutions, civil and public bodies. The willingness of Turkish organizations to have joint activities and partnerships with the Dutch institutions indicates that Turks in Holland have a tendency to integrate in the majority society.

As seen in table 10.3, only 18.5 percent of Turkish civil associations do not have joint activities or projects with Dutch organizations. There are a number of reasons behind this policy, such as problems of establishing communication with the Dutch institutions and concerns for possible misunderstanding of the cooperation with non-Turkish associations. It is also thought that cooperation with the Dutch organizations may be

Table 10.3 Joint Activities of Turkish and Dutch Organizations

Do you organize joint activities with Dutch organizations?	*(%)*
Yes	77.8
No	18.5
No reply	3.7
Total	100.0

seen as an intervention in internal affairs of the organization concerned. Moreover, lack of professional administration and insufficient knowledge of advantages of cooperation with the Dutch organizations also led to such institutional exclusions.

The general picture of Turkish organizations indicates that there is diversity in terms of self-definition and identity perception. The perception of institutional identity varies, which reflects the non-monolithic nature of the Turkish community and the ways in which it engages with the social world. As seen in table 10.4, 25.9 percent of the Turkish organizations in the survey put more emphasis on Turkish (national/ethnic) collective identity and define themselves as "Turkish" civil society organizations whereas 11.1 percent place a primary emphasis on religio-national/ethnic identity describing themselves as "Muslim-Turkish" associations. It appears that for Muslim-Turkish associations both national belonging and religious faith are an important basis of their institutional identity.

Research findings indicate that the majority of Turkish organizations define their institutional identity in hyphenated terms. As seen table 10.2, for example, 4 percent of these associations define themselves as Dutch-Turkish civil society organizations whereas 13 percent perceive themselves as Muslim-Turkish organizations. These findings clearly indicate that Turks are developing hybrid identities in Holland because they not only see themselves as Turks but also as Dutch, harmonizing Turkish and Dutch identities. Half of the Turkish organizations (50 percent) in the sample do not see any conflict or contradiction between being Turkish and being Dutch and thus internalize values of both communities. This emerging trend among Turks shows that they want to preserve their identity on the one hand and add a new dimension to it by seeing themselves as Dutch on the other hand, which strongly indicates that Turks in Holland are not against integration but are trying to become a part of the dominant society.

Table 10.4 Perception of Institutional Identity

How do you define your institutional identity?	*(%)*
Turkish Civil Society Organization	25.9
Dutch Civil Society Organization	3.7
Dutch-Turkish Civil Society Organization	37.0
Muslim-Turkish Civil Society Organization	11.1
Dutch-Turkish-Muslim Civil Society Organization	13.0
Other	5.6
All of the above	3.7
Total	100.0

Table 10.5 Views on the Integration of Turks in Dutch Society

Do you support the integration of Turks in Dutch society?	*(%)*
Yes, we support the process of integration	94.4
No, we do not support the process of integration	5.6
Total	100.0

Views of Turkish Civil Organizations on Integration and Identity

One of the most significant findings of this study is related to the views of Turkish civil organizations on the integration of Turks in the majority Dutch society. As already pointed out, most of the Turkish civil associations define themselves as Turkish as well as Dutch institutions and try to build up closer relations with a larger audience through the media, political parties, and civil society institutions. These are the indices of affirmative approach to the integration of Turks in the Dutch society. The findings in table 10.5 confirm these observations.

As table 10.5 indicates, an overwhelming majority (94.4 percent) of the Turkish civil organizations that participated in the survey support the integration of Turks in Dutch society. A number of reasons are cited behind the positive approach to integration. Integration is supported because it is believed that such a process will contribute to the solution of many problems in Holland, where Turks have permanently settled, acquired Dutch citizenship, and second and third generations have been born and educated. It is believed that finding sustainable solutions to multifaceted problems requires living in harmony with the dominant society, not in conflict. Turkish organizations supporting integration believe that tension and conflict between majority and minority communities damage peaceful coexistence in society. Of the Turkish associations concerned, only 5.6 percent oppose integration because for them integration means assimilation and loss of cultural authenticity and identity. What we see here is that most of the Turkish civil organizations in Holland support the process of integration of Turks in the mainstream Dutch society because they do not see it as assimilation or as a rupture in cultural identity. They want integration and harmonious social coexistence with the majority society while preserving elements of cultural identity.

Views of Turkish Civil Associations on Turkey's EU Membership

As pointed out earlier, the majority of the Turkish civil organizations that participated in the survey see themselves as Dutch-Turkish associations

Table 10.6 Views on Turkey's Membership in the European Union

Do you support Turkey's EU membership? Why	*(%)*
Yes, because it is in the interest of Turkey	88.9
No, because it is not in the interest of Turkey	3.7
Undecided	7.4
Total	100.0

and try to build up a hybrid identity by harmonizing different cultures. These organizations also show interest in Turkey's EU membership process, not only because Turkey is seen as the county of origin and a culturally important site, but also because of the interests of the Turkish community in Holland and in Europe. Therefore, they open up discussions on various issues and problems concerning Turkey at various venues and in different circles.

There is no doubt that both in Turkey and among Turks in Europe, membership of Turkey in EU is one of the most frequently debated issues. Turks in Holland also seem to have engaged in these discussions. As seen in table 10.6, a great majority of Turkish civil organizations (88.9 percent) support Turkey's EU membership and see this process as being in the interest of Turkey. Research on Turks in France and Germany also indicate that Turks in Europe are in favor of Turkey's membership in the EU (Kaya and Kentel 2005: 51).

Turkish Civil Organizations versus the Culturalist Approach

As already pointed out, Turkey's negotiations for membership in the EU have led to culturalist discussions focusing on issues of identity because of its predominantly Muslim population. The EU identity is frequently discussed in the European public arena, the media, and political circles in relation to Turkey's membership because Turkey is usually portrayed as a county that doesn't belong to the European family. France seems to have started discussions on the cultural identity of the EU and some other countries have followed suit, reducing the identity of Europe to cultural codes only. This approach tends to essentialize EU identity by references to cultural dimensions on the one hand and polarize EU and Turkey on civilizational dimension on the other hand.

The research findings indicate that the Turkish civil associations that participated in the study do not describe EU identity in cultural terms. This means that their approach to EU identity is not one dimensional, as seen in the French discourse, but multidimensional, taking various elements into consideration. As seen in table 10.7, 79.6 percent

Table 10.7 Descriptions of the European Union Given by Turkish Civil Society Organizations

How do you define the European Union?	*(%)*
The EU is an economic and political union	79.6
The EU is a cultural and religious (Christian) union	11.1
The EU is a military and security union	5.6
The EU is a union of economic and military colonialism	1.9
Other	1.8
Total	100.0

of Turkish associations in Holland do not ascribe a cultural or religious identity to EU but see it as a political and economic union. There is a similar attitude toward the identity of EU among Turks in France and Germany. Turks of 21 percent in Germany and 11 percent in France regard the EU as a Christian Club, whereas Turks of 48 percent in Germany and 64 percent in France see the EU as an economic integration. The rest regard it as a common cultural project, a democracy project, or a political and military power to varying degrees (Kaya and Kentel 2005: 50).

When EU leaders and politicians emphasize the cultural dimension of EU identity, Turks react to this reductionism in construction of identity that leaves out various processes and dimensions of collective belonging. The Turks in Europe assert that opposition to Turkey's EU membership on cultural and religious grounds is unacceptable. Therefore Turkish organizations attend meetings and seminars and analyze reports and other publications pertaining to identity discussions.

The history and cultural heterogeneity of Europe make it difficult to define what European identity means. There is no consensus on the definition and meaning of European identity.[9] The following statement made by an interviewee confirms these observations and suggests adopting a multidimensional approach to the EU identity:

> Defining the identity of the EU is difficult. The EU has diverse identities within itself. It is at the same time a political and economic union based on common interests and a partnership. It doesn't have a single monolithic identity. Therefore it is not easy to understand why primarily its cultural character is emphasized over and over again. As far as the membership of many other countries are concerned, the issue of cultural identity was not raised at all. Problems surrounding human rights issues were raised concerning the membership of other countries as well. However, for the first time in EU history, the cultural identity of a country, that of Turkey,

> has been raised. This is a strange approach. However, we should try to understand it because history if full of such mistakes.

As seen in table 10.7, 11.1 percent of Turkish organizations share the views of those Europeans who describe the identity of EU in culturalist terms and see it as a Christian union. Moreover 5.6 percent of Turkish organizations define the EU as a security and military union while only a small portion (1.9 percent) see Europe as a colonial power. Turkey's identity, its cultural and religious dimensions, and whether Turkey has a place in the EU despite its differences are all topical issues in Europe and will remain so throughout the negotiation process. However, the majority of Turkish civil organizations in Holland perceive the EU as an economic and political union as opposed to some Europeans who consider culture as the basic and dominant determinant of the EU identity. A representative of a Turkish civil organization, for example, articulates the identity of Europe as follows:

> For us, the EU is a union of democratic values. Of course there are some political groups and circles who try to impose their views, ideological preferences and values on this union. As Social Democrats we describe the EU as a union of democratic values and try to explain it to others who have different views on this issue. Christian Democrats in the EU from time to time describe it in religious terms. As a Dutch-Turkish civil association we definitely don't share this description.

Opponents to Turkey's membership in the EU not only mention population size and the unemployment rate in Turkey but also argue that the majority of Turks are Muslims, and this composition contradicts the cultural norms of the EU. Public opinion surveys in some EU countries suggest that the fact that the dominant religious faith in Turkey is Islam could be an obstacle to membership. The Turkish civil associations that participated in the study also state that they can observe the existence of such a trend in some EU countries where they meet various sections of the community.

The research findings in table 10.8 show that 81.5 percent of the Turkish civil associations that participated in the study think that the EU countries did not look at the membership of Turkey favorably because of religious differences and saw Islam as an obstacle in the long run. However, 11.1 percent of Turkish organizations do not think that religious differences will cause a problem in Turkey-EU relations.

The persistent description of the EU in culturalist terms and the constant portrayal of Turkish society's identity as Muslim are ploys used by some European leaders to try to influence the perception of

Table 10.8 Views on Whether the EU Countries Regard the Large Muslim Population in Turkey as an Obstacle to Membership

Do you think that the EU countries may regard the large Muslim population in Turkey as an obstacle to membership?	*(%)*
Yes	81.5
No	11.1
No idea	7.4
Total	100.0

EU identity and thus to depict Turkey's membership as a problem. Such discourse also influences the Turkish civil associations in Holland to a degree. The findings in table 10.9 partly support this observation. Although almost half (48.1 percent) of the Turkish organizations that participated in the research do not agree with a description that sees Europe as a Christian Club, 37 percent agree with this definition of Europe. The rest of the sample (14.8 percent) state they have no opinion on the identity of Europe or are not interested in this issue now. However, if a culturalist description of Europe is defended by leading figures and the EU identity is discussed in reference to cultural codes and differences, then this group may also join those who regard the EU as a Christian club.

A number of the researchers who were interviewed during the study argue that some circles in the EU oppose Turkey's full membership because the majority of the Turkish population are Muslims. One observer, for example, states that the religious characteristics of Turkish society are emphasized time after time, while the modern achievements of Turkey are not noticed as much as they deserve. He makes the following observation on this issue:

> The cultural and religious identity of the Turkish people is mentioned clearly in discussions on Turkey's membership. Some people argue that Europe is a Christian Union and Turkey has a population of 70 million, of which the majority are Muslims. Turkey is not an Islamic state, indeed it is a secular country with a majority Muslim population. How far does that constitute a problem for the EU? Compared to other Muslim countries, Turkey is more modern; however this aspect of Turkey has not been promoted. The Turks who came to Europe first mostly originated from social classes which were more active in particular industrial and economic sectors. Therefore, when they started to work and settle here, they did not have much contact with the bureaucratic, intellectual, scholarly, and educated circles of the host society. Only the recent comers and young generations started to establish communication with the larger society. Although Turkey is a democratic country where there are many

Table 10.9 Views on the Definition of the EU as a "Christian Club"

Do you agree with those who define the EU as a "Christian Club"?	*(%)*
Yes	37.0
No	48.2
No idea	14.8
Total	100.0

good scholars and scientists, whose authors are translated into many other languages including the Dutch and the English, these facts are known only by small number of people.

As pointed out earlier, there is an ongoing debate on the nature of EU identity, its sources, elements, factors, and determinants that have an impact on the construction of EU identity.[10] Although there is no consensus regarding the definition of a EU identity and its dominant characteristics, cultural, and religious arguments enter into debate when Turkey is at the centre of discussion.

In particular those who are opposed to Turkey's EU membership emphasize the Christian roots of European civilization and argue that Turkey should not be accepted as a member of the EU because the majority of Turks subscribe to a different religion, that is, Islam. Despite this opposition on cultural and religious grounds, the widespread perception of the EU identity among Turks in Holland is not based on religious and cultural factors. Turks mostly see EU identity on the grounds of democracy, economic cooperation, and political and regional partnership. One of the observers interviewed for this study who has been working in Holland for many years makes the following comments on EU identity:

> Many things could be said about the EU identity. The most salient aspect of it is the fact the EU was created as a union with an instinct to defend itself. There is no doubt that cultural elements were there although the Christian values were not at the very centre of this union. Given the forty years of its history, it would be a populist approach to say that the EU is a Christian Club. Historical roots, cultural foundations and Christian identity played a role in the establishment of EU. However, defining EU as a Christian Club is wrong.

The research results indicate that the modern, moderate, and constructive perception of religion that emerged in Turkey under the

influence of diverse cultural and intellectual factors throughout the centuries has not been explained to the Western audience. A modern and democratic image of Turkey has not taken root in the minds of Westerners, and it is usually confused with other Muslim countries. The failure or insufficient promotion of Turkey's modern achievements is seen as a factor that hampers Turkey's EU membership.

Conclusion

This chapter took its starting point from social capital and social network theories. Drawing upon in-depth interviews and survey-based research, this chapter shows that Turks in Europe have a potentially effective social capital stemming from their population size, economic power, political participation, and civil organizations.

As far as the civil organizations are concerned, this study indicates that awareness of the importance of civil society institutions became more widespread after 1985. Membership volume of Turkish civil organizations, their areas of activities, and relations with other institutions suggest that Turks have internalized the values of civil society and are increasingly becoming integrated into mainstream society. The interests of Turks in civil society organizations and civil values as well as the focus of their political preferences are an indication of social integration. The research results also show that Turks do not want to live in cultural ghettos isolated from rest of the society with walls of discrimination, but they want to lead a social life in harmony with the host society far from conflict but without losing their own identity.

The findings presented in this chapter indicate that an overwhelming majority (88.9 percent) of the Turkish organizations in the sample support Turkey's EU membership process and believe that the membership will benefit Turkey. Turkish organizations send a message to Europeans by stating that the young and dynamic population of Turkey should not be seen as a source of fear and threat in the EU countries because there will be no migration flow as speculated by some Europeans. Bear in mind that full membership negotiations may last until 2015, and it is likely that Turkey will improve its economy during this period and create new employment opportunities. It is expected that by the time of full membership, Turkey will have reduced its unemployment rate considerably. Turkish civil organizations that have a positive view of Turkey's EU membership organize a variety of events and activities that may have a direct or an indirect effect on the membership process in support of Turkey. These activities range from promoting Turkish art

and culture to engaging in projects to influence the media, civil society organizations, and political parties. The Turkish organizations in the survey also define themselves as Dutch institutions and try to create close relations with their counterparts. The research results clearly show that Turkish civil society organizations have accumulated a significant degree of experience, know-how, and financial resources that can no longer be ignored.

This chapter showed that the identity of the EU became an issue of frequent discussion and debate when the full membership of Turkey emerged as a strong possibility among the public, the media, and political circles in both Turkey and Europe. Discussions led especially by France and some other EU countries have started to reduce the EU identity to a cultural dimension. Despite such trends, Turkish civil society organizations in Europe do not define the EU based on cultural values. This means that emphasis on the cultural identity of the EU is not taken seriously by large sections of Turkish community. They strongly oppose the idea that Turkey should be rejected based on cultural values and differences. As far as those who have some doubts about Turkey's membership are concerned, it is observed that these people put emphasis on the Christian roots of European civilization legacy although they argue that the majority of the population in Turkey is Muslim, and thus should not be part of the EU. However, the widely held perception of EU identity among Turks emphasizes democratic values and economic cooperation rather than religious dimensions. Turks in Holland do not think that the EU is a Christian Club, as described by a minority group that opposes Turkey's membership.

This chapter concludes that Turks in Europe should be regarded as a source of important social capital with their large networks and resources that can challenge old culturalist clichés and contribute to bringing Turkey and the EU closer. The EU and Turkey do not need to get entangled in the web of culturalist discourse that has been on the rise since 9/11, whereby religion has emerged as one of the most salient identity markers. Turkey took an important step by investing in the "Alliance of Civilization Project" to replace stereotypes with that of informed and nonbiased perceptions. This is in itself a clear sign that Turkey would like to become part of the global world rather than isolate itself in cultural and religious ghettos. Today, the Turkish diaspora in Europe as a permanent social and cultural reality presents two opportunities: First, they might be seen as a test case and a challenge for the preservation and enlargement of cultural diversity in Europe by inclusion. Second, their social capital can be mobilized on local, national, and European levels to establish a bridge between Europe and Turkey.

Notes

1. This chapter is based on the findings of a fieldwork research which was conducted in December 2005 and January 2006 in the Netherlands. The research included a survey covering ninety Turkish civil organizations and in-dept interviews with their representatives and twenty experts on issues of EU identity, Turkey's EU accession, if culture is an obstacle for membership, and how Turks in Europe can contribute to bringing Turkey and Europe closer. I would like to thank Veyis Gungor and Huseyin Kocabiyik for their help in the data collection stage of the research.
2. On Turkish migration to Europe, see among others Abadan Unat (2002), Abadan-Unat (ed.) (1976), Beeley (1983), Bhatti (1981), Martin (1991), Paine (1974).
3. http://www.eubusiness.com/news_live/1168786802.44
4. http://www2.gcitrading.com/news/news_story.aspx?lang=FX1&news_Id=170672
5. http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=63994
6. http://www.cathnews.com/news/408/96.php
7. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/29/world/europe/29pope.html?ex=1322456400&en=a966c167d1894bb3&ei=5088&partner=rssnyt&
8. For theoretical discussions on social capital, see Field (2003), Baron, Field, and Schuller (eds.) (2001), Lin and Granovetter (eds.) (2002).
9. On the disscussions of European identity, see Wintle (1996), Leveau (ed.) (2002), Joyce (ed.) (2002).
10. For a discussion on foundational values of the EU, see Toggensburg (2003).

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