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TITLE:

**ADDRESSING ANTI-FOREIGNER SENTIMENTS IN EUROPE: FETHULLAH
GÜLEN'S PHILOSOPHY OF PEACE**

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DEDICATION

To those peace embroiderers who are persecuted in their native lands for dreaming a planetary spring

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies the cultural and historical roots and extent of anti-foreigner sentiments towards the culturally distinct Muslim others and how the perceptions of the self and of others in western European societies could be reworked through education by employing Fethullah Gülen's philosophy of peace in order to address these sentiments and reconcile the majority communities and culturally distinct Muslim others. It analyzes Gülen's writings and the books, articles, and conference proceedings on his thought and practice as a revolutionary leader of nonviolence and social transformation in order to ascertain the relevance of his ideas in western European context. The overall European Union (EU) immigration policies, the study concludes, lacking long-lasting vision and progress in line with the fundamental values of the EU, are politicized by the political elites and fail to address incrementing and mainstreamed xenophobic views on culturally distinct Muslim others whose overall cultural, intellectual, and creedal collective deficit contributes to this alterity and failure of integration. The general tendency in EU's immigration policies is still attuned towards assimilation, and thus, constitute cultural and structural violence. Gülen's creation-conscious, superordinate human identity-oriented, non-dualistic, altruistic, and holistic peace-centered weltanschauung has produced an alternative narrative to the dominant Euro-Atlantic vision, and if introduced in educational settings across western Europe has the potential to address anti-foreigner sentiments, social injustice, and the lack of social cohesion.

KEY WORDS

EU immigration policies, alterity, xenophobia, anti-foreigner sentiments, Fethullah Gülen, peacebuilding

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INTRODUCTION

Europe's loss of supremacy in the world of politics, followed by social, economic, and political changes after World War II, caused social disorientation in the societies of western Europe. After WWII Europe lost its primacy in the international arena (Outhwaite 2008), and faced difficulty adjusting to an ever-changing world. For centuries Europe used the colonies to send its surplus populations (Gibson and Poerio 2018). In the 20th century there was a shift from emigration to immigration when the colonies became independent and their disillusioned populations -with the hope of living lives in dignity- started moving to the former metropolises that had established advanced democracies (Taras 2012). The interstate and civil wars, dictatorial regimes, lack of security and economic opportunities, and natural disasters in these former colonies (Ammar 2018) as well as the media's glamorization of life in West in general drew more and more economic migrants and asylum seekers and refugees to Western Europe. The increasing number of immigrants arriving to Western European countries, and the previous ones' failure in integration (Scipioni 2018), however, produced discontent and stigma. The introduction of relentless neoliberal policies that weakened the welfare states starting with the 1980s harmed local production and businesses and increased the inequality in distribution of wealth (Bauman 2004; Engel 2018), and brought the middle classes across western Europe to the brink of poverty line (Buchowski 2017; Kaika 2017; Latouche 1993; Solon 2017). In order to find a collective solution to globalization and economic changes, the idea of Europeanization was introduced leading to the removal of borders and the partial transfer of legislation and authority away from the local and national administrations (Delanty 1995; Outhwaite 2008). These external efforts have been viewed as a threat to national sovereignty and identity and produced disillusioned and frustrated citizens across western Europe who looked for a scapegoat

to hold responsible for the social problems faced (De Master and Le Roy 2000; Leman et al 2014; Postelnicescu 2016). Due to the powerful yet at the same time elusive nature of the neoliberal system and the silence of the political executive many people began to look for a scapegoat to blame for increasing political, economic, and social problems.

The majority communities of western Europe found the culturally distinct immigrant others, a considerable number of whom are Muslims from western Asia and north Africa as the scapegoat (Buchowski 2017). The uncharted realms the peoples of western Europe found themselves in produced further frustration with the arrival of increasing number of immigrants especially from western Asia and northern Africa who liked –naturally- to preserve their distinct lifeways (Augé 1998; Bauman 2004; Semyonov and others 2006). In a sense, anti-foreigner sentiments have been used by the majority communities to save neoliberalism-robbed solidarity (Bauman, 2007). These culturally distinct Muslim others, to a greater extent, lacked rounded education and were financially stringent. This reality, inter alia, complicated their integration into majority communities. The increase in the number of immigrants, and their failure to integrate into the mainstream communities cannot be analyzed without tackling the issues below:

- “Who are the Europeans...?” (Slootweg and others 2019, 149), and
- What is meant by integration? (Taras 2012)

The idea in accommodating the culturally distinct other Muslims needs to ensure the thriving -not survival- of these individuals and communities (Devakumar and others 2019). The core values of the EU and the legislation are accommodating and fair in dealing with the immigrants and their children (Taras 2009; Taras 2012). Yet enforcing something through law cannot be effective by itself unless it is internalized by the communities and societies (Scheper-Hughes 1996). Contrary to the legal norms, member-state governments -pressured by far-right

groups- are shifting away from the EU core values (Allen 2014; Taras 2009) and are in many cases failing to pursue productive long-term immigration policies (Mulcahy 2011). The anti-immigration sentiments are becoming mainstreamed. What is primarily worrisome is not the extremist xenophobic statements and activities of few marginal groups, but the silent sympathetic bystanders from among the ordinary in the face of these extremist statements or activities across western Europe (Kaika 2017; Taras 2012). The public perception is that Islam and western values are incompatible and Muslim immigrants are inassimilable into the mainstream (Afsaruddin 2015; Buchowski 2017; Culver 2017; Funk and Said 2004; Parekh 2006; Taras 2012). The depiction of Muslims in mainstream media not only produces more bias, but also serves as a tool to permeate the ages old European negative perceptions of Muslims (Alatas 2005; Goytisolo 1992; Reeves and Stewart 2005; Said 2008). This common perception leads to an imagined gulf between Europeans and the Muslims (Taras 2009). Not feeling welcome and being expected to assimilate under the ambiguous policy of integration, Muslims withdraw themselves from public participation (Engel 2018). Disengagement in turn has produced pillarization and ghettoization across European societies (Kolossoff 2005; Taras 2012). The European Union (EU) immigration policies need to move away from assimilationist type integration to integration to the earlier meaning of the word “to complete what is imperfect by the addition of the necessary parts” (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 1968 in Delacourt 2005, 191) by mutual adaptation and dialogic engagement.

Anti-foreigner sentiments are closely linked to how individuals perceive themselves and others. The dominant Euro-Atlantic perceptions of the self and others have colonial roots (Blaut 2012; Goody 1977; Todorov 2010) whereby the self and others are viewed as binary opposites (Delanty 1995; Derrida 1981; Loomba 2015; Staszak 2008). The colonial understanding of

identifying oneself was based on the division between the civilized societies of the West and the savage and barbarian others (Blaut 2012; Todorov 2010) and social stratification within the Western societies between the elites and peasants (Patterson 1997). In this bifurcation Muslims made up the worse group as Islam had formed the perpetual other of Europe (Delanty 1995). Islam represented everything that Europe hoped not to be from the early Middle Ages up until the 19th century (Armstrong 1993). The Jews in the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, and Soviet Russia for half a century replaced Islam, as the enemy par excellence. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Islam, the old enemy, once again has taken its place to serve as the enemy of Europe (Ahmed 2003).

Appreciating individual differences and cultural diversity make up the essence of social cohesion and peacebuilding (2004b). The major challenge of the 21st century is the ability to learn to live in diverse societies (Hall 1993) as distances are disappearing and new citizenships, which are not determined by birth nor by ethnicity or nationality, are emerging (Delanty 1995). The crucial issue regarding recognizing differences is the ability of communities and societies to embrace and accommodate the new additions by mutual changes and adjustments and not leave these additions in the periphery. Therefore, appreciating individual, communal, cultural, and creedal differences can only be successful when “living together as equals in dignity” is ensured (Council of Europe 2010, 9).

Fethullah Gülen is a Muslim Turkish scholar, an educator, and a leader of social transformation. He has inspired a social movement called the Hizmet Movement which is a transnational social movement focusing on education to build a peaceful world; interfaith and intercultural dialogue to remove cultural, religious, racist, ethnic boundaries and rediscover the common ties that bind humanity as sisters and brothers; and cooperation to join resources to

address injustice, poverty, and destitution. At the core of his philosophy lies the human being, with the human being all problems can either be produced or resolved. His main focus is on educating the human being. He argues that the right type of education and socialization plays the key role in bringing up loving, compassionate, and peaceful human beings. The core values of the Hizmet movement are “hospitality, wisdom, compassion, and charity ... grounded in love” (Conway 2014, 113).

The strength of Fethullah Gülen’s message lies in three areas:

1. There are very distinguished thinkers in today’s world who analyze, criticize, and deconstruct phenomena and systems yet few of them provide alternatives, and still very few of them are engaged in activism and are able to put their ideas into practice. Fethullah Gülen can be considered among these very few intellectuals. Starting with the 1970s, as an educator he trained students who formed the core team of a transnational social movement that runs nonsectarian private schools, universities, hospitals, media outlets, NGOs focusing on interfaith and intercultural understanding and humanitarian aid organizations in hundred and eighty countries with the aim of addressing social injustice and ultimately contributing to peace (Pahl 2019).
2. He is a Muslim Turkish scholar and has a profound knowledge in Islamic jurisprudence, hadith, exegesis, theology, Sufism, Arabic grammar, *usul* -methodology-, and social sciences. His expertise transcends the modern compartmentalization of disciplines. He does not limit himself to one discipline. In his writings economics, philosophy, sociology, history, religion, and literature might be found side-by-side and intermingled (Albayrak 2011). He uses this deeply rooted background of his to embrace the modern world. He employs this traditional background as a lens to critically engage in the modern world

and he uses the modern heritage to re-interpret the tradition for a best possible synthesis (Alexander 2015).

3. His philosophy transcends commonly held dichotomies. He reconciles science and religion, sacred and profane, mind and heart, east and west, and modernity and tradition (Khan 2011; Kuru 2003)

Fethullah Gülen's interpretation of the self and of others provides unique guidelines to perceive and interact with the creation and human beings around us. He teaches love, compassion, altruism, empathy, munificence, humility, and trustworthiness. His noteworthy aspect, however, rests in teaching what he practices. Gülen offers a paradigm shift in understanding how one views oneself and others by emphasizing the interconnected and interdependence of everyone with everything else in the cosmos and everyone else in the world and by de-compartmentalizing human nature and the world.

His commitment for over sixty years to promote education and interfaith and intercultural understanding to address social injustice and contribute to peace by mobilizing youth across the globe has been viewed a threat to the status quo. Since the putsch in Turkey on July 15, 2016 Gülen and the Hizmet movement he inspires have been announced by the dictatorial Erdogan-led Turkish government as the arch enemy of the Turkish nation accused of serving as a pawn for global powers and CIA (Ebaugh 2010) to undermine the Turkish state and as the hidden cardinal of Vatican to adulterate and defeat Islam (Çelik 2008). Whereas in the US where he resides and where the volunteers of Hizmet movement inspired by his teaching is active Gülen is seen with suspicion, likened to the late Iranian leader Khomeini (Rubin 2008), and vilified to have ulterior goals to undermine the secular state. This far stretched calumnies from serving CIA to harboring anti-democratic extremist Islamist (e.g. political Islam) objectives, as argued by Pahl, puts Gülen

in good company with non-violent activists and peacebuilders who were defamed by establishments, political and corporate elites, and the organic media and intellectuals (2019).

One of the cardinal arguments of Gülen's philosophy for peace is that individual, communal, and global peace and harmony with nature is dependent on the reconciliation of material and spiritual domains (Gülen 1999). Reconciling the sacred and secular divide found in many European societies (Taras 2012) is fundamental in ensuring social cohesion and peace. Moral values can ensure striking a balance between excess and deficiency in the employment of drives such as reason, zeal, and anger that shape the individual's interactions with other individuals and the community at large (Kuru 2003). A boy in the marketplace who steals an apple, unless is educated to respect the spaces, dignity, rights, opinions, and properties of others and internalizes this conviction by making it part of his character, would most probably be involved in corruption when taking up a bureaucratic or political position. Setting a balance in employing these drives individually means taking moral values as criteria. Therefore, it can be argued that moral integrity constitutes the foundation of social justice and social cohesion. However, moral values have their roots in religions. Secular worldviews, as the 20th century has shown, could not ensure this balance. As Habermas and German sociologist Hans Joas maintain in Schweitzer, "it must be acknowledged that religious traditions can be sources and carriers of important values that neither the democratic state nor secular philosophies or worldviews can produce or maintain by themselves" (Habermas 2001 and Joas 2011 in Schweitzer 2016, 106).

Literature Review

Europe seems to be the western edge of the grand Asia, more than a continent. Due to this natural connection to Asia, it has been difficult to draw a clear line that separates Europe from the mainland Asia. While western Europe wanted to dissociate itself from the world of west

Asia and Russia, on the other hand it needed to include these worlds to talk about “greater Europe” to support the foundation myth of European history as both the Bible lands and the land of the ancient Greeks virtually lay outside of Europe. Western Europe formed the backwater of Asia before the 15th century. In “Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality” Delanty (1995) argues that the European identity emerged in adversity in the face of emerging Muslim powers. Western Europe differentiated itself from Asia while using Asia to define itself in opposition. The invasions of the Americas and colonial expansions changed the balance yet the sense of opposing the other became persistent. Even though the other of Europe changed throughout ages, as Delanty maintains, Islam was and still is the other par excellence of Europe.

The European elites’ identity formation in the middle ages had been an exclusive one. The idea of civilization takes the European aristocracy as the legitimate representative of each culture within western Europe. In “Inventing Western Civilization” Patterson argues that the idea of civilization is based on the us and them bifurcation between the educated upper classes of Europe and the uneducated peoples of Europe, the barbarian and savage general public in the colonies. He concludes that this idea of civilization is, therefore, elitist and class-stratified. The aristocracy is replaced by the white middle classes after the collapse of empires. Balibar suggests that this division “is the doing of the societies of the North... not of the immigrants themselves.” (Balibar 2004, 42) While Gadamer argues that the Europe’s unique attribute is its ability to live with others (Gadamer 1989 in Bauman, 2004), Delanty argues that European identity is based on “adversity” and “siege mentality” (Delanty 1995, 24-26, 84). The fact of the matter is that there are conflicting visions in western European identity regarding the perception of others.

Europe lost its supremacy in the world in the 20th century. In “Europe: An Unfinished Adventure” Bauman (2004) studies the fragile nature of Western Europe in an ever-changing

world, and how economic, political, and social changes pushed Europe into unprecedented situations in which peoples of Europe find that, blaming the strangers who live among themselves as the easiest way to cope with major changes in their lives. In “Europe Old and New: Transnationalism, Belonging, Xenophobia” Taras (2009) argues that European-ness today is associated with the west, and being in the west even within the continent is affiliated with an air of condescension towards the eastern neighbor. He studies this east-west difference within the continent. The idea of “European-ness” after the collapse of the Soviet Union is challenged by central and eastern European states’ inclusion as part of the enlargement of the European Union. The human flow from the new member states in the east and the immigration flow from south and east of the continent from turmoil-stricken west Asian and African countries into old Europe (e.g. western Europe) flare the phobias of the white middle classes.

The exaggeration of and constant focus on differences in creed and lifeways between western European majority communities and minority Muslim communities of Europe leaves little room for reconciliation and achieving social cohesion. In “Xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe” Taras (2012) examines how cultural differences between European and Muslim cultures are inflated and how phobias that ensue are shaping social and political life in Western Europe. He carefully analyzes the widespread fear for Muslims and Turks in Germany and France, and the rest of Western European democracies and how this phobia has the potential to undermine the very foundation of the European Union.

The immigration policies of western European member states are to a major extent formulated by nation states not the European Union. In “Europe's Migrant Policies: Illusions of Integration” Mulcahy (2011) contends that the European Union-level activities and discussions on immigration do not go beyond soft laws, policy suggestions that do not have power of

enforcement. She concludes that the EU has so far failed to produce progressive immigration laws, the immigration policies are politicized by member state politicians, and the introduction of new immigration laws are decided behind closed doors (Delanty 1995).

The collective intellectual, cultural, and spiritual deficit Muslim communities have been in for the last few centuries and the employment of Islam as an ideology, hinder the integration of the Muslims into the majority communities of western Europe. As Maalouf argues in “In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong” (2003) Islam is used as an ideology to resist European influence and dictatorial regimes in west Asian and north African contexts and as a driving force for the children of immigrants to show their dissatisfaction and indignation in the face of discrimination and refusal by the majority communities in the western European context, and therefore, this idea of Islam has no antecedents in history.

Fethullah Gülen is a Turkish Muslim scholar, leader of social transformation, and reconciler of creeds and cultures. In “Tradition Witnessing The Modern Age: An Analysis of The Gülen Movement” Ergene, as an associate of Gülen, analyzes how religion and specifically Sufism take the prominent role in shaping Gülen’s worldview. He contends, however, that Gülen, being well-versed in the *usul*, methodologies of classic religious sciences, never shies away from pushing the limits in interpretation to open up new spaces to accommodate the modern age. While Ergene’s analysis can be taken as insider’s insight, in “Toward an Islamic Enlightenment: The Gülen Movement” Turkish sociologist Yavuz’s analysis of Gülen falls short of delineating Gülen’s worldview in theory and practice as his interpretation fails to transcend Turkish secular interpretation of religion and current meta narratives (e.g. fundamental perspectives) in sociology. In “Peace and Dialogue in a Plural Society: Contributions of the Hizmet Movement at a Time of Global Tensions” Michel primarily focuses on education and interfaith dialogue in

theory and practice by looking for common threads between Hizmet ethics and the Catholic principles. Historian Pahl in “Fethullah Gülen: A Life of Hizmet” produces a biography of Gülen by neither being preoccupied by trying to fit Gülen’s ideas into ready-made schematas nor in neglecting religion as the driving force behind the Hizmet ethics as is sometimes done by Hizmet affiliated academics.

Fethullah Gülen and the movement he inspires that is active in around one hundred and eighty countries across the globe (Pahl 2019; Pandya 2018) have been dedicated to addressing cultural and structural violence primarily in Turkey for over five decades and abroad for over two decades by focusing on education and intercultural dialogue. The long-lasting solutions for any type of violence, according to Gülen, can be produced by focusing on education. Education, nevertheless, needs to be understood as the transformation of the full human being. Gülen proposes striking a balance between the individual and the communal, sacrificing neither one. He envisions a culture of conscience where the senses and mental faculties are guided by one’s conscience and where truth, human dignity, compassion, cooperation, honesty and trust are upheld. The Hizmet ethics based on the ideas of Gülen transcend Muslim and Turkish traditions. In “A Dialogue of Civilizations: Gülen’s Islamic Ideals and Humanistic Discourse” Carroll tries to find resonating ideas between Gülen and leading intellectuals of the past such as Confucius, Plato, Kant, Sartre, and Mill, around the topics on human dignity, moral soundness, freedom, education, and responsibility. In “Gülen’s Dialogue on Education: A Caravanserai of Ideas” Gage studies transcending shared views and enriching differences in education in theory and practice of Gülen and leading Euro-Atlantic (namely European and north American) educators and educationists such as Jean Piaget, Marie Montessori, John Dewey, Benjamin Bloom, Alexander Maslow, Kurt Hahn, Lev Vygotsky, Albert Bandura, and James Moffett.

There are conflicting views in academia on Gülen and the Hizmet movement (Appleby 2015). In “Beyond East and West: Fethullah Gülen and Border Thinking” Grinell posits that Gülen’s worldview is not governed by Western episteme and transcends imagined borders and boundaries. His discourse is humanistic but not specifically Humanistic (e.g. Euro-Atlantic humanism). Gülen’s contribution to the humanity is his modest attempt to contribute to pinpointing the contours of a future collective civilization of humanity in which differences are appreciated, struggle is replaced by cooperation, might is subservient to right, and the sacred and the secular are reconciled. These transcending and holistic ideas of Gülen reflected in Hizmet ethics make it difficult for academics and experts to encompass and interpret by using theories in the relevant fields that are context-bound. The religious -in general- and Muslim -in particular- inspiration behind Hizmet’s proactive activism has caused suspicion among the secular intellectuals. Working towards addressing social injustice not by engaging in window dressing or short-term solutions but on lasting solutions naturally threatens the status quo. Due to these facts, Hizmet has been drawing the ire of some elites and organic intellectuals in Turkey and the US where it is most active and visible.

The public talks Gülen delivered and the educational activities he engaged in starting in the late 1960s formed a civil society movement that has aimed to achieve social transformation through personal transformation. In the early 1990s the movement started to open schools and cultural centers and interfaith organizations abroad. In “Muslim Citizens of the Globalized World: Contributions of the Gülen Movement” edited by Hunt and Aslandogan (2007) academics in eleven articles study the Hizmet movement’s engagement in the modern world as a movement that started to evolve into a transnational movement yet is still deeply rooted in Turkish context. In “Muslim World in Transition: Contributions of the Gülen Movement” edited

by Yilmaz and others (2007) forty-eight papers presented at the conference held in London with the same title, experts analyze the constructive contributions of Hizmet. The articles analyze the Hizmet approach on:

- re-interpretation of religious concepts to make them relevant in the modern world;
- religious practice in secular contexts;
- civil Islam;
- forming a new European Muslim identity;
- countering radicalism;
- interfaith activism;
- taking a clear stance against terrorist acts such as New York, London, and Madrid bombings.

In “Islam and Peacebuilding: Gülen Movement Initiatives” edited by Esposito and Yilmaz (2010) consisting of papers presented at conferences held in London, Rotterdam, and Washington D.C., Hizmet’s main focus, education and interfaith dialogue activities are analyzed. While contemporary Muslims have been referring to their past to talk about peace, Hizmet presents a renewed voice to practice peacebuilding as Muslims in the contemporary world. Hizmet, according to the proceedings, is promoting multicultural pluralism by transcending borders, contributing to the reconciliation of East and West, and the commitment to non-othering.

The Hizmet movement’s presence in western Europe is relatively new when compared to other parts of the world. Unlike the activities in the US, the movement started off in western Europe by providing assistance to immigrants and their descendants in integration into the

majority communities. Later on Hizmet volunteers engaged in interfaith and intercultural dialogue with the majority communities. Academic engagement came to fruition in the establishment of the Gülen Chair for Intercultural Studies at Belgium's Leuven University. In "European Muslims, Civility and Public Life: Perspectives on and From the Gülen Movement" edited by Weller and Yilmaz (2012), comprising fifteen papers presented at conferences held in London and Rotterdam, the engagement of Hizmet movement as a civil society movement in the European context is studied. Muslim participation in collective community building through dialogic activism, the broadening vision of Gülen and Hizmet towards planetary consciousness, and the critical contribution of Hizmet in reconciling the minority and majority communities of Europe are the areas of primary focus.

The Hizmet ethics and practice across the globe has not only produced an alternative to religious fundamentalism, but also an alternative to modernity. In "Hizmet Means Service: Perspectives On an Alternative Path within Islam" edited by Marty (2015), the role of religion in Hizmet discourse and activism is analyzed. The volume critically analyzes: the reconciliatory nature of Gülen's worldview and Hizmet practice; if and how Hizmet can address gender inequality in public domain; the Hizmet ethics and how it is reconciled with the classic business ethics; and the conflicting narratives on Gülen and Hizmet in academia.

The 2016 putsch in Turkey which resulted in thousands of Hizmet volunteers leaving Turkey and settling in EU member states, Canada, and the US to escape state-administered collective persecution, contributed to Hizmet's leaving the Turkey-oriented worldview behind and adopting a more global vision. The dictatorial Erdogan-led Turkish government claims that Gülen and Hizmet volunteers are responsible for the failed coup attempt in Turkey that took place on July 15, 2016. The escape of thousands of well-educated Hizmet volunteers and their

taking up residence in advanced democracies; as well as their extraordinary efforts in integrating into the majority communities helped them with assuming a broader vision of human identity that Gülen has been advocating. In “Hizmet Movement and Peacebuilding: Global Cases” edited by Abu-Nimer and Siedel (2018) comprising fifteen articles presented at a conference held in Washington D.C. with the same title, focuses on religion’s role in contributing to global peace through education, intercultural and interfaith dialogue by studying the Hizmet activities across the world. The volume gives special attention to the Hizmet efforts in reconciling divided societies.

The effectiveness of Hizmet to reach out to the peoples of the world in the east, west, south and north to work together to contribute to peacebuilding lies in the sense of responsibility and probity (e.g. a morally sound nature and trustworthiness) of the volunteers that help them build trust with the host communities. In “The Spirituality of Responsibility: Fethullah Gülen and Islamic Thought” Robinson (2017) analyzes Gülen’s holistic idea of morally-driven responsibility as a vicegerent on earth having freewill and being responsible to oneself, to the Divine, to the environment, both physical and social. Robinson contends that this responsibility is proactive action oriented. In “Cross-cultural Dialogue on the Virtues: The Contribution of Fethullah Gülen” Conway (2014), different from the majority of the studies on Hizmet with a political science or sociology lens, studies the roots, principles, and telos of the Hizmet movement with an axiological lens. In other words, she attempts to map the fundamentals of the Hizmet ethics. She contends that one of the unique aspects of the Hizmet ethics is its virtue-based nature in contrast to the mainstream Euro-Atlantic duty-based ethics. She also provides the mainstream understandings in the other monotheistic faith traditions (e.g. Judaism and Christianity) to locate Hizmet ethics within the greater Abrahamic horizon. In “A Civilian

Response to Ethno-Religious Conflict : The Gülen Movement in Southeast Turkey” Kalyoncu (2008) studies Mardin, a province in south-east Turkey mainly populated by Kurds, and contends that Gülen employed *sohbet*, conversation, and turned to local gatherings aimed to remind the participants of their human and collective responsibility to take action in addressing illiteracy, poverty, and their product, lack of social cohesion, and social injustice. Kalyoncu argues that these gatherings provided the youth of Turkey a transcended vision to take responsibility in collectively shaping the future.

The intercultural and interfaith activities that first started in Turkey, then formed one of the main activities of Hizmet wherever it reached out across the globe, is based on one of the main arguments of Gülen, that differences are Divinely-given and therefore, require cherishing as these differences mirror the innumerable attributes of the Divine. In “Gülen on Dialogue” Sleaf and Sener (2014) analyze Gülen’s dialogic activism. They contend that Gülen’s idea of dialogue is based on “dialogue of life.” In other words, intercultural and interfaith engagement are not scholarly pursuits, but are rather action oriented with the aim of contributing to collectively build a more peaceful world. In “The Gülen Movement: Building Social Cohesion through Dialogue and Education” Çelik studies how besides educating the new generations to address cultural violence, Hizmet has focused on intercultural and interfaith activism in the European context. These activities bring together polarized communities in undertaking community service and contribute to forming a collective vision for a peaceful society.

In Gülen’s philosophy for peace, education -both formal and informal- is the key to transforming the current violence-filled societies of the globe into a more peaceful one. In “Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance” Gülen (2004b) highlights the fundamentals of peacebuilding, mainly focusing on holistic education, love and compassion,

reconciling the sacred and the secular, and forgiveness and hoşgörü. He contends that reconciling the fragmented human nature and social domain is crucial to build peace, which in turn requires educating the new generations as *al-insan al-kamil*, or as full human beings who reconcile the soul and conscience with the mind, senses and the body. The volume, however, lacks cohesion and depth as it is a compilation from various writings of Gülen, and unfortunately, gives the impression to the readers that his views are not well developed, as there are only few books of his -out of over seventy written in Turkish- that are translated into English that can give the English readers a chance to evaluate and value his thought. It is the responsibility of his associates to oversee the translation of his works into English, as Gülen, out of humility, would never promote himself nor his writing. In “Pearls of Wisdom” Gülen (2005b) redefines the ideal human being, family, society, science, and civilization and highlights the reconciliation of the divided realms of the spiritual and the mundane. It needs to be kept in mind that Gülen wrote this volume half a century ago in the beginning of his career in his early thirties (Merican 2019). In “Journey to noble ideals: droplets of wisdom from the heart.” Gülen (2013b) maps a life of fulfillment that is based on having a transcended vision, divesting oneself from base desires yet achieving self-discovery, living a life for others, and engaging in proactive and dialogic collective activism to attain the good pleasure of the Divine. His writing is to the point and wisdom-governed.

Methodology

This literature-based dissertation, employing theoretical analysis, studies the writings of Fethullah Gülen as the primary sources. The books, articles, and conference proceedings written on Gülen’s teaching and practice and the movement he inspires, and books and articles on and around xenophobia, EU immigration policies, European identity, and peace form the secondary

sources. I did not employ any of the academically recognized meta theories in social research. The epistemologies, embedded in the theoretical perspectives and in the methodologies, used as lenses to undertake social research (Crotty 1998) are produced in Europe and North America. These epistemologies are context-bound. As Habermas reluctantly admitted when the applicability of his ideas in other contexts was asked, “I am aware that mine is a limited and Eurocentric vision.” (Santos 2012, 46) Nevertheless, they are intended to be viewed universal. There is a claim that Euro-Atlantic knowledge is objective and therefore, deserves to be taken as reference point and as the ultimate authority as is the case with many other fields (Bauman 2004; Galtung 1994; Jackson 2015) When these epistemologies are taken as universal, they dominate the knowledge production (Tucker 1999) and marginalize and discredit non-Euro-Atlantic knowledge systems (Escobar 1994; Pieterse 2001). A methodological and epistemological pluralism, where non-Euro-Atlantic epistemologies are developed and the sources of knowledge are rescued from the limitations imposed by the Euro-Atlantic epistemologies, have still to be achieved to end the Euro-Atlantic domination. This domination amounts to epistemic violence.

Social scientists of Euro-Atlantic background and their Westernized counterparts in Africa, Asia, and south America are using social theories produced in a specific period and under specific circumstances. Many of these meta theories have their roots in the Enlightenment, and Enlightenment tradition is based on a dualistic worldview where might makes right and a bifurcation between the in-groups and others are drawn (Berting 1995). These meta narratives, instead of being universal, “are privileged discourses that deny and silence” alternative ones (Parpart 1993, 440). As argued by some leading experts in the field, fascism, anti-Semitism, two world wars and the Gulag as well as the emergence of extremist far-right youth and xenophobic middle classes and the violent extremist youth among the European Muslim citizens who are

descendants of immigrants are not aberrations but natural outcomes of the materialist, positivist, and secular worldview that has its basis in the Enlightenment tradition (Delanty 1995; Delacourt 2005; Tucker 1999). Furthermore, claiming universal appeal has the implied meaning that the Euro-Atlantic experience, in Darwinian terms, represents the maturation of humanity, and therefore, the non-European-North American world's failure to complete the process of evolution. This might be one reason why non-Euro-Atlantic societies are studied by Anthropology, using different criteria and a different template, than the study of Euro-Atlantic societies (e.g. that of sociology) (Delanty 1995).

As I have not employed any of the available epistemologies and theoretical perspectives, so have I refrained -as much as possible- to use in my dissertation any concepts that are naturally framed by ideologies. If I could not avoid using them I tried to provide my or Gülen's interpretation of these concepts. I have no intention to make a point in proving these epistemologies' and theories' irrelevance in Euro-Atlantic context. I argue that Marx, Weber, Durkeim, Mill, Freud, and Galtung or any other Euro-Atlantic intellectuals' views are context-bound and naturally fail to explain the roots and driving forces of a civil society movement (e.g. the Hizmet movement) when applied to a non-Euro-Atlantic context. I am not relativist, however. I am not denying that there are considerable parallels among different cultures and creeds. In fact, in parallel with the argument above, I do not associate myself with any of the “-isms” as they fail, in my view, to map my weltanschauung. As I will argue below, the theories and “-isms” are falling short in interpreting Gülen's weltanschauung as well.

This dissertation aims to analyze Gülen's novel idea of viewing oneself and others and whether these perceptions could contribute to achieving social cohesion in western European societies. As Hendricks argues, the “purpose of social scientific inquiry in general, and cultural

analysis in particular” is undertaken in order “to critique social and cultural life as fervently as possible so as to better understand how social actors interpret their thoughts and actions, and how those thoughts and actions affect local, national, and global societies” (2013, IX). I have no intention to discredit the western European approach of viewing the self and of the others. My aim in analyzing the western European context has been to postulate that Gülen’s thought and practice, having parallels with the humanistic discourse, has the potential to contribute to the reconciliation of majority communities and culturally distinct Muslim others of Europe.

Gülen’s worldview transcends dualistic worldviews. Ergene argues that religion (e.g. Islam) forms the lens of Gülen with which he sees and understands the world (2008). In other words, he is a representative of the traditional religious scholarship within Islam (Bulaç 2007). Yet, as Conway argues, Gülen is a modernist (2014). Gülen, in theory and practice, embraces the modern world to such an extent that Hendricks calls him and the movement he inspires as capitalists (2013). He puts special emphasis on local, national, and regional values on the one hand, and reminds us to recognize the inherent values of humanity that transcend cultures and creeds on the other. As Voll maintains, “Gülen’s vision transcends modern and postmodern, global and local.” (2003, 247) Khan posits that Gülen is neither secular nor religious (2011). Kuru argues that in Gülen’s interpretation of the world, secular and spiritual mindsets are reconciled (2003). Vicini contends that the activities of Hizmet are faith driven yet socially oriented and therefore are all-inclusive (2007).

Gülen’s views on freedom, rule of law, advanced democracy, and secular state differs from the mainstream conservative views in Europe and North America and religious discourses of Muslim scholars made known by the mainstream media. In 1994 when violence erupted in the Turkish society and some politicians, columnists, and intellectuals openly asked the military to

take charge of the situation, Gülen in a public gathering, took a clear stance by saying that there is no return from democracy (Mercan 2017). This drew the ire of both conservatives who like Erdogan, the current president of Turkey, considered democracy necessary only insofar as it could serve their interests and which could be discarded after securing control of the state (Gözaydın 2009) and the Kemalists, the ultra-secular ruling elite, who considered themselves as the custodian of the Republic and above democracy and law (Yavuz 2013). According to Gülen, the promotion and establishment of education, rule of law, and democracy is crucial, not a certain type of state (e.g. Islamic state), for ensuring immutable freedoms including freedom of religious practice:

Islam flourishes in [North] America and Europe much better than in many Muslim countries. This means freedom and the rule of law are necessary for personal Islam. Moreover, Islam does not need the state to survive, but rather needs educated and financially rich communities to flourish. In a way, not the state but rather community is needed under a full democratic system. (Gülen (2000) in Valkenberg 2006, 312)

Therefore, I did not employ any of the meta theories in social research to analyze Gülen's thought and activism. I also tried not to quote eminent scholars from Euro-Atlantic background to enrich my arguments as I am against this intellectual faddism. This study is not intended as an encomium of Gülen, yet as a modest attempt, in a time when violent extremism on both flanks in western Europe is escalating and the public officials who, as part of their task, instead of inviting the population to calm down and engage in empathy and self-criticism, seem to be inflating the rage of the public with their statements, and to analyze how Gülen offers an alternative narrative in viewing oneself and others through the lenses of compassion, hoşgörü, and altruism that are fundamental in addressing xenophobia, marginalization of culturally distinct Muslim others by

the majority communities, lack of social cohesion, and naturally the lack of peace. Peace throughout this thesis does not refer to polemology, eirene, or pax, instead is, as it is analyzed in the third chapter, the outcome of appreciation of individual and communal differences, the reconciliation of fragmented human nature and social life (e.g. the dualistic worldview), the individual and collective commitment to ensure psychological, physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual human flourishing. The Euro-Atlantic worldviews from far-right to radical left and anything in between, even if pushed to their maximum limits, have failed to address modern social ills (Santos 2012). The main argument of this dissertation is that Gülen's creation-conscious, all-inclusive, and love and compassion-centric view of others, if introduced in education, can contribute to the reconciliation of majority and minority communities, social cohesion and ultimately, peace in western Europe.

Research Questions

- How could Fethullah Gülen's philosophy of peace and the Hizmet movement's altruistic practice contribute to social cohesion and peace in western European societies?
- How can the deconstruction of the perception of the Self and the Others make space to address anti-foreigner sentiments in western European societies?
- What is the extent of anti-foreigner sentiment toward the culturally distinct others in western Europe?
- What are the historical and cultural causes that hinder the integration of Muslim immigrants in western Europe?

Research Aims

- Describing culturally distinct otherness in Western European societies
- Explaining the relevance of Fethullah Gülen's message to Western Europe

- Addressing the way individuals see themselves and others by reworking human perceptions

Research Objectives

- Examine the anti-foreigner sentiments of the majority communities towards the culturally distinct Muslim others who live in western Europe
- Analyze the relevance of the thought and practice of Fethullah Gülen for western Europe
- Investigate how perceptions of oneself and others can be reworked in order to address anti-foreigner sentiments by employing the ideas of Fethullah Gülen

CHAPTER 1:

ANTI-FOREIGNER SENTIMENTS TOWARD CULTURALLY DISTINCT MUSLIM OTHERS IN WESTERN EUROPE

The “new barbarians” will shake the very foundations of the empire with a creativity which is the evidence of a new society in the making. They are the new historical subjects, now emerging side by side with those who, in the bowels of the existing society, mobilize and struggle for a different social order. (Leonardo Boff (1981) cited in Latouche 1993, 123)

1.1 Introduction

Europe is often considered a monolithic area with shared race, history, culture, and political practice. Contrary to the insider and outsider common perceptions, there are many Europes (Delanty 1995). The borders of Europe are somehow ambiguous as well. The eastern border of Europe cannot be clearly drawn. Currently, Europe is often equated with the European Union (Nair 2014). The driving force behind the European Union is the western European countries that economically and policy-wise have been more active in shaping the agenda of the Comunitaria. Throughout this study, the public policies, political movements, and public perceptions of these big players of western Europe will primarily be analyzed in the context of anti-foreigner sentiments. The discriminatory practices analyzed in this study are limited to partial treatment based on culture, race, creed, and ethnicity in these countries. Prejudice for individuals based on sex, gender, and class are not within the scope of this study, unless the partiality on focus involves intersectional discrimination. Western Asia, in this study refers to the

common misnomer the “Middle East,” or “Near East” as these designations are given by taking Europe as the reference point.

Europe has been playing a key role in the world for the last few centuries. Europe as a role model with its democracy, human rights advocacy, rule of law, and the welfare measures has been the standard setter for the rest of the world. The increasing population of the continent, a widespread popular literacy movement, an unquenchable desire to study the natural phenomena and discover uncharted territories were a few of the causes, inter alia, that transferred Europe to become an extravertive continent. Historically, being the metropolis, during the colonial era, Europe had wielded authority over -nearly- the rest of the world. For centuries, Europe sent its extra population to the colonies (Bauman 2004; Gibson and Poerio 2018). Emigration had been the common practice for Europe. This common practice started to reverse after mid 20th century, when, gaining their independence, people in the former colonies started to in-migrate to Europe. For the last half century, Europe has become a haven for many people of the East and South struck by poverty, despotism, patriarchy, and variety of social, economic, and political injustices in their societies (Casanova 2007). Europe has been struggling for decades to accommodate these immigrants (Martiniello 2006).

After the WWII, Europe found itself in an ever-changing world. It handed over the political and economic supremacy role around the globe to its former colony and offshoot, the United States (Outhwaite 2008). After three golden decades of prosperity, with the introduction of neoliberal measures in late 1970s (Giroux 2016), Europe entered into unfamiliar realms marked by weakened economies, and political and social instabilities. The arrival of increasing number of immigrants who used unfamiliar languages, lived unfamiliar lives and resisted adapting to the lifeways of majority communities worsened the situation and harmed the social

cohesion in the European societies (Bauman 2004). The proximity of the culturally distinct immigrant others in an uncharted new world has made them the scapegoat of Europe (Whyte 1990).

A considerable number of these immigrants have been Muslims from western Asia and north Africa (Khader 2016). The collective memories of both the majority communities and Muslim immigrants that had been shaped by ages long hostility between Muslim states and western powers throughout centuries made it difficult for both communities to embrace one another. As majority communities struggled to live together with the Muslim immigrants as equals (Council of Europe 2010), Muslim immigrants, resisted to adapt to the majority community ethos and became visible and threatening in the eyes of the majority communities. This chapter attempts to answer the questions, “to what extend is there anti-foreigner sentiment toward the culturally distinct others in western Europe?” And “what are the historical and cultural causes that hinders the mainstreaming of Muslim immigrants in western Europe?”

1.2 Europe

The borders of Europe are contested. There are no clear lines to separate Europe from Asia (Hobson 2017). Europe is understood as the westernmost part of Asia jotted out towards the Atlantic and populated by people who share a common heritage. The eastern border of Europe has changed throughout history. During the middle ages, Europe ended where the Ottoman lands in the Balkans began. After the WWII, Europe ended where the Soviet satellite state territories began in central and eastern Europe. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the borders were moved further east, and debates whether Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus could be considered part of Europe took the central stage. Yugoslavia that refused to be part of both North Atlantic Alliance and the Warsaw Pact, had not been considered part of Europe (Therborn 2017).

The idea of Europe today is associated with the advanced democracies of western Europe. Colonialism and the industrial revolution carved up Europe a privileged position in the world. The colonies viewed the metropolis with mixed feelings, awe, envy, and indignation. The new states, established by copying the European nation-state model in Africa and Asia faced political, economic, and social quandaries (Nkrumah 1965; Rodney 1972). The social instability, economic failures, despotism, fight over resources and state control, and the civil wars and mass human rights' violations that ensued disillusioned peoples in these countries. Minorities, marginalized by the homogenizing nation-state policies, and the general public who were dissatisfied by state policies, turned their attention to the former colonizers in western Europe who had developed human rights- and rule of law-conscious social states with stable and booming economies. Thus, in the second half of the 20th century, Europe has come to be associated with the advanced democracies and social states of western Europe. These same advanced democracies and big economies spearheaded the forming of the European Economic Community and later the European Union.

The advanced democracies of the western Europe are the standard setters in many fields within the European Union, and thus, are the focus of this study. These big players, namely France, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, and Britain before Brexit, have been active and influential in shaping the EU immigration policies by uploading immigration policy suggestions (Mulcahy 2011). The former Soviet allied states of Europe, namely, Poland, Hungary Romania, Czechia, Slovakia are not included in the study. These states had aligned with a mass human-rights-violating Soviet regime (Evrard 1980; Human Rights Watch 1990) and could not be expected to recover within a period of few decades and produce a strong pluralistic society. Bulgaria is excluded from this study due to the fact that it has ethnic minorities who are native of

Bulgaria (Akgönül 2016) and also because it was part of the Warsaw Pact. Sweden takes a liberal stance divergent from the big players in accommodating immigrants, often does not follow the EU's immigration policies (Mulcahy 2011), and is therefore excluded from this study. Even though the main focus is on the big players primarily, Italy, Spain, and Portugal are not excluded from this study.

Historically, Europe is thought to have distinct cultural and racial features that separate it from Asia and Africa. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Aryan race represented primarily by the European nations was believed to achieve the most advanced stage in the evolutionary cycle and thus had come to be viewed superior in qualities compared to other races. This biological racism also called scientific racism gave rise to fascist movements around Europe. Fascist movements in turn brought about mass destruction mid-20th century. Biological racism was abandoned after the WWII. It was replaced by a new racism, “racism without races”, that created boundaries among people based on cultural differences (Balibar 2014; Delanty 1995; Tucker 1999). This racism of the wealthy not only ostracized the culturally distinct others (e.g. non-European immigrants), but also the working classes and the reject and unemployed poor in Europe (Back & Solomos 2001; Delanty 1995; Latouche 1993). As in the words of Sivanandan,

It is a racism that is not just directed at those with darker skins, from the former colonial countries, but at the newer categories of the displaced and dispossessed whites, who are beating at western Europe's doors, the Europe that displaced them in the first place. It is racism in substance but xeno in form – a racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white. It is xeno-racism. (Sivanandan 2001, 105)

The legitimate culture of Europe is represented by the white middle classes. The idea of civilization emerged in the 16th century France as an elite-oriented worldview and was based on

social stratification, “a set of hierarchical relations through which contempt for and fear of the other (among other sentiments) are expressed.” (Patterson 1997, 21). This idea of civilization was based on the colonial understanding of the bifurcation between the metropolis as the advanced and refined culture that in time claimed to have gained universal features and the cultures in the colonies that failed to complete the evolutionary cycle and became stagnant and backward (Said 2003). The uneducated and unrefined lifeways of the working classes and peasants across Europe were also considered backward and uncivilized. The uncivilized peoples in the colonies and at home in the metropolis were not only excluded but also abhorred by the civilized aristocracy (Delanty 1995; Patterson 1997). The division between the aristocrats and the peasants, destitute, and strangers prevailed in the modern times and transformed into the detachment of the well-off middle classes from the low-income earning working classes, towns’ people, and culturally distant immigrants. This idea of civilization not only discriminated the culturally distinct others, the economically stringent working classes, and the poor, but also women. As put by Derrida, this idea of civilization harbored racist, elitist, and sexist elements that produced binary divisions (Derrida (1976) cited in Parpart 1993). The consequence of seeing the world in binary opposites, especially in times of debility and disorientation, led to creating distances and prejudices between the close and familiar in-groups as “us” and the distant and unfamiliar out-groups as “them”.

1.3 Uncharted Realms and Xenophobia

The idea of Europe simultaneously bears inclusive and exclusive visions. Western Europe today looks quite different from the early 20th century Europe. Instead of a predominant, aggressive, ambitious, outward looking Europe, today’s Europe has become an economically shaken, inward looking, demographically marginalized, second-rate world power with an aging

population in the neoliberal age (Bauman 2004; Outhwaite 2008). As argued by Said Nursi, a Kurdish Muslim scholar of the 20th century, there are two Europes (Abu Rabi 2003; Michel 2013; Robinson 2018), the first one emerged out of the adversarial, anxious, and exclusionary crusading outlook, colonizing mindset, and some of the materialist and pragmatic Enlightenment values, that produced fascism, the two world wars, the Holocaust, and the Soviet Gulag that claimed the lives of hundreds of millions of people (Delacourt 2005; Delanty 1995; Tucker 1999). The second one, based on laudable Christian values, Renaissance ideals of inclusion, humanism, and hard work, promotion of arts and sciences, produced equity, rule of law, democracy, human rights, and the social state (Bauman 2004; Kamali 2017; Latouche 1993). This second Europe, argues Friedrich Hayek, has the capacity to produce a planetary consciousness by embracing the entire humanity and producing the conditions to help others achieve maximum self-fulfillment (Latouche 1993). Neither Europe can be thought to emerge without the contribution of other cultures and civilizations (Delanty 2017). These two conflicting visions of western Europe are concomitant. Western Europe is as much about rediscovering the common ties that bind human beings together as brothers and sisters, building bridges, embracing others, and cooperation as it is about creating distances, ostracizing, and discrimination (Delanty 1995; Scheper-Hughes 1992).

Western Europe strives to maintain social cohesion and solidarity in an ever-changing world. The neoliberal system that aimed to maximize profit and minimize expenses (Solon 2017) has been the predominant ideology in Europe since the 1970s. After the 1970s the gap between the wealthy and people with low-income has immensely widened (Giroux 2016). The middle classes became vulnerable, production left Europe and settled in countries where workforce was cheaper and capital was concentrated in the hands of the few (Kaika 2017). The transfer of

production and capital away from Europe and the oligopoly produced in global production harmed local businesses. The de-regulation which was the prerequisite of neoliberalism, primarily debilitated the social state, the trademark of western European democracies, that traditionally took measures to ensure the financial security and the coverage of health services and provision of education to the entire population (Brown 2015; Kaika 2017). Neoliberalism produced a new social order that induced public fear and insecurity (Bauman 2004). Fear and insecurity in turn produced widespread distress. This distress was deflected away from the corporate system towards those who were considered redundant and “other,” people who could easily be blamed and disposed (Buchowski 2017; Giroux 2016; Solon 2017). NGOs and especially religious organizations tried to fill the void that was left by local governments to provide subsistence benefits to the socially excluded.

The economic globalization contributed to the emergence of continental cooperation (Mulcahy 2011). Local governments, subdued by the corporate system, undertook a formidable task of enticing capital to their provinces, using meager budgets to sustain the cultural, economic, and public life (Bauman 2004). Meanwhile, the political elite pushed forward the establishment of the European Economic Community, the European Community, and finally the European Union, with the primary goals of removing restrictions on trans-border trade, overcoming the shortcomings of the nation-states, and forming a European entity to produce a unified power to protect the common interests of the continent in an ever globalizing world (Giroux 2016; Outhwaite 2008; Taras 2012).

The European Union idea was a top-down initiative by the political and corporate elites of Europe and therefore produced unease among the peoples of Europe (Mulcahy 2011). The peoples of Europe found themselves in uncharted realms with the removal of national borders

and free movement of people, especially from economically disadvantaged southern member states towards the north. Removing borders within the continent also meant strengthening external borders against the immigrants from Asia and Africa (Sivanandan 1989) After the collapse of the Soviet Union, starting with the late 1990s and early 2000s, the political and corporate elite undertook the ambitious EU enlargement project by accepting some of the former Yugoslavian and Soviet satellite states into the Union. The enlargement of the EU in the eastern Europe, produced a significant migration flow from the east towards north-west Europe. Meanwhile since the 1960s, Muslims from western Asia and north Africa have been emigrating into Europe primarily as economic migrants, later as asylum seekers and refugees.

The major cultural, economic, and political changes were deemed by the majority communities of western Europe to be undermining fundamental values and threatening social cohesion. The economic upheaval produced by neoliberalism, the establishment of the EU and the removal of national borders, the migration flow first from the south to the north, and then from the east to the north-west of Europe, and the non-European immigration flow from the former colonies, irreversibly altered the nation-state system, the traditional European communities based on ethno-cultural loyalty, and the citizenship based on nationality and birth. These changes and challenges produced anomie, a social condition in which social, economic, and political radical changes are followed by disintegration of collective values and norms, and the sense that one's belonging and solidarity is under threat (Serpa and Ferreira 2018). The symptoms of this constant collective dysphoria are the emergence of mainstreamed racism, detached communities, and xenophobia (Delanty 1995; De Master & Le Roy 2000; Leman and others 2014).

There are various terms that denote opposition to alterity. The idea in each is that the opponent comes short of measuring up to the standards set by the individual or a majority community. As the focus group of this study is the culturally distinct non-European Muslim immigrants, alterity in the sense of gender, sex, and class are not covered here. Heterophobia, used to mean fear or hostility for people who are different, yet recently it has assumed a different meaning. Currently heterophobia refers to fear or antipathy for heterosexual people. Anti-foreigner sentiment is another term used to express antipathy for foreigners. This sentiment involves the denial of uniqueness and distinctiveness of each individual other (Semyonov and others 2006). In other words, it entails lumping together people from a certain background as if they make up a homogenous community. In the European context, strangeness is received in various ways. If the foreigners are distant out groups (e.g. other nationals) with whom the interaction is limited to travelling and media representations, even though stereotyping might exist, there is little antipathy involved, unless cultural apparatuses have been ideologically or nationalistically charged to defame these out groups. If, however, the foreigners are the proximate other who live within the host community (e.g. immigrants), they may be perceived to pose an imminent threat (Taras 2009). Another term used to oppose strangeness is xenophobia. Xenophobia is a Greek word that literally means fear for strangers (UN Human Rights 2013). It involves more than a sense of fear, and refers to the intense dislike for strangers or for people from different cultures (Verri and França 2013). Xenophobia can have a racist, ethnic, and religious component. In other words, this intense dislike can be directed towards any individual or out-group that can diverge in one or many ways with any group in focus. Immigrants from south and east of Europe who, to certain extent, share cultural, religious, and historic common ground with western Europe may also face anti-foreigner sentiments, nevertheless, they are not

perceived to present a threat that the non-European, especially, Muslim non-European immigrants, are believed to pose (Delanty 1995; Hjerm and Nagayoshi 2011).

Since xenophobia entails an intense dislike, it naturally overlaps with hate crime. Hate crime is defined as cultural, structural, and physical violence perpetrated towards already marginalized groups with the intention of maintaining the cultural and racist hierarchization in a given community (Perry 2014a). When compared with other parts of the world, hate crimes, are more reported and recorded in Europe (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017a). Be that it may, still hate crimes, especially cultural ones in Europe, are underreported and underprosecuted (European Union Fundamental Rights Agency 2018), and thus lead to, what Nancy Scheper-Hughes calls, socially produced indifferences (1992). These indifferences make hate crimes seem normal, and when they are deemed normal, they become invisible. The states, the majority community, and the victims, together, produce this invisibility. The states fail to ensure an inclusive public education that recognize the dignity of every human being regardless of her/his race, creed, and ethnicity. They fail to regulate the contents of mass media that incite prejudice and bigotry towards culturally distinct others (PRISM 2015). The judicial systems, both the national ones and the transnational ones including the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), seem to be influenced by public opinion and contribute to this social production of indifference. Erica Howard's analysis of the CJEU 2017 ruling regarding the head-scarfed employees constitute a good example in this regard (2017). The security forces, subsequently and naturally, fail to take the cases of hate crime seriously. The majority community members, out of collective self-interest, prejudice and lack of a strong sense of social justice, overlook the sporadic infliction of hate crimes towards the marginalized group members. The victims, either out of ignorance regarding their rights or the lack of trust to the police and the legal system, also

contribute to this social production of indifference. Since xenophobia may include a cultural aspect, it overlaps with racism that is based on cultural distinctions. The nascent middle class racism of Europe arraigns the Muslim non-European immigrants to be primarily responsible for the social, political, and economic predicaments Europe is facing (Delanty 1995). Islamophobia is another term used to express anti-foreigner sentiments. According to the Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, it refers to discrimination and resentment against Muslim individuals and communities that yield to the exclusion of Muslims in partaking in mainstream social, cultural, political, and economic life (Conway 1997). Islamophobia involves racial, ethnic, religious, and -inflated- civilizational differences and, as such can be likened to anti-Semitism (Taras 2009; Taras 2012).

The anti-foreigner sentiments towards the culturally distinct non-European Muslims is on the rise (Council of Europe 2010; Dieng 2018; Engel 2018; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017b; Kaika 2017). The extremist views and actions of the supporters of the far-right parties against Muslim immigrants are not the main concern. Instead, what is alarming is the mainstream communities across Europe who not only keep quiet in the face of alienation, discrimination, and atrocity perpetrated against these Muslims, but who implicitly approve these acts (Allen 2014; Taras 2012). Since the WWII, Europe has come to be associated with core values such as respect for human life, human and minority rights, peace, democracy, freedom, and rule of law (Standard Eurobarometer 2012). In the face of social and economic disorder, Europe's future prosperity hinges on whether or not it affirms its core values (Allen 2014; Bauman 2004; Kaika 2017; Taras 2012).

The Greco-Roman heritage, Christianity, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, individualism, a material culture, and secularism are the cornerstones of the

European heritage (Berting 1995). The legitimate inheritors of the European heritage are the whites whose lives have been imbued by these fundamental experiences. The white citizen of Europe due to this reality finds her/himself primarily entitled to enjoy the welfare and citizenship benefits more so than the members of the minority communities of all stripes regardless of the equal access rights provided to all citizens by law. These white citizens also hold the right to decide who is admissible into the mainstream (De Koning and Modest 2017). The increasing number of non-European immigrants are seen to pose a threat to this privileged belonging. The racist movements across Europe that are gaining prominence (Council of Europe 2010; Taras 2009) can be seen as a response to the threat posed to the privileged position of these whites (Slootweg and others 2019). This privileged belonging and ownership of the white middle class, becoming mainstreamed, regardless of non-discriminatory legislation, affects the functioning of the nation-states.

The weakening of social cohesion due to the tendency to establish pillar communities across Europe is likely to affect the citizen-state solidarity (Bauman 2004). The sovereignty of the state has been narrowed and power has moved away from local and regional governments and become global under the control of the corporate system (Giroux 2016). Production, capital, and labor control transcended borders and became global. While production and labor moved away, local small and medium sized enterprises lost their market share in business across Europe (Buch-Hansen and Wigger 2010; Jessop 2018). In the hands of the global financial elites everything, including basic needs traditionally provided by the states, has become commodified (Brown 2015). Losing control and legitimacy by failing to serve and protect its citizens in various areas in the neoliberal age, states of Europe not only have become inward looking and engulfed in the troubles of their own, but also failed to come up with a long-term vision to ensure

renewal (Bauman 2004). The public discontent caused by globally produced convulsions led to the resentment of the different (Taras 2012). Put differently, the disillusionment of the public in the face of externally produced upheavals has been redirected from a global powerful elusive corporate system towards the unfitting others, e.g. immigrants, women, LGBTQ, and indigenous communities (Buchowski 2017; De Master & Le Roy 2000; Semyonov and others 2006; Solon 2017). European states tried to regain confidence and legitimacy by focusing on controlling cross-border human flow (Goodey 2002; Saddiki 2017). They also verged further towards a transnational collective European identity in order to absolve the shortcomings of the nation-state system in a globalized world (Delanty 1995). The economic inequalities produced by the neoliberal system weakened the social bonds between various sub-milieus within societies as it increased the gaps between the wealthy and the destitute (Bauman 2004). Weakened social bonds or horizontal solidarity among citizens of a society, as argued by Claus Offe, caused the weakening of vertical solidarity, the bond between the citizens and the state authority (Offe 2000 cited in Outhwaite 2008). To put it another way, the solidarity and strong social ties among citizens are the prerequisite for the solidarity between the citizens and the state. If various communities within a society have minimum contact with one another, trust and solidarity among the members of a society cannot be expected. The lack of such trust and solidarity in turn effaces the authority of the state. In order to regain public trust and strengthen their authority, the political executive of European states are trying to glue together the middle and the working classes by producing policies that deem immigrants as the new “dangerous classes”, unassimilable and unfit for integration due to fundamental civilizational differences (Bauman 2004; Taras 2012). This endeavor of the political executive contributes to the process of de-Europeanization of culturally distinct immigrants (Slootweg and others 2019).

1.4 Accommodating Culturally Distinct Immigrants

In the European context, pluralism has been traditionally understood as plurality of ideologies and political outlooks more than as diversity of cultures and creeds (Said and Funk 2002). Even when the statutes of the EU make mention of cultural plurality, there is ambiguity in regards to the definition and scope of it (Mulcahy 2011; Taras 2009). The EU statutes do not make clear which cultures are meant to be included to form the grand fabric of the European societies and which ones are not considered “European”, and are therefore excluded. According to the Treaty of Rome, one of the two main Treaties that form the basis of EU law, there is emphasis on cultural diversity in the provisions of education. In the same document, on the provisions of culture, nevertheless, what is meant by plurality of cultures is explained as diversity of national cultures and not diversity within national cultures (Mitsilegas 2007). Put differently, the emphasis is on preserving the majority community cultures, without any explicit allusion to minority -indigenous and non-indigenous- cultures. This ambiguity in legislation turns into a fragmented plurality on the field. In practice what prevails is, what Amartya Sen calls, plural monocultural societies (Sen 2007 cited in Todorov 2010) where people of different cultures, creeds, or denominations live in sterilized and segregated spheres with minimum interaction and mutual ignorance and prejudice (Council of Europe 2010). This style of living together in detached communities has led to pillarization where societies are divided into religious, denominational, ideological, or ethno-linguistic subcultures with high levels of autonomy (Maussen 2015). The Netherlands and Northern Ireland are the best examples for pillarized societies. Pillarized societies intend to achieve liberal tolerance. In liberal tolerance interactions are minimized among different communities within a democratic society with the desired aim of overcoming clashes (European Commission 2011; Keman 2011). Still what needs

consideration is that in pillarized societies the middle classes have the means to build safe gated communities, whereas the financially stringent working classes and the culturally distinct immigrants do not have the means to do so, instead they end up in stigmatized housing units or relegations (Bennett and others 2009; Khader 2016). Instead of liberal tolerance what needs to be emphasized and promoted is hospitable tolerance -discussed in the third chapter- or egalitarian tolerance where structural arrangements are provided in order to maximize interaction and cooperation in the public sphere (European Commission 2011).

The EU, having comprised of twenty-seven member states with varying political inclinations, does not have a progressive and unwavering immigration policy (Khader 2016; Mulcahy 2011). The EU, has provided a fundamental base for the recognition of basic rights of the immigrants, but could not achieve implementing a standard integration policy (Nair 2014). In general, it has been producing soft laws, policy suggestions that are not legally binding in the field of immigration (Mitsilegas 2007). The immigration policies are shaped by nation-states and in most cases are politicized in domestic politics and especially before public polls. The existence of far-right parties in a member state is the leading factor in determining immigration policies. Governing parties, especially center-right ones, take restrictive measures to address the immigration issues with the crucial concern posed by political opponents (Mulcahy 2011). Contrary to commonly held notions on the weight of public opinion to shape immigration policies, experts argue that the political executive shape immigration policies behind closed doors, relatively independent from public opinion (Grande and others 2019; Statham and Geddes 2006).

While the non-discriminatory legislations of the EU ensure equal participation for the culturally distinct immigrants in all fields of life and set the benchmark for plural societies in

theory, there are some shortcomings in practice (Mulcahy 2011). The EU statutes are promulgated to ensure equity and full participation of all segments of the society. Be that as it may, there are shortcomings in the reporting and recording of discrimination against culturally distinct immigrants (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2019). According to the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS-II), the legislations such as the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, the Racial Equality Directive, and the Employment Equality Directive guarantee non-discrimination of the culturally distinct immigrants, however, in practice, these legislations are not effectively enforced and discrimination against the culturally distinct others remain widespread (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017a). The survey results show that culturally distinct immigrants and their EU born and reared descendants face discrimination throughout the EU while trying to access employment, education, housing, and health services. In many cases the discrimination is routinized (Saral and Bahçecik 2020). For instance, the culturally distinct immigrants may not have access to the same benefits the traditional majority community white working classes enjoy, gained after long-fought trade union and labor movement initiatives. According to Rex and Tomlinson, this disadvantage pushes the culturally distant immigrant workers further away from the mainstream and gives rise to an underclass (Rex and Tomlinson 1979 cited in Back & Solomos 2001). There is a recurrent practice to hear that culturally distinct immigrants are discriminated in finding employment (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2019; Khader 2016; Vassilopoulou and others 2019). Muslim immigrant women, especially head-scarf-wearing ones, face intersectional discrimination, a situation in which multiple discriminations take place simultaneously (European Network against Racism 2016; Perry 2014b; Weichselbaumer 2020): for being women, women of color, Muslim,

and head-scarf wearing. Exclusion of Muslim head-scarfed women in education, employment, vocational training, health, housing, in the services and public areas has been on the rise across Europe (Ast and Spielhaus 2012; European Union Fundamental Rights Agency 2017b).

The arrival of culturally distinct others into Europe in the 20th century in great numbers has been a new experience for Europe. After WWII, Europe has been serving a safe haven for the Muslims who escaped political, cultural religious, and ethnic clash and discriminations in their countries. While in earlier centuries European monarchies cleared their territories from the undesired and redundant people by sending them to their overseas colonies, starting with the 20th century this move was reversed, and people from former colonies started to emigrate to European countries (Therborn 2017). While the Europeans had been exposed to African, Asians, and native Americans and their various cultures and creeds, these people were distant others, they did not pose an immediate danger during the colonial period. Moreover, there was a hierarchy involved that -as playing the upper hand in the relation with these distant others- empowered the Europeans. With the arrival of the immigrants from former colonies into Europe, the distant others turned into threatening inside others (Taras 2009). Democracy and human rights laws rendered them equal rights. The strange lifeways of these inside others at home, especially during a time of dizzying change and upheaval, have been frustrating. Religious practice of these inside others, principally, exacerbated the relation between the majority community and the culturally distant immigrants.

1.5 Muslim Others

Religion in Europe is understood as Christianity (Ünal 2006). Catholicism and Protestantism were seen native to Europe, whereas Orthodox Christianity had been regarded as the schismatic branch. Even though Christianity was an import, as were Judaism and Islam, from

Asia, Europe took it and made it its own (Hobson 2017). In the eyes of the Europeans, religion is Christianity and is universal. Since it is universal, as are the Enlightenment values that mold the European ethos, the journey religion had in Europe in relation to the society and politics from scholasticism to the Reformation and to secularism, is expected from other religions (Droogan 2013; Ünal 2006). Other religions could be provincial such as the religions of south east Asia, precursory, such as Judaism or deviant offshoot, such as Islam. Islam had been considered by the Church as heretical -a schism that emanated from Christianity (Reeves 2003). Denying a distinct existence to Islam and Judaism brought with it the issue of legitimacy and recognition. In its past, Europe refused to include the Jewish and Muslim cultures represented by Jews and Muslims of Europe as part of its cultural heritage (Delanty 1995).

The Muslim presence and influence in Christian populated lands and Europe during the medieval era caused a sense of resentment for Islam and Muslims in the collective memory of European population. During the 8th and 12th centuries the Christian Europe witnessed the rapid spreading of Islam in Christian lands (Armstrong 1993). Throughout these centuries, while the Christian Europe was a backwater in the world stage, Islam had started to play the predominant role in the old world as Euro-Atlantic cultures are playing globally in the contemporary world (Goody 2004; Hobson 2017). The spread of Muslim power took place primarily in the Roman provinces in the Mesopotamian lands mainly populated by Christians. The siege of greater Damascus in 634, Jerusalem and its surroundings in 637, the capture of Iberian peninsula starting with 711, and Sicily in the 9th century were all Muslim advances into the Christian lands (Armstrong 2002; Goody 2004). The siege of Constantinople, the second capital of the Romans in 1453 by the Ottomans, and Ottoman advances in the Balkans and central Europe contributed to these bitter experiences in the collective memory of the Christian Europeans (Lewis 1993).

The European identity emerged in the face of advancing Muslim threat. In the face of advancing Muslim influence between the 8th and 12th centuries, Christian Europe, not having a secure identity and feeling under siege (Delanty 1995), identified itself in binary terms (e.g. “us” and “them”) (Gallant 2017; Loomba 2015; Staszak 2008). The culturally and economically unified Muslim powers -stretched from the Iberian peninsula and Sicily in the west to the western borders of China in the east- posed multiple threats to the Christian Europe (Lewis 1993). The strength, public order, discipline, and organizational skills found in Muslim lands posed a major threat, for Europe lacked them almost altogether. Islam, for the Christian Europe, played a fundamental role throughout the medieval era: An opposite other whose existence contributed crucially to the development of Christian European identity (Goody 2004; Mastnak 2003). The Christian Europe hoped to be everything positive that Muslims did not present (Delanty 1995). Thus began the centuries old myth-making around the Muslim culture and religion in Europe that are still -to major extent- shaping the European mindset (Esposito 1999; Reeves 2003). The Christian Europe sought to build up its legitimacy by denigrating the dominant other, Islam, in the same way as the *westernophobes* among Muslims who have a siege mentality today are denigrating Europe and north America. (Ahmed 2003; Armstrong 1993).

The widespread Muslim influence among the Christian Europeans contributed to the emergence of distinct European cultural pattern. For Europe in the medieval era, everything seemed to be inundated by Muslim culture. Before the 12th century, Europe reminded a ruined gray area after the collapse of the Roman Empire while in the Muslim lands a cultural, intellectual, and economic revolution took place, global in scale (Goody 2017). The economic, cultural and intellectual revolution Muslims achieved drew people from around the world to Muslim lands. The brightest minds of Europe, were learning Arabic and studying under Muslim

scholars in order to acquire knowledge and advance in science and technology, philosophy, and literature (Armstrong 1993). Muslim way of dressing -unlike today- formed the fashion in European metropolises (Sancar 2007). The geographical, intellectual, and cultural spread of Islam raised among the Christian European intellectuals an urgency to rediscover the European past and classic resources in order to distance and protect the people from “Muslim” influence (Hobson 2017; Lewis 1993), something similar argued today by Muslim intellectuals to distance and protect their people from the “Euro-Atlantic” influence. Even though mostly denied by European historians, the source and the driving force of the Renaissance was the Muslim achievement and influence (Pieterse 2017). The widespread Muslim influence among the Christian Europeans mobilized the European monks and intellectuals to produce an alternative to the dominant Muslim civilization. The source was yet again the Muslim scholarship to achieve this grand initiative (Hobson 2017).

The depiction of Muslims in Europe varied according to the changing socio-political conditions (Lewis 1993). During the 8th to 12th centuries, Christian Europe, failing to a major extent to challenge this emerging power, turned to a religious discourse that was based on the argument that the mischief and transgressions of Christians was the reason for the emergence of the ravaging descendants of Ishmael as a punishment from God (Goody 2004; Rowe and others 2014). Christian Europe persistently avoided acknowledging Islam as a religion, and Muslims as adherents of a monotheistic faith, instead associated Islam and Muslims with warrior tribes, schism, heresy, witchcraft, promiscuity, and polytheism (Armour 2002; Daniel 1993; Goody 2004; Lewis 1993; Reeves 2003). As the Christian Europe believed that the followers of Christ represented “the way” to God and anything godly, the pendulum swing, Muslims, were delineated as the ultimate evil. This negative representation of the Muslims also served useful in

internal conflict, as rivaling individuals, groups, denominations, and monarchies of Europe accused one another of being as treacherous and evil as Muslims perceived to be. While Muslim sultanates were powerful and advancing, they were depicted as aggressive, masculine, promiscuous, and despotic during the middle ages (Lewis 1993). After the 16th century when Muslim powers became stagnant and Europe started to play a prominent role in the world, Muslims were started to be portrayed as wild, impulsive, feminine, and romantic, shortcomings that the Europeans prided to have overcome (Said 2003). During the 19th century when Muslim lands fell into poverty, illiteracy, and disarray, and Europe started to colonize these lands one after another, Muslims started to be depicted as immature, ignorant, deprived, gullible, lazy, and irrational (Said 2003).

In the first half of the 20th century, the stagnant nature of social, political, and economic life in the colonies was construed by the metropolises in the light of scientific racism (Claeys 2000). Having forgotten how the colonial suppressive measures have fundamentally and irreparably damaged the societies in Muslim lands (Armstrong 2002; Baker 2015), the metropolises explained the social, political, and economic failures of the colonies in Darwinian and racist terms, that the Muslims comprised of non-Aryan races who failed to complete the evolutionary cycle, and thus have become moribund (Loomba 2015; Said 2003). Even though this survivalist mindset was discredited and abandoned in the academic circles, and disavowed by the state officials and the United Nations, it continues to shape the international politics today. The reason why this mindset is still effective in politics is because it dominates the family life and school environment where child rearing take place (Masciulli 2004).

The imagined and often exaggerated civilizational differences described as fault lines contribute to mutual mistrust and alienation. The common Abrahamic roots and intersecting

values, traditions, and histories are rarely emphasized and explored, instead differences and grievances are often brought into focus. However, clashes between Occident represented by Europe and Orient represented by Muslim lands throughout the history were not based on creedal and cultural differences but were political in nature (Goody 2017). Even the Crusades, as the epitome of religiously driven clash, started as a political project in essence as Pope Urban II wanted to extend the authority of the Latin Church into the Eastern Church, and the advances of the Seljuks into the provinces of Byzantium gave him a chance to achieve his goal. Pope Urban II mobilized the aristocracy, knights, and the masses using worldly gains and religious discourse as a means (Todorov 2010). The overall failure of Muslims in various fields of life, believed by both Europeans and Westernized intellectuals among Muslims, explained by the incompatibility of Islam with European values that were believed to rest at the heart of modernization (Qureshi and Sells 2003; Esposito 1999) is the natural result of the Occident-Orient (Orient reduced to Islam) dichotomy model that generally dominates the social sciences and consequently diffuses into political and public domains (Kamali 2017; Said 2003). The incompatibility is also defended by hard-line literalist Muslims (Qureshi and Sells 2003) who have a similar mindset -even though standing in opposite polls- reminding European far-right ideology: protectionist and exclusivist (Buckingham and Alali 2020).

Islam has played the role of the principal enemy for Europe since its emergence and westward spread. The Muslims in the Iberian peninsula, the Moors, from the 8th to 15th centuries and the Ottomans from the 14th to 18th centuries served as the two major enemies of Europe. The common European aim in the face of an advancing Muslim threat in those centuries had been regaining the lost territories both in the continent and the Levant. In the 19th century Jews, the inside others, replaced Muslims as the enemy (Delanty 1995) After the WWII, Soviet

communism would play the role of the enemy for Europe and north America for half a century. After the disintegration of the Soviet regime, Islam as the enemy was retrieved to serve as the negative other for north America and Europe to sustain national and international politics which has been based on bipolar world order (Ahmed 2007; Goody 2004). Muslims, Jews, and the Slavs have been the three grand specters of Europe, Muslims always holding the worst place (Delanty 1995). Centuries long historical experiences between the Europeans and the Muslims have served as the main obstacle for both sides to embrace the other wholeheartedly. While Muslims constitute the mistrusted backward other in the collective conscious of the Europeans, the Europeans serve as the oppressive dissolute other in the collective memory of the Muslims (Todorov 2010; Qureshi and Sells 2003). Gülen argues that overcoming these stereotypes requires mutual empathic acceptance, and mutual collective willingness to listen to the other side and to understand their grievances (Walton 2015).

1.6 The Collective Muslim Deficit

Today, while the European Union unites European states politically and economically, Muslims have become ever-divided and live in ruined gray areas (Armstrong 2002). There is no Muslim world today -as Muslims have diverse races, ethnicities, cultures, and worldviews and are lacking a shared vision (Ergil 2013; Kamali 2017). Muslim majority countries have little in common. Contrary to the common perception that Muslims are religious, -even though religiosity is hard to define- Muslims are often non-practicing. Islam, since the colonial era, is used -in general- as a liberating ideology formerly against the colonizers and currently against oppressive regimes (Gülen 2004b). In the European context, Islam is employed by Muslim immigrants and their second, third, and fourth generations as a harbor to compensate for the fear for the foreign lifeways, lack of acceptance, and perceived aversion.

The primary problem Muslims are facing today is ignorance (Esposito and Yilmaz 2010; Weller and Yilmaz 2012). Muslims of the 21st century are facing the worst social, spiritual, and intellectual drought since its emergence in the 7th century (Baker 2015). It can be called compound ignorance (Chittick 2007; Lombard 2009) since multiple layers are involved in this ignorance. The classic understanding of education in the Muslim world included educating the mind, heart, and the senses of individuals (Krause 2012). To put it differently, education was understood as a holistic endeavor that involved three aspects; training the character and the mental and inner (e.g. spiritual) faculties (Gülen 2004b). The idea was to upbringing “*al-insan al-kamil*” perfect human beings, or morally sound, intellectually competent, and spiritually mature individuals. The first major deviation from this holistic educational approach took place in the 11th century with the establishment of Nizamiya madrasas in Baghdad, Nishapur, and Basra by Nizam al-Mulk, the grand vizier of the Seljuks. These institutions of higher education became the best universities in the Muslim world then. They became a model for later emerging madrasas across the Muslim world (Emekli 2017). Yet in these institutions the state established control over the *ulema* or the “theologians and scholars” and over the scientific inquiry and this model became the norm in the following centuries (Yanardağ 2020). Al-Ghazali, the rector of the Nizamiya Madrasa in Baghdad, a religious scholar, Sufi master, and philosopher, removed philosophy and along with it critical inquiry from the curriculum of the university (Emekli 2017). He took such a measure to protect religious sciences from the influence of philosophy (Conway 2014). Baghdad housed the House of Wisdom where Syriac, Persian, Greek, and Indian sources of the antiquity were translated into Arabic, studied and disseminated across the Muslim world (Afsaruddin 2005). The ideas that were introduced also influenced the interpretation of religious concepts. Other Nizamiya madrasas in other cities across the Abbasids,

and later madrasas across the Muslim world followed suit. It caused the hindrance of the critical study of natural phenomena in madrasas (Pahl 2019). The Muslim world, up until today, has not recovered from such a critical move.

Muslims to major extent have failed to study the natural phenomena, or the study of the laws of the cosmos, called in Islam as the laws of creation (Tetik 2012). Heeding and conforming to these cosmic laws in Islam for a Muslim is a religious obligation, as is conforming to religious laws, since both come from the same origin (e.g. the Divine) (Saritoprak and Ünal 2005). In fact, the traditional Islamic understanding is that religious laws deduced from the sources of Islam (e.g. the Quran and the Sunnah, the practice of the Prophet) and the cosmic laws are the two facets of the same coin, cannot contradict one another, and need to be complied with in order to be a genuine believer (Bakar 2005). According to this injunction, Muslims, with some sporadic exceptions across centuries, are failing to practice their faith in its entirety.

The second illiteracy Muslims have is the failure to comply with the second side of the coin, the religious laws deduced from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the practice of the Prophet of Islam. Muslims have become alien to the core message of Islam (Chittick 2007). According to the Prophet of Islam, a Muslim is someone from whose hands and tongue everyone is safe (Gülen 2004b) and the essence of Islam is good conduct (Moosa 2005). Since in the 21st century safety and good conduct are seldom associated with Islam, -European bias on Islam put aside- Muslims are responsible for this estrangement from the core of Islam. From the perspective of secular Europe where religious practice is constricted within the private domain, Muslims may be seen to be religious. Nevertheless, in reality, the religious education system represented by madrasas, in general, have failed (Vahide 2005), and Muslims of the 21st century have failed to represent the values and attributes that are at the heart of their faith, such as trustworthiness,

compassion, honesty, altruism, kindness, love, hard work, organization and cooperation (Khan 2011). Unfortunately, failing to embody these core attributes, Muslims of the 21st century are religiously illiterate. This illiteracy is also attached to the failure of production of knowledge. The production of religious knowledge has, in major extent, stopped among the Muslims for centuries (Sayyid 2006). What are produced today are either resources that annotate and reinterpret the works of previous scholars, or the works of contemporary intellectuals who want to produce new knowledge by departing from the traditional religious scholarship with the intention to reform religion as it took place in Europe. Muslims, in general, have failed to produce new religious injunctions based on the needs of the 21st century life while drawing on the main resources of Islam. Instead, Muslims still follow the injunctions drawn by the Muslim jurists of the previous centuries if not the jurists of the medieval era. In this regard, those who criticize the rulings of Islam today, need to keep it in mind that these rulings are not the rulings of the 21st century, but the rulings of -to say the least- the previous centuries. Muslims today lack to produce Muslim scholars well-versed in classical religious sciences and especially in *usul*, methodologies of these sciences, who are equally competent in modern life, literature, thought, and sciences, since drawing new rules requires having authority in both domains. This is what makes the views of Fethullah Gülen that will be covered in the subsequent sections, a unique case to be analyzed primarily by Muslim and European audience. Muslims are primarily responsible in this failure to draw new rulings according to the needs of the age. One cannot forget, however, the damage of the colonial policies that took great pains to maul public resistance by eliminating tribal leaders and religious intellectuals. In this way, inter alia, Muslims' access to religious knowledge is severed and alienation took place. To sum up, Muslims are, unfortunately, anachronistic in the 21st century. This situation complicate on the

one hand for Europeans to easily accommodate Muslim immigrants; and for Muslims the process of integration into European societies on the other.

1.7 Conclusion

The fast changing globalized world has removed distances and brought communities and societies with differing lifeways closer. Globally produced social ills mobilized individuals and groups to find less-disruptive regions around the world to live a life of security and dignity. Europe, while struggling to adjust to the global changes, along north America, became a prime destination for these migratory flows (Casanova 2007). The vacuum and injustice generated by the new social order produced a growing sense of unease and anxiety among the majority communities of Europe. This distress found an outlet in the incrementing numbers of culturally distinct immigrants to Europe. The Muslim immigrants primarily, due to historical experiences, cause anti-foreigner sentiments among the majority communities. The Muslim immigrants' own backgrounds were often not taken into account in Europe while they were asked to assimilate into European way of life. The Muslims of the 21st century have been facing a collective social, religious, intellectual, and cultural deficit incomparable to any period in their history, only comparable, to certain extent, to the deficit the Europeans had in the early middle ages (Armstrong 1993). Influenced by the ages old prejudices on Islam, overlooking this civilizational deficit Muslims are in, also forgetting the contribution colonial enterprise had in this current deficit, European majority communities backslide from the core values that progressed Europe to its current state and admired by the rest of the world. As humanity cannot be acquired in isolation, Europe, as a global power, has a task to, not only mend what it damaged in humanity for centuries, also employ its collective capacity to contribute to the formation of a new world in which peace prevails and modernity and tradition, material and spiritual, science and religion,

and communal and individual will be reconciled. The Europeans need to acknowledge that Islam is not alien in Europe on the contrary, played a crucial role in the development of contemporary Europe as Muslims cannot deny -neither today nor tomorrow- the grand European contribution to their lifeways. Removing the prejudice and resentment, mending the kinship, and rediscovering the shared ties that bind Europeans and Muslim citizens together especially as Christians and Muslims is contingent upon collective will on both sides to dialogue with the other (Weller and Yilmaz 2012). Building bridges and removing boundaries are what Fethullah Gülen envisions and puts into practice. The next two chapters explore his life, vision, and the emerging practice and how these could contribute in addressing anti-foreigner sentiments in western Europe.

CHAPTER 2: A CHANCE FOR WESTERN EUROPE: FETHULLAH GÜLEN

Only those who overflow with love will build the happy and enlightened world of the future. Their lips smiling with love, their hearts brimming with love, their eyes radiating love and the most tender human feelings—such are the heroes of love who always receive messages of love from the rising and setting of the sun and from the flickering light of the stars (Gülen 2004b, 91).

Come, come and join us, as we are the people of love devoted to God!

Come, come through the door of love and join us and sit with us.

Come, let us speak one to another through our hearts.

Let us speak secretly, without ears and eyes.

Let us laugh together with-out lips or sound, let us laugh like the roses.

Like thought, let us see each other without any words or sound.

Since we are all the same, let us call each other from our hearts, we won't use our lips or tongue.

As our hands are clasped together, let us talk about it. (Rumi in Gülen 2004b, 6)

2.1 Introduction

The world produced many intellectuals that envisioned the liberation and revival of the left-behind world and the construction of a peaceful world where east and west, north and south are reconciled. Few of them have been able to put their ideas into practice. Still, few among these intellectuals have focused on education in producing enduring solutions to change the current

state of affairs that generate global social injustice by perpetuating cultural, structural, and physical violence. Fethullah Gülen is one of these few intellectuals who championed a global educational reform and was able to put his ideas into practice by inspiring a transnational civil society movement called the Hizmet movement.

Fethullah Gülen is an advocate of planetary consciousness and global peace, and a revolutionary leader of social transformation (Rehman 2018; Yavuz 2013). The reality that his ideas as well as the activities of the civil society movement he has inspired challenge the status quo, the religious inspiration that is the driving force behind the activism, and the Muslim background of Gülen and many of the volunteers of the movement, draw relentless criticism primarily at home, in Turkey, and the US, where Gülen lives and the movement is very active (Appleby 2015).

Gülen's significance not only for Europe but also for the world lies in his conviction and lifelong activism to reconcile fragmented human nature, thought, and society on the one hand, and his adherence to nonviolence in the face of state-inflicted massive human rights violations on the other. He argues to reconcile science and religion, the profane and sacred, mind and heart, body and soul, modernity and tradition, men and women, individual and communal by advocating a holistic education that addresses the learner's heart, mind, character, and body; and to reconcile cultures and traditions by dialogic -interpersonal, interfaith, and intercultural-engagement and cooperation (Bailey 2018; Grinell 2007; Michell 2005). Gülen's views and the activities of the movement he inspires, that prioritize rearing intellectually competent, morally sound, spiritually cultivated new generations and building cultural and creedal cooperation, aim to contribute to usher humanity into a new era in which not self-interest and violence, but compassion and peace are the norms, and alterity is understood as a richness and cause for

creativity and progress. This chapter attempts to investigate the relevance of the ideas of Fethullah Gülen for western Europe.

2.2 Who is Fethullah Gülen?

Fethullah Gülen is a Turkish Sufi mystic (Pahl 2016), educator, advocate of peace and nonviolence (Harrington 2015), and a leader of social transformation (Çelik 2008; Yavuz 2013). He was born in Erzurum, a province in the north-eastern part of Turkey in 1938; after completing his traditional education moved to Edirne in 1959, a province in Thrace as a state appointed preacher (Carroll 2009); and later to Izmir, a province in west Turkey in 1966 where he initiated educational activities. In 1980 he moved to Istanbul where he pioneered the reconciliation and peacebuilding activities in Turkey and abroad (Esposito and Yilmaz 2010; Park 2007). In order to get medical treatment and avoid political prosecution (Koyuncu-Lorasdağı 2010), Gülen moved to Pennsylvania, US in 1999 and has been living there in exile (Bailey 2018; Harrington 2015; Pahl 2019; Wright 2012). He is likened to Gandhi (Findley 2015; Pahl 2019; Wright 2012), Rumi, 13th century Sufi mystic, (Michel 2007; Soltes 2013), and Martin Luther King Jr (Gage 2016). Some would liken him to Khomeini, Iran's theocratic leader (Rubin 2008).

Gülen's education has strands from traditional and modern education, yet transcends them both. He was educated by Sufi masters and traditional scholars in Sufism and religious sciences (Pahl 2019). He also read and studied Western philosophy, thought, and literature (Ergene 2008; Hermansen 2015) yet, his thinking is not governed or shaped by Western thinking. As argued by Klas Grinell, Gülen does not abide by the Western episteme, instead produces his own terms based on perennial Islamic knowledge (2007). Nevertheless, he is also not satisfied with the current stagnant Islamic scholarship, instead tries a synthesis between them (Pahl 2019). He contends that knowledge needs to be supplemented by action (Grinell 2010). His position is

that gnosis serve as a guide in gaining episteme (Gülen 2004b) in this way avoiding uncontrolled reign of the latter as observed in the contemporary world.

Gülen's philosophy of education is a holistic one (Beishenalievich 2018; Williams 2007). He posits that the main purpose of life is to seek understanding which can be achieved through learning (Carroll 2009). The purpose of learning is making knowledge a guide in life to attain human perfection, or to become "al-insan al-kamil" -perfect human being (Gülen 2004b). He maintains that for this process to be effective, it needs to involve addressing, the heart (the spiritual faculties), the mind (the intellectual faculties), and the body (the physical faculties) (Gage 2014; Gülen 2004b). Gülen is aware of the modern education across the globe that pays little attention, if any, to nurturing the spiritual faculties and ethics or moral education, since it is not considered a province of teachers of public schools (Kristjánsson 2013). Even if moral education or -a more preferred term in the field of education- character education is emphasized in primary and secondary public schools it is not clear what it entails or how in practice it can be taught effectively (Revell and Arthur 2007; Walker and others 2015). The purpose of moral education in public schools is seen to either reduce violence and trouble at school (Agboola and Tsai 2012) or to ensure that the graduates would acquire values as prospective employees to benefit businesses (Nelson 2005).

Gülen attempts to strike a balance between the individual and the communal through education and grassroots activism to bring about change. Following his mentor Said Nursi, Gülen argues that ignorance, poverty, and schism are the major problems that are plaguing the world today (Gülen 2004b). Since the late 1960s, in Gülen's thought and activism and Hizmet movements' activities, education occupies the focal point as the prime cure for these major problems (Penaskovic 2010). He believes that education has the transformative power to change

the current injustice-filled, violence-struck, divided world. The site to work on is the individual. Gülen believes that the solution to all social, political, and environmental problems rest with the individual human being (Ebaugh 2010). The ideal societies can only be formed by ideal individuals. Thus, his social transformation is based on transforming the individual. In order to contribute to the transformation of other individuals, he posits, one primarily needs to achieve self-transformation (Gülen 2005a). He maintains that self realization -knowing oneself, realizing one's potentials, and understanding one's place and responsibilities in the cosmos towards the Divine and towards the creation- is the purpose of human existence on earth. Even though he views it necessary to achieve personal autonomy, he does not agree with the modern concept of sovereign selfhood (Brigg and Walker 2016) or overvaluation of the individual that is achieved at the expense of social bonds (Bauman 2004). While he gives the onus on human agency (Robinson 2017), he understands that upbringing peace-minded new generations through education, in its nature, is a collective endeavor. Forming a civil society movement; mobilizing people to engage in global literacy project, contributing to cultural and creedal reconciliation, and partaking in addressing cultural and structural violence across the globe has become a growing feature of Gülen's philosophy and the movement he inspires. In this regard the Hizmet educational model is highly collective in practice. It can be argued that the Hizmet model contains a template to reconcile stereotypic European individualism and Eastern and Southern traditional cultures' horizontal collectivism, or I and us.

Gülen gained nation-wide prominence in Turkey with his public talks. He is considered an eloquent public speaker (Hendrick 2013). Gülen gave regular sermons, public talks, and conferences across Turkey in the late 1960s, the 1970s, and the early 1990s. The underlying themes of his talks included social justice, adorning oneself with ethical values to strive to

become “al insan al kamil” or “perfect human being”, reconciling the material and spiritual realms, pursuing an altruistic and service-oriented life, being representatives of peace, exerting utmost care to protect the eco-balance, initiating and participating in a collective endeavor of upbringing morally sound, spiritually and intellectually competent peace-minded new generations, focusing on nonviolence and positive action, and having a dialogic mindset to build bridges with everyone (Bailey 2018; Çelik 2008; Ebaugh and Koc 2007; Kim and Raines 2012; Krause 2012; Kuru 2003; Pahl 2012).

2.3 Gülen’s Educational Philosophy and The Hizmet Movement

The public talks he regularly gave as a religious scholar and the educational activities he pioneered as an educator since late 1960s helped form a movement around him that turned into a transnational civil society movement in the 2000s, focusing on peacebuilding, intercultural dialogue and understanding, and holistic education (Abu-Nimer and Seidel 2018; Pahl 2019; Robinson 2017). This peace movement (Bailey 2018; Droogan 2013; Kim and Raines 2012) is called Hizmet movement, hizmet meaning “service” in Turkish. In the academic circles the movement is sometimes called Gülen movement (Balci and Miller 2012). However, Gülen does not consider himself as the leader of the movement, let alone giving his name to it (Ebaugh 2010; Yavuz 2013).

Gülen introduced the dedicated and engaging teacher concept in the late 1960s (Ebaugh 2010; Gage 2014; Pahl 2019; Weller and Yilmaz 2012). He introduced a paradigm shift in viewing the role of the educator (Gage 2014; Hunt and Aslandogan 2007) by moving beyond the traditional role of the teacher who teaches the subject matter, has to work certain hours per day or week, and limits her/himself -to major extent- with the job description provided by the school administration, and who is driven by financial concerns. He introduced an education that is based

on maximizing engagement with the student, involving the parents, caring for all of the student's needs, carrying engagement with the student outside the premises of the school and make it life-long (Aslandogan and Cetin 2007). Gülen started as a teacher of religious sciences in Izmir in a state-run boarding school (Pahl 2019). The job description given to him was to teach certain hours of classes during the day and oversee the dorm (Mercan 2019). Gülen concerned himself with every aspect of the education and care of his students. The boarding school had around two hundred students. He usually had ten classes per day, after which he attended to administrative tasks of the boarding school, gave extra classes in the evenings, and monitored the dorm at night. Even though the trustees allocated a salary for teaching and serving as a dorm supervisor, he did not accept this money, instead contented with the salary he received as a state appointed preacher (Ebaugh 2010; Mercan 2019). He slept two-three hours at night and dedicated his time to make sure that the students were performing well in the subject matter at school. He monitored their overall performance, organized regular extra classes for students who fell behind the class and for the gifted students to advance faster, and made regular controls in the dorm at night (Hermansen 2015). He followed the academic progress, moral development, financial situation of each of his students. He met regularly with his students to discuss their future in order to give them a transcendent vision to serve people. He spent nearly his entire salary on refreshments, books and pocket money for his students (Pahl 2019). As part of his educational philosophy, he introduced good conduct classes to teach moral values. However, what made his teaching effective was his teaching by example. He taught trustworthiness, compassion, integrity, hard work, dedication, prudence, humility, and altruism by putting them into practice in his life (Conway 2014; Gage 2014; Yavuz 2013). The engagement continued after students' graduation. He encouraged his students to take up studies in college, assisted them in finding houses to stay,

helped with their college tuition and pocket money. After their undergraduate studies he continued to visit them while they did their two-year compulsory military service and when they started to work (Mercan 2019).

2.4 Responsibility and Integrity

Gülen's *iffet*, altruism, and sense of responsibility lie at the root of his lifelong activism. Gülen made *iffet* a central idea in his life and it has become a common practice among the volunteers of the movement. Even though translators use chastity for the term *iffet* (Robinson 2017) it transcends the meaning chastity carries in English. Perhaps probity is a better choice. *Iffet*, in the broader sense, means having moral integrity, living a life of contentment, not aspiring to beyond what is lawful, legitimate, or moral precedents, and being prudent (Gülen 2010a). Living a life of *iffet* in turn leads to trustworthiness. Gülen did not have finances to sponsor the schools. In fact he came from a poor family. He had to convince people to sponsor the Hizmet activities (Ebaugh 2010). While channeling public support (e.g. donation) to educational projects he distanced himself from finances, instead asked the sponsors to undertake financial matters (Ebaugh and Koc 2007). He gained the trust of the public. While serving as a teacher in Izmir, he did not eat in the school restaurant from the food that was prepared for the students, even though the rest of teaching staff did so as he thought he had no right to eat the food meant for students (Mercan 2019). He paid for his consumption of the water, as the money came from donations meant for the students (Alptekin 2012). He became renowned through his talks and people would organize trips from across Turkey to listen to his talks in the 1970s and 1980s. Some bureaucrats and politicians started to attend his sermons. He was offered a career in political parties by some political leaders as they wanted to harness public interest and respect for him (Mercan 2019). Business owners influenced by his teaching were ready to offer him their

resources. He strictly refused personal gain and favors. Currently, aged eighty-two, he not only pays the rent for two of his small rooms -a study and bedroom- and the food he eats, but also for the expenses for the accommodation of his guests (Mercan 2019).

His altruistic maxims, “*Yaşatmak için yaşamak*” -living for others- (Abu-Nimer and Seidel 2018; Kalyoncu 2008) and “*Hak için halka hizmet*” -serving humanity for the sake the Almighty (Rehman 2018); and his sense of compassion to not only assist the oppressed but also ensure prevention of all acts of oppression through education have been the driving force behind his activism. He has encouraged his students and entrepreneurs inspired by his teaching to broaden their visions, remove boundaries between ideologies, classes, cultures, and creeds and help build a global fellowship (Gülen 2020a; Pandya 2014). As an educator and revolutionary, his vision broadened gradually, from local and national to global as the movement he inspired expanded (Yavuz 2013). Always abiding with the Islamic creed and transcendent ethical values that formed his worldview, Gülen learned from the experiences of his followers who got in contact with diverse cultures, creeds, and lifeways across the globe and brought feedback to him. In this way, Gülen became both the teacher for the volunteers of Hizmet and the learner from the volunteers’ experiences (Pahl 2019). This gradual broadening can be noticed in his talks -most of which were recorded- and in his writings. After 1999, coinciding with his immigration to the US his Turkey-oriented discourse changed and became global in tone. His followers -in general- slowly adapted to this transformation (Yavuz 2013). Gülen’s current worldview would have little resonance with the strict literalist Turkish and Muslim scholars across the world. On the other hand Toktamis Ates, a socialist political scientist and writer; Cem Karaca, a Turkish-Armenian-origin rock star; Thomas Michel, a Catholic priest and academic, Ela Gandhi, an Indian-South African human rights activist, and George Marovitch, a diplomat and the former secretary of the

Catholic Bishops' Conference of Turkey would find themselves accommodated in Gülen's worldview. Gülen's current worldview is deeply rooted in the Sufi tradition, nevertheless it transcends boundaries. At the core of this transcendence lies his idea of humanity (Carroll 2009), which will be analyzed in the subsequent chapter.

2.5 A Transcended Vision for the Youth

Gülen's selfless dedication to educational activism gave the Anatolian youth a vision to serve humanity (Robinson 2015; Weller and Yilmaz 2012). Currently, thousands of educators mainly from Turkey and central Asia in private and public schools in over one hundred and eighty countries (Pahl 2019; Pandya 2018) from the US to Papua New Guinea, South Africa to Siberia, Germany to the Philippines, Kenya to Laos, Kurdish Region of Iraq to Bosnia and Herzegovina follow in the footsteps of Gülen, leaving their families, hometowns, comforts, and their bright personal dreams and futures behind, to dedicate their lives to contribute to the rearing of peaceful new generations of the grand family of humanity (Carroll 2009; Hermansen 2015; Hunt and Aslandogan 2007; Michel 2014).

Gülen gave the Anatolian entrepreneurs a transcended vision to serve the needs of others by dedicating their resources and times (Bernard 2015; Ebaugh 2010). When the number of students increased, the personal meager means were not enough to realize his service model. He understood that reaching out to more students required more people and finances involved. The regular sermons, public talks, and conferences gave Gülen the chance to bring in the support of more people. Gülen started to raise consciousness among his audience to go beyond catering self-interest, instead become concerned with the wellbeing of others, especially in the education of the youth. He was successful in few years to mobilize local small entrepreneurs to not only give financial support in renting, furnishing, and covering basic utility expenses of houses where

high school and college students stayed (Ebaugh 2010), but going one step further, he gave the business owners a vision to role model these youth, by spending time with them: to eat, pray, converse with them; provide college tuition, pocket money, and other expenses, visit them in their hometowns during the holidays, visit them in military bases after they graduate and are conscripted; and attend their weddings and special occasions (Pahl 2019). When schools were opened abroad, in the 1990s, Gülen asked these business owners to leave their businesses and families behind to undertake founding of private schools and overseeing their smooth running (Bernard 2015).

The students who received spiritual, moral, academic, and financial support, after graduating colleges encircled Gülen, to take the turn to dedicate their lives as they have seen from Gülen (Michel 2014). Gülen advised his former students to serve people by all means, support the education of children from rural areas in a holistic way as he had done, find business owners to provide scholarships, open student houses, dorms, and prep schools to prepare high school students for the centralized university entrance exam as more often than not the children of the elite classes were able to pass these exams (Kalyoncu 2008). In the 1960s and 70s going to high school was a far dream for the majority of the Anatolian youth, let alone enrolling into a university. Atatürk took great care to introduce modern secular revolution, yet he and the Kemalist elite, who followed in his footsteps, failed to provide cultural public tools and educational institutions to transform the masses (Kuru 2009; Yavuz and Esposito 2003). For instance in the 1960s there were only seven universities -four of which were established in the late 1950s- and only 2.3 percent of the youth were enrolled into one of these universities (Kömürlü 2019). In 1963, there were 288 regular high schools and 366 vocational/technical high

schools in Turkey (Fretwell and Wheeler 2001) and only 2.6 percent of the school-aged teenagers attended high schools (Zaim 1988), of a country with 35 million population.

Gülen makes a distinction between educators and teachers and posits that building a peaceful world is dependent on the selfless work of educators (Gage 2014; Çelik 2008). In his understanding, even though both educators and teachers facilitate the learning process, educators are rare, while there are many teachers (Gülen 2004b). Educators are teachers who -besides teaching subjects- also work on the development of their students' characters (Alam 2015). Educators, according to Gülen, contribute to the students' character building through engagement and role modelling (Ergene 2008). In Gülen's educational philosophy, the educator practices good conduct as part of one's personal struggle to become a full human being by adorning oneself with laudable qualities (Carroll 2009). The educator, while, continuing her/his journey of becoming, would inevitably reflect what is contained. In order for students to read these values-in-practice, the educator maximizes -inside and more so the outside of the classroom- interaction (Gage 2014).

2.6 All-Embracing Activism

Gülen's educational activism also involves informal education through local grassroots activism. He regularly gave sermons and conferences in Izmir, neighboring cities, and across the country in the late 1960s and 1970s; and wrote editorials (Ebaugh 2010). As the youth and the middle aged males crowded the coffeehouses -in reality teahouses- that mushroomed all around the city, Gülen's students arranged these coffeehouses and he gave talks there (Hermansen 2015; Pandya 2012). In five years he visited and gave talks in almost all of these coffeehouses, at least once, in Izmir, a city with 1,5 million population then (Merican 2019). After Gülen's students graduated and moved to different cities and found volunteers and broadened the base of the

movement, a new step was taken: the introduction of neighborhood associations where weekly meetings -called *sohbet in Turkish*- were held (Fitzgerald 2017). Local residents from all walks of life and with differing ages came together, drank tea and discussed a religious topic. In each meeting social responsibility, social justice, peace; and the necessity to act collectively to achieve these were emphasized (Kalyoncu 2008); Pahl 2019). When the number of participants increased, the weekly meetings were started to be held at participants' homes on a rotating base. With the increasing number of participants, these micro groups started to form uniform groups, such as contractors' group, teachers' group, medical doctors' group, engineers' group. In this way not only did they achieve group coherence, but also were they able to think collectively to use their expertise and resources to contribute to the community (Ebaugh and Koc 2007; Hendrick 2013). The contribution of these associations varied, providing scholarships to the needy children; sponsoring dormitories; opening daycare centers to provide employment opportunities to local women and new college-graduates, and ease the situation of the working parents in their communities; assisting local families in need by providing job opportunities and assisting the education of their children; building primary or secondary schools in collaboration with neighboring associations or local governments (Ebaugh 2010; Gage 2018). In the late 1990s, these associations transcended their local communities and extended to the south-east Turkey mostly populated by Kurdish people (Kalyoncu 2008). In the early 2000s, these associations reached out to Central Asian states and later to Africa. The success behind these neighborhood association meetings has its roots in the history of the Turkish Republic. The Kemalist state elite paid little attention to the needs of the Anatolian population. On the contrary, there had been strict control over these masses to suppress religious practice and dissention. Hizmet initiatives and specifically these neighborhood associations gave these sidelined people a

chance to achieve something collectively, move beyond being mere objects of the ever changing modern world, and collectively shape the contours of this modern world to make it more familiar and humane (Yavuz and Esposito 2003).

The Gülen-inspired top-notch schools (Conway 2014; Ebaugh 2010) across the world are nonsectarian and follow secular curricula, yet spirituality permeates the activities in these schools (Gage 2014; Michel 2014). Jill Carroll posits that Gülen's glocal Hizmet ethics, although humanistic in essence, is rooted in his religious worldview (2009). As argued by Thomas Michel, in these schools, spirituality is understood as transcendent ethical values-in-action -practiced by the educators and administrators- that permeates the curricular and extracurricular activities (2014). This spiritual and secular educational approach carries the seeds of a project that can contribute to a new paradigm between the secular and the spiritual approaches in education, not as a third way, but by offering a new interpretation where imagined boundaries are removed and exclusivist approaches in secular and spiritual mindsets are transcended (Kuru 2003). Following the analogy of Gülen, while the excelling in natural, formal, social sciences, humanities and arts form one wing of a bird (Gage 2015; Hendrick 2013; Mohamed 2007; Yavuz 2013), the other wing is represented by a strong emphasis on ethical maturity and social responsibility (Hettiarachchi 2018; Robinson 2018); and "hoşgörü," emphatic acceptance, -a concept analyzed in the following chapter- (Michel 2014; Soltes 2018) in order for the bird to soar high, or for an individual to flourish (Çelik and Alan 2012).

The paradoxical spiritual and secular outlook of Gülen and the educators inspired by him can be understood when the Turkish context is carefully studied where Gülen and the movement originated. The Turkish Republic is a secular state and secularism in Turkish context is similar to -if not stricter than- the French type laicite (Yavuz 2013). In this assertive secularism, the state

controls and shapes religion and religious practice (Kuru 2009; White 2017). Since the time of Atatürk who founded the secular republic and put strict measures to ban religious practice in order to modernize the population, the traditional Anatolian public -Turkish, Kurdish, Greek, Armenian, Jewish, and Alevi alike- searched ways to adjust to a secular environment while trying to maintain religious lives (Yavuz and Esposito 2003). The Anatolian public creatively formed religious communities to fill the gap left untouched by the secular state. The emphasis in the Muslim religious communities has been on improving the inner dimensions of religious life which formed the fundamental aspects of Sufism (Cantori 2007). Thus have the Anatolian traditional communities refrain from making their religious practice visible in the public domain except in rural areas and less strict shantytowns (Akyol 2019). The state eased the strict measures around religious practice throughout the history of the Republic whenever the state elite considered religious communities a balance to counter external threats (e.g. communism, Kurdish separatist movement, or religious extremism) (White 2017; Yavuz 2013). The pressure of the Turkish state towards the religious communities of Turkey helped produce secularly oriented religious communities. These religious communities, however, emerged after the 1980s in the metropolises when urbanization took place, as before the 1980s majority of the Turkish population were living in rural areas where literacy rates were low as the literacy rate in the 1970s was around 29 percent (Zaim 1988). It can be deduced from this fact that the majority of the Turks and Kurds who moved in great numbers as guest workers to western Europe, starting in the early 1960s, were from the rural areas and mostly uneducated.

2.7 Reconciling the Majority and Minority Communities in Turkey

Gülen, has a strong emphasis on social justice. In his talks Gülen emphasized removing existing distances between clashing ideologies, ethnicities, and classes to become a healthy

whole. He suggested two ways to contribute to building social cohesion: First a short term solution by mobilizing resources to address current troubles faced by aggrieved communities undertaken primarily by humanitarian aid organizations (Michel 2008); and a long-term one by addressing the cultural and structural roots of the injustices through educating both the majority community to overcome prejudices and adopt a shared vision and the aggrieved community by opening up spaces for them to enjoy equal opportunities for a promising future (Ebaugh and Koc 2007; Gülen 2004b; Yavuz 2013). The Gülen-inspired private primary and secondary schools and prep-schools, private institutions preparing high school graduates for the centralized university entrance exam, numbering one thousand; fifteen universities; NGOs working towards reconciliation and peacebuilding; humanitarian aid organizations; business associations; and TV channels, daily newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses before the dictatorial Erdogan-led Turkish government confiscated them all, worked to address social injustice in Turkey.

Gülen encouraged the volunteers of the movement to reach out and reconcile the Kurdish population of Turkey with the majority community, the ethnic Turks. Throughout the history of the Turkish Republic the state did not recognize the distinct ethnic background of the Kurds (Barkey and Fuller 1998). Kurds have been the other of Turkey (Pandya 2018). Due to the failure of the Turkish governments to recognize Kurds as a separate ethnic group and provide compulsory education, inter alia, the Kurdish question has become intractable (Bilgin 2013). The south-east part of Turkey, mostly populated by the Kurdish, has lacked infrastructure and major enterprises to sustain the economy of the region (Fretwell and Wheeler 2001; Pandya 2018). It has also been the least safe region in Turkey as PKK -the Kurdish Workers' Party- militants have been clashing with the official security forces and the civilians are the most harmed from this clash (Kalyoncu 2008). Therefore, approximately half of the Kurdish population, moved

westward and settled in metropolises such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Adana with the hope to find employment and provide a safe and propitious future for their children (Barkey and Fuller 1998; Bilgin 2013). These new comers into metropolises, nonetheless, lacking education and vocational training, often ended up forming shantytowns (Pandya 2018). Public schools in these suburbs, as can be expected, had lower standards in delivering education (Fretwell and Wheeler 2001). Having financial survival as their primary concern, parents in these shantytowns often paid little attention to their children's education. Their children often studied in the morning and worked in the afternoons under harsh conditions. The shantytowns lacking well worked-out structure and order, often became places for various unruly activities. Parents, being under pressure to meet the basic needs of their families, facing discrimination for being Kurdish as there has been widespread stigma for the Kurds as the divisive other among the ethnic Turks (Pandya 2018), and -due to culture clash- to make their children stay true to their traditional lifeways, became coercive within their families. Failing to receive quality education, satisfy their sense of belonging in the society; facing discrimination and a harsh life, seeing the contrast between their lives and the lives of the well-off around them; and to add salt to the wound, being pressured by their parents, these children have, run away, become introvert and overtly submissive; or denied their identity, changed their names, and assumed majority lifeways, or become marginal and rebellious to what they left behind and what they found in their new settings. In any case they become vulnerable to exploitation.

The children of the Kurds who remained in south-east Turkey have not had a prospect of a bright future either, for there has not been hope for them to have higher education and live a decent life or run flourishing businesses as the region is struck by terror inflicted both by the official security forces and the Kurdish separatist PKK (Pandya 2018). The shortcut for the

Kurdish children -both boys and girls- had been to join PKK to become freedom fighters -or terrorists depending on the view- and besides fighting the oppressive official security forces, these youth were forced to kill Kurdish or Turkish civilians who resisted to comply in providing the militants food and money, or letting their children to be recruited (Barkey and Fuller 1998; Pandya 2018).

The educational institutions such as prep-schools, private schools, daycare centers, study centers and youth centers, run by the movement both in south-east Turkey mainly populated by Kurdish people and in slums in metropolises with high Kurdish population, primarily, played a notable role in reconciling the stigmatized Kurdish population and working class with the majority communities (Gurbuz 2015; Kalyoncu 2008). Before the movement opened prep-schools, higher education study was exclusively reserved for the children of the political and business elite (Ebaugh 2010). Public schools across Turkey did not offer quality education in general across Turkey (Fretwell and Wheeler 2001). The graduates of private schools were usually successful in passing the university entrance exams and enrolling into the best places in the private and public universities. Nevertheless, private school tuitions have been very high (Çelik 2008) and thus, majority of the people from the rural areas -keeping in mind that before the 1980s great majority of Anatolian public lived in the countryside- could not afford sending their children to private schools to guarantee their children's entry into university. The solution for economically stringent families was to send their children to prep-schools. Prep schools were private educational institutions that provided intensive courses in one year to prepare students to both centralized university entrance exam and high school replacement exam and usually had a dorm to provide a suitable study environment. The movement opened the first prep-school in the western part of Turkey in 1974. In south-east Turkey the first prep-school was opened in 1988,

and by 2013 the number of prep-schools in the region exceeded one hundred, catering for ninety thousand Kurdish students (Koç 2013a). The tuition fees of the prep schools in the Kurdish region was lower compared to their counterparts in western and central Turkey as they were subsidized by Kurdish business owners who lived in the metropolises (Kalyoncu 2008). 20 to 25 percent of the students who enrolled into these schools were on scholarship (Gurbuz 2015).

The Hizmet movement reached out to both the Kurdish children who remained in south-east Turkey and the Kurdish children in suburbs of the metropolises not only by opening and running prep-schools to prepare them for the university entrance exam, but also funding houses and dorms for them to stay. Securing a place in one of the universities usually meant a way out for the entire family from predicament (Koç 2013b). However, without finding a place to stay while studying and covering the tuition fee, many Kurdish youth would not fulfill their dreams. Understanding that these youth needed a holistic support, the movement also provided places for these youth to stay as the movement had been running dorms across the country for college and high school students (Koç 2013b).

Realizing the need to cater for more children as there was demand for more prep-schools and also that majority of the children were not able to even pay for this one-year training provided by prep-schools (Kalyoncu 2008), the movement introduced another major solution in the late 1990 and early 2000s especially for students who came from low-income families. The movement initiated the study center project (Koç 2013a). Hundreds of study centers were opened in Kurdish populated south-east Turkey financed by entrepreneurs from metropolises and by local business owners (Kalyoncu 2008). These study centers catered for middle school students who came from low-income families and provided free training for them to pass the centralized high school replacement exam with the aim of -depending on the score achieved- securing a

place in a private high school with scholarship, without scholarship, or in a well-established public high school -majority of which were in metropolises or in western urban areas (Koç 2013b). The first study center in the region was opened in 2003 and by 2010 the number of these centers reached to two hundred catering for fifty thousand Kurdish students. Each year approximately 80 percent of the students who received free training in these centers secured a better place in a private or public high school (Koç 2013b). The teachers received a modest salary, often worked unpaid extra hours, and sometimes were harassed by the PKK militants (Kalyoncu 2008). Starting with the 2000s, the number of youth recruited by the separatist PKK dropped enormously (Koç 2013a; Pandya 2018). PKK militants, instead of supporting the movement for training Kurdish youth in south-east Turkey and in the Kurdish Region of Iraq, started to harass the teaching staff and students and burn down the schools, prep-schools, study centers, and dorms in south-east Turkey and in Kurdish populated suburbs (Pandya 2018). It deserves mentioning that, before 2017, the movement had the second strongest presence after Turkey in the Kurdish Region of Iraq, running more than twenty schools and a university and serving more than twelve thousand students (Pandya 2018) in an autonomous region with five-million population (IOM and UNFPA 2018).

The situation of the Kurdish youth in the slum areas of the metropolises worsened and disruptive street teenagers emerged. They were called street children because their parents were working throughout the day as these teenagers were unattended. They often skipped going to secondary school or became drop-outs, and -forming neighborhood groups- defied authority and engaged in impertinent activities. PKK, always having a strong presence in metropolises have considered these teenagers as easy recruits. Exploiting these teenagers' resentment towards their parents, the Turkish state, or majority community whom they have considered as being

responsible for their predicaments, PKK has used them in terrorist activities or as drug dealers near school campuses, as considerable portion of PKK's finances comes from selling drugs (Barkey and Fuller 1998; Gunter 2013). The movement mobilized financially able business-owners to fund *gençlik merkezleri* or youth centers and found volunteers to run these centers around these slum areas. These centers -in general- provided free secondary school support courses, ICT, arts, sports classes. Each center usually had a library and entertainment units with an internet café and pool tables. Hundreds of teenagers going to these youth centers finished high school and pursued higher education studies. Through these activities, Hizmet movement had a considerable success in reaching out to the "other" of Turkey and in reconciling the two major communities of Turkey (Pandya 2018).

It did not come as a surprise after 2013, when the number of children from financially stringent families increased greatly -including Kurdish ones- who scored high results and secured the best places in the university entrance exams in Turkey or alternatively enrolled in north American or European universities, and after graduating in Turkey or abroad, started to find employment in public offices especially in offices that have been traditionally reserved for the children of the political and economic elite of Turkey (e.g. ministry of foreign affairs and military ranks), that the state elite first closed down the prep-schools and then private school to protect the status quo (Pandya 2018). The movement has been paying the price of challenging the status quo heavily as the government not only confiscated all Hizmet institutions and imprisoned everyone affiliated with the movement, but also confiscated private businesses under the pretext of supporting terrorist activities (Srivastava 2017), activities that have been often supported by the previous ruling governments and by the considerable public of Turkey for almost fifty years (Ebaugh 2010).

Gülen hopes that the “Hizmet ethics” in educational activism that accommodates and celebrates alterity while not sacrificing the particular can contribute to the reconciliation of the cultures and traditions and attainment of global peace (Michel 2004). According to Stuart Hall the most crucial question of the 21st century is to live with differences while distances disappear (Back and Solomos 2001; Hall 1993). Radhi Al-Mabuk argues that the ethics-in-action of Gülen and the movement is glocal in nature, emphasizing local particularities in provincial, national, and regional dialogue; while celebrating transcendent ethical values inherent across creeds and cultures (2015).

2.8 Promoting Interfaith and Intercultural Understanding in Turkey and Across the World

Gülen’s and the movement’s second fundamental contribution to Europe can be in the area of intercultural and interfaith dialogue (Ahmed 2009). Gülen views intercultural and interfaith dialogue, as a religious obligation and as a toolbox to achieve justice in the society. In this regard his idea of dialogic engagement is not scholastic in nature but action oriented (Sleep and Sener 2014). The idea of justice, based on the Qur’anic understanding, implies collectively setting a balance in the society as vicegerents on earth. Gülen likens the society to an organism (Kilinc 2007; Saritoprak and Ünal 2005). As the wellbeing of an organism depends on working together of all its members and no one can be viewed as superfluous, in the same fashion, human beings need to realize that a society’s wellbeing rests on the cooperation of all its members and on the realization that no one or group can be considered redundant. As is the case with an organism, if a malfunction is developed, it is considered a collective failure and addressing it requires collective effort.

In 1994, Gülen encouraged the establishment of the Journalists and Writers Foundation (with UN ECOSOC membership before it was closed down in 2016) in Istanbul that initiated

intercultural/interfaith activities in the polarized Turkish society of the early 1990s (Ebaugh 2010). The Ottoman Empire was a multi-religious and multi-ethnic entity. After its collapse, many new states emerged in northern Africa, the Balkans, Arabian peninsula, and the Levant. Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, followed the European models and established a nation-state, making nationalism one of the six pillars of the republic (Akyol 2019). He ignored the ethnic and religious plurality of Anatolian people, instead emphasized Turkishness as the legitimate identity. The Kurds, Armenians, Jews, native Greeks called Rums, native Bulgars, Circassians, Bosniaks, Albanians, Arabs, and Syriac Christians were excluded by the Turkish governments (White 2014). Even though secularism was another pillar of the republic, Atatürk and his successors called Kemalists declared Sunni Islam as the legitimate interpretation of religion, thus delegitimizing Christianity -both orthodox and protestant versions, Judaism, and the Alevism, the Anatolian Shia (Harrington 2015). The Turkish state represented by the Kemalist elite, after the collapse of the empire, has developed a divisiveness phobia towards the minorities, thinking that they may be serving as pawns for foreign powers (White 2014). This Kemalist elite, forming a minority, deemed its survival to be contingent on maintaining a polarized Turkish society (Akyol 2007; Yavuz 2013). Sectarian clashes on the lines of ideological, ethnic, denominational, and religious differences claimed thousands of lives of especially the youth in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s (Yavuz 2003). Gülen initiated dialogue activities in the early 1990s by bringing people of all creeds, ideologies, and cultures of Turkey together in order to raise collective awareness and work together for a peaceful Turkey (Sakowicz 2018). These intercultural and interfaith activities gave different communities -sidelined by the Kemalist elite- a chance to express themselves and rediscover what they had in common, where they differed, and how they could work together for a better and peaceful Turkey (Yavuz 2003).

One of the platforms of the Journalists and Writers Foundation, the *Abant Platform* organized annual meetings, starting in 1998, attended by intellectuals comprised of academics, journalists, religious scholars, and public intellectuals of all creeds and orientations with the aim of producing a new social contract (Kuru 2007). These conventions had a deep impact in the reconciliation of polarized Turkish society (Ebaugh 2010). In these gatherings themes that raised divisions and disputes among various communities of Turkey were discussed, such as pluralism; state, society, and religion; democracy and rule of law; religious practice and secularism; peaceful coexistence; the Kurdish issue and building peace together; democracy and human rights; living together in peace as Jews, Christians and Muslims; identity and citizenship; and EU membership, multiculturalism, and Europe (Weller 2012; Ugur 2007). These topics had been traditionally discussed by the state elite and they would set the standards around these contentious issues. For the first time in the Turkish Republic's history a civil society initiative attended by intellectuals, with varying political perspectives, worldviews, and creeds or no creeds, discussed these issues to form a shared vision to embrace the future (Yavuz 2013). In the 2000s, *Abant Platform* gatherings were also started to be held abroad, in Arbil, Washington, D.C., Paris, Brussels, Moscow, and Cairo (Maigre 2007). However, what produced such an accommodating common ground to come together and discuss most contentious issues in a polarized society had been the Hizmet hospitality based on acknowledging humanity as a single family (Conway 2014), something that is analyzed in detail in the succeeding chapter. Besides producing intellectual engagement and contributing to social cohesion, these gatherings also educated the masses who -through the media and works of the movement volunteers- started to overcome polarized worldviews and prejudice against religious minorities. Christian and Jewish

minority leaders for the first time since the establishment of the Republic had been able to make public appearance and shown acceptance and respect (Mezararkali 2013).

2.9 Complete Human Beings

Gülen has been encouraging people who are inspired by his teaching to be *zuljanahain*, double winged, meaning, being both this worldly and other worldly (e.g. hereafter). In other words, he has encouraged his followers to be as spiritual and devout as possible, while at the same time to be as successful as possible in their worldly occupations (Ebaugh 2010; Gülen 2013), or to perform well as a business owner, scientist, medical doctor, academic, teacher, artist, engineer, school administrator, or bureaucrat. Asking his followers to bring these seemingly opposite traits together he contends to reconcile the spiritual and the secular and de-compartmentalize human nature and society. He advises to refrain being selfish in one's devotion and in one's worldly vocation (Gülen 2013). He argues that neither other worldly gain nor worldly gain should be the goal. He argues for people-oriented spirituality in which God's approval is gained not in solitude but among people by showing kindness, compassion, generosity, forgiveness, leniency, and by serving fellow humans to please God (Khan 2011; Pandya 2018). On the other spectrum he also argues to become rich, produce state of the art scientific inquiry, run top-notch schools and universities, come up with new discoveries, compose heart-soothing melodies, yet using all these achievements not for personal gain, but as means to serve people (Conway 2014). Following Gülen's advice, the volunteer business owners of the movement practiced principled capitalism while living a spiritual life, and using their spirituality as the driving force, used their capitals to promote education, humanitarian aid, healthcare for the needy, and peacebuilding (Pahl 2019). These donations have not served as a means to do window dressing as is sometimes done by modern-day capitalists, yet giving and

serving become the reason to work hard. The common practice among the volunteer businesspersons is to give one-tenth of their earnings and this -in some cases- may reach to one-third (Bernard 2015; Ebaugh 2010). Volunteer educators of the movement have run schools in one hundred eighty countries, and these schools are usually among the best schools where they are operating, primarily doing well in international science competitions, math and science Olympiads on the one hand, and producing morally sound and responsible students on the other (Gage 2014; Michel 2014). As maintained by some experts, Hizmet participation in the modern world has shown the compatibility of the spiritual and moral with the secular (Ebaugh 2010). While participating in the modern world and effectively mobilizing people to engage in the pursuit of worldly achievements, it stayed true to its spiritual and moral roots. In other words, Hizmet participated in the modern world, yet brought with it a spiritual and moral aspect to make it more humane (Çelik and Alan 2012).

2.10 Unwavering Commitment to Peace and Non-Violence

Gülen's philosophy for peace involves achieving inner and outer peace (Robinson 2018; Wright 2007) and is based primarily on transforming the individual. He argues that peace on earth can be achieved by peaceful individuals (Esposito and Yilmaz 2010). Being a peaceful individual in turn can only be the outcome of being in peace with the heaven, one's conscience, and one's social and physical surroundings (Çelik 2008). The latter, even though, a separate component of peace by itself, is dependent on the first two. Regardless of intellectuals who claim that we are living in the most peaceful era in human history (Pinker 2011; Karl Popper 1986 in Latouche 1993), many contend that there is no peace where socially produced indifference (Scheper Hughes 1996) in the face of globalized social injustice and cultural, structural, and

physical violence is pervasive (Bauman 2004; Chomsky and Barsamian 2011; Giroux 2015; Gülen 2004b; Solon 2017).

Gülen and the volunteers of Hizmet have strictly been non-violent in the face of egregious human rights violations. Gülen envisions a civilizational paradigm shift in which a balance between the material and the spiritual realms can be achieved (Çelik 2008). He understands that this paradigm shift requires global collective effort. The movement inspired by him humbly strives to contribute to this new peaceful world. Yet, as reminded by Galtung, global peace cannot be achieved without challenging the status quo (1969). It should not come as a surprise that recently in Turkey the Hizmet movement is first announced as a terrorist organization by the Erdogan-led authoritarian Turkish government (UK Home Office 2017), then, the Hizmet volunteers were fired from their jobs, ostracized, and arrested on trumped-up terror charges (Srivastava 2017; UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention 2020). As of December 2017, 140,000 persons -police officers, teachers, soldiers, doctors, judges, prosecutors and academics- lost their jobs, 130,000 persons were detained and 60,000 arrested, 3000 academic institutions -15 of which were universities- were shut down (Pandya 2018). Among the dismissed and arrested, 3000 persons are judges and prosecutors whose assets were also confiscated (Stockholm Center for Freedom 2017a). According to the human rights report released by the United States' Department of State, 7000 academics lost their posts most of whom affiliated with Hizmet and 1500 NGOs were shut down (2019). The Turkish governments' crackdown on the Hizmet volunteers is not abating. According to the statement of Minister of Internal Affairs of Turkey the number of detained persons affiliated with Hizmet reached to 511,000 and the persons who were arrested to 100,000 by March 2019 (Advocates of Silenced Turkey 2020). Yet under the state of emergency, detention and arrest make no difference as

people may be detained for years as has the case been with some journalists (Human Rights Watch 2019). The independent media in Turkey are silenced as more than 180 media outlets -a considerable number of which have been affiliated with Hizmet- were shut down and as Turkey has become the biggest journalist jailer country in the world according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (Amnesty International 2017a). A new unit was formed in the Turkish judiciary called *Sulh Ceza* -penal court of peace- to deal with Hizmet volunteers in specific and critics in general with no right for appeal (Amnesty International 2017b; Stockholm Center for Freedom 2017a). According to Nils Melze, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture, ill-treatment and torture cases against the Hizmet and PKK affiliated individuals in Turkish prisons are recorded (UN Human Rights Council 2018). There are 780 babies and infants who are growing up in prisons with their mothers (Advocates of Silenced Turkey 2019; Us Department of State 2019). Tens of thousands Hizmet volunteers, professors, bureaucrats, judges, journalists, writers, lawyers, and high-ranking police and military officers, most of whom had great achievements in their careers, and businesspersons and teachers affiliated with the movement have lost all their gained rights (Amnesty International 2017; Johnson 2018). Even though the numbers vary, more than 600,000 Turkish passports are cancelled, great majority of which are of persons affiliated with Hizmet (Bozkurt 2018). Hizmet volunteers paid the price of engaging in social activism and civil disobedience; upholding democracy and rule of law; and defying an autocratic government. Thousands of them escaped Turkey, usually via Greece, illegally, since in most cases their passports have been cancelled, and most of them sought asylum in EU countries (and also in Canada, and the US). Hundreds of them died while trying to pass the Maritsa (Evros) river that separates Turkey from Greece. According to Wall Street Journal, only in 2018 between January and September, 14,000 persons affiliated with Hizmet passed the river, 4000 sought

asylum in Greece, the rest moved westward into the EU (Stamouli 2018). These brightest minds of the country, if unable to leave the country, have become street vendors in order to sustain their families, as they were fired from their jobs by a statutory decree, they could be employed neither by public nor private businesses (Stockholm Center for Freedom 2017b). Those who are summarily dismissed from the public sector -and even sometimes their parents- are denied accessing housing and healthcare benefits (Advocates of Silenced Turkey 2019). 1100 businesses were seized by the government worth around \$10 billion-dollars, the owners of which had to leave Turkey to escape imprisonment (US Department of State 2019). The lawyers who want to defend them are harassed by the police, their offices are raided (Freedom House 2018; Stockholm Center for Freedom 2017a). There have been rape cases to women detainees or prisoners by prison guards or police officers (Advocates of Silenced Turkey 2020; Stockholm Center for Freedom 2017a); some have died while being under police custody (Advocates of Silenced Turkey 2020); some of them died suspiciously, according to official reports committing suicide (US Department of State 2019); many have been treated harshly (Human Rights Watch 2019); their medications are denied and their requests to see a doctor are not heeded (UK Home Office), sometimes for months, some of them, having final-stage cancer, -not being released- passed away without receiving treatment (Advocates of Silenced Turkey 2020); some of them aged over eighty or having chronic diseases such as Alzheimer, Parkinson's disease who have not been able to even undertake performing their basic needs were denied assistance, some of whom sometimes crawled in the ward to go to restrooms or being assisted by other inmates (Stockholm Center for Freedom 2020). There have been accounts where the children's guardianship of these imprisoned people was not given to their close relatives, instead as a punishment, these children were put into orphanages, not providing their parents their

whereabouts. This state-perpetrated collective punishment is still -full force- in progress and has not been fully recorded. In the face of this unprecedented violence for the last four years, Gülen solemnly asked the volunteers who have been facing these inhumane treatments defend their rights, escape unjust treatment or punishment if possible, but in any case, to remain as a representative of peace and never to resort to an act of violence. For four years, the volunteers of the movement stayed true to the message of peace and chose nonviolent civil resistance, employing legal means, if they are exhausted, turning to the international community, applying to European Court of Human Rights, or using the media or human rights-defending organizations to inform the world about this mass violence. They have been practicing what Gülen uttered in 1995:

We must be as if “without hands against those who strike us and without tongue against those who swear at us.” If they try and fracture us into pieces even fifty times, we still will remain unbroken and embrace everyone with love and compassion. And, with love toward one another, we will walk to the future.

(Gülen 2004b, 57 -authors rendition)

2.11 Conclusion

Fethullah Gülen as a Muslim scholar has given Turkish youth a vision to embrace the modern world while living a life of probity. The movement he inspired is proactive, has engaged in building communities, bridges among communities to contribute to peace before 9/11 attacks. For almost half a century Gülen has a clear stance on democracy and against politicizing religion, and the use of violence. His activism since the late 1960s has focused on addressing

injustices prevalent in societies. He publicly condemned 9/11 attacks, saying that a true Muslim cannot be a terrorist and a terrorist cannot be a Muslim (Lacey 2014), the bombings in various European cities, and violent responses in the face of Danish and Charlie Hebdo cartoons perpetrated by Muslims. However, moving beyond mere condemnation, he asks his followers to address misunderstandings about Islam by becoming peaceful representatives of their traditions, engage in dialogue with everyone to collectively address cultural, structural, and physical problems humanity is facing regardless of their location.

The volunteers of Hizmet numbering thousands who had to escape persecution and found a safe haven in the EU have a historical opportunity: becoming global in mindset by transcending Turkey-oriented worldview and deepening their commitment to democracy, rule of law, and human rights by learning from the west European experience crystalized in *acquis communautaire*. On the other hand, these volunteers of Hizmet can undertake a crucial role in the reconciliation of the majority communities with the others of Europe. Even though great majority of them are asylum seekers, they have the potential, education and experience, and the vision to contribute to a European alternative pattern in which the spiritual and moral are interwoven with the mundane, sacrificing neither.

CHAPTER 3: THE PERCEPTION OF THE SELF AND OF OTHERS

Rumi...called to all nations, “Come, come again, whoever you are, come! We call and say, If you would like to come, please come, our hearts are wide open to you, but please do not burden yourself. Let us come to your countries and homes. Just listen to us for a moment and let us listen to you as well, as we may both find something beautiful and form new stanzas in the poetry of human [humane] thinking. (Gülen in Rumi Forum 2011-author’s rendition)

3.1 Introduction

The western European experience represented by the EU has produced tolerant and non-discriminating laws to provide the basis for peaceful coexistence. The success in integrating the culturally distinct others as competent contributors to the wellbeing and social cohesion of the west European communities, however, primarily hinges on how the majority community members view themselves and others, what criteria they use to differentiate individuals, and how the people who are not able to meet these criteria are treated.

Fethullah Gülen, as a leader of social transformation, in thought and practice -deeply rooted in Sufi interpretation, yet transcending boundaries- has introduced dialogic engagement and hospitality based activism that creates new personal social spaces for the accommodation of individuals of various backgrounds and identities. Like Rumi's compass metaphor, Gülen has one foot deeply rooted in his tradition, while his other foot traverses and establishes acquaintance with people of the world near and far to compose collectively new stanzas of love, compassion, and solidarity in the poetry book of humanity. In his philosophy the primary common ground is creation, being a fellow member of the creation. This is followed by the second common ground, that of being human. All other affiliations are secondary according to this human identity.

Gülen proposes looking at differences as a source of richness and at fellow human beings with empathy, goodwill, and with love as each human being is a work of art of the Divine and serves as an index of cosmos, thus deserving appreciation and unconditional respect. The contempt that human beings mirror towards one another, in reality, can be viewed as self-contempt. Gülen views the real and worthy life as one lived for the sake of others in altruistic and educational

activism to bring about new generations which, unlike their predecessors, can transcend racial, creedal, lingual, ethnic, and cultural differences to work together towards a peaceful world. Global peace, according to Gülen, can be brought about by new individuals who are reared with love, compassion and tolerance, and who are able to reconcile the spiritual and material realms.

3.2 Anti-foreigner Sentiments and Education

The rising middle-class racism and far-right extremism in western Europe find the culturally distinct others, a considerable number of which are comprised of Muslims, as scapegoats in the face of disorienting major social, economic, and political changes (Khader 2016). This growing anti-foreigner sentiment is perpetuated from generation to generation through cultural apparatuses, family, school, social and religious affiliations, old, new, and mobile media, and performing arts (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia 2006). To be specific, biased views of the culturally distinct others, expressed openly or implied, are transmitted to the new generations via education as children are good readers and interpreters of words, expressions, actions, and gestures (Lantieri and Patti 1996). Therefore, any viable and long-lasting project to address anti-foreigner sentiments needs to start with educating the new generations. As western Europe does not have a problem with illiteracy, then it can be deduced that either the current education systems in EU member states are failing to deliver an inclusive and emphatic education that can address cultural racism and anti-foreigner sentiments that carry with it the seeds of outbursts of violent extremist clashes; or there are contradicting value transmission among the cultural apparatuses and the values transmitted to children by some cultural apparatuses are undone by some others (Gülen 2012). Hence, it can be argued that the dominant education systems in general have failed to contribute to social justice (Iram 2006; Lin 2006; Reardon and others 1994). What still needs to be accomplished is instilling all-embracing

humane values to children in the family and the primary and secondary schools (Çelik 2008). Training parents to rear loving and all-embracing new generations can be a crucial step to address anti-foreigner sentiments and lack of empathy. Yet because most parents are often employed, long-lasting and effective changes can come only if schools are transformed. Children from the age of six, and sometimes younger, go to school, where they learn to socialize, and are influenced greatly by the school environment -and their peers. This brings the core task to the teaching post which, if utilized effectively, can contribute enormously to a paradigm shift in education to rear loving and compassionate new generations (Gage 2014).

Changing how the self and others are viewed is fundamental in achieving a paradigm shift in education. The west European identity was shaped -in adversity- by an adversarial attitude towards the advancing eastern and southern powers as the aggressive other by a divided and isolated western Europe of the early middle ages (Delanty 1995). After a continental re-awakening, in the age of colonialism and imperialism, this us and them mentality was transformed into civilized metropolises and savage or barbaric colonies where the others were not considered as equals (Patterson 1997; Todorov 2010). Seeing the world from the window of us versus them division, first led to biologic racism and was later transformed into Eurocentrism and cultural racism in which the European cultural, intellectual, ideological achievements were understood to be universal, and European white middle classes were understood to be different from and superior to non-western groups and communities in the 20th century. Anthropology, for instance, even though a scientific discipline, is based on the separation of the self from others and studies the other by employing different criteria (Richardson 1990). This us and them concept, or ethnocentrism, however, is not unique to western Europe, as all cultures, religions, and ideologies draw lines between themselves and the ones who are different and produce

representations of others. It is not the difference that exists in reality that matters in this mindset, as argued by Edward W. Said, but the image that is produced in the minds of the self or the in-group (Said 2003). The imagined differences are exaggerated and emphasized to create cultural divisions in order to produce fear, shape politics, and public opinion (Kamali 2017).

3.3 Individualist and Communal Outlooks and Fragmented Education

The image of the self in western Europe, produced in opposition to the other, is closely linked to the current individualist worldview that upholds the supremacy of the self and views happiness as the satisfaction of personal desires (Rand 1964). Even though individualism contributes to personal autonomy and self flourishing, the survalorisation of the individual or supremacy of the self-concept that it promotes has weakened social bonds and the sense of community cohesion. This in turn led to defenseless and vulnerable individuals devoid of collective strength and action (Bauman 2004). This atomization of the society produced a concern for personal safety and security. Fearing the harm perpetrated by others, lone individuals resorted to private security firms and to sealed communities in which interactions are minimized with the out-groups, out-groups varying from different social classes, denominations, races, ethnicities, and creeds.

The communal outlook attributed to the Muslim communities is more of a myth than reality. The Muslim communities, as the focus of this study, are traditionally considered to be communal as opposed to European individualistic lifeways. Nevertheless, the colonial era disruptions, the alienation brought on by Westernization, and the harming policies of local dictatorial regimes along with centuries-old intellectual, spiritual, economic, and cultural drought altered the mindsets of Muslims and the social structure of Muslim communities. The prerequisite to collective consciousness is the individual's discovery of the ego and the

construction of identity (Iqbal 1920). After discovering and concretizing one's potentials and achieving self-development and self-expression, an individual can willingly give up one's personal gains for the sake of the community. This self-discovery and self-realization in great extent has been missing among the Muslims in modern times (Iqbal 1953).

The education systems found in Muslim majority countries are as fragmented as are the European secular education systems. Muslim majority communities, criticizing European secular education systems, fail to realize that the religious education provided in Muslim majority countries and in the diaspora has failed miserably (Khan 2011) to produce new generations capable of understanding the contemporary world and becoming an integral part of it, let alone transforming it by making it more just and humane. The education system in the Ottoman Empire had been divided for the last few centuries into *madrasas*, religious schools, and *maktabs*, secular schools. *Madrasas* were imparting religious education, yet ignoring natural and social sciences; and *maktabs* were following the current western education model by imparting natural and social sciences and humanities, yet failing to provide moral and spiritual education (Ergene 2008). There was a further division within the *madrasa* system. The *madrasas* were distanced from Sufism, the mystic and inner aspect of Islam, or from spirituality and devotion, and were becoming more and more literalist and text oriented. Madrasa alumnae and alumni were memorizing texts that were written centuries ago with little depth of understanding. The production of knowledge had come to a halt (Yavuz 2013). The rest of the Muslim world then more or less suffered from the same division. This stagnation in knowledge production and the division in education produced new generations who were missing one wing and the education they received could not fulfill its *raison d'être*, that of transforming the individual. Nor did it help with the new generations to understand the contemporary world and then become competent

contributors. Instead this fractured education produced staunch secularists who viewed religion and wisdom as things of the past and obstacles to progress on the one hand, and religious scholars who did not understand the contemporary world and instead espoused a narrowed and stagnant religious worldview devoid of spirituality and gnosis on the other (Ergene 2008).

Gülen's holistic education advocates the fusion of natural and social sciences, and arts and humanities along with both piety, spirituality, and moral integrity. He views education as a lifelong process of self-transformation through self-renewal (Robinson 2018). This constant self-renewal involving mental, spiritual, and physical faculties requires, according to Gülen, reconciliation of the self with one's social and physical environment and with the heavens in order to eliminate distances. In other words, education is a lifelong process of principled harmonization of the self with the others. In this regard he views the education systems in the Muslim majority countries as incomplete, compartmentalized, and deficient. (Ergene 2008). Similarly, he views the European public education systems as incomplete and given to excess (Aslandogan and Cetin 2007). He holds that a holistic education, which aims to rear intellectually competent, morally sound, spiritually cultivated, human and creation rights' conscious individuals, can address widespread social injustice and bring about a more humane and peaceful world if supported and promoted by civil societies across the globe. The following concepts Fethullah Gülen has been advocating and practicing for about six decades and are widely practiced not only by Turks, Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Bosniaks, and Central Asians (e.g. Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs, Tajiks, Turkmen, Uzbeks) but also by many people across the world who are inspired by his philosophy need to be evaluated and understood from this centerpiece argument (e.g. de-compartmentalization of education). The main argument of this research is that these concepts and approaches, if put into practice in European education systems for both the

majority community and minority community children, have the potential to address anti-foreigner sentiments against culturally distinct others and contribute to social cohesion, as they have contributed to reconciling divided societies across the globe (Bruckmayr 2010; Johnson 2018; Kirk 2018; Lacey 2012; Lacey 2010; Maranto and others 2014; Michel 2014; Nawab 2010; Tetik 2012)

3.4 Creation Consciousness to Address Eco-Injustice

One of the key concepts Gülen advocates is creation consciousness. This concept is based on Gülen's religious worldview. According to the classic Sufi understanding, the value of everything in the cosmos from the micro to normo- and the macro domain lies in their relation to its Creator. The two conflicting perspectives that were conceptualized by Said Nursi, a Kurdish Muslim scholar of the 20th century would help to clarify the point. Nursi held that there are two key means of looking at the cosmos and its contents: self-referential meaning (*mana-i ismi*) and other-referential meaning (*mana-i harfi*) (Aydin 2019). The self-referential meaning is the viewpoint that gives value to everything in the cosmos based solely on its own existence like a word that has a meaning by itself. The other-referential meaning gives value to everything in the cosmos based on its relation to its Creator, like a letter that has no meaning by itself and the significance of which lies outside. Without going further into philosophical background, basically, self-referential meaning is how materialist, naturalist, and positivist philosophy views everything in the cosmos focusing solely on its self value; whereas other-referential meaning is how everything is perceived and valued according to its relation to its Creator (Vahide 2005). According to the classic Sufi understanding, the cosmos is a showroom in which all or a combination of the Divine attributes (e.g. compassion, love, sustaining, healing, judging, forgiving) and names (e.g. The Compassionate, The All-Loving, The Forgiving, The Self-

Subsistent) are reflected and revealed in each and every thing, from subatomic particles to the galaxies. According to this other-referential meaning a galaxy, the Sun, the earth, the atmosphere, an ocean, a whale, a forest, a tree, a bird, a snail, an ant, a bacterium, a cell, an organelle in a cell, an atom, a quark, and ether, each has a value due to their relation to their Creator -each one precious and a work of art. (Capes 2010). Their intrinsic value does not abide with material worth, but by the fact that they are the work of art of their Creator and are the manifestations of the attributes and names of their Maker (Pahl 2012). Moreover, the Sufi understanding is that there is nothing that is not alive, including stars, meteorites, mountains, rocks, and pebbles; and that everything in the cosmos communicates albeit using different modes (Van den Berg 2012). It is relevant to note that being inanimate is not understood as being nonliving. The value of everything in the cosmos is the capacity to reflect the Divine attributes and the art displayed in each (Conway 2014). The value of a hand-made copper jug with fine ornamentation by a famous coppersmith does not lie in its material value. In fact if it is taken to a junk-dealer, it might not be even worth twenty cents. Whereas it might be worth tens of thousands euros if it is taken to an art shop, because its value is other-referential, meaning its value comes from its maker, the artist or coppersmith. By the same token, the value of everything in the cosmos comes from its Maker or its Artist.

Gülen's creation-consciousness idea is also linked to cosmic justice and interconnectedness of everything (Capes 2013). According to cosmic justice, everything in the cosmos, from subatomic particles to galaxies, follows the course set by the Divine, and nothing goes off-course, nor disturbs this balance set in the cosmos, except for those who have free will (e.g. human beings). Human beings' task is to cultivate the earth in particular and the cosmos in general by discovering their potentials and developing their skills without disturbing the fine

balance set in the cosmos (Kim 2012). This should not be understood as the independence of human beings from the rest of the cosmos, on the contrary human beings are interdependent and interconnected to this masterpiece, forming a minute yet a pivotal part of it (Raines 2012). Since everything is connected to one another in the cosmos, tipping off the balance in the Amazons, may have irreparable damage on other undiscovered parts of the cosmos which if continued in the same fashion, may bring a cataclysmic end.

These concepts have not been put forth by Gülen, on the contrary were known and practiced especially by Sufi mystics in the past. However, to a great extent, they have either been forgotten or not practiced. It can be argued that Gülen, who is viewed as one who goes beyond boundaries (Esposito and Yilmaz 2010), pushes the theory and practice in creation-consciousness to its limits. Creation makes up a single organism, and the more one is conscious of this unity and interconnectedness and lives a life in accordance with one's conscience (e.g. making one's conscience a guide over one's reason, feelings, and actions), the more one shares the injury and suffering of the others (Nursi 2007). Gülen says that he feels as much pain as if his arms are amputated when seeing a leaf fall from the tree in autumn (Ünal and others 2002). Here he expresses the intense pain he feels when a leaf is separated from its origin, the tree. When walking he would watch his steps to be sure not to harm ants on the ground. He did not talk with a close friend of his for a month when his friend killed a snake, reprimanding him that the snake had the right to live (Gülen 2004b). He repeatedly recounts how painstakingly in different instances he spent time to save an ant (Gülen 2016). The source of this interconnectedness is compassion. Compassion means acknowledging the distress and agonies of others and having a strong desire to soothe their grievances (Conway 2014). Compassion is not pity, but the most lofty value. Compassion is selfless love involving action. A mother's feeling for her baby is

compassion, but compassion is not a feeling that can solely be associated with women. The Divine is the source of compassion (Gülen 2004b) and compassion is the nucleus of the cosmos,

The whole universe, in every particle of its being, ceaselessly sings the praises of the All-Compassionate. All creatures together extol compassion with voices peculiar to each.... Everything speaks of compassion and promises compassion. Because of this, the universe can be considered a symphony of compassion. All kinds of voices proclaim compassion so that it is impossible not to be aware of it, and impossible not to feel the wide mercy encircling everything. How unfortunate are the souls who do not perceive this (Gülen 2010c, 36).

People who are not familiar with Gülen's lifelong meticulous commitment to honesty would dismiss the quote regarding feeling insurmountable pain in the face of a falling leaf to be a statement of great exaggeration. Yet as argued by his predecessor Nursi, honesty is the bedrock of human activity, without which everything loses its value (2010). Gülen is also known for his scrupulous stance against exaggeration as he considers exaggeration or approximation as lying. When it is twenty nine past seven, he considers it to be a lie if one rounds it to half past seven.

The creation-consciousness is not something Gülen developed in his later years, on the contrary, was part of his spiritual formation in his earlier years. Yusuf Pekmezci, a businessman and close associate of Gülen, who has been with him since the late 1960s, recalls how Gülen's creation-consciousness struck him as a young man in 1967 or 1968 during a summer camp which Gülen had organized borrowing money (2014). As the campsite was outside the city close to a forest and there was no public transportation available, a small truck was borrowed to transfer the necessary material. A teenager, who was eager to drive, took the vehicle and hit a tree. A branch of the tree was thrust into the car, breaking one of the side windows. Pekmezci, who was

coming from the city to the camp site found Gülen busy trying to move the car backwards to the road. Pekmezci, with the intention of relieving Gülen, asked him to return to the tents and resume the camp program, while he freed the truck from the branch and roll it up to the road. Gülen asked him how he would do that, to which Pekmezci replied, “I will cut the tree”. Gülen reprimanded him, “this tree is alive, how can you cut it?” Understanding Gülen’s point, Pekmezci assured Gülen that he would not cut the tree, but find a way to save the truck, and asked Gülen to resume the camp program. After Gülen left, Pekmezci took the sledgehammer from the truck and started hammering the side hood of the truck to tear it up so that when pulled back the branch would not be damaged. He damaged the car to save the tree in a time when making ends meet required great effort and Gülen had to borrow money to organize the camp. Gülen told him to make mud and smear it to the part of the tree where its bark was damaged, thinking that because of the removed bark, sunshine might harm the tree. Pekmezci had to undertake compulsory military service which then was longer than two years, when he came back he went to the forest and found the tree, watered it, took a picture of it to show it to Gülen. Gülen told Pekmezci how the tree grew, and added “but you wanted to end its life”. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Gülen suggested people around him to go to central Asia, establish schools and run them, Pekmezci was one of them. He went to Kazakhstan and stayed there for fifteen years. When he came back in the 2000s he remembered the tree, and one day went up to the forest and found the tree. When he met Gülen later and told him how the tree had grown, Gülen was pleased to hear about it, but reminded him, “but you wanted to end its life”.

The deep-attachment to creation is proportionate to one’s connection with the source of creation. In the words of Yunus Emre, a 13th century Sufi mystic, “We love the creation because of its Creator.” (Johnson 2018) I interpret Gülen’s statements regarding the falling of the leaf and

feeling insurmountable pain, protecting a tree and ants as a duty to not harming and fostering creation and acknowledging the interconnectedness of everything, as seeing everything in the cosmos as manifestations of Divine attributes and as a work of art of the Creator, and as having an unbendable commitment to preserving the balance set in the cosmos by its Maker. In this regard, it is relevant to note that the globe is not facing an environmental crisis, however, there are crises in individual human beings (Raines 2012; Van den Berg 2012) who pursue dualistic lives by separating the physical and spiritual realms.

3.5 Humanity as A Superordinate Identity to Address Globo-Social Injustice

Gülen has been a staunch advocate of sacredness of human beings and the inviolable freedom to life, beliefs, mental and physical health, reproduction, and personal property (Gülen 2004b). As he says,

[Oysaki, insan denen bu yüce varlık, haklarına kat'iyen dokunulamaz, hürriyetlerine ilişilemez, her türlü tebcil ve takdiri aşkın, dünya kadar hususiyetleri olan müstesna bir varlıktır. ... Onu hor görme, varlığın yaratılış gayesini hor görme, onu tezyif etme de hilkatin ruhunu tezyif etme demektir. O, hor görülüp tezyif edilmeyecek kadar âli olduğu gibi, asla feda edemeyeceği bir kısım hususiyetleri de olan müstesna bir yaratıktır: Onun hürriyeti elinden alınamaz.. ona tahakküm edilemez.. o kat'iyen zulme uğratılamaz.. ve hele asla sömürülemez; zira bunların hepsi, insanlık mânâsını tahkir ve insanî ruha haksızlıktır; dolayısıyla en büyük ahlâksızlıktır.]

This supreme being called human, having inviolable rights and freedoms and innumerable special qualities, who deserves all kinds of praise and appreciation, is an exceptional being... Despising her means despising the purpose of creation of the cosmos, denigrating her means denigrating the essence of the creation. As the human being is a lofty being who cannot be despised and denigrated, she is also an exceptional being with certain characteristics that can never be sacrificed or violated: her liberty cannot be taken away from her, she cannot be dominated, she

cannot be persecuted, and especially never be exploited; because all of these insult the essence of humanity and do injustice to the human soul; therefore, these acts constitute the greatest immorality and viciousness. (Gülen 1998, 185-authors translation)

The root of this sacredness is linked to the unique nature of human beings. Human beings manifest all of the attributes and names of the Divine. Nothing else in the cosmos reflects all of the Divine attributes and names except the cosmos in its entirety. In other words, human beings are the complete mirror of the Divine attributes (Gülen 2005). Even the cosmos without human beings is an incomplete mirror as there are certain qualities such as free-will that only human beings possess. Therefore, human beings are the index of the cosmos,

Humans, the greatest mirror of the names, attributes and deeds of God, are a shining mirror, a marvelous fruit of life, a source for the whole universe, a sea that appears to be a tiny drop, a sun formed as a humble seed, a great melody in spite of their insignificant physical positions, and the source for existence all contained within a small body. Humans carry a holy secret that makes them equal to the entire universe with all their wealth of character; a wealth that can be developed to excellence. (Gülen 2004b, 112)

Human nature is as intricate and aesthetic as is the cosmos. Human beings are also given the responsibility to act as the “vicegerent” or the deputy of the Divine (Conway 2014). A human being is expected to know oneself, understand one’s capability and limits, develop one’s faculties and capabilities by cultivating the earth and the cosmos without disturbing the justice or balance set in the cosmos to manifest Divine attributes and become worthy for an eternal life (Soltes 2012). Yet a human being can only achieve this grand task not in solitude but in collaboration, thus necessitating the formation of communities. Each human being is also a mirror of other human beings (Pahl 2019). Therefore a human being as a deputy of the Divine,

an index of the cosmos, a complete mirror, and the finest work of art of the Divine is required to collaborate with one's fellow human beings in order to blossom one's full capacity and discover the mysteries of the cosmos (Kim 2012). Due to this sacred nature of human beings, killing one person is like killing all of humanity (Qur'an 5:27-32).

Coming from this traditional understanding, Gülen says, "We are first human beings, then Muslim." (Mercan 2019, 291) This means that, in his weltanschauung, being human is the primary identity, or the superordinate identity, and Muslimness comes second in rank (Le Monde 2015). In other words, I am a human being and this identity and affiliation of mine links me to all human beings -as sisters and brothers in humanity- regardless of their races, creeds, languages, cultures, and sexes, genders, and classes. Being Turkish and Muslim are secondary in importance. Humanity as a superordinate identity needs to be interpreted not under the light of self-referential meaning, but under the light of other-referential meaning that human beings' attachment to their Maker.

Judging people according to their races, creeds, ethnicities, languages, classes, sexes, and genders does not make sense since human beings are not able to determine most of these. (Gülen 2004b). Even though they can choose their language, creed and gender, the common practice is that people make choices according to the environment and especially the families they are born into. If many of these differences cannot be chosen, how could they be made as a source of pride and privilege, or shortcoming, disgrace, and exclusion. What can be the fault of a Zulu boy, a Bangladeshi girl, and a Chinese primary school student today where the people of the south and east are marginalized; and so, then perhaps a Danish girl, an Australian blond teenager, or a Japanese boy in tomorrow's world may face similar fates unless perceptions are changed.

The sacredness of all human beings as the work of art, nevertheless, requires acknowledging the material and spiritual existence of human beings as well as recognizing the transcended realities and sacred values dismissed by materialist philosophy. As the material domain is unable to explain life, mind, and love, it also fails to understand sacredness (Gülen 2005b). Even if there is a widespread sustained distrust for traditional religious practice, there is a growing interest in spirituality among the youth in the continent (Michel 2014). Religions have been exploited as a means of creating division, exclusion, and persecution. It is these practices that are drawing aversion among many, especially the youth. Contrary to this common perception, Gülen employs religious concepts in secular settings to embrace everyone.

3.6 Hoşgörü

Hoşgörü is a Turkish word that is translated as “tolerance” (Walton 2015). It is a compound word comprised of “hoş” meaning good, and “görü” meaning view or sight, thus, it literally means seeing goodness (Capes 2010). Gülen, employing Sufi practice of embracing everything and everyone, ascribed broader meanings to hoşgörü. Tolerance can have a negative connotation, a sense of condescension and a sense of putting up with others (Pratt 2010; Soltes 2013). Whereas hoşgörü, as argued by Trudy Conway, transcends tolerance and also implies hospitality. She contends that tolerance is the trademark of Western liberal tradition, and hospitality is one of the leading traits of Muslim societies. Hizmet that originated in Turkey as a bridge between the west and the east, has reconciled tolerance and hospitality in hoşgörü (2014). The European tolerance lays the foundation for peaceful coexistence, peaceful understood as deriving from negative peace, but social cohesion requires hospitality to accommodate differences. Opening one’s home to friends and relatives is not considered hospitality. Hospitality is to open one’s heart and home to the stranger and wayfarer. In hospitality it is not

aimed to convert the stranger to our lifeways. Hospitality instead involves opening up space for a stranger to feel welcome, cared for, and recognized as a fellow being (Conway 2014). Thus, I argue that introducing hoşgörü in integrating the culturally distinct Muslim others in western Europe can bring a paradigm shift in accommodating them. What would naturally ensue showing hoşgörü to the culturally distinct others is that the stranger, feeling welcome, her dignity recognized, and cared for, would strive to embrace the host -though not necessarily the customs of the host- and look for ways to contribute to the social cohesion in the host society. Even though each member state has varying approach in immigration policies, Mulcahy, having studied EU immigration policies, concludes that the immigration policies have failed in general to go further than assimilation, regardless of terminologies employed.

Christian theologian and a close associate of Gülen, Scott Alexander translates hoşgörü as seeing the goodness in others (Alexander 2015). The idea is to see others as the Divine sees the creation and the human being, that is with mercy and compassion (Gülen 2004b). Hoşgörü presents a paradigm shift in seeing others. Gülen, employing the Sufi tradition's view of the other, starts with acknowledging the plurality of communities, creeds, cultures, and identities:

Different beliefs, races, customs and traditions will continue to cohabit in this village. Each individual is like a unique realm unto themselves; therefore, the desire for all humanity to be similar to one another is nothing more than wishing for the impossible. (Gülen 2004b, 249)

Nevertheless, Gülen does not subscribe to relativism (Pahl 2019). On the contrary, while he has advocated engaging with one's interlocutor to come around a round table with one's rich background, he has maintained discovering and celebrating the common ties that transcend races, creeds, ethnicities, and cultures and that bind humanity as sisters and brothers as wayfarers in

this journey of worldly life (Michel 2014). Therefore, his hoşgörü can be interpreted as principled pluralism (Pahl 2019) in which individuals while adhering to their backgrounds while bringing this richness to the table, are opening up space in their personal domains to accommodate their partners in dialogue and their diverse cultures (Sleap and Sener 2014). Gülen summed up this understanding and practice by saying,

“Reserve a seat in your heart for everyone.” (Gülen 2013c-author’s rendition)

In this process all participants, naturally in differing degrees, undergo changes (Akyol 2007). Yet, it should not be understood as an equalizing process. Conflicts, or differences of viewpoints and interests, are the source of creativity and progress through dialogue and understanding, and lead to engaging in collaborative action (Çelik 2008). If a conflict leads to argument, *münazara*, teach-in, instead of dispute needs to be employed. *Münazara* is an intellectual pursuit in which sides argue with one another with the purpose of producing knowledge without a selfish interest of either side to subdue the other. If one’s point of view is proven to be inaccurate in a *münazara*, it is deemed to be productive, since the person learns something out of this intellectual pursuit and is saved from falling into arrogance as interlocutors are seekers not bearers of truth (Hunt 2007).

Historian Jon Pahl translates hoşgörü as emphatically accepting differences, engaging in dialogue to find common ground (2019). Some scholars translate it as empathic acceptance (Capes 2010) as seeing the goodness in others requires an effort to understand one’s partner in dialogue, and understanding in turn requires looking at things from the perspective of the partner in dialogue. As Gülen says,

When interacting with others, always regard whatever pleases and displeases yourself as the measure. Desire for others what your own ego desires, and do not forget that whatever conduct displeases you will displease others. (Gülen 2005a, 59)

Gülen advocates using *hüsnüzan*, thinking positively, when interpreting the words and actions of others, whereas he deems it productive to be critical when interpreting one's own words and actions. He suggests acting like a public prosecutor for oneself and like a defense attorney for others (Sleep and Sener 2014) as the ego can grow blind to one's mistakes, while becoming overcritical and faultfinding in seeing others. When we dislike or are disturbed by words or behavior of someone else it is likely that we carry those traits inside ourselves. (Gülen 2004b). One also needs to bear in mind that what someone dislikes in others may perhaps be liked by someone else. Gülen is not dismissive of the fact that there are people -in the most positive interpretation- who mean well but cause harm and disruption. Each individual has many attributes and one or even few negative attributes does not and cannot change the reality that that person also has many other good attributes. Following the analogy given by Nursi, a ship cannot be sunk if there are nine innocent individuals and one criminal on it. Even if there were nine criminals and one innocent person on it, still it cannot be sunk because of the right of that one innocent person (2009). In the same fashion, an individual is like a ship. There may be many good attributes of a person and few that might be disliked. Nevertheless, one needs to look at others with *hüsnüzan*, with goodwill, instead of focusing on negative attributes. When carefully scrutinized everyone -without exception- has flaws. The crucial point that Gülen makes here is that in order to bring about positive change in others, everyone needs to work on oneself first to reduce these flaws and acquire lofty qualities. And, in doing so, this would reflect those positive attributes one would like to see in others (Gülen 2004b). Gülen suggests that the best way is to

not see the faults of others, yet he does not mean to be gullible or act like the three apes. This view requires focusing on one's own faults primarily (Conway 2014) and not seeing the faults of others while being busy working on one's own shortcomings. Secondly, one needs to acquire a mental state in which the individual thinks highly about fellow human beings as the mirror of Divine attributes and tries to interpret their actions in the best possible way (Sleap and Sener 2014). This mindset is the opposite of the common tendency in which the individual attributes one's faults and aggressions to external circumstances while the faults and aggressions of others are attributed to their personalities (MacNair 2003).

3.7 Altruism

Altruism, means unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others (Merriam Webster n.d.). The Turkish word for altruism is *ithar*. Gülen defines *ithar* as “devoting oneself to the lives of others in complete forgetfulness of all concerns of one's own” (2004a, 10). *Ithar* is associated with generosity and benevolence. An altruistic person is one who, while being in need oneself, prefers others over oneself (Qur'an 59:9). In this regard an altruist's happiness is dependent on the wellbeing of others. The opposite of altruism is stinginess and selfishness. Gülen contends that stinginess and selfishness produce distance among individuals, whereas altruism removes distances (Gülen 2004a).

Gülen argues that living a life solely based on personal interest without caring for the needs and wellbeing of others would wither the lofty humane faculties inherent in the human being (Gülen 2004b). In this regard he is critical of the selfish individualistic outlook that leads to hedonism and sees it as a major contributing factor to the social ills that are plaguing the world today (Penaskovic 2009). He suggests to the volunteers of Hizmet, not to be individualistic even in the pursuit of gains for the afterlife. Altruism is the ground where love and the most tender

feelings flourish and by contrast, “those who are ... entangled in the nets of selfishness, are unable to love anybody else and die unaware of the love deeply implanted in the very being of existence.” (Gülen 2010c, 39) The primary quality of an altruist is to open one’s heart to serve the needs of one’s fellow human beings,

Be so tolerant that your bosom becomes wide like the ocean. Become inspired with faith and love of human beings. Let there be no troubled souls to whom you do not offer a hand and about whom you remain unconcerned. (Gülen 2005a in Capes 2010, 218)

Gülen does not recognize boundaries that can limit an altruist in alleviating the sufferings of others. According to Gülen, if being human forms one’s primary affiliation, consequently as long as one has the will and conviction, there can be no boundaries and limits in serving the needs of others. Talking with a group of volunteers in the wake of a devastating typhoon in the Philippines in 2013, and referring to the Turkish proverb, an ember burns where it falls, Gülen says that this is the utterance of selfish people, and instead says, “wherever it hits, the ember also burns me.” This latter is the utterance of the people of maturity and conscience (Gülen 2013a). This requires consciousness towards the wellbeing of all human beings near and far, and in case of natural and human-afflicted disasters, feeling pain and running to attend to the wounds of the distressed and hurt.

Gülen’s idea of altruism in practice and theory is based on “yaşatmak için yaşamak” living a life for others, away from egoism (Ergene 2008). Gülen uses the candle as a metaphor to describe altruistic people. He says that a candle emits light to its surrounding while the stem of the candle receives the least of the light emitted (Ünal and others 2002). Similarly, an altruist serves others and benefits the least from the benevolence. Gülen warns, however, that “altruism is a great virtue only if it originates in sincerity and purity of intention; it should not be a means

to serve personal interest in any way (Yavuz 2013). This cannot be achieved without first achieving self-awareness and personal flourishing. Nevertheless, they cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive. Altruistic service and self-flourishing are life-long processes and take place simultaneously, yet undertaking altruistic service necessitates -as a prerequisite- developing a sense of responsibility (Çelik 2008).

Gülen, as a leader who has turned ideas and concepts into actions by mobilizing people, has placed altruism at the center of the Hizmet ethics (Çelik 2008). He has shown in his activism and has advocated that altruism, even though a voluntary personal commitment, requires collective action to produce lasting solutions (Ergene 2008; Yavuz 2013). Altruism needs to be accompanied by humility. The altruist needs to treasure the favors of others onto her/him while regarding one's favors unto others as insignificant (Gülen 2004b). The crucial point here is that Gülen does not refer to acting or pretending but rather internalization of these attitudes. He maintains that to intend to be humble is a pretense (Gülen 2011c). A humble individual, without pre-meditation, naturally acts modestly. In the same manner, an altruist holds others' actions and services invaluable while forgetting one's service onto others. Employing a Sufi practice that advises a mystic to forget everything one has forsaken in one's past (Nursi 2007), Gülen recommends to avoid falling into pride by forgetting the altruistic service one has undertaken throughout one's life. Activism where worldly -as well as other worldly- gains are expected in return cannot be considered altruistic activism (Saritoprak 2015).

The value of altruistic service lies in the sense of utmost anonymity. An honest altruist does not, Gülen posits, expect recognition and praise (Gülen 2013b). This is in line with the religious injunction that the benefaction of the right hand needs to be kept hidden from the left hand (Conway 2014). Preserving the human dignity and not injuring the feelings of the people

whose needs are served is very crucial. There is no space in Hizmet ethics for a patronizing and self-righteous air over the people served, as the altruist gains one's humanity thanks to and with the opportunity provided by the people served. Condescension and arrogance, in any case, are considered to deprive one from one's humanity and lead to loss in personal development (Gülen 2013b).

The driving force behind altruism is love and compassion (Gülen 2004b). What motivates this desire to attend to the agonies and needs of others for an altruist in the Hizmet ethics is summarized in the maxim, "*Hak için halka hizmet*" serving people for the sake of gaining the consent and approval of the Divine (Ergene 2008). As human beings cannot serve the Divine, serving, comforting, and removing barriers set in front of human flourishing of fellow human beings is a crucial aspect of being a vicegerent on earth (Robinson 2017). Unfortunately, this maxim lost its luster as it has been exploited by Islamist (e.g. political Islam) governments in west Asia, including Turkey as they have used religious rhetoric to come to power.

3.8 Peace

3.8.1 Defining Peace

There are different views regarding what peace is. The fact of the matter is that the current world is a peace-less world as social injustice and violence are widespread (Carter and Smith 2002; Lin 2006). Not being able to come up with a broad working definition that lays the foundations of a concept, in turn would lead to a failure to address the root causes of the current absence of peace. In this regard, I do not agree with the indistinct and confusing Wolfgang Dietrich's "many peaces" idea (Dietrich 2014). I am neither essentialist nor relativist. When peoples of the world -regardless of their cultural background- talk about love, what they refer to

is understood in an elementary sense, even though love varies from selfless and annihilating feelings for someone else to narcissistic feelings for oneself. A peaceful society is -regardless of the culture and creed- where people live in mutual respect, goodwill, acceptance and work together towards a shared future; and where the dignity of individuals is unconditionally respected in order for every individual to achieve self-realization. Varying stresses on different aspects of peace and the employment of diverse ways to define it should not lead to the conclusion that different societies mean different things when they refer to peace. While recognizing, as even twin siblings are different in many ways, in the same fashion communities are distinct and unique. Nevertheless, transcended spiritual values such as love, compassion, forgiveness, honesty, trustworthiness; and human aspirations for dignity, freedom, recognition and belonging are found in all cultures and creeds. The problem that the “peaces” argument can lead to among the ordinary is that communities and societies of the world cannot work together to achieve peace.

The overvaluation of the individual and the materialistic focus on human nature naturally shape the discourse on peace. The lives in the 20th century have been based on assumed separations: separation of bodies and minds from hearts and souls, separation of individuals from one another, and separation of humans and nature (Lin 2006). The dominant concepts of peace in Europe that are based on individualistic worldview (Brigg and Walker 2016) have not produced peaceful societies as the sovereign-self idea develops at the expense of social ties (Bauman 2004; Giroux 2016). The overvaluing of the self results in undervaluing the stranger, severing the possibility to engage in meaningful dialogue (Conway 2014). Even though the construction of a peaceful society hinges on peaceful individuals who comprise that society, the strength of social bonding based on love and compassion among individuals is equally indispensable (Said and

Funk 2002). The failure to recognize non-material aspects of human nature as may be expected leads to the failure to train these faculties in humans, and this in turn, hinders the self-flourishing of the full human being. In today's world we have individuals who, on the road to make profit, maintain power, gain fame, hold positions, and satiate their base impulses, use their intellects sharply without concern for the nature and human dignity and wellbeing. Laws and public policies for such individuals, whose body and mind are developed at the expense of their conscience and soul and who are not morally bound, are always bendable.

Gülen's focus has been on the process of self-transformation through formal and informal education that can lead to peace. Gülen has authored over seventy books in Turkish only few of which have been translated into English. In these books "*barış*" the Turkish word for peace appears much less than words like love, compassion, *hoşgörü*, justice, altruism, proactive activism, forgiveness, honesty, and trustworthiness. Can this be interpreted that peace-building does not occupy a primary place in Gülen's teaching? Has peace-building emerged as a key idea in line with the development of his global discourse in the 2000s? Gülen expresses that reconciling the worlds of the east and the west and initiating a global literacy project to contribute to global peace have always been two major goals in his life (Gülen 2011b; Sevindi 2008). The idea of reconciling communities has been his major concern in his activism since the 1960s (Kalyoncu 2008). I interpret Gülen's sparing use of the word peace in two ways. First, he reminds his audience that action speaks louder than words. Today almost everyone talks about peace, yet in an abstract way, without expressing what peace really is (Michel 2014). There is so much emphasis on peace in the political arena, among intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and schools today, and yet there is no peace in the world. Second, he reminds us that peace is an outcome, and that emphasis needs to be given to the ideas and activities that can lead to it. In

other words, he stresses the methods used to achieve personal and subsequently collective transformation to bring about peace (Ergene 2004). The peace-building can be achieved only if the peace embroiderers work on the deep roots or grassroots level, and engage in not reactionary but proactive activism (Gülen 2020b). Otherwise, work done on the surface would be undone by the deep-sea waves. According to Gülen, the foundation to work on is the human character.

3.8.2 Transforming the Individual and Welcoming Differences

Gülen's philosophy of peace is based on transforming the violence-yielding mindsets of individuals to achieve peace. In today's world might makes it right. The United Nations' Security Council is the epitome of this philosophy. International politics functions with the same logic. As Hans Küng posits, the vast majority of foreign policy clashes are driven by economic, political and military power interests (1999). As Martti Koskenniemi points out, the nation-state system is founded on constantly favoring certain people (e.g. the legitimate majority community) while silencing others (e.g. the native and non-native minority communities) (Koskenniemi 1989 in Charlesworth 1994) thus giving no chance to social justice and in turn to peace. The core values of the corporate system, that has power over governments, the structures of knowledge production, and the media, are competition, greed, and exploitation (Giroux 2016). However, the problem does not lie in these spheres. It is in the mindset of human beings where the problem rests. Violence in many different forms is ubiquitous in human beings' lives (Iram 2006). Social relations are governed by competition, envy, rancor, greed, intolerance, lack of trust, dishonesty, and duplicity. Life is viewed as a constant competition and one's survival is dependent on one's ability in getting the best of others (Lin 2006). Peace cannot prevail unless social relations are guided by love, compassion, honesty, altruism, cooperation, and forgiveness: "Those who want to reform the world must first reform themselves. If they want to lead others to a better world,

they must purify their inner worlds of hatred, rancor, and jealousy, and adorn their outer worlds with virtue.” (Gülen 2005a, 105) In this regard, global peace can only be achieved by new individuals who have a peaceful mindset and who live a life of non-harming the creation; who are all-embracing and all-caring; whose body and mind are guided by their conscience. In Gülen’s words, “These new people will unite profound spirituality, diverse knowledge, sound thinking, a scientific temperament, and wise activism.” (Gülen 2004b, 82) Therefore, I argue that Gülen’s philosophy of peace does not see the solution in addressing structural and physical violence, but in addressing their root, cultural violence.

The unique aspect in Gülen’s philosophy is the absence of otherization (Abu-Nimer and Yilmaz 2010). Gülen does not engage in identity politics (Yilmaz 2011). Unlike the new social movements that produce an other to react against in order to make their voices and grievances heard, Hizmet movement has done the opposite. Reaching out to the others with a willingness to listen and understand them hoping to solve common problems by working together in an atmosphere of comradeship has become the common practice (Gurbuz 2007). The enemy for the individual in Gülen’s philosophy -and in parallel with the Sufi approach- is the *nafs al-ammarah*, the evil-commanding self or the self-destructive and greedy ego within every individual that works like a central drive to pursue one’s base desires (Toguslu 2007). The enemy for the society is the trio of social ills, namely ignorance, schism, and destitution (Esposito and Yilmaz 2010).

The core idea of peace is the appreciation of differences among individuals. The differences among individuals are Divinely-given,

O humankind! Surely, We have created you from a single (pair of) male and female, and made you into tribes and families so that you may know one another (and so build

mutuality and co-operative relationships, not so that you may take pride in your differences of race or social rank, or breed enmities). (Quran 49:13)

Gülen argues that recognition of these differences is not sufficient, respecting and appreciating these differences is fundamental for peace to prevail,

(T)he peace of this (global) village lies in respecting all these differences, in considering these differences to be part of our nature, and in ensuring that people appreciate these differences. Otherwise, it is unavoidable that the world will devour itself in a web of conflicts, disputes, fights, and the bloodiest of wars, thus preparing the way for its own end. (Gülen 2004b, 250)

A peaceful society has peaceful individuals who live lives of virtues at its core. One of the leading ideas that Gülen advocates is, as expressed previously, the de-compartmentalization of human nature. Put differently, he advocates recognition of various faculties of human beings such as the soul, the body, the conscience, and the mind. Espousing a reductionist worldview by ignoring altogether or confining the spiritual aspects of human nature and needs in private domain, does not produce consistent and rectitude human beings, let alone peace (Lin 2006). As Gülen contends, “social harmony and peace with nature, between people, and within the individual only can come about when the material and spiritual realms are reconciled.” (Gülen 1999, 1) The foundation for a peaceful society is a peaceful individual. A peaceful individual is one who is resolute in viewing and interacting with one’s fellow human beings with love, compassion, dignity, fairness, and honesty. These values are intertwined with spirituality and have their bases in religious traditions (Küng 2004). Gülen contends that a peaceful future can be founded on “spiritual and moral values” by arriving “first at the altar of belief, then ascend[ing] to the pulpit of love” (Pratt 2010, 198).

3.8.3 Religion and Peace

Systems and structures, the *raison d'être* of which are to help human beings to organize communal life and social relations, hinder human flourishing and yield structural violence when they fail to recognize human beings with all their faculties. The sacredness of human dignity can hardly be explained by a materialist worldview that denies sacredness. Even though Gülen is an advocate of pluralist democracy (Conway 2014; Esposito and Yilmaz 2010; Mercan 2017), he is critical of the advanced democracies which fail to foster spiritual and religious flourishing of the individuals by saying, “If individuals cannot live by the principles of their religion freely because of certain obstacles put before them, this means that they have been denied the freedom of belief and conscience.” (Saritoprak and Ünal 2005, 448) He contends that an ideal democracy opens up spaces and fosters the spiritual as well as physical and mental development of the individual (Gülen 2020b). As the sociological secularist view that as societies are advanced religion will become extinct and the view that secularist worldview is superior to religious worldview are no longer valid (Grinell 2013).

The wars of the previous century and spreading tendency among the youth to join violent groups have not been religiously motivated. The 20th century that brought upon humanity over one hundred and ten million losses and one hundred and twenty wars since WWII, (Lin 2006, IX; Masciulli 2004, 334) have not been religiously driven, on the contrary the most horrible atrocities were perpetrated by secular minds. As Gülen eloquently yet with a sad tone expresses, [Hiroşima'nın mezar taşında kırılan medeniyet kâsesi...] “The bowl of civilization (e.g. the collective civilization of humanity representing all the moral, social, and intellectual gains since the first human being on earth until the present)” was “broken in Hiroshima...” (Gülen 2011a, 88). It is problematic, thus, to associate religions with violence and wars (Weller 2012). The

European experience in the previous centuries with religious or denominational violence and wars are regional experiences within Christianity and cannot be taken as universal issues. It is also relevant to ask if it is really religions' injunctions that divide individuals and societies and lead to violence or the unbridled human greed for power and possession that uses, inter alia, religions as a garment. It could be that Islam, specifically, is referred to as causing violence and division. This was the case in 2018 with a group of French intellectuals numbering over 250 including Nicolas Sarkozy, former president of France, three former prime ministers, elected officials, and artists who signed a document and publicly expressed their concern for the threat posed by certain verses of the Quran suggesting that these verses to be taken out from it (Le Parisien 2018). Besides the sheer disrespect to a religious text, it also manifests an ignorance of history. Many leading academics in the field of history of religions maintain that religious tolerance, not compared to today's practice, but when studied within their era in the Muslim world from Spain to the borders of China was light years ahead of the practice observed in Europe (Armstrong 1993; Cardini 2001; Fontana 1995). Some intellectuals of Europe yet need to acknowledge this reality in the past by overcoming the bias that causes misleading and unfounded fear. If ISIL fighters and suicide bombers are referred to cause violence, then, as Scott Atran, anthropologist and expert on terrorism who, in his own words in UN Security Council address, says "I spent much time observing, interviewing and carrying out systematic studies among people on six continents who are drawn to violent action for a group and its cause" concludes that these youth have not acquired religious education, know nothing about the sources of Islam (e.g. the Qur'an and the Practice of the Prophet), nor about the history of Islam. Some are recent atheists or Christian converts, and are looking for a life of significance (Atran 2015). The emergence of such youth in western Europe -a great many of youth who join these

terrorist networks are from Europe- in addition to the failures of families and the Muslim communities in which they are brought up in, similar to the far-right xenophobic youth of Europe, needs to be seen as symptoms of disorientation produced by the capitalist, materialist, and secular societies of western Europe (Gülen 2004b).

Gülen holds that religions have the potential to reconcile individuals, communities, and cultures and bring about peace (Pratt 2010). Gülen sees interfaith and intercultural dialogue among adherents of world religions as a crucial means to promote peace. In this regard his idea parallels that of Hans Küng who says, “There will be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions. There will be no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions.” (Küng 1999, 103) Gülen and the movement he inspired successfully employed religious conviction as a source of mobilization to reach out to people of any and no creed to collaboratively build breakwaters to prevent minor and major scale violent destruction (Saritoprak 2010), and build islands of peace, faith-inspired institutions that embroider peace (Conway 2014; Lacey 2007).

A peaceful world can be the collective work of people who sow the seeds of peace and selflessly walk off, to let others harvest the outcome. The transformation of the world into a peaceful one, a generations’ long collective process, according to Gülen, necessitates dedicated individuals who, by first acquiring peaceful thinking and practice in their personal lives, can sow the seeds of love and peace among individuals and communities and without seeing the result (e.g. a more just and peaceful world) can let others benefit it (Gülen 2013b).

Justice and compassion are the foundations on which peace can be built. Social justice is the prerequisite for a peaceful society. The lack of social justice in a society means that there is structural violence (Galtung 1969). Peace cannot be sought in the political arena, nor on the

street by protesting. Its root lies in ordinary daily interaction among individuals. If individuals, as family members, roommates, neighbors, classmates, coworkers, in their daily lives respect even the minutest rights, whether it be the feelings, dignity, opinions, property, and space of others and this awareness becomes a general tendency in that society, there can be hope for peace. Otherwise, as is the current case, human beings can continue to perpetrate violence while seeking peace without understanding the ground to work on to bring about peace. If social justice is the ground for a peaceful society, compassion is the glue to bring individuals together harmoniously, “Compassion is the beginning of being; without it everything is chaos. Everything has come into existence through compassion and by compassion it continues to exist in harmony.” (Gülen 2010c, 36) The two aspects of compassion that has the potential to bring individuals together harmoniously are empathy and a sense of concern to accommodate and comfort others.

3.8.4 Some Guidelines for Building Peace

- Re-educating human beings on the basis of love, hoşgörü, and dialogue (Gülen 2004b). An education that does not help rear new generations who are lofty and responsible individuals embracing everything and everyone is futile. A society based on such an education can be likened to a patient on life support.
- Rearing radically honest new generations who let honesty diffuse profusely into their lives and not just appear to be so. Honesty is the bedrock of social relations and of a harmonious society, and thus a prerequisite for a peaceful society.
- Giving-up the superior good if it leads to discord and choosing a lesser good if it secures accord. Social cohesion requires maturity to be open to making compromises as individuals to reach to optimal collective wellbeing.

- Giving up the idea of exclusivism. Distinguishing adherence to a cause from partisanship. Following a specific ideology or cause needs to be distinguished from fanaticism. Nursi suggests that it is the right of every person to believe and claim that one's outlook is the best one, nonetheless, one has no right to argue that one's outlook is the authentic and straightforward one and all others are amiss (Vainovski-Mihai 2010). The paths that lead to truth are as numerous as the number of breaths of the creation (Gülen 2013b).
- Not acting in ways to raise envy and antagonism in others even while striving to do good. Taking into consideration the feelings of others while engaging in proactive activism. This necessitates sincerity and avoiding ostentation.
- Understanding that humanity is gained not in solitude but in cooperation.
- Understanding that egoistic, both I- and we-oriented, worldview, is contradictory to compassion-governed and interconnected cosmos.
- Engaging in life-long selfless personal and collective positive action, proactive and constructive action, with the intention to contribute to the collective wellbeing.
- Resorting to all societies of the globe to collectively produce a discourse of peace and a global ethic. Such a collective endeavor should not be viewed as an attempt of syncretism, but as a task for fellow human beings to produce a planetary consciousness and meeting in the minimums.
- Forming peace-building, arbitration, and rehabilitation committees not only in neighborhoods, towns, cities, and within the countries, but global in scale to bring together resentful societies (Gülen 2010b).

- Promoting the idea that it is better to follow than to lead as leading comes with great responsibility (Nursi 2009). The ambition to secure a position and hold power from within the family to intergovernmental scale has been the root cause of many ills. The ambition to hold a public office, especially, has provided the super-rich with a chance to bankroll the campaigns of candidates and in return influence the public policies and exploit resources of the planet and the public (Giroux 2016). As Del Savio and Mameli posit, “The electoral-representative institutions of the contemporary democracies have been captured by oligarchies.” (2014) The ideal approach is that the task of administration is given to those who do not seek it.
- Giving youth a transcended vision that can help them channel their drives of reason, zeal, and anger and can add meaning to their lives in achieving this vision collectively. In Atran’s words, “Offering youth something that makes them dream of a life of significance through struggle and sacrifice in comradeship.” (2015) This vision, nevertheless, needs to be a tenable positive personal dream, and a sacred one, as material reward or punishment may only push the youth to greater extremes (Atran 2015).

3.9 Conclusion

Gülen has viewed the life on earth an open book that can be dyed according to one’s taste, capacity, and circumstances (Khan 2011). However, the best combinations and designs can be achieved through the contribution of others. The most valuable things in life are achieved in collaboration. There is an invisible thread in the cosmos that connects every being to the rest of the creation. The cement that keeps the creation together is compassion and love emanating from the Divine. Human beings’ task is to develop their potential in cultivating the earth and its surroundings without harming the balance inherent in the cosmos.

Human beings are the comprehensive mirror of Divine attributes and names. Each human being carries a sacred essence. The sacred nature of human beings does not only call upon respecting unconditionally every human being regardless of their race, creed, and background, but, also set the common ground to come together as brothers and sisters of the human family to celebrate the shared values and the diverse human experiences as richness.

While there is no measure in the cosmos with which the worth of a human being could be evaluated, the value of a human being's character is commensurate with one's compassion and altruistic concern and activism towards the creation. Living a life based solely on self-interest, on the other hand, severs the paths that lead to the flourishing of most humane senses and faculties of human beings.

Peace is not a discipline that can be studied under political science departments. Peace is a mindset, a conviction that colors one's character, and in turn is visible in one's attitudes and interactions with one's social and natural environment. Furthermore, peace is a verb, it involves selfless educational activism to address all types of social injustice, and consequently due to this aspect of peace, peace embroiderers are not always popular among the power holders, organic intellectuals, and the cultural industry. Reconciling the assumed dualistic worldview in human nature and in society is the prerequisite to building peace. Peace can be achieved through a new generation who "unite profound spirituality, diverse knowledge, a scientific temperament, and wise activism." (Gülen 2004b, 82)

CONCLUSION

The world has produced educators who have been able to generate insights that have transcended communities and cultures. Fethullah Gülen is such an educator whose ideas and activism transcend borders and boundaries. His love- and human-centric worldview have found audience among the peoples of different cultures and creeds to rediscover common human nature; celebrate the differences as the source of creativity and dynamism; and engage in collective efforts to address cultural and structural injustices.

Addressing anti-foreigner sentiments across western Europe necessitates diagnosing the illness or locating the root causes of these sentiments. As is the case in medical sciences, if the antibodies are not effective in tackling the disease, then external help (e.g. medicine) needs to be introduced. Does western Europe recognize that the spreading far-right xenophobic mindset is produced by the current materialist and secular worldview? The socially produced indifference and widespread nature of discrimination towards the culturally distinct Muslim others, from public school curricula to employment opportunities, needs urgent yet effective and long lasting solutions. This also necessitates that western Europe leave aside pride and their “we have the best attitude” to look outside for a cure beyond its borders. This taking an external cure from other cultures, nonetheless, needs to be differentiated from the current practice of borrowing non-European concepts, stripping them off of their cultural and traditional richness, and fitting them into the grand system of European thought and practice to add exotic flavor to it.

The EU immigration policies are not attuned to addressing anti-foreigner sentiments and removing boundaries between majority and minority communities. Making it a requirement for the immigrants to adapt to and abide by the host society’s formal norms are essential, yet enforcing them to adopt host society’s moral norms and lifeways cannot be compulsory. The

overall immigration policies of the European Union and the member states in western Europe based on assimilation under fancy terms such as civic integration, acculturation, and enculturation are discriminatory and thus, constitute structural violence. The immigration policies of western European countries need to move from mainstreaming the culturally distinct others to working towards changing the perceptions of both the majority and minority communities in order to ensure that every community is tolerant and hospitable to all creeds and cultures. This, however, necessitate a radical change in how one views oneself and others.

The peace of the world hinges on adopting and spreading an all-inclusive worldview. The idea of civilization that emerged in western Europe is based on social stratification (e.g. hierarchical relations between the self and other) and binary division and this division, undergoing changes throughout centuries, has produced conflicting visions of Europe: an inclusive one and an exclusive one. In a world where distances are removed, the future of Europe is dependent on which of the visions will take precedent.

Anti-foreigner sentiments do not only discriminate against culturally distinct communities and produce structural violence, but more importantly also gloss over the uniqueness of human beings by lumping them together as stereotypical collectivities. Each human being is a realm unto herself. From fingerprints to scent, from eyes to aura, each human being is distinct from the rest of humanity. Any attempt to erase or fail to recognize this invaluable uniqueness needs to be considered a threat to the inherent plurality of humanity.

Western European cultures' eastern and especially Islamic origin has been -to a major extent- denied in academic circles of Europe. This denial of the past exchanges and common roots is cultural violence. The mindset of denying the collective nature of building cultures and traditions marginalizes other communities, cultures, and creeds, and therefore, fosters the

European exceptionalism. This is a major obstacle in the face of recognizing the culturally distinct others as equal fellow human beings and in creating public space to accommodate them without forcing them to adapt to European lifeways.

Western Europe needs to learn to accommodate religions and religious practices. Religion has been pushed to the margins of public domain. Secular worldview on the other hand fails to give the youth a transcended vision and a life of meaning and dedication. Far-right extremist youth are not unique cases, on the contrary the xenophobic far-right extremist ideas are spreading among the public and influencing the public offices. The prevailing idea among these youth to ostracize the different ones has the potential to undermine the European Union and national unity as this intolerance shown for the culturally distinct others would look for other outlets and lead to internal division.

Islam, in the contemporary world, is seen by many Muslim and European intellectuals as an ideology rather than a religion. Muslims have been using Islam as a driving force of resurgence movements to challenge Colonial powers, despotic regimes, and revive the Muslim society through political activism. Western European states in the past and today in their interactions with the west Asian countries have encountered Islam as the driving force behind resistance. The failure to recognize Islam as a religion had its background already in medieval Christian Europe. The common argument among the intellectual circles of Europe as to whether Islam is compatible with democracy and European values is the proof that Islam is not being viewed in Europe as a religion but as an ideology. The historical bias towards Islam and the suffocating religious authority over public life in medieval Europe make wholeheartedly embracing the culturally distinct Muslim others a difficult task. The cultural, intellectual, moral, and religious collective deficit Muslim communities have fallen into in the last few centuries

further complicates the accommodation and acceptance of these Muslims by European majority communities.

The core values of Europe such as freedom, democracy, tolerance, inclusion, respect for human and minority rights made European positive achievements possible. Backsliding from and making concessions on them in the face of global changes and cultural, economic, and political tribulations carry the seed of undoing these achievements. The tendency to stay silent in the face of mass human rights violations as is the current case with Turkey to preserve economic gains and political interest will raise doubt among non-Europeans regarding western European democracies' commitment to their core values and whether these values are valid only within the communautaire and are not applicable to others.

Fethullah Gülen is an opportunity for western Europe. He is a Sunni Muslim scholar. His religious worldview is hospitable to modern world. He uses modern ideas to critique and re-interpret the religious values and practices and he employs religious values to critically evaluate modernity in order to reach to best possible synthesis of the traditional and the modern (Alexander 2015). On the one hand, he undertakes re-evaluating traditional understanding to make it part of the 21st century world, and on the other hand his thought and practice aim to add humane aspect to educational activism, economic endeavors, and social life. He achieves this through people who form the volunteers of the Hizmet movement active in over one hundred and eighty countries across the globe. Hizmet aims to achieve social transformation through personal transformation. The volunteers of Hizmet, having found themselves at home in the modern world and yet remaining true to their traditions, have reached out to peoples of different cultures and ethnicities and creeds of all and none, to contribute to a more humane and peaceful world.

In the philosophy of Gülen, education is a life-long process of transformation. Acquiring laudable qualities and striving to become perfect human beings is the aim of education. Where he differs from the modern secular education is his insistence on aiming to address and nurture all major human faculties, the mind, heart, conscience, body, and senses in order to achieve complete transformation. Failing to nurture all human faculties has produced giant physicists and politicians who are dwarfs ethically and conscience-wise, thus leading to the perpetration of major atrocities (Goytisoló 1992). The 21st century lacks role models, morally competent, intellectually mature, and spiritually cultivated human beings who can set the standard for especially the new generations to follow. Unfortunately, many of today's youth have celebrities, who in many cases instead of being followed are in need of psychological support, as their role models. The act and process of education cannot be considered as a job and as a means to make a living. Education is a life-long dedication. Educators are the ones who remove borders and boundaries, whose hearts are brimming with love and compassion, and who are committed to reaching out to everyone near and far to facilitate their personal flourishing. For these educators representation -and not presentation- is the mode of teaching.

Addressing cultural and structural violence has been the main focus of Hizmet educational activities. By providing opportunities for the children from financially stringent families and culturally distinct communities to pursue secondary and higher education in Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Pakistan, South Africa, the Philippines, Kenya, Nigeria and in many other divided or violence-struck societies across the globe, the Hizmet movement has aimed to address the root cause of prejudice and social injustice. The Hizmet movement, even though less established in western European countries when compared with the US and other parts of the world, has been working to educate the minority community children through private

schools and cultural centers and to contribute to social cohesion through interfaith and intercultural dialogue activities.

Hizmet volunteers have remained non-violent in the wake of mass human rights violations in Turkey. The movement is considered as a terrorist organization by the dictatorial Erdogan-led Turkish government. Tens of thousands of individuals affiliated with Hizmet have been summarily dismissed from their jobs, imprisoned and tortured, and their properties and businesses have been confiscated. Heeding the clear and constant suggestions of Gülen, the volunteers of Hizmet, even though facing state-perpetrated mass human rights violations in Turkey since 2014, continue to engage in civil resistance and show their commitment to non-violence.

The groundwork of addressing xenophobia and building peace cannot be in the political arena, but within the individual. How the individual sees oneself and others, and how the individual views differences existing among human beings and cultures is the starting point. Therefore, any attempt to address xenophobia needs to start changing self-perception and the perception of others. Failing to recognize that human beings are part of the cosmos, that nothing is in vain and everything in the cosmos is a valuable component of an interconnected and interdependent whole, then it becomes easy for human beings to assume they are separate from the nature and to start exploiting it. Failing to recognize that human nature is sacred and that all human beings are forming a grand yet single family, engenders human communities afflicted with racism, ethnic and religious clashes, class struggles, and gender-based atrocities.

Compassion is the reason behind existence. It is the thread that connects and unites all of creation. One's humanity is commensurate with the compassion one has for creation. Compassion is selfless love for existence, is a consciousness to embrace, care for, facilitate the

needs of, comfort the grievances, and assist the flourishing of everything and everyone. Compassion calls for altruistic activism and each one is dependent on the other. Compassion without altruistic activism is incomplete and altruistic activism without compassion is a veil for serving one's own interests. Therefore, those who live materialistic and selfish lives are unaware of this cosmic interconnectedness and live lives devoid of the most tender feelings.

Peace is closely linked with justice. Nevertheless, this justice is not the current idea of secular justice. Justice is the totality of balance within which the cosmos is sustained. Peace can prevail in a society comprised of individuals who live balanced lives. This balance cannot be reduced to secular terms. In other words, balance cannot be set in social life without taking the sacred as the standard. Moral values set the standard and have their roots in revealed knowledge. Therefore, the peace of the world is dependent on individuals who settle accounts with their conscience by making their conscience oversee and regulate their senses, body, and intellectual faculties; appreciate the differences in creation and consider these differences as intrinsic; and consider existence as sacred and therefore regard their physical, social, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing and prosperity as inalienable. Achieving global peace requires collective work of all cultures and creeds to work together to produce a peace language or a global ethic.

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