

DR. MUHAMMED BABACAN

ISLAM PHOBIA AND TURKISH IDENTITY

EXPLORING Identity Strategies of Young Turks in Britain



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Muhammed Babacan received his Masters (2016) and PhD degrees (2022) in Sociology from University of Bristol. He gave lectures on “Sociology in Global Context” and “Thinking Sociologically” at the same university. Babacan is a member of the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship, which is part of the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies at University of Bristol, where he also gave various seminars on his academic studies. He is conducting research activities in the areas of racism, Islamophobia, ethnicity, migration, and nationalism. With each topic, he is interested in the ways in which ordinary people reproduce the forms of collective belonging in their everyday lives. Since July 2022, he has been continuing his academic activities at Social Sciences University of Ankara.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADD –	Ataturkist Thought Association
AKP –	Justice and Development Party
APPGBM –	All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims
BME –	Black and Minority Ethnic
BRISOC –	University of Bristol Islamic Society
BSA –	British Sociological Association
CHP –	Republican People’s Party
CMEB –	Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain
CNN –	Cable News Network
EDF –	English Defence League
EUMC –	European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
GLA –	Greater London Authority
IAKM –	England Alevi Cultural Centre and Cemevi
IPT –	Identity Process Theory
LGBT –	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans
MAMA –	Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks
MFA –	Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MUSIAD –	Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen
NPCC –	National Police Chief’s Council
NSS –	National Secular Society
ONS –	Office of National Statistics
PKK –	Kurdistan Workers’ Party
SIT –	Social Identity Theory
TUSU –	Turkish Student Union of the UK
UETD –	Union of European Turkish Democrats
UK –	United Kingdom
US –	United States
USA –	United States of America

PREFACE

My academic interest in studying Islamophobia and identity strategies emerged out of both my personal experience of moving from a predominantly Turkish-Muslim country to an ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse London borough and my observations and determinations regarding young Turks in Britain during my Master in 2016 at the University of Bristol. In different stages of my life in Britain I either lived, worked, or socialized with young Turks and young Muslims from other ethnic backgrounds, having some opportunities to observe various identity practices in the British context. These early encounters gave me initial thoughts about the young Turks' identity practices against the outsiders' perceptions. I will tell, however, two main stories that channelled my academic interest in studying Islamophobia and identity.

The first story is based on my unscheduled conversation with young Muslim students from the University of Bristol at a mosque in Bristol in June 2016, during the fasting days of Ramadan for Muslims. These students were also members of one of the university's student groups, the University of Bristol Islamic Society (BRISOC). After breaking our fast, we had a conversation regarding our social lives both in British society and at the university. One of the most remarkable points that emerged in our conversation, which lasted about an hour and a half, was that Islamophobia was a serious issue for them. This was remarkable because Islamophobia was not raised as an issue in my interviews with young Turks carried out just two months ago in both Bristol and London in order to collect data for my master's thesis that aimed to explore how youths construct their ethnic identity by looking at their relationships with the family, the Turkish community and the host society. Another point that drew my attention was that Turkish students, as also stated by the young Muslims I had the conversation at the mosque with, did not prefer to subscribe to the BRISOC and participate in its events. I later found out that this is the case for Turkish students in almost all universities in the UK. There are exceptions, but not enough to change the general tendency among Turkish students. Instead of being a member of religious-based Islamic societies at universities, they prefer establishing their own community, Turkish society. On the one hand, Muslim students from different ethnic groups come together and do various social, cultural, and religious activities, on the other hand, Turkish students organise activities among themselves. In this respect, there were two questions arising out of this story that channelled my academic interest in focusing on Islamophobia and identity practices developed against it among the young Turks in Britain: 1) While the Muslim students raised the effects of Islamophobia on their everyday lives in an unscheduled conversation, why did the young Turks I interviewed for my master's thesis not raise it when they talked about their relationships with the host society? 2) While many young Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds come together around religion, why do young Turks, who are thought to be part of

the Muslim society in the UK, prefer to gather around the Turkish ethnic group rather than with those Muslims?

About a year later, in the second month of my Ph.D. program, another question was added to the previous ones through a story of my second-generation female Turkish friend in Bristol, but this story involved, at the same time, very exciting anticipation as to what identity strategies young Turks in the UK could develop against Islamophobia. This story was about her decision to no longer wear a headscarf. When my wife and I met up with her at a café in Bristol after a month-long break, the first thing that drew our attention was that she had taken off her headscarf. For a new Ph.D. student who had just begun to read studies on Islamophobia in the UK in order to design his research project, the desire to find out the reason/s behind this decision was so exciting. However, I was also aware that it was a sensitive issue and thus I could do nothing but hope that she would open the issue herself. Luckily, she decided to tell us why she took it off. She said that when she went out wearing a headscarf, she felt lonely in the crowd, the headscarf made her feel like a minority in the society, and that made her feel anxious. While driving in traffic, she was disturbed by people's gaze, and she thought it was because of her headscarf. Recently, she was worried that there would be a reaction against her by British society because of the terrorist attacks in London. She was also worried that when she applied for a job, her application would be rejected for wearing the headscarf. She recounted that the only way she could get rid of all these negative thoughts was to take the headscarf off because she believed when she took it off, she would no longer be on target. Interestingly, while she did not state that she experienced an overt form of Islamophobia, wearing it gave her fear that she would experience it one day. But the more remarkable point was her answer to my questions. When I asked her 'Well, have you encountered any problems since the day you took off your headscarf? Do you think the only problem was the headscarf for you?', she said, 'Nobody stares at me anymore when I go out because I think they do not recognise if I am a Muslim or a Turk. Some of my English friends even told me that I look English because of my white-skinned and blonde hair.' This was a unique answer in relation to Islamophobia because the literature on Islamophobia did not examine enough how its targets talk about and respond to Islamophobia through developing various identity strategies.

Accordingly, these two stories showed me that there was a considerable gap in the literature regarding how the supposed victims of Islamophobia experience, perceive, and respond to Islamophobia. These stories further suggest that while Islamophobia envisages a collective Muslim group who have the same religious beliefs, shared culture and ethnicity, Muslim groups in Britain may be targeted by Islamophobia in a different context and develop different identity strategies by considering their distinctive historical, political, ethnic, cultural, and religious legacies. Therefore, I aimed to fill the gaps in the Islamophobia literature on these issues, taking into consideration a population that has been so far under-researched, i.e., young Turks in London.

Over the long time that I have been working on this book, I have been supported in various ways by many individuals and organisations. Firstly, and most importantly, I would like to thank the people who chose to participate in this study for the time and effort that they dedicated to this project. I am very grateful to my supervisors, Professor Tariq Modood and Professor Jon Fox for their time, guidance, constructive feedback, and invaluable advice. Thank you for their patience with my impatience. Thank you for believing in this project, and their willingness to let me set my own pace of work. I am indebted to Professor Ejder Okumuş for his editorial help and ongoing academic support. Special thanks to the Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education for the scholarship they have provided to me to pursue this work. I would also like to thank the University of Bristol School of Sociology, Politics, and International Studies, which financially supported my presentations at conferences. Huge thanks go to my colleagues at SPAIS, University of Bristol. They have created a very supportive community that I have had a pleasure to be a part of. In particular, I would like to thank my officemates, Carlos, Samir, Fouzia, Pankhuri, Alessio, Juntao, Karina, Chuka, Natalie, Julio, Magda, Deogratius for their friendship, support and encouragement through my difficult times in this academic marathon.

This book is dedicated to my family. To my parents, Abdullah and Zeynep for their enduring emotional supports and prayers. To my wife, Sara, for her tremendous sacrifices and support that enabled me to find the strength and motivation to maintain my studies. Finally, to my delightful son, Eyup, who brought joy and happiness into our life.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

'The thing is my name. In Britain, if I said I am British, people will ask me "No, where are you really from?" For me, it means they want to categorise where I am from. Thus, I understand how they are stereotyping me.' (Rumeysa¹, interview 2019)

'I do not believe that we have much in common with the people from the Middle East. They are idiots. They make no sense. Firstly, we are whiter than them. Secondly, they are backward-minded. They have a lot of nonsensical views.' (Recep, interview 2019)

'They [the English] think they are perfect. There is not any perfect country, but they are always saying that they are superior – that they are powerful. For example, in secondary school, there was only English history. It was all about seeing themselves above us [i.e., the rest of the world]. If you keep telling me that you are superior, sorry, but I would say we [Turks] are far superior to you. That bothers me.' (Hasan, interview 2019)

1 Introduction

Islamophobia scholars, policymakers, and public and private sector stakeholders alike continue to draw attention to the increased hostility, hate crimes, discrimination, and scrutiny that British Muslims, especially youth, are experiencing in society. Many studies have addressed the issue of Islamophobia, but few have revealed its pervasive effect on young British Muslims and their responses to it. The impetus for this book emerged from the need to make visible the perceptions, experiences, and feelings of young Turks in Britain in relation to Islamophobia and, more specifically, to analyse discursive identity strategies² they develop to cope with Islamophobia. Consequently, this book seeks to explore the following questions: How do the young Turks perceive and represent Islamophobia? Do they see themselves as the targets of Islamophobia? How is Islamophobia at work in their everyday lives? How do they perceive they are racialised? Do they think that their identity is threatened or not properly understood, or do they feel provoked into taking a stand? What kind of identity strategies do they develop in response to Islamophobia? To what extent are distinctive legacies of Turkish identity drawn upon by the young Turks when they talk about Islamophobia? How does Islamophobia affect their attitudes and feelings towards ethnic, national, and religious identities? Using a data-driven inductive approach, this study adopts a qualitative approach to answering these questions. Semi-structured interviews, a demographic survey, and a thematic analysis were used to explore answers to these questions among 39 first and second-generation young Turks in London.

¹ All participants have been assigned pseudonyms.

² By strategy, I do not mean a self-conscious or instrumentally minded process. I mean a pattern of behaviour, a pattern of responding to circumstances. It is just the way the young Turks think, their internalised dispositions about how the world operates.

This chapter is organised as follows. I begin by sharing my personal interest regarding Islamophobia and discursive identity strategies around it. Next, I move to outline my research problem, which I situate within the existing literature on Islamophobia, and various identity strategies employed by minority groups and immigrants to manage discrimination of race, ethnicity, nation, and religion. I then briefly present a background to the case study by describing the Turkish migration history, the size of the Turkish population, their settlement pattern, identity negotiations of the young Turks in the current literature and discussing why this study should be carried out in this community.

1.1 Research problem

I am interested in exploring how young Turks in Britain perceive, experience, and feel Islamophobia, and, more importantly, exploring what identity strategies they have developed in response to Islamophobia. Over the last decades, Muslims in the UK have had intense public and political scrutiny, Islamophobic hostility, hate crimes, and discrimination (e.g. Runnymede Trust, 1997, 2017; Allen, 2004; Pew Research Centre, 2016). At the centre of today's perceptions in Western societies about Muslims, there are rigid boundaries between the Western modern, secular, and liberal democracy and the European way of life, and Muslims who are characterised as threatening those Western values. Especially right-wing political parties, politicians and media elites have manufactured fear of Islam and Muslims and promoted the insurmountable cultural differences and focused on the idea that Muslims, especially youth, are an unpatriotic fifth column, terrorist, and threat for Western modern and secular democracy, emancipation, freedom of speech, integration, multiculturalism, British identity, feminism, law and order, etc. (Abbas, 2005; Birt, 2009; Hussain and Bagguley, 2012; Gilewicz, 2012). The denigrating images of Muslims emerge not just in the policies of the War on Terror and securitization of Muslims in the West but have become part of everyday discourse and popular culture (Opratto, 2017), such that media-politician relations have created an environment in which racism against Muslims has been perpetuated, and they have been racialised through the inscriptions of culturally, religiously, and ethnically constructed "Otherness." Accordingly, numerous studies suggest that British society is becoming more Islamophobic, and Muslims, especially youth, in Britain have been its victims.

The evidence of Islamophobia, however, is not necessarily the best predictor of actual ways in which the young Muslims in Britain themselves describe and valorise their perceptions and experiences of and further responses to Islamophobia. In addition, the Islamophobic judgments on British Muslims often do not make a distinction between ethnic groups, assuming they are all radically Islamist, culturalist, conservative and thus not parts of the Western civilisation (Birt, 2009; El Amrani, 2012). Muslim communities in Britain, however, are heterogeneous (Moodood, 2005) and thus have distinctive ethnic, cultural, national, racial, and religious characteristics. Therefore, they may experience and understand Islamophobia in different ways and develop different identity strategies to respond to Islam-

ophobia by considering their distinctive legacies. Accordingly, taking into account the British context and the distinctive legacies within the British Muslim communities, I focus my research on exploring Islamophobia and identity practices developed against it from the perspective of one of the supposed victims of Islamophobia, i.e., young Turks in Britain. By exploring Islamophobia from their perspective, I contribute to the literature on how Muslims perceive Islamophobia, how Islamophobia manifests (in overt forms or covert forms) and Muslims have been racialised in their everyday lives, and more importantly, what kind of identity strategies they develop to cope with Islamophobia.

In this research, in light of the contributions of the existing literature on Islamophobia I approach Islamophobia in a broader context of racism and define it as cultural racism. I contribute to the literature on what the supposed victims of Islamophobia themselves think about the roles of media and politicians on Islamophobia. I further consider important the view of studies on the racialisation of Muslims that Muslims have been racialised in a range of different ways in which their racialisation produces material dimensions such as Muslim clothing, Muslim names, and ethnicity envisioned as signifiers of Islam or Muslim identity (e.g. Garner and Selod, 2015; Zempi and Awan, 2017; Selod, 2018). However, while the literature on Islamophobia has focused enough on its overt forms of manifestation in the lives of Muslims (e.g. Kunst *et al.*, 2011; Perry, 2014; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2015), there is little research examining its covert forms. In this regard, in order to better understand Islamophobia experiences of the young Turks and contribute to the literature on its covert forms, I pay regard to the view on everyday racism that racism as an expression of power relations is reproduced and reinforced through daily discourse and practices that often manifest in interactions without it being overt (Essed, 1991). I do not look for independent evidence of Islamophobia but explore it through the perception of my chosen group.

The most important contribution of my research to the literature on Islamophobia, however, is to explore how the young Turks talk about and what kind of identity discourses and strategies they employ to respond to Islamophobia. The scholarship on Islamophobia has focused heavily on its meaning (e.g. Runnymede Trust, 1997, 2017; Allen, 2010; Sayyid, 2011), the roles of media and politicians (e.g. Rahman, 2007; Ali, 2008), and, in part, the experiences of Muslims (e.g. Perry, 2014; Moosavi, 2015; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2015). However, this does not tell us much about the effects of Islamophobia on the various identities of the supposed victims of Islamophobia and the identity strategies that they employ to overcome its effects, to reduce, and potentially reverse, the status degradations (Lee-Treweek 2010; Fox *et al.*, 2015). The fact is that individuals are not simply passive victims of discrimination, but, crucially, they become more dynamic once they feel, in some ways, threatened or not properly understood. There is a rich body of literature on various identity strategies employed by some minority groups and immigrants to manage discrimination based on race, ethnicity, nation, and religion (e.g. Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 2005; Meer, 2010; Fox, 2013; Martinovic and Verkuyten, 2012; Bonino, 2017). Some of these identity strategies invoke and reinforce in-

group identification amongst minority and immigrant members. As social-psychological studies suggest, once individuals' group identity is threatened, they may react to the perceived inferiority through claiming a strong identification with the devalued, rejected in-group in order to obtain a positive social identity (e.g. Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Hutnik, 1991; Verkuyten, 1997; Rumbaut, 2004; Moroşanu and Fox, 2013). Alternatively, however, minority and immigrant members can see group boundaries as relatively permeable the way in which they can develop discursive identity strategies to fend off the accusations by dissociating themselves from the victimised ingroup (e.g. Taylor and McKirman, 1984; Ignatiev, 1995; Martinovic and Verkuyten, 2012; Fox, 2013).

Taking into account the existing scholarship on various identity strategies against discrimination amongst minority and immigrant groups, I have anticipated two conceptual possibilities of identity strategies to Islamophobia amongst the young Turks in the UK: reactive identity strategies and avoidance identity strategies. In the former identity strategies, I anticipate that they may defensively challenge Islamophobia through claiming a strong Muslim identification or Turkish identification or feeling de-identification with British identity. In the later identity strategies, I argue that they may detach Islamophobia from themselves and deflect it onto other Muslim groups. Here, they may distinguish themselves from them and further judge them racially and claim their putative whiteness, Britishness, Europeaness and secular way of life in the light of historical implications of Turkish identity. Having said that my interview questions have an explorative nature for any other possible identity strategies that the young Turks may develop in response to Islamophobia. Thus, with this research, I attempt to contribute to the literature on the various identity strategies developed by minority and immigrant groups from different backgrounds in order to manage different forms of discrimination.

1.2 Background to the case study

1.2.1 Turkish migration history

The Turkish diaspora makes up one of the largest immigrant communities in Western Europe. It is mainly formed by three basic sub-communities called 'Turkish-speaking people': Turks, Kurds, and Turkish Cypriots. The migration patterns of the Turkish-speaking people in Europe reflect different reasons and times. Although the majority live in Germany, there is a significant number settled in the UK.

The oldest community in Britain amongst Turkish-speaking people is Turkish Cypriots who initiated migration between 1933 and 1955 (Sonyel, 1988; Oakley, 1989) initially for primarily economic reasons and later because of political tensions in Cyprus in the 1970s. The first migration movement from Turkey to Britain mainly began with the bilateral agreement struck between the two countries in 1970 (Kucukcan, 1999; Mehmet Ali, 2001). However, the labour migration to the UK remained at extremely low levels compared to Germany, the Netherlands and France. In contrast with these three countries, Britain became one of the centres of

political immigration from Turkey that began in the 1970s and 1980s (Kucukcan, 1999). As well as these, many more Kurdish people from Turkey began to immigrate to Britain in the mid-1980s because of the conflict between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Turkish state. They sought political asylum in the UK and ultimately were admitted as refugees (M. Ali, 2001; Kirişçi, 2003; Sirkeci and Erdogan, 2012). From 23 June 1989 to begin the visa application for the entry of Turkish citizens, Britain has launched a new policy for Turkish nationals. After the change of immigrant admission rules, visa and border control policies, immigration to Britain under the Ankara Agreement³ (also known as Turkish Businessperson Visa) has become the most common way.

Like nearly all other immigrant minorities, the communities of Turks, Kurds, and Cypriot Turks are mostly settled in London (Atay, 2010). According to the 2011 Census, 53% of those people live in North London, particularly in the boroughs of Enfield, Haringey, Hackney, Islington, Waltham Forest, and Barnet (ONS, 2013). The Turkish-speaking community in Enfield is the largest group after the White British (Uysal, 2016). Moreover, while left-wing Kurdish people have settled down mainly in Haringey, Stoke Newington and Dalston, most of Turks who are mainly right-wing nationalists have settled in Newington Green which is around Green Lanes in North London where they have also established their businesses, social, cultural and religious community organisations including Turkish Mosques and supplementary schools (Simsek, 2012).

The settlement pattern of Turkish-speaking immigrants shows that social networks, kinship, and patronage relations have sustained the concentration of the Turkish-speaking people in the same boroughs of London (Kucukcan, 2009). Although there is ethnic (e.g. Turks, Kurds, and Cypriot Turks) and religious (e.g. Sunni Islam and Alevism) differences as well as cultural, social and political/ideological differences in some respects among the Turkish-speaking community (Simsek, 2012; Cakmak, 2018), they have lived and worked in the same areas. Simsek (2012) argues that the reason they choose to live in the same areas might be related to their desire to be closer to other community members, their relatives, workplaces, and not being able to speak English. While this situation can make them feel isolated from the mainstream, with the concentration of their houses, workplaces, community centres, children's schools, and shops, they construct their

³ Ever since its foundation, Turkey has chosen to follow a Western model in economic, political, and social structures with the aim of reaching the level of contemporary civilisations, thereby, the desire for a deeper cooperation with Europe has become increasingly entrenched in the spirit of the Turkish state. In this direction, on 31 July 1959 Turkey made its first application for association with European Economic Community (EEC) shortly after its creation in 1958. After the council of ministers of EEC accepted Turkey's application, on 12 September 1963 both parties signed the 'Agreement Creating an Association between the Republic of Turkey and the European Economic Community' (famously known as the 'Ankara Agreement') which came into force on 1 December 1964 (MFA, 2020). Ankara Agreement is, at the same time, a type of visa that provides the right for the citizens of countries with a cooperation agreement with the European Union to establish their own business in the UK and to apply for a UK permanent residence.

own socio-cultural space and create community solidarity and internal integration (Cetin, 2013).

It is hard to estimate how many Turks, Kurds, and Cypriot Turks currently live in the UK as there is no consensus between the official data and the estimates of researchers. According to the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the number of Turkish populations in the UK is 400,000 (MFA, 2021). Sirkeci et al (2016) argue that while many believe that the number of Turks, Kurds and Turkish Cypriots in the UK is approximately 500,000, some even go further suggesting only Cypriot Turks are that many. On the other hand, the only official data is based on the Census taken place in 2011. According to the Census, the total number of Turks (101,721), Kurds (48,977) and Cypriot Turks (19,073) is 169,771. Having said that, this number includes only write-in responses. The main reason for this controversial situation regarding the number of Turkish-speaking people is that these communities have not been included in the list of the ethnic groups recommended so far in the UK's censuses. The last data provided above, for instance, only includes 'write-in responses' on the 'Any other ethnic group' option in the 2011 census. Although people are given the option to type in their ethnicity if they do not identify with any groups in the list, this has made the situation much more complicated in the case of Turks. As a result, Turks, for instance, may have identified themselves with different ethnic categories such as mixed, multiple, British, Asian/Asian British or typing as Turkish, Turkish-British, White-Turkish or White-Turkish-British.

1.2.2 The young Turks in London: Identity negotiations and Islamophobia

The everyday life experiences of the Turkish young people in London move around their family, community, school, workplace, local environment, social networks and so on (Simsek, 2012). When social and cultural circles of people change, then the ways they construct their identities presumably vary. In that respect, abandoning one place and moving to another social setting is not only a displacement in space but, most importantly, a change of social, cultural, political, and economic conditions (Le Bris, 1989/90 cited in Leloup, 1996).

According to Simsek (2012), young Turkish-speaking people, especially second generations, in London have different ideas, feelings, and perceptions about their ways of life, cultures and ethnic backgrounds that surround them and thus their social interaction with the society. While some strongly hold onto their ethnic background in the multicultural society, others believe in the necessity of learning from both cultures. Because of this conflict, the young generation experiences hybrid identities 'as a third space'. Kucukcan's (1999) findings suggest the view that there are emergent identity formations among the second generation in the way in which identities are formed by local, European based perceptions, emerging German-Turkish, Dutch-Turkish, British-Turkish, and so on. According to Faas (2009: 180), Turkish youth in Europe had no singular identity but 'employed hybrid ethno-national, ethno-local and national-European identities as a result of their national location and, especially, schooling and social class positioning (rather than migration histories)'. Enneli's (2001) study, on the other hand, suggests

that the young Turkish people in Britain do not usually adopt hybrid identities. This is because they believe that being born in this country does not mean that they become British in the cultural sense (though her study is now over twenty years old). The situation of the Turkish-speaking minority group, in this context, has a contextual and complex aspect. In social science discourse, it is therefore spoken of 'shifting identity' or 'contextual ethnicity.' (Baumann, 1999).

The literature on the identity formation of young Turks in London suggests that Islam is one of the most important markers in the self-definition of most Turkish people. Kucukcan (2009: 97), for instance, suggests that 'Islam is one of the indispensable components of Turkish/Cypriot identity. Even those who defined themselves as 'not religious' or 'nominal' Muslims, feel that religion has had a public and private influence on the formation of Turkish identity.' Enneli *et al.* (2005) argue that the Turkish youth do not observe themselves as part of a Muslim group, but rather, some consider their religious identity as a natural extension of their ethnic identity. In that sense, Turkish identity, ethnicity, and Islam are closely intertwined and cannot be easily separated from one another (Kucukcan, 2009). This understanding is the product of a historical process. While the historical implication of Turkish identity contains a strong emphasise on the idea of Islam, it also reflects unique national and ethnic legacies firmly and concretely shaped through the instruments of modernisation, secularism, whiteness, Westernisation and so on (Gole, 1997; Ozakpinar, 1998; Cagaptay, 2006; Bozdaglioglu, 2008). The new young Turkish state established in 1923 as the successor state of the Ottoman Empire, spent much of its time rebuilding the country through reforms in accordance with a secular nation-state based on the Western model. When secularism pushed the Islamic faith out of society, nominal Islam became central to the Turkish nation as its culture and identity (Cagaptay, 2006). One could assert that it was not a conflict between secularism or westernism and Islam, but rather a clash between what was to be the main marker of the Turkish society: an Islamic identity which was faith-based but also welcoming of other Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds or Turkishness which strongly emphasised ethnic and national based identity, by drawing sharp boundaries between Turkish people and Islamic Middle Eastern civilisation. Accordingly, the literature on the young Turks in the UK shows that they have embraced the nominal Islam shaped through the instruments of secularism and modernisation and intertwined by Turkish culture and ethnicity.

The evidence from previous research further indicates that some young Turkish people experienced discrimination, harassment, marginalisation in the labour market, in the workplace, at school and in other parts of British society. While the first-generation young people are struggling with many disadvantages in social, cultural, and economic inclusion into the receiving society, the second generations have been affected principally by socio-economic class and ethnic background of their family, settlement choices in London, and finding jobs in the labour market, even if they have been educated in Britain, speak English and have good social relations with persons beyond their ethnic group (Enneli *et al.*, 2005; Enneli and

Modood, 2009; Simsek, 2012; Tanyas, 2016). It is evident from the study of Enneli and Modood (2009) that Turkish young people usually found employment within their ethnic enclave because they could not get a job outside of the community. Some believed that when they applied for a job and gave their CVs to workplaces, shop managers dismissed their applications because of the names on the CVs.

The literature, however, notes that under these negative circumstances, the young Turks prefer to have a mutual interaction with and feel strong emotional attachments to people from their own ethnic backgrounds. The main reason for that is that the Turkish community in London has been strengthened and kept alive through strong kinship relations and cultural, religious, and political organisations and thus those all play a crucial role in the construction and maintenance of young Turks' identity in Britain (Kucukcan, 1999; Yalcin, 2000; Enneli, 2001; Communities and Local Government, 2009; Simsek, 2012). Simsek (2012) argues that the emotional attachment that makes them feel more comfortable, more secure and solidaristic as well as reducing the feeling of strangeness can be only explained by shared culture, language, religion and so on. For that reason, the identity formation process of the people cannot be eliminated easily and further it is difficult to completely ignore the effects of the primordial attachments (Geertz, 1973) on it 'because of others' reminding' (Yalcin, 2000: 268).

This research aims to fill the gaps in the literature on Islamophobia and identity strategies developed against it, taking into consideration a population that has been so far under-researched, i.e., young Turks in London. When looking at the literature on the Turkish community in Britain, it shows that studies on the identity issues of young Turks in Britain have focused particularly on the roles of family, culture, and social, cultural, and religious community organisations on identity construction (Kucukcan, 1999, 2009; Yalcin, 2000; Enneli, 2001; Costu, 2009; Simsek, 2012; Akdemir, 2016). Kucukcan (1999), the disadvantages of being a migratory youth (Enneli, 2001; Enneli *et al.*, 2005; Enneli and Modood, 2009), educational problems and generational differences (Kucukcan, 1999, Enneli, 2001), the role of transnational social spaces in the formation of identity (Enneli, 2001; Simsek, 2012; Akdemir, 2016), ethnic identity development and mental health (Cavdar, 2020), identity and integration (Cilingir, 2010), and identity formation and perceptions of Europe (Faas, 2009). In this respect, the literature has neglected the Islamophobia experiences of the young Turks, its effects on their ethnic, national, and religious identities, and how they respond to it. To date, there has been no specific study which examines Islamophobia among not only young Turks but also of any Turkish community or in general in the UK. Not even a specific study has been found that assesses whether Turks in Britain have been targeted by Islamophobia or not.

However, several studies are focusing on Islamophobia among Turkish communities in other European countries which suggest that the Turks have been targeted by Islamophobia (e.g. Hopkins, 2008; Erturk, 2014; Yildiz and Verkuyten, 2012; Kunst *et al.*, 2013; Bayrakli and Hafez, 2016, 2017) and other sorts of discrimination (e.g. Celik, 2015; Latcheva and Punzenberger, 2016; Witte, 2018;

Thijssen *et al.*, 2021; Colak *et al.*, 2020; de Jong and Duybendak, 2021). These studies also signify that for the young Turkish people in Britain, negotiating their self-identity has been happening at the same time as having an ascribed Muslim identity which includes various negative stereotypical images and ascriptions and is constructed as an essentializing form of “Othering” by dominant outsiders (Moodood, 2017). This further means that the identity process for the young Turks is not just in relation to their relationships with their family and community, but also in relation to the outsider attitudes, treatment, and perceptions and their responses to these through employing various identity strategies. Thus, with this research, I make contributions to the literature on Muslim studies in Britain in general and Turkish studies in particular by exploring perceptions, experiences and feelings of Islamophobia, and more importantly, various identity strategies developed against it through the lens of the young Turks in Britain.

1.3 Book overview

My book is formed of eight chapters. The second chapter offers a review of the literature on Islamophobia and possible identity strategies that my participants might develop against Islamophobia. I argue that Islamophobia is a form of cultural racism and it manifests not only in its overt forms but also in its covert forms. I then focus on conceptualisation of possible identity practices against Islamophobia among the young Turks in the light of current literature on various identity strategies of migrants and minorities and the distinctive features of Turkish identity.

In chapter three, I describe and explain the research process I followed to create the data upon which the research is based. This chapter elaborates on my research questions and epistemological and methodological framework for studying Islamophobia among young Turks in the UK. I explain the practical steps I took in selecting the research participants, conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews and the process of analysing the data. I also discuss the ethical considerations, self-reflexivity, and rapport and reflect upon how and to what extent my positionality, personal experiences and the context of my fieldwork played a role in the research process.

Chapter four discusses the perceptions of respondents about negative discourses and stereotypes against Muslims made by the media, politicians and so on. It also evaluates what the young Turks’ perceptions of Islamophobia tell us about a sense of belonging to a collective Muslim identity. In chapter five, I analyse how Islamophobia operates in the daily lives of young Turks and their immediate circle of relatives and friends. This chapter first focuses on whether the respondents would claim that they experience Islamophobia. It then explores the covert forms of Islamophobia that Turks are targeted by in their everyday lives. Lastly, it addresses how under certain circumstances the respondents perceive Turks in Britain are racialised through various signifiers, including ethnicity, name, political affiliation, and occupation as well as in a gendered way.

In chapter six, I examine the identity strategies of the participants to detach the effects of Islamophobia from themselves. This chapter focuses on how and why

the participants state that they are not targeted by Islamophobia. It evaluates how they wield their putative whiteness and Europeaness in order to avoid being in the lower social status of racialised Muslim groups and thus position themselves as part of the more secure and high-status White European group. It also discusses how they mark and evaluate differences in physical appearance, view, action, moral character, and work ethic through racializing the other Muslims.

Chapter seven provides a discussion on the effects of Islamophobia on the participants' feelings and attitudes towards British, English, Turkish and Islamic identities. I first examine their understanding of British identity and their feelings and attitudes towards it. I then discuss their negative feelings and attitudes towards English identity due to the historical colonial dynamics of Britain and having a strong sense of Turkishness. Next, I elaborate on their strong emotional attachment to the Turkish identity. I further examine the reasons why they do not tend to show identification with a Pan-Islamic identity as a reaction to Islamophobia. Lastly, I explore their ethnic identity reaction to the negative stereotypes against Turkish people and Turkey during the Brexit.

Chapter eight offers an overview of the key findings and provides general arguments with which I have made theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions to the literature on Islamophobia and identity strategies. It also addresses the limitations and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Introduction

Following both domestic issues, such as the Rushdie affair in the late 1980s, the 7/7 London bombings, other terrorist attacks in later years, and global matters, such as 9/11, the Danish Cartoon Affair, and terrorist attacks perpetrated around the globe, Muslim immigrants in Britain, especially young ones, have been brought into the spotlight. Muslims have since been denigrated by statements saying that they pose a threat to Western secular democracy, emancipation, freedom of speech, integration, multiculturalism, feminism, law, and order, and so on (Moodood, 2005; Meer, 2010; Saeed, 2015; Opratko, 2017). The denigrated image of Muslims has been evidenced, not just in the policies of the War on Terror and the higher securitisation of Muslims in the West, but it has also become part of everyday discourse and popular culture (Opratko, 2017). The media, politicians and some others have associated Muslims with negative images and stereotypes, such as barbarism, primitiveness, violence, irrationality, terrorism, intolerance, inequality, fanaticism, pre-sexism, and pre-Enlightenment thought; thus, they are perceived as threats to Western society (Saeed, 2007; Ameli *et al.*, 2007; GLA, 2007; Meer and Noorani, 2008; Ali, 2008; Bleich, 2009, 2012b; Cherribi, 2011; Hussain and Bagguley, 2012; Holtz *et al.*, 2013).

Academic literature on Islamophobia has largely focused on its meaning, how Muslims are perceived and defined by media and politicians, as well as the superficial experiences of Muslims. The literature, however, has not sufficiently focused on the targets of Islamophobia. Therefore, in this research, by exploring young Turks' perceptions, experiences, and feelings about Islamophobia, I aim to contribute to the literature in terms of how Islamophobia is experienced and understood and what kind of identity strategies have been developed in response to it. I begin with the ways how Muslims experience Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism based on a culturally, religiously, and ethnically constructed "Otherness." In connection with everyday racism, it is further argued that Muslims might experience Islamophobia not only in its overt but also in its covert forms. It is believed that, in this way, this case study will contribute to the existing literature on how Muslims understand and experience Islamophobia.

Furthermore, the possible identity strategies that the participants of this study might have developed in response to Islamophobia are elaborated upon. The current literature on Islamophobia does not adequately address how Muslims talk about and respond to Islamophobia, nor does it explain how it affects their identities. Therefore, possible identity practices which young Turks might engage in are conceptualised in terms of the existing literature regarding various identity strategies that migrants and minorities have contrived and the distinctive characteristics

of the Turkish identity. Two identity strategies are anticipated as possible responses to Islamophobia: viz. reactive identity strategies and avoidance identity strategies. In the former strategy, the young Turks may defensively respond to Islamophobia, holding the perceptions and attitudes of British politicians, media, and the public as being responsible while at the same time associating themselves with either Muslim or Turkish ethnic identification or feeling disaffected with the British national identity. In the latter strategy, on the other hand, it is anticipated that the young Turks may respond to Islamophobia by detaching themselves from it and/or by distinguishing themselves from other ethnic minority Muslim groups by deflecting Islamophobia onto them. They may judge other Muslims racially and reclaim their own whiteness, Britishness, Europeanness and secular way of life in the light of the historical implications of Turkishness. Having said that, these are not precise, mutually exclusive categories and are not exhaustive. There might, however, be some other strategic responses that I have not anticipated.

2.1 Islamophobia

Whilst the origin of the term Islamophobia has been traced to an essay entitled *Accès de Délire Islamophobe* written by Etienne Dinet and Slima ben Ibrahim in France in 1925, the Oxford English Dictionary suggests that the term was first used in print in a 1991 American periodical, *Insight* (Allen, 2010). It is further suggested that a few Anglophone authors, including Tariq Modood, began using this term in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Moo, 2006; Allen, 2010). It was only with the 1997 Runnymede report, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*, however, that brought this term to public and policy prominence in the UK and elsewhere in order to highlight the reality of a considerable and rapidly growing anti-Islam-Muslim prejudice and hostility in the Western world (The Runnymede Trust, 1997). This report (1997: 4) suggested that Islamophobia consisted of three main elements: an ‘unfounded hostility towards Islam,’ ‘unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities,’ and the ‘exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs.’ At the centre of this report’s definition of Islamophobia was an anti-Muslim prejudice that humiliated Islam and viewed Muslims as enemies. These characterisations were later adopted by most authors in discussions about Islamophobia. The Bridge Initiative (2016), which was led by John Esposito at the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Centre for Muslim–Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, for instance, defined Islamophobia as ‘prejudice towards or discrimination against Muslims due to their religion, or perceived religious, national, or ethnic identity associated with Islam.’

Bleich (2012a) asserts that the term refers to a broader set of indiscriminate negative behaviours or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims. Stolz (2005: 548) similarly proposes the following definition: ‘Islamophobia is a rejection of Islam, Muslim groups and Muslim individuals on the basis of prejudice and stereotypes. It may have emotional, cognitive, evaluative as well as action-oriented elements (e.g. discrimination, violence).’ Another scholar who approaches Islamophobia in the context of prejudice is Wolfgang Benz. Describing it as a form of “resentment,”

he states that these resentments start with prejudice and tend to result in a violent manifestation of hatred towards stigmatised individuals, groups, and ethnic, religious, or national communities (Benz, 2011; quoted in Farid Hafez, 2018). It seems that Benz treats Islamophobia in the context of prejudice, which is an expression of mentalities and actions; therefore, he tries to explain this prejudice based on socio-psychological behaviour patterns.

Prejudice research which has focused on Islamophobia has contributed to studies on how Islamophobia makes Islam inferior and discriminates against Muslims. Nevertheless, by reducing the concept to the realm of religious enmity, fear of religion, and anti-Muslim hate and prejudice, this approach is not able to evaluate Islamophobia in a broader context of racism. This, however, is what I believe to be the most important concept one should consider when discussing Islamophobia. Thus, in this study, I attempt to study Islamophobia by means of its relations to racism and conceptualise Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism.

2.1.1 Islamophobia and cultural racism

In 2018, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims (APPGMB, 2018: 11), through extensive consultation with parliamentarians, experts, community activists, lawyers and victim-led organisations, proposed its definition of Islamophobia as being ‘rooted in racism and a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.’ The APPGBM’s definition has been adopted formally by all Westminster political parties except the British government, which rejected the proposed definition of Islamophobia, alleging that it ‘has not been broadly accepted...This is a matter that will need further careful consideration’ (ITV News, 2019). Moreover, Martin Hewitt, the chairman of the National Police Chief’s Council (NPCC), wrote a letter to the prime minister which contested that adopting this proposed definition could ‘be used to challenge legitimate free speech on the historical or theological actions of Islamic states’ and that it could ‘undermine counter-terrorism powers, which seek to tackle extremism or prevent terrorism’ (The Guardian, 2019). Apart from that, another letter that addresses similar concerns with that of the NPCC and which was signed by over 40 prominent people from a wide variety of religious groups, including Christians, atheists, Sikhs, and others, was written to the home secretary, Sajid Javid. This group also criticised the aforementioned proposed definition, arguing that it ‘is being taken on without an adequate scrutiny or proper consideration of its negative consequences for freedom of expression, and academic or journalistic freedom.’ The concern is that the adoption of this definition of Islamophobia would be ‘used to shut down legitimate criticism and investigation,’ furthermore positing that ‘no religion should be given special protection against criticism’ (Christian Concern, 2019). The statement that Islamophobia is ‘rooted in racism and is a type of racism,’ however, is predominantly perceived as the main problem since critics argue that construing Islamophobia as a form of racism does not make sense because neither Islam nor being a Muslim constitute a race. Based on this logic, therefore, negative attitudes and behaviours directed against Muslims cannot be racially stimulated (Sayyid, 2011). But does racism really depend on the actual

existence of races? Should Islamophobia be read as a form of racism? If the hostility to Islam and Muslims can be regarded as a form of racism, then what kind of racism might it be? How have Muslims been racialised? I attempt to tackle these issues by first going back and examining modern forms of racism, and then discussing the possibility of racism in the context of Islamophobia.

Before making an argument about the possibility of racism in the case of Islamophobia, it would be useful to begin with a description of racism and its modern forms. At its most basic, racism has developed within a context of economic exploitation and political domination within which some groups have set themselves over “Others” and have claimed their superiority, expressing that “Others” are inherently different and inferior through a set of prejudices, attitudes, and discriminations (Miles, 1989; Wieviorka, 1995; Fenton, 1999). From colonialism until the mid-twentieth century, supposed biological and moral inferiorities were the main markers for stigmatizing and alienating various racial and ethnic groups (Omi and Winant, 2015). For much of the 19th and 20th centuries, race was deemed as natural and taken to refer to classifications of humankind through biological features (Fenton, 1999). European society had developed a serious racist manner of discourse. According to Knox (cited in MacMaster, 2001), for instance, the Saxon race was purported to be imperviously superior to all other races. This was, in turn, based on the belief of some scientists that only superior racial groups could create superior civilizations (Omi and Winant, 1986). Many Whites thus embraced the belief that Blacks, in particular, were biologically, culturally, and intellectually inferior and backward (Banton, 1977; MacMaster, 2001; Lajevardi and Oskooii, 2018). Racism and racial discrimination were linked to phenotype and performed mainly on the grounds of colour (Modood, 2005). The meaning of race was based on white supremacist ideas, which were used as justification to oppress the Black races (MacMaster, 2001). This idea of race, in fact, strengthened the social and political oppression of Black populations by means of racial segregation. In other words, as Fenton (1999: 66) notes, ‘racialisation is the process of making physical differences into social markers and, typically, enforcing them in a regime of oppression.’ Fredrickson (2002), therefore, suggests two components to the concept of racism: “difference” and “power.” The former regards “Others” as different from “us” in a way that is given and immutable. This sense of difference motivates and justifies the latter to politically oppress and economically exploit “Others” (Banton, 1977; Fenton, 1999; Fredrickson, 2002).

Modern racism, which was based mainly upon biological features, was carried to a more extreme point in Nazi Germany under the leadership of Hitler in the 1930s and 1940s. As such, the Nazi view of race embraced the belief that the German, or Aryan race was superior to alien blood and values (Fredrickson, 2002). Prejudice against Jews was based on the idea that they were a biologically distinct race whose racial characters were inherently inferior (Rattansi, 2007). This genetically based understanding of race, thereby, gave Jews an ‘immutable biological destiny’ (Bunzl, 2005). Thus, anti-Semitism, detached from its religious background, is regarded as a form of racism, especially in continental Europe (Meer and

Modood, 2012). Meer and Modood rightly remark that, centuries before modern biological racism, the Jews faced religious antipathy by Christians in post-Reconquista Spain (not to mention other parts of Europe as well). In this regard, while racism in the nineteenth century and later took on a biological form, ‘what is critical to the racialisation of a group is not the invocation of a biology but a radical “Otherness” and the perception and treatment of individuals in terms of physical appearance and descent’ (Meer and Modood, 2012: 39).

Whilst historically race has been a biological or quasi-biological concept (Modood, 2013), since the second half of the twentieth century, there has been a growing body of scholarship which conceptualises racism as a cultural construct. The decline in biological racism and the hegemony of cultural racism is associated in the West with the defeat of Nazi Germany, anti-colonial struggles, and the civil rights movements of former colonies. Shifting the meanings and discourses of race as a response to new challenges emerging mainly from colonial and guest worker migrants in the post-Second World War context of labour shortages, the White elites of the world system have continued to perpetrate racism (Grosfoguel and Mielants, 2006). The relatively homogenous cultural and social characteristics of Western Europe began to change with a large influx of immigrants, including a substantial number of Muslims from South Asia, North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and so on. Immigrants have been depicted as “Others,” whether they be Blacks, Jews, Asians, or Muslims, and are claimed to be destroying the social order of their host nations. The message apparently is that ‘other must be effaced and subordinated-physically, culturally, economically and politically’ (Werbner, 2005: 6).

Today, a considerable number of scholars have come to deem the hatred being perpetrated against Muslims as a kind of cultural racism (e.g. Modood, 1997; Halliday, 1999; Parekh, 2000; Grosfoguel and Mielants, 2006; Meer, 2014; Runnymede Trust, 2017). It is based not only on the racialisation of modern biological entities, but also the inscriptions of culturally, religiously and ethnically constructed “Otherness.” Modood (2020) views Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism which also emphasises physical appearance and ancestral origin. In this respect, it differs from biological racism, which is understood as antipathy, exclusion, and unequal treatment on the basis of human biological or physical differences attributed to skin colour. He defines cultural racism as follows: ‘cultural racism builds on biological racism a further discourse which evokes cultural differences from an alleged British or “civilised” norm to vilify, marginalise or demand cultural assimilation from groups who may also suffer from biological racism’ (Modood, 2020: 38). Cultural racism ignores the differences/internal diversity in culture and cultural practices among Muslim groups and is far from capturing the different interpretations and ways of life among Muslim groups. To racially group all Muslims as a single cultural race or as an ethno-religious entity is to gather most internal cultural differentiations together in that targeted group. For example, non-religious or even non-Muslim Turks who do not show any visible biological, religious, or cultural markers may still be targeted by the host community because of

their ancestry, nationality, or name. This means that Muslims, or those who are categorised as Muslims, 'are identified racially and not simply in terms of religious beliefs or behaviour' (*ibid*: 39).

When Muslims respond to exclusionary discourses and misrecognitions, they are faced with denial by public figures, journalists, and politicians. They claim that Muslims cannot be considered a racial minority because being Muslim is a religious identity (Modood, 2017) that is seen as being voluntarily chosen (Meer and Noorani, 2008). In *The Politics of Islamophobia*, David Tyrer (2013) conversely insists on the view that Islamophobia is not about the criticism of religion but rather that 'Muslims are constituted and essentialised as a bounded group in order to manage the relationship between the idea of the West and its Others or its outsiders' (Tyrer, 2013: 171). He argues that the attempts to reduce it to a fear of religion and thus label Muslims as 'ontically pure religious targets' should be understood as identity strategies which are adopted by them in order to deny any such connection and that it should be read as referring to the ways Muslims are constructed as incomplete, incorporeal, and absent non-racial targets. For Tyrer, reducing racism to a set of biological features ignores the racialisation of Muslims. Therefore, it cannot be reduced to physical appearance but must be read as a series of objects that are produced through political practice and the exercise of power.

This does not mean, however, that all criticism of Muslims is necessarily Islamophobic. What makes something Islamophobic or not is a difficult question. One particular emphasis concerns whether the term Islamophobia can be used to censor legitimate criticism of Islam, that is freedom of speech. The National Secular Society (NSS), a British campaigning organisation, for instance, opposes the idea that any set of beliefs should be protected from criticism. Stephen Evans (2019), the CEO of the NSS, emphasises that it is problematic to stigmatise criticism of Islam or Islamic culture as racist. He argues that 'there is a lot in Islam that deserves criticism: attitudes to free speech, the treatment of women, LGBT people, Ahmadiyya Muslims and non-believers are frequently at odds with a modern secular liberal society.'

In distinguishing between Islamophobic speech and free speech, one would need to consider whether the speech relates to the expression of negativity against all Muslims (APPGBM, 2018). Making sweeping generalisations is more likely to be Islamophobic. One should have the right to critique ideologies and religions, but the manner and decorum in which individuals express themselves are vital. The speech should not intentionally demonise a religion, or humiliate, marginalise, or stigmatise a diverse group of people.

Taking the proposition that 'Muslim views about women are oppressive and not appropriate for modern Britain,' Modood (2020: 45-46) develops a test consisting of five questions with which to determine whether Islamophobia can be distinguished from reasonable criticism of Muslims and Islam:

1. Does it stereotype Muslims by assuming they all think the same?
2. Is it about Muslims or a dialogue with Muslims, which they would wish to join in?

3. Do the terms of the debate allow possible mutual learning?
4. Is the language civil and contextually appropriate?
5. Is there any insincere criticism which insinuates ulterior motives?

'If the answer to questions 1 and 5 is a "Yes" or a "No" to 2, 3 and 4, then we may be dealing with Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism' (Modood, 2020: 45-46). According to the logic of Islamophobia, there is an understanding where the dominant culture does not perceive another culture as being in any way, shape, or form its equivalent. The issue on which anti-Islamophobic thought stands is not whether individuals use their right to criticise other cultures and societies; on the contrary, it is about its re-definition and reproduction of their own conception of Islam and Muslims. I argue then that, rather than engaging in an intercultural dialogue (Modood, 2020) and mutual learning about each other's differences, dictating one's own truths and perceiving criticism as a right to humiliate, devalue and hate the other party is not a reasonable criticism of Muslims or Islam, but rather a reflection of Islamophobic intent. Having said that I acknowledge that sometimes it is difficult to adjudicate the legitimacy of criticism against Muslim groups as Islamophobic and thus what counts as Islamophobic critique may remain probabilistic. This is mainly because in some cases, we may not have access to critics' full range of attitudes and perceptions about Muslim groups to adjudicate whether their individual judgments might be deliberative or arise from systematic conditioning or prejudice.

2.1.2 The processes of the racialisation of Muslims

Although there has been a growing interest in Islamophobia since 9/11, the processes underlying the racialisation of Muslims have rarely been uncovered. Garner and Selod (2015: 14) note a few functions of racialisation as follows: 'It draws a line around all the members of the group; instigates "groupness," and ascribes characteristics, sometimes because of work, sometimes because of ideas of where the group comes from, what it believes in, or how it organises itself socially and culturally.' The literature shows that racialised tendencies and dynamics were employed by majority groups of Europe and America at different times. Putatively, White groups, such as the Irish in the mid-19th century (Ignatiev, 1995; Garner, 2006; Roediger, 2007), Jews in the US in the 20th century (Brodin, 1998), and East European migrants in Britain (Fox, 2013; Fox and Mogilnicka, 2017) can all be said to have been racialised. Garner and Selod (2015: 14), therefore, point out that Muslim groups can also be racialised. 'This is not due to them all looking vaguely the same but is because of the unity of the "gaze" itself.' What appears to be problematic in the racialisation of Muslim groups is that it treats what are clearly culturally and phenotypically distinct individuals as though they are homogeneous entities and thus places all Muslim groups into the same box.

The perception and treatment of Muslims have material consequences, such as the way in which the racialisation of Muslims produces material dimensions, envisioned as markers of Islam or markers of Muslim identity, in different ways, times, and places. These are not limited to biological or phenotypical traits but include a myriad of physical and cultural traits including clothing, Muslim name, cuisine,

ethnicity, nationality, language, accent, attitude, immigration status, economic situation and so on. Islamophobia is, therefore, a form of racism that socially categorises people by dividing and ranking them using embodied properties in order to exclude, subordinate and exploit them (Banton, 1983). It amalgamates all Muslims into one group, as well as those who are simply perceived as being Muslim. Racialisation is a concept that describes this process and thus helps capture and understand how racism/Islamophobia works (Garner and Selod, 2015). It is assumed that the cultural attributes of Muslims, which are usually tied to their religious appearance, practices, names, and ethno-racial appearance, are fixed and immutable (Meer and Noorani, 2008). This racialised understanding can be attached to a body or a culture, or both at the same time. People read the notion of Muslimness onto individuals (physical bodies) by the process of attributing to them an ensemble of symbolic meanings and associations (Garner and Selod, 2015). In other words, the religious and cultural traits of Muslims — some of which are visible (clothing, religious practices, etc.) and some of which are not (accent, Muslim names, etc.) — have been interpreted as being a threat to national security; incompatible with Western liberal values, modern secular democracy and freedom of speech; incapable of being identified with a national identity; and so on (Poole, 2009; Kunst *et al.*, 2011; El Amrani, 2012; Garner and Selod, 2015; Zempi and Awan, 2017; Selod, 2018;). But what if someone does not look like a Muslim or does not have a sign of Muslimness? Would she or he still be racialised as a Muslim? Garner and Selod (2015), for example, argue that individuals may be able to pass as non-Muslims given that they do not evidence signs of belonging to the Islamic faith (e.g. a hijab, a Muslim name, ethnicity, accent, skin colour, etc.).

Muslims have been racialised in a variety of different ways. Evidence suggests that the process of racialisation has gendered dimensions (Tyrer and Ahmad, 2006; Wagner *et al.*, 2012; Aziz, 2012; Allen, 2014 and 2015; Perry, 2014; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2015; Selod, 2018). Some Muslim women who wear religious clothing like the hijab have been essentialised by means of their religious visibility in the public sphere (Allen, 2014). For some Muslim men and women, ethno-religious signifiers are not always visible; instead, their accent, language or their Muslim name can provoke anti-Muslim encounters (Selod, 2018). Saeed (cited in APPGBM, 2018: 47) argues that some ‘practicing Muslim women who may not be visibly Muslim may encounter Islamophobia in the workplace, or an educational institution because of their religious practices, or encounter instances of Islamophobia where their religiosity is constantly under scrutiny.’ Furthermore, some Muslim men and women have also experienced Islamophobia in multiple subjectivities they occupy, being simultaneously affected by their gender, their social and economic class, and their racial, ethnic, national, and religious identities (Zine, 2006; Perry, 2014; APPGBM, 2018). As Selod rightly (2018) highlights, these identities are not distinct but are often interrelated with one another. Indeed, there is always a variety of ideas about them. The ways in which Muslims are racialised thus should be understood in all of its multifaceted complexities.

Experiences of Turkish immigrants across Western Europe

When looking at the literature on Turkish people in the UK, it shows that it has neglected the Islamophobia and other sorts of discrimination experiences of the Turkish community in general and the young Turks in particular. To date, there has been no specific study which examines Islamophobia among young Turks or any other Turkish community in the UK. There are, however, a few studies (Enneli *et al.*, 2005; Enneli and Modood, 2009; Simsek, 2012; Tanyas, 2016) that superficially address the discrimination experiences of some young Turks in the labour market, in the workplace, at school, and in other parts of the British society. However, these studies did not address whether these young Turks were discriminated against on ethnic, religious, or other grounds, and its effects on their identities, and how they responded to it.

In contrast, many studies focus on Islamophobia and other sorts of discrimination among Turkish communities in other European countries. These studies show that Turkish immigrants and their children in Western Europe often feel discriminated against on the basis of ethnic and religious otherness rather than colour (e.g. Celik, 2015; Latcheva and Punzenberger, 2016; Witte, 2018; Thijsen *et al.*, 2021; Colak *et al.*, 2020; de Jong and Duybendak, 2021). They are variously identified as others by being labelled as Turks, Muslims, or foreigners. Their Turkish cultural background combined with their Islamic background creates a kind of 'bright border' separating them from the majority and/or other religious groups (Alba, 2005). In Germany (Celik, 2017; Witte, 2018), the Netherlands (De Vroome *et al.*, 2014; de Jong and Duybendak, 2021), and Belgium (D'hondt *et al.*, 2015; Colak *et al.*, 2020), cultural differences are often taken as grounds for stigmatisation or discrimination. Some young Turks reported that visible religious symbols were associated with terrorism or being oppressed (Colak *et al.*, 2020; de Jong and Duyvendak, 2021). Colak *et al.* (2020) highlight that being confronted with stereotypical questions that assume that their ethnicity and perceived cultural differences are somehow 'exotic' or 'curious' causes Turkish youth to feel reduced to their cultural identities. Therefore, the superficiality of knowledge about Turkish culture and practices understandably disappointed many Turkish-Belgian students who expected their ethnic majority peers to demonstrate deeper awareness and understanding relating to their Turkish ethnic background.

Other studies have revealed that young Turks in Germany (Holtz *et al.*, 2013; Celik, 2015, 2017) and Belgium (D'hondt *et al.*, 2015; Colak *et al.*, 2020; D'hondt *et al.*, 2021) are exposed to discrimination at school based on their ethnic and religious background. The narratives of some Turkish students, for instance, demonstrate that because of their ethnic background, they became the target of aggressive behaviour, unequal treatment and name-calling by their teachers and peers (D'hondt *et al.*, 2015; Celik, 2015; Colak *et al.*, 2020). In addition, these Turks were exposed to exclusion and marginalization based on other factors that intersected with their ethnicity such as social class, religion, gender, phenotype, and accent. Like Turks in Germany, some of the Turkish-Belgium students, for instance, were

targeted for their more visible features, such as wearing a headscarf or having a pronounced dark beard (Colak *et al.*, 2020).

Research shows that young Turks in Western Europe also face substantial disadvantages in the labour market (Tesser and Dronkers, 2007; Enneli and Modood, 2009; Lessard-Phillips and Ross, 2012; Andriessen *et al.*, 2012; Gracia *et al.*, 2015; Connor and Koenig, 2015; Lewicki, 2017; Thijsen *et al.*, 2021). Second-generation Turks were closely identified with Islam, sparking controversy over the 'Muslim penalty' in their labour market integration (Connor and Koenig, 2015; Gracia *et al.*, 2015). In addition, Lessard-Phillips and Ross (2012) argue that second-generation Turks have experienced ethnic penalties in many countries such as Germany, Belgium, France, Austria, and the Netherlands. Most of those youth reported that they experienced unfavourable treatment while job-seeking and at least one in three attributed this to their ethnic background. In their study on discrimination against Turkish minorities in Germany and the Netherlands, Thijsen *et al.* (2021) found that the level of ethnic discrimination in hiring was much higher in the Netherlands than in Germany. The authors explain these cross-national differences in discrimination rates by variation in the opportunity structures for ethnic discrimination in hiring. They argue that more formalised recruitment procedures in Germany might minimise biases of first impressions in hiring.

So far, I have discussed Islamophobia in a broader context of racism and conceptualised it as a form of cultural racism. These arguments, however, are not sufficient for fully understanding Islamophobia. The way in which Islamophobia is perpetrated in the everyday lives of British Muslims remains especially incomplete. How true is it to claim that they experience it only in its overt forms (e.g. a White man throwing acid onto the body of a Muslim or someone in a public place yelling "go back to your country" at a woman wearing a hijab)? These racist practices are readily apparent, observable, and easily documented. If Muslims experience Islamophobia in more covert forms, however, could we call those practices Islamophobic or racist? If racist practices manifest in a subtle form, then how can one be sure that racism is at work? Research on various marginalised groups, including Black and LGBT people (Essed, 1991; Swim *et al.*, 1998; Sue *et al.*, 2009; Yosso *et al.*, 2009; Nadal *et al.*, 2010), show that racism is often enacted during mundane interactions without ever becoming blatant. Nevertheless, the literature on Islamophobia shows that, although there is a large amount of research on its overt forms, there has scarcely been any research conducted concerning its subtle forms. In the next section, Islamophobia is discussed in the context of everyday racism.

2.1.3 Islamophobia manifests in forms of everyday racism

Scholars increasingly highlight "a new age of racisms" which is continually evolving to new circumstances, and which has become more subtle and uncertain (e.g. Herbert *et al.*, 2008; Essed, 1991; Bonilla-Silva, 2018). In his book, *Racism without Racists*, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2018) argues that, despite the serious changes that occurred in the 1960s, a new racial structure began to manifest which, in effect, uncovered the continuity of racial inequality. The new racial struc-

ture consists of elements which are increasingly subtle and even apparently non-racial in nature.

Omi and Winant (2015) argue that in response to the racial conflicts which emerged in the 1960s, ethnicity-oriented accounts of race opted for neo-conservatism, which was a centre-right racial ideology that key ethnicity theorists including Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (1970) and Charles Murray (1984) helped to uncover. By allying with neo-conservatives, the new right developed sophisticated forms of political discourse that can covertly exploit racist sentiments. This made it seem that the overt forms of racism of the past had declined (Edgar, 1981; Sennett, 1980). Omi and Winant (1994: 127) describe this changing paradigm as follow: 'The new right generally do not display explicit racism. It has gained political currency by rearticulating racial ideology. As we have argued, rearticulating does not require an explicitly racial discourse, and would in fact be severely limited by any direct advocacy of racial inequality.' This rearticulation of racial ideology has also been discussed by Essed (1991), who points out that, although there is a common view that racism is no longer a significant matter in North America and Europe, it has merely taken on a new, everyday form of racism which often expresses itself in mundane interactions without ever seeming blatant. Hence, she states that 'everyday racism has been defined as a process in which socialised racist notions are integrated into everyday practices and thereby actualize and reinforce underlying "racial" and ethnic relations. Furthermore, racist practices in themselves become familiar, repetitive, and part of the "normal" routine in everyday life' (Essed, 1991: 145). In the post-civil rights era, therefore, subtle and covert behaviours replaced discriminatory practices and sustained the same outcome as overt forms of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). The civil rights movement, therefore, was a milestone that has increasingly changed the nature of racism from overt and blatant forms of racial practices to more subtle and covert forms (Dawne *et al.*, 2017).

The notion of power relations is highly important for understanding the concept of everyday racism. Racism is not only about behaviours, such as bias and prejudice, but also about power relations (Essed, 1991). Essed (1991: 50) describes everyday racism as 'the integration of racism into everyday situations through practices. It is the expression of a power structure and can be reproduced by using power in everyday situations.' Appealing to the power structure perpetuates racial and ethnic oppression. Recognising that racial oppression is inherent in the cultural and social order, Essed's study reveals that racism is more than structure and ideology. It is reproduced and reinforced through routine practices. Therefore, she approaches racism at a daily level rather than at a societal level. Having said that, it cannot be reduced to occasional incidents; rather, 'each instantiation of every-day racism has meaning only in relation to the whole complex of relations and practices' (Essed, 1991: 52). In that sense, everyday racism connects ideological and structural dimensions of racism with everyday practices and expounds reproduction of racism in terms of its daily experience. It lives on racist ideology and actions that sustain the system. The reproduction of these racist notions and

actions within the system also reproduces everyday racism. This continual process, then, becomes expected, unquestionable, and normal by dominant groups (Essed, 1991).

Essed (*ibid*) suggests that there are two components of everyday racism: cognitive (prejudice) and behavioural (discrimination). These are mixed and manifest synchronically in everyday life. In other words, they are inseparable from each other. Everyday encounters with prejudice and discrimination are not unusual and isolated experiences but are iterative and familiar events that can be considered commonplace (Essed, *ibid*; Swim *et al.*, 1998). Swim *et al.* (1998) point out that these encounters consist of short-term interactions, such as street remarks and glares, as well as experiences embedded in long conversations.

The story of Rosa N. in Essed's discussion of everyday racism clearly represents how everyday racism functions:

Rosa N. has never been physically molested, her life has not been threatened. She hardly has to deal with blatant "bigots." She has not been fired. She has been called a Black "whore" only once. She is gifted, she has a job, and she is pursuing a promising career. She is a "successful Black." So, one might ask: What is the problem? The problem is exactly that which is at the heart of everyday racism: the invisibility of oppression and the imperceptibility of Rosa N.'s extraordinary perseverance, despite multiple forms of oppression. Rejection, exclusion, problematisation, underestimation, and other inequities and impediments are regularly infused into "normal" life, so that they appear unquestionable. This is a story of oppression in the fabric of everyday life. Some of her experiences are obvious indications of racism. Many others are concealed and subtle. (Essed, 1991: 146).

The concept of "everyday racism" is, thereby, more related to hidden and subtle practices than overt incidents (*ibid*). Swim *et al.* (1998: 43), similarly, conducted daily diary research that examined African American women and men's experiences of racism. The results of the research show that they experienced three types of behaviours: '(1) being stared at, glared at, or watched (such as while shopping in stores); (2) verbal expressions of prejudice (such as racial slurs, insensitive comments, and stereotyping); and (3) bad service.'

Sue *et al.* (2007) coined the term "racial microaggressions" to delineate everyday incidents. Racial microaggressions as a form of everyday racism are brief, everyday exchanges that carry out denigrating messages to members of a racialised group in the forms of subtle snubs or dismissive looks, gestures, and tones (Sue *et al.*, *ibid*; Sue, 2010). Name-calling, jokes, offensive remarks and mistrust are some of these racist practices and are difficult to prove. This sort of racism is strongly influenced by stereotypes which are described as 'the traits that come to mind quickly when we think about the groups' (Stangor, 2009: 2). Although everyday racism may appear quite innocuous, unremarkable, or be depicted as "small slights," research shows that these microaggressions have made an impact on the psychological well-being and living conditions of targeted groups by creating inequalities in their education, employment, and healthcare opportunities (Sue, 2010).

The literature shows that various marginalised groups become targets of everyday racism. For example, research on Black Americans (Essed, 1991; Swim *et al.*, 1998; Sue *et al.*, 2009; Yosso *et al.*, 2009), LGBT people (Nadal, Rivera, and Corpus, 2010) and people with disabilities (Keller and Galgay, 2010). Nevertheless, despite a large amount of literature on the overt forms of Islamophobia (e.g. Tyrer and Ahmad, 2006; Kunst *et al.*, 2011; Perry, 2014; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2015; APPGBM, 2018; Selod, 2018), few researchers have examined its subtle forms, albeit with the exception of a few notable examples in recent years.

Moosavi (2015) examines how Islamophobia manifests in the lives of Muslim converts in Britain. He argues that Islamophobia only rarely manifests in the forms of violent attacks or transparent animosity. Rather, it materialises more frequently at a more mundane and discrete level. He called this form of manifestation a subtle Islamophobia in which Muslims experience latent hostility and discrimination in their everyday lives without it being obvious. Moosavi points out that Islamophobia is based on a racialisation process in which Muslims are marked out as the “Other,” even if converts were once members of the dominant White group. He thus emphasises subtle Islamophobia that impacts the daily lives of Muslims more than the infrequent instances of physical violence or petty verbal abuse. He explores how converts encountered negative attitudes and behaviours in subtle forms associated with their new lives as Muslims. This subtle form of Islamophobia may be undermined in terms of its effects, but Moosavi notes that the more pervasive covert Islamophobia may form the basis of a more aggressive and blatant form of Islamophobia if not challenged while in its more tolerated form.

Nadal, Issa, and their colleagues (2010) proposed a theoretical taxonomy to identify the ways how religious groups experience microaggressions. Their taxonomy constitutes six major categories of microaggressions that are based mainly on religion and are likely independent of ethnicity, race, or other variables. They categorised these six types of microaggressions as follows: 1) endorsing religious stereotypes; 2) exoticisation; 3) the pathology of different religious groups; 4) the assumption of one’s own religious identity as the norm; 5) the assumption of religious homogeneity; and 6) denial of religious prejudice (Nadal *et al.*, 2010: 297). Their focus was that of identifying how various religious groups may experience microaggressions in everyday interactions and the messages that are sent to them. In 2012, Nadal, Griffin and colleagues empirically evaluated this taxonomy among Muslim Americans. The findings of their research confirmed four of the themes proposed in 2010, along with two additional themes which were particular to Muslim Americans: 1) endorsing religious stereotypes of Muslims as terrorists; 2) exoticisation; 3) the pathology of the Muslim religion; 4) the assumption of religious homogeneity; 5) Islamophobic or mocking language; and 6) feeling like aliens in their own land (*ibid.*: 22).

Bagheri’s study (2018) on Muslims’ experiences of Islamophobia in Scotland suggests that some of his respondents drew upon their childhood experiences and their general knowledge of Islamophobia to identify it as a “continuum” which manifests in everyday interactions. It is argued that Islamophobia is not as overt

and visible as it was in the past. His study furthermore reveals that, while younger Muslims experienced Islamophobia in more verbal and explicit ways, when they became adults and started interacting with adults from majority groups, their experiences turned into more subtle forms of Islamophobia, including different “looks” or “stares” which they encountered in day-to-day interactions. Bagheri further argues that this implicit Islamophobia is influenced primarily by media and international events which speak about Muslims.

The subtle and inconspicuous forms of Islamophobia have also been explored among some British Muslim students. Chaudry (2021) focused on the Islamophobia which was perpetrated within university environments. The study’s findings show that they often experienced microaggressions that were tied to their appearances. Chaudry discussed these findings in terms of the types of racial microaggression developed by Sue *et al.* (2007) - e.g. microinsult, microassault, and microinvalidation. Two of these racial microaggressions, however, were evidenced in his study: microinsult (unconscious) and microassault (conscious). In the former form, by maintaining excessive distance from Muslims in the school environment and by excessively staring at Islamic dress, perpetrators unconsciously insulted Muslim students. Sue (2010: 9) asserts that these nonverbal interactions ‘communicate rudeness, insensitivity, slights, and insults....’ In the latter form, they experienced racial jokes which were intentionally and publicly performed. Yosso *et al.* (2009: 669) argue that, even if White students realise that ‘they would hurt someone with their attempt at comedy, the act of telling a joke is intentional. Some may laugh because they too hold stereotypical, racist beliefs.’ In that sense, they unconsciously hold the racist ideologies but code them as humour.

While some racist incidents are easily recognised in their overt forms – both of which are readily apparent and observable – others may be more covert or coded and, hence, may not be readily documented. Therefore, the targeted individuals who experience a subtle form of racism in their daily lives may claim to have never experienced any type of racism. Naseem (2017), for example, examined experiences of everyday racism in the workplace among British professional Pakistani and Algerian women and found that, even though they rejected the thought that they had ever experienced racism or discrimination, their accounts were embedded with experiences of everyday racism in the workplace such that it was obvious from an outsider’s perspective that they were being socially excluded. This was mainly due to the covert nature of the racism perpetrated. Thus, they found it difficult to identify. Naseem (*ibid*) argues that these women experienced different forms of implicit inequality because of their ethnic and/or religious identifications. Essentially, because they were ethnically and religiously different, they were neither appreciated nor seen as legitimate members in their workplaces who have a right to claim graduate-level professional jobs.

If racist practices manifest in a subtle form, though, how can one be sure that racism is at work? One of the arguments for this issue was developed by Essed (1991), who argues that experiencing racism over time generates an understanding of what attitudes and behaviours are normal or abnormal in given situations. This

experience also provides an awareness of the nature of racism. For this reason, she highlights that Black people have become skilled at identifying racism. Moosavi (2015) also applies this to Muslim converts in Britain by borrowing the term “double consciousness” from W. E. B. Du Bois (1969). According to Moosavi, because they had previously lived their daily lives as non-Muslims, they are well placed to detect Islamophobia. Because the converts became members of a minority Muslim group, they can perceive themselves through the eyes of the majority group and, therefore, easily recognise the negative attitudes and behaviours that are reflected there. Moosavi (2015), thereby, points out that these converts were able to identify and comprehend instances of Islamophobia because they were able to use their intuition and insight rather than empty sentiments. If one considers the significance of double consciousness in the context of invisible British Muslims, especially second generations, being integrated into British society successfully, they might be able to utilise their intuition and insight in order to discern racist and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours targeting them or the group(s) that they are affiliated with. Inasmuch as the second generations grew up in two cultures, this may have provided them with opportunities to be able to see themselves and their groups through others’ eyes.

It is clear from the literature which has been reviewed so far that scholarship on Islamophobia has focused on its meaning, the roles of media and politicians on Islamophobia, and how Muslims experience Islamophobia. This means that we have a considerable amount of information about Islamophobia. Moreover, the literature shows that British society is becoming more Islamophobic and that the images of Muslims, especially young people, are targeted by Islamophobic hostility, hate crimes and discrimination. The scholarship on Islamophobia, however, has not paid much attention to the supposed victims of Islamophobia and its neglect of this view has the effect of objectifying and homogenising their victimhood. To understand Islamophobia better, we need to explore how the supposed victims of Islamophobia perceive and experience it, how they respond to it, how they interpret it, and the consequences it has for their Muslim identity. This approach assigns some agency to them, seeing them not just as helpless victims but as active agents in processing Islamophobia and developing creative strategies to deal with it. What is distinctive about this research, therefore, is that it focuses on the exploration of how the social actors present and express themselves from their own perspectives as others talk about them. This is the most important facet which this book will attempt to contribute to the literature.

Accordingly, this research aims to contribute to the literature on how Muslims perceive, experience and understand Islamophobia and what kind of identity practices they have developed in response to Islamophobia. This is done by exploring the young Turks’ perceptions, experiences, and feelings regarding Islamophobia. How do the young Turks perceive and represent Islamophobia? Do they see themselves as its victims? How do they talk about it? Do they think that their identity is being threatened or that it is not being properly understood? Do they feel provoked? To what extent are the distinctive legacies of Turkishness drawn upon by

the young Turks against Islamophobia? How do they respond to Islamophobic stereotypes that deem Muslims as an unpatriotic fifth column, inimical to Western modern and secular democracy, terrorists, enemies of the nation, threats to British society and British national identity, etc.? How has Islamophobia impacted the young Turks' feelings and attitudes towards national, ethnic, and religious identities? It is believed that looking at the *sui generis* legacies of Turkishness will allow me to explore all possible identity strategies of the young Turks in the context of Islamophobia in order to better comprehend how they negotiate their identity. In the next section, the conceptual possibilities of the young Turks' responses to Islamophobia are discussed by considering the existing literature with regard to the various identity strategies of migrants and minority groups so as to build a foundation for this research and provide reference points for discussion and interpretation of this research's findings.

2.2 The conceptual possibilities of individual identity strategies to Islamophobia

Identity process theory (IPT) asserts that when identity is obstructed by changes in the social context, individuals might develop responses in order to react to the 'negative repercussions of experiencing identity threat' (Jaspal and Cinnirella, 2010: 291). It is particularly observable in the case of minority groups, which are not simply passive victims of "Othering" but, crucially, may become more dynamic or reactive once they feel, in some ways, threatened or not properly understood. There has been literature that documents various identity responses which are employed by migrants and minorities who attempt to cope with different forms of "Othering" pertaining to ethnicity, race, religion, nationality and so on (e.g. Ignatiev, 1995; Verkuyten, 1997; Bonnett, 1998; Roediger, 2005; Rumbaut, 2005; Garner, 2006; Verkuyten and Yildiz, 2007; Rahman, 2007; Ali, 2008; Fox, 2013; Morosanu and Fox, 2013; Saeed, 2016; Maghbouleh, 2017; Celik, 2015 and 2017; de Jong and Duyvendak, 2021). As the literature on Turks' experiences with Islamophobia in the UK has been sparse, I have drawn mainly on insights from non-Muslim minorities and immigrants, Muslims in Britain and Western Europe, Turks in Western Europe (mostly Germany and the Netherlands), and also the historical implications of Turkishness. Therefore, this study, on the one hand, contributes to the literature on how Turks in Britain experience, perceive, and respond to Islamophobia, on the other hand, it can also allow me to reflect on some of the similarities and differences between the UK and other Western European countries in relation to Islamophobia experiences of Turks and various identity strategies developed around it. So, the difference in the receiving country's political, labour market, and societal context (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006) may produce divergence in how Turks in different countries experience, perceive and respond to various forms of discrimination.

Considering the existing literature, I have anticipated two possible identity responses to Islamophobia amongst young Turkish people in Britain: 1) reactive identity strategies; and 2) avoidance identity strategies. Having said that, these are not precise, mutually exclusive categories, nor are they exhaustive. There could be

some other responses that I was not able to anticipate. This section will elaborate upon some possible types of identity responses for this research. They helped me think through what I would encounter during the data collection process. Each of them will be briefly discussed by means of possible conceptual typologies seeing as they create an important conceptual structure for examining the identity negotiations of young Turks in Britain in the context of Islamophobia.

2.2.1 Reactive identity strategies

“Othering” is the process of treating or evaluating individuals who apparently share the same characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, religion, etc., as, primarily, a devalued and inferior group. “Others,” therefore, face an adversarial stance. Existing social psychological research on ethnic minority groups and immigrants (e.g. Tajfel, 1982; Verkuyten, 1997; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Tajfel and Turner, 2004; Rumbaut, 2004; Martinovic and Verkuyten, 2012) suggest that, once one’s group identity is threatened, he or she might attempt to react to that perceived inferiority using different reactive identity strategies for the purpose of attaining a positive social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 2004). Rumbaut (2005) argues that perceived discrimination can increase ingroup identification amongst minority members so that they can distance themselves from majority groups. Accordingly, in the context of the young Turks in Britain, one possible response to Islamophobia may be in engaging reactive identity strategies. In other words, they may respond to religious stigmatisations in a defensive manner, holding the perceptions and attitudes of British politicians, media and the public responsible and either associating themselves with a Muslim or Turkish ethnic identity or by feeling disaffected with British national identity.

Stronger Muslim identification

Individuals often act collectively as members of certain social groups. This tendency helps them to identify their status in the social structure. According to social identity theory (SIT), posited by Tajfel and Turner (1979), collective action is described as an identity management strategy by which the discrimination and devaluation of one’s group poses a threat to his or her group identity and thus may adopt a more positive social identity. One of the possible identity management strategies suggested by the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA) is that minority individuals can respond to discrimination by emphasising a strong identification with the discriminated social group in order to increase support for collective action on behalf of the in-group (Branscombe and Ellemers, 1998; Fleischmann *et al.*, 2011). Fleischmann *et al.* (2011) point out that discrimination creates identity threats which increase identification with the devalued or rejected in-group. Branscombe *et al.* (1999), on the other hand, developed a rejection-identification model that proposes that, in order to overcome the negative consequences of discrimination and prejudice, individuals may identify with the rejected in-group. This is mainly because minority group identification has a positive effect on the psychological well-being of the devalued group members.

The literature clearly illustrates that, for some Muslim individuals, it has been a priority for them to declare their Muslim identities by demonstrating that they

actively belong to the global Muslim community (Bonino, 2017). The devaluation and humiliation of Islam, as well as the discrimination and racialisation of Muslims, are the most prominent factors that have reinforced in-group solidarity and Muslim identification (Choudhury, 2007). Ballard (1996) argues that religious-based discrimination has made religious identity more salient seeing as the attack targets the religious aspect of Muslims rather than their ethnic one. Therefore, Islam is envisioned as a more useful path for political mobilisation. Perceptions regarding being discriminated against on a religious basis for about thirty years have constructed a sense of global and cohesive Muslim consciousness amongst Muslim communities in Great Britain (Meer, 2010). The genocidal attacks on Bosnian Muslims, the Gulf War, the Rushdie Affair, the invasion of Iraq, the victimisation and humiliation of Muslims in Afghanistan and Kashmir, and particularly the ongoing occupation of Palestine (Modood, 1990), *inter alia*, have strengthened an “ummah consciousness” amongst Muslims all around the world. This tendency has accelerated since 9/11 and its aftermath. Recent research (e.g. Abbas, 2005; Hopkins, 2007; Rahman, 2007; Meer, 2010; Bonino, 2017) shows that, following the 9/11 attacks, the hostile discourses and implications against Muslim groups made by leading politicians and the press played an important role in further developing Muslim solidarity. The widespread presence of Islamophobia and the securitisation of Muslims, specifically young Muslims and Muslim women, (Saeed, 2016) have reinforced the collective Muslim consciousness amongst Muslim communities in the West (Birt, 2009).

Research shows that there is also evidence of increased religious identification among Turkish Muslims in some Western European countries as a response to perceived religious discrimination (e.g. Verkuyten and Yıldız, 2007; Fleischmann *et al.*, 2011; Phalet *et al.*, 2012; Guveli, 2014). Guveli’s (2014) research on Turkish people in Europe and Turkey, for instance, suggests that discriminated first-generation European Turks show higher rates of reactive religiosity. Verkuyten and Yıldız (2009) argue that the high levels of Muslim identity among Turkish-European Muslims are probably related to increased global and national developments. Because of their Islamic religious background, they experience high levels of threat which may force them to a position of having to defend and emphasise the significance of their religious identity (Verkuyten, 2007; Verkuyten and Yıldız, 2009). This increased in-group identification among the European Turks may not be only related to their reactions to the threat to their religious identity. As Verkuyten and Yıldız (2009) noted, for the Turks being a Muslim may also imply a normative group commitment to Islam.

Research on politicised collective identity has demonstrated that levels of religious identification have been a precondition for engaging in political action (Verkuyten, 2007; Verkuyten and Yıldız, 2009; Fleischmann *et al.*, 2011). According to Verkuyten (2007: 341), in social identity theory (SIT), individuals ‘with high and low psychological commitment to their group (high and low identifiers) can be expected to differ in their reactions and evaluations.’ With regard to the relationship between religious identity and politicised Muslim collective identity, Fleisch-

mann *et al.* (2011), in their experimental study on second-generation Turkish and Moroccan Muslim minorities in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden, found that, when their participants identified more strongly as Muslims, they were more willing to support political Islam. In addition to this, the findings of Fleischmann *et al.*'s study found that 'personal experiences of unfair and hostile treatment due to religious background significantly increased the degree to which the Turkish and Moroccan second generation identified with their Muslim in-group.' (Fleischmann *et al.*, 2011: 643). This result thus supports what the rejection-identification model of Branscombe *et al.* (1999) posits, i.e., that experiences of discrimination reinforce one's group commitment. As Phalet *et al.* (2012: 345) remarked, this reaction 'is consistent with the experimental findings in social psychology which show that the experience of discrimination strengthens identification with the disadvantaged group and thus protects collective self-worth and personal well-being.'

It is also evidenced from the literature that one's strong sense of belonging to a minority group affects the association between host national identification and perceived discrimination. In other words, when individuals see themselves as victimised by "Othering," their sense of belonging and national identification to the host society can be negatively affected (e.g. Archer, 2001; EUMC, 2006; Verkuyten, 2007; Verkuyten and Yildiz, 2007; Rahman, 2007; Martinovic and Verkuyten, 2012; Maliepaard and Verkuyten, 2018). The literature shows that young Muslims tend to prioritise their religious identity over their national and ethnic identities, which is in line with resisting and reacting to Islamophobia. Research conducted by Archer (2001), for instance, concludes that young Muslims in Britain who were represented as problematic in terms of Islamophobic perceptions rejected the ideas of whiteness and Britishness and showed a strong identification with Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds in the context of global brotherhood. The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC)'s report (2006) similarly indicates that Muslims who felt Islamophobic discrimination and socio-economic marginalisation reacted to these threats by becoming defensive and shy. It also caused them to feel disaffected from others in mainstream society. Indeed, they held the British public responsible for the religious stigma they perceived coming from them.

Research shows that perceived religious discrimination also leads some Turkish Muslims in Germany and the Netherlands to associate themselves with a stronger Muslim identity and distance themselves from the host national commitment (Kunst *et al.*, 2011; Verkuyten and Yildiz, 2007; Fleischmann *et al.*, 2011; De Vroome *et al.*, 2014). This reactive religiosity is consistent with the findings of social psychology which show that the experience of discrimination increases identification with the disadvantaged in-group, which indirectly led to lower national identification, and thus protects collective self-value and personal well-being (Branscombe and Ellemers, 1998; Branscombe *et al.*, 1999). The reactive religiosity among Turkish immigrants suggests that those who experience more discrimination will identify more strongly as Muslims in order to enhance their threatened religious identity.

Turkish immigrants come from a Muslim-majority society where levels of religiosity are higher than those in receiving societies including Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden (Phalet *et al.*, 2012). The first generations across Europe principally and effectively pass on Islamic traditions and practices to the next generations (Fleischmann and Phalet 2011; Phalet *et al.*, 2012) and that the young Turks are often highly committed to their Muslim identity. Many regarded Islam as a component of Turkish identity and thus consider their religious identity as a natural extension of their ethnic identity (Verkuyten and Yıldız, 2009; Fleischmann and Phalet, 2012; Phalet *et al.*, 2012). Some studies show that Muslim identification negatively affects the national identification of Turkish-Muslims. Kunst *et al.* (2011)'s study, which compared the experiences of the two largest Muslim minorities in two Western European countries, namely German-Turks and Norwegian-Pakistanis, for instance, reveals that for the German-Turks, their Muslim identification is incompatible with identifying with the German nation. This finding is in line with the findings of Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007)'s study in which they found a negative relationship between Dutch and Muslim identification. Yet, they further noted that a total Muslim identification does not necessarily imply low Dutch identification. This last argument was indeed confirmed by the findings of Verkuyten's study (2007), which examined religious and national identity among Turkish-Dutch Muslims. He found that about a third of the respondents showed high Muslim identification together with Dutch national identification. Similarly, in her study on *European Muslims Transforming the Public Sphere*, Asmaa Soliman (2017) argues that all her young respondents defined themselves as German Muslims, showing a strong attachment to both Islam and Germany. They saw Islamic and German identities as one entity. In that sense, having a strong sense of Muslim identification does not always imply a lack of host national commitment. Islamophobia, however, makes Muslims in Western societies feel and think about whether they belong and whether they are full members of society or not (Rahman, 2007; Karlsen and Nazroo, 2013).

A sense of loyalty to a country increases or decreases through its policies and its own citizens' attitudes towards ethnic minority groups. The expectation here thus is not only that minority groups adapt to the existing norms, institutions, and liberal democratic values of the country where they live, but also that they wish to have their presence be acknowledged. Furthermore, they should have equal opportunities with the majority group, be undifferentiated, and be recognised by political authorities. This point-of-view does not, of course, include those who have unhealthy ideologies and exhibit extreme and improper acts against social cohesion. Those with political authority should, therefore, recognise diversity — not deny it —, give all people a sense of belonging, and treat them equally. This emphasises the idea of the "One Nation," which is depicted as 'a community of communities and a community of citizens, not a place of oppressive uniformity based on a single substantive culture' (CMEB, 2000: 56). Accordingly, seeing as the equality of opportunities is at the essence of the integration process (Modood, 2013), it is also

important to stress that equal opportunity is one of the core notions of having a sense of belonging to a nation.

Accordingly, the young Turkish people in Britain may negotiate their identities in a religiously assertive way and may associate themselves with a Muslim identity against negative stereotypical ascriptions. Moreover, they may also tend to prioritise their Muslim identity over their British national one. As Waxman (1997) observes, Islam constitutes an essential character of Turkishness and, therefore, that being a Turk means being a Muslim. Furthermore, for some religious Turks, their main goal may be that of raising awareness of the problems of all Muslims rather than only of Turkish people and promoting solidarity amongst themselves. Having said that, the view of Turkish Islamists is based on the view that Turks should play a leadership role in the Islamic world. Therefore, Turkish Islamic identity has often been promoted by the idea of Turkishness (Waxman, 1997; Ozkirimli, 2008).

Reactive ethnic identification

Experiencing discrimination and exclusion, on the other hand, can trigger individuals to self-identify in ethnic terms. It is argued that the process of forging a kind of reactive ethnicity becomes more salient once ethnic minority groups experience a perceived threat, hostility, and exclusion in such a way that these negative attitudes and perceptions sharpen ethnic-racial identity boundaries (Rumbaut, 2005). Reactive ethnicity theory is seen as a 'product of confrontation with an adverse native mainstream' (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001: 284). According to this theory, when minority groups or immigrants experience "Othering," they seek to construct defensive identities and common solidarities which are seen 'as a response to the frustration of not being granted access to the dominant group' (Taylor, 1980: 137 cited in Verkuyten, 1997), subsequently increasing their identification with their ethnic group. This reactive ethnic identification has been judged to be reasonable by Portes and Rumbaut (2001: 284) because it is 'a defence to threatened self-images and collective dignity.'

Rumbaut (2005) argues that ethnic identification commences with the application of a label to oneself in a cognitive process of self-categorisation. This cognitive process includes two relational efforts. Individuals, on the one hand, claim a group membership while, on the other hand, drawing ethnic/racial boundaries with other groups. Such boundaries are sharpened and heightened when the individuals experience discrimination, threats, and exclusion. Hutnik (1991) explains that one of the possible outcomes of reactive ethnicity formation among young people is the idea of dissociation in which one's sense of belonging is high for one's own ethnic group and low for the majority group. When minority groups are, for instance, prevented from enjoying equal citizenship rights, they may react to this inequality in ethnic terms. This is mainly because they feel excluded from the country in which they have settled (Ersanilli and Saharso, 2011). The process of reactive ethnicity can, therefore, harm individuals' degree of identification with the host national identity and stimulate 'ethnic solidarity and self-consciousness' (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001: 152). Rumbaut (2008:110) therefore notes that this external stimulus 'had the unintended consequences of accentuating group differences,

heightening group consciousness of those differences, hardening ethnic identity boundaries between “us” and “them,” and promoting ethnic group solidarity and political mobilization.’

According to Rumbaut (2005), the process of reactive ethnicity formation in the face of discriminatory experiences occurs among all generations but is more observable for the 1.5 and second-generation, whereas it is less observable for the 2.5ers. He (2005: 113) argues that ethnic self-identities are ‘definitions of the situation of the self.’ When second generations grow up under hostile and exclusionary environments in which racial and ethnic labels and categories are imposed upon them by the external society, they may develop a reactive process, where the ethnic and cultural features of their parents become symbols of pride against external threats (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Indeed, the majority of young people tend to take for granted their ethnic self-identity in socially supportive contexts, thereby making their attachments for ethnic identity less apparent. When they feel that ethnic, racial, religious, or other social markers in the groups to which they belong place them in a minority status, though, they are more likely to be self-conscious of those attributes. Furthermore, the younger generations may overcome these with the psychological pressures created by such differences by heightening the salience and importance of ethnicity and ethnic boundaries. In other words, they may react to these perceived threats, persecutions, and discrimination by reaffirming ethnic solidarity and self-consciousness (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001).

The literature on Turkish-German and Turkish-Dutch second-generation young people show that perceived threats, discrimination, and exclusion have led some of them to develop reactive ethnic identifications. In his study on the ongoing negotiation and formation of ethnic identities amongst Turkish second-generation youths in disadvantaged secondary schools in Germany, Celik (2015) found that the students’ ethnic identity formation process was heightened in the context of their perceived discrimination. The perceived denigration of ethnic culture in public debates and everyday interactions consequently paved the way for the emergence of reactive ethnic identity among the young Turkish Germans. As a reaction to this perceived discrimination, many of his young participants adhere to their parents’ ethnic origin: ‘the perceived discrimination accentuates group differences, heightens group consciousness of those differences, and hardens ethnic identity boundaries in the minds of the disadvantaged Turkish youth...’ (Celik, 2015: 13). Celik (2015) argues that in some cases, reactive ethnicity among young German Turks may turn into an oppositional identity which, unlike reactive ethnicity, implies a subculture formed by virtue of exclusion by the dominant culture and which refuses not only dominant culture but occasionally even ethnic culture. Many of his respondents, he notes, claimed oppositional Turkish identities which assumed forms such as challenging the police and teachers in which their actions are endorsed as cool and ethnically proud. His findings, further, suggested that the young German Turks’ reactive and oppositional stances against the dominant soci-

ety was not an intrinsic part of ethnic culture, but was due to interactions with the dominant culture.

Among young Turkish people in Western Europe, subjectively or collectively perceived discrimination might also affect the process of (re-)ethnicisation where perceived discrimination stimulates (re-)ethnicisation which, in turn, can lead to the perception of further discrimination (Nauck, 2001). In his study of Turkish youth in Germany, Skrobanek (2009) argues that the young Turks tend toward a stronger (re-)ethnicisation in the case of perceived personal and group discrimination. For these Turks, the permeability of the group boundaries is lower and this strengthens Turkish identification which finally causes a process of (re-)ethnicisation. He further argues that this process also minimizes belief in the possibility of one day becoming part of the German majority group.

Studies show that some disadvantaged Turkish immigrant youth in Germany (Celik, 2017; Witte, 2018) and in the Netherlands (de Jong and Duyvendak, 2021) developed specific 'destigmatisation strategies' (Lamont and Mizrachi, 2012; Lamont et al., 2016) through engaging in ethnic boundary work (Lamont and Mizrachi, 2012; Wimmer, 2008). Lamont and Mizrachi (2012: 366) define 'destigmatisation strategies' as the 'rhetorical and strategic tools deployed by individual members of stigmatised groups in reaction to perceived stigmatisation, racism and discrimination, and the boundary work that takes place within these responses.' Celik's study (2017) illustrates that some young Turks in Germany were aware of their disadvantaged position as well as various forms of ethnic boundaries between Turks and the dominant majority such as socio-economic and residential segregation and ethnic segmentation in education. They therefore actively engaged in transforming ethnic boundaries in the discursive field and often stigmatised the dominant group in reverse, by associating negative ethnic stereotypes in their accounts with German identity and associating positive values with Turkish identity. In this respect, while they regarded the dominant group's culture as being inferior, they actually idealised their own culture and identity as superior in order to maintain their dignity against discrimination and prejudices (Celik, 2017).

De Jong and Duyvendak (2021: 16) examined destigmatisation strategies of Turkish-Dutch students affiliated with Milli Gorus movement (a leading religious Turkish diaspora organisation) in reaction to discrimination and stigma targeting their sense of self-respect and belonging in the Netherlands. They identified three strategies: confronting, convincing and contextualising. In the first strategy, students asserted their right to be culturally distinct from the ethnic majority while countering the problematisation of this difference, claiming that the ethnic majority should accommodate cultural differences. In the second destigmatisation strategy, they challenged value and acceptance threats by relocating cultural achievements in their Turkish and Islamic heritage. In the final strategy, instead of choosing between similarity and distinctiveness with the ethnic majority, students argued that ideological or political positions should reflect country-specific contexts. The destigmatised strategies of the young adults suggest that those who face social stigma not only have to cope with singular identity threats but also negotiate to

belong vis-à-vis multiple and changing constellations of audiences (de Jong and Duyvendak, 2021).

Studies of Turkish immigrants in Western Europe further suggest that perceived discrimination based on ethnic origin influences feelings of national belonging of young Turks (Verkuyten and Yildiz, 2007; Ersanilli and Saharso, 2011; Slootman, 2014; Latcheva and Punzenberger, 2016; Martiny *et al.*, 2017). Those who experience more discrimination tend to identify more strongly with their ethnic group and less strongly with the host country. Slootman's study (2014), for instance, reveals that his second-generation Turkish-Dutch participants frequently labelled themselves as Turkish or Muslim rather than accepting that they are Dutch. The attention to their ethnicity and the explicit social relevance of minority ethnicity led some of her respondents to identify themselves in ethnic terms because they thought that their identification with other labels would not be accepted by others. These findings show that ethnic identity was seen by her participants as the safest port to take refuge in while at the same time resisting negative stereotypes or reacting to the insistent labelling of others.

Receiving societies may have comprehensive responsibility for the framework or the climate of individual acts of discrimination. Many studies have highlighted the significant role that receiving contexts play in the integration process of immigrant communities (Crul and Schneider 2010; Ersanilli and Saharso, 2011; Alanya *et al.*, 2015). Ersanilli and Saharso's study (2011) that examines the role of integration policies of Germany, France, and the Netherlands on ethnic identification and settlement country identification of the children of Turkish immigrants indicate that while integration policies do not have an impact on ethnic identification, an inclusive policy has a positive effect on settlement country identification. Their participants identified themselves as Turkish and experienced Turkishness as an ethno-cultural identity referring to phenotype, ancestry, and culture. However, they experienced not being recognised as citizens of the country of origin, especially in Germany, the country with the least open citizenship regime. It was also felt in France and the Netherlands even though these countries have more civic conception of citizenship. Reflecting a "thicker" notion of citizenship that does not include people of a different ethnic origin, skin color or religion makes it harder for young Turks to identify with the settlement country identification.

In addition, researchers have argued that the perceived incompatibility of the children of Turkish immigrants' different identities results from intergroup conflicts and perceived sociocultural distance between groups as well as maladaptive norms and values attached to each identity (Verkuyten and Yildiz, 2007; Verkuyten and Martinovic, 2012; Schulz and Leszczensky, 2016; Martiny *et al.*, 2017). It might be expected that having native friends affects national identification positively. However, this is not the case for all immigrant groups. Schulz and Leszczensky's study (2016), for instance, reveals that having native friends did not affect the national identity of Turkish immigrants at all. They argue that for Turkish immigrants, who experience the overall highest levels of rejection in Germany, having native friends simply might not be adequate to develop national identification.

Moreover, incompatibility of ethnic and national identities and an especially strong Turkish ethnic identity may prevent Turks from embracing German identification. Martiny *et al.* (2017) also found a negative relationship between ethnic and national identification of Turkish students in Germany. Their respondents reported higher levels of ethnic identity than of national identity and higher levels of dual identity than of national identity. They further found that dual identity was negatively related to Turkish ethnic identity and positively related to feeling German. Martiny *et al.* (2017) argue that the reason for this might be assimilative pressure for Turkish adolescents to adhere to German social norms. In order to maintain their connection with the ethnic group while simultaneously adapting to German social norms, they might have endorsed a dual identity. The endorsement of a dual identity perceived as compatible with the national identity might also be a strategy to overcome potential identity conflicts, which can eventuate in social and psychological consequences (Hirsh and Kang, 2016).

The reactive ethnicity pattern can also be seen in the case of young Turks in Britain in the way in which they seek to reinforce their identification and belonging with their ethnic group in order to defend their threatened self-images and collective dignity (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Having said that, young Turks may also develop identity strategies to avoid any implication that the effects of Islamophobia apply to them. Therefore, they may deflect negative stereotypes onto other Muslim ethnic minority groups in Britain, differentiating themselves from them by claiming their distinctive ethnic identity of Turkishness.

2.2.2 Avoidance identity strategies

Alternatively, the minority groups can respond to Islamophobia by detaching religious stigmatisation from themselves and/or distinguishing themselves from other ethnic minority groups and further deflecting Islamophobic criticisms or stereotypes onto those other groups. This identity strategy assumes that individuals see group boundaries as being relatively permeable given the way they employ identity strategies to obtain membership to dominant status hierarchies (Ignatiev, 1995; Martinovic and Verkuyten, 2012; Fox, 2013; Wagner *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, it is possible for them to change their position from being victims in disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances to benefiting from belonging to the higher status of not being a racialised or victimised minority. This kind of identity strategy might also be observed in the case of the young Turkish people in Britain. They may react to Islamophobia in a context where they have to develop discursive identity strategies in order to fend off accusations by disassociating themselves from victimised minorities. They may also judge other Muslims racially and claim their own whiteness, Britishness, Europeanness and secular way of life in light of the historical implications of Turkishness.

The uses of racism

There is a relationship between being a member of a stigmatised group and its impacts on group social identity and social status (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015). In social identity theory, Tajfel and Turner (1979, 2004) hypothesise that individuals belonging to a devalued group may show tendencies to disregard the group in

order to join a higher status group so as to achieve a more positive social identity. Upward social mobility predicts that they will dissociate themselves from the stigmatised group (Kulich *et al.*, 2015) and end up strongly identifying with the new, high-status group (Wright and Taylor, 1999). In an attempt to understand why these individuals appeal to such strategies, Ellemers (2001: 215) examined the case of high-achieving female faculty members. She argues that ‘in order to function well in this hostile work environment, female faculty members may feel compelled to disidentify with other women. That is, their pursuit of individual upward mobility may lead them to rate other women negatively.’ She then suggests that socially mobile individuals may separate the self from the disadvantaged group and, effectually, label other group members.

Racism is one way of socially categorising people by dividing and ranking them using embodied properties in order to exclude, subordinate and exploit them (Banton, 1983). The idea of racism is depicted primarily as an ideology in so far as individuals ideologically produce racist discourses through various prejudices and exclusionary practices (Wieviorka, 1995; Miles and Brown, 2003) with reference to phenotypical and cultural differences (Modood, 2005; Fox, 2013). Therefore, it is not limited to phenotypical or biological traits; rather, racialised cultural characteristics can also be used as a basis of differentiation. Culture in this respect is as effective as skin colour in racialising discourses.

Research on racism has often focused on the perspective of the white majority. Scholars such as Ignatiev (1995), Roediger (2005), Garner (2006) and Fox (2012), on the other hand, argue that some migrant groups have also judged other migrants racially by means of changing their position from being victims with disadvantaged socio-economic circumstances to benefiting from the privileges of being white. Physical appearance is wielded as a strategic choice (Ignatiev, 1995; Brodtkin, 1998; Brubaker, 2002; Fox *et al.*, 2012) and an important preferred vantage point (Fox, 2013) for constructing a boundary between “us” and “them” on the grounds of racial difference. In this light, depending on the net of social relationships which characterise these encounters, being or claiming to be white becomes a basis for racialising others. As seen in the case of minority groups, such as the Irish Americans in the mid-19th century (Ignatiev, 1995; Garner, 2006; Roediger, 2007), the British working class in the 20th century (Bonnett, 1998), the Jews in the United States in the 20th century (Brodtkin, 1998), and, more currently, the Mexicans in the USA (Skrentny, 2002), the East European migrants in Britain (Fox, 2013; Fox and Mogilnicka, 2017), and the young Russian-speakers in Finland (Krivonos, 2017), they used their putative whiteness to benefit from the higher status of not being a racialised or victimised minority and, thus, to ensure both socio-psychological and material benefits (Fox, 2013).

One of the best-documented examples of the conscious and deliberate use of white discourse is that of the Irish. Noel Ignatiev’s (1995) book, *How the Irish Became White*, demonstrates how the Irish people, who emigrated to America in the mid-nineteenth century, made a strategic choice in order to overcome industrial capitalism and American nativism. In their first years of residence in the States,

they were derisively called “niggers turned inside out” because of the extent to which they not only had been moving into Black districts but also had been marrying African-Americans. In order to gain racial privilege, however, they made a series of economic and political alliances with White Southern planters, who also understood the importance of gaining the support of Northern laborers, in order to attain their own interests. Irish workers strategically distanced themselves from the Black labourers with whom they competed for work. They systematically excluded African-Americans from workplaces they worked at and demanded the dismissal of those Black workers who were employed at their workplaces. Although, at the first glance, the Irish attacks against African-Americans were viewed as a response to American capitalism, it nevertheless shows that ‘they had learned well the lesson that they would make their way in the U.S. not as Irishmen but as whites’ (Ignatiev, 1995: 120). For this reason, Irish Catholics had to change their position from being victims and opponents of racial oppression to proponents of slavery, racial oppression, and white supremacy. Similarly, Hungarian and Romanian migrants in the UK used whiteness as a tool while also being the targets of racism. They explicitly claimed their putative whiteness for the purpose of dissociating themselves from Britain’s ethnic minorities and the Roma. The purpose of wielding this whiteness was that of securing, not only socio-psychological benefits, but also a better standing in the UK labour market (Fox, 2013).

Whiteness, in this respect, is a claim and socially constructed identity, ‘simultaneously constitutive of non-white Others, yet fragmented into degrees of belonging (to communities based on place, class, nation and “race”)’ (Garner, 2006: 268). It is defined in relation to other identities and is a stance from which others are perceived as being deviant (Garner, 2007). It is argued by Garner (2006) that whiteness is not one thing in particular and has no absolute consensual meaning. This also highlights the constructed nature of racialised identities (Clarke and Garner, 2010). The boundaries, forms and discourses of whiteness have all been conceptualised in variable ways throughout the century (Bhattacharyya et al., 2002). It has been used in order to terrorise, enforce systematic supremacy, establish a set of norms, grow cultural capital, and create contingent hierarchies (Garner, 2006).

It is important to stress that, in light of the historical context of Turkishness, young Turks in Britain may also claim a putative whiteness as an identity strategy to differentiate themselves from other Muslim groups and associate themselves with the majority group in response to Islamophobia. As such, the notion of Turkishness strongly emphasises the idea that Turks belong to the white race. In 1909, an article in the *New York Times* asked the question “Is the Turk a White Man?” After analysing the topic thoroughly, a full-fledged scientific mobilisation aimed at establishing the whiteness and Europeaness of Turks in historical, racial, and linguistic terms was initiated (Ergin, 2008). The new modern Turkish identity was defined by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding father of the Turkish Republic, who believed that the new Turkey should cut all its Islamic and Eastern origins and define its identity as a part of “white/Western” civilisation. He tried to prove

this claim in many ways. In 1932, for instance, the first Turkish Historical Congress in Ankara was tasked with proving the theory that ‘all white Aryan races originated in Central Asia (ancient Turkish heartland)’ and further that the Turks were indeed the real basis of all “Western civilisation” (Gokay and Hamourtziadou, 2016: 179). At the second Turkish Historical Congress in Ankara, it was accepted that the Turks were an integral white European race. To sum up, during these two congresses, a view on the essential purity and supremacy of Turkish blood was reached. Besides the discussion pertaining to whiteness and European races, many reforms were promulgated to convert the new Turkey into a secular, modern nation-state by means of a series of political, religious, social, cultural, and educational policy changes. The discourse of whiteness was used to allege that Turkey is a part of the western project of modernity. Turkishness was inscribed into whiteness and thus acquired a racial character that took the form of Western civilisation and modernity. In the historical context, the claim of whiteness was an explicit policy of the new Turkey to distance Turkish people from other racial groups, especially Muslims in the Middle East, so as to better align themselves with the West (*ibid*).

Claiming Britishness

Although the evidence of existing research on the views of Muslim groups about Britishness suggests that most of those who were born in Britain or who have lived in Britain since their early years feel themselves to be British (e.g. Jacobson, 1997; Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015), their loyalty is still questioned and they are accused of having multiple identities. One of the main reasons for this is that approaches to the question of what it means to be British differ from one individual to another and one ethnic group to another. Thus, there is no single definitive criterion for who can be considered British.

Jacobson (1997) argues that ethnic minority groups position themselves according to three shifting boundaries of Britishness which are constructed and maintained by White British groups and also, generally to a lesser degree, by the minority groups themselves: viz., the civic boundary, the racial boundary, and the cultural boundary. These three dimensions of Jacobson’s understanding of national identity/nationalism have, on the whole, been categorised into two dimensions by a wide number of scholars: i.e., civic and ethnic (e.g. Fenton, 2007; Bechofer and McCrone, 2009; Kiss and Park, 2014). The former is generally defined by loyalty to a state through its laws and institutions. An emphasis upon the importance of having British citizenship, speaking English, or respecting Britain’s political institutions and laws may display the civic dimension of one’s British national identity (Kiss and Park, 2014). As opposed to the civic nation, the ethnic form of national identity is based upon similarities in blood ties, language, tradition, and culture; thus, ‘an individual’s deepest attachments are inherited, not chosen’ (Ignatieff, 1993: 4-5). This type of national identity may be understood as being born in Britain, living in Britain for most of one’s life, being a Christian, being white, having British ancestry, or sharing British customs and traditions (Condor *et al.*, 2006; Bechofer and McCrone, 2009; Kiss and Park, 2014). In that sense, while civic con-

ceptions of national identity tend to be more inclusive, ethnic conceptions are more exclusive (Heath and Roberts, 2006).

Indeed, there has been a debate in relation to the idea of Britishness and whether it is inclusive enough of Muslims. Some multiculturalist scholars (e.g. Modood, 2007; Uberoi and Modood, 2010, 2013) have advocated making Britishness more inclusive without cultivating feelings of discrimination or exclusion. Members of Muslim minorities in Britain define their Britishness in terms of its civic or official form (e.g. Meer and Modood, 2015; Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015), which focuses on 'the achievement of an autonomous state of equal citizens' (Hutchinson, 1994: 17). For many people, being British means having British citizenship or nationality (Jacobson, 1997). This sort of national identity thus reflects an inclusive character such that one may associate him or herself with the citizenry as well as the political practices and legal institutions of the state while also maintaining a separate cultural or religious identity rather than embracing the ethnic form of Britishness. This is a distinctly civic interpretation of British nationality and citizenship which excludes the idea of sharing a common decent, customs and traditions – that is, the ethnic dimension of national identity (Kiss and Park, 2014).

A distinction has been made between the English and the British by which the idea of British nationality provides ethnic minority groups some space to feel a sense of belonging to their country. In that sense, for Muslim groups in Britain, the task of reconciling their cultural, ethnic and religious heritage with Britishness constitutes a central issue (Uberoi and Modood, 2010; Meer and Modood, 2015).

Meer and Modood (2015), for instance, observed that Muslims in Britain tend to combine religious and national identities in such a way that their self-identification as British and respecting political institutions are considerably high. Other research has also found a positive association between British identification and Muslim affiliation (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005; Mogahed, 2007; Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015).

The literature, however, shows that many questions have been raised, especially by the media and politicians, about the loyalty and Britishness of Muslims (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005; Ali, 2008; Sales, 2010). It has been argued that young Muslims' understanding of British identity, which is based mainly on its civic form, has been construed as being problematic. The general criticism is that Muslim people first define themselves as Muslim before considering themselves British. Therefore, Muslims have to prove their loyalty to the country. That is to say, they have to redefine their identities as either "extremists" or "moderates" (Ali, 2008). Furthermore, Muslims have been perceived as challenging British values and beliefs and are depicted as enemies of the nation (El Amrani, 2012). This argument suggests that there is a conflict between national and religious identities amongst Muslims. As Kalin (2011) notes, this is because Islamic identity is viewed as being an obstacle to believing in democracy, equality, respect for one's country, and adhering to the country's constitution and laws. Furthermore, Muslims are seen as abiding by an ideology which does not accept any British values.

Ahmed (2009) notes in his empirical work on young Muslims that they are often confronted with questions that imply a choice between their nationality and religion — something which is viewed as somehow conflicting in popular perception.

Accordingly, on the basis of the meanings of these two boundaries of Britishness and the stereotypes about Muslims, it is possible for the young Turks, especially second generations, to respond to Islamophobia by claiming that they embrace both civic and ethnic forms of British identity.

They may claim that Islamophobia does not affect their British identity because they historically, culturally and racially have the same kinds of values as English people, such as believing in democracy and equality, being white, and adhering to the country's rule of law, as well as showing loyalty to the country. Furthermore, they may assert that their secular understanding of Islam is compatible with the idea of Britishness as conceived by British politicians and the media.

Asserting the compatibility of Turkishness with a modern Western secular democracy

At the centre of today's perceptions of Western societies about Muslims residing in the West, there are rigid boundaries between Western, European, modern, secular, liberal democracy, and Muslims, who are characterised as threatening Western values. Particularly, the visibility of Islam in public spaces has become the main issue in criticisms and debates in which religious and cultural practices and the views and policies of Muslim groups pertaining to European principles and values are underlined. Nevertheless, the judgments regarding Muslim groups often do not make a distinction between these groups, stressing that they are all radically Islamist, culturalist, conservative, anti-democratic, and thus not members of Western civilisation (Birt, 2009; Kunst *et al.*, 2011; Zebiri, 2011; El Amrani, 2012).

The literature on the idea of Turkishness (e.g. Gole, 1997; Ozakpinar, 1998; Cagaptay, 2006; Bozdaglioglu, 2008) points out that the Republic of Turkey, after being established in 1923, spent much of its time rebuilding Turkey through reforms in accordance with the idea of a secular nation-state based on the Western model. One of the other important steps toward secularisation transpired in 1926 when the Turkish Grand National Assembly approved a secular civil code which regulated the principles of marriage, inheritance, divorce, and adoption. Finally, in 1928, the declaration of Islam as the religion of the Republic of Turkey was eliminated from the constitution. Accordingly, Islam, which was seen as a culture, an ideology, and identity, as well as a particular set of beliefs which had united Anatolian-Turkish Muslims under the Ottoman Empire had been transformed into something simply nominal in the new Turkey. When secularism pushed the Islamic faith out of society, nominal Islam became as central to the Turkish nation as its culture and identity (Cagaptay, 2006). It was also one of the most important markers of Turkishness, which was an identity policy of Kemalist nationalism. This ethnic and national-based identity formation of Turkish society was shaped through the instruments of secularism and Westernisation. One can assert that it was not a conflict between secularism or westernism and Islam, but rather a clash between Islam, which welcomed other Muslims of different ethnic backgrounds,

and Turkishness, which strongly underlined the ethnic and nationally based identity of Turkish society and the understanding of Turkish Islam by drawing sharp boundaries between Turkish people and other ethnic groups, particularly Islamic Middle Eastern civilisations.

This Kemalist understanding of Turkishness is best viewed via one of Atatürk's quotes when he said that 'We are patriots and Turkish nationalists. The base of our Republic is the Turkish nation. So, the more our citizens know the Turkish culture, the more powerful our Republic is' (cited in Ince, 2017: 98). The Kemalist's purpose, at this point, was to transform Islam into something noninfluential form on state affairs and society rather than simply eliminating it. Inasmuch as Kemalist nationalism was still moulded by Islam, it was only nominal. As is quoted in Kışlalı's book, *Kemalizm, Laiklik ve Demokrasi*, Atatürk stated that 'religion is an important institution. A nation without religion cannot survive. Yet it is also very important to note that religion is a link between Allah and the individual believer' (2007: 64). In Atatürk's view, then, Islam in the public sphere was incompatible with western modernity (Bozdağlıoğlu, 2008) and thus excluded Islam from the public sphere. Secularism, then, was set up as a shield against it in the creation of a modern Western-style secular state. Indeed, its main objective was that of creating citizens that were tightly coupled with the nation-state and the Turkish ethnicity in order to catch up with the West in every aspect since it was thought that contemporary Western civilisation was superior to that of Islamic Eastern civilisation. At that point, one of the most important steps in the creation of a society that would be in harmony with modernisation and Western values had been carried out by redefining and reconstructing the identity of Turkish society itself.

After being established in 1923, the Republic of Turkey prioritised secularisation with its positivist and secular education. The Turkish education system promoted secularism by disparaging Islamism through courses on Atatürk's Principles and History of Reforms, which were taught in every school for eight years and the first years of university education (Demiralp, 2012). These secular tendencies and orientations have affected Turkish society in Turkey in many areas, especially in political and social life. In this context, secularism in Turkey played a crucial role in the construction of Turkish national identity, the reorganisation of the public sphere and the formation of Turkish citizenship. This also means that many Turkish immigrants already experienced secularism in Turkey before coming to Europe. Yet, although there was an intense westernisation-modernisation and secularisation process in political and social life in Turkey, some people, especially those living in the Anatolian countryside, have maintained a more traditional religious life and socio-cultural values. Studies on Turkish society in Turkey noted that especially education level and contact with the Western world were positively related to the secular understanding of Islam (Uysal, 2006). Research on Turkish minorities in Belgium and the Netherlands confirmed this tendency among Turks. These studies show that the second-generation and the more highly educated Turkish-Muslims tended to be less religious (Lesthaeghe and Neels, 2000; Van Tubergen,

2007; Phalet *et al.*, 2008; Maliepaard *et al.*, 2010; Smits *et al.*, 2010) although others pointed to greater intergenerational stability in Germany (Diehl and Koenig, 2013). From the perspectives of secularisation and assimilation theories, second-generation Muslims are expected to become less religious as they become more exposed to a predominantly secular surrounding (Maliepaard *et al.*, 2010; Phalet *et al.*, 2012). It has been also shown that the level of religiosity is influenced by contextual factors such as public hostility against Muslim immigrants (Connor, 2010).

Therefore, it could be said that the Turkish people have historically greatly valued Western modernity and, more specifically, understood Turkish Islam as being compatible with it. The young Turks in Britain, in that sense, may develop identity strategies to detach Islamophobia from themselves by emphasising their distinctive historical values. Taking into account the historical implications of Turkishness, the young Turks might latch onto their distinctive identity by distinguishing themselves from other Muslims in terms of their proximity to Europe, their secular and modern republican values, their European way of life, their understanding of Turkish Islam, and so on.

Accordingly, in this section, I anticipated some possible identity responses of the young Turks to Islamophobia by considering research on non-Muslim minorities and immigrants, Muslims in Britain and Western Europe, Turks in Western Europe (mostly Germany and the Netherlands) and the historical implications of Turkishness. The literature suggests that there is a clear divergence between studies in Britain and studies in other Western European countries (especially in Germany and the Netherlands) in relation to Islamophobia. While the literature in Germany and the Netherlands focuses on Islamophobia and other sorts of discrimination experiences of one of the largest Muslim groups in Western Europe (Turks), the British literature is much more focused on South Asian Muslims. London is different because it has a large South Asian population whilst in Berlin and some other European cities where Turks are the majority of immigrants.

One of the implications of this situation is that the experiences of Islamophobia and the identity strategies Turks develop in response can be different in London and the other European cities. Turks in Britain are relatively invisible Muslim groups and live in a context of super-diversity. But in both Germany and the Netherlands, Turks are the largest minority group and further in Germany there is no other major visible ethnic minority other than Turks. This also means there are not many contexts with the large Turkish communities living alongside other Muslim communities. London provides this super-diversity to the Turks. It is a city where the Turks live alongside other Muslim groups. Therefore, although the literature in Germany and the Netherlands do not raise any differentiation strategy or antipathy towards other Muslim groups among Turkish people, because of the exceptional context of London, Turks may use various identity strategies discussed in this section to differentiate themselves from the other Muslims in Britain.

Furthermore, it is clear that unlike some other research on Islamophobia, my study does not offer a single factor analysis (i.e Islamophobia) but rather remains open to different kinds of things that may influence Turkish identity. Turkish atti-

tudes to other Muslims and how Islam should be lifted in the modern world are shaped by different sources of Turkish identity such as Turkish nationalism, secularism, whiteness, and Europeaness, some of which may connect with Islamophobia of non-Muslims because Turks may want to distinguish themselves from other Muslims in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and approaches to Islam. So, in this study, I present a multifactorial analysis. Islamophobia cannot stand alone because it is nested with other factors, attitudes, and orientations which are also important parts of Turkish identity.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter was divided into two sections. The first section focused on the conceptualisation of Islamophobia in the broader context of racism. Islamophobia was defined as a form of cultural racism which references the history of racism and biological racism. The fact that Islamophobia manifests not only in overt forms but also in covert forms in the everyday lives of Muslims was also pointed out in the first section. The second section focused on the conceptual possibilities of the young Turks' responses to Islamophobia by considering the current scholarship on various identity strategies of migrants and minorities, as well as the distinctive characteristics of the Turkish people.

In the first section, Islamophobia was defined as cultural racism based on the inscriptions of culturally, religiously, and ethnically constructed "Otherness." Hence, while cultural racism builds on modern biological racism, it is different from biological racism because it focuses on differences in culture and cultural practices among Muslim groups. In that sense, racism cannot be reduced to a set of biological features but rather must be understood as a series of objects that target Muslims or those who are perceived as being Muslim. They have been racialised in different ways. These are not limited to biological or phenotypical traits but include a myriad of characteristics, including clothing, Muslim name, cuisine, ethnicity, nationality, language, accent, attitude, immigration status, economic situation, and so on. These religious markers are read as being threats to national security, Western liberal values, modern secular democracy, national identity, and so on. Moreover, given that subtle racism has become more and more common as overt racism has declined, it is argued that Islamophobia should be understood as something which manifests, not only in its overt forms but also in its covert forms. Due to the subtle nature of racism, racialised individuals may have difficulty recognising whether racism is at work. The subtle form of Islamophobia/racism may be undermined in terms of its effects, but the fact remains that it still impacts the psychological well-being of the targeted groups and, if not challenged, may then form the basis of a more aggressive and blatant form of Islamophobia.

The second section focused on the potential victims of Islamophobia – a topic which has been under-researched. While there has been a considerable amount of research about the meaning of Islamophobia, the effects that the media and politicians have had on it and the experiences of Muslims themselves, the scholarship on Islamophobia has not focused enough on how they respond to it. Considering

the current literature on various identity responses to different forms of “Othering” and the distinctive features of the Turkish people, two possible identity strategies to Islamophobia by the young Turks were anticipated: reactive identity strategies and avoidance identity strategies. In the first strategy, according to social psychological theory, once a person’s group identity is threatened, she/he reacts to their perceived inferiority for the purpose of achieving a positive social identity. This theory points out that this identity threat increases identification with the devalued or rejected in-group, which consequently has a positive impact on the psychological wellbeing of the discriminated group members.

The literature shows that the devaluation and humiliation of Islam and the racialisation of Muslims have reinforced in-group solidarity amongst Muslim groups. This is because they perceive discrimination or racism on a religious basis and, to defend and underline their Muslim identity, they express a strong desire to indicate solidarity with Muslims around the world. The literature further suggests that Islamophobia affects the national identification of Muslims. They may prioritise their Muslim identity over their national identities in order to resist and react to Islamophobia. Therefore, it was anticipated that the young Turks may associate themselves with Muslim identification as a response to Islamophobia and may tend to prioritise their Muslim identity over their British national identity. On the other hand, reactive ethnicity theory suggests that, when ethnic minority groups experience discrimination in such a way that it sharpens ethnic-racial identity boundaries, they develop a reactive ethnic identification in order to defend their threatened self-images and collective dignity. Discrimination solidifies ethnic identity boundaries between “us” and “them” while also promoting ethnic group solidarity and political mobilisation. It was thus argued that the young Turks may also develop reactive ethnic identification as a response to Islamophobia.

In the second identity strategy, it was anticipated that the young Turks may respond to Islamophobia by developing discursive identity strategies to detach the effects of Islamophobia from themselves and deflect it onto other Muslims. The literature suggests that some minority or migrant groups have changed their position from being victims to benefiting from the privileges of being in a higher status group so as to achieve a positive social identity. By claiming that they share commonalities with the White majority group, they may even judge each other racially or culturally so as to gain both socio-psychological and material advantages. Therefore, it was anticipated that racism may be an effective tool for the young Turks to deflect Islamophobia onto other Muslims, dissociate themselves from them, and align themselves with the White majority group. Considering both the literature on various minority groups who have wielded their putative whiteness as a strategic choice for obtaining material and symbolic rewards and the distinctive characteristics of Turkishness, it was argued that the young Turks may also claim their putative whiteness in order to be associated with the White majority instead of their stigmatised Muslim identity.

Considering the literature on the idea of Turkish identity, it was further anticipated that, in order to detach Islamophobia from themselves, they may distinguish

themselves from other Muslims by latching onto the idea of Turkishness – an identity which is purportedly compatible with Western secular, modern democracy and the Western way of life. Lastly, considering the ethnic and civic boundaries of Britishness and the negative discourses against Muslims, it was pointed out that the young Turks may claim that they embrace both forms of Britishness, that they do show loyalty to Britain, that they have integrated into British society, and that they will assert that Turkish-Islam is compatible with the idea of Britishness described by the media and politicians. That is, they may assert that they are true British people, pointing out that the debates questioning the British identity of Muslims are about other Muslims and not themselves.

Therefore, we need a carefully crafted methodology for exploring how Islamophobia is experienced and manifests in everyday interactions and how it is understood by the young Turks, as well as identifying what kind of identity practices are employed by them in order to better respond to Islamophobia. The methodology must be sensitive enough to distinguish between the conceptual distinctions and identity strategies outlined in this chapter. This will be elaborated upon in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS

3 Introduction

In this chapter, the qualitative research method adopted by this research to collect data is examined and discussed. This method consists of semi-structured in-depth interviews. These are used to explore and understand participants' experiences of Islamophobia, as well as the various identity practices that they utilise to fight against it. It is argued that this method allows the researcher to gather a richer, more detailed, and valuable set of data with which to address gaps in the literature on Islamophobia and identity strategies. In the first section, this study's research questions, design and methodological framework are introduced. Then, in the second section, the criteria for selecting this study's research participants are discussed. In the third section, the method with which the targeted participant populations and profiles are accessed is explained. Afterward, in the fourth section, a description of this study's adopted data collection method – viz. semi-structured in-depth interviews – is provided. Next, in the fifth section, the method by which the interview information was analysed and coded is presented. Moreover, in the sixth section, the ethical considerations which this study faced before, during, and after the fieldwork are addressed. Finally, in the last section, I reflect upon how and to what extent my positionality, personal experiences and the context of my fieldwork played a role in the research process.

3.1 Research questions and epistemological framework

This research aims to contribute to the literature on how Islamophobia operates in everyday interactions, how it is understood by individuals, and what kinds of identity practices are employed by migrants and other minorities by exploring young Turks' perceptions, experiences, and feelings regarding Islamophobia in the British context. Hence, the book addresses the following research questions:

1. How do young Turks in Britain perceive and represent Islamophobia and its relationship to them?
2. How is Islamophobia at work in the everyday lives of young Turks according to their reports on their experiences of Islamophobia?
3. What kinds of identity strategies do they develop in response to Islamophobia?

The wider aims of the research are:

- To explore how young Turks understand Islamophobia;
- To understand whether young Turks see themselves as targets of Islamophobia;
- To explore how Islamophobia manifests in their lives;

- To survey various identity discourses and practices as a response to Islamophobia;
- To explore whether young Turks develop a collective Muslim identity as a response to Islamophobia;
- To identify to what extent distinctive legacies of Turkishness are deployed by young Turks against Islamophobia;
- To investigate how Islamophobia impacts young Turks' feelings and attitudes towards ethnic, national and religious identities;
- To identify how Islamophobia impacts their feelings and attitudes towards English identity.

The focus of the research design on individuals and their various identity responses to Islamophobia aims to fill a gap in the literature. Much of the literature on Islamophobia neglects mundane/material practices towards individuals identified as Muslims, focusing on arguments relating to policies, mass media, films, publications, etc. Interpreting the social world from these critical perspectives disregards the perceptions, experiences, and feelings of social actors. This research examines how these social actors see, present, and express themselves from their own perspectives as others talk about them (Jenkins, 2008). My ontological position is based on anti-foundationalism, which treats the social world as always socially constructed rather than objectively determined (Carson *et al.*, 2001) and perceived (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). The reality is socially constructed in that 'all human knowledge is developed, transmitted, and maintained in social situations' (Berger and Luckmann, 1991: 15). There are multiple realities due to different individuals and groups having different perspectives. It is thus essential for the researcher to become aware of the context of a behaviour or event because social beings construct reality and give meaning to it according to context. My epistemological standpoint views knowledge as being constructed. Consequently, I seek to detect 'motives, meanings, reasons, and other subjective experiences that are time- and context-bound' (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988: 511). As a member of social reality, the researcher offers her/his understanding and interpretation regarding various meanings, beliefs, and practices, along with other subjective experiences and views. Therefore, knowledge is not merely found or given but is actively produced in the interactions between the researcher and her/his targets. Consequently, we do not have before us a complete and constituted world but one which only now is being constituted (Schutz, 1967). Accordingly, the role of the researcher in the research process is that of gaining knowledge, filtered by her/his own subjective meanings, creativity, and selectivity, all of which are present throughout all stages of a research.

The intention to elaborate upon the experiences of Islamophobia and the various aspects of the identity practices which are used against it necessitates that this study adopts a qualitative research method to collect data. Semi-structured in-depth interviews enable researchers to ask their informants open-ended questions by which to collect a detailed set of information (Burgess, 1995; Atkinson and Silverman, 1997) about the perceptions, experiences, and feelings they attach to

social phenomena. Interviews allow the respondents to elucidate their views in their own words, thus providing the researcher compelling knowledge about the nature of reality (Kvale, 2007). The main rationale for selecting the individual interview method is due to my wishing to interview, not only individuals who have access to the Turkish community spaces in North London (where the vast majority of Turkish people live), but also individuals who live in other regions of London and/or who do not have any affiliation with the Turkish community. Hence, I also made connections with youth who have affiliations with ethnic groups other than that of the Turkish community. This means that this research is not limited to a certain social space since it involves young Turks who come from different social and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, this research's focus is on young Turkish people rather than the site of Turkish cultural production. Therefore, participant observations were not employed because doing so would have suggested a different scope of research enquiry and would have caused a mismatch between the ethnographic and individual interview data that would have been collected.

Furthermore, as discussed in the previous section, the nature of racism has increasingly changed from overt and blatant forms to subtle and covert forms of racial practices. In this respect, it is difficult for the researcher to observe its existence and its effects on the targets studied. Moreover, young Turks do not necessarily have to have had direct experience with Islamophobia to be able to contribute their views to this research. Islamophobia must be understood, not only in terms of mundane/material practices, but also in terms of its discursive context – viz., the way in which respondents may develop their identity discourses against Islamophobic sentiments which have been strengthened by both the mainstream Western media and policymakers. Hence, these concerns led me to employ semi-structured in-depth interviews, thereby providing me with a well-founded knowledge base about my targets' perceptions, experiences, feelings, and responses in relation to Islamophobia. Nevertheless, I did conduct some overt participant observations at some point in the fieldwork. Spending a substantial amount of time in London, whilst not constituting participant observation *per se*, reveals that this research's strategies complement this study's interview strategy.

3.2 The selection of research participants

In the selection of research participants, four criteria - research population, ethnicity, location and the period of residency - were identified.

I focused on first and second-generation young Turkish people aged between 18 and 35 in London. There are two main reasons for choosing this demographic. First, I assumed that younger people interact socially with British society and culture more than older generations. Particularly, second-generations and some first-generations who had to come to Britain at an early age interact more with others seeing as they (potentially) were born and raised in the country of settlement and have been educated in British schools, made British friends, and, thereby, have been much more engaged with British society in their everyday lives. Second, as I discussed in the previous chapter, images of Muslim youth in the UK are targeted

by much contemporary Islamophobia. A number of terrorist attacks in the UK have brought young British Muslims in particular into the spotlight, especially since the words “Muslim” and “youth,” when placed together, are more often associated with radicalism. Political and media discourses and implications against Muslim youth fuel Islamophobic perceptions and prejudices. They are represented as people who are unsympathetic to the West or Britain, involved in violent terror, conservative, anti-feminist, and, on the whole, incompatible with Western modern secular democracy; who find it difficult to integrate into British society; who do not respect other cultures and religions, etc. (e.g. Meer *et al.*, 2010; Sales, 2010; Zebiri, 2011; Kunst *et al.*, 2011; Gilewicz, 2012). Hence, this research aims to explore how young Turks respond to these Islamophobic discourses and stereotypes, especially in light of the fact that they do not often distinguish between Muslim groups. Having said that, whether the participants experienced Islamophobia was not considered a criterion. Thus, this research is also open to those Turks who would claim that Islamophobia is not an issue which impacts their lives. They nevertheless still constitute a part of the research’s target population because I am aiming to understand why they detach Islamophobia from themselves and how they respond to racist accusations against Muslims in Britain seeing as that is a group they are also viewed as being members of.

Another important aim was to recruit individuals from the Turkish ethnic group. The term “Turkish people” in this research refers to those who identify themselves as Turkish. The idea of Turkishness formulated by Atatürk, the founding father of the Turkish Republic, does not unavoidably coincide with blood ties, nor is it blind to ethnic differences. It has no reference to a common race or common religion (Enneli, 2001). This civic conception of nationhood means, for instance, that a person born to a racially Kurdish parent might identify her/himself as being a Turk; likewise, a Turk might identify her/himself as being non-Muslim. Thus, this study sets out to include all such individuals.

I decided not to include Turkish-Cypriots in my sample. Although Mainland Turks and Cypriot Turks share many cultural, economic, and emotional values, as many studies in public and academic discourse underline (Enneli, 2001; Enneli *et al.* 2005; GLA, 2009; Atay, 2010; Simsek, 2012; Unutulmaz, 2013), these two ethnic groups are distinct communities in many other respects. For instance, their migration trajectories are different and have brought about different socio-economic and cultural outcomes for them. In addition, Robins and Aksoy (2001) note that the Turkish Cypriots have three main spheres of identity: shared culture historically with Greek Cypriots; the culture of mainland Turkey; and finally, the culture of Britain. This complex set of cultural reference points is reflected in the different ways they call themselves: Cypriot, Cypriot Turks, or British. Most young Cypriot Turks in Britain are second and third generations and “have a better inclusion to the receiving society as a result of historical connections to the UK and better use of the language” (Simsek, 2012: 70) compared to Mainland Turks. This longer settlement, their successful integration and ability to use the English provides many advantages in setting up businesses (Simsek, 2012) and thus success-

ful social, cultural and economic inclusion into the dominant society compared to mainland Turks and Kurds. Thus, it is both analytically and practically problematic to incorporate those people who identify themselves specifically as Kurds and Turkish Cypriots into the Turkish national identity issue in relation to Islamophobia as though they are homogenous groups in most aspects. For these reasons, this research focuses specifically on young people who identify themselves as Turkish. This is consistent with this study's aim to understand the reaction of Turkish nationalism and Turkish ethnic identity towards Islamophobia in the British context.

The vast majority of the Turks in the UK live in London (GLA, 2009; Atay, 2010; Simsek, 2012; Unutulmaz, 2013;). The main reason for this is that many Turkish social networking, kinship, and patronage relations exist between the Turks who already moved there for the purpose of making a community in that city (Kucukcan, 1999). On the other hand, there are some additional reasons for studying this community in London in particular. Even though the Turkish community does not constitute the biggest minority community in London, it has come increasingly into prominence and significance over the past decades in virtue of the food, barbershop, cultural, *inter alia*, organisations which have been built there (Unutulmaz, 2013). Besides, London is a highly distinctive place where young Turkish people find themselves in a highly tense predicament. Their identities have been constructed by means of two "geopolitical dimensions:" the "inside – out" and the "outside – in" (Modood, 2013: 127). This means that the identity process is built, not just in relation to ethnicity and ethnic identity construction (i.e., where individuals develop relationships with their family inside the community and so on), but also in relation to outsiders' attitudes, treatments, and perceptions. What is important to grasp here is that there is a dynamic interaction from the inside-out and the outside-in and that London allows one to better reveal the effects of these two dimensions on the identity construction of young Turks. On the one hand, London is home to a number of social, cultural, political, and religious organisations which are promoted by Turkish communities with the purpose of circulating and strengthening their identity. On the other hand, it also enables those young people to have relations with the wider society, including the dominant group, as well as other Muslim and non-Muslim minority groups. Thus, their identity negotiations and strategies to cope with Islamophobia are influenced both by internal and external forces. All of these also make it necessary to acknowledge that Islamophobia experiences and identification may differ for Turks in other towns and cities in Britain.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasise here that the period of residency in the UK was also a decisive factor in choosing respondents. This is because, in order to adjust or integrate into the host society's culture, language, and way of life, it is required for immigrants to have lived in the receiving country for a number of years. Therefore, in this research, I chose only those who had a minimum of five years of residency in the UK to be participants.

3.3 The process of accessing the field and the sample profile

I had good access to the targeted population for several reasons. For one, I am Turkish, know the nature and main characteristics of the Turkish community in London, and have a good number of gatekeepers. On entering the field, gatekeepers are always central elements. They may either 'help or hinder research depending upon their personal thoughts on the validity of the research and its value as well as their approach to the welfare of the people under their charge' (Reeves, 2010: 317). I initially used my personal connections to seek participants. I already made several contacts with some key gatekeepers and non-governmental Turkish organisations in London through social and cultural activities during the language course that I attended in 2015 and later on during the completion of my Masters in 2016. Even though I was able to reach informants through the agency of organisations such as the Turkish Islamic Cultural Centre, Turkish mosques, the National View Movement, and Jamia-e Suleymaniyya, I was still not able to reach informants who were diverse enough to represent the variation required. It was crucial for me to strive to include respondents who could represent the widest variety of perspectives possible within the range determined by the research objective (Koerber and McMichael, 2008). In that sense, my guiding principle during the fieldwork was to acquire maximum variation. I aimed to recruit individuals that were diverse enough to represent the variation known to exist in the Turkish community of London. To be more precise, Turks are not homogenous in terms of their social life and practices, their religious views, the level of their relationships with British society, etc. Thus, the way they experience Islamophobia, or have thoughts about it, may differ due to these differences. Including as many Turkish youth from as many backgrounds as possible would allow me to capture a whole range of identity responses to Islamophobia. For this purpose, I contacted as many Turkish organisations and institutions as possible in order to find a vast array of informants possessing as many different traits or qualities as possible.

I contacted them by means of the following three channels: Turkish friends who studied in various universities in London; the main gatekeepers; and by participating in activities held by those institutions and organisations. Meeting the most authorised and influential people/gatekeepers enabled me to reach the intended population much faster. The institutions and organisations which engage in business, politics, and socio-cultural activities were as follows: the Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen (MUSIAD); the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD); the Republican People's Party (CHP); the England Alevi⁴ Cultural Centre and Cemevi (IAKM); the Ataturkist Thought Association (ADD); and the Turkish Student Union of the UK (TUSU).

⁴ The term "Alevi" refers to those people who describe their belief system as Alevism. With regard to their ethnic identity, most of them are also Kurds. Thus, when explicitly asked, their Alevi-Kurdish identity becomes linked. They define their belief system as a "path" and therefore do not use the word "religion," by which they mean Sunni Islam. The Alevi identity is conceptualised vis-à-vis the Sunni majority in Turkey (for further information about Alevis, see Akdemir (2016)).

Although I, as a Turk, had no difficulty entering and communicating with such organisations, I faced some challenges accessing the respondents. I visited the England Alevi Cultural Centre and Cemevi (IAKM) and met its administrators to introduce my research and request their help in finding participants who would define themselves as Turkish-Alevi. The IAKM was established in 1993 to service Turkish and Kurdish Alevi communities. I was welcomed there very well and had a very nice conversation with its president and its other members. When I introduced my study proposal to them, however, they refused to help me find respondents, instead of providing me with the following justification: ‘Your research is about Muslims, but we are Alevi. Our faith and culture are different from the ones that Muslims have’ (President of the IAKM). Although I stated that I had set Turkish ethnic identity as being the main criterion for the research rather than religious identity (meaning that young Turkish Alevi did not have to identify themselves as Muslim), they were uncomfortable being involved in the same project as other Muslim groups due to their perception that Muslims in general hold a negative connotation for the West. I, therefore, had to find other channels of entry due to my goal of recruiting respondents with various perspectives. While the vast majority of Alevi in the UK are ethnically Kurdish, there are also Alevi associations in London where Turkish Alevi are predominant. These associations are generally named with the city or district they emigrated from. I decided to access young Turkish Alevi respondents through these associations. With the help of a friend of one of my main gatekeepers, I eventually achieved access to the targeted respondents through those associations.

Apart from those contacts, I recognised that there are also other young Turkish people who do not have any affiliation with those sorts of organisation and institution but who still are part of the Turkish community in London. In order to reach these Turkish youth, I asked the respondents after each interview whether they knew anyone who met the desired criteria. With the assistance of some of these respondents, I visited various pubs, dance clubs, and sports centres to access the target Turkish youth. Four participants were recruited in this way.

My sample consisted of thirty-nine respondents. Demographic information concerning their gender, age, occupation, country of birth, year of arrival, ethnicity, nationality, and religion are shown in Table 1 below. All participants have been given pseudonyms.

Table 1 Profiles of the participants

Name	Gender	Age	Occupation	Country of Birth	Year of Arrival	Ethnicity	Nationality	Religion
Arif	Male	30	Shop Manager	Turkey	1998	White-Turkish	British-Turkish	Islam
Ahmet	Male	20	Undergraduate	England	Born in the UK	Turkish-Alevi	British	Alevism
Alican	Male	22	Director	England	Born in the UK	White-Turkish	British-Turkish	Islam
Arda	Male	20	Undergraduate	Turkey	2013	White-	Turkish	Islam

						Turkish		
Bedir	Male	23	Shop Assistant	France	2013	Turkish	French	Islam
Berkan	Male	21	Laboratory Technician	England	Born in the UK	Turkish	British-Turkish	Islam
Bulent	Male	27	Retail Assistant	Turkey	1998	White-Turkish-Alevi	British-Turkish	Alevism
Cenk	Male	33	Taxi Driver	Turkey	2003	White-Turkish	Turkish	Islam
Ceylan	Female	30	Cost Controller	Turkey	2003	Turkish	British-Turkish	No Religion
Cuneyt	Male	21	Shop Assistant	Turkey	2004	White-Turkish	Turkish	Islam
Ergin	Male	31	Production Technician	Turkey	2002	White-Turkish	British-Turkish	Islam
Hamit	Male	20	Undergraduate	England	Born in the UK	White-Turkish	British	Islam
Hakan	Male	35	Taxi Driver	Turkey	2004	White-British-Turkish	British	Islam
Halime	Female	25	Engagement Team Member	Germany	2011	White-Turkish	Turkish-German	Islam
Hasan	Male	18	Undergraduate	England	Born in the UK	White-Turkish	Turkish	Islam
Leman	Female	24	Reception Team Member	England	Born in the UK	White-British-Turkish	British-Turkish	No Religion
Metin	Male	34	Retailer	Turkey	2005	White-Asian-Turkish	British-Turkish	Islam
Merye	Female	19	Undergraduate	England	Born in the UK	Turkish	British	Islam
Mahmut	Male	24	Postgraduate	England	Born in the UK	Turkish	British	Islam
Murat	Male	34	Postgraduate/Researcher	Turkey	2013	White-Turkish	Turkish	Islam
Nergis	Female	28	Interior Designer	Turkey	1997	White-Turkish	British-Turkish	No Religion
Neset	Male	23	Shop Manager	England	Born in the UK	Asian-Turkish	British-Turkish	Islam
Nuket	Female	31	Massage Therapist	Turkey	1995	White-British-Turkish	British-Turkish	No Religion
Oguz	Male	27	Postgraduate/Teaching Assistant	Turkey	2010	White-Turkish	Turkish	Islam
Osman	Male	30	Shop Assistant	Turkey	2011	Turkish	Turkish	Islam
Oyacan	Female	30	Interior Designer	Turkey	2007	White-Turkish	Turkish	No Religion
Ozan	Male	27	Shop Assistant	Turkey	2013	Turkish	Turkish	Islam
Ozlem	Female	34	Teacher/Family Advocate	Turkey	1994	White-	British	Islam

						Turkish		
Rumeysa	Female	32	Child Protection Manager	England	Born in the UK	White Turkish	British	No Religion
Recep	Male	26	Postgraduate	England	Born in the UK	White-Turkish	Turkish	Islam
Sabiha	Female	20	Undergraduate	England	Born in the UK	Turkish	British-Turkish	Islam
Selda	Female	32	Graphic Designer	Turkey	2008	White-Turkish	British-Turkish	Islam
Serap	Female	30	Self-Employed	Turkey	2012	Asian-Turkish	Turkish	No Religion
Serdar	Male	28	Web Designer /Photographer	Turkey	2006	White-Turkish	Turkish	No Religion
Sevil	Female	19	Undergraduate	England	Born in the UK	Asian-Turkish	British-Turkish	Islam
Sinem	Female	19	Undergraduate	England	Born in the UK	White-Turkish	British	Islam
Tulay	Female	34	Cashier	Turkey	2004	White-Turkish	British	Islam
Yaren	Female	21	Undergraduate/Retail Assistant	England	Born in the UK	White-Turkish	British-Turkish	Islam
Zeliha	Female	25	Project Assistant	Turkey	2012	Turkish	Turkish	No Religion

3.4 Data collection: Semi-structured in-depth interviews

I selected the semi-structured in-depth interview method as the means by which the data would be collected. The primary consideration for choosing this method was that semi-structured interviews would enable me to explore the perceptions and views of participants with regard to complex and sensitive issues and allow me to delve into details and clarify answers (Barriball and While, 1994). While the interviews involved the use of predetermined questions, they were flexible and involved open-ended questions which enabled the respondents to dwell upon certain issues more than others. I was free to change the order and wording of the interview questions depending on the direction of the interviews and the participants' initial responses, as well as ask further questions where necessary (Doody and Nooran, 2013). Hence, the nature of my interviews contrasts with the standardised/structured interviews in which the wording and sequence of all questions are the same for all participants. Having said that, I was also cognizant of the fact that changes to the wording of the interview questions should not lose the meaning of those questions (Gordon, 1975). I modified the interview questions for the first- and second-generation young Turks, as well as according to other appropriate criteria for each respondent. Employing the semi-structured interview method, I sought to explore – rather than impose – respondents' perceptions, views and feelings with more nuance and depth. I conducted the interviews in London from December 2018 to April 2019. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Lasting on average for about an hour, the 39 recorded interviews totalled approximately 39 hours of recording time. Most of the

interviews were conducted in Turkish, even though many had the opportunity of choosing to speak either English or Turkish. Some respondents switched to Turkish or English whenever they felt more comfortable with one of the two languages in order to better express their feeling and ideas. According to my observations during the interviews, four second-generation respondents were not able to speak Turkish fluently. I translated the quotations myself and presented italicised text in translations for the respondents' own use of English words and phrases.

Given that participation in the research was voluntary, I sought to make interviews as convenient as possible for my respondents. To avoid extra travel time and costs on the part of the respondents, I offered to go to where they preferred to meet with me. This meant that I often travelled to the neighbourhoods where they lived, studied, worked, or socialised. My only request from them was that the place where we would meet was quiet and that they would feel comfortable there. Some of the participants' choices of meeting places revealed the high degree with which they interacted socially with British society and even, to some degree, their invisibility in daily life. On 13 February 2019, after a long and tiring journey, I met Halime,⁵ who worked as an engagement team member at the University of West London. They, however, were not able to have the interview at their first scheduled meeting because Halime had been very busy at the time the interview had been scheduled even though she had set the meeting date and time in advance. Thus, Halime and I had to set a new meeting date and time. I was determined to go there for the second time because Halime was a Turkish woman who wears a headscarf during her social interactions with British people, especially the English, for most of her days. Hence, I was confident that her perceptions, experiences, and feelings regarding Islamophobia would contribute to my work. It turned out that it did. With most participants, I met in cafes, pubs and restaurants. I visited three universities, including SOAS, King's College and Surrey, to meet and interview several second-generation Turkish students. We used libraries and cafes at the universities for doing the interviews. Other meeting places for interviews were Turkish mosques and community centres, as well as their workplaces and homes.⁶

I spent a long time before and after the interviews with many participants, had the opportunity of having informal conversations with them, and observed their social environments overtly, including their workplaces, universities, and local pubs. Whilst I did not deploy participant observations as a method of data collection, all these observations and informal conversations helped me to understand the interviewees' behaviours and social interactions with others in their natural settings. Since the human brain has a finite memory, I took notes of what I encountered during the data collection. I did not take notes openly, though, as it was felt that that would have made the participants feel uncomfortable. To protect the identities of my respondents, I used pseudonyms and recorded my notes in an

⁵ All participants have been assigned pseudonyms.

⁶ On two occasions, I was invited to people's homes to conduct the interview. They offered me a cup of tea and coffee. After completing the interviews, I thanked them and left.

encrypted Word document on my computer immediately after the observations. On one occasion, I visited Tulay in a Turkish patisserie, where she worked as a cashier, much earlier than the time the interview had been scheduled. I introduced myself and sat down and waited for the time of the interview. After a while, a White male customer whose accent turned out not to be English entered and looked at the cakes in the showcase but then asked her if she was Arab due to her headscarf. The patisserie was quite small and thus the dialogue was easily heard by everyone inside. She politely responded that she was a Turk. When I asked her about this incident during the interview, she mentioned that she had experienced many such situations and generally non-English White Europeans engaged in that kind of behaviour. She believed that English people are much politer with regard to such matters. I utilised this event as the starting point of our conversation to explore how she would talk about such situations and how she usually responds to them.

Such opportunities did not only afford me a better understanding of my respondents' everyday interactions, but also allowed me to establish trustworthy relations with those I was interviewing (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007). I asked some of my participants about hanging out with them. They would then plan to attend social, cultural, political, economic, and religious events with me where they would more easily manifest their true identities and interact with outsiders more openly with me. These events were not only opportunities to socialise with them but also a way of gaining their trust. With some second-generation Turks, I spent time, ate dinner, drank cups of tea and coffee, and listened to their stories. The rapport established with the respondents created an atmosphere during the interviews as if the interviewer were a part of the interviewees' circle of friends. Indeed, this point was expressed more clearly by one respondent after their meeting had ended. When I asked Alican about his thoughts regarding the interview, he said, 'To be honest, it was not a formal conversation for me. I was very comfortable, so, I answered questions without ever getting bored.'

My interview questions included sensitive topics, such as Islamophobia, identity practices and ethnicity. The complexity of these topics hampers discussion and disrupts the exploration of its meaning by the respondents. The difficulty is that these issues are directly associated with the private and public spheres of their lives. As noted by Lee, 'It is difficult to avoid the fear of being a stranger, the fear of rejection when seeking personal details about people's lives, and the fear of violating the normative standards of those being studied' (1993: 12). Therefore, I avoided making judgmental statements, gestures, and facial expressions during the interviews. This approach was also appreciated by some of the participants after the interviews. For example, Ozlem said: 'I congratulate you too because you were very neutral throughout the entire conversation. You never criticised my identity, faith, political views, and views about Muslims. This is very important because I felt more comfortable when I shared my thoughts with you.'

Since the main aim of this research was to understand what kinds of identity discourses and practices young Turks develop around the question of Islamopho-

bia, I needed a suitable strategy, not only for selecting interviewees, but also for collecting the actual data. Developing an appropriate interview guide that considered the focus of the research questions and which was based on my theoretical background enabled me to gather a rich, detailed, and valuable set of data about their construction of various identity categories in response to Islamophobia. The process of preparing the interview guide started with identifying the main topics and sections that the interviews were to cover and by providing flexibility for the respondents to talk about topics that were not predicted by the theoretical background. The identified topics and sections were organised into a logical sequence. As discussed earlier, though, the order of the interview questions varied according to the participants' criteria and the direction that the conversations took (Bryman, 2012).

Data collection began with a demographic survey (Appendix 3), including questions regarding the participants' age, gender, country of birth, date of arrival in the UK, occupation, ethnicity, nationality, and religion. This strategy allowed me to correctly identify my target population before conducting the interviews. Knowing some key background information about the interviewees also helped me in modifying some of the interview questions according to the demographic details provided. In light of their responses, the data collection continued with those questions that I believed the respondents would be able to answer more easily. The purpose of these questions was to have a short conversation with the participants regarding their everyday life in the UK. This line of questioning aimed to explore in what ways they describe Britain, how they speak about their lives in the British context, and, importantly, whether they would bring up the issue of Islamophobia without being directly asked about it (for the interview guide, see Appendix 2). I followed up these general questions with more specific ones to acquire further details whenever needed, including on Islamophobia if the respondents had failed to bring it up themselves. The purpose of the questions in the second section of the interview guide was to understand whether they perceived Islamophobia as being something that affected them personally. The third section aimed to explore various identity practices focusing on respondents' responses to negative discourses and stereotypes made against British Muslims, and their feelings and views regarding British national identity, English people and culture, and the notion of Turkishness in the context of Islamophobia. For example, I asked participants about their views and feelings regarding negative discourses and stereotypes (e.g. that Muslims are involved in violent terror, have extremist views, have difficulty feeling British and integrating into British society, and do not respect other cultures and religions). These sorts of questions played important roles in revealing who the participants held responsible for such Islamophobic discourses and, hence, their views and attitudes towards the British media, politicians, and public, as well as other Muslim groups in the UK. Furthermore, they enabled me to explore the accounts, feelings, and attitudes of young Turks towards the notions of Britishness, Turkishness, and Englishness in relation to Islamophobia. In that

sense, these questions allowed the respondents to expand on the topic and allowed me to discover various identity practices around the issue of Islamophobia.

It is also important to acknowledge that the interview format and the order of interview questions may have had effects on some participants' responses regarding Islamophobia and identification. In the first place, a series of questions designed to explore how, if at all, participants raised issues of Islamophobia on their own revealed that Islamophobia had little salience, especially for those second generations who initially highlighted positive experiences in everyday situations. By not prompting them to talk about Islamophobia at the beginning of the interview, I may have contributed to a tendency to underestimate Islamophobia. A second possible effect might be related to interview questions examining the participants' thoughts about negative discourses and stereotypes against Muslims made by media, politicians and so on. These types of questions might have led the first- and second-generation respondents to develop various identity strategies to disassociate themselves from other Muslims and further deflect Islamophobia onto them. As I have discussed in the Introduction, my Master's dissertation interviews tended to elicit narratives of identification with other Muslims more frequently, and Islamophobia was not an explicit focus in that case. In this respect, asking direct questions about Islamophobia may have encouraged participants to discursively articulate and establish their status vis-à-vis the other Muslims in Britain.

3.5 Coding and analysing data

To facilitate the coding of the transcripts, I used NVivo. This software has a range of tools for recording, organising, and linking the patterns and ideas in the data in a number of ways (Richards, 1999; Wiltshier, 2011). Identities are undoubtedly complex products of individuals' ongoing endeavours to understand, interpret and respond to the historical ethos, culture, political systems, social class, social environments, ethnic and religious affiliation, external threats and so on. The coding scheme I developed thus cannot capture all dimensions of identity practices, nor does it reflect the only valid way of organising the data that I collected. Nonetheless, I assert that it best represents the most striking identity practices in relation to Islamophobia. This study's research questions aimed to explore the existence and nature of Islamophobia and the various identity discourses and practices developed by the respondents with relation to it. The coding scheme was thus organised around these objectives.

I employed thematic analysis to identify and analyse patterns of meaning in the dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis creates 'key themes, concepts and emergent categories' (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003: 220) with which to classify, organise, and understand the phenomena under study (Daly *et al.*, 1997; Joffe and Yardley, 2004). It also offers a 'theoretically-flexible approach to analysing qualitative data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 77). The themes identified encapsulate key elements of the data with regard to the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this research, themes were generated through a data-driven inductive approach (Boyatzis, 1998; Thomas, 2006). The inductive approach allows for the

analysis of qualitative data guided by specific evaluation objectives or questions identifying domains and topics to be investigated. Its main purpose is to allow research findings to emerge directly from the themes arising from the data, not from *a priori* theoretical expectations or models (Thomas, 2006).

I began the process of inductive coding by reading the transcripts. Emerging themes were developed by reading the transcripts several times and considering the possible meanings that were inherent in the data and how these fitted with developing themes. In inductive coding, categories are usually created from actual phrases or meanings in specific text segments (Thomas, 2006). During the analysis, I developed specific themes by capturing core messages reported by respondents. An early example of this is what I labelled 'white skin colour'. Many participants talked about their white skin colour as explaining why they did not experience Islamophobia. The following quotations are from the text that was coded into this category. For example:

- 'I am not marginalised like them because my skin colour is white.'
- 'I, on the other hand, am White and thus haven't experienced those types of problems.'
- 'I am not easily identified as a Muslim like South Asians are. My skin colour is white...'

Other early themes emerging from the text and coded by me included 'imperialist practices', 'the mass media wields anti-Muslim propaganda', 'everyday Islamophobia', 'racialisation practices', 'compatibility with Western modern secular democracy', 'a civic form of British national identity', 'reactions to the historical legacy of British colonialism', 'a strong sense of Turkishness'. The use of the early themes, however, limited expanding the themes to reflect the participants' views in a traditionally qualitative way (Creswell, 2012). To address this, once these early themes were applied to the text, various additional inductive themes were designated and used.

The analysis involved a detailed exploration and understanding of selected themes and sub-themes, which were then discussed in separate empirical chapters. In Chapter 4, in the category of their perceptions of Islamophobia, I paid attention to the discursive practices of the respondents rather than to their mundane practices (e.g. Islamophobia's being an ideology that is manufactured and continued in historical colonial dynamics). I then organised this theme into sub-themes with the aim of exploring the respondents' discourses regarding Western powers, post-colonialism, imperialist practices, and the roles played by mass media. The main categories for Chapter 5 on exploring Islamophobia in the context of the respondents were grouped in relation to their experiences about it. I tried to identify those who stated that they did not experience Islamophobia and those who felt that they had experienced an everyday form of Islamophobia. Having done this, I organised sub-themes in the context of racialisation practices, including the racialisation of the Turks, gendered racialisation, and the hijab as an ensemble of symbolic meanings and associations. In Chapter 6, the focus was on themes regarding the various identity strategies of the respondents to avoid being associated with Islamophobia.

These deflective identity practices were divided into two main themes: racist practices and asserting European values. In this chapter, I focused on the participants' accounts related to how and why they detach Islamophobia from themselves. After completing the coding process, I developed sub-themes for the chapter. The sub-themes identified for this chapter were whiteness, marking difference through physical markers, valorising differences in views, actions, and moral characters, the compatibility of Turkishness with Western modern liberal democracy, secularism, and the modern understanding of Turkish-Islam. Chapter 7 focused on the effects of Islamophobia on the young Turks' accounts, feelings, and attitudes towards the notions of Britishness, Turkishness and Englishness. This chapter further focused on why the young Turks cling to their Turkish ethnic identity rather than claiming a collective Muslim identity. Whilst gathering data, I first coded emerging identity practices as responses to Islamophobia in the light of several questions: what did they mean by being British?; what did the British national identity and Turkish ethnic identity mean to them?; why did they develop a reactive Turkish identification?; what were their attitudes and feelings towards the English identity and culture?; etc. Upon the completion of the coding process, I identified the following sub-themes: embracing only a civic form of Britishness; Englishness and Islamophobia; having a strong sense of Turkishness; Turkishness embracing both a civic and an ethnic national identity; and Brexit and reactive Turkish identification.

3.6 Ethical considerations

I carried out the fieldwork in conformity with the ethical principles approved by the University of Bristol to protect my targets from potential harm during the research. All research informants were given a hard copy of the written consent form (Appendix 1) and were asked to read and sign it. This form included the following: a) all the necessary information about my academic identity; b) an explanation of the aims of my research; c) the expected duration of an interviewee's participation; d) the implications of participating in the research project; e) the targets' rights; and f) an explicit clause guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality.

As I discussed in the data collection section, I utilised many channels to reach potential participants. The most important of these channels were gatekeepers. During meetings with each gatekeeper, I explained in detail the content of the research project and further mentioned the content of the participant consent form. Afterward, I reassured the gatekeepers that whatever information I collected during the fieldwork would be strictly used for the purpose of this research project and that I would protect the participants' personal identities. Furthermore, I especially emphasised that participation in the research was voluntary. Despite these facts, however, one of the gatekeepers, who was the head of one of the Turkish religious organisations in London, claimed that researching Islamophobia among young Turks who were members of that organisation could get them into trouble. The reason for such a concern was not because he thought Islamophobia could upset the participants but rather that he believed that the possible negative dis-

courses and attitudes of the young people towards the British state or society would harm his institution's reputation. I thus explained to him exactly what I was looking for and what kinds of questions I would ask in the interviews. Fortunately, his concerns were assuaged when I provided more detailed information about the research subject and its interview questions and also provided a hard copy of the Application for Ethical Approval form approved by the University and a hard copy of the consent form.

Furthermore, on one occasion, I encountered an accusation which had a brief emotional impact on me. I was accused of being someone who works for the Turkish state who was collecting information about Turkish people who had migrated from Turkey to the UK. I met a participant at a breakfast event held by secular Turks in London. There, I was introduced, by means of my gatekeeper, to a first-generation young Turkish woman in hopes of conducting an interview. After I provided information about the research, she asked me whether I would share her identity and personal data with the Turkish government. One of the possible reasons why she might have been worried about the research project was the fact that, when I introduced myself, I stated that I was funded by the Turkish state. Although this information made a positive impression on all my other participants, it aroused negative feelings and thoughts in this person. Being accused of being a government officer disappointed and frustrated me. I nevertheless refrained from discussing this issue further and tried to explain that the information that I would get from the interviews had nothing to do with matters that any government officer would be interested in. In this case, I clarified the research's purpose in-depth and enunciated that I was compliant with the University's ethical principles outlined by the British Sociological Association's (BSA) guidelines on ethical research, thereby vouchsafing that her identity would be preserved from harm and that it would remain confidential. Despite my assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, the potential respondent in question decided not to give consent and to not participate in the research project. Thankfully, this was the only instance of such a reaction during the fieldwork stage of this research. Both cases helped me develop a more nuanced attitude towards the behaviours of the participants.

Prior to conducting the interviews, I considered the fact that researching Islamophobia was a sensitive topic and thus would be upsetting for my respondents. The concept of "sensitive research" is one of the main issues to be considered in studies with vulnerable and marginalised people (Wellings *et al.*, 2000; Kong *et al.*, 2002; Liamputtong, 2007). Research is regarded as sensitive 'if it requires disclosure of behaviours or attitudes which would normally be kept private and personal, which might result in offense or lead to social censure or disapproval, and/or which might cause the respondent discomfort to express [themselves]' (Wellings *et al.*, 2000: 256). In conducting research on racialised people, it is thus crucial 'to be more ethically responsible for their lives and well-being and see that we do not make them more vulnerable' (Liamputtong, 2007: 32). Therefore, before initiating the interviews, I ensured that participants were aware that they could terminate the interview at any time and that they always would have the opportunity to ask

questions, express their concerns openly, and not answer any question that they felt uncomfortable with.

Before beginning the fieldwork, I developed some strategies on how to cope with the eventuality that the participants would experience psychological discomfort during their interviews. Participant body language helps one be more aware of any emotional distress on their part. Hesitancy, a change in their tone of voice or the speed of their speech and avoiding eye contact are some signals of emotional distress (Curtis and Curtis, 2011; Zempi, 2014). In light of this, in cases where talking to participants about sensitive topics such as Islamophobia could make them emotionally distressed, I would stop talking about the issue (s) being discussed in order to ensure that no further pressure would be placed on them. I would empathise with them by expressing my sympathy for their experience (s) and ask them what they felt could be done to make the situation better. If it were necessary that they receive post-interview care, I would refer them to appropriate support organisations and charities, such as Victim Support and MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks). Despite my concerns that talking about the issue of Islamophobia would affect the participants emotionally, I fortunately did not encounter any negative situation during the interviews, except for one participant who said that she was very pleased to have the opportunity to share her bad experiences in Germany with me. No participant described Islamophobia as an issue that had seriously impacted their daily lives.

Once I completed assigning all the pseudonyms, their real names were removed from all the research materials except for my field notes, demographic survey forms, and consent forms – all of which were securely stored. No relationship other than that of gender was related by the real names and the given pseudonyms so as to ensure the participants' anonymity and confidentiality. For example, if the interviewee's name was Ahmet, I assigned a pseudonym that did not begin with "A." Additionally, the names of workplaces which might have inadvertently disclosed their identity were not displayed anywhere in this book. If one of the relevant quotes included the university where the respondent studied, I would change its name with the name of another university. By doing so, I preserved the main idea of the quote without revealing the participant's real identity. Finally, in addition to all these precautions, all data was stored securely on the University's server.

3.7 Self-reflexivity and rapport with participants

This section addresses how, and to what extent, my positionality, personal experiences and the context of my fieldwork played a role in the research process, including the research design, data collection and analysis, and the writing up and drawing of conclusions (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Berger, 2013). For example, being self-reflective during interviewing helps me to take notice of my own reactions to the participants' views and emotions (Berger, 2013). Therefore, I was aware of my own role in constructing knowledge. I was also conscious about the key roles of my positionality and personal relationship with the participants in the process of data collection and analysis. I thus regularly noted my own views, assessments,

and feelings in my diary. I truly believed that this exercise helped me to reflect upon my positionality as a researcher and identify how my data analysis was partly influenced by my own experiences throughout the research process.

The positionality of insiders versus outsiders has been extensively discussed, though the boundary between these two has been challenged (Merton, 1972; Sherry, 2008; Carling *et al.*, 2014). In this research, I was an insider as well as semi-outsider – not for all but just for some gatekeepers and participants – since my identity has many dimensions. On the one hand, I was an insider because, in general terms, I come from the same ethnic background, I speak Turkish, and am familiar with the relevant customs. On the other hand, in terms of religion, I am a Muslim and was thus an insider; in the context of non-Muslim gatekeepers and participants, though, I was an outsider. However, this part of my positionality did not prevent me from establishing a good rapport with my gatekeepers and respondents. Throughout the fieldwork, I presented a worldview that does not conflict with other religious preferences and showed empathy for my interviewees, particularly in relation to the religious oppression experienced by Muslim groups in London. My positionality is not limited to these dimensions, though. The exercising of self-reflexivity, for instance, revealed other factors, including facts about my age, gender, class, and hometown which impacted the research process. My personal identity opened doors for me on many occasions, yet it also had some negative impacts on the research process.

During the fieldwork process, I realised that being from the same religious background is not always sufficient for establishing a positive relationship with people. The main reason for this is the constantly negotiated nature and complex structure of identity. The fact that identities are constructed through social interactions can invalidate the presuppositions of research. Being a Muslim was an important factor in accessing the field and creating affinity with the participants. It is not, however, adequate for establishing rapport in the case of every researcher. For example, a Muslim friend of mine conducting doctoral research in London received a negative response from a Turkish-Muslim organisation in London when he asked to interview its directors. He thought that his religious background would enable him to access that institution, but it did not as they stipulated a condition for doing the interview which was antithetical to his principle of objectivity. The condition was that he would relate only the information that they provided, regardless of any other academic or non-academic sources. Since this precondition was not accepted by him, the effort to establish an affinity failed. Therefore, despite the fact that primordial ties and identities are significant in establishing connections, they are not sufficient for building rapport with people.

In relation to class, I noticed that I had common ground with which to establish and strengthen my connections. On the one hand, with some participants coming from a middle-class urban environment, I already shared common aspects with some respondents. On the other hand, with those coming from the urban working class, I tried to highlight that I had also originated from a working-class background. Some of my respondents also made an effort to find commonality by

asking me about my hometown in Turkey or where I came from. My position as a postgraduate researcher made a positive impact on gaining access to and building rapport with Turkish students. The conversations we had on topics such as our academic activities, interests, and goals for the future helped them perceive these similarities in status. Exploring these commonalities encouraged them to feel more comfortable with me. My status as a postgraduate researcher, however, situated me in a very different class position to those participants working in low-skilled occupations. In such cases, I sought to downplay any educational differences between ourselves, instead opting to highlight our similar experiences, such as having worked in low-skilled jobs at different times during my life in Turkey. For example, my knowledge about commercial communication and how to converse with clients impressed some of the participants. Some respondents related to these initial conversations in their stories during the interviews, using phrases such as “you know what I mean” or “as you also said.” My low-skilled background in the past thus decreased the socio-cultural distance between myself and the participants.

The issues of access and trust are directly related to a relational structure. Our gender as researchers might be a factor that determines the extent of this relationship and its impact on the research process. Although my positionality as a male researcher gaining access to and interviewing women raised concerns at the beginning of the fieldwork that might have had negative impacts on the research process, thanks to my gatekeepers, I managed to access the field and build close relationships with the young Turkish women whom I interviewed for the study. Many said that they were happy to talk about and share their views on the issue of Islamophobia because they believed it to be important.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described and explained the research process I followed in order to generate the data upon which my research is based. I discussed the epistemological and methodological frameworks that I adopted for studying Islamophobia in the context of young Turks in Britain. I also stressed that my role in the research process is that of co-producing knowledge by filtering information through my own subjective understanding, creativity, and selectivity since they were present at all stages of my research. I discussed my data collection method – the semi-structured in-depth interview – and justified the need for this approach for the purpose of gaining a detailed set of information about young Turks’ experiences, views, and feelings regarding Islamophobia. I also stressed the importance of the research’s method in terms of accessing those youths who live in different regions of London and who come from different socio-cultural backgrounds while at the same time exploring the subtle and covert forms of racial practices.

In the selection of interview participants, I discussed four criteria: research population, ethnicity, location, and period of residency. I then discussed the reason why I had good access to the targeted research participants: viz., I am Turkish; I know the nature and main characteristics of the Turkish community in London;

and I had a good number of gatekeepers. I further explained that my guiding principle during the fieldwork was that of recruiting as many Turkish youths from as many backgrounds as possible in order to capture a whole range of identity dynamics in the context of Islamophobia. I then moved on to describe the data collection procedures that I adopted. Those involve many issues, such as making interviews as convenient as possible for the participants; collecting data according to the interview guide developed; avoiding making judgmental statements, gestures, and facial expressions during the interviews; modifying interview questions according to the participants' criteria and the direction of the interviews; and so on. Next, I discussed the process of coding and how the main themes emerged out of a data-driven inductive approach. The analysis involved a detailed exploration and understanding of selected themes and sub-themes which were discussed in separate empirical chapters.

In the final sections, I discussed the ethical considerations of the research, self-reflexivity, and rapport. I highlighted that, in order to protect participants from potential harm during and after my fieldwork, I conducted the fieldwork in conformity with the ethical principles outlined by the University. In the last section of this chapter, I reflected upon how and to what extent my positionality, personal experiences, and the context of my fieldwork played a role in the research process. Also, I discussed how I managed to access the field and build rapport with the participants.

In the next chapter, I discuss the young Turks' perceptions of Islamophobia. In light of their views and discourses, I examine how they connect Islamophobia to imperialist ideology and what their discursive practices tell us about collective Muslim identity.

CHAPTER 4

THE YOUNG TURKS' PERCEPTIONS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA: IMPERIALISM, MEDIA AND MUSLIM IDENTITY

4 Introduction

In this chapter, I examine participants' perceptions of Islamophobia and what this can tell us about their sense of a collective Muslim identity. Their perceptions of Islamophobia were shaped in part around the discursive practices they developed against the negative discourses and stereotypes made about Muslims by media, politicians, and so on.⁷

A vast amount of research has illustrated that the mainstream Western media and policymakers have been the most powerful driving forces behind the rise of Islamophobia among Western society at large (e. g., the Runnymede Trust; 1997; Abbas, 2000; Saeed, 2007; Ali, 2008; Poole, 2009; Birt, 2009; Allen, 2010; Zebiri, 2011; Lean, 2012). Terrorist attacks that are portrayed as being motivated by Islam have increased anti-Muslim sentiments in the West. Consequently, young Muslims have been deemed to be an unpatriotic fifth column and inimical to modern Western and secular democracy. The denigrated image of Muslims emerged in the policies of the War on Terror and the securitisation of Muslims in the West (Opratko, 2017). Since some were involved in violent terror, the rest are seen as being responsible for and capable of violence and terrorism (Rahman, 2007; El Amrani, 2012). Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 2 regarding this research's conceptual framework, the literature asserts that the identity construction of many young Muslims in the West has been significantly shaped by the increased global tensions and divergences between the West and the Islamic world and by reactions against anti-Islamic and Muslim propaganda manufactured by the mass media and policymakers.

Within this framework, I first discovered that some young Turks from different religious backgrounds conceptualised Islamophobia as a product of imperialist powers for the purpose of achieving certain goals in accordance with their political and economic ambitions. Moreover, the mass media was perceived as being the key mechanism in manufacturing the systemic propaganda about Islam and Muslims in order to legitimate the imperialist powers' military actions in Muslim countries. I then argue that contrary to what previous studies have revealed on the identity formation of Muslims, the reports of these young Turks do not suggest an Islamist political mobilisation effort or a sense of belonging to a collective Muslim identity. While they challenged the Islamophobia linked to the imperialist ideology and expressed their empathy for other Muslims, particularly those in war zones,

⁷ Most answers to this and similar questions are discussed in Chapter 6, which focuses on how and why the participants state that they are not targeted by Islamophobia.

their commitments to Turkish ethnic identity and Turkish-based Islam appears to have been an obstacle to their creating a sense of solidarity and collective Muslim identity.

4.1 Islamophobia: A manufacture of imperial policies

In her book, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, Deepa Kumar (2012: 9) underlines that the contemporary images of the Muslim enemy are accounts, 'not of religious conflict but rather of conflict born of political rivalries and competing imperial agendas.' She thus explains contemporary Islamophobia by exploring the nature of a new form of imperialism, stating that it is manufactured by the ruling elites at particular moments in order to attain certain goals that are in accordance with their political and economic ambitions. Nathan Lean (2012), in *The Islamophobia Industry*, also shows how political and media elites in the US have manufactured fear of Islam and Muslims in American and Western societies. Lean contends that they have managed (and have continued to convince) their fellow citizens that Muslims are increasingly becoming dangerous for their respective societies. It could be argued that Islamophobia is a game of the Western powers to spread the fear of Islam and Muslims in Western societies (Okumuş, 2017). This intentionalist and instrumentalist perspective on Islamophobia, which is linked to the goals of imperialism, was also raised by some participants.

It was argued that one of the justifications that Western powers put forward when attempting to occupy Muslim countries is that the existence and actions of radical groups in those countries threaten Western security (Poole, 2009). Some second-generation respondents reported that the reality of radicalism as a political movement has played into the hands of Western imperialists, with some even going further by asserting that those radical groups were actually created by Western powers, particularly by America. The following are excerpts from various respondents' interviews regarding this topic:

Berkan: America creates terrorist groups. America is the strongest country in the world, so what they are doing is supporting these terrorist groups – you know, like Bin Ladin, al Qaeda, and ISIS. The members of these terrorist groups are trained by American soldiers rather than by Muslim leaders or commanders (as supposed by the majority of people) in order to kill Muslims.

Yaren: Organisations such as ISIS are governed and funded by America. It makes me so angry. I know the truth, but others do not.

Rumeysa: ...we always talk about Nigeria where there is a terrorist group called Boko Haram. Nigeria is one of the poorest countries in some ways. Who gave them the guns? I am pretty sure they did not make them themselves. People really believe all of these stories and do not question them. They are not trying to understand why, who, or how these organisations were created.

Rumeysa, who stated that she had no religious affiliation, believes that Islamophobia is linked to 'an ideology that is being used to continue imperialism' and claims that these terrorist groups were exploited by imperialist countries as a means of conducting asymmetrical warfare against Muslims. Berkan also posits

that ‘...the Western world, in terms of politics, is trying to weaken the Muslim world.’ For them, Western powers inflicted these groups upon Muslim countries and their leaders in order to subdue them for their political and economic agendas. Therefore, it was pointed out that these Western powers did not hesitate to put these terrorist groups out on “the front of war” in order to destabilise or disintegrate these countries. Berkan, for instance, recounts, ‘if you look at Saddam Hussein or Kaddafi, these people were oppressive; however, they [the West] made those leaders seem more evil than they were. They invaded Iraq and hanged Saddam Hussein because they needed its oil and because the American economy was not good at that time.’

The invasion of Iraq by the United States and other Western powers was thus one of the main issues discussed by the participants who tried to approach the concept of Islamophobia from a wider perspective. The respondents regarded the “War on Terror” being officially launched as a milestone. It was contended that capturing oil and gas reserves was the original objective, ‘even though American politicians asserted that they had launched the invasion in order to obtain supposed weapons of mass destruction so as to bring peace back to Iraq.’ (Rumeysa). Rumeysa described these motives as an illustration of Western hypocrisy, stating that ‘When Saddam Hussein was gassing the Kurdish people, why did they not stop him then? Why did they wait for so many years when he had already been accused of killing Kurdish people? But then they said “Aha! Saddam has weapons of mass destruction!” even though they did not find any. I think this relationship is really precarious.’ Rumeysa believes that there is ‘a will for dominance’ which is linked to money and energy resources. She typified it as being an imperialist ideology that has continued to exist

but which is not the same as in history. Rather, it is an extension of it because why is it that whole terrorist organisations are supported by them? Why is it that most NATO members and most global organisations are established by those powers? Why did they support terrorist groups in Syria? You start seeing everyone congregate as in the old days. I think these are all just the same stories being told but slightly differently and with different names. (Rumeysa)

Another tactic that was thought to be fabricated in order to pave the way for occupying Muslim countries is the claim that the Qur’an orders the killing of non-Muslims. It was argued that, just as ISIS and other terrorist groups are created by the imperialists, this verdict was fabricated by those who act in concert with the imperialists. Berkan, for instance, proposed that ‘there are people like Tommy Robinson. He was in charge of the EDF (English Defence League). People like him might be trained by governments. They get the Qur’an and look at the verses “kill the infidels wherever you find them.” So, they use those kinds of reasons to, you know, attack Muslims.’ He further objected to that claim, stating that those people do not understand the context of the verse and its true meaning, for:

number one, it is in English, and translating the Qur’an into English is, itself, an interpretation. So, you lose its meaning. Secondly, each verse has its own context. You need to consider where it was revealed, when it was revealed, and why it

was revealed. Surat al-Bakara, for example, was revealed when Muslims were in Mecca, when they were being persecuted for about 13 years. Finally, the Muslims said “we have to retaliate against them now” seeing as they were being tortured and killed by those non-believers. Then the Qur’an [i.e. Allah] permitted them to defend themselves and to kill all but the innocents. Robinson and others do not know its true meaning or its context. Instead, they claim that Muslims can kill non-Muslims and that that is why ISIS kills non-Muslims. These are all part of the plan, all coming out of the same lathe. (Berkan)

For Hakan, the most prominent evidence of the mutual interest between radical groups and the imperialist powers is based on verses of the Qur’an, proclaiming that they have declared war against non-Muslims when instead they predominantly kill Muslims in various other Muslim countries.

They are in contradiction with their declarations. I do not, of course, mean that they should have killed non-Muslims. They must not kill anyone. They kill people in the name of Allah. For what reason does a Muslim kill another Muslim? For what reason does a Muslim kill innocent people? So, of course, there are radical people, even in the UK, who express that they are Muslims, but I do not acknowledge that they are Muslims. There is a systematic plan here and people should notice this. (Hakan)

Additionally, some others explicitly asserted that individuals who are inclined to adopt radical views come from other Muslim groups and are not Turks. Furthermore, they did not regard individuals or groups holding radical thoughts as true Muslims and further tried to differentiate the Turkish people’s understanding of Islam from that of other Muslim groups.⁸

Admitting that the existence of individuals or groups who have radical thoughts among Muslims cannot be denied, they further highlighted that equating all Muslims with radical groups is factually inaccurate and uncovers the malicious intentions of the Western powers. By drawing attention to the organic bond between radical groups and imperialist ambitions, they underscored that this superficial understanding of the Qur’an and Islam only serves the purposes of the imperialists. Furthermore, their approaches to the matter in question can be interpreted as attempts to distinguish them prominently from the ideologies and actions of the so-called Islamist radical groups.

Accordingly, this section has examined discussions of some respondents pertaining to the main animus of those who manufacture Islamophobia. The Islamophobic policies of Western powers were perceived as having been made in order to justify the invasion of Muslim countries for the purpose of capturing their energy resources. The so-called Islamist terrorist groups, such as al-Qaida and ISIS, were thus believed to be bred by Western countries, especially America, in order to legitimate their invasions. For some young Turks, however, there is even more at play. Through the instrumentality of the construction and representation of Muslims as a threat to Western society by the mainstream media and policymakers

⁸ See Chapter 6 for more on this.

(both of which are interpreted as being the most powerful driving forces and being very strong influences on the increase of Islamophobic sentiments by the respondents), their legitimisation for going to war strengthened. The next section discusses the participants' comments regarding how the mass media has been used as an agent of serving the political and economic interests of the imperialist powers by means of Islamophobic propaganda.

4.2 The mass media as means of anti-Muslim propaganda

The respondents established connections among 1) the creation and funding of terrorist groups; 2) the occupation or intervention of Muslim countries that are at the forefront of oil and gas reserves; and 3) the smear campaigns perpetrated against Muslims in the mass media. The role of the mass media, which is claimed to be in charge of certain groups, was thought to be that of manufacturing fear of Muslims (Lean, 2012) in societies at the global level. This was thus perceived as the main reason behind their invasion of Muslim countries.

According to Mahmut, the Western imperialist powers mobilised a scapegoat mechanism and declared Muslims and Islam as threats to the West.

This has been going on since 2001 when Bush launched the "War on Terror." It started overnight. Subsequently, the Muslim citizens of the UK and the US became threats to the West. They were citizens one day and then, overnight, they woke up and the towers were burning. There was a need to "scapegoat" the blame. The media needed someone to blame first. First, it was communism. And in 1991, communism ended, and the Soviet Union fell. There was no one to blame anymore. So, they needed something to get the narrative going again. I think the Muslims and Islam were chosen. Muslims are generally the victims of this mass media campaign. (Mahmut)

Berkan argued that Western foreign policy and media have created an enemy to justify their military actions in Muslim countries. According to him, although such claims can be considered conspiracy theories for some, it is an indisputable fact that there have been capitalist and imperialist groups who have striven to control the world economy. Berkan further pointed out that these actors also 'control the media corporations, such as CNN, and mislead societies based on their own interests.' For Rumeysa, the mainstream media have teamed up with policymakers in manufacturing Islamophobia. 'It is a way of creating dominance. I feel like it has played an instrumental role in the invasion of many countries.' She gave those organisations owned by Rupert Murdoch as examples of those groups, highlighting that 'it is all interconnected. Who owns the media? Who finances political parties? Who decides policy?'

One of the most important arguments that stood out in the views of some participants with regard to the role that the mass media has undertaken is that it serves and propagandises the societal and economic interests of imperial powers. Rumeysa, for instance, opined that 'the media wields propaganda as the art of persuasion to convince the public and to win their support for their political and economic intentions.' This conception echoes Amin Malak's (2005) argument that

the idea of Western superiority shapes the representation of Islam and Muslims in the minds of Western society in order to achieve its imperial and colonial ambitions. The media was thus deemed by the interviewees as having the power to control and shape the perceptions and beliefs of society (Ferguson, 1998). Rumeysa described the representation of Muslims by the mass media as anti-Muslim propaganda that seeks to ‘influence the hearts and minds of people.’ She first underlined the importance of Edward Bernays’s work regarding propaganda and then explained how the propaganda machine owned by the mass media has targeted Muslims.

You have got people like Edward Bernays. He was Sigmund Freud’s nephew. He liked public relations. He was an advertiser. He was the first person to create ideas and manuals on how to change the minds and hearts of people. Through advertising, he changed America. For example, there was a cigarette company called “Lucky Strike” in America. At that time in American history, women did not smoke. He made the advert campaign to target “Lucky Strikes” to women. Because of his work, it became fashionable and acceptable for women to smoke. So, his propaganda is fascinating. Now they use this instrument against Muslims. No one discusses all the trauma and the shit that has happened in the Middle East. All they know is that soldiers are killing the terrorists there. No one discusses any of the Muslims’ traumas. The mass media has a massive influence on whether people will go to war or not. Look at Hollywood. It is amazing, right? When I was a child growing up, in all the films, they were killing the Chinese, the Vietnamese, the Russians. Now in most contemporary Hollywood films, they are killing Muslims. 9/11 just provided them with the legitimacy to bend all Muslims in certain ways, and we are to believe that this is not new in our history, right? If you look at Islam and Christianity, who is told whose story? (Rumeysa)

For Murat, this is a tell-tale sign of political strength and propaganda warfare. According to him, this is manifested in two ways: viz., controlling the world through the manufacture of political arguments and/or through intelligence agencies. In his discussion, he focused mainly on the former. He argued that the information mechanisms put forward by politicians and the media are based on unrealistic claims to achieve and protect the shared interests of the political and economic elites rather than being factually based in reality. In other words, ‘they govern people with political lies. For example, during the 2003 war in Iraq, the politicians launched a war on terror and the American and British media were reporting that they would bring democracy and peace to the Middle East. But it was all a lie. It was just propaganda in order to justify their invasion – in order to get people on their side.’ He recounted that there exists systematic propaganda against Muslims in the media and that its main aim is that of creating a negative perception towards Islam and Muslims in society. ‘This perception has not yet been undermined. The media makes fake news, especially by linking Muslims with terrorist groups in the Middle East. All Muslims are regarded as responsible for those terrorist actions. It is a constant war against Islam, against Muslims. This is changing the way people look at Muslims.’ (Murat). Murat’s views on “propaganda warfare” and the inten-

tion of the elites in the media and in politics bore similarities to Nathan Lean's (2012) discourses. He argues that, through the "War on Terror" launched by George W. Bush in 2001, the media and political elites in the United States managed to use organisations and networks as a lever to spread the government's message amongst the American population and to establish Islamophobia as the new government policy. Nonetheless, what Murat argues is that the media and politicians' representation of Islam and Muslims was not only done out of political and economic interest but also for the construction of the "cultural other." Putting emphasis on 'a constant war against Islam, against Muslims,' he recognises the concept of Islamophobia as "continuity" (The Runnymede Trust, 1997; Meer, 2014). He thus looked upon the representation of the "War on Terror" as a war on Islam and Muslims. Admitting the idea that there might be people who sympathise with the terrorist groups among Muslims, Murat asserted that the main threat of the propaganda efforts of the media is that of generalising the bad reputation of those terrorist groups onto all Muslims.

4.2.1 'When White people commit it, the media says that they have mental health issues'

It is argued that propaganda warfare banks on pre-existing false ideologies, certain ideals and myths. These are described by Corbin (2017: 456) as another way of reinforcing racist stereotypes. According to her, there are two false narratives in the United States that play a crucial role in government and media propaganda. The first narrative is that "terrorists are always Muslims." The second is that "White people are never terrorists." This is a constructive dichotomy between the "West" ("Europe" / "Us") versus the "East" ("Muslims" / "the others") (Said, 1978). This dichotomy question was also one of the issues discussed by some respondents. For them, these statements are intensely propounded by the Western media.

The respondents argued that the current media representation of Muslims indicates a double standard. The terrorist shooting attacks that occurred at two mosques in New Zealand in 2019 were provided as examples of how this double standard is created. Some of the interviewees shared their views and feelings about this example in the context of the relationship between Islamophobia and the media since the attacks took place whilst the interviews were taking place. Hakan stated that the main goal of the Western media is to impress the idea of people that White people cannot be associated with terrorism. As he concludes, '...the media construe the murderer in New Zealand as being an angel. They have broadcasted his childhood photo on his mother's lap. This is nothing more than misleading.'

'Language is so important,' said Rumeysa. According to her, this double standard on the part of the Western media is evident in the language used.

Language I think is everything. So, when a Muslim commits a crime, it is called terror or extremism. When White people commit it, the media says that they have mental health issues. For example, when the guy in New Zealand committed the shootings, all one needs to do is look at all the newspapers and analyse their lan-

guage! “He had problems,” “he was abused when growing up,” “he had this,” “he had that,” “Oh, he was not an evil man, he was abused. Really, he was a good child. Something just went wrong for him.” But when it is a Muslim, they immediately label him an extremist. I think the way we use language is important. For example, if someone in Africa stole money from a charity, they call that corruption. In the UK, it is called “the mismanagement of funds.” The language they use is very different. The further away the incident is from the UK, the more extreme their language. (Rumeysa)

Participants’ remarks suggest that, while Muslims are ‘positioned and subjected in the dominant regimes of representation’ (Hall, 1990: 225), a white ideology is deployed as common sense and the norm, whereas “Others” are portrayed as being inherently different and inferior through a set of prejudices, attitudes, and discriminations (Miles, 1989; Wieviorka, 1995; Fenton, 1999). Berkan pointed out that the main reason behind this hypocritical attitude on the part of the media is their intention of showing Muslims as being a kind of diseased entity in the eyes of society: ‘They highlight the terrorist attacks that happened in Western countries but then they do not highlight the terrorist attacks that ISIS has committed in Muslim countries. You know ISIS kills maybe ten times or a hundred times more Muslims than non-Muslims.’

The participants believed that the mass media uses the power of fear at uncertain times to keep alive society’s hatred towards Islam and Muslims. As discussed earlier, the respondents construed this as a kind of “fear factory” (Lean, 2012) created by Western elites in order to establish the conditions for accomplishing their own agenda. Yaren provided Shamima Beguum, who left the UK to join ISIS in 2015 and whose UK citizenship was revoked when she requested to return, as an example of how the government and the media nourish this fear. ‘I think,’ stated Yaren, ‘that they used it as a prop. It is a kind of proof to the people, to remind them that they should not forget ISIS or that Muslims are terrorists.’ Halime stated that some newspapers and the TV news convey very biased news and manipulate people in order to cast doubt on Muslims in general. ‘They create a war atmosphere among the people,’ posited Halime. Assuming that the manufacturing of fear is also used as an effective means in British politics, Hamit, on the other hand, asserted that people who are less educated and who do not have knowledge about actual Islam and Muslims believe in these fabricated stories.

Sevil discussed how the ideological dissemination of the negative representations of Muslims in the media is meant to sew fear in society via images and portrayals and how those portrayals have been adopted by the British people:

...on the news, we have images of terrorists. I remember in my A-level psychology class that we had images of ordinary people on the screen and our teacher told us to guess which one was Muslim and which one was a White Christian. I remember everyone pointed the brown guy with the beard out as being the Muslim. There were like six different pictures of different people – a black person, a White person, persons of mixed race, etc. But I remember everyone said the brown guy with the beard was the Muslim. He did not, however, turn out to be a Muslim.

So, this image of who Muslims are has been created and disseminated to us by the media through the news and through a lot of what we hear. That is what the media tries to show us regularly. (Sevil)

According to Sevil, the perceived differences in the appearance of Muslims, including skin colour and beard, were normalised by the images of Muslims portrayed in the media, all of which draw upon a set of symbolic meanings and associations. She recounted that this image which was created by the media builds upon the ideological representation that 'Islam equals war. Islam equals bad. Muslims are the people who should be feared. They are all bad.' Thus, for her, the media representations of Islam and Muslims tend to be negative and hostile. In other words, they are constructed as a threatening "other" which should be excluded (Saeed, 2007; Modood, 2017).

It was further expressed that it is not only non-Muslims who are affected by this fear. The climate of fear created by the media, and which consequently influences the masses, has paved the way for an environment that causes Muslims to be afraid of each other. Rumeysa argued that this has divided Muslims to such an extent that they look at each other with suspicion. 'That is what white supremacy does. Like the fact that my mom fears other Muslims because they are wearing the hijab even though she wears one too. You are afraid of what you are. That is frightening.'

Although the media's playing a pivotal role in how Islam and Muslims as a whole are portrayed was discussed in the interviews, some participants highlighted the lack of Muslim power in the media as one of the reasons why Muslims are targeted by Islamophobia. According to them, since Muslims cannot adequately represent themselves and Islam, this gap is filled with misrepresentations of them made by the West (Saeed, 2007). It is assumed that there is a positive correlation between the notions of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1978), i.e., the way in which power enables those who possess it to use or transform knowledge to suit their own agendas whenever appropriate. As Mahmut claims, 'Muslims do not have their own narratives. They do not control what is said about them in the media. They do not have their own institutions, their own way of communication.' Neset also underlined that, when you do not tell people the truth, they have no alternative other than to believe the information being presented to them. He thus thought that the fear of Muslims in society is a corollary, saying that 'British TV channels broadcast about ISIS day-in and day-out. They call them Islamist terrorists. As British people listen to them, they start to generalise and believe that Muslims are terrorists. This is about power. Muslims do not have the media power to espouse the truth to others.' These respondents believed that the Western media exercises its power over knowledge in order to secure its own position (Poole, 2009) by representing Muslims in certain definite ways. The Muslim identity is then thought to be constructed from the outside-in. They were adequately conscious of the fact that if Muslims possessed the power and knowledge, they would be able to represent their own identities as opposed to being represented solely by the media.

In sum, these young Turks' perceptions and conceptualisations of Islamophobia were primarily linked to Western imperialism. It is the idea that the imperialist ideology has created and bred so-called radical Islamist groups and has fabricated the view that the Qur'an orders the killing of non-Muslims. The mass media was perceived as being the key mechanism for manufacturing the systemic propaganda that Muslims and Islam are threats to the West. It was argued that the ultimate objective of the imperialist powers in manufacturing Islamophobia was to legitimate their military actions in Muslim countries and thus achieve certain goals that were in accordance with their political and economic ambitions. But what does this assertion tell us in terms of the identity construction of young Turks? The next section addresses this question in the context of a collective/global Muslim identity as discussed in previous studies on Muslims.

4.3 A sense of belonging to a collective Muslim identity?

It is clear that there is an emphasis on an imperialist perspective of Islamophobia amongst some Muslim and non-Muslim young Turks. Their accounts regarding Islamophobia being manufactured by imperialist powers to capture the underground wealth of Muslim countries, however, do not suggest the idea that they developed an Islamist political mobilisation or built a sense of belonging to a collective Muslim identity. Rather, one might argue that they challenged imperialist practices and, to some extent, expressed sympathy for people from occupied and exploited Muslim countries. In the next paragraphs, I elaborate on why their accounts regarding the imperialist understanding of Islamophobia cannot be understood as a sense of belonging to a global Muslim identity but, rather, just as a feeling of sympathy.

The literature shows that many Muslims use certain pronouns to indicate that they have developed a sense of belonging to a collective Muslim identity and a feeling of emotional affiliation towards other Muslims. For instance, in her research on the "War on Terror," the mass media, and the reproduction of Muslim identity among British Muslim Asians, the participants of Güney's (2010) study clearly shows that they referred to the Muslims in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan and elsewhere as "us," "my people," "our people," etc. This was done in order to construct a global Muslim identity and express feelings of belonging to a global Muslim community. They also strongly identified with religious peoplehood (the ummah). However, one of the key features of my respondents' discussions regarding Islamophobia in the context of imperialism is that they used subject pronouns to refer to other Muslims. They frequently invoked the political and economic interests of imperialist powers by means of the Islamophobic propaganda portrayed in the mass media to define other Muslims. They never used the pronoun "we" or "us" when they talked about other "Muslims." Neither did they identify with the ummah. Instead, they used those pronouns to refer to "the Turks."

Furthermore, some young Turks endeavoured to highlight that they and their country of origin were not subjected to the interests of the imperialist powers in order to differentiate themselves from other Muslims. Indeed, when referring to

what the notion of colonialism, in a historical context, means for themselves and other Muslims, they placed themselves in a distinctive and preeminent position in comparison with other Muslims. Oguz, for instance, explained that:

Turks have never been the colony of another country. The vast majority of the Muslims here are people from old British colonies, and this makes us different. Let me explain this a little bit more because this is an issue we talk about a lot with other Muslims here. For example, one of the main issues that Muslims talk about amongst themselves is the concept of post-colonialism. That is, the effect of English colonialism on their cultures and how they could get rid of it as Muslims. This does not mean much to us [the Turks], though. We, of course, say this is something bad and we oppose colonialism but we, as the young Turkish generations, have not experienced it, nor did our ancestors narrate anything like it either. (Oguz)

Halime similarly expressed that:

I am proud that we have never been colonised, but it makes me feel very upset when I see other Muslims. Although I feel peaceful here, and although I have had lots of opportunities here, I know England is exploiting many Muslim countries. There is a veiled war against Muslims. They are smiling at you but they, in fact, have a different face. For instance, when I went to Bangladesh, I was told that Bangladesh is well-known for its tea production. But people also said that the majority of the tea producers there are British companies. I had supposed that Bangladesh was an underdeveloped country, but now I think something even worse than this. Is this really what makes humanity? You get on the plane and you have everything. But when you land in Bangladesh, you see people's bones. You see poverty. You see people without eyes. A completely different world. This is a result of colonialism. (Halime)

These respondents' perceptions of Islamophobia being linked with imperialism had been depicted through the experiences of other Muslims and Muslim countries. A claim of global Muslim identity is thus closely related to having similar experiences (Güney, 2010). Nevertheless, the experiences of other Muslims to Islamophobia when associated with the imperialist agenda is sufficient to empathise with them. My respondents' reports show that they did not go any further than that. Therefore, it would be wrong to interpret their perception of imperialist ideology as implying an Islamic political mobilisation on their part or, for that matter, their identifying with a collective Muslim identity. Moreover, those who had this perception were not only those who identified themselves as Muslim but also as non-Muslim, such as Rumeysa. This disassociation with Islam, however, did not prevent them from expressing sympathy for Muslims.

Furthermore, research suggests that increased religious identification among Turkish European Muslims is related to their reactions to perceived religious discrimination (i.e., Fleischmann et al., 2011; Phalet *et al.*, 2012; Guveli, 2014) or the increased global and national developments (Verkuyten and Yildiz, 2009). In their study on religious identification and politicisation in response to discrimination among the Turkish and Moroccan second generation in three European countries

(Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden), Fleischmann *et al* (2011), for instance, found that those who experienced more personal discrimination identified more strongly with their Muslim in-group. The narratives of my participants, however, show that their perception of the imperialist ideology is shaped, at least in part, by their empathy for other Muslims, particularly those in war zones, rather than their experiences of perceived discrimination. In other words, my participants do not appear indifferent to the global developments in especially Muslim countries even though the majority of them claimed that they are not subjected to Islamophobia. One might suggest that this implies they supported political Islam or developed a collective Muslim identity. However, their differentiating strategies by deflecting Islamophobia onto other Muslims⁹ do not allow us to make this interpretation. They portrayed an understanding of Turkish-based Islam which harbours secular and moderate characteristics and is thus differentiated from the Islam practiced by other Muslims. Islamic identity for the Turkish people has often been promoted by the idea of Turkishness (Waxman, 1997; Ozkirimli, 2008) where Islam constitutes the most important element of Turkish identity. Therefore, it might be argued that the participants discussed in this section regarded Islam as a component of Turkish identity rather than of a global Muslim identity when they stressed that they like identifying themselves through their dual identification as an ethno-religious unity rather than only by religion. In this context, the fact that some participants who were Muslim or religious Muslim did not, *per se*, mean that they felt a sense of belonging to a global Muslim community or that they had developed a political idea of the ummah.

Although they believed strongly in the existence of the Islamophobia manufactured by imperialist powers and, furthermore, held that Islam and the Muslim identity are both under threat, they opposed the view that this entails that they must develop an Islamist political mobilisation agenda together with other Muslims. Instead of a Muslim union, some suggested that a Turkish union centred around Turkish-Islam be organised. When I asked Sevil what she thought about the idea of establishing a Muslim union by which to explore their views about the political idea of the ummah (collective Muslim identity) in the context of Islamophobic debates, she said that 'We need to get together with the Muslim Turks around the world. Islam in other countries does not conform to my understanding of Islam. Sometimes I think of Arabs' understanding of Islam and I just cannot believe in it. I do not think it appeals to me.' Metin, similarly, stated that 'I prefer a Turkish union because a problem would definitely occur in the Islamic union. Turkish unity is more solid. Of course, for me, Islam carries priority, but the Islam that Turks follow is not that of the Arabs.' On the other hand, some Turks supported the idea of a collective Muslim identity, but this was subject to an indisputable condition: 'This unity should be established under the leadership of the Turks' (Berkan). Berkan explained his opinion as follows:

⁹ See Chapter 6 for more information on a large number of young Turks' claims regarding their secular and modern understanding of Turkish-Islam.

This is because not every Muslim country represents Islam and Muslims well. There are problem groups amongst Muslims, and they need to be controlled. Turks represent Islam more accurately. We are better at supporting Muslims and better at outstretching our arms when they fall to the ground. If they accept an Islamic union under our leadership, I would support it. Otherwise, I would not support any Islamic union. (Berkan)

Accordingly, even though they remarked upon the link between Islamophobia and the imperialist's political and economic agenda, their perception did not necessarily induce them to think as a collective Muslim group or about Islamic political mobilisation, contrary to what previous studies have revealed (e.g. Sayyid, 2003; Abbas, 2005; Hopkins, 2007; Rahman, 2007; Modood, 2009; Birt, 2009; Meer, 2010; Fleischmann *et al.*, 2011; Bonino, 2017). These young people alleged that Muslims around the world have been subjected to Islamophobia and that it had been manufactured by imperialist powers in order to achieve their own interests. By positioning themselves outside of this problem, however, they only had sympathy for other Muslims without indicating attachments to the notion of a global Muslim community. The Turkish cultural and ethnic interpretations of Islam seem to have prevented them from relating Turkish-Muslim identity with that of a collective Muslim community. Their accounts suggest that they tried to make a distinction between Turkish-Muslims as an ethno-religious identity and a global Muslim identity. This is, in some ways, a natural corollary to the thought of not being part of a Muslim group independent of Turkish ethnic groups. This, therefore, shows that the latter is as important to them as their religious identity. This latter point is best evidenced through the thoughts of some respondents regarding the religious and ethnic identities that they put forward when distinguishing themselves from other Muslims. Osman, for instance, expressed that:

Of course, I am a Muslim, but I am also a Turk and proud of that. I will not give up this identity. This is our main identity, and it sets us apart from other Muslims. Turks are different from other Muslims. We have the characteristic of leadership. When we enter into an environment, they know that we are Turks. Other Muslims behave in a looser, more withdrawn way. We were born both as Turks and as Muslims. Allah does not grant these qualities to everyone. (Osman)

Where these young Turkish-Muslims maintained that their religious identity is a component of their Turkish ethnic identity, this can be expressed as an effort to narrow religious boundaries by defining Turkish-Islam in such a way that the notion of a collective identity is only applicable to Turkish-Muslims.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to highlight some of this study's findings, which were based on the views and discourses of some young Turkish-Muslims and non-Muslims about the media and politicians' representations of Islam and Muslims. These findings are relevant to the research questions, specifically in regard to how the young Turks perceive and represent Islamophobia and what their discursive

practices tell us about their having a sense of belonging to a collective Muslim identity.

These participants conceptualised Islamophobia as a tool of the imperialist powers to legitimate their military actions in Muslim countries and thus to achieve certain goals that are in accordance with their political and economic ambitions. They established a connection among the creation and funding of the so-called Islamist terrorist groups, the occupation of Muslim countries, and the manufacturing of systemic propaganda against Muslims and Islam (i.e., that they are increasingly becoming a threat to the West) by means of the mass media and policymakers. For the respondents, the mass media has played a key role in controlling and shaping Western people's perceptions and beliefs towards Muslims and, therefore, have used the power of fear to keep their hatred towards Muslims alive in order to establish their imperialist aims.

Their perceptions of Islamophobia are, of course, itself a clear manifestation of the fact that they challenged the imperialist ideology that put a bull's eye on Islam and Muslims in general. Research on other Muslims including Turks in other European countries have also revealed that various Muslim groups have reacted to Islamophobia, but further added that those Muslims had reinforced their in-group solidarity and collective Muslim identity (e.g. Meer, 2010; Bonino, 2017; Phalet *et al.*, 2012; Guveli, 2014). This study's respondents, however, did not develop an Islamist political mobilisation agenda or a sense of belonging to a global Muslim identity even though they had argued strongly for the existence of Islamophobia manufactured by the mass media and policymakers. For them, the main target of the imperialist ideology is other Muslim countries and Muslim groups, thereby positioning themselves outside of this issue while also expressing sympathy for its victims.

Their perception of Islamophobia and the roles played by the mass media might be interpreted as an indicator of empathy for the other Muslims, especially in war zones. Unlike studies on Turks in other European countries that suggest that those Turks who experienced more personal discrimination identified more strongly with their Muslim in-group, however, this study reveals how my respondents deflected Islamophobia onto the other Muslims and thus did not develop global Muslim identity. Another important factor that prevented the respondents discussed in this chapter from uniting with other Muslims under a global Muslim identity was the existence of an understanding of Turkish-Islam that the young Muslim Turks believed differentiates themselves from other Muslims. They believed that the way they understood and interpreted Islam was different from the way others practice Islam. Therefore, they did not support a Muslim identity independent of the Turkish ethnic identity. They liked to define themselves through their dual identification of being Turkish-Muslims rather than merely identifying themselves as being Muslim. In that sense, for them, their Turkish ethnic identity is as important as their religious identity. Furthermore, instead of establishing a Muslim union, many instead suggested the creation of a Turkish union containing Turkish-Islamic elements.

The following chapter focuses on Turkish people's experiences of Islamophobia in Britain. It explores how Islamophobia is at work in the lives of Turkish people by analysing some respondents' reports regarding themselves and their immediate circle of friends and relatives.

CHAPTER 5

EXPLORING EVERYDAY ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE RACIALISATION OF TURKISH PEOPLE IN BRITAIN

5 Introduction

Over the past few decades, there has been much discussion about the considerable and rapidly growing anti-Islam/Muslim prejudice and hostility in Britain. This has not, however, been accompanied by as many empirical studies on Islamophobia as one might expect, especially with regards to whether it operates in more overt or more subtle forms and how Muslims have been racialised in their everyday lives. In this chapter, I analyse how Islamophobia operates at the micro-level. This analysis is grounded on an understanding of Islamophobia which is based, not only on readily apparent, observable, and easily documented racialised practices but also subtle and covert forms of racism which transpire in everyday interactions. Accordingly, the main objective of this chapter is to unpack and analyse this racialisation process by analysing some participants' reports regarding themselves and their immediate circle of friends and relatives. This chapter establishes the empirical relevance of Islamophobia for Turks, thus setting the stage for the subsequent chapters.

As I noted in the methodological chapter, one of the main purposes of the preliminary interview questions was to explore whether the participants would raise the issue of Islamophobia without my intercession. With the exception of two cases, none of the participants stated on their own that Islamophobia or other types of racism affected their daily lives, such as their daily routines, circle of friends, social interactions at work, school, or with British society in general. I then followed up this general line of questioning with more specific/direct ones related to Islamophobia in order to find out whether the participants would claim that they are targets of Islamophobia. Thus, two themes emerge from the empirical study here. First, the majority of the interviewees reported that Islamophobia (or racism in general) was not an issue that impacted their lives or the lives of their immediate circle of relatives and friends. Many of them even deflected Islamophobia onto other Muslims.¹⁰ Second, other respondents narrated accounts regarding themselves and their immediate circle of friends and relatives which show that they have had experiences of subtle forms of Islamophobia in their everyday lives more akin to 'everyday Islamophobia' (cf. Essed, 1991).

This chapter aims to analyse the accounts which relate to this second theme. It first examines those who had initially stated that they had never experienced it and thus appeared to maintain peaceful lives, but later narrated reports that they were

¹⁰ See Chapter 6 for discussions on how and why many young Turks pointed out that they are not subjected to Islamophobia and deflected it onto other Muslims in Britain.

indeed targeted by Islamophobia. In doing so, this first part attempts to unearth the covert nature of Islamophobia in the everyday lives of Turks in Britain. This type of Islamophobia was so covert, in fact, that some young Turks even had difficulty recognising and emphasising its existence, thereby stating that they were not targeted by it. It then addresses how young Turks perceive Turks are racialised in Britain by analysing the accounts of those who had, from the beginning, depicted a subtle form of Islamophobia in Britain that they had experience of but could not prove, as well as stories from those who had initially reported that they never experienced it. These young Turks' accounts demonstrate that Turkish people in Britain are racialised through various signifiers, including ethnicity, name, political affiliation, and occupation and all of which have been essentialised as markers of Muslim identity. Their perceptions further suggest that Turks were also racialised in a gendered way based on the fact that some of the participants are Turkish Muslim women who wear the hijab, with the woman wearing it being interpreted unproblematically as being oppressed, uneducated, mysterious, extremist, etc.

5.1 'Is it not necessary to experience something more direct in order to call it Islamophobia?': Covert nature of everyday Islamophobia

Some participants at first expressed that they never experienced Islamophobia or other sorts of racism, but then later explained that they became aware of a non-aggressive but still offensive type of racism when they left their "safe zones" or engaged in interactions with White British people who were strangers. Berkan, a highly religious participant, for instance, pointed out that the White British people at both his workplace and school respected his Islamic way of life. He was a full-time laboratory technician at one of the universities in London when I met him. He also used to be a police officer for two years. Additionally, he was conducting voluntary work for Milli Gorus (National Vision), which is one of the leading religious Turkish diaspora organisations in the UK. He quit his job as a police officer because he said that there were too many procedures and too much paperwork to do. When I asked him if he faced any problems as a police officer because of his religious or ethnic identity, he articulated that 'I used to pray in local rooms. The police officers used to respect me. They used to leave the local room for me to pray. They did not show any sort of discrimination toward me. They were fully aware that I was a Muslim.' He also noted that he does not encounter any discrimination at the university where he works as a technician and that his working environment does not seem to threaten his religious identity. When our conversation left the topic of workplaces, he narrated an account which did suggest that he was, indeed, a target of Muslim racialisation in Britain. After being asked about his experiences of Islamophobia during the interview, Berkan replied that he had experienced an incident but did not offer Islamophobia or other types of racism as the reason for this. : 'I mean, once I went to Margate wearing a takke.¹¹ Some English people in a car shouted something at me. I was walking in the street, but I ignored them. It was no big deal.' Takkes are perceived as being a marker of Islam (Garner

¹¹ A kufi cap was worn by Muslim men in mostly North and East Africa and South Asia.

and Selod, 2015; APPGBM, 2018) and have provoked some anti-Muslim encounters. Berkan, however, described this experience as being only a ‘minor verbal attack.’ His perception of this incident as being trivial might be due to two reasons: 1) either he thought that Islamophobia is a matter related to more extreme practices and therefore could not perceive this incident as being Islamophobic; 2) or he often encounters these kinds of incidents in his everyday life and therefore thought that ignoring it might be the better strategy to cope with them. In his study on destigmatisation strategies of Turks in Germany, Nils Witte (2018) found similar findings regarding the latter possibility. He showed that some of his respondents intentionally ignored stigmatisation which he attributes to being preferable to confrontation. In the case of Berkan, however, since he, in the beginning, gainsaid that he experienced Islamophobia, his lack of knowledge about its non-extreme nature might lead him to simply trivialise it as being just another racist incident.

Narrating her positive encounters with White British customers in her workplace, Tulay, also, stated at first that she had never experienced Islamophobia in Britain. But when we started talking about her interactions with White Britons outside of her safe environment, she described Islamophobia as a covert form of racism. When I first met Tulay, she was wearing a headscarf. At that time, she spent much of her time at her workplace where she encountered cultural others but which she still considered being a safe and peaceful environment. ‘I have worked in this patisserie for 8 years and, thank goodness, I have never had any trouble from our English customers... They are the most respectful, the most self-aware, and the politest people among all our customers.’ These positive encounters may have also contributed to the lessening of majority British prejudices about Muslims (Dixon, 2006). For instance, research on Blacks (Yancey, 1999) and Hispanics (Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004) in the US has concluded that positive personal interactions between minority and dominant group members have helped reduce prejudice towards minority group members. Tulay observed this as well: ‘The customers already know this place. They know that we are Turkish. They already know of Turkey. Turks have made a good impression on them.’ Cuneyt, a shop assistant in a café on Oxford Street in London similarly articulated that ‘English people respect you. They know when you are fasting and respect you then too. I grew up with these people and have made English friends. We visited each other. Some of them have even met my parents. They knew that we were Muslims and Turks. And even though my mom wears a headscarf, they did not harbour any negative attitudes against us.’ Positive experiences like these may have helped the White British people reassess their views and change their behaviour towards them (Dixon, 2006).

Nevertheless, this impression was limited to those British people with whom she routinely interacted. When our conversation went outside the “safe zones” of the patisserie, she described “the outside” as unsafe:

I just feel it. People do not disrespect me saliently. Once I was driving and one of my Turkish friends was next to me. She does not normally wear a headscarf. So, you know, English people are very respectable in traffic, especially to women driv-

ers. But when my friend drives, I have realised that they are much more respectable toward her [because she does not wear a headscarf]. They give way to her in traffic. They are very gentle with her. Once, though, she experienced what I experienced in traffic, too. There was a religious ceremony somewhere and thus she also was wearing a headscarf on that day. She was driving to the place [where the celebration was going to be held]. A few times, other drivers did not give way to her in traffic. She then said “that is very bizarre Tulay [pseudonym]. People usually give way to me. This has not happened to me before. I feel like people are doing this to me because I am wearing a headscarf.” Things like that happen but I do not know if we can call those behaviours Islamophobic. I mean I do not know. Is it not necessary to experience something more direct in order to call it Islamophobia? (Tulay)

She believed that her treatment was unjust but, due to its covert form, she was uncertain whether what she experienced was Islamophobia. In Tulay’s telling, she felt they were easily recognised as Muslims based on their physical appearances. The headscarf as a religious signifier acquired a racial meaning in this case. But she stopped short of claiming that they had been targeted by a racist practice. This is indicative of ‘a tendency that can be related to feeling expected to “brush things off” like everyone else seems to do’ (Cederberg, 2005: 207). Furthermore, although she was reluctant to identify the incident as Islamophobic, she nevertheless felt it. It made her believe that there might have been something wrong or abnormal about themselves (Macpherson, 1999; Sue and Sue, 2008; Sue, 2010).

Other participants verbalised that they never experienced Islamophobia or other racist tendencies in virtue of the fact that they lived in such a diverse society as London. They believed that, in highly diverse societies, different groups of people get to know each other better and thus will learn to respect and tolerate the differences of others. They thus believed that they were not subjected to Islamophobia in London. Aican, a second-generation postgraduate student and director of a Turkish association in London, for instance, expressed that he was not targeted by Islamophobia, asserting that: ‘This is because there are so many different groups in London and thus people respect each other. People have gotten used to differences here. Therefore, I did not feel like I have been pressured at all because of my religion.’ This instance interestingly exemplifies the notion of ‘commonplace diversity’ in which attitudes and perceptions towards diversity are generally positive (Wessendorf, 2013). From the everyday multicultural perspective (Wise and Velayutham, 2009), Aican highlighted positive experiences in everyday situations and thus seemed to maintain a peaceful life in London. In the latter parts of the interview with Aican, however, he narrated an incident which exemplified a subtle form of institutional racism during their ‘day-to-day interactions’ (Brandt, 1986):

I will never forget, one day there was a fight between two customers in our grocery store. So, my dad called the police station and provided our address to them. They told us that they were on their way. But they only arrived at night, when the fight had already ended many hours before. I mean, the fight started at around 6 p.m. and the police officers only arrived there at around 1.30 a.m. One of

them asked us what had happened. My dad, in response, asked them why they had come so late. We could have understood that they never come. But just two weeks after this incident, there was another fight in a bakery right next to our grocery which was run by English people. The fight was not as violent as the one that had occurred in our store, though. We closed our shop so that they would not attack us. But when those store owners called the police, they were there in about five minutes. They were not the same officers, but they came right away. (Alican)

When I asked him why he thought the police officers had arrived at the scene so late, he cited his father's name as being the main reason: 'When my dad called them, he gave information about his name, the name of the grocery, and the name of its owner. The grocery belongs to my father and his name is Hasan which is a typical Muslim name.' The main emphasis of institutional racism is the collective failure of social or political organisations to provide equal services to people due to their colour, culture, ethnicity, etc. (Macpherson, 1999). While much more attention in the literature is paid to the importance of overt racism and direct discrimination in institutional racism, Alican's account suggests that minority ethnic groups can also experience racial microaggressions which are brief, everyday exchanges that convey denigrating messages to members of Turkish Muslim groups in a subtle way (Sue *et al.*, 2007; Sue, 2010). Although no one can claim that Alican's account is an example of blatant institutional discrimination, Alican felt that they were treated unequally due to having a Muslim name. Unfortunately, subtle racism can have the same psychological repercussions as its more direct form (Sue and Sue, 2008).

Another practice uncovered about the participants is that they try to claim that Islamophobia does not exist in Britain by comparing Britain and Germany in terms of their respective levels of Islamophobia. The point to be considered here is that these participants lived in a different country before and experienced a form of Islamophobia which, for them, was much more severe and self-evident than that experienced by Muslims in Britain. Institutional racism in Germany was one of the main issues referred to in this comparison. This was highlighted elaborately by Halime, a postgraduate student and a part-time worker of the same university. She was born in Turkey and grew up in Germany. She came to London in 2009 to improve her English. She ended up, however, living here, saying that she has been living in London ever since. She explained that the most important factor for her making her decision to move to Britain was the fact that she had finally found the peace that she had always sought whilst living in London. She never regretted her decision of moving to the UK because 'I'm happy here and I didn't have that happy living standard in Germany.' She recounted the reason why it made her happier to live in the UK: 'I realise actually what life means here because, in Germany, we were always second-class citizens who were oppressed and who were always regarded as someone different from the rest of the nation. But here [in Britain], you are accepted for how you are, how you look, how you dress and how you seem.' When I asked her views regarding the contention that Muslims in Britain have problems due to their religious beliefs and practices, she reproached those who

thought that for making a wrong diagnosis, comparing how life was for her in Germany when compared to Britain:

I laugh at that. If you compare Britain with Germany, it [Islamophobia] does not exist at all here [in Britain]. I mean, the level of [Islamophobic] experience between the two countries is different... In my opinion, there is no Islamophobia here, but they [Muslims living here] think there is. So, when there is a small incident outside, they call it racism or Islamophobia, but it is not so. On the contrary, you would know exactly what racism is if you lived in Germany. Here [in Britain] you can work anywhere with your hijab on. Muslim women are very confident. They have many opportunities to conduct various businesses, like life-coaching, being a doctor, being a lawyer, being in food management – anything! But in Germany, you are restricted. For example, I had a friend who got her degree in medicine and applied to work at a hospital. They asked her to take her hijab off so that she would then be able to work for the hospital. She rejected doing that and opened her own clinic. Here [in Britain], Muslims have been given so many rights, opportunities, and freedoms. We have honour and dignity here. I have my full freedom here. In Germany, on the other hand, I struggled in order to find a job. Furthermore, even if you do find one, the first question they will ask you is whether you will take the hijab off because they construe the hijab as being an oppressive symbol... I do not believe that Muslims experience Islamophobia here in Britain, though. Here, I talk to other Muslims every day via our WhatsApp group. What I have realised is that my understanding of Islamophobia is very different from that of other Muslims... If you really want to explore Islamophobia, I suggest you go to Germany because it is extremely severe there. So, I always ask myself how I stayed there in Germany and why I kept silent whilst living there. I am very happy to be here in Britain [the last sentence put a cheerful smile on her face]. People respect differences [here]. I can imagine myself living here forever. (Halime)

There is substantial evidence of structural barriers to equal access in the German labour market and an array of research has revealed that minority groups are systematically subjected to racism in Germany (Weichselbaumer, 2016; Younes, 2016; Lewicki, 2017; Thijsen *et al.*, 2021). There is also evidence, though, that Muslims in Britain, and especially veiled women, are less likely to be employed and have, furthermore, experienced discrimination at their work (Heath and Martin, 2013; Ameli and Merali, 2015). But Halime emphasised the existence of Islamophobia in Germany yet did not believe in its presence in Britain. In other words, her understanding of Islamophobia was both explicit and severe. This understanding is clearly seen in the final sentences of the above quote in which she says that '[w]hat I have realised is that my understanding of Islamophobia is very different to that of other Muslims... If you really want to explore Islamophobia, I suggest you go to Germany because it is extremely severe there.' This might be because she experienced much more blatant and severe Islamophobia in Germany and, therefore, might disregard the Islamophobic nature of covert instances of racism that are generated in prosaic everyday routines.

Although some respondents stated at first that they never experienced Islamophobia, with some also claiming that it is not as a significant matter in Britain in comparison to other countries (e.g. Germany), their later narratives regarding themselves and their immediate circle of relatives revealed that it is still present but that it is often enacted during mundane interactions without ever becoming explicit (Essed, 1991). The lack of awareness about the subtle nature of Islamophobia has hindered some of the participants to generate an understanding of what attitudes and behaviours should be interpreted as being Islamophobic (Moosavi, 2015).

The accounts discussed in this section also touches briefly on the racialisation process of Turkish people in everyday encounters. Muslim names (in the account of Alican), the hijab (in the account of Tulay), and the takke (in the account of Berkan) were all perceived as markers of collective Muslim identity; thus, they were consequently racialised as Muslims. The next section elaborates upon evidence of how White British people connect with Turks and their culture, ethnicity, politics, and religious observances. This is done by analysing the accounts of those who had, from the beginning, depicted a subtle form of Islamophobia in Britain that they experienced but could not prove, as well as stories from some of those who had initially specified that they never experienced it but later narrated its relevance in their everyday lives.

5.2 Everyday Islamophobia and the racialisation of the Turkish people

It is argued that the ways people are racialised are largely dependent on their physical appearance (Omi and Winant, 2015; Selod and Garner, 2015; Selod, 2018; APPGBM, 2018). Omi and Winant (2015) point out that perceived differences in appearance, such as skin colour, hair texture, and nose shape can be interpreted and narrated in ways that draw upon a set of symbolic meanings and associations. As my empirical study shows, however, these are not limited to biological or phenotypical traits but include various aspects of cultural or religious markers as well. This study reveals that as in other European countries (e.g. Celik, 2015; Latcheva and Punzenberger, 2016; Witte, 2018; Thijsen *et al.*, 2021; Colak *et al.*, 2020; de Jong and Duybendak, 2021), Turkish people in Britain, according to some respondents' perceptions, have been racialised mainly through various ethnic, cultural, and political attributes tied to their Muslim identity (such as wearing the hijab, having a Muslim name, or supporting a particular political party in Turkey) rather than their skin colour or other somatic features. However, unlike Turks in other European countries that present more examples of explicit discrimination, my research found that the participants report being exposed to more subtle forms of discrimination.

The process of racialisation has gendered dimensions as well which, likewise, echo the extant research (Tyrer and Ahmad, 2006; Wagner *et al.*, 2012; Allen, 2014 and 2015; Perry, 2014; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2015; Selod, 2018). The visible markers of Turkish Muslim women, like the hijab, function as socially constructed signifiers which materialise Islamophobic meanings and understandings (Allen,

2014; Selod, 2018; Colak et al., 2020; de Jong and Duyvendak, 2021). The hijab is being essentialised in the same way that somatic traits are. For some Turkish men and women, religious signifiers are not always visible; instead, their ethnicity, name, political affiliation, and occupation were envisioned as markers of Islam or markers of their Muslim identity and thus provoked the everyday Islamophobia maintained and reproduced without overtly targeting its victims. These identities, as Selod (2018) also highlights, are not distinct but are often interrelated with one another and there is always a combination of ideas about them. The idea of how Turkish people are racialised thus should be understood in all of its complexities. In the following paragraphs, drawing on the perceptions of some young Turks, I first discuss how both Turkish men and women are racialised through a myriad of characteristics, including ethnicity, political affiliation, Muslim name, and occupation. I then analyse gendered racialisation against Turkish Muslim women with the hijab and shall suggest that they are more often the targets of everyday Islamophobia than Turkish men and secular Turkish women.

5.2.1 'Are you an extremist?': The racialised experiences of Turkish men and women

There is no doubt that the most remarkable racialising theme that has been revealed from the data is the view that Turks in the UK are exposed to racist discourses over the current political situations in Turkey. This generally happens when people find out where the targets are originally from. Some respondents confessed feeling discomfort when people in the UK have associated their ethnic identity with the current government policies of Turkey:

...They start treating you as if you are the official representative of your country and start talking about the political developments transpiring in Turkey. They behave as if you are a supporter of the current Turkish government and question your country's politics. They claim that the current government supports ISIS. Why are you are telling me this? That makes me feel like I am being accused and that bothers me. (Oguz)

This quote proposes that certain racist behaviours are not directly based on religious prejudices but may also be based on ethnic or political affiliations. This subtle form of racism tends to make victims feel uneasy and angry, often leaving them unsure about whether racism was even at work. Targets are psychologically persecuted and thus have higher levels of stress (Nadal *et al.*, 2012). Sometimes, however, this racist behaviour is performed in overt terms, just as Sabiha, a second-generation undergraduate student, narrated. She complained about people who criticised her due to her supporting the government in Turkey: 'I was a member of AKP youth branches in London and had some brochures to hand out. One White British person approached me and asked me, "Are you an extremist?" "What?" I asked him. He told me that Erdogan is an extremist and that, if I am supporting him, then I am an extremist, too.' Sabiha reported that she was racialised on the basis of her political preferences and was overtly referred to as being religiously "extremist." Transnational links and practices are not particular to first-generation people. Second-generation individuals like Sabiha may also want to

establish connections with their country of origin via political membership. When some political border-crossing practices, such as the example in the quote above, become more salient in the public sphere, though, its members may be targeted by much more severe reactions by the dominant groups compared to that of other culturally transnational activities.

Being subject to an excessive number of questions in one's daily life is one of the other themes which emerged from this empirical study. Taking into account the fact that there are substantially two kinds of directions or forces (i.e. from the "inside-out" and the "outside-in") which cannot be treated as being discrete shows that, for young Turks, their ethnic and religious identities are partly constructed as an essentialising form of "Othering" by outsiders and their response to it (Moodood, 2007). This construction from the outside occurred more in implicit forms through the use of Islamophobic language. Thus, the participants felt like they were being treated as if they were exotic, different, or unusual.

"Where are you from?" is one of the basic questions that the participants were asked when they were identified as an "other." Hakan, for instance, reported that, due to working as a taxi driver, some of his clients treated him negatively, supposing that he was a member of the South Asian Muslims, which constitute the largest Muslim population in the UK. He explained his experience as follows:

People confuse me with South Asians because I am a taxi driver who looks like them. They think that all taxi drivers are from South Asia. Some ask, "Are you Pakistani or Bangladeshi?" and they usually do it rudely. I mean 8 out of 10 are asking me directly where I am from. They are questioning you as if you made a mistake. It bothers me because it should not be that way. (Hakan)

Certain occupations in the UK are attributed to certain groups. The extensive presence of South Asian Muslim men in the service industry, such as taxi drivers, may cause drivers from other ethnic groups to share the same fate with them. Yet, being a taxi driver is not enough to be identified as a South Asian Muslim. Hakan here argues that appearing South Asian is the central marker for experiencing stereotypes. This might suggest that Muslims in the UK are often racialised in terms of some of the main characteristics of South Asian Muslims, such as physical appearance and cultural traits. The respondents reported feeling stress and discomfort and are weary of cases involving racist language.

According to Rumeysa, the question "Where are you from?" assumes that she is categorised as being different by the people asking it: "The thing is my name. In Britain, if I said I am British, people will ask me "No, where are you really from?" Even though she was born, raised, and lives in the UK, she is still treated like a foreigner. These sorts of questions send the message that she does not belong in Britain, thereby subtly communicating that there are certain criteria for being British¹² (Nadal *et al.*, 2012). As a result, she felt like an alien in her own land (Sue *et al.*, 2007). When the answer did not simply contain the origin of her parents' mi-

¹² See Chapter 7 for further discussion about young Turks' national identification and sense of belonging.

gration, the questioners revised the question until they received the information that they wanted to hear. For her, the question did not concern a geographical origin, so in her mind, she was not supposed to mention a country. Cassilde (2013: 116) notes that this question could be interpreted as the questioner's showing interest for another culture rather than intending to exclude "the other." Rumeysa, on the other hand, believes that this question generally does not aim to explore her own culture seeing as the questioners' intention is consciously malevolent: 'For me, it means that they want to categorise where I am from. Thus, I understand how they are stereotyping me.' In judging her, she stated, the perpetrators sometimes explicitly or implicitly apply racist beliefs about the attributes of her ethnic and religious groups on her:

People project their own assumptions [on me]. On purpose, I try not to tell people that I am Turkish because, if I do, I may receive racist comments. Indeed, I have had people say "Oh! Are you okay with your Turkish identity?" "You are the first Turkish person I have made an acquaintance with," etc. ... There was a person that I had met and had felt quite safe with her. I did not believe that she was judgemental. And then she asked me "Where are you from?" And I was like "I am Turkish," and then she said "Oh! Your parents are Muslim, so you grew up as a Muslim?" And then she asked me, "Are you a terrorist?" and I was like "What!?" If you say you are a Muslim or Turkish, they make assumptions like "You are a terrorist" or "You are an extremist." (Rumeysa)

Being asked stereotypical questions that assume the young Turks' ethnic origins and cultural differences are somehow unusual or curious may cause those targeted to feel reduced to their ethnic and cultural identities (Colak *et al.*, 2020). Rumeysa did not want people to know her differentness as she knew that various stigmatised attributions were ascribed to that differentness (Goffman, 1963). The Islamophobic attributions fostered by the media and politicians label all people, including both those who express their commitment to Islamic identity and those who are members of an ethno-religious group but dissociate themselves from the religious background of the group, as terrorists. Rumeysa identified herself as being a non-Muslim but could not elude Islamophobic language due to her ethno-religious signifiers, viz. ethnicity and Muslim name. The assumption is that being a Muslim is voluntarily chosen and thus not ascribed vis-à-vis sexual identities, which are involuntary categories of birth (Toynbee, cited in Meer and Modood, 2009: 345).

Another mode of questioning the respondents experienced stemmed from the assumption that all Muslim people share the same cultural and religious practices or behaviours and thus are members of a completely homogeneous religious group. For example, Zeliha describes her experience in the following way: 'Once I went to a pub and met someone there. Later on, he asked me "Why are you drinking?" and "Why are you not wearing a headscarf?" He was supposing that all Turks practice Islam.' In this instance, being a Turk was considered as being equivalent to being Muslim. Thus, the following two assumptions were being made: (a) there is no flexibility in the practice of Islam, and (b) all Muslim/Turkish women

cover their heads. Yaren also mentioned that she was questioned for not wearing a headscarf: ‘When I’ve told people at school that I am Muslim, they’ll be like “Ahh! Really? Why are you not wearing a hijab, then?” They think that, if you are Muslim, you must wear it.’ Such questions convey an implicit message that all Turks/Muslims must behave and practice in the same way, while also implying that they – especially those Muslim women who cover their heads – are exotic or abnormal in British society.

5.2.2 Gendered racialisation of Turkish Muslim women who wear the hijab

The empirical study suggests that there are clear gendered dimensions to Islamophobic discrimination (Tyrer and Ahmad, 2006; Chakraborti and Zempi, 2012; Allen, 2014 and 2015; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2015; Selod, 2018). Turkish women wearing the hijab, however, have been much more exposed to it than Muslim men and secular Muslim women who do not cover their heads. Having said that, the characteristic that distinguishes this research data from the current literature is that the Turkish women in this study have been confronted by Islamophobic discourses and discrimination during their everyday lives without it being explicit. Thus, contrary to what has been discussed about the Islamophobic experiences of Muslim women in previously conducted studies, the evidence of this research shows that “visible” Turkish women were not the recipients of explicit verbal abuse (Perry, 2014; Zempi, 2014), were not forced to remove their hijabs, and did not experience any violence or physical harm (Chakraborti and Zempi, 2012; Allen, 2014). Rather, Islamophobia appeared to them more frequently in a more mundane, subtle way. Furthermore, the majority of those who related female experiences of subtle Islamophobia articulated their mothers’ or wives’ stories rather than their own.

Some young Turkish women told me stories about what it was like being stopped and searched at airports. Tulay shared the following: ‘I often go to Turkey. I am stopped and searched at airports more often than other people. My friends are not searched but I am. If you are not wearing a headscarf, then you are not seen as being a threat.’ In airports, the hijab is perceived as being a religious marker of racialised Muslim identity (Selod, 2018). The women who wear them are easily recognised as Muslims and are perceived as if they are serious threats to national security by airport surveillance teams. As Tulay notes, ‘They see women like me as potential terrorists. This annoys me.’ Tulay has concluded that she is stopped at airports because she wears the hijab. It is obvious that she interpreted the incident as being discriminatory, but she did not have enough evidence to prove that Islamophobia was at work. What resonated with Tulay was the different kinds of treatment she receives at airports compared to her friends who do not wear the hijab. The behaviours that she experienced are examples of covert Islamophobia because of its subtlety and discriminatory nature (Nadal, *et al.*, 2012). Although the act of inspecting them multiple times at airports may sound like a routine situation which does not harm its targets, as expressed by Tulay, this discriminatory act causes the targets to feel distressed and frustrated (Blackwood *et al.*, 2013). Tulay

thus has tried to elude this discriminatory type of surveillance by avoiding certain airports. As she notes, 'I try not to use Heathrow airport to fly due to [the fact that they conduct] extra security searches.' By avoiding Heathrow, she attempts to minimise the potential for negative treatments by authorities at the airport and helps prevent her from feeling anxious.

Another challenge encountered at airports is that of being exposed to the gaze of other travellers while being stopped, searched, and questioned by airport authorities. Sabiha, for instance, articulated her Turkish friend's experience at one British airport whilst returning to London from Paris:

I have a friend who wears a headscarf. We went to France with our other two friends. When we returned to London, one police officer stopped her at the airport and asked her where she was coming from, what she did in France, why she came back, etc. She felt uncomfortable because everyone was looking at her. She was born in London. They did not stop us [her companions] or ask these sorts of questions of us. We were four people, but she was the only one who was wearing a headscarf. (Sabiha)

With respect to the issue of what makes airport incidents problematic, it is worth pointing out that respondents refer to experiencing a sense of injustice when people are stopped and searched simply because of their Muslim identity – something which is perceived as being a threat without any other apparent reason. Furthermore, these experiences are perceived as being a form of public humiliation (Blackwood *et al.*, 2013). Humiliation derived from discrimination tends to make the targets feel psychological distress (Hunter *et al.*, 2015).

Another incident that takes a place of importance in the daily lives of Turkish women is the hostile glare that they perceive from strangers in public places. They generally experience these stares in stores, on public transport, on the streets, and in public institutions. The implication is that these women are being "othered" or perceived as being suspicious or threatening. Hakan, for instance, told me that he witnessed many times how people on the street stared at his wife with hateful eyes. As he relates, 'People stare at you weirdly when you are wearing the hijab. Sometimes, I can see the hatred in their eyes when we go out. But she never experienced any verbal attacks or anything extreme.' Hakan was aware that the hostility against his wife was mainly hidden below the surface. Thus, he defined Islamophobia as something 'you can feel but cannot prove.' A similar point was made by Merve, who articulated her observation regarding how her mother's hijab drew people's attention in a discriminatory manner. She believed that, due to her mother wearing the hijab, 'people look at her strangely. For example, when we go to the hospital to see a doctor, we realise that the staff members behave differently toward her. It is because of her hijab.' It is worth noting here that what my participants narrated did not always relate to their own individual experiences. Nevertheless, they understood what happens to their relatives and felt how they were influenced psychologically. Moreover, some unordinary practices in their daily lives enabled the respondents to feel empathy with those targeted by Islamophobia.

Rumeysa, for instance, realised that British people would behave differently toward her when she wore a hijab and went out:

The reaction is so different. The energy from people is very different. So, what I noticed is that White or normal people are a bit more reserved or withdrawn. But when I do not wear it, I notice that people are more open to greeting me. ... These clothes I am wearing right now let me pass when I am walking. Even on the train, people move more. But when I wear the hijab, they stare at me strangely. (Rumeysa)

Being treated unfairly in social institutions due to the hijab was another theme which was revealed from the data. Nevertheless, the respondents were not certain whether the attitudes and behaviours that they received from such staff should be considered discriminatory practices due to its subtlety. Metin, for instance, narrated such an experience when he related his feelings regarding a time when he and his wife took their daughter to see a doctor at a hospital.

Metin: I have not been subjected to any discrimination, but sometimes I feel like I have, and I do not know if I am being too emotional. We took our daughter to a hospital recently. She had a fever. We waited for three hours in line and nobody took care of my daughter. I had to go in a few times to ask why my daughter had not been seen by a doctor yet, especially since her fever had not been brought down yet. They gave her an apple juice and took her temperature. But I saw that they treated a few English patients who had come to the hospital after us. I felt that they were discriminating against us. I supposed that their kids might have needed to be treated urgently, but that was not the case. I told the staff again that we had been waiting for three hours, but nothing changed. Then, I told her [the nurse] that we would be leaving, and she said that that would be our responsibility [and not theirs] if we left. "Okay," I said, and we left the hospital.

Muhammed: Why do you think they treated you differently?

Metin: They knew that we were different. My wife was there, and she was wearing the hijab. I mean, they did not do anything explicitly, but you could feel it. And still, you are not a hundred percent certain whether what you have experienced is discrimination.

As discussed by Schneider *et al.* (1997), the question "Were you left out because you are Black?" applies to the case of Turkish people. One could simply modify the question thus: "Were you treated differently because your wife was wearing the hijab?" Yet, this empirical research suggests that respondents had trouble labelling behaviours they experienced as discrimination. They were left alone with a strong sense of having been exposed to it. That is, even if they had difficulty attributing those incidents to racism, they were still affected negatively. Thus, these everyday incidents have, in a way, had similar psychological outcomes on the lives of the respondents as those which result from explicit racism. Racism, therefore, is not merely a matter of explicit beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours. It can also take more implicit forms.

5.2.3 The hijab as an ensemble of symbolic meanings and associations

It is argued that the ways people are racialised are largely dependent on physical appearance. Perceived differences in appearance, such as skin colour, hair texture, and nose shape are interpreted and narrated in ways that draw upon a set of symbolic meanings and associations (Omi and Winant, 2015). This research indicates that the hijab is also being essentialised in the same way that somatic traits are. It has become a symbol of perceived oppressive and subordinating cultural and religious practices (Afsar, 2008; Chakraborti and Zembi, 2012; Garner and Selod, 2015; Colak et al., 2020; de Jong and Duyvendak, 2021). Visible Muslim women are thus represented as uneducated, oppressed, mysterious, extremist, etc. Having said that, I would like to re-emphasise here that, as with other themes, the participants' articulations on this theme were based mainly on their feelings or perceptions rather than experiences of direct racism.

One of the doubts amongst some Western feminists is the view that Muslim women wear the hijab with their own consent (Aziz, 2012). This is one of the reasons why they denounce the wearing of a headscarf seeing as they see it as a symbol of oppression or patriarchy (Modood, 2013). The hijab seemed to evoke the recognition that they were Muslim; it was this that then became the focus of stereotyping. Rumeysa explained how White British people in her workplace negatively portrayed Muslim women wearing the hijab. She was born in London and noted that she always tended to conceal her ethnic and religious identity from those who could potentially judge Muslims or Turks.

One of my colleagues whom I had been managing made many racist comments about Muslim women. She said "They are wearing the hijab and you cannot see their hair. Can you believe this? How can I work with you if I cannot see your hair?" ... If you are wearing it, they assume that you have been married young, that you have been forced into marriage by your parents, that you are a terrorist, or that you are an extremist.... I feel like even I have been apprehensive to say directly that I am Turk to people because, the thing is, people are indirect. They always perpetrate microaggressions. (Rumeysa)

Rumeysa's account shows that visible symbols associated with Islamic identity exposed Muslim women to various forms of microaggressions, including assumptions of ties with terrorism or extremism. She appears particularly conscious of the negative perception of her identity, and she struggles with whether to disclose it to avoid adverse reactions. Studies show that similar passing strategies were adopted by some young Turks in Belgium where they tried to avoid negative looks and being stigmatised by hiding their religious and ethnic background (e.g. Colak et al., 2020).

As aforementioned, Hakan had explained how his wife reacted to the hostile glares that she received from strangers while walking down the street. He recounted that most of those who stared at his wife with hateful eyes were White British women, which is contrary to the view that veiled Muslim women are predominantly targeted by male actors (Klaus and Kassel, 2005). He believed that the headscarf was not just something that they disliked; more importantly, it was read as a sym-

bol of patriarchy. 'They are questioning why Muslim women wear it. They smile at you, but you can understand their actual feelings. I mean, they think that those women only wear headscarf due to family pressure. They think that I force her to wear it. I think that is one of the main problems in this country.' It could be said, then, that the aggravating gaze psychologically influences not only the victims but also those who witness the incident. Hakan thus noted that living in a society where there are such judgments against Muslim men is also difficult for him. One of the targets of this feminist claim is the oppressive husband (Afshar, 2008). The hijab is read unproblematically as an outward sign of oppression (Garner and Selod, 2015). The view that Muslim women who wear the hijab are oppressed is a popular tendency in the West (Chakraborti and Zembi, 2012). Many feminists see Muslim women with the hijab as being in need of saving from backwardness and fearful subordination, forgetting that feminism 'is about celebrating difference and respecting the choices that women make' (Afshar, 2008: 420). Afshar (2008) argues that, for some Muslim feminists, the veiling of women is directly related to the question of women's rights, casting it in the light of freedom of choice.

According to some respondents, another stark way in which Turkish women with headscarves are negatively construed is the prejudice that they are illiterate. For instance, Tulay explained that the underlying reason why strangers approached her negatively was that

[t]hey believe that those who wear the hijab are most likely uneducated and thus cannot speak English well. Generally, even when I used to walk around with my friends in charity shops, I always observed that people were more polite toward them, afforded them more special treatment, and were more likely to have conversations with them. I felt that a lot. Even my friends told me that people treated me differently (Tulay).

Tulay, who was first-generation, may have put forward her interpretation that the hijab is portrayed negatively by others based on stereotypes she encountered in the media. The mass media are complicit in the dissemination of negative images of Muslim women (Perry, 2014). This negative representation has engendered a feeling within this research's participants of being liable to be attacked at any time. Sevil's words, for instance, powerfully manifest the impact of the negative media portrayal of Muslim women on how she feels in her daily life. When I met her in February 2019, she told me that she had decided to wear a headscarf four years earlier. She nevertheless expressed the sentiment that she lives in never-ending fear of people judging her. 'I see people stare at my hijab. They are going to think that I have those views which are so negatively portrayed in the news. I have not seen racism with my own eyes, but it is still scary. It is still at the back of my mind because of the news.' Having said that, the media was not the only reason for Sevil's feeling unsafe in public spaces. She comprehended which behaviours were seen as being normal and which were abnormal for the first time in certain situations during secondary school. 'In secondary, I was not wearing a headscarf and a lot of people did not know that I was in "the box" of being a Muslim. This allowed me the opportunity of hearing people. They said whatever they wanted to without

any filter about Muslims. The views that I heard from others allowed me to understand how they saw my religion.’ Having witnessed the presence of racist beliefs and practices at an early age, she became skilled at understanding how her headscarf is generally perceived as being a threat in the eyes of the majority. She therefore lives her daily life with the intense sense of these negative impressions. Her perceptions about Islamophobia in everyday life suggest that she has developed a “double consciousness” (Du Bois, 1969). In other words, she is familiar with the majority group’s interpretations of her Muslim identity and, therefore, has explicit knowledge of racist views held against the Muslim society living in the UK. This has also been observed in the case of Black people who had knowledge about the reproduction of racism ‘through communication about racism within the Black community, and by testing their own experiences in daily life’ (Essed, 1991: 1). Unlike Black people, though, Sevil reported that she never experienced any direct racism. Nevertheless, her memories regarding the negative portrayal of Muslims, as well as what is espoused by the media, have helped her to understand how the majority of people perceive Muslims. These two drivers are a clear indication of why she was concerned about Islamophobia as it was rooted both in insight and intuition.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter provided an examination of how Islamophobia functions in the lives of Turkish people in Britain at the micro-level. Although there has been an increased interest in the considerable and rapidly growing anti-Muslim prejudice and hostility in the UK, little research has been conducted on what forms of Islamophobia operate in the everyday lives of Muslims and how they have been racialised.

While there has been a myriad of cases that show explicit and severe instances of Islamophobia in Britain and other European countries, the empirical evidence of this study importantly points out that attention must also be paid to the implicit forms of Islamophobia which I have decided to call “everyday Islamophobia.” Data reveals that a majority of the respondents stated that they never experienced Islamophobia or any sort of racism. However, accounts of a few of those respondents and others (which related stories from either their own lives or the lives of their immediate circle of relatives and friends) show that Turkish people in Britain are mainly embedded within subtle forms of Islamophobia in their everyday interactions with White British people. These forms of Islamophobia are not generally readily apparent and not easily documented racialised practices. Therefore, its targets may struggle to identify with certainty whether Islamophobia is at work in those cases or not. The difficulty of detecting covert incidents, however, does not mean that they cannot be considered Islamophobic; rather, covert incidents may have, in a way, had similar psychological outcomes as overt racism on targets’ lives. In that sense, Islamophobia is not merely a matter of overt attitudes or behaviours; rather, it takes on more subtle forms in everyday encounters.

The young Turks' reports about the racialisation process of Turkish people in Britain suggests that Turkish men and women, as Turks in other European countries, are racialised through various invisible traits, such as name, ethnicity, occupation, and political affiliation rather than their skin colour or somatic features. These are all envisioned as signifiers of Islam or Muslim identity. It has been observed, for example, that having a Muslim name provokes anti-Muslim encounters, with some Turks feeling that they have been treated unequally based on their having a Muslim name. Some are treated like foreigners even though they were born and raised in Britain. Some are subjected to a large number of questions regarding their ethnicity, religion, etc., in their everyday lives. Some Turkish taxi drivers share the same racialising experiences with South Asian drivers. Appearing South Asian is the central signifier of a racialising process. Some face Islamophobic discourses over Turkish politics. This happens in two ways. First, when the perpetrators learn about the target's Turkish ethnic identity, they racialise them over the policies of the current Turkish government, no matter whether they support that government or not. Second, some reported that they are racialised based on their transnational political affiliation. In either case, the current Turkish government is associated with radical Islamist groups. Thus, if the victims are ethnically Turkish or if they support the government, they are also categorised as terrorists or extremists. They are not discriminated against due to their beliefs, but rather due to their ethnic identity or political preferences, both of which are essentialised as threats because it is seen that these categorise them as supporters of terrorist groups.

The evidence further suggests that the process of racialisation has gendered dimensions. Some Muslim women who wear religious clothing like the hijab have been essentialised by means of their religious visibility in the public sphere. These Muslim women are the target of everyday Islamophobia far more than Turkish men and secular women, both of whom do not display any religious signifiers in public places. The hijab, like skin colour, has been visually interpreted and described in ways that draw upon a set of symbolic meanings and associations. Visible Turkish Muslim women are represented as uneducated, oppressed, mysterious, extremist and as a serious threat to national security. They are stopped and searched at airports because the hijab is perceived as being a religious marker. Women who wear it may also be treated as if they are threats to national security. Furthermore, they are also exposed to the gaze of other people at airports or in other public places where they may be seen as suspicious or threatening. It is further believed by some Turks that women wearing the hijab may be seen by some Western feminists as people in need of saving from oppression and backwardness.

In the next chapter, I examine how and why the vast majority of the respondents claimed that they are not targeted by Islamophobia. I discuss how they wield their putative whiteness and Europeanness in order to avoid being placed in a lower social status of racialised Muslim groups and thus position themselves as part of the more secure and high-status White European group.

CHAPTER 6

STRATEGIES OF ETHNIC GROUP DIFFERENTIATION: CLAIMING WHITENESS, EUROPEANNESS AND A SECULAR UNDERSTANDING OF TURKISH-ISLAM

6 Introduction

There is mounting evidence to suggest that British Muslims have been targeted by Islamophobic hostility, hate crimes and discrimination. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 5, some young Turks have reported Islamophobic discrimination against them and other Turkish people as a form of everyday racism. Nevertheless, a great majority of respondents have asserted that they are not victims of Islamophobia, deflecting it onto other Muslims through various differentiating strategies. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how and why the supposed victims of Islamophobia claim that they are not its victims and further deflect it onto other Muslims in the UK.

The scholarship on discrimination tells us that minority groups can respond to discrimination by claiming a strong identification with the devalued or rejected in-group to increase support for collective action on behalf of the in-group (Verkuyten, 1997; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). In the context of Islamophobia, the literature suggests that Muslims respond either in a religiously assertive way (meaning that they defend and underline their Muslim identity, reinforce Muslim in-group solidarity, and actively show that they belong to the global Muslim community) (Ballard, 1996; Abbas, 2005; Modood, 2009; Meer, 2010; Bonino, 2017) or along ethnic terms (i.e. they demonstrate a high sense of belonging for their own ethnic group and a low one for the majority group) (Verkuyten and Yildiz, 2007; Slooman, 2014; Celik, 2015). My research, in contrast, has covered a third identity strategy that a great majority of young Turks from different social, cultural and religious backgrounds have used to respond to Islamophobia. According to this strategy, they first expressed that Islamophobia has no effects on their lives and then asserted that it is a question of other Muslim groups through marking and evaluating phenotypical and cultural differences. Subsequently, talk about Islamophobia provides one context for the re-articulation of identities in these different terms. Their differentiating strategies sharpened ethnic-racial identity boundaries between Turks and other Muslims and also reinforced their attempts to align themselves with the White European majority. Their discourses towards other Muslims may be interpreted as attempts to resist the insecurity that is connected to the cultural and religious proximity they share with other Muslims, thereby cultivating and communicating a positive social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

In this chapter, I examine how and why most of the young Turks from different backgrounds stated that they are not subjected to Islamophobia. This re-

search's analysis of their strategies proceeds in two parts. First, I explore ways these young Turks mark and evaluate difference in terms of physical appearance (i.e. skin colour), view, action, moral character, and work ethic. Second, I examine the ways by which they claim a European identity (i.e., by asserting that (1) their Turkish identity and (2) their secular understanding of Islam are both in accordance with Western society's notions of modernity, secularism, and democracy. Both differentiating strategies may be interpreted as efforts to change their position from that of being a victim to that of benefiting from a higher status. This is done so that they are no longer racialised or victimised as a minority and, consequently, are able to restore status honour and thus obtain a positive social identity.

6.1 Marking and evaluating phenotypical and cultural differences

Difference is essential for identity construction. But it is as dangerous as it is necessary. It is dangerous because it can result in 'negativity, threatening, a site of danger, of negative feelings, of splitting, hostility, and aggression towards the other.' (Hall, 1997: 238). The 'other' is fundamental to the constitution of the 'self'. Further, the process of constructing the 'other' is dialectical which means both the 'other' and the 'self' are inevitably defined on the basis of the same criterion, e.g. appearance, culture, or religion (Pietikainen, 2000). This section reveals that many young Turks differentiate the 'self' from other Muslims through the elaboration of various negative feelings, attitudes, and hostility towards the other on the basis of phenotypical and cultural differences.

6.1.1 'My skin colour is white...Islamophobia is their concern not ours': Claiming whiteness

The Turkish claim of whiteness identified in this study appears as a new identity category that has not been raised in the existing literature on Turkish people. The results of this research's demographic surveys, which were filled out by the participants immediately before the interview stage of the research, provides evidence of Turkish people identifying themselves as being White Turks. Having to talk about other Muslims in the context of Islamophobia, however, may have provided one context for making this white identity assertion more explicit. In order to avoid being associated with other Muslims and thus being in the lower social status of racialised Muslim groups, they may have wielded their putative whiteness. Constructing a boundary between "us" and "them" on the basis of racial differences, these young Turks seem to aim to both detach religious stigmatisation from themselves and deflect it onto other groups with whom the great majority share a common religious identity.

Most of the respondents were keenly aware of their differences from the South Asian, Somalian and Arab Muslims in terms of skin colour. Therefore, when the conversation came to why they thought that they are not targeted by Islamophobia, they sharpened the racial boundary by explicitly asserting the difference between others' dark skin and their white skin colour, thereby deflecting the effects of Islamophobia onto other Muslim groups. Arda, for instance, articulated that 'By the term Muslim, the English refer to dark-skinned people, namely Pakistani,

Bangladeshi or Arab people. I am not marginalised like them because my skin colour is white.' Thanks to his white skin colour, he recounted that White British people considered him as a European and, therefore, that he had not encountered any such problems. Merve also emphasised this point, stating that, 'due to the skin colour of Pakistani people, racist people easily categorise them as Muslim. Thus, they become victims of racism. I, on the other hand, am White and thus haven't experienced those types of problems.' This sentiment is similar to Yaren's, who identifies herself as a White Turkish person, expressing that: 'Especially Turks do not even look like Muslims. We have white skin and some also have blonde hair. People do not even guess that we are Muslim.' Similarly, Selda drew a difference between South Asian Muslims and herself (and other Turks in general) with the help of white privilege and visibility as racialised markers: 'I am not easily identified as a Muslim like South Asians are. My skin colour is white... Their physical appearance and apparel are much more different from ours.' She concluded that 'Islamophobia is their concern, not ours.' Cenk also highlighted the fact that being white in British society could be seen as being a privilege which allows them not to be targets of racism: 'They cannot identify that you are a Muslim if you are white. In the worst-case scenario, they think that you are from Europe. Thus, they cannot be racist towards you. The skin colour of Turkish people is whiter when compared to other Muslims because they have dark skin.' Therefore, it is suggested that racism is something that puts dark-skin Muslims at a disadvantage and puts people of white skin colour, conversely, at an advantage. In that sense, whiteness is perceived by these respondents as a way of enjoying skin privilege.

The above quotes may be examined in two parts. In the first phase, the notion of Muslimness is assumed to be delineated as an identity that is particular to a certain group deemed as non-white in the British context. That is, religious identity is consubstantiated with the skin colours of peoples. South Asians are given a central place in that racialised category for it is believed that, due to those ethnic groups' "inferior" skin colour, they have been a more easily accessible prey to racist groups. Yet a much more salient point made by these participants is propounded in the second phase. While the skin colour of other Muslims is assumed to cause them to become the targets of Islamophobia, Turks' skin colour is seen as providing them with a more secure position which, in turn, protects them from those negative effects. The emphasis on skin colour stratification powerfully surfaced in their efforts to fence off any possible confusion between themselves and other Muslim groups in everyday interactions.

It might be argued that these respondents' stance is rooted in their aspiration to escape from being seen as miserable (Ignatiev, 1995). Their reports suggest that they are attempting to claim that their putative whiteness does help them secure a better acceptance from Britons vis-a-vis less White Muslims in Britain. Their use of whiteness is something not seen amongst Turks in other European countries where they are a significant minority group. The fact that London is super-diverse compared to Berlin or other cities where Turks are the largest minority may have influenced these young Turks' invocation of whiteness as a differentiating strategy.

The visibility of London's super-diversity in general and South Asians in particular may have been seen as an opportunity for young Turks in London to distinguish themselves from the other Muslims in this phenotypical way. Given that individuals endeavour to maintain positive self-esteem (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Verkuyten, 2003), their emphasis on identifying themselves in terms of white skin colour could be interpreted as a way of asserting a sense of positive self-esteem and collective self-pride. Through this ethno-racial boundary-making, thus, they may have resisted being classified as a stigmatised group and placed Turkish identity in a more favourable and secure position in Britain, a place where racism and discrimination against Black and minority ethnic (BME) populations are largely based on skin colour (Solomos, 2003; Linda McDowell, 2009).

6.1.2 'I am scared when I see them': Marking and valorising differences in appearance

Some first and second-generation Muslim and non-Muslim respondents did not only invoke skin colour but also marked differences in other somatic and cultural features. By doing so, they discursively constituted the other Muslims as racially, ethnically, or culturally inferior in ways that put some distance between themselves and other Muslims. For Recep, Arabs are 'dark-skinned' and 'backward-minded.' Hasan targeted Pakistani people. Skin colour, this time, was combined with their smell and clothes: 'I do not like the smell and clothes of Pakistanis. I mean, they are quite different. Their skin colour is different.' The views expressed by these second-generation Turkish-Muslims about Arabs and Pakistanis cite bodily characteristics as ethnic stereotypes. Serap, a non-Muslim Turkish nationalist, mentioned a dispute she had had with a janitor in her building when responding to a question regarding whether Muslims in Britain face any problems. She claimed that 'He looked like a member of ISIS with his beard. He was probably a Pakistani or Bangladeshi. I live in a zone where there are many Bangladeshi people. When I look at them, I think that they are behaving in ways that ruin judgments made against Muslims. I am scared when I see them.' One of the striking points in Serap's description relates to what she means with her reference to the notion of "Muslims." She said she did not implicate Turks in the stereotypes made against Muslims. As a non-Muslim-Turkish woman, she regards Turkish people as descendants of Turks who migrated from Central Asia to Anatolia and thereby disconnects Turks from the Muslims of other ethnic groups. The effort she made in denoting the enmity between the two groups, the "us" versus "them," ultimately intended to exclude Turks from the Islamophobia issue. Serap created an association between the South Asian man in her story and Islamic extremism and terrorism by means of making a direct reference to his racial markers. Apart from the somatic analogy that she establishes between ISIS and the man's beard, in her last sentences, she also refers to his entire physical appearance, including his cultural and religious clothes, as being a feared entity. This reflects not only a negative attitude towards the person in question but also an example of cultural racism which targets South Asian Muslims in general.

For some other Turks as well, encounters with different religious clothes evoke fear. Bedir, who described himself as a secularist, for example, was ‘scared of people who wear the burqa.’¹³ He saw the burqa as a marker of difference and remarked that ‘there are no such clothes in our religion. They do not reflect Islam.’ He thus justified Europeans’ reactions to such clothes because ‘it is very hard for people to communicate with those people since they cannot see their faces.’ He thus looked at their clothes with a distinctly “Western” perspective. He not only shared the same feelings and anxieties as those of European society but also constructed a boundary between “us” (Turks) and “them” (Muslims wearing the burqa) on the grounds of a moderate understanding of Islam, a Turkish-Islam based on secular values.

Some went even further and argued that because those women wear it, they might have connections with extremist, terrorist groups. This point was clearly expressed by Cenk, who also described himself as a secularist. He marked South Asian Muslims as potential terrorists in virtue of their clothes and somatic features and thus showed solidarity with the White majority:

They wear clothes like those of the terrorists. I saw people on the train – they had long beards and wore those clothes. I was concerned, for instance, whether they were carrying bombs which could blow up. I can understand English people very well because they witnessed terrorist attacks many times. Indeed, I believe that the English are very tolerant of them. (Cenk)

These marked differences seem to be intermingled with local contextual discourses on terrorism. The appearance of South Asian Muslims was interpreted as being a threat to national security. Moreover, saying that ‘the English are very tolerant with them’ exhibits a much more hostile attitude towards these Muslim groups compared to racialized discourses produced by some British politicians and the media. One possible interpretation is that by expressing empathy for the English over other Muslims, Cenk was implicitly aligning himself with a White majority. This may be because he intended to avoid being placed in the lower social status of the racialised Muslim groups in favour of positioning himself as part of the more secure and high-status White group. Therefore, Cenk may have tried to differentiate himself from the largest and more visible Muslim group in Britain through marking and valorising the differences in physical traits.

6.1.3 ‘They are very radical...completely brainwashed’: Marking and valorising differences in viewpoint, action, moral character, and work ethic

I think most young Muslims here are woolly-minded. They do not know exactly what to do. When they come together, they seek to harm or intimidate non-Muslims. They are mostly Pakistani and Somalian people. They have long beards and are very religious. When you go to regions where mostly Pakistani people live, they may harass you. For instance, there are lots of men in kebab shops at night

¹³ It is the most concealing of all Islamic veils. It covers the face and body, often leaving just a mesh screen to see through. The important thing about this veil is that it is made of thick, abundant fabric so that it does not show the lines of the female body.

and they may bother you with their facial expressions and verbal attacks. They encourage themselves in that manner. If a short-dressed lady walked through a Pakistani neighbourhood, they would certainly verbally abuse her. Once I got on a bus to go home. It was like 11 p.m. and I went up to the second floor and sat somewhere in the back. There were also three Black youths making noise. Suddenly, one of them stood up and started walking towards me. I was scared because a few years ago three Somalians had beaten me up. I thought I would be beaten up again. But I had a rosary on my neck which said “Allah (God) and Muhammed (Prophet)” in Arabic letters. When he came to me, I too stood up to defend myself, but when he saw the rosary on my neck, he, obviously surprised, said to me ‘Salamun Alaikum brother’ and then turned back and said to his friends ‘He is alright, he is alright.’ They saw me as one of them. My rosary saved me. They intended to beat me up but then saw me as their brother. Whereas they were black, I was white. I do not know what would have happened to me if I had not had the rosary. (Arif)

The emphasis on differences in physical appearance, including somatic features and clothes, was followed by their belief that the “other” had radical views, as well as finding deficiencies in the moral character and work ethic of other Muslim groups. In the above quote, Arif, a Turkish-Muslim, evaluated the views and actions of South Asian Muslims negatively, noting that their somatic differences are the main features of those groups at the same time. By “young Muslims,” he is mainly referring to people from South Asian Muslim communities. For him, the new generation of South Asians is especially engaged in radical behaviours towards people they consider non-Muslim. He represented them as being a religious threat and expressed anxiety and fear about their dominant presence in their neighbourhoods. His views on these young Muslims alluded to the idea that he himself had grievances against the stigmatised groups due to the negative views, actions, and physical appearances that they have which, in turn, induce Islamophobia. Moreover, highlighting his skin colour as a marker of difference from these Muslim groups implicitly aligned himself with White majority groups.

This valorisation of the differences between the two groups’ views and actions was also found amongst other Muslim and non-Muslim participants in the way in which they verbalised their discontent about associating with the other Muslim groups and blaming them for their negative image. For Halime, South Asian Muslims and Somalians were ‘so harsh on you. They are very radical. They are not attacking you physically but rather verbally. They are completely brainwashed.’ Moreover, Recep distinguished Turks from Arabs in terms of skin colour and moral character: ‘I do not believe that we have much in common with the people from the Middle East. They are idiots. They make no sense. Firstly, we are whiter than them. Secondly, they are backward-minded. They have a lot of nonsensical views.’ Metin similarly ascribed some negative adjectives to Arabs: ‘They are generally lazy, selfish, extravagant and impassive. They do not care about other people.’ Furthermore, for Serap, Arabs constituted an uncivilised race:

When you look at the Arab race, they eat with their hands. They do not have to worry about being clean. We have nothing to do with them. They constitute a parasitic race. They have made no contributions to humanity, not even to themselves. It is an undeveloped and uncivilised race. They behave badly toward women. I went to Dubai and was shocked when I saw how they behaved. They do not respect basic human rights in the least. (Serap)

It is clear that some Muslim and non-Muslim participants distinguished themselves not only from South Asian Muslims they share the same neighborhoods with but also from Arab Muslims in the Middle East. In this latter regard, home-grown contextual referents of ethno-cultural stereotypes influence Turkish youths in their differentiating strategies. Some studies reveal that Turks in Turkey also have negative feelings towards Arabs. In his study, *The Arab Image in Turkey*, Kucukcan (2010), for instance, found that while one-third of his Turkish respondents had a positive attitude toward the Arabs, 39% held negative views. This suggests that my first-generation respondents may not have been strangers to stereotypes in Turkey towards Arabs. It might be argued that the historical Arab image in Turkey may have had an impact on the negative discourse of these young Turks towards Arabs. Today, there is a perception of "Arab betrayal" and "Arab revolt" in the minds of many citizens of Turkey. In the first years of the Turkish Republic, in the textbooks prepared in line with the new ideology adopted and in the books of authors adopting a strict Westernisation view, the image of Arab and the revolt of Sharif Hussein were evaluated as a legitimising element of the Republican revolutions (Cicek, 2012). It is noted that the ideological approaches in question are also dominant in the history books taught in high schools today. In these books, traces of Turks being a superior nation to Arabs are seen in Turkish-Arab relations, and the Arab image is generally portrayed negatively (Akbaba, 2014).

For Cenk, a first-generation taxi driver, there were no problems for himself before extreme Islamists came to the UK. For him, 'they are from Pakistan and look like members of ISIS.' He racialised Pakistani Muslims through their physical appearance but, more importantly, their appearance also established several innate differences between Turks and Pakistanis for him. His assumption simply was that, if one resembles an extremist group in physical appearance, then s/he is associated with that extremist groups in such a way as to automatically translate into their sharing the same views and actions as those other groups. Following these racist discourses that he had towards Pakistani people, he felt like highlighting that Turks are different from them, propounding that 'British people are never troubled with Turks.' He further portrayed the Pakistanis as those who interfere in the British way of life:

In areas such as Luton, Pakistani people do not allow British people to drink alcohol at night. They stand to watch at night and, when they see a Briton or someone else drinking alcohol, they force them to throw the bottle into a bin. This is so bad. When you go from your country to another, you are not supposed to be assimilated but are expected to adapt yourself to that country's social lifestyle, social rules, and ways of behaviour. But instead, I see those Pakistani Muslims

expecting English people to keep up with their culture, religious beliefs and so on. This is absolutely unacceptable. If you don't like this country, then you should leave. (Cenk)

Cenk depicted Pakistani Muslims as those who disrespected the socio-cultural differences of British society. This point was also articulated by Cuneyt and Hamit, who described themselves as Turkish-Muslim. Cuneyt criticised South Asian Muslims because of their behaviours towards non-Muslim Britons: 'You cannot judge people here. You cannot tell them not to drink. That is their culture. Why do you try to interfere in their way of life? These sorts of thing substantially increase Islamophobia here.' Similarly, Hamit underlined the view that 'South Asians are causing Islamophobia because of their own actions. They resist integration. If they do not wish to integrate, then they deserve racism.'

Ergin claimed a moderate understanding of Turkish-Islam and similarities with the English to extinguish any possible confusion between Pakistanis and Turks during everyday interactions:

They have very radical thoughts. Most of them are Pakistanis. The media generally speaks about Islamophobia, but they also need to speak about those radical Muslims. What I mean by radical people are those who interfere with short-dressed women or who try to advice non-Muslims. Our religious understanding is very moderate. We do not give anyone advice or interfere with their lives. We also share many commonalities with English people. (Ergin)

Their perceptions of these Muslims suggest that South Asian Muslims failed to adapt and integrate to the norms, values, and practices of British society. These first and second-generation young Turkish-Muslims do not perceive South Asian Muslims as being truly British. Their statements ('you should leave,' 'you cannot judge people here,' and 'they deserve racism') indicate that a 'governing belonging' provides them with a basis for 'determining who is to be included or excluded from [the] national space' (Hage, 1998: 186). Another point that is striking in their narratives is that their negative discourses towards these Muslim groups show similarities with that of some White British people. They thus positioned themselves nearer the White British majority vis-a-vis the Pakistanis. This represents a kind of integration on the part of the Turks. They regarded social and cultural compatibilities as key determinants of successful integration into British society. Their emphasis on the differences in the moral character of the Pakistanis suggests that they implicitly perceive themselves as respecting those social and cultural differences, thus allowing them to integrate better within British society.

The most powerful hostile attitude towards other Muslim groups, however, came from Nuket.

Nuket: What would you do if your son or wife were killed in the attack on Manchester? There is an evil called ISIS and a lot of girls here went and joined them. Look, in the last case, the British citizenship of one of them [referring to Shamima Begum] was revoked. She was not allowed to enter the UK after that. That is how it should be. Why would I let the terrorist come back in? If I were the president, I would throw all Muslims out of the country.

Muhammed: But most Muslims also do not see these terrorists as being true Muslims. They condemn terrorism.

Nuket: Alright. Do you not think that they are potential terrorists? I am sure that they are because the Qur'an says kill. Okay, that is it. It is written in the Qur'an. I share my bread with you, feed your family and allow you to live in my land. But if you become strong, you will come and kill me? Is that so? If I were the president, I would ban Islam in this country. There is no Islamophobia in this country. If someone looks for trouble, I bring trouble on him. If someone sticks a knife in my son, I take his head off. Until a few years ago, I could not get my kid out. We were attacked by Pakistani Muslims because I am married to an English person. They attacked us with a knife. Our attackers were both young and adult people.

Nuket described herself as being a non-Muslim but also a Turk committed to the republican and secular values that Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, had established. At the same time, though, she saw herself as a conscious British citizen who respected and embraced British values. Her racist discourse was more concentrated on Pakistani Muslims due to her having had bad experiences with them and specifically referred to the case of Shamima Begum. Nuket's claim that the Qur'an advocates terrorism, however, suggests that she believed that Islam is at the root of all terrorism. She thus valorises all Muslims as being potential murderers. She portrays Muslims as being a threat to the security of British society due to their "innate" moral characteristics which incline them to adopt radical views and actions. Moreover, as with the other informants, her articulation pertaining to Muslims in Britain overwhelmingly associate them with negative connotations which bear a striking resemblance to the language, terminology and ideas circulated in the public and political spaces throughout Western media (Allen, 2010).

The tone in her narrative gave the impression of being a host rather than a guest in the UK. Nuket's racist discourse marked a social and cultural boundary of British citizenship. Religion was a major social and cultural signifier in creating that boundary. She did not only exclude those who had connections to the so-called Islamist radical and terrorist groups from British citizenship but also all those who believe in Islam. As she recounts: 'If Muslims say that they are discriminated against, please let them return to wherever they have come from. They all lie, believe me. They do not want to integrate or get socialised. I know some Muslims who do not even want to touch my hand. They do not even hug you.' She performed the act of being a "good citizen" (Anderson, 2013) by means of racialised practices that implicitly reinforce her own integration. It might be said that these racist discourses and attitudes towards Islam and Muslims seem to have been chosen as a useful tool to reinforce the idea that she was a superior citizen when compared to other "unwanted guests" (Ehrkamp, 2006).

Some first-generation Muslim and non-Muslim Turks stressed the importance of having a strong moral character and work ethic and being recognised as a valuable member of British society. The emphasis on these differences helped them to further distinguish themselves from other Muslim groups. Serap, for instance,

criticised South Asian and Somalian Muslims because of supposedly receiving benefits from the state and not trying to improve their position. Nuket, similarly, criticised these groups for living off benefits and complaining about Islamophobia:

They benefit from health services for free. They receive unemployment benefits as much as an English person does. When their women give birth, they are supported by free NHS care. Sorry, but they do not have such a social status in their own home country and yet they still claim that they are being discriminated against in this country? I do not believe that. (Nuket)

Those Muslims are discursively constructed as complaining non-citizens by Nuket. Furthermore, she believes that Islamophobia does not exist in Britain. For her, Muslims in the UK do not work but rather receive benefits from the state, whereas she and her husband work hard and contribute to British society economically. 'Everything is changing in the world, but they are not.' She thus objected to the government giving grants to those Muslims: 'Why do my husband's taxes go to these Muslim people [here, she is referring to South Asian and Somalian Muslims]? He is hardworking and contributes to this country, but they do not work.' She perceived both her husband and herself as being good citizens who contribute to Britain financially rather than placing a burden on it. Moreover, by doing so, she leverages her and her husband's supposed superiority with relation to work ethic and moral character over those Muslims and reinforces their own status in the British hierarchies of belonging.

Workplace was another context where differences in moral character and work ethic were highlighted. Nuket stated that she worked at a restaurant where a Somalian cook was also working. She associated his worship at the restaurant with the subjective understandings of British workplace norms: 'He was asking our boss for a prayer break every half-hour. I told the boss that he was lying and that he could perform his prayers collectively at home instead. You are working; you know you cannot do that at work. I told my boss to give him the boot.' On the one hand, she regarded his worship at the restaurant as a way of shirking his duty and thus as inappropriate behaviour. On the other hand, with her work ethic, Nuket revealed her understanding of her own position in British society, portraying herself as the one who contributes economically to Britain, who respects this society's rules, and thus as a 'good citizen' (Anderson, 2013) who has successfully integrated into British society. By underlying her superiority in moral character and work ethic, she explicitly ranked British Muslims as being below her and, in so doing, implicitly aligned herself with the White British majority.

Similarly, Cenk complained about the moral character and work ethic of Pakistani taxi drivers. He stated that they do not 'engage in dialogue with their clients. Indeed, some never even talk. My clients complain to me about this. In particular, they do not like talking to female clients, seeing it as being a sin.' For him, their unhealthy relationships with their clients were an indication of their having a negative moral character. He therefore criticised them for disrespecting the country's principles: 'You cannot do that. You live in this country and you must respect people. This is not your country.' Cenk's last statements demonstrate a 'governing

belonging' (Hage, 1998) which was also revealed in the discourses of the other informants discussed above. These "other" Muslims were perceived by them as being ones who threaten the social boundaries of British society in virtue of their trying to maintain their own rules rather than adapting to their adopted society's mores.

Furthermore, some of the informants disapproved of Muslims' claims that they are discriminated against in the job market because of their religious identity. For example, Arif argued that it is not a rational behaviour for these Muslims to blame hiring committees or agencies for racism when they are not qualified for a job: 'Blacks were also doing that. They were blaming White people for racism when they could not get a job. It is not true. As you see, Blacks are everywhere. These Muslims are trying to hide their failures behind their religious identity.' We can similarly see this discourse in the way Serdar (web designer), a non-Muslim-Turk, posits that 'What I see is that when Muslims are disqualified for a job, they prefer to say that they were rejected because they are Muslim rather than saying the truth – that their CVs were not good enough to get the job.' These differentiating and sometimes racialising practices could be used by my respondents as leverage to improve labour market position. Moreover, the local tools and tactics of racism and exclusion can be interpreted as efforts to demonstrate their successful integration into the British society socially, culturally, and economically compared to the other Muslims.

Taken together, most of my respondents from diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds spoke negatively about other Muslims. Some of their tropes were home-grown variants (i.e. rejection of particular religious beliefs and practices, ethno-cultural stereotypes) possibly transmitted by and transformed through transnational social and cultural networks; others showed similarities with local British repertoires of ethno-racial and cultural differences (i.e. colour racism, cultural racism, labour market discrimination). In addition, Turks in London have recourse to different sources of Turkish identity such as whiteness and a moderate understanding of Islam to differentiate themselves from these Muslim others. Their discourses towards other Muslims suggest that rather than responding to Islamophobia in a religiously assertive way, holding the perceptions and attitudes of British politicians, media, and the public to account, they deflected Islamophobia onto the other Muslims by judging their racial, ethnic, cultural and economic differences negatively. But what might be the reasons that lead the participants to use negative tropes against the other Muslims? It is possible that they did not want to be associated with Islamophobic stereotypes that have characterised Muslims as negatively and stereotypically inferior and have exacerbated their marginalisation. This disaffiliation with other Muslims can also be seen as an effort to place themselves in a more favourable and secure position.

6.2 Europeanness as a claim of belonging to the West instead of the East

Many respondents also asserted compatibility between Turkishness and Western, modern, secular democracies and purported holding a modern, secular understanding of Islam which is more in accordance with Western society. They

tended to dissociate themselves further from the “other” Muslims and to reinforce their attempts to align themselves with a white European identity. This, in turn, enables them to avoid any of the negative outcomes of Islamophobia and thus places a socio-psychological distance between themselves and the “other” Muslim groups.

6.2.1 Claiming there is a compatibility between Turkishness and Western, modern, secular democracy

Most of the participants highlighted that they have a strong connection to the West. Their claims that they are a part of the supposedly civilised, modern and secular Western world were underpinned by the historical endeavours of the new Turkey under the leadership of Atatürk. Özlem, for instance, explained:

Atatürk politically got closer to Europe and moved away from the Muslim world. Therefore, we have historically had values such as secularism, democracy, and modernism. I am very happy that he changed how Europe perceives us. I was brought up with these values and am glad to defend them because they distinguish us from other Muslims in the UK. (Özlem)

She portrayed Atatürk as a crucial politician in the establishment of closer ties between Turkey and Europe in the context of socio-politics. Drawing on the long-standing background of Turkish people with relation to European values, Özlem characterised these values as being keys with which to differentiate Turks from the “other” Muslim groups. She was also proud of adopting those European values. Likewise, Bedir emphasised Turks’ early encounters with Western values and seceding from the Middle East: ‘After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, we moved away from the Middle East and got closer to the West’ he explained. ‘So, we have had a modern life in Turkey. There are not many differences between Turkey and European countries.’ On the one hand, in Western discourse, these young Turks erect a sharp-cut boundary between Turks and “other” Muslims; on the other hand, they say that they share many features with Europeans. Having said that, some of the participants also tended to robustly emphasise their Turkish identity along with their distinct Europeaness. For example, Bulent highlighted how important being a Turk is for him: ‘We are westernised but at the same time we protect our Turkish identity. We have a close relationship with the West but have never given up on our Turkishness. If it were not so, being a Turk would not matter.’ This point was further featured by Oya, who described herself as being a Turkish nationalist: ‘We have adopted laicism in Turkey. I am very glad that we have done so. I was raised with values such as democracy, secularism, and Turkish nationalism.’ Their identity is thus a discursive construction which is close to that of the West yet never gives up on its Turkishness.

My informants’ assertion that Turkish people are historically compatible with Europeaness and its values is one of the reasons, they claimed, why other Muslims in Britain experience Islamophobia and why Turks do not. We can see this in the way Metin explains that Turkish people are much less exposed to Islamophobia because the “others” ‘seem radical in appearance’ and ‘follow a radical understanding of Islam’ but ‘we wear quite modern clothing and look like Europeans.

Our lifestyles are also similar to that of Europeans. Turks are modern and secular.’ Metin thus distinguishes Turkish people from the “other” Muslims in a racialised way. On the one hand, he perceives that those differences in physical appearance and radicalism are the decisive reasons for Islamophobia; whereas, on the other hand, he characterises Turks as being in a secure position and aligns them with Europeans due to their holding similar modern and secular understandings. Serdar similarly articulated that he did not experience Islamophobia due to maintaining a Western, modern, and secular attitude toward life. He further stated that ‘I do not think that there is too much dissimilarity between English people and me.’ Like other Turks, he felt European and described himself as having the European characteristics of being modern and secular.

Furthermore, judging Arab Muslims’ attitudes towards women, Serap highlighted that Western people are also aware of the Turks’ compatibility with the West: ‘Arabs have behaviours that do not fit in 2019. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, women just got the right to drive’ stated Serap. ‘I think Western people know that we are the most progressive and modern nation amongst Muslim countries’ she went on ‘because they have already visited Turkey and have realised this. We have values like Europeans have.’ She makes a distinction between Turkish people and Arabs in the way she positions Turks on a level above Arab Muslims and the same level with Europeans. This distinction is featured in other accounts as well. For example, Bulent talks about Turks who, he believed, reflected a positive image to Britons compared to other Muslims: ‘We are closer to the English than other Muslims are. English people have associated others with terrorism, but not the Turks. They see us as being different. They see us as much more modern and Westernised.’ Mahmut further stated that ‘Turks come from a secular liberal background in Turkey and fit in very well here. Our skin tone is also white.’ This point was similarly articulated by Ahmet: ‘Turkey is a westernised country. Europe influenced Turkey a lot. I think therefore that Turks integrate here more quickly. English people accept us. This is also because we are white.’ They explicitly claimed their whiteness and Europeaness as being reasons why they were accepted in Britain whereas “other” Muslim groups are not. The dual conflation of White = Europe has revealed an implication that asserting one to be a European was one of the implicit ways for the Turks to claim whiteness. What seems fundamental is that, for the Turkish youth, the discursive construction of claiming Europeaness plays a key role in the process of establishing boundaries between Turks and the “other” Muslims. Moreover, these boundary-making practices have enabled Turks to deflect the Islamophobia issue onto other Muslim groups and align themselves with White European people. Positioning themselves as White Europeans, they further show a tendency to exclude others from the European identity and, thereby, are left on their own with relation to the Islamophobia issue.

Ozlem was another participant who underlined Turkey’s earlier democratisation process and the values given to women and children:

After the Republic of Turkey was established, thanks to Ataturk, women had the right to vote since 1934. This is unfortunately ignored by Western people.

Turkey has given so much value to women and children. In 1929, Turkey announced April 23 as children's day. The children in Turkey celebrate it every year. We have always had these sorts of values in Turkey. (Ozlem)

Her emphasising on issues of democracy, women and children can be interpreted as a strategy to respond to negative stereotypes towards Muslims in general. By bringing these values to the forefront, she did not only dissociate Turks from the stigmatised Muslim groups but also implicitly placed Turks in a position which, she alleged, shared the same values as Europeans.

My participants did not only draw differences between the other Muslim groups and Turks, but also compared Turkey to some East European countries in the context of democracy. For example, Serap underlined that:

Turkey is a country that has experienced democracy. We embraced democracy long before some European countries. Greeks were governed by a kingdom only until very recently. Yugoslavia and Romania were both ruled by communism. We can also count Hungary. We, on the other hand, have been governed by democracy for a longer time. (Serap)

What is noteworthy in Serap's case is that she assesses Turkey and Turkish people's status of Europeaness in terms of its relatively early transition toward democracy. She does not view Turks' position as inevitably marked by their religious or ethnic identity. Rather, she sees Turkish people's status as being tied to their long-standing European identity. In this sense, having the value of democracy is rendered as being a sign of being European. Furthermore, Turks are postulated as being an ethnic group that deserves to be European in virtue of the fact that they adopted democracy much earlier than some East European countries, thereby implicitly placing Turks in a more favourable position in Europe.

6.2.2 Claiming a secular and modern understanding of Islam in harmony with British society

The discussion of the compatibility of Turkish identity with the Western, modern, and secular democracy demonstrates how Turkey's secularist ideology has influenced my respondents' approaches toward religion. Secularism was central in the European discourse seeing as it was constantly evoked when they asserted their identification with Western values in the context of Islamophobia. For example, Hasan, eighteen, was born and brought up in London. He was studying business in London when I met him in February 2019. He identified himself as a White-British-Turk and told me that he goes to Turkey every year. He had opportunities in both Turkey and London to observe Turkish society and was interested in reading the history of modern Turkey. Comparing Turkish society in general to that of other Muslims in the UK, he articulated that the manifestation of Islam in Turks' daily lives is not as visible as the "others," saying that this was a natural consequence of Turkey's secularisation process. He explained, 'Personally, I have not experienced any problem because we are not easily identified as Muslim. We do not wear clothes as the Pakistanis do. We have a secular life rather than a religious one. I think this is mainly because of Ataturk, who turned Turkey into a secular country in the 1920s.' Another concrete example of the secular character of

the Turkish people is provided by Arda. For him, since Turks do not tend to meet the requirements of an Islamic way of life, their daily lives do not appear to be a threat to British society compared to those Muslims who manifest their religion visibly in the public sphere. Rather, it has catalysed their being accommodated by British society:

For a long time, we have experienced laicism. Therefore, we have already been in such an environment in Turkey. That means that we are not as religious as other Muslim people. We lead a life that is not influenced by religion. Therefore, when a Turk is involved in a negative action here, it is not associated with religion due to Turks' lifestyles. That is why, I think, Turks are treated very well here. (Arda)

By the notion of secularism, these respondents refer to the exclusion of religious symbols from the public sphere and the rejection of religion and religious norms from their social and cultural activities. As a consequence of the secular experiences of the Turkish Republic, the secular public space in Britain does not sound unfamiliar for Arda and other Turks, whose attitudes and activities in the public sphere have no religious basis. They differentiate themselves from other Muslims in terms of the visibility of their religion in the public sphere and its impact on their daily lives.

The differences between the Turks and other Muslim groups in the manifestation of Islam are further outlined by one of the veiled participants. Sevil is a second-generation medical student who decided to cover her head four years ago. I met her in February 2019. She said that she was also working as a volunteer in a London-based young Turkish business association. She expressed that there are very few Turks in the UK who dress like her and that the vast majority of them are mature, first-generation Turkish migrant women. Although wearing one of Islam's most prominent symbols, the hijab, she admitted that Islam's influence on the daily lives of Turks is, in general, much less than that of other minority Muslim groups in the UK:

Many Turks are not even seen as Muslims. For example, I do not think we will be categorised as the same type of Muslims as Bengali or Pakistani Muslims. I guess it is because of the way we portray ourselves and the way we show our own religion to other people. As I said, a lot of Turkish Muslims are not really practicing or do not show the signs of their religion in their daily lives. A lot of Somalian families, on the other hand, force their kids to wear the hijab from the age of 4 or 5. (Sevil)

Unlike the strict understanding of Islam that other Muslim groups have, it is mentioned that there is a scarcity of religious indicators and sensitivities in the way Turks manifest themselves in British society. Ergin's words are a vivid illustration of this understanding. Putting particular emphasis on the courtesy and politeness of English people, and contrary to what was previously said, he stated that he generally accompanies his English colleagues to the pub even though he does not drink. On the other hand, he criticises his Muslim colleagues for not involving themselves in such activities:

I usually go to pubs with my colleagues, but I have a Bengali friend who is very strict about religion. He says he never goes to those places. We do not have a strict religious understanding like other Muslim groups. We follow a modern life. I mean we are Muslims but, at the same time, we live like other Western people. This is closely connected with our history. Since 1923, we have been closer to the West and have been influenced by their laws, rules and ways of life. (Ergin)

For Ergin, these strict attitudes are further perceived by non-Muslims as a deliberate choice which places a barrier between the “other” Muslim groups and them. This point is also underlined by Recep. According to him, South Asian Muslims have especial difficulty with getting along with non-Muslims. They avoid attending “our non-Muslim friends” dinner invitations and other events. So, they thereby exclude themselves from society.’ Another relevant example is provided by Yaren. She delineated the “other” Muslims as being those who ‘wear their clothes in certain ways and who behave in certain ways’ and have a different social life from the rest of British society in general. That is, ‘they are not that open to other people...and never go out of their comfort zones.’ Noting further differences between Turks and the “other” Muslims in the UK, she described the Turks as being moderate and secular and the “other” Muslims as being strict and religious:

I don't want to speak for everyone but, generally, I think Turks in Britain are very relaxed. Especially in England, we do not really follow Islam and we do not really take religion all that seriously. All of my friends go to clubs and drink, but when it comes to other Muslims, they are stricter – especially the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. They would do it, but their parents do not know about it. There are only a few of them who do it. They are strict in their religion. I think that might be one of the reasons why Turks do not experience Islamophobia very much, because Turks mix in with European culture. I think that others’ behaviours put a barrier between Muslims and English people. You know that, if there is a Muslim event in universities or somewhere else, they put boys and girls in different event rooms and they have something like curtains as well. It just seems like something out of the blue – like, why would they do that? What would happen if I sat next to a man? I think we are much more relaxed and that we do not really have those particular rules. (Yaren)

The meaning attributed to religion by the non-religious Turks embraces a philosophy of life that is compatible with the lifestyle of the majority of British society rather than an understanding based on Islamic rules. Religion is perceived as a symbolic attachment because of secular Turkish values. Aican, for instance, expresses the sentiment that English people are conscious of the fact that many Turks do not practice their religion and that Turkey is a secular state. He continues by saying that they also realise that ‘Arabs are not like us. The English find similarities with Turks.’ Similarly, Hamit articulated this Turkish version of Islam. He and his parents had a close relationship with English people. He was born and raised in Britain and was consonant with British culture and morals but also highlighted his Turkish ethnic background and adherence to Islam. He distinguished Turks from the other Muslim groups in the UK in terms of their interpretation of Islam and its

visibility in daily life. For him, Turks in the UK are not religious. Indeed, he claims that most of them hold a secular worldview. They have a similar lifestyle to that of English people as well. 'They go to nightclubs, drink alcohol, and do other things as well. A lot of Turks are that way.' Linking this non-religious interpretation of Islam to the issue of Islamophobia, he expressed that he does 'not think that Turks experience Islamophobia. Furthermore, there is a lack of negative news in the media about Turks vis-à-vis other Muslim groups.'

What is remarkable about Hamit's reference to "they" is that, during the interview, he implies already being outside of the Islamophobia picture. Moreover, he insinuates that he follows an Islam which is already compatible with Western society seeing as he was born and raised in British society and has good relationships with non-Muslims. He also focuses on talking exclusively about the case of first-generation Turks. Considering his observations about Turkish society, he thus asserts that a great majority of them do not see Islamophobia as something that affected them in light of their secular understanding of Islam.

Sabiha provided a similar view, adding that she is very pleased to see that Turkey has a secular worldview:

Many Turks in London are also drinking and going to pubs. There are even some Turkish pubs in North London which English people visit. I think English people see the socio-cultural activities of Turkish people in London as being very similar to their own. I do not believe that Turks live religious lives. Even in Turkey, you can see pubs at the corners of every street. I am very happy that Turkey is a secular state. (Sabiha)

It is widely asserted that Turks in the UK represent a secular form of the Turkish ethnic identity. This research's informants tended to differentiate themselves and/or other Turks from "other" Muslim communities in terms of ethnic boundaries, thereby highlighting the differences between Turkish Islam and other forms of Islam. Nuket is a first-generation woman married to an English person who said that she works as a massage therapist. She was going to Turkey a few times every year but she made only one Turkish friend in the UK. She used to have Turkish friends but, because of some issues, she did not want to associate with them anymore. Her friends were predominantly non-Muslim British people. Most of her British friends had already visited Turkey on holiday. She proudly stated that they were offered wine and Turkish beer at dinner tables laid by Turkish families. She also invited her friends to Turkish nights organised every year at her house. Although she does not prefer hanging around other Turks in the UK, she is firmly attached to a secular Turkish identity: 'I never say that I am a Muslim. I am always proud to say I am a Turk. I am from Turkey.'

Cuneyt also emphasised this boundary: 'We are different from other Muslims, especially Somalians and Pakistanis. We follow a much more modern Islam.' Similarly, Cenk stated that Turks are very different from the South Asian and Arab Muslims: 'At least, Turks try to adapt themselves to British society. We are not as religious as them. We do not force anyone to behave like Muslims. We do not practice Islam in public. We do not limit ourselves.' Bulent compared Turks to

South Asian Muslims in terms of sharia courts in the UK and other religious concepts:

There are sharia courts in the UK which South Asian Muslims generally apply to. Turkish people are very conscious and thus never do such things. This consciousness was inherited from the values of the Republic of Turkey. Thanks to Ataturk, Turkey was purified from mullahs and sheikhs. It was purified from superstitions. But when you look at Pakistani people, you can see these sorts of things in their lives. Turkish people practice their religion in a way that has been purified from superstitions. It is modern Islam. (Bulent)

Merve also highlighted the idea of Turkish Islam. When we talked about whether there would be a similar Islamophobia question if Turks were the only Muslim minority group who lived in the UK, she professed the claim that the discussion could most likely concentrate on debates linked to a secular Turkish ethnic identity:

I think it could be different. Religious identity would not be at the forefront because, in the media, we just see news about Asian Muslims. Therefore, Islamophobia is their concern. If the only Muslim group here was Turks, then the issue would be about Turkish identity rather than Islam or Muslim identity. Turkish people in the UK are, in general, recognised by their ethnic identity, not their religious identity. (Merve)

Ozlem's words similarly encapsulate the prominence of ethnicity for the Turks in the UK. She had a very negative view of South Asian Muslims due to their judgemental and disquieting behaviours. That was why she expresses the sentiment that Turks are closer to non-Muslim White British people rather than those "other" Muslim groups. Disapproving of the strict religious identity of those people, she draws ethnic boundaries between them and Turks:

When a Somalian or a Pakistani talk to someone in public places, they usually use Arabic terms such as "mashallah" and "Alhamdulillah." But we do not use these terms as much. We have come to be known by our ethnic identity, whereas they have come to be known by their religious identity. For instance, we organise a Turkish forum in Hackney where we help Turkish families. In Waltham Forest, on the other hand, there is a Muslim forum at which Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds congregate. For them, the first thing is being Muslim, but for us, it is our ethnic identity. We have also integrated into British society based on our sense of modernity, appearance, apparel, and social life. For example, our covered women do not wear veils or burqas like other people. Even they have successfully achieved social integration into British society. They dress up in a much more modern, stylish way. This situation may be related to the different interpretations of religion. I mean, Turks are much more moderate. (Ozlem)

The idea that, unlike the "other" Muslim groups, Turkish Islam has been moulded by modernism and secularism is also read in a way in which it prevents Turks from upholding a radical understanding of Islam. Mahmut's words powerfully underline this characteristic of Turkish Islam:

It is culturally very difficult to radicalise Turks. Radicalising in the name of Islam is very hard in Turkey. That is one thing I think we are good at. In Turkey, we understand Islam as Turkish Islam. So, the Turkish perception of Islam is different from other Muslim countries. They have their own ingrained conception of Islam which has been conceived by them as being a priority. That is why it is hard to radicalise Turks, I think. (Mahmut)

Furthermore, some of my informants asserted that a widespread apathy towards Islam among Turkish-speaking communities who migrated from Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus also has paved a way for exhibiting a positive perception and attitude in British society towards Turkish-speaking minority groups in general. Arda, for instance, emphasised those Turkish-speaking people's common features with Western values:

Most of those who migrated to the UK from Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus adhere to very similar values to those of Western people. Therefore, we have had quite different relations with British society compared to the ones Bangladeshis or Pakistanis have had. So, contrary to holding a racist attitude, I think that English people exhibit more positive feelings towards Turks. I mean, for instance, I am the only Muslim most of my English friends keep company with. They do not have any dark-skinned Muslim friends. I think they also realise that we both do similar things in daily life. (Arda)

Another factor, it is argued, that positively affects Turks' social and cultural relationships with British people and the reason why the Islamophobia issue does not apply to them is the high rate at which those Turkish-speaking people either do not believe in any gods or believe that the existence of god is unknown. Oguz was, for instance, one of those who drew attention to these people when asked about how many Turkish-speaking people in the UK are Muslim: 'There are many people in this community who either have secular views or do not believe in Islam. I think a great number of the Turks here are either agnostic or atheist. Therefore, I do not think that Turks face Islamophobia. The biggest problem that they encounter is that of trying to receive a British passport.'

Dissociating herself from the non-religious Turks in London, Merve laid stress on the positive side of young Alevis' non-Islamic daily life which, she confesses, is almost identical with the one that English people have:

Alevis in London have the highest population amongst people who have come from Turkey. They do the same things as the English people do. This makes our lives easier in the UK. The English people embrace Turks because Turks generally do not adhere to a strict life as other Muslim groups do. (Merve)

Merve was brought up in a religious and nationalist family. That said, she was not wearing a headscarf when I met her. She also claims that her skin colour is white when compared to South Asian Muslims. She believes that owing to those features she is easily distinguished from "other" Muslim groups and thus does not see Islamophobia as something that would be directed at her. What is much more noteworthy to remark on, however, is that she admitted that she has strict parents. That is why she said she is not able to go to pubs with her British friends: 'I was

not raised as a free child. I cannot do certain things. I cannot enter the house late at night. I do know a majority of the young Turks can do whatever they want.

They go to pubs, drink, and come back to their homes whenever they want.' I noticed during the interview, however, that she was hesitant about telling me the truth that she sometimes broke her parents' rules behind the scenes in order to acclimate better to English society. Therefore, she intended to verbalise her situation implicitly over other Turkish youths who are also exposed to such strict rules:

They are forced to do something. So, once they are free (she cast her eyes down and then laughed) – like when you are in college you are free – they start doing things which are accepted by English society. They do whatever they want... They want to be accepted by English people. They behave like them. (Merve)

Accordingly, most of my participants from different social, cultural and religious backgrounds perceived themselves and others according to differences. In doing this, they utilised their collective historical memories and characteristics (Karner, 2011). The Western values of Europeanness and a secular understanding of Islam that these participants refer to in their discussions on Islamophobia in this section have been constructed and defended as essential components of Turkish identity throughout the historical process (Ergin, 2008; Gokay and Hamourtziadou, 2016) and promoted by the Turkish education system (Demiralp, 2012).

In this historical context, these were explicit policies of the new Turkey to distance Turkish people from other racial groups, especially Muslims in the Middle East which also simultaneously aligned Turks with the West. This section shows that these European and secular tendencies and orientations have been wielded by many first and generation young Turks as differentiating strategies.

The reasons behind my participants' critical views toward other Muslims are complex. On the one hand, it may appear implausible for these young Turks to claim that they are not subjects of Islamophobia. They are part of a British Muslim community and as such, it can be assumed that they can also be victims of Islamophobia. On the other hand, though, these young Turks may have deflected this categorisation because they did not want to be perceived as members of the devalued/stigmatised group suffering from Islamophobia or the socio-cultural and economic marginalisation that often accompanies it.

The interviews show that my respondents were aware that the increasing racialisation and marginalisation of Muslims in Western countries have imagined "others" as inferior and therefore, being excluded and portrayed "the us" as being in a privileged, superior status and therefore free of associations with terror and terrorism. The identifications they emphasised brought positive social identities and positive collective self-esteem (Verkuyten, 2003). Thereby, the motivation to acquire a positive social identity and to increase their collective self-esteem may have led them to perceive their own ethnic group as being superior to other Muslim groups by distancing themselves from them.

Furthermore, the perception of Islamophobia among young Turks in London is redolent of how Turks have historically distinguished themselves from the other Muslims. The ethno-racial boundary-making strategies presented here - whiteness,

Europeanness, and a secular understanding of Islam - all pre-dated Islamophobia (Cagaptay, 2006; Ergin, 2008; Gokay and Hamourtziadou, 2016). Thereby, what unites the different threads of my analysis is not Islamophobia, but Turks wanting to differentiate themselves from the other Muslims. These strategies see them accentuating the different sources of their Turkish identity in order to push back the Islamophobia that threatens to drag Turks in. But why, then, do we not see similar strategies with Turks in countries like Germany where they are the largest minority group? One possible explanation for this might be that in contrast to Turks in other countries, Turks in Britain are a less visible Muslim group where they live in a context of super-diversity. Living alongside differences in a super-diverse context may have set the stage for the development of differentiating strategies manifested as colour racism, cultural racism, rejection of particular religious beliefs and practices, economic discrimination, etc. Moreover, the fact that South Asians are the largest minority Muslim group in the UK and therefore much more visible in both the British media and the public opinion (Moosavi, 2014) may have contributed to this Muslim group being the target of negative discourses and attitudes developed by these young Turks.

6.3 Conclusion

When individuals experience discrimination, threat, and exclusion, they seek to draw boundaries between themselves and other groups. These boundaries may reinforce the construction of defensive identities and common solidarities among members of stigmatised groups, distancing themselves from other groups. Such strategies acknowledge the problem of discrimination and its impacts and attempt to overcome its negative consequences to achieve a more positive social identity. In that sense, claiming discrimination is seen and appealed to as a useful strategy for strengthening the psychological well-being of the devalued group members. This was not, however, the case for my participants.

Rather than responding to Islamophobia in a religiously assertive way, holding the perceptions and attitudes of British politicians, media, and the public as being responsible, most of the young Turks I interviewed deflected Islamophobia onto the other Muslims by drawing ethno-racial, cultural, and economic boundaries.

While some of their negative tropes were drawn from local discourses and ideologies of racialised differences, others were home-grown contextual referents, probably transmitted by and transformed through transnational social and cultural remittances. The young Turks invoked different sources of Turkish identity such as whiteness, Europeanness, and a secular understanding of Islam.

It could be considered that these resources were used by these young Turks to highlight a Turkish identity that aligns Turks with White British and ensures separation with the other Muslims, rather than strengthening solidarity and unity with them. In this respect, one of the most important features of Turkish identity most of the respondents have recourse to is the strength of distinguishing Turks from the other Muslims. Boundary maintenance allowed them to perceive the “other” Muslims as racially, ethnically, culturally, and religiously distinct groups. It also

enabled them to assert that they have a strong connection to the West by invoking and stressing their phenotypical and cultural credentials as White Europeans.

These might be seen as discursive strategies that serve to deflect any suggestion that Islamophobia applies to them. By virtue of claiming to be White Europeans, it could be argued that they changed their position from being victims to benefiting from the higher status of not being a racialised minority.

In the next chapter, attention is turned to national and ethnic identity practices that emerged as responses to Islamophobia. It explores the effects of Islamophobia on the young Turks' attitudes and feelings towards British, English, and Turkish identities.

CHAPTER 7

THE EFFECTS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA ON THE YOUNG TURKS’ FEELINGS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS BRITISH, ENGLISH, TURKISH AND ISLAMIC IDENTITIES

7 Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that a large number of the respondents deflected Islamophobia onto other Muslims by drawing ethno-racial, cultural, and economic boundaries. I argued that they may have developed these discursive strategies to avoid any implication that the effects of Islamophobia apply to them and thus to achieve a more positive social identity. This chapter aims to explore whether these efforts to avoid being associated with Islamophobia continue when they talk about their attitudes and feelings towards British, English, and Turkish identities. The findings discussed in this chapter were mainly rooted in the interview questions focusing on the young Turks’ responses toward negative discourses and stereotypes made against British Muslims and their feelings and views regarding British national identity, English identity and culture, and Turkish identity in the context of Islamophobia. In that sense, these questions allowed me to explore various identity practices which revolve around the issue of Islamophobia.

There are many debates regarding how the loyalty of Muslims has been questioned (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005; Uberoi and Modood, 2010; Meer *et al.*, 2010; Sales, 2010). Some leading politicians and media have excluded Muslims, promoting insurmountable cultural differences and focusing on the idea that Muslims have difficulty feeling British and integrating into British society. As discussed in the conceptual framework chapter, when individuals see themselves as being victimised by “Othering,” their sense of belonging and national identification to the country can be negatively affected (Archer, 2001; EUMC, 2006; Verkuyten, 2007). As indicative of resisting and reacting to Islamophobia, young Muslims may tend to reject the idea of Britishness, wishing instead to show a strong identification with Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds in the context of a global brotherhood (Archer, 2001). That is, they may tend to prioritise their religious identity over their national and ethnic identities.

In order to explore the effects of Islamophobia on young Turks’ feelings and attitudes towards their national, ethnic and religious identities, I asked them open-ended questions about what they think about Islamophobic discourses, such as Muslims having difficulties feeling British, having difficulties integrating into British society, and their threatening British values and British identity (Nickels *et al.*, 2010; Gilewicz, 2012). This study reveals that, because most young Turks do not see Islamophobia as something that affected them personally, they were more likely to answer those questions which were aimed at exploring the impacts of

Islamophobia on British identity as though they were not its targets. Therefore, they tended not to de-identify with British nationality. Furthermore, they tended to emphasise the civic form of their British national identity while decisively rejecting its ethnic, or English identity, aspect. This was primarily due to two fundamental reasons: 1) their negative feelings and attitudes towards Englishness due to the historical colonial dynamics of Britain 2) and having a strong and distinctive sense of Turkish identity which is, effectively, antithetical to pan-Islamism (cf. Modood, 1997; Archer, 2001; EUMC, 2006). This study further suggests that, while most respondents make a distinction between civic and ethnic forms of British national identity, they understand Turkish national identity in both ethnic and civic terms due to their strong emotional loyalty to a Turkish ethno-national identity. Moreover, contrary to some other British Muslims, who tend to prioritise a pan-Islamic identity over their national identity in an attempt to demonstrate that they are resisting and reacting to Islamophobia, they suggest that a contradiction exists between Turkish-Islam and a pan-Islamic identity by highlighting their proximity to Europe, their secular and modern republican values, European way of life, and having a Turkish-Islam understanding.

Within this framework, this chapter begins by exploring how most participants emphasise a civic form of British national identity, decisively rejecting its ethnic aspect. Then, the effects of the existence of Islamophobia manufactured by the mass media and policymakers and most participants' adhering to a strong sense of Turkishness rather than the ethnic form of British national identity, i.e., English ethnicity, are discussed. The next chapter focuses on respondents' strong emotional attachment to their Turkish identity. It argues that they are loyal to Turkishness in both its ethnic and civic forms by examining their attachment to Turkish ethnic and national symbols. In addition, it addresses how many young Turks highlighted a very strong sense of Turkish identity, which itself contains an understanding of Turkish-Islam rather than stressing an identification with the ummah. Finally, their ethnic reaction to the negative stereotypes made against Turkish people and Turkey during Brexit is examined in relation to how they reacted, contrariwise, to Islamophobia.

7.1 Embracing only a civic form of Britishness: British national identity and Islamophobia

As discussed in the methodology chapter, data collection began with a demographic survey. Answers to the questions asked in this survey pertaining to the participants' nationality show that the majority of respondents identified themselves as being either British only or British-Turkish. This identification by itself, however, did not provide sufficient information regarding what they meant when they said that they felt British, what makes someone truly British, their feelings and attitudes towards British identity and so on. More importantly, this superficial knowledge pertaining to the nature of being British was not sufficient to explore the effects of Islamophobia and other sorts of discrimination, which are thought to

affect the degree of sense of belonging to a place and feelings and attitudes towards British identity.

Accordingly, in this section, in the light of the perceptions and experiences of Islamophobia, how the young Turks describe the idea of being British will be focused on, rather than on what McCrone (2002) calls “state identity,” or how people are defined as citizens by the state. This is a crucial distinction seeing as one can uncover the notion of Britishness being referred to when someone says that he or she has a sense of being British. How the young Turks feel about Britishness and their sense of belonging to the UK and British national identity in the context of Islamophobia is also examined.

For some second-generation respondents, their Britishness was essentially due simply to their being born in Britain and thus not something to which they attributed importance. This might be understood as being a “natural right” (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005; Fenton, 2007; Sales, 2012) and an unquestioned consequence of the birthplace. Here are three typical examples:

I was born and brought up here, so, I also identify myself as being British, but my background is Turkish. This is a fact and cannot be changed. I am British because I was born in England. (Ahmet)

A lot of people say that they are British because of their passport. Likewise, I am only counted as one because I was born here. I am a British citizen because I was born here. (Sevil)

I would say that I was born, raised, and educated here, nothing more than that. I am always Turkish. (Yaren)

Birth is one of the ways in which nations are viewed as natural communities that command the loyalty of their members (Fenton, 2007). While being born in England gives these young Turks the right to claim an English identity as a matter of territorial attachment (Condor *et al.*, 2006), they referred to their being born in Britain as a civic form of British identity by emphasising that they are ethnically Turkish at the same time. This description of Britishness thus lacks an emotional attachment to the ethnic form of British identity. To a certain extent, they identified themselves as being British, suggesting that their civic identity has paved the way for them to access the same rights as other British citizens while at the same time not embracing the ethnic values of the British national identity, claiming a strong Turkish identity instead.¹⁴

Some first-generation young Turks referred to the passport as being one reason why they identified themselves as being British. It is something that is written in the passport they hold and apparently is perceived by them in terms of citizenship and its instrumentality. Metin, for instance, mentioned the practical advantages of holding a British passport when asked what being British meant to him: ‘I do not have a visa issue while travelling. I can go anywhere I want. I think this is a huge advantage for me. I am a British citizen and know the power of my

¹⁴ See the section ‘A strong sense of Turkishness: I am British, but I am carrying Turkish blood’, for further discussion on claiming a strong sense of Turkish identity.

British passport. Therefore, being British is a great thing.’ For him, then, British citizenship and the British passport were symbols of free movement (Andreouli and Howarth, 2012).

Likewise, for Hakan, ‘anyone holding a British passport and speaking English is called a British citizen. It is also written in an English person’s passport.’ Hakan did not see any difference between the English and other British people in terms of citizenship rights.

They do, however, differ in terms of ethnic and cultural features. Being English is different because they have their own culture, their own customs. When you say you are English, it means you celebrate their festivals, like the Easter holiday. I do not celebrate it. I live here and speak English but that does not mean that I should act like them. They have their own culture, and we have our own culture. Therefore, I am not English. Easter is their festival; I do not celebrate it but respect them nonetheless. My festivals and special days are different. I respect these differences and I follow the rules. We all must follow the rules to live peacefully. (Hakan)

Hakan made a clear distinction between the notions of Britishness and Englishness. While the former refers to the conception of citizenship as an identity that embraces all those who hold a British passport and who speak English, the latter is treated as an ethnically and culturally different identity in the way those who adopt its ethnic and cultural values and attitudes think of themselves as being English (Condor *et al.*, 2006; Thomas and Sanderson, 2011). In this particular context, the civic form of British identity has become equated with citizenship (Jacobson, 1997), where the British nation is referred to as a group of people who focus on ‘the achievement of an autonomous state of equal citizens’ (Hutchinson, 1994: 17). This is a distinctly civic meaning of the British nationality that excludes sharing common descent, history, culture and religion – that is, the ethnic dimension of national identity (Condor *et al.*, 2006; Kiss and Park, 2014).

According to some respondents, British laws, rules, and values were the main factors that define Britishness. When I asked Berkan what he thought about the current Islamophobic rhetoric, which assumes that Muslims are threatening British values and thus are a threat to Britishness and that they are not British enough (Nickels *et al.*, 2010; Gilewicz, 2012; Hussain and Bagguley, 2012), he stated that, for him, being British means ‘to live here and follow the rules.’ He also stated that ‘[b]eing British also means [that one should] abide by British values.’ Nevertheless, he disapproved of some British values while adopting others which complied with his cultural and religious practices, expressing that:

...I do not abide by all practices. I abide by the ones that do not go against my religion. There are differences and similarities between me and other British people. In terms of similarities, legally speaking, you know we follow the same British values, such as the practicing of democracy, following the rules, obeying the laws, respecting differences, etc. Because, for instance, when you work at places, you have to accept [your colleagues]. You have to abide by them. This is what I think it means to be British. However, there are a lot of differences, and these depend on a few factors. The first factor is how cultural and religious I am. Because, if I am

cultural, then that is one difference that will set me apart from other British people. I do not agree with British people who think alcohol or homosexuality is fine. You know we have to accept lesbians, gays, trans-genders. I respect what they are. We should tolerate differences. That is fine. I have to accept them because who they are is none of my business. But then they, kind of, order that we have to encourage or support their being gay or lesbian. I cannot support homosexuality because my religion forbids it. I could say, okay, you are going to be a transgender or a gay – I do not mind –but do not make me encourage or support you. I go against all these practices. The difference between me and others is that I grew up as a Muslim and learned the morals of a Muslim. I respect other aspects of society, but you cannot force what society believes to be right or wrong on others. I respect your preferences and expect you to respect mine. (Berkan)

Berkan's account of Britishness accommodates the potential for juxtaposing multiple identities, such as that of a British citizen, with that of the celebration of religious differences (Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015). The process of adopting a national identity, therefore, does not necessarily imply that citizens should abandon their religious values and practices. One prominent allegation is that Muslims should abide by an ideology which does not accept any value in Britishness (Letters, *The Times*, 9 June 2006 cited in Meer, 2006: 211). This is thus why Islamic identity and Britishness conflict. Ahmed (2009), for instance, notes in his empirical work on young Muslims in the UK that they were often confronted with questions that imply a choice between their nationality and religion, which are commonly viewed as somehow conflicting. Berkan's articulation rebuts this criticism, suggesting that there is no conflict between his national and religious identity and thus that Islamic identity is not an obstacle to believing in democracy, respecting diversity, and adhering to the country's constitution and laws. His understanding of British national identity reflects some of the shared characteristics of people in the country; viz., members of British society being associated with citizenship, political practices, and the legal institutions of the state. This point is supported by other works which find a positive association between British identification and Muslim affiliation (Mogahed, 2007; Meer and Modood, 2015; Karlsen and Nazroo, 2015). Meer and Modood (2015), for instance, observed that Muslims in Britain synthesise religious and national identities in such a way that their self-identification as being British and respecting political institutions are considerably high. Mogahed's (2007) research, which was conducted amongst Muslims in London, Berlin, and Paris, similarly confirms this view, arguing that national and religious identities are not mutually exclusive, but coexisting and complementary. It is from these perspectives that Berkan felt obligations and social solidarity to his fellow citizens of British society. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the sentence 'I abide by the ones that do not go against my religion' was identified as a key criterion for assessing which practices in British society should be followed and which ones should not. This was a boundary made between national and religious identity. It is in this way that the challenge was not against the civic form of British identity, but rather against an ideology that promotes shared beliefs, practices, and

ways of life and thus a shared British culture. Accordingly, even though Berkan's understanding of British identity is inclusive (Modood, 2007; Thomas and Sander-son, 2011), it rejects being imposed upon by any particular ideology held by British society.

Moreover, a few respondents drew an analogy between Britishness and Ottoman citizenship in terms of their promoting inclusive national identity. Noting that Ottomanism considered all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, as being equal in terms of administrative, religious, legal and political rights. Bulent, for instance, stated that 'Britishness is like Ottomanism. I know that I am not English, but I identify myself as a British-Turk. I mean, I am a member of British society.' Ergin, who identified himself as a Turkish-British, also described his sense of Britishness as being inclusive and asserted that it promoted a sense of shared national identity while also implicitly rejecting 'the imperial dimension of what is meant to be British' (Uberoi and Modood, 2010: 302):

I like this concept. It was termed very nicely. It is British, not English. Indians, Pakistanis, Brits, Turks – they all see themselves as being British. It was the same in Ottoman times. Ottoman citizens were all from different ethnic groups. Who is British? A British person is a person who lives within the borders of Britain. Who is a citizen? It is an individual who works for the interests of the country regardless of his religious and cultural values, and who abides by British laws. It is like an umbrella that embodies everyone. (Ergin)

For Bulent and Ergin, their ethnic heritage and their Britishness were both of great importance. Their views echoed some multiculturalist scholars (e.g. Modood, 2007) who have advocated making Britishness more inclusive without cultivating feelings of discrimination or exclusion. The following point, however, should be underlined here: these participants' emphasis on an inclusive British identity was not identical to the suggestion that many multiculturalist scholars have made, nor did it stem from their experiences with Islamophobia or racism. Rather, their lack of experience with any form of exclusion or discrimination is seen as being evidence for the existence of an inclusive British identity. In that sense, Islamophobia was irrelevant to the feelings and attitudes of these respondents towards the civic form of British identity. While some leading politicians and the media have excluded some ethnic minority groups, have promoted the insurmountability of cultural differences, and have focused on the idea that Muslims have difficulty feeling British and integrating into British society, Bulent and Ergin's accounts as to what Britishness means for them apparently indicate that their understandings of Britishness prove their loyalty to Britain and make them feel a part of British society.

The belief that they have contributed economically to this country was one of the other striking factors that influenced some first and second-generation young Turks to feel like, and to be viewed as, a part of the British nation. This also serves as a response to one of the interview questions regarding the negative rhetoric which stipulates that Muslims cannot be part of the British nation. Bulent believed that there is a positive relationship between contributing to the country financially and being accepted as part of the country: 'If you are making economic efforts and

are contributing to the country, you are breaking the bias of many people against you. I live in this country and work hard. I serve the country. I pay taxes. So, I am a part of this country and I can see that people also accept me as one of its members.' Ergin, who thought that English people perceive him as being part of this country, similarly stated that 'I love my job at the English company I work for. I contribute to the country and pay taxes at the same time. In fact, this shows how much I have been integrated into this country – how much I have adopted it.'

Furthermore, marking the interrelationship between racism and socio-economic status, some proudly underlined that, because of their superior socio-economic class, they were not exposed to Islamophobia and were viewed as being members of British society. They further claimed, however, that this was not the case for other Muslims. Arif highlighted the value of Turks' making financial contributions to the UK in responding to the question of whether he thought he could be regarded as being part of British society:

We have restaurants, supermarkets, barbershops. We are doing business, but Somalians, for instance, are not doing these sorts of things. They are getting funding. I have attended dinners and have been invited to meetings and have not faced any problems from the White British people. I think such things are the problems of low-income people. (Arif)

Murat similarly stressed that: 'Turks are enriching the British economy through various business activities, such as restaurants and groceries. British people are also very satisfied with these services. I have not seen British people having problems with Turks.' For Bulent, Turks have created a positive atmosphere in Britain in such a way that no one had negative attitudes toward them. He recounted that this was because 'Turks are hardworking and contribute to the UK.' Sabiha articulated her father's dialogue with an English customer in his grocery:

Once my dad asked his customer why they see Turks as one of them but do not see other Muslims in the same way. He said we are in accord with them. We are not stealing from them. We are contributing to Britain. I think they like our effort. I think the English know we are different. (Sabiha)

They thus regarded the financial contributions made by them to the British society as a key determinant of successful integration. This discursive construction of their advantageous status in the labour market supposedly placed them in a more privileged position in relation to White Britons. Furthermore, as was discussed in Chapter 6 in more detail, by differentiating themselves from other Muslims in a number of ways, a great majority of these young Turks aimed to reinforce the idea that, while they integrate well with British society and feel a sense of belonging to it thanks to the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the Turkish people being in harmony with Western society and its values, others have failed to adapt and integrate to the norms, values, and practices of British society.

One could argue that these young Turks' feeling towards Britishness could not be explained by an emotional bond based on the ethnic form of national identity but, rather, on a depiction of citizens who feel responsibility for their country (France *et al.*, 2007) due to the opportunities, these respondents pointed out, Brit-

ain has provided them. This, in turn, fulfils their duty of citizenship. Neset, for instance, verbalised this clearly: 'I feel that I owe something to this country. This country always finances you in terms of education. Tuition fees are very high, but it is just. I have the same opportunities as other English people have. Some workplaces give English people priority, but you do not often see discrimination.' Hamit was another participant who felt that he owed this country. This generated within him the feeling that he had responsibilities towards the country he was born in.

I was born and raised here; therefore, its political or economic agenda concerns me. So, I always try to be up-to-date. For example, I ponder upon the economic consequences of Brexit. I ponder upon the negative or positive impacts of Brexit on our country. I discuss this together with my friends. As I said, I was born and educated here. I have spent all my life here. Therefore, I know that I should shoulder responsibility for this country. (Hamit)

This account shows that Hamit felt a strong attachment to Britain and a sense of civic duty. Aican similarly underlined that he is aware of all his rights and responsibilities as a British citizen and thus expressed that he is part of the country: 'This country's agenda is of concern to me. I live in this country. I am voting. I am a part of it. In Britain, there is room for my thoughts, too. I am a British citizen. I have rights. If anything happens outside of the country, the state protects me and sends me a lawyer.'

Moreover, some argued that, if someone wants to be accepted and not excluded as an "other" by the White British majority, he or she has to integrate into British society and embrace British values. Hamit, for instance, recounted he was '...also raised in the British culture. I played in a football team. Almost everyone was English on that team. So, I did not feel like I was being excluded. For example, nowadays, my brother is also playing on a team and my mom watches his games. She has very good communication with other people there.' When I asked Hamit what exactly he meant by exclusion, he replied:

I mean the view that English people discriminate or exclude Muslims or Turks. We have never experienced anything like that. But there is something else. Some of my friends' dads may have negative attitudes towards Muslims since they support far-right parties such as UKIP. But if you have adopted Britain, if you have integrated – not assimilated – but if you have embraced British values, they do not perceive you negatively. I mean you do not have to be an English person. You do not have to go to a pub. (Hamit)

Hamit understood Britishness as having the same meaning as integration. Thus, according to his account, if one shares the civic form of British values, one is viewed as a person who has integrated and who feels British (Uberoi and Modood, 2010). Yaren, on the other hand, profiled two English people who drew two different boundaries of British identity: while one viewed her as a part of British identity, the other did not.

I have an English neighbour who knows that my background is Turkish. But she still has conversations with my mom, dad, and me. She is very educated, and her husband is a professor at a university. So, with them I am British. But I think

there are other people and they are stubborn. They do not want to see anything beyond what it is now in 2019. They will not see me as British. They believe you have to be English by blood in order to have a British identity. (Yaren)

It could be argued that the ethnic/racial boundary of Britishness which focuses on there being an “inherent difference” (Fenton, 2010) excludes her from this identity, even though she was born and brought up in Britain and felt a sense of belonging to British society. It is the ideology that the national identity of individuals is based upon their blood ties and thus ‘an individual’s deepest attachments are inherited, not chosen’ (Ignatieff, 1993: 4-5). Nevertheless, Yaren was against this thought by highlighting the existence of a group that embraces and views her as a member of British society instead of claiming that she has been rejected by all English people and therefore is exhibiting a reaction to British identity. It might be said that her positive experiences with English people in her daily life had been influential on her having positive feelings towards Britain and British identity.

Moreover, some participants stated that they are proud of their Britishness since they lived in London, where there are fewer English people and a more diverse population. In other words, for them, Britishness means being a Londoner. For instance, Rumeysa, a second-generation female, articulated that:

London is like a melting pot of all different kinds of cultures. If I go outside of London, though, I do not feel as if I am part of the nation because it is uniform. You do not see many people of colour. There is no diversity outside of London. It is very limited. London is a multicultural city and that is something I love. It is like the beauty [or a crown] of Britain. (Rumeysa)

Regarding the concept of Britishness in the context of a multicultural society, she saw it as an identity particular to various ethnic minority groups in London. London was seen as a space that offers a common sense of belonging (Sales, 2010) to culturally different groups, rather than fully belonging to Britain. Sevil also asserted that she feels like a member of London and not Britain in general. Therefore, what Britishness meant to her was restricted to that territorial boundary. ‘This is because London is really a multicultural city. It is [at a point of maturity] where everyone accepts each other, and a lot of people love the benefits and advantages of living in a multicultural society.’ Her perception that some White British people excluded her from an inclusive British identity was indicated by the formation of her local understanding of Britishness. ‘I will not be seen as British because of the views that I have, the way that I act, the school that I go to, or the family that I have. The only way Britain connects to me is the fact that I was born in London. They [the English] think that they are from the royal family...they think that they are really posh – that they are superior. I think I am viewed as a Londoner, and that is also how I feel.’ She highlighted the positive sides of living in a multicultural city like London because it is there where she seems to maintain a peaceful life. The Islamophobia evident outside of London, though, had apparently influenced her sense of Britishness. It should be noted that this connection was not directly established by most of the other participants when they described their understanding and sense of belonging pertaining to Britishness.

The young Turks discussed above considered themselves British which is inclusive and unifying and which does not have any assimilative agenda. This subjective definition of Britishness rejects all characterisations based on certain nationalities, ethnicities, races, cultures, and religions. In that sense, the British identity which the respondents felt themselves as belonging to embraces the idea of multicultural citizenship (Modood, 2013). They understood British citizenship as having certain legal rights, having a British passport, speaking English, following British laws and rules, and adhering to British values (Kiss and Park, 2014) and consider it as falling within a framework based on an inclusive national identity. These young Turks, therefore, insisted that they have adopted an inclusive and civic, rather than ethnic and exclusive British (or English) national identity (Condor *et al.*, 2006; Fenton, 2007).

As seen in this section, where the respondents' thoughts and feelings about their British national identity in the context of Islamophobia were discussed, they emphasised their adoption of a purely civic form of Britishness. They embraced its civic form because, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, most of them specified that they did not experience Islamophobia. This shows that not experiencing (or claiming not to experience) discrimination can have a positive effect on developing a national commitment (cf. Verkuyten and Yildiz, 2007; Kunst *et al.*, 2011; Fleischmann *et al.*, 2011; De Vroome *et al.*, 2014; Celik, 2015). The findings of these studies on the relationship between perceived religious discrimination and national identification among Turkish Muslims in Germany and the Netherlands have found that the perception of group discrimination led many to a stronger Muslim identity or Turkish identity whilst simultaneously distancing them from the national identity of the countries they lived in. In his study about reactive ethnicity and oppositional identity among disadvantaged male Turkish second-generation youth in Germany, Celik (2015), for instance, found that most of his respondents who were exposed to discrimination daily do not feel a part of Germany and thus do not even want a German passport despite the advantages of being able to travel visa-free and vote in German elections. They said chose instead to carry a Turkish passport with an honour and pride that came with it.¹⁵ One possible reason my respondents combined their religious and ethnic identity with a civic form of British national identity (instead of claiming a reactive Muslim/Turkish identity) is that it was consistent with their claim that they were not subjected to Islamophobia or other sorts of discrimination in the UK. My findings confirm studies on Turkish-Muslims in other European countries that found a positive association between Muslim identification and national identification (Verkuyten, 2007; Solomon, 2017).

Having said that, they made a distinction between its ethnic and civic aspects, decisively rejecting the former. But why do these young Turks, especially the se-

¹⁵ When Celik (2015) conducted the interviews in 2014, according to the law, a child born in Germany to immigrant parents was asked by the authorities to choose between German citizenship or that of their parents' country of origin until his/her 23rd birthday.

cond generations, not embrace an ethnic form of British identity based on similarities in language, religion, history, ancestry, tradition, and culture (Kiss and Park, 2014)? It is argued that differences between civic and ethnic national identities are relevant to the debate about the differences between British and English identities (Heath and Roberts, 2008). The interview questions regarding the effects of Islamophobia on British identity also uncovered the fact that these young Turks' lack of adherence to the ethnic form of British national identity is related to two main reasons: 1) their negative feelings and attitudes towards Englishness due to the historical colonial dynamics of Britain 2) and having a strong and distinctive sense of Turkish identity. In the next section, their thoughts and feelings regarding English identity, culture, and socialisation patterns with the English are discussed in the context of Islamophobia. It attempts to answer the questions: "How influential are the everyday Islamophobia and historical colonial legacy of Britain in the formation of the participants' feelings and attitudes?" and "What are their views on Englishness?"

7.2 'Even if I was born here, I do not boast of this country's history': Englishness and Islamophobia

One of the main reasons underlying the distant attitudes of the interviewees towards the English identity and the English people was the historical legacy of British colonialism. At the discursive level, the perceptions of some young Turks to the notion of Islamophobia, mainly second generations, were primarily against the historical colonial dynamics of Britain. It is for this reason that they stated that they do not want to be part of this colonial legacy. Sabiha, for instance, articulated that 'England is a colonialist state and that bothers me. I do not want to be part of it. I think it also bothers many British people. The only thing that the English people care about is power.' Recep expressed similar views, adding that some English people are also proud of their colonial heritage:

England exploits other countries, and therefore some people see themselves as being superior. I know what kind of country England is and therefore cannot identify myself with it. Just because they see themselves as number one in every aspect. They always praise themselves. I do not like this. Even if I was born here, I do not boast of this country's history. I do not like those who praise themselves and exploit other countries. (Recep)

These second-generation young Turks discuss Englishness in the context of the historical colonial legacy of Britain and the English people who are boastful about that history. This history is one of the most important reasons why the participants did not embrace the ethnic aspect of British national identity. As discussed in Chapter 4, some young Turks linked that imperialist ideology to Islamophobia at which Islam and Muslims are targeted. Rather than the experiences of everyday Islamophobia discussed in Chapter 5, their views and discourses regarding the imperialist perspective of Islamophobia have influenced their attitudes towards English identity. They did not describe themselves as being English because they regarded it as a matter of national/imperial identity which some English

people are proud of. They were against those who have set themselves over “Others” and have claimed their superiority (Miles, 1989; Wieviorka, 1995; Fenton, 1999).

Previous studies, however, generally reveal that one of the main reasons why various Muslim groups in the UK do not adopt Englishness is that they associate this identity with White people (e.g. Thomas and Sanderson, 2011; Condor *et al.*, 2006). For instance, in Condor *et al.*'s study of young adult Pakistani-origin Muslims in Greater Manchester, one of her respondents presented the following justification as to why she rejected calling herself English: ‘Okay. The reason I wouldn’t describe myself as being English is because, to me, English means being white’ (Condor *et al.*, 2006: 140). Moreover, Archer (2001) argues that young Muslims in Britain who were represented as problematic by Islamophobic perceptions tend to reject ideas of whiteness. This study’s data, on the other hand, reveals that this reference to the racial signification of Englishness was not presented by the Turks interviewed as being a justification to refuse this identity. On the contrary, as discussed in Chapter 6, having to talk about other Muslims in the context of Islamophobia may have provided one context for making this white identity assertion more explicit. This was used as an identity strategy for reinforcing their attempts to align themselves with White British people. Therefore, it could be argued that these young Turks did not code the term “English” racially and thus did not endeavour to perceive Turkishness and Englishness as being mutually exclusive in racial terms. Rather, they constructed Turkishness as being compatible with white English identity.

Furthermore, the second-generation young Turks’ encounters with the English, who are seen as being proud of this history and as regarding themselves as being superior to other nations, may have contributed them to become self-conscious and sensitive to their own ethnic group (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Hasan, for instance, explained as follows:

They [the English] think they are perfect. There is not any perfect country but they are always saying that they are superior – that they are powerful. For example, in secondary school, there was only English history. It was all about seeing themselves above us [i.e., the rest of the world]. If you keep telling me that you are superior, sorry, but I would say we [Turks] are far superior to you. That bothers me. (Hasan)

It is obvious that these respondents perceived this external stimulus in such a way that it sharpened their ethnic identity boundary between “us” and “them.” When the second generations have grown up in an environment where the majority group claims to be superior to other groups, as seen in the quote, they may develop a reactive process by which their ethnic identity becomes a symbol of pride against external stimuli (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). The long-term interactions of the young Turks, especially those of the second generation, with the majority group in various social environments played an effective role in forming their attitudes regarding English people and identity. Being born and growing up in their host country enabled them to experience different social and cultural values within

the British context when compared to first-generation Turks. This might have been seen as an important factor in helping them to adapt much easier to English culture. From the dual socialisation that they underwent, however, emerged a conflict where the perceptions derived from outside of the family and community were incompatible with their ethnic, community-based identifications. The majority groups' discourses and behaviours towards one another in daily life play a decisive role in the identity construction process. Upon perceiving that they were being treated as inferior and were being excluded on the basis of their ethnic identity from the majority group, the process of forging a kind of reactive ethnicity became more and more salient, to such an extent that these negative attitudes and perceptions sharpened ethnic-racial identity boundaries (Rumbaut, 2005). This argument is also supported by the existing literature on Turkish people in Britain. This reveals that, under some circumstances, their relationships with their families and communities show strong emotional attachments and an instinctive behaviour toward people from the same ethnic background (Kucukcan, 1999; Yalcin, 2000; Enneli, 2001; Costu, 2009; Communities and Local Government, 2009; Simsek, 2012).

One might rightly question why these Turks cling to their ethnic identity rather than claim a collective Muslim identity, as other British Muslims have done (e.g. Jacobson, 1998; Modood, 2009; Birt, 2009; Meer, 2010; Bonino, 2017) as a reaction against the English thinking of themselves as being superior. The fact is that these first and second-generation young Turks did not react to these external stimuli by associating themselves with a collective Islamic identity. As emphasised in Chapter 4, even though they expressed sympathy toward those Muslims who have exposed the imperialist perspective of Islamophobia, it was nothing more than that. The main reason for this is that most of the young Turks in this study saw themselves in ethno-religious terms, i.e. as Turkish-Muslims. Therefore, this strong sense of Turkishness limited their identifying themselves as pan-Islamists. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 6, talk about other Muslims in the context of Islamophobia may have contributed many young Turks to perceive other Muslims as being racially, culturally, and religiously (with a strong emphasis on the modern, secular understanding of Turkish-Islam) distinct groups. Thus, they made efforts to differentiate themselves from them.

Identity construction is not a one-way process; rather, the nature of social interactions directs it. Merve's words reinforce this point. She stated that the most important reason for not being able to identify with Englishness is the English people themselves. 'They treat you as if you were not born in this country. So why are you trying to show me that you are different from me? Their mentality is different. I do not really understand this. I do not know why but they see themselves as being superior.' While she did not call herself English, she felt that she had already been excluded from this identity (McCrone, 2002; Condor *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, some respondents argued that this ethnically exclusive English identity has been reinforced by racist discrimination against immigrants and their children. One of the interview questions asked about the attitudes and thoughts of the

(mainly second-generation) respondents regarding English identity and the English people in the context of Islamophobia: "If England and another country were rivals in any matter, who would you support?" Rumeysa narrated her views on this question in terms of football:

I would not support England. I did not even support England during the World Cup. I always want them to lose. This is because of their hypocrisy. Should I tell you why? Most of their players are foreigners from Africa. They are treated like shit. For example, some throw bananas onto the football pitch. They think they are one of the best football teams, even though most of their players are from other countries. I did not want them to win because they are too hypocritical. Indeed, they are not actually that great. Most of their players are foreigners. If you were walking every day or playing in the UK league, would it be okay to throw bananas at you? They used to make monkey noises and threw bananas onto the pitch. These are the people serving your country. Imagine that! So, it is all very fragile. It does not give one security. Like, are you the right immigrant or the wrong immigrant? When you are the right immigrant, you represent our country. But that only happens one in a million times. The rest of the immigrant players are treated poorly, and yet we do not discuss that. That is what the English people are. They think that they are the greatest. And you want me to identify with them? I would not. I would not identify with them because they look down on immigrants and the children of those immigrants. They humiliate them and view them as their servants. (Rumeysa)

Rumeysa discussed her attitude towards the English people through their racist actions against British immigrants. As discussed in the first section, she experienced Islamophobia in a subtle form. Unlike most of the other respondents, she stated that she has a very active social relationship with English people in her daily life. Her close relationships with them, she recounted, allowed her to get to know them much better. However, according to her, she and other immigrants were primarily being evaluated and treated on the basis of their membership to ethnic minority groups in the UK. This membership, she contends, is not valued by English people. Due to these racist attitudes, her feeling towards English identity and society was negative.

Generally, people who live outside of their country of origin, especially second and third generations, often associated with the loss of their original identity by creating new identities (Rahman, 2007). No such tendency, however, was observed in any of this study's respondents. Rather, they exhibited a strong commitment to their Turkish identity. In some cases, this found its expression in a much more explicit and conservative way among some second generations. Recep, for instance, stated that 'Since I am a Turk, I never put myself in the same box as English people. For example, I proudly wear Turkey football t-shirts and never wear England t-shirts. I never compromise on these matters.' Another clear illustration of this can be provided with the case of Aican, who was also born in London: 'You are not English – that is a fact. I was born here but this does not change my ethnic background. You have probably interviewed many people and I am sure that they

also expressed that they feel Turkish. No matter how hard you try, you can never be an English person. Even if they accepted us [Turks], we would never fully identify with them.'

7.3 'I am British, but I am carrying Turkish blood': A strong sense of Turkishness

The literature shows that, when some young British Muslims experienced Islamophobia, their national identification to their host society was negatively affected. Furthermore, they tended to prioritise their religious identity over their national identity as indicative of resisting and reacting to Islamophobia (e.g. Archer, 2001; EUMC, 2006; Karlsen and Nazroo, 2013). This study, on the other hand, has revealed that the opposite can also occur. Because most of the young Turks did not see Islamophobia as something that affected them, they answered the probing questions which were constructed to explore the impacts that Islamophobia has had on British identity as though they were not its targets. Therefore, Islamophobia did not compromise their sense of belonging to being British. Having said that, while this study's interview questions aimed to explore the effects of Islamophobia on these young Turks' feelings and attitudes towards the British national identity, these questions also uncovered that the participants already have a very strong sense of Turkish identity which, the majority believed, protected them from the effects of Islamophobia. This strong emphasis on Turkishness is more related to the primordial ties that are given at birth and then carried into the present by means of shared history and culture (Smith, 1986). For these young Turks, then, the task of reconciling their ethnic heritage, rather than their religious identity, with the civic form of British national identity was a central issue.

Turkishness is the most important aspect of personal identity for most of these young Turks. They did not deny their citizenship, but the meaning that they attributed to it remained limited, while Turkishness was portrayed as an identity that they would never give up. This understanding was, for instance, expressed by Ceylan:

I mean I live here and have a British passport. But there is nothing beyond that. So, I can leave this country tomorrow. It is just the economic advantages and my friends that keep me here. I do not have any emotional attachment here – never have. I still watch Turkish TV channels and series and listen to Turkish music. Of course, I am happy here. I have a car. I have a home. I make a good profit here. So, I am very grateful to England. But I am a Turk who is always missing Turkey. I have been living here for 16 years. Whenever I sit at a table with a Turk and dip a piece of bread into my soup, I feel the happiness that British people cannot provide me with. (Ceylan)

She was one of the participants who preferred not to have any affiliation with Turkish social, cultural, or religious organisations held in London. She identified herself as non-religious British-Turkish and expressed that she had connections to other ethnic groups by means of various British organisations. 'Maybe I adapted to this place very quickly because I did not live-in places where there are many Turks.' She thus explained that she strongly integrated into British society and

complied with its norms. This did not, however, change the fact that her best friend was Turkish, and she further expressed that she feels strong emotional attachments to people from the same ethnic background. Simsek (2012) argues that the emotional attachment that makes people feel more comfortable and secure, as well as those which reduce the feeling of strangeness, can only be explained in terms of shared culture, language, and so on.

Some respondents reflected upon their affiliation to the Turkish ethnic identity by pointing out that Turkey and Britain mean different things to them. The second generations especially viewed Britain as the place where they were born and grew up and, therefore, defined Britain as their home. The meaning that they ascribed to Turkey, on the other hand, was very much different from this. Ahmet, for instance, articulated that he grew up in the UK's education system and that he holds a British passport. He, therefore, claimed that 'London is my home basically. I do not know if I can live anywhere else. When someone asks me about my nationality, even though I say I am British, I say that I am from Turkey. I would not deny my background. I am British but I carry Turkish blood.' Yaren also shared her feelings about Turkish ethnic identity and how she regarded Turkey as being her motherland.

Yes, I can have fun, I can do everything outside, but when I go home, I am Turkish. We watch Turkish TV....If you ask me where I am from, I will first say I am from Hackney since it provides me with the feeling of home. This is because you know the people in the neighbourhood, and you know what they do. If you asked me about my background, though, I would definitely say that I am Turkish. (Yaren)

These participants are reporting dual identities. But in contrast to the incompatible ethnic and national identities of Turkish students in Germany (e.g. Martiny *et al.*, 2017), my participants' identities were not incompatible. Indeed, whilst my respondents have stronger attachments to their ethnic identity they still embraced a civic form of British national identity. Martiny *et al* (2017) suggest that the reason for dual identities among young German-Turks might come from assimilative pressures to adhere to German social norms. The data from my study, however, do not demonstrate evidence of this in my case. Instead, my respondents' claim that they are not subjected to Islamophobia may have influenced their feelings towards British identity. This also indicates the significant role that receiving contexts play in how Turks in different countries identify with the settlement country identification (Crul and Schneider 2010; Ersanilli and Saharso, 2011; Alanya *et al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, the second-generation participants highlighted the importance to them of their birth and upbringing in Britain and how these made them perceive Britain as home. This was one aspect of their personal identities which is, as discussed in the previous section, where they referred not only to their identities as citizens but also to their local neighbourhoods where they felt a strong sense of belonging and attachment (Georgiadis and Manning, 2013). They celebrated their rights and privileges associated with citizenship and thus felt very positive about living in London but did not have similar feelings to Britain as a whole. In that

sense, the place that was meant by the statements ‘Britain is my home’ and ‘I am from Hackney’ was London, where there is more diversity and where fewer English people live. Ahmet put it clearly when he said:

I live in London where there are different cultures. Therefore, I do not feel like I am a foreigner here. But some English people are arguing as if they are losing their power in London. What UKIP, for instance, says the most is that they should expel foreigners from the entire country, including London. Sorry, but London is my home. I will not go anywhere. (Ahmet)

Al-Ali and Koser (2002) define “home” as a place where personal and social meanings are milled. These second-generation young Turks’ territorial attachment has commonly been linked to their relationships with their family and community. They find themselves in an environment where Turkish social, cultural and traditional activities are still maintained. Sevil’s statements demonstrate this point very clearly: ‘...I grew up in Turkish culture. This road presents Turkish culture. Every shop is Turkish. I have two uncles that run kebab shops. You are in London, in Hackney, and are surrounded by Turkish culture.’ Here, the traditional meaning of “home” has been redefined and has stretched its meaning to include the local context of the destination country (Simsek, 2012). The respondents, therefore, have expressed that they feel like they are part of British society and are members of a single British nationality. Since their feeling of home is also linked to the outside, as discussed in Chapter 5 regarding their experiences about Islamophobia, they perceive London as being socially and culturally diverse and as a very peaceful place to live. Apart from their feeling that London is their home, they manifested a strong emotional attachment to Turkish identity as well. The findings of this research clearly show that the ethnic characteristics that were left missing in the description of their British national identification were prominently emphasised when they expressed their feelings about Turkish identity.

7.3.1 Turkishness embracing both a civic and an ethnic national identity

In my analysis regarding various identity negotiations in the context of Islamophobia, one of the things that begs for a discussion is the relationship between Turkish ethnicity and Turkish national identity. Talk about British identity in the context of Islamophobia uncovered the contrast between its ethnic and civic forms. So far, I have discussed the reasons why they understand Britishness as a civic national identity. Nevertheless, what do they think about Turkish national identity? Do they think that Turkishness is also a civic national identity? Do they make a distinction between Turkish national identity and ethnic identity?

Based on their emphasis on the civic form of Britishness, it cannot be inferred that the Turks understand all national identities as civic and that, therefore, they interpret Britishness in the same way. Understanding what concepts such as nation, national identity, citizenship, and ethnicity – all of which are close in meaning to one another – is important for determining whether these young Turks make a distinction between Turkish national identity and ethnicity. This study reveals that the majority included Britishness when they defined their national identity. As has already been discussed, they felt belonging to it at certain points. One of the rea-

sons why they do not feel a belonging to it more often is that they are aware that they have a much stronger identity. This sense of belonging does not differ significantly in terms of the first or second generations. Selda, for instance, stated that 'I am a Turk. I was born as a Turk and grew up as a Turk. The passport that I have cannot change my blood. It just gives me my citizenship rights.' Nuket similarly expressed that 'I may have a British passport, but I am a Turkish patriot through and through. I have never changed my accent when speaking English because I am a Turk.' They connect the idea of ethnicity with blood ties. This is a primordial perspective of ethnicity in the ways in which it refers to the ideas of innate blood ties, loyalty to an immediate group, certain ineffable importance to said group, a feeling of sacredness, and so on (Shils, 1957; Geertz, 1973). What is at stake here is an essentialised and determinist idea of ethnicity. The emphasis on the British national identity thus refers to an ethnically inclusive notion of British citizenship, such that the idea of being British is not characterised as being tied to myths of common descent, history, language, and culture (Condor *et al.*, 2006; Fenton, 2010).

Many participants referred to a civic form of British identity, with their loyalty to British laws, rules, and values exhibiting this sense of membership. This factual acceptance of their national membership displays no enthusiasm for the English nation and thus does not show any sign of English identity (Fenton, 2007). They, however, see themselves as being members of the Turkish nation and their Turkish ethno-national identity holds a strong emotional influence over them through cultural memories and national ceremonies (Smith, 1991). For instance, according to Alican, a second-generation Turk living in the UK, one of the main reasons why Turkish people do not adopt an ethnic form of British national identity is because they have strong feelings toward their Turkish identity. He shared his feelings about his Turkish identity as follows: 'For me, being a Turk means the flag. It means the blood on that flag. The English have a flag too, but our flag is different. Even though I was born and grew up here, I memorised the Turkish anthem. Our national anthem starts with "fear not." It has advice for us. It tells me what I have to do as a Turk.' The emphasis on symbols such as blood, the flag, the anthem, and Turkish ancestry are not the only things which explain his identifying with his Turkish ethnicity. His feeling a strong emotional attachment to these symbols refers to the elements which comprise the identity of the Turkish nation. Given that Atatürk, the founder of the new Republic of Turkey, conceived Turkey as a modern nation-state, the main characteristic of Turkish citizens is the adamant connection between the nation-state and ethnicity, or ethno-nationalism. This doctrine stipulates that the common denominators of the Turkish nation are that they have a shared past and the desire to cohabitate peacefully with one another (Cagaptay, 2006).

As stated in Chapter 3, one of this study's research questions examines the impacts of Islamophobia on the young Turks' attitudes and feelings towards British and English identities. Therefore, one of the questions asked of the interviewees was designed to elicit responses which would show whether Islamophobia

influences their attitudes toward sports (i.e. which national team they would support if Turkey and England were playing against each other). Some of the participants, however, had no interest in any sports. Thus, I modified the question as follows: If there was a competition between Turkey and England in any area, which country would you support? It was anticipated that such questions would not directly reveal the effects of Islamophobia. Yet, its effects on their attitudes and feelings towards British and English identity could be discovered by means of follow-up questions. The reason for examining their preferences between the two countries over football was that studies have shown that football is one of the keys to the emergence of feelings of identity, national identity and nationalism and, hence, to the creation and display of individuals' loyalty to the country they feel that they belong to (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999; Fox, 2006; Paca, 2015). Furthermore, the literature suggests that the racist attitudes of the majority group and ethnically exclusive definitions of Englishness are some of the most important factors which affect who the second or next generations in England give their support to during international sport events such as football (Carrington and McDonald, 2001; Burdsey, 2006). The idea is that the arena of sport is used by the mass media and far-right nationalists to promote a xenophobic version of British national identity. It is therefore suggested by Carrington and McDonald (2001: 2) that 'sport is a particularly useful sociological site for examining the changing context and content of contemporary British racisms, as it articulates the complex interplay of "race," nation, culture and identity in very public and direct ways.'

National symbols, such as the flag and the anthem, are the basic elements which connect individuals to a nation. There are times when these cultural symbolic links are performed visually and audibly in the ritual performances of daily life. These kinds of activities serve to raise awareness of national consciousness within individuals. For this purpose, collective rituals loaded with national symbols, such as celebrating national holidays and watching national sport competitions, are organized at various times (Fox, 2006; Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008). The interviewees also commented on what these symbols and the rituals that created them mean to them. In this respect, Turkish youths are not only consumers of the meanings offered to them, but also become producers of these meanings in the UK context.

Muhammed: If Turkey and England were playing against each other in any sport, which team would you support?

Hasan: Of course, Turkey. I am Turkish.

Muhammed: But you were born and brought up here. Considering that you were born and brought up here, is there no possibility for you to support England?

Hasan: Not at all. Being born and raised here does not change anything.

Muhammed: But if England were playing against another country other than Turkey who would you support?

Hasan: I would not watch. I mean, in that case, I would not care.

Muhammed: Is there a specific reason for not supporting England?

Hasan: Probably, my Turkishness comes to the fore. You can see this in other things. For example, we celebrate our own holidays, celebrate days that are historically important to us. Turkish traditions and customs and Turkish culture are very dominant in our society. Our parents teach us the values of Turkish culture so that we do not forget our past. That is why I said I do not think my birthplace changes anything. I am a Turk and I feel Turkish.

Recep answered the same question as follows:

Recep: Turkey, always Turkey. I would even support another country against England. I never support England and never will. As I said, since I see myself as a Turk, being British is always secondary to me. I am proud when I wear a Turkish football t-shirt but do not wear English football t-shirts. I am 100% clear on that.

Muhammed: But why wouldn't you wear it? You were born here. You grew up here. Have the English had an influence on your thinking and feeling this way?

Recep: No, I have no problem with the English. I have many close English friends and we make up good company. Being born here does not mean that I would be an English supporter, though. I am a Turk. We have our own values, history, culture. I have a lot in common with the English, but I am a Turk, my parents are Turks, my ancestors were Turks, my motherland is Turkey. I always feel that I am Turkish. There is a Turkish flag hanging in our house. It means a lot to me.

Yaren, similarly, expressed that she would, 'a hundred percent,' support Turkey:

If we lose, I feel very sad. I just like how Turkish people behave. If there is a match, they take it so seriously. It is like they cry... they have arguments about it! It is such a big thing. I would cry. I think it is just exciting. It is just proving to other countries that you are strong. If I see that a Turkish soldier has died, I feel very upset. If Turkey is strong, then it makes me happy, but I do not feel the same things towards England. I love my culture; I love my country. So, I always feel closer to that. When I go to Istanbul, I feel like I am at home. I feel so happy! But when I come back here, I just hate it. (Yaren)

They identified more strongly as Turks, but this was not because they experienced Islamophobia and thus were reacting to that. Rather, they claimed that they have a good relationship with the English. Thus, it seems that everyday Islamophobia does not influence the discourses about national identities amongst the majority of the participants. Ethnicity, in that case, is determined, not by external and circumstantial forces, but by internalised attachments. This understanding of ethnicity views the concept as a collective of people cohabiting and acting together. This idea is properly captured by Weber's argument that primarily sees ethnic membership as a political community which inspires the belief in a common ancestry because of similarities of custom, physical type, and migratory memories (Weber, 1968). More importantly, though, this is a subjective belief in a common ancestry rather than the reality of having a common ancestry. In this regard, while this study reveals that some participants reacted to English identity based on the historical colonial legacy of Britain and their having a strong and distinctive sense

of their Turkish identity, it did not explore the existence of a similar reaction to it in the context of everyday Islamophobia. They rejected being a part of the English identity because they have a strong and distinctive Turkish identity.

One of the most salient issues that comes out of the young Turks' discussion is the contrast between Turkish-Islamic identity and the idea of pan-Islamic identity. It is argued in the literature on Turkish national identity that Islam is a part of Turkish culture and ideology. Indeed, it plays a key role in constituting Turkish national identity (Waxman, 1997; Cagaptay, 2006). It was one of the most important markers of Turkishness (an identity policy of Kemalist nationalism in the 1920s). The new Turkish state established in 1923 spent much of its time rebuilding Turkey through reforms in accordance with the secular notion of the nation-state. This ethnic and nation-based identity formation of Turkish society was thus shaped through the instruments of secularism and Westernisation. One could assert that it was not a conflict between secularism/westernism and Islam, but rather a clash between the idea of a collective Muslim identity which welcomes other Muslims in different ethnic backgrounds and Turkish-Islam, which strongly emphasised the ethnic, religious, and nation-based identity of Turkish society. This conflict drew sharp boundaries between Turkish people and other Muslim groups, and particularly Islamic Middle Eastern civilisation (Cagaptay, 2006).

A vast majority of my participants also stated that Islam constitutes a part of their identities.¹⁶ Although they identified themselves as Muslim, they did not think in a pan-Islamic way (cf. Modood, 1997; Archer, 2001; EUMC, 2006); rather, they suggested a contradiction between Turkish-Islam and the Islam that other Muslims follow. As noted in Chapter 6, most young Turks claimed a modern and secular understanding of Islam in concordance with Western society. In doing so, they had a strong tendency to differentiate themselves and/or Turks from the other Muslim communities by way of ethnic boundary making, which subsumes dissimilarities of Turkish-Islam from other Islamic understandings. Even some of the participants of this study, who identified themselves as religious, gave priority to their Islamic identity in their understanding of Turkish national identity, but did not do so by demonstrating their commitment to a collective Islamic identity and giving up their ethnic identity. In this respect, their definition of religiosity derives from their understanding of Turkish-Islam. A modern, democratic, secular, and Western-compatible understanding of Islam that the Turks emphasise strongly in depictions of Turkish ethnic and national identity shows parallelism with the Turkish understanding of national identity established in 1923 under the leadership of Atatürk (Cagaptay, 2006). Not only the first-generations but also many second-generations seemed to have been influenced by this understanding, probably through their parents and various Turkish organisations in London. This is further why they claimed that Islamophobia is not an issue for them, stressing a very strong sense of Turkishness. Thus, they embraced a civic form of Britishness, expressing that they adhere to British laws, rules, and values. That is a kind of

¹⁶ See Table 1 in Chapter 3 for information regarding these young Turks' identification with Islam.

insurance policy against Islamophobia; if you feel British, then you will not be a victim to Islamophobia.

Having said that, this study unveiled another important factor; viz. the Brexit Leave Campaign. These campaigns triggered some young Turks, including second generations, to react in ethnic terms (Slootman, 2014; Celik, 2015) by means of reaffirming their ethnic solidarity and self-consciousness (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). In order to examine these reactions in more detail, the next section discusses the respondents' reactions to the discourses of far-right Brexit supporters.

7.3.2 Brexit and reactive Turkish identification

Existing social psychological research on ethnic minority groups and immigrants (e.g. Tajfel, 1982; Verkuyten, 1997; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) suggest that, once one's group identity is threatened, they attempt to react to their perceived inferiority through different reactive identity strategies to attain a positive social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 2004). Rumbaut (2005) argues that this perceived discrimination can increase in-group identification amongst minority members. The reactive ethnicity pattern was also seen in the case of some participants in the way they responded to the Vote Leave Campaigners who produced a poster with the slogan "Turkey (population 76 million) is joining the EU" to reinforce their identification with their ethnic group in order to defend their threatened self-images and collective dignity (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001).

Brexit was not among the interview questions I had prepared. Nevertheless, some of the participants raised it when they were asked about whether they see themselves as having a British identity. A few participants argued that, in the beginning, they had supported Brexit, but when the smear campaign against Turkey was organised overtly, they gave up their decision about Brexit.

The main target was not Turks. Posters were hung up in the last two days. One of our lectures at university was entirely on the EU. There was a book that was so bulky. I even read almost the entire book. Until the last days, I had been supporting Brexit. I supported it because it might not have been good for the previous generation, but it would bring very good outcomes for the new generation. Since no military aid would be given to the EU, our money would remain in the UK. We will not have to supply economic aid [to Europe]. I mean, the products produced by the Netherlands and Germany will continue to be exported to England. A few days before the Brexit vote, however, racists published a list. There were 10 countries on that list. If they all entered the EU, 12 million people would gain access to the union, but if only Turkey entered the EU, 76 million Turks would gain access. I normally supported Brexit, but when I saw that poster, I changed my mind and voted to stay. So, I changed my decision. I voted for the UK to stay in the EU just because of the racist propaganda being propounded against the Turkish people. I felt like we were being denigrated. They saw themselves as superior. So, tell me what things you have that I do not? (Bulent)

Since Bulent's sense of belonging to his ethnic group was high, he responded to the racist attitudes of some English people reactively. He was born in Britain and closely followed the politics regarding the future of Britain. Once he perceived

hostility towards the Turkish ethnic group, though, he constructed a defensive identity to show solidarity with the Turkish people, thereby increasing his identification with his ethnic group (Verkuyten, 1997; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). He refused to be in the same group as those whom he perceived to be racist and whom he thought believed that they were superior to him in some way.

For Neset, Nigel Farage and his proponents fuelled such campaigns:

These people harm this country. I had been supporting Brexit, too, but being on the same side as those people made me feel uncomfortable. Why do you seek to attach Turkish people, or the country of Turkey for that matter, to this issue? I was planning to vote to leave because I thought it would be better for our economy. But the racist discourses made against us made me very sad. They created fear in society by effectively separating people and attacking others' identities. If you see Turks as dangerous, then why should I be on the same side as you? So, I voted to stay. (Neset)

This perceived hostility did not only increase identification with Turkishness but also led these participants to alter their political views on the future of England. This is an important finding that differs from studies that suggest racial discrimination encourages less political integration and more oppositional engagement for minorities (Sanders *et al.*, 2014; McAndrew and Sobolewska, 2015). My respondents reacted to the negative rhetoric developed against Turks during the Brexit campaign but their reports suggest that this did not negatively affect their democratic engagement (through voting etc) or cause them to engage in violent protest (McAndrew and Sobolewska, 2015). Accordingly, although my data cannot show my participants' civic and political engagement in any detail, what I have shown does not confirm research demonstrating a negative correlation between perceived discrimination and civic engagement (Sanders *et al.*, 2014; McAndrew and Sobolewska, 2015).

At this point, however, one issue should be highlighted: viz., that the sharp reactions of these young Turks towards the Brexit campaign revealed some differences when compared to their reactions against Islamophobia. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, the great majority of the respondents verbalised that they did not experience any problem with Islamophobia. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 6, they deflected the Islamophobia issue onto other Muslim groups. For others, they experienced it in the form of everyday racism. When it came to the Brexit issue, however, some of those who stated that they did not experience Islamophobia reacted to the Brexit campaign towards Turkish people by identifying more strongly with their ethnic group and less strongly with the host country. Studies of Turks in other European countries also show that perceived discrimination on the basis of ethnicity affects national belonging (Verkuyten and Yildiz, 2007; Ersanilli and Saharso, 2011; Slootman, 2014; Latcheva and Punzenberger, 2016; Martiny *et al.*, 2017). It might be concluded, then, that perceived discrimination may lead some Turkish people to prioritise their Turkish ethnic identity over their national identity. This in turn suggests that receiving societies have signifi-

cant responsibility for the climate of discrimination and the reasons why those people have such feelings towards the host countries' national issues.

Furthermore, some respondents expressed their discomfort about being associated with other Muslim groups during the Brexit. Recep, for instance, narrated that

[they were talking] as if Turks were dangerous. This made me nervous because I see myself as a Turk and embrace my Turkish identity. We are a different nation. Why do you see us in the same way as other Muslim groups? We are not dangerous. On the roadside, I saw huge billboards writing negative things about Turks. This bothers me because, even though I was born here, I see myself as being a Turk. So, those who believe these things will change their attitudes towards us. (Recep)

Serap similarly asserted that the Leave group during the Brexit carried out a campaign against Turkish people over their religious identity in order to convince people to vote to leave.

As a Turk, I took it as being a completely offensive tactic. They tried to develop policies based on Turkey's possibly entering the EU. They said we should get out of the EU because there are 80 million Turks who want to enter Europe. Therefore, they think that Turks are dangerous and would prefer to get out of the EU rather than be with us. We have national pride and I think they hurt it. I have no religious belief, but I come from Turkish culture. My parents are Muslims. I think that these campaigns were carried out over religion. In other words, they tried to imply that the Turks are Muslims and that, based on that reason, they would pose a danger if they entered Europe. It was not about skin colour. We are whiter than many other Europeans. It was not about the economy, either. Turkey is economically more powerful than many European countries. It was just about showing people that Turks are dangerous Muslims. They targeted Turks for their own purposes. Okay, I am not a Muslim, but they should know that Turkish Muslims are different from other Muslims. (Serap)

Accordingly, Turkish identity is one of the most sensitive issues for these young Turks. The fact is that, since Islamophobia did not arouse these same feelings in them, they did not construct a sense of global and cohesive Muslim identity in reaction to it (Ballard, 1996; Choudhury, 2007; Meer, 2010; Bonino, 2017). This is mainly because the majority claimed that Islamophobia is not an issue which impacts their everyday lives, but rather that other Muslims are targeted by it. All their efforts were directed towards proving that Islamophobia was not an issue that concerned them or their ethnic group. Therefore, they drew ethno-racial and cultural boundaries with them seeing as they did not want to be perceived as people who are in the same box as other Muslims.

In some cases, individuals describe their identities in essentialist ways, failing to consider the dynamics of their ethnicity through various social, cultural, and political interactions. This view is indeed more or less the same as the social constructionist approach, which conceives ethnic identification as situationally variable and negotiable. These young Turks were seriously attached to their cultural

and ancestral identities (Fenton, 2010) when the negative stereotypes during Brexit were perceived directly by them as an attack on their Turkish identity, including their ethnicity and Turkish-Islam. They became self-conscious and sensitive to their ethnicity because it is 'a defense to threatened self-images and collective dignity' (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001: 284). When they felt that they had been excluded from the country, the degree to which they identified with their British identity was negatively affected. Rumbaut (2008:110) therefore notes that the external stimulus 'had the unintended consequences of accentuating group differences, heightening group consciousness of those differences, hardening ethnic identity boundaries between "us" and "them," and promoting ethnic group solidarity and political mobilization.'

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an examination of the effects of Islamophobia on the young Turks' feelings and attitudes towards British, English, Turkish and Islamic identities.

First, in light of their perceptions and experiences of Islamophobia, how they described the idea of being British and their feelings and attitudes towards British national identity were examined. This chapter reveals that because most of the young Turks did not see Islamophobia as something that affected them, they answered the probing questions which were constructed to explore the impacts that Islamophobia has had on British identity as though they were not its targets. Therefore, Islamophobia did not compromise their sense of belonging to being British compared to Turkish-Muslims in Germany and the Netherlands who felt a stronger Muslim identity and weakened identification with the host country in response to perceptions of discrimination. My findings further suggest that there is a positive association between Turkish/Muslim identification and British national identity. This means that having a strong sense of Turkish/Muslim identification does not necessarily imply low host national identification. My participants reported higher levels of Turkish ethnic identity than of British national identity.

Having said that their emphasis on British national identity was solely on its civic form as its ethnic aspect was decisively rejected. Their lack of adherence to the ethnic form of British national identity, or Englishness, stems from two fundamental reasons: 1) their negative feelings and attitudes towards Englishness due to the historical colonial dynamics of Britain; 2) and having a strong and distinctive sense of their Turkish identity. Unlike those Muslims who understood English identity in racial terms, this study's respondents viewed it as being an expression of imperial ideology and thus rejected to be a part of this identity. Furthermore, they reacted to those who are proud of this history and regard themselves as superior by increasing their identification with their own ethnic group. The historical colonial legacy of Britain has thus crystallised the ethnic boundary between Turks and the English.

This chapter further suggests that, while these young Turks made a distinction between the civic and ethnic forms of British national identity, they did not under-

stand Turkish national identity in the same way. The idea of the Turkish national identity is also perceived as a civic one in one respect, but unlike the British identity, these youths tied it also to the myths of a shared ethnic origin. In that sense, they define Turkish citizenship in both civic and ethnic terms. Thus, the two concepts of ethnicity and nationhood clearly occupy very much the same territory of meaning in the context of Turkish national identity. Moreover, although the second-generation Turks in particular, who are far-removed, both geographically and temporally, from Turkey, interact within a society where differences thrive, they participate in collective rituals, such as celebrating national holidays and watching national sports competitions, carried out by their parents and the Turkish society and institutions located in the UK. These activities played a key role in these young people's having a strong emotional loyalty to the Turkish ethno-national identity. Feeling a strong emotional attachment to the ethnic and national symbols of Turkey, such as blood, the flag, the anthem, and their ancestry, reflect a strong primordial perspective of ethnicity, especially in the ways in which they referred to ideas of innate blood ties, loyalty to an immediate group, their group's having certain ineffable importance, the sacredness of that group, and so on. In that sense, while this study's interview questions aimed to explore the effects of Islamophobia on these young Turks' feelings and attitudes towards the British national identity, these questions also uncovered that the participants already have a very strong sense of Turkish identity which, the majority believed, protected them from the effects of Islamophobia.

Examining the effects of Islamophobia on their British identity further brought to light the fact that, contrary to other British Muslims who tend to prioritise a pan-Islamic identity over their national identity in order to demonstrate that they are resisting and reacting to Islamophobia, many young Turks highlighted a very strong sense of Turkish identity, which itself contains an understanding of Turkish-Islam rather than showing identification with the ummah. While Islam was perceived as being one of the most important components of Turkish national identity, culture, and ideology – with some even giving priority to it in their understanding of Turkish national identity – they do not think in a pan-Islamic way, even going so far as to suggest that Turkish-Islam contradicts with the Islam that other Muslims follow. While on the one hand, they embraced an inclusive/civic British identity, on the other hand, they claimed their distinctive ethnic and national identities by highlighting their proximity with Europe, their secular and modern republican values, their European way of life, and having a Turkish-Islamic understanding of Islam – all of which show parallelism with their understanding of the identity of the Turkish nation-state.

Their commitments to Turkish identity were much more salient when they brought into question the negative stereotypes made against Turks and Turkey during Brexit. Indeed, Islamophobia did not arouse the same feelings in these young Turks as Brexit did, for they did not assertively react to Islamophobia, nor did they construct a sense of collective Muslim identity in retaliation to it. The main reason for this was that, while they understand Islamophobia as a more reli-

giously based discrimination and as more of an issue for other Muslims, they perceived the Brexit campaigns regarding Turkish people and Turkey as a direct attack on their Turkish identity which they assert they will never give up.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS

'We are closer to the English than other Muslims are. English people have associated others with terrorism but not Turks. They see us as being different. They see us as much more modern and Westernised.' (Bulent, interview 2019)

8 Exploring Islamophobia and identity strategies developed against it

This book set out to explore the ways in which young Turks in Britain perceive, experience, and feel Islamophobia, and, more importantly, explore what identity strategies they have developed in response to Islamophobia.

The social context of young British Muslims demonstrates that they have been targeted by Islamophobic dynamics that result in culturally, religiously, and ethnically constructed "Otherness". However, research on Islamophobic attitudes and behaviours towards young British Muslims shows that the Islamophobic judgments on British Muslims do not take into account heterogeneity of Muslim communities in terms of cultural, ethnic, national, and racial characteristics and even in terms of understanding and living Islam. Given these dynamics and the heterogeneity, it is important to study Islamophobia from the perspective of young Turks apart from broader British Muslim society to understand the specificity of perception, experience, feeling, and identity strategies employed in an Islamophobic society.

In looking at scholarship conducted prior to this study, it is clear that this study has been a critical intervention given the absence of research into how young British Muslims themselves describe and valorise their experiences of and further responses to Islamophobia within Islamophobia scholarship as a whole. Broadly speaking, it is fair to conclude that the attention paid to Islamophobia from the perspectives of its supposed victims has been minimal. The scholarship that does delve into Islamophobia has done excellent work in addressing a number of issues relevant to its meaning and the roles of media and politicians more broadly. However, to enable a more significant sociological study into the experiences of Islamophobia and identity strategies developed against Islamophobia, it has been necessary to develop an adapted conceptual framework. The conceptual framework of this book was divided into two sections. The first section has addressed the conceptualisation of Islamophobia in the broader context of racism. Further, it has been expanded to incorporate issues pertinent to racialisation of Muslims and everyday racism. The second section has focused on the conceptual possibilities of the young Turks' responses to Islamophobia by considering the existing scholarship on various identity strategies employed by migrants and minorities, and the distinctive characteristics of the Turkish people. Given the necessity of exploring these understudied aspects of Islamophobia, the following research questions were developed:

- How do young Turks in Britain perceive and represent Islamophobia and its relationship to them?
- How is Islamophobia at work in the everyday lives of young Turks according to their reports on their experiences of Islamophobia?
- What kinds of identity strategies do they develop in response to Islamophobia?

The following objectives were formed to elucidate the overarching research questions;

- To explore how young Turks understand Islamophobia;
- To understand whether young Turks see themselves as targets of Islamophobia;
- To explore how Islamophobia manifests in their lives;
- To survey various identity discourses and practices as a response to Islamophobia;
- To explore whether young Turks develop a collective Muslim identity as a response to Islamophobia;
- To identify to what extent distinctive legacies of Turkishness are deployed by young Turks against Islamophobia;
- To investigate how Islamophobia impacts young Turks' feelings and attitudes towards their ethnic, national and religious identity;
- To identify how Islamophobia impacts their feelings and attitudes towards English identity.

This book has made clear that although some young Turks reported that Turks in Britain experience more subtle forms of Islamophobia which I call "everyday Islamophobia", the vast majority of the respondents developed various discursive identity practices that culminate in efforts to demonstrate that Islamophobia is not an issue that concerns them and Turkish people in general. Claiming Islamophobia with its racialised implications means that victimised people acknowledge and get approval from a racial order that places the racialised in an unfavourable position, resulting in being perceived as members of the devalued group suffering from socio-cultural and economic marginalisation. Therefore, they were able to draw on both local discourses and ideologies of racialized differences and home-grown contextual referents to avoid being placed in the lower social status of the racialised Muslim groups and thus position themselves as being part of the more secure and high-status White European group. Their discursive identity strategies sharpened ethnic-racial identity boundaries between Turkish people and other Muslims and further reinforced their attempts to align themselves with the White European majority.

The summary of how Islamophobia is at work in the everyday lives of the young Turks and their identity strategies developed as a response to Islamophobia requires a four-part examination. Firstly, when examining the views and discourses of the young Turks about Islamophobia, it is clear that many respondents including non-Muslims conceptualised Islamophobia as a product of imperialist powers to achieve specific political and economic goals and legitimising their mili-

tary actions. However, the fact is that contrary to what some studies on the identity formation of Muslims including Turkish European Muslims have assumed, these young Turks' perceptions of Islamophobia could not be interpreted as developing an Islamic political mobilisation effort or a sense of belonging to a global Muslim identity. Firstly, unlike studies from Europe that attribute increased religious identification among Turkish Muslims to their reactions to perceived religious discrimination or increased global and national developments, the majority of my respondents often tried to emphasise that Islamophobia does not affect them and that it concerns other Muslims more.

Secondly, my participants' emphasis on an imperialist perspective of Islamophobia was shaped in part by their empathy for other Muslims, particularly those in war zones, rather than experiences of perceived discrimination as experienced by Turks in other European countries. They were not, however, indifferent to the global developments, especially – but not exclusively – in Muslim countries. Nevertheless, the young Muslim Turks' understanding of Turkish-Islam differentiated them from other Muslims, acting as a barrier to the realisation of a collective Muslim identity.

Thirdly, this study reveals that as in other European countries, Turks in Britain have been racialized mainly through various ethnic, cultural, and political attributes tied to their Muslim identity rather than their skin colour or other somatic features. Yet, unlike Turks in other European countries who experience more explicit discrimination, my participants' perceptions regarding the racialisation of Turks in Britain suggest that they are subjected to Islamophobia that also includes subtle forms of racism. Those experiencing this kind of "everyday Islamophobia" are often uncertain whether what they have experienced is actually Islamophobia or not. The difficulty of identifying the subtle form of racism powerfully reflects the view that racism is constantly evolving into new conditions and becoming more subtle and uncertain. Turkish men and women are racialised through various non-bodily features such as name, ethnicity, occupation, and political affiliation. All of these are envisaged as signs of Islam or Muslim identity. Reports of some respondents further show that Turkish people have been racialised in gendered ways. Women with the hijab are the target of everyday Islamophobia far more than men and secular women. The hijab has been visually interpreted and described in ways that make use of a number of symbolic meanings and connotations. Women with the hijab are represented as being uneducated, oppressed, extremist, and mysterious and as threats to national security.

Fourthly, it is clear that all the efforts of the majority are to verbalise that Islamophobia does not affect their lives and then suggest that it is a matter for other Muslim groups. Most of the young Turks perceived themselves and others according to differences. They selected negative tropes when they talked about other Muslims. Some of their tropes were home-grown variants, probably transmitted by and transformed through transnational social and cultural remittances; others show similarities with local British repertoires of ethno-racial and cultural differences. In addition, they had recourse to different sources of Turkish identity such

as whiteness and a moderate understanding of Islam to differentiate themselves from the others. One reason that led the participants to use negative tropes against the other Muslims might be that they did not want to be associated with negative Islamophobic stereotypes that have exacerbated the marginalisation of other Muslims. This is an identity strategy in which they attempt to change their position from being a victim to enjoying a higher status and thus put a psychological distance between themselves and the other Muslim groups. Therefore, they did not hesitate to racialise other Muslims by evaluating them in terms of skin colour, views, actions, moral character, and work ethic.

Moreover, the perception of Islamophobia among the young Turks also has roots in the Turks' history of differentiating themselves from other Muslims. The ethno-racial boundary-making strategies uncovered in this research, such as whiteness, Europeaness, and a secular understanding of Islam, in some sense, pre-dated Islamophobia. Therefore, what unites the different threads of my analysis is not Islamophobia, but Turks differentiating themselves from the other Muslims in a context of Islamophobia. These differentiating strategies, however, were not present amongst Turks in countries like Germany where they are the largest minority group. One reason for this might be that whilst Turks in Britain are a relatively invisible Muslim group living in super-diverse contexts, Turks in Germany are the most numerous minority living in less diverse areas. Moreover, the fact that South Asians are the largest minority Muslim group in the UK and therefore much more visible in both the British media and the public may have made them more of a target of negative discourses and attitudes developed by the young Turks.

Fifthly, and finally, the young Turks' experiences, and views regarding Islamophobia impacted their feelings and attitudes towards British, English, Turkish and Islamic identities. Because the majority of young Turks did not see Islamophobia as something that affected them, they tended not to de-identify with the civic form of British national identity while decisively rejecting its ethnic aspect, English identity. They rejected the English identity due to two main reasons: 1) their negative feelings and attitudes towards Englishness due to the historical colonial dynamics of Britain 2) and having a strong and distinctive sense of Turkish identity. This means that, unlike those Muslims who code English identity in racial terms, these young Turks perceived Englishness as being an expression of imperial ideology, and therefore refused to be part of it. Their reactions towards those who are proud of this imperial ideology made explicit the ethnic boundary between Turks and the English. While these young Turks made a distinction between the civic and ethnic forms of British national identity due to the historical colonial dynamics of Britain, they understood Turkish national identity in both civic and ethnic terms because of a strong emotional attachment to the ethnic and national symbols of Turkey.

Furthermore, unlike some other British Muslims and Turkish-Muslims in Germany and the Netherlands who tend to associate themselves with a stronger Muslim identity and distance themselves from the national attachments of their

receiving country in order to show that they are resisting and reacting to Islamophobia and other sorts of discrimination, most of my respondents highlighted a very strong sense of Turkish identity, which itself contains an understanding of Turkish-Islam and yet is in harmony with a civic form of British national identity. The findings of this study support studies on Turkish-Muslims in other European countries that found a positive association between Muslim identification and national identification. My respondents' insistence that they have not experienced exclusion or discrimination in Britain is connected to their belief in the existence of inclusive British identity. In the context of Brexit, however, some respondents tended to identify more strongly with their ethnic group and less strongly with the host country. This indicates the significant role that receiving contexts play in how Turks identify with the settlement country identification.

8.1 Contributions of this study to scholarship

I contribute to the small but growing literature concerned with Muslim citizens settling in Britain in general and Turkish citizens in particular. The contributions of this study to academia are far-ranging. Theoretically, this study has helped further develop literature on the roles of media and policymakers regarding Islamophobia from the perspectives of the supposed victims of Islamophobia. This has further a significant contribution to exploring how Islam and Muslims have been subjected to negative images and stereotypes by media, politicians and so on in everyday discourse (Saeed, 2007; Ali, 2008; Poole, 2009; Kumar, 2012; Lean, 2012).

This study has also helped develop literature on the racialisation process of Muslims, centring the view that the racialisation of Muslims produces material dimensions, envisioned as markers of Islam or Muslim identity to reframe the perception and treatment of Muslim men and women encounter in the field of studies on racialisation of Muslims (Allen, 2014; Garner and Selod, 2015; Zempi and Awan, 2017; Selod, 2018). But more importantly, this research has provided a novel contribution to the literature on how Islamophobia manifests in the lives of Muslims. As I have shown in Chapter 2, there is a considerable gap in the literature regarding focusing on covert forms of Islamophobia. The existing literature on Islamophobia has focused largely on its overt forms (e.g. Kunst *et al.*, 2011; Perry, 2014; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2015), neglecting its subtle forms. Considering the subtle nature of everyday Islamophobia, this gap is not surprising and is in fact understandable but not justified if we are to develop an understanding of how exactly Islamophobia manifests in everyday interactions of Muslims. One of the ways to address this gap, as in the case of the present study, is to approach Islamophobia at a daily level. In this regard, it is important to take seriously the fact that everyday Islamophobia is reproduced and reinforced through daily discourse and practices that often manifest in interactions without it being overt.

The most important contribution of this study to the literature on Islamophobia, however, is to explore the various identity strategies the supposed victims of Islamophobia develop to cope with Islamophobia. As I have discussed in Chapter

2, the existing literature does not adequately address the effects of Islamophobia on its targets and the identity strategies they employ to respond to its effects, to reduce, and potentially reverse the status degradations. Considering existing scholarship on various identity strategies against different forms of discrimination amongst minority and immigrant groups, this study has provided an original contribution to the literature on how the supposed victims of Islamophobia present and express themselves from their own perspectives.

Methodologically, this research has used a qualitative research method and helped develop an approach that centres participant perceptions, experiences, and feelings in relation to Islamophobia throughout the study. I addressed the methodological focus in the Islamophobia literature that tends to neglect how the supposed victims of Islamophobia see, present, and express themselves from their own perspectives. Adopting semi-structured in-depth interview method rather than participant observation or quantitative methods allowed me to gather richer, more detailed, and valuable knowledge with which address gaps in the literature on perceptions and experiences of Islamophobia and discursive identity strategies the participants utilised to respond to Islamophobia. Therefore, this knowledge would not have been possible to gather through quantitative methods. Moreover, due to increasingly changing nature of racism from overt and blatant forms to subtle and covert forms of racial practices, quantitative methods would not have allowed me to explore its existence and effects on the targets. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews, I also made connections with many Turkish youths from as many backgrounds as possible to capture a whole range of identity responses to Islamophobia. Employing participant observations, however, would have suggested a different scope of research enquiry and sample profile. Therefore, this research makes a knowledgeable contribution to a systematic analysis of the young Turks' perceptions and experiences of Islamophobia, and various identity strategies they developed to cope with Islamophobia.

Furthermore, this study has provided empirical knowledge of young Turks in Britain who are regarded as the potential victims of Islamophobia but have not been studied as extensively as other Muslim groups in Britain. The distinctive characteristics of Turkish identity make them an interesting case. While Turkish identity contains a strong emphasise on the idea of Islam, it also reflects unique national, ethnic, and religious legacies firmly and concretely shaped through the instruments of modernisation, secularism, democracy, whiteness, and Westernisation. In this regard, this study has worked to introduce different perceptions, experiences, and feelings of the young Turks about Islamophobia that is often not heard of in literature on Islamophobia in Britain.

8.2 Limitations and recommendations for future research

There have, of course, been limitations to this study. The lack of Islamophobia-identity literature in developing this research was the main limitation. Although this allowed me to develop this as a relatively understudied area of research, it would have been useful to have more research to rely on in concluding this study.

The main intervention of this book is an attempt to call for more research into Islamophobia from the perspectives of the perceptions, experiences, and feelings of its supposed victims, given the way they do not remain simply passive but develop various identity strategies to overcome its effects. Further, although sampling was carefully considered to enable a diverse sample of people to take part in this study, because this study is based on small sample size, I remain dissatisfied with the number of people who were diverse enough to represent the variation required in this book. Different voices have been emphasised throughout this study, yet more participants may have provided more nuance to the conclusions of this book.

Taking these limitations into account, there is a clear implication for further research in this area. Firstly, there is scope for a stronger examination of Islamophobia and various identity practices developed against it with a more diverse sample. Thereby, further sociological empirical research on Islamophobia and identity practices will be exceedingly helpful in reinforcing this field of scholarship. Furthermore, as I have discussed in Chapter 6, one of the views that the participants of this research put forward when talking about Islamophobia is that Islamophobia is mostly outside of London. This research was carried out in London and thus further studies from a range of different cities/settings in the UK can provide a better understanding of contextual differences and patterns in relation to Islamophobia between London and these cities. Further, comparative studies can also be conducted in three basic sub-communities called 'Turkish-speaking people': Turks, Kurds, and Turkish Cypriots. This study included only those who identified themselves as Turkish. The main justification of this decision is that this study aimed to understand the reaction of Turkish nationalism and Turkish ethnic identity towards Islamophobia. Although the Turkish-speaking people have lived and worked in the same areas in London, there are ethnic, religious, political/ideological, and socio-cultural differences among the groups (Simsek, 2012; Cakmak, 2018). This could mean that they can experience Islamophobia in different ways and respond to it by developing different identity strategies. Therefore, in order to explore differences between the Turkish-speaking people regarding how they experience, understand, and respond to Islamophobia, comparative research can be conducted among these three basic sub-ethnic groups. In addition, further comparative research can also be conducted between the Turkish diaspora in different countries, especially in Germany, Netherlands, France, and the UK, to better understand how different state policies and public attitudes towards Muslims impact the ways Turkish people describe and valorise their experiences of and responses to Islamophobia.

Furthermore, Covid-19 brings new challenges to British Muslims in terms of polarisation and social fragmentation. Far-right extremists have spread rumours online about how Muslim communities are the ones evading isolation orders and spreading the coronavirus (Awan and Roxana Khan, 2020). We are yet to see the effects of the Covid-19 on Muslim communities, how Muslims experience the Islamophobic accusations during the pandemic both online and offline and what

kind of identity strategies they will employ to cope with the anti-Muslim bigotry and the Islamophobic narratives.

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