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Second-generation Turkish Americans in Chicago: the influences on the preservation of ethnic identity & Turkishness

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Second-Generation Turkish Americans in Chicago: The Influences on the Preservation of Ethnic
Identity & Turkishness

A Thesis
Presented in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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Abstract

This project investigates the preservation of Turkishness and ethnic identity in second generation Turkish Americans in the Chicago area. Since the turn of the century Turkish Americans have been part of the fabric of major metropolitan cities such as Chicago, coming in three major migration waves, but are underrepresented in terms of research and scholarly analysis. I examine the role of migrant organizations, focusing on Turkish American migrant organizations in Chicago, and their effect on retention and maintenance of ethnicity. I am interested in the influences that preserve the Turkish connections within these migrant families and how the connections to heritage are lost or solidified among second generation Turkish Americans. Using Gans' notion of symbolic ethnicity, Portes & Rumbaut's work with the second generation, Sebnem Akcapar's study of the role of migrant organizations and the importance of transnational space along with Ilhan Kaya's connections between space and identity among the Turkish American community, I posit that the role of the migrant organization and specifically its connection to second generation Turkish Americans cannot be underestimated. Though there are other influential factors, the migrant organization's role seems crucial. Based on interviews with second-generation Turkish American subjects in Chicago, along with community stakeholders, it appears three factors influence second-generation Turkish Americans connection to heritage, or in this case, Turkishness: family, migrant organization, and the perception of ethnic identity. As Turks are unique in both their physical presentation and religious backgrounds, they provide an intriguing demographic for this study as racial ambiguity, discrimination, and host culture lack of knowledge about Turks or Turkey are revealed as obstacles in their assimilation and integration.

Keywords: Turkish, second-generation, identity, migrant organization

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This project in the end, is for my boys. They are now the third generation of Turks in our family, they are Turkish Americans, along with a multitude of other nationalities. I am keenly aware of my role in passing on to them the pride and connections to our own family's Turkishness, and hope they continue that ethnic preservation in some form, for many generations to come.

Why Study Turks?

Delving into research about Turkish culture is not just my thesis work, it is a way of honoring my Turkish heritage and passing down the culture I am so proud of to my boys. They are now 3rd generation Turkish Americans among many other ethnicities. It's the Turkish pride passed down from my father, who came to the Midwest at 18 to craft a new life, that drives my work. I grew up within this community of Turks in the Chicago area, and these relationships and friendships have endured for well over 50 years, even after losing both parents. To say this is a rich culture, layered in history and tradition is an understatement, as many might understand who have studied the Ottoman Empire. However, weaving that rich Turkish culture into one's life based in a drastically different culture wasn't always easy. This work is very meaningful as I examine the ways in which one's Turkishness is both preserved, and passed down, specifically and more urgently after the loss of the keeper of culture in our family. With any loss in one's family there are many ways the loss reveals its consequences; both in their physical presence and in their less tangible, but equally important influence in the family. The cultural consequences of the loss of the patriarch in our family are daunting, as I wrestle with how best to maintain our Turkishness, as a family, without the originator. I employ the terms culture and cultural as Kaya does, as a vehicle through which and by which we create order and sense of ourselves and our place in the world. Kaya refers to culture as "Culture is a learned behavior and involves sense making. Collective identities are products of this sense-making process." And it's these processes that help shape our identity.

Introduction: The Role of Second-Generation Turkish Americans in Preserving Turkishness

What are the influences that preserve the Turkish connections within migrant families, and how do the connections to one's heritage deteriorate or disappear? The focus in this project is specifically second-generation Turkish migrants, as that is often a crucial demographic that either nurtures the ethnic ties or further assimilates, potentially losing the link to ethnic identity. In "Identity Across Generations" Ilhan Kaya argues that second-generation Turkish Americans navigate cultural terrain in a unique fashion, more entrenched in the customs of the host culture, however still aware of their parent's home culture while living in American culture, which is still largely ignorant about their ethnicity.¹ This challenge for the second-generation of adjusting to and growing up in a second culture creates some transitional challenges due to their connective, generation-bridging role.² Second-generation Turkish Americans often toe the line between acculturation and assimilation, bridging the cultural differences between themselves and their parents, the first generation Turks who were reared in a completely different set of cultural norms and values. There are varied scholarly approaches to the categorization and definition of second-generation individuals. For this project I'm using Portes and Rumbaut's description of the second-generation as native-born children of foreign-born parents, or foreign-born kids who migrated prior to adolescence.³ The second-generation, regardless of ethnicity, may identify with the additional challenge that come with border identity, which Portes and Rumbaut link to

¹ Ilhan Kaya, "Identity Across Generations: A Turkish-American Case Study," *Middle East Journal*, 63,no.4 (Autumn 2009): 627

² Leslie Reese, Ronald Gallimore, Estela Zarate, "To Be an American: Ethnic Identity, Biculturalism, and Citizenship Among Second-Generation Immigrant Latino Youth," *Journal of Moving Communities*, 3, no.1 (May, 2003): 11

³ Alejandro Portes, Ruben G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Study of the Immigrant Second-Generation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, 1.

Anzaldua's critique of gender and ethnic identities in *Legacies: The Stories of the Immigrant Second Generation*.⁴ This notion of border identity recognizes the existence of dual identities but proposes that neither is denied, creating challenges of straddling multiple cultures.⁵ These cultural and ethnic navigations can either work in tandem with one another, when support systems are in place, such as family or community, or be diametrically opposed to one another due to host culture prejudice, ignorance, or discrimination.⁶ The first and second-generation Turks maneuver American culture differently as they are influenced by their migration and/or assimilation experiences. And the way that each generation negotiates its ethnicity in a host culture varies. Often the era in which migration occurred greatly affects both the ethnic identity and the assimilation process for first generation Turks.

This project explores the three migration waves that brought Turks to the United States, Turkish identity, what it means to be Turkish, and finally, the influences of community on retaining or maintaining Turkishness in the Chicago area. I describe Turkishness as it coincides with Ergin's description of Turkish ethnic identity in "Is the Turk a White Man: Towards a Theoretical Framework for Race in the Making of Turkishness."⁷ Ergin uses Turkishness as an ethnic identifier which demands a distinction from other Muslim identifications and creates a specific connection to identity that is uniquely tied to Turkey.⁸ To truly analyze and comprehend the preservation of ethnicity, it's crucial to examine the factors influencing one's sense of

⁴ Alejandro Portes, Ruben G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Study of the Immigrant Second-Generation* (Berkeley) University of California Press, 2001, 2.

⁵ Ibid, 186.

⁶ Ilhan Kaya, Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study, *Middle East Journal*, 63, no.4 (Autumn 2009): 630.

⁷ Murat Ergin, Is the Turk a White Man? Towards a Theoretical Framework for Race in the Making of Turkishness, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 44, no.6 (November 2008), 830.

⁸ Ibid

identity and community support as well which will be explored through the literature as well as in the views of the interviewees for this project.

Overview

Turks are unique in their ethnic, physical presence, in that, there is often a certain racial ambiguity to their outward appearance.⁹ This contributes to perceived ethnic discrimination and their own sense of identity among the Chicago area Turks.¹⁰ Whereby, Turks may anticipate the potential ethnic discrimination that they anticipate from the host culture, negatively affecting their connections to ethnicity, as described in Ikram's work on ethnicity and discrimination.¹¹ The divergence in both purpose and membership of the two main Turkish migrant organizations in the Chicago area has seemingly negatively affected the cohesiveness of the overall community of Chicago area Turks (TACA, TASC), according to interviews with both community stakeholders and second-generation Turkish Americans.¹²

I argue there are several key factors in maintaining and preserving one's identity or in this analysis, sense of Turkishness. These are: family, language, migrant organization, & perception of ethnic identity. I am interested in the elements that are the most crucial for ethnic preservation and solid construction of an ethnic identity, in this case as that of a Turk or Turkish American. The second-generation is a key demographic as it appears that they are the turning

⁹ Ilhan Kaya, "Identity and Space: The Case of Turkish Americans," *Geographical Review* 95:3 (July 2005): 426

¹⁰ Umar Ikram, Marieke Snijder, Matty de Witt, Aart Schene, Karien Strunks, Anton Kunst, "Perceived Ethnic Discrimination and Depressive Symptoms: The Buffering Effects of Ethnic Identity, Religion, and Ethnic Social Network," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 51:5: (February 2016): 680.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Turkish American Cultural Alliance (TACA), and Turkish American Society of Chicago (TASC).

point in either solidifying a connection to ethnic identity or losing it as a connection to heritage.¹³

Project Relevance: Second-Generation Turks as a Case Study in Maintenance of Ethnicity

In this age of rampant xenophobia, racism, bigotry and a gross misunderstanding of migrant groups, this project assists in identifying the challenges and intricacies of migrant communities such as Turkish Americans and breaks down barriers that breed misunderstanding. The hatred, misinformation, and ignorance associated with migrant and non-white communities is not just alarming, but harmful to many future generations that may subscribe to this dangerous narrative; that of the “other.” Many families are from somewhere else and have roots in other parts of the world. Some of those journeys were due to forced migration, some were exploitative, and some were by choice.¹⁴ Though it wasn’t a peaceful migration for everyone, all the stories must be told, to challenge the ignorance, fears and misconceptions about non-white and migrant communities. This project though focused on second-generation Turks in Chicago has larger implications for second-generation migrants of any background in the United States. Though there are cultural nuances specific to Turks (religious influences, racial ambiguity, host country ignorance surrounding ethnicity), the larger implications for maintaining cultural ties among the second-generation migrants is important. There are connections to other institutions and systems such as education, civic and political circles as well. Also, there is the larger project of educating mainstream American culture, while maintaining one’s own connections to ethnicity as crucial for many ethnic groups and enclaves in this era. The distinction in this

¹³ Ilhan Kaya, “Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study,” *Middle East Journal*, 63, no.4 (Autumn 2009): 630.

¹⁴ Sebnem Akcapar “Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity,” *Turkish Studies*, 10:2 (July 2009): 165 . Gary Okihiro, *Third World Studies: Theorizing Liberation* (Durham) Duke University Press, 2016, 75.

project between Turks and Turkish Americans is tied to generation, as Ilhan Kaya discussed in the piece “Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study.”¹⁵ Kaya described and researched first generation migrants from Turkey whom he referred to as Turks, or those identifying as solely Turkish, as opposed to a hyphenated identity.¹⁶ This project includes an analysis of self-identity of Turkishness, and if not specified by interviewees, the term Turkish American refers to the second-generation, and/or those with a parent born in Turkey and Turk as either first generation Turk or a manner of solely identifying with Turkey as the basis for ethnic identity.

Chicago as locale

There is a limited amount of research on Turks in the United States, and there is an even smaller pool of research examining Turks in the Midwest, specifically Chicago. There is a gaping hole in the availability of scholarly analysis of Turks and Turkish Americans in the Chicago area. This is a demographic that is both under-represented and under-analyzed despite its sizable population in the region. Chicago is the site of a considerable Turkish community (though not the largest) and demonstrates some specificity with respect to lack of collaboration within the ethnic community and the absence of an enclave.¹⁷ The area is noteworthy as it is also one of the major receiving regions, along with Detroit, New York City, & San Francisco, of early Turkish migrants around the turn of the century.¹⁸ The significance of Chicago is also

¹⁵ Ilhan Kaya, “Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study,” *Middle East Journal* 63, no.4 (Autumn 2009): 625.

¹⁶ Ilhan Kaya, “Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study,” *Middle East Journal* 63, no.4 (Autumn 2009): 619

¹⁷ Özge Girit Heck, “*Representing Turkish national culture and Turkish-American identity in Chicago’s Turkish Festivals*” (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2011), 3.

¹⁸ Sebnem Akcapar, “Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity,” *Turkish Studies*, 10, no. 2 (2009): 167.

connected to my personal experience as a second-generation Turkish American growing up in the area. I am interested in how the region acts as either a unifier of the Turkish population, or if the migrant organizations and overall community act as a tool of segregation or isolation in the lives of Turks in the area. In other words, how the community has been helped or hindered by its location and unique characteristics, such as a lack of Turkish enclave is one of the goals of my field work and research. But, to understand the Turkishness expressed and internalized in the Chicago area, one must examine more closely the migration waves that brought Turks here in the first place.

Background on Turks in Chicago : Migration Waves

Chicago is a city of many cultures, and Turks comprise well over 5,000 of the city's population. Accurate and official statistics on the Turkish population in the Chicago area can be elusive. However, it's estimated that in 1990 there were approximately 5,000 Turks in the Chicago area, yet some estimates put the current Turkish population in Chicago around 10,000.¹⁹ The major migration waves that brought Turks to the area are distinct in their makeup and effects on the local Turkish population. The demographics of the Turks in these three migration waves affected their intents upon relocating and their desires to acclimate and adapt to American culture. For example, the first wave of Turks was less likely to see their new American home as their permanent home and were less likely to assimilate. A closer analysis of the migration waves and the demographics is key to understanding their part in maintaining Turkishness.

¹⁹ "United States Census Maps, Chicago Demographics," City of Chicago, accessed June, 2019, https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doi/supp_info/census_maps.html

The term migrant is used in conjunction with the United Nation's description of migrant as any person moving or moved across international borders or within a state, away from their habitual place of residence regardless of: a person's legal status, whether or not the move was voluntary, the causes for the movement or the length of stay.²⁰

There were three major migration waves affecting the makeup of the Turkish population that came to the Chicago area. The first wave of Turkish migrants (just over 20,000) came to the United States around 1900 and landed in three major urban areas, Detroit, New York City and Chicago. In her article "Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity" Sebnem Akcapar discusses the makeup of the migrant populations and the effect of migrant organizations on their integration.²¹ The first wave was noteworthy for several reasons, it was compiled mostly of illiterate, unskilled men, relocating to earn money with the intent of returning to Turkey.²² They didn't necessarily set their sights on fitting into, or acclimating to their new culture, their goals were simple; to survive, save, and return home. These migrants saw the United States merely as a temporary living situation. Contributing to their disconnect within society were feelings of discrimination and their perceived sense of "other" compounded most likely by the illiteracy and lack of worldliness on the part of the Turks.²³ Further complicating the Turkish identity is that Turks don't always appear different outwardly than those of white or European descent. Turks are often "white passing," as evidenced by research and my interviewee accounts, yet still Turks may struggle with other cultural barriers, such as language or religious differences that may invite discrimination as

²⁰ Issues," Social Transformations and Intercultural Dialogue, United Nations, accessed October 5,2019, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/migration>

²¹ Sebnem Akcapar, "Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity," *Turkish Studies*, 10, no. 2 (2009): 167-72.

²² Ibid, 167.

²³ Ibid, 169.

indicated in most of the interviews for this project. Kaya describes the complexity and influences on Turkishness affecting the identity of second-generation Turks in “Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case History.”²⁴ Kaya argues though Turks are often white passing, they are complex, ethnically and culturally speaking, so, their appearance varies as their backgrounds do. In other words, Turks have all different presentations, making the degree to which they can fit in to a majority white, European influenced culture a bit more nuanced.²⁵ The fact that the American culture in which they found themselves in the 1900s was just then experiencing Muslims for the first time, had a lot to do with their less than welcoming reception in the host culture according to Bilal Sert in “Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life.”²⁶ There appeared to be host culture ignorance at that time as to how to be hospitable, empathetic, and welcoming with this new demographic.

The second wave of migration was markedly different in makeup, as Kaya describes, it featured skilled Turks, professionals, students, and women who migrated between 1950-1980.²⁷ This second wave was the group most likely to identify as Kemalists, or those aligning with the philosophy and ideas of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the father of the modern Turkish Republic, founded in 1923. Kemalists are historically more secular, nationalistic, populist, and reformist, as these are characteristics espoused by Atatürk.²⁸ So, this wave was reared on Atatürk’s beliefs, with a strong sense of nationalism, and a connection to the Turkishness that meant modernism to

²⁴ Ilhan Kaya, “Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study,” *Middle East Journal* 63, no.4 (Autumn 2009):621.

²⁵ Ibid, 627.

²⁶ Bilal Sert, “Early Turkish Immigrants’ Adaptation Experiences” in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed. Sebahattin Ziyanak and Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 40-41.

²⁷ Ilhan Kaya, “Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study,” *Middle East Journal* 63, no. 4 (Autumn 2009): 618

²⁸ Ibid, 626-7.

this generation and demographic.²⁹ This second wave of Turks migrated to the Chicago area intent upon working, or opening businesses, or going to school and integrating into society. They were here, essentially, to improve their lives in some way. Most of this wave ended up staying in the United States, and many of the cultural associations were begun in this era, including the Turkish American Cultural Alliance in Chicago, or TACA.³⁰

The final wave (1980-2008) of Turks to the United States featured a mix of skilled and non-skilled migrants, families and genders. This wave was sometimes referred to as the “Germanification” wave, as it often includes more laborers that previously worked abroad (Germany) and eventually returned to Turkey after a certain amount of time.³¹ This was the most diverse of all the waves, in term of demographics, and goals upon migration. Some of these Turkish migrants intended on staying in the States (and Chicago) and some intended on working to earn money ad return to Turkey.

The final wave was also a combination of skilled and low-skilled workers, so were mixed into the workforce differently than the first two waves. Overall, this group included more laborers that ended up returning to Turkey.³² An examination of the factors influencing each wave of Turkish migrants coming to the United States will follow, as the climate and reception in the host culture influenced their attachment to ethnicity, or Turkishness. I’ll focus on both the influences on their own sense of ethnic identity as well as host culture perceptions of the Turks that affected their preservation or maintenance of Turkish identity. The themes in this project

²⁹ Ibid, 618.

³⁰ Sebnem Akcapar, “Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity,” *Turkish Studies* 10, no.2 (2009): 175.

³¹ Ibid, 172.

³² Ibid, 172-3.

include migration and immigration, ethnic and virtual enclaves, whiteness and racial ambiguity, identity, and finally, the perception of other.

Migration Policy Overview – Immigration Legislation in the U.S.

The U.S. immigration laws from the creation of this country until present day can be summed up in two words: restriction and manipulation. As scholars and critics of race relations such as Omi & Winant, Okimoto, Garner, Hancock & Fidel have pointed out, when you have an inequitable base, it is difficult to achieve a sense of equity from that flawed infrastructure.³³ It's telling that some of the first indicators of the new world's philosophy indicated the preferential treatment of the European, white ideals and restricted the rights of those perceived as "other" than the ideal new American.³⁴ This white, Western perspective is evidenced in legal frameworks, whereby the U.S. legislation that granted citizenship, through the Naturalization Act of 1790 to "any free white person of good character" was influential in furthering a white-centered foundation, according to the Pew Research Institute.³⁵ As a response to an influx of European migrants flooding many American cities, restrictions on migrants via legislation increased.

In the mid-1850s individual states began making their own decisions with respect to immigration law. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act responded to alleged threat of the influx of

³³ Roberta A. Garner, Black Hawk Hancock, Kenneth Fidel, "Class and Race- Ethnicity in a Changing City," in *Neoliberal Chicago*, ed. Larry Bennett, Roberta Garner, Euan Hague (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 18-19.

³⁴ Walter Ewing, "Opportunity and Exclusion: A Brief History of U.S. Immigration Policy," Immigration Policy Center (January, 2012): 2-3.

³⁵ D'Vera Cohn, "How U.S. Immigration Laws and Rules Have Changed Through History," Pew Research Center, September 30, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/9/30/how-u-s-immigration-laws-and-rules-have-changed-through-history/>

immigration by barring Chinese migrants from even entering the country. This was so clearly a perceived threat response manifesting itself in legislation, as there were only about .002% of Chinese in the country then. The scapegoating of non-whites and migrants through legislation started in earnest with the Chinese Exclusion Act, restricting Chinese migrants' entry to the United States. This xenophobia continued with the Immigration Act in 1891 that only extended migration restrictions. U.S. immigration was at a high point just around the turn of the century, in 1907, but still with just a select group being allowed to enter.³⁶ There were some Turks that entered at this time, this being the first wave of Turks relocating mainly for work and economic reasons,, however the secretive nature of their departure, contributed to tracking the populations movements, as referenced by noted Turkish American scholar Kemal Karpat, "Reference to Muslim emigrants is made in all types of communications... a group of Ottomans denied entry to the United States because of lack of the proper documents and/or any established means of subsistence was reported to consist of approximately 200 Syrians, 200 Armenians, and 60 "Turks," that is Muslims."³⁷ In *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, Bilal Sert notes that though a considerable number of Turks were processed through sites such as Ellis Island, a main migrant processing center, either not using their Turkish names or were inaccurately registered, or didn't even acknowledge their religious affiliation (Muslim) upon entry, for fear of discrimination.³⁸

³⁶ D'Vera Cohn, "How U.S. Immigration Laws and Rules Have Changed Through History," Pew Research Center, September 30, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/9/30/how-u-s-immigration-laws-and-rules-have-changed-through-history>

³⁷ Kemal Karpat, "The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 17, no. 2 (May 1985): 182.

³⁸ Bilal Sert, "Sociological Framework and Theories on Initiating Factors, Adaptation Experiences, and Millet Immigrants from the Ottoman Empire," in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed. Sebahattin Ziyanak and Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018): 1-2.

This fear of discrimination coincides with Ikram's work on perceived ethnic discrimination, the anticipation and negative consequences of discrimination can be daunting to many migrants, such as with Turks. The Turk's fears of discrimination were compounded by the fact that many Turkish Muslims entering the United States during the first wave had little knowledge about the American culture and traditions and were fearful that they would be perceived negatively.³⁹ Kaya describes the challenges of the first wave, "Since US immigration officials did not classify those entering the country based on their religion, we do not know much about the religion of the immigrants from the Ottoman Empire. Most Muslims, including the Turks, were afraid of not being accepted in a Christian country because of their faith. Hence many adopted and registered under a Christian name at the port of entry."⁴⁰ Turks in the first wave were among the first Muslims most Americans would encounter.⁴¹

The xenophobic atmosphere in the early 1900s in the United States created largely through legislation and racist narratives contributed to those fears of discrimination, and shaped dominant beliefs about migrants. The trends in migration and corresponding policies to pick and choose the new Americans persisted around the turn of the century and continues with current policies. The widely held perception of Japanese workers was that they were stealing jobs from Americans in the early 1900s, inspiring a "Gentlemen's Agreement" created in 1907 to limit the number of Japanese migrants to only those with alleged status and certain expertise.⁴² Though the agreement was informal, this trend to limit the type of migrants the United States allows

³⁹ Ilhan Kaya, "Shifting Turkish American Identity Formations in the United States" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2003), 49.

⁴⁰ Ilhan Kaya, "Shifting Turkish American Identity Formations in the United States" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2003), 49.

⁴¹ Ibid, 50.

⁴² D'vera Cohn, "How U.S. Immigration Laws and Rules Have Changed Through History," Pew Research Centers, September 30, 2015, <https://pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/9/30/how-u-s-immigration-laws-and-rues-have-changed-through-history>.

entry persists today, as evidenced via the Muslim travel bans of the early Trump administration.⁴³

This manufactured fear around the turn of the century that pervaded national sentiment came to a peak in 1924 with the Immigration Act of 1924 that limited migration and established quotas. Though one might say it featured more equitable elements, it still favored European migrants and still excluded those from Asia.⁴⁴ The manipulation of migrants, here specifically for labor, was created via the Bracero Program in 1942, that lasted until 1964. This allowed Mexican migrants in, but only to work the farms, exploiting labor as is a pattern for American policy, and to work here only temporarily, essentially just if and as the U.S. needed Mexican labor.⁴⁵ The second wave of Turkish migration started right before the McCarran-Walter Act, that ended the exclusion of Asian migrants.⁴⁶ It wasn't until 1965 that the quota system connected to migration ended, only to be replaced with another racialized way to target migrants; a preferencing of certain skills over others, for entry.⁴⁷

There was some legislation in the 1980s and into the 2000s that established amnesty for certain migrant groups (DREAM, DACA). However, another blow for Turks and non-majority migrants came via the two executive orders signed by President Trump in 2017. He banned travelers from six majority Muslim countries from entering the United States citing securitization

⁴³ Abed Ayoub and Khaled Beydoun, "Executive Disorder: The Muslim Ban, Emergency Advocacy, and the Fires Next Time," *Hein Online*, 22 no. 2 (Spring 2017): 221-3

⁴⁴ D'Vera Cohn, "How U.S. Immigration Laws and Rules Have Changed Through History," Pew Research Center, September 30, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/9/30/how-u-s-immigration-laws-and-rules-have-changed-through-history>

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Sebnem Akcapar, "Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity," *Turkish Studies*, 10, no.2 (2009):170-171.

⁴⁷ D'Vera Cohn, "How U.S. Immigration Laws and Rules Have Changed Through History," Pew Research Center, September 30, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/9/30/how-u-s-immigration-laws-and-rules-have-changed-through-history>

fears.⁴⁸ Though this didn't include Turkey, many scholars including Lipka and Rivera see the furthering of xenophobic, racist ideologies in the public and through legislation as increasingly harmful.⁴⁹

Literature Review

Enclaves as Reinforcers of Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity may be influenced and formed by factors including migrant community, migrant organizations, family, language ability and perception in host culture of one's ethnicity. Umar Ikram describes ethnic identity as "the subjective sense of ethnic group membership that involves self-labelling, sense of belonging, preference for the group, positive evaluation of the ethnic group, ethnic knowledge, and involvement in ethnic group activities."⁵⁰ There are also many ways in which one's ethnicity may be both ingested and expressed to those within and outside of the ethnic community. Herbert Gans discussed the concept of ethnic identity through symbols that allows one to show pride in one's culture, but without practicing and experiencing ethnicity as a part of everyday life, almost as a shorthand or shortcut to ethnic identity expression. Gans' notion of symbolic ethnicity as a way in which Chicago area Turks have incorporated the sense of Turkishness via symbols and outward identifiers of ethnicity is key as one addresses identity.⁵¹ The uniqueness of the migrant organizations in Chicago, and the

⁴⁸ Abed Ayoub and Khaled Beydoun, "Executive Disorder: The Muslim Bank, Emergency Advocacy, and the Fires Next Time," *Hein Online*, 22, no.2 (Spring 2017): 221-23.

⁴⁹ Michael Lipka, "U.S. Muslims see their relationship with Trump as strained," *Pew Research Fact Tank*, July 27, 2017, 2. Christopher Rivera, "The Brown Threat: Post 9/11 confluences of Latina/os and Middle Eastern Muslims in the US American imagination," *Latino Studies* 12, no.1 (2014): 1.

⁵⁰ Umar Ikram, Marieke Snijder, Marty de Wit, Aart Schene, Karien Stronks, Anton Kunst, "Perceived ethnic discrimination and depressive symptoms: the buffering effects of ethnic identity, religion and ethnic social network," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 51, no. 5 (February 12, 2016): 680.

⁵¹ Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: the future of ethnic groups and cultures in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, no.1 (January 1979): 9

overall agency of Turks in the area has affected their presence in the American culture.⁵²

Akcapar stresses the importance of organizational levels that affect Turks connection to the host culture and relationship with integration in the Chicago area. Her discussion of transnational space as creating the link between home and host country is key in understanding how Turks in the Chicago area are either more or less connected to their sense of identity.⁵³ Akcapar's reference to migrant organizations, associations or organizations as a place that creates transnational space, and a link between home and host culture, in order to unite and support the community inspired the analysis in this project.⁵⁴ In her work transnational space is a place such as a migrant organization that nurtures the migrant on the macro and micro level such that the Turks can solidify their Turkishness while connecting to their host culture at the same time, in the same space. In other words, these transnational spaces such as TACA or TASC may both encourage bonding to the home culture (Turkey) while nurturing the sense of belonging in the host culture (United States) through language classes and support resources. The Chicago area migrant organizations have created space in which to negotiate Turkishness, but they approach the notion of ethnic identity and cooperation and collaboration with American culture differently. Akcapar would argue that for migrants there are many benefits to migrant associations, however the first and second-generation Turks interact very differently with these organizations, affecting their decisions to further assimilate and integrate, or isolate from Chicago area Turks.⁵⁵

⁵² Ozge Girit Heck, Representing Turkish national culture and Turkish-American Identity in Chicago's Turkish festivals (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2011) 3-4.

⁵³ Sebnem Akcapar, "Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity," *Turkish Studies* 10, no.2 (2009): 166.

⁵⁴ Sebnem Akcapar, "Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity," *Turkish Studies* 10, no.2 (2009): 166.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 177.

The decision to assimilate into the host (American) culture may be impeded by discrimination in the host country, as discussed in Portes and Rivas' work with second-generation migrants, as some Turks have witnessed, including most of the project participants.⁵⁶ But, both the connection to host culture and sense of ethnic identity is a tenuous negotiation for Turkish Americans. Sanders sees migrant organizations as playing key roles in the preservation of ethnicity via social networks in "Ethnic Boundaries and Identities in Plural Societies," and the importance of connections to both regional networks and participation in transnationalism affects migrant's lives.⁵⁷ Sanders views migrant organizations as helpful in nurturing a sense of ethnicity but potentially linked to stereotyping of the ethnic group as well if the interactions between members are affected by territorial segregation.⁵⁸ Sanders views almost a fine line between ethnic support through migrant organizations and fodder for stereotyping from outside of the organization or ethnic group. The second-generation of Turkish Americans play a key role in bridging these two sectors, within and outside of the ethnic group.

Ilhan Kaya argues in "Identity Across Generations" the point at which the second-generation decides to either preserve and connect more earnestly to their identity as a Turkish American or disconnect from that ethnicity often happens during young adulthood and is crucial to the longevity of the ethnic group.⁵⁹ I describe this phenomenon of second-generation migrants at the crossroads of cultural identity as a *temporary ethnic disconnect* (TED). Kaya argues that this ethnic assessment typically occurs in young adulthood, such as during college years. Second-generation young adults are essentially spaceless for a period, meaning they don't

⁵⁶ Alejandro Portes and Alejandro Rivas, "The Future of Children," *Immigrant Children* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 229.

⁵⁷ Jimmy Sanders, "Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies," *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 346

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ilhan Kaya, "Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study," *Middle East Journal* 63, no.4 (Autumn 2009): 627-8.

feel a sense of complete belonging in their ethnic identity community *or* in American culture. It's during this period that second-generation individual may choose complete assimilation into American culture (losing much of their ethnic identity) or preserving their Turkishness through either a commitment or a recommitment to the Turkish customs and traditions, and often times language as well.⁶⁰ This temporary ethnic disconnect can be permanently severed by discrimination, or repaired via family, enclave, migrant organizations or positive childhood experiences within the culture.⁶¹ Should integration with simultaneous retention of culture be the goal, Kaya asserts there is much the community can do (rather than institutions) to assist Turkish migrants in the integration process. Certainly, the role of the migrant organization cannot be understated in this regard. In "Shifting Turkish American Identity Formations in the United States" Ilhan Kaya argues that it's really upon arrival in a host country such as the U.S. that Turks will become aware of their differences, or their sense of "other" in the community, and the support provided by the community at large affects the forward momentum of Turkishness as identity.⁶² He argues that the sense of spacelessness experienced by some migrants is exacerbated by discrimination and the racial ambiguity experienced by many Turks in the U.S., "Identity is mapped in a dual sense as we set boundaries between who we are and who we are not. Living in the United States makes Turks realize their differences as they see such differences being viewed as 'alien' or as 'other.' Therefore, Turks' self-identifications rarely match the identities given to them, specifically from a host culture. They may not be considered as 'American' or 'normal' as Americanness often translates to 'whiteness.'"⁶³ Kaya

⁶⁰ Ibid, 629.

⁶¹ Ibid, 629-30.

⁶² Ilhan Kaya, "Shifting Turkish American Identity Formations in the United States," (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2003): 9.

⁶³ Ibid.

describes here the awareness of the existence of the us vs. them binary where the Turk sees him or herself as the “other” for the first time upon arriving in the United States. That realization surrounding identity for him, then is only compounded by the separation from the white host culture that equates Americanness with whiteness.

The Value of the Virtual Enclave

Zeynep Tufekci describes the role of a virtual enclave and community as a method of increasing information dissemination through social media networks in her book *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*.⁶⁴ Tufekci argues that it’s through the public sphere, space created by social media, that private citizens can gather, share and express views that might not necessarily be tolerated by the dominant culture. She further discusses the public sphere as a place to create new narratives, to test out ideas and form possible protest actions against the dominant public, as the Turks did with the Gezi Park protests of 2013, resisting the government’s top-down policies.⁶⁵ For Tufekci, the enclave or community can be a conglomerate that operates both with local and international actors simultaneously. She views enclave as not beholden to a physical presence, and one that may work in conjunction with physical communities, to support them, such as with the physical groups that formed following global protests like those in Istanbul. She also refers to the ability of social media groups to act as a virtual enclave, becoming insular in an effort to create, defend and prepare their ideologies that are counter to the dominant culture of governmental regulations dominant public.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017): 230.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 231.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 6.

In communities such as Chicago where there is no ethnic enclave for Turks, no concentrated spaces in which to gather the virtual enclave takes on a new sense of relevancy and importance. Even in other American cities where there is a Turkish enclave and active migrant organizations the virtual enclave can be that additional support in ethnic preservation.

Chicago Area Migrant Organization With a Secular Identity

One of the more established and still flourishing Chicago area Turkish cultural organizations is the Turkish American Cultural Alliance, or TACA. This migrant organization was founded in 1965 for two reasons, to support its members with integration and adaptation concerns and to raise public awareness of Turkish culture through activities that focus on culture, art, history and heritage.⁶⁷ There is a membership of over 3,000, but the number of active members is much smaller according to Ivan U., past president of TACA. There are personal connections to this group, as my own family has been involved with TACA in various capacities since the 1970s. Some of the events TACA has created since its inception are: booths at the Chicago International Folk Festival that was staged at Navy Pier under Mayor Byrne, Children's Day activities (that observe National Sovereignty and the promise and possibilities of Turkish youth, or *Ulusal Egemenlik ve Çocuk Bayram*), and cultural and ethnic speakers and presentations in the Chicago area.⁶⁸ TACA also hosts the annual Republic Day Ball, commemorating the founding of the Turkish Republic (*Cumhuriyet Bayram*), Turkish music concerts, and commemorates Turkish holidays (*Bayram*).⁶⁹

⁶⁷ About TACA, Turkish American Cultural Alliance, <https://www.tacaonline.org>, accessed October, 2019.

⁶⁸ Ivan U., Interview, 2019.

⁶⁹ Ibid

Chicago Area Migrant Organization With a Religious Identity: Muslim Turks in Chicago

Much as there are many variations in physicality of Turks in Chicago, there are varied ways in which they connect and identify with religion, or Islam in this instance. There is a non-secular cultural center and mosque for Chicago area Turks and Turkish Americans in the organization Turkish American Society of Chicago or TASC. It was established in 1997 and bills itself as a combination of culture, education and religious services. According to its mission, the objectives are virtually identical to those of TACA. TASC states that they strive “To serve the Turkish-American in the Chicago area to better integrate into the society, and to introduce the Turkish culture to the community to cultivate friendship and promote a better understanding of diverse cultures through dialog and exchange of information.”⁷⁰ But, the likelihood and strength of a religious identity and connection to Turkish migrant organizations is affected by the organizational levels in the host country, America according to Akcapar. She argues that on the macro level the overall attitude surrounding Turkish migrants sets the groundwork for both their relationship (meso level) and their social status as well. The transnational space of the migrant organization can help connect the Turkish migrant to each of these levels or create friction and discord between the migrant’s connection to host culture and his or her own ethnic identity.⁷¹

Zeynep Sezgin urges the analysis of the role of the migrant organization and its overall effectiveness in “Turkish Migrant Organizations: Promoting Tolerance Toward the Diversity of Turkish Migrants in Germany.” Sezgin studied the Turks in Germany and the role of migrant organizations in integration and segregation. She questioned the helpfulness of the migrant

⁷⁰ “About Us” Turkish American Society of Chicago, accessed October, 2019, <https://www.taschicago.org>

⁷¹ Sebnem Akcapar, “Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity,” *Turkish Studies*, 10, no.2 (2009): 181.

organization in some western cultures such as Germany. She proposed that though the migrant organizations may assist overall with integration, their effectiveness greatly depends on how the migrant group's agenda fits into the host country's political and social agenda. Sezgin discovered there may be further isolation and segregation of migrant groups, such as the Turks in Germany, when there is discord between the two demographics.⁷² The early wave of Turks who came to America discovered, their Turkish identity was heavily influenced by popular cultural narratives in the host country.⁷³ The places in which ethnic identity and culture can be both reinforced and shared with the host culture is key according to Zeynep Isik-Ercan in "Third Spaces: Turkish Immigrants and Their Children at the Intersection of Identity, Schooling and Culture." Isik-Ercan discusses other factors influencing identity such as: navigating geo-cultural spaces, becoming agents of negotiation, regenerating traditions as other influential factors for Turks integrating into a host culture.⁷⁴

The migrant organization is one of those third spaces in which culture and identity is negotiated. These third spaces are places in which Turks can not only maintain their ethnic roots, but from which to reach out and educate the host culture about their identity and even build agency to navigate the American systems. The concept of knowledge is power is applicable in this instance as Turkish Americans who are more aware and comfortable in their American communities may feel more apt to display self-advocacy.

⁷² Zeynep Sezgin, "Turkish Migrants' Organizations: Promoting Tolerance toward the Diversity of Turkish Migrants in Germany," *International Journal of Sociology* 38, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 81.

⁷³ Bilal Sert, "Theoretical and Practical Implications," in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed. Sebahattin Ziyanak and Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 52-3.

⁷⁴ Zeynep Isik-Ercan, "Third Spaces: Turkish Immigrants and Their Children at the Intersection of Identity, Schooling, and Culture," *Diaspora, Indigenous and Minority Education* 8, no. 3 (July 2014): 127

Self-advocacy and familiarity with American systems becomes crucial for Turkish migrants in the face of “othering,” misperceptions and ignorance surrounding their ethnicity in the United States. Ikram addresses the importance of self-advocacy, “Strong ethnic identity may also create awareness of the socio-cultural history of the ethnic group, enabling individuals to adequately distinguish whether discrimination is directed at them personally, or at their ethnic group as a whole.”⁷⁵ Portes and Manning point out that if one subscribes to the assimilation theory as it relates to social mobility among migrants, those who fail to move up the social hierarchy are in that position due to the resistance to eschewing their traditional cultural values. These values may include cultural traditions as well as religious practices.⁷⁶

When an ethnic group such as Turkish Americans both connects and collaborates with populations outside their networks, the advantages seem to be greater agency and comfort on the part of the Turkish Americans. However, Sanders unearthed some concerns when ethnic groups connect with those outside their own communities as well, specifically when there are preconceived notions about the ethnicity. Sanders discovered some key concerns within an ethnic community as tied to stereotyping and collaboration. He determined that if there were limited interactions (within and out of groups), the differences would be emphasized and stereotyping would increase overall, to the detriment of the ethnic group.⁷⁷ The apparent lack of collaboration within the Turkish community, and their lack of agency in connecting with existing systems to promote a positive image of the ethnicity seems to support Sanders’ point about the need for collaboration. Sanders also touches on the importance of resource sharing within ethnic

⁷⁵ Ikram, et al, “Perceived ethnic discrimination and depressive symptoms: the buffering effects of ethnic identity, religion and ethnic social network,” *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 51, no. 5 (February 12, 2016): 3.

⁷⁶ Alejandro Portes, Robert Manning, “The Immigrant Enclave: Theory and Empirical Examples,” in *Social Stratification: Class, Race and Gender in Sociological Perspectives* ed. David Grusky (New York: Routledge, 2008): 48.

⁷⁷ Jimmy Sanders, “Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002): 328.

communities. He claims that when jobs and other resources are shared (bridging outside help with ethnic community members- often via migrant organizations) the social capital within that ethnic community will be enhanced.⁷⁸ The achievement of social capital wealth is incredibly important for most citizens, specifically migrants. By only achieving some economic goals, they may only move so far in the host culture, in terms of socio-political hierarchies. Both Chicago area Turkish migrant organizations leaders stated that part of their mission was connecting with migrants in order to support them both economically and socially, including integration support.⁷⁹ Nauck analyzes the stages of assimilation experienced by migrants, and sees them as: identification, social, structural, and cognitive. The cognitive state includes societal and institutional knowledge that is the stage not achieved, or even breached by many Chicago area Turkish migrants. Nauck discusses the barriers to achieve that last stage of assimilation as discrimination and prejudice.⁸⁰ In a post-9/11 American society, the instances of discrimination against Muslim Americans has grown, as evidenced by the literature and almost all my interviews.⁸¹

Portes and Rivas analyzed the factors influencing second-generation individual's life paths and success as: racial identification, work experiences, and the socioeconomic status given to their ethnic group in the host society.⁸² The resources the migrant parents may pass on to second generation children greatly affects their life paths and appear to help with positive ethnic

⁷⁸ Ibid, 330.

⁷⁹ Ivan U., President of TACA, 2019, Al Y., Leader of TASC, 2019.

⁸⁰ Bernhard Nauck, "Intercultural Contact and Intergenerational Transmission in Immigrant Families," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 32 (2001): 160-61.

⁸¹ Crystal Paul and Sarah Becker, "People Are Enemies to What They Don't Know: Managing Stigma and Anti-Muslim Stereotypes in a Turkish Community Center," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 46, no.2 (2017): 135, Christopher Rivera, "The Brown Threat: Post 9/11 Conflations of Latina/os and Middle Eastern Muslims in the US American Imagination," *Latino Studies* 12, no. 1 (2014): 44.

⁸² Alejandro Portes, Alejandro Rivas, "The Future of Children," *Immigrant Children* 21 no. 1 (Spring 2011): 219.

imaging as well. Migrant organizations and language play a key role in this cultural handoff with second generation members.⁸³ Akcapar also argues that the Turkish migrant organization can act as a link, or connector within the ethnic community as well as to the host culture at large, almost as an ethnic middleman.⁸⁴ There are national umbrella Turkish cultural associations, however they don't appear to have a strong influence in either collaborating with or mending the divisions in the Chicago area Turkish migrant population. Even within the umbrella groups there is further division, such as between TASSA (Turkish American Scientists and Scholars Association), who encourages scientific and scholarly exchange, and the ATFA, American Turkish Friendship Association founded by Fetullah Gülen supporters which created schools and mosques across the country.⁸⁵

Whiteness, racial ambiguity & Turkishness

Whether it is within the transnational space of the migrant organization or in the community at large, Turks and Turkish Americans struggle with the attempts to categorize them in racial terms. Their degree of whiteness not only plays a factor in their parents' integration and acculturation, but as Murat Ergin also discusses, on the second-generation's ability to bridge the generations and their own ethnic identity. Kaya argues in "Identity and Space: The Case of Turkish Americans," that it's really upon arrival in a host country such as the U.S. that Turks will become aware of their differences, or their perception as "other." This perception has a great influence on their own identity constructions and experiences in the host country, and he

⁸³ Ibid, 225.

⁸⁴ Sebnem Akcapar, "Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity," *Turkish Studies* 10, no.2 (2009): 165-66.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 176.

argues also affects the support provided by the community at large (think non-Turks), thereby influencing the forward momentum of Turkishness as identity.⁸⁶

This sense of racial ambiguity and the friction between legal whiteness but social non-whiteness is at the heart of Alim's raciolinguistic and transracialization argument.⁸⁷ Alim asserts that the desire to categorize (in order to more easily discriminate and "other" people) contributes to the creation of one's identity and is shaped by their interactions in the host culture.⁸⁸ In this way, the first generation appears to be the crucial piece in connecting to host culture, but the second-generation plays the key role in preserving heritage.⁸⁹

Migrants in the United States have struggled with oppression and marginalization that was constructed and maintained by the dominant white creators of a racial hierarchy since this nation was founded. There are oppressed groups based on race, gender, sexual identity, and ethnicity.⁹⁰ Oppression has affected many non-white and ethnic groups in all aspects of life from employment to housing, to access to services, and successful integration into the dominant culture.⁹¹ The separation and isolation of non-white groups and other marginalized populations has occurred via policies, systems and media with detrimental effects on the ability to not only access equal opportunities, but to live an equitable existence.⁹² Some migrants will also

⁸⁶ Ilhan Kaya, "Identity and Space: The Case of Turkish Americans," *Geographical Review* 95, no.3 (July 2005): 429-30.

⁸⁷ Samy Alim, "Who's Afraid of the Transracial Subject?" in *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas About Race* ed. H. Samy Alim, John Rickford, Arnetha Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 36.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 35.

⁸⁹ Ilhan Kaya, "Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study," *Middle East Journal* 63, no. 4 (Autumn 2009): 628.

⁹⁰ Gary Okihiro, *Third World Studies: Theorizing Liberation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 8-9.

⁹¹ Euan Hague, Michael Lorr, Carolina Sternberg, "Introduction Chicago: Neoliberal City," in *Neoliberal Chicago*, ed. Larry Bennett, Roberta Garner, Euan Hague (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017): 4-5.

⁹² D'Vern Cohn, "How U.S. Immigration Laws and Rules Have Changed Through History," Pew Research Center, September 30, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank-2015/9/30/how-u-s-immigration-laws-and-rules-have-changed-through-history>.

struggle with the challenge of racial ambiguity. When one is not clearly definable as white or non-white, there are additional difficulties in marginalizing that individual. When the dominant group must define the “other” residents of a city or neighborhood as say, Turkish or Irish, this need to categorize and racialize is directly related to power structures and the ways one entity or population, typically white, can rule over another, typically non-white.⁹³

The identity and perceptions of many migrants have consequences in the ways in which they see themselves, and how others see them. How is Turkish identity affected by a racial hierarchy, that created the basis for our government and systems? Lipsitz argues that there is a conscious “possessive investment in whiteness” that is created and advanced by private prejudice and public policies.⁹⁴ Whites are encouraged to keep this privileged identity and use it essentially as cash value to access housing, education, employment and inherited wealth, according to Lipsitz. Though the identity of whiteness is socially constructed, and therefore fictitious, Lipsitz argues that it has real-life consequences for non-whites as it restricts their ability to access opportunity and power.⁹⁵ There has been much legislation to support and highlight this continued and protected investment in whiteness throughout our history. However, some groups have displayed racial fluidity, or moving and associating with whites and non-whites, depending on circumstances.⁹⁶ For example, “Immigrants from Asia sought the rewards of whiteness for themselves by asking for legal recognition of their whiteness” to transition more

⁹³ Ilgin Yorukoğlu, “Whiteness as an Act of Belonging: White Turks Phenomenon in the Post 9/11 World,” *Glocalism* 2.2, no. 2 (2017): 18.

⁹⁴ George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998): vii.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 2-3.

⁹⁶ Samy Alim, “Who’s Afraid of the Transracial Subject?” in *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas About Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, John Rickford, Arnetta Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 36.

easily to naturalized citizens.⁹⁷ The implication here is that there is a conscious desire to associate with whiteness to reap the rewards and benefits of a white-dominant society.

The multitude of ways that the government supported the possessive investment in whiteness is evidenced in its treatment of housing and urban policy. Lipsitz argues that it was policies such as the creation of the FHA in 1934 that claimed to make homeownership a reality for all citizens, but in the end simply favored white homeowners and backed racist realty practices. Urban renewal programs that were meant to revitalize cities such as Chicago, focused solely on higher income and white residents destroying and disinvesting in non-white communities in the 1950s and 60s.⁹⁸ We are reminded that most whites accrue wealth (and with that access to power systems and legitimacy) through property. So, the decimation and disinvestment in that aspect of wealth accrual was part of the bigger plan to maintain this investment in whiteness.⁹⁹

The racial ambiguity of Turks in the United States creates a challenge for them in neatly fitting into either white or non-white categories. This need to categorize at all is directly connected to the desires to fit them into a hierarchy that will either disempower Turks or relegate them to a subordinate position, culturally speaking. Yorukoğlu asserts that though Turks are legally white, they just don't fit easily into Western categories of race, which Omi and Winant argue is a social construction to begin with.¹⁰⁰ Alim agrees that the need to categorize any ethnicity or group is problematic, because once categorized they are much easier to oppress. The

⁹⁷ George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998): 3.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 7.

⁹⁹ George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 5-6.

¹⁰⁰ Michael Omi, Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 1994): 57.

categorization of Muslims, and some non-whites, including Turks post 9/11 was done through some very racist discourse and weaponization of Muslims.¹⁰¹

For Turks who identified as secular, the phenomenon known as “White Turks” signaled a disassociation with Islam and a way to align more closely with whiteness, to therefore benefit from those privileges.¹⁰² Within Turkey the association as White Turk or Black Turk began in earnest in the 1990s and 2000s. What began as a satirical response to socio-economic and political changes in Turkey, morphed into an effort to clearly distinguish the secular, urban, white collar Turks (White Turks) from the conservative, Islamic, blue collar, new urban Turks (Black Turks) who were benefitting from the authoritarian, Islamic principles of the (then) Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan, who was himself a former leader of a conservative, Islamic political party.¹⁰³ This racial fluidity, or allegiance with whiteness or non-whiteness pushes back on the notion that you are either one or the other, the black/ white binary which in the United States morphed into the “American vs. alien” or “American vs. terrorist” binary post 9/11.¹⁰⁴ Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, many Turks were troubled by the association with Eastern identities, which were separate from whiteness, and saw more success and access with a closer association with European, Western, white identity. It was in the United States, brought on by the so-called global war on terror, that the racialization of Muslims was connected to criminality and terrorism.¹⁰⁵ Middle Eastern Muslims’ racial status isn’t always readily apparent, though often defined legally as white. Yorukoğlu argues racial ambiguity created a “white on paper, not

¹⁰¹ Ilgin Yorukoğlu, “Whiteness as an Act of Belonging: White Turks Phenomenon in the Post 9/11 World,” *Glocalism*, 2 no. 2 (2017): 3, Christopher Rivera, “The Brown Threat: Post 9/11 confluences of Latina/os and Middle Eastern Muslims in the US American imagination,” *Latino Studies*, 12, no.1 (2014): 46.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 17

¹⁰³ Ilgin Yorukoğlu, “Whiteness as an Act of Belonging: White Turks Phenomenon in the Post 9/11 World,” *Glocalism*, 2 no.2 (2017): 6.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 3.

in person” scenario that relegated them to the in-between zone, not white, and not necessarily non-white.¹⁰⁶

Alim suggests that the theory of race itself can be challenged by resisting the racist classification of either white or non-white in the first place. His notion of transracialization or moving across groups while pushing back on the fictitious concept of race may dismantle the philosophy and power of race.¹⁰⁷ The White Turk phenomenon further partitioned Muslims even within their own ethnic communities. For example, White Turks tend to be more secular, modern, urbanites, whereas those identifying as Black Turks were perceived as invaders of modernism, more religiously fundamental, and less educated.¹⁰⁸

The White Turks even interacted with systems such as government, education, labor differently and emphasized an approach promoting the free, equitable access to information and systems. They pushed for freedoms that they felt were threatened by the restrictive Turkish government, such as the freedom of the press, religion, etc. The White Turks in their home country (Turkey) were more readily associated with social media, as an increasingly restrictive government was controlling access and availability of information.¹⁰⁹ This perception and practice carried over to their approach in the United States, affecting how Turks felt about American systems and culture in general. Özge Heck describes the complexity and influences on Turkishness affecting the identity of second-generation Turks in “Representing Turkish

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Samy Alim, “Who’s Afraid of the Transracial Subject?” in *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas About Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, John Rickford, Arnetha Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 36, Nadine O. interview, 2019, Lisa A. interview, 2019, Allie T. interview, 2019.

¹⁰⁸ Ilgin Yorukoğlu, “Whiteness as an Act of Belonging: White Turks Phenomenon in the Post 9/11 World,” *Glocalism*, 2 no.2 (2017): 7-8.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 12-13, Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017): 6.

National Culture and Turkish American Identity in Chicago's Turkish Festivals.”¹¹⁰ Though Turks are sometimes white passing, they are complex ethnically and culturally speaking, so their appearance varies as their backgrounds do, in other words, Turks have all different presentations, making the degree to which they can fit into a majority white, Europeans influenced culture a bit more nuanced, according to Heck.¹¹¹ This makes their ethnic experience a bit unique among some marginalized groups. The fact that the culture in which they found themselves in the 1900s was just experiencing Muslims for the first time, had a lot to do with the less than welcome reception, as there was much ignorance as to how to receive the Turks hospitably, with empathy, and in a welcoming manner.¹¹²

The Resistance to Adopt Religion as an Ethnic Identifier

At the Columbian Exposition in 1893 Turks took part in the global exchange of ideas and culture in downtown Chicago. Sert describes that the goal of the Ottoman pavilion at this expo was to show Ottoman identity as that of a cultured and civilized people. The Turkish House showcased the technology, food and art from the Ottoman way of life, all in the convenience of its lakefront location.¹¹³

The Turks themselves, in addition to the cultural artifacts displayed at the exposition, retaliated against the popular images of Turks in the media and general American culture in the late 1800s as barbaric and unrefined.¹¹⁴ The addition of the Turkish mosque, displayed for

¹¹⁰ Ozge Girit Heck, *Representing Turkish National Culture and Turkish American Identity in Chicago's Turkish Festivals* (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2011).

¹¹¹ Ibid, 28-9.

¹¹² Bilal Sert, “Early Turkish Immigrants’ Adaptation Experiences,” in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed. Sebahattin Ziyanak, Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 49.

¹¹³ Bilal Sert, “Theoretical and Practical Implications,” in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed. Sebahattin Ziyanak, Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 53.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

cultural and religious significance served as not only an artistic and cultural installation, but a practical one as well, as it welcomed Muslims gathering for Friday prayer, right in the heart of Chicago.¹¹⁵

The presence of Turks at the turn of the century in Chicago, and their cultural introductions were the impetus for the creation of migrant organizations in Chicago, as well as nationally. Chicago Camenes was one of the early Turkish migrant organizations that catered to adaptation and integration. The Turks who arrived during the early wave were hesitant about their religious acceptance and even worried they'd suffer forced conversions, negatively affecting their adaptation experiences.¹¹⁶ So, these migrant organizations helped ease those fears and hesitations surrounding the host culture, and to strengthen the community.¹¹⁷ The overarching image of Turks in the American media before and just after the turn of the century was that of barbarians, and the "other." The further isolation attached to language ability (inability to speak host language) contributed to segregating the early wave Turks. It is perhaps the shift toward a nationalistic identity that marked the efforts of Turkish Americans in later waves to reclaim their Turkishness, specifically in adapting to the host culture.¹¹⁸ Noted Turkish scholar Kemal Karpat describes the fear of discrimination among the first wave of Turkish migrants who came to the United States. He noted that many Turks arriving in the United States were registered with Christian names, for fear of discrimination upon arrival.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Bilal Sert, "Early Turkish Immigrants' Adaptation Experiences," in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed. Sebahattin Ziyanak, Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 40.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 36-7.

¹¹⁸ İlhan Kaya, "Shifting Turkish American Identity Formations in the United States," (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2003), 50.

¹¹⁹ Bilal Sert, "Sociological Framework and Theories on Initiating Factors, Adaptations Experiences, and Millet Immigrants from the Ottoman Empire," in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed Sebahattin Ziyanak, Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 1.

This pattern of fear of reprisals attached to religious identity persists until today. Christopher Rivera argues that this comingling and combining of Latinx and Muslim identity created a new dimension of “otherness” after 9/11 where Muslims were seen as the invaders, assuming the place of Latinx population who had been seen as the alien “other.”¹²⁰ There was an increase in hate crimes, specifically Islamophobic hate crimes post-9/11, that Glasser would connect to the media effects theory- when images and ideas that circulate in the general public are weighty enough to have concrete effects in the society, like the increase in hate crimes.¹²¹

So, if the “Brown Threat” as Rivera introduces, is a framework for othering non-whites, then the Latinx threat discourse was certainly a great practice field for the strategy of othering Muslims post 9/11. The political systems, and institutions encouraged the participation in this alleged threat of brown people by even creating a federal “terror” campaign entitled “If you see something, say something” to encourage citizens to racially profile others.¹²² An immigration officer, in answering the question, “what’s suspicious?” answered with: “Accent. Dress. You know, different customs.”¹²³ Edward Said was keen to this type of othering as he argued the segregation and racist policies against so many non-whites were due to the desire to maintain the power of whiteness “I have not been able to discover any period in European or American history since the Middle Ages in which Islam was generally discussed or thought about outside a framework created by passion, prejudice, and political interests.”¹²⁴ Said found the narratives and discourse surrounding both non-whites and Muslims specifically here, as the basis from

¹²⁰ Christopher Rivera, “The Brown Threat: Post 9/11 confluences of Latina/os and Middle Eastern Muslims in the US imagination,” *Latino Studies* 12, no. 1 (2014): 44.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 47.

¹²² Christopher Rivera, “The Brown Threat: Post 9/11 confluences of Latina/os and Middle Eastern Muslims in the US imagination,” *Latino Studies* 12, no. 1 (2014): 56.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 57.

¹²⁴ Edward Said, “Orientalism,” in *Introduction to Literature: Pearson Custom Reader*, ed. John Frazier (Boston: Pearson Learning Solutions): 488.

which they were othered and discriminated against in American culture. In other words, we are still viewing non-whites in the same barbaric, racist fashion as we did in the Middle Ages.

There are many implications for the racialization of groups such as Turkish-Americans and any other non-white group, or racially ambiguous population. Certainly, perceptions are altered with racialization, as the narrative attached to the dominant public will drive the pervading views of any non-dominant group. Paul and Becker argue that there are steps Turkish Muslims have taken to fight the stereotyping and Islamophobia that has increased since 9/11.¹²⁵ They studied a Turkish community in the southern part of the United States to analyze how they were being stereotyped and racialized and their strategies for managing the stigma and discourse associated with their identity.¹²⁶ They discovered several ways the members of this Turkish community fought back against racist stereotypes, in order to reach socio-political and gendered equality in the United States. The Turks methods were to push back against stereotyping by seeking support from community groups, self-preservation (taking pride in oneself no matter the allegations), group-based activities, educational campaigns and interfaith dialogue.¹²⁷

Stigmatization and racialization are socially constructed, but with real life consequences, argue Paul and Becker, “A large body of research demonstrates that a stigmatized status ‘contaminates’ people’s identities and has implications for the stigmatized individual’s life chances, particularly in relation to suffering, social isolation, health and wellness.”¹²⁸ The movement of the “othering” in this example shifting from the macro level to the micro level and

¹²⁵ Crystal Paul and Sarah Becker, “People Are Enemies to What They Don’t Know, Managing Stigma and Anti-Muslim Stereotypes in a Turkish Community Center,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 46, no.2 (2017): 161.

¹²⁶ Crystal Paul and Sarah Becker, “People Are Enemies to What They Don’t Know, Managing Stigma and Anti-Muslim Stereotypes in a Turkish Community Center,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 46, no. 2 (2017): 135.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 149-51.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 138.

negatively affecting not just individual Turks, but their entire network's chances for a successful, equitable life experience in their community has many implications.¹²⁹ If the Turks ability to not only connect within their ethnic group or enclave is hampered, or their ability to educate and connect with those outside their ethnic circle, their very livelihood will be negatively affected. The discourse surrounding any one ethnicity is key to both their perception and their agency to move about within their own host cultures. And, the power to set the discourse, and to change the direction and language used in the discourse comes from the top and works its way down, which isn't unique to this community. And, though this community was tied to religious identity, as described by Paul and Becker, there are connections and implications of the delineation of "other" within the Turkish community as well.¹³⁰ This community center highlighted in Paul and Becker's work is greatly influenced by religion and more specifically the teachings of Gülen, " It is a branch of a larger regional organization founded by Turkish volunteers for the now international *Hizmet* (service) or the Gülen Movement. These Turks follow the teachings of Fethullah Gülen, a Muslim Turk currently residing in the United States, due to self-imposed exile following extradition attempts. Gülen promotes Islam as a peaceful and tolerant religion and preaches that education and altruism should be paramount among its followers."¹³¹

This cleric and religious figure is connected to the Chicago area religious community Turkish American Society of Chicago (TASC) as well, and the same philosophy and teachings are reflected in that community, a community that supports the cleric "Funded by an estimated

¹²⁹ Ibid, 141.

¹³⁰ Crystal Paul and Sarah Becker, "People Are Enemies to What They Don't Know, Managing Stigma and Anti-Muslim Stereotypes in a Turkish Community Center," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 46, no.2 (2017): 153-4.

¹³¹ Ibid, 142.

20 million supporters worldwide, who are reported to donate between 5 to 20 percent of their yearly income to the cause, the Gülen movement is responsible for establishing Islam-driven schools, media outlets, and cultural centers, like the TCC, across the globe.”¹³² With these kinds of connections to groups and systems outside of its own ethnic circles, the religious groups like TASC are attempting to create greater power to achieve their own missions and agency within the host culture at the same time. TASC is quite successful in courting and incorporating both religious communities and academics intrigued by the promise of a more modern Islam and the regard for religious freedoms.¹³³ This was an interesting concern as Fetullah Gülen himself has been intertwined in Turkish politics in several forms since the 1970s. Gülen saw his mission as being entrenched in political ideologies of the day, even as he began to be more obviously connected to Turkish cabinet members. Following the 1980 military coup, “Gülen described Anatolia as the final guard against the (corrupt) mentality of the crusaders, the Jesuits and also against the poison of lust, alcohol and Western philosophies and ideologies.”¹³⁴ He further accused the Kemalists (supporters of Kemal Atatürk, the secular founder of the Turkish Republic) of not being real Turks. “Gülen went on... the Kemalists had estranged themselves from the Muslim Turks.”¹³⁵ The leader of the Hizmet movement has both condemned and invoked politics to further his mission as the leader of fundamentalist Islam. In the United States, the Niagara Foundation, Gülen’s umbrella group for religion, education and political maneuvering has grown to include over 22 branches throughout the country.¹³⁶

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ “Mission,” Niagara Foundation, accessed October, 2019, <https://www.niagarafoundation.org>, Al Y., interview, 2019.

¹³⁴ Gunter Seufert, “Is the Fethullah Gülen movement overstretching itself? A Turkish religious community as a national and international player,” *SOAR 2* (2014): 8.

¹³⁵ “Mission,” Niagara Foundation, accessed October, 2019, <https://www.niagarafoundation.org>

¹³⁶ Ibid.

The “Othering” of Migrants & Non-Whites in the United States

When one is not clearly definable as white or non-white, there are additional difficulties such as access to systems and power that connect to marginalizing that individual and relegating them to a non-white category. As discussed in the piece “Class and Race-Ethnicity in a Changing City,” Garner, Hancock and Fidel illustrate the inequities in both circumstance and possibility in Chicago politics and economic inequities. When the dominant group must define the “other” residents of a city or neighborhood as say, Turkish or Irish, this need to categorize and racialize an “other” is directly related to power structures and the ways one entity or population, typically white, can rule and reside over another, typically non-white.¹³⁷

The language and discourse used against non-whites and migrants is a powerful weapon. In the case of the Turks, language continues to marginalize and racialize many groups. Alim argues that language is the most often used tool in racializing groups, and crucial to our understanding of race.¹³⁸ With the increase in racialized and criminalized language used to describe and associate with migrants and non-whites, such as Muslim Americans post 9/11, along with policies such as the so-called Muslim travel ban, came a striking increase in Islamophobic acts nationally.¹³⁹ Islamophobia has negative, lasting effects, as reported by several of the second-generation participants. Alim proposes the notion of transracial to describe someone who changes their “race” association and their language practices allowing them to

¹³⁷ Roberta Garner, Black Hawk Hancock, Kenneth Fidel, “Class and Race-Ethnicity in a Changing City,” in *Neoliberal Chicago*, ed. Larry Bennett, Roberta Garner, Euan Hague (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 18-19.

¹³⁸ Samy Alim, “Who’s Afraid of the Transracial Subject?” in *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas about Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, John Rickford, Arnetha Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 35-6.

¹³⁹ Christopher Rivera, “The Brown Threat: Post 9/11 confluences of Latina/os and Middle Eastern Muslims in the US American imagination,” *Latino Studies*, 12, no.1 (2014): 62

push back against racism.¹⁴⁰ He notes that “racial identities can shift across contexts, and even within certain interactions.”¹⁴¹ Referring to someone as transracial for Alim indicates that they not only cross over those racial lines and boundaries, but they interact with politics as well, that of course, involve racial hierarchies. He’s interested in racing language and languaging race.¹⁴² If we understand transracialization, as Alim suggests, as the way you translate yourself, and how others translate you, we can see how Turks in the United States are implicated via transracialization.

The language used over the years to describe the Turks in the U.S. has been altered and adjusted according to U.S. governmental policies, much as they have been for other ethnic groups (think Bracero program for one example). In other words, how do the Americans need to marginalize the Turks? The rhetoric will be adjusted accordingly, and that sets a pattern for future perceptions.¹⁴³ Alim argues that not answering the burning question “So, what are you?” allows for pushback on the racial categorization that is encouraged in the United States and challenges the assumptions that created the racist systems in the first place.¹⁴⁴ Alim would argue that Turks, who are often asked “What are you?” could greatly benefit from pushing back and resisting the delivery of an answer to that question, perhaps instead, focusing on sharing the richness of their culture.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Samy Alim, “Who’s Afraid of the Transracial Subject?” in *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas about Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, John Rickford, Arnetha Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 34.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 35.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 34.

¹⁴³ Samy Alim, “Who’s Afraid of the Transracial Subject?” in *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas about Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, John Rickford, Arnetha Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 36.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 36.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 35-6.

Language is also a powerful tool in not only shaping perceptions of individuals or groups, but of reinforcing bias and discrimination of groups, typically non-white groups.¹⁴⁶ Rosa and Flores argue that there needs to be an examination of how *institutions* create and react to race and language, as opposed to focusing on individuals and their use of language connected to race.¹⁴⁷ Combining research in critical language theory and critical race theory is the goal of Rosa & Flores' work as they unearth how deficits are created and language is raced.¹⁴⁸ It's the construction of race as part of the European colonial project to protect whites and racialize non-whites as other and to create a superior/inferior racial dynamic that begs for destruction, in their view.¹⁴⁹ Narratives surrounding migrants can either push back against racist perceptions of people and groups and against (or for) the maintenance of white power since the creation of our nation. Rosa and Flores cite Fanon's argument that colonized populations are the substructure of the dominant- subordinate dynamic, created to prevent access and agency to the subordinate citizens.¹⁵⁰

There have been many other ways, aside from language, utilized to separate and isolate and even interrogate non-whites, such as phenotypic profiling of Muslims post 9/11. Many were racially profiled due to alleged indicators such as: facial hair, clothes, language as a perceived association with Islam, or any part of the world that threatened U.S. security.¹⁵¹ If we examine language specifically, and the language that is typically used to isolate, segregate and interrogate non-whites, the field of research is quite deep. In other words, since the creation of our nation

¹⁴⁶ Jonathon Rosa, Nelson Flores, "Unsettling Race and Language: Toward a raciolinguistic perspective," *Language in Society*, 46, no.5 (2017): 621.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 622.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 621.

¹⁴⁹ Jonathon Rose and Nelson Flores, "Unsettling Race and Language: Toward a raciolinguistic perspective," *Language in Society*, 46, no. 5 (2017): 623.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 625.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 636.

there have been a myriad of ways in which non-whites have been racialized through language and imagery.¹⁵²

The othering was magnified post 9/11 to a point where physical appearance and language used within families was not only targeted, but punishable by law. The racial ambiguity of Turks, not appearing consistently black or white, implicated them in a suspicious pool of potential terrorists in the eyes of the American government.¹⁵³ Some states even went so far as to link national economic concerns to non-white citizens, as many had done in the 1980s and 1990s with the Latinx population. The transition from brown threat, to suspicion to racial profiling has been the reality for so many non-whites since the inception of our country.¹⁵⁴ However, it seems that the pool of non-whites profiled under various defenses, has grown, and will continue to grow until called out effectively, according to a recent Pew Research report.¹⁵⁵

One form of “othering” is via discrimination, and the perception of a demographic in any society. Even the perception or anticipation of discrimination can have detrimental effects, described as perceived ethnic discrimination in “Perceived ethnic discrimination and depressive symptoms: The buffering effects of ethnic identity, religion and ethnic social networks” Ikram, et al describe perceived ethnic discrimination as “day to day experiences of overt and subtle acts of unfair treatment because of ethnic background.”¹⁵⁶ These acts are not unique to the Turks in

¹⁵² Ibid, 641-2.

¹⁵³ Crystal Paul and Sarah Becker, “People are enemies to What They Don’t Know, Managing Stigma and Anti-Muslim Stereotypes in a Turkish Community Center,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 46, no. 2 (2017): 138.

¹⁵⁴ Christopher Rivera, “The Brown Threat: Post 9/11 connotations of Latina/os and Middle Eastern Muslims in the US American imagination,” *Latino Studies*, 12, no.1 (2014): 44.

¹⁵⁵ Michael Lipka, “U.S. Muslims see their relationship with Trump as strained,” *Pew Research Fact Tank*, July 27, 2017, 2.

¹⁵⁶ Umar Ikram, Marieke Snijder, Matty de Wit, Aart Schene, Karien Stronks, Anton Kunst, “Perceived ethnic discrimination and depressive symptoms: the buffering effects of ethnic identity, religion and ethnic social network,” *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 51, no. 5 (February 12, 2016): 686.

Chicago. However, their sense of “other” whether tied to physicality, language, religion, or ethnic symbols creates a disconnect and feeds into the perception of “other” that hasn’t necessarily been acknowledged or mended by the community in which they live.¹⁵⁷ The perception of being “othered” can have detrimental consequences on the longevity of an ethnic group or more personally, for a family’s heritage as described in Jimmy Sanders “Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies.”¹⁵⁸ Sanders views the assessment of ethnicity that occurs typically in young adulthood as key to a family or ethnic group’s generational growth. Second-generation young adults are a crucial demographic as they are essentially spaceless for a period, during which there is an internal evaluation of their Turkish identity, and they choose complete assimilation into American culture (losing much of their ethnic identity) or preserving their Turkishness through either a commitment or recommitment to the Turkish customs and traditions, and often times language as well.¹⁵⁹ This connection to culture can be either permanently severed by discrimination, or repaired via family, enclave, migrant organizations or positive childhood experiences within the culture.¹⁶⁰ Nauck investigates the connections between discrimination and assimilation in “Intercultural Contact and Intergenerational Transmission in Immigrant Families.”¹⁶¹ He proposes the stages to assimilation that migrants experience as: identification, social, structural, and cognitive levels.¹⁶² Nauck discusses discrimination and prejudice as barriers to reaching that last stage of assimilation (cognitive). He describes the first few levels as being much simpler to achieve and be comfortable in

¹⁵⁷ İlhan Kaya, “Identity and Space: The Case of Turkish Americans,” *Geographical Review* 95, no. 3 (July 2005): 430.

¹⁵⁸ Jimmy Sanders, “Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28(2002): 341.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid Jimmy Sanders, “Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 28(2002): 341.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 349.

¹⁶¹ Bernard Nauck, “Intercultural Contact and Intergenerational Transmission in Immigrant Families,” *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 32, no. 159 (2001): 168.

¹⁶² Ibid, 161.

(identification as connected to ethnicity, region or new environment) and learning the social lay of the land, so to speak, but that the latter stages are much more of a challenge to reach, if discrimination plays a role in the perceptions surrounding the migrant community.¹⁶³

Analysis of The Impact of Ethnic Enclaves & Migrant Organizations

Akcapar's work on the role of the migrant organization highlights some key concerns not only about their worth and position as an ethnic support system, but the dangers of absent or ineffective transnational spaces.¹⁶⁴ There are many ways the migrant organization and the ethnic enclave can affect (positively and negatively) the migrants experiences in a host country. The migrant organization can act as the agent or resource that encourages integration and success, or it can be a factor in separating migrants from one another and from assimilating into the host culture. I am interested in the migrant organization's role specifically as connected to the second- generation. The cultural bridge that maintains ethnic connections in any community is often a migrant organization. However, there needs to be more research on the topic of migrant organizations in regions without enclaves to know if it can be a sturdy enough support alone, or if it must accompany other factors to solidify ethnic preservation. If there is no ethnic enclave, that connection to culture may be mended and even thrive with other supports among them: migrant organization and family. Kaya's work in "Identity and Space: The Case for Turkish Americans," indicates that the support from the existence of a Turkish enclave (as in the New York, New Jersey area) can strengthen the sense of Turkishness among first and second -

¹⁶³ Ibid, 170-71.

¹⁶⁴ Sebnem Akcapar, "Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity," *Turkish Studies*, 10, no. 2 (2009): 177.

generation migrants, however, there are other factors, such as family, that are equally if not more important influencing the sense of ethnic identity.¹⁶⁵

But there is no ethnic enclave to support ethnicity, as is the case with Chicago Turks. And the absence of the Turkish enclave in Chicago has negatively affected the Turkish Americans in the area. The lack of ethnic enclave here may have strengthened or highlighted the importance of family in maintaining ethnicity. Kaya sees the influence of family in solidifying the sense of Turkishness as crucial in the second generation and perhaps more important or as important as the existence of the Turkish enclave in “Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study.”¹⁶⁶ It seems evident from my interviews with second-generation Turkish Americans in Chicago that family is a very strong influence in both ethnic pride and the likelihood of retaining and passing down the ethnic traditions. The family component is an equally critical component to ethnic preservation. The migrant organization when it works in tandem with the migrant organization ensures a greater likelihood of ethnic preservation among second-generation Turks. But in the Chicago area, one of these ethnic building blocks, the migrant associations, aren’t as strong or cohesive as they might be. The state of the migrant organizations in the Chicago area is rather unsteady, as they coexist, but don’t cooperate, and one appears to seek greater participation from multigenerational Turks in the area.¹⁶⁷

The emergence of a more digital age, allowing for easier transnational connections makes the migrant organization less crucial to building the sense of Turkishness among second-generations and beyond. The virtual enclave acts as a substitute for the physical spaces, such as

¹⁶⁵ Ilhan Kaya, “Identity and Space: The Case of Turkish Americans,” *Geographical Review*, 95, no. 3 (July 2005): 432.

¹⁶⁶ Ilhan Kaya, “Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study,” *Middle East Journal*, 63, no. 4 (Autumn 2009): 626, 628.

¹⁶⁷ Ivan U., interview, 2019.

migrant organization, or physical space in which to practice identity. In the Chicago area there exist two migrant organizations, that could in theory, work together to unite the Turkish community, however, don't appear to collaborate at all. The existence of the virtual enclave and transitional spaces online, as discussed by Tufekci, strengthen the virtual connectedness, but not the ability to meaningfully strengthen ethnic identity or achieve specific goals.

There is a virtual migrant organization in the Chicago area, Bridge to Türkiye Fund, that is truly more of a geocultural space in which to negotiate identity, and as Tufekci argues, a place to mobilize the sociopolitical voices that may be hampered or garner consequence in the homeland.¹⁶⁸ Bridge to Türkiye Fund (BTF) bills itself as a not for profit focusing on social change and education for those who may not have access to a higher education, or an education at all in underserved areas of Turkey.¹⁶⁹ BTF was established in 2003 and run by "... Turkish American volunteers driven to make a difference, to improve life and to cultivate social change for the common good. BTF's commitment to these ideals stems from our basic desire to give back to our native land for the many opportunities we have gained from her. BTF's capacity building programs provide opportunities for Turkish Americans to reconnect with their roots, while encouraging civic responsibility."¹⁷⁰ It is a multi-chapter organization started by a Turkish American in North Carolina in 2003 but has no physical spaces in any of the chapters, including the Chicago chapter. It is not specifically or officially connected with any of the other two migrant organizations in the Chicago area, so the three migrant groups (if BTF is considered a migrant organization) are running separate from one another. This disconnect specifically

¹⁶⁸ Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017): 6.

¹⁶⁹ "Our Mission," Bridge to Türkiye Fund, www.bridgetoturkiyefund.org accessed October 2018.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid

contributes to the discord or lack of collaboration among both the Turkish American community at large and the greater host (American) community, and membership and support potential within all three. One of the factors affecting this disconnect within migrant organizations in the Chicago area is due to religious affiliation and identity.

An existence of a Turkish enclave might create or strengthen ethnic solidarity and a study comparing the Chicago area Turkish community to other communities such as Detroit or New York would be meaningful to reach conclusions surrounding importance of enclave. Though there is somewhat of a virtual Turkish enclave in the local Turkish groups mentioned (TACA and TASC), there are also many other ways in which Turks and Turkish Americans can participate in counterpublics that may connect both cultures, as discussed in Tufekci's book *Twitter and Tear Gas*.¹⁷¹ There are the organized transnational groups focusing on philanthropy, such as Bridge to Türkiye Fund, and groups geared toward integration and support like TACA.¹⁷² There are also several virtual groups of Turks, some geared toward special interests on social media platforms in the Chicago area, but are also disconnected to the other three migrant groups. With the proliferation of online participation among present day Turks, migrant organizations in the Chicago area have not grown and reflected the changing needs of the Turkish population. The role of Turkish migrant organizations needs to shift and reconfigure to address the changing demographics and evolving needs and concerns of Turkish migrants.

The characteristics of the migration waves, or more specifically, the last wave has not been addressed via the Turkish migrant organizations in the Chicago area, and that has caused

¹⁷¹ Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017): 231.

¹⁷² "About Us," Turkish American Cultural Alliance, www.tacaonline.org, accessed October, 2018, "Our Mission," Bridge to Türkiye Fund, www.bridgetoturkiyefund.org, accessed October, 2018.

some of the split or lack of connectedness to migrant organizations as a whole. Their role is influential as a factor assisting ethnic preservation, but there need to be adjustments since their creation, as one association was created during the second wave, and the more recent group created during the third wave. These groups still play important roles in the community, especially in the absence of an ethnic enclave in which to gather and strengthen. However, more collaboration and solidarity among the existing groups would better support the Turks and Turkish Americans in the region. The organizations could certainly provide more societal support and help Turks avoid potential prejudice from the host community and fight misconceptions en masse. As Omi and Winant have described race as a social construct that is “unstable and decentered complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle,” this implicates the migrant organizations and the need to shift in order to reflect the changefulness of racism in the host culture.¹⁷³ If migrant organizations disappeared, Turks may suffer greatly in terms of longevity of ethnicity, and agency within the host culture.

With the influence of family on ethnic identity retention, family may be a strong enough sole support of the ethnic identity and able to strengthen the sense of Turkishness among second-generation Turkish Americans without other influences such as migrant organization. According to the interviews with community stakeholders and second-generation individuals, family is certainly one of the strongest influences in leaning into or away from the sense of Turkishness.

But how the first and second-generation Turkish Americans interact with any outside influences such as migrant organizations are not recognized in the Chicago Turkish community

¹⁷³ Michael Omi, Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 1994): 57.

and in much of the scholarly research. The inability or inaction on the part of the migrant organizations to alter their missions or strategies likely is to blame in this regard. The Turks who came to Chicago in the early wave may have been supported in a more active fashion via migrant organizations or community networks, and as more of a survival system than the migrants and their organizations in second and third waves.¹⁷⁴

In the Chicago area just one Turkish migrant group existed until the last decade (TACA), and the second migrant group (TASC) doesn't appear to be working collaboratively, according to both of their representatives and perceptions of Turkish American participants for this project.¹⁷⁵ And, if you argue that Bridge to Türkiye Fund can be considered a migrant organization, even as it operates in a virtual enclave space, it wasn't mentioned by any of the participants as an entity they interacted with, in support of their Turkish identity. Perhaps this entity isn't focused on the identity retention, as much as it is on the philanthropic possibilities.¹⁷⁶ Akcapar argues the Turkish migrant organization can act as a link, or connector within the ethnic community as well as the host culture at large. The splintered Turkish migrant organizations pooling their resources and power, would strengthen the Turkish migrant community in Chicago. And, by adjusting and tweaking their missions they could cater more effectively to the crucially important second-generation Turkish Americans. The division of allegiances within the Chicago area Turkish community is further isolating and reducing Turks overall agency in this region.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Bilal Sert, "Initiating Factors for Early Turkish Immigration to the United States," in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed. Sebahattin Ziyanak, Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018): 17.

¹⁷⁵ Ivan U., interview, 2019, Al Y., interview, 2019.

¹⁷⁶ Bridge to Türkiye Fund, www.bridgetoturkiyefund.org accessed October, 2018.

¹⁷⁷ Sebnem Akcapar, "Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity," *Turkish Studies*, 10, no.2 (2009): 165-6.

There are other national umbrella Turkish cultural associations such as ATAA (Assembly of Turkish American Associations) and FTAA (Federation of Turkish American Associations) however they don't seem to have a strong influence in either collaborating with or mending the divisions in the Chicago area Turkish migrant population. Even within the umbrella groups there is further distinctions in purpose, such as between TASSA (Turkish American Scientists and Scholars Association), who encourage scientific and scholarly exchange, and AFTA (American Turkish Friendship Association) founded by Fetullah Gülen supporters who created schools and mosques across the country.¹⁷⁸ When the migrant organizations allow for the creation and support of transnational spaces, in a more collaborative fashion regardless of ethnic identity, the highly splintered group of spaces in the Chicago Turkish community could be strengthened both within the community and out to the non-Turkish community.

With more than one of these factors missing whether its migrant organization, family, or enclave, the cultural bridge connecting Turks to their Turkish identity is negatively affected, resulting in a decreased chance of maintaining and retaining the sense of Turkishness.¹⁷⁹ This is evidenced in the interviews as well, as many who reported weaker connections to the Turkish community were less likely to have both family and migrant connections in their childhoods.

Both Chicago area migrant organizations supported language retention as well, as Akçapar argues that has been shown to be an effective tool in ethnic identity retention.¹⁸⁰ Many of the second-generation Turks in the United States struggle with Turkish language proficiency as well, which may complicate the connection to Turkishness. Teaching language fluency is one

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 176.

¹⁷⁹ İlhan Kaya, "Identity and Space: The Case of Turkish Americans," *Geographical Review* 95, no. 3 (July 2005): 435.

¹⁸⁰ Sebnem Akçapar, "Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity," *Turkish Studies*, 10, no.2 (2009): 179.

of the common goals of many migrant organizations, as evidenced with the two groups in Chicago TACA and TASC. However, I argue that the connectedness to language is particularly key for the second-generation as they appear to be the determining demographic that latches onto their ethnicity or tosses it aside. Akcapar discusses the evolution of migrant organizations, but where there is a lack of collaboration, such as in the Chicago area, on top of an absence of enclave, the importance of appealing to the second-generation cannot be underestimated.¹⁸¹

Though the role of heritage language specifically among second-generation Turkish-Americans cannot be underestimated, host language ability is relevant to the overall success of the first and second-generations of Turks and Turkish Americans. Language is key in both connecting with ethnic heritage as it is to navigate within host culture systems, implicating the importance of English language proficiency here. Ilhan Kaya noted that language ability, on the part of Turkish migrants is a key factor in determining both social and economic positions within American society.¹⁸² If you have a wider range of skills, that includes language ability, you are less likely to depend on the home culture for supports. As was the case for at least half the Turks who migrated to the United States, many (specifically in the second and third waves) displayed English proficiency that allowed for a quicker integration into the dominant culture and less reliance on home culture for survival.¹⁸³

In this way, the second and third wave Turks became more easily (or likely) integrated and it was less of a priority to seek cultural connections or reconnect with their ethnicity. This could be the reason why there are no Turkish enclaves in certain urban centers like Chicago, as

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 165-6.

¹⁸² Ilhan Kaya, "Identity Across Generations: A Turkish American Case Study," *Middle East Journal*, 63, no.4 (Autumn 2009): 630.

¹⁸³ Ilhan Kaya, "Shifting Turkish American Identity Formations in the United States," (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2003): 110.

Turks saw that “blending in” was a more effective path to success. Kaya points out as well the possible negative association with enclave, that it keeps Turks more bound to a neighborhood or space, thereby potentially restricting growth and overall ability. One of the reasons for the apparent overall success of many Turkish Americans in Chicago, the ability to integrate, adapt and achieve success without ties to an actual Turkish enclave points to the importance of other factors in strengthening ethnic bonds, like family and migrant organization.

I argue the enclave, specifically the virtual enclave, may not only serve as a resistance training ground, so to speak, in defense of one’s Turkishness, but one that supports and advocates at the same time, as an expansion on Tufekci’s work. Tufekci highlighted examples of virtual enclaves and the power of transitioning to physical spaces for political expression and empowerment, such as in the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul. I see the virtual enclave as a starting point, or rather, just one piece of the puzzle in terms of promoting ethnic identity among second-generation Turkish Americans. If they are able to interact digitally, but group in their own communities in person, this would appear to only strengthen both their likelihood of identifying as Turkish, but also their sense of power and agency within their own ethnic and host communities.¹⁸⁴ The work of the enclave is enhanced and invigorated when it works in conjunction with another entity to nurture strong support for ethnicity. That support entity can be the city or family or even migrant organizations. Once any group feels marginalized or powerless, the need to reclaim that power or agency will follow, and the enclave, whether physical or virtual, can serve as that collective support to resist racism, prejudice or any other marginalization doled out by the dominant public.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017): xxvi.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 231.

Even in the absence of an enclave, the focus on the second-generation and their connectedness to culture remains crucial to understanding ethnic identity. Reese and Gallimore analyze the role of the first and second-generation migrants in the United States and discuss the second-generation as the “turning point” for ethnic retention and identity.¹⁸⁶ Expanding on Reese and Gallimore’s focus on the second-generation, as well as Kaya’s work with generational ethnicity, I argue that the point at which the second-generation consciously connects with their ethnicity or buries it, is key. I argue that the point at which one reaches early adulthood (18-21) is a crucial stage in solidifying or building those cultural connections to heritage, as that creates the likelihood of carrying the ethnicity on, in an active fashion, in one’s family. The point at which there is the TED, a young Turkish American may realize the importance of heritage and background in their own personhood, or may reject it without proper supports, both familial and community. So, the acknowledgement of ethnic identity, then personal connections to family and heritage and then individual involvement in the maintenance of ethnicity appear to be the steps taken by Turkish Americans during their adult years, that assist in their maintenance of Turkishness. Isik-Ercan analyzed the negotiation of Turkish identity and determined that “third spaces” are key to retaining that identity. It appears that the second-generation members need space in which to negotiate identity, but to also pool forces to combat stereotypes and discrimination both within and outside of the Turkish community.¹⁸⁷

With a lack of collaboration or cohesiveness in the Chicago area Turkish communities, the only way forward (in maintaining ethnicity) is appealing to second-generation Turkish

¹⁸⁶ Leslie Reese, Ronald Gallimore, Estela Zarate, “To Be an American: Ethnic Identity, Biculturalism, and Citizenship among Second-Generation Immigrant Latino Youth,” *Journal of Moving Communities*, 3, no.1 (May 2003): 4.

¹⁸⁷ Zeynep Isik-Ercan, “Third Spaces: Turkish Immigrants and Their Children at the Intersection of Identity, Schooling, and Culture,” *Diaspora, Indigenous and Minority Education*, 8, no.3 (July 2014): 127.

Americans and, at the same time, encouraging collaboration within and among the virtual enclaves and existing migrant organizations. This is the main piece of the puzzle missing in the Chicago area Turkish community, collaboration and adaptation. The disconnect between groups and inability of the entire Chicago area Turkish community to coalesce around a group, association or idea is detrimental.

Analysis of Whiteness & Racial Ambiguity

The scholarly work linking perceptions of whiteness and the narratives surrounding an ethnic group, including the group's marginalization, as seen in the work of Yorukoğlu and Rivera suggest that these perceptions may also be linked to overall success. Therefore, the perception of a migrant's whiteness is the entrée to greater power and familiarity in the institutional settings within communities. Much work has been done to examine some marginalized communities, such as the Latinx population. However, there is a lack of scholarly study on communities such as Turkish Americans and their ability to succeed, as linked to whiteness or racial ambiguity. How Turkish identity is affected by racial hierarchies that exist in American society and are those racial hierarchies not the basis for most of our governmental and economic systems is key to understanding their patterns of assimilation, integration and isolation. Lipsitz argues that if our socio-political systems are founded on inequality and racism, then, the need to continually disempower some groups (Latinx, Turks) is required to maintain such an inequitable system. If so, I would argue that Turkish Americans are negatively affected by the inability to conform to a racial category, and even due to the need to categorize them as other than white in the first place. Alba discusses the concept of social and cultural boundaries in

“Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries” whereby language acts as a boundary blurring agent and race is the clarifier of boundary when race is ambiguous.¹⁸⁸

The challenge to maintain that sense of Turkishness will occur where there is the additional lack of family influence, in educating, practicing and sharing Turkish culture. I argue, that if only one of these factors is missing, the second-generation Turkish Americans may still (and appear to) progress toward ethnic retention of that identity. However, if for example, there is no family influence combined with a lack of connection to the Chicago Turkish community, the second-generation offspring will have a considerable challenge maintaining their sense of Turkishness, and will be much less likely to pass down their cultural heritage. It also appears that perception of culture and family influences are among the strongest influencers of maintenance of ethnic identity and encouragement to build and acknowledge the identity.¹⁸⁹ So, if the migrant organization and enclave is the space and place to express and solidify heritage, the family and perception of ethnicity is the birthplace of the personal ethnic connection to the sense of Turkishness. The second-generation is crucial in furthering the ethnic connections for future generations and the longevity of their ethnic heritage.

When there is racial ambiguity, there is a greater degree of marginalization and restricted access to power systems. How policies have affected the racialization of migrants and their connectedness to socio-economic restrictions, along with the language used to segregate and isolate them is key to this query. Sanders reminds us of the consequences of racializing groups including migrants, “When interaction between groups is limited and conditioned by territorial

¹⁸⁸ Richard Alba, “Bright vs. Blurred Boundaries: Second Generation assimilation and exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28, no.1 (January 2005): 37.

¹⁸⁹ Mary Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990): 57,

segregation, differences are emphasized, and this encourages stereotyping.”¹⁹⁰ Sanders also discusses the topic of remittances and the economic and social viability of migrants as supported by the entire community, not just the migrant community. Sanders argues that certainly the remittances (economic support sent to the home country, typically focused on regional or familial support) and the outside resources of a community in the host country are key to an ethnic network’s health and well-being.¹⁹¹ The availability of resources and supports to encourage the longevity of such groups as Turkish Americans was mentioned as crucial by both leaders of the Turkish migrant groups in Chicago, TACA and TASC.¹⁹² But, if the ethnic networks are able to share resources, including jobs, with the communities outside their migrant communities, the overall social capital will be enhanced.¹⁹³ A migrant’s association with whiteness and marginalization or the perceptions of marginalization affects their ability to achieve success, happiness or at the very least, equal access. The perception of a migrant’s whiteness plays a role then, on the possibility of socio-economic health. I argue the perception of a migrant’s whiteness is truly the entrée to greater power in the institutional settings within communities, and this power can be supported and encouraged specifically via the migrant organizations.

Analysis of Ethnic Identity Connected to Islam

Although the goal of this project was not to focus specifically on Islam, it is a key component in both understanding identity or Turkishness, and the perception of Muslims in the United States. I feel it is important to note that it is not essential to discuss religion in every

¹⁹⁰ Jimmy Sanders, “Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 21 (2002): 328.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 347-8.

¹⁹² Ivan U., interview, 2019, Al Y., interview, 2019.

¹⁹³ Jimmy Sanders, “Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28 (2002): 330.

query of Turkishness, but for purposes of this project, I would be remiss if this identifier was omitted in the analysis. Turks are a complex, layered and secular culture as well, that does not necessarily always get the justice and scholarly focus it deserves by focusing solely on religion.

In interviews with heads of both organizations (TACA, TASC), there seemed to be a palpable friction or disconnect between the two organizations, though they appear on paper to have identical dual missions of integration and education. Although one specifically was founded and maintains a secular philosophy (TACA), the non-secular organization (TASC) appears to mainly focus on its religious mission.¹⁹⁴ It's possible the demographics of the migration waves, mixed with home country politics have exaggerated and possibly created this divide in the Chicago area Turkish community. Sert focused on the impact the early migration waves had on the creation of migrant organizations in "Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life."¹⁹⁵ The arrival of the Turks in Chicago around the turn of the century were the impetus for the creation of migrant organizations. Since most Turks who migrated during the first wave were those most likely to identify as Muslim, religion heavily influenced their integration and connectedness to culture. The Turks who came to America during the first wave were hesitant about their religious acceptance, and some even worried about being forced to convert to other religions, negatively affecting their adaptation as well as influencing the overall perception of this group in their new home, the United States.

¹⁹⁴ Ivan U., interview, 2019, Al Y., interview, 2019.

¹⁹⁵ Bilal Sert, "Sociological Framework and Theories on Initiating Factors, Adaptation Experiences, and Millet Immigrants from the Ottoman Empire," in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed. Sebahattin Ziyanak, Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 3-4.

The migrant organizations did ease fears, and strengthened community, however they were fighting some very negative societal perceptions about Turks and Muslims.¹⁹⁶ In Paul and Becker's analysis of a Turkish community in the southern United States, they noted that this community fought and managed stereotypes and Islamophobia through dialogue with outside community members. However, it's key to remember that the community they observed was connected to the Gülenist movement, which has specific goals and beliefs.¹⁹⁷ The Turkish community featured in Paul and Becker's analysis preached the use of individual dialogue centered on their own interpretation of Islam, as a means of connecting with religious communities outside of their congregation.¹⁹⁸ I argue, however, that it is detrimental to resisting stereotypes by basing and centering discussions and community collaboration around religion. As many Turks who migrate to the United States are Kemalists and tend to be less traditional and more secular, this community's approach is a framework that will not be helpful to all Turkish Americans.¹⁹⁹ It's not to say that there should be no religion, or that all Turks are secular, but there are variances, as there are in most ethnic groups.

I suggest, instead, using the general approach of the Turkish community discussed in Paul and Becker's work, in reaching out via community groups, to other existing American community groups through collaboration and education but with a caveat. I would encourage the educational outreach work to be based in culture, art, or history, so that Turks can relay the rich culture without the connection to religion, as that may not only be divisive within the

¹⁹⁶ Bilal Sert, "Early Turkish Immigrants' Adaptation Experiences," in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed. Sebahattin Ziyanak, Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018): 41.

¹⁹⁷ Crystal Paul and Sarah Becker, "People are Enemies to What They Don't Know, Managing Stigma and Anti-Muslim Stereotypes in a Turkish Community Center," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 46 no. 2 (2017): 142.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 161.

¹⁹⁹ İlhan Kaya, "Shifting Turkish American Identity Formations in the United States," (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2003) : 31.

Turkish community but may contribute to a fear of the unknown from the dominant culture. In other words, connect via culture (separate from religion) as a means of dispelling myths and stereotypes via one to one interaction. As with non-white communities, and many migrant groups in the United States currently, there are more ways in which we are similar than different. But, at this point in our culture, there is considerable negative Islamophobic baggage, so to speak, so incorporating religion into a desired connection between Turks and non-Turks may not be the most effective strategy.

Analysis of the “ Othering” of Turks

The support seeking strategies of migrants are affected by the overriding perception of both their country and ethnic identity in the host culture, impacting their success both economically and socially. So, the ways in which Turks are perceived by popular culture, and the resulting effects that perception has on their life paths is key to understanding how they view and preserve ethnicity. Yorukoğlu and Alim discuss the effects that racial ambiguity and identification with whiteness can have on perceptions and access and ability.²⁰⁰ The need to categorize in the first place, Alim argues is disruptive to the access to power and institutional agency, and Yorukoğlu sees the identification with whiteness (the White Turks phenomenon) as furthering and validating the racialization embedded in the American systems and culture.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Ilgin Yorukoğlu, “Whiteness as an Act of Belonging: White Turks Phenomenon in the Post 9/11 World,” *Glocalism* 2.2, no. 2 (2017): 16-17, Samy Alim, “Who’s Afraid of the Transracial Subject?” in *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas About Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, John Rickford, Arnetha Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 45.

²⁰¹ Ilgin Yorukoğlu, “Whiteness as an Act of Belonging: White Turks Phenomenon in the Post 9/11 World,” *Glocalism* 2.2, no. 2 (2017): 17, Alim, “Who’s Afraid of the Transracial Subject?” in *Racio Shapes Our Ideas About Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, John Rickford, Arnetha Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 35-6.

How policies are used to racialize and segregate and “other” communities effecting their access to power systems is crucial to the analysis of any migrant group including the Turks in America.

One might wonder if the self-identification as “other” or different from the mainstream population even effects how one thinks they may have access to power. I’m reflecting on the inability of the Chicago area migrant organization TACA in applying for grants from the city of Chicago. The president claimed there was no one that was skilled in this area. They may have felt they couldn’t achieve the goal of community support, sensing defeat before even attempting the process of financial support from outside entities. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby migrant groups may feel they aren’t savvy with respect to receiving funding from municipalities or institutions, and don’t apply, robbing them of valuable experience within the system.

How have policies affecting the racialization of migrants been connected to socio-economic restrictions, and the language used to segregate and isolate? As Nauck analyzes the stages of assimilation experienced by migrants as: identification, social, structural, and cognitive, it’s key to note how crucial social capital wealth is as well. By only achieving some economic success, migrants may be stunted in growth both economically and socially, affecting their likelihood of maintaining cultural traditions in their host culture. Nauck’s cognitive state (one of the stages of assimilation) includes both societal and institutional knowledge, and I argue, this is the stage not achieved, or even breached by some Chicago area Turkish migrants.²⁰² So, how migrant groups like Turkish Americans are othered in the first place becomes a subject of analysis needed to understand the national narrative and the implications of

²⁰² Bernard Nauck, “Intercultural Contact and Intergenerational Transmission in Immigrant Families,” *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32 no. 159 (2001): 160, 170.

such a narrative. The person or group truly in charge of the perceptions and the concept of “other” in American culture determines resource allocation and future health and wealth. Those determining the patterns for discourse then become the one(s) with the true power in institutions and systems like education, politics, health, labor. If the systems and institutions don’t acknowledge the inequity first, and adjust and reconfigure in a dramatic fashion, the white/non-white dynamic will only become more powerful and continue to “other” and racialize groups such as Turks in the United States.

In the United States currently, the power to set the discourse still stems from the top (think President) and works its way down, as analyzed by Paul and Becker.²⁰³ Currently much of the rhetoric is certainly less than welcoming to migrants, non-whites and countless other groups. Much of the scholarly work surrounding Turks still is centered around Islam, which will make pushing back against stereotypes and racialization that much more difficult.²⁰⁴

Interviews with Chicago Area Turks

Chicago Area Turks & Enclave

Interviews were conducted with 14 community stakeholders and second-generation Turkish Americans in the Chicago area. There were slightly more men than women, but only by a few, including three male community stakeholders, the Consul General of the Republic of Turkey, the President of TACA, and the leader of TASC. The interviews were conducted in person, or virtually, via phone or email and the questions are found in the appendix. Names were altered to protect anonymity and privacy among all the interviewees including second-

²⁰³ Crystal Paul and Sarah Becker, “People are Enemies to What They Don’t Know, Managing Stigma and Anti-Muslim Stereotypes in a Turkish Community Center,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 46, no.2 (2017): 137.

²⁰⁴ Sebnem Akçapar, “Turkish Associations in the United States: Towards Building a Transnational Identity,” *Turkish Studies*, 10, no.2 (2009): 166.

generation Turks and community stakeholders and included participants between the ages of 18-60. The participants were from various neighborhoods in the city of Chicago and surrounding suburbs, as Turks in the area are spread out geographically speaking. The participants were from neighborhoods such as, but not limited to Lakeview, Loop, Rogers Park, Edgewater, and suburbs such as Naperville, Oak Brook, Northbrook and northern Indiana.

Data Collection Methods

The initial method of data collection drew respondents from personal networks, as well as established members of the Turkish American community (i.e. the member of the Turkish consulate). Subsequent respondents were collected through purposive and snowball sampling according to traditional social science methods. The data presented was the product of conducting semi-structured interviews, drawing on oral histories, also known as life narratives.²⁰⁵ Participants were both men and women ranging in age from 18-65. Since Turkish Americans can be considered a vulnerable population, all names have been changed to protect individuals. The DePaul University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved this research project as following all human subjects' protocols on November 19, 2019. See IRB criteria regarding exempt status category two under 45 CFR 46.104.

There was no real consensus on identity markers, as only 4 of the 11 second-generation Turks interviewed said they identified as Turkish American, when asked, or introducing themselves to others. Identity was connected to their professions, doctors, hygienists, or simply

²⁰⁵ Garner, Roberta and Gregory M. Scott. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research: Designs, Methods, and Techniques*. 1st ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education.

by name alone. One participant (the leader of the non-secular migrant organization) identified as Muslim first and called himself a Muslim Turkish American.

The absence of the physical Turkish enclave was noted as a drawback for at least 6 of the participants, and an advantage among five of the second-generation participants. There were varied reasons for the support or concern over the absence of an enclave. Of those that expressed concern or disappointment, Ayşe O., reported that a Turkish enclave allows for greater cultural connectivity, and without that community, the sense of ethnic identity is much harder to maintain and pass down to future generations. This coincides with Kaya's conclusions in "Identity and Space: The Case of Turkish Americans."²⁰⁶ Ayşe felt that the presence of such an enclave might be able to not only nurture ethnic ties but improve economic viability within the Turkish community as well.²⁰⁷ One of the community stakeholders, Ivan U. the president of TACA, saw both advantages and disadvantages in the absence of the Turkish enclave in the Chicago area. He reported being concerned that there was no actual Turkish neighborhood to visit and support, but that being a part of the fabric of a larger community (of non-Turks) allows Turks to blend in. Ivan U. felt that the perfect solution would be a neighborhood that could both unite Turks and blend in with and to the "American ways and culture."²⁰⁸ Frank Y., Ralph M, Allie T., and Mike P. all reported being challenged by the lack of Turkish enclave, but for different reasons. Mike P felt the presence of the enclave would be beneficial to the Turkish American community, however lamented the challenges of uniting Turks from varied backgrounds, as he put it, "Kemalists and religious Turks."

²⁰⁶ Ilhan Kaya, "Identity and Space: The Case of Turkish Americans," *Geographical Review*, 95, no. 3 (July 2005): 439.

²⁰⁷ Ayşe O., interview, 2019.

²⁰⁸ Ivan U., interview, 2019.

Allie T. echoed the concern about a possible divided community, if such an enclave existed. She also commented on the existence of other cultural groups in the area, that allowed for places to congregate and socialize, and wondered how different it would be if such places existed for Turks.²⁰⁹ Both Frank and Peter felt the presence of a Turkish enclave in Chicago might have encouraged and nurtured their Turkish identity, as they both were split with another strong ethnic presence in their families.²¹⁰ Peter M. noted that the presence of the migrant organization and other Turkish family friends in the Chicago area served as surrogate family for those on his father's side that still resided in Turkey, though he wondered if having an actual Turkish community would've encouraged what he described as "his inner Turk."²¹¹

Chicago Area Turks & Their Migrant Organization Experiences

The role of migrant organization is key to the power by which migrants can acclimate and create agency within their host culture. Portes & Manning discuss the assimilation theory as it pertains to the upward social mobility of migrants in the piece "The Immigrant Enclave: Theory and Empirical Examples." They point out that if one subscribes to this assimilation theory, migrants who fail to move up the social hierarchy are in that position due to the resistance from the host culture, eschewing their traditional cultural values, including cultural traditions and religious practices. This host culture resistance to their ethnicity, or expression of

²⁰⁹ Allie T., interview, 2019.

²¹⁰ Frank Y., interview, 2019, Peter M., interview, 2019.

²¹¹ Peter M., interview, 2019.

ethnicity, could certainly be construed as one of the challenges of the Turkish community in Chicago, as evidenced by the interviews for this project.

Ivan U., former President of TACA sees the Chicago Turkish Festival as a very effective presentation and display of Turkish culture, specifically for non-Turks. He reported resource challenges and lack of funds for the festival's absence the last few years. When asked if there were any city resources available to back such a festival he answered "No, but the city of Chicago has praised the festival in years past- saying it was one of the best run ethnic festivals in the city." When I asked if city funds were available for the festival, or for Turkish migrant groups in general, he speculated that one needs to know how to ask for it, to really pursue that possibility of funding, which would typically be in grant form. He explained there wasn't anyone currently within the organization that was skilled in these kinds of forms, applications, systems, or queries. He agreed that the city may have funds available for the festival but knowing how to apply for such funds was daunting and uncharted territory for them.

He also saw one of his biggest goals as engaging the second-generation Chicago Turks through the work of TACA. He argued that their participation is key to their future success, and for understanding the most effective ways to pass down their culture. He felt there are differing, generational views on culture and identity, and noted that there are also divergent emotional connections to Turkey that affect how first and second-generation Turks participate in migrant organizations. He was troubled by the lack of knowledge about the basics of Turkish culture, history, and people from outside of the Turkish community. He was also concerned about the negative imagery and racist and bigoted references to Turks and Turkish culture, both here and abroad. President U. hoped to move on to a more politically centered role, once his term was up,

and perhaps focus on transnational politics in order to make an impact on expanding American's perceptions of Turkey and Turkish identity.

The leader of the only Chicago area Turkish mosque and community center, TASC, or the Turkish American Society of Chicago, Al Y., began his description of their migrant organization as being affiliated with Fetullah Gülen, and the Hizmet movement.²¹² He described TASC as a cultural center that is based in religion, specifically the views of Fetullah Gülen, with support from the Niagara Foundation in Chicago. He described the dual identities of Chicago area Turks as those who practice Islam, and those who are really just “cultural Turks” as he called secular Turks.

He also curiously questioned my connection to religion, as we began, and wondered if I was a religious Turk or not. He followed up with questions about my family connections to religion before I redirected to the mission of TASC.²¹³ He described his organization & mosque's practices and beliefs as guided by, in his own words “fundamentalism,” with a philosophy he claimed is inspired by Islam to “spread good and share goodness” in order to effectively spread their message.²¹⁴ Interfaith dialogue was mentioned countless times during the discussion, as the way that they connect to non-Turks and share their mission, as an organization.²¹⁵ He shared the desire to connect with all Turks in the Chicago area, but felt that after the failed coup attempt to overthrow President Erdoğan in 2016, the Hizmet movement has, in his words, “been Satanized.”²¹⁶ He claimed that secular Turks in the Chicago area don't want to associate with TASC or other Gülenists for fear of implication, and possible retaliation from

²¹² Al Y., interview, 2019.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Al Y., interview, 2019.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

the Turkish government for any kind of collaboration. He lamented the political ties to religion both in Turkey and here, as a major factor impeding their further success as an organization or of any kind of positive perceptions or imaging in the United States.²¹⁷ It was curious that both the heads of the migrant organizations brought up the challenge of perception of Turks, in a slightly different way, but still discussed as a negative force to be reckoned with on American turf.

The Niagara Foundation and Gülenists achieve their successful collaborations in the United States reaching out to other faith communities and academics, mainly American academics. The foundation often curates trips to Turkey to share, what they view as “the real Turkey,” to those interested in their philosophy and work. These are the kinds of collaborations they seek, according to Al Y. When asked about the collaboration with the city of Chicago or other local resources, Al Y described a considerable number of notable figures, “Chicago area congressmen and senators” he claimed were Feto (Fetullah Gülen) supporters. He discussed outreach to local politicians and academics and explained that the last trip to Turkey hosted by the Niagara Foundation included over 300 people from this area traveling for a conference centered on religious freedom and interfaith dialogue.²¹⁸ On the Niagara Foundation website there are many Chicago area academics listed as supporters such as representatives from: DePaul University, Northwestern University, Roosevelt University and Elmhurst College on the advisory board.²¹⁹

Most second-generation participants reported a connection with the Chicago migrant organization TACA during their youth. Some had merely one or a few encounters with TACA,

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Al Y., interview, 2019.

²¹⁹ “About Us, Advisory Board,” Niagara Foundation, <https://www.niagarafoundation.org/>, accessed October 2018.

whereas some were heavily involved in the organization during their youth. Lisa A. described TACA as being “forced upon her” as she went every weekend to some kind of activity, event or class.²²⁰ Her family was very involved, from her parents to her grandmother, as she recalled reading poetry at the International Folk Fair booth, and took language classes to improve fluency.²²¹ Esther and Al reported less involvement, at least, not regular involvement in TACA activities, and Esther’s family seemed to connect with other Turkish families in the Chicago area, rather than the migrant organization. Bella reported that as soon as they landed in Chicago (from Turkey) they were immediately connected with TACA due to her father’s previous personal and professional connection to one of TACA’s founders. She said her family spent many hours there during her childhood, as they saw not only their community of Turks represented there, but also an opportunity to create a family away from home through the TACA community. She described their connection to TACA as “like some other people’s version of Sunday school and church, it was the place for culture, connection and where we went to eat and visit with others.”²²²

Allie T. was another second-generation participant that reported strong connections and regular involvement in the TACA community as a kid. Most of her weekends and spare time were spent folk dancing, attending religious events or other activities led by other Turks. She, like others that had a stronger connection to TACA, said the larger Turkish community was created from (mainly) connections within TACA, that were part of her daily routine. Allie also said she was always more comfortable among other Turks herself, and her parents were much

²²⁰ Lisa A., interview, 2019.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Bella O., interview, 2019.

more at ease knowing she was involved in activities with other Turks.²²³ Mike P., Ralph A., and Frank Y. reported limited interactions with the migrant organization TACA, the only one that existed during their childhood. Ralph expressed many of the TACA events may have been, what he described as “lost on him” due to lack of language proficiency.²²⁴

Mike P., and Frank Y. both remembered very limited interactions, but both also expressed a desire for the existence of a Chicago area Turkish enclave, perhaps seeing that as a substitute for ethnic support. Nadine O. was perhaps the most directly connected to the migrant organization as her father was the founder of the group in the 1960’s. She described her father as a “crusader of all things Turkish” and says he also was most comfortable around other Turks. She shared that she had to be involved and would often share responsibilities for involvement with her siblings. She did everything from folk dancing, to attending religious observances, to assisting at the International Folk Fairs that took place at Navy Pier. She did express regret at having to miss out on some markedly “American” holidays and occasions, like Halloween or school events, due to her family’s involvement in TACA. Though she (and her siblings) were a bit overwhelmed by their father’s commitment to the organization and mission, they were, and are, proud of his work and accomplishments.²²⁵

Chicago Area Turks on Whiteness & Racial Ambiguity

Each participant, except for two of the three community stakeholders, reported instances of discrimination or prejudice due to their Turkishness. Not only were Lisa and Ayse’s mothers both excluded from some events, but they received racist comments about whiteness as well.

²²³ Allie T., interview, 2019.

²²⁴ Ralph A., interview, 2019.

²²⁵ Nadine O., interview, 2019.

Lisa A said she was on the receiving end of comments like “wow, I can’t believe how light skinned you are?” upon revealing her nationality. She said she always felt the presence of her “skin privilege” and knew that her brother’s had a different experience than she, as she could “disguise her difference” when she wanted to be treated a certain way.²²⁶ Ester Y. made a point of sharing her parent’s background here, as she wanted people to know why they weren’t fluent English speakers but didn’t want them to “be lumped into other immigrant categories.”²²⁷ She knew that speaking a different language outed her as different, and suffered much harassment for her Turkish name. As an adult, Ester Y. also dealt with post 9/11 racism and prejudice, such as the instance when she was told, by a stranger, “You don’t have the right to speak!”²²⁸

Al D.’s experience with discrimination was somewhat similar. He (like all the second-generation participants) dealt with the grade school response “gobble, gobble” after sharing ethnicity at a young age. Al D. also dealt with the challenges of racial ambiguity, as many would assume, he was Latinx, and converted to Islam, judging by his name and physicality. He said he was regularly asked “So, are you a convert?” He also dealt with racism and misperceptions in the military (where he served for years). Al D. shared that he was regularly asked, even while serving, “when were you patriated?” assuming he was serving in the military as a path to citizenship. The questioning of his patriotism was particularly difficult for him, as he expressed much pride in both being Turkish and being American.²²⁹ He has lived overseas and in other cities, and he described the creation of the “other” and racist treatment of others this way “Germans treat Turks like Americans treat Mexicans.”²³⁰ Bella reports the same grade school

²²⁶ Lisa A., interview, 2019.

²²⁷ Ester Y., interview, 2019.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Al D., interview, 2019.

²³⁰ Ibid.

bullying that included “gobble, gobble” comments from neighbor kids in their new community. Kids also picked on her for her English language ability, as they arrived when she was in grade school. She still gets comments in the workplace surprised upon learning the ethnicity of her name and family by sharing, “You don’t look Turkish!”²³¹ Allie shared the same grade school experiences and added that there was an increase in racist comments post 9/11. She recalled a job she took that started just after 9/11, and upon meeting her new boss, she heard him swearing about Muslims, as she entered his office. She says it was at that point that she began to worry, in earnest, about the safety of her family, and boys.²³²

Nadine O. shared also instances of dealing with racial ambiguity coupled with ethnic ignorance. She states she usually felt that she was obligated to “educate and inform with a mini-seminar” describing Turkey and Turkish culture to the non-Turkish community.²³³ She experienced bullying and discrimination surrounding her name and physical appearance in her CPS grade school years. She said as a child out of town once, visiting her grandmother, she heard the “n word” for the first time from kids who didn’t know what to make of her name, look, or nationality, so they defaulted to discrimination and racism. Even in her adult years, she was barraged by the question, “So, what are you?” as found in Alim’s work with transracialization.²³⁴ People just need to know who and what you are, in order to box you into a category, which in turn, produces racism and discrimination. That pause to categorize is troublesome to many. Ayşe O.’s experiences with racism and discrimination were blatant and troubling. She was also excluded from activities and suffered microaggressions during her grade school years. Ayşe

²³¹ Bella O., interview, 2019.

²³² Allie T., interview, 2019.

²³³ Nadine O., interview, 2019.

²³⁴ Nadine O., interview, 2019, Samy Alim, “Who’s Afraid of the Transracial Subject?” in *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes our Ideas About Race*, ed. H. Samy Alim, John Rickford, Arnetha Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 36.

shared a disturbing college instance of essentially a hate crime, where her college dorm room was vandalized with anti-Turkish propaganda written on the common area walls of her dormitory. She claims that although the perpetrator was identified (security cameras) nothing was done following the incident.²³⁵ She said microaggressions followed her into the workplace in her adult years, and she's typically asked, "What kind of name is that?"²³⁶ She says her background and ethnic heritage were the topic of an entire job interview at one point.

It's important to analyze the responses of all three of the community stakeholders (consul general and migrant organization leaders) who had very little, if anything, to say regarding discrimination. Virtually every one of the second-generation participants reported some instances of discrimination or prejudice in varying degrees. Bob A. the consul general, when asked about any reports of discrimination, claimed that "stereotypes of Muslims work for them," following it up with this explanation. He stated that since "they don't look like Arabs, or the terrorist stereotype, they're not bothered."²³⁷ As curious of a comment as this was, when asked to clarify his perspective on stereotyping Turks, he further cited the negligible instances of discrimination reported to his office during his term. Bob A. claimed there were just two reports of discrimination against Turkish citizens in the United States during his tenure as consul general, presiding over 13 states from Wisconsin to North Dakota.²³⁸

This inability or lack of acknowledgement of discrimination on behalf of Turkish citizens could be due to the hesitancy of citizens to report any crimes, concerns or real struggles to authorities, fearing retribution or consequence. The lack of knowledge about what constitutes

²³⁵ Ayşe O., interview, 2019.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Bob A., interview, 2019.

²³⁸ Bob A., 2019.

racism and discrimination, coupled with a cultural difference in the way Turks interact with authority would explain the inconsistency between official reports of discrimination to the consulate and the racism and discrimination in the American culture at large. It certainly doesn't seem in line with the life experiences of the other project participants, but it garners further study. It's important to note the participants for this study were second-generation and have a different perspective on discrimination. It's also noteworthy that not all second-generation participants are dual citizens, and the consulate specifically, or more earnestly serves and supports Turkish citizens.²³⁹

The experiences of the last community stakeholder also mirrored the other two stakeholders, and not those of second-generation participants, in connection to discrimination. When asked about his experiences with discrimination, Al Y., the head of the non-secular migrant organization TASC shared that he has never experienced discrimination in the United States. He further clarified that neither his veil-wearing wife nor his daughter, who also wears a veil, have experienced any forms of discrimination either. He wondered if his own physical appearance and racial ambiguity has something to do with his experiences. He reflected a bit on the ambiguity and shared that there was one instance in an airport shortly after 9/11. He said he was preparing for prayer, finding a spot near the gates, and beginning prayer. In this crowded airport he was approached by a security officer and was fearful that it was going to lead to something negative. He says the officer came to him and said quietly, "Brother, you're facing the wrong way, Mecca is this way" pointing to a different direction for him to pray. Al Y. recalls

²³⁹ Ibid.

this story often as an example of not jumping to conclusions and of the goodness of people, specifically the American people.²⁴⁰

Chicago Area Turks and Islamic Identity

There were varied views on religion among the respondents, skewing toward secularism. Among second-generation participants, four of them described themselves outright as secular, and two as interacting with religion, but stopped short of describing themselves as Muslim, some not bringing up religion at all. As for the three community stakeholders, both ends of the religious spectrum were represented in the comments from the Consul General to the heads of both migrant organizations. As one might imagine, the head of the non-secular migrant organization TASC, Al Y. described himself as Muslim first, and his mission as centered around Islamic beliefs. Specifically, he claimed allegiance to, what he referred to as, “a fundamentalist interpretation” of Islam, as interpreted by Islamic cleric Fetullah Gülen, and his followers in the Hizmet movement.²⁴¹ He believes his mission is to share Islam, via Gülen’s vision, and to connect not only with Turks, but with other faith communities to further their mission.²⁴² An offer was extended at the conclusion of our interview to spend time with their resident Gülen expert, should I have any further questions, or want to learn more.

As one might imagine, the head of the secular TACA had different views on religion’s role in the lives of Turks in the Chicago area. Ivan U. felt the Turks in the Chicago area that identify as more religious tended to be more insular and stayed with their own community. He

²⁴⁰ Al Y., interview, 2019.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Al Y., interview, 2019.

saw religion as a divisive component in the Chicago area, responsible for a split (since the 1990s) among the Turkish community. He reiterated the mission of TACA as that of a secular group, seeing to unify Turks and provide support, achieving the mission through secular means. He clarified that religion is not ignored, as there are religious holidays (Bayram) that are acknowledged through activities, but that is not their driving force.²⁴³

These two viewpoints are in contrast, or at least not represented in the final community stakeholder, the consul general. Bob A. felt that on one hand a strong religious community, surrounding a mosque, would help with collaboration and cohesion among the Turks in Chicago. But then, he stated that he sees the Turkish community as divided due to religion and politics. Ivan expressed some frustration surrounding successful collaborations between all Turks in the area, though he reiterated there had been some collaboration with the consulate under his leadership.²⁴⁴

Chicago Area Turks and Experiences with “Othering”

The perception of Turks, and what Turkishness means to the community at large was perhaps the most interesting among the second-generation participants. They spoke about perceptions of Turkishness, and what that meant in their own families, and the perceptions (mostly, if not all negative) of Turkey and Turkishness on the part of non-Turks. Many even “othered” themselves within the Turkish community as making the distinction between Kemalist (modern, secular) and non-secular Turks, who might be more traditional, or less modern in their opinions. This act of othering within a community that has already been othered was revealing to observe and analyze. For example, Lisa A. said she feels her family is a family of “modern

²⁴³ Ivan U., interview, 2019.

²⁴⁴ Bob A., interview, 2019.

Turks.” For her, that meant that the women are strong, independent and adventurous. Lisa reported that she did feel “in between” cultures, as her family was made up of a Turkish mother and father who celebrated all Turkish holidays, despite living in Chicago. She felt that the ignorance on the part of the general population as far as Turkey or Turks were concerned, led to many of the negative perceptions.²⁴⁵

Ester Y’s perceptions of culture were also through her parent’s experiences and influences. She reports feeling different about her parents, changing her own perception of them, upon returning briefly to Turkey in her youth. She said that it was in their own “home culture” that she really saw who her parents were, their senses of humor, comfort among friends and their true persons. She also identified strongly, as her parents did, with being a Kemalist. Peter M., Frank Y. and Nadine had one parent of Turkish heritage and one parent of a different ethnicity, that perhaps influenced their perception of Turkishness. Peter M. also stated that he doesn’t readily identify as Turkish, and even hid his Turkish heritage growing up to avoid any discrimination and negative comments from other kids.²⁴⁶ Al D. and Ester report difficulty managing the perception of “other” as both parents were Turkish, and they would travel back and forth as a child. They each stated that they struggled with the feeling of not fitting in with any one culture, Turkish or American.²⁴⁷ Frank Y. felt that the language is a disconnect and contributes to the sense of other, as he is proficient in the language of his non-Turkish parent. A factor for Frank in connecting to heritage are the regular trips he takes to Turkey to visit family.²⁴⁸ Lisa A. pointed to something as basic as the food she ate that differentiated her at

²⁴⁵ Lisa A., interview, 2019.

²⁴⁶ Peter M., interview, 2019.

²⁴⁷ Ester Y., interview, 2019, Al D., interview, 2019.

²⁴⁸ Frank Y., interview, 2019.

school. She said that her parents also struggled with many of the local customs, such as punctuality and appropriate attire for school events. She laughed about how her mom regularly showed up late to school events and was always “dressed to the nines” while the other moms were in jeans and t-shirts. She is the second one to report that perhaps there was exclusion from some participation (on her parents’ part) and othering due to their perceived difference.²⁴⁹

Conclusions & Claims

There is much research to be done in completing any analysis of the isolation and racialization of migrants in this country. Though there is a reasonable amount of work already done on some non-white communities, such as the Latinx population, there is much to be discovered about so many other groups, including Turkish Americans. Until this field grows and is treated with the scholarly respect it deserves, the goal to eradicate racism toward migrants will be a challenging to say the least. There must be a more in-depth analysis of migrant communities in cities throughout the country, such as Chicago, and secondly, an effort to relay their stories to dispel myths currently circulating about migrants in our communities. By doing so, we may also work to come to terms with our own history and how we have played a role in the marginalization of groups like the Turks in Chicago. We should also be striving to change perceptions, in communities both virtual and physical. By understanding the stories of individuals in our communities affected by racial stereotyping and federal and local policies, we are one step closer to leveling the playing field, so to speak.

²⁴⁹ Lisa A., interview, 2019.

Portes and Rumbaut determined that the ethnic identity of the second-generation migrant appears to be very influenced by both family and perception of ethnicity in the host culture.²⁵⁰ This certainly seemed the case with the second-generation Turkish Americans in the Chicago area that participated in this project. Their role as turning point for ethnic longevity has not been acknowledged by the entities that can best support them such as migrant organizations in the Chicago area. This demographic can serve not only a crucial role in the longevity of their ethnicity for future generations, but they can be a major part of the pushback against the xenophobia and discrimination suffered due to host culture ignorance.²⁵¹

As far as the enclaves and migrant organizations are concerned, there are certainly advantages to connecting the world more efficiently via social networks and virtual enclaves, as discussed in Tufekci's work. However, maybe the transnationalism expressed through and as a result of virtual enclaves is not helping with migrant's overall agency within their own communities.²⁵² Though not conclusive this study brings forth many questions surrounding Turkish Americans and the importance of both family and enclave. Some of these questions to be addressed in future research surrounding this ethnic community are: Are Turkish Americans in Chicago better off today than 50 years ago because of the internet? Have Turks lives truly improved in their own communities in the United States since migration?²⁵³ Is the focus kept rather insular with the virtual enclaves and connectivity of the digital age, thereby removing the focus to connect with non-Turkish communities? How crucial is the Turkish enclave in a digital

²⁵⁰ Alejandro Portes, Ruben Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Study of Immigrant Second Generation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001): 71.

²⁵¹ Christopher Rivera, "The Brown Threat: Post 9/11 confluences of Latina/os and Middle Eastern Muslims in the US American imagination, *Latino Studies*, 12, no. 1 (2014), 52, 61, Ilgin Yorukoğlu, "Whiteness as an Act of Belonging: White Turks Phenomenon in the Post 9/11 World," *Glocalism*, 2.2, no.2 (2017): 16-17.

²⁵² Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017): 6.

²⁵³ *Ibid*, 5.

age when connectedness may not necessarily be physical? These questions can serve as the groundwork for future research into Turkish Americans and other under-represented ethnic groups as well.

Some of the most negative perceptions of both ethnicity and identity remain connected to whiteness and the racist foundation of American government and systems. If the aim within the Turkish community in Chicago is to refrain from educating and collaborating with outside communities, it appears the Turks' access to greater power within those systems (education, government, legal, labor) will be stunted. I argue that the virtual enclave may be more effective and meaningful for those within Turkey that may feel censored or shut out, however that same virtual enclave doesn't serve the Turks or Turkish Americans well as a means to reach out to non-Turks in the Chicago area, with the goal of changing perceptions or achieving greater agency within the communities. Nauck discusses the need to collaborate outside of one's ethnic group as he argued that the interactions that put Turks and Turkish Americans inside the American systems and institutions that are crucial, but not yet breached.²⁵⁴ The work both within Turkish communities like Chicago, and within the institutions that interact with the ethnic groups, is where the Turkish Americans need to be focusing. In other words, how to breach the block put on entrée into the places where power is held is the key to moving forward while maintaining ethnic identity.

This access and comfort in American systems and culture as a whole, will allow for pushback on the perceptions of Turks in the United States and allow them greater effectiveness and support within their own communities also.²⁵⁵ It could be that the hesitancy on the part of

²⁵⁴ Bernard Nauck, "Intercultural Contact and Intersectional Transmission in Immigrant Families," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 32, no. 159 (2001): 160.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 168.

the Turkish community stakeholders to address discrimination and prejudice is not just a denial of the existence of prejudice, but fear of being permanently and completely excluded from entrée to these systems they need to embrace. Just as the social construction of race and ethnicity takes seed in the American systems and cultural narratives for the Turks and Turkish Americans, so can the challenge to those narratives and perceptions. I argue that the perceptions and narratives created about Turks can only effectively be dismantled from within the same systems keeping them out. If Turks and Turkish Americans in Chicago can work from within the systems, such as government, education & the labor market, the allocation of resources and funding may be altered, thereby altering the distribution of power.

If there can be a challenge to the xenophobic, racist narrative of Turks and Muslim Americans, it needs to be acknowledged first as racist and xenophobic in order to be shattered.²⁵⁶ Alim argues that there shouldn't be the need to racialize in the first place, and I argue that Turks would do best to push back on the perpetual question, "So, what are you?" in order to begin building the respect they, along with other migrants and non-whites deserve.²⁵⁷ Since the "othering" done at the turn of the century when the Turks first arrived in the Chicago area created this narrative of Turks as barbaric and uncivilized, it has been an uphill battle to overturn this negative, racist perception ever since.²⁵⁸ I argue that this "othering" has not only pervaded

²⁵⁶ Samy Alim, "Who's Afraid of the Transracial Subject?" in *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas About Race*, ed., H. Samy Alim, John Rickford, Arnetha Ball (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 45.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Bilal Sert, "Early Turkish Immigrants' Adaptation Experiences," in *Turkish Immigrants in the Mainstream of American Life*, ed. Sebahattin Ziyanak, Bilal Sert (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018): 44.

the sentiment in the host culture toward Turks, but infiltrated their own communities. The problematic othering of Turks within Turkey as Kemalist, secular, modern, white, vs. conservative, Muslim, and black in terms of identity further distinguishes and isolates themselves in the United States as well. In other words, the racialization begins at home and continues, infiltrates and damages the perception of their ethnicity in American culture. This division within the Turkish communities in Chicago certainly spills over to affect the balance of power excluding Turks essentially, and displacing migrants from disrupting the discriminatory balance. The division within the Turkish community itself (white vs. black, Kemalist vs. Muslim) also keeps the Turks in Chicago from becoming a more robust demographic and from changing the narrative to a more positive overall perception.

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Appendix A

DePaul Graduate Program- Critical Ethnic Studies – Bulut

Thesis Interviewee Questions: (Second-generation Turkish Americans)

- 1) How do you identify yourself? (when you introduce yourself in conversations, or, as you self-identify)
- 2) Tell me about your parents, their backgrounds – both how you think of them, and how you even would speak of them to others, in essence, how you introduced them to others. Who they were to you.
- 3) What role did your parent(s) Turkishness, or heritage play in your childhood, or upbringing? How did being Turkish get passed down to you?
- 4) Do you remember going to Turkish cultural centers or Turkish events in or around Chicago? If so, what and where?
- 5) How do you identify yourself as Turkish, if you do? What connections to your heritage are the strongest?
- 6) Do you think it was helpful or more of a challenge not having one distinct Turkish community in Chicago?
- 7) What do you think most Chicagoans think of when they think of Turks?
- 8) What are the most visible representations of Turks in Chicago, how does one “see” or experience Turkish in Chicago, in your opinion?
- 9) In your childhood, what was the biggest challenge as the child of a parent just coming from another culture?
- 10) Did you feel any particular struggles as a second- generation Turkish American in school, or as an adult, with respect to discrimination, due to language, race, or ethnic discrimination at any point?
- 11) Any final thoughts on your Turkish identity and connection to either community spaces (neighborhoods, community centers) or family?

Appendix B –

DePaul University – Bulut (Community Stakeholders)

Critical Ethnic Studies Master’s Program- Thesis project- Interviewee Questions:

- 1) Please describe your role in the Turkish community:
- 2) What are your goals as connected to your position? What do you hope to accomplish?
- 3) What steps do you take (or have you taken) to achieve that goal? What are the actions, events or discourse that is initiated or supported through your position in the Turkish community?
- 4) Do you see connecting with Turkish cultural groups (or other Turkish entities) in the area as crucial to your mission? If so, how do you connect? If not, why?
- 5) When you are asked to identify yourself, how do you do so? (For example, I identify as Turkish, or Turkish American, and typically share that upon meeting someone?)
- 6) Do you believe that the absence of a physical Turkish community in Chicago is a detriment or an advantage, how?
- 7) In your opinion, is there a collaboration between the City of Chicago and your role? In other words, do you feel supported or guided by any kind of resources the city can offer?
- 8) What do you see the biggest challenges of your position are, in the Turkish community in Chicago?
- 9) Do you see an equal connection and sense of participation with all demographics of Turks and Turkish Americans in the Chicago area?
- 10) Any final thoughts on your Turkish identity and connection to either community spaces (neighborhoods, community centers) or family?