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Disaggregating Citizenship: Transnational partition of the “economic” from the  
“socio-cultural” in the case of a Turkish community in London

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**Abstract:**

Turkish immigrants from the eastern Black Sea town of Unlupinar who have settled in London over the course of the last forty years maintain a strong transnational existence. While they spend most of the year in London by working mainly in the food industry, they also make sure to find time to pay their hometown a lengthy visit every summer. Therefore, understanding the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of this immigrant community necessitates paying attention to the ties they have both to London and to Unlupinar. This transnational existence, however, is radically split along economic and socio-cultural lines as the ties that bind immigrants to sending and receiving contexts lead to a definite partition of immigrants' life experiences. While almost all economic activity is based in London's ethnic niche market, all socio-cultural activities remain embedded in Unlupinar's rural logic. Based on our field research in London and Unlupinar conducted in 2009, we aim to explore the ways in which strong ties in different spheres of life lead to a radical separation of the "economic" from the "socio-cultural" and the subsequent transnational partition of immigrants' practices. Furthermore, it seems that this transnational existence has direct reflections on how Turkish immigrants experience citizenship and conceive of identity attached to that. It has been said that the citizenship, which is actively constructed, is conceptualized as both polyvalent and multi-scalar. Compatible with our results, Turkish immigrants strictly distinguish economic aspects of British citizenship from cultural and political ones of it as a result of their close social and cultural connections crossing national borders. In this respect, we want to show in this paper that the emotional identification strategy of this group to Turkish citizenship and its reflections on the 'sense of belonging' are directly related with how they experience local and transnational space.

**I. INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH TOPIC AND QUESTIONS**

Turkish immigrants from the eastern Black Sea town of Unlupinar in London maintain a strong transnational existence with their home town more than thirty years. While they spend most of the year in London heavily involved in their self-employed businesses mainly in the restaurant and catering sector, they also make sure to find time to pay their hometown a lengthy visit every summer. Therefore, understanding the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of this immigrant community in London necessitates paying attention to the ties they have both to London and to Unlupinar. According to our observation, however, this

transnational existence is radically split along economic and socio-cultural lines as the ties that bind immigrants to sending and receiving contexts lead to a definite partition of immigrants' life experiences. As a result of this partition processes, it seems that almost all economic activity and rationality is based in London's ethnic niche market, all social and cultural decisions and frames of reference remain embedded in Unlupinar's particular rural socio-cultural logic.

Based on our ethnographic field research in London and Unlupinar conducted in 2009, we firstly aim to explore the ways in which strong ties in different spheres of life lead to a radical separation of the "economic" from the "socio-cultural" and the subsequent transnational partition of immigrants' practice and mentality. In this paper we want to discuss these findings put above in terms of their implications for citizenship. In this sense we aim to understand how this transnational existence affects the way in which Turkish immigrants experience citizenship and conceive of identity attached to that. We also wonder to what extent this Turkish community affects (and affected by) social and cultural landscape of their home town, on the one hand, and, urban landscape of London, on the other hand. In other words while searching answers for these questions, we would give some answers to the question of to what extent this Turkish community is a visible and integral element of London's urban landscape, and to what extent they become a member of London's societal context.

In the following section we put the historical context of this migration process from Turkey to UK. After a discussion on the conceptual framework of our paper, we turn to our research findings and analysis. Lastly we finish our paper with concluding remarks.

## **II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: MIGRATION FROM UNLUPINAR TO LONDON**

### **Turkish Immigrants in London: A General Overview**

Although the beginning of the labor migration from Turkey to UK goes back to 1960s, the proliferation of the academic studies on these migration processes starts after late 1990s with an increasing pace (Wahlbeck, 1998; Atay, 2006; Erdemir and Vasta, 2007). The growing interest on Turkish immigrants in London is closely related with an increase in the number of Turkish refugees in London after 1980s. This situation explains why main focus of many studies is Kurdish and Alevi immigrants from Turkey. There are also some studies

which focus on Muslim identity of Sunni Turkish immigrants (Küçükcan, 1999; Çilingir, 2010)

Turkish immigrants in London, analytically, can be grouped into different groups in terms of their socio-economic and cultural divergences. In order to understand the convergences and divergences among these groups, the Turkish neologism “*Türkiyeli*”, meaning “someone from Turkey”, or, “Turkish speaking society”, seems to be appropriate. Turks from Cyprus have distinct socio-economic characteristics in the sense that they have incorporated socially and economically into mainstream English society in the early years of their migration since they had already established close ties with British Empire as the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus. Immigrants from Turkey, who came to UK in 1960s and 1970s, worked mainly as employees of the restaurants and factories owned by Turks from Cyprus. A second group of Turkish immigrants are those, who migrated to UK in order to work in professional jobs with their skilled and urban socio-economic background. Third group, Kurdish immigrants, migrated to London primarily as a result of political pressures before and after military coup in 1980. Most of them could get refugee status in 1980s. With their political and social associations, they have an impact on local politics in London’s boroughs of Hackney and Haringay. They are either Kurmanji-speaking (Kurdish dialect) or Alevi (a more liberal branch of Islam in Turkey). Fourth group consists of immigrants who come from the villages of some inland Anatolia cities with their low educational and job qualifications. This last group migrated to UK as a result of labor demand of textile and food industry in London. They are predominantly Turkish-speaking and Sunni. Immigrants from Unlupinar can be thought as one of the known communities of this group. Compared to former group, immigrants with Kurdish and Alevi identity, these immigrants have low impact on local politics via their hometown associations and social clubs. Although there are some socio-cultural boundaries between these groups, it should not be forgotten that there are many similarities and connections as well. These relations can be defined as “symbiotic relations” in which both supporting relations and tensions in ideological and cultural senses exist (Atay, 2006).

In order to give a rough idea on the population size of Turkish immigrants in the UK, some numbers on population size and citizenship granting can be put here. According to the Greater London Authority’s (GLA) Labour Force Survey and Census Data, there were 52,893 people born in Turkey in the UK, and 39,128 in Greater London in 2001. On the other hand, the Turkish consulate estimates that there are 150,000 Turkish “nationals” in the UK. As

Vasta and Erdemir (2007) compiled from Home Office Statistical Bulletins, the numbers of Turkish nationals, who granted British citizenship between 1984 and 2005, are 47,008. In the same period, on the other hand, there were 36,569 Turkish nationals who applied for asylum in the UK. These numbers shows how becoming an asylum seeker in the UK is a valid way for granting British citizenship.

Before turning to a discussion on the migration processes of Turkish immigrants from Unlupinar, some major points of migration policies in the UK might be analyzed as long as they have an impact on our research case. Migration policies in the UK can be understood with the help of the concept “incorporation modes” (Schierup et. al., 2006). Of different modes of incorporation, which can be called as “political-administrative frameworks” of any immigrant receiving country, according to multicultural model, migrants are accepted by the host legal framework as distinct communities with their own cultural associations and social infrastructure. In our view, another major characteristic of incorporation policies in the UK is the importance of local politics and municipalities for immigrant groups in accessing to socio-economic resources (Melotti, 2006). Even at the local level, distribution of social and economic assistances is left to immigrant’s own associations. These policies are called by some scholars “communitarian” or “self-help” policies according to which immigrant groups are expected to obtain resources and assistance with their own organizational capacity. Since it is claimed that these policies reproduce the already existing socio-cultural divergences across religious and ethnic ties and existing class-based and racial inequalities, there exist many critiques to these policies (Barry, 2001; Schuster and Solomos, 2002). Not to mention, this kind of incorporation strategies affect the way immigrant groups identify themselves with “Britishness” or “Englishness”, and their citizenship practices. One direct impact of this mode of incorporation show itself in relatively open legal structure for acquiring citizenship. To sum up liberal immigration and citizenship policies in the UK with an emphasis on multiculturalism under a neo-liberal context carries some aspects of both multiculturalism and of assimilation integration models.

#### Immigrants from Unlupinar in London

Unlupinar with a population of 5.000 and with its own municipality is a relatively developed village of Kelkit, a subprovince of Gümüşhane, which is a small city on the Black Sea coast of Turkey. In terms of socio-economic indicators, Gümüşhane is the 71<sup>st</sup> most

developed city among the 81 provinces of Turkey. Its gross income per capita is as nearly half of gross income per capita in Turkey (DPT, 2003). Both Kelkit and Unlupinar have an economy based predominantly on agricultural and cattle breeding. Due to the lack of income-generating activities, emigration to big cities of Turkey and abroad has been always an option for local people as a survival strategy.

Specifically, the chain migration from Unlupinar to UK started when a townsman living in Germany as temporary worker was deported to UK in 1967. Then, he found a job in a restaurant owned by a Cypriot Turk as a waiter. Due to the transformation of the restaurant into chain of restaurants as a result of the expansion of food industry, he invited his locals to work in the same chain. In early years of this chain migration, only men from Unlupinar emigrated. In 1980s as a result of liberal migration policies of both Turkey and UK, family reunions took place. Moreover, some people from Unlupinar also applied for political asylum, since it was relatively easy to grant asylum from UK until the middle of 90s even if Unlupinar was not in south eastern of Turkey where many political oppressions were experienced by the Kurdish population of Turkey. Up-to-date, many of the immigrants have rights to stay and work in definitely and UK citizenship. However, still there are immigrants who do not have papers. Today, many Turkish immigrants from this town in UK work in the food sector as restaurant owners or employees in restaurants and meat factories<sup>1</sup>. We were said that more than 400 coffee shops and restaurants are owned by the members of this community. In recent years, some restaurants have been closed down due to the decreasing profit rates in the sector. Most of immigrant families from this town have been living London's boroughs which have dense migrant population such as Hackney and Harringay. Nonetheless, some families have moved to more affluent neighbors as a result of upward mobility they experience. It is estimated that today there are approximately 5.000 immigrants from Unlupinar. Throughout 80s and 90s, Unlupinar's economy and specifically construction sector became dependent on remittances sent from UK. However, remittances did not increase the production capacity of the town, since it was mostly used for daily expenses and construction. In recent years, the amount of remittances sent to hometown has decreased since the permanent population of the town has dramatically decreased as well. While the town's winter population is around 500, its population reaches to 6000 with the visiting immigrants.

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<sup>1</sup> With "meat factory" we want to denote the enterprices that produce ready-made döner and other meat products which a kebab restaurant needs daily.

### **III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:**

In our paper we use a conceptual framework constituted by two concepts: transnationalism and citizenship. Beyond an elaboration of these concepts, they will be also related to some theoretical discussions on international migration, citizenship and use of space. We firstly shall put the new understanding of migrant transnationalism with a place sensitive perspective in globalizing world, and then new understandings of citizenship.

Transnationalism simply can be defined as “occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation (Portes et al., 1999, p.219)”. This definition was elaborated by Vertovec (2001) with an emphasize on transnational social formations. According to him, any emphasize on transnationalism of international immigrants aims “to look empirically at, and to analyze, transnational activities and social forms along with the political and economic factors that condition their creation and reproduction” (Vertovec, 2001: 3). Portes et. al. (1999) make an analytical distinction between grass-root transnationalism and state-sponsored transnationalism of which former type of activities are less institutionalized, and consists of ordinary immigrant activities such as sending remittance, informal cross-country traders, activities of hometown associations and amateur cultural groups.

For our analysis, the debate around the question of whether transnational spaces and ties of immigrants affect incorporation of immigrants into host society negatively or positively needs to be mentioned. For two or three decades new theories of migrant incorporation, of which Portes’ segmented assimilation (Portes and Zhou, 1993) theory can be taken as a pioneer study, have challenged many assumptions of early assimilation theories. Different pathways of incorporation and a differentiation between different aspects of incorporation (Portes, 1995) have become a major topic of migration studies. For instance incorporation into the labor market and legal structure without blending into the political, social and cultural spheres of the host country has become a usual experience of many immigrants in developed countries. This phenomenon is defined by Glick Schiller et. al. (2005) as “pathways of incorporation”, meaning a transnational existence across two or more nation-state. According to Glick Schiller et. al. (2005), “transnational family networks” as one of the pathways of incorporation occurs when immigrants live in a host country with dense transnational family networks that link them both to other immigrants in the host country and home country. In other words, there might be a mutually inclusive relationship between

incorporation into a new state and maintaining cross-border incorporation. These transnational family and community ties might even reinforce the establishment of institutional ties with host country.

New theoretical contributions concerning citizenship theory has been elaborated for more than twenty years. Debates have been made especially with regard to the status of foreigners and immigrants as new citizens in developed countries (Bauböck, 1994). Dual citizenship (Faist, 2000) and post-national citizenship (Soysal, 1994) have been major concepts that are often associated with the processes of globalization, transnationalism and international migration. These new understandings of citizenship are connected to the identity formation of immigrants and political membership with a focus on globalization by Benhabib (1999). By being inspired by this perspective, Ehrkamp and Leitner (2003: 132) define a relational perspective that “captures the meanings and practices of citizenship, and their geographies in the contemporary period of accelerated and globalized movement of people across national boundaries.”

A major dimension of these new contributions is that citizenship is conceptualized as multi-scalar. In this understanding, scholars try to explain how immigrant communities use the urban space as strategic sites of citizenship (Holston and Appadurai, 1999), and also enact social practices at the different geographical scales. For instance, rather than the practices and impacts of citizenship is to be reduced to politics at the national level only, a more comprehensive understanding of citizenship must include politics and identity formation at the local and transnational levels as well. In addition to this dimension, both individual and collective everyday life practices of immigrants are defined as practices of citizenship beyond an understanding of citizenship depending on passive criteria of membership. Ehrkamp and Leitner (2003: 127) summarize this understanding: “citizenship is not just about passive criteria of membership in a national community and/or rights and duties conferred by the state. Citizenship is also a social practice that individuals engage in beyond the state, through institutions of civil society and civic actions”. Different from state-centered conceptions of citizenship depended on naturalization laws, when citizenship is conceptualized as a social practice, civic associations (such as religious organizations, trade unions and women’s organizations, and cultural associations) would be seen as an important dimension of citizenship practices. To sum up, this actively constructed understanding of citizenship, which is defined as both polyvalent and multi-scalar, could be summarized as a focus on citizenship practices and identity formation at multiple sites and at multiple scales.



Keeping in mind this conceptual framework, we lastly would like to suggest the importance of “translocality” or “migrant places as localities” in our case. This concept might enlighten us in the way immigrants use and conceive of spaces and places in which they live. Such a focus would remind us some spatial aspects of transnationalism and citizenship. In a recent article, Gielis (2009: 271) proposes to add “a place lens” as an analytical tool for transmigrant scholars in order to complement the already existing “network lens”. He justifies this contribution by saying that “a network lens works well for studying the internal complexity of cross-border social networks, a place lens is more useful for gaining an understanding of their external complexity”. Here external complexity is defined the complex ways in which the various social networks of transmigrant (both cross-border and intra-border ones) interrelate in the everyday lives of migrants. The core question is, however, how interrelating social networks can be (made) visible in place. Based on this place sensitive understanding, he firstly focuses on migrant places “in their capacity as meeting places of social networks”, and then on migrant places “in their capacity as translocalities”. In these places, he suggests, transmigrants can reach out to people in other places, and they are capable of being absent from the place in which they are physically. These places might be thought as communal places in promoting both expressions of identities and reinforcing of them. For the case of Turkish immigrants in Germany, for instance, Ehrkamp (2005) shows the constitution of relations between place-based local attachments and transnational practices. In our case two places seem to be important: Unlupinar as their home town and Hackney as their host town. In this sense we claim that these two localities are formed into a “translocal” space by the continuous activities and practices of immigrants.

To sum up, at one level, we will discuss how Turkish immigrants constitute and reproduce socio-cultural and economic ties with their home town specifically and with Turkey in general. This discuss would depict the way in which this Turkish immigrant community incorporated into a new socio-cultural context. Then our focus turns to the issues of citizenship. In this sense we try to understand the interaction between transnational practices of immigrants and citizenship practices. At this second level of our analysis we discuss, in brief, how these transnational connections have an impact on understanding and practices of citizenship.

#### IV. RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Our findings in this discussion are based on field work of a research project.<sup>2</sup> For this research, we employed a non-simultaneous multi-sited methodology, which means that we conducted a field work both in sending and receiving contexts in sequence of the sending, the receiving, and once again the sending context. While we were designing this methodology, we highly benefitted the perspective of Mazzucato (2005). In-depth interviews and participatory observation were the research techniques of our field research. We conducted in-depth interviews both in London and Unlupinar during the summer of 2009. We conducted interviews with 35 immigrants (16 female, 19 male) in London and with 12 locals (6 female, 6 male) who have relatives in London. We also conducted 20 expert interviews in both locations.

Firstly we want to highlight the transnational practices which have an important effect on citizenship practices of the immigrants. Our first important observation about these transnational activities is that they are experienced among townspeople and transnational ties of the immigrants mostly relate them to their hometown. Townspeople are mostly relatives to each other and thus they know each other personally. Being from Unlupinar (not being Turkish or Muslim)<sup>3</sup> is a very important criterion when they choose some one to spend time. The immigrants explain this situation with their distrust towards other immigrants from Turkey. They usually spend a great part of their holidays in Unlupinar with their relatives and friends rather than in other cities of Turkey. Our second important observation is that transnational activities are separated by gender lines. Since men and women of this community practice their daily life activities such as shopping or working in different places, these activities' transnational extensions also take place differently along gender spheres.

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<sup>2</sup> The full name of research project: "The Analysis of the Change in the Transfer, Utilization, and Impact of Remittances: The Cases of Migration from Yağlıdere to New York and Unlupinar to London". This research is funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK). We work with Dr. Aykan Erdemir as our project director in this project.

<sup>3</sup> In the sense since most of our respondents' concerns and deeds are towards their small hometown and community, these connections can be defined as long distance nationalism (Anderson, 1992). In our case, however, since village-based social networks outweigh non-community networks in this process of identity reproduction, the national identity of the immigrants is inclined to be confined to their village rather than broader national community.

Women's transnational activities happen at homes and men's happen at coffee houses or *kahvehanes* which are actually established as social clubs in Hackney.

If we elaborate these two points further, we see that women mostly spend their times at their homes with their close or distant relatives from Unlupinar. Together, they talk about other relatives or their children, eat and drink Turkish food and beverages, watch Turkish satellite TV channels which mostly broadcast on religious issues. They make phone calls their older common relatives who live in Unlupinar. Sometimes, they go together to Stoke Newington Mosque where facilitates as a meeting point for Muslim women in Hackney and shopping around Stoke Newington or Dalston Junction in Hackney, which many Turkish markets and shops can be found. When we asked them whether they have friends of other nationalities, we were told that due to lack of English they can not communicate other women in the mosque they attend or in the neighborhoods they live, although these places consist of many council houses for immigrants of different background. Moreover, we were astonished by the fact that they categorize Turkish immigrant women who are from other places of Turkey than Unlupinar as foreigner and they do not make friendship with them. They relate this situation to their preference to stay at home with their relatives. Even if they think that it is easier to go to somewhere from their homes, they do feel threatened outside their home. It is a very rare occasion that they go to Clissold or Finsbury Park in Hackney even if it is with their husbands or other male family members.

As far as we can see, children spend their childhood with their mothers. Since women do not work outside home, they do not need any daycare facility. From their adolescence period on, girls' and boys' lives differentiate sharply. Girls continue to college a few years, socialize with their mothers' circle and their peers from Unlupinar, and work sometimes in part-time works until their marriage with a boy from the community. Their families are reluctant to send them to universities and girls can not push hard to their families for such a decision even if they want to have university education. In adolescence period, boys start to spend time with other boys mostly from Unlupinar or their fathers. They work at restaurants called "*kebabçı*" in Turkish or at family meat factories, as unpaid family labor. As a result of their early participation into labor market, they leave school in an early age. Similar to their sisters, they marry with a girl from Unlupinar. At this point, we must mention export brides or grooms. Since Unlupinar's local economy mainly is based on remittances, young people who were born and grow up in Unlupinar see, rather than education or working in a local job, out migration as the only way to get out the life in Unlupinar. In this situation marrying to a

Londoner is a chance which one must not miss. Moreover, families in London may also prefer a bride or groom from Unlupinar since they think young people who live Unlupinar are not exposed to main stream culture in London. These marriages are arranged by the elders or young people can know and love each other during their holidays in Unlupinar. In this respect, they are mainly confined to relative circles and they reproduce the dominant social practices which take roots in Unlupinar. Even if immigrants arrange small celebrations in London for weddings, the real and important parts of the weddings take place in Unlupinar. These are important occasions where immigrant and non-immigrant people of Unlupinar can see each other, and new wedding arrangements are made. The circumcision feasts also occur in Unlupinar in the summer times. But most of the organizational arrangements about weddings or circumcision feasts are done from London mostly by phone calls and with the help from relatives from Unlupinar and London.

When we look at the men's sphere, we see that they spend very little time at homes. They come home at night very lately and leave home early in the morning. The transnational activities of men generally centre on their work places and coffee houses in Hackney that they visit after the work or in the breaks. The kebab restaurants of Hackney which are managed by men from Unlupinar are locus for transnational activities. Actually, kebab restaurants facilitate as coffee houses where friends and relatives of the restaurant owner meet. Actually the owners of the restaurants do not work in the restaurants except very rare occasions. In regular times, the employees who are mostly son, groom or the nephew of the owner work and serve the costumers.

Men from Unlupinar have and run their separate coffee shops. They do not go to other coffee shops in Hackney and Harringay and other Turkish immigrants generally do not visit theirs. The coffee shops have names such as *Karadeniz* or *Pekiin* which denotes geographical area where their home town is located. In these coffee shops, friends and relatives drink a tea (in a Turkish style) and chat about Turkish politics, soccer teams or their hometown Unlupinar. Especially, activities of municipality of Unlupinar and developmental and economic issues of Unlupinar are debated very harshly in coffee shops. In the coffee shop, by collecting money and donating it to a specific candidate, they can affect the local municipality elections in Unlupinar. They mostly say for the local elections the party of the

candidate is not important, but the personality of the candidate matters.<sup>4</sup> To support the candidate, they should know the candidate in person. They state that the existing major of Unlupinar won the election in this way and he came to London to raise money among immigrants for a project which is based on the selling flats to the immigrants.

The population from Unlupinar has association called Unlupinar Turkish Cultural Association which is actually very similar to a larger coffee house. Mostly men use the flat of the association. Townspeople sometimes organize picnics or dinners under the roof of the association. They use its website to announce the funerals or weddings. When poor members of the community die unexpectedly, they raise money to transport the dead body from London to Unlupinar. Townspeople also watch nearly every street of Unlupinar via the web cams on the web site of the association. During our field work, there was a new administration and they had plans to open courses on Turkish culture, Turkish food and Turkish language. These courses were thought as a measure against, as they define, “the destructive effect of British culture” on the young people from town. For the community, the association is also a way to get the help from Hackney council for cultural activities, but as far as we observe during the field research, even if the new administration was very ambitious to make the association in operation, they can not have it as they wish due to inadequate membership number and lack of organizational capacity.

When we have a closer look at the working lives and their economic decisions of the immigrants from Unlupinar in London from a perspective which focuses on transnational activities, unlike their social lives the working lives of the immigrants are mainly confined to London’s economy as an ethnic niche. They mainly work in the food sector as employers and employees of kebab restaurant and coffee shops or of meat factories. The kebab restaurants serve not only Turkish population in London but also other ethnic groups and tourists. Since kebab restaurants sell food at very cheap prices until very late hours at the night when compared to other fast food restaurants, they are very profitable businesses. The employees work for very long hours to make a living in the kebab restaurants or other enterprises in the sector. The employers, who have a kebab restaurant or coffee house, also spend day time usually around their enterprise as we said before. The meat factories provide important job opportunities for unskilled young men of Unlupinar. These enterprises retail meat products to

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<sup>4</sup> However, we observed that the candidates were the members of conservative and nationalist parties.

Scotland, Ireland and Wales but not to other EU countries due the regulations about meat between UK and EU countries. However, there are also adjunct transportation companies, which carry non-food products between UK and continental Europe. The immigrants from Unlupinar who have indefinite residence permits in UK or British citizenship can work in transportation companies because it requires high level mobility in Europe in short times which is very hard with a Turkish passport. Being a British citizen or having a work permit also matter for other immigrants who work in the jobs which do not require any mobility. If they do not have citizenship or work permit, this means generally for an immigrant from Unlupinar that she/he has to accept to work as a unpaid family labour or in very low paid jobs for long hours in one of the relatives' kebab restaurant or one of the jobs that her/his relatives find in a Turkish enterprise as a counter clerk or waiter/waitress. In such a situation, the network of the immigrant exploits her/his. But if the immigrant has work permit or citizenship, she/he can work in a regular job outside the Turkish niche; she/he can also benefit broader facilities of British social state.

14 of our 35 respondents have both Turkish and British citizenships. The other respondents also want to have British passports mostly for gaining indefinite work permits. Having British passport is not only important for working conditions of the immigrants, but with it social state benefits have huge effects on nearly every aspect of their lives. The very first impact of British social state and its facilities concerning the lives of immigrants from Unlupinar is about housing. Few families have their own houses in the suburban areas. Most of our respondents live in council houses, which are close to each other, and they pay their rent to Hackney council as social benefactors. Such a housing policy makes the immigrants clustered in the neighborhoods of Hackney and Harringay, which are mostly populated by immigrant communities. The close distances among the houses of the immigrants from Unlupinar increases the possibility of visiting the relatives or going out together. The immigrants may receive other kinds of social benefits such as unemployment benefits, child benefits or income support. They also use health and education facilities in the neighborhoods.

Even if all of them want to have British citizenship, the immigrants in general have two major and opposing perceptions about the social state in UK. The first group feel appreciation for these possibilities, and see them as a sign for the value attributed to citizens in Britain and as a right they deserve as citizens or citizens-to-be. Moreover, they think that they gain these benefits for their work in harsh conditions in the jobs which a non-immigrant

British does not want to work. They also emphasize that Turkey lacks these opportunities, and thus they are reluctant to turn back there. The second group of the immigrants see these benefits as a kind of trap that British state utilizes to keep the immigrants in Britain as cheap labor. They say that even if they receive benefits, they can not make money to change their way of life in Britain or return to Turkey. Especially, the women, who have to deal with the correspondences with the council and visits there to handle with the red tape of the benefits, state that they are not used to do these kind of things in Turkey, they do not have enough education to handle with British bureaucracy, they could not speak English, and the council's interpreters are rude and reluctant.

These differing perceptions of two groups about social security system of Britain roughly correspond with their wishes about return to Turkey. Among our respondents, nearly all of them think that they can not return to Turkey permanently, even if they wish it. Their greatest hope is to have financial opportunity to spend at least summers in Turkey when they are retired. Only eight of the respondent does not want to return Turkey permanently at any stage in their lives. Actually these eight immigrants constitute the first group of immigrants who have relatively positive feelings about social security system in UK. More importantly, none of our respondents does state that they feel any commitment or belonging to UK or to London. Only four of them give the names of the other cities in Turkey, rather than Unlupinar, when we asked them where they belong to. The immigrants who are originally from Unlupinar but immigrated to London from other cities of Turkey also say that their commitment to Unlupinar increased, they met new relatives, and they started to miss there after they came to London. The answers, that they gave to the question whether they feel comfortable in or not, whether they feel integrated in UK or not, are really puzzling. At a first sight most of the respondents state very confidently that they get used to life in London. However, when we dug it with the other questions about leisure time activities or perceptions about life in London in general, we understood that the accommodation they mention was actually at the survival level. They mean that they survive in London when they say "yes, we get used to it" or "yes, we integrated". They go to shopping or working, they could handle with the bureaucracy at the health center or school with the help of the interpreters or their children who speak English better than them. When we asked about the reason, the respondents, especially those who have children or middle aged ones, highlight the cultural differences and tell how these differences make their lives harder. A statement of a fifty-one

years old male immigrant who owns a coffee shop in Hackney can be illuminative to understand the situation:

I can not get used to it, because they have very different culture. Their life style. Their sense of humor. They have manners which are exactly opposite to ours. I mean, family is sacred for us, but they forget it so quickly. So, it will be a lie, if I say I get used to it. Will I attract attention, when I go out? No. But if you ask did you get used to it, no, I did not, I can not. Here, they have a culture of pub which I detest. Everybody goes there. Music level is very high, until your head ringing, drinking until you get drunk. If you want to make close friends with them, you have to meet them there. You go to pub to see them. They look at you strangely, if you offer to go for a picnic or to barbeque. He asks what the point is. Because they can not live without beer. It is similar; we can not feel comfortable if we do not go the coffee house. It is the same for them with the pub.

He is one the respondents who want to return to Turkey, very anxious about the manners and behaviors of his teenager son, and his one of the biggest fears is that his son will not be a proper Turkish boy. Some other respondents firstly put the advantages living in the UK. According to them, making profit from the kebab restaurants, benefiting the possibilities of social state, or living without any intervention of the authorities in private life such as right to go to school without uncovering the headscarves are positive aspects of the life in UK. However, after respondents say the advantages, they start with a “but” and continue to tell disadvantages which are mainly about cultural matters. For example, a respondent who is a fifty years old housewife firstly says that they can have every kind of food in their that the Queen has, thanks to the social state benefits. She is also among the immigrants who do not want to return to Turkey. Then, she continues as the following:

The culture... After all, our culture is different. With culture, I mean... we are Muslims. There are things, images which are contrary to our religion outside, they bother us. The young people are too free here, I mean the ones who are non-Muslims...every kinds of behaviors. I am bothered these behaviors most, because, I teach our own culture to my child our, they instill in my child from outside. We have arguments of “they are human, we are human, too” with my children.

Another immigrant who is a thirty six years old male kebab restaurant worker state that even if they can make money in London, this money does not bring peace to them. When we



asked about where he felt belonging, he stated in very certain manner: “Certainly, I am not British. God not make you British. Fortunately I was born as Turk, this is what I say.”

If the discontent about British culture is one reason for their unhappiness in London, the other reason is that their continuous nostalgia for Unlupinar. They miss the clean air, blue sky and green meadows of Unlupinar. They also miss the intimate relations which is free from calculations between neighbors and friends there. They feel safe in Unlupinar for themselves and their children. One respondent who is a 51 years old kebab restaurant owner’s words summarize why they are so devoted to Unlupinar:

“Do you know why we lost? For 25-27 years, only one thing, we did not accept England as our homeland, if we did like the Cypriots, Kurds, we always think that we will run tomorrow, this is the reason why we lost always. We did not invent, we should accept as homeland, because our kids grew here, we can not go back. I came here for three days, everybody did so. To buy a house, to buy a car, to pay a debt. But nobody can return. Everybody is here, but they do not accept here. Neither can we get used to here, nor to Turkey. We go there, we can not get used to there, too. Only village (Unlupinar)! We can only get used to the village, since we came from there. But our kids do not want to go there... They did not grow up there. Some of them do not want to stay here, too... Here is a life of a robot. This land gives you a few coppers, but takes your everything”

## **V. CONCLUSION**

In this picture of social and economic lives of the immigrants from Unlupinar in London, there are some striking points. The first one is the very strict split between female and male domains both socially and spatially. Where women only leave homes at very few occasions when they need, men spend just a few hours at the homes and they spend their days in the kebab restaurants or coffee houses which they or their relatives own in Hackney and Harringay. In this respect, women use public spaces of London such as parks or streets very rarely and their all activities including transnational activities are invisible and confined to private sphere. The second striking point is that whether private or public, whether female or male domains, the immigrants heavily prefer to socialize with their friends and relatives from Unlupinar. In this respect, what seems to be public in male domain actually can be evaluated

as an extension of private domain since it is only open for people from Unlupinar. All of their transnational activities in this domain are towards Unlupinar and for the reproduction of the culture that takes roots from Unlupinar. The third striking point about their lives is that only the economic activities of the immigrants can take place in the public sphere and relate them with London's economy as a an ethnic niche.

According to our view, since most of their transnational activities take place in private sphere, the citizenship practices become a part of immigrants' lives as long as they can affect the private sphere of the immigrants. We mean that the immigrants make practices of citizenship as long as they provide social benefits for their private sphere. In this respect, practices of citizenship, which are actually made for deriving social benefits of the British welfare state, are conceived as not the way to merge with the main stream way of life in London but to sustain immigrants' own way of life.

As far as we can see, the second generations who grow up in London want to break this cycle. Due to the crisis in food sector, the young people have to seek job outside this sector and they need the qualities which they can only acquire in British education system, thus they spend more time in schools. However, for them, it is very hard to have a relevant college or university education, since they are graduated from secondary schools in Hackney and Harringay, where is infamous with low quality of education. Even if they find a job outside the ethnic niche, they generally face with discrimination. High rate of endogamy also keep the young population in the strait limits of community and reproduce the first generation again London especially with the export bride and grooms. In this respect, it would not be wrong to claim that both the operations of British multiculturalism and reproduction dynamics of community confine the young people to the community. Only a few young people of the community may want to differentiate their lives and can find the ways for such a differentiation.

At the end we emphasize that this situation is not only related with immigrants' anxiety about to reproduce their way of life in London, but also it is related with British multicultural model which does not intervene the private sphere and cultural activities of an immigrant community and provide social space for them to stay as communities (Melotti, 2006). Contrary to hybridization thesis (Bhabba, 1994) and to the thesis that transnational ties strengthened the feelings of belonging to host society among the immigrant population (Glick Schiller et. al.; 2005), we observe in our case a process of homogenization of an ethnic

community. We also see for our case that their transnational ties reinforce and reproduce their belonging to their place of origin, and citizenship of the host country is only evaluated as an economic means.

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