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# ‘Turks’ in London: Shades of Invisibility and the Shifting Relevance of Policy in the Migration Process

Working Paper No. 51

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September 2008

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## Abstract

This paper reports the results of a pilot study into 'Turkish' Migrants in London. Drawing on notions of 'superdiversity', 'invisibility' and 'nodal points' (where migrants' actions intersect with policy), the account first maps out the three main constituent groups under study: Turkish Cypriots, 'mainland' Turks, and Kurds from Turkey. The main analytical part of the paper consists of an examination of the migration process of the three groups to London, built around the experiences of a small sample of migrants and key informants, and broken up into a number of stages – pre-migration and departure, arrival and adaptation, and settlement and the future. Throughout the analysis and in the conclusion, emphasis is laid on the intersection of migrants' life-stages with the policy nodes, which are shown to have variable relevance for migrants' decision-making.

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### Introduction: super-diversity and nodal points

Steven Vertovec has recently opened a new strand in the debate on multicultural Britain and the politics of immigration and integration by invoking the notion of 'super-diversity' to describe a level of complexity in migration processes and plurality of migrant groups never previously experienced in Britain. According to Vertovec (2007: 1024) 'diversity in Britain is not what is used to be', especially in London where, in the words of Ken Livingstone, the city's populist former mayor, 'you see the world gathered in one city' (quoted in Freeland 2005). The 'world in one city' slogan also featured in the Greater London Authority's analysis of the results of the 2001 Census (GLA 2005) and in the successful London bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games.

What, exactly, has changed? Three things, according to Vertovec. First, Britain's ethnic-minority and immigrant-origin populations are no longer dominated, as once they were, by the large, well-organised and easily identifiable communities from the former colonial territories of the Caribbean and South Asia. The GLA report (2005) examined the presence of people from no fewer than 179 nations in the capital. So, more than ever before, more people from more places are coming to live in London. Second, there is a 'diversification of diversity', by which national origin is an imperfect measuring-rod of the overlapping identities associated with ethnicity, language, religion, etc. Third, we observe a

multiplicity of variables which dynamically interact to 'produce' different types, channels and outcomes of migration; and one of the most significant of these variables is migration policy. The overall result is the increased number of 'new, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants' who have settled in London in recent years (Vertovec 2007: 1024).

We shall demonstrate presently how the framework of super-diversity has salience for our discussion of 'Turks' in London; and we will also, at the same time, embark on a necessary problematisation and elaboration of the term 'Turkish' when referring to the three different groups with varying connection – national, ethnic, linguistic – to this descriptor.

Before we do this, we need to set out the institutional context which frames our research on 'Turks' in London. The context is the MIGSYS research project, funded by the Population, Migration and Environment Foundation and the International Metropolis Project for 18 months, February 2006 to August 2007, and directed by Anna Triandafyllidou at the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) in Athens, Greece. The full title of the MIGSYS project is 'Immigrants, policies and migration systems: an ethnographic comparative approach'. The comparative structure involved small research teams carrying out fieldwork on 13 separate but overlapping migration systems: Poles in

Germany and Greece; Ukrainians in Hungary, Italy and Poland; Moroccans in Belgium, France and Spain; Turks in the Netherlands and the UK; and Mexicans in California, Missouri and Canada. The MIGSYS Final Report consists of an integrated summary of all 13 mini-projects, including a brief synthesis of our research on 'Turks' in London (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2007a: 50-3, 77-82). We use the vehicle of this Sussex Migration Working Paper to describe in more detail the field and documentary research carried out in London, the results of which were written up in two unpublished reports presented to MIGSYS workshops in Athens, 30 June–1 July 2006 and 22–24 February 2007 (Thomson 2006; Thomson *et al.* 2007).

So much for the mechanisms of the project. We now elaborate the conceptual framework that guided the MIGSYS research. Here we can do no better than quote Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2007a: 3):

[The research] aims at providing a better understanding of the connection between immigrants' plans and strategies of mobility, adaptation and survival, on one hand, and receiving country policies, on the other (...). More specifically, whether and what role these policies play in migrants' decisions to migrate, and/or in their plans to stay, move on to a different country, return to their country of origin, and in their overall efforts to adapt to the host country environment.

Key to the MIGSYS analytical frame is the concept of 'nodal points'. These are 'moments when a migrants' decision and/or realisation of a migration project intersects with a specific policy' (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2007a: 11). Five nodal points can be identified in the evolution of a migration process over time (Triandafyllidou 2005: 5; 2006: 18-20):

- *Decision* – to leave or stay, or commute or seasonally migrate. Apart from the family/household dimension of the decision (how much freedom does the individual

have, what is the role of family networks in migration?), relevant policies would include encouragement or barriers to migrate from a sending state, legal recruitment and entry channels from the receiving state, and alternative channels such as smuggling or clandestine entry and 'overstaying'.

- *Action* – actualising the desire to move (or failure to do so). Relevant policies – encouragement or control – as above, plus the level of information available to the migrant at this time.

- *Arrival* – as a legal vs. undocumented migrant, or asylum-seeker, or tourist/student and overstaying. Relevant policies relate to housing, education and training, employment, health and welfare assistance.

- *Adaptation* – working and living conditions, securing of migrant or refugee status. Policies here relate to the broad field of social integration, protection from discrimination, and other policies listed for 'arrival'.

- *Settlement and future* – to stay long-term or to return 'home'; or to migrate to another destination country; or to adapt to circulation and a transnational lifestyle. Policies again relate to integration and anti-racism, plus incentives to return etc.

We shall see later how these nodal points apply to the migrants we interviewed and to the wider migrant communities they are part of.

## Methodology

Interviews with a small sample of migrants and key informants were carried out in Haringey and Hackney in November and December 2006, following the guidelines of the MIGSYS project outline (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2007a). The interview structure followed the principle of the intersection of biographical and policy nodal points sketched above, together with a complementary set of standard questions normally asked to migrants and to people working with migrant organisations.

Three in-depth interviews were carried out with 'Turkish' migrants (the names are pseudonyms):

- Lale, a Turkish Cypriot woman in her 50s who came to the UK as a school-leaver teenager.
- Hulya, mid-20s, who immigrated from mainland Turkey five years ago; and
- Baran, aged 30, a Kurdish refugee from eastern Turkey who arrived in the UK in the late 1990s.

As for interviews with 'policy-makers', we decided against speaking with representatives of national or local statutory bodies because we felt that their responses would simply mirror official policy lines, whose views are readily available through official documents and websites etc. Instead, we chose to interview people working at the interface between policy implementation and the lives of our 'target' migrant populations. These key informants were also drawn from amongst the various Turkish 'sub-communities', although all of them had extensive knowledge and experience beyond their particular sub-groups.

Interviews were held in the language of choice of the interviewee – hence English, Turkish and Kurdish were used. The interviews were taped (with the informants' permission, of course), transcribed and translated where necessary. In this paper the authors also draw on their wider knowledge, both of this part of North London and of the communities studied. We acknowledge, however, that the small size of the sample renders this study more in the nature of a pilot investigation.

Straightaway we must also acknowledge here at the outset that the designation 'Turkish' (or 'Turks' etc.) is deeply problematic, especially for the Kurds from Turkey (who resist being called 'Turkish Kurds'), but also, to some extent, for Turkish Cypriots (who may identify with Cyprus not with Turkey). Within Turkey, Kurds have a marginal, persecuted status deriving from the failure of the Turkish state to recognise them – Article 13 of the

Turkish Constitution states that 'in Turkey, from the point of view of citizenship, everyone is a Turk without regard to race or religion'. As we will see later, this hegemonic categorisation travels with the migrants/refugees to the receiving countries, where, despite their persecuted status derived from their situation in Turkey being the *raison d'être* of their acceptance as refugees and asylum-seekers, they continue to be classed as 'Turkish'. Meanwhile, it is also important to appreciate that the emergent political and social realities amongst Kurdish exile communities in Europe have created new Kurdish identities and spaces for collective action. In particular there is a paradigm shift from having an identity imposed from Turkey (or from Iran, Iraq or Syria, the other countries with Kurdish populations), to a 'dreamed, imagined and constructed Kurdish identity formed in Kurdistan and in Diaspora' (Keles 2007). Likewise, some Cypriots do not want to be subsumed under the label of 'Turks' as they do not see themselves as migrants from the 'baby homeland' ('*yavru vatan*', a Turkish term for Cyprus) but view Cyprus as an independent country. This discussion continues in Northern Cyprus in terms of the relations between native Cypriots and settlers from Turkey.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Immediately below we describe the London setting for the 'Turkish' population in the UK, drawing on various data sources to indicate the size and characteristics of its three main constituent groups – Turkish Cypriots, mainland Turks, and Kurds from Turkey. Next, these three sub-communities are portrayed in more detail. We then explore the migration process of these three groups to London, disaggregated by several stages or nodal points: pre-migration and departure, post-migration and adaptation; and settlement or return. In conclusion we stress the provisional nature of our findings; the diversity of migrants' backgrounds and migration trajectories; and key policy issues relating to the groups of migrants studied.

## 'Turks' in the UK: the London setting

The 2001 UK Census sparked a great deal of interest in who makes up the country's population of nearly 60 million. The census confirmed both the long-term increase of the foreign-born population over the previous half-century, and an accelerated increase in the foreign-born during the most recent decade, 1991-2001. Thus, whereas 2.1 million were recorded as foreign-born in 1951 (4.2 per cent of the total population), these figures had more or less doubled to 4.9 million and 8.3 per cent in 2001. The increase in absolute numbers of the foreign-born population during the decade 1991-2001 – 1.1 million – was greater than any other intercensal decade, considerably exceeding the previous high of 600,000 during 1961-71. Growth in immigration, which has been particularly buoyant since 1997, continues into the current decade, running at around 500,000 per year during 2000-03, rising to nearly 600,000 in 2004, the year of EU enlargement when free movement and entry into the British labour market were open to all citizens of the 10 'new' EU countries. The annual outflow of migrants, meanwhile, grew much more slowly, reaching a plateau at around 350,000 since 2002.<sup>1</sup>

The last ten years or so in Britain have been a period of generally less restrictive policies towards certain categories of migrants; this has coincided with increasing concern about rising levels of immigration, reflecting the prominence that migration has had in the recent political landscape and media coverage. Contributing factors to this heightened public debate over immigration include the growth in numbers claiming asylum in the UK, which peaked at 103,000 in 2002;<sup>2</sup> street clashes between British

Asian and white youths in several northern industrial towns in 2001; the much-publicised surge in migration from the A8 accession countries (especially Poland) since 2004; the hidden scale of 'illegal' immigration; and of course the widespread worries over terrorist attacks in the wake of those which took place in New York in 2001 and in London in 2005. The political response has, for the most part, aimed to tackle *undocumented* forms of migration through tighter border controls and measures to discourage fraudulent asylum claims. At the same time, though, there has been a sea change in thinking as regards the role of *legal* migration in the UK economy. No longer does the state aim to restrict levels of legal or 'managed' migration to a minimum; now it explicitly ties the UK's economic interests to recruiting migrants to fill particular job vacancies and skill shortages in the labour market.

With this general UK immigration context in mind, we now pick up the theme of superdiversity in order to see where the 'Turks' fit in. First, some official data. In the list of 'foreign-born and without UK nationality' compiled by Salt (2004), those with Turkish nationality rank 16<sup>th</sup> in the UK, with 51,000 or 1.8 per cent of the total of 2.86 million.<sup>3</sup> The four largest foreign national groups come from Ireland (368,000 12.9 per cent), India (171,000, 6.0 per cent), the USA (155,000, 4.7 per cent) and Italy (121,000, 4.2 per cent). Intermediate places are taken, in descending order of importance, by Germany, France, South Africa, Pakistan, Portugal, Australia, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, Somalia, Former Yugoslavia and the Philippines.

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<sup>1</sup> The statistics in this paragraph are taken from National Statistics Online, under the headings of 'People and Migration', accessed 19 April 2006 (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>).

<sup>2</sup> This figure is for asylum applications (84,000) and their dependants, and this total amounted to a quarter of all non-British immigration in 2002. Asylum applications have since declined significantly.

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<sup>3</sup> This figure is substantially lower than the census enumeration of 4.9 million because of the dissonance between birthplace, nationality and ethnicity. The foreign-born include large numbers of immigrants who either had British passports at the time of their immigration (including some 'ethnic British') or who have subsequently acquired British nationality by naturalisation.

Table 1 London residents by country of birth outside the UK, 2001

| Rank | Country      | Number  |
|------|--------------|---------|
| 1    | India        | 172,162 |
| 2    | Ireland      | 157,285 |
| 3    | Bangladesh   | 84,565  |
| 4    | Jamaica      | 80,319  |
| 5    | Nigeria      | 68,907  |
| 6    | Pakistan     | 66,658  |
| 7    | Kenya        | 66,311  |
| 8    | Sri Lanka    | 49,932  |
| 9    | Ghana        | 46,513  |
| 10   | Cyprus       | 45,888  |
| 11   | South Africa | 45,506  |
| 12   | USA          | 44,602  |
| 13   | Australia    | 41,488  |
| 14   | Germany      | 39,818  |
| 15   | Turkey       | 39,128  |
| 16   | Italy        | 38,694  |
| 17   | France       | 38,130  |
| 18   | Somalia      | 33,831  |
| 19   | Uganda       | 32,082  |
| 20   | New Zealand  | 27,494  |

Source: GLA (2005)

Table 1 shows that, within London, Turks have a similar position, 15<sup>th</sup>, with just over 39,000, based on birthplace alone. However, a very different weighting is indicated by Table 2 which gives the estimated number of *Turkish speakers* at nearly 74,000, making Turkish the fifth most widely spoken language in London after English.<sup>4</sup>

These data give important insights into the position of ‘Turks’ and ‘Turkish-speakers’ within the kaleidoscope of multicultural or super-diverse London, but they also problematise the label ‘Turkish’. In fact, three distinct groups need to be recognised: *Turks* (Turkish nationals and Turkish-speaking), *Turkish Cypriots* (Turkish-speaking but coming from Cyprus), and *Kurds from Turkey* (Turkish passport-holders but ethnically Kurdish). Whilst the term ‘Turkish-speaking population’ has often been applied to encompass ‘Turks in

<sup>4</sup> These data on languages spoken come from a large survey of 897,000 London schoolchildren, asking which languages they speak at home (Baker and Mohideen 2000). The data may be accused of having methodological flaws (Vertovec 2007: 1032-3), but the findings are nevertheless remarkable and give a unique insight into the linguistic geography of London. Given the date of the survey, recently-arrived language groups, for instance from Eastern Europe, are greatly under-recorded.

the UK’ (Enneli 2002; Issa 2005; Mehmet Ali 2001), this is clearly offensive to the Kurds, who have their own language. Changing the label to ‘Turkish-and-Kurdish-speaking populations’ brings in Kurds from Iran and Iraq, who are present in significant numbers in the UK. Aspiring to their own nation, Kurds also object to being labelled as ‘Turkish Kurds’ (or Iraqi Kurds, Syrian Kurds etc.). In this paper we try to resolve this terminological dilemma by resorting to the compromise acronym CTK (Cypriot-Turkish-Kurdish communities). We opt for this, rather than any other sequence (TCK, KCT etc.), since it reflects the historical order of arrival of the three groups under study.

Table 2. Estimated speakers of top languages in London, 2000

| Rank | Languages            | Number    |
|------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1    | English              | 5,636,500 |
| 2    | Punjabi              | 155,700   |
| 3    | Gujerati             | 149,600   |
| 4    | Hindi/Urdu           | 136,500   |
| 5    | Bengali/Sylheti      | 136,300   |
| 6    | Turkish              | 73,900    |
| 7    | Arabic               | 53,900    |
| 8    | English Creole       | 50,700    |
| 9    | Cantonese            | 47,900    |
| 10   | Yoruba               | 47,600    |
| 11   | Greek                | 31,100    |
| 12   | Portuguese           | 29,400    |
| 13   | French               | 27,600    |
| 14   | Akan (Twi and Fante) | 27,500    |
| 15   | Spanish              | 26,700    |
| 16   | Somali               | 22,350    |
| 17   | Tamil                | 19,200    |
| 18   | Vietnamese           | 16,800    |
| 19   | Farsi                | 16,200    |
| 20   | Italian              | 12,300    |

Source: Storkey (2000)

There is undoubtedly a perception – largely true – that CTK immigrants and their descendants have been overlooked in research terms, certainly in comparison to the larger and more visible minority ethnic groups from the Caribbean and South Asia (Enneli et al. 2005). A focus on ‘race’ as a signifier of difference between white and non-white UK residents has left little room to consider issues affecting ethnic minority groups which somehow escape this dichotomised model; and even then studies

on the CTK communities are fewer and less in-depth than those on other nominally 'white' groups such as the Irish (Jackson 1963; Walter 2001), the Italians (Colpi 1993; Sponza 1988) or even the Maltese (Dench 1975).<sup>5</sup> Enneli *et al.* (2005) refer to 'Turks and Kurds' as a set of 'invisible' and 'disadvantaged' ethnic communities. According to Mehmet Ali (1985), the 'Turkish-speaking communities' in the UK are a 'silenced minority' due to the number of racial attacks on them which have gone largely unreported. Another factor contributing to their 'invisibility' is the perception that they are a highly self-sufficient group, for example because many find employment in the 'ethnic economy' in labour-market niches such as coffee-shops and kebab houses. Their strong kinship and social networks, however, disguise many social problems faced by these communities, a significant number of whose members live in some of the most deprived areas of London. CTK populations are disproportionately engaged in low-wage employment, whilst many of the youth leave education with few qualifications. Another concern is the poor level of English amongst many first-generation immigrants.

### **CTK communities: shades of invisibility and deprivation**

In this section of the paper we describe the three groups that make up the CTK population in London. Using a combination of secondary sources and our own interviews with immigrant and key community members, we delve into some social, economic and political aspects of the three communities, concentrating on areas of disadvantage that they suffer.

The three groups – Turkish Cypriots, mainland Turks, and Kurds from Turkey – arrived at different albeit overlapping times and for different sets of reasons.

### *Turkish Cypriots*

The Turkish Cypriots were the first to immigrate. Although a trickle had arrived in the 1930s, the main influx took place in the 1950s and 1960s. The British influence (Cyprus was a British colony from 1878 until 1960, when the island acquired independence) made the UK the destination of choice. Arrivals peaked in 1960-61, years that coincided with the withdrawal of British troops and the loss of well-paid jobs tied to the British colonial presence, and preceded the implementation of the UK Immigration Act of 1962. Hence this was an economic migration, driven to some extent by poverty and the opportunity to 'make good money' in Britain (Ladbury 1977: 303); but also, especially after the increase in inter-communal tension between the numerically dominant Greek Cypriots and the progressively marginalised Turkish Cypriots after 1963, by political motives too. Postwar London, meanwhile, offered plentiful opportunities for workers in a range of industrial and service occupations, as well as for some small-scale entrepreneurs. As one of our interviewees revealed, the attraction of Britain was especially strong for those regaled with 'stories about how beautiful the country was, how democratic, and how lifestyle was good [with] opportunities for everyone' (Lale, female, mid-50s, immigrated aged 19, now works in the care sector).

The Turkish Cypriot migration, like the movements of Greek Cypriots to Britain which occurred alongside it (see Constantinides 1977), was mainly a family migration; the intention was to settle in the UK, but to retain a Turkish Cypriot identity and links to Cyprus (Ladbury 1977). According to Robins and Aksoy (2001: 690), Turkish Cypriots emphasised their affinity to the 'British way of life' as a pragmatic attempt to be accepted. They were assisted by earlier-settled Greek Cypriots in finding accommodation and employment – the latter predominantly in the textile and dressmaking industries and in hotels, restaurants and snack-bars in London.

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<sup>5</sup> The extent to which these various ethno-national groups (including CTK migrants) are, indeed, 'white' is, of course, an issue for debate, which will not be followed up here.

Soon, many Turkish Cypriots established their own business in these sectors.

An interesting subplot in the story of Turkish Cypriot migration concerns their bi-communal relations with Greek Cypriots. The two communities emigrated in roughly the same proportions as their demographic distribution in Cyprus, where Greek Cypriots outnumbered Turkish Cypriots by four to one. But, unlike the growing inter-communal tensions back in Cyprus, with a virtual civil war during the years 1963-64 and then a brutal partition of the island in 1974, it appears that relations between the two communities in Britain remained reasonably cordial. This was partly because of their mutual, but unequal, dependence (Turkish Cypriots being more reliant on Greek Cypriots than vice versa), and partly because much of the migration to Britain occurred during a period of more harmonious co-existence, before the violent clashes which started in 1963 (Ladbury 1977).<sup>6</sup>

Regarding Turkish Cypriot numbers in the UK, there are only indirect indications. UK census birth-place records do not distinguish Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Successive censuses point to stable numbers of Cypriot-born since the main influx during the 1950s and 1960s: there were 72,665 in 1971, rising somewhat to 84,327 in 1981 (probably due to some renewed emigration as a result of the partition and displacement of both populations in 1974), then falling slightly to 78,191 in 1991 and 77,156 in 2001. Constantinides (1977: 272) suggested that the 1971 figure should be doubled to 140,000 to account for the second generation born in Britain, whilst Ladbury (1977: 305) estimated the Turkish Cypriot community at approximately 40,000 in the mid-1970s. Writing a quarter of a century (and therefore almost a generation) later, Robins and Aksoy (2001: 689) give an

estimate of 100,000, and claim that this is more than the 80,000 Turkish Cypriots remaining in Cyprus, where they now live in the self-proclaimed (but not internationally recognised) Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, along with large numbers of post-partition settlers from Turkey.<sup>7</sup> More recently, Enneli *et al.* (2005) quote an estimate of 120,000 Turkish Cypriots – Cyprus-born plus second and third generations – living in the UK.

The geographical distribution of Turkish Cypriots in London reflects, but is not identical to, the parallel Greek Cypriot migration, and has in turn influenced subsequent immigration of Turks and Kurds. According to Ladbury (1977: 306), Turkish Cypriots initially settled slightly to the east of the main areas of Greek Cypriot settlement, which were in Camden and Islington. Turkish Cypriots were also more likely than Greek Cypriots to locate south of the river. Like the Greek Cypriots, and reflecting a history of settlement which now dates back over fifty years and hence includes the progressive residential scattering of the second and third

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<sup>7</sup> According to a recent analysis by Hatay (2007), there is a 'war of numbers' over the population of Northern Cyprus, due largely to the disputed quantity of immigrant-settlers from Turkey. Provisional results of the 2006 census of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) give a *de jure* population of 256,644 (the *de facto* enumeration was 265,100, including visitors and tourists). Of the *de jure* total, 178,031 were TRNC citizens, 70,525 were Turkish citizens, and 8,088 were other nationalities. Of the 178,031 TRNC citizens 147,405 were Cyprus-born, 27,333 were Turkish-born (indicating that TRNC citizenship has been given to substantial numbers of Turkish settlers), and 2,482 were UK-born (mainly second-generation 'returnees'). And of the 147,405 Cyprus-born TRNC citizens, 120,031 have both parents born in Cyprus, 16,824 have both parents born in Turkey (hence these are 'second-generation' Turks in the TRNC), and 10,361 have one parent born in Cyprus and one born in Turkey (reflecting the substantial amount of intermarriage that has taken place between 'native' Turkish Cypriots and settler Turks). From all this we can deduce that there are around 120,000 'pure' Turkish Cypriots in Northern Cyprus, roughly the same number as the latest estimate for the Turkish Cypriot community in the UK. The Robins-Aksoy figure of 80,000 reflects politically-motivated under-estimates from the Republic of Cyprus government (the only internationally recognised government for the island, but which only controls the southern 60 per cent of the territory, where the Greek Cypriots live), which has been concerned to portray the Turkish Cypriot population as 'shrinking' in the face of massive immigration from Turkey.

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<sup>6</sup> This is not the place for a detailed examination of the 'Cyprus problem': for an overview see King and Ladbury (1982). There was, however, a further pulse of emigration in the mid-1970s, following partition (Hatay 2007: Appendix 2).

generations, there has been a process of suburbanisation away from the inner-city districts, moving north along the Haringey axis to Enfield, and southward to Croydon (cf. King and Bridal 1982 for Greek Cypriots). This outward diffusion of the Turkish Cypriots away from their initial core areas, which were never very dense or visible in the first place, makes them today an even more 'invisible' group in the ethnic social geography of London. Robins and Aksoy (2001) sensitively explore this invisibility in terms of Turkish Cypriots' suspension between three more dominant spheres of cultural identity: British society, within which they are now rather successfully integrated; Greek-dominated Cypriotness; and the (mainland) Turkish sphere which has both political resonance in terms of the 'Cyprus problem' and cultural importance in terms of the later waves of Turkish immigration into London. A further symbol of Turkish Cypriots' lack of visibility is the remarkable dearth of academic research on this group.

### *Mainland Turks*

Following the Turkish Cypriots, Turks from the mainland were the second of the three groups to arrive. Like the other two groups, they are overwhelmingly concentrated in London. The 2001 Census recorded 54,000 Turkish-born but this figure is subject to two important caveats: it includes Turkish-born Kurds, and it excludes second-generation Turks.

The arrival patterns of the mainland Turks were quite different from the Turkish Cypriots who preceded them. The first Turks to arrive, in the early 1970s, were single men who were joined by their wives and children later in the decade. To some extent this model of migration replicated the much larger migration of Turkish (and Kurdish) 'guestworkers' to Germany, the Netherlands, France, Belgium and Austria in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>8</sup> Most of the young

men migrating to the UK in the 1970s came originally from rural areas, but had often migrated internally to one of Turkey's big cities prior to their international move (Mehmet Ali 2001). The military coup in Turkey in 1980 brought a second wave of Turkish migrants to the UK, this time largely made up of intellectuals, students, trade union activists and professionals, with mainly urban origins (Erdemir and Vasta 2007). Like Turkish Cypriots, Turks in the UK have been very little researched; the significance of this neglect is different between the two groups. For the Turkish Cypriots the lacuna is perhaps more acute because the UK is by far the major destination for this emigration – other, minor, destinations include Australia, Canada and Turkey. For Turks, there has been abundant research on their other European destinations, especially Germany and the Netherlands.

Some of our key informants spoke about the relationship between the Turkish Cypriots and the Turks during the 1970s. The former were quick to create small businesses, as noted above, and thus opened up employment opportunities for mainland Turks.

In 1971, because of the initiative of the Turkish Cypriot employers in London there was a special agreement between Turkey and England to bring tailors to work in sweatshops in the textile industry (interview, Hackney Refugee Forum).

Then we would slowly see Turkish Cypriots opening restaurants and going to Turkey to bring in chefs and cooks to help... Turkish Cypriots never had that kind of experience with cooking Turkish food and kebab style, so therefore [mainland] Turks started coming in by getting work permits (interview, Turkish-Kurdish Community Centre).

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<sup>8</sup> The Turkish communities in these categories count 1.8 million in Germany (2005), 352,000 in the Netherlands (2004), 174,000 in France (1999), 125,000 in Austria (2001) and 47,000 in Belgium (2002); data are from

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Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2007b: 24, 37, 117, 133, 252). Apart from the different years, these figures are not strictly comparable because of different recording systems in the countries concerned.

Work permits had to be renewed every year; Turks became residents after five years' legal residence. Many still retain their Turkish nationality, mainly to protect their rights in Turkey, such as land ownership (Issa 2005: 8).

Another channel or nodal point for Turkish immigration arose out of the Ankara Agreement, signed in 1963 between Turkey and the EU, which facilitated the migration of Turkish entrepreneurs to Europe. After Britain's accession to the EU in 1973, some thousands of small businesses were set up by Turkish migrants, mainly as restaurant and café owners.

### *Kurds from Turkey*

Migration from Turkey rose again at the end of the 1980s as the conflict between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Turkish government displaced thousands of Kurdish people from eastern and south-eastern Turkey. Whilst a significant number came as students or under a business visa, many sought asylum in the UK, often having been forcibly removed from their villages in eastern Turkey and ending up as involuntary internal migrants in the country's big cities. The graph of asylum-seekers from Turkey (most of whom are likely to be Kurdish) peaked at 4,650 in 1989. The response from the UK government at the time, which believed that many of these asylum-seekers were really 'economic migrants', was to impose visa controls on all Turkish nationals coming to the UK. Asylum applications from Turkey fell to a fluctuating plateau of around 1,500-2,000 per year throughout the 1990s, but then rose to a new annual peak of around 4,000 in the early 2000s, since when there has been a rather rapid decline to below 1,000 by mid-decade (Griffiths 2002; Home Office 2006). Alongside the asylum route, other Kurds have arrived clandestinely or remained as 'overstayers'.

The progressive hardening of asylum rules over the past 15 years through increased use of detention, restricting rights of appeal, limiting access to welfare and removing rights to work has made life

difficult for the Kurds (and other asylum populations). Refugees' housing and welfare needs were taken up by voluntary organisations and the church (Wahlbeck 1999: 72-4, 156-9). Like the Turkish Cypriots and mainland Turks before them, Kurdish refugees from Turkey built on already-existing networks of support to help them settle in the UK, although many found it difficult to find steady employment and save money. This was partly due to the less favourable economic conditions they faced in the early 1990s. In particular, the textile industry – a sector which, over previous decades, had provided employment for many in the Turkish-speaking communities – had significantly declined. Especially for Kurdish women, access to employment was made more difficult by their poor English language skills and lack of education and training. Unlike Turkish Cypriot women, they do not have a tradition of skilled dressmaking; neither do they have the opportunity to learn such skills through training at work since much of the labour in this field is carried out at home and paid on piece rates (Enneli 2002). Meanwhile for Kurdish men, employment in small retail and service outlets (coffee and kebab houses, hairdressers, florists etc.) has been subject to growing competition and tightening margins, with the effect that the work available is increasingly casual, low-paid and subject to long hours.

Three important, and related, issues pertinent to the Kurds from Turkey are their distinctive cultural identity within the CTK community, the question of their numbers, and their condition of political exile. We take each in turn.

Asylum statistics mask Kurdish origin, for Kurdish asylum-seekers are recorded as coming from Turkey (or Iraq, Iran etc.). The history of Kurdish flight to Europe tells us that Kurds formed the majority of applications from Turkey in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Kurds from Turkey are simply subsumed under the category of Turks, and then when in the UK as part of the 'Turkish-speaking community'. This leads to a situation where 'not only has Kurdish origin been masked prior to leaving

Turkey... it is also hidden from the moment of arrival on foreign soil' (Laiser 1996: 127). As a staff member of a Kurdish-Turkish community centre<sup>9</sup> based in North London told us:

Kurds are very different from Turkish culture, Turkish identity. Our language is different from the Turkish language. We are two different ethnicities. We are not the same ethnicity, nor is Turkish the nationality that covers everyone. I mean, back in Turkey, on the passport it's written Turkish citizenship but that doesn't mean you're Turkish - that's a big problem.

There remains a sense amongst the Kurdish population in the UK that their culture and language are very much undervalued. Authors have spoken of the 'Turkish-speaking population' as an 'invisible minority' (Enneli *et al.* 2005), but the fact that Kurds are routinely registered as Turks with local authorities in the UK lends weight to the argument that they themselves represent a particularly neglected ethnic group. This is why their community organisations insist that using the term 'Turkish-speaking community' is not neutral: it implies that 'Turkish Kurds' somehow 'belong' to Turkey, and that their separate Kurdish identity does not merit recognition. Their claims as a people and nation are at times found to be at odds with anti-terrorist legislation in the UK and with the UK's position in favour of Turkey joining the EU.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In practice, the centres which call themselves 'Turkish and Kurdish community centres' are either Turkish- or Kurdish-dominated, with a very small minority of Turkish Cypriots involved.

<sup>10</sup> Since the enactment of the 2001 Terrorism Act in the UK, the PKK has been listed as a terrorist organisation by the UK government. Kurds from Turkey who claim asylum in the UK stating persecution due to membership of, or association with, the PKK could risk imprisonment under the Terrorism Act. At the same time (2000) the Kurdish television station MED-TV, which was broadcast from the UK, was closed down by the British government due to breaches of impartiality and claims that it incited people to commit criminal acts. These events highlight how diaspora politics and the struggle for Kurdish national recognition

Second, the issue of numbers throws up parallels with the Cypriots: just as Turkish Cypriots cannot be distinguished in the census from Greek Cypriots, so Kurds originating from Turkey cannot be separated from the overall Turkey-born (54,000 in 2001). In one of our earlier reports (Thomson 2006: 20) we gave an estimate of 50,000 for the 'Kurds from Turkey' population in the UK. Key informants interviewed at the end of 2006 gave estimates which ranged from 70,000 up to 150,000. As the following quote shows, inaccurate base data in part explains these wide statistical variations:

You can go to the school database... the majority of Kurds are still registered as Turkish or Turkish Cypriots. You go into a school. They have 500 kids; they say - oh they're all Turkish. You speak to the kids, you speak with their families - they're all Kurdish (Director, Turkish and Kurdish Community Centre).

Demographic structure also plays a role here. Key informants stressed the young age structure of the Kurds and the large size of their families. This impression is supported by a report from Haringey Council (1997) which similarly suggested that the majority of Kurds in London at that time were under 40 years of age and had families of five or more members. Given the timing of their arrival, the other two CTK communities - especially the Turkish Cypriots - are much older. Indeed the Turkish Cypriot community includes a growing number of elderly, some of whom find themselves socially isolated and unable to access public services as a result of poor health and still rudimentary English.

Third, their later arrival and the political nature of their exile give the Kurds a different experience of migration in the UK. The Kurdish community tends, more than the other two groups, to keep to itself, particularly through membership of associations which (though not exclusively) tend to have a strong political engagement

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have the potential to escalate into a sensitive political issue between the UK and Turkey.

with the 'Kurdish cause'. The Kurds' political exile from Turkey has granted them a freedom in London (and elsewhere in the Kurdish diaspora) to express their claims for recognition of Kurdish identity and the Kurdish nation (Wahlbeck 1999). *Newroz* – an ancient spring celebration for Kurds and Persians – became an intensely political occasion in London during the 1990s because of its explicit celebration of Kurdish culture and identity. Wahlbeck (1999: 170) interestingly notes, in his observations of the *Newroz* festival, that 'no banners carried calls to fight unemployment among [Kurdish] refugees or fight racism in the neighbourhood'. Compared to Turks and Turkish Cypriots, Kurdish men are more likely to be unemployed (not least because, as asylum-seekers, they are not allowed to work). Meanwhile, growing resentment amongst sections of the UK population towards refugees and asylum claimants has also meant that some Kurdish pupils in schools have been reluctant to identify themselves as refugees for fear of being victimised or bullied (Enneli *et al.* 2005). High rates of Kurdish pupils are excluded from schools; in fact, many members of the CTK communities in general do not feel their education in the UK was a good experience. As Enneli *et al.* (2005:13) explain in their ongoing research on young Turks and Kurds in London, schools can be an 'alienating environment' for many due to lack of teacher support and to lack of understanding of the specific needs of Turkish and, especially, Kurdish children. Their research also points out, however, that this picture of educational disenchantment and failure, and the consequent growth of what is referred to as a 'destructive peer culture' of Turkish and Kurdish gang groups, tend to conceal the achievements of other students from the same ethnic groups. These achievements have allowed some members of the community to enter professions such as law, accountancy and teaching, although they tend then to move away from the more deprived areas of initial settlement.

Two of the common indicators of social deprivation – the number of people in

rented social housing and the percentage entitled to free school meals – give a good idea of the relative status of the Kurds vis-à-vis the other two CTK communities. In Haringey, 30 per cent of its CTK residents live in social housing, whilst nearly eight out of ten Kurdish pupils had free school meals, compared to two-thirds of mainland Turks and half of Turkish Cypriots – the average for all pupils in the borough being four out of ten (Enneli *et al.* 2005: 10).

One final point: not only do the Kurdish numbers become conflated and confused with the statistics and estimates on 'Turks', but there is also an overlap with Cyprus. After the Turkish incursion into Cyprus in 1974, which resulted in the island's partition, the Turkish government brought about 17,000 Kurds from Agri and Mus in eastern Turkey to North Cyprus; their number has since grown to around 38,000. Our estimates suggest that today about 10,000 'Kurdish Cypriots' are in Britain.

### **The migration process**

Here we follow Castles' conceptualisation of the migration process as something wider than the simple move from one country to another; it includes both the situation before migration as well as the situation after, together with potential return migration and the impact on subsequent generations (Castles 2000: 15-16). Our account here draws on the 'nodal points' framework outlined in the introduction. We try to tease out the various stages in the migration process where different policies can be seen to have influenced, directly or indirectly, the decision and lives of those interviewed; or indeed where policy appeared to have little or no influence.

#### *Before migrating, and the departure*

In all three of the migrant life-story interviews it was clear that the choice of Britain as the country of destination related less to specific policy measures such as migrant recruitment schemes (e.g. that signed by West Germany and Turkey in 1961), and more to the presence of close

family members living abroad. This is less surprising when we consider that all three emigrated when relatively young (late teens or early twenties) and none had emigrated before.

Whilst they all migrated alone, two were able to rely on their families for financial help, advice and the security of a place to stay upon arrival.

Turkish-Cypriot Lale works as a nurse in London, where she has been living for 37 years since leaving her parental home in Larnaca after finishing her studies in high school. Life in socially-conservative Cyprus at that time, with its limited career opportunities for women, did not appeal to her:

The girls were all expected to get married, have children and things like that. And somewhere something went wrong and I just rebelled against that kind of thing – I wanted more for my life. I couldn't see myself getting married and... I decided that I would escape by emigrating, and the first choice was England because that was a kind of mother country...

As noted earlier, the UK was the 'obvious' destination for emigrant Cypriots at that time, for they had grown up under British colonial rule. Then, after independence in 1960, post-colonial Cyprus entered a period of political turmoil and civil war which adversely affected social relations and life opportunities, especially for the minority Turkish Cypriots. These turbulent years – the 1960s and early 1970s – also reinforced traditional gender relations in less well-off families: Lale's being a case in point.

I remember after the creation of the Cyprus Republic, things changed. There was political turmoil in Cyprus. We were deprived of many things, such as education. I come from quite a poor family, and although my father was a policeman, we were eight children and we didn't have enough to go

around. Priority was given to the boys' education.

Against this backdrop of political and economic crisis in Cyprus, the UK represented a world apart: a virtual idyll for a young Lale determined to make the most of her life. But there were further family network factors which proved crucial in Lale's decision, and ability, to move to London in 1969. Her father had spent some time in England in the 1950s and returned with vivid stories. And later, her mother – by that time divorced from her father – would move to England to start a new life for herself, so that Lale had a base to stay when she arrived.

I heard a lot of stories from my father when I was a young child. He came back with lots of pictures. I saw how women were treated. He told us women were very liberated and educated in England, and that idea kind of appealed to me because I wanted to become someone. I wanted to take control of my life. I wanted to feel that, yes, I am important as a woman and that my ideas count.

Some of Lale's reasons for moving to the UK echoed those of her compatriots of the time. Lack of opportunities at home, coupled with the promise of a richer and more fulfilling life in the UK, would persuade tens of thousands of Turkish (and Greek) Cypriots to migrate, primarily to London, in the 1950s and 1960s (Constantinides 1977; Ladbury 1977). Yet Lale's case is unusual in that she migrated alone on a journey of personal liberation and self-discovery; most other Turkish Cypriot women migrated with, or to join, their husbands who were regarded as the primary migrants and breadwinners (Ladbury 1977).

The case of Hulya, 25, from mainland Turkey, has some similarities to Lale's story, even though their migrations occurred more than 30 years apart. Like Lale, Hulya had family (her mother, sister and brother) already living in the UK; and she felt, albeit to a lesser degree, some affiliation to this

country. Here is an extract from her interview:

My main reasons [for migrating to the UK] were that my family lives here and I also came to learn English. I wanted to learn English as I think [it] is the most important language in the world. Another reason was that I was aware that the UK has a very good education system; as I am [was] a teacher in Turkey, so I wanted to see for myself how they manage here... I also always followed the news when I was in Turkey about the English education system, so that's why I came to this country... My family has lived in this country for a long time.

By her own admission, Hulya was in a more privileged position than most other migrants as she could travel to Europe without a visa on a special 'green' passport.<sup>11</sup> This passport allows its holders to stay up to three months in a European country, and is issued to government officials and civil servants, including teachers, in recognition of their service to the Turkish state. The passports are also issued to their wives and children. Although Hulya would subsequently have to apply for a student visa to enable her to prolong her stay in the UK, the green passport allows its holders to gain first-hand experience of life in a European country of their choice.

This leads us to the case of Baran, a Kurdish refugee who, like many Kurds in the 1990s, felt compelled to flee Turkey because, in his own words, 'I couldn't develop myself as a Kurd in reading or writing Kurdish in Turkey'.<sup>12</sup> Born in a small

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<sup>11</sup> The EU has expressed concerns that too many of these passports have been issued in recent years, including some whose 'service' to the Turkish state appears highly dubious.

<sup>12</sup> This story is corroborated in a recent detailed newspaper report on a Kurdish family in the UK who fled Turkey in the late 1980s. The report describes how both parents in the family had been jailed on several occasions simply because they refused to change their Kurdish names to Turkish ones, and because they insisted on speaking Kurdish rather than Turkish (Taylor and Hattonstone 2007).

town in eastern Turkey, Baran fled initially with his family to Malatya province in central-eastern Turkey after his father, a village headman, refused to join the village guard or *Koruculuk* system, created by the Turkish state to counter the Kurdish national movement.<sup>13</sup> Baran fled to Turkey after being arrested several times, the last time because he knew he had been identified as a potential 'criminal' for having taken part in a student demonstration. He sought asylum in the UK after his brother, who lives in Germany, advised against joining him there:

There were two options in my mind, Germany and the UK. I could flee to Germany because I studied German at university... I could have gone to Germany and continued my education there, it could have been an advantage for me... But from stories my brother told me... and from the newspaper reports about Kurdish migrants, I understood that Germany mistreats asylum-seekers, and even migrants who have lived there for 30 years. For example, if you are seeking refuge in Germany, unfortunately you are not allowed to leave the district where you are registered. You are allowed to travel only 20km [sic: 35km] during your application for asylum. It is like a prison. This law affected my decision not to flee to Germany.<sup>14</sup> (...) I heard that the UK is a country

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<sup>13</sup> The *Koruculuk* system has been criticised for its implication in criminal activity. The system uses Kurdish villagers, who often face pressure to join, to control remote areas in the east and south-east of the country. The 1998 Human Rights Watch Report highlighted the large-scale detention of Kurdish villagers who had refused to join the guard system (Human Rights Watch 1998).

<sup>14</sup> Germany has been widely criticised for being the only EU member state where these residency restrictions, known as *Residenzpflicht*, are in place. Asylum-seekers and people with temporary leave to remain require permission from the local authorities in order to leave their district. A permit costs 20 Euro. Without one, an asylum-seeker or person with temporary leave to remain found 35km or more outside their district of registration is liable to be fined. In addition, transgressions are added to the criminal records published by the Federal Criminal Office and result in a higher rate of criminal offences being accredited to non-nationals.

of freedom. At least that's what I was told... I chose the UK to feel freer... But now I know that it cannot be said fully that the UK is a country of freedom.

The interview with Baran reveals how migrants and asylum-seekers gather information about potential destinations (e.g. Germany and the UK) before deciding where to move. Often, however, this information is misleading. Policy, especially rules on asylum, is subject to frequent change. Whilst Baran gained quite accurate information about the *Residenzpflicht* law in Germany, he was clearly unaware of some aspects of the treatment of asylum-seekers in the UK. He was unusual in that he chose to trust his impressions of the UK as a 'land of freedom', and decided against joining his brother in Germany where he would at least have had family support nearby. Baran's disillusionment started as soon as he landed in Britain. What happened was that he travelled on a false passport and was held at the airport for two days before being sent to prison (an ironic event given his earlier description of Germany as a prison). His eventual release from prison was secured by his brother's wife, who had previously lived in the UK.

### *Relevance of policies*

Regarding the migrants' knowledge of policies, and their relevance to individuals' mobility, this varies from case to case. Lale's case is the most straightforward. The combination of her 'youthful naivety' (as she said herself) and her strong desire for personal freedom meant that her main thought was to escape the political troubles that were afflicting life in Cyprus.

Well, initially I didn't think I would need any kind of visa... just some kind of identity called a passport. Having said that, it wasn't an easy thing because by then the island was already divided, or segregated politically. The island was dominated by the Greek [i.e. Greek Cypriot] government... and there was no freedom of movement

[within the island]. Everything was under the control of the Greek [Cypriot] authorities, and it meant I had to travel from Larnaca to Nicosia to get a passport. That was almost unimaginable because we were not allowed to move from one town to another without getting special permission... but eventually [because my father was a policeman] he had some underground connections, and I got a passport.

As well as helping his daughter obtain her passport, Lale's father also paid for her ticket to London. Hulya was also supported by her father in her move to the UK, using the special-concession green passport. Much more problematic policy regulations confronted Baran, who was only able to take action with the paid help of a smuggler and a fake passport.

I came to this country in one day by plane. We changed plane at an airport I don't know where because a smuggler had arranged my travel... I came here illegally with a passport which was prepared by the smuggler, and I applied for asylum at the airport.

Interestingly, none of the three migrants referred to welfare provisions as factors in their choice of destination country. In fact, their knowledge of the UK's laws and institutions was at best limited, as this quote from Hulya illustrates:

I had little knowledge about the United Kingdom apart from the things I heard from other people... who had been here for a long time. For instance, I used to hear that the government gives houses to people, and I used to get confused as to why they did this. But I never really tried to find out.

Similarly, Baran explained that:

... before coming to this country I knew nothing about the institutions, laws etc. Because of this I spent three months learning about

different institutions, and how they work. I got this information from friends who arrived here before me. For example, how I can find a job, open a bank account...

Baran's account is a healthy antidote against claims that generous welfare provisions attract asylum-seekers, and that restricting rules on work and levels of financial support will deter applications for asylum. He also understood that life in Europe would not be as easy as the Turkish migrants working in Germany made out during their trips back home:

If you immigrate to another country, you have cultural, linguistic and other difficulties... When the *Alamanci* (Turkish migrants in Germany) told us about how comfortable and pleasurable life was in Europe... I laughed at them, I knew they were working 14, 15 hours a day. I knew their life consisted only of working, eating and sleeping... When I came here I wasn't disappointed because I already knew what to expect. But I was forced to choose this way.

This account of three migrant journeys to the UK suggests that policy is often only a peripheral consideration in the choice of destination country. For Lale and Hulya, the UK represented a natural choice because this country appeared the best context in which their personal goals could be fulfilled – in Hulya's case to learn English and in Lale's to feel more emancipated. The presence of family in the UK provided both of them with housing and other support on their arrival to London. Baran, on the other hand, was guided by his reaction to policy – the strict residency rules in Germany for asylum-seekers – to inform his choice of destination. In the mistaken belief that there would be no restrictions on his personal freedom in Britain, he chose not to follow this family connection and move to Germany.

### *Arrival and adaptation*

Family networks continued to play a crucial role in helping the newly-arrived migrants adapt to life in London. Both Lale and Hulya stayed initially with their mothers, as noted above. Personal connections were also important, both within and across the individual CTK communities. Ethnic boundaries were both meaningful and fluid. Turkish Cypriots' status as the first to arrive, and their strategic positionality (as both 'Turkish' and 'Cypriot'), enabled them to interact with both Greek Cypriots (who were often their landlords and employers in the early years) and mainland Turks (whom, in turn, they often employed in their own small businesses). Kurds from Turkey also faced in two directions: towards the wider Turkish-speaking community, and to the wider Kurdish community. Alliances were strategically instrumentalised according to necessity and opportunities.

Once arrived, two key channels for immigrants' survival and progression are housing and employment. Lale's account of her early years in London revealed both the self-sufficiency of the (Turkish) Cypriot community and the initial economic hardship, as renting rooms in shared properties left little room for privacy and saving. Her efforts to find work also revealed the level of gender-based discrimination in the workplace in the early 1970s, as well as the deskilling that often had to be endured:

I had typing skills... [but] they told me all, no, we haven't got any jobs in the office. I felt really patronised and intimidated and I thought, how dare you, you know, I am better than that. I want to work in an office... weeks and weeks [went by], I couldn't find any [office] jobs so I had to put my tail between my legs and I went back to the factory, and I said to the boss, please can you give me that job in the factory? So he says yeah, and that's how I started my first job. And I felt really degraded because I had great hopes and expectations... of

working and having an equal life. I actually found out that we were doing the same job in the factory, yet boys were getting £13 [a week] and I was getting £7.

Baran, too, underwent deskilling after his release from prison, negating his university studies. As an asylum-seeker in the late 1990s, he was not entitled to work for six months after lodging his claim.<sup>15</sup> After six months, he found part-time work in a textile factory, employed by a fellow-Kurd. But this was hardly what he aspired to and, as the following quote suggests, served only to delay his attempts to rebuild his life in Britain:

I worked for two years in the textile industry. I thought this type of work is not for me because it can give me nothing but money. I wanted to do something from which I can learn something and develop myself, and be happy with what I do.

However, like Lale, who then trained as a nurse, Baran also 'moved on', taking courses in order to access more fulfilling work, this time with his migrant community:

Then I worked in different projects related to migrants... and the Kurdish and Turkish community. I worked for the Kurdish radio station for four years. These jobs were part-time because I was also studying media and film at university... Now I work for a local Kurdish newspaper... Last year, I shot my first short film...

Hulya's employment trajectory likewise started with mundane work but then improved:

My first job was in a food hall, I was working at the till... I was only entitled to work part-time as I was a student, so I was only working up to 20 hours [per week]... [In the food hall] I realised that employers liked

to boss around employees and this made me set up my own business – I don't want to order my employees around.

The Ankara Agreement, briefly described above, presented Hulya with the opportunity to set up her own cleaning company, which she did with the financial support of her father.

Hence in accessing work, we also see the relevance of policy nodes: Lale, an economic migrant from a former British colony, had few restrictions on her life after entering the UK; Baran had to wait several months before he was allowed to access work; and Hulya benefited from a special agreement, but one which channelled her into setting up her own small business. It is clear how, in complex and highly differentiated ways, a wide range of policies and rules are in place to permit, regulate, control and exclude movements of people from different countries into the UK and their subsequent ability to progress and adapt. Outside of the formal domain of policies and regulation there are other actors: family members, personal friends, agencies, smugglers and people traffickers, all supplying services and information some of which have a cost. Not without reason, therefore, have some researchers likened contemporary migration to a global business, one that can very easily lead to the exploitation of less well-informed migrants (Salt and Stein 1997).

All of our migrant and key-informant interviews revealed their ambiguous feelings towards the UK. Baran sums up his overall experience:

We live here as second-class citizens. Of course some migrants have financially good positions. But living standards cannot be measured by money alone... Many migrants only work to earn money. Their living standards are, of course, more comfortable than in Turkey. The country's democratic rights, education and institutions are a thousand times better than in Turkey. But there is a question mark

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<sup>15</sup> Since 2002, asylum-seekers have no entitlement to work irrespective of how long they have been waiting for a decision on their application.

in my mind about how much migrants are allowed to use them.

This sense of only partially belonging to the wider host society was also repeatedly articulated by the key informants whose positionality gave them a wider perspective. Lack of recognition, on the part of the 'authorities', of the specific problems facing the CTK target populations was a recurrent theme. A crucial issue was the generally poor level of English of the CTK immigrants, and the limited (and decreasing) provision of language support, both vital for accessing services such as healthcare:

The language issue is the main one because, especially here in Hackney, language provision – it's not sufficient, it's not enough. There's a long waiting list, and secondly, there are many issues, ongoing issues for years and years, for example health and mental health issues... There is no proper support – especially Turkish-speaking support – for mentally-ill people (refugee spokesperson, Hackney).

Language support implies two things: English lessons for migrants and interpreting services. English-language for migrants has recently taken centre-stage in political discussions about social exclusion and immigration as part of the Labour government's community cohesion agenda. Many studies have in fact long highlighted how those who are in most need of access to public services are often the least able to do so (Alexander *et al.* 2004). This is certainly the case with the CTK populations; we noted earlier how elderly Turkish Cypriots often find themselves isolated from much-needed healthcare services. Key informants pointed out that there had been recent cuts in funding for English lessons provided to asylum-seekers. Formal interpreting services for migrants also remain in short supply (Alexander *et al.* 2004). Subject to ad hoc and uncertain funding, the provision of interpreting services is quite variable within local authorities, schools, the health service and

in the voluntary and private sectors. Instead the CTK communities and their respective organisations often rely on their own resources, such as members' financial contributions. In an even more informal way, children often act as interpreters for their Turkish, Cypriot or Kurdish parents, which has the effect of altering gender and generational relationships within the family unit, sometimes, it is claimed, in a negative way:

Parents cannot speak English or learn it easily. When the time comes, they use their children as interpreters, so the roles of the family change. Children can achieve a leading position, and fathers especially – because of traditional things, to close the gap – they use violence, especially on girls (refugees spokesperson, Hackney).

Poor educational results of many CTK children, along with their involvement in juvenile crime and youth gang culture, also places strain on parental relationships (Enneli *et al.* 2005). Key informants saw these problems as not unique to their own migrant communities, but a more general reflection of the high level of social deprivation in the parts of London where the CTK populations are concentrated. In policy terms, the absence of youth centres, and hence of activities for young immigrant-origin people to engage in, is seen as one reason behind the growth of Turkish and Kurdish gangs. These gangs are usually ethnically differentiated, although some mixing occurs too, according to our key informants. Identity is seen as a central issue:

If they don't belong to an identity, they tend to do a lot of criminal, anti-social behaviour. They form mafia street-gangs. Fighting and anti-social behaviour is becoming a problem (community centre representative).

Whether the problem of youth crime lies in issues of identity, or lack thereof, is a moot point. What is less contentious is the strong correlation between poverty and alienation

because of the low levels of funding for after-school and community activities in socially-deprived neighbourhoods. Turkish and Kurdish community centres attempt to fill this void, and try to instil a sense of cultural identity in young people, while others are more geared towards education.

Within the Kurdish community there are concerns that there is a lack of recognition on the part of the UK authorities that Kurds have a separate identity. On the one hand, as Kurds are often reluctant to register themselves due to a history of repression by the Turkish authorities, it is difficult for local policy-makers to assess the size of the Kurdish population in the UK and therefore to plan service provisions accordingly. On the other hand, there appears to be a lack of recognition within local authorities and public bodies in the UK of how inappropriate, not to mention upsetting, it is to subsume Kurds within the category 'Turkish-speaking community'.

The school [our son now attends] said that, if we want, they can provide him with a Turkish-speaking assistant, but we refused (Kurdish family, quoted in Alexander *et al.* 2004: 20)

Similarly one of our key informants explained the potentially serious consequences of poor interpreting services:

They are forced in a way to speak Turkish with their doctor through an interpreter, or speak Turkish with the consultant in a hospital before an operation. And sometimes they don't know what 'kidney' means in Turkish. How could they express it? In one case a woman died, and the main accusation by the family was the interpretation. They said the interpreter couldn't interpret properly.

Certainly, a question mark hangs over whether adequate provisions are being made to allow Kurdish children to learn and practise their mother tongue in Britain. At present, the Kurdish language and identity are largely promoted through community organisations. Yet Alexander, Edwards and

Temple's (2004) survey of access to interpreting services echoed concerns that some Kurds are reluctant to use community centres which to them appear too overtly political. It has also been suggested by the same authors that the Kurds from Turkey are not a cohesive 'community' as such but that, rather, friends constitute the real 'content' of the community, in the absence of established ethnic or institutional framings. In Baran's case, it is of note that he travelled to the UK where he had no family or other ties, and today he shares his accommodation with a group of foreign friends.

#### *The future: settlement or return?*

None of the migrants we interviewed had any concrete intention of returning to their countries of origin. Key informants confirmed the more-or-less settled nature of the three CTK communities, with minimal return flows (e.g. of some retired Turkish Cypriots to North Cyprus). On the other hand, their feelings towards British society, as we heard from some of the quotes above, are still sometimes quite ambivalent. Baran and Hulya, in particular, expressed the view that there remains an underlying tension within 'multicultural' Britain, creating only a partial attachment to the UK as a place of belonging. Their feelings of being somewhat separate from the wider society – an 'other' – were most obvious when they spoke of racism, which they largely attributed to the media and government policy.

Baran, however, gives the impression that he would return to Turkey if the political situation improved – something which in the short term seems unlikely. His legal status in the UK is still unresolved: he has been granted humanitarian protection, but not the refugee status that would give him permanent residency. The risk of deportation back to Turkey is an ever-present concern for those without a legal status in the UK.

Lale and Hulya, in contrast, identified more positive scenarios for staying in the UK. Lale felt more at home in London than in Cyprus,

a common reaction amongst long-resident and second-generation Turkish Cypriots (Robins and Aksoy 2001). On her most recent visit to Cyprus, she found her old home in Larnaca, in southern or 'Greek' Cyprus, as well as the capital Nicosia, much changed to the extent that she felt she no longer fitted in there. Her home in the old Turkish sector of Larnaca had been emptied of its Turkish Cypriot population who migrated north following the partition of Cyprus in 1974 (King and Ladbury 1982). Greek Cypriots, refugees from northern Cyprus, were living in the houses vacated by the Turkish Cypriots, which Lale found very strange and disorientating.

My son was very curious where I came from... So I took him... to Larnaca, where we went to my original house, which I found very difficult... Then we went to Nicosia, really very strange, because it was like I was in a different country... the strangest thing was we stayed in this Greek hotel, they gave us a top-floor room, which was very cheap... and my son opened the door onto the terrace but, shock, he called me, Mum come and have a look. And there over the rooftops against the mountains there were, you know, flashing out, 'How proud one is to say one is Turkish'... and another place there are flags, Turkish flags, and minarets and voices coming from everywhere. I felt, oh God, a bit embarrassed because there is this huge amount of Greek people living here, and they have to have imposed [on them] this kind of thing day in, day out, no escape. It was kind of... as if I was in a European country and the contrast [with the Turkish sector] really shocked me, you know... And the Turkish side is degenerating fast, it's really, really sad; I felt, do I really want to stay? (...) I couldn't identify at all in Cyprus. Although I did feel, you know, on the Greek side, yes, this is my people... mind you a lot of Greek people in Greek

Cyprus have emigrated back from London and you talk the same kind of language, you have the same ideas... their outlook to life is very similar (...) And I rented a Greek car, crossed the border, and as soon as I crossed the border I was told 'What the hell are you doing renting a Greek car, couldn't you have taken Turkish rented cars on this side?'... They were actually very interfering. There is still hostility towards Greeks. Not all of them, there are progressive Turkish [Cypriot] people as well, you know, waiting for the unification of the island. Unfortunately, I didn't have time to meet them.

Hulya's case, in the sense of commitment to remaining in Britain and security of being able to do so, is intermediate between Baran and Lale. She stressed how she wanted to raise her future children in Britain, yet she was worried whether her visa would be extended, allowing her to stay long-term. As she said: 'I don't regret coming to England. I am improving myself with useful courses so why should I leave all these and go back?'.

Hulya and Baran illustrate a broader problem with many migrant communities in Britain and elsewhere: the nodal points along their path toward integration do not connect up with the legal status that would be required for a satisfactory long-term settlement or indeed a viable transnational lifestyle. This becomes clear when we consider how some asylum-seekers and their families, who appear to be settled and well-integrated in their new host countries, remain at constant risk of deportation because of their 'unsettled' legal status.

## Conclusion

This paper has reviewed the chronology and characteristics of three groups of migrants who are conventionally but not always accurately associated with the label 'Turkish', namely Turkish Cypriots, Turks from Turkey, and Kurds from Turkey. We have highlighted the stories of three

migrants, one from each group, who have followed different migration paths to Britain. Whether these paths are 'typical' or not, we cannot categorically judge, because of the smallness of the sample and the internal heterogeneity within each of the CTK communities. Interviews with key informants, plus the authors' combined wider knowledge of these three groups and the parts of North London where they have predominantly settled, help to place the case-study narratives within a wider context, however. Our findings are illustrative rather than conclusive, they need corroboration and refinement through further research. This paper is therefore very much a pilot investigation.

Despite the exploratory nature of our analysis, several implications are clear. Migrants follow quite diverse migratory trajectories. Whilst, on the one hand, this is a self-evident truism about virtually any migration flow; on the other it also reflects the growing diversity of migrant types, nationalities, mechanisms and motivations, especially in 'super-diverse' London. Gone, it seems, at least as far as the UK is concerned, are the days when mass recruitment schemes brought more-or-less homogenous migrant flows from abroad. Now, in this post-industrial, globalised and cosmopolitan setting of London, migrant flows have not decreased in scale but have become far more diverse. Family, personal and ethnic-community networks assume greater importance. This diversity and informality pose fundamental challenges for migration policy – both in terms of managing or controlling the flows, and as regards integration and social or community cohesion.

We have shown that the concept of superdiversity functions as a good lead into the discussion of CTK groups because of their diverse make-up, which, as we have emphasised, is often hidden by official data. Hence, our paper demonstrates a concrete example of how, over time, the image of a superdiverse London has come into being, with the arrival of mainland Turks and then Kurds having the effect of adding successive layers to the make-up of

a 'Turkish' or 'Turkish-speaking' population originally made up of a Turkish-Cypriot base. Using the concept of nodal points derived from the wider MIGSYS project of which our small study was part, we have described the journeys of the migrants by breaking them into three distinct phases: before migrating, after, and return vs. settlement. It is clear, however, that these phases are interlinked in a more complex way than a simple linear or chronological account would lead us to believe. Above all, the migrants we interviewed still found the process of settling in the UK an unfinished journey. In Baran's case, the reason for this was very much related to UK asylum policy and the fact that he remains without a secure and permanent residence status; his 'humanitarian protection' status does not remove the risk that he could be deported back to Turkey at any time. There was also doubt expressed by Hulya as to whether her visa would be extended. As for Lale, whilst she does have a secure status and considers herself assimilated into Britain, the niggling sense of not fully belonging remains: at various points in her interview she referred to being marked out by her black hair and olive skin colour, her accent and the mistakes she still makes when speaking English.

Regarding policy nodes, we identified two levels of migration-related policy which have impinged on the trajectories of CTK migrants. At the *national and supra-national* level, we referred to Britain's early immigration regime which gave privileged entry rights to (former) colonial subjects from Cyprus (and elsewhere); the EU-Turkey Ankara accord, which facilitated Turkish business migration to the UK; and the toughening rules on asylum since the late 1990s, which have reduced asylum applicants from Turkey (who have been mainly Kurds) from nearly 4,000 in 2000 to around 750 in 2005. The effects of national policy are often most acutely felt at *local level*, where policy is implemented directly to migrants. The following key local policy issues can be identified as particularly relating to the CTK communities.

- The way the recent social cohesion policy agenda has coincided with cuts in funding for English-language support for asylum-seekers, alongside the increased level of bureaucratic literacy required to access strategic funding. This is especially problematic and harmful for the most socially disadvantaged groups of immigrants and asylum-seekers, which include CTK migrants.

- The relationship between restrictive asylum measures, the deskilling of migrants and their employment in low-wage jobs in the UK economy. Deskilling, combined with gendered and ethnicised barriers to certain kinds of employment, are characteristics of many migrations, but the asylum rules are particularly prohibitive and problematic, in our view.

- The way that the ethno-national struggle between the Turkish state and the Kurds is played out at the local political and institutional level in the UK, e.g. in the competition for resources between Turkish and Kurdish groups, the use of the term 'Turkish-speaking' to cover also Kurds, and the lobbying of Turkish authorities by certain British politicians.

- The failure of local authorities to identify Kurds separately from Turks, and the reluctance of Kurdish people to register themselves as such, makes it difficult for policy-makers to assess their numbers and plan service provision accordingly.

- A cluster of policy issues surrounding CTK youth: their general educational underachievement; their confused or 'lost' identities; the closure of youth centres and the consequent impact of this on the increase in anti-social behaviour, criminal activities and the formation of Turkish and Kurdish gangs.

All of these are vital nodes, and there are several parallels to be noted, both with other immigrant groups in Britain, and elsewhere in Europe.<sup>16</sup> The last on the list

seems most urgent, for it will be crucial for the future of the Turkish-Cypriot-Kurdish elements of 'super-diverse' London.

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<sup>16</sup> 'Turks' in the UK with Turks in the Netherlands is made in Triandafyllidou and Gropas (2007a: 77-82).

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<sup>16</sup> For instance, the problematic identification and registration of Kurds from Turkey as a distinct group from other Turks is characteristic also of Germany (Wahlbeck 1999). Explicit comparison between our findings for

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