Abstract: Germany invited large number of guest workers from Turkey to revitalize its economy after WWII. Following decades of development, the Muslim population has become the largest minority group in Germany making up 5% of today’s German population. The main Muslim political aspiration is to be able to retain Turkish nationality but also access to German citizenship, and to promote the diversified development of German society to recognize their Muslim identity as well. In order to achieve their own political aspirations, they participate in German politics through German political parties, civil society groups and mass media. Their activities not only have great influence on both domestic politics and diplomatic relations, but also in improving their living conditions in Germany. However, the law in both countries will keep them from receiving German citizenship, let
alone the dual nationality. Because of the inherent contradiction between Islam and Christianism, Germany has not yet become a truly pluralistic society.

**Key Words:** Germany; Turkish Muslim; Political Aspiration; Identity

With the growth of the Muslim population in Europe and the effect of terrorist attacks, European countries began to concern about the Muslim population in their own countries. Scholars from western countries believe that strong Islamic identity is the most important reason that keeps these Muslims out of the mainstream European society; some Chinese scholars consider the identity of immigrants and minorities as the primary causes. Germany has the second largest Muslim population in Western Europe and most of the Muslims in Germany are of Turkish origins. So based on previous research by respected scholars, this paper takes Turkish Muslims in Germany as an example to analyze their activities’ influence on both internal politics, inter-states’ relations and their own conditions in Germany.

**I. Formation and Political Aspirations of Turkish Muslims in Germany**

After WWII, Western European economy improved considerably under the Marshall Plan and the German economy was perceived as a miracle at that time. However, the establishment of the Berlin Wall in 1961 stopped the access between factories of Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and labor from the German Democratic Republic (GDR). So the government of the FRG began to recruit laborers from overseas. At the same time, Turkish economy was also developing with the help of the United States, but Turkey still had a large number of surplus labor force. When Turkey formed its new coalition government after the
1960 coup, the government promised to provide more positions for these laborers. Therefore, Germany and Turkey signed a bilateral Recruitment Agreement in October 1961 which allowed many Turkish Muslims to come to Germany as guest workers.

Though the German economy experienced a brief recession in 1967, it boomed again shortly thereafter and brought a greater demand for labor force. Facing the population increase after WWII and the abundance of labor force caused by the unemployment after the 1960 coup in Turkey, German government decided to offer Turks basically equal wages and welfare benefits. This was also very attractive to Turkish young Muslims. In the early 1970s, Turks formed 23% of non-German workers, the largest group of immigrants in Germany (Horroeks, D., 1966: 82).

The Turkish guest workers mainly came from underdeveloped rural regions of Turkey where people had strong religious sentiment with little influence of Kemal’s secular reforms. When they came to Germany, most of the industry they had access to was extensive manufacturing which needed high labor intensity. So, the guest workers mostly dealt with their colleagues and employers, but they did not have spare time or other channels to integrate into German society. Under these circumstances, the Turkish Muslims as guest workers in Germany followed their own way of life. Their jobs focused on labor-intensive industries, like manufacturing and construction; they lived together in ghettos and shared the same ethnicity, language and culture; Islam was their common identity.

As more and more Turkish Muslims worked in Germany, their families came to Germany for family reunification. According to the 1961 bilateral Recruitment Agreement between Turkey and Germany, guest workers must return to Turkey after having worked for two years in Germany. However, in fact, two years later, no employer wanted to lose these skilled laborers and the guest workers wanted to stay in Germany for the better living
conditions and social welfare. In addition, Germany did not enforce this provision effectively, so most Turkish guest workers could stay in Germany as permanent immigrants after two-year employment. There were about 130,000 Turkish Muslims in Germany in 1967, but the number increased to 600,000 by the early 1970s (Christopher, R., 2006: 103).

“The memorandum coup of 1971” alleviated the conflict between the political right and the left, but the reform of the nonpartisan technocrat government after the 1971 coup proved to be in vain. The national leaders did not reach any agreement on reform and three different ideologies of left wing, liberalism and nationalism emerged afterwards. Between 1973 and 1979, Turkey experienced six coalition governments. Ideological struggles between political parties in Turkey degenerated into political terrorism during 1970s. At the same time, violent Kurdish separatism and the Islamic movement involved into the political struggle, which finally resulted in another military coup in 1980. The political instabilities in Turkey played an important role for the guest workers when they were going to make up their mind to stay in Germany and bring their families with them.

Large numbers of Turkish Muslims swarmed into Germany through the way of family reunification from the middle of 1970s to the end of 1980s. The right of reunification of these guest workers was protected by Germany’s 1949 Basic Law and 1973 Family Reunification Act, which allowed guest workers to bring their spouses and juvenile children to Germany. But the difference between guest workers and their families must be noticed. Firstly, guest workers were mainly single males, while their families were women and children. These family members not only completely depended on guest workers, but also had social demands, such as housing, education, welfare and places of worship. This challenged the capability of Germany to accommodate. Secondly, Turkish Muslim guest workers did not have apparent religious
customs, while their family members might wear scarves and other attires that marked their religious and national identity. This made it hard for them to assimilate into German society. Thirdly, the most intractable problem for both guest workers and the German government was the education of children from the guest worker families. Therefore, when Turkish Muslim families came to Germany, the Turkish Muslim guest workers were not simply the symbol of a group, but also a real existent community with its own faith and culture (Fetzer, J. & Soper, J., 2005: 102).

Except for guest workers and their families, some Turkish Muslims came to Germany for political asylum. Turkish political refugees at that time were mostly Kurds and members of Islamic movements. The Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) was established at the end of 1980s. The PKK aims at establishing an independent nation-state of Kurdistan in the southeastern of Turkish territory, even through terrorism. They described themselves as Marxist-Leninists and their terrorist actions as struggle against Turkish imperialism (Güney, A., 2002: 123). So, they were harshly repressed by the Turkish government. In the early 1990s, Kurds in southern Turkey reestablished political parties to attend parliamentary elections, obtaining 13 seats in 1991. But these parties were banned soon after Kurdish members used the Kurdish language and wore Kurdish traditional costumes in Parliament. On the other hand, the 1982 Constitution forbade religious groups’ involvement in politics, but some of them established secret parties to continue their Islamic movement. For instance, Hoca Cemalettin Kaplan, who lived in Germany at that time, claimed to establish an Islamic country in the way of the Islamic Revolution of Iran and proclaimed himself caliph of the new Islamic country (Zürcher, E., 2004: 290). The Islamic movement led by Kaplan did not get enough support, but had caught attention from the Turkish government. Under the crackdown of Turkish government and the attacks of Turkish
military, large numbers of PKK members and Islamic fundamentalists fled to Germany to seek political asylum. There are two reasons for them to choose Germany: Firstly, Turkish Muslims who had already stayed in Germany could provide these political refugees with the convenience to live and a chance to revive their political ambition. Secondly, Germany’s 1949 Basic Law entitled the people who were subjected to political persecution to have the right of political asylum, and they were provided with generous social welfare (Chen, N., 2006: 37). Hence, large numbers of political refugees fled to Germany between the middle of 1980s and the year of 2002 when the Justice and Development Party came into power.

Current Turkish Muslims in Germany can be divided into three major groups. The majority group is family members and their descendants of guest workers. They receive limited education and have not yet really assimilated into German society. They are still employed in extensive manufactures. They hope to continue their life in Germany and obtain legally German citizenship. The second group is made up of political refugees. They try to accomplish their political ambitions on the support of Turkish Muslims in Germany. Political Kurdish refugees copied the conflict between Turks and Kurds in Germany; whereas, Islamic fundamentalists tried to get political support by arousing the faithful enthusiasm of Turkish Muslims in Germany. The third group consists of young Turks, who are overseas students, and of other intellectuals in Germany. They wish to purse a better life in Germany with legal status.

The common demand of all three groups is to have German citizenship and even the dual citizenship of Germany and Turkey. On the one hand, Turkish Muslims have strong national consciousness and religious identity, although they have lived in Germany for many years. They want to reserve their ethnic and faithful connection with Muslims in Turkey. But German
citizenship is even more necessary for their real life in Germany, especially if they want to accede to social welfare. On the other hand, Turkish Muslims are the largest minority in Germany, but most of their socioeconomic status is not as high as they expected. Therefore, they hope to change this situation by acquiring German citizenship. In addition, German citizenship is critical for the education of Turkish Muslim families. Germany does not provide citizenship to people born on its territory, so the children could not choose their nationality until they are adults. That is to say, if their parents are not German citizens, the identities of their children will be pending throughout their important years of education. Therefore, the biggest demand of Turkish Muslims is to have German citizenship, and they have tried to achieve this through political participation.

II. Different Ways of Political Participation by Turkish Muslims in Germany

Turkish Muslims in Germany realized that political participation is the most direct way to achieve their own after years of experience in Germany. However, Germany is a non-immigration country, which created many challenges and thresholds to Turks’ participation in German internal politics, including nationality, religion, culture and representation. Thus, obtaining political rights is not enough if they only rely on German political parties. Turks in Germany began to expand their influence in civil society through associations; their activities have promoted unofficial communications between both governments. Some influential Turkish medium in Germany strengthened identity and unity among Turkish Muslims. There are three major ways for Turkish Muslims to participate in German politics.

1. Political Participation through German Political Parties

Turks in Germany have struggled for their political rights
since the 1970s. But, in a non-immigration country like Germany, there are a lot of obstacles to become a member of any major political party, and, first and foremost is German citizenship. The initial way for Turks to attend German parties is to join a labor union connected with political parties, like the DGB (Federation of German Labor Union) and the SPD (Social Democratic Party). With the growth of the Turkish population, the negative attitudes of German CDU/CSU (Christian-Democrats) toward Turkish Muslims increased simultaneously. These parties warned that Germany was being “over foreignized”; they asked that the population from non-EU countries to Germany must be decreased (Oner, S., 2014: 73). It further marginalized Turkish Muslims in Germany and made it more difficult to achieve their political demands. By the end of 1986, there were only 8,166 Turkish Muslims who held German citizenship, the equivalent of ten in a million (Wernicke, C., 2007: 156-159).

The establishment of the Green Party in Germany gave hope to Turkish Muslims, because it is not necessary to have German citizenship for joining the Green Party. Political figures with a Turkish background, such as Cem Özdemir, Ekin Deligöz, Ozan Ceyhun and Rıza Baran all started their political activities by joining the Green Party. In 1982, the Green Party was elected as a member of the Bundestag, and Turkish Muslims mainly relied on the SPD and Green Party to struggle for their right to have German citizenship (Aktürk, Ş., 2010: 67-68). As a traditional nation-state, the German government, before the year of 2000, prescribed that people who wished to apply for German nationality must prove that at least one of their ancestors was of German descent (Oner, S., 2014: 74). The SPD won the election in 1998, and formed a coalition government with the Green Party. They reformed the descent principle in the German Nationality Law when they came to power. The new provision said that children born in Germany could be granted German citizenship
when they were between the age of 18 and 23 if they gave up their Turkish citizenship, under the preconditions that their parents must have had possessed legal residence and worked in Germany for complete 8 years, or must have had the permanent residence and lived in Germany for complete 3 years (Oner, S., 2014: 74). Many young Turks received German citizenship when the new law implemented in 2000. However, the identity of the parents is still an obstacle for many Turkish young generations to acquire German citizenship.

Turkish Muslims are dissatisfied with the SPD and the Green Party because the Nationality Law reform did not resolve the dual nationality issue although it canceled the descent principle. So, some Turkish Muslims have placed their hope on the FDP (Free Democratic Party) representing the liberals since 2000. The FDP claimed to support human rights and civil liberties, and to pursue internationalism and center-right political ideas. The FDP has promoted economic liberalism, free market economic and privatization for more than 30 years. The FDP is also a member of the European Liberal International and Freedom Democratic Union. Therefore, the FDP was very attractive to Turks, especially Kurdish and Alevis who are the minorities both in Turkey and in Germany.

At the same time, other Turks turned their eyes to Left Party, successor of the Party of Democratic Socialism established in 2007, and has become the fourth largest political party in Germany and third largest party in the Bundestag. The Left Party claimed to be aiming at creating a “fair and caring society”, and “high-quality education for all” (Die Linke). So the Left Party was a new option for Turks at that time. But what the Left Party cares more about is German relations with Europe and the world, not domestic issues.

The political demands of German citizenship, particularly dual nationality, is hard to accomplish. In order to pursue other and more important interests, Turks decided to support a
multitude of political parties. As the largest minority group in Germany, major German political parties cannot ignore the significance of the “Turkish votes”. But at the same time, the differentiation of political demands weakened the Turks’ strength, especially, the Kurds and Alevis, who constituted minorities inside the minority.

2. Political Participation through Civil Society

People who participate in politics through civil society usually need to join civil and social movements and organizations, and influence minority policy of the government through these associations. Some associations focus on political, cultural and social problems related to Turks, and assist relevant authorities to help women, students, workers, businessmen and teachers while other associations protect the national cultural traditions of Turks in Germany, and help them to integrate into German society. Still others concern the political rights of Turkish Muslims, they are not only against the assimilation policies of the German government, but also emphasize the maintenance of the equal rights of ethnic minorities.

These associations attended by Turkish Muslims can be divided into three categories—official associations, civil associations and religious associations. The official associations refer to the movements and organizations that act in Germany but controlled by the Turkish government. The Turkish-Islamic Union of the Directorate for Religious Affairs (DÎTİB, Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği) is one of the official associations. DÎTİB was established in 1983 by the Turkish government, representing Turkey’s State Administration for Religious Affairs. DÎTİB not only maintains the diplomatic relations between Germany and Turkey, but also ensures the loyalty of Turkish Muslims to the Republic of Turkey. On behalf of the Turkish government, DÎTİB appeals to Turks not to give up their Turkish ethnic identity while integrating German society (Oner, S., 2014: 82). The Religious
commissioner of the Turkish Embassy in Germany assists the Turkish government in managing the DİTİB. Officials and religious scholars in DİTİB are all trained and appointed by the Turkish government.

In the meantime, the German government also has a lot of cooperation with DİTİB. This is because, on the one hand, DİTİB is in charge of most mosques in Germany and is the most important Turkish association in Germany: and, on the other hand, the German government also wanted to use DİTİB moderate Islam in order to integrate Turkish Muslims. However, with the integration summit and the Islamic Conference held in Germany under Merkel’s government, German integration policy of Islam had changed. Germany began to stress that it should be Germany itself, not Turkey, which design the development of Islam in Germany.

Civil associations refer to the association established by German Turks and have great influence within German civil society. Some of the civil association offer service for Turkish Muslims. The most influential social association of this kind is the TGD (Turkish Community in Germany; Almanya Türk Toplumu) established in Hamburg in 1995. TGD represented the Turks serving in German state institutes, and they claimed that they were independent from conservatives, liberals, and social democrats and as well as religious groups (Amelina, A. & Faist, T., 2008: 103). As an unofficial association, TGD worked to establish good communication between Germany and Turkey, and offer education opportunities and job training for young Turks in Germany (Amelina, A. & Faist, T., 2008: 103). TGD had their own publications and public relations campaign and meetings. TGD did not have religious or ideological orientations, but they had political aspirations. For instance, they supported Turkish Muslims to hold German citizenship and planned to copy German-Turkish European schools in Berlin to other administrative states of Germany (Amelina, A. & Faist, T., 2008: 103).
In addition, these associations not only provide German language training to improve the competitiveness of Turkish Muslims on the job market, but they also teach the Turkish language and Islam to strengthen their ethnic and religious identity. But the most important is legal service provided by the associations that help Turkish Muslims to resolve disputes with their employers.

Other civil associations promote political interests of Turkish Muslims in business activities. Most of these associations were established in 1990s. Turkish businessmen in Germany established the TD-İHK (Turkish-German Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Türk-Alman Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası) in 1994 by imitating German entrepreneurs. On the one hand, the TD-İHK asked the German government to reform the visa system for Turkey in order to provide convenience for business travel of Turkish businessmen. On the other hand, TD-İHK promoted the development of Turkish domestic enterprises and took Turkey’s EU accession as its long-term goal (Oner, S., 2014: 84). Another influential commercial association is the ATİAD (Turkish Business Organizations in Germany; Avrupa Türk İşadamları ve Sanayicileri Derneği). ATİAD is located in Germany but it acted all over the Europe, especially in EU countries. ATİAD encouraged Turks in European countries to develop the entrepreneurship, promote the education of Turkish Muslims, improve the employment rate of Turkish Muslims, and assist Turkey’s EU accession. ATİAD played an important role in Turkey’s EU accession; it not only served as a bridge between Turkey and Germany, even with other EU countries, but it also established extensive links between politicians in Turkey, Germany and other EU countries.

The civil associations provided social services and solved

many real problems in the daily life of Turkish Muslims, but their impact on German politics is very limited. Although the business associations are active in the traditional low politics, they promote Turkey’s EU accession which makes up the area in which realpolitik cannot play effective role. Religious associations refer to the Islamic organizations established by Turkish Sunni Muslims in Germany, and the most famous one is the IGMG (Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş). After the 1971 coup, Turkey’s National Order Party (Millit Nizam Partisi) of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan was banned. Then, Erbakan went to Germany for political asylum and established the IGMG, which was supported by many Turks in Germany and other European countries. They tried to solve the dual citizenship issue by supporting Erbakan’s return to Turkish politics. The National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi), supported by IGMG returned in October 1972 and played a role in Turkish domestic politics. Because of its close connections with Turkish domestic political parties, the German government viewed the National Salvation Party as a political Islamic movement. The German Intelligence Agency considered the National Salvation Party as a “threat” to democracy in Germany (Yükleyen, A. & Yurdakul, G., 2011: 73), because the National Salvation Party impeded Germany’s assimilation policy by implementing Islamic religious education to Turkish children in Germany (Yükleyen, A. & Yurdakul, G., 2011: 73). However, the IGMG claimed itself is just an Islamic community which comprehensively organizes the religious lives of Muslims. And, they not aim at maintaining the Islamic teachings, proclaiming the Islamic creed and communicating religious duties resulting from that proclamation (Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş).

The AABF (Alevitic Community of Germany; Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu) is an Alevi’s association among Turkish Muslims, and a branch of AABK (Avrupa Alevi Birlikleri Konfederasyonu) established in 1991. As an Alevi group, AABF
has more than 130 local organizations and 100,000 members. AABF devotes to reviving Alevism in both Germany and Turkey. They carried out anti-discrimination education and human rights education, so as to promote dialogue and cooperation between Turkish associations in Germany and other European countries (Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu). AABF assists Turkish Muslims in Germany, but it only works for Alevis.

In general, the official associations lead the development of associations of Turkish Muslims. Civil associations focus on livelihood issues of Turkish Muslims, and support the accomplishment of national interests. Religious associations care about the spiritual world of Turkish Muslims, and they play the irreplaceable role in national unity and religious identity.

3. Political Participation through Media

The first Turkish media in Germany mainly worked to collect information for guest workers, like housing and employment, and brought news from their homeland. They were not interested in integration or assimilation (Drwecki, A., 2011). But with the family reunification and differentiation of political orientations, the media started to analyze their audience and redefine their own political stance. So the media also reflected internal dissent and views of Turkish Muslims in Germany. Because of the generally low level of education among Turkish Muslims, radio was more popular than other media forms like newspapers, television and the Internet.

OKB (Offener Kanal Berlin; Open Channel Berlin) is considered as a radical political radio station. OKB sometimes questioned German assimilation policy and provided services for Kurds in Germany who could use OKB station to broadcast to Kurds in Turkey. Radio Multi Kulti (Radio Multiculturalism) is another radio station with obvious nationalist tendencies, whose anchor people often joked that they “have a strong foreign accent” and the goal of speaking for the interests of Turkish Muslims.
Kulturradio (Culture Radio) is also a radio station of Turkish Muslims, who did not emphasize political or ethnic difference, but played Western music.

Civil society is the most thorough form of political participation, but associations of minorities are hard to have powerful influence on decision-making. Political parties should have been the most effective form, but Turkish Muslims have limited access to German political parties because of their identity. Even though they join some parties, they still constitute a minority of minorities. So, they are always neglected. The media can inspire emotion and passion of Turkish Muslims and provide them with a platform to express their views, but the servicing role played by media will not affect decision-makers.

The three ways of political participation mentioned above are all legal. Besides that, some extremists among Turkish Muslims would make use of loose political environment in Germany to establish religious extremist organizations. Currently, these organizations, like the Islamic Great Eastern Raiders Front (IBDA-C) are under the surveillance of the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Cui, W., 2001: 30-33). Extremist organizations usually have their own publications to promote their ideas and recruit members. Extremists are only a small part of Turkish Muslims, but they have affected German people’s views on the Turkish Muslims as a whole in their society.

**III. Political Influence of Turkish Muslims in Germany**

Turks form the majority of the Muslim population in Germany, and the largest group of the non-Christian population. The Turks’ political participation draws lots of attention from Germany’s government and society, and is affected by the Turkish government and religious groups. Therefore, political participation of Turkish Muslims will influence domestic politics
of both Germany and Turkey, and relations between the two countries. Of course. This effect will eventually be reflected in the issue whether the Turkish Muslim’s own political and social aspirations can be achieved.

1. Impact on Turkish Domestic Politics

The main impact of Turkish Muslims’ political participation to Turkish domestic politics is the conflict between its secularization and Islamization. There are various reasons for Turkish Muslims to insist on their Turkish nationality, but the most important is their Islamic and ethnic identity. This is the same for the new generations born in Germany. Some of them even have never been to Turkey, but they believe that the biggest difference between them and the Germans is Islam. Turkey in their eyes is Islam, and they construct their national identity via Muslim identity.

Turkish Muslims’ religious identity is part of their ambition for some exiled Turkish politicians in Germany. Besides Kurdish refugees caused by Turkish domestic ethnic policy, the main part of Turkish political refugees in Germany are leaders and members of political parties that were banned because of their political Islamic tendencies. After the 1971 “Memorandum coup”, the military government banned the National Order Party (Millit Nizam Partisi) for its apparent Islamic tendency. The political ideas of Erbakan, the party’s leader, won support from Turkish Muslims while he was exiled in Germany. They also promote their opinion that “Turkey should be a pure Islamic state, rather than a secular state” by mass media in Turkey. Two years later, Erbakan returned to Turkey with the support of Turkish Muslims in Germany and his newly founded National Salvation Party (Millit Selamet Partisi). After another coup in 1982, the National Salvation Party changed its name to Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), and then to Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi), continuing to implement Islam in the Turkish politics. The Justice and Development Party (Adalet
ve Kalkınma Partisi), which inherited its Islamic tendency, came to power, represented by the leaders Erdoğan and Gül, which means that Turkish politics accomplished the transition towards Islam. Obviously, Turkish Muslims’ religious identity, especially their support to Islamic parties in Turkey, enhanced Islamic challenges to secularism in Turkish politics.

The ruling Justice and Development Party came to power with the support of Turkish Muslims in Germany, but they did not have any plan to solve the “dual citizenship” issue that is most concerned by Turkish Muslims in Germany. According to Turkish Nationality Law, if a Turk want to apply for another country’s citizenship, s/he must confirm giving up her/his Turkish nationality through the Turkish embassies. But another provision provides that a Turkish citizen must return to Turkey to serve in the army, or pay a waiver’s fee and serve in the army for three weeks (Aktürk, Ş, 2010: 75), before abandoning the Turkish nationality. But Turkish Muslims in Germany are mostly low-income workers, who neither have the time for military service, nor the money for the waiver fee. The Turkish government could have helped Turkish Muslims by modifying the Nationality Law, since Germany amended its nationality law in 2000 which stipulated that Germany would not under any condition grant dual nationality to foreigners living in Germany who cannot renounce their original nationality (Aktürk, Ş, 2010: 75). Therefore, Turkish Nationality Law is an obstacle for Turkish Muslims to acquire German citizenship or to have a dual nationality.

2. Impact on the Relations between Germany and Turkey

The political participation of Turkish Muslims in Germany affects the relationship between Germany and Turkey mainly through DİTİB. This organization is an official agency of Turkish government for the management of Turkish Muslims in Europe. It is in charge of 740 mosques all over Germany (Goldberg, A., 2002: 75).
41). On the one hand, DİTİB encourages Turkish Muslims in Germany to improve their socioeconomic status and avoid damaging bilateral relations of the two countries. On the other hand, DİTİB also asks Turkish Muslims to keep their loyalty to the Republic and their ethnicity, and to resist any criticism against Turkey (Yükleyen, A. & Yurdakul, G., 2011: 70). As an official institute, DİTİB represents Turkish “official Islam”, interpreting Islam on the orders of the Turkish government. In matters of religious life, DİTİB asked the Turkish Muslims to maintain the Islamic faith, and practice it in daily life. DİTİB’s ambiguous attitude toward German assimilation policy is not conducive to the bilateral relations. Since DİTİB has great influence among German Muslims and it controls most of the mosques, the German government has to attach great importance to relations with DİTİB. However, the German government never wants DİTİB to manage Muslims and mosques on its own territory. What they desire are organizations and associations developing in Germany that take orders from the German government. The German government has offered language training to Turkish Imams since 2006. By 2007, more than 1,000 Imams received training from the German government (Euro-Islam). Moreover, the German government carried out Imam Education programs in Germany, hoping to produce Imams with German language and culture in order to replace Turkish Imams (Yükleyen, A. & Yurdakul, G., 2011: 71). There seemed to be a “battle” between DİTİB and the German government on the issue of integration of Turkish Muslims into German society. These contradictions would have subtle influence on the relations between Germany and Turkey, and even become an important reason for Germany’s hesitation on Turkey’s accession to EU.

3. Impact on Turkish Muslims in Germany

The political participation of Turkish Muslims in Germany also affects the group itself. It not only brought identity confusion
to the group, but also further marginalized them. Identity confusion occurs mainly on the second-generation of Turkish Muslims who have grown up in Germany. Those German-speaking and German-educated children should be considered German. But they are actually far away from real German society psychologically. This is mainly because Islamic education made them different from non-Muslim Germans. Therefore, they consider themselves as Turks and Muslims. However, once they return to Turkey, they become aware that they neither understand the Turkish language, nor do they get used to the life-style in Turkey. Especially, when they are trying to integrate into German mainstream society, the intentionally or unintentionally contaminated “German temperament” they absorbed make them incompatible with Turkish condition. Therefore, when they return to their homeland, they feel more like Germans.

In addition to identity confusion, marginalization in German society is their another concern. For Turkish government, they just want to get national interests from the ethnic identity of Turkish Muslims, but they would never make any responsible commitment to the Turkish Muslims as a minority group in German society. But the German Turkish Muslims’ strong religious identity may not be good for Turkish political interests. Because the Turkish government’s primary need is their national identity. So, Turkish Muslims in Germany might have been marginalized by the Turkish government itself. For Germans, Turkish Muslims are not German citizens and the German government is not responsible for them.

Besides, Turkish Muslims did not cooperate with the German assimilation policy, and always emphasized their Islamic identity, which kept reminding the German Christian society about their difference. So they were marginalized by Germany too.
IV. Conclusion

As Germany’s largest minority, Turkish Muslims tried various ways to accomplish their political aspirations. But Germany did not fairly fulfil their expectation. There are two main reasons. On the issue of citizenship, the descent principle was once the biggest obstacle for Turkish Muslims’ access to German nationality, but the situation has changed since the coalition government of the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party reformed German Nationality Law. It seems that provisions in the Turkish Nationality Law impeded most Turks from acquiring German citizenship or dual nationality. But the reason behind the provisions is the Turkish government’s demand for their loyalty to the Turkish state and the nation makes it impossible for them to perform their duty as legal citizens in their countries of residence. In general, different ethnic and cultural groups maintaining their original ethnic and cultural characteristics will be critical of the multicultural process of any nation state. However, if a group over-emphasizes their own characteristics, it will cause conflicts with other communities, which means failure of diversification. It would even lead to extremism, if the contradictions and conflicts could not be effectively solved. It is not hard to find that the Turkish Muslims’ insistence of their ethnicity and religion not only generated their crisis of identity, but it also led to Germany’s frustration regarding its diversification process. Therefore, Turkish Muslims could make full use of both sides’ governments to meet their political demands, rather than making those political aspirations become their own shackles. As an important part of European Muslims, Turkish Muslims in Germany could objectively reflect the Muslims’ living status and political participation in Europe. Like other Muslims in European countries, even though they cannot impact domestic and foreign affairs of any country, they are still an important part of European civil
society. So they could affect the development of European civil society in their own ways, and indirectly influence these European countries as well as the domestic and foreign affairs of their home countries.

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