

**FAITH DEVELOPMENT AND PERCEPTION OF
DIVERSITY AMONG MUSLIMS IN TURKEY:
CONSTRUCTION AND INITIAL TEST OF A MEASURE FOR
RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN ISLAM**

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ABSTRACT

The study is an attempt to investigate how a sample of Muslims in Turkey perceives diversity of faith and faith members. Employing the scheme of the theory of faith development, the author, by observing and analyzing the qualitative data which have been gathered from 25 participants via in-depth-interview, constructed a scale to measure three types of perception of religious diversity, corresponding to Stage Three, Stage Four and Stage Five in Fowler's model. In addition, the study sought correlation, if any, between these three perceptions of diversity, Muslim Conventionality and Quest religious orientation. Working in accordance with the expectancy, the results revealed three distinctive types of perception of diversity, with satisfying alpha values, and their correlates. However, there is no findings to support whether these three stages are developmental and sequential as Fowler proposed. In addition, it was revealed that Muslim conventionality has a high level of positive correlation with Style Three perception of diversity. Furthermore, Quest religious orientation tends to be more common among hypothesized higher forms of faith stages.

Key Words: Islam, faith development, perception of diversity, Quest, Muslim conventionality, Fowler, faith style.

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of cultural and religious diversity and the notion of pluralism, multiculturalism and tolerance have increasingly attracted the attentions of scholars across the world in general and in multicultural and multiethnic European countries in particular. The present multicultural form of some European countries resulted from the migrations in groups mainly around

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the middle of 20th century often from their former colonies with different ethnic and religious or cultural varieties. The reason for this arising movement is perhaps the concerns to respond to the effects of the globalisation, to protect social cohesion and to avoid potential conflict among various cultural groups.

The issue of diversity and its implications should not be taken as only related to the relations between different cultural traditions but also to intra-group varieties within the same cultural tradition. For instance, Turkish society is relatively more homogeneous than most of its European counterparts in terms of faith population. However, despite the overwhelming homogeneity in faith, whatever its cause may be, Turkey experienced some grim ideological conflicts particularly among young adults in late 1970s and early 1980s which ended up with hundreds of death tolls. Therefore, like any other current multicultural country, Turkey also needs to develop an atmosphere in which people with different faith or different versions of the same faith community should be able to live together in peace and harmony.

In contrast to the relatively pluralistic nature of Western societies, Turkey has often searched for a unity of sociological structure in religion, ideology, and in ethnicity as the state policy since its establishment in 1923. As a result, movements towards diversities and nuances within the traditional values often attracted close scrutiny by the side of Turkish authorities. It is possible to assume that in the background of this vigilance, lies the experience of witnessing dissolution of local cultures into independent states which ultimately led to the process of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (which was composed of differing cultures, faith and ethnic groups).

The new republic has given special attention to the regulations of religion in public area and the source of any “backward” movement in the name of religion was strictly traced. Traditionally, certain clichés related to intra-religious diversity have often been operationalized by certain class of the society to label any premature religious attitude towards other faith or ideologies. Among these are, *mutaassıp/bagnaz* which refers to a person who is strongly committed to a thought or a faith in such a way that he/she does not recognize those of others; and the word *yobaz* which designates an extreme version of being *bagnaz* in re-

ligion. Even a *yobaz* person may tend to oppress the “other” in favour of his/her faith. These are only lexical definitions which could be analysed in depth in Turkish context.

However, in last decades, Turkey, in line with general tendency across the world, has been revising its ongoing policy with regard to the diversity both intra-cultural and inter-cultural. The regulations in the way towards EU membership accelerated this tendency. At this process, it would be practical to conduct research on the types of perceptions of diversity by Turkish citizens, almost all of whom come from Muslim background. Nevertheless, surveys on inter-faith and intra-faith attitude have often been carried out in Turkish context at theoretical and theological levels. Without doubt, their contributions to our understanding cannot be minimized, but they should also be supported by empirical investigations.

Although the members of major world religions, including Islam, claim that the values they hold are in favour of peace, dialogue and corporation, the results of surveys sometimes indicate the opposite. For instance, a research was completed by a graduate student with adolescents in Turkey (Ozdemir, 2004). She investigated the level of exclusivism among secondary school students. For this aim, a Muslim exclusivism scale was distributed to 456 adolescents in 4 Turkish secondary schools along with an Islamic conventionality scale (Ozdemir, 2004).¹ The result revealed that 8% of participants tend to avoid from the environment in which “others” live. Though small, there is a positive correlation between exclusivism and observing daily prayers (.20, $p < .01$, $n = 383$) and Muslim conventionality (.20, $p < .01$, $n = 396$). To this, exclusivism tends to more common among “conventionally” religious oriented students than non-conventionally oriented ones.

In another survey by Yapici (2004) with graduate Sunni and

¹ The scale included the following items with Cronbach Alpha value of .82: (-) One should not take those who do not believe in Islam as close friends. The presence of Christian students in my school does not bother me. I can also establish friendship with non-Muslims. I would welcome if one from different religion moves to the next flat. (-) I do not like people from different religions live in my country. (-) I would not like students from any other religion be in my classroom. I can be a close friend of a Christian. (-) I wouldn't like to live in the places where people from different religions live.

Alawi students (n=511) it was found that the distribution of Sunni students who regarded each of the Alawis, Jews, Christians and Shiates communities as heretics or unorthodox ranged from 19% to 25%. In addition, the author reported that the distribution of the students who responded “no” to the statement “I would like to live with the family of one of the following groups (Jewish, Christians, and Shiate) in the same neighbourhood” ranged from 25% to 32%. Similar to Ozdemir’s findings above it was also found that the more important the religion is in a person’s life, the more exclusive the person tend to be; and the more dogmatic is a person, the more exclusive s/he is (pp. 236 and 324).

The contradiction between the friendly claims of religions and the empirical findings which sometimes shows the opposite is explained by the “types” of religiosity (Hunsberger, 1995 p.115) rather than religiosity per se. These types of religiosity are conceptualised in the literature of psychology of religion by such phrases as religious orthodoxy, religious conventionalism, faith stages or styles, fundamentalism and Quest religious orientation and so on. “These [notion of types] focus on the *ways* in which beliefs are held, ... rather than the *content* of the beliefs themselves” (Hunsberger, 1995, p.118). However, there is no reason to exclude the content, namely, the theological themes, from the discussion when conducting empirical research, and even it would be interesting to outline the correlations between the nature of the teaching of a religion about diversity and the perceptions of its adherents. For instance, theologically speaking, if one studies the Qur’an to learn its perspective with regard to its relation to “non-Muslims” (i.e. Christians, Jews, idol-worshippers, hypocrites and so on) s/he may find quite a few verses and point of views about religious diversity with different levels of emphases. Any text, whether in its verbal form or in any other symbols, is basically innocent and neutral. However, it is mainly the matter of various individual hermeneutical understandings which make sense out of it in different ways. Therefore, this study tries to take on the individual side of the religion.

A. Faith Development and Perception of Diversity

To introduce briefly, the theory of faith development (TFD) has mainly been based on Piaget’s work on intellectual develop-

ment. Piaget coined that intellectual talent or operations follow a series of sequential developments across the life span. Each observable progress in this process is called a *stage* which is supposed to be composed of various interrelated *structures*. In the same way, following Piaget's model and inspiring from theological traditions Fowler designated a theory of faith and, in line with his empirical works, claimed that human faith, or meaning-making activity, develops, if not stuck at an earlier stage, from childhood onwards on 6 "hierarchical and invariant stages". Furthermore, the theory proposes that each of the developmental models of meaning-making, namely stages, should be evaluated on the ground of seven components, called aspects (for validity concerns see Snarey, 1991). These include *form of logic, perspective taking, moral decision, social awareness, authority centre, cosmological view and symbolic functioning*. Thus, one's stage of faith development is observed on his/her cognitive performances on these aspects (for further detail and preliminary study about TFD see Fowler, 1989; 1986 and 1981)

At a later period, the "narrow focus on a unidirectional and mono-causal development and, related to this, the lack of explanatory power in regards to domain other than cognition" (Streib, 2006b), the idea of *structure* and *stage* along with the characteristics attributed to them (*invariability, hierarchy, sequence*) and the concept of development among others in Piagetian (thus in Fowler's) model have been seriously criticized (See various criticisms in, for instance, Streib, 2001a; Astley & Francis, 1992; Dykstra & Parks, 1986). Since, in its original form, stage theory is said to be not explaining the regression and developmental stagnation arising even in later periods of ones' biography. One of the important questions in this regard was whether it is the predetermined epigenetic structures which gives form to one's thinking or is it the content? Or both? The emphasis on the place of content and the interaction between psychological and socio-cultural conditions in faith development, as a "second developmental turn", has increased recently (see for instance, Reich, 1992; Streib, 1991; Ok, 2005 among others). As Streib (2006b, p.8) maintains "*functions and contexts, but also psychological factors such as personality traits or psychodynamic needs, and not at least subjective theological contents such as God representations* – all have an impact and all have their spe-

cific development dynamic.” This new resurgence along with other newborn alternative models, though in minority compared to mainstream consensus, seems to be innovative and promising.

The theory of faith development, as a heuristic tool, has the potential to provide a framework to study faith related topics especially within the fields of psychology of religion and religious education. As Streib (2006b) points out the topic of inter-religious matters is one of the areas to discuss the practical and societal relevance of the theory of faith development (s.2). Among the seven aspects in TFD mentioned above, especially the *perspective taking*, the *boundary of social awareness* together with *moral decision*, form one of the two clusters of the seven aspects. This interrelated cluster is called “psychosocial as well as cognitive content” (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004, pp. 25-6) and includes the most related aspects to one’s perception of diversity. For the purpose of the evaluation, a summary of the characteristics of two aspects, namely, perspective taking and the boundary of social awareness is presented below at three stages or levels: stages three, four and five².

Some features of a person with stage three orientation are as follows: A person with stage three is rather interested in mutual relations; uses symbols in a stereotypical way, has not yet developed the consciousness of being part of a certain social group; therefore, without having a conscious awareness, represents in his/her thinking the traditional discourse. S/he does not have critical ability or systematic thinking to evaluate neither his/her own tradition nor the others’ and values his/her group to the extent that ultimately lead to ignorance or exclusion of the others.

In comparison, as a more sophisticated form, a person with stage four characteristics; is able to think systematically and critically, i.e. discusses about the world views like Marxism or Islam as life styles with explicit rationality. While doing this, s/he defends his/her own perspective or self-selected world view perhaps because of the limited capacity for empathy to appreciate the wisdom in other faiths. The codes of human relationships are evaluated on the basis of general rules derived from his/her selected worldview. Pluralism is favoured when it is a part of an ex-

² For more detail on other stages see (Fowler, Streib and Keller, 2004)

plicit system such as Islamic pluralism, secular-humanistic pluralism etc.

Finally, still as the more expanded form than the latter, a person with stage five characteristics takes the others' internal frame of reference with less concern to defend his/her own. With a high level of empathy s/he tries to understand others from their own frame of reference recognizing their unique individual autonomy. S/he is able to deal with thoroughly different viewpoints without reducing their authenticity and manipulating them. S/he can perform critical reflection not only towards others but also towards the self. S/he is open to differences, tries to relate to different groups or belief systems and regards pluralism as richness rather than as a threat. S/he reflects on principles on which pluralism can stand upon.

To summarize then, an individual attitude towards other faith or its member may change from dominance, assimilation, reduction, acts of violence, oppression and exclusion to tolerance, objectification, indifference, unconcern and relativism; and then on to treatment of them as a gift and enrichment depending on shifts in perspectives (Streib 2006b, pp. 2 and 3).

B. Faith Style and Interpersonal Negotiations

Extending the *perspective taking* aspect in Fowler's model, (and in line with his revised model of faith development, styles perspective) Streib (2006a 2006b, and 2001b) suggested a scheme which he called *inter-religious styles perspective* which explicates the "attitudes toward the *other* and the *other religion*". In this model, Streib draws the projection of the five faith styles³ (subjective, instrumental-reciprocal, mutual, individuative-systemic and dialogical) on the praxis of interpersonal attitudes.

Although five interpersonal styles (Dialogical/inter-religious, Explicitly Multi-Religious, Implicitly Multi Religious, Imperialistic Mono-Religious and Xenophobic Mono-Religious corresponding to five faith styles mentioned above) have been designed. For the

³ Five religious styles are parallel with first five stages in Fowler's model in terms of qualitative content except some modifications Streib made on them including their labels. Stage 6 in Fowler's theory has often been criticised as being devised from theological point of view than the results of empirical data.

purpose of the paper I will focus on first three styles briefly.

Individuals with *Implicitly Multi Religious Styles* (mutual style) may look for harmony between different views (“nice-weather-collaboration”) or may reject the other faith in accordance with their implicit perception of the “expectancies” of their traditional groups towards that direction. “It applies a kind of “soft” pluralism which is attracted to, or even fascinated by, similarities in other religion (exotism) and which experiences strangeness with dissonance that is either ignored or resolved in harmony” (Streib, 2006b, p.8).

In comparison, persons with *Explicitly Multi Religious styles* (individuative-systemic) may confess an irreconcilable incompatibility between different views which may lead to rejection the other, or, by seeking after communality among them, may reflectively internalize (some parts of) the other at the same time trying to protect his/her own consciously defined position of faith.⁴ This style represents a rigid dichotomy to which the individual recognizes the plurality in such a way that s/he either thinks that different world views are utterly irreconcilable. “While this style may, to a certain extent, include the recognition of certain interdependence between the religions and also an awareness that every religious tradition has its own right and dignity, it is still preoccupied with guarding the self’s intimacy and authenticity”. (Streib, 2006b, p.8).

Finally, an individual with *Dialogical/ Inter-Religious* style can shift his/her perspective to applaud the other which s/he sees as a gift without objectifying and reducing it to a definition. The person is open to different views, is able to criticize himself or herself and is eager to learn from the other via encounter. “On this level, the strange is not regarded as something we are able to fully comprehend and ‘grasp’ in order to either assimilate or reject it, but the strange remains something mysterious, challenging, curiosity-eliciting and demanding – something that may offer a surplus” (for more detail see Streib, 2006b, p.8).

By introducing these styles of interpersonal negotiations, it is

⁴ An individual with this stlye assumes that “every religious belief and tradition, though it may not appear consistent and plausible to me, has its own right and dignity” (Streib, 2004, p.8).

not expected from an individual to act in the same way consistently in all conditions. As it was argued by Streib, while a person, in overall, may be, for instance, at Style Four in overall, he/she may reveal in some contexts or about certain topics characteristics of Style Five or Style Three.

The aim of this study is, by designing a quantitative measure, to tap three ways of perceptions of diversity which were hypothesised as corresponding to three stages of the theory of faith development: Stage Three, Stage Four and Stage Five; and to investigate if any link exists between these three perceptions of diversity and Muslim religious conventionalism and Quest religious orientation. In this respect, the two questions are worded as follows: How many types of perception diversity are available in the selected sample? Do these types correspond to the stage theory of faith development? What might be the relation between these three types of perception of diversity and two other variables of Quest religious orientation and Muslim religious conventionalism?

RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCESS

Data on faith stages or styles in general have often been gathered traditionally via interview methods. Nevertheless, there have been some attempts to develop quantitative measures (See Leak, Louks, & Bowlin, 1999; Barnes, Doyle, & Johnson, 1989) but it is accepted that the interview method still preserves its advantageous position in many respects.

This paper is originated from the results of a study on faith development which is due to be published mid-2007. To illustrate the background of this paper, I would like to introduce former empirical work on faith development briefly. In order to introduce the TFD to Turkish audience and to check whether the theory is applicable in a Muslim sample the author conducted 25 in-depth interviews with participants mainly from university students and a number of lecturing and working staff. The age of 25 participants ranged from 19 to 56 [mean=28.4 and median=24]. All participants identified themselves as Muslims in terms of faith except three who regarded themselves as Alawi and they felt closer to atheism than to their traditional faith.

To report the results of faith development interview, by em-

ploying the wording suggested by Fowler and his colleagues in faith development manual (2004, p.29), to assess inter-rater reliability, 25 cases were scored independently by a second rater who remained blind to the scores assigned by the primary rater. Comparing the level of agreement between the stage scores, 84% (21 out of 25) of the cases received scores that agreed within one-half stage, and 40% (10 out of 25) agreed within .25 stage. Nevertheless, ratings of the 4 interviews out of 25 which did not fall within one-half stage, have been re-evaluated by two raters without knowing each others' first ratings (through the help of a third person). As a result, 3 out of 4 were agreed upon in the second ratings. The result of ratings of 25 participants can be seen in the following table.

Table 1: Results of Faith Development Interview

Stages	Female	Male	Age Average	Total
4	5	5	28.1	10 (40%)
3-4 (transition)	6	4	27.8	10 (40%)
3	4	1	29	5 (20%)
Total	15	10	28.4	25

The nature of this qualitative data prompted the author to develop a quantitative scale to measure the perception of diversity by Muslims. The scale was mainly constructed from the verbatim responses provided by these 25 participants on the final question of faith development interview. The final question (Question 25) of the faith development interview was originally worded as "If people disagree about a religious issue, how can such religious conflicts be resolved?" It was observed that the responses to this question, allowed participants to discuss a wide spectrum of issues regarding diversity, relations to other faiths and interpersonal contradictions. Although the emerged stages are limited, based on average score on all items, to stages 3, 4 and the transition between the two, some of the responses to questions including Question 25 were obviously displaying stage 5 (and, though very rare, stage 2⁵) characteristics.

⁵ The expressions falling in this category included such descriptions as *hostility towards the members of other faith* and *fear of other faith (Xenophobia)*.

The following procedure has been followed in the construction of the items of the scale: (a) the responses to Question 25, in particular, have been gathered together and clustered according to stages they were allocated (b) the value-loaded responses of the participants in their original wordings concerning perception of diversity which were potentially viable for item construction were exposed to and compared with stage descriptions of two aspects, namely, *perspective taking* and *bounds of social awareness*, to verify their marked stage value through comparison. Thus, the original sentences were allocated to hypothesized stages, i.e. stages three, four and five as a result of comparison.

The descriptions of the row items which were allocated in stages can be seen in the following table. In the conceptualization of the characteristics of the statements, some words were borrowed from both faith development theory and religious negotiation styles.

Table 2: The descriptions of responses to Question 25 regarding diversity in thinking and faith

Stage 3	Stag 4	Stag 5
Convention-centered reference system	Taking the reference system of both faith (mutual) into account	Seeing the other as "surplus" to learn from. Valuing diversity
Respect and tolerance (for the aim of harmonizing)	Mutual respect and tolerance	Openness for differences
Sense of superiority of one's own religion	Mutual perspective taking	Empathy with the other (may also be for stage Four)
Discriminatory between faiths	Supports evidence based arguments	Accepting diversity as valuable in itself
Avoiding other faith, (Intra& inter faith) implicit exclusivism	Empathy-understanding the other (may also be for stage Five)	Relativising
Proud of one's own faith	Seeks/supports for finding a common	Unity in diversity

	point between views	
Negativising the “other” to justify one’s own (“religionism”)	Leaves decisions on executive ego on faith	Tension-positive,
Intervention to the other faith (for “good”) or conversion/assimilation concern	Against imposing one’s idea on the other and lack of hope in succeeding about conversion.	Inclusive and all-embracing
Single (not mutual) and embedded perspective	Sides with freedom for selection and expression of faith	Unconditional pluralism
Offer for renouncing by one of the sides (perhaps for the aim of harmonizing) as a solution	Acknowledging (inter-faith, systematic/explicit) diversity and mutual difference	
No inter & intra-pluralism but embedded pluralism.	Favours unity in a single system	
Seeking intimacy in relations		

To concretise what have been said so far, two examples are introduced below:

Example Participant I

Name	Age	Gender	Faith	RISS*	RIISS*	AI&IIRSS*	RI&IISSQ25*
Nil	26	F	Muslim	2.96	3.24	3.1	3-3

*(RISS= Rater I’s Stage Score, RIISS=Rater II’s Stage Score; AI&IIRSS=Average of Raters I and II’s Stage Scores, RI&IISSQ25=Raters I and II’s Stage Scores on Question 25 respectively)

Selected Statements from the Responses Given by Participant I to Question 25 of FDT

They [those who not able to reach an agreement] will say “what you know is to you and what I know is to me” as prophet said.

The best is to leave it [the disagreement] to my Lord

[They may interpret differently on the verses] except on those which are the accurate ones [*Muhkam vs. mutasabihat-basic vs. allegoric*]. We have the accurate verses. Comment is never acceptable in accurate verses.

If you have a look on the historical process of Christianity, it is known by us that it has aspects which have been deformed.

Since, my Lord declared to protect this [the Qur'an] until the final day. And as we know that God is promise-keeper.

If the members of two religions (i.e. Christianity and Islam) be taken into account, I think the valid faith at this point would have the final word. So, I hope this [valid] faith would be Islam which, according to our belief, was promised to be protected by God.

Descriptive features of the statements: The participant is open to intra-religious diversity; is embedded in her tradition, namely, has no distinguishable perspective than the one of her community; implies the superiority of her own tradition; refers to her own tradition for the truth criteria between two religions which means not being concerned with the possibility of a second perspective; tends to disaffirm partially other faith in order to justify her own.

Example Participant II

Name	Age	Gender	Faith	RISS	RIISS	AI&IIRSS	RI&IISSQ25
Cesur	40	M	Muslim	4	4.02	4.01	4-5

Selected Statements from the Responses Given by Participant IV to Question 25 of FDT:

First of all, it is wrong trying to reach an agreement [on religious disagreements]

It's a breach of human right, if I impose an idea on you, to force you to accept it, or to pressurize on it.

From the mouth of the Prophet verbatim, your religion is to you and mine is to me. Perhaps, you may try to teach the truth and to get others accept it, through, how it is called, ... *irşad* and *tablig* [guidance and proclamation]

Nobody gives the right of showing disrespect to someone who do not accept your religion, neither the right of pressure.

Okay, we believe in the same religion but behaving differently in its practice.

You do not intervene to mine, neither do I to yours, Look! A complete condition of secularism.

In fact there are two common points to agree upon. Nobody would be against it. Qur'an and Tradition/way of the prophet (*sunnah*). Mind that I am not saying the commentary (*tafsir*) of the Qur'an or the *hadith* (word of the prophet).

Dialogue; let not bring the disputed points into the agenda. Who we are? Human. Who we are? In need of a creator power. Who we are? In need of feeding. Who provides these? Some says mother nature, I say Allah. Let them believe in that way, me in this way.

We are not bound to love anybody, but we need to show respect to everybody. It is necessary to respect.

No disputed point is to be left if we come together at the common point of being human. They should bring their arguments, and I will bring mine. The positive science would be the common point.

Descriptive features of the statements: The participant is apparently mutual and refers to mutual reference system. He supports tolerance and respect between two different views and calls for basing discussions on evidence. He invites the interlocutors to find a common point employing mutual negotiation method. He is against imposing one's faith to others and considers inter-faith approach with a sense of freedom, unity (at common points) and mutual perspective taking.

As a final step, the row statements, such as in the quotations above have been reworded, when required, and turned into item format for the hypothesized scale measuring the attitude towards diversity in faith and thought. The initial item pool included 94 statements which were subjected to a pilot study with 55 participants. According to the result of factor analysis 36 of them were kept, hypothetically representing three stages (stages three, four and five).

In addition, the Quest scale (with 12 items) developed by Batson and Schoenrade and Ventis (1993) and a short Muslim conventionality scale (with 6 items) have been mixed and added up

to a questionnaire pack called “attitudes towards thinking and faith”. All scales used 5 anchors of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Certain, Agree and Strongly Agree. The survey was distributed to 278 participants in the district of Sivas, Turkey. The sample was a composite of young adults included mostly undergraduates, some post-graduate students and few middle aged academic staff.

RESULTS

The employed 36 items have been exposed to principle components factor analysis with varimax rotation. Using the Cattell’s criteria, three factors were obtained explaining 33.81 of the variance. The first factor was called as Style Three, the second as Style Five and the final one as Style Four. The items loading on each factor were exposed to reliability/item analyses (The derived items from the scales can be seen in the Appendix). In addition, participants whose mean scores on the scales (agreed or strongly agreed options) were calculated. Some parametric features of the scales as well as the mean frequency of positive responses can be seen in the following table.

Table 3: Some characteristics of scales employed in the study

	% of the Mean Scores	N. of items	Cronbach Alpha	Mean
Muslim conventionality	79	8	.86	4.36
Stage 3 perception of diversity	64	14	.87	4.08
Stage 4 perception of diversity	13	9	.62	3.23
Stage 5 perception of diversity	48	8	.73	3.82
Quest	1.4	12	.60	2.79

As can be seen in Table 3, three out of five scales (compared to the number of their items) have a satisfactory alpha levels ranging from .73 to high level of .86 (see Lester and Bishop, 2000, pp.18 and 25 for criteria). It was revealed from the calculation of average scores that about 79 % of the sample believes in Islam in a “conventional” way and more than half of the sample

(64%) perceives diversity at Style Three level.⁶ The correlations between scales can be seen in the following table:

Table 4: Correlations between scales of perceptions of diversity, Quest and Muslim Conventuality

		Correlations			
		Muslim	Quest	Style Three	Style Five
		Conventuality			
Quest	Pearson Correlation	.116			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.052			
	N	278			
Style Three	Pearson Correlation	.785**	.102		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.091		
	N	278	278		
Style Five	Pearson Correlation	.291**	.239**	.152*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.011	
	N	278	278	278	
Style Four	Pearson Correlation	-.132*	.143*	-.206**	.166**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.017	.001	.006
	N	278	278	278	278

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As can be seen from the Table 4, Muslim conventionality has a high level of positive correlation with Style Three type of perception of diversity (.79, $p < 0.01$, $n = 278$); low correlation with Style Five (.29, $p < 0.01$, $n = 278$) and very low negative correlation with Style Four (-.13, $p < 0.05$, $n = 278$). As a result, this seems to be confirming Fowler's conviction that Style Three type of perception of diversity corresponds to conventional attitude towards perception of differences.

Lack of high correlation between the three styles of perception of diversity indicates that three scales are measuring three different aspects presumably of the same phenomenon, i.e. perception of diversity. Are there other criteria to distinguish between the Styles? In a recently completed study by the author, the scales of Style Five and Style Three perception of diversity applied to 178 Muslim clergy or clergy candidates along with a number of other scales. It was found that, similar to the results

⁶ The percentages should not be taken as complementary to %100 since they have been calculated individually. That the scores adds up more than %100 may indicate the overlaps as can be inferred from the correlational matrix in Table 4. To this, some individuals, for instance, may be questioning his or her belief but at the same time believes in conventional way.

in present study, there is a low positive correlation between the two scales (Style Five and Style Three) (.22, $p < .05$, $n = 178$). Style Three has a negative (-.23, $p < .05$) and Style Five has a positive (.30, $p < .05$) correlation with Quest (of which nine items out of 12 took place in the survey with a Cronbach Alpha of .71). In addition, positive correlations were found between Style Three and Environmental Mastery (.24, $p < .05$); and between Style Five and Personal Growth (.22, $p < .05$), (both scales are sub-components of Ryff's psychological well-being scale (see Ryff & Singer, 1996)).

The assumption about faith stages' being sequential seems to be partially confirmed in this study by the fact that Quest (as a more mature form of faith as it has been coined by Batson et al. (2001)) has a low positive correlation with the Style Five (.24, $p < .01$), very low correlation with Style Four (.14, $p < .05$), and no important correlation with Style Three. Furthermore, it is noticeable that, while both Style Three and Style Four have very low positive correlations with Style Five (.15, $p < .05$; .17, $p < .05$), they have a low negative correlation between each other (-.21, $p < .05$). This prompts to ask the following question: Is Style Four starts or arises out as a reaction towards Style Three, then, in times, grows in the direction of Style Five, as a more mature form of faith with a more positive attitude towards conventional attitude?

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Employing the apparatus of the theory of faith development, this study attempted to survey three types of perception of diversity, which are named as Style Three, Style Four and Style Five. If reflected upon the emerged items in three factors, the first factor, Style Three, tends to possess three subcomponents: (a) Diversity-negativism (items 1 and 4), (b) single-true-faith centeredness (items 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13 and 14), and (c) motivation to convert those who do not belong to the same faith (items 6, 8, 9 and 11). These items all together can be phrased as follows:

There is only one set of true thought/belief/religion to which every person should obey/approach. There is no salvation/meaning outside of it. In which every problem can be resolved and in which there is no place for diversity in views or faith. This thought/belief/religion should be taught to others/non-Muslims.

The second factor of perception of diversity, Style Four, seems

to have three sub-components: (a) Conviction of the impossibility of change (items 4 and 5) (b) No need to try to solve the incompatibilities (items 3, 7, and 8), and (c) Secularism (items 1, 2, 6 and 9). These items can be put into a phrase as:

However you try, you cannot (and perhaps it is better not to try to) change people from their views because everybody believes that their truth claims are true to them. Therefore it is better let them to live in accordance to their own faith or thought and us to live our own.

The third factor of perception of diversity, Style Five, seems to have two sub-components: (a) Diversity-positive attitude with an emphasis on common points (respect/tolerance, good side in humans, equality of value claims) (items 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7), and (b) Openness to and valuing diversity (openness to diversity, valuing difference) (items 4 and 5). These items can be put into a phrase together as:

People may have different beliefs and thoughts and they may live together around such common points/values as respect, tolerance, being human. Further, people may be open to differing values because they may contribute to our maturity in looking at life events.

No obvious result has been obtained, in this study, whether Quest religious orientation, is a more mature form of being religious, thus, of exhibiting more sophisticated attitudes towards others as proposed by Batson, Eidelman, Higley, and Russel (2001) because of its low correlation with Style Five. However, the steady increase from no correlation with Style Three then with a very low correlation to Style Four and ending up with low correlation with Style Five can be seen as an indication that Quest tends to develop in parallel with the advances in faith journey. In other words it seems to be more common among more elaborated forms of faith styles.

One of the limitations of this survey is that although the scales seems to be performing in accordance with the theoretical expectations, as the results of factor analysis revealed, three distinctive styles of perception of diversity, their content and criterion validity, and whether they are developmentally sequential or not, have not yet fully been checked except perhaps Style Three which, having a high correlation with religious conventionality,

seems to be confirming Fowler's proposition that Style Three parallels with conventionalism. One of the ways of doing this would be to compare the results of the interview with that of the scales on the same sample. In addition, the reliability level of the scales of Quest religious orientation and Style Four is relatively low. Therefore, these two scales are in need of revision in Turkish context.

The attitude of the members of a cumulative religious tradition towards other faiths or their members is but one side of the coin. The other side can be the attitude by those who label themselves as "secular" or exhibits "indifference to religion" towards the members of faith traditions in Turkey. For this purpose, the prejudice and discriminatory behaviours of those who do not belong to a certain faith tradition towards other "faith" members, is equally worth to investigate. This is an important area to be covered in the future. Another area to be focused upon is the construction of a scale to measure Style Two perception of diversity. As it has already been mentioned above, although few items measuring Style Two perception of diversity took place in the item pool, the factor analysis did not reveal such a component. One reason among others may be the nature of the sample as it was mainly composed of an educational setting.

Is Style Three perception of diversity to be regarded as immature way of dealing with diversity in faith? To faith development theory, the higher stages are proposed as "more adequate" than the lower stages. Therefore, the educational aim would be to create the conditions in which students would be able, if their life orientations would allow, advancing to more sophisticated faith styles though it is not suggested to hurry them for this purpose. Teachers may facilitate students in their search for a better state of dealing with diversity or when they are stuck at, or regressed to the former stages. Although no obvious indication of aggression is observed in Style Three items, the maxim of "there is no salvation outside my belief" may, in provoking contexts, stimulate some to involve in the activity of proselytizing members of other beliefs or of discrimination against them.

If the implications of the results should be brought to the discussions about whether Religious Education (RE) should be discarded from school curriculum or be dropped from being com-

pulsory in Turkey, it could be suggested that Religious Education as a school subject should not alarm the parents, who may assume that it indoctrinates their children into Sunni Islam to withdraw their children from RE classes. Most would agree that students are to be equipped with the knowledge of cultural heritage within its enriching variety because it embodies the necessary symbolic tools for communication between the members of the society. There are vital human values with regard to human relations and dealing with pluralism and value systems such as humanism, Islam, secularism, nationalism, Liberalism etc. These include such concepts as tolerance, openness, empathy with people with different “faiths”, meaning-making systems, identity formation etc. Preventing students to join RE lessons in order to discuss these concepts can be regarded as critical deprivations which may lead to huge gaps, rigidity, closed mindedness, lack of empathy and tribalisations across the sociological strata of the society in Turkey.

However, it should be borne in mind that, starting from primary school to theology education in the universities, RE can not see Style Three type of perception of diversity as an end in itself and, thus cannot be allowed to foster it towards this direction. This is the most visible challenge to be dealt in today’s education system in Turkey. In the mean time, the challenge is not to be seen as only related to RE lessons and its teachers. Since Style Three perception of diversity is one of the windows of a more generic perspective. Its equivalence with rigid, obstinate and closed minded style may also be found in, for instance, secularism, nationalism, and even positive humanism with which educational authorities should equally handle with close examination.

As a result, it could be argued that it is not necessarily the RE to be eradicated from the schools or to be dropped out among compulsory subjects but it is the way it is taught to students. It is not Islam or any other content *per se* that should be exclusively dealt in curriculum discussions but it is mainly the *mentality* which RE authorities intend to cultivate on students’ mind to be focused upon. If a normative aim should be specified for this mentality, it would be “double, reciprocal interpretation of one’s own and the other’s religion by oneself and by the other” (van der Ven & Ziebertz, 1995 quoted from Streib 2006b)

“The aim of (religious) education is not the reduction or elimination of strangeness, but the ‘cultivation of strangeness’ –in the sense that strangeness becomes embedded in a culture of non-violence, a culture of perspective change, a culture of mutual dialogical inspiration. The strange owns a dignity and has to offer a surplus, a gift. In such culture, even experiences of strangeness within one’s own religion do not need to be suppressed; also these experiences promote learning” (Streib, 2006b). Furthermore, Hull’s perspective on Islam is an essential maxim when he was assuming that “Islam is not merely for Muslim Children. Islam is for everyone. All children have something to learn from the spirituality of Islam” (Hull, 1998). Extending such a climate as, for instance, “Christianity or Buddhism is not only for Buddhists or Christians but for all children” to Muslim population could be seen as one of the potential visions of today’s religious education in Turkey.

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Appendix: The Items of Scales Used In the Study

Items for short Muslim conventionality scale⁷

1. I think I should observe religious rules.
2. I would like to observe religious rules in my life.
3. A complete submission to Allah is required
4. I think I should be more religious than I am now.
5. One should observe daily prayers, five times in a day.
6. There is life after death.
7. It is required to believe in basics of religion in an absolute way.
8. (-) I think religious belief is not needed.

Items for Stage 3 perception of diversity scale

1. If you are in the way of Allah, you would not fall in separate views.
2. Islam is the last religion to which we and all human beings should obey.
3. Among all these religions, I think only Muslims will be redeemed.
4. There is no place for disagreement (conflict) in Islam because the prophets have never been in disagreement with each other. None of them said true to what the other said wrong.
5. If non-Muslims would like to approach to Allah by thinking a bit and trying to avoid from stereotyped prejudices, Allah will help them for this purpose.
6. If others think wrongly on an issue on which I see myself right, I would like to introduce them what I know.
7. There must be a solution in Islam about disputed issues. Resolution is unending in Islam.
8. Islam, the real and the true religion, should be taught to non-

⁷ The translations into English are not full technical translations. The original Turkish versions of the items can be obtained from the author on request.

Muslims.

9. I would, of course, like my faith be spread among people.
10. An atheist may render his/her life meaningful. However if it does not reflect the truth or the real, it is not that meaningful.
11. If I meet a person who has a different view or faith, I would like to try to tell him/her the truth as far as I know.
12. If those who are in other religions are not able to join Islam, this stems somewhat from their sluggishness.
13. Although in principle I feel open to people with different thoughts, I find myself closer to those who share my faith.
14. I would prefer to get marry someone whose point of view is in parallel with mine.

Items of Style 4 perception of diversity scale

1. Everybody's ideas or beliefs are true to them.
2. My belief is true to me, others do not accept it; others' belief is true to them I am not obliged to accept it.
3. It is not necessary that the differences in thoughts among people to be solved. They may not agree with each other.
4. If a person does not want to believe, it is impossible to make him/her to believe.
5. People are usually biased, if they believe in something, you cannot change them
6. Religion is a private matter of individuals, there is no need for discussion in this matter.
7. You cannot solve the differences in area of thought and belief.
8. It is a mistake for two people with different faiths to try to reach an agreement about their thoughts.
9. There is no one thing as Islam today; there are different Islams according to all individuals.

Items of Style 5 perception of diversity scale

1. Although people's ideas and religions may differ, they can understand each other as long as they show respect to each

other.

2. I would like people who think differently to consider each other with tolerance and without prejudgement.

3. There should not be such kind of idea: oh! This is Muslim, the other is leftist, rightist, or this is German, the other is English. Since, there absolutely should be a good side with any human being.

4. I am open to friendship with people from all cultures ranging from believers to fairly extremes, like atheists.

5. Those people who do not share the same faith or idea with me around me may also contribute to my maturity in looking at life and events.

6. Common points can be taken as criteria in disagreements between two people with different faiths.

7. In fact, every religion has some sense of truth.