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Sending States and the Making of Intra-Diasporic Politics: Turkey and Its Diaspora(s)

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Abstract

The multiple politics and identities of many contemporary diasporic configurations raise a number of important conceptual issues for the study of diaspora politics, including what counts as a “diaspora,” how do particular “diasporas” emerge, and what shapes their politics? This article discusses conceptual and substantive splits in the burgeoning social science literature on diasporas and suggests the value of analyzing the politics and policies of sending states as crucial factors in both “diaspora-shaping” and “diaspora-generating” processes. It presents an extended case study of the emergence of diaspora groups connected with contemporary Turkey, situating Turkey’s “New Diaspora Policy” in its historical context. The article concludes by suggesting that the proposed framework allows for a deeper theorization of the relationship between identity categories and political action, thus shedding light on the conceptual puzzle of what constitutes a diaspora.

Introduction

The multiple politics and identities of many contemporary diasporic configurations raise a number of important conceptual issues for the study of “diaspora politics,” including what counts as a “diaspora,” how do particular “diasporas” emerge, and what shapes their politics. With the burgeoning scholarly and policy interest in

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diasporas, such questions have become ever more salient. Governments and international organizations are increasingly setting up “diaspora engagement” programs, and “diasporas” have emerged as a significant feature of contemporary world society. Yet the diaspora politics attached to any particular “homeland” is as likely to be a cacophony of competing interests, identities, and stances as it is to be a unified political voice (Brubaker 1996, 55–76; Brubaker 2005; Adamson 2016).

The case of Turkey’s diaspora(s) is a useful one for examining the complexities of diasporic politics vis-à-vis homelands. Numerous different forms of transnational “diasporic engagements” routinely take place vis-à-vis Turkey. Some of these are in the form of engagement with official state institutions and processes, such as overseas voting. The Turkish Constitutional Referendum of 2017 and the Parliamentary elections of 2015, for example, were both characterized by a high rate of overseas participation and were considered to be important symbolic events in Turkey’s relationship with its global diaspora population.¹ Major political parties all engaged in some campaigning in Europe in 2015, and in 2017 the elections led to disputes between Turkey and countries such as the Netherlands and Germany over the issue of overseas campaigning.²

This image of Turkish citizens voting at local consulates and embassies around Europe can be contrasted with other scenes of more contentious forms of political engagement. Protests by Kurdish groups connected to Turkey, for example, have periodically dominated headlines, as the conflict between the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Turkish state has flared up and become entangled with the ongoing conflict in Syria.³ But incidents of contentious politics are not limited to the

¹2,867,858 Turkish citizens living abroad were eligible to vote in the 2015 elections, with polling stations at 33 different customs gates and 112 foreign representative offices in 54 countries. See Turkish Office of the Prime Minister, *Parliamentary Elections in 20 Questions*, Directorate General of Press and Information Ankara, Turkey. Available at: http://www.byegm.gov.tr/uploads/docs/inglizce_brs.pdf.

²“Turkey Rallies Row: Germany and Netherlands Harden Stance,” *BBC News*, March 12, 2017, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-39251216>. It should also be noted that election results in the diaspora in both cases varied substantially across country of residence — in 2017, for example, Turkish citizens in Germany, the Netherlands, and Saudi Arabia voted “yes,” whereas those in the United States, Great Britain, and the rest of the Gulf states voted “no.” Deniz Gungen and Tolga Bağ, “The 2017 Turkish Constitutional Referendum,” APCO Worldwide, April 19, 2017, <http://www.apcoworldwide.com/blog/detail/apcoforum/2017/04/19/the-2017-turkish-constitutional-referendum>; <http://www.apcoworldwide.com/blog/detail/apcoforum/2017/04/19/the-2017-turkish-constitutional-referendum>. The question of how diaspora–homeland relations vary according to the country of residence of diaspora populations has been taken up by Mylonas (2013).

³Some of the most widespread Kurdish protests in Europe have occurred over the issue of Kobane — the Syrian border town near Turkey, which was the scene of intense conflict between the Kurdish YPG forces and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In Germany,

Kurds. There are also millions of Armenians around the world with ancestral connections to Turkey, many of whom participated in centenary commemorations in 2015 to demand that the Turkish state recognize the Armenian Genocide.⁴

Indeed, the term “Turkish diaspora” is insufficient to cover the political activities of those around the globe with direct or familial connections to modern Turkey or its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire. It does not capture many of the political and cultural activities of the Alevi, Yazidi, Assyrian, or — more controversially — Muslim “diasporas” in Europe and elsewhere — not to mention individuals who have a familial but not a political connection with modern-day Turkey.⁵ In this respect, the politics of Turkey’s diaspora(s) resemble the diaspora politics of many other states — multiple, fractionalized, and contentious.

In this article, I examine how the politics and policies of sending states shape the emergence and form of diasporic ties to the homeland. I do this by bringing together three key areas of concern for scholars of contemporary diaspora studies — the impacts of diasporas on “their” homelands, the impact of sending states on “their” diasporas, and the question of what constitutes a diaspora. I argue that all three of these areas of inquiry are so intimately connected that they are, to a large extent, part and parcel of the same puzzle. Sending states and diasporas are, in effect, co-constituted — whether the sending state has an official diaspora management policy or not. To build on an analogy from Zolberg (1983), we can gain much by understanding the politics and policies of sending states as crucial factors in both “diaspora-shaping” but also “diaspora-generating” processes.

I develop this basic argument in the rest of the article in the following manner. First, I discuss the conceptual and substantive splits in the burgeoning literature on diasporas as actors, diasporas as the objects of sending state policies, and the question of what constitutes a diaspora. Second, I argue that a focus on the domestic politics of sending states as a causal factor in both diaspora formation and intra-diasporic politics provides a promising avenue for bridging these conceptual divides, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of how diasporas are constituted and

more than 20,000 joined a protest in Dusseldorf in solidarity with Kurds in Kobane in October 2014. Demonstrations also took place in Paris and London, and both the Dutch and European Parliaments experienced occupations by Kurdish protestors. See “Kurds Protest against Turkey as IS Advances on Kobane,” *BBC News*, October 7, 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-29518448>; “Kurdish Protestors Occupy Dutch Parliament,” *Al Jazeera*, October 7, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2014/10/kurdish-protesters-occupy-dutch-parliament-201410622457997974.html>.

⁴“Scenes from Armenian Genocide 100th Anniversary,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-armenian-genocide-anniversary-20150424-htmlstory.html>.

⁵Such as, for example, UK politician Boris Johnson. Norman Stone, “My Dream for Turkey, by Boris’s Great Grandfather,” *The Spectator*, April 23, 2008.

how their politics are shaped. Third, I present an extended case study of the evolution of Turkey's diaspora(s) in Europe as a way of illustrating the value added of bringing the domestic politics of sending states (back) into the study of diaspora politics. For the purposes of this article, I focus primarily on contemporary Turkish and Kurdish diaspora politics, although a full engagement with the issue would need to also include Armenian, Assyrian, Alevi, Yazidi, and other "diasporas" connected with Turkey. Finally, I discuss some of the broader implications of the argument and avenues for future research.

Diasporas as Actors Versus Objects of State Policy

Despite the "diasporic turn" by both scholars and policymakers in the past decade, the social science literature on diasporas still suffers from a degree of conceptual confusion and fractionalization. On the one hand, a number of scholars interested in a range of issues such as security and conflict, civil wars, democratization, and economic development have increasingly focused on diasporas as "actors" that impact on the politics of their "homelands." On the other hand, another set of scholars have noted that sending states around the world are increasingly setting up policies and institutions that reach out in various ways to their emigrants and diasporas. I first briefly review these literatures before discussing some of the underlying conceptual issues that plague them both.

Diasporas as Actors in Homeland Politics

Studies of diasporas as actors in homeland politics have grown steadily over the past two decades (Sheffer 1986, 2006; Shain and Barth 2003; Wayland 2004; Adamson and Demetriou 2007; Shain 2007; Cohen 2008; Koinova 2011b, 2014). Scholars have shown diaspora politics to be an important element in democratization (Shain 1999; Koinova 2009, 2011b), economic development (Nyberg-Sørensen, Van Hear, and Engberg-Pedersen 2002; Brinkerhoff 2008; Escriba-Folch, Meseguer, and Wright 2015), and foreign-policy making (Huntington 1997; King and Melvin 2000; Smith 2000; Saideman 2001; Haegel and Peretz 2005). In the field of security studies, there has also been an increase of interest in how diaspora politics intertwines with other security concerns such as civil wars and terrorism (Kaldor 1999; Adamson 2013; Baser 2015; Cochrane 2015; Van Hear and Cohen 2017).

Diaspora politics has been identified as a factor in understanding the onset and recurrence of civil war and internal conflict, with some studies suggesting that countries with significant émigré or diaspora populations are more likely to experience a recurrence of civil war, largely through the mechanisms of fundraising and financial support (Angoustures and Pascal 1996; Collier and Hoeffler 2000, 2004; Byman et al. 2001, 41; Miller and Ritter 2014). Other studies however have pointed out that diaspora politics can be either a radicalizing or moderating factor in secessionist conflicts (Koinova 2011a,b). The extent to which diaspora politics affect civil

wars may depend on the existence of particular mechanisms, such as brokers who act as links between networks of political mobilization and networks of conflict (Brun and Van Hear 2012; Adamson 2013; Koinova 2013, 2014). Diaspora politics may contribute to ongoing cycles of political violence by creating linkages between conflict, forced migration, transnational engagement, and conflict support (Van Hear 1998, 2009; Adamson 2004). However, diaspora politics have also been identified as factors in war termination, post-conflict reconstruction, and peace-building (Shain 2002; Shain and Aryasinha 2006; Baser and Swain 2008; Cochrane, Baser, and Swain 2009). Studies of diaspora politics and security have been extended to the phenomenon of terrorism — Sageman (2004), for example, argued that 84 percent of those involved in al Qaeda–inspired terrorism had been recruited in a diasporic context, with the majority of recruitment taking place in Western Europe. In addition, there is a growing body of empirical studies of particular conflicts (Hockenos 2003; Fair 2005; Lyons 2006; Smith and Stares 2007) that have examined the extent to which diaspora politics have affected patterns of “homeland” political violence.

Diasporas as Policy Objects — Sending State Emigration Policies

In a separate line of inquiry, an increasing number of scholars have focused their attention on a different set of puzzles. Rather than explaining the political activities and influence of a diaspora on a homeland, they have instead focused on the emergence of and variation in sending state or state of origin policies toward “their” diasporas (Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003; Ragazzi 2009). Whereas scholars only a decade or so ago lamented the lack of migration scholarship on sending state policies (Hollifield 2000, 143), that can hardly be said to be the case now.

Gamlen’s (2006, 2008, 2014) work in political geography has identified and theorized sending state diaspora engagement, diaspora integration, and diaspora-building policies. Spiro (1997), Bauböck (2005, 2007, 2009), Délano (2011), Fitzgerald (2006a), Barry (2006), Lafleur (2011), and Collyer’s (2014a,b) writing on extraterritorial and emigrant citizenship has raised conceptual and ethical issues about the nature of citizenship and de-territorialized political practices, including the extent to which individuals should have rights to influence the policies of states that they do not reside in, whereas Brand (2010) has examined the politics of why authoritarian regimes would advocate voting rights for their citizens abroad. Joppke’s (2003) theorization of the dual logics of “re-ethnicization” and “de-ethnicization” captures the contradictory logics of contemporary state citizenship policies, as well as the essentializing aspects of transnational nation-building policies — pointing to the fact that diaspora engagement policies do not necessarily fit well with cosmopolitan notions of transnationalism. Ragazzi (2014) has attempted to create typologies of state diaspora engagement policies that he divides into expatriate, closed, indifferent, and managed labor policies, showing that states engage in diaspora policies for different purposes and intents. This can range from harnessing remittances, to surveillance, to building “global nations” that can

enhance a state's soft power and ability to engage in public diplomacy. In a similar vein, work by Mylonas (2013) has focused on explaining variation in what he terms "diaspora management policies" in ways that link questions of diaspora engagement and return migration.

This conceptual and typological work on the varieties of diaspora engagement and management policies has been greatly enhanced by a number of excellent case studies of sending state policies toward their diasporas, including Brand's (2006) pioneering work comparing the policies of Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, and Jordan toward their citizens abroad; FitzGerald's (2006b, 2008) studies of the Mexican state's emigration policies; and Varadarajan's (2010) and Naujoks's (2013) analyses of the Indian state's changing policy toward its diaspora.

Conceptual Challenges

The split in the diaspora literature between diasporas as corporate agents or "actors" and diasporas as the objects of state policy is linked closely to the conceptual confusion regarding what constitutes a diaspora. Indeed, many scholars choose to employ terms such as *immigrants*, *emigrants*, *overseas citizens*, or *expatriates* instead of "diaspora" (Heisler 1985; Brand 2006; FitzGerald 2006a,b; Eckstein and Najam 2013; Miller and Ritter 2014) perhaps as a means of avoiding the issue. Others use the frames of transnationalism, transnational communities, or transnational politics (Faist 2000a,b; Portes 2001; Vertovec 2001, 2004a,b; Bauböck 2003; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a,b). Diaspora is a difficult concept to operationalize and code for in rigorous quantitative studies — measuring by migrant stock, dual citizenship, foreign-born population, and other factors, for example, largely leaves out "classical" diasporas such as the Jewish and Armenian diasporas. A diaspora, like other social facts, is an essentially contested concept (Sartori 1984; Searle 1996; Collier, Hildago, and Maciuceanu 2006; Goertz 2006). Reifying diasporas mirrors the problems of essentialism that has plagued the study of nations or ethnic groups (Adamson 2012). Diasporas are corporate agents that need to be "produced" before they can "act" — in this sense, diasporas can be studied as dependent variables and outcomes, as much as independent variables or causes (Lyons and Mandaville 2010; Adamson 2012). So, to take an example, just as diasporas can impact on the course of violent conflict, violent conflict can be a factor in the *formation* of diaspora politics, via forced migration, ethnic cleansing, population expulsions, and refugee flows, often feeding into "transnational cycles of political violence" (Zolberg 1983; Van Hear 1998, 2009; Adamson 2004; Lyons 2007).

Governmentality perspectives can be useful in seeing how the *category of diaspora* produces the populations that are then subsequently conceptualized as diasporas (Dufoix 2008; Ragazzi 2009). The "diaspora" is better understood as a field of competing stances or a category of practice than as a pre-given actor (Brubaker 1996, 2005). Diaspora politics can be defined as a form of transnational political engagement that is structured around a particularistic identity category (such as a

national, ethnic, religious, or sectarian identity) and a real or mythical “homeland” and can thus be actively constructed by political entrepreneurs (Adamson 2012). A wide variety of actors can thus deploy the category of “diaspora” for political purposes, ranging from diasporic elites and political entrepreneurs, “home states,” “host states,” international organizations, religious actors, state bureaucracies and development agencies, and NGOs (Brinkerhoff 2008; Ragazzi 2014). Diaspora mobilization can equally be undertaken by state actors to reinforce state interests and engage in nation-building, or by oppositional groups and non-state actors as a means of challenging and disrupting hegemonic constructs of national identity (Adamson and Demetriou 2007).

Diaspora-Shaping and Diaspora-Generating: The Constitutive Role of Sending States

While it is tempting to bypass the conceptual issues regarding what constitutes a diaspora, I wish to argue instead that the conceptual confusion is actually key to building a bridge between the literatures on diasporas as “actors” and diasporas as “objects” of state policy. Both literatures, I argue, rely on a statist ontology, informed by a “triadic model” of diaspora politics. The “triadic model” focuses on diaspora politics as taking place in the context of the relationship among a so-called “home state,” “host state,” and “diaspora.” “Host state” refers to the country of settlement or the migration-receiving state, “home state” refers to the perceived state of origin, whether real or imagined, and the “diaspora” is conceived of as either a transnational ethnic group or as a political field of competing identity-based stances that stretches across the “home” and “host” states (Sheffer 1986, 2006; Brubaker 1996).

Thus, for example, the literature on diaspora and violent conflicts examines how a conflict from the “home state” can become transnationalized or spill over into the “host state” via diaspora politics. Alternatively, diaspora politics can be viewed as creating a “fifth column” or inspiring “dual loyalties” via activities that prioritize the interests of the “home state” over the “host state,” such as by lobbying or other activities (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007). Or, diaspora politics in the “host state” can affect the course of conflict in the “home state,” via financial support or lobbying, as noted in the civil war literature above (Collier and Hoeffler 2000, 2004). The triadic model of diaspora politics is implicitly or explicitly about the disruption or complication of homogenous nation-state spaces — even if the nation-state still provides the basic frame. Nevertheless, the model continues to reify states (and, often, “diasporas”) as “actors” and does not go far enough in understanding the emergence of different forms of corporate agency and identity.

“Diasporas” in some senses can only exist in relation to national imaginaries and statist ontologies. They are simultaneously the nation-state’s other (in terms of organizational form), but at the same time they epitomize the dominance of the animating ideology of nationalism, as their logic depends almost entirely on a

coherent national imaginary.⁶ The transnational and dispersed form of diaspora as an identity construction still relies on a form of “methodological nationalism” that reproduces and naturalizes national discourses, identities, and ontologies (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 2003). “Diasporas” can thus not be understood apart from larger processes of nation-building (Brubaker 1996; Mylonas 2012, 2013). Mylonas highlights the conceptual ambiguity of defining diasporas faced by state policy-makers in his study of diaspora management policies. Diasporas can include a mixture of “citizens” or “co-ethnics.” Citizens refers to a more civic definition of expatriates, emigrants, or those who hold citizenship and have moved abroad, whereas co-ethnics refers to heritage and can include multiple generations — thus mirroring distinctions between civic and ethnic or *jus solis* and *jus sanguinis* citizenship policies (Brubaker 1992). Defining *who* constitutes the diaspora is as much a policy question for “sending states” as the various institutional, administrative, and legal modalities with which diaspora-building, diaspora engagement, or diaspora integration takes place. In this respect, sending state policies toward emigrants are mirror images of nation-state policies toward migrants (Torpey 1998; Triadafilopoulos 2004; Zolberg 2008; Klotz 2013; FitzGerald and Cook-Martin 2014) as they are ultimately about inclusion and exclusion, and defining who is inside and outside the polity.

Having discussed the divide in the literature between diasporas as actors and diasporas as objects of state policy, as well as some of the conceptual challenges in defining what constitutes a diaspora, I now turn to the case of Turkey’s diaspora(s) in Europe as a means of fleshing out and illustrating the argument.

Sending State Policies and Their Discontents: Turkey’s Diaspora(s) in Europe

Turkey, like many other states around the world, has become increasingly interested in “its” diaspora (Mügge 2012; Ünver 2013; Aksel 2014; Aydin 2014; Öktem 2014). What that diaspora constitutes, and how it is to be engaged, however, are questions that are intimately tied up with larger questions regarding Turkey’s identity and its role in the world. Turkey has long had official connections with communities of citizens living in Europe, especially in Germany (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003a,b,c). Yet it has only recently begun to use the term “diaspora” and to conceptualize diaspora engagement policies as a way of enhancing its soft power.⁷ In this section

⁶Religious identity can also play an important role in diasporic formations, although this is usually a politicized form of religion, resulting in the emergence of a religio-political diaspora. For a useful discussion on the intersection of religion and diaspora, see Vertovec (2004b). The author thanks an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

⁷Until recently, the term “diaspora” was largely used in Turkey in the context of transnational Armenian and Greek organizations and had a negative connotation. See discussions in Aksel

of the article, I place current “diaspora engagement” policies — namely the establishment in 2010 of the Office for the Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) — in their historical context by providing a brief overview of how the policies of Turkey have historically both generated and engaged “its” diaspora(s) before then turning to a discussion of contemporary trends in Turkish diaspora engagement.

Post-Ottoman Nation-Building

A first wave of “diaspora formation” activities can be traced back historically to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the period of post-Ottoman nation-building. Brubaker (1996) has argued that diasporas can be formed by two processes — people crossing borders and borders crossing peoples.⁸ The first half of the twentieth century saw both of these processes occurring in the area of contemporary Turkey, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire leading to the establishment of new state boundaries which divided populations that shared religious or linguistic affinities. It would be hard to speak of “diasporas” as such during this period, however, as identities were much more fluid, with individuals holding multiple religious, linguistic, and ethnic identities that only became reified with the insertion of nationalist discourses into the old imperial framework (Mylonas 2012).

In terms of “people crossing borders,” the Armenian expulsions or genocide, the Greek population exchanges of 1923, and the exodus of Assyrian Christians during the same time period all created “diaspora” groups, although both the Armenians and Greeks saw the creation of titular nation-states outside of Anatolia. In terms of “borders crossing peoples,” this created islands of “beached” or “accidental” Muslim/Turkish diaspora populations in modern-day Bulgaria, Greece, the Balkans, and Northern Iraq and Syria, as well as a Kurdish “diaspora” that stretched across Turkey and the former Ottoman provinces of Iraq and Syria.

The period of Turkish nation-building under a secular Kemalist ideology between 1923 and 1950 saw a simultaneous attempt to homogenize an identity within the territorial borders of the newly created Turkish state, as well as a general rejection of irredentism or pan-Turkism (which had been an important political ideology in the late Ottoman period). Thus, it was argued that “the folk which constitute the Republic of Turkey constitute the Nation.”⁹ This period of closure, defined by a statist

(2014) and Öktem (2014), as well as Gökhan Dukman, “The Possible Limits of the Turkish Diaspora,” *Daily Sabah*, April 13, 2015, <http://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2015/04/14/the-possible-limits-of-the-turkish-diaspora>.

⁸There is helpful discussion of this in Aksel (2014). See also Brubaker (2000), Laitin (1998), and Waterbury (2010).

⁹Nevertheless, there were some overtures toward Muslim minorities who had been “stranded” outside of Turkey with the end of the Ottoman Empire. The 1934 Law on Settlement, for

period of nation-building and reinforced by the geopolitical constraints and realities of the Cold War, included a state-driven economic model which laid the foundations for developments that were to eventually give rise to the emergence of a new type of diaspora via labor migration to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, and political exile in the 1980s.

1960s and 1970s Labor Migration between Turkey and Europe

Whereas the end of the Ottoman Empire and early Turkish nation-building generated Armenian and Greek diasporas with historical ties to the territory of modern Turkey, the existence of communities of Turkish citizens and their descendants in Germany and other Western European countries has its origins in state policies of both the sending and receiving states of the time. There was a coincidence between the need of states such as Turkey to export labor to relieve unemployment and the need for labor in Europe that emerged during the postwar economic boom period of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The German guest worker (*gastarbeiter*) system of migration “was devised and operated during a period of virtually full employment characterized by around 0.5 percent unemployment rate” (Bhagwati, Schatz, and Wong 1984, 278). Following the end of World War II, there was a shortage of labor throughout Western Europe. For countries experiencing decolonization, this shortage was filled in part by “repatriates.” In the case of Germany, however, the labor shortage was filled initially primarily by refugees from Eastern Europe. By 1950, nine million refugees had crossed over from the German Democratic Republic (Kindleberger 1967, 30–31). However, this labor supply was cut off with the building of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the iron curtain over Eastern Europe.

Turkey, like other Mediterranean countries, began to send migrant labor to Germany and other states in Western Europe. In July 1960, representatives of German employers established a recruitment bureau in Istanbul in order to channel workers to West Germany. A bilateral agreement between Germany and Turkey was signed on October 30, 1961, which made the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* (BfA) responsible for setting up recruiting agencies in Turkey. The government recruiting office was responsible for linking German employers with potential labor recruits in Turkey. The bilateral agreement created an official framework for workers’ migration and outlined such issues as levels of migration, benefits to workers, responsibilities of sending and receiving country, and so forth, and was revised in 1964 (Akgündüz 1993, 155). In 1961, there were approximately 7,000 Turkish citizens living in Germany (Leggewie 1996, 81). In the period between 1968 and 1972, 500 to 600 German recruitment offices operated throughout the Mediterranean region (Rist

example, was amended to provide a special refugee and immigrant status to groups such as Muslim Bosnians, Albanians, Circassians, and Tatars (Aksel 2014, 207).

1979, 412). In 1969, 80.8 percent of Turkish migration to Germany went through the official recruitment system (Castles and Kosack 1985, 41–42).

During the same period, the 1960s and 1970s, Turkey's state interests and official migration policies also had an impact on the expansion of a migratory flow from Turkey to Germany. Turkish policymakers sought to use labor emigration as a means of fulfilling several policy objectives, including the reduction of unemployment, the alleviation of some of the infrastructural strain resulting from internal rural to urban migration, and the increase of foreign exchange reserves through remittances. As Keyder and Aksu-Koç (1988, 7–10) note, the state-driven economic policy of import substitution industrialization (ISI) which Turkey pursued during this period provided an incentive for labor exports, because it created domestic unemployment by focusing on technology as opposed to labor, while producing goods only for an internal market, not for external trade, and therefore did not create sources of foreign revenue. At the same time, domestic industrialization created a “geographical and social unevenness” in society, as centers of urban industrialization grew at the expense of impoverished peripheral areas, which were relegated to merely providing pools of labor in the face of declining agricultural production.

While Turkey's economy was growing at an average annual rate of 3.6 percent between 1960 and 1978, per capita income, even by 1980, was still only \$850, well below that of other Mediterranean states, such as Spain, Greece, or Portugal. The combination of a high rate of population growth (from 20.9 million in 1950 to 45.2 million in 1980) and a rapid mechanization of agriculture created a tremendous burden on the Turkish labor market. From 1950 to 1975, between 7 to 9 million people migrated within Turkey from rural to urban areas (Sayari 1986, 90). Given that most Turkish citizens involved in the first wave of migration from Turkey were skilled artisans and members of the petite bourgeoisie in rural and urban areas who were seeking to escape proletarianization, migration policies were viewed as a safety valve for easing discontent (Akgündüz 1993, 171). Through migration, Turkey would be able to export workers, and ease domestic unemployment and the infrastructural demands on rapidly expanding urban centers. Turkey therefore strategically signed migration agreements not only with Germany, but also with Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Sweden, and Switzerland, although the vast majority of migrant labor flows were to be directed to Germany. Bahadır (1979, 105) argues that Turkey deliberately entered into as many labor agreements as possible in order to fall “back on other countries if one showed signs of saturation and diminished absorption ability.”

The desire to attract foreign remittances in order to cope with a foreign exchange crisis was an additional component of Turkey's migration policies. By the early 1970s, remittances represented 70 percent of Turkey's foreign currency earnings, 84 percent of export earnings, and 5 percent of the gross national product (Sayari 1986, 92–93). Workers' remittances continued to be a primary source of foreign exchange up through the 1980s, at which time Turkey switched to an export-led growth strategy. Turkey's Second Five Year Development Plan, 1968–1972, explicitly noted the importance of workers' remittances to the Turkish economy and included

measures to increase them. Official figures for annual workers' remittances ranged from between \$1 billion and \$2 billion annually between 1973 and 1986. The amount of unofficial transfers is likely to have been substantially higher. Between 1973 and 1975, official labor remittances equaled between 93.7 and 99.8 percent of exports in Turkey (Richards and Waterbury 1990, 390–91).

As part of state policy, Turkey attempted to channel the flow of remittances through official channels, such as state banks. However, the official figures only represent a tiny fraction of the actual financial transfers that occur between migration-receiving and migration-sending countries. Most transfers occur through informal and unofficial channels (Choucri 1986; Richards and Waterbury 1990, 389). Worker remittances in the form of foreign currency or consumer goods were important in driving much of the underground economy of Turkey and other countries. In the late 1970s, unofficial worker remittances helped to pay for about \$1.5 billion worth of smuggled imports. "Much of these consisted of badly needed equipment and primary inputs, without which Turkish industry would have probably collapsed" (Hale 1981, 232). In addition to the desire to ease unemployment and urban migration, and attract remittances, Turkish migration policy was also motivated by the hope that rural migrant workers would return home with useful skills and training and that returning migrants would make investments in their local communities upon their reentry into the country. As migrants began to return to Turkey with consumer goods from Europe, migration became a desirable alternative to many segments of the population. The Turkish government faced domestic pressures to expand its migration policies, and in the process, "the demand for getting on the official lists for worker recruitment emerged as a new and important source of patronage" (Sayari 1986, 92–93).

Following the oil crisis and a rise in unemployment in Germany, official recruitment of non-EEC foreign workers was put to a halt by Germany in November 1973. However, contrary to German expectations, the Turkish migrant community did not decrease in number after the change in recruitment policies. While there was an initial drop in the number of workers, the total number of Turkish immigrants increased. The years following 1973 brought a change in the type of migration to Germany. No longer recruiting workers, migration now took the forms of family reunification, politically motivated migration, such as asylum seekers — particularly in the years following the military coup in Turkey in September 1980 — illegal migration, and a small amount of legal migration of specialized persons (including Turkish state employees such as government teachers or religious personnel) (Akgündüz 1993). Indeed, the early 1980s were defined by the institutionalization of state engagement policies with its diaspora in Europe, which included the establishment of the Turkish Islamic Union of the State Office of Religious Affairs (DITIB) in Cologne Germany, which was organized under Turkey's Ministry of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) and which sent imams and other religious figures to Germany.¹⁰ This supplemented the Turkish consular

¹⁰However, Turkey had been sending imams to Germany since 1971 (Aksel 2014, 202).

functions, which had been the main source of Turkish engagement in Turkey by providing legal and administrative services to its citizens, such as registering births, marriages, and deaths and providing advice on pensions (Aydin 2014). Turkey also for the first time passed a law allowing dual citizenship in Turkey in 1981 and included Turkish citizens abroad within the constitution in 1982, as well as establishing the Higher Coordination Council for Workers, which included the Social Affairs and Economic Affairs Committees, which were designed to foster the attachments of citizens abroad to Turkey (Aksel 2014, 203–204).¹¹

1980s and 1990s State Repression, Political Exile, and Kurdish Separatism

A new wave of “diaspora formation” occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. In contrast to the 1960s and 1970s, in which labor migration was driven by Turkish economic policies of ISI, it was the political dynamics in Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s which created new forms of politically motivated migration. This interacted with earlier waves of economic migration, which had created existing networks in Europe, as well as with changes in Europe’s migration policy which increasingly restricted economic migration, making the option of seeking political asylum one of the few channels open for new migrants.

In Turkey, the country experienced increasing political instability and state repression in the late 1970s, which culminated in a military coup in 1980. During that period, there were a number of leftist movements and organizations that faced severe repression, one of which was the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), which was founded by Abdullah Öcalan in 1978. The PKK began to agitate among Kurdish areas of southeastern Turkey in the late 1970s. Bruinessen argues that the emergence of a radical Kurdish movement in southeastern Anatolia grew in part out of the process of rural to urban migration within Turkey, in which, as part of the general trend of urbanization and modernization of the agricultural sector during the period, Kurdish migration to urban areas in Turkey made populations in southeastern Anatolia more politically aware of the economic and infrastructural disparities which existed between the southeast and the rest of the country (Bruinessen 1984, 8–9). During the late 1970s, as Turkey descended into a state of internal anarchy characterized by violent clashes between the extreme left and right, the PKK began to attack targets and established a presence in Kurdish areas of Turkey.

When the Turkish military stepped in to restore domestic order to Turkey in September 1980, the PKK, along with all other left-wing organizations and trade unions in Turkey at the time, was severely repressed. In the wake of the 1980

¹¹ Article 62 reads: “The government takes measures to ensure family unity of the Turkish citizens working in foreign countries, to educate their children, to meet their cultural needs and to provide social security, to protect their link to the motherland, and to facilitate their coming back” (see Aksel 2014, 203).

military coup, the government banned a number of political parties, and over 20,000 leftists were arrested around the country, including approximately 3,000 Kurdish activists accused of promoting separatism. During the period, a group of Kurdish intellectuals, activists, and militants had arrived in Western Europe as part of the tens of thousands of political exiles who fled Turkey for political reasons following the 1980 military coup. It was members of this group who began to organize a Kurdish nationalist movement in Western Europe and establish a European branch of the PKK's political wing, the ERNK, in a number of European states. In addition, Kurdish activists set out to mobilize and politicize segments of the "Turkish" immigrant communities in Europe, which had been established as a result of the migration patterns that had emerged during the 1960s and 1970s.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the number of Turkish citizens seeking political asylum in Germany ranged from almost 58,000 in 1980 (the year of the military coup) to between 20,000 and 24,000 per year in the late 1980s and early 1990s (corresponding with the most intense period of the Kurdish conflict) (Faist 2000b, 83). Across all of Western Europe, almost 350,000 Turkish citizens applied for political asylum in various European countries between 1983 and 1994 (Faist 2000a,b, 93). Throughout the period, the number of foreigners seeking admittance to Germany under its asylum policies rose by almost 8,000 percent. In 1992 alone, almost 450,000 people sought political asylum status — this included refugees from the Balkans as well as Turkey (Gibney 1993). Thus, economic push and pull factors were transformed, to some extent, into a new set of political push and pull factors. These built upon earlier migration patterns and flows, as refugees and political asylum seekers from Turkey drew upon the networks which had been forged by previous economic migrants, and made their way to Germany, continuing an established pattern of chain migration.

During this period a distinctively Kurdish diaspora identity and nationalist movement emerged in Europe. Kurdish political exiles from Turkey set up a "diaspora engagement policy" that was managed largely via the PKK and linked to the ongoing military conflict in southeastern Turkey. In 1982, the new constitution of Turkey strictly prohibited the use of the Kurdish language, Kurdish publications, the establishment of Kurdish political parties, or other expressions of Kurdish identity. Expressions of Kurdish ethnicity were criminalized. Europe provided a space in which Kurdish intellectuals and activists could escape the repression of the Turkish state and work to codify and standardize a Kurdish language and culture by drawing on the opportunity structures that were available within Western European states, particularly Germany and Sweden. The 1990s thus saw a period of intense Kurdish activism in response to the shutting down of the political space in Turkey, which continued until the arrest of the PKK leader Öcalan in 1999 and the admittance of Turkey as an official EU candidate in the same year, which stimulated a period of political liberalization related to the EU *acquis* process.

At the same time, Turkey was also further institutionalizing its interaction with Turkish emigrants, moving beyond the provision of social, religious, and educational services to a more comprehensive approach that began to focus on fostering

transnational ties with Turkish citizens abroad who were increasingly integrating into European states and societies (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003c; Kaya 2011). Elsewhere, the end of the Cold War had reopened the question of Turkic and Muslim identity, with Turkey emphasizing a shared kinship with Muslim and Turkic groups in the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, China, and the Middle East.¹²

2001–2015: Turkey’s Diaspora(s) and the Emergence of the “New Diaspora Policy”

The late 1990s and early 2000s saw a convergence of events that were to lead to shifts in both Turkish domestic politics and Turkey’s diaspora(s). In addition to the arrest of Öcalan and the beginning of EU accession negotiations and a series of internal domestic reforms, the period saw a change in the geopolitical environment with the attacks of 9/11, the subsequent Global War on Terror and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the emergence of Islam and religion as issues front and center on the world stage, and the rise of the religiously oriented Justice and Development Party (AKP) within Turkish domestic politics. This was accompanied by a growth in religiosity in parts of Turkey’s diaspora in Europe. The transformation in identity is reflected in the academic literature on Europe’s Turkish population: whereas in 1996 the sociologist Claus Leggewie published a piece titled “How Germany’s Turks became Kurds,” by 2009 the sociologist Gökçe Yurdakul had produced the book *From Guest Workers into Muslims*.

Religious politics came to the fore during this period, and the top-down state-driven policies of the AKP combined with the emergence of a more vibrant civil society in which religious expression and religious organizations became more prominent. Thus, groups such as the Fethullah Gülen *Hizmet* movement, which had been active in Turkey and elsewhere in the 1990s; more fundamentalist groups such as *Milli Görüş* in Germany; and minority religious movements, such as the more progressive Alevis, all had an opening to increase their prominence in both Turkey and the diaspora, after having built up their capacity in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Turkish state moves to engage its diaspora(s) during this period went hand in hand with a number of other political developments in Turkey, including the emergence of a more expansive Turkish foreign policy, a reconstruction and re-imagining of Turkish national identity to include its Ottoman heritage (so-called neo-Ottomanism), and a political liberalization in Turkey related in part to the EU accession process, as well as a simultaneous process of pluralization and Islamicization. Like other states, Turkey increasingly turned to “its” diaspora as potential

¹²For example, Turkey established the Turkish International Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), which attempted to establish ties with Turkic populations in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere, including providing education in Turkish (Aksel 2014, 207).

source of soft power and influence. Previously viewed as “guest workers,” “Turks abroad,” “Euroturks,” or *almancilar* (Turkish word for Germans) (Kaya and Kentel 2005; Abadan-Unat 2011), the population in Europe, which was a legacy of previous Turkish state domestic policies of post-imperial nation-building, economic development, and domestic political repression and marginalization, was now being courted as a desirable constituency to enhance Turkish state power.

Turkey’s “diaspora management policy” reached a new stage with the setting up of a formal Office for the Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) in April of 2010. The name itself reflects the ambiguities of defining the diaspora and was meant to include Turkish citizens, students, and through the term “related communities” those who could be associated with Turkey via ethnicity or through historical ties. The aim is to define the diaspora as broadly as possible, with Foreign Minister Davutoglu arguing in 2011:

Every individual who originated from Anatolia belongs to the Turkish diaspora . . . “regardless of religion and ethnicity. This also included Armenians and Greeks, who the Turkish government would approach in order to ‘win their hearts’. We will talk to every Armenian and member of the Orthodox church who has emigrated from Turkey. We will talk about our glorious shared past. (Aydin 2014, 14)

In many respects, the office brought together streams of previous policies that were aimed at both Turkish citizens abroad (largely in Europe) and Turkish “ethnic kin” living in the Balkans or Former Soviet Union. As of 2014, the office employed approximately 120 people and had three sections that reflected its different target constituencies: a department for Turkish citizens living abroad, a department for cultural and social relations geared to “co-ethnics” and related communities, and a department for scholarships awarded to students from developing countries to fund an education in Turkey. An analysis of its publications has shown that the focus of the office has been largely on Western Europe, followed by the Balkans, the United States, and Canada — although there are also stories and programs on Africa, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.¹³ In the Office’s journal, there was a predominance of articles about discrimination in Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and stories of integration and adoption of Turkish children (Öktem 2014, 13–16).

At the same time that the state was drawing on its imperial past as a way of projecting a more expansive national identity both at home and abroad, it also drew on its identity as a majority Muslim country as a source of soft power. This was reflected as well in its diaspora policy, in which the state at times positioned itself as the protector of Turks in Europe, standing up for their interests in the face of discrimination or anti-Muslim sentiment in European states. This echoed the way

¹³ See Mylonas (2012) for a discussion of variations in state diaspora engagement policies based on where segments of the diaspora are located countries of residence.

in which Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu positioned Israel vis-à-vis Europe's Jewish population following the Paris attacks in January 2015.¹⁴ These policies were accompanied by a harnessing of Turkey's *Diyanet* or Ministry of Religious Affairs as a more prominent tool for projecting Turkish soft power internationally, including the building of a \$100 million mosque in Maryland, United States, as a place of worship for both diaspora Turks and other US-based Muslims.¹⁵ This use of Islamic identity as a form of soft power has been married with an explicit attempt to leverage the diaspora as a tool of state economic and lobbying power — to make (in the words of a member of the TYB Advisory Committee) “the Turkish diaspora among the most influential diasporas in the world.”¹⁶

Turkey's “New Diaspora Policy” was closely linked to its new assertive foreign policy and attempts to exercise increased geopolitical influence in the world (İçduygu and Aksel 2013, 183). However, as with the challenges the government came up against in its “zero problems with neighbors” foreign policy, Turkey's diaspora policy suffered from similar contradictions. Although it had an expansive rhetoric of inclusion in the neo-Ottoman language it uses, this was accompanied by a more narrow nationalist interpretation in much of the language used in the materials it published and the practices it encouraged (Öktem 2014). For example, while there have been overtures toward Armenians abroad which resulted in an increased level of return tourism and a re-discovery of Armenian identity in Turkey, this has also been accompanied by Turkey's resistance to recognizing a genocide, which has extended to attempts to engage “its diaspora” in activities such as demonstrations and lobbying against Armenian Genocide resolutions abroad (Ünver 2013, 182).

An expansive approach to “diaspora engagement” accompanied by a tight state control of content may in and of itself feed into ongoing “intra-diasporic politics” by fostering continuing political conflicts about the nature of national identity. It may even contribute to contemporary “diaspora-generating” processes via exclusionary political practices. An example of this is the targeting and repression by the ruling AK party of the *Hizmet* movement associated with exiled Islamic cleric Fethullah Gülen, which began in 2014 and accelerated after the failed 2016 coup, which President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan publicly blamed on Gülen and his followers. Ongoing internal repression of the movement within Turkey accompanied by a significant transnational presence around the world create conditions which might be ripe for members of the *Hizmet* movement to form an alternative counter-

¹⁴Tovah Lazaroff, “Netanyahu to French, European Jews after Paris Attacks: Israel Is Your Home,” *Jerusalem Post*, January 1, 2015, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Netanyahu-to-French-European-Jews-after-Paris-attacks-Israel-is-your-home-387309>.

¹⁵David Lepasca, “Turkey Casts the Diyanet: Ankara's Religious Directorate Takes Off,” *Foreign Affairs*, May 17, 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2015-05-17/turkey-casts-diyamet>.

¹⁶Cited in Aksel (2014, 205).

hegemonic “diasporic identity” which could resemble Turkey’s other marginalized “diasporas” — for example, the Alevis, Kurds, Assyrians, and others.

Finally, attempts to project an expansionist form of nationalism abroad also have the potential to ruffle the feathers of some of the states in which the “Turkish diaspora” reside. This has already been the case in Germany where Turkish state activities are viewed in some quarters as contradicting Germany’s efforts at promoting integration — a view that has not been helped by incidents such as Erdoğan’s 2008 speech in Cologne in which he argued that Turkey was against migrant “assimilation” and that it supported tying (former) nationals and their descendants to Turkey (Mügge 2013, 20). Indeed, the 2017 Constitutional Referendum was marked by a diplomatic crisis between Turkey and Europe over the issue of holding rallies in Germany and the Netherlands.¹⁷ Turkey has also been vocal about religious discrimination and anti-Muslim sentiment in Europe to the extent that it has periodically promoted itself as the protector of Turkish and/or Muslim communities in Europe — an approach that could be viewed as interventionist and undermining European states’ interests in institutionalizing Islam in Europe (Laurence 2012).

Conclusions

The recent move by the Turkish state to establish more formal diaspora engagement policies needs to be understood within a broader historical context. Turkish state policies of previous eras not only shaped the current politics and contours of “Turkey’s diaspora” in Europe, but also contributed to the formation of multiple diasporas. Earlier state policies of exclusionary forms of nation-building created, in effect, multiple competing diasporas tied to Turkey. Colloquial discussions of diasporas and academic studies on the matter reflect this, with separate literatures on “Turkish,” “Armenian,” “Kurdish,” “Assyrian,” “Alevi,” and “Muslim” diasporas in Europe — all of which may refer to populations that are connected with Anatolia, or modern Turkey, as their original or mythical “homeland.” Indeed, many individuals could be considered to be members of multiple diasporas connected to Turkey — for example, by holding Turkish citizenship, identifying as ethnically Kurdish, and at the same time identifying as a devout Muslim.

Much of the “intra-diasporic” (or, depending on definition, inter-diasporic) competition that one finds in populations originating from Anatolia or modern-day Turkey reflects this history. Conflict and rivalry between Turkish nationalist and Kurdish nationalist groups, often composed of individuals who, on both sides, hold Turkish citizenship; disagreements between Turkish and Armenian diaspora

¹⁷ Samuel Osborne, “Turkey Threatens Ending EU Refugee Deal after Diplomatic Crisis with Germany and the Netherlands,” *The Independent*, March 16, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkey-eu-refugee-deal-end-germany-netherlands-dutch-diplomatic-crisis-recep-tayyip-erdogan-a7633526.html>.

members over how to interpret and understand the events of 1915; and debates between Alevis and Sunni Muslims in Europe regarding the content of religious instruction lessons in state schools — all of these reflect the intra-diasporic politics of Turkey's diaspora(s) in Europe. Such intra-diasporic politics represent to some extent the globalization and transnationalization of Turkey's domestic politics, internal identity debates, and political cleavages — and their insertion into the contexts of Western European states. Each of these groups also lobbies in Europe for its own identity-based interests, and engages in transnational activities that in turn impact the “homeland,” that is, Turkey (Baser 2015). The ambiguity of whether such rivalries are inter- or intra-diasporic politics points to the very ambiguity of the concept of diaspora and its boundaries.

Moreover, the case of Turkey shows the importance of nationalism and identity politics in shaping both a state's current approach to “diaspora engagement” policies — but also how its past approaches to state- and nation-building have produced the diasporas that exist to be engaged. This is an important element that some of the more policy-oriented literature on diaspora engagement has underappreciated. In the case of Turkey, the fact that remittances have decreased in importance over the past decades and that there is little evidence of learning or diffusion of diaspora engagement policies occurring via international organizations and consultants means that the importance of diaspora engagement as a geopolitical strategy of nation-building and power enhancement needs to be considered (Mügge 2012; Ragazzi 2014; Tsourapas 2016).

While this article has focused on Turkey and its diaspora(s), the general framework can be applied more broadly. Examining the nation-building trajectories of countries such as India and China sheds light on their current diasporic configurations (Van Dongen 2017). China's intra-diasporic politics include Tibetan and Uyghur mobilizations, in addition to Han Chinese, and India's intra-diasporic politics include Sikh, Tamil, and Muslim diasporas, in addition to Hindu nationalist. Egypt's diasporic politics are a mix of secular, Muslim, and Coptic (Yefet 2017). Similarly, the diaspora politics of Iran is marked by multiple and competing stances, including contestations between devout Shi'a and secular forms of “non-Islamiosity” (Gholami 2014). Contested forms of intra-diasporic politics are widespread, and in order to be understood, they need to be linked to historical trajectories of nation-building and the domestic policies of the “homeland.”

I have argued here that two aspects of diaspora politics — engagement with the homeland by diaspora groups and engagement with diasporas by sending states — need to be seen as deeply intertwined. Whether a sending state has an official diaspora engagement policy or not, their domestic policies are key to understanding not simply the *politics* of diasporas, but also the very *formation* and *generation* of what later come to be understood as diasporas by state actors. In the case of Turkey, state policies of nation-building in the first part of the twentieth century, ISI in the 1960s and 1970s, state repression in the 1980s and 1990s, and economic liberalization and pluralization in the 2000s are all key to understanding the formation of Turkey's diaspora(s).

By providing a brief survey of the evolution of Turkey's diaspora(s) in the context of Turkish state policies over time, this article demonstrates the benefits of a historically contextualized approach to the study of diaspora politics. Moving beyond actor-based models of diaspora politics helps in understanding the extent to which diaspora politics and state diaspora policies are historically co-constituted, with both "homeland politics" and "diaspora engagement policies" part and parcel of larger processes of state- and nation-building. Using such a framework opens up possibilities for engaging in a deeper theorization about the relationship between identity categories and political action. In so doing, it also sheds light on the conceptual puzzle of what constitutes a diaspora.

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