SPECIAL ISSUE: Turkey's Diaspora Governance Policies from the Past to the Present –

GUEST EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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Diasporas have become a topic of academic and political discussion and interest since 2000. Until recently, most diaspora research has focused on the ways the states in the Global North "receive" outsiders but has devoted limited scrutiny to the role of sending states in shaping opportunity structures abroad.[1] The recently growing literature on diaspora politics draw our attention to the rise of state-led diaspora engagement initiatives which aim at cultivating, (re)building, (re)shaping and (de/re)mobilizing diasporas. Currently, more than one hundred states have established forms of diaspora engagement policies and institutions, with a variety of motivations.[2] Scholars try to understand the development of diaspora-engagement policies cultivated by political actors in the homeland from various disciplines including international relations, political science and sociology.[3] How these policies are cultivated and transformed

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[1] Bahar Baser & Ahmet Erdi Ozturk (2020) Positive and negative diaspora governance in context: From public diplomacy to transnational authoritarianism, *Middle East Critique*, 29(3), pp. 319-334.

[2] Alan Gamlen, Chris Kutarna & Ashby (2019) Citizenship as sovereign wealth: Re-thinking investor immigration, *Global Policy*, 10(4), pp. 527-541.

[3] Rainer Bauböck (2003) Towards a political theory of migrant transnationalism, *International Migration Review*, 37(3), pp. 700-723; Fiona B. Adamson (2006) Crossing borders: International migration and national security, *International security*, 31(1), pp. 165-199; Alan Gamlen (2006) Diaspora engagement policies: What

through time[4] and their multi-tiered nature[5] are of interest to those who try to understand the politics of diaspora governance. What political and ideological motivations drive home states to develop diaspora governance policies? Are home states after financial gains when it comes to engaging with their diasporas? How do they form structures to promote diaspora diplomacy? While there is an emerging literature that tries to unpack the triadic relationship among home and host states and diasporas, there is still so much to discover in terms of how state sovereignty, nation-building and citizenship come into play in the transnational space in the light of the ever-changing dynamics in a globalised world.[6]

This special issue is the outcome of a one-day workshop, "Turkey's Diaspora Governance Policies from the Past to the Present," held on 21 May 2021 and sponsored by the Centre for Peace, Trust and Social Relations at Coventry University, London Metropolitan University, and the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA). The workshop brought together prominent scholars in the field who have been working on Turkish migration for decades as well as early career academics who are focusing on the most contemporary issues. The special issue aims to contribute to the theoretical debates in transnationalism and diaspora studies by offering an in-depth understanding of a case study that addresses a variety of issues surrounding diaspora politics. Turkey as a case study is interesting to examine for several reasons. First, Turkey has been a migrant-sending country since mid-1960s, and it has sizeable diaspora(s) all over the globe, although concentrated in

are they and what kinds of states use them?, *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society Working Paper Series*, 32. Available online at https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP-2006-032-Gamlen_Diaspora_Engagement_Policies.pdf, accessed 1 January 2022; Hein De Haas (2007) North African migration systems: Evolution, transformations and development linkages, *International Migration Institute Working Paper Series*, 6. Available online at https://www.migrationinstitute.org/publications/wp-06-07, accessed 3 February 2022; Latha Varadarajan (2010) *The domestic abroad: Diasporas in international relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); Liza Mügge (2013) Ideologies of nationhood in sending-state transnationalism: Comparing Surinam and Turkey. *Ethnicities*, 13(3), pp. 338-358; Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff (2005) Digital diasporas and governance in semi-authoritarian states: the case of the Egyptian Copts, *Public Administration and Development*, 25(3), pp. 193-204; Gerasimos Tsourapas (2020) Theorizing state-diaspora relations in the Middle East: Authoritarian emigration states in comparative perspective, *Mediterranean Politics*, 25(2), pp. 135-159; Dana Moss (2016) Transnational repression, diaspora mobilization, and the case of the Arab Spring, *Social Problems*, 63(4), pp. 480-498.

[4] Zeynep S. Mencutek & Bahar Baser (2018) Mobilizing diasporas: Insights from Turkey's attempts to reach Turkish citizens abroad, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 20(1), pp.86-105.

[5] Luicy Pedroza & Pau Palop-García (2017) Diaspora policies in comparison: An application of the Emigrant Policies Index (EMIX) for the Latin American and Caribbean region, *Political Geography*, 60, pp.165-178.

[6] Bahar Baser & Élise Féron (2022) Host state reactions to home state diaspora engagement policies: Rethinking state sovereignty and limits of diaspora governance, *Global Networks*, 22(2), pp. 226-241.

Europe (and especially in Germany). Turkey-originated communities abroad are highly heterogenous and they become ever larger with each new wave of migration. Secondly, Turkey has developed a proactive diaspora engagement policy during the last decade that has been unprecedented in the country's political history despite emigration being an on-going process for many decades.[7] This new institutionalized way of engaging with its diaspora has gained significant attention at home and abroad. Thirdly, a new wave of migration has been in the making since the Gezi protests due to democratic decline in Turkey, and this migration indicates that the diaspora will keep growing and become increasingly more heterogenous in the future. Fourthly, Turkey's diaspora engagement policy is not static but multi-layered, as it applies diaspora diplomacy initiatives in tandem with transnational repression where and when necessary.[8] The repertoires of diaspora governance can swing between positive and negative engagement depending on the context (place, scale, space and time).[9]

Turkey has one of the largest diasporas in Europe, which occurred as a result of several migration waves starting in the 1960s. The Turkish diaspora started with the "guest workers" who came to Europe as temporary workers. Temporary contracts then turned into permanent settlement and the number of "Turks abroad" has kept increasing due to family reunification and the arrival of the second and third generations. Other significant waves of migration followed, especially after political turmoil in the country such as military coups and the low-intensity civil war between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Asylum applications from Turkey have increased immensely, especially in the 1990s, changing the diaspora's profile to a more multifaceted one: a combination of different ethnic and religious groups from Turkey with different needs, agendas and visions. Turkey's policy with regard to its citizens living abroad has evolved throughout time, following global trends as well as ideologies and visions of governing parties. One can observe a growing interest in diaspora governance decade by decade, although a substantial diasporic turn happened under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) when it created the Presidency for Turks Abroad

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[7] Damla B. Aksel (2019) *Home states and homeland politics: Interactions between the Turkish state and its emigrants in France and the United States* (London: Routledge); Ayhan Kaya & Ferhat Kentel (2005) *Euro-Turks: A Bridge or a Breach between Turkey and the European Union?* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies).

[8] Ahmet Erdi Öztürk & Hakkı Taş (2020) The repertoire of extraterritorial repression: Diasporas and home states, *Migration Letters*, 17(1), pp. 59-69.

[9] Zeynep Yanasmayan & Zeynep Kaşlı (2019) Reading diasporic engagements through the lens of citizenship: Turkey as a test case, *Political Geography*, 70, pp. 24-33.

and Related Communities (YTB) along with the Public Diplomacy Coordinator under the Prime Ministry, and the Yunus Emre Institutes for enhancing cultural activities abroad.

Since the AKP came to power, Turkey has gone through a significant transformation politically and socio-economically. Turkey never has been a fully-fledged democracy when it comes to human rights, but especially after the Gezi protests, there has been a visible democratic backsliding. Thousands of people lost their jobs under emergency decrees, numerous passports were cancelled, many journalists and academics were accused of terrorism for their disloyalty to the governing party, and freedoms of speech and assembly were seriously curtailed. While societal polarization has been increasing at the domestic level, the governing party also started transnationalizing its vision by engaging with the Turkey-originated communities abroad. Paralleling the changing state perceptions and strategies around the diaspora are changing diaspora profiles. Many white-collar secular Turkish citizens left due to the rapid Islamization of the public space. Other dissident groups, including academics, have left in response to their criminalization and lack of academic freedom. Many others, such as members of the controversial Gülen Movement (GM), have gone into exile in order to escape political purges.[10] These groups, who recently migrated, are not necessarily in solidarity in Turkey and they have competing, if not conflicting, interests.[11] These dynamics are carried to the destination countries, and the interactions between the newcomers and the older diasporas from Turkey cause new tensions. Moreover, some segments in the diaspora are supportive of the authoritarian measures[12] and there are widening trust issues among diaspora groups from different backgrounds. These new developments have made the diasporic landscape a highly contested space and a playing field for the transnationalization of Turkey's domestic disputes.[13]

[10] Ahmet Erdi Öztürk & Hakkı Taş (2022) Doom and gloom: leaving Erdoğan's Turkey, *GIGA Focus Paper*, (1), pp. 1-13.

[11] Ihsan Yilmaz (2020) Islamist populism, Islamist fatwas, state transnationalism and Turkey's diasporas. In Shahram Akbarzadeh (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Political Islam* (London: Routledge), pp. 170-187. Routledge.

[12] Bilge Yabanci (2021) Home State Oriented Diaspora Organizations and the Making of Partisan Citizens Abroad: Motivations, Discursive Frames, and Actions Towards Co-Opting the Turkish Diaspora in Europe, *Diaspora*, 21(2), pp. 139-165.

[13] Chiara Maritato, Kerem Öktem & Anna Zadrożna (2021) Introduction – A State of Diasporas: The Transnationalisation of Turkey and its Communities Abroad, *Diaspora*, 21(2), pp. 105-120.

The articles in the special issue provide an understanding of Turkey's diasporic landscapes and how they are being shaped and reshaped by the state-led diaspora building initiatives, new diasporic migration waves of exiles and dissidents, and finally the reactions of host countries to these recent developments. Turkey offers a rich case study to unpack discussions surrounding how competitive authoritarian states engage with their polity abroad; how citizenship takes new shapes and forms as a result of transnationalism; and how extraterritorial repression can be a tool to control and monitor diasporas by home states, among various other discussions. These articles contribute to migration studies in a number of ways as they offer a timely case study that provides significant insights into broader theoretical debates in diaspora studies. The authors use innovative methods and approaches to scrutinize Turkey's diaspora engagement from a critical perspective. Each article adopts a different theoretical perspective questioning concepts such as sovereignty, citizenship, nation-building, authoritarianism, and exile. Collectively, the articles enrich the discussion in the Turkish context and place the Turkish case in a broader theoretical framework.

Articles in this Special Issue

The special issue is unique in the sense that it focuses on the political dynamics from the past to the present and zeroes in on how Turkey's political trajectory reflects on diasporic landscapes under the rule of different political parties. The authors offer cutting-edge research with theoretical and empirical data while each article contributes to broader theoretical discussions surrounding diaspora politics. In scrutinizing Turkey's diaspora politics, the articles offer insights into understanding other diaspora-home state-host state nexuses in the Middle East and North Africa as well as other Global South countries.

This special issue contributes to academic literature in three ways. First, it avoids current bias in the study of Turkey's diaspora governance by examining both the past and present of the phenomenon. The current rise of Turkey's transnational politics has prompted many observers to view its diaspora governance as a mere AKP phenomenon, overlooking the past in favor of the immediate now. However, a more comprehensive view is needed not only to overcome the overemphasis on the present, but also to get a deeper understanding of current developments. Ayhan Kaya's lead article reveals how the instrumentalization of emigrant groups is not a novelty in Turkish politics, but a policy various governments have applied since the 1960s. In particular, Turkey's instrumental use of Islam to reach out to its

diasporas is an old practice that predates the AKP. Kaya demonstrates, through intensive fieldwork and discourse analysis of political speeches, how the policies of previous administrations and recipient states have shaped the AKP's repertory.

Adopting a similar approach, Gözde Böcü delves into less explored epochs of Turkey's diaspora politics, concentrating on the specific case of the Turkey-originated diaspora in Germany between the 1960s and 1990s. The article provides a historical sketch of the political infrastructure upon which the AKP's diaspora policy later would be constructed. Theoretically, Böcü highlights the dynamics of simultaneity and demonstrates how diaspora politics develop dialectically in response to the policies of the home and host states. Banu Şenay likewise focuses on the continuities in the Turkish state's engagement with its emigrants abroad, although she expands the contextualization to the cultural level, suggesting that the state not only promotes some formal policies but also sentiments and affects in the transnational realm. Şenay demonstrates how Turkey's diaspora politics is designed to perform a "pedagogical" function to cultivate the desired diaspora citizens. While the academic scholarship heavily focuses on the formal-institutional developments, Şenay's article, examining the state-organized public rituals, delves into the much-neglected cultural and pedagogical dimension of diaspora governance.

Second, the special issue cautions against the alarmist tone that dominates the current public discourse about Turkey's diaspora policy. Rather, it adopts a critical neutral stance, evaluating both the scope and limits of the phenomenon. While the Turkish state pursues vibrant policies to engage its diasporas, the success of this engagement hinges upon numerous factors such as its economic and institutional capacity and the receiving state's integration policies. Damla Aksel examines the successes and failures of Turkey's diaspora policies in light of James C. Scott's 'legibility' framework. Aksel outlines the Turkish state's efforts toward standardization and simplification in its diaspora governance, based on archival research and interviews with nearly one hundred state officials and migrant representatives in France and the United States. She then analyzes the limits of this transnational social engineering project by focusing on the resistance of the diaspora groups. Likewise, Arne Wackenhut problematizes the predominant emphasis on the supply side of diaspora politics and draws attention to its demand side by exploring how diaspora members relate or respond to Turkey's diaspora engagement policies in Sweden. Wackenhut uses interviews and abundant empirical data to demonstrate that neither diasporas nor home-state-

diaspora relations can be captured by single, monolithic categories. Rather, the article illustrates the various ways diverse subgroups perceive and respond to Turkey's diaspora policies.

Third, this special issue seeks to counterbalance the overwhelmingly state-centered research on Turkey's diaspora by observing diaspora groups as both objects and subjects of diaspora policy making. Although Turkey is a potent political force as a home state, the Turkish diasporas are not mere passive receivers of its policies. Following this rationale, the articles by Bahar Baser, Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, and Hakkı Taş investigate Turkey's recent and on-going emigration wave and the ensuing exilic and diasporic experiences. Baser and Öztürk analyze how exile has reverberated among intellectuals, artists, activists, and academics in the diaspora. Framing this exodus as an "exit" to voice dissent in Bert Hoffman's terms, the authors use a large number of interviews and primary sources to illustrate the main push factors behind this exit. Baser and Öztürk also provide a detailed account of the experiences of these elites in their host countries and how their transnational mobilization has added a new layer to oppositional diaspora activism. Taş examines another subgroup, the religious GM, and the different ways it has responded to multiple exogeneous shocks in its history. While outlining the multiple reconfigurations of the movement in its historical trajectory since the 1970s, Taş explains the factors that account for the GM's current inertia and intra-community divides in exilic diaspora. He argues that while exogenous shocks may generate incentives, if not imperatives, for change, this process is mediated within the group and requires the consideration of endogenous factors such as elite preferences.

In this special issue's final article, Zeynep Mencutek and Bezen Balamir Coskun provide insights with respect to Turkey's diaspora diplomacy in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. They question the types of state diaspora engagement instruments during this pandemic and the outcomes of interventions on home state-diaspora relations. Their empirically rich article provides insights about potential continuities or novelties with regard to the home state's outreach to their citizens abroad in times of crisis. While outlining the Turkish state's policy and discursive tools, Mencutek and Coskun illustrate how it has utilized the pandemic as an opportunity to further embrace its diaspora in the form of long-distance nationalism. Nevertheless, they observe only a limited positive effect of this corona diplomacy on the diaspora's reception of Turkey as a home state.

Overall, the goal of this special issue is to enable readers to understand the historical evolution of Turkey's diaspora governance policies, the ideological, political, symbolic and economic motivations behind such initiatives as well as how the Turkish diaspora, as well as policy makers and society receive these policies. The impact of recent political developments in Turkey and how they are reflected on contemporary diasporic landscapes will be discussed by engaging with concepts such as transnationalism and exile. Moreover, the special issue will demonstrate the scope of Turkey's diaspora diplomacy and its limits. The special issue not only focuses on elite-level political processes but also investigate the impact of domestic transformations and their transnational impact on everyday lives of diasporans in Europe and all around the world, and therefore it reveals visible and invisible impacts on diasporic landscapes in the "Western world and beyond" with an interdisciplinary perspective.

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