



Turkish Journal of Diaspora Studies


ISSN: 2717-7408 (Print and Online)
Journal Homepage: tjds.org.tr


Boundaries of the Turkish Diaspora

Mehmet Köse

To cite this article: Mehmet Köse (2021) Boundaries of the Turkish Diaspora, Turkish Journal of Diaspora Studies, 1(1), 64-79, DOI: 10.52241/TJDS.2021.0005

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.52241/TJDS.2021.0005>

 © 2021 Mehmet Köse. Published with license by Migration Research Foundation

 Published online: 30 March 2021

 Submit your article to this journal 

Boundaries of the Turkish Diaspora

Mehmet Köse 

Migration Research Foundation, Ankara, Turkey

Abstract

This article briefly investigates the evolution of Turkish diaspora over the course of history and pays particular attention to major diaspora formation approaches. Then, the focuses on the Turkish Diaspora within which, before all else, emigration and changing borders are considered major components for diaspora formation. This paper also demonstrates that the history of Turkish emigrant communities began in the 19th century during the Ottoman era and dramatically increased after WWII, during the Turkish Republic era. This study, in particular, focuses on autochthonous aspects of the Turkish diaspora, which came into existence as a result of the Ottoman State's territorial losses.

Keywords

Diaspora, Turkish Diaspora,
Autochthonous Diaspora,
Migrant Diaspora

Introduction

Diaspora discourse in Turkish public opinion has transformed from having a negative connotation into a positive one that acknowledges the complexities embedded within the communities living outside the Turkish State borders. Although the concept of the Turkish Diaspora is widely used by scholars, politicians, bureaucrats, and the media, they hardly concur on the same definition. The boundaries of the Turkish diaspora, for this very reason, vary in different discourses. Turkish communities in Western European countries, North America, and Australia can be considered the main body of the Turkish Diaspora. The Turkish Diaspora widened with later emigration waves to the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Recent literature, although limited, deepened and expanded the Turkish diaspora by adding long-term native communities living in countries that formerly belonged to the Ottoman State.

The dispersion and historical background of Turkish communities outside the territorial borders of the Turkish State clearly reflect the complexities and a variety of perspectives on the borders of the Turkish Diaspora. In this framework, this study seeks explanations about the formation of diaspora by looking into the historical trajectories of emigrations and analyzing the contribution changing state borders have on diaspora formation.

While investigating the formation of the Turkish diaspora over time, it does so under two main categories: through emigration of people and through geopolitical changes. First, peoples' movement, as in most cases, from homeland to new lands for a variety of reasons, discussed in later sections, pave the way for understanding the Turkish diaspora, from the last centuries of Ottoman State through to the Turkish Republic. Second, changes in borders due to the shrinking boundaries of the weakening Ottoman State in the last two centuries, left some parts of the

millet as minorities. Millet is defined as religious community irrespective of ethnicity during the Ottoman time, and Aktürk claims that there is clear evidence that the concept of the Turkish nation is inherited from the Muslim Millet (Aktürk, 2009).

Historical and Conceptual Background

Lately, diaspora has become a popular term to describe a nation's trans-border communities, however it is not the only term to describe this concept. Transnational communities, migrant communities, minorities, or kin societies are some major terms employed to define similar communities. All of these concepts are, more or less, related to the nation-state paradigm, which has prevailed throughout the international political system over last two centuries. The recent surge in globalization also has transborder, trans-state communities a major component of international political systems. In this sense, the concept of diaspora is very much related to nation, state, and the global political system. The definition of the nation and people of the state draw the framework for transnational communities. By looking into the usage of diaspora throughout history and by considering changes in the global political system, it is possible to categorize the development of diaspora, as a concept, into three periods.

In the first period, during the Greek pre-classical era, diaspora was first used to describe Athenian settlements around Asia Minor and the Mediterranean Sea. Population increases and limited resources led people to seek new settlements, arable lands, natural resources, and trade opportunities. These new Athenian settlements around Asia Minor and the Mediterranean Sea kept social, cultural, and economic ties with the mainland. (Osborne, 2009; Dufoix, 2008; Cohen, 2008). The next usage of the term is more related to religious communities, beginning with Jewish communities living as minorities. Christian literature also touches on the discourse to define Christians dispersed throughout Roman Empire as diaspora, until the Empire embraced Christianity and they were no longer prosecuted. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, Protestant and Catholic minorities within Catholic and Protestant majorities, respectively, also were called diaspora (Ages, 1973; Dufoix, 2008; Baumann, 2000). Throughout the Middle Ages, diaspora overwhelmingly referred to religious communities. In the same period as Islam's ascendance, the status of Muslim minorities under non-Muslim rulers was also discussed in Islamic Literature. A majority of Muslim scholars advised that if Muslims could freely live and practice their religion as minority under a non-Muslim majority, that land could still be considered Dar-al Islam (Albrecht, 2018; Özel, 2012), and they would still be considered to be within the Muslim nation, regardless of territorial sovereignty. In the opposite situation, where Muslims were not free or not allowed to live according to their religion, they were urged to migrate, as it was seen by the practice (Sunna) of the Prophet Muhammed. It is likely that this paradigmatic distinction led to the absence of the use of the diaspora concept in Muslim Literature during the Middle Ages.

Third period began with the invention of the territorial state in the 17th century, followed by the nationalization of the state starting with the 18th century and laid the groundwork for current diaspora discourse. Multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic empires turned into nationalized states that successfully or not aimed to homogenize society by imposing a single language and identity. Changes in the formation of the global political system and the triumph of the modern nation system, led to a renewed surge in diaspora discourse, as

well as the expansion of the term. Territorial states, societies, and human movements gained new sociological and political meaning (Kurubaş, 2017). Ethnic/cultural/religious/linguistic minorities, trans-border communities, trans-nation people, refugees, emigrants, migrants, labor migrants, expatriates, expellees, and diasporas also emerged as the outsiders of nation states. This brought about territorial particularities, in which the boundaries of modern states began not to coincide with the boundaries of the new nations (Kurubaş, 2017). The re(de)territorialization process and a dramatic increase in international migration played a vital role in increasing in the number of these kinds of communities throughout the world.

The concept of diaspora evolved with socio-political changes and expanded its characterization. The usage of the term began to increase in the early twentieth century with increasing academic and political interest. Practicality led to the use of the term diaspora as replacement for all others (Tölölyan, 2012; Vertovec, 2006; Clifford, 1994). The complexities and diversities in historical and societal experiences are also reflected in the definitions of the diaspora concept. Diaspora conceptualization is not even close to having an agreed upon parameter any time soon, as Grossman states in his article, in which he challenges the diaspora concept, through almost 200 cited articles defining diasporas between 1976 and 2017 (Grossman, 2018). Based on this selected literature Grossman identifies “6 core attributes”: transnationalism, community, dispersal and immigration, outside the homeland, homeland orientation, and group identity. However, these 6 criteria are only the ones that remained above the 50 % threshold out of the 32 criteria that were identified in different concepts.

The proliferation and variety of concepts reflect the distinctions in diaspora experiences. Each diaspora may have a distinct formation closely related to the nation building process. But each diaspora's experience may reflect similarities with other diasporas in some ways. Inductive definitions of the concept of diaspora, whose main focus is the Jewish diaspora, may lead to narrow conceptualizations, which leaves many other diaspora communities out of scope. Many concepts developed by scholars of Jewish identity reflect their own readings of the Jewish diaspora experience. To conceptualize one's own experience is not wrong, but to claim an ideal status and benchmarking position is not right. Forceful expulsion from the homeland was considered vital part of diaspora conceptualization by leading (mostly Jewish) scholars (Safran, 1991; Tölölyan, 2012). Although, the involuntary movement of the people is common for the formation of diasporic communities including modern cases, voluntary movement is also dominating factor, as in the case of Jewish people's migration to Alexandria and other developed cities known in the literature (Ages, 1973). On the other hand, in the modern Israeli state era, close to 1 million people left for other countries with no coercion (Solomon, 2017). With the dramatic increase in international migration, attempts to define diaspora also multiplied during the twentieth century, in which nation states and borders became more apparent. The motivation of international migration varied, including trade, job opportunity, economic prosperity, education, political, or religious reasons. The proliferation of causes for international migration caused coercive emigration to drop off from most diaspora definitions (Sheffer, 2003; Miller, Haas, & Castles, 2013; Dufoix, 2008; Vertovec, 1997; Butler, 2001).

Most diaspora concepts understand that diasporas are formed by the movement of people across borders. Changing borders are considered to be another major way that diasporas have formed, particularly after the dissolution of multi-ethnic, multi-nation, multi-cultural, and

multi-religious empires. The dissolution of multi-religious/cultural/ethnic empires and the rise of nationalized states left many people around Europe and the globe stranded as others/minorities in the new nation states. With Treaty of Versailles, the German Empire lost 7 million of its German people to new nation states (Harriman, 1973), which was conceptualized as “accidental diasporas” by Brubaker. Brubaker’s “accidental diasporas” and Laitin’s “beached diaspora” conceptualize the communities who have ties to the nation but were left outside the territorial borders of the German and Russian states after the dissolution of the German Empire and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Laitin, 1998; Brubaker, 2000). This conceptualization could be attributed to most multi-ethnic/religious/nation/cultural states who left the political scene and led the flourishing of many nation-states. Similarly, millions of people are socio-culturally tied to the people of Turkey yet remained within other nation states throughout the last two centuries, which largely ended with the Treaty Lausanne in 1923. The Turkish Republic inherited, as such, diaspora communities from its multi-nation empire Ottoman State predecessor. I prefer to call this type of diaspora *autochthonous diaspora*, since they were or became native to their place of residence. The communities defined as autochthonous are considered native residents of their countries and in this way, they are differentiated from recently migrated diasporas.

The question of the Turkish Diaspora

The concept of the Turkish diaspora began to gain ground with increasing emigration and settlement in the West in the post-WWI era. Early literature on Turkish emigration in this period did not employ the concept of diaspora, instead it used migrant community to describe these settlements (Abadan-Unat, 2017; Gitmez, 2019; Martin, 2019). The attribution of the diaspora concept to Turkish migrant communities appeared in the literature a quarter century after the post-WWII emigration and was mostly linked with labor migration (Cohen, 2008; Safran, 1991; Aydın, 2016). The Turkish Diaspora concept was expanded in recent literature by adding “co-ethnics” that remained outside the borders of the dissolved Ottoman State and “kin-state” relations (Aksel, 2014; Okyay, 2015). The complexity and ambiguity of the question of the Turkish Diaspora is reflected in the literature. Where to draw the line between migrant, minority, and diaspora community, as well as how diaspora are formed, being member of the diaspora, and continuation of being part of the diaspora are a few of the many questions that remain today.

Although there has been an increase in the use of the term Turkish Diaspora, there are also ambiguities involved with this usage. The blurring comes from misreading the semantic meaning and grounding definition of the diaspora concept, developed mainly by the Jewish experience, as mentioned earlier. Semantically, the Turkish Language Society (TDK- Türk Dil Kurumu) prefers to define the term diaspora as *kopuntu* (fragment), breaking from motherland. TDK additionally, conceptualizes diaspora in reference to Jewish people who live outside their homeland and national and religious minorities living outside their homeland. Because of this definition, the Turkish Diaspora as a concept, does not reflect a holistic picture of the actual Turkish Diaspora.

This definition mainly disregards previous cross border movements, which goes back to last centuries of the Ottoman State. Furthermore, almost none of the literature studies address

the communities that were part of the Turk/Islam millet but remained outside the borders of the modern Turkish Republic, despite the fact that some of these communities were the subject of bilateral and multilateral agreements. Turkish guest labor migration played a vital role in the building and institutionalization of the Turkish diaspora. Another critical issue with conceptualizing the boundaries of the Turkish Diaspora simply as the mobility of people, disregards the impact of the border changes and nation-state formations, which also created trans-border/trans-national communities. This research, thus, contends that the movement of borders and the movement of people have formed the Turkish Diaspora through the separation of people. The movement of the people, Turkish migration, will be analyzed in two periods: from the early 19th century in the Ottoman State period to the 1950's and the post WWII in the Republic period. The changes in the borders that resulted in the creation of diaspora will be investigated under the concept of autochthonous diaspora.

Formation of Emigrant Diaspora

Migration waves of people with Turkish/Muslim identity began in the early 19th century in the Ottoman Empire and continued through to the modern day in Turkey. The density of the waves was volatile due to home and host country policies, as well as regional and global political upheavals. It should be highlighted that the demography and profile of migrants in the Ottoman State and Turkish Republic period reflect opposing pictures. Migration during the late Ottoman time was mostly destined for the American continents, while there were small number of migrations to Europe. On the other side, during the Turkish Republic period, mass migration was bound for Europe, mainly Germany. The emigrant profile was also opposite in these two periods. Ottoman emigrants to the Americas were mainly unskilled workers and mostly non-Muslims, while the Republican period migrants were, relatively speaking, educated and white collar, especially in the first decades. Emigrants to Europe during the Ottoman era were mainly for the purpose of education and training, but during the Turkish Republic time were low-skilled workers. Socio-economic and socio-cultural groups prevailed and the migrants showed distinct pictures in these two periods.

Migration from the Early 19th century to the 1950's

The push and pull factors are important to highlight in order to understand the migration from the Ottoman State to the American continent in the last century of the Ottoman State. During the last century of the Ottoman State, migrations occurred for economic, cultural, political, and geopolitical reasons. While wars, economic hardships, and political situations were the major push factors for emigration from the Ottoman State. Industrialization and economic developments in North America and agricultural opportunities in South America were important pull factors in the selection of countries for migration (Karpat, 1985). Most emigrations from the Ottoman State occurred from the Levant region and the Balkans. Emigration from within current Turkish borders did not occur in large numbers. Emigration from Levant was caused by famine/poverty and inter-sectarian conflict, as well as population increases in the region because of incoming migration from other regions and lack of economic capacity to feed this population (Baycar, 2016). Pioneering emigrants belonged to low-income level groups followed by high

income groups. The economic prosperity of the first migrants motivated the latter groups. Most emigrants were Christian citizens of the Ottoman state. Some Muslims also joined this journey to avoid compulsory military service (Genç & Bozkurt, 2010).

The total migration to South and North America from the Ottoman State between 1860 and 1914 was about 1.2 million. Of these migrants, 600,000 from Levant, 450,000 from Albania, Macedonia, Thrace, and Western Anatolia, with the rest from other Anatolian regions (Karpas, 1985). Among all these ethnic and cultural groups, there were 22,085 registered as Turkish by the American immigration authorities between 1900-1925 (Bali, 2004). The number of Anatolian Muslims that joined the American migration was small and they mostly resided in industrial cities like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Massachusetts (Halman, 1980).

Low participation of Muslims in this emigration process was because of public policy and perception. The Ottoman State's policy was to prevent the Muslim population from diminishing within the country. Continuous wars and the need for manpower had major impact on participation in migration. Muslim citizens' emigration to non-Muslim countries might have caused the Islamic Khalifah to have negative image, so that was considered another factor to explain Muslim people's low emigration rates (Dinçer, 2013). In 1888, the Ottoman government forbade non-professional migrants from leaving the country based on the news they were in a vulnerable situation in the Americas (Dinçer, 2013). Protestant missionaries' activities to convert Muslims, poor treatment of Muslim citizens, and having to change their names to hide themselves were the reasons for this decision. Upon these developments, the government made the decision to provide financial support for those who wanted to return, but there was not too much interest in accepting this offer (Ekinçi, 2008). The involvement of the Ottoman State in WWI alongside Germany worsened the situation. Muslims and Turks were included in the "enemy alien" group, lost their free environment, and faced the risk of losing their jobs (Acehan, 2009).

With the demise of the Ottoman State, most of the Ottoman emigrants left for America and other countries. They lost their ties with the Ottoman State and Turkish Republic and became the diaspora of newly established independent states or mandated nations of occupying powers. This also applies to the Armenian and Greek nations who initially migrated from today's Turkish borders and joined their ethno-cultural relatives in the new nation-states. Ethno-cultural ties played critical role in the new diasporic identity. They became the diaspora of Armenia, Greece, Syria, Lebanon, or Albania. Muslim Turkish, Kurdish, and some other Muslim ethnic groups became the citizens of the newly established Turkey.

Although there was not a large number of Anatolian Muslims, more than half of them returned to their homeland before and after World War I. Some returned to the country with financial and logistic support provided by the government. Turkish migrants could not successfully establish a sustainable community in their hostland. A number of factors may explain the failure to establish a community: (1) a low population level comprised of mostly of single people without their families with them, (2) the inability to establish community institutions, (3) the aim to return home after saving enough capital to buy land or establish business. (Akgün, 2000; Ekinçi, 2008).

Overall migration to the Americas did not lead to the establishment of a strong community. However, pioneering Turkish diaspora institutions were established by members of the community and descendants of these first migrants. Even with this small population, the American Muslim Turkish community succeeded in initiating a Turkish Journal and charity organizations to support the Ottoman State during WWI (Acehan, 2015). They continued to raise funding during the Turkish Liberation War and transferred a quite substantial amount of money to Turkey (Acehan, 2015). The Turkish Welfare Association (Osmanlı/Türk Teavün Cemiyeti), Protecting Children (Himaye-i Etfal), Red Crescent (Kızılay), and the Turkish Cultural Union (Türk Hars Birliği) are well known organizations (Akın, 2004; Acehan, 2015; Çelik B. , 2008). Some community organizations established in the early 1920s-30s are still active among the Turkish diaspora in the USA, such as the Türk Hars Birliği.

During the last century of the Ottoman State, the main motivation for immigration to Europe was education and training (including internships and vocational trainings). During the last half century of the Ottoman State and many students were sent to Germany, France, and other European countries. The Ottoman State sent students on scholarships to Europe to get tertiary education (Kulaç & Özgür, 2017). To develop the capacity for industrialization, they planned to send 10,000 young people between the age of 12-18 to Germany, but this plan was only partially implemented because of WWI. Also during WWI, different ministries sent apprentices for vocational training (Toprak, 1981).

Migration for education to Europe did not result in strong communities during the late Ottoman Empire, mainly because most of them were either trainees or university students. Their study was sponsored by the State and they were expected to go back to their homeland and contribute to the industrialization of the homeland. However, the population of Turkish community in Germany reached 12,000 in the early 20th century, working in Mercedes, Bosch, etc. (Çelik, 2009). Close political relations between Germany and the Ottoman State also encouraged the establishment of the Turkish-German Friendship Society with branches in major German cities (Çelik, 2009).

The Post-WWI era witnessed new migration policies by western countries, in particular the USA; free migration was abandoned and tight policies were introduced to control the demography. New visa rules and quotas for migration were introduced in the early decades of the 20th century. Changes in how migrants were accepted had a negative impact on Turkish emigration to the USA. The total number of migrations from Turkey was 2,081 between 1930-1949 (HomelandSecurity, 2011). Two World Wars in the first half of 20th century, the rise of nationalist states, and the concentration on building nation states also had an impact on Turkish emigration. However, it should be noted here, this period witnessed many population transfers and exchanges around the world, including Greece-Bulgaria, Turkey-Greece, and Germany-Poland. So, Turkish emigration was very limited between 1920-1950.

Though emigration came to standstill in the 1930's, irregular migration from Mardin to Beirut was an exception. They used informal routes through the Hatay province. The economic, social, and political situation in the region pushed people to migrate. Language and job opportunities in Beirut pulled most Mardinians. Arabic speaking citizens of Turkey from Mardin survived in Beirut for over 90 years, through unrest and civil wars. They are concentrated in 5

quarters of Beirut with estimated population of 30,000. Most of them have already obtained Lebanese citizenship and remained in close contact with Turkey. In recent years, community institutions organized Turkish language courses for younger generations and they are able to vote in Turkish elections with increased turnover (Algan, 2018; Nas, 2017; Özdemirci, 2017).

Post-1950 Migrations

After the Second World War (WWII) migration policies and international migration saw new changes and directions. Western countries loosened the restrictive migration policies of the interwar period and allowed new migrants, but with controlling regulations. In this period, Western European countries turned into immigrant destinations from being sources of emigration, to the USA and Australia as well. Over a century, the migration profile of western countries has changed due to population losses to the new world and wars, including declining population growth and increasing demand for labor power. Post-WWII rebuilding efforts in Europe and big economies' need for skilled labor migration attracted Southern European as well as Turkish migrants to these new destinations (Börtücene, 1967; Gökdere, 1978). Economic growth in western countries was major pull factor; Germany's GDP grew from 74 billion DM in 1950 to 240 billion DM in 1961. That growth trend projected the need for another 2 million in the labor force until 1970 (Börtücene, 1967).

In the same period, economic hardships and political instability in Turkey were major push factor for the growing population. Economically, 2.3% growth in agriculture and 0.4% growth in industry were not so promising in their ability to absorb the growing active labor force (SBB, 2015). The Turkish population increased from 13 million in 1927 to 27 million in 1960 through immigration from Balkan countries and high birth rates (Gökdere, 1978; İçduygu, Erder, & Gençkaya, 2014). Almost half of this 27 million population belonged to the active labor force and 75% of it was in agriculture, while 1.5 million was jobless (Pehlivanoğlu, 1967).

The demand in the labor market in Western Europe and the immigration policies to attract skilled professionals in North America triggered Turkish migration in the 1950s. Engineers, medical doctors, and professionals began to migrate in 1956, followed by workers in 1957, through individual and private initiatives (Kurtuluş, 1999; Mortan & Sarfati, 2011; Unat, 2017). Brain and labor migration started in the same period. Furthermore, governments embraced non-professional labor migration as a policy and signed bilateral agreements with Germany (1961), Austria (1964), Belgium (1964), Holland (1965), France (1965), Sweden (1967), and Australia (1967) to send Turkish labor migrants to these countries. Although there was no agreement, direct and secondary migration to Switzerland, Norway, and Denmark also occurred.

Western European countries allowed official labor migration until the mid-1970s, by that time the Turkish population in the West reached over a million, overwhelmingly to Germany (DB, 1973). Compared to the 6,700 Turkish population in Germany in 1960 (Unat, 2017), this mass migration was critical in paving the ground for the creation of the Turkish diaspora over a decade. Temporary emigration at the beginning turned into long-term residence through the second decade and migrants remained in their countries of residence for a longer period (Gitmez, 2019). With the changing of the migrant profile from temporary guest workers into long-term migrants, the community of Turkish residents gradually built up.

Although most European countries stopped official migration during the early 1970s with the economic crisis, the Turkish population in Western Europe continued to grow through family reunification, unofficial migration, and asylum seekers. After migration from Turkey with the motivation of family reunification, the composition of the Turkish diaspora shifted from a male dominant worker population to a more gender balanced Turkish population with children. This happened by being able to bring their families from Turkey. When the second generation became of marriage age, they preferred to choose their spouse from Turkey, mostly in the second generation but less so in the third generation. Newborn children to Turkish families also played critical role in the population of Turkish diaspora. 195,000 children were born in Germany alone between 1961-1976 (YİS, 1976).

Irregular migration and asylum seeking were also in practice after the mid-1970s. There were only 809 asylum applications to West Germany in 1976 but it went up to 57,913 in 1980. Disorder and the 1980 military coup triggered political asylum seekers destined for Western European countries. Two out of five migrants were asylum seekers between 1980-2000 (İçduygu, Erder, & Gençkaya, 2014). Although some of these people met the criteria of political migrant, some used asylum seeking to migrate without meeting the criteria.

The 1980s were interestingly difficult for the Turkish migrant community in Europe. Host countries such as Germany openly embraced policies aimed at reducing the number of foreigners (İçduygu, Erder, & Gençkaya, 2014; Martin, 1991). Some influential German intellectuals (initiated by Theodor Schmidt-Kaler) publicly warned of the risk of foreign cultures and foreign languages undermining German identity, soul, and Christian culture (Circle, 1982). These years witness a significant increase in racist attacks towards Turkish migrants.

In the same period, a military coup in Turkey had a critical impact on Turkish migration. The military government asked western governments to impose visas for Turkish citizens to control outflow of people (T24, 2021). The military government also tried to convince host governments to take state responsibility for religious and cultural education away from community organizations. Interestingly, while the military government attempted to exert its power over the nation beyond its territorial borders, at the same time, it also initiated some political lobbying activities that used diaspora communities.

While economic stagnation in the West changed the policies of western governments toward migration, on the other hand, the oil boom in the Middle East opened new doors for Turkish migrants. This was second major labor-motivated Turkish migration movement in the post-WWII period. Beginning with Libya, Turkish construction companies were awarded contracts in the region, which also catalyzed labor exports to these countries. Libya was followed by Saudi Arabia and other gulf countries. Turkey signed bilateral labor agreements with Libya (1975), Jordan (1982), Qatar (1986), and Kuwait (2008). 400,000 Turkish workers went to Middle Eastern countries between 1970-1986 (Gül, 1992). In the 1990s, official labor emigration was overwhelmingly destined to Middle Eastern countries (DPT, 1994). Although most went as contracted labor, the service sector also followed. Starting with the first Gulf War, conflicts and internal wars interrupted Turkish migration. However, due to the contract bounded nature of Middle Eastern migration, it did not result in building a diaspora community as seen in western bound migration.

Despite the policies implemented by host countries and increasing barriers to migration and family union, the Turkish migrant community continued to grow in western countries. Along with labor workers in the Middle East, the Turkish migrant community passed 3 million in the early 1990s. Turkish migrants in western countries showed a new direction in this period; interest in gaining host country citizenship, this reassured the creation of Turkish diaspora community. Turkey also responded by changing the citizenship act and allowed dual citizenship. According to the Federal German Statistics department, only 14,500 Turks received German citizenship between 1972-1990, this figure went up to 410,000 between 1990-2000 (DİYİH, 2015).

The third wave of Turkish Migration came with end of Cold War. Although Turkish construction companies began to take up some contracts in Russia based on bilateral agreements just before the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the independence of 14 new republics, Turkish businesses, workers, civil society activists, and students poured into the newly independent countries. This new destination widened from the Balkan countries to the far east of Central Asia. 153,000 workers were officially sent to these countries, although most went independently between 1989-2007 (İçduygu, Erder, & Gençkaya, 2014). The Turkish migrant community seeded in this region, though it is not comparable with the first wave in size. The profile of the community may be composed of small and medium enterprises, civil societies, students, and mixed marriages.

The fourth destination, albeit nascent, began with the African Opening policy by the Turkish government in the new millennium. The Turkish community is slowly increasing in Africa, alongside the diplomatic presence of the country. The number of Turkish Embassies increased from 12 to 42 in Africa and Turkish Airlines began to fly 60 destinations in Africa. The African Opening policy encouraged small, medium, and large enterprises, as well as civil society organizations and both skilled and unskilled workers set foot in the continent. Investment by Turkish companies reached 6 billion USD.

After half a century since the beginning of mass migration in 1950s, Turkish communities spread around the world and built community institutions. Migration formed the Turkish diaspora overwhelmingly concentrated in western countries including North America and Oceania. Post-Soviet, Middle East, and African countries harboring Turkish migrant communities are dotted in different parts of the world in small numbers.

Movement of Borders: Autochthonous Turkish Diaspora

Turkish Diaspora literature rarely includes the autochthonous Turkish diaspora. I believe this is caused by transferring diaspora concepts from other experiences, without further assessing and looking into the history of the formation of the Turkish nation and its trans-border communities. When the Ottoman State began to withdraw from its territories in the 18th century, the trans-border part of the Turk/Islam millet was created; in most cases their rights mentioned in bilateral and multilateral agreements. The end of multi-nation Ottoman State and the creation of new states with a new nation idea enforced the “other” status of the diminishing Islam/Turk

population outside of the new Turkish Republic¹.

The rush to build nations and create homogenous societies led to mass deportations, cleansing, and in some cases exchange of populations. 1.8 million Muslim Crimeans left their land between 1783-1922 (Akgündüz, 1998), up to 2 million north Caucasian Muslim people were expelled, (Güngör, 2006) and 2 million left Balkans between 1878 and 1913 (Karpas, 2010), gradually towards modern day boundaries of Turkey. A smaller group of people from North Africa migrated to Ottoman territory after their lands became occupied by European countries. Whether they directly lived under the Ottoman State or not, under the occupation or threat by foreign forces, Muslim communities in these regions found safety by migrating to Ottoman lands. People who lived directly under Ottoman rule with a shared culture and values understandably choose to migrate to the borders of Ottoman State (Karpas, 2010). However, despite mass migration of these people, some of their neighbors, relatives, and compatriots chose not to leave their native land, remained as minority, and continued to maintain close contact with relatives in Turkey and preserved their culture and identity.

Both the Ottoman government and the Ankara TBMM government entered negotiations bilaterally or multilaterally to protect the rights of the remaining millet within non-Muslim majority states. The first its kind, the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (*Kuchuk Kainarji*), in 1773 included an article that explicitly mentions the right of the Tartar Muslim nation and their nativity, signed between the Ottoman State and Russia. The minority status and the rights of Western Thrace's Muslim Turkish community have been built up through conflicts and a series of agreements. After the independence of Greece, the 1830 London Protocol, the 1881 Treaty of Istanbul, the 1913 Treaty of Athens, the 1920 Greece Treaty of Sevres, and the 1923 treaty of Lausanne gave the responsibility to observe the rights of minorities, which was applied to the Ottoman and Turkish Republic to maintain its responsibility for the Muslim minority under the Greek control. Each agreement, with varying articles and details, mentions the cultural, religious, social, educational, economic, and civic rights of the Muslim communities. It was signed by the host government and the Ottoman and Turkish governments. The sovereignty was also shared in the appointment of the head of the Muslim community through these agreements. Turkey, as the successor state of Ottoman state, has authority to approve shortlisted Baş Mufti by Greek authorities. This is an important point, to the extent that sovereignty crosses the territoriality.

The Muslim/Turkish community in Bulgaria was the subject of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, the 1908 and 1913 Istanbul conventions, and the 1925 friendship agreement. Political rights, representation, economic rights, religious freedom, and protection of private and waqf properties were defined in the treaty of Berlin. Subsequent agreements and their application to domestic regulations, reiterated the rights of the Muslim/Turkish community as well as the relationship with the authorities in Istanbul. The Kars and Moscow agreements regarding the Muslim people of Batum/Acara, which was signed by the Parliamentary Government of Ankara, also have similar articles for the rights of Muslim communities and guarantee authority to Turkey.

¹ This discussion could indeed be extended with the literature on Ottomanism, Islamism, and nationalism debates in the late Ottoman Empire, which are mainly about how the Ottoman ruling elites have turned to Islamism, after the loss of Balkan territories, and then nationalism based on Sunni Muslim identity, with the rise of İttihad Terakki, but I leave this to further studies.

As a result, the last centuries of geopolitical upheavals and border changes led to the creation of a Turkish autochthonous diaspora. These communities are very much linked with the socio-cultural identity of the Turkish Nation. State boundaries were erected and respected, but the socio-cultural and ethno-linguistic ties survived and built trans-border spaces. The few aforementioned autochthonous diaspora community examples are the most known Turkish cases. Two World Wars and the subsequent Cold War, as well as the political priorities of governments interrupted contact between these communities until the 1990s. Most countries embrace more of a cooperative approach, eased the tension, and deemed these communities as catalyst for economic, cultural, and political relations between countries.


Concluding Remarks

Diasporas globally, and in particular case the Turkey's diaspora, are increasing their weight in academic discourse, policy circles, and the wider public agenda. The imposition of territorial states and the long struggle to create a nation embedded with that territorial state, ironically led to the proliferation of nations beyond borders, trans-nations, and diasporas. This was the latest phase of the usage of the diaspora concept, which dispersed dramatically compared to two previous usages during the time of city states and the Middle Ages. The twentieth century witnessed hundreds of hyphenated diasporas; Irish Diaspora, German Diaspora, Palestinian Diaspora, Moroccan Diaspora, Colombian Diaspora, Nigerian Diaspora, Japan Diaspora, Pakistani Diaspora, Lebanese diaspora, and so forth. They all have distinct experiences in most cases, but a lot of commonalities too, and are all very much linked to their states' history of nation building.

Borrowing from major diaspora literature, I categorized the formation of Turkish diaspora in two major subsets: international migrations that created migrant diaspora and geopolitical changes that formed autochthonous diaspora. While the Turkish migrant diaspora has continued to extend its boundaries since the 19th century, the autochthonous diaspora is static and has even diminished, in some cases, after the establishment of the Turkish Republic. It is also worth mentioning, that migrating autochthonous diaspora members sometimes join Turkish migrant diaspora communities in the diaspora, such as Western Thrace Muslim Turks in Germany and Australia, as well as Muslim Turks from Bulgaria in different European countries or Caucasian and Crimean Tatar Turks in USA.

This article traces the concept of the Turkish diaspora back to the late Ottoman period to understand the boundaries of the Turkish Diaspora. The future studies should further offer clarifications on the concept and boundaries of the Turkish Diaspora to contribute to long overlooked but nascent Turkish diaspora studies.

Orcid

Mehmet Köse  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5250-0742>

References

- Abadan-Unat, N. (2017). *Bitmeyen Göç*. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Acehan, I. (2009). Ottoman Street in America: Turkish Leatherworkers in Peabody. *International Review of Social History*, 19-44.
- Acehan, I. (2015). Ottoman Immigrants and the Formation of Turkish Red Crescent Societies in the United States. *Perceptions*, 59-76.
- Agas, A. (1973). *The Diaspora Dimension*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Akgün, B. (2000). The Turkish Diaspora in the United States and Its Role in Promoting Turkish-American Relations. *The Turkish Yearbook*, 99-117.
- Akgündüz, A. (1998). Migration to and From Turkey, 1783-1960: Types, Numbers and Ethno-Religious Dimensions. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 97-120.
- Akın, V. (2004). Amerika'da İlk Türk Lobisi: Türk Teavün Cemiyeti. *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 453-521.
- Aksel, D. B. (2014). Kins, Distant Workers, Diasporas: Constructing Turkey's Transnational Members Abroad. *Turkish Studies*, 195-219.
- Aktürk, Ş. (2009). Persistence of the Islamic Millet as an Ottoman Legacy: Mono-Religious and Anti-Ethnic Definition of Turkish Nationhood. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 893 — 909.
- Albrecht, S. (2018). *Dar al Islam Revisited*. Leiden: Brill.
- Algan, M. (Yöneten). (2018). *Lübnan'da yaşayan Mardinliler: Beyrut Rüyası* [Sinema Filmi].
- Aydın, Y. (2016). Turkish diaspora policy: transnationalism or long-distance nationalism? I. Sirkeci, & B. Pusch içinde, *Turkish Migration Policy* (s. 168-181). London: Transnational Press London.
- Bali, R. (2004). *Anadolu'dan Yeni Dünya'ya*. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Baumann, M. (2000). DIASPORA: GENEALOGIES OF SEMANTICS AND TRANSCULTURAL COMPARISON. *Numen*, 313-337.
- Baycar, K. (2016). Küresel Göç Çağında Osmanlı Transatlantik Göçleri ve Sebepleri (1870-1914). *Divan*, 1-32.
- Börtüçene, İ. (1967). Milletlerarası İşgücü Hareketleri ve Türkiye. *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 1-46.
- Brubaker, R. (2000). *Accidental Diasporas and External Homelands in Central and Eastern Europe: Past and Present*. Vienna: Insitut für Höhere Studien.
- Butler, K. D. (2001). Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 189-219.
- Çelik, B. (2008). Türk Diasporası. *Türk Dış Politikası* (s. 285-325). içinde İstanbul: Gökkuşbu.
- Çelik, L. (2009). *Almanya'da Türk İzleri*. Mainz: ESO.
- Circle, H. (1982). *The Heidelberg Manifesto*. http://ghdi.ghidc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=857 adresinden alındı
- Clifford, J. (1994). Diasporas. *Cultural Anthropology*, 302-338.
- Cohen, R. (1995). Rethinking 'Babylon': Iconoclastic conceptions of the diasporic experience. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*(1), 5-18.
- Cohen, R. (2008). *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. Londra: Routledge.
- DB. (1973). *Yurtdışı Göç Hareketleri ve Vatandaş Sorunları*. Ankara: Dışişleri Bakanlığı.
- Diñer, S. (2013). İlk Gurbetçiler: Harput'tan ABD'ye Emek Göçü (1850-1914). *Geçmişten Geleceğe Harput Sempozyumu* (s. 307-319). Elazığ: Fırat Üniversitesi.
- DİYİH. (2015). *Yurtdışındaki Vatandaşlarımıza İlişkin Gelişmeler ve Sayısal Bilgiler*. Ankara: Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı.
- DPT. (1994). *Yurtdışı Türk İşgücü Piyasası Alt Komisyonu Raporu*. Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı.
- Dufoix, S. (2008). *Diasporas*. (W. Rodarmor, Çev.) Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ekinci, M. U. (2008). Reflections of the First Muslim Immigration to America in Ottoman Documents. D. Balgamiş, & K. Karpat içinde, *Turkish Migration to the United States: From Ottoman Times to the Present* (s. 45-56). Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press.
- Gamlen, A. (2014). Diaspora Institutions and Diaspora Governance. *International Migration Review*, 180-217.
- Gamlen, A. (2019). *Human Geopolitics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gamlen, A. (2019). *Human Geopolitics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Genç, H., & Bozkurt, İ. (2010). Osmanlı'dan Brezilya ve Arjantin'e Emek Göçü ve Göçmenlerin Sosyo-Ekonomik Durumu. *Marmara Üniversitesi İ.İ.B.F. Dergisi*, 71-103.
- Gitmez, A. S. (2019). *Türkiye'nin Dışgöç Öyküsü*. Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat.
- Gökdere, A. Y. (1978). *Yabancı Ülkelere İşgücü Akımı ve Türk Ekonomisi Üzerine Etkileri*. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Grossman, J. (2018). Toward a Definition of Diaspora. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1-20.
- Gül, A. (1992). Ortadoğu Ülkelerinde Türk İşgücü ve Bu Ülkelerin İşgücü Açığı. *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 103-109.
- Güngör, F. (2006). Kafkasya'da Soykırım ve Sürgün-Kısa Bir Sosyolojik Tahlil. *Geçmişten Günümüze Kafkasların Trajedisi* (s. 11-38). İstanbul: Kafkas Vakfı Yayınları.
- Halman, S. (1980). Turks. S. Thernstorm, A. Orlov, & O. Handlin içinde, *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (s. 992-996). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Harriman, H. H. (1973). *The German Minority in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945*. Oklahoma: Oklahoma State University.
- HomelandSecurity. (2011). *2010 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. Alexandria: Homeland Security.
- İçduygu, A., Erder, S., & Gençkaya, Ö. F. (2014). *Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Göç Politikaları, 1923-2023*. İstanbul: Mirekoç.
- Karpat, K. (1985). The Ottoman Emigration to America 1860-1914. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 175-209.
- Karpat, K. (2010). *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler*. İstanbul: Timaş.
- Kose, M. (2020). The development of diaspora policies through political participation of Turkish diaspora.
- Kulaç, O., & Özgür, H. (2017). Sending Scholarship Students Abroad in Ottoman Empire. *European Journal of Contemporary Education*, 830-836.
- Kurtuluş, B. (1999). *Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ne Türk Beyin Göçü*. İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları.
- Kurubaş, E. (2017). *Asimilasyondan Tanınmaya*. İstanbul: Küre Yayınları.
- Laitin, D. (1998). *Identity Formation: The Russian Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Martin, P. L. (1991). *Bitmeyen Öykü: Batı Avrupa'ya Türk İşçi Göçü*. Ankara: Uluslararası Çalışma Örgütü.
- Miller, M. J., Haas, H. d., & Castles, S. (2013). *The Age of Migration*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Mortan, K., & Sarfati, M. (2011). *Vatan Olan Gurbet: Almanya'ya İşçi Göçünün 50. Yılı*. İstanbul: Türkiye İşbankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Nas, F. (2017). *Ortadoğu'da Göç Dinamikleri: Mardin'den Beyrut'a bir Göç Araştırması*. Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı.
- Okyay, A. S. (2015). *Turkey's Expansive Diaspora Strategy and its Implications for Emigrant and Kin Populations*. Fiesole: European University Institute.
- Osborne, R. (2009). *Greece in the Making, 1200-479 B.C.* (Second Edition b.). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Özdemirci, A. S. (2017). *Lübnan'daki Mardinliler: Mardin Halkının Göçü*. Ankara: Ortadoğu Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi.
- Özel, A. (2012). Klasik İslâm Devletler Hukukunda Ülke Kavramı ve Günümüzdeki Durum: İbn Teymiyye'nin Mardin Fetvası ile Benzeri Diğer Bazı Fetvalar. *M.Ü. İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 41-64.
- Pehlivanoğlu, Ş. (1967). Dış Ülkelerdeki İşçilerimizin Sosyal ve Kültürel Meseleleri. *Sosyal Siyaset Konferansları*, 75-91.
- Ragazzi, F. (2009). Governing Diasporas. *International Political Sociology*, 378-397.
- Safran, W. (1991). Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 83-99.
- Safran, W. (2005). The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective. *Israel Studies*, 36-61.
- SBB. (2015). *Ekonomik ve Sosyal Göstergeler 1950-2014*. Ankara: Strateji ve Bütçe Başkanlığı.
- Sheffer, G. (2003). *Diaspora Politics at Home Abroad*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Solomon, D. (2017). *Israelis Ditch Country In Record Numbers — Outnumbering Immigrants*. www.forward.com: <https://forward.com/fast-forward/379998/israelis-ditch-country-in-record-numbers-outnumbering-immigrants/> adresinden alındı
- T24. (2021, Şubat 25). *Türk vatandaşlarına AB ülkelerine vize ile girişi Türk hükümetiyle birlikte koyduk!* www.t24.

- com.tr: <https://t24.com.tr/haber/turkiyenin-vizesiz-avrupa-seruveni,245781> adresinden alındı
- Tölölyan, K. (2012). *Diaspora Studies: Past, present and promise*. Oxford: Oxford Diaspora Programme Working Papers.
- Toprak, Z. (1981). Almanya'ya İlk İşçi ve Öğrenci Göçü 1916-1918. *Bilim ve Sanat*, 26-27.
- Unat, N. A. (2017). *Bitmeyen Göç*. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.
- Vertovec, S. (1997). Three Meanings of "Diaspora", Exemplified among South Asian Religions . *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 277-299.
- Vertovec, S. (2006). *Diasporas good? Diasporas bad?* Oxford: Compas Working Paper No 41.
- Waterbury, M. A. (2008). Bridging the Divide: Towards a comparative framework for understanding kin-state and migrant sending -state diaspora politics. *Diaspora and Transnationalism Conceptual, Theoretical and Methodological Challenges* (s. 1-24). Sala Teatro: IMISCOE.
- YİS. (1976). *Yurtdışındaki İşçilerimizin Sosyal, Kültürel ve Ekonomik Problemleri ve Hal Çareleri*. Ankara: Çalışma Bakanlığı Yurtdışı İşçi Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü.