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A Critical Approach to the Term Turkish Diaspora: Is there 'the' Turkish Diaspora?*

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Abstract

In this article, the content of the term of Turkish Diaspora which is frequently being used in political, bureaucratical and academic life is being discussed. Particularly, usage of the term *Turkish* in between citizenship and kinship meanings, and out of the scope of the constitutional and legal definition makes the term Turkish Diaspora more problematic. It is unclear what is meant by the term Turkish diaspora that is being broadly and indefinitely used, and who are the subjects of Turkish diaspora. Moreover, Turkey's expectations and implications in her foreign policy regarding the societies which she defines them as diaspora is getting more problematic and important day by day. Despite the enormous scope of the problem, relatively little academic research has been conducted on this subject. This article, with the social constructionist perspective will discuss the phenomenon of Turkish Diaspora.

Keywords

Migration, diaspora, Turkish, Turkish diaspora, fellow descendants, citizen.

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Introduction

Re-thinking the Turkish diaspora, we need to quest for the historical improvement of the term of diaspora which is still progressing, as Dufoix (2015: 11) underlines:

> Within the last century, the old religious sense of 'diaspora' was successively supplemented by new layers of meaning. But the latter did not replace the former. Each new layer represented a new opportunity, adding up to the previous ones. This complex stratification turned a very ancient word into a most appropriate descriptor of the new global world.

Generally, migration (immigration and emigration) policies, specifically diaspora issues are getting more attention both in governmental and academic studies. Therefore, theorizing state and diaspora relations is uprising as a new and important field of study. Délano and Gamlen suggest (2015:176) to start with two important questions: "What is happening in the realm of state–diaspora relations, and why? The question of when and why states engage their diasporas – and why their practices converge or diverge – still needs answers based on better comparisons and theorization."

The term *diaspora* which used in the 5th century BCE among classical philosophers and Hellenist writers in a negative connotation and derives from an ancient Greek word meaning "to scatter, spread, disperse, be separated" is approximately 2500 years old (Baumann 2010: 19-23). Braziel and Mannur (2008: 1-2) specifies that the term was first used to describe the Jews living in exile circa 3rd century BCE. Therefore, as Gilroy (1994: 207) depicted diaspora *is an ancient word.*

Although diaspora is an old and even ancient word, it consists dynamic features in its inner context. Two prominent progressions in the diaspora studies -intensified in the 20th century- flourished the concept of the word: (i) secularization, (ii) trivialization. As a result of these ongoing processes "diaspora starts a new life as an academic notion, without any formal definition, that may encompass more than one relevant case." (Dufoix 2015: 9)

Ang (2003: 141-154) states that the economic, political and cultural erosion of the modern nation-state as a result of postmodern capitalist globalization contributed to the current context of the diaspora. With the contribution of the aforementioned discussions, Smith (2007: 5) defines diasporas as social groups settled and established in another country and are internally heterogeneous; she also disputes diasporas' constitution by a single factor and remarks the "different parts of the same diaspora can and do have different interests, defined among other things by class, gender, generation, occupation or religion."

Since 1990's, in various academic disciplines such as area studies, ethnic studies, and cultural studies topic of theorizations of diaspora have emerged. In addition to aforementioned fields there has been an almost explosion on diaspora issue in sociology, anthropology, film studies, queer theory, etc. This remarkable concern to diaspora from miscellaneous academic fields makes it difficult to reveal how and why the diaspora term is to speak of and for almost all movements and dislocations. Therefore, Braziel and Mannur (2008: 2-3) warns "… against the uncritical, unreflexive application of the term "diaspora" to any and all contexts of global displacement and movement; some forms of travel are tourism, and ever attempt to mark movements as necessarily disenfranchising become imperialist gestures."

Due to the reasons and discussions explained above, the theoretical background of the diaspora topic gains more importance. In this point Cohen's (2008: 1-2) distinction of diaspora studies four phases is a valuable contribution to the literature:

(i) Classical meaning [significant ethnic group(s): basically and historically Jews. The classical meaning was extended since 1960s and 1970s including the scattering of Africans, Armenians and the Irish.]

(ii) Deployment of the term to describe expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and minorities. (1980s)

(iii) Having been motivated by postmodern conceptions, social constructionist thinkers paved the way for the "third phase" after mid-1990s. Even though, they accepted the general

concept of diaspora and diaspora studies, they criticized second phase theories for focusing mostly on 'homeland' and 'ethnic/ religious community'. They argued that in a postmodern era where knowledge is accepted as deconstructable, the concept of identity should not be thought as established. Therefore, diaspora studies should bear in mind postmodern discussions regarding "deterritorialization of identities" and redefine their concepts and theories.

(iv) In 21st century, new critiques have reintroduced central features of the diaspora concept; therefore,the final phase has been named as the consolidation era in diaspora studies. Even though some of the views of the social constructionists welcomed, they themselves have been criticized for emptying core elements of the concept of diaspora. For example, "deterritorialization of identities" has been accepted as a credible phenomenon, however the concepts of home and homeland have still had profound relevance to diaspora studies.

Cohen's analyses of four phases of the meaning of diaspora and emphasis on social constructionist theory on the 3rd and 4th phases give us an important and valuable plane to draw the theoretical frame of the concept which comprises the theoretical background for Turkish diaspora discussions.

After examining the expanding and transformation process of the term, we should consider the characteristic of the diasporas. In this quest, Safran's (1991: 83-84) criterias on the common features of a diaspora which is being mostly referred in diaspora studies will be mentioned:

1. Dispersal from an original "centre" to two or more regions,
2. Retention of a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland including its location, history, and achievements,
3. The belief that they are not – and perhaps never can be – fully accepted in their host societies and so remain partly alienated and insulated from it,
4. The idealization of the homeland and the thought of returning,
5. The belief that they should collectively be committed to the

maintenance or restoration of the homeland and to its safety and prosperity,

6. Personally or vicariously relation with the homeland and a strong ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity.

Since 1991 and onwards, Safran's criterias have been discussed in diaspora literature and the most valuable contribution to the issue have been made by Cohen (2008: 4) who criticizes Safran for being *strongly influenced by the underlying paradigmatic case of the Jewish diaspora* and adds *solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries* (Cohen 2008: 7) as another feature for diasporas.

In addition to the discussions on diaspora, Faist (2010: 9) makes a valuable contribution to the literature by benchmarking *transnationalism* concept in diaspora studies:

> Although both terms refer to cross-border processes, diaspora has been often used to denote religious or national groups living outside an (imagined) homeland, whereas transnationalism is often used both more narrowly –to refer to migrants' durable ties across countries– and, more widely, to capture not only communities, but all sorts of social formations, such as transnationally active networks, groups and organizations. Moreover, while diaspora and transnationalism are sometimes used interchangeably, the two terms reflect different intellectual genealogies. The revival of the notion of diaspora and the advent of transnational approaches can be used productively to study central questions of social and political change and transformation.

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned process, discussions and critics, this article will quest if the Turks living abroad could be considered as Turkish diaspora? Are the criterias set forth by the Safran and Cohen suitable for the Turks abroad? To answer these questions, this article will inquire in to the subject of the Turkish diaspora? Who are the objects of Turkish Diaspora? Turkish citizens? Descendants? Blue card holders? Or Muslims?

This article -with a social constructivist perspective[1]- also claims that Turkey's diaspora policies, combined by legal texts, diplomatic attitudes, bureaucratic procedures, politic discourses, etymologic definitions in official Turkish dictionary and even academic studies and research centers for diaspora studies trivialize the Turkish Diaspora phenomenon and interprets an empty and dysfunctional term of diaspora.

Theorizing Turkish Diaspora

As it can be understood from the style of the interrogative sentence in the article's title, this article reviews and makes comments, arguing that a Turkish diaspora does not exist. To elaborate on the claims of the article below, the article claims that (i) a Turkish diaspora does not exist, (ii) a Turkish diaspora can actually exist, and (iii) a Turkish diaspora should exist. The article is intended to object to all bureaucratic, diplomatic, political and academic studies which are conducted presupposing the existence of a Turkish diaspora without asking even the most basic questions such as "Is there a Turkish Diaspora? Who forms this diaspora? What are its characteristics? Who are the subjects of the Turkish diaspora?". Considering the sensitivity of the issue, this objection will be made based on publicly accessible information and documents, and by using only open sources.

Hurd (2008: 298-316) claims that "interests are in part products of those identities" and the social constitution of state interests includes both interests and identities of actor's in the socialization and internationalization processes and the demand for social recognition and therefore specifies four distinguished features of social constructivism: (i) an alternative to materialism, (ii) the construction of state interests, (iii) mutual constitution of structures and agents, (iv) multiple logics of anarchy. Especially the second feature of social constructivism "the construction of state interest" is related with Turkey's diaspora policy linked with the *identity* phenomenon. Wendt (1992: 397) says "actors acquire identities-relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self-by participating in such collective meanings." Identification process for Turks living abroad, supported by the political, academical, bureaucratical, diplomatic endeavors in Turkey expose the dilemmas in diaspora identity and subjects of the Turkish Diaspora. In addition to problematics of the construction of identity for Turkish diaspora, *mutual constitution of*

structures and agents is incomplete discussion in socially constructing Turkish diaspora. The constructivist approach for the social construction of interests and identities presents the broader issue of the connection amongst structures/organizations and agents (Hurd 2008: 303).

By the problematic of social constructing of diaspora identity and the relation between structures and agents in the diaspora community, the content of this article is defined by the three main answers to the question "Why is there not a Turkish diaspora?" as listed below:

1. It is unclear what is meant by "Turkish diaspora."
2. The meaning of the word "diaspora" is not clear.
3. The meaning of the word "Turk" is being used beyond its constitutional definition**.**

Besides conceptual and theoretical dilemmas, these three fundamental uncertainties also result in dispersed and, further, contradicting diaspora studies carried out by the public institutions in Turkey. As a result of the rapid and significant changes occurring in the international system, there is an ever-increasing need for studies and discussions about the topic of Turkish diaspora; however, the basic questions regarding the diaspora issue do not receive the attention it actually deserves from the bureaucracy and the academia.

Nearly 45.600 results appear for "Türk diasporası" and nearly 38.100 results for "Turkish diaspora" on Google search engine. However, there are limited number of studies specifically on Turkish diaspora and on migration phenomenon at large although they have widespread use in various contexts.

Despite its thousands of years of migration culture resulting in a population dispersed within a geography from the Central Asia to the Balkans, from the Middle East to the Caucasus (Erdoğan ve Kaya 2015) and especially considering her last fifty years during which it turned into a country which has now millions of citizens scattered around the world from European countries to the USA, from Canada to Australia, Turkey -against its qualitatively, quantitatively and historically great and deep-rooted migration history- has scarcely any background information, knowledge, experience, legal regulation, academic research or policy regarding the migration

phenomenon and its natural consequence i.e. diaspora. Ekici (2010) indeed makes a proper assessment regarding the issue and emphasizes the thousand years of migration experiences and their inputs in the Turkish history, folklore, life style and culture. Ulusoy (2017:145) take this approach step further and argues that Turkey's current diaspora policies continues as the extension of the patterns of the migration policies on five basic fields: education, religion, work, economy and NGO's.

However, this great and unique experience in migrating that Turkey possess has the potential to bear a value and meaning for the theoretical and conceptual discussions globally. One of the primary intentions of this study is to attract attention to this potential and to constitute a source for new discussions and researches.

Unfortunately, most of the Turkish scholars uses the term of Turkish Diaspora for the Turkish migrants in Europe without analyzing the social characteristic of the Turkish community in Europe whether suitable for diaspora or not. As can be seen in Kaya and Kentel's study (2005), there is not any terminological difference between the words of *Turkish migrants*, *Euro Turks*, *Turkish groups in Western Europe* and *Turkish diaspora*:

> …Euro-Turks would provide both strong support and an impediment to Turkey's EU membership. Thus the research has aimed at investigating whether EuroTurks living in Germany and France could become a driving force or vanguard for Turkey in the process of integration into the European Union. It identifies the social, political and cultural discourses of the Turkish diaspora concerning Turkish-EU relations. By gauging public opinion among the Turkish groups in Western Europe, it also seeks to determine whether these communities could provide new opportunities and prospects for the formation of a more open and democratic society in Turkey.

This study does not cover any historical developments and any recent discussions regarding the question "What is a diaspora?", which is a separate research topic[2], instead, discusses how the "Turkish diaspora" term is

perceived and used, and focuses on the alternative definitions of the Turkish diaspora term.

Defining Turkish Diaspora

The term of *diaspora* and turkey

It is important to dwell upon when the term diaspora started to be used in Turkish and with what meaning it was used first. In this section of the study is based on Great Turkish Dictionary (*Büyük Türkçe Sözlük*) published by Turkish Language Association. The First (1944), Second (1955), Third (1959), Fourth (1966), Fifth (1969), Sixth (1974) and Seventh (1983) editions of the Dictionary do not include the term *diaspora*. The term is not included in the Eighth edition (1988) either; however, a term that means fragment ('kopuntu' in Turkish original) is described as "broken bit" on page 898. The term *diaspora* is included in the Volume 1 of the Ninth edition (1998) on page 580 for the first time and defined as "fragment" (*kopuntu* in Turkish original). The term mentioned above i.e. fragment (*kopuntu*) is defined as *"broken bit, diaspora"* in Volume 2 on page 1362. The Tenth edition (2005) and the facsimile of the Tenth edition (2009) defines "diaspora" on page 520 as follows: "diaspora: 1. Branches of Jewish people who start to settle in foreign countries after leaving their homelands. 2. A branch of any nation that leaves its homeland." The Eleventh edition (2011) includes three different definitions of the term diaspora on page 655: "diaspora: 1. A place where members of any nation or belief live away from their homelands. 2. A branch of any nation separated from its homeland, fragment. 3. Branches of Jewish people who start to settle in foreign countries after leaving their homelands, fragment."

As seen, the word diaspora was included in the agenda of the Turkish Language Association in 1998 for the first time; however, it was used as a synonym of the word *kopuntu* to generate a Turkish word, and to abstain from using a foreign term. Yet, the word was defined as "broken bit", which is explanatory by no means. Besides its first meaning that directly refers to Jews, for the first time in 2005 and 2009 when it was defined as *a branch of any nation that leaves its homeland*, it gained its second meaning close to what it actually means globally. On top of these two definitions, in 2011, another third definition was added as the denotation of the word, defining

the word diaspora as "the place where members of any nation or belief live away from their homelands", which is wrong in our opinion. As Sheffer (2003: 65-73) emphasizes the only meaning that the word diaspora has today is an ethno-national one, whose definition does not deal with belief groups by any means. Therefore, belief groups cannot be defined as diaspora. Other words such as *Göçtürkler*, *Dış Türkler*, *diyaspora* and *kopuntu* were tried in Turkish; however, none of these words could substitute for the word *diaspora*.

Social perception

In Turkish, the word diaspora has been given a specific use, in which it refers to Armenian Diaspora. The genocide allegations made by the Armenian Diaspora and their actions against Turkey further bolstered the negative perception of the word within the society. In addition to the negative perception caused by the Armenian Diaspora, the pejorative connotations influenced by terms like ghetto, minority, alien and fragment resulted in this unfavorable perception towards the word.

During his address at the World Turkish Entrepreneurs Assembly on March 26, 2016, the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan indeed emphasized the negative connotations associated with the word diaspora (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lIbvf3A3Gcc [Accessed on June 8, 2017]):

> Dear brothers and sisters, we have just used the term "diaspora" to define our citizens living abroad and people who are our country's nationals. To be frank, this expression is distant to me, an expression somehow stirring a feeling of deficiency. I do not really like it. Because this expression actually originates from a word that means getting separated. Separating, in other words, separating from one's country, separating from one's nation, and values. However, wherever we go or live, we are a nation that always remember its ancestors, past, history, values; and we continue to live together with them. To give an example, it has been thousand years since our ancestors left the Central Asia to arrive here or -put differently using the term diaspora- since

> they were separated from that geography. Yet, we still see that geography as our homeland, and embrace our brothers and sisters whenever possible.

As seen, the meaning "separated, parted" incorporated in the word diaspora stirs negative connotations regarding diaspora in Turkish and Turkey, and this situation is indeed articulated by the top authority of the state. At this point, it should be noted that the pejorative connotations of the term are now resolved thanks to how it developed throughout the history. Incorporating such connotations as ghetto, foreign, minority, a state of being marginalized, the term diaspora has now turned into a term adopted by many of the societies voluntarily, one that is used very often unnecessarily. Today it would be better to use the term Turkish Diaspora provided that its current potential acquires necessary features, instead of trying to generate a whole new term. Despite some unconfirmed allegations of a decision made by the National Security Council not to use the term "diaspora", the use of the term diaspora becomes obligatory as the term is adopted throughout the world and in our country, and the word is now included in Great Turkish Dictionary, as well as because other terms generated as substitutes for *diaspora* did not get the acceptance of the society, politics and academia. In addition to the Türkiye Scholarships (https://www.turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/. [Accessed on July 3, 2017]) granted to international students by the Administration for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, Diaspora Scholarships (https://www.ytb.gov.tr/diaspora_burslari.php. [Accessed on July 3, 2017]) granted to Turkish citizens living abroad are also an example that shows the term is used in practice as well.

Subjects of Turkish diaspora

One of the most basic questions and problems within the context of the discussions regarding Turkish diaspora is "Who forms the Turkish diaspora?" Even a superficial assessment will reveal that the structure, which does not actually exist yet is claimed to exist and defined as Turkish diaspora, is being used in legal regulations, and by academia, diplomacy, bureaucracy and press in a rather wide and ambiguous sense. This ambiguous term encompasses:

- Citizens,
- Fellow descendants (only the ones of Turkish descent),

- Related communities,
- Fellow communities,
- International students,
- Ottoman residues,
- All Muslims (Ummah).

Even this extensive usage shows that the term Turkish diaspora stands for a group whose subjects are unclear, concluding that there is not a Turkish diaspora defined. How this term is used depends on the experiences of individuals and/or institutions, their political preferences and purposes. Ahmet Davutoğlu (2012), the then Foreign Minister, stated:

> …the term Diaspora. We need to recognize the most extensive scope. Not a diaspora which only encompasses our citizens, I mean, those who are Turkish citizens and migrated; Bosnians, Albanians, Pakistanis, Somalians, Palestinians... we have to recognize their populations there, abroad as a part of our diaspora. Even an hour that they spent together with us in the history makes them a part of our diaspora.

Davutoğlu thus introduced a far-reaching and problematic definition of the term diaspora by including the Pakistanis living in England, the Somalians in the US, and many other communities into Turkey's diaspora and extending the scope of the term way beyond the academic and legal boundaries available.

As the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey - Article 66, defines the Turk as "Everyone bound to the Turkish State through the bond of citizenship is a Turk.", this study maintains that, for now, the most powerful subject of Turkish diaspora is -especially from a legal perspective- the Constitutionally-defined Turkish citizenship, and suggests that Turkish diaspora studies are carried out on the basis of the Turkish citizens living abroad. The Turkish Diaspora of Turkish citizens living abroad should be given a politically and diplomatically consistent ground and core that is also based on a sturdy ground within the context of national and international law.

It is critically required that the term fellow descendant is reconsidered, not on the basis of the bonds within one single ethnic group which comprises

Turkish citizens, but on the basis of all the individuals within the Turkish nation that is comprised of Turkish citizens, and the bonds of relationship outside Turkey (Yaldız 2018). Another important issue to be raised regarding these arguments is related to whether the communities recognized as fellow descendants have founded their own free states and whether they see Turkey as their homeland. It is obvious that the Turks of Western Thrace recognized as minorities in Greece and the Turkmens living in Turkmenistan cannot be equal subjects of Turkish diaspora. To give an example, Turkmenistan citizens living in the US are part of Turkmenistan diaspora, if they have diasporic characteristics. The Turkmenistan diaspora in the US can only be seen as another diaspora that the Turkish diaspora can cooperate with.

The term related community is another term that requires discussion and a definition. As witnessed that the term related community encompasses Bosnians, Albanians, Palestinians and even Somalians, the term related community expands the scope of the diaspora term to such extent that the term diaspora becomes nonfunctional. Davutoğlu (2012) stated:

> ... Do we see the Comoro Islands as Ottoman lands?... What we mean by related communities includes not only the communities in the Balkans and the Central Asia who we deem our cousins, but all the communities there. If student scholarships were granted... There are many nations whom we are in debt. There, these nations are what we mean by related communities.

Davutoğlu, thus, expanded the content of the term to the Comoro Islands defining almost all the world and all people living on earth as part of the Turkish diaspora.

Expressions such as "Ummah geography", "Ottoman residues", and "Islamic World" signifies a rather vague area within the context of the term diaspora. Referring to an imaginary ideal rather than a concrete one, these ideological terms that are not academic and diplomatic terms with no definable and determinable criterion can be used as a tool in foreign policy. However, as emphasized above, their inclusion in the Turkish Diaspora as diaspora subjects makes the term diaspora vaguer and less functional.

Academic interest in Turkey

It can be said that academic interest towards diaspora studies has been institutionalized generally in two waves in Turkey.

The first wave emerged after the Turkic Republics in the Central Asia gained independence following the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in the 1990s. During this period -as far as we can determine- the following academic departments were founded:

- Marmara University Institute of Turkic Studies (1991)[3]
- İstanbul University Research Institute of Turkology (1991)[4]
- Selçuk University Research Institute of Turkology (1991)
- Ege University Research Institute of Turkish World (1992)
- Atatürk University Research Institute of Turkology (1992)
- Hacettepe University Institute of Turkish Studies (1992)
- Erciyes University Research Center for Turkish World (1993)

The academic institutions founded during the first wave have three common characteristics in terms of geography, theme and academia. These above-mentioned institutions focused on the Central Asia geographically; thematically the "fellow" (of Turkish descent, Turkic) states and communities that gained independence after the USSR; and academically studies done by relatively more academics from the field of Turkish Language and Literature.

As for the second wave, it emerged after diaspora issues became more influential on the political and social life in Turkey starting from 2010. During this period -as far as we can determine- the following academic departments were founded:

- Kastamonu University Research Center for Applied Studies on Turkish World (2012)
- Uşak University Research Center for Applied Studies on Turkish World (2012)
- Uludağ University Research Center for Applied Studies on Turkish States and Related Communities (2013)
- Anadolu University Research Center for Applied Studies on Turks Abroad (2014)
- Necmettin Erbakan University Erol Güngör Research Center

for Applied Studies on Turkish Diaspora (2014)

- Sakarya University Research Center for Applied Studies on Diaspora (2015)
- Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University Research Center for Applied Studies on Turkish Communities Abroad (2015)

Studies carried out are not fulfilling both in terms of conceptual and theoretical requirements although the academic interest towards diaspora studies is excessively satisfactory in terms of numbers/institutions, as seen in the examples above. Terms used frequently in the names of the academic institutions such as "diaspora, Turkish diaspora, Turks Abroad, Turkish World, Turkish Communities, Turkish States, related communities" are picked arbitrarily, generally without needing a definition and resorting to any academic research.

How should Turkish Diaspora be Defined?

This study focuses on Turkish diaspora, which has not been given a legal and political infrastructure and which has yet to be studied and discussed in detail. Furthermore, the ambiguity caused by the weak and unnecessary interventions of the main institutions to sub-divide Turkish diaspora into *relationship diaspora, temporary diaspora,* and *ancestral diaspora* in their practices results in common and easily-referable use of this term, and consequently causes more conceptual uncertainty. However, it should always be kept in mind that diaspora is not a tool which can be referred to when deemed useful in foreign policy. Therefore, such use of the term that is intended to meet all needs in foreign policy in a way to cover all collaborations needed and further construe it beyond its broadest meaning just for using it as a tool for this purpose results in some predicaments both in foreign policy and in domestic policy.

In this regard, a local and new definition is needed based on Turkey's historical and cultural characteristics. As already emphasized in this study, lack of interest in the academia as well as the fact that studies are being imported from the European countries and the USA stand as the most significant predicaments regarding the issue. Moreover, this attitude is present not only in the field of diaspora studies but also in many fields of social sciences at large. As Bilgin (2005: 10) discusses this predicament

with respect to studies on international studies, assessing the structure of the studies on international relations throughout the world and maintains that a relation of center vs periphery is the core of this structure, and adds that the studies in Turkey are "on the periphery". This is also evident from the practices in Turkey, which include adoption of the dominant theory approaches developed by the Western countries (mainly the US and England) where studies (and theories) about international relations are produced, and employing and utilizing these theories without questioning (Yalvaç 2016: 61).

Acceptance of the diaspora terms and models produced particularly based on Jewish and Armenian examples in Turkey, contradicts with her historical, cultural, political and legal experiences regarding diaspora. As it can be seen in the table below, the Jewish and Armenian communities are attributed one single characteristic within the context of diaspora, and this case cannot explain the multi-characteristics of the Turkish diaspora.

Table 1. *Subjects of Diaspora and Their Characteristics*

Diaspora	Race	Language	Religion	Homeland	Citizenship
Israel Diaspora	Jew	Hebrew	Judaism	Israel	Israel (and other country)
Armenian Diaspora	Armenian	Armenian	Christian	Armenia	Armenia (and other country)
Turkish Diaspora	Turk Kurd Arab Jew Circassian Bosnian Kazakh …	Turkish Turkmen Kurdish Bosnian Albanian Arabic Macedonian …	Islam Christianity Judaism Zoroastrianism …	Turkey Azerbaijan Turkmenistan Bosnia Iraq Palestine Somali ….	Turkey (and other country) Azerbaijan Bulgaria Kosovo Germany the Netherlands ….

First of all, academic arguments on the terms (i) Turk, (ii) diaspora and (iii) Turkish Diaspora should be developed so that a comprehensive approach can exist to an extent wide enough to deal with this potential, as well as

political and legal regulations can be re-arranged based on this academic ground. The relation of such undefined terms as fellow descendant, related community, and fellow community with the term diaspora can only be defined within this framework.

The need for such studies scaled up even more since one of the most important problems that Turkey has recently faced in her foreign policy is associated with diaspora policies. Even the below-listed events that took place during the first seven months of 2017 are significant indicators of how much Turkey's diaspora policies exert an influence on the Turkish Foreign Policy:

- On March 11, 2017, the Foreign Minister of Turkey was blocked from going to the Netherlands to meet up with the Turkish citizens living in the Netherlands regarding the referendum in Turkey; Minister of Family and Social Policies of Turkey, was deported from Holland after being declared as persona non-grata.
- On March 17, 2017, Bulgaria recalled its Ambassador in Ankara as they blamed Turkey for intruding into the elections in Bulgaria within the scope of Turkey's policies about the Bulgarian citizens of Turkish descent in Bulgaria.
- On June 30, 2017, the Foreign Minister of Germany Sigmar Gabriel explained that, "the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan will not be allowed to meet up with the Turks during his visit to Hamburg between July 7 - 8, 2017 for G-20 Summit", and subsequently on July 12, 2017, the President Erdoğan criticized this attitude saying: "We intended to hold a meeting with our fellow descendants in Germany when I went there for the last G-20 summit. They would not let me…. You know the Netherlands, similar to Belgium. Then, why?"
- Article 28 of the Commission Report on Turkey adopted by the European Parliament on July 6, 2017 to suspend talks between Turkey and the EU states:

  (i) [Turkey's] exporting its internal conflicts poses a threat to peaceful co-existence within society in those Member States with a substantial community of Turkish origin,

(ii) the Turkish government must refrain from systematic efforts to mobilize the Turkish diaspora in the Member States for its own purposes,

(iii) [its] concern [regarding] the reports of alleged pressure on members of the Turkish diaspora living in the Member States

(iv) [it] condemns the Turkish authorities' surveillance of citizens with dual nationality living abroad.

- On July 7, 2017, the Netherlands banned a meeting organized by the Holland Branch of the Union of European-Turkish Democrats (UETD) on the anniversary of the failed coup attempt in July, 15, 2016 in Turkey, barring the then Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey from attending the meeting.
- On July 10, 2017, Austria barred Minister of Economy of Turkey, from attending an event organized in Austria to commemorate the 2016's failed coup attempt.

As seen above, the diaspora issue and diaspora policies get more and more important in terms of Turkey's foreign policy, bilateral and international collaborations and the accession-to-EU period. Therefore, conceptual arguments on Turkish diaspora are getting academically, bureaucratically, diplomatically and legally more important. The on-going arguments developed based on the "imported" ones, which are incompatible with Turkey's historical and social potential, will not be useful. So, within this context, this study has two proposals regarding the definition and characteristics of Turkish Diaspora, which should be a separate and voluminous topic for future studies: The subjects of Turkish diaspora can be established from two different perspectives, (i) a narrow (citizenship) one and (ii) extensive (Turkish) one. As Cohen's (2012: 7) proper assessment regarding the diasporas "often *mobilize a collective identity*, not only a place of settlement or … homeland, but also *in solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries*" global cooperation holds a mandatory role in Turkish diaspora's characteristics.

(i) From the narrow perspective, Turkish citizens (and those holding Blue Card) can constitute the core of the Turkish Diaspora as its main subjects. For

this perspective, the most basic point to be mentioned is that not all Turkish citizens living abroad can/will be able to be a part of the Turkish diaspora, contrary to the flawed approach commonly seen in practices. Recognizing the Turkish citizens, who live abroad yet became culturally, politically and/or economically detached from Turkey, and those who even have adopted destructive attitudes against Turkey because of their ideology and /or to an extent almost close to terrorism, not only makes the term Turkish Diaspora an empty and dysfunctional term but may also damage the diaspora policies to be implemented. This approach, which recognizes all of the nearly 6 million Turkish Citizens living abroad as Turkish Diaspora and maintains that the number of individuals included in the Turkish Diaspora abroad is 6 million, is wrong. In short, the formula "Turkish citizens living abroad = Turkish Diaspora" is wrong.

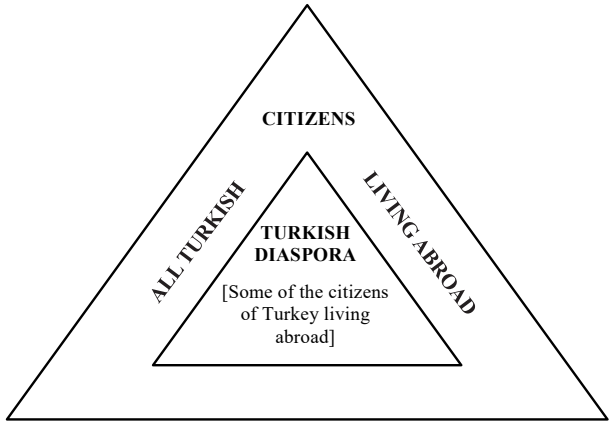

Figure 1. *Turkish Diaspora* (the narrow definition based on Citizenship)

Narrow Definition (Citizenship-Based)**:** Turkish Diaspora consists of the citizens of the Republic of Turkey that live abroad and recognize Turkey as their homeland and are in solidarity with Turkey and have a common sense of solidarity, who are globally in cooperation with the Turkish Citizens in other countries and sustain their cultural, economic, political and social bond with the homeland.

(ii) The term Turkish Diaspora can recognize the Turkish-speaking communities as its subjects, from a wide perspective that is based on the above-mentioned historical and cultural bonds. Recognizing its subjects based on the language spoken will render the currently-used vague and wrong terms such as "fellow descendant, related, fellow" useless, and especially highlight cultural identity instead of interpreting descent based on race. Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council), whose members include Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, is an important organization to be examined in this regard. However, it should always be remembered that the fact that not Turkic language but the Turkish language is decisive for the subjects of Turkish Diaspora means a lot to communities and individuals. Therefore, the Turkish-speaking communities who are legally and/or sociologically deemed as minorities in the states they are living in and who recognize Turkey as their homeland should be given priority, not the citizens of the independent states where Turkic Languages are spoken. The Turkish-speaking communities and individuals living in countries like Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Georgia, Syria, and Iraq will thus be incorporated into the Turkish Diaspora based on their bond through language/culture, not through descent/race.

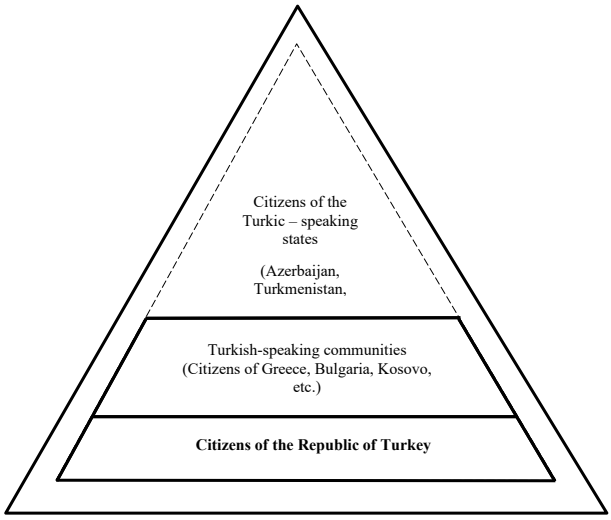

Figure 2. *Turkish Diaspora* (Extensive definition – Language-Based)

Extensive Definition (Turkish language as the Base)**:** Turkish Diaspora consists of the Turkish-speaking communities and individuals that live outside Turkey and recognize Turkey as their homeland and are in solidarity with Turkey and have a common sense of solidarity, and who are globally in cooperation with the Turkish-speaking communities living in other countries and sustain their cultural, economic, political and social bonds with the homeland.

Conclusion

As discussed in detail in this study, all institutions within the Republic of Turkey seem to be confused about the issue of Turkish Diaspora. Among the main reasons to this situation is the fact that there are hardly any conceptual and theoretical research and argument regarding Turkish Diaspora. Therefore; the long-established and possibly influential issue of Turkish Diaspora should be put on agenda particularly by the discipline of international relations, and law, political science, sociology, folklore, any many other disciplines; then, in turn, the endeavors in the fields of law, politics, bureaucracy and diplomacy will be useful and valuable. Bilgili (2012:12) states that "[h]aving a very diverse and dynamic migration history, Turkish migration stands as an enriching example to observe in depth…. The transition of temporary labor migration in Europe to permanent migration is a good example of this turnaround, as it has greatly influenced Diaspora engagement policies." The starting point of this study is that there does not exist a Turkish Diaspora, and that it may and should exist. Turkish citizens living abroad or Turkish-speaking communities have yet to be called a Turkish Diaspora particularly because of the lack of consciousness and of global cooperation, yet the above-mentioned historical, geographical and cultural features possess a significant degree of potential. Taking advantage of this potential and creation of a Turkish Diaspora are important in these three terms as explained below:

(i) In terms of a Turkish Diaspora, creation of and fostering a diasporic consciousness, keeping the bonds with homeland, handing-down of mother tongue and, hence, the culture itself to future generations are of greater importance to prevent assimilation of Turks abroad. Features which may be brought up by being in a Diaspora such as global

citizenship, multiple identities, multiculturalism, economic and, even political achievement are great opportunities considering the potential of the Turkish diaspora.

(ii) In terms of host state, Turkish diaspora has huge potential for diplomatic, political and economic gains thanks to its significant and wide geography, which is not limited to Turkey's land.

(iii) In terms of Turkey, Turkish Diaspora has gained a status of being a case needed more and more each passing day particularly in the field of public diplomacy and diaspora diplomacy, and many other fields like economics and foreign policy, as well as in exchanging/transferring knowledge and experience.

An important point to be emphasized here is that the Republic of Turkey cannot establish a Turkish Diaspora, that it is up to the Turkish citizens living abroad or Turkish-speaking individuals/communities whether to become/establish a diaspora. It should also be considered whether that specific individual and/or community recognizes itself as a Turkish diaspora, apart from whether Turkey recognizes them as a diaspora. Özarslan (2017) explains this situation with the term "response". It would indeed be one of the decisive features of the Turkish diaspora how those individuals and communities, who may be called Turkish Diaspora, respond to Turkey's diaspora policies.

The most important contribution from the Republic of Turkey to the process of creating a Turkish Diaspora should be provided through supporting conceptual discussions about the bond of language and/or citizenship and academic, bureaucratic, diplomatic and law studies; contributing to the formation of a diaspora consciousness and opening passages for global collaboration between the Turks abroad; not trying to establish a diaspora.

Global collaboration does not mean the political groups (Organizations of Milli Görüş, Ülkücü etc.), religious groups (Süleymancı, Nurcu, Alevi etc.), state-supported religious groups [DİTİB (The Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs), ATİB (European Turkish-Islamic Union), DCA (Diyanet Center of America), professional groups [MÜSİAD (Independent

Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association)] setting-up outside Turkey and collaborating particularly via non-governmental organizations. (To give an example, the global cooperation between the Milli Görüş Organization in Germany and the one in Australia is not a relation based on diaspora, but an organizational one.) Such platforms as Citizens Abroad Advisory Board (YVDK) can be given as significant examples that facilitate the global cooperation needed to establish a Turkish diaspora. (https://www.ytb.gov.tr/danisma_kurulu.php [Accessed on June 16, 2017])

This study rejects the extensive interpretation which maintains that Turkish Diaspora is so large that it covers nearly everyone on earth, as well as the approaches that explain the diaspora based on some ideological terms such as fellow descendant, related community, Ottoman residues, Ummah geography, etc. Another objection within this study is against the approaches that try to define Turkish diaspora based on imported terms. This study, instead, proposes two different definitions, each of which is based on either a legal ground (Turkish citizenship) or a cultural ground (Turkish language) in accordance with Turkey's own historical and social dynamics.

Therefore, the Turkish Diaspora issue and diaspora politics of Turkey should become topics of academic studies, and these studies should interest academics particularly from the field of international relations, as well as from other disciplines such as law, political science, sociology, folklore, etc. As Aydın (2014: 7) suggests, the new Turkish diaspora policy must be regarded in the context of three developments: (i) the emergence of a transnational diaspora in Germany, in other European states and in the USA, (ii) the new Turkish diaspora policy is related to the establishment of a new state elite and the implementation of a new discourse on modernity and Muslim national identity in Turkey, (iii) the new diaspora policy needs to be related to the context of the re-orientation of Turkish foreign policy, which would possibly not have taken place without shifts of power in society. This study hopes to result in new researches and arguments to be developed regarding the issue.

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Türk Diasporası Kavramına Eleştirel Bir Bakış: Türk Diasporası Var mı?*

Fırat Yaldız**

Öz

Bu makalede, Türkiye'nin siyasi, bürokratik ve akademik hayatında sıklıkla kullanılan Türk Diasporası kavramının içeriği tartışılmaktadır. Özellikle Türk kavramının, vatandaşlık ve soydaşlık arasında, anayasal düzenlemelerin de ötesine geçerek kullanılması, "Türk Diasporası" kavramını sorunlu hale getirmektedir. Çok geniş ve belirsiz bir içerikle kullanılmakta olan bu kavram ile ne ifade edildiği ve kimlerin Türk diasporasının öznesi olduğu belli değildir. Üstelik Türkiye'nin diaspora olarak adlandırdığı toplumlara ilişkin dış politik beklenti ve uygulamaları her geçen gün daha sorunlu ve önemli bir hale gelmekte; ancak bu konuya ilişkin yeterli seviyede akademik araştırma bulunmamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler

Migration, diaspora, Türk, Türk diasporası, soydaş, vatandaş.

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Критический подход к термину турецкая диаспора: существует ли «турецкая диаспора»?*

Фырат Ялдыз **

Аннотация

В этой статье обсуждается содержание термина «турецкая диаспора», который часто используется в политическом, бюрократическом и академическом контексте. В частности, использование термина *турецкий* между значениями гражданства и родства, а также вне рамок конституционно-правового определения делает термин «турецкая диаспора» более проблематичным. Неясно, что подразумевается под данным термином, который широко и неопределенно используется, и кто является субъектами турецкой диаспоры. Кроме того, ожидания и последствия Турции в ее внешней политике в отношении обществ, которые она определяет в качестве диаспоры, с каждым днем становится все более проблематичным и важным.
Несмотря на огромные масштабы проблемы, сравнительно мало научных исследований было проведено по этому вопросу.

Ключевые слова

миграция, диаспора, турецкий, турецкая диаспора, потомки, гражданин

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