Home State Oriented Diaspora Organizations And The Making Of Partisan Citizens Abroad: Motivations, Discursive Frames, And Actions Towards Co-Opting The Turkish Diaspora In Europe

Bilge Yabanci *Ca' Foscari University of Venice*

Correspondence: Bilge Yabanci, Marie Curie Fellow, L'Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Dipartimento di Filosofia e Beni Culturali Dorsoduro 3284/D, 30123, Venezia, Italy. bilge.yabanci@unive.it

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What motivates diasporas to support undemocratic rule in their countries of origin while enjoying democratic freedoms in their countries of settlement? This study adopts a meso-level approach to answer this question, and focuses on the Turkish diaspora in Europe as a case study. Lately, the diaspora governance literature has focused on official diaspora institutions and the policies of countries of origin. This study, alternatively, highlights "diasporic civic space" as an arena entrenching authoritarian practices "at home." It investigates the conditions under which diasporic civic space can be co-opted by undemocratic countries of origin and the role of "home state oriented diaspora organizations" in this process of co-optation. The study shows that diasporic civic space can offer resources to undemocratic regimes to mobilize previously dormant diaspora communities and create a support base abroad that is driven by nationalism and partisanship. The empirical discussion unveils four factors behind the successful mobilization of diasporas by undemocratic countries of origin: (1) nationalist sentiments among the diaspora; (2) motivations to get a share from the perks that may be meted out by home country government; (3) feelings of insecurity, fear, and marginalization as immigrants; and (4) the desire to assert one's identity and cultural ties vis-à-vis the majority in countries of settlement. The findings are based on the case of the Turkish diasporic civic space in Europe, which has recently been mobilized by a diaspora organization with political ties to the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Original data are drawn from semi-structured interviews conducted in 2018–2019 with members and representatives of major pro-AKP diaspora organization known as the Union of International Democrats (UID), as well as Alevi, Kurdish, and Islamist/conservative diaspora organizations in Sweden, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Germany. The findings contribute to the understanding of undemocratic home states' non-coercive and de-territorialized governance practices beyond their borders.

Key words: civil society, diaspora, diaspora organizations, government-oriented NGOs (GONGOs), Justice and Development Party (AKP), Turkey, Union of International Democrats (UETD/UID)

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Volume ▌, Number ▌ | 2021 | doi.org/10.3138/diaspora.21.2.2021.05.20.2

What motivates diasporas to support undemocratic governance in their home states? To answer this question, this study adopts a meso-level approach and focuses on the transnational civic space of the Turkish diaspora in Europe as a case study.[1] The extant work on Turkey's diaspora governance predominantly focuses on the emergence of a new official diaspora policy during the Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule, highlighting that the AKP has transformed Turkey's engagement with its diaspora to reincorporate citizens abroad into "the redefined nation" (Mencutek and Başer 2018; Aksel 2014; Öktem 2014). Within this context, the state discourse and the institutions in charge of the diaspora, such as the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), Yunus Emre Institutes, and the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), have been analyzed extensively. This literature has examined the AKP's attempt at advancing neo-Ottomanist foreign policy goals and entrenching Turkish identity among the diaspora (Maritato 2018; Öztürk and Sözeri 2018; Aydın 2014; Mügge 2012; Bilgili and Siegel 2013; Rosenow-Williams 2013; Ünver 2013).

However, in addition to the official institutions, the Turkish diaspora has also scaled up bottom-up efforts to create a "transnational political field" through which they maintain and diversify their ties with Turkey (Itzigsohn 2000). Yet, there is only scant attention in the literature to this contestation and, in general, to the diasporic civic space as an intermediary arena for mobilizing support for undemocratic regimes in home countries. This study investigates the Turkish diasporans transnational political field and a distinctive pro-AKP diaspora organization in this field focusing on the contestation for the co-optation of the diasporic civic space.

Drawing on fieldwork in Sweden, Austria, Germany, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, this study offers several contributions to diaspora governance and civil society literatures. First, it highlights the distinct role of the diasporic civic space and "home state oriented diaspora organizations" in diaspora governance. Such diaspora organizations can: (1) organize votes to consolidate autocratic governance; (2) gain a unique capacity to transform resources between the diaspora and home states, and to reward the supporters of the government abroad; (3) become active agents of authoritarian legitimation and denial of international criticism directed against the undemocratic home state; and (4) serve the purposes of surveillance and control over the regime's opponents abroad.

Second, the study develops an empirically grounded argument on *why* diasporas might support an undemocratic regime in their home country while benefiting from democratic rights and freedoms in their countries of settlement. The case study of the Turkish diaspora in Europe reveals that there is a complex set of factors that maintain the fervent support for undemocratic home states among diaspora communities. Expected and actual material benefits only partially explain the widespread diaspora support for the AKP. Long-distance nationalism and the desire to assert their distinct identity vis-à-vis the majority in countries of settlement also play a large role. The failure in attaining socio-economic and political equality for immigrants, and the rise of far-right and populist politics in Europe, also contribute to the insecurities and fears of diasporas. As the study demonstrates, the major pro-AKP diaspora organization exploits these fears and insecurities quite effectively.

Finally, this study also cautions against the normative optimism of the civil society scholarship. Civic space is not always composed of democratic, participatory, and autonomous actors. For instance, over the last decade, the Union of Turkish Democrats (UID), with its organic ties to the AKP, increasingly assumed a dominant role in seizing the civic space among Turkish diaspora through nationalist and civilizationist frames, and a performative action repertoire similar to grassroots movements (protests, electoral mobilization, charity work). The empirical analysis reveals that the UID's frames (i.e., messages, cues, discourse) and actions serve three major goals: (1) to disseminate the AKP's vision of a uniform nation based on a religio-nationalist (Muslim and Turkish) identity claim that exceeds Turkey's borders and Turkish citizenship; (2) to prevent the Turkish diaspora from being pushed into isolation and/or towards other diaspora organizations established by dissidents (especially Kurdish) and rivals (Gülenists); and (3) to lobby European governments in favor of Turkey, or more recently to mobilize—sometimes illegally and violently—against regime critics, particularly at a moment when the AKP and Erdoğan have turned autocratic policies (Somer 2016; Öktem and Akkoyunlu 2017).

Overall, the study demonstrates that the emergence of home state oriented diaspora organizations can be conceptualized as a part of the vast transnational political field—"a realm of recurrent and institutionalized interactions and exchanges between, on the one hand, immigrants and their social and political organizations, and, on the other hand, the political institutions and the state apparatus of the country of origin" (Itzigsohn 2000, 1130).

The next section grounds this study in the theoretical discussions on diaspora governance and discusses the concept of diasporic civic space. I, then, introduce the methodological design and data collection. The third section analyzes the historical emergence and transformation of diasporic civic space among Turkish migrants in Europe, while the final section zooms into the AKP's co-optation attempt of the diasporic civic space and the UID. This section analyzes the UID's frames (i.e., the way in which it communicates its goals through messages and cues), the action repertoire to mobilize the diaspora as loyal partisan citizens abroad, and how this framing and repertoire appeals to the fears, expectations, and resentments of the Turkish diaspora as immigrants ~~in~~ the increasingly anti-immigrant context of Europe.

Diasporic Civic Space And Diaspora Organizations

Much of the recent social science research on diasporas has been focused on state-constructed diasporas. States increasingly redefine their emigrants abroad as diasporas and develop organizations and institutions to make several political gains (Varadarajan 2010). Autocratic states are particularly keen to make use of diasporas. Délano and Gamlen (2014) argue that regime change in a country is often accompanied by an attempt to reincorporate diasporas into the nation through new discursive and policy tools. Similarly, Mirilovic (2016) contends that regime types in countries of origin play a critical role in diasporas' ability to establish transnational political ties.

While there is no doubt that home states can activate diasporic identities through formal policies and discourses, diasporas are not “isolated and passive recipients” of state policies (Yurdakul 2006, 437). An exclusive focus on home states cannot explain how diasporas respond to the shifting and expanding transnational political space, and how they become agents of regime change in home states. A more complete understanding of diaspora and home state relations is possible through studying the bottom-up mobilization of diasporas in ~~the~~ dynamic transnational political field (Itzigsohn 2000). State policies concerning diasporas draw transnationally dispersed populations into “a web of rights and obligations” (Bhagwati 2003, 101). In response, these populations feel empowered and seize the political opportunities to mobilize, formulate, or implement policies concerning their homelands (Levitt and Dehesa 2003). Itzigsohn argues that diasporas actively constitute a “transnational political field” that shapes and sustains their mobilizations. A transnational political field is composed of several “networks and institutions that create new forms of social relations and action across national borders” (2000, 1128). Diaspora organizations ~~are part of~~ a transnational political field, in that they allow diasporic communities to participate in the politics of their home country (Itzigsohn 2000; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, 762). They might have different morphologies, such as institutionalized (ethnic) migrant, hometown and transnational immigrant associations, or informal networks (Shain and Barth 2003; Yurdakul 2006; Moya 2005), but they can lobby politicians, challenge, or change policies and institutions in both settlement and sending countries (Çağlar 2006; Portes, Escobar, and Radford 2007). In short, they collectively constitute what can be termed as “diasporic civic space.”

In the liberal (or neo-Tocquevillian) approach that dominates civil society literature, the concept of civic space is associated with democracy, autonomy, pluralism, and participation. For instance, Keohane and Nye argue that transnational civic space is “not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of their governments” (2004 cited in Bauerkämper and Gumb 2010, 20). Others note that it creates voluntary democratic participation and egalitarian solutions to overarching cross-border issues in line with the public interest such as gender equality, environment, and human rights (Price 2003; Walzer 1998; Keck and Sikkink 1998). Shain and Barth similarly highlight diaspora organizations as “*transmit[ters of] the values of pluralism and democracy*” (2003, 450). Halm and Sezgin (2012, 450) contend that diaspora organizations help migrants adapt to their new societies, serve their cultural, social, and religious needs, construct identities, and assist integration. Others add that diaspora organizations offer breeding grounds for peace, development, and social capital, which open the way for diasporic communities’ political engagement and participation (Michon and Vermeulen 2009; Faist 2009; Cochrane, Başer, and Swain 2009; Brinkerhoff 2006). Occasionally, they also contribute, albeit limitedly, to the institutionalization of democracy in home countries (Itzigsohn and Villacrés 2008).[2]

However, the liberal approach to civil society and transnational civic space has been heavily criticized by neo-Marxist and neo-Gramscian scholarships. First, the autonomy of civic spaces (national or transnational) from national politics remains groundless in practice (Buttigieg 2005). Second, a civic space is also “a realm of inequality" (Walzer 1999). In other words, a civic space (national or diasporic) provides ~~only~~ certain groups and individuals with opportunities for mobilization. In this sense, civic space can reproduce prevalent inequalities as minorities and subaltern groups lack the means to enter and mobilize within the civic space (Richter and Hatch 2013; Chandhoke 2007). Finally, critical literature on civil society demonstrates that civic spaces are not always composed of pro-democracy actors and activities (Kopecky and Mudde 2005; Yabanci 2019a). Undemocratic regimes often seek to control and manipulate civic spaces (Yabanci 2019b; Giersdorf and Croissant 2011). Particularly, the presence of government-oriented or government-dependent civil society organizations (GONGOs) is an instrument of authoritarian control over societal demands (Yabanci 2016b; Hemment 2012). They are often the most lavishly resourced organizations in such regimes, thus reproducing the civic space as a realm of inequalities (Yabanci 2019a). Overall, the critical literature argues that civic spaces do not naturally create conditions supportive of democracy in home countries.

Taking cues from this critical civil society literature, in this study, I approach the civic space of diaspora communities originating from Turkey as composed of several organizations with different human, financial, and social resources. They enter and exit the transnational political field at different times and develop divergent links with other diaspora organizations, Turkey and countries of settlement (Portes, Escobar, and Radford 2007). As part of the expanding "rapid and dense linkages between immigrants and the sending countries" (Itzigsohn 2000, 1130), diaspora organizations allow "complex renegotiations and reproductions of power, identity, and modes of socio-political belonging (like citizenship)" (Hepner 2003, 286). However, to what extent diaspora organizations contribute to democracy in home states, and whether they advance the participation and pluralism of diasporas, are rather determined by the political context, institutions, and practices of countries of origin and countries of settlement as well as the autonomy and resources of diaspora organizations.

In this sense, I consider political opportunities as central factors in determining frames and action repertoires of diaspora organizations.[3] Both countries of settlement and countries of origin formally and informally intervene in and shape this space. Diaspora organizations respond to, interpret, and seize political opportunities, including accessible resources and regime dynamics in both settlement and sending countries (Sökefeld 2006; Özkul 2019; Odmalm 2004). Put differently, diasporic civic space is circumscribed by the political, legal, and juridical systems of countries of settlement and origin. Hence, different diaspora organizations among Turkish immigrants in Europe are expected to adopt various strategies and mobilizational means to promote their agendas as a matter of social, cultural, political, and economic resources. They are likely to articulate various claims regarding diaspora identity vis-à-vis countries of settlement and origin.

Methodology And Data Collection

Research on the mobilizational practices of transnational actors and diaspora organizations requires a qualitative in-depth design. This study is based on the triangulation of primary and secondary data. Twenty-four semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted with both core and passive members[4] of diaspora organizations in Vienna, Stockholm, Sarajevo, and Berlin. Interviews took place intermittently through six field trips conducted between January 2018 and November 2019. To corroborate the accounts of respondents affiliated with pro-AKP organizations and to get a broader picture of the diasporic civic space, I also interviewed networks and organizations established autonomously by first- and second-generation Alevi, Kurdish, liberal, and secular diasporic communities. Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted with academics and journalists working on the migration and integration of the Turkish diaspora in these four countries. Interviews were enhanced with participant observation at public debates and protests organized or hosted by the pro-AKP diaspora organization Union of International Democrats (UID). Observational data supplemented the interview data with an ethnographic point of view, particularly regarding passive members who are mobilized through these events.

To support and corroborate the interview and observational data, I reviewed a wide range of publicly available sources such as published interviews, newsletters, reports, online media coverage, official YouTube and social media accounts of diaspora organizations, and the personal social media accounts of individuals who represent or volunteer in these organizations. Intelligence or police reports by countries of settlement concerning Turkey's diaspora policy and diaspora organizations and online news in these four countries were also consulted.

Civic Space And Turkish Diaspora In Europe: From Solidarity Networks To Corporatist Seizure Attempt

Mobilization among Turkish emigrants through diaspora organizations has a long history in Europe. Over the decades, the centrality, importance, and functions of diaspora organizations have shifted alongside the changing demography of the Turkish diaspora and the reasons for migration. Diasporic mobilization through civic organizations emerged in the 1960s and 1970s with the first ethnic migrant and socio-cultural associations (Çağlar 2006; Akis and Kalaylioglu 2010). However, the transnational activities of early diaspora organizations remained limited for three reasons. First, migrants did not constitute a diaspora. Namely, they did not perceive themselves as permanent settlers abroad, but temporary migrants who would eventually return home. Migrant organizations, therefore, aimed to provide solidarity and socialization opportunities among Turks in foreign countries during their stay. Second, Turkey's policy towards citizens abroad was limited to remittance-management instead of diaspora governance (Mencutek and Başer 2018). Finally, countries of settlement encouraged and, in some cases, even funded solidarity organizations to improve multiculturalism and integration and discouraged transnational activities (Akis and Kalaylioglu 2010).

In the 1970s and after the 1980 coup, diasporic civic space among Turkish emigrants in Europe started to diversify and expand in three different directions. First, women and youth associations emerged, mostly as a reaction to the senior male-domination in hometown and cultural associations (Appendix A, S2[5]) and focused on the promotion of women and young migrants' rights in countries of settlement. Second, new organizations emerged with close ties to religious movements in Turkey (Gülen movement,[6] *Milli Görüş* or "National View"[7]) and smaller Islamic brotherhoods (i.e., *tarikats*). Starting in Germany, they progressively expanded to other countries (for a discussion on Germany, see Adar 2019). Third, in the 1980s and 1990s, political immigrants from ethnic and religious minorities (Alevi and Kurdish) established their associations. After the 1980 coup, these organizations sought to politicize the early arrivals from Turkey through new networks and organizations (Adamson 2018).

The advent of a more politicized diasporic civic space was transformative for early solidarity networks. With the politicization of the diasporic civic space, even socio-cultural associations started to orient themselves as transnational actors. For instance, in the mid-1990s, hometown associations witnessed a revival and sought active involvement in the political and economic life in Turkey and countries of settlement (Çağlar 2006). However, this transformation destroyed their functions as solidarity and integration providers. On this point, words of one interviewee who arrived for political reasons in the 1980s reflect a self-critical position: "when we arrived, we thought we knew everything better [than the early comers]. We brought political ideas but destroyed the solidarity and mutual-aid networks that aided them [the early comers] to adapt to and settle in Germany" (Appendix A, G3).

When the AKP came to power in 2002, the diasporic civic space was vibrant, diverse, and highly politicized. Organized diaspora groups by Kurdish and Alevi communities were critical towards Turkey's democratic shortcomings and human rights record. In the early 2000s, at the beginning of the AKP era, Turkey's official diaspora institutions were rather inclusive towards Kurdish and Alevi groups, reflecting the relative openness and pluralism of the early AKP years. However, the AKP's approach towards the Turkish diaspora ~~has~~ gradually transformed the diasporic civic space in many ways. The AKP developed an extensive top-down diaspora policy through official institutions (Öktem 2014). According to some observers, the Turkish government's new approach has become paternalistic and protective. "Over time, policies [towards diaspora organizations] have become more exclusive. Critical organizations no longer feel welcome. … [Today,] Turkey's communication with the diaspora is a one-way street" (MiGAZIN 2014). Yet, this approach appealed to a large segment of the diaspora after "decades of neglect and disdain" from Turkey (Appendix A, G7, A3).

The AKP also actively sought to co-opt the existing diasporic civic space by encouraging several diaspora organizations to accept a new mass diaspora organization that would absorb fragmented diaspora groups and organizations with corporatist logic. Towards this end, the AKP facilitated the Union of European Turkish Democrat (UETD) in 2004 (renamed the Union of Turkish Democrats (UID) in 2018). The UID initially registered as an association in Germany but progressively expanded its organizational presence from Cologne to the rest of Europe with offices in sixteen countries mostly in Western Europe, also in Bosnia, Macedonia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic (Appendix A, A2). UID's separate women and youth branches aim to develop European identity among the migrant youth while also working to ensure that "European-Turkish youth" are aware of their "authentic" identity and moral values through "entrenching their ties with their homeland" (Appendix A, BiH1).

According to a Turkish-Austrian journalist I interviewed, during the UID's founding, Erdoğan chose to come to Austria in person to summon all diaspora organizations, inform them that the government was establishing a new civic initiative, and ask for their support. In his words, "before the UID, diaspora had many colors including secular democratic voices as well as Milli Görüş and Gülen organizations. They [the AKP] thought smaller diaspora organizations were unimportant and never took them seriously but sought to discard them" (Appendix A, A1).

When it was established, the UID declared two aims: to actively defend the rights of Turkish-origin immigrants in Europe, and to kindle "European Turks'" ties with the Turkish government. However, the AKP's co-optation strategy received a cold response from some diaspora organizations. The idea of becoming part of one umbrella organization was perceived as "submission to the authority of Turkey," and these organizations wanted to maintain their autonomy and engage with both Turkey and counties of settlement (Appendix A, G2). Moreover, with the 2013 Gezi protests[8] and the increasing authoritarian tendencies of the AKP, many diaspora organizations distanced themselves from the AKP's diaspora policy, fearing that their autonomy would be threatened by the AKP's interventionist attitude (Appendix A, S3, S4, G5). However, some ideologically conservative/Islamist and nationalist organizations, such as Milli Görüş and *Türkische Gemeinde zu Berlin* (TGB),[9] were incorporated into the pro-AKP diasporic civic space.

As a result of the financial and political support provided by the AKP, and the voluntary withdrawal of some diaspora organizations from pursuing an autonomous transnational agenda, the UID has come to dominate a significant portion of the pro-AKP diasporic civic space, engaging conservative individuals (in particular) who identify as Turks across different countries. Field interviews with core members of the UID suggest that three major factors were critical in the creation of a pro-AKP diasporic civic space. First, the AKP was not only involved in the establishment and promotion of the UID, but has also directly supported it in terms of financial and human resources since then. Second, the UID is best differentiated from other diaspora organizations and from official diaspora institutions of Turkey through its direct ties and allegiance to President Erdoğan (Appendix A, A4). As noted by a passive member (i.e., someone not involved in the daily running of the UID) in the Bosnian branch, the organization is composed of *reisçiler* (Appendix A, BiH2). *Reis* translates as "leader," and *reisçi* refers to staunch supporters of a leader. Erdoğan is often referred to as the *reis* among the AKP ranks, and while defining oneself as *reisçi* signifies party allegiance in Turkey, it reveals more about the source of partisan loyalty as personal devotion to Erdoğan. Responding to my question about the UID's organic ties to the AKP, the following conversation between two core members of the organization also confirmed the testimony of the passive member:

RESPONDENT A, *turning to respondent B after hearing my question*: Are you an AKP supporter?

RESPONDENT B: No! Actually, I am pro-MHP [The National Action Party, *Milli Hareket Partisi*].[10]

RESPONDENT A: You see? The UID is not an AKP organization. We unite as Turks abroad who love their motherland. But, we all love our president. If Erdoğan establishes another party tomorrow, we will all support it.

This short conversation was performative, yet the unfaltering declaration of loyalty to Erdoğan or being a *reisçi* is revealing about the dominant personalistic orientation within the organization. As discussed in detail later, German intelligence reports confirm that the UID is guided by Erdoğan's close confidante Metin Külünk, another example of personalistic orientation within the organization (Stuttgarter Nachrichten 2018). It is also worth mentioning that under the presidential system in Turkey, the AKP is in an informal coalition with the MHP. The AKP's embrace of nationalism and the Turkish-Islam synthesis[11] benefited the UID by potentially broadening its membership base, which, however, alienated the Kurdish-oriented wing of Milli Görüş.

Third, the earlier networks and informal ties among the conservative elements of the Turkish diaspora played a significant role in creating the UID's local corpora across several countries and cities (Appendix A, S1, A2, S5). Conservative and working-class segments of Turkish diaspora who came to Europe as part of a low-skilled workforce mostly abstained from transnational mobilization preceding the AKP rule. It was primarily Alevi and Kurdish diaspora that actively sought transnational mobilization. The UID activated these relatively dormant diaspora members who had not previously taken part in Turkish party politics in their countries of settlement (Başer 2014), and created novel partisan engagement with these groups by framing new identity claims and channeling political demands in line with the AKP's diaspora policy. Eventually, the UID became the primary interlocutor for Turkish and the conservative-leaning Turkish diaspora in Europe. In the next section, I will examine in detail how the UID successfully rallies a significant part of the diaspora by focusing on its repertoire of mobilization and its framing of salient issues in the AKP's agenda.

Frames And Actions

UID's unique action repertoire and frames activated previously dormant diasporic communities (i.e., those that did not openly rally for a Turkish party or show interest in Turkish politics) and constructed a "new" diaspora identity based on partisan loyalty to the AKP. The UID resorts to various direct or indirect ways through which diaspora is mobilized in support of the AKP's authoritarian rule in Turkey. While electoral mobilization for votes is the most visible strategy, my fieldwork reveals more subtle means, such as financial support for the AKP's foreign policy objectives, authoritarian legitimation through cherry-picking human rights arguments to target European states where a large part of the Turkish diaspora lives, and the surveillance of dissidents and Gülenists abroad. Moreover, the success of the UID's actions and frames cannot be considered independent of the right-wing shift in Europe and the deteriorating bilateral relations between Turkey and Europe.

Electoral Mobilization And Mass Demonstrations

Authoritarian regimes often expand voting rights to diasporas in order to widen their electoral base and legitimacy (Brand 2010). Where electoral victory is the major source of legitimacy for regimes like in Turkey (Levitsky and Way 2010), it is even more likely that a diaspora's electoral support is highly valued. Over the last decade, voters in Turkey went to the polls for four general elections, two presidential elections, two constitutional referendums, and three local elections. In this hyper-plebiscitary system, the votes of the Turkish diaspora, who mostly hold dual citizenship, is critical for the AKP.

In 2012, the AKP government issued a regulation allowing registered voters abroad to cast ballots directly in their countries of settlement. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey has 6.6 million Turkish citizens living abroad, 5.5 million of which are settled in Europe.[12] In 2018, Turkey's Supreme Election Council declared that registered voters abroad stand around 3.5 million. The 2014 presidential election was a turning point for the mobilization of diaspora votes. Although the turnout was less than ten percent, Erdoğan was the overwhelming beneficiary of the diaspora votes from continental Europe[13] (Mencutek and Başer 2018). Despite the low turnout, support from the diaspora was invaluable during the highly polarized presidential elections, helping the AKP win with a tight margin.

In the following years, the UID played a crucial role in increasing diaspora voter turnout, which now stands around 50% (Adar 2018). When the AKP lost the majority in the 2015 elections, the UID launched a Europe-wide campaign before the snap elections. Similarly, for the 2017 constitutional referendum,[14] the organization carried out a "yes" campaign across Europe in support of an executive presidential system with the slogan: "those in love with the homeland say yes" (*memleket sevdalıları evet diyor*).

Besides electoral mobilization, the UID also rallies the Turkish diaspora through mass demonstrations. These pro-AKP demonstrations aim to scale-up support for the party in times of political crises in Turkey or to put bottom-up pressure on the governments of countries of settlement to reverse or limit their criticism of the AKP and Erdoğan. Mass protests also serve to counter-balance dissident mobilization within the Turkish diaspora. The Gezi protests in 2013 were a turning point for the UID in realizing the importance of street activism in shaping European public opinion about the Turkish government. In response to the Gezi protests, the UID organized a massive counter-demonstration called "Respect for Democracy" in Düsseldorf. The demonstration gathered 25,000 Turkish-origin people from Germany and neighboring countries. Süleyman Çelik, then head of the UID, addressed the audience during the mass rally with the following words:

> For half a century, we lived with governments that remembered our concerns only when they needed foreign currency. Turkey used to be a country of political instability and an underdeveloped economy. The previous governments sought conflict between different groups. We used to be citizens of a country that did not have a say in the international arena, a country whose democracy would be interrupted by military coups. Brothers, even if we are thousands

> of kilometers away from our motherland, our feelings and hearts are with our Turkey today. Turkey's strength is our strength. This country is our true love. (UID Headquarter 2013)

The Düsseldorf demonstration was the beginning of a new mobilizational practice in the pro-AKP diasporic civic space. The demonstration aimed to assert support for the AKP during the violent crackdown on demonstrators in Istanbul's Gezi Park after some diaspora groups issued statements and organized local protests to show solidarity with the Gezi protestors. Reflecting on the 2013 counter-protests, a UID representative recalled that

> we issued a call to our members to remain calm and rational [while protests were ongoing in Turkey]. But they pressured us demanding that they wanted to show their response too. We decided to organize the Düsseldorf meeting and more than thirty thousand people participated.[15] We gave an opportunity to the European Turkish community to assert their support for the government and our prime minister. (Appendix A, A2)

Public demonstrations in support of the AKP were also organized following the 2016 coup (see note 6) and the Turkish army's 2018 Operation Olive Branch in Syria against the Kurdish People's Defense Forces (YPG). The UID organizes street activism as Europe-wide solidarity events (i.e., several demonstrations are performed simultaneously across Europe). In the past, such demonstrations sometimes escalated into violent clashes with Kurdish groups that organized counter-demonstrations on the same issue. More recently, in coordination with the Azerbaijani diaspora organizations, the UID organized demonstrations in France, Germany, and Sweden in support of Azerbaijan during the 2020 war in Nagorno-Karabakh (UID 2020). These demonstrations were supported by online seminars to deny the 1915 Armenian Genocide. It emerges from these activities that since lobbying in favor of the AKP has become a redundant effort, and given the strained relations between Turkish government and EU countries (see below), the UID has turned its efforts towards mobilizing against the critics of the AKP and Turkey in a more widespread fashion, as well as what are claimed to be their historical enemies, such as Armenia during the most recent war in Karabakh.

Europe-wide events organized simultaneously in major cities are considered more effective in getting the attention of the host country governments and gaining visibility on social media platforms. After one such event in Vienna, the organizing team scrolled the UID's official Twitter and Facebook accounts and hashtags to gauge the event's popularity and impact, identified people who interacted with the posts, and counted the number of "likes," retweets, and responses. These street-demonstrations attract a large number of male participants confirming the connection between masculinity and nationalism (Nagel 1998). However, it is also important to mention that at some UID events that I observed, women were among the first to arrive to the demonstration. At a particular event in Vienna, after almost half an hour of waiting for the arrival of male participants, women started to joke that they were braver than men to demonstrate for Turkey, and if needed, clash with Kurdish counter-protesters.

Until the 2018 presidential and general elections, Germany had been the center of the UID's electoral campaigns and street activism since half of eligible diaspora voters live in Germany. Throughout the AKP period, Erdoğan and high-level politicians used the European public space to extend electoral campaigns beyond Turkey's territorial borders through rallies and meetings in several European countries. However, tensions between Turkey and the European Union were already building since the Gezi demonstrations, and took a new turn after the 2016 coup attempt.[16] Moreover, countries with large Turkish-origin migrants started to investigate DİTİB (the international extension of the *Diyanet, Turkey's Directorate General of Religious Affairs*), which allegedly pursued intelligence activities targeting Gülen sympathizers in Europe (Deutsche Welle 2017a). Amid these developments, when the UID sought to rally diaspora votes during the 2017 referendum campaign, Austria and Germany stepped in to impose restrictions by canceling some UID-sponsored events, and the Netherlands expelled the Turkish minister of family and social policy who arrived for a rally organized by the UID (BBC News 2017; Deutsche Welle 2017b). These incidents were a strong signal that the governments of the countries of settlement were no longer willing to tolerate the AKP's transnational power projections into countries with Turkish diaspora.

Facing restrictions in Western Europe, the UID decided to relocate its electoral campaigns to Bosnia. Personal relations between Erdoğan and the leader of the main Bosnian coalition party, Bakir Izetbegović, allowed the UID to quickly seize the Bosnian space and organize the largest electoral rally abroad for the 2018 presidential vote (Appendix A, BiH3). Given the small size of the Turkish diaspora in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UID organized bus transfers from Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, and other countries with sizeable Turkish populations to attend the rally with Erdoğan. Although the decision to relocate the electoral campaign to a peripheral country—at least for the goal of diaspora mobilization—was not a voluntary choice, the UID created a victorious narrative out of it. As a representative of the Sarajevo branch suggested, this storyline depicts Europe as an oppressor of freedoms of expression and assembly:

> They banned rallies in Europe. Then, with God's will, we organized a rally in which our president participated. Bosnia is also Europe, and it is where different nations live together in harmony, and this is what we support. It is the heritage of the Ottoman times. This is our message to Europe: support coexistence and the freedom of expression. (Appendix A, BiH2)

It is important to mention that other diaspora organizations perceive the UID's activities as the "exploitation of the diaspora's emotional attachments to Turkey" (Appendix A, G4). According to one respondent, "for the [2017] referendum in Turkey, the UID's deputy president *threatened* Turks, claiming 'if you do not vote, there would be a civil war in Turkey'" (Appendix A, A1). Another respondent confirmed that tapping into the emotions and fears of the Turkish diaspora is the main strategy of the pro-AKP diaspora organizations.

> The AKP convinced many migrants to endorse Turkey's position. The UID is the most obvious example of this. I personally object to the fact that Turkish politics are being performed here. The AKP points out the government here,

> the US, and others as enemies to us. But, we want to live here. We've been put through a very difficult situation after the [2017 constitutional] referendum. When you have xenophobic politicians in power, people are easily mobilized by emotions. (Appendix A, G4)

Some autonomous diaspora organizations also complain that the UID's partisan activities harm diaspora Turks in Europe by creating a hostile public opinion towards them. One representative complained, "if they [AKP politicians] really want to help Turkish people here, they should stop bickering with politicians and the government" (Appendix A, A5). ~~Overall, as the above statement confirms~~, the UID's successful electoral campaigns and street protests motivate large sections of the Turkish diaspora to support the AKP by capitalizing on their emotional ties to Turkey, and their fear and insecurity as migrants in Europe.

Resource Transfer and Transnational Charity

The UID also acts as an intermediary in a system of resource transfer between the Turkish government, Turkish development and humanitarian aid agencies, and the diaspora. The UID takes charity and humanitarian aid contributions from the diaspora, and then transfers them to the Turkish Red Crescent. For one campaign in 2017, the UID declared €3 million for Muslims fleeing from Arakan (Anadolu Agency 2017), while in the same year the organization raised donations worth €250,000 for Syrian refugees, and in 2019, €4.1 million in humanitarian aid was delivered to Yemen (UID 2017).

The UID's ~~charitable~~ campaigns are always promoted among the diaspora with reference to Turkey's foreign policy goals. These goals are presented within a humanitarian frame with Turkey portrayed as the voice and protector of downtrodden Muslims worldwide. To give an example, then head of the UID Zafer Sırakaya argued that

> Turkey is the first country running to help Arakan Muslims. We, as European Turks, try to do our part in taking responsibility in Turkey's caring approach … European Turkish communities competed with each other in granting donations. I believe €3 million in donations has so far been the largest contribution for the Red Crescent from a European civil society organization. Everyone contributed within their means, but we were especially so moved by children donating their coin boxes. (Anadolu Agency 2017)

As this statement reveals, the UID reproduces the AKP's "civilizational geopolitics" among the diaspora (Bilgin and Bilgiç 2011), wherein the diaspora can become a part of the "caring Turkish nation" through their contributions.

These charitable activities also have a clear gender dimension. Often, it is the women who handle charity campaigns as they are considered to be more suitable for social care work, whilst the managing cadres of the UID are male-dominated. For instance, campaigns for Palestine, Sudan, and Ethiopia were organized across Europe by the UID's local women's branches. Women also voluntarily produce goods for sale at fairs and organize events to raise contributions at the local level, which are then transferred to the male-dominated managerial echelons of the organization to be forwarded to Turkey. Similarly, during the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, branches in Germany and Belgium asked female volunteers to produce masks with the UID logo, which were later distributed to hospitals and health centers (UID Women 2020; Aşut 2020).

Besides resourcing contributions from the diaspora, the UID also mediates the transfer of material benefits, prestige, and perks to the diaspora members. The organization revolves around close-knit communities at the local level that inform its members about educational opportunities in Turkey. Youth, in particular, benefit from scholarships, training sessions, summer camps in Turkey, or placement at a Turkish university through quotas for diaspora Turks.

In contrast to passive members, the upper echelons of the organization benefit from political perks, prestige, and material incentives. Particularly, for the core members, the UID has become a stepping-stone for personal enrichment and jobs. A Turkish-German journalist, who votes for the AKP, confirmed the clientelism orientation within the UID, and responded with sarcasm to my question about why it was so difficult convincing UID representatives to speak about the organization during my fieldwork. He stated that it was "because they do not have anything to say about Turks here. They would have responded immediately if you had reached out to them claiming that you had a profitable investment opportunity in Turkey" (Appendix A, G6).

Indeed, some former UID representatives, including the former head Sırakaya, were elected as MPs in Turkey. Interviews also revealed that local level representatives are often appointed as the head of the AKP's electoral committees in countries of settlement or in Turkey. Adar (2019, 19) similarly argues that "the conflation of the associational and political realms" is built on the "increasingly close contact between the party, state institutions, and civil society actors … a patronage network that includes old and new associations with close ties to the AKP government, such as DITIB and the UID." Close family members of some UID representatives took positions in the government-controlled media outlets in Turkey. As one of my respondents summarized it,

> UID representatives are not interested in the problems of the diaspora. They look forward to migrating to Turkey. They are concerned about "what position I would get there." The more they tussle with the government here, the better positions they would be granted by Ankara. People who couldn't get a job here became managers in Turkey after joining the UID. (Appendix A, A1).

Overall, the UID-led resource transfer and clientelism illustrates the transnational role of diaspora organizations in reproducing that clientelism and creating a material interdependence between diaspora organizations and autocratic regimes in the countries of origin.

Authoritarian Legitimation: Hijacking Human Rights And Freedom Of Speech

Legitimation of political authority is an essential aspect of ruling as it generates cooperation from the ruled and "voluntary acceptance of the decisions and actions" of authorities (Yabanci 2016a, 346). Undemocratic regimes rely on various strategies of legitimation through performance and discursive claims. As ruling exclusively through coercion is costly and unsustainable, authoritarian legitimation stabilizes undemocratic rule and ensures the longevity of the regime (Burnell 2006; Gerschewski 2013). The UID has grown into an effective actor of authoritarian legitimation on behalf of the AKP by reinforcing and dispersing claims that draw on human and minority rights.

The UID's most notable legitimation strategy is to fill the diasporic public space with anti-far right and international human rights claims, to allegedly counter rising Islamophobia, far right, and anti-immigration attitudes in Europe. Towards this end, the organization exploits a well-established criticism that European countries fail to promote multiculturalism, pluralism, and equal treatment. It makes a special effort to highlight the rising far right support and hate speech targeting immigrants in Europe. The former head of the UID's 2018 New Year message is exemplary in this sense:

> Despite being established as a peace project and built on pluralism, multiculturalism, and multilingualism, the European Union faces a threat called Islamophobia. Europe is taken hostage by populism. We follow the rising racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia with great concern. The rights of Muslim minorities are not protected, and they are marginalized worldwide, European Turks are denied their fundamental rights. European states have not paid due attention to this issue for years. (Avrupa'nın Sesi 2018)

One should look beyond the face value of such statements and analyze how this particular framing consists of speech acts that contribute to the mobilization of pro-AKP sentiments in the Turkish diaspora. The UID uses press statements to raise awareness about discrimination and hate speech that Turkish and Muslim migrants face and organizes commemoration events for Turkish and Muslim migrants killed in neo-Nazi attacks. By hijacking and appropriating the human rights discourse, the UID's narrative not only resonates with the fears of large segments of the immigrant communities in Europe, but also shifts the blame from human rights abuses in Turkey to Europe. With the use of human rights discourses and civilizational framing, the UID has become what Adar and Yenigün (2019) aptly call "the loci of the production and circulation of a form of 'counter-hegemonic' knowledge that frames Turkey as a benevolent and humanitarian sponsor of 'anti-imperialist' and 'anti-Western' resistance."

Moreover, the UID's framing also provides a mantle for the AKP's human rights abuses, advancing it as a defender of multiculturalism and the rights of migrants in Turkey. Since the Syrian civil war, Turkey's role in hosting 3.6 million Syrian refugees is often compared to the closure of internal EU borders to asylum-seekers, pushback at the external borders, or the increasing appeal of far right politics in Europe (ReliefWeb 2020). After several pro-AKP events commemorating the 2016 coup and electoral rallies were called off by local authorities (see the previous section), the UID's anti-far right and pro-human rights discourse became amalgamated with an exclusivist civilizational frame asserting a contrast between the West that is hostile towards refugees and immigrants, and a welcoming and tolerant Turkey. European countries are accused of double standards for criticizing Turkey for violations of human rights while not protecting rights and freedoms inside Europe (Zalan 2017). According to one representative:

> [The government here] grants all rights to PKK supporters and terrorists. They are active and free to demonstrate or even attack our offices. They now grant citizenship and jobs in the media and universities to FETÖists,[17] while our educated kids are discriminated against in the job market because of their proud Turkish heritage. (Appendix A, G8)

This perception is neither fair nor impartial, and it unjustly attacks the critics of the current Turkish regime abroad and reveals a great degree of whataboutism and self-defensiveness within the pro-AKP Turkish diaspora. Yet, it is difficult to ignore these claims as empty rhetoric. Even a representative from an autonomous diaspora organization agreed "the [German] government conflates anti-immigrant with anti-Turkey and anti-Erdoğan feelings" (Appendix A, G3). This situation strengthens the widespread perception of disregard, discrimination, and unequal treatment of Germans of Turkish background. The UID was quick to pick this point for political gains and successfully mobilized the Turkish diaspora by appealing to the rising anxieties over anti-immigration sentiments in countries of settlement.

This civilizational framing is also instrumental in expanding the reach of the UID for its organizational survival. The name change of the organization from Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD) to Union of International Democrats (UID) in 2018 was intended to reflect the more ambitious geopolitical reach beyond Europe. A representative from the Sarajevo branch claimed that the organization intends to "open up to the ummah," as the outreach to the Balkans reflects the desire to include not just ethnic Turkish migrants but all Muslim immigrants (Appendix A, BiH4). As this statement shows, the UID's vision is synched with the AKP's power projection and pan-Islamist foreign policy goals as the self-styled defender and guardian of Muslims and immigrants in the transnational sphere.

The Slide Towards Uncivil Society

Uncivil society refers to organizations and networks that engage with the promotion and dispersion of "exclusivist and dogmatic ideas, predatory practices and general rule-breaking" and violence (Glasius 2010). Following the 2016 coup, some allegations in European media outlets highlighted the UID's slide into uncivil society by adopting extra-legal means. Accordingly, the organization encouraged its local networks to profile Gülenists and send lists of Gülen affiliates to Ankara (Sveriges Radio 2017). Although the interviewed representatives rejected this allegation, one UID representative disclosed a report during our interview that was presented to Erdoğan a week prior and openly mentioned that the UID would continue to monitor and prevent the activities of Gülenists. In another incident in Sweden, where a large number of Gülenists sought asylum after the 2016 coup, the UID made on to the news as "Erdoğan's criminal gang" when the chairman of the UID Sweden was recorded attempting to compel an unidentified correspondent into naming political asylum seekers in Sweden in exchange for crossing his name off a blacklist of regime critics that was going to be forwarded to the Turkish embassy in Stockholm (Öhman 2017). Fieldwork interviews also confirmed that diasporans face intra-group pressure to reveal potential Gülenists, marginalize them, and prevent them from renting houses or settling in cities or neighborhoods with sizeable Turkish-origin population.

Beyond extra-legal surveillance and clandestine intelligence, the UID was also accused of involvement in illegal activities. In 2017, an investigation by German intelligence authorities mentioned links between *Osmanen Germani*a (OG), a boxing society popular among nationalist Turkish migrants, the top representatives of the UID, and Metin Külünk, a confidant of Erdoğan. In a phone conversation taped by the German intelligence, Külünk asks an unknown UID representative in Germany "what can be done" about the German satirist Böhmermann who read out a poem mocking Erdoğan on a German TV show. After it was aired, the poem created a diplomatic crisis between Turkey and Germany (Smale 2016).

According to an intelligence report leaked to the German media, the UID's top leadership outsourced the task of intimidating Böhmermann to the OG. Külünk also ordered the OG to "beat the Kurds with sticks on the head" and "to film it" so that it could be used "to deter" possible critics of Erdoğan abroad (Frontal 21 2017). Further investigation revealed that Külünk provided the OG with €20,000 to buy weapons (Stuttgarter Nachrichten 2018). In 2018, Danish authorities also brought up an accusation against the OG for engaging in transnational criminal activities and assassination plans targeting Gülenists (Sveriges Radio 2018). The German Interior Ministry eventually banned the OG for its criminal activities including attempted murder, money laundering, drug trafficking, and promoting far right Turkish nationalism. Several OG members were arrested while others evaded prosecution by leaving Germany (Deutsche Welle 2018b).

Following the OG investigation, the German Federal Intelligence Agency started an investigation into the UID to understand whether its activities are compatible with the democratic and constitutional order (Deutsche Welle 2018a). According to German authorities, "the UID influences the Turkish diaspora as well as the political decision-making processes in Germany" in line with the AKP's domestic and foreign policy priorities (German Ministry of Interior 2019). More recently, the Baden-Württemberg intelligence report in 2019 classified UID "as an unofficial foreign organization of the Turkish government" (German Ministry of Interior 2019). Security and intelligence authorities in Austria similarly claimed that the moderate and independent public face of the UID is superficial and underemphasizes its unwavering loyalty to the Turkish government (Appendix A, A3).

The UID's involvement with a criminal gang stirred up media and public reactions, and tarnished its image as a civic organization. A representative told me that these criminal investigations also curbed active support for the UID among the Turkish diaspora. My respondent claimed that "recently, youngsters are reticent to volunteer for or taking part in the organization's events. They are in fear, thinking 'what if I can't find a job after studies here for being affiliated with the UID?' This has caused us some loss in membership" (Appendix A, A2). The negative image of the UID as the AKP's front organization in Europe alienated some diaspora members who see their future in their countries of settlement. Although it is difficult to draw a final conclusion from my data, this estrangement from the UID seems to be driven by pragmatism (i.e., being worried about job prospects and life in the country of settlement), rather than what the UID represents as an organization affiliated with illegal or violent groups.

Conclusion

State-driven diaspora policies constitute a major area of interest in transnationalism and diaspora studies. This focus has led to a preoccupation with official diaspora institutions, at the expense of more fluid and diffuse forms of diaspora governance. By focusing on the case of Turkey and the Turkish diaspora in Europe, I have argued that theorizing the home state and diaspora relations allows us to gain a novel vantage point of studying diasporic civic space, and particularly home state oriented diaspora organizations. Although diasporic civic space is populated by multiple organizations that act as transmission belts between the diaspora, countries of origin, and countries of settlement, the AKP has attempted to co-opt the diasporic civic space through a corporatist approach by creating a mass diaspora organization.

Several conclusions emerge from this study of diasporic civic space co-opted by an authoritarian home state. First, authoritarian politics are not spatially bound and can be entrenched by actors that are nominally civic and non-state. The case of the UID, the largest diaspora organization with close links to the AKP, reveals how authoritarian home states can politicize a previously dormant segment of the diaspora through novel channels. The discussion on the action repertoire and frames has shown that home state oriented diaspora organizations can utilize the transnational political field differently from official diaspora institutions. The UID is more than "a pro-AKP lobby organization" as often labeled. Besides working towards electoral mobilization of the diaspora in favor of the AKP and Erdoğan, it also runs a complex network of resource transfers in the service of the AKP's foreign policy goals. It also hijacks the anti-far right agenda and human rights advocacy in its communications with the Turkish diaspora. Finally, through its engagement in uncivil society, it functions as a surveillance instrument for ~~the~~ government. These activities demonstrate how a complex set of factors interact and shape the transnationalization and de-territorialization of authoritarianism through diasporic civic space.

Second, home state oriented diaspora organizations have an impact at three levels. Their first impact is on intra-diaspora relations (i.e., organizing and regulating social interactions of diasporans on an everyday basis). The findings of this study revealed that the fragmentation within the diasporic civic space reflects the social and political divisions in the home state. While civic space provides diasporans with opportunities to pursue their interests and goals vis-à-vis home state and countries of settlement, it also entrenches intra-diasporic polarization. In the case of Turkey, for example, the partisan polarization (pro- and anti-AKP/Erdoğan) often disassembles and cuts across previous cleavages within the Turkish diaspora. As a result, diaspora organizations close to Islamist and Gülenist circles find themselves on the same side of Kurdish, Alevi, and secular diaspora organizations.

At the second level, home state oriented diaspora organizations affect relations between the country of settlement and diaspora groups. The UID assumes a specific function in deepening feelings of fear and self-isolation within countries of settlement. It encourages what Vermeulen (2006, 12) calls "fencing off ethnic or national identity from other groups," especially from the majority. This situation might create adverse interactions between diasporas and societies in countries of settlement, resulting in self-imposed segregation and meager integration. Yet, governments in countries of settlement seem far from truly grasping the long-term consequences. The close links and widespread support for Erdoğan among the Turkish diaspora in Europe alarmed several governments in Europe and contributed to the perception of "the integration problem" of Turkish immigrants over the last decade. The case study of the Turkish diaspora shows that settlement countries have yet to devise an effective response to an authoritarian home states' instrumentalization of diaspora communities for authoritarian political ends. Settlement countries ~~should~~ take into account the fears of diaspora communities that are triggered by rising xenophobia, racism, and anti-immigrant views.

The final level concerns relations between home countries and their diasporas. Home state oriented diaspora organizations can create awareness of diasporic identities and nationalism by reproducing the undemocratic home states diaspora policy. They can provide a means for "orientation to a real or imagined 'homeland' as an authoritative source of value, identity and loyalty" (Brubaker 2005, 5). Thanks to the mediation of the diasporic civic space, many members of the diaspora, even second and third generations, can continue to identify with the home state more than with countries of settlement.

Finally, this study shows that diasporas seek ties with non-democratic homelands for various reasons: nationalist sentiments; to get a share of the perks, benefits, and prestige that the authoritarian incumbents distribute; feelings of insecurity and marginalization in countries of settlement; and the desire to assert one's identity and cultural ties. As Safran (1991, 83) argues, one of the defining characteristics of diasporas is their belief that "they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it." The success of the UID's frames and action repertoire was mostly a result of constructing a specific collective identity for Turkish diaspora based on their everyday experience of discrimination and exclusion in countries of settlement. In fact, alienation and insulation from the wider society in countries of settlement are deeply observable among AKP supporters in Europe, contributing to their pride for being associated with the strong Turkey that the AKP promotes.

It would not be wrong to claim that the increasing anxiety over anti-immigration and anti-Islam sentiments in Europe significantly contributed to the positive reception of the UID among the Turkish diaspora. This situation arises out of a search for identity and belonging. The emotional appeal of a strong homeland and a strong president vis-à-vis Europe, as skillfully promoted by the UID, facilitates co-optation of the diaspora. As a result, the AKP added a considerable part of the Turkish diaspora to its "winning" coalition.

This study also raises further questions. To what extent are home state oriented diaspora organizations resilient actors? How long can they control and rally diaspora support for undemocratic home states? In the case of Turkey, the UID still commands large resources thanks to its status as a front organization of the AKP, and it can bring people to the streets for major political protests or organize high-profile events. However, the AKP failed to totally co-opt the diasporic civic space that still holds critical voices, despite a corporatist attempt at undermining and seizing other diaspora organizations. Therefore, the longevity of diaspora organizations like the UID depends largely on the continuation of the undemocratic rule in home states. As my fieldwork revealed, fewer people are now joining these public events or affiliating themselves with the UID, primarily because of the fear of being targeted by security or intelligence of the countries of settlement. Future research on diasporic civic space should focus on the very presence of diaspora organizations with organic ties to undemocratic home states across the world. This would further clarify how diversities and cleavages within diasporas intensify and deepen in times of regime change in home states. This study cautions that there are disruptive, circumscribing, disabling, and hegemonic potentials of diasporic civic spaces.

Bilge Yabanci is Marie Skłdowska-Curie Fellow at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy.

Acknowledgments

This study received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Project 'CRAFT' with Grant agreement ID 795117. I would like to thank Kerem Öktem, Chiara Maritato, Anna Zadrozna, Sossie Kasabarian, and Talar Chahinian for their comments on previous versions of this article.

Notes

1 There were several waves of migration from Turkey to Europe for socio-economic and political reasons (Dedeoğlu and Genç 2017). Political migrants or asylum-seekers originated from ethnic or religious minorities and are referred to as the Kurdish or Alevi diaspora (Başer 2012; Massicard 2011). I use the term "Turkish diaspora" to refer to Turkey-originating diaspora communities. The term does not denominate ethnic or religious affiliations of the diaspora members unless otherwise stated. Neither do I imply that the Turkish diaspora is a homogenous community.

2 There is case study-oriented literature that focuses on the role of diasporas in perpetuating conflicts in countries of settlement (Koinova 2014; Orjuela 2008; Hockenos 2003). Diaspora may financially support militant struggles (Shain 2002; Byman et al. 2001; Mariani, Mercier, and Verdier 2018; Koinova 2011; Zunzer 2004; Smith and Stares 2007). While these studies provide evidence that diasporic mobilization is not always democratic or participatory, they do not focus on the diasporic civic space per se.

3 Frames refer to "action-oriented sets of stories, symbols, images, arguments that inspire and legitimate activities and campaigns" (Benford and Snow 2000, 614). Action repertoires refer to performance and actions to pursue their claims.

4 According to Shain and Barth (2003, 452), core members of a diaspora refer to organizational elites, while passive members are less active in the daily running and management but are available for mobilization when the active leadership calls upon them.

5 Interviews within Appendix A are cited by the first letter(s) of the country name and consecutive numbering (S = Sweden, G = Germany, A = Austria, BiH = Bosnia and Herzegovina).

6 The Gülen movement refers to the Islamic-political community around the self-exiled cleric Fettullah Gülen. The main public activity of this community is to offer Turkish education abroad. Until their fallout due to the 2013 corruption scandal in Turkey, the AKP was in an informal alliance with the movement to remove the secular-Kemalist establishment from the state bureaucracy and army. The power struggle between the party and the movement led to the 15 July 2016 coup attempt and the widespread purge and persecution of the Gülenists in Turkey. The majority of its high-ranking members escaped abroad in search of asylum and several others are imprisoned.

7 Milli Görüş (IGMG) is organized in twelve European countries through 2,330 branches and 127,000 members. It also runs a wide network of 518 mosques (IGMG 2015). The interviews revealed a widespread dissonance among IGMG's representatives concerning relations with the AKP government.

8 The Gezi Park protests took place in the summer of 2013 after the AKP's plans to replace a green space at the heart of Istanbul became public. These protests quickly turned into countrywide demonstrations against the government's authoritarian practices. The Gezi protests are a defining moment in Turkey's authoritarian turn under AKP rule.

9 TGB (Turkish Community in Berlin, *Berlin Türk Cemaati*) is an umbrella organization in Germany of seventy smaller associations with a nationalist-conservative worldview. The organization was considered to have ties with the Gülen network, an allegation that the current representatives staunchly deny after the coup attempt (Appendix A, G4). TGB has lately declared political and ideological loyalty to the AKP. During my fieldwork, I came across the portraits of Tayyip Erdoğan and Kemal Atatürk side-by-side at the entry of the TGB's major office in Berlin.

10 The National Action Party (*Milli Hareket Partisi*, MHP) is an ultra-nationalist political party combining Turkish nationalism with Islamic identity. Although it has never achieved a dominant party status, it has stable electoral support between 8–15%.

11 The Turkish-Islam synthesis emerged particularly after the 1980 coup as a state ideology and amalgamated Islam and Turkish nationalism by imposing Sunni-Islam as a formative part of Turkish identity (see Çetinsaya 1999; Akin and Karasapan 1988). This religio-nationalist redefinition of the nation has effectively engaged in social engineering through the education system and has further marginalized minority communities.

12 The majority (2.5 million) live in Germany, while other countries with sizeable populations holding Turkish citizenship are: France and the Netherlands with around 300,000 Turkish citizens each; Austria and Belgium with 130,000 each; Greece with 150,000; and Denmark and Sweden with 35,000 each (Sözcü 2017).

13 Support for Erdoğan was 69% in Germany, 80% in Austria, 70% in Belgium, 66% in France, and 78% in the Netherlands (Mencutek and Başer 2018).

14 The 2017 constitutional referendum in Turkey approved the abolishment of the parliamentary system and replaced it with an executive president.

15 The number of participants at UID events as noted in the media of countries of settlement and declared by the UID usually do not match. It is safe to assume the actual numbers are somewhere in-between.

16 The AKP expressed concerns that European states were not sufficiently contributing to Turkey's efforts to eliminate the Gülenist influence in Europe among the Turkish diaspora. In return, the EU and member states openly renounced the AKP's heavy-handed repressive policies towards civil society and critics of the government in Turkey.

17 FETÖ is a made-up abbreviation for the Gülen network in the aftermath of the coup attempt and stands for Fettullahist Terrorist Organization.

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Appendix A

1. S1, UID core member, March 2019.
2. S2, head of an independent organization for diaspora youth, March 2019.
3. G1, former leftist activist currently works at cultural center, November 2019.
4. G2, academic working on Turkish migrants, integration, and multiculturalism, November 2019.
5. G3, member of the management committee of an independent organization working on Turkish migrants, integration, and the education of migrant youth, November 2019.
6. A1, journalist of Turkish origin, active in an autonomous diaspora organization, January 2018.
7. A2, UID core member, January 2018.
8. BiH1, UID core member, September 2019.
9. A3, diaspora organization representative, January 2018.
10. G4, diaspora organization representative, November 2019.
11. S3, diaspora organization representative, March 2019.
12. S4, diaspora organization representative, May 2019.
13. G5, diaspora organization representative, November 2019.
14. A4, UID core member, January 2018.
15. BiH2, UID passive member, October 2019.
16. S5, UID passive member, June 2019.
17. BiH3, academic working on Turkey-Bosnia relations and Turkish influence in the Balkans, October 2019.
18. BiH4, UID core member, October 2019.
19. A5, diaspora organization representative, January 2018.
20. A6, academic working on Islam, migration, Islamism, and Islamic organizations in Austria, January 2018.
21. G6, journalist, November 2019.
22. G7, diaspora organization representative, November 2019.
23. G8, UID passive member, November 2019.
24. S6, UID core member, February 2019.