

LONG-DISTANCE POLITICS AND DIASPORA YOUTH

Analyzing Turkey's Diaspora Engagement Policies Aimed at Post-Migrant Generations

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Introduction

Turkey is one of the world's top emigration countries, sending a large number of expatriates to different continents for decades (International Organization for Migration 2020), and the majority of Turkish emigrants¹ have settled in Western European countries. Modern emigration from Turkey to Western Europe started in the 1950s and gained momentum in the 1960s as a result of short-term labor recruitment agreements between Turkey and various European governments, such as Austria, Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. In the earlier years of the Turkish exodus, young, male, and low-skilled temporary laborers made up the majority of Turks in Europe. However, over time, the profile of the expatriate community originating from Turkey has changed with the arrival of political refugees, family reunifications, and the birth of new generations on European soil (Abadan-Unat 2011). While Sunni Muslims form a considerable group within the Turkish émigré community; secular, Kurdish (an ethnic minority comprising approximately 17% of Turkey's population), and Alevi (an ethno-religious minority comprising around 15% of Turkey's population) communities are also strongly represented within the diaspora (Arkilic and Gurcan 2020; Arkilic *forthcoming*). Moreover, in response to Turkey's economic and democratic backsliding in the post-2000 era and key critical developments, such as the 2013 Gezi Park protests and the 2016 failed coup, a new wave of emigrants from Turkey has made Europe their home, leading to a sharp increase in asylum applications. These new emigrants include young professionals, students, Gülenists (followers of Fethullah Gülen, a US-based Islamic cleric, who is accused of plotting the 2016 aborted coup), exiled public employees, and persecuted academics and intellectuals (Türkmen 2019). Today, 5.5 million of the total 6.5 million Turkish citizens living abroad reside in Europe (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021) and the Turkish diaspora comprises four generations.

Even in the early phases of Turkish emigration to Europe, Ankara showed an interest in its diaspora, albeit without a clear roadmap. In the 1960s and 1970s, Turkish and European policymakers assumed that once short-term guest worker contracts terminated, Turkish workers would return to their *memleket* (homeland). However, by the mid-1980s, home and host state bureaucrats came to realize that Turks were no longer temporary guests in

Europe. This was due to lax immigration and integration policies introduced by host states, employers' interest in benefiting from cheap Turkish labor for the longer term, and Turkish immigrants themselves deciding to permanently settle in European countries because of the perceived generous socioeconomic conditions offered by them (Messina 2007).

This situation shaped Turkey's diaspora engagement policy and incentives in the following decades. While in the 1960s and 1970s Turkish policymakers saw immigrants as a safety valve against domestic unemployment and as remittance senders, Turkey's economic-oriented engagement policy evolved into a security-oriented approach in the 1980s and 1990s following the mass outflow of political dissenters to Europe and expatriates' shift from temporary to permanent settlement (Adamson 2019). The 1980 military coup, the beginning of a civil war between the Turkish army and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK, *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*) in 1984, and a series of atrocities against Alevi citizens in this period, led to a noticeable increase in asylum applications from Turkey to Europe (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Sökefeld 2008).

Turkey's activities aimed at overseas Turks and their descendants were limited in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The Ministry of Education sought to teach Turkish language, culture, and Islam to children of Turkish guest workers from 1976 with the formation of two institutions: the Directorate General for Services for Education Abroad (*Yurtdışı Eğitim Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü*) and the Directorate General for Education of Workers' Children Abroad (*Yurtdışı İşçi Çocukları Eğitimi Öğretimi Genel Müdürlüğü*) (Aksel 2019). In 1986, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture established Turkish Cultural Centers (*Türk Kültür Merkezleri*) to advertise Turkish culture, language, and art abroad (*Türk Kültür Merkezleri*) (Kaya and Tecmen 2011). However, apart from these minor efforts aimed at preventing young Turks' assimilation into European host societies, there was no institutionalized policy addressing post-migrant generations in this period.

A new conservative party, the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP), came to power in 2002 and transformed Turkey's diaspora policy. In 2003, the AKP established a parliamentary (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, TBMM) commission that sent deputies to Europe in order to identify the overseas population's problems. The subsequent report from those investigations (TBMM Commission Report 2004) made a case for the strengthening of ties with emigrants from Turkey and their descendants and for the creation of a multilayered and dynamic diaspora engagement policy. The report led to a radical overhaul of Turkey's existing diaspora policy, triggering the establishment of new diaspora institutions.

The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (*Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı*, YTB), serves as the backbone of Turkey's new diaspora agenda. Established in 2010, the YTB's objectives are: to intensify overseas Turkish citizens' attachment and ties to their homeland; to advance their social lives in their host countries; and to help diaspora Turks preserve their native language, culture, and identity (YTB 2021a). The Yunus Emre Institute (*Yunus Emre Enstitüsü*, YEE), is another important diaspora engagement institution that was launched in 2009. Its *raison d'être* is as follows: to promote Turkish identity, culture, history, and art abroad; to teach foreigners the Turkish language; and to facilitate Turkey's cultural exchange with other countries (YEE 2020a). Since their advent, both institutions have developed a series of specialized projects and activities targeting Turkey's young expatriate population.

The introduction of the Blue Card (*Mavi Kart*) program in 2009 and the granting of expatriate voting to all Turkish citizens over the age of 18 in 2014 are illustrative breakthroughs of Turkey's new diaspora policy. The Blue Card (which replaced the Pink Card) grants

émigré Turks who renounced their Turkish citizenship certain socio-economic rights back in Turkey, such as the right to obtain the citizenship of country of residence, to possess land, to live and work, and to inherit. In 2012, the AKP extended the right to apply for a Blue Card to descendants of former Turkish nationals who had obtained Turkish citizenship by birth (Pusch and Splitt 2013, p. 148).

The AKP's diaspora policies and institutions have been widely investigated (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Mügge 2012; Ünver 2013; Öktem 2014; Kaya 2019). The expanding scholarship has shown that while Turkey's earlier policies were motivated by remittance inflows, Turkey's EU bid, and countering political opposition abroad, Turkey's post-2003 diaspora scheme views certain diaspora groups, such as conservative-nationalists, as a key voter bloc in Turkish elections as well as a political lobby group abroad to promote foreign policy interests, including curbing Kurdish and Gülenist movements and the denial of the mass killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915 as genocide (Arkilic 2018, 2021a, 2021b; Aksel 2019; Yanaşmayan and Kaşlı 2019). Alongside these emerging analyses of the impact of Turkey's multitiered diaspora policy, other researchers have begun to examine how different segments of the Turkish diaspora, including pro- and anti-AKP diaspora groups, have perceived and responded to Turkey's selective engagement policies (Arkilic 2016, 2020, *forthcoming*).

However, Turkey's unprecedented interest in the younger generations of its expatriates remains understudied. This omission needs correcting given that the Turkish government itself has declared that "programs intended for young members of our diaspora hold significant importance" (YTB 2021a). Scholars have illustrated that there are substantial differences between immigrants and post-immigrant generations (Levitt and Waters 2002; Lee 2008, 2011; Kaya 2009; Huynh and Yiu 2015). While some (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) have argued that post-migrant generations' ties to their origin state are weaker since the scale and frequency of their engagement with it is not as established as that of their parents, others argue that third-generation immigrants feel a stronger connection to their homeland than first- and second-generations because of their feelings of exclusion and marginalization in their host country (Center for Turkey Studies and Integration Research Survey cited in Dieper 2018). Jones-Correa (2002) and Perlmann (2002) have also maintained that although second-generation migrants participate in transnational activities at lower rates compared to their parents, they tend to show more interest in the cultural dimension of transnationalism as opposed to their parents' focus on the economic and political dimension (Huang et al. 2013).

This chapter unpacks Turkey's youth-oriented diaspora engagement activities and analyzes what specific motivations underpin them. Turkey is well suited as a case because it sends the largest number of Muslim emigrants to Western Europe (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021). Turks form the largest ethnic minority in Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands, and the second largest in Austria (Al-Shahi and Lawless 2013). France and Belgium are other countries that host a significant number of emigrants from Turkey (Erdoğan 2013). Moreover, Turkey is a country with a young population at home and abroad. Given that young people between 15 and 24 make up roughly 15% of the total Turkish population of 82 million, Turkey is the youngest country in Europe (*Hürriyet* 2020). Its emerging activities and programs targeting descendants of Turkish citizens abroad thus constitute a rich yet underexplored terrain. Further, Turks form the least integrated immigrant group in many European countries, such as Germany, for example (Constant et al. 2012), and feel more strongly connected to Turkey than to their adopted countries (Center for Turkish Studies cited in *Deutsche Welle* 2018). Therefore, it is important to study Turkey's increasing sway over its post-migrant generations in Europe and what impact this new engagement

might have on young overseas Turks' integration prospects in, and identity and belonging to, their host countries in the future.

A thorough examination of the newly established Turkish diaspora institutions' activities and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches at diaspora rallies shows that the instruction of Turkish language, the organization of homeland heritage tours, and activities focusing on the young generation's socioeconomic and political empowerment, are some of the central tools used to consolidate younger generation Turkish emigrants' ties to Ankara. Turkey's symbolic nation-building efforts seek to improve Turkey's international image and "to keep Turkey's presence in Europe constant and strong" by investing in young Turks' capacity development and by mobilizing them as loyal and unassimilated supporters that would help Turkey defend its interests abroad (*Hürriyet* 2015).

This chapter seeks to contribute to the literature on transnationalism, diaspora studies, and long-distance politics by showing that young Turkish-origin diaspora members are viewed by Turkish policymakers as influential actors in long-distance politics due to their advantaged position as individuals born and bred in Europe. A Center for American Progress public opinion survey (Hoffman et al. 2020) conducted with Turkish diaspora communities in Germany, France, Austria, and the Netherlands between November 2019 and January 2020 found that younger overseas Turks report being more fluent in the language of their host country, being less focused on news from Turkey, and placing more emphasis on their European identity than older members of the diaspora. Yet interestingly, the survey found that younger respondents are more likely to perceive discrimination than their older counterparts because "younger generations have higher expectations of equal treatment; better understand subtle forms of discrimination, thanks to their greater linguistic and cultural awareness; and feel more comfortable speaking out" (Hoffman et al. 2020). Their feelings of discrimination and exclusion in Europe also create a fertile ground for Turkish involvement in the transnational space.

The findings of this chapter draw from the YTB's and the YEE's websites, activity reports, and press statements. It also uses secondary literature, Turkish officials' speeches, and media sources in Turkish and English (including *Hürriyet*, *Sabah*, *TRT Haber*, *Deutsche Welle*, and *The Guardian*) to take a closer look at Turkey's policy shift since the 1960s to the 2000s and its implications on diaspora youth. The first section of this chapter discusses some key terms, such as 'diaspora,' 'post-migrant generation,' 'long-distance politics,' and 'long-distance nationalism.' The second part looks at Turkey's long-distance politics aimed at diaspora youth since 2003, detailing Turkey's specific youth-targeted undertakings at home and abroad, including youth camps, homeland heritage tours, summer schools, human rights and civil advocacy programs, internship and educational opportunities, and Turkish language programs. This chapter concludes with a discussion of what Turkey's new diaspora engagement policy means for Turkey and its next generations as well as for European host states.

Diasporas, Post-Migrant Generations, and Long-Distance Politics

The word diaspora originates from the Greek term meaning dispersion (Ages 1973, p. 3). Most early discussions of diasporas were concerned with a small number of specific groups, such as Greeks, Jews, and Armenians (Brubaker 2005). While these cases were often referred to as catastrophic or victim diasporas, the conceptualization of the term has diversified particularly since the 1950s with the labeling of Chinese, Indian, and Lebanese expatriate communities as trading diaspora(s). Over time, labor emigrants have also been put under the 'diaspora' banner (Cohen 1997; Sheffer 2003). Today the concept "shares meanings with

a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community” (Tölölyan 1991, p. 4).

In this chapter, diasporas are defined as “people with common origin who reside, more or less on a permanent basis, outside the borders of their ethnic or religious homeland” (Shain and Barth 2003, p. 452). In addition to voluntary or involuntary dispersion, diasporas share several other common features, such as a collective memory about the homeland and a commitment to keep this memory vivid through symbolic and purposive expression, the possibility of return to the ancestral land, and a diasporic consciousness and associated identity hybridity practiced through diaspora organizations (Brinkerhoff 2009, pp. 29–31; Feron 2012, p. 3). ‘Post-migrant generations’ are members of the diaspora who did not emigrate from the country of origin but were born and raised in their respective receiving country (Mahieu 2019b, p. 184). I use ‘post-migrant generations’ interchangeably with other terms, including ‘diaspora youth,’ ‘next generations,’ and ‘younger generations.’

Emigrants from Turkey form a ‘diaspora’ because they share a common history and identity that distinguishes them from their host societies. Overseas Turks retain close economic, emotional, sociopolitical, and cultural ties to their homeland and have formed institutions, organizations, and parties since the first large-scale wave of Turkish emigration from Europe (Aydın 2016). As Shain (2007, p. 130) has noted, there are different levels of mobilization within diaspora communities: some, such as politically engaged elites, act as core members, yet others choose to remain passive or silent. In line with this observation, within the Turkish diaspora, while some individuals are politically active, others refrain from collective mobilization. In a similar vein, while some of them are members of migrant associations, many expatriates from Turkey have not joined any Turkish organization or political party and lead independent lives.

Turkish officials avoided the term ‘diaspora’ until the 2000s and instead opted for ‘guest workers,’ ‘immigrants,’ ‘Turks abroad,’ and ‘Euro-Turks.’ This is because the term had previously been used for former non-Muslim ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire, such as Armenians, Greeks, and Jews who had emigrated to Europe and the Americas in the 19th century as well as for Kurds and Alevis (Kirişçi 2000; Köşer-Akçapar and Aksel 2017). With the AKP’s rise to power in 2002, Turkish bureaucrats began to refer to overseas Turks as a ‘diaspora’ in an attempt to gather the Turkish émigré population under one roof and to highlight and harness their political potential.

Building on Anderson’s conceptualization (1992, 1998), scholars define long-distance politics as “all immigrants’ efforts to secure ties with the homeland and its population by applying modern communication technologies to shape policies there while living protected far from home” (Missbach 2012, p. 6). Long-distance politics can morph into long-distance nationalism, when members of a diaspora group take political action driven by a sense of nostalgic patriotism to recreate, protect or defend their (lost) home (Missbach 2012) and when they develop a nationalist pride due to their attachment to their country of origin (Aydın 2016). On the other hand, Glick-Schiller (2005, p. 570) defines long-distance nationalism as “a set of identity claims and practices that connect people living in various geographical locations to a specific territory that they see as their ancestral home.” Actions taken by long-distance nationalists include voting in homeland elections; supporting political movements and parties back home; sending remittances; demonstrating and lobbying; creating artwork; fighting; and even killing and dying (Glick-Schiller 2005). Long-distance nationalism emerges when a diaspora accumulates a critical mass of political exiles (Skrbis 1999). Long-distance nationalists lack accountability toward their home state as they mobilize in their democratic host states without the fear of punishment and sanction (Anderson 1992, 1994). While Eriksen (2002, pp. 154–55) has argued that long-distance politics or

long-distance nationalism demonstrates “how transnational connections weaken the authority of the nation-state,” homeland politicians may encourage and even demand long-distance nationalism from their diasporas and practice it themselves so as to engage with and to exert pressures over their diasporas (Glick-Schiller 2005). This ‘state-led transnationalism’ (Margaritis 2007; Gamlen 2014) or ‘state-led long-distance nationalism’ is centered around the idea of a territorial homeland governed by a state that claims to be acting in the name of the nation, and ideas of common history, descent, blood, and race to seek and claim membership in the transnational state (Glick-Schiller 2005). In this sense, long-distance nationalism is a product of transnationalism (Sobral 2018), which Vertovec (1999, p. 447) defines as “the multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states.” This is because long-distance nationalism “binds together immigrants, their descendants, and those who have remained in their homeland into a single transborder citizenry...and view[s] emigrants and their descendants as part of the nation, whatever legal citizenship the émigrés may have” (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001, p. 20). Such transnational citizenship (Lee 2004 cited in Gamlen 2008) creates a sense of ‘peoplehood,’ based not only on culture and history but also on a continued commitment to the nation-state (Sobral 2018). It is these ‘stories of peoplehood’ or ‘ethically constitutive stories’ about collective identities and belonging that help states generate and maintain their political legitimacy and enable emigrants to prove their belonging to a political community (Smith 2003; Bauböck 2010). Collyer (2013) has similarly emphasized the importance of narratives that include emigrants and their descendants as members of ‘the people’ or ‘the nation’ and acknowledged them as a necessary precondition for the development of diaspora policy instruments (Mahieu 2015).

Lee (2008) has noted that symbolic and emotional transnational ties are also essential for the transnational attachment of post-migrant generations. When members of the diaspora community, regardless of their generations, act on these collective identities, they imagine their homeland and promote its interests from wherever they settle. ‘Metaphors of blood-based peoplehood’ are often employed to link descendants of emigrants who are not fluent in their mother tongue to their homeland (Glick-Schiller 2005). However, as Triandafyllidou (2006) has warned, expatriates’ (and their descendants’) attachment to their homeland is affected not only by collective memories and myths about the homeland but also by what they experience in their respective host states.

Diaspora engagement policies play a key role in transnationalizing governmentality and spreading collective memories and myths related to the homeland to overseas nationals. These policies may be driven by various incentives, such as upscaling the homeland’s economic or political agendas into global arenas and controlling or monitoring diaspora communities. According to Gamlen (2006, pp. 5–6), these policies fall into three broad categories: (1) capacity-building policies are aimed at discursively producing “a state-centric transnational diaspora” (symbolic nation-building) and establishing a set of corresponding state institutions to govern the diaspora; (2) extending rights to the diaspora; and (3) extracting obligations from the diaspora, based on the argument that expatriates owe loyalty to their sending state. Developing this typology further, Gamlen (2008, p. 842) has identified two diaspora engagement mechanisms used by home states: the first one, diaspora building, cultivates new diaspora communities or reifies existing ones with capacity-building policies. Other studies have also paid attention to the construction and mobilization of diaspora identities. For example, in viewing diaspora as a process, scholars have looked at how diasporic identities are negotiated, reproduced, and contested (Mavroudi 2007; McConnell 2013). Gamlen’s second mechanism, diaspora integration, draws emigrants to the state by offering them a set of rights and obligations. Through the lens of *diaspora building*, the next section critically examines Turkey’s long-distance nationalism geared toward young Turks in Europe.

The YTB's Programs Targeting Turkish-Origin Diaspora Youth

The YTB's programs designed for overseas Turks are varied. Foremost are programs specializing in the empowerment of conservative-nationalist Turkish diaspora associations (Arkilic 2020, *forthcoming*). Another key concern of the YTB is to strengthen young diaspora Turks' attachment to their homeland and to familiarize them with Turkey's culture, history, heritage, and state institutions (YTB 2021a). Accordingly, this second cluster of activities are grouped under the Cultural Mobility (*Kültürel Hareketlilik*) category and focus on the strengthening of cultural ties between them and Ankara, the capacity development of diaspora youth, and the improvement of their Turkish language skills. According to the YTB (2021b):

Our young people living abroad interact intensely with their host country culture through their participation in host countries' education systems. The culture, identity, and behavior patterns of our youth are transforming very quickly. It is important for our young people to get to know and internalize our national (*milli*), spiritual (*manevi*), historical (*tarihi*), and cultural (*kültürel*) values and to transfer them to next generations. This is because the ruptures and breaks that occur on the cultural and historical ground bring many problems. It is a fact that especially the new generations have problems related to identity and belonging. Against this background, the YTB carries out projects to ensure that our young people turn into individuals with self-confidence, a sense of social and historical belonging, and peaceful, effective, and responsible members of the societies they live in. Our youth who know their own culture and history well and who turn this knowledge into a love bond (*gönül bağı*) with their homeland will have the motivation to compete with their peers in every field and be the pride and future of Turkey abroad [author's translation].

There are four chief programs under the Cultural Mobility scheme: (1) the Youth Camp Program (*Gençlik Kampları*); (2) the Evliya Çelebi Cultural Trips (*Evliya Çelebi Kültür Gezileri*); (3) the Diaspora Youth Academy (*Diaspora Gençlik Akademisi*); and (4) the Turkey Internship Program (*Türkiye Stajları*).

The YTB collaborates with the Turkish Ministry of Youth and Tourism and the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to bring young members of the Turkish diaspora to the youth camps in Turkey for six days. The program takes place in July, August, and September every year, and male and female participants are admitted in different time periods (*TRT Haber* 2017). To be able to attend the Youth Camp Program, participants need to be 18–22 years old and hold Turkish citizenship or a Blue Card. The YTB covers accommodation, food, and transportation expenses. Since the program's creation, more than 600 young Turks visited Turkey to attend these camps. In April 2019, 122 young people from ten different countries, including European countries, the United States, Canada, and New Zealand participated in this program. The YTB Youth Camp Program provides a wide range of sports activities (including rafting, mountain biking, climbing, golf, theater, and folk dance) and offers cultural and educational training. Personal development workshops and cultural heritage trips are some of the other components of this program (YTB 2021c).

The Evliya Çelebi Cultural Trips provide funding to Turkish civil society organizations and non-profit educational centers abroad to allow them to organize homeland heritage tours for diaspora youth. This program has declared its main purpose as the deepening of national and spiritual ties between the homeland and young Turks living abroad and to “establish belonging to their homeland” (*anavatanları ile aidiyet kurmak*) through cultural

landmark trips, ateliers, training, and workshops (YTB 2021d). Any young member of the Turkish émigré population aged 14–29 holding Turkish citizenship or a Blue Card is eligible to apply to this program. Between September and January each year, the selected participants from Europe, the United States, Canada, and New Zealand discover Turkey's cultural and historical landmarks for ten days in five different historically significant regions: (1) Istanbul-Bursa-Çanakkale-Edirne; (2) Istanbul-Ankara-Konya-Nevşehir; (3) Ordu-Giresun-Trabzon-Rize; (4) Şanlıurfa-Mardin-Gaziantep-Hatay; and (5) Samsun-Amasya-Sivas-Erzurum-Ankara. Similar to the YTB Youth Camps Program, participant expenses are covered by the Turkish state under this scheme. In 2019, 70 sponsored projects brought 3,200 young diaspora members to Turkey as part of the Evliya Çelebi Cultural Trips Program (YTB 2019, pp. 26–27).

The Diaspora Youth Academy Program provides capacity development trainings to Turkish-origin undergraduate and postgraduate students with Turkish citizenship or a Blue Card. Its predecessor, the Young Leaders Program, started in 2013 and had been renamed in 2017. With a focus on 'identity engineering' as specified by the YTB, the main goals of this program are to consolidate diaspora youth's ties to their homeland's identity and culture; to provide workshops and seminars on themes ranging from intercultural communication, and human rights to European history, migration, and international relations in order to turn Turkish nationals abroad into role models; and to improve their Turkish language skills. The YTB covers accommodation and food expenses of all participants (YTB 2021e). This program takes place in different cities in Turkey and Europe, such as Istanbul, Ankara, Sarajevo, and Strasbourg. For example, in 2019, 42 young diaspora members from various countries gathered in France to participate in a five-day training course. Since the program's establishment in 2013, more than 300 young Turks have benefited from this opportunity (YTB 2021f). The YTB also holds separate youth meetings for young members of the diaspora to enable them to build academic and professional networks in Turkey (YTB Activity Report 2019, pp. 28–29).

Another diaspora youth-tailored program of the YTB is the Turkey Internship Program. Launched in 2016, it grants young Turkish-origin university students abroad the opportunity to complete a one-month internship at Turkish public institutions, such as the YTB, ministries, and the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*), which is Turkey's formal religious institution that brings all religious activity under state control. According to the YTB, the Turkey Internship Program is tasked with informing "second- and third-generation Turks about internship opportunities; employment and business opportunities; and public, private, and non-governmental employers as well as improving their Turkish language skills" (YTB 2021g). In 2019, 144 young diaspora Turks served as an intern in the homeland as part of this initiative (YTB 2019, pp. 26–27).

The YTB has created several other initiatives to facilitate the teaching and learning of the Turkish language abroad. The Turkish Hour Project Support Program (*Türkçe Saati Proje Destek Programı*) provides financial assistance to Turkish civil society organizations, educational centers, and other non-governmental organizations in Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States to encourage them to provide weekly Turkish language classes to Turkish expatriates of school age (YTB 2021h). In order to train teachers who are qualified to teach Turkish to second- and third-generation Turkish children, the YTB has established fully funded postgraduate programs in cooperation with Akdeniz University, Hacettepe University, Necmettin Erbakan University, Sakarya University, and Yıldız Technical University in Turkey. University students holding Turkish citizenship or a Blue Card and residing overseas are eligible to apply for this two-year Master's program and are expected to return to their countries of residence to teach the Turkish language upon graduation (YTB 2021i).

The YTB has also embarked upon a Preschool Bilingual Education Support Program (*Okul Öncesi Çift Dilli Eğitimi Destek Programı*) to teach Turkish language to descendants of Turkish expatriates aged between 0 and 6 years. The program makes regular payments to Turkish civil society organizations, educational centers, and other non-governmental organizations in Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States to enable them to provide weekly classes for 32 weeks and to open bilingual kindergartens and daycare centers (YTB 2021j).

Another similar language-focused YTB scheme is the Anatolian Weekend Schools Program (*Anadolu Haftasonu Okulları Programı*). The program aims to provide Turkish overseas schoolchildren aged 7–17 a weekly, two-hour Turkish, one-hour history, one-hour religion, and one-hour culture/art classes for a period of 32–40 weeks. The YTB provides financial aid to centers and organizations across Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States willing to administer these classes (YTB 2021k).

AKP policymakers' emphasis on the Turkish language has become evident in other actions, such as a series of diaspora rallies held by the Turkish government in Europe since the mid-2000s. For example, in May 2015, President Erdoğan attended two diaspora youth rallies (*Gençlik Buluşması*) in Germany and Belgium (*Sabah* 2015). Fourteen thousand émigré Turks from all over Europe attended the rally in Germany to hear Erdoğan talk:

We don't see you as guest workers, we see you as our power abroad...I ask you to cling to your own identity and language. If you lose your language, you lose everything. You need to speak first to be able to think. If you can't speak Turkish, you can't even think.
(*Deutsche Welle* 2015a, 2015b [author's translation])

At the rally in Belgium, he similarly reminded post-migrant generations that they should teach their children Turkish first, and only if they defend their language, faith, culture, and civilization, will everyone show them respect (*Hürriyet* 2015, author's translation).

Finally, the YTB has invested in diaspora youth's capacity-building by initiating the Human Rights Education Program, which seeks to "increase the participation of our youth who continue their higher education, in human rights, advocacy and civil society activities" (YTB 2021a). By bringing a select group of young Turkish-origin attendees from abroad to Turkey, the institution aims to provide training and workshops on how to combat Islamophobia and discrimination, the workings of the European Court of Human Rights, and civil and legal advocacy strategies as well as to improve their networking opportunities (YTB 2021l).

The YEE's Programs Targeting Turkish-Origin Diaspora Youth

Like the YTB, the YEE has undertaken many diaspora youth-oriented projects prioritizing the instruction of the Turkish language and the dissemination of Turkish values to post-generation migrants. Since its establishment in 2009, the YEE has opened 58 Turkish Cultural Centers (*Türk Kültür Merkezleri*) in 46 different countries to provide Turkish language classes as well as seminars and exhibitions on traditional Turkish arts and culture (YEE 2020a). To groups of 8–16 students, the institution provides different levels of Turkish language classes depending on students' age and existing knowledge of the language. The YEE has taught Turkish to 50,000 students through its Cultural Centers and to 100,000 students through its broader programs (YEE 2020b). The institution has cooperated with 376 Turkish civil society organizations from 31 countries, conducting most of its activities (32%) in Europe and the Balkans (30%) (YEE 2018, pp. 9, 22).

In recent years, the YEE has launched the My Preference in Turkish (*Tercihim Türkçe*) Initiative, which has paved the way for Turkish to be taught as an elective or compulsory secondary foreign language in primary, secondary, and higher education institutions in Poland, Romania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Japan, Egypt, Montenegro, and Georgia. Thanks to this project, Turkish has been incorporated into official curricula in these countries. In addition, Turkish language kits, children's books, and other logistical and educational support actions have been provided to Turkish language teachers serving abroad (YEE 2020c).

YEE activities are not limited to these realms: since 2010, the YEE also coordinates the Turkish Summer School Program that brings hundreds of young overseas Turks to the homeland every summer for a one-month intensive Turkish language class and cultural heritage tours (YEE 2020d), and sends teachers, books, and other educational material to over a hundred universities abroad, which host Turkish Language and Literature (Turcology) Programs (YEE 2018, pp. 12, 17). In 2019, 92 students from 48 countries attended the Turkish Summer School Program in Ankara (YEE 2019, p. 130). In addition, in partnership with universities, the YEE runs a Turkish language instruction certificate (*Yabancı Dil Olarak Türkçe Öğretimi Sertifikası*) program in Turkey and abroad to train people who would be qualified to teach Turkish as a foreign language. To date, over 2,000 individuals have received this certificate (YEE 2019, p. 135).

Furthermore, the YEE conducts the Turkey Scholarship Program with the YTB. Having started in 2012, this scheme enables students from abroad to receive undergraduate education at Turkish universities for free. The program received 10,000 applications in 2012, and by 2019, application numbers rose to over 145,000 (YTB 2021m). The YEE provides preliminary Turkish language training to students who receive scholarships before they start their education in Turkey (YEE 2020e).

Finally, in terms of capacity development, the YEE's Cultural Diplomacy Academy (*Kültürel Diplomasi Akademisi*) provides a three-month training program in Istanbul to overseas scholars, university students, young professionals, journalists, and civil society experts to help them "identify Turkey's cultural diplomacy policies and to raise the 21st century's cultural diplomats" (YEE 2018, p. 129). Operating since 2016, the academy runs in Istanbul every weekend for a period of three months and modules taught in this program cover a wide range of themes (including, but not limited to, international relations, diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, project management, Anatolian civilizations, identity, and culture) (YEE 2018, pp. 129–30). Since 2017, the YEE also hosts the Young Academics Seminar Series as a platform that connects young graduate students and scholars with each other. To date, the institution has held 23 seminar series (YEE 2021).

Conclusion

Although the motivations behind Turkey's new diaspora engagement policy and the AKP's relations with various diaspora organizations have attracted considerable scholarly attention in recent years, Turkey's youth-oriented diaspora engagement agenda remains overlooked in the literature. This chapter has showed that engagement with post-migrant generations is a significant intention within Turkey's new diaspora policy. Ankara has sought to create a loyal, committed, and empowered young diasporic community who are tasked with serving as Turkey's ambassadors and defenders abroad through its newly established programs discussed above. The organization of homeland heritage tours, the instruction of the Turkish language, and capacity-building activities lie at the heart of Turkey's new diaspora youth policy and symbolic nation-building activities.

Turkey's investment in its diaspora youth should be contextualized within a global framework. Various countries across the world have taken demographical diversity and "next generations" into account while crafting their diaspora engagement policies. They have developed a common interest in cultivating closer ties with diaspora members across generations to encourage the inflow of remittances or the sociopolitical contribution of the diaspora group and/or to build or deepen political socialization and to ascribe particular orientations and values to diasporic members (Mahieu 2019a, 2019b). This is evidenced by Taiwan's Overseas Compatriot Youth Taiwan Study Tour (Love Boat) Program, India's Know India Program, China's Youth Summer Program for Overseas Chinese, Morocco's Summer Universities for Young Moroccans Living Abroad, and Eritrea's Know-Your-Country-Tour (Conrad 2006; Agunias 2009; To 2014; Mahieu 2015; Liu and Van Dongen 2016). Israel's Taglit-Birthright Program, a free ten-day trip offered to young members of the Israeli diaspora, is another interesting case in point as it is "an attempt to construct a diasporic identity...to transform a land into a homeland and create a sense of collective identity across borders" (Abramson 2017, p. 15). Turkey's unprecedented interest in the descendants of Turkish emigrants echoes these countries' attempts to engage with their post-migrant generations.

As Lee (2008) has rightly pointed out, the homeland's engagement with emigrants' offspring has significant implications for the young generation's identity and belonging as individuals with multiple loyalties and notions of 'home.' This is particularly relevant for Turkey's young diaspora members, which stand out in many countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands, as a poorly integrated immigrant group characterized by high school drop-out and unemployment rates (Crul and Doornik 2006; Karayalçın 2015; Arslan 2019) and an existential struggle (Güney et al. 2017).

Through participant observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and surveys, future studies should examine how effective Turkey's diaspora youth-oriented programs have been in reaching out to and establishing meaningful relations with young members of the Turkish diaspora, and how the existing fault lines and differences within the Turkish emigrant community affect Turkey's long-distance political ambitions. It would also be important to investigate how Turkey's rapprochement with young Turkish citizens abroad is received by European host states, such as Germany, which has announced that multiculturalism has utterly failed.

Note

- 1 In this chapter I define the Turkish diaspora as immigrants and their descendants who originate from Turkey and are involved in the politics of the homeland regardless of their cultural, ethnic, linguistic, political, or religious background. While the chapter usually opts for the term "Turkish diaspora," it acknowledges diversity within the expatriate community by also employing other terms, such as "diasporas from Turkey," "emigrants from Turkey," and "overseas Turkish citizens."

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