THE EFFECT OF IDENTITY ON THE VOTING BEHAVIOR OF THE TURKISH DIASPORA IN GERMANY: A STUDY ON THE AK PARTY'S VOTES IN THE 2018 TURKEY ELECTIONS

ERGİN ULUSOY[1*] & GÜLNİHAN AVCI KAYA[2]

[1]Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Nuh Naci Yazgan Üniversitesi, İktisadi Ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Siyaset Bilimi Ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü, eulusoy@nny.edu.tr, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0145-7729. [2]Arş. Gör., Nuh Naci Yazgan Üniversitesi, İktisadi Ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Siyaset Bilimi Ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü, gulnihanavci@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3513-6587.

ABSTRACT

After the Justice And Development Party (AK Party) came to power, the policies of the state towards the diaspora changed. Of course, this radical change in politics was also reflected in the voting preferences of the diaspora. Identity is an important factor that determines voting behaviour. Thus, voting choice of the diaspora is primarily related to identity. This study focuses on to the diaspora living in Germany and concludes that there is a strong identity interaction between the AK Party and the diaspora. This research asserts that the policies and discourse of the AK Party and Erdoğan are directed towards the consolidation of the diaspora. The existence of this interaction with the election and demographic statistics of official institutions is supported by the results of previous surveys with similar outcomes and the literature related to the German diaspora and compare it with the data on Turkey to present a meaningful picture. There is a direct relationship between identity and voting behaviour in –the diaspora, especially among AK Party voters. Other factors such as economy, domestic political developments, foreign policy, education etc. are essentially dependent variables.

Keywords: Turkish diaspora, external voting, political participation of diaspora, diaspora's voting behaviour, AK Party and diaspora

KİMLİĞİN ALMANYA'DAKİ TÜRK DİASPORASIIN OY VERME DAVRANIŞINA ETKİSİ: 2018 TÜRKİYE SEÇİMLERİNDE AK PARTİ OYLARINA İLİŞKİN BİR ÇALIŞMA

ÖZ

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AK Parti) iktidara geldikten sonra devletin diasporaya yönelik politikaları değişmiştir. Elbette siyasetteki bu radikal değişim diasporanın oy tercihlerine de yansımıştır. Diasporada kimlik, oy verme davranışını belirleyen önemli bir faktördür. Dolayısıyla diasporanın oy verme tercihi öncelikle kimlikle ilişkilidir. Bu çalışma, Almanya'da yaşayan diasporaya odaklanmakta ve AK Parti/Erdoğan ile diaspora arasında güçlü bir kimliksel etkileşimi olduğu sonucuna varmaktadır. Araştırma, AK Parti ve Erdoğan'ın politika ve söylemlerinin diasporanın konsolidasyonuna yönelik olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Söz konusu ilişki, resmi kurumların seçim ve demografik istatistikleri ile benzer sonuçlara sahip önceki araştırmaların sonuçları ve Almanya'daki Türk diasporasına ilişkin literatür ile desteklenmekte ve Türkiye'ye ilişkin verilerle karşılaştırılarak anlamlı bir tablo ortaya konulmaktadır. Diasporada, özellikle AK Parti'ye oy veren seçmenler arasında, kimlik ve oy verme davranışı arasında doğrudan bir ilişki vardır. Ekonomi, iç siyasi gelişmeler, dış politika, eğitim vb. gibi diğer faktörler esasen bağımlı değişkenlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk diasporası, dış oylama, diasporanın siyasi katılımı, diasporanın oy verme davranışı, AK Parti ve diaspora

INTRODUCTION

Diaspora has different definitions under different approaches. However, in terms of the definition that can be agreed upon, the diaspora is refers to emigrants and their descendants who live outside the country of their birth or ancestry, either on a temporary or permanent basis, yet still maintain affective and material ties to their countries of origin (Rannveig Agunias and Newland, 2012). But strong cultural and political ties with the homeland are important because, as Rosca (2019, s. 161) and Brubaker (2005) points out, this is one of the elements that turns an ordinary immigrant community into a diaspora. The fact that the people living in the diaspora have ties with both countries brings up many issues. And external voting rights is one of the most important of these issues.

External voting rights have been an important topic for diaspora research globally (Caramani & Grotz, 2015; Collyer, 2014; Collyer & Vathi, 2007; Goldberg & Lanz, 2021; Hartmann, 2015; Lafleur, 2015; Nohlen & Grotz, 2000; Rhodes & Harutyunyan, 2010; Turcu & Urbatsch, 2021). These voting rights are evaluated on the basis of rights and obligations. While some researchers approach them negatively within the framework of social contract theory (Bauböck, 2005, 2009; Blais et al., 2001; Fitzgerald, 2006), others argue that these voting rights are both an indicator of democratization and a contributor to the ties maintained between the diaspora and homeland (Gamlen, 2006; Grace, 2006; Hartmann, 2015; Kelley, 2012; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Wucker, 2004). The fact that the right to external voting has become such an important research topic due to the fact that states want to interact with the diaspora, in order to benefit from the diaspora both in lobbying (Levitt, 2001) and in information and money transfer, as well as the increased interest of political parties in diaspora votes.

Umpierrez de Reguero et al. (2021: s. 1-2) state that there are three main reasons for the emergence of external voting. The first of these is, of course, giving the diaspora the right to vote together with democratization (Lafleur, 2015; Rhodes & Harutyunyan, 2010). In this way, diaspora gaining the right to vote may come to the fore in order to contribute to the efforts of transition to a more effective democracy. The second reason is the interaction of a country with its neighbours and the world at large (Turcu & Urbatsch, 2015). The positive effect of globalization on technology and communication opportunities results in countries emulating and even directing one other. External voting rights can also come to the fore at this point. The third reason is that diaspora votes are thought to have an impact on the results of the elections in the homeland (Brand, 2010; Gamlen, 2015). In particular, the adaptation of the diaspora to the electoral system in terms of both ideological and economic financing of politics becomes an important source of motivation.

In this context, the relations between the diaspora and the root country have also been a point of interest. For this reason, literature has emerged focusing on the representation of the diaspora within the framework of the relations between the diaspora and the root country (Ancien et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2015; Margheritis, 2015), state policies regarding the representation of diasporas are not defined in a broad framework, and are mainly limited to dual citizenship practices, remittances sent from abroad (Guarnizo, 2003; Lacroix, 2013; Resende-Santos, 2016; Spoonley et al., 2003), and external voting (Baser Ozturk & Ozturk, 2019; Burgess, 2014; Collyer, 2014). Studies on the representation of states and diasporas both analyse the issue from different perspectives and re-open the concepts to discussion (Bauböck, 2009; Collyer, 2014; Lafleur, 2011; Margheritis, 2015; Ragazzi, 2014).

On the other hand, according to Délano Alonso and Mylonas, (2019: 478)the motivations and objectives of sub-state actors in relation to diaspora groups are formed separately from state policies and institutions, which on occasion lead to more positive reactions from the populations that they target. But in the case of Turkey, religion and nationalism are added to politics as important elements that cause the diaspora to become an extension of domestic and foreign policy. There are several studies investigating the subject in the context of the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AK Party) and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in relation to foreign and domestic politics. For example, Dinçşahin (2012), Arkilic (2021) and Aytaç and Elçi (2019) explain the AK Party's

populist policy; Abadan Unat et al. (2014) show the dynamics of the voting behaviour of the diaspora living in Germany; Yanasmayan and Kaşlı (2019) discuss the issue through the concept of citizenship; Şahin-Mencütek and Erdoğan (2016) put forward the AK Party's diaspora participation policies; and Sevi et al. (2020) explain the voting behaviour of the diaspora in the context of the diaspora's socio-economic roots in Anatolia. At this point, this article argues that the fundamental diversity of voting behaviour in the diaspora is related to the socio-economic and identical affiliations of the pioneers as explained by Arkilic (2021); Sevi et al. (2020), and Mencütek and Erdoğan (2016). As we claimed, the AK Party's nationalist-conservative policies are very important for the diaspora and the relations between these two need to be explained with different dimensions.

For this reason, in this study, the diaspora's voting behaviour is examined within the context of identity. Identity critically affects voting behaviour through social identity, group norms, or demographic preferences (Baysu & Swyngedouw, 2020; Chirco & Buchanan, 2022; Condon, 2015; Evrenk & Sher, 2015; Friese et al., 2016; Goldberg, 2014; Hansen & Tyner, 2021; Hillygus, 2005; Kroeber et al., 2021; Otjes et al., 2020; Schoen & Schumann, 2007; Webster & Pierce, 2019).
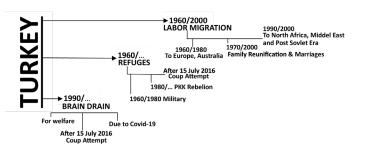
This study examined the parliamentary and presidential elections held in 2018 from a theoretical perspective. These elections were selected specifically as the practice of voting abroad only started to settle in 2018, and as two separate votes were cast in this year. This is important because when it comes to parliamentary elections, identity provides more freedom to voters in terms of party affiliation, but identity consolidation can be experienced more since identification with the leader will be ensured in leader election. Therefore, the 2018 elections demonstrate, simultaneously and separately, how voters are influenced by the AK Party, the nationalist-conservative Cumhur İttifakı (People's Alliance), and Erdoğan as a leader. The study was prepared strictly in accordance with the rules of scientific and publication ethics.

I. TURKISH DIASPORA IN GERMANY AND GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Emergence of the Turkish Diaspora has started with the labour migration to European countries and today most of diaspora members are labour migrants. On the other hand, although less in number, there are also brain drain immigrants and political asylum seekers (Kurds, Alevis, Asyrians etc.) among the groups that make up the diaspora (Adaman & Kaya, 2012; İçduygu, 2014).

The agreement signed with Germany was the first step of human flow from Turkey. In this direct 667.744 workers were sent by the Turkish government between 1961-1978 because the Germany demanded labour (Turkish Employment Agency, 2011). Secondly, at this time when there was a military coup in Turkey, European countries became the first place that came to mind for both those fleeing from the military coup and those who were opposed to the government. Şahin Mencütek and Erdoğan (2016: 177) stated that this situation makes the diaspora which is formed by immigrants and asylum seekers from Turkey form a heterogeneous structure consisting of different ethnic and religious groups. explained that Germany become a meeting point for all kind of immigrants with huge numbers. Today approximately 4-6 million people which is originally Turkish live in Germany (Abadan-Unat et al., 2014; Adar, 2019; McFadden, 2019; Sirkeci et al., 2012: s. 36; Söhn & Özcan, 2006: s. 102)

FIGURE 1 | Turkey's migration history

The Effect of Identity on The Voting Behavior of The Turkish Diaspora in Germany: A Study on The Ak Party's Votes in The 2018 Turkey Elections

93

At this point there is a generational difference regarding participation in elections in Turkey. The cultural and political ties of the Turks who have experienced migration are still alive. Among the 3rd and 4th generation Turks, Turkey does not go beyond being a defining element. The first generations define themselves primarily as Turks and accept political engagement with Turkey. Younger generations, on the other hand, try to live like Germans and define themselves primarily as Germans. In this sense, although Turkey has a culturally defining characteristic (Abadan-Unat et al., 2014) the motivation of the younger generations is to be included in the German society. Young generations seem to be more integrated than first and second generations Turks in terms of their participation in education, their desires to benefit from opportunities, their growing environment and socialization success (White, 2014). Older generations draw a more conservative profile due to their experiences and demands (Abadan-Unat et al., 2014; Moritz, 2010) and they want the younger generations to grow up with conservative values like themselves.

These reasons lead to the emergence of tension and conflict between the old and new generations based on the difference of values and integration (Şen, 2003; Lodigiani, 2018). For this reason, generations who have experienced migration take political trends in Turkey as a reference for their voting behaviour and becoming politicized.

II. THE AK PARTY'S FOREIGN POLICY AND DIASPORA POLITICS

The AK Party deals with the diaspora problem within the framework of its nationalist-conservative foreign policy through three elements: remittances, lobbying, and external votes. Turks living abroad are valuable elements for the AK Party to implement their nationalist-conservative policy more globally. Baser Ozturk and Ozturk (2019: s. 33) quotes Presidential Spokesman İbrahim Kalın by saying that global political aspiration is not only about social, political, and economic benefits but also about announcing to the rest of the world the story of the new Turkey. According to Köşer Akçapar and Bayraktar Aksel (2017: s. 139), this new emphasis on Turkey means the establishment of a new state elite and shift in power has led to the implementation of a new official discourse on modernity and Muslim national identity within the country.

Adamson (2019: s. 224-227) states that the support of conservative and Islamist groups, which appear as silent masses in the diaspora, to the AK Party was influential in the emergence of this result. In this sense, the AK Party's transition from a neo-Ottomanist line to a nationalist-conservative line in its foreign policy, including its diaspora policy, did not cause a break in the support of the diaspora but rather increased consolidation and engagement. Thus, the diaspora gains meaning as an indispensable tool of the AK Party's foreign policy (Şahin-Mencütek & Erdoğan, 2016: s. 181). At this point, Kalın's (2011: s. 18-19) statement that Turkey is perceived as a country that could successfully combine traditional Islamic-Ottoman culture with socio-economic modernization can be examined.

In this frame, the Erdoğan-led AK Party meant a loud voice and resistance against marginalization for the diaspora. In Erdoğan's words, "The ones who still try to squeeze European Turks into the narrow patterns of the 1960s do not want to accept the reality of a growing and strengthening diaspora" (Anadolu Ajansı). The language he used, the symbols he emphasized, his focus on religion and identity, and his emphasis on victimhood all reinforced this conviction. Thus, he was able to establish a closer interaction with the first two generations of the diaspora, who differed from the others in terms of age and educational background.

This approach of the AK Party will be argued throughout the studythe voting rights of the diaspora is actually one of the parts of a more holistic policy. In 2012, the AK Party adopted a voting rights arrangement which included the voting process in the host country, and which was initiated with the 2014 elections. Through this initial election, as Adamson (2019: s. 211) pointed out, the AK Party succeeded in using its external voting right effectively as an engagement policy to achieve its goals. It also made some new arrangements to maximize the rights of the diaspora.

Baser Ozturk and Ozturk (2019: s. 36-37) emphasize that the AK Party wants to see the diaspora as a friend of the nation and use it as an outpost to fight the enemies who want to cause chaos in Turkey and weaken the country. In this direction, in addition to the political role of YTB and UETD in Germany, the Diyanet's (Presidency of Religious Affairs) (Aydın, 2014) role "as the institutional embodiment of monopolizing religion by the state in Turkey and abroad was sustained in the post-2003 period" (Köşer-Akçapar & Bayraktar-Aksel, 2017: s. 146-147).

A further policy practice in which the AK Party applies a close branding on the diaspora is to keep the diaspora active in host countries and to keep its ideological engagement alive.. Even when the diaspora is considered only in terms of the 2018 elections, with its 20% potential among the entire electorate, it promises great support for the AK Party that cannot be ignored. Thus, while the AK Party is integrating the diaspora into politics in Turkey, it also tries to gain an advantage in its relations with the host countries through this political spirit as they are both a vote pool for the AK Party and an active player in lobbying activities. However, as indicated by both Baser Ozturk and Ozturk (2019); and Mügge et al. (2021), host country states, particularly European countries, historically have not supported this approach and policy and reacted to the AK Party's policies and actions. Germany reacted most harshly to this step of the AK Party. Initially, Germany closely monitored the AK Party's rallies within their country, and then completely forbid any of Erdogan's rallies due to his attitude and discourse.

III. EFFECT OF IDENTITY ON THE DIASPORA'S VOTING BEHAVIOUR

Voting behaviour of Diasporans in homeland elections may differ (Fidrmuc, Jan; Doyle; Lafleur and Sánchez-Domínguez): Diaspora voters may support the ruling party more intensely than voters in the homeland, as in 2006 Ecuador, 2000 Senegal and 2014-2018 Turkey. However, as in the 2006 Italian elections, on the contrary, they can give intense support to the opposition. There is no theory that can fully explain this yet. On the other hand, the reason for these differences exhibited by the Diaspora may be based on a socio-cultural agglomeration in a structural way, or it may be purely coincidental (Goldberg and Lanz, 2021; Carmines and Huckfeldt, 1998; Anderson, 2009). At this point, the theories put forward by social psychology regarding the voting behaviour of individuals gain importance.

Social psychology assumes that identity is a main factor influencing voting behaviour. As such, many studies draw attention to factors that can be considered components of identity such as emotions, sex, personality traits, living conditions, group affiliation, traditions, religion, education level, and socio-economic status in order to explain voting behaviour (Abadan-Unat et al., 2014; Friese et al., 2016; Gherghina & Tseng, 2016; Kroeber et al., 2021; Otjes et al., 2020; Schoen & Schumann, 2007). The success of political parties and leaders is directly related to their profile, due to the influence of identity on participation in elections and the colour of votes; political parties and leaders gain an advantage to the extent that they adapt to the voter's profile (Baysu & Swyngedouw, 2020; Chirco & Buchanan, 2022; Goldberg, 2014; Hansen & Tyner, 2021; Kroeber et al., 2021; Webster & Pierce, 2019). Two factors come to the fore in identity-related voting process: personal characteristics and group norms and attitudes. Friese et al. (2016: s. 190) stated that personal characteristics and attitudes are related to individual beliefs, expectations, previous experience and life conditions, values, and group norms, and that these can affect perception of a situation by preventing the processing of information that allows rational choice.

The voting behaviour of the diaspora is much more linked to living conditions and group identity based on common characteristics such as religion, past experiences, and cultural divisions. In terms of the present research, the main factors shaping the identity of a majority of diasporans are the Islamic and Turkish identities. Research supports the notion that Islam is a central element of the identity these diasporans. According to research conducted by the INFO GmbH (NTV, 2009), believing in God, tradition, power, and influence are values that Turks

find much more important than Germans. In the Euro-Turks Barometer survey of 2013 (Erdoğan et al., 2013), 61% of the participants answered the question of "how do you define yourself" by including Islam in their definition. In a survey (Pollack et al., 2016) participants, 47% stated that religious rules are more important than the rules of the state they live in; 13% stated that they are fundamentalists; nearly 30% stated that daily Islamic practices such as wearing modest clothing (i.e. headscarf) and not shaking hands are very important; and 32% stated that they want to live in a society ruled by the Islamic order. In another study conducted by the YTB (Küçükcan, 2011), 35% of the participants answered the question "how would you describe yourself" with a Muslim emphasis. In the same study, the rate of those who strongly agree with the statement "Anti-Islam is the main cause of xenophobia" was 54%, while the rate of those who partially agree was 20.5%. The results of these studies demonstrate that Islam has the power to shape all group affiliations, norms, values and, of course, identity itself.

In the Euro-Turks Barometer survey (Erdoğan et al., 2013), 53% of the participants identified themselves as both Turkish and Islamic, 7% as Turkish and European, and 22% used only the Turkish identity to describe themselves. Küçükcan asked participants how they would describe themselves and 25.5% of the participants answered as Turks, European Turks, or Turks in Europe, while 31.5% responded Muslim Turks.

When group affiliations and norms are considered, two main theories come to the fore: the theory of resistance and the theory of transferability. Gherghina and Tseng (Gherghina and Tseng, 2016: s. 3-4) define the theory of resistance as the fact that immigrants tend to maintain their own values and norms from their root country, making it difficult for them to adapt to their host country. On the other hand, the transferability theory states that immigrants tend to use their values and experiences to adapt to their new country. The reason for the resistance seen in the resistance theory is the social and political distance between the homeland society and the immigrant group. According to McAllister and Makkai, values and experiences brought from the country of origin affect experiences and values in the host country. In this case, the group tends to be introverted and consolidated by strictly adhering to its norms and values. In such a psychology, considering the findings above about Islam, integration cannot be seen as a solution.

On this point, Pollack et al. revealed that Turks in Germany are shown as the least willing group to adapt, although they are the largest minority group in Germany in this sense. According to the research from the INFO GmbH, Turks consider integration into German society as assimilation and tend to cling to their own values more. In research conducted by the TNS Emnid, participants were asked to respond to the question "what do you think contributes to good integration in Germany". 91% of the participants answered, "Learning the German language", 84% said "Adhering to German laws", and 76% said "Good relations with Germans". Interestingly, according to research carried out by the University of Münster (Pollack et al., 2016), almost 60% of Turks believe that Germans do not accept them as first-class citizens due to religious or ethnic reasons. According to YTB research (Küçükcan, 2011), 53.8% of Turks in Germany have experienced xenophobia, and 28% of men and 78% of women state that do not have equal opportunities when compared to Germans. According to the results of the Euro-Turks Barometer (Erdoğan et al., 2013), 38% of Turks in Germany say that they are discriminated against for being Muslims, while 31% say that this happens only some of the time.

In the example of the Turkish diaspora in Germany, most of the labour migrants can be categorised under the resistance theory. However, as Abadan-Unat et al. (2014) demonstrated, highly qualified migrants can be categorised under the transferability theory. This can create further polarisation because immigrants evaluated within the framework of the transferability theory are more open to change and adaptation. Thanks to the education and skills they have, they tend not to have issues integrating within the host society; whereas labour migrants in Germany come from less educated, less skilled, traditional, conservative inlands of Turkey, which leads to integration problems (Arkilic, 2021). Resistance theory can be used to explain this example as this is the reason the AK Party focuses on European Turks, especially those living in Germany, under the leadership of Erdoğan.

The research of Kroeber et al. (2021) demonstrates how social characteristics impact voting behaviour. According to this study, the age, education level, and socio-economic status of migrants are all related to their voting choices. Young people are more likely to be protest voters than the elderly (2021: s. 400-401) because they see voting as an opportunity to express their identities and therefore, they may turn to marginal or small parties. On the other hand, elderly people act on the basis of their group belonging and social identities, which are tightened under the influence of life experiences and group norms. In this case, younger individuals may be seen as impulsive with a tendency to protest, while older people are more conservative. In addition to age, education is another important factor to explain voting behaviour. Studies (Condon, 2015; Hansen & Tyner, 2021; Hillygus, 2005; Kroeber et al., 2021) reveal that education has an impact on voting preferences, especially since more highly educated individuals have a greater ability to process data. Rates of participation and the vote colour can be used as evidence of this, according to this theory (Hansen & Tyner, 2021; Kroeber et al., 2021; Schulte-Cloos & Leininger, 2022), educated and qualified Turkish citizens in Germany either do not want to go to the polls for Turkish elections or are not interested in Turkish politics at all and do not take Erdogan's discourse into account. In this context the third and fourth generations of more educated individuals tend not to be interested in Turkish politics (Abadan-Unat et al., 2014: s. 27-28).

Participation rates in the 2018 elections confirm this proposition. While the voter turnout in Germany was 45.74%, Erdoğan received 64.78% of all votes. This statistic shows that highly educated qualified Turks do not show enough interest in the elections. figure 2. And Table 1. clearly explain this situation.

As Arkilic (2021: 2) and Mügge et al. (2021: s. 412-413) have stated, AK Party and Cumhur İttifakı (Republican Alliance) voters generally consist of religious, less educated, less qualified, lower and middle-class people, Millet İttifakı (Nation Alliance) voters consist of more educated, qualified, secular, and urban people in all European countries including Germany. Figure 2. shows both the education level and age of voters. The first striking detail in Figure 2. is that the education level and age range of voters in Germany and Turkey are quite similar. However, the participation rate in Turkey is higher than in Germany. As a result of this, votes for Erdoğan and votes for the AK Party were 12 and 14 points lower, respectively, in Turkey than in Germany. The two items creating this difference are participation rate and education/age. The participation in Turkey is almost twice that of Germany. And according to data from the Turkish Statistical Institute, while the rate of participation for voters under 40 was 44%, the rate for those 40 and over was 56%. These rates were 40% and 50%, respectively, in Turkey. According to the German Federal Statistical Institute, at the end of 2021, the population under the age of 45 was 46%, and the population aged 46 and over was 54%.
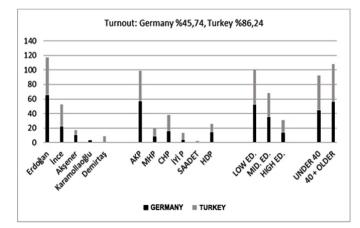
FIGURE 2 | A Comparison of Election Results and Demographic Traits of the Turkish Diaspora in Germany and Turkey.

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TUİK), Voters Profile Indicator

In addition to these data, as can be seen in right columns of Figure 2., 52% of the people in the diaspora have low levels of education and

The Effect of Identity on The Voting Behavior of The Turkish Diaspora in Germany:
A Study on The Ak Party's Votes in The 2018 Turkey Elections

95

35% have a moderate educational level. Similarly, 48% of the people in Turkey have low education levels and 33% have moderate levels. The level of education of a significant part of the data on Turks in Germany is unknown. However, the data are consistent and meaningful with other available data. Moreover, the income status of Turks is in parallel with their educational status. According to YTB research (Küçükcan, 2011), when questioned on their financial status, 41% of Turks in Germany answered "I have no income or I live with a low income", while nearly half stated that their biggest problem is unemployment. Similarly, Pollack et al. (2016) also indicated that 51% of Turks barely or with little money. Based on these data, it can be claimed that citizens in Turkey and Turks in Germany correctly reflect theoretical assumptions that the Turkish diaspora in Germany is a diaspora based on identity.

TABLE 1 | Results of the 2018 Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

2018 Parliamentary Election								
	AK Party	MHP	HDP	CHP	Saadet Partisi	İyi Parti	Others	Cumhur İttifakı	Millet İttifakı + HDP
GERMANY	56.30	8.25	14.02	15.28	0.68	3.31	1.53	64.55	34.390
TURKEY	42.56	11.10	11.70	22.64	1.34	9.96	0.7	53.66	45.64
2018 Presidential Election								
	Erdoğan	İnce	Demirtaş	Akşener	K. mollaoğlu		Others	Cumhur İttifakı	Millet İttifakı + HDP
GERMANY	64.78	21.88	9.98	2.58	0.58		0.20	64.78	35.02
TURKEY	52.59	30,64	8.40	7.29	0.89		0.20	52.59	47.22

Source: Supreme Election Council of Turkey (YSK)

However, group affiliation and group identity are also important for voters. According to Evrenk and Sher (2015), voters avoid being alone, raising the issue of herd behaviour. It is wiser for less educated and more conservative individuals to follow the wisdom of the herd for survival. Being alone in your choices means being insecure and excluded in a community with strong solidarity behaviour. Hansen and Tyner (2021); and McDonald and Crandall (2015) explain this situation using the injunctive norms theory, which states that injunctive norms influence behaviour by telling people what to do and showing them the way to go. If the individual does not act according to these norms, the punishment will be social pressure and social sanctions. Considering that Turks living in Germany are a closed structure, they have strong communication among themselves and establish close relations both in social life and within the scope of association activities. Thus, there would be a significant social cost to stray from group decisions and norms. This is important because in cases where the ruling party and the state are integrated, alignment between the electorate and the authoritarian regime leads to the expulsion of partisanship in the root country to the diaspora (Burgess, 2018; Yanasmayan & Kaşlı, 2019). Therefore, group affiliations in the Turkish diaspora are strongly associated with political parties and leaders. As Bornschier et al. (2021) point out, if individuals are satisfied with the party and the leader in terms of reflecting their social identities, they will continue to follow them irrationally. In cases where this does not happen, voters vote for an alternative party that they see closest to their identity, giving a message to the party and the leader to return to their previous identity positions.

CONCLUSION: MORE THAN A VOTE

The Turkish diaspora is an important example globally of a diaspora due to its size, economic volume, cultural diversity, and, of course, political power. Thus, it has been garnering more attention from both academics and states. This particular research focused on the voting behaviour of the diaspora as the place and importance of identity in the Turkish diaspora is quite unique. Therefore, while explaining voting behaviour, this research claims that this behaviour is primarily and mainly based on identity. Moreover, this emphasis on identity follows a social fault line in Turkey, and that identity polarization is deeper outside of Turkey than in the homeland due to the living conditions of the diaspora in the root country. The diaspora was marginalized as a party state policy after the AK Party came to power, and this was

reflected in the election results through the votes from immigrants who went to Germany through labour migration and became a part of the AK Party's natural base. Immigrants in the diaspora become willing participants to state engagement because of the discrimination and xenophobia they are exposed to in their host countries. Therefore, as seen by the results of this study, they quickly united around Erdoğan's discourse and identified with his high-profile leadership. The Turkish diaspora in Germany is a diaspora where ideological divisions are strong, regardless of which wing of politics. This is because the Turks who migrated to this country are mostly composed of groups that have political and cultural conflicts with the local power forces in Turkey. For this reason, political debates in Turkey are reflected more strongly on the mass here. For this reason, the values and political attitude defended by the AK Party under the strong leadership of Erdoğan are more embraced and brought to the forefront by the conservative and nationalist masses here, who are subjected to marginalisation.

This study followed an interdisciplinary approach between political science and political psychology when examining the relationships between identity and voting behaviour. In this study, social identity theory, resistance and transferability theory, and injunctive theory were put at the centre of the study. The theoretical assumptions were tried to be supported with findings from previous studies, statistical data, and the results of surveys. In this sense, this current study differs from others not only in terms of presenting a solid theoretical foundation, but also in bringing together the results of many field studies. Using this method, theoretical assumptions and their validity were tested.

Future studies may focus on the voting preferences of the diaspora in upcoming elections. In this sense, the voting preferences of the diaspora, the rate of participation in elections, and the discourse during the election campaign can be examined.

REFERENCES

[1] Abadan-Unat, N.; Çıdam, V.; Çınar, D.; Kadirbeyoğlu, Z.; Kaynak, S.; Özay, B. and Taş, S, (2014). *Voting Behaviour of Euro-Turks And Turkey's Presidential Elections of 2014. Research Paper*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Boğaziçi University.

[2] Adaman F., Kaya A. (2012). *Social Impact of Emigration and Rural-Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe: Turkey Report Prepared for the Directory General of Employment*. Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission Under the Auspices of GVG in Cologne, Germany.

[3] Adamson, F. B. (2019). Sending States and the Making of Intra-Diasporic Politics: Turkey and Its Diaspora(s). *International Migration Review*, 53(1):210–36. doi: 10.1177/0197918318767665.

[4] Adar, S. (2019). *Rethinking Political Attitudes of Migrants from Turkey and Their Germany-Born Children*. SWP Research Paper, 7, Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs doi: https://doi.org/10.18449/2019RP07

[5] Anadolu Ajansı (2021). *Growing Diaspora in Europe Instills Hope in Us: Erdogan*. https://ww https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/growing-diaspora-in-europe-instills-hope-in-us-erdogan/2205441 w.aa.com.tr/en/europe/growing-diaspora-in-europe-instills-hope-in-us-erdogan/2205441.

[6] Ancien, D., Boyle, M. and Rob, K. (2009). *Exploring Diaspora Strategies: An International Comparison*. Maynooth.

[7] Anderson, C. J. (2009). The Interaction of Structures and Voter Behavior in Dalton, Russell J., Klingemann eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, pp: 589–609. NewYork: Oxford University Press,

[8] Arkilic, A. (2021). Turkish Populist Nationalism in Transnational Space: Explaining Diaspora Voting Behaviour in Homeland Elections. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 23(4):586–605. doi: 10.1080/19448953.2021.1888599.

[9] Aydın, Y. (2014). The New Turkish Diaspora Policy. *SWP Research Paper*, 10. Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

[10] Baser Ozturk, B. and Ozturk, A. E. (2019). Turkey's Diaspora Governance Policies and Diasporas from Turkey In Germany: A Critical Reading Of The Changing Dynamics in Hatay, Mete & Zenonas Tziarras, eds. *Kinship and Diasporas in Turkish Foreign Policy: Examples from Europe, the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean*. Chapter:10. 29-45. PRIO Cyprus Centre Report: Nicosia: PRIO Cyprus Centre.

[11] Bauböck, R. (2009). The Rights and Duties of External Citizenship. *Citizenship Studies* 13(5):475–99. doi: 10.1080/13621020903174647.

[12] Baysu, G. and Swyngedouw, M. (2020). What Determines Voting Behaviors of Muslim Minorities in Europe: Muslim Identity or Left-Right Ideology? *Political Psychology* 41(5):837–60. doi: 10.1111/pops.12653.

[13] Bornschier, S., Häusermann, S., Zollinger, D. and Colombo, C. (2021). How 'Us' and 'Them' Relates to Voting Behavior—Social Structure, Social Identities, and Electoral Choice. *Comparative Political Studies* 54(12):2087–2122. doi: 10.1177/0010414021997504.

[14] Brand, L. A. (2010). Authoritarian States and Voting from Abroad: North African Experiences. *Comparative Politics*, 43(1):81–99. doi: 10.5129/001041510X1291136 3510439.

[15] Burgess, K. (2014). Unpacking the Diaspora Channel in New Democracies: When Do Migrants Act Politically Back Home? *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 49(1):13–43. doi: 10.1007/s12116-014-9151-5.

[16] Brubaker, R. (2005). The 'Diaspora' Diaspora, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Vol. 28/No. 1.

[17] Caramani, D, and Grotz, F. (2015). Beyond Citizenship and Residence? Exploring the Extension of Voting Rights in the Age of Globalization. *Democratization*, 22(5):799–819. doi: 10.1080/13510347.2014.981668.

[18] Carmines, E., and Huckfeldt, R. (1998). Political Behavior: An Overview in R. E. Goodin and H.-D. Klingemann eds. *A New Handbook of Political Science*. 233-54. New York: Oxford University Press.

[19] Chazan, G. (2017). Turkish Rifts Stir up Germany as Referendum Nears. *Financial Times. Retrieved*.

[20] Chen, Y. W. et al. (2015). Gone but Not Forgotten: The (Re-)Making of Diaspora Strategies. *Asian Ethnicity*, vol. 16, no. 3, July 2015, pp. 371–79, doi:10.1080/14631369.2013.878210.

[21] Chirco, P. and Buchanan, T. M. 2022. 'Dark Faces in White Spaces: The Effects of Skin Tone, Race, Ethnicity, and Intergroup Preferences on Interpersonal Judgments and Voting Behavior.' *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 22(1):427–47. doi: 10.1111/asap.12304.

[22] Collyer, M. (2014). A Geography of Extra-Territorial Citizenship: Explanations of External Voting. Migration Studies, 2(1):55–72. doi: 10.1093/migration/mns008.

[23] Collyer, M. and Vathi, Z. (2007). Patterns of Extra-Territorial Voting. Development Research Centre on Migration, *Globalisation and Poverty Working Paper*, 22, 1-36.

[24] Condon, M. 2015. 'Voice Lessons: Rethinking the Relationship Between Education and Political Participation'. Political Behavior, 37(4):819–43.

[25] Délano Alonso, A. and Mylonas, H. (2019). The Microfoundations of Diaspora Politics: Unpacking the State and Disaggregating the Diaspora. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(4):473–91. doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2017.1409160.

[26] Erdoğan, M., Kaya, A. and Ünver, C. (2013). Euro-Turks Barometer. *Euro-Turks Araştırması Raporu*. Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Göç Araştırmaları Merkezi (HUGO).

[27] Evrenk, H. and Sher, C. Y. (2015). Social Interactions in Voting Behavior: Distinguishing between Strategic Voting and the Bandwagon Effect. *Public Choice*, 162(3–4):405–23. doi: 10.1007/s11127-015-0241-3.

[28] Fidrmuc, J.; Orla, D. (2006). Does Where You Live Affect How You Vote? An Analysis of Migrant Voting Behavior. *Discussion Paper Series*, No: 4619. Institutions And Economic Performance.

[29] Friese, M. et al. (2016). Implicit Measures of Attitudes and Political Voting Behavior. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, vol. 10, no. 4, Apr: 188–201.

[30] Gamlen, A. (2015). The Impacts of Extra-Territorial Voting: Swings, Interregnums and Feedback Effects in New Zealand Elections from 1914 to 2011. *Political Geography*, 44:1–8. doi: 10.1016/j.polgeo.2014.08.005.

[31] Gherghina, S. and Tseng, H. K. (2016). Voting Home or Abroad? Comparing Migrants' Electoral Participation in Countries of Origin and of Residence. *Nationalities Papers*, 44(3):456–72. doi: 10.1080/00905992.2015.1132690.

[32] Goldberg Andreas C. (2014). The Impact of Religion on Voting Behaviour - A Multilevel Approach for Switzerland. *Swiss Political Science Review*, 20(2):305–29. doi: 10.1111/spsr.12068.

[33] Goldberg Andreas, C. and Lanz, S. (2021). Living Abroad, Voting as If at Home? Electoral Motivations of Expatriates. *Migration Studies*, 9(2):279–310. doi: 10.1093/migration/mnz018.

[34] Guarnizo, L. E. (2003). The Economics of Transnational Living. International *Migration Review*, 37(3):666–99. doi: 10.1111/j.1747-7379.2003.tb00154.x.

[35] Hansen, E. R. and Tyner, A. (2021). Educational Attainment and Social Norms of Voting. *Political Behavior*, 43(2):711–35. doi: 10.1007/s11109-019-09571-8.

[36] Hartmann, C. (2015). Expatriates as Voters? The New Dynamics of External Voting in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Democratization*, 22(5):906–26. doi: 10.1080/13510347.2014.979800.

[37] Hillygus, D. S. (2005). The Missing Link: Exploring the Relationship Between Higher Education and Political Engagement. *Political Behavior*, 27(1):25–47.

[38] Ho, E. L., Hickey, M. and Yeoh, B. S. A. (2015). Special Issue Introduction: New Research Directions and Critical Perspectives on Diaspora Strategies. *Geoforum*, 59:153–58. doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.12.006.

[39] Kalın, İ. (2011). Soft Power and Diplomacy. Perceptions, 16(3):5–23.

[40] Köşer-Akçapar, Ş. and Bayraktar-Aksel, D. (2017). Public Diplomacy through Diaspora Engagement: He Case of Turkey. *Perceptions*, 22(4):135–60.

[41] Kroeber, C., Gall, C. and Dingler, S. C. (2021). How Individuals' Social Characteristics Impact the Likelihood to Waste a Vote – Evidence from Great Britain, Germany and France. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 31(3):388–407. doi: 10.1080/17457289.2020.1718155.

[42] Küçükcan, Talip. (2011). *Avrupa'da Yaşayan Türkler: Yaz Tatili Döneminde Türkiye'ye Gelen Türkler Örneği*. Ankara: Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı.

[43] Lacroix, T. (2013). Collective Remittances and Integration: North African and North Indian Comparative Perspectives. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(6):1019–35. doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2013.765667.

[44] Lafleur, J. M. (2011). Why Do States Enfranchise Citizens Abroad? Comparative Insights from Mexico, Italy and Belgium. *Global Networks*, 11(4):481–501. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-0374.2011.00332.x.

[45] Lafleur, J. M. (2015). The Enfranchisement of Citizens Abroad: Variations and Explanations. *Democratization*, 22(5):840–60. doi: 10.1080/13510347.2014.979163.

[46] Lafleur, J. M. and Sánchez-Domínguez, M. (2015). The Political Choices of Emigrants Voting in Home Country Elections: A Socio-Political Analysis of the Electoral Behaviour of Bolivian External Voters. *Migration Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, July: 155–81.

[47] Levitt, P. (2001). Transnational Migration: Taking Stock and Future Directions. *Global Networks*, 1(3):195–216. doi: 10.1111/1471-0374.00013.

[48] Lodigiani, M. (2018). Turks in Germany: An Evaluation of Socioeconomic Integration. *Colloquium: The Political Science Journal of Boston College*, (2)1: 20–31.

[49] Margheritis, A. (2015). *Migration governance across regions: State-diaspora relations in the Latin America-Southern Europe Corridor*. Routledge.

[50] McDonald, R. I., and Crandall, C. S. (2015). Social Norms and Social Influence. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 3:147–51. doi: 10.1016/J.COBEHA.2015.04.006.

[51] McFadden, S. W. (2019). German Citizenship Law and the Turkish Diaspora. *German Law Journal*, 20(1):72–88. doi: 10.1017/glj.2019.7.

[52] Moritz, O. (2010). Türklerin Alman Toplumuna Entegrasyonu: Türkler Paralel Toplumlar mı Oluşturacak, Doğru Bir Entegrasyon mu Gerçekleştirecek? [The Integration of The Turks into German Society: Turks On Their Way To Parallel Societies Or To True Integration?]. *Bilge Strateji*, vol. 2, no. 3: 165–92.

[53] Mügge, L., Kranendonk, M., Vermeulen, F., and Aydemir, N. (2021). Migrant votes 'here' and 'there': Transnational electoral behaviour of Turks in the Netherlands. *Migration Studies*, 9(3), 400–422. https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnz034

[54] Niimi, Y.; Ozden, C.; Schiff, M. (2010). Remittances and the Brain Drain: Skilled Migrants Do Remit Less. *Annals of Economics and Statistics, no. 97/98, 2010, p.* 123, doi:10.2307/41219112.

[55] Nohlen, D. and Grotz, F. (2000). External Voting: Legal Framework and Overview of Electoral Legislation. *Boletín Mexicano de Derecho Comparado, 33(99):1115–45*.

[56] NTV, (2009). *Almanya'daki Türkler Dönmek İstiyor*. https://www.ntv.com.tr/dunya/almanyadaki-turkler-donmek-istiyor,4rGGmRk72k-m7Y0vOY9cKw

[57] Otjes, S., Stroebe, K. and Postmes, T. (2020). When Voting Becomes Protest: Mapping Determinants of Collective Action onto Voting Behavior. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 11(4):513–21. doi: 10.1177/1948550619872482

[58] Pollack, D., Müller, O. Rosta, G. and Dieler, A. (2016). *Integration and Religion as Seen by People of Turkish Origin in Germany*. University of Munster.

[59] Ragazzi, F. (2014). A Comparative Analysis of Diaspora Policies. *Political Geography*, 41:74–89. doi: 10.1016/j.polgeo.2013.12.004.

[60] Resende-Santos, J. (2016). Cape Verde: Rethinking Diaspora in Development Policy. *International Migration*, 54(2):82–97. doi: 10.1111/imig.12212.

[61] Rhodes, S. and Harutyunyan, A. (2010). Extending Citizenship to Emigrants: Democratic Contestation and a New Global Norm. *International Political Science Review*, 31(4):470–93. doi: 10.1177/0192512110374044.

[62] Rosca, A. (2019). The Political Voice of Diaspora: An Analysis of External Voting of Moldovan Migrants. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, Mar. doi:10.15549/jeecar.v6i1.247

[63] Şahin-Mencütek, Z. and Erdoğan, M. (2016). The Implementation of Voting from Abroad: Evidence from the 2014 Turkish Presidential Election. *International Migration*, 54(3):173–86. doi: 10.1111/imig.12229.

[64] Schoen, H. and Schumann, S. (2007). Personality Traits, Partisan Attitudes, and Voting Behavior. Evidence from Germany. *Political Psychology*, 28(4):471–98.

[65] Schulte-Cloos, J. and Leininger, A. (2022). Electoral Participation, Political Disaffection, and the Rise of the Populist Radical Right. *Party Politics*, 28(3):431–43. doi: 10.1177/1354068820985186.

[66] Sevi, Se., Mekik, C. S., Blais, A. and Çakır, S. (2020). How Do Turks Abroad Vote?. *Turkish Studies* 21(2):208–30. doi:10.1080/14683849.2019.1607311.

[67] Sirkeci, İ., Cohen, J. H. and Yazgan, P. (2012). 1980 and 2009, Germany Received 412,598 Asylum Applications from Turkish Citizens. *Migration Letters*, 9(1):33–46.

[68] Söhn, J. and Özcan, V. (2006). The Educational Attainment of Turkish Migrants in Germany. *Turkish Studies*, 7(1):101–24. doi:10.1080/14683840500520626.

[69] Spoonley, P., Bedford, R. and Macpherson, C. (2003). Divided Loyalties and Fractured Sovereignty: Transnationalism and the Nation-State in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 29(1):27–46. doi: 10.1080/1369183032000076704.

[70] Statista (2016). A Turkish-German View on Good Integration. https://www.statista.com/chart/5620/integration-immigrants-germany, accessed 10.04.2022.

[71] Şen, F. (2003). The Historical Situation of Turkish Migrants in Germany. *Immigrants & Minorities*, vol. 22, no. 2–3, July 2003, pp. 208–27, doi:10.1080/0261928042000244835.

[72] Tınç, T. (2021). Divided Community with Identity Problems. https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/people-germany-turkish-roots-have-identity-problems-situation-fuelled-turkish-president, accessed 15.04.2022.

[73] TNS Emnid. (2016). A Turkish-German View on Good Integration. https://www.statista.com/chart/5620/integration-immigrants-germany accessed 10.02.2022.

[74] Turcu, A. and Urbatsch, R. (2015). Diffusion of Diaspora Enfranchisement Norms. *Comparative Political Studies*, 48(4):407–37. doi: 10.1177/0010414014546331.

[75] Turcu, A. and Urbatsch, R. (2021). Aversion to Far-Left Parties among Europeans Voting Abroad. *Comparative European Politics*, 19(1):117–38. doi: 10.1057/s41295-020-00225-2.

[76] Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR). (2011). *From Past to Present*. https://media.iskur.gov.tr/21271/dundenbuguneiskur.pdf

The Effect of Identıty on The Votıng Behavıor of The Turkısh Dıaspora in Germany:
A Study on The Ak Party's Votes in The 2018 Turkey Electıons

97

[77] Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK). (2018) Turkey Parlamentary Election Results 2018. https://www.tuik.gov.tr

[78] Ulusoy, E. 2016. *Diasporayı Yeniden Düşünmek: Diaspora Teorisi ve Tarihsel Bağlamda Türkiye'nin Diaspora Politikası*. Ankara: PEGEM Akademi.

[79] Webster, S. W. and Pierce. A. W. (2019). Older, Younger, or More Similar? The Use of Age as a Voting Heuristic. *Social Science Quarterly, 100(3):635–52. doi: 10.1111/ssqu.12604*.

[80] Turkish Supreme Election Council (YSK). (2018) Parlamentary Election Results. https://www.ysk.gov.tr