



Literature review on Turkish-origin youth in Germany

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Literature review on Turkish-origin youth in Germany

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This literature review will be discussing the reasons why young Turks in Germany support Erdogan and why the Turkish state is interested in it. Various studies demonstrate that people with migration background have a lower level of interest in German politics. The more people feel connected to Turkey, the more they are interested in Turkish politics and less in German politics (Sauer, 2018). The survey of the Center for Turkish Studies suggests that the feeling of belongingness to Turkey in the 2nd and 3rd generation is higher than to Germany (Sauer, 2018). The high voter turnout among Turkish-origin migrants in Germany for the Turkish elections also shows how much young Turks are interested in their parents' homeland.

But what is the reason behind the fact that young Turks are more interested in Turkish politics than in German politics? To understand this phenomenon, it is required to take a step back and follow the way of Turkish foreign policy in Germany since the AKP started heading the government and the ways in which the young Turks were inspired by Turkish politics.

At the beginning, aims of the AKP government were aligned with the European concept of humanity. In addition, AKP promised to democratize the country further and to extend human rights and bring Turkey closer to the EU (bpb, 2019). The adaptation of European values was welcomed by most of the European states, including the Federal Republic of Germany, which hosts the largest Turkish-origin migrant community in the EU. As a result, Turkish politics was also reflected in Germany. Accordingly, in the 2000s many new associations internalizing this mindset were established.

There were many extant associations since the 1970's who were politically left and right orientated like *Demokrat İsci Dernekleri Federasyonu (DİDİF)* and *Avrupa Milli Görüş* (Küçüküseyin, 2002) but the ones after AKP regime specifically focus on Islam and Turkish-Ottoman culture. These associations were not hostile to Germany or Europe by the virtue of their existence at first; on the contrary, they often aimed to have more integrated relations and

a peaceful coexistence. In spite of the fact that they had a peaceful and innocent image initially, these cultural centers, including mosques, later turned into an issue. Besides, the changes in the political agenda of the governing party caused changes in the political attitudes of the Turks in Germany (Aydin, 2014).

The following section overviews main associations and their works oriented towards the Turkish origin youth in Germany.

Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion (Diyanet İşleri Türk-İslam Birliği, DITIB)

DITIB is the largest Islamic association in Germany, they also advertise on their website that they have youth associations at more than 850 mosques (DITIB Homepage: <http://www.ditib.de/default1.php?id=6&sid=11&lang=en>).

Up until a few years ago, there was no Islamic education at schools for Muslim children in Germany; DITIB was filling this gap. Especially on weekends and holidays, the association has been offering Islamic lessons. A few years ago, 800 German public schools started to teach Islam to 54.000 students. In addition, about 800 pupils attended Alevi religious education, which is offered in eight federal states (Mediendienst Integration, 2018).

Turkish Football Clubs

Amateur football clubs are very common and very popular among children and teenagers in Germany. In many FIFA advertising campaigns, football is associated with justice, respect and multi-culturalism. Football is portrayed as a common language of different nations. Although numerous football clubs had already existed in Germany, the number of Turkish football clubs have been increasing. Migration researcher Dr. Stefan Metzger has dealt with the reason why there are so many Turkish football clubs. One of the explanations of the migration research is that if the majority society doesn't meet the needs of some special groups, these associations are founded in any area. Besides, they do not only feel discriminated in German clubs but also feel unequal to the German players. The German style of club celebrations with pig sausages and beer does not suit their belief system (Greinke, 2018). Many of the DITIB mosques have their own football teams, too.

Osmanen Germania

In Germany, there are not only Turkish Football Clubs, but also Turkish Martial Arts Clubs for Turkish younger groups to spend their leisure times (Wensierski, 2007). Sinan Samil Sam, Ünsal Arik, Sükrü Altay are good role models as successful athletes who don't use their anger for violent acts and transform their power into success for young Turks (Woermer, 2014). Founded in 2015, Osmanen Germania was one of the fastest growing groups. They had 40 local groups, most of which settled in Nordrhein-Westfalen where most of the Turks live. They had 2500 members in Germany and 3500 worldwide (Stern, 2018).

Over time, sports clubs in Germany also began to represent the political interests of Turkish political actors. Box club Osmanen Germania is an example of this situation. In videos on YouTube, they pretended as if they had wanted to get young people off the streets (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qkVGylMs18>, 1.31 min.). Nevertheless, there were also allegations that the club was recruiting new members for illegal businesses (Zeit, 2018). Osmanen Germania is suspected of conducting illegal business and being involved in organized crime. Several times drugs, firearms, ammunition and large sums of cash were confiscated during raids and some of the members were arrested (Stern, 2018). It is also interesting that although they were registered as a boxing club, they never participated in a sports competition and there was not any sporting activity of this club. When the German state became aware of this sports club, they had already established connections with Turkish state. The club was accused of being the “dirty hand” of the Turkish government and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) (bpb, 2017). Subsequently, the club was shut down in 2018 by the German government because of their criminal acts and some members, including the chairman of the boxing club Mehmet Bagci, were accused. Even if the group is not on trial in a political context, their connection to the Turkish state became visible through photos. In one of these photos the consultant of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Inur Cevik, is photographed, and in another picture from April 2016 Bagcı with the AKP delegate Metin Külünk also can be seen. Külünk is a key figure in the national Turkish network on German soil (Klasen, 2018).

Moreover, people or groups who criticized the Turkish state like politically left-oriented groups, Alevis or Kurds felt threatened by this group. For instance, the incident against footballer Deniz Naki caused a shock effect in the media. On 8 January 2018, his car was shot at on the motorway. This case still has not been solved but since he is known for his criticisms

of Turkish politics and support of the terrorist organization PKK (Haberler, 2018), the German media has blamed Osmanen Germania for this situation (Welt, 2018).

Turkish Rap- Music in Germany

Rap music is a part of hip-hop culture; it originated in the slums of New York where mainly Afro-Americans live. The lyrics mostly deal with socio-economic class differences, such as inequality in social life and racism (Ogbar, 2018). The Afro-American music culture also reached to Germany. In the 1990s, Turkish rap was created by young Turkish people living in Germany (Baykan, 2019).

As in the United States of America, the texts in all countries generally deal with class problems, social rights, race and other aspects to which migrants are exposed in their daily lives. In the USA, the production of rap music was peculiar to African Americans, but today it hardly plays a role. Hip-hop culture stands for “rebellion”, which has arisen from the social class problems they experience and against these difficulties; this type of music is a way to express their feelings (Dietrich, 2018). Dark skin is of first priority to perform rap music. “White people” were not respected as rappers for a while because they did not have the same problems and they were not considered to belong to the community (Ogbar, 2018). For instance, a “white” rapper, Eminem had to fight many prejudices and was often ignored by other rappers (SWR3, 2011). In his movie “8Mile” he brought his rapper career to the screen. Today, he is one of the best known and most successful rappers worldwide. This also illustrates the evolving dynamics of the music scene, and it’s all inclusive nature.

Since people living in ghettos prefer this kind of music, Turkish or Arab-origin people are also a large part of it, and the music videos or lyrics are influenced by their experiences. Non-Turkish rappers or Turkish rappers, who mostly rap in German, use Turkish words in their lyrics, as a result Turkish slang has become part of this musical genre in Germany (Maviblaue, 2018). Also, in Germany, rap artists’ lyrics deal with the problems, criminality and violence of migrants. Some examples of such critical artists are:

Alpa Gun - Immernoch Ausländer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvKEISb6vAI>

Haftbefehl- Parallelen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ctIO8CwJsk>

Kool Savas Ft. SP - Krieg und Frieden:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QzZmlEfTOg>

It is like a competition, who has a more difficult life or had a more difficult life gets more respect in the community and among the fans (Voigt, 2019). So, it is not surprising that young people with a migration background feel attracted to rap music. The lyrics appeal to the fans because they can identify them with their daily problems. In contrast to the USA, the skin color in Germany is not a criterion for good rap music, but the social origin of the rapper is an important criterion. Since the lyrics are about one's own life, it is assumed that those who do not come from the ghettos, do not have much to tell in this scene, hence they are criticized and not perceived as "real rappers" (Voigt, 2019).

During the political tensions between Germany and Turkey in 2018, and the political success of *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD), many Turks were confronted with the question of what they think about the political tension or what they think about President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Dassler, 2017). The debate reached its climax with the "Özil crisis". The German national soccer player Mesut Özil was exposed to harsh criticism in the German media headlines with Erdoğan's statements about their joint photos (Spiegel Online, 2018). After the Özil crisis, and the diplomatic crisis between Germany and Turkey, the German-Turkish rapper Eko Fresh (Ekrem Bora) published a song track called "*Aber*" (But). Eko Fresh has transferred the idea of the American Rapper Joyner Lucas from the song *I'm not racist* (2017) to the German context.

The video clip is a three-parted role play; in the first part, a typical AfD voter is introduced: "First I want to clarify / I am not a Nazi, but / the Ali-Baba's / with their Islam conversation disturb me...". In the second part the angry Turk answers with clichés, praising Erdogan: "Nazis like you / with a barrel full of beer / What? integrate? / You want to assimilate us".

Eko Fresh's personal opinion comes in the last part of the song. He is sitting in the middle between the two chairs, which is a strong symbol of real life in betweenness and the chaos that individuals experience in a globalized world. He is annoyed about this polarization in the society (Rabe, 2018).

As if there was only the choice between Erdoğan and Bohmermann
Only the choice between Bertelsmann and Donerman
As if there was only the choice between black and white [...]
We grew up between both worlds, dot
I don't have to decide, I just have to be myself. (Eko Fresh - Aber)

Eko Fresh is a famous rapper who has already written many lyrics about the lives of minorities in Germany, but unlike his other songs, this song was not only a hit among his fans but it also received a lot of attention from many media outlets and researchers have thoroughly studied the lyrics (Landsberg, 2018). It can be assumed that the new field of research on rap music in Germany will become even more important in the future in order to better understand young people with a migration background.

Union of International Democrats (UID)

The UID - Union of International Democrats (previously known as UETD the Union of European-Turkish Democrats until 2018) was founded in 2004 and it organizes all events of AKP and the Turkish politicians in Germany, including President Erdoğan's visits to Germany. The UID is seen as a lobby organization of the AKP (Jansen, 2016). The motivation of the association is to preserve the identity, culture and religion of the Turks in Germany. Also, at one of the meetings organized by UID, Erdoğan stated that there will be new services for Turkish citizens, in order to keep up and preserve the language and the culture (Gögüs, 2018). The UID has sub-organizations for women, young people and academics. Some events of these suborganizations in the Year 2017 are (UETD Activity Report 2017):

UETD Women Organizations

- The UETD Women organized seminars for women about social rights and care for sick, handicapped and old people (P. 144)
- The role and meaning of women in politics and civil society (P. 112)
- Family communication (P. 113)
- Stands of handmade products (P. 115)
- On International Women's Day: the role and importance of Muslim women in history (P. 122)

The Europe-wide events have the main feature of highlighting the traditional role of women. AKP politicians also take part in some events, such as the consultative event between UETD Women and the AKP Women's Association, between 2 and 5 February 2017, where Mustafa Yeneroglu was invited to speak (P. 116).

UETD Academy

The UETD Academy deals with the political, economic and socio-cultural transformation that affects Muslims and migrants. According to the UETD website, the Academy's focus is on Muslims, rather than Turkish-origin individuals (<http://u-i-d.org/uetsd-akademi/>).

Under the title "Political Academy" an event about Turkey - Germany relations took place on 25th and 26th November 2017 in Cologne. The speakers shared their knowledge about the economic relations between the Ottoman Empire and Germany, the relations during the government of Gerhard Schröder and historical topics like the alleged genocide of the Armenians, PKK and FETÖ.

Union of International Democrats Youth

In the activity report from 2017, it became clear that UID's young members establish contacts with different German and Turkish institutions. They give seminars to young people not only on cultural and religious topics but issues like job opportunities after graduation as well. One of the main advantages of this association for members is that they have the opportunity to meet important bureaucrats, which make them, feel having someone to solve their problems and listen to their wishes, so they feel more belong to the Turkish community (UETD Activity Report 2017).

The UID also offers leisure activities such as cultural trips. In 2017, UETD organized a trip to Canakkale and Bursa. This trip took place for women and men at different times. These cities were historically very important places for the Ottoman Empire. Another destination of the UETD was Nice in France, the title of this trip was "The Ottoman Works in Europe." Nice was known as the depot capital during the Ottoman Empire. Bosnia- Hercegovina was another destination and the excursion was named as "Journey to the ancestors" (UETD Activity Report,

2017). In general, whether a trip is within Europe or to Turkey, the focus is always on the Ottoman Empire.

Erasmus Exchange Program

Another intersection between Turkish and German culture is the popular Erasmus exchange program. Turkey was a popular destination for students from Germany. The Erasmus coordinator of the University of Münster explains that Istanbul was the most popular destination for students after Madrid. Every year 30 to 40 students travelled to Istanbul with the Erasmus Program. Today, the number has dropped to nine students. She explains the reason for the decline as the unstable political situation in Turkey (Bettendorf, 2017). In 2014, there were about 2100 students from Germany who decided to spend an Erasmus semester in Turkey. In 2016, there were only 1086 students (Schwär, 2016). Germany is still an attractive destination for students from Turkey (Avrupa Info). This may be due to the high educational level of the universities.

The declining interest in an exchange in Turkey shows how even the Erasmus Program suffers as a result of the political tension between Turkey and Germany.

Student Groups

With an increasing number of Turkish students, Turkish daily politics has also become an issue at German universities. In addition to the various Islamic student groups, Turkish student groups, some of which support the Turkish government, were also established.

KulTürk (<https://www.facebook.com/kultuerkunibielefeld/>), represented at the universities of Bielefeld, Kassel and Paderborn, is only one example of Turkish student groups, which support the Turkish government. Because of their positive attitude towards the Turkish government, anti-Semitic events and critical debates, they have a bad reputation amongst the society especially on social media (Hasselhoff, 2018). Most members have good relations with DITIB and organize events together.

Above-mentioned subjects are some examples showing that the Turkish government took the opportunity to convince young people about their power and capabilities since offers of

majority society in Germany are inadequate. With the Turkish-Ottoman and Muslim associations, the Turkish government has been establishing alternatives for the German associations. These associations have also revitalized the debates on the “integration” of Turkish-origin youth born in Germany.

But what is the interest of the Turkish government? Why do they care about the Turks in Germany? In this way, the Turkish state will be able to influence the formation of opinion and behavior of the Turkish diaspora and influence political decision-making processes in Germany (Gögüs, 2018). One example of this is that the Turkish president has called on Germans of Turkish origin not to vote for the SPD, CDU and the Green Party in the 2017 federal elections (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2017). The Pro-Erdogan demonstration in Cologne in 2016 with up to 30.000 participants is another important example for this argument (Titz, 2016).

Nowadays we live in an “information society” so; the way people obtain information has great importance. The following study from Ethnic Market and Media Research about Political-Social Situation of Turkish Migrants in Germany in 2017 has shown how people of Turkish-origin obtain their information. The methodology of the study was random. The 20-minute interviews were conducted in German and Turkish language with 2839 people aged 18 and over. The study found that almost every day 49 percent of the interviewees use the media (online media, radio, television, newspapers) to gain information about politics, economy and social topics. On a scale from 1 (not credible at all) to 10 (extremely credible), the 18-29-year-olds consider the German media to be credible with 3.93 Scala points. The Turkish media is considered to be 4.71 Scala points credible by the same age range. For the general sample, the higher the educational level, the lower the credibility of the German media. And the higher the educational level, the lower the credibility of the Turkish media.

In the next chapter of the survey, an index was created under the topic of integration and Erdogan sympathy. The integration index consists of demographic and social characteristics. The integration index value for 18-29-year-old is 63.53 percent. The second index of Erdogan sympathy consists of positive and negative statements about Erdogan and Turkish politics. These two index values were crossed. The result clearly suggests that the lower the integration is, the higher the sympathy towards Erdogan is, accordingly.

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