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Diaspora politics and religious diplomacy in Turkey and Morocco

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyse the importance of diaspora politics and Islam in Turkey and Morocco. The main premise of the article is that both states have increasingly relied on diaspora politics and religious diplomacy to attain both domestic and foreign policy gains. Using a Most Different Systems Design (MDSD), this article first examines each country's political framework to determine how diaspora politics and foreign policies are outlined. Then, it demonstrates how both states use diaspora politics and religious diplomacy to access their diaspora groups in European countries, enhance their regional and global influence, and alter domestic political arrangements to amass power.

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Introduction

Diaspora politics have become omnipresent over the last couple of decades in the age of globalism as forms of political engagement that link constituencies in one country with a real or imagined homeland somewhere else (Adamson 2016). This article aims to reveal the similarities and differences between Turkey and Morocco in the making of their diaspora politics and religious diplomacy. Different reasons can be enumerated to explain the need to compare the two countries. First, both Turkey and Morocco remain major migrant sending countries. It is estimated that around five million Turkish-origin people live in Europe, while Morocco also counts five million Moroccans living abroad (Haut Commissariat au Plan 2020). Second, both Turkish and Moroccan migrants represent the largest migrant groups in Europe (Fassmann and İçduygu 2013). Third, both countries have sought to maintain close relationships with their diasporas. And finally, although these two states are constitutionally and historically different from each other, Turkey has gradually become more identical to Morocco under the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – AKP) rule over the last decade in terms of the instrumentalization of religion in state and society relations as well as in foreign policy making (Kaya 2015).

Migrant sending states such as Turkey and Morocco have lately contributed to the Islamization of their diasporic communities in Europe by instrumentalizing religion to both reach out to their emigrants and attain their domestic and foreign policy objectives.

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Supporting this argument, this article will concentrate on the policies and practices of the two states in designing their diaspora politics and religious diplomacy. Islam gives guidance to many self-identified Muslims in Europe and elsewhere. As the focus of this article is not on the Islamization of diasporic communities, the authors will name a few drivers of the process of Islamization. It is primarily the exclusionist and discriminatory policies and practices of migrant receiving states in Europe that alienate Muslims and make them more religiously engaged in seeking justice. Secondly, it is the reflexive agency of self-identified Muslims to get engaged in religiosity in order to relocate themselves in the globalized world that is full of insecurity, injustice, and deprivation that hit many people, including the Muslims in other parts of the world. Thirdly, the growing appeal of Jihadist ideologies such as Wahhabism, Salafism and Shi'ism (Haynes 2021; Mandaville 2020). Eventually, it is the religious-based diaspora politics of migrant sending states that have become gradually more engaged in the promotion of Islamic religiosity. This section will shed light on this last aspect of Islamization of diaspora through the exploitation of diaspora politics and religious diplomacy of the two states.

This article demonstrates that, over the last decade, Turkish diaspora policies have evolved to resemble Morocco's repressive and controlling diaspora governance policies (Baser and Ozturk 2020). In the 1970s, Morocco established a strong network of associations of workers and merchants called the "*Amicales*' (known as secret police) to maintain strict control over the diaspora (Drhimeur 2020). The network was an extension of the state's repressive domestic policies towards political activists and dissident voices. Those who fled the country were primarily mobilizing within trade unions and associations in Europe (de Haas 2005), and the Moroccan state actors feared that the emigrants would organize themselves into political opposition to the regime, thus affecting the flow of remittances to the homeland. *Amicales* functioned as intelligence services to collect information about Moroccan activists in Europe and sometimes harassed them or pressured their employers to fire them (Sahraoui 2015).

In Turkey, the Office for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (*Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı* – YTB), established in 2010 by the AKP, became a surveillance tool over the members of the Turkish diaspora, especially after the 2016 coup attempt (Baser and Ozturk 2020). The Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) has helped the YTB target groups deemed a threat to the AKP, mainly Kurdish activists and members of the Gülen movement. These institutions, along with loyal diaspora members, are in charge of collecting information on dissidents. Other cases include intimidation and the refusal of service at Turkish consulates (Baser and Ozturk 2020). These practices have become extensions of the authoritarian state apparatus and repressive policies at home.

Research design and methodology

To study the importance of diaspora politics and the influence of Islam on foreign policies, we use a comparative method of agreement. Based on the 'most different systems design' (MDSD), this study identifies similar relations between independent and dependent variables within Turkey and Morocco (Przeworski and Teune 1970) in order to understand similar outcomes for the two states (Tarrow 2010). In other words, MDSD may unfold similar diaspora and foreign policy strategies in different socio-political contexts. We compare Turkey, which has become an electoral authoritarian regime

within a laicist background (Özbudun 2015; Esen and Gümüşcü 2016), and Morocco, where Islam is the official religion of the state, and the king is the Commander of the faithful, thus detaining both political and religious powers (Abouzzohour and Tomé-Alonso 2019). Although both states have recently become similar in terms of the instrumentalization of religion in both domestic and foreign policy-making processes, we still want to claim that, constitutionally and historically, the two states remain very different from each other. Turkey and Morocco are constitutionally different since the former still has the principle of laicism in its constitution while the latter has Islam as its official religion embedded in its constitution. Both states are also historically different since the former has a post-imperial legacy while the latter has a post-colonial legacy (Haynes 2021). In brief, this paper will demonstrate the similarities of diaspora politics initiated by the two states and how they instrumentalize their own official versions of Islam to reach out to their emigrant communities in Europe and increase their influence.

Based on the analysis of the secondary literature on diaspora studies, migration studies, religion studies and international relations, this article examines how Turkey and Morocco have formulated their diaspora politics and religious diplomacy. The article's main premise is that both states have used diaspora politics and prioritized their own interpretation of Islam in their foreign policies to enhance their regional and global influence and amass power. The article is composed of three sections. The first section briefly elaborates on the theoretical perspectives on diaspora studies and the role of religion in everyday life in the diaspora, international relations, foreign policy and domestic policy. The second section will compare the political framework in Turkey and Morocco to determine how diaspora politics and religious diplomacy are formulated. The third section will compare the instrumentalization of diaspora politics and Islam by both states in attaining their respective domestic and foreign policy objectives.

Theoretical framework

Having acknowledged the importance of their diaspora communities in a globalizing world, states have formulated different policies to engage with their citizens abroad (Brand 2017). This includes introducing political rights for the diaspora and the establishment of diaspora institutions and organizations to facilitate bureaucratic issues (Gamlen 2008). Different factors shape how diaspora engagement policies are formulated. Emigration history, the location and the size of the diaspora, and the economic and political system of the home country are among these factors (Collyer 2013a). The policies follow different economic, political and social logics (Gamlen 2006).

The literature on state-led engagement policies with the diaspora adopts three different approaches. The first relates to migration and development, the second to transnationalism and the state, and the last one to extraterritorial citizenship. The first approach examines the implications of immigration on home countries, particularly the effect of 'brain drain' on the development of migrant sending countries (Bhagwati and Hamada 1974). In the 1990s, the literature started to emphasize the contribution of migrants to poverty alleviation and economic development in their home countries and how the latter has sought to engage with their diaspora to promote such activities (de Haas 2006). This approach often views the diaspora as a resource that can be mobilized to support the migrant sending state's political or economic interests (Collyer 2013b).

The transnational approach focuses on migrants as international actors and explores how migrant sending states' diaspora policies have contributed to the 'redefinition' of the state (Levitt and de la Dehesa 2003). Migrants' transnational political mobilization and participation in the politics of their home countries affect the political system and foreign policies of the homeland (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003). Migrant sending states cultivate migrants' loyalty to build political allegiances and achieve diplomatic ends (Mahler 2000). Migrants become agents of state-sponsored diplomacy. Embracing the diaspora could bolster a nation's image while creating a soft power tool for home states to promote their interests by subcontracting certain roles to diaspora members as brand ambassadors of the state (Mahler 2000). Migrant sending states set up 'global nation policies' to woo their diaspora communities (Smith 1999) and to obtain economic and political resources (Mahler 2000). Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) examines how diaspora policies in Turkey have sought to strengthen economic, political and cultural ties between the homeland and Turkish-origin emigrants abroad who have become a strategic player in Turkey's relations with the EU. The Turkish state has recently become more engaged with the diaspora for political purposes **during the AKP rule, and the Turkish emigrants have become 'good representatives' of the homeland and lobbying agents for Ankara (**Kaya 2012; Şenay 2013; Şahin-Mencütek and Başer 2017; Adamson and Tsourapas 2019; Yanaşmayan and Kaşlı 2019; Baser and Ozturk 2020).

The last approach in the literature elaborates on emigration in terms of citizenship. It analyzes migrants' citizenship as a tool of nation-building and identity construction (Barry 2006). Similarly, the literature on state-led diaspora engagement initiatives within hybrid or purely authoritarian regimes examines the multifaceted motives behind such initiatives. Laurie Brand (2002) argues that diaspora policies in Morocco and Tunisia have sought to penetrate and surveil the community abroad as an extension of the authoritarian state apparatus. Here diaspora governance serves to obtain economic and foreign policy interests when citizens abroad become ambassadors of their homeland or suppress voices deemed a political or a security threat to the regime (Turner 2013). In this case, diaspora policies become mechanisms of surveillance, retribution, and security, or propaganda machines to further state legitimacy within the diaspora (Hongmei 2012). These policies fail to be inclusive as they favour certain groups and neglect others depending on who the state is willing to incorporate and who is deemed a threat (Turner 2013). Good citizens are those loyal to the regime back home, while traitors are those who refuse to comply (Hirt and Mohammad 2018). This 'transnational authoritarian rule' that spills over the borders wishes to control and regulate the diaspora (Lewis 2015). To that end, Jörum (2015) examined how the Syrian authorities used repressive measures against the Syrian diaspora that mobilized against Bashar's regime in Sweden and created a perpetual feeling of insecurity. Similarly, Cooley and Heathershaw (2017) demonstrate how dictatorial states use repression, surveillance, monitoring and harassment against the dissident voices in their diaspora communities.

The role of religion in everyday life in diaspora

The study of modern diasporas has become a crucial aspect within the fields of international relations, cultural studies and ethnic studies since the 1980s (Sheffer 1986, 2003; Safran 1991; Clifford 1994; Hall 1994; Gilroy 1995; Cohen 1997). Some diasporic

communities often appeal to religion for structural, cultural and emotional reasons. Sometimes, such an appeal is structurally reinforced by the receiving state and society, and sometimes it is strengthened by migrant sending states (Kaya 2012). International migrants, refugees and asylum seekers often reify their religious capital in the context of migration. Religiously oriented migrants might, at first glance, seem as if they are practising an essentialist form of religio-cultural identity, taken from their homeland. This conclusion would rather be misleading. This is because the formation and articulation of religious identity is a process which is not free from the constant interaction between various social groups, classes, cultures, as well as between migrant sending and migrant receiving states.

Reification of religion could be a practical tactic employed by migrants and their children to create a safe haven for themselves in transnational space (De Certeau 1984). Emphasizing culture and tradition serves the same purpose, to protect what is deemed to be left in the age of insecurity: religion, purity, culture, ethnicity, honour and the past. The discourse of purity seems to be one of the last resorts for migrants where they believe they can defend their norms, values and families. However, it is not only the structural constraints in the receiving country that lead to the reification of religious identities among the members of diasporic communities. Sometimes it may be the sending state's diaspora politics that contributes to the reification of religiosity, or Islamization, among the members of emigrant-origin communities. European states have long failed to provide political opportunity structures to devout Muslims in diaspora leading them to align themselves with the alternative political opportunity structures offered by the sending states to answer their needs for political identification. This has provided Turkey and Morocco with an opportunity to spread their influence within their respective diasporas and a tool to make their religious-based foreign policies more efficient. This work will claim that some segments of both Turkish and Moroccan diaspora communities in Western Europe constitute illustrative samples in terms of ethno-cultural and religio-political identity formation processes that are constrained by both social-economic-political-historical conditions of their countries of settlement (e.g., Jones 2016; Veugelers 2012; Lijphart 1975) as well as the diaspora politics of their countries of origin.

The role of religion in foreign policy and domestic policy

Religion is often noted as an important source of values for both individuals and groups of people. These values influence how domestic and foreign policies are formulated because religion can be 'a mobilizer of masses, a controller of mass action . . . an excuse for repression [or] an ideological basis for dissent' (Calvert and Calvert 2001, 140). In this sense, the role of religion in politics is better understood as a continuous set of interactions between institutions, actors, and ideas in different national and international contexts (Cesari 2021, 83). Religion may be used as a source of legitimacy (Fox 2004). Legitimacy is described as the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed (Hurd 1999, 381). Religion influences domestic policy behaviour when it is used to legitimize regimes while delegitimizing those who oppose them (Fox 2004). When Morocco integrated religion into its public educational system, it started presenting itself as 'the trustworthy guardian of Islamic heritage' in charge of implementing social control (Cesari 2021, 93). This has enabled Morocco to blur the lines between

national identity and Muslim identity to construct a homogenous nation. Unifying society is a way to control subjects since the ruler minimizes domestic opposition and maximizes domestic support (Fox and Sandler 2004, 49). It has conferred the state moral legitimacy and the authority to solely interpret religion (Starrett 1998). The ruling elite of such Muslim states become capable of portraying themselves as 'morally correct' and convincing people that their 'cause is legitimate' and should not be opposed (Fox and Sandler 2004, 35). Otherwise, opposing them would be opposing a religious precept; it would be defying what is moral and right (ibid, p. 49).

The reference to religion in states' discourses or public policies elevates them by granting them a sacred nature (Fox 1999). Regimes might also use religion to justify their actions, especially if religion is regarded as a legitimate means to solve given societal issues (Lipset 1960). In this regard, religion's greatest influence on the international system is through its significant influence on domestic politics. Policy makers might use religion to enhance their soft power and influence. When religion is embedded in society, it becomes a source of mobilization in the hand of states (Akgönül 2020; Gözaydın 2021). They use attraction and encouragement rooted in common religious beliefs to appeal to others, persuade them to act in a certain way, or go along with their objectives (Haynes 2021). And so, they establish religious transnational networks and institutions to cultivate foreign relations with their diaspora communities, advance national interests (Rees 2021), extend their reach, and influence transnationally (James 2021). Globalization has enabled religious actors to shape international politics allowing them to project influence, mobilize resources, and attract followers across national boundaries, greatly enhancing their overall political position (Toft et al. 2011, 167). Religious views might influence foreign policies when used as sources of legitimacy and normative power. Political leaders who draw on religion in formulating their foreign policies are perceived as 'morally correct' thus enhancing their regional and international influence. Within this theoretical framework, this paper aims to demonstrate how both Turkey and Morocco follow the same logic in designing their diaspora politics, how both refer to Islam in their foreign policy, and how they try to influence their diaspora, their norms and values to attain domestic and international gains.

Increasing role of Diyanet in the framing of Islam in Turkey

The nature of the political system and the domestic political arrangements affect the way diaspora politics and foreign policies are shaped. Turkey and Morocco differ from each other as far as their relationship with religion (Islam) in their constitutions is concerned. While constitutionally Morocco is a Muslim state, Turkey is constitutionally defined as a laicist state. However, there are political and societal changes in contemporary Turkey that make both states increasingly similar in terms of the role of religion in state and society relations. The Turkish state has undergone a subtle process of Islamization under the AKP rule, the roots of which can be traced back to the 1980s (Kaya 2015). The state-centric Kemalist regime was confronted with the challenge of ethno-cultural and religio-political groups in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup (Keyman and Öniş 2007). The 1982 Constitution prepared by the military junta was favouring a Turkish and Islamic alliance using a flavour of popular religious nationalism in the country. The idea was a neo-liberal one aiming at the revival of a religious-based community formation in

Turkey as opposed to a centrifugal working-class alliance (Sakallioglu 1996). In this political context, it became possible to see the Islamist forces, values and themes more pervasively involved in political, social and economic spheres. For instance, the Islamist orders and communities (*Sufi tarikatlar*) infiltrated the political parties, government, civil service, and the business and banking sectors (Tuğal 2009; Sakallioglu 1996).

Islamist parties in Turkey remained marginal political actors in the electoral process of the state throughout the 1970s and 1980s, as they were opposed to pluralism and fundamental freedoms (Tezcür 2009). It was the Welfare Party, established in 1983, which gradually adopted policies more in line with broader public appeal after gaining representation in the national parliament in 1991. Their success in local governance in the 1990s, such as in Istanbul, the mayor of which was the current President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has also given them the strength to search for different sources of legitimacy other than religion. Since the early days of their rule in local administrations in the big cities, they focused more on constituency services and on what Sumita Pahwa calls *pothole fixing* in relation to the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Pahwa 2017; Gulalp 1999).

In 1996, the Welfare Party formed a coalition government with the True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi* – DYP), a centre-right party. However, the coalition did not last long as the Constitutional Court declared the Welfare Party 'an existential threat to the Turkish Republic' (Tezcür 2009). The closure of the Welfare Party took place in a global conjuncture characterized by the emergence of armed Islamic resistance groups like Hamas and Hezbollah throughout the region (Muasher 2014). Before the closure of the Welfare Party in January 1998, the Virtue Party had already been established in December 1997 to fill the void. However, the Virtue Party failed to secure a similar level of popularity, primarily because of the growing discontent of its younger members with global aspirations who realized that ideologically driven platforms failed to garner strong public support, while also making their parties subject to increased state repression. The Virtue Party was banned in 2001 for the same reason, as 'an existential threat to the Turkish Republic.' The exclusion of the Virtue Party from the political system prompted the younger reformist cohort to create the AKP with a clear set of centrist policies promoting 'modern values of liberalism, human rights and market economy' (Tezcür 2009).

The leader of the new Party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, rejected all kinds of affiliations with Necmettin Erbakan, describing Islam to make his party's centrist position 'accessible and meaningful' to the crowds (Tezcür 2009). This ideological stance was novel in the history of Islamist parties in Turkey. While Erbakan utilized Islam as a 'holistic ideology' in ontological contrast to the West and as an end in itself, Erdoğan instead addressed Islam as a means to make the AKP a catch-all party. The AKP sought to meet the Copenhagen criteria[1] that determine a country's eligibility to join the European Union and adopted several reforms to consolidate civilian control over the military. Consequently, in July 2003, the Parliament ended the executive authority of the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*, MGK) (Özcan 2008). Thus, the reforms removed the military tutelage of the presidency, the judiciary and the secret services (Kirdiş and Drhimeur 2016). This significant decline in the power and influence of the military enabled the AKP leadership to dominate the public policy agenda as well as the judiciary, economy, media and bureaucracy, thus having an authoritarian turn (Kaya 2015; Öniş 2013).

To support its conservative discourses and to represent itself as a 'moral leader' for society 'in all walks of life' (Lord 2018, 113), the party resorted to Diyanet, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, the weight of which has gradually increased in both domestic and foreign policy over the last two decades (Öztürk 2016). Diyanet, the increasing presence of which in the implementation of diaspora politics and religious diplomacy will be soon delineated, was granted the right to express opinions on laws, statutes and regulations and censor religious content on online platforms (Lord 2018). The AKP has sought to increase *Diyanet*'s budget and personnel in an attempt to improve both the visibility and presence of Islam in public space and state agency when it comes to the religious discourse (Bruce 2019). Currently, *Diyanet* has an annual budget of 1.6 billion US dollars and more than 80,000 employees. Its budget surpasses that of 37 other state ministries. It subsidizes the construction and maintenance of more than 90,000 mosques in Turkey, decides the content of the legal sermons, controls the Quran courses in the country, employs all the imams, and organizes the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (Öztürk and Sözeri 2018). The AKP has also delegated social provisions and services to religious movements, reflecting religion's strong return to public space. Thus, Islam has been used to incorporate and comfort the underprivileged, the marginalized and the forgotten (Kaya 2015).

Soon after the 2007 presidential elections, when Abdullah Gül, a member of the AKP, replaced the secular President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the AKP started redefining Turkey as a Muslim nation that should free itself from the effects of Westernization. This discourse has been centred on the necessity of purifying Turkish society from the contaminating effects of Western values deemed corrupt and immoral (Çinar 2018). The AKP, mainly Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, started mixing religious references with nationalist, conservative, centre-right, and anti-establishment references. Party leaders mobilized social, cultural, nationalist and religious values to position themselves as the guardian of religious values (Ceran 2019). For instance, empowering Islam meant lifting the ban on headscarves both in schools and civil services. New concepts were introduced in schools, such as the concept of human rights from an Islamic perceptive and the representation of marriage and family as the foundation of society (Kaya 2015).

The role of the ministry of *Habous* in the framing of Islam in Morocco

In Morocco, the constitution defines the country as a Muslim State. The king is not only the 'head of state' but also *amir al mouminin* (Commander of the faithful), who ensures respect for Islam and the religious compliance of laws. The king chairs the Council of the *Ulama*, the only body empowered to issue *fatwas* (religious views), and thus monitors the conformity of laws and acts to the Islamic identity of the state (Madani et al. 2013). The King has also initiated reforms of religious affairs that would help to diffuse the idea of a 'Moroccan official Islam' based on the Maliki legal school and counter the influence of other religious groups or Islamic doctrines. These reforms, including bringing all Moroccan mosques under the supervision of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, and determining which sermons are given in mosques, also aim to consolidate the authority of the King and his religious legitimacy as the Commander of the faithful (El-Katiri 2013). The Ministry of Islamic Affairs (the Ministry of *Habous*) manages the religious field and is in charge of Islamic education, training religious personnel and supervizing religious complexes, including the shrines. It is also the only authority responsible for appointing

religious personnel. The legitimacy of the Ministry is based on the king's religious authority, and its main aim is to determine the framing of 'official Islam' to specify who are the 'competent religious' personnel challenging the 'unofficial Islam' (Bruce 2019). Thus, the Ministry of *Habous* ensures the protection of what is considered ideologically safe by the monarchy and makes it impossible for 'unofficial' religious movements or associations to find a mosque where they can express their opinions or dissident voices (Tozy 1999).

Traditionally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is commonly referred to as a 'sovereign' ministry and the *domaine réservé* of the King. The monarch is the only authority with the right to decide international matters and frame international relations and diplomacy (Houdaïgui 2013). With the constitutional reforms of 2011, Mohammed IV maintained his central role and preserved his preponderance, along with his entourage, over the decision-making process and the implementation of foreign policy (Fernández-Molina 2015).

The comparison between Turkey and Morocco's political contexts reveals how the two states are constitutionally and historically very different cases, except that both rely heavily on diaspora politics and religious diplomacy to obtain domestic and foreign policy objectives, especially over the last decade. Our next sections will demonstrate how the two states follow the same logic in formulating their diaspora politics and instrumentalizing religious diplomacy.

Diaspora politics and the use of religion

This section compares the instrumentalization of diaspora politics and religious diplomacy in Turkey and Morocco to access foreign regions and outside groups, enhance their regional and global influence, and alter domestic political arrangements to amass power. In the 1960s, migratory flows from Turkey and Morocco started after both states signed labour recruitment agreements with various European states. When these states halted recruitment in the mid-1970s, labour migrations decreased considerably while family reunification rose (de Haas 2014; Fassmann and İçduygu 2013; Alaoui 2013; Kaya and Kentel 2008). This resulted in a shift from temporary or short-term labour emigration to a more long-lasting and permanent one.

In the 1990s, there was a considerable slowdown in Turkish and Moroccan emigration to Europe, mainly due to restrictive policies in the receiving countries but also to improving economic, social and political conditions in Turkey and Morocco. At the same time, European states witnessed enormous demographic changes, led by the dissolution of the Eastern Block. 1989 signalled the beginning of a new epoch that resulted in massive migration flows of ethnic Germans, ethnic Hungarians, ethnic Russians and Russian Jews from one place to another (Brubaker 1998). This period of demographic change in Western Europe occurred in parallel with the rise of xenophobic discourses such as the 'clash of civilizations,' 'culture wars,' 'religious wars,' and 'Islamophobia,' as well as with the reinforcement of restrictive migration policies and territorial border security *vis-à-vis* the nationals of countries outside Europe (Kaya 2012). This was a game-changer in the perception of Turkish- and Moroccan-origin migrants in Europe as they became more exposed to racist and Islamophobic attacks (Bulliet 2004; Kaya 2012).

The end of labour migration after the Oil Crisis of 1973 and the introduction of restrictive policies in Europe led to a change in the social structure of emigration and the rise in larger-scale family reunification that came to supplement individual emigration to Europe. Massive family reunification during the 1970s and the 1980s shifted the nature of emigration from temporary to permanent settlement (de Haas 2014; Kaya and Kentel 2008). With the intensification of migration flows, it became necessary for the Turkish and Moroccan states to design their diaspora politics to regulate different spheres of life of their emigrant-origin populations residing in Europe. The increasing awareness of the importance of remittances for the local economies pushed Turkey and Morocco to elaborate exhaustive legal, financial and institutional instruments to strengthen their economic, social, religious and cultural links with their diaspora communities in Europe. The national discourse on emigrants in each country also shifted from framing them as mere economic agents to the defenders of local and national interests abroad. To meet the religious needs of their diaspora communities, Islam also came to play an important part in the way these links have been cultivated.

Both states have been heavily engaged in religious diplomacy over the last two decades. What is meant by religious diplomacy is that diplomacy becomes more about engaging religions, having a conversation with religious actors, and considering religious beliefs relevant to internal politics, foreign policy and international relations (Ferrara and Petito 2016). Both states have promoted institutional governance of Islamic affairs within their diaspora either under Diyanet in Turkey or the Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs (*Ministère des Habous et des Affaires Islamiques*) in Morocco under the direct supervision of the King (Bruce 2019). These two institutions are portrayed as the representatives of 'official Islam', the type of Islam that only the state can promote or sanction. In their attempt to maintain close links with their emigrants, the Turkish and Moroccan state actors benefit from economic, social, cultural and, most notably, political gains.

Between the 1980s and the 2000s, Turkey came to consider migrants as political agents acting as an extension of the Turkish state in defending its interests against centrifugal groups abroad. In the aftermath of both military coups held in Turkey in 1960 and 1971, the members of some *Tarikats* (religious paths), such as the *Süleymanci*s, looked abroad for their economic and political opportunity spaces. They built a distinctive Turkish Islamic community among Turkish workers in Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, countries with a significant Turkish migrant worker population (Yavuz 2005). Hence, the Islamist congregation of emigrants from Turkey directly correlated with the political developments in Turkey back in the 1960s and 1970s.

The period following the 1980 military coup in Turkey resulted in the emigration of thousands of asylum seekers such as Kurds, Alevis, radical left-wing individuals, and Assyrians. This period was juxtaposed with the securitization of the Turkish state's relations with its citizens abroad, globalization of Turkish economy, and the consolidation of state-led Kemalist republicanism incorporating a stricter emphasis on Turkish-Islamist moral values (Içduygu et al. 1999). In this period, emigrants were politically instrumentalized by the Turkish state to ensure that centrifugal ethno-cultural and religious elements abroad could be contained by loyal citizens living abroad.[2] The most influential organ established by the Turkish state in the 1980s to control the members of the diaspora was the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Türk*

İslam Birliği – DITIB, established in 1984). The very name of the institution reflects the main ideological motive of the 1980 military coup very well, which has promoted the Turkish-Islamist values (Abadan-Unat 2011).

From economic agents to religio-political agents

In the following two sections of the article, the focus will be on the changing perceptions of emigrants from the perspective of both states. Initially, both states framed their emigrants as economic agents contributing to the welfare of Turkey and Morocco. However, this kind of rhetoric was replaced with more religio-political rhetoric in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001. Both states then became more inclined to benefit from the growing civilizational discourse by instrumentalizing religion and religious diplomacy in attaining their foreign policy objectives.

In Turkey, emigrants were perceived as important sources of remittances for several decades, at least until the early 2000s. Remittances – the earnings generated and sent back home by migrant workers – have long been an important source of exchange revenue for developing countries, with Turkey being no exception in the trajectory of remittances, especially between the early days of emigration in the 1960s and the beginning of the 2000s (Arkilic 2020). They have also started to become mobilized to legitimize the AKP. In Cologne, for example, the AKP established the Union of European Turkish Democrats (*Avrupalı Türk Demokratlar Birliği* – UETD) in 2004 (Aksel 2019). The UETD, the name of which was changed into the Union of International Democrats (UID) in 2018, was mobilized by the AKP to organize public rallies for the Turkish President in Cologne, Brussels and Strasbourg, where he gave public speeches in the framework of general elections held in 2015. The AKP's close ties with the UETD have always been visible. On 10 May 2015, President Erdoğan addressed Turkish-origin emigrants in Karlsruhe in a public event organized by the UETD (Presidency of The Republic of Turkey 2015). Under the AKP, Diyanet has endorsed the party's discourse, actions and policies and granted them religious legitimation. The party has continued the long tradition of state control of Islamic religious activities by using the Diyanet to determine who has the legitimate religious authority against the 'deviant radicals' (Lord 2018). It is now responsible for spreading the AKP's understanding of Islam and nationalism. Through Diyanet, Turkey has transnationalized governmentality and extended its control beyond its borders (Gamlen 2006; Maritato 2020). Diyanet usually organizes socio-cultural and religious activities that endorse the AKP's conservative and nationalist ideology (White 2014). A combination of 'basic principles of morality and religious knowledge with national symbols, obedience to the authority, love for the homeland, and protection of the family as an immutable entity' serve to serves to promote loyalty and obedience to the Turkish authorities (Maritato 2020).

Similarly, in Morocco, emigrants have been considered an important source of remittances and foreign investment (de Haas 2007). Remittances would not only reduce unemployment and poverty but also represent a 'political safety valve' (de Haas 2005) that would contribute to reducing political and social discontent within the underprivileged regions of the country (Collyer 2013b). Actors close to the regime in Morocco established the *'Amicales'* of workers and merchants to maintain strict and

tight control on Moroccan migrants (Brand 2002). They served to monitor Moroccan leftist activists who fled from repression in Morocco to Europe and to monitor emigrants who were suspected of being involved in opposition activism (de Haas 2005). These associations clearly indicated that the Moroccan state viewed emigrants as more than just commodities but also as 'extensions' of the Moroccan population who needed to be monitored for security reasons (Brand 2002). Arabic teachers and imams were also sent abroad to provide Arabic language and religious classes to remind emigrants of their origins and discourage integration and assimilation efforts (de Haas 2005). Similar to the Turkish state, the Moroccan state also perceived integration and assimilation as a threat to the flow of remittances (Benkirane 2010).

The elaboration of the Moroccan state of religious diaspora politics started in the 1980s when Moroccan religious movements transplanted their activities to Europe (Bruce, 2019). It became necessary for the state to monitor and control the religious discourse both domestically and internationally. The Moroccan diaspora represents more than 10% of the Moroccan population. Framing the religious discourse within this diaspora is considered vital to the security of Morocco. Controlling the religious discourse within the Moroccan community through governmental intermediaries serves to avoid any 'clashing perceptions' or dissident voices within this diaspora (El-Katiri 2013).

Furthermore, the Moroccan state has founded and financed cultural associations in Europe (Bruce 2019). Hassan II Foundation, for example, finances Arabic language classes and cultural trips. These activities aim to promote the idea of a Moroccan national Islam and thus preserve the regime's control over the religious field. For the Moroccan regime, the promotion and the 'safeguard' of a distinct national identity among its diaspora in Europe is part of a security strategy because it ensures that the Moroccan model of Islam is stable while unifying different religious actors around the idea of Moroccan nationalism.

Competition over Islam: enhancing regional and global impact through religio-political institutions

Since the early 2000s, emigrants came to be considered lobbying agents in Turkey (Abadan-Unat 2011; Kaya 2018). This period has been shaped by the AKP's rule that has lasted for five consecutive terms, creating incremental breaches with former governance models in Turkey (Öniş 2012). Under the AKP rule, the Turkish state has perceived emigrants as active lobbying agents who are expected to contribute to the growing hegemony of the Turkish state in Europe. During this period, the Turkish state has founded new institutions to help emigrants mobilize themselves as active lobbying agents: The Directorate of Turks Abroad and Related Communities[3] in 2010, and Yunus Emre Institute in 2007[4] have been established in this period to mobilize emigrants living abroad (Arkilic 2020). The YTB aims to establish a strong and successful diaspora with strong ties to Turkey in order to create a political lobby and close economic links with the countries of residence, while YEE aims at introducing the world to the Turkish language and culture by means of active involvement of Turkish emigrants. Migrants became the 'most important source of Turkey's regional and global power' (Presidency of The Republic of Turkey 2015).

Diyanet is also in charge of promoting Turkish Islam abroad to prevent the emergence of radical discourses (Öztürk 2016), compete for regional influence with Saudi Arabia and Iran (Lord 2018), and maintain Turkish Muslims' loyalty to the Turkish state (Öztürk 2016). It has become an 'international symbol' of the state's religious identity (Öztürk 2018) and established a monopoly on who represents 'official' and 'legitimate' Islam abroad (Bruce 2019). It is now responsible for spreading the AKP's understanding of Islam and 'diaspora nationalism' (Clifford 1994) and promoting Islamic moral values outside Turkey to young generations (Öztürk 2016). In other words, it has tried to spread the image of the 'new Turkey' introduced by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan both domestically and internationally (Öztürk and Sözeri 2018).

Under the AKP regime, former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu conceived Turkey's foreign policy within his doctrine of strategic depth. He argued that Turkey could become a global power if it followed a foreign policy that respects the country's Islamic history. Thus, his conception favours an ethno-religiously oriented foreign policy and rejects Westernization (Özkan 2014). For Davutoğlu, the strategic depth of Turkey lay in its geopolitical position and its identity that would enable Turkey to unite Islamic countries and create a common front against Western hegemony. Islam and the Ottoman-Islamic identity would allow the country to easily incorporate countries spreading from the Balkans to the Middle East and beyond (Öztürk and Sözeri 2018). For this purpose, Diyanet is the agent of religious diplomacy to establish and consolidate Turkey's position as an international Islamic leader (Lord 2018). It is given a 'global vision' and plays an essential role in AKP's foreign policy (Bruce 2019). To that end, Davutoglu positioned Turkey as a Muslim country within the global order and structured the role of Diyanet around the concept of the 'heart hinterland' (*gönül coğrafyası*) in a way that would help Turkey become a 'pivotal country' and regain its appeal within the global Muslim community. It should become the 'flotation ring' and the reference for Muslims around the world to 'deliver the eternal call of Allah and the Prophet to humanity, which is endangered by secularism and nihilism' (Öztürk and Sözeri 2018).

In Morocco, since the 2000s, diaspora policies have sought to grant emigrants civil and political rights presenting them as a 'valuable resource that generates additional resources' (Brand 2006). In 2005, the King announced the creation of the Council of the Moroccan Community Living Abroad (*Conseil de la communauté marocaine à l'étranger* – CCME) and promised these emigrants the right to electoral participation and parliamentary representation. 'Courting' the diaspora would help attract investments, improve the country's image within the diaspora, which may, in turn, present a positive image of Morocco and consequently defend the state's international interests (de Haas and Plug 2006).

The Moroccan authorities would like to represent the kingdom as an 'Islamic model' for the region and the West (Abouzzohour and Tomé-Alonso 2019). At the centre of this model is the monarch, the Commander of the Faithful, who portrays Morocco's brand of Islam as moderate and thus should become a model for 'European Islam' (Bruce 2019). In 2008 King Mohammed VI founded the European Council of Moroccan Ulama (CEOM) to help finance Moroccan religious associations in Europe, organize conferences, and distribute religious publications. This means for the Moroccan authorities an opportunity to exercise ideological influence and diffuse their national form of Islam. Most importantly, the King founded the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams,

Morchidines and Morchidates in 2014 to cooperate with national and foreign religious institutions to train local and foreign imams. The same applies to Africa, where, in 2015, the king created the Mohammed VI Foundation of African *Ulema* (clerics) to promote regional cooperation on religious matters by helping to train imams, build mosques and distribute copies of the Quran. Through religious diplomacy and a moderate discourse of Islam, the monarch designs the main lines of foreign policy to build new political and economic ties (Tadlaoui 2015). Not only does the king assert his position as a regional religious leader, but he also controls and monitors the religious discourse within the diaspora and influences how Islam evolves in Europe.

Moroccan religious diplomacy mechanisms include a network of Moroccan Islamic associations and institutions that benefit from financial and diplomatic support to train clerical staff, build mosques and offer religious teaching (El-Katiri 2013). Other mechanisms seek to organize conferences and distribute religious texts. For Morocco, religious diplomacy is not the monopoly of religious institutions. Cultural institutions can also help obtain foreign policy objectives. Hassan II Foundation, for example, organizes cultural trips and Arabic language classes to promote the idea of a Moroccan national Islam in accordance with the official ideology of the Moroccan regime. The religious discourse emphasizes the importance of Moroccan customs and traditions in understanding Islam. The aim is to promote and 'safeguard' the idea of a distinct Moroccan national Islam in Europe as part of a security strategy to unify different religious actors within the diaspora around the idea of a Moroccan nationalism (Bruce 2019). By presenting the Moroccan Maliki school as flexible in its ability to adapt to the European context, Morocco would like to present its understanding of Islam as a role model for Europe, and become a key interlocutor between European officials and Muslim migrants (Amghar 2007).

The Moroccan state started elaborating on religious diaspora politics back in the 1980s after Morocco's religious movement transplanted its mobilization to Europe (Bruce 2019). When the Islamist opposition in Morocco, mainly the Islamic Youth Movement (*Chabiba islamiya*), which believed that the use of violence was legitimate to overthrow the monarchy and establish an Islamic state, became popular in France, where it created its own network of influence, Moroccan state's diaspora politics started to be more involved in religious affairs (Godard 2015). For such youth movements, Europe was a land of exile and an opportunity to voice their opposition to the Moroccan regime (Amghar 2007). The Moroccan Ministry of Habous cut ties with the Rally of Muslims in France, which intended to help the Moroccan state manage religious affairs abroad after the PJD sought to form a partnership with the Rally (Amghar 2007). It is part of a strategy to control and govern the religious discourse beyond national borders. Before that the state was mainly preoccupied with sending imams during Ramadan (Bruce 2019), and the diaspora oversaw their own religious activities (Godard 2015).

Conclusion

Religion in diaspora becomes an essential marker of identity as it offers immigrants and their descendants a symbolic fortress protecting them against the perils of a heartless world. In this sense, religion provides immigrants and their descendants with a compensatory tool to come to terms with the destabilizing factors of migration,

modernization, urbanization, political exclusion and globalization. Sometimes, migrant sending states may choose to fuel such emotions that result from the lack of political opportunity structures that the receiving states fail to offer to pious and devout Muslim migrants and their descendants by offering religious-based political opportunity structures to some of their diasporic communities at the expense of alienating secular and liberal-minded communities in the transnational space. Similar to ethnicity, heritage and past, religion may also become instrumentalized, reified and essentialized by migrant-origin individuals to come to terms with the structural difficulties of their migrant situation.

The work has also revealed that both Turkey and Morocco share similarities in shaping their diaspora politics, recruiting citizens abroad, and generating partisan politics abroad. It has illustrated that both states have profoundly relied on religious diplomacy in attaining their domestic and foreign policy objectives. The increasing visibility of the Turkish *Diyanet* and the Moroccan Ministry of *Habous* in mobilizing both diasporic communities indicate that both states try to promote their understanding of Islam to mobilize their diasporic communities to act as active lobbying agents.

Finally, the article has discussed the ways in which both states have instrumentalized Islam in religious diplomacy to attain their respective domestic foreign policy objectives in international relations across Europe and within their own regions. It has been argued that religious diplomacy became prevalent in Turkey during the era of the former PM Ahmet Davutoğlu. Gradually, it has become the *Diyanet* that became more actively involved in implementing religious diplomacy formulated to promote the Turkish version of Sunni Islam in Europe. Similarly, Morocco has also tried to promote its official version of Islam regionally and in Europe. Although both states are similar in many ways in terms of generating their diaspora politics, they have become competitive actors in Europe in promoting and advocating their own interpretations of Islam. This competition is not only limited to Turkey and Morocco; it also involves other actors, such as the European states, on the one hand, trying to establish their own national forms of Islam, such as German Islam, French Islam and Dutch Islam, and Middle Eastern and North African countries on the other hand that trying to promote their own versions of Islam such as Saudi Wahhabism and Iranian Shia Islam (Haynes 2021).

Notes

1. The Copenhagen criteria require that a state has the institutions to preserve democratic governance and human rights, has a functioning market economy, and accepts the obligations and intent of the EU.
2. A relevant example to demonstrate this divide between the associations established by the Turkish-origin migrants in German can be the *Türkische Gemeinde zu Berlin* (TGB, founded in 1983) and *Türkische Bund in Berlin-Brandenburg* (TBB, founded in 1991). While the former was supported by the conservative political parties in Turkey, the latter was supported by social democratic and left-wing political parties (Özcan 1994, 319).
3. YTB works under the umbrella of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, see https://www.ytb.gov.tr/en
4. Yunus Emre Institute also works under the umbrella of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, see https://www.yee.org.tr/en

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