BRINGING OUTSIDERS IN

TRANSATLANTIC PERSPECTIVES ON IMMIGRANT POLITICAL INCORPORATION

Edited by

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identification at the local and transnational levels is not a zero-sum game." Immigrants seek not only socioeconomic integration, political rights, and antidiscrimination policies in the countries to which they migrate but also intervention in the political affairs of, or within the international community on behalf of, their homelands. The Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark have tried to offer migrants responses to the former set of demands while foreclosing action on the latter. Yet the political incentives of native-born politicians work against this strategy; German political parties, for example, highlight their support for Turkey in an effort to attract Turkish-origin German voters, much as U.S. political parties increasingly try to woo Latino voters.

U.S. political parties also get tangled up in internal conflicts over immigration policy and integration policies in ways that Luis Fraga (chap. 12) has shown and that we (Jennifer Hochschild and John Mollenkopf, chap. 19 in this volume) develop further. That is, they seek both to woo Latino voters and to control the border against "too many" Latin American immigrants. So do and will European parties as more and more immigrants and their descendents attain citizenship and suffrage, and make demands based on their concern about their countries of origin as well as their domestic needs. European politics will probably become even more complex than U.S. politics on this subject because European states must engage with EU-level governance; a multitude of immigrant groups with different origins and goals; an active transnational advocacy network; and greater contiguity with neighboring states that might have distinct circumstances, politics, and incentives. In comparison, even the cross-cutting pressures within the two-party U.S. political system look simple to navigate.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The End of Closet Political Transnationalism?

The Role of Homeland Politics in the Political Incorporation of Turks and Kurds in Europe

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In the Danish local elections in the early 1990s, a Turkish-origin candidate was listed for the Social Democratic Party in one of the Copenhagen constituencies. He was running in an area with a high concentration of migrants, especially Turkish-origin migrants, who had gained the right to vote in local elections more than a decade earlier. Then, as now, the support for the Social Democratic Party, which was in government up through the 1980s, was high among Turkish-origin voters. Still, to help out the candidate, party officials offered to invite a prominent Turkish social democrat from Turkey to boost the campaign. This offer was, however, immediately rejected by the candidate. As he explained, his Turkish voters in Copenhagen were not social democrats in Turkey. On the contrary, in terms of Turkish politics they were supportive of mainly right-wing nationalist or religious parties. And, although they would vote for the Social Democratic Party in Denmark because of its policies toward migrants, they would most likely distance themselves from a candidate standing next to a Turkish social democrat.

This anecdote stems from one of my first interviews with Turkish- and Kurdish-origin local politicians in Europe. It is highlighted as an example of the main point of this chapter—how homeland political identification and practices among Turks and Kurds intersect with their political incorporation in their countries of residence. The Danish Turkish-origin social democrat’s dilemma is not a unique event. Homeland political interest in Turkish politics by Turkish and Kurdish migrants has not gone away with time and been replaced with immigrant political concerns over the situation in the country of residence. The understanding that migrant political participation and identification at the local and transnational levels is not a zero-sum game has been demonstrated on both sides of the Atlantic (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001; Levitt 2003; Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003). This, however, is just a starting point for further inquiry into how a transnational view of migrants’ political identification and agency may contribute to a more holistic understanding of their local political incorporation.
In the case of Turkey and Turkish migrants, transnational political identification and activities of migrants are important for a whole host of reasons. The very presence of more than 3 million Turks within the European Union further sensitizes the receiving countries, especially Germany, to bilateral and multilateral relations with Turkey. This sensitivity is reinforced by mobilization and lobbying among Turks and Kurds related to the domestic and foreign policy of Turkey (Östergaard-Nielsen 2003d). This chapter, however, does not focus on the extent to which Turkish or Kurdish migrants have influenced the domestic or foreign policy of their countries of residence or on the extent to which some of these political movements are perceived to constitute a security threat. Instead, it analyzes how Turkish- and Kurdish-origin migrants negotiate homeland political issues in their dealings with the political institutions of their country of residence.

This dimension of migrant homeland political orientation is relevant because migrants and migrant descendants have become an integral part of the political landscape throughout the European Union. Turkish and Kurdish migrant associations have long acted as representatives for the various ethnic, religious, and political groups of these migrant collectives. Turkish-origin voters have become important constituencies for political parties in Europe. Countries granting local voting rights to third-country nationals have a long-standing experience with electoral participation of migrants and migrant-origin representatives in local government. Moreover, with growing rates of naturalization, even countries with an exclusive policy on political rights for non-EU citizens, such as Germany, now have considerable Turkish-origin constituencies. The number of Turkish-origin political candidates and representatives has also grown. Such migrant representatives are attractive for political parties because having a migrant-origin candidate on the list signals an inclusive policy toward migrants. More important, such a candidate has the potential to attract votes from the co-ethnic, co-national, or co-religious migrant-origin voters. This chapter illustrates how homeland political identification is not just a matter of interest to the relationship between migrants and their country of origin. The extent to which and ways in which homeland politics matter to Turks or Kurds enters into the equation of their relationship with their resident-country political institutions.

The following pages briefly outline the relationship between the Turkish-origin groups in Europe and their country of origin, Turkey, and then focus on two central dimensions of their local and homeland political orientation and mobilization. The first concerns the extent to which interest in transnational politics is durable over time and is relevant for also second- and third-generation migrant Turks and Kurds. In this context, we should evaluate homeland political orientation and engagement among migrants over time and generations, not just in terms of whether there is less or more of it, but we should also identify qualitative changes in the political identification and participation of Turks and Kurds as they maneuver in an increasingly complex and multilevel institutional and political environment.

The next section discusses the extent to which homeland political issues are included or excluded in processes of local political participation of Turks and Kurds. The term closet transnationalism refers to situations in which migrants tone down their identification with the homeland because of exclusionary demands for national commitment (Joppke and Moraw ska 2003). It has been argued that migrant political

transnationalism is no longer something that migrants have to keep away from the local or national political arena of their countries of residence (Joppke and Morawska 2003). Yet, as the introductory anecdote indicates, political identification with homeland politics does not always translate easily into the political life in the country of residence.

At the time of my interviews, little was known about the homeland political identification and practices of Turkish migrants in Copenhagen. This was in part because homeland political agendas were rarely put forward by the Turkish migrants themselves and in part because of the limited political and institutional space granted to migrant political transnationalism related to the homeland within the host-country political system (Östergaard-Nielsen 2002). But has homeland politics become more accepted since then? To what extent does the attitude to homeland politics differ in various EU member states? To what extent are migrants from Turkey expected to participate as migrants focused on migrant political issues and not as Turks or Kurds interested in Turkish politics?

The final section briefly comments on how the case of the Turks and Kurds compares to other major migrant collectives in Europe, points out some of the remaining gaps in the current research field, and raises the issue of how migrant political transnationalism enters into recent debates and policies on migrant incorporation.

These discussions point to already-existing answers and identify possible further paths of inquiry that may complement them. They do so by rereading and updating my previous research on the transnational political mobilization of Kurds and Turks in four EU member states (Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, and the United Kingdom). The analysis presented here is not a systematic comparison of these case studies (Östergaard-Nielsen 2001, 2002) but, instead, uses examples from especially the Danish, German, and Dutch research to illustrate the general arguments.

Just a few words on some of the central concepts used throughout this chapter—Turks and Kurds mobilize around a series of issues. One set of issues relates to their situation in their country of residence, referred to as immigrant politics. This includes issues of socioeconomic integration, political rights, problems with discrimination and racism, and the role of Islam in public space. Another area of mobilization has to do with the country of origin, referred to as homeland politics. This includes both direct intervention in the political affairs of the homeland and lobbying the host government or other relevant political actors on issues related to the country of origin. In the case of Turkey, issues of human rights, democratization, ethnic rights for Kurds, and religious rights for both Sunnis and Alevis have been on the agenda of migrant associations (Östergaard-Nielsen 2003d).

This chapter highlights how immigrant political and homeland political issues overlap and intertwine and are at times inseparable. Moreover, they do not correspond to a dichotomy between local and transnational political participation. It is not that the immigrant political is local and the homeland political is transnational, per se. At the level of associations, immigrant politics can take on a transnational dimension, sometimes institutionalized through cross-border federations of migrant associations, and also take place through lobbying Europe-wide supranational or intergovernmental institutions. The transnational politics of migrants is, in other words, not necessarily homeland political. Meanwhile, homeland politics can take the same
transnational dimension of networking and lobbying across borders, but can at the same time be very local to local. A recent study has noted a rise in hometown associations among Turks and Kurds in EU member states that strengthen local ties to their village of origin through social economic and political practices (Çaglar 2006).

**Turkey and the Turks and Kurds abroad**

Turks and Kurds (from Turkey) constitute one of the largest migrant collective within the European Union. Following processes of guestworker recruitment and subsequent family reunification, as well as the continuous arrival of asylum seekers and irregular migrants, more than 3.5 million Turkish citizens and former Turkish citizens reside in EU member states. More than two-thirds (~2.4 million) live in Germany. The forty-year time span between now and the heyday of Turkish guestworker recruitment in the 1960s means that at least three generations of Turks now live within the European Union. Indeed, by no means all Turkish citizens abroad have migrated. Approximately 614,000 Turkish citizens have been born in Germany alone. The ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic differences among migrants from Turkey make any generalizations we could make about them difficult to sustain. Turkish citizens or former citizens living within the European Union may be Sunni or Alevi Muslims, identify themselves as Kurdish or another ethnic subgroup, be university trained, or be self-employed or, indeed, unemployed. More nuanced view of this group is often subdued in debates on migrant incorporation and political participation, in which the Turkish migrant collective has a high profile.

As in the case of other migrant groups, it is difficult to underestimate the significance of low-cost travel and electronic means of communication, and the availability of homeland media for Turkish migrants’ ability to stay in touch with their homeland. Turks and Kurds in Europe can follow events in Turkey with the flick of the TV remote control or by reading one of the many Turkish newspapers that are widely available throughout Europe. They can log on to the Internet and seek and exchange information or express their opinions in blogs or chat fora.

Moreover, the Turkish governments has taken a series of measures to forge or strengthen ties with the Turks and Kurds abroad over the last decade and a half. From a set of policies aimed at catering for the guest workers and their families abroad until their return, a more recent set of policies are based on the realization that Turkish citizens and their descendants are a permanent feature of European societies and polities—and EU-Turkish relations. Like in the case of a series of other countries of emigration, the rationale behind these outreach policies is to foment the social capital upgrading of its citizens abroad and attract continued economic and political support (Bauböck 2003b; Östergaard-Nielsen 2003b). Among the various policies employed is allowing dual citizenship so that Turks can take up the citizenship of their country of residence without having to give up their Turkish passport. This was later followed by the introduction of a special pink card giving those Turkish citizens who had to give up their Turkish citizenship in order to naturalize abroad more rights in Turkey. In this way the Turkish government encourages the naturalization and political engagement of emigrants and their descendants in their countries of residence. In terms of political rights, Turkey has not managed to implement long-distance voting rights for its citizens abroad, although this has been on the agenda for more than two decades. Meanwhile, Turkey has also set up a consultative council for dialog between key policymakers and Turks abroad on how Turkey may help solve the problems that its citizens experience abroad and how Turkish overseas citizens may contribute to the Turkish economy from afar. It has recently been argued that Turkey should and could play a greater role in facilitating the integration of its citizens abroad (Erzan and Kirisci 2006).

Although the Turkish outreach policies have been interpreted as attempts to establish a pro-Turkish lobby inside Europe, research on Turkish and Kurdish migrant collectives in Europe indicate that there is no reason to overestimate the effect of these policies (Östergaard-Nielsen 2003d). Both first- and second-generation leaders of migrant associations often harbor a fairly cynical view of the extent to which Turkey has assisted them from afar, and they certainly do not want to be seen as a fifth-column representative of the Turkish state. Nonetheless, a number of associations are aligned with Turkish foreign policy and have helped put forward issues, such as the Armenian issue or the EU accession of Turkey, to the policymakers of their country of residence.

Somewhat more complex is the impact of other political actors, such as parties and movements of various political, ethnic, and religious persuasions, which seek to mobilize economic and political support among the Turks and Kurds abroad. The success of these movements varies, but especially Kurdish and Sunni Muslim networks have come under intense scrutiny by both the countries of reception and origin. Indeed, the work of Turkish or Kurdish nonstate actors and opposition parties among the migrant collectives in Europe has been one of the main incentives for the Turkish state also to engage in its outreach policies. But, again, it is important to emphasize that the political and civic landscape of local and transnational Turkish associations and networks is not a remote controlled reproduction of the political situation in Turkey. Different political, religious, and ethnic movements and associations have reacted in various ways and with various levels of intensity to events and attempts of mobilization from Turkey (Östergaard-Nielsen 2003d).

**The Durability of Transnational Identification, Belonging, and Political Orientation among Turks and Kurds in Europe**

The transnational lens on the political mobilization and participation of migrants has gained favor in European research on Turks and Kurds (Faist 2000; Koopmans and Statham 2003; Östergaard-Nielsen 2003d). Criticism of the transnational take on migration is abundant: it is not new, it is not representative for the whole migrant collective, and it is not durable. The latter issue is highly relevant to the case of Turks and Kurds in Europe, given the high number of migrant or refugee descendants. Has interest in Turkish politics declined over the years? Are the children and grandchildren of Turkish or Kurdish migrants less interested and engaged in the politics of their homeland than their parents? Or are there other differences over time?
or between generations that we need to take into account when framing and carrying out research on the transnational dimension of political incorporation.

It is important to emphasize the lack of data on homeland political orientation and mobilization of migrants. So far, the research field has been dominated by qualitative studies that sample on the dependent variable; that is, they study migrant transnationalism where it manifests itself, leaving behind the question of how widespread these practices are (Portes 2001). The predominance of qualitative over quantitative studies means that there is little in the way of surveys that indicate the differences among levels of transnational political orientation over time or between first- and second-generation migrants. Instead, there are studies using different migrant collectives or different states of residence and origin as independent variables to explain different levels of transnational political engagement (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001, 2003c; Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003; Koopmans and Statham 2003).

A recent survey of the ‘Euro-Turks’ in Germany and France shows a declining sense of affiliation with Turkey over the generations. Whereas approximately 50 percent of the first generation feels more closely affiliated with Turkey than its country of residence, only around 25 percent of the second generation (defined as those born in Germany or France) feel that way (Kaya and Kentel 2005). Yet, at the same time, the results indicate that the identification of the second generation is somewhat ambiguous—the marginally larger group of respondents among the second generation feels equally affiliated with both the country they were born in and Turkey, leaving only around one-third of the respondents identifying mainly with Germany or France. Moreover, the closer identification with Germany or France does not necessarily translate into greater interest in German or French politics. The study does not correlate interest in Turkish politics with birthplace, but the overall survey results indicate that Turks are not as interested in Turkish politics as is sometimes assumed in political debates. Approximately 40 percent of the Turks in Germany (and 50 percent of the Turks in France) was “not at all” or “not really interested” in Turkish politics and around one-third does not have a clear affiliation with any Turkish political party (Kaya and Kentel 2005). Still, that does leave more than one-third of the respondents in the “very interested” in Turkish politics categories and two-thirds that identify with a Turkish political party even though they were living or even had been born abroad.

In addition to trying to look at quantitative changes in transnational identification and engagement over time and between various generations of migrants, it is important to explore the qualitative differences. One tendency over the last decades is for Turkish and Kurdish associations, especially those having a stronger presence of second-generation migrants, to integrate the homeland political and migrant political dimensions of their outlooks and activities. Generally, there has been a trend toward an increasing focus on immigrant political issues among Turkish and Kurdish associations in Europe. Many associations are founded with this purpose in mind. Even associations originally born out of a transnational link with a political actor in Turkey tend to focus on the situation in the countries of residence. But, as mentioned, the immigrant political engagement may coexist alongside homeland political issues; and moreover, in some cases the two dimensions become inseparable. For example, the Kurds have linked their campaigns for recognition of their cultural rights in Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands with their situation of discrimination in Turkey. Their pamphlets, seminars, and demonstrations have highlighted how Kurds have the right to be treated as Kurds (and not Turks) in their country of residence and that such recognition would send an important signal to the Turkish authorities. Similarly, a religious minority such as the Alevis may include references to their situation of long-standing discrimination in Turkey when trying to advocate more rights for Alevis in Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Sunni Muslims have pointed to the parallels between the headscarf issue in Turkey and in Germany or, indeed, France (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003d).

Beyond ethnic and religious groups, another interesting example is the support and lobbying by European-based Turks and Kurds for EU membership for Turkey. Migration and the presence of a large collective of Turks in EU member states play an important role in the Turkish EU accession negotiations. The argument, repeatedly brought forward by major Turkish federations in Europe over the last decade, is that the entry of Turkey into the European Union would facilitate the integration of Turkish citizens or former citizens already living within the European Union. Beyond their automatic transition from third-country citizens to EU citizens, the inclusion of their country of origin would send an important symbolic signal. As argued by the head of the Turkish Community in Germany (Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland, TGD), the support by German policymakers for the EU accession of Turkey is helpful for the integration and coexistence of German Turks in Germany because “many German-Turks have interpreted the rejection of their homeland as a snubbing of themselves” (Kolat 2003). These examples illustrate how homeland politics is no longer a long-distance relationship in the case of Turkey but may form an integral part of the migrant political advocacy campaigns of the Turks and Kurds within the European Union.

Following the same line of thinking, it is important to emphasize that identification with Islam or with a Turkish or Kurdish political movement is no longer transnational by default. The institutionalization of a number of religious, ethnic, or political movements in the countries of residence makes identifying with them less homeland-oriented than was true for the parent’s generation. For a migrant to identify with or join these movements may, rather, be a reactive marker to distinguish themselves from the wider society of the country of residence informed by their experience of discrimination and exclusion (Schifflauer 1999). Membership in an ethnic, religious, or political association or network of residence may also be based on the social or religious services or the local political representation that these associations provide for the local community of Turks or Kurds (Ehrkamp 2005). The fact that these associations are linked transationally with the homeland or kindred associations and movements in other countries is not irrelevant, but it can be secondary and not enter into the day-to-day functions of the associations. Thus, identification with or membership in a transnational homeland political network may be performed locally in the neighborhood.

Finally, it is worth exploring further the extent to which especially second- and third-generation Turks and Kurds are between the homeland and host-country only. The changing agendas of Turkish and Kurdish associations indicate that they are increasingly mobilized by or linked with wider issues of democratization and human rights, environment, and gender instead of the national political parties or movements
favored by their parents’ generation. Moreover, observers of other Muslim groups note that the second generation may identify with wider Islamic movements and solidarity with other Muslim groups elsewhere and that this can also inform local political participation. For instance, recent election results in Britain have shown how the second-generation Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims, to a much greater extent than the first generation, were disappointed with Labour because of the British involvement in the Iraq war (Bodi 2005). We must add to this that the spaces and institutions for migrants' identification and political engagement also include the European dimension or international and transnational organizations. The bulk of the homeland political activity continues to take place at the local or national level. Yet, increasingly, European institutions, such as the European Parliament and the European Council, are also on the receiving end of Turkish and Kurdish homeland political and transnational political engagement. The central and vocal position of EU institutions on EU accession of Turkey, as well as related issues of the Turkish human rights record, the Kurdish issue, the Armenian issue, and the Cyprus conflict, has cemented their relevance as targets for homeland political lobbying of European-based Turks and Kurds. Thus, the triadic framework of host country, homeland, and migrants (Sheffer 1986) is no longer sufficient to analyze processes of political identification and practices that go beyond national institutions and movements.

Political Opportunity Structures and Transnational Networks among Migrant Associations in Europe

It has been suggested that, whereas the first generations of migrants were closet transnationalists subject to the exclusionary demands of their home and host states regarding their national commitments, today public discourse and political opportunity structures are much more tolerant of diversity and facilitate multilevel identification and political participation (Shain 1999; Joppke and Morawska 2003). The European experience of Turkish and Kurdish migrant political transnationalism seems to deviate from this observation in some respects.

The setup of the European Union entails the promotion of overlapping political membership for its citizens. Nevertheless, although more member states have allowed dual citizenship over the last decade, issues of dual national allegiance for third-country nationals are still contested in some EU member states (Faist 2007; Østergaard-Nielsen 2008). The signature campaign of the Christian Democratic Union during 1999 against the proposal of the Social Democratic–Green government coalition to allow dual citizenship is a case in point. At the time, it was argued that dual citizenship was the institutionalization of dual loyalties, a pathway to parallel societies and thus a threat to German national identity (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003d). Moreover, cross-border political mobilization along political, ethnic, and religious lines often sits uneasily in European debates on modes of migrant incorporation. In the case of the Turks and Kurds, acceptance of diversity seems to stop when this diversity manifests itself in political agency along homeland political agendas. Indeed, it is especially the political dimension of migrant transnationalism, the extent to which migrants support a political cause, movement or party outside their country of residence, that remains controversial in the relationship between these associations and the political institutions and actors in their country of residence.

Given the differences in citizenship and migrant-incorporation regimes in the various European countries, several studies have examined the significance of different resident-country political contexts on migrant homeland political activities, including those of the Turks. These studies argue that exclusive citizenship and migrant incorporation regimes, such as in Germany, serve to strengthen homeland political orientations and organizations among Turks and Kurds. In contrast, the Dutch multicultural inclusive regime may lessen homeland political activities because third-country citizens can vote in local elections in the Netherlands and migrant associations are actively included in institutionalized platforms for dialog with policymakers (Abadan-Unat 1997). For instance, one comparative quantitative empirical survey of the extent to which migrant transnational claims-making features in the host-country national press argues that there is more homeland political activity in Germany than in the Netherlands and that homeland politics in the Netherlands is more included in the political system (Koöpmans and Statham 2003). But the impact of national political opportunity structures was less clear-cut in my comparative study of Turkish and Kurdish transnational and homeland political engagement in Germany and the Netherlands. In addition to a "more/less" type of evaluation of the amount of homeland politics, this study uncovered how differences in access to politics impact the particular ways in which migrant transnational political activities are formulated and communicated. Also, the host-country political institutions and actors stood out in this study as strong mediators of transnational political activity (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001). There is no doubt that the study of migrant transnational political practices needs to be located within their particular political institutional context.

Yet, because the research also included research on the transnational networks, it revealed how transnational practices are not only a function of the type of citizenship and the national political opportunity structures. Indeed, the main point of migrant transnational political networks is that they are unbounded by their national context and able to draw on resources from associations or other political actors elsewhere. The landscape and genealogy of transnational political organizations, many of which now also, or even foremost, serve as migrant political associations, stand out as very similar in Germany and the Netherlands (and Denmark), illustrating the importance of migrants’ transnational networks back to their country of origin and, not least, among organizations in Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Local associations are linked up through an increasingly institutionalized infrastructure of national and Europe-wide federations with varying types of ties to the homeland. Through these networks, associations pool resources and exchange information on both immigrant and homeland political issues. They hold joint festivals and political meetings or coordinate their campaigns (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001). Thus, comparative studies of the relationship between national political opportunity structures and migrant homeland political practices have limitations. Citizenship and political opportunity structures are key elements in the political universe of migrants, but so are their transnational networks and resources.
One of the main challenges arising from this is how to methodologically deal with the transnational in the local and the local in the transnational. Studies of migrant homeland political mobilization and participation, therefore, need to rid themselves of the most basic elements of methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002) and employ a methodology that allows for an unbounded understanding of migrant transnational and homeland political networks and participation.

Another main point, to return to the issue of closet transnationalism, is that it is important not to conflate those political opportunity structure open to migrant political participation with the opportunity for homeland political lobbying and claims-making. Even though the multicultural Dutch migrant-incorporation regime aimed to include and promote dialog with the migrant collective, these channels were by no means open to dialog on homeland political issues. Migrants from Turkey were supposed to participate as migrants, or to some extent as Muslim migrants, but not as Turks or Kurds. Thus, contrary to the claim that more-inclusive Dutch structures would incorporate transnational homeland political claims-making, there was, in the case of several Turkish or Kurdish groups, a schizophrenic system in which the homeland political activities took place more outside the Dutch political system of dialog with migrant associations. Alongside different models of migrant political incorporation, there can exist quite similar attitudes to migrants’ transnational homeland political mobilization (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001).

Indeed, in the Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark, there was an explicit censoring of homeland political agendas and engagement in the context of migrant political participation. Although some homeland political agendas were more controversial and unwelcome than others, there were numerous examples of host-country political actors urging Turkish and Kurdish associations to focus on migrant political issues and not the politics of Turkey. Significantly, public funding for migrant associations also tends to be earmarked for immigrant political activities. In the case of Denmark, the guidelines for government funding for migrant associations makes clear that such funds cannot be used for anything even remotely homeland-related, such as “festivals in relation to national or religious holidays[,]...closed arrangements or activities that collect money” (Østergaard-Nielsen 2002). That migrant associations are being funded to do immigrant political activities and not homeland politics is neither surprising nor controversial. It is difficult to imagine that any host country would fund a particular homeland political network or its activities in the context of immigrant political incorporation. Consequently, this invites migrant associations to downplay any homeland political agenda or affiliation in their dealings with public authorities. They do not want to appear to have an explicit homeland political affiliation so as not to hamper their opportunities for public funding. This is particularly the case with Turkish associations supporting right-wing nationalist or religious parties in Turkey. Such Turkish (and, to a lesser extent, Kurdish) migrant associations usually emphasize that they are “not political,” by which they usually mean in the context of Turkish politics. As one head of a Turkish association in Copenhagen with strong sympathy for the Turkish right-wing Nationalist Movement Party explained during an interview, it is important to stress that the activities of the association are cultural and not political because “Otherwise you often get misunderstood and then you don’t get any funding.” (Copenhagen, 2000)

Still, the exclusion or toning down of homeland political issues is also a frequently mentioned concern of the Turkish migrant federations themselves, especially those that try to bridge several religious, ethnic, and political groups. Homeland politics, as mentioned in several interviews, is best kept at arm’s length because it divides the migrant associations and drains collective efforts to improve migrant political issues. For instance, in the case of the Turkish Consultative Body (Inspraak Organen Turken; IOT) in the Netherlands, made up of representatives from Turkish migrant associations, it was specifically mentioned in the statutes that homeland politics could not be discussed if one of the member associations was against it. Similarly, in Denmark, one of the major migrant political federations interviewed, the Federation of Ethnic Minority Organisations (Paraplyorganisationen for Etniske minoriteter; POEM), made it clear that it will have nothing to with “the politics of other countries.” (Copenhagen, 2000)

**Homeland Politics at the Ballot Box**

Homeland politics is also an ambiguous asset at the ballot box in the countries of residence. As already mentioned, migrant-origin candidates are attractive to political parties for a whole host of reasons, including their ability to attract the migrant vote. The concentration of migrants in certain urban areas means that Turkish-origin candidates have a higher chance of making it past the post there. Especially in electoral systems in which voters have the option of voting for a particular candidate, migrant-origin candidates have been noted to attract a high number of such votes, sometimes upping their ranking on the party list and securing their seat in local government. This is not to say that Turks automatically vote for Turks only. Yet the relationship between the Turkish-origin candidate and the migrant collective is often honed during election campaigns. Pamphlets are sometimes also produced in Turkish, and Turkish political candidates hold meetings with Turkish migrant associations on their own initiative, the initiative of their political party, or the initiative of the Turkish association itself. Similarly, the Turkish media, widely followed by the Turks abroad, tends to tune in on the Turkish-origin candidates, who in turn may use in particular the European-based Turkish press as a venue for their campaign.

On the surface, homeland politics is rarely welcomed or considered relevant for the relationship between parties and Turkish-origin voters. Time and time again, political party executives and policymakers in Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark have stressed that they want to dialog on migrant politics and not homeland politics with their Turkish- or Kurdish-origin constituents. Migrant-origin candidates themselves emphasize that they are not running on a homeland political platform. Yet the reality on the ground is somewhat more complex. Diaspora politically driven lobbying and block-voting, as has been identified in the United States (Huntington 1997; Shain 1999), is not common in Europe or among the Turkish origin voters. Still, especially in Germany, where the Turkish-origin voters number around 600,000, German political parties are aware that their policies toward Turkey are, if not defining, then not irrelevant for their relationship with Turkish-origin voters. In particular, the issue of the EU accession of Turkey has become as much an issue of domestic political as a homeland political concern.
Politics as foreign policy because of its significance for the Turkish citizens (and also former citizens) living within the European Union.

In recent elections, political parties in Germany have highlighted how their policies toward Turkey are attractive to Turkish-origin German voters. This is especially the case for the Social Democratic Party, which enjoys the support of the majority of Turkish-origin German voters. Indeed, the Turkish vote has been referred to as the “secret weapon of Schröder” (Wüst 2003:29). Leaders of the Social Democratic Party have stressed their support for the EU accession of Turkey in federal electoral campaigns. Likewise, Turkish-origin social democratic candidates have highlighted this issue. At the rallying website of two social democratic Turkish-origin candidates in the 2003 federal electoral campaign, the main paragraph informs voters that the Social Democratic Party has “consistently strived to achieve the beginning of the negotiations for Turkey’s EU membership,” whereas the opposition parties, as well as the recently formed and rival Left Party, is against the admission of Turkey to the European Union.

Meanwhile, the Greens and the Christian Democratic Union have low support among the Turkish-origin voters (Wüst 2003) and their policies on Turkey have not been helpful in ameliorating this relationship. The Greens, who are otherwise advocates of very inclusive migrant-incorporation policies, took a very critical stance on the Turkish human rights deficit and, in particular, the handling of the Kurdish issue up through the 1990s, which was difficult to stomach for more conservative, pro-Turkish voters. Indeed, the dilemma of maintaining a critical stance on Turkey while not distancing their Turkish-origin voters led to the implosion of their Turkish membership association in the mid-1990s and the establishment of a new association in which homeland politics was taboo (Özdemir 1997). At the other extreme, the conservative Christian Democratic Union continues to court Turkish-origin voters with its emphasis on assimilatory incorporation policies. In terms of Turkey, their lack of attention to the human rights situation and the Kurdish issue up through the 1990s was welcomed by their limited number of Turkish-origin supporters, but their critical rhetoric toward Muslim immigrants and, in particular, their opposition to the EU accession of Turkey have been real obstacles.

Although homeland politics is secondary, and often marginal, compared to immigrant political issues, there is usually coherence between the homeland political views of the candidates of Turkish or Kurdish origin and the Dutch, German, or Danish political parties for which they are running. The majority of Turkish- and Kurdish-origin candidates have been drawn to center left or left-wing parties with a political program more attractive to migrant collectives. That the Social Democratic Party in Germany has also been less critical of Turkey and in favor of EU membership for Turkey is a further plus. But when there is a significant conflict of opinion or identification in terms of Turkey or Turkish-EU relations, this may lead to the Turkish-origin candidate and the party going separate ways.

On the one hand, the political party may be weary of the homeland political views of their Turkish-origin candidate. During the 1990s, there were several instances when Turkish-origin candidates were screened and filtered out before they were allowed to run for office (Östergaard-Nielsen 2001). More recently, in the Dutch electoral campaign of 2006, the socialists excluded one Dutch-Turkish candidate and the Christian Democrats excluded two Dutch-Turkish candidates because of their denial of the Armenian genocide of 1915. This view is contrary to the official policy of these Dutch parties. The decision provoked strong criticism both in Turkey and among Turkish organizations in the Netherlands. On the other hand, migrant-origin candidates may opt out by themselves. For instance, the pro-Kurdish line of (especially) parties to the left of the social democrats has deterred some Turkish candidates who do not agree. In one instance, a Turkish-origin leader of the local chapter of the pro-Turkish Association for Promotion of the Thoughts of Atatürk declined the invitation to run for the Greens because she could not endorse the party line on Turkish domestic policy regarding the Kurdish issue.

This last example also illustrates how, from the point of view of the migrant-origin candidates themselves, homeland politics is a double-edged sword because it both attracts and deters voters. None of the candidates or representatives interviewed was unaware of the homeland political issues and their representation among the Turkish-origin voters. But successful Turkish and Kurdish candidates, as in the example of the social democrat in Copenhagen mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, try to keep homeland political issues or an affiliation with a particular homeland political Turkish association or political party in Turkey at bay. For instance, a Turkish-origin candidate for the senate in Berlin explained during an interview that he had difficulties in going to Turkish organizations because they would not have anything to do with the Green Party, which they perceived as “the anti-Turkish pro-Kurdish party” (Östergaard-Nielsen 2003). Little by little the doors opened for him, and whenever someone brought up the Kurdish issue he would say, “We are in Berlin, in Germany, we are not in Turkey; we should not keep what is happening in Turkey a secret but I have not come to talk about that. I have come to talk about Berlin, about Kreutzberg, about your problems.” In another instance, a Turkish-origin candidate for the social democrats in Aarhus, Denmark, worked with Turkish migrant associations of all political and religious persuasions during his campaign in the local election in the late 1990s. Once he had come into office, he organized joint meetings in which these associations met and had the opportunity to leave aside their different homeland political persuasions and find common ground on immigrant political issues (Östergaard-Nielsen 2002).

We might suppose that second-generation political candidates would be less inclined to enter into debates on homeland political issues. And indeed, among the candidates interviewed, it is especially in this group that political candidates reject the issue of Turkish politics altogether as irrelevant to their political role in Denmark, the Netherlands, or Germany. But there are important exceptions.

In the case of one of the most high-profile second-generation Turkish-migrant politicians in Germany, Cem Özdemir, homeland politics was difficult to avoid. Indeed, Özdemir had an intense relationship with the Turkish media and Turkish politics during his time in the German Bundestag. As the first Turkish “guestworker child” in the Bundestag, he had a high profile in Turkish-German relations. By his own account, he, somewhat paradoxically, had to learn about Turkish politics while in the process of becoming a German policymaker (Özdemir 1997).

After being elected, Özdemir had only a brief honeymoon with his parents’ country of origin. Although his occasionally critical stance on Turkish domestic and foreign
politics was more moderate than in the case of some of his Green Party colleagues, his criticism was not well received in Turkey. He also took a very openly critical attitude toward the attempts of the Turkish government, political parties, and media to influence Turkish citizens abroad. Consequently, the Turkish media launched severe attacks on him and even called him a traitor and a back-stabber (Necef 2001; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003d). Özlemir has since become a deputy in the European Parliament for the Greens, where his political priorities include not only issues of migrant integration and EU-Turkish relations but also wider foreign political issues of human rights and U.S.-Middle Eastern relations.17

Concluding Remarks

The case of Turks and Kurds illustrate how the homeland political orientation of migrants may intersect with their local political incorporation. Judging by the rapidly growing scholarship on migrant transnational political mobilization and participation in Europe, the Turkish and Kurdish migrants’ continued interest in homeland politics is not exceptional.18 Like the Kurds, a range of diaspora political groups, such as Sri Lankans and Somalis, engage in the intrastate conflicts or regional disputes of their countries of origin (Kleist 2007; Orjuela 2007). Likewise, migrant groups with comparable migration trajectory to the Turkish migrants, such as Moroccans, have become important stakeholders in the processes of democratization and development in their countries of origin (Lacomba 2004; Lacroix 2005; Østergaard-Nielsen 2007). Yet only further more systematic research will establish to what extent the Kurdish and Turkish cases are representative for other migrant collectives in terms of how migrants negotiate their homeland political engagement in the process of their local political incorporation into their country of residence. In that respect, it is worth stating that, even among different political associations of Turks and Kurds, there are significant differences in processes of mobilization, types of claims-making, and the extent to which homeland political issues are brought forward in the local and national political fora of the country of residence. In part, this is because different political associations draw on different sets of transnational resources beyond the local context; in part, this is because some homeland political issues are more palatable in the political context of the receiving country than others.

Further studies of these phenomena need to take into account how perceptions of homeland politics are not fixed but are subject to change over time, both in the countries of residence and among the migrants themselves. Regarding the former, it seems relevant to explore how recent trends in migrant-incorporation regimes influence the homeland political claims-making of migrants. Broadly speaking, there has been a rupture in current thinking on how to manage migrant incorporation in several northern European countries. For some observers, the concept of multiculturalism has been seriously challenged by the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and parties in countries such as the Netherlands and Denmark. For others, it is not the general concept that is at fault but a lack of coherent policies to help (especially) second-generation migrants find their feet in their societies of residence. Overall, a strengthened link among national identities, values, and membership has been identified in the policies on and practices of citizenship and migrant incorporation in a range of EU member states (Joppke and Morawska 2003; Brubaker 2001). These convergences of migrant-incorporation policies render the juxtaposition of the exclusive assimilationist Germany versus the inclusive multicultural Holland, mentioned in comparative studies of migrant political transnationalism, less clear cut. It is therefore relevant to further consider whether and how these public policy shifts influence the perceptions of and policies on homeland political and transnational mobilization and practices of migrants.

Alongside the task of identifying how recent trends in migrant incorporation regimes change the perceptions of homeland political engagement of migrants, it is worth noting that some migrant transnational engagement is more welcome than others. Cutting across national contexts, there are, very generally speaking, two quite opposite perceptions of the challenges and opportunities that migrant transnational engagement in homeland politics may offer. On the one hand, there are warnings of the particularist and extremist tendencies within the politicization of migrants and their descendants. Fueled by events such as 9/11 and the London bombings in July 2005, there is a particular focus on political extremism among second-generation Muslims and nationalist diasporas, and there are warnings of the worst-case domestic and international security threat that these groups and their transnational networks may pose (Kaldor, Anheier, and Glæsious 2003; Huntington 2004; Leiken 2005b). This type of transnational political orientation is viewed as leading to a fragmentation of the polity in the receiving country and the sustaining of conflict in the country of origin. On the other hand, there is growing recognition of the transnational orientation of migrants and diasporas as a resource. Migrants’ transnational networks and practices can work toward development and the democratization of their countries of origin and can constitute an important bridge between their countries of origin and residence (Nyberg-Sørensen, van Hear, and Engberg-Pedersen 2002; de Haas 2006; Østergaard-Nielsen 2007). These two sets of perceptions and their related policies are part of the same picture. European governments and societies are witnessing a concern with how to steer clear of long-distance nationalism or religious extremism and to foster a local and transnational citizenship along more cosmopolitan lines among migrant populations.

By no means are all Turkish- and Kurdish-origin migrants in Europe interested in Turkish politics, and only a fraction translates its interest into active membership in homeland political networks or other forms of political action. Still, the heterogeneous landscape of Turkish and Kurdish transnational networks in Europe means that they have featured in both sets of debates. The more radical and extremist transnational networks are perceived as a security threat, whereas other, more human rights–based and reformist organizations and networks have been noted for their efforts to strengthen civil society and the processes of democratization in Turkey. More generally, the very presence of the sizable number of Turkish citizens or Turkish-origin European citizens within the European Union is recognized as an important feature of Turkish-EU relations.

This chapter has illustrated how the transnational identification and engagement of Turks and Kurds is not just a matter of their long-distance relationship with Turkey but also plays into their local political incorporation in their countries of residence.
The evaluation of the ways in which homeland political interest intersects with local political participation should not just focus on the scope and intensity of the extent to which Turks or Kurds are still interested in Turkish politics. It is equally relevant to identify the ways in which such homeland political affiliation changes over time and is informed by not only political events in Turkey but also the local and wider international political context. Although some issues and movements have remained remarkably unchanged over the last decades, most political objectives and forms of mobilization and participation have transformed over time as migrants, refugees, and especially their descendants become more rooted in their local context. In particular, issues such as Turkish-EU relations and the local and international politics of Islam blur the boundaries between migrant and homeland political issues and render a distinction between the local and the transnational more difficult to sustain. Thus, the term homeland politics may have become too narrow to capture the transnational identification of (especially) second generation migrants, who may categorize their wider engagement in terms of the wider region, religion, or human rights and democratization.

The case of Turks and Kurds within the European Union demonstrates how transnational political engagement may coexist with political incorporation in the country of residence. Interestingly, recent elections in (especially) Germany indicate that political parties are realizing that their policies toward Turkey are not irrelevant to their growing Turkish-origin political constituencies. Yet they also highlight the boundaries and thresholds for homeland politics within the host-country politics. Across European states, some national gatekeepers still want Turkish migrant associations and political candidates to assimilate politically as migrants and to keep homeland political agendas and practices out of the host-country political system. Migrant associations and political representatives display a complex range of responses, spanning from keeping homeland political issues at bay from lack of interest to a more instrumental and selective inclusion of Turkish politics when it is not in conflict with their local political interests. On the national or local political scene, homeland politics has only partly come out of the closet, and it is still an ambiguous asset in their local political incorporation.

Among the broader lessons learned from the Kurdish and Turkish case is that the understanding of local political incorporation is enriched by including the wider transnational context. Turkish and Kurdish homeland political engagement may be influenced but is not dictated by the political opportunity structures in the country of residence. Homeland political activists may choose other discursive or physical venues for their claims-making and draw on transnational networks and resources. To the extent that migrants, refugees, and sometimes their descendants continue to be mobilized by homeland political issues, they challenge an assimilatory and locally bounded understanding of migrant political incorporation. There is, therefore, an important policy task involved in dealing with the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of migrant transnational political engagement in Europe. Alongside this, here is academic work to be done in clarifying overlapping concepts of the local and transnational participation and gathering new and preferably comparative data on ow migrants, especially the second generation, negotiate their complex and multilevel transnational political environment.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Organizing Immigration Interests in the European Union

Constraints and Opportunities for Supranational Migration Regulation and Integration

Gallya Lahav

Assuming that immigrant incorporation is affected by host-country reception and policy environments, attitudinal and institutional norms reveal how Europeans reconcile their diverse interests around migration. Moreover, they provide key insights about how democratic societies may accommodate immigrant groups in their midst—a question driving the rationale of this book. In a global era of new security threats, western democracies are increasingly caught between their political and security pressures to protect their borders and their rights-based and global market norms—what has elsewhere been described as “the migration-security-rights trilemma” (Lahav 2005, 1). On the one hand, the realist pursuit of state sovereignty to protect national territory has envisioned more protectionist approaches to migration and border control. On the other hand, global economic imperatives of open markets, trade, and tourism, coupled with societal interests concerning civil liberties, social cohesion, democratic values, and constitutional guarantees, have promoted liberal norms and inclusionary practices. The role of foreigners and ethnic minorities in the terrorist attacks of 9/11, 3/11, and 7/7 have raised further concerns that open economic borders and liberal immigrant policies, the very hallmarks of Europe’s “embedded liberalism” (Hollifield 1992; Sassen 1996) are increasingly at odds with the core responsibilities of liberal states and democratic governments to provide security for their citizens and resident foreigners.

Nowhere are these tensions and contradictions more profound than in the European Union, where nation-states have been pressured to reconcile their national impulses of protectionism with communitarian demands for more cooperation. The momentum toward European integration has exposed the incongruities between efforts to control the movement and treatments of people with that of promoting open borders, a free market, and liberal standards. The construction of Europe, in attempting to manage issues such as immigration collectively, brings to the fore the existing diversity of cultures and political traditions in the region, particularly in dealing with concepts that are so close to the core of identity—questions of “us” versus “them” (foreigners).