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NEW DYNAMICS IN TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: A NARRATIVE STUDY OF TURKISH YOUNG ADULTS WITH HIGHER EDUCATION IN GERMANY

TUĞBA GÖÇER

ADVISOR: DR. ULRIKE FLADER
CO-ADVISOR: PROF. DR. ASKER KARTARI

MASTER'S THESIS

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MASTER'S THESIS

Submitted to the Department of the Anthropology and Cultural Research in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts under the Double Degree Program of "Intercultural/Transcultural Communication" between the MA Transcultural Studies at University of Bremen and the MA Communication Sciences at Kadir Has University

BREMEN, AUGUST 2019

I, TUĞBA GÖÇER, hereby declare that;

- this Master's Thesis is my own original work and that due references have been appropriately provided on all supporting literature and resources;
- this Master's Thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;

TUĞBA GÖÇER

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DATE AND SIGNATURE

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This work entitled "NEW DYNAMICS IN TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: A NARRATIVE STUDY OF TURKISH YOUNG ADULTS WITH HIGHER EDUCATION IN GERMANY" prepared by Tuğba GÖÇER has been judged to be successful at the defense exam held on .... and accepted by our jury as Master's thesis.

APPROVED BY:

……………………………………………… University of Bremen

SIGNATURE

Dr. Ulrike Flader / Advisor University of Bremen

SIGNATURE

Prof. Dr. Asker Kartarı / Co-Advisor Kadir Has University

SIGNATURE

I certify that the above signatures belong to the faculty members named above.

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NEW DYNAMICS IN TRANSNATIONAL POLITICAL EXPERIENCE: A
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GERMANY

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the personal narratives on political experiences of Turkish young adults with higher education in Germany. Using the method of narrative analysis, in this thesis, their narratives are approached as a part of transnational spaces. Therefore, this study shows how the personal narratives on political experiences are attached not only to political perspectives but also to the perceptions of media representations and that of their own self-identities. While locating personal narratives into complex ground of transnational space, what is shown in the analysis cannot be generalized to a wider population or used for testing hypothesis. This study rather explains interviewees' everyday practices that vary from discussing political issues to having personal responsibilities as forms of transnational political actions.

Key Words: Transnational politics, Political experiences, Turkish Youth, Transnational Actors

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's highly globalized world, everything and every people are getting more and more involved socially, economically and politically. Thus, even the domestic political events in one country might have resonances from one another, without physical border relations. However, for relations between Turkey and Germany, the situation has deeper roots considering the residents in Germany with Turkish background. These people have been a medium for that resonance between two countries since the Labor Recruitment Agreement in 1961. While once 'quest workers' were turning into the biggest minority group in Germany(White, 1997),their relations with Turkey had not got loose but maybe even the contrary (Mueller, 2006; Pollack *et al.*, 2016). However, although Turkish population in Germany had always been one of the important subjects of international politics between two countries, they also have become a domestic issue for both countries later in this picture which leads this thesis to examine the discussions of transnational politics to highlight the blurred boundaries between domestic and international politics especially in everyday discourses of Turkish population in Germany.

Moreover, the recent public debates between two countries regarding the Turkish and German politics might be considered as a period of intensive and highly intermixed transnational relations. Due to the fact that the public debates are embedded into the political fields of both countries, political experiences of Turkish people in Germany and how they narrate these experiences become an important aspect in transnational political moments. Therefore, this study aims to show the complexity of political experiences through the personal narratives of Turkish young adults in Germany in higher education. My analysis of personal narratives will show how political discussions are reflected to the everyday interactions and actions of the interviewees. In this regard, how they narrate their everyday interactions with others are related with how they perceive political structures, media images as well as their own positions in the society.

There is an enormous amount of literature on Turkish migration to Germany and on living conditions of Turkish people with migration background in Germany. However, since the existing researches mainly focus on disadvantaged conditions of those people, there is almost no study focuses on the well-educated, active Turkish youth and their personal experiences. Therefore, keeping in mind the importance of the historical process in order to comprehend the today's situation, this study aims to examine the personal narratives of political experiences in the scope of transnational political fields. The importance of the selected subject and theoretical perspectives on transnational politics that are embraced in this thesis will be explained in the chapter 2.

Since this study does not have a purpose of testing any hypothesis, it uses the method of narrative analysis in order to show the complex relation between the political experiences of the interviewees and transnational political space. Thus, political experiences are considered not only in a form of conventional political participations but also having everyday discourses on politics. The details of methodological tools, interviews and participants will be given in the chapter 3.

While the analysis is based on the data collected from the field work, in the chapter 4, I will describe the field research processes which contain details about how I entered to the field, difficulties of access, ethical concerns and the analysis method of the collected data.

In the chapter 5, I will present the analysis of the personal narratives in relation to the previous theoretical and methodical discussions. This chapter consists of three subchapters, which were put in an order according to founded key themes from the interviews. The first subchapter focuses on how the interviewees discuss Turkish politics in their everyday interactions, which shed light on their perspectives of discourses on Turkish politics and its problems in German context. Second subchapter explains their reflections on media and media representations of Turkey, Turkish politics and Turkish people in Germany. And the last one is about their self-identities in relation to their everyday practices as transnational actors.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There is a tremendous amount of literature on Turkish migration to Germany starting from the 1960's among various disciplines from sociology to economy, political sciences to the migration studies. Since the phenomena itself is well-discussed on many platforms, I will rather summarize the related literature and theoretical discussions for this thesis' subject.

2.1 Related Literature

In order to move to the questions of this thesis there might be a need of an overview on issues such as higher education of Turkish youth in Germany, as well as their political experiences both in Germany and Turkey. There is a moderate number of researches that are illuminating the problems attached to the issues above. Many of them emphasize the structural problems attached to the so-called the second and third generation of Turkish migrants in Germany, such as the lack of citizenship, low level of integration and feeling of discrimination (Faas, 2007; Song, 2011; Güllüpınar and Fernández-Kelly,2012; Ataman *et al.*, 2017). However, there is only little number of researches that are focused on migrant youth and almost none of them were focused on the youth's experiences of political discussions. Lastly, all studies, without exception, underline the 'disadvantaged' position of Turkish students in Germany either by giving the number of school drop-outs rates or by emphasizing the low levels of attendance to the higher education or perceiving them as victims of discrimination.

First, for the issue of education among Turkish youth in Germany, many of the researches are based on the statistical data, which have been collected through mass surveys conducted by either governmental institutions or recognized research organizations. For example, the statistical data of the Educational Report of PISA (The Programme for International Student Assessment) surveys were used in order to highlight "the structural inequalities" that are experienced by Turkish students in the German education system by focusing on the correlations between ethnicity and school attendances where the numbers show a comparatively lower

attendance to *Gymnasium[1]* among Turkish students. (PISA 2003 cited in Güllüpınar and Fernández-Kelly, 2012)

Another article on the same data set argues Turkish students are the most disadvantaged among the different migrant groups (Song, 2011). Also, one recent research restates the lower participation to higher education among Turkish youth in Germany by using the statistical data from NEPS (German National Educational Panel Study) in order to analyze different factors behind Turkish students' success levels (mostly focused on failure) (Acar, 2019). While this study aims to analyze the personal narratives of Turkish youth with higher education, the results of the quantitative researches are mentioned in order to show how quantitative researches describe the current context of Turkish youth in Germany. Also, their generalizations shadow the complexities of selected subject, and thus, the need of a qualitative research becomes more obvious.

Since the concepts of "integration" and "national identities" are constantly stated in quantitative researches on migrant youth, it is no surprise that those concepts were attached to the sense of 'discrimination' and being 'disadvantaged'. For instance, one study examines the relation between integration and personal well-being among Turkish ethnic youth by carrying out structured questionnaires with students between the ages of 17-24 (Koydemir, 2013). In this case, the researcher tries to measure the integration level whereas another research is focused on the differences in identity building processes among Turkish high school students in Germany (Faas, 2007). However, rather than focusing on the students' own perspectives, the latter accuses the German education system as not being inclusive.

Regarding the political experiences of youth, one research compares the political participation among young Turkish people from Turkey, Germany and Belgium based on the findings from massive survey data of PIDOP (Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation 2009–2012) (Ataman *et al.*, 2017). While the researchers elaborate the civic participation as a form of political action, they

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[1] In the ranking of high schools, it is the highest type of high school in German education system

also point out the possible reasons for different ways of political participation among young Turkish people. The way they consider different forms as political participation would be an insightful approach to the political experiences of Turkish young people in order to achieve a deeper understanding of their narratives.

Another research on political participation of young people in Germany, is comparing the Germans, Turks and the other migrant groups (Noack and Jugert, 2015). The authors concluded that among the Turks, who tend to attend organizations in their own ethnic communities, the religiously engaged young males show the most interest in politics. The findings that they present as an interest in politics could be expanded to a wider scope. This interest might be seen also in the form of everyday discussions of politics. Thus, it might be possible to consider the everyday practices regarding political discussions as a way of political action as well as political interest.

Yet, only a limited number of researches can provide an insight into the Turkish youth by conducting semi-structured interviews with them. Two of the articles with this methodological approach are based on the same data set collected from 20 in-depth interviews with high school students in Bremen as a part of the author's ethnographic research. The first one is focused on the identity production of the students on the basis of the students' sense of discrimination in their school and social lives (Çelik, 2015). He argues that when students feel more excluded from the majority, they tend to produce "re-active ethnic identities" which means either emphasizing their own ethnic origins strongly or producing "oppositional identities" which can also be shown as a form of violence.

The second article is another analysis based on the same data, arguing that students produce "coping mechanisms" in order to manage the structural inequalities and social exclusions (Çelik, 2018). To do so, Turkish students refer to stigmatizations of both Turkish and German identities. In order to de-stigmatize the already produced meaning attached to Turkish and German identities, they identify being a Turk with being a friendly, thoughtful and self-giver person, while labeling being a German as being a rude, selfish and distant person. On the other hand, the author also points out a second coping mechanism of some of his interviewees to

de-stigmatize the features of being a Turk: For them, those features are attributed by the majority of the population, and they de-stigmatize themselves by not acting according to the attributed characteristics in order to avoid discrimination. He also concludes that those types of identity production might depend on different aspects such as neighborhood, school location and social environment.

Last but not least, a recent study was conducted only among university students with Turkish backgrounds (Reichert, 2017). According to the results of an online survey, Reichert used a selected sample from respondents, who already defined themselves as politically engaged. In his analysis, he distinguished three types of political participation: politically inactive, conventional and unconventional participation. He discussed the reasons and motivations behind each type of participation without testing any theories or producing a new one. Similar with the researches focused on political participations, Reichert also included different forms of political engagement without building a hierarchical perspective upon those forms. Such an approach would be helpful to understand Turkish youth's narratives on political experiences as a form of political action instead of categorizing them according to a certain typology of political participation.

In the light of existing literature up until now, it can be seen that Turkish students are not a well-studied group with respect to their own motivations and statements. While most of the studies are based on mass collected survey data, a small number of ethnographic researches are situated in the scope of either students' self-identifications or political participations. Even though it seems problematic, none one of them studies political participation and self-identification under one perspective. More importantly, there is no literature on this specific group's political participation in Turkey or in relation to Turkey's diaspora politics. The literature about their political participation refer to participation in German politics which can be a problematic limitation considering the number of residents in Germany with Turkish passport. Therefore, in my study, I aim to examine the students' political experiences and their self-identifications within the same domain of transnational space that involves Turkey's diaspora politics and Germany's domestic politics as transnational political discourses.

2.2 Theoretical Perspectives

The term 'long-distance nationalism' was used for the first time by Anderson in (1992), and Skrbis (1999) used the term to explain the migrants' search for national ties to their homelands as a consequence of their exclusion or a loss of political power in their settlement countries. Later on, Nina Glick Schiller barrows it in order to show that "we have entered a second age of long-distance nationalism and transnational nation-state formation." (Glick Schiller, 2005, p.574) Further, she asserts:

> [w]e are seeing the flourishing of a politics in which ancestral identities are made central by diverse sets of actors including emigrants of different classes, political refugees, leaders of homeland governments, and intellectuals. Today's current mass dispersal of migrants and the availability of rapid communications including mobile telephones, Internet, satellite television, and electronic money transfers facilitate efforts to organize social movements around a homeland politics from afar. In this conjuncture, the term long-distance nationalism is becoming increasingly popular. (p.574)

In accordance with the quotation above, it might be convenient to analyze the experiences of Turkish-origin residents in Germany at the scope of long-distance nationalism, even though the emphasis on 'long-distance' might be of lesser importance in today's world, especially in case of Turkish-German politics. In order to underline the remaining importance of the term, it might be useful to elaborate Turkey's homeland politics as a part of transnational political agenda. While the domestic politics both in receiving and sending country have an essential part in terms of setting boundaries of inclusion, exclusion, and citizenship (Eva Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003), in today's Germany, it is almost impossible to draw a line between domestic and international politics with respect to the enormous number of residents with Turkish passports. One of the possible explanations for this blurring line could be given from a long-distance nationalism perspective since one of the key issues for this study is the interviewees' discussions about the Turkish politics in their daily lives in Germany.

Furthermore, Østergaard-Nielsen also argues that Turkey's importance in German politics has been shifted from foreign politics to a domestic political issue with regard to the approximately 2.5 million residents with Turkish background in Germany (2003, p.86). Accordingly, it might be rightfully claimed that the situation of migrants in Germany cannot be fully understood without a transnational perspective, which includes their relationship with Turkey (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2001). Beside Turkey's importance as a subject of the transnational political space, the way that interviewees describe their thoughts on Turkey and Turkish politics might open another angle to the blurring of the political separations. As it will be discussed further, in this thesis, transnational space is considered as a ground for intermingled relations of political structures and everyday discourses of its actors. Therefore, political experiences and everyday practices of interviewees in this study, will be analyzed as forms of re-producing the transnational political space in its blurred complex context.

On the one side, the increasing numbers of Turkish residents are already blurring the lines of domestic and international politics in Germany even from their everyday political discussions. On the other side, Turkey has started to become actively involved in the transnational political space through its diaspora politics. Hence, while its diaspora politics were stated once as "reactive rather than pro-active" (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003, p.12), recently it has been discussed that Turkish diaspora politics has become more actively involved in the transnational political space through practices, and discourses of emigrants (Aksel, 2016, p198). In her analysis, Damla Aksel also asserts the need for transnational politics since the origin states are actively including their "kin" to the social, political and cultural aspects of their political agenda. By doing this, sending states show the interest of governing their "kin" independently from the citizenship status. Therefore, they are widening their scope of involvement from sending states to the "kin states". (Aksel, 2016, p198)

As one aim of this study is to underline the presence of political actions in the everyday practices through the interactions of the interviewees, it is important to comprehend the complexity of the intermingled political discourses within the

narratives of Turkish youths. Instead of proposing a causal relation between the Turkish governmental policies and the political experiences, I will try to show the beneath presence of Turkish politics in the everyday discussions on politics. Therefore, the importance of Turkey should be considered as one of the aspects in transnational spaces which should be approached as the ground for all produced narratives.

In this regard, it is important to underline the need for the transnational perspective in the political field by emphasizing the difficulty of drawing lines between domestic/ international/ diaspora politics both in Turkey and Germany. Moreover, as it is stated by many scholars, it is also very difficult to draw a line between what is political and what is social in transnational fields. One of the possible reasons for that is approaching those fields as an operative ground where political, social, cultural aspects tend to overlap in the everyday lives of the transnational subjects (Isotalo, 2012; Gerdes, Reisenauer and Sert, 2012; Schunck, 2014). Therefore, for this study, the concept of transnational space will be considered as a gathering ground of different aspects from everyday relations to political affiliations instead of defining and separating different transnational fields. Thus, the term 'transnational space' seems to be suitable since Ayhan Kaya employs it to refer to "a wider spectrum of social, cultural, political and economic transactions among transnational subjects, families, institutions, corporations, networks, images, figures, languages, discourses, arts, rituals, cuisines and symbols" (2007, p.3)

A similar and more directly targeted perspective upon the transnational spaces can be found in Betigül Ercan Argun's theorization of the *Deutschkei*, which she defines as the "web of networks established by migrants from Turkey in Germany" (2003, p.5). *Deutschkei* is a transnational entity, neither a mirror image of Turkey, nor a display of the characteristics of Germany. Thus, she uses the term as a theoretical spectrum to understand Turkey's political situation rather than for drawing a picture of the migrants in Germany (2003, p.6) As much as it is a useful term to bring a historical angle to the theoretical approaches and emphasize

discursively produced character of the transnational spaces, its operational level does not properly correspond to current situation of those spaces.

There are important points for this study with respect to the usage of the term 'transnational space'. Firstly, transnational space allows us to discuss almost all cross-border actions under the same domain. Secondly, it also takes the transnational actors as active agents who constantly construct and re-construct this space. Especially, in the case of Turkish population in Germany, it would be more than accurate to embrace that attitude when their active and simultaneous participations in political, economic and social fields both in Germany and Turkey are considered. Although Argun tends to bring the term *Deutschkei* as an operational term in order to show intermingled relations, she still gives the sense of being Turkish as an embedded in the German context, therefore, produce another space as *Deutschkei.* Thus, referring to the context itself as a transnational space might help to avoid this sense of separation.

Moreover, it is highly crucial here to adopt Göle's approach on Islam as coeval part of European discourse in order to analyze the narratives of the interviewees in the scope of transnational spaces. Her emphasis on the blurred boundaries between European experience and Islamic Faith (2012, p.675), allows us to see Europe and Islam as connected histories (p.684). The important point is how she constructs the Islam as an intrinsic part of Europe and shows how its form of existing is changing the public spaces of Europe (Göle, 2011, p.390). Whether these changes occur in a form of anti-Islamic movements or increase the visibility of Muslims, it does not affect the very idea of being in the same domain of Europe.

In addition to examining the increasing visibility of Islam as a part of European discourse, Göle approaches to visibility "as a form of agency" which can be mute sometimes but certainly "disruptive, provocative and transformative" (Göle, 2011, p.391). This approach gives us a valuable point to interpret the interviewees' narratives on political discussions. Their references to the representations and self-identifications as a form of practices can also be considered also a form of agency. To illustrate, she gives an example of how "Muslim women's new covering practices cannot be captured in the light of anterior historical experiences or of different and

'foreign' cultures, but must be situated in contemporary time and located in European experience" (Göle, 2012, p.675)

Although Turkish populations have been examined as active participants before (Soysal, 2001; Kivisto, 2001; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003; Kaya, 2007), involving their sense of belonging and identities as dynamic elements in the transnational space is a recent approach. As Aksel affirms, identities of Turkish-origin people in Germany should be analyzed not only in the sense of belonging to one place or embracing multiple cultural identities, but also with regard to more active forms of identity productions through transnational activities (2016). Thus, some of the activities tend to be comprehended as cognitive choices of personal investments – as Schunck discusses: "investing into receiving country specific capitals then can be seen as an assimilative strategy and the investment into ethnic capitals as an ethnic strategy" (2014, p.31).

However, without discarding the importance of personal investments, my comprehension will remain in a parallel line with Göle's approach towards Muslim women's practices that are located in "European experience". With the help of her approach, it might be possible to tackle the concept of coeval presence and practice as a way of transformative action in a transnational space rather than to focus on the essential characters of being Turkish or German. The experiences, which are already attached to the practices, perceptions and narratives of transnational spaces, are thus locating themselves in the center of the analysis

As the interpenetrated characteristic of Muslim women with European experience seems to be a well-suited example for transnational actions, that should not be thought otherwise in the case of the experiences of Turkish youth with higher education. Quite similarly, their narratives are produced through their habitats that are "shaped by social, cultural, economic, and political imperatives of both countries in a way that equips them with a rather more vibrant set of identities—more cosmopolitan, more syncretic, more rhizomatic, and more transnational" (Kaya, 2007, p.16). Their self-identities, in that sense, could be approached as another form of practice, and therefore another way of action through their everyday discussions, interactions and imaginations.

2.3 Central Problem and Research Questions

In the light of related literature and theoretical framework, this study aims to understand Turkish youth's own perspectives in relation with the recent political situations. The lack of qualitative data on subject's experiences leads this study to ask the questions below:

- How do Turkish young adults with higher education narrate their own political experiences in Turkey and Germany?
- In which ways are recent diaspora politics reflected in Turkish young adult's self-identifications?
- How do Turkish young adults with higher education discuss transnational politics between Germany and Turkey?
- In which ways do Turkish young adults with higher education perceive political representations in German and Turkish media?

3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will shed light on the research process and analysis methods applied in this study. Firstly, I will discuss the relevance of the selected methodology to the research questions. Secondly, I will explain the research procedures in relation with the design of the research, which includes details about the interviews, sampling technique and the participants.

3.1 Method

With respect to the research questions that are raised in the previous chapter, methods of narrative ethnography might be useful to make a sufficient narrative analysis. As it was mentioned before, the main aim of this study is to analyze Turkish[2] young adult's political experiences through their own narratives

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[2] Referring them as "Turkish" is based on respondents' self-descriptions rather than their citizenship statuses. Moreover, in order to be politically correct, here Turkish means as ethnically Turk not the people who come from Turkey since it has a wider scope of different races, ethnicities and religions.

in relation with transnational space. The outcome of the analysis, therefore, should not be considered as representative of a greater population other than the interviewees themselves. However, it is possible to examine the interplay between the social structures and personal stories in general by using the method of narrative ethnography.

The need of narrative ethnography becomes clearer when we consider the possible problems in studies that work with transnational paradigm. The term "transnational" might be used to avoid "methodological individualism" which tends to shadow the roles of state and social institutions in the analysis (Isotalo, 2012, p.104). Furthermore, Riina Isotalo discusses that it is also possible for many scholars to accept migrants' perspective as subconscious when they work with the transnational paradigm. (2012, p.135) One possible problem can be deduced from these quotations, which is ignoring the agency of the subject while trying not to shadow the social structures. Yet, as it is explained in the chapter of theoretical perspectives, the usage of transnational spaces in this study does not imply to give more importance to structures of transnational relations than the personal experiences.

In this regard, narrative ethnography might provide us a perspective to consider personal experiences as a harmony of narratives and transnational spaces. To illustrate the need of the narrative ethnographic methods for this study, it is helpful to explain what Georgakopoulou emphasizes as "to study narrative-in-context rather than narrative as text(2006, p.123) and Phoenix's idea of giving equal "importance to individual and social" in narrative analysis (2008, p.66). These two quotes show the importance of narrative ethnographic method in this study since it concerns to discuss the narratives in their complexities rather than producing simple cause-effect relations or generalizations. Thus, narratives are neither as a mere reflections of the social structures nor independent stories from their contexts, but they are "social in this and other ways, connected to larger cultural and historical discourses" (Riessman, 2012, 377)

Thus, narrative ethnography helps to prevent reductionist tendencies both in terms of subjective and societal reductionism. For the former one, narrative

ethnography does not approach to narratives as the subject's "own" story or "own" words since "[T]here are no narrative heroes or antiheroes who stand outside of their circumstances." (Gubrium and Holstein, 2008, p.255). As authors assert the importance of locating stories into their own contexts, adopting this perspective is crucial for this study. The reason for that, the meaning of political experience does not necessarily involve interviewees' direct references to the politics or political actions. On the contrary, the promise here is to show those experiences as a part of transnational political spaces, therefore, condition of the appearances of narratives related with the circumstances in the transnational space.

In order to prevent the societal reductionism, awareness of narrative embeddedness helps to avoid from "reading stories as straightforward reflections of social structures or society at large." (Gubrium and Holstein, 2008, p.255) Therefore, applying narrative ethnography for this study might be the way to show the complexities and many layers of interactions among individual, social and political factors. In this case, however, it is already underlined in transnational space discussion, individuals should be considered as interactive agents as well as political and social structures.

Last but not least, one more point should also be mentioned regarding to embeddedness of the narratives to their contexts. Since the goal for narrative ethnography is to give equal importance to social and personal constructions, self-identities of the interviewees should be examined in relation with transnational spaces as well as politics and political actors.

In order to establish a valid discussion on relations of self-identity with transnational political field, the usage of the term "identity" should be clarified. In the scope of transnational spaces, the term "identity" emphasizes the idea of "becoming" (Kaya, 2007, p.3), rather than strictly established "beings". Therefore, it goes hand in hand with the idea of "fluid positioning" as it is pointed-out in narrative analysis that refers to a constant positioning of the narrators according to the situations they are in. (Harre &van Langehove cited in Riessman, 2012, p.374). Hence, narrative ethnography becomes useful for studies of social changes and

macro level phenomena (Riessman, 2012) which corresponds to the needs of this study's research questions.

3.2 Interviews

Whether it is asked through the questions or not, narratives always related with their context which are social and cultural issues at societal levels: they are the "narratives-in-interaction" (Bamberg, 2006, p.173). Since this study asking the questions of "how" instead of "why", narrative analysis opens a possibility to achieve to the answers with respect to multi-layered, complex relations among individual narratives, societal phenomena and actions in transnational space.

In this regard, I conducted narrative interviews which were mainly based on participants' stories. These interviews were focused on three main topics such as: Turkish politics and its resonance in Germany, how interviewees experience politics in their everyday lives, media representations of Turkish politics and politicians.

Our interviews lasted between 50 to 75 minutes and are electronically recorded. Most of them were held on campus, 4 were held in a café near at the respondents' workplace or home.

3.3 Sampling & Participants

While the aim of this study is to analyze the personal narratives of Turkish young adults, I used snowball method after I found my first interviewees from one event of the Turkish Student Society. Although method was useful to reach people from Turkish background, my sample had to stayed in the scope of certain friendship circles. However, there were different political standings[3] in terms of voting habits among the respondents while they were affiliated with two main student societies. The first one is the Turkish Student Society where I had my first access, and the second one is the Islamic Student Society which I reached through my first respondents. Existence of different political choices was an unintended

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[3] Voting for 4 different parties in Turkey

consequence which does not significant by itself, nonetheless, it broadens the scope of analysis to comprehend the political experiences in general.

14 participants were interviewed for this research. Inside of the sample there were 4 undergraduate students, 8 graduate students and 2 recently graduated from different majors. The age range was between 23 to 29 years old. The usage of term "young" in research questions is a practical choice to refer this specific age group which separates them from the adolescents and middle ages in its commonsensical meaning. Except one, all of the interviewees were born and raised in Germany, they are so called "third generation migrants"[4].

4. FIELD RESEARCH

The purpose of this chapter is to give details about the field and my entrance to the field. Then, I will mention possible ethical concerns, difficulties and how I tried to take precautions in order to prevent them. Lastly, I will clarify the methods that are used during the process of analysis.

4.1 Introduction to the Field

When I first decided on my research questions and subjects, I was thinking that university students would be easier to access, I was not aware of the barriers a head of me. Among my first attempts to contact, there were youth branches of political parties, and youth organizations of a governmental presidency and some smaller groups in University. After many negative returns from widespread organizations, I was not sure that I would ever reach them as I planned beforehand. Luckily, within a month, I got an invitation from the Turkish Student Society under the University. I was invited to a board meeting. In that meeting I had met with my first interviewee –Hakan who is the founder of the Turkish Student Society. Although he was a valuable contact as a gate keeper to that community, other members of the board were mostly Turkish students who came to Germany at the

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[4] Although they will not be called as 3rd generation in this thesis, it is a common term for to underline that their history in Germany goes back to their grandparents.

age of 18 or 19 for their higher education. Thus, they are not involved in the sampling of this research.

Afterwards, I started to attend their events to get an access to the society. I attended plenty of events such as discussion nights, game days, picnics and one documentary showing about the history of the Turkish migrants in Germany. Since the documentary was the most crowded event that includes people other than the members of the student society, I introduced myself and my research to audience before the showing started. However, unlikely to my expectations, I could not get any volunteers to contribute to my research so easily.

Then, I started to approach people and ask if they would be interested to participate or not, this is where I did my first mistake. Even though I stated before that my research is about the people who were born and raised in Germany, it was not an easy task to select them inside of that crowd. I started to listen their talks, from my commonsensical knowledge I tried to recognize them from the way they speak[5]. However, their Turkish was almost flawless, then I started try to find people who are "accidentally" switch to German between the Turkish sentences.[6]
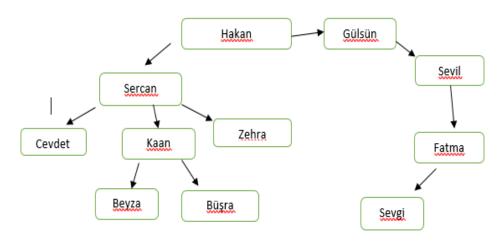
I met with three people that day but could not ask whether they were born in Germany. Unfortunately, one of them was born in Turkey and moved to Germany at his eight and I found out that during my interview with him. He was the only person who is not born in Germany among the fourteen interviewees. While I was thinking about to eliminate our conversation from the analysis, I realized that during our meeting he was referring his Erasmus semester in Turkey as "abroad". Also, similar with most of the respondents, he was stating that he could only live in Germany. So, I decided that if he sees himself in Germany and identify himself with this view, who am I to keep him out from the research by saying that "but he was not born in Germany".

Luckily enough, after the documentary ended, I had reached out my first interviewees. Towards to end of the same event Hakan introduced me to former

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[5] A common caricatured image of second or third migrants in Germany who speaks Turkish differently than the Turkish people born and raised in Turkey
[6] Something that caught my attention during the previous meeting

president of the Islamic Student Society: Anıl. Besides Cem, Merve and Faruk, whom I met personally during this event, the table below explains the web of relations in the rest of the sampling.

4.2 Difficulties

Due to restricted time span, I had to conduct my field research and meetings within two months. During this time period, Ramadan (a religious month of fasting in Islam) started. Therefore, some of the planned respondents from the Islamic Student Society did not want to meet during the daytime in the Ramadan, but they invited me to the *iftar* (dinner time to end of day's fasting). While Ramadan was a disadvantage to conduct more interviews, participating to the *iftar* gave me a chance of a small ethnographic observation to the inside of the event and the Islamic Student Society. Although *Iftar* was a huge event open for everyone whatever their religion is, the 60-people table that I was sitting with the spouses of my planned respondents and their friends, was full of Turkish people. As it is mentioned by many interviewees that their close friend circles mostly consist of Turkish people, I had chance to experience this mono-national, single-gender sitting arrangement as a part of their daily practices. While interviews are the only sources for the analysis part in this thesis, having a small ethnographic experience, get to know them outside of interview context and having casual chats helped me to embrace a more insightful perspective to interpret their narratives*.*

Secondly, my personal standing as a short-term graduate-student in Germany has limited my access to different organizations such as YTB[7] since I had to introduce myself as a researcher which might sounds intimidating. Also, my lack of social circle in Germany had made me seen as more like an outsider, maybe even an "unknown" that was becoming a problem when I told them I want to talk about politics. Although it is a well-known fact in qualitative researches that the interviewees might have some presumptions about the interviewer's cultural identity(Song and Parker, 1995), when it is come to politics, especially Turkish politics in Germany, people tended to be more sceptic which is again will be an important point in my analysis. However, during our meetings, being Turk showed itself as a benefit especially when we were talking about Turkey or Turkish politics. Since it is stated by many interviewees that they are sharing their opinions and criticism on Turkey with their Turkish friends. Being a Turkish researcher might have helped to set aside skeptical presumptions about my personal cultural/political identity.

Lastly, besides being Turk seemed as an advantage as I mentioned above, a women interviewee has also mentioned that she always speaks Turkish when she was talking about her emotions and feelings (Büşra, 26 years old, MA Student in Teaching). Since all of the interviews were conducted in Turkish, there was a need for a translation to English which is done by me. Thus, on the one hand, speaking Turkish might have provided an easier access to their personal feelings. On the other hand, it is always possible to lose some meanings in the process of translation (Lentin and Titley, 2011). In order to minimize the possibility of meanings lose, I offered them to re-check the Turkish transcriptions and final version of English to see if there is anything that is misunderstood or misrepresented.

4.3 Ethical Concerns

In order to avoid possible ethical problems and provide a level of protection of interviewees' privacy (Piper and Simons, 2005), their names are changed with random Turkish names. Since I conducted my research in a semi-large city in

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[7] Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities

Germany, it might be too easy to identify the participants even with the changed names. Therefore, to achieve full anonymity, the name of the city and university will not be mentioned in the analysis. Besides this, participants' real names were not used either in records or transcriptions against the possibility that it might be understood by other people in public places.

Moreover, in terms of narrative analysis, it is considered that "research participants bring their histories of previous positioning and their expectations of the interviewer and the interview to the research context." (Phoenix, 2008). Accordingly, at some points during the interviews some participants were asking questions back to me about my opinion on the subject or wondering how the other participants have responded to the same question. Although I remained silence in order to protect the anonymity of the other interviewees, sometimes it caused to pass some topics by the interviewee. For example, when I asked them which party they support, one of the interviewees wondered if the others replied that question because it is not a "common" thing to ask people in Germany. (Zehra, 26 years old, Law student)

Lastly, when a participant wanted to talk about another participant's perspective, it was an ethnical decision for me to remain friendly environment or put a distance between the interviewee and myself. Bringing up the issues of anonymity has automatically turned the friendly environment to the interview session. However, maybe because of the friendly environment of our conversations, in general, some participants tended to "gossip" more about the others which put me a difficult position. Even though I wanted to encourage them to talk openly by being friendly, not contributing to their "gossip" attempts might have distorted that friendly environment and led interviewees to talk more charily.

4.4 Analysis Method

Since the interviews were electronically recorded, detailed transcription was an important and exhausting part before I started to analyze the data. In order to analyze the data, I started with producing codes of the narratives on the basis of transcriptions. All codes were developed manually during and after the interviews.

Generating and organizing codes continued over transcriptions. Then I categorized those codes and order them to find repetitive themes and subjects.

In classical narrative analysis, scholars tend to put boundaries between narrative and story. However, during the analysis, their separation might not be as clear cut as it is claimed(Gubrium and Holstein, 2008). Phoenix mentions, key themes might be found around repeated content in stories(2008). Hence, the task was to find out the "key themes" without considering analytical differences between story and narrative. However, on operational level, as it is stated in Riessman's article, it should be considered that "narratives add up something" (Bell cited in Riessman, 2012, p.370). Since main focus on this thesis is the personal experiences of the interviewees, it was also important how they ordered their experiences during the interviews.

Accordingly, key themes are detected by following the repeated subjects in the interview's flow. As interviews are mainly focused on their political experiences, media representations of Turkish politics and political actor in Germany are also shown as key themes for the analysis. Lastly, while interviewees' self-identities are already important in order to comprehend personal experiences in their own complexities, the ways that they discuss their differences from some of the Turkish population in Germany are considered as another key theme in this analysis.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE PERSONAL NARRATIVES

5.1 Turkish Politics in Everyday Discussions

"Turkey is no longer just important in terms of foreign policy, but has become a domestic political issue because of the more than 2 million people of Turkish descent living here." This quotation belongs to one of the interviews which is conducted by Eva Østergaard-Nielsen with a member of German parliament in 1997(2004, p.86). She gives this excerpt in order to emphasize the occurrences of transnationalism in political debates. She shows that the concepts of international and foreign politics had started to fail in terms of comprehending the relations between Turkey and Germany. In that regard, after more than 20 years since her

field research and theorization of transnationalism, the term did not lose its importance in politics. Hence, it might be even possible to say that its domain has been more broaden from explaining the international politics to the daily discourses of the transnational actors.

Since transnationalism in Germany has covered a wider scope from political debates on Turkey and Turkish politics to the daily discourses of the actors, transnational activities can be found in different aspects of this transnational space. Such as, Turkey's recent active diaspora politics underlines the intermingled character of the domestic and foreign politics which increase importance of transnationalism and stand as an example to transnational politics.

In addition to governmental politics, having an interest in Turkish politics and discussing it in everyday discourse in Germany should be considered as a form of transnational activity. With respect to transnational activities, Ayhan Kaya asserts that they are not only cross-border political engagements but also their social, cultural, economic interaction between two countries as well as the rest of the world through transnational spaces. (2007) Also, since transnational spaces are highly complex and refer to a wider scope, transnational aspects can be noticed in many different domains of social lives. Thus, having an interest in Turkish politics from Germany might be considered as a form of transnational political activity itself (Kivisto, 2001, p.161)

When it is acknowledged that the interviewees of this study are already actors of transnational spaces since they are born, raised and live in Germany with Turkish backgrounds, their discussions on and interest in Turkish politics have become their transnational activities. Since they experience transnational politics as being actors of transnational space, their narratives of those experiences become valuable subject of study in order to examine the complexity of transnationalism from everyday discourses. What is more, discussing Turkish politics in German context is shown itself in their narratives as a problem of transnational politics.

An example can be given from a personal narrative of young Turkish man in order to show the transnational aspects in his daily conversations. When it is asked

to share whether and how he discusses Turkish politics in his everyday conservations, he describes:

> Me and my friends (Turkish friends), for example, we can criticize Turkey among our group. Even though we criticize, we try to see what is the best for Turkey, try to understand the situation. But when you speak with Germans, it does not matter how much you are against the politics and politicians in Turkey, you have to defend Turkey in front of the foreigners. No matter what happened, you cannot denigrate Turkey to the foreigners. I don't personally. I can discuss with you (pointing at me) everything about Turkey, you can bring up every issue and we can criticize together. However, if a German person comes and sits with us right now, I would never criticize(Turkey). Because they do not ask questions in order to understand, they already have strict opinions about the situation in Turkey. (Cevdet, 23 years old men, under-graduate double major student in Computer Engineering and Economy)

Besides the fact that his interest in Turkish politics can be seen as example of transnational politics, the excerpt above is implying more than this. For illustration, it is interesting to see that how Turkish politics is perceived as something negative immediately without any indication in the question. On the one hand, the sense of negativity could be based on his own opinion on the current political situation in Turkey. On the other hand, it might be a perception developed through the public discourses about Turkish politics in Germany. Thus, his usage of the word "defend" here however, signals that he is not the one who has negative attitudes on Turkey solely but he is the defender of Turkey when this negativity took place in his interactions. Therefore, defending turkey cannot be only interpreted in terms of his own political perspective. It is a purposeful choice of action in his everyday conversations with "foreigners" which converts it into a transnational activity.

Also, a further observation can be made according to Cevdet's description. His clear distinction between his attitudes when he talks with Turkish "friends" and to German shows another level of the transnational paradigm. From a mere observation it can be interpreted that his attitude leads to a segregation in his social circles. Although this segregation seems only to occur during the political discussions, it should be mentioned in order to give an adequate picture of their everyday experiences of transnational spaces.

On the other hand, while Cevdet's narrative gives the sense of "defending Turkey" against the negative connotations of Turkish politics in German context, another interviewee brings the idea of defending directly in relation with the Turkish politics. Thus, he connects the notion of defending with the feeling of power and confidence which are coming from the recent Turkish diaspora politics. He tells the political discussions in an observer fashion:

> Okay, maybe I am not 50 years old, but I know them nobody has stood up for us until now. They (Turkish people) feel the power when Erdogan call Europeans as hypocrite, no one had say something like that before. It might be a characteristic for Turkish people here, but they tend to get carried away with those kinds of speeches. They feel power, not the power for destroy, but stand up and **defend**, kind of self-confidence. They proud of being Turk and stood up for it. (Anıl, 27 years old, graduate student in mechanical engineer works in Mercedes, former president of Islamic student club)

Thus, the position of "defending Turkey" should not be understood only as a reflection of their own political perspective. Rather, the position of defending is a production of the everyday interactions which consist of different elements other than opinions on Turkish politics. While Cevdet emphasizes "not to denigrate Turkey", Anıl focuses on the feeling of the power to "stand-up". That brings the questions of: Against whom do they defend Turkey? or Against what do they stand-up? For the former question, Cevdet's point of not-to-discuss with Germans supplies a possible answer, however, why they defend Turkey might overlap with the possible answers of the latter question. How they define and describe the category of "German" when they state they "do not want to discuss with Germans about Turkish politics" might lead us to comprehend what they are stand-up for.

In order to build the above connection, there might be a need of a closer look into Cevdet's distinction of Germans and Turkish friends from different interviewees' narratives. Since one recurring topic was the question of who they discuss Turkish politics with, when it is asked how they discuss Turkish politics in their daily interactions. In this regard, another example might be given from a personal narrative of a young man who voted for AKP before he gave up his Turkish citizenship. He illustrates:

> For example, let's say I am supporting CHP and my (Turkish) friend is supporting AKP, we can discuss with each other. I can say that Germans are right on some issues, I can say this to him/her. And he or she can agree with me on some points and disagree with the others. There is no problem with discussions on the same level. However, if a German person told me that yours (President) is a dictator. At that point, even though I am a CHP supporter, I will tell that person that they have to respect him (Erdogan) as an elected president in our country. Here, there becomes a unity, a solidarity among the Turks (Kaan, 26 years old, MA graduated in Religion and English Teaching, working{intern} in high school)

His preference of talking with Turkish friends can be understood from the perspective of "long-distance nationalism" (Glick Schiller, 2005). The term states the national belonging could be seen even from long distances from so called "homelands". What Kaan was referring might be interpreted from first glance as if being Turkish is an essential part for discussing Turkey. Also, this notion of the prefer to talk about Turkish politics to Turkish friends instead of Germans was confirmed also by many interviewees from different political perspectives. Thus, the distinctions between being Turkish or German in order to discuss Turkish politics does not only depend on person's political perspectives such as supporting current Turkish politics or not. For example, a woman interviewee who clearly criticizes current Turkish politics during the interview, when I asked her with whom she shares those criticisms, she explained as:

> I can talk with my friends openly, for instance, we criticize his(Erdogan's) harsh words when he spoke very angry. Sometimes I think that he does not know what he is talking about, but I won't tell that to a German –cannot explain why but I don't want to discuss with the Germans. (Sevgi,26 years old, Master student in Business Administration)

Despite the fact that she is pointing out as "friends" rather than "Turkish friends" which was different from the other interviewees' expressions, almost all of them –including her – mentioned their closest friends consist of mostly Turkish people. Hence, the choice of the mono "national" friendship circle might be considered as an extension of the discourse of not to talk with Germans about politics into their daily social relations.

Yet, having a Turkish dominated friend circle is an intentional choice since all of my interviewees claimed that their social groups turned into more Turkish when they started to university. In addition to have a mono "national" social circle,

their avoidance of discussing with Germans can be explained with respect to conditions of production of those close friend-circles. As Glick-Schiller affirms in relation to migration and long-distance nationalism, people who experience more discrimination in their "host-land", tend to create a closed community from their home-lands (2005). However, as it is stated earlier in this chapter, Germany cannot be conceived as a "host-land" in the case of the interviewees of this study. Therefore, the way they produce the category of German should be thought outside of classical nationalist approach. As it will be discussed further in this chapter, none of the interviewees refers to any direct discrimination. Yet, they express their own perceptions of the others as Germans who always have already constructed ideas on Turkey and Turkish politics, and who are not open-minded to change it.

5.1.1 Discussing Turkish politics is a problem with "Germans"

Kaan's statement that he can discuss with Turkish friends on "the same level", in a way, implies that he perceives a hierarchical rank in his conversations with Germans or at least he sees a need of a mutual conversation where everyone can have chance to comment each other's thoughts. Sevgi, on the other hand, does not give a specific reason of why she would not share her critiques about Turkish politics with Germans. Yet, Cevdet describes his experience in more detail, when he is asked why he does not discuss with Germans, he continues with:

> In the end, people of Turkey are voting for someone. And according to those votes a person become a president. Whichever direction it is, it is a decision of people in Turkey. I don't think that it is Germans' business. Yet, it is their favorite topic. When they hear that you are a Turk, they automatically try to talk to you about Turkey and Erdogan. I refuse to talk. I ignore their questions. I don't talk anymore. I don't want to spend my energy for nothing. Whoever brings this subject, they already have a fixed idea on their mind. You cannot change that. Why would I bother? (Cevdet)

From his emphasis on "Germans" are the ones who want to talk about Turkish politics in the first place, it become clearer that it is not only Turks, who turned into transnational actors, but also the "Germans" have become active agents by being interested in transnational politics. Therefore, it is possible to see people without migration history as integral parts of transnational politics which validates the importance of discussing politics in everyday conversations as a transnational

activity. Thus, being interested in Turkish politics is something shared in German context both by Germans and Turkish people. This point is important to understand their production of category of German as an attached to their experiences rather than a form racially or culturally defined category which requires a deeper elaboration.

In order move on to a deeper analysis, it should be mentioned that in the studies that embrace transnational perspectives, questions have changed from classical ones such as whether or not migrants lose their cultural distinctiveness to the questions of how they experience and organize transnational spaces. (Schunck, 2014, p.55) Therefore, to understand their experiences for the production of the "other" is more important than their "actual" distinctions as a group. Here, the term other works as an operational concept in order to underline its discursively produced character from the interpretations of the interviewees' narratives. Hence, how do Turkish young adults experience the political discussions about Turkey is attached to how do they produce the other as "Germans whom they do not want to discuss with".

What Kaan refers to as being on the same level in a conversation and his emphasis on a search for "respect" is attached to how he characterizes the specifics of being German while they talk about Turkish politics. By emphasizing his preference not to talk to Germans, in a way, he produces Germans as "others" which can also be found in Cevdet's answers about discussing Turkish politics. Kaan pictures Germans as disrespectful to elected president of Turkey and, therefore, to Turkish democracy – a similar narrative of "Germans" appears in Cevdet's definition as people who have pre-established ideas which are not possible to change.

Therefore, the separation of Turkish and German cannot be explained along the lines of nationalist assumptions because the important point is that none of the interviewees was referring Germans as an ethnical, even a racial category. Rather, they use "German" as people who always have strict and negative opinions on Turkish politics, whose opinions are impossible to change. Even though "German" as an "other" does not refer to rigid national category, within the existence of such

separation, they give the notion of "us" and "them" as if they are two distinctive groups. In order to make sense of the group identities, Jolle Demmers asserts that in today's world, the production of group identities are not necessarily bounded with actual spatial or territorial existences (2002, p.89) Even though she brings more abstract notions of "belonging" into the discussions than the term "long-distance nationalism" which is already broaden the sphere of nationalism by underlining the cross-border actions. Still, it might not be enough to make rightful interpretations of Turkish young adult's narratives about German others.

On the one hand, it might still be possible to examine their narratives in a similar perspective as what Çetin Çelik describes as "de-stigmatization strategies" (2018). In its broaden sense, he analyzes that disadvantage Turkish students to develop de-stigmatization strategies in order to fight against everyday discrimination (p.709). Hence, while they are trying to challenge and change the "stereotypes" against Turks, they create "us" and "them" categories by correlating the Turkish identity with honesty, loyalty, open-heartedness, generosity and being trustworthy while they attribute negative features to the German identity such as being cold, individualistic, self-centered, stingy and untrustworthy. (p.714). Although Çelik's analysis is very insightful in terms of showing the different possible reasons behind the production of the categories of 'us' and 'them', he states that his respondents are still emphasizing the cultural differences in order to justify the seemingly ethnic segregation. (p.713) Instead, what I would like to propose in accordance with my findings another possible view upon the narratives of "German other" and "Turkish friends".

As it is obvious, while they are attributing some characteristics in order to define who they refer as German, they distance themselves from those type of characteristic. However, it might be possible to build a connection between political discourses, and identity formations regarding to everyday interactions as in they are in the same domain of transnational spaces. In other word, the important point is the conditions of the experiences of defining "German other" and being "Turkish friend" which are discursively produced categories from their daily interactions as transnational actors. Thus, while Çelik's findings emphasizes the cultural

differences, it might be helpful to focus on the similarities such as sharing similar mindset by being part of the same discussions among transnational spaces.

5.1.2 Turkish politics occur in Germany

In order not to focus on cultural differences from interviewees' distinctions of being Turkish and German, it is crucial to understand their definitions of being German. More importantly, it should be recognized that productions of being Turk and German belong to same public discourse of Germany. For illustrate this point, a woman who has dual-citizenship and supports central left parties in both countries, answered my question aggressively when I asked her why she does not prefer to discuss with Germans:

> I really get angry when Germans think that they know about Turkey because of the news in German media. They have a lot of judgements without any *real* information about Turkey. When you tell them that –Turkey is not like that –, they put you a category right away. "you are an *Erdoganci*[8] , you are defending him" but the situation is not about that. I just want them to shut up when they don't know about something. If you say something positive –any small thing – you become *Erdoganci* according to them. If you defend Turkey, you defend Erdogan! Cause if you are a proper German, you have to castigate Erdogan. If you are not agreeing with them (Germans) one hundred percent, you are not democratic enough(!). (Gülsün, 28 years old, English and Religion Teacher at a Gymnasium)

Her emphasis on being democratic in relation to her discussion of Turkish politics with Germans should be considered as the way of bringing Turkish domestic politics into the transnational political space by discussing it in Germany. In other words, it can be interpreted from her narrative that Turkish domestic politics are judged by the German's democratic values. She thinks that if she says something positive on Turkish politics, it would show that she lacks democratic values in the eyes of Germans. Therefore, as an active political agent of this space, her experience of Turkish politics in Germany through her interaction with Germans opens a way to comprehend the Turkish politics in European domain.

It might be useful to apply here, the perspective of Nilüfer Göle which asserts Islam as an integral part of the Europe by showing the increasing visibility of the

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[8] A term for supporters of the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Islam in public spheres in Europe, and its coverage on political and public discourses (Göle, 2011, 2012, 2013). The important point is that she shows how anti-Islam and Islam are in the same domain of Europe. Therefore, Muslims belong to Europe through their citizenships, and staying permissions and having European tastes, and identities. Similarly, she analysis Muslim women as European despite of their "cultural" differences which leads their identities as form of cultural composition like *Burkini*[9]. I believe, adopting Göle's approach of European Muslim women into this analysis, become essential part to interpret the narratives on the notion of *Erdoganci*.

While Göle criticizes the idea of seeing Muslim women and Islam as counter aspects to the European values without considering their embeddedness to the European discourse (2012, p.675), being *Erdoganci* in that sense, should be conceived as a part of Germany's public discourse. Since it is used to refer certain type of people in Germany rather than Erdogan's supporters in Turkey. Furthermore, public discourses on wearing *Burkini* are focused on how it endangers the European values such 'secular public space', being *Erdoganci,* in that sense, is contradicting with so called European democratic values.

In Gülsün's explanation, she tends to justify her stereotypes of German by claiming that she is the one who is stereotyped as *Erdoganci* in the first place. Thus, the way she describes the experience of being labeled as *Erdoganci* totally belongs to the Europe because its condition of possibility is remaining in European discourse. While she already has a grasp of European public discourses as being a part of the public, the way she discussed the Turkish politics and her experiences cannot be thought outside of the European domain.

Gülsün was angry to the people who do not have "real" information for a situation and yet they act as if they know the real. How she labels as the real situation and Germans as people who do not know "the real" are not independent from her own identification. Thus, she is not a supporter of Erdogan but getting a reaction as if she is, might be the reason behind her anger. Another interesting point

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[9] A produced word from burka and bikini

is her sarcastic tone when she describes the conditions of labeled as being *Erdoganci* and consequently "not-being democratic" in the eyes of Germans. As a person who is born and raised in Germany and working as a teacher in a respected high school, she does not want to be accused of being lacking democratic values. Therefore, she distances herself from Germans by claiming that she knows "the real" or at least, the subject that she talks about. While she was criticizing what the "Germans think" for being democratic, in a way, she produces a new stereotyping of German as "being ignorant" about the "real" situation.

Therefore, stereotyping Germans, attributing certain characteristic to being a German and expectation of "respect" from the counter party in a discussion should be considered, in a parallel line with the narrative of "not discuss with Germans". Also, they cannot be examined only in terms of an essential category as being German since they are produced from the everyday interactions and experiences. For example, from Gülsün's explanation, her opposing position appears as to be against to the people who believe the German media and its representations without questioning. Through her definition of Germans, she also claims for her own identity. It is important to note that her self-positioning also occurs from her interactions therefore could be placed into the same European domain.

Hence, as it is mentioned earlier, this self-positioning could also be considered as a political activity by itself in the scope of transnational politics. While the scope of the transnational political activities goes beyond from following the political events in Turkey to discuss it in everyday life interactions (Gerdes, Reisenauer and Sert, 2012, p.121), range of motions of the transnational political actors is not limited to forms of conventional political participations any longer. They are producing and re-producing the transnational political space from their observations, discussions and actions. Thus, being *Erdoganci* is an aspect of European discourse and it also related with the media representations and perspectives of others. It is possible to comprehend from this, their motivations behind the notion of "not discussing with Germans" is not separated from how they produce the category of German. Even more, Being German and being *Erdoganci*,

are always discursively produced elements in the same domain of transnational spaces[10] with respect to their own identity productions, ideas, and perceptions.

What Kaan mentioned as solidarity among Turkish people when they are defending Turkey can be fairly read as the solidarity among people who try to show another perspective on Turkey which is against the current representation in German media. Hence, Gülsün's stereotyping as "German" might be seen as a counter act to the stereotypes of Turkish people as *Erdoganci.* Here, the term *Erdoganci* and the conditions of turning into one, is going hand in hand with media images, representations and perceptions. Consequently, the way they narrate themselves is linked to how they narrate theirs and others' perceptions on the media. In order to discuss how transnational spaces are constructed, it is highly crucial to take the media representations into this analysis.

5.2 Perceptions on Media

Before going into details on the perspectives on media and media representations, there might be a need of clarification about the way they define the "power" of the media. Gülsün's emphasis on the "real" does not solely point out that media shows the "unreal", but it also gives an example of her perspective on the power of the media in creation of the "real" in the minds of its consumers. From her perspective, since people believe in media without questioning, they turn into manipulated consumers of the representations. This acknowledgment of power of the media, is also repeated in answers of another interviewee who directly accuses media to create the discourse of being *Erdoganci*:

> When Erdogan told people here "not to vote for 4 parties in Germany", there was a huge outrage in media. "How can he interfere our elections?" kind of. Let's think, if all the Turkish people with German citizenship had voted accordingly –which is not possible –they won't affect the overall results, they are only 4 percent or something. Still, all media focused on Turkey for 24 hours of a day. All headlines were like "how Erdogan attempts to interfere our domestic politics", "German intelligence agency should interrogate all the Turkish organizations, they should be banned" ... "who do they think they are to dare to do that?" etc. What is more, it even caused such a thing that whether you are supporting Erdogan or not, if you are a Turkish, you are *Erdoganci* in

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[10] Here it might be possible to say European discourse

the eyes of the Germans. (Cem, 24 years old, under-graduate student in System Engineering, works in SPD)

Besides his sarcastic tone in his voice, especially, when he gives the examples of media headlines, he also claims that the reason of the stigmatization of people as *Erdoganci* is again media's representation. Here, giving media a power to affect to minds of the people, desires little more attention because of discussing media itself might be examined in relation with their references to political situation and events in Turkey. Thus, narratives on media related with resonances of Turkish politics in German public discourse. In Cem's narrative, it seems more important how media covered Erdogan's speech than the speech itself, in a way, showing us how the notion of being *Erdoganci* belongs to European discourse according to media representations.

In this regard, as complex as it sounds, transnational political space always contains intermingled relations of media representations and perceptions, identity formations and othering actions as well as the political perspectives and experiences. Therefore, in its nature it is a highly complex and multilayered space. Since the aim here is to capture this complexity through the analysis of narratives, it might be appropriate to have a closer look into media and its impact on the production of the discourses among the Turkish young adults.

5.2.1 Media as a powerful institution

Although recently migrants' (or people with migration backgrounds) media usages is a popular subject both in migration and media studies, in the case of Germany, most of the studies aim to show the degree of integration among the migrants in relation to their usage of the media. They apply quantitative data analysis in order to validate their arguments. (Heft and Paasch-Colberg, 2013; Geißler and Weber-Menges, 2015; Mittelstädt and Odag, 2018) However, they are still related in terms of some of their findings to make sense of the narratives of my research participants. While people with Turkish background show the most critical attitudes toward German media (Geißler and Weber-Menges, 2015, p.38), the usage of the media among young people does not show a significant difference between the youth with migrant backgrounds or natives (Heft and Paasch-Colberg,

2013, p.20). Moreover, the aim of this chapter is not measuring which media they use but rather see how they narrate media and its images

During the interviews, when I asked them to share their opinions on media representations, what all of the interviewees referred as "German media" was mass media news. Thus, besides they have not mentioned any alternative medias in Germany when we were talking about representations of Turkish people in the media, their reference was always to the main-stream news rather than movies, TV shows or series. One possible explanation might be that they were already informed about the interviews will be focused on their political perspectives. Therefore, their narratives on media were mostly focused on the ideologically produced media images and political speeches from both countries. Because of the embeddedness of the perceptions of the media to the political experiences, the way they perceive and narrate media in the scope of the news channels and items in main stream German mass media is an essential part for to analyze their perspectives on transnational politics.

First of all, the way they discuss the media as an institution that has direct effects on its audience should be mentioned because it is related with how they narrate their perspectives of political public discourses. For example, Cem continues his comments on media by underlining its power on to change the public discourses:

> Media has become harsh (?) German society remained same. What I mean, Turks were used to be dirty, now *Erdoganci.* If Erdogan will die tomorrow, they will find something else, nothing will change. It is not about Erdogan. Of course, since Erdogan revolting against Europe, they want him to go down, it is another subject. But Erdogan exist today, he might not be tomorrow. Tomorrow someone else would come, and discourse would be changed. (Cem)

Here, within a claim on "seeing the bigger picture", he is also commenting on the structural and historical perspectives upon Turkish people by using the example of a current situation. This quote, in a way, confirms that the issue is not only about Turkish politics but also how it resonances in Germany through media images. Even more, from this perspective, latter might be more important regarding to impacts of Turkish people's lives in Germany. His views on media is similar to

well-known classical theories on media such as "magic bullet theory" which approaches media images as one-way implementation of the ideas. Although assumptions of that theory were discredited long time ago[11], it is important note how Cem places the media in a highly powerful positions not only in terms of its representations of current Turkish politics but also ever-changing discourses on Turkish population through history.

In addition to the media's power to change the public discourses, the assumption of the direct effect of the media, becomes clearer when German media is accused for driving Turkish people to take supportive/defensive positions on behalf of the Turkish government:

> There was a time that they were writing very positively about Turkey, around mid of 2000 and beginning of the 2010's. Then time for disparagement began. I mean they were exaggeratedly criticizing. They were tweezing the subjects basically, so people here (Turkish) start to justify him (Erdogan). For example, there were people who defend today's government, and you were thinking that they are rightful in defending because they (German media) were even criticizing such things that are normally wouldn't have be criticized... I am not supporting today's government –you know that (talking to me) – but as much as I criticize certain things, it bothers me that German media are pushing too much. As if they don't have any other hobby, they are always making news about either Trump, or Kim Jong-un or Erdogan. But they don't write about their own (German) politics and politicians which is the most problematic. (Hakan, 29 years old, works in a government office, founder of Turkish Student Society)

According to Hakan's explanation German media seems more effective than the Turkish politics for Turkish people to support the political parties in Turkey. Even though he does not make any claims for the times that the media representations upon Turkey were positive, the idea of taking a supportive position for Turkish politics against media overlaps with previous interviewees' narratives who state they would always defend Turkey in front of the Germans. In order words, wherever attacks are coming from does not matter: media or people who believes in it, Turkish people are taking positions accordingly. Thus, both narratives shed light on their perspectives on politics in transnational spaces whether in a form of direct speeches on their own thoughts or their ideas on the other people's thoughts.

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[11] See Elihu Katz, 1960

What is striking here is that the appearances of two different positions in accordance with how media representations are perceived. One the one hand, there are Germans who believes media's representation without questioning. On the other hand, Turkish people who stand against to the media representation as an immediate reaction. Either way media has a direct effect on people's actions according to many interviewees.

Interestingly, from Hakan's point of view, Turkish people in Germany are reacting to German media but they are supporting the government in Turkey rather than taking any action in Germany against the media. While the phenomenon itself shows how the relations of politics are intermingled together with media perceptions, and the way he attributes almost autonomous power to media opens a path for to connect comments on media to personal experiences of transnational politics.

Thus, according to Hakan, German media is using its power intentionally to channel the discussions to Turkish or global politics[12] instead of domestic problems. He accuses the media of distracting the agenda by criticizing the things which "normally would not have been criticized". No matter what are the "real" problems in Germany which media should have given attention to, Hakan criticizes the usage of the media's purposeful selections of the news. Therefore, his critical opinions not only attached to the representations and images that are used in the media but also to the process of agenda setting itself. The general ideas on "how media works" might be interpreted as again a claim of knowledge on "bigger picture" instead of commenting on a peculiar example.

By giving an enormous impact capacity to media and subjecting people to its impact, in a way, they claim a distant position from that impact zone by "observing" the situation. Although an early research of relations between youth and media emphasized the direct bad effects of the media on them such as violent images, they started be discussed as "active participants" who can interpret the media images and are freed from direct effects (Buckingham, 1993, p.8). Therefore, their

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[12] the mere fact that names are belong to autocratic politicians might be important in terms of agenda setting of German media but will keep aside in this analysis

comments as observers can only be discussed within the approach that they are the active participants through their interpretations.

Here, it is important to understand their perceptions and experiences as active participants towards German media, "interpellation" might be useful term in order to understand how they describe the media as an institution which has "direct effects" on people. While Althusser uses the term interpellation to show how individuals become subjects through the ideology (1972, p. 174). Gaunlett borrows the term and claims that "Interpellation occurs when a person connects with a media text" (2008, p.31). Thus, their attribution a powerful position to the media underlines their awareness of the constructed nature of the media images. Therefore, being acknowledged about the media's power in order to produce meanings through ideologically constructed images leads to comments on the media as an institution.

Since the critics upon media and media images were showing similarities among all of the interviewees, it might be possible to claim that they share similar codes in terms of their perceptions on media. Hall argues that in order people to interpret and exchange meanings, they need to share a similar conceptual map in which they have by belonging to the same culture (1997, p.19). Accordingly, it could be said that, one aspect of this cultural map that they share is the mere awareness of the ideological construction of the media itself. Thus, this awareness should not be examined as if it was only about German or Turkish media. In general, by distancing themselves from the people who are directly affected by the media images, they are also claiming a sense of autonomy in terms of interpreting the represented meanings, again as active agents.

In terms of the impacts of the media to its consumers, they do not separate Turkish or German media. For example, addressing the Turkish people who follows the Turkish media in Germany, one interviewee states that: "I see that most of Turkish people turning more nationalist, I think it's dangerous for us and our future in here." (Beyza, 26 years old, undergraduate student in Teaching). In a way, she shows her awareness of the ideologically constructed nature of the media and claims that people are affected by those ideologies. Furthermore, another

interviewee shares her experience with the Turkish people who follow Turkish media:

> I am always discussing with my friends that how media is biased. For example, most of my friends are supporter of AKP, and they are also educated people, when I tell them that there are also bad deeds of Erdogan, such as he has stolen from the government- they are telling me that "do you believe them now?" I've got surprised by seeing that educated people think like this. What is wrong here that they don't question or make a research on this. I am also struggling with that (Büşra, 24 years old, undergraduate student in Teaching Art and Physics)

Therefore, whether it is Turkish or German media, the problematic part is to have a supportive or counter position according to media representations without considering the very production of those representations.

In addition to their criticisms on the people, who believe or act according to media images without questioning the productions of those media images, a woman interview explains the problematics on media productions and their perceptions:

> It's same in Turkey and Germany, media is not free. There is *Zeit* here, they are making more accurate news, so, it is relatively "objective because they write everything in *Zeit* from different perspectives. However, we need to check which sources they are using. Germans love using statistics, but statics also can be manipulated. Anyway, even in *Zeit,* there are some images on media, the language they use, the news that they select are always promoting those images, they (media) cannot go out of those images. (Sevil, 28 years old, master graduated from English philology, works in a project)

Sevil's distrusted attitudes towards media in general and her definition of the media in terms of the representations of the constructed images, could also be seen as common element in their "shared cultural map" besides her own educational background. However, it would be totally deceiving to conceive the word "culture" as "Turkish background". The culture that shared is more specific than the culture that is only limited with ethnic boundaries. Thus, as much as I avoid the use the term "culture" during the analysis, it might be coherent to underline that all my interviewees are young Turkish people with higher education. Even more, they participate actively to student societies, which emphasize either the Turkish or Muslim identities. Therefore, it can be only possible to examine their narratives with respect to their own positions. Consequently, the term "shared cultural map"

is only referring to this domain. In the end, they share a common perspective on media by either criticizing the productions of media images or people who believe in it.

5.2.2 Critical views on media representations

In the interviews when the subject is more focused on the contents in Turkish and German media. There were general comments on the current situation of Turkish media in relation to Turkish politics such as "I heard that reporters are jailed" -*Sevgi* or "I know some journalists are afraid of writing critical staff in Turkey"- *Gülsün.* However, more direct comments can be seen when the subject was the German media. For example, a woman interviewee, who compares two medias when I asked her opinions on Turkish representation in German media, she explains:

> Always Erdogan, even in the smallest thing he did appears in the news in German media. I realized that events are written from many different perspectives in Turkish media. For example, on the one side there are the supporters of Erdogan, on the other side you can see the oppositional positions. However, in German media, you cannot see even a one single drop of a support, they all have the same perspective... In German media always talks about the lack of press freedom in Turkey, but, I think, there is *some* freedom in Turkish media but there is none in German. You cannot see in anywhere, of course they need to write in a same way to make us think the same! (Sevgi, 26 years old, Master students in Business Administration)

During the interview, she also mentions that the jailing of the reporters in Turkey as a form of struggle against terrorism. She does not connect the freedom of the press with the arrests. Therefore, she claims that Turkey has more "freedom" inside of the media in terms of its multi-vocal perspectives. Although it is not clear why she made such a comment, the way she connects the notion of the press freedom to the existence of oppositional position together might be reflecting her perception of the media in general. Thus, even the Turkish media which has more "freedom", has "some" degree of the freedom. The wording here could be understood that she does not think that there would be totally free press. Although it seems as a far-fetched analysis of her narrative, her tone and gestures when she says "some" gives a clue to interpret the further narratives with respect to perceptions of the media.

Besides the overall discomfort about German media's interest in Turkish domestic politics, some of the interviewees were accusing German media by being hypocrite. This accusation is not only in relation to the current Turkish politics but to overall perspective of the media. Such as, a woman from the Islamic student society explains:

> Problems are clear, increased racism, anti-Islamic discourses, AFD's increasing vote share etc. We don't see those problems in media, on the contrary, the language they use promoting those problems such as anti-Islam, for example, in the case of New Zeland bombing: if it is done by a Muslim he would have been directly a "terrorist" but when he is white? I really get angry with that kind of things. They show Turkey as the most dangerous place but when it comes to the protests or bombs in any European country you cannot see that. (Zehra, 26 years old, undergraduate student in Law)

Although she uses Turkey as an example to show what the problem in German media is, it might be possible to consider her perspective in the same line with the previous personal narratives on media. While Hakan calls the situation as distractions of German media, Sevgi thinks the one-sided perspective as the problem. Moreover, with different focuses Sevil and Zehra point out the language that is used in media in order to describe the problem of media ideology. Thus, they all try to describe a similar problem with different focus points. Despite of their different political perspectives, they all embrace a view that news productions are connected to another agenda. While they do not define what this agenda is clearly, the underlining similarity between their narratives on intentionally (ideologically) selected content of the media indicate their "shared cultural map" to interpret the media representations.

While many of the interviewees do not specify the reasons behind their distrustful attitudes towards the media, Sevil brings another dimension to the discussion of the news production in German media. After her claims about how German media is not (cannot be) objective due to already constructed images, she continues to exemplifying her perspective:

> German media always stays in the middle ground– "don't speak of the country's real problems – AFD, racism, neo-Nazis etc. AFD is not popular that much but Erdogan is the president at the end he got supported from many Turkish citizens who lives here, so he got more attention. But they don't aware

that they are making him more popular among Turks here. (Sevil, 28 years old, master graduated from English philology, works in a project)

Unlikely to other respondents, Sevil defines the media coverage of Erdogan as matter of Germany's domestic problem by considering the Turkish population in Germany. Moreover, even though it is in terms of amount of the media coverage, comparing AFD with Erdogan shows how she make sense the idea of news value. Besides she defines AFD as one of the real problems in Germany, its news value gives her chance to connect it to the news about Erdogan.

Another important point here is the way she refers to a group of people as "Turks" which will also be a key point to analyze their self-identifications. Obviously, she does not talk about herself as a part of that group, while many of the interviewees referring to representations of Turkish people in German media, they were also distancing themselves from those representations:

It is obvious that I am not a German from my black hair and eyes but I have no problem when it comes to speaking German, I even help my German friends in their bachelor theses, I was always the best student of my class for whole my life" (Fatma, 26 years old, master student in Teaching)

Although physical appearance still stands as an important factor to mention, it is no surprising that she emphasizes her success in her education life and German skills after she mentioned her Turkish "outlook". One possible reason can be given from an example of the representation of Turkish population: "63% of all children born to foreign parents do not speak a single word of German when they enter the first year of school. Also, four out five Turkish first graders have no knowledge of German, which severely hampers their ability to learn (Der Spiegel 2/24/02: Online)" (Mueller, 2006, p.430). Thus, their perfect level of German was a common topic among all of my interviewees while they were narrating their own positions, such as, "you cannot say I'm Turkish from my speaking of German" (Anıl, Cem)

Here, Fatma claims that she is not in 63% population that is represented in the news. Being successful as a way of a practice against to the media images is something comes up when she and many others talk about the issue. This emphasis on individual success, in a way, is showing what really bothers them such as over

generalization of Turkish people which are based on the "other type of Turkish people" instead of themselves.

Moreover, it is also possible to see the construction of those images not only through media but also underlined by governmental institutions. For example, "in the report for the Integrationsplan from the Bundesregierung 2007, Muslim communities are clearly shown as 'unintegrated'" (Yükleyen and Yurdakul, 2011, p.69). Therefore, media representations, perceptions and narratives on "other Turkish people" is hard to be separated from the stereotypes of Turkish people in general. The awareness of their very own existence and positions in the society, which are not corresponding to stereotypes that they defined, lead them to the criticize the generalized images among media and desire of to show their (successful/ achieved) positions. Thus, since narratives on stereotypes are highly related with the perspectives on media representations, it is almost impossible to make a concrete conclusion whether they are bothered by not-being-represented in media or not being-recognized as in the category of Turkish people.

Considering their opinions on the people who are directly affected by the media representations, it can be said that they re-produce the categories of "us" and "them" by distancing themselves. Thus, the way that they stereotype "German" as a person who believes in German media, is still related to analysis through its direct relation with media images and media representations of Turkish population in Germany. Dyer points out that "how we are seen determines in part how we are treated and how we treat others is based on how we see them. Such seeing comes from representation (Dyer, 2002,p.1) Consequently, the importance of the media cannot be neglected in terms of their self-identifications. Moreover, what they do as a practice either in a form of a de-stigmatization strategy or their self-positioning in transnational spaces will give us more clue about their self-identifications.

Therefore, to understand perceptions of media representations is itself a highly complex task because of those representations and how they are narrated have many different aspects. As it is claimed before, it might be impossible to separate how they narrate the other's perceptions on media representations and how they place themselves into the overall situation.

5.3 Identity Formations as ways of Transnational Practice

There might be still need for direct descriptions for their personal experiences in order to understand their unique positions that is underlined many times. When one interviewee gives an example from his experience:

> We are the most affected ones because of the polemics from both sides. On the one hand, we take to defend position when they call him (Erdogan) dictator, since he is the elected leader no matter what. On the other hand, when he called Germans as Nazis, you need to defend yourself that you are not thinking that way. (Anıl, former president of Islamic student club)

This difficult position that Anıl defines himself in, might be interpreted as feeling of responsibility that causes an in-between position between Turks and Germans. However, the sense of "being responsible" should be approached as a part of their self-identification. Thus, similar with earlier discussions about their distancing themselves from the people who are not "questioning", the feeling of responsibility is an active participation to social fields in a form "showing the otherwise".

5.3.1 Being a good example

Anıl might be a suitable example for showing how different layers of perceptions attached to media representations and his self-identification. While he starts with the statements of his observations on the changing attitudes of people according to media and his own standing toward to the situation, he gives more details when he describes his own practices against the perceptions of the media images:

> I can say that 80% of my friends are Turkish since I don't have to explain the reality behind the German media to them. However, we decided with a friend that "we should be a good example". I mean, we have interactions with Germans every day at our workplaces, we need to show that we are not that much of a different person, we are not the Turkish people who are shown in the media. (Anıl)

Therefore, "being a good example" for showing to "Germans" that there is another mode of being Turkish in oppose to the media images. As it is discussed previous chapter, while "Germans usually believe what media shows", his clear distinction of himself from those representations does not necessarily imply that he

totally disagrees with those representations. Rather, it shows that he is not the one whose represented in the media. The way he gives himself a mission as being a good example, can be seen in the form of an individual responsibility to change "Germans minds" instead of changing ideologically constructed media images in total. While, he describes his aim for embracing such an attitude:

> What I want is, I want to change the image of the Turkish in the minds of Germans. They've already being surprised when I told them I am a Turk, but they directly say that "but you're different" I want that to be changed. There is a saying in German that: "*Den Wald vor lauter Bäumen nicht sehen*" – means don't see the forest for trees – I am standing as an example, but they still have another image as Turk in their minds. (Anıl)

His individualized perspective on how to change the images also implies that his successful relations in his working life. While he emphasizes that most of his close friends are Turkish people, he turns his inevitable everyday interactions with Germans to an opportunity to change their minds. Even though he could not achieve his goal to change the constructed image of the Turkish in total, he shows himself as "a different" Turk to his colleagues, and in return, he is not treated accordingly to the already established image in people's minds.

Although his individual success in his personal relations in his workplace does not guarantee that he would not be treated as a 'typical' Turk in his further relations, he draws another typicality for his practices for daily interactions. Thus, the way they discuss the feeling of responsibility can be seen as one part of their identity productions. As one of the woman interviewees explains her perspective on media images and defines her own attitude towards them:

> I'm blaming both sides. What media showed is not always represent the reality, they overly generalize and show Turkish people/Foreigners negatively. On the other hand, it is not always wrong, there are bad examples, too. While media produce the negative images over Muslims most of the time, Muslim should see themselves as representing their religion in a foreign country. I know there are people like media represented but I get really angry when I see that generalized representations. I think that "Will they see me like this too?" this is where I try to show "I'm not like this, we are not like this" but you cannot do this by yelling, you need to show it. (Merve, 27 years old, undergraduate student in Industrial Engineering)

Here, one of the important points is the way she charges the other foreigners not only Turkish people but the people who have a responsibility of being a representative. As Schinkel argues, integration has become individualized issue also with respect to neoliberal ideologies. Thus, "if an individual is lacking in 'integration', the individualized responsibility for this is at once extended to all members of the 'group' to which that individual is considered to belong (Schinkel, 2018, p.4)

She continues with how this state of being a representative has stick to her personality by expressing that "I am always careful about my behavior. For example, I drive even more carefully when my mother is in the car with me. Since she wears headscarf, I don't want to lead people to say something like –Muslims don't respect to rules in traffic –etc." Therefore, a rough picture could be drawn here as while media representations have impacts on how the "other" people think about her, her practices in order to change the stereotypical views play a role in her self-identification processes.

On the one hand, her being against the generalizations of media could not be considered as a unique position to her or to all my interviews since a research on the young people and their media perceptions has revealed that "Young people also argued that, 'the media shouldn't be writing in a stereotypical way … such as generalizing and labelling all young people" (Gordon, 2018, p.181). On the other hand, as it is stated in Çelik's study on Turkish high school students "many spoke about the negative views concerning Turks in public debates in Germany and the reflections of these images onto their interactions in school (Çelik, 2015, p.1655). While his sample contains from high school students who does not have any German friends, he analyzes their identities as a form of "reactive ethnicity" in relation with their narratives and de-stigmatization strategies (2015, p.1655)

However, de-stigmatization strategies in Çelik's study reflected as attributing values to ethnic identities in order to struggle with the notion of inferiority (Lamont cited in Çelik, 2018, p.706) while with respect to narratives of the interviewees in this study, being a good example can be seen as another form de-stigmatization

strategy. Thus, they attempt to change the stereotypes of being Turkish by being another example of Turkish in their everyday interactions.

When we consider the 'inevitable' interactions that Anıl mentioned, and the way they burden themselves with personal responsibilities to change images through their interactions, their attitudes should not be approached only as a practice in order to arrange the personal relations. In other words, although there is an overall anger towards to generalized images on media, their desire to change these images might be approached as their active participation to the everyday discussions which are already part of transnational political sphere. Also, their being against the images does not imply that they deny the possible existence of the people who corresponds those images. Cem summarizes this issue:

> Almost all Germans believe in their media, especially if they encounter with a Turkish people who resembles the media image –they (those Turks) are disgrace of our Nation, yelling around, throwing their garbage outside – there are Turkish people like this. When a German person sees one example of those people, they confirm the image in the media and accept it. But when I started to spend time with them (Germans), I realize that I am breaking down their prejudices, their perspectives upon me and the way that they talk with me changes. What I want is to provide a second alternative image to their minds when they think of "Turkish people" (Cem, 24 years old, under-graduate student in System Engineering, works in SPD)

As it can be seen from his quote, Cem admits that media representations are not totally unreal. Even Cem himself calls some of the people as "disgrace". However, what he criticizes might be interpreted as the singularity of the image. In that sense, he is not only claiming himself as a Turkish person, but also claims that he is from the second type of the Turkish people. Moreover, he retells the characterizing of "German" as people who accept that media representations in order to justify his mission of providing an alternative image, in a way, he is showing that there would not be an alternative for Turkish image, if he does not engage with idea of proving this alternative image. As it is discussed in previous chapter.

Additionally, the notion of "being a good example" operates in both directions. On the one hand, they declare their mode of existence as being another example of Turks to the Germans. On the other hand, although they do not mention specific personal responsibilities when they talk about some Turks, even from their close

friendship groups, they are taking a critical attitude towards to people who have strict perspectives on Germans and do not have any contact outside of Turkish community. Most of the interviewees are proving their standings as a good example through the claims of the other Turks and how they are actually "un-integrated".

5.3.2 Being another type of Turk

While there are various narratives of the interviewees with respect to the integration debates, many of them are focused around the lack of an official definition of the term. Therefore, they conceive the term irrelevant or useless for their own experiences. On the other hand, as it is stated in some of the narratives, intentional isolation of "some" Turkish people seems equally problematic for the integration processes. Thus, interviewees neither totally opposed to idea of the "un-integrated" people in Turkish population nor they feel they are represented in media representations of Turkish population. Rather they have criticism towards generalizations in media, not-questioning the media representation, and prejudices that are produced through stereotypes in accordance with those media representations. Therefore, it would be totally inappropriate to approach their self-identifications as fixed entities that are only related to their ethnic backgrounds since cultural and cultural identity is considered a matter of "becoming" (Kaya, 2007, p.3). They are actively positioning and re-positioning themselves in accordance with the specific situations.

In that regard, one of the positioning might be seen in their placements of themselves as subjects of change who have impacts on the Germans that they encounter with. While they have the idea of being a good example on the one hand, they are expecting not to be considered as either of two types of Turks as Faruk describes:

> I don't know whether there is a period for my integration, when it has started and ended, I don't know really. But I realize that there are some Turks who only hang out with Turkish people, and they are extremely asocial. They don't finish school, open a *"dönerci"* or works in a döner place. They are living in a parallel world. But, at the same time, there are also Turks who are totally assimilated, could not speak any Turkish, don't have any Turkish identity, turned to be a German totally with a Turkish name. I see myself in between

(Faruk, 25 years old, graduate student in Computer Engineering, works in a German soft-ware company)

At the first glance, the way he defines himself in between those two might be seen as a middle ground position between two different identities rather than another mode of being. However, as studies on transnationalism asserted that second and third generations migrants cannot be considered as "gurbetçi"[13] while they have accommodated themselves in the transnational space bridging the two countries" (Kaya, 2007, p.8). Therefore, it would not be appropriate to use former concepts such as "gurbetci" or even "3rd generation migrants" in order to understand their positions and self-identifications. Faruk is a Turkish person in his own terms, he has a successful business life, he does not even consider integration as a problem in his life, he differs from both of Turkish groups that he defined.

"The really decisive difference, after all, is not the difference between the 'well integrated' and the 'less integrated'. It is the difference between those for whom integration is not an issue at all, and those for whom it is." (Schinkel, 2018, p.5) Therefore, according to Faruk, people who have integration problems are either isolated from the majority or assimilated to the major culture. However, he is a person who embrace his ethnic background as a person who is clearly "integrated" to the majority through his education and business life. Thus, it can be interpreted that he does not consider integration as an issue that needs to be solved for him while he does not refer any nationalist essentialist ideas while he states himself as Turkish.

Also as it is stated in the findings of a quantitative analysis on the integration levels of second and third generations, 86% of the second and third generations think that one should stand self-confidently by his or her own culture and origin – but only 67% of the first generation do so (Pollack *et al.*, 2016, p.10). Hence, if there is one thing that should be underlined for the integration debate (despite of the lack of definition of the term), it is not about being or accepted as "German" for sure. On

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[13] A word in Turkish used for the first-generation migrants who are considered as being home-sick

the contrary, all of the interviewees claimed themselves as Turkish and they strongly emphasis that. One of the interviewees explains:

> If you don't abandon your roots, whatever you do, you'll stay as minority. Alll we can do is wait. I mean you have to wait until you get your own position. Of course, meanwhile we have to communicate with Germans, we have to try break the prejudices but we will never become a German. I don't want to be a German anyway. I just want to live together but really together! And without any problems. (Cem)

Here, being Turkish should not be approached as in terms of classical nationalist category since he has clearly separated himself from the other Turks in a first place. The notion of "becoming" in their self-identifications ensures to avoid rigid definitions upon their identities. Moreover, Kaya suggests the term "processes of bricolage" in order to emphasize their identities as a process of "becoming" and approaches their identities as "the process of heterogenesis or the process of cultural bricolage" (Kaya, 2007, p.12). Therefore, it is important to analyze their own subjectivities from their narratives on their experiences and practices rather than in a part of ethnically bounded minority group. Thus, as Deniz Sert shows in her study, when respondents are better educated they are more undecided about their identities (2012, p.93). If we focus on their personal description of their identities, Kaan defines his positions as a bridge.

> Turks speak with Turks, Germans speak with Germans. There are less people interacting with each other on daily basis. We are functioning as bridges in that sense. (Kaan, 26 years old, MA graduated in Religion and English Teaching, working {intern} in high school)

Although his narrative is standing for his subjective perspective on his own identity, his usage of "we" as the subject signals a sense of belongingness to a group. However, this belonging seems to refer to a particular group of people who can actually be bridges. The usage of the term "bridge" here can be interpreted as connecting two different societies since they are the people who have connections to both sides.

In this regard, we can see that he himself uses the notion of two totally separate sides, even though he does not define himself as part of one side because of his connections to both sides. In order to avoid rigid interpretation, it is crucial to

approach even to the personal narratives as a fluid parts of complex transnational spaces. Therefore, it becomes more important to focus on their identities as they defined themselves as "bridges".

Within the consideration of the cultural identities appear in fluid forms in transnational spaces, which contain ever-changing social, economic and political interactions, it is possible to observe that the concept of the bridge is not only in a form of bounding so-called two different societies together but also subjects own positions to their futures in German society. What Cem refers as "waiting" also shows itself in the narratives of other interviewees.

For example, Sevgi who also tries to be "a good example" on her daily interactions, gives two examples from her two different work environments, when I asked her whether she has any examples from her everyday life in relation to media representations:

> When I was doing my internship at Mercedes, there were people discussing stuff about Turkey and they never asked me what I thought on those issues. I was there as a Turkish person. They could have asked me! But even if they would, I probably could not have said anything since I was an intern. How should I put it, I would afraid of their reactions because they were supposed to grade me about my internship, and it was very important for my career, so I did not want to conflict with their ideas upon Turkey and Turkish people. But for example, I had another job to cover my expanses during my studies, I was a waitress. There, I could tell my boss that "Turkish people are not always like that etc.", when he was making fun of the people by referring to a comedian (Referring to earlier conversation about a German comedian who makes jokes on Turkish people). I could speak because it wasn't an important job for me, it wasn't my actual career. (Sevgi, 26 years old, Master student in Business Administration)

Although her narrative also goes hand in hand with the statements on "not discussing with Germans", it gives more insight in which conditions discussions can be held or not. The important point here is the way that she refrains herself from the conversations in her internship in Mercedes and it can be read from the point of "waiting" that Cem asserted. The meaning of waiting in her narrative is that she could act otherwise if she had not had to finish her internship successfully and if that internship was not one of the important steps in her career path. She might have another practice afterwards. Therefore, the practice of waiting should not be conceived as forbearing in order to things to get passed. It is an active decision

which they make as another positioning in relation with their identities like their mission of a "being a good example". Yet, they wait until they have a certain position in their career in which they are no longer depending on others. That is, until they have strengthened positions in their careers as well as in society.

When I asked what will happen after the waiting ends, Kaan defines what he is waiting for which is very much related with how he positions himself in the society, consequently, his self-identification:

> For example, I have supervisors in the school now, they observe my classes and I know what they wanted to see and order my way of teaching accordingly. But after my internship is over, I will arrange my classes in my own style. (Kaan, 26 years old, intern teacher in Gymnasium)

This quote becomes more meaningful in terms of what could have been changed with altering the teaching styles, with an example from Gülsün's explanation:

> For example, when we were having religion classes in high school, there were verses from all holy books. I remember that our teacher wrote on the board a verse from Quran. It was something about "killing the non-Muslims", my friends were making jokes about me killing them. But now, I know Quran, so I can bring another verse from Quran that states "don't harm even the smallest living beings". I can do that in my classes, I can show a bigger picture. (Gülsün, English and Religion Teacher at a Gymnasium)

As a shared thought among the interviewees which is also stated in a public report of SVR "more immigrants should be hired as teachers, public servants, police officers and judges and the German Bundestag (the national parliament) should have more parliamentary representatives with a migration background." (SVR, 2014, p.2) Consequently, in order to find themselves a place in many different positions in society, they firstly choose to be a good example to show that they do not belong to the group that is represented in media and stereotyped according to those representations.

Secondly, they aim at being successful at their educational and professional lives, having everyday interactions with Germans and changing the perceptions on themselves. Thus, they might function as bridges between isolated Turkish communities and prejudiced Germans. However, more

importantly, they could be seen as bridges between the present day and their future positions in the society.

All in all, through ever changing dynamic relations in transnational spaces, their experiences of today's changing structures have made possible for them to imagine another future, in which they will achieve higher autonomous positions in their professions. Apart from the possibility of realization of such an imagination in the future, the very existence of these imaginations drives their actions, practices and self-identification. Therefore, they are "waiting" for their future imaginations, while becoming "bridges" for their future goals.

6. CONCLUSION

Without having a purpose of testing hypothesis, this study explains the narratives of the interviewees' political experiences in regards to complex relations of transnational political spaces. While this study asks the questions of how do Turkish young adults with higher education in Germany narrate their political experiences and how do they discuss the transnational politics and perceive political representations. The focus of analysis is based on their personal narratives on related subjects. Thus, this study uses the method of narrative analysis in order to examine the personal political experiences from interviewees' narratives of everyday discussions on politics.

I conducted 14 narrative interviews with Turkish young adults with higher education, whom I accessed through student societies in the university. In order to analyze the narratives, I produced codes according to transcriptions of the interviewees. Categorizing the manually produced codes helped me to find repeated subjects and key themes, which were taken as bases for the subchapters for the analysis part.

With respect to theoretical discussions on transnational political spaces, the ways that the interviewees discuss Turkish politics in Germany should be considered as a form of transnational political activity, since they are already the

transnational actors by being born and raised in Germany with Turkish backgrounds. Therefore, how they narrate their perspectives on Turkish politics cannot be thought outside of the German context which stands as a transnational space of public discourses, political structures and everyday interactions. While their narratives on politics were highly related with media representations of political actors and their experiences of stigmatizations and stereotypes, it is also crucial to mention how they discuss media representations and their effects in general, and their personal experiences of those representations. Lastly, their definitions of their self-identities are also connected with their everyday actions and practices held in the transnational space. Thus, not only how they discuss politics is a form of transnational political activity, but also how they perceive media images and produce their self- identities should be considered within the scope of the transnational political space.

In addition to this study's contribution to the lack in the existing literature, for the further studies there might be a need of a comparative analysis in order to examine whether the changes in Turkish or German politics affect the ways Turkish young adults perceive and narrate their experiences. Since this study focuses on the personal narratives of the political experiences on current conditions of the interviewees, it does not show the possible historical changes. Therefore, it would be valuable to elaborate the personal narratives directly in relation with the changes in politics.

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APPENDIX A

Example for Interview questions

Warm up questions

1. Can you introduce yourself a little bit?

    -born place, age, major in university, family background etc.

2. I see that you speak Turkish very well, where did you learn it? [14]

3. Which language do you feel the most comfortable?

4. How often do you visit to Turkey?

    -place of stay, days, activities, impressions.

5. Do you have regular connections with Turkey?

Questions in relation with Turkish and German media

6. Are you interested in Turkish media?

    -news, TV series, football matches

    -Which channels, through what? (TV/Internet/social media)

7. Do you follow the news about Turkey?

    - From where?

8. What are the things that got your attention?

9. What do you think about representation of Turkey in Germany?

    -What do you mean by biased? (this is usually what comes up)

10. Could you try to describe the Turkish population that is shown in German media? [15]

    -how they deal with it if it is problematic for them, and how they differentiate themselves if they start to "refer" those people.

Questions about political perspectives

11. Are you a member of any organization?

    -political party, NGO or mosque organizations, student clubs[16]

11.1 What kind of activities are you doing in there?

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[14] I realize in my early interactions during meetings and events, some people are very insecure about their Turkish level, in some cases hearing this sentence relax them to not to worry about the grammar, and perfect sentences.

[15] This is usually where people talk about stereotypes, prejudices and closed communities

[16] According to answer, our conversation focuses on either German politics or Turkish politics and why they interested in that one.

11.2 How did you decide to join that organization?

    -motivations, changes, social environments

12. Are you participating politics in Turkey?[17]

13. What kind of things are you taking into consideration during election periods?

    -both for elections in Germany and Turkey

Questions about transnational politics

14. Have you observed any changed between Turkish and German politics?[18]
    -what and when are they, why

15. Do you talk about politics in a casual conversation?

    -on what and with whom, and how they reflect the political events

16. Do you think conflicts in politics somehow affecting your everyday relations?

17. What do you think about the recent regulations of laws about citizens abroad by Turkish government?

    -perspectives on voting and voters, blue card, YTB

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[17] Usually, goes with what kind of passport they have.
[18] Most of the time they talked about tension between two countries