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Transnational social spaces
out of international migration:
evolution, significance and future prospects

From international migration to transnational social spaces?

FOR THE VIEWERS of the Turkish government channel TRT int
on German cable TV it is obvious that some children of Turkish
immigrants in Germany have embarked upon successful musical
careers in both Turkey and Germany. For example, during the summer
of 1995, the German-based and now disbanded heavily Turkish rap
group *Cartel* replaced Michael Jackson from being number 1 in the
Turkish charts. Also, the nightly news on German TV usually feature
reports on the widely known Kurdish political-military
organization—the *Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan* (PKK, Kurdistan Work-
ers' Party). The PKK not only operates in Turkey but also tries to
influence German politicians to exert pressure on its Turkish counter-
part. Moreover, TV shows for Turkey are often produced in Germany
and vice versa. For example, the state television engineers about a
quarter of its productions for viewers of TRT int in Germany. The
growing presence of Islamic groups is another example of ties that
criss-cross nation-state borders. Not being allowed a formal status in the
1970s and 1980s in Turkey, these organizations have grown and flour-
ished in Germany. Moreover, it has been obvious that the remittances of
Turkish migrants have been complemented by a flow of goods and
information in the other direction. Remittances are now being gradually
replaced by capital flows such as direct investments of the children of
Turkish migrants who engage in textile production in Turkey and
market their products in Germany. Similar observations can be made for
many other cases of sending-destination linkages and ties, such as from
the Caribbean islands to the United States (Pessar 1997), or from
Morocco to France.

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All these examples point toward a circular flow of persons, goods, information and symbols that has been triggered in the course of international labor migration and refugee flows.

Transnational spaces carry important implications for the adaptation of immigrants and refugees in the receiving nation-states. Up until now, theoretical approaches have discerned two main trajectories available to newcomers: assimilation and ethnic pluralism. Transnational social spaces enlarge the range of possibilities.

We can differentiate three models of immigrant adaptation in distinct dimensions of immigrant insertion, ranging from economic over political to cultural. The first model, assimilation, aptly applies to the U.S.-American situation from World War One until the end of World War Two, because there was a long period of extremely low immigration, during which assimilationist tendencies could work. Without necessarily adhering to the stage-conception of these models—for example, acculturation as a necessary first step towards social, economic and civic integration—, we could take some of their main tenets to describe this pattern: in the socio-economic realm it means that immigrants and refugees adapt to the prevailing occupational status, income levels, and residential patterns shown by the native population. In the political realm we expect immigrants or, later, their descendants to acquire the citizenship of the country of settlement and show loyalty, such as in case of war. Cultural assimilation, especially prevalent among the second generation, can then be seen to exemplify the tendency towards an eventual full melting with and in the receiving country—not necessarily excluding a mutual exchange of norms, values and behavioral patterns between the immigrant and native groups.

Conceptually, ethnic pluralism constitutes a second main trajectory of insertion. The formation of ethnic enclaves and ethnic niches corresponds to this model: enclaves entail separate economies based on labor, capital and even consumers in territorially-bounded ethnic communities, and niches refer to a concentration of self-employed immigrants in specific industries. A specific variant of niche and enclave patterns are middleman minorities, consisting of groups specializing in trade and concentrating in the petite bourgeoisie—with a high degree of hostility directed towards them, for example, Chinese migrants in 19th century America (Bonacich 1979). In the political sphere the claim towards political autonomy could even go as far as efforts to secede, as demanded by some African-American groups during the 1930s who strove to establish a black state in the U.S.-American South. Cultural retention essentially means that migrants transfer collective identities

from the sending to the receiving country and that these identities develop in relative isolation from the receiving context. Extreme examples would include Hutterite settlers from Russia who settled in sparsely populated regions of the USA and Canada.

Here, the claim is that these two models should be complemented by a third one—the border-crossing expansion of social space. This discussion focuses on how transnational social spaces have evolved, under what circumstances and within what mechanisms, and draws some preliminary implications for immigrant adaptation.

Transnational social spaces develop in two stages. In a first phase they are a by-product of international migration and seem to be basically limited to the first generation of migrants. Researchers have long recognized that migration is not simply a transfer from one place to another with few social and material links. Rather, migration usually generates continual exchanges between geographically distant communities and migrants do not automatically sever their ties to the sending countries (for many, see Werbner 1990: 3). As a matter of fact, migration flows are characterized by migrant networks. First, only by the creation and reproduction of migrant networks do migration flows turn into chain migration and thus become mass phenomena. Second, migrant networks, interacting with groups and institutions in the areas of destination and origin, form the raw material for the formation of new ethnic or religious communities. Migrant communities in the receiving country can best be described from a structural perspective as a network of networks and organizations. In turn, international migrations are often also characterized by ongoing processes of recurrent viz. cyclical or seasonal nature, where migrants regularly go home for varying periods each year, or return migration. After all, it has long been a truism that every migration stream breeds a counterstream. In a second phase—the emphasis of this analysis—transnational social spaces go beyond the strictly migratory chains of the first generation of migrants and develop a life of their own.

The development of transnational social spaces offers a unique opportunity to look into the formation of networks, groups and organizations that span at least two nation-states. Some classics have argued that *propinquity*—among other factors, such as a shared common interest and a common language—is conducive to the formation of groups. For example, English trade unions first organized along patterns such as location, for example cities. Later, trade replaced this focus as an organizing principle, for example among carpenters and other crafts (Simmel 1955: 128-130). However, international migrants living in transna-

tional social spaces form networks, groups and 'communities without propinquity' (Webber 1963). One of the questions is by what principles propinquity is supplemented. Indeed, physical location and geographical distance are not the only grid upon which political collective action, shared culture and economic cooperation can be mapped.

First, this discussion clarifies basic concepts, such as transnational social space and the main resources involved, such as various forms of social capital inherent in social and symbolic ties—exchange-based obligations, the norm of reciprocity, solidarity, information and control. Second, this analysis outlines some causal macro-factors that may have opened up opportunities for migrants to build transnational spaces to a greater extent than before World War Two. Third, a few forays into the empirical realm serve to sketch the lineaments of the German-Turkish transnational social spaces, focusing on the German and somewhat neglecting the Turkish end: the emergence of Turkish niche businesses in Germany and transnational businesses spanning both countries; efforts of some Kurdish organizations to establish a homeland called 'Kurdistan'; and collective identity among second-generation German-Turks in the religious realm, involving Islamic thought and organizations, but also secular forms of everyday culture. We conclude with a discussion of factors that may limit the future growth of transnational social spaces.

Towards a definition and a typology of transnational social spaces

The examples mentioned above attest to the ability of movers to creatively pattern their personal and collective experience. We need to develop concepts that can be applied not only in either the sending or the receiving regions but also refer to emerging transnational linkages, such as those between Algeria-France, India-United Kingdom, Turkey-Germany and Mexico-Caribbean-USA (cf. Basch *et al.* 1994: 8 and Pries 1996). *Transnational social spaces* are combinations of social and symbolic ties, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that can be found in at least two geographically and internationally distinct places. These spaces denote dynamic social processes, not static notions of ties and positions. Cultural, political and economic processes in transnational social spaces involve the accumulation, use and effects of various sorts of capital, their volume and convertibility: economic capital, human capital, such as educational credentials, skills and know-how, and social capital, mainly resources inherent in or

transmitted through social and symbolic ties. The reality of transnational social spaces indicates, first, that migration and re-migration may not be definite, irrevocable and irreversible decisions—transnational lives in themselves may become a strategy of survival and betterment. Second, even those migrants and refugees who have settled for a considerable time outside the original sending country, frequently entertain strong transnational links.

The transnational social spaces inhabited by immigrants and refugees and immobile residents in migration systems thus supplement the international space of sovereign nation-states. Transnational social spaces are constituted by the various forms of resources or capital of spatially mobile and immobile persons, on the one hand, and the regulations imposed by nation-states and various other opportunities and constraints, on the other; for example, state-controlled immigration and refugee policies, and institutions in ethnic communities. Transnational social spaces are characterized by *triadic relationships* between groups and institutions in the host state, the sending state (sometimes viewed as an external homeland) and the minority group—migrants and/or refugee groups, or ethnic minorities.

There is a marked difference between the concepts of *globalization* and transnational social spaces viz. transnationalization: transnationalization overlaps with globalization but typically has a more limited purview. Whereas global processes are largely decentered from specific nation-state territories and take place in a world context, transnational processes are anchored in and span two or more nation-states, involving actors from the spheres of both state and civil society (Meyers 1979: 311-27). Also, transnationalization differs from *denationalization*. The latter term has denoted the fact that the stateless and many minorities (in post-WWI Europe) had no recourse to governments to represent and protect them (Arendt 1973: 269).

Space here not only refers to physical features, but also to larger opportunity structures, the social life and the subjective images, values and meanings that the specific and limited place represents to migrants. Space thus differs from *place* in that it encompasses or spans various territorial locations (see also Malmberg 1997). On a micro-level, this has to be seen in conjunction with the use of time to form particular time-space strategies of potential migrants: it is evident that international mobility depends very much on the stage of persons in the life-course and the projects associated, for example, establishing a family. The context of migration is constituted by the potential migrants themselves in interacting with significant others, for example in kinship groups.

Larger structural factors such as economic and political opportunities constitute a more remote, albeit an enabling and constraining context in which individuals, collectives and networks operate (Faist 1997).

One set of resources in transnational social spaces has to be explained in more detail: various forms of social capital embedded in social and symbolic ties. *Social ties* are a continuing series of inter-personal trans-actions to which participants attach shared interests, obligations, expec-tations and norms. *Symbolic ties* are a continuing series of transactions, both face-to-face and indirect, to which participants match shared meanings, memories, future expectations and symbols. Symbolic ties often go beyond face-to-face relations, involving members of the same religious belief, language, ethnicity or nationality.

Social capital are those resources inherent in patterned social and symbolic ties that allow individuals to cooperate in networks, groups and organizations. Social capital resources function as mechanisms that enhance cooperation, or by their absence, discourage it. It also serves to connect individuals to networks and organizations through affiliations. We can differentiate the following forms of social capital resources:

1) *Reciprocity as a pattern of social exchange*: mutual obligations and expectations of the actors, associated with specific social ties and based on exchanges and services rendered in the past (Coleman 1990: 306-9). These obligations and expectations can be an outcome of instrumental activity, for example, the tit-for-tat principle.

2) *Reciprocity as a social norm*: what one party receives from the other requires some return (Gouldner 1960: 160).

3) *Solidarity* with others in a group who share similar positions (Portes 1995: 16). It is an expressive form of social transaction. The most important form of solidarity is 'collective representations' (Durkheim 1965: 471). These are shared ideas, beliefs, evaluations and symbols. Collective representations can be expressed in some sort of collective identity—we-feeling or we-consciousness—and refers to a social unit of action. In its ideal-typical form these are cultural com-munities, such as families, ethnic groups, religious parishes, congrega-tions, communities and nations. Solidarity can also be institutionalized: citizenship, for example, is an institutionalized form of ties between a citizen and a state, often in short supply among migrant newcomers.

There are three main benefits to be derived from social capital: in general, it helps members of networks or groups to get access to more *economic, human and social capital*. This crucially depends on the num-ber of persons in a network or collective which are prepared or obliged to help you when called upon to do so, i.e., the number of social and sym-

bolic ties available (Bourdieu 1983: 190-95). Also, *information* is a benefit of social capital. In general, the information benefits of a large, diverse network tend to be higher than the information benefits of a small and socially homogeneous network. Moreover, the higher the stock of social capital, the more *control* can be exerted, monitoring and sanctioning other actors. The basic idea is that the extent matters to which any particular person is an important link in the indirect social ties to others in controlling the flow of information, authority, power, and other resources.

Transactions based on exchange, the norm of reciprocity and solidarity have desirable and undesirable effects. They can restrict the degrees of freedom of individuals involved in significant ways. In addition, while the norm of reciprocity tends to enhance cooperation, it can also lead to revenge and retaliation. And solidarity may not only help to pool energies among kinship members when building a business, but can also encourage envy and stifle entrepreneurship when the profits are constantly split instead of also establishing funds for reinvestment.

Resources that make up social capital have two important characteristics: first, it is very hard to transfer them from one country to another, they are primarily *local assets*. Thus, in addition to political regulations of international migration, this is one of the main causes for the relatively low, albeit increasing rates of international mobility. However, if transnational networks and chain migration emerge in the course of migration, the transferability of ties carrying obligations, reciprocity, solidarity, information and control increases. Second, these various forms of social capital are crucial mechanisms for applying other forms of capital. They provide *transmission belts* that bridge collectives and networks in separate nation-states. Resources inherent in social and symbolic ties are necessary to mobilize other forms of capital, especially among those short of economic capital. And often, immigrants need social ties to established immigrants or brokers to find work. And when transnational social spaces emerge out of migratory flows, even the return to the sending country may not be permanent, as many older migrants temporarily migrate again in the opposite direction in order to secure their medical needs in the countries in which they once worked and some of their children or other kin still live. These forms of recurrent migration or transmigration would not be possible without intra-kinship obligations and reciprocity. Thus, mechanisms such as reciprocity and solidarity are crucial in the formation of circular flow of goods and persons between countries and fulfill a contingent bridging function.

What needs to be described is the formation of transnational social spaces, ranging from rather short-lived exchange relationships to long-lived transnational communities. There are at least three forms of transnational social spaces that need to be distinguished: transnational exchange, reciprocity and solidarity within kinship and friendship systems, transnational circuits, and transnational communities.

Kinship- and community-based transnational exchange, reciprocity and solidarity are typical for many first-generation labor migrants and refugees. Transnational exchange becomes very visible in the manifold export-import businesses established by immigrants in the receiving countries, so as to satisfy typical needs of immigrants communities for mother tongue videos, food, clothing and other supplies. The establishment of enclave businesses and niche economies, homeland-oriented voluntary associations, the transplant of homeland political organizations, and the emergence of religious congregations are regular features of these processes. Reciprocity can be seen, for example, in remitters sending back money to members of his or her kinship group in the country of origin; especially in those cases where territorial exit is part of a strategy including economic survival or betterment among migrants and those who stay behind— migration as a sort of informal risk insurance. In those cases migrants remit money to those who run household affairs in the sending place. Often, seasonal, recurrent and eventual return migration are part of these strategies. Finally, transnational solidarity can be observed when migrants support village development projects in their home countries.

Transnational circuits are characterized by a constant circulation of goods, people, and information transversing the borders of sending and receiving states (Rouse 1991). For example, by the end of the 1980s, about half of all adult Mexicans were related to someone living in the United States. Transnational circuits seem to be most developed in cases of circular international migration. They also typically develop in a context in which we find often rather successful socio-economic adaptation to the conditions in the receiving country, or sucessful re-integration in the sending country. Sometimes, we see the so-called second-and-plus-generations involved in business activities in the former sending country of their parents or grand-parents. The overseas Chinese family businesses in South-East Asia and Indians in East Central Africa are notable cases in point. What is crucial is that these entrepreneurs and their dependants are firmly rooted in either the former sending or the former receiving country and use it as a sort of base from

which to carry out entrepreneurial activities in others. Economic, po-
litical or cultural entrepreneurs use insider advantages such as knowledge
of the language, knowing friends and acquaintances abroad to establish a
foothold.

Transnational communities characterize situations in which international
movers and stayers are connected by dense and strong social and sym-
bolic ties over time and across space to patterns of networks and circuits
in two countries. Communities [that is, *Gemeinschaft*] 'encompasses all
forms of relationship which are characterized by a high degree of per-
sonal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion
and continuity in time' (Nisbet 1966: 47). For transnational commu-
nities to emerge, reciprocity and solidarity need to reach beyond narrow
kinship systems. Such communities without propinquity, in which
community and spatial proximity are de-coupled, do not necessarily
require individual persons living in two worlds simultaneously or
between cultures in a total 'global village' of de-territorialized space.
Living in two places simultaneously is true of only very few migrants,
such as hypermobile Chinese businessmen in North America in the late
20th century. This is an effect of the growing interdependence of the
U.S. economy with the Chinese Pacific economies of Taiwan, Hong
Kong, Singapore and China. For example, these astronauts establish a
business in (say) Singapore, yet locate their families in Los Angeles,
New York or Toronto to maximize educational opportunities for their
children or as a safe heaven in the event of political instabilitiy. The
astronauts constantly move between the two places (Cohen 1997: 93).
What is required, however, is that communities without propinquity
link through exchange, reciprocity and solidarity to achieve a high
degree of social cohesion, and a common repertoire of symbolic and
collective representations.

Transnational communities can emerge on different levels of aggre-
gation. The most fundamental are village communities in sending and
receiving countries that connect through extensive forms of solidarity
over longer periods of time. Frequently, investment of those abroad or
of returnees in private and public projects exemplifies this kind of sup-
port. Transnational communities can also be of a larger kind, primarily
held together by symbolic ties of common ethnicity or even nationhood.
For example, refugees who have pursued nation-building or political
opposition projects in their home countries typically try to develop and
entertain dense transnational ties.

Transnational communities are characterized by a continuous involvement in a triadic relationship between themselves, the host country and the original homeland. They can evoke solidarities that are inconsistent with and sometimes even contradictory to the allegiances demanded by the territorial nation-states involved. Especially in cases of war between host and sending nation-states, the charge of dual loyalty and disloyalty has arisen (Sheffer 1986: 8). This is most often the case with *diasporas*. History is full of examples for diasporas. The Jewish experience usually first comes to mind as a prototype for diaspora formation; and could be extended to include African-Americans, Armenians and Palestinians. In diasporas, a group has suffered some kind of traumatic event which leads to the dispersal of its members, and there is a vision and remembrance of a lost or an imagined homeland still to be established, often accompanied by a refusal of the receiving society to fully recognize the cultural distinctiveness of the immigrants. Diasporas frequently include a full cross-section of community members who are dispersed to many diverse regions of the world (for a fuller list of characteristics, see Safran 1991). It is not useful to apply the term diaspora to settlers and labor migrants because they did not experience traumatic experiences and it cannot be said that most of the members of these groups yearn to return to their lost homeland.

Diasporas can only be called transnational communities if the members also develop some significant social and symbolic ties to the receiving country (Saint-Blancat 1995: 10). If they do not, we can speak of *exile*. For instance, the political exilee is a person who yearns to return to his home country after persecution and flight. Some temporary labor migrants with a clear intention to return home can also be regarded as exilees. Exilee communities are single-mindedly drawn to the former homeland eventhough the intentions, especially among labor migrants, may change. This goal is so overriding that no substantial ties to the new and supposedly temporary country of settlement develop.

To prosper, diasporas do not necessarily need concrete social ties. It is possible that the memory of a homeland manifests itself primarily in symbolic ties. This has been the case for the Jewish diaspora for centuries after the destruction of the Second Temple. More than a thousand years later, some authors have characterized the relationship of diasporic Jews with those in Israel as *mishpachah*, literally meaning family (Jacobson 1995: 236). The difference between diasporas and other forms of transnational communities becomes clear when we compare the Jewish diaspora before the establishment of the state of Israel with global communities such as Chinese entrepreneurs and traders in many

countries of Southeast Asia, Africa, and the two Americas. Jews experienced dispersal in a traumatic fashion, and—at a time when assimilation seemed to be inevitable in many European countries—the horrors of the Holocaust rekindled their consciousness of kind. The Chinese went abroad as settlers, and later experienced xenophobia. The vision of the Chinese was, at first, much less oriented towards the ancestral homeland, and lacked components of exile. It was only later that Chinese in Southeast Asia became united by discrimination. In addition, they gained increasing awareness of unity as a consequence of the revolution against Manchu rule and the resistance to the Japanese invasion of their homeland. The still later rise of nationalism throughout Southeast Asia and the attacks against their economic position by the longer-established ethnic groups further intensified their collective identity of being Chinese abroad.

Factors contributing to the formation of transnational social spaces

One macro-structural trend may have accelerated to the emergence of transnational social spaces. The technological breakthrough in *long-distance communication and travel* occurred in the 19th century. New and improved methods of communication and travel, such as transoceanic steamship passages and telegraph communication, set the necessary but not sufficient stage for the development of transnational ties. The ongoing communication and transport revolution has considerably decreased costs for bridging long geographical distances. This trend sharply accelerated after World War Two. In sum, a variety of structural and technological developments has liberated communities from the confines of territorially restricted neighborhoods.

We have to distinguish processes of transnationalization in the economic sphere, on the one hand, and in the political and cultural realm, on the other. For economic transnational spaces to develop, transnational circuits plus beneficial conditions to the investment of economic capital in the original sending country, such as lower production costs, may suffice. Although individual transnational entrepreneurs obviously benefit from social and symbolic ties between sending and receiving countries—for example, ties through friends and kinship systems—, economic activities do not need to be strongly embedded in these systems over extended periods of time through solidarity. Exchange- and reciprocity-based resources are sufficient.

This situation is quite different from the formation of transnational communities built around political or religious projects. Here, the main catalysts are, first, strong ties of migrants and refugees to the sending country and strong ties of non-migrants to significant others in the receiving country over an extended period of time. Social ties and symbolic ties need to flourish— social connections, language, religion and cultural norms. Second, these ties and corresponding resources are not only embedded in migration flows but in other linkages as well, such as trade and mass communications. Third, juridical and political regulations, such as domestic and international regimes, may allow, to varying degrees, for the movement of people and tolerate or repress political and religious activities of immigrants and refugees in either sending and receiving countries. In short, *ceteris paribus*, the stronger the manifold social and symbolic ties of migrants and refugees between the two or more areas, the more numerous linkages other than migration and the more favorable the conditions for public political and cultural activities in the original receiving country, the more propitious the conditions for the emergence of transnational spaces in the form of transnational communities.

We now need to specify some of the *ceteris paribus* conditions *within* the sending and receiving nation-states. First, the factor most conducive to transnationalization of politics and culture in the sending countries has been contentious minority politics relating to ethnicity and religion, often associated with the building of fledgling nation-states. These sending country conflicts tend to be exported to the receiving countries. Examples abound, ranging from Indian Sikhs in Great Britain, Canada and the United States to Kurds in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden. In the host country, conflict import is more likely, the more liberal or tolerant the political regime, thus allowing for the mobilization of transmigrant or transrefugee resources.

Second, in the receiving context, serious obstacles to socio-economic integration and a denial of acculturation or cultural recognition are extremely conducive to the transnationalization of political and cultural activities. The two difficulties, economic and cultural, may go hand in hand, or may proceed separately. For example, some groups may be denied opportunities for cultural assimilation or recognition while they are well-integrated socio-economically. This used to be true for Chinese in the white settler colonies, until the 1940s. In other cases, partial socio-economic exclusion and a perception on the part of substantial groups among the newcomers that their cultural recognition is blocked, can go hand in hand, as the examples of some labor migrant groups in

Western Europe suggest; for example, Surinamese in the Netherlands or Caribbeans in the United Kingdom.

Third, there must be a continuous and bi-directional exchange of goods, information and persons between the two or more countries involved. A necessary prerequisite for international migration to occur in the first place are prior exchanges in the economic (e.g., foreign investments), political (e.g., military cooperation or domination), or cultural (e.g., colonial education systems) dimensions. This is why activities in transnational social spaces do not create such transnational linkages *ex nihilo*, but usually reinforce preexisting bonds.

Economic transnationalization: entrepreneurs moving from the ethnic niche to transnational businesses

In the German-Turkish case we find that intra-kinship exchange, reciprocity and solidarity have been complemented at later stages by partial transnational circuits that include not only families, but also larger groups. Three forms of economic transnationalization developed in this sequence: first, remittances of labor migrants from Germany to Turkey; second, the inception and growth of niche businesses in Germany; and third, emergent transnational production, distribution and sale.

The first period from the early 1960s until the 1980s was characterized mainly by labor migrant remitters who transferred money to Turkey, and returning migrants who invested in housing and consumer products. Mostly, migrants and those who stayed behind built transnational transactions on mutual obligations and reciprocity. In the 1980s and 1990s, the share of remittances from Germany to Turkey as a percentage of foreign trade has decreased, probably due to family reunification; partly, remittances from the Gulf states compensated for this decline. Nonetheless, if migrants' participation in the tourist and housing industries and their investments in other sectors are taken together with family remittances, international migrants have become the single most important source of hard currency in Turkey.

The second period has been characterized by higher scales of economic activities in Germany such as investments in housing and the growing importance of a thriving so-called ethnic economy in Germany. The number of Turkish self-employed in Germany tripled from 1983 until 1992, from about 10,000 to 35,000. In Germany about 8% of all immigrants are self-employed; with Turkish immigrants coming closer

to the higher rates among Greeks and Italians. This overall rate of immigrant self-employment corresponds to the rate of self-employment among German citizens (Bericht der Beauftragten 1994: II.2.10). Typical activities of Turkish migrants have included grocery shops, craftspersons, travel agencies, and restaurants.

About 65% of all these companies are family-owned and employ above all the owner and kinship members. Thus, new labor for businesses, serving an immigrant and a small but growing German clientele, has often come from the respective kinship group in Turkey (Goldberg 1992). Therefore, many Turkish companies in Germany use reciprocity that emphasizes kinship groups as a recruiting pool. Kinship-migration and marriage migration have enabled Turkish entrepreneurs in Germany to tap this pool of cheap and docile labor since the recruitment stop in 1973. Kinship-based reciprocity is often accompanied by a well-known noir side: excessive social control of new labor from Turkey. For example, young women from remote relatives in Turkey are bound informally to work for a fixed time in Germany with the shopowner until they are free to look for other employment.

More recently, a third pattern has emerged, from the niche to transnational coordination of business activities. Some Turkish entrepreneurs have entered fields in which they found themselves competing with German businesses, such as software development and textile production (ATIAD 1996). Especially in the latter sector, production costs are much lower in Turkey than in Germany. This induced textile companies to move production to Turkey, while retaining their sales and distribution centers in Germany. A small group of Turkish entrepreneurs based in Germany can exploit insider advantages, eased by information flowing through transnational networks: they use language skills, social and symbolic ties to friends and acquaintances in Turkey in order to gain a foothold in a transnational market. Especially exchange-based and mutual obligations in networks are of utmost importance because they help to lower transaction costs. For example, informal give-and-take arrangements cover the dealings with German and Turkish authorities.

It certainly is important to emphasize that the majority of migrants have remained proletarians or self-employed shopkeepers, or are being increasingly excluded from the labor market on the German side (Faist 1995). Yet small-scale export-import businesses and mid-sized textile firms both benefit from the same set of innovations in communications and transport that underlie larger-scale industrial relocations. Put more broadly, these grassroots economic initiatives do not arise in opposition

to more general trends of transnational relocation of production and trade, but are partly driven by them (Portes 1996).

A case study helps to illustrate the evolution of transnational spaces involving smaller economic actors riding the crest of transnationalization (1). In the case of international migrants from a small Anatolian village, Alihan, there was frequent contact between and among the men who lived and worked abroad in the 1970s. They also entertained links to family members still living in Turkey. These ties extended to Turkish migrants from other regions, and Turkish male clubs and associations all over Europe. These wide networks of communication transferred messages about events in Europe and happenings in the home village. By contrast, the international migrants from Yeniköy, a village in the same region, concentrated their transactions exclusively on their own group. Once abroad, they forged few new ties to men from other regions and villages.

Reciprocity and solidarity among Alihan men enabled them to be very ingenious in the economic realm. They could be seen to be much more heavily involved in import-export business than Yeniköy men. For the Alihan men, international migration was indeed a part of a household survival and improvement strategy that reached beyond the kinship to the realm of community. As a by-product, most families in the village could improve their living standard significantly, measured by Turkish standards. Virtually all those who returned to Turkey turned to self-employment and settled outside Alihan—mostly in Konya, the provincial capital. Some of the returnees not only invested in joint projects with other Alihan returnees but also with persons from other parts of Turkey. Alihan men often entered into joint-ownership projects with Turks outside their village, whereas the Yeniköy men made no attempts to make investments together with anyone outside their own group. Yeniköy migrants mostly returned to their village and tried to fit savings and investments into the local economic structure of the village. One of the reasons for their higher rate of return to the sending village was that they had initially faced better economic opportunities at home than their Alihan counterparts.

The key to understanding these differences among these two village communities is to be found in the ability to mobilize reciprocity and solidarity, and the benefits so derived, information and social control. The migrants in Alihan who followed the first pioneer migrants, could

(1) The following account is based on a cautious secondary analysis of Engelbrekts-son's (1978) superb ethnographic study of migration from two very different Turkish villages to Sweden and Germany.

resort to dense social ties that encompassed more than one kinship group. Those interested in migrating from Yeniköy could not, unless they belonged to a single kinship group from whom the first migrant left for Europe. Alihan represented a village with a strong social cohesion, relatively few economic differences, and a sense of collective communal identity. The population exhibited a strong feeling of solidarity in a common history that reaches back to the 16th century. The collective representation of the village as a cohesive unit was pervasive. All villagers considered themselves descendants of the original settlers and most families had marital connections to other families in the village. Patriarchs arranged marriages within the village, with few newcomers entering the resident kinship groups. Help was present in times of need. Reciprocity in the form of mutual obligations extended beyond the blood-based kinship group; there was a non-kin reciprocity, certainly not representative of all Anatolian villages. In other words, various benefits, such as information and control of family members, could be derived from reciprocity, and village solidarity acted as a partial substitute for economic capital. By contrast, migrants from Yeniköy exclusively supported the members of their own kinship group. Other potential migrants could not rely on the valuable reciprocity and information flowing from this one kinship group. The village that had existed for about 100 years in the mid-1960s, was grouped into various communities—Turks from Anatolia, Turkish refugees from Bulgaria, Kurds—that had little contact to each other. It is thus not surprising that the one kinship group benefiting from international migration— located in the poor Turkish community—did not share its resources with other villagers.

In sum, when migrants from both villages found themselves abroad, the Alihan community, with higher amounts of reciprocity and solidarity, more successfully exploited the new opportunities transnational social spaces offered to them than those migrants from Yeniköy who kept very close ties to their kinship group only. We conclude that the transnational ties in the Yeniköy case existed for roughly a generation only; kinship- and community-based transnational exchange, reciprocity and solidarity in a single kinship group. Transnational economic activities in the Yeniköy case effectively stopped when the migrants returned from Europe to Turkey, whereas it continued longer in the Alihan case. For more than a dozen years, the Alihan villagers effectively functioned as a transnational community, benefiting from high levels of information flows and strong social control. Yet, while communal reciprocity undoubtedly furthered the economic success of Alihan residents, it also

cemented gender relations controlled by patriarchs of extended families. After all, relatively immobile women, most of whom stayed behind in Turkey, shouldered the transnational life-style of Alihan men.

Political transnationalization: Kurds between adaptation, exile and diaspora

In the public realm, transnational social and symbolic ties and link-ages are particularly visible among migrants and refugees who have mobilized and struggled for political change in their former or pro-spective homelands. The vision of a homeland—yet to be created—and return to it, is a powerful and crucial ingredient of diaspora formation in the case of larger-scale transnational communities. Many politically active Kurds are engaged in a simultaneous group-making and a state-making project. Some Kurdish organizations have declared the very creation of a nation-state as their goal, be it an autonomous nation-state or, more modestly, increased cultural and political autonomy of the regions inhabited mainly by Kurds in southeastern Turkey. Kurds as a relatively coherent ethnic or national group and their homeland 'Kur-distan' clearly are *ex post facto* constructions, a vision or myth (Behrendt 1993). This is typical for new challenger groups in diasporas; see the Sikhs's intentions to form 'Khalistan'. It is certain that Kurds form a sort of stranded minority in their home region that covers parts of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. A prior state never existed before they started to fight for national autonomy. Yet, the winners of World War One partitioned the territory now claimed by nationalist Kurds and alloted it to various new nation-states.

Some Kurdish migrants and refugees from Turkey are ardent build-ers of transnational spaces. Living in Germany, they demand political and cultural autonomy in the Republic of Turkey. Various organizations direct their demands to both Turkish and German governments, rang-ing from the dictatorially-led PKK, involved in armed struggle with the Turkish army and its many political subsidiaries, to groups using more peaceful means, such as KOMKAR (Organization of the Associations from Kurdistan) and the closely related Socialist Party of Kurdistan (PSK). At the same time, some organizations maintain intense cross-national ties to Kurdish organizations in various other European coun-tries, such as the Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium (Nielsen 1992: 123) and, of course, to Turkey. Because of the massive concentration of

Kurds in Germany, political transnationalization has to be analyzed primarily as a triadic relationship between Germany, Turkey, and the refugee or exiled minority.

Numerically speaking, the Kurdish group constitutes the second-strongest immigrant group after the Turks in Germany. Most Kurds either arrived as guestworkers or asylum seekers. Initially, Kurds migrated to Germany as guestworkers in the late 1960s and early 1970s; according to reliable estimates of experts, about 85% of all Turkish citizens of Kurdish descent in Germany. Thereafter, some Kurdish refugees arrived after the military coups in 1971 and 1980 as activists, victims or targets of the fighting between 'security forces' and the PKK in the 1990s. They constitute another 15%. Compared to labor migrants who consider themselves ethnic-national Turks, very little re-migration has occurred among migrants and refugees who see themselves primarily as Kurds. This suggests that ongoing military conflicts, resulting ecological devastation, poor economic prospects and continuing persecution of the civilian population from either the state 'security forces' or the guerilla PKK have triggered out-migration and flight but have prevented sizeable return migration—forming the reservoir of transnational networks and potential transnational communities.

Three periods mark the development of this particular transnational social space. In the 1960s and 1970s, guestworkers of the southeastern Turkish provinces arrived in Germany; no significant political mobilization rallying around Kurdish questions occurred. Since the 1980s, tension and violence escalated between Turkish 'security forces' in southeastern Turkey on one side, and armed Kurdish groups, mainly the PKK, on the other. Since then, more or less open warfare between the two sides, with massive destruction of the environment, led to high rates of out-migration directed towards the major cities in Western Turkey such as Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara, but also to big cities surrounding the southeastern provinces such as Adana. Only a few of these refugees ever arrived in Germany. Of those who did, many are activists. Martial law has since then been in use in many southeastern provinces.

Kurds are among both the challengers and victims. Much of the persecution by the state is motivated by an authoritarian brand of central and dirigistic nationalism (*Kemalism*), directed at all democratic opposition forces and especially targeting politically active Kurds and those suspected of cooperating with autonomist or separatist organizations. Examples of this suppression are the persecution of journalists and Kurdish language media reporting on events in the southeastern provinces. Other events concern the incarceration of Kurdish deputies

from the national grand assembly. These members belonged to the Kurdish political party, HEP-Workers' Party of the People (founded in 1991; later reconstituted as DEP-Democracy Party and HADEP-Democracy Party of the People) in 1993 and 1994. There seem to have been linkages between PKK activists and members of these Kurdish parties, expressed in a high density of social ties and information flows (Cürükkaya 1997: 76). Ironically, the severe repressive measures taken by the government have alienated a growing proportion of the Kurdish population, causing the PKK gradually to gain widespread support in spite of its reputation for brutal violence. Certainly, the armed conflict did not help to shift loyalty and allegiances to the Turkish government.

While the activities of the PKK have not undermined the territorial integrity of the Turkish state, they have nevertheless been a formidable military threat. This stark claim has to be further qualified. Even the PKK has signalled that it is ready to compromise on the question of territorial independence. For example, PKK chief Abdullah Öcalan has stated that, politically, he may be satisfied with Kurdish autonomy in a reformed Turkish state with a federal system instead of the current rigidly centralized political system.

In a third period, beginning in the mid-1980s, the PKK moved this conflict abroad, to Germany in particular. The German government as a NATO ally and host to a large Turkish and Kurdish population became the target of demands from the PKK which threatened to use Germany as a theater for warfare. In turn, the Turkish government intervened and demanded the outlawing of PKK; the German Ministry of the Interior finally followed other countries such as Sweden and did so in late 1993. Yet this conflict does not simply involve militant organizations such as the PKK. The Turkish side also asked the German government not to grant official status to other Kurdish organizations. In 1985, for example, the German federal government decided not to recognize Kurdish and Armenian organizations as ethnic groups (*Volksgruppen*) who can apply for government monies to undertake integration measures, such as social work and language instruction.

Intensifying conflicts in Turkey and the neighboring countries that also involved the German government and public have certainly added to the very high rate of mobilization of Kurds. For example, out of an estimated 500,000 persons of Kurdish descent in Germany, up to 100,000 participated in a single mass rally in 1993. Although this should not be taken as a sign of political support for a particular organization, this mobilization rate is indeed remarkable. There is a close exchange of information and persons between migrated or exiled Kurds and those

left behind in the southeastern provinces, or living in the Western parts of Turkey. The density of social ties is continuously increasing. Among some of the means used are newspapers, telephone, video and music cassettes.

In the face of immense conflict, we could hypothesize that among refugees who struggle with adaptation in their new environments, the acceptance of radical organizations is higher than among those who stayed. This would mean that symbolic ties can be mobilized more efficiently among refugees. There is some indirect evidence for this thesis. In a survey in the mid-1990s, respondents in two main centers of refugees within Turkey (Adana and Mersin), the acceptance of PKK was greater than in cities with higher rates of emigration (Diyarbakır, Batman and Mardin). Moreover, a newspaper close to PKK, *Özgür Ülke*, was more widely read in the in-migration than in the out-migration cities (Ergil 1995: 26 and 16-7).

The domestic aspects of the conflict have spurred the efforts of Kurdish organizations in Germany, advancing interests of Kurdish immigrants. The demands of organizations such as KOMKAR include additional instruction of Kurdish school children in their mother tongue in public schools; radio and TV programs in the Kurdish language; counseling centers for Kurds; recognition of Kurdish names at German registrar's offices and support for Kurdish self-help groups.

Yet, social control used in the process of mobilization and challenge to state authorities also has to be closely differentiated according to its effects. For example, the authoritarian leadership in the PKK has used the symbolic ties among the Kurdish people to centralize control. The enhanced capacity to monitor and control members through violent extortion and threats is a negative benefit derived from solidarity. It helps to advance the cause of an authoritarian organization involved in a separatist or autonomous Kurdish project, but sacrifices individual autonomy and many lives.

All these events did not only contribute to the mobilization of the Kurdish population in Germany, but also sparked debates in the German public on whether to send back to Turkey those Kurdish asylum seekers whose claims were rejected by German authorities. For example, one position advocated by German authorities has been that there are alternatives to Germany as a safe heaven, above all the western provinces of Turkey, in which no open civil strife has taken place. A further issue concerned the usefulness of selling or donating arms to the Turkish army in 1991-92, outlawing the PKK, and human rights in Turkey. A veritable train of delegations from all walks of life in Germany to Tur-

key followed, including members of parliament, government, unions and NGOs (Hocker and Liebe-Harkort 1996: 338-363).

Solidarity extended by the Kurdish activists and their Kurdish and German supporters to activists in Turkey makes the feedback loop complete: the armed conflict in Turkey has produced many refugees, some of them international. The ensuing social and symbolic ties that span places in Germany, other EU states, Turkey and countries adjoining Turkey, are the basis of support for PKK warriors and those sympathetic to this organization. In turn, this solidarity and the material resources flowing from it have intensified the armed conflict in the southeastern provinces. One of the consequences is that the flow of displaced persons and international refugees is steadily replenished. Some of the refugees moved to Germany and have mobilized into various Kurdish organizations, some of whom claim that life in Germany is a temporary exile to be followed by the establishment of an independent Kurdistan.

We can certainly discern diaspora elements among the Kurdish population in Germany. For example, some groups seek to establish a homeland or cultural autonomy. Yet others seek to adapt to the German environment in trying to advance socio-economic integration. Overall, the variety of positions taken on all these issues is too wide and too diffuse to speak of coherent trends going either way. It is likely that activist refugees form the main basis of the groups building a diaspora. However, there are significant differences: activists and supporters of the PKK and their German intellectual allies are trying to build a sort of 'refugee warrior diaspora' akin to the Palestinian example. They insist on the exile aspect of the diaspora and affirm an emerging Kurdish identity. They clearly consider Kurds in Turkey and Europe as forming a temporary transnational community pursuing a national project. Nonetheless, the shared cultural expressions are still few, aside from folkloristic phenomena such as the *Newroz* festival. By contrast, organizations such as KOMKAR have developed transnational networks *and* seek to advance adaptation in Germany. They demand both more rights to cultural and political autonomy for Kurds in Turkey and the integration of Kurdish settlers in Germany on an ethnically self-conscious basis.

Some of the tensions among Kurds in Germany can be seen in self-descriptions of collective identity. Comparing two respresentative samples from the mid-1980s and early 1990s, we find that the percentage of Kurds in Germany who feel 'Turkish' went down significantly both among the first and second generation, from about 40% to close to zero

(Brieden 1996: 41). Also, there is very little social contact between Kurds and Turks living in Germany. The frequency of contact primarily depends upon the attitude towards the 'Kurdish question'. There is an attenuating trend, however: the re-ethnicization is much stronger among the first than among the second generation of Turks and Kurds. And both among Kurds and Turks there is a significant percentage saying that they are neither Kurdish, Turkish or German but European, cosmopolitan or simply 'human being'. This is reminiscent of the 'cosmopolitan stranger', an ideal type who would show no ethnic or racial identification, except when pressured to claim identity (Park 1950).

Cultural transnationalization:
young Muslims between disintegration, syncretism, and segmentation

To emphasize the transnational aspect in the development of collective identity is not the same as saying that immigrants live 'between' two cultures. Early attempts have sought to interpret the experience of first and second-generation Turkish immigrants as being uprooted from Turkish culture and not having been inserted in German culture. Also, one finds the assumption in the researches on refugees that to become uprooted and removed from a nation-state community is automatically to lose one's identity and customs. Thus, there is not only a transformation but a loss of culture and identity (for a sophisticated version of this argument, see Stein 1981: 325). Here, the emphasis is not on how international (trans)migrants have lost their cultures and identities, but on how they have developed new practices and orientations in transnational social spaces, a trans-cultural *mélange* or *bricolage*. In its most pronounced form—transnational spaces such as the community of Muslim believers *(umma)*—this claim poses a challenge to a binary either-or understanding of collective identity.

A first impression of the complicated set-up relating to collective identity can be seen from empirical evidence generated by ethnic and national self-description. In the survey mentioned above, we see that the percentage of Turks and Kurds who feel totally German is close to zero, even among the second generation (Brieden 1996: 43). The reasons given by the respondents can be grouped into two sets: first, a feeling of rejection by German culture and second, the experience of discrimination by native German citizens. Yet, the percentage of those who *also* feel German amounted to 29% among Turks and 12% among Kurds; an

indication towards a sort of hybrid identity that includes both German, Turkish or Kurdish elements. We can now phrase the question as to what kind of *syncretism* exists regarding collective identity more precisely. Is this the sort of transitory syncretism observed by scholars among immigrants of European descent who arrived in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries—such as Italian-Americans or Irish-Americans—finally leading to cultural assimilation in generations following the original migrants? Or, do these syncretist identities indicate a more sustained and uneasy coexistence of various ethnic and national identities and cultural practices that are not brought together successfully in an integrative synthesis, because cultural segregation develops, that isolates these communities both from the sending and receiving contexts? Yet another alternative would be that syncretist collective identities arise that successfully occupy a cultural space in between sending and receiving states.

Again, various periods of transnationalization can be distinguished. In a first phase, Turkish labor migrants, sometimes joined by family members, intended to spend a few years to earn enough money and return to Turkey. In this period, cultural practices mostly remained limited to the private sphere; for example, the perceived transitional nature of religious affairs found its expression in rooms in factories or apartments serving as prayer halls. Sending country control of these affairs was minimal. The Turkish government certainly did everything to increase the flow of remittances but did nothing to organize religious life. This completely changed in a second period, when various aspects of Turkish cultures in Germany began to flourish more visibly in the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, religious devotees and believers started to build mosques and founded cultural organizations. In short, cultural affairs became publicly visible and its internal differentiation along ethnic, religious and political lines increased. In a third period, migrants have come to use more and more elements found in both sending and receiving societies to cope with discrimination and take advantage of new liberties they encounter in the receiving countries, to participate in events back in the sending countries, but also to take advantage of an increasingly 'multicultural' environment and public policies in the receiving polities that recognize 'cultural difference' and 'ethnic diversity'. The triadic nature of the relationship has come to the fore, since both sending and receiving country governments attempted to control the sprouting religious and cultural organizations.

The emergence of a transnational space and concomitant feedback loops in the cultural realm can be exemplified when looking at young

Muslims. Some authors have interpreted the experience of many Turk-
ish youth in Germany to be one of *disintegration* (Heitmeyer *et al.*
1997). The underlying hypothesis is that issues of collective identity
surfaced because of unresolved problems of socio-economic and politi-
cal adaptation. Nationalist and religious we-groups have gained impor-
tance because universally valid mechanisms such as access to labor
market and the educational system have not provided the basis needed
for the formation of a satisfactory individual identity. According to this
view, many young Turks suffer from the effects of modernization, such
as ever-increasing demands on educational credentials or higher than
average rates of unemployment compared to German youth, xenopho-
bic violence, and a denial of cultural recognition on the part of German
majority society. These tendencies allegedly contribute to the retreat of
Turkish youth into ethnically organized we-groups that offer a coherent
collective identity along nationalist and religious lines. Importantly,
these youth are seen as rootless in both the German receiving and the
Turkish sending society. Many descendants of Turkish migrants are
Turks in Germany and *Almancilar* (*'Deutschländer'*) in Turkey. This
view holds that the experience of discrimination and manifold fears are
the fertile breeding ground for Islamist orientations among many Turk-
ish youth because they are threatened to become a liminal people. And
the stronger discrimination is felt and the higher the propensity that
'traditional values' are passed on from parents to youth in Turkish
migrant families, the greater the likelihood that these youth espouse
positions such as support of Qur'an courses and schools, of Islamic
superiority and of religiously legitimized readiness to use force as a
means of politics (Heitmeyer *et al.* 1997: 44).

Extending these thoughts, we could now go on to argue that the tend-
ency among some descendants of Turkish immigrants to adhere to
Islamist groups has been taken by certain German groups as a sign that
these young men and women of Turkish descent are unwilling to as-
similate, to fit in. This could be taken by populist and xenophobic
groups in Germany to mean that they are justified in their prejudices.
The feedback loop would be complete when manifestations of racism
revolve to engender new sources of apprehension and further inclina-
tions to clannishness and endogamy. For example, a substantial number
of first and second-generation Turks in Germany marry partners
imported from Turkey. This kind of behavior could be thought to breed
further hostility and estrangement on both sides.

While the idea of a feedback loop is plausible, this particular inter-
pretation of Muslim youth as the victims of both German xenophobia

and rejection on the part of German society is flawed for at least three reasons. First, not only discrimination and exclusion have contributed to practices and orientations that extend beyond cultural assimilation to German majority society, or the uncritical acceptance of Turkish secular, nationalist or Islamic orientations. We also have to consider German public policies and proposals meant to advance 'multiculturalism'. Second, the above account overestimates the effects of discrimination in the receiving country and underestimates the political instrumentalization of religious mobilization in the sending country, as causes underlying Islamist orientations. Third, the interpretation of Turkish migrants and their descendants as victims of anomie seriously underrates their creative potential to establish social spaces beyond cultural assimilation on the one hand and a wholesale transplantation of Turkish orientations to Germany on the other (2).

First, the transnationalization in the cultural realm is readily advanced by discourses and even public policies favoring multiculturalist tendencies, a mix of demands and efforts to grant specific (group) rights to ethnic minorities, so that they may express cultural distinctiveness, develop political organization and engage in economic betterment. The demands of the certainly not coherent multiculturalist agenda include voting rights for permanent residents who are not citizens; affirmative action programs that aim to increase the representation of visible minorities in major educational and economic institutions; revised work schedules so as to accomodate the religious holidays of immigrant groups; provision of bilingual education programs for the children of immigrants, so that their earliest years of education are conducted partly in their mother-tongue, as a transitional phase to secondary and post-secondary education in German. In the 1980s and 1990s, these tendencies have been publicized above all by German academics and opposition politicians. Also, Turkish interest groups who do not share any of the premises of the German organizations have taken up many of these demands and made them part of their own agenda. The demands of Islamic groups who ask for recognition as a religious group on a basis similar to the main Christian denominations (*Körperschaften des öffent-*

(2) It is not possible here to discuss the problems pertaining to the conceptualization of collective action underlying the disintegration thesis. It should suffice to point out that this thesis rests on Durkheim's understanding of collective behavior in his *Division of Labor* (1964): the advancing differentiation of something called 'society' (read: increasing division of labor and modernization) threatens the 'shared consciousness' based on the essential similarity of individuals. Into the gap arising between the level of differentiation, on the one side, and the level of shared consciousness, on the other, moves anomie. For a devastating critique of the Durkheimian model of collective action and alternatives based on resource mobilization theory, see Tilly (1978).

lichen Rechts), and Muslim organizations who establish primary schools and look for public subsidies are another. To the extent that multiculturalist policies agree with the agenda of Muslim organizations, we should expect efforts on their part to maintain, change and build symbolically cohesive collectives around collective representations.

Second, the activities of Islamic organizations in Germany are partly an outgrowth of an increasing re-Islamization of public life in Turkey. For these organizations, Turkish migrants in Germany are primarily of political interest. These groups try to gain power in Turkish domestic politics. Since the 1950s, Islam has become an extremely contested current in Turkey. For example, Islamist groups have presented Islam as the new bond for Turkish nationalism, thus challenging the legacy of Kemalist nationalism. The DİTİB (*Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği*), a branch of the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, DİB) has been active in Germany since 1985; but only after Islamist organizations such the Assocation of the New World View in Europe (AMGT/*Avrupa Milli Görüş Teskilatlari*; nowadays IGMG or Milli Görüş) and the Association of Islamic Cultural Centers (VIKZ/*Islam Kültür Merkezleri Birliği*) had attracted a large following and built mosques (Faist 1996). These developments in Germany cannot be understood without the new policies of the Turkish government towards Islam. It has accelerated mobilization around religion among the most numerous religious groups, the Sunnis and Alevis. In the early 1990s the Turkish government departed a few inches from the Kemalist tradition, at times actively fostering a Turkish-Islamic synthesis. For example, religious education, once an optional subject in primary and secondary schools, was made mandatory. The Directorate of Religious Affairs gained strength, numerous new mosques built and imams appointed. What once started out as a confused right-wing doctrine to address the spread of socialism during the 1970s in Turkey—combining fervent Turkish nationalism and Islamism—has virtually come to be elevated to a quasi-official state policy. Even a repressive anti-Islamist policy since the mid-1990s, executed by the military, has not effectively countered this seminal trend.

While the activities of Islamic organizations in Turkey and Germany have strengthened Turkish nationalism and Muslim transnationalism, the messages of the organizations involved have unintended and contradictory implications. On the one hand, Islamist propaganda emphasizes in-group social and symbolic ties and thus segregation from German society (Gür 1993: 45-9). On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the first generation is to stay in Germany, and there is no

question about the first, second and third generations. While settlement in Germany does not necessarily lead to increased contacts with Germans and vice versa, it replaces a one-sided orientation to Turkey with a bi- or transnational focus. For example, issues of education and employment are practical questions to be solved in Germany. And even nationalist and religious organizations woeing young Turks who have grown up in Germany deliver a double message: *'Wir, wir, wir sind von hier, sind Einheimische'* ('We, we, we are from here, we are indigenous') and *'Wir sind Türken, sind Muslime, sind zivilisiert'* ('We are Turks, we are Muslims, we are civilized', cited in Karakaşoğlu-Aydin 1997: 37). Very different organizations relate this double message to young Turks in Germany, ranging from the now nationalist-cum-Islamist Grey Wolves and the Islamist Milli Görüş to the religious organizations directed by the Turkish Directory of Religious Affairs with its German branch DİTİB. In short, in an effort to control young Muslims in Germany through symbolic ties, religious organizations inadvertently relinquish a one-sided sending country orientation. Symbolic ties of a more complex nature have begun to appear.

Third, the victim angle emphasizing disintegration and the instrumentalization of young Turks by religious and nationalist organization seriously underrates the creative and enriching potentials of young Turks living in Germany. For example, it neglects all those youth who understand themselves as practicing Muslims, yet not as Islamists. Also, in three consecutive surveys among young Turks in Berlin (1989, 1991, 1997), about 24 to 27% of the young people said they had a close tie to religion, while between 36 and 50% responded that they were somewhat distant (Senatsverwaltung für Gesundheit und Soziales 1997: 3). The concept of disintegration is flawed because it tends to emphasize the idea of either uprootedness or transplantation. It is here that the term *translated people* may be apt to enrich existing images. This term, borrowed from the novelist Salman Rushdie (1989), is different from 'uprooted' (Handlin 1973 [1951]), rootless immigrants seeking to melt into a majority core, and 'transplanted' (Bodnar 1985), newcomers who transfer their cultural baggage from home to their new homesteads. Migrants are continually engaged in translating languages, culture, norms, and social and symbolic ties. Trans-lated persons are situated in diverse contexts. There is no simple return to the sending country. The individual and collective identities are not fixed once and for all; they are not permanent over decades or centuries.

This prodigious energy becomes visible, for example, in the adaptation of musical styles (Kaya 1997). Hip-hop and rap are exported to

Turkey. A preliminary ethnographic analysis of some texts by Turkish youth suggests that empirical research would do well to extend its one-sided focus on discrimination, alientation and subsequent entry into religiously-Islamic and nationalist organizations. In one of the songs of the former Turkish rap group 'Cartel' we find: *'DU BIST TÜRKE... in Deutschland... verstehe das, vergiß' es nicht'* (cited in Heitmeyer *et al.* 1997: 84) (3). This is not *double consciousness* in the sense of W.E.B. DuBois (1989: 1-9). It is partly a self-conscious search for individual and collective identity, keeping a distance from both German and Turkish contexts. These expressions of identity are both transnational and youth-subcultural.

What the discussion of political transnationalization already indicated, emerges more strongly when we look at collective identity related to religion and nation: underlying this extension is a recognition that transnational social spaces are not only constituted by concrete social ties but also by symbolic ties involving acts of imagination. In the age of instant telecommunication, social science and theology, religious communities such as the *umma* can be created and integrated in a new image through the mind and through shared imagination. Yet these transnational communities have solid local roots, sometimes in two or more countries, with symbolic ties acting as bridges between different nation-state contexts.

The *umma* is a particularly interesting case of imagined transnational space because the claim extends to a truly transnational Muslim community of believers transcending nation-state borders and the domestic politics of the countries covered. While there is certainly no one *umma*, many Turkish (-German) organizations entertain close formal links to counterparts not only in Turkey but also in other European countries. For example, IGMG nurtures close ties to the largest Islamist party in Turkey. Even more transnational is the Association of Islamic Cultural Centers (VIKZ), since it constitutes the German branch of a worldwide enterprise with representations in countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Russia, the USA, Argentina and Brasil (Feindt-Riggers and Steinbach 1997: 44-6). While Muslim organizations are not structured in the same way as the Catholic church worldwide, transnational ties advance networks that go beyond bilateral linkages (Voll 1997).

In sum, we find that a declining legitimacy of cultural assimilation as a shared vision, the extension of multicultural rights, the experiences of cultural discrimination and socio-economic exclusion and the transla-

(3) 'YOU ARE A TURK... in Germany... Understand it, don't forget it'. See also Zaimoglu (1995: 96).

tion of cultural and political conflicts from Turkey to Germany and back, have all contributed to an increasing transnationalization.

Instead of stretching the term diaspora beyond its limits, it is more meaningful to speak of a *transnationalized and segmented cultural space*, characterized by *syncretist identities*, populated by sundry ethnic, political, religious and subcultural groups: transnational means that cultural elements from both the original sending and receiving countries have found entry in the cultural repertoire of the descendants of migrants. In addition, it is sometimes part of an international or global culture, as in the youth subculture. Collective representations can be thought to be syncretist to emphasize the active role of the immigrants themselves.

Instead of solid transnational communities, cultural segmentation characterizes the world of Turkish migrants along *ethnic and religious differences*. For example, not only Sunni but also Alevi groups have begun to act collectively. The internal and cross-cutting ethnic and religious differentiations among Turkish immigrants in Germany are varied and complicated. If we take the three most numerous both self- and other-defined ethnic groups among Turkish citizens and their descendants as a point of departure—Turks, Kurds and Arabs—we can differentiate the following groups in a rough and preliminary way: among Turks and Arabs we find mostly Sunnites, Alevites and atheists; among Kurds we find all these groups and very small Shii'te groups such as the Yezidis (Spuler-Stegmann 1996). A recent study identified 47 distinct ethnic groups in Turkey (Andrews 1989). It is more than likely that groups other than Sunnis and Alevis are waiting in the wings to join the multicultural party. A move from very repressive to somewhat attenuated policies towards non-Turkish cultural practices meant that the rate of mobilization among ethnic and religious groups has surged. With the Turkish government's relaxation of bans on associations and non-Turkish languages, culture and identity politics among ethnic groups in Turkey have 'revived', for example among Alevis, Circassians and Laz. As has been the case among Kurds and Sunni Islamists discussed above, we could expect this new mobilization to translate from Turkey to Germany.

This mobilization has been underway among Alevis in Turkey and Germany, involving an ethnicization and politicization of religion in both countries, mutually reinforcing each other. In Turkey, a state obligated to a laicist model along the French lines—but with active control of the state over religion—, the rulers have shown tendencies to elevate the Sunni version of Islam to a quasi-official religion since the early

1990s. In turn, the PKK also jumped the train of incorporating Islamist rhetoric into their program and official proclamations. This has had severe consequences for some PKK adherents and supporters. For example, Alevis have been a very secular group. During the 1970s and 1980s, they formed a good-sized support group for militant left operations; and the PKK recruited a sizeable portion of fighters from this milieu. However, estranged by Islamist declarations by the PKK's leader, some Alevis have turned to ethnic symbols, thereby claiming their own collective identity. One way of doing this has been by the adoption of Zaza, a Kurdish language spoken around Dersim, a majority Alevi city in southeastern Anatolia (Roy 1996: 101).

Sunni and Alevi groups imported their conflicts into Germany. Since Sunni groups have lived for the second generation in Germany, Alevi groups have faced stiff competition. Up until now, most active Alevis participated in the political realm, for example in the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Growing competition for the second generation has led to a politicization of religion. Trying to reach members of the second generation, more and more Alevi entrepreneurs organize religious groups and seek to mobilize their clients around the cultural symbols of Alevidom. In turn, this has feedback effects for conflicts between Sunnis and Alevis in Turkey; financial, human and social resources flow from Germany to Turkey to support the building of an organizational infrastructure among Alevis. All of these organizations are part of transnational circuits. But it would be far-fetched to regard them as representations of full-fledged transnational communities or even as diasporas.

In sum, syncretist identities do not imply a diaspora consciousness, such as a collective identity carrying elements of both Turkish or Kurdish and German but with a strong dominance of the former element due to an imagined homeland or collective religious community. Nor do these mixing identities necessarily denote a successful stage in the transition from one collective identity to another, such as the development: Kurd→Turk→Turkish-German→German. Rather, it is an outcome of transnational ties and often segmented cultural communities that do refer to a successful synthesis in some cases— such as hip-hop musicians among the cultural elite—but also to an un-integrated existence of both German and Turkish elements next to each other, for example, among some young Islamists.

Conclusion: the uneasy existence of transnational social spaces 'between' and 'in' nation-states

Transnational social spaces raise questions such as: what happens to kinship systems and their traditional living together in one place when economic reproduction, risk diversification and betterment encompass various countries? What befalls to notions of nationalism and nation-state unity when citizens move abroad and seek to establish a new homeland, carved out of the old one? What occurs to notions of cultural uniqueness when persons acquire cultural repertoires that are transnational? Can the ancestral or (imagined) future homeland also be a transnational space, such as the modernized Islamic *umma*?

In particular, the existence of transnational social spaces calls into question the dominant focus on immigrant (dis-)integration, (non-) assimilation and ethnic pluralism on the nation-state level in receiving countries. As the initial empirical evidence presented here suggests, immigrant adaptation on the nation-state level is a crucial element of the migrant experience. However, this dimension needs to be complemented by a stronger focus on trans- (and sub-) national levels of analysis in order to capture the dynamics of border-crossing expansion of social space.

Transnational political and religious groups in the Turkish-German space suggest that geographical propinquity is not a necessary requirement for communities. However, in the cases analyzed here, another sort of propinquity is of utmost importance: ethnic or national and religious reciprocity and solidarity among sections of Kurds and Muslims, respectively. It is thus apparent that not only actual social ties matter but also symbolic ties between sending and receiving countries. The transnational bridging functions of social capital cannot be thought without collective representations.

The emergence of transnational social spaces concerns strategies of governments and migrants dealing with discrimination and xenophobia as well as multicultural claims. Indeed, it seems as if the stronger the control efforts by the respective governments, the stronger the resistance of various transmigrant groups. For example, this applies to both politically active Kurds and politically-religiously active Muslims. One of the ironies is that some of these carriers of transnationalization are self-proclaimed guardians of rigorous nationalist and religious projects. Seen in this way, reciprocity and solidarity, embedded in symbolic ties,

function as bridges for 'long-distance nationalism' (Anderson 1994: 326) and long-distance religion.

It is important to note that transnational social spaces are not deterritorialized. Some globalization scholars have already pronounced the detached nature of cultural representations in global flows. They posit that flows 'occur in and through the growing disjunctures among ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes' (Appadurai 1996: 37). The ethnoscapes relate to persons such as tourists, migrants, refugees, exilees, guestworkers and other geographically mobile categories who influence the politics in and between nations to a degree not known before. To see transmigrants and refugees embodying cosmopolitan homelessness is a tempting proposition. These could be seen as the first to live out transnational realities in their most complete form. Instead, this analysis suggests that ethnoscapes are not magic carpets but fulfill contingent bridging functions between groups and organizations in nation-states demarcated by doors at the territorial borders and inside the nation-states. These doors range along a continuum from open to closed. Aspects of the lives of transmigrants remain highly localized, albeit characterized by a profound bi- or sometimes even multi-focality.

Although transnational social spaces are by and large neither intermittent nor serendipitous developments, two caveats relating to their continued feasibility are in order (4). Politicians, administrators and members of civil society in fairly liberal nation-states such as Germany may end the toleration or even casualness they currently show towards ethnically-based political, religious and cultural formations that entertain strong transnational linkages. The conditions for the existence of transnational spaces are mercurial. Under certain conditions, such as war, nationalism in the receiving country may create conditions under which groups with transnational linkages may be accused of disloyalty and are tested about whether they are patriots or traitors.

Take the case of German Americans or US-Americans of German descent for a moment. For most of the latter part of the 19th century and until World War One, many of the economic, political and cultural ties this article described for Turks characterized German-Americans in the United States of America. A significant part of the German flow was triggered by the revolution of 1848-49, and there was much cross-fertilization between the radicals of that era and the reform wing of the Republican Party in the USA, as the distinguished career of Carl Schurz

(4) I am indebted to John Mollenkopf for his comments on the limits of transnational social spaces.

indicates. Economic ties can be found in the development of the American economy by firms such as Anheiser Busch, Steinway pianos, and all of the American optical industry. Moreover, German-language schools and a rich *Vereinsleben* signalled lively symbolic ties. Yet as a result of war between the USA and Germany in 1917, almost all of these links sundered, and in fact most German-Americans gave up their native language as well as their *Gesangvereine* and other distinctive cultural forms. 26 U.S. states outlawed German as a language of instruction in high schools and church congregations switched from German to English. Germanness lived on only in certain sects of the Lutheran Church, and even there in hidden form. Not only did transnationalism disappear, but for all intents and purposes so did America's largest white ethnic group.

Transnationalization may also be attenuated, when seen in the longer historical perspective for reasons other than the domestic repercussions of international conditions. What seems like a comparative advantage at one point—for example Turkish entrepreneurs in Germany having access to cheap labor in their garment factories in Turkey, Kurdish exiles having a secure political basis to struggle for more autonomy or even independence in the southeastern provinces of Turkey, or Turkish Muslims of various religious groups using Germany as a base to fight against secularism and laicism in Turkey—can be a springboard to something entirely else for some, while it becomes a kind of trap for others, preventing them from making more successful moves within the nation-state that has become their new home. It is only when these immigrants and their descendants also find a basis for their economic, political and cultural activities other than sending country or homeland affairs that elements of transnationalization can remain beneficial to them in the long run. At the same time, immigrants' ties accross borders can ease ethnic and religious tensions that accompany the adaptation of newcomers in the countries of settlement.

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