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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the political participation of Turkish migrants in Germany within a transnational context. This issue is highly eminent for democracy and integration and it constitutes the fundamentals of political sovereignty. Therefore, explaining the diverse political mindsets as well as the grade of interest and participation in political issues is of high importance. This article analyses the findings of the empirical study conducted with Turkish migrants in Germany focussing on their political interests and party preferences in both countries. The survey results show at first higher interest for political processes in Turkey than in Germany; but with rising legal participation, higher citizenship rights and higher education, the interest for German politics increases. But however, throughout the different groups, a transnational orientation is the main observable factor. The apparent contradiction of the party preferences (in Germany more left wing oriented parties, in Turkey more conservative-religious parties) can be explained with pragmatic setting of priorities.

Keywords: Political Participation, Political Interest, Party Preferences, Turkish Migrants, Transnational Relations

Almanya'daki Türkiye Kökenli Göçmenlerin Siyasal Katılımı ve Parti Tercihleri

ÖZET

Bu makale Almanya'da yaşayan Türkiye kökenli göçmenlerin siyasal katılımını ulusötesi bir bağlamda analiz etmektedir. Siyasal egemenliğin temelini oluşturan önemli olgulardan biri olarak siyasal katılım, demokrasi ve entegrasyon için de son derece önemlidir. Bu bağlamda farklı politik yaklaşımları/bakış açılarını, siyasal ilgi ve siyasete katılım derecelerini açıklamak önem teşkil etmektedir. Bu amaçla, makalede açıklanan ampirik çalışma Almanya'daki Türkiye kökenli göçmenlerin hem Alman hem de Türk siyasetine olan ilgilerini ve iki ülkedeki seçimlerdeki parti tercihlerini incelemektedir. Elde edilen araştırma verilerine göre katılımcılar, ilk etapta Türkiye'deki siyasal süreçlere Almanya'dan daha fazla ilgi göstermektedirler; ancak yasal katılım oranları, yasal vatandaşlık hakları ve eğitim oranlarının yüksekliğine ve artışına bağlı olarak Alman siyasetine olan ilgi de artmaktadır. Ayrıca, farklı gruplar arasında, uluslararası bir yönelim temel bir faktör olarak gözlemlenebilir. Parti tercihlerindeki görünür karşıtıklarsa (Almanya'da daha sol görüşlü partiler, Türkiye'de daha muhafazakar-dindar partiler) pragmatik tercihler ile açıklanabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyasal Katılım, Siyasal İlgi, Parti Tercihleri, Türk Göçmenler, Ulusötesi Bağlantılar

Introduction: The Relevance of Political Participation

Research studies into political participation go back a long way,¹ regaining prominence with the studies on the subject of election turnout and membership in political parties in the 1970s.² The focus point of these studies was on understanding/classifying the political behaviour and participation of the social players. More recent studies (from the realm of political psychology) concern the issue of decreasing election turnout (in Germany), explaining it as the result of the convergence of the major parties' aims and stances and the ensuing lack of any voting incentive, which lead to a reduction of mobilisation potential.³

However, the general question as to why political participation is relevant can be outlined relatively effectively in terms of democratic theory: a functioning democratic system relies on the participation of the citizens, whether directly through elections or through civic or individual engagement in the process of political consensus-building, because political sovereignty requires participation in and, in the best-case scenario, also the full consent of those governed if it wishes to be perceived as a legitimate regime. Also, possibilities of influencing and taking part should be distributed as evenly as possible. Precisely at this point the participation of immigrants⁴ raises questions: non-naturalised immigrants in Germany are largely excluded from participation in national and state parliamentary elections, something which rightly provokes criticism from the point of view of the theory of democracy, because on the other hand they are subject to political rule like everyone else.⁵ Thus a political system which ignores immigrant interests forfeits its legitimacy.

However, besides issues of democratic theory, the political participation of immigrants is also relevant from the point of view of integration policy, because it is also accompanied by structural integration, with the opening of spheres of influence, which demands greater social participation and greater interaction between majority and minority societies.⁶

For political participation the interest in politics is a key factor. It is a precondition for grappling with political issues, learning about them and possibly playing an active role. Political interest is considered to be an extremely robust indicator of election turnout;⁷ at the same time that interest

1 Anthony Downs, *Economic Theory of Democracy*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1957.

2 Sidney Verba et al., *Participation and Political Equality*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1978; Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*, New York, Harper and Row, 1972.

3 Severin Bathelt and Evelyn Byztek, "Die sind doch eh alle gleich" - Zum Einfluss von Bewertungsunterschieden der Bundestagsparteien auf die Wahlbeteiligung", *Politische Psychologie*, Vol. 5, No 2, 2016, p. 173-192.

4 Speaking about "immigrants" and "migrants" includes both people who migrated themselves as well as people with a migration background; that means that their parents or grandparents migrated.

5 See Uwe Hunger and Menderes Candan, "Politische Partizipation der Migranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und über die deutschen Grenzen hinweg. Expertise im Auftrag des Bundesamts für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) (Universität Münster: Institut für Politikwissenschaft)", http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Expertisen/politische-partizipation.pdf?__blob=publicationFile. (Accessed 27 June 2020); Andreas Wüst, "Wahlverhalten und politische Repräsentation von Migranten", Siegfried Frech, (ed.), *Die offene Gesellschaft. Zuwanderung und Integration*, Schwalbach/Ts., Wochenschau Verlag, 2007, p. 145-173; Martina Sauer, "Politische und zivilgesellschaftliche Partizipation von Migranten", Heinz-Ulrich Brinkmann and Martina Sauer (eds.), *Einwanderungsgesellschaft Deutschland. Entwicklung und Stand der Integration. Lehrbuch zu zentralen Aspekten der Integration in Deutschland aus sozialwissenschaftlicher Perspektive*, Wiesbaden, Springer VS, 2016, p. 255 - 279.

6 Ludger Pries, "Weder Assimilation noch Abschaffung des Integrationsbegriffs. Für ein transnationales Assimilations- und Teilhabeverständnis", Marianne Krüger-Potratz (ed.), *Vielfalt als Leitmotiv*, Göttingen, V & R unipress, 2014, p. 17 - 36.

7 See Bathelt and Byztek, "Die sind doch eh alle gleich".

can be fundamentally influenced by general opportunities for participation.⁸ Various studies show that there is less interest in (German) politics among persons with an immigration background than among indigenous people. This also applies if the socio-structural characteristics to which an influence on political interest are ascribed are comparable for persons with and without an immigration.⁹ For example, with regard to persons of Turkish origin, a recent study shows that young people of Turkish origin have significantly less political knowledge compared to young people of other ethnic backgrounds as far as politics in Germany are concerned.¹⁰

Furthermore, political participation goes hand in hand with the dimensions of identity and belonging, which are of relevance in terms of integration theory. Thus, for example, a sense of belonging can be reinforced through offers of participation from the majority society and the inclusion and representation of immigrants' interests in the political process. However, these offers must also be perceived by immigrants and the interests must be clearly formulated. The requirements for this are a certain degree of political sensitivity, political knowledge and also the conviction that one is able to influence political processes, i.e. a type of political sense of self-efficacy.¹¹

Against this background, therefore, actually unequal consideration for immigrants' interests and also individual perception of such inequality may lead to alienation from the political system, a tendency to withdraw and ultimately to a sense that one is merely a second class citizen. A further conceivable alternative outcome of this perceived disregard for interests is the establishment of alternative representation of interests or the persons in question being inclined to accept already existing "offers" from outside. This can be clearly observed, for example, in the case of persons of Turkish origin in Germany who support, from Germany, the interests of the ruling party in Turkey, the AKP.¹²

With regard to persons who either are or are not immigrants, political participation is also accounted for with reference to specific individual resources such as education, participation in the labour market, professional status, income and also gender, age and family integration. However, for immigrants the degree of integration, the time of immigration, the period of residence and experiences and impressions previously accumulated in the country of origin also play a significant role, although they lose their relevance as the period of residence increases.¹³ The naturalisation process (simplification or complication) also plays a key role and, for example, also explains differences within the immigrant groups (for example between ethnic German resettlers and persons of Turkish origin).¹⁴

If we consider the changes in the last 15-20 years in Germany from an institutional perspective, it is clear that immigrants represent a potential of increasing significance, above all for political parties,

8 Stephanie Müssig and Susanne Worbs, "Politische Einstellungen und politische Partizipation von Migranten in Deutschland", *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge: Reihe Integrationsreport*, No 10, Working Paper 46, 2012, p. 1-58.

9 See Ibid.

10 See Anne Greßer, "Ethnische Ungleichheiten im politischen Wissen. Politische Lernprozesse türkischstämmiger Jugendlicher in Deutschland", Wiesbaden, Springer Verlag, 2014.

11 See Müssig and Worbs, "Politische Einstellungen".

12 See Lena Rickenberg, "Deutschland als 86. Wahlkreis der Türkei?", Wiebke Hohberger (ed.), *Grenzübergänge, Grenzräume, Grenzgänge, Entgrenzungen*, Wiesbaden, Springer VS, 2018, p. 171-196.

13 Müssig and Worbs, "Politische Einstellungen".

14 See Andreas Blätte, "Die Stimmen der Migranten im Bundestagswahlkampf 2013: Wahlkampf in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft", Rudolf Korte (ed.), *Die Bundestagswahl 2013*. Wiesbaden, Springer VS, 2015, p. 211-241.

as their general share currently amounts to more than 23% of the population. Over half of them hold German citizenship and are therefore eligible to vote upon reaching the age of majority – according to the micro-census approx. 7 million people, accounting for 12% of those eligible to vote in total.¹⁵ Furthermore, the demographic fact that this group is significantly younger than the indigenous population underscores its future political relevance. Thus, knowledge and inclusion of the specific needs, desires, attitudes and mindsets of voters with an immigration background may be an election winner in the future. Because many countries permit their citizens to participate in parliamentary elections abroad (e.g. Turks abroad since 1995), they are also of interest politically for the former countries of origin. Thus, for example, the share of persons eligible to vote who are living abroad amounts to 5%, of which 2.7% live in Germany. With regard to exercising their right to vote, an earlier study by Wüst¹⁶ shows that the figure for immigrants is approximately the same as those recorded for the indigenous population. Particularly in elections which may be expected to have a tight outcome, this group may therefore be in a position to tip the scales.

Though participation in elections is only one of many forms of political participation, it is a very central one, as elections determine and legitimise the government and the composition of parliament and therefore the focal points and orientation of policy. Against this background, in recent years political parties have deliberately striven to recruit immigrants as mandate holders or party members. If we look at the current 19th German Federal Parliament, the distribution of mandates is characterised by a marked asymmetry, particularly in the conservative, Christian democratic parties: of the whole of 709 elected deputies only 58 (8.2%) have an immigration background.¹⁷ In detail, the Left Party (*Die Linke*) has the highest share of deputies with an immigrant background (19%), followed by the Green party (*Die Grünen*) (15%) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) at 10%. The share in the Alternative for Germany (AfD) stands at 9%, in the Free Democratic Party (FDP) at 6% and in the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) fraction at only 3%.¹⁸ It may be that some parties consider the risk of nominating a candidate with an immigrant background to be higher than the benefits gained from mobilising and securing immigrant votes, because their voter base has reservations vis-à-vis cultural diversity.¹⁹

However, what tendencies have voting behaviour shown up to now? What are the immigrants' preferences? Between 2016 and 2018 party preferences underwent considerable changes, which indicate that old patterns of party affiliation are breaking down: up to 2016 immigrants, if one considers all groups, seemed to have found their political home rather in the SPD, with a substantial lead over the union parties (40.7% vs. 27.6%). "Bündnis 90/Grüne" and "Die Linke" were almost neck and neck (13.2% vs. 11.3%). However, in 2018 a shift occurred – now across all immigrant groups the CDU/CSU at 43.2% was ahead of the SPD at 25% (38% CDU/CSU and 17% SPD for people without an immigrant background). This striking change is due above all to the change in the party preference of persons of

15 Statistisches Bundesamt, "Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund – Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2018", Fachserie 1 Reihe 2.2, 2019, Wiesbaden.

16 Andreas Wüst, "Wie wählen Neubürger? Politische Einstellungen und Wahlverhalten eingebürgerter Personen in Deutschland", Wiesbaden, Springer VS, 2002.

17 See Mediendienst-Integration, <https://mediendienst-integration.de/integration/politik.html>, (Accessed 22 June 2020).

18 Ibid.

19 See Blätte, "Die Stimmen der Migranten im Bundestagswahlkampf 2013."

Turkish origin; less had changed in the preferences of the other large immigrant group, the ethnic German resettlers, who showed an inverse party preference pattern, with a significantly higher affinity for the CDU/CSU. While the group of ethnic German resettlers favours Christian democrats (around 41%) and the SPD accounts for only 15%, for people of Turkish origin the SPD (37%) is still the most popular party, though the CDU/CSU still attains 33%. However, in 2016 with regard to people of Turkish origin the SPD still stood at almost 70% and the CDU/CSU at only 6%. At around 10% Bündnis 90/Die Grünen enjoy the fourth strongest preference, while *Die Linke* has more supporters (12%).²⁰ For people of Turkish origin there has therefore been a considerable shift in party preference from the SPD to the CDU, which points towards an alignment with the general party preference, a tendency which for people of Turkish origin is also apparent in other surveys.²¹

Despite the strong shift in party support from the SPD to the CDU/CSU, the left-wing liberal camp is still in the lead. But is this the result of a general left-wing liberal disposition among people of Turkish origin? By contrast the transnational outlook explicitly repudiates this idea: For more than 10 years strong sympathy for the ruling AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – the Justice and Development Party) in Turkey has been noted among people of Turkish origin in Germany.²² This was apparent in both the national presidential election in 2014, in the voting for the Turkish parliament in 2015 (June and November), in the constitutional referendum in 2017 and also in the results of the last parliamentary election in 2018. These are shown here as an example:

Table 1: Parliamentary elections in Turkey in 2018:
Voting results for the population in Turkey and persons of Turkish origin abroad

	Turkey and abroad	Turkey only	Abroad	Germany
AKP	42.56	42.28	51.02	55.69
MHP	11.1	11.2	7.89	8.38
Republic electoral alliance	53.66	53.47	59.75	65.09
CHP	22.64	22.79	17.62	15.56
İYİ Parti	9.95	10.14	4.02	3.35
Saadet Partisi	1.35	1.36	0.88	0.83
Nation electoral alliance	33.94	34.29	22.52	19.74
HDP	11.7	11.53	17.34	14.79
Source: <i>Anadolu Agency, Milliyet</i> (other smaller parties are not specifically shown)				

20 SVR (Sachverständigenrat für Migration und Integration deutscher Stiftungen), “Parteipräferenzen von Zuwanderinnen und Zuwanderern: Abschied von alten Mustern. Kurzinformation des SVR-Forschungsbereichs 2018-2”, https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/media/downloads/3_Publikationen/2018/September/SVR_Partepraeferenzen_2018.pdf. (Accessed 3 June 2020).

21 E.g. in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), see Martina Sauer, “Identifikation und politische Partizipation türkeistämmiger Zugewanderter in Nordrhein-Westfalen und in Deutschland. Ergebnisse der erweiterten Mehrthemenbefragung 2017”, <https://cdn.website-editor.net/09fe2713f5da44ff99ead273b339f17d/files/uploaded/2017.pdf>. (Accessed 3 June 2020).

22 For NRW see Sauer, “Identifikation und politische Partizipation”.

Spread across whole Germany, approval ratings for the ruling AKP are thus significantly higher among Turkish migrants than the values in Turkey; and looking at the federal state level, they even reach values of around 70%.

Support for the CHP (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* – Republican People’s Party), as the second strongest opposition party, lags far behind (in Germany) at 16% (that party is currently the second strongest party in Turkey at almost 23%), almost neck and neck with the HDP (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi* – People’s Democratic Party; a politically left-wing liberal leaning party associated with the Kurds), which stands at 15%.

How can this contradiction in psychological profile and party preference be explained? First we should remember, with reference to the social psychology-based research studies on voting behaviour (the Michigan model), that three central factors/attitudes influence voting: 1. Factual orientation/issues, 2. Candidate orientation and 3. Party identification.²³

The preference for social democratic, left and green parties can thus be largely attributed to the party programmes of the German parties on the issues of integration, minority rights, acceptance of dual citizenship etc., even though half of the population of Turkish origin is naturalised and enjoys full legal rights. Thus one can by all means speak of pragmatic positioning based on a calculation of one’s own interests, even if migrants’ interests are obviously not wholly wrapped up in issues related to migration and integration, but rather are equally affected by developments on the labour and housing market, education and healthcare policy etc.

Party political preferences with regard to Turkey can be explained first and foremost in terms of the various migration waves from Turkey to Germany and long-term party identification: in the first phase of migration, i.e. from 1961 to 1973, the “guest workers”, who were successively joined by their families, largely originated from the rural population, which had a predominantly conservative/Islamic character. In Germany they organised through compatriot associations (often known as “culture associations”), as well as through mosque associations, which politically now tend to be part of the ruling AKP’s voter pool. These conservative/religious attitudes are largely passed on within families to subsequent generations. Generally speaking, intergenerational transmission of values is very pronounced in immigrants.²⁴

In the second major migration wave, i.e. during and after the military coup of 1980 and after the long period of unrest in southeast Turkey in the 1990s, increasingly people with a left-leaning political mindset or from the territories predominantly inhabited by Kurds came to Germany seeking asylum. Currently, besides left-wing liberal intellectuals (who have grown up here), particularly Kurdish and also Alevi communities (due to their historical tension with Sunni Islam) provide the largest potential for support for the HDP and have a critical attitude towards the AKP, although there are Kurdish-origin people with strong religious (Sunni muslim) ties, who refuse both PKK and HDP. Turkish social democracy, with its emphasis on secularism, the Atatürk reforms etc., does not offer a distinct profile for people of Turkish origin in Germany – its themes (such as secularism) affect the everyday lives of people of Turkish origin in Germany less, and it speaks rather to an elite in Turkey with a western, global and urban orientation. We assume that supporters of the CHP in Germany recruits especially

23 See Wüst, “Wie wählen Neubürger?”.

24 Irina Mchitarjan and Rolf Reizenzein, “Kulturtransmission bei Minderheiten: Ein Theorieentwurf”, *Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation*, Vol. 30, No 4, 2010, p. 421 - 435.

from a growing Turkish intellectual in the second and third generation of Turkish guest workers with a positive ethnic Turkish identity, but sceptical attitudes to the current Turkish politics.

The example of this apparently contradictory voting behaviour sheds light on the multiple fractures that divide immigrants of Turkish origin. On the one hand, there is a group with a strongly religious/conservative orientation, which at least sympathises with the Islamisation tendencies in Turkey but in Germany experiences the strongest sense of exclusion and rightly demands more participation and equal rights. On the other hand, there is a group with a left-wing liberal orientation which is highly critical of the political developments in Turkey but at the same time also sceptical with regard to greater “empowerment” of Muslims in Germany, viewing them as “backward” and “premodern”. This political orientation (left wing in Germany and right wing in Turkey) seems for Turkish political scientist like Murat Erdogan not as a confusing contradiction, but more an expression of transnational and hybrid identities.²⁵

The empirical study presented here addresses the following two sets of question:²⁶

1. How strong is the political interest of persons of Turkish origin and by what factors is it significantly influenced?
2. How does the election turnout and party preference of persons of Turkish origin look in the transnational context?

Empirical Study: Methodology

In order to answer these questions, 2017 data from the multi-theme survey regularly carried out by the Centre for Turkish Studies and Integration Research (*Zentrum für Türkeistudien und Integrationsforschung - ZfTI*) since 1999 have been used. In that year, besides a survey of approximately 1,000 individuals of Turkish origin in North Rhine-Westphalia, approximately 1,000 people of Turkish origin in other German states were also questioned in the autumn of 2017 and appropriately weighted for the nationwide assessment, which led to a weighted case number of 1,527 interviews. The survey was carried out as a computer-supported, representative and bilingual telephone survey (CATI – computer-assisted telephone interviewing). The target group was persons of Turkish origin²⁷ over 18 years of age, and the basis for selection was an onomastic procedure where entries with a Turkish given and surname were picked out of electronic telephone books. The population of persons of Turkish origin over 18 years of age in Germany amounts to 2,023,000.²⁸ The interviews lasting an average of 20 minutes were carried out 20% in German and 80% in Turkish.

25 See Murat Erdoğan, “Avrupada’ki Türkiyeli Göçmenler ve Euro-Turks Barometre Araştırmaları”, *Göç Araştırmaları Dergisi- The Journal of Migration Studies*, Vol. 1, No 1, 2015, p. 108-148.

26 Some of the results presented here have already been published in Sauer “Identifikation und politische Partizipation türkeistämmiger Zugewandelter in Nordrhein-Westfalen und in Deutschland. Ergebnisse der erweiterten Mehrthemenbefragung 2017”, <https://cdn.website-editor.net/09fe2713f5da44ff99ead273b339f17d/files/uploaded/2017.pdf>. (Accessed 3 June 2020).

27 The term “of Turkish origin” refers to persons with family roots in Turkey, irrespective of their ethnic affiliation (Turks, Kurds, Armenians etc.) and citizenship or the migrant generation they belong to.

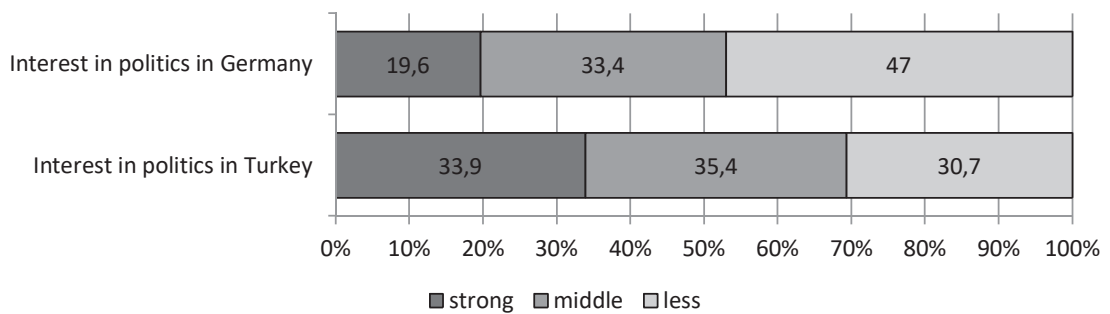
28 Special evaluation of the micro-census 2016 (persons of Turkish origin over 18 years of age) by the Federal Statistical Office, foreigners and integration statistics, e-mail following an enquiry of 4 August 2017.

Political Participation

Political Interest

In persons of Turkish origin interest in German politics is significantly lower than interest in Turkish politics. While almost one fifth stated that they have a strong interest in German politics, more than one third affirmed a strong interest in Turkish politics. At the same time almost half have only limited interest in German politics and just under one third have little interest in Turkish politics. The two orientations show a high degree of correlation with each other. Those with a strong interest in German politics also have a strong interest in Turkish politics and vice versa.

Figure 1: Interest in politics in Germany and in Turkey compared (row percentage)



To obtain a more meaningful impression than a mere snapshot, we observed this process over a longer period, from 1999 in North Rhine-Westphalia. The above findings are confirmed: the interest in Turkish politics was at all times higher than the interest in German politics, the fluctuations in the interest in Turkish and German politics developing in relatively parallel fashion until 2010. However, subsequently the interest in German politics decreases, remaining relatively constant until 2015 and increasing again in 2017. By contrast, the interest in Turkish politics increased continually from 2010 and in 2017 reached the same value as in 2015, these being so far the two highest values. The drifting apart of the two orientations observable since 2010 has thus been halted for the time being.

Analyses of interdependencies for people of Turkish origin in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) show that German citizens with Turkish roots more frequently have an interest in German politics, but are no less frequently interested in Turkish politics. They more often see the German federal government and somewhat less frequently the Turkish government as a representative of their interests, are more satisfied with the work of the German federal government and more frequently see opportunities for participation through codetermination and exercising an influence. They also more frequently affirm the consideration given by politicians to citizens' interests.

The relationships with the interest in politics (with regard to both countries) have two things in common in NRW (see table 2): women have somewhat less interest in politics than men and, possibly counterintuitively, religious beliefs do not play a significant role for an interest in politics. Interest in Turkish politics is determined by gender, social status, acculturation and the perception of discrimination. Interest in German politics is influenced to an even greater ex-

tent by acculturation, but only to a limited extent by social status. On the other hand, the degree of interaction with the majority society has a clear impact. Also apparent is the relationship with the generation a person belongs to and the perception of discrimination. However, weak relationships were identified with regard to a person's assessment of their own economic situation and economic prospects (see table 2).

Table 2: Interest in German and Turkish politics – persons of Turkish origin in NRW (mean values*)

		Interest in German politics	Interest in Turkish politics
Gender	Male	0.86	1.18
	Female	0.58	0.95
	Cramers V.	0.182***	0.144***
Generation	First	0.54	0.93
	Second	0.83	1.08
	Third	0.90	1.09
	Marriage migrants	0.44	1.08
	Cramers V.	0.171***	n.s.
Citizenship	Turkish	0.57	1.10
	German	0.90	1.03
	Cramers V.	0.222***	n.s.
Acculturation	Low	0.22	0.79
	Rather low	0.46	0.93
	Rather high	0.81	1.13
	High	1.07	1.17
	Cramers V.	0.262***	0.118**
Social status	Low	0.73	0.94
	Rather low	0.78	1.10
	Rather high	0.76	1.15
	High	1.04	1.31
	Cramers V.	0.110*	0.122*
Interaction	Low	0.44	1.15
	Rather low	0.45	0.97
	Rather high	0.66	1.01
	High	0.91	1.13
	Cramers V.	0.177***	n.s.
Economic situation	Good	0.85	1.14
	So-so	0.67	1.05
	Poor	0.57	0.92
	Cramers V.	0.111***	0.084**
Perception of discrimination	No	0.63	0.95
	Yes	0.81	1.11
	Cramers V.	0.119***	0.110***
Total		0.72	1.07

* Mean on a scale of 0 = low interest to 2 = strong interest.

Significance level: *** < 0.001; ** < 0.01; * < 0.05

Party Preference

Party preference or affiliation means a relatively stable psychological tie with a party which is usually formed in youth. In the first instance a person's life in the context of the family home has an effect on party preference. However, in later stages of life the social environment and media, which also shape values, are influential. Party affiliation is also affected by sociodemographic characteristics such as religious affiliation, education and social status: citizens in Germany with ties to Christianity tend to support the union parties, whereas employees without any church affiliation tend to support the SPD. Die Grüne and the FDP are primarily voted for by highly educated citizens with a weak church affiliation. Besides long-term forging of affiliation, support for a particular party can also be determined in the short-term by specific or personal issues.²⁹ Whether a party affiliation (in the host country) is fostered in immigrants often also depends on their experiences in the country of origin (which may still have an impact in the next generation), on the length of their stay (a party affiliation needs time to develop) and, for all migrants, on their interest in politics as well as their identification with the host society. Last but not least it depends on the possibility of participating in elections at all.³⁰

Even if the positions of the parties on integration policy have converged since the Federal Republic of Germany committed itself to an immigration society to the extent that they all acknowledge integration as a socio-political task, the parties nevertheless differ in their understanding of integration. A still existing basic conflict with the polarities of a monocultural (support for resettler immigration and integration; restriction of immigration, permanent settlement and the naturalisation of other groups) and a multicultural model of society (support for asylum seekers and integration of foreign workers) is even perceptible and attributable to the political camps. This also affects the party affiliation of immigrants.³¹

Accordingly resettlers, for example, had a greater tendency to lean towards the conservative/bourgeois camp, while German citizens of Turkish origin for a very long time leant towards the left-wing camp and the SPD, not least due to its strong ties with the trade unions and the image of the SPD as the "workers' party".

Achim Goerres et al.³² compared the voting behaviour of people of Turkish origin with ethnic

29 It should be taken into account that the "Sunday question" reflects party preferences and moods that do not necessarily represent actual voting behaviour. The further away an election is the more noncommittal the position expressed in the Sunday question and the more the answer is influenced by moods and current debates. The closer an election gets the greater the impact of long-term voter affiliations, which then have a strong influence on the day of the election, more so than specific or personal issues. See Stephanie Müssig and Susanne Worbs, "Politische Einstellungen und politische Partizipation von Migranten in Deutschland". Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge: Reihe Integrationsreport, No 10, Working Paper No 46, 2012, p. 1-58.

30 See Ibid.; Martin Kroh and Ingrid Tucci, "Parteibindungen von Migranten: Parteien brauchen erleichterte Einbürgerung nicht zu fürchten", *Wochenbericht des DIW*, No 47, 2009, p. 821 – 827.

31 Wüst, "Wahlverhalten und politische Repräsentation von Migranten"; Klaudia Tietze, "Einwanderung und die deutschen Parteien. Akzeptanz und Abwehr von Migranten im Widerstreit in der Programmatik von SPD, FDP, den Grünen und CDU/CSU", Münster, LIT Verlag, 2008.

32 Achim Goerres et al., "Deutsche mit Migrationshintergrund bei der Bundestagswahl 2017: Erste Auswertungen der Immigrant German Election Study zu Deutschtürken und Russlanddeutschen", https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323534980_Deutsche_mit_Migrationshintergrund_bei_der_Bundestagswahl_2017_Erste_Auswertungen_der_Immigrant_German_Election_Study_zu_Deutschturken_und_Russlanddeutschen (Accessed 27 June 2020).

German resettlers / immigrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union. They also come to the conclusion that, on the one hand, the election turnout of those two groups is considerably lower (58 % among ethnic German resettlers; 64 % among people of Turkish origin) than for all people eligible to vote (76%), and on the other that people of Turkish origin tend to be on the left of the ideological spectrum while ethnic German resettlers clearly tend to be on the right. Theoretically, the orientation on the sociopsychological Michigan model seems unproblematic also for research into immigrant voting behaviour – long-term factors such as party identification were less explanative than short-term orientations with regard to problem-solving competence or top candidates.

The results of the ZfTI multi-theme survey also showed, for persons of Turkish origin up to 2015, a marked dominance of the SPD and a relatively high share for *Die Grünen* and *Die Linke*, as well as a significantly lower affiliation with the CDU and FDP compared to the overall electorate,³³ which in the meantime, however, has weakened considerably.³⁴ Various analyses of the party affiliation of immigrants³⁵ arrive fairly unequivocally at the conclusion that the preference for a party among migrants is largely attributable to the migration history or type of migration (resettler or “guest worker”) and is influenced only to a limited extent by other factors like education and professional or social status. This dominance of migration-related factors is declining but still extant.³⁶

The party political landscape in Turkey also reflects basic societal conflicts, which primarily run along the lines of secularism vs. religious order and a homogeneous vs. a plural ethnic social structure and, passed on intergenerationally and transnationally, are also apparent in the Turkish community in Germany. The religious conflict is represented by the AKP on one side and the secular, social democratic CHP on the other; the ethnic division finds expression in the party political spectrum with the HDP and the nationalistic MHP (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* – the Nationalist Movement Party).³⁷ The AKP is currently the strongest party in Turkey. It rules without coalition partners and has a majority in parliament thanks to an alliance with the MHP.

The party preferences of people of Turkish origin living in Germany exhibit contradictory orientations for Germany and Turkey, which can be attributed (for Germany) to the objectives with regard to integration policy and the traditional (self-)positioning in the worker class and for Turkey to an ethnic-religious origin and character.³⁸

33 See Sauer, “Politische und zivilgesellschaftliche Partizipation von Migranten”.

34 See Sauer, “Identifikation und politische Partizipation”; See also SVR (Sachverständigenrat für Migration und Integration deutscher Stiftungen), “Parteipräferenzen von Zuwanderinnen und Zuwanderern: Abschied von alten Mustern. Kurzinformation des SVR-Forschungsbereichs 2018-2”, https://www.stiftung-mercator.de/media/downloads/3_Publikationen/2018/September/SVR_Partiepraeferenzen_2018.pdf. (Accessed 3 June 2020).

35 E.g. Müssig and Worbs, “Politische Einstellungen”; Kroh and Tucci “Parteibindung von Migranten”; Wüst, “Wahlverhalten und politische Repräsentation von Migranten”.

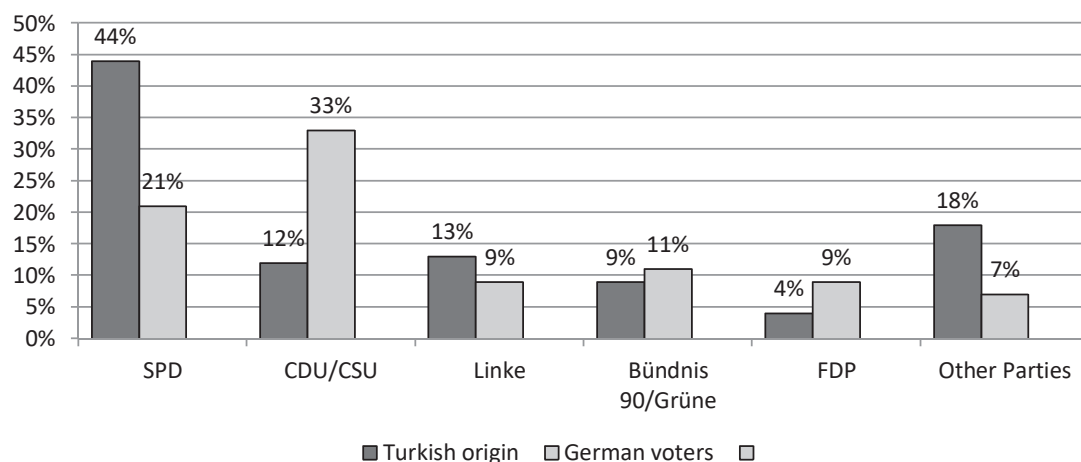
36 Sauer, “Identifikation und politische Partizipation”; SVR, “Parteipräferenzen von Zuwanderinnen und Zuwanderern”.

37 See Haci-Halil Uslucan, “Türkeistämmige in Deutschland. Heimatlos oder überall zuhause?”, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ)*, Vol. 67, No 1-2, 2017, p. 31-37.

38 Ibid.

If one compares the results from 2017 for people of Turkish origin eligible to vote³⁹ with regard to the “Sunday question” concerning the federal parliament elections with a current survey of the entire German electorate,⁴⁰ there are huge differences, particularly with regard to the two major parties. For the entire German population in January 2018, the CDU stood at 33% and the SPD accounted for 21%, while *Die Grünen* stood at 11% and the FDP at 9%. Of these, 9% would have voted for *Die Linke* if there had been a federal parliamentary election on the following Sunday. There was a 12 % point difference between the SPD and CDU in favour of the CDU. However, according to the results of the current survey, in the voting by the eligible population of Turkish origin in Germany there is 32 % point difference in favour of the SPD. Thus the share of SPD voters among immigrants eligible to vote of Turkish origin is 23 % points higher than in the entire German electorate. On the other side the share of CDU voters is 21 % points lower, while for *Die Linke* the share is 4 % points higher and for the FDP 5 % points lower.

Figure 2: Party preference for the next parliamentary election of voting eligible immigrants of Turkish origin in Germany and the entire voting eligible population (percentage values – only respondents with a party preference) Date of Survey: January 2018



* In the entire German population including 13% AfD

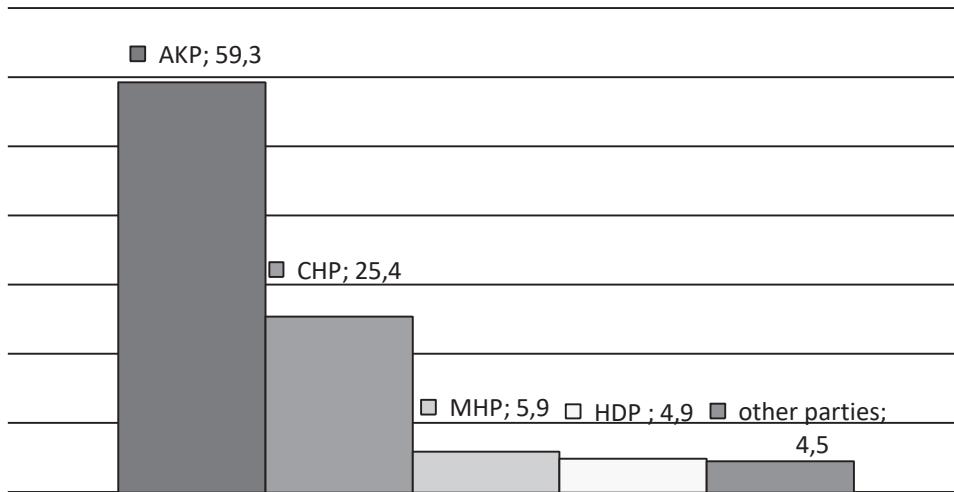
Party Preference in Elections in Turkey

In terms of party preference in parliamentary elections in Turkey, for all persons of Turkish origin in Germany the AKP is clearly dominant (59%). The second strongest party would be the CHP at 25%, followed by the MHP at 6% and the HDP at 5%.

39 According to estimates on the basis of the micro-census (special assessment of the Federal Statistical Office upon request, e-mail of August 2017), almost 740,000 German citizens with Turkish roots (including people with dual citizenship) were over the age of majority and therefore entitled to vote for the parliamentary elections in September 2017.

40 Source: Representative telephone survey of 1,500 citizens in Germany eligible to vote by Infratest-dimap in January 2018 on behalf of Tagesschau (ARD Germany trend) <https://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/photographs/crbilderstrecke-449.html> (Accessed 14 February 2018)

Figure 3: Party preference in the next parliamentary election in Turkey (percentage values – only respondents with a party preference); Date of Survey: Octobre 2017



Also with regard to party preference in Turkey the respondents differ according to citizenship. Turkish citizens⁴¹ – who are thus entitled to vote in Turkey – would still vote for the AKP significantly more frequently than German citizens (+17 percentage points) and less frequently for the CHP (-13 percentage points). Turkish citizens also still favour the MHP a little more (+5 percentage points), while the HDP would garner fewer votes from Turkish citizens than from German ones (-7 percentage points).

If one compares the survey results with regard to the “Sunday question” concerning the parliamentary elections in Turkey of October/November 2017 with a current (January 2018) survey of the electorate in Turkey,⁴² huge differences are again apparent, particularly with regard to the AKP, which stands at 40 % in Turkey and would therefore receive 29 % points less support than among Turkish citizens in Germany. The CHP would be voted for by 25 % in Turkey and would therefore receive 6 % points more support than in Germany. The MHP accounts for 7 % of the votes in Turkey and 1 % point more in Germany. The HDP has a figure of 11% in Turkey, 8 % points more than in Germany.

If, irrespective of the voting right and therefore citizenship, we compare the party preferences of people of Turkish origin in Germany with their party preferences in Turkey, we obtain a very unusual distribution that requires an explanation: Supporters of “other parties” in Germany (and not the established parties with a longer tradition) are most frequently AKP voters (85%). That share is also comparatively high among FDP (70%) and CDU supporters (50%). By contrast, SPD and *Die Grünen* voters have an above average tendency in Turkey to support the CHP (58 % / 65 %); among

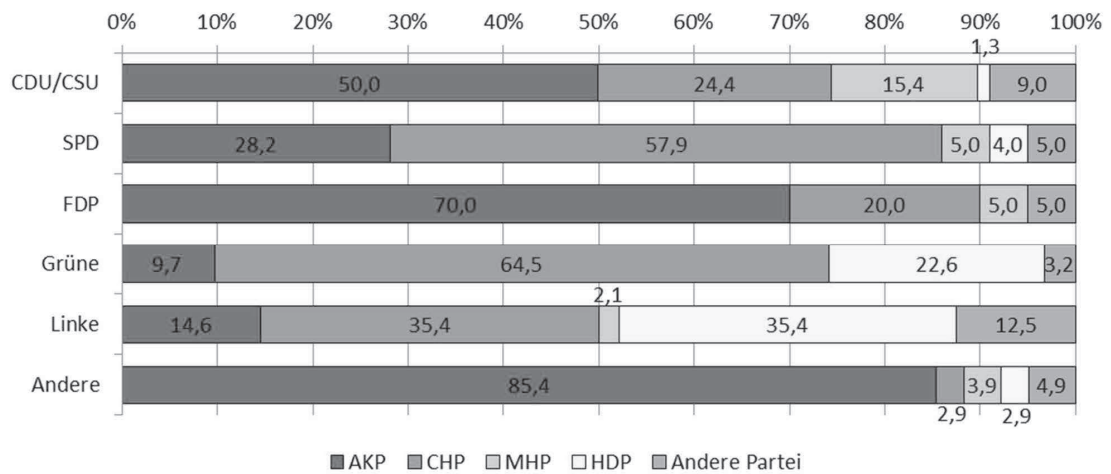
41 Since 2012 the approximately 1.4 million adult Turkish citizens in Germany have been able to participate in Turkish elections also from abroad. This was the case for the first time for the presidential elections in 2014.

42 Source: Representative telephone survey of 3,000 citizens eligible to vote in 26 cities in Turkey by the research institute SONAR, published in the daily newspaper Cumhuriyet, 14.01.2018. http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/photograph/foto_galeri/905050/1/SONAR_in_son_anketi__Erdogan_in_ikinci_turda_da_secilmesi_cok_zor.html

SPD supporters there are even more AKP voters (28 %) than among supporters of *Die Grünen* (10 %). Also, out of supporters of *Die Grünen* a relatively high share would vote HDP (23 %). A good one third (each) of supporters of *Die Linke* of Turkish origin favour the CHP or the HDP.

If we also include those respondents who would not vote in Germany, the AKP supporters above all include non-voters and wavering voters, as well as supporters of other parties. “Only” 12 % of AKP supporters are also supporters of the SPD.

Figure 4: Party preference in parliamentary elections in Turkey according to party preference in German federal parliamentary elections (percentage values, N = 482) Date of Survey: October 2017



Andere: Other

Andere Partei: Other parties

Conclusion: Inferences/Recommendations

The results indicate a rather low level of political interest. Comparing genders, it is even lower among women than among men. However, among members of the next generation of Turkish migrants, political interest is significantly higher. Nonetheless, there is still room for further development. Earlier studies of young people show that particularly young people of Turkish origin have limited political knowledge compared to other ethnic groups (with regard to German politics).⁴³ Thus there seems to be a considerable challenge here for political education work, i.e. to focus more on young people and women.

By contrast, the adoption of German citizenship as well as acculturation, participation in the labour market and social interaction appear to boost political participation and political interest, not only with regard to Germany but also with regard to Turkey. Thus in terms of the need to strengthen political participation among immigrants (of Turkish origin) in Germany it would appear that equal citizenship, social and cultural rights and their acceptance, as well as the reduction of discrimination in the world of education and work, are of central importance. If people are given the sense that they

43 Greßer, “*Ethnische Ungleichheiten im politischen Wissen*”.

are “excluded”, i.e. that they do not belong “to us”, it also seems for them psychologically nonsensical to participate in the framework of values of the group which doesn’t even wish to include them among its number. This can also be proved with empirical data of the ZfTI: If possibilities of cooperation are deemed greater, an increased sense of belonging is also perceived.⁴⁴ Furthermore, research shows that a high level of participation by immigrants is also accompanied by higher values for a sense of well-being and satisfaction with life.⁴⁵

With regard to party preferences, a contradictory party affiliation among persons of Turkish origin in Germany (without religious affiliation and tending to the left) and Turkey (religious affiliation and conservative) can only be assumed to a limited extent – while the SPD is consistently the strongest party if one considers the entire group of people of Turkish origin, at the same time the general ideological tendency is also clear. However, with regard to Germany AKP supporters would vote rather for the CDU (and therefore remain in a “conservative block”) than, for example, left-wing or liberal parties. However, another result is equally noteworthy: The AKP supporters are predominantly in the group of non-voters or wavering voters. If there is party affiliation for Germany, AKP supporters are mainly found among the supporters of other parties. This may be an indication of a somewhat detached attitude to the German party political landscape or only limited representation of their interests in it.

Besides greater consideration for immigrant interests, a significant increase in political participation could be achieved through a greater presence of candidates with an immigration background – numerous studies in European countries have shown that voters with an immigration background prefer candidates who themselves have a history of immigration or other/indigenous candidates, even if they have a different ethnic background. They consider the candidates with an immigration background to be more credible or “more sincere” as representatives of their interests.⁴⁶ This should be an incentive for political parties to be more sensitive in the selection of their top candidates and, with regard to the voter base, also drive forward the policy of opening the party for cultural diversity.⁴⁷

Finally, the question can now be asked: are people of Turkish origin in Germany (politically) at home? This question surely cannot be answered by way of yes/no binary logic. They are in the process

44 Sauer, “Identifikation und politische Partizipation”.

45 See Daniela Marzana et al., “Does Participating in National and Ethnic Associations Promote Migrant Integration? A Study with Young First- and Second-Generation Migrants”, Nikola Balvin and Daniel Christie (eds.), *Children and Peace*. Peace Psychology Book Series, Wiesbaden, Springer VS, 2020, p. 103-118.

46 Here one would obviously also have to examine the specifics of the electoral system and whether it is party or candidate-centric. This will not be further dealt with in this paper (for more detailed clarifications see Lucas Geese, “Do immigrant-origin candidates attract immigrant-origin voters in party-centred electoral systems? Evidence from Germany”, *Acta Polit*, Vol. 55, 2020, p. 492–511).

47 In a sociopsychological experiment it has been shown that a (notional) party whose members have been described as diverse (with regard to gender, religion and ethnicity) were perceived as being a little less competent and yet “warmer” compared to a “homogenous” party (dominated by “white” men, age homogeneity and ethnically German). The theoretical background is the *stereotype content model*, which predicts attitudes and behaviour with respect to social groups. In it warmth (with the sub-dimensions of “friendliness” and “moral integrity”) and competence constitute central predictors of trust. In this case that model was applied to political parties (trust in the party), and the effect of “warmth” was shown to be greater. Summarising these findings the authors come to the conclusion that it is more beneficial than harmful to a party if it externally communicates the social diversity of its mandate holders. See Franziska Ehrke et al., “Weniger kompetent, aber dafür wärmer? Zum Einfluss sozialer Vielfalt von Parteien auf politisches Vertrauen”, *Politische Psychologie*, Vol. 5, No 1, 2016, p. 28-45.

of settling into their new home Germany. They will be more likely to see it as their home if they can set up familiar furniture there, if they can divide up the walls and rooms differently and if they can contribute to the architecture of the entire building.

In sum, our work contributed to the literature in four respects: At first, it identifies the determinants of political participation and voting behaviour of Turkish migrants in Germany. Secondly, it gives some hints to increase the participation of Turkish migrants in the social and political life in Germany. Thirdly, it tries to understand the apparently contradictory voting behaviour with respect to elections in Turkey and Germany (conservative parties in Turkey; left-wing parties in Germany) and at last, it compares their voting behaviour with an other great migrant group in Germany, the resettlers from former Soviet Union, which is innovative and still not examined adequately.

Future studies should determine the political orientation of people of Turkish origin in a different host country (for example in USA or Great Britain, which have a very different Turkish population regarding socioeconomic status etc.), so that the context variable in Germany can be better assessed. Further studies should also compare the political orientations of people of Turkish origin with other immigrant groups so as to clarify the specific characteristics of the respective groups.