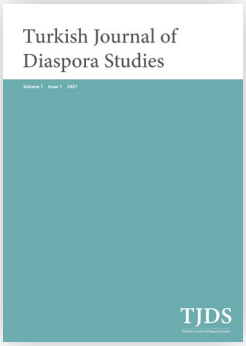

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Interview

Ayhan Kaya
Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey

Q1. *The concept of diaspora is used to define almost any community who has a distinct identity tied with an imagined or territorialized nation outside the resident country. Nationalization of the concept of "victim" diaspora seems no longer prevailing but communities beyond the territory of a nation generally fit the picture. Migration or exile is not the only cause to form diasporic communities. To some studies, socially, culturally, religiously, ethnically, linguistically, and/or geopolitically amalgamated communities are also deemed to form diaspora. Having said that, what do you think about the impact of the proliferation of the usage on the conceptualization of diaspora? And/or, how would you conceptualize diaspora?*

A1. I think the increasing circulation of the term "diaspora" in social sciences as well as in everyday life partly springs from the fact that religion has lately become an explanatory factor in understanding the socio-economic, political and psychological dynamics behind the act of migration. Religion has become more important for some social groups, especially migrants and refugees who live away from their homelands. Such groups try to find different shields to protect themselves against the perils of globalisation. To that effect, stories of migration are embedded in religious texts, and they offer various narratives into which migrants can insert their own migration stories to rationalise their act of migration. In reading and listening to the stories of those who have inhabited their religious tradition before them, migrants may discern the sacred in their own journeys and experiences. The stories of the exile for Jews and Christians, of migration for Muslims are paradigmatic in this sense. The stories of migration are also depicted in other religions as well such as Hinduism. The experience of being in exile provides the context within which other stories of migration were formulated, including those of Abraham uprooting his family, leaving his home city of Ur and living as a nomad; Moses and the people of Israel leaving Egypt for the Promised Land; Joseph being sold into slavery and traveling as a slave to Egypt; Ruth and Naomi arriving from Moab as refugees from famine; and Mohammad's journey from Macca to Medina.

The story of Abraham has been used together with the story of Ulysses in Migration Studies and Diaspora Studies to describe the difference between modern diasporas and old diasporas. The term 'diaspora' is derived from the Greek verb *sperio* (to sow, to scatter) and the preposition *dia* (through, apart). For Greeks, the term referred to migration and colonisation, whereas for Jews, Africans, Palestinians and Armenians the same term acquired a more unfortunate, brutal and traumatic dispersion through scattering. Yet, the contemporary notion of diaspora is not limited only with Jewish, Greek, Palestinian and Armenian dispersive experiences; rather it describes a larger domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker,

CONTACT *Ayhan Kaya* *ayhan.kaya@bilgi.edu.tr*

exile community and ethnic community. The primary difference between the old and modern form of diasporas lies in their changing will to go back to the 'holy land', or homeland. In this sense, the old diasporas resemble the story of *Ulysses* while the modern ones have been like that of *Abraham*. After the Trojan war, Ulysses encountered many problems on the way back to Ithaca. Although he had many obstacles during his journey, he was determined to go back home. Conversely, the experience of the modern labour diasporas resembles the prophet Abraham's biblical journey. In the first part of the Bible, it is written that Abraham, upon the request of God, had to journey with his people to find a new home in the unknown, and he never went back to the place he left behind. The analogy of Ulysses and Abraham originally belongs to the philosopher, Emmanuel Levinas. In explaining the attempt of conventional philosophy to seek the knowledge about the 'Other', Levinas stated that the history of philosophy has been like the story of Ulysses who 'through all his wanderings only returns to his native island'. He preferred the story of Abraham to that of Ulysses. Conventional philosophy has always sought to return to familiar ground of 'being', 'truth' and 'the same', Levinas' endeavour was to take it elsewhere. He proposed that philosophy should accept that we do not, cannot and should not know the Other, rather than seeking knowledge of it.

Coming back to the original question, I think one of the reasons behind the proliferation of the usage of the term diaspora has something to do with the religionization and culturalisation of social-economic and Political phenomena in the age of globalisation…

Q2. *States are increasing their efforts all around the world for diaspora engagement; however, they still lack in giving efforts in internationally debated policies. This does not mean that states do not have diaspora policies of their own but we don't see the diasporic issues discussed among states perhaps due to political and socio-cultural sensibility. Is it possible for states to consider debating diaspora internationally beyond assimilation or nationalization policies?*

A2. I believe that multiple allegiance of diasporic subjects is a fact, and that is the reality which needs to be recognized by the migrant sending states and receiving states. My studies on the Turkish-origin migrants and their descendants in Europe so far have revealed that Turkish-origin residents in Europe want both the Turkish state and their countries of residence to grant dual citizenship rights, sometimes even multiple citizenship rights, driven from their physical, mental and symbolic allegiance to each country, culture, and state.

Rainer Bauböck (2007) classifies diasporic citizens in three distinct categories: multiple nationals, denizens and ethnizens. Multiple nationals are formally recognized as citizens by two or more independent countries tolerating, or even actively promoting, dual citizenship. This is an indication of the normative and institutional change in attitudes towards transnationalism. The term 'denizenship' refers to a special legal status of longterm resident foreign nationals who enjoy most of the civil liberties and social welfare rights of resident citizens, often including rights to family reunification, some protection from deportation and voting rights in local elections, as well as quasi-entitlements to naturalization. Denizenship is a status of residential quasi-citizenship combined with external formal citizenship granted by the sending country. Denizenship is often considered a step in the process of migrant integration in the receiving country. It is therefore rarely regarded as a mode of transnational diasporic citizenship. Finally,

'ethnizenship' is the converse of denizenship, in a way that creates an external quasi-citizenship for individuals who are neither citizens nor residents of the country granting that status. It is generally granted to minorities on the basis of ethnic descent and perceived as common ethnicity with an external kin state. States such as Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia have recently adopted laws that introduce quasi-citizenship for minorities of co-ethnic descent living abroad, in order to provide them with certain benefits including financial support for maintaining a minority culture and language, privileged admission to the territory or labour market of the kin state, and in some cases, facilitation of naturalization.

Multiple nationals' special status must be recognized by relevant states if these states want to enjoy the financial, political, economic, cultural and social contributions to their countries by those citizens. Otherwise, those multiple nationals tend to resent towards those countries that do not officially recognize their socio-economic, political and psychological reality based on multiple forms of belonging. This kind of resentment mostly result in cutting off the linkages with such states that do not officially recognize their reality. For instance, Aiwa Ong calls diasporic Chinese subjects 'multiple passport holders', 'multicultural manager with flexible capital', 'astronauts' shuttling across borders on business and 'parachute kids', who are 'dropped off in another country by parents on the trans-Pacific business commute'. The states that are actors in this game are expected to grant flexible citizenship, transnational citizenship, or diasporic citizenship, to such multiple nationals if they want to compete more effectively in the global economy.

Turkish origin migrants and their descendants in Europe also want to enjoy the right to dual, or multiple, citizenship in their countries of origin and of settlement. It is now apparent that the cross-border life of transmigrants of Turkish origin is the most important determinant of tolerance of dual citizenship within Turkey as well as in their countries of residence. However, nowadays, the current state of political affairs between Turkey and the European Union Member States indicates that those multiple citizenship rights are at risk due to the escalation of polarizing attempts between the two sides in the age of populism.

Q3. *Since the world entered into the nation-state system, territorial states have not been able to contain nations, rather led to increasing diasporas. So how do globalized nations and governance impact territorial state and diaspora relations?*

A3. The more global the world becomes the more nation-states want to have diasporic subjects away from home and to instrumentalize them in obtaining their international objectives. Sometimes homeland states tend to politically and economically instrumentalize their diasporic communities to put pressure on the state actors of the receiving states. The polemics between the Turkish state actors and the Dutch state actors in 2017 is a good example in this sense. President Erdoğan's statements regarding the members of the Turkish diaspora to be more active in public space is also another indication of the instrumentalization of diasporic individuals in obtaining national objectives in international politics. Sometimes, receiving states such as Germany may instrumentalize these transnational and diasporic communities to make an impact on their homeland, Turkey. For instance, Germany aims to set up a social, economic, cultural, and sometimes even political, bridge between the two sides by instrumentalizing the hybrid cultures

of German-Turkish youngsters competent in both languages and cultures.

Sometimes, there might be other cases which are peculiar with the existence of kinship communities living in the neighbouring country. Hungarian minority in Romania, Silesian minority in Poland, Turkish minority in Greece, and many others are such examples. Mainstream political parties and the others in Romania often blame the Hungarian minority of having dual loyalty, being anti-Romanian and irredentist.

Hence, in both cases, one could argue that the legacy of nation-states still continues. Nations-states are still the leading actors in international relations. Global technologies of communication and transportation make it possible for them to have a strong impact on their diasporic communities. This is not only the case for the migrant sending states, but also for the migrant receiving states that are sometimes capable of instrumentalizing their immigrant populations as a leverage to make impact on the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of their homelands.

Q4. *In general, diaspora studies are not at their peak values. A small number of scholars dedicate their time to diaspora issues. For those who are eager to study this subject, what are the fundamental approaches to studying the concept of diaspora? Why is it important to study and how do you see where diaspora studies are heading to or need to go?*

A4. I can answer this question by quoting my PhD supervisor, Professor Steven Vertovec. Back in 1997, Steven [had] already made an important intervention in social sciences by classifying three different approaches to the notion of modern diaspora. This intervention is, I think, still relevant today. Young scholars can follow one of these paths which mostly originate from anthropology and sociology. The first standpoint regards diaspora as a *social form*. Daniel Boyarin, Jonathan Boyarin and William Safran are the representatives of this path. Diaspora as a social form refers to the transnational communities whose social, economic and political networks cross the borders of nation-states. The second approach conceives diaspora as a *type of consciousness* which emerges by means of transnational networks. James Clifford, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Paul Gilroy, and Robin Cohen have followed this path in their writings. This approach departs from W. E. B. Du Bois' notion of 'double consciousness', and refers to individuals' awareness of being simultaneously 'home away from home' or 'here and there'. The third path is the understanding, which regards diaspora as a *mode of cultural construction and expression*. Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, Steven Vertovec and many others have followed this path. This approach emphasises the flow of constructed styles and identities among diasporic people.

Diaspora Studies is a rich venue that is linked with Migration Studies, Refugee Studies, Citizenship Studies, Trasnationalism Studies, Nationalism Studies, and Ethnic Studies. Young scholars will have to go through the main texts written by Diaspora Studies scholars in order to understand the philosophical, ethical and scientific opening that they may offer in extending our horizon…

Orcid

Ayhan Kaya  *https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4431-3220*