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Exploring Cooperative Practices in the Everyday: The Power of Narratives, Visual Culture, and Transnational Identity in Turkish-German Relations

Deniz Güneş Yardımcı and Frank Gadinger

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Preface

In this working paper, the principal investigators of the DAAD-TÜBİTAK co-funded project 'Distant Neigbors: Exploring Political Narratives and Visual Culture in Turkish-German Relations' Frank Gadinger from the University of Münster and Deniz Güneş Yardımcı from Istanbul Bilgi University, give an introduction into the theoretical and methodological framework and objectives of the project. In their paper entitled 'Exploring Cooperative Practices in the Everyday: The Power of Narratives, Visual Culture and Transnational Identity in Turkish-German Relations' the authors note that narratives and visual culture play a significant role in building group identities, (de-)legitimizing narrow political realities and regaining voice in political discourses. They argue that political and in particular cultural actors around Turkish-German relationship develop transnational cooperations and culturally hybrid communities and work with narratives and visual culture that stabilize (fragile) relations across borders. This is the first working paper in the series on the ongoing project supported by Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) under the Grant Number 221N423 and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) under the Grand Number 57628225. The series hosts working papers associated with the research project.

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DAAD-TÜBİTAK Project

'Distant Neighbors: Exploring Political Narratives and Visual Culture in Turkish-German Relations'

About the DAAD-TÜBİTAK Project 'Distant Neighbors: Exploring Political Narratives and Visual Culture in Turkish-German Relations'

The joint research project between the European Institute at Istanbul Bilgi University and the Centre for Global Cooperation Research, funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK). The starting observation in the context of the project is that the relationship between Turkey and Germany has been mainly analyzed in social science research (e.g. foreign policy analysis) through a narrow focus on political elites and in the context of the EU or broader geopolitical concerns. These studies often claim that the relationship has transformed from a befriended to a rather pragmatic mode of cooperation and can be characterized as a form of 'distant neighbors' particularly in the ritualized meetings between German and Turkish political leaders (Merkel, Scholz, Erdoğan). Our project aims at challenging or at least supplementing this dominant narrative by broadening the empirical scope from political elites to the much larger variety of political and cultural actors (civil society movements, political activists, scientists, filmmakers, novelists, musicians, artists etc.) from both countries in their European and transnational context. Our main argument is that these actors, operating in often very loose transnational networks (e.g. environmental activism, film festivals), have developed and established practices and creative techniques in transnational cooperation and thereby overcome the nationalist-driven narratives of a distant relationship. In short, the state of affairs in German-Turkish relations is much more complex and, to some extent, much more promising than a focus on bilateral official relations would suggest.

For more information, please visit the project Website: https://explorenarratives.com/

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Biography

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Frank Gadinger is currently a Professor of International Relations and Sustainable Development at the University of Münster/Germany. His research interests include the appeal of right-wing populism, the normativity of international practices, the role of narratives in IR, visual storytelling in global politics, and practices of (de)legitimation in world politics. He published in journals such as International Political Sociology, International Studies Quarterly, International Studies Review, Narrative Culture, Review of International Studies and European Journal of International Security. Recently, he published the edited volume (with Jan Aart Scholte) Polycentrism: How Governing Works Today (with Oxford University Press, 2023).

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Deniz Güneş Yardımcı is DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) lecturer and researcher at the European Institute at Istanbul Bilgi University. She is a sociologist, media- and film scholar specialized in Turkish-German relations with a focus on Turkish-German migration history, cultural identity, and the cinematic representation of migration, refugees and diasporas. Yardımcı has a PhD in Media Arts/Film Studies from Royal Holloway, University of London. She further holds a BA and MA in Sociology and a BA and MA in Media and Communication Studies/Film Studies from the Johannes Gutenberg University-Mainz, Germany. Currently, she is the principal investigator of the Turkish team of the bilateral DAAD-TÜBİTAK project 'Distant Neighbors: Exploring Political Narratives and Visual Culture in Turkish-German Relations' and working on her book about 'Culture and Identity in Turkish-German Cinema'.

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Exploring Cooperative Practices in the Everyday: The Power of Narratives, Visual Culture and Transnational Identity in Turkish-German Relations

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Introduction

When we think about the idea and term 'cooperation' in the political realm, we often focus on issues of global cooperation such as climate change, negotiations about peace and conflict or development and aid. Then, we think about enduring problems and challenges, might feel frustrated about the increasing complexity of a world in crisis and doubt the objective of finding global solutions through cooperative efforts. Such a narrow view on cooperation in 'high politics' on a global scale, however, neglects that our political life in the everyday is shaped by various established cooperative practices that seem to work and order our social activities like commuting, working, consumption, workout and so on. As these basic activities are mostly based on practical knowledge and cultural experiences, we do not explicitly notice them anymore and do not think about how they work in a social sense.

Think of ordinary disputes and joint initiatives for pragmatic solutions in the kindergarten and schools, in the job context or local politics in cities and villages. In such situations, various actors need to negotiate competing claims around a dispute – e.g. which rules do we establish in our company for working at home? How do we organize a party in our house community? – and aim at finding an agreement. The insights of such trivial situations in our everyday life, which are prime examples for cooperation in and through practice, have been rather ignored

as a promising starting point by political scientists and social science scholars who mainly put emphasis on the results of global cooperation (e.g. a summit on climate negotiations) and identified explanations for (un)successful cooperation in the tradition of institutionalism (e.g. Axelrod 2006).

However, there is a recent trend in social sciences and humanities to conceptualize and study the notion of cooperation from a different point of view by emphasizing its processual and contingent nature. These scholars argue that cooperation should not be interpreted as an abstract, political instrument only used by political decision-makers, but as a social practice which is (re)produced by us as social agents all the time and in various social fields such as education, family life and work. Such a view considers human agency (e.g. Tomasello 2010) and argues that cooperative practices need to be analyzed in their historical background and in their embeddedness with other cultural dimensions such as narratives, emotions, norms and rules (see, e.g. Freistein et al. 2022; Gadinger and Scholte 2023).[1] This new kind of research has shown in fields such as migration (e.g. Mencutek 2018), digital data governance (Aguerre et al. 2024) or diplomacy (Hofius 2022) that cooperation often works through informal processes and experimental ways of governing and that creative agency plays a more significant role than assumed in institutionalist research on cooperation. Institutions and institutional procedures (as rules and practices) still play a role for establishing cooperative efforts, but not the only one. Furthermore, a turn to practices and the everyday implies to consider the materiality of our activities in relation with objects, technology and visuality (e.g. social media communication), the role of the body as main carrier of practices, and the contested nature of practice in their normative interpretation (Bueger and Gadinger 2018).

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[1] The interdisciplinary work at the Centre for Global Cooperation Research in Duisburg across 12 years is based on this premise and shows the promise of such a new perspective on global cooperation through various conceptual and empirical studies.

Main Argument

The idea for this book project comes from this theoretical starting point to interpret cooperation as a practice, which involves creativity, adaptation, and empowerment, and should not be regarded as a static procedure. As we are empirically interested in the development of Turkish-German relations and how political actors from both countries cooperate and creatively work together in many cultural projects and joint initiatives, we shift the focus from the narrow focus on political elites and decision-making processes on the diplomatic level of 'high politics' (e.g. Arısan-Eralp et al. 2022; Aydın-Düzgit and Tocci 2015; Turhan 2019) to other (often overlooked) spheres such as art, protest movements and academic projects. By drawing on European Union studies and foreign policy analysis (e.g. Reiners and Turhan 2021; Tekin and Schönlau 2022; Bedir, Gedikli, and Şenyuva 2022; Schulz 2019) many scholars often diagnose a growing distant and pragmatic relationship between Germany and Turkey due to an alienation in the European integration process and the purely strategic game between both countries around geopolitical concerns, the NATO partnership, the EU-Turkey deal on refugees and currently the Russian war in the Ukraine.

This 'high politics narrative' narrowly centers on the triangle between the political leaders of Turkey (Erdoğan), Germany (former and current chancellors Angela Merkel and Olaf Scholz) and the various actors around the EU. Following this focus of analysis, it is less surprising that the relationship is characterized as a transformation from a befriended to a rather pragmatic mode of cooperation in roles of 'distant neighbors' (the original title of the research proposal), particular in the ritualized and polite, yet rather frosty meetings and communication between German and Turkish political leaders, for instance after President Erdoğan's election victory in May 2023, Sweden's NATO membership debates, the Russian-Ukrainian war and the war in Gaza. As Ebru Turhan (2022) argued, the relationship between Turkey and Germany did never follow a linear development with continuous ups and downs, but always built on strong communication channels,

leading to a 'relatively pragmatic and transactional approach toward the evolution of the relations between Germany and Turkey, and between Turkey and the EU'. From such a point of view, the relationship in strategic terms of transactionalism is largely based on short-term and interest-oriented exchanges between both countries, rather than engagement based on shared normative goals (Turhan 2022).

Our project aims at challenging or at least supplementing this dominant narrative among contemporary prevailing scholarly debates on Turkish-German relations and public media discourses by broadening the empirical scope from political elites to the much larger variety of political and cultural actors (civil society movements, political activists, scientists, filmmakers, novelists, musicians, artists etc.) from both countries in their European and transnational context.[2] Various transnational initiatives such as the annual 'Film Festival Turkey Germany Nürnberg' for nearly three decades, the 'Turkish Film Festival Frankfurt' since 2000, the 'German-Turkish Co-Production Development Fund' by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İstanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı - IKSV) that fosters collaborations between filmmakers from both countries, and 'Tarabya Cultural Academy' in Istanbul, run by the German Embassy in Ankara and curated by the Goethe-Institute, awarding annual fellowships to artists in the fields of visual and performing arts, music, literature and film/media, and the initiative 'German-Turkish Youth Bridge' supported by Stiftung Mercator and the *German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and* North Rhine-Westphalia's *Ministry for Children, Youth, Family, Equality, Refugees and Integration, all aim to* support transcultural exchange between Turkey and Germany. These examples show that the case of Turkish-German relations can be also told differently through a broader lens that considers joint

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[2] The idea for this book project is based on a joint research project between the European Institute at Istanbul Bilgi University and the Centre for Global Cooperation Research, funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and TÜBİTAK. The group of scholars (Katja Freistein, Frank Gadinger, Mustafa Gökcan Kosen, Christine Unrau, Deniz Günes Yardimci) share an research interest in developing conceptual and methodological ideas on visual culture, narrative analysis and emotions in world politics.

initiatives, projects and collaborations which are embedded in practices of art, culture and everyday life.

The example of this joint research endeavor around the project between German and Turkish scholars[3] also shows that research activities across disciplines develop as part of a global research community and distance from closed national research contexts. While the idea of an exchange is still relevant for identifying overlap in research interests and sharing ideas, the bilateral categories of national identities have lost significance as many involved scholars switch between these both and other countries in their academic activities.

Our main argument is that many of these cultural and political actors, operating in often very loose transnational networks, have developed and established practices and creative techniques in transnational cooperation and thereby overcome the nationalist-driven narratives of a pragmatic or even distant relationship in terms of strategic interests. In short, the state of affairs in German-Turkish relations is much more complex and, to some extent, much more promising than a focus on bilateral official relations would currently suggest. The main difference to the focus on political elites is that all the other spheres of political life in everyday culture (e.g. film, art, music, architecture, popular culture, science), which are often overlooked by social science scholars, are taking into account and will provide the key sites for exploration in our project. The case of classical music concerts as controversial sites for mobilizing civil society, as Serkan Topal shows in his contribution by analyzing the role of pianist Fazil Say, demonstrates that supposedly apolitical activities like classical music can play a key role in negotiating political narratives around Turkish-German relations which transport the message of (re)building a bridge between Western and Turkish values through a combination of activism and music. The fields of literature and cinema are other important sites, on which hybrid and transnational narratives are developed by novelists like Feridun Zaimoğlu, Fatmas Aydemir, Deniz Ohde and filmmakers such

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[3] Funded by DAAD and TÜBİTAK

as Fatih Akın and Cem Kaya and who break with national clichés and tell more complex stories of culturally hybrid identities. It is interesting to remember that those exchanges have been mutually productive. While we often think about contemporary German-Turkish filmmakers and novelists in a narrow German perspective, it is often forgotten that many artists and scientists from Germany emigrated after 1933 to Turkey (e.g. Erich Auerbach, Paul Hindemith, Wilhelm Röpke), contributed to Turkey's new university and education system and also had the experience of being migrants (Reisman 2006).

This later example shows that it is insightful to complement the current view on pragmatic relations and 'Turkey deals' by a historical perspective on the complex and long-standing relations between Germany and Turkey. This relationship is dating back as far as the establishment of both republics and has been reflected in various cultural forms such as arts. Think of the German Fountain gifted by the German Kaiser Wilhelm II to the Ottoman Empire in 1900 and the historic summer residence of the German ambassador in Tarabya Istanbul, a gift from the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1880. Given both countries' growing ties in light of the 1960s labor migration, the social sphere has become an important place for understanding this relationship, and numerous studies have made Turkish immigrants and the Turkish diaspora in Germany their object of analysis. Yet only a limited number of those studies have taken the respective reflection in art, everyday culture and especially film into consideration (e.g. Alkın 2017; Yardımcı 2017, Hake and Mennel 2012; Tunç Cox 2012; Steward 2021).

Furthermore, instances of visual or music culture have received little attention in the exploration of the ever-intensifying Turkish-German relations. However, focusing on Turkish-German Hip-Hop Culture and Graffiti in Berlin, Ayhan Kaya (2007) argues that the German-Turkish diaspora not only 'shaped social, political, economic, and cultural spheres of life in Turkey', but also became 'transmigrants who can practically and symbolically travel back and forth between their countries of destination and of origin (…). The habitats of meaning of German-Turkish transmigrants are shaped by social, cultural, economic, and political

imperatives of both countries in a way that equips them with a rather more vibrant set of identities more cosmopolitan, more syncretic, more rhizomatic, and more transnational (498). Beyond their symbolic value for different generations of Turkish and German citizens, art and culture in many forms can be seen as an expression of different emotions that come to shape politics, such as frustration, uncertainty and hope, and stabilize fragile group identities through community building.

The project follows conceptual ideas around the narrative and visual turn in social sciences and humanities (e.g. Bleiker 2018; Crilley et al. 2020; Czarniawska 2004; Koschorke 2018; Patterson and Renwick Monore 1998) by emphasizing that narratives and visual culture play a significant role in building group identities, defining political realities, and (de-)legitimizing the various political projects in discourse. Narratives also involve an emancipatory potential as the polyphony of political discourse allows for regaining voice and developing new narratives that stabilize fragile group identities. Such a view is also relevant for issues of transnational cooperation as (visual) narratives and emotions provide sources and tools for establishing cooperative practices (Mayer 2014) and imagining pathways for groups and communities of different (and more hopeful) futures (Freistein et al. 2022).

As the various examples demonstrate, political and cultural actors around the Turkish-German relationship have developed transnational and culturally hybrid identities and work with narratives and visual culture to stabilize these fragile relations and communities across borders. In doing so, they underline the emancipatory potential of cooperative practices in a transnational space. While these social forces of visual narratives are often analyzed in studies on the rise of right-wing populism (e.g. Freistein and Gadinger 2020; Freistein et al. 2022), we aim at foregrounding the power of narratives and visual culture for progressive political projects that overcome nationalist ideology. Like populists, these actors develop (visual) narratives and draw on (pop-)cultural repertoires to create resonance with their critical audience. Particularly in situations of crisis or

exception, such as the recent, devastating earthquake in Turkey or the respective elections, transnational ties within civil society become more visible and can be studied systematically as instances of solidarity or cooperation.

Conceptual Background: Exploring Narratives, Visual Culture and Transnational Identity

The project aims at reconstructing Turkish-German relations along three different, but interlinked key dimensions: political narratives, visual culture and transnational identity. The conceptualization of a close link between political narratives and visual culture is one of the premises of the project, as it argues that political narratives as legitimizing devices for cooperative efforts and transnational identities are (re-)produced through storytelling practices in everyday discourses (film, art, culture, music, novels, etc.). Such a narrative view emphasizes the close relationship between linguistic and material elements of storytelling practices and further considers the role of affects and emotions (e.g. Koschut 2020).

Narratives

Scholars in social sciences have recently put more emphasis on the importance of narratives (and visuality) to better understand the cultural foundations of world politics. The concept of narrative is an interdisciplinary term in the tradition of literary studies, narratology and cultural studies (e.g. Koschorke 2018). As the term is sometimes narrowly used in terms of strategic action, we suggest a processual and relational notion of narrative as it is established in much practice- and discourse-oriented research across the disciplines. Such a processual notion means that a narrative is never fixed, as it needs to be enacted through practices and performances of storytelling by actors in situations of social life (Czarniawska 2004: 3). Narratives are a form of configuration device by which actors seek to

make sense of the world and order it in a specific way (Czarniawska 2004; De Fina 2021; Fisher 1987). As Jerome Bruner (1991: 4) famously remarked 'we organize our experiences and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on'. The notion of *homo narrans* underlines the different view on political actors who do not act in terms of simple actor models between either interests or norms, but play with creative capacities and skills to develop narratives that shape political realties (Koschorke 2018: 4, see also Fisher 1987).

Storytelling is subjective and linked to practical judgements of selective interpretation, personal experiences and sequencing of events (Somers 1994: 616; Wagenaar 2011: 214). Narratives require some sequential ordering of events, mostly termed as 'emplotment' (Somers 1994), but the events themselves need not be real (Patterson and Renwick Monroe 1998: 316). This sequencing and temporal ordering function of narratives can be interpreted as the key element of narratives as it puts emphasis on the creative dimension of storytelling between narrator and audience as well as on the political question which information around events is considered or disappears.

As Czarniawska (2004: 11) similarly argues, 'narrative is the main form of social life because it is the main device for making sense of social action'. Thus, narratives gain performative power to motivate, organize and stabilize collective action (Mayer 2014). In various policy fields such as urban planning and climate governance (Buchenau et al. 2023), it has been shown that narratives play a crucial role in establishing cooperative practices and developing a common belief in the "joint enterprise" (Wenger 1998) and guiding political pathways for action. The notion of community of practice (Wenger 1998), for instance, which is used to describe emerging practices and learning processes in groups and communities, ranging from companies and networks to organizations and integration projects like the EU, is based on the premise of shared repertoires and narratives that give orientation to the members of the group and provides legitimacy for working together (Bremberg et al. 2022). While narratives play a key role in shared knowledge creation and diffusion through practices, there are always overlapping

and competing narratives between communities and groups of actors, which is characterized as boundary work and contestation (Hofius 2022) and the polyphonic nature of discourse.

However, the premise that narratives are key political devices that generate legitimacy, mutual agreements and cooperation does not mean that the efficacy of narratives is a simple and easily controllable endeavor. As narratives are 'ontologically indifferent' (Koschorke 2018: 7) they do not separate a priori between truth and fiction and their appeal depends on culturally narrative conventions and distinct stock of stories in their contexts. This means that a 'successful' narrative in one community does not necessarily resonate with the audience in other communities. Searching for a common understanding through narrative remains a fragile process of (re)telling stories, which are judged by the audience and can be further accepted, declined or disappear in other ways.

Hendrik Wagenaar (2011: 210-216) draws on narratology to show how political narratives become appealing: they are open-ended and deal with possibilities not certainties, they are subjective and involve concrete people (as characters for identification); they are value-laden and function through moral positioning, and they are action-oriented by providing suggestions and a certain measure of provisional certainty that allows persons to act at all. The competing narratives in media discourses around famous Turkish-German football players, as Melis Öneren Özbek shows in her contribution, is a good example for the different appeal of narratives between ideal integration and failed integration, which both allow for strong group identification through mobilization of emotions like national pride and role-model self-attachment on the one hand and scorn and mockery on the other.

The aim of this project is therefore to explore the specific narrative elements and practices of (visual) storytelling across various cases in Turkish-German relations, which show the creative and emancipatory potential of narratives for building transnational identities. We aim to understand through empirical examples how and by whom narratives are enacted through various practices of (visual) storytelling in different forms of art, communication, literature, film, and music. In

doing so, we use a rather minimal definition and understand narratives as 'communicative-discursive representations of events with temporal sequence and/or causal relations in the form of a plot, carried by characters and roles, and drawing on socially relevant topoi' (Freistein et al. 2024).

As argued elsewhere (Freistein et al. 2024), a fruitful analysis of narratives necessarily implies to consider and explore the relationship between three constitutive elements of narratives: topos, characterization, and plot. Furthermore, a narrative analysis allows for incorporating additional elements such as performativity, affect, fantasy and relationality, which demonstrate the close link between narrative analysis to discourse analysis, practice-oriented research and related interpretive research in media and communication studies. To give a few examples for these narrative elements, it makes sense to relate them to our case of Turkish-German relations:

The history of the Turkish-German relationship draws on various topoi, which all characterize the underlying tension between Turkey and Germany in the European context. The metaphor of Turkey as a bridge or bridgehead between Europe and Asia has been often used to emphasize the strategic and cultural significance of Turkey for the European system and its boundary to Russia's imperial ambitions. While the partnership between Prussia/Germany and the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the 19th century was even described as a matter of love around common goals of modernization (Seibt 2016), this topos of friendship as close neighbors have come in narrative competition with other, more neutral descriptions of partners or even rivals, which underline the second dimension of characterization as moral judgments. The discriminating term of Turkish migrants as 'guest workers' (*Gastarbeiter*) in the 1960s, for example, can be seen as an attempt to establish clear hierarchies by Germans, which are challenged by later generations of German-Turkish citizens who do not accept the unequal relations and think differently about integration efforts. Finally, these stories about the Turkish-German relationship work with different plots that draw on famous genres such as romance and tragedy. While the close relationship between Prussia and the Ottoman Empire is often told in romantic terms and

utopian ideas, the later periods are more based on tragic storylines, in particular the freezing process of Turkey's EU membership. When we take a look at the contributions in this project, we observe also irony and comedy plot genres that describe the current political realities as a matter of chaos and never-ending crisis, which cannot be easily solved but need to be encountered with a pinch of laughter and require creative ways of cooperation.

The other narrative elements can be also adopted in empirical research. The focus on visuality, music and art shows that narratives are produced beyond text-based understandings and need a multi-modal approach for analysis. Specific affective responses to narratives can be also observed in Turkish-German relations which help to create affective communities (Hutchison 2016) that may establish even longer-term emotion norms. The notion of fantasy builds on the idea that subconscious desires and promises of pleasure can be activated in narrative. The imaginaries of the glorious past of the Ottoman Empire, for example in series such as *Muhteşem Yüzyıl/The Magnificent Century* (2011-2014), works with a fantasmatic logic that elude concerns of realization and plausibility. The relationality of narratives puts emphasis on underlying power relations, hegemonic claims in the use of language and the polyphony of overlapping narratives. The discriminating term 'guest worker' is an example for such a hegemonic claim, while the culturally hybrid perspective of German-Turkish citizens symbolize a narrative of empowerment, for example by German-Turkish entrepreneurs who interpret their role as employer and middle class as a matter of course.

As these brief remarks already show, the aim of narrative analysis is not the merely identification of various narratives in a field (following content analysis). Instead, using narrative analysis 'should aim at understanding how narratives are shaped, what makes them appealing for specific audiences, and who benefits or loses through dominant political narratives' (Freistein et al. 2024). Such a narrative perspective comes with a strong interest in culture, discourse, and practices of (visual) storytelling, and is focused on power and legitimacy relations in politics. A narrative analysis should therefore be understood as a cultural and critical activity

(similarly Bal 2009; Czarniawska 2004; Wagenaar 2011). As narratives are relational in nature, they connect different spheres from the intimate settings of private lives to social group and network activities to the political arena. Such an understanding of narrative leads into a broader notion of the political and considers the spheres of everyday life and visual culture, which is our second key concept of the book framework.

Visual Culture

As our research perspective on narratives is interested in practices of storytelling from bottom up in everyday life, it is obvious that we also take into account the role of visuality and visual forms of storytelling in social media and other forms of communication. Thus, we aim to combine conceptual thoughts from narrative research with the interdisciplinary research field of visual culture. Scholars working on visual culture are interested in exploring the role of visual media in our everyday life and how the practice of showing and seeing is learnt through distinct cultural codes and rules and shared knowledge production in social and political contexts (Mitchell 2008). This implies to consider the circulation of images and visual media in a globalized world, the consumption of images in everyday and popular culture and the contextualization of images and visual forms in power relations and hierarchies (Bogerts 2020: 30).

The turn to visual culture is similarly motivated as the narrative turn: Both focus on how people make sense of the world and how narratives and visual culture are employed to shape political realities. However, most scholars drawing on visual culture might emphasize the role of everyday culture in these sensemaking processes and aim at sensitizing ordinary people for the visual production of images around us, for example, in street art and graffiti (Bogerts 2022). The double goal therefore drives the political agenda of visual culture to reflect on the power of images and visuality in our everyday practices (e.g. watching TV, using social media communication) as well as to use them in an emancipatory understanding for developing counternarratives to hegemonic discourses.

By exploring the role of arts and visual culture, our contributors aim to provide original insights into Turkish-German relations beyond prevailing political debates on strategic and sometimes problematic bilateral and geopolitical relations. Approaches on transnational and transcultural art go far beyond the dominant discourse that reads music, film, literature and other forms of art in relation to the discursive contribution they make to political debates about immigration and integration in both countries. A close textual or visual analysis of different art forms by Turkish-German transnational artists, filmmakers, writers and musicians provide valuable insights into the artistic cultural hybridity of their work mixing diverse cultural backgrounds. The artists' own cultural hybridity become interesting with particular regard to their works' narrative and aesthetic features. Another method is the combination of close textual/visual analysis and contextual analysis of certain art works with a critical exploration of important theories and concepts on culture and identity.

The benefits of adopting a contextual analysis are twofold. Firstly, art dealing with Turkish migration to Germany and the Turkish diaspora in Germany naturally engages with real sociohistorical developments and the different phases of a migration movement that started in the 1960s. Embedding artworks into this wider sociohistorical context offers additional insight beyond the text. This will help to 'activate' 'meaning' in the text that could otherwise pass unnoticed and to integrate it for a more precise analysis. Given the importance of integrating context into the art analysis and setting it into a dialogue with the text, contributors intend to investigate the history of Turkish migration to Germany and evaluate its artistic and cultural impact on both countries. Secondly, a contextual analysis taking into account the transnational circulation, distribution and reception of art in both countries and internationally, has the potential to show the power art has to impact societies and foster transnational ties between Germany and Turkey.

Transnational Cooperations, Transnational Identities

What makes (visual) narratives relevant and appealing for issues of (transnational) cooperation and identity building is their function of providing a social glue for distinct groups and communities and thereby stabilize joint practices and projects. Notions of transnational cooperation, transnational communities and transnational identities occurred in disciplines such as cultural theory, economics, and sociology firstly in response to the emergence and growing importance of the term transnational to refer to how organisations, institutions and people are connected across nations, and secondly, in response to the limitations of the existing terminologies such as national, multinational, or international that seem to put emphasis on nations' fixed and closed boundaries. The term transnational, however, reflects the changing circumstances in the globalised world characterised by complex economic and socio-cultural exchange across national boundaries. Especially in the field of migration studies, we can identify the desire to study migration related issues such as the effects of diverse migration movements, integration policies, diasporic communities, culture, and identity from a new angle that goes beyond the borders of nation states. Thus, over the past decades, the term transnational has superseded to some extend notions such as multinational and international which rather focus on the contact and relationship between nations.

Thomsas Faist (2009) distinguishes three generations of transnational scholarship. Whilst the first generation evolved particularly in the field of International Relations in the 1960s and 1970s focussing on the interrelationship between states and non-state actors like multinational companies and their cross-border activities, the second generation in the 1980s and 1990s is grounded in anthropological and sociological approaches dealing with international migration, migrants, and their quite constant and complex bonds across of at least two national borders of the home and host country in social spheres called 'transnational social spaces` (Faist 2000 and 2004). The scholarship especially cantered around topics on migrant assimilation, integration, diasporas, and

diaspora politics. The third generation on transnational scholarship emerged as a response to the criticism of second-generation studies on transnationalism, that follow an essentialised understanding of categories like boundaries, nations, and ethnicity. These studies move away from a fixed and static perception of cross-border ties of persons or groups across national boundaries and start to focus on the non-static and fluent nature of boundaries and ties that go beyond national and include regional and local social spaces. These approaches are more concerned with how diverse boundaries of social formations (organizations, groups, cultural differences) and spaces exist, emerge, and transform (Faist 2009: 67-72). Faist's categorisation of transnational scholarship into three phases show that while the first generation of transnational scholarship and globalization studies take a top-down perspective on societal transformation, the second and particularly third generation studies are rather interested in bottom-up approaches. By appreciating the non-static and fluent nature of diverse transnational social spaces, and categories like culture and identity, contributions in our book project analysing the role of narratives and visuality in everyday life, arts and culture also take a bottom-up approach in their analysis of social transformations in Turkish-German relation.

The proliferation of the term transnational that captures 'the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and that of their host country' (Basch et. al. 1994: 7), resulted in the emergence of new concepts like 'transnational identity', `transnational communities' and 'transmigrant', referring to people and groups of people with multiple relationships and cross-cultural living experiences across political, geographic, and cultural borders. Similarly to the notion transnational, the term 'transcultural' (Welsch 1999) and 'cultural hybridity' (Bhabha 1994) emerged responding to rather limiting concepts such as multicultural and intercultural. Sociopolitical and scholarly debates in Germany in the 1980s and 1990s mainly focused on the notion of multiculturalism and interculturalism when engaging with Turkish migrants and the second and third generations. Welsch (1999) argues that these concepts draw on Johann Gottfried Herder, who considers culture to be rather folk-bound and static. However, recent scholarly debates, especially through

the concepts of transculturalism (Welsch 1999) and hybridity (Bhabha 1994), claim that a static understanding of culture is not sustainable. In line with this understanding of culture as fluent and rejecting the idea of fixed boundaries, the contributions in our book will focus on the everyday of transnational social spaces and transnational cooperations considering transmigrants', artists', and cultural agents' multiple and transnational belongings and culturally hybrid identities. Taylan Yıldız explores in his contribution the interrelationship between diaspora and cultural hybridity and how *third spaces* (Bhabha 1994) are visualized. In her research on Turkish-German transnational cinema, *Deniz Güneş* Yardımcı illustrates the transnational nature of production, distribution, circulation, and themes in films made by diasporic filmmakers in Germany and demonstrates how Turkish German directors' - like Fatih Akın or Ayşe Polat - multiple and transnational belongings result in culturally hybrid narratives and visual cultures in their representation of Turkish, German, Kurdish and other (rural) cultures, languages and dialects, music, lifestyle habits etc. The transnational and culturally hybrid character of these films open up new spaces for re-negotiation of existing political narratives around Turkish-German relations by stressing the interwoven artistic-, cultural- and everyday lives of Turkish German relations.

Even though the notions like transnational cooperation, transnational community and transnational identity arose to provide conceptualised frameworks that help to find answers to societal transformations in today's globalised world, transnationalism has a much longer history. Turkish-German transnational connectivity can be traced back to diverse migration movements of merchants, military advisors, scientists, and people from the construction sector from the German to the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Kaiser 2015: 72). These early migrants from Germany and their descendants, the so-called *Bosporus Germans*, founded the German society *Teutonia* in 1847, to meet social and cultural needs of the growing German-speaking population in Istanbul (Radt 2006). *Club Teutonia* and its newly restored building that accommodates the German Orient Institute Istanbul still exist today and serve as a location for cultural cooperations and events. In 1868, *Bosporus Germans* also established the German

high school *Deutsche Schule Istanbul*, which still operates as an elite high school today (Dietrich 1998; Maessen 2022), built the Protestant Church *Kreuzkirche* in 1861 and founded the Catholic Church St. Paul, which is also still active (Kiebel 1992; Wehr 2009).

During the Nazi Regime in Germany between 1933 and 1945, thousands of Germans and German-Jewish political activists, intellectuals, artists and academics found refuge in Turkey. Many of these professors and intellectuals, who started to work at universities like the Istanbul University and Ankara University, decided to stay in Turkey after the end of the war and significantly influenced the development of scientific fields like law, architecture, medicine and biology (Neumark 1980; Seyhan 2005; Kaiser 2015; Kunuroglu and Önder 2023). These early military, political, economic, and cultural transnational cooperations in the Ottoman Empire, the migration of academics, intellectuals, and artists from Germany before and during World War II and the development of the growing German speaking community in Turkey demonstrate that transnational contacts across Turkish-German borders existed and continue to exist long before the term emerged in literature and everyday discourses. Most likely, these multifaceted transnational and transcultural contacts and exchange had an important impact on continued friendly relations between the two empires and later states.

However, in the context of Turkish German relations, concepts dealing with diverse transnational phenomena gained popularity in academia and the everyday not until the 1980s and 1990s, when the second and third generation of former labour migrants and their families became an integral part of Germany's society. An important corpus of literature on Turkish-German relations emerged including the migration history, Germany's migration and integration politics, socio-economic inequalities, discrimination and xenophobia, and diverse facets of transnationalism. To understand contemporary interwoven transnational and transcultural relationships between Turkey and Germany, it is significant to look at the socio-historical context of Turkish migration to Germany to provide relevant background on how migration shaped socio-cultural realities of Germany and Turkey. This will offer a framework in which to situate contributions in the project book. We can

distinguish between approximately six phases of migration starting after World War II, each having distinct features, but also merge into each other:

The Recruitment of Guest-workers:

Due to labour shortages and a period of rapid economic growth after the Second World War, the Federal Republic of Germany signed a labour recruitment agreement with Turkey in 1961 (Yano 2007: 2; Münz et al. 1999: 43) [4]. As the recruitment policy involved only temporary immigration and the rotation principle was applied, foreign workers' work and residence permits were generally restricted to the duration of one year (Münz et al. 1999: 47). These workers from abroad were called Gastarbeiter (guest-workers) as their contracts stipulated they would be sent back to their home countries after their permit expired and their positions would be occupied by new workers. The colloquial expression guest-worker was a sociopolitical colloquialism rather than an official confirmed designation (Bade 2004: 418). The continuous demand for labour prompted the government to abolish this restriction for Turkish workers in 1964, which Yano interprets as the first important step from the rotation principle to a de facto immigration of Turkish guest-workers (Yano 2007: 3f.). Münz et al. focus on the employers' perspective noting that the constant rotation of the workforce proved a substantial disadvantage to companies (Münz et al. 1999: 48). German employers continually encouraged guest-workers to invite fellow countrymen, which, together with family reunions, led to chain migration. Up to 1973 the number of employed labour immigrants in West Germany grew to approximately 2.5 million, most of them from Turkey and Yugoslavia (Yano 2007: 4). The public debates about the guest-worker model and OPEC's (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil embargo and the subsequent recession, caused the Federal Republic of Germany to change this recruitment policy at the end of 1973 (Yano 2007: 5; Bade 2004: 439; Motte et al. 1999: 191)

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[4] Other countries include Italy (1955), Greece and Spain (1960), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965), and Yugoslavia (1968)

Family Reunifications: From 'Guest-workers to a De Facto Country of Immigration: The second phase of immigration into West Germany lasted from 1973 to 1979 and was primarily characterised by the family reunions of the previously recruited employees. In 1973, 2,595 million immigrant labourers were living in Germany, of whom more than 600,000 were Turkish (Herbert 2001: 224). When the recruitment stopped, the number of immigrant employees fell but the total immigrant population continued to rise. The end of the recruitment phase in 1973 actually encouraged family members to move to Germany as this now represented their only chance to emigrate. In 1974, more than 1 million Turks belonged to the residential population and about half of them were employed. The number of Turkish residents increased steadily, whereas residents from other countries decreased until 1979. People of Turkish origin made up more than 1.4 million out of a total of 4.4 million migrants, i.e. they were the largest immigrant group in Germany in 1980 (Bundesministerium des Innern 1982: 31). Furthermore, due to the continuing family reunions, marriages with partners from Turkey, and the high birth rate of Turkish immigrants, the Turkish community in Germany continued to grow. Over time, the migrants moved out of their worker residences and settled in certain affordable neighbourhoods close to the factories in big cities, leading to the formation of special milieus similar to ghettos. West Germany had virtually become a country of immigration (Yano 2007: 6)

Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the 1980s and 1990s:
Despite the end to recruitment in 1973, migration flows from Turkey changed rather than ceased due to considerable refugee movement in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1980, a military coup d'état in Turkey raised the number of asylum seekers when Turkish and Kurdish political opponents of the then-Turkish government fled. At that time, more than half of all applications from asylum seekers came from Turkey (Hanrath 2011: 16). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the outbreak of a military conflict between the Turkish security forces and the formerly separatist PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan) in the southeast of Turkey, led to a further wave of

asylum seekers from Turkey, this time, predominantly refugees from Kurdish provinces (Hanrath 2011: 16).

Citizenship and the New Immigration Act:

The change of government in 1998 led to a shift in Germany's immigration policy, including the reformation of the Nationality Act and the introduction of the Green Card alongside debates about a New Immigration Act in a phase that lasted until 2004. In particular the reformation of the Nationality Act in 1999 provided a significant improvement, since German citizenship was no longer based only on heritage (jus sanguinis), but linked to the birthplace principle (jus soli). The new regulation of January 2000 granted 'foreigners'' children born in Germany additionally German citizenship up to the age of 23 after which they could decide themselves which citizenship to keep (Yano 2007: 8f.). The right to citizenship was a necessary but delayed response to the social reality of a Germany marked by the diasporisation of different immigrant communities over decades, like the Turkish diaspora. A further innovative step was the passing of the New Immigration Act in 2005. The legislative procedure took more than four years and was accompanied by various political, public, and academic discussions about immigration, integration, and multiculturalism. After multiple compromises and renewals, the New Immigration Act became effective on 1 January 2005 (Heckmann and Vitt 2002: 237-286). It was Germany's first-ever immigration law to govern all immigration issues and was the first official acknowledgment that Germany was a country of immigration.

Circular Migration and Turkish German Transmigrants after 2000s:

Kaya and Adaman (2012) differentiate several stages of return migration and note an increase in transit migration and return migration after 2000. Returnees between the 1960s and 1980s returned to Turkey because of German's remigration programme. The number of returners until 1974 was circa 2.5 million. When Germany introduced the voluntary return scheme in 1984, around 300,000 people decided to return to Turkey (Kaya and Adaman 2012: 6). Currently, this first-

generation early returnees lives half of the year in Turkey and the other half in Germany. A continuous movement between Turkey and Germany marks remigration in the 1990s and 2000s. Today, return migration has become a constant process of mobility for those transmigrants between the country of residence and the country of origin. In this respect, the steadily growing group of qualified middle- and upper-middle-class Turkish origin returners constitutes an interesting phenomenon. These returners are often fluent in both Turkish and German, speak English and work in German companies such as Lufthansa, Mercedes, Siemens, or various call centres. They complain about discrimination in Germany and this prompted their return to Turkey to live in Istanbul or other big cities like Izmir to work in international companies in different sectors (Kaya and Adaman 2012: 6). The new generation of returners or transmigrants work in various sectors including banking, engineering, and arts and culture.

New Wave of High-Skilled Migration:
The so-called new migration wave started after the Gezi Park protests in 2013 followed by the coup attempt on 15 July 2016, and the presidential referendum in 2019 in Turkey. Academics, journalists, intellectuals, students and white-collar professionals, among others. This development goes in line with Germany's current demand of high-skilled migration. Two contributions in our project book engage with diverse socio-cultural effects of this high-skilled migration, which often is termed as brain drain. Ceren Kulkul focuses on transnational belongings of migrants in Berlin and their transnational social networks. Also taking the example of Berlin, Idil Atasoy takes a close approach on transnational identity negotiations of newly arrived artists in the city.

The outlined socio-historical context of migration allows us to situate contributions in the project into a broader transnational societal framework. Continuing various migration movements from Turkey to Germany over the past 60 years clearly display firstly the heterogeneity of the Turkish and Kurdish diaspora in Germany, and secondly, the increasing number of Turkish German transmigrants, who exhibit various patterns of transnational mobility between

Turkey and Germany resulting in building strong bonds across national borders. Considering also the German community living in Turkey, such as the already mentioned *Bosporus Germans*, *posted personnel* working in German businesses or Turkish-German joint ventures, teachers at foreign-language schools or universities, personnel of cultural institutions, research centres, and diplomats, *family reunions* in form of German spouses of Turkish citizen and their descendants, *retired German citizen*, settling in coastal areas such as Alanya and Antalya, *alternative lifestyle seekers* in search for a more fulfilling life, and *exchange students* (Kaiser 2015: 68-71), the transnational links across the two countries appear even stronger.

Additionally, looking at the contemporary landscape of transnational cooperation, we find a great number of diverse cooperations ranging from business cooperation, of whom many join the German-Turkish Industry and Trade Chamber (Deutsch-Türkische Industrie- und Handelskammer) established in 2013, cooperations in the cultural and artistic field like the above mentioned 'Turkish Film Festival Frankfurt', 'German-Turkish Co-Production Development Fund' and 'Tarabya Cultural Academy', to various academic cooperations in form of Erasmus student exchange programs, DAAD lectures at Turkish universities and joint bilateral degree programs such as the joint MA in Social Sciences of Humboldt University of Berlin and Middle East Technical University in Ankara, the MA in European Studies Program of Istanbul Bilgi University and European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), and the Law Double Degree program run by the Altinbas University in Istanbul and the University of Cologne. The foundation of the Turkish German University in Istanbul in 2014 is an extraordinary example of academic cooperation that underlines the importance of development and intensification of bilateral scientific cooperation and exchange between German and Turkish institutions. The idea for this book project is also based on a joint research project between the European Institute at Istanbul Bilgi University and the Centre for Global Cooperation Research, funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and TÜBİTAK. It is a part of the DAAD program 'PPP Programs for Project Related Personal Exchange' supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and

Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF) and aiming at strengthening the academic relations and exchange of ideas between a German and Turkish institutions.

Conclusion

We believe that in an era marked by multiple geopolitical and societal crises like wars in Europe and the Middle East, climate change, continuing migration movements, complex international geopolitical realignment processes, and growing societal polarization tendencies, finding solutions to these interwoven problems has made international cooperation more necessary also in the case of Turkish-German relations. Thus, we argue, that given transnational social spaces and transnational cooperations contribute significantly to the intensification of cooperative and supporting ties between Turkey and Germany.

As part of our project, two authors' workshops were organised. After the first workshop on July 19, 2023, at the University of Duisburg-Essen, the second workshop of the DAAD-TÜBİTAK funded bilateral project titled 'Distant Neighbors: Exploring Political Narratives and Visual Culture in Turkish-German Relations' took place on April 5, 2024 at the European Institute, Istanbul Bilgi University. The authors' workshop brought together scholars, researchers, and experts from various academic disciplines to once again delve into the multifaceted dynamics of the relationship between Turkey and Germany. Organized by the European Institute at Istanbul Bilgi University and the Käte Hamburger Kolleg / Centre for Global Cooperation Research at the University of Duisburg-Essen, this workshop aimed to expand the discourse beyond traditional political analysis that focus on political elites to explore the role of narratives and visual culture in transnational Turkish-German spheres by encompassing a diverse range of cultural and political actors, including civil society movements, youth cultures, filmmakers, novelists, musicians, and artists. The idea is that these actors, operating in loose transnational networks influence political discourses and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Turkish-German relations. The interdisciplinary workshop

brought together young and experienced researchers from different academic backgrounds such as political science, sociology, anthropology, media studies and film studies to engage with the everyday (visual) narratives of Turkish-German relation. Participants presented their work in progress, focusing on methodological approaches and empirical cases. The workshop featured three panels, each addressing different aspects of Turkish-German relations. Key themes included transnational social spaces, youth radicalization tendencies, visual representation of transnational communities, methodological and theoretical approaches on narrative and visual analysis, new migration movements from Turkey to Germany, and the role of arts in transnational and cosmopolite Turkish-German spheres. The workshop provided a valuable platform for interdisciplinary exchange, fostering a deeper understanding of Turkish-German relations beyond conventional analyses of political elites. By exploring narratives and visual culture in social, cultural, and artistic transnational spaces, the workshop gave significant insights to the complex dynamics of transnational cooperation between Turkey and Germany. The fruitful discussions and diverse perspectives will be compiled into an edited volume, potentially part of the Routledge Global Cooperation Series. We express gratitude to participants for their valuable contributions, fostering an engaging and collaborative environment and to DAAD and TÜBİTAK for making this workshop possible.

The contributions in the upcoming book will explore how everyday (visual) narratives and transnational artistic and cultural cooperations intersect with Turkish-German relations in high politics and can be regarded as powerful drivers of social change. We suggest that everyday transnational cooperations and transnational social spaces mirror an important and widely overlooked part of social reality and that they contribute positively to public discourses on Turkish-German relations having the capacity to shape these under certain conditions.

Acknowledgements

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