

Chapter 30. Goodbye Germany: Migration Intentions of Highly Qualified Turks

Cemal Sari and M. Nail Alkan¹

Introduction

The migration of young, well-educated Turkish academics from Germany to their parents' home country has become a stronger focus for the integration debate in recent years. The problem appears particularly through the fact that structurally well integrated Turkish migrants of the second and third generation, who are multilingual and intercultural focused, leave Germany voluntarily and thus their work capacity is consequently lost in Germany. As motifs for migration, unfavorable chances of success in career are often mentioned, which are associated with a disadvantage and discrimination in employment and furthermore are accompanied by social exclusion mechanisms (Griese, & Sievers, 2010, Sezer, & Dağlar, 2009). Many of them do not feel being fully accepted in Germany and therefore they leave the country to move to Turkey, where they can expeditiously become successful in their careers using their professional qualifications acquired in Germany (Alkan, 2011). The migration can thus be interpreted as an averting from the German society as well as an evidence of a lack of integration and a failed integration policy, because despite the fact that these individuals were born and grew up in Germany and went through the German education system, they desire to leave the country (Aydın, 2012).

However, it cannot be assumed exactly who leaves the country and why, because there is a lack of studies and data. Therefore, this paper investigates the question of why highly qualified Turks intend to migrate from Germany to Turkey and whether there is a difference between genders regarding the migration purposes. This paper likewise presents first results of a qualitative study on German-Turkish highly qualified academics from the second and third generation in Germany. By the use of an empirical survey the process of a problem-focused interview is applied, which combines different question techniques and methods. Thereby, an unbiased registration of the migration-willing inhabitants' experiences, actions and perceptions of social reality is collected.

Migration Intentions of Highly Qualified Turks

The migration research pays attention to the return intentions of migrants of Turkish origin for a long time. As the annual report "Migrationsland 2011" of the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration highlights, Germany has nowadays in terms of Turkish origin citizens not an immigration but instead, an emigration problem. Since 2008, more people of Turkish origin leave the country than they move into - and predominantly the highly qualified individuals

¹ Dr Cemal Sari, Ruhr-University of Bochum, Faculty of Social Science, Department of Sociology/ Organization, Migration, Universitätsstraße 150, 44780 Bochum, Germany. E-mail: cemal.sari@rub.de; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Nail Alkan, University of Gazi, International Relations, 06500 Beşevler, Ankara. E-mail: nailsecret@gmail.com.

leave. Quite a number of the so-called German-Turks confirm this trend as well: For instance, in 2008, a quantity of 28,741 Turks immigrated to Germany, while 38,889 Turks returned from Germany to Turkey in the same year (BAMF, 2012). In accordance with a quantitative online survey study, 36 percent of the questioned Turkish academics and students stated a willingness to migrate to Turkey on a short, medium or long-term basis (Sezer, & Dağlar, 2009). According to Sezer and Dağlar's study a "lack of feeling home in Germany", "professional disadvantages" and "economic aspects" are the central motifs to migrate from Germany to Turkey.

The telephonic "representative study on the integration behavior of Turks in Germany" from March 2011 achieved further results regarding a possible migration. A total of 1,003 people (including 674 without and 329 with the German citizenship) have been interviewed. Due to the question "Are you planning or intending to return to Turkey?" four percent of the people of Turkish origin answered with "Yes, in the next two years", 12 percent said "Yes, in the next decade", and 30 percent declared "Yes, but later". Thus, 48 percent of the participants without the German nationality plan to move or return to Turkey. In the group of people with German citizenship however, only 39 percent think of leaving Germany (Liljeberg, 2011). The studies of the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) from 2007/2010 come to the conclusion that graduates from migrant families in Germany are more often affected by unemployment than graduates without a migrant background. These results are being justified by referring for instance to the ethnic discrimination in the labor market. Applicants with a Turkish sounding name, despite their German nationality and native speaker likeness in the German language, have worse chances for an invitation to a job interview than those with a German name (Kaas, & Manger, 2010). Appropriate to the stage of research the question about the motifs for leaving Germany and the choice of Turkey as a migration destination therefore raises.

Research Methods

For the preparatory study carried out on university graduates of Turkish origin from the second and third generation who are willing to migrate from Germany towards Turkey, the choice of methodology fell to a qualitative interview. That includes eight handbook-supported expert interviews conducted in the Ruhr area (Ruhrgebiet) and realized in German. The empirical study was based on the method of problem-focused interviews, combining different methods and question techniques (Witzel, 2000). The analysis of the empirical material was based on the documentary interpretation. For the compilation of the study group of highly qualified Turks, initially, a combination of the snowball principle and the arbitrary sampling was used (Frankfort Nachmias, & Nachmias, 1995). It was about an unbiased registration of the actions, motifs and perceptions of the interviewees and their awareness of the social reality. All of the eight examinees had completed the entire school and university education in Germany, came from the Ruhr area and were aged between 20 and 55. Two of them hold the Turkish citizenship and the others own the German. All respondents hold contacts to Turkey - some had very intense, even job-related contacts, while others had exclusively contact to their relatives.

In order to implement the research project, the respondents were asked to answer, in addition to the biographical information, 19 questions in order to analyze exactly the reasons and motifs of females and males for the migration intentions from Germany to Turkey. The survey was conducted using different multipliers (in the Ruhr area - Duisburg, Bochum, Essen, Dortmund - and Participants of the German-Turkish year of research, education and innovation in 2014 at the Ruhr-University of Bochum) from 27 October 2014 to January 2016 in Germany. The focus on the Ruhr area arises from the fact that the Ruhr area is strongly marked by immigration (Pries, 2011). It is important to mention that due to the small study group and its composition (five women, three men) the range of generalization of the results is highly limited. Nevertheless, this study can be called an exploratory study in order to gain first insights and findings in a yet nearly unexplored area (Przyborski, & Wohlrab-Sahr, 2008).

Migration Intentions

At this point, the survey results of the qualitative interviews are reflected. The reasons and personal migration intentions, which were expressed or indicated by the migration-willing highly qualified Turks or emerge from their stories, are summarized in this paper into four categories.

Poor career prospects

The majority of the surveyed Turkish academics named in the interview primarily the aspect of “unfavorable career prospects in Germany” as a major reason for a migration to Turkey, so Erdem Küçük. He is one of the first prime examples of this study. Erdem was born in 1980 in Germany and lives in Essen where he obtains his doctorate contemporaneously. In the recent years he has observed that people with a doctorate, could live in Turkey, especially in large cities like İstanbul and İzmir, at least as good as in Germany:

I'm doing my PhD and when I'm done, I will probably go to Istanbul because in comparison to the German students, I won't have big chances in the labor market here although I have a doctoral degree. Someone with a doctorate in Turkey will be treated like a minister.

This hope he keeps for himself, but whether his desires come true, “the future” will decide on that. He could imagine to “try” how life is all about in Turkey and then he wants to “look further”, he describes in the interview. By “hearsay” he knows that graduates being fully competent in three languages are mostly preferred in Turkey:

Someone like me, who is completely fluent in Turkish, German and English and who is intercultural competent, has in Istanbul better chances. I would feel financially, culturally and emotionally more balanced in Turkey.

Erdem hopes to achieve a leading position in a German company in Turkey in which he would like to support and promote the German-Turkish industrial relations. However, he realizes that he does not want to work permanently in Turkey, but only temporarily, he stressed then. The fact that professional reasons

are often essential for a migration to Turkey suggests that for highly qualified Turks primarily the professional career and the social advancement is important. Migration willingness to Turkey then seems an option if the career advancement and upward social mobility in Germany appears to be no (more) feasible or if Turkey promises better prospects.

Discrimination in the Labor Market

The fact that the majority of highly qualified people of Turkish origin considered their own professional perspective as “unfavorable”, can be literary lead back to the discrimination restrictions on the German labor market and the structural disadvantages in many areas of society. A majority of interviewed persons have already experienced discrimination in everyday life and in the professional environment. Individuals with a Turkish sounding name are already discriminated in the first application phase. Accordingly, someone with a German name must write five applications to receive an invitation to a job interview, whereas a competitor with a Turkish name has to write seven (OECD, 2007/2010). The same marks, similar strengths - but different names (Bürgin, & Erzene-Bürgin, 2013). The straight out graduate educational academic Sibel Öztürk for instance, who is just looking for a suitable work, manifested herself in this regard by saying:

It was a nice time during my childhood in the Ruhr area. I just grew up with both the German culture as well as with the Turkish culture. I had been lucky enough to where I lived, [...] there were just not as many Turks. Still, I always felt a message saying: You don't belong to it! Because you're a Turk. In Germany it is always said, multicultural wonderful - anyway, you're a Turk. Oh, you can dye your hair blond but you have brown eyes so you're a Turk. Below [the doorbell] not Müller is written, but Öztürk. You are Öztürk, and that's it.

Without being directly asked about discrimination, also Ümit Berk, a social scientist reported from his experiences of discrimination. Already at school he had been confronted with all kinds of discrimination. This motivated him rather to “fight” than to think of migrating from Germany to Turkey. He had to make a discrimination experience in the housing market: When he came to an inspection date and the landlord has seen that he is of Turkish origin, the landlord looked for excuses in order to not let him rent the house. However, this negative experience could not be a migration intention for him. Nowadays, he can imagine migrating with his family from Germany to Istanbul - but for other reasons than being discriminated or disadvantaged.

Absent Sense of Home

Many of the results of this study confirm that a majority of surveyed academics think of a migration towards Turkey because of a “lack” of identification or because they feel the antagonism being between these two cultures and countries. Due to the question: “What are the reasons for you to intend to move to Turkey?” For instance, Derya Esen, who was born in Turkey but lives with her parents in Germany since the age of 3, answers:

I'm not sure if I'm German or Turkish. I feel in both, in the country of origin and in the destination country, both native and foreign. In Turkey I am Alamanci and in Germany I'm a woman of Turkish origin. I miss each country, when I'm in the other. I'm caught between chairs but might actually feel in both cultures very well.

Ultimately, she calls herself a Turkish-German woman. She thus explains that she has two homes. Since two or three years Derya thinks of working and living in Turkey. But whether she actually takes that step, she does not know yet. The other interviewees also take both Turkey and Germany as their home country:

I feel assigned to both countries, to two citizenships. I can now make no distinction as to whether I'm a German or a Turk. I'm standing right in the middle and have a bit of both. When I go to Turkey and there I get a steady job, that doesn't mean to me that I go back, it means that I go for a certain period to my other home.

On the one hand, the examinees feel emotionally and ancestry moderately rooted in Turkey: "The Turkish outweighs maybe", but on the other hand they feel "a hyphenated identity, as a Turkish-German" and would not work in a long term period in Turkey but only limited. They consider Germany and Turkey as their homes and would not describe their future stay in Turkey as a return.

Socio-cultural Networks

Among the possible causes of a migration we find also socio-cultural networks including friendships and family ties. It should be noted that mostly women, particularly at a young age, feel more being in the obligation to return with their parents to Turkey than men (Zirkeci, & Zeyneloğlu, 2014). A majority of the interviewees has familial and professional ties and contacts to Turkey and has been for both, job-related and personal reasons more often there. These individuals watch Turkish TV, read Turkish newspapers and therefore pursue regular information about the country. Some interviewed academics indicated to travel to Turkey several times to accept lectureships at Turkish universities, to attend conferences or to visit their relatives. In addition to academic purposes and friendship networks, partnerships belong to the most important factors which influence the decision and the complementation of a possible migration.

Reasons based on a partnership play also a key role in the migration projects of Aylin Kaya. While studying in Bochum she met her future husband who had come as an exchange student to Germany. Since her fiancée has currently spent his schooling and most of his studies in Turkey, it was difficult for him to "foothold" in Germany. It therefore seems as the most appropriate solution to them to migrate to Turkey. Tarkan Cetin, who does not want to migrate for professional reasons to Turkey, the existing social network in Istanbul embodies an important migration intention for him. The young economist, who is increasingly traveling to Istanbul due to his doctoral degree, commented:

Because of my PhD I have often attended conferences in Istanbul. Then I get to know Istanbul closer, and the city impresses me more and more. So I recently decided to go after my doctoral for a long time to Istanbul. On this occasion, an

opportunity to work came suddenly. For I had met the professor of [...] Üniversitesi. He had then offered me to work for him after graduation. Yes, I could actually imagine to work with him.

This statement shows his openness towards a job-related living in Turkey which is facilitated by the fact that he has a pre-existing social connection to his destination country.

Results and Discussion

Which conclusions can be drawn from this study regarding the migration willingness of highly qualified Turks in general? The object of this survey was to investigate the migration behavior of highly qualified Turkish academics from Germany to Turkey and to determine whether there are gender typical motivations and reasons for migration intentions. This empirical work has firstly shown that for all of those, in principle, exist an openness to imagine a future life in Turkey and possibly to live and work there temporarily. Among the motifs why they would leave Germany, mainly economic reasons or the prospect of a better job or faster advancement opportunities in the destination country, where they can use their particular language and intercultural skills (as in international companies or institutions, but also in the university sector), are mentioned. A few interviewees could imagine that they would, after a few years of residence in Turkey, return back to Germany if they would be professionally fully recognized here.

Furthermore, it has emerged that females and males have mentioned different motivations to leave Germany. Especially for women, family reasons and partnerships seem to play a central role to the migration decision. Men instead, would mainly migrate for work reasons. The study also suggests that Turkish highly qualified academics who live in Germany and have grown up here and participate in the social life, at the same time maintain intense relations with their homeland. They likewise feel emotionally attached to their country of origin. They regularly communicate with relatives and friends, consume the Turkish media and thereby follow the occurrences in Turkey. There are motifs such as the disadvantages and discrimination that might tempt people to migrate. But however, it is rather to be interpreted as an (un-) satisfaction factor or disruptive factor for their personal situation in Germany.

Moreover, a majority of interviewees could decide neither for the one, nor for the other country. They felt not adequately addressed by an “either-or” classification and plead for a dual affiliation, which designates a “as well as” belonging. The results of this analysis show that the reasons can under no circumstances be contemplated separately but must clearly be considered as a variety of motifs. Not a single motivation, but only the coming together of different reasons leads to the migration willingness. Generalizations regarding the migration projects of highly qualified people with Turkish backgrounds can hitherto present current results, since they represent a small sample size and the study is still ongoing. For this purpose, more empirical qualitative surveys are planned which contribute to the deepening of the study.

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