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THE TURKEY–GERMANY MIGRATION CORRIDOR

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Introduction

In Europe, one of the largest migration corridors is between Turkey and Germany, a function of their longstanding migration history. According to the latest census data, in 2017, there were 2.77 million persons from Turkey with a migration background living in Germany (Destatis 2018). Although labour migration from Turkey to Germany is the most well-known type of mobility between the two countries, in this chapter we demonstrate that there are multiple population movements in this specific corridor. We examine six phases of migration between the two countries while concentrating on their developmental impacts. In so doing, we argue for a nuanced understanding of a migration corridor given the heterogeneity of mobility and two-way flows over the years between cities and regions leading to corridors within country corridors.

Linkages between Turkey and Germany have existed for a long time, as both countries have been allies leading to economic, political, and societal exchanges throughout recent history. Starting as early as the nineteenth century, the German empire was sending military personnel to the Ottoman empire for training purposes that also continued in the early years of the Turkish republic. During World War I, the Ottomans allied with the German empire leading to more population movements of businessmen, craftsmen, and their spouses (Pusch and Splitt 2013). Those relations had positive implications in the political and economic relations between the two republics. Against this background, we identify six phases consolidating the migration corridor between Germany and Turkey: (1) the migration of academics escaping from Nazi persecution to Turkey (1930–50); (2) the entrepreneurial small-scale migration from Turkey to Germany (1950–60); (3) guest worker recruitment starting the official labour migration (1961–73); (4) the settlement phase with family unification (1973–90); (5) the asylum seeking period (1989–2000); (6) contemporary two-way flows (2000–present).

Migration streams between Turkey and Germany

During the 1930s, the first Turkish President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk invited Jewish intellectuals including professors, teachers, and physicians who escaped from Nazi persecution to settle in Turkey. German professors contributed to the development of the higher education system in

Turkey and trained future intellectuals (Widman 1973). This migration flow was a two-step process directed initially towards Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. From there, some moved abroad, mainly to the US. Upon their further mobility during the 1940s, those intellectuals kept their ties and initiated partnerships with universities in Turkey. Moreover, they also led important institutions such as the German Hospital, German schools, and German-speaking churches (Radt 2006). Their mobility allowed different segments of Turkish society in large cities to familiarise themselves with German culture, and as a result they became more sympathetic towards Germany paving the way for subsequent migrations (Akgündüz 2008).

In the second phase of migration, in the 1950s, Turkish businessmen and entrepreneurs were invited to West Germany not only to improve their skills but also to strengthen foreign trade and the economy between the two countries (Abadan-Unat 2011). During this phase, migration was organised by individuals and small groups for entrepreneurial activities. This is usually an overlooked stage of migration between the two countries because of low numbers of migrants. For example, during that period, high school graduates in Turkey in technical fields were invited to Germany for training with the aim to post them as foremen in German plants operating in Turkey. Later, those who were trained in Germany opted to stay in the country rather than going back to Turkey for work (Akgündüz 2008).

The third phase, in the 1960s, was characterised by the state-organised guest worker agreement. During that decade, Turkey was facing higher unemployment rates and pursuing state-led industrialisation. Turkey aimed to send workers to gain skills and send financial remittances to contribute to the country's development goals while at the same time reducing the demographic pressure. It coincided with the era when Germany was restructuring its economy and experiencing labour shortages after World War II, particularly after the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1962. Against this background, both nation-states conceptualised this short-term agreement for their mutual economic development (Abadan-Unat 2011, 7–13; Martin 2014). Migrants were mainly male and working in specific industrial sectors and accommodated in dormitories. Migrants' financial remittances in this period played a crucial role in Turkey's economy, and thus development (Içduygu 2006). Guestworkers were from villages in central Anatolia, such as Boğazlıyan (Yozgat) or from the Black Sea region, for example, the city of Trabzon. The Black Sea shores are well known as a region where both rural and urban migrants originated.

The oil crisis of 1973 ushered in the fourth phase, the settlement of Turkish migrants in Germany. Labour recruitment from Turkey officially stopped while family reunification increased (Martin 2014). This was a time when the social rights of workers and their families became an important policy issue. As a result of intergovernmental negotiations, migrants gained access to state welfare provisions such as healthcare, unemployment, and pension rights in Germany. In addition, more young women migrated independently to improve the prospects of their households, when they and their families in Turkey learned about the demand for workers in the German labour market. They were usually not well-educated and eventually employed in jobs requiring no qualifications such as in the textile sector. Migration profoundly influenced family life both in the emigration and immigration contexts, because women became breadwinners that changed the division of labour within families. (Abadan-Unat 2011, 88–111). When families arrived in this era, they settled in cities and concentrated in certain neighbourhoods such as Kreuzberg and Neukölln in Berlin, Marxloh in Duisburg, and Keup in Cologne, changing the urban landscape of Germany. For instance, North Rhine-Westphalia is the most foreign populated federal state mainly because of the Ruhr area, where heavy industries were located, which recruited migrant labourers. Macro-level changes such as deindustrialisation together with

different migration streams over time and lack of integration policies made the area ethnically segregated resulting in poor housing and schooling leading to further marginalisation (Reuschke and Weck 2013).

The fifth phase, between 1989–2000, was characterised by conflicts in the South-eastern region in Turkey from the 1980s, which dramatically increased the number of people seeking political asylum in Germany (Martin 2014, 229–31). That migration stream added another layer of heterogeneity to the existing migrant population in terms of ethnicity and region of origin from Turkey. In Europe, this period was also characterised by other refugee movements such as from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Christian Democratic Union party was in power in Germany with the idea that their country was not a country of immigration and the main discourse revolved around immigrants having the ‘right’ to choose between return or full assimilation into German society. In that context, in 1983, the ‘Foreigners Repatriation Incentive’ law encouraged around 5 per cent of Turkish migrants to return through granting a lump sum return incentive together with pension premiums. Return migrants were usually elderly and unskilled who invested their savings in property or small family businesses. They therefore did not necessarily contribute to the industrialisation of Turkey as originally anticipated. The policy worked as a retirement strategy for the first-generation labour migrants. However, for their children, who have been brought up in Germany, the situation was different. When parents returned to Turkey, they often took their youngest children with them to be sent to schools in Turkey where they had re-adaptation issues. Over time, some of these children returned to Germany either to study or through marriage. Concurrently, migrants who stayed in Germany established small independent businesses and created further employment for fellow workers. The ‘Foreigners Law’ in 1992 eased the process of becoming a German citizen and particularly for younger generations with longer residence, school attendance, and who renounced their right to Turkish citizenship. The law also put emphasis on continuous employment and residency for social rights and naturalisation while favouring those with good prospects of integration (Abadan-Unat 2011, 13–25).

During this fifth phase, religious, political, and business associations were financed by Turkish migrants and the state. The Turkish–Islamic Union of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (DITIB) (1984), Islamic Community Millî Görüş (1985), and the Federation of Alevitic Communities of Europe (AABF) (1991) were the major religious associations with transnational activities (Amelina and Faist 2008). Millî Görüş had strong ties with the extreme right and Islamic political parties such as Milli Nizam, Faziler, Saadet, whereas DITIB became the mouthpiece of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the early 2000s, so that the transnational religious and political ties were consolidated.

In the sixth phase, from 2000 onwards, we observe a mix of movements including students and highly skilled persons pointing to an increase in more circulatory movements and a decline in the number of marriage migrations. Baykara-Krumme and Fuss (2009) explain marriage migration as taking place between migrants who had at least 5 years of residency in Germany and their new arriving spouses from Turkey. This definition excludes family reunification of already married migrant couples. This definition covers the 49 per cent of Turkish first-generation male migrants’ marriage and family reunification patterns in Germany. In this last phase, the tendency to choose a spouse from Turkey declined for male migrants, while it slightly increased for females (Baykara-Krumme and Fuss 2009). Some of the marriages were arranged because for some families having a groom from Turkey in Europe was financially appealing, together with the idea of raising the next generations with an ‘appropriate culture’ (Abadan-Unat 2011, 108–10).

When we look at the developmental effects of the various streams of migration, we can say that not everything is economic. Social remittances, or the idea that norms, practices, identities, and social capital circulate between the two countries through the simultaneous involvement of the migrants in both contexts, play a major developmental role, too (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011). For instance, women's participation in migration and paid work allowed a rethinking of authority in the household and a division of labour between migrating and non-migrating families in Turkey. The emergence of 'kaleidoscopic' type families (Kiray in Abadan-Unat 1976, 210–34) indicates that size, membership, and authority is decided by the breadwinner, in many cases the female migrant. In this process, families located in both contexts have been transformed in terms of gender relations, division of labour, and what is considered culturally and socially appropriate.

Other types of mobilities in this sixth phase of migration between Turkey and Germany include returned guest workers and their children, exchange students, skilled professionals, and German retirees (Fauser 2016). While some of the first-generation guest workers and their spouses return to Turkey for good, some of them prefer to circulate between the two countries as a lifestyle choice. For instance, Bilecen and Tezcan-Güntekin (2014) found that first-generation retired migrants tend to live in both countries simultaneously, usually maintaining ties to their own communities in Turkey where they have property and personal ties. Moreover, some of the guest workers have had previous internal migration experience in Turkey from rural to urban areas, particularly to the big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Antalya. In such cases, guest workers tend to return to those cities while also visiting their villages and communities.

According to King and Kılınç (2016), three types of 'return' by second-generation Turkish migrants exist. First, 'return' as teenagers based on parental decision. Second, 'return' through marriage, usually observed among women. Third, 'return' as a self-realisation and a quest for identity and belonging through which ambivalences in an imagined 'ethnic motherland' arise. While the first and second types were usually observed in the fifth phase, the third type of 'return' is a main aspect of the sixth phase. The now grown-up second-generation whose parents chose to stay in Germany during the fifth phase started to enrol in universities or find jobs in Turkey and wanted like to experience their 'motherland' for themselves.

The latest research on exchange students and skilled professionals shows a mixture of flows in both directions (Bilecen Süoğlu 2012; Fauser 2016; Pusch and Aydın 2012). While Germany has always been an attractive study place for exchange and degree-seeking students from Turkey, recently both German and second-generation migrants also go to Turkey for educational purposes. For instance, Pusch and Aydın (2012) conducted research with highly skilled German citizens with a Turkish background, who were sent to Istanbul by the businesses they work for. In their findings, they show how they question their identities when they work in Turkey. Their return to Germany is always an option indicating another type of circular movement between the two countries.

The last type of mobility found in the sixth phase is characterised by German retirees living in Antalya and its provinces mainly in Alanya due to affordable living conditions and good weather. Their impact has been the creation of a de-facto municipal foreigner council in Alanya, but also in changing the daily landscape of the province through for example opening their shops, bakeries, and building churches.

One major and recent type of mobility consists of academics from Turkey seeking refuge in Germany, thus reversing the very early trend in this migratory corridor. In January 2016 'academics for peace' group signed a petition to draw attention to human rights violations in

the South-eastern region of Turkey. Moreover, on 15 July 2016, there was a coup attempt against the state institutions. In such a political climate, academics were charged of being members of terrorist group and 8,000 were fired. The most substantial support for the Turkish academics has been by the Humbolt Foundation's Phillip Schwartz Initiative, who once had to flee Nazi Germany and convinced the Turkish government to appoint the persecuted German professors in 1930s.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have shown different population flows that contributed to the heterogeneity of migration and consolidated the corridor between Turkey and Germany. We argued that such international flows have impacts on the two countries in economic and socio-cultural terms. What is implicit in the migration corridor concept is that once migration is initiated, either individually or through state-led initiatives, later networks of people, businesses, and institutions/organisations sustain such channels and turn the migration into a corridor where both ends are transformed. Once the networks gain momentum, migration tends to become more diversified. As we have shown, sometimes the corridors can be geographically circumscribed. For example, due to the industrialisation of a region, such as the Ruhr area, migrant flows tend to be directed towards such regions. From the perspective of the sending area, however, the networks channel them into certain cities and neighbourhoods to create networks of networks, or corridors within corridors. In this chapter, we have shown, that the concept of 'the corridor' is quite restricted because it gives the impression of a homogeneous and often uni-directional flow of people. As the history of migration between Turkey and Germany throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century demonstrates, this is far from being the case.

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