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Introduction

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in:

Turkey, Migration and the EU: Potentials, Challenges and Opportunities

edited by

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Introduction

Seçil Paçacı Elitok and Thomas Straubhaar

Two things have inspired us to edit a volume on migration, Turkey and the European Union (EU).

Firstly, the year 2011 is the 50th anniversary of the bi-lateral agreement between Turkey and Germany on labor recruitment in 1961. In half a century, enormous political and economic changes took place both in Germany and Turkey. Thanks to the so-called “Guest-Workers” Programs, the labor shortage of Germany during the reconstruction and recovery period after World War II has been met by a migrant labor force. On the other hand, it suited very well the excess labor problem of Turkey. For Turkey, there were two main premises behind the bilateral agreements. First, migrants were expected to return with new skills, which would have had positive externalities on the labor market. Second, remittances of workers were expected to generate productive investment- and employment-creating activities. The history of Turkish emigration, which started more than half a century ago, has disappointed these expectations from the Turkish point of view in two ways. On the one hand, remittances of Turkish migrants did not render the hope for the economic impulse. They remained a tool for financing the balance of payments deficits but they did not turn into employment-creating investments. On the other hand, the transfer of the return of the migrants’ skills did not take place. On Germany’s side, from an economic point of view, labor market shortages were relaxed and the migrant labor force contributed to the economic boom tremendously. Yet, Germany ended up with an unintended permanent migration and no coherent integration policy. Initially, the agreement between Germany and Turkey meant a temporary migration, yet many migrants ended up being permanent residents. The agreement with Turkey came to an end in 1973 with an expectation that the guest-workers would return. However, after the 1970s, migration

trends to Germany and other European countries continued and took different forms such as family unification, asylum seeking, refugee movements and irregular migration.

Secondly, in order to increase the consistency of the individual contributions to the book, we organized an international workshop on “Migration Potentials from and to Turkey” at the Hamburg Institute of International Economics (HWWI) on January 12, 2010. This workshop was supported by the EU Marie Curie Research Training Networks on the “Transnationality of Migrants” (TOM).¹ The idea of the workshop was to bring scholars from research centers, mainly specialized in migration research, to exchange ideas and share perspectives. Experts from various disciplines were invited to discuss the question of potential effects of Turkey’s accession to the EU on migration potentials from their specific point of view. During the workshop, we addressed the historical dimension and possible scenarios as well as challenges and opportunities arising from migration. Throughout the workshop, we sought to generate some more knowledge on the topic of “migration potentials” from several angles. To this end, we included issues such as labor market aspects, push and pull factors, volume/profile/regional distribution/pattern of migration potential, current migration panorama, future trends, demographic factors and policy aspects in the context of EU accession. The workshop was designed as a small conference with around 20 participants and there were four key presentations, which triggered extensive and lively discussions.²

Editing a volume on the entire migration experience of Turkey over the last half century and covering all the aspects of future potential migration in the context of EU-Turkey relations is probably an over-ambitious target. Nevertheless, this book touches upon at least some important aspects of the ongoing debate about the effects of Turkey’s accession to the EU upon the migration flows and sheds light on various dimensions of current panorama, addressing policy implications as well as future challenges and opportunities.

¹ The TOM Research Training Network was started in 2007 and continued until the end of 2010. It had 15 teams all across Europe investigating the contribution that foreign migrants make to the social and economic linkages between countries. In particular, the TOM project assessed how migration contributed to increasing trade, creating larger capital flows, increasing foreign direct investment and encouraging further migration.

² A majority of these presentations can be downloaded from <http://www.hwwi.org/themenfelder/demografie-migration-und-integration/projekte/migration-und-integration/tuerkei-und-migration.html>. A conference program is available at http://www.hwwi.org/fileadmin/hwwi/Veranstaltungen/Workshops/2010/2010-01-12_Workshop-Agenda.pdf and at the end of this volume, as well.

The “gradual realization of the free flow of workers” from Turkey into the European Economic Community was regarded as a significant and positive aspect of the 1963 Ankara Agreement, which was signed two years after the beginning of an intense migratory movement from Turkey into Europe. The Ankara Agreement had made Turkey an associate member of the Community. However, 42 years after this Agreement, in the Negotiating Framework of October 3, 2005, in the context of Turkey’s European Union (EU) membership process, it was stated that long transition periods and derogations, specific arrangements, or provisions of permanent protection might be effective to limit the free movement of people from Turkey. Although these new perspectives signaled a renewed emphasis on the migration between Turkey and the EU, they reframed the issue in a negative context. It is only natural that new perspectives on migration will emerge under changing circumstances. Undoubtedly, a dominant trend to emerge in recent years has been the politicization of migration in the EU climate. In the political arena, migration has essentially become an issue of “governance” requiring the participation of actors on national, international, transnational and civil-society levels. Ahmet İcduygu and Ayşem Biriz Karaçay, in Chapter 1, emphasize the demographic aspects of migration issues within the scope of EU-Turkey relations. They make general inferences on the qualitative and quantitative status of migration on the basis of current debates over Turkey’s EU membership. Throughout the chapter, they interpret migration as an issue of governance and policymaking. Within this framework, they outline three main issues in EU discussions on the issue of international migration in relation to Turkey, including: (a) whether an intense migratory wave towards the EU in case of a free movement will create serious economic, social and political adjustment problems; (b) whether Turkey’s demography and, as a consequence of this demography, the migration waves of Turkish origin, will have a complementary role in the demographic shrinkage process in the EU and (c) whether Turkey, in its position as a “receiving country” and “migration transit zone”, will be successful, and, if so, to what extent, in producing and implementing policies in compliance with the EU-centric international migration and asylum regimes. The chapter concludes with the tasks of the EU, Turkey and migrants in handling the issue of migration as a “political phenomenon that requires governance”. İcduygu and Karaçay argue that changing demographic processes will affect migratory movements that Turkey, Europe and other neighboring geographies might encounter, and the future status of inter-

national migration in the Euro-Turkish space should be considered together with its economic, social, political and demographic dimensions.

Throughout most of the 1990s and early 2000s, Turkey has been hit hard by the EU's claim that most of Turkey's policies were substandard and insufficient to be accepted as a member to the EU. In the realm of asylum and migration, the story was similar with Turkey being accused of violating the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as being unable to control its borders. However, since 2002, the Turkish government and bureaucracy have engaged in a fascinating process of reforming their immigration policies. In Chapter 2, Juliette Tolay examines the role played by the EU in triggering these reforms, and how these reforms matched with Turkey's qualification as a "European country". Tolay argues that the rationale behind Turkey's reforms in the realm of immigration goes beyond a traditional process of "Europeanization", but rather is the result of what she calls "critical Europeanization" or the activation of Turkish pride and willingness to do "better than the Europeans", or be "more European than the Europeans".

Turkey has a long tradition of accepting refugees – a fact that is little known in the West. The Cold War years were characterized by asylum seekers from the Soviet world. Those recognized as refugees by North America were mainly resettled in North America. The composition and volume of asylum seekers into Turkey have changed considerably since the end of the Cold War as well as the policies of the government. Kemal Kirişçi, in Chapter 3, brings a critical approach to the evolution of Turkish asylum policy in the last two decades and assesses the role of "Europeanization" in the transformation of Turkey's policies. Kirişçi argues that the impact of the "EU" has been a mixed and contested one and that other factors such as the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)'s long-standing engagement of Turkey, the rise of an effective civil society, the rulings of the ECHR (European Court of Human Rights) and the "logic of appropriateness" have also played an important role in this transformation.

Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to irregular migration. Turkey was known as a "sending" country for a long time. However, it has started witnessing an ever-increasing migration flow of an irregular nature into the country since the 1990s due to political unrest and economic transformation in the region. The integration of the Turkish economy to the global markets with increasing informal employment opportunities attracted people from former socialist countries as migrant workers. In spite of this phenomenon, studies delineating

the position of irregular migrants participating clandestinely in the labor markets and tackling their employment conditions are rather few. Studies on domestic and care workers that make the main body of the existing research and the other few surveys on migrants employed in various branches of economic activity demonstrate that irregular immigrants live and work under very precarious conditions. In Chapter 4, Gülay Toksöz and Çağla Ünlütürk Ulutaş review and evaluate the existing labor migration literature from a gender perspective to highlight different levels of precarity that male and female migrant workers are confronted with to answer the question of feminization of migration in Turkey. Sema Erder and Selmin Kaşka, in Chapter 5, focus on the relative position of the foreigners in the Turkish labor market with special reference to the new immigration flows generating from the region. For this sake, the interaction of the informal labor market and irregular migration are examined. The current terminology on irregularity is critically analyzed in Erder's and Kaşka's article, which calls for the necessity of reconsidering/redefining the concept.

Giulia Bettin, Seçil Paçacı Elitok and Thomas Straubhaar analyze the reasons behind the sharp decrease after the year 1998 in the volume and the trend of the aggregate flows of remittances as well as its consequences for the Turkish economy in an historical context in Chapter 6. Remittance literature with respect to Turkey focuses on the determinants of remittances, both from a microeconomic and macroeconomic perspective, and their (anti)cyclical behavior. However, there is a gap in the literature for a study looking in depth at the causes and consequences of the fall in the post-1998 remittances trend. Against this background, this chapter also considers how remitting behavior is affected by economic downturns and specifically the focus here is on what happened to remittance flows to Turkey during and after the financial crises of 1994, 2000/1 and 2008. The findings show that the decline in remittances might be the consequence of several coexisting reasons. New generations of migrants have weaker ties with Turkey and they are progressively moving from the return idea to the willingness of settling permanently in the host country and investing in their own businesses there. At the same time, the contraction in remittance flows after the last two financial crises that hit Turkey in the 2000s shows that even if the investment motives could still play a role in determining remittance behavior, the instability of the Turkish economy and the consequent loss of trustworthiness probably played a key role in influencing migrants' attitude towards remittances negatively.

The geographical and political location is fundamental to Turkey's migration reality. Istanbul as a global city is a hotspot for various migration movements and one of the very few economic centers and global cities at the frontier of the EU. This location of Istanbul illustrates its high significance in the region as center of the global modern economy and its attraction for various migrant groups as it provides various spaces for transnational identities, life-styles and formal and informal organizations. In Chapter 7, Barbara Pusch analyses various forms of transnational migration to Istanbul. After a short overview on recent migration movements to Turkey and the clarification of the theoretical concepts used in the article, she focuses on Istanbul's attractiveness for regular migrants, irregular labor migrants, irregular transit migrants and asylum seekers and refugees as well as migrants with a Turkish background. She presents micro-level examples from her empirical work, which represent the experiences of migrants within the context of transnationality. In this context, she elaborates the relation of transnational migration and global cities using the example of Istanbul.

The potential for migration to Turkey of highly skilled migrants educated in Germany with a Turkish background is and will be significant, as well. In Chapter 8, Yaşar Aydın examines the migration of highly qualified Turks from Germany to Turkey, ones who went through the German education system (from primary school to the college degree). Aydın discusses on the ground of a transnationality framework whether this migration movement is a brain-drain process. Aydın postulates the reasons that motivate the highly qualified Turks for their migration decision. Among these reasons, the three most important ones are as follows. First, due to the recent developments in the German economy, such as privatization, unemployment and the shrinkage of social benefits, highly skilled migrants are under the risk of unemployment or underemployment. These economic determinants play the most important role among the pushing factors, yet they influence the confidence of highly skilled migrants with regards to the future of the German economy. Second, highly qualified migrants feel under the risk of being disadvantaged or even discriminated against. For instance, the unemployment rate among German academics is 4.4 %, whereas it is 12.5 % among the academics with an immigration background. Third, in line with the integration of the Turkish economy with the world economy, the Turkish labor market became quite attractive for the highly skilled German-Turks. The attractiveness of Istanbul, as it is in the center of the branches of many German firms and as it is preferred due to so-

cial networks and cultural closeness, also plays a role in the migration decision. German companies that have branches in Istanbul mostly prefer highly qualified German-Turks, who immigrated to Turkey, hold the blue-card (free to work and reside in both countries) and speak both languages.

The last contribution highlights immigration policies in Germany from the 1960s to today with a special emphasis on integration discussions. In Chapter 9, Mehmet Okyayuz highlights the immigration policies in Germany from the 1960s to today with a special emphasis on integration discussions. He critically analyzes the determinants of the migration and integration debate from a socio-historical point of view. He argues that, from the bilateral agreement between Germany and Turkey in 1961 until the recruitment stop of 1973, immigration policy was solely guided by the interests of the economic actors of the receiving country and was more or less equal to labor market policy. Starting from the mid-1970s, the social dimension of labor migration was emphasized in the sense that migrants themselves were integrated into debates concerning migration policies related to their living and working conditions. With the 1980s, a notion of integration emerged in which the migrants' strategies were no longer considered useful for developing a diverse, multicultural, tolerant and democratic society that respects human rights and freedoms. This chapter assesses perceptions of integration and participation of foreigners, along with perceptions of socio-political order and multiculturalism underlying and steering the flow of the debates, in order to show tendencies within the process of the relations between the foreigners and the political sphere (reflected in the wide scope of responsibility and action of the state) on the one hand, and the social sphere (reflected in the wide scope of action of social actors) on the other hand. A special emphasis is given to the structural dimension of immigration policies best seen within the context of their possible functionalization as a mechanism to solve social tensions.