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## **Emigration of Highly Qualified Turks**

A Critical Review of the Societal Discourses and Social Scientific Research

*Yaşar Aydın*

in:

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

edited by

Seçil Paçacı Elitok and Thomas Straubhaar

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# Emigration of Highly Qualified Turks

## A Critical Review of the Societal Discourses and Social Scientific Research

Yaşar Aydın

### Introduction: Background and Relevance of the Problem

The emigration of in Germany educated highly qualified Turks<sup>1</sup> from Germany to Turkey has attracted the attention of the media, politics and social sciences, and triggered controversial debates on a possible “*brain drain*”.<sup>2</sup> In this discussion, not only economic and scientific considerations, but also political concerns such as the involvement of highly qualified Turks in the social system and their identification with the cultural value system in Germany were included.

Three recent developments initiate to deal with the emigration of highly qualified Turks from Germany to Turkey.<sup>3</sup> Firstly, trade associations, experts and political actors have been complaining since at least the late 1990s that more and more top-executives, academics and other highly qualified persons emigrate from Germany.<sup>4</sup> This can also be verified by existing statistical data.

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<sup>1</sup> Initially, it needs to be emphasized that the term “Turk” does not refer to ethnicity, but to the territory of the Turkish Republic. In this contribution, the term “Turk” refers to a person who is (a) either a citizen of the Turkish Republic, (b) was once a Turkish citizen, but then has been naturalized and became a German citizen or (c) who is a natural-born German citizen with Turkish parent/s.

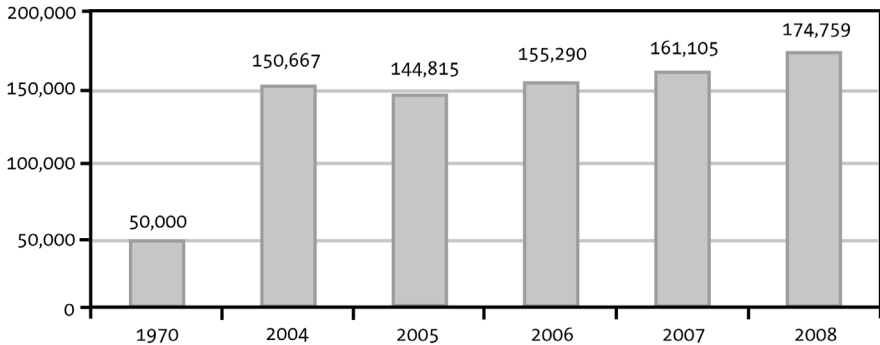
<sup>2</sup> See Jacobsen (2009), Flocke (2008).

<sup>3</sup> Here it needs to be emphasized that this contribution is not a final work, but a work in progress. It is part of a more comprehensive research project which is currently carried out at the HWWI (Hamburg Institute of International Economics) on behalf of the foundation Hans Böckler Stiftung. This research project aims at investigating empirically the causes and reasons of migration intentions and the actual migration of highly qualified Turks from Germany to Turkey. It focuses mainly on two questions: Are these highly qualified Turks “participating in two societies”? Does the emigration of highly qualified Turks mean “brain drain” (“waste of resources”) or “failure of integration”? For this purpose, semi-structured interviews are conducted. In this contribution, however, the focus is rather on the existing social scientific literature and the available data.

<sup>4</sup> Kinast et al. (2007), Heise-Online (2007).

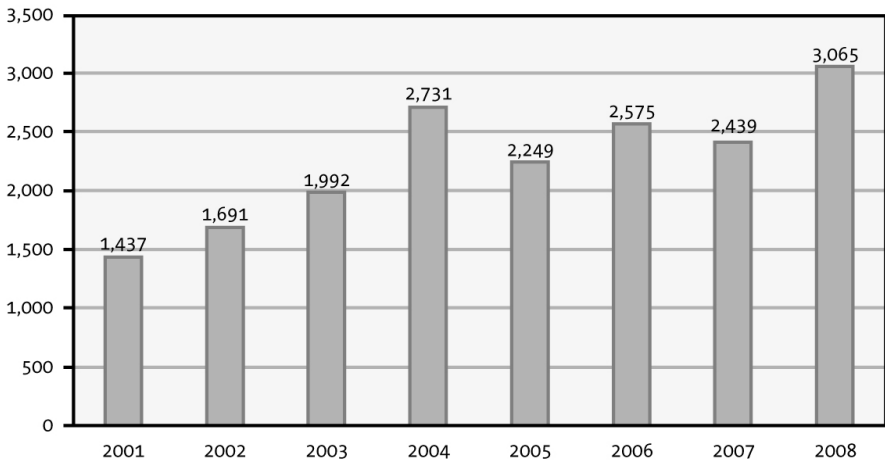
The number of the emigrants from Germany has almost increased three-fold in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century compared to the 1970s (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Emigration of Germans from Germany



Source: Migrationsbericht 2007 and 2008.

Figure 2: Emigration of Medical Doctors from Germany



Source: Migrationsbericht 2008.

Today, more and more Germans are willing to live and work abroad. The available data show that German emigrants are a well-educated and a positively se-

lected group compared to the total population. Besides, in recent years there has also been a slight increase in the proportion of highly qualified emigrants. Highly qualified persons are indeed not the biggest group among German emigrants, but they make an over proportional amount. A comparison of the years between 1990 and 2000 shows that the percentage of the highly qualified emigrants has increased by 10 % in these ten years.<sup>5</sup> The emigration of doctors of medicine is also on the increase (Figure 2).

In business and politics, this development is regarded as problematic for two reasons. On the one hand, it is suggested in the social scientific literature that technical revolutions and economic developments benefit from *immigration movements* notably of highly qualified persons or specialists, while *mass emigration* of highly qualified persons and specialists results quite often in economic downfalls. On the other hand, in media discourses this increasing emigration is interpreted as an indication for the fact that Germany does not benefit enough from the international competition for highly qualified persons respectively specialists.<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, experts, employers' associations and trade unions predict that, in some sectors in the medium term and in other sectors even in the short term, there will be a growing shortage of skilled workers. Due to the rapid aging population and the growing importance of a knowledge-based economy, the qualified or skilled labor shortage will worsen notably in the sectors like health and engineering as well as in various service sectors.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the emigration of highly qualified Turks is also interpreted as an indication for a mental "*turning away*" of this group from the host society and for a "*failure of integration*".<sup>8</sup> It is frequently suggested that in the light of demographic trends, shortages of skilled workers and the lack of success in the recruitment of highly qualified professionals from abroad, it would be critical

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<sup>5</sup> Sauer/Ette (2000, p. 70).

<sup>6</sup> Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (2009, Editorial). This volume refers to the aging of the population and the "considerable shortage of skilled labor" and projects that Germany could lose "the international competition for the 'best minds'", APuZ (2009, p. 2).

<sup>7</sup> Heise-Online (2007), Fellmer/Kolb (2009). The shortage of skilled labor and the need for skilled immigration is also declared in the International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2009 of the OECD. In this survey, it is argued that the "economic downturn did not change the necessity of managing labor migration in general". According to this survey, it is likely that in the wake of economic recovery "a stronger migration flow" will resume (SOPEMI [2009, p. 3]). It is also predicted that in 2015 in OECD countries "the number of retiring from the labor force will exceed the number those who will enter the labor market" and that this development "will continue over many years" (*ibid.* [p. 1]).

<sup>8</sup> Leibold (2006).

from economic and political points of view if Germany still had to give up on a highly qualified workforce being trained in Germany.

In view of these developments and considerations, this book contribution focuses on the push factors that lead highly qualified Turks to emigrate from Germany as well as on the pull factors that lead them to migrate to Turkey. Thus, it aims at elucidating the reasons and causes of this emigration movement on the basis of existing research findings and statistical data. In the first part of this contribution, firstly classical and then more recent explanations on the migration of highly qualified workers will be presented systematically and discussed critically. In the second part, then, the extent and the causes of emigration of highly qualified Turks will be addressed.

### Theoretical Explanations for the Highly Qualified Migration

Since the end of World War II, the emigration of highly qualified workers, interpreted as “*brain drain*”, and their motives for emigration have attracted the attention not only of social scientists, but also of economists and politicians. The debate was triggered by a study conducted in Great Britain, which raised a public awareness for the weaknesses of the British education and academic system. The study called for an increase in funding.<sup>9</sup>

In the following discussions about the emigration of highly qualified persons, developing countries have been problematized as the main sending countries. At that time, the most important receiving country was the U.S., followed by Canada and Great Britain. Sending countries were India and other Asian, African and South American countries. Subsequently, the phenomenon was taken up also by development studies, problematized as “*brain drain*” and used for explaining the problem of underdevelopment. Having said that, now the question is: what is meant by “*brain drain*”?

#### *Brain Drain and High Qualification*

Literally, “*brain drain*” means emigration of intelligentsia. In economic discourses, the term refers to economic losses caused by the emigration of trained, skilled and especially highly qualified workers, specialists or other talented people such as academics from a country or a region to another country

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<sup>9</sup> Great Britain 1968, Hillmann/Rudolph (1996, p. 2).



or region. In scientific literature, there is no exact definition for highly qualified persons. It mostly remains unclear whether the term “*high qualification*” means the formal qualification or the present professional activity. In this contribution, the adjective “*highly qualified*” is based on the definition, which is found in the Law on Residence, Employment and the Integration of Foreigners in Germany.<sup>10</sup> According to Article 19(2) of this law, highly qualified people are

- Scientists with special professional knowledge,
- Teaching personnel and research assistants in high positions, and
- Specialists or executive personnel with special professional knowledge who get a salary at least more than the income threshold of the general pension system.<sup>11</sup>

Among the negative consequences or socioeconomic losses of “*brain drain*”, a number of historic examples could be given. In the first place, the migration of academics from the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) to the German Federal Republic (West Germany) should be mentioned. This situation turned out to be an economical and political problem for the German Democratic Republic. Previous examples consisted of, for example, the forced migration of Huguenots from France to Prussia, which brought many disadvantages for France and advantages for Prussia. The omission of Jewish bankers, which was caused by the expulsions during the high Middle Ages and early modern period, cost Spain its position as Great Power in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Germany and Austria lost many prominent scientists and entrepreneurs with Jewish origin due to the expulsion, extermination and forced emigration of Jews and Nazi opponents in the 1930s and 1940s under Nazism.

In a nutshell, “*brain drain*” can be considered as either a voluntary or a forced permanent emigration of highly qualified persons. “*Brain exchange*” on the contrary refers to the mutual flow of highly qualified workers between a sending and a receiving country. “*Brain circulation*” again refers to a process of circulation like this: studying abroad – gaining professional work experience – returning to the home country.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Gesetz über den Aufenthalt, die Erwerbstätigkeit und die Integration von Ausländern im Bundesgebiet (AufenthG).

<sup>11</sup> This presently amounts approximately 64,800 EUR per year.

<sup>12</sup> Diehl (2005, p. 1), Ladame (1970). The French migration researcher has criticized definitive assessments of migrations as a “*brain drain*” and pointed out the possibilities and benefits of the mobility of highly qualified elites. He argued that one day these people would return and that the “*brain drain*” would turn out to be a “*brain gain*”. To conceptualize this theoretically and describe it empirically he proposed the concept “*circulation of the elite*”. This term was received with great attention in social scientific discourse and is used by migration researchers with a slight modification as “*brain circulation*” (Hunger [2003, p. 14]).

### *Theories on the Mobility of Highly Qualified Workers*

In social research, the mobility of highly qualified workers was initially explained by two opposite *grand theories*. Representatives of the *dependence theory*, on the one hand, explained the mobility of highly qualified workers by the global market structures and assessed it as a form of exploitation. Representatives of the *modernization theory*, on the other hand, assessed the mobility of highly qualified workers more positively from the perspective of a “free” global labor market.

The dependency theorists argued that the “Western” dominated world market structures are responsible for the underdevelopment because they keep the poor developing countries in the position of economic and political dependence.<sup>13</sup> In this regard, the active “recruiting” of qualified professionals from developing countries by the rich industrialized countries was taken as the evidence of the poor “South’s” exploitation by the rich “North”. Industrialized countries would take advantage of the skilled labor pool of poor countries without making a contribution to the training costs. They argued that the loss of “the brightest minds” would produce and reproduce a vicious circle of underdevelopment and poverty. As a consequence, supporters of dependency theory called for an international regulation of the mobility of highly qualified workers and for, at least, an enforcement of financial compensation for sending countries.<sup>14</sup> The Indian economist Bhagwati proposed a *brain drain tax*, which should be paid either by receiving host countries to the sending developing countries or by the highly qualified immigrants themselves, once they are capable of payment.<sup>15</sup>

Modernization theorists evaluated the emigration of the elites rather positively. On the basis of the neoclassical theory, they assumed that the migration of intellectuals and technical elites should be seen more in terms of a free global labor market, which follows the law of supply and demand. People should use their different skills and abilities where they are used most efficiently and where they find the best competition.<sup>16</sup> In this sense, the emigration of elites from developing to industrialized countries is logical and would create not only negative results. Government interventions like regulating of

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<sup>13</sup> Senghaas (1974).

<sup>14</sup> Ghosh (1982), Thirwani (1989), Galeano (1988).

<sup>15</sup> Bhagwati (1976 a/1983 b).

<sup>16</sup> Ethier (1987).

the mobility of highly qualified workers and financial compensation for sending countries would, according to the supporters of modernization theory, produce distortions in international competition and thus global welfare losses.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to the representatives of dependency theory, the emigration of highly qualified workers was by the supporters of modernization theory not explained by the politics of receiving or respectively recruiting countries, but rather by the conditions in sending countries. From the perspective of modernization theory, the emigration of the highly qualified workers turned out to be a consequence of the lack of operational and developmental opportunities in their country of origin. Firstly, in developing countries the job opportunities were not sufficient for the trained workforce. Second, the migration of the highly qualified workforce was also a result of the overproduction of especially scientific elites. In order to support the second thesis, India is cited.<sup>18</sup>

In both *grand theories*, namely in the modernization and dependence theory, large imbalances in wage levels, vast differences in living standards and specific attracting factors such as immigration programs as well as political circumstances in sending countries were considered responsible for the migration of highly qualified people. Subjective motives such as the desire for self-realization, broadening one's own horizon, emancipation from traditional constraints and gaining individual autonomy were hardly regarded in these two grand theories. Beside a *brain drain tax* and *emigration control bans*, no useful strategies were developed.

Discussing the mobility of the highly qualified persons only in terms of "brain drain" deserves criticism because of different reasons. Firstly, it deserves criticism because the focus is mainly on the economic aspects. The focal point of these considerations was the benefits and disadvantages that arise from the mobility of highly qualified people for the economy of a country or a region. This meant that political and sociological aspects are obscured. Secondly, in such considerations both the "society" and "national economies" are understood as "close entities" in the sense of the "container model" of the society. This includes the risk of succumbing to "methodological nationalism".<sup>19</sup> Thirdly, the

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<sup>17</sup> Körner (1999).

<sup>18</sup> Mount/Ford (1997).

<sup>19</sup> Ulrich Beck describes the idea of the society as a cohesive, coherent and clear-cut unity as "container theory of society" (1997, p. 49). Following Smith (1979, p. 191), Beck characterizes the "understanding of society of the first modernity as methodological nationalism". One characteristic for this perspective is the assumption of a "congruency between the society and the nation-state" (Beck [1997, p. 115]).

term “brain drain” is often an expression of fears of not being able to benefit from the international competition of highly qualified persons. *Fourth*, in those discussions on the mobility of highly qualified persons in terms of “brain drain”, emancipatory potentials and socio-economic advantages for the emigrants which arise from voluntary emigration were absent. Furthermore, in such theoretical approaches and discourses, migration is understood as a unidirectional change of residence.

These aspects and issues raised in last two points are addressed systematically in research on *transnationality* in which a new form of migration is stated and termed as “*transnational migration*”. Recent migration research based on the “*transnationalism*” perspective substantiate empirically that, today, international migration does not occur as a single unidirectional change of residence, but rather as a permanent mobility and as a new *reality of life* for a growing number of people. Transnational migration results in “*transnational spaces*” characterized as a “*hybrid product combining identificatory and socio-structural elements of the region of origin and the region of arrival*”.<sup>20</sup> Based on this perspective, international processes of *detritorialization* can be interpreted as a major driving force of the mobility of highly qualified persons. Between Germany and Turkey, similar transnational social spaces may be presumed, but until now this has not been studied systematically. The concept and research approach of transnational social spaces stated that through current migration movements something new, namely a “*third space*”, emerges: interrelation of social life and activities which are characterized by a “*here-and-there*” and a “*both ... and*”. Between the “*clear-structured*” world of national, cultural and religious boundaries, “*social landscapes*”<sup>21</sup> are emerging which connect and change regions of origin and regions of arrival. The question to what extent the emigration of highly qualified Turks gives rise to similar “*social landscapes*” or “*transnational spaces*” between Germany and Turkey has been left open in the contemporary migration research.<sup>22</sup>

Since the 1990s, following the migration researcher Ladame (1970) a third strand has been increased alongside the modernization and dependency theories which considers the positive effects of migration of highly qualified work-

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<sup>20</sup> Pries (1998, p. 136).

<sup>21</sup> Albrow (1998).

<sup>22</sup> Although the transnational aspects of the Turkish migrants in Germany are highlighted in recent contributions and Thomas Faist (2000) edited a book on transnational social spaces between Germany and Turkey, empirical analysis which focus on highly qualified Turks and transnational social spaces in Turkey are still rare.

ers for both the sending and the receiving countries. Contemporary research, for example, points out the emergence of diaspora-like networks,<sup>23</sup> the return of migrants or the combination of both phenomena, from which many possibilities and innovations result.<sup>24</sup>

Other studies deal with networks of scientists that were built by emigrated scientists who bring positive effects for the sending and receiving countries.<sup>25</sup> Further publications deal with corporate networks, which emerge as a consequence of globalization. These include, for example, the development of internal labor markets which are of great importance for the mobility of highly qualified workers. The importance of these internal labor markets varies depending on profession and the existing competitive situation in the respective international labor markets.<sup>26</sup>

In this respect, the following question is of great interest for this contribution as well as for migration research in general: does the emigration of highly qualified Turks from Germany mean a “*failure of integration*” as it is frequently stated, or does it mean rather “*participating in two societies*”?

### Mobility of Highly Qualified Persons with Turkish Origin

In the second half of the 1980s, the topic of the mobility of highly qualified persons in the migration research enjoyed a worldwide renaissance. The focus was directed on the emigration of highly qualified persons from developing countries or from one industrialized to another industrialized country. In recent years, another group attracts the interest of the media, social sciences and economics: in Germany, educated and highly qualified Turks emigrate from Germany to Turkey, namely from a highly developed industrial society to a prospering industrial society. Questions that interest the scientific community and the public focus on the causes of the mobility of this group as well as on possible indications for a return tendency among them. In such debates, the focus is on concerns and fears about a possible “*waste of human resources*”<sup>27</sup> and “*failure of integration*” which is frequently insinuated especially by conser-

<sup>23</sup> Meyer (2001), Meyer et al. (2001).

<sup>24</sup> Iredale (2001).

<sup>25</sup> Brown (2000).

<sup>26</sup> Beaverstock (1991), Straubhaar/Wolter (1997). For the role of international personnel consultancies, see Gould (1988), Findlay (1993).

vative politicians and the media. Prior to a further discussion of these, it is useful to present some key data on the life situation of highly qualified Turks in Germany.

### *Basic Data for Life Situation of Highly Qualified Turks in Germany*

Available data on highly qualified Turks in Germany is due to two reasons inadequate. On the one hand, in social scientific debates the term “*highly qualified person*” is used in a different way so that it is not always clear whether it refers to the formal qualification or to present professional activity. On the other hand, the existing statistical data are often imperfect due to several reasons: the statistics of the Bundesagentur für Arbeit (federal employment agency), for example, do not consider the “*migration background*” so that we are not able to find out the number of active Turkish employees who are subject to social security insurance.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, from available empirical data and research results,<sup>29</sup> we can extract a general view about the *life situation* and the *degree of integration* of and *return tendencies* among highly qualified Turks with a permanent residence in Germany.

To begin with, it was to be mentioned that 10 % of the 1.74 million Turkish citizens were in 2006 in possession of an academic diploma. Altogether, 15 % of the immigrants with a Turkish background were employed as medial and upper white-collar professionals or even as officials.<sup>30</sup> However, we cannot determine exactly how many of these medial and upper white-collar professionals could be categorized as highly qualified.

According to a study, carried out within the European Migration Network (Europäisches Migrationsnetzwerk), a total of 23,908 highly qualified Turkish citizens were residing in Germany (on June 30, 2005). In relation to the total number of Turkish employees subject to social security insurance (458,243), it makes 5.21 %, while in relation to total number of all highly qualified employees subject to social security insurance (5,579,752), it makes only 0.41 %. The major-

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<sup>27</sup> “*Waste of resources*” is also an issue of migration from non-OECD countries. Qualifications and work experiences of immigrants are frequently regarded by employers as inferior which leads to waste of resources as well as to frustrations by the immigrants (SOPEMI 2009).

<sup>28</sup> See Straubhaar (2006) on the problem of the reliability of statistics.

<sup>29</sup> There are only a few studies which give information on the socio-economic background, motivations for migration and return intentions of highly qualified Turks. To be mentioned are the TASD-survey and the studies of Heß (2009), Jahr et al. (2001) and Enders/Bormann (2001).

<sup>30</sup> Tucci (2008, p. 202, 204).

ity of highly qualified Turkish employees were occupied in the health sector (11,197), followed by technicians (3,496), entrepreneurs, businessmen and systems analysts accountants (1,932) and engineers (1,709).<sup>31</sup>

However, this study does not give information about the proportion of those who were educated in Germany (*Bildungsinländer*)<sup>32</sup> or abroad. Moreover, these figures refer not to formal education, but to present professional activity. It can be expected that the number of highly qualified persons in terms of formal education is possibly higher than in terms of current professionally activities. In the TASD-survey, the number of Turkish academics was estimated between 45,000 and 70,000 persons.<sup>33</sup> It should also be mentioned that we also do not have exact figures on the unemployment of highly qualified persons with Turkish backgrounds. According to an OECD-survey (2007), the proportion of unemployed highly qualified persons with a migration background amounts to 12.5 %, while the unemployment rate of highly qualified persons without a migration background amounts to 4.4 %. In short, the unemployment rate of highly qualified persons without a migration background is approximately three times lower than by highly qualified persons with a migration background.

### *Migration of Turks*

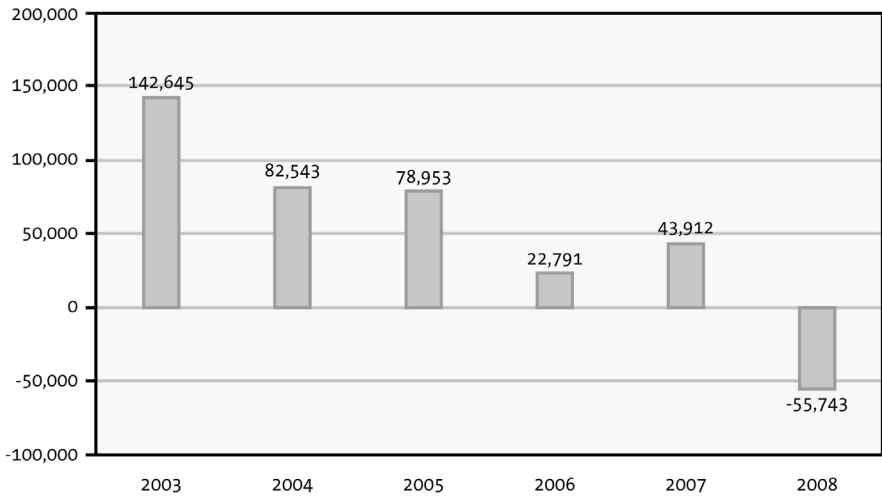
Prior to an overview about migration movements between Germany and Turkey, some basic data on migration in general should be presented. It is worth pointing out that from 1991 to 2006 approximately 15.1 people moved in to Germany. In the same period 10.9 million people migrated from Germany. This makes a net immigration of 4.2 million. However, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the migration movements are on the decrease. In 2005 the lowest immigration (707,352) since the year 1987 was registered. In 2006 immigration to Germany dropped to 661,855 (558,467 of them were persons with foreign citizenship). In contrast to that, the number of emigrants rose by 1.7 % (to 639,064; 483,774 of them were foreigners) in comparison with the previous year. In recent years, the net migration balance was on the decrease, too; in 2008 there was a negative net migration balance (Figure 3).

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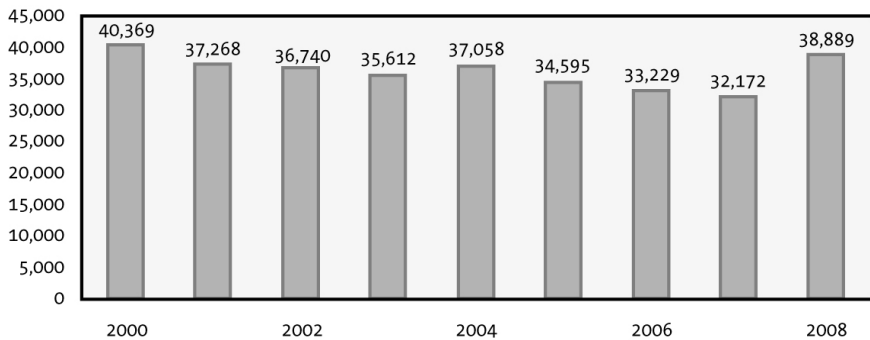
<sup>31</sup> Heß/Sauer (2006, p. 46).

<sup>32</sup> "Bildungsinländer" are students or persons with foreign citizenship who have the same university entrance conditions as nationals because they completed their education in Germany.

<sup>33</sup> Sezer/Dağlar (2008).

**Figure 3: Net Migration from Germany**

Source: Migrationsbericht 2008.

**Figure 4: Immigration from Germany to Turkey**

Source: Migrationsbericht 2007 and 2008.

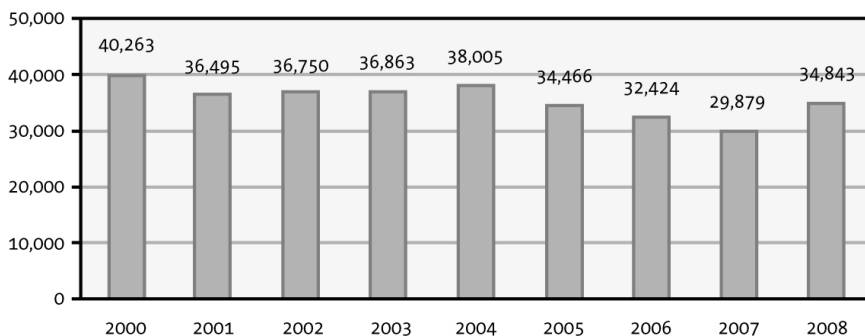
It needs also to be emphasized that the immigration from Turkey to Germany has been reduced since 1991 by more than half. In 1991, 82,818 persons emigrated from Turkey to Germany, while in 2006 there were only 31,449 immigrants from Turkey. A great part of the emigration from Turkey to Germany



was due to spousal *immigration or family unions* as well as to *asylum applications*, which are for couple of years on the decrease, too. The migration from Germany to Turkey, in contrast, does not increase dramatically, as data for the years from 1991 to 2006 show, but remains relatively constant (Figure 4).

Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that, from these data the proportion of immigrants with a Turkish background or citizenship or German *expatriates*, who immigrate to Turkey for the short term, is not apparent. The Migrationsbericht 2007 (migration survey of 2007) breaks down migration outflows according to citizenship, so that we can gain a general overview about the extent of emigration of Turks. According to this, there are no dramatic developments: the figure of the emigrants with Turkish citizenship remained between 1991 and 2006 constant, too. However, it must be taken into account that the citizenship of an emigrant need not coincide with the destination. That is to say, we cannot suggest that, for example, a person with Turkish citizenship who leaves Germany immigrates necessarily to Turkey. It remains therefore unclear whether these emigrants with Turkish citizenship migrate to Turkey or to another country when they leave Germany. Besides, the extent of highly qualified Turks in proportion to the total number of immigrants to Turkey is not apparent, too.

Figure 5: Emigration of Turkish Citizens from Germany



Source: Migrationsbericht 2007 and 2008.

It is possible that a great part of those who immigrate to Turkey has German citizenship. The readiness to emigrate from Germany could be higher by highly qualified persons with German Citizenship since they can return to Germany

whenever they want without any difficulties. Furthermore, German citizens with a Turkish background can make use of all rights in Turkey except the active and passive right to vote. This is guaranteed by the blue card (*mavi kart*).

According to the official statistics in Turkey, in 2000 all in all 73,736 persons migrated from Germany to Turkey (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu). Noticeable is first of all a big deviation between the number of Turkish official statistics and the data of the German official migration survey.<sup>34</sup> According to the German migration survey in 2007, migration from Germany to Turkey amounted 40,369 in the year 2000. A possible explanation for this deviation is the fact that a part of the emigration from Germany to Turkey is not registered as such by German authorities for various reasons. It is possible that many emigrants with Turkish citizenship remain registered in Germany even when they live in Turkey because they do not want to affect their insurance rights (claims) or pension entitlements. However, this is an issue that requires systematic research.

Relevant statistical data are also insufficient because they do not reflect the citizenship of those who migrate from Germany to Turkey. The extent of the highly qualified person in relation to the total number of emigrants is not calculated, too. In summary, the existing data on migration movements between Germany and Turkey do not provide clear statements on the emigration of highly qualified persons with a Turkish background from Germany to Turkey.

### *Research About the Mobility of Highly Qualified People of Turkish Origin*

The interest of scientists, business organizations and the public in statistical data and other empirical scientific insights on the residence of highly qualified people in Germany and on the immigration of them to Germany have increased considerably. The study “Migration of Highly Skilled Workers from Third Countries to Germany”<sup>35</sup> conducted by the Research Group of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge) provided important insights. In this research, highly qualified individuals who possess a residence permit according to Article 19 of the Law on Residence, Employment and the Integration of Foreigners in Germany (AufenthG) are inter-

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<sup>34</sup> Migrationsbericht (2007).

<sup>35</sup> Hess (2009).

viewed.<sup>36</sup> The study attempted to gather information about the socio-economic background, the motives for migration and intentions of return-emigration of highly qualified migrants in Germany. 959 highly qualified individuals (statistical population), recruited via the Central Foreigners Register (Ausländerzentralregister), are from different countries: 51 people are from Turkey, 193 from the USA, 161 from the Russian Federation and 55 from China.

However, it has to be argued against this study critically that the results for the question about the satisfaction with Germany, the income and the job situation, as well as the reasons for leaving the country of origin (*push factors*) or for deciding in favor of Germany as a destination (*pull factors*), are not broken down by country of origin. Regarding the future prospects of highly qualified workers from Turkey, the study states that 73.3 % of them plan to stay for more than ten years or forever in Germany.<sup>37</sup> However, since this study surveys newly arrived, high-skilled workers, the articulated intentions of remaining in Germany can hardly be transmitted to the rest of high-skilled workers of Turkish origin in Germany. Questions about the factors and causes of migration intentions and the actual emigration of Turkish origin are not addressed in this study.

“*Return intentions*” of Turkish migrants have engaged migration research for a long time. In the 1970s or even in the 1980s, many migrants have expressed their return intention during several interviews, which was evaluated as an indication of “*lack of desire for integration*”. Such results led to the conclusion that the stay of Turkish migrants has a temporary character and, thus, those comprehensive efforts for their socio-political integration would be unnecessary. Only gradually, has migration research come to the conclusion that the declaration of return intentions could rather be interpreted as a psycho-social strategy, on which migrants rely in order to undermine the experienced discrimination respectively to compensate it.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> It is about a clearly defined group (as defined in Article 19 AufenthG), i.e. “about scientists with special technical knowledge, teaching individuals with exceptional capabilities as well as specialists or managers, whose residence is in a special economic and social interest” (Hess [2009, p. 22]). For this survey, those people were interviewed who possessed a permanent residence permit according to Article 19 AufenthG on 30.6.2007. The interviewees were determined from the Central Aliens’ Register (AZR). “These are new immigrants who entered after 2005 and who immediately received a residence permit according to § 19 AufenthG as well as people who previously have lived with another type of residence permit in Germany” (*Ibid.*).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 72).

<sup>38</sup> The central thesis of Pagenstecher, which addressed this paradox, is: “Even the return orientation will not be realised it has important social, cultural and psychological functions” (1996, p. 167). He interprets the articulation of return intentions

In these discussions on the “*return intentions*”, the “*failure of integration*” or the degree of integration of Turkish migrants, the focus was initially put on people with lower skills, lower education and poor language skills. Today, the media cares about the “return” intentions of highly qualified people. However, there is a lack of systematic study on the living conditions, attitudes, “return”, or to be more precise, migration intentions and self-assessment of highly qualified Turks.<sup>39</sup>

However, the TASD study, which has explored the issues just mentioned through online interviews, can be seen as an exception.<sup>40</sup> The main objective of this study was to determine the extent to which *Turkish academics and students in Germany* (hereafter TASD) identify themselves with Germany or how strongly they feel connected emotionally to Germany – the return intention served here as an indicator. The study comes to the conclusion that the vast majority of Turkish academics – men were clearly in the majority – want to leave Germany.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the study restrictively underlines that the declared return intention would rather display the discontent of the TASD with the professional world and everyday life in Germany than determine the readiness to emigrate. The TASD study states that the strong will to emigrate and the “*Turkey-orientation*” among Turkish academics and students can be explained by the failures of the German integration policy.<sup>42</sup>

### *Factors of Mobility of Highly Qualified Turkish Origin*

What are the main factors which motivate highly qualified Turks to emigrate from Germany? In social scientific discourse three factors are discussed.

(1) *Disadvantageous career prospects*: the TASD study arrived at the conclusion that a significant proportion of Turkish university graduates and the majority of Turkish students want to migrate from Germany to Turkey due to

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not only as a “defensive strategy and uncertainty” but also as a “statement of loyalty to the own minority group and to the country of origin” (*Ibid.* [p. 168]).

<sup>39</sup> For the state of integration of the Turks in Germany, see Goldberg (2000) and Tucci (2008).

<sup>40</sup> The TASD study is considered as the “most comprehensive social study” carried out until now, which for the first time examines the attitudes, habits and return intentions of the Turkish “educational elite” in Germany. However, this is not a representative study, because there are hardly any data about the total population of Turkish academics and students in Germany. This is also admitted self-critically by Kamuran Sezer, who worked on this study with the organization “future.org” (see Focus-Online [2008]).

<sup>41</sup> Sezer/Dağlar (2009).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 8).

“*professional reasons*”.<sup>43</sup> “*Disadvantageous professional perspectives*” is also highlighted as a central motive by highly skilled Turkish migrants who already moved to Turkey.<sup>44</sup> The respondents referred to their own negative experiences during their searches for job or in job interviews.<sup>45</sup> High unemployment among academics with a migration background (12.5 %, almost three times higher than among academics without migration background, 4.4 %) could be read as a clear evidence for this interpretation (see OECD study, 2007). In addition, the T ASD study found out that migration-readiness by academics and students, who estimate their personal and the general economic situation of Germany as unfavorable and who are correspondingly more pessimistic about their future is higher in comparison to those who have a more optimistic assessment. In this sense, “*bad economic situation*” and “*pessimistic estimate*” of the own economic prospects can be considered as two important push factors.<sup>46</sup>

(2) *Lack of feeling at home or lack of identification*: an additional finding of the T ASD study is that a lack of “*feeling at home*” or “*reluctance*” to identify oneself with Germany is a major factor related to the return intentions as well as to the actual return. To the question “*Because of what reasons do you intend to move to Turkey*”, 41.3 % of the online respondents answered with “*lack of feeling at home*”.<sup>47</sup> The T ASDs who express their return intention, rather see Turkey as their true home country than Germany. Among those who perceive Germany as their homeland, the extent of migration intention is correspondingly low. Crucial in regard to return intentions are also family ties: with an increasing intensity of family or other social ties, the readiness to return decreases.<sup>48</sup> However, this finding of the T ASD study is worthy of criticism for three reasons. Firstly, it is not representative, since there are hardly any reliable figures about German-Turkish high-qualified workers for a representative sample. Secondly, the survey questionnaire (“*Do you intend to move to Turkey in the future?*”) is not precise enough. Thirdly, the diagnoses “*lack of feeling at home*” and “*lack of identification*” are still in dispute among social scientists. Another study about attitudes of Turks towards the state and the society comes to the conclusion that Turkish migrants see the German social system as “*very posi-*

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Pusch/Aydin (2011), Aydin/Pusch (2011).

<sup>45</sup> Jacobsen (2009), Flake (2008), Ludwig (2009), Kaas/Manger (2010).

<sup>46</sup> Sezer/Dağlar (2009, p. 23).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 17).

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 7).

tive” and believe “to live in a righteous or partially just society”.<sup>49</sup> 49 % of the respondents would show a stronger relationship with Germany and a “high proportion” has “built up stable emotional bonds with Germany”.<sup>50</sup> In another study conducted by Martina Sauer, 60 % of Turkish migrants answered the question of whether they have any return intentions with “No”. Only 33 % of the respondents imagine a return to Turkey.<sup>51</sup>

(3) *Disadvantage and discrimination*: previously “unfavourable job prospects” were referred to as a key motivation for both the return, or, to be more precise, emigration intentions, as well as the actual emigration. It can be stated that a large proportion of highly qualified Turks see their own professional perspective as “unfavorable” due to the restrictions caused by discrimination on the German labor market and the structural disadvantages in many areas of society. 73 % of the respondents of a study have experienced discrimination in everyday life and in the professional world.<sup>52</sup> A face-to-face survey conducted by Ulrich Wilamowitz-Moellendorf showed that the majority (60 %) of the Turkish respondents claim “to have experienced often the feeling of discrimination as a foreigner”.<sup>53</sup> There are other research findings according to which a large part of discrimination against immigrants goes back to negative attitudes of employers and to discrimination during the recruitment period. Andrea Janßen and Ayça Polat<sup>54</sup> referred to *gatekeepers (decision-makers)*, who would decide during the employment-mediation period at the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) as well as during the interview period for companies according to non-functional criteria such as by ethnicity or “cultural characteristics”. They wrote in this regard that “the selectivity of the stereotypes by gatekeepers about Turks” is often more crucial than professional criteria.<sup>55</sup> Michael Blohm and Martina Wasmer pointed out in their contribution

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<sup>49</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (2001, p. 7).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 16).

<sup>51</sup> Sauer (2007); see also Kaya (2005).

<sup>52</sup> Sauer (2007 f, p. 139).

<sup>53</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (2001, p. 9).

<sup>54</sup> Janßen/Polat (2005).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* (p. 2001). For a study on discrimination against migrants in general as well as against Turks in particular, see also Aydın (2009), Granato/Kalter (2001). The study by Leo Kaas and Christian Manger (2010) can be seen as an exemplary case in this context. They send 528 applications of the fictional, equally well-qualified students with the names Serkan Sezer, Fatih Yıldız, Tobias Hartmann and Dennis Langer. The internship-applications with German names achieved a higher response rate as well as much more positive responses. The results of the study showed that even if a job applicant has nearly perfect references s/he is discriminated against during the job-search period if the employer suspects a Turkish origin.

about attitudes and contacts towards foreigners that “*the social distance towards Turks*” is far greater than the social distance towards other immigrant groups.<sup>56</sup> However, it must be noted here that experiences of discrimination or the subjective perception of a conflict as a rejection on the ground of ethnicity may not always have to match with objectively verifiable circumstances or experiences, but can also be influenced by expectations as well as general and individual moods.

What are the key factors that lead to the emigration of high-skilled Turks to Turkey? These can be broadly summarized into two points.

(4) *Social networks*: the social networks, which cover family bonds as well as the circle of acquaintance and other dense relations, are largely neglected in the research literature as possible factors of migration. Many highly skilled Turks living in Germany maintain relationships with various organizations and friends in Turkey, whereby they receive information about possible internal job postings. In addition to exchange programs and the friendship networks, family relationships and partnerships count as key factors, which have a relevant influence on mobility decisions and experiences. As demonstrated in many other studies on migration, the family influences the mobility of scientists significantly because family and kinship networks provide emotional support and necessary assistance in everyday life (eg., child care or other supports).

(5) *High economic growth*: during the recent years, Turkey has succeeded in achieving a sustainable economic growth averaging around 7 %. As a result, the Turkish economy was able to overcome serious consequences of the economic crisis of 2001; besides, the high inflation rate could significantly be reduced, as well. In 2001, the average inflation rate was still 68.5 %; however, in September 2009, the rate could be lowered to 5.3 %. Moreover, once the new direct investment law was passed (June 17, 2003), the number of newly established foreign companies increased significantly. At the end of 2007, the cumulative number of foreign companies reached around 18,308. The number of foreign company formations, participations and subsidiaries increases with a growing tendency. The number of German companies in Turkey is strongly growing, too (cp. SWR International 2009), which in turn promotes the immigration of highly qualified Turks to Turkey. German companies in Turkey, for example, increasingly fill in key positions with young, German-Turkish academics. They have an advantage over their German competitors due to their

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<sup>56</sup> Blohm/Wasmer (2008, p. 210).

bicultural background and bilingual skills. In addition to this, German citizens of Turkish origin possess the *Blue Card (mavi kart)*, and thus avoid the restrictive Turkish residence and work law.<sup>57</sup>

## Summary and Outlook

The aim of this contribution was approaching the emigration of highly qualified Turks and identifying the push-factors, which lead them to emigrate from Germany as well as the pull-factors, which lead them to immigrate to Turkey. Another important question was whether or to what extent there is a current emigration tendency among the highly qualified Turks living in Germany. In contrast to conventional *grand theories (dependency and modernization theory)*, this contribution arrived at the conclusion that it is highly problematic to explain the mobility of highly qualified people only in terms of “*brain drain*”. Regarding highly qualified Turks in Germany we can talk of “*brain drain*” or “*waste of human resources*” only insofar that a part of the émigrés decide for emigration due to the experience of disadvantage and subjective perception of discrimination. However, for a significant part of the émigrés the immigration into Turkey meant *personal autonomy, upgrading of personal freedom and social status advancement*. However, we know such examples only from the media; scientific analyses (studies) have not existed hitherto. There is an extensive scientific literature, which highlights a number of positive effects of the emigration of highly qualified Turks from Germany to Turkey. There are studies, which describe how the emigration of highly qualified people leads to “*transnational social spaces*”, but they take other countries and other national groups as examples. A consideration of the emigration of highly qualified Turks in terms of “*brain drain*” implicates the risk of losing sight of the positive aspects of this process.

It must be pointed out that the question about the *emigration intentions* of highly qualified Turks cannot be answered exactly on the ground of existing statistical data or scientific insights. *First*, the number of the highly qualified Turks residing in Germany cannot be determined because statistical surveys meanwhile cover the immigration background, but they do not consider the country of origin, ethnic or national background. Data about the highly qualified Turks do not distinguish between those who possess the German citizen-

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<sup>57</sup> Ludwig (2009, p. 43).



ship from Turkish citizens. *Second*, available statistics do not show the profession and education level of Turkish persons who emigrate from Germany, so that the proportion of highly qualified persons is not detectable. *Third*, there are no systematic studies about the *life conditions, attitudes and emigration tendencies* of highly qualified Turks in Germany. Therefore, the question of emigration intentions refers to a desideratum in current research and data.

Further questions which also have to be left open are these: To what extent is the *emigration* of highly qualified Turks from Germany a result of a “*failure of integration*” or a “*lack of integration*”? Are we dealing here with “*participation in two societies*”, with the emergence of “*transnational social spaces*” or “*transnational lifestyles*”? These questions cannot be answered exactly on the ground of existing research and statistical data. For this purpose, relevant qualitative empirical studies such as interviews and group discussions are needed. These interviews then ought to be interpreted systematically from a multidisciplinary perspective and with the means of *depth-hermeneutics* in order to understand them in their latent significance.

In conclusion, mobility of highly qualified Turks cannot only be considered from an economic perspective; caution has to be exercised particularly on account of the subjective point of views of the émigrés. Three questions would be crucial for a critical review from a subject perspective: (1) Are we dealing with a voluntary mobility? (2) Is the emigration possibly due to social discrimination or juridical political marginalization? (3) Does it result in waste of human resources?

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