

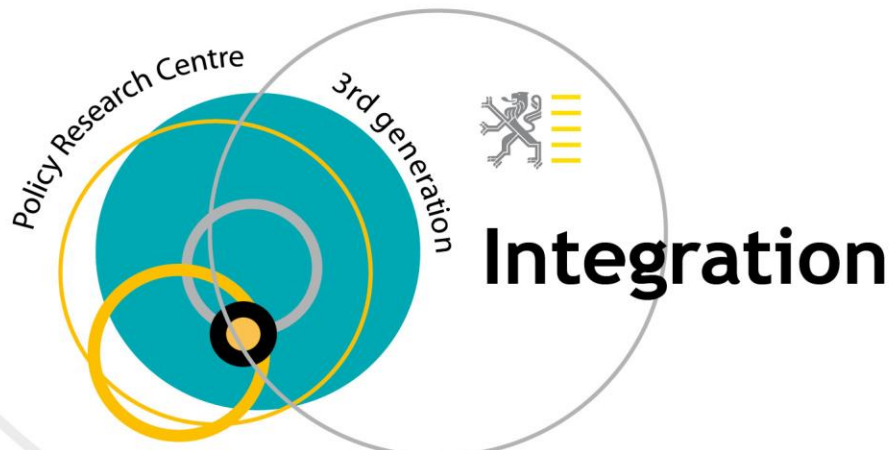
Emigrate from Belgium to the ancestral homeland: the motives and experiences of Turkish descendant youth

26 August 2013

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Integration***



Outline of Presentation

- **Introduction**
 - Turkish migration to Belgium (permanent “guest” workers and Euro-Turks)
 - Contextual background of the research
- **Research questions**
- **Research methods and sites**
 - Belgium and Turkey
 - 27 interviews with Turkish 2nd generation youth
- **Findings**
 - Motivations and aspirations to emigrate from Belgium to Turkey
 - Experiences from “returnees” in Turkey
 - Dynamic interplay of micro-macro level

Turkish migration to Belgium

- **1964: bilateral agreements between Belgium and Turkey**
 - Flexible work permit regime
 - Tolerant family reunification regulations
- **Mainly labour migration with aspirations to return**
 - Mine
 - Textile industry
- **From guestworker to settler**
- **Second largest non-EU27 migrant community in Belgium**
 - 39 828 with Turkish nationality (2011)
 - 112 000 Belgians with Turkish origin (naturalisation and 2nd generation)
- **Family-reunification and marriage**
- **Emigration aspirations from Turkey to Belgium dry up or change**
 - Not labour but human rights
- **Aspirations of 2nd generation youth to emigrate to Turkey**
 - In line with other European countries

Research questions

- **RQ1. What are the circumstances and motivations for the emigration to the ancestral homeland? What are the roles of push-pull factors on micro-macro level underlying this emigration of the 2nd generation Belgian-Turks?**
- **RQ2. What are the experiences of the actual “returnees”? Does the image and expectation of the ancestral homeland become reality or not?**

Research methods and sites

- **Target-sample of 30**
 - 12 “returnees” in Turkey and 15 with aspirations in Belgium
 - Saturation after 27
- **Sample accessed by**
 - Self-selection via response to add in online journals
 - Personal networks
 - Snow balling
- **Criteria: 18-35, 2nd generation aspirations to or actual emigration, educational level, Flanders & Brussels and Turkey**
- **Semi-structured open interviews**
 - Predefined topic list discussed beforehand and tested in pilot interview
 - Adaptation of topic list during the interviews when new topics discovered
- **Native researcher with proficiency in Dutch and Turkish language**
- **Ethics and analysis**
 - Verbal consent
 - All interviews were recorded and transcribed
 - Coding and analysis with Nvivo 10

Profile of informants in analysis

- **Place of birth**
 - Belgium (26) & Turkey (1)
- **Gender**
 - Female (20) & male (7)
- **Place of residence:**
 - 15 in Belgium: Antwerp (4), Brussels (3), Limburg (7), East Flanders (1)
 - 12 in Turkey (Ankara (2), Gaziantep (1), Istanbul (7), Konya (1) and Sakarya (1)
 - Emigration to Turkey: within the last year (5) & one and maximum eight years (7)

Age	Educational level	Labor market Position					
		Other	Student	Unemployed	Manual worker	Non-manual workers	Self-employed
<25	Secondary		BF8				
	Higher		BF5				
25-29	Secondary			BTF4, TBF4 TF15		BF1, BM1, BM4	
	Higher	TF12	TF19, BF9, BM3	BF2, TF13, TF14, TF16, BF6, TF17		TF18	TM5
≥30	Secondary				TF11, BM2	TM6	TM7
	Higher					BF3, BF10, BF7	

Findings

“Write in capitals: I emigrated [to Turkey] because of experiences of discrimination [in Belgium]” (TM5)

“If you have money, you have power and here [in Turkey] power is the only thing that counts. Here it is all about brands, how you are dressed eg. Which is not that much the case there [in Belgium]. There they treat you as a human being, you have your civil rights and nobody minds your business, but here you only have rights if you have money. No money means no rights” (TF14)

What pushes the 2nd generation Belgian-Turks? (macro)

- **Economic situation**
 - GDP low but slightly higher as EU average;
 - Unemployment rate (8.5% in 2013Q1) and youth unemployment rate (23.3% in 2013Q1)
- **Societal success**
 - *Educational success*
 - High drop out rate, overrepresentation in technical and vocational education and few in higher education (mediated by SES); delays in school carrier (directed impact ethnicity)
 - *Labour market participation*
 - high risk to enter long term unemployment regardless of educational levels; in jobs below qualifications, self-employed or in and (un)paid internship directed impact ethnicity)
- **Discrimination**
 - In both public as socio-economic domain and when going out and encountering police
 - Observed, experimentally tested (recruitment process), perceived by migrants (religious and highly educated) and reported
 - Extreme right (1990s) and 9/11 (2001)

What pushes the 2nd generation Belgian-Turks? (micro)

- **Image of Belgium**

- Conservative Belgian-Turkish society (♀)
- Belgian mentality (monotone and pessimistic)
- Belgian system (live to work)
- Climate

“I think most people have the same problem. People here are very satisfied, but not happy. There is a big difference between being satisfied and being happy, and I’m just not happy” (BM4)

- **Leisure and cultural activities**

- Social – control within Belgian-Turkish population
- Limited friendship possibilities
- Limited social life (Life ends at 6 p.m.)

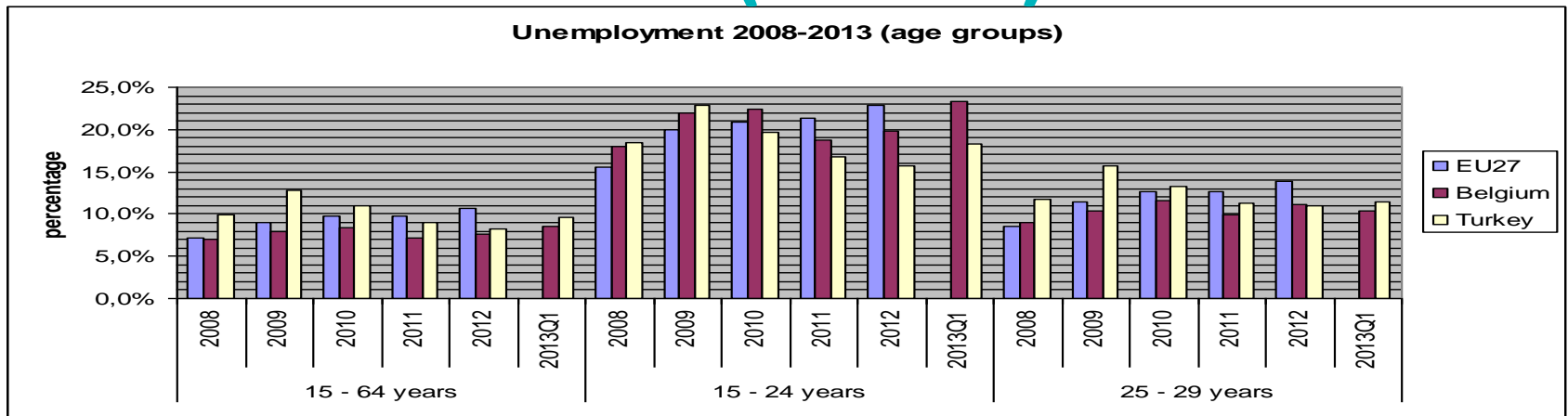
“I feel more attached to the Turkish language and the Turkish way of sharing emotions and humor. Sometimes I go to the Flemish theatre, but I find it so absurd. Everyone is laughing, while I don’t think it’s funny at all. I try to force myself, but hey what can I do, I just don’t have it in me” (BF4)

What pushes the 2nd generation Belgian-Turks? (micro)

- **Identitiy**
 - *In-betweenness*
 - The constant other
 - Feelings of (not) belonging
 - In search of Turkish identity (patriotism)

“It’s like I’m living multiple lives in Belgium. I have my life at school and my life at home. I’m a different person with my classmates, and I change when I’m with my family . I’m always going back and forth between these two identities and I don’t want that anymore, so I want to leave.” (BF9)

What pulls the 2nd generation Belgian-Turks? (macro)



- **Turkish miracle**
 - Economic cool down, inflation and consumption on credit
 - Westernization of consumption (modernity and *Almanci*), spectacularist consumption
 - Tension between modernisation and Islamisation with nepotistic public investment projects
- **Attitude and policy of Turkish government towards the Turkish migrants**
 - No policies targetted to 2nd generation to promote Turkey (cf. Morocco)
 - Homeland-Advice Bureau (2001) advises migrants who return permanently to Turkey
 - Double nationality

What pulls the 2nd generation Belgian-Turks? (micro)

- **Image of Turkey**
 - Turkish homogeneity
 - Turkey equals Europe
 - Romantisation Turkish society
 - Plus point as Belgian – Turk (diploma and multilingualism)
 - Labor market opportunities
- **Leisure and cultural activities**
 - Turkey never sleeps
 - Turkish way of leisure (tea gardens – Bosphorus)
 - Partner
 - Friendship

“Istanbul has a mystical spell, when your soul has been contaminated by this city ones, it inevitably goes under your skin. When you leave, it attracts you back” (BM1)

Reality check: experiences of “returnees”

- **Image of Turkey**
 - Hierarchal and authoritarian society
 - Consumerism (nouveau riche and credit card mentality)
 - Educational level
 - Traffic
 - Indifferent mentality
 - Social security
- **Leisure and cultural activities**
 - Friendship (in-betweenness- unreliable)
 - Prejudice towards Euro-Turks
 - Expensive
 - Lack of time (work – distance)

In Belgium I felt like a Turk, but since I’ve been living here, I realised that I am an European” (TF14)

Reality check: experiences of “returnees”

- **Labor market experiences**
 - Ethical issues
 - Wage (underpaid)
 - Power of employer (working overtime)
 - Lack of professionalism
 - Hierarchy
 - Belgian diploma or language not added value
 - Nepotism
 - Gender (image of gender-related employment)

“You know, sometimes you have to go. Maybe I had to come and work here to get it out of my mind. At least I will not regret for not trying” (TF17)

Conclusions on RQ1: pre-return

- Sample of 2nd generation Belgian-Turks were mostly educational high-achievers or high positioned on the social ladder and also fluent in 3 to 4 languages
- Image-forming of Turkey was mainly based on transnational activities such as the (summer) holidays and feedback mechanisms such as the Turkish media, family and friends
- Most respondents gave the impression to realise the negative aspects of Turkey: mainly the “Turkish system” economic inequalities and conditions in hospitals
- Based on the information we can distinguish three profiles of return migration motivations
 - Return because of economic possibilities: economic return
 - Return because of the “Turkish way of life”: romantic return
 - Return through family or partner: followers

Conclusions on RQ2: Post-Return

- Initial reaction and adaptation to return was inconvenient; but most overcame the translocation and within a year or two they felt integrated in the Turkish society, yet many of them still compare Turkey to Belgium on issues such as human rights and social security
- Many returnees were able to access the job market, but had to encounter extreme severe working conditions often leading to resignation
- Returnees had to reconsider their romantic image of Turkey and the Turkish society into a more realistic point of view:
 - contrast between education systems
 - low incomes and high costs
 - challenges of living in Turkey: Turkish mentality, traffic
 - network-based society and nepotism
- Of course there were also many references to the positive aspects of life in Turkey (way of life, living in an active, unpredictable and dynamic country, lots of (economic) possibilities)

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- *Prof. dr. Christiane Timmerman* (Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies, University of Antwerp)

Application process

All applicants have to submit an extended abstract presenting their current research project, a recommendation letter of their supervisor, a motivation letter and a curriculum vitae.

Deadline for applications

15 September 2013

More information: www.imiscoe.org (PhD training page)
or Joris.Michielsen@uantwerpen.be (academic coordinator)

