
50 Years After the Labour Recruitment Agreement with Germany: The Consequences of Emigration for Turkey

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Abstract

Turkey is a country with relatively recent and ongoing experience of labour emigration. Starting with the signing of the bilateral Turkish-West German labour recruitment agreement in October 1961, it has been a country of emigration, a trend that significantly influenced part of its economic, social, and political history. This essay elaborates the last fifty-year history of labour emigration from Turkey, and its consequences for the country in the economic, social and political spheres. It aims to sketch briefly the trends and patterns of emigration flows with reference mainly to the changing nature of these flows over time. More specifically, the essay offers an overview of the main impacts of labour migration for the country. It concludes that neither the positive nor the negative consequences of migratory flows for the country should be overestimated.

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Keywords

Turkey, Germany, emigration, labour migration, labour recruitment agreement, remittances.

Introduction

It has been exactly 50 years since the start of large-scale emigration from Turkey to other parts of the world. Throughout that time many changes have taken place in Turkey, and the country is now quite different from what it was 30 or 40 years ago. There is no doubt that some of these changes have been associated with the dynamics and mechanisms of these emigration flows. Although the country had experienced a series of outflows of people since the late 19th century, these flows were mostly limited to persons with non-Turkish or non-Islamic background. Therefore, Turkish emigration, in its ethnic or national sense, is a relatively new phenomenon. Unlike the British, Germans, Italians, Greeks, Chinese, or Indians, for example, the Turks had no particular history of large-scale

emigration in modern times up until the signing of the bilateral Turkish-West German agreement (30 October 1961), which initially permitted Turkish individuals to enter West Germany on temporary one- or two-year work contracts, and was later expanded to permit the entry of families. In the half century since, Turkish men and women have emigrated in hundreds of thousands. The great majority of these emigrants went to Western Europe; some also went to Australia and, later, in larger numbers to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and more recently to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).¹

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The evolution of this movement was impressive. Starting with the outflow of a few Turkish migrants in late 1961, there were by 2011, when the population of Turkey itself was over 73 million, more than 3.5 million Turkish migrants in Europe, some 100 thousand Turkish workers in the MENA region, some 60 thousand settlers in Australia, and over 75 thousand workers in the CIS countries. There were also more than a quarter

million Turkish migrants in Canada and the United States. Thus, at any one time during these years, some six per cent of the Turkish population was abroad.² And when we consider that some 40-50 per cent of the early emigrants returned permanently to Turkey,³ it would appear that a sizeable minority of the present Turkish population has had a direct experience of emigration, and an even larger proportion has had - through the emigration of a close relative or friend - an indirect experience.

There is no doubt that the potential impact of this movement on Turkey is more than a function of numbers; it is also a function of contacts and transnational ties. From the beginning, Turkish emigrants have appeared to keep in touch with family and friends in the homeland. Many of them have visited Turkey from time to time on holidays, to attend weddings, or in response to the sickness or death of a relative. They have sent remittances, bought homes and lands, and made investments. Some of them have returned for good. At the very least, it would seem likely that this combination of massive emigration and the maintenance of a high level of contact with those left behind in a transnational space would serve as an important stimulus for changing Turkey's economic and social life.

There exists a great deal of research on the various aspects of Turkish emigration, but relatively little is

known about its consequences for the country. This essay provides a broad overview of the literature on some of the consequences of international migration for Turkey. The focus therefore is diverse; highlighting similarities and differences within economic and social spheres, and emphasizing mixed research findings given the fact that what is found for one area is often counterbalanced by an opposite finding in another area. As a way of providing exploratory background, the following section provides a brief history of Turkish migration to Europe since the early 1960s. The second section analyses the main characteristics of the consequences of emigration for the country. The final section outlines what has been learned from the previous studies with regard to the general implications of Turkish emigration for the country.

Turkish Emigration since 1960s: A Historical Synopsis

With the exception of the mass outflow of its non-Muslim population since the early 1920s, which was part of the nation-building process in the country, emigration from Turkey remained limited until the early 1960s.⁴ Although Turkey began to export labour only after the negotiation of an official agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany in 1961, by 1970 it became one of the largest suppliers of workers

in various labour importing countries.⁵ Preceding the agreement with Germany, the Western European labour market had already started to draw a number of workers from the labour pool in Turkey. However, the size of this frontier movement was small, and it was sporadic and relatively unknown, because workers often migrated illegally, due to the difficulties in obtaining passports, visas, and residence and work permits.⁶

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Within the context of European migratory regimes of the 1960s, a structurally organised emigration from Turkey was not possible without the negotiation of an official agreement between governments. The post-war reconstruction of Europe was still in process, and the economies of many Western European countries were in need of labour. After the making of the 1961 constitution, the First Five-year Development Plan (1962-1967) in Turkey delineated the 'export of surplus labour power' as an ingredient of development policy concerning the prospective flows of remittances and reduction in unemployment. To promote this policy, Turkey first signed a bilateral

labour recruitment agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany in 1961. Similar bilateral agreements, specifying the general conditions of recruitment, employment and wages, were signed with other governments.⁷ These agreements shaped the initial stages of migratory flows to a great extent, even if they did not have any considerable impact on the later stages of the flows. In other words, starting with the early 1970s, migratory flows from Turkey gained their own dynamics and mechanisms, which were quite independent from the previously structured measures of the bilateral migration agreements.

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The emergence of mass emigration from Turkey in the early 1960s was prompted in large measure by economic factors. The movement of migrant workers over the period of 1961-1975 fluctuated as a consequence of changes in the European migration market. The number of workers going to Europe increased immediately after 1961, and peaked at 66,000 departures in 1964. Then, the recession of 1966-67 caused a rapid decline in these numbers. In 1967, only 9,000 workers were sent by

the Turkish Employment Service (TES), while over 900,000 were on the waiting list to go abroad.⁸ In the aftermath of the recession, the number of emigrants increased sharply. This was a period of mass emigration; more than 100,000 workers left Turkey annually. In 1974, however, the Western European governments stopped the entry of workers because of economic stagnation. This resulted in a dramatic decline of the number of labour emigrants, making a total of only 17,000 departees. The year 1975 marked the end of large-scale Turkish labour migration to Europe. According to the official records in Turkey, a total of nearly 800,000 workers went to Europe through the TES between 1961 and 1974.⁹ Of these workers, 649,000 (81 %) went to Germany, 56,000 (7 %) to France, 37,000 (5 %) to Austria, 25,000 (3 %) to the Netherlands. As noted by Abadan-Unat,¹⁰ during the early phases of migratory movements from Turkey to Europe, female participation was extremely low; but over time it had increased, mainly due to two factors: the voluntary and imposed demands of potential women migrants and the migratory policies of the host countries towards family reunification. For instance, while only nine per cent of the emigrants to Germany were females in 1962, this proportion had increased to more than a quarter of all emigrants in 1974.

From the early 1970s to the early 1980s, a transitional period of emigration occurred in which the direction of Turkish emigration shifted to other labour markets: Australia and the oil exporting countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Considering the migratory flows to Western Europe, one should note that, although the labour movement from Turkey ceased in the early 1970s, migration did not end, but subsequently took such other forms as family reunion, refugee movement, and clandestine labour migration.¹¹

In the late 1960s, the Turkish government, under the pressure of the unemployment problem, quickly went into a search for a new market to sustain the labour exporting process at a time when the doors of Europe were being closed to immigrant workers. Indeed, the Turkish emigration to Australia, as well as that to the Arab countries, started in these circumstances. The timing of the bilateral labour recruitment agreement with Australia in 1967 reflected the efforts of the Turkish emigration strategy of “falling back on another country if one showed signs of saturation and diminished absorption ability.”¹² There was, of course, a significant contrast between the migration policies of Turkey and Australia at that time. While Australian immigration policy was based upon the expectation of permanent settlement of immigrants, Turkish emigration policy was guestworker-

oriented. The signing of a migration agreement with Australia was a new step undertaken to maintain the continuity of emigration. In the period of 1968-1974, more than 5,000 Turkish workers arrived in Australia. The level of emigration to Australia shifted by around two hundred to five hundred settlers each year after 1975. Overall, there were nearly 12,000 Turkish workers and their dependants who arrived in the country between 1967 and 1975.¹³ Today, in addition to a few hundred new emigrants arriving each year, there are more than a couple of hundred people from Turkey annually migrating to Australia based on family reunification and marriage migration flows. However, it should be noted that the number of Turkish migrants going to Australia represents only a very small fraction (approximately one per cent) of all emigrants from Turkey.

In the 1980s, Turkey maintained a high level of male labour emigration to Arab countries, mainly to Saudi Arabia, Libya and Iraq.¹⁴ Turkey’s search for new receiving countries corresponded with the demand for labour force in these countries. As stated by Appleyard, the dramatic upsurge of oil prices after 1973, and the accompanying increase in the income levels of the oil-exporting Arab states with very small populations, boosted demand for labour.¹⁵ The result was a large influx of contract workers from other developing countries. Migration from Turkey to Arab countries

occurred within this broader context. More than 75,000 workers had gone to the oil-exporting countries in the period of 1975-1980. In the 1980, this number reached almost half a million. The total number of migrant workers who had an experience of selling their labour in the Arab countries was over 700,000 from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s.¹⁶ However, by the mid-1990s, partly due to the completion of large scale infrastructural big projects in the oil-exporting countries, and partly due to the unfavourable circumstances caused by the Gulf crisis, the number of Turkish workers in Arab countries began to decline. Indeed, it fell by more than 100,000 from a figure of 250,000 in the late 1980s to 140,000 in the early 1990s, and to 100,000 in the early 2000s. Currently, this figure is well below 80,000.¹⁷

The last phase of Turkish emigration started with the flows of relatively small groups of workers to the CIS countries. As emphasized by Gökdere, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, some of the newly emerging states in the region launched reconstruction programs.¹⁸ The active involvement of various Turkish firms in these programs attracted a crucial level of project-tied

and job-specific migration, particularly to the Russian Federation and to the Central Asian republics. The importance of the emigration to the CIS countries was overwhelmingly clear in terms of its impact on the continuity of emigration from Turkey; in a period when a downturn of migratory flows to the labour-receiving Arab countries occurred following the Gulf Crisis, the migratory movement to the CIS countries came to signify a remedy for the emigration pressure in Turkey. The level of Turkish labour migration to these states started to increase steadily: from 8,000 workers in 1992 to over 20,000 in 1993, and later to over 40,000 in 1994. It declined over to 26,000 in 1996. In 2005, there were more than 70,000 Turkish workers employed in the CIS countries. Overall, in the period of 1990-2005 there were over 150,000 workers who left Turkey for the CIS countries.¹⁹

As already noted, the suspension of organized labour immigration to Western Europe in the mid-1970s did not curtail the overall emigration from Turkey. Not only did new destination areas begin to draw thousands of emigrants from the country, but also Europe remained a long-standing receiving area for an

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increasing number of newcomers from Turkey. The number of people in Europe from Turkey increased continuously from 600,000 in 1972 to almost 2,000,000 in the early 1980s and to 2,900,000 in the mid-1990s. In 2010, the total number was over 3,500,000.²⁰

Indeed, during the 1980s and 1990s, migration from Turkey to Western European countries reached unexpected levels. In this period, some 1,800,000 people from Turkey entered Western Europe, almost doubling the Turkish immigrant population of 1980 in the region. Apart from the continuing family reunification flows, many of the immigrants arrived in the receiving countries by way of marrying someone (often from Turkey) who had already lived there: marriage migration became a new form of family reunification. In the last two decades, more than two-fifths of the people moving from Turkey to Europe (nearly 700,000) were those who came with the claim of seeking asylum.²¹ As noted elsewhere, in the case of the asylum seekers it has been tempting to look for further evidence to determine who is a genuine refugee and who is an economic migrant.²² Indeed, these asylum seekers were often viewed with suspicion by the receiving countries, and were often considered as part of a mass attempt by Turks to illegally enter their societies in search of employment and social benefits. However, as realized by many European countries, the outbreak

of the 'Kurdish question' in Turkey provided an obvious environment in which most asylum claims could be considered genuine and to require quite serious assessment, and consequently, some assistance and protection.²³ There were around 400,000 asylum seekers coming from Turkey to Western Europe in the period of 1980-1995. In addition to the rocketing increase in the year of the military coup, 1980, in the late 1980s and early 1990s in particular the increase in the number of asylum seekers was quite sharp: the annual average number of Turkish citizens who were officially registered as asylum seekers in the Western European countries increased from about 15,000 in the early 1980s to nearly 45,000 in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Despite a considerable decline, the number of asylum seekers from Turkey still stood at high levels, with an annual figure of 25,000 in the late 1990s. However, there was a considerable decline in the early 2000s, giving the annual figure of around 15,000. In 2010, this figure was less than 8,000.²⁴ In addition to the flows of people on asylum and family grounds, there existed a clandestine movement from Turkey in which a migrant might be undocumented in terms of not having a valid passport before leaving the country, having entered the receiving country illegally, or having entered legally on a visitor's visa and overstayed. Estimation on the volume and conditions of

clandestine migration is difficult and the existing figures should better be viewed with some scepticism.

Many Turkish emigrants who previously settled in various European countries are returning to Turkey, but not all of them permanently.

In the last two decades the vast majority (more than 95 %) of Turkish citizens immigrating to Europe arrived in ten countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.²⁵ Among these ten countries, Norway and the United Kingdom were the new immigration countries for the Turkish migrants, mostly for the asylum seekers, while the remaining eight countries were the old ones that had received migrant workers since the early 1960s. Within the first half of this period, the increase in the annual average population flow was huge, rising from an annual figure of 50,000 in the early 1980s to 100,000 in the early 1990s. Despite a relatively steady decline in the last half of this period, Turkey was still producing some 50,000 emigrants in the second half of the 1990s for Europe. In addition to some asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, the majority of these migrants

were spouses or future spouses, arriving through family formation migration. There were also people migrating under the conventional family reunification schemes. Those who might be considered as 'new labour migrants' and 'student migrants' did not constitute a sizeable flow in the recent period. It appeared that the 2000s characterised a new era in which emigration and asylum flows from Turkey to Europe slowed down considerably. These years also represented the period of return migration for many of the early migrants to Europe who migrated in the 1960 and 1970s.

In summary, from the early 1960s to mid-1990s, three main reasons were central to the growing population size of Turkish communities in Europe. First, Turkish workers were staying for longer periods than originally planned, and were bringing in their spouses and children. Second, as experienced since the early 1980s, there was an increasing flow of asylum seekers from Turkey. Third, as more spouses were reunited, the birth rate of the Turkish population rose as large numbers of Turkish children were born in Europe. In fact, there was evidence that, while the actual number of Turkish workers in Europe showed a relatively small increase in the period of 1985-2000, there was a considerable increase in the number of their dependants.

Since the mid-1990s, the volume of emigration from Turkey to Europe

has been declining, while it manifests some rising trends in the cases of other destination areas, such as the Arab and CIS countries. The restrictive immigration policies of the European receiving countries have continued to exist, but in addition to that they have, to a certain extent, led to a lessening of pro-emigration attitudes within certain segments of the society, due to positive economic, social and political developments, mostly as consequences of Turkey's candidacy for EU membership and the start of accession negotiations with the EU. While this happens, what is also observed is the increasing diversification of destination countries for the Turkish emigrants. As noted earlier, besides the flows of sub-contracted labour to the Arab and CIS countries, the already established sporadic migratory movements of thousands of Turkish citizens, which have carried thousands to more than 30 countries around the world, have grown.

Our knowledge of the return migration of Turkish citizens is for the most part very limited due to the lack of data. Since the emigration from Turkey started mainly under the so-called 'guestworker' scheme, return migration was an inevitable result of the whole process. Indeed many early migrants stayed abroad to be a 'guest', just worked for a limited term of contract work (usually for two to four years), and then returned home. The others stayed.

Return migration increased after the oil price shock of 1973, when many West European countries stopped recruiting migrant workers and began to encourage return migration. According to Gitmez, some 190,000 returned between the years 1974 and 1977, and another 200,000 returned between 1978 and 1983. Gitmez also provided some estimates of annual return figures: between 1967 and 1974, there were some 30,000, during 1975 and 1976 this number ranged between 55,000 and 60,000, and from 1976 onwards to the 1980 it is estimated that the annual number of returnees revolved around 15,000 to 20,000.²⁶ The return movement had, however, gained new momentum in the early 1980s, exceeding 70,000 persons annually. Another study indicates that about 1,000,000 Turkish emigrants returned home in the period of 1960-1990.²⁷

Children of migrants who were born in Europe or grew up there also sometimes return to Turkey because they wish to connect with their roots.

Starting with the 1980s, although the patterns of migration and settlement of Turkish immigrants in Western European countries have changed from a temporary stay to unintended settlement, return migration has often been a dynamic element of the whole

migration picture. It seems that in the early 1980s, the 'Return Acts and Bonuses' of the host governments encouraged substantial return migration to Turkey.²⁸ For instance, there were some 310,000 returnees from Germany in the period of 1983-85, and some 10,000 returnees from the Netherlands in the period of 1985-86. However, in the late 1980s, the levels of return migration from Germany declined sharply to 37,000 persons annually and from the Netherlands to 3,000 persons. Figures from Germany and the Netherlands suggest that there has been a steady level of returning migrants over the last ten years. For instance, in the first half of the 1990s, there were annually 40,000 to 45,000 returnees from Germany, and again annually around 2,000 returnees from the Netherlands. The estimated annual number of returnees was around 100,000 in the early 1980s, while it has stabilized at around 40,000-50,000 in recent years.²⁹ However, the return migration of the 1990s and 2000s is quite different from the return migration of the 1970s and 1980s. In fact, it is mostly a movement of a floating population of emigrants between the host countries and their home country. Many Turkish emigrants who previously settled in various European countries are returning to Turkey, but not all of them permanently. Many of the first generation migrants who migrated in the 1960s and 1970s and later retired

have started living six months in Turkey and six months in Europe. They prefer to keep in contact with, for example, the health services and pension systems, and they often do not wish to give up their houses, and try to keep in contact with their relatives, who live both in Turkey and abroad. Meanwhile, children of migrants who were born in Europe or grew up there also sometimes return to Turkey because they wish to connect with their roots.

Economic, Social, and Political Consequences of Emigration for Turkey: A Re-assessment

In examining the consequences of international migration for Turkey, three questions appear to be pivotal: first, what are the main consequences of emigration; second, how do these manifest themselves; and third, by what means were they brought about? These are not easily known. Most research into these consequences has addressed the economic aspects - as could be anticipated from both the unquestioned importance of these conditions and the relative ease with which they can be measured. However, both the results of this research and the conclusions to be drawn from them are extremely variable. For instance, whether economies of the various regions in Turkey are

better, stronger, or more efficient as a consequence of emigration is an issue on which research still offers complicated answers. Research findings on the social consequences of migration for the country display a similar variety.

Some of this variety and inconclusiveness of research results owes its origin to the actors of the migratory movements being considered, the needs and perspectives of individual and family members of migrants, their communities, and the countries of origin and destination, which can hardly be expected always to coincide with one another. Some is occasioned by differences in the theorizing used: “equilibrium” model versus “conflict” model.³⁰ Theorizing specifically as to the consequences has mostly been in terms of the equilibrium model which, for instance, presupposes that the relief of pressure on the job market involves no loss of production, as it is partially or entirely unemployed workers who leave, or assumes that social harmony is maintained through the emigration of possibly disruptive elements, such as political or religious dissenters. But there has also been theorizing concerning the conflict model; for instance, it is emphasized that emigration includes the loss of labour supply in which substantial amounts of human capital have been invested; or it implies depopulation of the rural areas.

Similar to the cases in other migrant-sending countries, emigration in Turkey has been seen as resulting in a mixture of benefits and costs. Most of these can be related in one way or another to economic or social consequences that migratory flows generate in the country. Accordingly, drawing on evidence from Turkish emigration to Europe, this part of the essay investigates the economic or social consequences of emigration for Turkey.

Economic Consequences

There are two basic approaches to the economic consequences of emigration: the “balanced growth” and “asymmetric growth” models.³¹ The balanced growth approach assumes a positive impact upon the national balance of trade, an increase in domestic investment, and consequently an accelerated economic growth. For instance, Martin asserts that the notion that exporting labour can reduce economic differences among areas is termed balanced growth, because the transfer of labour helps the emigration area to catch up economically with the immigration area.³² The main assumptions behind this optimistic model include the relief of pressure on the job market without any loss of production since it is supposedly the case that unemployed workers migrate, and the contribution to the development of the homeland through the returned

migrants' industrial training and experience acquired abroad. The asymmetric growth model presupposes that emigration from developing countries results in a widening gap between underdevelopment in the sending country and development in the receiving one. Within this pessimistic model it is thought that not only the displacement of labour from underdeveloped to industrialized countries, but also the transfer of human capital from agriculture to industry, contribute to inescapable results of domination relationships between the migrant-receiving core regions and the migrant-sending peripheries. In short, asymmetric studies look at emigration with disfavour, because it allegedly distorts and perhaps slows down the development in the migrants' areas of origin.³³

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Taking these two approaches into consideration, one can directly refer to the pros and cons of the economic consequences of emigration from Turkey. Among the main consequences of labour emigration for sending countries are, firstly, the beneficial effects of incoming

workers' remittances. As noted by Martin, Turkey, as a developing country, faced perennial shortages of foreign funds to pay for imported goods and services and often needed external capital to support development projects.³⁴ From this perspective, workers' remittances greatly contribute to the country's economy. Although it is argued that the amount of emigrant remittances Turkey has been receiving is somehow insignificant in comparison with the total saving potential of these migrants, the scale of remittances attributable to labour migration to Europe is large enough, and has been the most important source of foreign exchange earnings.³⁵ Over \$US 75 billion has been remitted in Turkey since the early 1960s, giving the average annual figure of \$US 1.9 billion.³⁶ Workers' remittances increased from a modest \$US 93,000,000 in 1967 to a peak of \$US 1.4 billion in 1974, and then declined to \$US 893,000,000 in 1978. Turkey had a more or less consistent level of annual remittance receipts of around \$US1.5-2 billion between 1979 and 1988. In this period, almost a quarter of Turkey's annual total import bill was financed by the remittance receipts. During the late 1980 and early 1990s, the country had annual remittance receipts of about \$US 3 billion which increased to \$US 3.4 billion in 1995, and then peaked to over \$US 5 billion in 1998. In the 1990s, remittances were equivalent to more than one third of the

trade deficit. The percentage declined in the late 1990s, but still averaged close to 20 % in the early 2000s. Then, it rapidly dropped, for instance, making only 2 % of the trade deficit in 2004. While the declining trend of remittances to Turkey since 1999 is very obvious, they have been falling particularly since 2002, but the nature of this recent decline is not so clear, partly due to the rising tendency towards permanent settlement in the host countries, partly because of increasing informal channels of remittances, and partly due to the changing calculations of remittances in the accounting of the national budget.³⁷

Another aspect of the workers' remittances was the type of investments made by the migrants; money coming from abroad often finds its way into the maintenance of the family left behind or is spent as an investment in equipment, building, car, or possibly as part of the migrant's attempt to set himself up in a trade or other new enterprise.³⁸ Certainly much of the incoming money goes directly into the family or local community of the migrant, often to maintain dependants left in Turkey. In the many cases, where migrants abroad do not return to their point of origin in Turkey, much of the remitted money is spent on consumables for the new home. It seems that remittances do not help to reduce imbalances between regions in the country, though there clearly are specific improvements made possibly by remittances.³⁹ Indeed,

even though the remittances of the workers have played an important role in coping with the perennial foreign-exchange crisis of the Turkish economy⁴⁰ the contribution of emigration to the investment processes has been rather limited.⁴¹ According to Koç and Onan, remittances have a positive impact on household welfare, as shown by the fact that households receiving remittance are found to be better off than non-receiving households.⁴² Although a considerable amount of the related literature argues that remittances are not mostly spent on "productive investments" that would contribute to long term development, it is possible to claim that improvements in the living conditions of migrants, such as access to better nutrition or allocation of more resources to education, are also forms of productive investments.

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The other economic benefits resulting from emigration include: (a) the lessening of tension arising from unemployment and underemployment; and (b) the acquisition of skills in the

foreign countries by the returning migrants. Indeed, since the very early period of the emigration, the Turkish government often has primarily expected the emigratory flows to contribute to the reduction of unemployment levels, though it is noted that skilled workers should be encouraged to remain at home. For instance, Turkey's first Five-Year Plan in 1963 reported that "the export of excess, unskilled labour to Western Europe represents one of the possibilities for alleviating unemployment."⁴³ It is generally agreed that since the early 1960s, around 10 % of the workforce in Turkey has been unemployed and another 15 % underemployed. These figures persist over the whole period of the last 45 years. Thus reduction in unemployment and underemployment is of paramount importance. Emigration has obviously helped to reduce unemployment pressures in Turkey, but it is not easy to quantify the effects of emigration on unemployment since both are difficult to measure precisely. On the other hand, several studies point out the potential growth-slowing effects of Turkish emigration because of the emigration of skilled workers.⁴⁴

The second expectation from emigratory flows was that the emigrants would acquire new skills and training from their working experience abroad. It was believed that migration would have a favourable impact on the migrants' local community in the form of new

investments, transfer of technology and machinery, and new enterprises when the emigrants returned. Therefore, another way to identify the likely impact of international migration is to look at the process of return migration.⁴⁵ Based on a very rough estimate, one can assume that more than 1,500,000 Turkish workers and their family members have returned home since the beginning of migratory flows in 1961. One of the most obvious implications of the return migration is for the Turkish labour market. Some of the return migrants may directly become employment-seekers, but since they return with skills and work experience for which the labour market in Turkey has limited demand, the overall outcome of this process for Turkey has been frustrating on two counts. For the state, there has been the realization that skills acquired abroad have often failed to make an impact on Turkey's need for human resources. For the individual, the same mismatch engenders personal disillusionment.

If emigrants from Turkey, who returned in the 1970s, were young male migrants who had been alone abroad, motivated to return by their expired work contacts, the migrants who returned during the 1980s and early 1990s were more likely to be aging workers and their families pushed to return by mostly socio-psychological reasons such as long established homesickness. Therefore,

in the period of the former group, although there was a question of how to incorporate them into the workforce in the country again, in the case of latter group the main question was their permanent investments in Turkey. What is often observed is that return workers of various periods often do not return to the sending area or do return but use remittances non-productively; there is a widespread assumption in the literature that most returned Turkish workers buy a taxi or delivery truck, build rental housing, or set up a small business and become part of the service economy; and that such service sector investments have few employment multipliers. It is hard to determine where exactly the migrants settle after they return, but it is generally agreed that they often prefer urban centres rather than their rural homes, many preferring to settle in the metropolitan areas.⁴⁶ One hypothesis is that this process contributes to rural-urban imbalances and regional disparities. The other side of the same process is the direction of workers' investments: funds transferred by the migrants are often invested in urban areas that are already developed to a certain extent.

The Turkish officials in the 1970s tried to channel remittance savings into employment-generating activities in order to maximize economic growth.

The Turkish officials in the 1970s tried to channel remittance savings into employment-generating activities in order to maximize economic growth. Actually, there were three unique development programs linked to emigration.⁴⁷ First, in order to channel the funds to the less developed areas rather than developed ones, starting from the early period of emigration, the Turkish authorities supported the establishment of workers' joint stock companies that would invest in the less developed regions of the country. It was believed that investments of these companies would provide job opportunities to returning migrants, and at the same time they would serve as a device for the economical use of their savings. This was regarded as an efficient way of industrializing the regions of origin. More than 600 workers' companies have thus been created, with varying capital and numbers of shareholders. Although the workers' companies aim at achieving a certain social goal by developing the backward regions in general, they are unable to get away from the economic considerations that matter considerably as far as the productive operation of the enterprises is concerned. Workers' companies have run into various problems such as project identification, financial and technical planning and management, and inadequacy of communications.⁴⁸ Hence, their role in fostering the development of less developed regions has been rather minimal.

Another aspect of the official policy of reintegrating the return migrants' savings into the local economies was to support the creation of Village Development Cooperatives. However, because many of them sought to secure jobs for their members rather than to realize productive investments in the villages through remittances, most of the co-operatives were really used as vehicles to facilitate more migration. A third method for attracting the savings of the migrants was the establishment of the State Industry and Workers' Investment Bank in 1975. The bank advocated mixed enterprises organized by the state and private capital, including workers' remittances. However, this effort has not been successful either for overall enterprises or for channelling the investment resources into the less developed regions. Here one must note that in the 1960s and 1970s there was no stock exchange market in Turkey, so that stock exchange became an option of investment only after 1980s, when some Turkish migrant workers in Europe started putting in their savings.⁴⁹

Social and Political Consequences

As noted by Manderson and Inglis, "migration is a process which is frequently seen as having considerable potential for producing social change because of the disruption it produces into the established patterns of social

life."⁵⁰ In other words, migration can have a powerful effect on social change. Although there are some mixed conclusions drawn from the previous studies on the role played by international migration in fostering or retarding social change in societies of origin, it is generally agreed that emigration from developing to developed countries often results in moving the countries of origin from a more to a less "traditional" plane. From this perspective, migration to Western Europe has indeed become an important source for social change in Turkey. Settlement and employment abroad has exposed large numbers of Turks to modern economic, social, and political processes. Certainly, migrants' own lives have been deeply influenced by the migratory movements. By the same token, this movement has had precise repercussions on their family members, relatives, friends, and their local communities in Turkey.

The most important changes are related to the changing status of women and the rising value of children.

What has clearly been observed is that Turkish workers often return home with changed attitudes and behaviours; in fact, the label of "*Almancı* or *Almanyalı*", which literally implies "Turk from Germany", as the local non-migrant people call the Turkish migrants, is a product of

these perceived changed attitudes and behaviours.⁵¹ Within the migrants' more immediate personal-social environment there are changes in generation and gender relationships. Perhaps the most important changes are related to the changing status of women⁵² and the rising value of children.⁵³ Women's role has changed via emigration in several ways: urbanization, the adoption of a nuclear family pattern, entry into the labour market, and brought about by increasing media exposure changes in life styles and emancipation. Many rural women, in particular, joined their husbands abroad and found jobs there. For thousands of women from Turkey, emigration has been a real cause behind their growing labour force participation. It seems that upon their return to Turkey many migrant women have wanted to settle in urban areas, and they have often tended to acquire more authority within the family. For the men, traditional status symbols based more directly on age, kinship, devoutness or ownership of land were replaced by modern indicators such as income, qualifications and skills, and perhaps knowledge of a Western European language. It is felt that the roles and relationships of parents and children had also changed as a result of migration experience: parents, fathers in particular, have had negative opinions about the changing roles and relationships between parents and children. This may be due to the fact that parents have started to

lose their traditional authority over children. In short, the demise of the extended family and traditional familial relationships has been widely observed as emigration sped up these processes.

A notable aspect of migration-induced social change is the attainment of upward social mobility by the migrants in their home society.

Emigration also contributed to the improvement of the migrants' quality of life.⁵⁴ This improvement was based on greater wealth, as well as on living in more modern environments which enabled the migrants to acquire greater knowledge about the world and provide advanced education for children. It is within this context that a notable aspect of migration-induced social change is the attainment of upward social mobility by the migrants in their home society. While in Europe, Turkish workers are generally accorded a very low social status, their social standing in Turkey improves markedly. The signs of their upward social mobility are visible in both rural and urban Turkish society. The literature confirmed that emigration afforded individual migrants and their families upward mobility; returnees were usually among the wealthiest people in their villages of origin, or emigration facilitated return migrants'

relocating in urban areas. Another aspect of the improvement of the migrants' quality of life, as noted earlier, was that remittances were most often spent on building a modern house, buying land and farm machinery, and purchasing urban apartments, cars and trucks, or electrical appliances. The examples of motor vehicles and appliances suggest that in many ways emigration provided the remittances and perhaps the desire for goods which speeded up changes that would have occurred in any event. Indeed, return migrants in villages with cars and appliances noted frequently that their non-migrant neighbours also made such purchases during the 1970s and 1980s, but the returned migrants were often among the first with new consumer goods and usually had more of them. Abadan-Unat emphasizes the conspicuous consumption of returnees, noting that some displayed electrical appliances as a symbol of their affluence even before their village had received electricity.⁵⁵

There are some socio-political consequences of emigration; for instance, as emphasized in some studies, returned migrants talked about socio-political changes such as more respect for human rights and democracy.⁵⁶ Having been granted dual citizenship rights, many Turkish citizens could enjoy citizenship rights in their host countries.⁵⁷ Another issue is the changing status of military service for emigrants; although one

cannot imagine any attempt to shorten the nearly two-years military duty in Turkey, now as a consequence of emigration there is a programme which permits Turks residing abroad to shorten their compulsory military service by paying a fee in foreign currency.

Emigration from Turkey has also had numerous unintended and unanticipated consequences for the country. These include the emergence of cultural-revivalist tendencies among the Turkish migrants abroad, and problems related to return migration and second-generation returnees.⁵⁸ The cultural-revivalist trends are somehow associated with the growth of religion-based fundamentalism, as well as the troubles with Kurdish nationalism. Once abroad, many Turkish emigrants tend to adopt a discernibly more Islamic orientation, or many Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin reinforce their ethnic allegiance. Alevi emigrant communities originating from Turkey have gone through a similar process of revivalism.⁵⁹ This phenomenon is mainly based on two factors: the defence mechanisms of emigrants in a foreign environment, and the social, political and cultural climates of the host countries which encourage these religious and ethnic revivals. As a consequence of emigration, extreme ethno-politics based on ethnic or religious identity, particularly in the case of complex migratory networks, prepares the ground for radical political actions, such as the movement toward

establishing a Federal Islamic Republic in Turkey or the realization of Kurdish separatist demands.⁶⁰

Another area of unforeseen social consequences of emigration is the reintegration of return migrants and their families in Turkey. For those who returned in the 1960s and 1970s, the return and integration question was not critical, since they were engaged in temporary labour migration and most anticipated their eventual return to Turkey and acted accordingly. If these early returned migrants were mainly men who had been alone abroad, returning migrants in the 1980s and 1990s were more likely to be families with adolescent children. Fearing that they might not be able to come back to Europe at a later time, many of these returning left a younger member of their family behind in Europe to retain a link with that country. They were in state of ambivalence about deciding on permanent settlement in the host country and resettlement in Turkey. These difficulties in migrants' decision-making on return migration together with the adjustment difficulties of their children who had already spent their early socialization period abroad, made the reintegration process of these returned migrants a difficult one. In particular, the children of returnees had serious problems in adapting to the very different social and educational environment of Turkey.

Various other social consequences of emigration can be observed in the area of demography. Since the early 1960s emigration from Turkey has almost invariably exceeded immigration; this fact in itself has had a certain impact. The population has grown more slowly than it otherwise would have done. On the other hand, emigration can often be seen as a means of slowing down the rush to the cities in Turkey from the rural areas. But at the same time emigration together with the construction of a modern infrastructure accelerated east-to-west and rural-to-urban migration.

On the whole, whatever its consequences for those in the receiving society, for both migrants and those of their kin and friends who remain in Turkey emigration holds out the possibility of encountering a variety of social-change-producing forces.⁶¹ the separation of spouses and of parents and children, the loss of friends, extensive contact with another culture, the absence of reinforcements for one's prior heritage as well as encounters with constraints on behaviour associated with that heritage, notable increases in wealth and income, more material possessions, the experience of coping with the unfamiliar and of doing so in the absence of prior social support, and the formation of competing social networks and emotional ties. The experience of emigration holds out, in short - especially for the migrant, but also

for those of the migrant's close network which remains behind - the possibility of simultaneously coming into contact with new ways and losing supports for old ways; of undertaking new roles and abandoning old roles; of acquiring new skills, new interests, and new aspirations. One can only expect the social changes associated with such experiences to be augmented by marked differences between the migrant and those in the receiving area in income, status, culture, race, or religion.

Conclusion

Although the migratory flows from the country have been declining for the last two decades, Turkey is among the world's leading migrant-sending countries, with about six per cent of its population abroad. While the issues of emigration and its impact on economic and social developments are regaining their importance on the international agendas, the Turkish case provides us with a unique setting mainly due to the three principal reasons: first, Turkey, as a country of both some relatively "old" and some relatively "new" emigration,⁶² keeps its significant position in the ongoing regimes of international migration in Europe; second, the country has its own way of dealing with various social and economic consequences of emigration in the last five decades; and third, although Turkey seems to be losing its

own official concerns on the emigration-related issues, only recently it has again started becoming very conscious about it, mostly because of its EU affairs.

Today it is very clear that neither emigration itself nor remittances as its by-product are seen by the officials in Turkey as a way to overcome economic difficulties and promote development in various parts of the country, "a reversal of 1960s hopes that emigration would lead to development."⁶³ Although the country is still experiencing difficulties in creating jobs for its citizens, the option of emigration does not seem to be a feasible one, as the possibilities of finding new destination areas are not so great. On the other hand, as the country has experienced rising economic development since the early 2000s, it is hoped that new windows of opportunities will be opened, as the expected flows of foreign direct investment and new job creations.

Based on a review of published literature, this essay has addressed some of the economic and social consequences of emigration for the country. Despite the plethora of studies on Turkish international migration, few take a specific focus on the effect of this migratory movement on the country. The challenge is to extract and synthesize into a coherent body of knowledge the generalizable consequences of emigration for the country.

On the whole, international migration of the type engaged in by emigrants from Turkey over the last few decades has tended to improve the economic positions in the country, through the economic and social remittances, and transnational ties between emigrants and those in their close relatives and friends. Whether this economic betterment proves of lasting benefit either to the migrants and their networks or to the society from which they come is at the least a debatable point, the resolution of which depends essentially on the length of time under consideration and the criteria employed. One thinks, for example, of Yemen, an overwhelmingly agricultural country, being forced to import a large proportion of its food because of the emigration of so many men out of agriculture and into the oil fields of the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia;⁶⁴ or, at a more individual level, of the three-fourths of the 81 respondents in a recent study in Turkey who had not themselves migrated but said that, because of the migration of a close relative, they had bought things they would not otherwise have been able to buy and that these purchases had produced friction between themselves and their neighbours, friends, or relatives.⁶⁵ Of course, emigration of this type can also have non-economic consequences: personal frustration, sorrow, and discontent - as well as, on occasion, hope, response, joy, and happiness. But what of rather more social

consequences? As could be anticipated on the basis of modernization theory, findings from many related studies show that emigration results in moving the country from a more to a less “traditional” plane.

Emigration has been one of the most powerful vehicles of social change in Turkey, but a lack of foresight and adequate planning have to a certain extent led to a waste of human and financial resources.

So far, on the economic and social consequences of emigration from Turkey for the country itself, we can be certain only about the conclusions at a high level of generality. We can safely conclude that the consequences of emigration for Turkey fall unequally upon different sectors within the sending population, and upon different persons and families within these sectors. We can be certain that, against various criteria of ethics and value, the consequences of emigration are mixed: neither altogether good nor altogether bad. For instance, if remittances have reduced inequalities of wealth in this region of the country, they have increased them in another region; if emigration has apparently weakened kinship ties here, it has apparently strengthened them there; if economic

development has been advanced in this region, it has been retarded in another one; and so on. Some aspects of this paradoxical picture are attributable to the complex nature of the migratory process - to difficulties of measurement, or to the reliance, because of these difficulties, on proxy measures of possibly doubtful suitability. Some are simply attributable to the fact that so little specific research is done. Some may be attributable to inadequate research designs.

The one thing that can be said with certainty from the research findings, so far, on the consequences of emigration for Turkey is that, as emphasized by Abadan-Unat, emigration has been one of the most powerful vehicles of social change in Turkey, but a lack of foresight and adequate planning have to a certain extent led to a waste of human and

financial resources.⁶⁶ Official attempts to convert the economic inputs of the emigratory flows into the country's real economy were not organized enough to obtain sustainable positive impact over time. However, one should not underestimate the ongoing importance, and probably the positive contribution, of emigration for the country; one can only imagine what would have happened to Turkey if remittances had not financed two thirds of the country's trade deficit in the 1990s, what would happen to the unemployment problem in the country if the three million expatriate Turkish citizens were suddenly to return home, or even what would happen to the relationship between the European countries and Turkey, if the bridging role of the Turkish transnational communities there did not exist.

Endnotes

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