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Second-Generation Turkish-Gendered Narratives of (Re-)negotiated Identities

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countries in the 1960s.[3] These economic migrants were coined as *Gastarbeiter*, literally „guestworker". In terms of scope and volume, migration to Germany has been the hallmark of Turkish immigration in contemporary Europe, and it has constituted the backbone of the so-called „Euro-Turk" phenomenon (Toktas 2012: 5). Guestworker programmes were designed to solve immediate labour shortages in Germany by recruiting workers on temporary, short-term residence and work permits, yet this temporary settlement turned into a more or less permanent one for the majority of the Turkish guestworkers.

In the early stages of migration, during the early 1960s, Turkish migrants were mainly men aged in their 20s and 30s, relatively skilled and educated compared to the average working population in Turkey, and from the economically more developed regions of the country (Abadant Unat 1976; Martin 1993). The proportion of rural migrants at this stage was just 17.2 per cent. In the second half of the

As we shall see later, these three types have some resonance with my study of second-generation returnees.

The final point to be made in this overview of Turkish migration to Germany concerns the recognition of this migration now as a *labour diaspora*. Whilst it is true that the term „diaspora" has only recently been used within the Turkish context, the long-standing and hence multi-generational nature of this migrant presence in Germany (and elsewhere in Europe) makes its designation as a labour diaspora (cf. Cohen 1997) entirely appropriate. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the Turkish migrants were indeed specifically recruited for their labour power, although the second wave of political exiles, associated with the military coup of 1980, clearly fit another diasporic mould – that of the political or „victim" diaspora (Cohen 1997). The second generation"s „return" to Turkey can thus be conceptualised as a *counter*

the „return" label because, in the feelings of the protagonists of this kind of migration, there is indeed an element of „going back" to the homeland.

formulate a conceptual framework aimed at a better understanding of the strong social and economic links between migrants‟ host and origin countries; and at the individual level too, sustained social contacts between the destination setting and the homeland affect the evolution of (second-generation) migrants‟ identities (Portes et al. 1999: 219). Hence migrants, or people of migrant heritage, return to their homeland because of their social and historical attachment to that place which, even if they were not born there, is identified emotionally as their „home‟ or „native soil‟.

Attachment to the „home place‟ is a key constituent of *diasporic consciousness*. Diasporas are nurtured by nostalgia; by memories of both an individual and collective past. Unlike the so-called „classical‟ diasporas, which are about displacement due to traumatic exile with a strong sense of „victimhood‟ enshrined in diasporic identity (the Jewish diaspora is the „ideal type‟ here), the Turkish emigration experience conforms to what Cohen (1997) calls a „labour diaspora‟. Like other types of diaspora reviewed by Cohen (victim diaspora, colonial diaspora, trading diaspora, etc.) the Turkish case satisfies all of the standard criteria for a diaspora definition nominated by key writers such as Safran (1991) and Brubaker (2005), which are:

dispersion from an original homeland, either forced or voluntary;
historical maturity, so that to the original migrants have been added subsequent generations who share at least some of their parents‟ or ancestors‟ diasporic identity;
a shared sense of ethno-national identity, separate from that of the host society; and
a homeland orientation, including a despite to return there some day, to visit, and maybe to settle.

Vertovec (1997) sees part of the etiology of diaspora as a „type of consciousness‟ that is generated amongst contemporary transnational communities who are aware of their „multi-locality‟. The awareness of multi-locality stimulates the desire to connect the self with others, both „here‟ and „there‟, who share the same „roots‟ and „routes‟ (cf. King and Kilinc 2014).

Memory plays a key, but highly complex, role in the construction of diasporas and the maintenance of diasporic identities. In one of the standard works on the subject of memory, Maurice Halbwachs (1992) prefers to use „recollection‟ rather than memory because it points to what he regards as a necessary collectiveness, based on group consciousness. One of these social groups is, of course, the family (eg. The Turkish migrant family in Germany) wherein „there exist customs and modes of thinking… that impose… their form on the opinions and feelings of their members‟ (1992: 58). Following on from Halbwachs, Erll (2011) proposes the term „cultural memory‟ instead of collective memory in order to stress that memories are culturally embedded, at whatever scale.

Finally, there is the way that memories are communicated. Following Assman and Czaplicka (1995), „communicative memory is based on language and everyday oral communication, but also has a more constructed and technologically dependent set of channels in the way that it is reproduced through television, cinema, literature, art and social

media. For the target group of this study, as we shall see later, their constructions of „home‟ cannot be understood without reference to the family narratives and practices which express ethnic identity, family history and family-organised visits to the homeland.

Second-generationers who „return‟ to their parents‟ country of origin exhibit complex atifculations and experiences of *home* and *belonging*. Ulf Hedetoft points out that the English word „belonging‟ is a fortuitous compound of „being‟ and „longing‟ (2002: 1). He then goes on to ask an extremely important question: „But what if where we feel we belong (our “cultural” or “ethnic” home) does not match objective descriptions of membership (our “political” or “civic” home), because “belonging” separates into its two constituent parts: “being” in one place, and “longing” for another?‟ (Hedetoft 2002: 5). This question is incredibly prescient for the study of migrants, and especially so of the second generation,

Methodology

Overview of the fieldwork

Having the above research questions and theoretical

language. In order to preserve interviewee anonymity, Pseudonyms were used as well as not giving specific details about workplace.

Interviewees were selected by a respondent-driven non-random sampling approach, based on a diversity of snowballing chains, some of which originated from the personal contacts of the author and her family. The selection was directly linked to the definitions of „second generation" and „returnee". First of all, for the interviewees to be qualified as „second-generation", they had to be born in the host country or brought from the home country before kindergarten age, i.e. five years old, and have two parents who immigrated to the host country. Secondly, the interviewees had to be living in their parents" country of origin for at least six months to be considered a „returnee". Since the interviewees were mostly found through personal, friend and family contacts, there was always a mutual trust between the researcher and the informants from the beginning. Women participants preferred to meet at their homes whereas the interviews with men mostly took place in quiet cafes or at their workplaces. When the interviews were held at cafes, men insisting on paying the bill, creating a gender hierarchy.

Istanbul was chosen as the main location for the fieldwork on the assumption that the second generation would return to this cosmopolitan city to be close to a variety of job opportunities. In addition, German foundations and organisations as well as Turkish-German collaborative institutions are mostly based in Istanbul. Such organisations offer some, albeit numerically limited, opportunities for employing Turkish-German returnees as well as being good places to contact possible candidates as interviewees.

The main disadvantage of concentrating the fieldwork in Istanbul was not being able to capture the lives of people in other settings. It was assumed that

stages, the *gendered contrasts* in participants‟ perspectives and experiences will be a prominent part of the analysis and interpretation.

pbringing in Germany

This section illustrates the first diasporic moment in the lives of the second generation, which is their upbringing within the Turkish diasporic setting in Germany. The account starts with the second generation‟s „family narratives‟ and a focus on the first generation‟s background profile and their orientation towards the „return project‟. „Family memories‟ narrated by the second generation stress the following:

> Family memories play a vital role in the second generation‟s constructions of „home‟ and „belonging‟. From this, there is often an explicit or implicit linkage to their attitudes and motivations towards the „return‟ to their parental homeland.
>
> For the first generation, the notions of home or homeland remain fixed. The dream of an eventual return to the homeland is the main theme. *Their* narratives of „home‟, therefore, are the first reference points for the second generation‟s constructions of belonging. However, the second generation have a more complex relationship towards the parental homeland.
>
> The second generation has a „diaspora consciousness‟ (Vertovec 1997) which was firstly constructed by being surrounded by their „family narratives‟. They refer to their generation as the „in-between‟ and „lost‟ generation; they feel that they are stuck between their parents‟ world, where traditional practices and memories are intertwined, and the „diaspora spaces‟ where they constantly renegotiate their hybrid identities.
>
> „Family narratives‟ have an effect on the second generation‟s understanding of the gender roles, both at an individual level and regarding their imaginings of „home‟. The second generation acknowledge that their parents perceive Turkey as the „motherland‟ because of the sentimental and emotional attachments, and Germany as the „fatherland‟ because of the monetary attachment. Therefore, mothers symbolise care, love, emotions, sentimentality; and fathers symbolise rationality, money, work, and being strong. These gendered perspectives of the self-identity and diasporic identity summarise the second generation‟s *habitats of meaning*.

The findings on the profile of the first generation contradict to some extent the mainstream discourse that visualises the first generation as a poorly integrated group of labour migrants consisting of men who came from rural areas of Turkey with no prior skills. Such a view portrayed women purely as dependant actors who came to Germany due to family reunification. The following account introduces an alternative story in which these generalisations do not have such sharp edges. The findings show that the second generation has to be understood in the scope of *fluid cultures* in which their Turkish diasporic identity, which is essentially a Turkish-German hybrid identity, constantly interplays in the various „diaspora spaces‟ that they inhabit. In a

Family backgrounds of the second generation

The study finds that the majority of the first generation immigrated to Germany in the 1960s as guestworkers who were recruited for work in factories. Most of them came from Istanbul or around Istanbul along the Black Sea coastline. They were coming from the working class and their economic struggles in Turkey led them to project their migration to Germany. However they were not the poorest of the poor, nor were they illiterate or semi-literate. Most of them had completed their high school education. Despite the mainstream picture of Turkish immigrants‟ settlements in the „ghettos‟ of big German cities, the findings from the fieldwork in Istanbul show that the first generation settled in small industrial towns in Germany which did not have a Turkish community, at least during the 1960s.

The story below represents the common characteristics of a working-class family from Istanbul. Nurten‟s parents immigrated to Germany in 1961 to work, and they still live in Germany. Two extracts from her interview are presented below. In the first, she describes the work that they did, which included both factory work and higher-level work (translating). They had a family background of internal migration within Turkey before they emigrated to Germany (this is very common in Turkish migration history). In the second part of her narrative, she talks about the environment she grew up in. She vocalises another common characteristic of the first generation, that is, women were involved in economic life and therefore the second generation spent their early ages within a German environment through neighbours, babysitters and the kindergarten.

> Both of my parents were born and raised in Istanbul. But they are originally coming from Siirt. My father went to Germany in 1961, my mother followed him soon after. Additional to his work as a mechanic, he also worked as a translator in the company. My mother was in the electronics department of the epa0 1 108.02 amaT1 0 0 149(wor)5(ETBT1 (p

When the interviewees made the distinction between themselves and „the other Turks‟ they often mentioned the rather „liberal‟ and „modern‟ ways of their parents. Some interviewees said that their mothers were the first to immigrate to Germany, again challenging the standard view of Turkish migration as man-led. The narratives point out another commonality, namely that women worked in factories just as men, socialising with both Germans and other guestworker nationalities (mainly Greeks, Italians and Yugoslavs). The following quote is a good illustration of how the second generation with family roots from Istanbul perceives the evolution of the Turkish settlement in Germany, by reflecting upon the migration memories of their parents. Erdem‟s parents met in Germany, and after their marriage, they settled in a small town closed to Hamburg.

> My mother went to Germany by herself. She only told her family after she moved there. So, her parents had to accept it, she was already gone. She worked in a factory in which only women were recruited. The flat she lived was provided by the factory.
>
> […]
>
> She did not have an adaptation problem. She went to Germany from Istanbul. She comes from a decent family. Istanbul of her times was very modern. When I look at the old pictures of my mother, I see that they were wearing mini-skirts. Turkish society of today would not accept it… In the first stage of the guestworker agreement, people were mostly coming from big cities like Istanbul and they did not have any problems integrating. The problem was the people who followed them. These people came from rural areas, they had big families. Time after time, they created their own communities where they strongly preserved their traditions. They did not integrate on purpose; instead they created ghettos… Therefore, their children became confused people who felt „in-between‟. These kids had different lives at home and outside of home (Erdem, M45, Istanbul).

The narratives call attention to an important commonality amongst the first generation, regardless of their socio-economic background and reasons of settlement in Germany. In all the accounts, it can be detected that the first generation planned their migration project as a temporary project which then turned into a permanent stay. The goal was to save some money and buy property in Turkey, and then return to the homeland once the goal was reached. Didem‟s narrative below illustrates the first generation‟s determination to return to Turkey. Her father went to Germany as a refugee in 1978, right before the military intervention of 1980. Her mother settled in Germany with Didem‟s father in 1987. This example is selected to represent the generally widespread desire of the first generation to return, because Didem‟s father did not immigrate to Germany voluntarily, he basically had to escape from Turkey due to his political beliefs. Yet, he always dreamt of returning, even though he became a successful restaurant owner in Germany.

> My parents wanted to save as much as money as they could and come back to Turkey at some point. Since I know myself, I always remember my family saving money and making plans to return. They really wanted to come back to Istanbul. That‟s why we never bought a house in Germany. We were always renting. Imagine… I lived there

The parents of the second generation arranged their summer holidays in Turkey. All the narratives pointed out that one of the parents‟ main motivations for hard work was linked to the holidays in Turkey. In order to afford the costs of these holidays, parents saved money throughout the year. For the second generation, these holidays symbolised good weather, sun, Turkish food, warm welcoming from relatives, and long car rides between Germany and Turkey.

Another finding points to the openness of the families towards the German host society and its *multi-kulti* formation with other nationalities. The narratives commonly state that the parents encouraged their daughters and sons to go to school and be active during their school lives with extracurricular activities such as sports, arts, school trips etc. In general, all the accounts highlight the good relations with German neighbours.

The interviewees‟ stories start changing when they talk about their lives after high school. The parents who encouraged them to study, have German friends, and integrate in the German society then wanted to direct their chil

My mother had a rule. It was forbidden to speak German at home. I am glad that she forced us to speak Turkish at home. I see new generations [of Turks], their Turkish is horrible. Their German is not good either. They are in-between.

[…]

My mother used to say, „We are Turkish. We are Muslims. Our traditions, our religion, our culture is different [than the Germans‟] and we are just living in this country.‟ We never forgot that we were Turkish. When my mother came to Turkey, she would buy history books and encourage us to learn more about the history of Turkey.

[…]

My father was in the school parent-teacher association, he requested Quran courses for Muslim students. So the school arranged religion classes for us on Saturdays and Sundays. In terms of religious matters… my parents tried to teach us about religion as much as they could. They sent us to these Quran courses.

[…]

My family… I think to a certain degree they were also conservative. For example… I started karate when I was 13. They didn‟t enjoy the idea but they allowed me. After a year my brother started karate too. It was because my brother was dying to learn karate. It was more like „your sister is a young lady no

> history was through their parents because Turkish history is not a part of school syllabuses in Germany (Öykü, F34, Istanbul).

When looked at how *cultural memory* shaped the second generation‟s constructions of „home‟ and „belonging‟, it appears that the second generation keenly reflected upon their diasporic identity through its representations in films, documentaries, music and history books etc. Especially, they felt familiar with the representations of the second-generation Turkish-Germans and guestworkers. For instance, Taner mentions how he was a fan of Turkish-German hip hop singers, because the lyrics were precisely about the struggles of the second-generation Turkish-Germans in Germany.

> We were watching Turkish channels on TV. I was a fan of Turkish-German hip-hop culture. Hip-hop is important because it is protest music, it is the voice of the people. It makes claims, it shouts the problems (Taner, M36, Düzce).

Most of the narratives are similar to Taner‟s; the second generation commonly mentioned that they could see similarities between their lives and representations in different genres of arts and media. However, there is another point in these narratives; that is, while second generation constructed their „belonging‟ through the representations of grand narratives about the Turkish nation, culture, history, and Islam, they did not have a deeper understanding of these, but they were still passionately hanging on to these Turkish representations. One of the reasons of this, as was found in the narratives, is the shaping of *the Self in the gaze of the Other*. German society and German institutions (mostly by referencing the school system) were not „nationalist enough‟ in the eyes of the second-generation Turkish-Germans. Taner‟s narrative illustrates this approach the best:

> Turkishness was so important for me. Germans are so soft; they do not care if someone says something bad about their nation or family. Turks help each other, within a second 15 Turkish guys can gather for another Turk, and you don‟t even have to know that person so well, you just want to help because you don‟t want to see that another Turk is having hard time.
>
> […]
>
> I learnt that my family was Alevis after moving to Turkey because we never talked about it in Germany. I also had really limited knowledge about the Turkish traditions. For example I learnt the Turkish National Anthem in the army [in Turkey]. I learnt about Atatürk and his principles in the army as well. I started reading books about Turkish history only after moving to Turkey.

As Taner‟s interview extracts illustrate, the second generation‟s pride about being „Turkish‟ is rather fixed in the scope of *banal nationalism* (Billig 1995). On the other hand, their construction of homeland is a gendered one, nationality is something holy and it has to be respected. When the second generation mentioned Turkey, they commonly used the term „motherland‟. „Motherland‟, as a gendered „home‟, is closely linked to the second generation‟s understandings of „mother‟ as being loving, caring, mostly standing behind the father but still having a weighted place and therefore being admired and respected. These

narratives usually belong to men; for them mothers are holy. Here as well, just like in the case of nationality, the second-generation men referred to the German society‟s understanding of „mothers‟ and made their points through reflecting on *the Other, or significant other*, linking this to the understanding of nation. Batuhan‟s interview extracts below reflect this understanding very well. Batuhan has German citizenship; he never studied in Turkey. He was born and raised in Berlin, and studied Marketing at his German university. He stated that speaking in Turkish was difficult for him, because he felt more comfortable in German.

> Germans don‟t swear at mothers. Mothers are not holy in Germany. Once a Turkish guy swore at my mother, I knocked him down. But now, Germans started swearing at mothers too. They learnt it from Turks… For Germans, mothers didn‟t have such a great value. We taught them that mothers deserve the highest respect.
>
> […]
>
> We also taught Germans that flags are holy. We were carrying Turkish flags with such respect, and they learnt from us. During the World Cup, the Germans weren‟t waving their flags, we [Turks] were waving German flags! Turkey wasn‟t in the World Cup, so we were supporting Germany, carrying their flags with the same respect we have for the Turkish flag. Germans were shocked by this! Then, they also started carrying German flags. Germans made news about this case: „Why do Turks carry German flags?‟ It was such a big deal (Batuhan, M32, Istanbul).

Constructing 'home' and 'belonging' transnationally

The second generation‟s childhood visits to Turkey are the best example of the activation of transnational spaces. Interview accounts point out that the second generation generally went to Turkey once a year with their parents during the six-weeks summer holidays. They went to Turkey by car, filling it with especially consumer goods from Germany such as washing machine, irons, TVs – back in the days Turkey did not have a market for these electrical consumer durables. One important point is that the experience was rather *translocal* than transnational (cf. Anthias 2008; Brickell and Datta 2011). First of all, the second generation narrate that they had not been/lived in other towns/cities in Germany than theirs. Secondly, when they came to Turkey, they only visited their parents‟ city/village of origin and a summer resort in the Aegean and Mediterranean. When they were in their parents‟ city/village, they mostly spent time with their relatives in their neighbourhoods. When they went to the summer places, they stayed either in a hotel or in the summer house of their parents or relatives. Therefore, it is difficult to speak of „places‟, it is more coherent to mention „spaces‟. Yet, these childhood memories created mostly a positive picture of „home‟ in the eyes of the second generation, with only a few exceptions. Öykü tells about how she enjoyed the summer holidays in Turkey until she became a teenager:

> We would first come to Istanbul to see my grandparents, then we would go to our summer house. But these trips weren‟t enough to see the real life in Istanbul. I enjoyed these summer holidays in Turkey. I was getting really excited before the trips.

> The road trips felt like they were going to take forever and this would double my excitement. We would bring presents for my grandparents and our friends.
>
> […]
>
> But the people in the summer town would always point at me, whispering „She is from Germany‟ to each other. I wasn‟t bothered about this when I was a kid. It started to disturb me when I was around 16 years old. I didn‟t like the attention. It felt like everyone was interested in me (Öykü, F34, Istanbul).

The rest of the narratives are similar to Öykü‟s. One of the main themes of the childhood memories from Turkey is that the second generation were made to feel that they could never fully belong to Turkey because the locals called them *Almancı* and they treated them as if they were tourists or strangers. This was mainly due to the second generation‟s different looks, clothing and behaviour. Especially before the 1990s, when Turkey started to have a liberal and more open economy, there were no foreign brands in Turkey. The second generation‟s clothing and accessories, sports shoes and bags made them look different. Another point is that the second generation did not feel comfortable speaking Turkish, because even though they understood most of what was being said, they had a hard time understanding pop culture references, jokes and idioms. This shows an important point: language is dynamic, it changes over time, and it is strongly related to cultural contexts. Knowing words and constructing sentences are not always enough for a full communicative understanding.

The following account is a good example of how members of the second generation compare and contrast Germany and Turkey and relate their understanding of „home‟ to different places. It also illustrates how the second generation renegotiated their gendered identity in these transnational spaces.

> Before each trip, the excitement grew in me; we were going to our land, to where we belonged! But when we were in Istanbul, I was missing home – Germany! I was admiring everything in Istanbul. Even though we had the best of everything in Germany, I would be admiring the stuff in Turkey. For example the shitty ice cream made by the local grocery in Istanbul was so valuable to me! My aunt‟s daughter Selin was my idol. When I met her, I would scan her clothes, hair style and behaviour carefully so I could imitate her. She represented how a Turkish girl should have looked like for me. In Germany young people mostly wore sporty stuff. But the girls around my age in Turkey were so fancy!
>
> […]
>
> Once Selin told me, „I am going to show you something. You won‟t t me, el‟Ḥ x l [illegible]

> was nothing! (laughing) Turkey wasn‟t really developed in those years, but still it was the best place in my opinion (Lamia, F36, Istanbul).

These considerations on „home‟ and „belonging‟ show that the second generation has been constantly (re-)negotiating their diasporic and gendered identity in different diaspora spaces; and their „home‟ constructions were directly linked to their „family narratives‟. The next sections evaluate how the second generation‟s imagined „home‟ met the reality and how second generation reflect upon these based on their experiences during and after the return.

Narratives of return and (re-)settlement

The narratives of return show that the second generation had mixed feelings about the return.

school was nice. I was feeling like I was a stranger in Turkey; everything was new and I was expected to get used to everything. I was missing my friends in Germany, our house there, my school… But as an only child and being female it wasn‟t possible for me to live alone in Germany. I wouldn‟t be alone but according to my parents, being far from them meant being alone. So I had to forget about Germany.

[…]

They thought that if they didn‟t return at that point they wouldn‟t return at all. Also seeing my aunt marrying a German and settling in Germany, they thought the same would happen to me. I think they wanted me to marry someone who is from our culture, they must have had worries about me finding a German husband or something.

[…]

When we returned to Istanbul, my parents always said „Now you live in Istanbul and you have to be careful with everything. It is not as safe as Germany!‟ All of a sudden I was introduced to fears… Fearing strangers, fears about cars and traffic, fear from food sold on the streets… This feeling was something new to me; in Germany I wasn‟t living a life where I had to constantly watch out what was happening around me.

[…]

Now I think I could never live in Germany again. In my working career, I worked in a company for 14 years which was cooperating with Germany. So I had to go to Germany 4-5 times a year. Every time I went to Germany, I was waiting for the day that I was going to return to Turkey. Now I think that it was a good decision for my family to return to Turkey. I love my country, I love its people. In Germany people have boring lives. The life in Germany is very limited. You go to work, you come back home, you take a walk… I realised these things so much later… So I don‟t want wa

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they thought that they returned to the motherland to which they belonged, they discovered that they were different. Women struggled to renegotiate their gendered

Many questions and areas for further research remain. This has been mainly a case-study based on second-generation return to Istanbul; mechanisms of return and conditions of post-return are likely to be very different in rural and small-town Turkey. The analysis outlined in this paper has hinted at this, via the case of Ahu in Devrek, but not explored this comparative dimension in depth. Other avenues for research might look in more detail at the second generation‟s future plans (for instance their ideas on a possible „re-return‟ to Germany), their deeper thoughts on Turkish and German society, and the future of the Turkish labour diaspora in general, both in Germany and other countries where it has settled.

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