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Turning back to Turkey – or turning the back to Germany? Remigration intentions and behavior of Turkish immigrants in Germany between 1984 and 2011

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Turning back to Turkey – or turning the back to Germany?

Remigration intentions and behavior of Turkish immigrants in Germany between 1984 and 2011

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Abstract

By applying event-history analysis to all available waves of the German Socio-Economic Panel, we analyze how remigration intentions and actual remigration of Turkish migrants to Germany have evolved over time. The study draws from a broad set of theoretical approaches to remigration and it takes a different focus than previous studies by concentrating on long-term change in these rates. Our findings reveal an increase in remigration intentions and rates for first generation migrants after the turn of the millennium. Those who plan to return have a stronger emotional attachment to Turkey than those who plan to stay. Nevertheless, the two groups differ neither with respect to their educational levels nor in terms of their identification with Germany and perceptions of discrimination. Similarly, the small though slightly increasing group of immigrants that actually returns does not have a clear profile in terms of educational level, national identification, and perceptions of being disadvantaged in Germany. We thus argue that for first-generation migrants from Turkey after 2001, rising remigration intentions and actual remigration are unrelated to their integration into German society. Rather, the increase seems to be triggered by macro-structural changes in the country of origin.

Acknowledgments: The authors are listed in alphabetical order and have contributed equally to this article

1. INTRODUCTION

In Germany, numerous media reports and first empirical studies have recently been published focusing on allegedly increasing emigration rates of Turks to Turkey (Kuhlenkasper and Steinhardt, 2012; Aydin, 2010). This literature conveys a strong impression that young and skilled Turks are the ones prone to turn their backs on Germany and remigrate to a prosperous homeland (Aydin, 2010). This coincides with an increasing awareness that Germany needs well-educated immigrants to alleviate the consequences of population ageing and a shortage of skilled personnel. The factors triggering rising emigration rates are thought to be economic opportunities in a growing Turkey in combination with discrimination-related lack of opportunity in Germany (Aydin, 2010).

Official data does not shed much light on the scope and causes of this phenomenon. Firstly, the data is not reliable since many remigrants do not un-register in Germany. Second, it does not contain any information on skill level or emigration motives. And finally, it does not differentiate between, for example, a naturalized Turkish labor migrant returning to Anatolia and a German businesswoman moving to Istanbul. This lack of information on the scale and causes of recent patterns of remigration to Turkey is unfortunate from both a theoretical and a policy-oriented perspective.

Theoretically, the motivation of migrants to invest in host-land specific resources partly depends on their expected length of stay abroad. Accumulating these resources takes time and effort and is only worthwhile if they are expected to yield returns in the long run. Accordingly, remigration and emigration intentions have an impact on motivation to learn a host country's language, to find a well-paying job, and to invest in the success of one's children in school (Dustmann 1999, 2000). Furthermore, if Turks living in Germany showed a rising tendency to remigrate after years of life in Germany, this would pose a puzzle. Many

empirical studies have suggested that due to a steady increase in social and economic ties in the host country, migrants become more prone to settle down over time (for a classic study see Massey, 1986).

From a policy perspective, high remigration rates among the young and skilled may weaken a country's chances to succeed in the often-cited international "race for talent" (Shachar, 2006). This competition centers on attracting skilled migrants *and* inducing them to stay, in other words to not simply move to where their human capital yields the highest returns (Massey and Akresh, 2006). Migrants or individuals with roots abroad are more likely to either make such a move or remigrate. On the one hand, they have access to migration networks that lower the costs and increase the benefits of moving (Massey and España, 1987). On the other hand, many also possess resources that can be easily transferred to the country of origin – and "tastes" that render living there more attractive (Gundel and Peters, 2008: 770). It would represent a problem if this tendency were reinforced by better-educated migrants and their descendants having a sense that discrimination is impeding access to economic resources and social status.

Against this backdrop, our paper has a twofold purpose. First, we wish to examine the question of whether emigration intentions and emigration rates have in fact increased among the population of Turkish origin living in Germany. To the extent this is indeed the case, we will, secondly, explain these changes, our main focus being (a) identifying those socio-demographic subgroups triggering such an increase, and (b) determining whether long-term changes in remigration rates and intentions can be accounted for by explanatory factors usually discussed in studies on (re-)migration: the migrants' social, economic, and emotional ties to the receiving and sending countries.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In a theoretical framework, remigration is just another form of migration. Within individual-level approaches to migration such as neoclassical economics and new economics of labor migration (NELM), migrants' remigration behavior is influenced by their resources in both the receiving country and the country of origin (the following discussion is partly based on Cassarino's account of theoretical approaches to remigration; see Cassarino, 2004; Massey *et al.*, 1998). From a neoclassical perspective, remigration mostly occurs when immigrants either fail to find or lose a (good) job in the host country, so that the economic returns to migration are lower than expected. Meanwhile, the proponents of NELM have argued that migrants are target earners who are eager to return to the families they have left behind once they have accumulated enough money to compensate for certain market failures at home (Stark 1991).

While the two theories come to fundamentally different conclusions regarding who remigrates (Constant and Massey, 2002), they share a focus on migrants' individual characteristics and resources. Skills in the host country's language, occupational status, and contacts with non-migrant citizens evolve over time and reflect migrants' investments decisions. A host country's resources and ties can thus be expected to increase over time. In turn, resources in and ties to the sending country have mostly built up back home and can thus be expected to gradually wither. Accordingly, within both theoretical approaches remigration rates and intentions should gradually decrease with increasing duration of stay.

Transnational accounts of migration and remigration call into question the universality of a smooth settlement process. They emphasize that migrants belong to and participate in border-spanning social networks and activities that link sending and receiving countries through regular visits, trade and remittances, and association-based political and cultural activities (see

Glick-Schiller, 1999). As a result, migrants maintain economic and social ties to their various countries of origin even if they gradually integrate into the host country. Once economic or political conditions in the receiving or sending context change, transnationally active migrants can promptly react to these changes, since they possess skills, knowledge, and social ties valued in both the German and Turkish context. Migration and remigration are thus considered circular rather than permanent in nature (Cassarino, 2004, see also Constant and Zimmerman, 2012). What is more important in the framework of our research is that remigration is thought to have as much to do with involvement in reciprocal border-spanning networks than with narrowly defined economic or family ties in either context (Cassarino, 2004). Furthermore, identificational ties and emotional attachments to the home or host country play an important role in this approach.

Within transnational approaches, remigration is linked to and part of a broader pattern of transnational activities. Its persistence over time and generations has been questioned, both empirically and theoretically (Waldinger 2004; for transnational identifications see Snel *et al.*, 2006: 303). This debate notwithstanding, it seems unlikely that remigration not only remains high over time but also increases after years of settlement (Reagan and Olsen, 2000). In order to explain such long-term changes in remigration rates, we thus need to take account of macro-level changes in the receiving or sending country. These may render remigration more – or less – attractive, even if migrants’ resources and ties and identifications have remained rather stable, as a result of either stagnation in integration processes or ongoing transnational activities.

This broader economic and social context of remigration is the focus of structural approaches to the phenomenon: “As the structural approach to return migration contends, return is not only a personal issue, but above all a social and contextual one, affected by situational and

structural factors” (Cassarino, 2004: 257). Many of the sending countries for Western Europe’s labor migrants have experienced periods of economic prosperity and have themselves become – at least temporarily – attractive destinations for immigrants. But even without dramatic change back home, migrants may become more prone to remigrate if returns to skill and education decrease in the receiving country, for example due to deteriorating economic conditions or rising levels of xenophobia. Previous studies have shown, however, that such changes need to be substantive or even “shock-like” in order to affect human behavior normally characterized by inertia and bounded rationality (Massey and Kalter, 2008: 139).

The theoretical approaches reviewed so far are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they focus on different explanatory variables and analytical levels that need to be considered in a broad analysis of remigration behavior. Proponents of neoclassical approaches and the new economics of labor migration pay most attention to migrants’ individual economic and social ties in the receiving and sending countries. Transnational approaches emphasize that through their involvement in transnational activities and networks, migrants often maintain homeland-related identities, business ties, and reciprocal social relationships in Germany and Turkey. These ties are less narrowly defined than the individual resources and ties that are the focus of economic approaches. And structural approaches remind us that we need to take a closer look at macro-level changes in the sending and receiving countries that may trigger long-term changes in remigration rates. We will now present the results of existing studies on remigration and offer some background information on the groups and contexts under consideration here, before turning to a description and explanation of recent changes in intended and actual remigration among Turkish migrants to Germany.

3. EXISTING FINDINGS ON REMIGRATION, THE SITUATION IN GERMANY, AND AN EMPIRICAL PUZZLE

Most studies of remigration reflect either the neoclassical approaches or the new economics of labor migration.ⁱ Accordingly, they accentuate migrants' human capital endowments and their economic and social ties in the sending and receiving contexts. The neoclassic assumption that remigration occurs when initial migration turns out a failure has been confirmed in several studies: being jobless or working part-time increases the likelihood of return (Constant and Massey, 2002; Kuhlenkasper and Steinhardt, 2012; Gundel and Peters, 2008). Inversely, a high income seems to be negatively correlated with return migration and intentions (Kuhlenkasper and Steinhardt, 2012; Constant and Massey, 2002; Constant and Zimmermann, 2012).

Interestingly, findings are mixed with respect to migrants' education. According to the mechanism proposed by Borjas and Bratsberg (1996), migrants with higher educational levels who belong to low-skilled immigrant groups are more prone to remigrate, thereby increasing the group's original selectivity. Several studies support this argument (for Spain and Italy see De Haas and Fokkema, 2011; for Germany Kuhlenkasper and Steinhardt, 2012ⁱⁱ; for home-country schooling of Turks in Germany Constant and Massey, 2002). However, the effect on remigration intentions seems to be less clear (Steiner and Velling 1994).

With respect to migrants' social ties, empirical evidence clearly shows that having children or a partner in the receiving country reduces both the chances of remigration and the intention to remigrate, especially when the partner is naturalized (Dustmann 1996) and children are in school. In turn, having a partner back home renders return migration more likely (Constant and Massey, 2002; Kuhlenkasper and Steinhardt, 2012; Gundel and Peters, 2008; Constant and Zimmermann, 2012).

Variables that may affect the non-monetary costs of staying abroad permanently, such as identification with the receiving or sending country, have received considerably less attention than migrants' economic and social ties in Germany and Turkey. However, identification with Germany and speaking German have been shown to increase expected length of stay (see Steiner and Velling, 1994; for remigration behavior see Constant and Massey, 2002). In their study of migrants in Italy and Spain, De Haas and Fokkema have demonstrated that their socio-cultural integration is strongly related to a decline in return intentions. Transnational activities such as remittance increase return intentions; the same applies to investment back home (De Haas and Fokkema, 2011, see also Dustmann and Mestres, 2010).

The studies referred to so far convincingly explain variation in remigration behavior and intentions. They basically show that increasing economic, social, and emotional ties in the host society leads to a decrease in remigration (intentions) or, to put it differently, that integration into German society reduces the remigration probability. But while all these studies try to explain who migrates and who does not, they say little about long-term changes in remigration rates. This is partly because they rely on older data, whereas the currently discussed increase in remigration rates seems to be a rather recent phenomenon. An exception is the study by Kuhlenkasper and Steinhardt on remigration patterns of migrants to Germany; the authors find a "rising effect" after the year 2000 "[that] is likely to be driven by the positive development of the Turkish economy" (21). It should be noted, however, that the authors concentrate on the role of migrants' human capital endowments and their economic and social ties in Germany and do not consider experiences of discrimination or identification with Germany. They thus largely ignore the factors playing an important role in the current debate on Turkish migrants' remigration behavior. In the following section, we will take a closer look at the integration process experienced by Turkish migrants in Germany.

Turks in Germany: Immigration and settlement

Many of the 2.5 million Turks and Germans with Turkish roots living in Germany today were recruited as so called “guest workers” in the 1960s and early 1970s (BMI/BAMF 2009, 220). Immigration rates (for non-German immigrants from Turkey) nevertheless peaked after the end of recruitment in 1973 due to family reunification and marriage migration. They remained at high levels (100,000 – 200,000 individuals per year) until the mid-1980 and declined afterwards. Since 2007, they have dropped below 30,000 individuals per year (data provided by the German Federal Statistical Office). Today, 40% of the Turkish-origin population living in Germany was born in the country and the average length of stay is about 26 years (ibid.: 224).ⁱⁱⁱ

With respect to their integration into German society, the Turkish-origin population still bears marks of the “guest worker” era. On average, Turks have limited language skills, lower educational credentials, higher rates of joblessness, lower income, and fewer social ties with Germans than other ethnic groups (Kalter, 2011; Luthra, 2012). Public attention is often drawn to the alleged failure of Turkish migrants and their offspring to integrate “successfully”. While their cultural background as Muslims is often held responsible for this in the populist debate on this issue (see Sarrazin, 2010), structural factors such as an ongoing ethnic replenishment, the larger size of this group (Esser, 2008), and ethnic discrimination dominate academic discourse.

Despite the fact that the integration of Turkish migrants – and of their children – lags behind that of other groups, there is no evidence that it does not progress over time and generations. Mostly due to rising levels of education, joblessness is lower among second than among first generation migrants (Herwig and Konietzka, 2012), and they are more likely to work as white collar employees than members of their parents’ generation (Granato and Kalter, 2001). They

also have more contacts with Germans, higher rates of intermarriage (Nauck, 2001; Schroedter and Kalter, 2010), and better language skills; and they identify with Germany more strongly (Diehl and Schnell, 2006). Similarly, their ties to Turkey will generally have weakened rather than strengthened because of declining numbers of immigrants from Turkey and, related to that, limited ethnic replenishment.

In sum, there is no evidence that there are any disruptions in the integration process of Turkish migrants and their children that may have rendered remigration more attractive. But what about macro-structural changes that might affect returns to their human, social and cultural resources in Germany or Turkey? While the European and international financial crisis has affected Germany less than many other European immigrant destinations, media reports on Turkish outmigration often claim that the situation has become worse in terms of general acceptance in Germany of Turkish migrants and their children. In fact, the debate about the compatibility of Islam with Western culture has gained momentum in Germany during the last decade, even though most indicators have shown the level of Islamophobia in the country to be stable – at a relatively high level (Kühnel and Leibold 2007). Available data shows that Germans tend to be more prejudiced and show higher levels of social distance toward Turkish migrants and their children as compared to members of other ethnic minorities in the country. Furthermore, perceptions of cultural distance between Turks and Germans have increased since the mid-1990s.^{iv} Related to this, Turks report incidences of discrimination more often than immigrants from other countries (Hans 2010: 286).

There is some evidence (Kaas and Manger, 2010) available for responding to the question of the extent to which Turkish migrants experience discrimination in the labor market—and considerable debate in this respect. While discrimination seem to be more often suffered by this groups than others, it is also clear that the lower labor-market position of Turkish

migrants is mainly a result of their comparatively low educational credentials (Granato and Kalter 2001). It is nevertheless possible that young educated Turks or Germans with Turkish roots in particular feel increasingly bothered by an ongoing lack of social acceptance in Germany. For some migrants, the gap between expectations and reality may thus have widened during the last decade, even if the situation as a whole has not changed for the worse (for this “integration paradox”, see Kessler *et al.*, 1999).

It is likewise hardly possible to speak of any structural “shocks” in respect to the situation in Turkey. Nevertheless, there has been significant economic and cultural movement in the country (Gerhards and Hans, 2011). Above all, GDP almost doubled between 2000 and 2010 (from 290 billion to 550 billion; see ec.europa.eu/eurostat). Joblessness for university graduates for its part remained at best stable between 1988 and 2012 and is currently at levels of about 10% (see <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr>). Cultural change has been substantial, with Istanbul, always a vibrant capital at the border of Europe and Asia, now increasingly attracting international artists, students, and business people. At the same time, religious-conservative movements have become more prominent under the Erdogan government, with a growing presence of Islam in the public sphere.

In the framework of the above observations, we will now consider the long-term dynamics of remigration behavior and intentions in Germany. While an alleged increase in the remigration of Turkish migrants plays an important role in the public debate, empirical studies of this issue, especially studies based on longitudinal data, are so far almost nonexistent. We will examine the question of whether rising remigration rates and intentions are caused by characteristics and resources that have been shown to affect past remigration, most importantly migrants’ economic and social ties to both their home- and host countries and their involvement in transnational activities. We will also examine the widespread argument

that (allegedly) rising remigration rates and intentions reflect a lack of social approval in Germany by assessing the role of attitudinal variables such as perceptions of discrimination and identification with both Germany and Turkey. This strategy will enable us to at least indirectly assess the role of macro-structural changes in the migrants' country of origin. Since we draw from a rather broad spectrum of theoretical approaches to remigration and take into account a range of individual-level variables we can reasonably assume that remaining changes in remigration patterns are related to macro-structural changes.

4. DATA AND METHODS

In our analysis, we use data from the Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP), which offers information on private households in Germany (www.diw.de/de/soep). This dataset has been used in numerous studies of remigration intentions and behavior for a number of reasons. First of all, in this data set, labor migrants from Turkey were oversampled when the original sample was taken in 1984. Second, SOEP data provides longitudinal information on a broad range of topics (Wagner *et al.*, 2007). The same households stay in the panel as long as possible – including individuals who join these households as, for example, children, partners, and immigrants. Third and finally, the data set contains information on panel dropouts based on follow-up studies so that remigrants can be identified and remigration can be analyzed prospectively (Neiss/Kroh, 2012).^v Individuals who replied in the negative to the question of whether they wished to stay in Germany forever can be coded as individuals with an intention to remigrate.^{vi} While most studies presented above use older SOEP waves, we will include *all* available survey waves in our analysis (1984-2011). Given the debate on Turkish emigration, we restrict our study to first and second generation migrants (respectively, those who

immigrated at the age of 6 or older; those who immigrated before the age of 6 or were born in Germany but have at least one foreign born parent) from Turkey.^{vii}

From a theoretical viewpoint, we wish to determine whether and, if so, why a rising number of individuals have decided, over time, not to stay in Germany forever (“remigration intention”) and/or left the country (coded as “remigrant” in the lifespell data set). We here use event-history analysis and look closely at the effect of the year of observation. As intentions and behavior are recorded only once a year in the SOEP although they can occur at any time between two surveys, we employ discrete-time models (Allison, 1982: 63). We estimate the probability that an event that has not yet occurred will happen at a certain point in time and specify how this probability depends on year of observation and other explanatory variables (Allison, 1982: 70ff.; Yamaguchi, 1991: 17ff.). Each year that a person is exposed to the risk of experiencing the event is taken as a separate observation. In the case of remigration intentions, the risk period begins when the person indicates for the first time that s/he intends to stay forever in Germany – those who never intended to stay forever are thus excluded from the data set. The risk period ends the year this intention is given up, in other words when the person considers remigration for the first time or – if the intention to stay remains stable – with the most recent available observation. If a person switches back and forth between an intention to stay in Germany and a remigration intention, we treat each of these transitions as a separate event. In the case of remigration behavior, the risk period begins when a respondent is included in the SOEP^{viii} and ends when he or she has either quit the SOEP survey due to emigration or with the most recent available survey year for that person.

Independent variables include indicators for the theoretically relevant explanatory factors identified above, notably migrants’ socio-demographic characteristics, their ties and resources in Germany and Turkey, their involvement in transnational activities, and their subjective

perceptions of and identifications with Germany and Turkey (see Table A in supplementary material for details).^{ix} In all multivariate models we control but do not display the mostly insignificant results for time in risk period and time since migration (for immigrants).

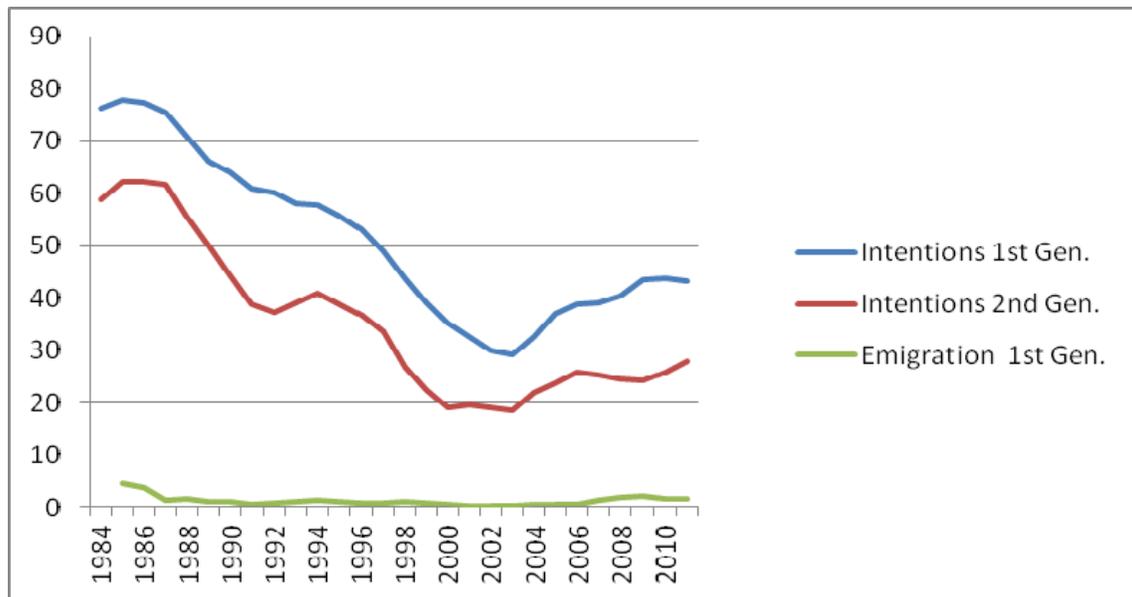
5. FINDINGS

We will begin our empirical analysis with a descriptive overview of our variables, then presenting the multivariate results regarding the factors triggering long-term changes in remigration rates and intentions.

Changes in remigration rates and intentions over time - some descriptive evidence

Figure 1 displays the annual proportion of first and second generation Turks who stated that they do not want to stay in Germany forever and of those who have been coded as emigrants. The figure shows that for first-generation Turks, remigration intentions decreased almost steadily until 2002, when they reached their lowest level, that is, when only about 30% stated that they *did not* plan to stay in Germany forever. From 2003 on, remigration intentions in fact increased. However, actual remigration has remained very low for first-generation Turks, although it also became slightly more frequent starting in 2005. The overall pattern looks somewhat similar for second-generation Turks, albeit on a lower level. Actual remigration is not displayed here for second-generation Turks, since the number of remigrants is extremely small in the time period under consideration (31 individuals). Analysis not presented here indicates that this pattern is unique for Turkish labor migrants and their children. Other migrant groups included in the SOEP in larger numbers (e.g. Poles; Italians) do not display this pattern but an ongoing decline in remigration intentions. Obviously, rising emigration intentions do not reflect a general increase in international mobility.

Figure 1: Emigrations intentions and rates of first and second generation immigrants from Turkey (means)



These results demonstrate that while there is some empirical reality behind the public debate outlined in the introduction to our paper, two important specifications are necessary. First, the increase we have confirmed is much more prominent on the attitudinal level (that of intentions) than on the behavioral level (that of actual remigration). Second, it affects *first* generation migrants rather than their children. With this clarification, we can now turn to the factors triggering rising rates of emigration (and emigration intentions) after years of living in Germany.

Why have remigration intentions and rates increased?

In order to address this question, we will formulate separate models for the time period before and after the increase around the year 2002. Prior to presenting multivariate analyses, we will take a brief look at the distribution of the independent variables in these two time periods by generation. This will enable us to assess if there has been any substantial change with respect to factors that have been shown to affect remigration behavior and intentions in

existing studies, most importantly migrants' ties and resources in Germany and Turkey, their transnational activities, and their identifications with and attitudes about Germany and Turkey. As can be seen in Table 1 this is hardly the case.

Table 1: Distribution of independent variables by generation and time period (means)

	Before 2002		2002 and later	
	First generation	Second generation	First generation	Second generation
<i>Socio-demographic characteristics</i>				
Age	38	22	45	28
Female	45	42	49	49
Married	84	31	89	49
More than basic education	11	12	14	26
Occupational Status				
retired	2	0	10	0
jobless	10	9	12	10
working	55	53	45	58
<i>Ties and Resources in Germany and Turkey</i>				
Children in household	58	53	55	62
Family ties: most relatives in Turkey	33	10	33	4
Visits from/visiting Germans	69	83	54	67
Good German language skills	25	81	25	78
Good Turkish language skills	72	53	65	57
Remittances	11	3	9	7
Visits to Turkey	82	76	84	77
<i>Feelings and Attitudes about Germany and Turkey</i>				
Has been discriminated	57	52	54	50
Feels at home during visits in Turkey	17	8	18	9
Identifies with Germany	11	25	18	37
Identifies with Turkey	60	42	54	35

Notes: **in bold**: significant difference between generations, *in italics*: significant differences over time ($p < 0.001$).

Change over time and across generations in the employment-related economic situation of Turks in Germany mostly reflects the different age structures of first and second generation migrants. The share of individuals with more than basic education has increased over time, especially for second generation migrants. Indicators of both groups' social ties show that the share of Turks whose relatives are mostly living in Turkey has declined sharply from the first to the second generation. Surprisingly, social ties to Germans have *decreased* despite the second generation being more integrated socially than the first. As expected, the share of

individuals who speak German well is much higher among those who were born in Germany than among those who immigrated, but there is little change over time.

Transnational activities such as remittances are clearly limited to a minority of migrants (3-11%). They are higher for first than for second generation migrants even though the two groups converged somewhat after 2001. A large share of migrants from both generations has traveled to Turkey, but a comparatively small share has felt at home right away during these visits, especially among those who were born in Germany. Interestingly, the national identification of the migrants shows a classical pattern of assimilation: identification with Germany increases over time and generation and identification with Turkey correspondingly decreases. Experiences of discrimination are similarly high for both groups and have remained stable over time: every second Turk has had such experiences. Overall, there is no evidence for a disruption in the integration process or an alienation from Germany that may have triggered rising remigration intentions or rates. The declining share of Turks who have visited Germans in their homes and have been visited by them is an interesting exception to this rule.

Our multivariate analysis will now turn to the question of whether *the relationship* between the ties, resources, and attitudes considered so far and migrants' remigration intentions and behavior has changed over time. We first address socio-demographic characteristics such as age, sex, and education in order to analyze which subgroups have been especially likely to develop emigration intentions or to have emigrated over time. In a second step, we assess the impact of migrants' social, economic, and cultural ties and resources in Germany and Turkey. In a third step, we look at migrants' subjective perceptions of and identification with both countries. In all models, we include year of observation to study change over time (see Table 2).

Table 2: Emigration Intentions of First Generation Turks: Discrete Time Models, Hazard Ratios

	<i>Basic Model</i>		<i>+ resources and ties</i>		<i>+ feelings and attitudes</i>	
	<i>Before 2002</i>	<i>2002 / later</i>	<i>Before 2002</i>	<i>2002 / later</i>	<i>Before 2002</i>	<i>2002 / later</i>
<i>Year of measurement</i>	0.96*** (0.00)	1.06*** (0.01)	0.96*** (0.00)	1.09*** (0.02)	0.96*** (0.00)	1.07** (0.02)
<i>Socio-demographic characteristics</i>						
Age	1.00 (0.01)	1.07* (0.04)	0.97 (0.02)	1.03 (0.04)	0.97 (0.02)	1.03 (0.04)
Female	1.17** (0.09)	1.13 (0.13)	1.24** (0.12)	1.17 (0.14)	1.20* (0.11)	1.23 (0.16)
Married	1.28** (0.15)	0.97 (0.17)	1.18 (0.16)	0.96 (0.20)	1.08 (0.14)	0.91 (0.20)
More than basic education	0.89 (0.10)	1.22 (0.18)	0.84 (0.12)	1.19 (0.19)	0.88 (0.13)	1.21 (0.20)
Occupational status (ref.: other non working)						
retired	0.55* (0.16)	1.57 (0.44)	0.50* (0.17)	1.49 (0.44)	0.48** (0.17)	1.40 (0.43)
jobless	1.05 (0.13)	1.01 (0.19)	1.05 (0.15)	1.07 (0.22)	1.06 (0.16)	1.04 (0.22)
working	1.03 (0.09)	1.01 (0.14)	1.01 (0.11)	1.04 (0.15)	1.01 (0.11)	1.01 (0.15)
<i>Ties and Resources in Germany and Turkey</i>						
Children in household			0.89 (0.08)	1.09 (0.16)	0.88 (0.07)	1.03 (0.15)
Family ties (ref.: all relatives in Turkey)						
most relatives in Turkey			0.97 (0.16)	0.87 (0.18)	0.98 (0.16)	0.78 (0.16)
most relatives in Germany			0.80** (0.08)	0.79 (0.12)	0.81* (0.08)	0.79 (0.12)
all relatives in Germany			0.67** (0.07)	0.62** (0.10)	0.67** (0.07)	0.62** (0.10)
Visits from/visiting Germans			0.83** (0.06)	0.94 (0.11)	0.88 (0.07)	1.02 (0.12)
Good German language skills			0.99 (0.05)	0.96 (0.08)	1.08 (0.06)	1.07 (0.09)
Good Turkish language skills			1.20** (0.08)	1.66*** (0.22)	1.15* (0.08)	1.61** (0.23)
Remittances			1.79** (0.36)	1.24 (0.48)	1.77** (0.37)	1.07 (0.41)
Visits to Turkey			1.11 (0.16)	1.04 (0.17)	1.09 (0.16)	0.91 (0.15)
<i>Feelings and Attitudes about Germany and Turkey</i>						
Has been discriminated					1.06 (0.08)	1.06 (0.12)
Feels at home during visits in Turkey					1.35** (0.13)	1.69*** (0.22)
Identifies with Germany					0.61** (0.10)	0.84 (0.16)
Identifies with Turkey					1.66*** (0.14)	1.69*** (0.23)
Number of persons' years	5.500	2.667	4.086	2.474	4.046	2.425
Number of persons	967	537	612	499	611	483
Pseudo R ²	0.01	0.04	0.02	0.07	0.04	0.09

Notes: Controlling for time in risk period, years since migration, missing dummies, *** p<.001; ** p<.05; * p<.10

Our results confirm that for first generation migrants from Turkey, SOEP year has a negative effect – i.e. remigration intentions have decreased – until 2002, even if possible socio-demographic compositional effects are controlled for. Female and married respondents are more likely to have remigration intentions, and children in the household tend to decrease this risk.^x With respect to remigration intentions, we cannot confirm findings from earlier studies (see footnote 2 above) that Turks with higher levels of educational are particularly prone to remigrate. Model of fit increases substantially if we take account of migrants’ economic, social, and cultural ties in Germany and Turkey.^{xi} Interestingly, retired people are not those who are most likely to plan remigration. At this stage in life remigration illusions appear to have largely either become reality or been abandoned. The other variables point in the expected direction: social ties in Germany, notably contacts with Germans and the presence of relatives in the country, decrease remigration intentions, while transnational activities such as sending remittances increase them.

The last model clearly proves that remigration intentions are not only a matter of economic and social ties and resources. Those who identify with and feel at home in Turkey during visits plan to remigrate more often and the opposite holds true for those who identify with Germany. Nevertheless, the negative effect of SOEP year for the pre-2002 period remains stable and significant once migrants’ identifications are taken into account. Obviously, settlement intentions increased in the period under consideration independently of increasing economic, social, and emotional ties to Germany.

So far, our findings are neither new nor surprising. This changes when we turn to the models for the period after 2001. As suggested by the descriptive results presented above, these models show a significant and stable positive effect for year of measurement. Apart from that, the models for both the time periods under consideration look rather similar. An interesting

difference between the pre- and post-2001 models is that identification with Germany – despite increasing over time – is no longer negatively related to remigration. This contradicts the idea that a withering identification with Germany is triggering remigration plans. Rather, identification with Germany is no longer a barrier to remigration. The finding that experiences of discrimination are completely unrelated to migrants’ remigration intentions backs this interpretation.

Overall, the stable and positive coefficient for year of measurement in the post-2001 models shows that the post-2001 increase in remigration intentions cannot be accounted for by the factors included in our models. For example, the positive effect of year of measurement does not vanish once migrants’ decreasing social ties to Germans (see variable “visits to and from Germans” before and after 2001 in Table 1) are controlled for. Since SOEP data allows us to control for an encompassing range of factors driving remigration intentions, it seems quite possible that rising emigration intentions are related to processes in the country of origin rather than to the situation of Turkish migrants in Germany.

Table 3: Emigration Intentions of Second Generation Turkish Immigrants: Discrete Time Models, Hazard Ratios

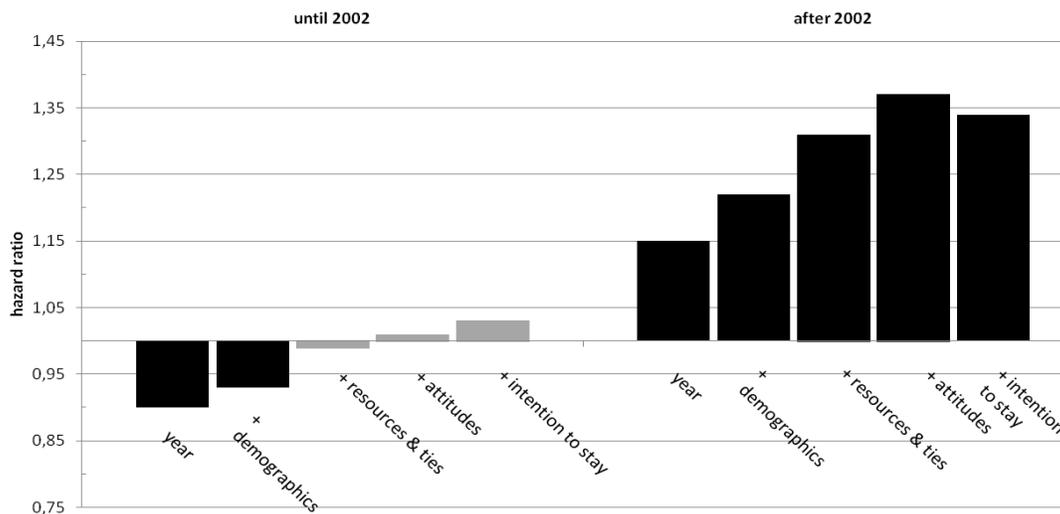
	<i>Basic Model</i>		<i>+ resources and ties</i>		<i>+ feelings and attitudes</i>	
	<i>Before 2002</i>	<i>2002 and later</i>	<i>Before 2002</i>	<i>2002 and later</i>	<i>Before 2002</i>	<i>2002 and later</i>
<i>Year of measurement</i>	0.90*** (0.01)	1.03 (0.03)	0.91*** (0.02)	0.99 (0.03)	0.92** (0.02)	1.01 (0.04)
<i>Socio-demographic characteristics</i>						
Age	1.07 (0.10)	1.24** (0.12)	1.73** (0.42)	1.17 (0.11)	1.49* (0.35)	1.15 (0.13)
Female	0.83 (0.12)	1.31 (0.22)	0.73* (0.13)	1.19 (0.21)	0.71* (0.12)	1.02 (0.20)
Married	1.52** (0.29)	0.93 (0.19)	1.39 (0.29)	0.91 (0.23)	1.43* (0.30)	0.86 (0.22)
More than basic education	1.43 (0.34)	0.78 (0.16)	1.25 (0.30)	0.78 (0.17)	1.08 (0.26)	0.90 (0.21)
<i>Occupational Status (Ref.: other non working)</i>						
jobless	1.05 (0.27)	1.40 (0.47)	0.91 (0.26)	1.27 (0.46)	0.87 (0.25)	1.21 (0.46)
working	0.89 (0.15)	1.21 (0.25)	0.71 (0.14)	1.14 (0.27)	0.67* (0.13)	0.99 (0.24)
<i>Ties and Resources in Germany and Turkey</i>						
Children in household			0.96 (0.16)	1.17 (0.23)	0.88 (0.15)	1.17 (0.26)
<i>Family ties (Ref.: all relatives in Turkey)</i>						
most relatives in Turkey			0.10*** (0.06)	0.78 (0.86)	0.08*** (0.03)	2.01 (1.08)
most relatives in Germany			0.86 (0.29)	0.73 (0.39)	0.67 (0.24)	0.92 (0.47)
all relatives in Germany			0.55** (0.14)	0.50 (0.26)	0.41** (0.11)	0.56 (0.27)
Visits from/visiting Germans			0.87 (0.19)	0.73 (0.15)	0.96 (0.21)	0.76 (0.16)
Good German language skills			0.77* (0.11)	1.21 (0.27)	0.83 (0.12)	1.17 (0.28)
Good Turkish language skills			1.26** (0.12)	1.65** (0.24)	1.11 (0.11)	1.38* (0.22)
Remittances			1.41 (0.87)	0.69 (0.31)	1.45 (0.91)	0.63 (0.29)
Visits to Turkey			1.02 (0.27)	1.28 (0.32)	0.97 (0.25)	1.19 (0.28)
<i>Feelings and Attitudes about Germany and Turkey</i>						
Has been discriminated					1.22 (0.20)	0.93 (0.18)
Feels at home during visits in Turkey					1.59* (0.42)	1.57 (0.43)
Identifies with Germany					0.51** (0.11)	0.56** (0.13)
Identifies with Turkey					1.68** (0.28)	1.51** (0.30)
Number of persons' years	1.886	1.575	1.389	1.393	1.348	1.226
Number of persons	395	343	258	296	258	261
Pseudo R ²	0.02	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.08	0.10

Notes: Controlling for time in risk period, missing dummies, *** p<.001; ** p<.05; * p<.10

Models for 2nd generation Turks born and raised in Germany confirm our descriptive findings that this group's remigration intentions decreased until 2001. But our multivariate findings for the period after 2001 demonstrate that these intentions remain stable – and do not increase as they do for 1st generation migrants – once compositional effects are accounted for. Apart from this important difference, the results are basically the same as for first generation Turks. Ties in Germany, notably the presence of relatives, good German-language skills, and identification with Germany correspond with a low intention to remigrate, while the opposite is true for Turkish-language skills and identification with Turkey. Again, experiences of discrimination are unrelated to remigration intentions, and this is the case with the migrants' level of education and occupational status as well.

In order to analyze the link between remigration intentions and actual remigration – as well as potential changes in that respect - we will now take a closer look at the dynamics at work in Turkish migrants' remigration behavior. Again, we compare the two time periods and calculate the same models that were used for remigration intentions. Results are displayed graphically in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Emigration Behavior (1st generation): Effect of Year of Measurement



Similarly to the findings regarding remigration intentions, we can observe a negative and stable effect of year of measurement until 2001. With the inclusion of controls for migrants' ties and resources (most importantly Turkish language skills and having a job in Germany), this effect becomes much smaller and is no longer statistically significant. This suggests that remigration decreased between the mid-1980s and the turn of the millennium *because* migrants' ties in Germany became stronger.

From 2002 onward, we find a *positive* effect for year of measurement which reveals that not only remigration intentions have increased over time but actual remigration as well. Our multivariate analysis produces two remarkable findings: First, the coefficient for year of measurement does not merely remain stable once migrants' resources and ties are controlled for but actually becomes larger. Obviously, remigration would have increased more strongly than it actually did if the integration of Turkish migrants (through holding a job, having a family, identifying with Germany) had not progressed over time. Second, the strong positive effect of year of measurement remains stable even if we control for remigration intentions – which have a strong positive effect on actual remigration independent of the time period under consideration. Remigration has thus become more likely even for those who have not already had remigration intentions. Analysis not presented here (see Table B in supplementary material) reveals that the small though slightly increasing group of Turkish immigrants returning to Turkey does not have a clear profile in terms of educational level and both identification with and perceptions of Germany.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, we have analyzed how the remigration intentions and actual remigration of Turkish migrants have evolved over time. While several SOEP-based studies of remigration have been published since the 1990s, our study has a new focus. We describe and explain long-term rate changes between the mid-1980s and the present. Our findings show that some empirical reality informs the current debate about Turks returning to Turkey in increasing numbers, but that perception of the phenomenon needs to be qualified in several important respects.

First, while there was in fact an increase in remigration intentions and rates for first-generation migrants after the turn of the millennium, we can see that there has been no such increase in intentions on the part of second-generation migrants, once changes in this group's socio-demographic composition are taken into account. In addition, very few German-born individuals with Turkish-born parents actually return to Turkey. Second, empirical evidence does not suggest that it is the better educated who plan to leave the country. In a similar vein, those who indicate an intention to return neither identify less strongly with Germany nor feel discriminated against more frequently than those who intend to stay, despite potential remigrants having stronger emotional attachments to Turkey.

In our analysis we drew upon a broad set of theoretical approaches to remigration. In that theoretical framework, we have found that for first-generation migrants after 2001, rising rates of intended and actual remigration have been unrelated to their integration into German society – a process that has not shown any signs of disruption. In fact, without the ongoing settlement of Turkish migrants, their remigration rate would have been higher after 2001.

Turkish immigrants returning to Turkey do not have a clear profile in terms of their educational level, identification with, and perceptions of Germany.

This supports our argument that the increase is related to processes in the country of origin rather than to the integration process in Germany. It is in fact those migrants who still identify as Turks and who still possess the necessary resources, most importantly Turkish language skills, who re-settle in Turkey. Unfortunately, we do not know a great deal about the nature of dynamics in Turkey that may render remigration more appealing. Analysis not presented here does suggest that these dynamics involve economic factors rather than the cultural factors mentioned above: religious Turks – i.e., those who frequently attend religious services – are not more likely to return to Turkey than less religious Turks.

We have used one of the few datasets in which emigrants are coded as such. However, with the data at hand we cannot further qualify our assumption that pull-factors in Turkey are triggering rising emigration rates. For example it is quite possible that economic change in specific economic niches such as tourism have rendered remigration attractive for migrants who are able to work as mediators between German and Turkish culture. However, unless truly border-spanning data sets become available, these assumptions remain speculative. Only such data would allow us to follow up emigrants after they have again become immigrants – to the very country they once left.

ⁱ If not otherwise indicated, the following studies are based on German data. The socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP) contains information on remigration and is thus a rather unique and often-used dataset for understanding this issue.

ⁱⁱ The authors claim that "For Turkish immigrants, outmigration is characterized by a positive self-selection with respect to skill intensifying the initial negative selection process" (p. 3). However, their descriptive findings show that those who stay in Germany have higher levels of education than those who leave the country (Table 3), while their multivariate findings only partially confirm this thesis (Table 4): although those belonging to the low-status group (isco1) are less likely to remigrate than those with medium levels (isco3), those with high levels (isco 4) are less likely to do so.

ⁱⁱⁱ In Germany, children of Turkish immigrants are not automatically citizens. They become German by birth only if their parents fulfill certain requirements such as legal stay in the country for 8 years. Even these children must decide between the ages of 18 and 23 if they wish to be Turkish *or* German citizens since double citizenship is not accepted on a regular basis.

^{iv} Most importantly, German perception of cultural distance between Germans and Turks have increased substantially between 1996 and 2006. Means on a 7-point scale (1=low and 7=high distance) have increased from 4.09 (males) and 4.15 (females) in 1996 to 5.14 (males) and 5.24 (females) in 2006. In the same time span, the German perception of distance with Italians and ethnic Germans has remained stable or even declined. Own analysis based on data from the ALLBUS (available under <http://www.gesis.org/allbus>).

^v Persons who were no longer interviewed in the SOEP because they left Germany are coded as emigrants. This probably includes a few persons who moved to another country than their country of origin. Similarly, some respondents who may have moved back might not have been coded correctly as remigrants (Constant and Massey, 2002).

^{vi} Until 1995, immigrants were asked *How long do you want to live in Germany?* Those who answered *I want to return within the next 12 months/to stay several more years in Germany* were coded as having a remigration intention. From 1996 on, the question was: *Do you want to stay in Germany forever? Yes/No.*

^{vii} We include individuals independent of their citizenship. In our analyses we do not differentiate between Germans and Turks because holding German citizenship does not have any effect on remigration intentions or behavior.

^{viii} Start of this risk period is the year of immigration, which in most cases lies prior to the observation window. Partially censored data on the left only allows analysis conditional on the fact that the individual has survived (i.e., not yet emigrated) before the start of the observation (Blossfeld et al. 2007: 40).

^{ix} If relevant information is missing for a certain survey year, we have replaced it with information available from the most recent year. We use dummy variables for most variables and control for refusals through missing dummies.

^x We cannot determine if the spouse lives in Germany or Turkey because there are very few respondents with a spouse abroad who state that they want to stay in Germany forever.

^{xi} The calculation of likelihood-ratio tests in nested models shows that with one exception (2nd generation migrants after 2001), all models including a further set of independent variables have significantly more explanatory power than the previous model ($p < .05$).

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Table A: Generation of complex independent variables

<i>Variable name</i>	<i>Generation details</i>
Family ties	<p>ratio: sum of family members living in Germany divided by sum of family members living in Turkey</p> <p>family members=mother or father or daughter or son or sister or brother or grand child</p> <p>ratio=0: all relatives in Turkey</p> <p>ratio>0 and <0.5: most relatives in Turkey</p> <p>ratio>=0.5 and <1: most relatives in Germany</p> <p>ratio>=1: all relatives in Germany</p>
Visits from/visiting Germans	<p>0= either visits from Germans <i>or</i> visiting Germans or no visiting contacts at all</p> <p>1=visits from <i>and</i> visiting Germans</p>
Good German language skills	<p>0=neither good or very good German speaking skills nor good or very good German writing skills</p> <p>1=either good or very good German speaking skills or good or very good German writing skills</p> <p>2=both German speaking and writing skills good or very good</p>
Good Turkish language skills	<p>0=neither good or very good Turkish speaking skills nor good or very good Turkish writing skills</p> <p>1=either good or very good Turkish speaking skills or good or very good Turkish writing skills</p> <p>2=both Turkish speaking and writing skills good or very good</p>
Remittances	<p>0=either no sending of remittances at all or only sending remittances to a person living in Germany</p> <p>1=send remittances to at least one person living abroad</p>

Table B: Emigration Behavior of First Generation Turkish Immigrants: Discrete Time Models, Hazard Ratios

	<i>Basic Model</i>		<i>+ resources and ties</i>		<i>+ feelings and attitudes</i>	
	<i>Before 2002</i>	<i>2002 and later</i>	<i>Before 2002</i>	<i>2002 and later</i>	<i>Before 2002</i>	<i>2002 and later</i>
<i>Year of measurement</i>	0.92** (0.02)	1.22** (0.07)	0.99 (0.04)	1.31*** (0.09)	1.01 (0.03)	1.36** (0.12)
<i>Socio-demographic characteristics</i>						
Age	1.04 (0.03)	0.90* (0.09)	1.03 (0.05)	0.82* (0.08)	1.03 (0.05)	0.82* (0.09)
Female	0.94 (0.17)	0.92 (0.35)	0.84 (0.21)	0.96 (0.37)	0.83 (0.21)	1.14 (0.43)
Married	0.25*** (0.04)	1.82 (1.06)	0.19*** (0.04)	1.48 (0.89)	0.19*** (0.04)	1.53 (0.99)
More than basic education	0.82 (0.24)	1.04 (0.66)	0.94 (0.35)	1.23 (0.82)	0.98 (0.35)	1.31 (0.99)
Occupational status (ref.: other non working)						
retired	0.45 (0.23)	0.80 (0.46)	0.51 (0.27)	0.79 (0.48)	0.49 (0.26)	0.66 (0.38)
jobless	1.45 (0.34)	- (-)	1.47 (0.47)	- (-)	1.48 (0.47)	- (-)
working	0.63** (0.12)	0.56 (0.27)	0.57** (0.16)	0.75 (0.35)	0.56** (0.16)	1.00 (0.45)
<i>Ties and Resources in Germany and Turkey</i>						
Children in household			0.92 (0.20)	0.46 (0.22)	0.92 (0.20)	0.49 (0.24)
Visits from/visiting Germans			1.06 (0.21)	0.81 (0.28)	1.06 (0.21)	0.75 (0.26)
Good German-language skills			0.79 (0.13)	0.72 (0.19)	0.84 (0.14)	0.80 (0.22)
Good Turkish-language skills			1.51** (0.30)	1.53 (0.48)	1.48** (0.29)	1.48 (0.48)
<i>Feelings and Attitudes about Germany and Turkey</i>						
Identifies with Germany					0.55 (0.42)	1.21 (0.64)
Identifies with Turkey					1.50 (0.41)	2.38* (1.09)
Number of persons' years	13.376	4.419	11.646	3.707	11.646	3.565
Number of persons	1.444	685	1.244	623	1.244	576
Pseudo R ²	0.05	0.06	0.11	0.32	0.12	0.35

Notes: Controlling for time in risk period, years since migration, missing dummies, *** p<.001; ** p<.05; * p<.10