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Using an integrated qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews with 32 second-generation Turkish parents in Germany, this study examines the parental concerns formed by assessing the value of children, which, in turn, influence return migration intentions. This study proposes that parents develop three main concerns in an attempt to maximize the value of their children: (1) socioeconomic, (2) assimilation, and (3) marriage concerns. Return migration intention itself turns into a parental investment by designating the home country as the final destination where these concerns can be resolved, and thus their children may reach their full potential for themselves and their families. This study suggests that in the context of migrant families, the value of children can be a potential predictor of return migration since it is subject to changes during the life course in response to the cultural, social, and economic contexts of the host and home countries.

KEYWORDS: Germany; life course; national contexts; return migration; Turkish migrants; value of children.

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the ways in which parental concerns, based on the assessment of the value of children, shape the return migration considerations of the second-generation Turkish parents residing in Germany. Parental concern is defined as matters of particular interest, importance, or consequence to parents regarding their children (Niska et al. 1997). Value of children refers to the balance between the social and economic costs and benefits that parents obtain from having children (Kagitçibasi and Esmer 1980). The ultimate objective of this study is to establish a link between return migration and the value of children.

This study is predicated on the premise of the human capital approach that people base their relocation decisions on the likelihood of success at the destination and hence, a broader cost–benefit calculus (Sjaastad 1962). The focal argument of this approach and its microeconomic extensions (Stark 1991; Todaro 1969) views return migration as a human capital investment in the same way that migration is, contingent on the country where greater benefits and lower costs are envisioned and where individuals reach their full potential. In the light of the transnational paradigm (Glick Schiller et al. 1992), addressing how costs and benefits are calculated places the emphasis on the transnational identities and engagements of individuals, instead

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of exclusively characterizing them as economically motivated actors. The second pillar of this study is constructed from the value of children approach, for which the value placed on children is assessed by weighing the social and economic costs and benefits of having children for parents (Hoffman and Hoffman 1973; Kagitçibasi and Esmer 1980). Combining and expanding upon these two theoretical constructs, for both of which cost–benefit reasoning is applied, this study proposes that should the balance of benefits and costs deriving from the value of children yield more advantages in the home country, parental concerns will emerge as a strategic tool to maximize the children's value and, thus, initiate return movements.

Second-generation Turkish parents in Germany provide a notable case for this kind of examination for at least three reasons. First, there is relative consensus that a traditional Turkish family is more likely to exhibit a collectivistic culture of relatedness, embeddedness, and emotional interdependence (Phalet and Schönpflug 2001). Accordingly, family members show strong attachment to one another, and ties between parents and children are extremely close (Ataca 2009). Here it must be noted that homeland culture and diaspora culture may differ, the latter may emerge with distinct patterns, and dissimilation may occur. However, among Turkish migrants, the patterns in Western Europe largely reflect the origin culture to a substantial degree (Guveli et al. 2016). Second, despite exposure to more liberal and egalitarian values and personal autonomy, the traditional family model persists in Turkish migrant households in Western Europe (Phalet and Güngör 2009). In this regard, how children's values attributed by their parents may affect return considerations is an intriguing and timely question for a group whose family values prioritize close-knit ties. Furthermore, as more children of second-generation Turks have reached marriageable age in Western Europe (Van Pottelberge et al. 2021), studying second-generation parents could shed light on the familial dynamics in which parental involvement in children's marriage choices is particularly high (van Zantvliet et al. 2014). Third, Turkish migration to Germany represents one of the most prolonged and largest international flows in the last century (King and Kılınç 2014). The continuity of this flow through family reunification and transnational marriage has yielded a large Turkish population in Germany. Not only has the first flow of Turkish guestworkers resided in Germany for over six decades, thus producing multiple generations, but their distinct cultural orientations, widely perceived as incompatible with European values, also make this case noteworthy.

The influence of children's future welfare on return migration has been extensively studied in the context of different countries (Djajić 2008; Dustmann 2003; Vlase 2013) with two important gaps. First, research in this field primarily focuses on first-generation migrants. Second-generation parents, meanwhile, represent an understudied area. Second, to my knowledge, no study focuses exclusively and systematically on the variations and distinct factors comprising parental concerns that initiate return migration. The common response in the literature is that parents may wish to return to their country of origin where their children can realize their full socioeconomic potential. Even if this perspective appears plausible and is grounded in empirical evidence, this study explores another possibility: Parental concerns may form a more complicated portrait and may be developed based upon some addi-

tional factors through which parents assess their children's value in a more holistic way.

Drawing on 32 semi-structured interviews with second-generation Turkish parents, this study proposes that developing (1) *socioeconomic*, (2) *assimilation*, and (3) *marriage concerns* about children represents both the detection of a decline in the value of children and an attempt to increase it to facilitate the return. Considering that parents initiate a return movement for their children, even if their expectations might be in conflict with the realities of the contemporary world, their demands and aspirations should be satisfied; otherwise, they would engage in a "failed" return. Hence, each parental concern has its own aim to be fulfilled, and each parental concern comes with an associated strategy and outcome to achieve. Return migration constitutes a future investment decision whereby parents forecast that the home country is the final destination where children are expected to reach their full potential for themselves and for their families. Parents devote substantial material and non-material resources to their children to promote the best possible outcomes for their welfare and their own aspirations. Thus, return migration is one of the last resources parents intend to utilize in this context.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Return Migration and Second Generation

Return migration is typically viewed as another form of migration, and therefore, the existing literature explains it through the lens of international migration theories (Diehl and Liebau 2015). The neoclassical economics model explains return migration as a cost–benefit decision or unfulfilled income expectations (Todaro 1969). This theoretical framework considers return a "failure" due to miscalculation and inability to benefit from migration (de Haas and Fokkema 2011). In contrast, the new economics of labor migration model frames return migration as the logical result of a calculated household strategy in which there is no further reason to stay in the host country when enough financial and human capital are acquired (Stark 1991). Evidence shows that macro-and micro-economic factors play a role in return migration. Economic difficulties in Germany arise as a factor motivating both return migration and return consideration (Fokkema 2011; Kuhlenkasper and Steinhardt 2017). Moreover, the improvement of the Turkish economy and the increased quality of social reforms are presented as a catalyst of return (Kunuroglu et al. 2018).

The exclusive emphasis on economic factors in these approaches, however, may undervalue the social factors that drive diaspora consciousness and transnational ties. In response to the shortcomings of economic approaches, the transnational paradigm—bridging identities and connections with the home country—offers a lens to acknowledge that return migration and transnationalism are intrinsically interlinked (Bilgili 2022). A plethora of studies show that strong transnational ties are the contributing factor facilitating and enabling return (Carling and Pettersen 2014; de Haas and Fokkema 2011; Diehl and Liebau 2015). Concerning the second generation, the question at hand is the establishment and maintenance of transnational ties

with and belonging to a country in which they were not even born. Within this context, imaginary as a major source of transcending both physical and socio-cultural distance, may guide a type of collective nostalgia and promote a collective valuation of authenticity (Osbaldiston 2012; Salazar 2011). Formed in a complex cultural and social intermingling between and with the co-presence of "here" and "there," imaginary leads to a diasporic consciousness that emerges as a means of blocking assimilation and constructing ethnic identity (Cohen 1997). Studies corroborate this assertion: Younger Turks in Germany have intensified their group boundaries in the face of educational and labor market barriers, as well as discrimination (Çelik 2018; Skrobanek 2009), which strengthens their transnational character to reaffirm their group identity (Portes 1999). Reactive ethnicity—the process of identity consolidation in response to discrimination—is activated through diasporic consciousness and transnational ties, manifesting as an underlying mechanism of return intention, a finding observed primarily in subsequent generations (Tezcan 2019). Therefore, return intention may not be treated as independent of transnational ties; rather, it is the result of a decision-making process that unfolds over time as the various benefits of migration gradually fade and an identity consolidation process takes place.

Migration has often been conceived as a one-way movement, leaving little space for the discussion of return migration (de Haas and Fokkema 2011). The magnitude and diversity of return migration across time and space present a number of theoretical and empirical challenges. Among these challenges, operationalizing "generation" and "return migration of the second-generation" are arguably two of the most significant. Generation, a recurrent concept in sociology, has multiple meanings, including kinship descent, cohorts, age groups, or historical periods (Kertzer 1983). Migration studies have traditionally employed the term "generation" to denote the kinship lineage, in which household members are nested within families, to quantify their assimilation process (King and Christou 2008). In its strict definition, second generation refers to those who were born in the host country to parents born abroad (Wessendorf 2007). However, what if their parents, who share the same generational position, had different settlement experiences, such as settlement through the guest-worker agreement or family unification? Or, is "children of the second-generation" still conceptually valid when those who were born in the host country bring a partner from their home country or marry someone with a different generational status? These are the open questions on which no broad consensus has been reached, and which remain controversial.

Although the term "second-generation migrant" has been widely used in the existing literature, the extent to which being born in a host society to migrant parents makes a person a "migrant" and their "return" a "return migration" is no less controversial. On the one hand, return migration is defined as the movement of migrants back to their country of origin to permanently resettle (Gmelch 1980). Second-generation migration, on the other hand, refers to children of migrants who return to their family's country of origin in search of a strong sense of identity and belonging (Reynolds 2008). Moving to the ancestral homeland may constitute a "new migration in its own terms"; however, for the second generation, this movement may be reminiscent of a "return" at an ontological level (Kılınç 2022).

The migration of the second generation to the homeland of their parents has been described as "roots migrants" (Wessendorf 2007) or "counter-diasporic migration" (King and Christou 2010). In the face of this terminological diversity, King and Christou (2011) argue that when migrants believe that they return to a "homeland" to which they feel emotionally and historically connected, the ontology is what counts more than the statistical measurement of return. In line with previous research that focused on the return migration of second-generation Turks in Germany (King and Kılınç 2014) and in Western Europe (Fokkema 2011; Kunuroglu et al. 2016), this study also adopts the terms "second generation" and "return." In part, this is also because many participants of this study identified as "second generation" and expressed a sense of "going home" to the land of their family roots.

The Value of Children and the Return Question

A key aspect of parenting involves assisting children with developing the skills they need to function adaptively. In turn, the hopes, expectations, and aspirations of parents for their children motivate the continuation and quality of childrearing practices. What parents aspire for their children is not inherently independent of the cultural norms in which they are embedded, as well as their cultural and socioeconomic surroundings. It is the cultural frames in which the content and the intensity of parental aspirations, expectations, and values are (re)shaped and (re)expressed (Klaus et al. 2005). Within the parent–child relationship context, value is defined as a process in which the valuator assesses and contingently reconstructs the importance of the valued, driven by the valuator's position in society and norms defining worth (Gu 2022). Simply put, a value is the outcome of the entire process of assigning a quality to behavior, people, and events (Heinich 2020). Understanding how children are valued is essential to understanding parenting goals and expectations for children, intergenerational relationships, and modifications to these relationships in a changing socio-cultural and economic environment (Kagitcibasi and Ataca 2015). Perhaps more importantly, the value migrant parents place on their children and the concerns about the children's future constitute the driving force behind return considerations (Dustmann 2003).

The concept of value of children has been intensively used in cross-cultural research to explain fertility behaviors, family-size preferences, and childrearing patterns (Fawcett 1983; Hoffman 1987; Hoffman and Hoffman 1973; Kagitcibasi and Ataca 2005, 2015; Nauck 1989). Value of children, referring to the functions children serve or the needs they fulfill for parents, was initially theorized to reveal fertility motivations and to predict family-size decisions (Hoffman and Hoffman 1973). In an attempt to understand the association between the fertility decision and the economic value attributed to children, previous research has focused primarily on the tradeoff between marginal sacrifices and satisfactions, and between the quantity and quality of children in determining the value of children (Schultz 1973). In this theoretical framework, families invest time and money in their children, who, in turn, serve as instruments to satisfy parental needs (Fawcett 1983), such as love, fun, stimulation, distraction, and economic security (Hoffman and Hoffman 1973). Thus, the

value of children, as a central mediator variable at the individual level, is an implicit decision-making model that perceives benefits minus costs as determining reproductive behaviors (Nauck 1989).

Due to the transformations in society and in socio-cultural contexts, the value of children approach has also been subject to variation and therefore revisited (Trommsdorff and Nauck 2005). One of the most striking consequences of modernization and industrialization is a decline in the economic value of children as a result of the reduced demand for agricultural labor and the increased demand for better education (Bongaarts and Watkins 1996). As the direct economic value of children has been decreasing, the value of children approach has paved the way to explain the parental motivations underlying childbearing, parenting styles, family ties, and intergenerational relationships (Kagitcibasi and Ataca 2005, 2015; Nauck 1989). For example, in developed societies where family relationships are characterized by independence and children do not have a substantial role in contributing to the parental household or in providing elder care (Nauck and Klaus 2007), value of children has been implemented to display how children become intermediate goods by providing esteem, comfort, and stimulation and affect in their parents' social production function (Nauck 2007). The trajectory from being useful laborers to being economically worthless but emotionally priceless is described as the "sacralization" of children, a cultural process whereby children are invested in as emotional and moral assets (Zelizer 1985).

In the parenting context of Turkey, in which family interdependence is particularly strong, the revisited lens on the value of children has centered on three distinct types of expected benefits from children: (1) economic/utilitarian, (2) psychological, and (3) social/traditional (Kagitçibasi and Esmer 1980). Economic/utilitarian values involve children's potential material benefits while they are young as well as their ability to provide old-age security as adults. Psychological values include companionship, pride, and the sense of accomplishment that result from having children, which also strengthens emotional group ties. Finally, social/traditional values refer to the social acceptance that having children brings to parents and to the continuation of the family. In a sense, children are the expansion of the self and an expression of "immortality" for the family and the family's name, as well as helping to perpetuate one's group (Hoffman and Hoffman 1973; Hoffman and Manis 1979).

Migration occurs as a response to widespread factors in both home and host countries, and with various purposes. However, if the costs of staying are higher than the benefits of returning, migrants are expected to return to their home countries (de Haas and Fokkema 2011). These "benefits" may not be reduced to the current economic situation alone; migrants may also consider the long-term benefits when reevaluating their life circumstances, especially if they have children. That is to say, return intentions may not only be influenced by the life course of the individual migrant, but also by familial motives, which develop in conjunction with concerns regarding the welfare of the offspring (Dustmann 2003). If the migrant parents are concerned that the social and economic costs of staying outweigh the benefits, returning to the origin country may appear to be a more viable option. This entails determining where the children will be more valuable to the parents and themselves. As such, recent research indicates that second-generation Turks in Germany are

more likely to return to Turkey for their children to prevent them from facing the same social and economic barriers they did (Kunuroglu et al. 2016).

Parental Concerns About the Value of Children Initiating the Return Movement

Socioeconomic Concerns: A number of studies have demonstrated that the existence of children in the host country reduces the likelihood of return (Nekby 2006; Tezcan 2018b; Uebelmesser 2006). For migrant parents, future prospects regarding how and where their children should be raised affect settlement plans. Should children's career prospects be perceived as better in the host economy, the parents may choose to stay; if the home country's economy provides more opportunities for children, they may opt to return (Dustmann 2003; King 1978). Migrant parents may also postpone return plans until their children have graduated (Djajić 2008). To this extent, considerations and concerns about children's future emerge as strong determinants of staying in the host country, as migrant families make altruistic sacrifices for their children's well-being by postponing their return (Ganga 2006). For Turks in Germany, this sacrifice may come in the form of intentions to return to prevent their children from experiencing the ethnic penalties that second-generation Turks have faced, which directly affect socioeconomic outcomes (Kunuroglu et al. 2016). Moreover, qualitative research reveals that the majority of Turkish parents in Germany consider the Turkish education system to be superior to the German system (Kunuroglu et al. 2018). Parents may perceive returning as a strategy for their children to achieve social mobility.

Even though parents are not necessarily opposed to their children becoming socially similar to those around them in Germany, as this can reflect upward mobility, they are selective about which aspects of the host culture they would like their children to adopt, "not by abandoning, but modifying original patterns" (Baykara-Krumme 2015:1331). While instilling their own ethnic heritage, parents also desire the best outcomes that the host country has to offer for their children (Gang and Zimmermann 2000). In this sense, some Turkish migrant parents want their children to become more fluent in the German language as it is valued in Turkey's labor market (Kunuroglu et al. 2018). In the same way that the majority of second-generation returnees work in occupations directly related to the German language, such as tourism bureaus, translation offices, and airline companies (Kılınç 2014), parents may project a future in which their children use their German language skills to elevate their socioeconomic standing. For a Turkish family that detects a decline in the value of children in Germany, returning may appear as a strategy to increase their children's economic independence and, accordingly, their economic contributions to the household in Turkey and to eliminate the possibility of their children being a burden.

Assimilation Concerns: Undoubtedly, one of the challenges that migrant parents face in the host country is raising children in line with their heritage culture. Nevertheless, a high level of value discrepancies, as a result of the acculturation gap, complicates the cultural transmission process (Phalet and Schönpflug 2001). There is a body of evidence that a considerable acculturation gap exists between the first- and

the second-generation Turks in Germany (Diehl and Schnell 2006), even if the latter hold a substantial volume of heritage cultural values (Diehl et al. 2009). However, because of dissonant acculturation, with these generations learning the ways of the host society at different paces (Portes 1997), the value discrepancies in migrant families increase over time (Phinney et al. 2000). Growing up in Germany, Turkish children move through a variety of social institutions with less influence from their heritage culture. They attend German schools, work in German jobs, interact with the out-group, and are socialized within German culture. Although most parents socialize their children into their heritage culture through religion, norms, and traditions in their families and communities, the extent of their children's assimilation constitutes an important parental concern.

Considering the pattern of minority groups seeking social approval from the majority group while distancing themselves from their own ethnic group to avoid discrimination (Birman and Trickett 2001), some parents may be concerned that their children will become socially indistinguishable members of German society if no precautions are adopted to ensure cultural transmission. In the context of second-generation Turkish parents, returning to Turkey while children are still young and dependent, prior to their full socialization in the German environment, seems a reasonable strategy to manage children's undesirable levels of assimilation (Kunuroglu et al. 2018). Instilling the heritage culture, preserving cultural continuity across generations, and preparing children for their new life in Turkey appear to necessitate frequent visits to the home country for "cultural training" (Tezcan 2019).

The value of children approach suggests that children are fundamentally an expansion of self, a tie to a larger entity, and a way to immortalize one's name (Hoffman and Hoffman 1973). That is, having children is a way of living beyond one's own life span and being represented in the following generation, and serves as a vehicle for the continuity of collective social identity (Arnold et al. 1981). Children's undesirable level of assimilation, however, complicates the process of intergenerational cultural transmission and the maintenance of group norms. In addition, once the way in which children acquire and adapt to host culture values threatens family cohesion and invalidates parental goals, migrant parents and their children become increasingly alienated from each other as a result of acculturation gap-distress (Baolian Qin 2006).

Marriage Concerns: Another concern that has prompted parents to consider returning is their children's "undesirable" marital choices, given that ethnic identification weakens over the generations (Hochman et al. 2018). This concern stems from the possibility of intermarriage, lack of proper Turkish spouse candidates in Germany, and problems associated with importing spouses from Turkey.

Two contrasting perspectives concerning the children of second-generation Turks' future marriage preferences may be suggested. First, the assimilation perspective proposes weakened ethnic attachment and increased contacts with partners from the out-group, resulting in a higher rate of intermarriage (Gordon 1964). Second, the "ethnic revival" perspective, denoting a return to the cultural traditions of the ancestral culture with the persistence of ethnic boundaries, may indicate that children of second generation would marry spouses with the same ethnic background

(Gans 1979). The low rate of intermarriage among Germany's younger Turks is regarded as an indicator of a movement "back to the Turkish roots" (Mueller 2007:432).

Historically and contemporarily, Turkish migrant parents have often taken an active role in partner selection for their children (De Valk and Liefbroer 2007; Hense and Schorch 2013). The most common ways are to choose a partner residing in Germany or to "import" a partner from Turkey (Timmerman et al. 2009), and such parental control over marriage has several motivations. First, marrying a partner from the in-group ensures the cultural continuity and preservation of group identity across generations, and also maintains descent-related intergenerational solidarity (Kalmijn 1998). Second, co-ethnic marriages are clear attempts to prevent couples from divorces that may potentially happen due to the cultural gaps of two parties (Schmidt 2011). Last but not least, when parents consider that potential Turkish spouse candidates who were raised in the same host country seem less likely to embrace traditional familial roles, transnational arranged marriages by importing a spouse from Turkey appear as a strategic decision (Timmerman 2006).

On the one hand, intermarriage of children seems the least desirable option for most Turkish migrant parents, being largely perceived as a betrayal of community and family values. On the other hand, co-ethnic marriages are not problem free. First, co-ethnic spouse candidates living in the same host country are often not considered proper. Research conducted in Belgium found that there is a bad reputation for young Turks among the Turkish community; Turkish boys have "gone astray" and Turkish girls are "too liberated" (Timmerman et al. 2009), which may make parents question this option. Related to the spouse candidates' undesirable features, their family members' respectability and cultural compatibility also become suspicious (Hense and Schorch 2013). Therefore, on behalf of their children, migrant parents may prefer a non-migrant spouse from Turkey to be imported, assumed to be "better behaved" and "more traditional" (Timmerman 2006).

Transnational arranged marriages also have certain risks. Husbands imported from the origin country may exploit marriage migration to obtain a residence permit and ignore their marital obligations (Charsley 2005). Moreover, at least initially, they are not able to play the expected breadwinner role due to not knowing the language and not having enough qualifications for employment in the new environment (Van Kerckem et al. 2013). Imported brides are also unfamiliar with the host country, have a lack of host language proficiency, and become totally dependent on their husbands and in-laws, which may lead to physical or psychological violence (Timmerman 2006). Given these considerations, no marriage type or spouse selection seems risk free in Germany; hence, parents would opt to return to Turkey permanently while taking their children's future marriages into account. The return movement is especially important and timely while the children are still young and dependent, able to be guided with less effort.

Children's marriage types may potentially affect parents' future eldercare arrangements. Informal eldercare received from children is largely taken for granted in Turkish culture (Schans and Komter 2010), whereas nursing homes are culturally less acceptable for elderly Turkish migrants (van den Brink 2003). Several studies have reported the spouses of children to be actively involved in the provision of

informal eldercare (Henz 2009; Szinovacz and Davey 2008). In addition, the quality of the relationship between children-in-law and parents-in-law determines the level of care and assistance (Peters-Davis et al. 1999). From the perspective of the value of children approach, children are the source of reliable support mechanisms for old-age security (Oliveira 2016). Co-ethnic marriages ensure the maintenance of familial ties and shared values and norms, which facilitate harmonious communication; thus, co-ethnic marriages appear to be the least risky option in light of parents' future eldercare expectations.

METHOD AND DATA

The data for this study were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted between April and June 2018 with 32 second-generation Turks living in Germany and considering returning to Turkey for their children.[2] The participants were recruited through a Facebook group[3] that is used to exchange information on and legal issues prior to return migration among more than 97,000 migrant Turks. The group members send private messages to the group administrator, who then posts those messages anonymously to allow other group members to comment on them. These comments typically aim to answer the question while sharing the commenter's own experiences and future prospects regarding return migration. I examined the comments posted in the last 6 months before the interview phase and contacted 182 Turks in Germany who specifically presented their return intentions based on parental concerns. The participants were told that the study examined the connection between return migration and the future prospects of their children.

Three criteria were used for the selection of participants. First, the participants must have been born and living in Germany. Second, they must have had at least one child who was also born in Germany. Third, their primary reason for returning to Turkey must have been centered around their children. Of the 182 potential cases, 122 individuals responded to my interview invitation, and due to the strictly defined sample, only 32 were eligible. Most of the interviews were conducted via cell phone ($n = 24$), but some preferred video calls ($n = 8$), with interviews lasting 1–3 hours (the average length was 1 hour and 20 minutes).

The sample includes 13 females and 19 males ranging in age from 33 to 45. All participants held dual citizenship, and with the exception of four divorcees, all were married. The educational attainment of the sample was low, as there were only two college graduates. Of the 13 female participants, 10 were housewives and the rest were employed in service sector jobs; of the 19 male participants, two were unemployed, three were store owners, and the rest were employed in blue-collar jobs. The average number of children per participant was 3.20, ranging from one to five.

This study was carried out using semi-structured interviews and an integrated qualitative approach that incorporates both the principles of deductive coding structure and inductive reasoning in analyzing the data (Bradley et al. 2007). The deduc-

[2] This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Florida (#201602105).
[3] https://www.facebook.com/GurbettenAvrupaDanTurkiyeYeKesinDonus/ (Permanent return to Turkey from abroad and Europe).

tive approach assumes a certain amount of knowledge in the literature to be present in the data (Thomas 2006). This step was used to generate the framework, often referred to as a start list, consisting of the initial codes in line with previous research (Miles et al. 2014) and to develop clusters of data (Azungah 2018). Using 91 initial codes derived from the posted comments and previous research, interview topics were generated. After collecting demographic information, the interviews continued with (1) education and employment history, (2) financial protection (savings in money and investments in both Germany and Turkey), (3) general attitudes toward Germany and Turkey as well as people in both countries, (4) transnational connections with Turkey, (5) perceptions on assimilation, discrimination, gender roles, religion, intermarriage, and eldercare, (6) current and future evaluation of their children's socioeconomic and educational success compared with Turkish ones in Turkey and Germany, and native children, and (7) future prospects of their children. The total number of initial codes reached 102 after the interviews.

To capture all pertinent aspects of the data, an inductive analysis was conducted following the interview phase. The inductive approach requires "subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh and Shannon 2005:1278). The inductive approach allowed the classification of 102 initial codes into 13 axial codes, and axial codes into three theoretically distinct selective codes (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, then analyzed in NVIVO 12.0 software.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic Concerns

The findings indicate that parents have substantial socioeconomic concerns about their children's future in Germany pertaining to the ethnic penalties that limit their access to education and employment opportunities. Some stressed the children's low educational performance, some shared deep worries and concerns about future employment, and some referred to both. In doing so, with few exceptions, the participants compared their children to other Turks in Germany instead of native or other migrant peers. From time to time, this comparison was accompanied by some examples from their own youth echoing ethnic penalties, as the following quote illustrates.[4]

> I am really concerned with the kids' future. Germany's system doesn't allow us to get ahead. You know the song, "You're a worker, remain a worker." My neighborhood is full of Turks. Why don't I know a single Turk who becomes successful? I was really good in school, no teacher assisted or encouraged me, and one of them even blamed me, that I cheated on exams. I was assigned to a special needs school with disabled children, and we're all working in the factories here today. I don't want my kids to work under a cruel boss [. . .] They can adapt to Turkish schools and be successful. (Father of 13F*, 11M*, age 33)

[4] The number–letter combinations show the age and gender of the participants' children. Children directly mentioned in subsequent quotations are marked with an asterisk.

Education is of key importance for the successful integration and social mobility of migrants and their descendants (Gang and Zimmermann 2000). In general, most of the participants, who were schooled in Germany themselves, believe that the German school system has been designed to discriminate particularly against Turkish children to show them their proper place in the social hierarchy. Hence, for these parents, staying in Germany would mean condemning their children to a lower social class. This was stated by many participants, such as in the following case:

> In seventh grade, there were ten foreigners in the class. I remember German kids didn't talk to us that much. My father changed his job, and we moved somewhere else at that time. In the eighth grade, all my peers in the class were German. They were all mocking my name. I talked to the teacher, she changed my seat to the farthest back, rather than warning those bullies. I never forget such things. My kids witness such humiliating treatments, too. Integration, equality, these are all lies. Another day, the youngest one asked me, "Mom, am I stupid?" while she was doing homework. She has no confidence anymore because of her teachers. (Mother of 15M, 13M, 9F*, age 39)

When the children of guestworkers, the second generation, were schooled, the general impression was that they were not as serious and competent as their native German peers, performed more poorly, and tended to leave school earlier (Gang and Zimmermann 2000; Worbs 2006). Although ethnic disparities in education were thought to be gradually eliminated over time, they do still persist, particularly for Turkish children, as most of the participants highlighted. Considering that labor market success depends on educational attainment and that the participants are suspicious of the German education system, which is thought to contribute to ethnic penalties, the only feasible option appears to them to be return migration. While return migration is intended to increase the children's value in socioeconomic terms, this potential movement cannot be seen as solely altruistic. In fact, parents want to ensure that their children will be economically independent, unlike many subsequent generations of Turks they personally know, as expressed by the following participant:

> Europe has come to an end. Turks can't save money anymore. If we stay a little bit longer, I'm afraid I'll lose my kids. Just go out and wander around in [a German city]. Turkish youth are on the streets, doing nothing, no job, no school. These idlers take money from their parents and spend it on smoking, alcohol, gambling, and even drugs [. . .] These kids are not successful with anything, I'm ashamed by this lost generation. If you have a decent life, you shouldn't be a burden on anyone, even on your family [. . .] My kids speak German outside the home. Their German is superb, but we only speak Turkish at home. We only watch Turkish TV at home. Why? We want our children to learn Turkish well. And after returning, they will watch German TV. If they become proficient in both German and Turkish, they can work wherever they want when they grow up. (Father of 12M*, 10F*, age 40)

For some parents, staying in Germany would circumscribe their children's capacity to achieve economic independence. Furthermore, children would become an economic burden on the household. Staying in Germany would also mean confining children to a lower social class, by both objective measures and public attitudes. However, parents designate strategies to maintain the proficiency level of their children's German language after the return: Parents do not want their children to forget German upon their return to Turkey, as the language provides greater employment

opportunities (Kılınç 2014). Families who only watch Turkish television in Germany consider making their children watch German television in Turkey.

Parental concerns about children's socioeconomic status in Germany have been transformed into a return migration intention to prepare a better future for children in Turkey. In most interviews, it was notable that the socioeconomic value of children was equalized to the economic independence of the children instead of direct economic contributions from children to parents: The "return project" may aim to boost their children's economic independence once they are employed or to eliminate the possibility of their children being a burden on the household economy. It is also worth adding that, for some parents, preventing children from being a burden on the family economy is less of an economic concern; rather, the concern here is to prevent any possible stains on the family's reputation.

Assimilation Concerns

Besides the socioeconomic barriers that their children face—and would face in the near future—second-generation Turkish parents also worry about the loss of heritage culture and values that children experience through assimilation. In this case, transmitting the heritage culture to successive generations seems to be motivated not only by the desire to preserve the origin culture and socialize the children within it. Rather, it relies heavily on a pragmatic selectivity through which children should adapt to both home and host countries simultaneously and at a similar pace, despite the various complexities added to children's upbringings by demanding them to live between and within two cultures. Due to the discrepancy between the heritage culture instilled at home and the social environment to which children are exposed outside the home, the inability to pass down traditional values to their children constitutes a major concern for parents (Phalet and Schönpflug 2001).

Most parents felt unprepared for the challenges of raising children with exclusively host culture values, norms, and behavioral patterns because their parenting style and orientation would not fully address the needs of their children. Thus, from the parental perspective, social similarity with German peers requires a careful calculation of costs and benefits. On the one hand, children would be functional and aspiring members of the host society. On the other hand, what children are being transformed into should not threaten the family's cohesion and cultural continuity. In line with this insight, a study revealed that Korean-American parents expressed concerns about the prospect of their children growing up as a racial and cultural minority, along with identity confusion and cultural conflict (Choi and Kim 2010). During the interviews, one prominent concern regarding the assimilation process and directly shaping children's value from the perspective of parents emerged: The possibility and/or the existence of substance use, a characteristic that participants commonly attributed to native youth. Substance use has become an alarming concern, almost an absolute indicator of assimilation and deviation from the dominant Turkish cultural norms:

> Since our kids [i.e., Turkish children] see discrimination everywhere, it's enough to smile at them to make them follow you and do whatever you want. Our kids are like, how can I say, too naïve [. . .] My nephew started seeing someone and they moved in together [in Germany]. He was such a kind and considerate boy. It only took a year for him to completely change, doing all drugs, drinking all kinds of stuff, gambling, tattoos, you name it. My brother finally disowned him. We also stopped seeing him. I don't want my kids taking cues from him. (Father of 18F, 13M, 10F, 8M, age 43)

It was abundantly clear that the majority of participants viewed smoking and drinking as immoral behaviors that would eventually damage the reputation of the community and bring shame and dishonor to the family. The findings signaled that the participants were generally unsatisfied with their children's assimilation level, which involves social similarity with German peers, lack of heritage cultural awareness, and substance usage, whereby parental control strategies turned out to be inefficient. Parents anticipate their children becoming indistinguishable members of the host society, which is almost held to be equivalent to "losing a child." Children are the expansion of the self; transmitting culture and beliefs to be reflected in another who will live longer means attaining a kind of immortality (Hoffman and Hoffman 1973). Since children carry on family names and establish a link between generations, it is essential that cultural continuity be maintained to anchor the self beyond one's own lifetime (Hoffman et al. 1978). In a highly collectivistic culture, assimilation is a major threat to the expansion of self. The more the characteristics of the self are altered in the following generation, the less valuable children become.

Assimilation concerns are set on a two-way road where parents undergo extensive negotiation processes with their children; protecting them from undesirable consequences of mainstream exposure is one critical task, while preparing them for a new country is another. Consequently, most participants visit Turkey as a family at least once a year. Although the most commonly stated reason for these visits was a longing for the homeland, underlying reasons included allowing their children to learn more about Turkey, preparing children for their potential futures, making them more "Turkish," and ensuring their approval of return. In this sense, visiting Turkey becomes an anti-assimilationist trip for children. The following participant described how she mentally prepares her children for Turkey:

> I try to take my children to Turkey once a year. I always talk about Turkey, saying we did this and we did that in Istanbul. I tell them about the beauties of our homeland. We talk about Turkey continuously. (Mother of 20F*, 18F*, 13F*, 7M*, age 44)

The purpose of visits to the home country is to create a training ground for children in anticipation of their potential future in Turkey. Parents try to depict an image of Turkey as a place of holidays. They seem aware that the more attractively they portray this imaginary country, the more likely children will want to go there and the easier it will be for the entire family to return. The most effective method of reinforcing the intention to return to Turkey is to recall the family's pleasant vacation memories. The children, however, will realize that this whole process was merely a "game" when they permanently settle in Turkey. Still, parents seem to be insistent about using this "innocent con" until they return to Turkey:

> My children want to go back to Turkey now. Why? Because they only see it in summer. The sea, the sand. Thus, the sooner, the better. The younger the children are, the easier it will be for them to adapt to living in Turkey. My children are German citizens, but I always said this: We are guests here. If you want to come back one day, you can. You have your citizenship. They all say, "No, dad, we'll come with you. We want to live there too." I have always said the same things to myself. My dad came here for work, we're guests here. When the time comes, we'll go back … There are some families who speak German with their children. What happens then? They grow up with German culture. How can you familiarize these children with Turkey then? (Father of 9M*, 6F*, 2F*, age 35)

Most parents believe that the older their children get, the more they will embrace German culture and the more difficult it will be for them to adapt to Turkey. Because of this, the ideal time to return is not only before their children become more assimilated, but also while children are young enough that their demands can be easily dismissed by families. Leaving Germany while children are still young and dependent and before they are fully assimilated is the major prerequisite for returning. Currently, children are not entities to be proud of due to their distance from the culture of origin. Visiting Turkey on a regular basis may be understood as a practice that centers on children, who are the main reason why the second-generation constructs intense transnational ties with the home country. The visits to Turkey are seen as an opportunity to instill the heritage culture and to contemplate future marriages, as described in the following subsection.

Marriage Concerns

In traditional Turkish culture, marriage is a way of perpetuating family cohesion; thus, much value is attached to marriage (De Valk and Liefbroer 2007). In a context where society is traditionally patrilineal, family cohesion and the preservation of group identity can be maintained when family members are homogeneous in terms of similarity in backgrounds and shared values. Accordingly, intermarriage would damage the values attributed to children for carrying on the family line (Hoffman and Manis 1979).

The interviews highlighted that the dating practices of children of the second generation outside of the Turkish community are of major concern and a common source of tension. This is generally due to parents' negative attitudes toward dating outside of one's own group for reasons of cultural incompatibility; for some, it is a fear that dating may be the first step of more committed relationships, cohabitation, and intermarriage. Intermarriage is equalized to discontinuity of cultural transmission across generations; consequently, subsequent generations would not pursue the same cultural values.

Children's dates are subject to a somewhat nebulous parental approval procedure in which parents wish to have the final word. Parental involvement is not only relevant for dating; children are also expected to comply with the same approval process during the selection of a spouse (Wachter and de Valk 2020). The efficacy of parental involvement is also strengthened by some "bad apples" who prefer out-of-culture union practices in Germany, and parents try to keep their children from witnessing such behaviors and possibly being affected by them. One participant explained:

> My husband has a cousin [in a German city] who is living with his girlfriend. What on earth, they still don't want to marry. It is very easy, right? No responsibility, no obligation, you can run away whenever you want. Is it really possible to explain the merits of marriage to my kids, while their relative is living with someone without marriage? In Turkey, there are kids pretty as a picture. At least they know how to behave. (Mother of 15M, 13M, 9F, age 39)

During the interviews, it was readily apparent that youth in Turkey were idealized as near-perfect candidates to become children-in-law and that there was a dearth of potential spouses in Germany. In light of the potential "dangers" of being raised in the West, the local co-ethnic community is regarded as nearly as unacceptable as the outgroup. Youth in Turkey, however, are generally praised for their modesty, religiosity, greater cultural alignment, good behavior, and family-oriented nature. Instead of importing a spouse from Turkey, the strategy that parents plan to employ is to locate a potential spouse in Turkey. In this way, transnational arranged marriages gain a new form, whereby the children of second generation are exported from Germany to Turkey (Tezcan 2021). The challenges associated with marrying a local co-ethnic spouse, importing a spouse from Turkey, intermarriage, and cohabitation constitute this particular parental concern and encourage parents to return to Turkey. Here is one parent's explanation:

> If you don't marry off your daughter, our people start gossiping. It doesn't matter whether it's true or not, as the saying goes; throw dirt enough, and some will stick. We went through the same thing not long ago. We don't want to deal with these gossips anymore, she is old enough. Upon returning it's better that she starts her own family. (Mother of 23F*, 19M, 13M, age 45)

The pattern whereby daughters experience more restrictive parental standards needs to be acknowledged. The parents of a daughter seem especially rushed for marriage due to gossip circulating within the co-ethnic community in Germany. Marriage is seen as a strategy for warding off "shame" for the family in cases of "misbehavior" of single daughters (Crul and Doomernik 2003). The participants seem to be more likely to monitor their daughters than their sons and to actively intervene in marriage stages. From the perspective of some parents, marriage is "a way of bringing children who have gone astray back on track" (Van Kerckem et al. 2013:1028). A number of participants expressed concern that they may lose control of their children if they remain in Germany much longer, while also articulating the underlying reasons why intermarriage would not work and why having their children marry in Turkey appears to be the best option, as expressed by the following participant:

> Turkish families in Europe are collapsing. Most have lost their identity [. . .] They don't even want to look after their own parents anymore. They would put them in a nursing home and forget, just like how Germans do [. . .] If my kids marry a foreigner, they will only pay attention to the words that will come from the lips of their wives for making a visit to us, let alone give us any care when we get old. (Father of 20M*, 17M*, 10F, age 44)

In traditional Turkish culture, the elderly receiving care from adult offspring is a societal norm that both parties expect to be upheld (Kagitcibasi and Ataca 2015). During most interviews, it became clear that children were expected to carry out filial duties when their parents reach older ages. Foreign children-in-law are seen as major threats to this kind of future eldercare arrangement. By transmitting their own marriage pattern to their children, parents wish to guarantee their informal future elder-

care, which would be harder with a child-in-law unwilling to engage in it. In short, intermarriage risks children's roles of providing security in their parents' old age (Kağitçibaşi 1982). At first glance, leaving the host country for children's future prospects may appear to be an altruistic sacrifice. A closer examination reveals, however, that returning to the home country requires reciprocity.

Most older Turkish immigrants in Europe (Tezcan 2018a; van den Brink 2003) and their Turkish counterparts in Turkey (Korhan et al. 2013) find institutional care to be culturally, socially, and religiously less acceptable. For example, older Turkish immigrants in Belgium rarely use professional care and care insurance, even if they contribute to these services through taxes and contributions (Draulans and De Tavernier 2020). In the absence of informal eldercare, children, particularly daughters and daughters-in-law, are at risk of social exclusion and stigmatization, which are the sanctioning mechanisms through which norm-following is enforced and social pressure to adhere to the rules is generated (De Tavernier and Draulans 2019). Return migration appears as a precaution against the possibility that parental influence on partner choice would lose its relevance and effectiveness over time and that children would enter into potentially undesirable forms of union, and accordingly, the informal eldercare expectations are not met.

A qualitative study focusing on older first-generation Turkish circular migrants, going back and forth between Germany and Turkey, reported that their second-generation children do not fulfill their traditional responsibilities to provide proper care for them (Tezcan 2018a). At this juncture, a possibility must be acknowledged that the eldercare expectations of first- and second-generation Turks may differ. Instead of imposing the eldercare standards of the first generation, second-generation parents may abandon some aspects of eldercare when receiving and negotiate the place of eldercare in their own lives as well as the lives of their children. When asked about their housing arrangements in Turkey, half of the participants reported that they own or have inherited three-or four-story buildings, of which their children will inherit one floor upon marriage. Instead of demanding that one of the children with their nuclear family moves in with their parents (Draulans and De Tavernier 2020), future eldercare negotiations may lead to building virtually distinct but essentially mixed households.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Return migration has become one of the central preoccupations of recent scholarship and has garnered substantial interest from social scientists. With such growing interest, the determinants of return migration have sparked a great deal of debate and controversy. Findings are mixed, and studies are plagued by methodological shortcomings and a lack of data. Return migration, as any relocation decision, is the outcome of an evaluation of the costs and benefits of movement, as well as the various life conditions, goals, and strategies involved; as such, it cannot be reduced to a single factor to the exclusion of all others. This study considers the value of children as a potential determinant of return migration, which second-generation parents seek to maximize by settling in their home country.

The main goal of the value of children approach is to understand and reveal the transformation in fertility behaviors and intergenerational relationship patterns stemming from the discussion of how societies modernize and the degree to which traditional and modern values compete (Kagitcibasi and Ataca 2015; Nauck and Klaus 2007). Studying children's value in migrant populations reveals a more nuanced picture, especially when the cultural traditions are strongly preserved, parenting styles and expectations diverge from the host culture, and when migrant background causes a considerable value discrepancy between parents and children. Consequently, the values attributed to and expectations from children are more likely to change at a faster pace in response to cultural and socioeconomic contexts of the host country than will be seen among counterparts in the home country. As a dynamic conceptual construct that may increase or decrease reliance on the trade-off between the costs and benefits derived from children, the value of children has emerged as a useful conceptual framework in understanding decision-making processes of return migration. In countries like Germany, host to multiple generations of migrants from different social, cultural, and religious backgrounds, the value of children for migrant parents is especially worth examining if we wish to better understand the mechanisms enabling return migration.

Different perspectives on the value of children based on cross-cultural comparisons identify the expected benefits from children that generate their value (Hoffman and Hoffman 1973; Kagitçibasi and Esmer 1980; Nauck and Klaus 2007). In an effort to establish a link between return migration and the value of children, this study took a step back and addressed how parental concerns shape and interact with these benefits. Building upon the human capital approach, the first proposition made is that parental concerns represent both the detection of a decline in children's value and an effort to increase it. Thereby, moving beyond the framing of the second-generation's return ideation as nostalgic romanticization (Wessendorf 2007), a series of carefully calculated strategies with pragmatic and practical ties to the homeland are put into action: From improving their children's German language skills after the return and frequent visits to Turkey for "cultural training" to the housing agreements for their future informal eldercare, each parental concern is utilized as a strategic tool to achieve certain outcomes derived from the children. The second proposition then enters the scene: Parents may opt to return if it leads to greater benefits for their children than staying. As a result, return migration, as a parental investment, appears to be one of the last resorts parents intend to employ for the sake of their children. A substantive novelty of this proposed framework lies in the focus on the ways in which parental concerns are used as strategic tools to increase the value of children and thus initiate return migration.

Even though the lack of survey data and the exploratory nature of this topic necessitated qualitative research, the limitations of the chosen medium to recruit and interview participants and the extreme selectivity of the sample should not go unnoticed. The sample selection criteria included not only being a second-generation parent, but also having already expressed a desire to return for their children before the interview. No comparison can therefore be drawn between generations or migrants who intend to return based on the value of their children and those who do so for other reasons. Such research would identify which additional parental concerns are

pertinent and which are less applicable. Also, the narratives included in this study came largely from participants with high levels of transnational activity and low levels of education, predominantly working in the service sector and blue-collar jobs. Thus, findings should be carefully interpreted in light of the selection bias and the lack of generalizability of the implications.

Prioritizing the future prospects of their children, second-generation parents' return considerations, which are rooted in the macrostructural conditions that govern their daily lives, are dynamic and contingent on a variety of resources and possible scenarios. Ultimately, the patterns found represent only one of the structural, cultural, and familial configurations that possibly initiate return migration. While children's value has conventionally been studied to reflect the position of the child within the family and society, revealing its potential to reconfigure return migration decisions at large is of particular significance. This study takes an important step in this direction.

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