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The Relevance of a “Culture of Migration” in Understanding Migration Aspirations in Contemporary Turkey

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ABSTRACT *This article investigates the relevance of the presence of a “culture of migration” and related migration feedback mechanisms for explaining migration aspirations. This study focuses on the districts of Dinar and Emirdağ in Turkey—which have a distinct migration history toward Europe. The question is raised whether and how migration aspirations of potential migrants change according to the presence of a “culture of migration”—living in a migration-impacted region or not. This study relies on data collected in these two regions on the basis of a representative survey and in-depth interviews collected in the context of the EUMAGINE project (2010–13). Migration aspirations in a region characterized by a “culture of migration”—Emirdağ—prove to be significantly lower than that in a similar socio-economic region, but with no “culture of migration”—Dinar. Perceptions of the economic opportunities in Europe and of the working and living conditions of immigrants in Europe are more negative in the migration-impacted region of Emirdağ than in Dinar. It is interesting to note that the population in Emirdağ has still a similar (positive) vision on the democratic and human rights capital in Europe, as the population in Dinar.*

Introduction

The usefulness of traditional migration theories—push–pull, neoclassical, structuralist and others, which view migration decisions as a more or less passive response to external factors, is increasingly being questioned.¹ As stated by de Haas, “Despite the enormous value of macro-level theories [. . .] they often lack a ‘behavioral link’ to the micro-level.”² Push–pull migration theories typically confound macro-level migration determinants with individual migration motives. “People do,” however, “not migrate ‘because of’ abstract concepts such as demographic transitions, declining fertility, ageing, population density, environmental degradation or factor productivity. People will only migrate if they perceive better opportunities elsewhere

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and have the capabilities to move.”³ De Haas therefore proposes to conceptualize migration as a function of *aspirations* and capabilities within a given set of opportunity structures.⁴ Migration aspirations refer to individuals’ view of migration as a desirable life project.⁵ They are not equal within or across societies and constant over time, and are strongly dependent on information, *perceptions* and value systems.⁶

Perceptions have become important in the context of today’s international migration, in which an increasing number of people are exposed to the idea of migrating because of the spread of mass communication and transportation possibilities and due to the rise in facilitating migration institutions such as human smugglers, international recruitment offices and marriage bureaus.⁷ These migration-related perceptions are socially and culturally constructed and informed by factors on different levels of explanation.⁸ People form their migration-related perceptions and gain information from a range of different sources that are situated at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels.⁹

At the *macro-level*, perceptions and subsequent migration aspirations are influenced by factors that are common to all potential migrants, such as national migration policies, the overall economic and political situation in the country, the mass media, and the human rights and democracy situation (see Figure 1). Perceptions and migration aspirations are also shaped by *micro-level* characteristics of individuals such as gender, age, educational attainment and labor market situation.¹⁰ Migration aspirations are finally also—indirectly through perceptions—impacted by elements located on a *meso-level* of which the role of social networks or transnational family in particular has been highlighted.¹¹ Ritchey summarizes the role of social

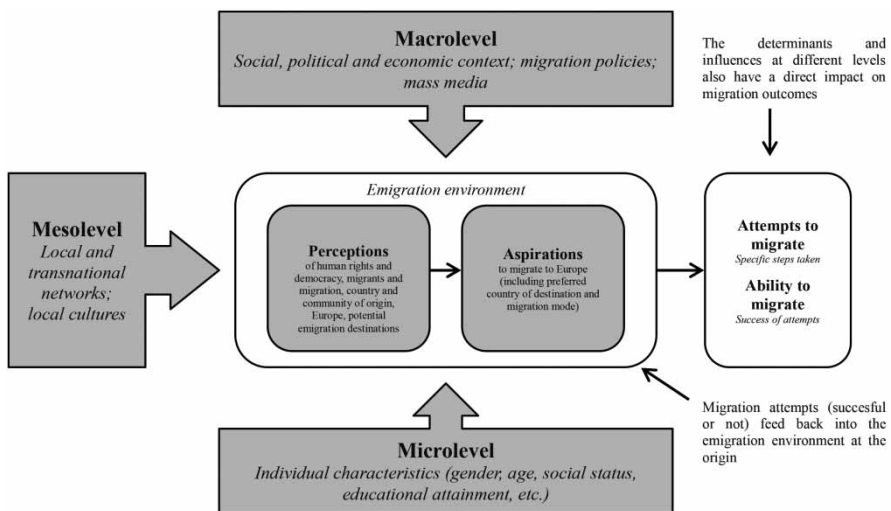


Figure 1. Eumagine Conceptual Framework.

networks in migration processes in three hypotheses: the *affinity*, the *facilitating* and the *information hypothesis*.¹² According to Haug, social networks provide a solid foundation for the dissemination of information.¹³ This holds especially true for sending communities where expanding social networks have given rise to a “culture of migration” where migration becomes deeply rooted into people’s behavioral repertoires.¹⁴ People in migrant-sending countries and household members living abroad are not unanimously positive about migration, and potential migrants tend to be passive receivers of these messages.¹⁵

This article aims to address this gap in our knowledge of contemporary international migration dynamics. This study investigates the relevance of the presence of a “culture of migration” and related feedback mechanisms—both at a meso-level—taking into account the changing macro context, for explaining migration aspirations at a micro-level. This is examined within the context of migration to Europe from a sending-country perspective. Given that relations between Europe and the world in general are changing, we expect that these shifting balances impact on people’s migration aspirations to Europe. More concretely, it is assumed that men and women (outside Europe) who have access to firsthand information on the current situation in Europe because they are living in a community largely affected by out-migration might develop different migration aspirations than those who have not. Therefore, the study investigates the significance of meso-level feedback mechanisms of international migration and how they ultimately impact on migration aspirations, at a micro-level. In other words, what is the relevance of the presence of a “culture of migration” in understanding migration patterns?

Given the significant migration flows that have been established between Turkey and Europe from the early 1960s onwards and the ongoing changing relations between Europe and Turkey in particular, contemporary Turkish migration provides a particularly interesting case study. These migration flows have traditionally been explained in terms of the *push* of the unemployment in Turkey and the *pull* of the employment opportunities in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s,¹⁶ and the subsequent family reunification or marriage migration,¹⁷ asylum migration and clandestine labor migration. Indeed, following World War II, the European migration regime was based on the demand for labor from neighboring countries. This demand was incorporated in Turkey’s development strategy in response to the ongoing unemployment and with the aim to benefit from remittances; furthermore, Turkey signed bilateral labor recruitment agreements with different European countries.¹⁸ Despite the European restrictions on regular labor migration in the mid-1970s, the population of Turkish citizens in Europe increased from the 1980s onwards through migration based on family reunification or marriage migration, asylum and clandestine migration.¹⁹ While these conditions might certainly have been important determinants of past Turkish migration patterns to Europe, they are no longer sufficient for understanding contemporary Turkish migration dynamics.

Therefore, the question is raised whether and how migration aspirations of potential Turkish emigrants change according to the presence of a “culture of migration”—living in a migration-impacted region or not—controlling for specific characteristics

of these people (such as gender and age), and/or their perception of their own country and Europe. This study relies on quantitative and qualitative data, collected within the context of the EUMAGINE project, in two regions in the Afyon province in Turkey: Emirdağ (migration-impacted region) and Dinar (region not impacted by migration). Although seemingly similar, these two regions have a distinct history of migration toward Europe. Emirdağ has already widely been studied as a region characterized by high emigration rates, while in Dinar emigration is comparatively low.²⁰

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

When exploring the traditional theories of international migration in *Worlds in Motion*, all but one theory explicitly focus on the prominent role of the context in stimulating out-migration.²¹ The Theory of Cumulative Causation argues that each act of migration changes the social context—the meso-level—within which subsequent migration decisions are made, so that additional moving is more likely to occur, a process first introduced by Myrdal and reintroduced to the field by Massey.²² The theory incorporates the impact of sociocultural community level changes on individual level motivations and behaviors.²³ As mentioned earlier, expanding migrant social networks can give rise to a “culture of migration” in the sending community where migration becomes part of people’s behavioral repertoires.²⁴ International migration, Kandel and Massey argue, is cultural in the sense that the aspiration to migrate is transmitted across generations and among people through social networks.²⁵ Timmerman, in her studies on Turkish chain migration, conceptualizes a “culture of migration” as places that are thoroughly characterized by (chain) migration.²⁶ In these places migration binds the region of origin with the region(s) of destination and in which “the family” as an institution is often capable of building a bridge between traditional praxis and the challenges linked to international migration. Within a “culture of migration,” migration is always an option that is present when people are making plans for the future. Migration becomes in a sense “a habit,” a trend in which people often participate simply because “everyone is emigrating.”²⁷ Previous studies demonstrated that prospective Turkish migrants appeared to be heading for a “mythical” destination (Europe) where all their worries would be resolved. Obstacles such as learning a foreign language, non-recognition of academic degrees, irrelevant work experience and a hostile society were, on the whole, taken lightly. In fact, few gave these obstacles any serious consideration at all.²⁸

The Theory of Cumulative Causation is a promising concept in that it dedicates a substantial role to the context in which migration decisions are formed while also stressing the importance of culture for analyzing migration decision-making.²⁹ Unfortunately, this theory only incorporates past migration’s accelerating effects, without conceptualizing the possibility of negative feedback loops.³⁰ Is it possible that in certain areas critical migration-related information disseminated through social networks creates a migration-undermining dynamic, or does emigration continue, disregarding the omnipresence of negative reporting on migration? These are interesting questions based on actual observations,³¹ which cannot be explained by

Cumulative Causation Theories but are longing for theoretically sound explanations. Research evidence on the impact of information dissemination through social networks on migration aspirations is far from unambiguous. A substantial number of academic publications report on the advertising impact of this information on migration aspirations.³² Important constituting factors of popular discourses are the narratives and practices of returning migrants. Often these migrants strengthen the veracity of media images, partly to impress, and partly to deny any elements of failure to their relatives and friends back home.³³ The demonstrated successes of these migrants appear to stimulate popular imagination in the country of origin, especially when it is characterized by ostentation.³⁴ Returning migrants regularly function as a reference group for others.³⁵ They also have advertising effects for migration and stimulate migration-related perceptions.³⁶ Not all research findings agree with the idea of positive and promoting images being spread by popular discourses, and point at the prevalence of contradicting discourses. Mai, for example, demonstrates how the omnipresence of Italian television in Albania turned Italy into an attractive destination for migration in the past.³⁷ However, because of increased access to multiple sources of information and due to stories of disillusionment by returning migrants, today's migrants are changing their focus away from Italy and toward more distant and unfamiliar places. This likewise reveals the dynamic and changing nature of discourses and their resulting imaginations over time, which Riccio also found in his study.³⁸ The overall success of migration in Senegal has brought along a shift in stereotypes. Whereas a migrant district was considered to be a ghetto in the past, today the inhabitants are talked about as idols and heroes. Timmerman points at possible conflicting representations within one and the same discourse.³⁹ In her studies on Turkish migration, Timmerman found that immigrants have a rather ambivalent status in their regions of origin. On the one hand, migrants are envied for their material successes, but on the other hand, they are referred to as "kültürsüz" (literally: people without culture, however with the connotation of being ignorant and backward). All these examples demonstrate the importance of incorporating the possibility of both positive migration-facilitating and negative migration-undermining feedback mechanisms at work through social networks and related cultures of migration. Migration flows may expand or contract according to these feedback mechanisms. Migration is therefore dynamic and non-linear:⁴⁰ it is dependent on the particular phase of a migration cycle.⁴¹ In other words, factors that provoke migration at a certain moment under specific conditions might at another moment in time when the conditions have changed lose their significance for triggering migration.

As mentioned earlier, to investigate the relevance of the presence of a "culture of migration" and the significance of a related feedback mechanism for explaining migration aspirations in Turkey, the analysis is focused on two rather similar regions in Turkey: Emirdağ and Dinar in the province of Afyon. However, Emirdağ has a significantly higher emigration rate than Dinar. In 1990, Emirdağ had an international emigration rate of, respectively, 11.29 percent (in the center of the sub-province) and 15.7 percent (villages and towns), while for Dinar the

international emigration rate was only 2.6 percent both in the center and the villages.⁴² Although statistics are hard to get, other studies also point to the omnipresent “culture of migration,” which makes Emirdağ rather unique in the region;⁴³ this is absent in Dinar.⁴⁴ Therefore, it is assumed that firsthand information on Europe is more available in Emirdağ than in Dinar.

A lot of research demonstrates that people are generally motivated by economic reasons to migrate.⁴⁵ There is currently, however, a major economic crisis going on in Europe, meaning that job opportunities in Europe are comparatively scarcer than before the crisis. In contrast with Europe, Turkey undergoes an economic growth phase.⁴⁶ Therefore, it is assumed that the economic crisis in Europe has a negative effect on migration aspirations with an economic finality. It is also expected that these negative perceptions on the economic situation in Europe are stronger in regions where there is/was more migration experience and hence the development of a “culture of migration” (Emirdağ). In such regions, compared to regions where there is less migration experience (Dinar), there is more access to firsthand information on Europe, and consequently a higher probability of negative feedback on the economic European situation. Therefore the hypothesis that people in Emirdağ are less likely to have positive perceptions of job opportunities in Europe than people in Dinar is put forward.

H1: People in Emirdağ are less likely to have positive perceptions of job opportunities in Europe than people in Dinar

It is evident that people assume that immigrants already living in the EU are affected by the ongoing economic crisis too. Probably, if residents in Emirdağ or Dinar are receiving negative information from “Emirdagli” (people from Emirdağ) or “Dinarli” (people from Dinar) in Europe, these immigrants will speak from their own personal situation. It is known that during economic hardship, those people who are living in weaker socioeconomic conditions are most affected by the crisis.⁴⁷ Several studies demonstrated that the economic situation of Turkish immigrants in Belgium—the most popular destination for immigrants from Emirdağ—is relatively poor.⁴⁸ Immigrant populations, who are often living in more precarious conditions and who are also easily visible because of different phenotypes, traditions and religion, experience even more difficulties participating in and being accepted by society.⁴⁹ Therefore, it is assumed that people in Turkey living in regions where firsthand information of what is going on in Europe is widespread are less likely than people without such information channels in their community to have positive perceptions of the living and working experience of migrants in Europe. However, the negative information might not be limited to the economic situation as such in the EU. It might also be that they think that the living conditions at large for immigrants are deteriorating.⁵⁰ Therefore, the following hypotheses are postulated—focusing on the experiences of the Turkish immigrant populations in Europe:

H2: People in Emirdağ are less likely to have positive perceptions of the living and working experience of migrants in Europe than people in Dinar

The sociocultural context in the EU is facing several challenges too. In general, there is a feeling that solidarity within society is under high pressure. One of the consequences of the economic crisis is that governments are cutting down a lot of social policies, impacting people's living conditions. Access to good housing, healthcare, education and jobs becomes more difficult.⁵¹ Moreover, several forms of extremism, populism and polarization are on the rise, in turn affecting the democratic and even human rights climate in Europe. Injustice, intolerance and discrimination toward groups characterized by a weak economic and/or sociocultural status are becoming more salient.⁵² It is assumed that people in Turkey living in a region where firsthand information on the situation in Europe is ready at hand will have a more negative perception on the social and democratic/human rights climate in Europe compared to those people who are living in a region where there is less access to this firsthand information.

H3: People in Emirdağ are less likely to have positive perceptions of the social and democratic/human rights situation in Europe than people in Dinar

It is assumed that the perceptions of the deteriorating conditions in Europe in general and for immigrants in particular have a negative effect on migration aspirations. It is expected that this negative effect is stronger for people living in regions where there is/was more migration experience and hence the development of a "culture of migration" (Emirdağ). In such regions—compared to regions where there is less migration experience and no "culture of migration" (Dinar)—there is more access to firsthand information on Europe, and consequently a higher probability of negative feedback on the European situation. More in general, the hypothesis that migration aspirations of people in Emirdağ are therefore lower than that of people in Dinar is put forward.

H4: People in Emirdağ are less likely to have migration aspirations to Europe than people in Dinar

Methodology

Quantitative and Qualitative Research Design

In this article, the data of the EUMAGINE project are used. As mentioned before, in this contribution there is a focus on one country of the Mediterranean basin: Turkey, and more specifically on the regions of Emirdağ and Dinar. In this section, the quantitative and qualitative data collection in these two research areas is outlined.⁵³ The research population was delimited to the *population aged between 18 and 39 years*. This population has the highest probability to perceive emigration as a

possibility.⁵⁴ Sampling happened twice within this population: first quantitatively and then qualitatively.

Quantitatively, a representative sample of 500 respondents aged 18–39 years within the two research areas (1000 respondents in total) was aimed. A stratified cluster sample with random walks was used.⁵⁵ The research areas were first stratified according to a rural–urban dimension and sub-counties. Interviews were distributed according to the size of the strata. More specifically, 50 batches of ten interviews in each research area were distributed according to the relative size of strata. A list of clusters (neighborhoods and villages) was made for each stratum. After deciding on the number of clusters in each stratum, batches of ten interviews were sampled in fixed intervals.⁵⁶ A random walk was executed to select households. Within selected households (defined as "all persons who live under the same roof, normally eat together and have communal arrangements concerning subsistence and other necessities of life") respondents were randomly chosen.⁵⁷ The selected respondents were questioned face to face in the first half of 2011 with structured paper-and-pencil questionnaires.⁵⁸ The selection of respondents in the research areas continued until 500 interviews were completed.⁵⁹ The data had to be weighted to account for differences in the selection probability of respondents.⁶⁰ The data were analyzed with SPSS 21.

There was also a qualitative sampling in both research areas. Nonparticipant observations and 40 (twenty for each area) in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in the period of October 2011–January 2012.⁶¹ The fieldwork was done in the same regions as the quantitative data collection. To gain knowledge of the area, researchers had to spend minimum two weeks in each region (subdivided in localities chosen in function of representativeness for the region). There was a purposeful selection of informants according to gender, age, occupational status, migration experience and aspirations.⁶² An interview guide was developed as an instrument. The interviews had to be recorded on tape and notes taken by the researcher.⁶³ In some places, local officials needed to be contacted to obtain approval and support for entering the locality. Informants were located through a variety of entry points in order to ensure the diversity within each group of informants. Throughout the fieldwork the researchers ensured the anonymity of all the informants. The data were analyzed with NVivo.

Dependent Variables

Four dependent variables were used. For the first dependent variable *perception of job opportunities in Europe*, a dichotomous measure was used. The *perception of job opportunities in Europe* was measured with the statement whether "it is easy to find a good job in Europe." The categories "strongly agree" and "agree" were coded as 1. The categories "strongly disagree," "disagree" and "neither agree nor disagree" were coded as 0. In the total sample, 495 of 1000 respondents had positive perceptions of job opportunities in Europe.⁶⁴ In Emirdağ, 240 of 500 respondents had positive perceptions of job opportunities in Europe. In Dinar, 255 of 500 respondents had positive perceptions of job opportunities in Europe.⁶⁵

The second dependent variable is a dichotomous variable that measures *positive perceptions of the living and working conditions of migrants in Europe*. Four questions were summed up into one scale.⁶⁶ The scale is coded as “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The Cronbach alpha or the internal consistency of the scale of four items is 0.61 in the whole sample. The alpha is relatively low but acceptable considering the small number of items. The variable was then visually binned into five equal parts. The two parts that represent a positive reception were coded as 1. In the total sample, 273 of 1000 respondents had positive perceptions.⁶⁷ In Emirdağ, 125 of 500 respondents had positive perceptions. In Dinar, 148 of 500 had positive perceptions.⁶⁸

The same was done for the third dependent variable measuring *perceptions of the social and democratic/human rights climate in Europe*. The Cronbach alpha or the internal consistency of the scale measuring the perceptions of human rights in Europe is 0.73 in the whole sample. Five questions were summed up and the part that indicates positive perceptions was coded as 1.⁶⁹ The other part of the scale was coded as 0. In the total sample, 454 of 1000 respondents have positive perceptions of the social and democratic/human rights climate in Europe.⁷⁰ In Emirdağ, 239 of 500 respondents have positive perceptions. In Dinar, 215 of 500 have positive perceptions.⁷¹

The fourth dependent variable measures *migration aspirations to Europe*. Respondents were asked whether they want to migrate to another country.⁷² Respondents who said they have aspirations to migrate to another country were also asked to which country they would prefer to go. The combination of these two questions resulted in a variable that measures the migration aspirations to Europe.⁷³ Of the 1000 respondents in the two Turkish regions (Emirdağ and Dinar), 358 had aspirations to migrate to Europe (weighted data).⁷⁴ In Emirdağ, 187 of 500 respondents had migration aspirations to Europe. In Dinar, 171 of 500 had migration aspirations to Europe.⁷⁵

Independent Variables

Age is a continuous variable measuring the age of respondents that was mean-centred for the whole sample. Respondents who were younger than 19 and older than 39 years were excluded (23 respondents). *Marital status* is coded 1 when respondents were unmarried, divorced, widowed or separated, and coded 0 when respondents were married/monogamous, married/polygamous or living with a partner/not married. *Children* is a variable measuring whether respondents have at least one child (coded as 0) or no children (1). In order to measure *family migration experience*, respondents had to indicate whether they “have any family members above 16 years old who are currently living in another country and who have been in contact with you at least once over the past twelve months.” It is important to notice that respondents thus indicated whether they had recent contact with these family members or not. The variable was coded dichotomous (0 = no family migration experience, 1 = family migration experience). *Gender* has male as category 1 and female as

category 0. *Years of education* is coded as 0 (no education, only Koranic school, only basic literacy or national language), 1 (preschool), 1–5 (primary school-old system), 2–9 (primary school), 6–8 (lower secondary school-old system), 9–11 (higher vocational school), 10–12 (upper secondary school-old system), 10–13 (upper secondary school-old system), 14–17 (university or polytechnic) to 18–21 (doctorate).

In this article, human rights in a broad sense include the quality of schools, life of men/women, governmental poverty reduction and health care. Ten questions measured the *perception of human rights in Europe and their own country* (five questions for Europe and five questions for their own country). The Cronbach alpha for the scale measuring the perceptions of human rights in Europe was 0.73. The Cronbach alpha of the scale measuring the perceptions of human rights in their own country was 0.65.⁷⁶ The questions measuring the perception of human rights in Europe are coded 0 (very bad) to 4 (very good), and very good (0) to very bad (4) for the questions measuring the perception of human rights in their own country. A variable was also made that specifically measures the *perception of the living and working conditions of migrants in Europe*. Four questions were summed up into one scale.⁷⁷ The scale goes from negative to positive perceptions (from 0 to 4). The questions used the agree–disagree format. The internal consistency of the scale of four items is 0.61. Principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization showed that the five questions measuring perceptions of human rights in Europe and the four questions measuring the perception of the living and working conditions of migrants in Europe are two distinct factors. The variable measuring perceptions of human rights in Europe and the variable measuring perceptions of the living and working conditions of migrants in Europe are lowly correlated (total sample: Pearson $r = .174$; $p < .01$; Emirdağ: Pearson $r = .234$; $p < .01$; Dinar: Pearson $r = .138$; $p < .01$; all two-tailed significance tests). Respondents in Dinar have distinct perceptions of the life in Europe as a whole and the life of migrants in Europe. Both perceptions are less distinct in Emirdağ. They are more correlated in Emirdağ. We can conclude that the first variable measures the general situation of human rights in Europe and that the second variable measures the specific (living and working) situation for migrants in Europe.

People were asked whether “it is easy to find a good job in Europe and in their own country” (*perception of job opportunities in Europe and their own country*) (in a strongly disagree–agree format for the Europe perception and the reverse for the own country perception). The perception of job opportunities in Europe correlates more highly with the variable measuring the living and working conditions of migrants in Europe than the more general variable measuring perceptions of human rights in Europe (Pearson $r = .225$; $p < .01$; two-tailed significance test; total sample; Emirdağ: Pearson $r = .266$; $p < .01$; Dinar: Pearson $r = .166$; $p < .01$ compared to Pearson $r = .159$; $p < .01$; total sample; Emirdağ: Pearson $r = .158$; $p < .01$; Dinar: Pearson $r = .168$; $p < .01$; all two-tailed significance tests). The perceptions of European job opportunities are more linked to the variable measuring the perceptions of the living and working conditions of migrants in Europe than the more general variable on perceptions of Europe.⁷⁸

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Total Sample, Emirdağ and Dinar

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean or proportion	SD
<i>Total sample</i>					
Age	977	19	39	28.26	6.14
Unmarried	1000	0	1	0.38	–
No children	1000	0	1	0.45	–
Family migration experience	1000	0	1	0.48	–
Male	1000	0	1	0.58	–
Years of education	1000	0	21	9.85	3.92
Perception of human rights in Europe	984	0.40	4	2.76	0.58
Perception of human rights in their own country	996	0	4	1.78	0.62
Perception of job opportunities in Europe	998	0	4	2.22	0.95
Perception of job opportunities in their own country	1000	0	4	2.68	0.86
Material wealth	1000	0	4	0.86	0.59
Perception of living and working conditions of migrants in Europe	997	0	4	2.21	0.65
<i>Emirdağ</i>					
Age	488	19	39	27.75	6.01
Unmarried	500	0	1	0.44	–
No children	500	0	1	0.50	–
Family migration experience	500	0	1	0.74	–
Male	500	0	1	0.54	–
Years of education	500	0	21	9.64	4.03
Perception of human rights in Europe	500	0.80	4	2.80	0.57
Perception of human rights in their own country	499	0	4	1.82	0.63
Perception of job opportunities in Europe	499	0	4	2.17	0.97
Perception of job opportunities in their own country	500	0	4	2.81	0.80
Material wealth	500	0	4	0.90	0.60
Perception of living and working conditions of migrants in Europe	500	0	3.75	2.11	0.67
<i>Dinar</i>					
Age	489	19	39	28.77	6.23

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean or proportion	SD
Unmarried	500	0	1	0.32	–
No children	500	0	1	0.39	–
Family migration experience	500	0	1	0.22	–
Male	500	0	1	0.61	–
Years of education	500	0	17	10.07	3.80
Perception of human rights in Europe	484	0.40	4	2.71	0.59
Perception of human rights in their own country	496	0	3.60	1.73	0.60
Perception of job opportunities in Europe	499	0	4	2.28	0.93
Perception of job opportunities in their own country	500	0	4	2.54	0.90
Material wealth	500	0	3.43	0.82	0.59
Perception of living and working conditions of migrants in Europe	497	0.25	4	2.30	0.61

Source: Weighed data; individual questionnaire—stum20121001.

Furthermore, an index was made that measures the *material wealth* of respondents in both regions as a variable with principal component analysis (varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization).⁷⁹ The scale goes from high to low material wealth (0 to 4). The Cronbach alpha of the material wealth index computed for both Turkish regions is 0.70. Finally, the *two Turkish regions* were coded in dummy variables: one for Emirdağ and one for Dinar (Table 1).⁸⁰

Results

The fact that people in Emirdağ live in a migration-impacted region—and thus characterized by a culture of migration—shows from a number of variables and answers on certain questions of the EUMAGINE survey. There are more people in Emirdağ with family migration experience: 73.6 percent or 368 of 500 respondents. This contrasts with the considerably lower percentage of respondents with family migration experience in Dinar: 22.2 percent or 111 of the 500 respondents. The distributions of the other independent variables are not so markedly different when we compare people living in these two regions. On the basis of these findings, it is evident that people in Emirdağ have more access to firsthand information on Europe (from other Emirdagli in Europe) compared to people living in Dinar. That migration is part of the contemporary sociocultural praxis in Emirdağ is also

evident from the fact that in Emirdağ, the vast majority assumes that in general the (other) residents of Emirdağ aspire to work and live in Europe; more concretely, 84.1 percent or 420 of the 500 respondents think that most young men would like to live and work in Europe and 72.6 percent or 363 of the 500 respondents think this about young women. In Dinar, however, this percentage is relatively lower: only 30.5 percent (152 of the 500 respondents) think that young men and 15.3 percent (76 of the 500 respondents) think that young women would like to live and work in Europe (In Dinar, one respondent was put on missing).

These quantitative findings are also reflected in the qualitative data:

The young people here always have the tendency to go to Europe. They do not want to work so much. When they come to a certain age, they always want to go to Europe. Because every family here has someone in Europe, either an aunt, an uncle, a sister or someone. This is why the young people want to go to Europe. (Emirdağ, male)

And everyone migrates to Europe, 90 percent of the people are European (Turks), (...) But as you see the population is declining constantly. Here everyone is interested in the social life in Europe, it might be better than here but social lives in Turkey are also good, health and everything, but there Europe has a valuable money and our citizens always migrate to Europe. Maybe we also have within us the intention to go to Europe. (Emirdağ, male)

These findings are in line with the data from the survey indicating that in the migration-impacted region of Emirdağ people assume that in general people of their community find migration an interesting option.

It is clear that people in Emirdağ live in what can be rightfully characterized as a “culture of migration” (meso-level). The testing of the hypotheses on the individual perceptions and aspirations (micro-level) showed the following.⁸¹ The first hypothesis was supported; “people in Emirdağ are less likely to have positive perceptions of job opportunities in Europe than people in Dinar” (see model one in Table 2). People living in Dinar are 1.33 times as likely to have positive perceptions of job opportunities in Europe compared to the people living in Emirdağ. On the basis of the qualitative data collection, it became clear that—next to positive evaluations of the economic possibilities in Europe—a lot of doubt about Europe’s economic potentiality was put forward. These informants interviewed in Emirdağ, for example, express their perceptions on the economic crisis in Europe:

How are business opportunities?

I don’t think it’s like the past.

If you compare with the past what could you say?

In the past there were lots of work opportunities, they say there’s not today.

(Emirdağ, male)

How is employment situation there? You had said that there is no much job opportunities in Davulga. How is it there?

In France and other countries, in France for instance, they do not find a job. You have to be a university graduate even to work in the market. Therefore, there is no job. (Emirdağ, female)

And according to this informant, while Europe is in crisis, Turkey is undergoing an economic boost:

But actually our country is better. (...) The country is very big and there are good things. All Europe is in crisis now. But thank goodness we don't get into crisis. (Emirdağ, male)

This female informant interviewed in Dinar, on the other hand, expresses her positive perceptions on job opportunities in Europe:

Would you go to Europe if you had the chance?

Certainly. I would not even think. There are many opportunities there. I think it is a good idea to go. (...)

What would be the main thing that attracts you to Europe?

It would be employment. I would not go to Europe if the employment here would be good. If I could work here, I would not go there. If I had a good job here, I would only go to Europe as a guest. (Dinar, female)

The second hypothesis is also supported. People in Dinar are 1.38 times as likely to have positive perceptions of the living and working experience of migrants in Europe compared to people in Emirdağ (model 2 in Table 2). In other words, people in Emirdağ have a significantly more negative view on the living and working experiences of migrants in Europe. It was clear from the interviews and observations that a lot of people in Emirdağ personally knew people who were living in Europe. Often, they testified of negative experiences they encountered when trying to make their living in Europe. Again, often reference was made to the economic hardship Europe is going through and its negative effects on their compatriots in Europe, as illustrated by the following extracts from an interview with a female informant in Emirdağ:

Have you ever gone to Europe?

No, never. But I would like to go for a short visit to see it. I would like to see what is there. I would like to see their living. They come here so rich, so luxurious... But some say their lives there are not luxurious at all. I would like to see their lives there.

That is interesting. Can you explain that?

Everyone there works all day. They wake up early in the morning, they take their lunchboxes with them. Some travel for 60 kilometers to reach their

Table 2. Logistic Regression (Odds Ratios)

	Odds ratios			
	Model 1 (n: 953)	Model 2 (n: 953)	Model 3 (n: 953)	Model 4 (n: 907)
Age (Ref. category = mean age in whole sample)	0.98	0.98	1.02	0.99
Unmarried (Ref. category = married)	0.87	1.67*	0.96	1.40
No children (Ref. category = children)	1.37	0.74	1.63*	1.15
Family migration experience (Ref. category = no family migration experience)	1.17	0.82	0.98	1.94***
Male (Ref. category = female)	1.03	1.18	1.24	1.58***
Years of education (Ref. category = no education, only Koranic school, only basic literacy or national language)	0.95**	0.91***	1.01	0.95**
Perception of human rights in Europe (Ref. category = very bad)	1.98***	1.78***	–	1.41**
Perception of human rights in their own country (Ref. category = very good)	1.42***	1.50***	0.79**	1.54***
Perception of job opportunities in Europe (Ref. category = strongly disagree)	–	1.21**	1.35***	1.13
Perception of job opportunities in their own country (Ref. category = strongly agree)	1.02	0.82**	1.35***	1.08
Material wealth (Ref. category = high material wealth)	1.16	1.19	1.04	1.53***
Perception of living and working conditions of migrants in Europe (Ref. category = strongly disagree)	1.42***	–	1.56***	2.23***
Research area (Ref. category = Emirdağ)	1.33*	1.38*	0.83	1.38*
Constant	0.04***	0.07***	0.08***	0.00***
Nagelkerke R^2	0.11	0.10	0.09	0.20
Area under curve	0.66	0.66	0.64	0.73

Note: Weighted data; individual questionnaire—stum20121001.

* $p < .10$.

** $p < .05$.

*** $p < .01$.

workplace. Some of them work in canals, they have to work under rain, under snow. They have to work whatever happens. (. . .) My relatives in Europe say there is no life there. There is no air there. The only reason they stay there is the money. Those who go from here to Europe clean toilets. They work in

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factories. They do not have good jobs. (...) They say they would stay in Emirdağ if there were jobs but now they cannot return. (Emirdağ, female)

Results in model three in [Table 2](#) indicate that there were no significant differences between people in Dinar and Emirdağ concerning positive perceptions of the social and democratic/human rights situation in Europe (see model 3 in [Table 2](#)). Therefore hypothesis three is rejected. The variable that measures the social and democratic/human rights situation in Europe is more general than the variable measuring the living and working conditions of migrants. The former variable seems to measure the situation in Europe in a more general way. A similar story counts for the perceptions of European job opportunities. This variable was more linked to the perceptions of the living and working situation of migrants. In the qualitative data, the general tendency was observed among informants in both Dinar and Emirdağ to perceive the social and democratic/human rights situation in Europe in a more positive way than in their own country. As illustrated by the following extracts from interviews conducted with a female informant in Dinar and one in Emirdağ in which they both express positive perceptions on the opportunities for women in Europe:

“For example, here a woman at forty years of age cannot do anything as she chooses to do. But there, a woman can easily wear a mini skirt at the age of forty. They are freer there.” (Dinar, female)

“You know Turkey, there are no women rights.” *So what changes for a woman when she goes to Europe? What rights does she gain?*

“To say the truth, I do not know Europe. But I hear they are freer, they are more activist. Today we cannot even trust the police here. They only listen to you and nod. They do not follow up with the case if a man disturbed you. They only listen to you and then let go the man free. In Europe, they are freer, they are more confident.” (Emirdağ, female)

Given that people in Emirdağ have a significantly more negative view on job opportunities and on the living and working experience of migrants in Europe, and there are no significant differences between people in Dinar and Emirdağ concerning positive perceptions of the social and democratic/human rights situation in Europe, it comes as no surprise that on the basis of the multiple regression analyses it was found that people in Emirdağ are less likely to have migration aspirations to Europe than people in Dinar. This means that we find significant evidence for the fourth hypothesis (see [Table 2](#), model four). People living in Dinar are 1.38 times as likely to have migration aspirations to Europe compared to people living in Emirdağ.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this article confirm the relevance of not only “geographical imaginations” or imaginations of the existing social, political and economic possibilities characterizing the places where people live, but also the potential migration destinations

for understanding migration decision-making. Most interesting, however, is that the findings convincingly demonstrate that migration aspirations are also impacted by the role of living in a “culture of migration.” However, contrary to an important body of research that points at the importance of such a “culture of migration” in perpetuating migration aspirations and decisions,⁸² the study demonstrates the possible dissuading effect on potential migrants of living in such a “culture of migration.” These results are in line with earlier studies that raised the point of the possibility of migration-undermining feedback dynamics within migration-impacted regions,⁸³ as well as studies that assumed, mainly on the basis of qualitative research methodologies, how in certain areas critical migration-related discourses might have a dissuading effect on potential migrants.⁸⁴ But, the analyses go a step further. Individual level migration aspirations in a region that is characterized by an omnipresent “culture of migration” (Emirdağ) are significantly lower than that in a similar socioeconomic region, but with no “culture of migration” (Dinar). Perceptions of the economic opportunities in Europe are more negative for people living in the migration-impacted region of Emirdağ. Furthermore, the working and living conditions of immigrants in Europe were more negatively perceived by people living in Emirdağ than in Dinar.

The above-mentioned results can be interpreted by the observation that the economic crisis in Europe is much more “present” for people living in migration-impacted regions through their privileged relation with the Turkish immigrant communities in Europe, compared to similar regions without a significant history of out-migration. It is clear from our analyses that the negative information on the situation in Europe has a dissuading effect on migration aspirations of the local population. However, it is interesting to note that the respondents in Emirdağ maintain a similar (positive) vision to that of the respondents in Dinar of the democratic and human rights capital in Europe. This allows the conclusion that the economic crisis in Europe does not (yet) affect the perceptions of the Turkish population under study on the democratic and human rights status of Europe, at least for the Europeans. It is also evident that next to the economic crisis in Europe, the growing economy in Turkey is a major element for forsaking migration aspirations. These findings also support the relevance of the concept of “relative deprivation”—saying that people appraise their properties in relative terms, that is, in comparison with a reference group—for understanding migration decisions.

It is clear from this study that people on an individual level perceive macro-level factors as socioeconomic opportunities and democratic and human rights contexts through meso-level factors such as being embedded in a community in which transnational social networks and migration experiences are common. Migration-related perceptions and subsequent aspirations are thus also constructed with the informational input from living in a culture of migration through which people collect information and exchange ideas.⁸⁵ Given that the EU is currently challenged by a severe socioeconomic crisis, it is evident that the negative information on the living and working conditions in the EU is much more available for people living in regions characterized by a “culture of migration” than for people living in similar regions not connected by means of transnational networks to the Turkish immigrant communities in Europe.

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Notes

1. Carling, Czaika, and de Haas, “Aspirations and Capabilities in Migration Processes.”
2. de Haas, “Determinants of International Migration,” 6.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Carling, *Aspiration and Ability in International Migration*.
6. Carling, Czaika, and de Haas, “Aspirations and Capabilities in Migration Processes.”
7. Carling, “Migration in the Age of Involuntary Immobility,” 5–42.
8. Levitt and Jaworsky, “Transnational Migration Studies,” 129–56; Faist, *Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*, 30–5.
9. Anderson, Regan, and Ostergard, “Political Repression and Public Perceptions of Human Rights,” 439–56.
10. Ibid.
11. Gurak and Caces, “Migrants and Networks and the Shaping of Migration Systems,” 150–76.
12. Ritchey, “Explanations of Migration,” 363–404.
13. Haug, “Migration Networks and Migration Decision-Making,” 588.
14. Massey, “Contemporary Theories of International Migration,” 17–59.
15. Riccio, “Following the Senegalese Migratory Path Through Media Representation.”
16. Avci and Kirişci, “Turkey’s Immigration and Emigration Dilemmas at the Gate of the European Union,” 123–57; Martin, “Turkey-EU Migration,” 125–44.
17. Timmerman, Lodewyckx, and Wets, “Marriage at the Intersection Between Tradition and Globalization,” 232–44.
18. Project Paper 5 Eumagine (Korfali, Üstübici, and De Clerck), *Turkey Country and Research Areas Report*.
19. Ibid., 24.
20. Ibid., 45–8.
21. Massey et al., *Worlds in Motion*.
22. Myrdal, *Rich Lands and Poor*; Massey, “Social Structure, Household Strategies, and the Cumulative Causation of Migration,” 3–26.
23. Project Paper 1 Eumagine, *Conceptual and Theoretical Framework*.
24. Massey, “Contemporary Theories of International Migration.”
25. Kandel and Massey, “Culture of Mexican Migration,” 981–1004.
26. Timmerman, “Marriage in a ‘Culture of Migration,’” 585–94.
27. Ibid.
28. Timmerman and Vanderheyden, “Turkish and Moroccan Newcomers in Flanders,” 87–104.
29. Project Paper 1 Eumagine, *Conceptual and Theoretical Framework*.
30. de Haas, “Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes,” IMISCOE conference.
31. Mai, “Looking for a More Modern Life . . .,” 2–22; Riccio, “Talkin’ about Migration,” 99–118; Timmerman, “Gender Dynamics in the Context of Turkish Marriage Migration,” 125–43; Timmerman, “Marriage in a ‘Culture of Migration’”; Timmerman, Vanderwaeren, and Crul, “Second Generation in Belgium,” 1065–90.

32. Collyer, "How Does a Culture of Migration Affect Motivations for Migration?"; de Haas, "Myth of Invasion"; Düvell, *Ukraine—Europe's Mexico?*; Lesthaeghe, *Communities & Generations*; Riccio, "Following the Senegalese Migratory Path Through Media Representation"; Timmerman, "Gender Dynamics in the Context of Turkish Marriage Migration"; Timmerman, "Marriage in a 'Culture of Migration'."
33. Wood and King, "Media and Migration."
34. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*; Riccio, "Talkin' about Migration."
35. de Haas, "Myth of Invasion."
36. Theo, "Dreaming Inside a Walled City."
37. Mai, "Looking for a More Modern Life . . ."
38. Riccio, "Talkin' about Migration."
39. Timmerman, "Creativiteit Binnen Conformisme," 117–38; Timmerman, "Gender Dynamics in the Context of Turkish Marriage Migration"; Timmerman, "Marriage in a 'Culture of Migration'."
40. de Haas, "Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry," 1587–617.
41. See also Zelinsky, "Hypothesis of the Mobility Transition," 219–49.
42. Project Paper 5 Eumagine, *Turkey Country and Research Areas Report*, 44–8.
43. Vanderwaeren et al., *La migration par le mariage d'Emirdağ Bruxelles*.
44. Project Paper 5 Eumagine, *Turkey Country and Research Areas Report*.
45. Hatton and Williamson, *Age of Mass Migration*; Stark and Taylor, "Migration Incentives, Migration Types," 1163–78.
46. Project Paper 5 Eumagine, *Turkey Country and Research Areas Report*, 8–9.
47. Schuerkens, *Socioeconomic Outcomes of the Global Financial Crisis*; Sirkeci, Cohen, and Ratha, *Migration and Remittances During the Global Financial Crisis and Beyond*.
48. Mañço, "Turcs d'Europe," 76–87.
49. Martiniello et al., *Nieuwe migraties en nieuwe migranten in België*; Brochmann and Jurado, *Europe's Immigration Challenge*.
50. Crul, Schneider, and Lelie, *European Second Generation Compared*.
51. Algan et al., *Cultural Integration of Immigrants in Europe*.
52. Fangen, Fossan, and Mohn, *Inclusion and Exclusion of Young Adult Migrants in Europe*.
53. Based on Project Paper 6a, 6b, 7 and 8 of the Eumagine Project: Project Paper 6a Eumagine (Ersanilli, Carling, and de Haas), *Methodology for Quantitative Data Collection*; Project Paper 6b Eumagine (De Clerck et al.), *Instruments and Guidelines for Qualitative Fieldwork*; Project Paper 7 Eumagine (Ersanilli), *Survey Report*; Project Paper 8 Eumagine (De Clerck), *First Qualitative Analysis*.
54. Project Paper 1 Eumagine, *Conceptual and Theoretical Framework*.
55. See also Project Paper 6a Eumagine, *Methodology for Quantitative Data Collection* and Project Paper 7 Eumagine, *Survey Report* for more details.
56. See also Project Paper 6a Eumagine, *Methodology for Quantitative Data Collection*, 39, 58–63; Project Paper 7 Eumagine, *Survey Report*, 9, 15.
57. See Project Paper 6a Eumagine, *Methodology for Quantitative Data Collection* and Project Paper 7 Eumagine, *Survey Report* for more details.
58. See also Project Paper 6a Eumagine, *Methodology for Quantitative Data Collection*, 33–5; Project Paper 7 Eumagine, *Survey Report*, 4–6.
59. Respectively 2495 and 1751 households in Emirdağ and Dinar were contacted in order to meet this criterion (Project Paper 7 Eumagine, *Survey Report*, 19). Respectively 34.23 percent and 19.87 percent of the contacted households in Emirdağ and Dinar were assessed as households with no eligible respondents. Of the contacted households, respectively, 5.37 percent and 11.71 percent in Emirdağ and Dinar refused to cooperate. In Emirdağ a lot of addresses were assessed as "vacated/nobody was at home" (39.12 percent of contacted households). This was relatively higher than that in Dinar (13.59 percent). This indicates high emigration in this area (Project Paper 7 Eumagine, *Survey Report*, 8, 20).
60. A selection probability weight was calculated for the within-household selection for each stratum (see also Project Paper 7 Eumagine, *Survey Report*, 26).
61. Project Paper 8 Eumagine, *First Qualitative Analysis*, 4, 7 and 28.

62. Project Paper 8 Eumagine, *First Qualitative Analysis*.
63. A guideline for the qualitative fieldwork and a two-day training in qualitative research was developed (see Project Paper 8 Eumagine, *First Qualitative Analysis*, 4).
64. Two respondents were put on missing.
65. In Emirdağ, one respondent was put on missing. In Dinar, one respondent was put on missing.
66. “Going to live or work in Europe can be a good experience for women” or “men”; “most people from Turkey who go to live or work in Europe become rich” or “gain valuable skills.”
67. Three respondents were put on missing.
68. In Dinar, three respondents were put on missing.
69. People were asked whether the life of men and women, schools, health care and governmental poverty reduction in general in their own country and Europe were very bad, bad, neither good nor bad, good or very good. There is a difference in wording between these items and the items that measure the perceptions of living and working conditions in Europe. This could have affected the respondents’ responses. We can, however, note that all respondents in both regions received the same questions and that we found differences between the respondents living in these regions.
70. Sixteen respondents were put on missing.
71. In Dinar, 16 respondents were put on missing.
72. “Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to go abroad to live or work.”
73. The following countries mean “Europe” in this article: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Belarus, Europe, Western Europe, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the UK and Lithuania. There are indications that almost all respondents knew which countries are European. The first three countries that came up when respondents were asked which countries/places they think off when they hear the word “Europe” were countries/places defined in this article as European. More than 90 percent of all countries/places that were mentioned were European.
74. Forty-five respondents were put on missing: we lack information on their aspirations to migrate to Europe.
75. In Emirdağ, 12 respondents were put on missing. In Dinar, 33 respondents were put on missing.
76. Both measures were uncorrelated in the whole sample (Pearson $r = -.06$; $p < .05$; two-tailed significance test). The Pearson correlation coefficients were insignificant when calculated for each research area separately.
77. “Going to live or work in Europe can be a good experience for women” (or men), “most people from Turkey who go to live or work in Europe become rich” (or “gain valuable skills”).
78. The perceptions of job opportunities in Europe and their own country are uncorrelated in the whole sample (Pearson $r = -.004$; $p < .01$; two-tailed significance test). The Pearson correlation coefficients were insignificant in Emirdağ and Dinar.
79. Based on Jolivet and de Haas; see Project Paper 13 Eumagine (Timmerman et al.), *Cross-country Analyses*. Nineteen questions in the survey measured whether respondents had access to electricity, a modern flush toilet connected to sewerage in residence, running hot water, shower in residence, radio, television, satellite dish and receiver, video/VCR/DVD player, telephone (landline or mobile phone), computer at home, Internet connection at home, refrigerator, gas/electric stove, dishwasher, air conditioning, washing machine, bicycle, moped/motorcycle and car/truck/van. Six components with an eigenvalue higher than one were combined into an index. The explained variance of each component was used to multiply with the regression factor score of the component in question. The multiplied scores were then summed into one index.
80. Four possibly relevant variables were excluded. They almost did not vary across respondents in both regions, namely citizenship, other nationalities, residence permit for another country and international migration experience. Almost 100 percent of our respondents were citizens of Turkey and did not have another nationality or a residence permit for another country. Almost no respondents had international migration experience (33 of 1000 respondents, almost equally divided: 14 in Emirdağ and 19 in Dinar).

81. The variance inflation factors in the models did not go beyond 3.43 (no signs of collinearity). The Hosmer–Lemeshow goodness-of-fit tests for each model are above 0.05. There were outliers outside two standard deviations in two models (model 2 has 12 outliers and model 4 has 10 outliers). There were no studentized residuals higher than 3 or lower than -3 . The Cook distances never reached the value of 1 and there were no leverage values above 0.90. We checked for nonlinear effects of the perceptions, age, years of education and material wealth by adding squared terms. There were no improvements of the models and we therefore opted to use models without squared terms.
82. E.g. Collyer, *How Does a Culture of Migration Affect Motivations for Migration?*; Theo, “Dreaming Inside a Walled City.”
83. de Haas, “Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry.”
84. E.g. Mai, “Looking for a More Modern Life . . .”; Timmerman, “Gender Dynamics in the Context of Turkish Marriage Migration”; Timmerman, “Marriage in a ‘Culture of Migration’”; Timmerman, Vanderwaeren, and Crul, “Second Generation in Belgium.”
85. Koser and Pinkerton, *Social Networks of Asylum Seekers*.

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