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*Research Article*

### **The quest for a ‘better life’: Second-generation Turkish-Germans ‘return’ to ‘paradise’**

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## **The quest for a ‘better life’: Second-generation Turkish-Germans ‘return’ to ‘paradise’**

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### **ABSTRACT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

This paper uses a lifestyle-migration lens to analyse the ‘return’ of the Turkish-German second generation to their parents’ homeland, Turkey. It focuses on a scenically attractive touristic region, Antalya on the south coast, where second-generation ‘returnees’ find a highly congenial environment to pursue their project of living a ‘better life’ in the ancestral homeland.

#### **METHOD**

Thirty in-depth interviews with second-generation Turkish-Germans, mostly in their 30s and 40s, were carried out in and around Antalya in 2014. Narratives were coded and prepared for thematic analysis using NVivo.

#### **RESULTS**

According to thematic analysis of interview narratives, many respondents were seeking to ‘escape’ from difficult personal, family, and economic situations. They mobilised their human capital of educational qualifications, language skills, and life experience to set up or get jobs in hotels, restaurants, and other tourist services, combining work with a relaxed attitude to life in what they saw as a ‘paradise’ of natural beauty and social open-mindedness. Alongside these practical considerations of seeking a better work–life balance were more existential themes of rediscovering their ‘true selves’ and reinventing the meaning of ‘home’ in this cosmopolitan niche.

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## 1. Introduction

'Lifestyle migration' has emerged as a major type of migratory movement in recent years (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a, 2009b; Benson and Osbaldiston 2014), challenging the assumption that migration is mainly explained by reference to economic factors. Whilst the 'rational choice' optic of neoclassical economics is still relevant in its framing of labour migration, where there is a self-evident desire to find work and a higher income, there is now recognition of an increasing diversification of migration types based on the characteristics and motivations of the migrants, their life stages, and the directionality of the movement (Halfacree 2004; King 2002). In particular, there is a renewed research interest in return migration and its theorisation (Cassarino 2004).

In this paper we apply the lifestyle-migration framework to examine the 'return' of second-generation Turkish-Germans<sup>3</sup> to the southern coastal region of Turkey. We put 'return' in quotation marks since this not a true return in migration-statistical terms: our research participants were born and brought up in Germany, and they are 'returning' to a country which their labour-migrant parents left during the 1960s and 1970s. By putting emphasis on this paradoxical condition we highlight that return is not necessarily an act of 'homecoming', especially in the case of the second generation.

For people in diaspora, 'home' is often said to have a dual meaning embedded within a "tension between the real experience of home and its idealized form" (Moore 2000: 212). Much return migration research has explored 'the myth of return' in the complex sphere of "living here and remembering/desiring another place" (Clifford 1994: 311). Our objective in this paper is to explore the case of returnees who opt for a life in a touristic region where they reinvent their notion of home outside the duality of the 'here' of their German town of departure and the 'there' of their parents' place of origin. Our analysis is built around answers to the following research questions. First, how come the second-generation Turkish-Germans decide to relocate to the home country of their parents? Second, why do they choose the region of Antalya as their place of resettlement? And third, how does living in Antalya reconfigure their ideas of 'home' and belonging?

We locate our research within the wider phenomenon of counter-diasporic migration (Christou and King 2014), arguing that the 'return' of the second generation challenges traditional conceptualisations of home and bounded definitions of identity. Our previous research focusing on the resettlement of second-generation Turks in Istanbul and small towns has highlighted the complex nature of home for this transnational group (Kılınç 2014; King and Kılınç 2014). Those who relocated to Istanbul, Turkey's largest metropolitan centre, value the cosmopolitan atmosphere of

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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this research, we conceptualise 'second-generation Turkish-Germans' as the Germany-born children of Turkish labour migrants to Germany.

the city and its varied employment opportunities, although there are also disappointments and frustrations, such as high living costs, the chaos of the city and its traffic, and the corruption and lax professional standards in the working environment. The second generation who settled in rural small towns based their choices firmly on kinship networks, with the expectation of living in a familiar and secure environment. However, these respondents expressed their anxieties about feeling different and even oppressed in their homeland communities. In both cases, parental influence played a major role in framing the second generation's idea of 'home' and the physical place of return.

In the case of Antalya, we observe a different dynamic of second-generation 'return': what is important here is the uniqueness of the place as a touristic region, offering a more open and flexible lifestyle in an environmentally and culturally attractive setting. Most participants' parents emigrated from other parts of Turkey, not Antalya: hence it is relatively a neutral place for the second generation. Following Massey's (1995: 59) concept of place as "a meeting-place, the location of intersections of particular bundles of activity space, of connections and interrelations, of influences and movements", we suggest an understanding of place wherein change, openness, and interconnectivity are manifested. As our Antalya research demonstrates, 'home' appears as a mobile and overarching concept beyond the borders of physical locality. At the same time, it is the specificity and attractive character of Antalya which enables the second generation to find 'belonging', rather than family-history ties. Therefore, these narratives help us understand 'home' in broader sets of connections beyond its grounded, sedentary, and kinship affiliations.

We review key literature on lifestyle migration and locational preference in the next section. In the subsequent section we give some brief background on the Turkish migration to Germany. Then we describe our methodology, including the geographical setting of the fieldwork in southern Turkey. Our findings are presented under the general heading of 'narratives of lifestyle choices' and explore, firstly, various accounts of the return process and its outcomes, including previous holiday experiences in the area, the desire to interact with German- and English-speaking tourists, and the possibilities for employment and business development in the tourist economy. Secondly, we move to more reflective and existential accounts, relating to escapism, the quest for an 'alternative' way of life, and the (re-)discovery of a sense of self. These narratives are tangled with the concept of 'home', interplaying between and across the dichotomies of place-attachment versus mobility, as drawn out further in the conclusion.

## **2. Lifestyle migration and second-generation 'return'**

Theories of international migration privilege economic, political, demographic, and social-network factors as the key drivers of international movement (see e.g., Brettell and Hollifield 2015; Castles et al. 2014). The notion that migration is also 'produced' by noneconomic factors related to lifestyle and personal environmental preference – that it can be an act of consumption – is relatively new, and is a radical departure from standard conceptualisations of migration as a means to an end, such as the economic improvement of the migrant or the expansion of production sustained by migrant labour. The work of Benson and O'Reilly has been pioneering in exploring the nexus between migration and lifestyle (see Benson 2011; Benson and O'Reilly 2009a, 2009b) and in arriving at a new theorisation of this migration genre.

Benson and O'Reilly (2009a: 609) see lifestyle migrants as relatively affluent, middle-class individuals who move to places which offer what is perceived as a better quality of life. Their analysis is predominantly based on Northern Europeans' resettlement in Southern European destinations. By applying their framework of lifestyle to the case of the second generation we expand the meaning of 'affluent' and nuance the significance of 'class'. Our research shows that affluence can be found in other types of capital beyond material wealth, including human, social, and cultural capital. In fact, these other types of capital appear as the main elements driving the second generation's propensity to 'return' to Turkey and settle in Antalya. Capitalising not so much on their economic resources but rather on their language skills and their knowledge of both German and Turkish culture enables them to generate an income from the region's tourist economy. Where they fit into the transnational German-Turkish class system is more difficult to specify, and we return to this question later.

Ethnographic accounts such as Benson (2011), King et al. (2000), and O'Reilly (2000) have revealed a recurring narrative of escape permeating lifestyle migrants' accounts of their decisions to migrate, often accompanied by negative representations of life before migration, including 'trigger events' such as redundancy, retirement, divorce, and health-related issues. According to Benson and O'Reilly (2009a: 609–610),

*The fundamental features of the different lifestyles sought thus include the re-negotiation of the work–life balance, quality of life, and freedom from past constraints. Through these strategies of reorientation, the migrants seek the greater good in life, however that might be perceived. Lifestyle migration is thus a search, a project, rather than an act, and it encompasses diverse destinations and dreams.*

Benson and O'Reilly then identify (2009a: 611–613) three types of lifestyle migration, based on a mix of geographical and sociological criteria. All are relevant to our Turkish-German study.

The first is residential tourism, whereby lifestyle migrants turn the touristic experience into a permanent lifestyle – a 'holiday for life'. International retirement migration to southern Spain is the classic instance of this type, and has been much studied (see Casado-Díaz 2006; King et al. 2000; Oliver 2008; O'Reilly 2000). However, working-age migrants also engage in this kind of geographical move, many of them taking the opportunity of servicing the residential and short-stay tourists. They set up small businesses such as bars, restaurants, hairdressers etc., trading on the demand for same-language, co-ethnic services by tourists and residents who do not speak the local language (O'Reilly 2000). The common tropes which resonate through studies of coastal lifestyle migration are relaxation and slow pace of life, the Mediterranean climate and lifestyle (sun, food, wine, outdoor living), and life as a permanent holiday.

Benson and O'Reilly's second type of lifestyle migration is the rural idyll, and here the classic destination is France, typified by Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence* (1989) and followed by the more academic studies of Buller and Hoggart (1994) and Benson (2011). According to Benson and O'Reilly (2009a: 611), rural locations offer lifestyle migrants an image of the 'simple' or 'good life', stepping back in time, getting back to the land, and experiencing the 'traditional' and 'authentic' values of rural community cohesion which are seen to have been lost in urban-industrial modernity.

Thirdly, there are bourgeois bohemians, migrants who seek 'alternative' lifestyles in spaces that are characterised by certain spiritual, artistic, or creative impulses. Waldren's (1996) account of the 'outsiders' – literary, artistic, and musical figures – in Deia in Majorca is the seminal study on this migratory lifestyle genre; she documents their bohemian ideals and the way they intersect with the lives of the 'locals'. In an earlier study of alternative lifestyle migration to the west of Ireland, Kockel (1991) called these mainly European (German, Dutch, British etc.) movers "countercultural migrants", attracted there by the Celtic culture, the informal economy, and the landscape – a special place, endowed, according to some, with mystic properties. More recently there has been a growth in ethnographic studies of various other subtypes of the mobile or migratory 'bohemian' way of life, including Bousiou (2008) on the more hedonistic lifestyles of people who constantly return to spend time on the Greek island of Mykonos, Frohlick (2009) on the 'Northern' women who look for romantic love and a simple life on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, and Korpela (2010) on Westerners in the Indian city of Varanasi where they engage with Indian music and other cultural values.

Whilst the above threefold typology offers us a useful framework to interpret our research material, some further refinements can also be made, drawing on insights gleaned from other literature. The first addition to note is that the rural-idyll vision can be reversed. Instead of metropolitan-origin counterurbanisers seeking peace and quiet in the beautiful countryside of another country, we find rural-origin or provincial-town migrants (usually young people) yearning for the cosmopolitan vibe of a large multicultural city like London (King et al. 2014). A second innovation is to apply the lifestyle migration concept to return migration, including second-generation and ancestral return. Cassarino's (2004) much-cited paper on the re-theorisation of return migration does not mention lifestyle migration. Yet there are clear indications of the attraction of the way of life in the ethnic homeland in studies of second-generation return from Britain to Barbados (Phillips and Potter 2009) and Cyprus (Teerling 2014: 87, 111), and to Greece from Germany and the USA (Christou and King 2014: 137–139). In these studies, lifestyle choices are intertwined with the desire to 'go back to roots'.

The third refinement is to question the middle-class framing of lifestyle migration advanced by Benson and O'Reilly (2009a: 608). In her study of Pakistanis in Britain, Bolognani (2014) argues that, amongst the pros and cons shaping the return migration process, lifestyle reasons often loom large. She sees this as a sign of Pakistanis' increasing confidence in their ability to determine their future as they maintain transnational lives and experience changes in status in their countries of origin and settlement. In their "return imaginary" they are attracted to Pakistan by lifestyle pull factors: a more relaxed pace of life, warm weather, close contact with nature, a lively social life with extended family and friends, a more congenial religious environment, and a more comfortable life for women who can hire maids to do the housework.

Bolognani's paper raises compelling questions about the importance of the 'affluent middle class' criterion of Benson and O'Reilly (2009a). This seems to us an entirely justified critique: why should the desire for a better lifestyle, even when largely defined on aesthetic grounds, be confined to a particular class? As with most migrations, however, some sociodemographic selectivity may be involved. In existing research on the Caribbean, Greece, and Cyprus and in our own prior research on those who 'return' to Istanbul, there seems to be a consistent pattern of positive selection for second-generation 'returnees': it is the most educated, adventurous, and ambitious who 'return', even if most of those who have these characteristics do not return (Christou and King 2014; King and Kılınc 2014; Potter 2006; Teerling 2014).

As class appears a dubious concept in which to frame second-generation 'return' in the Turkish-German context, more useful is the notion of forms of capital that can be deployed to facilitate the 'return' and successful survival thereafter (Bourdieu 1986; Erel 2010). Social network theory suggests that family, friendship, and community ties



disclose the significance of interpersonal ties in determining mobility in both outward and return migration (Boyd 1989). For instance, Reynolds' (2008) research on British-Caribbean second-generation return highlights the importance of social capital as family and friendship networks facilitate 'return' for the second generation. Furthermore, such social capital can be converted into other forms of capital, notably financial and human capital (Coleman 1990).

As we shall see when we present and discuss the interview data, 'returnees' are able to capitalise on Germany-derived human capital (especially languages), their social capital (networks created before, but especially after, resettlement in Antalya), and what might be described as their transcultural capital (Meinhof and Triandafyllidou 2010) – the absorption of two (or more) cultural repertoires, enabling them to move easily between and within different national and international cultural spheres.

### **3. Methodology and the research setting**

Turkish migration to Germany has been the largest bilateral migration in Europe. Turks are the largest residing migrant group in Germany (2.7 million out of 10.8 million immigrants in that country in 2010), and Germany is the main destination country for Turkey's 4.3 million emigrants (World Bank 2011: 5, 123, 246). Most Turks arrived as labour migrants – 'guestworkers' – and settled in industrial and urban areas of West Germany in the 1960s and early 1970s, although there was a second, smaller, exodus of political dissidents following the 1980 military coup in Turkey. Hence the Turkish immigrant-origin community in Germany is long established. However, measuring the scale and composition of this population is compromised by the difference between birthplace and nationality: the criteria of 'foreign-born' and 'foreign citizens' overlap but are essentially different metrics, especially since the Naturalisation Law of 2000, which has reduced the Turkish-national population to 1.5 million (OECD 2015: 336). According to Rittersberger-Tilic et al. (2013: 90–91), 40% of the Turkish-origin population in Germany were born in that country, and those who have 'returned' to Turkey are our concern in this paper.

Our study is centred on the southern coastal city of Antalya and extends around the homonymous Gulf. In this coastal region, 30 second-generation Turkish-Germans were interviewed during March and April 2014: 16 in Antalya, 8 in Alanya, and the remainder in Side and Kemer.

The city and bay of Antalya have been transformed by tourism since the 1980s. Before then the area was mainly agricultural, specialising in citrus production. In 1982 the Turkish government passed the Tourism Incentives Law, which encouraged investors to capitalise on Antalya's rich natural and cultural assets. Hotel construction

and the expansion of job opportunities related to tourism drew in migrants from the interior, rural regions of Turkey. In 1985 the population of the city of Antalya was 250,000; by 2000 it had tripled. As the tourism infrastructures improved, Antalya became popular for European as well as domestic tourists, both of whom started buying second homes in the region for summer-holidays and longer-term use. According to the Antalya City Culture and Tourism Directory, tourist numbers visiting the area grew from 1.8 million in 1995 to 7.5m in 2005 and to 12m in 2013, the main foreign nationalities being Germans, Russians, British, and Dutch. European tourists choose Antalya and Alanya because of their low and all-inclusive costs compared to other Southern European destinations, the reliable climate, attractive coastal scenery, and family-friendly atmosphere (Kozak 2002). As well as short-stay tourists, this area is also foremost in Turkey in attracting both Turkish returnees and German settlers (Rittersberger-Tilic et al. 2013).

Research participants were approached via various means: personal contacts followed up by snowballing chains, the websites of institutions in the region, and social media sites such as Facebook (social groups for Turkish-German returnees) and Couchsurfing. Of the 30 persons interviewed, 16 were men and 14 women; the majority were in their 30s or 40s. Most interviews lasted around one hour, with a range between 30 minutes and two hours. Appropriate ethical procedures were observed, including getting consent for the interview to be recorded. In what follows, pseudonyms are used and the precise names of small places or names of businesses are not given in order to protect participants' anonymity. The interviews mainly took place in the informants' workplaces or in local cafes. The interviews were mainly in Turkish (according to informants' preferences) – although often intercut with words and phrases in German – and sometimes in English. The recorded narratives were transcribed and simultaneously translated into English for practical purposes.<sup>4</sup> The raw data was stored and sorted on the NVivo programme. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the texts (Braun and Clarke 2006). Repeated patterns of meaning were detected through initial coding, and then revised and used as the basis for further analysis. The flexible nature of the thematic analysis enabled us to embrace a phenomenological approach to understanding both the lived experiences of the informants and their interactions with structures framing their actions (Holloway and Todres 2003).

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<sup>4</sup> This was for two reasons: because English is the common language of the co-authors of this paper, and because of software language limitations.

#### **4. General characteristics of the sample**

As we expected before we launched the fieldwork, most of the informants worked in tourist-related employment. This was not a product of the sampling strategy: tourist-related employment is common in the area. Some of the participants have their own small businesses (e.g., restaurant, hairdresser, real estate, translation service), others work as salespeople in shops geared to the tourist market, as hotel managers or administrative staff, or as occasional freelancers in tourist-related activities, such as guides and translators/interpreters. The youngest interviewee was a 21 year-old female medical student in Antalya, and the oldest a 55 year-old man who works as a bar manager and owns a shop in downtown Antalya. Equally important to age at the time of interview was age at migration, which ranged from 16 to 41. For the younger returnees some kind of (extended) family support was often important, but adaptation was generally an easier process in the long run.

Most of the participants' families originated in Turkey's central Anatolian region, predominantly Sivas, Ankara, and the surrounding area; two were from Istanbul and the remainder were from the Aegean and Mediterranean regions of Turkey. A key point to bear in mind is that only two of our informants' parents originated in the local Antalya region. The parents were attracted to Germany as industrial 'guestworkers' during the 1960s and 1970s, except for three cases where the father migrated to Germany for educational or professional reasons. The participants had a range of educational backgrounds within the German system. All were educated to at least secondary school, the equivalent of high school in Turkey, and a minority had some form of tertiary education.

In our earlier research we found that family and social networks were key ingredients in return to Istanbul and small-town locations (King and Kılınc 2014). However, the Antalya participants' parents do not live close by: they either live in Germany or have returned to the towns and districts they were originally from. What, then, attracted participants to settle in the Antalya coast region? All respondents mentioned that they visited Turkey regularly during childhood, on summer holiday trips with their families. The itineraries of these visits would always comprise the towns and villages of parental origin, but often also visits to the coast, and to Antalya in particular, for a 'proper' holiday. In Turkey, as in other southern European countries, it is common for people who can afford it to buy a holiday home on the coast. Even if the participants' families did not themselves own a holiday home their relatives and friends often did, so they would have a place to stay for some of their summer visits. Participants related how much they loved these holiday weeks by the sea: the experience helped them construct a very positive image of life in Turkey. As Turkish-German children living in urban-industrial Germany, they saw the area around Antalya

as a kind of paradise where they could enjoy the sea and sun, eat good food, and feel the love and warmth of their relatives and the local people. As they grew older they became aware that this holiday life was not the only reality in Turkey. From their interactions with other Turkish people in Germany, their stays in rural Turkey, and the representations of Turkey in the German media, they also drew a negative picture of their 'homeland' as a backward country with traditional customs, far behind Germany in developmental terms. Nevertheless, the participants' accounts reveal that they had always recognised the natural beauty, rich culture, and human warmth of their parents' country of origin, and saw its potential as a great place to live, especially during and after the 1990s when Turkey's modernisation process accelerated.

It is important to stress that it is not so much Turkey as a whole which attracts them to move to the parental homeland, but rather the special character of their chosen place of 'return'. In the Antalya region the importance of the geographical and social setting was narrated as crucial; not only the physical beauty of the coastline and its backdrop of hills and mountains but also the free-and-easy social environment. Participants emphasised the importance of working in a tourist environment where they can speak German, practice their English, meet people of different nationalities with different lifestyles and values, and be close to other Turkish-origin returnees from Germany and elsewhere in Europe. In their words, they feel as if they live in a warmer and nicer version of Germany. They are also able to indulge their own 'alternative' lifestyle practices which would be frowned upon or simply not tolerated in other parts of Turkey, such as consuming alcohol, eating pork, smoking weed, having tattoos etc. As entrepreneurs or employees in the tourist sector their jobs involve socialising with tourists, which they generally find a pleasant interaction, not least because the lines between work, social life, and leisure become blurred. Their working places are the historical quarters of Antalya and the adjacent beach areas and so they live with a constant holiday feeling around them. Their accommodation is also within or close to these areas, so their neighbours are Germans and other Europeans, or Turkish people and returnees who are relatively open-minded compared to the Turkish norm.

## **5. Narrating the 'return' through the lens of lifestyle choices: Escape, leisure, and a search for self**

Conceptualising second-generation 'returnees' to southern Turkey as lifestyle migrants can be argued on two main grounds. First, they conform to the motivations of mainstream lifestyle migrants, who are looking for a sociogeographic setting where a 'better way of life' can be lived, at least for a while (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a). They have different priorities to those members of the second generation who have settled in

their parents' place of origin and in big cities like Istanbul and Ankara, where family duties are paramount and where material status in terms of finding a 'good' job and salary is very important. The research findings for the second generation who relocated to the southern touristic towns show that this group prioritises social life and aesthetic considerations over economic factors such as career progression and income, and for this reason they may envision their stay in Antalya as nonpermanent or as a staging post in their lives – without, however, being clear what the next step might be. As opposed to the standard 'economic migrant' or returnee, they are looking for a work/leisure balance tipped more towards leisure and life enjoyment. This stress on sociability builds on both their human capital (derived from the German educational system, with excellent knowledge of German and other languages, notably English) and their cultural capital (knowing both German and Turkish cultures and customs), which they can use for both economic benefit and an enriched social and cultural life.

The second reason why the lifestyle framework is used is more existential: those participants who have settled in these southern coastal areas see the move there as a "project of the self" (Benson and Osbaldiston 2014: 7). Their evocation of postmodern reflexivity resonates with a conceptualisation of lifestyle migration as the quest for a better life through finding one's 'true self' (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a: 610). Often the search for the true self is performed by settling in a location perceived as somehow 'authentic' or 'alternative'. However, as studies of the tourism experience have shown, the notion of authenticity is deeply problematic, resting on an often false dichotomy of the urban-industrial milieu as 'inauthentic' and 'dystopian' and the tourist destination (or in this case the Turkish 'homeland') as 'authentic' or 'utopian' (MacCannell 1976; Wang 1999). What tourists (and returnees) find instead is a kind of "staged authenticity" (MacCannell 1973) created for their benefit, or rather the economic benefit of those involved in marketing the tourism 'product'. In the eyes of our research participants the Antalya region is undoubtedly perceived as a utopian paradise: 'authentic' in that capitalistic modernity is not so dominant as in other parts of Turkey or in Germany, and 'alternative' in that this is a place where they can escape their prior constraints and conflicts and achieve a more hedonistic and relaxed lifestyle. However, not all of them are alive to the intrinsically ambiguous position they hold in shifting the character of the place away from its constructed image of being some kind of 'authentic' utopian paradise.

## 5.1 Escapism

Thematic analysis revealed that the term 'escape' occurred frequently in the participant narratives. Some participants stressed escape *from* some thing, some place, or some

situation; others stressed escaping *to* the new utopian destination in southern Turkey. 'Escape from' narratives were generally less about the problematic nature of Germany *per se* and more about personal, family, or economic difficulties, such as a failed business, a career blockage, a divorce, or some other kind of family rupture. Behind these specific circumstances were more general problems like feeling somehow 'stuck' between the inward-looking space of Turkish family life in Germany and the wider social space of the host country. Whilst this combination can produce vibrant identity mixes which are seen as transnational, cosmopolitan, and syncretic (Kaya 2007), there can also be confusion, contestation, and constant negotiation between different identity sets, which leads the second generation to seek a fresh start where they can focus on improving themselves and their lives.

However, it was the specifics of family-related problems which emerged as dominant in narrating the initial 'return' project, as the following example shows. Arda (male, 33, Antalya) was born and raised in a small town on the fringes of the Ruhr industrial region. His parents migrated from the Aegean region of Turkey in the early 1970s: in Germany they were factory workers and also part-time musicians in Turkish bars. Arda's family life fell apart when his parents divorced and he desperately felt the need to escape. When he was 16 he moved to Turkey, voluntarily following his sister, and living initially with his grandmother in his father's village. Despite being a teenager, Arda's decision was his own: he thought it would be a safe move to firstly stay with his grandmother, as he did not know anybody else. Arda has remained estranged from his parents ever since. He explained his journey to Antalya in the following terms:

*I think my family situation affected me very badly. In a way I did not see the point of staying in Germany. When I moved to Turkey I devoted all my energy to learning English. Then I learnt Russian. People here [in Turkey] didn't know foreign languages back then... From my grandmother's village, I moved to Antalya because I knew I could get a job with my language skills. I started as a waiter in a hotel. Then I worked on cruise ships for a few years, entertaining kids and teenagers. Then I started work as a tour guide, which I still do, combining it with other jobs. The tourism sector is such an open field. That's why there are so many Turks from Germany here. Even on a bad day you earn 50 euros. Just stand in the street and offer tourists a guided mini-tour. It's enough to know German, you don't need any other qualifications.*

Arda's account points to two important aspects of life in Antalya for the Turkish-German second generation. The first is independence – being able to 'stand on your own two feet'. The second is that the area provides many job opportunities for those

with language skills and initiative. Arda's is a bold narrative of escape and mobility. His escape is a double one, first from small-town Germany and his parents' divorce, and then from the limiting environment of his grandmother's village in Turkey. He seems to have deliberately chosen jobs where he could move from one place to another, working on tours and cruise ships. His trajectory, at least thus far, perfectly exemplifies the crossroads between travel, leisure, work, and migration recently explored by Cohen et al. (2015). Arda has never had his own flat, choosing to take rooms in hotels and hostels in Antalya between his various trips. He puts his constant good mood down to a *carpe diem* philosophy which enables him to escape the mundane routines, responsibilities, and worries that others face in their 'ordinary' lives, and instead to enjoy the experience of encountering new people and cultures.

*I like the social environment in the tourism sector. Also, growing up with two cultures and being familiar with others through the multicultural setting in Germany, I feel that I am a global citizen, even though it says 'Turkish' on my identity card... I feel that I am different; I like adventure and challenge. I always wanted to escape the limited environment of Germany and in my grandmother's village. Here, I can follow my own principles, I try to seize the day, live in the moment.*

Our second example of an escape narrative also involves divorce – this time the participant's own, not his parents' – as well as a story of business failure. The case of Süleyman (aged 55) contrasts with that of Arda in that his 'return' to Turkey took place at a much later age – 37. Süleyman was born in Istanbul but taken by his parents to Germany aged two, settling in the industrial town of Duisburg in 1960. After a peripatetic career he set up an import/export company trading between Germany and Turkey, but this company eventually failed, bankrupting him. He first relocated to Istanbul to try to save his business, but to no avail. Meantime he went through two divorces, the first from his German wife, the second from a Russian wife. He moved to Antalya in 2004, where he runs a bar and a shop.

*When my company failed, I was left with a debt of millions [of Marks]. I am a self-made man, I had always been successful... but this project failed. I had travelled the world, seen a lot. I needed a fresh start, but this could not happen in Germany, as the debt collectors would be on my tail. I first came to Istanbul; my mother was living there at the time. But I could not handle it; I needed to be in a more international environment. Through my network of friends, I decided to settle in Antalya where I could use my German and earn money, which I did,*

*working in luxury jewellery shops... I do miss Germany from time to time, but Antalya is my home now. Here, we live in paradise.*

## **5.2 Balancing work and leisure**

An important part of the participants' lifestyle plans is to attain what they see as a more amenable balance between work and leisure. This is achieved by engaging in jobs with a high level of built-in sociality, including flexible working hours and easy-going working conditions, surrounded by tourists and by others who work in the tourism sector.<sup>5</sup>

The first case we introduce to illustrate this work/leisure rebalancing is 54 year-old Nejla, who arrived in Turkey at age 26. In Germany she had been working as a translator for the judicial courts, dealing with cases involving Turkish people, usually defendants. She found the job both tiring and boring, and was also worn down by all the negativity involved in constantly having to listen to the harsh comments of her German colleagues about Turkish people. She decided to start a new life in Turkey. Like the other participants we interviewed, she knew about Turkey from her previous visits: she had the impression of Turkey at that time (1980s) as a "backward country which was slowly developing but at least the people were nice and the weather was good."

Like both Arda and Süleyman, Nejla did not move directly to Antalya. She spent some years working in hotels and as a translator in Ankara (the Turkish capital) and Marmaris (a coastal town in south-west Turkey). Eventually she was offered a managerial job in a casino in Antalya, capitalising on her language skills and international work experience. She had been living in Antalya for more than 20 years at the time of the interview, and had recently moved from the casino job into freelance translation work. Nejla is unmarried and does not have children. She said she is happy with her single life: "I never felt I needed a man. Live your life, travel, have adventures and live for yourself." She sees Antalya as an ideal place to live because she does not have to explain anything to anyone. She is accepted as a single and independent woman – something that would be less easy in other parts of Turkey.

In terms of work–life balance, Nejla is a clear example of doing jobs (in hotels, tourism, the casino etc.) that are enjoyable and bring a wide social circle. Her hotel casino work, especially, involved many social activities, including Rotary Club

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<sup>5</sup> In a seasonal touristic location such as Antalya this work/leisure balance is not always achieved, with the likelihood of too much work during the holiday season and enforced leisure during the winter. Cyclical variations in tourist numbers are also relevant in the context of recent political and social disturbances in Turkey.



meetings, charity functions, business dinners, and parties. When asked about her future plans, she replied:

*I am happy in Antalya; I would never go back to Germany. Antalya is a lovely place to live, here everybody knows me... The sales people know me, the cafes and restaurants and the shopping centres know me, because basically I was bringing in a lot of tourists. I have contact with everyone here. Basically, Antalya is my hub.*

Another woman who has pursued a working life that is combined with her interests and leisure activities is Yıldız (49), who owns a hairdressing and beauty parlour. She moved to Antalya in 2005 aged 41 – another mature ‘returnee’. Her return was enmeshed in that of other family members: she started visiting Turkey more often after her parents and her sister returned in the 1990s. Her dual citizenship, acquired through marriage, enabled her to move back and forth with ease. Then her son went to Turkey for his high-school education and continued at university in Antalya. She wanted to follow her son and so she moved her nuclear family there, including her daughter who subsequently went back to Germany for university.

Yıldız’s salon is located in the Old Town and her clientele is mostly German plus some other European nationalities, both tourists and those who have settled longer-term. Her job is her passion and hobby. Having qualified as a hair-stylist in Germany she is familiar with the tastes of a largely German customer base, and her fluency in German and English provides her with a working environment similar to what she knew in Germany. Like many others whom we interviewed in Antalya and adjacent resorts, she moved there for a mix of economic and lifestyle motives. She mused, “Well, there are many foreigners living down here. And I would live in a relaxed environment with a holiday mood all year round.” Although she was aware of the increasingly traditional religious and cultural direction of Turkey, she felt she inhabited a social space that was insulated from recent political developments.

*Fortunately I am living in Kaleiçi [Old Town] and my shop is right next to my house. So I can forget about those current problems in Turkey. Kaleiçi is another world, different from anywhere else. I have customers from all over Europe. I practically only speak German and English during the day. I follow German news and the European news, because my customers talk about what’s happening and I need to keep up with them. I guess I created a little Germany or Europe in this shop, and this makes me feel as if I am living in Germany. I have a strong connection with my customers. Last year my husband and I went*

*on a European tour and we met many of my customers – some hosted us, took us out for dinner.*

### **5.3 Searching for one's true self and a better life**

We follow Kaya (2007) in crediting the Turkish second generation in Germany with a high degree of self-reflexivity. Kaya deploys the notion of 'syncretic culture' to describe the Turkish-German transnational experience. Their "dynamic patterns of syncretism" (2007: 485) mix together elements of Turkish, German, European, and global-cosmopolitan culture in a bricolage that is ever-evolving, a cultural identity that is as much about 'becoming' as 'being'. The key question is where second-generation Turkish-Germans can best express their 'true' identity and live lives that are a faithful reflection of their selves (Benson and O'Reilly 2009a: 610). Based on thematic narrative analysis, our findings show that the informants who settle along the Antalya coast have a decidedly postmodernist view of their identities, seeing themselves as cosmopolitan and/or global citizens who feel attached to Turkey and Germany in different and fluid ways, but who also articulate wider identificatory repertoires. Many of their 'return' migration stories contain the notion of searching for a new 'home' to which, to quote Rapport and Dawson (1998: 6-9), they can feel they belong and therefore "best know and be themselves". Home, therefore, becomes a journey, in which the construction of home is not necessarily tied to a fixed location nor is inevitably a permanent temporal construct, but rather emerges out of evolving relationships to place and to people.

Our informants commonly stressed that they chose to live in Antalya and its surrounds because this was the most international and open-minded place that they could access to realise their lifestyle choices. In their narratives we see that the participants are engaged in an ongoing search for their 'true selves' through experiencing the most that they can, believing that this will 'return' them to a better, more satisfying, and fulfilling life. Going back to the interview with Arda (male, 33), he explains his ideas on self, identity, and belonging in the following simple yet eloquent words:

*Germany is not my home... but then neither is Turkey. Until now, I was always somewhere else and there was no place where I felt I belonged. Recently I started thinking: where is my home? Home is an emotional thing. There are Turkish people who have lived in Germany for fifty years but claim that Turkey is their home... I don't want to invest my energy into thinking where my home is – it does not matter. I need to experience and to see more to decide. People*

*always long for things, things to hold on to, to feel safe. Perhaps because I grew up without parents, I feel independent and I don't need that safety feeling. I am homeless and that's OK!*

Despite his earlier escapist account and his wish, expressed immediately above, to travel and see more, later on in his extensive narrative Arda indicated that Antalya would be the place where he would eventually put down his roots. This was explained with reference both to the international atmosphere of the place and to the sense of 'non-belonging' he felt towards other places elsewhere in Turkey or in Germany.

The second example of finding 'self' and feeling 'in the right place' in Antalya comes from Nazan's narrative. She is aged 44 and was born to guestworker parents in a small town in Germany. Unlike nearly all of the other participants, her parents come from Antalya. Partly because of this, and their Alevi background (a more heterodox variety of Islam), her family were more flexible than most guestworker Turks, who came from rural Anatolia. When she moved away from home at the age of 18 her parents were fine with her decision, but the local Turks in the neighbourhood criticised the family for letting this happen – according to their traditional values, a girl moving out alone before marriage is unacceptable behaviour. After a difficult marriage that ended in divorce, she brought her two children to settle in Antalya in 2002, when she was 32 years old. She knew the place from summer holidays and she had close relatives there. Through her family networks she started seasonal work in hotels, and then moved into more stable employment in shops. She currently works in a clothing store in the Old Town. Aside from the working environment, she emphasised that Antalya offers her the space to be herself as a single mother with an independent spirit.

*To be honest, I feel more comfortable being a woman in Antalya than in Germany, because in Germany we were surrounded by Turkish families and they were really conservative and judgemental. Most Turks in Germany are that way; they stick to their traditional values. Here I can comfortably live as a divorced woman with two children... I love being single. I enjoy coming home from work and doing whatever I want. And in Antalya, I can do this without people interfering in my life choices.*

## **6. Concluding discussion**

This paper has brought counter-diasporic migration and the lifestyle optic into dialogue with one another. We feel that this has been a productive conversation, leading to an enhanced understanding of why second-generation Turkish-Germans 'return' to their

parental homeland, especially to the 'paradise' of the scenically, climatically, and culturally attractive south-coast region around Antalya. But it is clear that while some returnee migrants plan to settle for good because of the special attractions of the place, others see it more as a staging post and may eventually move on.<sup>6</sup> Another key theme echoing through this paper has been the role of disruptive events in triggering or shaping the return process. In various interviews, instances of racism and discrimination in Germany, family break-up, and issues with a general 'bad' environment (unemployment, drug abuse etc.) all surfaced. These led to the idea of getting out of Germany and beginning a new life in Turkey.

The narratives illustrate that 'home' is not a fixed place but is in constant flux, like individuals' feelings about and ties to it. The narratives highlight that it is not always the case that 'home' is a secure place where one can feel familiar and safe. Instead, home appears as an 'in-the-making' process, dependent on the individual's investments in different types of capital. The paper shows that Antalya enables this alternative way of understanding and reinventing 'home' for the second generation due to its international and relatively liberal atmosphere.

The importance of counter-diasporic migration as an emplaced process based on "intersections, connections and interrelations" (Massey 1995: 59) is vividly illustrated by the hybrid urban/rural/tourist/seaside space of Antalya and its nearby smaller towns. In the interviewees' narratives we see the variable cultural and landscape qualities that they ascribe to their version of paradise: it is urban, with an Old Town, but also with fields and mountains close by, whilst its touristic function draws in people from different European countries, lending it a carefree, cosmopolitan air as well as offering business and livelihood opportunities.

All three types of lifestyle migration named by Benson and O'Reilly (2009a) – residential tourism, the rural idyll, and the bohemian lifestyle – are present in our research material, together with a fourth, which we added ourselves: the lively cosmopolitan urban milieu. The paper thus stresses the importance of the sociospatial context of this particular type of 'return', different from other 'return' contexts such as large cities (Ankara, Istanbul) or rural hometowns and villages. Participants likened Antalya to a community which is both close, in that the high degree of social contact promoted by working in the tourist sector means that social networks are strong, and also cosmopolitan, alternative, and diverse, with many nationalities and lifestyles present and a generally tolerant attitude – almost a 'parallel society'. Here, second-generation 'returnees' feel psychosocially secure in a living environment where there are people who share their migratory background and values. The narratives reveal that many of them know each other, go to bars/pubs to drink German beer together, and

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<sup>6</sup> Subsequent visits to the region since the fieldwork in 2014 have revealed that several of our research participants have indeed moved on.

bring each other presents if they visit Germany. But there are also constraints around the choice to live in Antalya and southern Turkey. Many participants mentioned that they would try to move to other countries if their international mobility were not limited by the possession of a Turkish (i.e., non-EU) passport. Therefore, by moving to Antalya they are taking the best available option, finding a place where they can enjoy a relaxed, even unconventional way of life surrounded by people with an international mindset. In this respect our study opens a new window on the growing field of research on counter-diasporic migration, where notions of the ethnic and ancestral homeland as a repository of kinship ties and traditional values are often strong (e.g., Christou and King 2014).

In terms of social class – a crucial defining feature of lifestyle migration, according to Benson and O'Reilly (2009a) – we find that the participants have fluid class backgrounds, made more complex by the fact that they reference two social systems: the German system where they were socialised for the first part of their lives and the Turkish one where they reside now. But this is to over-simplify, for they are inserted as a fundamental constitutive component in the specific touristic social formation that is Antalya, with its mix of autochthonous residents, internal migrants from the interior, first- and second-generation returnees, Turkish tourists, and foreign, mainly Northern European, tourists and residents. The Turkish-German 'returnees' are not a homogenous class but include hierarchies that are based on education, German and Turkish fluency, and parental origin (in Turkey, and place of residence in Germany). To give a specific example, those second-generationers who come from big cities such as Munich, Hamburg, or Cologne tend to criticise the German skills and accents of those who come from small industrial towns.

Rather than social class, we found the Bourdieusian concept of types of capital – human, social, (trans)cultural etc. – more useful in understanding the ability of participants to effect 'return' and carve out a living for themselves. Sometimes this livelihood develops and increases in status over time; for instance, as individuals move from casual work into managerial and ownership positions. In other cases almost the reverse process occurs as people downsize their working lives and create more time for leisure. The adjustment of the work/leisure balance is carried out in two ways: by adjusting time allocation in favour of leisure (e.g., by working part-time or seasonally), and by doing tourist-related work that combines the two and provides lots of social and leisure contacts.

Finally, in analysing and interpreting the participants' narratives we highlighted three dominant discursive themes, all characteristic of lifestyle migration stories. First, we noted that people were escaping from personal and family histories that were in various ways challenging or even traumatic, and were seeking a new and more easy-going life as an antidote to past difficulties. Rather than escape to Istanbul or another big city where they would be small fish, they opt for the idea of being bigger fish in the

more intimate, slow-paced environment of the south coast, which they have constructed as a paradise of beautiful nature, benign climate, and free-and-easy lifestyle and where they can easily find employment and create a more relaxed work–life balance (the second narrative theme). At least that was the idea; it was a bit of a gamble and they did not always think it through. For many it worked out, and they are content in their paradise, at least for now, in their current young-to-middle-age life stage. For others, reality has been somewhat different from that imagined, and achieving their desired work–life balance has brought some disillusionment. There have been instances of social or ideological conflict with the local or internal-migrant Turkish populations, and of being ripped off in the areas of employment and investment.

The 'search for self' reflects a deeper level of narrative discourse. Relocating to southern Turkey is seen as a process of connecting with, and being able to express, one's inner sense of self. As Christou has shown in her pioneering study of Greek-Americans, second-generation 'returnees' construct their 'return-to-homeland' project as a search for identity and cultural belongingness (2006: 18). For both Greek-Americans and Turkish-Germans the journey to the homeland is both geographical and a psychological and existential trip, a (re-)discovery of self and belonging by being in the place where they want to be and where they can best know themselves (Christou 2006: 218; Rapport and Dawson 1998: 9). The Turkish-German second generation in Antalya is certainly on this 'journey to self' but, as in many journeys, they are uncertain about the final destination. In this sense they are intermediate between travellers, always on the move, and diasporic subjects, forever oriented to their resting place in the diasporic homeland.

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