

2000 Families – Episode 3

Education

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Migrants, migration, Turkey, education, Europe, generations, families, countries, societies, Turkish, Turks, individuals, project, outcomes, study, dataset, integration, obtain, policymakers, children.

SPEAKERS

Dr Sait Bayraktar, Christine Garrington

Christine Garrington 00:02

This is the 2000 Families Research Project podcast series, looking at the impact of migration across three generations of Turkish families. In today's podcast, Dr Sait Bayraktar from the University of Essex, talks about early findings from the project about the educational achievements of the study's participants.

Dr Sait Bayraktar 00:22

In the 2000, feminist study, we have this unique data set on Turkish migrants and their descendants. The important thing for us is to understand whether Turks in Europe actually benefited from migration. Therefore, I studied the highest education level obtained by around 15,000 migrants and non migrants individuals. And it showed the highest education level of an individual. It's important because it shows the skills and qualifications of individuals recognized by the institutions. And of course, this variable can be also harmonised internationally so researchers can make cross national comparisons.

Christine Garrington 01:00

You mentioned that you use the data from the 2000 Families Project, I wonder what sorts of things migrants and non migrants were asked in that dataset about their education that was helpful to you and the things that you wanted to look at specifically?

Dr Sait Bayraktar 01:13

Yeah so they were asked a set of questions on education, obviously we asked them the highest level of education they obtained. For those who have never been in education, we ask about their literacy, because we had also people quite old in the dataset. And as we conducted interviews with people over 18, some are still in education. So we ask if they were still in education or not. And we also asked the country they completed their education.

Christine Garrington 01:42

Are you able to give us an overview of the sorts of information that you ended up with on whom?

Dr Sait Bayraktar 01:47

Yeah one conclusion for us, was that these families were transnational, in terms of the country of education, we saw that actually many of the children of migrants were actually educated in Turkey, and vice versa. They had members in multiple countries, some of them were in Europe, while others have returned to Turkey or have not lived in Europe at all. We found that those who had education in Europe obtain higher educational outcomes than those who had education in Turkey. We also found that both groups obtain higher educational outcomes in the younger generations. Each generation has better educational outcomes than the previous one.

Christine Garrington 02:33

So you compared the educational outcomes of those who left Turkey for Europe and those who stayed behind. What did you find there? Tell us a bit more about that.

Dr Sait Bayraktar 02:41

We see that those educated in Europe obtain higher levels of education than those educated in Turkey. However, we see that the gap between Turkey in Europe and Turkey is getting smaller across generations. And I attribute this trend to the education expansion, which takes place, of course, both in Turkey and in Europe. Expansion started much earlier in Europe, but it is now also taking place in Turkey and actually at a higher price. Whether it will be at the same level in both Europe and Turkey that's for us to see in the future.

Christine Garrington 03:02

Now the findings here not necessarily surprising, but I wonder do they bring a sort of a sharper focus to our understanding? And if so, can you explain a bit how?

Dr Sait Bayraktar 03:24

Yeah, sure. I think what's striking here is that we have the opportunity to compare Turkey in Europe and Turkey and Turkey for the first time with such a large survey data. By the ambitious efforts of the 2000 Families Project we are now able to explore the differences in a variety of economic, social and cultural outcomes. When we look at the migration literature we often see that the study is comparing migrants with natives or other migrant groups in the destination countries. And we think such a comparison is of course, very important regarding their integration trajectory. But what we don't see is actually whether they are actually advancing at all compared to what they would have done back in Turkey if they didn't migrate. We want to complete the picture of assimilation by showing the other part, the part that shows actually migrants to change and they differ from their current mix in the origin countries. They are in a process of adapting themselves economically, socially, and also culturally.

Christine Garrington 04:27

So what are the sorts of factors came into play when you looked at education across generations, from generation to generation?

Dr Sait Bayraktar 04:33

Yeah, actually that's one of the novelties of the study. Thanks to the lineage data over two generations in the dataset, I had the chance to investigate transmissions across three generations. Obviously, parental background is very important for educational outcomes and those families with better resources can support their children to a greater extent and that's not only for migrants, but all individuals living in a society. But not surprisingly we see that parental resources are important for both migrant, non migrant Turks. But on the other hand, we also see that Turkish parents in Europe are less able to transfer their resources to their children into destination countries. While in Turkey individuals benefit from the resources from their parents and even grandparents. We don't see that happening at the same level for migrants in Europe. I believe that migrant parents often cannot utilise the knowledge and the skills they obtained in Turkey prior to their migration.

Christine Garrington 05:34

Do you think this tells us something about the longer term impacts and effects of moving to another country?

Dr Sait Bayraktar 05:40

Yes, migration of course is a very complex phenomenon and often has effects on multiple generations. What we can say is that it has many advantages for migrants but disadvantages always, or usually come with the price. The education outcomes of Turks have been on the research agenda for several decades. And on average, we know that education outcomes of Turks in Europe are lower than natives and also many of the other migrant groups in the countries they live in. However, with 2000 Families Project now we see that actually they are advancing compared to the cohorts that is left behind in Turkey. And thanks to migration men have better opportunities than what they would have without migration.

Christine Garrington 06:26

And then just finally, I wonder if that you, you feel there are some sort of key takeaway points for policymakers and all those people trying to better understand what drives and motivates migrants today?

Dr Sait Bayraktar 06:37

Migration is not a new phenomenon, and it doesn't seem to be over anytime soon. Migrants as all other individuals, they are looking for better ways of living and let them be economic migrants or asylum seekers, it's the same. And they are just hoping for a better life outcomes for themselves and their families. I think that has not changed for decades, if not centuries. In this project, we explored the Turkish case, but I think it's fair to say that this is the story of guest workers that came in the 60s on also about their children, many others came to Northern Europe from Spain, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, or Morocco. For Turks, we see some wrong patterns of adaptation in certain domains of integration, so it seems possible to empower them to actively participate in the societies, in the receiving societies. I believe that governments do not always manage migration in the best possible ways, and at times societies feel the tension caused by a combination of factors related to migration. The important thing I think, is to accept that change is constant. Rather than being part of the tension policymakers should look for ways that migrants can actively participate in the societies. I think the cost of migration can be

eased by the strong integration policies and fighting against discrimination. And then hopefully, new wave of migrants will be more successful than the previous

Christine Garrington 08:03

Dr. Sait Bayraktar was talking to Chris Garrington about his research on education, which features in Intergenerational Consequences of Migration, Socio Economic, Family and Cultural Patterns of Stability and Change in Turkey and Europe, which is published by Palgrave Macmillan. You can find out more about the Norface funded 2000 Families Research Project at www.2000families.org.