

MIGRATION AND READING ACTIVITY: A STUDY OF THE TURKISH AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND THE TURKISH AUSTRIAN COMMUNITY, SAN FRANCISCO AND VIENNA

Abstract

How does reading activity change after migration in different cultural contexts? This is the underlying question of this study, which investigates the reading habits, preferences, and behavior of Turkish migrants in Vienna and San Francisco.

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INTRODUCTION

Every week, when I join a Turkish children's reading group in the neighborhood center of my district in Vienna, I ask the Turkish woman who initiated the club what the children like reading, why there are no high school students coming, if they read Turkish books mainly in school or at home, and so on. As she tells me, five children are the maximum number of students – all of them between 9 and 11 years old – participating in the half-hour course. She tells me about the difficulties of the children reading and understanding books that are read in schools in Turkey at this age. Since 2011, Austrian media has been boiling with the discussion of whether Turkish should be taught as a secondary language in Austrian public schools; at the moment, only some schools in Vienna offer Turkish as a secondary language and one school offers the possibility to take the high-school exit exam ("Matura") in Turkish. Although, at 114,740, Turkish citizens constitute the largest migrant¹ group in Austria² no higher education in form of a bachelors or Masters programs for Turkish as taught language is currently offered. The plan for such a program has been discarded several times since the University of Graz first announced it³ and leads to mostly politically phrased discussions about migration, integration and the Turkish community in Austria. In addition to the limited amount of Turkish language classes at public schools, several Turkish organizations and foundations in Vienna offer Turkish language and literature courses.

Although the Turkish population in California is significantly lower (15,104 according to the U.S. Census Bureau),⁴ several organizations including the AATT (American Association of Teachers of Turkish Languages) support Turkish education at American schools and universities. Several academics in America formulated a "Language Learning Framework for Turkish" in 1996⁵ with funding from the National Council of Organizations of Less

¹ The term "migrant" is commonly used for the Turkish community in Europe (first and following generations), while in North America "immigrant" – denoting a person who migrated for work and study to stay permanently – is more frequent. Since my research is grounded in Europe, the standard term "migrant" is used throughout the paper.

² Statistik Austria, 2014:

http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/bevoelkerungsstruktur/bevoelkerung_nach_staatsangehoerigkeit_geburtsland/index.htm

³ For 2015 the University of Graz announced the program:

<http://derstandard.at/2000008032665/Lehramt-fuer-Tuerkisch-ab-2015-fix>

⁴ With an Increase in Turkish students at Berkeley+15.38% change from 2013.

http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/students/current/enrollment_data.

⁵ By Ayla Algar, Engin Sezer, Sibel Erol, Ralph Jaekel.

<http://international.ucla.edu/media/files/LLFreport-ss-t1m.pdf>

Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL), where the importance of literature in Turkish language education is stressed. Nevertheless, other publications suggest that Turkish language and literature is still not taught in most of the American schools.⁶

Significance

As illustrated above, the impact of Turkish language education in Europe and the USA does not correspond to the amount of Turkish-speaking people living in these areas. In both Vienna and San Francisco an increased organization and institutionalization within the Turkish community is taking place. In the recent years some of these societies and organizations called for improved Turkish language education in schools and at universities in both Europe and the U.S.⁷ Since the discussions around these issues are mostly led by politicians, the needs of the Turkish speaking communities are widely overlooked, especially when it comes to reading and writing.⁸ By widening the focus of German-Turkish migration issues in contemporary research, the comparative analysis of two different areas aims at evaluating common results in order to formulate guidelines for assessing reading activity of migrant communities and provide insights for language and literature education.

Research Question

What and how do Turkish migrants read? Based on this question the proposed study explores how reading activity relates to migration and vice versa. Which factors define the change in reading behavior of Turkish migrant communities? How can we analyze these factors in different cultural contexts? How are reading preferences conditioned upon these factors? How does availability of reading material in the native language influence reading activity after migration? By identifying and analyzing contributing factors in reading activity related to these questions, this study hopes to draw attention to the significance of literature to migration, the importance of language and literature education, and to reach institutions and the public with information on the needs of the Turkish community.

Case Studies

Fieldwork was conducted in San Francisco and Vienna, focusing on literary consumption and reading habits of the Turkish migrant community. In each city eight semi-structured

⁶ <http://www.cal.org/heritage/pdfs/briefs/turkish-heritage-language-schools-in-the-us.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.cal.org/heritage/pdfs/briefs/turkish-heritage-language-schools-in-the-us.pdf>

⁸ The survey (2010) „Türkische Migrant/-innen in Österreich:

Zahlen. Fakten. Einstellungen“ (Turkish Migrants in Austria: Number. Facts. Outlooks) from the Austrian Integrationsfonds gives numbers for how many Turkish migrants read Turkish newspaper or watch Turkish television, but not for reading Turkish literature.

http://www.integrationsfonds.at/oeif_dossiers/tuerkische_migrant_innen_in_oesterreich_zahlen_fakten_einstellungen/

interviews with members of the Turkish migrant community were conducted. The analysis of reading activity and migration through two case-studies is not intended to assess which of the populations is more or less developed regarding education and reading activity, but rather, to serve as a basis from which to look at different cultural and social contexts and to present a versatile picture of how migration affects reading activity in different geographical, social, and cultural contexts.

Literature Review

As previously mentioned, Turkish migration and its impact on education and culture in the German context are extensively discussed topics. The excellent academic work of Deniz Göktürk is but one example of research in the recent years⁹ specifically dealing with cinema and Turkish identity. While scholarly literature on Turkish language and literature education is sparse, for the Austrian context, the books by Inci Dirim are an important source. Dirim reconsiders common notions related to Turkish as a foreign language, while she emphasizes the relevance of multilingual education.¹⁰ Bahar Otcu offers an ethnolinguistic overview of Turkish language education in American schools by drawing on an example of a Saturday school in New York.¹¹ The linkage between identity and language is the defining topic of her publications.¹² While linguistic research topics seem to be dominant, literature consumption, production and its connection to education remains a marginal issue. Major surveys on the Turkish communities in Austria only investigate media consumption for television and newspapers.¹³ Academic publications such as the “Language Learning Framework for Turkish” support the practical application of specialist knowledge about Turkish language teaching to the educational realm. Hence, this study aims to add to existing academic literature while extending the geographical limitations to a comparative framework for analyzing reading activity and migration.

⁹Deniz Göktürk(2007), *Germany in Transit. Nation and Migration, 1955-2005. A Sourcebook*. Co-edited with David Gramling and Anton Kaes. Berkeley: University of California Press.

¹⁰ Interview with Inci Dirim in the Austrian newspaper „Der Standard” (09.06.2011)
<http://derstandard.at/1304554024377/Rassismus-der-Sprache-Oesterreich-Tuerkisch-ist-keine-Fremdsprache>

¹¹ Otcu,B. (2010). *Language maintenance and cultural identity construction: A linguistic ethnography of Discourses in a complementary school in the US*. VDM Verlag Dr. Muller.

¹² Otcu,B. (2010). *Heritage language maintenance and cultural identity formation: The case of a Turkish Saturday school in NYC*. *Heritage Language Journal*, 7(2), 112-137.

¹³ GfK-Austria GmbH. *Integration in Österreich. Einstellungen, Orientierungen, und Erfahrungen*.
http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMI_Service/Integrationsstudie.pdf

Literature on readership and reading habits from the past thirty years mostly favors quantitative research methods such as surveys to investigate reading activity as well as guided interviews [Guthrie and Seifert 1984, 45]. This study therefore hopes to be an asset by proposing a qualitative approach, that investigates the cultural and social influence on reading activity as linked to language use and migration. For the Turkish migrant communities in Austria and the US no extensive study to-date exists that measures the reading of fiction due to the lack of quantitative data and the methodological challenge it presents.

Methods

For groups in both locations a total of sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted based on themes – factors of reading activity¹⁴ – such as reading habits, choices, motivation, preferences, language education and use, and others. The aggregated data is then reported for each case study in themes to represent each population in relation to their cultural context.

Hypothesis and Aim

My hypothesis is that reading activity is strongly influenced by migration. Depending on availability of reading material in the native language as well as social and cultural networks, changes in reading activity might vary for different cultural contexts. Turkish language usage in the form of reading Turkish literature is strongly dependent on social networks and exchange. In this study I want to provide insight to different actors who encourage Turkish literary education and depict the needs and interests of the Turkish speaking populace while stressing the significance of literature for society, specifically concerning migration and integration. This study hopes to incite the creation of an index of reading activity for migrant communities for future research.

1. APPROACHES TO THE ANALYSIS OF READING ACTIVITY IN MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Although a quantitative approach using sales figures, circulation statistics, library circulation data, as well as the extended use of online media platforms such as Kindle, Goodreads, etc. may be insightful for certain migrant communities with increased online reading activity, in the case of the Turkish migrant communities in San Francisco and Vienna, qualitative data appears to provide more fruitful material about reading habits, particularly the amount of reading and the content of reading activity. As we will see, the circulation of books seems to take place mostly through friends and family and books are predominantly acquired in the

¹⁴ Based on the readership index proposed by Guthrie and Seifert [1984]

home country. E-books and library usage also seemed to have little effect on most of the interviewed subject's reading habits.

Production of reading material does not guarantee contact between reader and writer nor the utilization of information by the intended audience. [Guthrie and Seifert 1984, 10]

As is discussed here, reading habits of fiction appear to be a special case, quite different from newspapers or articles both online and in print. The challenges and implications of reading habits for fiction are addressed in one of the following themes.

Rather than proposing a quantitative measure for readership – as discussed in former studies such as Guthrie and Seifert – this study follows a qualitative approach to analyze and contextualize reading habits¹⁵ of the Turkish migrant community. Through the qualitative approach this study seeks to communicate reading habits of the Turkish migrant community on an individual level, hoping to foster cross-cultural awareness and communication in future research and social life.

Past qualitative studies using semi-structured interviews to analyze readership and reading activity mostly used reader typologies and identified reader groups based on social, educational factors and reading preferences. In his study about reading habits Andreas Schröder [2006] uses semi-structured interviews to analyze the usage of E-books versus print media by outlining different user profiles, such as the “Computer User”, “The Book-lover”, “The Library User” [Schröder 2006, 42]. In his Master's thesis, an extensive analysis of the media usage of Turkish migrants in Austria, Attila Özgül [2006] also conducted semi-structured interviews and analyzed them according to a typology proposed by Hafez [2002], according to which media, Turkish or Austrian, is predominantly used, participants are assigned to a user profile such as “The Bicultural user”, “The Transcultural User”, “The Assimilation User” etc.

In accordance with the aim of this study – to outline the cultural and social context for each case study and investigate reading activity of a certain group within the migrant community rather than sketching out user or reader-profiles – I am interested in themes through which the relations between reading activity and migration can be made visible. I will discuss the results of the interviews in themes, which are contextualized in their social, economical and cultural background.

¹⁵ ‘Reading habit’ or ‘Leseverhalten’ in this text is used to refer to the act of reading any medium, print or digital.

2. STUDY PROCEDURE

This section addresses how subjects were recruited and how the study has been conducted. Interviews were conducted in San Francisco and Vienna during July and August 2016.

San Francisco Case Study

The Office for the Protection of Human Subjects at UC Berkeley has reviewed and approved my request to conduct this project on June 29, 2016. Upon receiving the confirmation, a meeting was scheduled with the founder and president of the Berkeley Turkish School.¹⁶ Most of the study participants were recruited through personal contact at and through the school. In addition, a call for participation was posted on several media platforms such as Facebook groups. The call for participants was also broadcasted on the “San Francisco Turkish Radio”. Interviews were then scheduled through email contact. Interviews were conducted during July and August 2016. A total of eight individuals were interviewed in San Francisco during that period. Half of the interviews were conducted during individual meetings, the other half via phone calls or on skype. Consent forms were distributed to and signed by the interviewees.

Vienna Case Study

Prior to the arrival in Vienna in mid July 2016, possible study participants were contacted at meetings of the “Vereinigung der Studenten und Jugendlichen aus der Türkei in Wien” (Society of Students and Youth from Turkey in Vienna) and through personal contacts. Interview sessions took place individually during August 2016 in person or on the phone. A total of eight individuals were interviewed.

Interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. All responses were recorded through notes taken during the interview sessions; no audio recordings were made.¹⁷ The language in which the questions were asked and answers were given was alternating between, English, Turkish and German depending on subject and situation. Some questions appeared to be easier to ask and answer in Turkish. Upon request of the participant the language was switched. It is interesting to note that most of the individuals preferred to be interviewed in Turkish, while demographic information was mostly given in the language of their country of residence. Additionally, questions regarding Turkish fiction were answered predominantly in Turkish, since book titles were also given in Turkish in most cases.

¹⁶ <http://www.berkeleyturkishschool.org>

¹⁷ Due to the limited time frame of four months to conduct the study, an application to make audio recordings to The Office for the Protection of Human Subjects would have exceeded this time window.

As a basis for the the guided semi-structured interview a question catalogue was composed consisting of 45 questions. Ten of which related to demographic information such as age, gender, birthplace, education, occupation, year of migration. The 35 remaining questions about reading habits, motivation and preferred media/genres/authors etc. can be structured in the following themes. Depending on the conversation during the interview and the given answers, the sequence of the questions was changed to support a continuous flow. Each interview started with demographic questions and basic questions regarding reading frequency.

3. THEMES

The themes can be collected under three umbrella terms that together represent what Guthrie and Seifert call the “readership index” and are necessary for a “well-rounded description of a person’s reading activities:” medium, content and volume [Guthrie and Seifert 1984, 18].

For this study these three terms prove to be helpful to summarize a variety of factors that are specific to a reader community. Additional themes are added to this rather general set of features for a readership index as a feature set specific to these case studies regarding language and opinion about Turkish literary education.

Some determinants that have proven in previous studies to influence reading activity, as outlined by Guthrie and Seifert [1984], are reading material, urbanization, education, occupation, community size as well as personal factors such as gender and marital status, etc.

As the interviews show, some of these factors might have more influence on the reading activities of individuals than others. Family size may have a strong impact on reading activity for individual cases, while education and availability are more general factors. The selected subjects form a rather homogenous group according to social position, educational background and age. Accordingly, this study aims at extracting general factors that seem to influence reading behavior of migrants while also preserving case-specific individual factors regarding migration history and personal background. Since this study is primarily interested in fiction, questions about reading preferences were asked from more general (which genres etc.) to more specific questions about fiction. This study focuses on reading fiction more than other media.

3.1. Volume and Medium: Reading regularities for fiction and non-fiction

To give an idea of how much is being read, several questions were asked regarding quantity of reading material throughout the subject's life (childhood vs adulthood) to map out the periods in which reading activity decreased or increased. Subjects were asked to give a clear account of how often and for how long reading occurs. Investigating reading regularities this way helps to construct a timeline on which reading activities can be mapped throughout the life of a study participant.

For questions about reading regularity, amount of reading, as well as time spent on a medium or genre were asked to estimate what is being read when, not only on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis but also throughout the subject's lifetime (in school vs in adulthood vs currently). In addition to that, questions about time spent on reading were also asked. In alignment with the readership index proposed by Guthrie and Seifert [1984], the factor of volume is composed of number of books (media) read as well as time spent on reading. Individuals were asked to give approximate times (minutes) for reading activity on a day/a week/a month. Furthermore, subjects were asked to give an account of how many books they read on average every year and count how many books they have read during the past year.

Medium encompasses questions about the type of publication (print/online) and the type of text (fiction/nonfiction) to investigate the ratio of fiction vs. nonfiction and print vs online publications.

In their work Guthrie and Seifert point to the challenges of gathering and basing results on data about reading activity of fiction. They point out that readership of "fiction, which often has a high 'pass-around' rate" [Guthrie and Seifert 1984, 14] is therefore challenging to measure.

Figures on the reading of fiction may often be four or five times higher than those on sales and library withdrawals combined. [Guthrie and Seifert 1984, 14]

A qualitative approach to this feature reading activity of fiction vs. other texts gives insights on the migrant communities preferred medium as well as its relation to availability of reading material in Turkish in their country of residence and the underlying social networks of distribution.

3.2. Content: Reading preferences

This theme gives account of what is being read at the time of the interview including preferred genre and content.

As Guthrie and Seifert point out [1984, 17], statements about reading preferences might not always lead to sufficient findings. To clarify the findings of this study, questions were asked to differentiate between prior and current reading preferences as well as future desired reading choice.

Preferred place and time for reading is also included in reading preferences not related to content. Subjects were asked when and where they preferred to be reading.

3.3. Motivation and Reading Choices

Reading motivation and reading choices help to contextualize the material being read. To show the purpose of chosen material underlying the motivation to read, participants were asked if they mainly read for fun or for work/studies. Additionally, questions were asked regarding choices of material (How do you choose what to read?) as well as sources for recommendations. These and other questions about the use of media platforms as well as other recommendation networks (With whom do you talk about literature?) served to convey the underlying social network of reading choices.

3.4. Social Interactions regarding reading material

The question “With whom do you talk about literature?” serves to further make visible the social network of exchange of information about literature and reading material and is especially interesting to make visible the ties to the home country through communication.

3.5. Language

Study participants were asked to give basic information about the language actively used at home and at work to estimate the amount of Turkish vs. English/German/etc. and correlate it to passive language use – the language in which material is being read for different genres and publication formats. Other questions related to reading in Turkish specifically. Another interesting aspect regarded reading translations to estimate the continuous use of Turkish vs. the language of the country of residence.

3.6. Opinion regarding language education and material availability

Availability of reading material in Turkish in the country of residence is a significant factor on which other factors are strongly dependent, such as reading motivation, distribution and social networks. This theme serves to give insights into the shortcomings of current distribution practices of foreign fiction as well as secondary language education regarding reading and to give insights into the individual needs and wishes of the two populations.

3.7. Contemporary context

Reading activity is dependent on social, cultural and political developments relating to the populations examined. Ongoing political developments and events in specific seem to have a strong impact on reading activity. The time period in which the interviews were conducted overlaps with the attempted military coup d'état in Turkey on July 15, 2016.¹⁸ This is especially interesting, since recent developments in Turkey have had a wide media impact and the majority of participants reported to have been influenced directly or indirectly by this event in their personal and professional lives. This additional factor explains the increased amount of newspaper reading activity of some participants. Recent studies have shown that Turkey is a leading country in the use of social media.¹⁹ The qualitative approach of open semi-structured interview has proved very fruitful in exposing this additional factor. In a minority of cases the interview ended with a discussion on recent political developments in the home country.

In reporting the results, I do not focus on the influence of ongoing political developments for each case study, it is, however, necessary to keep it in mind as a relevant overarching factor.

4. DEMOGRAPHICS, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE SAN FRANCISCO AND VIENNA CASE STUDY

In this section the collected demographic data is discussed for both case studies to give an overview of the two populations. Homogeneity between the two groups is presented according to year of arrival as well as age and educational status. As it is visible in the figure below, arrival years range from 1976 to 2016, while the majority of individuals arrived to the current place of residence after 2000.

4.1. San Francisco Participants

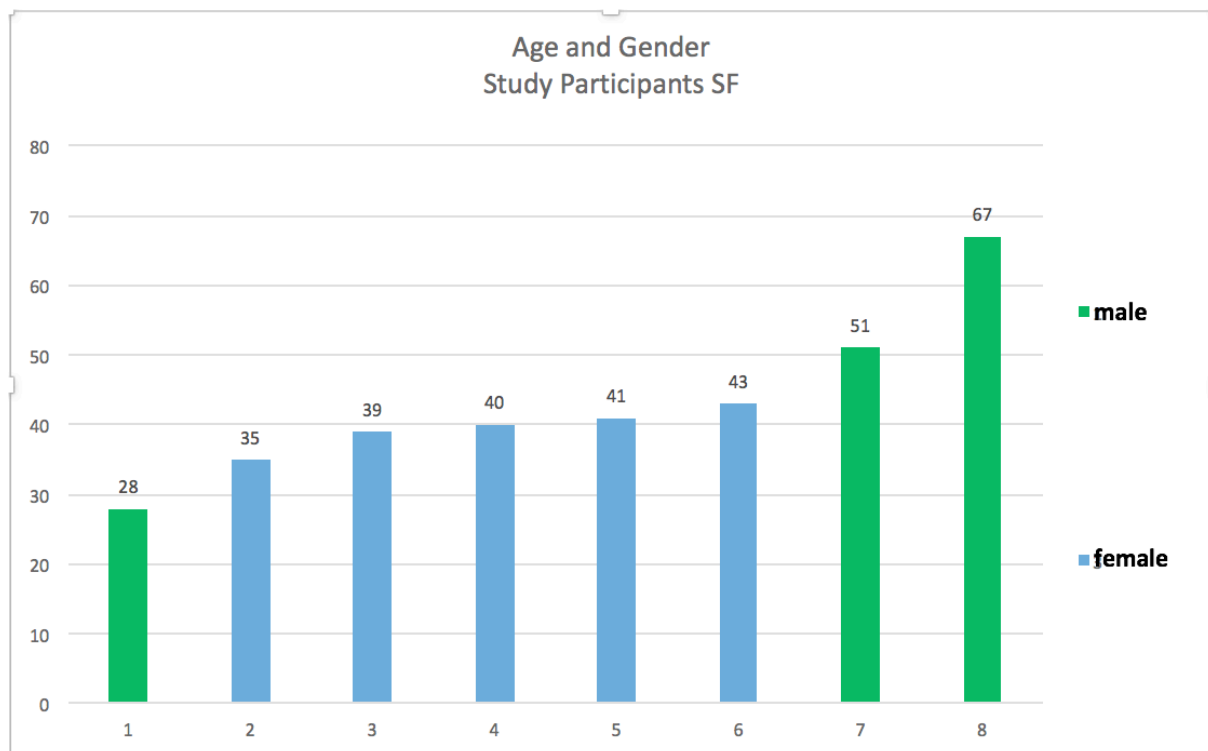
¹⁸ For a comprehensive timeline of the events see: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/timeline-of-turkeys-failed-coup-attempt.aspx?pageID=238&nID=101711&NewsCatID=341>

¹⁹ “use of social media for news is considerably higher in Turkey than the eighteen country average (44 per cent) identified through the wider digital news study.” “How Turkey Uses Social Media - Reuters Institute Digital News Report.” Accessed December 27, 2016. <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/essays/2015/how-turkey-uses-social-media/>. During the coup news sites reported the blockage of social media platforms in Turkey. See “Social Media May Have Been Blocked during Turkey Coup Attempt | World News | The Guardian.” Accessed December 27, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/15/turkey-blocking-social-facebook-twitter-youtube>.

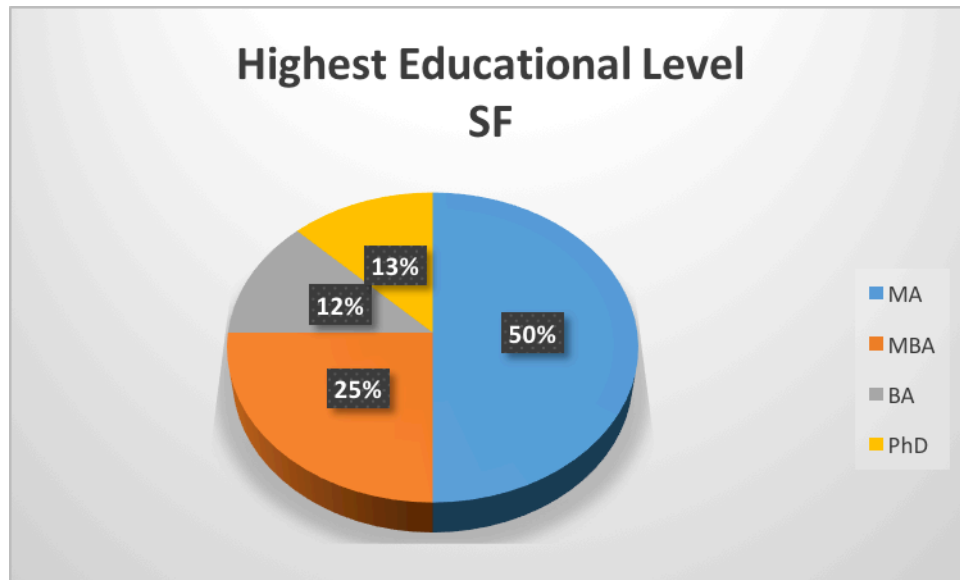
Recent studies increasingly analyze the influence of social media use on migration networks. See Dekker, Rianne, and Godfried Engbersen. “How Social Media Transform Migrant Networks and Facilitate Migration.” *Global Networks* 14, no. 4 (October 2014): 401–18. doi:10.1111/glob.12040.

When looking at the demographic data presented, it becomes apparent that the participants interviewed are educated individuals with academic backgrounds, who migrated for educational purposes or family reunion. Since most of the individuals were recruited at the Berkeley Turkish School, most of the subjects are parents who invest in the language education of their children. It goes without saying that the interviewed subjects represent a subgroup of all residents of San Francisco who are of Turkish origin and therefore do not represent the total population currently living in San Francisco. Furthermore, since the call for participants was directed at a reading public, only subjects who expressed a tendency to read frequently or have a genuine interest in literature and print media contacted me and agreed to participate.

Age and gender: The age average of all study participants is 40.6 years.



Highest educational level: It is notable that all of the study participants in San Francisco had a higher educational degree. Two of the eight participants indicated that they had come to San Francisco solely for studies. All study participants have completed primary, middle and high school in Turkey.



Reason for Migration: Half of the participants came to the Bay Area for educational purposes. All of which pursued a University degree. Two of the participants migrated for personal reasons such as family reunion and one participant migrated due to professional circumstances.

Language use: Participants were asked to indicate which languages they mostly speak at home and at work. Half of the participants live bilingually and use Turkish and English equally. Two participants mostly use English and two mostly Turkish at home and at work. All participants with children predominantly spoke Turkish at home.

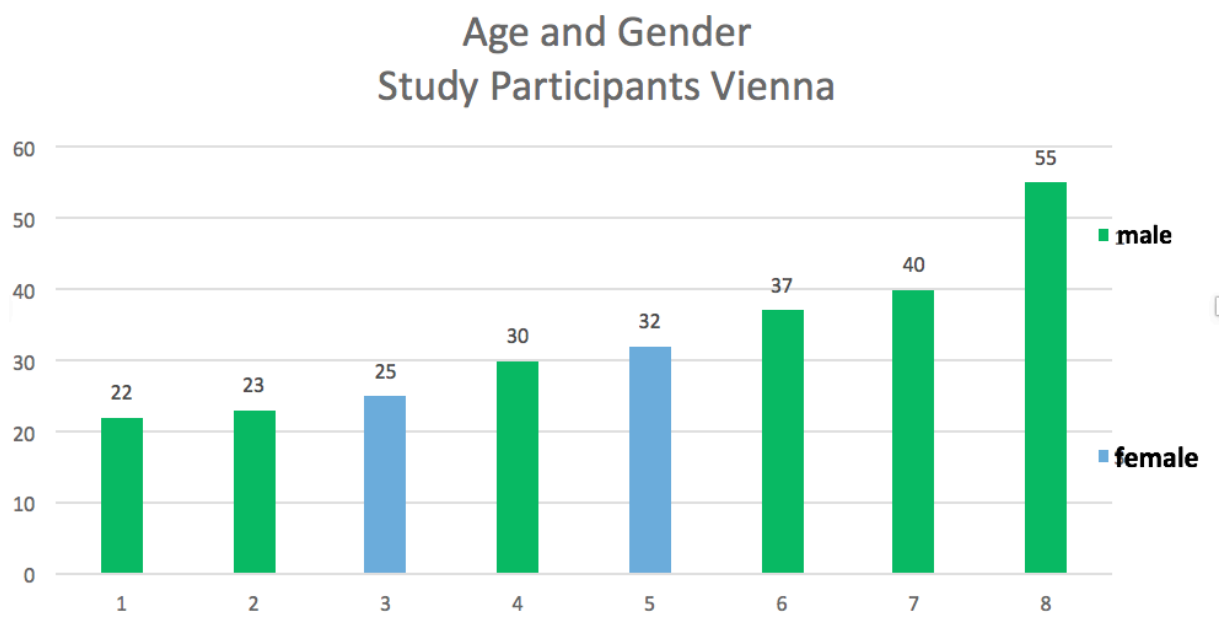
4.2. Vienna Participants

The majority of participants in Vienna were recruited in an educational setting or/and affiliated with the Society of Students and Youth from Turkey in Vienna and were involved in cultural activities such as Turkish theater performances.

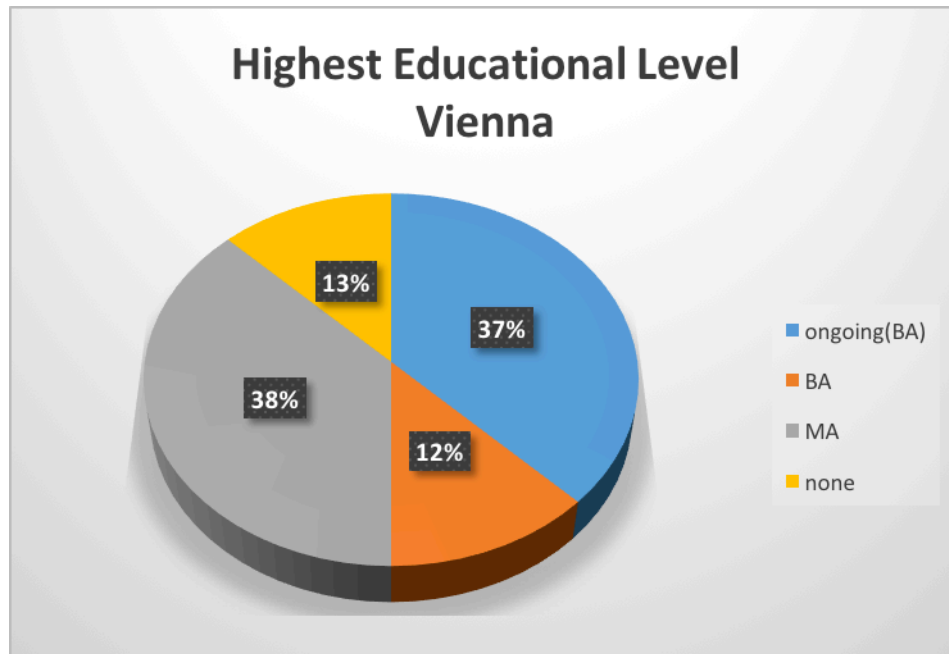
An important precondition for the recruitment of participants was that the individuals were born in Turkey and later migrated to Vienna. Therefore, the study analyzes a subgroup of the larger population of Turkish migrants (first and second generation), whose migration process may date back to the 1950s. The migration period for both populations is therefore similar, while they differ in average age and gender of individuals. As mentioned above for the SF participants, the selected group does not represent the total population of Turkish migrants in Austria.

As in the SF case study, participants showed a genuine interest in literature and reading and almost all participants have an academic background and migrated for educational purposes or family reunion.

Age and gender: As we can see in the figure below, compared to the participants in San Francisco, the age average is significantly lower with an average of 33 years. Additionally, participants in this group are predominantly male. While gender is not analyzed as a central factor of reading activity in this study, it is nevertheless a significant difference between the two populations.



Highest educational level: The type of degree appears to be correlated to the age average. Three of the participants under the age of 30 were still studying in a BA program at the time of the interview. Three of the participants above 30 have an MA degree, while one of the participants did not have a University degree and none had a PhD degree. All Vienna study participants have completed primary, middle and high school in Turkey.



Reason for Migration: Six out of eight participants came to Vienna to study at University, two of which for graduate studies. Two of the participants migrated for personal and professional reasons.

Language use: Three participants indicated that they mostly use German at work, while speaking Turkish at home. English was mostly used for educational purposes, two participants reported. One participant reported to solely use German at work and at home and two participants indicated they solely use Turkish.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Volume and Medium: Reading regularities for fiction and non-fiction

In both of the case studies participants indicated that they mainly read non-fiction, while individuals who read fiction on a daily or weekly basis represent the minority. The amount of fiction and non-fiction read seems to be correlated as well to changes in personal life.

Fiction: In San Francisco, only two participants said they read fiction every day or every second day. Six participants said they read almost no fiction at all, while half of them stated that they used to read fiction more frequently in the past, during their University years or before getting married. Only one participant said she read fiction every day. As popular genres in addition fantasy fiction also teen fiction was mentioned.

In Vienna, while only two participants said they read fiction everyday or every second day, all participants read at least one novel in the past year. Three of the eight individuals stated that after moving to Vienna they started reading less fiction: “I do not get the chance to read fiction in Vienna. I am trying to read as much as I can while I am in Turkey” one person said. Three participants stressed that they focus more on learning German, through reading study material and children’s books, rather than reading fiction.

Non-fiction: Six of the eight participants in San Francisco read the news online – in both English and Turkish – on a daily basis. Two participants said they also read columns (köşe yazıları), a popular medium in Turkey. Other non-fictional genres mentioned to be read on a regular basis (every day or every week) were professional books to improve career or character, biographies, scientific papers, design journals and magazines for work (teaching), writing analysis.

All Vienna participants read the newspapers everyday, in both Turkish and German. While German newspapers were mentioned to be read on the metro, Turkish newspapers are read online. One person said: “I am trying to read the news in German. When I go to Turkey, I read Turkish newspapers, otherwise I read them online.” Besides news, three individuals said they also read scientific publications about technology, music, philosophy, sports.

Amount of Reading during lifetime: All of the study participants in San Francisco said they read the most during their University years. Two participants indicated that their reading activity increased after migrating because of homesickness.

Three participants in Vienna said they read the most in their high school years. One person said that after moving to Vienna his reading decreased because of University classes and social life. Two participants said they were reading regularly and that their amount of reading had not changed after migrating. Three participants stated that they now read much less than they had in the past, during their twenties.

Time spend on Reading a week: Except for one individual all study participants in San Francisco said they read from a book every day. One person claimed to read “constantly online.”

All except for one participant in Vienna said they read from a book everyday. Two individuals said they read more than 30 hours a week. Two individuals emphasized that it

changes according to the book and the season and said they read most on holiday. Half of the interviewed people said they read less than 5 hours a week.

Number of books read in the past year: In San Francisco two participants said they read more than ten books in the past year, while one person counted 50-100 books read (mostly teen fiction). All other individuals counted less than five.

While two participants in Vienna said they have not finished a single book in the past year, one person counted 20-25 books read. Three other participants said they read 5-8 books in the past year.

Medium: In both cities all participants said they read fiction mostly in print. Newspapers are read online, probably due to availability. All participants said they bought print books in Turkey and then brought them to their country of residence. None of them used the library or online shops to acquire reading material.

In San Francisco only one participant said she listened to audiobooks everyday while commuting. One person said she was not able to bring her library when she came to San Francisco, so she had to reduce the amounts of books in her possession significantly.

Most participants in Vienna indicated they do not read e-books. One person said he “could not get used to it.” Two individuals said they buy books in Turkey and import them to Vienna.

5.2. Content: Reading preferences

As mentioned above, participants were asked to list books they had recently read as well as their preferred genre, place, and time for reading. Additionally, they were asked “How do you choose what to read?” to convey the underlying distributional network as well as information sources for literature.

Books recently read: One participant in San Francisco, who preferred historical fiction has recently read the memoirs of a soldier in the Ottoman army, which was given to him by a friend. Another participant said he mostly likes drama, plays by Harold and poetry by Nazim Hikmet lately.

Except for two participants, all others said they have read a book written in Turkish recently. Two participants in Vienna read translation of English novels – such as Moby Dick – in Turkish.

Preferred genre: In San Francisco: Three participants indicated they do not like horror or anything with “negative” content. As an explanation one participant stated that there was too much horror in real life, so she preferred to read entertaining and easily readable books, such as teen fiction, fantasy, and romance, as well as political writing, and research.

All individuals in Vienna indicated that they mostly read prose in general and novels in particular. Moreover, three participants said they do not read poetry at all. Three individuals specified by saying they prefer historical fiction.

Preferred place and time for reading:

San Francisco: All except for one participant preferred to read at home and mostly in the evenings, at night, before going to bed. Two individuals stated they also read while commuting.

Vienna: Most of the participants enjoyed reading at home, while three people said they like to read on vacation in Turkey. Reading in nature, in parks, or outside was also mentioned as a preferred reading spot.

5.3. Motivation and Reading Choices

Motivation:

San Francisco: All participants said they read mostly for fun rather than for work. Only two individuals mentioned reading for work most of the day, while reading here was defined as reading emails and technical manuals. One person said she read for her own benefit.

Vienna: Since two of the study participants were students, they stated that they mostly read for school if not for entertainment. One person said she read because of her routine, while another person said “reading is like eating and drinking for me, while I also read for University.” One person said that they read to develop.

Reading choices:

San Francisco: Almost all participants indicated that they rely on friends’ recommendations, when selecting a book to read. Two individuals said they rely on bestseller lists or online book reviews. From the interviews it became apparent that individuals rely on reviews for non-Turkish fiction, while most participants who listed mostly Turkish authors mentioned friends’ recommendations for their choice of literature.

As an example, a person said she goes to a book store to “see what is popular and read reviews on kindle, skim through it” and then decides whether she will read it or not.

Another person, who mentioned that his preferred genres were poetry, historical novels, short stories, and essays said that there are “... only are few authors from Turkey I read. There are many very popular poets who write for ideological reasons, because they don’t write well.” He also mentioned that besides the Turkish bestsellers, he feels isolated and cut off from Turkey when it comes to how he chooses what to read, so he bases his choices on online articles. Two participants also said they avoid readings books with religious content.

Another person, who mostly reads parenting books, also uses Facebook recommendations, reads reviews, and follows authors reviews from Amazon. She noted that she strongly relied on the comments about a specific book or author by friends and stressed that “if someone says that writer is horrible and the ideas are not good” she won’t read it, while she also questions reviews and does read books with bad reviews.

Vienna: While all participants said they relied on friends’ and relatives’ book suggestions, two participants also mentioned that they often look for new books in bookshops in Turkey. One person said “I do not choose them, it is coincidental. In the past I used to look for the bestsellers in bookshops.” Two individuals also followed their favorite writers as well as book reviews in Turkish newspapers. “I like reading Turkish authors and look at recommendations in literature magazines,” one person said.

5.4. Social Interactions regarding reading material:

San Francisco: Regarding the question of with whom they talk about literature all expect for one participant said they talked to close relatives, such as aunts and friends in Turkey as well as their spouses. One person said she talked to her old classmates online and another person said she frequently recommended books to her close friends. One person said “reading books is not part of Turkish people, we don’t talk much about it.”

Vienna: Three individuals said they do not talk to anybody about literature. Three participants said they spoke to their partners and relatives in Turkey. Two participants talked with their friends about literature, while one person said “I like talking to people I met recently about literature.”

5.5. Language

San Francisco: Two individuals said they used mostly English at home and at work, while one person indicated that she only use Turkish. She just recently arrived in California and said her English was not as good as it would need to be to read fiction in English. All other study participants were bi- or multilingual.

When asking a participant what language she mostly uses, she answered that since both she and her husband are Turkish she mostly speaks Turkish at home. She also said that it was hard to find books here in Turkish, so she buys them in Turkey. When asking which language she mostly reads in she answered:

Mostly in Turkish. I started reading Orhan Pamuk in English, but I did not like it. It didn't make it for me. It is a psychological thing, even if the book is truly translated into English, I lose the connection and I don't think it's a good book. It doesn't give me the same effect as in Turkish. When I read it in Turkish, it means more to me. I read Jane Austen in Turkish and English and liked English better. It is best to read in original language, that's what I prefer.

Another person, indicated she is mostly using English. She said good language is important, during high school she started reading in English, during her time at a University in Turkey, she said she was mostly bilingual for studies and fun. When she came to California, she said she started to read more in English.

Interestingly, more than one participant said they read Orhan Pamuk's novels in translation. One participant, who mostly reads in English, said due to availability she reads Pamuk's novels in translation.

Another person, who mostly used English answered the following when being asked about the reading language:

Now regularly English. After moving here more English. While in Business School, I read many books about business. I started reading books in the U.S. in English, after that any book bought or read here, I read in English. I frequently bought and brought books here from Turkey but didn't read them. I bought a Turkish novel and a poetry collection ten years ago and haven't even started reading yet.

When asking about how the participants dealt with unfamiliar phrases or words, most of the participants answered that they do not frequently look up words and phrases in dictionaries or online. One person, who mainly reads in Turkish and said her English was not good yet and

so she only reads English literature in Turkish translation, indicated that when reading she marks, looks up, and takes notes of terms she does not understand.

Vienna: Two participants said they mostly use German both at work and at home, while two other participants said they mostly used Turkish. Two individuals said they used Turkish at home and German at work. One person said that they mostly use English. Another person said she was mostly using English, because her education is in English, but she was using German at work and Turkish at home.

Both participants, who mostly use Turkish at home and at work stressed that, while they read mostly in Turkish, they either plan to or already do read more in German since moving to Austria. Likewise, they also read English literature, such as Agatha Christie, in Turkish translation. One person, a student, who mostly reads books for his studies said (in Turkish):

I spoke with my friends. After moving to Vienna none of us reads. There are more attractive things to do, like in social life. There is no time for books anymore. One has to regain the habit to read.

Another person, who reads both in English and Turkish likewise, reads authors like Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak in English translation.

Bilingual subjects (Turkish-German or English-Turkish) appeared to be mostly reading in Turkish. One person said her education was in English, so she read in English sometimes, but almost always in Turkish, and only sometimes in German to improve her language skills. Half of the books she read were written by foreign authors in translation.

Only one person, who mostly used German, read books mostly in German, even translations and said “If I can’t find the book in German I read the Turkish translations.” Another person, who mostly uses Turkish said he especially read all fiction books in Turkish and acquires second-hand books from Turkey. He also said he reads all books in Turkish translation and only reads scientific publications in German.

All participants said they looked up unknown words and phrases on the internet. Three of them mentioned to use the online dictionary of the TDK (Turkish Language Institution) to look up Turkish words. One person said: “I look up Ottoman words online and check for spelling.”

5.6. Opinion regarding language education and availability

Additionally, I asked participants two questions regarding the availability of Turkish fiction in other languages (“Are there books by Turkish authors you would wish to be translated?”) and their preferences of reading material in Turkish language education (“Which authors are crucial in Turkish language and school education?”).

San Francisco: A researcher (67 yrs) mentioned that he would like more poetry by authors such as Yahya Kemal Beyatlı to be translated into English and mentioned only not contemporary authors which, in his opinion, are crucial in education.

A teacher (35 yrs) also said that the Turkish classics such as Sait Faik are crucial in Turkish language education, but it depends on the children’s’ age. An industrial design specialist (43 yrs.) also said the Nazım Hikmet classics should be translated into English.

A self employed person (40 yrs) pointed out that she is not well informed enough about current publications in Turkey and said that there are not many Turkish books available on Kindle, while saying that the Turkish classics, which one is “forced to” read in Turkish middle school, should be translated. The same person also said, she did not enjoy reading until studying at university:

Books are not as much promoted, it is forced there [Turkey] from first grade and up, especially in middle school I was forced to read nonsense classics. They are boring and not kids fiction! Parents don’t educate children about reading books. It is due to popular books like Harry Potter that kids started reading books more.

When asking which authors are important in Turkish language education, she answered:

Have the kids read something more appropriate, not too heavy. One can’t force them to read one book, but have them choose from a selection of texts instead.

An occupation engineer, age 55, shared his experiences in a weekend school, where he was volunteer teaching using school books, which he brought there from Turkey. He said that for Turkish language education this was helpful because “children have different interests, so it is best to find what the child likes and find books in that area. The children enjoyed reading in English more than in Turkish.”

A teacher (39 yrs) said that for her Turkish classes, she tries to buy books from a Turkish publisher, and mentioned that the children should learn some poetry by writers such as Nazim Hikmet, Can Yücel, or Orhan Veli to get an idea about the Turkish culture.

A person, age 41, working in product marketing pointed to the importance of having more Turkish political books in English translation and recalls that “the required reading in high school were good, but old ones with old style language (Arabic words) are not useful, but more modern ones from the past 50 years should be in curriculum.”

Vienna: A student (23 yrs) said that in Turkish language education, works from the Republican period (1920s) until now should be read. Another student (23 yrs) said that rather than the list of recommended 100 books for primary education in Turkey²⁰ reading the world classics should be mandatory and more than about Turkey, students should read about history. The question, which Turkish books he would like to be translated, he answered:

What I want is that one translates works written by historically important people that lived in Turkey, such as Nasreddin Hoca, the Ottoman Padishahs, people who had an impact on Europe, etc. History is important. One can translate an historical event that took place in Turkey into German. More than being educational it could be entertaining.

A finance secretary (32 yrs) also stressed the importance of reading Turkish classics and instead of assigning works by specific authors to all students, they should look at the child's interest, because otherwise they will lose interest in reading. The same person recommended to use easily readable books in Turkish language education, “because Turkish is a hard language.” A manager (40 yrs) said that Turkish classics should be translated, while works written in contemporary Turkish should be used in Turkish language education. A musician (55 yrs) said that classics should be used in Turkish language education. Another musician (37 yrs) recommended that more realistic, reportage novels be translated and said that poetry should be read in Turkish classes.

6. DISCUSSION

The readership index (or Reading Activity Inventory) developed by Guthrie and Seifert, that served as the methodological and theoretical basis of this study demonstrates interesting

²⁰ Recommended by the Turkish Ministry of Education. See:
[https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/MEB_100_temel_eser_listesi_\(ortaöğretim\)](https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/MEB_100_temel_eser_listesi_(ortaöğretim))

insights in how medium, volume and content relate to each other.²¹ However, for migrant communities other factors need to be considered, as illustrated above. In contrast to Guthrie and Seifert's study, in which they state that

Simplicity is an important feature which allows for the comparison of individuals with one another, of communities, or of demographic groups within countries, or of countries in different regions of the world. This simplicity is attained in the readership index by combining media and contents with the common measure of time spent in the activity. [Guthrie and Seifert 1984, 90]

this study intends to explore the complexity and variety of factors in reading activity of migrant communities and does not aim to portray a generalized or simplistic view on readership. The results presented here therefore are not based on the assumption that "It should be possible to characterize a single person or a single community with a single statement." [Guthrie and Seifert 1984, 52] The results discussed here are not intended to fit into a reader typology approach, such as applied to Turkish migrants by Schröder [2006] and Özgül [2006], but work to demonstrate a variety of factors in reading activity related to migration in different cultural contexts.

By presenting the results from the interviews with Turkish migrants in two different cultural contexts I hope to give insights regarding the underlying research question of this study – how reading activity relates to migration and vice versa – by outlining the different factors in organized themes forming what can be summarized under readership and reading activity. This study seeks to give account on what Turkish migrants read, their motivations and preferences, and their language use (passive and active). Furthermore, this project hopes to make visible how native language literature can be used and expanded according to the migrant community's needs and preferences. The methodological qualitative approach should give a more individualized picture of different cultural contexts using two case studies.

The results presented here then illustrate that relevant factors for reading activity, such as language use and the social network, are strongly tied to the distribution and availability of Turkish fiction publications and the significant impact they have on changes in reading activity after migration.

²¹ Guthrie and Seifert could for example prove that "If a person read one type of content in a newspaper or a magazine, other types were likely to be read [86]", which also becomes apparent in the results about the reading activity of Turkish migrants, although newspaper reading appeared to have a great impact on the amount of other material read, such as fiction. Guthrie and Seifert also state that newspaper reading is correlated to informational reading, while lesser to reading fiction. They also point to the high pass around rate of fiction and stress that books are less often derived from libraries, but from bookstores, which for the Turkish migrant community is not the case due to availability.

Each factor captures a different aspect of reading activities of Turkish migrant populations in different cultural contexts. In this section, I discuss the results related to the themes as inter-dependent factors of reading activity.

Volume and Medium: Reading regularities for fiction and non-fiction: In San Francisco factors that relate to reading regularities were higher education and increased reading in University years and personal factors (such as marriage) to decrease reading activity.

In Vienna reading activity related more to personal factors and language acquisition. Learning German was mentioned as a priority and therefore had a rather large impact on reading habits.

In both case studies the newspaper was the medium most frequently read (on a daily basis), while other non-fiction reading material differed for both populations. Genres such as self-improvement and work-related publications appear to be more central in SF, while scientific publications and arts were more represented in the Vienna case study.

Amount of Reading during lifetime: In San Francisco, the University years were identified as the period of most active reading, while migration seems also to often be followed by increased reading, caused by “homesickness” among other causes.

For the Vienna case study, the high school years can be defined as the period in which participants read most, while after migration the amount of reading is either equal to or less than before.

It can be inferred that the language of studies is an indicator for decreased reading activity at the University. While San Francisco subjects had prior knowledge available to read in the language of their higher educational degree program, in Vienna subjects were still acquiring the language. While “homesickness” was not mentioned by Vienna group the emphasis on the “social life”, points to the importance of a social factors beside the linguistic factors.

Time spent on reading: All study participants (except for two) read on a daily basis. Accordingly, both studies combined display a homogenous readership and time spent appears to be a context-independent factor.

Numbers of Books read: As both case studies show, the number of books read does not necessarily relate to reading activity, since some books are read on a frequent basis and/or repeatedly, while other books are read rarely and over a long period of time. More than

reading activity, this information gives an idea about readership. The number of books read appears to be strongly dependent on personal factors and varies from individual to individual on a broad scale. The case studies have shown that only a few participants read exponentially more books in the past year than the majority.

Medium: While non-fiction, such as newspapers are read online, fiction is – except in two cases – read in print only. As pointed out by some of the participants, online publications of Turkish fiction are still very scarce and migrants need to acquire books in Turkey and bring them to their country of residence. As the case of the participant and her private library illustrates, the number of books in the country of residence is limited to the number of books one can bring. Other media sources, such as audiobooks and online publication, were only used by a few subjects pointing out that Turkish fiction in a digital format is still not commonly available.²²

Books recently read and preferred genre: In both case studies the majority of participants' recently read book was in Turkish. Preferred genre corresponded to the last book read, which was all fiction.

In San Francisco the emphasis was on easily readable material, nothing challenging like horror. Time efficiency is an important factor that determined reading habits in this case study.

In Vienna genres such as historical fiction were mentioned, which illustrates that rather than time efficiency, language appears to be a more dominant factor for preferred genre.

Preferred place and time for reading seem to underline these arguments. In both case studies reading at home was most popular.

While in San Francisco reading during commuting again points to time efficiency as a factor, in Vienna the emphasis was more on reading during holiday in Turkey. Besides free time, material there appears to be easily accessible and social exchange can easily take place.

Motivation and Reading Choices: All except for students and new parents said they read for fun, while stressing the habit of reading. The referred times and places for reading mentioned are a dependent factor of reading motivation. Unsurprisingly, reading fiction mainly occurred

²² There are currently no eBooks in Turkish on Amazon.

in free time and in private spaces, while public places – such as libraries and cafes – did not appear as places for reading in any of the case studies.

In both case studies the social network on which reading choices for Turkish fiction are based appeared to be rather small, restricted to friends and family in Turkey.

For the San Francisco case study reading choices were mostly conditioned on friends' recommendations, which supports the claim made by Guthrie and Seifert [1984] regarding a higher circulation rate of fiction as compared to non-fiction books.

The Vienna case study also displayed a very tight social network of friends, whereby reading material in Turkish appeared to be more accessible due to frequent travels and a higher exchange rate between relatives more than friends in Turkey. The fact that most Turkish migrants living in Vienna said they read a lot during holiday supports the argument of a higher exchange rate. From Austria it is more accessible to browse bookstores for Turkish fiction on vacation in Turkey.

The social factor for reading – as both case studies demonstrate – is strongly linked to accessibility and the contact with the social network in the home country. Interestingly, social structures in the country of residence which could effect the exchange of material were not mentioned.

Being or feeling cut-off from Turkey when selecting what to read was specific to the San Francisco case study, strengthening the communication online.

Online reviews are read only related to non-Turkish publications – especially in San Francisco. The use of online platforms also correlated to preferred genre. For books about personal development participants relied more on online reviews, while bestsellers were chosen at the bookstore.

Personal preferences – such as religious content – are an independent factor for reading choices.

Social Interactions regarding reading material displayed the same social network underlying reading choices, a close network of family and friends in Turkey is the basis for connection, resources and opinion. In San Francisco the network appeared to consist more of close relatives and spouses, while the Vienna case study pictured a looser network of friends and relatives.

For Vienna, no communication about literature was reported, which can lead to the assumption that because of the theater group a more institutional environment is provided.

On this basis it can be argued that in Vienna the social network for reading exchange is more local, while in San Francisco more international (cross-country).

Language is one of the most central factors for reading habits of Turkish migrants, since it conditions all other factors. The case studies displayed different language use and reading language. In San Francisco the majority of participants had language skills prior to arrival (except for one case), and were therefore multilingual at the time of migration.

In Vienna the majority of participants started acquiring German upon arrival, which makes language acquisition an important factor for reading activity (especially reading choices).

Differences in language use vary according to private or professional setting (at home and at work). In both studies, Turkish was identified as a language mostly used at home, although in San Francisco reading in English was more frequent

In Vienna the third language mentioned is English – due to education – which is an important factor conditioning reading language. Turkish was identified as the most common reading language of fiction in both case studies, which illustrates, that fiction is strongly related to the country of origin.

Reading in other languages, such as German and English, was reserved for non-fiction mostly, while reading language relates to reading choices and motivation. In San Francisco material in English mostly included scientific publications. In Vienna, language acquisition was the main motivation for reading in German.

Common in both case studies was that translations were mostly read in English of only famous Turkish authors (such as Orhan Pamuk or Elif Shafak), while the original language was preferred.

The use of dictionaries applied more to Turkish in Vienna, while San Francisco participants did not use dictionaries frequently. None of the participants said they used dictionaries for English or German publications.

Opinion regarding language education and availability: One overarching fact in both case studies when asking about the sources preferably used in Turkish language education was the distinction of classics and modern literature.

In both case studies participants recommended classics of Turkish literature to be translated, even though their role in classrooms was viewed critically, especially regarding older language (Ottoman words), that might be challenging for kids nowadays. In general, opinions differed: some promoted the use of more classics in Turkish language education, others suggested more modern fiction to be used in education.

World classics, books about poetry, also historical and political publications were recommended. Interestingly, in education, poetry was stressed to be important to read, while most participants did not mainly read poetry and even mentioned disliking it. Some participants expressed the need to assign readings according to the child's interests.

7. CONCLUSION

The qualitative methodological approach in this study allows to zoom in on a group within the migrant community and identify factors of how migration influences reading activity. The themes are therefore extended by additional factors and can serve as the basis for an index of readership for migrant communities. Hence, the themes can serve as an index for a migrant community's reading activity.

Important factors that influence many aspects of reading activity linked to migration, being present in the majority of theoretic blocks is language (acquisition), social network, and availability.

The social network linked to Turkey is a factor which illustrates how the exchange of reading material is important to sustain the network and to connect with the home country. Fiction especially appears to sustain a network of cultural exchange and ties to the home country.

The availability of reading material in the native language (Turkish) is another relevant factor on which the majority of other factors depend. This is especially interesting to publishers and libraries, since e-publications and online reading could be extended and adapted to the needs of the Turkish migrant communities. On a local or global level publishers and libraries could

therefore extend their Turkish literature collections and distribution to make Turkish reading material more available both in print and online.

The study also stresses the role of reading in education of the migrant population, pointing at preferred material and genres for literary education and hopes communicate insights about the migrant community's needs and preferences for the education of the future generations. The results suggest that a more individualized and specialized approach to reading material incorporating poetry as well as classics of Turkish literature could be used in Turkish language education.

Another relevant factor that conditions reading activity to a wide degree is language. The results display that the reading language is strongly linked to language acquisition. Language acquisition could be supplemented by institutions and organizations as well as libraries that promote reading practices in the language of the receiving country prior to or upon arrival to facilitate cross-cultural dialogue by using translations of fiction or other genres.

Findings presented here are also conditioned on other factors such as current political developments in Turkey. Accordingly, it is possible that there are other factors, personal, political, or professional. Alternative explanations for the findings therefore depend on the significance of each factor. Results are strongly dependent on and limited by the educational and professional homogeneity amongst populations and do not represent the whole migrant population in each place of residence. Additionally, the short timeframe, including of current personal and political developments condition the results.

Future research can therefore encompass a long-term study of reading habits applying the proposed method during a wider time window (>3 months) with more detailed interviews based on important factors identified.

Additionally, a combination of quantitative and qualitative approach could give insights into the demographics and specificities of the wider migrant community. A survey following the readership index in combination with the set of factors applied in this study could be used for a large population of migrant communities in different cultural contexts.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank the study participants for their time and efforts to contribute to this study. I am very grateful to the Marshallplan Foundation and the Institute for European Studies at UC Berkeley for their support of this study. Further, I want to express my gratitude to the Berkeley Turkish School and the Society of Students and Youth from Turkey in Vienna for their generous help and important contributions as well as their excellent work in education, culture and art. **Teşekkür ederim!**

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