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INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION SYSTEM BETWEEN TURKEY AND RUSSIA: THE CASE OF PROJECT-TIED MIGRANT WORKERS IN MOSCOW

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Abstract

With over 4.5 million persons born in Turkey living abroad – for the most part in Europe – Turkey is currently one of the most significant emigration countries in the world. If native-born children of immigrants are included, over 6 million, or more than 8 percent of the country's population lives abroad.

These large numbers are a product of various migratory flows from Turkey which began in the early 1960s with the arrival of Turkish migrants in various Western European countries, and continued with the arrival of Turks in Australia, and the oil-rich countries of North Africa and the Middle East (MENA), and then in the former communist countries such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The emigration history of the last fifty years in Turkey indicates that the migratory flows of Turkish citizens have become a part of various migratory systems.

The main aim of this essay is two-fold. First, it attempts to document the dynamics and mechanism of project-tied migration from Turkey to the Russian Federation, particularly focusing on the case of project-tied migrant workers from Turkey to Moscow. Second, it looks at the migratory system between Turkey and the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, Central and Northern Asian countries, with special reference to macro, micro, and meso factors affecting the migration system concerned.

Résumé

Avec plus de 4,5 million de personnes nées en Turquie et vivant à l'étranger, principalement en Europe, la Turquie est devenue actuellement l'un des grands pays d'émigration dans le monde. Quand on inclut les enfants d'émigrés natifs dans les pays d'accueil, l'estimation va au-delà de 6 millions de migrants, ou l'équivalent de plus de 8% de la population résidente en Turquie.

Cette image est le produit des flux migratoires partant de la Turquie qui ont principalement d'abord commencé par le départ des migrants turcs vers différents pays de l'Europe de l'ouest dès le début des années 1960. Ensuite, les flux ont continué pour atteindre l'Australie et les pays pétroliers de l'Afrique du Nord et du Moyen Orient (ANMO) avant de s'orienter récemment vers les ex-pays communistes tels que ceux de la Communauté des Etats Indépendants (CEI). L'histoire migratoire des dernières cinquante années en Turquie indique que les flux migratoires des citoyens turcs sont devenus consécutivement une partie des différents systèmes migratoires.

L'objectif principal de ce papier est double. Premièrement, il vise à identifier les dynamiques et mécanismes des projets liés à la migration de la Turquie vers la Fédération de Russie, en mettant l'accent particulièrement sur le cas des travailleurs turcs à Moscou. Deuxièmement, cet effort vise à élaborer le système migratoire entre la Turquie et les ex-pays communistes de l'Europe de l'Est, les pays de l'Asie Centrale et du Nord, en se référant principalement aux facteurs de niveaux macro, micro et méso qui affectent les systèmes migratoires en question.

I. Introduction

The reference to the analytical context of migration system theory with its interest in regional migration systems,¹ shows us that, since the early 1960s, the migratory flows of Turkish citizens have become a part of various migratory systems. First, these flows were heavily involved in post-war European immigration; second, they were connected to immigration to Australia; third, they were linked to contract migration to the oil-rich countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA); and, finally, they were again connected to contract migration, this time to the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, central and northern Asia.

According to migration system theory, any migratory movement can be analyzed through interacting macro- and micro-structures. While macro-structures mean large-scale institutional factors in sending and receiving countries, micro-structures refer to the characteristics of individual migrants. Meanwhile, what brings together these two levels are the meso-structures which indicate a number of intermediate mechanisms such as recruitment agencies.² Although there have been numerous studies conducted on Turkish emigration to different migrant-receiving countries, there has been as yet no consolidated research carried out on contract migration from Turkey to the former communist countries in the region. Meanwhile, migration system theory has not been used in research on Turkish emigration. Therefore, the current study will compliment previous studies in the field.

The main aim of this essay is two-fold. First, it attempts to document the dynamics and mechanisms of contract migration from Turkey to Russia, focusing particularly on the cases of project-tied Turkish migrant workers in Moscow. Second, we intend to elaborate the migratory system between Turkey and the former communist countries, with particular reference to macro, micro and meso factors.

The first two parts of this essay refer to the macro-structures of the relevant migration systems. The *first* part provides us with an overview of the history of Turkish emigration since the early 1960s, and relates the emergence of contract migration to Russia to the wider context of emigration from Turkey in that period. In the *second* part, the nature, characteristics, and patterns of migration to Russia are explored. Based on a fieldwork conducted in Moscow in 2008 in which 10 project-tied migrant workers and some employers were interviewed, the *third* part offers an analysis of micro- and meso-level actors in the migratory process, specifically elaborating the migration histories of contracted migrant workers. In the fourth and final part, we offer some conclusions on the migration system between Turkey and Russia.

II. Locating the Contract-based Migration in the Wider Context of Turkish Emigration

International migratory movements originating in Turkey, which started in 1961 with a limited number of migrant workers passing into Europe and eventually expanded to include other destinations, had created a large spread of Turkish migrants abroad by 2000: over 2,700,000 Turkish nationals in Europe (in addition to over 800,000 Turkish migrants that have acquired the citizenship of their host states); nearly 100,000 Turkish workers in Arab countries; 60,000 resident Turkish settlers in Australia; and more than 75,000 Turkish workers in the former communist countries of eastern Europe, central and northern Asia (Table 1). Moreover, over 250,000 migrants of Turkish origin currently live in the US and Canada. If native-born children of immigrants are included, the Turkish population abroad rises to over 6 million or more than 8 percent of Turkey's population.

¹ Kritz, Lim and Zlotnik (1992).

² Castles and Miller, 2003: 27.

Table 1: Turkish Migrant Stock Abroad in mid-1980s, mid-1990s and mid 2000s

Country of residence \ Year	Mid-1980s		Mid-1990s		Mid-2000s	
	Number (x 1000)	%	Number (x 1000)	%	Number (x 1000)	%
Austria	75	3,1	147	4,4	127	3,8
Belgium	72,5	3,1	79,5	2,4	45,9	1,4
France	146,1	6,2	198,9	6	208	6,3
Germany	1400,1	59,3	2049,9	62	1912	57,9
Netherlands	156,4	6,6	127	3,8	160,3	4,9
Scandinavian Countries	41,2	1,7	73	2,2	51,6	1,6
Switzerland	51	2,2	79	2,4	79,5	2,4
Other European Countries	42	1,8	87	2,6	130	3,9
Total Europe	1984,6	84	2841,3	85,9	2714,3	82,1
MENA Countries	200	8,5	127	3,8	105	3,2
Australia	35	1,5	45	1,4	60	1,8
CIS Countries	0	0	50	1,4	75	2,3
Other Countries	140	5,9	245	7,4	350	10,6
Total	2359,6	100	3308,3	100	3304,3	100

Source: Figures are compiled by İçduygu (2006) from various sources of OECD and Eurostat

Leaving aside the migration of a large number of non-Muslim Turkish citizens, a consequence of the nation-state building project of the early twentieth-century, migratory flows from Turkey were limited until the 1960s. During the first ten years following the signing of the migration agreement on October 30, 1961 between Turkey and the Federal Republic of Germany (FDR), Turkey became the most important country in providing labor force to many European countries.³ In fact, many Western European countries, and primarily the FDR, had started making demands on the Turkish labor market even before the Treaty of 1961 was signed between Turkey and the FDR. The main factors that determined the European migration regime in the 1960s were the intensive demand for labor in post-war Europe and the bilateral treaties that had been signed as a result of relevant inter-governmental agreements. Under the First Five-Year Development Plan (1962-1967), prepared upon the ratification of the 1961 Constitution in Turkey, the “exportation of surplus labor” was set as an important development strategy in terms of the foreign currency revenues generated by any migrant workers and the decrease of unemployment within the country.

In the early 1960s, the international migratory flows originating from Turkey were driven mainly by economic factors. The fluctuations in worker migration from Turkey to Europe paralleled the supply and demand balance of European economies between the years 1961 and 1975. After 1961, a substantial increase was observed in the number of workers migrating to Europe, and in 1964, the annual number of migrant workers peaked with 66,000 workers. Starting in 1968, a distinct increase was seen in the number of migrant workers following the economic shrinkage; in other words, the said period was a time of intense mass immigration. However, in 1974, with economic stagnation West European governments nearly ceased accepting migrant workers and the number of migrant workers from Turkey decreased to as few as 17,000 annually. The year 1975 was the year in which mass migration of workers from Turkey to Europe stopped. According to official figures in Turkey, between the years 1961 and 1974, approximately 800,000 workers migrated to Europe through the Employment Agency (Table 2), of which 649,000 (81 percent) migrated to Germany, 56,000 (7

³ Paine (1974), İçduygu (1991).

percent) to France, 37,000 (5 percent) to Austria, 25,000 (3 percent) to the Netherlands and the rest to various other European countries.⁴

Table 2: Turkish Labor Migration by Destination, 1961-2005

Host Countries		Europe	MENA Countries	Australia	CIS Countries	Others	Total
1961-1974	Number	790017	2441	5806		12235	810499
	%	97.5	0.3	0.7	-	1.5	100.0
1975-1980	Number	13426	74181	2647		14792	105046
	%	12.8	70.6	2.5	-	14.1	100.0
1981-1990	Number	2612	423208	2478		4875	433173
	%	0.6	97.7	0.6	-	1.1	100.0
1991-1995	Number	9647	208274	1324	115	125238	344598
	%	2.8	60.4	0.4	0.0	36.3	100.0
1996-2000	Number	10465	32195	515	65521	4256	112952
	%	9.3	28.5	0.5	58.0	3.8	100.0
2001-2005	Number	16561	57974	176	89623	17533	181867
	%	9.1	31.9	0.1	49.3	9.6	100.0
Total	Number	842728	798273	12946	155259	178929	1988135
	%	42.4	40.2	0.7	7.8	9.0	100.0

Source: Official sources: Compiled by İçduygu (2006), based on various in Turkey.

A significant change was observed in the direction of migration from Turkey in the second half of the 1970s, during which period oil-exporting states of the MENA region emerged as new migration destinations⁵ (Table 2). Another important point regarding migratory waves to West Europe, which needs to be mentioned, is that although labor migration from Turkey fell in the 1970s, migration to Europe did not entirely cease and continued in new forms such as family unification, asylum/refugee migration and irregular (illegal) migration.⁶

The changes in the dynamics of the European migration regime and diminishing demand for labor in the late 1960s turned the Turkish government to new pursuits. The concerns accompanying the problem of unemployment have also been effective.⁷ In this context, Australia and MENA countries became new destinations for Turkish migrant workers: the labor force treaty signed with the Australian government being a notable example of the Turkish government's new strategy. From 1968 and 1974, approximately 12,000 Turkish workers and their families migrated to Australia. When we consider the general trend of migration from Turkey after 1960, although migration to Australia does not appear quantitatively significant, it is nevertheless unique in the sense that it was migration to a traditional country of migrants and has the characteristic of permanent settlement.

⁴ İçduygu (1991), Akgündüz (2006).

⁵ The labor force migratory wave to the Middle East and North Africa has a different character from the one towards West Europe both in terms of being relatively temporary in nature and involving movement of only male workers. The length of stay of migrant workers arriving in Middle Eastern and North African countries is determined by the nature of their work. Generally, migrant workers are employed for two-year periods. The rate of return of migrant workers migrating to the said regions is significantly high, which can be explained by the fact that very few migrant workers have the opportunity to be employed at a new project.

⁶ Böcker (1995), İçduygu (1996).

⁷ Nevertheless, it needs to be emphasized that during this period, there was an important difference between the migration policies of the governments of Turkey and Australia. Whereas Australian migration policy incorporates the expectation that migrant groups would permanently settle in the country, Turkish migration policy is based on the concept of the guest worker.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the MENA countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, Libya and Iraq emerged as countries attracting a substantial number of migrants from Turkey. Turkey's efforts to find new open doors for Turkish migrants coincided with the MENA states' need for labor.⁸ From 1975 and 1980, more than 74,000 Turkish workers migrated to these countries. And the number of temporary migrant workers from Turkey to the MENA countries is estimated to have reached 500,000 by 1990. It should be noted that these migrant workers stay in the countries where they work on a temporary basis, depending on temporary work permits, and following the expiration of their employment contracts, some of these workers return to Turkey, and after some time, go back to these countries on similar employment contracts. However, both the completion of large-scale infrastructure projects in oil exporting countries in the mid 1990s and the unfavorable conditions created by the Gulf Crisis caused a decrease in worker migration to the region from Turkey. The number of migrant workers, which was 200,000 in 1980 dropped to less than 130,000 in the mid 1990s and fell as low as 105,000 in the last years (Table 1).

The final phase of migration from Turkey comprised the migratory movement to the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, central and northern Asia, involving particularly a significant number of migrant workers to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). New development plans were initiated in the new countries that emerged in the region following the collapse of the Soviet Union and other communist regimes.⁹ The fact that a number of Turkish companies were actively involved in these programs caused work-based migratory movements of substantial size. In a period of diminishing migration towards the MENA countries, struggling to overcome the ramifications of the Gulf Crisis, migratory flows towards the CIS countries were significant in terms of the sustainability of emigration from Turkey. Labor migration from Turkey to these countries has demonstrated a progressively increasing trend. Whereas only 115 persons migrated from Turkey to the CIS between 1991 and 1995, this figure increased to over 65,000 during the 1996-2000 period, and neared 90,000 between 2001 and 2005 (Table 2). In particular, the significant increase in the number of workers going to CIS countries in the last decade has been remarkable: the number more than doubled rising from nearly 17,000 in 1997 to over 36,000 in 2007. In a comparative perspective, the significant share of project-tied migration to the CIS region was also clear: in 2007 while the proportion of those who found employment in the MENA countries was less than one third of the total number of workers going abroad, those who left for the CIS countries was nearly half of the total (Table 3).

Table 3: Number of Workers Sent Abroad by the Turkish Employment Office (TEO), 1997–2007

Receiving Country	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007
European Union countries	1814	2419	2685	4299	1710	9393
Other European countries	13	10	219	237	176	2367
The ME countries	9500	5896	5156	10189	24798	24401
CIS	16980	7092	8019	16330	28663	36404
Australia, Canada, USA	400	396	116	93	94	261
Israel	4300	1485	3917	422	417	277
Other	314	149	130	2581	4497	5064
Total	33321	17475	20242	34151	60355	78167

Source: Turkish Employment Office (TEO).

⁸ As Appleyard (1995) mentions, the leap in oil prices after 1973, and the subsequent increase in the income levels of oil exporting and not so populous Arab states boosted the demand for labor in these countries.

⁹ Gökdere (1994).

III. Project-tied Migration from Turkey to Russian Federation

The migration system between Turkey and Russia which primarily consists of the flows of the project-tied migrants towards this region is best evaluated in three phases: the *initiation* period (1980-1990); the *transition* period (1991-2000) and the *consolidation* period (2001 onwards).

Initiation Period (1980-1990)

In the initial phase, the changing dynamics of Turkish foreign policy and the increasing attention of Turkish contractors to foreign markets might be noted as the core causes of the early migration process between Turkey and Russia. In the context of diversified foreign policy, the Turkish government replaced its strong unidimensional Western oriented policy with a multidimensional alliance pattern and began to follow an outward-oriented foreign policy aimed at improving multilateral cooperation.¹⁰ Consequently, the implementation of the *1984 Natural Gas Agreement* – a joint economic cooperation agreement signed between the Soviet Union and Turkey – and *Turkish Eximbank's*¹¹ \$1,150 million export credit to the Soviet Union were among the first signs of this transformation process.¹² These new policy initiatives implemented by the Turkish government strengthened the intense interaction between Turkey and the Soviet Union before the latter's disintegration, which was, in turn, to instigate the early stages of the migration system between Turkey and Russia.

Prior to this intensified political and economic relationship, there were only a few Turkish companies operating in the Soviet Union, established mainly by entrepreneurs and retired bureaucrats who were aware of the Soviet closed economy and bureaucracy and also of that country's particular needs that might be supplied by Turkey.¹³ In the early 1980s, Turkish contractors had already shown an interest in expanding their operations to different regions.¹⁴ Because, having entered the MENA countries' markets and having made headway bidding in the mid 1970s, Turkish contractors faced serious difficulties ranging from ongoing conflicts in the region to inadequate financial, managerial and technical resources in the construction fields in the mid 1980s. At this stage, alongside the transformation process in Turkey, the 1984 Natural Gas Agreement opened the construction market of the Soviet Union to Turkish contractors who afterwards introduced new destinations to project-tied migrants in the Soviet region. According to this agreement, the expansion of trade had been almost on barter terms with one party (the Soviet Union)¹⁵ exporting goods (natural gas), while the other (Turkey) balanced trade by contracting out services (construction).¹⁶

Turkish construction companies consequently began to launch new projects in the region. The most important Turkish construction companies such as STFA, ENKA, GÜRİŞ and GAMA had carried a

¹⁰ Heper and Sayarı (2002).

¹¹ Turkish Eximbank, by means of its Country Credit and Guarantee Programs, provides financing for the export of goods and services to be realized by Turkish companies to priority countries that are determined in line with the economic and foreign-policy objectives of the Turkish Government in order to establish permanent and long-term relationships.

¹² Öniş (2004).

¹³ The first private Turkish company in the Soviet Union was established by Güntekin Köksal, one of the foremost industrialists, who entered the former Soviet Union with representation, consultancy and engineering services in 1974. Following his steps, Ertan Balin entered the Soviet Union with BASTAŞ Barite Company initiated in 1978. BASTAŞ, exporting barite (a mineral used in oil industry) to USSR, was the first accredited Turkish company before the dissolution of the USSR.

¹⁴ Girtli and Sözen (1990).

¹⁵ A similar agreement was already concluded between Federal Republic of Germany and the Soviet Union in 1981. The Agreement on Basic Terms of Natural Gas Deliveries to the Federal Republic of Germany was signed for gas exports for 25 years starting in 1984. The Agreement was executed within the Gas-for-Pipes deal that included *gas deliveries* from Western Siberia to Germany and the construction of an export *gas pipeline* from Urengoi to Uzhgorod which was 4,500 km long.

¹⁶ The Soviet Union pledged to provide Turkey with 120 billion cubic meters of *natural gas*. Part of the revenue was to be used for imports of Turkish goods, of which 35 percent was allocated to Turkish *construction services* in the Soviet Union.

high number of project-tied migrants and professionals to various regions in the Soviet Union and this became the distinctive migrant profile in the migration system between Turkey and Russia in this period.¹⁷ According to the statistics of the Turkish Employment Office (TEO),¹⁸ in 1989, 932 Turkish project-tied migrants were employed in the Soviet Union, while in 1990, the number of project-tied migrants increased to 1,243 (Table 4). The number of construction projects operating in between 1989-1994 was 97, while the total value of these projects was estimated at USD 420 million.

Table 4: Number of Workers Sent to Russia by the Turkish Employment Office (TEO) and Number and Value of the Turkish Construction Projects in Russia, 1989-2008

Years	Number of project-tied workers	Number of projects	\$ million
1989	932		
1990	1243		
1989-94	76849	97	4209
1995	35792	33	1055
1996	20460	91	1674
1997	13195	124	717
1998	7426	56	1126
1999	2215	80	732
2000	2199	75	181
2001	4190	31	165
2002	10160	19	343
2003	10816	38	428
2004	13281	40	1033
2005	19540	70	746
2006	24142	56	2292
2007	23118	59	3605
2008	15696	78	3387

Source: Turkish Employment Office (TEO) and Moscow Office of the Commercial Counselor.

Transition Period (1991-2000)

This period witnessed the rapid collapse of the previous social and economic system which was to drastically alter the living conditions in the post-Soviet territory and created a totally new migration situation in the former Soviet Union.¹⁹ The industrial structure in the post Soviet countries' economies was distorted and many of the production links were disrupted by radical institutional changes.

The early years of the collapse of the Soviet Union led to nationalism, ethnically and religiously based conflicts, minority discrimination and civil wars and produced the *mass repatriation* of Russian-speaking populations²⁰ to their country of historical origin. Repatriation was accompanied by flows of

¹⁷ Aydın and Bekar (1997).

¹⁸ The Turkish Employment Office (TEO) is the organization responsible for monitoring labor market developments, taking measures and developing policies to assure a match in labor supply and demand in markets through provision of job seeking and placement services, non-formal vocational training, on-job training, and the implementation of other active labor market policies. All contract-based workers have to get the approval of their contracts by TEO, (www.iskur.gov.tr).

¹⁹ Korobkov and Zayonchkovskaya (2004: 482).

²⁰ The Russian-speaking populations includes those people for whom Russian is a native or major language, among them, besides ethnic Russians, are Ukrainians, Belarusian, and other CIS nationalities. With this repatriation, Russians, and later Ukrainians and Belarusians, who were active participants in the expansion of the Russian Empire and the life of the Soviet Union, returned home at this stage (Zayonchkovskaya 2002: 344).

refugees, forced migrants and displaced people from areas of armed conflict and nationalist clashes.²¹ Within the years after the disintegration of the Soviet Union (1992-1998), movements to Russia formed the major migration trend and Russian net migration reached 3.5 million as compared to 2.4 million in the period 1976-90.²² On balance, though the disintegration of the Soviet Union did not cause major changes in the direction of migration flows, the nature of these flows changed radically because most of the former Soviet republics were transformed into newly independent states (NIS) who implement nationalizing policies. Therefore the seriousness of the migratory problems stemmed not from a growth in migration but rather from the fact that a significant percentage of migrants were now resettled/repatriated, refugees or forced migrants leaving neighboring states under threat of violence or because of discrimination.

However, in the second half of the transition period, the number of labor migrants with only temporary residence in Russia increased markedly. This changing migration trend may be viewed as evidence of the development of private entrepreneurship, land ownership and the beginning of market reforms. In addition to the development of genuine labor market relations, the exhaustion of the reserves of ethnic repatriates, the moderation of minority policies and the official recognition of the freedom of exit and entrance resulted in a new economic landscape and new migration forms within the territory of the former Soviet Union. In line with these developments, *short term labor migration* and *shuttle trade* emerged as means of survival in the post-Soviet economic crises and led to substantially lower social tension and a higher standard of living.²³ In this phase, the majority of labor migrants were irregular short-term migrants,²⁴ mostly from the CIS countries, involved in the trading building and repair industries, transportation and other services. As to the labor migration from non-former Soviet states, registered inflows of migrant workers are mostly from China, North Korea and Turkey.²⁵

In the transition period, Turkish construction companies, as the main source of the flows of professionals and project tied migrants into the region, rapidly gained in experience and sophistication by focusing on low-technology projects in difficult locations.²⁶ In fact, their accumulated past experience in the MENA countries and in the Soviet Union during the last decade of the Soviet system taught these construction companies how to solve problems that were peculiar to the post-Soviet regions. The success of the construction companies encouraged *Turkish businessmen* to be actively involved not only in the Russian construction market, but also in sectors such as tourism, textiles and food production. Furthermore, in this period *Turkish investors with small or medium size capital* took the risk of establishing gift shops, cafes, restaurants, bakeries or slaughterhouses in the newly emerging Russian market economy. The war in Chechnya, the 1998 Russian financial and economic crisis, growing difficulties in residence registration, existing administrative obstacles, and the increasingly xenophobic attitudes of the Russian society, on the one hand, and the earthquakes of 1999 and the 2001 financial crisis in Turkey, on the other, negatively affected Turkish companies in the region, and consequently migration flows from Turkey to Russia has slowed down in the last decade or so.

²¹ Russian sources mentioned close to 300 territorial claims that arose during 1988-1996 in the post-Soviet space, of which at least 140 retained their importance at the beginning of the new century. Of those around twenty resulted in military clashes, and six led to regional wars (Korobkov 2007: 170; Polian, 2004). For further information, see also Zayonchkovskaya, (1996: 3).

²² Zayonchkovskaya (2002: 344).

²³ Ivahniuk, (2004); Zayonchkovskaya, (1996: 3)

²⁴ Many labor migrants combine their official permanent jobs in the private or state sector with short-term work in other cities or countries.

²⁵ Korobkov and Palei (2005); Zayonchkovskaya (2002).

²⁶ In this prolific period, various hospitals, housing complexes, shopping malls, office buildings and industrial plant projects as well as prestigious contracts such as the renovation of the White House and the State Duma buildings were carried out in Russia.

After a peak of 35,000 in 1995 (approximately 10-15 percent of the total regular labor migrants to Russia), the annual number of labor migrants from Turkey to Russia declined considerably: 13,195 in 1997 and 2,199 in 2000 (Table 4). Regarding the number of construction projects, there was a fluctuating trend in the second half of the 1990s. In 1995, the number of projects was 33, whereas in 1997 it was 124 and 75 in 2000. The financial volume of these projects also fluctuated, with a general decline from USD 1,055 million in 1995 to USD 181 million in 2000 (Table 4).

Nevertheless, the beginning of the 1990s was an important turning point for Turkish construction companies. In those years, these companies handled contracts in Russia and the other former Soviet Union Republics in addition to projects in the MENA countries, which established markets for them in the pre-1990 era.²⁷ In the light of these developments, it might be concluded that in the transition period, Turkish migrants, mostly residing in the two migrant magnet cities of Russia, Moscow and St. Petersburg, had already established themselves with different profiles including professionals, project-tied migrants, and medium and small size investors.

Consolidation Period (2001-onwards)

In the consolidation period, Russian migration policies were subjected to fundamental revisions which had serious consequences for migration trends and patterns in the region. First, the threat of terrorism, the effects of September 11, 2001 and the new political leadership switched the political line of Russia toward a tightening in migration control.²⁸ Starting in about 2005, these policies were followed by a liberalization in migration. In this period, despite the fact that the Russian migration policies were consolidated, they, at the same time, reflected a transition from a strict migration-control position to a new 'open doors' policy. In brief, the consolidation period might be divided into two distinct phases: the migration control policies (2001-2005) and the open-door policies (2005-onward).

The phase of migration control (2001-2005) was marked by the attempts of the new Putin administration to develop the institutional foundations of migration policy, including its legal structures and the executive mechanisms for the practical implementation of new policies.²⁹ At that stage such attempts were mostly oriented towards the strengthening of law enforcement around migration policies. These policies concentrated mostly on the following two groups of migrants: refugees and forced migrants, on the one hand, and illegal migrants on the other. The main policy aim in these two cases was to limit the numbers coming in. But, in fact, illegal labor migration flows exceeded official settlement flows, as well as officially registered regular labor migrant flows.³⁰ Overall, during this period, migration flows continued to shrink: net migration in 2004 was 74,000 compared to 914,000 in 1994.³¹ The steady decrease of migration flow was accompanied by the demographic crisis brought about by a combination of increasing aging and dropping fertility.

Since the early 1990s, migration has been the only source of population growth in Russia, compensating in 1992-94 for up to 80 percent of the losses resulting from the natural decline in population; 40 percent in 1996-98; and about 20 percent of these losses in 1999-2000.³² Interestingly, even immigration has been losing its ability to compensate for the huge demographic losses that Russia has faced in recent years: the compensation ratio declined to 7.7 percent in 2001 and just 4.7

²⁷ Öz (2000: 137).

²⁸ Molodikova (2007).

²⁹ The Concept of the RF Demographic Development until 2015 (adopted September 2001), the Concept of Migration Regulation Process in the RF (March 2003), the Law on the Citizenship of the RF (November 2003) were some of the significant legal sources that was approved by the Putin Administration (Korobkov 2007: 178). Also significant was the introduction of migration cards in 2002 for all foreign citizens arriving in Russia and of a diversified visa system in 2003.

³⁰ Molodikova (2007).

³¹ Korobkov (2007).

³² Vorobyeva (2001).

percent in 2003.³³ The unfavorable demographic structure creates a strong and stable demand for migrant labor forces. The demographic crisis in combination with the inefficient policies against illegal migrants prompted the Russian government to change its policy from one preventing migrants to new “open door” policies.³⁴ Consequently, in 2005 the Putin administration adopted new acts with the aim of the general liberalization of its migration policy, increase of permanent migration, improvement in migration statistics, the expansion of the legal space for temporary migration and a limited legalization of undocumented migrants.³⁵

The shifting migration policies in Russia, in parallel with the declining performance of the Turkish economy in this period affected the migration flows between these two countries. Although the number of construction projects first decreased from 75 in 2000 to 38 in 2003, and then slightly increased to 40 in 2004, the total value of the projects increased considerably with some fluctuations, from USD 181 million in 2000 to USD 1,033 million in 2004. The annual number of project-tied workers also increased significantly from over 2,000 in 2000 to more than 10,000 in 2002, and to 13,000 in 2004 (Table 4). In 2005-2009, while the annual number of project-tied workers to Russia reached 25,000 and the number of annually initiated new projects stayed level at around 60, the annual total value of these projects reached over USD 3,000 million. To sum up, as a result of the project-tied economic relations between Turkey and Russia, and of the migratory flows since the 1980s, today there are around 35,000-40,000 Turkish migrants residing in Russia mostly in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The vast majority of these migrants are project-tied migrants (estimated 85-90 percent) and the rest are professionals and small- and medium-sized investors.

IV. Project-tied Migrants in Moscow: Some Micro- and Meso-Level Analyses

Russia has the second largest foreign migrant population in the world after the United States. Figures vary widely, but the World Bank estimates that in 2005, the total number of migrants there was 12.1 million.³⁶ While it is difficult to determine the *number of migrant workers* in Russia, the Russian Federal Migration Service (FMS) estimates that they numbered between seven and nine million in 2007.³⁷ The majority of migrant workers arrive from Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.³⁸ The economic disparity between these Central Asian countries and Russia is stark. In 2007 *per capita* income in Russia was more than 16 times that of Tajikistan. Russia is also an attractive destination for citizens of many countries of the former Soviet Union because Russian remains a regional *lingua franca*. Russia’s remarkable domestic construction boom has been made possible by millions of migrant workers, most from the former Soviet Union. As to the labor migration from non-former Soviet states, registered inflows of migrant workers are mostly from China, Northern Korea and Turkey.³⁹

As far as Turkey is concerned, though the international labor migration flows from Turkey has widened its routes and has led to a distinctive migration system between Turkey and Russia over the last three decades, there has been very little sustained research carried out on this migration system

³³ Korobkov (2007).

³⁴ Molodikova (2007: 3).

³⁵ Korobkov (2007).

³⁶ The World Bank, "Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008,"

<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/0,,contentMDK:21352016~isCURL:Y~menuPK:3145470~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:476883,00.html> (accessed June 2, 2008).

³⁷ HRW Report (2009).

³⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with Ekateriana Egorova, Head, International Affairs Directorate, Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, Moscow, June 2, 2008.

³⁹ Korobkov and Palei (2005); Zayonchkovskaya (2002).

that became particularly relevant after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.⁴⁰ In order to shed light on project-tied migration flows from Turkey to Russia and on the characteristics of migrant workers within these flows, the findings from the in-depth interviews with the ten individual project-tied migrants carried out in Moscow in 2008 will be presented.

Project-tied migration, a type of contract migration,⁴¹ occurs when a migrant worker is admitted to an employment state for a defined period to work solely on a *specific project* – such as a construction project – being carried out in that State or by his or her employer.⁴² Based on this definition, the findings of the field work in Moscow will be evaluated at two levels. Focusing on the *micro* level, the individual characteristics of project-tied migrants will be analyzed by looking at some background characteristics of project-tied migrants: the incentives that explain their migration from Turkey to Russia; their intentions in terms of temporary or permanent sojourn; their living and working conditions; and their future plans. At the *meso* level, a number of intermediate mechanisms such as the role of subcontracting/recruitment agencies will be examined through the question of how migrant workers find jobs and how they get to Moscow, and how they work there.⁴³

With the Moscow fieldwork, several contacts were made with Turkish construction companies so as to reach the 10 sampled workers and to carry out in-depth interviews with them. The sample, based on a ‘snowballing’ technique, was built up taking into consideration the age, sex, occupation, and education of the workers. It also sought to get to grips with the circularity of workers that the project-tied migrants experienced by working in different projects and in different countries. The main areas covered in the in-depth interviews were background information, the circularity of migratory movements, future plans, various networks and groups affecting migration history and future plans in Moscow. The interviewing was carried out in Moscow over 3 weeks, July 5-30, 2008. The in-depth interviews were held in Turkish and averaged 3-5 hours. All interviews were face-to-face and there was no third-party involvement in the interviews.

The findings presented here are a descriptive account of some characteristics and experiences of the sampled project-tied migrants. Furthermore, the findings are assessed and evaluated together with information given by key informants, businessmen and intermediaries in the Russian construction sector, Russian academics and Turkish bureaucrats/businessmen in Moscow. Contacts were made with the authorities, academics and stakeholders from various government bodies, universities and foundations in Moscow to reduce the risk of observer bias.⁴⁴

Micro Level Analysis: Characteristics and Experiences of Migrants

In micro level analysis, the interviews in Moscow provided an opportunity to detail migration history, migration circularity and the future plans of project-tied migrants in Moscow. Who are the project-tied migrants in Russia? Why do these migrants decide to go to Russia? Do these migrants consider themselves to be only temporarily in Russia? Have they any intention of continuing work in other countries?

⁴⁰ Research concerning that region mostly focused on the suitcase trade, the feminization of migration (domestic workers) and human smuggling/trafficking in Russia and other CIS countries.

⁴¹ Contract migration consists of usually unskilled or semi-skilled foreign workers who are admitted on the understanding that they will work for a limited period and includes temporary contract migration, seasonal migration, and project-tied migration, ILO, IOM and UNHCR (1994); Böhning (1984; 1996) .

⁴² Appleyard (1995), Böhning (1996).

⁴³ Although this current study may not be able to answer all these questions comprehensively, it addresses a number of issues on various aspects of project-tied migration between Turkey and Russia.

⁴⁴ Among these, there were the Turkish Embassy, Turkish-Russian Businessmen Association, Moscow Lomonosov State University, Russian Academy of Sciences, Turkish Office of the Commercial Counsellor.

Project-tied migrants in Moscow: Some background characteristics

According to the statistics of FMS, Moscow with a population of over 12 million has 1.8 million regular migrants, but with the inclusion of illegal migrants, this number was estimated at around 3.5 million in 2008. Moscow's traditional migrants – ethnic Tatars, Ukrainians, and peoples from the Caucasus – have recently been supplemented by migrants from the former Soviet republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova.⁴⁵ Migrants also are coming to Moscow in growing numbers from beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union, from China, South Korea, Vietnam, Turkey and Afghanistan. On the basis of the interviews with the Turkish Consulate, it can be concluded that there are approximately 35,000-40,000 migrants from Turkey residing in Moscow and St. Petersburg where most of the construction projects of the Turkish contractors have been operating. Accordingly, this field research focuses on Moscow as the location of the study and the construction sector as the main sector where the project-tied migrants are working.

In the construction sector men not surprisingly outnumber women though there are jobs for the women particularly in the administration and service departments of the ongoing construction projects. Therefore, all of our migrant respondents are men. The interviewed project-tied migrants are aged between 23 and 50, with an average age of 33 (Table 5). Half of our respondents are single. They mostly had urban backgrounds and were fairly well educated, skilled workers. None of the four married project-tied migrants think about family reunification. They see their settlement as temporary, as are their contracts, and, in any case, the project-tied migrants point to the huge cultural and religious differences between Russia and Turkey. One of the experienced project-tied migrant stated:

My contract will be finished in one year so I have to move to another construction site maybe in another city or in another country. In Russia people have a very different culture and way of life. Religion is different, the language is very difficult. I don't want to bring my family here. They would be very isolated. (Ali)

As this is the case, project-tied migrants' wives and children stay at home, and wives continue to take care of the house and children. How is family life affected by this long period of separation?:

You know, I have been working since 1993 as a project-tied worker in various cities and countries... What I know is that it is too difficult to raise a child in that way. While my children were growing, they mostly refused me, when I came home after the long period of separation. The interesting thing is I am here, away from my family for the future of my children, but I always have problems with my children... From now on, everything is under control. I can say this, now they are expecting gifts from me. (Mehmet)

Why Russia as destination?

Among the main reasons for working in Russia, five project-tied migrants cited the need to get a whole wage at the end of the month in order to support the family financially, carry out the education of the children and pay off debts. (Table 5). *“Education is more important, I have to work to provide a better life for my children and this is possible, when they get a good education”*, said one of the respondents. It is reported that construction workers in Turkey are mostly paid on a weekly basis, but in Russia, companies pay the wages at the end of the month which makes working in Russia an interesting option for workers. Negative work conditions in Turkey were labeled as another push factor. Additionally, what made two of the project-tied migrants go to Russia was the reputation of the company and the prestige gained by working in that company (Table 5). As clearly stated by the young project-tied migrant respondent below, some of the leading Turkish construction companies in Russia offer not only precious experience, but also a variety of management quality.

My father worked in this company, he was in Libya, Iraq, and you know this company gave us an identity. So I can work in Russia, Libya or Ukraine or Kazakhstan where the company gets projects. For me this identity is more than a logo, it is not only a brand. So how can I explain? We are like a family. It gave us not only salary but also trust. (Hüseyin).

⁴⁵ For the year of 2008 the number of Tajiks is 170,964; Uzbeks are 146,216 and Kyrgyz 88,930 (www.turkrus.com).

Table 5: Characteristics of the 10 Project-tied Migrants interviewed in Moscow, 2008

1	M	37	Married	Village	Secondary	Carpenter Skilled	1991	Russia/Kazakhstan/ Russia	High (10-above)	Russian good	Relatives worked in the same company, working there gives a positive identity
2	M	50	Divorced	City	Secondary	Carpenter Skilled	1991	Belarus/Libya/ Russia	High (10-above)	Arabic few / Russian very good	To get monthly wage; to earn good money
3	M	32	Married	City	Primary	Painter Skilled	1997	Russia/Ukraine/ Azerbaijan	High (10-above)	Russian good	To get monthly wage; to earn good money
4	M	48	Married	Village	Secondary	Electrician Skilled	1993	Russia/Kazakhstan	High (10-above)	Russian very good	To get monthly wage; to earn good money
5	M	25	Single	City	Secondary	Pattern Worker Unskilled	2005	Russia	medium (3-9)	Russian fair	Relatives worked in the same company, working there gives a positive identity
6	M	25	Single	City	Primary	Ironworker Unskilled	2005	Russia	medium (3-9)	Russian fair	Wonder about how the working conditions in Russia are
7	M	35	Single	Town	Secondary	Electrician Unskilled	2000	Russia/Kazakhstan	medium (3-9)	Russian fair	Bad working conditions in Turkey
8	M	27	Single	City	Tertiary	Plasterer Skilled	2006	Russia	Low (1-2 years)	Russian poor / English good	To get monthly wage; to earn good money
9	M	25	Married	City	Primary	Plasterer Unskilled	2007	Russia/Afghanistan/ Russia	Low (1-2 years)	Russian poor	Bad working conditions in Turkey
10	M	23	Single	Village	Secondary	Plasterer Unskilled	2007	Russia	Low (1-2 years)	Russian poor	to get monthly wage; to earn good money

Source: Moscow Field Research (MFR)

Overall, a common point that might be concluded from the project-tied migrants was as follows: the main motive that made the project-tied migrants work abroad was an economic incentive, particularly in saving money and sending their children to better schools.

Where do the project-tied migrant workers live and where and how do they work?: In the initiation period, the Turkish construction companies preferred to employ mostly Turkish workers. The interviews with employees emphasize the fact that by employing Turkish workers, Turkish contractors think that they avoid possible communication problems such as language as well as cultural incompatibility. Apart from this, it is often noted that Turkish workers tend to work in harsh conditions, to which they can adapt easily. In fact, findings from the interviews show that the migrant workers' ability to work in difficult environments comes from their past experiences gained in MENA countries. The in-depth interviews with employees underlined the Turkish workers' ability in using various construction equipment and machinery as stated by one of the experienced migrant workers:

I was in Libya and I know what a desert storm is and think that it will be much easier to deal with cold weather conditions like those in Russia. If you put on not 3 but 4 pullovers, then you can live here. But you know, forget the climate. We, the Turkish workers, were the only guys, who knew the equipment and machinery in the construction industry in the early years after the collapse. During these years, I was shocked since none of the Russians knew these pieces of equipment. Of course, the company, first of all, chose Turkish workers. If I become a contractor, I will do the same thing, because you have to complete the projects on time. (Ali)

The reasons stated here reflect the fact that the Turkish companies, in the initiation period, mostly worked with Turkish workers. But the 1998 economic crisis in Russia opened construction up to Russian workers for a short time. Mostly very qualified workers including women worked with Turkish project-tied migrant workers in the Turkish construction companies, as noted by the respondent below:

The economic crisis in Russia was worse than terrible. Yes, our conditions were very good, because with our advance money we could buy whatever we wanted, the prices were so low. But still you could not feel good. Since, there were teachers or doctors who were working in construction to earn money and to support their families. Interestingly, in this crisis period, some of the equipment, cheap or expensive, disappeared from the field. Sometimes 2,000-3,000 nails, sometimes an excavator tire were lost. I have to say that for the first time in my life I worked with a woman who was able to use a very complicated construction machine in the construction field. But after the crisis, when the Russians earned enough money, they all disappeared. (Mehmet)

When the wages of Turkish workers increase, and when this is coupled with bureaucratic problems regarding the transfer of the workers from Turkey, Turkish contractors consider employing foreign workers in their overseas projects. Regarding the internationally competitive construction market in Russia, today, in contrast to the initiation period, there are not only Turkish workers, but also foreign workers mainly from the Central Asian countries who work in the industry. Many companies prefer foreign workers who will be employed without going through a complicated employment procedure and who know Turkish or who are able to speak one of its dialects. Today, at the construction projects of the Turkish companies, one can easily meet a Tajik, Uzbek or Kyrgyz migrant worker.

As to the living conditions of the project-tied migrants, there are mostly on site dormitories which provide workers with accommodation, consisting of simple rooms with 6-8 beds. In addition to the dormitories, some of the companies are able to rent guesthouses or small hotels for their workers. These places of accommodation generally provide proper sanitary conditions and workers, in most cases, have access to hot water or bathing facilities. Formal companies and employers provide reasonably good conditions to their workers, but with informal employment, there are cases where workers are promised housing and three meals a day but are, instead, faced with poor conditions.

One of my friends was deceived by an illegal subcontractor and he came to Russia on a tourist visa, then the subcontractor took his passport. On the building site he said that he slept on the basement floor of the house that they were building and ate only macaroni for 2 weeks. (Reşat)

In one month we generally have two Sundays free. On those days I really like to go to shopping and cafes. Sometimes we picnic with our friends. In Russia, we do not have problems with Russians,

except with bribery. Once, the police asked me for a bribe. I really did not have money; therefore they brought me to their office and said that I had to clean the room. What could I do? I cleaned the room and then they released me. (Murat)

As stated by the respondent above, migrant workers' interviews report that physical attacks and bribery by police, border guards, and custom officials were the main abuse that Turkish migrants faced in Moscow. Apart from this, violent racially-motivated attacks and murders of minorities of non-Slavic appearance have become common in Moscow⁴⁶.

If you dress well, then you do not have much of a problem in Moscow. But if not, then think twice. I am not blond but have black hair. Just for this reason they may attack. I was attacked by 4 Russians. I could not do anything, I called my friends, they took me from the metro station. (Reşat)

In short, the abuse and exploitation of the project-tied workers comes from illegal subcontractors and/or employees or from the police and other officials in Russia. In addition to this, racism and xenophobia are pervasive problems in Russian society, which the Russian government has failed either to prevent or to combat.

What to do with their earnings?: Generally, project-tied migrants receive their wages at the end of the month. Having left these wages, between USD 1,000-1,500, in their bank accounts in Turkey, the project-tied migrants survive in Moscow, on their advance payments, USD 100-200. Currently, most of the Turkish construction companies in Russia transfer the wages of project-tied migrants to the worker's bank account in Turkey. In the early period of migration to Russia companies used to transfer the payments to the migrant's own bank account in Russia. This method of payment though led to serious problems for both the companies and the migrants themselves. In the later period then payment was made to accounts in Turkey:

In the early 1990s, the payments were put through to our bank accounts in Russia. But some of the workers spent it in a very short period of time without taking their families into consideration. Some families broke up because of this salary mismanagement. So the company authorities took this situation under consideration and from then on they paid wages into our accounts in Turkey. (Ali)

Migrants, having opened accounts with their close relatives (wives and/or fathers/mothers), leave their wages in Turkey their relatives administer these savings and spend them for their family. Six out of the ten interviewed migrant workers indicated that they share their accounts either with their father, mother or wife and try to save money:

You know we have one very famous saying: home is made by a female bird! Advance money is all my spending here in Moscow. I leave all my salary to my wife. She knows how to use it better than me. You know, we are free for two Sundays in a month and on those days I try to survive on my advance money. (Hasan)

What is their duration of stay and future plans in Moscow?: In Moscow, the work experience of the project-tied migrant workers has been divided into three periods according to their work experiences abroad: low level (1-2 years); medium level (3-9 years); high level (10 years-above). Three of the contract workers had a medium level of foreign work experience (3-9 years) and the other three workers had a low level of foreign experience (1-2 years). Project-tied workers circulate in different countries within different projects of various companies and this circulation becomes a part of their lives. It appears that the project-tied workers sign contracts of anything between two-months and two-years duration. When migrant workers' contracts expire, they return to Turkey, stay there for a while and wait for another project call. In the home country, they mostly work short-term in a self-employed capacity. As the interviews demonstrate, the majority of project-tied migrants in Russia worked as carpenters, drivers, or housepainters in Turkey. They often spent three to six months in Turkey in the intervals of two contacts abroad. According to the migrants, this type of break is a very functional period especially for those who have a family in need of care.

⁴⁶ HRW Report (2009).

The previous foreign work experiences of the interviewed workers clearly reflect the changing geographies of the project-tied movements of the Turkish construction companies since the early 1980s. The most experienced interviewed workers in Moscow took part in various projects operating in Libya and in other post-Soviet countries like Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan (Table 5). Some of the contact workers, in particular those who have long experience of work abroad, were able to learn the native language of the countries they work in. For instance, four of the respondents who were among the most experienced workers, were fluent in Russian, and one had also learned Arabic in Libya.

As expected, the project-tied migrants did not take the permanent stay abroad as a serious option. However, as often mentioned by the respondents in Moscow, some of the project-tied migrants with entrepreneurial ambitions had taken the risk of staying permanently in Russia, particularly during the initiation period of migration from Turkey to Russia in the 1980s. With medium- and small-size investments in mostly food, tourism and textiles, they tried to fill the gaps in the newly opened Soviet economic system. According to the respondents, apart from the mixed marriages of Turkish professionals and businessmen residing in Russia, most mixed marriages took place among these settled-down entrepreneurs who were former project-tied migrants.

One of my friends stayed in Moscow and opened a bakery here (in Moscow) in the early 1990s. He was really wise... In those years, the economy was not so good. Those were very difficult days for the Soviet society, but we could buy everything with our advance money. So it was not so difficult to open a shop or to buy a flat and he did so, he did not waste his salary and now he is better off than me. (Veli)

From the Moscow fieldwork, it can be concluded that most of the project-tied migrants do not plan to go back to Turkey permanently. No matter how hard the weather and/or the working conditions in Russia are, eight of the interviewed migrants think that working conditions in construction companies abroad are better than the working conditions in Turkey, so they prefer working abroad. Mostly they are satisfied with their living conditions in the construction industry abroad, and typically the intention of these migrants is to continue to circulate with different projects to various countries. The answer to the question of other possible destinations apart from Russia depends on particular companies who offer different opportunities. In other words, project-tied workers do not tend to go to specific countries, but prefer to circulate with companies providing economic prosperity and job security.

Meso Level Analysis: Migrants and Related Institutions

At the *meso* level, a bridge between the micro and macro dynamics, a number of intermediate mechanisms such as subcontracting or recruitment agencies will be reviewed with reference to the question of how contract-workers find their jobs and how they get to Moscow.

How do project-tied migrants go to Moscow?

The first project that brought Turkish project-tied workers to Russia was the restoration and renovation of the Petrovsky Passage, a historic architectural landmark in Moscow. The first workers arrived at Kiev Train Station in Moscow after a three-day train trip, in October 1988. Following this project, various hospital, housing complex, shopping mall, office building and industrial plant projects as well as prestigious ventures such as the renovation of the White House and the Russian Parliament Buildings were accomplished. In the later stages of project-tied flows to Russia, migrant workers also used the 3-4 daily bus services which departed from Istanbul to different Russian regions. Today, the project-tied migrants travel with airplane – mostly cheap charter planes – and then arrive at the building site, after a bus or train trip within Russia. In the last five years, all of our respondents arrived in Russia by plane.

How do the project-tied migrants find their jobs in Moscow? The Role of Intermediaries

The Moscow fieldwork indicate that there are *formal* and *informal* forms of job placement and/or recruitment. With formal recruitment, for the forthcoming projects, Turkish construction companies mostly utilize their on-site workers. In other words, the companies' own human resources become their major source of worker supply for their continuing and forthcoming projects in different regions of Russia. Turkish companies also cooperate with subcontracting agencies and intermediaries mostly initiated by former foremen who have worked and who have experience in Russia and/or Turkey. These

legal intermediary firms/subcontractors are the major agents in the job placement of migrants. In brief, the project-tied migrants may find their jobs within their companies or through a subcontracting agency/intermediary firms. But they become a project-tied worker after the signing of work contracts between the Turkish companies and workers. For the two sides, the contracts become legally effective, only after the approval of the TEO. All companies must register their workers to the Russian authorities before employment begins.

The costly, difficult and lengthy administrative and bureaucratic procedure to recruit project-tied migrants from abroad encourages some companies/subcontracting agencies to recruit workers illegally. They may transfer the workers with tourist visas to the field and let them work informally for the construction companies in various parts of Russia. Subcontracting has always been important in the construction industry, particularly in building construction where the production process is divided into a number of discrete activities. These tasks or activities are often carried out sequentially and may require specialized labor. Therefore, it often makes sense, in technical and economic terms, for general contractors to subcontract some tasks to independent, specialized units. However, subcontracting⁴⁷ has increased significantly in the past two decades and it is no longer restricted to specialized tasks. Project-tied migrants in Russia too are commonly employed through subcontractors who negotiate the contract for labor on a project and then hire the workers through the intermediaries run by foremen. The foremen deals with the subcontractors and often the foremen recruit their relatives and/or friends from their neighborhood in Turkey. One of the interviewed foremen who owns his intermediary agency in Moscow declared that

...The 'outsourcing' of labor through illegal subcontractors means that work in construction has become temporary and insecure. And as you may know workers' protection has been eroded as large numbers are excluded from social security. Illegal subcontractors don't want to give any security; though they have to do so. But when it comes to money, they know how to take it. I worked for several years in an established and famous company and gained a lot of experience in Russia, in Libya, Iraq, and Kazakhstan. But now I am a bridge between the workers and the company that I worked for...If there is a new project, they call me and tell me about the workers they are looking for... Of course, I first of all look at my village and relatives in recruiting the workers because, I know them and I can give guarantees.(İbrahim)

Three of the interviewed project-tied workers stated that there has been a clear and significant increase in the proportion of the illegally-employed in the small or very small firms operating in Russia. In the in-depth interviews, one of the project-tied migrants pointed out that he knew a few cases where workers had been deceived by an illegal intermediary:

I know one intermediary, who took the money of my friend and brought him to Moscow with a tourist visa by promising him that the visas would be issued in Russia and that his job was ready in Moscow. After the visa expired, the intermediary left my friend in the construction industry and disappeared. By chance I met him in Moscow and helped him. He returned to Istanbul.(Kemal)

All of the interviewed project-tied workers in Moscow were recruited formally. Eight of the interviewed migrant workers were employed directly by their companies' own human resources departments and the other two migrants were employed through legal intermediaries. The role of informal social channels consisting of relatives, friends or community members from Turkey was increasingly recognized as an important channel for encouraging additional migration and assisting the new project-tied migrants arriving to Russia. All of the interviewed respondents stated that they had arranged jobs through formal channels, but that they were not able to reach these networks, without the help and encouragement of either their friends and/or their relatives. In fact, family, friends and community members with migration experience had provided initial contacts and information, introduced subcontractors and/or legal intermediaries or had even sponsored the move.

⁴⁷ Subcontracting is usually on a 'labor only' basis, and may go through several stages on a large project, creating a multi-layer contracting system. At the bottom of the system are the intermediaries who recruit and control labor: intermediaries (mostly initiated by foremen), subcontractors and contractors.

One of my close-friends told me about a company operating in Moscow. He had also worked there and gave my name to the subcontractor with whom he was working. Then the subcontractor called me, we set up an interview, he asked me about my qualifications and they, afterwards, send my name to the company. After one month, the company called me to their center in Istanbul. I live in Trabzon. I passed an interview and a test and then signed my contract and then the journey to Russia began.

V. Conclusion

In the last fifty years, migratory flows of Turkish citizens have integrated into various international migration systems which were determined by different economic, social, and political processes. The migration system between Turkey and Russia, split into three interrelated periods in this essay, shows the transformations which have taken place since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its transition to a new socio-economic system. Since the early 1990s, new migration patterns have been experienced throughout the post-Soviet countries. These include mass repatriation, particularly of the Russian speaking population and flows of refugees and internally-displaced persons. Some new forms of migration have emerged as a means of survival in the post-Soviet economic crisis. For instance, short-term labor migrants and shuttle traders show the important role migrants may play in the shift towards a market-based economy. Parallel to these developments, the internalization process of Turkish constructors within the changing dynamics of Turkish foreign policy has widened the migration flows from Turkey by introducing new migrant worker profiles to different regions. With the combined effects of transition in the post-Soviet geographies, in addition to the project-tied migrants, Turkish businessmen and small- and medium-sized investors have joined the migration flows from Turkey to Russia.

As noted throughout this essay, the internationalization process of Turkish contractors started during the mid 1970s, a period when Turkey faced serious economic and political difficulties.⁴⁸ The depressed home market coincided with the recession in the world market caused by the surge in oil prices.⁴⁹ This situation provided an opportunity for the internationalization of Turkish contractors. Oil-rich countries in the MENA region together with developing countries, making use of the relatively cheap funds they obtained from international financial markets, contributed to a boom in the construction industry. For instance, in 1975, the Turkish-Libyan Joint Economic Cooperation Protocol facilitated the entry of Turkish contractors to Libya, giving them the experience of working overseas. With this protocol, Turkish project-tied migrant workers began to circulate throughout MENA countries.⁵⁰

Consequently, the internationalization of the Turkish construction market took these workers in new directions. In the second half of the 1980s, the 1984 Natural Gas Agreement signed between Turkey and the Soviet Union, in line with the new perspectives in the Turkish foreign policy, marked another turning point for Turkish contractors and also for the project-tied migrant workers from Turkey. Accordingly, Turkish contractors began to undertake projects in Russia in the late 1980s. Turkish contractors made good use of this opportunity and established themselves in an emerging market. The beginning of the 1990s, therefore, was an important turning point for the Turkish construction industry: various Turkish construction firms started signing contracts in Russia and the other former republics of the Soviet Union, in addition to the MENA countries. An overall evaluation of the activities of Turkish contractors reveals that in the 1970s their work was concentrated in five countries: Libya (71 percent), Saudi Arabia (17 percent), Iraq (7 percent), and Kuwait (5 percent).⁵¹ In the period 1970-1990, however, the share in Libya fell sharply from 71 percent to 15 percent. The work of Turkish contractors in Russia, on the other hand, increased to 40 percent. In fact, if the share of all CIS countries is taken into account, then the share of works undertaken in the former Soviet Union rose to half of all contracts carried out by Turkish contractors in 1990s. In the last decade, the share of Russia was more than a half of the total contact-

⁴⁸ Tavakoli and Tulumen (1990).

⁴⁹ Öz (2001).

⁵⁰ Giritli *et al.*, (1990: 416).

⁵¹ Öz (2001: 137).

based work done by the Turkish companies, and the share of the CIS countries was over three-quarters of the total contacts.

A typical Turkish project-tied construction migrant worker traveling to Russia is a young man between 20 and 35, who leaves his family behind and enters Russia for a job, for between 3 months to 2 years. It is often the case that project-tied workers prefer a one year contract and then return home for a period of 2-6 months to spend some time with their families. But on these breaks, they typically earn more money by working as electricians, housepainters or do different jobs like driving taxi or minibus or working on their farm. The project-tied workers enjoy higher wages in Russia. Often they send their savings to bank accounts shared with close relatives, and leave the financial management to close family members, while they only spend a limited amount of 'pocket money' in Russia. The education of children is given as one of the main reasons that they work abroad. It appears that the family members left behind, though admitting the difficulties they face, are used to these long separations: they do not insist on any type of family reunification. Apart from the nature of the temporary work that these migrant workers do, types of cultural incompatibility, language barriers, and different religious practices are reported as the main obstacles for family unification.

At a meso level, there are agencies in operation which facilitate the recruitment and employment of migrant workers. When seeking to work in Russia, project-tied migrants frequently use the intermediaries and subcontractors including not only agencies but also individuals who act as informal or even 'illegal recruiters'. Those are often family members, Diaspora networks and others, both in Russia and in their home communities in Turkey.

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