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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TURKISH MIGRANT WORKERS FROM GIRESUN IN THE UNITED STATES: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CONDITIONS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine the socio-economic and professional conditions of Turkish migrant workers from Giresun in the United States. To that general aim, this study investigated the social origin and family structure, quality of life, features related to working life, working conditions, social and political participation, thoughts about living in the United States and expectations of future of these migrant workers. The research was carried out with 92 Turkish migrant workers from Giresun, working in Connecticut; Bridgeport, New Haven and Danbury. The data were collected by using a questionnaire composed of 79 closed and open-ended questions developed by the researcher based on a literature review. This questionnaire consists of items related to the social, professional and economic conditions of these migrant workers. Data which were collected by a questionnaire towards migrant workers were analyzed with descriptive statistics by using the statistical package SPSS. The findings of the study revealed that The vast majority of Turkish migrant workers from Giresun in the U.S. are young and economically active male. These workers in the U.S. can be separated into three groups such as those whose both entrance to and working in the U.S. are legal, those whose entrance to the U.S. is legal but working there is illegal, and those whose neither entrance to nor working in the U.S. is legal. Turkish migrant workers from Giresun have migrated to the U.S. because of the 'push factors' in Turkey and the 'pull factors' in the U.S. The push factors in Turkey are economic reasons such as unemployment or not having job opportunities, low income and poverty. The pull factors in the U.S. can be grouped as economic and non-economic reasons such as better job and training opportunities, higher wages, family reunion and better future. Along with these reasons, the immigration policies that the U.S. follows also cause Turkish migrant workers from Giresun to prefer the U.S. Due to being clandestine and incompetency of language, a great proportion of these migrant workers are engaged in jobs unrelated to their profession and training, they are usually paid below the minimum wage, and they have longer working hours compared to the U.S. labour. A great proportion of these workers, including the legal workforce usually lack social protection and benefits such a health, medical and employment security. In addition all of the examined Turkish migrant workers from Giresun remain out of interest of American and Turkish trade unions, and politics. They are also faced with unemployment though not for a long period.

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INTRODUCTION

Migrant workers, whose number will continue to increase owing to the economic and social influences of globalization, have a great significance in the world population. According to ILO estimates, there are roughly 20 million migrant workers and members of their families across Africa, 18 million in North America, 12 million in Central and South America, 7 million in South and East Asia, 9 million in the Middle

East and 30 million across all of Europe.¹ Besides the cultural, social and economic problems migrant workers encounter in the host countries, they frequently are denied the rights provided by the specific ILO conventions and recommendations and UN conventions related to migrant workers.²

¹International Labour Office (ILO). "Current Dynamics of International Labour Migration: Globalisation and Regional Integration," *A Unison Discussion Paper*, 2002, accessed April 17, 2012, <http://www.unison.org.uk/file/a2444.pdf.pdf>.

²Ryszard Cholewinski, "International Human Rights Standards and the Protection of Migrant Workers in the Asia Pasific Region," accessed April 17, 2003, <http://www.december18.net/paper1standards.htm>.

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Compared to citizens of the host country, migrant workers are usually paid less than the minimum wage and work longer hours under harsher worker conditions. They usually lack social protection and benefits related to health, medical support and employment security. In the case of illegal migration, such social and economic problems become even more serious. Interest in the problems of migrant workers is increasing worldwide, but in Turkey studies remain limited and tend to be based on observational assessments. Consequently, this study is expected to contribute to the national and international literature in the field and so to social policies that address the migrant workers' problems.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study a questionnaire was used to find out the socio-economic and professional conditions of Turkish migrant workers from Giresun in the United States. Initially, the questionnaire was administered to 94 individuals, but eliminating 13 questionnaires that were not filled out according to the instructions left the data obtained from 81 participants to be analyzed. Those participants had been selected randomly from volunteers in three cities in Connecticut: Forty-eight worked in New Haven, 25 in Bridgeport and 8 in Danbury. Seventy-five (92.6%) were male, and the remaining 6 (7.40%) were female. Fifty-five (67.90%) were married; 19 (23.50%) were single, and the remaining 7 (8.60%) were divorced. All were between the ages of 20 and 58.

The questionnaire we developed consisted of two sections. The first part related to demographic and personal information, social origin and family structure. The second part related to professional and economic conditions, quality of life, thoughts about living in the United States, and expectations about the future. Through investigation of the literature on migration and migrant workers and a review of measurement instruments on the social and economic profile of workers and migrant workers, 79 closed and open-ended questions were obtained. The prepared questionnaire then was examined with respect to its language and content validity by academic specialists in those fields. The questionnaires were administered within a two-month period. The purpose of the study was explained to the Turkish migrant workers, and they were asked to read the instructions. They then completed the questionnaires independently in approximately 50 minutes.

Analysis of the Data

The research data were analyzed through descriptive statistics by using the statistical package SPSS. The results are illustrated in the tables in form of frequency and percentage. As it can be seen in Table, the immigration of Turkish workforce to the U.S. has started in 1980's and has increased in 1990's and beginning from the year 2000 it has begun to decrease. Indeed since 1930s, the number of immigrants has increased steadily, with the increase accelerating in the 1970s and 1980s. By the late 1990s, nearly one million persons entered the U.S. legally each year and another 300.000 entered the U.S. illegally³. Based on this finding it can be said that

Turkish workforce immigration to the U.S. has increased at times when international workforce immigration is largely observed, and beginning from the date when the U.S. started to follow strict immigration control policies right after the September 11 events, it has decreased.

As it can be traced in Table, the distribution of the migrant workers in the sample group in terms of ways of entrance to the U.S. was examined; it is observed that 43.21 % of them enter by tourist visa, 29.63 % of them enter illegally, 24.69 % of them enter by immigrant visa and 2.47 % of them enter by student visa. Among the 24 workers who have entered the U.S. illegally, 3 have entered with a passport belonging to someone else, 15 have entered by ship and 6 have entered the U.S. without using a visa from Canada. Among the ones who have entered without using a visa from Canada, three have declared that they have entered Canada by ship illegally and three have declared that they have entered Canada with a visa. This finding indicates that Canada is a state of transit for the workers and most of the illegal immigrants have entered the U.S. by tourist visa and by ship.

Today, just like the immigrant workers who have entered most of the European countries illegally, the immigrant workers who have entered the U.S. by illegal ways get help from the people called "human traders". These go-betweens make these people pass the border of the determined country illegally in exchange for some determined fee per person via sea because of the recent strict immigration control policies.⁴ However, these go-betweens help the immigrants to enter the U.S. illegally in various ways other than using ship. As a matter of fact, these go-betweens who seem like businessmen, but in fact who are human traders, have acquired visa for the ones who have entered the U.S. by using tourist visa. According to the accounts of the immigrants, the go-betweens prepare tourist visa in exchange for 12.000-17.000\$. Furthermore, the immigrants state that this fee can decrease to 10.000\$ for one person and according to the number of children it can go above 17.000\$. It is also stated by the immigrants that some go-betweens make the people whom they promise to acquire the U.S. visa enter the countries such as France and Germany without applying for the U.S. visa. Recently, it is also stated that some Turkish immigrant workers enter the U.S. from Germany by the help of go-betweens.

Entrance to the U.S. by tourist visa, the cost of which is higher than entering via sea is more often actualized by the partners in Turkey. Furthermore according to the accounts of the immigrants, the ones who have entered with tourist visas have much better economic conditions than the ones who have entered via sea. After the year 1990, especially when Mexico and Canada have started visa regulation, a great increase is observed in the rate of the people who enter the U.S. by tourist visa. Until 1990's, a great number of the ones who entered illegally has gone to the U.S. from Mexico and Canada. It is also observed that there is an increase in the rate of the ones who enter by immigrant visa especially in the last five years.

Immigration Studies, November, 1999, accessed April 17, 2012, <http://www.cis.org/articles/1999/back/199.htm>.

⁴ Nusret Ekin, "The Two Faces of Globalization 'Unwanted Illegal Migrants Invited Information Workers,'" *Labor Law and Economics Journal*, 18 (2), (2001): 12.

³George J. Borjas, "The Top Ten Symptoms of Immigration," *Center for*

As it is known, due to small population and lack of workforce, the U.S. gives residence permit to the thousands of people who have applied for and who have been chosen randomly from the countries which have been determined beforehand under the limitations of certain quato and by the method of DV1. The increase in the rate of the ones who enter the U.S. by immigrant visa can be explained through the increase of quato for Turkey in random selection which is done by the method of DV1.

As it can be traced in Table, the distribution of the migrant workers in the sample group in terms of their status was examined, it is observed that 50.62 % of them are clandestine, 27.16 % of them have permission to residence and 4.41 % of them have permission to work. Out of 6 immigrant workers who have work permit one is a student.

Table 1. Entrance and factors driving immigration to the U.S., Status in the U.S. of Turkish migrant workers in the sample group

Entrance Dates	N			%
1) 1970-1979	1			1.23
2) 1980-1989	15			18.52
3) 1990-1999	48			59.26
4) 2000-2004	17			20.99
Total	81			100
The Ways of Entrance			N	%
1) By tourist visa			35	43.21
2) By Immigrant visa			20	24.69
3) By student visa			2	2.47
4) By illegal ways			24	29.63
		By a passport belonging to someone else	3	3.70
		By ship	15	18.52
		Without using a visa from Canada	6	7.41
		Total	24	29.63
Total			81	100
Driving Factors			N	%
1) Economic			66	81.48
2) Family Reunion			10	12.35
3) Other			5	6.17
To plan		81	100	
Status			N	%
1) Clandestine			41	50.62
2) Citizen			12	14.81
3) Permitted resident			22	27.16
4) Permitted workers			6	7.41
Total		81	100	

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of Turkish migrant workers in the sample group

Gender			Number			%
Female			6			7.40
Male			75			92.60
Total			81			100
Age in years			Number			%
25 and below			10			12.35
26-30			18			22.22
31-35			19			23.46
36-40			20			24.69
41 and above			14			17.28
Total			81			100
Marital status			Number			%
1) Single			19			23.50
Married	Collusively married		33	40.74	55	67.90
	Married in real meaning		22	27.16		
	Total		55	67.90		
Divorced	Collusively divorced		6	7.40	7	8.60
	Divorced in real meaning		1	1.20		
	Total		7	8.60		
Total					81	100
* This terminology refers to a marital status assumed for purposes of legal residence in the United States.						
Level of education			Number			%
Illiterate			2			2.50
Literate			7			9.00
Elementary school			10			12.00
Secondary school			15			18.50
High school or equivalent			39			48.10
University			8			9.90
Total			81			100

According to this finding, the migrant workers in the U.S. can be classified as 'legal migrant workers' and 'illegal migrant workers'.⁵ According to this classification, the ones who have permission to residence and work are legal immigrant workers, the clandestines are illegal migrant workers. The authorized U.S. citizens are also regarded as legal migrant workers. As in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, the migrant population in the U.S. is defined according to the foreign country which the people have been born in. For this reason, the people who are given citizenship are regarded as migrants.⁶ The ones who are regarded as clandestines are the people whose entrance is legal but whose working is illegal or the people who have entered the country illegally and whose working is illegal.

Table 3. Social origin and family structure of Turkish migrant workers in the sample group

Place of birth	Number	%	
Village	50	61.73	
Town	14	17.28	
City	17	20.99	
Total	81	100	
Parents' occupation	Number	%	
		Mother	Father
Worker	2	17	2.47
Self-employed	-	19	-
Public/Military/Police Officer	1	9	1.23
Farmer	-	27	-
Other	78	9	96.30
Total	81	100	
Parents' education	Number	%	
		Mother	Father
Illiterate	36	7	44.45
Literate	12	8	14.81
Elementary school	31	51	38.28
Secondary school	1	7	1.23
High school orequivalent	1	7	1.23
University	-	1	-
Total	81	100	

The status of the people who have one of the conditions defined above and who are working is accepted as against the U.S. laws.⁷ The foreign clandestine worker can be defined as the individual who does not have permission to residence, work and stay according to the present regulations without a relation of citizenship to the country where she/he is staying.⁸

The increase in the number of people who have declared themselves as clandestines according to the way of entrance to the U.S. can be explained by the fact that the people who have entered by the tourist visa continue their working in the U.S. although their visas have expired. The illegal workers can be the people whose both entrance to the U.S. and staying in the U.S. are illegal or can be the people whose entrance is legal but working is illegal or in other words, the ones who have entered the country by the tourist visa but continue working although

their visas have expired.⁹ For this reason, 17 workers who have entered by tourist visa are added to the 24 clandestine workers who have entered the country illegally.

Table 3. Characteristics of the work life of Turkish migrant workers in the sample group

Reasons for changing a job and/or workplace	Number	%
Low wages	33	40.74
Inability to speak English	17	20.99
Being illegal workers	12	14.81
Disagreement with employer	8	9.88
Disapproval of the work and/or workplace	6	7.41
Other	5	6.17
Total	81	100
Duration of unemployment	Number	%
Never unemployed	35	43.21
1 month	12	14.81
2 months	14	17.28
3 months	8	9.88
4 months	1	1.24
5 months	6	7.41
6 months	5	6.17
Total	81	100
Job finding methods	Number	%
Unsolicited application	9	11.11
Through relatives and acquaintances	70	86.41
Response to newspaper advertisements	1	1.24
By invitation	1	1.24
Total	81	100

Some of the people who have entered the country by tourist visa have permission to residence and work and some of them are authorized to the U.S. citizenship. Almost all of the people who have entered by tourist visa and have permission to residence after a while have got this permission by collusive marriage with a few exceptions. A few of them have permission to residence by marrying to a U.S. citizen or to a girl from a Turkish family who has permission to residence in the U.S. Some of them who have permission to residence by this way are authorized to U.S. citizenship after a while by applying for U.S. citizenship. Among the workers, there is no female who has permission to residence by collusive marriage or by marrying to a U.S. citizen or to a man belonging to a Turkish family who has permission to residence. Except for the immigrations made in order to come together again with the family, it is observed that female workers do not immigrate to the U.S. generally because of the traditional Turkish family relations, even when these women have immigrated, they cannot apply for the same ways with the male workers because of the same reasons.

As it can be traced in Table, the distribution of the migrant workers in the sample group in terms of the driving factors of migration to the U.S.; it is observed that 81.48 % them immigrate to the U.S. because of economic reasons such as unemployment, low wages, lack of income, better job opportunities, better future and poverty, 12.35 % of them immigrate to the U.S. in order to reunify with the family and 6.17 % of them immigrate to the U.S. because of other reasons such as education, restrictions in the political rights and the family pressure.¹⁰ As it is known, the economic factors driving

⁵Ali Arayıcı, Phenomenon and Losses of External Migration, (Istanbul: 1995); Ayhan Gençler, "The Factthat Illegal Foreign Laborandthe Case of Turkey," *Labor Law and Economics Journal*, 17 (3), 2002, 29, 30.

⁶Jonathan Coppel, Jean-Christophe Dumont and Ignazio Visco, "Trends in Immigration and Economic Consequences," *OECD Economics Department Working Papers No:284*, accessed January 23, 2001, <http://www.oecd.org/pdf/M00002000/M00002743.pdf>.

⁷Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FEF), *Illegal Foreign Labor in Turkey*, (Istanbul: 1995), 10.

⁸Gençler, Fact, 32.

⁹Oğuz Karadeniz, "IllegalForeignLabor in Turkey,"*99 Yearbook of Confederation of TurkishTradeUnions*, 1999, 416, 417.

¹⁰Müzeyyen Güler, *Beyond the Ocean TurkishMigrants in U.S.*(Istanbul:

immigration are generally classified into 2 groups except for extraordinary conditions.¹¹ One of these factors is 'push factors' which stem from willingness to immigrate in the emigration country and which are the supply side factors affecting the interest.

'pull factors' in the U.S. are both economic and non-economic factors such as better job opportunities, higher income and family reunion. According to the fact that globalisation strengthens the international migration movement because of the economic inequality between the developed and developing countries¹³, it is observed that main part of the

Table 4. Working conditions of Turkish migrant workers in the sample group

Occupation	Number	%
Food preparation and serving (dishwasher, waiter and waitress, chef and head cook, manager, cook, food preparation worker, host and hostess)	69	85.19
Other than food preparation and service	12	14.81
Total	81	100
Weekly working hours	Number	%
20 hours	2	2.47
25 hours	1	1.23
35 hours	1	1.23
40 hours	12	14.81
45 hours	2	2.47
50 hours	18	22.22
55 hours	2	2.47
60 hours	41	50.62
65 hours	1	1.23
70 hours	1	1.23
Total	81	100
Weekly wages (\$)	Number	%
\$ 200 and below	11	13.58
\$ 201-300	39	48.15
\$ 301-500	18	22.22
\$ 501-800	7	8.64
\$ 801 and above	9	11.11
Total	81	100
Trade-union membership	Number	%
Member of a tradeunion	0	0
Not a member of a tradeunion in Turkey or in the U.S.	74	100
Member of a trade union in Turkey but not in the U.S.	7	8.64
Total	81	100
Insurance (U.S social security benefits)	Number	%
With insurance	24	29.60
Without insurance	57	70.40
Total	81	100
Health-care benefits	Number	%
With health-care benefits	3	3.70
Without health-care benefits	78	96.30
Total	81	100

The second one is named 'pull factors' which are the demand side factors that affect the demand for immigrants in destination country. Push factors can be lack of employment prospects, unemployment, low income, lack of materials in the field study and research and lack of interest, strict bureaucratic structure giving more importance to rank than ability, pressure on the political rights, political uncertainties, stress in working and family life in the home country. Pull factors are factors such as higher income, better job opportunities, democratic rights and freedom and marriage to a foreign spouse.

In this framework, according to the results of the research, it can be said that the 'push factors' in Turkey are economic factors such as unemployment or low income stemming from lack of job opportunities and inequalities in incomes¹²; the

immigrants in the U.S. have come from the countries where there is very low per capita incomes.¹⁴ For this reason, the relative income disparities between the U.S. and Turkey can be said to be an important factor, but not the only factor which influences the incentive to migrate. The migration movements also depend on the immigration policy of the destination country as well as other factors that influence expected costs and benefits of moving, such as transportation and housing costs.

Non-economic factors are likewise important.¹⁵ Besides these driving factors, Turkish immigrant workers prefer the U.S. also for the following reasons.¹⁶

Huzur Offset, 2004).

¹¹Ignazio Visco, "Immigration, Development and the Labour Market," *Migration: Scenarios for the 21st Century International Conference*, Rome, 12-14 July 2000, accessed March 21, 2003, <http://www.oecd.org/pdf/M000080000/M00008031.pdf>.

¹²Birsen Ersel, "The Social and Political Problems Raised by the Emigration of Turkish Workers," *South-East Europe Review*, 4, (2001), 39-41.

¹³Hasan Ejder Temiz, "International Migration Movements in the Globalisation Process, Poverty and Labor Markets," *Labor Law and Economics Journal*, 18 (5), 2004, 36.

¹⁴Tara Vishwanath, "Information Flow, Job Search and Migration," *Journal of Development Economics*, 36 (2), 1991; Micheal C. Burda, "Migration and the Option Value of Waiting," *CEPR Discussion Paper No.1229*, 1995, 1-24; Coppel, Dumont and Visco, *Trends*, 13.

¹⁵Heinz Werner, "Why do Workers Migrate? Temporary Migration for Employment and Training Purposes and Relevant International Agreements," 1996, accessed January 5, 2005,

- The presence of regulations about family reunification programmes and which permits the spouse and close relatives of the citizens to enter the country for permanent residence
- The presence of opportunities which allow individuals to enter the country for employment
- The presence of regulation to authorize the individuals to citizenship and immigration policies.

Along with the immigration policies, the psychological stress associated with moving to live in another country and the language and cultural differences impinge on the decision to move as well as choosing the destination country. However, the negative aspects of these factors can diminish with the immigrant relations in the destination country. In making choice on behalf of the U.S. close relations among immigrants, family reunion programmes and the settlement patterns of past immigrants provide a dynamic push factor.¹⁷ It is observed that some of the workers want to stay a limited period in the U.S. and save enough money in a higher-wage economy to improve their conditions at home, by buying land, building a house, setting up a business etc., however they don't return home and prolonge their staying. They develop social relationships in time with each other and with the new immigrants. In the context of developed social relationships, it is observed that new relation forms develop such as kinship and friendship and these relations make the job searches easier for the new comers and also provides a decrease in accomadation expences.

The United States has historically been and continues to be an important net recipient of immigrants and is the largest gross recipient of immigrants in absolute terms among the OECD countries, because these above mentioned immigration policies and driving factors of immigration coincide with each other. It is observed that the entrance of three out of four legal immigrants is related with family reunion and this group makes up the first great immigrant movement and the ones who entered the country for job opportunities make up the second great immigrant group.¹⁸ Among the Turkish immigrant workers who entered the U.S. legally, the ones who immigrated for the family reunion make up a great majority.

That the vast majority of the workers are male indicates that in Turkish society male workers have a much greater tendency to migrate than female workers do. Furthermore, the finding that three-fifths of the migrant workers were between 25 and 40 years of age indicates that workers under the age of 25 consider migration as a last resort and primarily prefer living in Turkey while older workers not prefer to migrate, considering that it is late for them to start a new life. Although approximately three out of five workers are married, the

marriages of 60 %of them are collusive. Similarly, of the 7 (8.60%) who are divorced, all but one of their divorces are collusive, reflecting the impact of US immigration policies on the marital status of migrant workers. Because migration tendencies of individuals may depend on variables in social origin and family structure, such as place of birth, father's and mother's occupational class and education, and spouse's profession, these were investigated, and the results are shown in Table 2. As can be seen in Table 2, the migrant workers were mostly village born, suggesting that, being deprived of employment opportunities, villagers have the greatest compulsion to find a job in any way, including by going to the United States. The work life and working conditions of the migrant workers in the sample group were investigated under the heading "Professional and Economic Conditions" and the results are shown in Tables 3 and 4. This result that almost all of the migrant worker shave changed their jobs and/or workplace.

Although this situation can be explained by many factors, it is mostly related with the fact that migrant workers are deprived of employment and socio-economic rights which the U.S citizens have. Since 35 of the 81 migrant workers have never lost a job, and another 12 have been unemployed for no more than a month, the minority who do stay unemployed for a long period may have limited job opportunities because they have few acquaintances, for almost all migrant workers (86.41 %) find jobs through relatives and acquaintances. The vast majority (85.19 %) of the migrant workers were employed preparing and serving food. Considering that 39 of the 81 migrant workers had attended high school, its equivalent, and 8 of the 81 migrant workers had attended a university, this result indicates that Turkish migrant workers, like other foreign workers in the United States, make only a very limited use of their education. Generally, the ones who do work in jobs appropriate to their educational and professional levels immigrated as children and completed their education in the United States.

Those who work in restaurant-like places in the United States generally are engaged informally and under flexible arrangements that result in more negative working condition,¹⁹ especially for immigrant workers, and for undocumented (or illegal) immigrants in particular. Thus, while US citizens are engaged in accordance with the legal weekly hours of work (40 hours) in restaurant-like workplaces,²⁰ most Turkish immigrants in Table work between 40 and 60 hours per week, and the undocumented are those who work 50 to 70 hours a week. Likewise, because the legal minimum wage in Connecticut was \$7.10 per hour,²¹ there should be at least 65 Turkish workers earning over \$300 weekly, whereas just 34 report doing so. In fact, most of the 7 Turkish workers earning from \$501 to \$800 per week are U.S. citizens or legal- resident

[http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Migration/Documentation/Publication_s_and_reports/Reports_and_proceedings/1996_CDMG%20\(96\)18E.asp#P684_77235](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Migration/Documentation/Publication_s_and_reports/Reports_and_proceedings/1996_CDMG%20(96)18E.asp#P684_77235); Heinz Werner, "Reginal Economic Integration and Migration: The European Case," *The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 534, 147-164; Visco, Immigration, 8; Coppel, Dumont and Visco, Trends, 12.

¹⁶Coppel, Dumont and Visco, Trends, 5.

¹⁷William J. Carrington, "Enrica Detragiache, and Tara Vishwanath, Migration with Endogenous Moving Costs," *The American Economic Review*, Vol.86, No.4, 1996; Coppel, Dumont and Visco, Trends, 13.

¹⁸Coppel, Dumont and Visco, Trends, 5, 8.

¹⁹The Economist, "Illegal Immigrants Willing, Eager and Cheap," June 7, 1997, 55-56.

²⁰U.S Department of Labor Employment Standards Administration Wage and Hour Division (DOL-BLS), "Connecticut Minimum Wage Rates," 2005, accessed April 28, 2005, http://www.dol.gov/esa/min_wage/america.htm#Connecticut.

²¹Connecticut Department of Labor (CDL), "History of Minimum Wage Rates," 2004, accessed December 28, 2008, <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wgwkstnd/wage-hour/history.htm>.

workers, and the 9 earning \$801 and above have recently become business owners. Meanwhile, the Turkish migrants without legal working status blame increased competition from similarly undocumented workers from Mexico and the Philippines for driving down wages, and statistics seem to corroborate their perception. In 1960, the average migrant man living in the United States actually earned about 4 percent more than the average native man, but by 1998, the average migrant earned about 23 percent less; the newest immigrants earned 34 percent less; and immigrants from Mexico earned 40 percent less than natives.²² Although more of the migrant workers is a member of US trade union, 39 (48.1%) of them believe in the necessity of a union.

That these workers do not join a union can be explained by the fact that the unions generally do not care about the problems of migrant workers, including those from Turkey. In addition, language and cultural differences make it difficult for the unions to communicate with the migrant workers to persuade them to join.²³ Moreover, restrictive policies and regulations and fears of losing their jobs make the migrants reluctant to join, while non-immigrant members become uneasy when their unions expand services to migrant workers.²⁴ While 54.32 percent of the workers (44) claim that they will work until they retire, 45.68 percent of them (37) state that they will return to Turkey without waiting for retirement.

Conclusion

Immigration movements to the United States, in general, and those of Turkish workers, in particular, tend to involve economically active young men. In the Turkish sample studied, they are mostly village born; approximately half have graduated from high school or the equivalent. They are children of mothers who are housewives, and of fathers who are farmers or self-employed. Both of these parents are likely to be illiterate or to have attained a very low level of education. Almost all of the migrant workers find jobs through relatives and acquaintances, and most never experience unemployment. They engage in jobs irrelevant to their education and profession in Turkey, such as restaurant work, where flexibility leads to negative working conditions, especially for non-legal workers. Consequently, Turkish immigrant workers usually are not covered by health-care benefits; they change jobs and/or workplaces, unwillingly; they remain outside the interest of trade unions, and most, even those who are working legally, lack U.S. social security benefits.

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