

Interview with a third generation Turkish immigrant

Hello Burak, maybe you can tell us something about yourself before we start with the interview.

My name is Burak and I am 18 years old. I was born in Hanover and now I live in Seelze, with my mother, my father and my three younger siblings. My family owns several houses. At the moment I visit a vocational college.

Burak, the first question deals with your family. Where are your parents from and what was their job there?

My parents came from a small town near the city Izmir at the Aegean Sea. These people hadn't a lot of money and they were working as farmers. Today you would say that they belong to the lower class.

When did your parents come to Germany and how old were they?

My maternal grandfather was a first-generation immigrant worker and he took my grandmother and my mother to Germany. She was two years old at that time. My father met my mother in Germany while visiting friends. He was 20 years old when he came to Germany. My siblings and I were born in Germany.

Why did your parents choose Germany as their homeland and how did they get here?

As I said before my family didn't have a very comfortable life in Turkey. In Germany there was a great economic boom and they searched for workers. In the 1960s they hired immigrant workers from Turkey and my parents expected a better life. The papers were taken care of by the employer and they got an apartment provided.

Did they come alone or with their family?

First my grandfather came to Germany as an immigrant worker and he should return after five years. But the companies wanted to keep the immigrant workers for a longer time because they didn't want to educate new workers constantly. So my family followed him.

What did the parents of your grandparents think about this?

The people from the Anatolian villages didn't have much money and because of that they were very proud and they expected wealth from the homecoming money.

Where there any problems leaving Turkey?

No because there were special treaties between Germany and Turkey.

How did your parents imagine Germany to be and how did they prepare to live here?

My grandparents didn't know Germany very well. The people from Anatolia knew that the living conditions were much better and they thought that Germany was a very rich country.

Before the immigration they didn't prepare themselves because they meant to stay only temporarily. My grandparents learnt to speak German here. My parents also visited language classes, although my mother grew up in Germany.

Did they accept the qualifications of your parents?

My father studied in Turkey, but that wasn't accepted.

What are your parents' professions?

My father has worked for VSM for 18 years. My mother has a small bakery in our town.

Which citizenship do your parents own, Turkish or German?

My parents and I have both citizenships.

How did you grow up? Did your parents speak Turkish or German with you and your siblings?

I was in the swimming team and now I play football in a football club in Letter. On the one hand I have got a lot of Turkish friends but on the other hand I made German friends in school. During my childhood I often visited Turkey and because of that I met other friends from there.

What would your parents say if your girlfriend was German? What would happen if you married her? How do you think about it?

I don't care which nationality my wife might have. Sure she also can be German. But honestly I have to say my parents wouldn't take it that easy and they may wish to have a Turkish daughter- in- law.

What do and what don't you like about Germany?

I was born here and I like German discipline and orderliness. However, Turkish casualness can be a nice change from that as well. I don't like the fact that many Germans are prejudiced against Turks. I really hope this will change in the future.

Do you want to move to Turkey one day? Maybe as a pensioner?

That is very unlikely, having grown up here. But I wouldn't rule it out to 100 per cent as we have many relatives in Turkey to whom we hold up the contact. My grandparents go to Turkey every year for about two months, whereas I only go every other year.

Where do you want to be buried after you die?

We have a family grave in Turkey where my grandparents and parents want to be buried. So that counts for me as well.

Thanks for the interview.

Interview by Peter-Christian Betke, translated by Vanessa Reinhold and Philipp Werner