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CONGRESS

Middle East and Muslim Worlds
Studies

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Panel 60

Gender and Generation in Marriage and Spouse Choice in Turkey and its Diaspora

The workshop intends to investigate the issue of the spousal choice as well as that of the family lifestyle in Turkey and in its diaspora settled in Europe using four different studies by the specialization of the researchers who conduct them (three sociologists and one psychologist), in their field (the big city, the province, different immigration countries) and their methodology (qualitative and/or quantitative survey, secondary analysis, clinical observation). The mobilization of questions about gender and intergenerational issues are the points of convergence of these four approaches: to what extent the choice of spouse in Turkey and in its diaspora is related to endogamic determinism or is there a perceptible evolution towards different forms of exogamy? Are the spouse choice and the choice of familial lifestyle a matter of an individual or collective decision or a mixture of both? How is this decision negotiated today; what is the role of mothers in this transaction? How is this problem experienced more specifically in the context of immigration to Europe? What influence does gender have on marriage? How do parents view their children's marriage and family life? How do children view their parents' family life?

Person in charge: Manço Ural (Aksaray University, Department of Sociology)

Discussant: Collet Beate (University Sorbonne Paris, Sociology and Computer Science for Humanities Department)

Program

Taş Ertugrul (Samsun University, Department of Psychology)

View of women from Turkish immigration in Belgium on the choice of spouse

The research and clinical observations we have carried out since the 1990s on marital practices in the Turkish community living in Belgium raise various tensions between couples, even psychological disorders with a higher prevalence in cases of union with a spouse from Turkey. In the framework of this communication, we present the results of quantitative research conducted in 2018 on 435 married women with Turkish immigrant background in Belgium in order to find out their experience related to the choice of their spouse, but also their point of view regarding this choice which should be made in the case of their children. The research aims to clarify, in an inter-generational perspective (for themselves, and their children), the psycho-sociological determinants of the choice of a spouse for these women, as well as the consequences of the latter on their mental state; their social and family experience; and their perception of gendered relationships within the couple.

Gündüz Eran (International Family Centre, Psychosocial Centre)

Choice of spouse and matrimonial practices of immigrants from Turkey and their descendants in France and Germany

Immigrants from Turkey are in the majority among ethnic groups in Germany, while in France they are rather a minority, in particular, compared to immigrants originating from Maghreb countries. In both countries, the integration of immigrants from Turkey and their descendants is a hotly debated issue. In the 2010s, the issues of “forced marriage”, “arranged marriage” and even “honor crimes” sparked heated debate. For example, researchers have focused on the question of the “marital behavior” of descendants of immigrants from Turkey. How would one explain, on the one hand, the high proportion of transnational marriages, and on the other hand the low rates of “interethnic” marriages among immigrants from Turkey? It is by examining possible differences in marital behavior depending on the national context this intervention will take on its comparative dimension. The input will be based on the results of the research project “Mixed Marriages”: mode of conjugal formation and family dynamics of descendants of immigrants in France and Germany”, conducted in 2005-2006. In my presentation, I will focus on the interviews conducted during this research. On the other hand, I will analyze more recent statistics concerning the matrimonial strategies of descendants of immigrants from Turkey.

Ak Akyol Feyza (University of Galatasaray, Istanbul, Department of Sociology)

Transmission of gender roles through marriage and spousal choice practices in Turkey

Demographic indicators point to a departure from the idealized model as “traditional” in marital behavior in Turkey. But despite these changes, it is possible to observe a general continuity of gendered family roles. Turkey continues to represent a society of male domination, but the cultural legitimacy of this domination is now under threat. The communication focuses on the effects of these societal changes on the attitudes of Istanbul students towards marriage and in particular the choice of spouse, through the intergenerational prism of mother-daughter relationships, i.e. through the reinterpretation of prescriptions and advice transmitted to girls by their mothers. It is the possible attitudes and strategies related to marriage that is attracting our attention. The empirical research evidence comes from qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted in the 2010s with female university students in Istanbul and women aged 45 and over, representing the generation of mothers versus female students.

Manço Ural (Aksaray University, Department of Sociology, mancoural@gmail.com)

Choice of a spouse, choice of society? Quantitative and qualitative survey on the choice of conjugal partner and the family lifestyle in Aksaray, Turkey

Located close to the geographical center of Turkey, the city of Aksaray has 305,000 inhabitants (2019). A significant number of local socio-demographic indicators are within the national average. These data allow us to consider Aksaray as an Anatolian Middletown, the fact from which it would be possible to sketch a more general sociological portrait. The purpose of the communication is to analyze the factors involved in the spouse choice and those which contribute to the formation of family lifestyle aspirations. The study crosses three heuristic dimensions: gender, age and educational attainment. The data analyzed come from both a quantitative survey (out of a sample of 1,901 people) and a qualitative survey (65 semi-directed interviews) conducted between 2016 and 2019 in Aksaray. The analysis carried out using the gender and inter-generational prism generates, in addition to information on wishes and experiences related to marriage, a vision of the participants’ representations about “tradition” and “modernity”; individual freedom and group membership (family, religion, ethnicity, nation); religiosity and secularity; social change and conformism; gender equality and discrimination, etc.