

An in-between step of integration? A study of gender roles and attitudes among second-generation Turks with a second generation partner

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Europe's populations currently incorporate growing numbers of migrants and their descendants. How they adjust to their life in Europe and how interethnic relations are developing are thus of particular interest. The partner choice of migrants and their children receives traditionally a lot of attention. Thereby, the focus is particularly on intermarriage, because it is seen as a measure of social distance between ethnic, social and religious groups as well as the ultimate sign of integration into the host society (Gordon 1964; Kalmijn 1998). However, the vast majority (up to 90 percent) of the Turkish second generation who lives in almost all countries of Europe choose someone from their own ethnic group. Although there is a growing number of second generation youths they could choose from, the majority of the Turkish second generation marries a partner from Turkey.

Studies on intermarriage found that migrants or their descendants are more likely to choose a native partner if they are more embedded into the host country and less rooted in the culture of the immigrant community. They usually have better host country language skills as well as higher levels of education (Klein 2001; Blau 1994; Gordon 1964; Lieberman & Waters 1988; Lesthaeghe & Surkyn 1995). By contrast, the few studies that looked at marriage migration – the importation of spouses from the country of origin – often found inconclusive results related to education and socio-economic status (Lievens 1999; Hooghiemstra 2001; Çelikssoy et al. 2003; Gonzalez-Ferrer 2006). However, particularly qualitative studies studying Turkish descendants in Europe pointed out that the continued preference for marriage partners from the country of origin is best studied by looking at values and norms relating to family behavior. In this context, particularly important are traditional family values, the wish for “innocent” spouses who are not “spoiled” by way of life in Europe, family loyalty and values, maintenance of virginity, and strong attachment to country of origin (Hooghiemstra 2001; DiCarlo 2007; Strassburger 2003). Turkish migrants brought with them traditionally more collectivistic cultural attitudes on marriage and family, and while this behavior underwent changes (Kagitçibasi & Ataca 2005) it still differs from the more

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individualistic partner choice and family behavior that emerged during the last decades in Europe. Traditionally, Turkish parents take a great interest in their children's union formation, because a marriage does not only link two persons, but two families. Even in Turkish families with more liberal family attitudes the influence of parents and the family remains at a high level.

The marginal intermarriage rates of Turkish migrants and their descendants even after decades of living in Europe are often related to the strict endogamy norms in the Turkish culture. However, in case of the second generation, the local marriage market includes a substantial group of second generation young adults of the same origin. The question is why young adults of Turkish origin who grew up in Europe would prefer to go to Turkey to find a partner instead of choosing someone from their own ethnic group that has similar social and cultural capital in relation to the host country? The findings related to intermarriage and marriage migration suggest that socioeconomic or educational factors may not be sufficient in studying the underlying mechanisms of this process. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to go beyond these factors and to focus on attitudes and gender roles of the Turkish second generation.

It can be hypothesized that a second generation partner may differ from a first generation or a native partner in terms of social and cultural capital relating to the host country. The capital is likely higher for a second generation partner than for a first generation partner and somewhat smaller or equal for a native partner. In other words, growing up in Europe and having contact to the host country increases the likelihood that a member of the Turkish second generation will have different aspirations and behaviors relating to family formation and life decisions than someone who grew up for instance in a rural area in Turkey. They would therefore be less sought-after partners for those who look for more traditional family attitudes in their spouse (or son/daughter-in-law in case of arranged marriages). Thus, a second generation partner may be a step in between choosing a first generation and a native partner. This choice may be reflected in more modern gender roles and family relations, greater orientation towards the host society and less ties to Turkey compared to those with a first generation partner. A distinction between a first generation, a second generation partner and a native partner would thus be better suited to draw conclusions on social distance or integration trends (Gordon 1964) among the Turkish second generation than simply contrasting exogamous and endogamous unions.

The objective of our paper is thus whether the preference for a second generation partner is a in-between step between the choice of a first generation and native partner? We study the

influence of gender roles and family attitudes and orientation toward host country in 13 European cities using TIES data (2007-08)². The TIES survey collected information on second-generation respondents aged 18-35 years using a similar questionnaire and set-up. This allows to control for structural constraints, such as group size of the Turkish second generation, which has been shown to be of influence in the partner choice process (Blau 1994). Furthermore, this comparative picture allows to present the situation of the Turkish second generation in diverse settings across Europe, which may also influence their partner choice.

Preliminary results suggest that even more than contextual factors, attitudinal differences may be best suited to explain the different partner choices among the Turkish second generation. Those with a second generation partner display less traditional family attitudes than those with a first generation partner, however they also have less liberal family attitudes compared to those with a native partner.

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