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A GENDER-BIASED APPROACH TO THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN WHO MIGRATED TO TURKEY THROUGH MARRIAGES

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Abstract
As a result of globalization, the relations of individuals from different nations and the increase in the migration phenomenon have followed a directly proportional course. These migrations, which were carried out for various reasons, have caused immigrants to be affected in different ways. When the relevant literature is examined, it can be seen that women are affected by the phenomenon of migration more than men. Moreover, marriage migration, one of the types of migration that is described as specific to women, has become widespread. The aim of this research is to examine the experiences of women who migrated to Turkey through marriage and married to a Turkish man, in terms of gender. Within this framework, the daily life experiences and social integration processes of these women are going to be discussed from a gender perspective.
Keywords: Gender, Migration and Women, Marriage Migration, Social Integration, Imported Bride.

I. Introduction

With globalization and mobility of the citizens all over the world, the rate of migration has risen. Especially after 1980s, Turkey has started to get migration for some causes including marriages (İçduygu, 2004).

Looking at the current migration literature, it can be seen that women who migrated to Turkey through marriages and married to a Turkish man has been studied very limitedly. The reason for this situation may be the secondary status of women in society (Aksu and Sevil, 2010). It is an undeniable fact that migration is a process that gender norms, relations and identities can be changed and re-structured. In parallel with this, studying gender and migration, specifically immigrant women, may be a way to understand social order and norms (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2005: 9; Şeker and Uçan, 2016).

Current literature focuses on different effects of migration on migrants. For instance, learning the language of the country they have settled in and being able to take a place in the business life of the country are among the most important statuses of immigrants in the society (Ciğerci- Ulukan, 2008). Moreover, some research focus specifically on what refugees experience after they arrive in Turkey. This evidence points to difficulties in accessing basic needs, unemployment, language barriers, discrimination and social isolation (Acartürk, 2016: 144; Karaman and Ricard, 2016: 323; Körükcü, Aydın and Conwey, 2017: 4).

Furthermore, migration can be seen as a positive process for women who gain access to health and education services and who enter into labor force, acquiring new skills, financial wellbeing and freedom, taking on new roles outside of traditional gender roles in spite of their traumatic experiences (Frateschi, 2015: 13).

On the other hand, some other studies underline the negative effects and problems of migrant women. Freedman (2009) underlined the problems that these women faced in working life stemming from their duties and responsibilities in domestic sphere. For instance, Tavukçu and Şahin (2021), analyzed the problems experienced by women in Turkey due to migration in the context of gender with the sub-titles of the effects of migration on family life, social life, education and working life, general health and reproductive health. The findings revealed that women faced with many problems such as language, social exclusion, negative effects on their education life, gender-based informal employment, uninsured and/or low wages, and access to health services. Erten (2017) aimed

to examine the adjustment problems experienced by women who migrated to Germany by marriage and how they cope with these problems. As a result, the strategies and ways of coping with the problems faced by women have shown that although they live their migration experience as dependent on men, women engage in a strong struggle that pushes the boundaries of their ethnic groups. In another research having the same participants as the former one, Gayırnal (2021) also examined the identity transformation processes of Turkish migrant women in Germany and found that there is no profound difference in identity between the four generations who immigrated to Germany from Turkey, and the participating women tend to preserve their own identity.

Similar to this research, Sağlam (2021) ran a research with Gagauz women who married to Turkish men. As a result of the study, it was determined that the changes in the daily lives of women first started with their migration to Turkey and gained continuity with their marriage. It has been revealed that these practices are generally about religion, language, cultural rituals and ceremonies, dressing and eating and drinking. Especially, the factor of religion difference is effective on social border.

Bilgin (2021) discussed the difficulties and struggles of Syrian migrant women who came to Turkey with forced migration in working life and other fields. As a result of the research, which underlined that these women could become stronger through work, it was determined that they were adversely affected by the pandemic as well as difficulties such as social cohesion, unemployment, poverty, access to health and education conditions.

In their study with Syrian women, Doğangün and Keysan (2021) demonstrated that migration is a loss of status for women who receive education and work in Syria, and that it is a process that brings with it participation in education and education life, access to public space and reduction of family pressure for women who do not receive education and work in Syria.

Lotfi and Porsuk (2021) studied with Iranian migrant women and it has been found that more than half of Iranian immigrant women are married, most of them are university graduates but unemployed, they have difficulties in employment, they do not receive social assistance, and they have language, education, social and economic problems.

In line with this information from the literature, this study aims to examine the experiences of women of foreign origin, who migrated to Turkey through marriage and married to a Turkish man, in terms of gender. In this context, these research questions are going to be answered:

RQ1. What are the socio-demographic features of the women who migrated to Turkey by marriage after marrying to a Turkish man?

RQ2. In terms of gender, in which area(s) did the phenomenon of marriage migration mostly affects women who migrated to Turkey by marriage?

RQ3. In terms of gender, what effect has the phenomenon of marriage migration has had on daily life experiences of women who migrated to Turkey by marriage?

RQ4. In terms of gender, what effect has the phenomenon of marriage migration has had on social integration process of women who migrated to Turkey by marriage?

II. Methodology

The research was run with the periods and paradigms of qualitative research. The data were collected by in-depth interview method with a semi-structured interview form.

Participants

The participants of the study consist of 13 women who migrated to Turkey by marriage after marrying to a Turkish man.

The names of the study were not included; they were coded with P1, P2, etc.

Data Collection and Procedures

An in-depth interview technique was used as a data collection technique.

A semi-structured interview form was used (Patton, 1987) to gain similar replies to similar questions by different participants.

The open-ended questions were compiled after a literature review and were evaluated by three field experts. These research studies are from Sağlam (2021), Tavukçu and Şahin (2021), Bilgin (2021), Berger (2004), Akpınar (2017) and Doğangün and Keysan (2021).

Socio-Demographic Information

Could you briefly describe yourself, please? (Place where you live, your age, the country where you were born and raised, how many years you have been married, number of children if any, education level, occupation, your husband's occupation and his education level, etc.).

Information on Daily Life Experiences

Marriage

Can you tell us about your life before and after your marriage? What has changed in your daily life with your marriage experience; that is, how did you live before, how do you live now? What is the main difference about you before your marriage and about you now?

Raising a child (if any)

How did you share the task of raising children in your family with your husband? Are you raising your child according to your own culture or according to Turkish culture and traditions? As a woman, how do you evaluate the situation in Turkey with the family structure and division of labor in the country you migrated to? Are there any differences and/or similarities?

Participation to Public Sphere

Were you working before you got married? If yes, in which positions and areas of business have you worked? Are you currently working? Are you doing a job related to the field you graduated from? As a woman, how has your education, career or working life changed before and after your marriage? As a woman, how do you evaluate the working conditions in the country you migrated to and the working conditions in Turkey? Do you think there are similarities and differences?

Information on Marriage Migration and Integration Process

How and where did you meet and decide to get married and migrate to Turkey? In what ways do you think there are similarities and differences between the city and country where you were born and raised, and the city you live in now in Turkey? Could you share your experiences with us? What kind of problems did you encounter during the integration process into the country? What do you think was the root cause of your problems? You live in Turkey; you are married to a Turkish person. How would you describe the current "you" as Turkish, Muslim or with a different definition? Do you feel that you belong to Turkish society? How do you think people around you define you in the society you live in?

These interviews were recorded using a voice recording program, and the researcher took notes during the interview. The interviews lasted between 45 and 70 minutes and were collected between 01.03.2022 and 05.05.2022.

Analyzing the Data

The researcher herself did, record, and transcribed verbatim the interviews. This data set was subjected to the three-step qualitative data analysis of Miles and Huberman ın (1984).

In the first data reduction process, the researchers decreased the data set by deciding on the data that will be used during the research and by separating the data into themes. In the second step, data display, the data were changed into a table or a figure to make the data more understandable. Lastly, in the last step, drawing a conclusion and verification, the themes and the tables were commented.

Findings

RQ1. What are the socio-demographic features of the women who migrated to Turkey by marriage after marrying to a Turkish man?

Table 1: The socio-demographic features of the participants

CODE	ORIGIN	AGE	DURATION OF MARRIAGE	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	LEVEL of EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	THE OCCUPATION SHE DOES IN
1	Russia	43	19 years	2	Bachelor's degree	Doctor	Not working
2	Russia	54	20 years	3	Bachelor's degree	Teacher	Not working
3	Moldova	41	18 years	2	Bachelor's degree	Teacher	Teacher
4	Iran	33	3 years	1	Master's degree	Doctor	Doctor
5	Iran	37	7 years	2	Master's degree	Engineer	Not working
6	Iran	33	6 months	0	Bachelor's degree	Architect	Hotelkeeper
7	Azerbaijan	70	47 years***	3	High school	-	Not working
8	Azerbaijan	43	12 years***	2	Bachelor's degree	Physiotherapist	Physiotherapist
9	Georgia	62	5 years***	3	High school	-	Nursing at home*
10	Georgia	28	4 years***	1	Bachelor's degree	Art history expert	Nursing at home*
11	Japan	42	14 years	2	PhD	Academics	Academics
12	Germany	36	3 years	1	Bachelor's degree	Graducated as a banking expert	Boutique owner
13	Kazakhistan	5	2 years**	0	Bachelor's degree	Graduated from Dept. of Turkish Language	Manager of tourism agency

*Working informally
**White marriage
***P7-P8 and P9-P10 are mothers and daughters

Table.1 demonstrates the socio-demographic features of the 13 women participants. 2 of these women are from Russia, one from Moldova, 3 from Iran, 2 from Azerbaijan, 2 from Georgia, 1 from Japan, Germany and Kazakhistan. The average of their ages is 42.8 years. The average of the duration they have been married is approximately 12 years. As to their educational backgrounds, one of them was graduated from PhD and 2 from Master's; 8 of them were bachelor degree graduates while 2 of them finished high school. Table also shows that the field they graduated from and the job they are doing now may show difference.

RQ2. In terms of gender, in which area(s) did the phenomenon of marriage migration mostly affects women who migrated to Turkey by marriage?

Table 2. The areas mostly affected women who migrated to Turkey by marriage

Themes	N	%
Social life	6	46
Marriage and family life	4	31
Working life	2	15
Educational life	1	8

Table.2 shows that the areas mostly affected women who migrated to Turkey by marriage can be categorized into four themes such as social life (n=6, 46%), marriage and family life (n=4, 31%), working life (n=2, 15%) and educational life (n=1, 8%).

Regarding social life, the participants talked about the language, cultural and religious problems together with social exclusion they faced after they migrated to Turkey:

"I was somewhere between what my family taught me all my life and what my husband was thought from his own family and culture. Especially Turkish is a very difficult and

completely different structure of language that affected whole my life when I firstly came here. I know that for 3 years, my Turkish has not been the as the same level as my mother tongue, German, but nevertheless I can understand and write as if I had been living here for twenty years thanks to my Turkish teacher who also speaks German fluently." (P12).

Another participant underlined the working life problems of migrant women:

"I am an engineer, I graduated from university in Malaysia with a degree. However, I do not work now as I cannot find a suitable job as a woman with a diploma from a foreign university in the East. Each and every woman face with different kinds of problems stemming from their gender and resulting with the same scenario: Working life is not for women!". (P5).

Participant 10 stated that she could not get accustomed to marriage and family life and still has some problems:

"My mother was also married to a Turkish man and she told me the cultures and the society is exactly the same as ours. Then, they introduced me with my husband. Despite living in a different country and city with my mum's new family, I have faced with serious problems regarding Marriage and family life. We decided to break up with my husband to times, what makes us together is our son." (P10).

One of the participant told that the barrier she experienced and affected mostly when she came to Turkey was about her educational life:

"I graduated from Department of Teaching Faculty as I had always wanted to become a teacher in university. However, even though my husband promised me that I could continue to my education, I could not in Turkey. They did not accept my diploma and I was pregnant and could not start to a new university." (P2).

RQ3. In terms of gender, what effect has the phenomenon of marriage migration has had on daily life experiences of women who migrated to Turkey by marriage?

Table 3. The areas affected daily life experiences of women who migrated to Turkey by marriage

Themes	N	%
A passage to traditional family life	3	23
A swift in gender roles	3	23
Working life experiences	2	15
Religion	2	15
Stereotypes	1	8
Lack of access to public sphere	1	8
Not having opportunity to get higher education	1	8

Table.3 shows that the areas affected daily life experiences of women who migrated to Turkey by marriage can be categorized into seven themes such as a passage to traditional family life and a swift in gender roles (each n=3, 23%), working life experiences and religion (n=2, 15% each), stereotypes, lack of access to public sphere and not having opportunity to get higher education (n=1, 8% each).

Approximately half of the participants declared that a passage to traditional family life and a swift in gender roles were the factors that affected daily life experiences:

"I was shocked when my mother-in-law told me that we would stay together and decide everything regarding the domestic things in the family together. Because we were only one and a big family living together. At that moment I thought that this is a typical eastern family carrying all the traditions from yesterday to today." (P12).

Another participant claimed that there can be some changes in gender roles during migration process:

"In Russia, we tended to share every household together; my father washed the dishes, my mother paid the bills, etc. On the contrary, when we moved to Turkey, my husband told that he could not do any housework, he could not even put the dishes in the dishwasher.

When I asked him why, he told me that there is a famous Turkish saying that I must memorize: Do not interfere in men's business with the pulp of your hands, meaning that the areas and responsibilities of men and women in this new society is strictly separated from each other." (P2).

One of the participants told that she was affected by lack of success to public sphere when she migrated to Turkey:

"When I first came here, I thought I could not have any friends, and even could not participate to a meeting in this country. How can I know that Istanbul was a totally cosmopolite place?" (P11).

Similar to what Bisin et al (2008) mentioned, two of the participants put forward that religion was a factor affected daily life experiences:

"As I am a Gagauz Turk, I can easily say that I am Turkish. However, I did not cross over my religion, as it is the most important barrier affecting one's daily life." (P3).

"All in my life, being a Muslim had been a very strange thing. The reason for my thinking like this is what my family taught me in the past about the different life styles and the patriarchal norms in Islam. So that when I told that I would marry a Turkish man, they replied they can only allow me if I do not change my religion. This is the most important thing in my life." (P1).

The two of the Georgian participants, who are mother and daughter (P9 and P10), and working as nursing at home, underlined all these problems:

"Before we came here, we had been educated with nursing facilities. After me, my daughter also came to Turkey to work as a nurse at home. But, as you know, we are working unofficially, and these problem lead us be worried about our future even if we are married to Turkish men." (P10).

One of the participants underlined that she could not have an opportunity to get higher education (P8). This was also underlined by Bozan (2014). Stereotypes, named as gender stereotypes, were mentioned by one of the participants as a barrier for her daily life. (P6).

RQ4. In terms of gender, what effect has the phenomenon of marriage migration has had on social integration process of women who migrated to Turkey by marriage?

Table 4. The areas affected social integration process of women who migrated to Turkey by marriage

Themes	N	%
Cultural and religious structure	4	30
Language barrier	3	23
A passage to a patriarchal society	2	15
Generation gap between husband's family	1	8
Lack of institutions and organizations for migrants	1	8
Lack of access to legal and social rights	1	8
Missing family and country	1	8

Table.3 shows that the areas affected social integration periods of women who migrated to Turkey by marriage can be categorized into seven themes such as cultural and religious structure (n=4, 30%), language barrier (n=3, 23%), a passage to a patriarchal society (n=2, 15%), generation gap between husband's family, lack of institutions and organizations for migrants, lack of access to legal and social rights and missing family and country (n=1, 8% each).

Most of the participants told that they mostly had problems with cultural and religious structure of the new county and language barrier:

"I was in a completely different geography, with a different religion and culture. This was the most important barrier I came across when I firstly came here. What I did before we got married had been to get Turkish lessons in Russia. So that I alleviated the language problem, found a work at a hospital and at the same time developed my language and

started to get the new culture easily." (P1)

Other effects that were claimed by the participants were a passage to a patriarchal society and generation gap between husband's family:

"I had had some Turkish friends before I came to Turkey. They are the ones who introduced me to my husband. I knew that, as we were all from similar cultures and societies, men and women are not equal. However, when I moved here, I understood that the fact that did not allow me from easily integrating to society was patriarchy in this new Turkish society." (P4).

"As an academic staff at university, I needed to work for long hours. After one year from my migrating to Turkey, my parents-in-law tried to convince me to give up my work and have a baby. At first I could not believe my eyes and ears, but with time, they start to understand that we have a huge cultural and generation gap and stopped everything they had urged me to do. That's why my parents came from Japan to help me raise my children". (P11).

Participant 7, who is 70 years old, stated that when she firstly came to Turkey, she was not aware of her legal and social rights clearly. The rest of the two participants put forward that lack of institutions and organizations for migrants (P6) and missing family and country (P13) were the other effects they came across during their social integration periods.

III. Discussion and Results

As an answer to RQ2, the fields that women mostly influenced by marriage can be divided into four themes such as social life, marriage and family life, working life and educational life.

RQ3 can be replied that the areas affected daily life experiences of women who migrated to Turkey by marriage can be categorized into seven themes such as a passage to traditional family life and a swift in gender roles, working life experiences and religion, stereotypes, lack of access to public sphere and not having opportunity to get higher education.

The findings obtained from the present study showed parallelism with the studies in the literature. What three of the participants underlined were also put forth by Şeker and Uçan (2016) as there can be some changes in gender roles during migration process? Moreover, as Doğangün and Keysan (2021) underlined before, one of the participants told that she was affected by lack of success to public sphere when she migrated to Turkey.

Looking at the literature, it is understood that religion can be a factor that complicates or slows the integration of the migrants into the host country (Bisin, et al. 2008). On the other hand, there are some others claiming that despite there are some differences between the origin and host country regarding religion, they can internalize the norms and values of the host society to a certain extent and find a middle ground between assimilation and alienation (Norris and Inglehart, 2012). Similar to what Bisin et al (2008) mentioned, two of the participants put forward that religion was a factor affected daily life experiences.

Evaluating from gender perspective, two of the participants stated that they had some working life experiences such as accessing to the labor market, working in low-paying, unofficial and unskilled jobs and falling behind their career plans. The current literature (Ekis-Gökmen, 2011; İçduygu, 2004; Bozan, 2014) says that in Turkey, the work of immigrants in the labor market is generally informal. The two of the Georgian participants, who are mother and daughter (P9 and P10), and working as nursing at home, underlined all these problems.

Regarding RQ4, the areas affected social integration periods of women who migrated to Turkey by marriage can be categorized into seven themes such as cultural and religious structure, language barrier, a passage to a patriarchal society, generation gap between husband's family, lack of institutions and organizations for migrants, lack of access to legal and social rights and missing family and country. Most of the participants told that they mostly had problems with cultural and religious structure of the new country and language

barrier, in parallel to Acartürk (2016) and Karaman, M. & Ricard, R. (2016) stated in the current literature.

Other effects that were claimed by the participants were a passage to a patriarchal society and generation gap between husband's family. Similarly, Freedman (2009) underlined that the migrant women can face with societal norms and traditions that place women at domestic sphere, inside home, busy with house chores and children.

Just as Moiz and Demir (2016) has underlined, these women have lack of knowledge on these rights, however, Polek and Schoon (2006) claimed the opposite and told that married migrant women can be relatively more successful in integrating into society.

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