



Gender-role behavior of second-generation Turks: The role of partner choice, gender ideology and societal context

Doreen Huschek^{a,*}, Helga A.G. de Valk^b, Aart C. Liefbroer^c

^a Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute & Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement, The Netherlands

^b Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, The Netherlands & Free University Brussels, Belgium

^c Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute & VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

This study explores and compares gender-role behavior of second-generation Turks in six European countries. On the individual level, we study the role of gender ideology and consequences of (transnational) partner choice on four aspects of gender-role behavior; childcare, routine household tasks, financial matters, and income contribution. Furthermore, we ask whether welfare state regimes and policies have a similar effect on the gender-role behavior of the second generation across countries, as they have on the majority populations. Analyzing data from the survey The Integration of the European Second Generation (TIES, 2006-08), we find that the gender-role behavior of second-generation Turks follows a typology based on gender relations and predominant family models, but mainly for the traditionally female domain of childcare and routine household tasks. Our results show that contributing to the household income is clearly shared in Sweden, but less so in the other countries. Taking care of financial matters follows no clear country pattern and women are twice as likely as men to indicate this as a shared task. The findings underline the importance of policies in shaping gender-role behavior also for migrants and their descendants. Intra-group comparison points to the strong influence of gender ideology on behavior and to the fact that men choosing a partner from Turkey live in couples where the division of labor is the most traditional.

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1. Introduction

Although the last decades have been characterized by increasing gender equality, the division of labor is still highly gendered in industrialized societies. Women's labor market participation is not equal to that of men and within the household women still do most of the housework, even excluding childcare, in all European countries (Blossfeld & Drobnič, 2001; Coltrane, 2000; Pfau-Effinger, 2004). However, while a gendered division of labor persists across industrialized countries, the level of gender inequality varies substantively by country. Nordic countries score highest on equality both in the private and

public work sphere. By contrast, Europe's more conservative welfare regimes show less egalitarian levels of labor force participation and shared housework (Batalova & Cohen, 2002; Fuwa, 2004; Geist, 2005; Hook, 2006; Knudsen & Wærness, 2008).

Whereas gender-role behavior among the majority populations in Europe is well documented, we know much less about the division of labor among migrants and particularly their descendants. Most studies on the children of migrants, the second generation, have focused on their integration in the socio-economic sphere. However, how migrants and their descendants shape their family life and make decisions about the division of labor within the partner relationship will become all the more important with their increasing share in the population in many Northern and Western European countries. Particularly in the younger age groups, the children of migrants

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: dhuschek@nscr.nl (D. Huschek).

make up large shares of the population; for instance, 20 and 30 percent of the population in the age group 0–15 years in the Netherlands and Germany, respectively (Statistics Netherlands, 2010; Statistisches Bundesamt, 2007). In cities, where most migrants live, this share reaches up to 60 percent.

As European populations become more diversified, it is increasingly important to understand how family relations function among all segments of the population. Understanding what factors influence decisions in migrant families or the reason why some groups remain distinct while others become indistinguishable from the majority population, is a prerequisite for good inter-group relations and social cohesion. Thus, it is relevant to broaden discussions on gendered division of labor to these groups of the population. This is even more true as the second generation may differ in their gendered labor division, particularly if their parents originate from countries where the roles of men and women are more separated in the private and public sphere, as is the case with the largest non-Western labor migrant groups: those of Turkish origin. Resolving the potential conflict between the diverging expectations of a more egalitarian host society and a more traditionally oriented family of origin is in particular a challenge for the women of the second generation. There are two forces at play: industrialized societies increasingly promote labor force participation in order to help ease the strain on welfare systems and shortage of labor force. In tandem, norms on gender-role behavior are changing. At the same time, migrant families and communities, in the process of retaining some of their ethnic identity, often promote cultural maintenance—including gender-role expectations (Dion & Dion, 2004).

As a result of these opposing forces, the Turkish second generation finds itself in an intermediate position, having to negotiate potentially clashing norms and values. It is particularly interesting to study which factors are important in determining gender-role behavior as this will illuminate how the second generation tries to resolve dilemmas that result from having to cope with these potentially opposing sets of norms. In addition, with the second generation coming of age in Europe, our study is able to concentrate on actual behaviors, rather than on attitudes concerning union formation and gender-role behavior only. While it has been shown that Turkish migrants and their descendants have less egalitarian gender preferences than the majority population and other migrant groups (Bernhardt & Goldscheider, 2007; De Valk, 2008; Röhr-Sendlmeier & Yun, 2006), the actual gender-role behavior of the second generation in various European countries has not been studied.

In exploring differences in the division of tasks among the children of Turkish labor migrants across Europe, particular focus is given to two relevant factors. First, we focus on the macro level by studying country level differences in gender-role behavior among the Turkish second generation. Socio-economic and policy contexts have been found to influence gender-role attitudes and behavior of the majority population (for an overview see:

Cooke & Baxter, 2010; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). It will be examined whether the societal context of the host societies has a similar effect on gender-role behavior among descendants of Turkish migrants as well.

Second, at the individual level we examine whether the gender-role division of the second generation is related to gender ideology and to patterns of (transnational) partner choice. Turkish migrants and their descendants are found to display less egalitarian gender preferences than majority populations in a number of countries. This difference is attributed to differences in gender ideology and related cultural norms (Nauck, 2000; Phalet & Schönplflug, 2001; Read, 2004). Partner choice patterns may also reflect particular family and gender ideology preferences. Studies in several European countries suggest that Turkish migrants who have married a partner from Turkey hold more traditional family norms and Turkish migrants who married a native partner the most egalitarian (Hooghiemstra, 2001; Lievens, 1999; Strassburger, 2003). Whether these attitudinal differences also translate into different behavior within couples remains to be answered.

Using data from the project on 'The Integration of the European Second Generation' (TIES, 2006–08), we study gender-role behavior, in particular task division in different domains, among second-generation Turks in 11 cities in 6 countries: Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The cross-national design of the TIES survey makes it possible to compare children of migrants of similar origin across borders. These data are cross-sectional, preventing causal claims about the relationship between the division of labor and gender-ideology and partner-choice practices. Nevertheless, our analysis can point to important associations between these factors among the second generation.

2. Turkish migration to Europe

Migrants from Turkey represent the largest non-Western immigrant group in Europe and amount to around four million people including immigrants, descendants of immigrants, naturalized citizens and political refugees. The majority – up to 3 million – are living in Germany. Sizeable immigration started in the early 1960s in the form of labor migration with government agreements originally designed as short rotation stays (Akgündüz, 2008). From the mid-1970s the main form of immigration became family reunification (and formation), which now represents one of the main routes of legal entry into Western Europe. From the 1980s onward political refugees from Turkey entered Europe, mainly Kurds. The large majority of second-generation Turks in our study had fathers who came to Europe as labor migrants in the late 1960s and were reunited with their wives in the subsequent years.

The Turkish government had decreed that deprived regions should be preferred for the recruitment of labor, thus intending to lower unemployment and increase remittances to help the struggling Turkish economy of the 1960s. This led to the majority of the parental generation originating from rural areas, e.g. Afyon province

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