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Author(s): Lincoln H. Day and Ahmet Içduygu

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The Effect of International Migration on Religious Observance and Attitudes in Turkey

LINCOLN H. DAY[†]
AHMET İÇDUYGU[†]

As part of a larger inquiry into the consequences of international migration for those who remain in the country of origin, detailed interviews were conducted with 234 adults in four Turkish provinces. Three migrant-status categories were defined: (a) Returned migrants, (b) Nonmigrant close kin or friends of migrants, and, as a control group, (c) All others. With respect to religious observance and adherence to religiously based viewpoints, group (a) was the least “traditional,” and group (c) the most “traditional.” In between was group (b). Of the two possible explanations for such a pattern — recruitment and socialization — recruitment appeared highly significant. The evidence for socialization, however, was mixed. General social change, not migration as such, would appear to be the more likely factor to move individuals’ religious observance and attitudes along a “traditional”/“non-traditional” continuum.

Religious identification keeps cropping up as an attribute of potentially large-scale and profound behavioral significance — whether the focus is on religious group differences in modern democratic politics or the recent expansion of Islamic “fundamentalism”; whether on the bloodshed associated, this century, with the separation of India and Pakistan, the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, or the persistent fratricide in Northern Ireland or, in earlier centuries, with the Crusades and the Wars of Religion.

The question posed here is whether recent, massive increases in international migration could reinforce personal religious identification and, in consequence, increase the frequency and intensity of religious observance — and just possibly (though we are in no position to test the proposition here) increase also the likelihood of one’s engaging in various secular practices (ranging from voting patterns to the commission of terrorist acts) associated with religious identification.

Whether permanent or temporary, migration can be highly stressful (the classic statement on this is Handlin 1951). Whatever its consequences for those in the receiving society, for both migrants and those of their kin and friends who remain in the society of origin migration holds out the possibility of encountering a variety of stress-producing forces: the separation of spouses and of parents and children, the loss of friends, extensive contact with another culture, the absence of reinforcements for one’s prior heritage as well as encounters with constraints on behaviors associated with that heritage, notable increases in wealth and income, more material possessions, the experience of coping with the unfamiliar and of doing so in the absence of prior social supports, and the formation of competing social networks and emotional ties. The experience of emigration holds out, in short — especially for the migrant, but also for those of the migrant’s close network who remain behind — the

[†] Lincoln H. Day, now retired, was Senior Fellow, Demography Program, Research School of Social Sciences, Institute of Advanced Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra. Address: 2124 Newport Pl., NW, Washington, DC 20037-3001.

[†] Ahmet İçduygu is Assistant Professor of Political Science, Bilkent University 06833, Ankara, Turkey.

possibility of simultaneously coming into contact with new ways and losing supports for old ways; of undertaking new roles and abandoning old roles; of acquiring new skills, new interests, new aspirations. And one can only expect the stresses associated with such experiences to be augmented by marked differences between the migrant and those in the receiving area in status, culture, race, or religion.

Under such conditions, religion could afford a migrant (and also those who remain behind) with much comfort and reassurance: for example, in the case of the migrant, a touch of the comfortable and familiar and the opportunity to meet compatriots, as well as affirmation of his or her individuality and worth in the face of possibly denigrating pressures to the contrary in the host society.

But if the migration experience embodies forces seemingly capable of strengthening religious feeling, it embodies others seemingly capable of weakening it — particularly the absence of reinforcements for the migrant's original belief system and the corresponding presence and reinforcement of alternative, possibly conflicting, belief systems.

The consequences of migration, whether within or between countries, are experienced at three levels: that of the migrants themselves, that of the society they enter, and that of the society they leave. Although there have been exceptions (e.g., Abadan-Unat et al. 1976; Yenisey 1976; Engelbrektsson 1978; Gordon 1978; Bennett 1979; McArthur 1979; Rhoades 1979; Grasmuck 1982; Khattab and El Daeif 1982; Khafagi 1983; Alpay and Sariaslan 1984; Azmaz 1984; Morauta 1984; Gunatilleke ed. 1992; Bocker 1995), social researchers have tended to focus on the first two to the exclusion of the third. They have either ignored altogether the consequences for societies of origin, or considered them from but a limited perspective: commonly addressing internal movements (usually rural to urban) to the exclusion of international, and, more important, limiting the scope of their inquiries to narrowly economic concerns — and doing so at such a high level of generality (the national, for the most part, and in terms of such issues as the balance of payments, employment levels, and average wage rates) as to eclipse individual behavior and difference, while addressing issues of mutual causation and context, if at all, only by inference.

The data for the present analysis come from a more general inquiry into the role played by international migration (particularly that between markedly different cultures and levels of living) in fostering or retarding social change in societies of origin. The locus of this study was Turkey, a particularly appropriate place for it, first, because of its high rate of emigration, and second, because this high rate of emigration is of but recent origin. Unlike the British, Germans, Italians, Greeks, Chinese, or Indians, for example, the Turks had no particular history of large-scale emigration in modern times until the signing of the bilateral Turkish-West German agreement (31 Oct. 1961), which initially permitted Turkish men to enter West Germany on temporary one-year work contracts and was later expanded to permit the entry of women and families. In the less than four decades since, Turkish men and women have emigrated in the hundreds of thousands. The great majority of these emigrants went to Western Europe, but large numbers also went to Australia and, more recently (in larger numbers than to Australia), to the Arab countries of both North Africa and the Persian Gulf.

The growth of this movement is impressive. Starting from almost none in late 1961, there were, by the mid-1990s, when the population of Turkey itself was some 57 million, more than 2.5 million Turkish workers and their dependents in Europe, some 170,000 Turkish workers (without dependents — dependents not being allowed in) in Arab countries, and some 40,000 settlers in Australia (Gökdere 1994: 37). Thus, at any one time during these years, some 5%–6% of the Turkish population was abroad. And when we remember that some 30%–40% of these emigrants returned permanently to Turkey, it would appear that a sizable minority of the present Turkish population has had a direct

experience of emigration, and an even larger proportion — through the emigration of a close relative or friend — an indirect experience.

But the potential influence of this movement on Turkey is more than a function solely of numbers; it is also a function of contacts. From the beginning, Turkish emigrants appear to have kept in touch to a particularly high degree (through letters, telephone calls, and remittances) with family and friends in the homeland, and many have visited it from time to time on holiday, to attend weddings, or in response to the sickness or death of a relative (İçduygu 1994). At the very least, it would seem likely that this combination of massive emigration and the maintenance of a high level of contact with those who remained behind would be an important stimulus to change in Turkey's economic and social life.

Yet, massive as this movement has been, its recency offers the important possibility so far as social research is concerned of being able, for comparative purposes, to identify a control group of persons presumably but little affected (at least in any direct sense) by the experience of migration, whether of themselves or of close kin or friends. In designing our inquiry, it was thus possible, on the basis of their experience of international migration, to envisage three distinct categories of persons: (a) returned migrants, (b) nonmigrants who were close relatives or close friends of migrants (whether or not these migrants had returned), and, as a control group, (c) nonmigrants who were neither close relatives nor friends of migrants.

METHOD OF INQUIRY

Our analysis is based on the results of lengthy, detailed interviews with adult men and women in four Turkish provinces, ranging from the more developed and urban (Ankara, Izmir) to the less developed and rural (Konya, Yozgat). Ankara (city population 3 million) and Izmir (city population 2 million), two of the main metropolitan areas in Turkey, have been major sources of migrants to a wide range of receiving countries (from Germany to Australia, North Africa, and the Gulf States). They are also the main areas to which migrants have returned. Konya (city population 550,000), the country's richest grain-growing area, has been a major source of migrants to several receiving countries, most particularly in Scandinavia. Yozgat (city population 45,000), an underdeveloped region, has been a source of emigrants to a variety of countries.

Respondents were drawn in approximately equal numbers from each of the four provinces and, within each province, in approximately equal numbers from both urban and rural districts. The respondents were all persons 18 years of age and over ($N = 234$) in 116 households. The oldest was 74. Eighty-three of them (47 men and 36 women) were returned migrants; 54 (6 men and 48 women) were close relatives of migrants, whether or not returned; 19 (3 men and 16 women) were close friends of migrants, whether or not returned; 34 (17 men and 17 women) were both close relatives and close friends of migrants, again whether or not returned; and 44 (24 men and 20 women) were "controls," that is, neither migrants themselves nor close relatives or friends of migrants. (For a more detailed discussion of the fieldwork, see Day and İçduygu 1997).

On the basis of a tally of a selection of their answers, we decided nothing would be lost — and much gained in the processing and analysis of the data — if we made a single category out of the three kin or friend categories. The resulting distribution by sex and migrant category is shown in Table 1.

There were seven interviewers, including the Director of Fieldwork (İçduygu). All were Turkish, and originally from the several districts in which the interviews were conducted. Besides interviewing, they participated in construction of the questionnaire, as well as in development, for analysis, of the indicators of "traditional" and "modern." The interviews, which lasted between one and one-and-one-half hours, were conducted in pri-

vate, away from others, with men interviewed by men and women by women. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their answers, and there was no tape-recording of what was said. Such precautions add to the confidence one can have in the results of any such inquiries and, more specifically in the present instance, can be expected to lessen whatever bias might inhere in the fact that one-fourth of the households in the study contained more than one interviewee. The distribution of interviewees by household size is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SEX AND MIGRANT STATUS

Migrant Status	No.		Total	% of Total
	Men	Women		
Returned migrants	47	36	83	35
Nonmigrants who are close kin or close friends of migrants	26	81	107	46
Controls (nonmigrants who are neither close kin nor close friends of migrants)	24	20	44	19
TOTAL	97	137	234	100

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES PER HOUSEHOLD, BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND SEX

No. Persons in Household	No. Households This Size	No. Interviewees In Households This Size		
		Men	Women	Total
1	2	0	2	2
2	21	15	24	39
3	22	13	27	40
4	22	19	26	45
5	33	32	38	70
6	8	10	9	19
7	5	5	7	12
8	2	2	3	5
10	1	1	1	2
Total	116	97	137	234

LIMITATIONS OF THE INQUIRY

Because we were not dealing with a random sample of the Turkish population, we are limited in what we can say — in fact, largely precluded from saying anything at all — about conditions in Turkey as a whole. This particular limitation is of no moment here, however, for it was not our intent to describe Turkish society or identify either the relative magnitudes of the various sectors of the Turkish population or the types of belief or behavior among them. Our purpose was, instead, to ascertain the association (or lack of it) between migrant status and various items of behavior, belief, and attitude — irrespective of the proportionate distribution of these phenomena within the Turkish population as a whole. There is no dearth of problems with this type of research: problems of definition, of appropriateness of questions, of coding, of respondents' understanding of questions or their mood at time of interview, for instance. But unless there is reason to believe (and we know of none) that the various items for analysis we have inquired into are somehow randomly

associated with what we have cross-tabulated them with, the lack of a random sample should be no grounds for concern.

The number of respondents, however, is another matter. As in any study of this type, the sizes of the Ns are the main limitation on the number of factors that can be simultaneously controlled for. The large amount of information we have collected makes this a matter of particular significance in the present instance. Almost any cross-tabulation of these data produces a plethora of empty cells. We addressed this problem in two ways. First, we combined values in the major control categories so as to attain cells with more workable Ns: reducing Age to four categories, Migrant Status to three, Level of Schooling to five, and Residence to two. Second, we limited our analyses to searching only for general patterns of relationship, as against employing one or another statistical test of "significance" (for an earlier use of such an approach, see Day 1991). Slight statistical differences, unless part of such a pattern, were disregarded. Such a course of action is called for not only by the generally small Ns in the cells created by our tabulations but also by the fact that these data were not derived from a random sample.

FINDINGS

Because Muslim religious practices are characterized by marked differences between men and women, the sexes are treated separately throughout our analysis. The data on observance consist of answers to three questions:

1. Do you fast at Ramadan?
2. How often do you pray? and
3. (For men only) How often do you visit a mosque?

Data on adherence to presumably religiously based "traditional" views consist of answers to two questions:

4. What do you think about women covering their hair? Do you think it's a good idea, a bad idea, or doesn't it really matter?
5. Do you think it's all right for married women to use contraception? [If YES] Is it all right if their husbands don't know about it?

These answers were supplemented with those to a third question specifically related to religion:

6. Would you like to see children receive more religious instruction?

At the most general level, what stands out in the association between migrant status and both religious observance and adherence to religiously based viewpoints is the pattern of consistently greater observance as well as consistently greater adherence to the more "traditional" viewpoints on the part of those in the control group: those, that is, who are neither migrants themselves nor the close kin or friends of migrants. On every measure — and among both men and women — it is the controls who are the most concentrated at the more observant and more "traditionally" adherent end of the continuum (Table 3).

What differences exist in this regard between the two noncontrol categories (i.e., the returned migrants and the nonmigrant close kin/close friends of migrants) are in the direction of both less observance and less adherence to "traditional" viewpoints on the part of the returned migrants. This is true for both men and women, although the pattern among the latter is more consistent. The pattern among women also displays more polarization: generally higher proportions of women praying frequently, as well as higher — in fact, markedly higher — proportions praying either less than once a year or not at all. Although

both sexes in all three migrant statuses favor the use of contraception by married women, women (with the one exception of the rural controls) are consistently more favorable than men.

TABLE 3
PATTERNS OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE AND VIEWPOINT: SELECTED
PERCENTAGES BY MIGRANT STATUS AND SEX*

	Returned Migrant		Close Kin/ Friend		Control	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
N =	47	36	26	81	24	20
Questions:						
1. Do you fast at Ramadan?						
Regularly (i.e., every year)	55	42	77	64	100	95
Never	19	17	19	10	0	0
2. (Men only) How often do you visit a mosque?						
At least every Friday	72	—	73	—	92	—
Never	21	—	27	—	0	—
3. How often do you pray?						
5 times a day	19	14	12	21	42	55
At least once a day	28	22	15	22	46	55
At least once a week	74	25	73	28	92	55
Less than once a year or not at all	26	67	23	60	4	45
4. What do you think about women covering their hair? Do you think it's a good idea, a bad idea, or doesn't it really matter?						
Good idea	15	17	31	32	75	85
Bad idea or doesn't really matter	81	78	65	65	21	15
5. Would you like to see children receive more religious instruction?						
Yes	47	33	54	42	83	85
No	49	53	38	46	13	15
6. Do you think it's all right for married women to use contraception?						
[IF YES] Is it all right if their husbands don't know about it?						
Yes, whether or not husbands know	30	50	19	40	4	15
Yes, but only if husbands know	60	47	58	46	54	35
No, not even if husbands know	11	3	23	15	38	50

NOTE: * Percentages do not necessarily add to 100 because not all categories are mutually exclusive, and not every possible frequency is included in the calculation.

This general pattern — the control group more concentrated, and the returned migrants less concentrated, at the observant and adherent end of the continuum — persists with the introduction of controls (not shown here) for age, schooling, and urban-rural residence, despite the inevitably small Ns entailed in this greater detail. In each tabulation, what consistency there is tends to arise from the association with migrant status. The responses also tend to be more polarized among women than among men: the differences between the responses of returned migrants versus those of the controls, or between returned migrants and kin or kin and controls, being generally greater among women than among men. It is a pattern probably attributable to the likelihood that the differences between the roles and experiences associated with the different migrant statuses (i.e., returned migrant, nonmigrant kin/friend, and control) are greater for women than for men.

DISCUSSION

The associations are about what might be expected on the basis of the various “modernization” theories: the returned migrants are furthest toward the more “progressive,” less “traditional” end of the continuum of religious observance and adherence, and the “controls” are furthest toward the more “traditional.” In between — usually closer to the migrants, but sometimes closer to the controls — are the nonmigrant close kin and close friends of migrants. This general pattern, although observed most clearly in the absence of any control for such presumably closely related characteristics as age, sex, schooling, and residence, also holds when these controls are introduced.

The existence of such a pattern says nothing about its origins, however. Nor, at this level of analysis, is there support for the contention that the experience of emigration — whether direct or indirect — is conducive either to departure from, or greater adherence to, “traditional” practices of religious observance and adherence to religiously based viewpoints.

Causation: Recruitment. The possible causal explanations for the observed patterns are two: recruitment and socialization. People who choose to migrate are — by that fact alone — in some measure different from the rest of the society. In the circumstances of the particular migration under study here, those who migrated — even before they decided to migrate — might well have been, say, more ambitious, more willing to take risks, more materialistic, more idealistic, more discontented, more “progressive” or “modern” — not to mention less traditionally “religious.” Whether or not subsequently reinforced or modified by the experience of migration, such traits could assuredly have been a stimulus to migrate.

As for the response patterns of the nonmigrating close kin and friends — which lie between those of the migrants, on the one hand, and those of the controls, on the other — these could be at least partly anticipated on the grounds that migrants would be likely to share a number of common traits with nonmigrant members of their close networks. That these close kin and friends did not themselves migrate could be attributed either to their being more subject than the migrants to various countervailing pressures working against such action or to their not possessing these traits to a degree sufficient to push them across the migration threshold. Either way, however, one could expect that migrants would harbor ideas at some variance with those held by the rest of the society, and that the nonmigrating members of their close kin and friendship networks would do so, as well — if not necessarily to the same extent.

Causation: Socialization. But migration is more than a recruiting agent; it can also be a socializing agent: one not only for the migrant but also for the nonmigrating members of the migrant’s network (as well as, less directly, for the rest of the society — by way of the changes it can occasion in lifestyles, expectations, even institutional structures). At the least, the migrant is bound to have some experience of a different culture and lifestyle, while his or her nonmigrating close kin or friend (but especially a spouse or older child), in consequence of this migration, might well experience new roles, an improved economic position, or a greater sense of independence — with all the possible changes in values, knowledge, beliefs, and levels of aspiration this could lead to. Whatever the stimuli in any particular instance, this process of socialization could take a great variety of forms.

And through what means might the experience of migration — either direct, as a migrant (although the nature of our data do not permit such analysis), or indirect, as kin or close friend of a migrant — be expected to affect religious observance? The many, often mutually reinforcing, possibilities can be subsumed under the headings of three direct consequences of the pattern of international migration under consideration here: (a) separation of kin and friends, (b) enhanced economic well-being of migrants and their families, and (c) contacts with other persons and lifestyles.

Through the separation associated with it, emigration can occasion loneliness, sadness, and (on the part of the migrant) homesickness, as well as anxiety about the wellbeing of kin and friends and (in consequence of the separation of spouses) sexual frustration. It can also lead to the acquisition of new skills, new aspirations, and greater self-confidence through the imposition of new responsibilities (or the enhancement of already existing ones) — those associated with caring for parents or children, management of a farm or business, or the management of money, for example — or through fostering the assumption of such new roles as those associated with entering the labor market or obtaining employment outside the home or family setting. And by removing people from some of the reinforcements for their heritage, as well as from the constraints (including surveillance exercised by kin and neighbors) on alternative types of behavior, separation can also lead to changes in behavior, norms, and aspirations on the part of both the migrant and those in the migrant's kin and friendship networks.

Improved economic condition, by leading, for example, to the possession of a radio, a television set, or a car can also bring one into contact with certain elements of the wider — even international — society, with resulting changes in outlook, levels of aspiration, or self-awareness.

And a wider range of contacts, greater or more meaningful contacts with others of possibly different values or behavior patterns, involvement with a new set of “significant others” — whether brought about directly through personal contact or indirectly through contact with a migrant intermediary or greater access to the media of mass communication, for example — can extend the range of one's expectations and possibilities respecting behavior, levels of aspiration, consumption, morals, or values. But, by raising levels of aspiration, by creating wants that did not previously exist, these extended contacts can also raise the level of personal discontent and frustration. Kadioglu (1994: 548–49), for example, found that, although they had lost some of the fatalism that characterized them in the premigration setting and had acquired more “individualistic, independent, risk-taking, initiative-laden behavior patterns,” Turkish women who had been “exposed to the migration experience” (either by emigrating themselves or by remaining behind upon the emigration of their husbands) also experienced increased frustration if they were unable to find “appropriate outlets (jobs or social activities) outside the household in the return context.” And because they thought of themselves as a separate group, these women also often experienced difficulty relating to neighbors who lacked the migrant experience. Improvements in economic or social status, it would seem, do not necessarily come cost-free.

Assessing the relative importance of recruitment versus socialization in the determination of the patterns observed here is not an easy task. Data like those to hand can, at best, only offer hints. The only possibility with our data was to divide those in the close-kin-or-close-friends-of-migrants category into two subcategories on the basis of whether they reported having experienced certain changes in living conditions and lifestyle as a result of the migration of a close relative or friend, and then compare these two groups' respective patterns of responses on the items presumed to be indicative of religious observance and viewpoint.

The relevant experiences attending the migration of a close relative or friend for which we have information here relate to whether this migration had any effect on:

(a) The amount of care the nonmigrant respondent extended to family members

Question: Did [your husband/wife's; this person's/these persons' absence(s)] have much effect on your responsibilities for taking care of other family members? For instance, did it cause you to start or stop looking after an aged parent or a grandchild?

(b) The nonmigrant's responsibilities concerning family property

Question: Did [it/they] have much effect on your responsibilities for taking care of a family property or enterprise? For instance, did it cause you to do more or less work — or do a different kind of work — in connection with taking care of a house, farm, or family business?

(c) The nonmigrant's income

Question: Did it increase your income, decrease it, or leave it at about the same level? Did it make your income more regular or less regular?

(d) The nonmigrant's social activity

Question: Did it affect your social activity — i.e., the things you did, the people you visited with? For instance, did it increase or decrease the frequency with which you visited friends or relatives? The amount of shopping you did/do on your own?

(e) Composition of the nonmigrant's household

Question: Did it affect the composition of your household — whether, e.g., you moved to or combined with another household?

(f) The nonmigrant's living conditions

Question: Did it affect your living conditions — that is, your housing, your furnishings, your household equipment, for example?

If migration does, indeed, affect patterns of religious belief and observance through socialization, we ought to be able to expect those persons in different categories with respect to whether or not migration affected them in various ways — ways arguably associated with the possibility of simultaneously coming into contact with new ways and losing supports for old ones, of undertaking new roles and abandoning old roles, of acquiring new skills, new interests, and new aspirations — to present correspondingly different patterns of religious observance and viewpoint.

Our approach in this analysis was to cross-tabulate (a) the pattern of answers regarding religious observance and adherence among the non-migrants in the migrants' close kin and friendship networks with (b) certain of these nonmigrants' experiences occasioned by the migration of their close kin or friends. We hypothesized that one or another of these experiences, because of their presumed significance to the development of, for example, new perspectives, new aspirations, or new models of belief and behavior, would be associated with a departure from the more "traditional" forms of religious observance and, by implication, from patterns of religiously grounded belief, as well.

As already noted, for this purpose there were six experience variables, relating to caring for a relative, taking care of a business or property, income, social activity, household composition, and general living conditions. The religious observance variables related to fasting at Ramadan, frequency of praying, and (for men only) frequency of visiting a mosque. The presumably religion-grounded views were whether women should cover their hair, whether children should receive more religious instruction, and whether a married woman should be allowed to use contraception without her husbands' knowledge. The number of comparisons in which differences could appear between those who had and those who had not experienced changes in roles and conditions as a result of the emigration of close kin/friends is, for men, 30 [5 areas of change (because only one man claimed to have experienced a change in social activity) by 6 items of observance or viewpoint] and, for

women, also 30 (6 areas of change by 5 items of observance or viewpoint (because the frequency of visiting a mosque refers only to men)].

Overall, changes in roles and living conditions in consequence of the emigration of close kin/friends do appear to affect patterns of religious observance and adherence to religiously based viewpoints among the emigrants' nonmigrant close kin/friends. The effects were not the same for men and women, however: tending to be in opposite directions for the two sexes, and also generally more pronounced among men. The men who had experienced such changes were markedly *more* likely than those who had not experienced them to be at the more "traditional" or, at least, away from the more "nontraditional," end of the continuum; among women, it was the other way around. This difference by sex shows up whether the differences under consideration are expressed in terms of percentage points or percentages (Tables 4 and 5). And it persists (to the extent possible with the small Ns entailed in such a process) with the introduction of controls for age, residence, and schooling.

TABLE 4

NUMBERS OF COMPARISONS SHOWING A DIFFERENCE OF AT LEAST 8 PERCENTAGE POINTS IN PATTERNS OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE AND VIEWPOINT BETWEEN THOSE EXPERIENCING AND THOSE NOT EXPERIENCING CHANGE IN ROLE OR CONDITION IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE EMIGRATION OF CLOSE KIN/FRIENDS: NONMIGRANT KIN/FRIENDS, BY SEX

Men	Women	Proportion with Experience is 8+ Percentage Points:
19	5	<i>Higher</i> in more "traditional"
3	12	<i>Lower</i> in more "traditional"
3	7	<i>Higher</i> in more "nontraditional"
18	6	<i>Lower</i> in more "nontraditional"

TABLE 5

NUMBERS OF COMPARISONS SHOWING A DIFFERENCE OF AT LEAST 20% IN PATTERNS OF RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE AND VIEWPOINT BETWEEN THOSE EXPERIENCING AND THOSE NOT EXPERIENCING CHANGE IN ROLE OR CONDITION IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE EMIGRATION OF CLOSE KIN/FRIENDS: NONMIGRANT KIN/FRIENDS, BY SEX

Men	Women	Proportion with Experience is 20+%
17	5	<i>Higher</i> in more "traditional"
4	16	<i>Lower</i> in more "traditional"
2	2	<i>Higher</i> in more "nontraditional"
19	6	<i>Lower</i> in more "nontraditional"

Variation exists within each experience and each religious activity category. In general, however, at this level of analysis, the same variable figures in both the major *increase* in religious "traditionalism" among men and the major *decrease* in religious "traditionalism" among women. That variable is the proportion in favor of allowing married women access to contraception without their husbands' knowledge. Taking on new roles, increasing one's income, and the like generally leads among men, to increased opposition to such access; and among women, to increased approval of it.

Overall, however, there is essentially no consistent pattern: the hypothesis that changes in roles and conditions of life in consequence of the emigration of close kin/friends would affect patterns of religious observance or adherence to religiously based viewpoints among nonmigrants receives less support here, more support there. Nor is there any more pronounced pattern in association with the specific experiences, themselves.

CONCLUSION

So what does it all add up to? On the whole, international migration of the type engaged in by Turks over the last few decades has tended to improve the strictly economic position in the home country of both the returned migrants and, through remittances, those in their close networks. Nearly all of our respondents with an experience of migration (whether direct or indirect) claimed it had had such a result for them. Whether this economic betterment proves of lasting benefit either to the migrants and their networks or to the society from which they come is at the least a debatable point the resolution of which depends essentially on the length of time under consideration and the criteria employed. (One thinks, for example, of Yemen, an overwhelmingly agricultural country, being forced to import a large proportion of its food because of the emigration of so many men out of agriculture and into the oil fields of the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia (see, e.g., Swanson 1979), or, at a more individual level, of the three-fourths of the 81 respondents in the present study who had not themselves migrated but said that, because of the migration of a close relative, they had bought things they would not otherwise have been able to buy and that these purchases had produced friction between themselves and their neighbors, friends, or relatives.)

And, of course, migration of this type can also have noneconomic consequences: personal frustration, sorrow, and discontent — as well as, on occasion, hope, response, joy, and happiness. But what of rather more social consequences — specifically, in the present instance, with respect to religion? As could be anticipated on the basis of modernization theory, our data show a consistent association between migrant status and patterns of religious observance and religiously based value systems — with more “traditional” patterns being adhered to least often by the returned migrants and most often by the control group. Although schooling, age, and residence are also associated with such patterns, the association with migrant status holds when these are controlled for.

What one sees in these Turkish data is a considerable diversity of religious observance and viewpoints among people within the same presumably socially significant sectors of the population (within, that is, the same age/sex/residence/schooling sectors). Some of this diversity is doubtless associated with the experience of migration, both direct and indirect. But there is also evidence that Turkey is a society in the process of rapid change: undergoing rapid urbanization, experiencing sizable increases in the numbers of automobiles and certain other consumer items (with all the pressures for changing lifestyles and values these bring with them), and experiencing, as well, a rapid extension of literacy, marked expansion of both the knowledge and practice of birth control (including abortion) and a concomitant reduction in fertility. Then there is the growth (for whatever reasons) of Moslem fundamentalism, as well as the troubles with the Kurdish separatists.

Migration is doubtless causally associated with some of these changes. The increased numbers of automobiles and other consumer items are a particularly obvious example, and there are some who perceive a causal connection between migration and the growth of Moslem fundamentalism (Sayari 1986, esp. p. 96, and Abadan-Unat 1997, esp. pp. 244–48). But it is the more general social changes, not migration as such, that seem likely, in the long run, to have the greater bearing on religious belief and practice. There is little support here for the contention that the type of international migration that has involved so many Turks, these past three decades — migration that has for the most part been temporary and economically motivated, and that has involved movement from relatively poor agricultural or but slightly industrialized areas to rich, highly industrialized ones characterized by marked differences in language, religion, and overall culture — is going to result either in strengthening or weakening religious feeling and practice in Turkey, or in increasing or decreasing the social strength of its religious institutions.

NOTES

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