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Children of female immigrants in Turkey: numerical analysis of data

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of research on female immigration into Turkey conducted in the 2014-2015 academic year in Istanbul, Antalya and Izmir, funded by the Scientific & Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK). Data presented in the article was collected in Turkey using field research, surveys and semi-structured interviews among female immigrants from the countries of the former USSR. This research is a pioneering study on female immigration into Turkey and this paper is a continuation of the book on female immigration “Women from North move to South: Contemporary migration from the Former Soviet Union countries to Turkey” that was published by Transnational Press London Ltd. in London, UK, in December 2016. Female immigrants from countries of the former USSR come to Turkey for various reasons; to study, to marry, to work; all seeking a better future and new prospects. The majority of female immigrants have children and this paper gives a numerical analysis of the data received from female immigrants from countries of the former USSR in Turkey. The data concerning their children was collected during this research. The sample consisted of more than 400 female immigrants from countries of the former USSR. The data has been analyzed by age, gender, religion, the percentage of children born in Turkey and the different relationships existing between female immigrant mothers and their children.

Keywords: Children, female immigration, former USSR, Turkey, numerical analysis of data

1. INTRODUCTION

A project concerning female immigration to Turkey was conducted in that country and it explored many details of life and employment for female immigrants from countries of the former USSR and their children. The results of this research was published in the following papers “Issues in countries of the former Soviet Union as the driving force for female migration to Turkey”, “Slavic women in Turkey: from past to present”, “Challenges of Ukrainian female immigrants and their children in host countries”, “Challenges and strategies of behavior of Ukrainian female immigrants abroad”, a book “Women from North move to South: Contemporary migration from the Former Soviet Union countries to Turkey”, and in the essay “Discourse about Women-Immigrants from Former Soviet Union Countries as a Special Social Group in Turkey”.

However, in the book “Women from North move to South: Contemporary migration from the Former Soviet Union countries to Turkey”, issues faced by children of female immigrants from countries of the former USSR in this country, have not been explored in detail. Therefore it is necessary to do so in future publications and research and this paper is devoted to the numerical analysis of data collected concerning children of female immigrants in Turkey: *“Children of women from the countries of the Former Soviet Union were not the subjects of the research but it is important to say that the majority of these women have children. Some of the children of these women stayed in their countries of origin; some accompanied their mothers to Turkey and have stayed there permanently; some were born in Turkey. The characteristics and the analysis of the age and gender of the children of these women will be a part of a chapter in the next book or article”*.

This article is devoted to research concerning children, in particular the numerical analysis of data collected concerning children of female immigrants in Turkey.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology and strategy of research

The methodology of this research consisted of semi-structured interviews and surveys for accumulated statistic data and field research. The snowball sampling method was very useful and by using this method some female immigrants helped to find other immigrants from the former USSR for interviews and surveys in Turkey.

The strategy of the research consisted of the following stages:

- ✓ collecting data through surveys and semi-structured interviews among female immigrants from the former USSR in Turkey;
- ✓ creating a database using the responses;
- ✓ the statistical and numerical analysis of received data.

Sample of research

As noted above, the majority of the female immigrants have children and during this research information about children was received through field research, surveys and semi-structured interviews conducted among female immigrants from the former USSR in Turkish cities such as Istanbul, Izmir and Antalya. Thus, a sample for research was taken from female immigrants from the countries of the former USSR in Turkey, who came to the country for a

variety of reasons. More than 400 respondents participated in the surveys and semi-structured interviews.

Reasons why women from the countries of the Former Soviet Union move to Turkey

Structured interviews were conducted among the female immigrants and one of the questions was about their reasons for coming to Turkey, such as marriage; jobs and careers; labor migration; new opportunities; or other reasons.

According to the results of these interviews, the majority of the female immigrants (63% of all interviewed women) came to Turkey to marry.

According to estimations, the percentages of the female immigrants who come to Turkey with the aim of marrying are as follows: 20% of Armenian women come to Turkey for marriage; 38% of Azerbaijani women; 82% of Belarusian women; 22% of Georgian women; 62% of Kazakhstani women; 17% of Kyrgyzstani women; 75% of Latvian women; 43% of Lithuanian women; 60% of Moldovan women; 72% of Russian women; 27% of Turkmenistan women; 66% of Ukrainian women, and 50% of Uzbekistani women.

A large percentage of the female immigrants come to Turkey to work and for career purposes. Accordingly, 80% of Armenian women come to Turkey to work; 31% of Azerbaijani; 14% of Belarusian; 100% of Estonian; 11% of Georgian; 23% of Kazakhstani; 50% of Kyrgyzstani; 25% of Latvian; 43% of Lithuanian; 30% of Moldovan; 20% of Russian; 100% of Tajikistani; 33% of Turkmenistan; 21% of Ukrainian, and 40% of Uzbekistani women.

Some of the female immigrants also come to Turkey for labor migration: 19% of Azerbaijani women; 67% of Georgian; 8% of Kazakhstani; 17% of Kyrgyzstani; 5% of Moldovan; 3% of Russian; 33% of Turkmen; 7% of Ukrainian, and 10% of Uzbekistani women.

Some of the female immigrants come to Turkey seeking new opportunities for themselves: 6% of Azerbaijani women; 14% of Belarusian; 8% of Kyrgyzstani; 14% of Lithuanian; 5% of Moldovan; 3% of Russian; 7% of Turkmen; and 2% of Ukrainian women.

Those coming for other reasons are - 6% of Azerbaijani women; 8% of Kazakhstani; 8% of Kyrgyzstani; 2% of Russian; and 4% of Ukrainian women.

From these figures, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the female immigrants who come to Turkey were seeking marriage.

According to the opinion of Landale, N.S., Thomas, K. J. A., and Hook, J. V., *“Immigrant families face unique challenges as they adapt to their new country, yet they also bring with them many strengths, most notably high levels of marriage”*.

However, some of them will probably change marital status again later because they were born and brought up in a different culture, with different traditions and a different mentality and see themselves as individuals. It seems they cannot adapt very easily to their new life, new rules and traditions and therefore their marriages can sometimes fail.

Forms of relationship between mothers, female immigrants, and their children

Using the field research of the project, various forms of relationship between mothers - female immigrants, and their children have been identified:

- ✓ the first is when female immigrants came to Turkey alone and their children were born in the new country;

- ✓ the second - female immigrants came to Turkey accompanied by their children;
- ✓ the third - immigrants left their children in their countries of origin and came to Turkey alone;
- ✓ the fourth - immigrants gave birth to children in Turkey, but returned these children to stay with their parents or relatives in their home country;
- ✓ the fifth - children of immigrants live in different countries - some children live in the homelands of the immigrants and some in Turkey;
- ✓ the sixth - children of the immigrants live with their fathers, previous husbands or partners of the female immigrants in countries of the former USSR, in Turkey or in other countries.

According to the opinion of Portes A. and Rivas A., “*These young immigrants also differ by their countries of origin and their socioeconomic background*”.

Of course, this affects relationships not only the female immigrant mothers and their children, but the relationships with their relatives from all sides of the family. It seems that among all the forms relationships between these female immigrant mothers and their children in Turkey, the least problematic are relationships between mothers and their children who were born in Turkey. These relationships are less stressful for both sides and these children are best adapted to life as citizens in Turkish society.

Analysis of family situations of female immigrants and their children in Turkey

The results of semi-structured interviews and surveys show that the majority of female immigrants are married in Turkey but they have many different family situations - some marry for the first time, some for a second etc.

In Table 1, the family situations of female immigrants who participated in this research is analyzed by countries of origin. Table 1 shows that overall 77% of the female immigrants from the former USSR, respondents of semi-structured interviews and surveys, married in Turkey.

These, who married in Turkey, were made up of 40% of the Armenian female immigrants; 86% of the Azerbaijani; 76% of the Belarusian; 50% of the Estonian; 56% of the Georgian; 92% of the Kazakhstani; 42% of the Kyrgyzstani; 25% of the Latvian; 67% of the Lithuanian; 71% of the Moldovan; 83% of the Russian; 45% of the Turkmen; 80% of the Ukrainian, and 86% of the Uzbekistani female immigrants.

Table 1. Analysis of family situations of the female immigrants by their countries of origin

Female immigrants from:	Married	Single	Divorced	Widow
Armenia	40 %	20 %	20 %	20 %
Azerbaijan	86 %	0	7 %	7 %
Belarus	76 %	4 %	12 %	8 %
Estonia	50 %	50 %	0	0

Georgia	56 %	11 %	22 %	11 %
Kazakhstan	92 %	8 %	0	0
Kyrgyzstan	42 %	42 %	0	16 %
Latvia	25 %	75 %	0	0
Lithuania	67 %	33 %	0	0
Moldova	71 %	10 %	19 %	0
Russia	83 %	10 %	6 %	1 %
Tajikistan	45 %	27 %	9 %	18 %
Turkmenistan	80 %	11 %	8 %	1 %
Ukraine	86 %	0	14 %	0
Uzbekistan	40 %	20 %	20 %	20 %

Source: Research in Turkey (2014-2015).

The percentage of the divorced female immigrants was between 6%-22% among participants of this research. These were 20% of the Armenian female immigrants; 7% of the Azerbaijani; 12% of the Belarusian; 22% of the Georgian; 19% of the Moldovan; 6% of the Russian; 9% of the Turkmen; 8% of the Ukrainian and 14% of the Uzbekistani female immigrants. As seen above, the majority of the female immigrants were married and the majority of them have children.

How many of the female immigrants from the sample of the research have children?

In the process of surveys and semi-structured interviews, the female immigrants gave the number of their children, and the results have been collected in Table 2.

Female immigrants from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Tajikistan who were a part of the sample did not have children at the time of the research and their data have not been included in the Table 2.

Table 2. Percentage of female immigrants from the former USSR who have children

Female immigrants from:	Female immigrants who have children	Female immigrants who do not have children	Pregnancy
Armenia	60 %	40 %	0
Azerbaijan	100 %	0	0
Belarus	80 %	20 %	0
Georgia	78 %	22 %	0

Kazakhstan	62 %	38 %	0
Kyrgyzstan	63 %	37 %	0
Moldova	85 %	15 %	0
Russia	68 %	30 %	2 %
Turkmenistan	91 %	9 %	0
Ukraine	67 %	31 %	2 %
Uzbekistan	86 %	14 %	0

Source: Research in Turkey (2014-2015).

Among the remaining women, 60% of female immigrants from Armenia have children; 100% from Azerbaijan; 80% from Belarus; 78% from Georgia; 62% from Kazakhstan; 63% from Kyrgyzstan; 85% from Moldova; 68% from Russia; 91% from Turkmenistan; 67% from Ukraine; and 86% from Uzbekistan. Overall, 70% of female immigrants in Turkey who participated in the research have children from previous or current marriages.

Number of children of female immigrants from the former USSR

As seen above, 70% of female immigrants from the sample of the research in Turkey, who participated in interviews and a survey, have children from previous or current marriages. These female immigrants may have one, two or even more children (Table 3).

Therefore, the Table 3 shows that:

- ✓ 33% of female immigrants from Armenia have one child and 67% - two children;
- ✓ 50% of female immigrants from Azerbaijan have one child, 36% - two children, 7% - three children, and 7% - four children;
- ✓ 63% of female immigrants from Belarus have one child, 37% - two children;
- ✓ 43% of the immigrants from Georgia have one child, 14% - two children, and 43% - three children;
- ✓ 50% of the immigrants from Kazakhstan have one child, and 50% - two children;
- ✓ 57% of the immigrants from Kyrgyzstan have one child, 29% - two, and 14% - four children;
- ✓ 35% of female immigrants from Moldova have one child, 53% - two, and 12% - three children;
- ✓ 57% of female immigrants from Russia have one child, 38% - two children, and 5% - three children;
- ✓ 30% of the immigrants from Turkmenistan have one child, 60% - two, and 10% - three children;
- ✓ 63% of the immigrants from Ukraine have one child, 33% - two, and 4% - three children;
- ✓ 33% of the female immigrants from Uzbekistan have one child and 67% - two children.

It is seen that the majority of the female immigrants from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine have one child, and those from Armenia, Moldova, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have two children.

Table 3. Percentage of female immigrants who have one, two or three children according to all female immigrants from the sample of the research

Female immigrants from:	One child	Two children	Three children	Four and more
Armenia	33 %	67 %	0	0
Azerbaijan	50 %	36 %	7 %	7 %
Belarus	63 %	37 %	0	0
Georgia	43 %	14 %	43 %	0
Kazakhstan	50 %	50 %	0	0
Kyrgyzstan	57 %	29 %	0	14 %
Moldova	35 %	53 %	12 %	0
Russia	57 %	38 %	5 %	0
Turkmenistan	30 %	60 %	10 %	0
Ukraine	63 %	33 %	4 %	0
Uzbekistan	33 %	67 %	0	0

Source: Research in Turkey (2014-2015).

Gender of children of female immigrants from the former USSR

The results of the research concerning gender of children of female immigrants show that the majority of children of immigrants from Armenia (60%), Azerbaijan (58%), and Uzbekistan (60%) are male (Table 4).

At the same time, the majority of children of female immigrants from Georgia (57%), Kyrgyzstan (75%), Moldova (53%), Turkmenistan (67%), and Ukraine (61%) are female.

Percentage of children of female immigrants from the former USSR who were born in Turkey

As seen above, some of the children of female immigrants from the former USSR were born in Turkey. In the sample, according to the replies of the immigrants, 50% of children of Armenian female immigrants were born in Turkey; 82% of Azerbaijani; 57% of Belarusian; 14% of Georgian; 82% of Kazakhstani; 44% of Kyrgyzstani; 59% of Moldovan; 70% of Russian; 33% of Turkmen; 56% of Ukrainian, and 43% of Uzbekistani female immigrants.

Therefore, the majority of the children of Azerbaijani, Belarusian, Kazakhstani, Moldovan, Russian, and Ukrainian female immigrants from this sample were born in Turkey.

Table 4. Gender of children of the female immigrants

Female immigrants from:	Male	Female
Armenia	60 %	40 %
Azerbaijan	58 %	42 %
Belarus	50 %	50 %
Georgia	43 %	57 %
Kazakhstan	50 %	50 %
Kyrgyzstan	25 %	75 %
Moldova	47 %	53 %
Russia	50 %	50 %
Turkmenistan	33 %	67 %
Ukraine	39 %	61 %
Uzbekistan	60 %	40 %

Source: Research in Turkey (2014-2015).

Age of children of female immigrants from the former USSR in Turkey

The age of children of the female immigrants from the former USSR in Turkey was also analyzed and the results show that the ages of their children range from one year old to 45 years old (Table 5).

Table 5. Age of children of the female immigrants

Female immigrants from:	1-5 years	5-10 years	10-20 years	20 years and more
Armenia	20 %	0	20 %	60 %
Azerbaijan	22 %	22 %	43 %	13 %
Belarus	31 %	34 %	23	12 %
Georgia	0	0	27 %	73 %

Kazakhstan	25 %	33 %	33 %	9 %
Kyrgyzstan	10 %	45 %	27 %	18 %
Moldova	22 %	22 %	30 %	26 %
Russia	32 %	35 %	23 %	10 %
Turkmenistan	17 %	0	28 %	55 %
Ukraine	26 %	24 %	25 %	25 %
Uzbekistan	20 %	20 %	40 %	20 %

Source: Research in Turkey (2014-2015).

Therefore, the children of Armenian (60%), Georgian (73%), and Turkmen (55%) female immigrants are adults as they are 20 years old or more, which means that their mothers are female labor immigrants in Turkey. They came to Turkey without children, just to work on a temporary basis.

At the same time the majority of children of female immigrants from Belarus (65% of children from 1-10 years old), Kazakhstan (58% of children from 1-10 years old), Kyrgyzstan (55% of children from 1-10 years old), Russia (67% of children from 1-10 years old), and Ukraine (50% of children from 1-10 years old) came to Turkey to live permanently because most of their children were born in Turkey.

Religion of children of the female immigrants

The female immigrants from the countries of the former USSR have different religions, such as Christianity, Protestantism, and Islam. Of course, those who are Muslim found it much easier to adapt and integrate into Turkish society. These are the female immigrants coming from countries such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Female immigrants from Armenia, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine, who are Christian or of other faiths found it much harder.

The female immigrants from non-Muslim countries of the former USSR need to be aware of and remember that under Islamic Sharia law in marriages between Muslim men and non-Muslim women the children born are always considered Muslim. “Under the rules of Islamic Sharia, children born of mixed marriages, involving a Muslim man and non-Muslim woman, are considered Muslims. Children born to a Muslim father are always required to follow the religion of the father. Even if the child is baptized into the Christian faith; he will always be regarded as Muslim and governed by Islamic Sharia”.

Therefore a question concerning religion of children was included in the questionnaire of the research for the female immigrants from Muslim and non-Muslim countries of the former USSR. Armenian immigrants answered that they children are Orthodox Christian; Azerbaijani and Turkmen that they children are Muslim.

Some of children of Belarusian, Georgian, Kazakhstani, Kyrgyzstani, Moldovan, Russian, Ukrainian and Uzbekistani female immigrants are Muslim; others are Orthodox

Christian or of another faith and some of them have not yet determined the religion of their children (Table 6).

Table 6. Religion of children of the female immigrants from the former USSR in Turkey

Female immigrants from:	Muslim	Orthodox Christian	Not determined yet
Armenia	0	100 %	0
Azerbaijan	100 %	0	0
Belarus	38 %	45 %	17 %
Georgia	27 %	73 %	0
Kazakhstan	83 %	17 %	0
Kyrgyzstan	92 %	8 %	0
Moldova	27 %	42 %	31 %
Russia	57 %	28 %	15 %
Turkmenistan	100 %	0	0
Ukraine	40 %	41 %	19 %
Uzbekistan	88 %	0	12 %

Source: Research in Turkey (2014-2015).

Some of the children of the female immigrants from non-Muslim countries of the former USSR are Muslim. As shown in Table 6, from all the female immigrants 38% of Belarusian, 27% of Georgian, 27% of Moldovan, 57% of Russian and 40% of Ukrainian confirmed this. Even where the female immigrants from non-Muslim countries of the former USSR do not accept the fact that their children are Muslim, under Islamic Sharia law, the children of female non-Muslim immigrants and Muslim men continue to be considered Muslims.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The paper presents the results of research based on field research, surveys and semi-structured interviews conducted in some cities of Turkey within a fellowship project on female immigration in Turkey.

Using field research as part of the project, the research identified a variety of relationships between female immigrant mothers and their children: - those who came to Turkey alone and whose children were born in their new country; those who came to Turkey

with their children; those who left their children in their countries of origin and came to Turkey alone; those who gave birth to their children in Turkey, but then returned their children in their original homeland with parents or relatives; children who live in different countries from their mothers, some children live in the homelands of the immigrants and some in Turkey; children of immigrants who live with their fathers, previous husbands or partners of the female immigrants in countries of the former USSR, in Turkey, or other countries.

The project aimed to explore not only the issues of female immigrants from the countries of the former USSR in Turkey but also to conduct numerical analysis of data concerning the children of these female immigrants.

The following shows the most important results of the research:

According to the research, overall 70% of the female immigrants from former USSR in Turkey, who participated in the research, have children from previous or current marriages, among these are 60% of the female immigrants from Armenia; 100% from Azerbaijan; 80% from Belarus; 78% from Georgia; 62% from Kazakhstan; 63% from Kyrgyzstan; 85% from Moldova; 68% from Russia; 91% from Turkmen; 67% from Ukraine; and 86% from Uzbekistan.

Among all the female immigrants from the former USSR who participated in the research, the majority from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine have one child and the majority of those from Armenia, Moldova, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan have two children.

Most of the children of the female immigrants from Georgia (57%), Kyrgyzstan (75%), Moldova (53%), Turkmenistan (67%), and Ukraine (61%) are female and most of those from Armenia (60%), Azerbaijan (58%), and Uzbekistan (60%) are male.

The majority of the children of Azerbaijani, Belarusian, Kazakhstani, Moldovan, Russian, and Ukrainian female immigrants who participated in the research were born in Turkey.

Children of the Armenian (60%), Georgian (73%), and Turkmen (55%) female immigrants who participated in the research, are adults as they are 20 years old or over. At the same time, the majority of the female immigrants from Belarus have children between 1 and 10 years old (65%), from Kazakhstan (58%), Kyrgyzstan (55%), Russia (67%), and Ukraine (50%), and these children were born in Turkey.

Concerning the religion of the children of the female immigrants from non-Muslim countries of the former USSR that were born in Turkey, 38% of the children of the Belarusian female immigrants, 27% of Georgian, 27% of Moldovan, 57% of Russian, and 40% of them are Muslim. Even if female immigrants from non-Muslim countries of the former USSR do not accept the fact that their children are Muslim, under Islamic Sharia law children of marriages between female non-Muslim immigrants and Muslim man are always considered Muslims.

This research is a pioneering study of female immigration into Turkey and this paper is a continuation of the book on female immigration “Women from North move to South: Contemporary migration from the Former Soviet Union countries to Turkey” that was published by Transnational Press London Ltd. in London, in the UK in December 2016, and the essay “Discourse about Women-Immigrants from Former Soviet Union Countries as a Special Social Group in Turkey” that was published by Cognella Academic Publishing in San Diego, USA in 2016, and also papers “Issues in countries of the former Soviet Union as the driving force for female migration to Turkey”, “Slavic women in Turkey: from past to

present”, “Challenges of Ukrainian female immigrants and their children in host countries”, and “Challenges and strategies of behavior of Ukrainian female immigrants abroad”.

Biography

Dr. Oksana Koshulko gained a Ph.D. in Economic Sciences at the National University of Food Technologies in Kyiv, Ukraine. She is an Associate Professor of the Department of Finance and Industrial Economics at the Polotsk State University, Belarus and a member of the Association for Women in Slavic Studies (AWSS), USA. Dr. Koshulko has conducted researches at Jagiellonian University and the Cracow University of Economics in Krakow, Poland; at Maltepe University in Istanbul, Turkey; and at the Center for Social and Economic Research in Warsaw, Poland.

She has written around a hundred papers and publications that have appeared in peer-reviewed journals in Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Poland, Moldova, and Switzerland.

Her books and chapters of books have been published in USA, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Germany, UK, and USA.

During the period 2011-2017 Dr. Koshulko received numerous of scholarships and grants from the Association for Women in Slavic Studies, USA; the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey; the Network of East-West Women, USA; the Polish Academy of Sciences “Jozef Mianowski Fund” and the Queen Jadwiga Scholarship Fund of Jagiellonian University, Poland; the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, and from the Polish and Romanian National Commissions for UNESCO.

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