

# **The Effects of Religious Attitudes of Youth on Migration**

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## **Abstract**

In this study it is hypothesized that religious students are less prone to migrate than other students. Interviews were conducted with five hundred seventy one university students in Turkey. Findings indicate that there is no significant difference among the religious and non-religious students concerning migration.

**KEY WORDS:** Turkey, University Youth, Religious attitudes, Migration

## **Özet**

Bu araştırmada gençliğin dini tutumlarının göçe etkisi incelenmiştir. Beşyüzyetmişbir üniversite öğrencisi ile görüşme yapılmıştır. Dini tutumları diğer öğrencilere göre daha baskın olan öğrencilerin göçe daha az eğilimli olacağı hipotezi sınanmıştır. Verilerin analizi üniversite öğrencileri arasında dini tutumların göç etmeye etkili olmadığını göstermiştir.

**ANAHTAR KELİMELEER:** Üniversite gençliği, Dini tutumlar, Göç, Türkiye

## **1.Introduction**

To understand people and social life the institution of religion is very important. Like the family, the religious institution is quite complex. The term religion covers variety of beliefs and practices. Even in the same society there is the diversity of religion.

Sociologists do not investigate whether certain religious beliefs are valid or whether certain religions are better than the others. Sociologists cannot study such questions because they adhere to the scientific method. Consequently, we investigate religion as a social phenomenon, focusing on the functions and dysfunctions of religion, the origins

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of conflicts within and between religious groups and the ways in which religion is intertwined with social, economic and political issues.

From the sociological perspective, we can also see how religion, in its various forms, contributes to the stability and instability of the social world.

Durkheim defines religion as

a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden-beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church all those who adhere to them (1964,62).

Durkheim defined religion too broad and too inclusive.

Durkheim used the term profane as the opposite of sacred. Today scholars are more likely to use the word secular to represent the opposite of sacred and to use the word secularization to refer to the process of society and culture becoming less sacred, or less influenced by religion. Secularization is more than the substitution of scientific knowledge for religious beliefs. It is also about organized religion losing some of its power and authority over all spheres of modern life. The development of public education is another example of secularization, in this case in education (Elliott and Shamblin, p.330).

With the Industrial Revolution, dramatic changes occurred in the structure of Western societies. These changes led to the Enlightenment of the nineteenth century. Early sociologists such as Emile Durkheim and Max Weber were concerned that decline in religion would lead to the destruction of societies.

## **2. Impacts of Religion on Society**

Herbert Spencer's ideas on the roots of religion were presented out in his *Principles of Sociology* published between 1876 and 1896. He tried to answer the question of why primitive people believed in things such as spirits, magic and so on. He concluded that because they had very limited knowledge the inferences they made about the world were understandable and reasonable. For Spencer funerary rites were a source of cohesion in society and the religious institutions which developed later were the bearers of tradition and the supporters of social stability.

Comte's evolutionary scheme of the development of human thought, which he thought was the key to the development of society, was set out in his *The Positive Philosophy*. In this study he set out "law of three stages" which states that in the intellectual development of humanity there are three distinct stages: theological, metaphysical and positive.

In the first stage, the theological, thoughts and ideas about reality are basically religious in nature. The metaphysical stage is a transitional stage between the theological and positive stages, the latter modern scientific thought. For Comte, religion was not

only an attempt to explain and understand reality but also unifying principle of human society (Hamilton,1995).

To understand Durkheim's theory of religion it is best to consider first Fustel de Coulanges and W. Robertson-Smith from whom Durkheim was influenced. Fustel de Coulanges (1830-89) was a French historian and in his classic study *The Ancient City* tried to show the relationship between religion and social life (Morris, p.11). He argued that early ancient society was organized around the joint family and what held this group together as a corporation was the ancestral cult. The religious ideas determined all the essential characteristics of ancient society, the laws of marriage, the forms of kinship and property relations. As the religion of antiquity changed, the social and political structure of society changed, too, and the ancient city, rather than the family, became the basic social institution (Morris, p.112).

An important aspect of Robertson-Smith's theory was that in primitive religion practices had primacy over beliefs. "Religion", he said, "is not to do with the saving of souls but with the consolidation of the group" (Hamilton,p. 98).

Durkheim (1964) in his major work focused his analysis on the religion of the Australian aborigines. According to Durkheim, since religion is something which is social it follows that the basic categories of thought are derived from society (Hamilton, p.99). Durkheim describes the clan organization of aboriginal society and the association between each clan and a sacred totem. The totems are represented by stylised images drawn on stones. Clan members who believe themselves to be descended from the sacred totem, they too are sacred. For Durkheim, the belief system was the experience of collective life that generated such ideas and concepts. Durkheim saw religion only in its function in establishing and reaffirming group solidarity and as possessing symbolic significance for a "group" or society (Morris,p.122).

Kingsley Davis (1948) lists the positive functions of religion which, according to him rationalises and supports the sentiments that give unity (cohesion) to society.

Later functionalist theorists go much further in introducing a psychological perspective into their theories. Thomas and Janet O'Dea list six functions (Chalfant, p.247) of religion for the individual and the society.

Marx located the source of human alienation in economic and political conflicts (Elliott,p.328). He pointed to the vital effect that religion has had in stabilizing relatively static structures of society (Ibid., p. 327).

Weber's controversial study of the Protestant Reformation in which he argued that the growth of industrialism had both stimulated and been stimulated by the religious conflicts and changes in Western Europe. Weber did not limit his studies to Western religions. He also studied the interplay of religion, economics, and politics in China, India, and in ancient Judaism.

### 3. Research Design and Methodology

In order to measure the effects of religious attitudes of university students on migration seven questions were asked.

The seven questions are.

1. How often do you go to mosque?
2. Do you fast in Ramadan?
3. How often do you go to mosque in Ramadan?
4. How do you react to the ones who neither goes to mosque, nor performs the ritual prayer nor fasts in Ramadan?
5. Do you have arguments with your friends because of their religious beliefs and attitudes?
6. What do you think about women's veiling and being religious?
7. What do you think about women's employment?

The data presented in the tables come from a random probability- sample survey of students in Selçuk University in Konya. Interviews were conducted with 571 university students.

In this study it is hypothesized that religious students are less prone to migrate than the other students.

### 4. FINDINGS

**Table I**  
**Preferred residence**

	Konya	Big cities (Ank.İst.Ant. İzmir)	other cities	not decided	Total
Frequency of going to mosque					
1. Every week or more	41	55	2	106	254
2. Every month or more	2	9	8	13	32
3. On holidays	10	35	20	33	38
4. Never	14	49	25	37	125
Total	67	148	105	189	509

chi\_square=17.38797 DF=9 significance=.04298

In Table 1 the chi-square statistics is used to test the null hypothesis that the frequency of going to mosque and migration tendency are independent. The results of Table 1 shows that at the  $X=.04$  significance level our null hypothesis is rejected. So we can conclude that migration tendency among youth is influenced by how frequently they go to mosque. If we examine the cells which appear in Table 1, we see that from a

sample of 509 university students, 254 of them go to mosque at least once a week. In other words .50 of the students go to mosque at least once a week, .25 never go .19 go on holidays and .06 go once a month. In this sample, while 50 per cent of the students go to mosque very frequently, the other 25 per cent never go and the last 25 per cent go from time to time.

16 per cent of the ones who go to mosque very frequently prefer to continue to live in Konya, while 22 per cent of them prefer to go to big cities like Ankara, İstanbul, Antalya, İzmir, and 20 per cent want to go to other cities. In other words while 16 per cent stays in Konya, 42 per cent of the religious group wants to migrate. Among the ones who never go to mosque 10 per cent of them prefer to stay in Konya, while 59 per cent of them think to migrate to other cities.

9 per cent of the ones who go to mosque rarely think to stay in Konya and 90 per cent of them prefer to change their residence. Findings in this table do not support our hypothesis that the more religious students are less prone to migrate, because in both (religious, and less religious) groups majority of the students prefer to live in other cities rather than in Konya.

Only with little difference like .05 and .07 more of the students who go to mosque frequently want to stay in Konya.

**Table 2**  
**Preferred residence**

	Konya	Big cities (Ank.İst.Ant. İzmir)	other cities	not decided	Total
Do you fast in Ramadan?					
1. Yes	75	135	100	188	498
2. No	3	26	12	27	68
Total	78	161	112	215	566

chi\_square=7.76618 DF=3 significance=.04298

In Table 2 the results show that to prefer to stay in Konya is not influenced by fasting in Ramadan.

**Table 3**  
**Preferred residence**

Frequency of going to mosque	Konya (Ank.İst.Ant. İzmir)	Big cities	other cities	other decided in the coun.	not	Total
1. Every day	24	38	12	22	69	165
2. Once a week or more	29	51	7	32	73	192
3. Never	13	65	9	25	53	165
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>522</b>

chi\_square=17.67562 DF=8 significance=.02379

In Table 3 the results show that to migrate is affected by the frequency of going to mosque in Ramadan. In this Table, too, the cells show that even in the group which goes to mosque most frequently majority of the students prefer to migrate than to stay in Konya. 15 per cent of the ones who go to mosque every day and 8 per cent of the ones who never go to mosque want to stay in Konya.

**Table 4**  
**Preferred residence**

How do you react to the ones who don't fast?	Konya	Big cities	other	other	not	Total
	(Ank.İst.Ant. İzmir)		cities	decided		
				in the coun.		
1. I get very angry	4	4	1	4	23	36
2. I get angry	12	10	5	18	34	79
3. It doesn't matter	25	54	12	21	51	163
4. I show tolerance	37	92	11	39	102	281
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>559</b>

chi\_square=30.75132 DF=12 significance=.00215

In Table 4, there is relationship between preferred residence and reaction to people who don't participate in religious rituals. As Durkheim points out, rituals generate and sustain social solidarity and cohesion. Only 14 per cent in both tolerant and less tolerant students want to stay in Konya.

**Table 5**  
**Preferred residence**

	Konya	Big cities (Ank.İst.Ant. İzmir)	other cities	not decided	Total
Do you argue with your friends because of their religious beliefs?					
1. Yes	11	23	19	50	103
2. No	66	137	94	166	463
Total	77	160	113	216	566

chi\_square=6.06349 DF=3 significance=.10856

Table 5 shows that migration tendency is not influenced by religious beliefs.

**Table 6**  
**Preferred residence**

	Konya	Big cities (Ank.İst.Ant. İzmir)	other cities	not decided	Total
What do you think about women's being veiled?					
1. They must be veiled	32	28	38	89	187
2. There is no relationship between being veiled and being religious	3	27	12	12	54
3. It is their choice	42	104	61	111	318
Total	77	159	111	212	559

chi\_square=36.14565 DF=6 significance=.00000

In Table 6, 17 per cent of the ones who say that women should veil want to stay in Konya and the rest want to migrate to other cities.

	<b>Preferred residence</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>Konya</b>	<b>Big cities (Ank.İst.Ant. İzmir)</b>	<b>other cities</b>	<b>not decided</b>	
<b>What do you think about women's employment?</b>					
1. She must be employed	26	97	61	90	274
2. She must stay home	18	20	17	44	99
3. Other	29	35	30	67	161
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>534</b>

chi\_square=21.55015 DF=6 significance=.00146

Table 7 shows that 18 per cent of the more conservative ones want to reside in Konya.

### **6. Conclusions**

This study suggests that there is no significant difference among the religious and non-religious students concerning migration. Majority of the students wish to migrate to big cities. In the university environment there is increasing contact with the modern world of modern ideas. These provide the university students with a greater store of skills, experience and know-how, all of which enhance their abilities to look forward to challenging jobs abroad.

The distinguishing features of modern societies are the break down of extended kinship, regional, ethnic and religious attachments. "In their place, occupation becomes a more important element of general social standing, since more than any other attribute it influences the income and style of life a person leads" (Blauner, p. 30).

In this technologically advanced industrial society it is not likely that the primacy of the economic institution can be replaced (Fichter, p.122).

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