



# **The reflection of social changes and transformations to the marriage affairs: The application in Malatya<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

The social environment in which a person was born and lives determines both his/her attitudes and gives him/her a consciousness. The questions of “what a person wants to do, what he/she has to do and what he/she can do” are given him by the socio-cultural environment in which he/she lives. The phenomenon of marriage, which is a milestone in a person’s life, is, also, not independent of this reality. The society and the social environment make themselves felt on such occasions as the age of marriage, the person to get married and the wedding ceremony.

The processes of modernization, industrialization and urbanization configure or stabilize the transformation. The transformations which have economic, social and political themes show their effects on the institutions of family and marriage. The person who can’t be senseless to the transformations around him/her changes his/her attitudes and manners. In this respect, many social conditions such as the idea of the marriage institution, expectations from a marriage, the formula of a good and long marriage and the roles of the married partner undergo changes. This study focusing on these issues evaluated the results of the survey performed on 600 different married people. The findings obtained from the sample consisting of different education, income and occupation groups are presented with a sociological analysis.

*Keywords:* Family, marriage, social change, transformation

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## **1. Introduction**

Individual, who is a social being, is born inadequately and without a protection. His inadequacies force him to make cooperation and solidarity with another individual. The individual who are not able to meet his necessities and solve his problems ask for help from the people around him. The institutions resulted from social needs and adopting certain behavioural forms with the ethos they have created are the fundamental components of the society. The social structure is made up of the mutual relations of the institutions, each of which meets the different need of the society. Social structure has two aspects, dynamic and static. The structure protects its existence as the body, while the institutions which are the components of the structure change and transform according to the conditions. The change in the scope and function of an institution finds its response in the ethos and social behaviours.

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Individual, who doesn't live instantly, randomly and unconsciously, is a living thing who behaves by taking the environment and conditions in which he lives into consideration. The time, culture and ethos in which the individual lives are the significant sources that human regard as reference in his behaviours. Durkheim, one of the founders of the sociology, uses the term of "collective conscious" for these sources which are also viewed as "the preparer of a behaviour". "Collective conscious" manipulates us outside of us and by putting pressure on us (1994:36-39). Individual, who is a social being, cannot be deaf to this conscious, which is outside of him and forces him to think and behave in a certain way.

In this way, Parsons claims that individual in a society is not unlimited and unblocked in terms of behaviours and activities. And these limits and blocks take form within the framework of the questions of "what he wants to do", "what he must do" and "what he can do". Parsons mentions that human behaviours in a society are systematized as "personal", "cultural" and "social". According to this argument, needs and requests which exist in the psychological base form human's perception system and the capacity of his information and evaluation form his personal system, which means that human thinks, feels and evaluates. However, human is not alone while performing these activities. All these series of activities take form and occur in a certain cultural system. According to him, mutual interactions of humans make up the common expectations unity, which is cultural systems, shown with symbols in time. On the other hand, cultural system makes up the standards which will determine the human's perception, feeling and evaluation activity. By this way, humans produce such rules and applications within the social interaction and they use them that these completely shoulder the organization function of the personal and social activities. For that reason, these actions which are organized and become integrated on the base of shared and adopted standards lead to the phenomenon of social system (Erdoğan, 1987:29-30). Hence, Durkheim explains the situation which is effective in his manners and behaviours with the terms of "external" and "pressure"; on the other hand, Parson explains it with a composition resulted from the systems of "personal", "cultural" and "social".

## **2. Historical Reality of the Social Change and Its Appearance in Social Life**

Change is a reality of human life. Historically, there have been few regions, races, nations and cultures without the effect of change. From the clans which are accepted as the first social unity until today, each society is under the effect of this process of change depending on its own structural properties. The properties of the society are the determiner in the area, speed and rate of this change, and the reaction to it. Humankind, which is thousands of years old, has witnessed to three revolutions, which are "agriculture", "industry" and "information". Depending on the effects of the changes which occurred, social history is sorted out in three social levels which are agriculture, industry and information. Each of these levels, which are also expressed as traditional, modern and post-modern, has created its own unique structure. Each level has given human different roles and brought out the next level within it, depending on the interaction of structure-institution.

Modernization, which is one of the most comprehensive evolutions in the history, signifies the transformation from a traditional society to a new structure in terms of institutions, values, the production styles, beliefs, thinking, the life styles and habits. Modernization, and also industrialization and urbanization, which are dependent on modernization, have created a structure which is very different from the past. The contents and the functions of the current institutions have been revised and a very different system has been put into use depending on very different paradigms.

Family and marriage institutions which are in the interaction with the components of social structure are the practice areas of changes and transformations which other institutions have shaped. Any change which has taken place in the institutions such as economy, politics and law directly affects the family which is permanently in the interaction with them. As well as modernization and industrialization, the urbanization processes in which these two have become embodiment bring about changes in the social structure and in the relations of family-marriage as a whole.

Individuation and loneliness which modernization forms cause the social life to shatter. The fact that social life has gradually shattered and the individual has steadily sequestered himself weakens the power of the conventional

institutions and functions to address the society and threatens the social unity (Furedi, 2001:211). The concentration of the modernization causes people who are able to keep away from many centers that make the integrity in the human life and to live according to his will within the stability of his simple social environmental to increase (Oskay, 2001:87). Depending on these, the area of the influence of the customs and traditions shrinks; the manipulating power of the institution of the religion weakens and social taboos collapse and sexual roles change. Thus, family goes through an evolution within itself. These changes which correspond to the changes in the meaning and the purpose of the life force people, especially the family members, to be away from the society by making them live on their own (Şentürk, 2012:112).

Individuation which modernization has caused makes itself felt also in the choice of the person to get married. According to Parsons, with the process of modernization, far fewer people choose their partners to satisfy their parents. That's why, nowadays, more people who will be likely to get married take their preferences into account, not their parents', relatives' or neighbours'. The situations of going away and breaking off from the families and relatives occur in the cases of marriage and the choice of partner as well. Because going away from the relatives and people occur not only spatial but also emotional, social and cultural bases (Jones, Tepperman, Wilson, 1995:46). The excess and heterogeneity of the people living in the city affect the form, content and the frequency of the social relations. In this respect, conventional manners, behaviours and relations replace with behaviours, manners and relations rational which are rational and based on interests. For that reason, individuals try to adapt to these conditions by developing behavioural models that are suitable for city life (Hanser, 1986:114-115).

Sexuality, with the increasing sexual freedom actions depending on the restriction under the influence of religion and morality, is getting out of the action of reproduction and becoming a relationship style which is taken pleasure (Fromm, 1998:15,34). The fact that reproduction is getting out of the action of reproduction affects the family's meeting the function of human's need for sexuality negatively for the society to accept the situation. With the pleasure coming to the fore, the family enters in an unnecessary position. Increasing individuation, inclination to the material values and the adoption of the hedonist life style focusing on happiness leads to a mass who have limited responsibilities, live alone, grow domestic plants and animals.

It has been observed that there has been a huge increase in the number of divorces, "additive families" formed by the remarriages of the divorced and the families with single parents as a result of these economic and social changes. Adult girls and boys are inclined to remain single or keep an informal relationship called "civil partnership" instead of getting married. Sperm banks, emerging as a result of the new reproduction technology, give rise to a different parenthood situation different from the past in the point of having a child. By carrying the sperms obtained from the people whose identities are uncertain or secret to an ovum owner, an unnatural parenthood is formed (Macionis, 2012:478-483).

### **3. Information about the Research**

Since very recently, Turkey has been going through decreases in the rates marriages as well as the fast and frequent divorces. The rates of marriages decrease and the duration of the marriage decreases and also the phenomenon of living separately or splitting up due to the divorces are seen more often than the past. Considering the functions which the institutions of family and marriage have performed in terms of individual and society, every kind of research is of significance in order for this institution to survive, to be strengthened and to have qualified relations. The rates related to the subject in Turkey and Malatya become a reason to prepare a survey.

Considering the rates of marriage and divorce in Turkey: there were 510.155 marriages in 2002, 641.241 in 2005, 582.715 in 2010 and 592.775 in 2011. Specifically for Malatya, there were 6.272 marriages in 2002, 7524 in 2005, 5680 in 2010 and 5958 in 2011. The rough rate of marriage in Malatya was %0 10.21 in 2002, %0 7.70 in 2010 and %0 7.95 in 2011 (TUIK, 2011).

When we look at the divorce rates in Turkey; totally 95.323 divorces happened in 2002 whereas this number increased to 95.895, 118.568 and 120.117 in 2005, 2010 and 2011, respectively. This trend in the rates of the divorces in Turkey is also valid for Malatya as well. As a matter of fact, the number of divorce in Malatya in 2002 was 600, but this number increased to 610 in 2005, and then to 807 in 2010 and finally to 776 in 2011. The rough rate of divorce in Malatya was %0 1 in 2002, but it fell to %0 1.09 in 2010 and to %0 1.04 in 2011 (TUIK, 2011). For that reason, considering the marriage and divorce rates in Malatya, the decrease in the rates of marriage go parallel with the increase in the rates of divorce. In other words, it has been observed that there was a decrease in the marriages and increase in the divorces in the population of Malatya over 15.

The research aiming to evaluate the family structure in Malatya, the quality of the marriage relationships and the perceptions of the married couples concerning both their marriages and general marriage phenomenon makes use of the application techniques by searching the sources theoretically and involving the information based on these theories. The findings here involve a certain part of this study.

The population of Malatya in 2011 was 757.930; whereas in 2012, it was 762.366. The distribution of the population according to the city centre and the districts was 498.588 in 2011, while in 2012 it was 504.793. 381.025 of the population was male whereas 381.341 was female.

According to the data in 2012, the marital status of the population was as follows:

The number of married males over 15 in the population was 178.148; the number of married females was 177.605; the number of males never get married before was 94.098; the number of females never get married before was 76.709; the number of divorced males was 4.579; the number of divorced females was 6.342 (TUIK, 2012). Considering the data, the number of married people in Malatya in 2012 was 355.753. That's why, the scope of the study is 355.753. By taking this scope into account, the sample is 600 with 95 % reliability level and +- 4 % tolerable margin of error (Sencer, 1989:609).

### *3.1. The information about the Sample*

50.8 % of the sample made up of 600 people was female and the other 49.2 % was male. In other words, 305 of the sample were female and 295 were male. When we look at the range of the age in the sample, 6 % of the sample was 20-25; 20.3 % of the sample was 26-31; 29.7 % was 32-37, 17.2 % was 38-43, 12.5 % was 44-49 and 14.3 % was 55 and over.

The 1.3 % of the sample was illiterate; 20.5 % was primary school graduate; 9.3 % was secondary school graduate and 32.5 % was high school graduate. As the people in the sample stated, 35.7 % of them had lived in the city centre since they were born; 6.5 % of them had lived in the city centre for 5 years; 6.5 % for 10 years; 7.8 % for 11-15 years; 11.3 % for 16-20 years and 32.2 % for 21 years.

As the people in the sample stated, 18.2 % of them were married for 5 years or less; 14.7 % 6-10 years; 30.5 % for 11-15 years; 9.8 % for 16-20 years and 26.8 % for more than 20 years.

### *3.2. The Equivalent of the Social Change in Family and Marriage*

#### *3.2.1. The age of getting married is increasing*

Due to the intensity of the activities in industry and public services out of agriculture, there has been an occupational work sharing and specialization. Occupational work sharing and specialization make the higher education compulsory. Depending on these, the age of getting married is increasing and the number of single males and females is rising (Fındıkoğlu, 1991:62). Because of the changing life style, the expectations of people for getting married and set up a family go through a change. With the individual promoting his education level and with the age rising depending on the level of the education, the rank of the priorities in the preferences of marriage and partner

change and the expectation level increases. The adult gets married at his will and chooses the partner according to his/her expectations, not to satisfy or convince the society. Thus, getting married at a lower age decreases and the age of getting married increases with relevance to the adolescence age in the agricultural society and the country. The findings obtained in the study are in the same trend as well.

As the people in the sample stated, 2.2 % of them got married when they were 15 or below, 27.7 % got married when they were 16-20, 47.7 % got married when they were 21-25 and 22.3 % got married when they were over 26. When evaluating the first marriage age according to the sex, the conventional attitude of females getting married at a lower age have been maintained. As a matter of fact, while there is no marriage for males at the age of 15 or below, and the rate of getting married between 16 and 20 is 13.9 %, this rate is 4.6 % and 41 % for females.

### *3.2.2. Nuclear Family is getting widespread*

The child gets out of the “an economical value” and turns into “a psychological value” in the sense of a new life style which the city forces. Due to a change in the value that belongs to the child, there has been a decrease in the number of children. In the study of “the value of the child” carried out by taking these series of changes into consideration, interesting results have been obtained in Turkey. As the level of income, education and the movement from the country to city increases and the number of children in the family decreases, the feature for providing love and completing the family of the child gets more significance. Therefore, in a conventional structure, while the child has a value in terms of his/her material benefits, his/her value also increases in value with the process of improvement. The process of the transition from the material benefit to the psychological value also means having fewer children. Because, the economical value of the child is a “cumulative” value which is associated with the number of children. That is, as the number of the child rises, the economical value which he/she provides also rises. On the other hand, there is a contrast between the factor of psychological value and the number of children. In other words, the decrease in the number of children values the psychological value of the child. The dependence age and situation also affect the situation (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1990:154-155). Thus, the number of children decreases with the process of urbanization. The result in the study confirms this opinion.

In the sample group, 9.7 % of the people had no child; 23 % had only one; 39.3 % had two; 14.2 % had three and 13.8 % had four or more children. Modern city life depending on the decreasing number of children reveals a nuclear family type. This reality was observed in the findings obtained in the research. As a matter of fact, according to the statements of the attendants in the sample, 83 % of them had a nuclear family, 16.5 % had a large family and 0.3 % had a divided family. It was also obtained in the research that the decisions taken within the family were shared between the spouses, which is a feature of a nuclear family. When asked “who takes the decisions in the family?” in the sample, the answers were as follows: 48.5 % of the sample said the man, and 45.5 % collective and 6 % the woman. While the decision in a conventional large family is taken by the man in the house, this situation changes in the nuclear family which the modern city life has brought about

Modern city life gives opportunities for adults to get to know each other and provides chances to get married a partner whom he/she will choose. Most of the people in the society confirm this kind of marriage and parent think that their children must choose the person at their will whom they will get married. The findings obtained in the research strengthen this opinion. In fact, according to their statements, 46.8 % in the sample got married through arranged marriages; 50.3 % got married after meeting and seeing each other and 2.8 % got married after they ran away.

People in the sample said 45.2 % of them dated before the marriage and 54.8 % didn't. In the subject of dating of the adult children who will get married, 34.8 % think dating is necessary; 33.7 % think it's necessary within the parents' information; 17.5 % think it is undesirable and 14 % oppose to dating as it is not suitable for their values. Also, when asked the people in the sample the question of who must decide the person whom the adult child will get married, 42.3 % said they must; 51 % think that the adult children with the parents must and 6.7 % think parents must take the decision.

Modern city life brings about significant changes in the system of values. The urban person who tends to the nuclear family and sees dating suitable thinks that marriages which don't function and give harm to the spouses must finished. As a matter of fact, the married couples are of the same opinion. According to the statements made in the research, 68.3 % of the people in the sample saw the divorce suitable if it was necessary and 31.7 % opposed to divorce whatever the conditions were.

### *3.2.3. The frequency of using technology*

Technology leads to new occupations such as industrialization, banking, administration, sales marketing and consulting which indicate the huge transitions and transformations in the education and economy. The common features of these occupations are that they don't have fixed working period, people work until late hours and they include permanent movement and intense work. The fact that parents or spouses are not together in the necessary hours in the day transforms the home into a hotel which is used for sleeping. The couples who spend most of their time during the transportation and come home exhausted physically and mentally need to take advantage of the latest technological instruments. They want to overcome the mental exhaustion by using the technological innovations. In this respect, spare times are used for watching tv, using pc and surfing on the net. The findings in the research also confirm this situation. According to the statements of the people in the sample, 45.8 % watched in the evenings in their free time; 7.7 % used pc and surfed on the net; 34 % talked about the daily issues and 12.5 % spent their time however they liked.

The influence of the technology increases every passing day. The life-facilitating features of technological instruments, the comfort and the fall in their cost for use make these products more common. Internet, which is the main constituent of the globalization, is of great significance here. The fact that the network of technological substructure developed and the cost of use increasingly fell led people from every sex, age, education, class, race and nation to use it more often. Though the rates are different, married couples from almost every group make use of the internet and use the social media such as twitter, Facebook and Skype, which internet provide. The findings obtained in the research also confirm this opinion. 55.7 of the people in the sample had internet connection at their house; however, 44.3 % didn't have it. When asked them if they had social media accounts such as twitter, Facebook and Skype, 11.7 % said their partner had; 17.5 % said he/she had; 24.8 % said they both had and 46 % they both didn't have.

The interesting point is that the use of internet is seen as dangerous for the marriage by the married couples. 48.3 % of the people in the sample said that internet use such as twitter, Facebook and Skype was harmful for the marriage; 40.2 % of them said it wasn't harmful if there was no privacy and 11.5 % said it wasn't harmful. The fact that internet use leads to an addiction, it serves opportunities for the different purposes, it facilitates for the couples to cheat each other and removes the atmosphere of chatting affect this result.

### *3.2.4. Being unprecedented of the family and marriage*

Parsons is of the opinion that the process of industrialization breaks up the family, it makes the family smaller through fewer children and single marriage and it leads to breaking off in the relations of relatives. According to him, family is now not made up of people who sleep in the same place and consume the same people due to industrialization. Family loses its production power and political and religious functions. Family sharing the educational duties and responsibilities with the newly organized institutions maintains its function of preparing the children to the social life and satisfying the couples biologically and psychologically (Yazan, 1990:105). This reality makes the institutions of family and marriage without no alternatives. Despite all the transitions and transformations and the problems experienced within the house, most of the people happy to be married and recommend the marriage. The findings obtained in the research also confirm this opinion. 77 % of the people in the sample said they were happy to be married; 13.2 % said they weren't happy and 9.8 % said they had no idea about that. In the same respect, when asked them whether they agreed the idea of "Bachelorhood is a time of sultanate", which is a common proverb in Turkey, 70.3 % of the people in the sample said no and 29.7 % said yes. Thus, people confirm and recommend marriage.

## 4. Tables

Table 1. Family types

	N	%
Nuclear family	498	83
Extended family	99	16.5
Broken family	3	0.5
Total	600	100

Table 2. Age at marriage

	N	%
15 or less	14	2.3
16-20	166	27.7
21-25	286	47.7
26 an over	134	22.3
Total	600	100

Table 3. Number of children in family

	N	%
Childless	58	9.7
1	138	23
2	236	39.3
3	85	14.2
4 and over	83	13.8
Total	600	100

Table 4. Dating before marriage

Have you been dating before marriage	N	%
Yes	271	45.2
No	329	54.8
Total	600	100

Table 5. Children consent to flirt

	N	%
Please confirm your flirt-child	209	34.8
Confirm parents with the knowledge	202	33.7
Find objectionable	105	17.5
Contrary to our values	84	14
Total	600	100

Table 6. Stay single

“Celibacy is a sultanate”	N	%
Yes	178	29.7
No	422	70.3
Total	600	600

Table 7. Happiness in marriage

<b>Are you happy in marriage?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	462	77
No	79	13.2
I don't know	59	9.8
Total	600	100

Table 8. Home leisure

<b>What do you do when the house is leisure?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
TV viewing	275	45.8
PC, internet	46	7.7
Chat	204	34
Worn by everyone on the head	75	12.5
Total	600	100

Table 9. Internet connection

<b>Do you have internet connection?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	334	55.7
No	266	44.3
Total	600	100

Table 10. Social media use

<b>Do you have a facebook, twitter account?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
My wife has	70	11.7
I have	105	17.5
Each of us has	149	24.8
Not all of us	276	46
Total	600	100

#### 4. Conclusion

The institutions meeting the needs of the people regularly make up the social structure as a whole. There is a dynamic interaction between the institutions which compose a system. The very important processes such as modernization and industrialization lead to serious changes in the social structure and cause a transformation in the conventional life. The feeling of “we”, living with the society, helping each other, giving importance to the traditions, customs and values, limited transformation and movement and conventional life style characterized by production through given status and necessities replaced with the feeling of “I”, individuation, rational thinking and behaving, materialization, fast transformation and movement, earned status and production for market. All these changes affect every institution, including the relations of family and marriage.

Different from the past, modern day individual, when he/she decides, gets married to the person whom he/she wants and likes, and he/she meets and dates the prospective partner and has fewer children and looks for his own solution when faced with a problem and feels more comfortable to finish a marriage which he/she can't maintain it and makes use of the technology more and in brief he/she survives by adapting the transitions and transformations which occur.

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