

Migration, Islam and Masculinities: Transforming Emigration and Immigration Societies

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Observations and Thoughts Concerning Homosexuality in Turkey

By exploring masculinity and homosexuality in Turkey we aim at contributing to the understanding of masculinity and Islam in migration.

Sexual identities have increasingly often become item of the agenda in Turkey. Homosexuality is one of the topics that have become an increasingly prevailing topic in Turkey in the recent years. While transvestites and transsexuals have become news headlines through violence they experience almost daily in different cities of the country, homosexuals attract attention through their becoming increasingly institutionalized, which should though not mean that they do not experience violence, discrimination and oppression.

While examining the construction of different concepts of masculinity and the construction of homosexuality in Turkey, just as in any other Islamic country, it is obvious that no solution can be achieved without addressing Islam. Therefore the understanding of the Turkish example shall contribute to the understanding of masculinity and Islam in migration, even though the Islamic world should not be perceived as a monolithical block.

This paper aims at verifying the assumption that social and cultural values of the Turkish society which have a designating impact on the construction of dominant masculinities play a determining role in the process of the construction of non-normative masculinities.

Due to the fact that there is almost no in-depth scholarly research on different sexual identities in Turkey, most of the information we shall give is based on observations and personal experiences. The reason for the inexistence of scholarly research on these topics is evidence on the approach of the Turkish society to these issues.

This paper aims at illuminating the reasons for homosexuality not having become a field of study, heterosexual scholars not daring to work on the topic, homosexual scholars not being able to achieve their coming-out, this situation being common to many other sectors of work, homosexuals problems with their families concerning their sexual identity, physical and verbal violence they are exposed to as well as their not having any localities to meet except for a few cafés and bars in the bigger cities of the country. In order to achieve this we would like to set out at the process of the construction of masculinity in society and give a summary of the factors that lead to homophobia.