

# Women in Higher Education in Turkey: What Has Changed in 100 Years?\*

## Türkiye'deki Yükseköğretimde Kadınlar: 100 Yılda Ne Değişti?\*

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### ABSTRACT

In Turkey, women acquired the right to obtain higher education in 1914. Women's demand for higher education, the increased number of high schools and the needs of teacher-training schools for girls led to an increase in the number of women in higher education over time. After the nation-building process in 1923, new universities were opened across the country and the number of women in higher education has increased from 22 (0.73%) (in 1914) to 3 675 986 (47.5%) (in 2018-2019). Within this framework, this paper aims to explore how female students' profiles have changed over the last 100 years. What is the social make-up of the female students who enrolled in universities nowadays? What are the differences and/or similarities among women who attended the universities as first women students and those of today? Drawing on the Eurostudent Survey IV (2011), these questions are elaborated regarding women's socio-demographic, family and educational backgrounds. Outcomes are discussed within the context of the modernization history of Turkey.

**Keywords:** Woman, Higher education, Eurostudent project, Turkey

### ÖZ

Türkiye'de kadınlar üniversiteye girme hakkını 1914 yılında kazandı. Kadınların yükseköğrenim talebi, artan liseler ve kız çocukları için öğretmen yetiştirme okullarının ihtiyaçları zaman içerisinde yükseköğretimde kadın sayısında artışa neden olmuştur. 1923'teki ulus devlet oluşturma sürecinin ardından, ülke genelinde yeni üniversiteler açıldı ve yüksek öğrenimdeki kadın sayısı 22'den (%0,73) (1914) 3 675 986'e (%47,5) (2018-2019) yükseldi. Bu çerçevede, bu makale kadın öğrencilerin profillerinin son 100 yılda nasıl değiştiğini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Günümüzde üniversiteye kayıtlı öğrencilerin sosyal/ailevi arkaplanı nasıldır? Üniversitenin ilk kadın öğrencileri ile bugünkü üniversiteli kadınlar arasındaki farklılıklar ve/veya benzerlikler nelerdir? Bu sorular, Eurostudent Anketi IV (2011) verisine dayanarak kadın öğrencilerin sosyo-demografik, aile ve eğitim geçmişleri dikkate alınarak ele alınmıştır. Bulgular, Türkiye'nin modernleşme tarihi bağlamında tartışılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Kadın, Yükseköğretim, Eurostudent projesi, Türkiye

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## INTRODUCTION

Generally, consideration of the place of women in Ottoman society began with the discussion of the “women question”, which has addressed the social, political and economic status of the women, and occurred as part of the modernization and secularisation movements during the Tanzimat era (1839-1876) (Kandiyoti, 1991a; Çakır, 1996). Modernist intellectuals and some in the ruling class evaluated it as the cause of backwardness and as a problem that needed to be solved. To them, it was necessary to raise the status of women for development and improvement (Sancar, 2012). The solution was to give women more education and to underline the role of educated women within the family. However, according to Tekeli (1985), this did not mean that women should have an independent identity as decision-makers or be rid of the control of men as decision-makers. On the other hand, conservatives or Islamists defended the view that the status of women should be preserved and the traditional structure maintained (Göle, 2004). According to this view, there was no need for women to take a more significant place in the public sphere, to raise their educational level or to have equal rights to men.

Before discussing the role of the Tanzimat era on women, it would be better to mention the education system in the Ottoman Empire. In the Conventional Ottoman Education System, before Tanzimat it was not possible for girls to continue their education after sıbyan school, which might be accepted as a primary school based on religious training (Caporal, 1982; Akşit, 2004, 2012). On the contrary, boys were eligible to continue to other technical schools opened in the later years in order to train to be technical staff for the madrasa (Muslim theological school)<sup>1</sup> and/or army. Furthermore, via the devshirme system which was a rendering service to the Sultan as a bureaucrat or a soldier by talented and young male children who were discovered after the conquests and trained in the court (Kazamias, 1966), boys could receive an education in the Enderun whose main function was to raise the administrator and statesman (Ataünal, 1993) at the court, as well. The women at the court could take courses such as reading and writing, and sewing, at the harem which was the women’s section in the court. Furthermore, families of the bureaucrat class would provide an education to their male and female children at their own mansions. In short, while rural girls could go to sıbyan school, which was not necessary until Tanzimat in general, the girls of urban and bureaucrat families could receive a private education at their mansions (Akşit, 2011).

In fact, Tanzimat was a response to the Western “economic, technical and military” pressure and modernization effort (Kandiyoti, 1991b). Moreover, the other areas of social life, especially the Ottoman Court, began to come under the effect of the change in the world. For example, it was during this period that European duennas were hired to train the girls of

the bourgeoisie class and the new bureaucrats that came into being with the changes in the social structure (Tekeli, 1997; Davis, 1986). Under the effect of westernization, duennas were employed so the children could learn a foreign language as an important sign of status.

In the Tanzimat era, it was decided that rüştiyes (i.e. Ottoman secondary/junior high school) should be opened, which would enable girls to continue secondary education after sıbyan school (Tekeli, 1985; Baskın, 2007; Caporal, 1982). However, these schools did not become common. Almost all of them were in Istanbul, and their number was inadequate (Çakır, 1996).

Despite the negative social viewpoint on the training of women, there were attempts by the ruling class and elites to include women in the field of education. The reason behind these attempts is the relationship between the backwardness of the society and the backwardness of women (Jayawardena, 1986). The solution is that women should be reshaped by doing that their duties would be determined and a “new ideal woman type” would be formed. It is the reason for the backwardness of the society was that children were not well educated due to their ignorant or illiterate mothers. Mothers had a big role in the upbringing of children so they could be useful for the state and nation. Accordingly, women’s social duty was to become a good mother (Toska, 1998; Tekeli, 1997). The rural and urban women who were uneducated and imitated Western women were to be well educated so that they could be a good mother and bring up their children well.

Furthermore, in the Tanzimat era, the primary school became compulsory for girls and boys to attend and it was decided that the number of rüştiyes for girls should be increased (Caporal, 1982). The rüştiyes were free-of-charge and non-compulsory institutions where religious values and social gender roles were taught so girls would learn how to be a good wife and mother (Jayawardena, 1986). Because it was not considered right in religious terms for girls to share the same space as boys of the same age, or because girls had reached “the age at which they should keep away from boys” (Dulum, 2006), there arose the problem of who would become their teachers. At first, old male teachers attended their courses because they were considered to be “reliable and licensed” (Akşit, 2012), but later it was decided that teacher-training schools (Darülmualimat) should be opened to train female teachers (Caporal, 1982; Jayawardena, 1986).

Another type of vocational school opened in this period for women was female industrial schools. Their number increased year by year, and the students’ profile was largely composed of young, urban and low-income girls. Thus, male and female industrial schools would later enable members of the lower socioeconomic class to enter the field of production (Akşit, 2012).

<sup>1</sup>The madrasas were the centre of information production and distribution as well as the institutions where the language of education was Arabic (in just the same way as Latin in Christianity). For more information on these institutions, see Tekeli and Ilkin (1993: 11-18).

On the one hand, non-Muslim schools enabled the upper class to reproduce itself and create female elites, while *rüştiye*, midwife- and teacher-training schools, and especially industrial schools emphasized the education of lower classes and offered alternatives to them (Akşit, 2012). However, these schools did not become widespread, so only some women from the urban bourgeoisie class could attend them. In this case, what is important is the household head's, namely the father's, view of girls' education (Davis, 1986). For example, Halide Edip's father as the supporter of westernization ideology was the clerk of the court and she started to learn English at the age of seven (Gündüz-Hoşgör, 1996).

Considering the era's ideology with regard to women and education, it seems that girls were expected to attend school for the purpose of "being a good mother, a good wife and a good Muslim" (Kandiyoti, 1991a). In this period of pressure, it was impossible to think that women should have a job and take place in the public sphere. However, the increase in women's literacy under Abdülhamid II became influential in the feminist movement and women's organizations (Abadan-Unat, 1998). Therefore, under the effect of the era's on increase in freedom and the rate of literacy (primarily among the urban and upper-class women), women played a role as activists/subjects in struggling their and society's freedom through expressing their demands, thoughts and reactions thanks to associations and journals (Kandiyoti, 1991b; Çakır, 1996; Sancar, 2012)

Women's demand for education, the struggle of the women's movement in this area, the increased number of *rüştiye* and *idadi* (i. e. Ottoman secondary schools), and the inadequate number of teacher-training schools for girls gave birth to the need for women's inclusion in higher education. According to Baskın (2007), modernization, which relied on social, economic and political transformations, required the creation of "the new woman" and involvement of women in higher education.

At first, women's higher education, which started at some conferences in *Darülfünun* (the only university in Ottoman Empire), was institutionalized by the opening of *İnas Darülfünunu* (1914), which can be called as "women's university" (Baskın, 2007; Caporal, 1982). In the early years, all the women who passed the entrance exam could register at *İnas Darülfünunu*. That is, not only the graduates of public education, which included *Rüştiye*, *Idadi*, and teacher-training schools but also those who took private education could apply for the entrance exam. The entrance exam was difficult, so private tutoring courses and institutions were opened in the following years that prepared women for the entrance exam (Çakır, 1996).

In the first years of *İnas Darülfünunu* (between 1914 and 1919), just 129 women registered. Baskın (2007) makes such a notable evaluation about the socio-economic background of these students:

At *İnas Darülfünunu*, there were *mültezim*'s children who could be labeled as the elites of the traditional social structure as well as students from the families of army members, and the children of governor, revenue

officer, principal registrar. While the class origin of these students varied, it would not be wrong to assume that most of them exhibited petit-bourgeois features parallel to the background of newly-developed social forms and that the students from the state officials' families were predominant.

Opened in Istanbul and attended by a limited number of women, *İnas Darülfünunu* was officially closed in 1921 as a result of the demonstrations against the non-coeducational system. Thereafter, coeducation was adopted in *Darülfünun* (Abadan-Unat, 1981; Baskın, 2007). In other words, women's demand for and determination to take part in a coeducational system became the reason for the closure of *İnas Darülfünunu*.

When the women graduated from *İnas Darülfünunu*, they could become teachers in their working life. When women were allowed to receive an education in the fields of medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy (1917) (Dulum, 2006), they started to have different jobs.

After the declaration of the Turkish Republic and in the building process of the nation-state, education seems to be used as part of this process. In the first period, from 1923 to 1950, education had the function of creating national identity, unity, and consciousness of citizenship. Education undertakes a big role in a society that shifts from "multiethnic, multireligious, theocratic and agrarian empire" to "secular, unitary nation-state" (Rankin et al., 2006) and that is expected to reach "the level of contemporary civilization". There are two functions of education in this period: 1) The rate of literacy is low, and so it is necessary to shape the population, most of whom live in rural areas and whose literacy rate is low, as new individuals who have adopted the nation-state, citizenship, secularism, and Kemalist ideology. Therefore, education served the new order's purpose of acculturation for this purpose. 2) As mentioned in the Economy Congress of İzmir, there is a need to train the manpower that is required to exist in the capitalist world (Çakıroğlu-Çevik, 2015)

Changing the educational facilities that had been provided by the Ottomans to a certain class and more to men within that class, and presenting them to each class and women equally, Kemalist ideology created a big revolution in the social status of women through the laws securing gender equality. It was *state feminism* (Tekeli, 1985). Any transformation in the field of women's rights and male-female equality meant secularisation, modernization, civilization and disengagement from Ottoman Empire. While the state was supporting women to take part in public life by giving them educational, professional, political and social rights, it also tried to educate the women who made up the majority of the population, had a low level of literacy and could hardly reach higher education. These women were not expected to be "elite" women, but the intention was that they would become "educated housewives" who knew home economy; would become useful, knowledgeable and full of initiative; and could transfer the Republican ideology to the next generation for national identity.

The second period, between 1950 and 1980, faced changes in educational institutions due to the political and economic ideology, social transformation and international relationships. In particular, the population increase parallel to the developments in health, migration from the rural to the urban space and urbanization leave their mark on the educational changes in this period. Firstly, as education institutions fail to meet the demand increasing in the urban areas, the state allows the new private schools to be opened especially in urban areas. This case would later cause socioeconomic background differences. For instance, the urban and middle-upper class families –as well as daughters of these families- benefited from these advantages. Secondly, because of compulsory primary education, the secondary education demand increased and afterward these led a huge interest in higher education. Therefore, a lot of new universities were opened in many cities besides Ankara and İstanbul. However, the newly-opened universities failed to meet the demand for university in time, depending on the increased domestic migration, urbanization, population rise and economic policies, so new practices and institutions such as Open Education Faculty of Anadolu University, “teaching via letters” were placed into as alternatives. Additionally, the practice of central exam to select and place student at the universities was enforced in this period by Inter-University Student Selection and Placement Centre (Turkish abbreviation, ÜSYM) (Çakıroğlu-Çevik, 2015).

After 1980 as the third period, the neoliberalist approach, intense demand and competition have resulted in privatizations in many fields, including education. Education starts to be transformed into a good or a “consumption good desired” by all the segments of society. Moreover, the idea that higher education is as a mean of upward mobility and physical work is an inferior status leads to competition in access to higher education. The role of the state in education decreased and private enterprises have taken their place in every field of education. The privatization of education causes only a privileged class to benefit from this service and consequently class, regional and gender inequalities become deeper. In other words, women’s, rural people’s and lower-class members’ access to education are more difficult than men’s, urban people’s and middle-upper class members’ because of the big race for prestigious schools/universities and departments in universities. On the other hand, after 80s, it is seen that participation in secondary and higher education increased among women (Çakıroğlu-Çevik, 2015).

In sum, after the nation-state building process – along with industrialization, other socioeconomic development, and many related sociological factors mentioned above– new universities have opened across the country. Thus, while the number of universities in Turkey has reached 206, the number of women

in higher education has increased from 22 (0.73%) (in 1914) (Baskın, 2007; Ergün, 1996) to 3675986 (47.5%) (in 2018-2019) (Council of Higher Education of Turkey, 2019)<sup>2</sup>. In other words, the participation rate of women in higher education has risen from 9.8% in 1923 to 45.6% in 2011 (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2013). These numbers indicate that there have been significant changes in women’s educational status.

To conclude, as seen the numbers and participation of women in universities have increased. Certainly, this expansion in numbers<sup>3</sup> has been the outcome/consequence of the social and economic transformation in Turkey on the macro-level and socioeconomic status of the female student in micro-level: In Ottoman Empire, the first female students in higher education were from high socioeconomic status and highly educated families and urban areas. On the other hand, what/how about in contemporary Turkey? Who are the female students in higher education nowadays? Are they still coming from high socioeconomic background or urban areas? Can rural women reach to university education? What extent? By comparing the first female students with recently female population in the universities, can we elaborate the differences and/or similarities among the women in higher education in Turkey? In sum, what has been changed in the nature of the female university students’ profile? In the next section, we will elaborate on these questions by applying quantitative research via Eurostudent Survey IV.

## METHODS

This study depends on Eurostudent Survey IV (2011) which is part of the EUROSTUDENT project<sup>4</sup>. It has been coordinated by Higher Education Information System (HIS) (in Hannover, Germany), and carried out since 2000 to provide a wide range of data on the demographic characteristics and social make-up of the national student populations, models of access and attendance and types of higher education, types of accommodation, funding and state assistance, living expenses and student spending, so forth. Turkey participated in this project in the third round in 2007 and in 2011, which is the fourth round of the project but the second in Turkey (Orr et al., 2011). The main survey method used in Turkey is an online survey in the spring semester of 2010, and the sampling technique is simple random sampling (10% from each university). The initial sample was 152144, but the return rate was relatively low (12.8%), so the final sample is 19479 for Turkey (Orr et al., 2011).

Therefore, Eurostudent Survey IV (2011) questionnaire and data were utilized for the reasons that it is the most recent tertiary student research at the national level and it contains several questions as mentioned above. However, for our study, second-year upper high school students (who constitute 0.1% of the sample), graduate students (who constitute 11.4% of

<sup>2</sup>There were 3019 male students in Darülfunun (Ergün, 1996, p. 390) and 22 female students in İnas Darülfunun in 1914. For further information about the numbers see Ergün (1996) and <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/> In addition, the percentage was calculated by the authors regarding the numbers taken from these resources.

<sup>3</sup>For further information, see TÜİK (2012).

<sup>4</sup>For further information see <http://www.eurostudent.eu/>

the sample) and distance education students (who constitute 2.5% of the sample) were excluded because undergraduate (bachelor) students who enrolled in any faculty except distance education are our main case. With all these exclusions, the data set is reduced to 16817 individual cases. But more specifically, the sample size for women is 8500 out of a population of 16 817.

This study is aimed to figure out the female university students' profile to elaborate on the differences and/or similarities between first women in the university and by doing that to cover the changes in terms of socioeconomic, regional, educational status of female students. In this sense, the methodological framework of the study covering variables and data analyses is like that:

Considering the drawing on the second-hand data and its limitations, the dimensions are classified under three subtitles: socio-demographic, family background and educational background characteristics. For **socio-demographic characteristic**, *age and the living place until the age of 12 years old*; for **family background characteristic**, *parents' education level, family education level, parents' employment status, parents' occupations, student's monthly income from parents and student's monthly expenses from parents*; for **educational background characteristic**, *type of high school, region of secondary school, kindergarden and private-tutoring attendance* will be used as variables. Therefore, they enable both to describe the profile of female students nowadays and to compare them with the first female students in the university in Turkey.

The crosstabs for the categorical level of measurement and t-test analysis for the numerical level of measurement are used to establish the relationship among variables by gender.

## FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

### Socio-Demographic Characteristics

As seen from the table below, although the average **age** for all undergraduate students is around 21, there is a significant difference between female ( $M=21.1244$ ,  $SD=1.79078$ ) and male ( $M=21.5604$ ,  $SD=1.90520$ ) students in terms of age ( $t(16610)=-15.880$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

**Table 1:** Socio-Demographic Variables

Variables	Female	Male
Age	21.1244	21.5604
	$t=-15.880$ $df= 16610.522$ $p=0.000$	
Living place until 12 years old.		
city center > 1 million population	40.0	32.9
city center < 1 million population	20.4	22.3
country town	28.8	27.7
town	5.1	6.1
village	5.7	10.9
	100%	100%
	$\chi^2=212.474$ $df=4$ $p=0.000$	
Total (n)	8500	8316

This can be related to the significant difference between genders in terms of a direct transition to higher education: females (66%) are more likely to directly enter tertiary education (i.e. no interruption between high school and tertiary education), compared to males (58.9%). According to Özsoy (2002), females are more likely to be placed in a faculty after the first university entry exam, but they are less likely to get as many chances to take the university entry exam, compared to males. To this end, females tend to be more "rational" in their preference of which faculty to enroll in at the first exam. This could be due to the perception of gendered roles of women – who will be married "out" – as wives, mothers, and housewives, roles which do not require more education. If she is academically inclined, a family can encourage a daughter to achieve in higher education. If not, investment in education will be a waste of money and time. Therefore, females tend to work harder to achieve in the entrance exam.

Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between living place and gender ( $\chi^2(4, n=16816)=212.474$ ,  $p=0.000$ ): we see that 5.7% of female students and 10.9% of male students are from villages. This means that there are twice as many male students from rural regions than female students from rural, which is consistent with the agricultural economy and family decision process that favors males over females. What this indicates is that rural and urban differences that go back to the early period of the Republic (and even the Ottoman Empire) are still an issue in entering higher education. In other words, regional differences, which are mainly based on inadequate infrastructure and quality education, hamper the equality of educational opportunity. Rural females are the most underrepresented group in the higher education system in Turkey. Like urban women in the early Republic period, urban women are more likely to enter higher education than rural women. It could be argued that females from rural are still considered and employed as unpaid family workers and that education is not necessary for them.

### Family Background Characteristics

With regard to the question of whether there is a difference in the education level of parents, we can see from Table 2 that there is a significant difference between genders ( $p=0.000$ )

in terms of the **education level of father** and of mother. The percentage of all male students whose father has primary and below education level is higher than females whose father has the same education level: 36.2% of male students and 28.2% of female students. Moreover, females (29.4%) are more likely to have a father with a high education level, compared to males (26.5%).

Considering empirical and theoretical arguments, parents' educational level is a crucial indicator of how highly education is valued. Highly educated parents value education greatly, encourage and invest in their children's education, particularly their daughters (King et al., 1993). Therefore, highly educated parents expect their children to achieve at least their own level of education (Stromquist, 1989). Regarding this, since the late Ottoman period, educated fathers have given more educational opportunities to their daughters, such as duennas, private teaching at home from foreign teachers, encouraging them to read and write, and lastly higher education. Therefore, in the history of Turkish modernization, educated fathers have played an important role in the education of their daughters and in their empowerment process in Kandiyoti's (1991a) words, they are "advocators of emancipation of women").

Although there is a significant difference between genders in terms of the **education level of their mother**, more than half of females (51.9%) and male (58.8%) students have a mother with a low education level. Therefore, their education level is

higher than their mother's. This means that for these students, attendance of tertiary education represents upward social mobility in relation to their mother's education level.

As we do not want to miss the details, we look at the parents' education level separately. However, we can generally discuss the family's education background. This classification depends on Orr et al. (2011)'s model and is as follows:

1. *Low education background*: neither a student's father nor their mother has attained an educational level higher than primary education.
2. *High education background*: either a student's father or their mother or both parents have attained higher education and above.

Like the educational level of parents, there is a significant difference between both genders in terms of **family's education background** (Table 3), ( $p=0.000$ ): female students are more likely to have a family with a high level of education, compared to males. This table is consistent with the discussion on the father's education level, as well. As mentioned before, highly educated parents are aware of the difficulties in the intergenerational transmission of family resources in modern/capitalist society (Treiman, 1970). In this sense, having highly educated parents is seen as an advantage for females in terms of the resources they have and how highly their education is valued.

**Table 2:** Parents' Education Level

Variables	Female	Male	Female	Male
	Father		Mother	
Illiterate	0.7	2.2	4.9	12.0
Drop out from primary school	2.3	5.7	5.6	8.9
Primary school	25.2	28.3	41.4	37.9
Secondary school	14.2	12.4	10.9	10.1
High school	28.2	25.0	23.3	19.3
University	26.7	24.1	13.0	11.2
Master/PhD	2.7	2.4	0.9	0.7
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	$\chi^2=243.195$ $df=6$ $p=0.000$		$\chi^2=371.126$ $df=6$ $p=0.000$	
Total (n)	8500	8316	8500	8316

**Table 3:** Family's Education Background

Variable	Female	Male
Education background of the family		
Low level	24.9	33.1
Middle level	43.0	37.9
High level	32.2	29.1
	100%	100%
	$\chi^2=137.111$ $df=2$ $p=0.000$	
Total (n)	8500	8316

Related to the educational background, the profiles of **parents' occupation** and employment status given in Table 4 and Table 5 are like that: The difference between the father's and the mother's employment status is not noteworthy, considering the employment rate of women in Turkey. For TÜİK (2013), the employment ratio of women (aged 15 to 64) in 2011 was 27.8%. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the majority of students have mothers without paid work (i.e. are housewives).

Moreover, it can be said that females are more likely to have a father with a *high qualified occupation*, compared to males. This is consistent with the findings on the father's education level.

First of all, this picture displays the occupational change/transition experience of Turkey. As Güvenç (1998) states, Turkey has tried to complete a "demographic transition" (which Europe completed in 300 years), including transformations "from rural to urban, from agricultural and industrial service, more technically". Related to the urbanization and industrialization, which needed new knowledge and skills, occupations and employment status have diversified, and education has expanded (i.e. *massification of education*) in Turkey. In this sense, urbanization, the massification of education, occupational varieties and labor market conditions have been effective for fathers' occupational status. Therefore, it could be argued that children of *professionals, middle/low-level directory or office clerks* are more likely to attain higher education, because of the nature of occupations required in urban settings, the availability of educational facilities and the affordability of educational expenses.

As seen in Table 5, there is a significant difference between **parents' employment status** by genders, too. In general, students' fathers *work for salary or wages* or are *retired, not working*. The percentage for female students is 37.5% and

28.5%, while for male students it is 33% and 29.1% respectively. Additionally, the notable occupation groups are an *employer with paid workers* and *self-employed without any paid workers*. All these imply the father's job security and economic power, which will provide educational expenses for their children. Regular wages (whether as a monthly salary or pension) or relatively high wages (whether through being *self-employed* or an *employer with paid workers*) give fathers the opportunity to invest in their children's education.

As mentioned before, the majority of mothers are *housewife and not working* in the formal economy, which is consistent with the general (un)employment rate of women in Turkey, which results from inadequate employment policies for women, and patriarchal ideology, which defines women firstly as mother, wife and housewife. As discussed before, in the early Republic period in particular, education was a means for women to learn how to become "a good wife, a good mother, a good housewife and a good spouse" (Abadan-Unat, 1981) and "an important source of labor, particularly for white-collar occupations" for the modern, secure and industrialized new Turkish Republic (Gündüz-Hoşgör, 1996). In this way, despite not being a part of the labor market (but a part of the *reserve army of educated labor*), educated women with "traditional roles" have contributed to reproduce the ideology of the period (Kemalist ideology), to produce and care for manpower.

With regard to the question of whether there are any differences between genders in relation to students' monthly income and expenses from parents, we found that there is a significant difference between all female and male students. Actually, **income from parents** can be called "pocket money" of students, who are free to choose what to spend it on. On the other hand, **expenses from parents** are study-related expenses directly paid by parents, such as dormitory and faculty fees. The average income from families of females (293.39 TL) is

**Table 4:** Parents' Occupational Status

Variables	Female	Male	Female	Male
	Father		Mother	
High-level managers	3.9	4.0	0.8	0.5
High qualified occupations	15.0	13.3	8.1	6.7
Technicians and associate professionals	5.0	3.8	2.5	1.7
Middle/low-level directory or office clerks	18.4	18.0	7.4	5.8
Service/sales workers	6.2	5.2	1.6	1.6
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	4.9	7.7	0.5	1.1
Craft and related trades workers	19.7	18.8	2.1	1.8
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	6.4	6.2	0.3	0.3
Unskilled worker	12.0	12.5	2.5	2.0
Armed forces/military	3.7	3.3	0.2	0.0
No (housewife)	4.8	7.0	74.0	78.5
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	$\chi^2=123.367$ $df= 10$ $p=0.000$		$\chi^2=91.410$ $df= 10$ $p=0.000$	
Total (n)	8500	8316	8500	8316

**Table 5:** Parents' Employment Status

Variables	Female	Male	Female	Male
	Father		Mother	
Working for daily wages	5.2	7.4	1.1	1.2
Working for salary or wage	37.5	33.0	11.8	9.2
Employer with paid workers	11.7	10.1	1.5	1.2
Self-employed, but not employed any paid worker	9.1	9.6	1.1	0.8
Unpaid family worker in family business	0.8	1.8	0.6	0.9
Not working, but looking for a job	1.9	2.9	0.5	0.4
Retired, not working	28.5	29.1	11.6	10.4
Died	4.7	5.3	1.4	1.7
Housewife, not working	0.0	0.0	70.2	73.9
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	$\chi^2=120.844$ $df= 8$ $p=0.000$		$\chi^2=58.759$ $df= 9$ $p=0.000$	
<b>Total (n)</b>	8500	8316	8500	8316

**Table 6:** Other Socioeconomic Status of Family Variables

Variables	Female	Male	Total
Income from family/partner	293.39	320.75	307.11
	$t=-5.890$ $df= 14953.776$ $p=0.000$		
Total expenses paid by parents	427.10	310.25	369.23
	$t=9.227$ $df= 16644.863$ $p=0.000$		
<b>Total (n)</b>	8500	8316	16816

lower than that of males (320.75 TL), while the average income of males is higher than the average income overall (307.11 TL). There is a significant difference between all female and male students ( $t(14953.776)=-5.890$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

This can be associated with parents' investment in the daughter (like fathers in the early Republican period). For example, if she enrolls in a faculty, such as medical or engineering, that has higher fees than others, or in a private university that has higher fees than a state university, expenses will be increased, and parents will need to invest more in order for her to attain her educational status (called a "gold bracelet"). Therefore, it could be argued that high-income families are more likely to enable their children, particularly their daughters, to stay in education longer via economic resources they have and to invest more in their children's education.

### Educational Background Characteristics

The economic, social and ideological transformation in the 1950s resulted in a demand for more high schools in Turkey. However, inadequate supply by the state and the ideology of the period created new types of schools and diversity in secondary education, including Science and Anatolian high schools, which opened in the 1950s; vocational high schools and private schools; regular high schools; and super high schools, which opened in the 1990s. With Science and Anatolian

schools, which have been expected to train students for higher education and then to become "future professionals", being "the apple of the state's eye" (Gök, 1997), the state has made a hierarchical arrangement. Other schools, particularly vocational schools, and regular high schools, have not been a priority for the state, compared to others.

Firstly, about half of university students are from Anatolian high schools (48.1%), regular/super high schools (37%) and vocational high schools (7.1%). The proportion of students from private schools (4.4%), science high schools (2.5%) and other schools (7%) are much lower. These numbers are consistent with the distribution of the students by the schools. For example, 45.18% for Anatolian high schools, 51.58% for regular/super high schools, 7% for private schools and 1.84% for science high schools (Ministry of National Education of Turkey (Turkish abbreviation, MEB), 2012).

Additionally, there is a significant difference between genders in terms of the **type of high school** ( $\chi^2(5, n=16815)=210.068$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The percentage of female graduates from Anatolian high schools (53.3%) is higher than that of males (42.9%), while the percentages of male graduates from vocational schools (8.8%) and regular/super high schools (40.2%) are higher than those of females (5.6% and 33.9% respectively).

**Table 7:** Variables Related to High School

Variables	Female	Male	Variables	Female	Male
<b>The type of high school</b>			<b>Region of Secondary school</b>		
Vocational	5.6	8.8	Less than 20.000	9.5	8.7
Science	2.2	2.9	Between 20.001 and 100 .000	26.5	24.2
Anatolian	53.3	42.9	Between 100.001 and 500.000	23.3	27.1
Regular/Super	33.9	40.2	More than 500.001	40.7	40.0
Private	4.3	4.4		100%	100%
Other, Military schools, Foreign	0.7	0.8			
	100%	100%			
	$\chi^2=210.068$ $df=5$ $p=0.000$		$\chi^2=35.762$ $df=3$ $p=0.000$		
<b>Total (n)</b>	8500	8316	<b>Total (n)</b>	8500	8316

**Table 8:** Other Educational Variables

Variables	Female	Male	Total
<b>The kindergarten attended (years)</b>	1.5579	1.4103	1.4849
	$t=10.500$ $df= 16433.198$ $p=0.000$		
<b>The private tutoring course attended (months)</b>	15.3578	14.6123	14.98
	$t=6.591$ $df= 16814$ $p=0.000$		
<b>Total (n)</b>	8500	8316	16816

When we look at the region of secondary school, we see that the **distribution of the region** is consistent with the region in which s/he grew up until the age of 12 and that some types of high schools only exist in certain regions such as urban areas. Students from secondary schools in a region with fewer than 20,000 residents (i.e. villages) are the underrepresented group in higher education. Additionally, there is a significant difference between both genders and faculties in terms of region of secondary school ( $\chi^2(9, n=6840)=392.343$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). In this sense, it can be argued that the young in urban regions are more likely to access higher education. As mentioned before, the inadequate infrastructure of education in rural regions hinders education attainment and equality of educational opportunity.

Socioeconomic status (SES) of females' family becomes more important for attendance of females at these schools. In this way, gender educational inequality is more likely to begin with the attendance of secondary or high school. In other words, low-income families' preference for favoring sons decreases the opportunity of schooling for daughters, which results in reproducing gender inequalities. In our study, as seen above, females have relatively middle- or high-income families. In sum, the family socioeconomic background of females is related to attendance at high school, which affects access to higher education (as in the late Ottoman and early Republic periods).

Unlike kindergarten, **private tutoring courses** (as Bray (1999) stated "shadow educational system") are common

supplementary forms of education. Until 1970, private tutoring had worked as a support for school lectures and as a method of preparation for school entry exams. However, the increased demand, limited supply and competition for entrance to higher education with the practice of central exams caused private teaching institutions to increase in number, especially in urban and in the West of Turkey (Gök, 2005). However, the main rise took place after the 1980s because of the higher demand for higher education. Like kindergarten attendance, females are more likely to participate in private tutoring courses for longer which is consistent with the employment status of mother and SES of family.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to discuss and compare the profile of women in higher education in Turkey within the context of the modernization history of Turkey. Following over 100 years of expansion in higher education institutions and other social and economic changes in Turkey, the differences and/or similarities between the first cohort and a relatively recent one have been explored thanks to the Eurostudent Survey in 2011.

In the educational system of the Ottoman Empire, educational facilities were provided to the ruling class, males and urbanites only. With an agriculture-based economy, the Ottoman Empire did not need educated subjects. As mentioned before, with Tanzimat era, debates over modernization, Westernisation, and progress brought forward structural transformations and women's participation in the field of education. Accordingly,

both education and women gained importance during Tanzimat, and they became the two most important parts of the project of a new society. The value attached to women and education underwent some changes together with the social transformation. The solution to the relationship between women and the backwardness of the country made it possible to offer educational facilities to women. The new schools that began to open were attempts to enable women to receive an education. However, urban-rural and class differences affected women's educational status. The educational facilities provided by middle and upper-class urban families to their daughters – i.e., duennas, private tutoring and an intellectual environment – made them privileged compared to illiterate lower-class and rural women. This privilege enabled them to take their place on the frontline of women's struggle and allowed the "women question" to be visible by mentioning class problems such as education and work. Women's presence in the field of education and working life in the final decades of the Ottomans is related to the Westernization and social policies based on modernization and secularisation.

The Ottoman women's movement played an important role in providing educational facilities to women through associations and journals. Educated urban and upper-class women within the women's movement fought for women to obtain the right to education. One of its important achievements was to enable women to be admitted to higher education. When we look at the students' profiles, however, it appears that female students in higher education were the daughters of middle and upper-class families. Accordingly, class privileges were preserved. However, institutions where lower-class girls received an education also existed such as female art schools, female institutes and vocational schools, including teacher-training schools and midwifery schools, etc. These schools served to provide women with a chance to take their place in working life after graduation and to achieve upward social mobility. However, these schools reproduced the gender roles and thus enabled the woman to be a good wife, mother and Muslim even if they could not find a place in working life. To some extent, in contemporary Turkey, the school curriculums still include similar reproduced patriarchal ideologies against women (Gümüüşođlu, 2013; Arat, 1994).

As the study has shown, the first students in higher education were from high socioeconomic status families and urban areas. The effects of the ideological climate of the period, the women's movement and struggle, and fathers highly valued higher education were the main determinants of attainment of higher education. However, there has been notable educational inequality among women in terms of regional, SES and urban-rural disparity. Turning to female students in 2011, according to the findings they have mostly come from urban areas, high SES families, better educational backgrounds and have highly educated fathers with prestige occupations, as well. In other words, females from rural areas and low SES families are still underrepresented groups in the higher education system in contemporary Turkey, as in the Ottoman period. In this sense, in the last 100 years, despite the expansion of institutions

and the socio-economic transformations in Turkey, there has not been such a great transformation in the profile of women in higher education in Turkey. It may be the reason that, as Stromquist (1989) states, for parents from the middle or upper class, the investment of daughters' education is not risky because of the high possibility of having better opportunities in the labor market via social networks (social capital as Bourdieu's term). In addition, as higher education is seen as a tool for reproduction of the privileged classes (Bourdieu et al., 1977), it is not surprising to see women in higher education who are mostly from urban and high SES families.

To conclude, the consistency with the rise in the participation of women in higher education across the world for last decades (Becker et al., 2010; Bradley, 2000), Turkey, like other countries, has witnessed remarkable growth in higher education since 1970, especially of women. This expansion cannot be understood without considering the economic, political and social climate of neither Turkey nor the world. However, in spite of the increase in the population of women, general profile of women in higher education has not changed over the time, particularly in Turkey as findings of this descriptive study. As Karen (2002) states, since inequalities have persisted, its negative effect on selection process for accessing universities by gender and class has been required to explain and discuss. Furthermore, sex-segregation fields (male vs. female-dominated fields) in the university as another issue (which is out of the scope of this study and needed further studies for Turkey) has changed little over time across the world (Bradley, 2000) because of both gender roles (woman as primarily mother, wife and housewife) and labour conditions offering women lower wages and lower prestige occupations than those for men. Therefore, the changes in higher education by gender and class would be notable topics for new studies for Turkey.

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