

## Gendered pathways of integration: The case of Romanian brides in Izmir, Turkey

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### ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings from a literature review conducted for a doctoral thesis in sociology that explores the integration process of Romanian women married to Turkish citizens who live in Izmir, Turkey. In this study, the focus lies on the types of changes mixed marriage brings to the lives of Romanian women and how they adapt to these changes. The study is qualitative and will use semi-structured interviews for data collection. The basic criterion for the sample will be that the female partner of the Turkish-Romanian mixed couples will be of Romanian origin and the male partner will be of Turkish origin. The reason for choosing Izmir is that it is among the cities with a significant Romanian population. Considering that integration is a two-way process, selecting both Romanian women and their husbands as a sample will provide a more comprehensive picture to understand this phenomenon. In this way, integration can be understood from both the perspective of immigrants and the host society.

While the fieldwork is scheduled to begin in fall 2025, the literature review, currently nearing completion, reveals that limited research has been conducted on Romanian women in Turkey, especially regarding the relationship between integration and mixed marriage. The existing studies on female migration in Turkey have focused on other nationalities, like Ukrainian, Russian, and Moldovan and a limited number of studies focused specifically on the adaptation processes of these women (Deniz, 2020; Sağlam, 2021), especially from a gender perspective. One of the main concepts explored in the literature review for this research is gender. On this specific issue, the resulting qualitative study will further explore how Romanian brides will negotiate gender roles within the family context in their mixed marriages.

This contribution will share insights from the literature review that will outline the conceptual framework guiding the research. The current theoretical framework will be used as an analytical tool aimed at further exploring during fieldwork the gendered experiences of Romanian brides from Izmir and how they shape the integration process of these women.

Keywords: mixed marriages, Romanian brides, integration, gender

### CV

**Ana-Lavinia Popa** is a PhD candidate in Sociology at İzmir Kâtip Çelebi University, where she studies with the support of the international scholarship program Türkiye Scholarships. Her thesis is titled *Mixed marriages in Turkey: the case of Romanian immigrant brides in Izmir*. She holds an MA in Human Resource Management and a BA in Anthropology, both from the University of Bucharest. She has volunteered for NGOs and international organizations like IOM on projects related to migrant integration in Romania and Turkey. Her research interests include international migration and integration. She is fluent in Romanian, English, and Turkish.