

Narratives of Graduate Women on Unemployment in Turkey: Great Expectations, Better Realities

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Turkey ranks among the countries that have the largest gender gap in terms of economic participation and opportunity for women. The progress made in the status of women, has largely been confined to the legal level with limited practical consequences. Limitations are much visible regarding the position of woman in the labor market. Even though women's access to employment and equal pay are guaranteed under the Constitution and regulated by Laws, women's participation in the labor market is still much lower than men. Women with a university degree are no exception in this respect. In fact, although university graduate women are more likely to be employed than women without university degrees, their unemployment rate is much higher as compared to men having the same qualifications. While displaying the signs regarding the dissipation of human capital in the country, the (long-term) unemployment of university graduate women involve clues on the socio-political and cultural context, referring mainly to the influence of patriarchal ideology and its continuous reproduction with the ever rising tide of conservatism. The aim of this study is to delineate the dynamics of (long-term) unemployment of university graduate women in Turkey, with reference to their experiences both in the labor market and in the private domain. Departing from women's own narratives, the study revolves around two interrelated dimensions each describing woman's venture through the labyrinth of patriarchal restrictions: One concerns with the gender based discriminations in the process of job searching, referring to the subordinate position of woman in the market and the other pertaining to her life experience in the private sphere, touching on her squeezed position between her (professional) expectations and traditional gender roles.

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