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Gretty M. Mirdal

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Abstract The present article is based on interviews conducted in 1980–1 with 75 Turkish women in Denmark, and re-interviews of the same women by the same interviewers in 2000–1. The aim of the original interviews was to collect the women's accounts of their immigration, and to study their subjective evaluation of their physical, psychological and social situation at the time. Twenty years later, 85 percent of the sample could be located and 61 percent were re-interviewed. In the meantime, these women had lived and worked in Denmark, been in contact with the Danish health, educational and social systems, and their living conditions had improved considerably. There were several noteworthy changes in both objective and subjective dimensions between the two interviews, not least in the conception of shame. The analysis of the original and follow-up narratives is conducted here with a special emphasis on the relation between shame, gender roles and emancipation.

Key Words boundaries, dignity, emancipation, gender roles, shame

Gretty M. Mirdal
University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Changing Idioms of Shame: Expressions of Disgrace and Dishonour in the Narratives of Turkish Women Living in Denmark

Shameful things are done: lies, loose living, disrespect for one's elders, failure to love one's national flag, incorrect voting at elections, over-eating, extramarital sex, autobiographical novels, cheating at cards . . . : and they are done shamelessly. (Salman Rushdie, *Shame*, 1983)

What is considered to be shameful or shameless varies across cultures and across time within the same culture. The assumption that Mediterranean Muslim cultures are essentially and unremittingly 'shame-cultures', and that Western Protestant cultures are guilt cultures, is therefore untenable. Actually Benedict herself had already rejected the dichotomy between shame and guilt cultures as oversimplified when she coined the terms in 1946, emphasizing that both emotions are

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present in all societies. Since then, numerous works have studied shame in the context of the industrialized western societies (e.g. Broucek, 1991; Elias, 1978; Gaulejac, 1996, 1999; Goffman, 1967; Jacoby, 1994; Kaufman, 1985; Lewis, 1971, 1987; Morrison, 1989; Nathanson, 1992; Sennett & Cobb, 1972; Tisseron, 1992). The question of interest is no longer whether shame or guilt is more or less prominent in a given culture, but how and through which dynamic interactions cultural factors contribute to define and to impact on feelings related to 'shame'. Changes in the concept of shame among immigrants can be one way of studying these complex phenomena.

The wave of immigration that took place in the later part of last century from Turkey to Denmark constituted a natural experiment on the vicissitude of shame by bringing together communities with different behavioural codes, especially with respect to sexuality and gender relations, and at different levels of industrialization and economic development. The Turkish immigrants who came to Denmark in the 1970s originated mainly from traditional Muslim rural areas, characterized by rigid gender roles and traditions, and they came directly to a highly industrialized, post-modern, non-religious society of Protestant background.

The present article is based on interviews conducted in 1980–1 with 75 immigrant Turkish women in their own language (Turkish and Kurdish) and in their own homes. The same interviewers (the author and a Kurdish-speaking assistant) contacted the same women in 2000–1. The aim of the original interviews was to collect the women's accounts of their immigration, and to study their subjective evaluation of their physical, psychological and social situation at the time. Twenty years later, 85 percent of the sample could be located, and 61 percent were re-interviewed under the same conditions. There were several noteworthy changes in both objective and subjective dimensions between the two interviews, not least on the conception of 'shameful and shameless things'. The present article analyses the old and new narratives with a special emphasis on the changes that have occurred in relation to the concept of shame.

Material and Methods

Subjects

Originally we contacted 150 Turkish women between the ages of 18 and 60, randomly selected from official registers from four Danish municipalities: the two largest cities in Denmark (Copenhagen and Aarhus), a suburban municipality and a rural municipality. Of the 150,

136 were living in areas with a high density of Turkish immigrants, and 14 in areas with no other Turkish families. Seventy-five agreed to participate and were, as mentioned above, interviewed in their own homes and their own language (Turkish or Kurdish or) in 1980–1. (The selection of subjects and procedure is described in detail in Mirdal, 1984, 1985.)

In 2000–1, we first re-contacted the original sample by mail. In cases where the letter was returned, we tried to locate the person through public registers. Finally, the women who agreed to see us again could also inform us of the whereabouts of the ones who did not reply. We succeeded in finding the traces of 65 (85%) of the 75 from the original sample through these methods. Two had died, eight had returned to Turkey (two of whom could be interviewed in Turkey), and ten could not be located. Forty-six (61 percent) accepted to participate, and 11 (13 percent) did not wish to be interviewed. It is obviously difficult to get reliable information on the reasons for these refusals: in some cases the family had bad experiences with ‘interviewers’ who had extracted information that was later turned in to fiscal authorities; some of the families said the ‘they did not have the energy to receive guests’, or that they had ‘too many worries’ and did not wish to talk about them. It thus cannot be excluded that the 11 women who refused to participate constitute a more overburdened group than the one that has been reached.

The present article is based on data from the original and the follow-up samples whose characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Procedure

In the original study we wanted to elucidate questions related to the following categories: the experience of emigration; arriving in Denmark; housing conditions; information on past history; relationship to children and spouse; other social relations; future plans; and physical and psychological complaints. The latter questions were based on the short version of the Present State Examination translated into Turkish (Savasir, Gögüs, & Üztürk, 1974; Wing, 1976).

The same categories of questions, with less emphasis on the history of migration, and more emphasis on the experiences of the last twenty years, were reproduced in the interview schedule of the follow-up study. However, on both occasions the schedules were never formally applied, the informants providing the answers to most questions spontaneously.

For several reasons, it was decided to conduct the interviews on the informants’ premises, and as qualitative interviews rather than in a

Table 1. Characteristics of the subjects of the original and the follow-up studies

	Original study	Follow-up study
Number of interviewed women	75	46
<i>Ethnic origin</i>		
Turkish	52 (69%)	Same as previous interview
Kurdish	20 (27%)	
Other	3 (4%)	
<i>Age:</i>		
< 20 years	8 (11 %)	–
21–30 years	10 (13 %)	–
31–40 years	30 (40 %)	6 (13%)
41–50 years	27 (36 %)	11 (24%)
51–60 years	–	21 (46%)
> 60 years	–	8 (17%)
<i>Educational status</i>		
None	42 (56 %)	Same as previous interview
< 5 years	10 (13%)	
5 years or more	23 (31%)	
<i>Knowledge of Danish</i>		
None	32 (43%)	13 (28%)
Understands	37 (49%)	19 (41%)
Understands and reads	6 (8%)	14 (31%)
<i>Occupational status</i>		
Employed	16 (21%)	7 (15%)
Unemployed/retired	31 (41%)	17 (37%)
Has never worked	28 (37%)	22 (48%)
<i>Danish citizenship</i>		
Obtained	–	6 (13%)
Applied	–	1 (2%)

standardized manner. The immigrant women were not accustomed to participating in research projects, they were suspicious of authorities, and it was difficult to convince them that the information would remain confidential and anonymous. Unless we succeeded in establishing a genuine rapport with the women, we knew that we would not get honest and trustworthy information from them. A good relationship necessitated in turn a tactful and reserved approach, and the maintenance of a culturally acceptable 'optimal distance'. Furthermore, we were not dealing with a psychiatric population. Some of the questions of the Present State Examination were not relevant in the given context, and they would be considered offensive by the informants.

The interviews were therefore open and gave the women the possibility of telling the story of their life as immigrants, without too much

interference from us. In cases where the interviews revealed that the informants were in need of psychological or social assistance, the initial contact was continued.

Whenever possible, that is, whenever the informants accepted it, the interviews were recorded on audiotapes and later typed verbatim. If the women did not accept the use of audiotapes, the interviewer and/or her assistant noted down the answers in shorthand. The interview was then reconstructed as faithfully as possible. All interviews were then transcribed and subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Methods

As implied in the introduction to this article, shame as an emotion and as an anthropological, psychological and sociological phenomenon has been extensively studied. The methods used in our study inscribe themselves in the ones used in previous similar investigations. We were particularly inspired by the methods used by the psychoanalyst Helen B. Lewis (1971) in construing a working concept of the psychology of shame. We studied old and new Turkish dictionaries, as she had done in English, looking up words related to embarrassment, humiliation, mortification, disgrace, dishonour, inadequacy, ridicule and disrepute.

The interview-protocols from 1980–1 and 2000–1 were first reviewed for references to the word shame (*ayıp*) and its Turkish synonyms. Once a list of shame-words was determined, all the protocols were analysed in order to detect the occurrence of such shame-related words. Considering that shame can be unidentified as such, but still expressed in different ways, we reread all the protocols to detect feelings or situations implying shame, even if they were not directly identified as shameful by the informant. As an additional check, all the protocols were subsequently submitted to an electronic word-detection. All the relevant passages which contained either relevant words or situations related to shame were marked and filed individually.

In a second stage all of these files were analysed with respect to the background for the feelings of shame, that is, what had apparently caused them. On this basis we generated categories of shame-provoking situations, presented in the second section of the results, entitled 'Causes of Shame'.

Results

Words and Expressions of Shame

Compiling a List of Shame-Words

Very few of the original interviews were conducted entirely in Kurdish, and none of the follow-up interviews were. However, the Kurdish informants did use words and sentences in Kirmanci-Kurdish in the presence of the Kurdish assistant. These sparse Kurdish passages were translated into Turkish in the transcriptions. The following shame-words were found in the narratives:

- *ayip* (both noun and adverb, shame and shameful)
- *namus, seref* (noun, honour)
- *utanc* (noun, shame)
- *cekinmek* (verb, to be embarrassed, shy)
- *utanmak* (verb, to be ashamed),
- *utanmaz* (adjective, shameless)
- *yüzsüz* (adjective, shameless; literally faceless)
- *yüz karasi* (noun, generating shame; literally that which makes the face black)
- *sikilmak* (verb, to be embarrassed or shy)
- *mahcup* (adjective, bashful, self-conscious)
- *rezalet* (noun, ridicule)
- *rezil* (adjective, ridiculed, scandalized)

The word '*ayip*' was detected much more often in the electronic word-detection than under our careful reading of the protocols. We were very concerned by this discrepancy implying inattention on our side until we found that the occurrences we had missed were being used as a figure of speech, which we had not considered as really related to feelings of shame. The high frequency of the word *ayip* turned out to be due to its use in the expression: 'it is shameful to say' (*ayıptır söylemesi* or *söylemesi ayip*), which we had not regarded as shame-words but as idioms, as in the English expression 'It's a shame' or 'It's a pity'.

However, further analyses revealed that most of the time the thing that was 'shameful to say' had indeed a connection with shame-provoking themes, even though the association was distant, and probably not used knowingly by the narrator. We therefore decided to include these expressions in the content analysis.

Idioms and Expressions

The expressions '*it is shameful to say*' or '*excuse me*' (in Turkish '*ayıptır söylemesi*', '*söylemesi ayip*' and '*affedersiniz*', respectively) turned out to

be mainly used in two contexts: (a) sexuality and the body; and (b) immodesty, ostentation and boastfulness.

(a) *Sexuality and the body.* In most languages it is considered embarrassing to talk about sexuality. Even in Scandinavian countries, where the attitude toward sexuality is relatively relaxed, the topic is approached with much discretion. In Turkish, however, the whole body seems to be encompassed by feelings of chastity, to the point of necessitating apologies whenever any part of the body between the throat and the feet is mentioned in traditional everyday conversation.

'*Söylemesi ayıp*', 'it is shameful to say', accompanied almost any reference to the body, as in the following examples:

He was soaked when he arrived, and, *it is shameful to say*, he had to change his clothes.

The doorbell rang, when I was, *it is shameful to say*, under the shower.

Her dress was cut so low, that one could see, *it is shameful to say*, her breasts.

'*It is shameful to say*' is an expression of apology synonymous to '*Affedersiniz*', which means 'Pardon me'. In others words, one asks to be excused for the guilt of causing feelings of embarrassment in another person by one's reference to matters of the body.

(b) *Immodesty and boastfulness.* The second context in which '*It is shameful to say . . .*' or '*Excuse me for saying . . .*' were being used was in relation to a statement that could be considered as immodest or boastful, as in the following examples:

It is shameful to say, he came with four pounds of beef, and I prepared a spicy kebab.

The house was full of guests. *It is shameful to say*, our home is never empty.

We called them to ask if they wanted to go on a picnic; they accepted immediately. Everyone brought, *it is shameful to say*, exquisite dishes, salads, böreks and, *excuse me*, köftes.

The possible shamefulness of such situations is not immediately obvious. The apology here seems to be a defence against an overemphasis of one's virtues and possessions, the crime called '*hubris*' in ancient Greece. It is a way of negating one's superior social condition in order not to embarrass the other. It comprises an element of shame, not because of *what one is*, or *what one does*, but because of *what one has*, which the other person might lack. It expresses an identification with the other's possible deficit, and thereby humiliation. Social inferiority is considered as so painful and damaging for a person that rules of

elementary politeness require an elevation of the lower-status person to the level of the higher one, or at least a word of excuse at being the most privileged party of the two. This is especially required when the privileged person is a woman, or the younger of the two.

There was no difference in the use of these figures of speech between the first and the second interview. They seemed to reflect a stable linguistic style in the individual informant's narratives. The informants who used the expressions frequently in the first interview used them also in the second one.

The Causes of Shame

Passages of the narrative in which words of shame appeared directly, and situations implying such feelings, were analysed with the purpose of establishing categories of shame-provoking situations. The analyses yielded three main categories encompassing the majority of circumstances which were related to or provoked feelings of shame:

- situations related to sexuality, exposure of the body and its functions;
- trespassing boundaries; situations related to being 'out of place' and feeling inappropriate in a given situation; and
- social and economic inferiority, the inability of reciprocating/settling an inequality.

These three categories of situations are overlapping and interrelated. It is only for the sake of clearness in the following presentation that we have found it necessary to differentiate between them in the analysis. We aim at being able to reflect the complexity of these interactions as the analysis progresses.

A Short History of Turkish Migration to Denmark

A short history of Turkish migration to Denmark is necessary here in order to situate the informants who participated in our study, and to understand their conception of male and female space and the shame of trespassing gender boundaries. Men immigrated first (between 1969 and 1974), in the majority of cases directly from their villages in Anatolia (mostly from central Anatolia), and they moved in with family or relatives who were already established in Denmark. About five to ten years later, realizing that their expected return to Turkey was economically impossible, and tired of living alone in rented rooms, the male immigrants sent after their wives and children. The workers were very reluctant to bring their wives and children to Denmark. There

were many reasons for this unwillingness (among others, economic and socio-political factors) which fall outside the scope of this paper. One of the reasons for not wanting the Turkish family to come to Denmark is, however, relevant to our topic: namely it was considered '*ayip*', shameful, for a Turkish immigrant to bring his family to Denmark, which was regarded as a depraved country, especially with respect to sexual morals and inter-generational relations.

The women, who were anxious to join their husbands because their lives as single mothers in Turkey was very difficult, were told that Denmark was not a country for them. The possible 'Danish influence' on the daughters was seen as particularly undesirable. One woman put it as follows:

I started to press him. We were miserable. The children were growing up without a father. 'Take us to Denmark', I said. His father talked to him, too. 'It's not good for them to stay here alone', he said. But my husband did not want us to come. 'Denmark is not a country for you', he said. 'It will not be good for the girls to grow up there.'

This perception of Denmark must be understood in the context of the living conditions of the male guest-workers at the time. In order to save as much money as possible and to support the family back home, these men lived under miserable conditions, in the most dilapidated areas of urban centres, often in cheap hotels or rented rooms, populated by the most underprivileged part of the Danish population. The picture they had of Denmark was one of depravation and degradation. In addition, the Danish lack of inhibition with respect to nakedness and the natural attitude toward bodily functions constituted a very strong contrast to the Turkish rules of conduct. Danes, children as well as adults, have, for example, collective shower-rooms that they use after exercising, they are often naked on the beaches, pornography is legal, and sexual relations before marriage are not prohibited. It is in this context that changes in the expression of shame among immigrants should be seen.

Gender Roles and Exposure

The association between sexuality/nakedness (especially female sexuality) and shame dates back to the beginnings of time. Etymologically, the word 'shame' has been linked to the Indo-Germanic *kam/kem*, meaning to cover. The idea of covering one's nakedness is closely tied to the concept of shame (Jacoby, 1994; Schneider, 1977).

The word itself is used as a reference to 'private parts' in many languages. In Greek *aidoia* (genital organs, literally shame parts) comes from *aidos*, which means shame. In Danish, *skamlæber* (literally 'lips of shame') is the word for vulva. In Turkish, the root of the verb *utanmak*,

(to be ashamed) is *ut*, the female sexual organ. Likewise in French and English, covering one's shame is used in connection with concealing the sexual organs.

As noted by Broucek (1991), shame has also been related to the child's psychosexual development and more specifically to sexuality in the major part of modern psychological and psychoanalytic literature. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* from 1930, Freud (1930/1961) suggested that shame originated when human beings acquired the upright position, which made their 'genitals, which were previously concealed, visible and in need of protection, and so provoked feelings of shame' (p. 99). Later, in the *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud (1933/1964) related shame to the need to conceal genital deficiency, thus making shame 'a feminine characteristic par excellence' (p. 132).

Thus visibility and exposure are at the very centre of the experience of shame. The most obvious symbol of shame at exposure is the Muslim woman's shame at being seen unveiled. Transposed to the gender and space dimensions in rural Turkish culture, this type of shame lies behind the tradition of the woman walking behind the man or in her keeping out of his way. In some Anatolian villages a woman who has to cross a road may have to wait up to several minutes for a man who is on that road to pass by before she can do so. It is considered improper and *ayip* (shameful) for her to expose herself by placing herself in his sight.

In the classical work of, for example, Davies (1987), Gilmore (1987), Peristiany (1965), Pitt-Rivers (1965) and Wyatt-Brown (1982), men were seen as responsible for their woman's shame. Since women were vulnerable and in need of protection, and since shame was contagious, both the segregation of women and male domination were considered as being in everyone's best interests. The control and regulation of shame has therefore been an essential factor in the maintenance of gender roles and socialization patterns. There is a kind of circularity in this process. The transgression of boundaries generates shame, which again serves to maintain the separation between men's world and women's world and the division between public and private space.

Displacement, Being Out of Place, Transgressing Boundaries

Migration entails by definition moving from one place to another, and thereby transcending the original boundaries of private and public space. Women and men have always had access to different spaces according to the characteristics that were attributed to them in

different societies. This phenomenon is far from restricted to Muslim cultures. From the Greek city-states to the modern cities of the 21st century, social space has with few exceptions been divided into a public and male domain, and a private and female domain. This division has been considered to be 'natural' (in the sense of biologically determined), and this has in turn reinforced the separation between public and private, and the segregation between men's space and women's space. The more dichotomized the gender roles, the more segregated the public and private spheres, the more shameful it has been to cross these boundaries. How were these boundaries re-created and reformed in the course of migration and exile?

In most cases, the male immigrants who had already lived in Denmark for several years did not have the facilities to accommodate the incoming family. The newcomers were temporarily hosted by relatives who lived under better conditions. Very soon, however, the Danish authorities reacted to the ensuing overcrowding in the flats of the hospitable families, and required proper housing before granting a permit of family reunification. This procedure resulted in a flux of immigrants toward newly constructed low-priced suburban housing, thus creating communities with a high density of newly arrived immigrant families originating from the same areas of Turkey. These new communities, which have erroneously been called 'ghettos', very quickly achieved a spatial organization similar to the one that prevailed in the Turkish villages in the 1980s.¹ In the original study, we found that the conception of the women's place in the private and public space in Denmark had many similarities to the uses and customs they brought with them from rural Turkey. (See Emge, 1992, for a detailed study on the style of traditional living in the areas of Central Anatolia from which our informants originated.)

The Organization of Space and Definition of New Limits

When the wives and daughters of the migrant workers started to come to Denmark, the sexual freedom in the new surroundings made it even more necessary for the males to increase their control on the women's freedom of movement. Paradoxically, the schooling requirements in the new country, and the economic necessity for the wives to take employment outside of the home, required great mobility. In the beginning the husbands or an older son accompanied the wives to the factories where they worked, and fetched the daughters/sisters after school. This soon proved to be impossible to carry out. Women and girls began to go out alone, but there were strong restrictions on participating in social activities after school or work.

Parallel to the spatial structure of the villages, women in Denmark could also visit Turkish neighbours, go to the doctor, to malls and shopping centres, and move around freely in the *mahalle* (living area), but trips to the centre (*merkez*) of Copenhagen were viewed with disapproval. Only three of the 75 women in the original study had gone to the centre of the city. Twenty years later, this number was around eight out of 46.

At the start, over half of the families did not send the girls to school after the obligatory eight years. In some cases the girls were kept at home, officially to take care of younger siblings, but also because the parents were worried about their daughters' emancipation, and, above all, that they could be seen in the company of boys, and that this could get known back home. As time passed, schools and working places came to be regarded as an extension of private and therefore 'halal space', as expressed by one of the informants.

This is in line with the observation made by Arat (1998) on women's employment in rural Turkey. Women working in agriculture were not considered as working outside of the home; their work was seen as an extension of household duties. Similarly, cleaning in a factory or an official institution, plucking mushrooms or ironing in a laundry in Denmark came to be regarded as part of the immigrant woman's responsibilities which made it legal to circulate outside the traditional limits. In contrast, the Danish world beyond the physical premises of the school or the workplace was considered as 'public space', independently of geographic closeness. Schoolgirls were not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities and had to come home directly from school. But it was acceptable for the girls and women to go to work, even if the workplace was far away from home and entailed evening shifts. It was important not to be seen in the wrong place at the wrong time, and new norms emerged for these categories.

Thus, in the first years following migration, the organization of the Turkish communities in Denmark resembled not only the social organization of the village of origin, but was comparable to that of many traditional Mediterranean Muslim societies, for example the following description of the Kabyle of North Africa:

In groups whose members are well-known to each other, such as the Kabyle clan or village, the control of public opinion is exercised at every moment, and community feeling is experienced with the highest possible intensity . . . everybody knows everybody, condemned without the possibility of escape or relief to live with others, beneath the gaze of others . . . thus the fascinated attention paid to the conduct of others, coupled with the almost haunting preoccupation with their judgment, render unthinkable or despicable any attempt to free oneself from the dictates of honour. (Bourdieu, 1974, p. 212)

Shame, Socioeconomic Status and Feelings of Inferiority

In addition to the shame related to sexuality and to exposure, there is a third aspect of the concept of shame which seems relevant to the present study. This is derived from an individual's hierarchical position (place) in society and has to do with being subordinated, inferior, poor and marginalized. It concerns economic and social deficits rather than lack of modesty or 'immoral' conduct.

This aspect of shame related to social status has been neglected in the literature on women from Muslim societies, not because the importance of personal achievement and social status is ignored (it has in fact been extensively studied in relation to men), but because women have traditionally not had a status of their own. Securing welfare and status for the family was a man's duty. Failure to do so brought dishonour and shame primarily on the man, much less than on his wife. Men, and not women, determined the family's social position. This last aspect of shame, which could be called 'social disgrace', seems, however, to be especially relevant in the present study. Women could only bring shame to the family by misbehaving, and not because of economic or social inferiority. In the follow-up interviews, however, the women expressed embarrassment related to their social and economic status.

Don't mind us. Our language is a villager's tongue. Not having gone to school or anything. Our language is a bit crude. You must bear with me. Yes, a villager's tongue. We don't have grammar. We don't have much knowledge.

In the beginning we did not know the rules in this cleaning business. We worked for three hours or six hours or whatever, and they told us to clean the whole floor, all the offices. Because we didn't know better, we were getting exhausted, our backs were breaking, we were sweating blood. Then I found out that a five-day programme had been set by the management, and we had not been told. For example, which floors had to be washed on which days. Because we didn't know anything, we were cleaning all of them every day. So one day, when they said, you must do the cleaning of this floor, I said: 'Show me the list of how many offices I have to clean per day.' 'How do you know that there is such a list?', he said. 'I went to courses,' I said, 'and I want to see those lists immediately.' So they sent immediately for the lists from the head office, and it turned out that the norm was four offices and one meeting room per day. It is not a big deal, but I felt good about it. It was re-establishing justice.

The follow-up interview revealed a discrepancy between the sense of competence and self-assuredness felt when the women were back in Turkey, and the feelings of inferiority and embarrassment that they feel when they are in Denmark. Although many of the women had

travelled on their own within Turkey—some had even gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca by themselves—none of them had travelled within Denmark or the rest of Europe.

I have even been to Mecca. On my own. I was not accompanied by anyone. And if Allah grants me days to live, I will go there once again . . . [but] here I cannot go to the city hall by myself. I don't understand what they say. It is humiliating.

Last time I was in Turkey, I went to the lawyer because no one could find the deeds of the house after my husband had died. And the lawyer asked me '*Teyze* (Auntie), what can we do for you?' I told him about the deed that was apparently lost, and he said, 'I don't know. What shall I say? I really don't know.' Such a lawyer! So I went to the authorities on my own, and before noon, I had a new deed.

This same woman did not dare go out alone in Copenhagen, except for short errands in the neighbourhood, and she felt that she had to be accompanied wherever she went: 'It is not that I cannot go out alone, I just don't speak freely, I don't feel capable of expressing myself. I feel embarrassed.'

Discussion and Conclusion

The Vicissitudes of Shame: From 1980–1 to 2000–1

The content analysis of the narratives across twenty years suggests that there has been a change of focus from a preoccupation with 'sexual honour' and from shame elicited by transgressions of the boundaries of 'female space', to a greater focus on shame related to social position.

In the beginning it was very important to keep within the limits of acceptable traditional gender roles for fear of scandal and gossip. In the follow-up interview the preoccupations centre more on the social and economic position that the individual woman and her family have been able to achieve in Denmark (e.g. their standard of living, the education and the economic status of their children). At this point shame seems to be more closely related to being uneducated and to lack of social success than to improper conduct.

The most conspicuous shame-provoking situation in the follow-up interviews is one's own ignorance or one's children's lack of education. The question of the women's own education, or rather lack of it, had already arisen in the first interview. As mentioned above, 56 percent of the sample had received no education and were functionally illiterate. Many of the women had mentioned this fact in the first interview as

an impediment and difficulty in the new country, but not as a cause of particular embarrassment. This condition was seen as the responsibility of their families, who had not sent them to school. In the follow-up interview, however, illiteracy was a major cause of shame and humiliation. The types of situations which elicited expressions of shame in the follow-up interviews are illustrated below:

- experiencing that one's own children are embarrassed about one's lack of knowledge, especially not being able to speak Danish:

He says, please Mother, don't open your mouth when you come to school, so no one hears how you speak.

- having to participate in the obligatory Danish classes, where one has to admit that one is illiterate:

If we are unemployed, the town authorities send us to Danish courses. If we don't go, we do not receive unemployment benefits. I would rather work in a fish-factory. Sitting in a class with others looking at you and not being able to read is the worst thing of all. I sink through the floor . . .

- realizing that one has not been able to give one's children an adequate education:

We thought that they would get an education, find their way, get somewhere. That they wouldn't live a disgraceful (*rezil*) life like ours. It just didn't turn out that way.

In the beginning we did not want the girls to go to a Danish school. We thought that it wouldn't be proper. That people around us would find it shameful. Now I regret it very much.

In line with Kazgan, Kirmanoglu, Celik and Yumul (1999), who studied internal immigrants within Turkey, we found that great importance was given to the children's education, and this was equal for children of both genders. Deli (2000) has observed the same tendency in a Kurdish population of internal immigrants from Eastern Anatolia to Istanbul. As one of her respondents put it:

I did not send my oldest children to school; I preferred that they remained ignorant rather than they learned another language than ours. But today I can see how important it is for them to be able to read and write. I am ashamed when I think that they do not know how to. (p. 201)

This development is also in accordance with the predictions made by Nermin Abadan-Unat in 1977 in a classic article on the implications of migration for the emancipation of Turkish women in Europe. Among her criteria for emancipation was 'increasing belief in egalitarian opportunities of girls and boys in terms of education' (p. 55).

Lack of good linguistic skills, either in Turkish or in Danish, was also considered as shameful or humiliating because it implied ignorance and lower social background:

I still don't speak the language. We weren't smart enough at the time. We thought it was shameful to go to language school. But now, when this one [the daughter-in-law] came, we allowed her immediately to go to a Danish course.

The girl suffered very much in school. It took her a lot of time to learn Danish. The other children made fun of her. They laughed when she opened her mouth. They also beat her. The teacher did not help her. Now we realize that we should have sent her to kindergarten, so that she was more prepared when she started school. Who knows, maybe she would have been able to study. Now she has a cleaning job.

I don't know. I can't tell. I have not been going anywhere for the last six–seven years [since she stopped working]. I cannot explain what I mean. I understand quite well what they are saying, but I cannot speak for myself. I would not be able to reply if I were insulted. I go everywhere with my oldest son. I do not feel that I could defend myself if I were in a difficult situation.

The powerlessness implied in the inability to reply, to protest against a felt injustice is shame-provoking. Inversely, being able to respond, to give an adequate answer, is a question of honour. When the feeling of self-consciousness, reticence and traditional bashfulness are overcome, shame gives way to dignity.

In Terms of Conclusion: Social Status and Degrees of Freedom

Although shame related to the transgression of female space continues to be important in the follow-up interviews, the content analysis of the narratives suggests that there has been a change in the situations and behaviours that elicit shame since the first interview twenty years earlier. As suggested above, there is a much greater focus on shame related to social position rather than to 'proper conduct' in the follow-up interviews. The focus has changed from 'sexual honour' to the maintenance of self-esteem and dignity. From the concern about keeping within the limits of acceptable traditional gender roles and fear of scandal and gossip, the main preoccupations in the follow-up interview centre on the social and economic position that the individual woman and her family have been able to achieve in Denmark. Standard of living and the education and the economic status of their children are at the forefront of the women's (self-)consciousness, with shame being more closely related to lack of success in these areas than to improper conduct.

In a sense, the immigrant women, and especially their daughters, seem to have acquired a 'code of shame and honour' more similar to urban or higher social-level women in Turkey. As also noted by Pitt-Rivers (1965, in relation to Andalusian society), the strict rules of conduct for females have importance for the lower social groups, much less so for the middle class and none for the upper. Women in the upper social classes appear much more careless of their sexual honour because their honour is unassailable: 'Femininity in the higher class is not a passive, a negative reflection of male dominance. The honour of a woman of high society does not have to lean on a male for protection' (p. 12).

Although marginalized in a Danish context, Turkish immigrants have experienced a rise in their social status in the home country. In addition to this, marrying a young woman living abroad gives a male Turkish citizen the possibility of settling in Europe. This is a very attractive opportunity for prospective grooms in the host country. Most of the children of immigrant families can thus marry partners who have a higher socioeconomic status than their family's original status. The fear of not finding a husband for their daughters no longer being an issue, the restriction of movement for females has become less strict. Being seen in the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong person no longer has devastating consequences for a woman's reputation or a girl's marriage prospects, and is not as shameful as it was at the time of the original interview.

Brandes (1987) remarked that researchers have tended to focus too much on village culture, and that they have not studied how the meaning of shame is 'transformed, when cities grow or villages die, or when migrants move here or there, with or without their families' (p. 133). The data presented above shed some light on such transformations. Barriga's (2001) study on shame (*Vergüenza*) in Chicano and Chicana narratives also seems relevant in the present context. Barriga illustrates the parallel processes of growing power and decrease of shame. In one of the novels analysed in the article, Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* (1984), the main character points at the relation between shame, poverty, male domination and the maintenance of traditional gender relations.

The design of this study does not allow any inferences as to the causes of the reported changes. Although the migratory experience, acculturation and living in Denmark have undoubtedly played a role, the time-factor and the different stages in life in which the women were interviewed must also be taken into consideration in the analysis of the results. The psychology of shame, especially the vicissitudes of shame

through the lifetime, are not well known. It is possible that the changes and developments described here are widespread phenomena, and not specific to diasporic or Turkish communities.

The relationship which we have found between shame and lack of education in the follow-up interviews of our Turkish material could also be a reflection of the globalization of the 'knowledge-based society'. Twenty years ago, it was a shame to follow language courses or to send one's daughter to school; now it is a shame not to do so, and not to have done so. The development that has taken place implies that shame is no longer primarily related to the transgression of gender roles (female space) but rather to being a victim of them, to being oppressed and ignorant. The first type of shame had the restriction of women's space as its consequence. The latter could, on the contrary give women the possibility of transcending the traditional spatial limits through education and the acquisition of new skills, and paradoxically turn out to have emancipatory possibilities.

Notes

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1. As shown by Lévi-Strauss (1955) in his analysis of the social life of the Bororos, the spatial structure of a village reflects the culture of its inhabitants. The physical and ecological conditions can change, but the organization of space preserves its qualities under the changed conditions or in the new locations. For the Bororos, for example, the meaning of the spatial organization was not tied to a given locality. It remained the same when the village moved from place to place, preserving the spatial distribution of functions and habitations. Similar observations can be made about the Turkish families who moved to Denmark in the first years after immigration.

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Biography

GRETTY M. MIRDAL is Professor of Clinical and Transcultural Psychology at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. She was born in Istanbul in 1944. She received her BA from Smith College, Northampton, Mass., and her postgraduate degrees from the University of Copenhagen. She works in two areas: the long-term impact of migration and transcultural integration on mental and physical health; and theory and practice in the psychological treatment of stress reactions and chronic disease. ADDRESS: Gretty M. Mirdal, Department of Psychology, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 5, DK-1399 Copenhagen K, Denmark. [email: gretty.mirdal@psy.ku.dk]