

Family is a society's main asset to achieve sustainable development and political stability

Family undertakes greater functions in regards to sustainable development than what meets the eye, according to a new study on Family and Marital union by [SESRIC](#). The study has revealed some arresting results, showing that importance of family has not diminished but expanded in contemporary society.

One fundamental function of family union the report highlights confirms the universally acknowledged role of marital union in population generation. The study has shown that severe marriage rate decline puts countries at risk of falling to sub-replacement level. In fact, based on future projections, the report estimates that 22 OIC ([Organization of Islamic Cooperation](#)) countries, including Turkey, will be at sub-replacement level by 2050 along with an increasing delay and decline in marriage and family formation.

Yet there are some results that are less common but quite arresting such as family and marriage's role in political stability. According to the report, delay in marriage and family formation results in reduced voting participation among the youth. The missing link is most likely about motivation: Married couples with children are more likely to develop a sense of civic duty which then prompts political participation. Moreover, the study reports that family ties can dampen radicalization by preventing adolescents from being allured into political propaganda.

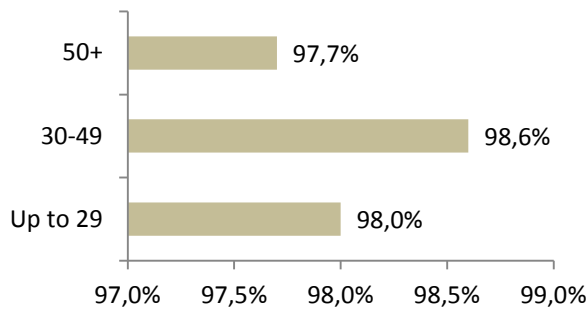
SESRIC report also demonstrates how families are connected to economic growth and suggest that the relationship is quite straightforward. New studies in economy assert that economic growth is largely determined by Human Development Index, quality of country's human capital. What determines Human development index, however, is the Early Childhood Development Score and what predicts a child's development score is the family environment.

Family's role in economy is not limited to human capital generation, the report adds. Family firms provide a big portion of the GDP, and they are more likely than non-family firms to promote an egalitarian economic culture consistent with Islamic teachings.

Against this backdrop, the report looks at demographic, economic, and cultural shifts that have been challenging family and marital union's functions and performance. Among complex cultural shifts, the report particularly emphasizes the rise and spread of an individualist lifestyle, which promotes a false clash between individual needs and family and marital life, whereas family is seen to limit individual's development. This erroneous belief results in hesitation to start an enduring relationship, delays child rearing and family formation, and leads to smaller families.

The report deepens its analysis on emerging cultural trends by examining the value orientations of Generation-Y or Millennials, born between 1980 and 2000. Millennials are the main marriage-eligible population and will be future parents and spouses; hence, they will shape the future of family life and spousal relations in OIC societies.

Fig. 1 “Family is the most important institution...”
% of value survey responses in selected OIC countries



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on WVS 2010-2012 Wave on country available data (*Very important and Important combined)

Compared the previous generations, Millennials are more individualistic. They are prone to extravagance and consumerism; they have low interpersonal trust; they are ambitiously career-oriented.

Yet, on the other hand, for them family is still the most important institution in their lives (Figure.1) Millennials endorse the institution of marriage as the most appropriate form of romantic union; they think family is the main space to find love and security and that family values should be preserved; and they desire for a strong work-family balance. Finally, they care about making their parents proud (Figure2).

These findings show, the report maintains, that Millennials are particularly caught in the false-make clash, yet they are not fully alienated from traditional values.

The report draws policy implications to preserve functions of family as well as family values across various sectors of society but emphasizes the importance of developing policies that would focus on Millennials, understand their value transformation more thoroughly, and support them to strike a balance between greater demands for individual needs and desire to form families.

The report titled *“Safeguarding family Values and the Institution of Marriage in OIC countries: How are Families and Marriage Changing in the New Millennium”*, can be found at www.sesric.org.

The report was prepared for The First Session of the Islamic Ministerial Conference on Empowering the Marriage and Family Institution in the OIC Member States and Preserving Its Values, hold by OIC in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 7-8 February-2017.

Fig.2“One of my main goals in life has been to make my parents proud...”

% of value survey responses in selected OIC countries

Egypt	99.10%	Algeria	95.40%
Uzbekistan	99.10%	Kazakhstan	95.20%
Malaysia	98.60%	Morocco	95.20%
Turkey	98.60%	Azerbaijan	94.30%
Jordan	98.30%	Bahrain	93.20%
Nigeria	98.30%	Kuwait	89.30%
Iraq	98.20%	Pakistan	89.30%
Kyrgyzstan	98.00%	Palestine	82.10%
Qatar	98.00%	Lebanon	79.40%
Yemen	96.90%	Tunisia	79.40%

Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on WVS 2010-2012 Wave on country available data (*Very important and Important combined)