Research Paper

Social Distance in Today's Istanbul: Politics and Exceptionalism

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ABSTRACT:- A May 2011 survey of 999 residents of Istanbul reveals high levels of intolerance towards members of many social identities in Turkey. With the exception of people perceived to be ethnically 'Turkish' or 'Dindar' (religiously observant), the respondents rejected close social interaction with other ethnic (particularly Kurdish), national (especially American and Greek), religious (specifically Jewish and Atheist), or sexual (namely homosexual) identities. Further, large percentages of the respondents preferred that members of these 'other' identities be excluded entirely from Turkey, not even permitting those 'others' to enter the country as tourists. Intolerance is alive and thriving among these Istanbul residents.

The data show several significant relationships: 1) Age is indirectly related with tolerance: as age increases, tolerance decreases; 2). Education however is directly related to social distance: as level of schooling increases, tolerance increases; 3) Sports fanaticism shows a direct relationship with intolerance among some but not all social 'others.' On the other hand, 4) Region of origin shows little relationship to social distance, and 5) Gender has no significant relationship to social distance. 7) Political party preference and 8) Turkish exceptionalism show the strongest and most consistent relationship to tolerance.

Keywords:- Social Distance, Intolerance, Social Identities, Turkey, Kurds, Turkish Exceptionalism.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper explores social tolerance and intolerance towards members of selected ethnic groups, foreigners, religions groups, and a sexual minority in Istanbul, Turkey, as well examining relationships between several factors thought to increase or decrease ethnic prejudice and intolerance. Over the last 20 years, migration, especially forced and involuntary migration, from eastern Anatolia to the cities of western and central Turkey, among other historical trends, has contributed to inter-ethnic animosity in Turkey. Recently, a heightened concern for diversity and for valorizing the contributions of members of different ethnic and religious communities to a more-embracing Turkish society has been expressed by both political and media spokespersons. High levels of social intolerance impede such efforts. Thus understanding the roots of and supports for social tolerance is critical for building a more equitable society in Turkey.

We present and analyze data from nearly a thousand respondents in several neighborhoods of Istanbul to explore social tolerance and intolerance and other variables related to levels of tolerance, or social distance. The instrument employed to measure social tolerance is the Social Distance Scale developed by Emory Bogardus in 1933 and used widely in social science research since then.

Bogardus's original instrument was designed to measure 'social distance' between ethnic groups and has generated a rich research literature in studies of prejudice and tolerance. Social distance is a measure of the level of social interaction with typical others with which one is comfortable. The instrument has been adapted and employed to examine social distance and the support for minority rights[3], sources of intergroup conflict[4], attitudes towards disabled people or people suffering from mental illness[5], program effectiveness[6], prompts and impediments to immigration[7] , consumer preferences and behavior[8], tourism and tourist accommodation[9], and other uses. Nedim Karakayli uses Turkish data to show that social distance is multi-factorial : for example, respondents may express strong negative affect towards members of a group while simultaneously reporting close and continuing work relationships with the same group members.[10]

Several social distance studies have been conducted in Turkey on the willingness of medical practitioners to interact with clinically depressed patients and other stigmatized persons (cited above), but perhaps the most interesting surveys of opinion in Turkey are those conducted by Ertuğrul Gödelek of Mersin University's Department of Psychology[11]. Gödelek has conducted four social distance surveys in Mersin in southeastern Turkey over a twelve year period stretching from 1998 to 2010. His most striking finding is that

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expressed social distance between Kurds and Turks has increased both for Kurdish and for Turkish respondents in each succeeding survey. Interethnic intolerance has grown in Mersin for more the last fifteen years.

However, apart from Gödelek's studies, the literature reveals few studies that show relations between social distance in Turkey and variables such as education, income, gender, or other standard variables. Our study contributes towards exploring such relationships.

Further, we examine the contribution of "Turkish exceptionalism" to intolerance. Turkish exceptionalism is expressed in the notion that "Turkey is different from other nations in terms of its moral worth and status as exemplar to other people." Exceptionalism has been found to be a potent and robust social variable in studies in the United States[12], in Japan[13], across Europe[14], and in other nations. Political commentators in Turkey use concepts similar to exceptionalism in their analyses of current Turkish foreign and domestic policies[15].

II.   METHODS

This project explores relationships among social distance and several other variables. In our project, we adapted the Bogardus Social Distance Scale to measure expressed social distance of respondents in Istanbul from four categories of 'others' in Turkey: 1) ethnic groups, 2) foreigners, 3) religious identities, and 4) a sexual minority. Let us describe each of these 'others.'

The first 'other' focuses on two ethnic group identities in Turkey: Turks and Kurds. Turkish ethnic identity is problematic in Turkey.[16] Prior to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 amid the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, 'Turks' were one of many identities available over a period of five hundred years in a multi-ethnic, multi-national society that spanned three continents.[17] As part of the nation-building project of the Republic of Turkey, Turkish identity was mandated as the only normative ethnic identity sanctioned in the republic. Small numbers of people of other ethnic and religious identities were promised protected status by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne[18] ending the hostilities between the Ottoman Empire and other signatories[19]. The state-sanctioned "Turkish" identity is strongly supported through a series of formal and informal procedures, ranging from the mandate that all public education or dealings with state bureaucracy be conducted in the Turkish language to the potent daily ritual in which every elementary school child chants, "Ne mutlu Türküm diyene!" ["How happy one who calls himself a Turk!"]. The phrase can also be found carved in public monuments across the Republic. However, this official Turkish identity is challenged, contested, and rejected by a large number of citizens of the republic.

Members of Turkey's Kurdish population have mounted the longest-lasting and most powerful resistance and challenge to this state-maintained identity. Kurds are one of the largest ethnic groups in the world with no state. The main population of Kurds is divided among four countries: Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria, with the greatest Kurdish population in Turkey. Turkey's Kurdish population is concentrated in eastern and southeastern Turkey and in Istanbul. Estimates of the portion of the population of the Republic of Turkey self-identifying as Kurdish range from 10 to 24 percent of the total population—the range signifies both an undercount by the Turkish census[20] and a protective identity management on the part of many Kurdish people[21].

While there are many other ethnic identities in contemporary Turkey, each of them is a small proportion of the total population and is less visible and receives less attention than do Turks and Kurds, the two largest groups. Thus, while respondents were asked their ethnic identities, social distance attitudes towards these smaller ethnic groups were not measured in this project. Social distance towards Kurds and Turks, then, represent the ethnic groups in Turkey in our study.

Our second social distance category focuses on foreigners in Turkey. Tourism is a mainstay of the Turkish economy: for example, more than 31 million foreign tourists entered the country in 2011[22]. We were interested more in those visitors to Turkey who were likely to prompt a stereotyped response. In class discussions with our students, several foreign groups were selected to represent foreigners in Turkey: Americans, Arabs, Chinese, Greeks, Iranians, and Russians.

In a pretest of the survey instrument, Israelis were included as foreigners in Turkey, but respondents consistently and all but unanimously identified Israeli nationality with Jewish religious identity. Israelis were dropped from the instrument and Jews were added as a religious identity.

 The third social distance category explores religious identities in Turkey. Three religious identities were listed on the survey instrument: Jews, Atheists and 'Dindar'—a Turkish term denoting those people who define themselves as religious and observant rather than as secular and non-observant. According to the US Central Intelligence Agency *World Fact Book*, 99.8% of the population of Turkey is Muslim, mostly following Sunni Hanafi practice[23]. Thus, in Turkey, Dindar implies a Sunni Muslim religious identity.

The fourth category of others was a sexual minority, homosexuals. Same-sex sexual activity was decriminalized in the Ottoman Empire in 1858 and has remained decriminalized in the Republic of Turkey since the republic's inception, although same-sex marriages are not legally recognized. Nevertheless, homosexual behavior and identities remain highly stigmatized throughout Turkey.

Social distance towards these four categories—ethnic identity, selected foreign identities, religious identity, and a sexual identity--were the dependent variables for our research inquiry. Social distance attitudes towards these 'others' were measured with the Bogardus Social Distance Scale[24]. The scale, as well as the other items on the survey instrument, was translated into Turkish by sociology major undergraduates in our university's required Research Methods II class; the students translating were native speakers of Turkish. The translations by the undergraduate students were reviewed by a graduate student native speaker of Turkish in the sociology master's program. She revised the scale and other items for clearer Turkish grammar and for greater comprehension by our Turkish speaking respondents.

The survey included several independent variables: age, level of schooling, gender, region of origin in Turkey, political party preference, level of support for sports teams, support for Turkish exceptionalism, and ethnic identity. Some of these variables need little explanation while others call for clarification. Age, level of schooling, gender, political party preference, and ethnic identity are common variables found useful in sociological research. However, the variables "where are you from," "sports fanaticism," and "Turkish exceptionalism" are less common.

Turkey has experienced high levels of internal migration over the last 60 years[25], with the bulk of the migrants ending up in Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, and other urban regions of Western Turkey. But when one asks someone in Turkey, "Where are you from?" they answer not with where they currently reside, but with the region or province from which they or their families emigrated. Even after two or more generations, people maintain a strong identity with their region of origin.

As in many other societies, football [for Americans: soccer] is wildly popular in Turkey and many people express strong levels of support for and identification with various professional football teams. One item on the survey asked respondents to locate themselves on a scale ranging from "fanatic" support for a sports team to hating sports. We inquired whether fanaticism in sports were related to social distance to 'others,' that is, whether fanaticism is generic. If one is fanatic in one realm is one also fanatic in other areas?

Turkish exceptionalism, parallel to American exceptionalism, is a stance that holds that the Turkish society and nation are unique and that Turkish society and culture are qualitatively superior to those of other nations. Further, exceptionalism involves a moral calculus holding that the Republic of Turkey as a nation has a duty and a responsibility to guide or shepherd other nations. An item on the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a statement that claims that Turkey is unique and superior to its neighbors; agreement to this statement was taken to indicate support for Turkish exceptionalism.

The survey instrument was pre-tested on a happenstance sample of university students. Minor revisions to some items were made for greater clarity. The revised version of the questionnaire was administered to respondents in municipalities throughout Istanbul by students enrolled in the English track in our university's sociology undergraduate program. Each student was instructed to recruit at least 20 respondents. The students were told that their respondents could include no students from our university nor members of their families, that no more than 11 of their 20 respondents could be of one sex, that their respondents could include no one under the age of 18, and that approximately one third of their respondents should fall within the age ranges of young adult, adult, and elderly. Students read an informed consent form to respondents and administered the questionnaire face to face in May 2011. The students gathered a total of 999 completed questionnaires. The questionnaire responses were coded and stored in an SPSS file. All data analysis was conducted using SPSS.

III.   PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA
3.1 Description of the Sample and the Identities
3.1.1. The respondents

Our respondents come from nearly every municipality of Istanbul, although they tend to come from municipalities where our university student dormitories are located or from municipalities where our students reside. The number of respondents per municipality range from a low of one (from Merter or Çatalca, for example), to 39 from Üsküdar, 49 from Başakşehir, 50 from Baçhelievler, 113 from Acvılar, to a high of 152 from Beylikdüzü. While our sample comes from many parts of Istanbul, it is not representative of the geographical distribution of the city's population.

The 999 respondents were divided nearly equally between women (51%) and men (49%). The respondents' ages were concentrated in the age category 19-35 (45%), followed by 33.7% in the category 36-60 and 15.5% over the age of 60 with the remaining 5.7% under the age of 19. Nearly half the respondents reported more than 12 years of schooling (46.1%), with nearly a third (31.6%) reporting between nine and twelve years of schooling; the remaining 22.2% report fewer than nine years of schooling.

Turkey has traditionally been divided into seven geographical regions. Nearly a third of our respondents (31.4%) chose the Marmara region as their region of origin; almost one fifth (19.3%) chose the Karadeniz region; other regions were less frequently chosen: the region identified as their place of origin by the smallest percentage (5.5%) was the Akdeniz region. Although western and northern Turkey are over-

represented as places of origin among our respondents, the sample includes substantial numbers of people identifying each of Turkey's seven regions as "where they are from."

Respondents were asked to identify themselves with one of ten ethnic identities. Nearly 70% selected Turkish as their identity while more than nine percent selected Kurdish. Other identities selected ranged from 5.2% for Laz and 3.0% for Arabs, to less than one percent for either Armenian or Romen (Gypsie); 3.6% chose "other" as their preferred ethnic identity.

More than half (56.2%) of our respondents chose AKP [Justice and Development Party] as their party preference, 14.0% chose CHP [Republican People's Party], 7.9% selected MHP [Nationalist Movement Party], 3.1% chose BDP [Peace and Democracy Party], and 18.7% selected "hiçbiri" [none] or "diğerleri" [other].[26] Our sample shows political preferences similar to the political party preferences of the voters of Istanbul.

Respondents varied widely on their support for sports teams: 21.9% described themselves as fanatic supporters, while a slightly larger percentage (29.5%) described themselves as not interested in sports teams; 42.5% said they were interested but not fanatic and 6.0% report hating sports teams.

Respondents also varied in their support for Turkish superiority or exceptionalism. Of the respondents, 11.0% reject or strongly reject the notion of Turkish exceptionalism while 45.4% describe their support as moderate. A total of 43.6% either support or strongly support the idea of Turkish superiority to other nations.

We measured the social distance of four categories of 'others' in our study: ethnic groups in Turkey, foreigners in Turkey, religious identities in Turkey, and homosexuals. Our respondents varied greatly in their attitudes towards these four 'others.'

3.1.2. Major ethnic groups in Turkey

Our respondents generally expressed positive attitudes towards Turks in Turkey: 69.9% stated they would accept Turks as members of their families by marriage and another 14.5% would accept Turks as close friends. That is, nearly 85% would be comfortable with Turks in the two closest social distance categories.

Attitudes towards Kurds in Turkey fell into a very different pattern: only 13.8% of the respondents expressed willingness to accept Kurds as members of the family by marriage while 16.5% were comfortable with Kurds as close friends. A total of 22.1% of the respondents chose the social distance of excluding Kurds from the country entirely while another 7.8% would permit Kurds to visit Turkey as tourists. That is, 29.9% of the respondents chose the two most distant social distance categories for Kurds.

3.1.2.1. Foreigners in Turkey

Attitudes towards the groups chosen to represent Foreigners in Turkey (Americans, Arabs, Chinese, Greeks, Iranians, and Russians) showed much variation. Table 1 summarizes the responses. Respondents expressed high social distance towards each group of foreigners: one may sum the two highest social distance categories (admit to country as tourist and exclude from country) as an indicator of high social distance. Of the six foreigner identities, Arabs have the lowest social distance; nonetheless nearly 41% of our respondents place Arabs in one of the two highest social distance categories. A slightly higher percentage, 41.7%, of respondents place Iranians in one of the two highest categories. Between 53.7% (Americans) and 70.3% (Greeks) of the respondents place the remaining four foreigner groups in the two highest social distance categories.

Table 1. Percentage of Respondents Expressing Each Social Distance Category towards Foreigners in Turkey

Social Distance Category	Foreigners in Turkey					
	Americans[27]	Arabs	Chinese	Greeks	Russians	Iranians
Family by Marriage	6.8	7.0	3.5	3.7	7.6	7.8
Close Friend	13.9	18.6	10.8	6.4	8.2	19.6
Neighbor	7.8	12.9	7.4	7.4	6.2	13.2
Co-Worker	11.9	8.4	14.4	5.4	7.7	7.7
Citizen	5.9	12.5	5.7	6.8	6.2	10.0
Tourist	41.2	33.5	46.4	40.9	45.7	32.7
Exclude from Country	12.5	7.1	11.9	29.4	18.5	9.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.0	100.1	100.

The groups with the lowest social distance (willingness to accept a member of the group into my family by marriage) were the Russians and Iranians (each with 7.6%) followed closely by Arabs (7.0%). These data on foreigners show overall markedly high social distance.

3.1.2.2. Religious Identities

The respondents expressed very different attitudes towards the three religious identities measured. Expressed social distance towards Jews and atheists were similar. Very few respondents were willing to accept Jews (1.0%) or atheists (2.2%) as members of their families by marriage. A slightly larger percentage was willing to accept members of these religious identities as close friends (Jews, 4.3%; atheists, 4.7%).

Large percentages of the respondents expressed an unwillingness to accept members of these two groups as citizens of Turkey (Jews, 84.3%; atheists, 76.4%). While both groups are stigmatized by our respondents, negative attitudes towards Jews seem stronger than those towards atheists.

The respondents expressed much more favorable attitudes towards Dindar or "religious people." A total of 40.1% of the respondents expressed willingness to accept Dindar as members of the family by marriage and another 23.1% were open to close friendships with the Dindar. Interestingly, 8.6% of the respondents were unwilling for the Dindar to be citizens of Turkey. We did not ask our respondents for their own religious identity, but we assume that many if not most would self-identify as religious or observant. Thus the large percentage of respondents with positive attitudes towards religious people is not surprising. The strong negative attitudes towards atheists, who are often understood to be hostile to religion, are also not surprising. However, the very negative attitudes towards Jews are more puzzling and call for further investigation.

3.1.2.3. Homosexuals

Our respondents expressed the greatest social distance for homosexuals of all the 'others' measured in our survey: more than two-thirds (66.8%) of the respondents chose to exclude homosexuals from Turkey entirely; another 15.1% would permit homosexuals only to visit Turkey as tourists. Fewer than 10% of the respondents chose a social distance for homosexuals that entailed social interaction [accept into family via marriage (0.9%), as a close friend (4.4%), as a neighbor (2.9%), or as a co-worker (1.0%)]: 90% preferred no interaction at all with homosexuals. Homosexuals join Jews and atheists as the three 'others' with the greatest social distance among our Istanbul respondents.

3.2 Analysis of the Data

Relationships among our variables were explored using several statistical tests appropriate for nominal and ordinal variables. The chi square test for independence (χ^2) identified pairs of variables that were associated, then lambda (λ, for pairs of nominal variables) and gamma (γ) and Kendall's tau-b (τ_b) (for pairs of ordinal variables) were used to measure the strength of association of variables found to be related. For all statistical tests, the level of significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$ or smaller.

We explored the relationships among several independent variables (age, gender, level of schooling, region of origin, political party preference, level of sports support, acceptance of Turkish exceptionalism, and respondent's ethnicity) and four dependent variables (social distance towards ethnic groups in Turkey, towards foreigners, towards religious identities, and towards homosexuals). Now we look at each of these in turn.

3.2.1. Social Distance towards Ethnic Groups in Turkey

For this analysis, the ethnic groups in Turkey were re-coded into three categories: Turks, Kurds, and others; our analysis focuses on expressed social distance towards Turks and Kurds.

1. Social Distance towards Turks

The dominant, normative, and most prevalent ethnic identity in today's Turkey is 'Turkish.' Within our sample of respondents, 69.4% self-identify as Turkish. There is little surprise, then, to find that most respondents express high acceptance of social interaction with Turks. Similarly, there is little association between any of the independent variables and social distance towards Turks. Table 2 summarizes the statistical analysis.

There were no significant relationships between the independent variables and social distance towards Turks, except for region of origin and respondent's ethnicity. For example, willingness to admit Turks to the family by marriage (the lowest social distance category) ranges from a low of 53% in 'Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi' (Southeastern Anatolia Region), to a high of 76% in 'Karadeniz Bölgesi' (The Black Sea Region). The southeastern region of Turkey, in some sense, has more of a regional rather than a national orientation: it serves as the borderland between Arabic and Turkic cultural regions. The black sea region is widely recognized as a center of Turkish nationalism[28]. Not surprisingly, respondents reporting Turkish ethnicity express much lower social distance toward Turks than do respondents choosing other ethnicities.

Table 2. Relations between Independent Variables and Social Distance towards Turks

Variable	Chi Square value	Degrees of freedom	Level of Significance	Lambda	Level of Significance	Gamma	Level of Significance	Tau-b	Level of Significance
Age	24.662	18	.135	.005	.317	-.085	.097	-.047	.097
Level of Schooling	12.241	12	.427	.004	.564	.028	.586	.015	.586
Gender	1.290	12	1.000	.005	.752	NA	NA	NA	NA
Region of Origin	60.510[29]	36	.006	.004	.206	NA	NA	NA	NA
Political Party Preference	45.788	30	.033	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sport Support	12.892	18	.798	.000	NA	-.032	.523	-.019	.523
Exceptionalism	23.924	24	.466	NA	NA	.002	.968	.001	.968
Respondent's Ethnicity	32.340	12	.001	.019	.205	NA	NA	NA	NA

2.   Social Distance towards Kurds

Kurds are the largest ethnic minority group in Turkey. The attitudes of our respondents towards Kurds differ markedly from those towards the dominant ethnic group. Table 3 summarizes the statistical relationships between our independent variables and expressed social distance towards Kurds.

Attitudes of our respondents expressed toward Kurds were quite different than those towards Turks. Several independent variables are significantly related to expressed social distance attitudes toward Kurds: age, level of schooling, region of origin, political party preference, sport support, exceptionalism, and respondent's ethnicity each vary with respondent's attitudes toward Kurds.

Table 3. Relations between Independent Variables and Social Distance towards Kurds

Variable	Chi Square value	Degrees of freedom	Level of Significance	Lambda	Level of Significance	Gamma	Level of Significance	Tau-b	Level of Significance
Age	31.163	18	.028	.027	.094	-.034	.375	-.025	.375
Level of Schooling	21.260	12	.047	.007	.620	-.045	.263	-.033	.263
Gender	19.328	12	.081	.028	.312	NA	NA	NA	NA
Region of Origin	124.534	36	.000	.049	.012	NA	NA	NA	NA
Political Party Preference	133.603	30	.000	.045	.000	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sport Support	30.441	18	.033	.019	.041	-.133	.000	-.100	.000
Exceptionalism	46.243	24	.004	.020	.131	.073	.051	.056	.051
Respondent's Ethnicity	55.499	12	.000	.079	.046	NA	NA	NA	NA

The greater the age or level of schooling, the more likely the respondent is to express negative social distance preferences towards Kurds, although the relationship is weak. Intolerance towards Kurds increases both with age and with education. We speculate that the indoctrination into a 'master narrative' of the history of the Republic of Turkey in all levels of schooling may account for the increase in intolerance with increased schooling.

Respondents who report region of origin in eastern and southeastern Turkey express more positive attitudes towards Kurds as do those respondents who report Kurdish ethnicity. Neither of these findings is surprising since these regions were historically part of the Kurdish homeland.

Respondents' reported political party preference, level of sport support, and endorsement of Turkish exceptionalism are each significantly related to social distance towards Kurds. Willingness to admit Kurds to one's family by marriage varies significantly with expressed political party preference. Only 7% of respondents who prefer MHP [Nationalist Movement Party] are willing to accept Kurds into their families; on the other

hand, 76% of those who endorse BDP [Peace and Democracy Party] welcome Kurds into their family by marriage. In between these extremes, 12% of those who support AKP [Justice and Development Party], 13% of the respondents who choose 'others' or 'none,' and 10% of the respondents selecting CHP [Republic People's Party] as their preferred party welcome Kurds into their families.

Except for supporters of BDP, few of our respondents chose the lowest social distance, a willingness to admit Kurds into their family by marriage. Complementary to these results, political party preference is also related to attitudes to exclude Kurds from the Republic of Turkey altogether, even to deny Kurds the right to visit Turkey as tourists. For example, 37% of those who support MHP choose to exclude Kurds from Turkey, 30% of those who support CHP, 21% of those who support none or other, and 18% of those who support AKP also express a preference to exclude Kurds from Turkey. Even though TurkStat, the official Turkish Statistical Institute, does not report the percent of Kurds in the Republic of Turkey, reliable estimates state that as many as 18% of the citizens of Turkey are Kurdish[30]. That such large percentages of our respondents would choose to exclude Kurds from Turkey is noteworthy; further, these findings suggest low support for satisfying requests by Kurdish citizens of Turkey for full citizenship and participation in the social and cultural life of the republic.

Clearly, political party preference among our Istanbul respondents is connected to attitudes towards the place of ethnicity in the Turkish republic. Level of sport fanaticism is also related to attitudes towards Kurds: the more fanatic our respondents in their support for a sports club, the more intolerant they are towards Kurds.

3. Social Distance towards Foreigners in Turkey

The importance of tourism is highly significant for the Turkish economy. In addition, large numbers of foreigners reside in Istanbul and other areas in Turkey. These foreigners participate in Turkey's strong economy, or study at Turkish universities, or come to Turkey for their retirement, or find themselves in Turkey because of marriage or for other reasons. People in Istanbul respond to foreigners in a variety of ways, a variety reflected in the social distance preferences towards foreigners expressed by our respondents.

Only three of our independent variables are significantly related to social distance attitudes towards foreigners: level of schooling, support for exceptionalism, and respondent's ethnicity (see Table 4). Gamma and Kendal's tau-b show a weak but significant negative relationship between level of schooling and social distance towards foreigners: as level of schooling increases, social distance towards foreigners decreases. That education is related to tolerance brings a smile to the faces of educators[31].

Support for exceptionalism is significantly related to social distance; again, gamma and Kendal's tau-b show a significant but weak negative relationship between support for exceptionalism and social distance. As exceptionalism increases, tolerance decreases. Respondent's ethnicity is also significantly related to social distance. Respondents who identified as Turks showed less tolerance than those who identified as Kurds or 'Others.'

Table 4. Relations between Independent Variables and Social Distance towards Six Foreign Identities

Variable	Chi Square value	Degrees of freedom	Level of Significance	Lambda	Level of Significance	Gamma	Level of Significance	Tau-b	Level of Significance
Age	16.156	18	.582	NA	NA	.034	.419	.025	.419
Level of Schooling	19.898	12	.069	NA	NA	-.135	.002	-.094	.002
Gender	10.568	12	.566	.018	.211	NA	NA	NA	NA
Region of Origin	38.092	36	.374	.004	.606	NA	NA	NA	NA
Political Party Preference	43.381	30	.054	.002	803	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sport Support	18.597	18	.147	NA	NA	-.021	.616	-.015	.616
Exceptionalism	52.054	24	.001	.004	.205	-.102	.014	-.074	.014
Respondent's Ethnicity	21.336	12	.046	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Social Distance towards Religious Groups
4. Social Distance towards 'Dindar'—the Observant

Three independent variables are significantly related with social distance towards religiously observant people in Turkey—the 'Dindar:' level of schooling, political party preference, and support for exceptionalism (see Table 5). In addition, while the calculated Chi square values did not reach significance, the gamma and Kendal's tau-b measures of association for ordinal variables show a significant but weak relationship between sport fanaticism and social distance.

Respondents with fewer than nine years of schooling were somewhat more accepting of intimate relationships with the Dindar (66%) than were those with high school (60%) or more than high school (63%) education. These differences however are quite modest. The relationship between sports fanaticism and social distance is also significant but weak. The relationship indicates that the stronger ones sports fanaticism, the more welcoming one is to the Dindar.

Table 5. Relations between Independent Variables and Social Distance towards 'Dindar'

Variable	Chi Square value	Degrees of freedom	Level of Significance	Lambda	Level of Significance	Gamma	Level of Significance	Tau-b	Level of Significance
Age	21.650	18	.248	.004	.753	.030	.462	.021	.462
Level of Schooling	23.016	12	.028	.001	.929	-.027	.515	-.019	.525
Gender	11.495	12	.487	.028	.182	NA	NA	NA	AN
Region of Origin	45.648	36	.129	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Political Party Preference	167.934	30	.000	.028	.003	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sport Support	27.784	18	.065	.002	.705	-.128	.001	-.092	.001
Exceptionalism	133.720	24	.000	.017	.002	.297	.000	.216	.000
Respondent's Ethnicity	13.775	12	.315	.007	.705	NA	NA	NA	NA

The relationship between political party preference and social distance towards the Dindar is more pronounced. While 73% of AKP supporters and 73% of 'other parties' chose the lowest social distance categories for the Dinar, only 36% of CHP supporters and 44% of BDP supporters expressed willingness to welcome a Dindar person into their family by marriage or as a close friend. Many commentators suggest that the political process in Turkey has strong religious dimensions; the AKP, for example, is said to represent and act on the interests of conservative and observant Muslims while the CHP represents and acts for secular or liberal Muslims in Turkey.

Support for exceptionalism is also related to social distance. Again, the relationship is striking: those expressing the two strongest levels of support for exceptionalism have the most accepting attitude towards the Dindar: 71% of these respondents welcome the Dindar to the most intimate social distance categories. However, those expressing the two lowest levels of support for exceptionalism show the highest social distance towards the Dindar (27% and 36% respectively).

Table 6. Cross-tabulation of Political Party Preference and Support for Turkish Exceptionalism.

Support for Turkish Exceptionalism	Political Party						
	AKP	BDP	CHP	MHP	Other	None	Totals
Very High	127	2	6	8	8	15	166
High	188	8	19	16	13	23	267
Neutral	227	10	71	46	35	63	452
Low	16	7	31	7	6	16	83
Very Low	3	4	12	2	2	4	27
Totals	561	31	139	79	64	121	995

This relationship led us to ask whether support for exceptionalism were related to political party preference. Table 6 shows the cross-tabulation of these two variables. The Chi square statistic was calculated to determine if party preference and support for exceptionalism were independent. The calculated Chi square = 168.122, df = 20, sig. = 0.000; the two variables are related. Of the respondents who supported AKP, 56% either

supported or strongly supported exceptionalism. On the other hand, only 18% of the respondents who preferred the CHP supported or strongly supported exceptionalism. The supporters of BDP (32 %) and of MHP (31 %) were situated between these two poles. We did not ask any questions to measure the phenomenon, but the connection between exceptionalism and a political party often tied to neo-Ottomanism and to Islamist movements calls for sociological exploration. Many political analysts and commentators have described connections among the growth of religious conservatism in Turkey, aspirations for a Turkish regional political hegemony modeled on an Ottoman pattern, and calls for the reestablishment of the caliphate with a location in Turkey[32].

5. Social Distance towards Jews

Our respondents expressed little tolerance for Jews; Jews, atheists and homosexuals received the very highest social distance scores of all the 'others' measured. Our respondents' age, level of schooling, political party preference and support for exceptionalism were each related to social distance for Jews (see Table 7). Although the measures of association are weak or not significant, generally, as age of respondent increases, intolerance towards Jews increases. Level of schooling has the opposite relationship: increased schooling was related significantly if weakly to increased tolerance.

Table 7. Relations between Independent Variables and Social Distance towards Jews

Variable	Chi Square value	Degrees of freedom	Level of Significance	Lambda	Level of Significance	Gamma	Level of Significance	Tau -b	Level of Significance
Age	29.016	18	.048	NA	NA	.081	.098	.050	.098
Level of Schooling	26.267	12	.014	NA	NA	-.193	.000	-.118	.000
Gender	13.942	12	.304	.031	.303	NA	NA	NA	NA
Region of Origin	41.295	36	.250	.004	.537	NA	NA	NA	NA
Political Party Preference	74.735	30	.000	.005	.493	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sport Support	19.773	18	.346	.001	.705	.037	.417	.024	.417
Exceptionalism	48.969	24	.002	.002	.655	-.063	.176	-.040	.176
Respondent's Ethnicity	13.355	12	.344	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Political party preference and intolerance towards Jews were significantly related. One may review the percent of respondents of each party preference who choose "exclude from country" as their preferred social distance as an indicator of intolerance towards Jews. The political party preference that ranked most intolerant was AKP (60% preferred to exclude Jews from Turkey) while BDP (42 %) and CHP (46 %) were ranked least intolerant.

Support for exceptionalism was also significantly related to social distance towards Jews. Of the respondents expressing the strongest support for Turkish exceptionalism, 64 % prefer that Jews be excluded from Turkey, not even coming as tourists. However, more than half of those showing less or no support for Turkish exceptionalism prefer to exclude Jews from the country,

6. Social Distance towards Atheists

Atheists join Jews and homosexuals to make up the social identities which receive the least tolerance by our respondents. More than half (59. 6 %) of our respondents would exclude atheists from Turkey and another 16.8 % would permit them only to visit Turkey as tourists. Only 7.0 % of our respondents would welcome atheists as members of their family by marriage or as close friends. Further, social distance towards atheists is related to five of our independent variables: age, level of schooling, political party preference, Turkish exceptionalism, and respondent's ethnicity (see Table 8 for details).

Again, while the association is weak, there is a significant direct relationship between age and intolerance towards atheists: the older the respondent, the less likely the respondent is to welcome atheists to intimate social relations. Level of schooling, however, has the opposite relation: as level of schooling increases, tolerance towards atheists increases.

There are significant relationships between political party preference and social distance towards atheists and between respondent's ethnicity and tolerance of atheists. Among both the supporters of AKP and of MHP, more than two-thirds of the respondents (67 %) would exclude atheists from Turkey; an additional 19 % (MHP) and 15 % (AKP) would permit atheists only as visitors to Turkey. The supporters of BDP (44 %), CHP (43 %), and those with no political preference (45 %) are the most tolerant of atheists, although one noted that close to half of the supporters of each of these parties would also exclude atheists from Turkey.

Table 8. Relations between Independent Variables and Social Distance towards Atheists

Variable	Chi Square value	Degrees of freedom	Level of Significance	Lambda	Level of Significance	Gamma	Level of Significance	Tau-b	Level of Significance
Age	30.717	18	.031	NA	NA	.121	.012	.075	.012
Level of Schooling	37.656	12	.000	NA	NA	-.268	.000	-.163	.000
Gender	10.207	12	.598	.0005	.862	NA	NA	NA	NA
Region of Origin	43.840	36	.173	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Political Party Preference	81.507	30	.000	.009	.034	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sport Support	28.588	18	.054	.003	.491	.042	.353	.027	.353
Exceptionalism	177.474	24	.000	.0008	.236	-.254	.000	-.166	.000
Respondent's Ethnicity	23.838	12	.021	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Support for Turkish exceptionalism and respondent's ethnicity is also related to social distance towards atheists among our respondents. As support for exceptionalism increases, tolerance towards atheists decreases. Further, respondents who identified as Kurds and as Turks were more likely to choose to exclude atheist from Turkey (78 % and 80 % respectively) than were respondents of other ethnic identities (46 %).

7.   Social Distance towards Homosexuals

Homosexuals were the social identity which received the greatest intolerance of the groups studied: fully two-thirds of our respondents (66.8 %) preferred to exclude homosexuals from Turkey while another 15.1 % would permit homosexuals to visit Turkey for short periods as tourists only. Less than 1 % of the respondents would accept homosexuals into their families by marriage and fewer than one in twenty (4.4 %) would welcome homosexuals as close friends.

Table 8. Relations between Independent Variables and Social Distance towards Homosexuals

Variable	Chi Square value	Degrees of freedom	Level of Significance	Lambda	Level of Significance	Gamma	Level of Significance	Tau-b	Level of Significance
Age	26.553	18	.088	NA	NA	.127	.015	.073	.015
Level of Schooling	28.318	12	.005	.004	.179	-.187	.000	-.106	.000
Gender	17.081	12	.147	.012	.745	NA	NA	NA	NA
Region of Origin	38.809	36	.621	.004	.371	NA	NA	NA	NA
Political Party Preference	113.933	30	.000	.015	.058	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sport Support	36.977	18	.005	.006	.515	.110	.029	.065	.029
Exceptionalism	177.102	24	.000	.008	.133	-.260	.000	-.156	.000
Respondent's Ethnicity	28.026	12	.005	.010	.179	NA	NA	NA	NA

Six of our independent variables show a relationship with social distance towards homosexuals: age, level of schooling, political party preference, sport fanaticism, support for Turkish exceptionalism, and respondent's ethnicity. Again, age and level of schooling show opposite relationships: as age increases, intolerance increases; on the other hand, as level of schooling increases, intolerance decreases.

Respondent's who indicated support for different political parties differ in their intolerance towards homosexuals. Supporters of AKP and MHP show the highest intolerance towards homosexuals (74 % and 73 % respectively); supporters of CHP show the least intolerance (47 %), while other political party supporters range between these extremes. If one looks at tolerance rather than intolerance, the pattern persists. While 29 % of the supporters of BDP and 15 % of the supporters of CHP would welcome homosexuals either as close friends or as members of their families by marriage, only 2 % of the supporters of AKP and 3 % of the supporters of MHP would do the same.

Sports fanaticism and support for Turkish exceptionalism are also related to intolerance towards homosexuals: there is a weak but significant direct relationship between fanaticism and intolerance towards homosexuals; on the contrary, there is a weak but significant indirect relationship between exceptionalism and intolerance. That is, as sports fanaticism increases, intolerance increases, but as exceptionalism increases, intolerance decreases.

Respondents reported ethnic identification is also related to levels of social distance towards homosexuals. Both Kurds (67 %) and Turks (61 %) are more likely to choose to exclude homosexuals from Turkey than are respondents who indicate other ethic identities.

The level of intolerance for homosexuals among our respondents is surprising. Istanbul has an active gay subculture, with bars, clubs and hamams openly serving both domestic and foreign customers. Further, the Ottoman Empire was noted for a relatively open stance towards homosexuals. On the other hand, both religiously conservative and culturally traditional families are vocal in their condemnation of homosexuality and homosexuals.

The practice of 'honor killings' by family members of men who acknowledge their homosexuality is rarely reported in Turkish media, although many experts suggest that killings of homosexual family members may equal one-twentieth of the number of killings of female family members[33].

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Our May 2011 survey of 999 residents of Istanbul reveals a high level of intolerance towards members of many social identities in Turkey. With the exception of people perceived to be ethnically 'Turkish' or 'Dindar' (religiously observant), the respondents rejected close social interaction with other ethnic, national, religious or sexual identities. Further, large percentages of our respondents preferred that members of these 'other' identities be excluded entirely from Turkey, not even permitting those 'others' to enter the country as tourists. Intolerance is alive and thriving among these Istanbul residents.

While our study examines only one point in time, there is reason to believe that both intolerance and hostile acts based on intolerance is increasing in Turkey, as it is in other areas of the Middle East. The 'Arab Spring' was welcomed by many as marking the replacement of autocratic regimes with more democratic political structures. However, the fall of autocratic regimes in the region has also been accompanied too often by a break-down of long-standing patterns and structures of inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance and accommodation. Recent events in Iraq and on-going events in Syria are two striking examples of upsurges of intolerance and violence towards persons of differing ethnic or religious identities. The recent increase in violence between forces of the Turkish state and Kurdish activists may fit this pattern.

Our data show significant relationships among several independent variables and social distance. Age regularly has an indirect relationship with tolerance: as age increases, tolerance decreases. Education has the opposite effect: as level of schooling increases, tolerance increases. Sports fanaticism shows a direct relationship with intolerance among some social 'others' but not with all others. In general, however, as fanaticism in supporting sports teams increases, so too does intolerance. Region of origin shows little relationship to social distance, except for tolerance for Turks and intolerance for Kurds. Gender has no significant relationship to social distance among our respondents.

The variables with the strongest and most consistent relationship to tolerance are political party preference and Turkish exceptionalism. Further, we find that these two variables are themselves related. The association between political party preference and tolerance holds for nearly all the 'others' in our study. Of our respondents, those who support two political parties, AKP and MHP, show significant levels of intolerance for Kurds, for foreigners, for two of the religious identities (Jews and atheists), and for the sexual minority (homosexuals). Supporters of two other parties, BDP and CHP, show much stronger levels of tolerance towards these same groups. For intolerance and intolerance to take on a partisan hue is disturbing. Demonizing others is not a strategy that fosters the development of democracy. This relationship is made more disturbing when one

notes the concordance between AKP and the Dindar: intolerance is further strengthened by drawing on religious justifications.

The relationship between support for Turkish exceptionalism and social distance follows the same pattern as that between political party social distance. Supporters of AKP and MHP score high on Turkish exceptionalism and those who score high on exceptionalism also exhibit high levels of intolerance (except for Turks and the Dindar). This suggests that Turkish exceptionalism may be an adaption of neo-Ottomanism, with political and religious actors seeking a reinvigoration of the powerful role played by the Ottoman Empire but now dressed in the garments of the Republic of Turkey. The connection between exceptionalism and the positive valuation of the Dindar raises the question of whether this cluster of relationships also points to an Islamist energizing of people who show intolerance for so many others. That is, our data suggest that many of our Istanbul respondents prefer a Turkey that is mono-ethnic, mono-religious, hetero-normative, and protected from foreign influences.

Our study is exploratory and our conclusions tentative. However, our results strongly support the need for further study of the levels of tolerance and intolerance and the factors that promote tolerance and limit intolerance. Our study was restricted to one point in time: repeated studies are called for. Our study queried only residence of Istanbul: studies to see if Istanbul is typical of the rest of Turkey or whether regional variations exist would be useful. Events in other countries of the region make urgent efforts to understand the forces that promote tolerance and facilitate inter-ethnic and inter-religious cooperation not only in Turkey but in neighboring countries imperative.

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