Boundaries of Brotherhood

Syrian Refugee Reception and
National Identity Contestation in Turkey

PhD Thesis

European Institute

London School of Economics and Political Science

Friedrich Püttmann

Istanbul, 30 September 2024

To my parents

Declaration

I hereby certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This thesis may not be reproduced without my prior written consent.

I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

Following the regulations for research degrees of the LSE's Academic Board from June 2024, I declare that the word count of my thesis is below 100,000.

Note: This copy of my thesis is the copy I was examined on, not a redacted one.

Abstract

Theory suggests that citizens' religious and ethnic identities shape how inclusive they are towards refugees. This thesis investigates the case of Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees.

It draws on three years of fieldwork, 115 in-depth interviews with neighbourhood chiefs (*muhtars*) in three Turkish cities (Izmir, Konya, Şanlıurfa), and a nationally representative original survey of 2,539 participants, including an experiment.

Previous research has found Turkish citizens' relation to Syrian refugees to be "paradoxical", fluctuating between inclusion and exclusion. Using a framework of social and symbolic boundaries, this thesis resolves this paradox by identifying a split between the two boundary types in this case.

The thesis argues that Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities make little difference in shaping their *social* boundaries with Syrian refugees, i.e. their willingness to interact with them, but do make a difference for their *symbolic* boundaries, i.e. their willingness to accept Syrian refugees as part of Turkey.

Socially, exclusion is prevalent and notably justified by specific narratives for each identity: secular Turks "defend Turkey's freedom and modernity" against conservative Muslim Syrians; religiously conservative Turks "prove their Muslimness" by excluding "fake Muslim" Syrians; and ethnically Kurdish or Arab Turkish citizens may care for their relatives from Syria, but may view privileging all co-ethnics as "racist".

In the case of symbolic boundaries, religiously conservative Turkish citizens are more inclusive of the refugees than secular ones, while ethnically Kurdish or Arab Turkish citizens are more inclusive than ethnic Turks. This inclusion does not result from feelings of cultural proximity, however, but from the quest of Turkey's historically marginalised to change the boundaries of Turkish national identity, redefining its meaning and thereby enhancing their *own* position within it.

Turkey's Syrian refugee reception is thus a new arena of its national identity contestation, reflecting – like elsewhere – struggles over recognition, belonging, and dominance.

(300 words, as required)

Acknowledgements

Many people seem to use the acknowledgements of their PhD thesis as an opportunity to reflect to some extent on their overall experience of their PhD journey. But my fear is that if I were to do this here, it would probably result in another book of its own, so many and rich are all the anecdotes that come with three years of living in Turkey and so many are the things that I feel I could say about these past four years and about what has been a very special experience, indeed. Above all, though, I am just truly thankful to have been able to have had this experience and for all the personal discoveries it has allowed me to make: of knowledge and ideas but even more so of places, people, and myself. From discussing refugees near the Syrian border to discussing Turkey in the midst of Washington, DC; from being called *Fikret* in Istanbul to being called *Frédéric* in Paris; and from the *muhtars* who took me into their homes to Zeynep who took me into her heart – these four years had it all, and I am grateful for every moment, happy or painful. Therefore, it is this gratitude that I would like to focus on in these lines.

To begin with, I would like to thank the London School of Economics, its European Institute, and the Hamburg Foundation for the Advancement of Academia and the Arts for making all of this financially possible. Without the LSE PhD Studentship and the Foundation's generous research grants, this PhD would not have been possible for me in this way, and I feel deeply honoured and grateful to have been selected for this and to have had this opportunity. It has meant the world to me, and I shall hope to be able to give back through the knowledge it has given me and the person it has made me. In the same vein, I would also like to thank the European Institute at the LSE as well as the Center for International Studies (CERI) at Sciences Po Paris, the French Institute for Anatolian Studies (IFEA) in Istanbul, and the Istanbul Policy Center at Sabancı University for having been such welcoming academic homes to me and for having given me all the support I received from them on my research mission. Doing a PhD can be a lonely exercise at times, especially during a global pandemic such as Covid-19, and so the value of having one's 'crowd', be it on screens or side-by-side, becomes even clearer. In the same sense, I would also like to thank my wonderful PhD colleagues in London, Paris, and Istanbul for having been that 'home' to me and for making me feel alive and sane, be it in moments of laughter or moments of distress. Their names are too many to list them all, but they know who they are, and they hopefully know that I cannot wait to have lunch with them again. Finally, speaking of home, I would also like to thank my housemate Özge in Istanbul, not only for teaching me what a struggle it means to be a queer Arab Turkish woman in the Turkey of today, but above all, for being my friend and companion during the many years we

shared our house together on Cihangir Caddesi as well as everyone who has given me another loving home to write my thesis from, including the people of the *Sis & Bros Cihangir* café in Istanbul who welcomed me as their new neighbour and friend and to whom I owe much of my Turkish skills; Gillian and Graham Young in London who rented out a room to me and became 'my English parents'; Paul Linnarz in Washington, DC who made it possible for me to discover the think tank world of the American capital and discuss my research with its Turkey analysts; my mother in Medingen who has been the place I know I can always return to and feel at home; and Zeynep in Gaziantep who makes me feel at home no matter where we are. All that said, my Istanbul home would not have been complete without the regular care from Suna Abla and Gülay Abla who kept me healthy and gave me comfort no matter the day or week. Gülay Abla's sudden passing away towards the end of my PhD came as a deep shock and has shown me what many people in Turkey have always reminded me of: that life can be terribly short and we must always appreciate its value. I deeply wish for Gülay to rest in peace, and to everyone else, I can only warmly recommend to have lunch at *Hanımeli* in Istanbul one day. And when you do, please say Hi from *Alman Fikret* ☺.

This thesis is a study of Turkish society and it would not have been possible without the contribution of so many individuals. To every single *muhtar* who sat down with me, trusted me, and shared their views with me, I say: *Teşekkür ederim*, it is through you that this thesis project came to life. As is the nature of every academic analysis, your views are the subject of an investigation that may come with inherent critique just as much as it follows my quest to understand your point of view. But while we may differ in view at times, we will always be united by our shared interest to meet and talk. Therefore, whatever critical comments this thesis may in part make, too, none of this ever undermines my personal appreciation of every one of you for the fact that you were open to meeting with me and telling me what you think. *Eyvallah*. The same thanks go to the team of KONDA, the Turkish polling institute that meticulously designed with me and carefully implemented every single bit of the nationally representative survey I had the chance to conduct for this thesis, and to every Turkish citizen who, despite the tense times we live in, took the time to answer the survey and thereby generated my data. Without these people, there would be none of my original insights on the following pages. In the same vein, I am also deeply indebted to, Sadi Kutlu Özbay and Sina Tekin, the two Turkish research assistants my grant allowed me to employ for a careful transcription of every single anonymised interview. I know how very, very tedious the work is you have done for me, but I hope you know, too, how very vital and central it has been to making this research possible.

Finally, very special thanks go to Rita Astuti and Kemal Kirişçi for making my stays in Turkey possible, even when doing so almost seemed impossible.

Every original insight needs a critical pair of eyes to inspect them, and so it is to so many people that I owe my gratitude for their thorough feedback and useful comments. Among them are Natascha Zaun, Hakan Seçkinelgin, Élise Massicard, Jennifer Jackson Preece, my colleagues at all levels of the LSE's European Institute, various academics and think-tankers across DC and New York, my cousin Vitus Püttmann who patiently taught me R much better than any course ever has, the students of Istanbul's Marmara University who patiently listened to me lecturing about my research to them in French, and the participants of LSE's Seminar for Contemporary Turkish Studies, of LSE's Turkish Week, and of the EUI's conference on Dilemmas in Migration Policy as well as numerous, numerous friends, Turkish or other.

Finally, as with every PhD thesis, there are some individuals in the background that hardly feature on any of its pages but have featured so much in the process that is behind the thesis' production. In this spirit, it is to every single one of my friends, old or new, close or far, former or current, that I would like to say thank you for carrying me through life at all its different stages and in all sorts of ways. Your friendship honours me, whatever it each consists in, and it is through these friendships that I get so much of my energy and purpose to live. You are named here without names because all of you have contributed to me being able to get to this point ever since a long time before I even started this PhD. But in the context of this thesis, there are four people that I would particularly like to express my gratitude to.

The first is my supervisor, Yaprak Gürsoy. Yaprak, it always strikes me to realise that I was one of the very first PhD students you supervised for your supervision has never been short of anything. Your in-depth engagement with everything I have written, your critique just as much as your encouragement, your constant availability and eagerness to help, your warning words just as much as your trust and empathy have made you the best supervisor I could possibly ask for and I feel honoured to be able to consider you my friend. If this thesis wasn't already dedicated to my parents, it would have to be dedicated to you.

The second person is my partner and fiancée, Zeynep Çakaloz. Zeynep, as you know, one of my favourite lines in one of my favourite films is the phrase "God has sent you my way", and in a way, it is thanks to this thesis and through it that we have met, which proves once more what a great endeavour it has been. Besides Yaprak, there is nobody who has read as much of it as you have, and it is through this process that I also got to know you: your never waning interest and care, your continuous encouragement and incredible love, but above all, your unparalleled goodheartedness, which leaves its marks in so many places and which I am

so fortunate to have been able to find. Writing this thesis has given me the great gift of meeting you, but this thesis, too, would not be what it is without our encounter.

Finally, the two people I would like to especially thank are the people who stood at the very beginning of my journey overall: my parents, Kristin Püttmann and Klaus Püttmann. Mum and Dad, as every sociologist will tell you, the chances of me being what I am today are pretty slim without everything you have given me, above all, your love and support whenever I needed it, your values, and the many inspirations and pieces of advice you have given me. Everything I do today, especially my interest in other people, is in a way just another trace of the groundwork you once laid and of the compass you are continuing to hold for me. Since an early age, I have heard you say what a very special time doing your PhDs was for each of you. Today, I can say: I agree with you. Thank you for everything!

In closing, I'd like to thank once more everyone who made me discover Turkey, little by little, and from all its different sides and perspectives as well as taught me to speak Turkish, ever since I started getting to know this country during my Erasmus at Boğaziçi University in 2015. Again, these people are so many that their names would overload these pages. But I truly appreciate their existence and everything they have shown me. *Hepinize çok teşekkür ederim*.

All errors are mine.

İstanbul, 30 September 2024

Table of Contents

Empirical Analysis I: Inductive Part (Fieldwork)

Theorising

Empirical Analysis II: Deductive Part (Survey)

List of Figures and Tables

Introduction

Table of Contents

Introduction

Why this thesis?

On 13 December 2023, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Filippo Grandi, opened the Global Forum on Refugees in Geneva with the following remark:

> One of my strongest messages to you today is precisely the following: we cannot overstate the role that host countries and communities play in saving lives, and we must never forget the price that they pay — on behalf of us all — as they deliver this global public good. (Grandi 2023)

In his speech, Grandi underlined that in tackling the global challenges that come with forced displacement across the world, the experiences of host countries had to be taken more into account. The concept that captures this plea is called international responsibility sharing, and it is the wider academic and policy context that this thesis falls into.

One way to put this responsibility sharing into practice is the resettlement of refugees to third countries. Resettlement is "a solution to meet the specific needs of vulnerable refugees and enables them to move from their country of asylum to another country [for] assistance" (UNHCR 2024b). According to the European Commission, resettlement moreover aims to "support non-EU countries hosting many people in need of international protection" as well as to "provide legal and safe pathways to the EU and reduce the risk of large numbers of irregular arrivals in the long term" (European Commission 2024). Indeed, although relatively small in number, resettlement has a strong symbolic value in that it expresses acknowledgement that refugee reception is not only a financial issue for host societies, which matters to gaining their co-operation in reducing irregular migration (Adar and Püttmann 2022). Finally, by providing a regular alternative to irregular migration, it also helps prevent refugee deaths (ESI 2023).

In the view of the UNHCR, Filippo Grandi, refugee resettlement is therefore "a clear demonstration of responsibility and burden sharing" and must "continue and be significantly scaled up" (Grandi 2023). This is also the view of the then High Representative of the European Union for Foreign and Security Affairs, Josep Borell, in his report from 29 November 2023 on the state of EU-Turkey relations, in which he recommends that EU member states step up the resettlement of Syrian refugees from Turkey to the EU, as agreed under the EU-Turkey Statement from 18 March 2016, in order to keep signalling the shared commitment to managing their reception and foster Turkey's compliance with the Statement (European Commission 2023b). This, too, is part of the context of this thesis that is essentially a study of the Statement's 'sociological aftermath' in Turkey.

A central figure in the conclusion of the EU-Turkey Statement on migration was then German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who, after receiving the highest number of Syrian refugees in Europe (Mushaben 2017), sought to contain the rise of Europe's far-right that resulted from this decision by reducing irregular migration to the EU through a 'deal' with Turkey (Erdoğan et al. 2024 - NB. 'Erdoğan' is a common name in Turkey. Wherever I cite *President* Erdoğan, I shall write 'Pres. Erdoğan'). Though the Statement externalises refugee reception (Üstübici 2019; Müftüler-Baç 2021), for Merkel, too, refugee reception constituted an international responsibility (Meiritz 2015). The EU-Turkey Statement therefore included the prospect of resettlement to the EU for some of Turkey's Syrian refugees.

But the principle of international responsibility sharing and the policy of resettlement have come under strain (Thielemann 2018). Except for Germany and a few others, EU member states have been little engaged in resettlement from Turkey (ECRE 2023), and the so-called Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme for Syrian refugees in Turkey that was first proposed by the European Commission (European Commission 2015) and reaffirmed in the Statement in return for Turkey's efforts to prevent irregular migration to the EU (European Council 2016), has not been activated until today (European Commission 2023b). One reason for that is arguments about the religious and ethnic identity of host societies and refugees that suggest that similarity along these lines is crucial to refugee inclusion. One prominent thinker in this vein is former World Bank director for research and widely published Oxford academic, Paul Collier, who has advocated "culturally differentiated controls" to be applied to the composition of immigration to Europe, favouring the "culturally proximate" over the "culturally distant" (2013: 262). And culture, for Collier, refers to *ethnic and religious identity*. The result is his proposal for what he considers "a fit-for-purpose migration policy" that builds upon the assumption that it is more conducive to refugees' "absorption" into the host society, as Collier (2013: 264) calls it, to keep them in "culturally proximate" geographies – which can undermine resettlement. His book achieved "massive, best-selling impact" (Favell 2019: 2).

A prima facie plausible thought, the logic of this proposal can be found today across many domains of public policy and political discourse on migration in Europe, with Denmark, for example, explicitly trying to prevent immigration from 'non-Western' countries and having completely exited the UNHCR resettlement programme in 2018 (Frellesvig 2022) or the former Chancellor of Austria, Sebastian Kurz, arguing that Turkey was "a more suitable place" for Afghan refugees than Europe (Daily Sabah 2021). Needless to say, the call for preventing the inflow of immigrants to Europe that are ethnically or religiously dissimilar from the white and Christian or atheist majority society is also commonplace among Europe's far-right, with the

Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, for example, successfully having prevented the relocation of Syrian refugees from over-burdened EU member states across the EU, as was proposed by the European Commission in 2015, stating the refugees' religious and ethnic identity as the reason (Leroy 2019). The concept that captures this line of thinking has been named 'civilizationism' (Brubaker 2017; Balfour 2021; Bettiza, Bolton, and Lewis 2023), building on the idea of a world order according to ethno-religious fault lines (Huntington 1996).

Policies and discourses on refugee reception today are thus, in part, torn between an 'internationalism' on the one hand and a 'civilizationism' on the other (Stewart 2020). The central question that underlies this paradigm clash is the role of religious and ethnic identity in the relation between host societies and refugees. Much has been written on this. A good share of this literature underlines that for refugees themselves, considerations of the religious and ethnic identity of host communities play a big role for their migration decisions (Chatty 2018; Rottmann and Kaya 2020; Üstübici and Elçi 2022). But, what about the role of *host society members*' religious and ethnic identities in *their* relation to the refugees?

Previous research has reached differing conclusions here, which I shall categorise into three different models in Chapter One. One stream of research can be synthesised into what I call the *Distance Model*. This part of the literature has found, as Collier would suggest, that the greater the commonalities between host society and refugees in terms of religious and ethnic identity, the more inclusive the hosts are towards the refugees. Another current in the literature can be summarised by what I call the *Distinction Model*. This literature finds that in some cases the opposite of the above can be the case, i.e. that commonalities with the refugees may threaten host society members' sense of self and possibly therewith associated privileges, which in turn may lead to a special need for distinction vis-à-vis them and thus to less inclusiveness rather than more. Finally, a third research stream points at the importance of the meaning that host society members' respective religious and ethnic identities hold for them with regard to refugee reception. That is, host society members may interpret their religious or ethnic identity as to be associated with certain values that favour the reception and inclusion of refugees, regardless of the refugees' own religious and ethnic identity. This mechanism I call the *Dignity Model*.

As becomes clear, while the outcomes they predict in terms of host society members' inclusiveness vis-à-vis refugees are partly the same, every model suggests a completely different social mechanism regarding the role that host society members' religious and ethnic identities play in this relation. In this context, Syrian refugee reception in Turkey can be considered a critical case (Flyvbjerg 2006; Small 2009; Hancké 2009). A critical case is a case in which a theory should apply, since all the conditions for it are met, yet fails. By this virtue,

studying a critical case not only allows to uncover the unknown limitations of existing theories, but also yields insights for a new one (Hancké 2009: 68-71; Small 2009: 21). For the role of citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to refugees, Turkey is such a case.

Syrian refugee reception in Turkey as a critical case

With the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Turkey began receiving increasing numbers of Syrian refugees. Only three years later, in 2014, it became the country hosting most refugees in the world, which has been the case ever since. Today, there are around 3.6 million registered Syrian refugees in Turkey and many more unregistered ones (UNHCR 2024a). Almost overnight, Turkey turned from a country of predominantly emigration into a major hub of immigration and migratory transit (Içduygu and Kirişci 2009). One crucial factor in this was President Erdoğan's so-called "open door policy" towards the Syrian refugees arriving at Turkey's border (Koca 2015; Kaya and Nagel 2020). This was accompanied by a humanitarian "discourse of Islamic inclusion" (Balkılıç and Teke Lloyd 2021) that designated the Syrian refugees as Turkey's "brothers and sisters in faith" (*din kardeşleri*) that should be received as "guests", just as the people of Medina had done towards Mohammed and his fellows when they had to flee Mecca (Kaya and Nagel 2020; Erdoğan 2020a; Koca 2016). As President Erdoğan proclaimed in a speech on 8 November 2019 in Istanbul:

> When we turn to the Kaaba five times a day, open our hands to the sky [signifies praying], we become conscious again of being a nation and an *ummah*. We become one by meeting in prayers, we become siblings. Islam is the common denominator that concerns us with the problems of people thousands, tens of thousands of kilometres away from our country. Even after 1400 years, the following special advice from the last sermon of Prophet Mohammed is our guide: "Believers! Listen to my words and memorise them! A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim and thus all Muslims are brothers." The oppressed of Arakan, Syria, and Turkistan are our brothers. You know, some people say: "Make the Syrians go." We can never accept this. African and Asian victims are like our full siblings. *There is no boundary to the Islamic brotherhood.* No one can plant the seeds of separation among us. (TRT 2019, own translation, my italics)

Many have classified this rhetoric of refugee reception as "civilizationist" (Yanaşmayan, Üstübici, and Kasli 2019; Balkılıç and Teke Lloyd 2021) for it draws on the idea that a shared religion unites people across national boundaries under a common civilization, which is the core idea of civilizationalist thinking and the same logic as presented by opponents of Muslim refugee reception in Europe (Brubaker 2017, 2016; Huntington 2007; Balfour 2021). As Wimmer (2008b, 2013) writes, emphasising civilizational commonalities by reference to a shared world religion is in fact a common strategy to widen or overcome boundaries – be those

national, ethnic, or class-related. This is further underlined by President Erdoğan's references to an 'Ottoman bond' that allegedly unites Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees, too, as he proclaimed in other speeches (Milliyet 2015). As Kaya (2024: 238) summarises those times, "[t]he reception of Syrian refugees in Turkey was initially based on a discourse of tolerance and benevolence that, in turn, was based on path-dependent ethnocultural and religious premises dating back to the Ottoman Empire". In doing so, Erdoğan indirectly followed advice by the sociologist Robert Putnam that in the face of immigration and diversity, political leaders should "redraw more inclusive lines of social identity" and create "a new, more capacious sense of 'we'" to enable immigrants' integration (Putnam 2007: 164-5). Erdoğan's narrative of a Muslim and Ottoman fraternity between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees can therefore be categorised as an attempt of "boundary making from above" (Scuzzarello and Moroşanu 2023) with the aim of fostering long-lasting public acceptance of Turkey's reception of the Syrian refugees (Erdoğan 2020a). Whether this sort of policy narrative was strategically wise in that regard is also part of the context of this thesis.

Ten years on from the start of Syrian refugee reception in Turkey, not only the open-door policy has been lifted, but also the (initially positive) mood in Turkey towards the Syrian refugees has radically changed (Koca 2016; Hoffman, Werz, and Halpin 2018; Erdoğan 2018b, 2021). In contrast to President Erdoğan's initial discourse,[1] anti-refugee sentiment in the Turkish population has been on a steep rise, including counter-narratives on social media such as *#ülkemdesuriyeliistemiyorum* ('I don't want Syrians in my country') (Erdoğan-Öztürk and Işık-Güler 2020), an anti-refugee movement called Angry Young Turks (*Öfkeli Genç Türkler*), and several incidents of violent racist attacks (Hamad 2021; Püttmann 2024). Some have therefore also spoken of a securitisation of the Syrian refugees "by society" (Erdoğan 2020a). This resentment has been particularly pronounced among voters of secular nationalist parties, such as the oppositional Republican People's Party (CHP), founded by Kemal Atatürk, whose then leader, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, made it a central topic of his presidential election campaign in May 2023 and led talks with the newly founded anti-refugee Victory Party (*Zafer Partisi*). But it also includes the majority of supporters of President Erdoğan's religiously conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP) and of the left-wing pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP, later renamed DEM Parti) (Erdoğan 2018b, 2021). Moreover, most Turkish citizens, including most AKP and HDP supporters, say that they do not to feel culturally similar to the Syrian refugees, despite Erdoğan's discourse of shared Islam and Ottoman roots (ibid).

---

[1] President Erdoğan's own discourse and refugee policy, too, have changed over time and today speak of a "voluntary, safe, and dignified return" of the Syrian refugees to Syria (Heukelingen and Püttmann 2023).

It is precisely these major religious and ethnic cleavages of Turkish society (Arat and Pamuk 2019) that make Syrian refugee reception in Turkey an interesting and critical case for a study on the role of host society members' religious and ethnic identity in their relation to refugees. That is because, while the great majority of the Syrian refugees in Turkey is (or is perceived as) *religiously conservative Sunni Muslims* and *ethnic Arabs or Kurds*, most of Turkey is, broadly speaking, *split*, on the one hand, into *religiously conservative Sunni Muslims* and secularised Muslims (including the religious minority of Turkish Alevis), and on the other, into *ethnic Kurds or Arabs* and ethnic Turks (putting aside other very small ethnic minorities). This societal makeup allows for a comparison of these different strata's relations to the Syrian refugees and an investigation of what role their religious and ethnic identities play.

However, as shall be detailed in Chapter One, looking at the already existing evidence relating to this question, it becomes clear that none of the three models laid out above can fully explain the diverging findings on what role Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities play in how they relate to the Syrian refugees. While some findings on Turkey support one model, other findings support another – sometimes within the same study even. For example, as Genç and Özdemirkıran Embel (2019) find in their research on the views of neighbourhood chiefs in Istanbul, "their attitudes towards forced Syrian migrants are *paradoxical*, marked both by feelings of disturbance, worry and uneasiness, and at the same time welcome and support" (2019: 168, my italics). Similarly, Alakoç, Göksel, and Zarychta (2022: 548) have found Turkish citizens' attitudes towards Syrian refugees to be "contradictory". This poses a puzzle to existing theories, making this case critical. And it raises the question of whether a new model could be developed that can fuse the diverse findings under one common logic and make sense of the 'aberrant' Turkish case as a whole. This is what this thesis wants to investigate.

Research question

Given the above puzzle, this thesis asks:

What is the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to Turkey's Syrian refugees?

The term 'Turkish citizens' is explicitly chosen here rather than 'Turks' to pay attention to the diversity of ethnic self-identifications in Turkey. Some Turkish citizens may in fact not conceive of themselves as 'Turks' ethnically speaking or may not be identified by others as 'Turks' due to the frequently ethnic connotation of the term. This makes the expression

'Turkish citizens' considerably more precise. Meanwhile, the term 'Syrian refugees' shall refer to forcibly displaced migrants from Syria rather than to the legal specifics of the term 'refugee'. It is also not intended as the construction of a collective identity of Syrian refugees 'for-itself', which some have argued does not exist (van Uden and Jongerden 2021). Instead, it is merely to be understood as a descriptor of the asylum-seekers' country of origin.

With regard to religious and ethnic identity, which I shall discuss in more detail in Chapter Two, I shall focus here not so much on different types of religion – which certainly do exist in Turkey – but more on different ways of living religion (mostly Islam). By this I mean different degrees of individual secularisation and piety in one's relation to religious practice and teachings, which is a common (binary) distinction between people across Turkish society and politics (Arat and Pamuk 2019). Albeit a reductionist view on personal religiosity, this focus helps to capture the broader and most salient socio-political fault lines in Turkey with regard to religious identity. Ethnic identity, meanwhile, shall refer to Turkish citizens' ethnic self-identification and linguistic characteristics. That is because ethnic identity, at least in Turkey, only matters if it becomes an individual's lived experience – be it because they claim it (one could also say: 'practice' it) or because they are being made 'conscious' of it through the perceptions of others. Self-identification and language use are therefore the best tools to operationalise this floating concept.

Finally, the term 'relation' shall be conceptualised through the analytical framework of social and symbolic boundaries, which I shall discuss in more detail in Chapter One. *Social boundaries* in the way that I shall use the term in this thesis refer to "everyday networks of relationships that result from individual acts of connecting and distancing" (Wimmer 2013: 9). Put differently, they capture the behavioural dimension of Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees, that is, their social interaction with the Syrians. In contrast, the concept of *symbolic boundaries* refers to "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space" (Lamont and Molnár 2002: 168), or what Wimmer (2013: 9) has described as "acts of social classification and collective representation". Differently put, they capture the ideational dimension of Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees, that is, their identification with the Syrians and their views on whether the Syrian refugees belong to the collective identities the respective Turkish citizens see themselves a part of. In short, as the terms suggest, social boundaries are about inclusion in a social sense (i.e. *intending to interact* with someone) whereas symbolic boundaries are about inclusion in a symbolic sense (i.e. *bestowing belonging* upon someone).

Research design

Given the above puzzle, this thesis takes a grounded-theory approach to its empirical strategy. As the term suggests, the idea of a grounded-theory approach is that, rather than relying on and testing established theories, the researcher works inductively by engaging in detailed analysis of suitable data and the search for patterns therein in order to build a new theory on that basis (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012). This new theory would hence be *grounded* in the data and the researcher's analysis of it. Naturally, this exploration does not preclude a subsequent deductive phase of the research (confirmation) in which the newly developed theory is tested on a different set of data. This is indeed precisely the route this thesis shall take.

As I shall detail in Chapter Three, the empirical data from which my new grounded theory shall arise are predominantly (but not exclusively) semi-structured in-depth interviews with 115 so-called neighbourhood chiefs (*muhtars*) in the Turkish cities of Izmir, Konya, and Urfa (officially called Şanlıurfa) that I conducted (in Turkish) in the winter and spring of 2022. The fully anonymised voice recordings that emerged from these interviews were subsequently transcribed by two Turkish native speakers. I then conducted a thematic analysis on these transcripts and my notes, which means to identify recurring categories and concepts, analyse their meaning, and trace how they are interconnected (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012). To pay full attention to the virtues of qualitative sociological analysis, which call for a thorough contextualisation of the data in its various dimensions (Johns 2001; Gibson and Brown 2009; Clifford 2010), I dedicate one chapter to each of the locations in which I performed these interviews, ranging from Chapter Four to Chapter Six.

Another reason for doing so is my attempt to thereby approximate a controlled case comparison (Bowen and Petersen 1999; Wimmer 2013). By this I mean that I shall compare my findings from each location in a way that keeps some of the places' socio-demographics somewhat equal while allowing for intended variance in the variables of my interest: religious and ethnic identity. This is possible – to some degree – thanks to the relatively strong internal homogeneity of Turkish cities with regard to these two identities. Following this logic, I shall take inspiration from Finkel (2017) and compare these locations in two pairs: while Izmir and Konya are both predominantly ethnically Turkish, Izmir has a reputation for its dominant secular lifestyle and politics whereas Konya is known across Turkey for its religious conservatism. *Limiting my fieldwork to specific parts of the two respective cities that resemble each other along other intervening socio-economic variables* (including the presence of Syrian refugees), this then allows me to better tease out the role that in particular religious identity may play. By the same token, my analysis of Urfa shall take Konya as its reference point, as

the two are renowned for their religious conservatism, yet unlike Konya, Urfa is ethnically mostly Kurdish and Arab. Finally, these two types of variance in Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identity are conducive to the overall aim of my analysis because, as laid out above, the majority of Syrian refugees in Turkey are (or are seen as) religiously conservative Sunni Muslims and ethnically Arab or Kurdish, which creates different levels of commonalities with the Turkish citizens in the three named cities.

As shall also be detailed in Chapter Three, the reason why I chose *muhtars* (neighbourhood chiefs) as my unit of analysis – although the large majority of them is male – is that muhtars are elected street-level bureaucrats who are "a valuable source of information on their neighbourhoods as they are in direct contact with the residents – citizens and refugees alike" (Üstübici 2020: 78). Moreover, being elected, they often are good representations of the socio-economic composition of their neighbourhood, which can range between 100 and 10,000 inhabitants and is thus a good micro-level unit (Massicard 2022). In addition, focusing on the perspective of one profession only allows for a greater comparability of contexts, while the fact that they are bureaucrats answering citizen requests made them practically more accessible to me as a foreign researcher. It is the combination of these advantages that has made muhtars popular interlocutors for research in Turkey on Syrian refugee integration (International Crisis Group 2019; Genç and Özdemirkıran Embel 2019; Üstübici 2020; Güngördü and Kahraman 2021) and on neighbourhood life more generally (Woźniak 2018; Biehl 2020).

Building on this fieldwork and my thematic analysis of it, I then distil from this the broader patterns I identify with regard to my research question and develop, in Chapter Seven, my new grounded theory from them by drawing on the concept of the social field as a heuristic (Bourdieu 1984; Fligstein and McAdam 2012) to present a new theoretical model – just as Geertz (1973) did regarding the social organisation of Balinese society by studying cockfights – of the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identity in their social and symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees that can better capture the mechanism that really underlies these processes. In a final step (Chapter Eight), I then explore ways of testing my new theory on generalisable empirical data by designing and analysing my own nationally representative survey and experiment, based on a questionnaire developed from my fieldwork findings and the hypotheses I deduced from my theory. This survey was carried out on 2,539 participants across Turkey in September 2023 by the Turkish research institute KONDA, with whom I also developed the questionnaire, thanks to a grant I received from the Hamburg Foundation for the Advancement of Academia and the Arts. While the analysis of the survey

data supports the empirical predictions of my new model, the survey experiment yields first insights as to how future research may test the social mechanism that my new model suggests.

Central argument

Solving the above puzzle, the argument of my thesis thus reads:

Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities play *little* role for their *social* boundary making towards Turkey's Syrian refugees. That is because even where Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees have religious and/or ethnic commonalities, Turkish citizens still prefer not to interact with them and develop street-level narratives[2] that provide the symbolic boundaries to legitimise this social distancing, which is a finding directly in line with those of others (Üstübici 2020; Alakoç, Göksel, and Zarychta 2022). Although religious venues, gatherings, or charity projects may provide occasions for more interaction with the refugees, my data indicates that this does not lead to more private social interaction. Similarly, a shared ethnic identity seems to matter only in the sense of shared family or kinship networks that facilitate social interaction and that *happen to* be ethnic, and in the sense that a shared language makes communication easier. It does not, however, motivate Turkish citizens to interact more with Syrian refugees.

Strikingly, the street-level narratives through which the interviewees legitimise their social distancing from the Syrian refugees explicitly refer to religious and ethnic identity as symbolic boundary markers, even in places where the Syrian refugees themselves would claim that they and the Turkish citizens do have the same religious and/or ethnic identity. Essentially, this shows how boundary making is an agile dynamic that can occur even where outside observers may presume an easy social integration of refugees with locals due to a seemingly shared identity. It also once more underlines the very central point of the boundary approach, which is that it is the boundaries of a group that define its identity, not "the stuff they enclose" (Barth 1969: 15), i.e. some externally identifiable characteristics.

Still, at the level of *symbolic* boundary making, religious and ethnic identity also play *another role* in that some religiously conservative and ethnically Kurdish or Arab citizens do indeed tend to draw somewhat more inclusive boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees than do secular and/or ethnically Turkish citizens of Turkey, which is done by affirming the Syrian refugees' belonging to Turkey and Turkish society. However, where more inclusive symbolic boundaries are being drawn vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, this often happens in distinction from

---

[2] Bloemraad et al. (2019: 75) also call these "local cultural scripts", i.e. unofficial collective narratives at the micro level.

some other part of Turkish society, such as secular and ethnically Turkish citizens of Turkey, or from 'the West' and European countries abroad. By the same token, where secular and ethnically Turkish citizens of Turkey draw their exclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, this often happens in conjunction with distinguishing themselves from other citizens of Turkey such as religious conservatives or Kurds. In sum, the symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees thus never happens 'on its own' but always in reference to a third party inside (or outside) Turkish society. The three models discussed above thus fail because they do not see 'the third man'[3] in the host-refugee relationship formation.

Therefore, I argue that the mechanism that underlies this symbolic boundary making is *not* differences in feelings of proximity to the Syrian refugees, as also the results on social boundary making suggest, *but* differences in strategy regarding the making of the boundaries of Turkish society itself and thus of the definition of 'Turkishness' or Turkish national identity, which – as we learn from Barth (1969) – is directly defined by its boundaries. Differently put, because religiously conservative and ethnically Kurdish or Arab citizens of Turkey have historically long been on the "periphery" (Mardin 1973) of Turkish society, facing secular and ethnically Turkish citizens at its "centre" (ibid) and the social oppression those submitted them to (Arat and Pamuk 2019), they have an interest in "broaden[ing] the circle" (Lamont 2023: 3) of Turkishness to include religiously conservative Muslims or ethnically non-Turkish people, such as the majority of the Syrian refugees – or *themselves*.

In contrast, secular and ethnically Turkish citizens of Turkey seek to preserve the Kemalist definition of Turkishness under the founding fathers of the Turkish Republic. This makes them symbolically more exclusive towards the Syrian refugees as a change in Turkish society's boundaries could result in a change of Turkish national identity – which they oppose. The differences in inclusiveness at the level of symbolic boundary making are therefore not due to different feelings of proximity towards the Syrian refugees, but due to different interests and thus strategies in the longstanding contestation over Turkish national identity. Symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees is thus a way for Turkey's different religious and ethnic segments to push for their favoured vision of Turkish society and Turkishness.

This mechanism, I further suggest, can suitably be modelled as a so-called social field, or as what Hintz (2016: 337) has called the "arena" of Turkish national identity contestation. Taking inspiration from her argument that we must conceive of Turkish foreign policy as a venue of Turkey's national identity contestation to explain the different moves and shifts in it,

---

[3] "The Third Man" is a classic film noir from 1949. The title refers to a mysterious third figure who was supposedly seen at the scene of a crime and eventually offers the solution to the investigation, but whose identity and role are initially unknown.

I argue that it is the different positions of different religious and ethnic identities in the social field of Turkish national identity that explain their role in Turkish citizens' symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. Differently put, to understand the effect they have on this relation, we need to understand the social locations of these identities in Turkish society and the interests regarding the definition of Turkishness that result from that. Their symbolic boundary making is thus essentially *strategic* and more about *their own inclusion* than about the Syrian refugees. As, for example, Wimmer similarly writes: "we can gain considerable analytical leverage if we conceive of immigrant incorporation as the outcome of *a struggle over the boundaries of inclusion in which all members of a society are involved*" (2013: 31, my italics). Syrian refugee reception in Turkey is thus, like Turkey's foreign policy, a new "battleground" (Hintz 2016: 339) of Turkey's pre-existing national identity contestation.

In offering this new model of the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to the Syrian refugees, the contribution to the literature that this thesis seeks to make directly echoes previous substantive and theoretical work that has gone in a very similar direction. *Substantively*, my central argument further develops the claim by Saraçoğlu and Bélanger that the Syrian refugee issue has been instrumentalised by both Turkey's government and the political opposition in the "longstanding hegemonic struggle to define the boundaries and symbolic content of the Turkish nation" (2019: 381), making the Syrian refugee issue "one of the battlefields on which two historically conflicting conceptions of nation [i.e. Kemalism and Islamism] collide" (2019: 381). As I shall argue, though, this collision is in fact about more than just two conflicting visions of Turkish society and national identity, involving various "identity proposals" (Hintz 2016: 336) that reflect Turkish citizens' respective positions in the social field of Turkish national identity, which are linked to their religious and ethnic identities. *Theoretically,* my argument thereby directly falls in line with Wimmer's more general theory of ethnic boundary making, which argues that "different actors pursue different strategies of boundary making, depending on their position in the hierarchies of power and the structure of their political networks" (2013: 97), and that, therefore, "the social field [that captures this hierarchy] will be characterized by competition and contestation between various modes of classification and various claims to moral superiority, rightful entitlement, and political solidarity associated with [these positions]" (ibid). As I shall argue, this type of theorising can help us advance our understanding of host-immigrant relations, *if we refine it* with regard to the difference between citizens' *social* and *symbolic* boundary making vis-à-vis immigrants, as I have sketched above. The next section shall lay out how I seek to do so.

Structure

Over the remainder of this thesis, I shall proceed as follows. Chapter One shall present the theoretical framework of my study by reviewing previous research on this topic in the wider literature, synthesising it into the three models mentioned above, showing why none of them can fully explain existing evidence on the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identity in their relation to Turkey's Syrian refugees, and finally introducing the conceptual toolkit for my own analysis, which are the notions of social and symbolic boundaries. In doing so, I shall also show why these concepts are apt at equipping the study of social integration with more analytical precision than other related concepts, such as 'integration' itself for example.

Chapter Two shall then move on to discussing the meaning of religious, ethnic, and national identity in general and more specifically in the Turkish context. This shall be done by briefly sketching the evolution of Turkish identity from the demise of the Ottoman Empire to the foundation of the Turkish Republic and today. This will be followed by a review of the arrival of the Syrian refugees in Turkey, the political and societal debates surrounding it, and the meaning of the concept of the migrant in Turkey more generally. It will include a discussion of President Erdoğan's policy narrative of religious and Ottoman brotherhood between Turks and Syrians as well as of the notions of neo-Ottomanism and '*yeni Türkiye*' (new Turkey), which have often been associated with this discourse, too. This chapter shall provide the conceptual, historical, and socio-political background to my study.

Chapter Three shall then present my methodology by first discussing the logic of a grounded-theory approach as well as the advantages and disadvantages of interpretivism. It shall also explain the rationale of thematic analysis of qualitative data from in-depth interviews as I have conducted them. Furthermore, it shall provide more details on my unit of analysis – Turkish neighbourhood chiefs or *muhtars* – and make the case for why they are a useful entry point into Turkish society for me. Finally, the chapter shall also shed light on the rationale of a controlled case comparison and justify my case selection more thoroughly in that regard. As part of this chapter, I shall also reflect on my own identity in this research process and argue why I consider it worthwhile to have done this research as a foreigner and non-native speaker of the Turkish language.

Chapters Four to Six will present and analyse the findings from my in-depth interviews with muhtars in Izmir, Konya, and Urfa. In doing so, each of them shall first introduce the reader to the inhabitants of the city and to the situation of the local Syrian refugees. This shall be done based on both secondary literature and data I collected through my fieldwork. It will

also include various relevant information on the economic conditions and social integration of the Syrian refugees in each respective city.

Overall, across Turkey, the very large majority of the Syrian refugees – more than 98% – live outside camps today (Erdoğan 2022) and in a "protracted situation", which means that they neither advance towards full local integration nor have a prospect of returning or being resettled in the near future (Püttmann and Kirişci 2023). As a result, most of Turkey's Syrian refugees continue living off rapidly diminishing aid payments and informal job opportunities. As Kirişci and Püttmann (2023) describe:

> very few [Syrian] refugees [in Turkey] have been granted work permits; an estimated 800,000 to 1.1 million [of them], including women and children, participate in the informal labour market under particularly precarious conditions. Furthermore, […] considerable international funding has been channeled into projects to support refugees' access to livelihood opportunities, emphasizing the acquisition of vocational and language skills. However, despite an ever-growing number of such projects, there has been neither a sizeable nor a sustainable increase in formal jobs for refugees.

The overall socio-economic situation of most Syrian refugees in Turkey is thus very dire and has been even more aggravated by the global Covid-19 pandemic (Kirişci and Erdoğan 2020) and, after my fieldwork, by the earthquakes of 6 February 2023 (Kirişci 2023). Still, with their specific circumstances changing from city to city and from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, the situation of the Syrian refugees shall be described in this thesis case by case in each of the chapters Four to Six. After that, each chapter continues with an analysis of my fieldwork data, organised according to the major themes that crystallised in the thematic analysis I conducted.

Together these chapters shall show that in every location, there is another street-level narrative undermining the policy narrative of Islamic and Ottoman inclusion by President Erdoğan by justifying why Turkish citizens prefer not to interact too much with the Syrian refugees. While in Izmir, this narrative revolves around the protection of local socio-cultural diversity against the Syrian refugees, which are seen as threatening this diversity, in Konya, muhtars argue that although they believe in the idea of religious brotherhood among Muslims, this is not possible with the Syrian refugees because these are "fake Muslims" that do not really abide by Islamic teachings, such as no theft, high hygiene, and strict modesty. At the same time, the people of both Izmir and Konya find themselves to be more societally advanced than the Syrian refugees, which buttresses their social boundaries vis-à-vis them even further. In Urfa, meanwhile, it turns out that what may look like ethnic solidarity is instead what Wimmer (2013) has called 'famalialism', which is solidarity between relatives and kin, which often *happen to be* of the same ethnicity, but which is different from ethnicity being the actual bond.

As a result, Urfa's muhtars, too, would prefer the departure of the Syrian refugees and argue that because co-ethnicity should not matter for solidarity but only humanity, there also are no special grounds on which they would feel a special solidarity with the Syrian refugees, as their antisocial behaviour (often resulting from severe poverty) was 'calling into question their humanness'. Racist as this description obviously is, it goes to show that even in the location where the religious and ethnic commonalities between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees are the biggest, there are still boundaries to be drawn.

These excluding social and symbolic boundaries at the street level across Turkey aside, the three chapters will also show how in all three locations there are also instances of friendly interaction between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees, independently of their religious or ethnic identity. Moreover, the analysis across these chapters will extract from the data the crucial finding that in the instances where more inclusive *symbolic* boundaries are being drawn in Konya or Urfa by affirming the Syrian refugees' belonging to Turkey, this inclusion is always made by distinguishing at the same time the local population of Konya or Urfa from 'other' secular or ethnically Turkish people in the West of Turkey. In doing so, the Konyalites and Urfalites underline their own virtuousness and vision for Turkish society, which is different from the historically dominant vision of secularist and nationalist Kemalism. Meanwhile, in Izmir, it is precisely this Kemalist vision that is seen under threat by the neo-Ottomanism of President Erdoğan, which the Syrian refugees have come to be seen as a part of. This makes the mostly Kemalist muhtars of Izmir reinforce their symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees in order to 'defend' their vision of Turkish society and national identity. In sum, it is these findings that then lead to my conclusion that it is their struggle with each other over Turkish national identity that makes different religious and ethnic demographics of Turkish citizens draw different symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, rather than differing feelings of actual proximity.

This mechanism shall then be conceptually modelled in Chapter Seven, which theorises these findings by aid of the notion of the social field. It proceeds by synthesising the findings from my fieldwork analysis, introducing the concept of the social field, and arguing why this concept neatly fits the data here and can help in modelling Turkish citizens' strategies of symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees by placing this process in the social field – or what Hintz (2016) has called the "arena" – of Turkish national identity contestation. Underpinning this theoretical model with related findings in the secondary literature on Turkey as well as more general philosophical and sociological literature that finds a similar mechanism in completely different contexts, this chapter ends on a graphic illustration of the model in the

shape of an actual field and the positions of the different religious and ethnic identity pairings in it with regard to the boundaries of Turkish national identity. This shall visually illustrate why it is in the interest of those religious and ethnic identities on the "periphery" (Mardin 1976) of Turkish society to widen the symbolic boundaries of Turkishness in a way that it includes the Syrian refugees, whereas it is in the interest of those at the historical "centre" (Mardin 1976) of Turkish society to keep these boundaries tight and firm: because Turkey's citizens either stand to gain or lose something from it personally.

Finally, Chapter Eight shall venture out into testing this new social field model of the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identity in their social and symbolic boundary making towards Turkey's Syrian refugees through an original nationally representative survey, including an experiment. The chapter does so by first showing how I transition from my conceptualisation of social and symbolic boundaries to their operationalisation in the survey questionnaire and from the findings of my fieldwork to specific questionnaire items. It shall also explain how the experiment I designed served as a first attempt at finding out how the social mechanism I postulate – the social field of Turkish national identity – could be tested. Subsequently, the chapter discusses the data collection for the survey, including possible biases, and moves on to the analysis of the data by means of regression. The chapter concludes by finding that Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identity indeed plays little of a role with regard to their social boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, but does play a role for symbolic boundary making in the sense that religious conservatives and ethnic Arabs and Kurds are more inclusive towards Syrian refugees than secularists and ethnic Turks. Moreover, the chapter's findings suggest that to test whether this is the case because of these identities' different positions in the social field of Turkishness, future experiments or studies should pay special attention to these identities' intersectionality in the design of the treatment in order to fully account for the different, partly counter-balancing factors that are at work here.

The Conclusion of this thesis shall serve to reflect at a more abstract level on what is 'the point the of it all', transitioning from a summary of the central findings and message of the thesis to its implications for theory building and policy making. In doing so, the Conclusion makes the theoretical points that future analyses of host-refugee relations should consider host society members' relation to each other and themselves more to understand any identity-based variation in boundary making vis-à-vis refugees, and they should consider that the motives that drive social and symbolic boundary making can be very different from each other. Finally, the Conclusion also states three practical implications, which are that in settling the social conflict over its refugee reception Turkey will need to settle its own struggle over its national identity;

that (civilizationist) policy narratives centred around seeming commonalities between a host society and refugees are not sustainable with a view to fostering long-term public acceptance; and that 'culture', in the sense of religious and ethnic identity, cannot serve as an argument to undermine refugee resettlement because socially integrating the Syrian refugees is difficult for any society, regardless of its geographical distance to Syria.

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework

Table of Contents

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter shall lay out the theoretical background to my analysis. In doing it, seeks to answer the following questions: What is the current state of research on immigrant integration, and how does my research address a gap? What are current theories of the role of host society members' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to immigrants, and how can they be compared? What is the puzzle that arises in this context from previous research on Turkish citizens' relation to Syrian refugees that makes it a critical case? And finally, why are the concepts of *social* and *symbolic boundaries* a good analytical lens for investigating this puzzle?

As I shall show, previous research and theories on the role of religious and ethnic identity in host societies' relation to refugees can be synthesised into three different models that I shall call the (1) Distance, the (2) Distinction, and the (3) Dignity Model. As I will also show based on previous research, while each of them seems to be able to explain some portion of the case at hand, none of these models can make sense of it as a whole. In response, I shall argue that the boundary approach can help us solve this puzzle and build a new model that accounts for the weaknesses of the three existing ones by tracing bottom-up how group identity comes into existence and differentiating between the social (i.e. behavioural) and the symbolic (i.e. ideational) dimension of immigrant inclusion. The remainder of this thesis will then conduct its analysis following this approach.

In what follows, I shall first present previous research on immigrant integration and discuss the concept of integration as such. I then build on Max Weber's principles of sociological explanation to frame the theoretical debate on the role of host society members' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to immigrants through three different models that suggest alternative social mechanisms linking the macro with the micro level. Third, I shall present the puzzle of the Turkish case by reviewing previous research on it and showing the strengths and weaknesses of the three existing models in explaining it. Demonstrating how all of them fall short of providing a complete explanation will show why the case is a critical case that demands to rethink current theoretical models and will help improve theory building. And finally, I introduce the boundary approach and make the case for it, showing how it meets the requirements of sociological explanation and can help solve the puzzle.

1. The Wider Context: Research on Immigrant Integration

Research on immigrant integration has gone in various directions. While some have studied the different dimensions of immigrant integration, such as immigrants' position on the labour market (Heath and Cheung 2007; Phalet and Heath 2010), their relation to natives (Connor 2010; Muttarak and Heath 2010; Dribe and Lundh 2011; Alba and Foner 2015a) or natives' attitudes towards them (Cohrs and Stelzl 2010; Branton et al. 2011; Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan, and Courtemanche 2015), their value orientations in comparison with the mainstream (Norris and Inglehart 2012; Tausch 2019), their participation in their host society's politics (Heath et al. 2013; Sanders et al. 2014; Fisher et al. 2015), their legal status (McNevin 2006), or their identity construction (El Tayeb 2011; Meer 2012), others have compared nation states' different philosophies of integration and their respective policies over time (Favell 1998; van Krieken 2012; Barou 2014; Joppke 2017), analysed the securitisation of specific religious and ethnic minorities (Roe 2004; Sasse 2005; Kaya 2009; O'Toole, DeHanas, and Modood 2012), researched the causes of social and violent conflict around immigration (Koopmans 1996; Dancygier 2010), or developed own proposals for a fruitful living-together in the multicultural societies of tomorrow (Kymlicka 1996; Tibi 2002; Foroutan 2004). These proposals can also be seen as reactions to the rise of "super-diversity" (Vertovec 2007) and the allegedly thereof resulting decline of "social capital" and trust (Putnam 2007; *cf.* Portes and Vickstrom 2011; Wimmer 2016).

Still others have investigated the concept of integration itself (Schnapper 2007; Ager and Strang 2008; Pace and Şimşek 2019). Originating as an idea in Émile Durkheim's studies on the division of labour (1893) and religious communities (1897), it further rose to academic prominence through its application in Talcott Parson's functionalist theory of social systems (1937) and the urban sociology of the Chicago School and its preoccupation with migration, race, and ethnicity (e.g. Park and Burgess 1925; see Favell 1998 for a similar overview). Today, it is "a concept hotly debated by academics, policy makers, states and migrants themselves" (Şimşek 2018b: 269) across the world. However, although integration is the declared goal of much social policy (European Commission 2020), Castles et al. point out that "[t]here is no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration. The concept continues to be controversial and hotly debated" (2002: 12). Robinson therefore calls 'integration' "a chaotic concept: a word used by many but understood differently by most" (1998: 118), and voices doubt that there ever could be a unifying definition.

Criticising the concept, some have pointed out that most analyses of integration fall into the trap of "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002), conceiving of the

host society and immigrants or refugees as two distinct yet homogenous groups and of integration as the hierarchical submission of the latter to the former. This ignores the internal diversity of each and their various modes of interaction and relation (Erdal 2013; Şimşek 2018b). Schinkel (2017, 2018) has therefore argued that the concept should be abandoned altogether, both for its epistemological shortcomings and allegedly essentialising culturalist undertones (*What exactly is that society that immigrants should integrate into?*) and for the purportedly colonialist power imbalances that the concept is said to imply (*Why should some have to integrate and others not?*). In response, propositions have been made for how to "rethink the academic use of the concept 'integration'" (Favell 2019: 269), with some famously suggesting to conceive of it as a more egalitarian two-way process between host society and immigrants (Phillimore and Goodson 2008) – a definition widely used in official policy statements today (European Commission 2014). Still, especially in the public sphere, many now oppose the use of the 'integration word', which they perceive as an imposition of mainstream social practices on minorities for them to prove their belonging (Favell 2019) or as "the continuance of a long-standing colonial development paradigm" (Favell 2022b: blurb).

As a result, both in research and policy, the term 'social cohesion' is sometimes preferred today to social integration in an attempt to speak of an encounter on eye level between immigrants and host society, and to discuss their relations in a less politicised manner (Eminoğlu 2020; IOM 2022; European Commission 2022). However, some also use both terms in conjunction, distinguishing between the social cohesion of society overall and the social integration of immigrants into it (Council of Europe 2004; Loch 2014). Critics have meanwhile lamented that opting for 'cohesion' rather than 'integration' merely represented another "backlash against multiculturalism" (Stead 2017: 405; Modood and Salt 2011) that downplays the racial injustices that many ethnic and religious minorities face in Western societies today, in particular, with regard to citizenship regimes (Bauböck 1994; Soysal 1995; Lionnet 1995; de Leeuw and van Wichelen 2012). One group especially in focus here are Muslim immigrants in Europe and their descendants who suffer from high levels of social exclusion, irrespective of their nationality (Adida, Laitin, and Valfort 2016), but not irrespective of their race (Miaari, Khattab, and Johnston 2019) or their degree of secularisation (Bowen 2016a).

The topic of Muslims in Europe has also given rise to extensive research and discussions on the compatibility of Islamic values with European national identities (Cesari 2004; Modood, Triandafyllidou, and Zapata-Barrero 2006; Bowen 2009; Roy 2013), including from the standpoint of Muslim minorities themselves (Ramadan 1998, 2005; Göle 2015). Questioning this compatibility, some also have framed Muslim migrants as a looming threat to

liberal values and national security (Kepel 2017; Koopmans 2020; Tausch 2021). While in France or Belgium, such debates have predominantly targeted Muslims of Arab ethnicity, in Germany or the Netherlands, most of this discourse has been on Turks. In the US, meanwhile, talk on integration has predominantly centred around race and colour, especially with regard to African Americans and Latino immigrants (Alba and Foner 2015b). In all cases, though, it is religious and ethno-racial identity that are at the heart of research and debates on integration and the formation of society's boundaries (Foner 2015).

In contrast, less is known about the role of religious and ethnic identity in the integration processes of Muslim migrants and refugees in Muslim-majority societies. As Alrababa'h et al. (2021), for instance, point out with regard to the social acceptance of immigrants,

> the focus on Western countries in the literature, and the resulting imbalance between where public attitudes toward migrants are studied and where most migration has been occurring, is a limitation of existing academic knowledge on this topic. We lack an understanding of public attitudes toward migration in a range of countries that have been significantly affected by migration. In addition, our purportedly general theories about the drivers of attitudes toward migrants are built from specific country contexts characterized by relatively high economic and infrastructural capacity to absorb new migrant populations, and relatively high levels of cultural difference between the migrant and host populations. (2021: 36)

Many Gulf countries, for example, were notably reluctant to receive Syrian refugees and give them a formal status. Here, religious leaders stood out as vocal advocates of refugee reception, issuing respective *fatwas* and opposing the otherwise "chauvinistic trend in the Gulf not only against refugees" (Hanafi 2017: 119). This falls in line with research on the ethics of asylum in Islam and Muslim societies (Agha 2008; Elmadmad 2008), on the role of Muslim charities and associations in lobbying for and supporting refugee reception (Boudou, Leaman, and Scholz 2021; Gutkowski 2022), and on political discourses that draw on Islamic motives to generate public support for refugee reception, like in Turkey (Kloos 2016; Kaya and Nagel 2020; Erdoğan 2020a). Similarly, others have researched conceptions of Arab ethnic identity with regard to notions of hospitality towards refugees and the prospect of long-term integration (Shryock 2004; Tobin 2018; Carpi and Şenoğuz 2019). A few exceptions notwithstanding (e.g. Kaufman 2006; Mansour 2019), little research has been done, however, on the role of citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to refugees *in Muslim-majority societies*.

One reason for this gap in the literature may also be that the notion of 'integration' is often not welcomed by governments in the region and hence not accepted as a potential future (Shryock 2004; Hanafi 2017). In Turkey, for example, there is therefore a preference in politics and among international organisations to instead speak of a "harmonization" between Syrian

refugees and Turkish citizens (UNHCR 2022). Be it called 'integration' or 'harmonization', the practical need for more research on this issue to prevent conflict is evident, though.

As has been widely found, concerns regarding immigrants' impact on the economy are an important factor in attitude formation to immigration (Mayda 2006; Dancygier and Donnelly 2013). However, much research on public attitudes to immigration around the world has in fact suggested that citizens' cultural concerns regarding refugees outweigh their economic concerns (for a review, see Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). For example, evidence on Syrian refugee reception in Jordan has affirmed "the relative importance of humanitarian and cultural concerns over economic ones", arguing that "humanitarian motives can sustain support for refugees when host and migrant cultures are similar" (Alrababa'h et al. 2021: 34). For many Europeans, the preference is to receive asylum-seekers that can contribute to the economy, are in humanitarian need, and are Christian (Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2016). For example, in the case of the Ukrainian refugees, evidence suggests that it is their "demographic, religious and displacement profile" (Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2023), but not their nationality, that engenders public support of their reception among Europeans. Meanwhile, experimental research has shown that personal exposure to a refugee crisis and the organisational chaos that may come with it, reduces citizens' support of receiving refugees (Hangartner et al. 2019) and increases their support of extreme-right parties (Dinas et al. 2019).

In this context, research has also uncovered the detrimental effects that hate speech on social media can have on public attitudes towards refugees (Getmansky, Sınmazdemir, and Zeitzoff 2018) whereas empathy-based counter-speech strategies have been found to reduce exclusionary attitudes towards refugees among citizens (Hangartner et al. 2021). Therefore, research has explored the role of *narratives in migration policy* (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011; Scuzzarello 2015) and discussed the design of *migration communication campaigns* (Dennison, Piccoli, and Carmo Duarte 2024), including what an effective discourse for refugee reception may look like (Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2016; Alrababa'h et al. 2021). It is against this background, too, that this research zooms in on the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to the Syrian refugees, because, as Chapter Two will show in detail, it is these identities that Turkey's President Erdoğan has invoked in his policy narrative to foster Turkish citizens' public acceptance of receiving the Syrian refugees (Yanaşmayan, Üstübici, and Kasli 2019). Given this strong presence of religious and ethnic identity in migration policy narratives, this study therefore does *not* ask what *generally* matters for Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees, but what role in particular their religious and ethnic identities play here. Different theories have been advanced regarding this question.

2. The Debate: Current Models and Evidence

Sociology's central purpose is to connect the observation of phenomena at the macro level, that is, patterns and trends across the whole of a given society, with occurrences at the micro level, that is, the lived experiences and perspectives of individual agents. More specifically, according to Max Weber (1920), sociology consists in "the interpretive understanding of social action, and thereby […] causal explanation of its course and consequences". This epistemological approach, generally termed as methodological individualism, in essence holds that no sociological explanation of a given phenomenon is complete if it does not explicate how the actions and beliefs of individual people produce it (Goldthorpe 2001). In other words, Weber's principles call upon researchers to formulate their explanations at the action-theoretic level rather than at the level of systems or structures (*cf.* Wallerstein 1974; Burawoy 1998). For Weber, understanding the meanings that subjects ascribe to what they do and the intentions behind their actions is thus paramount to fully grasping their behaviour. This conception of sociological explanation (which in other disciplines, for example, history, is also called 'realist-constructivist approach') lays the foundation for my review of the theoretical debate.

The described link between the macro and the micro level in such explanations has been aptly visualised by the so-called 'boat model' diagram developed by Coleman (1986). This model type illustrates a key concept of my theoretical framework: the social mechanism. A social mechanism can be understood as the social "cogs and wheels" (Elster 1989: 3) through which a specific macro-level pattern emerges. That is, it describes *the logic behind agents' attitudes and actions.* Without it, we may come to know that some variable X correlates with another variable Y, but we still would not know *why* such an association existed.
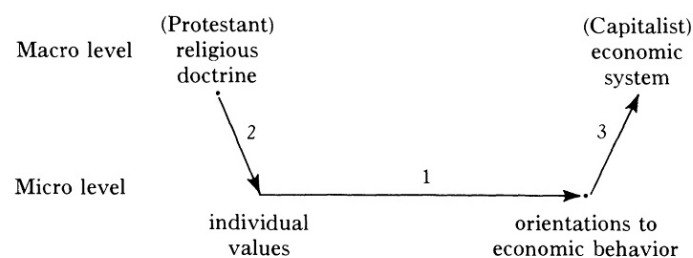
Fig. 1. Example of an application of Coleman's 'boat model', displaying the social mechanism in Weber's theory of the Protestant ethos and the rise of Capitalism (from Coleman 1986: 1322)

In what follows, I shall synthesise the current theoretical debate and the previous evidence on the role of citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to immigrants and refugees according to *the different social mechanisms that have been suggested*.

There are three different hypotheses about the role of host society members' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to immigrants and refugees that can be extracted from the current theoretical debate and previous research. In presenting them, I am aware that I only look at the host society's relation to the immigrants and not at the other side, as a fully relational (see Emirbayer 1997) or a network-theoretical (see Granovetter 1973) approach to the subject would require. Furthermore, some scholars are of the opinion that academic research on social integration should, in fact, focus on the opposite side, that is, the experiences and strategies of resistance of immigrants and refugees who are subjected to policies of integration and dynamics of racism and discrimination as they emerge from the host societies and their states (Yurdakul 2022; Favell 2022a). However, my choice is grounded in the fact that not only is "the acceptance of the receiving society towards newcomers […] crucial in supporting integration processes" (Şimşek 2018b: 270) but also, ultimately, it is the receiving society's relation to the newcomers that shapes a country's refugee and immigration policy. What follows is my personal categorisation of the existing literature into three distinct models.

2.1 The Distance Model

Current research on social integration is marked by a "constructivist consensus" on concepts such as race, ethnicity and nationality, and by a "routine beating of the dead primordial horse" (Wimmer 2013: 2). A great majority of the literature seems to agree that such identities are fluid and contextual rather than fixed and natural as primordialism has it (Özkırımlı 2000). However, the 'dead horse' has re-entered the scene through the back door in the shape of two other notions: from critics of immigration to advocates of multiculturalism, it is 'culture' and 'civilisation' that are now being essentialised, if not 'racialised' (Bunzl 2005; Lentin 2005; Brubaker 2017). A prevalent version of this is the theory of cultural[a] distance (Wimmer 2013: 181, see end of chapter for the endnote). This theory suggests that

> Culture is what separates diasporas from the indigenous, and some cultures are more distant
> from the culture of the indigenous population than others. The more distant the culture is,
> the slower will be the rate of absorption of its diaspora (Collier 2013: 262).

According to Collier, "[the viability of a society's] diversity depends not just upon numbers but on the cultural distance between immigrants and indigenous populations" (2013: 76). His central thesis reads that too much diversity can have harmful consequences for a society's social cohesion because it impairs the "mutual regard" and "trust" among people (ibid: 72). That is because host society members and newcomers always find themselves in competition

over the distribution of resources, and "mutual regard" and "trust" are the key factors that legitimate the sharing of resources and thus inclusion of the other. Therefore, "diversity", which Collier leaves undefined, must be "contained", not only by controlling the size but also the "composition of migration" (ibid: 264). Collier provides the following example:

> Suppose, probably reasonably, that Bangladeshis are more distant from English culture than Poles. This has a simple yet important implication. Following the previous argument about the effect of cultural distance on how rapidly a diaspora merges into the cultural mainstream, the Bangladeshi diaspora will have a slower rate of absorption than the Polish diaspora. (2013: 90)

The theory of cultural distance has been reiterated in different shapes across various literatures in philosophy (Scruton 2007), history (Pagden 2008), economics (Collier 2013; Collier & Hoeffler 2018) and sociology (Tausch 2017; Koopmans 2020). Its origins, however, lie in the social psychology of acculturation, where it was popularised by John Berry (1980; 1997). According to Wimmer,

> Berry defines cultural distance as being the result of remote historical connections between two languages or two religious traditions. Chinese and French are more remotely related than French and Italian, Buddhism and Protestantism more than Buddhism and Hinduism. The straightforward hypothesis that we can derive from this perspective is that the more distant the linguistic or religious origins of two ethnic communities, the more their members should be oriented towards different values. (2013: 181)

Other names under which cultural distance theory has appeared include 'ingroup favouritism' (Cowling and Anderson 2019) and 'homophily' (McPherson et al. 2001), which – whilst not being identical – essentially suggest the same sort of mechanism. In the same vein, the 'clash of civilizations' hypothesis (Huntington 1996) can be read as the international relations-version of cultural distance theory, suggesting that the central source of conflict between states after the Cold War would be ethno-cultural and religious differences, bringing those with similar ones closer together and driving those with more distant ones further apart. Along the same line, Huntington (2004) also argued that American national identity was under threat of being transformed in its Anglo-Protestant core because of the influence of Latino immigrants' Catholic and Mediterranean culture that was too distant for them to fully integrate.

Finally, also in anthropology, a new reading of Sperber's "epidemiology of representations" (1985; 1992) in the study of religion and culture (Svensson 2014) has suggested that cultural similarities are bound to the diffusion of symbols and therefore depend on people's social connectedness. From this it is concluded that geographical proximity as well as shared religion and ethnicity are important factors of cultural similarity because they

facilitate connections and thereby the diffusion of symbols. Less naturalistic anthropological approaches such as Herzfeld's theory of "cultural intimacy" meanwhile suggest that cultural commonalities between people enable a "rueful self-recognition" in the other (2005: 6), even if they are different otherwise, and thereby make them feel familiar with each other, which leads them to being more inclusive of each other. According to Herzfeld, "a government may [therefore] try to co-opt the language of intimacy for its utilitarian ends" (2005: 4), one of which may be the definition of a nation's boundaries and of what counts as alien.

In sum, the range of definitions of what cultural distance precisely consists in and how it can be measured, today, goes beyond Berry's initial definition of it as "how dissimilar two cultures are in language, religion etc." (Berry 1997: 23) and includes conceptualisations and operationalisations such as "differences in religion" (Ali and Huntington 2007: 54), the "structural distance between languages" (Fearon 2003: 195), the level of linguistic, ethnic and religious "fractionalization" (Alesina et al. 2003), the genetic dissimilarity between two groups (Collier and Hoeffler 2018), differences in social attitudes and values between members of different religious traditions (Inglehart and Baker 2000; Harrison and Huntington 2000) or – similarly but more expansively – the sum of differences in "language competencies", "mutual identification and acceptance", "shared core norms and values" and "bridging social capital" (EurIslam 2014; Statham and Tillie 2016). Taken together, all these highlight the role of ethnic and religious identity as well as language. The social mechanism they stipulate reads:

Commonalities between host society members and refugees lead to more social inclusion because of mutual identification and thereof resulting feelings of solidarity.

I shall call this theory, which is the most prevalent across the literature, the Distance Model. Illustrated as a boat model, its mechanism would look as displayed in Figure 2.
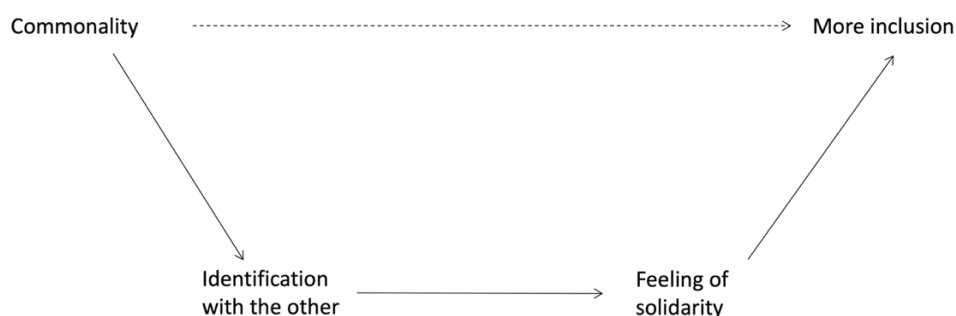
Fig. 2. The Distance Model

Evidence supporting this model comes, for example, from experimental and survey-based research on social attitudes in Israel and Malaysia that finds religious identity to be a strong source of ingroup favouritism, also regarding refugees, with host society members generally preferring immigrants of the same religion as themselves (Ben-Nun Bloom, Arikan, and Courtemanche 2015; Ben-Nun Bloom et al. 2019; Cowling and Anderson 2019). Similarly, survey-based research on (Christian) Western Europeans finds that the more religiously practising they are, the more they hold prejudices against people of other religions (Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2016; PEW 2018), which suggests that the more pronounced people's religious identity is, the less inclusive they are of non-co-religionists. In the same vein, analysing longitudinal individual level data on 138 immigrant groups in Sweden, Dribe and Lundh (2011: 297) find that similarity along "cultural factors (values, religion, and language) play[s] an important role" for immigrants' likelihood of intermarriage with natives, again suggesting that commonalities matter for social inclusion. Likewise, analysing public attitudes towards Syrian refugees in Jordan, Alrababa'h et al. (2021) find that, irrespective of economic burdens, "humanitarian motives can sustain support for refugees when host and migrant cultures are similar" (2021: 34), which they assume to be the case here based on the supposedly shared religious and ethnic identity of Syrian refugees and Jordanian citizens.

2.2 The Distinction Model

In opposition to this stands the theory of cultural distinction, which maybe unexpectedly predicts the exact opposite outcome. This theory holds that

> Social identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against what is closest, which represents the greatest threat. (Bourdieu 1984: 479)

In his article *The Narcissism of Minor Differences*, Anton Blok draws on a notion by Sigmund Freud to point to "the importance of small differences for understanding conflicts" (1998: 34) and explain why such perceptions of difference often arise where they are least expected from an outside perspective. Giving a wide range of empirical examples from the history of anthropology (Simmel 1908; Evans-Pritchard 1940; Lévi-Strauss 1966; Hammel 1993), spanning from the demise of Yugoslavia to the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda, Blok in particular cites Bourdieu (1984) to argue that the Self is inherently based on its distinction from the Other and that the more this Other is similar along prima facie characteristics, the greater is the need to underscore possible differences to preserve one's sense of self. A recent empirical example

supporting this theory can be found in Adida's mixed-method research on immigrant inclusion in West Africa, in which she argues that

> cultural affinities may motivate cultural entrepreneurs to highlight differences and reify boundaries. The result is that culturally similar groups may face greater political exclusion than culturally dissimilar ones. (2011: 1372)

The logic behind this, according to Adida, is the "threat of group identity loss" (2011: 1371), as suggested by Blok: the more potentially ambiguous the boundary between members of the host society and immigrants, the greater the need for the former to manifest it. This theory thus stipulates the following social mechanism:

Commonalities between host society members and refugees lead to less social inclusion because of a threat to the sense of self and a thereof resulting need for distinction.

I shall call this theory the Distinction Model.
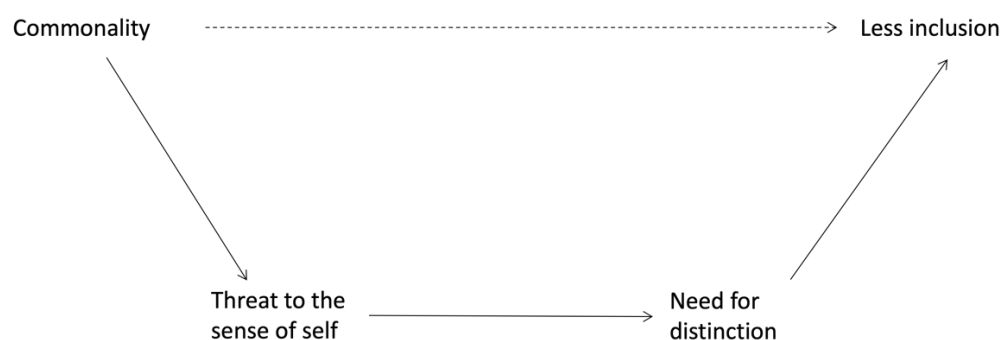
Fig. 3. The Distinction Model

Another example of this mechanism is the occurrence of Islamophobic rhetoric in Muslim-majority countries, like Turkey or Kosovo, where secular governments have set their societies off against more conservative practices of Islam to prevent perceptions of their national identity as 'backward' or 'Middle Eastern' (Püttmann 2018, 2020; Bayraklı, Hafez, and Faytre 2019).

2.3 The Dignity Model

Research on refugee reception has also found host society members' values to play an important role in how they relate to the immigrants. This includes, for example, employees of faith-based organisations or religiously motivated volunteers that profess an inclusive attitude

towards refugees as a way of putting their belief into practice but also narratives of 'ethnic' cultural practices such as 'Arab hospitality'. One Christian organisation assisting refugees with their resettlement process to the United States studied by McKinnon (2009) illustratively states the logic behind this attitude to the social inclusion of refugees as follows:

> Helping a refugee begin a new life in your community is one of the most tangible expressions of what our faith calls us to do. (USCCB cited in McKinnon 2009: 319)

According McKinnon (2009), the religious beliefs of such organisations and volunteers not only motivate them to support the refugees but also make them more inclusive towards them, although they may still construct the refugee as 'different'. As one volunteer quoted by McKinnon (2009: 319) proclaimed: "God has sent Africa to me!". The emphasis here is on the volunteer's relation to *their faith*, which is practised by including the Other, rather than on their relation to the Other themselves. As the previously cited Christian organisation goes on to say:

> We cannot insist too much on the duty of giving foreigners a hospitable reception. It is a duty imposed by human solidarity and by Christian charity […] They should be welcomed in the spirit of brotherly love, so that the concrete example of wholesome living may give them a high opinion of authentic Christian charity and of spiritual values. (USCCB cited in McKinnon 2009: 325)

In this case, the social inclusion of refugees is thus an injunction of faith that is done not because of how the host society members perceive the cultural identity of the refugees, but because of how they perceive their own.

In many religions, the concept of the 'sanctuary' as a refuge for the needy and forcibly displaced of the world plays an important spiritual role and lays the foundation for the religious' inclusive acts towards refugees, regardless of the latter's own religious identity (Marfleet 2011; Wilson 2011). This type of faith-based hospitality not only refers to faith-based organisations but also to their respective faith communities (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011; Snyder 2011). In the Jordanian context, for example, Alrababa'h et al. (2021) find that greater religiosity is slightly correlated with more positive attitudes towards Syrian refugees. Although religiosity figures here as the motivation to show greater support and sympathy towards refugees, Nawyn (2006) finds in the context of the US that most faith-based organisations are similar in their practise to secular ones and that inclusiveness towards refugees rarely comes with religious doctrine, which suggests that it may also be ethics in general. Finally, just like with religious identity, also ethnic identity narratives can serve as a basis for charity and inclusivity towards refugees, as for example the Jordanian and Lebanese governments have done by invoking "Arab

hospitality" as "a national public virtue" (Carpi and Şenoğuz 2019: 129; Shryock 2004) in the face of the Syrian refugees' first arrival. However, framing the Syrian refugees as "guests" in these countries also made clear that this would not lead to formal integration (Gutkowski 2022). This means that while the Syrian refugees may have been included socially, they were kept away from becoming a new part of those countries' collective identities. Still, similarly to the religiously motivated, also this inclusion emerges from references to the hosts' own identity, coining particular convictions, rather than to the identity of the refugees.

In all these cases, the driving force behind the host society members' boundary making are thus their values, motivating their help, independently of the religious or ethnic identity of the respective refugee. This suggests the following social mechanism:

Commonalities between host society members and refugees do not matter but rather, some religious and ethnic identities may support charitable values that lead to more inclusion.

I shall call this theory the Dignity Model.
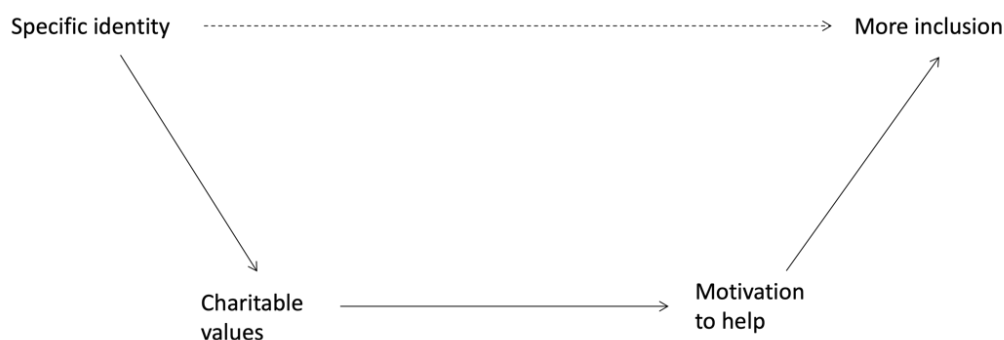
Fig. 4. The Dignity Model

Another example of this mechanism are political appeals to national identity and its alleged values as the basis of the social inclusion of refugees, such as then German Chancellor Angela Merkel's statement in 2015 when around one million Syrian refugees entered Germany: "If one now needs to apologise for showing a friendly face towards those in need, then this is not my country anymore" (Merkel 2015, own transl.). The phrase was also linked to what the media at the time called the emergence of a new German "Welcoming culture" (*Willkommenskultur*) (Hartnett 2019). According to Cecil, Stoltzfus, and Hagues (2018), also here, religious values may have played a role for many Germans in welcoming the Syrian refugees, even if they described themselves as scarcely religious in terms of practice.

3. The Puzzle: Turkish Citizens' Relation to Syrian Refugees

The underlying logic of this research's design is that of a critical case study (Hancké 2009). Critical cases provide the opportunity to challenge a widely accepted theory or test rival ones, and thereby uncover to what extent they may have to be rethought in light of the evidence presented by the analysis of the new case. For this to work, the chosen critical case must be "well within the universe as defined by the theory" (ibid: 68) and an instance in which the theories fail to fully make sense of the phenomenon at hand, although the prerequisites are met. Moreover, for a theory to be fully-fledged, this not only requires that its predictions are valid, but also that the mechanism underlying them is as suggested (Elster 2007). The role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to the Syrian refugees is such a case.

What is puzzling about this case? Religious and ethnic identity have played a significant role in Turkish society since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 as well as before under the Ottomans (more on this in Chapter 2). These identities have not only shaped the making of 'Turkishness' itself but also shape the major social cleavages in Turkish society today (Aydın-Düzgit 2019; Arat and Pamuk 2019). This creates ethnic and religious variation whilst holding other things constant. First, although most Turkish citizens are of Sunni Muslim denomination today, Turkish religious identity has traditionally been split between the camp of the more conservatively religious and ostentatiously pious believers and the camp of the more 'Westernised' and secular ('Kemalist') ones (Arat and Pamuk 2019). And second, although according to the law and the Republic's first constitution, all citizens of Turkey are *Turks*, some citizens also or exclusively identify ethnically as Kurds or Arabs (Zürcher 2017). The Syrian refugees, meanwhile, are predominantly conservative pious Sunni Muslims and Arab or Kurdish in ethnicity (McHugo 2014; Çağaptay 2014), notwithstanding, of course, various exceptions, such as secularised or Turkmen Syrians. Now, everything else being equal, each of the three above-cited models would predict that pious Turkish citizens relate differently to the Syrian refugees than secularised ones and that Arab or Kurdish Turkish citizens relate differently to them than Turkish citizens with no such ethnic identity.

According to the *Distance* Model, pious and/or Kurdish or Arab Turkish citizens would have to be more inclusive of the Syrian refugees because their religious and ethnic identities have more in common with the Syrians than do secular and/or ethnic Turks. The *Distinction* Model, in contrast, would suggest that self-identified Muslim and Kurdish or Arab Turkish citizens, on the contrary, feel a particular need to set themselves off against the Syrian refugees and thus become less inclusive than Turkish citizens that are not Kurdish or Arab or do not self-identify as Muslim. Finally, in this empirical case, the *Dignity* Model would predict a

similar outcome as the Distance Model, with the difference being that religiously conservative Turkish citizens are not more inclusive towards the Syrian refugees because they regard them as similar but because of their personal religious or ethnic values, irrespective of the Syrians' religion or religiosity, and that *Kurdish* Turkish citizens, for example, are also more inclusive of *Arab* Syrian refugees since they act out of conviction rather than out of feelings of similarity. That is, while the expected outcome of the Distance and the Dignity Models may be very similar here, the mechanism behind it is very different: Whereas the former considers the Syrian refugees' ethnic and religious identity as well and draws on perceptions of similarity, the other only refers to the Turkish citizens' own religious and ethnic identity and draws on the values that these citizens derive from it.

Prior research does not provide a clear answer as to which model is at work in this case. While Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan from the religiously conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP) has often framed the Syrian refugees as Turkish citizens' "Muslim brothers and sisters" (Kaya and Nagel 2020), implicitly invoking the logic of the Distance Model, Erdoğan (2020a, 2020b) finds high levels of perceived cultural difference from the Syrian refugees and strong support for their return across *all* socio-political camps in Turkey, including AKP voters, with over 80% not finding the Syrian refugees to be culturally similar. However, his survey also indicates that the level of perceived cultural difference and support for refugee deportation is *still lower* among voters of the *religiously conservative* AKP and of the leftist *pro-Kurdish* Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP, now called DEM Partisi) than among voters of other parties, such as the *secularist* Republican People's Party (CHP) or the far-right *nationalist* National Movement Party (MHP). So, what can explain this variance?

Table 1. Perceived Cultural Similarity of Syrian Refugees in Turkey according to party preference (Values in percent). Source: Erdoğan (2020a)[4]

	Not similar at all	Not similar	Not similar at all + Not similar	Neither similar, nor not similar	Similar	Very similar	Very similar + Similar	No idea / No response
People's Alliance[5]	39.5	34.6	74.1	10.7	12.0	0.6	12.6	2.6
National Alliance[6]	61.8	29.6	91.0	5.4	2.0	0.1	2.1	1.5
HDP	48.8	29.3	78.1	6.1	13.4	-	13.4	2.4
Other	58.5	34.1	92.6	2.4	-	2.4	2.4	2.6
No indication	50.3	30.0	80.3	10.7	5.5	-	5.5	3.5
Total	**50.5**	**31.4**	**81.9**	**8.6**	**6.7**	**0.3**	**7.0**	**2.5**

[4] The survey was conducted between 15 December 2020 and 12 January 2021 with Turkish citizens in 2,259 households across 26 cities.
[5] The People's Alliance (*Cumhur ittifakı*) consists of the AKP and the MHP.
[6] The National Alliance (*Millet ittifakı*) consists of the CHP and the more moderately nationalist Good Party (İyi Parti).

A later repetition of the survey in 2020 produced very similar results (Erdoğan 2021), as has the survey by Hoffman, Werz, and Halpin (2018). Interpreting these data, the latter have suggested a split of Turkey's religiously conservative camp into nationalists on the one hand and a "compassionate Islamist strain" (2018: 13) on the other. This may explain, they say, why AKP voters' attitudes towards the refugees are "the softest overall – though still very negative" (ibid). Turkey's Kurds, meanwhile, may be torn between kinship-based camaraderie on the one hand and "competition for low-wage jobs" (ibid) on the other, they hypothesise, which may lead to slightly though still not distinctly more favourable views among HDP voters.

Diverging from these findings, the most systematic and robust analysis of this issue thus far comes from Getmansky, Sınmazdemir, and Zeitzoff (2018). Based on their survey experiment in June and July 2014 with 1,257 residents in central, eastern, and south-eastern Turkey, they find that "[s]upporters of the ruling AKP party are *not* more positive towards the refugees compared to supporters of other parties, but they are systematically *less* likely to see refugees as a threat" (2018: 503, emphasis mine) and are "somewhat positive towards Sunnis, but this result is marginally significant (90%)" (2018: 501). As the authors justifiably comment, "[t]his result is especially important because it shows that negative messages about mostly Muslim refugees can negatively impact attitudes towards them even in a middle-income, Muslim-majority country such as Turkey" (2018: 492). In contrast, the survey experiment of Lazarev and Sharmer (2017) from 2013 with 1,140 male participants in Gaziantep near Syria as well as the Istanbul districts of Bağcılar, Fatih, and Beşiktaş finds that "emphasis on shared religion can reduce prejudice" (2017: 203) against Syrian refugees among Turkish citizens.

Regarding ethnic identity, meanwhile, Getmansky, Sınmazdemir, and Zeitzoff's study indicates "weak evidence of co-ethnic bias in treatment of refugees" (2018: 500). They write:

> (1) Kurdish respondents have warmer attitudes than non-Kurds towards all groups of refugees; (2) Kurdish respondents exhibit the warmest attitudes towards Kurdish refugees, and then towards Sunnis. Non-Kurds express slightly warmer attitudes towards Sunni refugees, and treat the other groups equally. This suggests that common religion may be associated with a more sympathetic attitude towards refugees, but not as much as common ethnic identity. (2018: 497)

However, checking for robustness, their analysis furthermore reveals that, while exposure to refugees is *not* a significant factor behind Kurds' warmer attitudes, "[t]here is strong evidence that residing in a province with a history of political violence (OHAL) is associated with more positive feelings towards refugees" (2018: 503). This may explain why Kurdish Turkish citizens are also warmer towards *Arab* Syrian refugees, suggesting that it is more about Kurds'

own experiences of oppression, i.e. a common suffering, than about ethnic similarity. In line with this, Erdoğan (2021) finds that the level of Turkish citizens' perceived cultural similarity to Syrian refugees is in fact *lower* among Turkish citizens living in cities *near* the Syrian border (many of which are Kurdish or Arab like the Syrians) than elsewhere in Turkey.

These findings point in various directions of explanation. The evidence that Turkish citizens' sympathy is greater towards refugees that are Sunni (like most of themselves) and that the predominantly religiously conservative voters of the AKP exhibit slightly more positive views and stronger feeling of cultural proximity vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees than more secular voters supports the *Distance* Model. Also, the finding that Kurdish Turkish citizens feel the warmest towards Kurdish Syrian refugees and that voters of the pro-Kurdish HDP feel more positive about the Syrian refugees than the predominantly secularist voters of the CHP goes in the same direction. However, although voting behaviour in Turkey is strongly tied to socio-cultural identities (Laebens and Öztürk 2021), these macro-patterns do not tell us yet whether it is actually Turkish citizens' *religious and/or ethnic identities* that drive this variation. Indeed, not all Kurds vote for the HDP, and not all voters of the HDP are Kurdish, just like not all voters of the AKP are pious Muslims. Moreover, the findings that the preference towards Sunni Muslims is only marginal and that Kurds, in fact, also feel warmer towards Syrian refugees of other ethnicities, for which the reason may be that they associate them with the political and violent conflict they themselves went through, as Getmansky, Sınmazdemir, and Zeitzoff (2018) have shown, support the theory of the *Dignity* Model that it is about the values that may be tied to respective religious and ethnic identities in Turkey rather than about commonalities with the refugees. Finally, the finding that hardly anyone in Turkey feels culturally close to the Syrian refugees and that this is particularly so among Turkish citizens living near Syria, raises the question of whether this may result from an attempt of deliberate self-differentiation from the Syrian refugees, exactly because they may be religiously or ethnically similar, as the *Distinction* Model would suggest. The quantitative evidence on this question thus yields support for each of the three models and leaves unclear whether there is a common thread connecting the various findings.

Previous qualitative studies paint a similar picture. In her ethnography of different Istanbul neighbourhoods, Alkan (2021) found cases of Syrian refugees experiencing ethnic and religious discrimination when hunting for jobs and housing as well as of Turkish citizens active in aid organisations preferring to help Syrians that resembled them religiously, both of which supports the *Distance* Model. In contrast, International Crisis Group (2018: 8) finds "faith-based solidarity" and "honour" to be driving pious Turks' charitable attitudes to Syrian

refugees, which also hints at the *Dignity* Model. Meanwhile, studying a women's club in Mersin on Turkey's southern shore near Syria, Ozcurumez and Mete (2021: 373) find that the Syrian refugees are in fact considered to be "different in […] religion" despite being Sunni Muslims, too, which is reminiscent of the *Distinction* Model. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in various other settings across Turkey have reached comparable results (Saraçoğlu and Bélanger 2019; Ayvazoğlu and Kunuroğlu 2019; Erdoğan 2020b, 2021). This perception of religious difference has also been found among overtly pious Muslim Turkish citizens (Üstübici 2020). As Alakoc, Göksel and Zarychta (2022) find based on 85 in-depth interviews with public officials, party affiliates, humanitarian workers, journalists, and small business owners in Istanbul, Eskişehir, Hatay, and Gaziantep,

> counter to prevailing expectations, shared religion between Turks and Syrians was not especially prominent across our interviews, and the most devout respondents tended to use it in a polarizing way, to draw distinctions in the practice of the religion rather than to unify the two groups (2022: 549)

Next to the *Distinction* Model, their study also supports the *Dignity* Model, finding that most interviewees that voiced relatively positive attitudes towards the Syrian refugees invoked "humanitarian values", "compassion", and "the importance of hospitality" (Alakoç, Göksel, and Zarychta 2022: 554) rather than shared religious identity. Regarding ethnic identity, newspapers have reported intra-Kurdish solidarity between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees in places like Diyarbakır (Yansit 2022), which backs the *Distance* Model, but also intra-Arab animosity in places like Antakya (Can 2020), supporting the *Distinction* Model. Given this diversity of previous findings, to date, no cohesive logic has been identified that could figure as a general mechanism behind all of these phenomena.

What further complicates the picture is the Syrian refugees' perspective on whether they and Turkish citizens culturally resemble each other. According to both survey-based and ethnographic research, many Syrian refugees express a feeling of "cultural affinity" and social inclusion in Turkey thanks to shared religious identity and joint religious practice with Turks (Kaya 2017a, 2017b; Çetin 2019; Kaya and Nagel 2020; Rottmann and Kaya 2020). This "cultural affinity" for Turkey, due to Islam, is also what some Syrian refugees in Berlin that previously lived in Turkey have stated to have been missing since moving on to Germany (Rayes et al. 2021). In the same vein, Syrian refugees have also been found to have chosen their destinations in Turkey specifically based on "cultural similarities" in terms of religious (Kaya, Çimen, et al. 2021: 37) or ethnic identity (Kaya, Akkaya, et al. 2021: 57). Overall, a

majority of Syrian refugees have thus indicated feeling culturally "very similar" to the Turkish citizens (Erdoğan 2021) – though this perception radically changed in more recent surveys (Erdoğan 2022). In light of this, the puzzle takes on its full shape: If the Syrian refugees have mostly felt similar in religious and ethnic terms to (at least some share of) the Turkish citizenry, then why do most Turkish citizens feel so different from them? And why do Turkish citizens vary on this issue? Based on this review, it seems as if each of the models discussed above may be able to explain a portion of what is happening, but none of them can make sense of the case as a whole. To build a model that can, is the aim of this research.

4. My Analytical Lens: Social and Symbolic Boundaries

Following the logic of sociological explanation presented above, it is the purpose of this research to understand the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to Turkey's Syrian refugees by analysing how behaviour, narratives, and conceptions at the micro level build up to larger patterns at the macro level, that is, by identifying the social mechanism that connects macro-level patterns with micro-level processes and can help us explain what is going on.

As my review of the wider literature on integration research has shown, the notion of integration itself is analytically not very productive for such an endeavour. Albeit neutral in its theoretical origins and widely used across academia and society, it has come to be a heavily loaded term whose usage may lead to more cloudiness and contestation than conceptual clarity – not to mention the manifold dimensions of the concept, as discussed above.

The concepts of *social* and *symbolic boundaries* allow to remedy this issue. Indeed, the boundary notion has become remarkably popular as a conceptual framework across diverse approaches to integration research (e.g. Ahmed 1999; Bail 2008; Alba 2012). That is because it puts the focus on how groups come into being in the first place and on how they relate to one another – be it at the level of social interactions, public discourses, or citizenship regimes. This not only does away with the various connotations of the integration term, but it also provides a powerful analytical tool.

4.1 The Logic of the Boundary Approach

The boundary concept originated with the anthropologist Frederik Barth whose claim was that it is the boundaries of a group, i.e. their "criteria for evaluation" of whether someone belongs, that define a group's identity, *not* "the cultural stuff [these boundaries] enclose" (1969: 15), which may be more easily visible for outside observers. That means: Assessing what groups

exist and how they relate to each other can only be done by analysing how agents draw such boundaries themselves, i.e. how they mark the difference between one sum of people they think to be part of and others who are deemed not to belong, and *not* by identifying cultural characteristics that may seem relevant to the outside observer in grouping together individuals. Wimmer (2013: 22) has created a graph that aptly illustrates this idea, contrasting it with the approach of J. G. Herder, that is still widespread in public debates and research methodologies today, to divide the social world into groups according to externally identifiable similarities.

A Herderian world   A Barthian world
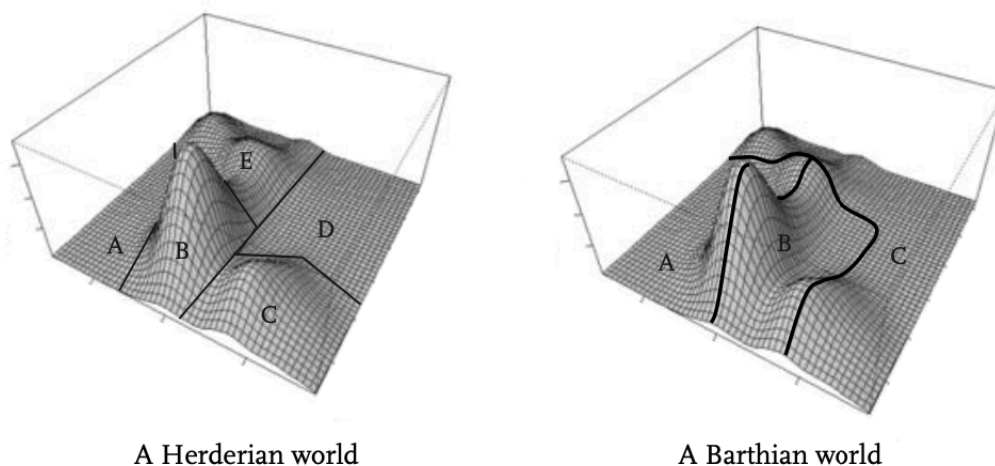
Fig. 5. Two ways of dividing the social world into groups: In both cases, the 'landscape' of attributes is the same, but the boundaries drawn across it are very different. For Herder, the boundaries run along externally identifiable differences, whereas for Barth, the actual boundary making of actors may follow its own logic. (Source: Wimmer, Andreas (2013) Ethnic Boundary Making. Oxford: OUP, p.22)

The key theoretical point of this approach is thus that group identity and relations can only be understood from what anthropologists call the *emic* perspective, that is, the vantage point of agents themselves, how they ascribe meaning, and what they regard as *salient* differences and similarities. For Wimmer, who has decidedly developed the concept, such boundaries are "the outcome of classificatory struggles and negotiations between actors [that] lead to a shared understanding of [their] location and meaning" (2008b: 970). The boundary approach therefore does not speak an *a priori* verdict on the primordial-constructivist debate on the nature of identity. Rather, its focus lies on processes of identification and distinction and the behavioural consequences that these may have. These can be studied in various contexts.

The concept of boundaries has appeared in much research on immigration and inter-ethnic relations (Lamont 2001; 2014; Bail 2008; Alba 2009; Wimmer 2013) but also on other types of group formation, such as social class (Lamont 1994; Lamont and Duvoux 2014),

nationhood (Tilly 2005; Wimmer 2018) and citizenship (Bauböck 1994). Especially in the anthropology of minorities, identity formation, and social inclusion, it has become a widespread analytical tool. For Zygmunt Baumann, social order in the modern state fundamentally relies on the "clarity of binding divisions, classifications, allocations and boundaries" (1997: 47), from which follows that anything that may "blur" this clarity of dividing lines poses a potential problem to social order: "strangers" are problematic for the modern state and society because they do not fit their "cognitive map", but rather "befog the boundary lines that should be clearly seen" (1997: 46). At the same time, conceiving of people as a 'stranger' is both the result of modern society's boundary making and the condition for the construction of its collective identity and social order, according to Bauman (1997).

This reiterates Barth's main thesis that the existence of groups is based on the act of exclusion in itself and not on intrinsically meaningful (or 'primordial') shared characteristics. Sibley (1995) takes this idea one step further, suggesting that modernity has socialised individual agents into seeing the collective self as a "body" whose "purity" needs to be maintained by defending its "borders". As a result, he argues that "[s]patial boundaries are in part *moral* boundaries" (1995: 39, own italics). This link between boundaries and morality will be critical for my later analysis. What becomes clear is that boundaries are constitutive of both collective identity and social order, and that they express themselves both physically through the organisation of space and agents' behaviour, and symbolically through speech and attitudes.

Different types of boundaries and boundary change have been theorised. In particular Alba (2005) has suggested that social boundaries can be categorised into *bright* (read: solid) and *blurred* (read: permeable) ones according to their respective level of ambiguity about who falls on which side. This differentiation will be key for my analysis, too. As such, boundaries are particularly tangible when they become politically institutionalised, for example, through national borders or conceptions of citizenship (Alba and Duyvendak 2019). Furthermore, Zolberg and Long (1999) but also Bauböck (1994) have identified change in social boundaries to come about by either "crossing", "blurring", or "shifting" them. Where it occurs, boundary change can have effects as drastic as the redrawing of borders or the eruption of ethnic hatred and genocide (cf. Benhabib 2005; Ron 2000). What causes these boundary processes can in itself be conceptualised as social mechanisms which are the "precipitants of boundary change" (Tilly 2004; 2005). Tilly therefore distinguishes between two types of social boundary mechanisms, those that *constitute* boundary changes and those that *cause* them. Boundary creations and changes can arise bottom-up, e.g. from new interpersonal encounters or the diffusion of specific perceptions, or they can be instilled top-down, e.g. through public

discourse or the reconstitution of administrative entities (Wimmer 2013). As a result, the "formation, transformation, activation, and suppression of social boundaries" (Tilly 2004: 211) can be considered processes at the micro level (how people interact and relate in a local context) that may constitute the social mechanism underlying large-scale effects at the macro level (e.g. immigration or citizenship policy, public discourse, social attitudes, collective behaviour).

4.2 Differentiating between Social and Symbolic Boundaries

To give this analytical tool more precision, Lamont and Molnár (2002) have remarked that boundary making consists of two distinct elements: they comprise a *social* dimension in the sense of agents' behaviour towards others and a *symbolic* dimension that underlies or justifies these behaviours, arising from the ascription of meaning. Lamont and Molnár have therefore further distinguished between what they call "symbolic boundaries" that are first and foremost the "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorise", generating "feelings of similarity and group membership" (2002: 168), and actual "social boundaries" that are "objectified forms of social differences" with behavioural or institutional consequences (ibid). Their theoretical intention is to clearly mark the difference between boundaries in an emotive, ideational, that is, a s*ymbolic* sense ('Because of X, they do not belong to us.') and those that have traceable consequences in a behavioural or even institutional, that is, in a *social* sense ('Because they do not belong to us, we want them to keep away.'). Wimmer, too, makes such a distinction between boundaries in his work, but he has not given it a specific name.

To be sure, in her first own study of symbolic boundaries, Lamont defines them as "conceptual distinctions that we make to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space" (1992: 89) in contrast to "objective social boundaries that are revealed by the existence of ghettos, exclusive clubs, racial or gender segregation in the workplace, or the institutionalization of corporatist practices" (ibid). As a result, she defines "the people excluded by our boundaries" as "those with whom we refuse to associate and those toward whom rejection and aggression are showed, and distance openly marked, by way of insuring that 'you understand that I am better than you are.'" (1992: 91). Answering the question of "what materials boundaries are created [from]", Lamont explains that "boundaries are rarely created from scratch", rather, they "generally exist prior to situational interactions and are determined by available cultural resources and spatial, geographic, and social-structural constraints" (1992: 95). From this follows that what matters in the analysis of symbolic boundaries is not how individuals interact with specific other individuals but rather how they conceive of the groups they feel belonging to and of others who they consider to be outside.

Jeffrey Alexander (1992) provides an illustrative example of the role of symbolic boundaries in the classification of people as citizens and enemies in civil society discourse. Drawing on Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane, Alexander argues that these binary categories live on in the civil society discourse of today because

> Just as there is no developed religion that does not divide the world into the saved and the damned, there is no civil discourse that does not conceptualize the world into those who deserve inclusion and those who do not. (1992: 291)

In this dichotomy, the notion of the 'moral' plays an important role because those who are kept beyond a group's boundary are often considered to be there because they are seen as "impure", "uncivilized" and, therefore, "unworthy and amoral" (Alexander 1992: 290-291). In making these boundaries, agents draw on what Alexander calls a "symbolic code":

> When citizens make judgments about *who should be included in civil society* and who should not, about who is a friend and who is an enemy, they draw on a systematic, highly elaborated symbolic code. (1992: 291, my italics)

To understand patterns of inclusion and exclusion as the result of boundary making, Alexander calls on researchers to "study this subjective dimension of civil society" (1992: 290). For this,

> […] we must recognize and focus on the distinctive symbolic codes that are critically important in constituting the very sense of society for those who are within and without it. These codes are so sociologically important, I would argue, that every study of social/sectional/subsystem conflict must be complemented by reference to this civil symbolic sphere.

The relevance and contribution of such a fine-grained analysis of boundary making becomes fully clear when considering the shortcomings of large-scale survey and experimental research. For example, to their surprise, Alrababa'h et al. (2021) find in their study on Jordanians' attitudes towards Syrian refugees that "despite the relative similarity between the host and refugee communities in Jordan, cultural concerns remain an important factor" (2021: 54), and that, moreover, the Jordanian Sunni Muslim respondents significantly preferred Christian refugees over Alawite Muslim ones (2021: 55), if given a forced choice. To explain these outcomes, considering the cultural "stuff" that supposedly defines groups from an outside perspective is not sufficient, but an in-depth analysis of people's boundary making is needed to discern the actually salient categories (Wimmer 2013). Symbolic boundaries thus matter for immigration policy because they are *the conceptual basis of citizens' attitudes to newcomers*. To conclude with Michèle Lamont's own words:

> Symbolic boundaries are *the lines that include and define* some people, groups, and things while excluding others. (Lamont, Pendergrass, and Pachucki 2015: 15341, my italics)

Based on this distinction, the literature on boundary making has generally discussed the questions of whether social and symbolic boundaries always *fall together*, as Wimmer's (2013) definition would suggest, or whether at times they may also diverge, and of whether people's symbolic boundaries, i.e. their vision of their in-group, always *precede* their social boundaries, i.e. their willingness to interact with other people, or whether at times symbolic boundaries may also be a sort of ex-post legitimisation of the social boundaries already drawn (for an extensive review of this discussion, see Edgell et al. 2020). As shall be seen, the thesis shall contribute to this theoretical discussion, too, arguing that social and symbolic boundaries can indeed diverge from each other and that symbolic boundaries may indeed succeed social ones, rather than always precede them. As stated at the outset, it is these insights that hold the key to solving the puzzle of Turkish citizens' relation to Syrian refugees.

In sum, the analysis of the making of social and symbolic boundaries can help provide a mechanism-based explanation to the analysis of wider social phenomena such as host societies' in- or exclusion of immigrants and refugees. Social and symbolic boundary processes are thus at the heart of the micro-macro link and therefore neatly fit the requirements of sociological explanation as defined by Max Weber.

Conclusion

This chapter has served developing the theoretical framework of this research. It has done so by situating it in the existing literature on immigrant integration, discussing conceptual tools, and by considering known explanatory models and previous research on the case at hand to show why this unsolved puzzle presents a critical case that may yield new theoretical insights. The chapter has moreover set the course for the empirical analysis that is to follow by outlining its rationale and justifying its approach. In a next step, Chapter Two will conceptualise the two main concepts of this analysis – religious and ethnic identity – and will situate them in the context of Turkey's national identity formation and the arrival of the Syrian refugees.

[a] Similarly to the notion of 'integration', the concept of 'culture' has faced much critique in anthropology and political theory, too, for its allegedly essentialising, simplifying, and groupist tendencies (Abu-Lughold 1991; Vertovec 1996; Strauss and Quinn 1997; Akan 2003). To be sure, engaging with arguments that use it is not equal to honouring their use of the term or conceding to the reification of culture as 'a thing'. Rather, by distilling the empirical content and abstract logic of an argument about the role of culture in host-refugee relations and reformulating it in more general terms, it becomes possible to conceptually specify it and empirically test it without using the notion of culture itself.

Chapter Two

Religious and Ethnic Identity in the Turkish Context

Table of Contents

Chapter Two

Religious and Ethnic Identity in the Turkish Context

Introduction

The two central concepts of this thesis' analysis are *religious* and *ethnic* identity. This requires both a clear conceptualisation of these terms and their contextualisation in Turkish society and politics – in particular with regard to the arrival of the Syrian refugees and the public discourse that ensued as a result. Moreover, as this chapter will also show, the two concepts have often been tightly connected to the relatively newer concept of *national* identity and the concepts of *race* and *civilisation* – also in Turkey. As such, religious and ethnic identity are not only two key concepts in the study of immigrant integration, but also in national identity formation, which often are linked (for a review see Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). In Turkey, this link cannot only be seen in its history of moving from the demise of the Ottoman Empire to the foundation of the Turkish Republic, but also in the social relations between Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities. As they meet each other through domestic migration, the meaning of Turkish national identity becomes a routine object of debate (Turam 2013). The chapter shall therefore also discuss the notion of the migrant in Turkey in order to better situate Turkey's Syrian refugee reception in social, political, and historical terms.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, I shall discuss the concepts of religious and ethnic identity per se, how they are related, and how they link to ideas of nationality and race. Second, moving on to the Turkish context, I shall sketch the role these concepts have played in forming Turkish national identity at the time of transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic in the 1920s. Third, building on this background, I shall show how these concepts have come into play in reformulations of Turkish national identity today in what has been called 'new Turkey' and how the public debates that followed from that have also been linked to the Syrian refugee reception. Here, research on the role of ethnic and religious identity for migrant acceptance in previous experiences of migration in Turkey shall be considered, too, as well as how these shaped the notion of the migrant in the Turkish context as such. Because not only emigration but also immigration is anything but new to Turkey (Kirişci 2007).

1. Conceptualising Religious and Ethnic Identity

1.1 Religious Identity

According to Jackson Preece, religion as a concept entails two key dimensions, one being private, consisting in a person's beliefs and inner convictions, the other being public and consisting in the "practical effect of those convictions not only on the individual but also on the community to whom he or she belongs" (2005: 18). Another way of putting this would be to speak of a spiritual and a social dimension of religion. Following from this, different beliefs result in different belongings, both in the sense of religions overall (e.g. Islam, Christianity, Judaism) and in the sense of religious sects (e.g. Sunni, Shia, Alevi, Alawite). Moreover, different beliefs may result in different religious behaviours with regard to both type and intensity of religious practice. Finally, belonging to a religion, or even practising certain religious prescripts, does not necessarily say much about the precise content of a person's beliefs or the importance they ascribe to them. In Europe, people's religious belonging has historically for a long time simply been determined by the religion of their ruler, following the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* ('whose realm, their religion'). Moreover, many religious tenets have become generic cultural practices, often void of an actual spirituality (Roy 2010). That is why a lot of empirical research on religious identity today (Davie 1990; Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan 2012; Just, Sandovici, and Listhaug 2014) distinguishes between three key dimensions of religious identity, which are (1) *belonging* (religious membership), (2) *believing* (religious convictions), and (3) *behaving* (religious practice).

Based on these differentiations of religious identity, the academic literature on Islam commonly speaks of a difference between 'cultural' or 'nominal' Muslims (Ruthven 2012; Özyürek 2014; Bowen 2016b), which some also have termed "Muslims with a capital M" (Popović 1986) or even "Muslims without Islam" (Ramadan 1998), and 'pious' or 'practising' Muslims. The former can be described as individuals who identify with Islam most often because of family lineage, may celebrate its holidays, and adhere to some of the cultural traditions stemming from the religion. This means they tick the boxes of *belonging* and, to some extent, *behaving*. The latter, in contrast, display a greater level of religiosity, that is, they ascribe greater importance to their religious *beliefs*, and they may devote themselves more rigorously to pious religious practice such as attendance to prayer or religious dress. Of course, religious belief and practice, in truth, cannot be captured by a simple binary distinction such as these ideal types because many Muslims, today, individually 'pick and choose' what elements of their religion they believe in and practise and how they interpret and adopt them (Göle 2015). In Islamic contexts, however, the distinction between 'secular' and 'pious' Muslims with

regard to the role that Islam plays in their lives has become a popular analytical tool to describe phenomena such as the alleged 'culture wars' inside Muslim-majority societies like Turkey (Arat and Pamuk 2019) or the alleged 'Islamophobia' of secular Muslims vis-à-vis their pious peers (Bayraklı, Hafez, and Faytre 2019). Despite its conceptual shortcomings, this ideal-typical distinction will also be useful for my analysis. Because, as a result of these nuances, "religion can identify itself with a particular culture or even operate solely as a culture [and it] can go so far as to lose any religious dimension and be reduced solely to an identity-marker" (Roy 2010: 33), which likely applies to a good share of secular Turkish citizens.

1.2 Ethnic Identity

According to Jackson Preece, ethnicity – the idea of a collective's shared "origin by birth or descent" and their "common racial, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics" (OED 1989 cited in Jackson Preece 2005: 136) – is "a relatively recent invention and should not be confused with the ethnic characteristics associated with it" (2005: 136). What this means can be illustrated by introducing the concept of *ethnicisation*, that is, the formation of a distinct 'people' (from the Greek *ethne*). Ethnic traits such as the above but also customs and collective memory can be 'ethnicised', which means they can be politicised into a shared ethnic identity (Jackson Preece 2005). In Western cultural narratives, Islamic religious identity, for example, has historically often been linked to being Arab (Said 1978; Roy 2010). What 'being Arab' means, however, is a question in its own right that arises from the debate on the concepts of 'ethnicity' and 'race' and their distinction. In North America, race is commonly seen as defining biological features such as skin colour, invoking a hierarchical thinking and producing discriminating effects, whereas ethnicity has come to be understood as the self-identified grouping of people around selected ethnic traits such as a shared race, language, history, or culture (Jackson Preece 2005; Wimmer 2013). In contrast, in the European public debate, the mere use of the notion of 'race' incites awkwardness and wide opposition because the term itself is seen as the source of a racist ideology of natural hierarchies between people and therefore should be disposed of altogether (Le Parisien 2018). That this approach, however, has hardly done away with racial thinking in Europe is captured by the notion of '*racialisation*'.

As with 'ethnicisation', the concept of 'racialisation' regards the essence of 'race' to be its social construction and subsequent politicisation, which can, in fact, arise on the basis of manifold biological *and* social characteristics (Omi and Winant 2018; Goldberg 1992; Lentin 2008, 2015; Thomas 2010). As Siebers puts it, "'race' is a myth [whose consequences] can be very real" (2017: 381). As such, Balibar and Wallerstein (1991), for example, have argued that

Europe's racialisation of its colonial subjects was preceded by a racialisation of its working class, which later resulted in the racialisation of the biologically indistinguishable Jews and, according to Lentin (2005), has now been succeeded by the racialisation of culture. As Tariq Modood (1994, 2005) argues, '*colour* racism' is increasingly replaced by '*cultural* racism'. Ford succinctly summarises this argument:

> Colour matters as a means for identifying members of cultural minorities, and it is the *perception of essential and irreducible differences in values and cultural practises* between such racially identified groups and the majority which generates prejudice and discrimination, a phenomenon Modood calls 'cultural racism'. (2008: 613, my italics)

In the Europe of today, the recurring racialisation of national identity based on both physical and cultural traits is meanwhile exemplified by expressions such as *Bio-Deutscher* ('organic German'), *français de souche* ('stem-French') or *autochtone Nederlander* ('indigenous Dutch'), which all draw on biological imagery and thereby tie back to the very beginnings of racist thought, ensuing from the transfer of the Linnaean plant taxonomy to humans. The core of this racialisation is its *essentialisation* of humans as being entirely defined in who and what they are by what has been made out to be a key feature, which can be anything (Siebers 2017), and the thereof resulting hierarchical "race-thinking" (Jackson Preece 2005: 64). A good illustration of racialisation's adaptability is the racist term *Kopftuchmädchen* ('headscarf girls') that the former Finance Senator of Berlin, Thilo Sarrazin (2010), introduced into the German public debate on Islam in arguing that the gene pool of the German people was under threat by what he perceived to be essentially less able citizens, which racialises covered Muslim women, independently of specific biological features like skin colour.

While race and ethnicity are thus not the same, since ethnicisation does not inherently imply the same hierarchical logic as racialisation and some identities can be racialised that cannot be ethnicised (see veiled women in Europe), race can lay the foundation for ethnic identity, and ethnicity can trigger racialisation. The key point here is that both race and ethnicity are entrenched social constructions – be they imposed or self-ascribed – that can strongly vary in their content (i.e., the features they draw on) and their salience (i.e., to what degree they matter socially and politically) with regard to the definition of collective identities and their boundaries. Thus, to ask, for example, whether Arabs classify as an ethnicity or a race is almost beside the point since they can view themselves as a coherent *ethnic* group (self-ascribed identity) but they can also be *racialised* inside the diverse societies they inhabit and as such be treated as inferior (imposed identity). Whether such processes actually happen, changes from context to context. As ethnicisation can draw on a broad range of identity markers, ethnicity

may also distinguish physically indiscernible people, as for example the cases of the Western Balkans or the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda teach us, where ethnic identity has been conceived on the basis of language and religious belonging (Ramet 2005; Ignatieff 2006) or social class (Newbury 1998). Since the 19th Century, ethnicisation has widely paved the way for another type of collective identity: the nation (Jackson Preece 2005; Ignatieff 2006).

1.3 National Identity

According to Jackson Preece, the fact that ethnic characteristics "afforded a readily available means" to "establish a common bond between the members of a community and their political rulers" (2005: 137) made it a useful collective identity to create the "imagined community" (Anderson 2016) that is the nation. This type of nation-building is commonly called ethnonationalism. It goes back to the German romanticist Johann Gottfried Herder and his idea that people's "collective freedom" from imperial rule was "based on particular national or cultural characteristics" (Fukuyama 2018: 59). The *ethnic* conception of national identity stands in contrast to the *civic* conception, which originates in the French Revolution. As Jackson Preece explains by citing Hans Kohn, 'ethnic nations' are imagined as "folk communities, formed by ties of a hoary past, and later of prehistoric, biological factors" whereas 'civic nations' are imagined as "unions of citizens, by the will of the individuals who expressed it in contracts, covenants or plebiscites" (Hans Kohn cited in Jackson Preece 2005: 149). After ethnonationalism reached its peak in the racist state ideology of Nazi Germany, explicit expressions of ethnonationalism became increasingly unpopular in Europe. Far from disappearing, however, ethnonationalism today lives on in new shapes such as cultural racism, as seen above, or what Brubaker (2017) has called *civilisationism*.

This paradigm reformulates national identity 'beyond the nation', as it were, and instead grounds its boundaries and sense of solidarity in a (often racialised) religious identity as its bonding force (Brubaker 2016; Yavuz 2020). As Ali and Huntington (2007: 54), two prominent proponents of this ideology, stress in this regard, "the core of [the clash of civilisations] is differences in religion". However, it is important to note that religion is generally conceived here in 'cultural' or ethno-racial terms rather than spiritual. With regard to the European context, Brubaker (2016) has therefore called this phenomenon a "reactive Christianity", arguing that in an increasingly secularised Europe, "Christianity is readily available for reinterpretation in cultural or civilizational terms, with no reference to matters of theology, belief, or ritual". A good example of this is the German anti-immigration movement PEGIDA, whose name stands for *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*

('Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident'), that has made it its mission to defend Europe's allegedly Christian identity against Muslim immigrants – all whilst being criticised by representatives of *the Church* for being *un-Christian* (Deutsche Welle 2021).

What becomes apparent is that populist civilisationism, as it occurs among the political far-right in Europe, is more about a subjectively felt religio-cultural identity (*belonging*) rather than about actual Christian religiosity (*believing* and *behaving*) and as a mechanism of boundary making in fact reproduces the racism of 20th Century European nationalism through the new transnational language of European identity with Muslims now being the primary other (Bunzl 2005; Goldberg 2006; Lentin 2008; Wimmer 2013; Özyürek 2014; Brubaker 2017). The term used in the literature to refer to this shift from nationalism to civilisationism reads '*the new Europe*' (Bunzl 2005; Özyürek 2014).

This 'new Europe' is meanwhile being mirrored in name by what others have called the emergence of a 'new Turkey' (Yavuz 2006; Keyman 2014; Waldman and Calışkan 2017) and the advent of a Turkish brand of civilisationism, called *neo-Ottomanism* (Ergin and Karakaya 2017; Yavuz 2020). To understand what these terms mean and how they are reformulating Turkish national identity, it is important to take a closer look at the role of religious and ethnic identity in the making of Turkishness at the time of transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic when Turkish national identity was 'born'.

2. Religious and Ethnic Identity in the Invention of Turkishness

When Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founded the Turkish Republic in 1923, he founded it in part based on French-style Republican principles such as *nationalism* and *staunch secularism*, banning various Islamic symbols from the public sphere (Nereid 2011) and instituting a corporatist ideology (Parla and Davison 2004). In doing so, Atatürk not only created modern-day Turkey, he also created the modern-day Turks (Kadioğlu 1996; Foss 2014). After the demise of the multicultural Ottoman Empire and its claim to global Islamic leadership, a secular Turkish nation-state emulating those of Western Europe represented the direct avenue towards progress and modernity in the eyes of the 'Father of the Turks' (Bozdoğan and Kasaba 1997). This was a harsh rupture with Ottoman social identity. Meanwhile, the definition of the new Turkish national identity that was meant to replace it was anything but clear.

2.1 Ottoman Identity under the Empire

The core feature of the Ottoman Empire was to be both a princely sultanate and a religious caliphate, with its emperor being both the political leader of all its subjects (sultan) and the

religious leader of Muslims worldwide (caliph). This primacy of Islam notwithstanding, the Ottoman Empire was based on a system of *millets*, diverse communities defined by their religious belonging and given "substantial autonomy with regard to education and property as well as religious affairs" (Jackson Preece 2005: 24). In this administrative setting, religious belonging hence came to be the primary identity marker of Ottoman subjects, next to their shared allegiance to the sultan. Throughout the existence of the Ottoman Empire from the 14th until the 20th Century, Islam, therefore, was of fluctuating significance. Towards the end of the 19th Century, however, Sultan Abdülhamid II tried to engage Islamic religious identity in an effort to mobilise Muslims across the Empire and beyond against European imperialism: "[…] more than any sultan before him, Abdülhamit appealed to Muslim solidarity, using the title and symbols of the caliphate" (Zürcher 2017: 74). This made sense given that the empire's population had become increasingly Muslim at the time due to Muslim refugees from previous wars, but this pan-Islamic rhetoric also constituted a strategic policy narrative that would repeatedly be used during times of political distress for Ottoman rulers (ibid). Muslim religious belonging thus grew in importance towards the end of the empire, leading to the rise of an "Ottoman Muslim nationalism" (ibid: 116). By the start of the First World War, one quarter of the Anatolian population were displaced Muslims from the Balkans, the Black Sea shores, and the Caucasus, reinforcing the Islamic element of Ottoman identity and causing rising tensions between the different *millets* (ibid). At that time, marked by political reform and looming war, the empire experienced a heated ideological debate over what should constitute its collective identity in the future.

According to Zürcher, this debate is said to have evolved around four major currents, being *Ottomanism* ("the idea that all subjects, irrespective of creed or language would become loyal citizens with equal rights in the new constitutional state" (2017: 127-28)), *pan-Islamism* ("which sought to regenerate the empire on the basis of Islamic practices and of solidarity within the Islamic *Ümmet* (Community)" (2017: 127)), *pan-Turkism* ("which sought the union of the Turkic peoples under the Ottoman flag" (2017: 127)), and *Westernism* ("the movement to adopt European techniques and ideas, [in] contrast with Islamic traditionalism" (2017: 127)). However, as Zürcher underlines, these ideological currents were not mutually exclusive and in fact often overlapped. While the concept of nationalism – an intellectual import from Western Europe – had already spread itself across the empire and its different religious communities, "Turkish, as opposed to Ottoman, nationalism, was a relative late-comer" (Zürcher 2017: 128). However, following the empire's demise and the subsequent War of Independence, it should become the dominant ideology, inciting a new debate on its meaning in itself.

2.2 Turkish Identity under the Republic

The creation of the Turkish Republic coincided with the creation of Turkish national identity. This represented a radical change for the inhabitants of Anatolia, which did not pass without conflict. Saatci aptly summarises this process as follows:

> During the transition from Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic it was deemed necessary to redefine the state and Turkish identity. At this historical juncture, Islam was replaced with other ideals and universals such as Turkism, modernity and étatism. The sudden and large-scale *shift away from religion* followed by *vigorous ethnic assimilation efforts* created a contradictory context between the state and ethnic/religious segments of the population [that did not correspond to the new ideal citizen that identified as secular and ethnically Turkish]. (2002: 549, my italics)

A central actor in this state-building was the Republic's first President, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. As Şükrü Hanioğlu states, "in Mustafa Kemal's vision, nationalism was to replace religion through a radical reinterpretation of Islam from a Turkish nationalist perspective" (2011: 132) For Atatürk, Islam was "an Arab faith and a vehicle for Arab domination" (ibid). In a schoolbook produced under his supervision, this view is presented under the heading of an "Arab-Turkish struggle", where it says: "The Turks, too, had been a great nation before accepting the religion of the Arabs" (cited in Hanioğlu 2011: 132). Clearly, in Mustafa Kemal's vision, Turkish identity was to be "something separate from the Middle Eastern and Islamic civilization of the Ottoman Empire" (Zürcher 2017: 193), absorbing plenty of 'Western ideas' and thereby producing an economically and culturally *modern* country in the sense of European modernism (Findley 2007). Well aware of Islam's importance for many Turks, however, Atatürk is said to have found inspiration not only in French secularism but also in the Protestant reformation, trying to "privatize religion as well as produce a Turkified Islam" (Hanioğlu 2011: 155) subjugated to the state. One example of this was the newly introduced recitation of the mosque's call for prayer in Turkish instead of Arabic as it is usually done (Zürcher 2017: 194).

Atatürk's nationalist convictions with regard to what made a powerful state "prompted the hero of the War of Independence to move toward abandoning Ottoman ideology altogether" (Hanioğlu 2011: 133), a system of thought he considered the source of weakness that had led to the defeat during the First World War. Muslims outside Turkey, such as the Arabs whose insurgence had famously contributed to the fall of the Ottomans (Rogan 2015, 2017), were for Atatürk "a calamity [which had] befallen the [Turkish] nation" (Arı İnan cited in Hanioğlu 2011: 141). Mustafa Kemal's Islam-critical and Orientalist views, especially regarding Arabs, are well-known and continue to inform much of Kemalist thought until today. As the lexicon of the Turkish Language Association from 1945 stated in its definition of religion: "Kemalism
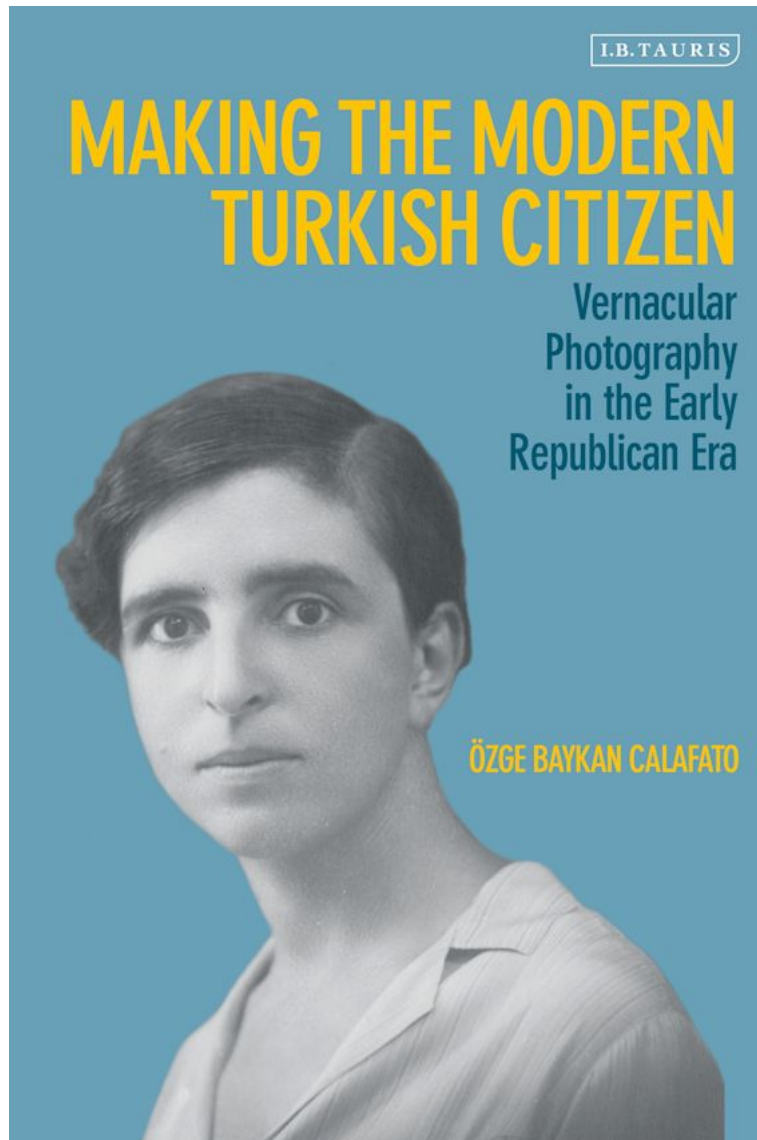
Fig. 6. Book cover illustrating the ideal female Turkish citizen in the Kemalist vision
(From: Baykan Calafato (2022))
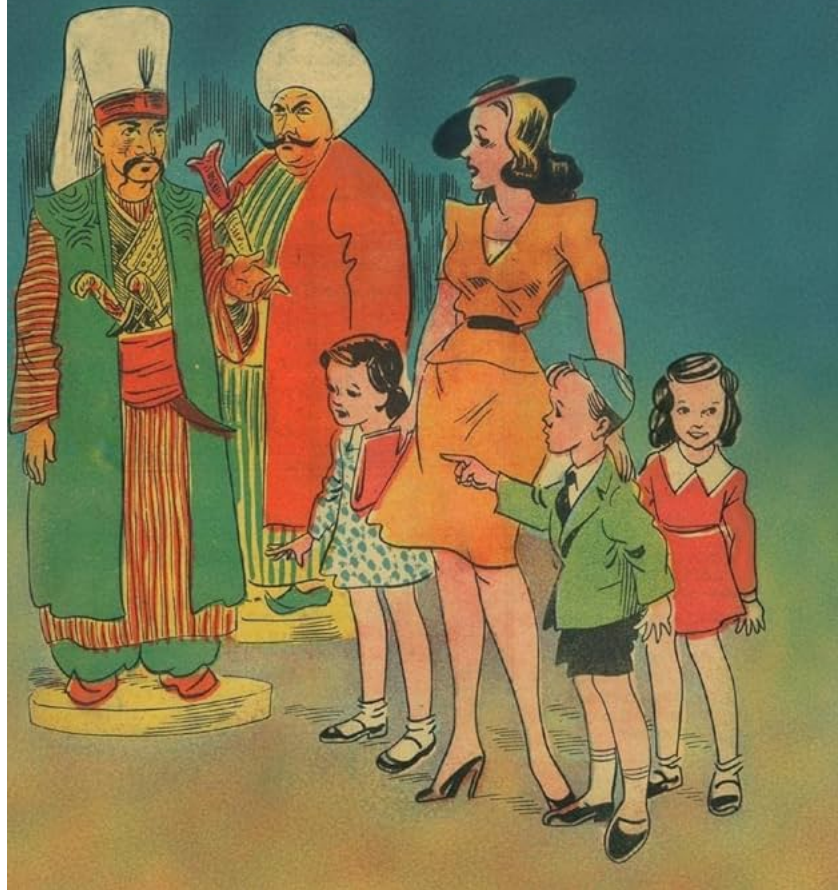
Fig. 7. Another book cover illustrating the Kemalist vision of Turkishness in explicit distinction from the Ottoman Empire (From: Nick Danforth (2021))

is the religion of the Turk" (cited in Hanioğlu 2011: 193). But who exactly was that 'Turk'?

According to the official Republican narrative based on Article 88 of the Turkish Constitution from 1924, "the inhabitants of Turkey are called, regardless of their religion or their race, 'Turk' in the sense of their citizenship" (Kreiser and Neumann 2009: 387, my translation). But having said that, the founder of the Republic himself was much invested in clarifying the identity and history of the Turkish people through various historical studies on its ethnic roots. The replacement of the markedly multi-religious and multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire (McMeekin 2015) by the Turkish Republic came with a conception of national identity that was only seemingly open to diversity. Although said to be inspired by French Republican ideals of an egalitarian, *civic* model of nationalism (Kadioğlu 2006), Turkish citizenship practically presumed a "core nation", with the "boundaries of Turkishness" being defined by "race and religion", as writes Marc Baer (2004: 682-4).

Baer illustrates this by drawing on the particular historical case of the *Dönme*, a very small ethnoreligious group. Originating from Thessaloniki, the *Dönme* had converted from Judaism to Islam but had never dropped all of their Jewish practices and, as a result of that, were "struggling to legitimize their existence in the new Republic" (ibid). As Baer explains:

> Despite the official universalist ideology, Turkey granted equal, individual rights in practice to Muslim Turks while denying full integration to non-Muslims and non-Turks, thus maintaining the pre-state division of society [from Ottoman times] based on religious groups, but adding race as a determining factor. (2004: 685)

The population exchanges that took place after the Turkish War of Independence under the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 defined many inhabitants of Greece as 'Turkish' by mere virtue of their being Muslim (Zürcher 2017: 165), among them the *Dönme*. Despite Atatürk's personal dislike of the Islamic religion, it was religious belonging that came to co-determine what made a Turk a 'real Turk'. As King illustratively describes:

> The exchange was meant to true up the lines of religion, ethnicity, and citizenship, and historians sometimes refer to the refugees created by the Lausanne accord with the shorthand labels of "Greek" and "Turks." But those terms would have seemed bizarre to the refugees themselves. The exchange commission relied on essentially the same criteria for determining personal identity as the Ottoman Empire had used – religious confession – but pasted onto that old category a new, wholly ethnic label. (2014: 121-23)

The fact that Islam continued to be the state religion of the early republic just as it had been under the empire further exemplifies this ambiguous role of religion in the new secular nation-state (Zürcher 2017: 174). Likewise, when the Republican leadership started developing the

national economy in the 1930s, "foreign companies were put under pressure to hire Turks (meaning Muslims) and dismiss non-Muslims", which led to "large numbers of conversion to Islam" (ibid: 197). Erik Zürcher's verdict about Turkish identity at the time therefore reads:

> As before, the categories 'Turk' and 'Muslim' were barely distinguishable. Both in public opinion and among the Kemalist Young Turks who now held power, the two were connected. This would be proved time and again over the next decades, the first time in 1934 when vicious anti-Jewish pogroms broke out in Thrace. (2017: 197)

As seen above, ethnicity, however, can draw on many characteristics and so alternative conceptions of Turkishness independent of Islam existed too, such as that of the Turkish Hearth movement, which "concentrated on Anatolia as the Turkish heartland and idealized the culture of the Turkish peasant population" (Zürcher 2017: 129). This emphasis on culture and origin thereby introduced a racialising dimension to the idea of Turkish ethnic and thus 'true' national identity. In the public discourse at the time, all these conceptions would co-exist, sometimes by competing but most often by contradictorily conflating with each other. The racialisation of Turkishness finally reached its peak in what came to be known as the Turkish Historical Thesis in 1932: "This theory, which Mustafa Kemal emphatically supported, held that the Turks were descendants of white inhabitants of Central Asia, who had been forced by drought and hunger to migrate to other areas, such as China, Europe and the Near East" (Zürcher 2017: 192).

For Baer, the specific case of the *Dönme* therefore epitomises how the modern Turkish state sought to 'Turkify' its people, that is, to enforce an "ethno-religious homogenization of the population" (2004: 693), arising from a "biological and religiously bounded understanding of the Turkish nation" (ibid: 694). This subjugated all minorities to a hegemonic national identity based on Sunni Islam and Turkish ethnicity, branding some of them as "an internal danger to the majority" (ibid: 686). This concern about non-Sunni and 'ethnically non-Turkish' minorities' lack of loyalty to the nation also concerned the Armenians, Greeks, Alevi and Kurds of Turkey, some of which underwent expulsion and horrific mass killings, if not genocide[7], as a result (Akçam 2006; Efe and Forchtner 2015; Sjöberg 2016). Similar to the above-mentioned racialised notions of national identity in the Europe of today, Baer's conclusion on the meaning of Turkish national identity during the first decades of the Republic is therefore:

> Rather than political identity, blood and lineage were often most important. True Turks were distinguished from those considered Turks by law. Being an Arab, Armenian, Jew, Kurd, or Orthodox Christian was often equated with foreignness. (2004: 704)

---

[7] For a detailed discussion of the Armenian genocide question, see Akçam (2006) and Kieser (2020) but also McMeekin (2015: 223-245) or Kreiser and Neumann (2009: 375-77). Sjöberg (2017) discusses the question of a Greek genocide while Efe and Forchtner (2015) discuss Turkish narratives of the Kurdish massacre in Dersim during the 1930s.

This suggests that religious identity might even have come second, after other ethnic traits.

Such an interpretation corresponds with Çağaptay, who asserts that "High Kemalist praxis emphasized ethnicity and diminished the role of religion in the definition of the Turkish nation" (2002: 73). A crucial component of this definition of Turkish ethnicity was language. This does not surprise since language is often seen as "the embodiment of an organic, ethnic identity" (Jackson Preece 2005: 110). The special importance of language for ethnic identity goes back to the Herderian conception of ethnicity as a community whose close internal ties, shared historical destiny, and common culture together create what he called the "genius of a people", which finds its primary expression in having the same language (Wimmer 2013; Fukuyama 2018). Because of their special cultural significance in defining collective identity, "ethnic traits such as language have been used to create and sustain *political* communities", too (Jackson Preece 2005: 138, my italics). For Çağaptay, Kemalism hence displayed in the founding years of the Republic an "ethnicist definition of the nation through language" (2002: 70). This was especially verbalised in 1931 by Recep Peker, then Secretary-General of the CHP, in his notion of Turkey's "unity in language and ideals" (cited in ibid.). Already by the end of the 19th Century, Sultan Abdülhamid II had attempted to turn all Arabs, Greeks and Jews into Turks by imposing Turkish language instruction also at non-Muslim schools (Kreiser and Neumann 2009: 344), which supports the vision of national identity based on language.

Another illustrative case in point regarding the importance of language for the conception of Turkish ethnicity is the case of the *Karamanlı*, a Turkish-speaking Orthodox minority of Asia minor that also became part of the population exchange between Turkey and Greece at the beginning of the 20th Century. Whilst the Greek government viewed them as "ethnic Greeks who had lost their language but resisted the loss of 'the Greek religion'", Turkish intellectuals "wrote extensively on the Turkishness of the Karamanlis, making reference to the linguistic basis of nationhood" (Özdemir 2009: 32). This shows yet again how different conceptions of Turkishness placed their emphasis on different ethnic traits, with primacy in this case being given to language. In contrast to Baer (2004), this suggests that language trumped both religion and race as defining marker of Turkish national identity. Notably, despite its ethnic conception of the 'core nation', which normally logically excludes the possibility of membership for people of other ethnicities if it is defined racially (Jackson Preece 2005: 152), the Republic's leadership still pursued a policy of assimilation, as Çağaptay points out, drawing on the example of the 'Citizen Speak Turkish' campaign in the 1930s:

> Inasmuch as Kemalist ideology focused on the Turkish race, in practice, Ankara kept the avenues of assimilation open to those who were not ethnically Turkish, especially the Jews and non-Turkish Muslims. […] Race referred not to a biological community, but to a national one. […] it was defined through language and not genetic factors. (2004: 97)

In sum, this means that although the construction of Turkishness was more ethnonationalist than Turkey's first constitution stated, the fact that it never was fully clear what exactly Turkish ethnicity was and whether religious, racial, or linguistic features were most important in defining it, meant that its symbolic boundaries were subject to constant negotiation and public debate and could be drawn in various ways.

One institution that was central in drawing these was the Turkish History Foundation (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*) that was tasked with diffusing the official depiction of the Turkish Republic as a complete identity break with the Ottoman past. According to Öktem, "[i]n the foundation's publications, *conservatively religious* Turks, *non-Turkish speaking* Muslims and *non-Muslims* appear as *the internal 'other'*" (2004: 568, my italics) to the ideal Kemalist Turk. This makes all of the features discussed above the symbolic boundaries of Republican Turkish national identity. Next to pious Turks, this also 'otherised' ethnic minorities, like the Kurds.

In this ethnonationalist vein, it was common for a long time in Turkey to view ethnically Kurdish Turkish citizens (who can be hardly distinguishable physically) as "mountain Turks" who had "forgotten" their 'true Turkishness' and simply had to be 'reminded' (Cowell 1987; Barkey 1993). Underneath this official narrative, the Republican leadership regarded the Kurds as one of "certain Muslim but not culturally Turkish tribes" and as a distinct "race" whose existence and concentration in Eastern Anatolia with its potential for national independence represented an "existential threat" to "Turkish/Atatürk nationalism" and the "unitary state principle", therefore the solidification of any minority in the republic had to be prevented (Bayır 2021: 343-45). As the 1924 Constitution stated, "This is a state of one nation", which fundamentally meant: "sovereignty belongs to the single Turkish nation", which minorities were expected to assimilate into to gain the full equal citizenship status that the Kemalists offered them (Bayır 2021: 344-47). As Bayır argues, this principle was effectively used as "a legal justification for denying the existence of the Kurdish nation within Turkey, with its distinct ethnic, linguistic and cultural characteristics and one that exists outside of the boundaries of the Turkish nation" (2021: 347).

The Turkish Republican fear of minorities' autonomy has sometimes also been called the 'Sèvres syndrome', referring to the Treaty of Sèvres after the Great War in which the Entente carved up the Ottoman territory partly by giving regional autonomy to various ethnic

minorities including the Kurds (Bajalan 2021). Similar to its suppressive policies on traditional religious identity, the Republican elite thus ruled various bans on expressions of Kurdish ethnic identity, in particular, the speaking of their language in public or Kurdish-medium education (Yüksel 2021). To further dilute Kurdish identity and 'Turkify' the people in the Eastern regions, the government implemented a policy of demographic engineering through the forced settlements of other populations (Yüksel 2021; Ates 2021). This fear of minorities as a threat to Turkish national unity has remained present in Turkish narratives until today.

Kurdish identity itself, meanwhile, has taken many turns. With the arrival of nationalist ideology in the Ottoman Empire, also the Kurds began rethinking their collective sense of self, in particular, after the empire's fall (Yeğen 2021). Unsuccessful at creating a state for themselves but heavily defined by their tribal social structures (Bajalan 2021; Ates 2021; Bayır 2021), "Kurdish identity served as a source of connection across the [new] state boundaries" throughout the 20th Century (Gunes 2021: 256). Before, it had been the caliphate above all that had made the deeply religious Muslim Kurds allegiant to the Ottoman sultan and created a "symbolic bond" with the Turks (Bajalan 2021: 132; Yüksel 2021; Ates 2021). Facing secular rulers of a different ethnicity and Islamic sect, also the Kurds of Syria experienced a violent suppression of their cultural identity and the threat of demographic engineering through the resettlement of "ethnic Arabs" (Gunes 2021: 262; Bozarslan 2021). Later Kurdish nationalist activists therefore often operated across borders and maintained close links into Syria – a network that would thrive again during the Syrian civil war starting in 2011 (Yeğen 2021; Ates 2021). However, not all Kurds would identify with the Kurdish national movement at any point in recent history and besides their *fragmentation into tribes and political views*, the Kurdish people were also marked by considerable social cleavages (Yüksel 2021; Gunes 2021), creating divisions within the Kurdish movement, too (Bajalan 2021).

As the Turkish efforts of assimilation and centralised government never fully attained their goals in Eastern Anatolia (Yeğen 2021; Bayır 2021), nationalism among the Kurds, instead, further grew, starting at the end of the 1950s, and eventually gave rise to the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) under Abdullah Öcalan at the end of the 1970s, which strongly advanced the ethnicisation of Kurdish identity and married it with a Marxist-Leninist ideology (Watts 2006; Bozarslan 2008). In this view, the country of Kurdistan was colonised by different nationalist oppressors and an autonomous state was needed to preserve its Kurdishness (Yeğen 2021). Since the founding of the Turkish Republic, Kurdish ethnic identity has thus been marked by a *kinship-based identification with each other* across existing nation-state borders – albeit fluctuating in cohesion – and an inherent struggle with the Kemalist conception of

national unity as well as with a Republican leadership that would regard Kurdishness as "backward" (Yüksel 2021: 211). This would change in 2013 when then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared that "a strong Turkey should never be afraid of a federal state system. You can maintain a unitary structure in a federal state system too'" (cited in Bayır 2021: 351). This suggested to some that this was the beginning of a 'new Turkey'.

3. 'New Turkey' and the Arrival of the Syrian Refugees

3.1 Ottomanism as a Means of Boundary Change

As the boundary approach posits, groups can emerge on the basis of diverse collective understandings of shared identity. As such, every actor can belong to different identity-based groups at the same time and be excluded from others. But what these identities are and how they are defined, who belongs to them, and which identities are more important than others, is the result of a constant negotiation process (Lamont and Molnár 2002; Wimmer 2013). Of course, once institutionalised in some form, legal identities do not change as easily. But socially, they remain unstable and can be shaped through interaction, discourse, or politics. It is in this vein that the Turkish President tried to discursively shift both the symbolic and social boundaries of Turkish society on the basis of a shared religion, culture, and Ottoman history, so that Turkish citizens be more inclusive of Syrian refugees, as the following examples show.

> When we turn to the Kaaba five times a day, open our hands to the sky [*signifies praying*], we become conscious again of being a nation and an *umma*. We become one by meeting in prayers, we become siblings. Islam is the common denominator that worries us with the problems of people thousands, tens of thousands of kilometres away from our country.

> Even after 1400 years, the following special advice from the last sermon of Prophet Mohammed is our guide: "Believers! Listen to my words and memorise them! A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim and thus all Muslims are brothers." The oppressed of Arakan, Syria and Turkistan are our brothers. You know some people say: "Make the Syrians go." We can never accept this. African and Asian victims are like our full siblings. There is no boundary to the Islamic brotherhood. No one can plant the seeds of separation among us.

> Speech by President Erdoğan on the occasion of Mawlid al-Nabi,
> the birthday of Prophet Mohammed, on 8 November 2019[8]

***

---

[8] I received significant help with the identification and translation of this quote from Şeyma Çelik. Retrieved from: https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/cumhurbaskani-Erdoğan-birileri-diyor-ya-suriyeliler-gitsin-asla-biz-bunlara-eyvallah-edemeyiz-440173.html

Dear Members of Parliament,

I want to make this point here once again to you and our beloved nation. As Turkey, we always keep our hearts and doors open to our brothers and sisters in Syria and Iraq just like to our brothers and sisters living in the Balkans, Central Asia, North Africa, Africa, and in other parts of Asia, and we will continue to do so.

What matters to us is our historical background, cultural closeness, civilisational partnership and the human values that we share with these brothers and sisters. The places we call Syria and Iraq today were no different from Mardin, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, and Hatay [*all are cities in southeast Turkey*] just a century ago.

Regarding the people living in Syria and Iraq as different from our own citizens would embarrass us in the eyes of history, our ancestors, and especially our martyrs. Our perspective on this land and our siblings living there can never be the same as that of other states, especially the countries of the West. The trouble of our siblings living in Kobane or any other city in the region concerns us just as much as them, and it mobilises us.

With this in mind, we opened our doors to all our brothers and sisters from Syria and Iraq and continue to do so.

Speech by President Erdoğan in the Turkish Parliament on 1 October 2015[9]

*****

As Turkey, we are happy, content and proud of having hosted you [Syrian refugees] as guests for four years. You have become *muhajir* [migrants]. You left your homes by necessity. We in turn became *ansar* [hosts] for you and we mobilised all our means. No matter what anyone says, you never are a burden on us.

Speech by President Erdoğan addressing Syrian refugees
in the city of Gaziantep on 8 October 2014[10]

As Kaya and Nagel (2020: 24) write about Turkey's reception of the Syrian refugees, "in the first years of the migratory movement, the discourse of guesthood and Ansar spirit as well as the rhetoric of Islamism, neo-Ottomanism and populism made it easier for the Syrians to be received and to be offered all the basic provisions". As the last vignette above exposes, the Turkish president particularly referred to the Islamic concepts of *ansar* and *muhajir*, which go back to the inhabitants of Medina providing refuge to prophet Mohammed and his disciples upon their escape from Mecca, in order to create a policy narrative that framed the Syrian

---

[9] I received significant help with the identification and translation of this quote from Şeyma Çelik. Retrieved from: https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/cumhurbaskani-Erdoğanin-meclis-konusmasinin-tam-metni-2125367
[10] I received significant help with the identification and translation of this quote from Şeyma Çelik. Retrieved from: https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/Erdoğan-suriyeli-siginmacilara-seslendi-27342780

asylum seekers accordingly and thereby justified Turkey's initial 'open-door policy' (Koca 2015). Policy narratives have generally been shown to be important tools for policy-makers to generate public acceptance of refugee reception and migration policy by "drawing on available ideational resources and patterns of thought" (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011: 2). In this vein, Erdoğan's invocation of the notions of *ansar* and *muhajir* as well as Turkey's Ottoman history was aimed at evoking feelings of (top-down) compassion and solidarity towards the Syrian refugees among Turkish citizens (Erdoğan 2020a).

In the language of the boundary approach, such a discourse represents an instance of state institutions trying to redefine collective identity from above so that the boundary of belonging to the in-group is shifted beyond the nation. As Wimmer explains:

> Emphasizing civilizational commonalities is another way to blur ethnic boundaries. Perhaps the most politically salient example is to underline membership in one of the world religions, especially Islam, Buddhism, or Christianity. (2008b: 989)

Alternatively, Wimmer writes, such "boundary blurring […] by emphasizing civilizational commonalities [can also be done] by drawing upon the cultural heritage and political unity of empires long gone" (2013: 63). Classic examples of this are Islamic reform movements' invocation a global *umma* or the European Commission invoking the empire of Charlemagne (ibid). Moreover, "institutional actors such as the state" possess "special powers to command and impose classifications" regarding who belongs to the 'imagined community' they govern (Wimmer 2013: 31). Here, both of these features are present. In this sense, Yanaşmayan et al. therefore argue that the "civilizationist populist discourse" of the Turkish government "selectively extends the boundaries of 'the people'" (2019: 48).

This governmental discourse that "presented the refugees as elements of 'religious or cultural solidarity'" (Erdoğan 2020a: 75) falls into the previously discussed paradigm of *civilisationism* (Brubaker 2017), which in this case has widely been called *neo-Ottomanism*. According to Yavuz, neo-Ottomanism means

> rooting present notions of Turkish national identity within their Ottoman Islamic heritage. It also entails deeper and renewed cultural and economic engagement with territories and societies once ruled by the Ottoman state and an attendant desire to renew leadership of the Muslim world […]. [Unlike the race-thinking underlying 'the new Europe', however,] Neo-Ottomanism provides *a pluralistic view of Turkishness*, and it is believed to offer a broad umbrella of identity that would allow all ethnic and linguistic identities to coexist. (2020: xii-xiii, my italics)

In contrast to Turkey's vehement departure from the religious heritage of the Ottoman Empire under the early Republican leadership, President Erdoğan has frequently invoked the Ottomans as a source of inspiration for the 'new Turkey' of today, precisely because of its self-definition based on Islam as a blanket-identity across ethnic differences (Arat and Pamuk 2019; Yavuz 2020). As has been seen, this narrative was also used when facing the arrival of the Syrian refugees. As the next section shows, this has led to much opposition among Kemalists,[11] inviting the question of whether it resonated more among the religiously and ethnically 'other'.

3.2 Opposition to Ottomanism: The Religious Factor

Subsequent to his above definition of neo-Ottomanism, Yavuz goes on to specify and criticise that as an ideology it is neither politically neutral nor is it necessarily as pluralistic as promised. Rather, in the view of Yavuz,

> Neo-Ottomanism is simultaneously a conservative ideology, a form of identity, a worldview, an orientation in foreign policy, and a melancholic reaction that Turkey experienced after the empire fell. At least in the case of Turgut Özal [former Prime Minister of Turkey], neo-Ottomanism was a search for post-Kemalist cosmopolitanism. For Erdoğan, it is a model of building an authoritarian one-man rule through the dominance of Islamic identity and politics. (2020: 6)

The notion of a 'new Turkey' has therefore encountered much opposition among the secular strata of Turkish society that have started experiencing a "nostalgia for the modern" of the past (Özyürek 2006: title), as Kemal Atatürk had envisioned it. With the AKP's seizure of power, it became an omnipresent fear that Turkey's laicism could be abolished and Turkey was going to "be Iran" (Medyascope 2024). In this context, many in these strata have perceived Turkey's welcoming reception of the Syrian refugees as part of the President's purported pursuit of 'Islamising' Turkish society by means of demographic engineering (Ongur and Zengin 2019). As Veli Ağbaba, then deputy chair of the Republican People's Party (CHP), put it in an online statement on 3 July 2016 in response to President Erdoğan's decision to facilitate the acquisition of Turkish citizenship for Syrian refugees:

> By viewing this issue in terms of electoral calculations and assimilation plans, approaching it under a religious-sectarian angle, the AKP clearly shows that it does not think of these persecuted people's lives but that it focuses on its own political future. […] What is at stake here is not humanitarian concerns but something else![12]

---

[11] Here, I am referring to any Turkish citizens supportive of Kemalism (i.e. secularism, modernism, nationalism etc.).
[12] I received significant help with the identification and translation of this quote from Erkut Emcioğlu. Retrieved from: https://www.facebook.com/chphaber/photos/a.369781219841960/638039786349434/?type=3&comment_ id=638063939680352&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D

The indirect accusation made against the President here is that nationalising the mostly very pious Sunni Syrian refugees was predominantly intended as a boost in votes for the Islamic-conservative AKP (Ongur and Zengin 2019). The arrival of the Syrian refugees in Turkey has thus added fuel to the fire of Turkey's Islamist-secularist divide and its identity politics.

That is because Islamic identity comes in various shapes and sizes. This is especially the case in Turkey, where the very great majority is Muslim and most of them, across political party lines, agree with the statement that "Islam is central to my life and my conception of Turkish national identity" (Hoffman, Werz, and Halpin 2018: 8), but where at the same time the most pertinent cultural and political divide is commonly said to be between pious, more religiously conservative and secular, less religiously oriented Sunni Muslims, whose struggle with each other Arat and Pamuk (2019) have called *the defining feature of Turkish politics*.

However, also here, this binary categorisation of Turkish society just as much as the categories 'Kemalist' and 'Islamist' no longer aptly capture Turkey's increasingly diversified socio-political landscape. Since its entry into coalition with the far-right nationalist MHP in 2018, the doctrine of the ruling Islamic-conservative AKP has shifted towards the very nationalism it had previously criticised (Kaya, Robert, and Tecmen 2020; Thumann 2020). Meanwhile, allusions to Islam can be found across all Turkish political parties and movements (Yanaşmayan et al. 2019) and may be combined with feminist (Arat 2012), liberal (Paul and Seyrek 2020) or even far-left (Yavaş 2019) political ideologies. In this vein, also secular parties in the opposition have frequently referred to the Syrian refugees in terms of a "shared culture and religion" (Yanaşmayan et al. 2019: 44). As should be kept in mind, even early ideologues of Turkish nationalism such as Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924) regarded "religious commonality as more important than asserted consanguinity" in defining the boundaries of Turkish belonging (Kreiser and Neumann 2009: 359, own translation). Thus, the key point here is that both conceptions and degrees of religious identity strongly differ across Turkish society and cannot easily be sociologically pigeonholed.

Another important differentiation is the diversity of Islamic cultures. Across the world, religions are practised in different ways in different places as well as by different sects and denominations. As one Turkish interviewee cited by Murat Erdoğan (2020b), working for a non-governmental organisation in the city of Gaziantep near the Turkish-Syrian border, expressed with regard to Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees:

> There is no similarity except for religion. And I think even with the religion, only the name is the same, the living is different. What they practise as religion and what is practised here is not the same at all. (as cited in Erdoğan 2020b: 63)

This makes sense because, as Olivier Roy points out, also among the *believing* and *behaving* members of a religion, religious belief and practice can differ since

> Religiosity has many and varied forms and can be accompanied either by a tremendous theological conformity or by variations. […] religiosity is not theology, but it can be identified with what Niebuhr calls a "religious culture". (2010: 31)

As a result, the belief in and practice of religious norms also depends on the often localised "social and cultural understanding of these norms" (ibid: 30) and may thus give rise to crucial cultural differences within the same religion. Drawing on this differentiation between religion and localised religious culture, some Muslims in Western Europe as well as in the Balkans, for example, have deliberately referred to the notion of a 'European Islam', either in order to express that the cultural integration of European Muslims of immigrant descent is possible without giving up on their religion (Bowen 2009; Ramadan 1998) or to define themselves "in opposition to another, implicit Islam, considered 'intolerant since non-European', which is located beyond the Bosporus and the Strait of Gibraltar" (Bougarel 2007: 97; see also Özyürek 2014; Püttmann 2018, 2020). Following the same logic, research has found Turks to regard themselves as morally superior to and more 'civilised' than the Syrian refugees (Cristaldi 2019; Ozcurumez and Mete 2021), which is a classic trope of (racialised) cultural distinction and symbolic boundary making (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Lamont 2001; Wimmer 2013) and which can take on a religious dimension, too (Roy 2010; Özyürek 2014). It thus becomes clear that religion and culture cannot said to be the same and, as a result of globalisation and the diversification of religious practice, increasingly less are (Roy 2010).

However, the fact that these phenomena are noteworthy in the first-place results precisely from the other fact that religious and cultural identity have traditionally been closely intertwined and in many ways still are (Roy 2010). Moreover, a defining feature of world religions such as Islam is their claim to universalism and their appeal to uniting believers across other boundaries (Jackson Preece 2005). As cultural identity can take on the most microscopic of shapes and hence produce an infinite number of respective boundaries (Wimmer 2009: 251), this research consequently takes cultural diversity as a given and instead asks whether religious identity – a crucial cleavage across Turkish society – can in fact bridge such differences and blur the boundaries – in particular, in the case of those Turkish citizens adhering to a more devout and conservative practice of Islam that many Syrian refugees view as similar to their own religious culture (Rottmann and Kaya 2020; Kaya, Çimen, et al. 2021).

In the Turkish context, this would mean that Turkish citizens who consider themselves to be religiously conservative or more devout should be more inclusive of Syrian refugees than their secularised counterparts, following the logic of the Distance Model. However, the state's public discourse on the Syrian refugees has also appealed to Turkish citizens' Islamic identity as a basis of refugee inclusion by referring to Islam's values rather than similarities with the Syrian refugees, which would be more in line with the Dignity Model, as for instance these two speech extracts by President Erdoğan from 10 October 2014 and 18 February 2015 show:

> We opened our doors to our siblings who fled conflict in Iraq and Syria, and we mobilised our means. We now host more than 1.5 million people in our country. Why? This is our understanding of humanity, conscience, and Islam.[13]
>
> ***
>
> These lands welcomed everyone fleeing persecution in the Caucasus, regardless of their religion, culture, belief. […] We are a nation who knows what *ansar* means. We consider every brother/sister who comes to our country as a *muhajir* and we welcome them.[14]

In sum, this makes analysing the role of religious identity (in the sense of religiosity) in Turkish citizens' boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees particularly interesting. That said, another identity category many Turks mention in everyday life as a reason for their opposition to the long-term reception of the Syrian refugees is the Syrians' predominant 'Arabness'.

3.3 Opposition to Ottomanism: The Ethnic Factor

Turkish national identity under Kemalism also thrived on collective memory, especially with regard to the Arabs. Arab nationalist movements' part in the ultimate collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1922 (Rogan 2015, 2017), with Damascus being "the unofficial capital of Arab political intrigue" (McMeekin 2015: 302), created an everlasting public narrative in Turkey of 'the Arab' as a traitor, enemy, and 'backward Oriental', similar in style to European Orientalism. In contrast to this nationalist race-thinking, the Islamic-conservative AKP, as has been seen, has sought to change the Republic's ethnic conception of Turkish national identity into a predominantly religious neo-Ottoman one, enabling, for example, the expression of Kurdish identity inside Turkey (Efegil 2011; Kolçak 2016; Grigoriadis and Dilek 2018) and paving the way for deepened economic and political ties with Arab Muslim states in the Middle East (Demiralp 2009; Hintz 2018). Yet, in the light of the new flaring up of the Kurdish conflict and the AKP's later coalition with the far-right nationalist MHP, Turkish nationalism has

---

[13] I received significant help with the identification and translation of this quote from Erkut Emcioğlu. Retrieved from: https://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalar/353/2945/trabzon-toplu-acilis-toreninde-yaptiklari-konusma
[14] I received significant help with the identification and translation of this quote from Erkut Emcioğlu. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8nU0rkZoGY

soared again (Hoffman 2021; Soz 2021; McKenan 2021; Van Veen 2021). Moreover, as Bozdağ has found, also Turkish public discourse on the Syrian refugees has "reinforce[d] nationalism and an ethnocentric understanding of citizenship in Turkey" (2020: 1-2).

What this means in practice today can be vividly observed on social media. On 30 September 2020, a post was published in a Facebook group named *Expats in Istanbul*, which read: "Hi I'm wondering what's the most conservative/family-oriented area to live in with English/Arabic speaking people?" Only 21 hours later, the enquiry had received 221 comments with many of them having been posted by accounts with Turkish names.[15] While the first ones were straightforward answers to the question, the comment section quickly took on a fierce tone. Starting with sarcastic jokes, the comments gradually turned into a debate on whether the person should be asking such a question at all and not rather 'adapt to the Turkish way of life', which was portrayed by some as inherently secular. This then incited another debate on what it actually meant to be Turkish in the first place, whether pious Turks had 'better manners', and whether it was correct to call Turkey 'a Muslim country'. Eventually, the heated exchange ended in people ordering each other to move to Arab states or Israel/Greece if they 'had a problem' with Turkey's Islamic or secular identity respectively. While markedly gruesome in its style, the discussion reflects much of today's fiery debate about Turkey's national identity and many Turks' (racist) self-definition in opposition to an 'Arab Other', such as the Syrians.
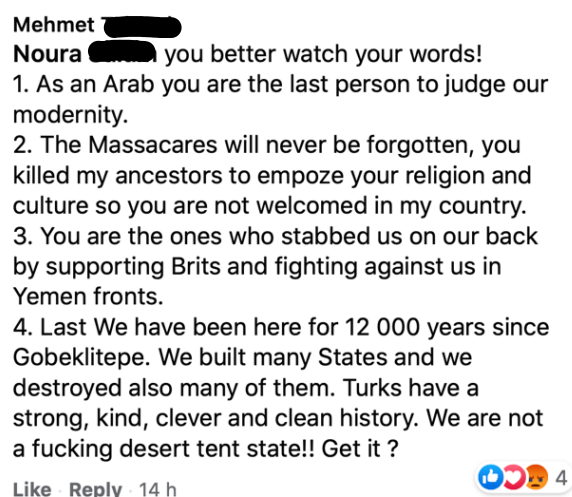
Fig. 8. Snippet from the mentioned Facebook discussion on Istanbul neighbourhoods

---

[15] Retrieved online on 1 October 2020 from: https://www.facebook.com/groups/istanbulexpats

As part of that, Arab Syrians have also come to be perceived as a demographic threat to the Kurdish minority, both in northern Syria and in southeast Turkey. That is because they are feared to be purposefully resettled by President Erdoğan in an alleged attempt to replace the political influence of the Kurdish national movement in this region with an Arab-dominated allegiance to Turkey's ruling party based on Islamic-conservative sympathies (Adar 2020). This fear nourishes itself from the aforementioned fact that the use of resettlement policies to dissolve one identity and bolster another – "demographic warfare", as Kreiser and Neumann have called it (2009: 376, my translation) – has a long history in Turkey, as has been seen above (Kieser 2000, 2020; Baer 2004; Çağaptay 2002). This would suggest that Kurdish Turkish citizens would make a clear difference between Syrian refugees that are co-ethnics and such that are not. In contrast, Wimmer (2009; 2013) has critiqued that too often, ethnicity is *a priori* assumed to play a role in the formation of groups because it is physically easily tangible. But instead, in many places of immigration, Wimmer says, it is a more general distinction between pre-existing inhabitants and newcomers on the basis of local group norms, which define boundaries independently of ethnic identity. In his view, the core of Barth's boundary approach to ethnicity is that "ethnic distinctions result from marking and maintaining a boundary irrespective of the cultural differences observed from the outside" (Wimmer 2013: 22). The challenge is thus to disentangle not only how ethnicity shapes the boundaries but also how the boundaries shape ethnicity. Therefore, previous migration flows to and through Turkey as well as Turkish citizens' reactions to these and the resulting 'notion of the immigrant' in Turkey shall be considered in a final step of this contextualisation.

3.4 Previous Turkish Experiences of Migration and the Concept of the Immigrant in Turkey
In Western Europe, Turkey is mostly known as a country of emigration owing to various labour migration agreements concluded in the 1960s with countries such as Germany, Belgium, or the Netherlands. In addition, especially after the 1980 military coup, Turkish citizens have also sought political refuge in Europe. Much of this outward migration, however, merely is the extension of a vibrant domestic migration inside Turkey, predominantly leading from the rural zones of Anatolia and the southeast to the big cities and economic hubs of the country. Next to natural effects of urbanisation and industrialisation, many of these domestic migrants have been Kurds escaping the economic underdevelopment of their home regions or the various violent conflicts between the Turkish state and Kurdish nationalists (Zürcher 2017). Likewise, also many religiously conservative non-Kurdish rural migrants from central Anatolia made their way to the urban centres of the country in an attempt to improve their life-chances. None

of these migration flows from the periphery was welcomed warmly by the secular nationalist Turkish establishment of the big cities (Demiralp 2012). Instead, upon their arrival in especially Istanbul but also Izmir and Ankara, many of these marginalised populations set up camp in improvised and quickly built shantytowns, which received the (in)famous nickname *gecekondu* ('put up overnight') (Keyder 2018: 32). This marginalisation eventually resulted in the political "mobilization of rural cultural elements such as religion or ethnicity in the rising discontent against the [Kemalist] 'centre' [of Turkish society]" (Demiralp 2012: 292), manifesting the inner-Turkish class divide through markers of religious and ethnic identity.

But also foreign immigration has been present in Turkey, especially at the beginning and at the end of the 20th Century. As aforementioned, following the Ottoman Empire's loss of territory and the population exchanges after the War of Independence, many Muslim refugees arrived in Turkey from the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East (Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse 2009). Like the Syrian refugees of today, these Muslim refugees were called *muhajir*. "During this formal reception period groups who were most welcomed were the ones which were supposed to easily melt into a Turkish identity [by virtue of] having a Muslim and/or Turkish background [*sic*]", write Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse (2009: 460). These *muhajirs* made up 20% of the Turkish population when the Republic was founded (Zürcher 2017).

While their arrival has made the Turkish population more diverse in terms of physical features, today, their descendants are no longer considered immigrants. In contrast, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Eastern Europeans arrived in Turkey who would engage in what came to be called "suitcase trade" – an informal 'shuttle service' of consumption goods from Turkey to their home countries (Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse 2009: 476-8) – or other informal labour such as sex work, and would mostly lead secluded lives in the desolate parts of Istanbul. In later years, migrants and refugees from North Africa and the Middle East would join them there on their way of passing through Turkey to Europe. Transit migration, as this is formally called, has significantly gained in size in Turkey over the last decades (Kirişci 2007) and has become a special concern of European policymakers today (Erdoğan et al. 2024). But not all those who consider crossing into Europe, do move on, and so, many of these migrants from the Maghreb as well as Iran, Afghanistan, and Iraq have come to stay in Turkey. Towards the turn of the Century, the biggest group among them were Kurdish and Turkmen refugees from Iraq, 460,000 of which had fled Saddam Hussein's suppression of their uprising against him in 1991 and many others who followed (Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse 2009: 495).

Boundary making within Turkish society vis-à-vis these different types of immigrants has been very diverse. Unsurprisingly, the Turkish state regarded the high influx of Kurds as a

"potential 'threat to national security'" (Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse 2009: 494), as it feared the newcomers could join Turkey's Kurdish independence movement out of ethnic solidarity. The state therefore sought to constrain their contact with the local Kurdish population by confining them to camps. Among Turkey's Kurds, meanwhile, ethnic solidarity was indeed real, especially from Kurdish organisations and parties. As Danış, Taraghi and Pérouse explain,

> Ethnic and political ties intermingle in the formation of social networks that are utilized by the politicized Iraqi Kurdish migrants. The Kurdish 'structure' in Turkey through its political parties, cultural centers, and newspapers provide an important niche for the organization of Iraqi Kurdish migration, as well as the temporary incorporation of Kurds in Istanbul. [Furthermore,] It is not only the Iraqi Kurds who benefit from this *ethno-political solidarity*. Kurds from Syria may also integrate into the political networks. Social and spatial concentrations of Kurds in some city neighborhoods help the newcomers to make contact with the local Kurdish inhabitants. (2009: 503-4, my italics)

This shows how Turkey's *politically active Kurds* would effectively include Kurdish refugees from neighbouring countries such as Iraq and Syria in their collectivity. What it does not show, however, is whether this "Kurdish solidarity ethos" (Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse 2009: 504) was truly based on a shared ethnic identity per se or rather on precisely their political activism, as also others have found (Gourlay 2018a, 2018b). As Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse conclude, "Kurdish ethnic ties are not as fruitful as other networks, unless in combination with some sort of political affiliation. Thus in the case of Iraqi or Iranian Kurds one needs to talk about an *ethno-political network rather than a purely ethnic network*" (2009: 625, my italics), which questions the role of ethnic ties, let alone ethnic commonalities per se. As times moreover have changed since the 1990s, this historical background merely broadens the room for hypothesises as to whether and how the ethnic identity(ies) of Turkey's Kurdish population may affect their boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees of today.

With regard to other ethnic groups, research has found Afghan refugees of Turkmen ethnicity, who, according to Danış, Taraghi and Pérouse, "already spoke the Turkish language and shared a common Turkish heritage [*sic*]" (2009: 446), to have more easily integrated in Turkey than other groups from Afghanistan, both in terms of institutional access and social integration. The same was found with regard to Turkmen from Iraq about whom they write that "their ethnic similarity with the mainstream Turkish society contributes to their integration into Turkish society" (2009: 482). Turkmen from Iraq have also benefited from special educational opportunities such as a Study-in-Turkey programme that the Turkish state offered them based on the alleged "ethnic/linguistic 'closeness' between Turkey and Iraqi Turkmen" (2009: 513). Similarly, with regard to Iranians, the authors find that "Turkey attracts many of them thanks

to the geographical and cultural proximity" (2009: 616), which is another seeming case in point for the Distance Model outlined in Chapter One. The role of ethnic identity in Turkish society's inclusion of immigrants and refugees is thus anything but conclusive. Similar things can be said regarding religious identity.

While their Muslim religion was what made the formerly Ottoman subjects Turks when they arrived as refugees in Anatolia, the Muslim religiosity of domestic migrants arriving in Istanbul is what has caused much of their rejection by the city's Kemalist establishment. As different ethnographic accounts describe, modern Kemalist and urban Istanbul identity have seen themselves under threat by the conservative religious customs and cultural codes of the *arriviste* from rural Anatolia, independently of the newcomers' economic status (Özyürek 2006; Thumann 2011; Turam 2013). This trauma of the Istanbul elite in the face of the socio-cultural transformation of their city through domestic rural-to-urban migration has made it so far to be echoed in prominent Turkish literature as well (Pamuk 2014). Moreover, with regard to foreign Muslim immigrants in Istanbul, Danış, Taraghi and Pérouse have found that "beyond the sometimes heard assertions about a common membership in a 'community of believers', the practice of religion seems to remain a private and a 'national' issue at the same time" (2009: 601). Both these examples show how religious identity, despite a shared faith and denomination, is shaped by inner distinctions of national and class identity, which run against the idea of religious brotherhood and undermine faith-based solidarity. Religious bonding may thus be impeded in some cases by other identities that take priority or by the structural lack of opportunities to interact.

In contrast, other examples suggest that for the less socially privileged, shared Islamic identity has made them more inclusive towards foreign immigrants. As Biehl finds in her ethnography of the Istanbul neighbourhood of Laleli, which has been likened to being "a Tower of Babel, where one can encounter all kinds of migrants in its streets" (Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse 2009: 480), "shared religion (Islam) surfaces as an added desirable criterion" (Biehl 2020: 2245) for Turkish landlords in choosing their tenants from this very diverse population of immigrants. Moreover, in their extensive study on immigrants in Turkey, Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse find evidence of "faith-based community building" (2009: 657) in the sense that sharing a religion leads to shared social practices such as communal prayer and therefore allows for "greater interaction between Muslim migrants and Turkish citizens" (2009: 693). However, they also specify that not all Muslims go pray at the mosque and of those who do most are men, therefore this greater room for interaction may be limited.

This suggests that while for some Turks, Islamic religiosity is what makes them repel arriving migrants even more, for others, it is what makes the latter significantly more likeable. And yet the evidence also shows that the mechanism behind this boundary making is not quite clear, as, for example, in the case of North Africans in Istanbul, who mostly reside in religious areas, yet about whom Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse write that "[s]urprisingly, the fact that Maghrebis in Istanbul are mostly Sunni Muslim does not help them to get in contact with Sunni Turkish society, quite possibly because they cannot find a particular niche to fit" (2009: 625). Past Turkish experiences of immigration thus leave the question unanswered of whether shared religious identity in the sense of belonging, believing, or behaving may be a key ingredient of blurring the boundaries vis-à-vis Turkey's Syrian refugees.

Conclusion

This chapter has served to provide a conceptual map for the empirical analysis that is to follow. In doing so, it has sought to capture the complexity of the central concepts in this analysis – religious and ethnic identity – by tracing how they relate to each other and connected concepts, such as race, nationality, and civilisation. One key insight from this conceptual discussion is that both are highly context-dependent, with religious identity not only being about people's *religion* but also about people's *religiosity* (which in Turkey, as the chapter has also shown, may be the more important cleavage) and with ethnic identity being in a constant flux, able to define itself by drawing on various symbolic elements from history over language to looks, but also being defined both by social relations and by political interests. Placing this discussion in the context of Turkey and connecting it to the arrival of the Syrian refugees, the chapter has furthermore arrived at the other key insight that while religious and ethnic identity have played central roles in the public discourse on the Syrian refugees, it remains unclear, also considering Turkey's history of migration and previous research on other immigrant groups, what role these identities may play in the actual social and symbolic boundary making of Turkish citizens vis-à-vis Syrian refugees on the ground. To find out will be the aim of the following empirical investigation. The next chapter shall therefore detail how this shall be done.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Table of Contents

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

Much social research is divided into two major camps, a positivist and an interpretative one. This research seeks to cross this boundary. In order to go beyond the existing theories in the literature that fail to fully make sense of the case at hand, as discussed in Chapter One, this thesis pursues a grounded-theory approach (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012). This means that it is split into a first and central part that is inductive or 'exploratory', in which I develop my own new theory based on 115 in-depth interviews and two years of observations across Turkey, and a second, smaller part that is deductive or 'confirmatory', in which I try to test this theory with an original nationally representative survey of Turkey, including an experiment. This chapter serves to explain the rationale behind the theory-building part of this approach.

To conduct these in-depth interviews, I chose Turkish neighbourhood chiefs (*muhtars*) as my interlocutors, using them as *proxies* to access both behavioural information and street-level narratives about local boundary making, and selected the cities of Izmir, Konya, and Urfa as my primary fieldwork sites (next to many months I spent in the megacity Istanbul). In doing so, I followed the advice of Wimmer (2013: 212) and did what Bowen and Petersen (1999) call a *controlled case comparison* based on *multi-sited field research*, selecting these sites on the basis of specific dimensions in which they are similar and dissimilar. Such an interpretive enquiry at the micro level by means of thematic analysis of my transcripts and fieldwork notes allows me to trace Turkish citizens' social and symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis Syrian refugees *bottom up*. Aware that this data is mostly *discourse* about practices, not practices themselves, my aim is to identify the social mechanism that previous theories may have overlooked, which many have argued qualitative fieldwork is a good method for (Lamont and White 2005).

In the remainder, I shall explain these concepts and choices in more detail, starting with a discussion of what it means to research social and symbolic boundary making empirically and why in-depth interviews are an apt tool of investigation in doing so. This will be followed by a discussion of why muhtars are a suitable unit of analysis for this and a justification of my case selection with regard to the cities mentioned above. As part of that, I shall also discuss my own positionality as a researcher and illustrate the practicalities of the data-collection process.

1. Researching Boundaries Empirically

1.1 How do we find social and symbolic boundaries in real life?

For the founder of the boundary approach, Frederik Barth, the very core of this conceptual framework is "to recognize that although [social] categories take cultural differences into account, we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between [social] units and cultural similarities and differences" (1969: 14). This means that rather than trying to identify symbolic boundaries from the outside based on our own perception of significant similarities and differences between people (the so-called *etic* perspective), we must try to access the so-called *emic* point of view, that is, actors' own ideas of what differences and similarities really matter. Differently put, we must study collective identities from within rather than from without.

Analytically speaking, this then raises the question of how we find these boundaries. Following Lamont's (1992) conceptual distinction, a social boundary may be said to exist where actors actively try to create a distance between themselves and some specifically defined 'other' through various types of action that leave structural traces (e.g. housing patterns, type and level of interaction, etc.). Symbolic boundaries, in contrast, cannot be identified positively but must be uncovered by exploring actors' social categorisations and ascriptions of meaning. For Wimmer, the goal of boundary analysis is thus to understand what makes "a mere category" become "a bounded group" (2013: 13), by dissecting shared notions of difference and similarity as present in everyday narratives and identifying how, if at all, these translate into attitudes and behaviour towards others. This research is therefore interested in 'motives', not 'causes'.

With regard to Turkish citizens' boundaries vis-à-vis Syrian refugees, the task is then to "uncover the logic of [their] system[s] of classification and closure" (Wimmer 2013: 11) and to analyse in what ways, if any, ideas of religious and ethnic identity play a salient role here. To do so, Lamont provides the following advice:

> I understand the *criteria* at work in *an interviewee's description* of his friends, his feelings of inferiority and superiority, etc., as reflective of the general *mental maps* and boundaries that he/she mobilizes in natural settings, and as subjective boundaries that only potentially can lead to the drawing of objective boundaries, i.e. to actual exclusion from groups, institutions, and so forth. (1992: 98, my italics)

As follows, semi-structured in-depth interviews are a useful tool to distil such "mental maps" (Lamont 1992) and "systems of classification" (Wimmer 2013), as they provide a lens into how actors make sense of the world, but also give insights into how they act upon it.

1.2 Interpretive enquiry through in-depth interviews

In a grounded-theory approach, semi-structured in-depth interviews can be used for two purposes. On the one hand, the interviews may function as a "proxy for experience" (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012: 8), in which case they are used as sources of information on individuals' feelings, perceptions, knowledge, and behaviour. Here, the interview's semi-structured nature and open-ended questions allow to probe for and extract new information that the closed-questions of a survey interview could not detect. For the purposes of this thesis, this is useful in understanding the ways in which Turkish citizens *interact* with Syrian refugees – that is, their *social* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees.

The other function of such interviews derives from the phenomenological tradition after Edmund Husserl (1936) and Alfred Schütz (1962), which "seeks to understand the meanings that people give to their lived experiences and social reality" (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012: 11). Constructivist in its epistemology, this approach to sociological analysis has coined such notions as 'lifeworld' and 'lived experience' to stress the importance of how individuals make sense of what surrounds them, including other people, in tracing the way they choose to act. Differently put, understanding how subjects socially construct their world helps us explain the actions they pursue (Weber 1921). As such, this sort of interpretive analysis seeks to link information on individuals' social behaviour with narratives about the *meanings* that "justify" this behaviour (della Porta 2008: 205) – here, Turkish citizens' *symbolic* boundaries.

In this sense, the aim here is to develop a grounded theory of Turkish citizens' boundary making vis-à-vis Syrian refugees, specifying the mechanisms that underlie it. In this context, eliciting and scrutinising such meanings is crucial to uncover the ways in which Turkish citizens perceive themselves as similar or different to the Syrian refugees, i.e. to unveil the symbolic boundaries they draw vis-à-vis Syrian refugees. That is because social interaction alone does not necessarily remove existing symbolic boundaries between groups (Barth 1969). In turn, symbolic boundaries "only potentially" (Lamont 1992: 98) lead to social boundaries. The analysis of in-depth interviews can thus help put the two boundary types into relation. That said, some have been critical of interviews as a method, favouring participant observation instead. That is because they are wary of the 'truth' of the information that interviews provide (Golden 1999; Hancké 2009). In fact, interviews are of course 'only' *representations* of reality, which are subjective (if not strategic) and omit elements. However, the hope is that through a high number of interviews, I shall attain saturation (Small 2009: 25). More crucially though, it is only through interviews, yielding "participants' own words and native cognitive constructs" (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012: 12), that *their* meaning-making become accessible.

1.3 The value and limitations of interpretive enquiry

To be sure, through my fieldwork, I do not seek to establish positive generalisable facts as do large-scale surveys, but rather, it is meant to provide an empirically informed theory as to how and why specific actors do or do not produce specific attitudinal patterns at the macro level. As Geertz put it, "ethnographic assertion [is] essentially contestable", but what it offers is a "refinement of debate" (1973: 29) on the micro-foundations of social action. Methodologically, interpretive enquiry thus cannot attain generalisability, but aims for transferability. That is, while qualitative empirical findings cannot be said to necessarily be representative of some wider population of cases, the logic of action they reveal may also help explain other cases than the ones directly investigated (Small 2009).

Bunge's objection that interpretations are nothing but an "intuitive and empirically untestable conjecture", that is, a "guess" (1997: 412), and hence cannot help in the search for social mechanisms (unlike what Small (2009) suggests), ignores the many instances in which "researchers have used interviews, archival investigation, or participant observation to interpret results derived from large-sample data" (Small 2011: 65; see also Lieberman 2005; Obstfeld 2005; Giordano et al. 2006; Small 2009; Harding 2009, 2010; Briggs et al. 2010). A particularly strong case in point is the case of the American *Moving to Opportunity* programme in the early 2000s, showing how even in the case of a large-scale social experiment, qualitative in-depth interviews served as an indispensable tool to make sense of the observed statistical associations that otherwise would have remained puzzling black boxes (DeLuca et al. 2012).

As a result, also many scholars working in the positivist tradition have drawn on the ethnographic method to research social mechanisms (Varese 2001; Gambetta and Hamill 2005; Gambetta 2009; Hamill 2010; Hamill et al. 2019). Commenting on the divide between positivism and interpretivism, Jon Elster has therefore made the compelling argument that "to interpret *is* to explain" as long as interpretations are confronted with "*experience*" (2007: 52, emph. orig.), that is, empirics. One way to do so is to derive observable hypotheses from one's interpretations that can be tested with representative data, as shall be done in Chapter Eight.

2. Interviewing Turkish Neighbourhood Chiefs (Muhtars)

How does one do a qualitative in-depth study of street-level narratives in an entire country? In solving this problem, I needed to choose a suitable unit of analysis that could be found across Turkey, provide me with rich information on local life, and would always speak from more or less the same epistemological standpoint within society's social stratification to be comparable (cf. Smith 1990). In response, I chose so-called *muhtars*. What are they?

2.1 What is a muhtar?

A muhtar is an elected administrator at the neighbourhood level, both a bureaucrat and an indirect representative of their community. As such, muhtars preoccupy what Massicard calls a "hybrid position", characterised by a "fundamental ambiguity" (2022: 2). Voted into office without any (explicit) party affiliation, muhtars' tasks encompass things like the maintenance of the local civil register and the issuing of certificates, the distribution of social aid and the confirmation of delivery of official mail to residents, but de facto they also represent these residents vis-à-vis the *kaymakam* (district governor), who represents the central government. As such, muhtars may for example be asked to report on their neighbourhood to the authorities. First created as an institution in 1829 in Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire (Massicard 2022), muhtars and their offices (*muhtarlık*) exist in every Turkish neighbourhood or village today, which range in size from a few hundred inhabitants to up to 10,000, while the average population size is 1,700 (ET 2024). As a result, some muhtars also employ auxiliaries that help them fulfil their tasks. Financially, muhtars receive a humble salary from the state that is below the minimum wage (e-devlet 2024), which they top up with fees they collect from the citizens that make use of their services. However, with the gradual digitisation of public services in Turkey through tools such as the mobile phone application *e-devlet* (e-state), this part of their income has significantly dropped in recent years (Massicard 2022).

For some, being a muhtar is therefore no longer economically viable, which reduces the benefits of the position to the nonpecuniary perks that come with it, such as the right to carry a weapon, good contacts to the public administration (that can be used for various other purposes), opportunities for travel (as part of muhtar conventions) and social recognition in their respective neighbourhood. Since the position of the muhtar can moreover be combined with other professions, many muhtars tend to be shopkeepers, real estate agents, builders or businesspeople at the same time. Furthermore, many are also in retirement from their previous job or were exclusively housewives before (Şenol 2013). In any case, very often, being muhtar is seen as a social honour and a "secondary occupation" (Massicard 2022: 52; Şenol 2013) rather than as a professional career. This notwithstanding, many muhtars display a serious commitment to their role, and electoral competition for it is often numerous and fierce (ibid).

Given these circumstances, many muhtars (in particular those retired or running a shop from where they also fulfil their administrative duties) spend a lot of time sitting and chatting with local residents who come to visit them, either for other business or deliberately for conversation. Outside their office hours, these exchanges often continue, as muhtars tend to be recognised and greeted on the street by local residents (at least from a certain age upwards),

who signal them their respect. As one of my interviewees (male, senior, working-class) in the city of Konya described his life as a muhtar:

> I come here [to the muhtarlık] at 8 or 9 o'clock. People come here for the works related to the muhtar's office. I see to their works, then I go home at 18 o'clock. This is my life. I have a small motorbike. In my spare time, I travel around the neighbourhood with it. I visit the streets. I have 300 streets. I talk to people: 'How are you? Are you well? Are there poor people on your street? Are there people to help? Tell me.' I take note of the people to be helped. I help them when the time comes. After that, since we are muhtars, we meet with the district governorship, the offices of public education, the municipality, and the provincial governorship [*valilik*]. When there are any issues, we meet with them and solve them.

This may explain the muhtars' "pronounced social anchoring" (Massicard 2022: 21), which, according to Massicard, also "has an impact on the social profiles of muhtars, meaning that they are comparable to notables" (ibid). Indeed, many muhtars tend to already enjoy some sort of social recognition in their neighbourhood or village before taking office, as a community elder, a popular and well-connected individual, or an informal village leader. At times, this prestige is then also passed on to one of their descendants, boosting their chance to become their next muhtar. As Massicard notes, despite the increasing professionalisation in many realms of political activity, "local luminaries continue to dominate the muhtarlık" (2022: 38). Given the predominance of patriarchy in Turkey and its female visibility problem (Arat 2000), this also means that only very few muhtars – around 2.3% (Şenol 2013; Baran and Zobar 2022) – are women. Moreover, it means that men of higher ages are in a privileged position to become muhtar, both financially and in terms of social status. Finally, it also means that the socio-economic backgrounds of muhtars can considerably vary, often reflecting the socio-economic status of their respective neighbourhood or village.[16]

2.2 Why are muhtars a suitable unit of analysis?

Are in-depth interviews with Turkish muhtars essentially equal to portraying Turkish society from the vantage point of 'old, white men'? Choosing muhtars as a unit of analysis, that is, as my primary interlocutors, indeed, comes with many potential biases and limitations. As the section above has described, statistically speaking, many muhtars share specific characteristics that do not proportionately reflect the diversity of Turkish society, in particular with regard to age, gender and professional occupation (other than the muhtar's office). At the same time, the vast range of their socio-economic backgrounds may be seen as a challenge to whether their

---

[16] In fact, where I estimate the muhtars' social class in this thesis, it is based on information they have told me about their neighbourhood and/or family background. This also means that my categorisation may not be perfectly accurate. As a result, the social class indicated here is often better to be understood as their neighbourhood's overall socio-economic status.

structural viewpoints really are comparable. What is more, although muhtars do not run for a political party, many are indeed member of one – be it overtly or covertly, actively or passively. Since the presidency of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, this politicisation of the muhtar has reached an unprecedented level, as the president began holding regular mass meetings with muhtars from around Turkey to hear their views, but more importantly, to instil them with his own (Massicard 2022). Besides this increasing politicisation (which many muhtars also reject), the muhtar is by definition in close interaction with the authorities of the state, which in some instils the idea that they must not express themselves politically but align themselves with the respective position of the kaymakam, the municipality or the central government. Either way, the result is that many muhtars with views they fear to express may refuse to be interviewed or that they might simply reiterate official discourses. Finally, as a consequence of the growing digitisation of public services in Turkey, in some cities such as Konya, many neighbourhoods have been merged, increasing the number of residents per muhtar and thereby decreasing the intensity of the latter's social embeddedness in local contexts.

Despite these many limitations and potential biases, muhtars are in a unique position to serve as informants for an in-depth interview-based comparative case study such as this one. Although, as a population, muhtars can hardly be said to reflect the breadth of Turkish society overall, as elected officials, they most of the time do reflect the 'social biotope' they emerge from. For instance, in the liberal neighbourhoods of Istanbul's Beyoğlu or Kadıköy districts, muhtars that are women, gay, Alevi, or outspoken feminists are not a rarity. Similarly, while the fact that are significantly more female muhtars in Izmir than in Urfa makes the views of women in Urfa less accessible, this imbalance in itself is reflective of the different socio-cultural contexts that I seek to compare and therefore not simply a methodological obstacle, but part of the 'phenomenological reality' and variation that I study. That is, it is precisely this socio-cultural as well as socio-economic embeddedness of the muhtars with regard to their neighbourhoods that makes them the ideal individual to talk to in trying to get an understanding of the wider social surroundings they are situated in.

This is buttressed by their matchless social embeddedness that provides them like no other with "privileged access to the local population" and "direct knowledge of […] individuals' daily lives" (Massicard 2022: 2). In this sense, interviews with muhtars should be conceived of as a type of *'street-level elite interview'*. It is this special position of theirs that has made muhtars a common informant for an abundancy of micro-sociological studies on Turkey (Woźniak 2018; International Crisis Group 2019; Genç and Özdemirkıran Embel 2019; Biehl 2020; Üstübici 2020; Güngördü and Kahraman 2021). Interviews with muhtars moreover

have the benefit of being comparable across social contexts because, despite the existent variety of muhtars, the structural position from which these 'notables' get their information is more constant than it would be if diverse occupations, yielding a higher diversity of social profiles, were interviewed. Furthermore, interviewing muhtars comes with the significant practical advantage for the researcher that they are both accessible and available: while their phone numbers can be found online, most of them are by definition compelled to spend a certain amount of time per day in their office. This makes finding them, introducing oneself as a foreign researcher, and doing an in-depth interview of one hour or more at all possible, whereas for people in other well-connected occupations, such as teachers, nurses, or businesspeople, this may not be. That said, conducting these interviews, one must of course bear in mind that the information they provide is biased by their own positionality, too, and that in talking to me as a foreign researcher, they may well be pursuing their very own 'representation strategies'.[17]

2.3 My positionality as a researcher

Why should Turkish muhtars, who are employed by the state, facing me, a young male[18] middle-class and non-Turkish researcher from Germany, asking about local residents' relation to the Syrian refugees (a tense topic in Turkish politics) tell their honest views, if anything at all? And why should I, being that researcher, be able to fully grasp the nuances of what they are willing to share? As many have warned me before starting my fieldwork, I should "expect to be rejected" in my requests for an interview, and as others have added, I should beware of the fact that those willing to talk to me may "not tell the truth", be politicised in their replies or euphemistic in their descriptions, as is custom for many Turks in conversation with a stranger.[19] Indeed, like other researchers before me (cf. Massicard 2022), I encountered such muhtars that would be suspicious of me,[20] that would ask for an official permission from the district governor (which I obtained), or that would decline to talk to me altogether, if only because their husband did not allow them to. And I encountered such muhtars whose most frequent answer to me would be: "*Her şey iyi, sıkıntı yok* (Everything's okay, there's no problem)".

---

[17] Some speak here of the "conditions of enunciation" shaping the narrative data (for a review see Pier 2019).

[18] One must recognise that if I were a woman, doing these long interviews with male muhtars in the more conservative places I went would certainly have been much harder, maybe even impossible, which underlines male privilege.

[19] A Turkish saying reads: "*Kendi iç problemlerimizi dışarı anlatma* (Don't tell our internal problems to the outside)."

[20] Indeed, as I later learned, in several locations, some muhtars discussed the possibility of me being a spy in their chat groups, asking their peers or the district governor for advice. At times, this would lead to lively debates, with some using this opportunity to vent their anger about the Syrian refugees and the EU whilst others actively got involved to 'lobby' for me, arguing that one should support young people in their education, such as this German doing his PhD, and persuading other muhtars to talk to me. Meanwhile, one district governor, for example, emphasised that this was an academic research project affiliated with a university and that it was up to every muhtar individually whether they would like to take part in it or not. As uncomfortable as these discussions about me felt at the time, they definitely helped me gain access to the field and my interviewees' trust.

However, as my goal was not to deliberately talk about 'problems' nor about politics, but about people's everyday lives (brushing over the fact that these could be full of problems and politics themselves), in most cases, the muhtars I contacted were happy to talk to me. Moreover, as the widespread anger in Turkey about the Syrian refugee issue had made it feel less risky to voice open opinions on this topic, many shared all sorts of views and experiences. Reaching out to them with an introductory letter in Turkish from Istanbul's Sabancı University, which was hosting me during this time, rather than mentioning my affiliation with the London School of Economics, many muhtars seemed to acknowledge me as a harmless student with sincere motives. Besides, some confided to me that they were only talking to me because I was from Germany, a country they viewed positively. That said, unlike what some readers may presume, during our conversations, precisely this positionality as a young researcher speaking Turkish as a foreign language, helped me in attaining the very goal of in-depth interviewing, which is to interrogate the taken-for-granted concepts in people's narratives by asking probing questions (Hesse-Biber 2016). That is, thanks to my seeming ignorance as an 'innocent and uninformed outsider', I could ask my interviewees different, possibly 'inappropriate' or 'direct' questions to make them explicate the very preconceptions that they would rely on in their descriptions and that constituted their lifeworld. Finally, given that many were aware that the issue of the Syrian refugees in Turkey had been of global interest at some point and that, like Turkey, Germany had received a high number of Syrian refugees, too, my personal interest in this topic was less surprising or dubious to them than one might think.

2.4 Data collection and analysis

The interviews lasted between 0:30 and 1:30 hours, took place at the muhtar's office (which could be a shop as well), in a café, or outside, and for the most part were tape-recorded, with notes also being taken. The interview guide I used can be found in Appendix I. They were conducted in Turkish without assistance but later (anonymously) transcribed by two Turkish native-speakers. After that, I conducted a *thematic analysis* of these transcripts and my notes, which means to identify recurring categories and concepts (themes), analyse their meaning, and trace how they are interconnected (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012). In doing so, the aim is to detect an overall structure across the interview data that yields insights into what sort of social boundaries the interlocutors draw, why they do so, and how this relates to the symbolic boundaries in their minds. In a nutshell, I seek to understand through what narratives Turkish citizens (i.e. the muhtars and their surroundings) make sense of their own behaviour vis-à-vis Syrian refugees, and what role their religious and ethnic identities play in these.

Thematic analysis is a typical tool for a grounded-theory approach (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012; Naeem et al. 2023). Naeem et al. define it as "a research method used to identify and interpret patterns or themes in a [qualitative] data set" (2023: 2) with the ultimate aim of building a "conceptual model" that can explain the social process being studied through the lens of the actors concerned. Instead of 'themes', some therefore also speak of "categories and concepts within text that are then linked into [...] theoretical models" (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012: 11). But the basic idea is the same: to reorganise the 'messy' data according to summative, overarching labels and thereby more lucidly represent 'what is going on'.

This is done by 'coding' the data and subsequently categorising these codes. To code the data means to dissect it into small-scale themes that each summarise a certain part of, in this case, an interview. For example, one 'code' (i.e. theme) that very often came up in my interviews was Turkish people's alleged fearlessness in comparison with the Syrian refugees, mostly expressed through the statement "*Bizde kaçmak yok* (We don't run away)". However, other types of statement may have expressed the same idea and thus also belong to this code. As a next step, I then initially categorised this code under the more large-scale theme of 'Turkish superiority' to which also other codes belong, such as Turkish people allegedly being more "civilised" or Turkish Islam allegedly being "cleaner". The coding I have done in the case of this research is a so-called *structural* coding (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012) because I have done it according to a pre-defined analytical framework, which is that of social and symbolic boundaries. In this vein, I classified the theme of 'Turkish superiority' for example as an instance of symbolic boundary making. All that being said, it is important to note that different authors use these various terms ("code", "category", "theme") in different ways, with some, for example, defining a 'theme' as something more abstract than a 'code' and others doing the opposite (cf. Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012; Naeem et al. 2023). More importantly, though, the underlying logic always remains the same: to move from the empirical to the abstract and from the singular to the general. Figures 9 and 10 on the next page give an example of how Naeem et al. (2023) have done this.

In presenting the results of a thematic analysis, one typically proceeds in reverse order by exhibiting the main large-scale themes thus identified, substantiating them with the more detailed codes, and illustrating *some* of the codes through real data in the shape of selected "pertinent quotations" (Naeem et al. 2023: 5). The latter also serve as evidence. As Naeem et al. recommend, "[t]his [quote] selection should echo robust patterns in the data, reflect diverse participants' viewpoints, and balance readability and authenticity" (ibid). Appendix II then provides an online link to the entirety of my transcripts and codebooks (NVivo files).
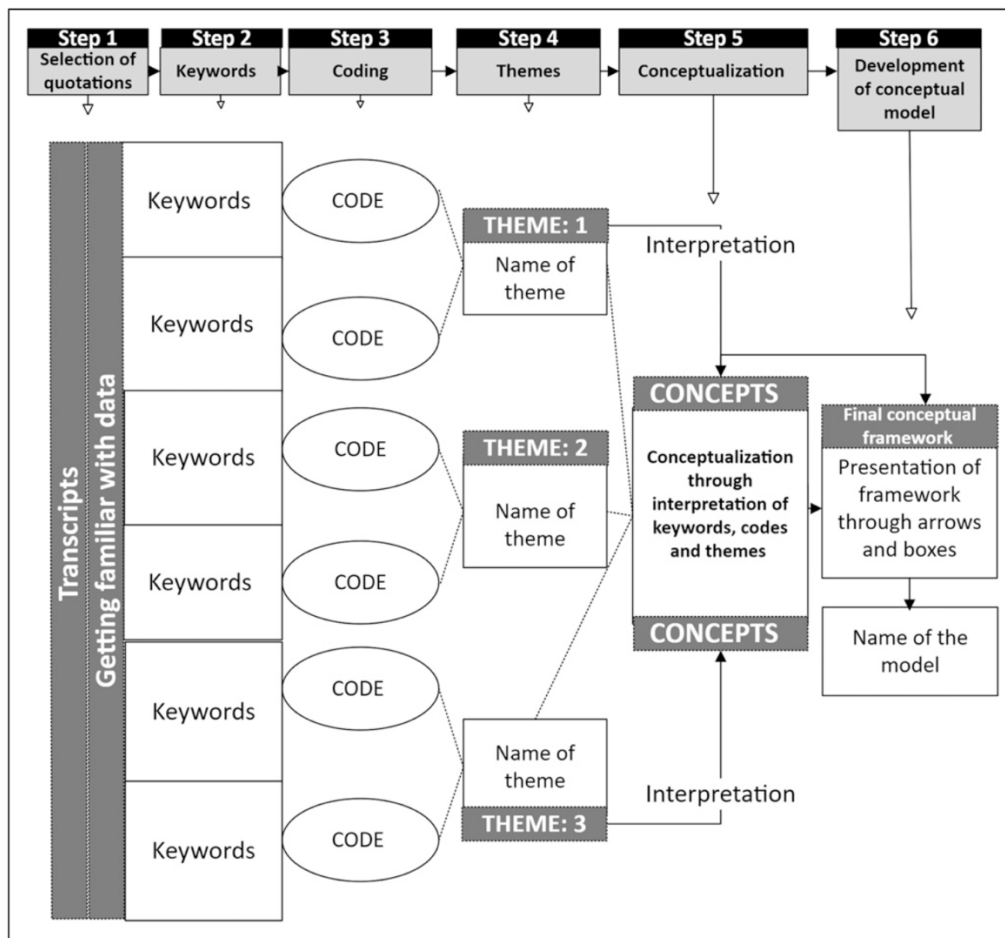
Fig. 9. Illustration of the Thematic Analysis Process by Naeem et al. (2023: 3)
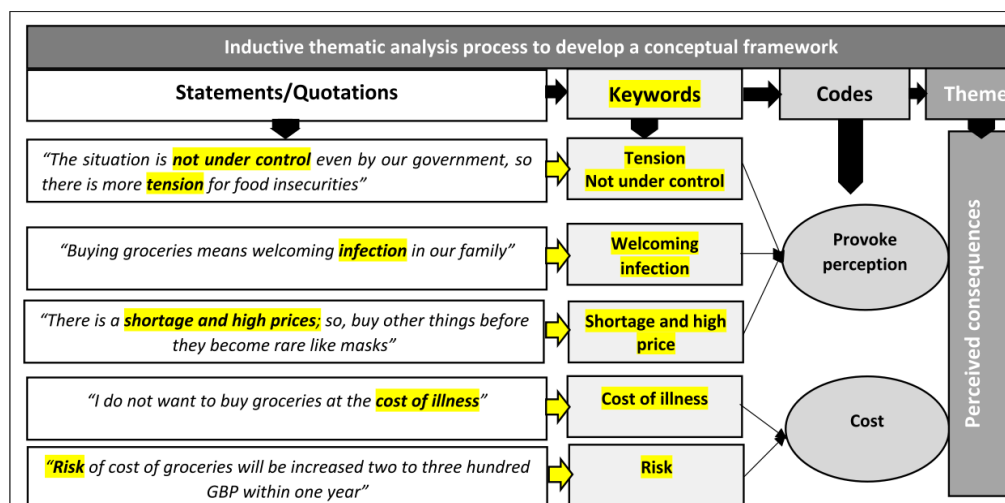
Fig. 10. Example of an Application of Thematic Analysis by Naeem et al. (2023: 4, highlighting original)

101

Although my interviews were set up to be one-on-one with the muhtars, they often turned into what one could call 'spontaneous focus group discussions', with other people occasionally present at the muhtar's office joining the conversation, too. These included friends or relatives of the muhtar, residents seeking the muhtar's services or customers frequenting their shop as well as various people being professionally connected to them, such as the local imam, spouses, teachers and very often the local postman or -woman. Their contributions to the interview naturally created a focus group setting that would have been difficult to organise more formally in advance due to most people's unfamiliarity with this format, but which added a lot to exploring the shared notions of social and symbolic boundaries. This was especially so when the interlocutors began agreeing or disagreeing with each other or provided different descriptions of the same topic, which allowed me to trace the contestation of certain ideas. In addition, these bystanders also contributed towards the gender balance of my sample, as a few of them happened to be women. Of course, the downside of these bystanders' involvement may have been that some muhtars might have become more hesitant to share their thoughts, possibly being wary of contradiction with residents. However, while I did not get such an impression, my eventual interview sample in any case reflects an even balance of individual and group conversations. As a result, to reflect this reality of many of my in-depth interviews, involving unanticipated bystanders, my unit of analysis would in fact more accurately be labelled as 'muhtars and friends'. That said, while I explicitly asked the muhtars both about their personal views and about the views of people in their neighbourhood more generally, distinguishing these is sometimes practically not possible. Moreover, unfortunately, the social dynamics of the conversations as they took place and the general suspicion vis-à-vis me as a foreign researcher often made it seem inappropriate to ask for personal background information from these bystanders and sometimes even from the muhtars themselves, which, alas, lowers the quality of the data and could not be rectified later on.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic that was still going on at the time as well as the coincidence of my stay in Konya with the month of Ramadan and the tense political atmosphere in Turkey in early 2022, when I conducted these in-depth interviews, many of them turned out to provide an almost unexpectedly rich amount of data. Following the interviews, many muhtars would ask to take a selfie with me to commemorate the occasion, which provided me with an opportunity to thank them for their time. Moreover, the subsequent circulation of these selfies in their chat groups indirectly also gave another boost to gaining their trust and getting them to accept to be interviewed. Finally, outside the interviews, several of them would take me out for a meal, show me around their neighbourhood or invite me to their homes or another

Fig. 11. Selfie by a muhtar in Izmir, showing the local postman as well as myself in the background in conversation with a resident (Use permitted)

Fig. 12. Breakfast at a muhtar's office in Urfa (Use permitted)

Fig. 13. A personalised gift from a muhtar in Konya, carrying my 'Turkish nickname'

social occasion in the evening, sometimes together with other muhtars, which would be another help in my immersion in the field. As a result, throughout my month-long stays in Izmir, Konya and Urfa it would happen that I would coincidentally run into muhtars I knew on the street, which cannot compare with any proper long-term immersion for sure but was another step in that direction and in laying the ground for attaining depth in my interviews. In pursuing this approach, I interviewed 40 muhtars in Izmir (13 female, 27 male), 43 in Urfa (all male) and 32 in Konya (all male) from February until May 2022. Why did I choose to compare these cities?

3. Controlled Case Comparison and Case Selection (Cities)

3.1 What is a controlled case comparison?

In the interpretive search for generalisable mechanisms, comparisons of different contexts can be of help (Bowen and Petersen 1999). While interpretive enquiry is inherently focused on detail and depth rather than generalisability and causality, small-scale controlled comparisons, in which some contextual factors are held constant whilst others are being varied, can help discern the role of such factors *within* these mechanisms (Wimmer 2013: 212). Conducting what some also call a "comparative ethnography" (Simmons and Rush Smith 2019) or "comparative ethnographic narrative analysis" (Arnault and Sinko 2021), the aim is to find out how collective narratives in different social contexts reflect notions of religious and ethnic identity in people's relation to the Syrian refugees. Methodologically, this builds on the assumptions that, first, "narratives may be gathered to understand people's interactions, beliefs, and contexts" (Arnault and Sinko 2021: 2) and that, second, "narratives are context dependent", that is, they are "a co-creation between the narrator and their socio-cultural world" (ibid). Thus, comparing collective narratives in different socio-cultural contexts is a way to compare the meaning-making impact of these sociocultural contexts themselves. Therefore, conducting narrative-oriented interviews with Turkish muhtars in different sites where religious and ethnic identity significantly vary whilst other factors can be kept somewhat constant, can help identify their role in Turkish citizens' boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees.

To do so, I chose to focus on specific urban areas as my contexts of comparison. That is because, in Turkey, many cities are closely associated with specific sociocultural identities, in particular regarding religious practice and ethnicity (Zürcher 2017). As a result, individuals' narratives are likely to be reflective of these surroundings, which makes a comparison of fieldwork data concerning these factors possible. That said, to identify the role of specifically religious and ethnic identity, some level of control over the variation in other characteristics of these cities had to be established by keeping those as similar as possible.

3.2 Case selection

The cases I chose for this most similar comparison (Hancké 2009) are the city-centre districts of the cities of Izmir, Konya and Urfa (officially Şanlıurfa). Following Laitin (1999) and Finkel (2017), I compare these cases as two contrasting pairs: Izmir with Konya and Konya with Urfa. Of course, overall, these cities are far from being similar to each other: Izmir, located on the Aegean coast, is a lot more prosperous than Urfa, located near the Syrian border, while Urfa hosts many more Syrians than does Izmir. However, these differences are considerably smaller between the selected districts,[21] which all exhibit diverse levels of economic prosperity and a similar number of Syrian refugees. What makes them otherwise different from one another is what is of theoretical interest to this research: Izmir is a stronghold of secularist modernism whereas Konya is known for its largely religiously conservative population, yet both cities' inhabitants are predominantly self-identified ethnic Turks. In the same sense, while religious conservatism is a commonality between Konya and Urfa, Urfa is largely inhabited by ethnic Kurds and Arabs. These two pairings thus allow to hold some of the contextual variation constant whilst isolating the two factors of interest, which are religious and ethnic identity.

Table 2. Overview of the Selected Cases (Cities) for Comparison

	Population (Region)	Population (**Selected part**)	Prosperity (Region)	Prosperity (**Selected part**)
Izmir	c. 4 million	c. 345,000	High	Low-high
Konya	c. 2 million	c. 380,000	Medium	Low-high
Urfa	c. 2 million	c. 380,000	Low	Low-high

	Syrian refugees (Region)	Syrian refugees (**Selected part**)	Religious identity (main)	Ethnic identity (main)
Izmir	c. 150,000	c. 48,000[22]	Secularist-Modernist	Turkish
Konya	c. 120,000	*not available* ☹	Religiously conservative	Turkish
Urfa	c. 430,000	c. 41,000[23]	Religiously conservative	Kurdish + Arab

---

[21] Konak in Izmir; Selçuklu, Meram, and Karatay in Konya; Eyyübiye, Halliliye, and Karaköprü in Urfa
[22] Kaya, Çimen, et al. (2021)
[23] Bilbay (2020)

	Previous presence of migrants	Historical cultural diversity	Main school of Islam	Much support for Kurdish nationalism
Izmir	Yes	Yes	Sunni-Hanefi	No
Konya	Yes	Yes	Sunni-Hanefi	No
Urfa	Yes	Yes	Sunni-Hanefi	No

	Pre-existing ties to Syria	Municipal policy[24]
Izmir	No	Disengaged
Konya	No	Integration
Urfa	Yes	Integration

Green stands for 'held equal'
Red stands for variation, with the cases marked in yellow being the variance of interest

Albeit not neatly comparable in a positivist variable-oriented understanding of comparison (della Porta 2008), an interpretive ethnographic comparison of these sites is sensible because

> Where political scientists typically compare similar or dissimilar outcomes, comparative ethnography might highlight political [or social] processes — *the dynamics, meanings, and practices that shape political [or social] life* — as the proverbial outcome of interest. […] [Therefore,] For comparative ethnographers, ensuring variation on the dependent variable — a classic problem for positivist research designs — is not an impediment because *the goals are to provide a thick description of a particular political [or social] process and to highlight similarities and differences in the processes at work.* (Simmons and Rush Smith 2019: 352, my italics)

Such 'thick descriptions', which analyse social behaviour by contextualising it and interpreting its meaning for the agents themselves (Geertz 1973), directly cater to developing theory in a grounded manner, i.e. data-driven and bottom-up. The comparison of muhtars' narratives on the meaning of their religious and ethnic identities in their relation to the Syrian refugees in the above cities thus allows to do exactly that: highlighting similarities and differences between the different sociocultural contexts and thereby distilling the role these identities play. Finally, to better enable these comparisons, I would at times deliberately prompt them in my interviews by asking interviewees to define their local identity in comparison with other parts of Turkey.

---

[24] Betts, Memişoğlu, and Ali (2020); Kaya, Akkaya, et al. (2021); Kaya, Çimen, et al. (2021)

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the value of interpretative enquiry by means of in-depth interviews with Turkish muhtars in the cities of Izmir, Konya and Urfa for my grounded-theory approach to answering my research question. In doing so, I have outlined the limitations of ethnographic research in general and of in-depth interviews in particular as well as of speaking to muhtars as my main interlocutors – particularly from my position as a non-Turkish researcher. Having done that, I have defended my methodological choices by reference to especially three reasons: (1) the uniqueness of information that becomes accessible through interpretative enquiry, in-depth interviews, and with a foreigner asking the questions; (2) the wealth, comparability, and accessibility of information that only muhtars allow for to such a degree; and (3) the fact that, despite all existing differences between Izmir, Konya and Urfa, they are the best cases to reveal the role of religious and ethnic identity in boundary-making through a controlled comparison. Pursuing this approach, the next three chapters will present and analyse the findings from my fieldwork, city by city. This is done in order to pay the necessary attention to context, required in adopting an "ethnographic sensibility" (Simmons and Rush Smith 2019). After that, I shall compare these qualitative findings in Chapter Seven and, on that basis, develop my own new grounded theory. Finally, this theory shall then be tested experimentally in Chapter Eight, drawing on original data from a nationally representative survey in September 2023. The hope is that, as Simmons and Rush Smith emphasise, "[e]thnographic immersion often unearths political phenomena that have largely evaded scholarly attention" (2019: 354). It is from this exploratory point of departure that I shall proceed.

Chapter Four

Defending Diversity against Diversity

Izmir

Table of Contents

Chapter Four

Defending Diversity against Diversity
Izmir

Introduction

Izmir is located in the West of Turkey on its Aegean coast, facing Greece, and has carried the Greek name of *Smyrna* until 1930. It is a city of maritime trade, cosmopolitanism, and militant Kemalism. In Turkey, it is known for its largely 'Western' and secular lifestyle, its liberal outlook and low level of religious conservatism, and its deep allegiance to the Republican People's Party (CHP). Under this surface, however, its history and sociological makeup are slightly more complex, as shall be sketched in the first half of this chapter, also drawing on the descriptions by the interviewed muhtars. The first part will moreover describe the situation of the local Syrian refugees. Analysing the interviews with the muhtars in more depth, the second part shall then describe and contextualise their boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees.

For this chapter, 13 female and 27 male muhtars of various ages, social backgrounds, and ethnicities, were interviewed in February 2022 in the inner-city district of Konak. Konak consists of destitute historical quarters and improvised shantytowns, but also of a few gentrified areas and upmarket neighbourhoods. Today, it hosts a large share of Izmir's Syrian refugees as well as many irregular foreign migrants and domestic migrants from Turkey's southeast. As detailed in Chapter Three, background information on the cited interviewees' gender, age, and class will be stated in very broad categories to maximally preserve their anonymity, while additional information on their ethnicity or family history will be added where made available. Also, the reader should note that any direct quotes from the transcripts are only examples of the data whereas I summarise other parts of it in my own words for more brevity.

The purpose of this chapter is to *identify the range of social and symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis Syrian refugees* as they are drawn in the diverse yet ethnically mostly Turkish and religiously mostly secular city of Izmir, and thereby *establish a reference point for comparison* with the subsequent studies on Konya and Urfa. In this sense, the chapter represents something like the descriptive data part of my overall analysis. As part of that, the chapter will also derive the hypothesis that while Turkish citizens, irrespective of their religious and ethnic identity, mostly all draw exclusionary boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrians, many secular ethnic Turks moreover seek to exclude them to defend their Kemalist vision of Turkish national identity.

1. Izmir and its Syrian Refugees

1.1 Who are the People of Izmir?

Before the Turkish Republic, religious and ethnic boundaries used to matter very little in Izmir. In her account of 19th Century Ottoman Izmir, Zandi-Sayek describes the city as a "modern harbor equipped for international steamship traffic and railway lines [where] [m]igrants, seasonal workers, and transient sailors thronged into a city already home to communities of diverse ethnic, religious, and national origins […]" (2012: 1). Based on this, she writes about its inhabitants that "by residing in a multiethnic, multiconfessional, and multilingual polity, they had become well versed in dodging conventional communal boundaries and forming coalitions of shared interest across communal lines when it suited their needs" (Zandi-Sayek 2012: 2). As an international port city, the people of Izmir comprised members of many ethno-religious communities of the Ottoman Empire, such as Muslims, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews as well as traders from various parts of Europe. In Izmir, these groups were not minorities but almost equal in size (Dumludağ and Durgun 2011: 925). In particular, the presence of the Sephardic Jews had played a crucial role in Izmir's rise to a major port city in the 17th Century, as they were acting as intermediaries between European Levant companies and their Ottoman counterparts, including the state's administration (Danon 2020). According to Danon, the position of the Jews in Ottoman Izmir also was "not complicated by the rising tide of various nationalisms sweeping Europe" later on (2020: 6). This non-Muslim majority of the city famously earned it the name of *gâvur* (infidel) Izmir in the rest of Anatolia, whereas European travellers would call it "the little Paris of the Orient" (Kaya 2021: 3). Although these different communities lived in separate quarters, for Zandi-Sayek, "the multilayered, fluctuating, and contingent identities of Izmir's plural society" challenge "assumptions of clear-cut ethnoreligious boundaries" in Ottoman times (2012: 7). This narrative of the people of Izmir as diverse but in harmony shapes their residents' self-perception until today.

However, over the course of history, the nature of the boundaries between Izmir's different ethnoreligious communities has been fluctuating, turning thicker with changes in the economy, the aftermath of World War I, and the onset of the Turkish Republic. As the demand of European companies shifted towards raw materials from Anatolia rather than goods from further East, the Anatolian Greek (*rum*) merchants and producers of Izmir seized their opportunity to strengthen their ties with "their Christian coreligionists [from Europe] at the expense of Ottoman Muslims and Jews" (Danon 2020: 9). This made them the predominant traders in town and attracted additional Hellenic Greeks (*yunan*) to settle in Izmir, too. With Greece's occupation of Izmir in 1919, many Greek Izmirians then sided along ethnoreligious

lines once more and turned against their Muslim neighbours with violence (Morack 2017). Following the conquest of the city by the Turkish army in 1922, the wave of violence turned back against the *rum* as well as against Armenians (ibid), making many of them flee the city. The subsequent population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923 as well as the escape of thousands of Turkish-identified Muslims from the Balkans, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus removed even more Greeks from Izmir whilst bringing in many new Muslims from abroad, further reducing the city's ethno-religious diversity. By 1926, the majority of the people of Izmir were Muslims, who "had begun to empathize only with members of their own ethno-religious group" (Morack 2017: 84). The new Turkish national consciousness spreading at the time moreover resulted in a "mobilization against the use of non-Turkish languages" in Izmir in 1934, aiming at the "Turkification of the minorities" and leading to violence against non-Turkish speakers of all sorts (Lamprou 2013: 824/25). Meanwhile, the descendants of the (often notably fair-skinned) Balkan Muslim refugees have continued to be called *göçmen* (migrant) in everyday language in Turkey (Kaya 2024) and the question of their 'actual' Turkishness has been the subject of ferocious debates (HaberTürk 2020).

Today, ethnic diversity in Izmir is higher again as a result of domestic migration from Turkey's southeast, in particular Mardin and Diyarbakır, from where many ethnic Kurds came in the 1950s and afterwards, fleeing the armed conflict in their hometowns or looking for work (Güngördü and Kahraman 2021). Within Turkey, Izmir is now the city with the third biggest Kurdish immigrant population and the third most popular destination for domestic migrants overall after Istanbul and Ankara (Yıldız and Uzgören 2016). But also irregular foreign migrants from Afghanistan and different parts of Africa have come to Izmir on their transit to Europe and ended up staying. These migrants, which often stand out in the landscape of the city because of their skin colour, have predominantly settled in the inner-city neighbourhood of Basmane, where many dilapidated old buildings house affordable hotels that the migrants tend to stay at on their first arrival (Oner, Durmaz-Drinkwater, and Grant 2021). Given its architectural destitution and social precarity, for many Izmirians, Basmane represents a "pit of shame [that figures] as an anomaly at the heart of the city" (Baydar and Güngör 2021: 635) and is avoided by many.

That is also because the city overall economically thrives, having the third highest GDP in Turkey and being its second biggest trade centre (Turkstat 2022). Next to its wealth, it is politically known to be a stronghold of the Republican People's Party (CHP), founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, whose French-educated wife Latife originated from Izmir (Zürcher 2017; Çalışlar 2013). Since 2003, the CHP has continuously been governing Izmir, preceded

by the Democratic Left Party (DSP) of former CHP-member Bülent Ecevit. In the 2018 Turkish Presidential elections, four years before my fieldwork, 54% of Izmir's and 56% of Konak's votes went to the CHP candidate (Yeni Şafak 2018a). Given the strong association of geography with political identity in Turkish everyday talk, saying that one's family originates from Izmir, therefore, means to many Turks that one holds Kemalist views. However, the full picture of Konak's socio-political reality also encompasses 30% of the votes in 2018 that went to President Erdoğan and 9% for the candidate of the pro-Kurdish HDP.

Speaking to the muhtars on how they saw their city, many reiterated the narrative of its liberal cosmopolitanism and tolerance towards others.

> [We are] diverse but in harmony with each other. We welcome everyone with open arms. We love everyone. We are friendly and warm towards everyone. […] We are very much freedom-loving people. We don't want pressure. Whether woman or man, married or single, we treat everyone the same. We are for democracy. May everyone be whatever they are; their religion, language, gender, it shall not matter. (i1, female, middle-aged, working-class)

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

> There used to be many Italians and Greeks in Izmir. They were our neighbours. I still go to Church sometimes; it's the house of God, too, after all. But those people haven't stayed. There are very few people with [my] attitude now. (i2, female, middle-aged, middle-class)

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

> Izmir is a very nice hometown. It's open to all views. Both secularists and conservatives can easily find their place here. Also religious people. Different identities are comfortable [here]. (i20, male, senior, working-class, Kurdish)

In many of the interviews, the oft-mentioned term "democracy" was less about the rule of the people and a political system than about the idea of an *open society*, which the muhtars regarded to be a special feature of Izmir in today's Turkey. The likewise oft-mentioned concept of "freedom" meanwhile just as much referred to personal lifestyles, particularly such that diverge from pious religious practice, as to the liberty to politically oppose the central government. This freedom was said to derive from Izmir's strong Kemalist identity, which was regarded to make the city more "modern", "civilised" and "advanced" – for some, more "European" – than *other parts of Turkey* and which needed to be *defended* against Islamist politics and intruders.

> You know, our Izmir means civilisation. Somehow there are progressive people in Izmir that go against the government. In politics, we are on the right track. We support other parties, the CHP for example. […] There are no sects or cults here. They came, but they couldn't succeed here. They are reactionary, fanatic. I, too, do pray but I'm not excessively religious. I am a Kemalist (*Atatürkçüyüm*). God tells us to pray five times a day and that is what we do. (i10, male, senior, working-class, from the Aegean coast)

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

In comparison with other cities, Izmir's social structure is a bit more modern. People are more able to communicate with each other. For example, no one who doesn't drink will mess with anyone who does. Nobody says: "Why don't you fast?" (i20, male, senior, working-class, Kurdish)

***

Izmir is a free place: Life is free, the individual is free, everything is free. You live religion [but] it's a city where no one touches another's life, where everyone lives their own life. Nobody will mess with another. People set their own rules. […] A girl may wear a miniskirt, go out at 2 o'clock at night, smoke cigarettes, put on earrings, be lesbian, be trans. No-one will mess with anyone. Do you understand? Because this is important for this society. This is a place without neighbourhood pressure. (i13, male, senior, middle-class, old Izmirian)

Also Izmir's immigrant population was said to be well integrated into this liberal and modernist social climate. However, socio-cultural differences and occasional clashes especially regarding alcohol consumption and the position of women were said to exist, too.

Izmir people feel more relaxed, different. They don't care too much. They feel a bit closer to Europe. In my neighbourhood, there are Easterners,[25] Syrians, migrants from Crete, citizens from central Anatolia, Konya, and Erzurum, Roma people, people of many colours. They have all blended in, they can all nicely live here. Izmir is that kind of place: people blend in. Our youngsters here often drink beer, sitting by the sea and chatting. [People from] other cities in Turkey cannot do away with that. Problems arise, but Izmir is a bit more tolerant [*hoşgörülü*] regarding these topics. (i11, male, junior, working-class, Kurdish)

***

[Bystander – male, senior, working-class:] I am originally from Mardin. […] My mother tongue is Arabic, I am Arab. The Izmirian ladies are 'society ladies' [*sosyete hanımları*].

How so?

[Muhtar:] Izmir means drinking, having fun, living life. When a wife doesn't love her husband anymore, they separate. "Izmir's weather and women cannot be trusted", they say. (i32, male, senior, working-class, *göçmen*)

The pride in Izmir's Kemalist identity and Republican modernism throughout many of the interviews furthermore often tied in with a prevalence of nationalism and patriotism.

To be an Izmirian, first of all, means comfort, peace. Concerning people, women, girls, it means more freedom – in every regard. […] Families [here] are more enlightened, have a more modern outlook. They are more patriotic, more idealist, more nationalist. […] A Turk would never leave their country and go. They would fight for their country; they would not flee and seek refuge in another country. That's what patriotism is (*Vatanseverlik budur*). (i14, female, middle-aged, middle-class)

***

[Bystander – male, middle-aged, working-class:] For example, on Republic Day, everyone takes out their flag, sings the marches, has fun. We celebrate that.

---

[25] Easterners (*doğulular*) is a term frequently used for people from Turkey's East (which are often Kurdish).

[Muhtar:] We celebrate holidays, days that Atatürk gave us as a present. Especially in Izmir, this is very different. What I mean is, generally, everyone who endorses Turkish culture attaches their flag to their balcony. We are nationalists (*Milliyetçiyiz*). (i9, female, middle-aged, working-class, *göçmen*)

To make sense of this affirmed link between freedom and nationalism in the Turkish context, one needs to consider the cultural significance of Kemal Atatürk in the Republican milieu, where he is not only seen as the military defender and political father of the Turkish nation, but very much also as its societal reformer, enforcing a 'Western' way of life and conception of modernity (Özyürek 2006; Danforth 2021). In conjunction with this, many of these almost militant descriptions of Izmir's cultural identity should be seen in the context of Turkey's political climate in 2022, marked by a high level of societal polarisation between supporters of the Islamist government and various other socio-political milieux, in particular, Kemalists. As Özyürek (2006) has analysed, since the turn of the century, many secular Turkish citizens have begun 'defending' their modernist vision of Turkish national identity against the new dominant presence of political Islam in Turkey through various small acts in everyday life, from bringing Atatürk symbolism into the private sphere to intensifying their celebrations of the Republic.

For many people in Izmir though, especially in the many low-income neighbourhoods of Konak where this research took place, Izmir is first and foremost a place of work opportunities, of lower living costs than in Istanbul, and of mutual helpfulness (*yardımseverlik*). As one restaurant-owner put it to me: "It is not about where you are born, but about where you get full. That is why we like Izmir." For many inhabitants of Izmir who migrated to the city from elsewhere, it is thus less its cultural than its economic possibilities that matter to them, and so, their relation to the city is much more utilitarian than identity- or value-based. This crystallised in repeated descriptions of Izmir as the city of "commerce" (*ticaret*), of "wretches" (*gariban*) and of "an affordable life" (*yaşam ucuz*) before all else.

This dividing line between 'earlier' and 'later' inhabitants of Izmir and their respective relation to the city is crucial to understanding its sociological constitution of today because it reveals how the centre of the city, that is Konak, was already undergoing a transformation that diversified its ethnic, religious, and political identities prior to the arrival of the Syrian refugees. What is more, in Turkish everyday language, being *of* a city does not depend on one's place of residence or birth but on the place of birth of one's ancestors. It is in this sense that some of the 'newer' inhabitants of Izmir interviewed for this research stressed that there were "no *real* Izmirians left anyway" (*zaten gerçek İzmirliler hiç kalmadı*). This, however, did not make the 'older' inhabitants of Izmir any more accommodating towards the domestic migrants from

Turkey's East (mostly Kurds). Instead, the Kurds' arrival in Izmir was at first noted with suspicion and concern, as for example the following description by a muhtar who not only is a long-standing resident of Izmir herself, but whose parents also were born there, shows:

> At first, there were prejudices. I mean, the face of the neighbourhood had changed, its shape, but we were still the same. […]
>
> *What were those prejudices about?*
>
> Terrorism. But if I, for example, always stay in Turkey and then move to Germany, what is the first thing I'll do? I will speak Turkish to the Turks! Their mother tongue, the language with which they were born and that they learned in those lands, was Kurdish. In those days, you wouldn't teach them Turkish. But if we know German, Italian, or Spanish, if we look at people coming [from those countries] like "Oh, what a nice language they speak!", then we should look at them the same way. Because language is people's most fundamental right. […] And of course, there were prejudices as in "They give birth a lot!". Now, I'm neither from the East nor Kurdish, but my parents also had five children and my grandfather had ten siblings. It has nothing to do with [being Kurdish]. (i16, female, senior, middle-class)

What this extract reveals, is how the Kurdish domestic migrants' ethnic identity, in particular their language, was closely associated with events in Turkish domestic politics in the eyes of the local receiving society. Their mother tongue was not just different but a signifier of danger, of a lower social class, and of general 'Easternness' in the sense of Orientalism (Said 1978). This perception of threat was also extended to the migrants' fertility, which according to the interviewed muhtar above had different dimensions. For her, the trouble and noise that come with the presence of many children in the neighbourhood were a nuisance for local inhabitants, in particular, as the Kurdish domestic migrants were in her view not looking after their children sufficiently. However, what is more, a family's fertility is widely perceived in Turkey as an indicator of how 'modern' they are, with urban white-collar families often taking pride in the few children they have. Hence, both the number of children and the parents' perceived level of care did not cohere with the locals' 'modern' values. To be sure, the perceptual association of high fertility with 'cultural backwardness' is not specific to Turkey but exists in many other places, too (Davis and Blake 1956). Both mother tongue and fertility, figuring in this case as measures of 'Turkishness' and 'modernness' and of the potential to be a political, demographic, or even violent *threat* to these values, thus constitute here symbolic boundaries between 'old' Izmirians and Kurdish domestic migrants. This echoes the argument by Saatci that "the warfare [with the PKK] also initiated a sentiment of Turkish ethno-nationalism at the individual level that wishes to exclude Kurds from both the physical and ideological borders of Turkey and Turkish identity" (2002: 560). As the interviews moreover revealed, often, these rigid symbolic boundaries would coincide with rigid social boundaries, too.

This boundary formation shows the limits of the much-affirmed liberalism and tolerance of the people of Izmir. And it reveals the meaning of these concepts in this context: Freedom and tolerance, here, are not positively defined as applicable to all kinds of identity, but they are stressed as *affirmation against the perceived intolerance in other parts of Turkey* towards various things and identities often associated with 'the West' or Izmir, such as alcohol consumption, revealing female dress, religious and sexual minorities, and so forth. Because of that, their tolerance ends *where another's identity is seen as a threat to this 'Western' lifestyle*. In the case of the Kurdish domestic migrants, it comes in addition that their identity was previously politicised as part of the violent conflict between the independentist insurgents of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Turkish state in the 1980s and '90s. As a result, *local public perception of the Kurdish domestic migrants' presence in Izmir was closely linked to domestic Turkish politics and less about the people themselves*.

However, as the above muhtar also told, over time these social and symbolic boundaries began to blur, as people slowly got to know each other – and as the Syrian refugees arrived, which shifted the boundary of collective identity towards them.

> *Do these views on the migrants from Eastern Turkey resemble people's views on the Syrian refugees?*
>
> No, [now] people say: "They [the Kurds] grew up in my country [*benim topraklarımda*]. The Easterners are a hard-working community." […] The Syrians, we don't know how they live. (i16, female, senior, middle-class)

The following section shall shed some light on this last point.

1.2 The Situation of the Syrian Refugees in Izmir

Like other foreign irregular migrants in Izmir, most Syrian refugees initially came to trespass into the EU via the Greek islands, starting to arrive in high numbers in 2015 (CNN 2015). Also similarly, many of them at first stayed in the cheap hotels of the inner-city neighbourhood of Basmane, whose central street soon came to be called "little Syria" by the people of Izmir (Oner, Durmaz-Drinkwater, and Grant 2021). With the conclusion of the EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016 and the subsequent drop in irregular crossings in the Aegean (ESI 2019), many of them became long-term residents of Izmir, spreading to the various neighbourhoods where they could find cheap housing. As a result, the centrally located district of Konak, which, as aforementioned, comprises many decaying historical quarters and *gecekondu* (shantytowns), began to house many of them.

Research on their lives there indicates that many of them came to Izmir "through a network of Kurdish relatives and friends" (Yıldız and Uzgören 2016: 201). Also within Izmir, it was again "the existence of co-ethnics, kinship/ethnic relations" as well as the availability of jobs and the proximity to transportation, public services, and workplaces that determined the Syrian refugees' choice to settle in more centrally located neighbourhoods like Konak (Güngördü and Kahraman 2021: 387). In addition, especially the affordability of housing has determined their settlement patterns, which distributes them across neighbourhoods rather than concentrating them in specific streets. As a result, the municipalities of Konak and Karabağlar together house nearly 70% of Izmir's Syrian refugees (Betts, Memişoğlu, and Ali 2020: 505). According to Güngördü and Kahraman, it is also the more conservative "religious way of life" (2021: 404) of these neighbourhoods that moreover attracted the Syrian refugees to settle there:

> As three elderly Syrian respondents stated, the existence of a (Turkish) Islamic community in which the members often gather and go to mosques and read the Qur'an collectively was the main reason behind their settlement in Yunusemre [a neighbourhood in Karabağlar]. Due to the existence of the religious community, the respondents also emphasized that there were no pubs, bars or any other form of commercial activities that challenged the Islamic way of life, especially for the youth. (Güngördü and Kahraman 2021: 404)

With regard to their relation to the people of Izmir, Yıldız and Uzgören (2016: 203-4) state that many of the Syrian refugees find them to be "hospitable", "helpful", and "friendly", much more so than in the ethnically predominantly Kurdish and Arab as well as religiously much more conservative city of Şanlıurfa near the Syrian border where many of them first entered Turkey. However, the authors also underline the Syrians' problem of connecting to the locals in Izmir due to their lack of Turkish language skills. Many of them also put to the researchers that they "would prefer to stay in Turkey rather than go to Europe due to the cultural and religious similarities between the two countries" (Yıldız and Uzgören 2016: 205).

Previous research on the local Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees meanwhile paints a very different picture. Yıldız and Uzgören find them to express a general "social acceptance towards Syrians on humanitarian grounds" (2016: 205), but also stress that "most said that they had no direct contact with Syrians" (ibid). Where Syrian refugees were not seen as job competitors due to their low education, they were said to be tolerated, as long as they would not receive more benefits than Turkish citizens and "adapt to the social order" (ibid). What many verbalised, however, is an anger at the Turkish government for not having "developed a plan" (ibid) before receiving the refugees. What must be kept in mind here is that

their study was conducted in 2014, only three years after the first arrival of the Syrian refugees, when their number was still relatively low.

Later research such as the study by Ayvazoğlu and Kunuroğlu on Syrian and Turkish university students in Izmir finds that in particular "religiosity was a major boundary marker although the two groups share the same religion" (2019: 425), next to cleavages arising from the language barrier. In this context, many Syrian students were stating a "strong preference for Istanbul [rather than Izmir] due to perceived cultural similarity to their culture of origin, similar religious practices and perceived positive attitudes of its natives toward foreigners" (Ayvazoğlu and Kunuroğlu 2019: 433). For the same reasons, the interviewees also "identified with and felt accepted by the Anatolian culture […] as opposed to the culture of Izmir" (ibid). Regarding Izmir, in contrast, the Syrian interviewees "reported that they expected religious and ethnic discrimination [due to] a diverging interpretation of Islam" (Ayvazoğlu and Kunuroğlu 2019: 434), particularly regarding alcohol. This made them dislike Izmir and believe that *"[e]specially in Izmir, Turks did not accept Syrians very much"* (ibid, my italics).

Indeed, also at the level of local governance, Betts, Memişoğlu, and Ali find that "refugees have not been a priority on the municipality's policy agenda" (2020: 505). As a reason, they identified "political grounds" (ibid), giving the example of a local NGO worker who said that "the most common narrative you hear is that 'Syrians are here because of AKP's wrong policies'" (ibid). This *theme of the political meaning of the Syrian refugees' presence and the impact it has on boundary making vis-à-vis them* comes out even more pronouncedly in the study by Saraçoğlu and Bélanger (2019). On the basis of 78 in-depth interviews with various Turkish residents of Izmir in different locations across town, they argue that people's "anti-Syrian sentiments reflect political concerns and anxieties that *precede and go beyond* the social effects of Syrian immigration" (Saraçoğlu and Bélanger 2019: 378, my emphasis). In the case of those attached to Kemalism and secularism, they suggest that they view the presence of the Syrians – with their more religiously conservative codes and their Arabic language – as *an element of the general "creeping Islamicization" (ibid) of Turkey and the loss of its Republican identity under the AKP government.*

As an example of this view, they cite a group of politically engaged middle- and upper-middle-class women they interviewed. In contrast, in the case of Izmir's Kurdish migrant population, they cite an activist who stated about his community: "We derive empathy from *our own experiences*. [...] We know that we are best suited to understand their hard conditions. So we have to show this empathy as a human obligation" (ibid: 376-7, my emphasis), referring to the forced displacement of many Kurds by the armed conflict in their home region and the

discrimination they faced in other places in Turkey due to their ethnic identity. However, other Kurdish participants they interviewed stated that, precisely because of their own position as 'socio-economic underdogs' in Turkey who just about got by economically, they regarded, in particular, the Arab Syrian refugees as "parasites" and "fundamentalists" (ibid: 376), creating in them an "anxiety about losing their 'place' as they knew it" (ibid).

What all three cases have in common is that their view on the Syrian refugees is an extension of their previously already ongoing struggle with Turkish society in general. Overall, Saraçoğlu and Bélanger thus find that "many interviewees projected their *pre-existing anxieties* pertaining to the loss of 'national cohesion' on to the presence of Syrians in Turkey" (2019: 380, my italics). From this, they arrive at their conclusion that

> The reason for [the interviewees'] *perception of threat* cannot be reduced to the unprecedented scale and abruptness of the Syrian influx. It is also related to the political instrumentalization of Syrian refugees by the government and opposition parties alike in their fierce and *longstanding hegemonic struggle to define the boundaries and symbolic content of the Turkish nation*. [...] [As a result,] the Syrian refugee issue in Turkey has become *one of the battlefields* on which two historically conflicting conceptions of nation [i.e. Kemalism and Islamism] collide. (Saraçoğlu and Bélanger 2019: 381-2, my emphases)

As I shall show at the end of the following analysis of my interview data from Izmir – and more generally over the course of this thesis – my own findings support this claim.

2. Boundary Making vis-à-vis Syrian Refugees in Izmir

2.1 The Making of Social Boundaries: Contact, Customs, and Class

One major factor forming the social boundaries between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees in Izmir is their spatial segregation, which is a common element of social boundary making (Lamont and Molnár 2002). According to the majority of interviewed muhtars, the Syrian refugees had predominantly settled where they could find affordable housing. This meant that inhabitants of more expensive neighbourhoods were exposed to fewer and wealthier Syrians than inhabitants of socially more disadvantaged areas where the Syrian refugees sometimes even outnumbered the Turkish citizens. Still, as the Syrians would move around town, also the residents of privileged neighbourhoods were not isolated from them, even if there were less points of direct contact. Another major obstacle that stood in the way of much social interaction according to the muhtars was the scarce Turkish language skills of many Syrians' that did not allow for conversation, which echoes prior research on the Syrian refugees (Karasapan 2019). But even where the Syrians' Turkish was sufficient or locals spoke Kurdish or Arabic,

interaction was reported to be fairly limited in many cases. One stated reason for this was that the Syrians allegedly stayed among themselves and did not show any interest in interacting:

> Now, there's this: They're a bit closed, attached to one another. A refugee doesn't do grocery shopping at a Turkish shop. You're German, you go to a Turk's shop and do your shopping there, don't you? They don't. No matter what, they go to a Syrian shop. But we already know this. We know why. The [Turkish] shopkeeper doesn't look at them with benevolence. If he did, the Syrians would shop there. Frustrated by this, the Syrians will spend their money at a shop of their own [*kendi bakkalına*]. (i8, male, junior, working-class, Kurdish)

What crystallises here is a rigid social boundary based on very limited social interaction, which is in line with Erdoğan (2021, 2022), who finds little social interaction between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees across Turkey. Although in this case, Syrian refugees and Turkish citizens not only share the same physical space but partly also the same language (Kurdish), they choose to frequent different commercial venues and not to mingle. While it is unclear whether the cited muhtar's beliefs about the reasons behind the Syrians' behaviour are correct, it is noteworthy that he attributes a significant causal role to the local Turkish citizens' attitude towards them.

Although most muhtars said that the Syrians present were spread across their neighbourhood and did not cluster in particular streets, most actual contact with one another was limited to brief interactions ("We say 'Hello' or 'Peace be upon you' to each other.") in apartment buildings, hospitals, or on the street. Longer conversations or friendship were in many instances said to be rare. As the following vignette exposes, insufficient language skills were not the only reason for that:

> *Are there any conversations between locals and Syrians?*
>
> Look, in this neighbourhood, there is no intimacy between them. They [the Syrians] do not converse with other people. They gather among themselves.
>
> *What do you think why there's no correspondence?*
>
> We have different customs. We don't get along with each other. They think more religiously. That's why they don't allow women in their surroundings. They get married at an early age. Our things don't match.
>
> *There's no friendship or anything like that?*
>
> No friendship at all.
>
> *Did they learn Turkish?*
>
> 80 per cent [of them] know [Turkish]. The first [Syrian] immigrants came here eight to nine years ago; by now they have learnt it and know it quite well. (i33, male, senior, working-class, *göçmen* – born in the Balkans)

Quotes such as this one give evidence of another social boundary based on said-to-be differing ways of religious practice. In the reading of this muhtar, social contact did not happen between Syrian refugees and Turkish citizens because their men did not want women around them. Interestingly, in his narrative, this meant that Syrian refugees and Turkish citizens of the same gender would not socialise either. What is more, while Çetin (2019) found religiously practising Syrian refugees in Turkey to perceive themselves as more integrated than less practising ones, in the case of Izmir, the Syrian refugees' religious practise distances rather than unites locals and migrants, as previously found by Ayvazoğlu and Kunuroğlu (2019). Asked if the mosque did not provide a place for social contact, many interviewees responded that either themselves or the Syrian refugees did not go to mosque much. Paradoxically, this resulted in simultaneous descriptions of the Syrian refugees as *too religious* in some ways and *too non-religious* in other ways for social contact with Turkish citizens to come about.

> We have a mosque, but I have not seen any Syrians coming to the mosque. We can't say that religious feelings are very strong among the Syrians as they are [elsewhere] in the world.
> (i17, male, senior, middle-class)

While some of these social boundaries can thus be traced back to different customs that preclude interaction in a practical sense (if people simply 'cannot' meet because of a rule or do not meet because they don't leave the house, a social boundary naturally arises), another social boundary that emerged from the data was based on Turkish citizens' deliberate avoidance of the Syrian refugees. This avoidance was justified with the fact that they were seen as competitors on the labour and housing market, or with character traits attributed to the Syrians, such as a "lack of honesty" ("*dürüstlüğünü görmüyorum*") or that one could not trust in them ("*güven yok*"). These were central themes that shone through in many of the interviews, in particular, where physical proximity was higher. These themes also point at the presence of symbolic boundaries, structuring the Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees and the way they would behave towards them. As Lamont (1992) has noted, *moral attributions*, as can be seen here, are a core element of symbolic boundary making and defining collective identity. The next section shall explore these in more detail.

Finally, another core social boundary separating Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees was socioeconomic, resulting from different labour activities. As many interviewees described, a high number of young Syrian refugees were running small shops, working low-paid informal jobs in the factories, or collecting scrap, which kept them in places where many Turkish citizens no longer worked and gave them a reputation as social outcast and profiteers of social benefits.

As Şimşek (2018a, 2021) has already argued, at the level of Turkish citizens' *social* boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, it really is the Syrians' social class that determines Turks' relation to them, with better-off Syrians being able to build "social bridges" to Turkish citizens. Indeed, the refugees' social class was a frequent theme in the data that was said to matter more than shared religion, as it was considered to be an indicator of their social conduct and of their economic impact on the country.

> *What do you feel when you hear the phrase "We are brothers and sisters in faith."?*
>
> [Muhtar:] There is no such thing. I don't feel anything.
>
> [Bystander – male, senior, middle-class:] We get angry. Of course we don't want them. Their level of culture is very low. The cultured Syrians have all gone to Europe. In our country, the wretched, poor, uneducated, and ignorant ones remained. Like those called gypsies, those that have a low level of culture and couldn't get any papers, they're all here.
>
> (i13, male, senior, middle-class, self-identified Kemalist)

As in this vignette, many lamented the presence of the impoverished Syrian refugees as a sign of Turkey's developmental demise. Instead of catching up with Europe, it was allegedly going backwards. To further illustrate this point, some even referred to 'the Turks' living in Germany, many of whom or whose ancestors had come as low-skilled workers, suggesting that they, too, were an example of the problems that arose in a society if the immigrants it received were of a low social class: just like the religiously conservative and uneducated Turkish labour migrants had allegedly failed to integrate in Germany, so were the Syrian refugees now in Turkey.

2.2 The Crossing of Social Boundaries: Waiting, Wedlock, Work, and Women

The example of the Turks in Germany was not always an argument for why the Syrian refugees could never integrate with the Turkish citizens, however.[26] In contrast to the negative outlook above, in some of the interviews, their example was also used to suggest that all it might take to reach more social integration between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees was *to wait*.

> In the 60s, Germany asked for labour from Turkey. Just like Germans and Turks live under the same roof now, so do we here. [...] At first, the Germans looked down on the Turks. But now my nephew is married to a German girl. People get used to each other. [...] How many years have the Syrians been in Turkey now? You get used to them.
> (i36, male, senior, working-class, self-identified Kemalist)

---

[26] In a recent analysis, also Kaya (2024) finds that many Turkish citizens liken the Syrian refugees in Turkey to the experiences of Turkish emigrants in Europe. Kaya suggests that this may have created more empathy towards the Syrians among Turks with labour migrant relatives in Europe, whereas the opposite may be the case for those Turkish citizens – including many of the 'new' high-skilled Turkish migrants in Europe (Yanaşmayan 2016) – that feel culturally or politically different from these often conservative first Turkish labour migrants.

As the vignette furthermore suggests, waiting and getting used to each other could eventually also lead to another way of crossing the social boundaries, which is marital relations. Indeed, despite these various social boundaries and the rarity of friendship, what occasionally occurred was marriage. As some interviewees reported, this mostly was the outcome of young people meeting at school, where Syrian refugees spoke better Turkish and more social interaction was said to take place, or of elder men taking on a new (or additional) Syrian wife. Strikingly, despite the rigid social boundaries at friendship level, several (mostly male) Turkish citizens would marry with (mostly female) Syrian refugees. Most of the time, marriage was said to happen with Turkish citizens from the southeast, whose ethnic identity is predominantly Kurdish or Arab. People in the neighbourhood were said to accept this because either the romantic relationship was considered a quality seal for the respective refugee; or because, if the Syrian spouse was female, she would be considered to be 'submitting to Turkish culture'; or because the Syrian's Muslim identity was considered sufficient to receive social approval.

> *Do Syrians and Turks get married?*
>
> People from Mardin, they get married [with them]. Turks rather not. But boys and girls go to school, then they meet; there's no problem, they marry.
>
> *What do people think about this?*
>
> There's no bad thinking. As they're Muslim, it's not considered a problem.
> (i10, male, senior, working-class, *from the Aegean coast*)

To fully understand this quote, it is important to recall the ambiguity of Turkish identity, which in everyday language in Turkey is used both in a civic sense, referring to Turkish citizens, and in an ethnic sense, referring to some ambiguously defined ethnic Turkish identity, as described in Chapter Two. While the question was posed about Turks in a civic sense, the respondent in his answer makes a difference between ethnically Kurdish or Arab Turkish citizens from the southeast and 'ethnic Turks'. What this data also shows is that popular operationalisations of social boundaries as being particularly blurry when marriage occurs between different groups (cf. Muttarak and Heath (2010), for example), are questionable, since here, marital relations signify an individual's crossing of a boundary rather than a change of the boundary itself. As Barth (1969) already argued, such phenomena show that boundaries can be crossed and yet persist. To be sure, this is also related to the fact that it is mostly male Turkish citizens marrying female Syrian refugees, which does not necessarily mean that the Turkish men thereafter feel related to the Syrian woman's original family. In any case, the findings from this data on the social significance of inter-group marriage for boundary change

are thus more in line with classical alliance theory (Lévi-Strauss 1949), arguing that marriage is the beginning of boundary change rather than its peak, as which it is often operationalised. This meaning of marriage should be kept in mind in future quantitative assessments of social relations between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees.

That said, the potential initiation of a boundary change through marriage did also incite disapproval among some Turkish citizens, who feared that if the boundary was to be blurred, so would their "culture".

> *Do people have conversations? Are there any friendships?*
>
> Not a lot.
>
> *Why is that, do you think?*
>
> The reason for that is culture. For example, a lot of men I know have a Syrian lover now. Why? According to our women, the state's laws allow *one* marriage. In Syrian law, four marriages [are okay]. One man can bring [home] four women! […] This makes me feel terrible. They're leading us into evil. (i12, male, middle-aged, working-class, Kurdish)

Besides marriage, other factors that would blur the boundaries were economically mutually beneficial relations, such as when Syrian refugees were Turkish citizens' employees, customers, or tenants. But also relationships as co-workers were said to have such an effect. Moreover, especially children at school, where they were learning Turkish, were said to be driving social mixing, so that the respective Syrian families ended up being seen just as socially integrated as Turkish citizens ("*Türk kadar onlar da kaynaştılar, muhabbet ediyorlar, evlerini veriyorlar kiraya*", i8). In cases where some of these contact-enhancing factors were present, even the number of Syrian refugees in a neighbourhood did not seem to matter.

> Look, there are 50 [Syrian] households in my neighbourhood. Five people each. There must be 500 [Syrian] people in my neighbourhood now [*sic*]. Think about it! They all work. The heads of family work, they pay rent, they can pay the rent. They can provide for their house. I have never heard of a Syrian not paying the rent for their house. Everyone pays the rent and lives in their house. I haven't heard of any fight and brawl. […] They all speak Turkish. The children learn and study Turkish. I mean, people in my neighbourhood got used to them. (i5, male, senior, working-class)

Furthermore, knowing Kurdish or Arabic also largely facilitated social contact and thus blurred boundaries, as did sharing the same gender, according to some of the female muhtars. The latter partly reported socialising with Syrian refugee women over coffee and tea, however, the Syrians' husbands were said to often be opposed to that out fear that the Turkish women could "change the minds" of their wives ("*kafasına başka şeyler sokar*"). Meanwhile, as one female muhtar stressed, she would inform the Syrian women that domestic violence was

prohibited in Turkey and "tell them that if 'this' happened again, [she] would do what was required" (i26, female, middle-aged, working-class). This suggests that, in some instances, gender identity and female solidarity could blur the social boundaries between Syrian refugees and Turkish citizens. In these cases of more positive relations, Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees were also reported to buy food from each other's shops because they did "not consider the other a stranger" ("*onu yabancı görmüyorum yani*"). However, these blurred boundaries could also suddenly become very solid again, as one interviewee astutely explained:

> People get along as long as there's no argument. But as soon as there is, everyone regroups as Syrians and as Turks, ready to fight. It's *like an invisible wall* that materialises in moments of conflict. (Bystander (i37), male, middle-aged, working-class, Kurdish; my emphasis).

All this points to the relevance of symbolic boundaries being at work here. And it suggests that, while in some cases, blurring social boundaries may lead to blurring symbolic boundaries, too, in other cases, the symbolic boundaries remain resistant to change, no matter what. This does suggest that Turkish citizens' symbolic boundary making may also be driven by other factors than their personal experiences with the Syrian refugees. The next section shall look into this.

2.3 The Making of Symbolic Boundaries: Moral Distinctions

Across the data, various codes emerged indicating the presence of rigid symbolic boundaries between Izmir's Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees. As Lamont (1992) describes in her theoretical groundwork, symbolic boundaries often are expressed as *moral differences* between groups. This also came out here. Many muhtars viewed the Syrian refugees as morally deficient due to various characteristics that were said to crucially distinguish them from Turkish citizens. Among these were items that portrayed them as a burden on their surroundings, such as that they were "badly raised", "inconsiderate", and "disrespectful towards their environment" as well as "loud", "dirty", and "indecent". In general, they were considered to be "bringing many social problems". Moreover, the descriptions of the Syrian refugees by Izmir's muhtars also included items that ascribed criminal activities to them, such as theft and drug consumption, and items that blamed them on a character level, such as that they were "lazy" and "careless about their future", "ungrateful towards the Turks", "traitors" of their homeland as well as of the Ottoman Empire and other people in general, and, finally and most dominantly, they were seen as "having a nice life" in Turkey, "sitting on the beach and smoking waterpipe", while Turkish soldiers were allegedly fighting and dying for them in Syria. As detailed in Chapter Two, the depiction of the Syrian refugees as "traitors" also has its roots in pre-existing negative

stereotypes of Arab identity in Turkey, stemming from the Arab Revolt in 1916 and the subsequent demise of the Ottoman Empire. It is a theme that appears in much research on Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees. As Carpi and Şenoğuz write, for example: "such [historical] accounts shape local 'mental maps' [in people's minds] in line with Turkish nation-building [and, as a result,] the social boundaries between local residents and refugees are reinforced along these [mental] maps" (2019: 136-7).

Furthermore, some interviewees even went so far to dehumanise them: "they eat animal food" (i31, male, middle-aged, middle-class, *göçmen*) or "they're like cannibals, like monkeys" (i22, male, junior, working-class, Kurdish). Finally, several muhtars added that the male Syrians were also "uncivilised" with regard to women and female dress, staring at them and occasionally even harassing them: "I feel bad and cheap when they look at me" (i4, female, middle-aged, working-class, *göçmen*). In the view of Izmir's muhtars, moral deficiencies such as these marked the fundamental difference between Turkish citizens and the Syrian refugees.

> *What do people here think how [the Syrians] are?*
>
> [Bystander – male, junior, working-class:] They're like cannibals, like monkeys.
>
> No, it's not like that. But they take whatever they find, they steal.
>
> [Bystander – male, junior, working-class:] They steal, they goggle at women.
>
> Their men, for example, are immoral; they beat girls, they are disrespectful, they goggle at them.
>
> [Bystander – male, junior, working-class:] We couldn't possibly tell you what kind of morals they have…
>
> *What do you mean by morals?*
>
> Morality is showing good behaviour. And if one doesn't, they're immoral. For example, the black people [i.e., foreign migrants in Izmir] never goggle at a woman, but the Syrians stare at women passing by like thiiiiiis!
>
> *So, the problem is not the sort of morals, but the lack of morals?*
>
> For example, they throw rubbish on the ground. We are not like that. We are like Europe; we throw it in the bin. Cleanliness comes from faith [*Temizlik imandan geliyor*]. Those who are not clean, have weak faith. Our religion commands cleanliness. If you are not clean, you do not understand anything about religion. Among the Syrians, there are both immoral and moral ones. But they have many children, some have ten children! (i22, male, junior, working-class, Kurdish)

Quotes like the above give insight into how these moral distinctions between Turkish citizens and the Syrian refugees are constructed here. The vignette pictures in particular the Syrian men as morally inferior to Turkish citizens because of their "improper" behaviour and justifies the Turkish citizens' moral superiority with two reasons at once: their likeness to Europeans and

their proper understanding of Islam. What is remarkable about this is that this quote shows how the distinction neither follows a classic Orientalist logic, juxtaposing allegedly civilised and morally superior Europe with an allegedly uncivilised and savage Orient (see Said 1978), nor an Islamist logic, accusing Muslims not practising a conservative reading of their religion of indecency and loss of values (see Roy 2010). Rather, it is both at the same time. Moreover, the quote also reveals how the attribute of "cleanliness" is not just about physical hygiene but about the moral value of social behaviour as well and thus becomes highly racialised in this context. This way, just like in Europe (Chin 2010; Jonsson 2016), the interviewees use the advocacy of gender equality to legitimise their racism against immigrants. Finally, just like with Izmir's Kurds in the past, the Syrians' fertility was another racialised theme in many of the interviews.

> [Muhtar:] I think they're very sex-crazed.
>
> [Bystander – female, middle-aged, working-class:] They say it when we talk among women: It's because our husbands love to have children. Pregnancy is an expression of being a strong man for them. It means they're so strong, so powerful.
>
> [Muhtar:] They have a higher need for sex. And they don't know how to use protection. They don't want to. (i3, male, middle-aged, working-class)

While here, it is described as archaic and as a sign of the Syrian refugees' almost animalistic 'cultural backwardness', in many other contexts, this high fertility was moreover said to represent a demographic threat to the ethno-religious composition of the country and Turkish citizens' sovereignty. This can be summarised by the data code "The Syrians are taking over". This theme, too, is reminiscent of similar discourses in Europe, as detailed in Chapter Two, and of the other 'demographic fears' of many Turks regarding Turkey's Kurds, as seen above. Just like in Europe, it has also been politically mobilised in Turkey in campaigns of the new anti-immigrant Victory Party (*Zafer Partisi*), founded in August 2021, or the online film series *Silent Occupation* by journalist Hande Karacasu, which attracted almost five million views within two months after its release in May 2022 (Karacasu 2022).

Moreover, the theme of the Syrians' 'cultural backwardness' was often contrasted with Izmir's claim to "modernness", including ways of socialising or dressing.

> [Muhtar:] They sit outside their house. They spread rugs, sit on the floor, and are happy. We are not like that. Oh, we sit on the balcony! [Or] we take a chair to sit in front of the door. These are all examples. The way they dress doesn't match [us] in any way. Our cultures do not match at all. We are brothers in faith, true, but our cultures are different.
>
> *Turks are more...?*
>
> [Muhtar:] Modern!

[Bystander – female, young, working-class:] In any case, they're not clean.

(i26, female, middle-aged, working-class)

What becomes apparent in this extract is how "modernness" is invoked to justify why despite predominantly sharing the same religion, Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees were crucially different from each other in how they lived, with the Turks' way of life being described as a culturally "more developed" way of living Islam. What is more, the trope of cleanliness is evoked here, too, however, in this case, its meaning is not linked to ideas about proper religious practise but to a conception of (secular) "civilised" behaviour. Finally, what also crystalises in this vignette is the connection between conceptions of civilised behaviour and material means, as sitting on the balcony or on chairs is only possible if these are available, which for many Syrian refugees in Turkey may actually not be the case.

Comparing the two preceding quotes, two insights become apparent: First, different muhtars point at different symbolic boundaries based on their respective conception of what Turkish national identity is all about. And second, despite these differences in how Turkish identity and its respective symbolic boundaries are constructed, they overwhelmingly arrive at the same conclusion that the Syrian refugees are 'very different' from Turkish citizens. Interestingly, when asked what being a Turk meant, the presented definitions were very different, which reflects the core of the boundary approach as laid out by Barth (1969) that it is the boundaries that define groups and not the actual "stuff" they enclose. Differently put, although the participants' ideas of what it meant to be a Turk were so diverse, most of them agreed that the Syrian refugees could not be included in it, even if they were made citizens. What underlines this point is that Izmir's inhabitants of Kurdish and Arab ethnicity were not viewed as 'real Turks' in some contexts, but when compared to the Syrians, their Turkishness was said to be obvious. This also shows how the floating concept of Turkish national identity that fluctuates between ethnic, racial, and religious definitions on the one hand, and civic and cultural ones on the other, makes the Syrian refugees' inclusion inside Turkish society's symbolic boundaries particularly difficult. Unsurprisingly, the more ethnic Turkish national identity was conceived of, the less it was said to be possible that Syrians could become Turks. However, as the different codes from the data presented above make clear: irrespective of the interviewees' own religious and ethnic identity, it was the widely shared moral attributions to Turkishness that justified the exclusionary symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrians.

One of these moral attributes that was very frequently named across different religious and ethnic but also class and gender identities is the data theme "We [Turks] don't run away"

("*Bizde kaçmak yok*"). The symbolic boundary thereby created consists in the belief that Turkish citizens would never leave their homeland behind in the face of war, but defend it, which was said to distinguish them from the Syrians refugees, who allegedly had "run away" and therefore were morally inferior to Turkish citizens. Some of the interviewees also linked this allegation of cowardice against the Syrian refugees to their conception of Islam as calling upon Muslims to fight rather than flee, suggesting that the Syrian refugees had acted against the precepts of Islam and, therefore, religious brotherhood with them was impossible.

> You must have studied [Islamic] history. The battle of Uhud, the battle of Badr. Have you ever heard of leaving the battlefield without instructions? Is it written in the book [Qur'an], is it said that Muslims left the battlefield? They did not run away while fighting. Those [the Syrians] fled! How can we be brothers? It's over! (i6, male, junior, working-class, Kurdish)

What this quote also suggests is that Turkish citizens were not only as such morally superior to the Syrian refugees, but moreover 'better Muslims' than them. The linkage between moral superiority and national identity moreover shows how much ideas of 'morality' and 'culture' were ways for the interviewees to express their racism against the Syrian refugees, which is in fact a common way to do so (Goldberg 1992; Lentin 2005; Kaya, Robert, and Tecmen 2020). Building on this, another central driver of the symbolic boundary making was nationalism.

2.4 The Making of Symbolic Boundaries: Nationalism

Across the data, the Syrians' moral deficiencies were often traced back to their 'Arabness'. This Arabness – in conjunction with the argument that the Syrians had not enjoyed democracy and that the position of women was low in their home country – was invoked as an explanation for their alleged 'cultural backwardness', disrespectful behaviour towards women, and physical and moral "dirtiness". Based on this racialisation, the symbolic boundary between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees was not only deemed to be moral but also "civilisational". As seen in Chapter Two, this reframing of racialised nationalism as racialised *civilisationism* is also very present in the EU (Lentin 2005; Brubaker 2017). Thus, despite Turkish society being mostly Sunni Muslim like the Syrian refugees, many of the culturalist anti-refugee tropes mentioned here are actually very similar to those existing in the EU, as the next vignette shows.

> Of course, we are afraid. For the ethnic structure will change. Because there are people who marry Syrians. […] Every newcomer must adapt to and comply with the host society. The same applies to our citizens. If our citizens go to the Netherlands or England, they should adapt to that society. They should live like them. They should not act in a way that disrupts the social structure of that place. They [the Syrians] are trying to maintain their lives here as they lived there [in Syria]. And when they look different, they face reactions. Our religious beliefs are of course strong because they are Muslims, too. Some people are afraid of this,

> of Arabisation. Because in the past, such black niqab and covering did not exist in Turkish traditions and customs. Turks, Turkish descendants do not dress like that. There is no such veil, covering everything [in Turkey]. These were all imposed on Turks from outside under the name of Arab culture and Islam. (i14, female, middle-aged, middle-class)

This type of rhetoric against Arabs and conservative Islam may, in fact, be even more pronounced in some parts of Turkey than in the EU precisely because the majority is Muslim itself and the critics may feel a need for distinction from these 'other Muslims' on the one hand but also more entitled to criticise Muslims on the other. In this context, the trope of religious brotherhood with the Syrian refugees, which had often been used by President Erdoğan to shift the boundaries of Turkish society towards more inclusivity, was largely rejected in many of the interviews. While this may be less surprising as such, given Izmir's outspokenly Kemalist and thus secular and nationalist image, what is noteworthy are the narratives through which this was done. Some interviewees stated that religious brotherhood simply did not exist, that it did not mean much to them, or that it was "just a political phrase". Another argument for why Muslim brotherhood with the Syrian refugees was impossible was that the Syrian refugees were "living better than the Turks" and that being Turkish came before being Muslim.

Others, in contrast, did not want to deny it but argued that, while religious brotherhood might exist, what really mattered for accepting foreigners into one's society was "humanity". This meant that accepting a refugee depended on their behaviour as an individual and not on their identity or that of the receiving society. Notably, this seemingly liberal approach was then used to explain why the Syrian refugees could not be regarded as 'brothers and sisters' since their behaviour was in many ways said to be objectionable. Some interviewees moreover stressed that they were afraid of the Syrian refugees exactly because they were Muslims, too, since they themselves did not practise all of Islam's tenets but considered this to be in line with Islam's fundamental principles, whereas they feared that the Syrian refugees around them – like Turkish religious conservatives or Turkey's Islamist government – could pressure them into orthodoxy.

> There's no compulsion in religion. There's no such thing as "A woman won't be in paradise because she doesn't cover herself". Islam is about intention. If I look at you with a bad eye, it's my bad intention. (Husband of i9, female, middle-aged, working-class, *göçmen*)

In this vein, another prevalent theme in the interviews was that, although both Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees were predominantly Sunni Muslims, a religious brotherhood could not exist between the two because *Turkish Islam* was more "modern" and more "civilised".

While these terms already came up in the descriptions of the people of Izmir overall, this narrative shows that many people in Izmir do not consider themselves more "modern" simply because they are less religious, but because their way of being religious is more "modern", too.

> [Bystander – male, senior:] […] We receive money from Europe to look after the Syrians. There is no religious brotherhood with them. We are Turks and they are Arabs.
>
> [Muhtar:] Arabs practise Islam differently; we practise it differently.
>
> (i33, male, senior, working-class, *göçmen* – born in the Balkans)

This kind of narrative links back to wider debates on national differences in the practise of Islam versus its supposed universality across nations (Ramadan 1998; Roy 2010). In Turkey, depictions of local Islam as being 'more European' and thus superior in a civilisational sense to other forms of Islam constitute a symbolic boundary vis-à-vis particularly Arab Muslims (Bayraklı, Hafez, and Faytre 2019). This phenomenon is also known from the Western Balkans (Bougarel 2007). In this view, supposedly national differences overrule the shared religion.

2.5 The Contesting of Symbolic Boundaries: Turkey's National Identity Conflict

As a final finding, the analysis of the data revealed that in several of the interviews, a difference was made between *the Syrian refugees as people* and *what the Syrian refugees represented*. Their image as being mostly religiously conservative was often mentioned in the data as a threat to the Izmirians' secular and liberal way of life. However, the threat was not said to arise from the people themselves but from its link to domestic Turkish politics. A few devotedly Kemalist interviewees stated that, while some of their Syrian neighbours were okay to have around, what drew a rigid symbolic boundary between them was the fact that one had to fear that they were "on the other side" of Turkey's battle over its identity and outlook. As one of them put it: "A person cannot change you or impose anything on you, but political power can" (i25, female, middle-aged, middle-class).

This parallels the key point made earlier by Saraçoğlu and Bélanger (2019) about the Syrian refugee issue having become a new "battlefield" on which Kemalist and Islamist ideology "collide" in expressing their views on "the boundaries and symbolic content" of the Turkish nation *through* their views on the Syrian refugees. As Kaya has argued more recently, it is "the civilizational frame used by the AKP in the treatment of Syrian refugees" (2024: 232) that secular ethnic Turks oppose by excluding the Syrians themselves. Also in the view of the Middle East Eye's Turkey bureau chief, Ragıp Soylu, posing the question '*Is Kemalism back?*'

in an article on 11 September 2024, many secular ethnic Turks see the issue of the Syrian refugees as just one part of a series of Islamcising policies by the AKP-led central government, which results in a "nostalgia for 90's Kemalism and secularist lifestyle" just as much as it results in a "focus on ejecting the more than four million Syrians" (Soylu 2024: n.p.). To recall, "the Syrians' presence in Turkey has also gone in parallel with the neo-Ottomanist aspirations of the AKP rule in both foreign and domestic politics" (Kaya 2024: 235). As a result, it is secular ethnic Turks' struggle to preserve a Kemalist and unitary Turkey against the aspirations of religiously conservative Turkish citizens or such that do not identify as Turks in an ethnic sense that fuel their exclusionary *symbolic* boundaries towards the Syrian refugees. This also explains the discrepancy between their self-description as cosmopolitan, tolerant, and open towards everyone and their exclusionary boundary making towards the Syrian refugees: *fending off the Syrian refugees is conceptualised as part of fending off rival conceptions of Turkish national identity that are seen as a threat to precisely this idea of liberalism of theirs.*

Such a 'limited' conception of cosmopolitanism, as it were, is, in fact, not uncommon in Turkey, where it has typically been a somewhat "elitist phenomenon" in the sense that people would associate being cosmopolitan with middle- and upper-class culture rather than with the sheer existence of multiculturalism (Maessen 2022). As a result, the Izmirians' conception of cosmopolitanism is not inclusive of the Syrian refugees, but rather, it is intruded by them and, hence, in need of defence. As the sections above have shown, Izmir's cosmopolitanism is a 'cosmopolitanism among middle-class modernists'. It is this type of cosmopolitanism that the secular ethnic Turks seek to protect – against the Turkish government and the Syrian refugees.

In contrast, as several of the Kurdish migrant interviewees suggested, their ethnic peers felt closer to the Syrian refugees because they themselves had been displaced by war or discriminated against by Turkish society, which echoes the earlier findings by Saraçoğlu and Bélanger (2019). As such, they likened the rejection that the Syrian refugees were experiencing to their own experiences of rejection and, therefore, said to be more inclusive towards them.

> [Conversations between locals and Syrian refugees] happen in areas where Kurds are concentrated. They can empathise with these people because they have been through such a process themselves. They also fled war and came here. Just as we have suffered poverty, destitution, wretchedness, and hunger here, so do they. Why should I make them go through what I went through? People here understand them more. […] [In contrast,] There are the nationalists, some are racist: they don't like Syrians and they don't like Kurds either. [...] They despise them, they despise them as a race, and they don't like them because the government brought them here. These people are supposedly harming their way of life.
>
> *They don't like them because the government brought them?*

> Yes, that's why they oppose them: they reject them in order to attribute this situation to the government. If the opposition had brought them, they would not be so hostile [towards the Syrians]. But they do this just because they don't like the government.
>
> (i20, male, senior, working-class, Kurdish, leftist)

As this quote suggests, what may look like varying social boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrians may in fact be varying political positions in Turkey's internal struggle over its national identity. That is to say, while the hosting of almost four million Syrian refugees naturally entails various social and economic challenges that cause frustration and resentment among Turkish citizens, these challenges were mentioned by Izmirians of all religious and ethnic identities. What did vary, though, were the general views on Turkish national identity from which the interviewees would derive the type of symbolic boundary they would draw vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. Although all Turkish citizens may either experience similar problems with the Syrian refugees or build friendly relations with them, they seem to take different positions on the Syrian refugee issue to express their views on the meaning of Turkish identity more generally. This, in turn, suggests that what underlies the variation in symbolic boundary making is less about varying relations to the Syrian refugees themselves than it is about varying relations to Turkish society. The role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities would thus follow from Turkey's national identity contestation. Over the following chapters, this clue shall be explored more.

Conclusion

Many of my interviewees in Izmir took pride in the city's allegedly cosmopolitan heritage and Kemalist reputation. For them, it signified a vision of Turkish national identity marked by a modernist and allegedly liberal lifestyle as well as a strong sense of nationalism. As has become clear throughout the chapter, all these attributes – "cosmopolitan", "modern" and "liberal" – must be understood in the Turkish context, however. What they do not signify is an open-mindedness towards religiously conservative lifestyles, as they exist in many other places across Turkey. Rather, what they signify is an attitude that is protective of their more secular lifestyles that they consider threatened by Islamic conservatism. Izmir's freedom thus signifies the freedom *from* religious conservatism, less so the freedom *to* conservatism.

This protective attitude is essential to understanding the Izmirians' symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. While denying the Syrian refugees full membership of Turkish society may seem at odds with the Izmirians' concomitant advocacy of liberalism, it is in line, however, with a conception of liberalism as an attribute of Turkish national identity

that is threatened by the government's alleged Islamic transformation of Turkish society, which the Syrian refugees are seen as an extension of. To be 'liberal' and 'cosmopolitan', in Izmir, therefore means to oppose the symbolic inclusion of Syrian refugees, not to support it.

What does that mean? To be sure, as this chapter has shown, too, many Turkish citizens have deep concerns about the labour and housing market as a result of the Syrian refugees' presence in Turkey and are upset about various other social issues linked to the Syrian refugees' poverty, such as criminality, low hygiene, noise, and so forth. But as the data also suggests, where these issues are solved, crossing or blurring the social boundaries becomes possible. The symbolic boundaries drawn vis-à-vis the Syrians, however, remain largely unaffected by this – and thus also the general attitude that the Syrian refugees remain a threat. As one interviewee poignantly put it: It is as if there was "an invisible wall" between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees that instantly becomes tangible in moments of distress.

As the data furthermore shows, this symbolic boundary does not merely exclude Syrian refugees; it has also excluded the ethnically different, poorly educated, and in part religiously conservative working-class Kurdish domestic migrants from Turkey's eastern provinces. Like the Syrian refugees, they were seen as Others to a Kemalist conception of Turkish national identity; a conception that many of my interviewees in Izmir were eager to protect against anything that may challenge it – be that Syrian refugees or other Turkish citizens.

Chapter Five

"But they're not proper Muslims"

Konya

Table of Contents

Chapter Five

"But they're not proper Muslims"
Konya

Introduction

The city of Konya is located in Central Anatolia, the geographical heart of today's Turkey. There, it lies a three-hour drive south of Ankara at the southwestern end of a wide plain north of the Taurus mountains that separate it from the Mediterranean Sea. As a result, it is home to a continental climate with cold winters and hot summers, surrounded by fertile fields that have given rise to an enormous agricultural industry in the region. Next to this, the city has seen steep economic growth in recent years thanks to a booming manufacturing sector, producing automotive parts and heavy machinery. Some have therefore named Konya and its nearby cities the "Anatolian Tigers" (Tok 2008), attesting them a sort of "Islamic Calvinism" (ESI 2005) that they see as a driving force behind their new entrepreneurial success. And indeed, with numerous smaller and larger family businesses populating the city and giving proof to its industriousness, it is also known in Turkey for its religious piety, its social conservatism, and its loyal allegiance to Turkey's Islamist ruling party, the AKP. In fact, according to Işık, Konya is "considered one of the most religiously conservative cities in Turkey" (2008: 527).

But this description needs to be put into perspective. Because in many ways, Konya, today, really is not that different from any petit-bourgeois place one may find across Europe: a major city at the feet of the Anatolian highlands with an abundance of low-rise single-family houses, at once rural idyll and industrial hub, where people build cars and ride their bike, pray to God and maintain their traditions, enjoy nature and value order. Like many other Turkish cities, also Konya has seen a growing influx of Syrian refugees since 2011, with their number being 123,000 at the time of my fieldwork (Mülteci Derneği 2022), next to 1.4 million locals. How do the people of Konya relate to them in comparison with Izmir? And what role does their religious identity play in this? These are the questions this chapter seeks to answer.

As shall be shown, religious identity is both a factor of inclusion *and* exclusion between the local Turkish citizens and the Syrian refugees. Whilst many of the Syrian refugees in Konya have been reported to have moved there exactly because they identified with the city's religious conservatism, my data shows that many of Konya's muhtars and their peers consider the Syrian

refugees to be "improper Muslims" that do not "live Islam", which parallels previous findings in other places (Üstübici 2020; Alakoç, Göksel, and Zarychta 2022). That is because they frame the social problems they experience with the Syrian refugees, often ensuing from the latter's socioeconomic deprivation, as signs of their lacking in Islamic morality. As a result, the religious conservatives of Konya do not reciprocate the Syrians' feeling of proximity but draw a clear symbolic boundary between themselves and the Syrians based on the argument that if the latter are not proper Muslims, there also cannot be religious brotherhood between them. By means of this narrative, the religiously conservative muhtars of Konya and their peers can continue thinking of themselves as good Muslims and accept the idea of religious brotherhood, as propagated by President Erdoğan, but can also justify why this does not apply to the Syrian refugees. Like in Izmir, the social boundaries thus seem to arise from the Syrian refugees' socioeconomic deprivation more than anything else. This may explain why surveys such as Erdoğan (2018b, 2020b, 2021) or Hoffman, Werz, and Halpin (2018) have not found a higher level of identification with the Syrian refugees among Turkey's religiously conservative voters.

Still, these surveys also suggest that religiously conservative Turkish voters are somewhat more inclusive of the Syrians than secularist voters. Indeed, as my data also indicates, the Konyalites' religious identity does seem to motivate *some* of the muhtars to pursue a *symbolic inclusion* of the Syrian refugees, which stands in contrast to Izmir. The reason for this, however, is *not* a feeling of similarity to the Syrian refugees *but* a feeling of dissimilarity from secularist Turks: as those reject the Syrian refugees partly for their religious conservatism, Konya's religious conservatives feel reminded of their own oppression by the Kemalists for the same reason and, therefore, start solidarizing with the Syrian refugees as a reaction and an assertion of their Islamic values that they regard as morally superior. That is to say, while Konya's religious conservatives do not identify with the Syrian refugees themselves much, they do identify with the type of rejection the Syrians receive from more secular Turks and, therefore, *in part*, are symbolically more inclusive of them. Building on the previous chapter, I shall show how differences in Turkish citizens' symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees between Izmir and Konya thus reflect different positions in Turkey's national identity struggle rather than substantively different relations to the Syrian refugees themselves.

To recall, the data for this chapter stems from 32 interviews with exclusively male muhtars (yet several female bystanders) in April 2022 during the month of Ramadan. As the previous one, this chapter is split into two parts, first introducing the local context with regard to the identity of the Konyalites and the situation of the Syrian refugees in Konya, and then analysing the social and symbolic boundaries the former draw vis-à-vis the latter.

1. Konya and its Syrian Refugees

1.1 Who are the People of Konya?

In June 2022, two months after completion of my fieldwork in Konya, the journalist Ingrid Woudwijk featured the city in an article that gives a good sense of the social biotope it is.

> When entering the city of Konya by car, you see nothing but industry. Countless factories, large industrial areas and construction sites. These are the hallmarks of the 'Anatolian Tigers', a nickname given to manufacturing centers in the Turkish heartland that have become important engines for the Turkish economy under Pres. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.
>
> […] Only when the call to prayer blares from the surrounding minarets do workers start appearing from all directions. They carry prayer rugs or a cardboard substitute under their arms and make their way to the local mosque. Konya is not just known for its industry, but also for its conservatism. This combination of entrepreneurship and religious values translated into natural support for Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) in recent decades, […] (Woudwijk 2022)

As mentioned at the outset, agriculture and manufacturing play a big role in Konya. They have made it a wealthy city with a modern infrastructure, three local universities and an international network. What is more, the city is also known for the mausoleum of the globally famous Islamic scholar and poet Rumi (or *Mevlana*), who lived in Konya for most of his life during the 13th Century, which today attracts much tourism from around the world and further boosts Konya's economy. Most of this industrialisation started in the 1980s, when local businesses began exporting their goods abroad, including to the EU (Işık 2010). This modernisation is a big achievement for Konya, which has come a long way. As a 2005 research report describes,

> In the rural world of 1950s Anatolia, three decades after the founding of the Turkish Republic, 68 percent of Turkish adults were still illiterate. Thirty years later [in the 1980s], when an American anthropologist, Carol Delaney, spent two years studying a Central Anatolian village [near Konya], she found that village life had changed little, culturally or economically. She described a moral universe centred on procreation and rigid gender roles. […] Work, on the other hand, constituted a "premonition of hell". (ESI 2005: 5-6)

Yet, Konya's relatively recent entrepreneurial success is, in fact, closely connected to its religiously conservative social identity. A prime example of this is the business association MÜSIAD (*Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, "Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association") that predominantly brings together small and medium enterprises with a religiously conservative outlook and that was founded in 1990 in distinction from the mostly secular big business association TÜSIAD (*Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği*, "Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen Association") (Öniş 1997). At a MÜSAID meeting in 2012, founding president Erol Yarar described the purpose of the association with the words:

"We are working for the wealth of this world to be in the hands of Muslims and for the poor to be rich" (Yerel Haberler 2012, own translation). Across Turkey, Konya has traditionally one of the largest MÜSIAD memberships (Öniş 1997: 759), reflecting the importance of religiously conservative entrepreneurialism in the city. As Öniş notes, "MUSIAD members include some very large companies, of which the most striking case is Kombassan located in Konya, the traditional stronghold of Islamic business […]" (1997: 758). Much of this industrial change in favour of religiously conservative SMEs in the 80s and 90s happened under the rule of Prime Minister, and later President, Turgut Özal, who stood out in his policies for marrying religious conservatism with economic liberalism as well as for his personal profile as a self-made man from the Turkish provinces (Arat 1991). As one Konyalite muhtar recalled:

> Before Turgut Özal, people were unaware of everything. For example, most of them ate bulgur, there was no other kind of food. Özal opened the eyes of the nation. He expanded democracy. When televisions showed us countries abroad, people changed. I mean, they saw that culture. (k24, male, senior, middle-class)

As many have argued, when the AKP was founded, Erdoğan took Özal and his Motherland Party as a role model (Heper 2013). The long-standing popularity of the AKP in Konya may therefore be of little surprise. In 2018, almost 75% of Konya voted for Erdoğan in the Presidential elections (Yeni Şafak 2018b), and over 70% gave their vote to the AKP in the 2019 local elections (Yeni Şafak 2019). Although Konya has been a stronghold of Islamist politics already since the 1970s (Gökarıksel and Secor 2017), with the openly Islamist politician and mentor of Erdoğan, Necmettin Erbakan, for example, saying that his "political views with Islamic influence began in Konya" (Kutlu 2007: 260), it was particularly the profile of the AKP that reflected both the cultural identity and the economic interests of its inhabitants:

> The AKP government's pro-business policies, explicitly religious rhetoric, and social conservatism have succeeded in economically and politically enfranchising a new 'Islamic bourgeoisie' (Öniş 1997, 748). This aspiring middle class promotes tastes, styles, and modes of social interaction notably distinct from the secular, Western-oriented lifestyles of the republican elite. (Gökarıksel and Secor 2017: 387)

The first link between Konya's industrial transformation and its religious conservatism is thus that Konya's entrepreneurial success is experienced as a victory by those who formerly felt oppressed both in an economic sense as lower-class small business owners and in a cultural sense as rural, religious and staunchly conservative people. This class dimension of Konya's religious conservatism is crucial to understanding its meaning and salience for locals. Not only were the people of Central Anatolia the cultural antipode to the secular elites of Western Turkey

but they also used to be the 'economic underdogs' of the Republic (Öniş 1997). As Öniş has underlined, be it in a cultural or an economic sense, politial Islam in Turkey has therefore always also been "the ideology of the excluded" (1997: 748). Whilst the reality of this exclusion certainly has changed over the last decades with the rise of a new Islamic bourgeoisie to the centre of the Republic and the normalisation of religiously conservative lifestyles also in the big cities of Turkey (Arat 1991; Navaro-Yashin 2002; Yılmaz 2009; Thumann 2011), the memory and feeling of exclusion among the religiously conservative electorate often persists until today. To many of the interviewed muhtars, being from Konya therefore also meant living in a socially inclusive environment:

> You have seen Izmir and Istanbul – I don't live like people in those cities. This is a more comfortable, prosperous hometown where all kinds of poor and rich can get along. Both the rich and the poor live easily in Konya. Why? We have cheap things to meet the needs of the poor. We are really proud of being from Konya. (k12, male, senior, middle-class)

However, Konya's economic transformation has also led to a social one. In many of the interviews, the muhtars described the urban change that had been taking place in recent years. A core aspect of this were the changing residential patterns, with many Turks leaving their old houses in the centre of the city behind and often in decay, moving into newly built apartment blocks that promised high-quality living with central heating and modern amenities. But not all Konyalites did so voluntarily; some, in fact, would have preferred to stay in the houses they had inhabited for decades but had to give in to the municipality's urban development plans and the new roads those foresaw. During my interviews as well as casual conversations with members of the public in Konya, many of those concerned expressed anger or defeatism in the face of the high-rise buildings that they had been moved to against their will. Moreover, this urban change also seemed to have affected the morals of the city, as expressed in its consumption patterns. Although known for its religious conservatism, the area around one of Konya's universities was seamed with many hip cafés that looked no different from Istanbul and were open despite the ongoing month of Ramadan, attracting a small young crowd that seemingly found no contradiction in combining their fashionable black headscarves with a coffee and a cigarette in public before the daily end of fasting.

As Işık (2008: 525) and many of the muhtars moreover noted, part of Konya's urban change has also been the attraction of considerable migration from other regions of Turkey and beyond, with the biggest shares being made up by university students, labour migrants from the East and villagers from the surrounding areas that sought better-paying jobs and modern

housing in the city. On the far-northern outskirts of Konya, this has created a striking amalgam of impoverished locals that would go visit the muhtar's office on a regular basis during Ramadan to ask for support and university students from around the world, many from sub-Saharan Africa, hoping for a degree from Turkey that the local institutions were offering them, all crammed together in a forest of high-rises that strongly contrasted with the rest of the city.

Here, in this very urban setting, one local muhtar was convinced that Konya's famously religious mindset was "just talk" and that the days of Islamic morality and neighbourly love had long gone. Emphasising that he himself was not from Konya but from a small town in the northeast of Central Anatolia, where people still had high morals, he found the people of Konya to be "selfish" and "fake", not wanting to share and only superficially behaving like good Muslims whilst committing sins behind one's back. Similarly, another muhtar described what he called the difference between "mountain" and "valley" people, with the former being simple and unsociable but trustworthy whereas the latter were wealthy and eloquent but fickle in their deeds. In his words, the region of Konya had seen in recent years the gradual descent of mountain people down to the valley – both in a physical and a moral sense.

And how are people from the mountains different from people from the plains?

Now, our mountain people, for example, are a bit more loyal to their word. Won't they? Yes. Out of 100 people, 10 people will let you down. But in the lowlands, 40 people will. [...]

So, you can trust the highlander more?

That's exactly right. Both because he has seen poverty and because our mountain man is like that. I'm telling you, the water is hard and the people are brave. That's how the men of that part of the country are.

Why is that so?

It depends on the [social] structure. Because we are not rich here.

I mean, why do you think mountain people are like that?

Now look, I told you, for example, the income of the highlanders is low. I am telling you, he sows with a hoe and pulls with a donkey (*çapayla eker, sıpayla çeker*). In other words, he earns [his living] with all his strength. But the man from the plain has plenty of fields. He has a beet field, he tills it with a tractor. But he has a lot of money; he spends the money, and that's it. But here, the man of the mountain first pays his debt and then eats.

Now, are people from Konya more 'mountainous' or more 'lowlandish'?

Lowlandish.

So, can you trust people from Konya then, generally speaking?

I can trust them, but those old things are over; now you can't trust that many people anyway.

(k31, male, senior, working-class)

143

Despite this severe urbanisation and sociocultural diversification of the city, Konya's muhtars held on to the claim that religiosity and traditions continued being defining features of life in Konya and of its people. This coheres with the findings of Işık (2010), who cites a carpenter in her study with the words: "Konya is a modern place [now], but we are still *imanlı* [pious] and proud. […] Things change, but we still value respect, generosity and community here in Konya" (2010: 53). In a similar vein, a central term that surfaced in many of my interviews was that of "modesty", sometimes also expressed as "simplicity", which was described in similar ways. In Konya, life was said to be "modest" and "simple" in contrast to Izmir, where life was seen as "*sosyetik*" (derived from the French word *société*): a life that offered lavish amusement and the consumption of high culture but stood lower in religiosity and morals. Indeed, for many, the difference between life in Konya and Izmir was not only reflected in the offerings and atmosphere of the cities but also in the character of the people. "Modesty" was not just meant in material terms, referring to the different 'developmental' levels of the cities, but also in moral terms, attributing a higher ethical mindset to the people of Konya. This 'moral modesty' moreover often connoted an idea of authenticity, with many saying that the people of Konya might not be as 'fancy' as the people of Izmir but more 'real'.

This 'authenticity' was a red thread throughout many of the muhtars' accounts of Konya people, often linking the material with the moral. Life in Konya was said to be "quiet", with people "wanting harmony" and appreciating the "cleanliness" and "tidiness" of the city, which reflected a high life quality for them. There was said to be little entertainment and few opportunities to go out; instead, people preferred going out into nature and doing picknicks. Some even called this "the Anatolian way of life", which, again, they contrasted with the "*sosyetik*" lifestyles of Istanbul and Izmir in the West. For them, to be from Konya meant to "live naturally" (*doğal yaşamak*). The omnipresence of agriculture was not only an economic reality for many of the interviewees but the foundation of an approach to life that privileged traditions and rules as means to create order and reliability in an unforeseeable environment. A big part of this was the importance placed on the family and local community. As was often emphasised in the interviews, in Konya, people still knew their neighbours by name whereas in the big cities, nobody would open the door to a stranger or give them a helping hand. This way of life was also said to be reflected in the character of Konya's people who were described as "hardworking", "straightforward" and "good, simple people", being "the friendliest of all Turks" and showing a great degree of helpfulness, hospitality and respect towards others, in the view of the muhtars. Following from this, many underlined the significance that charity had for the Konyalites as well as being 'a good Muslim' and living by religious prescripts. In

doing so, the people of Konya were said to be holding up "Anatolian values", which in many other places in Turkey had allegedly perished. As a result, in Konya, also the lower classes were said to be living a good life and to be part of the community.

> We're Anatolian people.
>
> *What does that mean?*
>
> To live naturally.
>
> *What do you mean by living naturally?*
>
> I don't know, not being 'fancy/posh' (*sosyetik olmamak*), but a little more Anatolian. […] Tranquillity (*huzur*) is the most important thing here. (k20, male, senior, middle-class)
>
> <div align="center">***</div>
>
> In Izmir, people don't do much for each other, but here, from this neighbourhood to another, people offer their help. […]
>
> *This place is not like Izmir, you say?*
>
> People here are warm-blooded, they help each other. They're helpful. But maybe there are some in Izmir, too, I don't know, I haven't been there, I don't want to mention their sins because I haven't seen it. […] This place is a little more religious... I mean, modest.
>
> *What does that mean?*
>
> I mean, Konya people are a little more respectful to their traditions and customs. A little introverted. No one can really figure out the Konyalites. (k17, male, senior, working-class)
>
> <div align="center">***</div>
>
> [To be from Konya] means to appear as one is (*olduğu gibi görünmek*); in Konya, you are what you are.
>
> *What does that mean?*
>
> I mean, to say what one thinks (*düşündüğünü konuşmak*). That's what it means.
>
> *You mean, to speak frankly?*
>
> Ha! To speak frankly, yes. That's what being a Konyalite means.
> (k32, male, middle-aged, working-class)

As becomes apparent, the logic behind this suggested authenticity is that modesty in means and mind is regarded as leading to truthfulness in character. Wealth and sophistication are seen as treacherous and may lead people into insincerity; the 'society' of the urban realm is 'fancy but fake' in contrast to the 'community' of the countryside that is 'rough but real'. This juxtaposition of 'society' and 'community' is strongly reminiscent of the classical sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (2012 [1887]) and his definition of those concepts. For Tönnies, the primary difference between these two types of human association is the type of social action

that creates them: while a 'community' comes into existence through what he called the "natural will" (*Wesenwille*) of people that gives rise to an impulsive and affective behaviour, reflecting people's "essence", a 'society' emerges from people's "strategic will" (*Kürwille*) that initiates a behaviour governed by calculations and rational choice. In modern times, both are needed, according to Tönnies, as they are serving different purposes: while the community is the locus of feelings and interpersonal warmth, society exists for economic exchange and individuals' pursuit of their interests. What is more, in its inception, the notion of 'society' was originally equal in meaning to 'the good society', that is, the upper classes that displayed 'manners' and were in full control of their emotions, in contrast to 'the people', who unlike 'members of society' had not reached the same degree of 'civilisation' (Elias 1976, 1983; Kieserling 2001). With the onset of modern times, 'society' and 'civilisation' increasingly became associated with urban space and the possibilities, pleasures, and pitfalls this domain would engender (Simmel 2001, 2006; Buruma and Margalit 2004).

Against this backdrop, many intellectual and political movements have formed throughout European history, opposing the threatening wealth, diversity, and insincerity of 'urban society' and calling for an affirmation of the authentic, emotionally freed community of the countryside as the foundation of the nation (Janka 1997; Plessner 2003; Buruma and Margalit 2004). This sort of discourse has also been common in Turkey with the Istanbul neighbourhood of Beyoğlu, for example, gaining a reputation as "a place of moral deprivation" that is a little "foreign" and where people lose their "Turkish morality", i.e. their "sense of being a good Muslim" (Maessen 2022). It is in this sense as well that around the time of the Republic's foundation, nationalist intellectuals such as Ziya Gökalp defined 'true Turkishness' by reference to the ideal type of the Anatolian farmer, juxtaposing the egoist individualism of urban 'civilisation' with the altruism and communal spirit of rural 'culture' (Parla 1985; Zürcher 2017). The narrative that crystallised in the interviews with Konya's muhtars, portraying their identity as reflective of 'the people' and of a life centred around the 'authenticity' of the 'community', may therefore also be read as a vision of 'the true Turk'.

This conception of 'the true Turk' is moreover imbued with religious conservatism. As already Işık (2010: 61) found, displaying "public piety" is an important social asset in Konya that confers onto a person "a clean reputation" and makes them "trustworthy". In this sense, many of the muhtars described the people of Konya as *muhafazakâr* and *dindar*, that is, as "conservative" and "pious". These are established terms in Turkey, but as Gökarıksel and Secor point out, they can signify very different things and be performed in a multitude of ways, therefore, our "understanding of 'piety' and religiosity is something that we [should] let emerge

from our empirical research, from our research subjects' own understandings and expressions" (2017: 384). Based on their own fieldwork, they thus find that "there is no single moral code [of piety] across even the conservative city of Konya" (Gökarıksel and Secor 2017: 389-90). In Turkey like elsewhere, being religious is not the same as being conservative, nor does it necessarily equal favouring Islamist or conservative parties. As the previous chapter has shown, many who identify with Kemalism and define themselves as secular and *modern* are at the same time believers with varying degrees of religious practise. However, while the basic characteristic of believing in God and being religious – be that practising or not – may also be described in Turkish with the word *inançlı* ("believing"), it is common jargon in Turkey to use the word *dindar* ("pious") to connote a more conservative approach to religious practise that typically relies on a stricter interpretation and application of Islamic precepts. To identify as "conservative" and "pious", therefore, meant to the Konyalite muhtars to 'take religion seriously' and ensure rigorous practise, unlike in places like Izmir, where people allegedly did not "live religion" and had "weak religious feelings", preferring nightclubs over traditions.

> *What exactly are you proud of?*
>
> The people of Konya, their welfare and their faith. Their full practise of Islam.
>
> *And faith, what does that look like in everyday life?*
>
> In everyday life, everyone prays first. They don't look at anyone badly. They try to practise the rules of Islam. In our Konya, they try to practise it fully. This is known in Turkey: Konya, Kayseri, Erzurum – these three provinces in Turkey practise religious beliefs very well. (k8, male, senior, working-class)
>
> ***
>
> Izmir has a different lifestyle. It is by the coast. Religious feelings are weak. Our people respect their elders. For example, Brother Emin is an elder. When he tells someone not to do something, he doesn't do it. Ours respect their elders and love their little ones. (k30, male, middle-aged, working-class)
>
> ***
>
> *People from Konya, how would you describe them? I mean, in terms of lifestyle.*
>
> Generally, a bit conservative. I mean, not bigoted (*bağnaz*), let me tell you that. […] People here are not like that. They don't have that. What I call a conservative is someone who is loyal to his traditions, his past, but always forward-looking. In other words, people here are very self-sacrificing and hardworking. Now this city is industrialised, there are many job opportunities... this is the situation. […] Socially speaking, this place is very innocent; it's a place where generally good people live. The crime rate is very low, neighbourly relations are very strong. (k1, male, middle-aged, middle-class)

Not having such *sosyetik* lifestyles but a strong commitment to religion and traditions was then also said to be the reason why the people of Konya had "stronger morals" than the people of

Izmir and were able to provide their children with a "good upbringing". For some who had moved to Konya from the outside, this at times led to unwanted "social pressure" with regard to religious practise, but for most interviewed Konyalites, their city's religious heritage and reputation was something to be proud of and uphold, like the cleanliness of Konya's roads. Many saw Konya as predestined for religious leadership and as a role model of Central Anatolian culture. These qualities had to be advocated in support of a united Turkey and a strong Turkish state that many of the muhtars felt loyal to. The arrival of the Syrian refugees confronted them with a new test of this ethos.

1.2 The Situation of the Syrian Refugees in Konya

Migration is not new to Konya. Placed along the ancient Silk Road, foreign traders have passed through the city for much of its existence. With the settlement of Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians during the Byzantine Empire (the *Karamanlı*), the city was fairly interreligious in Seljuk and Ottoman times until the population exchange with Greece in 1924 (Temizel and Attar 2015). Also in modern times, Konya has attracted migration, such as around 20,000 Crimean and Caucasian immigrants at the turn of the century as well as around 11,000 refugees from the Balkans at the end of the Ottoman Empire and around 6,000 refugees from Bulgaria between 1950 and 1955 (Kaya, Çimen, et al. 2021). As stated above, in addition to this, Konya has received many internal migrants from other parts of Central Anatolia as well as from the East and Southeast of Turkey, many of these being Kurdish and seeking better living conditions (ibid). On top of this come the aforementioned foreign university students, international tourism, and many (often unregistered) Afghan and African irregular migrants (Özgür-Baklacıoğlu 2011). But the situation of the Syrian refugees is different.

Although Syrian refugees started coming to Turkey in 2011, Konya only received Syrians as of 2014 (Kaya, Çimen, et al. 2021). Analysing their choice of Konya, Kaya et al. argue that

> Konya is renowned for its conservative culture, and many Syrians come here due to its cultural similarities with their home country, including traces of [Rumi] and the Sufi Movement, which give Konya a special place in the world of Islam. (2021: 37)

With the absence of a settlement policy for refugees in Turkey until 2022 (Hürriyet 2022), the Syrian refugees have mostly been free to choose where to live. Similarly to the previously cited research on Izmir, perceived cultural similarities, relating to a conservative practise of Islam and conservative social mores more generally, seem to have been a motivating factor in the

Syrians' settlement choices that made them prefer Konya over other places. Other research has meanwhile suggested that "[d]ue to the easy life conditions and social factors, Konya is one of the most chosen provinces by refugees" (Çankaya, Dikmen, and Yılmaz 2020: 462). While it is unclear what these "life conditions and social factors" are, with regard to the Syrian refugees' living situation in Konya, Kaya, Çimen, et al. (2021) find that

> The Syrian population is spread throughout the city, with relatively higher concentrations in certain neighborhoods, rather than living in a single Syrian neighborhood, and they have integrated well with the native residents. A survey in 2018 with 1,100 participants found that 40% of the city's native residents had at least one Syrian neighbor, and that the majority accepts the Syrians as residents. An indicator of this acceptance is their integration into the labor market. Most men and adult members of Syrian families work in Konya's industrial sector, and Syrian adults and adolescents can easily find a job in small and medium sized businesses which required part-time workers. (2021: 37-38)

In the view of Kaya, Çimen, et al. (2021), the Syrians' residential dispersion across town, which is confirmed by Çankaya, Dikmen, and Yılmaz (2020), as well as the broad availability of jobs, the active engagement of the municipality in providing services, and the efforts of local NGOs to foster the Syrian refugees' social inclusion, have engendered a high social acceptance of the Syrians among local Turkish citizens in Konya. In a similar vein, conducting a survey with 423 locals as well as in-depth interviews with four Syrian restaurant owners in Konya, Akın, Yılmaz, and Akın (2020) find that Turkish citizens frequenting Syrian restaurants have less negative perceptions of Syrian refugees, which they interpret as the beneficial effect of social contact points between citizens and refugees on the Turkish citizens' attitudes towards Syrian refugees. Given the popularity of public prayer in Konya, one could moreover suspect that mosques similarly serve as such social contact points. Analysing why other local Turkish citizens might not want to enter a Syrian restaurant, Akın, Yılmaz, and Akın (2020) state that the difference in language is not a reason but rather negative perceptions of such venues' hygiene, security and cuisine as well as a general rejection of foreigners.

In contrast to the picture these studies paint, Afyonoğlu (2021: 2) writes that "Syrians in Konya live in areas called the Syrian Neighborhood", which are the parts of town where old "substandard" houses are frequent and available for lower rents than elsewhere. As many of the muhtars told as well, Syrian refugees in Konya typically live in those houses since their Turkish owners have moved into modern buildings with central heating and are now renting out their old homes to the Syrians, benefitting from an additional income. The coincidence of Konya's urban development with the arrival of the Syrian refugees has thus turned many local Turks into landlords and supposedly boosted their living standard, which is different from

Izmir, where most of the houses the Syrian refugees inhabit had previously been abandoned. However, as a few of the muhtars also stated, some Turks refuse to rent their houses to Syrians, as they fear the latter could damage them or because they are generally opposed to the Syrians' presence in Konya. Overall, while Konya's Syrian refugees seemed indeed to be dispersed across the city and its neighbourhoods, according to the muhtars, this dispersion was strongly limited to places where cheap housing was available, which was mostly old and of poor quality. In addition, the municipality's urban development plans often put an end to the Syrians' stay in those homes, as they were foreseen to be demolished, which exposed the Syrians to much uncertainty. As one muhtar described the situation:

> The places where they stay are not very suitable, they have difficulty in staying in such places. There is also something else: some [Turks] won't give their house to Syrians, so they stay wherever they can find something. […] It's like the Turks themselves live in the new places, and they gave the Syrians the old places. (k7, male, senior, working-class)

Given this precarious situation of many Syrian refugees in Konya, like elsewhere in Turkey, many Syrian women therefore "marry to survive" (Afyonoğlu 2021: 9), often entering into polygamous marriages as well and accepting domestic violence out of fear of abandonment. Against this backdrop, Afyonoğlu (2021) describes various local narratives about them that are very similar to those in Izmir, reflecting local Turkish citizens' perceptions of the Syrian refugees as lacking in hygiene, being obsessed with reproduction, "'begging' […] as a 'habit' or 'way of life'" (ibid: 14) and being irresponsible parents as well as privileged by the Turkish state and having negatively affected the housing market and economic activity in Konya. Moreover, surveying Konya-based healthcare workers' perspectives on the Syrian refugees, Küçükkendirici and Batı (2020) found that many Syrian refugees were lacking in Turkish language skills and that this created a significant barrier between them and Konya's inhabitants. In conclusion, the relation of Turkish citizens in Konya to the Syrian refugees is thus less than clear, raising various questions about the actual boundary processes here.

2. Boundary Making vis-à-vis the Syrian Refugees in Konya

2.1 Muslim Identity as a Symbolic Boundary between Muslims

Interestingly, many of the narratives about Syrian refugees that crystallised in the interviews in Izmir also surfaced in the interviews in Konya. According to many of the muhtars, the Syrian refugees were "loud at night" and often involved in fights, "disrespectful" and "dangerous", "only interested in themselves" and "unthankful" towards the Turks as well as "dirty, smelly

and unclean" but also "lazy" and "jobless", leading comfortable lives in Turkey, "begging" and having "too many children", whilst Turkish soldiers were dying for them in Syria. Also similarly to Izmir, many of the interviewed muhtars related these perceptions and complaints to the wider nationalist narrative that "Turks would never escape from war" (*bizde kaçmak yok*) and the idea that the Syrian refugees were "not behaving like real refugees", by which they meant that a 'real refugee' would be intimidated by their new social environment, trying hard to adapt to it and being thankful towards the society that was hosting them. In contrast, the Syrians appeared to be taking their stay in Turkey for granted, enjoying social privileges Turks were not receiving (like easier access to healthcare and higher education) and not making much effort to integrate in the eyes of the muhtars. In short, similarly to discourses on refugees in other countries as well (Schmid 2015), the muhtars were expecting the Syrian refugees to be lower in the local social stratification than themselves whilst also working harder to fit in, but perceived some of the Syrian refugees to be the complete opposite, that is, a social nuisance on the one hand and advantaged on the other. Like in Izmir, many muhtars in Konya lamented the low education and social class of the Syrian refugees that they saw as a reason behind the problems the people of Konya were experiencing with them, which coheres with the argument by Şimşek (2018a, 2021) about the role of social class for Syrian refugees' integration in Turkey.

While Kaya, Çimen, et al. (2021) argue that the Syrian refugees' participation in the local labour market can be interpreted as a sign of the Konyalites' acceptance of their presence in the city, my data suggests that employing Syrian refugees does not necessarily equal accepting them. Rather, whilst many Konya people were happy to benefit from Syrian refugees in economic terms as *employees* or *renters*, they did not consider them equal or took an inclusive attitude towards them, which suggests that economic integration does not necessarily lead to social integration. Just like with marriage, as seen in the Izmir Chapter, also employment relations may therefore not a viable indicator of blurred social boundaries between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees overall, since both marital and work relations may be entered here purely for personal gains from another individual without recognition of the other side as equal. However, this was different where Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees were not in a hierarchy but colleagues, thereby interacting more and developing deeper relations.

> *You say there is not much conversation happening. Is there any friendship then?*
>
> Of course, when there is work, we tell the [Syrian] man to come. How can there not be friendship when you work [together]? Then, they come to the mosque, and we talk there. (k28, male, middle-aged, working-class)

Still, although public spaces such as the workplace, the mosque, shops, or one's street were said to be venues of interaction and sites in which social contact actually occurred, many interviewees also said that this interaction mostly stayed at a more superficial level, only rarely leading to active socialising with each other or even friendship.

> *So, there's still some distance [between Syrians and Turks], you say?*
>
> There is. Look, do you know what a friend is in Konya? It's like 'heart and liver' (*can ciğer*). It's an inseparable part. It's not about travelling, going out, seeing each other the next day. Our friendship is until the end: if we are going to die, we will die together, not just let them die and I will be saved. Say we're going to have a fight, for example: if they're fighting, I'll fight with them. Why? We are friends. But friendship with Syrians is more a 'Hello! Hello!'-friendship. There's no close friendship. (k3, male, senior, middle-class)

While this shows that the social boundaries between the Konyalites and the Syrian refugees could be blurred, it also manifests that simply sharing the same physical space was not enough to do so. In this vein, several muhtars also accused the Syrian refugees of upholding these boundaries themselves, as they were said to "stay among themselves", "always shop at Syrian shops", "not attend mosque much", "not make enough effort to integrate", "not leave the house in general" or "consider the Turks their enemies", even. While some recognised structural reasons behind these boundaries, such as socio-economic segregation and many Syrians' insufficient Turkish language skills, others showed leniency by noting that they themselves did not socialise much outside their family and therefore few opportunities arose to get to know each other more. That said, where the Syrians' language skills would allow for conversation, which the muhtars estimated to be the case for at least half of them, many of the muhtars still chose not to interact, viewing the Syrian refugees as "invaders" of their public space. As one muhtar put it: "Now the Syrians have occupied the playground; no Turk goes there anymore." This suggests the presence of rigid symbolic boundaries.

> *So, do Syrians and Turks ever chat in daily life?*
>
> They don't chat much. Why? Because Syrians shop from their own shops, that is, from the shops opened by Syrians. They don't pay much attention to the others. There's a bit of a problem in terms of mixing and harmony, [Turks and Syrians] don't really get along (*Biraz uyuşmada sıkıntı var, pek uyuşamıyorlar*).
>
> *How so?*
>
> I mean, to say 'Let's drink tea and chat with Syrians', it doesn't seem very healthy.
> (k7, male, senior, working-class)

Interestingly, some of the narratives marking these symbolic boundaries were, like in Izmir, built upon a cultural racism[27] based on concepts such as modernity and civilisation, with some muhtars describing the Syrians as "backward", "wild" (*vahşi*), "culturally inferior", and "uncivilised" whilst underlining that Turks were "more modern". This lack of 'development' was said to be especially visible in the disrespect with which the Syrian refugees were allegedly treating women. Building on this, many also claimed that the Syrian refugees were harming local social order by going against Turkish traditions, values, and culture and by having a bad impact on Turkish children in their upbringing. These narratives are particularly interesting because they mobilise many of the notions and arguments that are stereotypically associated with the more secular, Kemalist, and urban parts of Turkish society, as they evoke a binary imagery that juxtaposes a 'modern Westernised Turkish nation', guided by rationality and nationalism, with a 'wild underdeveloped Arab Orient', guided by tradition and tribalism. In this vein, some of Konya's muhtars even mentioned the Syrian refugees' conservative Islamic clothes as an example of this 'backwardness', saying that it was "indecent" for men to walk around like that in public and a sign of "reactionary" gender relations that Syrian women and men could not mingle under any circumstances.

> For example, the cornerstone of a family is the woman. If the woman is educated, she educates her child, or her conversation with her husband is accordingly et cetera. For them, the woman is always an inferior class. The man is always ahead, the woman is always in the oppressed place. This is generally the case with Syrians. But in our country, the Turkish woman is put forward, loved, respected, valued, reads. But this is completely absent [among Syrians]. In other words, the girl should not be educated but stay on the side line. The woman is in the background, she has no say in anything. But this is not the case with the Turkish people. (k12, male, senior, middle-class)

<p align="center">***</p>

> Let's say a male Syrian has a female cousin. For them, it is not permissible in Islam to sit with her. And they don't. But we have no problem. We can sit together. […] [We are] a little more modern. I mean, we can sit with our relatives, but it is problematic for them.
>
> *It reminds me of what you said about your son: he's Muslim and an imam, but modern. Do you think this is a general difference between Turks and Syrians?*
>
> Of course. Customs, traditions, modernity... that's why we cannot interact.
> (k24, male, senior, middle-class)

This then raises the question of whether Konya's predominant religious conservatism made any difference here in comparison with Izmir. It did indeed, but often in a reverse sense of what might be expected: While joint religious practise already failed to blur the social boundaries between the Syrian refugees and Turkish citizens in Konya because it did not lead

---

[27] See the discussion of *cultural racism* in Chapter Two.

to much social interaction other than a show of respect to each other, as noted above, for many of the interviewed muhtars, there was, in fact, little of a common religious identity that could have blurred the symbolic boundaries in the first place. Rather, Muslim religious identity was said to be something that separated Turks from Syrians. The rationale behind this view that crystallised in the interviews is that many of the Turkish interlocutors considered the Syrian refugees to be "only Muslims by name", not by practice. What unravelled throughout the interviews is that rather than feeling united by the Islamic faith as a result of the fact that it significantly mattered to the people of Konya, it was the importance of "proper practice" of Islam that made many of the Konyalite muhtars consider the things they disliked about the Syrian refugees to be signs that the Syrians may be Muslim, "but not proper Muslims".

> I mean, the name is Muslim, but there is no ablution, no prayer, nothing. Alhamdulillah, he says he is a Muslim, but he has nothing to do with it. I mean, he is a Muslim by name (*dilde Müslüman*). (k29, male, middle-aged, working-class)
>
> ***
>
> They collect rubbish [to earn money] until late at night, and they never pray. (k27, *missing*)
>
> ***
>
> He says they do not fulfil the duties of Islam.
>
> [Bystander:] Indeed. I mean, think of people who don't pray, who lie, and so on.
>
> This not only applies to those from Aleppo, but also to those from Damascus. Aleppo is a little more civilised and has a higher level of education. In the Damascus region, the level of civilisation, morality, and education is zero! (k5, male, senior, working-class)

This denial of the Syrian refugees' 'real Muslimness' was in part a reaction to social behaviours that they considered morally incompatible with Islam, such as prostitution, drug use or premarital and homosexual relationships, which would occur among some of the Syrian youth in Konya. But also, it was a way for them to 'make sense of' all the social problems they would experience with the Syrian refugees, from the perceived laziness and lack in cleanliness to their begging on the street and asking for support rather than fighting in Syria. None of these things were considered acceptable for a 'real Muslim' and deserved rejection. This rigid symbolic boundary vis-à-vis their alleged Muslim brothers and sisters from Syria did not make the respective muhtars feel any less religious, but on the contrary, it was a way for them to underline what good and modern Muslims they were themselves in contrast to the Syrians.

> [Muhtar:] [At the Syrians' homes], there's one family in one room and another in the next room. But you have sanitary needs, don't you? How can you do that with so many families?

For example, one woman's husband works at night, the other woman's husband works during the day; they live in the same house with someone else's husband.

[Bystander:] What the muhtar means to say is that their houses are very crowded. We normally live in a nuclear family. In our own houses. They're crowded together in a house, maybe by necessity, maybe willingly. And there's also this: I am a postwoman. Generally, men are the postman here. When I knock on the door, Syrian women do not open the door. They think it's a man and do not open it. Our Turkish citizens first ask: Who is it? Say it's a covered woman facing a postman, she then first puts on her headscarf, and then opens the door. But the Syrian women never open the door; they do so, thinking it is a man. And then they say that this is because of Islam. But they say this and at the same time they live with hundreds of people in the same house. This is what the muhtar wants to say.
(k12, male, senior, middle-class)

As this vignette suggests, the socio-economic misery the Syrian refugees were living in and their more conservative approach to gender relations were framed here as signs of a 'backward' and 'hypocritical' practice of Islam, confronting the pious Muslims of Konya with questions about their own understanding of religiosity and making them choose terms such as 'modern' to explain themselves. Following from this, many then also expressed that they were feeling taken advantage of by the Syrians, claiming that they had come deliberately to Konya in the knowledge that the people of Konya were such good Muslims and helpful people to exploit their charity. As some of the muhtars put it: 'We had good intentions when helping them, but it backfired.' Similarly, others complained that they had "treated the Syrians as Muslim brothers, but they never thanked us" or stressed that religion was the only thing that connected them, not "brotherhood". Arguing that a real Muslim would never do harm to another Muslim, like the Syrian refugees were doing to the Turks by wrecking the local social order and trading on the Turks' helpfulness and piety, many concluded that the Syrian refugees could not be considered very religious, both for their lack in practice and their 'immoral behaviour', and that even if they said to be Muslims, they did not "live as Muslims".

Do you think there are any similarities between Turks and Syrians?

Our commonality was Islam, but we don't like them – because they don't live Islam.

Is there any other commonality?

We have nothing else in common. (k8, male, senior, working-class)

The overall narrative that developed along these lines thus portrayed the Syrians as 'religious fakes', pretending to be like the people of Konya, but really only wanting to benefit from them and their religious values. This anger at the Syrians and self-appraisal at the same time moreover often enmeshed with an emphasis on most Syrian refugees' Arabness, as also seen in Izmir, with typical arguments being that Turks were "closer to true Islam", that Arabs'

"religious culture" was different, and that the Turks were "Muslims, but not Arabs". Some even said that the "international image of Islam" was at stake here and that Turkey should show how Islam could be different from the Middle East. Furthermore, other muhtars added that next to religious identity, Turkishness was important, too, imposing a natural boundary between Syrians and Turks despite their shared religion, similarly to the nationalism in Izmir. However, what did not surface in the interviews in Konya as much as it had in Izmir were portrayals of the Arabs as the historical archenemy of the Turks due to their role in the demise of the Ottoman Empire and their being an inherent Islamic antipode to the secular Republic of Turkey, as Atatürk had seen them (Hanioğlu 2011). This suggests that although many of Konya's muhtars were eager to distinguish themselves in their practice of Islam from the Syrian refugees, they did not do so with the same vision in mind as the secular Kemalist muhtars in Izmir for whom the Syrian refugees were 'false Muslims' because they were 'too Muslim', that is, 'fanatic'. Still, also in Konya, the muhtars' street-level narratives reflected a dynamic of inner-Islamic differentiation, as has been common in Turkey and the Balkans (Püttmann 2018; Bayraklı, Hafez, and Faytre 2019), that would brand one's own practice of Islam as both more 'modern' and more faithful to the essence of 'true Islam'.

> [Muhtar:] They don't have religion. I mean, they are Muslims, but there's one thing: they don't have real Islam as we understand it – my teacher knows better – but the Turks live it. The Turks have been the protectors, the guardians, and the keepers of Islam in every era after they accepted Islam. Am I wrong, my teacher?
>
> [Bystander:] It is true, Turkey was the leader of all Islamic countries.
>
> (k1, male, middle-aged, middle-class)

This narrative of religious differentiation of Konya's religiously conservative muhtars from the Syrian refugees is striking because within Turkey, it would typically be secular Turks who would consider themselves '*modern*' in the Turkish sense of the word (cf. Özyürek 2006) to distinguish themselves from religiously conservative Turks like those in Konya, called '*muhafazakâr*'. The travelling of the notion of the 'modern' from the secularist domain of Turkish identity politics into the religiously conservative domain suggests that the appearance of a new Other in the shape of the Syrian refugees may have made *some* of Turkey's religiously conservatives identify more with their secularised fellow citizens than before. In fact, such an effect would be of little surprise, as research has reported similar phenomena, for example, in Belgium, where the arrival of Muslim immigrants has blurred the symbolic boundary between Flemings and Walloons (Bernstein 2013). This underlines that although Konya's muhtars

framed their problems with the Syrian refugees through a narrative that depicted the Syrians as *religiously* 'deficient', most of these problems were in fact of a more generic kind, like in Izmir.

However, also like in Izmir, there were also exceptions to this. Indeed, neighbourhoods in which such a narrative did not occur in the interviews were places in which the Syrians were said to be few in number, employed, and described as "hardworking", "quiet and tidy", and "committed to practising religion" – basically, like the Konyalites would describe themselves. In fact, the Konyalites' narratives about themselves and their expectations of the Syrians showed strong similarities to narratives in Western Europe (Wimmer 2013), demanding the refugees to behave in accordance with local conceptions of moral virtues that may be expressed through notions of religious or national identity but, in essence, are *petit-bourgeois values –* which here determine 'Muslimness'.

As Wimmer (2013) finds in his study of integration in a small town in Switzerland, rather than dividing natives and foreigners, the boundaries the local inhabitants draw divide between the 'established', i.e. long-term residents that cohere with the dominant petit-bourgeois values of quiet and order, which includes both natives and foreigners, and 'outsiders' that do not correspond to the locally dominant vision of the good life – be that newcomers from abroad or from inside Switzerland. In the same vein, Konya's pious muhtars are adamant to preserve the socio-economic development their city has recently reached, as described above, against whoever could undermine it. Their culturally racist discourse of *'the good Muslim'* is therefore not much different from discourses of *'the good migrant'* in Europe (cf. SVP 2023).

As becomes clear from the data, despite sharing the same religion, the muhtars noted severe 'moral discrepancies' between themselves and the refugees, stating that the Syrians were not behaving as they expected them and emphasising the socio-economic dimension of their difference. Indeed, regular employment, for example, seemed to eliminate the Syrian refugees' loudness at night, as it structured their everyday lives in a way that would induce a change of habits. This socio-economic dimension and the locals' 'moral disappointment' with their supposedly Muslim brothers and sisters became most visible when the religiously conservative muhtars of Konya said to prefer "educated Ukrainian refugees" over the Syrians currently in their city. Even more strikingly, a central argument for this preference was that the muhtars imagined such educated Ukrainians to behave more in line with what they regarded as the key precepts of Islam, such as cleanliness, order, and patriotism, than the Muslim Syrians. As some of the muhtars argued: non-Muslims may be more Muslim than 'fake Muslims'.

> Now, for example, in our country, Turks and Muslims have become dishonest, trying to deceive, trying to steal. But I see in Europe, in France, in England, the citizens are honest.

They don't try to betray each other, both vis-à-vis other races and their own. They work properly. They are doing what Islam says, and our Muslims are doing the opposite. Well, they are being dishonest. They pray. What does prayer mean? Prayers are performed by righteous people. You cannot pray and lie. The man who prays shall be honest, this is God's command. A churchgoer will not go out and steal. These are my thoughts on religion. I wish you were a Muslim; I would like that. You should research that, too. (k16, male, senior, middle-class)

<p align="center">***</p>

[Muhtar:] It'd be different with the Ukrainians.

How?

[Muhtar:] Ukrainians are clean in my opinion, those [Syrians] are dirty.

Syrians are dirty?

[Muhtar:] Ukrainians are clean.

How so?

[Muhtar:] I mean, the way they eat...

[Bystander 1:] The way they live.

The Ukrainians are cleaner in their way of life?

[Bystander 2:] Exactly.

But they're not Muslims, are they?

[Muhtar:] Well, we're talking in terms of cleanliness.

(k10, male, middle-aged, working-class)

<p align="center">***</p>

[The Syrian refugees] don't work, they don't obey the rules. Understand? But now, for example, there are a few from Ukraine. Because of this war. […] We welcomed them, too. We also tell them that we are there when they need help. But in terms of refugees, the Syrians have been causing trouble lately. (k3, male, senior, middle-class)

<p align="center">***</p>

People here think that men in Ukraine are better than these Syrian men. Why? While [the Ukrainians] are fighting to defend their homeland, [the Konyalites] don't like [the Syrians] because even their young people live here nicely and do not fight. This is the point of view of our Turks. They say that a man who sells his homeland is no good... They're right. You don't come to Turkey [just] because they dropped four bombs. In our religion of Islam, we believe that if someone dies fighting, he's a martyr, and if his hand and foot are severed, he's a veteran. This is in our religion. (k8, male, senior, working-class)

In sum, this section has shown how Muslim identity itself is utilised here as a means of drawing a symbolic boundary vis-à-vis other Muslims from a disadvantaged socio-economic background by denying them to be 'real Muslims' due to the social problems they cause. This denial enables the religiously conservative muhtars of Konya to do something seemingly

paradoxical, which is to reject the idea of a religious brotherhood with the Syrian refugees *not despite but by affirming* their own commitment to Islam. The Konyalites' greater identification with Islam does thus not give rise to a narrative of greater identification with the Muslim Syrian refugees, but on the contrary, in their narratives, it is, as it were, *because of Islam* that the Konyalites draw a rigid boundary between themselves and the Syrian refugees. As a result, since the Konyalites do not recognise the Syrian refugees as real Muslims, they also do not recognise any religious brotherhood with them.

> *Okay, so you say there is no Islam in them (Müslümanlık yok onlarda)?*
>
> I swear, there isn't!
>
> *And that's why there is also no religious brotherhood?*
>
> There isn't. (k29, male, middle-aged, working-class)
>
> <div align="center">***</div>
>
> Religious brotherhood is relative. I mean, religious brotherhood exists, but [for example,] officially 99% of Turkey is Muslim. According to me, how many per cent are Muslim? 15-20% are Muslim. That is, not all of them are Muslims who live according to the rules. […] Those who come from Syria seem to be religious, but they are not that much. In my opinion, half of Turkey is no different from Christians, and the same goes for the Syrians. (k16, male, senior, middle-class)

This finding is not only in line with previous research that has reached similar results (Üstübici 2020; Alakoç, Göksel, and Zarychta 2022), but it moreover reflects wider discussions and conflicts within Islam about who counts as a 'real Muslim', which often conceal racial and class boundaries, too (Bougarel 2007; Özyürek 2014). As Özyürek (2014), for example, finds in her research on German Muslim converts, whilst they endorse Islam as their religion, many of them nevertheless reject other Muslims, such as working-class immigrants of Turkish or Arab ethnicity, labelling them as 'improper Muslims', too. Muslims' attachment to Islam must thus be seen as separate and separable from an attachment to other Muslims. This invites greater questions about the role of religion for refugee acceptance in a host society.

Finally, this finding on its own would leave the analysis incomplete, though. In Konya, the religiously conservative Turks' self-differentiation from other 'improper' Muslims does not only apply to their relation to the Syrian refugees but also to their relation to other Turks. As the next section shows, this deliberate distinction of religiously conservatives from secular Turks is the mechanism that explains why *some* of the former may nevertheless profess to be more inclusive of the Syrian refugees than the latter, as the surveys suggest (see Chapter One).

2.2 Islamic Ethos as an Expression of Moral Superiority and 'True Turkishness'

Although most of the muhtars in Konya referred to their religious identity to draw a rigid symbolic boundary vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, *some* did affirm the existence of a religious brotherhood between Turks and Syrians, stating that they were feeling closer to the refugees because they were Muslims. In this vein, they proclaimed that having the same religion lead to having a similar culture and, therefore, to being able to understand each other more easily. They also said that pious Muslims, which they considered the Syrian refugees to be, were more trustworthy. Moreover, in their view, their joint religious practise was bringing them together, and although cultural differences existed, their shared religion was more important since Allah had commanded that Muslims should be brothers and help each other. Therefore, they said to have a special duty towards Muslim refugees, which made them support the Syrians even more than they otherwise would, they said. As many of these muhtars put it: 'We are nicer to them because "they're *muhacir* and we're *ensar*"', referring to the Quranic terms explained in Chapter Two, which are meant to remind Muslims that the Prophet Muhammad was a refugee himself, received by the people of Medina, and which President Erdoğan has frequently used in trying to foster social acceptance of the Syrian refugees in Turkey.

These testimonies stand in stark contrast to those cited in the previous section. However, more often than not, the respective muhtars were quick to relativise these statements shortly after making them. The longer vignette below illustrates it.

> Later, our love for them [the Syrian refugees] withered away, they became undesirable people. The Syrians are the undesirables now. I mean, if there was a survey, I swear, I would be in a dilemma regarding whether they should go or not. However, I am a citizen, [and therefore] they should leave immediately. But I am a little more conscientious. Why? They are now *muhacir*. […] We are *ensar*, they are *muhacir*. That's what people did to the Prophet in 1400. […] But there can be no such thing as – excuse me, but the guy, he lays eyes on your property; he does that as an immigrant who came here. I didn't see it with my own eyes, but in our neighbourhood, theft has increased by one hundred percent. Especially theft of things left outside. People here leave iron, coal, plastic, or their bicycle in their garden. [Now, theft] has increased a lot. There wasn't as much before, in my view.
>
> *I mean, where do you think those initial feelings of yours came from?*
>
> [Bystander:] Faith! Faith!
>
> Well, them being Muslim. That they are our brothers and sisters in faith. Look, when I first became a muhtar, there were 14 Syrians in my neighbourhood. […] We used to visit them every Thursday evening. Half a kilo of tea, one kilo of sugar. We'd buy it, we'd arrive, they liked it. When they brewed tea, they also threw sugar into it, they didn't put it in afterwards. I said: "Look, we don't want it like that, either brew it separately for us or throw it in afterwards." They said: "OK, let's brew it separately.", and they brewed it separately. […] We used to go round every week on Thursday evenings. We would arrive, for example, and there were a lot of children at home. The next week, we would buy them socks or chocolate. We went to a house: two families, twelve children. They're all close, the oldest is eight years old, the youngest are 2 years old, 1.5 years old and six months old. We bought socks. They all live in one living room, there is no other. The washing machine is over here, the fridge is

over there, I swear to God. That house was then demolished… We like [to help people] like this, but you realise that the guy has his eye on your property. He has a bad influence on your child. He almost won't let you stay in your neighbourhood. When that happens, love withers.

(k21, male, senior, working-class)

As becomes apparent here, like in many of the other interviews in Konya, not only seems the benevolence of the people of Konya towards the Syrian refugees to have been higher at first, before the occurrence of social conflict, but also the Turkish citizens' social boundaries vis-à-vis them seem to have been blurrier in the beginning, when differences could still be overcome. Likewise, also the Konyalites' symbolic boundaries seem to have been more inclusive at first, indeed including the Syrian refugees as fellow Muslims in the notion of religious brotherhood. Although many of these muhtars continued to view the Syrian refugees as "victims" of their circumstances, this did not change that they had started drawing more rigid social and symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis them, perceiving them by now as a problem and wanting them to leave. Despite this resentment, many muhtars still affirmed the idea of a religious brotherhood, which raises the question of what exactly this means for them and why exactly they would do so.

Probing further into this, it emerged that their idea of religious brotherhood was less about the Syrians' being Muslim and therefore deserving of help and inclusion, than about the people of Konya themselves being 'good Muslims', proving this through their deeds. For them, religious brotherhood was, in fact, not so much a brotherhood between co-religionists than a religiously-motivated brotherhood between humans, which also applied to 'fake Muslims' like the Syrian refugees, as it would have applied to complete non-Muslims, as many of the muhtars emphasised. As became clear in the interviews, many of the pious muhtars experienced a tension between the term 'brother in faith', as it had often been mentioned in the Turkish media, and their feelings about the Syrian refugees. To resolve it, they argued that the Syrians' being Muslim was adding "a little extra" (*artı bir*) to their motivation to support them, but really, they were doing so because as good Muslims, they would do so towards *any humans*, also those of other religions, like the Ukrainians, for example. If true, this suggests that not so much identification with the Syrian refugees as co-religionists was motivating Konya's religiously conservative muhtars' remaining hospitality towards them as was identification with Islam and its charitable values. Such a conclusion would align with the hypothesis by Hoffman, Werz, and Halpin (2018) that the higher degree of acceptance of the Syrian refugees among AKP voters is due to the proportion of "compassionate Islamists".

However, such a conclusion would fall short of *the bigger picture* that became visible when *contextualising how these professions of Islamic dignity were made*. As emerged, the addressee of these claims to morality was not only Allah, so to say, but also: Turkish society – in particular, secularised Turkish citizens that, in the view of Konya's muhtars, like the Syrian refugees, could not really call themselves Muslims, as they did not really "live Islam" either, as the vignette below illustrates.

> [Bystander:] […] People in Konya are a little more…
>
> The people in Konya are a little more hospitable because they live a bit more religiously. They say it is a Muslim sin [not to help]. They feel responsible. They say this is my Muslim brother. But you can't find that in Izmir.
>
> [Bystander:] You [also] won't find it in certain parts of Istanbul or in Bodrum.
>
> You can't find it in touristic places.
>
> [Bystander:] And there's another thing. The thing in Konya is, because of the notion of *ensar* and *muhacir*, because of that feeling of helping people who have migrated here from their country for various reasons, that belonging, the feeling of helping our prophet, Konya helps a little more, because we live these things more.
>
> (k5, male, senior, working-class)

As the vignette reveals, the muhtars' claim to compassion is also *a claim to moral superiority* vis-à-vis *other Turks* – and *Western countries*, similarly to what President Erdoğan has often declared when receiving the Syrians (Kaya 2024). This came through when those muhtars that spoke of a special responsibility towards other Muslims elaborated on the reasons for it:

> "because Europe would never help Muslims",
>
> "because we are different from Europe, which is inhumane, letting them die at sea",
>
> "because Christians support each other, too",
>
> "because Germans feel closer to the Ukrainians, too",
>
> "because Muslims are being persecuted by global powers in this world, so we must unite",
>
> "because Muslims are being discriminated against", and
>
> "because people from other religions might convert the Syrians, so they should not go to Europe".

As becomes clear, hardly any of these motives is about the Syrian refugees themselves but they all live off a logic of distinction – that is, a definition of the Self in contrast to an Other, which in this case could be dubbed as 'the morally inferior West' (both inside Turkey and beyond). Following this logic of self-validation (cf. Gürsoy 2023), the proclaimed religious brotherhood

with the Syrian refugees seems to be more about affirming pious Muslims' moral virtuousness and dignity in contrast to non-Muslims, rather than about an actual feeling of proximity towards the Syrians. The mechanism that thus transpires here behind the Konyalite muhtars' religious brotherhood with the Syrian refugees is what one could call a *rationale of reaction*.

This rationale builds upon a general critique of the alleged lack of Islamic values west of Konya. In the view of Konya's muhtars, the treatment of the Syrian refugees by 'the West' as well as more secular parts of Turkish society was nothing but another instance of this alleged moral deficiency (sometimes also called *batının ahlaksızlığı*, 'the West's immorality', in Turkish vernacular). Speaking about Turkey's Syrian refugees, some of Konya's muhtars hence did no less than connecting the issue with a fundamental criticism of the 'oppression' of Islam and pious Muslims at the time of the Turkish Republic's foundation and thereafter and the way the Kemalist elites conceived Turkish national identity.

> [Atatürk] watered down [Turkey's religious life]. There are some things there that I criticise. I criticise when appropriate. Because... Now that we've brought it up, let's say it: I am conservative, religious, Muslim, and sometimes we have experienced problems because of that. For example, the Konyalites will not easily bring the CHP to power. Why? Because of the religious oppression they used to see during the time of İnönü, İsmet İnönü. I couldn't send my child, the one who is two years older than the other, to a Quran course. It was forbidden... He's Muslim! And I can't send him to a Quran course. I mean, unfortunately, there are problems because of that. I mean, some people like it, some people don't. I don't really like it. For example, the alphabet reform... […] Why was it necessary? We switched from the Arabic alphabet to Latin. What changed in one day? The population at that time was 23 million. 23 million Turks became illiterate in one day. By learning new letters again... No. And the fedora hat (*fötr şapka*) [a sign of Atatürk's], and the French stuff, whatever... There is no revolution against these things, but it happened. There's nothing we can do. Because of the religious degeneration this produced, we now have disagreements/differences (*ayrılıklarımız var*). (k24, male, senior, middle-class)

Together with the Konyalites' self-differentiation from the allegedly '*sosyetik*' descendants of the Kemalist elite in the urban centres of Turkey, as shown in the muhtars' description of their identity, this critique of the felt oppression of religiously conservative Muslims in Turkey is being transferred here onto the issue of the Syrian refugees' symbolic inclusion and the question of whether there is such a thing as religious brotherhood with them. As a consequence, many of Konya's muhtars affirmed their persisting solidarity with the Syrian refugees, despite the problems they were experiencing with them and the ways in which they regarded themselves as different from them, in order to react to what they perceived as yet again the victimisation of the 'subaltern' for their religious conservatism. As the quotes below illustrate, the Syrian refugee issue provides a new arena for 'moral competition' among Turkish citizens.

People here don't think badly of [the Syrians]. They don't think badly because they are Anatolian people. […] We're peasants, we're natural. […] I mean, there is no envy. Tayyip, for example, the Prime Minister, comes to you as a guest, he sits and eats; we are natural. I mean, we're guest-loving. […] We're compassionate. I mean, we have conscience.

So, it's different from those 'sosyetik' people, for example?

Of course.

They don't have that much compassion?

They don't have as much compassion as we do. (k20, male, senior, middle-class)

***

I read in a [Turkish] newspaper: "We will become Arabised."

No, no, no. We will not. Turks won't become 'Arabised'. There is a group in Turkey that doesn't want Syrians. What do they call them in Europe? Bourgeois. The bourgeoisie is pushing this view. By saying we will become 'Arabised', they drive the people into hatred. Those newspapers are their spokespersons. (k3, male, senior, middle-class)

***

For example, some parties have a racist discourse – CHP, İYİ, Ümit Özdağ's party – and say: "We will expel them." They are being racist. Actually, [the Syrians] should indeed go and that war should end. But the people who say those [racist] things employ Syrians in their own shops. They employ them because their labour is cheap. In other words, if the state decides tomorrow that we are expelling the refugees, those people who oppose them will oppose them again at the border gates, saying that we should not expel them. For example, Ümit Özdağ says that the Syrians should leave, but his porter in his own home was a Syrian. That's what we heard. […] Those people [use racist language], some people do it, but not all of them. *The people* [*millet*] don't do it. The people don't like it.

What do the people think?

Even if the people don't like refugees, they put up with them. The people don't want them, 90% don't want them, but they don't persecute them, they still help them. […] Because if God sets a rule, He sets it for the good of people. […] You have a religious responsibility. (k16, male, senior, middle-class)

In this vignette, the issue of the Syrian refugees is being linked with the muhtars' self-description discussed above. What emerges is the previously seen juxtaposition of *'the people'*, that are portrayed as low-class, sincere, hospitable, religious and, above all, more conscientious and compassionate, with an *'elite'*, that is portrayed as ruthless, hateful, racist, and hypocritical. This juxtaposition, which depicts differences in social class and religious identity as aligned and equates them with differences in morality and compassion, effectively transfers the pre-existing identity struggle between Turkey's secularist and religiously conservative strata onto the issue of the Syrian refugees. In this narrative, we see, on the one hand, the personage of the 'cold, indecent, and insincere secular bourgeois', whose vision of Turkishness has dominated the Republic for 'far too long' and who excludes the Syrian refugees because of their religious

conservatism, just like they used to exclude Turkey's conservatives, and on the other, we see the personage of the 'warm, candid, righteous, and pious commoner from Anatolia', who reacts to the dominance of the 'elite' by advocating a different vision of Turkishness that puts their view of the Islamic ethos at its centre and, *therefore*, expresses more inclusive views about the Syrian refugees. The religious conservatives' higher inclusivity towards the Syrian refugees thus becomes another way for them to oppose their definitional Other inside Turkey, that is, the secular elites, and express their own claim to inclusion and moral superiority. Turks' symbolic boundary making towards the Syrians hence mirrors their struggle for recognition and cultural domination inside their conflict over Turkish identity. Because, as Lamont reminds us in Bloemraad et al. (2019: 74), symbolic boundary making connects inclusion with morality for it is essentially about defining who counts as "a valuable member of society".

In sum, as the following vignette illustrates, the reception of the Syrian refugees has become a new battleground for Turkey's pre-existing identity struggle. This means that the statistical difference in relation to the Syrians between secularist and religiously conservative Turkish citizens is not actually reflective of differences in how they feel about the Syrians, but rather, it is reflective of how they feel about each other.

> *What does it depend on [whether Turks get along with the Syrians or not]?*
>
> Let me speak frankly about this: It's about political views… If a man doesn't pray or if a woman doesn't cover her hair, they see [the Syrians] as [pious] Muslims – ehm – and therefore as bad. But the other guy is a hajji [he has done the pilgrimage to Mecca]; he says: "[Exclusion] is a sin, it's a shame." He goes and caresses [the Syrian's] head. So, it's about political views, about socialism, about secularism. Or people may be angry with the government, angry with Tayyip [President Erdoğan]: "You brought them here, you put them here!" Et cetera. There are people from CHP, İYİ Party, and HDP who are angry [at the Syrian refugees] because of their political views. (k5, male, senior, working-class)

As described above, a defining feature of Turkish politics since the foundation of the Republic has been the opposition between supporters of the Kemalist idea of Turkish national identity, that typically live more secular lifestyles and define themselves as 'modern', and supporters of a more religiously loaded idea of Turkish national identity, that place greater emphasis on Islamic prescripts, are more conservative and define themselves as 'the people' or 'true Turks' in contrast to a supposed secular, urban and elitist Other. This conflict has been fought on various fields, ranging from sexuality, sports, clothing, and alcohol (En Son Haber 2022; Middle East Eye 2023) over foreign policy (Hintz 2018) and foreign investments (Middle East Eye 2022) to national education (Cumhuriyet 2024b), women's rights (Cumhurriyet 2023), popular culture (Hintz 2021), and even dogs (Zaman 2024). And as this chapter has shown, the

reception of the Syrian refugees has become another one of them. As a result, when Turkey's religiously conservatives are found in surveys to be more inclusive of the Syrian refugees, as discussed in Chapter One, then that is *not* because they actually feel closer to them, *but* because they are thereby advocating a different, more Islamic vision of morality and Turkishness. They are, so to speak, widening the boundaries of Turkish society in order to redefine its identity.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to analyse the role of religious identity in how the people of Konya relate to the Syrian refugees. As has become clear, religious identity plays a double layered role here. Paradoxically, the Konyalite muhtars' narratives exposed religious identity as both an exclusive and inclusive symbolic boundary vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. It is exclusive in that Konya's religiously conservative muhtars invoked their understanding of themselves as 'good Muslims' as a difference to the Syrian refugees, whom they considered 'improper Muslims' due to the many social problems that they experienced with them. On the one hand, religious identity thus served establishing a rigid symbolic boundary vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees rather than blurring the difference between them. On the other, religious identity also was invoked as the thing that united religiously conservative Turks and Syrians against what the muhtars saw as their shared oppressor: secular immorality, both in the sense of 'the West' and in the sense of Turkey's Kemalist elite and its adherents. Taken together, what follows is that while Konya's religiously conservative muhtars do not identify with the Syrian refugees, they do identify with the feeling of exclusion that the Syrian refugees experience in Turkey as a result of their prima facie religious conservatism. In conclusion, this suggests that the mechanism behind the greater inclusivity of religiously conservative Turkish citizens vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, that previous surveys have indicated, is what I call a rationale of reaction, i.e. a way to oppose a shared opponent: secularist Turks.

Building on this idea, the next chapter on Turkish citizens' boundary making vis-à-vis Syrian refugees in Şanlıurfa shall explore whether the same mechanism may also apply to the role of ethnic identity.

Chapter Six

"Language is just a tool"

Urfa

Table of Contents

Chapter Six

"Language is just a tool"
Urfa

Introduction

The city of Urfa (or *Şanlıurfa* – 'glorious Urfa' – as its official name reads) is in many ways very different from Izmir and Konya. Located around 100 kilometres north of Turkey's border with Syria, it is a major urban space in Turkey's southeast with c. 1 million inhabitants, marked by its ancient history and age-old melting pot of ethnicities, religions, and languages. Today, this religious diversity is minimal, with the majority of Urfalites being Sunni Muslims and most of them very conservatively so. Yet, its ethnic diversity persists, with many of its residents identifying as ethnically Arab or Kurdish next to being Turkish citizens, and so the languages spoken in the homes of Urfa are many. But besides its religious and social conservatism, there are also other characteristics that Urfa shares with Konya. Thanks to today's irrigation of the Harran plain, agriculture in Urfa has drastically modernised and spread, driving employment across the region. Similarly, also tourism to Urfa and its historical sites has skyrocketed in recent years, attracting visitors from around Turkey and abroad to what used to be a very destitute place. This has not only made Urfa's economy grow, it has also led to the creation of new establishments that cater to a touristic clientele that more often than not is less religiously conservative than many Urfalites. With the arrival of the Syrian refugees, this diversification and transformation of Urfa reached another peak because what followed the Kurds and Arabs fleeing to Urfa from Syria, were the highly educated (and often White) aid workers from other places in Turkey and abroad, coming to help. As a result, the cultural crossroads that is Urfa is even more real today than before the Syria crisis. Still, the general make-up of the city remains that of an ethnic diversity united in religious conservatism.

What does that mean for local Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees? Do the ethnic and linguistic commonalities between hosts and refugees engender different interactions and notions of belonging in Urfa than in Konya? As shall be shown in this chapter, Urfa's Kurdish and Arab inhabitants indeed seem to draw more inclusive *social* boundaries vis-à-vis the likewise Arab and Kurdish Syrian refugees in their city than do Turkish citizens in Konya. But what may *seem* like solidarity among co-ethnics crystallises upon further investigation as *a 'special responsibility' towards relatives* – who happen to be of the same ethnicity. In short,

it is a wide definition of *family ties (kinship)* rather than pure ethnic ties that is behind the greater social inclusiveness in Urfa, and this social inclusiveness is *not* transferred to Turkey's Syrian refugees in general. Instead, rejecting the idea of ethnically conscious inclusion as "racism", Urfa's muhtars were keen to emphasise that language was nothing more than "a tool", and, therefore, could not and should not determine solidarity. As a result, like elsewhere in Turkey, many Turkish citizens in Urfa would prefer the Syrian refugees to leave rather than stay, regardless of the latter's ethnicity, which they justify through several resentful narratives.

However, this does not entirely map onto the level of *symbolic* boundary making. Here, the Urfalites, like the people of Konya, seem to be somewhat more inclusive than, for example, people in Izmir. The reason for this – also like in Konya – is however not that they actually feel closer to the Syrian refugees (except for their relatives, that is) but, instead, by expressing that the Kurdish and Arab Syrians are part of Turkey, they pursue a strategy of redrawing the symbolic boundaries of Turkish society at large to make them more inclusive of *themselves*. Like in Konya, their underlying interest is to integrate their own formerly marginalised identity – here, as Kurds or Arabs – more into the centre of what it means to be a national of the Turkish Republic today. And the symbolic inclusion of the Syrian refugees is a way for them to do so.

Like the preceding two chapters, the remainder shall discuss the identity of the local Turkish citizens and the situation of the Syrian refugees that they are exposed to, followed by an analysis of the 42 (male) interviewees' social and symbolic boundary making. In doing so, I shall first show that what looks to be about ethnicity is actually about kinship; then analyse the narrative that the Urfalites mobilise to justify their rejection of the Syrian refugees overall; and, finally, distil the vision of Turkish society that they favour and that underlies their partly inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees.

1. Urfa and its Syrian Refugees

1.1 Who are the People of Urfa?

For many people, Urfa and its neighbouring cities symbolise a 'Kurdish-Arab Turkey'. That is because the ethnicities and predominantly very conservative lifestyles of its inhabitants (International Crisis Group 2019) as well as the architecture of the city seem similar to nearby Syria and Iraq, with which the city shares much history and indeed commonalities (Beihammer 2012; Bekleyen and Korkmaz 2013). According to unofficial estimations, Urfa's population is 60% Kurdish, 30% Arab, and 10% Turkmen or Turkish (International Crisis Group 2019).

Known as *Edessa* in Antiquity, Urfa once was situated at the northernmost tip of Mesopotamia (Segal 1970), the famously multicultural landscape in the middle of the Middle East.[28]

In describing their hometown and its people to me, many of my interlocutors made reference to the diversity of the inhabitants that had lived in Urfa over the centuries, establishing various languages, religions, and customs in and around the city. Some underlined this by showing me around their neighbourhood and indicating the buildings of non-Muslim religions, such as a synagogue or a church, that were no longer in use today. Indeed, for centuries, Jews and Christians were living in Urfa side by side with the majority of Sunni Muslims (Öktem 2004). However, as Öktem (2004) describes in great detail based on his own fieldwork in Urfa, many members of the Jewish and Armenian religious minorities disappeared from the city after the pogroms of 1895 and the beginning of Sunni Muslim-dominated Turkish nationalism that was also present in Urfa. Today, Urfa's cultural diversity therefore mainly consists in ethnic terms, with many people identifying as Arab or Kurdish and speaking the respective languages at home and with only few people identifying as ethnically Turkish. In contrast, religiously speaking, almost everyone adheres to a conservative type of Sunni Islam. Still, in people's narratives, this multiculturalism – be it ethnic or religious, real or imagined – was a defining characteristic of Urfa's social identity, together with a special inclusiveness and openness towards strangers, allegedly resulting from it and reflected in people's hospitality.

In my interviews, the role of this ethnic diversity in everyday life was hard to pinpoint. On the one hand, many of my interlocutors stated that their social interactions and networks were not shaped by their ethnicity, arguing that the ability to communicate with each other was the only criterion that really mattered. But on the other, many also revealed that housing patterns often followed an 'ethnic logic', with most Urfalites living next to co-ethnics and some of the muhtars even calling the city's different neighbourhoods 'Kurdish', 'Arab', or 'Turkish'. What is more, rather than any big *existing differences* between the different ethnicities in Urfa, some muhtars would mention small attempts at *creating differences* that people would engage in. For example, according to one Kurdish muhtar, Urfa's Arabs were 'trying to be different' from Urfa's Kurds by giving their vote to Turkish nationalist parties rather than religious or leftist ones like the Kurds. While practical linguistic considerations and family ties thus brought out an ethnic element in how the people of Urfa drew their *social* boundaries vis-à-vis each other (see the housing patterns, for instance), ethnic identity seemed to play hardly any role in the making of *symbolic* boundaries among the Urfalites.

---

[28] A detailed description of what Urfa feels like today and how I navigated my fieldwork there can be found in Appendix I.

Meanwhile, Urfa's ethnic makeup went hand in hand with the existence of regional kinship networks (*aşiret*). Although not visible to me and allegedly decreasing in importance, especially among the young, as one interviewee told me with much regret, their remaining relevance in my interlocutors' lives came out every now and then in my encounters. Instances of that were one of my interviewees' questions about the clan my taxi driver belonged to, as he was sitting with us for the duration of the interview, or another interviewee's role as head of his clan in the village he was from, which gave him a higher social status and level of authority in the rural area he was living in. It was in this spirit of a relevant but not primary social connection, which the clan seemed to be for most of my interlocutors, that they also signalled their awareness of some of their clans reaching into Syria and connecting them with "relatives" over there – many of which now were in Urfa.

Kinship networks have indeed long played an important role in southeast Turkey and its neighbouring regions, often sustained by "clan endogamy" (Barth 1986: 170) and providing an economic community (Öztürk, Jongerden, and Hilton 2014), local authority (Belge 2011), and sometimes even political union (Ocakli 2017). While their importance has been fading in recent decades, as described by the muhtar, "tribalism still remains influential in the life and consciousness of many Kurds" (Saatci 2002: 558; Ocakli 2017) and Arabs in southeast Turkey. This also applies to cross-border family ties into Syria and Iraq that have been the basis of widespread trade and smuggling (Belge 2011; Aïta 2017; Gourlay 2018a). With the onset of the Syrian civil war, the cross-border ties of Kurds in Turkey and Syria moreover gave rise to a strengthening of pan-Kurdish identity, driven by a shared experience of oppression and struggle against the dominant order (Gourlay 2018a, 2018b). Typically, however, clans in southeast Turkey have been opponents of the Kurdish movement (Belge 2011; Ocakli 2017), stressing the various cultural *differences among Kurds* (Saatci 2002) and rather tending to support conservative Islamic forces in politics (Ocakli 2017). The idea of a collective Kurdish identity has therefore "never had an unambiguous denotation" (van Bruinessen 1992: 268), but instead, many Kurds "have identified themselves as speakers of a language or dialect, members of a religious sect or certain tribe, or any combination of them" (Saatci 2002: 558).

The obstacle that clan structures in southeast Turkey have posed to the formation of a wider national identity has also affected the Kemalists' making of secular modern Turkishness, as Ceren Belge (2011) has investigated in detail. Analysing historical records and interviews, Belge finds that "kinship networks and solidarity undermined the state's exclusivist national project" (2011: 110) and "the worldview of the republican elite" (2011: 100) that sought to "destroy 'traditional' society in order to make a new type of citizen" (ibid). By drawing on the

"invisible ties of commitment and solidarity" (2011: 102) that kinship networks represent for many Kurds, they were able to collectively fend off the "thorough transformation of society" (2011: 99) that the Kemalists pursued and the "violent punishment of those who refused the republic's offer of Turkish national identity" (2011: 109). Differently put, the change in "the social and symbolic order" (2011: 97) of the region that the Republic's establishment wanted, went against the "mental maps" (2011: 98) of the local Kurdish (and Arab) population. What Belge thus describes here is a struggle over the social and symbolic boundaries of the national identity of the new Turkish Republic between the Kemalist leadership and the clan structures of ethnic minorities in the southeast of Turkey, such as the Kurds. While the state's law of the time considered many Kurds "tribes who are citizens of Turkey but not loyal to the Turkish culture" (2011: 100), Kurds' resistance to the "ideal national citizen" (2011: 109) became what Belge calls "kinship morality" (2011: 103) in a "war on identity" (2011: 109). Belge's analysis hence shows how kinship networks in southeast Turkey, including Urfa (2011: 103), have long been a defining factor of social and symbolic boundary making (more so than ethnicity itself) and have as such challenged the dominant Kemalist vision of Turkish national identity.

Even more than the kinship networks, however, it was farming and the countryside that my interviewees would evoke in their narratives about the defining features of life in Urfa and its people. Agriculture has indeed been blossoming in this part of southeast Turkey and become a major source of income in Urfa (Şahin Mencütek, Karal, and Altıntop 2021), especially since the start of GAP (*Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*), the Southeast Anatolia Project of the Turkish government. Launched in the 1970s, GAP was an initiative to develop what was seen as the 'underdeveloped' hinterland of the Turkish Republic and as susceptible to Kurdish ethno-nationalism and insurgency as a result of that (Bilgen 2018, 2019). With GAP came the construction of 22 dams along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, resulting in the irrigation of 1.8 million hectares of previously arid lands in the Harran plain around Urfa (Bilgen 2019), enabling the spread of cultivation in a region that had struggled to have any before. As a result, many of my interviewees, too, would engage in one way or another in agriculture, ranging from being large landowners themselves to trading livestock at a very small scale. The rise in wealth that the profiting inhabitants of Urfa have seen has, like in Konya, led many of them to move away from their old-town houses into high-rising newbuilds far off the city centre and to rent out their previous homes to newly arriving villagers – and Syrian refugees (Purcell 2017).

If a key aim behind GAP was to reduce the popularity of Kurdish nationalism among ethnically Kurdish Turkish citizens in southeast Turkey (Bilgen 2018), the region around Urfa can serve as an example where Kurdish ethnic identity does not coincide much with the leftist

and pro-Kurdish attitudes one may find, for example, in Diyarbakır, Van, or Tunceli (Gourlay 2018a, 2018b). That is because, as often goes unnoticed in the media, many ethnically Kurdish Turkish citizens identify as religiously conservative Muslims before ethnic Kurds and their political ideals may thus be more represented by a discourse of neo-Ottomanism, promising inclusion in Turkish society through the common bond of Islam, than by a discourse of ethnic distinction and minority rights (Yavuz 1998; Akdağ 2016). Indeed, as many of my interviewees were adamant to emphasise, 'just because they were Kurdish, they did not support the PKK' – a connotation often made in Turkey that they seemed to suffer from and wanted to disprove.

What is moreover important to note here is that, before deploying the notion of an 'Islamic brotherhood' as a policy narrative to foster social acceptance of the Syrian refugees, President Erdoğan had used the same narrative to try to foster social cohesion among the different ethnic identities inside Turkish society and to symbolically include the Kurds more (Sarigil 2010). If such a vision of Turkish society was popular among most of the religiously conservative Kurds in Urfa that I spoke to, this held even more true for my ethnically Arab interlocutors, who would have few other options to find belonging in Turkey. With this social profile in mind, it comes as little of a surprise that the AKP achieved 43% in Urfa in the general elections of May 2023, followed by 25% for the pro-Kurdish HDP, 9.4% for the far-right nationalist MHP, and 7.5% for the Kemalist CHP (Sözcü Gazetesi 2023).

The wide opposition to Kurdish independence and insurgency among most people in Urfa also set them off, in their view, from many of the Kurds on the other side of the border in Syria, whom they would often regard as Kurdish nationalists. Clan networks as well as the fact that Urfa's inhabitants, for the most part, also speak Kurdish or Arabic as their mother tongue, have facilitated the Syrian refugees' settlement in Urfa (International Crisis Group 2019), yet the role of these commonalities in social and symbolic boundary making has been less clear.

1.2 The Situation of the Syrian Refugees in Urfa

With around 120,000 Syrian refugees living in its city in 2017 next to circa one million locals (van Uden and Jongerden 2021), Urfa has been "grappling ever more with insufficient jobs, inadequate school capacity, early marriages and public administration deficiencies, as well as an increase in crime" (International Crisis Group 2019: 0) since the Syrian refugees' arrival. Moreover, the International Crisis Group (ICG) found in 2019 that "[i]nter-communal strains [were] emerging in Şanlıurfa that could lead to clashes and presage similar tensions elsewhere" (ibid). Already in 2017, Urfa had seen a demonstration against the Syrian refugees as well as a riot that led to the vandalization of several Syrian-owned shops (van Uden and Jongerden

2021). In short, as a result of its close proximity to Syria, the city of Urfa has been under particularly high pressure since the onset of the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey.

The above-cited report by ICG thoroughly assessed the situation of the Syrian refugees in Urfa in the year of 2018, around four years prior to my fieldwork. Based on interviews with experts at Turkish ministries and state authorities, foreign and Turkish aid organisations, local politicians, teachers, businesspeople, students, parents, and *muhtars* as well as Syrian refugees, of course, it paints a picture of initial hospitality and support organised around Kurdish and Arab *kinship networks*,[29] followed by waning compassion and "worrying new strains" (International Crisis Group 2019: 2) of both economic and social nature.

ICG's findings include that while most Syrian refugees in Urfa, like in Turkey overall, do not speak Turkish at all or only very little, in Urfa, many of them benefit from having *Turkish citizen relatives* who were ready to help them upon their arrival with things such as administrative processes, the search for housing, or finding a job (International Crisis Group 2019: 2). As the report states, this help was particularly directed at Syrian refugees who were indeed *some sort* of relative,[30] coming mostly from places directly behind the border, and less at Syrian refugees from cities farther away (ibid). In the beginning, especially many Kurdish Turkish citizens also seemed to salute the displaced Syrian Kurds' efforts to battle the terror group ISIS that was occupying their homes and trying to oppress them (ibid).

However, by 2016, six years after the first arrivals, crime had risen enormously, with convictions having quadrupled, which the report links to criminal networks' targeting of Syrian youth in Urfa for smuggling, sexual exploitation, and drug trade (ibid: 4-5). Particularly Syrian women living in camps have been found to be 'sold' for sex by camp guards to local Turkish men (ibid: 7). Different but related, the report also speaks of "exploitative marriages" (ibid: 11), arising from polygamous marital unions performed by local imams, albeit legally prohibited by the Turkish state. As documentaries (e.g. Ölcüm 2016) and anecdotal evidence I gathered locally suggest, often, the young Syrian women who become the second or third wives of older Turkish men are given to their grooms by their families for high amounts of money, which both lowers the strains on the families' budgets and increases their economic resources. Although condoned by the assisting imams, ICG has found these polygamous marriages to be

---

[29] This finding is also supported by van Uden and Jongerden (2021), who identified kinship networks as the main support network of Syrian refugees in Urfa.

[30] As Ocakli explains, today, "the meaning and boundaries of clan networks have become vague [so that] families need not always be blood relatives [but can] base their allegiance to a clan on their village of origin" (2017: 574).

"socially disruptive and [to] cause tension between Syrians and Turkish citizens" (ibid: 11),[31] the latter of which often feel uneasy about the 'comeback' of this phenomenon and tend to blame the young Syrian women themselves for it (ibid). The fact that many female Syrian refugees as well as many female Turkish citizens are married underage in the region of Urfa, however, seems to be conducive to these occurrences and makes them persist (ibid: 14).

Apart from crime, prostitution, and exploitative marriages, the report also indicates a high level of poverty among Urfa's Syrian refugees (as among most Syrian refugees in Turkey) and a very high tendency to work in informal jobs in the agricultural sector with salaries far below the legal minimum wage (ibid: 16-17). In fact, the Syrian refugees' massive presence in Turkish agriculture (Kirişci 2020) joins a general trend of increasing shares of foreign workers in this sector since the 1990s and is now so common that some speak of "a new reserve for cheap labor in Turkey" (Kavak 2016: 34), a "refugeeization of the workforce" (Erturk 2017: 170), or "new rural ghettos in southern Turkey" (Pelek 2022: 54). As elsewhere in Turkey, too, this heightens the level of resentment among Turkish citizens that these Syrians have to face, as their exploitation is also a driver of competition and of a drop in wages for Turkish citizens on the informal labour market, many of which, in Urfa, live in destitute conditions themselves (UNHCR 2017; International Crisis Group 2018).

In addition, this resentment also lives off the perception that Syrian refugees are being privileged in comparison to Turkish citizens, receiving financial aid particularly for them and preferential treatment by the authorities (ICG 2018). While the Turkish state's privileging of Syrian refugees is a myth (ibid), part of this imbalance between the Turkish host communities and Syrian refugees is indeed due to social security measures especially for Syrian refugees, designed and financed by the EU in order to *relieve* some of the pressure on the Turkish state and society (European Commission 2023a). Especially in regions like Urfa where many Turkish citizens are impoverished themselves, however, this humanitarian aid by international donors also appears to have the adverse effect of *reinforcing* the perception of the Syrian refugees as a problem rather than reducing it. As one muhtar in Urfa put it to me during a ride in his car when passing a vehicle of the UN: "Do you know who they are? They are the United Nations. And do you know what they do? They only help the Syrians."

The social tensions that result from these various factors can be felt in the Syrian refugees' everyday lives. Based on in-depth interviews with Syrian refugees and staff members

---

[31] Two muhtars (one Arab, one Kurdish) did indeed tell me about their young Syrian second wives, with one also telling me about the criticism from other local Turkish citizens he was facing for it. Another (Kurdish) muhtar meanwhile told me that he saw it as his duty as a muhtar to try to prevent this "unethical" practice.

of present NGOs, Aras and Duman found that many Syrian children in Urfa, as elsewhere in southeast Turkey, reported "encounter[ing] physical and psychological violence from their peers on their way to and from schools or in their neighbourhoods" (2019: 485). Moreover, orphanage exists in high numbers among the Syrian refugees in Urfa, being estimated at 11,000 cases in 2018, which is why many of the present humanitarian aid organisations and UN agencies focus in particular on vulnerable children in Urfa, both Syrian and Turkish (Şahin Mencütek, Karal, and Altıntop 2021). Meanwhile, the Syrian refugee children's mothers often also face particularly high obstacles in accessing the labour market due to their widely lacking knowledge of Turkish and low level of education and professional skills (Öztürk, Vildan Serin, and Altınoz 2019). Next to the language barrier, Şimşek et al. (2018) found in a survey on Syrian refugee women in Urfa that many also reported various mental health symptoms and a lack of social support. The need for greater socio-psychological support among Syrian refugees in Urfa has also been identified by Aras and Duman (2019).

With these destitute conditions in mind, many Syrian refugees in the Turkish-Syrian border region, including Urfa, have for a long time remained 'in waiting', expecting the situation in Syria to change again and their return to potentially become possible (Biner and Biner 2021). To cope with the lack of local integration that, however, resulted from the protraction of this assumed temporariness (Kirişci and Püttmann 2023), many Syrian refugees in the region have resorted to transnational links with family and friends abroad in countries such as Germany who help them survive by sending them remittances (Şimşek 2018b). In the same transnational vein, other Syrian refugees in the region who have fought against ISIS as part of insurgency groups have maintained ties to these groups and try to support them (Dag 2018). Moreover, many Syrian refugees that do business in Urfa purchase their goods from across the border (van Uden and Jongerden 2021). Yet, these transnational activities may also arouse the anger of local Turkish citizens who feel economically disadvantaged or are opposed to 'Kurdish unity'. Meanwhile, also inside Urfa, such "informal support systems" have been observed in a case study by van Uden and Jongerden (2021: 251) to be the Syrian refugees' main way of coping with their situation. However, given the diversity of these networks, the authors also conclude that there is "no single, overarching Syrian community" (ibid) in Urfa.

Meanwhile, some policy reports have tended to speak of "more cultural continuity" (International Crisis Group 2018: 3) between Syrian refugees and Turkish citizens in Turkey's southeast, allegedly "making [the latter] more hospitable to the Syrians who have settled there" (ibid). What seems to confirm this belief is that "[m]ost of the refugees from Syria in Urfa are Arabs and Kurds and settle in a neighbourhood that corresponds with their ethnicity" (van

Uden and Jongerden 2021: 257). However, as my analysis in the next section will suggest, to believe that the social and symbolic boundaries between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees must therefore be fairly blurred, would be misguided.

2. Boundary Making vis-à-vis the Syrian Refugees in Urfa

2.1 Inclusion: 'Familialism' rather than Ethnic Solidarity

Many of the Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees in Urfa share the same language: Arabic or Kurdish. It comes with little surprise that this facilitates their communication and thus social interaction, as many of the interviewees reported. As previous research has found, too, this was also reflected in their housing patterns: while there were said to be fewer ethnically Kurdish Syrian refugees than Arab ones, many of them had reportedly chosen to settle in neighbourhoods of their own ethnicity. However, this did not mean that Urfa's residents would necessarily also prefer to speak Kurdish or Arabic with the Syrians. In fact, where possible, Turkish was said to be the language of communication between locals and Syrians in many of the interviews. Still, for some, the commonalities they shared with the Syrian refugees allegedly blurred both the social boundaries between them, as the commonalities made it easier to socially interact, and the symbolic ones, as they created a sense of collective identity, just as the Distance Model would predict and previous research has found, too (Gourlay 2018a; van Uden and Jongerden 2021). As one Arab muhtar succinctly put it:

> *In your daily life, do Turkish citizens and Syrians ever have any conversations?*
>
> Of course, they do. Because the language is the same, the [ethnic] bond [*bağ*] is the same, the religion is the same. Inevitably, there is a connection. Many of them are our relatives. And most of us here have gotten married [to them], too. For example, one of my wives is Syrian. (u8, male, middle-aged, working-class, Arab)

This vignette perfectly reflects the idea that social boundaries neatly map onto symbolic ones and that the greater the ethnic and religious similarities between people, the blurrier these are. However, probing further into this during the interviews unsettled this certainty.

As this vignette also shows, a crucial element in this relationship is the idea of being *relatives*. These family ties consist of two dimensions: newly formed marriages between (generally male) Turkish citizens and (female) Syrians, and pre-existing contacts between more or less distant kins on the two sides of the border. These family ties shape their relationship in different ways. As several of the interviews indicated, many of the Syrian refugees ended up living in neighbourhoods dominated by their own ethnic group not only because the shared

language facilitated communication in everyday life (including the search for work) but also because they *already knew someone there*. As one muhtar put it: "most of them are the relatives of our Urfa people anyway". The underlying relevance of "pre-existing relations (especially kin)" also comes out in the study by van Uden and Jongerden (2021: 260), giving a hint that what may seem like solidarity among co-ethnics may in fact be solidarity among relatives.

Indeed, for the local Turkish citizens, sharing a language and having family ties was not the same as a generalisable ethnic solidarity. Rather, as many of the interviewees stated, the fact that they were in some way related to many of the Syrian refugees gave them a *special responsibility*. It was this duty of care towards their relatives, no matter how distant, that made them feel closer to Syrian refugees of their own ethnicity; it was not their ethnicity as such. This analysis finds support in the parallel finding by van Uden and Jongerden that ethnic ties were particularly strong when they were actually "grounded in regional and kinship ties" (2021: 257). The same logic of other factors than ethnicity being *latently at work* here applied to newly formed family relations between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees of the same ethnicity through marriage. Sharing a language, which was linked to sharing the same ethnicity, made it easier to enter a marital relationship – but as the interviewees emphasised, it was not their partners' ethnicity itself that made relationships with co-ethnics more attractive.

This predominantly *instrumental* significance of co-ethnicity in Turkish-Syrian relations in Urfa is as crucial as it is fuzzy. After all, one might argue: What is the meaning of collective ethnic identity if not sharing a language, being somehow related, and therefore, maybe, culturally more similar and more drawn to each other? This is indeed what primordial theorists of ethnicity and nationhood have claimed ever since J. G. Herder (Wimmer 2013). But this conception falls short of what ethnic identity may mean today, which varies a lot in the significance it has for every individual. This was also found by van Uden and Jongerden in the case of Urfa, stating that their Syrian and Turkish informants "related to their ethnicity to varying degrees and in different ways" (2021: 257), with not all of them moving in networks that were ethnically defined. Moreover, reducing the explanation of these patterns to simple ethnic homophily overlooks how attributing causal efficacy to ethnic group identity itself may obfuscate the mechanisms at the level of the individual that may actually produce these patterns (Brubaker 2002; Wimmer 2013: 42).

One such alternative mechanism is what Wimmer (2013: 42) has called "familialism": the clustering of individuals according to pre-existing contacts and relationships of trust, often arising from being related. These familial clusters may *correlate* with a specific ethnicity, but that does not make ethnic identity the *causal* force behind those bonds. As Wimmer explains,

> [one] needs to carefully determine whether or not an observed pattern is indeed "ethnic" or whether other, lower (or higher) levels of social organization are responsible for the outcome, most importantly, village communities or families. Given that most villages and families are monoethnic, observers should beware of interpreting village or family networks as evidence of ethnic solidarity (Wimmer 2013: 42)

Family networks (including pre-existing contacts) and the practical advantages of sharing a language are also what crystallises as a more plausible explanation for why Urfa's Syrian refugees mostly live in neighbourhoods dominated by their own ethnicity (where they knew someone) and why the locals of Urfa expressed hospitable views and feelings of proximity mostly only vis-à-vis *some* of their co-ethnics. As the same muhtar that initially emphasised cultural proximity to the Syrian refugees detailed later in the interview:

> It comes from kinship, not from Kurdishness or racism. You have to show more sympathy to them. Now you say, why do you show sympathy? I mean, Kurds are oppressed there, you have to recognise them, they are oppressed there. We know ISIS; they are terrorists. (u8, male, middle-aged, working-class, Arab)

While the vignette firstly exemplifies how family ties rather than ethnic ties (which *happen to be the same here*) drive their special solidarity with the Syrian refugees in their neighbourhood, it moreover even reveals a strong opposition to the idea that ethnicity in and of itself could be the binding force between locals and refugees because this idea is seen as "racist". As some of the interviewees put it when being pressed on the question of an ethnic solidarity:

> *So, how does a Kurd from around here get along with a Kurd from Syria?*
>
> [Muhtar:] A Kurd from there can also get along with an Arab just as with a Kurd from here. It's not just Kurds with Kurds.
>
> *So, how about any Kurdish brotherhood?*
>
> [Bystander:] No, it's more a human brotherhood. It'd be the same if they were Ukrainian or Russian.
>
> [Muhtar:] The Western mentality is a bit like that: they speak of Kurds and Turks. (u1, male, middle-aged, working-class, Kurdish)

This sort of conflation of the stress on being relatives and the stress on the fact that there was a general, ethnically non-discriminatory responsibility to support the refugees repeatedly resurfaced in the interviews, as also the following vignette illustrates:

> Most people here are obliged [to help] [*çoğunluk mecburi hallerde*]. They must take them into their homes because they are their relatives. When it is necessary you will take them home; you can't leave them on the street. They escaped from war; you have to protect and look after that person. (u21, male, senior, middle-class, Kurdish)

This seemingly-ethnic-but-actually-family solidarity at times also *spilled over* onto co-ethnics that were not direct relatives (which in a setting where family ties tend to be defined in very broad, sometimes regional terms (Ocakli 2017) was more often than not difficult to disentangle anyway). This, even more, created the impression of an ethnic solidarity, but yet again, in fact, was reflective of friendships that had emerged through kinship networks, which happened to be monoethnic but did not necessarily display an 'ethnic consciousness'.

This idea finds further support in the finding that almost none of the interviewed muhtars seemed to attribute any special importance to some sort of shared 'Kurdishness' or 'Arabness' per se and that many of them furthermore refrained from expressing any *general* solidarity with the Syrian refugees overall. Instead, they reiterated many of the narratives of rejection that could also be heard in Konya. This suggests, as previous research has found, too (Danış, Taraghi, and Pérouse 2009; Gourlay 2018a), that affirming ethnic solidarity depends on political convictions rather than cultural identification. As the next section will show, similarly to the exclusionary narrative of 'good Muslimhood' in Konya, one dominant narrative among the muhtars of Urfa presented their exclusion of the Syrian refugees as, in fact, an *assertion* of the city's ethnic diversity and allegedly non-discriminatory multiculturalism.

2.2 Exclusion: Committing to Ethnic Diversity as the Dissolution of Ethnic Bonds

This section will analyse the street-level narratives in Urfa that justify the refugees' exclusion. Having dissected the apparent 'special relationship' that Urfa's muhtars expressed regarding their co-ethnics from Syria, which revealed the centrality of pre-existing (often kinship) ties, helps understand why these feelings at the same time also allow for expressions of repulsion vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees overall, as is the case in much of the data I collected. Despite the seeming ethnic and religious, if not 'cultural', similarity between Urfa's Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees, which the Distance Model would expect to result in feelings of proximity and which some of the muhtars, indeed, affirmed, many of them also voiced strikingly harsh and brutal views in describing the Syrians, as the following vignettes illustrate (trigger warning).

> Since they have less Islam, their lifestyle is more comfortable. They also drink alcohol and go out with their wives until 3 o'clock in the morning. However, Allah says: 'I distribute sustenance to those who get up early'. Do you know who strolls through the streets at night? Dogs. A dog strolls until the morning and sleeps during the day. In the evening, there's a dog next to every rubbish bin. They [the Syrians] are of the dog breed. (u24, male, senior, working-class, Kurdish)
>
> ***
>
> Syrians are filthy. Like animals. No matter how much good you do them, they don't understand goodness. (u27, male, senior, working-class, Kurdish)

Are they not your Muslim brothers and sisters?

[Bystander 1:] That is true. [But] we took them in as human beings. There are also Jews and Armenians among them. How should I know their religion. Do you know what their religion is? Now there is war in Ukraine, and we pity them. And when Palestine was dropping bombs on Israel, we supported Israel. We took them [the Syrians] in as human beings, but they are not human beings.

[Muhtar:] Europe did well not to take them. If they go to Europe, they will wreck it, too.

[…]

So, why did you take them in?

[Bystander 2:] At first, we did not know that they were such traitors. [But] if [tomorrow] there was another country [from where refugees would come], we would help again.

(u11, male, middle-aged, working-class, Kurdish)

There is a lot to unpack in these quotes, which I shall do now step by step.

What unites all three vignettes is the stark denial of the Syrian refugees' humanness. Like with the denial of the Syrian refugees' 'true Muslimness' found in Konya, this denial of humanness enables the interviewees to justify the limits or lack of inclusiveness towards the refugees. But what the vignettes also show is the variety of reasons and identity ascriptions that underpin this denial of humanness. One of these (obviously deeply racist) 'explanations' is the argument that because the Syrian refugees allegedly stick less to what the muhtars regard as the prescripts of Islam, their social behaviour allegedly degenerates to a degree that it is 'animalistic' rather than 'human'. Added to this are various other *moral* deficiencies that allegedly define them, such as a lack of gratitude or the Arabs' 'historical guilt' of having betrayed the Ottoman Empire, as invoked through the word "traitor". Likewise, several of the negative ascriptions seen in the interviews in Konya and Izmir also surfaced in Urfa. Structurally identical to the 'fake Muslims' narrative in Konya, the 'non-human' narrative suggests that because Turkish citizens' solidarity and hospitality towards the Syrian refugees was founded upon shared humanity (and, notably, nothing but that), this required a humanistic behaviour of Urfa's inhabitants, however, at the same time, these feelings of 'human solidarity' could inevitably not be sustained if this 'humanistic behaviour' was not reciprocated because this called into the question the actual 'humanness' of the Syrian refugees – the commonality underlying this solidarity. This thus shows once more how the idea that prima facie externally identifiable similarities could predict boundary making processes is a fallacy because, as the data indicates, even shared humanity can be questioned.

Most strikingly, however, this (racist) rejection of the Syrian refugees and the denial of the Syrian refugees' humanness, at the same time, served to demonstrate the Turkish citizens' allegedly own '*anti-racist humanism*'. This is a narrational logic that calls for closer inspection. Similarly to the narrative found in Konya that its inhabitants could not embrace the Syrian refugees but had to reject them exactly because they themselves were good Muslims (and the Syrians were not), the logic here is that, exactly because Urfa's Turkish citizens reject any type of racism and only care for shared humanity, any sort of general ethnic solidarity with one's co-ethnics among the Syrian refugees would go against the ideal of a non-racist ethnic diversity that Urfa was said to incarnate. In this ideal, the importance of ethnicity for patterns of social interaction and the creation of bonds is said to dissolve and only shared humanity does matter – which, however, can allegedly not be found among the Syrian refugees. In this narrative, too, it is thus *not despite, but by virtue of* their commitment to anti-racism that the Urfalites justify their racism against the Syrian refugees.

One sub-theme of this narrative is some *Kurdish* muhtars' rejection of specifically *Kurdish* Syrian refugees, as the following statement by a Kurdish muhtar illustrates:

> I think Arabs are better than Kurds. They are more respectful. For example, they invite us to their houses [even if] we don't go. But Syrian Kurds are not like that.
>
> *Do you have any relations with Arab Syrians?*
>
> Not much, but we meet them. They invite us to their houses; they are respectful towards us. They are more respectful than Syrian Kurds. (u5, male, senior, working-class, Kurdish)

This intra-Kurdish rejection, that is reminiscent of the Distinction Model, i.e. the idea that people draw thicker boundaries where ethnicity is the same in order to distinguish themselves, was often rooted in the perception that the Kurdish Syrian refugees would support Kurdish nationalism, including militant insurgent groups in Syria and Turkey, which were not very popular in Urfa where most Kurds were religiously conservative, loyal to the Turkish state, and eager to emphasise that they were 'neither terrorists nor separatists despite being Kurdish'. The connotation of Syrian Kurds with Kurdish insurgent activities is meanwhile also reflective of the Turkish government's securitising discourse since 2016 that has portrayed them as such, which has found fertile ground in Urfa where, in 2015, the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) had killed two sleeping police officers (Kösebalaban 2020). In this vein, the interviewed Kurdish muhtars often regarded the Kurdish Syrian refugees as ethnonationalists and thus as enemies of *their* ideal of ethnic diversity in which ethnicity no longer mattered much, as in their view was the case in Urfa.

They don't like…, I mean, they don't like us.

I wonder, why is that?

They do not like the Turkish state.

Is there no reason for this?

I think they're supporters of the YPG [militarised Kurdish group in Syria]. That's the reason.

But they haven't said that, have they?

But they criticise us: "You are Kurds, why don't you protect your roots?" I have an MP in parliament. My cousin was an MP. Is there anything that impairs my roots? Anything? My daughter lives in Balıkesir [city in western Turkey near the Aegean], she got married there, for example. We have no problem with Turks. (u5, male, senior, working-class, Kurdish)

While potential support for the YPG[32] by Kurdish Syrian refugees cannot easily be assumed and certainly not for all of them, this reaction to them by some of Urfa's Kurdish muhtars is yet again a reflection of the national identity conflict inside Turkey. In this conflict, many religiously and socially conservative Kurds, like the majority of Kurds in Urfa, typically are in firm opposition to those Kurds in Turkey that claim their recognition as a separate nation inside Turkey (such as the pro-Kurdish HDP). Especially because these are often perceived as being linked to the violent insurgent acts of the PKK. This shows once more how Turkish citizens' relationship to the Syrian refugees is 'pre-structured' by Turkey's own national identity conflict into which the Syrian refugees have entered. In this identity conflict, Urfa's Kurdish Syrian refugees are thus perceived by some of Urfa's Kurdish Turkish citizens as their opponents – just as Izmir's secularist ethnic Turks did, albeit for very different reasons.

This perceived political opposition between Urfa's Kurdish Turkish citizens and its Kurdish Syrian refugees is, however, solely one constitutive element of the overarching local narrative of why there is no ethnic solidarity per se. As shown above, Urfa's Turkish citizens adhere to a vision of Turkish society that takes ethnic diversity as a given but does not privilege *ethnic* identity over other ones, such as Turkish national identity or Muslim religious identity. It is by following this logic that Urfa's muhtars draw thicker social and symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees than the Distance Model would expect. Where the social boundaries are indeed blurrier (that is, more permeable) this is because of familialism and possible relational 'spill-over effects' onto the immediate network of one's relatives. At times, these are framed in terms of ethnic and religious proximity but, in fact, they boil down to very concrete pre-existing or newly established familial relations – which could be with anyone.

---

[32] YPG stands for *Yekîneyên Parastina Gel* (People's Defence Units) and is a Kurdish militant group in Syria that came to be known for its fight against ISIS, but is also linked to the PKK in Turkey and thus considered terrorists by the Turkish state.

Reminiscent of the Distinction Model is the idea that while Kurdish Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees may well share the same ethnicity, the remaining boundary-marking difference is that the latter are considered 'bad Kurds'. This differentiation is expressed intra-ethnically but also about other ethnic groups. As one muhtar put it, "*Our* Arabs are different", marking an a priori invisible line between Turkish and Syrian Arabs. In a challenge to the Dignity Model, the notion of ethnic, religious, or national values is mobilised both to declare a general solidarity with refugees, regardless of any similarities other than shared humanity, and to justify the subsequent rejection of the Syrians, as they are deemed 'unworthy' of this solidarity for 'lacking human qualities'. It is the alleged belief in the universality of solidarity and an "ethnicity without groups" (Brubaker 2002) that are turned here *against* the Syrian refugees and against the idea of a special brotherhood with them. As Lamont and Bail (2005) have identified, this is, in fact, a typical strategy that many subordinate ethnic groups tend to deploy in going against their racist stigmatisation and exclusion in society, which they call "universalising": an emphasis on general human morality as the yardstick for belonging rather than any particular identity – neither that of others nor their own. As a result of this strategy to advance the Kurds' belonging to Turkish society, a special ethnic solidarity of Kurdish Turkish citizens with the Kurdish Syrian refugees thus becomes logically impossible.

However, what is possible and strategic, too, from this vantage point, is to *symbolically* include the Syrian refugees in this vision of Turkish society by emphasising their belonging to Turkey in order to express precisely this non-ethnic character of Turkish society that these Kurdish and Arab Turkish citizens advocate. It is this strategic interest that seemed to result in somewhat more inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees than social ones.

2.3 Inclusion II: Ethnic Diversity as a Vision of Turkish National Identity
This section will analyse why some Urfalites do not socially, yet symbolically include Syrians. If ethnically Kurdish and Arab Turkish citizens thus do not feel any greater proximity to their co-ethnics from Syria than what may emerge from easier communication through a common language, pre-existing contacts, and new and old family relations, then why should they express opinions in surveys, as discussed in Chapter One, that make them seem more inclusive of the Syrian refugees than other Turkish citizens? And if they are indeed more inclusive, then what shared narrative may carry these attitudes?

Similarly to the chapter on Konya, I argue that there is indeed a higher level of symbolic inclusivity among ethnically Kurdish and Arab Turkish citizens vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, but that the reason for that is not a greater feeling of proximity. Rather, this symbolic inclusivity

advances the own interest of these groups in the contestation over Turkish national identity. This interest is *to reconceive of Turkish society in a truly ethnically diverse way*, and it is by showing symbolic inclusivity towards the Syrian refugees, despite all their social resentment, that ethnically Kurdish and Arab Turkish citizens express this vision of society.

This can be found in the data in several instances, which taken together create this overall picture. Many of Urfa's religiously conservative muhtars emphasised the importance of religion for them and that, if Allah commanded that Muslims be brothers and sisters, then that was imperative. However, many, in fact, qualified this in a way that 'religious brotherhood' should be understood beyond the commonality of Islam, that is, it should include other people that are not Muslims, too. Besides Islam, this was also what general humanity commanded. One muhtar (who in his own words was just as much religiously conservative as everyone else) put this very expressively by calling the call for religious brotherhood "racist":

> *Then why do they say on TV that you and the Syrians are religious brothers and sisters?*
>
> Essentially, those who say that are racist. What do you mean by 'religious brother'? A Muslim is your religious brother, but a stranger is not your religious brother? It doesn't work like that: treating your religious brother and foreigners differently. People in Germany are human beings, too. The black person in Africa and the imam of the mosque in Syria are the same. (u20, male, middle-aged, working-class, Kurdish)

While this engagement with the concept of the 'religious brother' inherently accepts that there is such a thing, the vignette also shows how the concept translates differently at the street-level than it is used at state-level political discourse such as the speeches of President Erdoğan. This way, religious brotherhood becomes a signifier with a varying signified. While it seems to denote solidarity between co-religionists, many in Urfa interpreted it to signify a religiously-inspired brotherhood between humans in general. That this interpretation also contains ethno-racial dimensions crystallises at the end of the quote. Here, the muhtar compares how he would relate to someone with whom he shares their religion (and maybe ethnicity), i.e. a Syrian imam, to how he would relate to someone racially different and who, moreover, is often conceived of in racist discourse as inferior. In doing so, he claims that these differences should not matter and that, as a result, there should be no hierarchy between people, neither according to religion nor to ethnicity or race. This point is crucial since it expresses the muhtar's general vision of a society defined by ethnic equality all whilst talking about his relation to the Syrian refugees.

This vision directly relates to own experiences of ethnic stigmatisation, discrimination, and exclusion that many Kurds and Arabs in Turkey experience themselves (Yeğen 2009; Demiralp 2012; Gourlay 2018b; Duvar English 2023b). As one muhtar described it, right after

stating that the Syrian refugees' ethnicity had no importance ("For us, being Arab or Kurdish doesn't matter. Both came from Syria – what difference does it make? You shall bear both."):

> Now, Turks in Turkey are from Central Asia. But Kurds are indigenous here. The entire southeast Anatolian region is Kurdish. They are the real owners of Turkey. [But] Turks sometimes don't accept us. Like your [*sic*] Westerners: you don't accept Muslims either.
>
> *Are you saying that you are more accepting because you have had similar experiences?*
>
> I mean, the people who govern you and me are sometimes racist for their own interests. Now, I speak Kurdish. So what? What difference does it make if you speak English or Turkish? In the West [of Turkey], they don't understand because they don't know Kurds. If they knew me, they wouldn't say [racist things]. (u9, male, senior, working-class, Kurdish)

This vignette suggests that the symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees is tied to the experience of other pre-existing symbolic boundaries in Turkey: by drawing more inclusive boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, this muhtar implicitly also seeks to blur the symbolic boundaries of Turkish society that exclude himself, presenting a different vision of Turkish society altogether. Moreover, the quote also illustrates the international dimension of this boundary making since this inclusivity is not only expressed as a challenge to the ethnically exclusionary boundaries inside Turkish society but also as a challenge to the religiously exclusionary boundaries of 'the West'. Contrasting this with the social rejection of the Syrians, this suggests that this symbolic inclusion is more about politics than proximity.

As a result, in the interviews, some of Urfa's muhtars sought to differentiate themselves from this allegedly exclusionary Other in 'the West' – be that Western Turkey or beyond – by presenting a vision of Turkish society that would see ethnic diversity united by Turkish national identity and a commitment to it. The following three vignettes are good examples of this:

> Now, if I am under the Turkish flag, it doesn't matter whether I am a Kurd or a Turk. It doesn't matter whether you are a Turk or an unbeliever [*gavur*, as in 'non-Muslim']. It is important that you are a human being, a *good* human being. (u9, male, senior, working-class, Kurdish)

<div align="center">***</div>

> Kurds in Syria did not become [real] citizens [of their country]. But Kurds in Turkey have citizenship. My son is a doctor today, a governor, thanks to the state. My father is an agricultural engineer. […] In our country, Turks, Kurds, Circassians are all one. There is no distinction. (u27, male, senior, working-class, Kurdish)

<div align="center">***</div>

> If I was a German citizen, could I really be a German? [I couldn't] because I haven't made a contribution to Germany. One needs to make a sacrifice. Now, can I be a muhtar if I don't work? Can I be a muhtar if I don't treat people nicely? This is what citizenship should be like: You got to treat people nicely, you got to make a contribution, you got to make a sacrifice, so that you can become a citizen. Then, in three months or five months, a man ought to become a Turkish citizen. (u20, male, middle-aged, working-class, Kurdish)

What the vignettes reveal is a vision of Turkish society that is common among religiously conservative Kurds in Turkey, who often support the Islamist AKP of President Erdoğan and are adamant to distinguish themselves from the predominantly left-liberal and nationalist Kurds of Turkey that support the HDP (Ocakli 2017). In this vision, (conservative) Islam is often seen as the common denominator between Kurds and Turks in Turkey, as also reflected in the ideology of neo-Ottomanism (Sarigil 2010). However, as the vignettes reveal, for the muhtars, this vision not only rejects placing any importance on ethnic commonalities, but it also refuses to replace them by religious commonalities and instead advocates moral character as a societal bond. This not only reflects once again the point by Lamont (1992) that boundary making is closely linked to conceptions of morality, but it also presents a conception of citizenship that is based on such moral boundaries and that, just as it opens up space for the Syrian refugees to become Turkish, also underscores Urfa's Kurdish and Arab inhabitants' belonging to Turkey.

That is because it is themselves whom they regard as morally most virtuous – the main criterion of national identity in their vision. This they express not only through their adherence to (a conservative reading of) Islam but also through their very care and charity towards the Syrian refugees – despite all racist resentment. The most striking example of this that I came across during my fieldwork in Urfa was Muhtar No. 24, who, after likening the Syrian refugees to dogs, as seen in one of the vignettes above, invited me after our interview to the office of a local charity organisation next door that worked to support the Syrian refugees – and which he was the very president of (!). This illustrates how the inclusion of the Syrian refugees is not necessarily about the Syrian refugees themselves or any feelings of proximity to them but about Urfa's religiously conservative and ethnically Kurdish or Arab muhtars' *own identity interests*. And these are to prove their personal moral virtuousness and thereby manifest their belonging to Turkish society based on the vision of Turkish society and citizenship that they advocate.

This vision of Turkish society was expressed in various ways, at times as a reverberation of neo-Ottomanism and at other times as a plea for one-worldism:

[Bystander 1:] This place is a mixed city. There are Turks, Kurds, Zaza.

[Muhtar:] It is a mixed society with different ethnic origins.

[Bystander 2:] Although there are so many different ethnic origins, they can live together – just like the Ottomans. There is no need for blood ties, for family ties here. You do not need to be relatives for a bond. For example, Mister Muhtar is not our relative, but our bond can be much stronger than with a relative.

[Muhtar:] Indeed, this is how it is.

(u1, male, middle-aged, working-class, Kurdish)

<center>***</center>

[Bystander 1:]: Most Kurds want to stay here. Let's remove the borders. We are all human beings.

[Your friend] says we should erase the borders. Where does this idea come from?

[Muhtar:] The strong should not oppress the weak. Think of Hamburg, Munich, Lyon – [wherever we Kurds go] they will crush us there. What shall we do? If we go to Iran, they will crush us there. If there were no borders, migration would not happen [*sınırlar olmasa göç olmaz*].

I wonder if this is a common view among people here?

[Muhtar:] I have family in Syria. Even visiting them is forbidden. This is not humane. If the borders were lifted, terrorists would still be caught everywhere. The German state would catch them [even] here. But when there is a border, the rich live in comfort and the poor live in hardship because there is nowhere to escape to.

[Bystander 1:] Now look, Fikret Püttmann [a Turkish nickname I was given] is in Turkey, isn't he? He is at one of our Turkish universities, isn't he? And everyone here helps him. What we want to say is that I should be able to go to Germany, and German universities should give me the same equal rights. We are not talking about the Kurdish-Turkish case.

[Bystander 2:] Fikret, diesel now costs 25 Liras in Turkey and 3 Liras on the other side of the border. If Turkey removes these borders, I will buy my diesel for 3 Liras. Let those in Turkey buy it for 3 Liras. Surely, both the Syrian government and the Turkish government are working, but I've had enough, I will go to Germany. A German's 1000 Euros are worth 15,000 Liras, [but we only have] 1000 Liras. With 1000 Euros you can manage for 10 years. That's what we're saying. Otherwise, we see no problem between the West and the East. We have been to Çanakkale [famous place in Western Turkey, known for the Gallipoli Campaign from 1915 to 1916, which kicked off the Turkish War of Independence under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk; it is an iconic place for Turkish nationalism], this badge is from there. We have brothers in the East and in the West [of Turkey]. There is no such thing as Turkishness or Kurdishness.

This is a very strong point of view. Why is it rather Kurds who think this way, as you insinuate?

[Muhtar:] The majority always oppresses the minority. It's the case in the USA and Germany, too. Is there no racism in Germany? (u21, male, senior, middle-class, Kurdish)

Although these societal visions are framed very differently and make reference to very different concepts – from Ottoman unity to the erasure of national borders – they both seek to criticise ethno-nationalism and call for the same idea: a society or world in which ethnic identity should not matter and that is inclusive of anyone regardless of their ethnicity.

In this sense, just like with the idea of religious brotherhood, for the muhtars of Urfa, neo-Ottomanism then also does not necessarily quite signify what it may signify at the level of Turkish public discourse, i.e. an ethnically diverse Turkish society held together by Islam. Instead, it appears to signify an idea of multiculturalism that prioritises a diversity of identities, also religious ones, over any specific commonalities. Religion, that is, Islam, meanwhile, rather takes on the role of a moral compass that confers upon the muhtars a special duty of care, just

like the existence of family bonds, as described in the previous section. By drawing more inclusive boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, the muhtars of Urfa thus also express their 'religious superiority' vis-à-vis those in Turkey that they deem exclusionary or racist. All taken together, their symbolic inclusion of the Syrian refugees is thus above all an expression of their 'Urfa identity' and of the case for a Turkish society how they would like to see it: ethnically diverse *but not* ethnically conscious; religiously committed *but not* religiously homogenous.

Conclusion

On 17 December 2023, the Turkish newspaper Duvar reported that two Kurdish workers of Turkish nationality had been assaulted by Turkish security guards on a construction site in the city of Trabzon for speaking Kurdish to each other. In an interview following the incident, one of the workers declared: "This country belongs to all of us. A citizen of the Turkish Republic should be able to speak their mother tongue just as freely as someone from Britain can speak English in Turkey or someone from France can speak French" (Duvar English 2023b). As the quote exemplifies once more, the struggle for recognition and belonging for Turkish citizens from an ethnic minority who seek to both be part of Turkish society and live their ethnic identity remains a life-defining issue for them, also one hundred years after the founding of the Republic. In the words of Mesut Yeğen, Kurds in Turkey have been treated by Turkish society for the most part either as "prospective Turks" or as "pseudo-citizens" (2009: 597). Today, they therefore seek to be 'full citizens' of Turkey – whether they vote for the leftist pro-Kurdish HDP or for the conservative Islamist AKP (Yeğen, Tol, and Çalışkan 2020).

In the same vein, Urfa's ethnically Kurdish and Arab muhtars pursue a more inclusive vision of Turkish society by redrawing its symbolic boundaries in a way that encompasses ethnically non-Turkish people more – such as the Syrian refugees and themselves. As my analysis has indicated, rather than reflecting some general ethnic solidarity, their more inclusive *social* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees are actually about family relations. Therefore, many of them join the chorus of anti-refugee resentment and 'We've had enough!' when it comes to the Syrian refugees overall. However, their more inclusive *symbolic* boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrians thus results from an attempt to generally redefine the meaning of Turkish national identity and the 'social rules of belonging to Turkey' in order to advance their own position inside Turkish society.

Chapter Seven

"Conflict over the Soul of Turkey"

Synthesis of Fieldwork Findings and Theory Building

Table of Contents

Chapter Seven

"Conflict over the Soul of Turkey"
Synthesis of Fieldwork Findings and Theory Building

Introduction

The encounter with a new person and our resulting relation to them does not only reflect what we think and feel about that person themselves. It also reflects how we think and feel about ourselves and the things this new encounter triggers inside us. These things may include pre-existing fears and insecurities as well as unresolved questions and conflicts that the new encounter forces us to face in a new way. Our relation to the new person must therefore not be seen as immediate and in isolation but as mediated by our memories and the social embedding we move in. As a result, the relation we build to the new person is only partially about them and just as much about our relation to ourselves; about the worries we have and the wishes we pursue. The new encounter reposes the question of who we are and who we want to be.

Such is also the case for Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees. As the preceding three chapters, analysing the data from my fieldwork in Izmir, Konya and Urfa, have shown, many of the interviewees expressed their relation to the Syrian refugees in the same breath with comments on their relation to other Turkish citizens and the way they see Turkey overall. As has crystallised, the arrival of the Syrian refugees pushes Turkey's citizens to come to terms with themselves as a country and with the pre-existing conflicts between Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities. Their differences in boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees are therefore only partly about the Syrian refugees themselves, whereas the other part stems from their use of symbolic boundary making as a strategy to express their different views on Turkish society and how they would like it to be. Since the making of boundaries is what constitutes collective identities (Barth 1969; Wimmer 2013), it is reflective of one's vision of this identity and hence an essential 'tool' in trying to shape it. While most Turkish citizens draw *similarly rigid social* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, driven by socioeconomic factors, racism, and Orientalism, as discussed throughout Chapters Four to Six, the *differences in symbolic* boundary making between Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities can therefore be explained by taking into account the *pre-existing societal context into which this boundary making falls*.

This societal context can be modelled as a "social field". The concept of the social field is an analytical heuristic to elucidate the web of relations between different actors in a certain social context in which something is at stake and to show how the actors' different positions in it incite in them different motivations and strategies vis-à-vis each other (Bourdieu 1984; Fligstein and McAdam 2012). The social field I seek to model here is *Turkish national identity*, which, I argue, Turkey's reception of the Syrian refugees has become a new site of contestation of. Building on this, my theoretical proposition is that we can explain the differences in boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees between Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities – this thesis's research question – by tracing their positions in this field. That is because their differences in boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees essentially reflect their different respective goals and strategies in their "conflict over the soul of Turkey" (Aydın-Düzgit 2019: 17).

As shown in Chapter Two, Turkey's citizens have had very different experiences of inclusion and exclusion with regard to Turkish society and its ideal national identity, depending on their personal religious and ethnic identity. They therefore often prefer diverging visions of society for Turkey that advance their own position. To describe the structure of this social field, many have used the notions of 'centre' and 'periphery', coined by Şerif Mardin in 1974: With the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and the creation of Turkish national identity, a 'battle' erupted over who would be at the centre of this new nation-state and identity and thereby be able to set the terms for those on the periphery. Following this framework, much of Turkish history can be conceived of as the struggle of those on the 'periphery' – be that religious conservatives or ethnic minorities – to reach the 'centre' of Turkish society and change the rules by which the positions in the social field of Turkish national identity are allocated. Against this backdrop, the differences in symbolic inclusion of the Syrian refugees in Turkish society represent a 'proxy war' of this very battle. As I aim to show below, it is these centre-periphery relations inside Turkey's national identity contestation that explain the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their relation to the Syrian refugees.

In the remainder, I first present the central conclusions I draw from the findings of my fieldwork. Then, I draw on insights from philosophy and prior empirical research to lay bare the logic underlying these findings; introduce the concept of the social field; and, finally, show how this heuristic can be used in modelling this logic, which is the "mechanism of contestation" (Hintz 2018) over Turkey's national identity. I conclude with a depiction of the model I develop to offer a new grounded theory of the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees.

1. Synthesis of the Fieldwork Findings

1.1 Similarities across Cases

To recall, *social boundaries* denote the ways people interact with each other, i.e., the choices they make in frequenting certain people and places whilst avoiding others, but also the institutional, economic, or physical factors that separate or integrate them. In contrast, *symbolic boundaries* denote shared notions of difference and similarity, that is, of collective identity and social belonging. In this sense, as discussed in Chapter One, the *Distance Model* would suggest that Turkish citizens of a similar religious or ethnic identity as the Syrian refugees surrounding them would draw blurrier social boundaries vis-à-vis them, that is, interact more with them, because they may relate to and identify with them more. Moreover, greater similarities in terms of religious and ethnic identity may also coincide with more places where such interaction can happen, for example, the mosque. In contrast, the *Distinction Model* would suggest that the opposite happens because Turkish citizens who resemble the Syrian refugees more in terms of religious and ethnic identity may feel a greater need to show that they are different from them. Finally, the *Dignity Model* would presume that rather than resemblances, it depends on the values that Turkish citizens associate with their respective religious and ethnic identity for whether they draw blurrier or firmer social boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees.

As the analysis in the preceding three chapters has shown, neither seems to be the case. That is because, in every city, there is a different kind of street-level narrative of why mingling with the Syrian refugees is not desirable. In *Izmir*, where a secularist ethnically Turkish identity prevails, the idea of a 'brotherhood' with the Syrian refugees is perceived as upsetting for it undermines, in their view, the distinctiveness of Turkish modernity vis-à-vis the 'backward Arab Orient', as exemplified by the miserable conditions most of the Syrian refugees live in. Therefore, most social boundaries are kept solid. While the idea of a religious brotherhood with other Muslims is welcome in predominantly religiously conservative and ethnically Turkish *Konya*, many there argue that such a brotherhood is difficult to have with the Syrian refugees in practice because the latter are not 'real Muslims', given the 'immoral ways' in which they handle their economic misery. Therefore, most people draw firm social boundaries here, too. Finally, the same narrative exists in likewise religiously conservative, yet ethnically diverse *Urfa*, where this narrative is moreover coupled with another narrative suggesting that the idea of an ethnic brotherhood would be 'racist' and attach too much importance to ethnicity. Therefore, unless directly related through family relations or a shared clan, Urfa people, too, prefer to maintain firm social boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees.

In all cases, these narratives essentially justify why social interaction with the – for the most part, socio-economically deeply disadvantaged – Syrian refugees is not only undesirable, but also morally 'inadvisable'. This shows how symbolic boundaries, which are often based on moral notions (Lamont and Molnár 2002), support the making of rigid social boundaries here. While the narratives of symbolic boundary making here thus differ by religious and ethnic identity, the shape of these symbolic and social boundaries turns out to be fairly the same across cases: very rigid. In turn, the same applies to instances in which they are blurrier: be it in Izmir, Konya, or Urfa, wherever the socio-economic conditions of the Syrian refugees seemed better (particularly regarding the question of whether they had a regular job, some education, and Turkish language skills), their Turkish neighbours seemed happier to interact with them, regardless of their religious or ethnic identity, which is directly in line with the earlier findings of Şimşek (2018a, 2021) on the pivotal role of social class and socioeconomic factors for Syrian refugees' integration in Turkey. With regard to President Erdoğan's discourse of an Islamic and Ottoman brotherhood with the Syrian refugees, this thus suggests that this policy narrative of refugee reception was, eventually, ineffective and partly even counter-productive because either the idea of a brotherhood in itself upset Turkish citizens (notably in Izmir) and thereby hardened their boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, or it was ignored in practice due to alternative street-level narratives that would 'explain' why this discourse was true but did not, in fact, apply to the Syrian refugees.

1.2 Differences between Cases

While the section above helps us understand why – contrary to the predictions of the three models discussed and despite President Erdoğan's discourse of brotherhood – Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities mostly all reject the Syrian refugees in an unanimous fashion, as also previous surveys (Hoffman, Werz, and Halpin 2018; Erdoğan 2018b, 2020b) have indicated, those findings on their own do not help us understand why the same surveys have also suggested that there may still be *some* differences between the boundaries that Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities draw vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. To recall, both Hoffman, Werz, and Halpin (2018) and Erdoğan (2018b, 2020) hinted at the possibility that religiously conservative and ethnically Kurdish or Arab Turkish citizens may be somewhat more inclusive towards the Syrian refugees. Despite the widely shared rigid social boundaries described above and the diverse narratives they draw on, also my fieldwork data has indicated that this may be the case. That is because, although interviewees of all religious and ethnic identities would express one way or another how they were different from the Syrian

refugees, among those in Konya and Urfa, there would *also* be a recurring narrative of how they were morally 'better' and hence more inclusive of the Syrian refugees than 'other' Turks (cf. Gürsoy 2023 on the quest for moral validation in Turkish national identity construction).

This inclusiveness, that occurred in some places of the data, was primarily symbolic, as the very same interviewees would often still draw rigid social boundaries. Moreover, this inclusiveness did not refer to any resemblance in identity, but to a shared *'positionality'*: in seeking their own inclusion inside Turkish society against the historical Kemalist ideal of a secular and ethnically homogenous Turkish citizen, both religiously conservative and ethnically minoritarian interlocutors redrew the symbolic boundaries of 'Turkishness' in a way that would include the (mostly pious and ethnically non-Turkish) Syrian refugees as well as *themselves*. That means that although most of them were adamant to distinguish themselves from the Syrian refugees on the one hand, many were also keen to present a vision of Turkish society that would symbolically include them, and thereby *manifest their own inclusion, too.* This makes sense if we consider the role religious and ethnic identity have played in the construction of Turkish national identity and its ever-ongoing contestation since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, as discussed in Chapter Two. A theory of the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identity in their boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees that can model this mechanism and thereby organise the seemingly diverging empirical findings above should therefore take into account this national identity contestation inside Turkish society.

2. Towards a Social Field Model

2.1 Moving beyond previous Models

As Chapter One has demonstrated, none of the existing models that emerge from the literature – the Distance Model, the Distinction Model, and the Dignity Model – could fully make sense of the available evidence on the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identity in their relation to the Syrian refugees. What that means is that previous empirical enquiries relating to this topic have supported each of these models respectively, leaving a puzzling picture behind and raising the question of whether there may exist a theoretical model that can tie all these seemingly contradictory findings together and connect them by a common overall logic. As Genç and Özdemirkıran Embel, for example, have argued in their study on Istanbul-based muhtars' relation to the Syrian refugees, "their attitudes towards forced Syrian migrants are *paradoxical*, marked both by feelings of disturbance, worry and uneasiness, and at the same time welcome and support" (2019: 168, my italics). The aim of this chapter is to show that they are not as paradoxical as they may seem and to develop a model that can make sense of them.

Based on the analysis of my fieldwork data over the preceding three chapters, I argue that instead of viewing Turkish citizens' boundary making vis-à-vis Syrian refugees through a lens that exclusively focuses on how Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities relate to the Syrian refugees themselves – as all three of the discussed models do in one way or another – we should adopt a wider analytical perspective that takes into account how Turkish citizens relate to *one another* based on these identities, i.e. a perspective that considers the larger societal context that this takes place in. What I mean by that is this: Rather than looking at these boundary making processes as isolated cases of social interaction that are purely based on the immediate experiences between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees, we should situate the making of these boundaries within the political and cultural conflicts inside Turkish society that predate the Syrians' arrival to put all the puzzle pieces together and see the bigger picture. This bigger picture, I argue, is Turkey's longstanding internal struggle over its national identity in which different cultural 'camps' take different political positions and derive from these their boundary making approaches towards the Syrian refugees. Exactly because it is the boundaries of a group that define its identity, Turkish citizens' symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis Syrian refugees is a new way for them to express their vision of Turkish national identity and society – regardless of what their lived experiences with the refugees are in practice. Differently put, it is how Turkish citizens relate to each other that explains the role of their religious and ethnic identities in how they relate to the Syrian refugees overall.

As Elster (2007) has suggested, in theorising the social mechanisms that drive human action, much valuable inspiration can be taken from novels and philosophy. In his famous play *No Exit*, French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1947) displays the human condition as one in which to be oneself always means to be both the subject of one's own actions and the object of others' perception through which one inevitably perceives oneself, too. That is, the constitution of one's Self happens not only in relation to an Other from which we distinguish ourselves or with whom we identify (Mead 2003 [1934])[33], but also 'through the eyes' of 'another Other' that we have on our mind when acting. As Garcin says to Estelle about Inès in Sartre's play: "She is between us. I cannot love you while she watches me" (1947: 94, own translation). Although not actively involved, Inès's mere presence and her gaze mediate Garcin's relation to Estelle and shape how Garcin positions himself towards the latter. In the same sense, Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees is not an unmediated relation, but a relation that is 'seen by other people' – here, other Turkish citizens and the world beyond. It is the presence of this

---

[33] More details on the concepts of Self and Other and identity formation as a process of othering can be found in Appendix I.

'other Other' and the way they may perceive the actions of the subject that affects these actions. That is to say, Turkey's citizens do not draw their boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees in social isolation but do so being conscious of what they may *signal* to *other* Turkish citizens. Therefore, their symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees are not only about the latter themselves but also express something vis-à-vis 'those watching', which is their personal vision of 'the Turkish Self'.

As shown in Chapter Two and the analysis of my fieldwork data, this 'Turkish Self', i.e., the meaning of 'Turkishness', has been and continues to be the object of a long-standing symbolic struggle between Turkish citizens of various ideologies. This struggle has reached such a high degree of political polarisation (Erdoğan 2018a; Aydın-Düzgit and Balta 2019; Somer 2019) that Turkish citizens' relation to one another can be described, today, with the words of Carl Schmitt as a relation split into 'friend and enemy'. For Schmitt (2007 [1932]), it is this distinction that guides all political actions and motives. He writes: "This grouping [that is, the friend-enemy grouping] is […] always the decisive human grouping, the political entity. If such an entity exists at all, it is *always the decisive entity*, […]" (2007: 38). Differently put, once political polarisation has reached such a peak, the friend-enemy distinction becomes the decisive factor for most of people's social attitudes, regardless of the respective topic. To be sure, whilst Schmitt conceives of the friend-enemy relation as actual violence, which in the absence of civil war does not apply to Turkey, the reality and intensification of thinking in camps that marks Turkish politics and society today (McCoy, Rahman, and Somer 2018) is an all-pervasive context that must be taken into account – also when it comes to Turkish citizens' boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. In this context, the religious and ethnic divides play a crucial role. The relation to the Syrian refugees that Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities develop therefore always takes place against this backdrop of polarisation and incites a reasoning that may be reduced to 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend'.

Added to this comes the special meaning that the act of hospitality has for the definition of a country's Self. As Jacques Derrida (1996) has argued in his widely-cited essay on this topic, to grant hospitality as a state to a foreigner ("*Étranger*") reveals, first, who has the power to decide upon this on behalf of the receiving society, and second, who is deemed worthy in the eyes of that society to benefit from it. Evidently, in most states today, this selection does not happen at random but according to laws that the sovereign has decided to adopt. But these laws emerge from a choice, and, therefore, as Derrida specifies, "there is no hospitality […] without the sovereignty of the self over its domain [*Pas d'hospitalité […] sans souveraineté du soi sur le chez-soi*]" (1996: 53, own translation). This underlines the link between

hospitality, sovereignty, and selfhood. For Derrida, the duration of that society's hospitality is moreover based on the question of who is eventually considered part of that society and who remains an outsider forever. He writes: "The Foreigner carries in them and poses the fearsome question … the question *of* the foreign [*sic*] [*L'Étranger porte et pose la question redoutable … la question* de *l'étranger*]" (1996: 17, own transl., emphasis original). This "question of the foreign" that Derrida refers to here is the question about the *relation* in which the 'foreigner' stands to the receiving society, that is, whether they are to be included inside its *boundaries* or not. Therefore, it also signifies the question of *who* the receiving society itself *is* and *who rules* its domain: "As if the foreigner was the being-in-question, […] but also the one who, by posing the first question, calls into question [*Comme si l'étranger était l'être-en-question, […] mais aussi celui qui, en posant la première question, met en question.*] (1996: 11, own transl.). As a result, the act of hospitality brings to the surface both a nation's self-definition and its internal power dynamics – in this case: Who are the Turks, and who may decide that? In a society as polarised as the Turkish one today, this inherently stirs up pre-existing conflicts about these questions. It is for this reason that the reception of the Syrian refugees and the symbolic boundaries that Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities draw vis-à-vis them must be seen in the very context of Turkey's pre-existing national identity contestation because, for most of it, this polarised contestation takes place exactly along these two identity fault lines (Atikcan and Öge 2012; Kalaycıoğlu 2012; Keyman 2014; Erdoğan 2018a).

Three conceptual insights follow from this:

(1) A subject constitutes its Self not only in relation to some direct Other, but also in relation to 'another Other' that 'watches' this primary relation (Sartre).

(2) If the relation to this other Other is one of highly polarised conflict, this conflict becomes the decisive factor in all subsequent attitude formation (Schmitt).

(3) The act of granting hospitality as a society to a 'stranger' expresses both *what* the Self of that society is and *who* has the power to define that (Derrida).

Taken together, this illustrates how the acts of refugee reception and immigrant inclusion are thus inherently also a reflection of national self-definition and domestic power relations. This, in turn, inherently triggers any pre-existing contestation of this definition and of these power relations. Once such a conflict exists and reaches a certain level of intensity, it shapes the relation that different parties in this conflict form vis-à-vis the refugees themselves. As a result, it is this context of conflict over Turkey's national identity that must be integrated into a model of Turkish citizens' symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees.

As discussed in previous sections, previous hints at such a mechanism come from Getmansky, Sınmazdemir, and Zeitzoff (2018) as well as Saraçoğlu and Bélanger (2019). Both point at the impact of pre-existing identity conflicts in Turkish domestic politics on Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees. Furthermore, my new model parallels an argument previously made by Hintz (2016, 2018) about Turkey's national identity contestation in the realm of foreign policy. Her argument suggests that rather than treating national identity as a cause or consequence of Turkey's foreign policy, Turkey's foreign policy itself should be viewed as an "arena" or "playing field" (2016: 337) in which the contestation among competing proposals for national identity takes place. Picking up on this idea, I argue, in turn, that Syrian refugee reception in Turkey has become such an "arena", too, in which different actors draw their symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees in function of their respective proposal for Turkish national identity. To be sure, I do not argue that this is all what there is to it and that economic grievances or personal experiences do not matter. Rather, what I suggest is that, with regard to the role of religious and ethnic identity in the symbolic boundary making processes vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, it is the "mechanism of contestation" (Hintz 2016: 342) – or what Steinmetz (2007: 27) would call "symbolic competition" – over the meaning of Turkish national identity that can tie together all three of the theoretical models discussed in Chapter One and therefore provides the most complete explanation of the phenomenon at hand. While Hintz (2016) herself did not draw on it, I propose that in building this new argument, an apt analytical tool to model this national identity contestation by means of symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees and to extend Hintz's thinking in "strategies" and "sites" (2022, *pers. comm.*) is the concept of the social field.

2.2 Introducing the Concept of the Social Field

This section argues that the social field concept can help explain boundary-making dynamics. As both Lamont (1992) and Wimmer (2013) point out, boundary making is a practice of group identity construction by categorising others as different from oneself and one's purported peers. Since these group identities are constructed, the boundaries that support them can be contested. Boundary making, therefore, also reveals a distribution of power and often results in a symbolic struggle over what classifications are to be the generally accepted ones. According to Bourdieu, this symbolic struggle takes place in what he calls a "social field": an identifiable social context possessing a certain order, in which "the established" and "the challengers" (1984: 230) compete over domination. This happens according to a specific "structural logic of the field" (Bourdieu 1984: 232) that depends on the *resources* that are at stake, the *institutions* that exist

in the given field, and the *rules* by which actors compete. Hilgers and Mangez have summarised Bourdieu's conception of the social field as

> *a structure of relative positions* within which the actors and groups think, act and take positions. […] The position of an actor or a group depends not only on the way in which it manages to renew itself but also on *the ways in which all the other actors in the field evolve or seek to evolve*. (2015: 10, my italics)

As a concept, the social field is an attempt to overcome sociology's structure-agency debate (see Giddens 1986) and enable explanations at the action-theoretic level that are also conscious of agents' constant embeddedness in a web of human relations (see Sampson 2012). These relations, captured by the field, are organised in both symbolic and social terms:

> Symbolic structures order the field (and the social world) by classifying and categorizing it at the level of meaning: how do people think, how do they order the world cognitively within the field, *what are their position-takings*? Social structures, on the other hand, order the world by classifying and categorizing it according to the objective resources, positions and trajectories of individuals and groups. (Hilgers and Mangez 2015: 11, my italics)

It is starting from an initial symbolic order that the established and the challengers enter into symbolic struggles over its maintenance or modification:

> Examining the structures of positions will often lead one to identify actors relatively well established in the field, who therefore have a certain interest in the maintenance of the established order or the modification of this order within limits that enable them to strengthen their domination. Conversely, *newcomers will tend to implement strategies aimed at subverting the symbolic order* […]. (Hilgers and Mangez 2015: 11, my italics)

Modification or subversion of the field's symbolic order goes in hand with a redistribution of *recognition* (cf. Honneth 1992), whose existing distribution is the result of previous struggles:

> As soon as the rules that define the legitimate activity in a field are modified, so too is the distribution of recognition. *The struggle in a field is thus a struggle to impose a definition of legitimate recognition, in which victory leads to more or less monopolistic control of the definition of the forms of legitimacy prevailing in the field.* The history of the field is the history of the internal and external struggles that animate it […]. (Hilgers and Mangez 2015: 6, my italics)

The essence of the social field is thus (1) the placement of actors in different positions (both symbolically and socially) according to the distribution of the resources that are recognised as relevant in the respective field, and (2) the constant struggle of these actors with each other, based on their respective positions and their thereof resulting different viewpoints and interests,

over both the available resources and the recognition of what counts as resources – that is, a struggle both *according to* and *over* the rules of the field.

Fligstein and McAdam (2012) have further developed this concept under the name of "strategic action fields", which they define as "socially constructed arenas within which actors with varying resource endowments vie for advantage" (2012: 10). This presumes that although this struggle between actors can be *about* meaning, as in the case of symbolic boundary making and collective identity construction, there exists a "set of shared meanings that structure field dynamics" (ibid). These shared meanings consist in (1) a "shared understanding of what is going on in the field, that is, what is at stake" (ibid), and (2) in "shared understandings about the nature of the 'rules' in the field" in the sense that "actors understand what tactics are possible, legitimate, and interpretable for each of the roles in the field" (2012: 11). These shared understandings, however, do not foreclose the existence of "*different interpretative frames reflecting the relative positions of actors* within the strategic action field" (ibid, my italics). This means that while there must be some consensus as to what the field is about and how it works for it to exist, social fields are "only rarely organized around a truly consensual 'taken for granted' reality" (ibid), which results in the struggle that takes place within it.

These processes of contention can lead to change either *within* the field, i.e., regarding the positions that different actors inhabit, the resources they have at their disposal, and the thereof resulting power relations between them, or *of* the field itself, i.e., regarding its structure as such, that is, the underlying 'rules of the game'. Fligstein and McAdam therefore suggest that "it is useful to separate out the *dramatic changes* that occur in the formation and transformation *of* a field from the more *piecemeal changes* that result from contention *in* the fields on an ongoing basis" (2012: 13, my italics). In my reading, two things follow from this: First, for the established, the biggest threat occurs when the challengers attempt to transform the field and its order overall. And second, the smaller the consensus on the rules of the field, the greater the challengers' interest to do so.

This makes the concept of the field a useful analytical tool to model the struggle over a society's social and symbolic boundaries. As Friedrich-Silber (1995) noted, spatial metaphors such as fields and boundaries have seen a steep rise in contemporary sociological theory. Although she finds them "even more abstract than other metaphors such as organism, text, theater" and "harder to distinguish from their equivalents in ordinary language" (1995: 326), she explains how such theoretical metaphors can help systematise and visualise the interaction between contextual factors and agents' practices vis-à-vis each other. However, she also points out that Lamont's notion of symbolic boundaries was originally proposed as a corrective to

Bourdieu's notion of the social field. Lamont (1992) argued that boundaries were more flexible and dynamic than Bourdieu's concept of the field, which Lamont regards as "stable and closed" (Friedrich-Silber 1995: 344), for it assumes that actors engage in symbolic struggles exclusively to advance their (strategic) interests (Lamont 2022, *pers. comm.*). Criticising field theory for its allegedly deterministic connotation that she finds reminiscent of the model of the *homo economicus*, her plea is to "take identity seriously", pay more attention to agency, and leave room for motives behind boundary making other than interests, such as values, emotions, or tradition (Lamont 2022, *pers. comm.*; cf. Weber 1921).

In contrast, Wimmer (2013), who likewise uses the concept of the social field, contends that all boundary making eventually also contains dimensions of strategy in that actors pursue goals through it. Citing Bourdieu, who coined the concept of the social field, Wimmer argues:

> The social world is both the product and the stake of inseparably cognitive and political symbolic struggles over knowledge and recognition, in which each pursues not only the imposition of an advantageous representation of himself or herself . . . but also the power to *impose as legitimate the principles of construction of social reality most favorable to his or her social being* (individual and collective, *with, for example, struggles over the boundaries of groups*). (Bourdieu as cited in Wimmer 2008a: 1025, my italics)

One example of the analytical utility of the social field concept in grasping actors' motivations is Steinmetz's (2007) study on German colonial policy in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa, in which he argues that rather than ideology-driven, the German colonisers' diverging and seemingly paradoxical behaviour vis-à-vis the natives was essentially a reflection of their competition for status in the social field of 'colonial expertise'. In line with Wimmer's claim, the concept of the social field can thus complement the analytical lens of boundary making if one accepts the axiom of largely interest-driven social action.

In response to this debate, I contend based on my fieldwork data that in order to fully understand why actors draw the symbolic boundaries they draw, a clear characterisation of how the context affects agents' interpretative frames and defines their gains in this symbolic struggle is needed. Just like boundaries drawn at the micro level have effects on the macro level, the institutional, political, and discursive structures at the macro level provide meanings and motives to actors at the micro level. As a result, regardless of whether agents act strategically or other in making boundaries, their boundary making at the micro level is likely to be a derivative of their position in these macro-level structures to which they respond in one way or another. This is not to be deterministic but rather, it is precisely to attain the holistic understanding of how actors' identity and their motives are formed in relation to others that

Lamont (2022, *pers. comm.*) calls for. Thinking of boundary making as situated in a social field is particularly conducive to the empirical case at hand here because it allows to conceive of boundary making as a conscious choice that is made in interaction with a bigger context (here, Turkey's national identity conflict) and the resulting interests and strategies. Therefore, the social field concept allows to illuminate a mechanism that otherwise would remain opaque.

2.3 Turkish Citizens' Symbolic Boundary Making vis-à-vis Syrian Refugees as Strategies within the Social Field of Turkish National Identity

Drawing on the analytical lens presented above, I posit that Turkish national identity or 'Turkishness' can be conceived of as a social field in which the central process of contention is the struggle over belonging and what it means to belong. Speaking of an "arena" rather than a 'field' in order to "convey its battleground connotation" (Hintz 2016: 339), Hintz describes what this struggle is about and how it relates to boundary making:

> These [symbolic] struggles carry immense ontological significance as groups compete against each other to delineate standards such as the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, friends and enemies, and desired goals of the group — essentially, who "we" are and how we should behave. (Hintz 2016: 340)

The difference of my conceptualisation to Hintz's is that she views Turkish national identity contestation as a process taking place in different fields whereas I conceive of 'Turkishness' as a field itself. In this field, all actors try to establish themselves at the centre of Turkishness. They do so either by working to get inside its established boundaries (competition *by* the rules of the field) – e.g. think of Turgut Özal's rise from modest religiously conservative origins to adopting secular codes of wealth – or by challenging the established boundaries of Turkishness and thereby moving those more towards themselves (competition *over* the rules of the field) – e.g. think of Hayrünnisa Gül being Turkey's first First Lady to don the veil. Again, this idea is not entirely new. Although he did not use the social field concept at the time, also Mardin (1974) indirectly applied its logic by conceiving of the defining element of Ottoman/Turkish politics as the struggle between what he called "the centre and the periphery". Mardin argues that notions of ethnicity and religiosity were not present in Turkish discourse until very late, but what had existed for a long time is "the confrontation between center and periphery [as] the most important social cleavage underlying Turkish politics and one that seemed to have survived more than a century of modernization" (1974: 170). Mardin recounts how even before the Turkish Republic, there was an opposition between the ideal-typical "cultivated Ottoman",

working as an urban bureaucrat at the centre of society and politics, and the ideal-typical rural farmers and nomads of Anatolia, who experienced a "cultural alienation" from their rulers and, in response, "developed [an] extremely varied counter-culture, [being] well aware of [their] secondary cultural status" (1974: 170-5). Turkey's centre and the periphery thus not only exist in a geographical sense, but their "symbolic differences" (1974: 171) also reflect the centre and periphery of the state as a social field and the different (power) positions in it.

As Chapter Two has illustrated, this social field was carried over into modern Turkey. As Emre Erdoğan writes, "Turkish political culture [is] based on [a] continuous tension between the center and the periphery, the secular and the religious, Kurdish and Turkish", stressing that "[t]hese social cleavages have existed throughout the history of the Turkish Republic" (2018a: 2). For Dağ, the reason for that is that "[d]uring the process of the nationalization of language, culture, history and economy, distinct ethnic and religious identities were excluded from [Turkey's] social and political arenas" (2018: 1253). This exclusion has created an everlasting symbolic struggle over Turkish national identity, consisting in the enforcement of certain conceptions of Turkish identity by the established at the centre and challenges to these conceptions by the marginalised on the periphery. The latter have since been striving to move into more favourable positions in this field, seize control over the centre, and bring their own cultural codes into it (Arat 1991; Turam 2013).

That is why Somer calls the 'centre-periphery' division between different religious and ethnic identities Turkey's "formative rifts" (2019: 44). Ever since the foundation of the Turkish Republic until today, these have been the ground of much political mobilisation in Turkey. As Kalaycıoğlu states for example, "[r]esearch has so far indicated that ideological differences shaped under the influence of religiosity and ethnicity are a major source of voting behaviour at general elections in Turkey" (2012: 7). The crux of their political salience, however, is not so much the different 'cultural content' of these different religious and ethnic identities as is the fact that they have been in different power positions in the social field of Turkishness.

From this vantage point, also the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) must be seen as the rise of some of Turkey's periphery to its centre and as the gradual political and cultural takeover by the formerly excluded. For Somer, the AKP has been successful because it "represented 'new' (i.e., from the outskirts of the mainstream) political actors who had previously been marginalized, mostly because of their background as political Islamists [and whom] Turkey's secular laws and pro-secular institutions and elites—the country's 'center'—had treated […] with suspicion and some disdain" (2019: 45). Political Islam in Turkey thus also serves as "the ideology of the excluded" (Öniş 1997: 749). As Öniş explains,

> The religious symbolism associated with political Islam provides the unifying bond that helps to engineer a cross-class alliance, bringing together individuals with markedly different status in society. What is common to both groups [upper and lower-class religiously conservative voters] is that they are part of the 'excluded', but excluded in a very different sense of the term. The poor and the disadvantaged who form the principal electoral base of political Islam are excluded in the sense that they do not share in the benefits of growth in the age of globalisation. The professionals, the businessmen [*sic*] and the intellectuals whom we would classify as the rising 'Islamic bourgeoisie', are clearly benefiting from globalisation and modernity, yet also feel part of the excluded by not being part of the real elite in society. In this sense, political Islam as a protest movement and the ideology of the excluded constitutes a challenge to both left and right-wing parties of the established secular political order. (Öniş 1997: 748/9)

Turkish political Islam's overall aim can hence be described as "redefining society based on Islamist foundational narratives" (Somer 2019: 49) to turn the established social and symbolic order in a way that puts the formerly marginalised at its centre. This "passive revolution" (Tuğal 2009), in turn, has incited an "ontological insecurity among pro-secular groups" in Turkey (Somer 2019: 49). The result is a constant symbolic struggle between the established and the challengers of the social order of republican Turkey over their visions of "new Turkey" (Yavuz 2006; Keyman 2014; Waldman and Calışkan 2017) and the attempt of Turkey's religious conservatives to consolidate their new position in the field of Turkishness.

The same struggle applies to groups relegated to Turkey's socio-political periphery because of their ethnic identity, like Kurds or Arabs. In fact, the shared experience of exclusion is so significant for Turkish politics that it would at times even effectively unite Islamic conservatives and Kurdish leftists under a "peripheral alliance to redesign the centre" (Demiralp 2012: 287). As seen in Chapter Two, similarly to Turkey's religious conservatives, Turkish citizens that would not identify as ethnically Turkish have been outside the Kemalist ideal of Turkish national identity for most of the Republic's history and often still are today. Citing an Arab interviewee from the surroundings of Urfa in her research, Demiralp vividly illustrates what this ethnic exclusion inside Turkey can look like:

> "When we go to the West ['the West' is Western Turkey] *they label us* immediately as if it is written on our forehead. From our genetic structure, from our accent, we get identified. Especially 10-15 years ago, the police or even *regular citizens* would treat us as if we were PKK members [Kurdish insurgent organisation], *as if we came from a different country*." (Demiralp 2012: 294, my italics)

As a result of this historical and partly still ongoing exclusion of religious conservatives and 'ethnic non-Turks', "the contestation of national, religious and ethnic identity is at the core of Turkish politics and society today" (Gökarıksel and Secor 2017: 386) and, as such, constitutes the background for most of Turkish citizens' political and social attitudes.

For example, a study by the Turkish polling institute Konda (2018) based on a representative survey of Turkey in November 2018 found that most Turkish citizens choose a party not because they actually support it, but because they reject all the others. Moreover, this rejection does not stem from a dissatisfaction with the other parties' policy programmes, making them choose the lesser evil, but is more deeply rooted in an identity-based opposition to them and the will to go against them. For instance, voters might not vote for the AKP out of approval of their Islamic-conservative policies but because the AKP may promise in their eyes to be the strongest bulwark against the pro-Kurdish HDP, and the vote is used to obstruct the latter, not to further the former.[34] This "negative party identity", as the study's authors name it, is another illustration of how Turkish citizens may tend to form their opinions in direct relation, that is, in opposition, to other Turkish citizens.

The phenomenon of "negative identification" (*negatif kimliklenme*), as Konda calls it, has arguably increased over recent years with socio-political polarisation in Turkey being on a steady rise. Based on a review of various literatures and empirical studies, Somer finds that "Turkey has become one of the most polarized countries in the world" (2019: 42). This view is also reflected in Turkish society itself. In 2017, about 62% of the Turkish population were reported to think that Turkish society was "deeply polarized" (Aydın-Düzgit and Balta 2019: 157). Another survey from 2017 by Istanbul Bilgi University and the German Marshall Fund concluded, too, that socio-political polarisation in Turkey had reached a very high level, as can be seen in Emre Erdoğan's (2018) summary of the survey's central findings:

> Indications of high social distance were present in the survey, as 78 percent of the respondents did not approve of their daughter marrying a supporter of the "other party," and only 29 percent said they would like to be neighbors with such a person.
>
> There were also signs of perceived moral superiority such as 91 percent of the respondents thinking supporters of "their political party" are "honorable" while 80 percent claiming that "other party's" supporters are "arrogant."
>
> A disturbing level of political intolerance emerged from the survey: About half of the respondents supported wiretapping the phones of supporters of the "other party," and 37 percent said they are against participation of the members of this group in elections. (Erdoğan 2018: 1)

The crudest statistic, however, comes from still another survey from 2016, again by Konda, finding that 74% of Turkish citizens were against their children playing with the children of someone voting for another party (Somer 2019: 55). These findings indicate what McCoy,

---

[34] For example, Turkish MP Mehmet Ali Çelebi left the secularist CHP to join the Islamist AKP because he thought that more had to be done *against* the pro-Kurdish HDP (Duvar English 2023a).

Rahman, and Somer (2018) distinguish as "political" and "societal" polarisation, with the latter describing the instance at which the thinking in "camps with mutually exclusive identities and interests" (2018:18) also extends into ordinary "spaces of social coexistence" (2018: 20), so that people's social and political identities converge to a degree that they essentially conflate. As a result, the process of polarisation gradually hardens both the symbolic and the social boundaries between Turkish citizens of different identities, reducing society's integration overall (McCoy, Rahman, and Somer 2018) and nurturing the perception of an ontological threat to one's own identity and way of life across all its different milieux (Somer 2019; Aydın-Düzgit 2019). That is why, in response, every identity group develops an interest in redressing the boundaries of Turkishness in a way that ensures that their own identity is well included, if not at the centre of it. Therefore, most political issues in Turkey must be seen in the context of this severe socio-political polarisation and identity-based partisanship as well as through the lens of the social field of Turkishness *in which* this symbolic power struggle takes place.

What follows from this? For Aydın-Düzgit and Balta, the stated "increasing levels of political polarization imply that, in today's Turkey, [all] political issues are evaluated by citizens largely with reference to their own partisan affiliations" (2019: 158). That is, what matters in forming one's opinion is not the issue at such, but the position on it of one's camp. According to Somer, this type of positioning is a direct result of the polarising discourse of President Erdoğan, "urging people to interpret political events, and to position themselves politically, in terms of [one] major rivalry in society" (2019: 52) that is the battle between the old 'centre' and 'periphery'. The existence of such a new political order "à la Carl Schmitt" (Somer 2019: 52) is supported by Laebens and Öztürk who argue based on a nationally representative survey from 2018 that "years of polarized political conflict and gradual democratic breakdown forged and strengthened partisan group identities in Turkey" (2021: 247) to the extent that these partisan identities not only determine the political but also the everyday social realm today. Turkey's socio-political polarisation has increasingly split its society into parallel 'lifeworlds' that are not only ideologically but also socially and spatially distant from each other (Somer 2019) and that are led to perceive the state of Turkish society from entirely different 'standpoints', often shaped by the frames that their respective camp's leaders and media offer them (Aydın-Düzgit and Balta 2019). In this context of polarisation, the contestation of Turkey's national identity by means of competing narratives prevails as the central issue underlying various other political debates. In fact, many of these debates can be seen as "battlefields" of this all-defining *kulturkampf* (Kalaycıoğlu 2012, 2021) about Turkish national identity and different visions of 'the good society'.

This "battleground" (Hintz 2018) can be modelled as a social field. As Somer writes, "[p]olarization is a multidimensional and relational process" (2019: 48), by which he means that it encompasses more than one issue and that all issues are approached with a view to one's 'opponent'. Conceiving of Turkish citizens' boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees as strategies of contestation within the field of Turkey's national identity can capture exactly that. By reconstructing the positions of different *ideal-type* Turkish citizens in the social field of Turkishness based on their respective religious and ethnic identities, it becomes possible to illustrate and deduce what their respective interests in drawing Turkish society's boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees a certain way may be. Figure 14 is an attempt to do so.

Unlike other models discussed in Chapter One, this new model allows us to understand why, as my fieldwork data has shown, religiously conservative Turkish citizens and such that self-identify as ethnically different from Turkish may draw more inclusive *symbolic* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees than their secular and ethnically Turkish counterparts, *although* these identities do not seem to matter much in the making of *social* boundaries. As Figure 14 displays, although those Turkish citizens that have traditionally been on the periphery of the field of Turkish national identity (i.e., religious conservatives and ethnic Kurds and Arabs) do not feel close to the Syrian refugees, that is, they do not identify with them despite possibly sharing a common dedication to Islam or the same language, they have a strategic interest in including them in their vision of belonging to Turkish society to stretch its symbolic boundaries in a way that these boundaries ensure their own belonging. That is, religiously conservative Turkish citizens are not more likely to seek to include religiously conservative Syrian refugees in Turkish society because they are more likely to have a social connection to them, but because they want Islam to play a greater role in Turkish society in order to include themselves more. Likewise, ethnically Kurdish Turkish citizens do not seek to include the Syrian refugees for reasons of identification with them but because they want ethnic diversity to be more normalised in Turkish society in order to foster their very own inclusion. As Steinmetz wrote about the "symbolic competition" among German colonisers for status as 'experts on natives', "[n]ative policymaking was directed not only toward the colonized but was intended to signal something to other Germans" (2007: 52). In parallel to that, Turkish citizens' symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees is not only directed at the refugees themselves but intended to signal their respective vision of Turkish society to other Turkish citizens.

Frequent social boundary

Kemalist vision of Turkish national identity (Symbolic boundary)

'Peripheral' visions of Turkish national identity (Symbolic boundary)
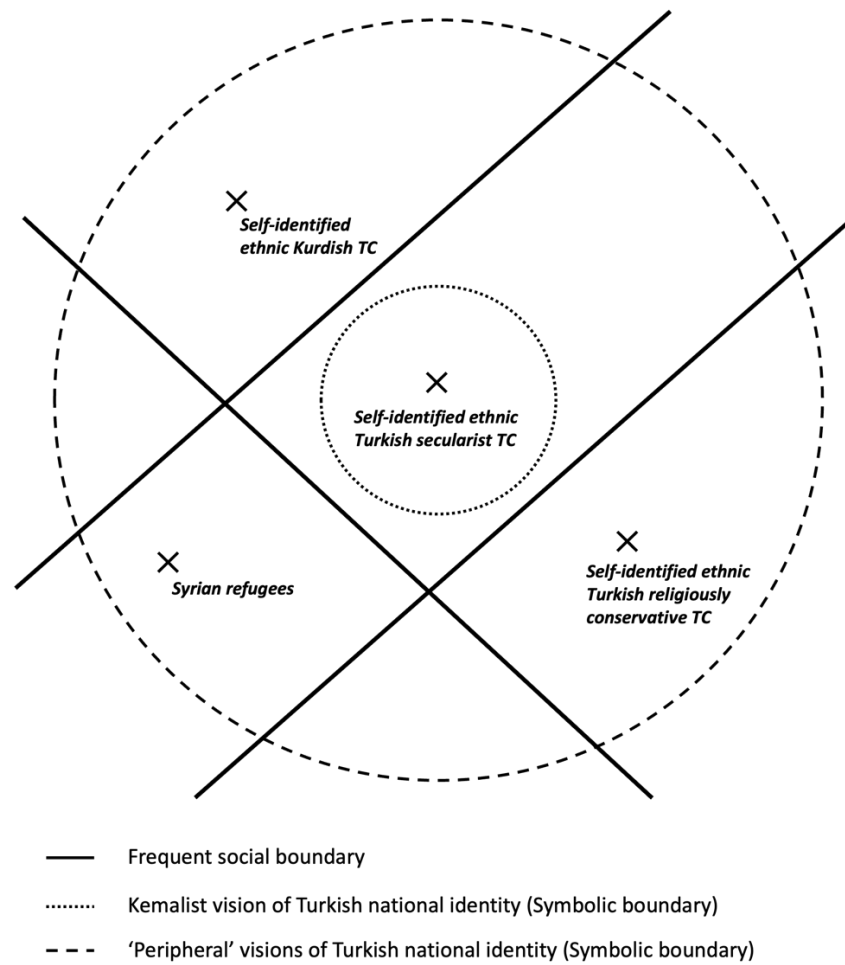
Fig. 14. Basic Sketch of Turkish National Identity as a Highly Polarised Social Field
(TC = Turkish Citizen)
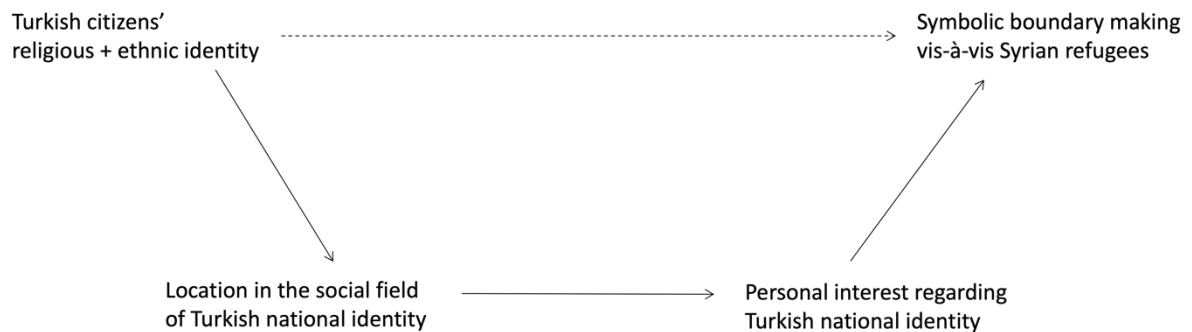
Fig. 15. The Mechanism of Contestation as a Boat Model

My field model thus synthesises the major findings of the analysis of my fieldwork data over the preceding three chapters by illustrating why, in the context of a severely polarised contestation over Turkish national identity along the fault lines of religious and ethnic identity, Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities may draw different *symbolic* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees in terms of inclusiveness, although the *social* boundaries they draw vis-à-vis them are all similarly exclusive.

Analysing attitudes to Syrian refugees in Turkey, Alakoç, Göksel, and Zarychta (2022) have demanded that research must pay greater attention to how regional context matters in public attitude formation towards refugees. Precisely in this vein, this new model tries to show how, in Turkey, what may look like being about the 'cultural content' of religious or ethnic identity in shaping Turkish citizens' symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, is, in fact, about the centre-periphery relations inside Turkish society and the struggle between Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities over the boundaries of Turkishness.

Conclusion

In 2016, journalist Suzy Hansen titled an article of hers for the New York Times Magazine: *The Erdogan Loyalists and the Syrian Refugees – Faced with an influx of new Arab neighbors, a conservative neighborhood in Istanbul struggles with the question of what it means to be a Turk.* As has followed from the philosophical excursion above, all social action takes place in relation to both an Other that is the object of these actions and another Other that observes them (Sartre). This is especially the case, the more the relation to the observing Other is polarised to the extent of being one of 'friend and enemy' (Schmitt). In accordance with this, the act of immigrant inclusion reveals both citizens' relation to the 'refugee Other' and to the 'observing Other' – here, fellow nationals. Therefore, the relation citizens build to the refugees is also an act of defining the boundaries and, thus, meaning of national identity (Derrida).

In this vein, if Turkish citizens' relations are highly polarised, as they are indeed today, then it follows from that that they are likely to build their relation to the Syrian refugees not merely in dependence of the Syrian refugees themselves, but also of their position vis-à-vis other Turkish citizens. Their pre-existing conflict over the definition of Turkish national identity thus directly impacts their relation to the Syrian refugees. Since this national identity conflict has been shaped for much of Turkish history by Turkey's religious and ethnic social cleavages, Turkish citizens of different religious (secular/pious) and ethnic (Turkish/other) identities are inclined to position themselves differently regarding the symbolic inclusion of Syrian refugees in Turkish society, *yet not* because of different feelings of similarity and

proximity to them *but* because of their respective interests in Turkey's national identity contestation, that is, to shape Turkish national identity and society in a way that ensures the inclusion of their own religious and ethnic identity and puts it (more) at the centre. In a way, the symbolic inclusion of the Syrian refugees is therefore also a means for Turkey's historically oppressed religious and ethnic identities to overcome *a feeling of insecurity* (cf. Gürsoy 2023) and demand *recognition of their identity's moral worth* to be 'a valuable member of society' (cf. Lamont 2023).[35] Because showing compassion is also a way of showing moral superiority and personal power (Fattah and Fierke 2009), and in the contestation over Turkishness, clashes between different conceptions of morality and claims to power are a very central element.

Although resentment against the Syrian refugees exists across Turkish society and has reached new heights as of late (Püttmann 2024), this contestation over Turkish national identity in the new 'arena' of Syrian refugee reception keeps continuing. As President Erdoğan's former speech writer, Aydın Ünal, declared in an interview on 22 July 2024:

> I have written and said it many times, but let me repeat it: our Syrian guests are not a burden on Turkey. On the contrary, it is them who carry a burden. […]
>
> Ignore those who pretend to be Turks or Turkists (*Türkçü*) and provoke society. Our Syrian guests stand by our side in the defence of Turkishness against Kurdish racism and terrorism, against Iran's Shiite expansionism, and against assimilation under the name of Westernization. Not every Muslim is a Turk, but a Turk is a Turk if they are a Muslim.
>
> In comparison with an atheist, a Shamanist, or a deist, etc. who claims to be a Turk, a Muslim Syrian, just like a Muslim Kurd, is much closer to us, is much more like us, is much more one of us.
>
> (Aydın Ünal as cited in Cumhuriyet 2024a, own translation)

As Koru (2023) has suggested, "Erdoğan's migration policy entails a radical vision for the country", which is "to revise Turkish political identity" and "soften up Turkish nationhood to make it more civilizational, and particularly pan-Islamic". Differently put, the Turkish President's inclusive discourse on the Syrian refugees is less about the refugees themselves than it is about shifting the boundaries of Turkishness and thereby changing its meaning, too. In turn, it is this contestation over Turkishness that explains the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities in their boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees.

---

[35] In Bloemraad et al. (2019), Lamont discusses how next to legal and social membership of a national society, there is also cultural (or symbolic) membership, which is essentially about recognition in the sense of being "*perceived* as *valuable* and *belonging to the nation*" (2019: 74, my italics). This stresses the link between moral worth and societal inclusion.

As this chapter has tried to demonstrate, the concept of the social field is a useful heuristic to model the different positions in this identity conflict and the respective relations to the Syrian refugees that Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities express as a result. In doing so, this chapter has offered a new model of boundary making vis-à-vis refugees that invites us to pay more attention to the pre-existing conflicts inside the host society that the arrival of the refugees falls within. Its central theoretical proposition is thus that we must more strongly consider the general relations *among* the members of a refugee-receiving society before we analyse their relations to the refugees themselves. In short, this model affirms that immigrant integration must be seen as a part of a society's own integration overall. As Wimmer argues in his theory of ethnic boundary making, "we can gain considerable analytical leverage if we conceive of immigrant incorporation as the outcome of *a struggle over the boundaries of inclusion in which all members of a society are involved, including institutional actors such as the state with its special powers to command and impose classifications* (2013: 31, my italics). This research has provided fresh evidence to support this claim.

As the deductive and final component of this thesis, the next chapter shall seek to empirically test this argument by means of a survey experiment, using original nationally representative data, collected face-to-face for this thesis in September 2023.

Chapter Eight

Testing the Theory

Table of Contents

Chapter Eight

Testing the Theory

Introduction

The central aim of this thesis has been to develop a new grounded theory of the role of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identity in their relation to Turkey's Syrian refugees. I have done so in response to the fact that existing theories that can be distilled from the literature on this topic could not fully make sense of previous findings regarding the Turkish case. That is, the existing empirical evidence that can give hints regarding the role of religious and ethnic identity in the relationship between Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees has been ambiguous, yielding support for all three models I developed based on the respective literature (see Chapter One). Drawing on my ethnographic observations and semi-structured in-depth interviews with 115 neighbourhood representatives (*muhtars*) in three Turkish cities (Izmir, Konya, and Urfa) in 2022, I have therefore built a new model that identifies an overarching logic to the seemingly paradoxical previous findings and thereby provides an explanation for them.

Using the concept of the social field as a heuristic, I have argued that, while there is little difference between Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities in how they draw *social* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, there is a significant difference between them in how they draw *symbolic* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, and that these differences essentially reflect the citizens' respective positions in the social field of Turkish national identity. That is, while secularist ethnic Turks have an interest in drawing less inclusive symbolic boundaries of Turkish society in order to defend the Kemalist conception of Turkish national identity as secularly minded and ethnically Turkish, Turkish citizens on the periphery of this social field, such as religious conservatives or ethnic Kurds or Arabs, have an interest in widening the boundaries of Turkish society in order to ensure their own inclusion. Their higher symbolic inclusiveness vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, who are for the most part seen in Turkey as likewise religiously conservative and ethnically Arab or Kurdish, is therefore *not* a reflection of a greater feeling of proximity to them, as also the social boundaries indicate, *but rather* a reflection of their own interests inside the country's conflict over different visions of Turkish national identity and society. Because "boundaries provide a substantive vision of who belongs in society and who does not" (Edgell et al. 2020: 313).

While this attains the main goal of this thesis, i.e. to develop a new theory grounded in original empirical data and thematic qualitative analysis, the next step would be to test this theory on *generalisable* data. However, making a first attempt at doing so, I shall show in this final chapter of my thesis that this is, alas, not at all easy. As Martin (2003) rightly stresses, since social fields are "invisible", it is difficult to trace them in empirical reality. He therefore suggests that a social field should be observed and measured by its "effects", i.e. the likely actions that follow from agents' different field positions. In response, this chapter draws on original empirical data from a nationally representative survey, including an experiment, conducted specifically for this thesis by means of 2,539 face-to-face interviews across Turkey on the 2nd and 3rd of September 2023.

Analysing this data using simple logistic regression, I shall show that there is indeed a statistically significant association of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities with their *symbolic* boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, but *less so* with their *social* boundary making, just as my theory predicts. More concretely, while religiously conservative Turkish citizens and ethnically Arab or Kurdish ones are more inclusive towards the Syrian refugees at the *symbolic* level than secular Turkish citizens and ethnic Turks, there is hardly such a difference at the *social* level. In line with my claim above about the methodological difficulty of revealing the mechanism that underlies this, I shall moreover show how the treatment that I designed for this experiment proved ineffective, and argue that, in response, future experiments to test my theory should use a treatment that is more conscious of the *intersectionality* of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities. That is because one likely reason why this experiment failed is, as I shall show, that the different parts of the treatment cancelled out each other's effect. Overall, this chapter will thus provide some first empirical evidence in support of the generalisability of my theory and moreover lay the ground for future research to develop empirical tests that can also assess whether the underlying mechanism is what I suggest.

In the remainder, I shall first present the design of my survey experiment and its respective questionnaire, including a discussion of my operationalisation of the concepts I seek to investigate and of the treatment I used to try to tease out the social field of Turkish national identity contestation. I shall also discuss here some details of the data collection for the survey. Second, I shall phrase the observable hypotheses that I draw from my theory and seek to test. Third, I shall present the results from my regression analyses, and fourth, discuss them both substantively with regard to what they imply for my theory and methodologically with regard to why future experiments should use a more intersectionality-conscious treatment to test the social mechanism part of this theory.

1. Design and Data

1.1 Design of the Survey and Survey Experiment

To recall, as Wimmer writes about the conceptualisation of social boundaries, "a boundary displays both a categorical and a social or behavioral dimension. The former refers to *acts of social classification and collective representation*, the latter to everyday networks of relationships that result from individual *acts of connecting and distancing*" (2013: 9, my italics). For him, a social boundary only really exists when the two types of acts do coincide. In contrast, Lamont and Molnár (2002) use this differentiation to speak of two distinct types of boundary, which are social boundaries and symbolic boundaries. For them, *social* boundaries are likewise "revealed in stable *behavioral* patterns of association", but they also represent "objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities" (2002: 168-9, my italics). Next to individual choices and collective patterns of social interaction, they thus additionally emphasise the possible reification of these patterns in social structures and their effects, such as institutions, group formations, or the material environment (for example, rights or privileges attached to nationality, gender, race, social class, or housing patterns). In contrast, *symbolic* boundaries represent for them "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space" (Lamont and Molnár 2002: 168), which is in direct alignment with the "categorical dimension of social boundaries" that Wimmer (2013) proposes.

The way I have used the concepts of social and symbolic boundaries in this research is a mix of these two. While I have preferred to distinguish between the two types of boundaries, as Lamont and Molnár suggest, I have meanwhile preferred to stick with Wimmer's focus on "individual *acts* of connecting and distancing" rather than their reification in social structures. The latter I have done because my research is interested in the *personal* relation to the Syrian refugees that Turkish citizens *build*, i.e. their chosen interaction with them in everyday life and their social categorisation of them, rather than the question of the Syrian refugees' institutional or legal inclusion in Turkey. And I have done the former in order to not preclude the question of whether, in this case, social and symbolic boundaries actually coincide, which is a topic of discussion in itself in the literature on boundary making (see Edgell et al. 2020 for a review) and, as restated in the introduction, a central element of my argument regarding Turkish citizens' boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. That said, I do consider the structural social boundary of *exposure* to Syrian refugees, but not as part of citizens' boundary *making*.

Building on this conceptualisation of social and symbolic boundaries, I have operationalised social boundary making for this survey as different possible ways of interacting with the Syrian refugees (using levels of exposure to them as a control variable), and I have operationalised symbolic boundary making as perceptions of the Syrian refugees' similarity to Turkish citizens and of their belonging to Turkish society. The questions I have used to measure Turkish citizens' *social* boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees hence read as follows:

Questions about *acts* of connecting and distancing vis-à-vis Syrian refugees

12. Do you try to stay away from Syrians in your daily life?

( ) Yes, I do ( ) No, I don't

14. How often do you talk to Syrians in your daily life, in your neighbourhood or elsewhere?

( ) Never ( ) Sometimes ( ) Often ( ) All the time

15. Do you have a Syrian friend who is not related to you by blood but whom you can trust?

( ) Yes, I do ( ) No, I don't

16. How often do you spend time together with Syrians who are not your relatives? (Eating together, chatting outside of work, making house visits, etc.)

( ) Never ( ) Sometimes ( ) Often ( ) All the time

The precise phrasing of these questions was developed taking into account conceptual goals as well as sociocultural aspects of Turkish society and the practical considerations and concerns raised by the contracted pollster, KONDA. A complete version of the survey questionnaire in both Turkish and English can be found in Appendix IV, followed by a detailed annotation and discussion of the survey questions in Appendix V. The structural social boundaries that I use as *control variables* I have measured as follows:

Questions about *inherent exposure* to Syrian refugees

10. Are there any Syrians in your neighbourhood?

( ) None   ( ) A few   ( ) Quite a few   ( ) Many

11. How often do you see Syrian people when you go out on the street?

( ) Never ( ) Sometimes ( ) Often ( ) All the time

13. Do you have someone from Syria among the people I will now list according to the degree of closeness? (TO THE SURVEYOR: Tick ALL valid options.)

[ ] Relative [ ] Neighbour [ ] Colleague [ ] Tenant [ ] Employee [ ] None [36]

---

[36] In the survey, this item also includes the options 'spouse' and 'friend', which I don't use though, as I seek to control for contacts that either *predate* intentional "acts of connecting and distancing" or *exist for instrumental reasons* (rent, labour).

In the same manner, the following battery of questions was developed to measure Turkish citizens' *symbolic* boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees:

Questions about symbolic boundary making *before* the experimental treatment

9. To what extent may Syrian refugees belong in your community?

9.1. In my country ( ) Yes ( ) No

9.2. In my city ( ) Yes ( ) No

9.3. In my neighbourhood, workplace, or school ( ) Yes ( ) No

9.4. In my building, as a neighbour, or in my group of friends ( ) Yes ( ) No

9.5. In my home or family ( ) Yes ( ) No

17. Now I will read some sentences about the Syrians. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with these sentences. 1 means definitely false, 5 means definitely true.

17.3. I think the Syrians are similar to me culturally or in terms of values.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

17.4. I think the Syrians are similar to me in terms of religious practices.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Questions about symbolic boundary making *after* the experimental treatment

23. Now I will read some sentences about the Syrians. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with these sentences. 1 means definitely false, 5 means definitely true.

23.1. The Syrians now have a place in Turkish society.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

23.2. The Syrians can become a part of Turkish society in the future.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

23.3. The Syrians should be more integrated into Turkish society.

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

23.4. The Syrians should be given the right to become citizens after they stay in Turkey for a certain period of time and adapt [to Turkish society].

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

24. Do you see the Syrians as your religious brothers and sisters?

( ) Yes, I do ( ) No, I do not

25. Do you see the Syrians as your Kurdish or Arab brothers and sisters?

( ) Yes, I do ( ) No, I do not

These questions seek to reflect that symbolic boundaries, as Edgell et al. (2020: 311) put it, are practically about the "social *acceptance*" and the "social *belonging*" (my italics) of people – or as Lamont and Molnár put it, about "feelings of similarity and group membership" (2002: 168). Moreover, the questions directly draw on various elements of Turkish citizens' boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees that came up in my fieldwork data. What is also important to note is that, after extensive discussion, the term "the Syrians" was preferred to "Syrian refugees" or "Syrian asylum-seekers/immigrants/migrants" to stay close to the way the Turkish public tends to speak about the Syrian refugees and to avoid any biased reactions to the phrasing of the question that the terms "refugee" or "immigrant" could trigger. This phrasing is moreover in line with previous surveys on the Syrian refugees in Turkey, such as the widely cited *Syrian Barometer* by the UNHCR (Erdoğan 2018b, 2020b, 2021).

With Turkish citizens' social and symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees being the dependent variables of interest here, my main independent variables of interest are their religious and ethnic identities. Building on my conceptualisation of them in the Turkish context, as extensively discussed in Chapter Two, I operationalise them in two different ways, considering both the 'subjective' dimension of religious and ethnic identity in the sense of self-identification and their 'objective' dimension in terms of religious practice or mother tongue. With regard to religious and ethnic self-identification, I use questionnaire items that have been repeatedly used and validated in previous surveys by the contracted pollster, KONDA, which read as follows:

> *4. Which of the following three groups do you consider yourself to belong to in terms of* ***lifestyle****? (TO THE SURVEYOR: Tick the ONE option that the respondent says)*
>
> ( ) Modern ( ) Traditional conservative ( ) Religious conservative
>
> *33. We are all citizens of the Republic of Turkey, but we may be of different* ***ethnic origins****; what do you know or feel your identity to be?*
>
> ( ) Turkish ( ) Kurdish ( ) Zaza ( ) Arab ( ) Other (Write): ....
>
> *34. What is your* ***religion and sect*** *to which you feel you belong?*
>
> ( ) Sunni (Hanafi or Shafi'i) Muslim ( ) Alevi Muslim ( ) Other (Write): ....

As discussed at length in Chapter Two, as simplistic though they may seem, the concepts that are provided as answer options here reflect a typical usage in Turkey. While the category of "modern" stands for more secular, Westernised lifestyles, which, however, do not exclude religious belief or practice per se, "religious conservatives" are considered to be trying to live their life fully according to religious precepts. The category of the "traditional conservative",

meanwhile, represents a (secular *or* religious) conservatism rooted in national traditionalism. My focus is therefore on the categories "modern" and "religious conservative".

To be sure, these categories are mere ideal types and are certainly grounded more in Turkish public discourse than in actual social reality where individuals may have much fuzzier identities and lifestyles that do not neatly fit them.[37] However, precisely by virtue of being commonly used terms in Turkish everyday language, they provide the strong advantage that they reflect the religio-cultural fault line that impacts so much of Turkish society and politics, as discussed in Chapters Two and Seven. In the same vein, asking people what ethnicity they self-identify with can be much more productive than determining this externally by means of *a priori* criteria since many Turkish citizens may, for example, be of mixed ethnic heritage, not speak the language that is associated with 'their' ethnicity, or simply be 'out of touch' with it.

Still, to attain more robustness in measurement, the following items about externally assessable elements of ethnic and religious identity were also added to the questionnaire:

*30. Which **language** do you speak MOST at home?*

( ) Turkish ( ) Kurdish ( ) Zaza ( ) Arabic ( ) Other (Write): ....

*32. Do you or your spouse **cover your head** when you go out on the street? How do you cover your head? (TO THE SURVEYOR: Read the options to the respondent and tick the answer given by the respondent).*

( ) No cover ( ) *Başörtüsü*[38] ( ) *Türban* ( ) *Çarşaf, peçe* ( ) Interviewee is a single male

*35. Which of the following would you describe yourself in terms of **religious practice**? (TO THE SURVEYOR: Read the answers below, tick the first one the respondent says)*

( ) A person without religious belief

( ) Someone who does not believe in the requirements of religion

( ) A person who is a believer but doesn't quite manage to fulfil religion's requirements

( ) A religious person who tries to fulfil the requirements of religion

( ) A religious person who fulfils all the requirements of religion

Again, also here, the answer options provided were validated in previous surveys by the pollster and are based on different levels of piety as they are common in Turkish society.

Next to the independent variables of interest, also data on various covariates was collected, including participants' age, gender, income, education, profession, hometown, and party choices. Moreover, given the impact of the devastating earthquakes in southeast Turkey

---

[37] For example, think of Sevgi Kılıç, a young female CHP politician, wearing an Islamic headscarf.
[38] A detailed description of the differences between these Islamic head coverings can be found in Appendix IV.

on 6 February 2023 seven months before the survey, in which around 100,000 people died and many more experienced some form of loss, also questions about the earthquake were included. A detailed description and discussion of how these variables were measured in the survey can be found in Appendix V.

Finally, to measure the impact of the participants' location in the social field of Turkey's national identity, an *experimental treatment* was inserted in half of the questionnaires. Given various concerns by the polling company about the practical feasibility of more elaborate or visual alternatives, the treatment consisted in seven additional questions about the past, present, and future of the position of religious conservatives and ethnic minorities in Turkey as well as one question that directly related religiously and ethnically motivated exclusion to the Syrian refugees, with the aim of eliciting reactions just as a vignette-based treatment would do. In the half of the questionnaires that contained them, they were inserted right before the second question battery on symbolic boundaries presented above, spanning the questions Q23 to Q25.

20. Now I am going to read some sentences to you. Could you indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with these sentences? 1 means definitely false, 5 means definitely true.

1.1. Religious people in Turkey used to be oppressed in social life. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

1.2. Religious people in Turkey are still oppressed in social life. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

1.3. Ethnic minorities in Turkey used to be oppressed in social life. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

1.4. Ethnic minorities in Turkey are still oppressed in social life. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

1.5. Turkish society should embrace ethnic minorities more. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

1.6. Turkish society should embrace Islam more. (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

21. Some people in Turkey do not like the Syrian refugees because they are Arab or Kurdish and mostly religious conservatives. How do you feel about this?

( ) I agree with these people. ( ) I disagree with these people.

( ) I don't care. ( ) It makes me angry.

To be sure, these questions were not included as actual measurements of something but as an experimental manipulation to test whether the differences in symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis Turkey's Syrian refugees between participants of different religious and ethnic identities change after having received this treatment. That said, the treatment was designed to bring the contestation of Turkish national identity even more to the fore of the participants' minds with the intention to make the respective participants more strongly aware of their position in this conflict vis-à-vis other Turkish citizens. The logic pursued here is what one could call a 'contrapositive logic': since the presumed effect of Turkey's national identity contestation on

Turkish citizens' symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees cannot be shown by experimentally *removing* this identity conflict, the idea is to use the experiment to *reinforce* its presence and see whether this enhances its presumed impact. To check whether the treatment's intended manipulation, which was to make the participants actively think of their position in Turkish society vis-à-vis other Turkish citizens, actually took place, a so-called manipulation check item was inserted into the questionnaire. This was placed right after the post-treatment questions about symbolic boundary making.

> *28. When answering these questions, to what extent do you think you took into account the opinions of other people in Turkey?*
>
> ( ) Not at all ( ) A bit ( ) Quite a bit ( ) Very much

This item is meant to assess in a straightforward manner whether the treatment *succeeded in manipulating* the participants in the way intended. This question is different from the question of whether the substantive *effects of such a manipulation* are as hypothesised. The benefit of inserting such an item is that in case that no average treatment effect can be detected, it allows to determine whether the hypothesised mechanism therefore does not seem to exist or whether the used treatment was simply not able to trigger and thereby reveal it. Differently put, in the case of a no-effect scenario, the manipulation check helps estimate whether it is the theory that is at fault or the tool to test it.

Finally, before employing the questionnaire in the survey, a *cognitive comprehension test* was conducted with a group of five Turkish university students, which involved extensive discussion of their perception of the questions and helped check whether the intended meaning would come across. That said, the bias that comes with this particular sample is clear.

1.2 Data Collection

The data for this survey was collected by means of 2,539 face-to-face interviews across Turkey, following a regionally stratified probability sampling design, i.e. the participants were selected randomly within pre-defined regions. Of these, 1,344 (53%) randomly received the treatment questionnaire. Randomisation checks after the data collection (see Appendix VIII) indicate that the randomised administration of the treatment questionnaire was fairly successful with regard to key variables such as gender, age, education, occupation, income, party preference, ethnic self-identification and lifestyle, language at home, religious practice, sect, and head covering, presence of Syrian refugees in one's neighbourhood, the frequency of encounters with them, or the existence of a Syrian friend. Details on the sampling frame of the polling company,

KONDA, can be found in Appendix VII. Biases that may have arisen include, in particular, social desirability bias, interviewer bias, and satisficing/straightlining. While face-to-face interviews have the strong advantage of eliciting the highest response rates, the presence of a pollster and the variance in their appearances and ways of interaction may bias the responses people give (Groves et al. 2009). Additionally, the length of the survey with a total of 45 items may have led to fatigue and hasty responding. Appendix V discusses this in more detail.

Meanwhile, the timing of the survey was fortunate as the start of September 2023 was a relatively ordinary time in Turkey, following the upheavals of the earthquake in February and the general elections in May as well as the summer break. What must be noted, however, is that the issue of the Syrian refugees played a significant role during Turkey's presidential elections in May 2023, especially when the oppositional candidate, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu from the secular-nationalist social-democratic Republican People's Party (CHP) allied with Ümit Özdağ, the founder of Turkey's openly racist first-ever anti-immigrant party, the Victory Party (*Zafer Partisi*), to defeat the incumbent, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the religiously conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP), and in that process publicly announced that all Syrian refugees would leave Turkey if he were elected (Tokyay 2023; Püttmann 2023). One example of this was CHP posters across Turkey with the slogan "The Syrians will leave!" (*Suriyeliler gi-de-cek!*). The possible impact this survey-taking climate may have had on the results can only be guessed. The same applies to the earthquake.

2. Hypotheses

Based on my fieldwork and the argument I have developed from it, there are two central claims that I seek to test with this survey experiment. The first one concerns the difference between social and symbolic boundaries. As my fieldwork indicated, while there may be more occasions for Turkish citizens that are religiously conservative or ethnically Arab or Kurdish to interact with Syrian refugees because the language barrier is smaller or there are more shared social spaces, such as religious venues or family networks, this does *not* lead to drastically more inclusive *social* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees among such Turkish citizens than among Turkish citizens that are secular or ethnically Turkish. However, at the level of *symbolic* boundaries, the differences in inclusiveness vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees between religiously conservative Turkish citizens and ethnically Arab or Kurdish ones on the one hand and secular Turkish citizens and ethnic Turks on the other are indeed significant. I therefore hypothesise:

H1a: There is no statistically significant difference in social boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees between secular ("modern") and religiously conservative Turkish citizens.

H1b: There is no statistically significant difference in social boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees between ethnically Turkish and Arab or Kurdish Turkish citizens.

H2a: Religiously conservative Turkish citizens draw statistically significantly more inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees than secular ("modern") Turkish citizens.

H2b: Ethnically Arab or Kurdish Turkish citizens draw statistically significantly more inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees than ethnic Turks.

My second central claim concerns the social mechanism that underlies these expected observations. As I have argued, the reason why there is a smaller difference at the social level than at the level of symbolic boundaries is that, regardless of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identity, most of them do not want to or do not have the possibility to socially interact with the Syrian refugees. However, Turkish citizens of Arab or Kurdish ethnicity or such that are religiously conservative have an interest in widening the symbolic boundaries of Turkish society in order to consolidate their own belonging to it as well, given the ever-present contestation over Turkish national identity. Since the purpose of the treatment described above is to bring Turkey's national identity contestation even more to the minds of the respondents, I hypothesise that, if the treatment's manipulation is successful, the described difference in symbolic boundary making will be even greater among participants that have received the treatment than among the control group. That is, religiously conservative and ethnically Arab or Kurdish Turkish citizens that have received the treatment will draw even *more* inclusive symbolic boundaries than those who have not, and secular and ethnically Turkish Turkish citizens that have received the treatment will draw even *less* inclusive symbolic boundaries than their equivalents in the control group.

H3a: The treatment will be associated with more inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees for religiously conservative Turkish citizens.

H3b: The treatment will be associated with more inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees for ethnically Arab or Kurdish Turkish citizens.

If these hypotheses are confirmed, then this would suggest that Turkish citizens' awareness of Turkey's national identity contestation influences how symbolically inclusive or exclusive they are vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. This would support my theory that these differences in symbolic boundary making between Turkish citizens of different religious and ethnic identities are more about their different interests in this national identity contestation than about different feelings of proximity to the Syrian refugees.

3. Results

The following is an overview of the results from numerous logistic regression analyses, using the different operationalisations of religious and ethnic identity as well as social and symbolic boundaries as independent and dependent variables respectively. To increase the robustness of these results, all models include the following *control variables*: gender, age, education, occupation, religion, party preference, loss due to the earthquake, presence of Syrian refugees in one's neighbourhood, frequency of (coincidental) encounters with Syrians in everyday life, and *inherent* existence of a Syrian contact, such as a relative, neighbour, colleague, tenant, or employee. Moreover, the independent variables – religious and ethnic identity – which were measured by self-identification as well as religious practice, head covering, and language at home, also served as control variables to each other. Detailed descriptive data can be found in Appendices VIII and IX. For better readability, the controls are not listed in the regression tables, as is increasingly custom in research focusing on the effect of one specific variable.

3.1 Religious Identity and Social Boundary Making

On social boundary making according to religious identity the results show that, including the above-mentioned control variables, there is *no statistically significant difference* between *secular and religiously conservative* Turkish citizens, as measured by self-identified religious identity ("lifestyle"), regarding the likelihood of (a) trying to stay away from Syrian refugees, (b) talking to them, or (b) having a Syrian friend. There is, however, a significant positive association between a self-identified religiously conservative lifestyle and the likelihood of socialising with Syrian refugees, which, in light of the fieldwork, is likely based on shared religious venues. The same result appears when measuring religious identity as the level of religious practice, which, also without controls, is predominantly *not* significantly associated with any of the above measures of social boundary making, except for having a Syrian friend, which is significantly, though only a tiny bit more likely for some practice in contrast to none. Finally, measuring religious identity by the type of the respondent's or their wife's (if married)

head covering, there is also *no* statistically significant association with the above measures of social boundary making after applying controls, except for talking to a Syrian refugee, which women wearing the chador or niqab or their husbands are significantly more likely to do. Likewise, also the likelihood of having a Syrian friend significantly increases the more a respondent or their wife covers their head. Here, the model also indicates that being female, which in all models is significantly negatively associated with any social interaction with Syrian refugees, is no longer statistically significant in those cases where head covering is significantly associated. Taken together, all this suggests that religious identity does indeed not significantly matter for social boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, except for social-ising, which may result from joint religious service, and female covering, which might reduce women's inhibitions against social interaction with Syrians or blur the boundaries through another mechanism. The respective regression models can be found in Appendix X.

3.2 Religious Identity and Symbolic Boundary Making

In contrast to the above, the results for the different levels of acceptance of Syrian refugees in one's surroundings are the complete opposite. Here, a self-identified religiously conservative lifestyle in comparison with a secular ("modern") one is *significantly positively* associated with all levels of acceptance, also after adding the stated control variables to the model. That means, self-identified religiously conservative people are more likely to accept Syrian refugees in their country, their city, their neighbourhood, their apartment building, and even their home – at least so they say. Likewise, self-identified religiously conservative identity is also *significantly positively* associated with perceptions of cultural and religious similarity to the Syrian refugees, also after adding controls. The same applies to some levels of religious practice: here, little or no practice is significantly negatively associated with acceptance, also after controls, in contrast to complete atheism (which may correlate with political liberalism) or pious practice, which tend to be associated with a higher level of acceptance. Religious practice is also *significantly positively* associated with perceived religious similarity (the more, the more), whilst pious religious practice is moreover *significantly positively* associated with perceived cultural similarity. Finally, again in direct opposite to social boundary making, religious head covering is *not* significantly associated with any of the levels of acceptance after inserting controls. However, respondents wearing a chador or niqab and their husbands are significantly more likely to perceive the Syrian refugees as culturally similar, and women with any type of head covering are significantly more likely than women without one to perceive the Syrian refugees as religiously similar. The respective regression models can be found in Appendix XI.

3.3 Ethnic Identity and Social Boundary Making

On social boundary making according to ethnic identity the results show that, including the above-mentioned control variables, there is *no* statistically significant association between self-identified Kurdish identity and the likelihood of (a) talking to Syrian refugees, (b) socialising with them, or (c) having a Syrian friend. The same applies when we measure ethnic identity by the language spoken at home: also Turkish citizens who speak Kurdish as their mother tongue are *not* significantly more likely to talk to Syrian refugees, socialise with them, or have a Syrian friend. As for self-identified Arab Turkish citizens, they are indeed significantly more likely to talk to Syrian refugees, socialise with them, or have a Syrian friend, also after controls. However, the significance level of this association heavily drops or even disappears once we control for inherent exposure to Syrians through a relative, colleague, neighbour, employee, or tenant. Also here, the same pattern applies when we measure Arab ethnicity by the language spoken at home. This suggests that, as shown in Chapter Six on Urfa, what seems to be ethnic bonds may actually be family bonds and the 'social spill-over effects' that result from these kinship networks by bringing together also people that are not related. The respective regression models can be found in Appendix XII.

3.4 Ethnic Identity and Symbolic Boundary Making

Just like with religious identity, in contrast to the above findings on social boundary making, self-identified Kurdish and Arab identity are *significantly positively* associated with almost all levels of acceptance, i.e. in the same country, city, neighbourhood, apartment building, or home. For self-identified Arabs, however, the association drops in significance each time we control for inherent exposure to a Syrian contact and completely disappears with regard to accepting Syrian refugees in one's home/family. The same pattern crystallises when measuring ethnic identity by the language spoken at home. Moreover, speaking Arabic at home is at no point significantly associated with perceived cultural or religious similarity, whilst identifying as Arab is – unless we control for inherent exposure to a Syrian contact. In contrast, speaking Kurdish at home or identifying as Kurdish is at all times, also after adding controls, *significantly positively* associated with perceived cultural and religious similarity. This underlines even more that for ethnically Arab Turkish citizens it is 'family relations' that bind them to the Syrian refugees, not ethnic solidarity, whereas ethnic Kurds feel strongly about the Syrian refugees' symbolic inclusion, even though, socially, they are no more connected to them than others. The respective regression models can be found in Appendix XIII, and the entirety of my data analysis scripts (R files) can be found under the online link in Appendix II.

3.5 Implications for Hypotheses 1 and 2

As the results above show, the role of religious and ethnic identity regarding the making of social boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees is minor and there is no statistically significant major difference between Turkish citizens here. This supports Hypotheses 1a and b. As the results moreover show, this is different at the level of symbolic boundaries. Here, Turkish citizens that are religiously conservative and/or ethnically Arab or Kurdish are indeed significantly more likely than secular and/or ethnically Turkish Turkish citizens to draw inclusive boundaries. The starkest illustration of this is the 'effect reversal' from social to symbolic boundary making for Arabs and Kurds: while Arabs do draw somewhat more inclusive social boundaries supposedly due to their family connections, they are more likely to symbolically differentiate among the Syrian refugees according to kinship degree; in contrast, Kurds are socially less inclusive of Syrian refugees than Arabs, yet symbolically more inclusive of the Syrian refugees. This detachment of social and symbolic boundary making not only shows that the two do not always overlap, but also that there are factors influencing the making of symbolic boundaries other than people's actual social experiences with them. Hypothesis 2a is thus supported while Hypothesis 2b is only supported for Kurds, not for Arabs.

3.6 Results from the Experiment (Implications for Hypothesis 3)

Unfortunately, the experimental treatment did not succeed in manipulating the respondents. As the responses to the manipulation check indicate, there is virtually no difference between the treatment group and the control group with regard to how much respondents considered the views of other Turkish citizens whilst answering the post-treatment questions on symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. This suggests that the treatment has not fulfilled its purpose of manipulating the respondents in the way intended and the experiment can thus not serve as a test of the mechanism part of my theory. The next section will discuss in more detail the possible reasons for this and the learnings for a better experimental test of my new theory. As a result, the responses to the post-treatment questions also indicate no significant average treatment effect. Moreover, the direction of the treatment coefficient is negative even for religiously conservative or ethnically Arab or Kurdish Turkish citizens, unlike hypothesised. However, this changes once we conduct sub-group analyses.

These sub-group analyses indicate a statistically significant positive treatment effect for religiously conservative Arab Turkish citizens for the items on whether the Syrian refugees should belong to Turkish society in the future and receive Turkish citizenship once they have sufficiently integrated. That means, religiously conservative Arab Turkish citizens that have

been reminded of Turkey's national identity conflict in terms of religious and ethnic identity are significantly more likely to affirm that Syrian refugees should belong to Turkey. Moreover, although statistically not significant, the effect direction is positive for both Arabs and Kurds that are religiously conservative on the question of whether the Syrian refugees already belong to Turkish society today. The respective regression models can be found in Appendix XIV. The next section will discuss the possible meaning of these findings in more detail.

4. Discussion

The predominant confirmation of Hypotheses 1 and 2 in the analysis supports my theory that Turkish citizens' social and symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees does not overlap in the sense that their religious and ethnic identities play only *marginal* roles in their *social* boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees but are *significant* when it comes to the making of *symbolic* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, i.e. the question of who belongs to Turkey and its society. To show that the social mechanism that underlies this difference is their use of symbolic boundary making as a strategy in Turkey's national identity contestation depending on their respective position in this social field, the experiment should have shown in a second step that the inserted treatment further enhances the role of religious and ethnic identity in Turkish citizens' symbolic boundary making towards the Syrian refugees. That is, it was expected that, receiving the treatment, secular and/or ethnically Turkish Turkish citizens would draw even less inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees whereas religiously conservative and/or ethnically Arab or Kurdish Turkish citizens would draw even more inclusive ones. This did not happen because the used instrument did not work.

Now, why did the treatment, i.e. the additional seven questions about the oppression of pious Muslims and ethnic minorities in Turkey in the past and today, not manipulate the respondents in the way intended, which was to make them think even more strongly about their position in Turkey's national identity conflict vis-à-vis the position of other Turkish citizens? The most likely reason for this is that the treatment did not consider the *intersectionality* of Turkish citizens' identities in this national identity contestation enough.

What does that mean? As discussed in Chapter One, who I am is fundamentally a matter of difference. Any identity I have I can only have because some other being does not have it. This makes identity entirely context-dependent. It also means that I can have several identities, each being activated and relevant under different conditions. But this does not mean *that it is only one identity at a time that matters.*

This interplay of identities is theoretically captured by the notion of intersectionality. Intersectionality signifies "the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; a theoretical approach based on such a premise" (OED 2021). The core message of this theoretical approach is that "[t]he problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference […] but rather the opposite – that it frequently *conflates or ignores intragroup differences*" (Crenshaw 1991: 1242, my italics). Consequently, intersectionality demands to always account for the additional identity layers that may *moderate the effects of another identity layer* and to not treat them separately (Wimmer 2013). Whether one understands by it 'mere' statistical interaction effects or something more complex (see the discussion in Wimmer 2013: 213-14) is then, really, secondary.

Following the logic of intersectionality, the treatment used here would have failed to manipulate the respondents in the way intended because it did not consider the many possible intersections of ethnic and religious identity but instead *triggered both identities at the same time*. This may have caused that the effect of being triggered about one identity *cancelled out* the effect of being triggered about the other. For example, *religiously conservative* Turkish citizens that identify as *ethnic Turks* may be triggered positively by a treatment that speaks about societal pressure on pious people in Turkey and, as a result, may want to draw more inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis Turkey's Syrian refugees in order to express their position that religiously conservative Sunni Muslims should receive more recognition. However, as the treatment also speaks about societal pressure on ethnic minorities, such as Turkey's Kurds, whom they may see as a threat, this may trigger the ethnic Turks negatively and thus make them draw *less* inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees in order to express their opposition to more rights for ethnic minorities in Turkey.

By the same token, *ethnically Arab* Turkish citizens that are *religiously secular*, Alawite, or Christian, as they exist in Antakya or Mersin for example, may react positively to a treatment that speaks about a lack of recognition for ethnic minorities in Turkey, which they may have experienced themselves, and, as a result, may likewise want to draw more inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis Turkey's Syrian refugees to express their position on this issue. However, as the treatment also asks about societal pressure on pious Sunni Muslims in Turkey, whom they may see as a threat, this may trigger them negatively and thus make them draw *less* inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees to express their opposition to a greater presence of Sunni Muslim piety in Turkey.

This intersectional interpretation of the experiment's results finds further support in my finding that one group that *was* statistically significantly affected by the treatment were religiously conservative Arab Turkish citizens, who drew *more inclusive symbolic boundaries* vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees *after the treatment* reminded them of Turkey's national identity conflict. Following the intersectional logic, the reason may be that, in their case, neither the treatment's questions about the oppression of ethnic minorities nor those about the oppression of pious Sunni Muslims triggered them negatively because their very own identity lies exactly at the intersection of these two, and, therefore, they may be able to relate to both types of lacking recognition themselves. As a result, it is only logical that a greater awareness of Turkey's national identity contestation would make them draw more inclusive symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees in order to express their position in this conflict, because *for them, unlike for other respondents, there likely is no cancelling out* of the two different identity triggers in the treatment.

In summary, this means that a future experiment to tease out the presence of the social field of Turkish national identity and its effect on Turkish citizens' symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis Turkey's Syrian refugees as an expression of their position in this field will need to pay greater attention to the *intersection* of religious and ethnic identity in the design of its treatment in order to not "conflate or ignore intragroup differences" (Crenshaw 1991: 1242), as seems to have happened here. In fact, a more intersectional approach would also cater to the inner logic of a social field because, just like the concept of the social field, the analytical framework of intersectionality reasons in terms of people's "particular social *locations*" (Yuval-Davis 2015: 94, my italics) and the "differential *situatedness* of different social agents" (Yuval-Davis 2011: 4, my italics), which is based on the respective intersection of their personal identities. As Scuzzarello and Moroşanu (2023) argue, taking into account the specific "intersectional social positionings" (2023: 2997) of different members of the host society and the migrants that are received can help explain the natives' diverging strategies of boundary making vis-à-vis the newcomers. Thus, in short, to really reveal the role of Turkish citizens' positions within the social field of Turkish national identity based on their respective religious and ethnic identities, *a future experiment must factor in more how these identities intersect* and, as a result, can create very different positions in this social field, rather than treat them as separate and additive (Crenshaw 1991: 1299; Yuval-Davis 2011: 7). This matters because, as boundary making is essentially about different "projects of belonging" (Yuval-Davis 2011: 1), it is agents' very personal intersection of identities that decides whether they feel included and recognised by certain symbolic boundaries – or not.

Conclusion

This chapter has moved from the inductive part of my thesis to its deductive part by trying to put my newly developed grounded theory to a test. This test has consisted in the design and conduction of a nationally representative survey across Turkey, inclusive of an experiment. As has been shown, my theory found support with regard to its claim that Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities play a *significant* role in their making of *symbolic* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, but only a *marginal* role in the Turkish citizens' making of *social* boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. Moreover, my theory stipulates that the reason for this (i.e. the social mechanism that produces this finding) is that Turkish citizens use the making of symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees as a strategy to advance their own identity interests in the contestation over Turkey's national identity.

To test this, I exposed about half of the respondents to a treatment,[39] which consisted in additional questionnaire items about the religious and ethnic dimension of Turkey's national identity contestation. This treatment was aimed to make the presence of this social field more explicit by making the treated respondents more aware of Turkey's national identity conflict and thereby have them think more about other Turkish citizens' positions in this social field. However, the treatment did not successfully manipulate the respondents in the way intended and therefore the experiment did not succeed to actually test the mechanism part of my theory. A better instrument is needed.

In developing this instrument, I have argued that greater attention will need to be paid to the *intersection* of Turkish citizens' religious and ethnic identities. That is because, depending on how these identities intersect, Turkish citizens may inhabit very different "locations" inside the social field of Turkey's national identity contestation, which may result in different boundary making strategies vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. A likely reason why the used treatment did not work is therefore that the effects of its questions on religious and ethnic identity *cancelled out* each other. In future experiments, a more intersectionality-conscious treatment may be able to rectify this.

---

[39] Ethics approval for this study was obtained from the LSE's Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix XV).

Conclusion

Table of Contents

Conclusion

> Since the moment the [Ottoman] Empire had established itself as a state whose military power no longer relied on the cavalry of Turkic tribes, *nomads were increasingly seen as a risk and nuisance, independently of their religious or ethnic background*. (Kreiser and Neumann 2009: 140, own translation, my italics)

The point of it all

After the end of World War II, many Britons left their bomb-gutted houses and looked for new homes in other cities, including the small town of Winston Parva.[40] For some, the distance covered from their original places of residence to their new domicile was only a few kilometres. However, in the eyes of the 'indigenous' inhabitants of Winston Parva, these newcomers were 'very different' – a view that still prevailed in the early 1960s when British-German sociologist Norbert Elias conducted fieldwork there (Elias and Scotson 1965). Fifteen years after the war, Elias and his assistant were not able to make out any major discernible differences with regard to various socioeconomic characteristics between the "established" and "outsiders" of Winston Parva's working class, except for the fact that the former had been there longer than the latter. Still, the persisting 'us/them' differentiation between the two groups resulted in tangible patterns of spatial segregation and mutual exclusion. What Elias and Scotson detected here were rigid social and symbolic boundaries between two groups of Britons that to the outside observer seemed to have a lot in common. But as the researchers had to conclude, for the construction of differences, similarity did not matter.

As this thesis has tried to show, this also holds for Syrian refugee reception in Turkey. A good share of Turkish society shares a more conservative approach to Islamic practice with the Syrian refugees and/or their Arab or Kurdish ethnicity, whereas other Turkish citizens do not. But as this thesis has found, for the making of social boundaries, these differences in ethnic and religious identity among Turkish citizens only play a minor role in their intention to interact with the Syrian refugees. Instead, it is in the telling of street-level narratives to legitimise their social distance taking from the Syrian refugees that the Turkish citizens' different religious and ethnic identities come to the fore as they become the building blocks of *multiple ways of marking their difference* from the Syrians. So, when it comes to the refugees' social integration, the citizens of Turkey do not behave very differently from the people of Winston Parva, and their varying levels of commonalities with the refugees in terms of religious and ethnic identity do not matter much.

---

[40] The name 'Winston Parva' is a fictitious designation by Elias and Scotson of an area of the city of Leicester.

Rather, it is in their contestation over 'Turkishness' where these differences do matter. In many countries, immigration and refugee reception lead to debates on national identity and what vision a society has of itself. As the legal scholar of migration management Daniel Thym has argued regarding Germany, for example, one obstacle in Germany's effective integration of refugees is the still widely prevailing "collective self-perception" (*kollektive Selbstbild*) that Germany simply is not a country of immigration. This often hinders productive debates on how to achieve the integration of those immigrants and refugees that, by the end of the day, are there (Thym 2023). Similar dynamics of discussing national identity and visions of society in the context of immigration could also be observed in France in 2023 with the introduction of the new law on immigration, the so-called *loi immigration* (Carriat, Guillou, and Métais 2023). As one protestor in the streets put it: "This just isn't how I see […] our society" (Le Monde 2024). The same issue occurs in Turkey – almost everywhere and all the time.[41]

Ever since its coming into being, Turkish national identity has been called into question. As laid out above, the question of "Who is a Turk?" has received multiple answers throughout time and space, and lies at the centre of a struggle that has defined Turkish society until today. Seemingly about identity, this struggle is essentially about inclusion: about who belongs to the country in what sort of way, and about who the people of Turkey choose to connect with and who not. Like in other countries, this struggle also lies at the foundation of the increasing political and social polarisation that Turkey is undergoing today. Because it is where the symbolic boundaries of belonging and the social boundaries of interaction have become so firm that individuals live in a constant state of identity politics, that polarisation can thrive, because the mission of every 'identity group' becomes the advancement of their 'identity interests' and the shaping of the collective boundaries of Turkish society in that regard.

This fight over society's collective boundaries and the meaning of national identity can take place in many "arenas". As Hintz (2018) has shown, one of them is Turkish foreign policy. As this thesis has tried to show, another one is Turkey's reception of Syrian refugees. Building on a crucial thought by Wimmer (2013) that debates about the inclusion of immigrants are always also debates about the inclusion of all other members of society, too, I have argued in this thesis that it is Turkish citizens' different social locations in their contestation over Turkish national identity, which derive from their respective religious and ethnic identities, that define the role of these identities in their symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees in

---

[41] From the issue of Turkey's stray dogs to the success of Turkey's national women's volleyball team, the number of topics in Turkish public discourse that turn into an "arena" of Turkey's national identity contestation, rather than being about the issue itself, are, in fact, numerous!

that those who have an interest in shifting the boundaries of Turkishness towards more inclusion of religiously conservative and/or ethnically minoritarian identities, like themselves, express this through more inclusive attitudes towards the Syrian refugees, whereas those who have an interest in preserving the once established boundaries, such as secular and/or ethnic Turks, express their opposition to this boundary change through less inclusive attitudes towards the Syrian refugees. It is thus their positions in the social field of Turkishness that explain the role of their religious and ethnic identities in their relation to the Syrian refugees.

As Yanaşmayan, Üstübici, and Kasli (2019) have previously argued, the civilizationist rhetoric of refugee reception that President Erdoğan deployed in the face of the Syrians' arrival in Turkey "selectively extends the boundaries of 'the people'" (2019: 48) at the symbolic level. But this selectiveness directly ties in with Turkey's pre-existing national identity contestation as it favours some religious and ethnic identities inside Turkish society while it downplays others. As a result, those who benefit from it, will support it, whereas those who feel they would lose from it, will fight it. It is this set-up of identity interests that thus shapes Turkish citizens' different boundary making strategies towards the Syrian refugees in their struggle over the identity of 'the people' and less so their actual daily social relations to the refugees. To say that the role of religious and ethnic identity in how Turkish citizens relate to the Syrian refugees is about their different social locations in Turkish society and its national identity contestation, is essentially to say that much of Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees is, in fact, not so much about the Syrians but about Turkish citizens' relation to each other and themselves.

To speak with the language of critical case studies, it is this 'relation to the self' that is the "dimension that was incorrectly specified in the old theory, and which helps [us] understand what actually happened" (Hancké 2009: 70) in the case of Syrian refugee reception in Turkey.

Theoretical implications

These findings imply two central lessons for theory building. The first is that the three models discussed at the outset of this thesis have failed to make sense of the 'aberrant' case of Syrian refugee reception in Turkey as a whole because none of them accounts for what one could call 'the inner workings of the national self' in the relation to the refugees. By this I mean that all three models make the conceptual mistake to conceive of 'the national self' as *stable*, rather than as the outcome of a constant social and political negotiation process itself. Differently put, to understand the relation between 'self' and 'other', between host society and refugees, and the role of host society members' religious and ethnic identity in it, we must first understand

the role of their religious and ethnic identities in *the making of the self*. Because this self is not just the starting point of the host society's relation to the refugees, but it is also the end point.

That is, every society changes through the arrival of newcomers and so does its identity. Therefore, the more this national identity is the object of a polarised and fierce negotiation process over its meaning already prior to the newcomers' arrival, the more different visions for this society will lead to different strategies in symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis the immigrants and the more this pre-existing polarisation will turn the immigrants' societal integration into a new 'battleground'. Therefore, rather than taking host societies and refugees as the two stable ends of a bilateral relation and studying the role of different identities in it, our theoretical models should be revised in a way that accounts more for the identity struggles inside the host society and that considers more how the boundary making vis-à-vis immigrants may affect such pre-existing internal contestations over collective identity.

The argument that it is a country's societal context rather than the 'cultural content' of citizens' different religious and ethnic identities that determines how these identities shape citizens' collective boundaries vis-à-vis others, can be found in other empirical settings, too. For example, Posner (2004) takes advantage of the fact that the same two ethnic groups, Chewas and Tumbukas, exist in two different bordering countries, Zambia and Malawi, to use it as a natural experiment in explaining when ethnic identity becomes politically salient. Analysing the puzzle that Chewas and Tumbukas conceive of their respective identities the same way in both Malawi and Zambia, but consider themselves political adversaries in the former whilst allies in the latter, Posner argues that it is not their ethnic identity itself that defines the boundary between them but their respective positions in domestic politics: Whilst in Zambia, both groups are big enough to serve as an electoral basis and thus end up competing, in Malawi, they are too small to matter in national elections and are thus incentivised to unite. Based on this, Posner makes the more general point that the role of an identity cleavage may not depend on the nature of the cleavage itself but on the domestic political context, including its respective dynamics of competition and conflict, and on the positions these identity groups inhabit in it, including their thereof resulting interests and strategies.

Such a "re-specification of the theory" (Hancké 2009: 70) could easily be implemented. For example, in the study by Adida (2011) on the role of cultural similarity in host-immigrant relations in West Africa, her argument that greater ethnic similarity leads to greater rejection by host society members, as they try to protect the uniqueness and privileges of their ethnic group inside the country, could be expanded by integrating into the analysis a greater focus on the shape of these internal struggles between the country's different identity groups themselves.

Likewise, findings that, in some places in Europe, church-attending Christians are more accepting of refugees than atheists whereas in other places the opposite is the case (PEW 2018), could be analysed by investigating these practicing Christians' social locations inside their respective societies more generally, which may turn out to be mirrored in their views on immigration. Similarly, the racialised debates in Europe these days about who counts as a 'real' national of a certain country beyond citizenship, as discussed in Chapter Two, could be reconceptualised as tactics of "social closure" (Wimmer 2013) vis-à-vis racial or ethnic minorities in a field of national identity where different groups may all fear general status loss and thus try to tighten the symbolic boundaries of belonging to society to bolster their own position. Or, by the same token, analysing the exact social locations of different immigrant community members in their societies' fields of national identity could help explain why some of them remain favourable towards immigration whereas others turn to the complete opposite. In short, a greater awareness of the specific social fields within which host-immigrant relations are produced may help improve our analyses of identity-based variation in these relations. Because wherever newcomers step into an ongoing "struggle for recognition" (Honneth 1992) inside a society, they easily become a new projection surface for it.

As Lamont reminds us based on Honneth (2012), Taylor (1992), and Jenkins (2008), "recognition is central in establishing groups as worthy and valued members of the community, as individuals endowed with full cultural membership" and "this is particularly crucial in dynamic struggles around the meaning associated with individual and collective social identity" (Lamont 2014: 816). Differently put, a citizen's lived experience of belonging to their national society is not merely a question of citizenship but of being *recognised* as belonging by others. Struggles over the meaning of national identity are therefore always also struggles over the membership of every individual and group. As a result, any attempt to change the meaning of national identity in the face of immigration never purely happens with regard to the newcomers themselves, but always also attributes a new status to the individuals and groups already present, potentially moving them in the social hierarchy (Wimmer 2013). Therefore, it is such struggles between citizens in different social locations, both for recognition (Lamont 2023) and for power (Wimmer 2013), in the relational and institutional context that they take place in (Wimmer 2013; Lamont 2023) – which can be conceptualised as a social field – that we must inspect more closely to understand what *interests* citizens of different identities may be pursuing through their symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis immigrants.

From this then also follows the other theoretical implication of the findings of this thesis which concerns the relationship between social and symbolic boundaries (cf. Lamont 2014).

This implication is that, the reason why social and symbolic boundaries may at times *not* overlap, as has been widely discussed in the literature on boundary making (Edgell et al. 2020), may be that the motivations for it (cf. Wimmer 2013) may *differ from each other*. Differently put, the same Turkish citizen may be '*spontaneous*' in their social boundary making vis-à-vis a Syrian refugee, based on, for example, personal affection or disaffection towards the specific Syrian individual, but '*strategic*' in their symbolic boundary making vis-à-vis them, based on personal interests relating to the definition of Turkish national identity.[42] Such a theoretical fine-tuning would help explain why some muhtars in Izmir have Syrian friends yet would never consider them part of Turkey, while some muhtars in Konya would never socialise with Syrian refugees yet consider them their 'brother or sister', as my fieldwork has shown. Because, if the nation is an "imagined community", as Anderson (2016) famously wrote, then imagining it may be a very different process (of symbolic boundary making) than 'living' it (through social boundaries), and thus agents may pursue different motives at different levels.

Distinguishing the motives behind different types of boundary making could then also help explain what Scuzzarello and Moroşanu (2023) have called clashes between boundary making 'from above' and 'from below', that is, divergences between boundaries as drawn by political leaders and boundaries as drawn by citizens on the ground. As this thesis also found in the case of Syrian refugee reception in Turkey, while some Turkish citizens reject their government's symbolically inclusive boundaries vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees altogether, others have (strategic) reasons to support them, but no reason to implement them socially. Indeed, the different motivations at work in each type of boundary making produce the seeming "paradox" (Genç and Özdemirkıran Embel 2019) in Turkish citizens' relation to the Syrian refugees. For our refinement of theory and future research, this means that rather than to speak of a boundary only where the symbolic and the social *coincide*, as Wimmer (2013) suggests, or to posit that symbolic boundaries are a *condition* for social ones, as Lamont (1992) does, treating social and symbolic boundaries more separately may sharpen our analyses.

Practical implications

Building on these theoretical insights, there are also three practical implications that follow from this thesis.

The first is that Turkey will need to address more openly the question of what a shared vision for its society and national identity could look like and try to build a consensus around

---

[42] The most drastic example of such a split may be that of some Germans during the Nazi regime that would agree with excluding the Jews from Germany (strategic symbolic boundaries) and at the same time have Jewish friends (spontaneous social boundaries) (Himmler 1943).

that. As has become clear to me throughout this research, the political explosiveness of the Syrian refugee reception in Turkey has a lot to do with the pre-existing and unresolved social conflicts inside Turkish society that were triggered by the question of the Syrian refugees' integration into Turkish society. While the reception of the Syrian refugee poses many difficult and undeniable practical challenges for Turkish society, which this thesis has tried to shed a light on, too, the question of whether the Syrians refugees should be integrated into Turkish society in the long term not only needs to be addressed urgently and in its own right with a view to the lives of the refugees and the socio-economic problems that emerge from postponing proper integration for too long, but this question will also need to be addressed in conjunction with the much bigger and for Turkish society and history much more crucial question of how Turkey as a nation sees itself in the future. In many debates on immigrant inclusion, there are voices that argue that the idea of national identity in itself is an obstacle to immigrant inclusion; this thesis's findings, in contrast, suggest that the absence of a settled national identity and the contestation over it can be an obstacle just as much because it inevitably makes the newcomers the 'political plaything' of a struggle that actually is independent of them. In this vein, a more consensual search for a national identity for Turkey in the future would therefore also require addressing more openly and peacefully the question of minorities and their place in Turkey. Because whatever decision will be made with regard to the Syrian refugees' future in Turkey will also implicate them and how they may see their status in Turkish society.

Second, this thesis also holds implications for politicians' rhetorics of refugee reception and how these can be made more strategic with a view to fostering long-term public acceptance. As mentioned at the outset, the sociologist Robert Putnam once recommended that in the face of immigration and diversity, political leaders should "redraw more inclusive lines of social identity" and create a "new, more capacious sense of 'we'" to ensure immigrants' integration (Putnam 2007: 164-5), and as we know from Wimmer (2013), the idea of a shared civilisation is a common tool for such a redrawing of symbolic boundaries, also in Europe (Balfour 2021). But as this thesis's findings suggest, to do so may be strategically unwise and unsustainable. That is because, as my analysis has indicated and others (Üstübici 2020; Alakoç, Göksel, and Zarychta 2022) have found, too, even where the supposed similarities do exist, for example, in terms of religious identity, which is often said to underpin a shared civilisation (Wimmer 2013), the concerned host society members may still evade the inclusive boundary making 'from above' in the shape of a civilizationist policy narrative through alternative street-level narratives that will justify why the similarities mobilised in that policy narrative do not actually exist in practice and thereby legitimise a more exclusive boundary making on the ground.

This then not only questions the effectiveness and sustainability of policy narratives geared at greater social inclusion that draw on civilizational themes but of policy narratives that are built around alleged commonalities more generally. Because if commonalities can always be called into question and boundaries can emerge where one may not expect them, then trying to integrate immigrants through the idea of an already shared identity is highly risky and can easily fail. Instead, based on this thesis's findings, it appears that Putnam's advice should be expanded and that policy-makers – be it in Turkey or elsewhere – that try to rally the public around the reception of refugees in times of crisis should do so through a policy narrative that exclusively addresses fundamental principles of the host society that many of its members can identify with rather than any of the specific characteristics of the refugees themselves, as others have suggested (Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2016; Alrababa'h et al. 2021). Such considerations may promise a more *resilient* rhetoric of refugee reception.

Third, the case of Syrian refugee reception in Turkey directly contradicts Paul Collier's idea of a "fit-for-purpose migration policy" (2013: 264) to the extent that he argues that "cultures matter" (ibid: 262) for a host society's inclusion (or what he calls "absorption") of immigrants. That is because 'culture', defined by Collier (2013) as religious and ethnic identity, may serve as a *justification* (i.e. a symbolic boundary) for host society members' social boundaries, but, if other intervening socio-economic variables of the sort that Collier lists, too, such as education and employability (Collier 2013: 260), make immigrants' social integration harder, then, as the case of Syrian refugee reception in Turkey suggests, cultural commonalities between host society and immigrants – in the sense of a shared religious and/or ethnic identity – are *unlikely to make up for these challenges* and to make the immigrants' integration into the local host society any easier. To be sure, this does *not mean* that 'cultures do not matter' either, but rather, it means that people's idea of their 'culture', of their religious and ethnic identity, *does not precede, but follows from* host society members' interests in integrating immigrants. As Edgell et al. (2020) discuss in their review of the state of research on symbolic boundaries, some voices in the debate suggest, in the same vein, that symbolic boundaries are often not the precursor to social boundaries, but their ex-post legitimisation.

But if that is the case, then it becomes difficult to argue that 'culture' is a starting point of the social integration of refugees and that, therefore, it is more opportune to keep them in "culturally proximate" geographies rather than resettle some of them to "culturally distant" places (Collier 2013: 262). Instead, the central advice to be given to Collier based on the findings of this thesis would be, as Wimmer has already put it elsewhere, "to avoid the […] fallacy of *assuming* communitarian closure, cultural difference, and shared identity rather than

empirically *demonstrating* their existence" (Wimmer 2013: 41, my italics). Differently put, while Collier (2013: 262) argues that "cultures matter", I argue that "context matters" – because 'context creates culture', as it were. By this I mean that, as I have found in this research, it is citizens' *context-dependent interests and ideals* that drive *the making of their boundaries* and thus of *their identity vis-à-vis the refugees* – not the other way round.

Much previous research has found that white Christian European citizens prefer white Christians as refugees (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Bansak, Hainmueller, and Hangartner 2016, 2023; PEW 2018), and many have therefore concluded that religio-ethnic commonalities cause feelings of similarity and hence more inclusive attitudes to refugees (see e.g. Ford 2011). However, for the mechanism of similarity to be really true, citizens of *other* ethnic and religious identities would have to be *less* inclusive towards white Christian refugees and *more* inclusive towards refugees with whom *they* share ethnic and/or religious commonalities. As discussed at the start of this thesis, given the scarcity of evidence on, for example, attitudes to refugees in Muslim-majority societies (Alrababa'h et al. 2021), this largely remains a black box. Responding to this gap, this study finds little evidence that religious and ethnic commonalities really lead to greater social inclusion of refugees by citizens. Moreover, it has argued that where it seems like such commonalities lead to greater *symbolic* inclusion of refugees, it is actually citizens' visions of their national identity and not feelings of similarity towards the refugees that drive this. Furthermore, the qualitative findings of this study suggest that regardless of citizens' religious and ethnic identity, they prefer refugees that they perceive as 'causing no damage to their local social order and the country's economy', which *may* be the same as refugees with whom they share religious or ethnic commonalities, but *not necessarily*.

This finding sits well with previous research on attitudes to immigrants, suggesting that most citizens prefer the same type of immigrant: "one who is well educated and in a high-status occupation, with plans to work, good [local language] skills, and no prior unauthorized entries" (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014: 239) – a preference that "hardly varies based on respondent characteristics including age, income, labor market position, partisanship, ethnocentrism, and self-monitoring" (ibid). As this previous research also finds, it may be national discourses, portraying immigrants of different identities as to be matching this profile to different extents, that explain citizens' 'cultural' preferences (Hopkins 2011; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). Building on these prior findings and the findings of this thesis, we are thus led to conclude that, when it comes to immigrants, 'citizens may all want the same' and that Collier's argument that, citizens that have more religious and/or ethnic commonalities with refugees are more inclusive of them no matter whether the latter correspond to the 'ideal immigrant', falls short.

Certainly, this does not deny that practical factors such as sharing a common language or having pre-existing family ties with members of a certain host society can be favourable to social integration. As Chapter Six of this thesis on Şanlıurfa in Turkey's southeast has shown, too, such factors do indeed naturally facilitate social interaction. Nor does the above finding mean that socially integrating refugees from geographically distant places is 'equally easy' for all societies around the world. Rather, it means that such an awareness of how religious and ethnic identities essentially *arise from, rather than lead to* boundary making vis-à-vis refugees, implies for policy-making on migration that socially integrating, for example, Syrian refugees, is *equally difficult* in terms of 'culture' for all societies – be they more or less geographically distant from Syria. Therefore, identifying countries that may be culturally "more suitable" for an integration of the Syrian refugees, is a fallacy.

What this means for the politics of refugee distribution is up to politics. But it is hoped that this thesis may contribute to making these politics based on more suitable arguments.

To conclude

When the aspiring sociologist Norbert Elias became a Jewish refugee fleeing Germany in 1933, he gradually made his way to the United Kingdom, where he later became a researcher at the London School of Economics in 1939. But with the onset of the German bombing of London in 1940, the LSE itself had to flee to Cambridge, and for Elias, the social and symbolic boundaries once more shifted. Having escaped from being labelled a danger by virtue of being Jewish in Germany, he now was labelled a danger by virtue of being German in the UK and as a result was imprisoned for eight months. What Elias experienced was a common experience of boundary changes for Jewish refugees at the time. As the philosopher Hannah Arendt writes in her essay *We Refugees* from 1943: "In Paris we could not leave our homes after eight o'clock because we were Jews; but in Los Angeles we are restricted because we are 'enemy aliens'. *Our identity is changed so frequently that nobody can find out who we actually are*" (1943, my italics). Thinking of the very nature of social and symbolic boundary making, this is in fact little surprising. Because whether it is Jewish refugees in the 20th Century or Syrian refugees in the 21st, host societies' inclusion of refugees is unlikely to be predictable based on externally discernible identity characteristics. Because identity itself is created through boundary making, and boundaries can always change.

Appendices

Appendix I

Interview Guide

Interview Guide

ENGLISH VERSION

Personal identity
1. Since when have you been living in X? What do you think about it? Do you like it? Where are you originally from? What is your age? Have you ever done another job than muhtar? Etc

Local identity
2.a What does it mean to be a native/inhabitant of X in your view?
2.b How would you describe your neighbourhood?
2.c Do you think that X / your neighourhood has changed over the past ten years? If so, how?

Local Syrians
3. Can you tell me about the Syrian refugees in your neighbourhood? How many are there? Where do they live and what do they do?

4. What do you think why the Syrian refugees in your neighbourhood have chosen to come to your city instead of another one? What do you think about that?

Social boundaries
5. Do you personally have any contact with Syrian refugees?
      a. If not, why do you think that is?
      b. If yes, how do you interact?

6. Do people in your neighbourhood interact with the Syrian refugees?
If so, how? If not, why?
      a.   Do you know of friendships between locals and Syrians?
      b.   Would it be okay for a Syrian to become part of your family?

Symbolic boundaries
7. How would you describe these Syrian refugees? How are they different or similar to the people in your neighbourhood? Does this matter?

8. What do people in your neighbourhood generally think of the Syrian refugees?
Why do they think that? And what do *you* think about the Syrian refugees?

9. If the Syrian refugees in your neighbourhood were to stay forever, how would that make you and the people in your neighbourhood feel?
      a. What does it mean to be Turkish to you? Can a Syrian be 'Turkish'?

10. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the Syrian refugees in your area?

TURKISH VERSION

Bireysel kimlik
1. Ne zamandır X'te yaşıyorsunuz? X'le ilgili ne düşünüyorsunuz? Seviyor musunuz? Aslen nerelisiniz? Yaşınız kaç? Muhtarlıktan başka bir iş yaptınız mı? vs.

Yerel kimlik
2.a X'li olmak ne demek sizce?
2.b Mahalleniz hakkında ne söylersiniz? Nasıl bir yer?
2.c Sizce mahalleniz / X son 10 yılda değişti mi? Öyleyse, nasıl? Yerli/Mahalleli Suriyelilerden dolayı mı?

Yerel Suryilelier
3. Mahallenizdeki Suriyeli sığınmacılar hakkında neler söylersiniz? Kaç kişi var yaşayan? Nerede yaşıyorlar, ne yapıyorlar?

4. Suiryeli sığınmacılar sizce neden başka bir yere gitmek yerine sizin mahallenize / kentinize gelmiş olabilirler? Bununla ilgili ne düşünüyorsunuz?

Sosyal sınırlar
5. Kişisel olarak hiç bir Suriyeli ile bir muhabbetiniz, alakanız oldu mu? Herhangi bir anınız var mı?
      a. Değilse, neden sizce?
      b. Evetse, nasıl bir alakanız oldu?

6. Mahallenizdeki insanların Suriyeli sığınmacılarla herhangi bir alakası oldu mu? Evetse, nasıl? Değilse, niçin?
      a. Yerliler ve Suriyeliler arasında hiç arkadaşlık oluyor mu?
      b. Türklerle Suriyeliler arasında akrabalık ilişkisi, evlilikler sizce olabilir mi?
      Sizce böyle bir şey uygun karşılanır mı?

Simgesel sınırlar
7. Suriyeli sığınmacıların Türkiye'deki yaşantıları boyunca sizde bıraktığı intiba nedir? (Günlük yaşamdaki karşılaşmalarınızda mesela. Mahallede, apartmanda, hastanede ve saire) Sizce mahallenin yerlilerinden farklılıkları ya da benzerlikleri nelerdir?
Bu benzerlik ve farklılıkların bir önemi olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Nasıl?

8. Mahallenizdeki insanlar genel olarak Suriyeli sığınmacılar hakkında ne düşünüyor? Neden bunu düşünüyor? Peki *siz* (Suriyeli sığınmacılar hakkında) ne düşünüyorsunuz?

9. Eğer Suriyeli sığınmacılar dönmek yerine temelli kalmaya karar verirse, sizin ve mahallenizdeki insanların buna karşı ne hissederdi?
Sizce Türk olmak ne demek? Sizce bir Suriyeli Türk olabilir mi?

10. Yaşadığınız bölgedeki Suriyeli sığınmacılarla ilgili başka eklemek istediğiniz bir şey var mı?

Appendix II

Online Links to my Interview Transcripts, Codebooks and Data Analysis Scripts

The complete anonymised transcripts of my interviews in Turkish, written by two anonymous Turkish native speakers (employed through a research grant from the Hamburg Foundation for the Advancement of Academia and the Arts), can be found under:

> Püttmann, Friedrich, 2024, "Friedrich Püttmann_LSE_PhD Thesis_Interview Transcripts", https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/FU6VWK, Harvard Dataverse, V1

The codebooks I wrote in NVivo as part of my thematic analysis of the interview data can be found under:

> Püttmann, Friedrich, 2024, "Friedrich Püttmann_LSE_PhD Thesis_Codebooks", https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/45KLHD, Harvard Dataverse, V1

The scripts I wrote in R as part of my analysis of the survey data can be found under:

> Püttmann, Friedrich, 2024, "Friedrich Püttmann_LSE_PhD Thesis_R Scripts", https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/B41IQN, Harvard Dataverse, V1

The survey data itself can be made available upon request.

Appendix III

Navigating my Fieldwork in the Urfa of Today

Urfa's ancient historical heritage is still being celebrated in the streets of Urfa today, with various hotels, for instance, bearing the names of Palmyra, Babylon, or Mesopotamia itself. For not much longer than since recent decades, these hotels have been attracting tourists from around Turkey and beyond, seeking to visit and experience the old town of Urfa with its limestone courtyard houses, its meat-heavy cuisine famous for its kebabs and liver, and its so-called 'sıra nights' – a traditional celebration of local folk songs. A central element of this new tourism is the ancient archaeological findings around Urfa, most notably the neolithic settlement of Göbekli Tepe from around 9,000 BCE – the oldest human settlement that has been found in the world to date. First discovered in 1963, its historical significance came to light when the German archaeologist Klaus Schmidt began excavating and analysing it over the course of the 1990s – an excavation that has only just started and is expected to continue for decades to come (Hürriyet Daily News 2022).

As a result of the international research missions and tourism that this has brought to the city,[43] the people of Urfa have started to gradually become used to the sight of foreigners from around the world wandering through their city, where many locals, however, continue to live in destitute conditions, particularly on the outskirts. As a (fair-skinned and blond) foreign researcher from Germany myself, this has had advantageous side-effects for me since the idea of a German coming to town to do research was no longer 'exotic' – in fact, many of my interviewees would even liken me to the late Klaus Schmidt, cheerfully telling me how much he had liked Urfa, its people, and its cuisine. Together with the shadow of Schmidt, another door opener in gaining access to my interviewees was my interlocutors' pride in their reputation for their great hospitality. Stories of strangers being taken into people's homes repeatedly surfaced in my interviews and small-talk conversations with the Urfalites, as did various invitations for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Albeit no full long-term immersion by far, these various instances of mingling with my interviewees, their social networks and other people I would meet outside my interviews greatly enhanced my sense of the local dynamics and interactions between people, as they would also bring up a number of topics and conversations not directly related to my research.

Another catalyst in this process of making contact and gaining my interlocutors' trust was that not only the presence of foreigners from the Global North per se, but in particular of such foreigners that would be interested in the Syrian refugees had become somewhat normalised in Urfa by the time I came for my research since various UN agencies are operating in the region (Şahin Mencütek, Karal, and Altıntop 2021). Some of the interviewed muhtars even proudly displayed in their offices a picture of themselves with the head of one of these. That said, while this may have facilitated my access to the field, it may also have shaped the content of my interlocutors' answers in a way that they might have 'recycled' narratives that they had found appropriate for foreigners like me, asking questions about life with the Syrian refugees. However, the fact that I was able to conduct these interviews in Turkish, shared the same gender with all of my muhtar interviewees (who were, alas, exclusively male) and was young and very casual in my way of talking to them, seemed to help in establishing a connection and dynamic that supposedly was very different from their mediated and more formal interactions with the foreign representatives of international organisations.

---

[43] The international Netflix series *Atiye – The Gift* about the site of Göbekli Tepe may have caused a lot of it, too.

Identity Formation as a Process of Othering[44]

Following George Herbert Mead (1934), personal identity is what we and others see in our self. A self "can only exist in definite relationships to other selves" (Mead 2003 [1934]: 40), which means two things: First, identity is defined by its being different from others (I am X because some are not), and second, this identity depends on its recognition by others (it is hard to say I am X if nobody thinks so) (cf. Fukuyama 2018). As such, one's idea of one's self is a response to a "generalized other" (Mead 2003 [1934]: 34, my italics). This other often originates in the experienced collective attitudes of the social group that one feels part of. Hence, it is only in one's position as a member of a social group and its distinction from other social groups (othering) that arises "a mental content, a self" (2003 [1934]: 34). As this can go both ways, subjects' identity also emerges from being othered. Identity is therefore the product of both a subjective identification as similar to some and different to others and an external identification by others, including authorities such as the state (Suny 2001). Where subjective and external identification collide, this may result in a "struggle for recognition" (Honneth 1992).

Approaching the topic of identity from this social constructivist viewpoint, I look at identity as something that is built through one's "responses to these stimuli [of otherness]" (Mead 2003 [1934]: 34); stimuli that are often embedded in language and symbolic actions. As a result, there lies "in the categorisation of others through language a heavy instrument of assigning social identity" (Graumann 1999: 62, my translation). Such assigned categorisations decide upon who is 'in' and who is 'out' of a group; they determine the 'belonging' since "collective identities are constructs based on symbols" (Müller-Doohm 1999: 75, my translation). Therefore, language expresses who is "designated as beyond" the boundaries of a certain social entity (Ahmed 2000: 3). Often, this furthermore entails the conscious or unconscious aggrandizing of one's own group and the depreciating of the other (Graumann 1999). It is especially in these moments where boundaries are being negotiated that an affected part of one's social identity becomes salient. Collective political and social identities can thus be regarded as "identities [that] refer to shared representations of a collective self as reflected in public debate, political symbols [and the like]. They consist also of collective beliefs about the definition of the group and its membership that are shared by most group members" (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009: 4). As a result, just like personal identity, "collective identity is also by definition about the construction of an 'other'" (Fligstein 2009: 135). This especially applies to the case of "traditional national identity, an identity that is often explicitly connected to race, ethnicity, or religion" (Fukuyama 2018: 7).

---

[44] Parts of this have appeared in: Püttmann, Friedrich. 2016. "'To be European means to be me" – The Perspective of Young Muslims in Kosovo on European Identity, Südosteuropa Mitteilungen, 56(2): 46-63.

References for Appendix III

Ahmed, Sara. 2000. Strange Encounters. Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality (Routledge: London).

Checkel, Jeffrey T., and Peter J. Katzenstein. 2009. 'The politicization of European identities.' in Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), European Identity (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Fligstein, Neil. 2009. 'Who are the Europeans and how does this matter for politics?' in Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), European Identity (Cambrdige University Press: Cambridge).

Fukuyama, Francis. 2018. Identity. Contemporary Identity Politics and the Struggle for Recognition (Profile Books: London).

Graumann, Carl. 1999. 'Soziale Identitäten. Manifestation sozialer Differenzierung und Identifikation.' in Reinhold Viehoff and Rien T. Segers (ed.), Kultur, Identität, Europa (Suhrkamp: Frankfurt).

Honneth, Axel. 1992. The Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA).

Hürriyet Daily News. 2022. 'Excavations in Göbeklitepe may continue for decades: Expert', Hürriyet Daily News.

Mead, George Herbert. 2003 [1934]. 'The Self.' in Linda Martín Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta (ed.), Identities (Blackwell Publishing: Malden, MA).

Müller-Doohm, Stefan. 1999. 'Kulturelle Identität im Zeitalter der globalen Medienkultur.' in Reinhold Viehoff and Rien T. Segers (ed.), Kultur, Identität, Europa (Suhrkamp: Frankfurt).

Şahin Mencütek, Zeynep, Dilek Karal, and İmran Altıntop. 2021. 'Governance of Refugee Children Protection in Turkey: Between Vulnerability and Paternalism', Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, 19.

Suny, Ron. 2001. 'Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations', Journal of Modern History, 73: 862-96.

Appendix IV

Original survey questionnaire in Turkish

Items **21** and **22** are the **treatment**. They were <u>removed for the control group</u>.

İYİ GÜNLER EFENDİM,

İzninizle size birkaç kısa soru soracağım. Anketimiz yaklaşık 10 dakikanızı alacaktır. Araştırmamız, tek tek kişilerin değil, genelde halkın ne düşündüğünü belirlemeyi amaçlayan bir çalışmadır. Sorularımızla ilgili samimi fikirlerinizi rica ediyoruz. İlginize ve yardımlarınıza çok teşekkür ederiz.

	MK Kodu (Zarfın üzerinde yazılıdır): …………..
1.	**Konuşulan kişinin cinsiyeti** ( ) Kadın ( ) Erkek
2.	**Kaç yaşındasınız?** …………….
3.	**Eğitim durumunuz, yani son bitirdiğiniz okul nedir?** ( ) Okuryazar değil ( ) Diplomasız okur ( ) İlkokul mezunu ( ) İlköğretim / Ortaokul mezunu ( ) Lise mezunu ( ) Üniversite mezunu ( ) Yüksek lisans ( ) Doktora
4.	**Kendinizi, HAYAT TARZI bakımından aşağıda sayacağım üç gruptan hangisinde görüyorsunuz?** *(ANKETÖRE: Deneğin söylediği TEK seçeneği işaretleyiniz.)* ( ) Modern ( ) Geleneksel muhafazakâr ( ) Dindar muhafazakâr
5.	**Geçen hafta para kazanmak için bir işte çalıştınız mı? Çalıştıysanız mesleğiniz nedir?** **ÇALIŞIYOR İSE:** **ÇALIŞMIYOR İSE:** ( ) Devlet memuru, şef, müdür vb. ( ) Doktor, mimar, avukat vs. ( ) Emekli ( ) Özel sektörde memur, müdür vb. (Serbest meslek) ( ) Ev kadını ( ) İşçi ( ) Çiftçi, ziraatçı, hayvancı ( ) Öğrenci ( ) Küçük esnaf / zanaatkâr /şoför ( ) Çalışıyor, diğer: …………… ( ) İşsiz, iş arıyor ( ) Tüccar / sanayici / iş insanı ( ) Çalışamaz halde
6.	**Hangi ilde / şehirde doğdunuz?** (ANKETÖRE: **İL** adını yazınız, **İLÇE** adı yazmayınız.) ………………………………………………………………………
7.	**Bugün bir GENEL MİLLETVEKİLLİĞİ SEÇİMİ yapılsa oyunuzu kime, hangi partiye verirsiniz?** *(ANKETÖRE: Cevap yok, diyenlerden olabildiğince cevap almaya çalışınız.)* Parti adı: …………………………………………… ( ) Kararsız ( ) Oy kullanmaz
8.	**Geçtiğimiz Şubat ayındaki depremler nedeniyle aşağıdakilerden herhangi birini kaybettiniz mi?** [ ] Ailemden birini [ ] Yakın akrabalarımdan birini [ ] Tanıdıklarımdan birini [ ] Oturduğum evi ( ) Kaybım olmadı.
9.	**Suriyeli sığınmacılarla ilişkiniz hangi seviyede olabilir? Şu sayacağım yerlerde bulunabilirler mi?**
	Aynı ülkede ( ) Evet ( ) Hayır
	Aynı şehirde ( ) Evet ( ) Hayır
	Mahallem, işyerim veya okulumda ( ) Evet ( ) Hayır
	Apartmanımda, komşum olarak veya arkadaş grubumda ( ) Evet ( ) Hayır

Evimde veya ailemde	( ) Evet	( ) Hayır

10. Mahallenizde Suriyeli bulunuyor mu?
( ) Hiç bulunmuyor.   ( ) Az sayıda bulunuyor.   ( ) Bayağı bulunuyor.   ( ) Çok fazla bulunuyor.

11. **Sokağa çıktığınızda Suriyeli birilerini ne sıklıkta görüyorsunuz?**
( ) Hiç   ( ) Bazen   ( ) Sık sık   ( ) Her zaman

12. **Günlük yaşamınızda Suriyelilerden uzak durmaya çalışıyor musunuz?**
( ) Evet, çalışıyorum.   ( ) Hayır, çalışmıyorum.

13. **Şimdi yakınlık derecesine göre sayacağım kişiler arasında SURİYELİ biri/birileri var mı?** *(ANKETÖRE: Geçerli TÜM seçenekleri işaretleyiniz.)*
[ ] Eşiniz   [ ] Akrabanız   [ ] Komşunuz   [ ] İş arkadaşınız
[ ] Tanıdığınız   [ ] Kiracınız   [ ] Çalışanınız   ( ) Hiçbiri, Suriyeli tanıdığım yok.

14. **Kendi mahallenizde veya başka bir yerde, günlük yaşamınızda, Suriyelilerle ne sıklıkla konuşuyorsunuz?**
( ) Hiç   ( ) Bazen   ( ) Sık sık   ( ) Her zaman

15. **Herhangi bir kan bağınız bulunmayan ama güvenebileceğiniz Suriyeli bir arkadaşınız var mı?**
( ) Evet, var.   ( ) Hayır, yok.

16. **Akrabanız olmayan Suriyelilerle ne sıklıkla birlikte vakit geçiriyorsunuz? (Yemek yemek, iş dışında sohbet etmek, ev ziyareti yapmak vb.)**
( ) Hiç   ( ) Bazen   ( ) Sık sık   ( ) Her zaman

17. Şimdi size Suriyeliler ile ilgili cümleler okuyacağım. Bu cümlelere ne derece katılıp katılmadığınızı belirtir misiniz? 1- Kesinlikle yanlış, 5 ise Kesinlikle doğru anlamına gelmektedir.

	1-Kesinlikle Yanlış	5-Kesinlikle Doğru
Suriyeli mülteciler politikası Türkiye için önemli bir konudur.	(1) (2) (3)	(4) (5)
Suriyeli mülteciler politikası Türkiye için hayat pahalığından daha önemli bir konudur.	(1) (2) (3)	(4) (5)
Suriyeliler ile kültürel olarak veya değerler bakımından benzediğimi düşünüyorum.	(1) (2) (3)	(4) (5)
Suriyeliler ile dini pratikler bakımından benzediğimi düşünüyorum.	(1) (2) (3)	(4) (5)
Suriyelilerin çoğu dindar Müslümanlardır.	(1) (2) (3)	(4) (5)

18. **Aşağıdaki iki seçenek arasından komşunuz olarak hangisini tercih edersiniz?**
( ) Suriyeli mülteci   ( ) Ukraynalı mülteci

19. **Suriyeli bir mültecinin Arap veya Kürt olması sizin için fark eder mi?**
( ) Hayır, fark etmez.   ( ) Suriyeli Arap bir mülteciyi tercih ederim.   ( ) Suriyeli Kürt bir mülteciyi tercih ederim.

20. **Aşağıdaki iki seçenek arasından komşunuz olarak hangisini tercih edersiniz?**
( ) İyi eğitimli ve meslek sahibi bir Suriyeli
( ) İyi eğitimli ve meslek sahibi bir Ukraynalı

21.	*Şimdi size bazı cümleler okuyacağım. Bu cümlelere ne derece katılıp katılmadığınızı belirtir misiniz? 1- Kesinlikle yanlış, 5 ise Kesinlikle doğru anlamına gelmektedir.*	*1-Kesinlikle Yanlış*				*5- Kesinlikle Doğru*
	Türkiye'de dindar insanlar eskiden toplumsal yaşamda baskı gördüler.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Türkiye'de dindar insanlar halen toplumsal yaşamda baskı görüyorlar.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Türkiye'deki etnik azınlıklar eskiden toplumsal yaşamda baskı gördüler.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Türkiye'deki etnik azınlıklar halen toplumsal yaşamda baskı görüyorlar.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Türkiye toplumu etnik azınlıkları daha fazla benimsemelidir.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Türkiye toplumu İslam'ı daha fazla benimsemelidir.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

22.	**Türkiye'deki bazı insanlar, Arap, Kürt ve çoğunlukla dindar muhafazakâr oldukları için Suriyeli mültecilerden hoşlanmıyor. Bu konuda ne hissediyorsunuz?**

( ) Bu insanlarla aynı fikirdeyim.   *( ) Bu insanların düşüncesine katılmıyorum.*
( ) Bu durum beni ilgilendirmiyor.   *( ) Bu durum beni sinirlendiriyor.*

23.	Şimdi size Suriyeliler ile ilgili cümleler okuyacağım. Bu cümlelere ne derece katılıp katılmadığınızı belirtir misiniz? 1- Kesinlikle yanlış, 5 ise Kesinlikle doğru anlamına gelmektedir.	1-Kesinlikle Yanlış				5- Kesinlikle Doğru
	Türkiye toplumu içinde Suriyelilerin artık bir yeri var.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Suriyeliler ileride tamamen Türkiye toplumunun bir parçası olabilirler.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Suriyeliler Türkiye toplumuna daha fazla dahil edilmelidir.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Suriyelilere Türkiye'de belli bir süre kalıp uyum sağladıktan sonra vatandaş olabilme hakkı tanınmalıdır.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

24.	**Suriyelileri din kardeşleriniz olarak görüyor musunuz?**

( ) Evet, görüyorum.   ( ) Hayır, görmüyorum.

25. Suriyelileri Kürt veya Arap kardeşleriniz olarak görüyor musunuz?

( ) Evet, görüyorum.   ( ) Hayır, görmüyorum.

26. Sizce aşağıdakilerden hangisi bugün Suriyelileri en iyi tanımlar?

( ) Mağdur   ( ) Fırsatçı   ( ) Misafir   ( ) Hiçbiri

27. Sizce bu dönemde Suriyelilerin geri gönderilmeleri ahlaki açıdan kabul edilebilir mi?

( ) Evet, kabul edilebilir.   ( ) Hayır, kabul edilemez.

28. Bu soruları yanıtlarken, sizce Türkiye'deki diğer insanların fikirlerini ne kadar göz önünde bulundurdunuz?
( ) Hiç   ( ) Biraz   ( ) Fazla   ( ) Çok fazla

29. Avrupa Birliği, Suriyeli mültecilerin Türkiye'de kalması için daha fazla ekonomik ve sosyal destek sağlasaydı, Suriyeli mültecilerin daha uzun süre Türkiye'de kalmalarını kabul eder miydiniz?
( ) Evet, kabul ederdim.   ( ) Hayır, kabul etmezdim.

30. Evinizde EN ÇOK hangi dilde konuşuyorsunuz?

( ) Türkçe   ( ) Kürtçe   ( ) Zazaca   ( ) Arapça   ( ) Diğer: ………

31. 14 Mayıs 2023 GENEL MİLLETVEKİLLİĞİ seçimlerinde oyunuzu kime, hangi partiye vermiştiniz? *(ANKETÖRE: Cevap yok, diyenlerden olabildiğince cevap almaya çalışınız.)*

( ) ……………………………….…… partisine oy verdim.
( ) Bağımsız adaya oy verdim.   ( ) O tarihte yaşım tutmuyordu.
( ) Sandığa gitmedim, oy kullanmadım.   ( ) Boş oy verdim.

32. Eşiniz veya siz, sokağa çıkarken başınızı örtüyor musunuz? Nasıl örtüyorsunuz?
(ANKETÖRE: Seçenekleri deneğe okuyunuz ve deneğin kendi verdiği cevabı işaretleyiniz.)
( ) Örtmüyor   ( ) Başörtüsü   ( ) Türban   ( ) Çarşaf, peçe
( ) Görüşülen kişi bekâr erkek

33. Hepimiz Türkiye Cumhuriyeti vatandaşıyız, ama değişik etnik kökenlerden olabiliriz; Siz kendinizi, kimliğinizi ne olarak biliyorsunuz veya hissediyorsunuz?
( ) Türk   ( ) Kürt   ( ) Zaza   ( ) Arap   ( ) Diğer: …………

34. Kendinizi ait hissettiğiniz dininiz ve mezhebiniz nedir?

( ) Sünni (Hanefi veya Şafii) Müslüman   ( ) Alevi Müslüman   ( ) Diğer: ………

35. Dindarlık açısından kendinizi aşağıda okuyacaklarımdan hangisiyle tarif edersiniz?
(ANKETÖRE: Aşağıdaki cevapları okuyunuz, deneğin söylediği ilkini işaretleyiniz)

( ) Dini inancı olmayan biri
( ) Dinin gereklerine pek inanmayan biri
( ) İnançlı ama dinin gereklerini pek yerine getiremeyen biri
( ) Dinin gereklerini yerine getirmeye çalışan dindar biri
( ) Dinin tüm gereklerini tam yerine getiren dindar biri

36. Bu evde yaşayanların aylık toplam geliri ne kadardır? Herkesin her türlü kazancı dahil evinize ayda ortalama kaç para giriyor? ………………………… Türk Lirası

37. ANKETİ BİTİRME SAATİ ……….. : …..…… *(Anket bitiminde doldurmayı unutmayınız.)*

38. Oturulan evin tipi: (ANKETÖRE: Aşağıdaki şıklardan birisini, deneğe sormadan, siz işaretleyiniz.)

( ) Gecekondu / Dış sıvasız apartman ( ) Müstakil, geleneksel ev

( ) Apartman ( ) Site içinde ( )

Çok lüks bina, villa

Anketörün Adı Soyadı: ……………………………

Appendix V

Annotation and further discussion of the survey and its questionnaire

Lifestyle categories

Much has been written – and criticised – about the empirical inaccuracy and imprecision of the blanket terms "*modern*" (secular) and "*muhafazakâr*" (conservative) with regard to capturing the diversity of Muslim religious identities in Turkey. As stated in the main text, the reason why I have nevertheless opted to use these blanket terms is their *conceptual validation* both in pervious surveys of the polling company KONDA, which commonly uses them in its questionnaires, and in my experience of everyday life in Turkey where many people use them to describe their social realities. What concept validation simply means is that the chosen concept – be it 'truly accurate' or not – *'works'*, i.e. that people respond to it and can engage with it. Moreover, given the need for utter parsimony in quantitative studies beyond the diversity of identities in the real world, there is a high incentive – if not a need – to stick with such over-simplifying concepts as these, in Turkey, widely established terms. To be sure, using them here is done in full consciousness and recognition that they *are* simplifications and consciousness of the risk that this entails in the sense of painting a simplified picture of social reality, too. It is hoped, though, that the knowledge gain arising from such a survey outweighs its scientific sacrifices and that no harm is done.

Measuring frequencies

One of the pieces of advice I received in designing this questionnaire (many thanks to Tolga Sınmazdemir on that note!) was to use more specific terms than "few (*az*)", "many (*çok*)" and the like. The reason why I decided not to abide by this advice is that only providing more specific response options (e.g. "below 50", "below 100" etc.) does not necessarily make the answers collected more truthful. On the contrary, in estimating, for example, the number of Syrians in one's neighbourhood, citizens may have difficulty in putting an accurate number on it, which may end up heavily inflating numbers whilst giving the illusion due to the specificity of the response that these impressions are always accurate. Instead, it is hoped that by using less specific response options, such a false impression is avoided and more transparency about the nature of the responses being mere estimates by individual people is being provided.

Political atmosphere in Turkey at the time of the survey and interviewer/desirability bias

As stated in the main text, the survey data was collected on the 2nd and 3rd of September 2023 by over 150 enumerators (mostly university students) employed by the polling company KONDA across Turkey. Turkish society at this time could be described as 'reawakening from a phase of exhaustion'. Seven months before Turkey had seen the most horrible earthquakes it may have ever experienced. About four month before, it had seen partly vicious national elections, during which the country's socio-political polarisation may have peaked and especially the issue of Syrian refugees received massive attention during the second round, further dividing the country. And, finally, right before the survey was conducted, the largely hot and widely popular tourist destination, Turkey, had been in summer mode with maybe much fewer citizens going on holiday than in the past due to the

high inflation in Turkey (annual inflation was 61.5% in September 2023), but still a considerable effect on people's everyday lives, be it by slowing down or by experiencing peak business times. What this also meant is that there was relatively little public debate or controversy (at least in my humble impression) after a very intense Spring – and about one month ahead of the 7 October attacks and of the conflict in the Middle East flaring up again. As a result, for a survey, this actually was a good time as it may have helped eliciting respondents' 'more deep-seated' views rather than such that are reactions to current affairs.

Still, given the general political atmosphere in Turkey as it was in 2023 and the years just before, as described in detail in Chapters Two and Seven, this may have impacted the respondents' responses through *interviewer bias*. What this means is that the specific profile of the interviewer may have led to specific assumptions of the respondents about the likely views that the interviewer themselves may have on the questions they ask as part of the survey and as a result may have biased the way the respondents respond, for example, by toning down but also by reinforcing their views on certain issues or, in the worst case, by giving false responses or none at all. Especially in Turkey where clothing is often associated with religious identity and thus often with likely political views, too, this can be a problem. However, the only comfort one can find in this context is that the fact that most interviewees were young university students doing this as a side-job may have given them an 'air of innocence' (as it has partly given me during my interviews, too, despite already having been 30 when conducting them) and thus 'softened' any potential specific reactions to their profile, leading to interviewer bias. That being said, what can of course never be controlled in such a large survey is the impact of the diverse interviewers' personalities on how they – despite all having received the same training from KONDA – conduct the interviews in practice.

Finally, in the same vein, respondents may have had specific ideas about what views on the issues they were asked about were *socially desirable*, either in the view of 'society in general', filtered through their lived experience of it, or in the view of the specific person interviewing them. As with all surveys, this is unfortunately a source of bias that can hardly be controlled and may especially apply to particularly sensitive questions, including some drastic ones about the Syrian refugees or questions about personal identity. However, as with my own interviews on this topic, what may come in favourably here is that the topic of Syrian refugees has become such a common topic of conversation on Turkey's streets that talking about – also to an interviewer – it may, in fact, be much less sensitive or linked to context-specific ideas of social desirability than, for example, the causes of inflation or most certainly the Turkish government as such would have been.

Satisficing and straightlining

These are two potential sources of bias in the collection of survey responses that were discussed in the main text, as they are particularly likely to arise when surveys are as long as the one sued for this study. *Satisficing* essentially means that, given the survey's length, respondents may at some point start to give *any* response to the questions asked just for it to finish soon, rather than actually think about their views when/before answering. One way of doing that, for example, is *straightlining*, which means that people keep choosing the same answer (e.g. "Yes", "Never" or "1") to various unrelated yet subsequent questions if they are of the same format. One way this was tried to be prevented was to avoid long repetitions of the same question format or topic in the survey questionnaire.

Appendix VI

Description of the different types of Islamic head covering in Turkey

Başörtüsü (Headscarf – 'traditional headscarf'): This term generally refers to a simple headscarf worn by many Muslim women in Turkey, often also for purely traditional reasons. It usually covers the hair, neck, and sometimes the shoulders, but does not cover the face. It's often worn casually and is considered a modest but less restrictive form of head covering.

Türban (Turban – 'modern headscarf'): This is a more specific style of headscarf that is typically wrapped around the head in a turban-like fashion. It's often used to cover the hair and neck, and it can be more elaborately styled compared to the basic "başörtüsü". The term "türban" can sometimes carry political or social connotations depending on the context in Turkey. In this sense, when referring to ostentatiously pious covered women in urban parts of Turkey, it is typically "türban", not "başörtüsü" that is used as a term. The "türban" is therefore the most commonly known form of Islamic headcovering in Turkey today, signalling a deliberate choice of piety, whereas the "başörtüsü" is more commonly found in rural areas and worn by older women.

Çarşaf (Chador): The "çarşaf" is a typically black full-body covering that leaves only the face visible, like the chador in Iran. It is associated with a significantly more conservative approach to Muslim modesty.

Peçe (~Niqab): The peçe is a typically black face veil, leaving only the eyes visible, like the niqab in Saudi Arabia. It is usually worn in combination with other garments for full-body covering. The "peçe" is the most conservative of the headcoverings and is often associated with a strict interpretation of Islamic dress codes.

Appendix VII

Details on the sampling frame provided by Konda

KONDA
ARASTIRMA

September 30th, 2022

Dear
Friedrich Püttmann

Proposal for a nationwide field survey representing Turkish Society

1) PURPOSE AND SCOPE
The aim of the research is to identify several subjects of the adult population over 18 years of age in Turkey.

The findings will be analyzed and interpreted within the framework of the country's different demographic, political, sociological and cultural clusters.

2) SAMPLE AND FIELD APPLICATION IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH

a)   Sample
The sample will be prepared by stratifying population sizes based on ADNKS (Address Based Population Registration System) data, neighborhood and village education statistics based on ADNKS data, and neighborhood and village results of the 24 June 2018 general elections.

The settlements were first separated as rural/urban/metropolis and the sample will be determined on the basis of 12 regions.

51,301 neighborhoods and villages are divided according to the number of adults over the age of 18, and settlements with an adult population of less than 2000 are defined as "village", settlements between 2-500 thousand are defined as "city", and settlements with an integrated urban population of over 500 thousand are defined as "metropolis."

The number of neighborhoods and villages depending on the number of subjects to be visited from the clusters formed after layering will be randomly selected by the computer.

Within the scope of the research, face-to-face interviews will be conducted with the subjects in their households in the neighborhoods and villages of 95-105 districts of 28-32 provinces, including the center, on the condition that one province from each of the 26 sub-regions must be selected.

The provinces in the table below can be changed **while maintaining the condition of representing 26 sub-regions.**

	Level 1 (12 regions)	Provinces
1	İstanbul	İstanbul
2	West Marmara	Balıkesir, Tekirdağ, Edirne
3	Aegean	İzmir, Manisa, Denizli
4	East Marmara	Bursa, Eskişehir, Kocaeli
5	West Anatolia	Ankara, Konya
6	Mediterranean	Antalya, Adana, Hatay, Mersin
7	Middle Anatolia	Kayseri, Sivas, Niğde
8	West Black sea	Samsun, Bartın
9	East Black sea	Trabzon, Ordu
10	Northeast Anatolia	Kars, Ardahan
11	Middle East Anatolia	Malatya, Tunceli
12	Southeastern Anatolia	Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır

Age and gender quotas will be applied for 18 surveys to be conducted in each neighborhood.

Age group	Women	Men
18-32	3 subject	3 subject
33-48	3 subject	3 subject
48 and above	3 subject	3 subject

b)   Field application

Field application:

The field application of the research will be carried out on Saturday and Sunday, on a weekend within two weeks following the approval of the questionnaire and questions (the exact date will be determined after the project approval). The research field application will be decided according to the acceptance of the questionnaire form and client's approval.

3) SURVEY FORM

The interview flow and the questions to be used in the surveys will be prepared by cilent and KONDA, after the survey forms have been prepared, they will be applied after the approval of the client.

The questionnaire will be 60-65 questions long, including demographic questions. In order to make comparisons between studies, the questionnaire will also include questions from previous studies.

4) REPORTING

The data collected from the field research will be analyzed with different methods and software after being coded as standard. A collective report will be prepared that will include the analysis and evaluation of different demographic, sociological, cultural and political groups in the society, as well as their comparison with each other.

In addition to the findings of this research, the report will also examine the direction and dose of change in the last ten years in society, using the findings of previous research in the KONDA Data Warehouse.

The presentation of reports will be prepared and carried out to the participants that client deems appropriate, on the date and within the scope deemed suitable by the client.

The data set of the research will be submitted to the client together with the reports.

5) CALENDAR

Face-to-face interviews in households will be held on Saturday and Sunday on a weekend within two weeks following the approval of the questionnaire.

The report will be completed and submitted within the 4th week following the field application.

Appendix VIII

Randomisation checks and descriptive data on the control variables[45]

Gender

Whole survey
Male: 49 %
Female: 51 %

	Male	**Female**
Control group	0.52	0.48
Treatment group	0.47	0.53

N = 2523, 16 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 5.0296, df = 1, p-value = 0.02492*
There is a statistically significant difference in distribution

Age

Whole survey
Mean age: 42.12
Median age: 41

	Mean age
Control group	41.7
Treatment group	42.5

N = 2535, 4 missing values. P-value = 0.185
No significant difference in distribution

Lifestyle

Whole survey
Modern: 36.4 %
Traditional conservative: 41.7 %
Religious conservative: 22 %

	Modern	**Traditional conservative**	**Religious conservative**
Control group	0.37	0.43	0.20
Treatment group	0.36	0.41	0.24

N = 2487, 52 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 5.5233, df = 2, p-value = 0.06319
No significant difference in distribution

---

[45] Missing values were removed.

Future vote

Whole survey

Party	%
AKP	22.4
CHP	22.5
MHP	4.0
HDP/YSP	4.7
IYI	2.6
Other	5.7
Undecided	23.2
No vote	15.0

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	AKP	CHP	MHP	HDP/YSP	IYI	Other	Undecided	No vote
Control	0.22	0.21	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.05	0.26	0.15
Treatment	0.23	0.24	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.06	0.21	0.15

N = 2406, 133 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 8.1129, df = 7, p-value = 0.3227
No significant difference in distribution

Education

Whole survey

Education (grouped)	%
Below high school	47.4
High school degree	29.5
University degree	23.2

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	Below high school	High school degree	University degree
Control	0.46	0.31	0.23
Treatment	0.49	0.28	0.23

N = 2531, 8 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 4.1675, df = 2, p-value = 0.1245
No significant difference in distribution

<u>Occupation</u>

Whole survey

Occupation	%
White collar	17.1
Blue collar	26.3
Retired	14.7
Housewife	26.5
Student	9.3
Unemployed	6.1

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	White collar	Blue collar	Retired	Housewife	Student	Unemployed
Control	0.18	0.28	0.14	0.24	0.09	0.06
Treatment	0.16	0.24	0.15	0.29	0.09	0.06

N = 2532, 7 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 11.535, df = 5, p-value = 0.04175*
There is a statistically significant difference in distribution

<u>Income</u>

Whole survey

Monthly income in TRY (September 2023: 1€ = 29 TRY)	%
Below 5k	4.2
5-8k	13.5
8-10k	6.7
10-15k	29.8
15-20k	12.9
Above 20k	32.9

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	Below 5k	5-8k	8-10k	10-15k	15-20k	Above 20k
Control	0.04	0.12	0.07	0.30	0.14	0.34
Treatment	0.04	0.15	0.07	0.30	0.12	0.32

N = 2320, 219 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 4.5212, df = 5, p-value = 0.4771
No significant difference in distribution

Ethnic self-identification

Whole survey

Self-identified Ethnicity	%
Turkish	78.4
Kurdish	16.4
Zaza	1.5
Arab	2.1
Other	1.6

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	Turkish	Kurdish	Zaza	Arab	Other
Control	0.78	0.17	0.01	0.02	0.02
Treatment	0.79	0.16	0.02	0.02	0.01

N = 2522, 17 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 2.1499, df = 4, p-value = 0.7082
No significant difference in distribution

Language spoken at home

Whole survey

Language at home	%
Turkish	88.2
Kurdish	9.8
Zaza	0.5
Arabic	1.1
Other	0.3

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	Turkish	Kurdish	Zaza	Arabic	Other
Control	0.88	0.10	0.01	0.01	0.01
Treatment	0.89	0.10	0	0.01	0

N = 2513, 26 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 5.3993, df = 4, p-value = 0.2487
No significant difference in distribution

Religious practice

Whole survey

Religious practice	%
Non-believer	3.3
No practice	2.3
Some practice	30.1
Practice	52.4
Pious practice	11.9

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	Non-believer	No practice	Some practice	Practice	Pious practice
Control	0.03	0.03	0.32	0.50	0.13
Treatment	0.04	0.02	0.29	0.55	0.11

N = 2511, 28 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 7.7866, df = 4, p-value = 0.09972
No significant difference in distribution

Head covering

Whole survey

Head covering	%
None	36
Headscarf (Başörtüsü)	41.6
Turban (Türban)	6.6
Chador/Niqab (Çarşaf/Peçe)	1.0
Interviewee single male	14.8

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	None	Headscarf	Turban	Chador/Niqab	Interviewee single male
Control	0.34	0.41	0.06	0.01	0.17
Treatment	0.38	0.42	0.07	0.01	0.12

N = 2519, 20 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 14.066, df = 4, p-value = 0.0071**
There is a statistically significant difference in distribution

<u>Religious sect</u>

Whole survey

Religious sect	%
Sunni Muslim	89.4
Alevi Muslim	5.4
Other	5.2

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	Sunni	Alevi	Other
Control	0.89	0.06	0.05
Treatment	0.90	0.05	0.05

N = 2468, 71 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 2.1021, df = 2, p-value = 0.3496
No significant difference in distribution

<u>Presence of Syrians in one's neighbourhood</u>

Whole survey

Syrian presence	%
None	31.8
Few	36.4
Quite some	16.8
Many	15.0

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	None	Few	Quite some	Many
Control	0.33	0.37	0.16	0.14
Treatment	0.31	0.36	0.17	0.16

N = 2526, 13 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 3.0574, df = 3, p-value = 0.3829
No significant difference in distribution

Frequency of encounters with Syrians

Whole survey

Syrian presence	%
Never	17.4
Sometimes	36.3
Often	26.4
All the time	20.0

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	Never	Sometimes	Often	All the time
Control	0.18	0.36	0.26	0.21
Treatment	0.17	0.37	0.27	0.19

N = 2535, 4 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 1.3119, df = 3, p-value = 0.7263
No significant difference in distribution

Existence of a close Syrian friend

Whole survey

Syrian friend	%
No	94.0
Yes	6.0

Distribution between Treatment and Control Group

	No	Yes
Control	0.94	0.06
Treatment	0.94	0.06

N = 2506, 33 missing values. Row percentages. X-squared = 0.36262, df = 1, p-value = 0.5471
No significant difference in distribution

Appendix IX

Descriptive data on the dependent variables

(starts on the next page for layout reasons)

Do you try to stay away from Syrian refugees?

No   42 %

Yes   58 %

n = 2505 (34 missing values)

How often do you talk to Syrians in your daily life, in your neighbourhood or elsewhere?

Never	71.0 %
Sometimes	23.0 %
Often	4.5 %
All the time	1.8 %

n = 2518 (21 missing values)

Do you have a Syrian friend who is not related to you by blood but whom you can trust?

No   94 %

Yes   6 %

n = 2506 (33 missing values)

How often do you spend time together with Syrians who are not your relatives? (Eating together, chatting outside of work, making house visits, etc.)

Never	89.4 %
Sometimes	8.6 %
Often	1.7 %
All the time	0.4 %

n = 2515 (24 missing values)

To what extent may Syrian refugees belong in your community?

Same country

No   72.5 %

Yes   27.5 %

n = 2500 (39 missing values)

Same city

No   74 %

Yes   26 %

n = 2495 (44 missing values)

Same neighbourhood, workplace or school

No   78 %

Yes   22 %

n = 2493 (46 missing values)

Same building, group of friends or as a neighbour

No   83 %

Yes   17 %

n = 2481 (58 missing values)

Same home or family

No   92.6 %

Yes   7.4 %

n = 2478 (61 missing values)

Appendix X

Regression models for Chapter 8, Section 3.1

Table 1:

Staying away from Syrian Refugees according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	-0.116
	(0.148)
Controls	✓
Constant	0.495
	(0.351)
Observations	2229
AIC	2895.5
BIC	3078.2
Log-likelihood	-1415.757
RMSE	0.47
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of trying to stay away from Syrian refugees according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 2:

Talking to Syrian Refugees according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	0.332
	(0.172)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.887***
	(0.433)
Observations	2239
AIC	2300.2
BIC	2483.1
Log-likelihood	-1118.106
RMSE	0.41
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of ever talking to a Syrian refugee (combined values for 'Sometimes', 'Often', and 'All the time' against 'Never') according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8

Table 3:

Having a Syrian Friend according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	0.497
	(0.309)
Controls	✓
Constant	-3.003***
	(0.732)
Observations	2222
AIC	933.4
BIC	1116.0
Log-likelihood	-434.679
RMSE	0.23
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of having a close Syrian friend according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 4:

Socialising with Syrian Refugees according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	0.726**
	(0.252)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.498***
	(0.626)
Observations	2233
AIC	1294.6
BIC	1477.4
Log-likelihood	-615.315
RMSE	0.28
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of ever socialising with Syrians (combined values for "Sometimes", "Often", and "All the time" against "Never") according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 5:

Staying away from Syrian Refugees according to Religious Practice

Non-believer	-
No practice	-0.301
	(0.431)
Some practice	-0.149
	(0.340)
Practice	-0.219
	(0.343)
Pious practice	-0.099
	(0.367)
Controls	✓
Constant	0.546
	(0.471)
Observations	2258
AIC	2944.6
BIC	3139.1
Log-likelihood	-1438.289
RMSE	0.47
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of trying to stay away from Syrian refugees according to religious practice, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8

Table 6:

Talking to Syrian Refugees according to Religious Practice

Non-believer	-
No practice	-0.336
	(0.524)
Some practice	-0.339
	(0.399)
Practice	-0.072
	(0.400)
Pious practice	-0.304
	(0.429)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.431*
	(0.571)
Observations	2272
AIC	2328.6
BIC	2523.3
Log-likelihood	-1130.289
RMSE	0.41
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of ever talking to a Syrian refugee (combined values for 'Sometimes', 'Often', and 'All the time' against 'Never') according to religious practice, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8

Table 7:

Having a Syrian Friend according to Religious Practice

Non-believer	-
No practice	-15.916
	(494.307)
Some practice	-1.556*
	(0.643)
Practice	-1.161
	(0.645)
Pious practice	-0.934
	(0.692)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.397
	(0.945)
Observations	2251
AIC	938.0
BIC	1132.4
Log-likelihood	-434.997
RMSE	0.23
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of having a close Syrian friend according to religious practice, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8

Socialising with Syrian Refugees according to Religious Practice

Non-believer	-
No practice	-1.330
	(1.002)
Some practice	-0.449
	(0.631)
Practice	-0.010
	(0.630)
Pious practice	-0.261
	(0.666)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.680
	(0.859)
Observations	2261
AIC	1314.5
BIC	1509.1
Log-likelihood	-623.256
RMSE	0.28
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of socialising with Syrians (combined values for "Sometimes", "Often", and "All the time" against "Never") according to religious practice, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 9:

Staying away from Syrian Refugees according to Head Covering

No covering	-
Traditional headscarf	-0.081
	(0.122)
Turban	-0.083
	(0.202)
Chador/Niqab	-0.162
	(0.461)
Interviewee single male	-0.199
	(0.164)
Controls	✓
Constant	0.493
	(0.357)
Observations	2259
AIC	2945.5
BIC	3140.0
Log-likelihood	-1438.726
RMSE	0.47
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of trying to stay away from Syrian refugees according to head covering, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8

Talking to Syrian Refugees according to Head Covering

No covering	-
Traditional headscarf	0.195
	(0.143)
Turban	0.323
	(0.232)
Chador/Niqab	1.430**
	(0.525)
Interviewee single male	0.121
	(0.188)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.763***
	(0.442)
Observations	2271
AIC	2324.2
BIC	2519.0
Log-likelihood	-1128.105
RMSE	0.40
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of ever talking to a Syrian refugee (combined values for 'Sometimes', 'Often', and 'All the time' against 'Never') according to head covering, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 11:

Having a Syrian Friend according to Head Covering

No covering	-
Traditional headscarf	0.414
	(0.288)
Turban	1.320***
	(0.365)
Chador/Niqab	1.818**
	(0.620)
Interviewee single male	0.697*
	(0.328)
Controls	✓
Constant	-3.386***
	(0.771)
Observations	2254
AIC	936.4
BIC	1130.9
Log-likelihood	-434.209
RMSE	0.22
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of having a close Syrian friend according to head covering, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 12:

Socialising with Syrian Refugees according to Head Covering

No covering	-
Traditional headscarf	-0.319
	(0.210)
Turban	-0.277
	(0.320)
Chador/Niqab	0.205
	(0.609)
Interviewee single male	-0.102
	(0.264)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.666**
	(0.632)
Observations	2264
AIC	1313.8
BIC	1508.4
Log-likelihood	-622.899
RMSE	0.28
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of socializing with Syrians according to head covering, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Appendix XI

Regression models for Chapter 8, Section 3.2

Table 1:

Acceptance in the same Country according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	0.426**
	(0.164)
Controls	✓
Constant	-0.586
	(0.383)
Observations	2219
AIC	2473.0
BIC	2655.6
Log-likelihood	-1204.500
RMSE	0.43
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same country (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 2:

Acceptance in the same City according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	0.520**
	(0.167)
Controls	✓
Constant	-0.972*
	(0.393)
Observations	2216
AIC	2390.6
BIC	2573.1
Log-likelihood	-1163.305
RMSE	0.42
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same city (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 3:

Acceptance in the same Neighbourhood / Workplace according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	0.658***
	(0.178)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.536***
	(0.423)
Observations	2215
AIC	2164.5
BIC	2346.9
Log-likelihood	-1050.226
RMSE	0.39
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same neighbourhood (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 4:

Acceptance in the same Apartment Building / Circle of Friends according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	0.601**
	(0.198)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.138***
	(0.467)
Observations	2206
AIC	1836.4
BIC	2018.8
Log-likelihood	-886.211
RMSE	0.35
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same apartment building / circle of friends (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 5:

Acceptance in the same Home / Family according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	0.692*
	(0.282)
Controls	✓
Constant	-3.101***
	(0.651)
Observations	2203
AIC	1125.6
BIC	1307.9
Log-likelihood	-530.776
RMSE	0.26
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same home / family (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 6:

Feeling of Cultural Similarity according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	0.616*
	(0.274)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.454***
	(0.616)
Observations	2224
AIC	1192.0
BIC	1374.7
Log-likelihood	-564.014
RMSE	0.27
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of considering the Syrian refugees similar to oneself in terms of culture or values (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 7:

Feeling of Religious Similarity according to Lifestyle

Modern	-
Religious conservative	0.864***
	(0.191)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.435**
	(0.441)
Observations	2217
AIC	2012.6
BIC	2195.1
Log-likelihood	-974.308
RMSE	0.37
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of considering the Syrian refugees similar to oneself in terms of religious practices (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 8:

Feeling of Cultural Similarity according to Religious Practice

Non-believer	-
No practice	-0.041
	(1.036)
Some practice	-0.017
	(0.779)
Practice	0.465
	(0.775)
Pious practice	0.660
	(0.802)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.301*
	(0.953)
Observations	2248
AIC	1212.6
BIC	1407.0
Log-likelihood	-572.276
RMSE	0.27
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of considering the Syrian refugees similar to oneself in terms of culture or values (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to religious practice, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 9:

Feeling of Religious Similarity according to Religious Practice

Non-believer	-
No practice	-0.591
	(0.913)
Some practice	0.290
	(0.590)
Practice	0.879
	(0.588)
Pious practice	1.058
	(0.607)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.487*
	(0.710)
Observations	2240
AIC	2033.8
BIC	2228.1
Log-likelihood	-982.902
RMSE	0.37
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of considering the Syrian refugees similar to oneself in terms of religious practices (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to religious practice, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 10:

Feeling of Cultural Similarity according to Head Covering

No covering	-
Traditional headscarf	0.327
	(0.240)
Turban	0.433
	(0.347)
Chador/Niqab	1.663**
	(0.529)
Interviewee single male	0.467
	(0.315)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.409***
	(0.629)
Observations	2253
AIC	1209.0
BIC	1403.5
Log-likelihood	-570.517
RMSE	0.26
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of considering the Syrian refugees similar to oneself in terms of culture or values (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to head covering, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 11:

Feeling of Religious Similarity according to Head Covering

No covering	-
Traditional headscarf	0.646***
	(0.165)
Turban	0.783**
	(0.241)
Chador/Niqab	1.271**
	(0.462)
Interviewee single male	0.448*
	(0.221)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.388**
	(0.448)
Observations	2245
AIC	2040.4
BIC	2234.8
Log-likelihood	-986.203
RMSE	0.37
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of considering the Syrian refugees similar to oneself in terms of religious practices (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to head covering, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Appendix XII

Regression models for Chapter 8, Section 3.3

Table 1:

Staying away from Syrian Refugees according to Self-Identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	-0.316*
	(0.137)
Zaza	0.030
	(0.385)
Arab	-0.258
	(0.307)
Other	-0.184
	(0.355)
Controls	✓
Constant	0.358
	(0.330)
Observations	2271
AIC	2953.7
BIC	3125.6
Log-likelihood	-1446.866
RMSE	0.47
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of trying to stay away from Syrian refugees according to self-identified lifestyle, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 2:

Talking to Syrian Refugees according to Self-Identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.146
	(0.155)
Zaza	-0.745
	(0.492)
Arab	0.794*
	(0.338)
Other	-0.406
	(0.424)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.580***
	(0.412)
Observations	2283
AIC	2335.4
BIC	2507.4
Log-likelihood	-1137.677
RMSE	0.41
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of ever talking to a Syrian refugee (combined values for 'Sometimes', 'Often', and 'All the time' against 'Never') according to self-identified ethnicity, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 3:

Socialising with Syrian Refugees according to Self-Identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	-0.162
	(0.277)
Zaza	-1.284
	(1.108)
Arab	1.129*
	(0.469)
Other	-0.256
	(0.641)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.922**
	(0.600)
Observations	2268
AIC	1313.7
BIC	1508.4
Log-likelihood	-622.856
RMSE	0.28
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of ever socialising with Syrians (combined values for "Sometimes", "Often", and "All the time" against "Never") according to self-identified ethnicity, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 4:

Having a Syrian Friend according to Self-Identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.165
	(0.332)
Zaza	-1.375
	(1.429)
Arab	0.831
	(0.566)
Other	0.988
	(0.531)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.558***
	(0.701)
Observations	2258
AIC	948.1
BIC	1142.7
Log-likelihood	-440.067
RMSE	0.23
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of having a close Syrian friend according to self-identified ethnicity, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 5:

Staying away from Syrian Refugees according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	-0.093
	(0.214)
Zaza	-0.278
	(0.751)
Arabic	-0.006
	(0.508)
Other	-0.842
	(0.796)
Controls	✓
Constant	0.362
	(0.332)
Observations	2254
AIC	2937.9
BIC	3132.4
Log-likelihood	-1434.971
RMSE	0.47
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of trying to stay away from Syrian refugees according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 6:

Talking to Syrian Refugees according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.196
	(0.241)
Zaza	0.505
	(0.952)
Arabic	0.092
	(0.562)
Other	1.213
	(0.854)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.487***
	(0.414)
Observations	2265
AIC	2317.9
BIC	2512.5
Log-likelihood	-1124.936
RMSE	0.40
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of ever talking to a Syrian refugee (combined values for 'Sometimes', 'Often', and 'All the time' against 'Never') according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 7:

Socialising with Syrian Refugees according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.000
	(0.279)
Zaza	0.678
	(0.853)
Arabic	1.221**
	(0.443)
Other	2.066*
	(0.984)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.890**
	(0.590)
Observations	2274
AIC	1316.9
BIC	1488.8
Log-likelihood	-628.458
RMSE	0.28
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of ever socialising with Syrians (combined values for "Sometimes", "Often", and "All the time" against "Never") according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 8:

Having a Syrian Friend according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	-0.208
	(0.354)
Zaza	0.463
	(1.115)
Arabic	0.842
	(0.524)
Other	1.059
	(0.982)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.517***
	(0.689)
Observations	2264
AIC	948.0
BIC	1119.8
Log-likelihood	-444.024
RMSE	0.23
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of having a close Syrian friend according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Appendix XIII

Regression models for Chapter 8, Section 3.4

Table 1:

Acceptance in the same Country according to Self-identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.492***
	(0.148)
Zaza	0.292
	(0.418)
Arab	0.658*
	(0.320)
Other	0.200
	(0.383)
Controls	✓
Constant	-0.780*
	(0.387)
Observations	2227
AIC	2479.6
BIC	2662.2
Log-likelihood	-1207.779
RMSE	0.42
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same country (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified ethnicity, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 2:

Acceptance in the same City according to Self-identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.412**
	(0.151)
Zaza	0.264
	(0.436)
Arab	0.642*
	(0.325)
Other	0.252
	(0.385)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.104**
	(0.395)
Observations	2224
AIC	2404.4
BIC	2587.0
Log-likelihood	-1170.182
RMSE	0.42
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same city (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified ethnicity, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 3:

Acceptance in the same Neighbourhood / Workplace according to Self-identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.460**
	(0.158)
Zaza	0.027
	(0.485)
Arab	0.874**
	(0.336)
Other	0.283
	(0.400)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.726***
	(0.427)
Observations	2223
AIC	2174.1
BIC	2356.8
Log-likelihood	-1055.071
RMSE	0.39
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same neighbourhood (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified ethnicity, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 4:

Acceptance in the same Apartment Building / Circle of Friends according to Self-identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.473*
	(0.219)
Zaza	0.622
	(0.566)
Arab	1.126**
	(0.427)
Other	0.361
	(0.432)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.110***
	(0.447)
Observations	2240
AIC	1857.3
BIC	2051.6
Log-likelihood	-894.650
RMSE	0.35
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same apartment building / circle of friends (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified ethnicity, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 5:

Acceptance in the same Home / Family according to Self-identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.745**
	(0.283)
Zaza	0.124
	(1.049)
Arab	1.330*
	(0.566)
Other	0.075
	(0.648)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.989***
	(0.617)
Observations	2237
AIC	1138.1
BIC	1332.3
Log-likelihood	-535.044
RMSE	0.25
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same home / family (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified ethnicity, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 6:

Feeling of Cultural Similarity according to Self-identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.848**
	(0.270)
Zaza	-1.181
	(1.318)
Arab	0.883
	(0.549)
Other	-0.953
	(1.080)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.304***
	(0.582)
Observations	2256
AIC	1205.4
BIC	1400.0
Log-likelihood	-568.721
RMSE	0.26
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of considering the Syrian refugees similar to oneself in terms of culture or values (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified ethnicity, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 7:

Feeling of Religious Similarity according to Self-identified Ethnicity

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.617**
	(0.204)
Zaza	-1.183
	(0.894)
Arab	0.211
	(0.523)
Other	0.310
	(0.457)
Controls	✓
Constant	-0.982*
	(0.416)
Observations	2248
AIC	2047.2
BIC	2241.6
Log-likelihood	-989.596
RMSE	0.37
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of considering the Syrian refugees similar to oneself in terms of religious practices (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to self-identified ethnicity, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 8:

Acceptance in the same Country according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.463*
	(0.184)
Zaza	0.036
	(0.701)
Arabic	0.817
	(0.435)
Other	0.764
	(0.755)
Controls	✓
Constant	-0.586
	(0.383)
Observations	2219
AIC	2473.0
BIC	2655.6
Log-likelihood	-1204.500
RMSE	0.43
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same country (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 9:

Acceptance in the same City according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.412**
	(0.151)
Zaza	0.264
	(0.436)
Arab	0.642*
	(0.325)
Other	0.252
	(0.385)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.104**
	(0.395)
Observations	2224
AIC	2404.4
BIC	2587.0
Log-likelihood	-1170.182
RMSE	0.42
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same city (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 10:

Acceptance in the same Neighbourhood / Workplace according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.493*
	(0.196)
Zaza	0.224
	(0.709)
Arabic	0.689
	(0.440)
Other	0.646
	(0.833)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.536***
	(0.423)
Observations	2215
AIC	2164.5
BIC	2346.9
Log-likelihood	-1050.226
RMSE	0.39
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same neighbourhood / workplace (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 11:

Acceptance in the same Apartment Building / Circle of Friends according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.654**
	(0.210)
Zaza	0.483
	(0.818)
Arabic	1.058*
	(0.443)
Other	1.265
	(0.772)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.870***
	(0.436)
Observations	2247
AIC	1865.0
BIC	2036.6
Log-likelihood	-902.520
RMSE	0.35
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same apartment building / circle of friends (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 12:

Acceptance in the same Home / Family according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.722**
	(0.271)
Zaza	-14.569
	(1219.164)
Arabic	-15.296
	(747.884)
Other	0.363
	(1.135)
Controls	✓
Constant	-2.610***
	(0.599)
Observations	2244
AIC	1141.8
BIC	1313.3
Log-likelihood	-540.901
RMSE	0.26
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of accepting the Syrian refugees in the same home / family (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Table 13:

Feeling of Cultural Similarity according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.640*
	(0.267)
Zaza	0.378
	(1.106)
Arabic	-0.414
	(0.768)
Other	0.683
	(1.171)
Controls	✓
Constant	-1.963***
	(0.569)
Observations	2263
AIC	1212.5
BIC	1384.3
Log-likelihood	-576.262
RMSE	0.27
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of considering the Syrian refugees similar to oneself in terms of culture or values (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Feeling of Religious Similarity according to Language at Home

Turkish	-
Kurdish	0.757***
	(0.192)
Zaza	0.044
	(0.825)
Arabic	-0.536
	(0.524)
Other	0.868
	(0.879)
Controls	✓
Constant	-0.781
	(0.407)
Observations	2255
AIC	2056.3
BIC	2228.0
Log-likelihood	-998.161
RMSE	0.37
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Log-odds of considering the Syrian refugees similar to oneself in terms of religious practices (combined values for "Yes" and "Definitely Yes" against the combined values for "Undecided", "No", "Definitely No"), according to language spoken at home, including all the control variables listed in Chapter 8.

Appendix XIV

Crosstabulations and Regression models for Chapter 8, Section 3.6

Table 1:

Crosstabulation of the Manipulation Check for the Treatment and Control Group

	Not at all	A bit	Quite a bit	A lot
Treatment	0.308	0.257	0.226	0.210
Control	0.312	0.253	0.226	0.209

Row percentages. X-squared = 0.099882, df = 3, p-value = 0.9919
N (Treatment Group) = 1344
N (Control Group) = 1195

Table 2:

Are the Syrian refugees part of Turkish society today?
(For Lifestyle = Modern)

Treatment	-0.150
	(0.110)
Constant	2.861***
	(0.079)
Observations	899
R-squared	0.002
Adjusted R-squared	0.001
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their lifestyle as "modern", showing no statistical significance and thus no average treatment effect.

Table 3:

Are the Syrian refugees part of Turkish society today?
(For Lifestyle = Religiously conservative)

Treatment	-0.310*
	(0.135)
Constant	2.996***
	(0.102)
Observations	541
R-squared	0.010
Adjusted R-squared	0.008
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their lifestyle as "religiously conservative", indicating a statistical significance and thus an average treatment effect, but in the other direction than hypothesised (negative instead of positive).

Table 4:

Are the Syrian refugees part of Turkish society today?
(For Ethnic Self-Identification = Turkish)

Treatment	-0.159*
	(0.073)
Constant	2.875***
	(0.053)
Observations	1959
R-squared	0.002
Adjusted R-squared	0.002
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their ethnicity as "Turkish", indicating a statistical significance and thus an average treatment effect, which is in the hypothesised direction.

Table 5:

Are the Syrian refugees part of Turkish society today?
(For Ethnic Self-Identification = Kurdish)

Treatment	-0.117
	(0.152)
Constant	3.151***
	(0.109)
Observations	407
R-squared	0.001
Adjusted R-squared	-0.001
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their ethnicity as "Kurdish", showing no statistical significance and thus no average treatment effect.

Table 6:

Are the Syrian refugees part of Turkish society today?
(For Ethnic Self-Identification = Arab)

Treatment	-0.270
	(0.395)
Constant	2.870***
	(0.297)
Observations	53
R-squared	0.009
Adjusted R-squared	-0.010
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their ethnicity as "Arab", showing no statistical significance and thus no average treatment effect.

Table 7:

Should the Syrian refugees be part of Turkish society?
(For Lifestyle = Modern)

Treatment	0.042
	(0.047)
Constant	1.241***
	(0.034)
Observations	899
R-squared	0.001
Adjusted R-squared	0.000
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their lifestyle as "modern", showing no statistical significance and thus no average treatment effect.

Table 8:

Should the Syrian refugees be part of Turkish society?
(For Lifestyle = Religiously conservative)

Treatment	-0.107
	(0.086)
Constant	1.619***
	(0.066)
Observations	538
R-squared	0.003
Adjusted R-squared	0.001
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their lifestyle as "religiously conservative", showing no statistical significance and thus no average treatment effect.

Table 9:

Should the Syrian refugees be part of Turkish society?
(For Ethnic Self-Identification = Turkish)

Treatment	-0.047
	(0.036)
Constant	1.353***
	(0.027)
Observations	1956
R-squared	0.001
Adjusted R-squared	0.000
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their ethnicity as "Turkish", showing no statistical significance and thus no average treatment effect.

Table 10:

Should the Syrian refugees be part of Turkish society?
(For Ethnic Self-Identification = Kurdish)

Treatment	-0.037
	(0.080)
Constant	1.450***
	(0.057)
Observations	408
R-squared	0.001
Adjusted R-squared	-0.002
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their ethnicity as "Kurdish", showing no statistical significance and thus no average treatment effect.

Table 11:

Should the Syrian refugees be part of Turkish society?
(For Ethnic Self-Identification = Arab)

Treatment	0.549*
	(0.267)
Constant	1.217***
	(0.201)
Observations	53
R-squared	0.077
Adjusted R-squared	0.059
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their ethnicity as "Arab", indicating a statistical significance and thus an average treatment effect, which is in the hypothesised direction.

SUBGROUP ANALYSIS

Table 12:

Should the Syrian refugees be part of Turkish society?
(For Ethnic Self-Identification = Arab | Lifestyle = Modern)

Treatment	0.222
	(0.503)
Constant	1.333**
	(0.356)
Observations	18
R-squared	0.012
Adjusted R-squared	-0.050
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their ethnicity as "Arab" and their lifestyle as "modern", showing no statistical significance and thus no average treatment effect.

Table 13:

Should the Syrian refugees be part of Turkish society?
(For Ethnic Self-Identification = Arab | Lifestyle = Religiously Conservative)

Treatment	0.933*
	(0.411)
Constant	1.200**
	(0.319)
Observations	25
R-squared	0.183
Adjusted R-squared	0.147
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001	

Ordinary least squares regression of the treatment variable for respondents identifying their ethnicity as "Arab" and their lifestyle as "religiously conservative", indicating a statistical significance and thus an average treatment effect, which is in the hypothesised direction.

Appendix XV

Ethics Review

THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE
United Kingdom
www.lse.ac.uk

Research Ethics Committee

email: research.ethics@lse.ac.uk

Friedrich Püttmann
European Institute
F.Puttmann@lse.ac.uk

16th February 2024

Re:	Nationally representative survey in Turkey
REC ref.	1279
Outcome:	Post-study assessment – favourable opinion

Dear Friedrich,

I am writing with reference to the above survey, funded by the Hamburg Foundation for the Advancement of Academia and the Arts, which was fielded in September 2023. An ethics review was not completed prior to the survey being fielded, although the research does relate to your PhD research which underwent ethics review and was approved in December 2021 (ref. 39209).

The Research Ethics Committee, having considered the documentation you have sent relating to the survey fielded in September, is satisfied that the survey did not give rise to any significant ethical issues and that adequate safeguards were put in place. The Committee sees no reason why ethics approval of the application would not have been given had it undergone review prior to the survey being fielded.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Lyn Grove
Research Governance Manager
Secretary, LSE Research Ethics Committee

Bibliography

Abu-Lughold, Lila. 1991. 'Writing Against Culture.' in Richard G. Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (School of American Research Press: Santa Fe, NM).

Adar, Sinem. 2020. 'Repatriation to Turkey's 'Safe Zone'in Northeast Syria', *German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, 1: 1-4.

Adar, Sinem, and Friedrich Püttmann. 2022. "Making EU-Turkey Cooperation on Migration Sustainable. A Greater Focus on the Turkish Host Society Is Required." In *SWP Comment*. Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP).

Adida, Claire L. 2011. 'Too close for comfort? Immigrant exclusion in Africa', *Comparative Political Studies*, 44: 1370-96.

Adida, Claire L., David D. Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort. 2016. *Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA).

Afyonoğlu, Meliha F. 2021. 'The experience of violence of Syrian women living in Konya: An intersectional study through the narratives of service providers', *International Soical Work*, 0: 1-17.

Ager, Alastair, and Alison Strang. 2008. 'Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21: 166-91.

Agha, Sharifah Nazneen. 2008. 'THE ETHICS OF ASYLUM IN EARLY MUSLIM SOCIETY', *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 27.

Ahmed, Sara. 1999. 'Home and away: Narratives of migration and estrangement', *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 2.

Aïta, Samir. 2017. "Trade without Religion between Turkey and Syria." In *Éditoriuax de l'Ifri*. Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales.

Akan, Murat. 2003. 'Contextualizing Multiculturalism', *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38: 57-75.

Akçam, Taner. 2006. *A shameful act: The Armenian genocide and the question of Turkish responsibility* (Palgrave Macmillan: London).

Akdağ, Gül Arikan. 2016. 'Rational political parties and electoral games: the AKP's strategic move for the Kurdish vote in Turkey', *Turkish Studies*, 17: 126-54.

Akın, H. Bahadır, Seçim Yılmaz, and Şeyma Akın. 2020. 'Syrian Refugees and Peaceful Coexistence: Dining Spaces as Contact Points', *Liberal Düşünce Dergisi*, 25: 125-44.

Alakoç, Burcu Pınar , Gülay Uğur Göksel, and Alan Zarychta. 2022. 'Political Discourse and Public Attitudes toward Syrian Refugees in Turkey', *Comparative Politics*, 53: 547-71.

Alba, Richard. 2005. 'Bright vs. blurred boundaries: Second-generation assimilation and exclusion in France, Germany, and the United States', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28: 20-49.

———. 2012. *Blurring the Color Line. The New Chance for a More Integrated America* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA).

Alba, Richard, and Jan Willem Duyvendak. 2019. 'What about the mainstream? Assimilation in super-diverse times', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42: 105-24.

Alba, Richard, and Nancy Foner. 2015a. 'Mixed Unions and Immigrant-Group Integration in North America and Western Europe', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 662: 38-56.

———. 2015b. *Strangers No More. Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe* (Princeton University Press: Princeton).

Alkan, Hilal. 2021. 'The gift of hospitality and the (un)welcoming of Syrian migrants in Turkey', *American Ethnologist*, 48: 180-91.

Alrababa'h, Ala', Andrea Dillon, Scott Williamson, Jens Hainmueller, Dominik Hangartner, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2021. 'Attitudes Toward Migrants in a Highly Impacted Economy: Evidence From the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Jordan', *Comparative Political Studies*, 54: 33-76.

Anderson, Benedict. 2016. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso: Cambridge).

Aras, Bülent, and Yasin Duman. 2019. 'I/NGOs' Assistance to Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Opportunities and Challenges', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 21: 478-91.

Arat, Yeşim. 1991. 'Social Change and the 1983 Governing Elite in Turkey.' in Mübeccel Kıray (ed.), *Structural Change in Turkish Society* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN).

———. 2000. 'From Emancipation To Liberation: The Changing Role of Women in Turkey's Public Realm', *Journal of International Affairs*, 54: 107-23.

———. 2012. *Rethinking Islam and Liberal Democracy: Islamist Women in Turkish Politics* (SUNY Press: New York).

Arat, Yeşim, and Şevket Pamuk. 2019. *Turkey. Between Democracy and Authoritarianism* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Arendt, Hannah. 1943. 'We Refugees', *Menorah Journal*, 31: 69-77.

Arnault, Denise Saint, and Laura Sinko. 2021. 'Comparative Ethnographic Narrative Analysis Method: Comparing Culture in Narratives', *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, 8: 1-8.

Ates, Sabrı. 2021. 'The End of Kurdish Autonomy: The Destruction of the Kurdish Emirates in the Ottoman Empire.' in Cengiz Gunes and Veli Yadırğı Hamit Bozarslan (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Kurds* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Atikcan, Ece Özlem, and Kerem Öge. 2012. 'Referendum Campaigns in Polarized Societies: The Case of Turkey', *Turkish Studies*, 13: 449-70.

Aydın-Düzgit, Senem. 2019. 'The Islamist-Secularist Divide and Turkey's Descent into Severe Polarization.' in Thomas Carothers and Andrew O'Donohue (eds.), *Democracies Divided: The Global Challenge of Political Polarization* (Brookings Institution Press: Washington, DC).

Aydın-Düzgit, Senem, and Evren Balta. 2019. 'When elites polarize over polarization: Framing the polarization debate in Turkey', *New perspectives on Turkey*, 60: 153-76.

Ayvazoğlu, Ayşe Şafak, and Filiz Kunuroğlu. 2019. 'Being a Syrian University Student in Turkey: Intergroup Relations, Psychosocial Issues, and Boundary Formation', *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 38: 425-47.

Baer, Marc. 2004. 'The Double Bind of Race and Religion: The Conversion of the Dönme to Turkish Secular Nationalism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 46: 682-708.

Bail, Christopher A. 2008. 'The configuration of symbolic boundaries against immigrants in Europe', *American sociological review*, 73: 37-59.

Bajalan, Djene Rhys. 2021. 'The Kurdish Movement and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1880–1923.' in Cengiz Gunes and Veli Yadırğı Hamit Bozarslan (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Kurds* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Balfour, Rosa. 2021. "Against a European Civilization: Narratives About the European Union." In. Brussels: Carnegie Europe.

Balibar, Etienne, and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1991. *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (Verso: New York).

Balkılıç, Özgür, and Fatma Armağan Teke Lloyd. 2021. 'Does Islamic inclusion of Syrians represent a real challenge to Europe's security approach?: Dilemmas of the AKP's Syrian refugee discourse', *Turkish Studies*, 22: 357-79.

Bansak, Kirk, Jens Hainmueller, and Dominik Hangartner. 2016. 'How economic, humanitarian, and religious concerns shape European attitudes toward asylum seekers', *Science*, 354: 217-22.

———. 2023. 'Europeans' support for refugees of varying background is stable over time', *Nature*, 620: 849-54.

Baran, Salih, and Gökhan Zobar. 2022. 'İçişleri Bakanı Soylu: Türkiye'de 1134 kadın muhtar görev yapmakta', *Anadoluy Agency,* 26 October.

Barkey, Henri J. 1993. 'Turkey's Kurdish Dilemma', *Survival*, 35: 51-70.

Barou, Jacques. 2014. 'Integration of immigrants in France: a historical perspective', *Identities*, 21: 642-57.

Barth, Frederik. 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Little, Brown and Company: Boston).

Barth, Fredrik. 1986. 'Father's Brother's Daughter Marriage in Kurdistan', *Journal of Anthroplogical Research*, 42: 389-96.

Bauböck, Rainer. 1994. *Transnational Citizenship: Membership and Rights in International Migration* (Edward Elgar Publishing: Cheltenham).

Bauman, Zygmunt. 1997. *Postmodernity and its Discontents* (Polity: London).

Baydar, Gülsüm, and Selin Güngör. 2021. 'The Pit of Shame - Mobilizing affect in Basmane, Izmir', *City. Analysis of Urban Change, Theory, Action*, 25: 634-51.

Bayır, Derya. 2021. 'Why Autonomy Hasn't Been Possible for Kurds in Turkey.' in Cengiz Gunes and Veli Yadırğı Hamit Bozarslan (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Kurds* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Bayraklı, Enes, Farid Hafez, and Léonard Faytre. 2019. 'Making sense of Islamophobia in Muslim societies.' in Enes Bayraklı and Farid Hafez (ed.), *Islamophobia in Muslim Majority Societies* (Routledge: London).

Beihammer, Alexander D. 2012. 'Muslim Rulers Visiting the Imperial City: Building Alliances and Personal Networks between Constantinople and the Eastern Borderlands (Fourth/Tenth–Fifth/Eleventh Century)', *Al-Masaq*, 24: 157-77.

Bekleyen, Ayhan, and Nail Mahir Korkmaz. 2013. 'An evaluation of Akabe mass housing settlement in Sanliurfa, Turkey', *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 28: 293-309.

Belge, Ceren. 2011. 'State Building and the Limits of Legibility: Kinship Networks and Kurdish Resistance in Turkey', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 43: 95-114.

Ben-Nun Bloom, Pazit , and Gizem Arikan. 2012. 'A two-edged sword: The differential effect of religious belief and religious social context on attitudes towards democracy', *Political behavior*, 34: 249-76.

Ben-Nun Bloom, Pazit, Gizem Arikan, and Marie Courtemanche. 2015. 'Religious Social Identity, Religious Belief, and Anti-Immigration Sentiment', *American Political Science Review*, 109: 203-21.

Ben-Nun Bloom, Pazit, Allon Vishkin, Paz Ben-Nun, Miriam Korenman, and Maya Tamir. 2019. 'Religion and Anti-Immigration Sentiments in Context: Field Studies in Jerusalem', *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 29: 77-93.

Bernstein, Anna. 2013. 'Othering in Belgium: Flemish, Wallons, and Muslims', University College Maastricht.

Bettiza, Gregorio, Derek Bolton, and David Lewis. 2023. 'Civilizationism and the Ideological Contestation of the Liberal International Order', *International Studies Review*, 25: 1-28.

Betts, Alexander, Fulya Memişoğlu, and Ali Ali. 2020. 'What Difference do Mayors Make? The Role of Municipal Authorities in Turkey and Lebanon's Response to Syrian Refugees', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34: 491-519.

Biehl, Kristen Sarah. 2020. 'A dwelling lens: migration, diversity and boundary-making in an Istanbul neighbourhood', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 43: 2236-54.

Bilbay, Ömer Faruk. 2020. 'Uluslararası göç sorununun sosyo-ekonomik etkileri: Haliliye ve Eyyübiye ilçeleri üzerine bir inceleme', *Journal of Politics, Economy and Management (JOPEM)*, 3.

Bilgen, Arden. 2018. 'A project of destruction, peace, or techno- science? Untangling the relationship between the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) and the Kurdish question in Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 54: 94-113.

———. 2019. 'The Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) in Turkey: An Alternative Perspective on the Major Rationales of GAP', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 21: 532-52.

Biner, Özge, and Zerrin Özlem Biner. 2021. 'Syrian refugees and the politics of waiting in a Turkish border town', *Social Anthropology*, 29: 831-46.

Bloemraad, Irene, Will Kymlicka, Michèle Lamont, and Leanne S. Son Hing. 2019. 'Membership without Social Citizenship? Deservingness & Redistribution as Grounds for Equality', *Daedalus*, 148: 73-104.

Boswell, Christina, Andrew Geddes, and Peter Scholten. 2011. 'The role of narratives in migration policy-making: A research framework', *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 13: 1-11.

Boudou, Benjamin, Hans Leaman, and Maximilian Miguel Scholz. 2021. 'How Religious Reasons, Structures, and Interactions Shape Refugee Advocacy and Settlement', *Migration and Society: Advances in Research*, 4: 99-109.

Bougarel, Xavier. 2007. 'Bosnian Islam as 'European Islam': Limits and Shifts of a Concept.' in Aziz AlAzmeh and Effie Fokas (eds.), *Islam in Europe. Diversity, Identity and Influence* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Routledge: London).

Bowen, John R. 2009. *Can Islam be French? Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ).

Bowen, John R. 2016a. *On British Islam: Religion, Law, and Everyday Practice in Shariʿa Councils* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ).

———. 2016b. *On British Islam. Religion, Law, and Everyday Practice in Shari'a Councils* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ).

Bowen, John Richard, and Roger Petersen. 1999. *Critical Comparisons in Politics and Culture* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Bozarslan, Hamit. 2008. 'Kurds and the Turkish State.' in, *The Cambridge History of Turkey*.

———. 2021. 'Dark Times: Kurdistan in the Turmoil of the Middle East, 1979–2003.' in Cengiz Gunes and Veli Yadırğı Hamit Bozarslan (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Kurds* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Bozdağ, Çiğdem. 2020. 'Bottom-up nationalism and discrimination on social media: An analysis of the citizenship debate about refugees in Turkey', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23: 712-30.

Bozdoğan, Sibel, and Reşat Kasaba. 1997. *Rethinking modernity and national identity in Turkey* (University of Washington Press).

Branton, Regina, Erin C Cassese, Bradford S Jones, and Chad Westerland. 2011. 'All along the watchtower: Acculturation fear, anti-Latino affect, and immigration', *The Journal of Politics*, 73: 664-79.

Brubaker, Rogers. 2002. 'Ethnicity without groups ', *European Journal of Sociology*, 43: 163-89.

———. 2016. "A new "Christianist" secularism in Europe." In.: The Immanent Frame.

———. 2017. 'Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40: 1191-226.

Bunzl, Matti. 2005. 'Between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Some thoughts on the new Europe', *American Ethnologist*, 32: 499-508.

Burawoy, Michael. 1998. 'The Extended Case Method', *Sociological theory*, 16: 4-33.

Buruma, Ian, and Avishai Margalit. 2004. *Occidentalism. The West in the Eyes of its Enemies* (Penguin Press: New York).

Cağaptay, Soner. 2004. 'Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40: 86-101.

Çağaptay, Soner. 2002. 'Reconfiguring the Turkish Nation in the 1930s', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 8: 67-82.

———. 2014. "The Impact of Syria's Refugees on Southern Turkey." In *Policy Focus*. Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Çalışlar, İpek. 2013. *Madam Atatürk. The First Lady of Modern Turkey* (Saqi Books: London).

Can, Şule. 2020. *Refugee Encounters at the Turkish-Syrian Border. Antakya at the Crossroads* (Routledge: London).

Çankaya, Seyhan, Hacer Alan Dikmen, and Sema Dereli Yılmaz. 2020. 'Investigation of social support perceptions and hopelessness levels of refugee women in Turkey', *International Social Work*, 63: 459-72.

Carpi, Estella, and H. Pınar Şenoğuz. 2019. 'Refugee Hospitality in Lebanon and Turkey: On Making 'The Other'', *International Migration*, 57: 126-42.

Carriat, Julie, Clément Guillou, and Thibaud Métais. 2023. 'Projet de loi « immigration » : le camp Macron flirte avec l'idéologie de la « préférence nationale » sur les aides sociales aux étrangers', *Le Monde,* 19 December.

Castles, Stephen, Maja Korac, Ellie Vasta, and Steven Vertovec. 2002. "Integration: Mapping the Field." In *Home Office Online Report 29/03*. London: Home Office.

Cecil, David, Kenneth Stoltzfus, and Rachel Joy Hagues. 2018. 'The Role of Faith and Faith-Based Organizations in the German Response to the Refugee Crisis', *Social Work & Christianity*, 45: 93-112.

Cesari, Jocelyne. 2004. *When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and in the United States* (Palgrave Macmillan: London).

Çetin, Mehmet. 2019. 'Effects of religious participation on social inclusion and existential well-being levels of Muslim refugees and immigrants in Turkey', *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 29: 64-76.

Chatty, Dawn. 2018. *Syria: The Making and Unmaking of a Refuge State* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

Chin, Rita. 2010. 'Turkish Women, West German Feminists, and the Gendered Discourse on Muslim Cultural Difference', *Public Culture*, 22: 557-81.

Clifford, James. 2010. 'Partial Truths.' in James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (University of California Press: Berkeley, CA).

CNN. 2015. 'Syrian refugees swarm Turkish port city hoping to catch boats to new lives', *CNN,* 9 September.

Cohrs, J. Christopher, and Monika Stelzl. 2010. 'How Ideological Attitudes Predict Host Society Members' Attitudes toward Immigrants: Exploring Cross-National Differences', *Journal of Social Issues*, 66: 673-94.

Coleman, James S. 1986. 'Social theory, social research, and a theory of action', *American journal of sociology*, 91: 1309-35.

Collier, Paul. 2013. *Exodus: How Migration is Changing our World* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

Connor, Phillip. 2010. 'Contexts of immigrant receptivity and immigrant religious outcomes: the case of Muslims in Western Europe', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33: 376-403.

Council of Europe. 2004. "A new strategy for Social Cohesion." In. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Cowell, Alan 1987. 'Turkey Admits Inroads by Kurdish Guerrillas', *New York Times,* 22 October, pp. 9.

Cowling, Misha Mei, and Joel R Anderson. 2019. 'The role of Christianity and Islam in explaining prejudice against asylum seekers: Evidence from Malaysia', *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 29: 108-27.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color', *Stanford Law Review*, 43: 1241-99.

Cristaldi, Maria Pia Ester 2019. "The Language Policy of Turkey and the Sunni Syrian Community in Istanbul." In *Muslims in the UK and Europe Conference*. Cambridge.

Cumhuriyet. 2024a. 'Erdoğan'ın eski metin yazarı Aydın Ünal: 'Her Müslüman Türk değildir ama Türk, Müslümansa Türk'tür", Cumhuriyet. **https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/siyaset/erdoganin-eski-metin-yazari-aydin-unal-her-musluman-turk-degildir-2229860**.

———. 2024b. 'Laiklik Meclisi, MEB'in 'Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli'ni Danıştay'a taşıdı', Cumhuriyet. https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/siyaset/laiklik-meclisi-mebin-turkiye-yuzyili-maarif-modelini-danistaya-2231679.

Cumhurriyet. 2023. 'Türkiye resmen İstanbul Sözleşmesi'nden çıktı!', *Cumhurriyet,* 2 January.

Dag, Rahman. 2018. 'The Spillover Effect of the Syrian Crisis on the Peace Process in Turkey', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 53: 1251-70.

Daily Sabah. 2021. 'Turkey criticizes Kurz's 'astonishing' remarks on Afghan refugees', Daily Sabah, Accessed 8 May. https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/turkey-criticizes-kurzs-astonishing-remarks-on-afghan-refugees.

Dancygier, Rafaela M. 2010. *Immigration and Conflict in Europe* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Dancygier, Rafaela M., and Michael J. Donnelly. 2013. 'Sectoral Economies, Economic Contexts, and Attitudes toward Immigration', *The Journal of Politics*, 75: 17-35.

Danforth, Nick. 2021. *The Remaking of Republican Turkey: Memory and Modernity since the Fall of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Danış, A. Didem, Cherie Taraghi, and Jean-François Pérouse. 2009. '"Integration in Limbo": Iraqi, Afghan, Maghrebi and Iranian Migrants in Istanbul.' in Ahmet İçduygu and Kemal Kirişci (ed.), *Land of Diverse Migrations - Challenges of Emigration and Immigration in Turkey* (Istanbul Bilgi University Press: Istanbul).

Danon, Dina. 2020. *The Jews of Ottoman Izmir - A Modern History* (Stanford University Press: Stanford).

Davie, Grace. 1990. 'Believing without belonging: is this the future of religion in Britain?', *Social compass*, 37: 455-69.

Davis, Kingsley, and Judith Blake. 1956. 'Social Structure and Fertility: An Analytic Framework', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 4: 221-.

de Leeuw, Marc, and Sonja van Wichelen. 2012. 'Civilizing migrants: Integration, culture and citizenship', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15: 195-210.

della Porta, Donatella. 2008. 'Comparative analysis: case-oriented versus variable-oriented research.' in Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Demiralp, Seda. 2009. 'The rise of Islamic capital and the decline of Islamic radicalism in Turkey', *Comparative Politics*, 41: 315-35.

———. 2012. 'The Odd Tango of the Islamic Right and Kurdish Left in Turkey: A Peripheral Alliance to Redesign the Centre?', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 48: 287-302.

Dennison, James, Lorenzo Piccoli, and Mariana Carmo Duarte. 2024. "Migration Communication Campaigns: The state of the practice and an open database." In. Brussels: European Union.

Deutsche Welle. 2021. 'PEGIDA', Deutsche Welle. **https://www.dw.com/en/pegida/t-18171081**.

Dinas, Elias, Konstantinos Matakos, Dimitrios Xefteris, and Dominik Hangartner. 2019. 'Waking Up the Golden Dawn: Does Exposure to the Refugee Crisis Increase Support for Extreme-Right Parties?', *Political Analysis*, 27: 244-54.

Dribe, Martin, and Christer Lundh. 2011. 'Cultural Dissimilarity and Intermarriage. A Longitudinal Study of Immigrants in Sweden 1990-2005', *International Migration Review*, 45: 297-324.

Dumludağ, Devrim, and Bülent Durgun. 2011. 'An Economy in Transition: Izmir (1918-38)', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 47: 923-45.

Durkheim, Émile. 1893. *De la division du travail social* (Alcan: Paris).

———. 1897. *Le Suicide. Étude de Sociologie* (Alcan: Paris).

Duvar English. 2023a. 'Parliament speaker Kurtulmuş criticizes AKP MP Çelebi over deputy vehicle card controversy', *Duvar English,* 26 September 2023.

———. 2023b. 'Turkish security guards assault workers for talking in Kurdish', Accessed 17 December 2023. https://www.duvarenglish.com/turkish-security-guards-assault-workers-for-talking-in-kurdish-news-63503.

e-devlet. 2024. 'Muhtar Adayı Olma Şartları 2024 - Muhtar Maaşları Ne Kadar Oldu?'. https://www.edevlet.net/muhtar/#Muhtar_Maaslari_Ne_Kadar_Oldu.

ECRE. 2023. 'RESETTLEMENT AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION DEPARTURES - Türkiye', Accessed 13 May. https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkiye/content-temporary-protection/movement-and-mobility/resettlement-and-family-reunification-departures/.

Edgell, Penny, Evan Stewart, Sarah Catherine Billups, and Ryan Larson. 2020. 'The Stakes of Symbolic Boundaries ', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 61: 309-33.

Efe, Ibrahim, and Bernhard Forchtner. 2015. ''Saying sorry'in Turkey: The Dersim massacre of the 1930s in 2011', *Journal of Language and Politics*, 14: 233-57.

Efegil, Ertan. 2011. 'Analysis of the AKP Government's Policy toward the Kurdish Issue', *Turkish Studies*, 12: 27-40.

El Tayeb, Fatima. 2011. 'The Forces of Creolization. Colorblindness and Visible Minorities in the New Europe.' in Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih (eds.), *The Creolization of Theory* (Duke University Press: Durham, NC).

Elias, Norbert. 1976. *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* (Suhrkamp: Berlin).

———. 1983. *Die höfische Gesellschaft* (Suhrkamp: Berlin).

Elias, Norbert, and John L. Scotson. 1965. *The Established and the Outsiders* (Frank Cass: London).

Elmadmad, Khadija. 2008. 'Asylum in Islam and in Modern Refugee Law', *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 27.

Elster, Jon. 1989. *Nuts and bolts for the social sciences* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

———. 2007. *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Eminoğlu, Nihal. 2020. "Intercultural Cities: Intercultural Dialogue as a Tool for Social Cohesion." In *RESLOG. Local Governance and Migration Series*. Stockholm: SKL International AB.

Emirbayer, Mustafa. 1997. 'Manifesto for a Relational Sociology', *American journal of sociology*, 103: 281-317.

En Son Haber. 2022. 'Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan sigara ve alkolde vergi değerlendirmesi', *En Son Haber,* 31 May.

Erdal, Marta Bivand 2013. 'Migrant Transnationalism and Multi-Layered Integration: Norwegian-Pakistani Migrants' Own Reflections', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39: 983-99.

Erdoğan, Emre. 2018a. "Dimensions of Polarization in Turkey: Social Distance, Perceived Moral Superiority, and Political Intolerance." In *On Turkey*. Washington, DC: German Marshall Fund.

Erdoğan, M. Murat, Nihal Eminoğlu, K. Onur Unutulmaz, and Friedrich Püttmann. 2024. 'The impact of Syrian refugees and irregular migrants on EU-Turkey relations: Decison-makers' perspectives on the EU-Turkey statement.' in Berna Şafak Zülfikar Savcı, Ludger Pries and M. Murat Erdoğan (eds.), *Forced Migration in Turkey: Refugee Perspectives, Organizational Assistance, and Political Embedding* (Routledge: Abingdon).

Erdoğan, Murat. 2018b. *Syrians Barometer 2017* (Orion: Istanbul).

———. 2020a. ''Securitization from Society' and 'Social Acceptance': Political Party-Based Approaches in Turkey to Syrian Refugees ', *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, 17: 73-92.

———. 2020b. *Syrians Barometer 2019* (Orion: Istanbul).

———. 2021. *Syrians Barometer 2020* (Eğiten: Istanbul).

———. 2022. "Syrians Barometer 2021." In. Ankara: UNHCR.

Erdoğan-Öztürk, Yasemin, and Hale Işık-Güler. 2020. 'Discourses of exclusion on Twitter in the Turkish Context: #ülkemdesuriyeliistemiyorum', *Discourse, Context & Media*, 36: 1-10.

Ergin, Murat, and Yağmur Karakaya. 2017. 'Between neo-Ottomanism and Ottomania: navigating state-led and popular cultural representations of the past', *New perspectives on Turkey*, 56: 33-59.

Erturk, Selma Akay 2017. 'Refugees in the agricultural sector - Some notes on Syrians in Hatay province, Turkey.' in Alessandra Corrado, Carlos de Castro and Domenico Perrotta (eds.), *Migration and Agriculture - Mobility and Change in the Mediterranean area* (Routledge: London).

ESI. 2005. "Islamic Calvinists - Change and Conservatism in Central Anatolia." In. Berlin.

———. 2019. 'The EU-Turkey Statement three years on', European Stability Initiative. https://www.esiweb.org/pdf/ESI%20core%20facts%20-%20EU-Turkey%20Statement%20three%20years%20on%20-%2015%20April%202019.pdf

———. 2023. "EU-Turkey Statement 2.0 - How the EU and Turkey must cooperate in their mutual interest." In, edited by ESI. Berlin: European Stability Initiative.

ET. 2024. 'Regions & Boundaries map data for Türkiye'. https://www.europa.uk.com/map-data/regions-boundaries/country/?cc=tr.

European Commission. 2014. "European Modules on Migrant Integration - Final Report." In. Brussels: European Commission.

———. 2015. "Commission presents Recommendation for a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme with Turkey for refugees from Syria." In.

———. 2020. "Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027." In. Brussels: European Commission.

———. 2022. 'Cohesion Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE)', European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1607.

———. 2023a. 'The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN): Offering a lifeline to vulnerable refugees in Türkiye', Accessed 13 December 2023. https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/emergency-social-safety-net-essn-offering-lifeline-vulnerable-refugees-turkiye_en.

———. 2023b. "JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL - State of play of EU-Türkiye political, economic and trade relations." In. Brussels: High Representative of the European Union for Foreign and Security Affairs.

———. 2024. 'A new EU resettlement framework'.

European Council. 2016. "EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016." In.

Fattah, Khaled, and K.M. Fierke. 2009. 'A Clash of Emotions: The Politics of Humiliation and Political Violence in the Middle East', *European Journal of International Relations*, 15: 67-93.

Favell, Adrian. 1998. *Philosophies of Integration. Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain* (Macmillan: London).

———. 2019. 'Integration: twelve propositions after Schinkel', *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7: 1-10.

———. 2022a. "Comments at the Comparative Inequality and Inclusion Seminar on 13 September 2022 at the Weatherhead Center of Harvard University." In. Cambridge, MA.

———. 2022b. *The Integration Nation: Immigration and Colonial Power in Liberal Democracies* (Polity: Cambridge).

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena. 2011. 'Introduction: Faith-Based Humanitarianism in Contexts of Forced Displacement', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 24.

Findley, Carter Vaughn. 2007. *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1789–2007* (Yale University Press: New Haven).

Finkel, Evgeny. 2017. *Ordinary Jews: Choice and Survival during the Holocaust* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ).

Fisher, Stephen D, Anthony F Heath, David Sanders, and Maria Sobolewska. 2015. 'Candidate ethnicity and vote choice in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science*, 45: 883-905.

Fligstein, Neil, and Douglas McAdam. 2012. *A Theory of Fields* (Oxford University Press: New York).

Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2006. 'Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12: 219-45.

Foner, Nancy. 2015. 'Is Islam in Western Europe Like Race in the United States?', *Sociological Forum*, 30: 885—99.

Ford, Robert. 2008. 'Is racial prejudice declining in Britain?', *The British journal of sociology*, 59: 609-36.

———. 2011. 'Acceptable and unacceptable immigrants: How opposition to immigration in Britain is affected by migrants' region of origin', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37: 1017-37.

Foroutan, Naika. 2004. *Kulturdialoge zwischen dem Westen und der islamischen Welt: Eine Strategie zur Regulierung von Zivilisationskonflikten* (Deutscher Universitätsverlag Wiesbaden).

Foss, Clive. 2014. 'Kemal Atatürk: Giving a new nation a new history', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50: 826-47.

Frellesvig, Jacob Jung. 2022. 'Could the current strict Danish migration policy serve as an example for the EU, or does it undermine a common EU migration approach?', Accessed 8 May. https://www.europeanfutures.ed.ac.uk/could-the-current-strict-danish-migration-policy-serve-as-an-example-for-the-eu-or-does-it-undermine-a-common-eu-migration-approach/.

Fukuyama, Francis. 2018. *Identity. Contemporary Identity Politics and the Struggle for Recognition* (Profile Books: London).

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books: New York).

Genç, Hatice Deniz, and Merve Özdemirkıran Embel. 2019. 'Paradoxical Perceptions on Syrians' Forced Migration to Turkey: A Case Study of Istanbul Muhtars', *Alternatif Politika*, 11: 168-91.

Getmansky, Anna, Tolga Sınmazdemir, and Thomas Zeitzoff. 2018. 'Refugees, xenophobia, and domestic conflict: Evidence from a survey experiment in Turkey', *Journal of Peace Research*, 55: 491-507.

Gibson, William J., and Andrew Brown. 2009. *Working with Qualitative Data* (Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA).

Giddens, Anthony. 1986. *The Constitution of Society* (Blackwell: Oxford).

Gökarıksel, Banu, and Anna J. Secor. 2017. 'Devout Muslim masculinities: the moral geographies and everyday practices of being men in Turkey', *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24: 381-402.

Goldberg, David Theo. 1992. 'The semantics of race', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 15: 543-69.

———. 2006. 'Racial Europeanization', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 29: 331-64.

Goldthorpe, John H. 2001. 'Causation, Statistics, and Sociology', *European Sociological Review*, 17: 1-20.

Göle, Nilüfer. 2015. *Musulmans au quotidien: une enquête européenne sur les controverses autour de l'islam* (La Découverte: Paris).

Gourlay, William. 2018a. 'Kurdayetî: Pan-Kurdish Solidarity and Cross-Border Links in Times of War and Trauma', *Middle East Critique*, 27: 25-42.

———. 2018b. 'Oppression, Solidarity, Resistance: The Forging of Kurdish Identity in Turkey', *Ethnopolitics*, 17: 130-46.

Grandi, Filippo. 2023. "Global Refugee Forum Opening remarks of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi." In, edited by UNHCR. Geneva: UNCHR.

Granovetter, Mark S. 1973. 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American journal of sociology*, 78: 1360-80.

Grigoriadis, Ioannis N, and Esra Dilek. 2018. 'Struggling for the Kurdish vote: religion, ethnicity and victimhood in AKP and BDP/HDP rally speeches', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 54: 289-303.

Groves, Robert M., Floyd J. Fowler, Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau. 2009. *Survey Methodology* (Wiley: Hoboken (NJ)).

Guest, Greg, Kathleen M. MacQueen, and Emily E. Namey. 2012. *Applied Thematic Analysis* (Sage: Thousand Oaks).

Gunes, Cengiz. 2021. 'Kurdish Politics across the Middle East during the 1970s.' in Cengiz Gunes and Veli Yadırğı Hamit Bozarslan (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Kurds* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Güngördü, Feriha Nazda, and Zerrin Ezgi Kahraman. 2021. 'Investigating Syrian Refugees' Choice of Location in Urban Areas as a Subjective Process: A Cross-case Comparison in the Neighbourhoods of Önder (Ankara) and Yunusemre (İzmir)', *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*, 10: 387-412.

Gürsoy, Yaprak. 2023. 'Emotions and narratives of the spirit of Gallipoli: Turkey's collective identity and status in international relations', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 50: 1039-57.

Gutkowski, Stacey. 2022. 'Playing Host Since 1948: Jordan's Refugee Policies and Faith-Based Charity', *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 13: 163-84.

HaberTürk. 2020. 'Bu kafaya göre Yahya Kemal de Türk değildir ve Türkçe bilmez!', HaberTürk. https://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/murat-bardakci/2809101-bu-kafaya-gore-yahya-kemal-de-turk-degildir-ve-turkce-bilmez

Hainmueller, Jens, and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2014. 'Public Attitudes Toward Immigration', *Annual Review in Political Science*, 17: 225-49.

Hamad, Fatma Ben. 2021. "'A nightmarish night': Syrian neighbourhood in Ankara attacked after deadly fight', France 24. https://observers.france24.com/en/middle-east/20210818-syrian-neighbourhood-ankara-turkey-attacked.

Hanafi, Sari. 2017. 'Gulf Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis - Facts, Debates and Fatwas', *Sociology of islam*, 5: 112-37.

Hancké, Bob. 2009. *Intelligent Research Design: A Guide for Beginning Researchers in the Social Sciences* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

Hangartner, Dominik, Elias Dinas, Moritz Marbach, Konstantinos Matakos, and Dimitrios Xefteris. 2019. 'Does exposure to the refugee crisis make natives more hostile?', *American Political Science Review*, 113: 442-55.

Hangartner, Dominik, Gloria Gennaroa, Sary Alasiria, Nicholas Bahricha, Alexandra Bornhofta, Joseph Bouchera, Buket Buse Demircia, Laurenz Derksena, Aldo Halla, Matthias Jochuma, Maria Murias Munoza, Marc Richtera, Franziska Vogela, Salomé Wittwera, Felix Wüthricha, Fabrizio Gilardic, and Karsten Donnayc. 2021. 'Empathy-based counterspeech can reduce racist hate speech in a social media field experiment', *PNAS*, 118: 1-3.

Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü. 2011. *Atatürk - An Intellectual History* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ).

Hansen, Suzy. 2016. 'The Erdogan Loyalists and the Syrian Refugees', *New York Times Magazine,* 20 July.

Hartnett, Sabina. 2019. 'Willkommenskultur: A Computational and Socio-linguistic Study of Modern German Discourse on Migrant Populations', *TRANSIT*, 12: n.p.

Heath, Anthony, and Sin Yi Cheung. 2007. "Unequal chances: Ethnic minorities in Western labour markets." In *Proceedings of the British Academy*.

Heath, Anthony F, Stephen D Fisher, Gemma Rosenblatt, David Sanders, and Maria Sobolewska. 2013. *The Political Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

Heper, Metin. 2013. 'Islam, Conservatism, and Democracy in Turkey: Comparing Turgut Özal and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan', *Insight Turkey*, 15: 141-56.

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene. 2016. *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (SAGE: Thousand Oaks, CA).

Heukelingen, Nienke, and Friedrich Püttmann. 2023. "With or without Erdoğan, we need to talk about refugees again." In, edited by Clingendael. The Hague: The Clingendael Institute.

Himmler, Heinrich. 1943. 'Speech in Poznan on 4 October 1943', Yad Vashem, Shoah Resource Center. https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%204029.pdf.

Hintz, Lisel. 2016. "'Take it outside!" National identity contestation in the foreign policy arena', *European Journal of International Relations*, 22: 335-61.

———. 2018. *Identity politics inside out: National identity contestation and foreign policy in Turkey* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

———. 2021. 'The empire's opposition strikes back: popular culture as creative resistance tool under Turkey's AKP', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 48: 24-43.

Hoffman, Max. 2021. "Flashpoints in US-Turkey Relations in 2021." In. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

Hoffman, Max, Michael Werz, and John Halpin. 2018. "Turkey's 'New Nationalism' Amid Shifting Politics." In. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

Honneth, Axel. 1992. *The Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (MIT Press: Cambridge, MA).

———. 2012. *The I in We: Studies in the Theory of Recognition* (Polity Press: Cambridge, MA).

Hopkins, Daniel J. 2011. 'National Debates, Local Responses: The Origins of Local Concern about Immigration in Britain and the United States', *British Journal of Political Science*, 41: 499-524.

Huntington, Samuel. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon & Schuster: New York).

———. 2004. *Who are we? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (Simon & Schuster: New York).

Huntington, Samuel P. 2007. 'The Clash of Civilizations Revisited', *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 24: 53-59.

Hürriyet. 2022. 'More neighborhoods to be closed to foreigners, says minister', Accessed 12 January https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/more-neighborhoods-to-be-closed-to-foreigners-says-minister-174519.

Içduygu, Ahmet, and Kemal Kirişci. 2009. *Land of Diverse Migrations: Challenges of Emigration and Immigration in Turkey* (Istanbul Bilgi University Press: Istanbul).

Ignatieff, Michael. 2006. *The Warriors Honour: Ethnic War And The Modern Conscience* (Penguin: London).

International Crisis Group. 2018. "Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions." In. Istanbul: International Crisis Group.

———. 2019. "Mitigating Risks for Syrian Refugee Youth in Turkey's Şanlıurfa." In *Europe Reports*. International Crisis Group.

IOM. 2022. 'Migrant Inclusion and Social Cohesion', International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Accessed 21 July 2022. https://eea.iom.int/migrant-inclusion-and-social-cohesion.

Işık, Damla. 2008. 'On Sabır and Agency. The Politicis of Pious Practice in Konya's Carpet Weaving Industry', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 10: 518-41.

———. 2010. 'Personal and global economies: Male carpet manufacturers as entrepreneurs in the weaving neighborhoods of Konya, Turkey', *American Ethnologist*, 37: 53-68.

Jackson Preece, Jennifer 2005. *Minority Rights: Between Diversity and Community* (Polity: Cambridge).

Janka, Franz. 1997. *Die braune Gesellschaft* (Quell Verlag: Stuttgart).

Jenkins, Richard. 2008. *Social Identity* (Routledge: New York).

Johns, Gary. 2001. 'In Praise of Context', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 22: 31-42.

Jonsson, Terese. 2016. 'The Narrative Reproduction of White Feminist Racism', *Feminist Review*, 113: 50-67.

Joppke, Christian. 2017. 'Civic Integration in Western Europe: three debates', *West European Politics*, 40: 1153-76.

Just, Aida, Maria Elena Sandovici, and Ola Listhaug. 2014. 'Islam, religiosity, and immigrant political action in Western Europe', *Social Science Research*, 43: 127-44.

Kadioğlu, Ayşe. 1996. 'The paradox of Turkish nationalism and the construction of official identity', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 32: 177-93.

Kalaycıoğlu, Ersin. 2012. 'Kulturkampfin Turkey: TheConstitutional Referendumof 12 September 2010', *South European Society and Politics*, 17: 1-22.

———. 2021. 'Kulturkampf and voting behaviour in Turkey - A key to Turkish politics?' in Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu (eds.), *Elections and Public Opinion in Turkey* (Routledge: London).

Karacasu, Hande. 2022. "Sessiz İstila." In.

Karasapan, Omer. 2019. "Turkey's Syrian refugees—the welcome fades." In. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute.

Kaufman, Asher. 2006. 'Between Palestine and Lebanon: Seven Shi'i Villages as a Case Study of Boundaries, Identities, and Conflict', *Middle East Journal*, 60: 685-706.

Kavak, Sinem. 2016. 'Syrian refugees in seasonal agricultural work: a case of adverse incorporation in Turkey', *New perspectives on Turkey*, 54: 33-53.

Kaya, Ayhan. 2009. *Islam, Migration and Integration. The Age of Securitization* (Palgrave Macmillan: London).

———. 2017a. 'Istanbul as a space of cultural affinity for Syrian refugees:"Istanbul is safe despite everything!"', *Southeastern Europe*, 41: 333-58.

———. 2017b. 'A tale of two cities: Aleppo and Istanbul', *European Review*, 25: 365-87.

———. 2024. 'The role of Turkey–EU relations and Turkey-to-Europe emigration experience in the treatment of Syrians in Turkey.' in Berna Şafak Zülfikar Savcı, Ludger Pries and M. Murat Erdoğan (eds.), *Forced Migration in Turkey: Refugee Perspectives, Organizational Assistance, and Political Embedding* (Routledge: Abingdon).

Kaya, Ayhan, Ayhan Akkaya, Yasemin Baysan, Çağan Coşkuner, Bihter Dazkır Erdendoğdu, Necip Porsnok, Sinem Malcı Tümer, and Önder Yalçın. 2021. "Syrian Migration and Municipal Experiences in Turkey - Mass Migration and Local Responses: Adana, Gaziantep, Hatay, Mersin, Reyhanlı, Şanlıurfa, Zeytinburnu." In *RESLOG Reslience in Local Governance - Local Governance and Migration Series*. SKL International.

Kaya, Ayhan, Burcu Çimen, Hürrem Betül Levent Erdal, Ayşegül Kılıç, Kübra Kırmacı, Mücahit Sami Küçüktığlı, Ramazan Ferhat Ölkü, Elif Sezen, and Meryem Sezgin. 2021. "Syrian Migration and Municipal Experiences in Turkey - Living Together and Social Cohesion: Kahramanmaraş, Konya, Konak, Mezitli, Seyhan, Şişli." In *RESLOG - Resilience in Local Governance: Local Governance and Migration Series*. SKL International.

Kaya, Ayhan, and Alexander K Nagel. 2020. "Reception Policies, Practices and Humanitarian Responses–Synthesis Report." In *RESPOND Working Papers*.

Kaya, Ayhan, Max-Valentin Robert, and Ayşe Tecmen. 2020. 'Populism in Turkey and France: nativism, multiculturalism and Euroskepticism', *Turkish Studies*, 21: 361-91.

Kaya, Dilek. 2021. 'Gendering the history of cinemagoing in Izmir, Turkey: Middle-class women's experiences of cinema in the 1960s and 1970s', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 00: 1-16.

Kepel, Gilles. 2017. *Terror in France. The Rise of Jihad in the West* (Princeton University Press: Princeton).

Keyder, Çağlar. 2018. 'Imperial, National and Global Istanbul - Three "Istanbul" Moments from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Centuries.' in Susan C. Pearce and E. Fuat Keyman Nora Fisher-Onar (ed.), *Istanbul. Living with Difference in a Global City* (Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, NJ).

Keyman, E Fuat. 2014. 'The AK Party: Dominant party, new Turkey and polarization', *Insight Turkey*, 16: 19.

Kieser, Hans-Lukas. 2000. *Der verpasste Friede: Mission, Ethnie und Staat in den Ostprovinzen der Türkei 1839-1938* (Chronos-Verlag: Zürich).

———. 2020. *Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Architect of Genocide* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ).

Kieserling, André. 2001. 'Das Ende der guten Gesellschaft', *Soziale Systeme*, 7: 177-91.

King, Charles. 2014. *Midnight at the Pera Palace. The Birth of Modern Istanbul* (Norton & Company: New York).

Kirişci, Kemal. 2007. 'Turkey: A Country of Transition from Emigration to Immigration', *Mediterranean Politics*, 12: 91-97.

———. 2020. 'How the EU and Turkey can promote self-reliance for Syrian refugees through agricultural trade', The Brookings Institution, Accessed 13 December 2023. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-the-eu-and-turkey-can-promote-self-reliance-for-syrian-refugees-through-agricultural-trade/.

———. 2023. 'After the earthquake: Refugees should be included in Turkey's reconstruction', Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/after-the-earthquake-refugees-should-be-included-in-turkeys-reconstruction/.

Kirişci, Kemal, and M. Murat Erdoğan. 2020. 'Turkey and COVID-19: Don't forget refugees', Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/turkey-and-covid-19-dont-forget-refugees/.

Kirişci, Kemal, and Friedrich Püttmann. 2023. 'The Global Refugee Forum can markedly improve refugee economic inclusion', The Brookings Institution, Accessed 13 December 2023. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-global-refugee-forum-can-markedly-improve-refugee-economic-inclusion/.

Kloos, Sophie. 2016. 'THE NEO-OTTOMAN TURN IN TURKEY'S REFUGEE RECEPTION DISCOURSE', *Alternatif Politika*, 8: 536-61.

Koca, Burcu Toğral. 2015. 'Deconstructing Turkey's "open door" policy towards refugees from Syria', *Migration Letters*, 12: 209-25.

———. 2016. 'Syrian refugees in Turkey: from "guests" to "enemies"?', *New perspectives on Turkey*, 54: 55-75.

Kolçak, Hakan. 2016. 'Unfinished building: Kurdish language rights during the first AKP ruling period from November 2002 to June 2015', *JEMIE*, 15: 26.

Konda. 2018. "Konda Batromesi - Popülist Tutum, Negatif Kimliklenme ve Komploculuk " In. Istanbul: Konda.

Koopmans, Ruud. 1996. 'Explaining the rise of racist and extreme right violence in Western Europe: Grievances or opportunities?', *European Journal of Political Research*, 30: 185-216.

———. 2020. *Das verfallene Haus des Islam. Die religiösen Ursachen von Unfreiheit, Stagnation und Gewalt* (C.H. Beck: Munich).

Koru, Selim. 2023. "Can Turkey be a melting pot? Erdoğan's migration policy entails a radial vision for the country." In. Ankara.

Kösebalaban, Hasan. 2020. 'Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy Toward Syria: The Return of Securitization', *Middle East Critique*, 29: 335-44.

Kreiser, Klaus, and Christoph K Neumann. 2009. *Kleine Geschichte der Türkei* (Reclam: Stuttgart).

Küçükkendirici, Hasan, and Serap Batı. 2020. 'Konya'da Sağlık Çalışanlarının Mülteci ve Sığınmacılara Bakış Açısının Değerlendirilmesi', *Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Genel Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi*, 2: 28-39.

Kutlu, Önder. 2007. 'Local Government Tradition and Its Cultural, Social, and Political Bases: The Konya Model', *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 16: 255-71.

Kymlicka, Will. 1996. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

Laebens, Melis G., and Aykut Öztürk. 2021. 'Partisanship and Autocratization: Polarization, Power Asymmetry, and Partisan Social Identities in Turkey', *Comparative Political Studies*, 54: 245-79.

Lamont, Michèle. 1992. *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago).

———. 2001. 'Immigration and the salience of racial boundaries among French workers', *French Politics, Culture & Society*, 19: 1-21.

———. 2014. 'Reflections inspired by Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks by Andreas Wimmer', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37: 814-19.

———. 2023. *Seeing Others. How Recognition Works—and How It Can Heal a Divided World* (Atra/One Signal Publishers: New York).

Lamont, Michèle, and Christopher A Bail. 2005. 'Sur les frontières de la recon- naissance: Les catégories internes et externes de l'identité collective', *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* 21: 61-90.

Lamont, Michèle, and Virág Molnár. 2002. 'The study of boundaries in the social sciences', *Annual review of sociology*, 28: 167-95.

Lamont, Michèle, Sabrina Pendergrass, and Mark C Pachucki. 2015. 'Symbolic Boundaries.' in J. Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Elsevier: Amsterdam).

Lamont, Michèle, and Patricia White. 2005. "Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research." In. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Lamprou, Alexandros. 2013. 'Nationalist Mobilization and State-Society Relations: The People's Houses' Campaign for Turkish in Izmir, June-July 1934', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 49: 824-39.

Lazarev, Egor, and Kunaal Sharma. 2017. 'Brother or Burden: An Experiment on Reducing Prejudice Toward Syrian Refugees in Turkey', *Political Science Research and Methods*, 5: 201-19.

Le Monde. 2024. 'Loi « immigration » : des milliers de manifestants à Toulouse demandent le retrait du texte', *Le Monde,* 20 January.

Lentin, Alana. 2005. 'Replacing 'race', historicizing 'culture' in multiculturalism', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 39: 379-96.

———. 2008. 'Europe and the Silence about Race', *European journal of social theory*, 11: 487-503.

———. 2015. 'What does race do?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38: 1401-06.

Leroy, Isabella. 2019. "How Poland and Hungary were put in a minority position on the relocation of refugees (2015-2019) " In *Les Dossiers*. Paris: SciencesPo.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1949. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Beacon Press: Boston, MA).

Lionnet, Françoise. 1995. 'Immigration, Poster Art, and Transgressive Citizenship: France 1968-1988', *SubStance*, 24: 93-108.

Loch, Dietmar. 2014. 'Immigration, segregation and social cohesion: is the 'German model' fraying at the edges?', *Identities*, 21: 675-92.

Maessen, Enno. 2022. *Representing Modern Istanbul. Urban History and International Institutions in Twentieth Century Beyoğlu* (I.B. Tauris: London).

Mansour, Rasha S. 2019. 'Displacement, Identity, and Belonging: Iraqi Communities in Amman', *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 17: 425-40.

Mardin, Şeref. 1973. 'Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?', *Daedalus*, 102: 169-90.

Marfleet, Philip. 2011. 'Understanding 'Sanctuary': Faith and Traditions of Asylum', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 24: 440-55.

Martin, John Levi. 2003. 'What Is Field Theory?', *American journal of sociology*, 109: 1-49.

Massicard, Élise. 2022. *Street-Level Governing - Negotiating the State in Urban Turkey* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA).

Mayda, Anna Maria. 2006. 'Who Is Against Immigration? A Cross-Country Investigation of Individual Attitudes toward Immigrants', *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 88: 510-30.

McCoy, Jennifer, Tahmina Rahman, and Murat Somer. 2018. 'Polarization and the Global Crisis of Democracy: Common Patterns, Dynamics and Pernicious Consequences for Democratic Polities', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 62: 16-42.

McHugo, John. 2014. *Syria. A Recent History* (Saqi Books: London).

McKenan, Bethan. 2021. 'Kurds in 'mountain prison' cower as Turkey fights PKK with drones in Iraq', *The Guardian,* 4 April.

McKinnon, Sara L. 2009. '"Bringing New Hope and New Life": The Rhetoric of Faith-Based Refugee Resettlement Agencies', *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 20: 313-32.

McMeekin, Sean. 2015. *The Ottoman Endgame: War, Revolution, and the Making of the Modern Middle East, 1908-1923* (Penguin: London).

McNevin, Anne. 2006. 'Political Belonging in a Neoliberal Era: The Struggle of the Sans-Papiers', *Citizenship Studies*, 10: 135-51.

Mead, George Herbert. 2003 [1934]. 'The Self.' in Linda Martín Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta (ed.), *Identities* (Blackwell Publishing: Malden, MA).

Medyascope. 2024. 'Ayşe Çavdar yazdı: Gençlik korkusu* ya da Türkiye İran oldu mu?', Accessed 25 February. https://medyascope.tv/2024/02/25/ayse-cavdar-yazdi-genclik-korkusu-ya-da-turkiye-iran-oldu-mu/.

Meer, Nasar. 2012. 'Misrecognizing Muslim consciousness in Europe', *Ethnicities*, 12: 178-96.

Meiritz, Annett. 2015. 'Flüchtlingsgespräch bei Anne Will: Merkels ehrlichste Regierungserklärung', *Der Spiegel,* 8 October.

Merkel, Angela. 2015. 'Besuch der Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel an der Universität Bern'. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7Y-3vOMKQs.

Miaari, Sami, Nabil Khattab, and Ron Johnston. 2019. 'Religion and ethnicity at work: a study of British Muslim women's labour market performance', *Quality & Quantity*, 53: 19-47.

Middle East Eye. 2022. 'Turkey in final stage of talks for up to $10bn funding from Qatar', *Middle East Eye,* 25 November.

———. 2023. 'Turkey: Women's volleyball victory overshadowed by row over LGBTQ+ player'. https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-women-volleyball-victory-overshadowed-lgbtq-row.

Milliyet. 2015. 'Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın meclis konuşmasının tam metni', *Milliyet,* 1 October.

Modood, Tariq. 1994. 'Political Blackness and British Asians', *Sociology*, 28: 859-76.

———. 2005. *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity, and Muslims in Britain* (U of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis).

Modood, Tariq, and John Salt. 2011. *Global Migration, Ethnicity and Britishness* (Palgrave Macmillan: London).

Modood, Tariq, Anna Triandafyllidou, and Ricard Zapata-Barrero. 2006. *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship. A European Approach* (Routledge: London).

Morack, Ellinor. 2017. 'Fear and Loathing in "Gavur" Izmir: Emotions in Early Republican Memories of the Greek Occupation (1919-22)', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 49: 71-89.

Müftüler-Baç, Meltem. 2021. 'Externalization of migration governance, Turkey's migration regime, and the protection of the European Union's external borders', *Turkish Studies*, 23: 290-316.

Mülteci Derneği. 2022. 'Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Sayısı Aralık 2022', Accessed 12 January. https://multeciler.org.tr/turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisi/.

Mushaben, Joyce Marie. 2017. 'Angela Merkel's Leadership in the Refugee Crisis', *Current History*, 116: 95-100.

Muttarak, Raya, and Anthony Heath. 2010. 'Who intermarries in Britain? Explaining ethnic diversity in intermarriage patterns', *The British journal of sociology*, 61: 275-305.

Naeem, Muhammad, Wilson Ozuem, Kerry Howell, and Silvia Ranfagni. 2023. 'A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22: 1-18.

Navaro-Yashin, Yael. 2002. *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ).

Nawyn, Stephanie J. 2006. 'Faith, Ethnicity, and Culture in Refugee Resettlement', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 49: 1509-27.

Nereid, Camilla T. 2011. 'Kemalism on the catwalk: The Turkish hat law of 1925', *Journal of Social History*, 44: 707-28.

Newbury, Catharine. 1998. 'Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda', *Africa Today*, 45: 7-24.

Norris, Pippa, and Ronald F. Inglehart. 2012. 'Muslim Integration into Western Cultures: Between Origins and Destinations', *Political Studies*, 60: 228-51.

O'Toole, Therese, Daniel Nilsson DeHanas, and Tariq Modood. 2012. 'Balancing tolerance, security and Muslim engagement in the United Kingdom: the impact of the 'Prevent' agenda', *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 5: 373-89.

Ocakli, Feryaz. 2017. 'Politics in the Kurdish periphery: clan networks and local party strategies in a comparative perspective', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 53: 571-84.

OED. 2021. "Intersectionality." In *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Öktem, Kerem. 2004. 'Incorporating the time and space of the ethnic 'other': nationalism and space in Southeast Turkey in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries', *Nations and Nationalism*, 10: 559-78.

Ölcüm, Gülseren. 2016. 'Türkei: Das Ehe-Business mit den geflüchteten Frauen', Accessed 29 September. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71Svya00ukU.

Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2018. *Racial Formation in the United States* (Routledge: London).

Oner, Asli Ceylan, Bahar Durmaz-Drinkwater, and Richard J. Grant. 2021. 'Precarity of refugees: the case of Basmane-Izmir, Turkey', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47: 4651-70.

Ongur, Hakan Övünç, and Hüseyin Zengin. 2019. 'Reading Agamben backwards: Syrian refugees, biopolitics and sovereignty in Turkey', *Social Science Information*, 58: 103-20.

Öniş, Ziya. 1997. 'The Political Economy of Islamic Resurgence in Turkey: The Rise of the Welfare Party in Perspective', *Third World Quarterly*, 18: 743-66.

Ozcurumez, Saime, and Hatice Mete. 2021. 'The afraid create the fear: perceptions of refugees by 'gün' groups in Turkey', *Identities*, 28: 1-19.

Özdemir, Renk. 2009. 'Border of Belonging in the 'Exchanged' Generations of Karamanlis.' in Ahmet İçduygu and Kemal Kirişci (ed.), *Land of Diverse Migrations - Challenges of Emigration and Immigration in Turkey* (Istanbul Bilgi University Press: Istanbul).

Özgür-Baklacıoğlu, Nurcan. 2011. 'Asylum policy and practices in Turkey: Constructing the refugee "Other" in Konya ' in Barbara Pusch and Uğur Tekin (eds.), *Migration und Türkei. Neue Bewegungen am Rande der Europäischen Union* (Ergon Verlag: Baden-Baden).

Özkırımlı, Umut. 2000. *Theories of Nationalism* (Palgrave Macmillan: Houndmills).

Öztürk, Lamiha, Zehra Vildan Serin, and Hamdiye Altınoz. 2019. 'Challenges and Obstacles for Syrian Refugee Women in the Turkish Labor Market', *Societies*, 9: 1-10.

Öztürk, Murat, Joost Jongerden, and Andy Hilton. 2014. 'Commodification and the Social Commons: Smallholder Autonomy and Rural–Urban Kinship Communalism in Turkey1', *Argrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 3: 337-67.

Özyürek, Esra. 2006. *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* (Duke University Press: Durham, NC).

———. 2014. *Being German, Becoming Muslim: Race, Religion, and Conversion in the new Europe* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ).

Pace, Michelle, and Doğuş Şimşek. 2019. "The politics of integration. Adjusting to new lives in host societies." In. Brussels: SIRIUS.

Pamuk, Orhan. 2014. *A Strangeness in My Mind* (Faber & Faber: London).

Parisien, Le. 2018. 'Les députés suppriment le mot «race» de la Constitution', *Le Parisien,* 27 June.

Park, Robert E., and Ernest W. Burgess. 1925. *The City. Suggestions for Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment* (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago).

Parla, Taha. 1985. *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp, 1976-1924* (Brill: Leiden).

Parla, Taha, and Andrew Davison. 2004. *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey: Progress or Order?* (Syracuse University Press: Syracuse, NY).

Parsons, Talcott. 1937. *The Structure of Social Action* (Free Press: New York).

Paul, Amanda, and Demir Murat Seyrek. 2020. "Could Turkey's new parties change the political balance?" In. Brussels: European Policy Centre.

Pelek, Deniz. 2022. 'Ethnic residential segregation among seasonal migrant workers: from temporary tents to new rural ghettos in southern Turkey', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 49: 54-77.

PEW. 2018. "Being Christian in Western Europe." In. Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center.

Phalet, Karen, and Anthony Heath. 2010. 'From ethnic boundaries to ethnic penalties: Urban economies and the Turkish second generation', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53: 1824-50.

Phillimore, Jenny, and Lisa Goodson. 2008. 'Making a Place in the Global City: The Relevance of Indicators of Integration', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21: 305-25.

Pier, John. 2019. 'Narrative Theory and Discourse Analysis', *Recherches contemporaines en narratologie*.

Plessner, Helmuth. 2003. 'Grenzen der Gemeinschaft. Eine Kritik des sozialen Radikalismus.' in Günter Dux, Odo Marquard and Elisabeth Ströker (eds.), *Helmuth Plessner. Macht und menschliche Natur* (Suhrkamp: Berlin).

Popović, Alexandre. 1986. *L'islam balkanique: Les musulmans du sud-est européen dans la période post-ottomane* (Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden).

Portes, Alejandro, and Erik Vickstrom. 2011. 'Diversity, Social capital, and Cohesion', *Annual review of sociology*, 37: 461-79.

Posner, Daniel N. 2004. 'The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi', *American Political Science Review*, 98: 529-45.

Purcell, Bridget. 2017. 'The House Unbound: Refiguring Gender and Domestic Boundaries in Urbanizing Southeast Turkey', *CIty & Society*, 29: 14-34.

Putnam, Robert D. 2007. 'E pluribus unum: Diversity and community in the twenty-first century the 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture', *Scandinavian political studies*, 30: 137-74.

Püttmann, Friedrich. 2018. 'Can the Balkan Muslims Help Europe Represent Islam?', *Südosteuropa Mitteilungen*: 110-22.

———. 2020. 'Imagining Islam in Kosovo - The social construction of the Kosovar Muslim subject among European political actors', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 20: 307-25.

———. 2023. 'Keine Mehrheit gegen Erdoğan: Die türkische Opposition hat einen mächtigen Dämpfer bekommen', *Tagesspiegel,* 15 May 2023.

———. 2024. 'Mord an einem jungen Syrer bei Antalya: Was der Tod des Geflüchteten mit Europa zu tun hat', *Tagesspiegel,* 9 July.

Püttmann, Friedrich, and Kemal Kirişci. 2023. 'Why Europe should back the UNDP's "Türkiye Compact" for refugees', LSE. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2024/01/23/why-europe-should-back-the-undps-turkiye-compact-for-refugees/.

Ramadan, Tariq. 1998. *To Be a European Muslim* (The Islamic Foundation: Leicester).

———. 2005. *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

Ramet, Sabrina P. 2005. *Thinking about Yugoslavia: scholarly debates about the Yugoslav breakup and the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Rayes, Diana, Carine Karnouk, Dana Churbaji, Lena Walther, and Malek Bajbouj. 2021. 'Faith-Based Coping Among Arabic-Speaking Refugees Seeking Mental Health Services in Berlin, Germany: An Exploratory Qualitative Study', *Front Psychiatry*, 12.

Robinson, Vaughan. 1998. "Defining and Measuring Successful Refugee Integration." In *ECRE International Conference on Integration of Refugees in Europe*. Antwerp: ECRE.

Roe, Paul. 2004. ' Securitization and Minority Rights: Conditions of Desecuritization', *Security Dialogue*, 35: 279-94.

Rogan, Eugene. 2015. *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East* (Penguin: London).

———. 2017. *The Arabs. A History* (Penguin: London).

Rottmann, Susan, and Ayhan Kaya. 2020. ''We can't integrate in Europe. We will pay a high price if we go there': culture, time and migration aspirations for Syrian refugees in Istanbul', *Journal of Refugee Studies*.

Roy, Olivier. 2010. *Holy Ignorance: When Religion and Culture Part Ways* (Hurst: London).

Roy, Olivier 2013. 'Secularism and Islam: The Theological Predicament', *The International Spectator*, 48: 5-19.

Ruthven, Malise. 2012. *Islam: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

Saatci, Mustafa. 2002. 'Nation-states and ethnic boundaries: modern Turkish identity and Turkish-Kurdish conflict', *Nations and Nationalism* 8: 549-64.

Şahin Mencütek, Zeynep, Dilek Karal, and İmran Altıntop. 2021. 'Governance of Refugee Children Protection in Turkey: Between Vulnerability and Paternalism', *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 19.

Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism* (Penguin: London).

Sampson, Robert J. 2012. *Great American City. Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect* (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago).

Sanders, David, Stephen D Fisher, Anthony Heath, and Maria Sobolewska. 2014. 'The democratic engagement of Britain's ethnic minorities', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37: 120-39.

Saraçoğlu, Cenk, and Danièle Bélanger. 2019. 'Loss and xenophobia in the city: contextualizing anti-Syrian sentiments in Izmir, Turkey', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 53: 363-83.

Sarigil, Zeki. 2010. 'Curbing Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey: an empirical assessment of pro-Islamic and socio- economic approaches', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33: 533-53.

Sarrazin, Thilo. 2010. *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt).

Sasse, Gwendolyn. 2005. 'Securitization or Securing Rights? Exploring the Conceptual Foundations of Policies towards Minorities and Migrants in Europe', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 43: 673-93.

Schinkel, Willem. 2017. *Imagined Societies. A Critique of Immigrant Integration in Western Europe* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

———. 2018. 'Against 'immigrant integration': for an end to neocolonial knowledge production', *Comparative Migration Studies*, 6: 1-17.

Schmid, Fabian. 2015. 'Flüchtlinge und teure Smartphones: Hetze ohne Fakten', *Der Standard,* 9 August.

Schnapper, Dominique. 2007. *Qu'est-ce que l'intégration?* (Gallimard: Paris).

Scuzzarello, Sarah. 2015. 'Policy actors' narrative constructions of migrants' integration in Malmö and Bologna', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38: 57-74.

Scuzzarello, Sarah, and Laura Moroşanu. 2023. 'Integration and intersectionality: boundaries and belonging "from above" and "from below"', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 46: 2991-3013.

Segal, Judah Benzion. 1970. *Edessa: 'The Blessed City'* (Clarendon Press: Oxford).

Şenol, Fatma. 2013. 'Elected Neighbourhood Officers in a Turkish City (Izmir): Gendered Local Participation in Governance', *Urban Studies*, 50: 977-93.

Shryock, Andrew. 2004. 'The New Jordanian Hospitality: House, Host, and Guest in the Culture of Public Display', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 46: 35-62.

Sibley, David. 1995. *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (Burns & Oates: London).

Siebers, Hans. 2017. '"Race" versus "ethnicity"? Critical race essentialism and the exclusion and oppression of migrants in the Netherlands', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40: 369-87.

Simmel, Georg. 2001. 'Soziologie der Geselligkeit.' in Rüdiger Kramme and Angela Rammstedt (eds.), *Georg Simmel. Aufsätze und Abhandlungen, 1909-1918* (Suhrkamp: Berlin).

———. 2006. *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben* (Suhrkamp: Berlin).

Simmons, Erica S., and Nicholas Rush Smith. 2019. 'The Case for Comparative Ethnography', *Comparative Politics*, 51: 341-59.

Şimşek, Doğuş. 2018a. 'Integration Processes of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: 'Class-based Integration'', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 33: 537-54.

———. 2018b. 'Transnational Activities of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Hindering or Supporting Integration', *International Migration*, 57: 268-82.

———. 2021. '"Winners and losers of neoliberalism": the intersection of class and race in the case of Syrian refugees in Turkey', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44: 2816-35.

Şimşek, Zeynep , Nebiye Yentur Doni, Nese Gül Hilali, and Gokhan Yildirimkaya. 2018. 'A community-based survey on Syrian refugee women's health and its predictors in Şanliurfa, Turkey', *Women & Health*, 58: 617-31.

Sjöberg, Erik. 2016. *The Making of the Greek Genocide: Contested Memories of the Ottoman Greek Catastrophe* (Berghahn Books: New York).

Small, Mario Luis. 2009. ''How many cases do I need?' - On science and the logic of case selection in field-based research', *Ethnography*, 10: 5-38.

Snyder, Susanna. 2011. 'Un/settling Angels: Faith-Based Organizations and Asylum-Seeking in the UK', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 24: 565-85.

Somer, Murat. 2019. 'Turkey: The Slippery Slope from Reformist to Revolutionary Polarization and Democratic Breakdown', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 681: 42-61.

Soylu, Ragıp. 2024. 'Is Kemalism back?', Middle East Eye. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/kemalism-back-middle-east-eye-zyxne/.

Soysal, Yasemin Nuhoğlu. 1995. *Limits of Citizenship. Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago).

Soz, Jiwan. 2021. "Against Whom Is Ankara Waging War in Syria: The Kurds or The Kurdish Workers' Party?" In. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie.

Sözcü Gazetesi. 2023. '2023 Milletvekili Seçimi', Accessed 17 December 2023. https://secim.sozcu.com.tr/secim2023mayis14/sanliurfa-secim-sonuclari.

Stead, Victoria. 2017. 'Doing 'social cohesion': Cultural policy and practice in outer metropolitan Melbourne', *Critical Social Policy*, 37: 405-24.

Steinmetz, George. 2007. *The Devil's Handwriting. Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa* (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago).

Stewart, Blake. 2020. 'The Rise of Far-Right Civilizationism', *Critical Sociology*, 46: 1207-20.

Strauss, Claudia, and Naomi Quinn. 1997. *A cognitive theory of cultural meaning* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

SVP. 2023. 'Es kommen zu viele und die falschen Ausländer: Die Schweiz braucht eine neue Asylpolitik'. https://www.svp.ch/aktuell/publikationen/referate/es-kommen-zu-viele-und-die-falschen-auslaender-die-schweiz-braucht-eine-neue-asylpolitik/.

Tausch, Arno. 2019. 'Muslim Integration or Alienation in Non-Muslim-Majority Countries', *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 30: 55-99.

———. 2021. 'Islamist Terrorism, Political Islam and Migration in Western Europe.' in Hussein Solomon (ed.), *Directions in International Terrorism* (Palgrave Macmillan: London).

Taylor, Charles. 1992. *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA).

Temizel, Gamze, and Melis Attar. 2015. 'Faith Tourism Potential of Konya in terms of Christian Sacred Sites', *Proceedings of the 3rd Mediterranean Interdisciplinary Forum on Social Sciences and Humanities, Barcelona, 17-19 May 2015*: 125-46.

Thielemann, Eiko. 2018. 'Why Refugee Burden-Sharing Initiatives Fail: Public Goods, Free-Riding and Symbolic Solidarity in the EU', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56: 63-82.

Thomas, James M. 2010. 'The racial formation of medieval Jews: a challenge to the field', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33: 1737-55.

Thumann, Michael. 2011. *Der Islam-Irrtum* (Die andere Bibliothek: Berlin).

———. 2020. *Der neue Nationalismus* (Die andere Bibliothek: Berlin).

Thym, Daniel. 2023. 'Humanität und Härte', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 2 November, pp. 6.

Tibi, Bassam. 2002. *Europa ohne Identität? Leitkultur oder Wertebeliebigkeit* (Siedler: Munich).

Tobin, Sarah A. 2018. 'Vernacular Politics, Sectarianism, and National Identity among Syrian Refugees in Jordan', *Religions*, 9: 1-13.

Tok, Evren. 2008. 'Anatolian Cities and the New Spirit of Turkish Capitalism', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 7: 81-89.

Tokyay, Menekşe. 2023. 'Refugee card played again in Turkiye candidates' election campaigns', *Arab News,* 4 May 2023.

Tönnies, Ferdinand. 2012 [1887]. *Studien zu gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Springer Berlin).

TRT. 2019. 'Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Birileri diyor ya 'Suriyeliler gitsin', asla biz bunlara eyvallah edemeyiz', *TRT Haber,* 8 November.

Tuğal, Cihan. 2009. *Passive Revolution - Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA).

Turam, Berna. 2013. 'The primacy of space in politics: Bargaining rights, freedom and power in an Istanbul neighborhood', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37: 409-29.

Turkstat. 2022. 'STRONG ECONOMY', Invest in Izmir, Accessed 24 June 2022. https://investinizmir.com/why-izmir/strong-economy/.

UNHCR. 2017. "Regional refugee and resilience plan 2017–2018 in response to the Syria crisis: Turkey." In.

———. 2022. 'Social Cohesion and Harmonization', Accessed 2 August. https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/social-cohesion-and-harmonization.

———. 2024a. "Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Turkey." In.

———. 2024b. 'Resettlement'. https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/ressettlement.

Üstübici, Ayşen. 2019. 'The impact of externalized migration governance on Turkey: technocratic migration governance and the production of differentiated legal status', *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7: 1-18.

———. 2020. ''Street-Level Justifications': Service Providers Mediating Refugee Reception in the Urban Context of Istanbul', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 35: 74-92.

Üstübici, Ayşen, and Ezgi Elçi. 2022. 'Aspirations among young refugees in Turkey: social class, integration and onward migration in forced migration contexts', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 48: 4865-84.

van Bruinessen, Martin. 1992. *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (Zed Books: London).

van Krieken, Robert. 2012. 'Between assimilation and multiculturalism: models of integration in Australia', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 46: 500-17.

van Uden, Judith, and Joost Jongerden. 2021. ''Everyone is a Possibility': Messy Networks of Refugees from Syria in Urfa, Turkey', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 23: 251-68.

Van Veen, Erwin. 2021. "How is Turkey answering its 'Kurdish question'?" In.: OpenDemocracy.

Vertovec, Steven. 1996. 'Multiculturalism, culturalism and public incorporation', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 19: 49-69.

———. 2007. 'Super-diversity and its implications', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30: 1024-54.

Waldman, Simon, and Emre Calışkan. 2017. *The New Turkey and its Discontents* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974. 'The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 16: 387-415.

Watts, Nicole F. 2006. 'Activists in office: Pro-Kurdish contentious politics in Turkey', *Ethnopolitics*, 5: 125-44.

Weber, Max. 1921. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Mohr Siebeck: Tübingen).

Wilson, Erin. 2011. 'Much to be Proud of, Much to be Done: Faith-based Organizations and the Politics of Asylum in Australia', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 24: 548-64.

Wimmer, Andreas. 2008a. 'Elementary strategies of ethnic boundary making', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31: 1025-55.

———. 2008b. 'The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory', *American journal of sociology*, 113: 970-1022.

———. 2009. 'Herder's heritage and the boundary-making approach: Studying ethnicity in immigrant societies', *Sociological theory*, 27: 244-70.

———. 2013. *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

———. 2016. 'Is diversity detrimental? Ethnic fractionalization, public goods provision, and the historical legacies of stateness', *Comparative Political Studies*, 49: 1407-45.

Wimmer, Andreas, and Nina Glick Schiller. 2002. 'Methodological nationalism and beyond: nation-state building, migration and the social sciences', *Global Networks*, 2: 301-34.

Woudwijk, Ingrid. 2022. 'How Turkey's "new economic model" affects exporters in Konya', Turkey Recap, Accessed 28 June 2022. https://turkeyrecap.substack.com/p/how-turkeys-new-economic-model-affects?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email.

Woźniak, Urszula. 2018. 'The Mahalle as Margin of the State: Shifting Sensitivities in Two Neighbourhood Spaces of Istanbul', *Anthropology of the Middle East*, 13: 79-94.

Yanaşmayan, Zeynep. 2016. 'Does education 'trump' nationality? Boundary- drawing practices among highly educated migrants from Turkey', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39: 2041-59.

Yanaşmayan, Zeynep, Ayşen Üstübici, and Zeynep Kasli. 2019. 'Under the shadow of civilizationist populist discourses', *New Diversities*, 21: 37-51.

Yansit, Semra. 2022. 'Diyarbakır: Sosyal dışlanma yok, mülteciler artık daha yerleşik', *Gazete Duvar,* 30 June.

Yavaş, Mustafa. 2019. 'Boundary Blurring as Collective Identity Formation? The Case of the Left-wing Islamists in Turkey.' in, *Bringing Down Divides* (Emerald: Bingley (UK)).

Yavuz, M Hakan. 2006. *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Islam, Democracy, and the AK Parti* (University of Utah Press: Salt Lake City, UT).

———. 2020. *Nostalgia for the Empire: The Politics of Neo-Ottomanism* (Oxford University Press: Oxford).

Yavuz, M. Hakan. 1998. 'A preamble to the Kurdish Question: the politics of Kurdish identity', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 18: 9-18.

Yeğen, Mesut. 2009. '"Prospective-Turks" or "Pseudo-Citizens": Kurds in Turkey', *Middle East Journal*, 63: 597-615.

———. 2021. 'Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey, 1898–2018.' in Cengiz Gunes and Veli Yadırğı Hamit Bozarslan (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Kurds* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Yeğen, Mesut, Uğraş Ulaş Tol, and Mehmet Ali Çalışkan. 2020. 'Ethnicity and Elections in Eastern Turkey: What do the Kurds Want?', *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 7: 446-63.

Yeni Şafak. 2018a. 'İzmir Presidential Election Results - 24 June 2018', Accessed 29 June 2022. https://www.yenisafak.com/en/secim-cumhurbaskanligi-2018/izmir-ili-secim-sonuclari.

———. 2018b. 'Konya Presidential Election Results - 24 June 2018', Yeni Şafak, Accessed 25 July 2022. https://www.yenisafak.com/en/secim-cumhurbaskanligi-2018/konya-ili-secim-sonuclari.

———. 2019. '31 March 2019 Konya Local Election Results', Yeni Şafak, Accessed 25 July 2022. https://www.yenisafak.com/en/yerel-secim-2019/konya-ili-secim-sonuclari.

Yerel Haberler. 2012. 'Kurucu Genel Başkan Erol Yarar, Müsiad'ın Kuruluşunu Anlattı*,* 12 May.

Yıldız, Ayselin, and Elif Uzgören. 2016. 'Limits to temporary protection: non-camp Syrian refugees in İzmir, Turkey', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 16: 195-211.

Yılmaz, Kamil. 2009. 'The Emergence and Rise of a Conservative Elite in Turkey', *Insight Turkey*, 11: 113-36.

Yüksel, Metin. 2021. 'Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism in the Interwar Period.' in Cengiz Gunes and Veli Yadırğı Hamit Bozarslan (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Kurds* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge).

Yurdakul, Gökçe. 2022. "Comments at the Comparative Inequality and Inclusion Seminar on 13 September 2022 at the Weatherhead Center of Harvard University." In. Cambridge, MA.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2011. *The Politics of Belonging - Intersectional Contestations* (Sage: London).

———. 2015. 'Situated Intersectionality and Social Inequality', *Raisons Politiques*, 2: 91-100.

Zaman, Amberin. 2024. 'Turkey's street dogs face mass cullings as Erdogan touts euthanization bill', *Al Monitor,* 18 June.

Zandi-Sayek, Sibel. 2012. *Ottoman Izmir - The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840-1880* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis).

Zürcher, Erik. 2017. *Turkey. A Modern History* (I.B. Tauris: London).