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Results of a survey conducted in 2005 on democracy in Turkey

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A democratic Turkey, by way of example, is a threat to Islamic dictatorships and a source of strength for the transatlantic community that symbolizes democracy and rule of law. Is Turkey ready to play this critical role on the regional stage? This geopolitical challenge currently facing Turkey is analyzed in the following essay, based on recently-conducted research.

[1]After a 15-year ethnic insurgency from 1984 to 1999 that devastated the Southeast of the country, Turkey was enjoying a period of peace until Istanbul was shaken on the 15th and 20th of November, 2003, when bombings carried out by al-Qaeda affiliates in Turkey left 70-odd dead, and many more severely injured. Police records indicated that some of those arrested and interrogated were from the southeastern of Turkey. These events that were all related to the Southeast challenged the social scientists of Turkey to examine whether this region would serve as an impediment, or would support Turkey's quest for modernization and democratization at a time when prospects for EU membership were dawning on the horizon. While we, the researchers, were preparing to study this matter, the resurgence of hostilities, led by the insurgent group, the Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK), resumed in early 2005, and the need to examine this became all the more urgent. Our aim was to test two popularly-held assumptions. First, that the East's traditionalism and religiousness posed a threat to democracy by favoring a religious regime over a secular one. Secondly, that the East is less tolerant of differences and less open to democracy than the rest of the country, particularly given the long-term insurgency and lingering parochialism existing in the East.

Methodology

[2] For our research we conducted surveys of 8,556 people in seven provincial capitals in the east-southeast of Turkey by applying a questionnaire form made up of 39 questions, prepared by Profs. Doğu Ergil and Murat Şeker¹. Specifically, the provinces we chose were: Batman, Bingöl, Diyarbakir, Siirt, Şirnak, Tunceli, and Van. For comparison, we also surveyed 777 people in two western provinces, specifically, the town of Tekirdag in the Çorlu province, located in the Thrace/European region, and Salihli in the province of Manisa, located in the Aegean region². The southeastern provinces were specifically selected because they have been, and still are, centers of protracted ethnic conflict for decades, and have also proven a fertile ground for extremist religious currents and organizations like Turkish Hizbullah - recently, even al-Qaeda, which has found followers and operatives in this area. For the eastern group, Prof. Murat Şeker, the group's survey specialist, obtained sampling data from local administrators, the Census Bureau, and municipalities in order to draw a representative sample of the population. Those towns in the western regions were chosen so as to be roughly demographically (in size and semi-rural character) equal to those surveyed in the East³.

Background

[3] Before examining the survey results, it is useful to highlight the structural and important demographic differences between the two groups so that we may more fully understand the people whose attitudes and opinions we have surveyed. In the East, a state of emergency has brought about a different legal system with many restrictions on civil liberties under the framework of the 'Law of Extraordinary Conditions', and society is generally poorer, more rural, and believed to be more traditional, religious, communal, and ethnically diverse in comparison to other parts of Turkey. In contrast, the group from western Turkey has experienced little ethnic strife, and enjoys a vibrant economy and higher living standards compared to the East. The most salient between the East and West is ethnic differences. 87.9% of the respondents in the western provinces surveyed identify

¹ See Appendix A for the complete interview sheet.

² See Appendix B for a provincial breakdown of those surveyed.

³ See Appendix C for a complete breakdown of all independent variables used in the survey.

themselves as Turks, 3% as Zaza, 3.1% Kurmanch⁴, 0.9% Arab, and 5.1% as 'other.' In the eastern group, Turks are a minority (20.7%), Kurmanch are a majority (44.1%), with Zazas (21.6%) following, along with Arabs (7%), and 5.8% 'other'. The East is also generally poorer than the West. Among our respondents, the percentage of those who earn 1,000 YTL per month is 27.9% in the West, whereas in the East this is only 11.9%. Similarly, those who earn 100-500 YTL per month make up 18.3% of the West and 43.3% of the East. It should also be noted that when examining our survey results we are dealing with an extremely young population in the East. The age group of 18-35 comprises 73.4% of those surveyed in the southeast, and 53.1% in the western provinces.

A Theocracy in Turkey?

[4] One of the greatest worries of 'modern Turkey' is that those living in the East are too religious and traditional to the point that they may prefer a theocratic regime to a democracy. To test this assumption, we looked at the two underlying issues with regards to this worry: first, exactly how religious those in the East are, and how their faith is manifest in other aspects of their lives; and secondly, what opinions and attitudes those in the East have about democracy. As the results of our survey show, citizens of the southeast are indeed religious, in some aspects more so than their compatriots in the West, but still they exercise this in a private rather than public way, and while dissatisfied with democracy as it applied to their own lives, they have not abandoned its principles and ideals.

Democracy and Religion

[5] In the past two decades the failure of secular regimes, western-oriented rulers, and the void of declining socialism have led to a different kind of opposition in predominantly Muslim countries. A new perception of a polity fashioned by religious rules and organization was proposed to substitute secular government where Sharia would replace legislated constitutions. To begin with, when we asked our subjects whether they 'would prefer a democratic regime or a religious form of government', an overwhelming 70.8% of the respondents in the East preferred a democratic regime,

⁴ While both Zaza and Kurmanch groups are accepted as branches of the Kurdish ethnic family, some Zazas consider themselves to be culturally different

while in the West this figure was 91.9%. Interestingly, respondents in the East had a somewhat more cautious view of the practicality of a religious regime when it came to the question of whether elected officials or the clergy would better run the country. Here, 81.6% of those in the East said elected officials would run the country better, while the percentage in the West (91.2%) remained close between these two seemingly identical questions.

[6] We further explored the topic of democracy and religion with the question, 'Would you accept living in Turkey under a religious regime?' Again, a majority in both groups said 'no': 73.7% in the West and 53.7% in the East. That a slim majority in the East said 'no' to this question may at first glance seem cause to worry, but if one looks more closely at the responses as to why they would live under a religious regime, only 22.3% of respondents would do so out of piety, while the rest state economic and political expectations that are not currently satisfied. Those who said 'yes' to living in a religious regime are found in greater proportion among those with no education (70.3%) compared to those with a university degree (31.8%) or even a high school education (43.9%), and from the lower classes - only 28.3% of those with monthly incomes of 1,000 YTLs or higher said 'yes'.

[7] To explore this further and see if Turkish citizens felt public officials should be religious, we asked the question, 'Should a fair and equitable administration be religious?' 34.2% of the respondents from the West, in contrast to 51.9% of the respondents from the East, said 'yes'. Yet the fact that certain people are religious is not cause for alarm if this is exercised privately rather than publicly, and if those who are religious do not see any contradiction between their faith and their form of government. In response to the question of 'whether democracy is compatible with religion', a higher percentage of those in the East (31.3%) compared to those in the West (22%) said 'yes'. This can be interpreted several ways: religion is a threat to democracy, hence it is incompatible; or democracy is a threat to religion, hence they are incompatible. Regardless of whether one takes the more secular or religious reading of the question, the fact of the matter is that the eastern part of Turkey is, and will remain, religious, and although a worrying amount (36.8%) sees democracy and religion as incompatible, 31.3% does not, and the remaining 31.9% believes that they can be compatible 'sometimes'.

Religion, Education, and Terrorism

[8] Our survey results have shown that the majority of Turkish citizens in the East do not favor a religious regime, although the West is more strongly opposed to such an idea. But how, if at all, does religion influence their opinions on other sectors of life? The citizens of eastern Turkey express their nuanced and private concept of religion as it relates to education. To the question, 'Do you believe that religious education in the schools is sufficient?' the western group responded positively by 53.8%, whereas 64.4% of respondents in the East believed it to be insufficient. How does one interpret this? Does this mean that the East is hostile to the very idea of secular education? When answers to this question are broken down by religious denomination, the underlying reason for regional difference becomes apparent. The respondents in the East are more religiously heterogeneous, and sizable Alevi and Shafi minority groups have long complained about the bias of religious education in the school system that only teaches the scripture and values of the Sunni-Hanefi branch of Islam. Indeed, Shafis and the 'other' category is the most displeased (79.5%) with religious education in the schools. Interestingly, and encouragingly, an even higher proportion of those in the East found democracy education in the schools insufficient as they did religious education. Only 19.1% of respondents in the East believed democracy education to be sufficient in the school system, compared to 39.3% in the West. The inhabitants of eastern provinces where democracy is more needed want democracy education in the schools more than they want religious training. They also seem to want it for the sake of cultural pluralism and religious freedom, not merely for the sake of religion as a faith.

[9] A discussion about religion in Turkey's East would not be complete without a discussion of its relation to violence and terrorism. In 1999, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)—the notorious Kurdish rebel organization that had some popular support - was militarily defeated and its leader was arrested and incarcerated. In the desperate years of decline after 1999, the organization encouraged its members to engage in dramatic acts of terrorism. Approximately two dozen suicide bombings took place between these years, most of which were carried out by women. The striking thing about the bombings is that they were not religious in nature; rather, they were the ultimate acts of the members

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To quote a passage, use paragraph (§)

of a secular, secessionist movement to prove it was alive and willing to hurt. Indeed, our survey results support this line of thinking.

[10] When asked whether suicide bombing is an act of terrorism, the majority of respondents in both regions agreed: 78.9% in the West and 66% in the East said 'yes'. Within the East, the less educated, less well-off, and interestingly, younger portion of the population is less likely to condemn suicide bombings, although in all cases the majority of people within these categories equate suicide bombings with terrorism. The East may be less willing to call suicide bombings a form of terrorism than the West, but when it comes to the usefulness of terrorism the two regions are nearly identical. When asked, 'Does terrorism serve the interest of the people?' only 12.2% of the East and 15.8% of the West said 'yes'. Those in the East are also less likely to believe that a religious person can be a terrorist: 58.8% answered that a devout/religious man could not be a terrorist, while in the West this was 40.6%. Granted this is not as categorical a denial as the question about whether terrorism serves the interest of the people, but regardless, a clear majority dissociate religion from these acts of violence. They believe no faith can justify violence against other human beings.

'No' to Dictatorship

[11] After assessing popular opinions on religious regimes, let us now turn to opinions on democracy and politics within Turkey. Our results show that citizens in the Turkish East are by no means uninterested in democracy - in some cases, they are more active than their counterparts in the West - but there is a certain sense of despair about what democracy has wrought, alongside a strongly identifiable sense of hope and faith in the democratic process. 80.6% of the western group and 64.7% of the eastern group voted in the latest national elections, while 78.4% of the respondents in the West and 63.1% in the East claim to regularly participate in national and local elections. These are relatively high levels of participation, especially in comparison to some other western democracies - America's turnout for its 2004 presidential election was 60%, its highest in almost 40 years⁵ - yet the citizens in both groups believe that they do not have significant influence on the government or the management of their country. When asked whether they feel that they are part of

⁵ *Washington Post*, 'Election Turnout in 2004 Was Highest Since 1968', January 15, 2005. Available: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A10492-2005Jan14.html>

or effective in influencing the administration and management of the country, the western group said 'yes' by 44.3%, 'no' by 34.9% and 'sometimes' by 20.8%. These figures are respectively 46.9%, 37.5% and 15.5% for the eastern group. This obvious dissatisfaction with politics and existing political institutions is further reinforced by responses to the question, 'Do you trust the people you vote to office?' 44.5% of respondents in the West, and 60.1% in the East, trust the people they vote to office. The reason why there is more trust in the elected officials in the East may be attributed to the fact that, especially at the municipal level, people vote for their own candidates rather than that of the government or party leadership. Additionally, the majority-Kurdish population may elect those of their own ethnic group at the local level to exert their denied group identity, whereas at the national level this is not the case.

[12] Fundamentally, a democracy is expected to be just and to ensure fairness and equality for its citizens, yet our study shows that both groups are disappointed with the capacity of democracy in Turkey to dispense justice. When asked 'does democracy deliver justice', a plurality of both groups—39.1% in the West and 38.4% in the East—said 'yes', with a worrying 31.4% of respondents in the West and 29.0% in the East saying 'no' (29.5% in the West and 32.5% in the East said 'sometimes'). Unfortunately, people who expect effective management of daily life have come to accept a tolerable level of corruption as compensation for services and public goods. Given this, we asked the question, 'Does democracy always lead to corruption?' to which 74.8% of the western group and 73.4% of the eastern group said 'no'. To test whether the more religious East believed corruption to be endemic to a secular form of government, we asked the question, 'Can a religious regime prevent corruption and injustice?' 73.5% of respondents in the West and 59.0% in the East said 'no'. There is obviously a marked difference between the answers to this question between the two groups, but regardless, the majority of those in the East do not hold a religious regime to be above corruption.

[13] It is important to note that this disconnectedness with the products of democracy has not translated into negative feelings about the idea of democracy. When asked whether they would prefer a qualified dictator over an elected leader to run the country, 66.3% of the western group and 68.9% of the eastern group said 'no'. It seems that although higher numbers participate in elections in western Turkey, the inhabitants of east-southeastern Turkey are slightly less likely to support a dictator to run their daily lives no matter how qualified he or she is. These findings attest to the

maturity of the Turkish citizens. They see flaws in the democratic process but do not want to give up their rights or surrender to a benign dictator. Indeed, one of the arguments for supporting a qualified dictator is that they can deliver practical results rather than mere lofty ideals. Yet despite economic hardships those in the East still value the ideals and principles of democracy. When asked if freedom of thought and expression is as important as bread and jobs, a higher percentage of those in the East (86.8%) said 'yes' than of those in the West (74.1%). Considering that those in the East suffered under many restrictions for decades, it is understandable that they are more sensitive to basic political and civil freedoms than their compatriots in the West.

Is the East Lagging Behind the West in Democracy?

[14] The debate surrounding Turkey's quest to be part of 'contemporary civilization' revolves around more than just whether or not Turkey belongs to Europe. Fundamentally, it is a question about the future of Turkey: will Turkey languish in its current path, or will it move towards a more inclusive, more liberalized democracy in which all regions and all people within Turkey's borders are included. In this section we look at our survey results and assess whether the East will be a burden in the furthering of democracy in Turkey, as it is sometimes assumed to be, or whether the attitudes and opinions of those in the region should give Turkey and those that wish to see it consolidate its democracy a reason to be optimistic.

Quo Vadis Turkey?

[15] To begin with, questions regarding Turkey's place in the world show that respondents in both the East and West, Turks and Kurds alike, unequivocally see Turkey's place in Europe. When asked whether Turkey's interests lay in Europe or Asia, a higher percentage of those in the East (83.3%) responded 'Europe', compared to 72.1% in the West. This is a strong indication that in the most volatile part of the country where violent politics has been associated with secession, the popular will is more toward integration than partition. This should be evident given that when tens of thousands of citizens from the eastern provinces were displaced during security operations in the course of the 1980s and 1990s, only a fraction of them went and settled in the Kurdish region of Iraq,

with a somewhat larger number going to Europe, and the predominant majority staying in Turkey and settling in the Mediterranean littoral or metropolitan cities of Istanbul and Izmir of western Turkey. For a region suffering from economic hardship and political repression, being a part of Europe seems to provide hope for securing economic improvement and expanded human rights. When asked for specific reasons why they prefer Europe, 28.1% of the respondents in East and 14.2% in the West pointed to economic development or increasing wealth as the reason for their preference, while 11.7% in the East and 7.6% in the West gave a political reason, like a more qualified democracy or rule of law.

[16] This preference for Europe is further revealed in the respondents' answers to the question, 'Should Turkey be an EU member or take care of business without membership?' 77.4% of the East and 58.6% of the West are in favor of EU membership. This obvious difference among the regions may be attributed to the fact that the citizens in the East believe in the transformative effect the EU will have in improving their living standards and in further liberalizing the political process that has otherwise been more demanding on them due to political conflicts that has hindered living conditions in the region.

[17] A commonly held belief and worry with regards to EU membership, aside from the East being overly religious (which has already been discussed above), is that the East is known to be more traditional in comparison to the West. One of the questions we asked to examine this was: 'Who would you appeal to first when faced with an injustice?' The respondents in the West appealed to the courts by 67.4%, to the family-clan-tribe trilogy by 17.1%, and only in exceptional circumstances to appointed or elected officials (2.3% provincial governor, 1.5% district governor, and 0.6% mayors). In the eastern provinces, 49.7% of the respondents appealed to the courts, 29.2% to the family-clan-tribe network, 2.5% to the provincial governor, 0.5% to the district governor, and 1% to the mayors. While the difference between those who appeal to the courts to amend an injustice is 17.7% between regions, a somewhat smaller percentage, 12.1%, appeal to a more traditional source like the family, clan or tribe (clan and tribe are non-existent in the social fabric of western Turkey, although such relationships still linger among groups who have migrated from the East). Apparently, the East is more traditional and communal, but not to the degree of denying modern institutions and networks. Both regions are equally skeptical about the functionality of the officialdom in solving their problems.

Gender Issues

[18] One of the most important issues relating to traditionalism and modernity are those regarding gender issues and women's rights. Turkey boasts of having more female academics, physicians and judges than some of the European countries, and to have granted universal women's suffrage before even Switzerland - the country from where Turkey borrowed her civil code - had done so. In traditional societies women have an inferior place in social life, and their status is often overshadowed by the domination of men. In recent years massive migration from the countryside brought more rural and traditional values to the regional towns that constitute the universe of our research. Given this background, one would expect that values concerning the place and status of women in social life would be very traditional, perhaps even to the degree of delaying the democratic process.

[19] To examine this, we asked the question, 'Can traditional values and rules protect the chastity of women?' Both groups are rather realistic in pointing out the futility of traditional values in a society where 'honor crimes' is a cultural pattern to protect a woman's virtue. 56.5% of those in the West and 53.1% of those in the East believe that traditional values cannot protect the chastity of women, and only 23.7% of the western group and 27.9% of the eastern group believe in the power of traditional values and rules. On such a sensitive issue, the citizens of Turkey in both regions seem to have agreed on the merit of the individual's power to decide on their own rather than submitting to traditional ways and customs.

[20] One of the most promising answers came from the question, 'Should men and women be equal?' 87.4% of the respondents in the West and 85.5% in the East responded positively, and of males only, 85.4% in the West and 81.2% in the East agreed. We pressed the issue further: 'Would you vote for a woman in the elections?' Again both groups answered almost identically: 87.4% of the respondents in the West and 85.4% in the East said 'yes', including 82.9% of males in the West and 79.2% in the East. Furthermore, in response to the question, 'Should women be prime ministers, members of parliament and judges?' 88.4% of the respondents in the West and 85.3% in the East said 'yes', with the answer among males being 84.1% (West) and 79.5% (East). These figures attest to a high degree of democratic mentality even in the most parochial part of Turkey where, by and

large, women have been mainly confined to maternal and secondary/supportive roles and kept out of the public sphere.

[21] Issues of gender balance are particularly important regarding education - after all, if progress is to be made, education is integral to this. In order to investigate this serious deep-rooted manly instinct to segregate women from the world of men, we asked the question 'Are you in favor of coeducation or separation of boys and girls?' Only 11.3% of the western group and 25.7% of the eastern group opted for the separation of the boys and girls. Again, the East has evinced its traditionalism relative to the West, but a large majority of almost three-fourths (74.3%) of the population endorses coeducation. We should also note that tens of thousands of girls are not sent to school in the East and kept home for domestic or agrarian work. This seems to be more of an economic necessity than blind gender inequality imposed by cultural bias.

[22] These responses beg for further analysis, as we cannot tell from this question alone whether the 25.7% of the respondents in the southeastern provinces want to bar women from education altogether, or whether they simply prefer single-sex education. When asked, 'Should girls be educated?' more than 93% of both easterners and westerners said 'yes' (93.2% in the West, 93.1% in the East). What this means is that people, regardless of their traditional leanings and values, still want their daughters to be educated, but perhaps do not want them to be associated with the other sex in younger ages. In other words, they are conservative - not particularly politically conservative or conservative to the point that it obfuscates their judgment regarding the equality of women and their education for upward mobility - rather, theirs is a general cultural conservatism that does not pose a real threat to democracy. This type of cultural conservatism is further reinforced by answers given to a follow up question as to why girls should be educated. In the East 19% of the respondents cited economic reasons, 18.9% cultural reasons, and a plurality, 36.5%, cited 'human rights' (24.3% had no answer). In the West, where it is only normal to send girls to school, the respondents were somewhat unsure, with 38.4% saying 'human rights', and 56.5% having no answer. The third highest answer, 'cultural', was only 3.9%.

[23] Answers to two more questions supported our conclusion that the East was equally, if not more so, in tune with modern values with regards to gender issues when compared to the West. To the question, 'Do you believe that women are oppressed (put down) in daily life?' 80% of the

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To quote a passage, use paragraph (§)

eastern group and 68% of the western group said 'yes'. Among male respondents only, 74.9% in the East and 65.4% in the West believed women were oppressed. This is an interesting finding because it is generally believed and observed that women are put down in practically every vestige of life in the East, particularly relative to the West. In a way, this is an admission of a truth by both victims and culprits. However, both regions are more ambivalent when asked whether they believed if gender equality is observed in the society as stipulated in the Civic Code. 58.7% in the West (58.8% of males) and 50% (50.3% of males) in the East believe that gender equality is observed as stipulated in the Civic Code. Is there a guilt conscience at work here when more people believe women are put down while less people, 30% less in the East and 9.3% in the West, say that gender equality is observed as stipulated in the Civic Code ? A follow-up cross-tabulation concerning who answered how, this discrepancy is found to be attributable to men rather than women.

Pluralism and Tolerance

[24] One of the greatest challenges Turkey may face in the future, particularly if it wishes to join the European Union, is tolerance of its religious and ethnic minorities. Debates over these issues reached their peak in recent years as a political party and cadre that distinguished themselves as 'religious' (Islamic) rose to power in Turkey but succeeded in institutionalizing many belated reforms that gradually transformed laws and practices unfavorable to the ethnic and religious minorities of Turkey. Having lost an Empire through secessionist movements, the Republican elite and the political culture they shaped looked upon ethnic and religious expressions of identity with suspicion and disdain. Their reaction varied between assimilation to denial and repression. However, group cultural identities survived, and in the void of sufficient incentives for assimilation, Kurdishness acquired a vestige of opposition, which the Turkish political elite interpreted as 'separatism'. When we asked the respondents how they identify themselves in terms of public identities, 27.7% of the respondents in the West and 18.7% in the East forgo their ethnic belonging and identify themselves as 'citizens of Turkey'. Additionally, 46.2% of the respondents in the West and 12.7% in the East identify themselves as being Turks, while this percentage is 4.5% and 32.5% for Kurds among the two groups, respectively. The third largest group, Muslim, consists of 18.1% of the respondents in the West and 29.3% in the East.

[25] These findings point to two realities. First, while a collective or political identity centered around the concept of 'citizens of Turkey' has come to fruition in the process of nation-building, ethnic identities still weigh heavily. Even amongst the western group where those who identify with the nation are higher, a far greater number think of themselves as ethnic Turks than any other category. The criticism that those in the East who identify themselves as Kurds at the expense of the national interest should apply equally to those in the West who think of themselves as Turks rather than non-ethnic nationalists. Second, there is a third category that still remains adherent to religious communalism and seeks group solidarity within members of their faith. This fact is more obvious in the East, since while people collectively identify as Turks (12.7%) and Kurds (32.5%), Muslim identity (29.3%) looms as heavily as the other identities. This high ratio may be attributed to the slow-moving nation-building process in the east. While Kurdishness was repressed for a considerable length of time and citizenship was based on ethnic qualities, the Kurds in the East may have taken refuge in an Islamic identity that is different from ethnic affiliation, and is a shared identity with the dominant or ruling group of the country.

[26] One of the questions asked to probe the degree of tolerance among citizens in both regions was, 'If you were neighbors with Christians or Jews, would you socialize with them?' Over three-quarters of the people in both regions responded positively: 76.4% in the West and 77.2% in the East. The same trend is observed concerning the issue of traditional attire worn by people or communities that is generally associated with religiosity. When asked whether they think people whose way of dressing is reminiscent of religiosity might engage in terrorism, respondents from the East were less judgmental than those from the West. In the East, 11.8% of the respondents said 'yes' and 15.3% said 'sometimes', while in the West the answers were 28.7% 'yes' and 30.8% 'sometimes'. It is somewhat natural that there is a higher level of suspicion of manifest religiosity in the secular West of the country. After all, people in the East see this as a normal part of daily life and a part of their cultural heritage.

[27] When it comes to political tolerance the East is just as modern as the West. When asked whether they would go over to the rival party headquarters and congratulate them for their electoral victory after their party loses in the elections, 61.3% of those in the West and 62.8% of those in the East said 'yes'. To see almost no difference in the part of the country that is expected to be more radicalized due to decades of political strife and authoritarian social formations like tribalism,

large landlordism and religiosity, is indeed encouraging for the future of democratic development in Turkey. The East is just as democratic and harboring of modern attitudes when it comes to religious and political tolerance as compared to the West.

[28] When asked general questions about tolerance, the respondents in the East exhibited a greater degree of open-mindedness and understanding - traits that are thought to lie at the heart of modernity. A higher percentage, 90.5% in the East compared to 78.9% in the West, claimed that they 'are respectful of the rights and views of others who do not think the way you [they] do'. Even those who may voice and complain of grievances or wrongs done to them by the officialdom claim to be more forgiving than those in the West. When asked if they could forgive a major injustice done to them in the past, 50.9% of the respondents in the East said 'yes' and 27.4% said 'sometimes'. In contrast, in the West 30.1% said 'yes', and 37.1% said 'sometimes'. So while citizens in the East may voice their objections and complains about treatment of them, the majority of them are not likely to hold a grudge. This gives hope to the prospects for reconciliatory politics in Turkey.

Conclusion

[29] Turkey is populated by two societies, one, more modern and secular, the other more traditional and parochial. However, according to the data at hand, even in the regions of Turkey that are the least developed, the most religious and traditional, these people still want democracy. They are disappointed with the results of the existing democratic process but still have faith in its future. They are religious and spiritual but express these in private rather than public life. They believe in gender equality, and are aware that it has not yet been fully achieved. They are culturally conservative, but are tolerant and modern in important ways concerning democracy and civic life. They look towards Europe and hope for progress in the future. More than anything, they are optimistic about their future. 63.6% of the respondents in the East (and 61.9% in the West) believe 'tomorrow will be better than yesterday'. To the fears and anxieties Turkey has about its future, we can only say, with the support of our research: *don't worry, Turkey. Although there is quite a way to go, you are on the right track. Trust yourself and thrust forward, for you have the necessary qualities. All you need is good leadership to guide you through the historical journey to which you have always aspired: 'to belong to contemporary civilization'.*

Appendix A: Questionnaire

[30] Good day, we are conducting a scientific survey on democratic values/attitudes. We have selected you at random. We will not ask your name. We will be happy if you answer our questions:

1. Province of research:

2. District of research:

3. Age:

4. Gender: a - Male () b – Female ()

5. Occupation/profession:

6. Monthly household income:

7. Education:

a –Elementary school () b – Junior High School () c – Senior High School () d - University () e - None ()

8. What is your ethnic belonging?

a - Turk () b - Zaza ()

c- Kurmanch () d - Arab () e - Other.... ()

9. Do you belong to a religious order (*tariqa*) ?

a - Yes () b- No ()

10. How do you identify yourself?

a – Citizen of Turkey () b - Turk ()

c - Kurd () d - Arab () e - Muslim () f- Other

11. What is your political inclination/affiliation?

a -Leftist () b – Rightist ()

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To quote a passage, use paragraph (§)

c - Nationalist () d - Conservative () e – None ()

12. Did you vote in the latest national election?

A –Yes () b–No ()

Will you rather prefer a qualified leader who comes to power forcefully to a mediocre but elected leader?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Does democracy deliver justice?

a - Yes () b - No () c- Sometimes ()

Do you regularly partake in local and national elections?

a - Yes () b –No ()

Do you feel that you are a part of or are effective in influencing the management/administration of the country?

a - Yes () b -No () c- Sometimes ()

Are you respectful of the rights and views of others who do not think the way you do?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Do you trust the people you vote to office (to rule the country)?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Is freedom of thought and expression as important as bread and jobs?

a – Yes () b - No ()

Is this or the other world (heavens) more important for you?

a – This world ()

b – The other world ()

c – Both

Would you go over to the rival party headquarters and congratulate them for their electoral victory if your party loses in the elections?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Should Turkey be a EU member or take care of business without membership?

a – Let us be a member of EU ()

b – Let us take care of business alone ()

Does Turkey's interests lie in Europe or in Asia?

a - Europe () b – Asia ()

Why?

Would you prefer a democratic regime or a religious style government?

a - Democracy () b –Religious regime ()

Is democracy compatible with religion?

a - Yes () b - No () c – Sometimes ()

Would elected officials or the clergy run the country better?

a – Elected () b – Clergy ()

15. Would you accept living in Turkey under a religious regime?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Why?

16. Is suicide bombing an act of terrorism?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Why?

If you were neighbors with a Christians or Jews would you socialize with them?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Does terrorism serve the interest of the people?

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a - Yes () b - No () c- Sometimes ()

When you see people wearing religious attire (indicating their fundamentalist outlook) do you think 'they may engage in terrorism'?

Yes () b - No () c- Sometimes ()

Can a devout (religious) man be a terrorist?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Should restaurants be open during the month of Ramadan (fasting time)?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Should man and women be equal?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Should women be prime ministers, members of parliament and judges?

a - Yes () b -No ()

Would you vote for a woman in the elections?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Should girls be educated?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Are you in favor of coeducation or separation of boys and girls in education?

a – Coeducation () b - Separation ()

Do you believe that democracy education in the schools is sufficient?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Do you believe that religious education in the schools is sufficient?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Is extracurricular (outside the school system) religious education necessary?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Do you believe that gender equality is observed in the society as stipulated in the Civic Law?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Do you believe women are oppressed (put down) in daily life

a - Yes () b - No ()

Who would you appeal to when faced with injustice?

a – Courts ()

b – Family elders, tribal elders/leaders, religious sheikhs (traditional leaders) etc. ()

c – Local administrators like the

Governor () District governor ()

Mayor () None ()

Does democracy always lead to corruption?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Can a religious regime prevent corruption and injustice as well?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Should an fair and equitable administrator be religious?

a - Yes () b - No ()

Can tradition(al values and rules) protect the chastity of women?

a - Yes () b - No ()

c- Sometimes ()

Will tomorrow be better than yesterday?

a - Yes () b - No ()

If need be, can you forgive a major injustice done to you in the past?

a - Yes () b - No () c- Perhaps/sometimes ()

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39. Which Muslim sect do you belong to?

a- Alevi () b- Sunni () c- Other.....

Appendix B: Provincial Breakdown

GROUP	PROVINCE	INTERVIEWED
WEST	TEKİRDAĞ	405
	MANİSA	372
EAST	BATMAN	803
	BİNGÖL	762
	DİYARBAKIR	3960
	SİİRT	969
	ŞIRNAK	519
	TUNCELİ	500
	VAN	1043
TOTAL		9333

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Appendix C: Independent Variables

AGE			
GROUP		Frequency	Percent
WEST	18-22	92	11.8
	23-35	321	41.3
	36-47	247	31.8
	48+	117	15.1
	Total	777	100
EAST	18-22	3061	35.8
	23-35	3218	37.6
	36-47	1509	17.6
	48+	692	8.1
	Total	8480	99.1

GENDER			
GROUP		Frequency	Percent
WEST	female	291	37.5
	male	486	62.5
	Total	777	100
EAST	female	3489	40.8
	male	5067	59.2
	Total	8556	100

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OCCUPATION			
GROUP		Frequency	Percent
WEST	Student	85	10.9
	Gov. Official	153	19.7
	Laborer	64	8.2
	Artisan/Craftsman	370	47.6
	Housewife	80	10.3
	Unemployed	25	3.2
	Total	777	100
EAST	Student	2305	26.9
	Gov. Official	1689	19.7
	Laborer	455	5.3
	Artisan/Craftsman	2158	25.2
	Housewife	1531	17.9
	Unemployed	365	4.3
	No answer	53	0.6
	Total	8556	100

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INCOME			
GROUP		Frequency	Percent
WEST	100-200	2	0.3
	200-300	6	0.8
	300-400	56	7.2
	400-500	78	10
	500-600	99	12.7
	600-1000	186	23.9
	1000+	217	27.9
	No answer	133	17.1
	Total	777	100
EAST	100-200	428	5
	200-300	541	6.3
	300-400	749	8.8
	400-500	908	10.6
	500-600	634	7.4
	600-1000	2243	26.2
	1000+	1016	11.9
	No answer	2037	23.8
	Total	8556	100

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EDUCATION			
GROUP		Frequency	Percent
WEST	Primary School	115	14.8
	Middle School	165	21.2
	High School	273	35.1
	University	221	28.4
	No Education	3	0.4
	Total	777	100
EAST	Primary School	1419	16.6
	Middle School	1034	12.1
	High School	3435	40.1
	University	1951	22.8
	No Education	681	8
	No answer	36	0.4
	Total	8556	100

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ETHNICITY			
GROUP		Frequency	Percent
WEST	Türk	683	87.9
	Zaza	23	3
	Kurmanch	24	3.1
	Arab	7	0.9
	Other	40	5.1
	Total	777	100
EAST	Türk	1768	20.7
	Zaza	1849	21.6
	Kurmanch	3777	44.1
	Arab	599	7
	Other	493	5.8
	No answer	70	0.8
Total	8556	100	

RELIGIOUS ORDER			
GROUP		Frequency	Percent
WEST	Yes	48	6.2
	No	729	93.8
	Total	777	100
EAST	Yes	666	7.8
	No	7890	92.2
	Total	8556	100

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RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION			
GROUP		Frequency	Percent
WEST	Alevi	109	14
	Sünni	524	67.4
	Other	144	18.5
	Total	777	100
EAST	Alevi	683	8
	Sunni	5059	59.1
	Other	1733	20.3
	No answer	5	0.1
	Total	7480	87.4
	N/A	1076	12.6
	TOTAL	8556	100

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IDENTITY			
GROUP		Frequency	Percent
WEST	Citizen of Turkey	215	27.7
	Türk	359	46.2
	Kürt	35	4.5
	Arab	9	1.2
	Muslim	141	18.1
	Other	18	2.3
	Total	777	100
EAST	Citizen of Turkey	1602	18.7
	Türk	1087	12.7
	Kürt	2778	32.5
	Arab	263	3.1
	Muslim	2511	29.3
	Other	257	3
	No answer	58	0.7
	Total	8556	100

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POLITICAL AFFILIATION/INCLINATION			
GROUP		Frequency	Percent
WEST	Left-wing	260	33.5
	Right-wing	138	17.8
	Nationalist	133	17.1
	Conservative	60	7.7
	None	186	23.9
	Total	777	100
EAST	Left-wing	2467	28.8
	Right-wing	565	6.6
	Nationalist	776	9.1
	Conservative	776	9.1
	None	3870	45.2
	No answer	102	1.2
	Total	8556	100