PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS: PHASE II QUALITATIVE INSIGHT FOR TURKEY

PREPARED BY AUDIENCENET FOR TENT

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METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The TENT Tracker is a multi-phased study seeking to understand public opinion on the refugee crisis:

• Phase 1: Multi-territory quantitative research (via an online survey) with representative samples of the population in 11 countries across North America, Europe and Australia. The findings from this phase established key trends in public opinion, and were also used to segment the population based on whether their attitudes were 'overtly positive', 'overtly negative' or 'mixed.'

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Phase 2: In-depth qualitative research (via online communities) to better understand the rationale behind, and to identify the strength of, trends highlighted in the surveys. This phase also tested the effectiveness of different types of call to action messages. Five countries were included: Canada, Germany, France, Sweden, Turkey, with approximately 40 participants in each, split across the three population segments identified in Phase 1 ('overtly positive', 'overtly negative' or 'mixed'). It comprised two rounds of research, in April and June 2016. This report documents the findings from Phase 2 and focuses on the Turkish Online Community.

Segment	Number
Overtly Positive	10
Mixed Views	18
Overtly Negative	8
Total	36

Social and Political Context:

- This research was conducted after the EU-Turkey deal came into effect whereby migrants arriving in Greece would be sent back to Turkey if they do not apply for asylum or their claim is rejected. There were also reports of Turkey sending refugees back to Syria during this period.
- NGOs and international organizations such as the UN and the Council of Europe raised questions about the legality of the deal.
- The situation within Turkey is still very volatile with several attacks taking place during the period, blamed on a range of militant groups.



OVERVIEW

Of all the countries included in this research, Turkey is the closest to the sources of conflict in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, it was perhaps inevitable that Turkish participants were by far the most likely to have had personal experiences of refugees than was the case elsewhere. They had an extensive knowledge of their Syrian neighbors, and were well informed of the Syrian cities and provinces from which they came. Indeed, Syrians seem more likely to already have personal networks in Turkey than elsewhere according to the comments in the online communities.

Proximity brought with it a strong sense of empathy for their neighbors and participants appeared to take great pride in the identification of Turkish people as hospitable and charitable. Still, there was a significant amount of commentary on the economic impact of the refugee crisis in terms of increased rent and reduced wages. As a result, Turkish participants were more likely to indicate that the refugee crisis would affect their voting intentions.

Turkish participants were highly critical of their European Union neighbors, with many referring accusing them of hypocrisy in advocating for human rights and universal freedoms but not taking responsibility for people in desperately vulnerable positions. There were those in the online community who sought to draw a link between perceived EU inaction on the refugee crisis and the manner in which EU member states have dragged their heels on Turkish accession to the EU. Additionally, some were critical of the Turkish government's interference in Syria.

Participants split along the lines of our positive, mixed and negative segments as to whether Syrian refugees represented any more of a threat than had already existed. Additionally, most felt that when it comes to

integration the young, the well education and those from higher socio-economic backgrounds were at a significant advantage. Unique to Turkey, within this activity there emerged a perspective that men found it easier to integrate than women, or that they had more success in doing so.

Many people in Turkey had already volunteered to help refugees, although some identified problems of fake charities set up to profit from the crisis. Beyond volunteerism, they felt there would be a need for an enormous amount of political will to rebuild broken infrastructure and help people set up their lives again.







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ONLINE COMMUNITIES TABLE OF CONTENTS







AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEES

AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEES

This activity sought to understand participants' direct and indirect **experiences with refugees**, other means by which they attained their (varying levels) of **knowledge on the issue**, and **experiences/perceptions of media coverage**.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- Have you ever met a refugee yourself or heard any first hand stories about refugees?
- Have you heard anything in the news/media lately about refugees coming to Turkey?
- Have you noticed any differences in the type of coverage of the refugee crisis depending on the media source?



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KEY THEMES

VARIANCE OF NEWS COVERAGE

Clearly, certain media outlets have been more open and welcoming to refugees while others have followed a more hostile line. In social media, people seem to forget the realities of a refugee's daily life and engage in quite unsympathetic commentary.

"Sabah newspaper is treating the refugees from a more humane angle, while Hurriyet and some of the others are discriminatory. As for TV channels, ATV is more humane while some other channels are more discriminatory

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive

"In the news there are tragic events and political comments, on the social media there are cruel criticisms, and in our daily life we encounter people that are trying to hang onto a new life."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Several participants indicated that the crisis had directly affected their local economy by pushing wages down and rents up. At the same time, there was some acknowledgement of refugees contributing to the economy.

"Rents in the downtown area significantly increased because of the arriving refugees. The middle class of town moved from the downtown areas to the newly built western part."

Male, 35-44, Mixed views

"It has effects. There are so many refugees. It is difficult for them to find work and there is this situation. Some firms and supermarkets employ refugees for low wages. Our own people that need work are being pushed to the background."

Male, 25-34, Mixed views



AREAS OF DISCUSSION

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF MEETING REFUGEES OR HEARING THEIR STORIES

As one of Syria's neighboring countries, it comes as no surprise that Turkish participants were much more likely than others to have had direct experience of refugees. These experiences differed extensively from those in other countries surveyed. For one thing, participants in some towns and cities documented an increase in accommodation costs and a reduction in wages as a result of the refugee crisis as wealthier Syrians move into middle class areas and poorer Syrians take employment with low pay.

In terms of direct contact with refugees, there is an overall sense of empathy at their plight, although some have expressed frustration at the strain on services and overcrowding in their towns.

EXTENT OF NEWS COVERAGE

According to Turkish participants, there was some variation in the coverage given to the refugee crisis by print and broadcast media, which ranged between humane and sympathetic coverage to the more hostile. Social media also showed some variation and some referred to the cruel commentary that pervades certain platforms.

The focus of news coverage also varied considerably and in recent months has shifted to document the plight of those making their way to the EU, as well as those who failed to make it. There were also some comments regarding the rumors that have circulated, such as the perceived advantage given to certain applicants for refugee status in the EU.

THE TURKISH SITUATION

Given Turkey's close proximity to the Syrian conflict, people there have had a very particular experience of the refugee crisis. For one thing, many Syrians appear to already have networks there, enabling them to establish businesses and to build the main elements of a functioning economic position. This contrasts to the more dependent position of refugees elsewhere.

However, the sheer scale of the refugee population will undoubtedly have an effect on demographics and services, and there is a risk that this could cause tensions in certain towns and cities.

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"Here, in Usak, there are many Syrian refugees. We constantly encounter them on high streets and markets. Some of them are better off. I see them at restaurants, cafes and other places that are catering for the upper class. Sometimes I see them at the district marketplace or at leisure time places. They are settled here. There are Syrians working for some of the local stores. There is also one working in the leather industry. He made an investment of 10 million TL and established a factory. In short, the people I see are settled here, they have no plans of going to Europe or back to Syria."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

"I think, while dealing with the refugee crisis, Turkey stepped up in vain and then was left alone." Female, 55-64, Mixed views

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"I think the refugees are people struggling for their lives, I saw it on the news, there are many refugees some of them cannot go to their own country, they are sitting around the streets, living here and there.." Female, 25-34, Mixed views

"What I understand from the news is that saying that one is Christian while applying for refugee status works positively against the discrimination that Europe is performing" Female, 35-44, Mixed views

"Obviously it affected me and my environment as it affected everyone else. We feel insecure. We don't know who they are, what they are going to do. We don't understand their language." Male, 35-44, Overtly negative

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"The refugee crisis did not affect me but the situation of the refugees near out house is sad. There is a grocery store opened by a gentleman coming from Syria near our house. This is a new place. Then, after 2-3 F14:H14 there is a restaurant opened also by refugees. My observation is that they are nice people causing no trouble for others, but sometimes young adults are arguing and acting rude and this is disturbing people."

Female, 18-24, Mixed views

"I saw some news. The news were about the hardships that the refugees who wanted to enter the European countries, but were rejected, been facing." Male, 18-24, Overtly positive

AUDIENCI



SECTION 2 THE TURKISH POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

THE TURKISH POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

OBJECTIVES

This activity gathered views on the political landscape of each country in relation to the refugee crisis. For example, refugee and immigration policies.

It also examined the extent to which government actions on the refugee crisis **informed voter behavior**.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- Did you **vote** in the recent election?
- If you did vote, to what extent, if at all, did refugee and immigration policy have an impact on how you voted?
- How do you feel about the Turkish government's policies concerning refugees?
- What do you think people in other countries think about Turkey's refugee policy?





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KEY THEMES

CITIZENSHIP AND DUTY

HYPOCRISY AMONG EUROPEAN NEIGHBORS

Turkish participants quite regularly invoked a sense of citizenship, duty and obligation with regard to participation in the electoral process. This was quite constant across varying perspectives on the refugee crisis

"Yes I voted at the general elections. If there is another election, I will vote because it is my 'citizenship duty'. The refugee and migrant policies do not affect my vote. I will still vote. I think positively about the refugees and migrants"

Male, 55-64, Mixed views

"Yes I voted. Of course I will vote. This is my legal and national responsibility. The current [refugee] policy will affect my vote. Female, 45-54, Overtly positive There is a palpable sense of frustration with neighboring European Union member states, who advocate for human rights and universal values but are unwilling to take on their responsibility with regard to refugees. Some feel there is an Islamophobic undertone to this position.

"You mentioned people in other countries. Europeans say that they care about people but we see how they are treating the refugees. They want the minimum number of refugees, zero refugees if it is possible. Because Europeans don't actually love people. Since the most significant feature of the refugees is that they are Muslims, there is no mention of love of people, human rights etc. They are afraid that the Muslims are migrating to their countries. I don't care about what they think of our country's policy. Their hypocrisy is revealed anyways."

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive



REFUGEE CRISIS & VOTING INTENTIONS

Turkish participants were more likely to say that their voting preference would be affected by immigration and refugee policy. This was more pronounced among "mixed views" and "overtly negative" participants than their "overtly positive" counterparts. A large proportion of participants invoked a strong sense of responsibility to participate in the voting process. Some indicated that their voting preference might change in the next elections based on the handling of the refugee crisis,

GOVERNMENT POLICY

The discussion opened up a variety of perspectives on Turkish government policy. Some agreed with how the government had handled it, usually from the perspective of the "overtly positive". Others of a similar perspective felt that more could be done to better plan for the influx of people.

There were those of a more mixed disposition who felt that the current position, while admirable, is not realistic or sustainable. Then there were those who were more hostile and wanted refugees to be sent back.

Some were also critical of the Turkish government's interference in the Syrian conflict, which, they argued had exacerbated the crisis.

EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

There was not a great deal of sympathy for or interest in the perspectives of external partners with regards to Turkey's handling of the refugee crisis. Some participants were quite scathing of European neighbors. The narrative was prevalent among positive, mixed and negative participants that Turkey has been isolated in taking responsibility for the situation while others sit by, failing to step up to the plate.

Turkey's difficulties have made it easier for other countries to avoid doing anything meaningful to refugees. As such, participants were not especially bothered by what others thought, as these perspectives would be bound in duplicity and hypocrisy.

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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Whenever the topic of refugees comes up, I think of an old client of mine. He was a very nationalist German and he hated migrants, especially Turks. He did not hesitate to share his views even with me ... Now, the roles have changed ...We were the migrants, now we are the country where the migration is directed at. Although the circumstances are different, we must develop policies for refugees ... My personal opinion is that we would not assimilate the migrants in our country the way that the Europeans did or we would not develop hatred towards them. Although we think that the situation is not sustainable, we cannot deny them help... It is not acceptable that we put our humanity and conscience aside and think only rationally. In summary, we know by experience that Europe is the same old Europe. If Europe's own interests are at stake, both the helpless humans and the famous human rights policy can easily be discarded without hesitation." Female, 25-34, Mixed views

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Yes I voted for AKP, migrants and refugees affect me, the government should help them." Male, 25-34, Mixed views

"The government's policies are right, especially considering the discriminatory attitude of other countries." Male, 18-24, Overtly positive

"I think the policies in our country are deficient. There should be sustainable solutions regarding the future. The international community signed an agreement with Turkey and created a temporary solution. This solution will fail in the long term.

Male, 35-44, Mixed views

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"The government uses this as a show. If the government had not supported the groups in Syria, then the wouldn't have been escalated. Of course this is going to affect my vote."

Male, 55-64, Overtly negative

"If Turkey takes care of the refugees, the other countries will be happy as they won't have to deal with this problem." Male, 55-64, Mixed views

"As far as I know, the refugee crisis policy is the way it should be. I have no knowledge about how to handle such crises. However, the agreement that other countries paid money for the return of refugees confused me. I am following a news site and I get the necessary news." Female, 25-34, Mixed views



SECTION 3 POSITIVELY INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION

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POSITIVELY INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION

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The objective of this exercise was to establish the most effective types of discourse when seeking to positively influence public opinion towards refugees.

Participants were asked to imagine/ recollect their approach to **convincing friends/ family to take a positive stance towards refugees**.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- Can you think of a **friend or family member who might disagree** with you about the refugee crisis?
- How have you/ might you go about trying to change their perspective?
- How have/ would you go about convincing people who are undecided or have no strong opinions?





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KEY THEMES

HEARTS AND MINDS

Like elsewhere, Turkish participants veered towards a combination of rational and intellectual argumentation as well as a gut-level appeal to emotion in order to convince people of their perspectives. The attainment of a sense of empathy is predicated on reaching people's hearts and minds.

"This is the fundamental point of this issue. The emotional dimension. Can you see this drama and tell these people not to come or go away? However, we should look at the issue also rationally. There are financial, social and cultural dimensions to this issue. If somebody does not agree with me, I would only ask this person to think carefully. To look at things from a wider perspective, be empathetic but also think of what's beneficial for the country, and make a balanced analysis."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

EACH TO THEIR OWN PERSPECTIVE

Turkey stood out in the sense that a greater proportion of participants appeared content to leave others to their own devices and were reluctant to actively engage in changing anyone's opinions with regard to refugees. The contention went that everyone has access to the same information and had the capacity to think for themselves.

"Why would I want to change people's opinions? Everyone has their own views. I have a lot of people around me with both positive and negative views." Female, 25-34, Overtly positive

"I don't have to change people's opinions and try to make them think like me. Everybody sees everything and if they can have a different opinion after seeing everything, why would I try to change them? Male, 55-64, Overtly negative



AREAS OF DISCUSSION

TALKING TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Participants showed a diversity of scenarios with regard to how they relate to their families and friends. Some indicated that they had overall the same set of values and perspectives as their peers. Others said that, while they differ in opinion, they would not make any effort to bring others over to their perspectives as they are equally entitled to hold their own opinions.

Another group tended to be critical of those with an opposing opinion. They indicated that such differences were down to varying circumstances, such as the level of exposure each person has to the refugee crisis.

UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER

In general, there appeared to be a low level of interpersonal discourse on the subject of refugees. However, some communicated this as a matter of respecting and understanding the differing perspectives that others may hold.

Indeed, several acknowledged that those with whom they disagree are often informed by a large strain on resources in their local area. However, they felt that better access to information and an appeal to a greater sense of empathy would improve this.

DRIVING THE MESSAGE HOME

Turkey's close proximity to the war in Syria really brings into sharp focus the extent and severity of the refugee crisis. More than others, Turkish citizens have witnessed the desperate attempts of refugees to travel to the European Union by land and sea and the hostility and danger with which they have been greeted.

As such, participants in the online community could readily recognize the difficulties they would have were Turkey to fall into a similar conflict. They can readily envisage their own hypothetical difficulties, thus making an appeal to empathy all the more effective.



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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I would tell the people with neutral opinions about the traumas that the refugees are going to cause social trauma in the near future. Government policies should not be emotional and for showing off, but they have to be rational. What is important is not accepting the refugees but not being tangled in policies that might result in the coming of refugees in the first case. The discrimination against these people. Unemployment and exploitation. Young people that cannot get proper education, which makes them vulnerable. Over -reproduction. Illegal activities, formation of gangs. These are the ones that first come to my mind. What is best for everyone is to ensure security in their own country and sending them back home asap."

Female, 55-64, Mixed views

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"There are a lot of people around me that don't think like me. They think that the refugees should not come to our country (no matter what happens to these people). I did not force myself to change the opinions of these shallow people." Female, 25-34, Mixed views

"No matter how much I try to explain, they are not going to understand. I am tired of trying to show people the truth and explain things. I prefer staying silent as it is always my loss." Male, 18-24, Mixed views

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"I am a Muslim member of a Muslim country. Just like my ancestors reached out and helped people in the past, I think we should do the same and I would feel proud of being the only country that helps"

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

"If they had a different opinion, I would tell them that it could have been us and it would have negative effects on us if we needed help but nobody helped but discriminated against us. If people are in need and nobody helps, they can go down the wrong path." Male, 18-24, Mixed views





SECTION 4 IDENTITY AND OPINION FORMATION



IDENTITY AND OPINION FORMATION

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OBJECTIVES

This activity looked to uncover the influence of identity on opinion formation. It looked at both personal and national identity, and whether these framed participants' views in relation refugees.

A key objective was to ascertain whether people from particular sub-groups or holding certain worldviews are likely to be more **hospitable or hostile** to refugees.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- When thinking about your personal identity, do you talk in terms of **local area, region,** nationality or something else?
- What does being Turkish mean to you?
- What do you think are the best and worst attributes of Turkish society?
 - Why do you think many refugees want to come to Turkey above other developed Western countries?



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KEY THEMES

HIGH LEVEL OF 'CIVIC PATRIOTISM'

While several participants indicated their regional or ethnic background, Turkish nationality appeared to have the greatest potency in terms of self-identification. Several explicitly made the point that this description was civically, and not ethnically defined, although some did also incorporate Islam as an important component of their identity. Such civic patriotism traversed both overtly positive and negative perspectives.

"Being from Turkey means that although someone is from a different ethnic group, living together under the flag of the country defined by law, under the umbrella identity of 'Turkiyeli' (-people of Turkey, from Turkey... meaning, not ethnically Turkish, but a Turkish citizen)."

Male, 65-74, Overtly positive

"I'm from Adana, live at the Mediterranean region. I am a Turkish citizen and I am proud to be a Turk."

Female, 55-64, Mixed views

CHARITY AND HOSPITALITY

Participants in this activity appeared to take great pride in the identification of Turkish people as hospitable and charitable. Some linked this to broad identifiers of the Turkish personality and upbringing while others saw it as a form of religious observance.

"Hospitality, loyalty to homeland, to the flag, religion and honor Male, 25-34, Overtly positive

"The best characteristic of the Turkish society is that they have a strong character and they are brave. Islam, which is the best religion, is being lived in Turkey. Therefore, we help the refugees on the basis of our prophet's words: "the one going to bed with a full stomach while his neighbors are hungry is not one of us". That is why they come to Turkey"

Male, 55-64, Mixed views



AREAS OF DISCUSSION

PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION, LOCALE, REGION & NATIONALITY

Turkish participants showed a strong sense of identification with their nationality. This was, for the most part, defined in terms of citizenship rather than any particular ethnicity or region, and there was a strong sense of pride in Turkey's position in the world as a bridge between Asia and Europe. Religion also emerged as a strong source of identity for some participants. They looked in particular to the components of Islam that encouraged hospitality in the context of the refugee crisis.

ATTITUDE TO TURKEY & TURKISH SOCIETY

Turkish participants offered a substantial amount of praise for their country and society, ranging from geographical attributes to historical positions and the perceived lack of discrimination in the country. Some participants drew on their schooling, indicating that a substantive portion of this perspective has its foundations in the education system.

Overall, there was a sense of pride in Turkish people's hospitable nature, even among some "overtly negative" participants.

WHY DO REFUGEES COME TO TURKEY?

The explanations for refugees coming to Turkey were quite straightforward, with geographical proximity emerging as the foremost. However, some indicated that cultural and religious affinity could also play a role.

Others saw Turkey as a 'bridge' or 'stepping stone' for refugees to make their way to the European Union or to North America. However, the obstructionism of neighboring states rendered this impossible. As such, participants differed as to how long refugees would remain in Turkey. Some assumed they would stay for good while others thought they intended to return once the situation in Syria normalizes.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Turkish people's best characteristic is that they are charitable, their worst characteristic is that they are looking at things too emotionally."

Female, 55-64, Mixed views

"Refugees are coming because they would like to use Turkey as a bridge. They don't really wanna stay in Turkey. They want to go to the European countries through Turkey but those countries reject them and they stay here as their final destination."

Male, 55-64, Mixed views

"I am a Turkish citizen with Kurdish origins. I live in Istanbul.

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive

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"Mediterranean region, Burdur town. I am a Turkish citizen, from the people that migrated to Anatolia from the steppes of Middle Asia."

Male, 55-64, Mixed views

"We are both loyal to our traditions and beliefs and also open to science and technology. It means that we have to embrace the ancient eastern civilizations and do not fall into the mistakes of the day. We should use the advanced civilization of the West as an example for us, but we should not aspire for that. Being from Turkey is a privilege. These are our best characteristics."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

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"Geographical proximity is the most important cause [of refugees coming to Turkey]. Another reason is that Turkey is not discriminatory. May be the final destination for some of them. For some, it is just a stepping stone. But for many, I think this is just a temporary place. I am sure that most of them would like to go back if the problems in their country ended."

Male, 45-54, Mixed views

"Being from Turkey does not only mean being a citizen of this country. It means, becoming the part of a fusion of the east and the west."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views







ATTITUDES TOWARD REFUGEES

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OBJECTIVES

This activity sought to establish the strength (if any) of negative sentiment towards refugees, as well as what drives it (e.g. fears and anxieties). It also looked at whether negative sentiment or prejudice was more common in relation to particular 'types' of refugees.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- To what extent, if at all, do you think refugees arriving to Turkey **pose a security threat**?
- Do you think some groups of refugees are better than others at integrating into Turkish life?





KEY THEMES

DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES ON SECURITY

Across the varying perspectives, respondents acknowledged the potential for a security to emerge from the refugee crisis. However, participants split along positive-negative lines as to whether Syrian refugees represented any more of a threat than had already existed. As the quotes below show, there were even divisions within the "mixed views" category.

"There is definitely a security problem. The people coming and going cannot be properly checked. We see that terrorists also cross the borders. There is also the problem of compatibility with the Turkish society. There are cultural clashes in cities such as Gaziantep and Sanliurfa."

Male, 25-34, Mixed views

"I don't think that they create a security problem. I mean: let's say that 5% of the refugees have ulterior motives, are thieves or potential criminals. The percentage in our country is the same anyway."

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive

YOUTH, SOCIAL CLASS AND EDUCATION

For Turkish respondents, the most advantageously placed when it comes to integration were the young, the well education and those from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Some also referred to gender as a factor.

"Yes some refugees are more successful because the ones with education and skills find employment, learn the language and establish good relations but the young and uneducated ones prefer begging at the traffic lights and cause trouble. The young educated males do better at integration and they can earn a living, while young girls and women fail. Their origins and religion is not all that important, having skills and knowledge is more important. A Syrian refuge fixed our air conditioning, he has a home and job and he was a decent guy." Female, 55-64, Overtly positive

"The ones with economic means are good at integrating. And I think the children can adapt more easily." Male, 35-44, Overtly positive

AUDIENCE

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

SECURITY

Across the different bodies of opinion offered, there was a tendency to show concern at the potential threat to security. This was perhaps inevitable given that Turkey shares a border with Syria and has experienced numerous attacks.

"Overtly negative" participants jumped on this as a means to show hostility to refugees and they extended this to economic insecurity wrought by unemployment too. "Overtly positive" and "mixed views" participants also acknowledged security threats but were far more sanguine, indicating that these threats could equally emanate from within Turkey. Some of the latter took a more hawkish position with regard to those found to have breached security.

INTEGRATION

As in other countries surveyed, Turkish participants assumed that younger people would have more success integrating. Additionally, higher levels of education, more advantageous financial means and higher socio-economic background were also seen as major factors that would aid integration.

Unique to Turkey, within this activity there emerged a perspective that men found it easier to integrate than women, or that they had more success in doing so. Interestingly, women were far more likely to put this point of view forward.

Unsurprisingly , those who learn to speak Turkish fare considerably better than those who do not.

RELIGION AND VALUES

Of the countries surveyed during this phase, Turkey was the only one with a majority Muslim population. This factor emerged during discussions regarding the integration of Syrian refugees. Some saw it as a significant advantage as it embodied a similar set of values. Similarly, the fact that Turkey and Syria are neighbors was seen to help.

However, for "overtly negative" participants shared religion did not change the perception of foreignness they felt towards Syrian refugees.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Of course some of them are more successful, the ones with better economic conditions are in a more advantageous position. At least they don't have to stretch their hands out for money and being told to "f**k off". Education might result in differences as the ones with higher education might learn the language more easily. Once you learn the language, the rest is easier. And I think the younger ones can adapt better, while a 70 year old cannot adapt easily, a 7 year old can."

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive

"I observed that male and middle class refugees can integrate better and some of them even opened their own businesses"

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

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"They don't create only security problems. I think this is a more general problem. In terms of adaption, there can be different factors. For example the ones that see Turkey as a transit country on their way to Europe might experience problems."

Female, 25-34, Overtly positive

"I think they can create security problems if there is a lack of attention. Some people that arrive as refugees are qualified people, they have an occupation back home and they can find employment and adapt to the situation but the others are not his lucky. Because of the latter, these people can be used by provocateurs and cause security problems."

Male, 18-24, Overtly positive

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"We can say that they are successful at integrating, however, economic power and language plays are role here. The ones with earnings can reach good life standards here and can be easy integrated. They have the same religion so religion is not a problem."

Male, 18-24, Mixed views

"They definitely create a problem. It is nice that we have all these people over, but they cause an increase in incidents and also in unemployment. ."

Male, 55-64, Overtly negative

AUDIENCE

SECTION 6 WALKING IN A REFUGEE'S SHOES



WALKING IN A REFUGEE'S SHOES

OBJECTIVES

This activity looked to determine the extent to which participants could **empathize with refugees**, putting their stories into their own words.

Participants were free to write in the first or the third person and to base their story on wherever they felt appropriate.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

Create a story about a refugee's journey to Turkey:

- Where did they come from?
- Why did they come to Turkey?
- How are they finding **life in Turkey**?
- What are their **hopes for the future**?

🎦 amandaku44

Thank you, it's interesting trying to see things from another's perspectivel. If m sure the challenges faced with be unique to each individual. If they poolen like English is would range thei swould be huge challenge too, as residents of our small rown speak nothing but English, and we are not culturally diverse. It would help if the relayees were motivated to learn the language, and be outgoing so they can quickly make friends within the community.

Comment

🗾 dmy7122

After a long journey, 22 year old Mohammad from Syria finally arrived at Vancouver International Airport as refugees on January 5, 2016, their aunt, who came to Canada 8 years ago, was waiting for him.

Mohammat od his stories to hi saura. About 3 years ago when he was till in College in a smill Southern of the ymn innfor comparer sicines. ag yoo of militans gabod hin mind orgage hin to their military came have stored to point of militars and gifte against the governmer armites. During a statel many of militans were killed, but koldy. Mhaammad anywerd and stuccarding storage from the same militars and was hilding an a reflage care governed by the hinterin frace anywer and stuccarding the store of the same store of the same state and the same store of the same store particular divisition of the same store of the same

The first king he noticed on his way out of the Aryort, Vancourer was to beautiful, the roads were clean and wick, the siy was blue, the green grasses were everywhere, and most importantly, the poople seemed happy relaxing and peaceful. To his surprise, it was actually not cold, even warmer than it in home country in this season (but, later or, in noticed that it was raining and raining.). Since he arrived, he had been sleeping on the sofa in the living room of a small Burnaby assurement. His aute on the framilies were verifies to find and baror have how hom as family the chourd that his aver the soft of the living room of a small Burnaby assurement. His aute on the framilies were verifies to find and baror have how how how as family the chourd that his arrived.

KEY THEMES

DIRECT AND STARK REALITY

Clearly, Turkish participants have had far more experience of the harrowing realities of the refugee crisis than their counterparts in the other countries surveyed. The quote below appears to draw heavily on the story of Aylan al-Kurdi.

"One day, the neighbors said that war was about to break out. We got together and thought about what we could do to save our children. Their predictions were correct and civil war broke out and the government and the oppositional groups started to fight. Like other families, the Alyan family also started to be afraid. They sold their assets and put the money aside ... Some things required time. Some of their friends had reached Europe through sea routes and achieved better conditions ... They came to Didim and rented a boat. Hundreds of people got on the boat. A law enforcement officer on the other side fired at the boat and the boat sank. Children and almost everyone drowned. Alyan was spotted by a journalist in the morning and became the headline in the news. Did anything change? The ones that survived are still hungry and miserable, what remains from the dead is their pain."

Female, 55-64, Mixed views

A SITUATION VERY CLOSE TO HOME

Several participants eschewed hypothetical accounts of refugees' experiences, preferring to recount the stories of refugees who had moved into their neighborhoods.

"A family that came from Aleppo is living across us. The father used to own an ironwork workshop in Syria ... In 2014, [their] situation got tenser and the Assad forces started to attack their region more frequently, their economic conditions and living conditions got worse. They could not find certain foods and transportation became problematic. After all this, mum and dad decided to leave the country. In early 2015, they entered Turkey through the border crossing at Kilis Oncupinar. First, they stayed at the Refugee Camp for a while. Meanwhile, with the help of some friends, they managed to get to the Kartal district in Istanbul. The dad got in a place similar to the ironworks one and he is still working there. They are quite happy in Turkey now. Their hopes about the future are that they make ends meet until the situation in their country gets better and then they would like to go back, re-open the workshop and continue their lives. ."

Male, 65-74, Overtly positive

AUDIENCE

WHERE THEY CAME FROM AND WHY THEY CAME

As might be expected, almost all of the stories recounted here pertained specifically to Syrian refugees. Turkish respondents tended to be more precise with regard to geographical location, indicating the Syrian province or city of origin of their characters and recounting in greater detail the journey they had made through Turkey. These narratives were a good deal starker than in other countries and were much better informed with regard to the dates at which conflict escalated in particular parts of Syria.

LIFE IN TURKEY

The narratives contained in this activity comprised a mix of the difficulties faced during the transition from a normal life in Syria to camps and the search for accommodation in Turkey, as well as the everyday practicalities of supporting a family in such uncertain surroundings.

Evidently, from personal experience, Turkish participants were well aware the lengths Syrians had to go through to find work that is often below their level of qualification just to sustain themselves. Added to this, several recounted the difficulty in accessing education for their children.

HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

Participants varied with regard to their assumptions of the hopes and aspirations of Syrian refugees. Most narratives seemed of the opinion that Syrians would like to return home in an ideal world.

However, several saw this as unrealistic and their stories were predicated on the assumption that those who realize this will instead try to build a sustainable life and living in Turkey.

For others, Turkey served merely as a stepping stone for a move on to the EU and North America. Stories in this category tended to have more harrowing accounts of the journeys taken to Greece and Italy, and the dangers this entailed.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"A family from Syria with 3 kids. We ran away from war and sought refuge in Turkey's Gaziantep town. We left all our belongings behind and have financial difficulties. Dad was a dentist and earned good money back home but he is working here at the packaging department of a slipper factory. The only dream is that war will end we can go back home and everything will be the same as it was. This family could not find a house when they first arrived, so they started living with their acquaintances and they were 15-16 people in one house. It went like this until dad found a job. But he could not do his occupation so he started working in various jobs at the factory. His only hope is to raise his children back home, under peaceful conditions"

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

"

They got here from Syria 3 years ago. Their only chance was to run and the only thing they wanted was to stay alive. The closest place where they could go in order to survive was Turkey. They thought that they were going to stay here for a while and go back. But it did not happen that way and they could not go back. They wanted to get to Europe and establish a new life but they got rejected by Europe and came back. They tried to find illegal ways but some of their family members died and they still had to come back. They had to remain in Turkey. Their life in Turkey was normal, at least they were alive. They started living in Turkey and got jobs. The only thing they wanted now was to stay alive, be happy and to forget what happened. But they still had the hope of being able to go back one day."

Male, 18-24, Overtly positive

"

It should not be a good situation for them. They are people that had to leave the country because of incidents that took place in a country ruled by dictatorship for many years. They so lucky that they have Turkey close by, a country which opens its arms to the ones in need at times even when their friends do not want them. When they arrived in Turkey, they found a life so full of freedom that they have never seen. They got to know a nation that had mercy and helped them when they were in need. Even though some of the would like to go back, some of them are dreaming of staying here."

Male, 55-64, Overtly negative

AUDIENCE



SECTION 7 TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION
YOUR APPROACH TO TURKEY-EU RELATIONS

Turkey's relationship with the

European Union has come in for a considerable amount of commentary in recent months. Leaders broker a deal on the refugee crisis, while the agenda for Turkey's EU accession bid remains an open source of uncertainty and sometimes rancor. This activity sought to see where Turkish online community participants stand on this.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

The activity here is to **draft an open letter** to the people of Europe.

Some things you *might* want to mention include:

- Turkey's relationship with the European Union
- Refugees
- EU membership



AUDIENCE NET



KEY THEMES

HYPOCRISY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Several participants hold the perspective that the European Union is well adept at talking about its record in human rights and universal freedoms. However, when defending these rights comes at the price of self-sacrifice, such values are nowhere to be found. As such, participants like the one below saw fit to take the EU to task on this.

"The refugee problem is a question whether you are sincere about the the human rights etc that you frequently talk about, or not? If you truly are a civilization that values people, you open your arms to everyone regardless of their race, nationality, religion and denomination. Or you can say that we have been fooling the world for so long. It is like, people are important only as long as they are our people, the others don't matter. Yes, I wanna see what you are going to do about this test. I hope you make the right decision in the name of humanity. I do not care about the EU membership issues, I don't have much to say about this **Female, 35-44, Overtly positive**

DISCRIMINATION IN EU MEMBERSHIP NEGOTIATIONS

There were those in the online community who sought to draw a link between perceived EU inaction on the refugee crisis and the manner in which EU member states have dragged their heels on Turkish accession to the EU. The line of argument goes that both are linked to discrimination on the basis of religion.

"Our relations with the EU are not going at a pace that we desire. I guess that the opinions of EU countries towards us are very different, they are discriminating against us. Is the reason for us being Turks and Muslims and your belief is Christianity? However, people's beliefs are related to their own selves. We are hosting 3 million refugees but you could not manage to host 100-200,000 refugees. Even if their beliefs are different, the most important thing is that they are humans. You have been performing the same discrimination against Turkey and you have been making us wait for the past 50 years for EU membership. You don't really want us to be an EU member, you just have been playing a game for years. I know that you'll want to accept us when the EU is falling apart, but then, it will be too late and we will not join you."

Male, 55-64, Overtly negative

TENT.ORG

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

FRUSTRATED RELATIONS

While some express the opinion that relations are generally good between the European Union and Turkey, more often than not, participants expressed a deep sense of frustration with the status quo.

There is a view that Turkey has been strung along in the EU accession process and that EU member states have acted in poor faith in their dealings with Turkey.

CONTEXT OF REFUGEE CRISIS

Participants' sense of frustration became particularly pointed when it came to the handling of the refugee crisis.

While Turkey has made efforts to deal with a huge logistical challenge amid increasingly strained resources, EU member states drag their heels and fail to coordinate effectively to alleviate the situation of refugees or indeed the Turkish authorities and voluntary organizations.



"

"The Turkey EU relations are sometimes warm and sometimes cold. There are wars and the refugees cannot find a place to stay. The government should find a solution, these people are gonna starve. We are living in corruption and terror, there might be a war any time, we do not know."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

"We as Turkey and the people of Turkey, did our best regarding the refugee problem. Please, you also be sincere about this and act the way you are supposed to act"

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive

"

"As you know, the global events resulted in the loss of many lives. The main reason of these events is terrorism, but also, the faulty policies of states had important results. As a result of these events, many people died and many had to leave their country and migrate to other places under difficult conditions. I hope that all countries and nations of the world will perform their responsibilities so that these hard days will be over."

Male, 18-24, Overtly positive

"Don't you let us become a EU member because we are Muslims?"

Male, 55-64, Mixed views

"

"Because of your careless policy, this situation escalated and you did not care at all. You only realized when people arrived at your door, if you had cared about this earlier, things wouldn't come to this state, you have a lot of faults regarding this"

Male, 55-64, Overtly negative

"Most societies have problems, unemployment, terror, hunger etc. We are aware that you pay attention to the increasing refugee matter at least a little, you see Turkey's situation regarding the solutions, mercy is not only national but is related to conscience. I don't know much about Turkey's EU relations, I am not a politician, I am just a citizen of Turkey, I am a human being like you and I hope things will get better, love."

Female, 25-34, Overtly positive

AUDIENCE NE

"Dear People of Europe,

We are terribly disappointed about you nowadays. You are at the heart of civilization and you see themselves as the representatives of human rights. However, the way you treat people running away from war and cruelty is inhumane. In fact, this is no surprise. The memory of Bosnians massacred in the middle of Europe is still in our minds. The Netherlands that take children of Turkish families away, decided to watch the Srebrenitse massacre from the front row, although they have been present in the area as part of the peace forces. Your mentality is such that you only favor our people and do not value others.

Your famous Court of Human Rights is just a shop window! I want to ask you: what would you do if the refugees that had to wait at your borders for months and the ones that entered the EU but left to starve and be miserable filed complaints about at your won human rights court? Would you still secure your own benefit as you always do? Or, would you conduct a just case, and sentence yourself?

The concept of Europe is not valid in my mentality anymore and I know that a lot of Turkish people think the same way. So is the EU. We have been making a lot of changes sometimes unnecessarily for becoming a member of the union. Finally, we just got fooled like a young maiden that has been deflowered with the promise of marriage. Nobody is having this dream anymore. Your insincerity, intolerance and arrogance is not suitable for us at all. Why don't you just leave us alone? If the refugees prefer you and would like to get to your land, you should feel proud. But if you don't want that, you should deal with it yourself.

In short, people of Europe, you are not so Dear to us anymore. I'm sorry!"

Female, 25-34, Mixed views



SECTION 8 INCREASING THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEER EFFORTS



INCREASING THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

This exercise looked specifically at practical ways of increasing volunteering and donations to charitable causes linked to refugees.

It asked participants to come up with ways to overcome commonly cited **obstacles** (e.g. time and money), as well as any others they could identify.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

Several refugee organizations are finding it difficult to raise money and recruit volunteers in Turkey. People say they don't have enough money, time or knowledge about how they can help.

 How do you think these organizations could overcome these obstacles and increase donations and volunteer numbers?





TENT

KEY THEMES

BEYOND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Perhaps due to the experience of Turkish people at the coalface of the refugee crisis, there is an awareness that assistance of refugees must go beyond individual direct donations and volunteerism. The quote below indicates a preference for a medium- to long-term strategy that would direct the energy of volunteers to fostering political will to prepare for the aftermath of the conflict.

"I think there is enough help. The help that is going to be needed from now on is not financial but political. Big scale campaigns should be initiated both on audio-visual and social media and an international public opinion pressure should be created for ending this war, this kind of effort will help more. The biggest help is needed during the rehabilitation period after the war ended. There is an immense financial need for restructuring the infrastructure and superstructure of Syria after the war. With the help of the charities, the big countries can donate and rehabilitate the country quickly so that the refugees can go back home."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

SCANDALS IN THE CHARITY SECTOR

During the discussions, it emerged that there had been incidences where unscrupulous people had established scam charities and made fraudulent use of donations from well-meaning people. This could pose a problem to some of the efforts underway and there is a responsibility for local government entities to give their support to veritable charitable efforts to provide them with credibility among donors.

"There might be an effective media campaign. They can reach people through the social media. There can be announcements from municipalities and local governances. If people believe that there is no scam in the help campaign, then they might help."*

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

Note from the translator: "Turkey experience numerous scandals carried out through charity campaigns, money laundering, using the money for personal stuff etc."

AUDIENCE

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

BUILDING TRUST

The charity sector has some work to do in rebuilding trust among people in Turkey. Given that several organizations have taken advantage of the good intentions of volunteers and donors alike, it will be necessary to mount an effective publicity campaign to differentiate reputable charitable organizations from the charlatans and swindlers referenced in the discussions here

PRAGMATIC APPROACH

Turkish participants tended to be very pragmatic in their recommendations for the voluntary sector, perhaps informed by their close proximity to the refugee crisis.

Given the strain put on hospitals and medical resources, it was perhaps unsurprising to see participants recommending blood drives and similar activities. Added to this, some showed significant foresight in advocating longerterm political approaches.

Discussants were also more likely than in other countries to leverage the use of religious organizations, as well as the stipulation of Islam that one must give to charity.

EXPECTATIONS FROM ABROAD

As in earlier sections, participants referenced the disproportionate burden that had been placed on Turkey relative to other countries, such as EU member states. As such, some did turn this question on its head and say that there was an onus on other countries to pay up and to assist Turkey in its dealings with the refugee crisis.

"First of all, there are many swindlers on the internet and also in real life. Therefore, people cannot help even though they see and experience what's going on. I am sure that many people would like to help. But they cannot help because of the reasons that you mentioned. I don't know how to increase. Maybe the social media can be utilized effectively. Maybe the ads and info on tv and newspapers can be helpful. People could be informed that if they cannot help financially, they can still help in other ways. Because many people understand only financial help, when you mention helping."

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive

"

"We know that the charities are collecting enough money and things and distributing those. Imagine a country with the unemployment rate of 10%, but still feeding 3 million refugees and spent 10 billion US dollars so far, what more can our people do? I think you should ask these questions to the European countries. The Turks spend 10 billion dollars and embraced 3 million refugees, shouldn't you Europeans, people of civilized countries be doing at least something from now on? This is the question we would like you to ask"

Male, 45-54, Mixed views

"

"There should be financial support for people who want to help. Volunteers should be found. People should be informed that they can perform their Islamic duties (donating 1% of your income every year is one of the requirements of Islam-) by donating to the refugees and charity organizations should be founded. For examples, committees of 20 people can be formed in every town for these campaigns."

Male, 55-64, Mixed views

"There should be fundraising. Donating blood and maybe an organization can be established to feed people and problems can be solved this way."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

AUDIENC

SYRIAN AND IRAQI CULTURE



SYRIAN AND IRAQI CULTURE

OBJECTIVES

This exercise sought to make use of Turkey's unique position, adjacent to Syria and Iraq, both of which have been prominent countries of origin for refugees.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

Most people in Europe have few **cultural references for Syria or Iraq.** All they tend to see on the news is images of war, terrorism and refugees. As these countries **border Turkey**, maybe you can help enlighten people in Europe about Syrian and Iraqi culture? Feel free to talk about any parts of Syrian and Iraqi culture but you might want to discuss the following.

What kind of food do you associate with Syria and Iraq?

Can you recommend any Syrian or Iraqi films, music or literature?

What comes to mind when you think about **Syrian or Iraqi history**?





KEY THEMES

ANCIENT AND RECENT INFLUENCES

Participants went into considerable detail to describe their neighbors' cultural background, historical influences and recent factors that have contributed to their present situation. Even "overtly negative" respondents showed a considerable degree of sympathy.

"Our neighbors Syria and Iraq lived by the Mesopotamian culture, Islam religion and the Arabic culture. There is Islamic culture, Arabic culture, Kurdish culture, these are in architecture, music, clothing, cuisine and lifestyle. The cuisine is kebab, lahmacun, meat dishes, pastries. They have a free dressing style but wear local Arabic clothing and kundura. I can advise Dr Necdet Yasar Bayatli's book on Iraq Turkmen folk culture. When someone says Syria, Damascus immediately comes to my mind, and for Iraq, Baghdad comes to my mind immediately. The Hummus dish that we also are making originates from here. The long lasting Iran-Iraq war deteriorated their life conditions. Syria is so close to our South Eastern settlements that we can see the lights. Because at many points the border-line is crossing some mountains, there were no barbed wires etc and they used donkeys for smuggling.)."

IRAQ AND SYRIA SEEN DIFFERENTLY

The perspective offered by participants differs for each country. Evidently, Syria is seen as more liberal than Iraq, at least in terms of dress. This was the case prior to the war, in any case.

"Iraq is a country shaped by the USA in the recent past. Syria is going to be the same I think. The Iraqi food I know is Biryani Pilav and they have meals prepared by camel meat. The official language of both countries is Arabic. It is my observation that Syria does not have an oppressive attitude regarding dressing, as Iraq does. Syria has a single party semi-presidential system at the moment but Iraq is a republic. Syria has hummus and the taste is similar to Turkish cuisine. Iraq is very advanced about weaponry. I watched the Iraq movie: 'Turtles Can Also Fly', a movie about the life of the Kurdish population there, it is a nice movie

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

Male, 55-64, Overtly negative

AUDIENCE

AREAS OF DISCUSSION

MIXED INFLUENCES

Turkish participants saw a large number of similarities in Syria and Iraq. Looking to ancient history, they described both as Mesopotamian civilisations. Culturally, they share an Arab background, while there are also other shared ethnic groups such as those of Kurdish background. Added to this, Syrians and Iraqis have a shared dominant religion in Islam.

Several participants referenced the shared history between Iraq, Syria and Turkey itself. Most notably, they referred to the centuries of Ottoman rule. This has had a long term influence on many aspects of their relations as well as preferred tastes.

In recent times, both countries had been deeply affected by their negative experience of war. This has manifested itself in a pronounced US influence over Iraq, while Syria is still going through a chaotic and traumatic experience.

SHARED HISTORY & CULTURE

Participants referred to numerous shared cultural influences ranging from music and literature to film. The most pronounced area of crossover came in reference to their respective cuisines and participants listed a multiplicity of examples from biryani pilav and lamacun to şam tatlısı şam fıstığı künefe içli köfte.



"Because they were under Ottoman rule for many years and because they are our neighbors, there might are some similar details. For example, there might be similarities in clothing and food. There are similar musical tunes."

Male, 35-44, Mixed views

"We have the same religion. Our languages are different. I don't think anyone knows more about Syrian history and literature than us. I don't know much about movies and music. Every people like the same tastes. Except from pork. They eat dishes acceptable in Islam. This is all I can think of"

Female, 35-44, Overtly negative

"

"Syria and Iraq are sister countries, they get along well as long as there is no war. Films: Kurtlar vadisi, Iraq operation"

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

"Ottomans ruled Syria and Iraq for 600 years. Therefore, our cuisine and musical culture are more or less the same. Our history and literature is different. Fuzuli and Nesimi are the authors that we have in common in our literature.."

Male, 18-24, Overtly positive

"

"I think these cultures are similar to Arabic and Islamic cultures. They might be similar to the culture of South Eastern Turkey. The cuisine of this region is similar to the Syrian and Arabic cuisines, for example kebab and pastries. I have no idea and interest regarding the music, literature etc of these places. These countries have ancient histories of encompassing many civilisaitons, yet full of war."

Female, 45-54, Overtly positive

"When I read the question, I realized that I don't know our neighbours that much. I think I should do some research on that."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

AUDIENC

