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**İRAN’S IMAGE IN TURKEY: THE PERCEPTIONS
OF THE TURKISH ELITES AND THE GENERAL
PUBLIC TOWARDS IRAN
TÜRKİYE’DE İRAN İMAJİ: GENEL TÜRK
KAMUOYUNUN VE SEÇKİNLERİN İRAN ALGISI**

**Mahdieh AGHAZADEH KHOEI
2520160230**

**TEZ DANIŞMANI
Prof. Dr. Yunus KAYA**

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ÖZ
TÜRKİYE’DE İRAN İMAJİ: GENEL TÜRK KAMUOYUNUN VE
SEÇKİNLERİN İRAN ALGISI
MAHDİEH AGHAZADEH KHOEI

İran ve Türkiye, Orta Doğu'nun iki önemli devleti olduğu gibi bu devletlerin ilişkileri de bölgedeki dengeleri belirleyen önemli faktörler arasındadır. Her ne kadar Türkiye ve İran Ortadoğu’da meydana gelen olaylarda birçok kez karşıt taraflarda olmuşlarsa da sıklıkla iş birliği arayışına da girmişlerdir. İki ülke arasındaki ikili ilişkilerin önemli siyasi ve ekonomik sonuçları olmuş ve birçok araştırmaya esas teşkil etmiştir. Üzerinde nispeten az durulan bir konu ise devletlerarası ilişkilerin ötesinde her iki ülkenin kamuoylarında diğlerinin nasıl algılandığı ve bu bakış açılarının sabit mi yoksa gelişmelere göre değişken mi olduğudur. Tezin amacı Türk kamuoyunun ve elit tabakanın İran ve İranlılara yönelik algısını analiz etmektir. Araştırma sorularını ise şu hususlar oluşturmaktadır: Türk kamuoyunun ve seçkin kesimin (elit tabaka) İran ve İranlılara yönelik algıları, algılarının nasıl farklılaştığı ve Türkiye’deki İran imajının/algısının belirleyici faktörleri. Bu çalışmada nicel ve nitel yöntem birlikte kullanılmış ve nicel analizlerde Ordinal (sıralı) Regresyon modellerinden faydalanmıştır. Analizlere kaynaklık eden veriler anketler ve yüz yüze görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları, Türk kamuoyunun İran ve İranlılara olan algılarının elit tabakaya göre daha pozitif olmasına rağmen, her iki kesimin de genel olarak negatif algıları olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ülke İmajı, Elit Algısı, İran, İmaj, Toplumsal Algı, Orta Doğu, Türkiye, Türk-İran ilişkileri.

ABSTRACT

IRAN'S IMAGE IN TURKEY: THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE TURKISH ELITES AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC TOWARDS IRAN

MAHDIEH AGHAZADEH KHOEI

Iran and Turkey are two key actors in the Middle East and their relation has a crucial role in determining the future of the region. Although Turkey and Iran have been increasingly at odds on a number of issues in the Middle East, recently they have started to look for ways to cooperate. The aim of this thesis is to analyze the Turkish general public's and the elite's perception towards Iran and Iranians. The research questions are: How the Turkish general public and the elite perceive Iran and Iranian people, how their perceptions differ and what determines the perception of Iran in Turkey. This study utilizes a mixed method approach - both quantitative and qualitative methods - using the Ordered Logistic Regression Models and interview data. All the data have been gathered through questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The results suggest that both Turkish elites and the general public have a generally unfavorable view toward Iran and Iranians, with the general public being slightly more positive than elites.

Keywords: Country Image, Elite Perception, Iran, Image, Public Perception, The Middle East, Turkey, Turkish-Iranian relations.

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Öncelikle, tez danışmanım, İstanbul Üniversitesi Öğretim Üyesi, değerli hocam, Prof. Dr. Yunus Kaya Bey'e, bana bu konuda araştırma fırsatı verdiğinden ve bu süreçte bana yol gösterdiğinden dolayı içten şükranlarımı belirtmek isterim. Hocamın, tolerans, zengin bilgisi, dinamizm, vizyon, içtenliği ve motivasyonu ile benim ilham kaynağım olmuştur. Kendisi, araştırmamın ilerili uygulama metotlarını bana öğretmiştir ve bu araştırmamın şeffaf hali ile sunmamı sağlamıştır. Hocam, değerli zamanını bana ve bu araştırmaya çokça ayırmıştır. Onun yol göstermesi ile bu araştırmayı yapmak benim için onur verici ve ayrıcalıklıdır. Sağladığı her imkân için sonsuz minnettarım. Prof. Dr. Yunus Kaya hocama, dostluğu, kurduğu empati ve sarf ettiği sabır için ayrıca teşekkür ederim.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a product of a research journey that, from the beginning, aimed at understanding the perceptions of the Turkish elites and the general public towards Iran, based on primary and secondary data. The secondary data was obtained from the PEW Research Center's Global Attitudes and Trends study in which the general view of the Turkish people toward the Iranian state and its policies has been asked for the period from 2002 to 2017. The primary data has been collected by conducting a face to face survey of 1271 respondents in 12 different Turkish cities out of whom 121 persons fit in the defined scale of Turkish "elite." In order to understand the Turkish general public and elite perception toward Iran and Iranians and to assess the determinants of Iran's image in Turkey, both primary and secondary data was analyzed by utilizing a variety of quantitative analysis methods.

Iran and Turkey, two major non-Arab Muslim powers in the Middle East with a rich history, have not engaged in a war since the signing of the Treaty of Qasre Shirin (also called the Treaty of Zuhab) in May 1639. The border between Iran and Turkey is one of the oldest in the world that has been unchanged since the Treaty of Qasre Shirin with some peaceful re-designs in the Treaty of 1932 (Ay, 2016). From the historical point of view, the political relations of Iran and Turkey – and their predecessors - are characterized by patterns of cooperation and contradiction due to converging and diverging interests of both countries. Keyman & Sazak (2015) liken Iranian-Turco relations to a "roller-coaster" because of many up and downs in the nature of their relations (p. 328).

The relation between the two countries became most intense during the Safavid period (1486-1722); when Shia Islam became the official state religion in Iran that was contrary to the Sunni Ottoman Empire. However, with the establishment of the Qajar dynasty (1796-1925) which had a positive attitude toward the Ottomans, Turkish-Iranian relations experienced a notable improvement. Indeed, positive Turkish-Iranian relations

reached their peak during the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979), although there were some minor tensions.

Iranian-Turkish relations were given a new edge by Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution and the subsequent creation of an anti-Western Islamic Republic that was at odds with the secularist pro-Western Turkey. Fearing Ayatollah Khomeini's strategy of exporting the Islamic Revolution, Ankara kept its political distance from Iran. However, from the 1990s to the present day, Iranian-Turco relations shifted from mistrust and conflict more to cooperation and partnership. Former Turkish President Turgut Özal, in particular, believed that close economic relations with Iran were important for Turkish interests. Also, during the Iran-Iraq War that lasted eight years between 1980 and 1988, Iran became Turkey's main trading partner. With the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) since 2002 and its 'zero problems' strategy with its neighbors, Iran and Turkey relations entered into a new phase. Since the AK Party governments over nearly two decades, Iran and Turkey have been keeping their relations close while at the same time competing to increase their influence in the region.

The idea for this dissertation occurred after - as an Iranian-Turk who has lived in both countries - I have been always asked some interesting questions by a lot of people in Turkey belonged to diverse social classes about Iran and Iranians. The following were some of these questions: "Do you speak Arabic in Iran? Can women drive in your country? Are there camels in the streets of Tehran? Is there an ongoing war in Iran? Will we get punished in front of everyone if we do not wear the hijab in your country? Are the cities there developed? Do you have electricity everywhere? etc. These and so many other questions can still surprise me and I wonder how come that two centuries-old neighboring countries do not have a clear image about each other despite the great legacy and immense political, economic, cultural and social impacts on each other throughout history. While these personal experiences do not necessarily represent the average view on Iran among Turks and obviously there are people who are very well informed about their neighboring

country and its civilization, history and culture, nevertheless they gave quite enough reason and motivation to the writer to attempt the current study.

It should be noted that the great part of the literature on Iran-Turkey relations has focused on political, economic and trade relations between Iran and Turkey. However, so far there has been no academic attempt before to assess the perception that these two old neighbors' people have toward each other. At the present time, Turkey and Iran's policies play a key role in the region and assessing the way their people perceive each other can have a huge impact on the future of relations between both countries. Especially for Iran, it is a must to consider its image and perception in the world and its possible shortcomings. That is not to say that the Iranian-Turkish relations is one of the key points to determine the future of the ME.

The Scope of the Study and the Significance of the Research: Why Is Iran's Image in Turkey Important?

As Adib-Moghaddam put it "In many ways, Turkey and Iran are too embedded within each other to be separated or to act antagonistically." (Adib-Moghaddam, 2019, p.7). Iran and Turkey have important roles with different effectiveness in the region. A close relation between these two players can have significant political and economic implications in the Middle East. In addition, the collaboration of Iran and Turkey would help to promote stability, security and regional peace. As Yarmohammadian, Omidi & Ebrahimi stated as well, "Turkey and Iran can achieve the comprehensive goal of regional security and stability in bilateral relations only by finding common points and grounds" (Yarmohammadian, Omidi & Ebrahimi, 2017, p.14). According to Meral,

The Turkish public remains deeply mistrustful of Iran, thanks to a mixture of Kemalist and Sunni misreadings. Numbers of Turks visiting Iran, academic and policy experts on Iran, and Turks who speak Farsi remain too minuscule to record. In June 2014, the Pew Research Center found that 75 percent of Turks held unfavourable views of Iran, and only 11 percent of Turks held positive views of Rouhani. This

limits the degree to which the Turkish government can push closer relations (Meral, 2014, p.19).

Meanwhile, as Meral mentioned as well, public opinion can have an important effect on the foreign policy of a country. In his paper *The Role of Public Opinion in Foreign Policy* (2018), Sharifullah Dorani has well explained the theoretical and empirical evidence of the debate between liberalists and realists about the effect of public opinion on the foreign policy of a country. Theoretically, realism claims that “public opinion is emotional (or ‘moodish’), irrational, ill-informed, easily shiftable (or volatile), lacks structure and coherence, and can be manipulated by leaders from the top... [in realist model] policymakers make foreign policy on the basis of ‘national interest’ and ignore the ‘emotional’ and ‘subjective’ views of the mass” (Dorani, 2018, Theoretical Disagreement section, para.1). This have been empirically approved in different studies such as Bailey’s *The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy* (1948), Almond’s *The American People and Foreign Policy* (1950), diplomat-historian George F. Kennan’s *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (1951), and journalist Walter Lippmann’s *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (1955).

In contrast, the liberal theories “find public opinion to be relatively stable, sensibly structured, consistent, and consequently impactful on foreign policy, as presidents take into consideration public opinion when making foreign policy decisions.” (Dorani, 2018, Theoretical Disagreement section, para.5). From the liberal’s point of view, there are three main important reasons for taking public preferences into account in foreign policy decisions: first, public support legitimizes the government within democracies. Second, rational politicians are responsible for the public’s will, so they follow public preferences; and finally, politicians always want to maintain or even increase their approval rating among the public. One of the significant examples of empirical studies on this view is *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (1973) by John E. Mueller, in which he demonstrated how public opinion mattered during the Vietnam war.

In this research – in line with liberal theories of public opinion – it has been considered that the public opinion of Turkish people can have a significant impact on Turkish foreign policy towards Iran and, thus, should be studied in detail. In addition, as will be reviewed in detail in the literature review of this study, the rivalry nature of Iranian-Turkish relations has resulted in mostly a divergent relationship between them. By improving the two rivals' image at home, a more convergent relation can be established.

There are a couple of examples in which the image of Turkey abroad has been studied. However, apart from Pew Research Center studies, there are not many studies that survey Turkish public opinion about a foreign country or an image of a country in Turkey. As an example, the TESEV Foreign Policy Program published a series of *Perception of Turkey in the Middle East* from 2009 to 2013. In the fifth series of this study, findings reveal that while the sympathy for Turkey has dropped by 19 percentage points over the last three years in the Middle East, it is still perceived as a model by half the survey participants.

In another study, Pawel Michalak (2019) examined the image of Turkey in the public discourse of interwar Yugoslavia during the reign of King Aleksandar Karađorđević (1921–1934) according to the newspaper *Politika*. In Ahmet Uysal's study (2011), the Perception of Turkey in Egypt before the Revolution (2005-2010) has been evaluated. The reason for this study has been mainly attributed to the fact that with new developments in Turkey just after the Justice and Development Party's rise to power in late 2002, this country attracted a huge attention from the Arab world which was struggling with poverty and authoritarian regimes. The study concludes that Turkish perception was seen as a model for solving huge problems in Egyptian society. According to the results of this study, Turkey's active foreign policy, economic developments, and democratization process seem interesting in Egyptian society. However, as emphasized above, the study of Turkish public opinion on other countries and peoples has been lacking. In the case of Iran, a review of literature has not revealed a comprehensive analysis of Turkish public opinion about Iran, its government, and its people. The aforementioned PEW study

includes only a couple of questions on Iran alongside several other countries as a point of comparison for the image of the USA, which arguably is the main objective of that study.

This dissertation aims to fill this gap in the literature. However, while this study evaluates the perception of Iran and Iranians in Turkey, it does not try to show if there would be a possibility of either Iran or Turkey becoming a role model for each other. Instead, in this study, the image of Iran and Iranians has been studied in order to elaborate firstly the determinants of the perception of Iran in Turkey. The importance of this is linked to the fact that if a country is not aware of its image in other countries that are strategically and politically important, then it cannot shape its foreign policy toward that country in an effective way. Only by acknowledging the determinants of its foreign image can a country strengthen its international perception. This is one of the reasons why the United States surveys its image in most parts of the world on a regular basis to understand its current global image and to determine policies to improve this image year by year.

In addition, there are so many Iranians who visit Turkey every year, and many businessmen who do business together between these two neighboring countries. However, one may ask if this contact can result in a more positive perception of each other. This is why by giving a review of the contact theory in the literature review chapter of this thesis, the efficiency of this contact has been questioned by the survey participants.

Moreover, as there is evidence of a negative image of Iran in Turkey (especially according to PEW Global Attitudes research series), this study intended to realize if this negative image would only belong to the current government acts or if it is also about the image of Iranian people as well. By understanding this, it is important for the next researchers who can work on the reasons behind the possible negative image of Iranians in Turkey to offer some social and cultural policies between these two countries.

Fourthly, not only the Turkish public view on Iran and Iranians but also the Turkish Elite view has been studied in this thesis. The reason for adding this to the current research is to present a comparison between the differences between Turkish public and elite views

of Iran and Iranian people – if there is any. By giving a detailed review about the definition and theories of an elite, the best definition has been chosen. Based on the given definition of elites in Turkey, the current research aimed to explore if the image of Iran and Iranians would change according to the social, economic, and educational level of people in Turkey.

Finally, this study does not aim to analyze the history and the structure of Turkish-Iranian relations. The information on this will be given only as a background for the readers who may not be familiar with the relation between these two countries and peoples. However, a detailed analysis of this topic is beyond the scope of the current study.

In sum, this study has been designed to determine the Turkish public and elite view toward not only Iran, but also Iranian people. There are a lot of cultural ties between Iran and Turkey: not only millions of Turkish speaking Iranian-Azeris but also so many Persians who have visited Turkey feel themselves in a close tie with Turks. However, this is not generally a two-way relation: Turkish people are not generally eager to visit Iran, even while they do not need a visa for Iran and the currency of Iran is worth half of their currency – the Turkish Lira. Is this reluctance related to their view of Iran and Iranians? What is the image of Iran in Turkey? This research can cast some light on the answer to these questions.

The dissertation provides a general framework to understand the determinants of the image of Iran and Iranian people in Turkey and a huge amount of data for further academic investigations about the links between Turkish peoples' perception of Iranians and how it links with the Iranian-Turkish political relation. In addition, the results of this research will firstly help to compare the public and elite's perceptions of Iran and analyze the gap – if there is any. Finally, the important points which policy makers should take into consideration in developing Iranian-Turkish relations will be revealed. By acknowledging the Turkish public and elite's perception towards Iranian people and their

government, the existing gap between both nations can be realized and hence creating some new strategies to bring nations and governments closer can be identified.

Research Objectives and Approach

Research objectives and approaches are fourfold:

- I. What is Turkish public perception towards Iran and Iranians (in terms of their view toward the Iranian state, religion, Turkish security, identity)?
- II. What is Turkish Elite perception towards Iran and Iranians (in terms of their view toward the Iranian State, religion, Turkish security, identity)?
- III. How does the opinion of the Turkish public compare to the opinion of Turkish elites towards Iran and Iranians?
- IV. What determines the perception of Iran in Turkey?

Methodology

This thesis is based primarily on quantitative analysis of primary and secondary data both of which represent the population. The primary data constitutes a sizable sample with a total of 1,271 respondents from 12 different cities in Turkey. As conducting a questionnaire for this number of respondents is practically only possible by conducting surveys, all the data were collected by conducting a face to face questionnaire on Turkish citizens aged 18 and over living in Turkey.

The primary data includes two subgroups: the general population and the elites. The sample size for general public respondents, 1,150 respondents, were collected at the NUTS1 level (Statistical Region Unit 1 level), in which the respondents were from 12 different cities in Turkey, including Istanbul (20.2%), Ankara (13.5%), Adana (10.7%), Diyarbakir (10.6%), Bursa (8.9%), Izmir (8.6%), Kayseri 6.7%), Balikesir (6.6%), Malatya (5.6%), Zonguldak (4.5%), Trabzon (2.1%), and Erzurum (2.0%) were selected. The questionnaire for Turkish elite respondents is the same as for public respondents, but

it includes 5 more questions that were open-ended. The responses to these open-ended questions have been analyzed as in-depth interview data and constitute the qualitative aspect of the analysis. The sample size for Turkish elite is 121 persons in which the respondents were from 3 different cities in Turkey including Istanbul (38%), Ankara (37.2%) and Izmir (24.8%).

Secondary data comes from the PEW Research Center's Global Attitudes and Trends Analysis project in which results for the surveys are based on telephone or face-to-face interviews, depending on the country. Face-to-face interviews are either computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI) or pen and paper interviews (PAPI). The sample size for every country is about 1,000 people on average. The number of countries vary every year, with a maximum number of 38 countries in 2017.

The main statistical method that will be utilized in this study is the Ordered Logistic Regression Model, measuring the strength of the relationship between an ordinal categorical response variable and explanatory variables. In addition, descriptive statistics, Reliable Alpha Tests, and Pearson Correlation Coefficient tests have been applied to the data of this study.

Thesis Structure

In Chapter 1, theories on country image and perception, the elite concept and theories, history, and literature review on Turkish-Iranian relations in different phases of time will be reviewed. By studying a brief background on historical and current Iranian-Turkish relations, one can have a better image about the cultural, social, political, and historical grounds for the perception of Turkish people of Iran and Iranians. In addition, based on the theories and previous studies, selection of the best factors as independent variables is possible. Therefore, the theories and literature review form a background and a foundation for the next chapters.

The Second Chapter will present an analysis of secondary data provided by the PEW Research Center's Global Attitudes and Trends Analysis. At the time, PEW Centre's

data is maybe the only or the most comprehensive study that analyzes the perception and attitudes of peoples of different countries towards each other – mainly their perception of the USA. These surveys have been conducted since 2001 and include a range of questions that evaluate Turkish people's image of Iran. The current study has made a special effort to extract the questions related to Turkish people's view on Iran from the whole data and to summarize them.

As the data available in Chapter 2 has its own limitations, this study conducted and collected primary data in Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)-1 level. In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, the data, methodology, and the empirical results of primary data on Turkish public and elite respondents view have been analyzed in detail, and at the end of both chapters the regression analyses have been presented. Finally, the conclusions and implications of the results for the future of Iranian-Turkish relations, and hence its possible effects in the region, have been presented.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The effects of an image of a country or that of its people goes beyond the economic considerations and may have more far reaching political effects. Contrary to the importance of the subject, the literature about political image of countries in the world is limited (except studies on the United States image in the world that is conducted every year by American based PEW Research Center). Most of the country image studies concern the economic aspect including marketing, country of origin effect and country branding. However, there is not much literature about the perception of the countries around the world. The first part of this study will review the definition of country image and perception and the literature associated with it. As this study concerns the political image of Iran in Turkey, the economic aspects of country image literature have not been included.

Moreover, as the current study evaluates the view of both Turkish general public and elites on Iran and Iranians, theories on elites and the concept itself is analyzed in the second part of this chapter. In this part, first the current available literature of elites will be given and then the definition of elite as a concept that has been used in this research will be explained accordingly.

There is another significant literature review that this chapter will cover: the Contact Theory. This is because this research is also interested to determine if contact among Turkish and Iranian people influences Turkish public and elites view toward Iran and Iranians. As this research will not only study the image of Iran, but also the image of Iranians in Turkey, the Contact Theory and examination of intercultural relations is important.

Finally, in the last part of this chapter, the history and background of Turkish-Iranian relations in different phases of time will be given. While the emphasis of this thesis

is the current image of Iran in Turkey, it will provide a background on Iranian-Turkish relations as well. In order to understand the current perception and feelings of Turkish people toward Iranians, it is necessary to see how the relation between Iran and Turkey has developed during recent history. Understanding the relation between country image and the history of relations between Iran and Turkey is important for a couple of reasons: first, the background of political relations between Iran and Turkey partly determines the Turkish media and the way it pictures Iran, and so it can determine the way that Turkish people's perception about Iran can change. In addition, obviously, it is not expected that people of a country would have a positive image of another that have had negative political experiences with each other. Moreover, our perception of a country is interrelated with direct and indirect experiences that we have had with it. Finally, evaluation of relations between two countries is convenient for analyzing the data and reasoning the results. For these reasons, the literature review of this thesis will present a general review of Iranian-Turkish relations in different aspects of time.

1.1. Country Image and Perception

1.1.1. Definition of Image and Perception

Analysis of images of different political perceptions in public mentality has become one of the major aims of studying country images and perception. The examples are studying the images of political parties, leaders, institutions, ethnic groups, states in general and countries. According to Granberg “evidence indicates the political perceptions by the public as a whole are generally quite accurate [...] when the perceptions of a sample of people are considered collectively, the correspondence between political perception and political reality is very close” (p.506).

Elena Shestopal (2014) defines political perception as “a process of reflection of parties, state, leaders etc. in public mentality” and image as the main elements that constitute this process. She adds that in psychological literature, one can find the definition of image as a “generalized picture of the world that is formed as a result of processing of

information that goes through the senses.” (p.3). As a result, “Political image as any other image, is on one hand – reflection of some real characteristics of the object of perceptions, i.e. political power, leader’s personality, peculiarities of political party, state, etc. One can call them objective components. They to a big extent define the contents of the image. On the other hand, the image is a projection of expectations of the subject of perception. Political image reflects people’s needs, motives, emotions, cognitions, concepts, stereotypes, values and demands of public to authorities. These components of the image can be called subjective. Political images change with the changes of mass consciousness” (Shestopal, 2014, p.3).

The media routinely share news about the defense technologies, nuclear proliferation program, new ballistic missiles and so on. The message of these kinds of media news changes for different countries. It could perceive the news as a threat – for enemies - or safeguard – for allies. As a result, the same action by a country which is perceived as an enemy will be considered as more threatening than a country which is perceived as an ally. This is the simplest way to explain the Image Theory.

The concept of image was first defined by Kenneth Boulding (1959) as “the total cognitive, affective, and evaluative structure of the behavioral unit, or its internal view of itself and its universe” (pp. 120-121). In *The Image: Knowledge in Life and Society*, Boulding (1956) tried to develop a new science named “Eiconics,” in which the concept of the image is the basis of it. Boulding states that the idea behind the image is that human behavior is the result of all previous internal and external motives, resulting in conscious images of the future. So, one can say that human behavior depends on the image.

In his famous book titled *The Logic of Images in International Relations*, Robert Jervis (1970) focused on the popularity of the image concept to explore intergovernmental relations. Images have been widely used in international relations literature to illustrate the behavior of states. Governments always trying to control the image of themselves.

The perceived strategic intergovernmental relations from which the images are begotten are a function of three dimensions: perceived goal compatibility between states, assessment of relative power capability, and evaluation of the cultural status of the other actor (Herrmann & Fischerkeller, 1995). Different configurations of these three dimensions elicit different images. There are five “ideal-typical” images—enemy, degenerate, colony, imperialist, and ally—identified by Herrmann & Fischerkeller, that can be explained as below:

The enemy image, for instance, is limited to a perception of another target that is seen as threatening, roughly comparable in capability, and not too different in terms of cultural sophistication. The degenerate image, in contrast, refers to an image of another state that is seen as representing a great opportunity to exploit and that is similar in capability but suffering from cultural decay. The colony image represents the ideal case in which a subject believes there is a great opportunity to exploit a target actor who is both weaker and inferior in terms of culture. The imperialist image is the converse of this, representing the ideal case of a subject seeing intense threat from a state that is much more powerful but not culturally superior. Our ally image refers to a perceived relationship in which the subject's belief in the prospects for mutual gain outweighs the importance of perceived capability or cultural judgments. Using five images we can represent a diverse set of possible perceived relationships (p.426).

In Herrmann & Fischerkeller’s 1977-1990 image analysis, the USA view of Iran in 1977 were moderate ally/colony, in 1980 were colony, and in 1985 and 1990 were moderate enemy/colony. In the same interaction patterns analysis, Iran’s view of the USA in 1977 were moderate ally, in 1980 and 1985 were imperialist and in 1990 were moderate imperialist.

Rezarta Bilali (2010) examined propositions of international image theory in the context of Turkey-U.S. relations. Based on the Image Theory of Herrmann & Fischerkeller, she holds that “Turks endorsed an imperialist and a barbarian image as well as a resistance tendency toward the United States both at the onset of the Iraqi war and

three years later. Ally image and cooperation tendency were endorsed at a lower degree, though still at the midpoint of the scale” (p.297).

In the latest Country Brand Index (2014-2015), Turkey ranked as 53rd and Iran ranked as the 71st country among the 75 investigated countries. In Marc Fetscherin’s (2010) definition, “a country brand belongs to the public domain; it is complex and includes multiple levels, components, and disciplines. It entails the collective involvement of the many stakeholders it must appeal to. It concerns a country’s whole image, covering political, economic, social, environmental, historical, and cultural aspects. The main objectives of country branding are to stimulate exports, attract tourism, investments, and immigration, and create positive international perceptions and attitudes.” (pp.467-468)

Another related concept is Nation Image, which in Martin & Eroglu’s words is defined as the total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular nation (Martin & Eroğlu, 1991, p.194). By the same token, one can interpret *A Nation’s Reputation* as the public images that people have in their mind about a nation (Bromley, 1993; Kang & Yang, 2010). Every nation in the world has a set of positive or negative, clear or vague images. These images should be important for every nation, because they can determine the nation’s stand in the world. There are different nation brand indexes for measuring a country’s reputation, using a vast number of measurement criteria, such as a country’s exports, governance and defense, culture and heritage, people, tourism, investment, immigration, business life, quality of life, etc.

1.1.2. Literature Review on Country Image and Perception

Countries attempt to promote their nation’s image and so their nation’s brand. According to Kunczik (1996), “an image of a nation constitutes the totality of attributes that a person recognizes (or imagines) when he contemplates that nation” (1996, p.44). He adds that such an image consists of three analytically distinguishable components - what we know (a cognitive component), how we feel about the nation (an affective component); and our actual behavior towards the nation (an action component). Individuals’ exposure to

information either through planned communication activities, or through contact with movies, news or word of mouth help them to become more knowledgeable about a country. Autonomous and not controlled information is thought to have a high level of credibility and therefore a high impact on the destination's image (Alvarez and Campo, 2014).

Interestingly, political perceptions sometimes give a better image than realities. An example is the political perceptions of South Koreans of North Koreans. In 2012, The Institute for Peace and Unification Studies of Seoul National University surveyed how South Koreans have thought about North Korea since 2007. The results support that while seeing threatening behavior from North Korea, the majority of South Koreans do not see North Korea as an enemy, showing the resilience of human perception and cognition.

Using statistics, Tomonori Sasaki (2010) evaluated the Chinese elite's threat perception of Japan from 1981 to 2006. The research sought to answer two questions: first, has there been a change in perception of the Japanese threat in the People's Liberation Army, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Chinese economic institutes sectors over time and, if so, what can one deduce about the causes of this change? By analyzing threat perception, Sasaki attained important results that added valuable information to the literature. His findings support the fact that there has been a consensus regarding the threat perception of Japan within the three sectors in China; which suggests that all sectors reacted the same way and one cannot dismiss the changes in threat perception as the product of publicity by a single organ of the Chinese government. Consequently, the alliance will remain important for Japan, but at the same time Japan will seek other policy options such as developing its own military capabilities and enhancing confidence-building measures with China.

Emile Kok-Kheng Yeoh (2018) has investigated China's image in Malaysia by focusing more on the country's societal response. Perception of China in Malaysia is interconnected with domestic power politics, generational transition, and governmental

control over public discourse. By using secondary data, Yeoh repeats that despite the existence of disputes between Malaysia and China in the South China Sea, Malaysia was the most favored country toward China in Spring 2013. However, as Malaysian society possesses a complex multi-entity construct, there are vastly different perceptions and responses to the implications of the rise of China.

In another study, U.S.–China security perceptions toward each other were investigated in 2012 as the result of a unique collaboration among the Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Kissinger Institute on China and the United States at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, China Strategic Culture Promotion Association, and the Research Center for Contemporary China at Peking University. This project emerged from an awareness of the growing influence, in both the United States and especially China, of both public and elite attitudes on what many analysts recognize as an increasingly turbulent bilateral security relationship. Its objective is to discover and analyze the views of the public and elites in five distinct categories – government, business, academia, the military and the media – regarding a wide range of national security issues, from the nature of American and Chinese power, both globally and in Asia, to the images held of one another’s national character.

The sample size used in this project is 1004 general public, 54 government official experts in the legislative and executive branches, 52 retired military officers, 93 scholars, Think Tank Experts and NGO Leaders, 74 business and trade leaders and 32 members of the news media. In “Perception and Misperception in American and Chinese views of the other,” groups of eight U.S. and Chinese scholars have analyzed the results of the U.S.–China Security Perceptions Project. Their analyses provide more nuanced and far-reaching insights into the potential effects of American – Chinese attitudes on each side’s foreign policy and on the bilateral relationship. Not surprisingly, the conclusions of the project are complex. The results reveal that there are some large gaps in Chinese perceptions of the basic traits and characteristics that they and Americans exhibit. That is, the differences in

perceptions of the self and the other are quite substantial. In the aggregate, Chinese respondents believe Chinese people demonstrate a lot of positive traits while Americans demonstrate negative ones.

One interesting perception studies belongs to Papadopoulos and Helsop (2000), in which they developed a “Cross-national and Longitudinal Study of Product-Country Images with a Focus on the U.S. and Japan” in which data were collected from 15 countries with a 16-item country scale to measure perceptions of 5 core countries, as well as self-perceptions of 13 additional nations. Countries were rated on a 1 to 7 scale - in which 1 stood for “poor” and 7 stood for “good” - in terms of cognitive issues (technology, role in the world, taste, education, wealth, stability and knowledge); affective issues (trustworthiness, likability, industriousness, ideal nature of the country, and interest in visiting), and conative issues (willingness to invest, ties, political alignment and level of imports).

Among important findings of this study, one suggests that perceptions of others are contingent upon perceptions of oneself. In addition, it holds that depending on who was asked and how people see themselves, the perception of the other changes. For example, countries with high affective views of themselves (e.g., Netherlands and Spain) tended to offer relatively low affective evaluations of the United States, while countries with relatively low affective ratings of themselves (e.g., Israel and Indonesia) gave high affective evaluations of the United States.

In his study, “American Perception of Iran,” Avery Bisset (2015) explores how the medium through which a person consumes their news influences their perception of Iran’s nuclear program and American foreign policy toward Iran. He considers elites, interest groups, partisans, and demographics as important factors that influence public opinion of American foreign policy. His research suggests that there is an American media bias toward Iran’s nuclear program and that there was a significant relationship between media

and American influence of Iran only for internet news, print newspapers, social media and television.

GALLUP, an American research-based, global performance-management consulting company that is famous for its public opinion polls conducted worldwide, has evaluated U.S. views of Iran after the nuclear deal. According to this study, Iran's long-standing negative image in the U.S. remains unchanged, and in 2016 only 14% of Americans held a favorable view of Iran, which is almost the same percentage as before the nuclear deal. Results for this Gallup poll were based on telephone interviews conducted Feb. 3-7, 2016, with a random sample of 1,021 adults, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

Similarly, Gallup has been asking residents from 132 countries worldwide to rate the leadership of the U.S. since 2005, providing a comparison of how perceptions of U.S. leadership change over time and from administration to administration. The “U.S.-Global Leadership Track” is the largest global public opinion study of views about U.S. leadership. Results are based on face-to-face and telephone interviews with approximately 1,000 adults, aged 15 and older, conducted throughout 2014 in 135 countries and 2015 in 132 countries. Results supports the fact that the highest rating for U.S. leadership are Europe and the Americas, and that there is a flatness in the overall trend.

With a different viewpoint, Jo-Anne Hart (2015) examines mal perception of Americans towards Iran. He holds that because of widespread unchallenged assumptions, there is a misperception and a lack of clear thinking about Iran that significantly affects policymaking. Hart properly quotes Klaus Knorr’s argument about how perceptions and misperceptions result in false policies:

[The] greatest dangers to realistic threat perception do not inhere in the intellectual difficulties resulting from poor evidence and future uncertainty [...] The greater danger lies in rigid preconceptions and attitudes of which the perceiver is unaware, or not aware enough. Such preconceptions make him desire to see certain things

happen, and to make what he wants to do seem justified. And the push and pull of emotions that are [...] attached also to foreign actors in such forms as hatred and contempt can lead the perceiver astray. These intervening preconceptions and attitudes produce selectivity in the receipt and use of information; they therefore contribute to a distorted image of reality and to false expectations (p.10).

Accordingly, Hart concludes that the U.S. can succeed in its relation with Iran, if it creates relations such that Iran would not consider using her capabilities against the U.S. and so by a better vision, better outcomes can arise.

In another empirical study, Ying Fan and Akram Shahani (2016) investigated the key factors that influence country image of Pakistan, focusing on the comparison between the self-perception of Pakistani nationals and the perception of people from other countries. The sample used in this study is small: 29 respondents, who were postgraduate or doctoral students studying in London, including 7 Europeans, 5 Africans, 10 Asians and 7 Pakistanis.

The study affirms that Pakistan suffers from a negative country image, as findings support that not only the self-perception of Pakistanis was largely negative, but also there was little positive image of Pakistan among foreigners. In addition, most non-Pakistani respondents lacked knowledge of the country and the media was the main source of information about the country. However, very interestingly, after watching a slide show of Pakistan, respondents gave vastly different responses and there was a slight visible change in their perception towards Pakistan. The result of this experiment attest to the important role that images have on people's perception. It is often through images of a country that people make judgements about multiple facets of a country, including the country's politics, economy, or culture, without direct experience of these faraway places (Kunczik, 1997).

While there is a considerable work on U.S. image in the world, the perception of other countries has not been studied enough yet or the available studies are extremely

limited. The most comprehensive perception studies belong to Pew Research Center that by conducting public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research, inform the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world. Using Pew's data, global views of Iran have been examined in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

Pew Research Center studies include its work on world opinion of the United States that have been implemented from 2002 to 2017 among 25 countries by asking respondents that if they have a favorable or unfavorable view towards the United States. The result of the research shows that across the countries surveyed, a median of 50% have a favorable opinion of the U.S., while 43% have an unfavorable view. In addition, the most 10 favorable countries to the U.S. are Vietnam, Israel, the Philippines, South Korea, Poland, Nigeria, Hungary, Italy, Ghana, and Japan, in that order (Pew Research Center, 2018).

At present, there has been relatively little analysis of perceptions towards Iranian people and its government. There is no research available about the image of Iran in Turkey - its neighboring country. What has proliferated is the literature of the Turkey-Iran relationship, usually centered on both states' rival perceptions of one another and how these perceptions are manifested in their respective policies towards each other. Even though Iran and Turkey have long years of relations during history, the way its people perceive each other is extremely based on the image that they have in their mind through the media.

1.2. The Elite Concept and Theories

Besides the Turkish public's perception, this thesis also examines the Turkish elites view toward Iran and Iranians. The question that may arise here is who are elites? Or, how we can define someone as being elite? To be able to answer this question there is a need to define what elite theory is.

According to Marcus, before the Seventeenth century the word 'elite' referred to "being selected by God" (Marcus, 1983, p.8). The first studies of elite concept and theory were suggested by two social scientists: Pareto (1848–1923) and Mosca (1858–1941). Pareto viewed elites as a ruling or governing class of society; He put his definition of elite as follows: "Let us assume that in every branch of human activity each individual is given an index which stands as a sign of his capacity, very much the grades are given in the various subjects in examinations in school. The highest type of lawyer, for instance, will be given 10. The man who does not get a client will be given 1 – reserving zero for the man who is an out-and-out idiot. To the man who lies made his millions – honestly or dishonestly as the case may be - we will give 10. To the man who has earned his thousands we will give six... And so on for all the branches of human activity... So let us make a class of people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity, and to that class give the name of elite" (1936, pp.1422-23). According to Pareto, except for some short periods people are governed by an elite. He takes elite as "the strongest, the most energetic, and most capable for good and as well as evil" (Pareto, 1936, p.36).

Mosca propound elites as a minority group of society who control the ruled class, monopolize power and perform all political functions (Mosca, 1939, p.50). According to Bottomore, Mosca made the first systematic division between elites and the masses (1993, p.2). Mosca claims that there are two classes in all societies, the one that rules and the other that is ruled. The ruling class is always less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages of the power it holds. The ruled class is more numerous but is directed and controlled by the ruling class (Mosca, 1939, p.50). Mosca claims "in reality the dominion of an organized minority, obeying a single impulse, over the unorganized majority is inevitable" (1939, p.53). Thus, in Mosca's conceptualization, an elite is lesser in number and higher in different qualities. He emphasizes being organized as the main characteristic of an elite.

Bottomore concludes that both Pareto and Mosca "were concerned with elites in the sense of groups of people who either exercised directly or were in a position to

influence very strongly the exercise of, political power. At the same time, they recognized that the governing elite or political class is itself composed of distinct social groups” (Bottomore, 1993, p.5).

Elite theory became a more important topic after the Second World War, especially with Mill’s *Power Elite* (1956). Mills assume that the people of the power elite who are in command of the major hierarchies such as big corporations, government and army, can affect the everyday life of ordinary people by concentration of information and control of power (2000, pp.3-5). In Mills’ concept, elites are integrated into a national power structure and they enjoy power, wealth, and celebrity.

An alternative understanding of elites, instead of seeing elites contribute to power, sees them as groups and individuals who control disproportionately large amounts of vital resources (Kahn, 2012), such as monetary and economic capital, as well as cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984). As such, Gulbrandsen explains that “CEOs in large private companies, senior civil servants, and senior military officers are, for instance, elites by virtue of their holding top leadership positions. Rich people constitute an important and powerful segment of the economic elite as well as prominent authors who may similarly be seen as significant elements of the cultural elite in a particular society” (Gulbrandsen, 2018, p.161).

Higley and Moore (1981) divide the literature on elites into four models. The first one is the consensually integrated elite model, in which top position holders are part of an inclusive formal and informal network. The second model states that in the plural elite there is not a dominant unified elite. The third one is the power elite model in which there is a clear hierarchy within the elite and military, in which political and business elites are on top. Finally, there is the ruling class model, in which society is shaped according to the functioning of capitalism and dominated by an upper class (Higley and Moore, 1981, pp.584- 585).

The elite concept in Turkey has taken different definitions from time to time. During the Ottoman Empire, the *Men of the Tanzimat* (the products of the secular civil schools) became the ruling elite of the Ottoman Empire following the Crimean War. According to Stanford J. Shaw (1968), “These Men of the Tanzimat formed a new ruling class of relatively well-educated and well-motivated individuals whose main desire was to modernize their state ... Many were ... children of members of the older Ottoman ruling class ... It was only when the Tanzimat produced a new generation of twentieth-century reformers not directly tied to the older ruling class that a significant reform was possible. This new generation consisted mainly of men from relatively modest families who rose through the army and the civil schools created by the Tanzimat ... It was men such as these who united in the Society of Union and Progress” (Shaw, 1968, pp.36-37).

In other words, in explaining the behavior and policies of the *Men of the Tanzimat*, Stanford J. Shaw has mostly emphasized the educational and social background of individuals to being considered as the ruling elite. Joseph S. Szyliowicz (1971) explains how emergence of some schools like the *Galatasaray* School, *Mülkiye* (the Civil Service School established in 1859), and the *Harbiye* (the Military Academy opened in 1849) is interrelated to the rise of modern Turkey. In Joseph S. Szyliowicz words, “ Their influence [of these schools] has been so great that one irreverent Turkish friend has summarized the role of these schools as follows: “*Harbiye plus Mülkiye equals Türkiye*,”” (Szyliowicz, 1971, p.376).

However, Kamil Yılmaz (2009) criticizes the way that these schools were accepting students because “these schools and almost all military schools have not been accessible to people with religious backgrounds” (Yılmaz, 2009, p.119). Yılmaz has investigated the emergence and rise of a conservative elite in Turkey and he attempted to examine the changes that have been taken place in Turkey since the 1980s “that have paved the way for the emergence and rise of a “new social group,” that is, a religiously more conservative elite which can also be defined by an amalgam of “Islamic and modern” (Yılmaz, 2009, p.114). By criticizing the modernist elites who raised from *Kemalist*

Reforms as a new type of upper class who monopolize governmental power, he welcomes the rise of conservative elites in Turkey mainly because of the integration of the religiously conservative people into the country's socio-political system that brought many religiously conservative groups from the peripheries of society to its center. In addition, Yılmaz considers that the rise of Turkey's new conservative elite within the political realm that has taken place through the AK Party “has manifested itself as an improvement in Turkey's outlook with regard to human rights, democratization, the rule of law and respect for and protection of minorities” (Yılmaz, 2009, p.131).

The concept of elite used in this thesis has nothing to do with the Turkish experience of the ruling elites and instead it refers itself to the Cambridge Dictionary definition of elites that consider the elite word as “belonging to the richest, most powerful, best-educated, or best-trained group in a society.”¹ Thus, elites in this thesis are defined as those who graduated from some university degree level with a family monthly income level of 8000 – 8500 TL on average, that as of today is about four times the minimum wage level (about 2020 TL) in Turkey. As such, the elites in this study have university degrees that have supplied them with specialized expert knowledge that let them access occupations such as a government officer, doctor, engineer, lawyer, architect, journalist, lecturer, manager, academician, etc. Moreover, several of these elites run their own businesses and have their own occupational group. There are some 7.5% elite respondents who have less than 7500 TL monthly income, but they possess high educational levels (example: retired academicians).

1.3. The Contact Theory

The contact theory originates from Allport's (1954) study in which he carefully distinguishes between casual and impersonal, and sustained and personal contact. Allport emphasizes that contact has to be between groups with equal status, who incorporate common goals and that there should be a cooperation between groups (Kaya & Karakoç,

¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/elite>

2012). In Allport's Contact Hypothesis, "Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom, or local atmosphere), and if it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups" (Allport, 1958, p.267).

Allport's studies have inspired and attracted the interest of a significant number of scholars in recent years. Wagner and colleagues (2006) studies in Germany shows that the increasing size of minority groups creates an opportunity for intergroup contact and reduces prejudice among the members of the dominant group in this country (Kaya and Karakoç, 2012). McLaren (2003) shows that having no foreigner friends for individuals can increase the feeling of them being threatening. UNESCO asserts that the key to improving social relations is contact between members of different groups (Everett, 2013). Pettigrew and colleagues (2011) studied recent advances in intergroup contact theory. By evaluating studies in Italy, Germany, Northern Ireland and the U.S., Pettigrew and colleagues affirm that intergroup contact can also trigger a process of indirect effects and that having ingroup friends who have an outgroup friend relates to diminished prejudice. Thus, in short, "the friend of my friend is my friend" (Pettigrew and colleagues, 2011, p.277).

An important implementation of contact theory in this study would be to see if contact among Turkish and Iranians would decrease their prejudice against each other and if it would increase Turkish positive feeling toward Iranian people. To examine the important effect of contact and social connections and its implications for Iranian-Turkish relations is one of the main missions of this research.

1.4. Background of Turkish-Iranian Relations

Turkey and Iran share geographical borders and a similar culture, both having Islam as their main country religion: Turkey with majority of Sunni's and with a secular

government; and Iran with a majority of Shias and with a theocratic government. Iran and Turkey share similar ethnic groups (Turks and Kurds). Historically, both countries tried to keep a line of moderation in their policy toward each other. They have had contradictions as well as cooperation: acting sometimes similar to alike magnetic poles and sometimes similar to unlike magnetic poles. Despite their foggy relations during the 1980's and 1990's, Iran and Turkey entered a new phase of relations after 2002, when the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) came into power.

The literature on Iranian-Turkish relations includes a wide range of studying both cooperation and contradiction dimensions during different periods of time. Sinkaya (2004) has studied Iranian-Turkish relations from 1989 to 2001. Karacasulu and Karakır (2011) have examined Turkey's relations with Iran since the AK Party. Furthermore, Wang Bo (2011) has analyzed the dynamics of the bilateral relations of Iran and Turkey. Stein and Bleek (2012) have focused on Turkish-Iranian conflicts more recently. The following parts will review Iranian-Turkish relations in two important phases: before and after the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

1.4.1. Iran and Turkey's Relation: before the Islamic Revolution

Early examples of comparative analysis of Iranian-Turkish relations date back to the 1960's. In his paper "Disengagement from Traditionalism in Turkey and Iran," Richard F. Pfaff (1963) argues that compared with democracies, authoritarian rule in a Muslim country is much more effective in sustaining political and economic development. Since then, the comparative work on Iran and Turkey has become an increasing subject of interest for scholars. There is a huge amount of literature about relations between Iran and Turkey from various aspects: some study their relations from a historical view, others compare them on various grounds such as societal, economic, governmental, religious and many other areas.

Taking a look at the history of Iran and Turkey, one can easily find that the two neighbors have shared a lot of cultural context. The most obvious and commonly

emphasized example of Iran and Turkey's cultural intimacy dates back to the 16th century, when Sultan Selim I, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, wrote collected poems – *Divan* - in Persian while Iranian ruler Shâh Ismâ'il wrote poems in Turkish by using a pen name *Hatayi* (Hazır, 2015).

While Iran and Turkey became Islamized from the 7th to 11th century, their religious paths diversified since the 16th century, with the rise of the Safavid dynasty. Shâh Ismâ'il Safavi chose Shi'i Islam as the official religion of the Safavid Persia. Through most parts of the 13th to 20th centuries, the Ottoman Empire continued to be the largest state in the Sunni Muslim world and the Persian Empire turned into "the largest state containing the most numerous minority sects in the Muslim World" (Hazır, 2015, p.6). While having two different Shi'a and Sunni sectarian identities, the cultures of Iran and Turkey have always remained intertwined. Persian was even for long time an elite language for the Ottomans.

In his book *History of Iran-Ottoman relations in the Safavid era* (2013), Nasrollah Salehi has gathered and translated some important Turkish articles about the Persian-Ottoman relation during the Safavid dynasty. He considered the Safavid era as the turning point of the Iranian-Turkish relation as the political and military competition between two governments gained ideological nature during the Safavid time when the religion became politicized in both Persian and Ottoman governments. According to one of the papers that Salehi translated and mentioned in his book, there are eight main periods of relation between Persian and Ottomans during the Safavid era: first, from the initial Shah Ismail attacks in 1499 to the battle of Chaldiran in 1514 that is an era of Safavid multiple attacks to Ottomans. Second, from the battle of Chaldiran to the Peace of Amasya in 1555, when the eastern policies of Ottomans were active. Third is the peace era from 1555 to about 24 years and then the next era starts with the Murad III's (the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1574 until 1595) attack to the eastern boundaries till the Treaty of Constantinople in 1590. The fifth period is the peace time till 1603; and then the 9 years' war period starts

(1603-1612). The seventh phase that length till the Qasre Shirin Treaty in 1639, and the last epoch is the peace period since 1639 (Salehi, 2013, p.7-17).

According to Stanford J. Shaw in *The Cambridge History of Iran Vol. VII* (1991), one of the important incentives of keeping peace for both Safavids and Ottomans governments were common economic interests. Exports of silk and other products passing through Ottoman territory, via Trebizond to the west, especially with the increasing competition from the Persian Gulf-Suez Canal and the Russian Caucasus routes, were an important reason. In addition, increase of European economic imperialism by the 19th-century seriously affected both Iran and the Ottoman Empire resulted to somewhat similar reform movement, particularly the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905 and the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 (J. Shaw, 1991, p.313).

By coming to the power of Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979) in Iran and foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the relation between Iran and Turkey undertook a new shape. Iran and Turkey's closeness and similarities became more concrete with modernization experiences. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and Shah Reza Pahlavi in Iran were the elites who attempted to transform their societies via modernization movements. In *Men of Order- Authoritarian Modernization under Reza Shah and Atatürk*, Touraj Atabaki and Erik j. Zürcher (2004) presented a comparison between European modernization in Turkey and Iran, arguing that European modernization was considered as a model in both countries; however, according to Hazir, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was more successful in modernizing his country, adding that "the emerging difference between Iran and Turkey overwhelmingly stems from the varying levels of modernization (Hazir, 2015, p.17)."

John Calabrese (1998) is another scholar who contributes to study of Iranian-Turkish relations. He studied the reasons behind the rocky relations of Iran and Turkey by identifying the key issues in evaluation of the Turco-Iranian relationship in an historical context. Calabrese states that the struggle between the Persian and Ottoman Empires took

a long time, up until the 18th century. Then after, by recognition of their common Muslim identity, tensions reduced but it did not lead to an amicable relationship. In 1847, the Treaty of Erzurum gave way to a century of peace. With the rise of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and Reza Shah in Iran, many aspects of the Turkish and Iranian nation-building procedures were dissimilar. Nevertheless, both Atatürk and Reza Shah were above all concerned with consolidating their domestic political authority and maintaining an 'independent' foreign policy.

In her report of 1995, Patricia Carley quoted Changiz Pahlavan's description of Iranian-Turkish relation before the Islamic revolution as follows: Reza Shah Pahlavi and Atatürk "had many common concerns, including a shared opposition to communism and a strong commitment to modernization. Good relations were made more concrete through adherence by both to several agreements such as the Sadaabad Pact in 1937 and the Baghdad Pact in 1955 (which became CENTO in 1959), both of which were signed under the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi" (Patricia Carley, 1995, p. 13). By the mid-1970s, with the combination of oil profits and the Shah's ambitions, Iran propelled itself into being the regional power. According to Calabrese, "From the Turkish perspective, ambitions notwithstanding, Iran was a friendly neighbor with a pro-western orientation - a status quo regional power" (Calabrese, 1998, p.77). However, the Islamic Revolution of 1979 changed everything in Iran and it quickly soured relations between the two countries.

1.4.2. Iran and Turkey's Relations: after the Islamic Revolution

Contemporary relations between Iran and Turkey have gone through three broad phases: post the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the 1990s and after the AK Party. In the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, Turkey quickly recognized Tehran's new regime, but the Turkish secular elite saw Iran as a threat because of its intention to export its Islamic Revolution to neighboring countries.

The 1979 Iranian Islamic Revolution that replaced the 2,500 years of continuous Persian monarchy with the Islamic republic presented challenges to Turkish-Iranian

relations. Ruhollah Khomeini, an Iranian Shiite cleric, was the Iranian revolution leader. In a speech made on August 24, 1986 Khomeini said:

In the Islamic world, the Ulama were led to believe that they had to obey the tyrants, oppressors, and the holders of naked power. Certain lackeys preferred to obey Atatürk, who destroyed the rule of Islam, instead of obeying the orders of the prophet. How can a reasonable mind accept this? Today, the Ulama [in Turkey] who are the puppets of the Pharaonic forces, teach the people the orders of God and the prophet, but at the same time call on them to obey Atatürk...How can one argue that this is consistent with the notion of [Islamic rulers] whom God ordered us to obey? Obviously, [Islamic rulers] in the real sense can only be those who follow the order of God and his messenger (Quoted in Ozbudun, 1990, pp.244-245).

Even in 1987, during a visit to Turkey, Iranian Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi criticized Atatürk's reforms and refused to pay a tribute at his mausoleum (Elik, 2012). Indeed, conflict between a radical Islamist Iran and Western-oriented and secular Turkey seemed unavoidable. However, with the Iran-Iraq war in 1988 and death of Ayatollah Khomeini in June 1989, the two states managed to keep smooth relations (Sinkaya, 2004).

During the Iran-Iraq eight years' war, Iran became Turkey's main trading partner; By 1983 Turkish exports to Iran constituted 19 percent of all Turkey's exports. After the war ended, relations between Ankara and Tehran became confrontational mainly because of their ideological differences. During the 1990s, internal developments and geopolitical competition between Iran and Turkey determined the main reasons for the escalation of conflicts in Turkish-Iranian relations (Barkey, 2015 & Sinkaya, 2004).

The 1990s were the time that the Turkish foreign ministry adopted a cautious approach towards Iran since there were two kinds of approaches to Iran among Turkish intellectuals: "While the Kemalist elite, the nationalists and the military were viewing Iran as a fundamentalist state that wanted to export its regime to Turkey, Islamists and liberals were in favor of improving relations with Iran" (Sinkaya, 2004, p.118). On the other hand,

Iran was cautious toward Turkey as it was discomforted with the increasing power of Turkey in the region and also because of the “pan-Turkism” fear of Iran as it is home to many ethnically Turkic and Turkic-speaking minorities.

However, again, after the rise of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and Reza Shah in Iran, a decline in sharp pan-Turkism activities happened. On the one hand, Atatürk preferred to have close political relations with the Soviet Union and Iran and on the other hand, Reza Shah’s internal limitations against development of pan-Turkism were some of the important reasons for this decline (Bayat, 2009, p.107-108).

Geopolitical competition was another reason for diversification of Iran and Turkey during the 1990s. As a result of their Turco-Iranian competition to become the “model country” for the Caucasus and Central Asia countries, Turkey and Iran entered into a geopolitical competition over this region following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. In addition, both states have established strategical ties with Kurdish groups in northern Iraq to benefit from influential advantages. Iran suspected that Turkey aimed at capturing the oil-rich Mosul-Kirkuk region and as a result would decrease Iran’s hegemony in the Middle East. Turkey was concerned about Iran’s support of the establishment of an Islamic regime in Iraq; and also, about Iran’s sheltering of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in its sphere of influence in northern Iraq (Sinkaya, 2004, pp.119-120).

Nevertheless, despite the existence of some conflicts during the 1990s, with the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) since 2002 and its ‘zero problems’ strategy with its neighbors, the situation changed. Iran and Turkey have “rationalized” their relations since the late 1990s. They both modified their foreign policies, as Iran under the leadership of President Khatami implemented a “détente with neighbors” and “Dialogue among Civilizations” policies; and Turkey followed the “Zero Problems with Neighbors” policy from February 2004, which was one of Prime Minister Erdogan’s Chief Adviser Ahmet Davutoglu’s articulated policies as one of the four leading principles of the AK Party government (Sinkaya, 2012).

The Turks provided Iran with their support at different important times, including the controversy about Iran's nuclear program; Iran also slowly shifted its stance, particularly on the sensitive Kurdish question. Although the two governments have cooperated when necessary, yet their relations have still long been defined by mutual suspicion and competition (Barkey, 2015).

Additionally, under the AK Party government, Iran's perception of Turkey as a secular western country has been replaced by a favorable approach. Autonomous regional policy of Turkey bolstered the new image of Turkey in Iran. Indeed, one can observe a positive change in Iranian-Turkish relations during the 2000s, after a decade of limited bilateral relations in the 1980s, and tense relations in the 1990s. Iranian-Turkish main cooperation areas during AK Party government can be summarized into two general aspects: economic and trade relations and both countries' national security strategies.

1.4.2.1. Economic and Trade Relations

In close conjunction with improved diplomatic relations, the bilateral trade between Iran and Turkey has increased steadily in the past two decades. Even in the stormy periods of their political relationship, Iran and Turkey kept their cold friendship and maintained their economic relations. Relatively, it is not to be unexpected that Gökhan Bacık (2016, p.1) calls Iranian-Turkish relations a "Cold Peace." He states that Iran and Turkey are both eager to develop a compartmentalization strategy whereby the states cooperate in neutral areas like trade and they try to not interfere in their political differences in their relations.

According to Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs report of 2006, due to increasing demand from domestic consumption, Turkey's need for energy increased 6-8 percent per year since the late 1990s. Iran - as the holder of second largest reserves of gas in the world - was an appropriate energy provider for Turkey. As a result, The Turkish-Iranian Business Council was set up in November 2001 to expand economic and commercial ties. In 2007, Turkish foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, explained the new tendencies of Turkey:

[...] here all our allies should take into consideration Turkey's unique position. As a growing economy and surrounded by energy resources, Turkey needs Iranian energy as a natural extension of its national interests. Therefore, Turkey's energy agreements with Iran cannot be dependent upon its relationships with other countries (Poyraz, 2009, p.10).

Broad economic expansion of Turkey – especially in recent years – has increased its dependency on Iran's natural resources. According to CIA's factbook, Turkey's Real GDP growth rate increased from 3.2% in 2016 to 7.4% in 2017, turning the country into the 13st biggest economy in the world by its GDP (purchasing power parity). The International Energy Agency (IEA) report of 2016 on Turkey confirms that over ten years (2004-14), gas demand in Turkey grew from 22 billion cubic meters (bcm) to 49 bcm, driven by rising gas usage in the residential, power and industry sectors of the country. In addition, Turkey is dependent on gas pipeline imports from the Russian Federation (55.1%), Iran (16.2%) and Azerbaijan (12.8%). Moreover, Turkey is a significant importer of energy from Iran, securing more that 50% of the total of its oil consumption from energy-rich Iran. In 2017, CIA ranked Iran as the world's fourth largest crude oil producer, third largest natural gas producer and the eleventh refined petroleum products producer.

Because of its strategic geographical location between the Middle East and Europe, Turkey is widely considered a major oil and gas hub. Thus, in order to reach European markets, Iran needs Turkey. Energy is one of the main reasons that there is an economic convergence between Iran and Turkey, all of which prevents any major confrontation between them. Turkey and Iran signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between 2003 and 2010, making Iran Turkey's major energy partner (Ekici, 2010). In his speech in June 2014 to the Turkish-Iranian business council, President Hassan Rouhani underlined Iranian-Turkish economic relations by stating that "Turkey is a bridge connecting to the West and Europe, while Iran is a bridge to the Far East; we should use these two countries as bridges for regional development. Turkish and Iranian economies should complement each other" (Hürriyet Daily News, June 10, 2014).

Turkey is the first country that has a preferential trade agreement with Iran. This agreement was signed between the two countries with the goal of boosting bilateral trade in January 2015. According to the agreement, 125 items of Iranian goods and 140 items of Turkish goods were supposed to trade based on preferential tariffs (IR economy, 2015). Table 1.1. shows bilateral trade between Turkey and Iran from 2016 to 2019. According to the Table, Turkey's imports from Iran are at a higher value than its exports. Turkey's main exports to Iran include automotive supply products, fiberboard, paper and paperboard, tobacco, zinc ores, nonwovens, hygienic towels and diapers and Turkey's main imports from Iran include raw petroleum materials, natural gas, plastics in primary forms, metals other than iron and organic chemicals (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey's official website).

Table 1. 1: Bilateral Trade between Turkey and Iran, Billion US Dollars.

	2016	2017	2018	2019/January-July
Turkey's Exports to Iran	4.96	3.26	2.4	1.4
Turkey's Imports from Iran	4.7	7.5	6.9	2.82
Volume	9.7	10.76	9.3	4.22
Balance	0.3	-4.24	-4.54	-1.42

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey

The last Session (27th) of the Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting was held on 17-18 September 2019 in Ankara. As a result of this meeting, Iran and Turkey have agreed to launch direct train services between Tehran and Ankara. They also set a \$30-billion annual trade target, signing several agreements to enhance cooperation in various areas (Tasnim News Agency, 2019).

Moreover, Turkish Iranian relations have expanded in the tourism industry as well. Based on a report published by the Hotel Association of Turkey (TÜROB), the number of Iranian tourists visiting Turkey increased to approximately 2.5 million in 2017, from 1.7 million in 2016. TÜROB calculated the per capita expenditures of Iranians as more than \$1000 versus \$630 that other foreign tourists spend per capita. The sharp increase of the

exchange rate in Iran, especially the U.S. Dollar and Euro, is one of the main reasons that Turkey became a top destination for Iranian travelers. At the time, Iran became the third largest market for Turkey's tourism sector.

1.4.2.2. National Security, the Kurdish Issue, and Iran's Nuclear Program

In order to understand what the security concerns of Iran and Turkey are, one should fully understand its concept first. The term "Securitization" is grounded in Ola Waever's 1989 paper named "Security the Speech Act: Analyzing the Politics of a Word." Waever initially defined security as "speech act," which implies that the meaning of security is linked with the security discourse (Weaver, 1989). This holds that a non-security problem could be a security problem just by the political actor's way of interpreting the issues. In other words, the main argument of securitization theory is that in international relations an issue becomes a security issue not because something constitutes an objective threat to the state, but rather because an actor has defined something as an existential threat. Hence, an issue becomes a security issue only by being labeled as one.

The concept and framework of securitization was developed by the group of scholars – including Waever - who worked at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, the so-called "Copenhagen School." The Copenhagen School tried to widen and deepen the definition of security by stating that non-military threats can undermine the security, stability, and survival of states as well as the lives of individuals. Securitization means "to present an issue as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure" (Buzan, Weaver, & Wilde, 1998, p.24). Thus, as the Copenhagen School argues, "something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so" (Weaver, 1995, p.47).

In this respect, following the Islamic Revolution, anxiety about a possible spread of the Islamic regime, and the fear of Islamic fundamentalism with the popular expression of "Turkey is not going to be Iran," paved the way for the construction of a security discourse and policies towards the Islamic Republic of Iran (Luleci-Sula, 2018, p.5).

Nevertheless, the rise of AK Party government and its persuasion of a wide range of domestic reforms such as a Europeanization process and decreasing role of the military in politics made desecuritization of Islamic fundamentalism in Turkey possible.

AK Party elites even moved further, and they believed that political Islam could create a common ground for solving the problems in the Muslim world. They succeeded to “deconstruct negative perceptions towards Iran” and “to convince the public that such a shift in Turkey’s political behavior is essential for it to increase and consolidate its power and prestige internationally.” (Luleci-Sula, 2018, p.13). Another important reason for changes in the principals and foreign policy of Turkey has mostly been associated with Ahmet Davutoglu, who was the leader of the AK Party from 2014 to 2016 and then served as the 26th Prime Minister of Turkey. Davutoglu believes that “historical and geographical composition of a state remain constant while all other elements of foreign policy should be considered as dynamic and open to change” (Davutoglu, 2011). By changing the image of neighbors – especially Iran, Davutoglu was able to overcome domestic obstacles and to reconstruct Turkish foreign policy.

Throughout the 2000s, not only desecuritization of Iran, but also the geopolitical situation provided ample opportunities for Turkey and Iran to cooperate. The situation of Kurdish separatist groups in Iran, Turkey, and their mutual neighboring country - Iraq - provides a point of convergence in Iranian – Turkish relations. Neither country wants to see the establishment of an independent Kurdish state. As one of the important issues at the top of its national security agenda, Turkey cooperates with Iran against two main militant and political Kurdish organizations: The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) based in Turkey and the Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK) branched in Iran. Thus, Turkey and Iran have developed their cooperation to protect their borders and defeating Kurdish terrorist organizations has become an important point of cooperation among Turkey and Iran.

Concerning the Iraqi Kurds, Iran and Turkey got closer in the aftermath of the March 2003 American intervention in Iraq. They cooperated in the fight against separatists through sharing intelligence and planning coordinated attacks. As an example, in 2007 and 2008 they both staged coordinated strikes against PKK bases in the Qandil Mountains (Sinkaya, 2018).

The 12th session of the Turkey-Iran High Security Commission met in Ankara in April 2008 and Iran and Turkey signed an MoU to exchange intelligence and increase security cooperation to combat these two terrorist groups, to maintain their border security, as well as to fight against other organized crimes. Prior to departing for the meeting, Iranian Deputy Interior Minister Abbas Mohtaj told reporters that, “Iran looks at the PKK and PJAK as a single terrorist organization under two different names” (McCurdy, 2008, p.98).

Another important security issue that led to cooperation of Iran and Turkey was Iran’s nuclear program. Turkey was used as a mediator between Iran and the West regarding Iran’s nuclear program. As President Obama put it, “I believe that Turkey can be an important player in trying to move Iran in that direction [abiding by international rules and norms]” (New York Times, December 7, 2009). In June 2010, Turkey voted against UNSC resolution 1929, which proposed the fourth round of sanctions against Iran because of its nuclear program. Thus, Turkey’s constant rejection of sanctions on Iran increased criticism from the West. On his visit to the European Political Center at Brussels, Erdogan responded angrily to Western critics by claiming that:

We will never cut our relations with Iran. No one can define our policy. Turkey is not a tribal state. Turkey is a powerful country that has a great history. Therefore, we decide our destiny, we take our decisions. No one can determine to whom we will talk and to whom we will not (Ekici, 2010, p.222).

Thus, Turkey preferred dialogue and diplomacy in solving Iran’s nuclear issue, rather than imposing sanctions and isolating Iran. On the other hand, Iran was also

interested to cooperate with Turkey to maintain it as a partner, keeping apart from the Western alliance against itself (Karacasulu & Karakır, 2011, p.115).

Another important security question that resulted in up and downs in Iranian-Turkish relations from cooperation to competition, and from competition to cooperation, is the Syria issue. After the unsuccessful attempt to assist the demise of the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, Turkey clarified its support for reforms in Syria, and it converged with Sunni Gulf countries in calling for a regime change in Damascus. On the other hand, Iran gave strong support and provided a genuine shield to its longstanding ally in Damascus. The Syrian regime plays an important political and logistical role to fulfill Iran's interests in the region. Because of Syria's border with Lebanon, Iraq, and Israel, it serves a key geographical role for Iran to reach these countries and their related groups such as Hezbollah and a range of radical Palestinian groups. (Mohammed, 2011; and Talbot, 2013).

In addition, the Iranian-Syrian alliance has been durable for three decades: Syria was the only Arab state that supported Iran during the Iran-Iraq eight year war, both countries have anti-western stances and both support the opposition groups Hamas and Hezbollah, they have economic links and the rulers of both countries are Shia-Muslims. Moreover, as anti-westernism and anti-Zionism are two of the basic foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran, supporting Hamas and Hezbollah is an important key to follow this agenda. Indeed, Syria is a source of legitimacy for the Iranian theocratic government (Aaron & Bleek, 2012).

For Turkey, Syria is significant in economic and security aspects. Syria is not only a budding market for Turkish goods, but also a transit country for Turkey to reach its goods to other regional markets. In addition, Syria cooperation over the Kurdish issue is a need for Turkey (Idrees Mohammed, 2011, p.90) and the Assad regime's support for the PKK has created "a deep concern for Ankara" (Sheharyar Khan, 2015, p.47).

Whereas Iran was the key supporter of Assad's regime in Syria, Turkey advocated Assad's ousting, Iran and Turkey narrowed their differences following their mutual concerns over the empowerment of the Syrian Kurdish PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and PJAK (Free Life Party) in northern Iraq. This is when Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accepted that Assad might remain in power in Syria. Iran and Turkey increased their cooperation against a mutual threat and in August 2017 the first high-level Iranian military visit to Turkey since the Iranian revolution took place (Katzman, 2019).

As Aras and Yorulmazlar put it, "The Syrian crisis has pitted Iran and Turkey against one another, but whether through the current stalemate or after some future settlement, the two countries share and will continue to share common challenges" (Aras & Yorulmazlar, 2016, p.4). Thus, both countries understand that it is important for them to set the parameters for cooperation in order to overcome mutual challenges.

Another dominant factor that contributes to affect Iranian-Turkish relations is the Iraq issue. For Iran, Iraq turned from a hostile neighbor to an important strategic partner; and for Turkey, Iraq is a significant neighbor from the economic and security aspects. Iran-Iraq bilateral relations have been mainly based on distrust, especially after Saddam Hussein's rise to power and the Ba'ath Party's rule in Baghdad. Iraq was one of the main threats to Iran's security during the eight-year war in the 1980s. With the fall of Saddam in 2003 and the situation in Iraq since that time, the impact of Iraqi issues on Iran's security has increased. For the Iranian state, maintaining a strong influence in the post-Saddam Iraqi government has become a key strategy. Iran maintained its attempts to support the creation of a Shia-dominated government in Iraq (Bazoobandi, 2014). Moreover, new conditions in Iraq raised new security issues for Iran, to the extent that Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, stated "the security of Iraq is Iran's security" (BBC Persian, 2014).

On the other hand, according to Patricia Carley (1995), there are a number of issues that have shaped Turkey's relations with Iraq, as follows: water and oil, the Kurds, maintaining current boundaries, domestic politics and Turkey's relations with the West.

However, the largest issue in Turkish-Iraqi relation has always been the Kurdish issue. In the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, Turkey found itself in the worst possible scenario: a transformed Iraq that legitimized the Kurds' claims in the north through the establishment of a federal Iraqi state (Barkey, 2010). Turkey's primary aim in Syria and Iraq is to follow policies to prevent the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) gaining autonomy and achieving territorial gains.

Competition over Iraq has strained the political relations between the two countries. Iran and Turkey try to counter the influence of each other and other actors (mainly Western powers and Saudi Arabia) in Iraq. While the government of Turkey has established a strong political relationship with the Northern Iraq Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), the Iranian state has shown its undivided support for the Shi'a parties. As a result, although Iran and Turkey maintain their efforts to sustain a stable political relationship, their concerns over Iraq have caused intense competition between them (Al-Fawwaz & Abualkanam, 2019).

Despite their strained political relationship and their intense competition in the region, Iran and Turkey have managed to continue their cooperation due to their converging interests and the need for security from external and internal threats. The Kurdish issue and Iran's nuclear program are two important subjects that ensure Iranian-Turkish inevitable need for cooperation. As a result, "The security agreements between Iran and Turkey were a major trust-building accomplishment" (Meral, 2014, p.17).

1.4.3 Iran and Turkey's Contemporary Relations

As explained, Iran and Turkey are two countries that have had up and downs in their relation but never made it either "black" or "white." They have extensive economic ties but generally tense political relations. In order to mention some examples on Iranian-Turkish contemporary relation, at the present time, both countries are holding a couple of ongoing meetings in Iran and Turkey. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, in June 2019, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Foreign Minister of Turkey had a trip to Iran

and in April, November and December 2019, Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran visited Turkey. In addition, in September 2019, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani paid a visit to Turkey in order to meet President Erdogan and to participate in the Fifth Trilateral Summit on Syria. In all of these visits, both Iranian and Turkish leaders mentioned that they are interested in boosting their relations with each other. For instance, in regard to challenges arising from a U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran and the other six world powers, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu told reporters on his visit to Isfahan in June 2020 that “We are evaluating the process after the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal with both Europeans and Iran” (Hürriyet Daily News, June 21, 2019).

The line of strong embrace among two non-Arab countries, Iran, and Turkey, is traceable until very recently. In January 2020, with the USA assassination of Qasim Suleimani, long-time head of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force (IRGC-QF), there would be some changes in the Middle East dynamics and so it would have some significant implications for Iranian-Turkish relations. IRGC plays a very important military and political role. It is the dominant actor in Iran’s foreign policy, and it takes the lead for many operations in different countries such as Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Afghanistan, and Palestine (Brookings, January 03, 2020).

According to the Guardian, with the death of Suleimani, Turkey “has a freer reign in northern Syria and with the region’s Kurds, whose connections to Iran it had found difficult to manage in recent years” (The Guardian, January 12, 2020). However, it took about 10 hours for Ankara to respond to this act of war carried out by its NATO ally. Turkish Presidential spokesman İbrahim Kalın said that “Turkey once again calls on all parties to act with common sense and avoid steps that will further escalate tensions ... Turkey has always been opposed to foreign intervention, assassinations and sectarian conflict in the region” (Ateşçi, 2020). As a response to this and also a phone call between Turkish President Erdoğan and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, IRNA news agency cited President’s Rouhani’s thanking the “Turkish president for his sympathizing with the Iranian state and nation on the sad occasion of the loss of the top Iranian general” (IRNA,

January 4, 2020). Still, Iran is aware of Turkey's important role in normalization of Iranian-Western relations (Entekhab, February 5, 2020). Görkem Dirik Explains the current Iranian-Turkish relations as follow:

Turkish-Iranian relations do not promise stability, sustainability, continuity, and genuineness. On the contrary, they include simultaneous contrasting features such as conditional cooperation on specific matters but rivalry and competition on other issues. Therefore, the future of Turkish-Iranian relations seems dependent on the possibility of establishing a solid partnership that can overcome the negative perceptions related to ancient experiences. It could be argued that history is still a factor, and the mistrust continues between the two countries, periodically examining the potency of the Turkish-Iranian partnership (Daily Sabah, February 26, 2020).

Yet, there are many challenges for Iranian-Turkish relations to gain sustainability and stability. Although there is a lot of effort to bolster bilateral cooperation of Iran and Turkey on the Kurdish issue, cooperation remains limited (Tremblay, 2019). In addition, the issue of Syria is still vague and not totally solved between the two neighboring countries. Because of strategic reasons, Tehran is discontent with Ankara's military presence in northern Syria. However, as Turkey also has very conflictual relations with most of the countries in the Middle East, including Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and the GCC (over Qatar), as well as with many of its NATO allies, it is important – at least for the time being – for Turkey to keep its good relations with Iran (Yücesoy, 2020). Thus, it is rational to conclude that Iranian-Turkish relations are expected to be flourishing for the current period and until such time that new strategic threats alter their relations.

CHAPTER TWO:

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS - PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S GLOBAL ATTITUDES AND TRENDS ANALYSIS

2.1. About the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project

In its “Global Attitudes and Trends” project (the PGA Project), the Pew Research Center² provides data to compare the viewpoints of people from different countries around the world toward a series of issues like the economy, democracy, globalization, world politics, terrorism, US foreign policy, and respondents’ assessments of their own lives. According to Kittilson (2007, p.879), the Pew Global Attitudes Survey (PGAS) has its roots in the 1991 survey named “The Pulse of Europe” that provides data on thirteen European countries. Pew’s series of Global Attitude Surveys began with an elite survey of twenty-four countries in 2001 and continued expanding to 38 countries, including: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, Venezuela, and Vietnam in 2017. Since 2001, PEW Research Center measures public opinion among ordinary citizens of different countries on an annual basis, all of which are available in the project’s website.³

² Pew Research Center originates from a research project created in 1990- called “The Times Mirror Center for the People & the Press” that conducted regular polls on politics (PEW Research Center’s official website: “our history”). In 1996, when The Pew Charitable Trusts became the Center’s sponsor, the center was renamed to “The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press” (PEW Research Center’s official website: “our history”). Pew Research Center defines itself as “a nonprofit, nonpartisan fact tank that enriches the public dialogue and gives information about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world” (PEW Research Center’s official website: “about pew research center”). By conducting research on a wide range of topics, the center helps U.S. and international policymakers, leaders, and the public at large to understand and address some of the world’s most challenging problems.

³ <https://www.pewresearch.org>

In the first publication of the *Pew Global Attitudes Project* of 2001, the main aim of the survey was stated as “determining common points of view on issues and life’s circumstances across continents and cultures.” In its 2001 survey, the *Global Attitudes Project* presented public views about the U.S. foreign policy and its role in the world and the spread of American culture, values, and business practices. Later, in 2003, the second *Global Attitudes* report was released to assess the public views toward globalization and modernization with a special focus on attitudes and values in Islamic societies. Afterward, since 2004, surveys got more standard with similar questions focused on different themes ranging from economic and globalization issues, to democracy and governance, U.S. foreign policy, terrorism and the U.S. response. The results mainly elucidated international attitudes toward the United States and showed where U.S. and foreign opinions align and collide. Until today, the Pew Research Center has conducted more than 480,000 interviews in 91 countries, mainly in conjunction with the longstanding *Global Attitudes* and *Religion & Public Life* projects.

2.2. Methodology

According to Pew Research Center methods, results for the surveys are based on telephone or face-to-face interviews, depending on the country. Face-to-face interviews are either computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI) or pen and paper interviews (PAPI). The sample size used in *Pew Global Attitudes and Trends* survey for every country is about 1000 people in average. The number of countries vary every year, with a maximum number of 38 countries in 2017. For results based on the full sample in each surveyed country, there is 95% confidence that the error attribute Table to sampling and other random effects is plus or minus the margin of error.

2.3. Iran’s Image in Turkey: Findings from the Pew Global Attitudes Project Data

In *Pew Global Attitudes Project*, many questions have been asked from respondents about their view towards different countries in different years. By checking all the questions,

those which have been asked to Turkish people about Iran have been chosen. Questions, answers and data analysis are given below.

In 2003, one of the questions in Pew Global Attitudes Project directly asked “How much of a danger would Iran have in relation with the stability in the Middle East.” The answers of Turkish people are given in Table 2.1. As elaborated, among 1000 answers from Turkish respondents in 2003, 33% considered Iran as “No danger at all” to the stability of the Middle East and only 10% noted Iran as a great danger to the peace of the region. It is interesting to see that about 24% of respondents didn’t know if Iran is a danger to the stability of the Middle East or not.

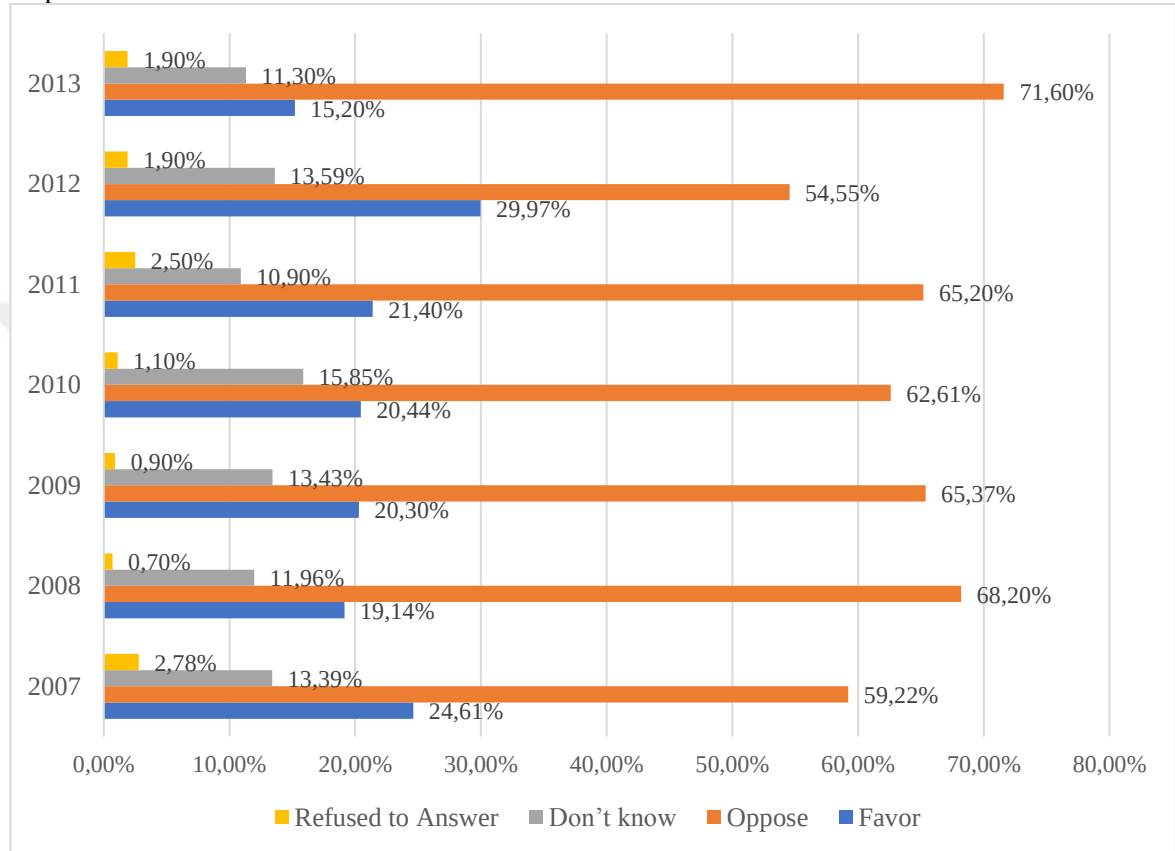
Table 2. 1: Iran as a danger in relation with the stability in the Middle East – Turkish respondents’ answers in 2003.

	Number of Responses (Turkey)	Answers in Percentage
A great danger	101	10.10%
Moderate danger	170	17.00%
Small danger	150	15.00%
No danger at all	330	33.00%
Don’t know	243	24.30%
Refused to Answer	6	0.60%
Total number of Respondents	1000	100.00%

Source: *Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2003, Question Number 20C.*

Not surprisingly, one or two of the questions of *Pew Global Attitudes Project* from 2007 to 2013 were about Iranian Nuclear Program. The first question that has been asked in Turkey for 7 years is “Would you favor or oppose Iran acquiring nuclear weapons?”

Figure 2. 1: Would you favor or oppose Iran acquiring nuclear weapons? Answers from Turkish respondents from 2007 to 2013.



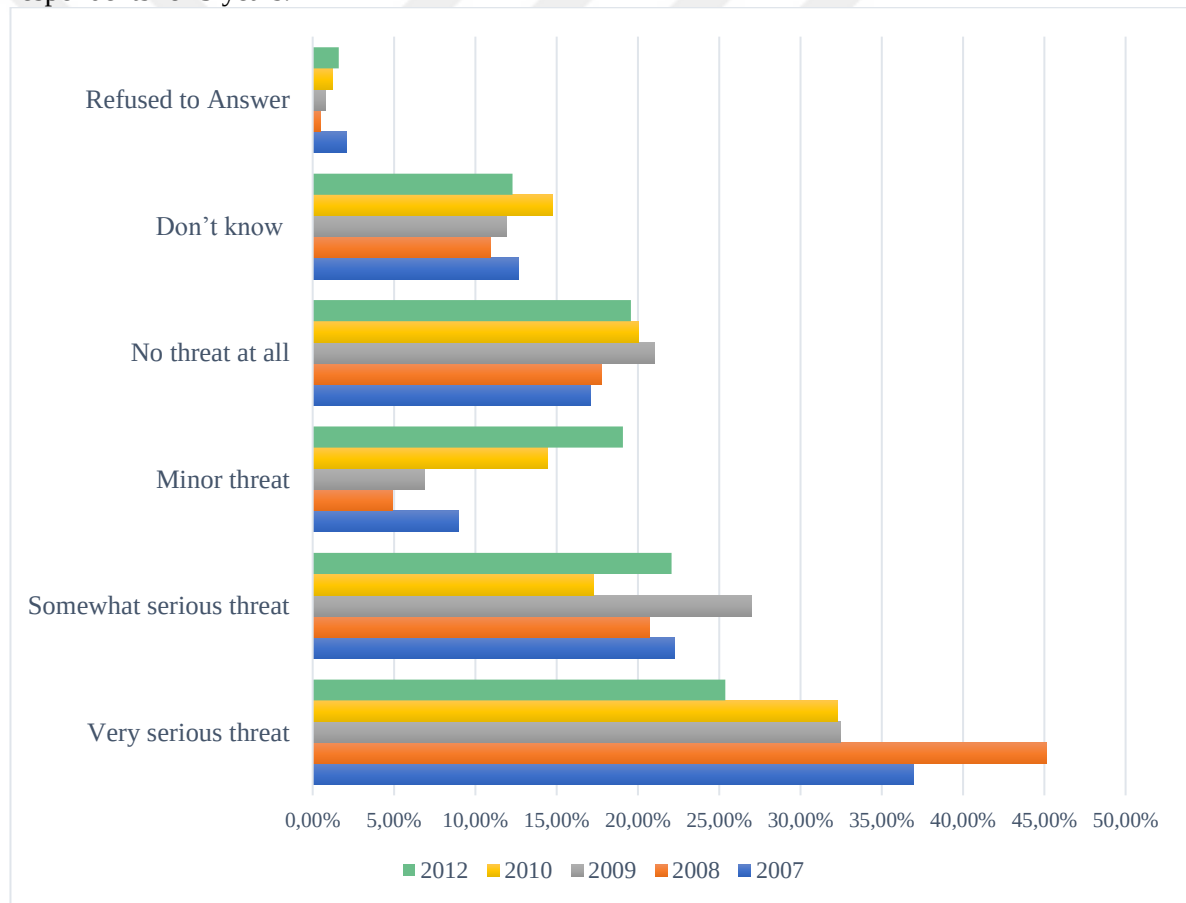
Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, years 2007 to 2013. Question Number 66 in 2007, 54 in 2008, 51 in 2009, 82 in 2010, 83 in 2011, 104 in 2012 and Question Number 116 in 2013.

As shown in figure 2.1, for all the studied years, at least 54% of Turkish respondents were opposed and a maximum 29.97% of them were in favor of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. It is interesting to see that there is a notable shift in the answers in 2012, the last year that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was the president of Iran: the number of respondents who were against Iran acquiring nuclear weapons decreased from about 65% to around 54%, and the number of those who were in favor of it increased from around 21% to almost 30%. This trend changed again in 2013, when President Hassan Rowhani took office.

The second question about Iran's Nuclear Program that, among others, has also been asked of Turkish respondents was "if Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, would

this represent a very serious threat to our country, a somewhat serious threat, a minor threat, or no threat at all?” The answers are shown in figure 2.2. Results shows that during all the studied years, most of the Turkish respondents considered Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons as a “Very Serious Threat.” However, during all the years, at least 17% of respondents considered a nuclear Iran as “No Threat at All.”

Figure 2. 2: If Iran were to acquire nuclear weapons, would this represent a very serious threat to our country, a somewhat serious threat, a minor threat, or no threat at all? Answers from Turkish respondents for 5 years.

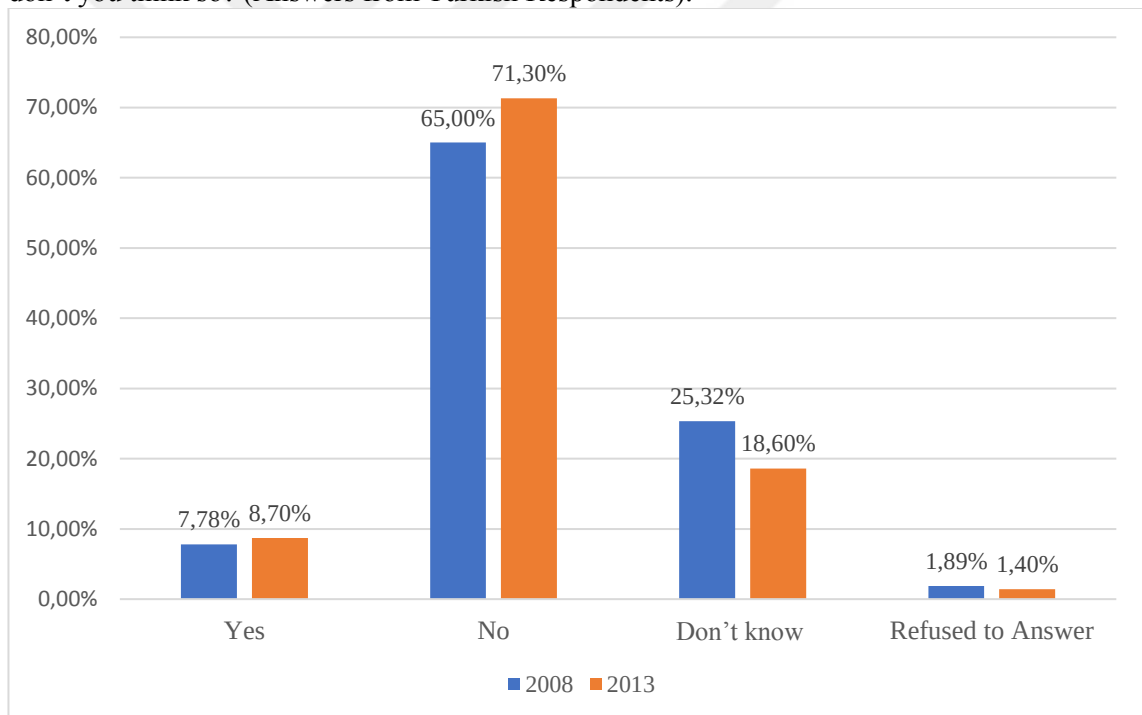


Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, years 2007 to 2010 and year 2012. Question Number 67 in 2007, 55 in 2008, 52 in 2009, 83 in 2010, and Question Number 104 in 2012.

The reason why Iran’s potential processing of nuclear weapons would be perceived as a “very serious threat” for Turkey is simple: the presence of a nuclear Iran will undermine the delicate power balance that has existed between the two nations since the Treaty of Qasre Shirin in 1639. Changing the picture of nearly equal military capabilities

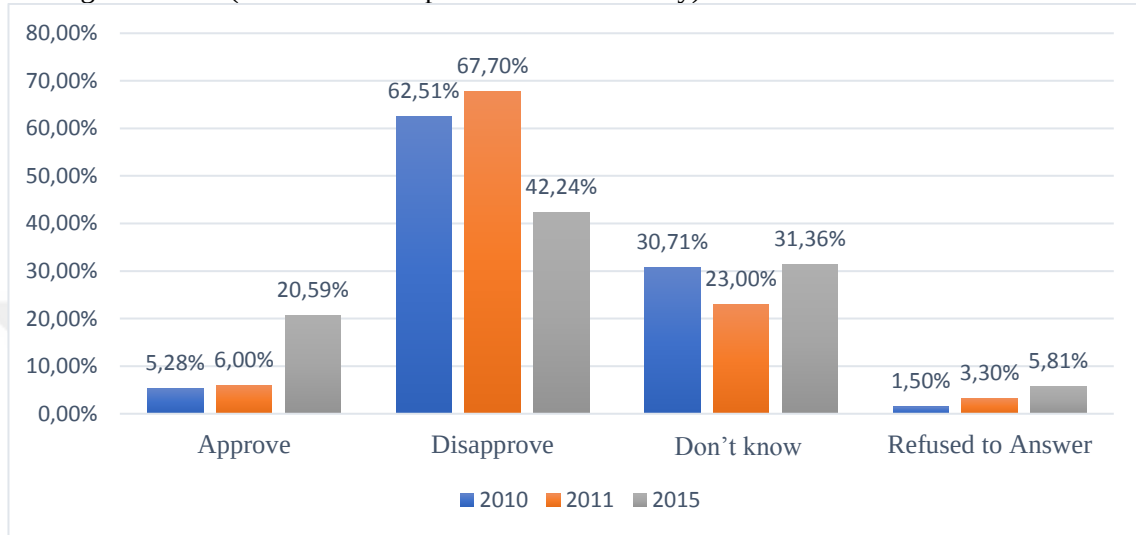
on both sides of the border of Iran and Turkey would upset Turkey since it will confront the serious concern of a “powerful Iran” in the Middle East. Obviously, Turkey (and so Turkish people) would be reluctant to assume a higher profile in the region. Some in Turkey think that Iranian attainment of nuclear weapons would cause Iran to gain gravity in regional developments, in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Caucasus at the expense of Turkey. For example, a nuclear Iran will have more influence over Azerbaijan” (Kibaroglu & Cağlar, 2008, p. 71).

Figure 2. 3: Do you think the government of Iran respects the personal freedoms of its people, or don't you think so? (Answers from Turkish Respondents).



Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, Question number 59 in year 2008 and question number 127 in year 2013.

Figure 2. 4: Please tell me if you approve or disapprove of the way President Barack Obama is dealing with Iran? (Answers of Respondent's from Turkey).



Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, Question number 79 in year 2010, question number 79 in year 2011 and question number 26 in year 2015.

There is one question that has been asked only two times: in 2008 and 2013, asking respondents about if they think that the government of Iran respects the personal freedoms of its people, or not. As shown in figure 2.3, in both years, more than 65% of respondents thought that the Iranian state did not respect the personal freedoms of its people. The number of pessimistic answers increased about 6% in the second year of study, which was 5 years after the first year that this issue was included

Moreover, in the years 2010, 2011 and 2015, the foreign policy of the U.S. President of that time, President Barack Obama, towards Iran has been questioned in Turkey. As shown in Figure 2.4, the answers support the fact that with time, Turkish people have approved more of the way President Obama was dealing with Iran. However, they generally were more disapproving of President Obama's policies toward Iran.

One of the most important questions that has been asked in most of the studied years in Pew Global Attitudes Project is related to people's opinion toward different countries. As an example, by asking "Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of "Inserted

Countries,” people’s views toward the studied countries have been analyzed. Only for the U.S. case, since its first poll in June 2002, the international opinion on the U.S has been studied by in-depth interviews of 110,000 people in 50 countries.

In 2007, Andrew Kohut presented his remarks to the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs; Sub-Committee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and oversight by his report titled *America’s Image in the World: Findings from the Pew Global Attitudes Project* to help these committees better understand how the United States is perceived throughout the world. In this report, he elaborates about the “Anti-Americanism” problem and its causes in some of the countries. The report is very important in the sense that by realizing the perception of the world toward the U.S., policy makers can work on the reasons behind it and so improve them in the upcoming years. The same is true for other countries in the world: by studying their images - including views of their policies, values, and people – governments can help their policy makers to choose the right path in their relations with each other in the future.

This significant question has also been asked about Iran over 11 years from different countries, including Turkey. Table 2.2 shows the summary of data on Turkish people’s view toward Iran. As shown, there is an average sample of 999 Turks whose view toward Iran has been asked. The answers range from “1- Very Favorable” to “4-very unfavorable.” If respondents chose “don’t know” their answer is coded as number 8 and if they did not answer, then their answer is coded as number 9. The mean of the answers is somewhere between 3 and 4 for all the years, that shows a general unfavorable view towards Iran.

Figure 2.5. shows the percentage of each answer of Turkish respondents about Iran. In all of the studied years, at least 37% of Turkish respondents had a “very unfavorable” view towards Iran. “very favorable” views never exceeded 5.8%, and “somewhat favorable” views average for all the studied years is 16.89%. The table obviously represents the fact that Turkish people have a generally negative view toward Iran. However, this data cannot show us if they have an unfavorable view toward the

Iranian state, Iranian people, or both. This is what this survey will answer during the next chapters.

Table 2. 2: Summary of data on Turkish people's view toward Iran, Pew Global Attitudes Project.

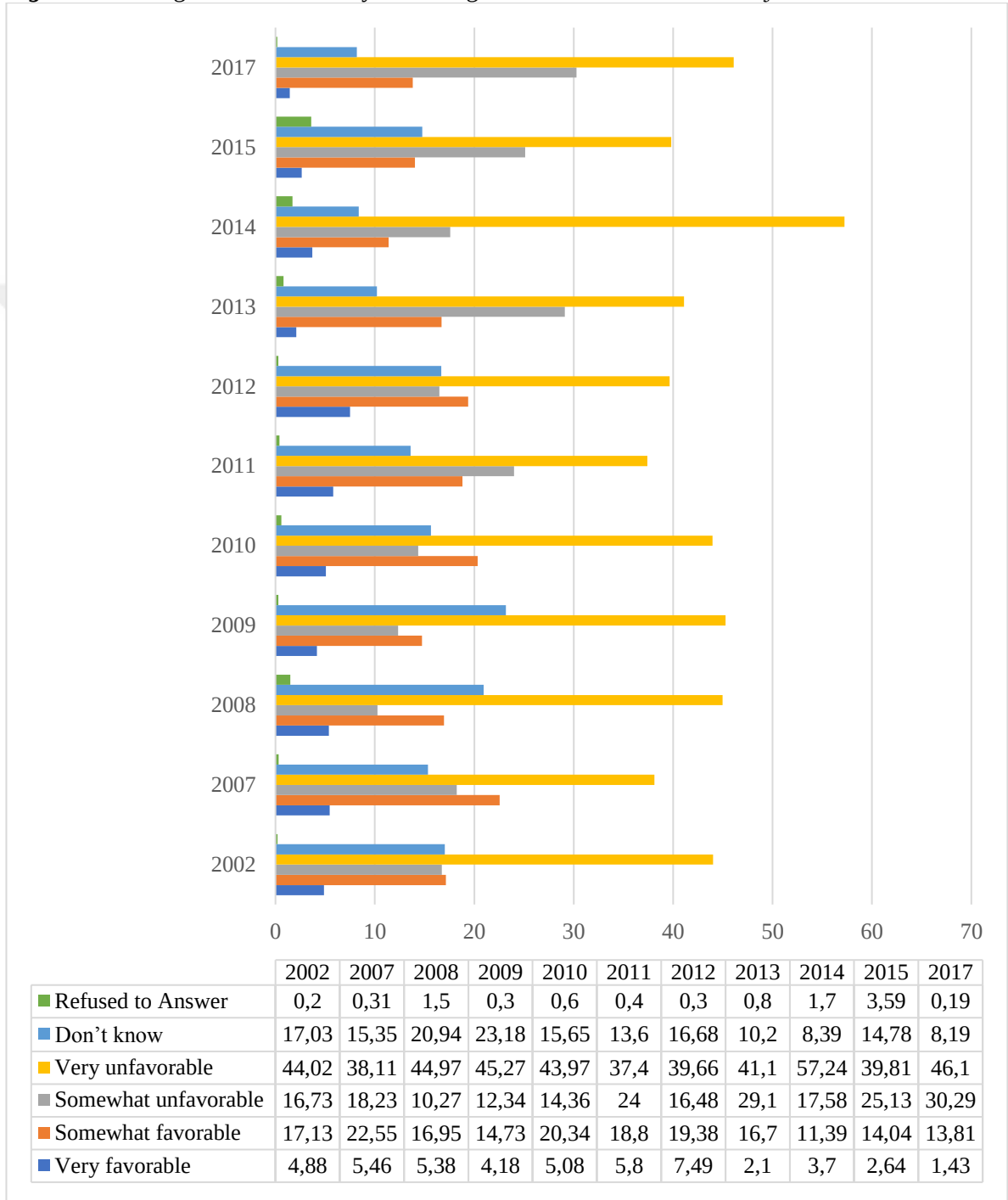
Year	Total No. of Observations*	Participants that answered the question (Response Rate) **	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
2002	1,004	831	3.20698	0.965925	1	4
2007	971	819	3.05495	0.988026	1	4
2008	1,003	778	3.22237	1.01376	1	4
2009	1,005	769	3.28999	0.959012	1	4
2010	1,003	840	3.16071	0.993005	1	4
2011	1,000	860	3.0814	0.957965	1	4
2012	1,001	831	3.06378	1.034128	1	4
2013	1,000	890	3.22697	0.832517	1	4
2014	1,001	900	3.42778	0.863489	1	4
2015	947	773	3.25097	0.852694	1	4
2017	1,050	962	3.32121	0.783378	1	4

* Total number of observations include all those who were studied in Turkey, including all those who chose "I don't know" as their answer or those who refused to answer.

** Participants who answered the question are those who chose either 1- Very Favorable, 2- Somewhat Favorable, 3- Somewhat Unfavorable and 4- Very Unfavorable.

Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2002 (Question number 61), 2007 (Question number 16), 2008 (Question number 10), 2009 (Question number 11), 2010 (Question number 61), 2011 (Question number 3), 2012 (Question number 8), 2013 (Question number 9), 2014 (Question number 15), 2015 (Question number 12) and 2017 (Question number 12) surveys.

Figure 2. 5: Image of Iran in Turkey according to Pew Global Attitudes Project's data.



Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2002 (Question number 61), 2007 (Question number 16), 2008 (Question number 10), 2009 (Question number 11), 2010 (Question number 61), 2011 (Question number 3), 2012 (Question number 8), 2013 (Question number 9), 2014 (Question number 15), 2015 (Question number 12) and 2017 (Question number 12) surveys.

What is obvious in Figure 2.5. at first glance is the quite high percentage (57.23%) of “very unfavorable” views in 2014. The reason for this partly lay behind the Turkish people’s view toward Iranian presidents and the Iranian state. In June 2013, Reformist-backed cleric Hassan Rouhani became Iran’s president, just after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was Iran’s president from 2005 to 2013. As shown in Table 2.4, there was a relatively higher confidence in President Ahmadinejad in 2012, compared to previous years.

Table 2. 3: Summary of data on Turkish people’s view toward Iranian President, Pew Global Attitudes Project.

Year	Total No. of Observations*	Total No. of Participants that answered the question**	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
2007	971	742	3.21159	0.981461	1	4
2008	1,003	777	3.351351	1.007115	1	4
2009	1,005	760	3.385526	0.950723	1	4
2010	1,003	773	3.294955	0.972917	1	4
2011	1,000	816	3.768382	0.550766	1	4
2012	1,001	851	2.764982	1.019225	1	4
2014	1,001	736	3.51087	0.874361	1	4
2015	947	703	3.173542	0.915853	1	4
2017	1,050	776	3.282216	0.813749	1	4

* Total number of observations include all those who were studied in Turkey, including all those who chose “I don’t know” as their answer or those who refused to answer.

** Total number of participants that answered the question are those who chose either 1- Very Favorable/a lot of Confidence, 2- Somewhat Favorable/Some Confidence, 3- Somewhat Unfavorable/ Not too much confidence and 4- Very Unfavorable/No confidence at all.

Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2007(Question number 60), 2008(Question number 21), 2009 (Question number 21), 2010 (Question number 34), 2011 (Question number 48), 2012 (Question number 44), 2014 (Question number 45), 2015 (Question number 106) and 2017 (Question number 60) surveys.

While there is an average of about 4.21% “a lot of confidence” and 11.24% “some confidence” for the years 2007 to 2011, there is 10.59% “a lot of confidence” and 24.68% “some confidence” in President Ahmadinejad in 2012. However, in 2014, one year after President Rouhani was elected, only 3.8% of Turkish respondents had a “very favorable” view and 7.49% of them had

a “somewhat favorable” view toward him. All of which could modify the general view towards Iran in Turkish respondents’ polls and cause the 2014 unfavorable rates to increase.

Table 2. 4: Image of Iranian President’s in Turkey for 9-years according to Pew Global Attitudes Project’s data.

	President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (2005 - 2013)						President Hassan Rouhani (2013 - Present)		
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014	2015	2017
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A lot of confidence	4.84	5.98	4.18	5.08	1	10.59			
Some confidence	15.86	12.46	12.64	13.16	2.1	24.68			
Not too much confidence	14.01	7.38	8.66	12.76	11.7	23.88			
No confidence at all	41.71	51.65	50.15	46.06	66.8	25.87			
Don’t know	23.27	20.54	24.18	21.93	17.6	14.49			
Refused to Answer	0.31	1.99	0.2	1	0.8	0.5			
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100			
Very favorable							3.8	4.33	1.43
Somewhat favorable							7.49	12.78	12.67
Somewhat unfavorable							9.59	22.81	23.43
Very unfavorable							52.65	34.32	36.38
Don’t know							24.98	21.54	24.95
Refused to Answer							1.5	4.22	1.14
Total							100	100	100

Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2007(Question number 60), 2008 (Question number 21), 2009 (Question number 21), 2010 (Question number 34), 2011 (Question number 48), 2012 (Question number 44), 2014 (Question number 45), 2015 (Question number 106) and 2017 (Question number 60) surveys.

2.4. Comparing Iran’s Image with Other Countries in Turkey: Findings from the Pew Global Attitudes Project

Beside Turkish people’s view toward Iran, their view toward the United States, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hamas and Hezbollah have all been questioned by asking the same question: “Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of “Inserted Countries/Organizations/religions.” Data summary of this question asking about different countries/organizations/religions other than Iran from Turkish respondents is given in Table 2.5.

Table 2. 5: Summary of data on Turkish people’s view toward the United States, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hamas, and Hezbollah from Pew Global Attitudes Project.

	Year	2002	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017
United States	Total No. of Observations *	1,004	971	1,003	1,005	1,003	1,000	1,001	1,000	1,001	947	1,050
	Participants that answered the question**	844	896	873	836	911	877	876	915	925	829	1015
	Mean	3.05	3.70	3.61	3.45	3.44	3.57	3.46	3.29	3.32	2.95	3.35
	Std. Dev.	1.04	0.69	0.81	0.86	0.85	0.74	0.89	0.93	0.94	0.98	0.88
	Min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Max	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
China	Total No. of Observations						1,000	1001	1,000	1,001	947	1,050
	Participants that answered the question						845	831	854	895	748	923
	Mean						3.29	3.19	3.09	3.30	3.15	2.89
	Std. Dev.						0.86	0.99	0.94	0.93	0.91	0.97
	Min						1	1	1	1	1	1
	Max						4	4	4	4	4	4
Russia	Total No. of Observations		971		1005	1,003	1,000		1,000	1,001	947	1,050
	Participants that answered the question		795		759	826	849		877	893	768	992
	Mean		3.36		3.45	3.37	3.28		3.23	3.42	3.23	3.01
	Std. Dev.		0.84		0.83	0.85	0.87		0.85	0.85	0.83	0.96
	Min		1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1
	Max		4		4	4	4		4	4	4	4

Saudi Arabia	Total No. of Observations		971	1003				1,001	1,000		947	1,050
	Participants that answered the question		767	782				822	838		771	947
	Mean		2.75	2.80				3.17	3.04		3.17	2.90
	Std. Dev.		1.03	1.10				1.04	1.01		0.94	0.96
	Min		1	1				1	1		1	1
	Max		4	4				4	4		4	4
European Union	Total No. of Observations					1,003	1000	1,001	1,000	1,001	947	1,050
	Participants that answered the question					861	868	841	887	910	790	1001
	Mean					3.13	3.20	3.24	3.04	3.16	2.83	3.05
	Std. Dev.					1.01	0.95	0.98	0.95	1.07	1.02	0.96
	Min					1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Max					4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Christians	Total No. of Observations		1,003	1005	1,003	1,000						
	Participants that answered the question		827	773	829	878						
	Mean		3.614	3.547	3.539	3.603						
	Std. Dev.		0.756	0.765	0.768	0.665						
	Min		1	1	1	1						
	Max		4	4	4	4						
Jews	Total No. of Observations		1,003	1005	1,003	1,000						
	Participants that answered the question		814	783	837	872						
	Mean		3.74	3.716	3.73	3.739						
	Std. Dev.		0.646	0.623	0.578	0.561						
	Min		1	1	1	1						
	Max		4	4	4	4						
Muslims	Total No. of Observations		1,003	1005	1,003	1,000						
	Participants that answered the question		944	897	928	952						
	Mean		1.428	1.886	1.745	1.939						
	Std. Dev.		0.793	1.141	1.067	1.156						
	Min		1	1	1	1						
	Max		4	4	4	4						

Hamis	Total No. of Observations	971	1003	1,005	1,003	1,000	1,001	1,000	1,001	947		
	Participants that answered the question	673	686	733	761	800	770	804	875	706		
	Mean	3.42	3.691	3.718	3.57	3.595	3.523	3.501	3.615	3.47		
	Std. Dev.	0.9	0.713	0.641	0.792	0.746	0.866	0.743	0.75	0.8		
	Min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Max	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		
Hezbollah	Total No. of Observations	971	1003	1,005	1,003	1,000	1,001	1,000	1,001	947		
	Participants that answered the question	730	768	753	794	821	789	824	894	706		
	Mean	3.63	3.839	3.806	3.717	3.717	3.684	3.569	3.71	3.61		
	Std. Dev.	0.77	0.536	0.523	0.642	0.627	0.693	0.721	0.638	0.72		
	Min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Max	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		
* Total number of observations include all those who were studied in Turkey, including all those who chose "I don't know" as their answer or those who refused to answer.												
** Participants that answered the question are those who chose either 1- Very Favorable, 2- Somewhat Favorable, 3- Somewhat Unfavorable and 4- Very Unfavorable.												

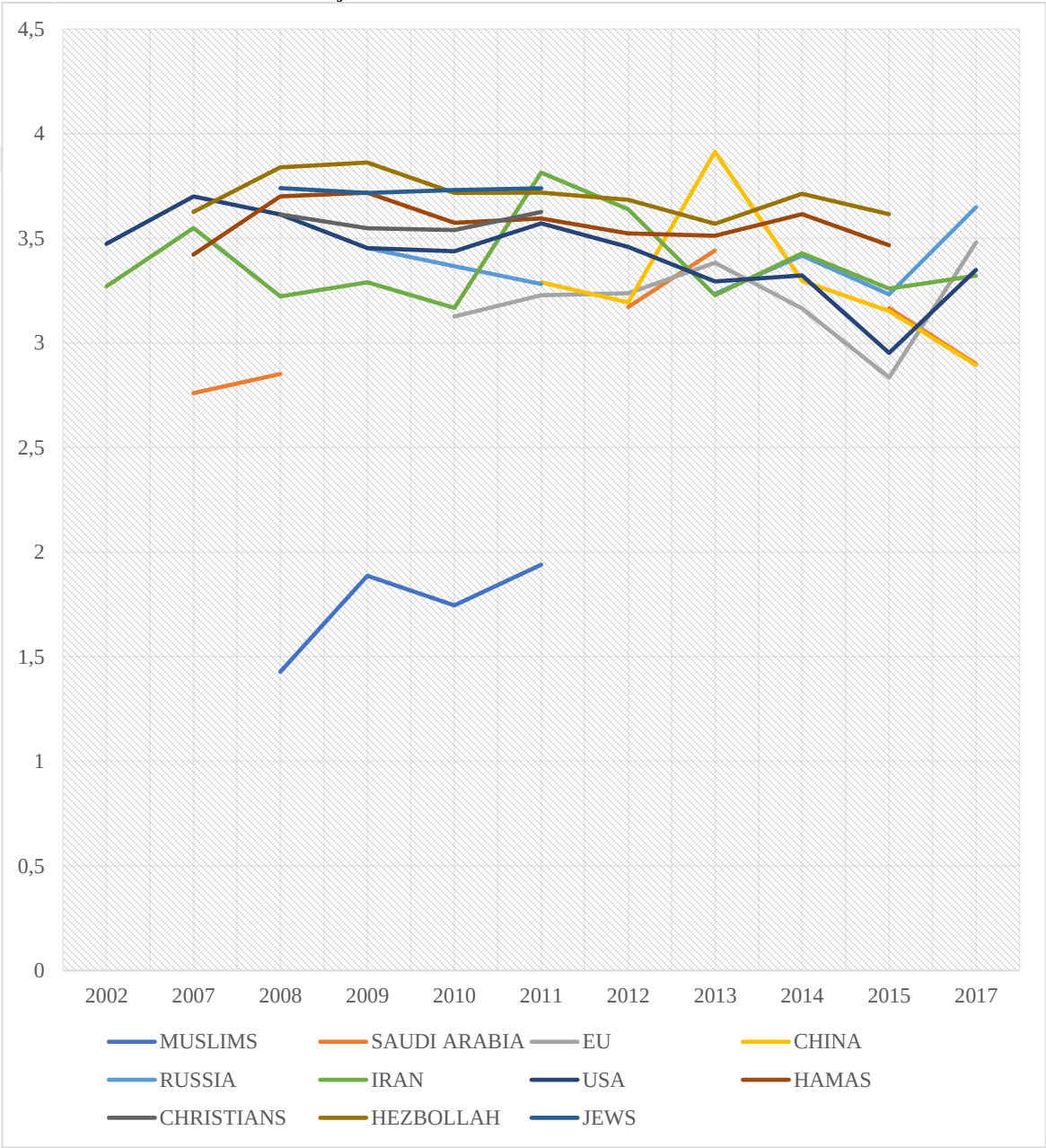
Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2002 (Question number 8, 61), 2007 (Question number 16), 2008 (Question number 10), 2009 (Question number 11), 2010 (Question number 61), 2011 (Question number 3), 2012 (Question number 8), 2013 (Question number 9), 2014 (Question number 15), 2015 (Question number 12) and 2017 (Question number 12) surveys.

To sum up these data, Figure 2.6 shows how Turkish people's view toward Iran, the USA, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the European Union, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hamas, and Hezbollah has changed from 2002 to 2017. While Turkish people's view toward Iran has had a lot of up and downs, their view toward other countries/organizations is nearly steady over the time frame. From 2002 to 2010, Turkish people were more negative toward the USA than Iran. However, this trend changed after 2010 and their view toward Iran became more negative than the USA for most of the years.

Figure 2.7 shows the average of data means for every country/organization in order to be able to compare these views. Accordingly, Turkish people have the worst view towards Jews and the best view toward Muslims. Their negative view towards Jews is even stronger than their negative view toward Hamas and Hezbollah. Considering the

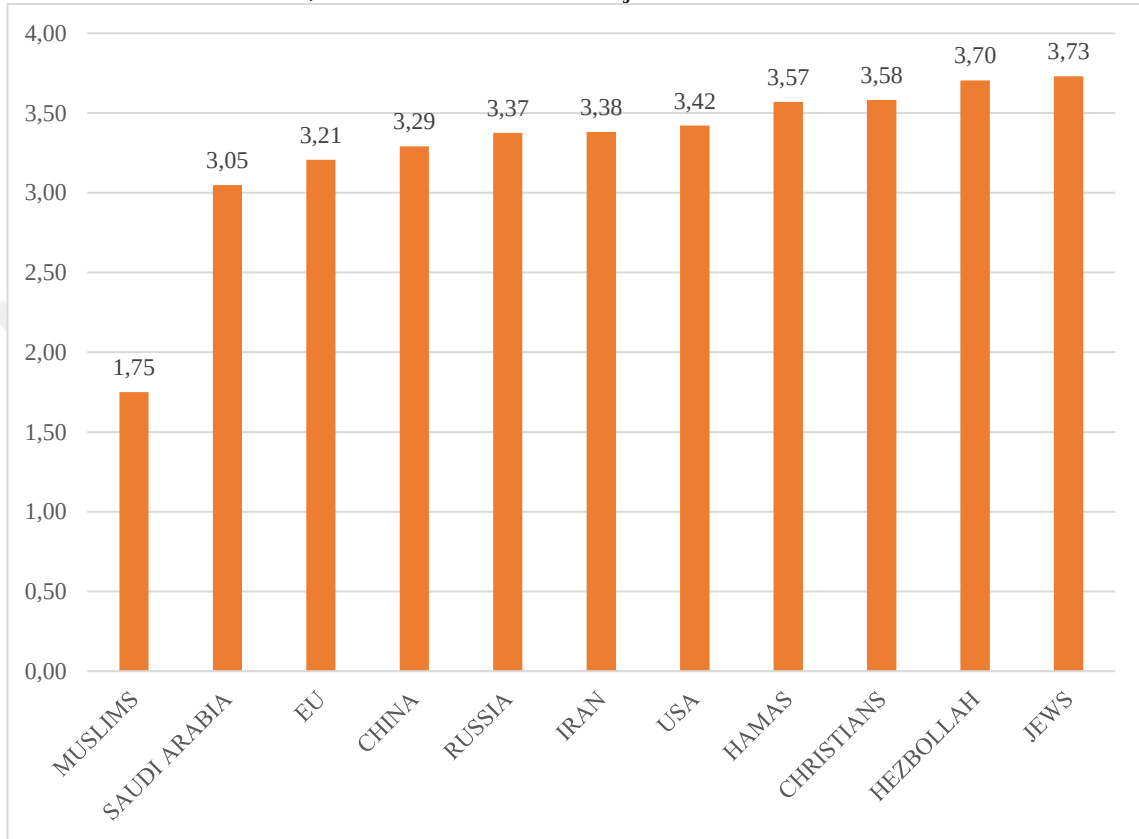
average levels, the image of Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, Iran, and the USA in Turkey are better in order.

Figure 2. 6: Turkish people’s view toward different countries and organizations from 2002 to 2017, Pew Global Attitudes Project.



Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project

Figure 2. 7: Turkish people’s view toward different countries and organizations, Average of means from 2002 to 2017, Pew Global Attitudes Project.



Source: *Pew Global Attitudes Project*

2.5. Comparing Iranian Presidents Image with Other Presidents in Turkey: Findings from the Pew Global Attitudes Project

In Pew Global Attitudes Project, not only the Turkish people’s view towards different countries and organizations, but also their view toward their Presidents/Prime Ministers/Kings has been studied. Respondents answered the question “Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of (the name of a President/Prime Minister/King)?” The summary of data for these answers is given in Table 2.6.

Table 2. 6: Summary of data on Turkish people's view toward Iranian, American, Russian, Israeli, Saudi Arabian, Turkish and Syrian Presidents/Prime Ministers/Kings Pew Global Attitudes Project.

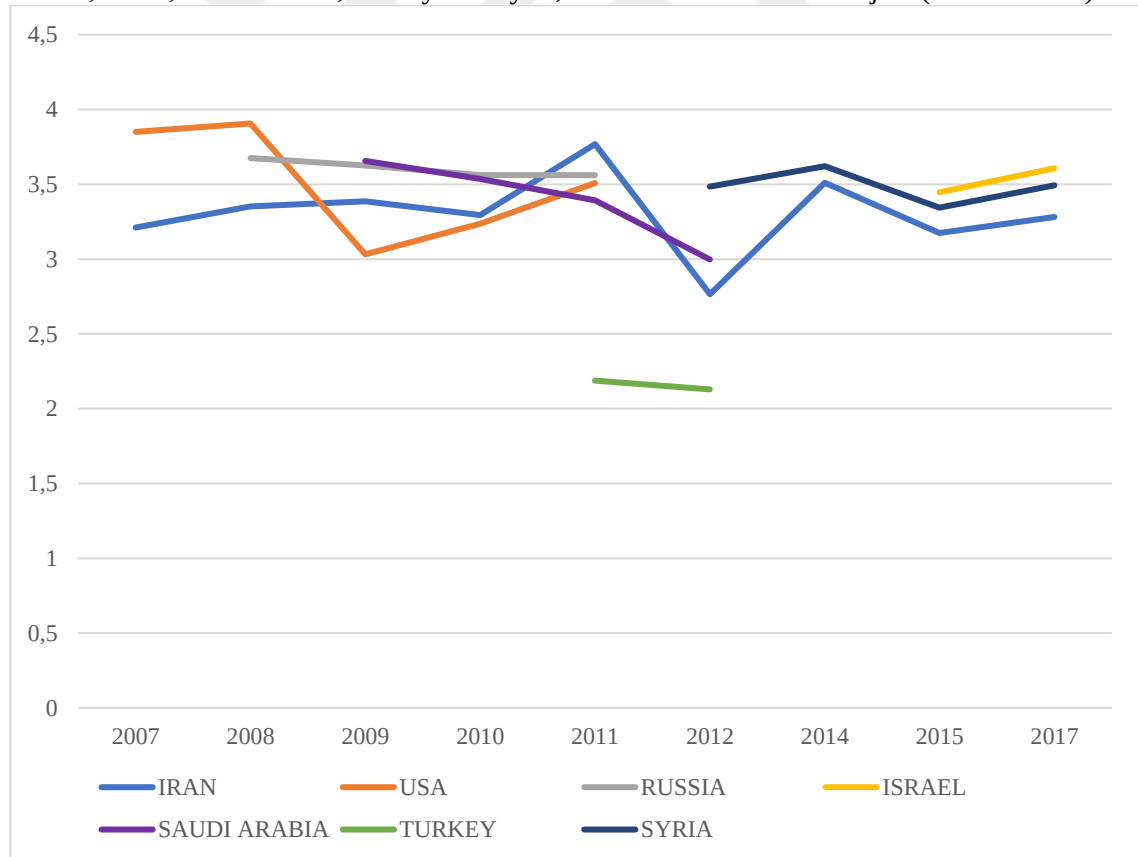
	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2014	2015	2017
Iranian Presidents (President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad from 2007 to 2012, and President Hassan Rouhani from 2013 to 2017).	Total No. of Observations*	971	1,003	1,005	1,003	1,000	1,001	1,001	947	1,050
	Total No. of participants that answered the question**	742	777	760	773	816	851	736	703	776
	Mean	3.21	3.35	3.39	3.29	3.77	2.76	3.51	3.17	3.28
	Std. Dev.	0.98	1.01	0.95	0.97	0.55	1.02	0.87	0.92	0.81
	Min	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Max	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
U.S. Presidents (President George W. Bush from 2007 to 2008 and President Barack Obama from 2009 to 2011)	Total No. of Observations*	971	1,003	1,005	1,003	1,000				
	Total No. of participants that answered the question**	891	898	847	879	855				
	Mean	3.85	3.91	3.03	3.24	3.51				
	Std. Dev.	0.45	0.39	1.03	0.94	0.77				
	Min	1	1	1	1	1				
	Max	4	4	4	4	4				
Russian Presidents (President Vladimir Putin in 2008 and President Dmitri Medvedev from 2009 to 2011).	Total No. of Observations*		1003	1,005	1,003	1,000				
	Total No. of participants that answered the question**		770	696	761	813				
	Mean		3.68	3.63	3.56	3.56				
	Std. Dev.		0.73	0.70	0.70	0.68				
	Min		1	1	1	1				
	Max		4	4	4	4				
Israeli Prime Minister (Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from 2009 to 2017).	Total No. of Observations*			1005		1,000			947	1,050
	Total No. of participants that answered the question**			774		833			726	911
	Mean			3.86176		3.86074			3.44628	3.60703

	Std. Dev.			0.40407		0.37953			0.78556	0.69481
	Min			1		1			1	1
	Max			4		4			4	4
Saudi Arabian Kings (Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah from 2007 to 2012 and King Salman in 2017)	Total No. of Observations*	971		1,005	1,003	1,000	1,001			1,050
	Total No. of participants that answered the question**	632		718	697	809	812			711
	Mean	3.27		3.66	3.54	3.39	3.00			2.96
	Std. Dev.	0.96		0.71	0.76	0.85	0.99			0.93
	Min	1		1	1	1	1			1
	Max	4		4	4	4	4			4
Turkish Prime Minister (Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan from 2011 to 2017)	Total No. of Observations*					1000	1,001			1,050
	Total No. of participants that answered the question**					948	938			1010
	Mean					2.19	2.13			1.80
	Std. Dev.					1.15	1.17			1.03
	Min					1	1			1
	Max					4	4			4
Syrian Presidents (President Bashar al-Assad from 2012 to 2017)	Total No. of Observations*						1001	1,001	947	1,050
	Total No. of participants that answered the question**						863	928	739	945
	Mean						3.48	3.62	3.34	3.49
	Std. Dev.						0.78	0.80	0.90	0.81
	Min						1	1	1	1
	Max						4	4	4	4
* Total number of observations include all those who were studied in Turkey, including all those who chose "I don't know" as their answer or those who refused to answer.										
** Total number of Participants that answered the question are those who chose either 1- Very Favorable/a lot of Confidence, 2- Somewhat Favorable/Some Confidence, 3- Somewhat Unfavorable/ Not too much confidence and 4- Very Unfavorable/No confidence at all.										

Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2007 (Question number 60), 2008 (Question number 21), 2009 (Question number 21), 2010 (Question number 34), 2011 (Question number 48), 2012 (Question number 44), 2014 (Question number 45), 2015 (Question number 106), and 2017 (Question number 60) surveys.

Figure 2.8 summarizes Turkish people's view toward presidents, prime ministers, or kings of Iran, the USA, Russia, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Syria from 2007 to 2017. Comparing it with others, the trends of Turkish people's view toward Iranian and American presidents have more up and downs. In Iran's case, both of the most favorable and unfavorable views belong to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. For the USA's case, the most unfavorable view belongs to President George W. Bush and the most favorable view is for President Barack Obama. In addition, while Turkish people's view toward Kings of Saudi Arabia became more positive, their view toward Israel's Prime Minister gain more negative weight during the time.

Figure 2. 8: Turkish people's view toward Presidents/Prime Ministers/Kings of Iran, USA, Russia, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Syria, Pew Global Attitudes Project (2007 to 2017).

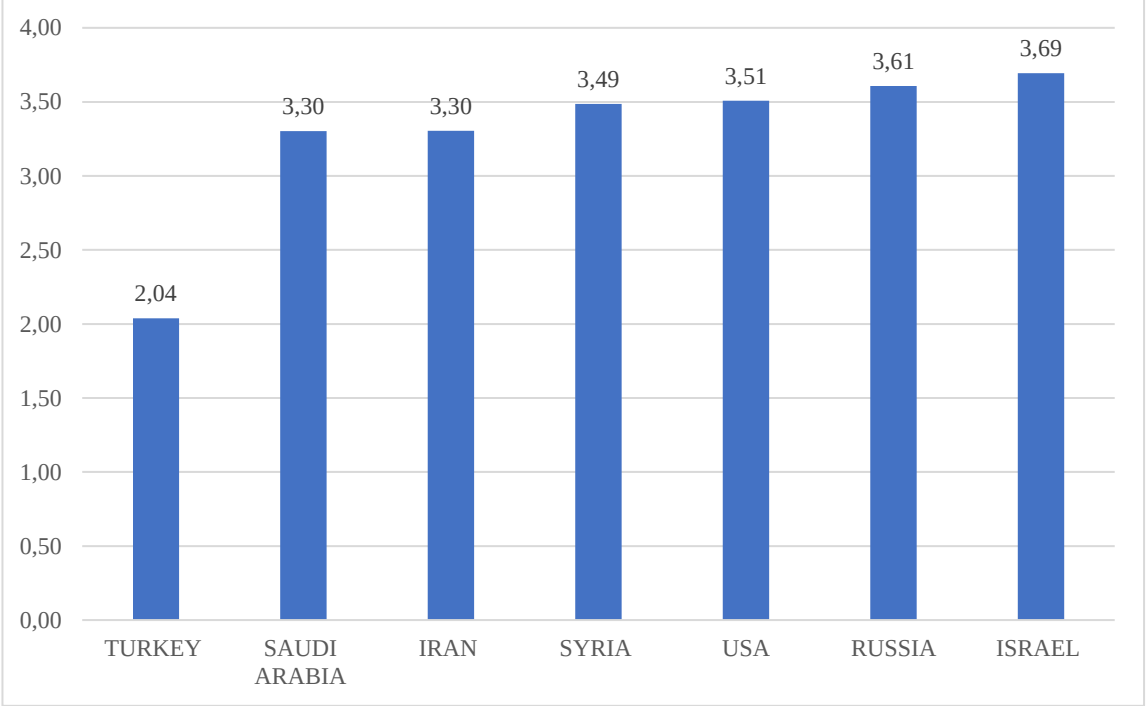


Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project Data

Figure 2.9 shows the average means of Turkish people's view toward each country from 2002 to 2017, which help us to compare these views. As a result, from 2002 to 2017,

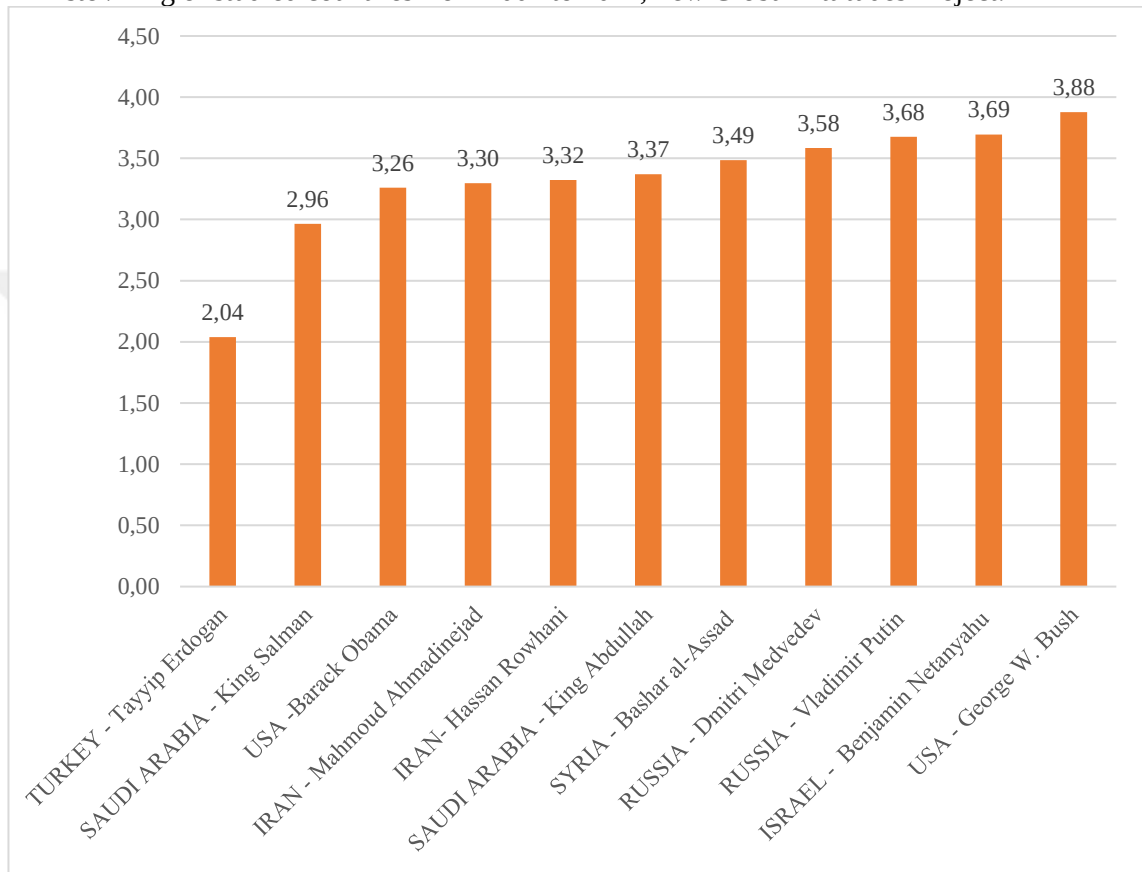
Turks had a more positive view toward Turkish, Saudi Arabian, Iranian, Syrian, American, Russian and Israeli Presidents/Prime Ministers/Kings in average in order. However, by taking a look to the Figure 2.10, we can see that among all, the worst view belongs to President George W. Bush. This is while President Obama had a less unfavorable view among all others except the Saudi Arabian King Salman and Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan.

Figure 2. 9: Turkish people’s view toward Presidents/Prime Ministers/Kings of Iran, USA, Russia, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Syria. Average means of each country from 2002 to 2017, Pew Global Attitudes Project.



Source: *Pew Global Attitudes Project Data*

Figure 2. 10: Turkish people’s view toward Presidents/Prime Ministers/Kings of Iran, USA, Russia, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Syria. Average means for each President/Prime Minister/King of studied countries from 2002 to 2017, Pew Global Attitudes Project.



Source: Pew Global Attitudes Project Data

2.6. Is There a Correlation Between Turkish People’s View Toward Iran and Their View Toward Other Countries?

In this section, the relationship between people’s view toward Iran and their view toward different countries, organizations and religions will be analyzed. In order to evaluate this, time series data analysis has been applied to the data of Pew Global Attitudes Project from 2007 to 2017 (considering that data for years prior to 2007 were missing for most of the countries). Details about the data are explained in the “2.3. Methodology” part of this chapter.

2.6.1. Methodology of Employing Correlation Analysis

As the data is a time series data and number of observations are different for the various countries, an annual average has been applied in order to apply correlation analysis. After applying descriptive analysis, Pearson Correlation analysis and Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation analysis have been employed. Pearson Correlation is commonly used to measure the correlations among pairs of variables or within and between sets of variables and it can show whether there is a statistically significant linear relationship between two continuous variables.

As data used in this research were Likert Scale and they were not the continuous type, Spearman's correlation coefficient has been applied as well. Spearman's correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of association between two ranked variables. According to the data type employed in this research, Spearman's correlation coefficient results are more accurate and more appropriate for correlation analysis. As the results of correlation analysis showed that there was no statistically significant correlation at a 5% significance level, no regression analyses were employed.

2.6.2. Descriptive Statistics

Data descriptive analysis is given in Table 2.7. According to this – as elaborated before – the mean of Turkish people's view toward Iran, China, the European Union, Russia, the United States and Saudi Arabia are mostly “Unfavorable”, which shows as a number between 3 and 4. Standard deviation for most of the countries is about 0, it means that there are no fluctuations in Turkish people's attitude in different years toward these countries. Among selected countries, the United States has the most and Iran has the least fluctuation, which means Turkish people's attitude had up and downs towards the USA during the time, but it seems more stable toward Iran. Moreover, the maximum average value among all selected countries belongs to the USA (3.7) which represents a “very unfavorable” view and the minimum belongs to Saudi Arabia (2.75) that represents a “somewhat unfavorable” view.

Unit Root Test has been applied to all the data and all variables are stationary; so that we can run correlation analysis and the result would be reliable. By using EViews program, Pearson Correlation Analysis (Table 2.8) and Spearman Correlation Analysis (Table 2.9) have been applied. Due to missing data for a couple of years for Saudi Arabia, this country has been excluded from Spearman Correlation Analysis to avoid errors. The results support that there is no statistically significant correlation between variables at a 5% significance level, which indicates that there is no relation between Turkish people's view toward Iran and their view toward other countries.

Table 2. 7: Pew Global Attitudes Project Data descriptive analysis.

	CHINA	EU	IRAN	RUSSIA	SAUDI ARABIA	US
Mean	3.15	3.09	3.21	3.29	2.97	3.41
Median	3.17	3.13	3.22	3.32	2.97	3.45
Maximum	3.30	3.24	3.43	3.45	3.17	3.70
Minimum	2.89	2.83	3.05	3.01	2.75	2.95
Std. Dev.	0.15	0.14	0.12	0.14	0.18	0.21
Skewness	-0.78	-0.91	0.21	-0.95	-0.02	-0.87
Kurtosis	2.53	2.90	2.14	3.15	1.37	3.60
Jarque - Bera	0.67	0.98	0.38	1.22	0.66	1.41
Probability	0.72	0.61	0.83	0.54	0.72	0.49
Observations	6.00	7.00	10.00	8.00	6.00	10.00

Source: *Pew Global Attitudes Project Data*

However, one should mention that at a 10% significance level, there is a strong correlation between Turkish people's view towards the United States and the European Union. In addition, results support the fact that, again, at a 10% significance level, there is a strong correlation between Turkish people's view towards China and Russia.

Table 2. 8: Pearson correlation result.

Covariance Analysis: Ordinary

Date: 06/28/19 Time: 14:36

Sample (adjusted): 2013 2017

Included observations: 3 after adjustments

Balanced sample (listwise missing value deletion)

Correlation						
Probability	CHINA	EU	IRAN	SAUDI ARABIA	RUSSIA	US
CHINA	1 -----					
EU	-0.708348 0.4989	1 -----				
IRAN	-0.890979 0.3	0.310629 0.7989	1 -----			
SAUDI ARABIA	0.968682 0.1597	-0.86143 0.3391	-0.75033 0.4598	1 -----		
RU	0.972375 0.15	-0.52402 0.6489	-0.97235 0.1501	0.883961 0.3097	1 -----	
US	-0.769247 0.4413	0.995907 0.0576**	0.39527 0.7413	-0.903811 0.2815	-0.59885 0.5912	1 ----- -

Note: *, **, *** indicates 10%, 5%, 1% of significance level.

Table 2. 9: Spearman rank-order correlation result.

Covariance Analysis: Spearman rank-order
Date: 06/28/19 Time: 14:28
Sample (adjusted): 2011 2017
Included observations: 5 after adjustments
Balanced sample (listwise missing value deletion)

Correlation Probability Iran	Iran	US	EU	Russia	China
	1 -----				
US	-0.2 0.7471	1 -----			
EU	-0.1 0.8729	0.9 0.0374	1 -----		
Russia	0 1	0.2 0.7471	0.6 0.2848	1 -----	
China	0.1 0.8729	0.1 0.8729	0.5 0.391	0.9 0.0374**	1 -----

Note: *, **, *** indicates 10%, 5%, 1% of significance level.

2.7. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, the data from Pew Global Attitudes Project, which has been applied on a sample size of about 1000 people for more than 30 countries from 2003 to 2017, has been evaluated. Results suggest that in 2003, most Turkish respondents considered Iran as “no danger at all” to the stability of the Middle East. However, from 2007 to 2013, at least 54% of Turkish respondents were opposed and maximum 29.97% of them were in favor of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. Most Turkish respondents also considered Iran’s nuclear program as a “very serious threat.” In 2008 and 2013, more than 65% of Turkish respondents thought that the Iranian state were not respecting the personal freedoms of its people. For the studied years of 2010, 2011 and 2015 results revealed that Turkish people generally disapproved more of President Obama’s policies toward Iran, rather than

approved. In addition, Pew Global Attitudes Project results suggest that from 2002 to 2017, Turkish people had a generally negative view toward Iran, and they were mostly “unfavorable” toward this country. By taking a narrow look at the results, one can acknowledge that from 2007 to 2017, Turkish respondents showed a more confident and favorable view toward President Ahmadinejad, compared with President Rowhani.

It is interesting to know that from 2002 to 2010, Turkish people were more negative toward the USA than Iran. However, this trend changed after 2010 and their view toward Iran was more negative than the USA for most of the years. Among others, Turkish people have the most negative view toward Jews. In addition, Pearson Correlation analysis and Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation analysis have been applied to Pew Global Attitudes Project data and the results support the fact that there is no statistically significant correlation at a 5% significance level between Turkish people's view toward Iran and their view toward other countries.

Considering the average level, the image of Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, Iran and the USA in Turkey are better in that order. Moreover, Turkish people are more trusting and in favor of the Presidents/Prime Ministers/Kings of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, USA, Russia, and Israel in order. This may reveal that Turkish people's being favorable or unfavorable to a country is dependent on their view toward the government of that country. However, Pew results do not show if Turkish people's view toward Iran is the same as their view toward Iranians, and if the cultural aspects, religious similarities and contact or connection with Iranians would affect Turkish people's perception of Iran. In addition, Pew results do not make a differentiation between Turkish elite and public views. This study is designed to investigate both the Turkish public and the elite view toward not only Iran, but also Iranians. In addition, as this study gives more updated information about the image of Iran in Turkey, it can be used as a source to compare current and previous views of Turkish people on Iran.

CHAPTER THREE:

DATA, METHODOLOGY, AND THE EMPIRICAL RESULTS OF PUBLIC RESPONDENTS

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, results from the primary data analysis are presented and examined in detail. The chapter aims to examine the Turkish public respondents' view toward Iran and its general image, Iranian state policies and its effect on Turkey's security, religion in Iran, and Iranian identity and culture. It includes 4 main parts entailing data and methodology, empirical results, regression analyses and conclusions.

3.2. Data & Methodology

Data for the analysis were collected by conducting a face to face questionnaire on Turkish respondents aged 18+ and living in Turkey. The sample size, including 1150 respondents, were in NUTS1 level (Statistical Region Unit 1 level), in which the respondents were from 12 different cities of Turkey including Istanbul (20.2%), Ankara (13.5%), Adana (10.7%), Diyarbakir (10.6%), Bursa (8.9%), Izmir (8.6%), Kayseri 6.7%), Balikesir (6.6%), Malatya (5.6%), Zonguldak (4.5%), Trabzon (2.1%), and Erzurum (2.0%).

In terms of methods, the results of data analysis will be first presented as descriptive statistics. Then, the results of Logistic Regression models will be presented as causality analysis.

3.3. Empirical Results

3.3.1. Demography

Results for the surveys are based on face-to-face survey technique. The first part of the survey evaluates the respondent's demographic information. According to the results, 49.5% of respondents were male and the rest were female respondents. About 15.6% of

the respondents are 18-24 years old, 23.4% were 25-34 years old, 21.7% were 35-44 years old, 16.7% were 45-54 years old, 11.9% were 55-64 years old and 10.7% were more than 65 years old. Comparing with PEW's generation groups for American adults' segmentation, the average of Turkish public respondents can be identified as Millennials.⁴

In terms of education, only 19.3% of the respondents graduated from a university and 8.6% of the respondents are not educated (never attended or not graduated from a school). As such, most of the respondent's education level can be considered as either up to elementary school, middle school, or high school. In addition, 65.6% of the respondents are married, 28.4% are single and the rest are either widow/widower, divorced or no answer. Most of the total monthly income of the family of the respondents is around 2501 – 3500 TL (43.4%) that is about 440 USD to 616 USD ⁵ (Table 3.1).

Table 3. 1: Total monthly income of the family of the public respondents.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
2020-2500 TL	185	16,1%	16,6%
2501-3000 TL	251	21,8%	22,5%
3001-3500 TL	233	20,2%	20,9%
3501-4000 TL	164	14,3%	14,7%
4001-4500 TL	168	14,6%	15,1%
4501-5000 TL	59	5,1%	5,3%
More than 5001 TL	54	4,7%	4,8%
Total	1113	96,8%	100%
No answer	37	3,2%	-
	1150	100%	-

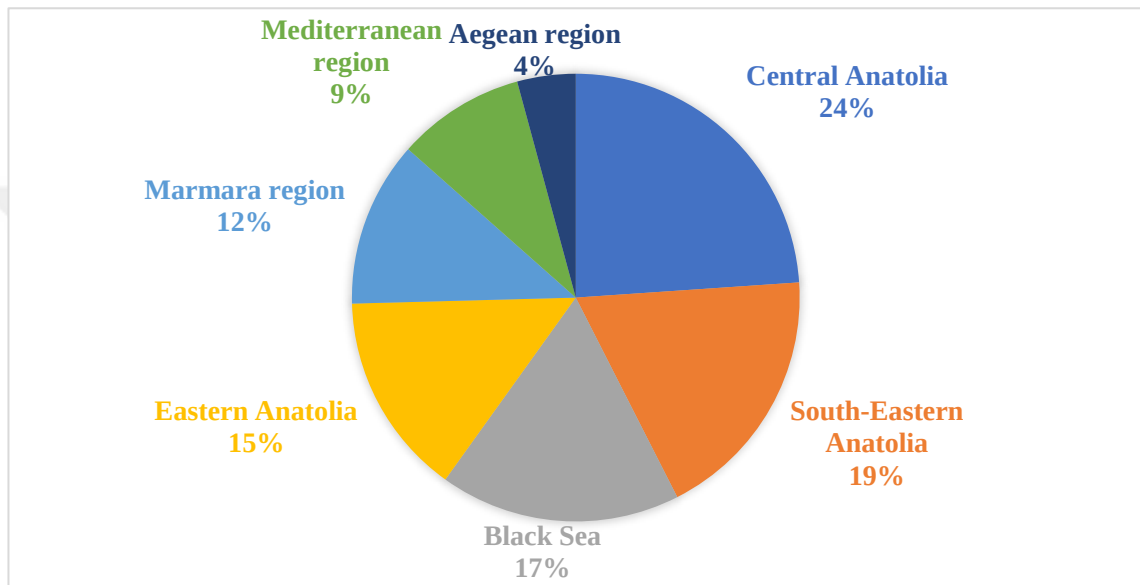
According to the results, 23.8% of the respondents are originally from the Central Anatolia region of Turkey, 18.5% from the South-Eastern Anatolia region, 17.3% are from the Black Sea region, 14.6% from the Eastern Anatolia region, 11.9% from the Marmara

⁴ "Generations and Age" Retrieved on 31.08.2019 from <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/generations-and-age/>

⁵ Considered rate: 1 USD = 5.6792, Central bank of Turkey's rate on 08.03.2019, retrieved from http://www.tcmb.gov.tr/kurlar/kurlar_tr.html .

region, 9.2% from the Mediterranean region, 4.2% from the Aegean region, 0.3% from overseas and 0.2% gave no answer (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3. 1: Origin of Turkish public respondents according to the regions in Turkey.



3.3.2. Information about the Respondents and Their Past Experience with Iran and Iranians

The second part of the survey is designed to gather information about the respondents. For example, respondents have been asked about the amount of their internet usage, their feelings about the culture and languages of other countries they know, the number of times they have been abroad, if they know any Iranian people in person or in their neighborhood, etc.

Understanding the amount of internet usage by respondents help us to acknowledge the level of their information and their relation with the outside world that may affect their view toward other countries, especially neighboring countries like Iran. Our survey results show that 19.1% of the public respondents do not use the internet at all - among whom 89.9% are uneducated respondents -, 18.6% use the internet less than an hour a day, 28.2% use it between 2 and 3 hours a day, 17.3% between 4 and 5 hours a

day, 8.6% between 6 and 7 hours a day and about 8.2% use the internet more than 8 hours a day.

In addition, respondents have been asked about the culture that they feel is closer to Turkish culture. Interestingly, 49.4% of the public respondents feel themselves closer to European culture, 29.2% to Arab culture, 7.6% to Iranian culture, and 6.1% to the Central Asian culture. Noting that while 78.8% of uneducated respondents feel their culture is closer to Arab culture, most university graduate respondents find themselves in a closer link with European culture.

When respondents were asked if they would prefer to live in another country rather than Turkey, their answers suggest that among 671 person (58.3%) who responded positively to this question, most would prefer to live in Germany (14.8%), United States of America (11%), Saudi Arabia (7.6%), France (7%), Britain (5.8%), Italy (4.2%), Norway (3.9%), Canada (3.6%), Russia (3.6%), Australia (3.1%), Switzerland (2.4%), Sweden (2.1%), Netherlands, Azerbaijan (1.8%), Spain (1.6%), Japan (1.5%), Iran (1.3%), Greece (1%), Cyprus (1%) and China (1%).⁶

Furthermore, results demonstrate that most of the public respondents (78.3%) do not speak any other language than Turkish. However, results support that by improving the education level, the probability of knowing a foreign language for respondents increases. The most known languages by those respondents who know at least one foreign language are English (58.4%), Arabic (16.5%), German (10%), Kurdish (4.1%), French (3.1%), Zaza (1.7%), Persian (1.7%), Russia (1.4%), Spanish (0.7%), Greek (0.3%), Italian (0.3%), and Romaic (0.3%) in order.

Among all the respondents, only 10.6% have been abroad before. However, results reveal an interesting fact: most of the respondents who have been abroad before, among others, feel their culture closer with Iranian culture (Table 3.2). The first 20 countries that

⁶ Only the 20 first countries have been mentioned.

respondents have traveled to before are as follows: Saudi Arabia (32%), Germany (10.9%), Iraq (6.3%), Cyprus (4.7%), Georgia (4.7%), Russia (3.9%), Italy (3.9%), France (3.1%), the United Kingdom (3.1%), Romania (3.1%), Ukraine (2.3%), Iran (1.6%), Switzerland (1.6%), Greece (1.6%), United States of America (1.6%), Kirghizstan (1.6%), Afghanistan (0.8%), Spain (0.8%) and Bulgaria (0.8%).

Table 3. 2: The relation between being abroad and a culture that respondents feel a closer tie with.

	Respondents who have been abroad before	Respondents who have not been abroad before	Total
Arab culture	11,4%	88,6%	100,0%
Iranian culture	36,8%	63,2%	100,0%
Central Asian culture	1,4%	98,6%	100,0%
European culture	7,3%	92,7%	100,0%
None	13,3%	86,7%	100,0%

Table 3. 3: Respondents ratings of their feelings about living with Iranians or visiting or living in Iran.

	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average (out of 5)
	Not Positive at all	Not Positive	Neither Positive nor Negative	Positive	Very Positive		
Becoming a Friend with Iranians	20,4	20,7	32,9	20,4	5,6	100,0	2,7
Visiting Iran	26,2	19,9	24,0	21,3	8,7	100,0	2,66
Becoming a neighbor with Iranians	24,5	23,8	28,1	17,3	6,3	100,0	2,57
Becoming a roommate with Iranians	30,4	25,8	23,6	14,3	5,9	100,0	2,39
Working in Iran	32,8	22,1	24,5	14,8	5,8	100,0	2,39
Study in Iran	31,5	26,5	22,6	13,6	5,7	100,0	2,35
Living in Iran	34,7	24,5	23,5	11,2	6,1	100,0	2,3
Marry with an Iranian person	36,7	24,3	23,6	11,2	4,2	100,0	2,22

Based on the results, most of the public respondents (79.4%) have not met or only met a few Iranians before and only 7% of respondents have/had Iranians friends. In addition, the average of public respondents answers about their feeling regarding “becoming a friend with Iranians, visiting Iran, becoming a neighbor with Iranians, becoming a roommate with Iranians, working in Iran, studying in Iran, living in Iran, marrying with an Iranian person” were somewhere between “not positive” and “neither positive nor negative” view (Table 3.3).

3.3.3. General Image of Iran

In the first question of the third part of the questionnaire, “General Image of Iran,” respondents were asked to say the first word coming to their mind once they hear the word “Iran”. Among 1002 respondents who answered this question, 123 (10.7%) said the first word that came to their mind when they hear Iran’s name is “oil.” The 20 most frequent answers are “Sharia, neighbor, Muslim, execution, religion, nuclear weapon, Shia, pressure, repulsive, country, Arab, war, Khomeini, money, regime, bigotry, unreliable, hijab, tourism and being rich.”⁷

In order to have the chance to compare respondents view toward Iranians and other nationalities, they were asked to rate their view toward the people of different countries. The result shows that Turkish public respondents have a more positive view toward Azeris, Japanese, Russians, Iranians, Spanish, Germans, Italians, Arabs, French, Chinese, British and Americans in that order.

Answers to the question “please tell us if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of Iran?” shows that about 16.1% of respondents have a “very unfavorable” view toward Iran, and most of the respondents (36.9%) are “neutral.” The average of the results is about 2.74 out of 5, that

⁷ Exact answers in Turkish language are: “Petrol, Şeriat, Komşu, Müslüman, İdam, Din, Nükleer silah, Şii, Baskı, İtici, Ülke, Arap, Savaş, Humeyni, Para, Rejim, Yobazlık, Güvenilmezlik, Tesettür, Turizm, Zenginlik”

is somewhere between “somewhat unfavorable” and “neutral” views toward Iran. Compared with the same answers for the same question in PEW Global Attitudes Project of 2017 (that have been explained in detail in Chapter 3), if not considering the “neutral” answers for 2019 respondents, there is a 30% decrease in “very unfavorable” view of Turkish people toward Iran in 2019. At the same time, the “very favorable” view of Turkish people toward Iran has increased from 1.43% to 5.2%, and their “somewhat favorable” view has increased from 13.81% to 19% (Table 3.4).

Table 3. 4: View of Turkish public respondents toward Iran: comparing the current study’s results of 2019 with 11 years results of the PEW Global Attitudes Project.

	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Neutral	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
2002	4.88	17.13		16.73	44.02
2007	5.46	22.55		18.23	38.11
2008	5.38	16.95		10.27	44.97
2009	4.18	14.73		12.34	45.27
2010	5.08	20.34		14.36	43.97
2011	5.8	18.8		24	37.4
2012	7.49	19.38		16.48	39.66
2013	2.1	16.7		29.1	41.1
2014	3.7	11.39		17.58	57.24
2015	2.64	14.04		25.13	39.81
2017	1.43	13.81		30.29	46.1
2019	5.2	19	36.9	22.7	16.1

Respondents believe that among others, first Media (TV, Newspaper, Radio and Journals), second Social Media (Tweeter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.), third Books, fourth Friends Ideas, fifth the Iranians that the respondent knows /observes and lastly Music has affected their idea about Iran and Iranians the most.

Not surprisingly, among Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, most of the respondents (64.1%) consider Turkey as the regional power in the Middle East, 9.4% chose Iran, 7.9% chose none of the options, 4.9% chose Saudi Arabia, 2.7% chose Egypt, and 10.9% chose “I don’t know.” They also chose the same order of countries when asked to answer the same question but for ten years’ time. This means that Turkish respondents believe the main regional power is Turkey and Iran stands in second place, either now or in the near future.

3.3.4. Iranian State Policies

The fourth part of the questionnaire evaluates the respondents view toward the policies of the state of Iran. Results shows that at least 60% of respondents know each Iranian president, in which 62.4% of respondents know President Rowhani, 63.2% know President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, 72.2% know President Mohammad Khatami and 72.5% know about President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. However, there is an average confidence in Iranian presidents by Turkish public respondents.

Table 3.5 represents Turkish public respondents view toward the Iranian state. Results demonstrate that on average, respondents believe that there are violations of human rights in Iran and so the current regime in Iran should change. They also believe that Iran follows a sectarian (Sunni-Shiite) foreign policy towards the Middle East. The average of answers about the respondents’ view toward the Iranian state is either neutral or they do not have a favorable opinion toward the Iranian state. Again, among Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, most of the respondents (76.1%) believe that Turkey contributes more to regional peace than the others. However, still Iran is in second place compared with Egypt in third and Saudi Arabia in the last place.

Table 3. 5: Public respondents view toward Iranian state.

	1	2	3	4	5		
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Average (out of 5)
There are human right violations in Iran	6,2	13,5	35,6	29,0	15,7	100,0	3,34
The current regime in Iran should change	6,5	12,5	38,8	27,2	14,9	100,0	3,31
Iran follows a sectarian (Sunni-Shiite) foreign policy towards the Middle East	7,4	10,2	46,1	26,9	9,5	100,0	3,21
Iran is a victim of biased propaganda of enemies	5,9	16,4	48,1	22,7	6,8	100,0	3,08
In a broad view, I have a favorable opinion toward the Iranian state	18,1	25,2	33,2	20,7	2,7	100,0	2,65
Government of Iran respects the personal freedoms of its people	16,4	29,0	32,4	18,6	3,5	100,0	2,64

3.3.5. Opinion Toward Religion in Iran

The fifth part of the questionnaire evaluates the respondent's opinion toward religion in Iran, starting with questions about the respondent's view toward religion itself and their degree of being religious. 97.3% of the respondents believe that they belong to a religious denomination and among those who are not, 88.2% are Atheist and 11.2% are Agnostic. Among those who considered themselves as being denominating to a religion, 93.7% are

Sunni Muslims, 6% are Alevi Muslims and 0.3% are Shia Muslims. In addition, 75.3% of them considered themselves as “quite religious,” 13.2% as “unsure /neutral,” 6.3% as “very religious,” 4.5% as “not very religious” and 0.7% as “not religious at all.”

In order to understand more about the religiosity degree of the respondents, they were asked if they do five daily prayers (called “Salat” in Arabic and “Namaz” in Turkish and Persian), how much time they spend in private religious activities, such as prayer, or reading the Quran and how often they attend mosque or other religious meetings (Table 3.6). It should be mentioned that among female respondents, 51.5% wear the Hijab and among male respondents, 29.5% rarely participate in Friday prayers, 27.2% often participate in Friday prayers, 18.6% usually participate in Friday prayers, 16.4% always participate in Friday prayers and 8.3% never participate in Friday prayers. Note that females do not participate in Friday prayers in Turkey. As among others, the most important factor for being a religious Muslim is praying Namaz, this survey considered the rate of praying Namaz for Turkish respondents as the degree of their religiosity. As such, one can conclude that about 55.9% of respondents are considered as religious, and about 44.1% of respondents are considered as being unreligious.

Table 3. 6: Respondents religious practices frequency.

Praying Namaz	Spending time in private religious activities, such as prayer, or reading Quran	Attending mosque or other religious meetings
32.6% rarely	31.7% Couple of times in a week	23% Never
23.7% often	27% A few times a month	21% A few times a year
16.7% almost always	20.2% A few times a year	20.6% A few times a month
15.5% usually	10.9% Once a year or less	18% Couple of times in a week
11.5% never	10.2% Never	17.4% Once a year or less

According to the results elaborated in Table 3.7, the average of Turkish public respondents consider Iranian people as “quite religious.” This is actually what may be perceived globally of Iranian people, mainly because of its Islamic state, but there is some

evidence about that while there is a wide literature on the fact that although the Iranian state appears as one of the most religious governments in the world, the Iranian people find themselves at a deeper distance, further from Islam day by day. Prokopowicz (2009) cited *The New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, who stated that “In much of the world, young Muslims are increasingly religious, but compulsive Islam has soured some Iranians on religion.” Thus, Turkish people generally consider Iranians as quite religious people while there is accumulating evidence that atheism is on the rise especially among the youth in Iran, which is likened by some to a “tsunami of atheism” (Deutsche Welle, 2013).

Table 3. 7: Turkish Public Respondents view towards Iranians in terms of Religiosity.

	Frequency	Percentage
1- Not Religious at all	38	3,3%
2- Not very Religious	117	10,2%
3- Unsure/Neutral	363	31,6%
4- Quite religious	433	37,7%
5-Very religious	198	17,2%
Total	1148	100%
Average	1148	3.82 out of 5

Furthermore, Turkish public respondents were asked if they prefer religion and politics becoming combined in Turkish governmental structure, the same as in Iranian state, as all the rules in Iran are according to Islam and a religious leader heads the country. 63% of respondents do not prefer such a system and 8.9% prefer no separation between religion and politics in the Turkish governmental system. 28.1% of respondents replied “I don’t know” to this question. Moreover, comparing Shia and Sunni Muslims, 28.8% of Turkish public respondents believe that Shias are more radical than Sunni Muslims and 20.5% think the reverse. However, there are 50.7% of respondents who do not know the answer.

3.3.6. Iran & Turkey's Security

This part of the questionnaire evaluates Turkish public opinion toward Iran on security aspects. The first question was asked to understand if Turkish public respondents consider Iran as a partner or as a competitor of Turkey. Results show that while 37% of respondents consider Iran as a competitor, 24.3% believe that Iran is a partner of Turkey. 37.2% of the respondents did not know the answer, and 1.5% of the respondents considered Iran as neither competitor nor partner of Turkey.

Table 3.8. shows the respondents threat evaluation about different issues in the Middle East. On average, Turkish public respondents consider the Syrian civil war as the highest threat for Turkey. While they consider “Iran’s nuclear program” as the second major threat, Turkish respondents believe that “International sanctions on Iran” can be the third biggest threat for their country. Whereas Iran’s nuclear program and international sanctions on Iran have been rated by Turkish public respondents as a threat for Turkish security, international sanctions on Iran are mainly a result of Iran’s nuclear program itself.

Table 3. 8: Public Respondents Threat Evaluation about Different Issues in the Region.

	Not a Threat	A Minor Threat	Average Threat	Threat	A Major Threat	Total	Average*
The Syrian civil war	10,9	9,7	19,4	32,6	27,4	100,0	3,56
Iran's nuclear program	13,5	7,5	22,6	33,6	22,8	100,0	3,45
International sanctions on Iran	12,9	7,5	26,0	30,7	22,9	100,0	3,43
Islamic extremist groups	13,4	10,6	20,3	32,7	23,1	100,0	3,41
Political instability in Iran	15,2	11,1	21,5	31,4	20,9	100,0	3,32
*The Average has been calculated from 1-5 rates							

Turkish public respondents' opinion about different issues on security of the Middle East are presented in Table 3.9. Although the average of respondents believe that Turkey slightly contributes to peace and stability in the Middle East, there are about 24% of respondents who slightly or strongly do not agree with this. In addition, while the average of respondents believe that Iran is not a threat for Turkish security and Turkey should build a strong relationship with Iran, they believe that Iranian policy is contributing to a sectarian division in the Arab world, it does not take the interest of other countries in the Middle East into account and it is not working to promote peace and stability in the region.

Regarding Iran's nuclear program, the average of Turkish public respondents believes that if Iran continues its nuclear program, the international community should not authorize military action and the USA should not apply or increase sanctions on Iran. However, they generally do not agree with Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon, and they do not believe that Iran's pursuing a nuclear program would be for peaceful purposes.

Likewise, the average of respondents does not support Iran's action politics in Syria and Iraq. In a comparison, the average of Turkish public respondents believe that firstly the United States, then Saudi Arabia, then Russia and after all them, Iran do not contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East. What is obvious from the results is that Turkish people definitely do not believe that Iran is a role model for their country.

As the last question of this part, according to the survey results Turkish public respondents listed the most untrustworthy countries as Israel, Syria, United States of America, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, China, Iran, Russia and Germany in that order.

Table 3. 9: Turkish public respondents view toward security issues in the Middle East.

	1 -Strongly Disagree	2- Slightly Disagree	3- Neither Agree nor Disagree	4- Slightly Agree	5- Strongly Agree	Total (Percentage)	Average
Turkey contributes to peace and stability in the Middle East	6,9	17,3	32,6	28,2	15,0	100,0	3,27
Iranian policy is contributing to sectarian division in the Arab World	7,5	17,7	43,9	25,1	5,8	100,0	3,04
Turkey should build a strong relationship with Iran	9,9	24,0	29,4	28,2	8,5	100,0	3,01
Iran is pursuing its own agenda to serve its interests	9,2	21,8	37,4	24,7	6,9	100,0	2,98
Iran and Turkey can become allies	7,9	24,3	38,9	24,8	4,0	100,0	2,93
Iran is a threat for Turkish security	7,0	27,7	40,2	21,5	3,6	100,0	2,87
The growing number of newcomers from Iran threatens traditional Turkish customs and values	10,0	28,3	40,2	17,2	4,4	100,0	2,78
Iran takes into account the interest of other Middle Eastern countries	10,3	30,3	38,5	15,3	5,6	100,0	2,76
Iran is having a great influence on the way things are going on in Turkey	10,3	29,7	40,0	16,2	3,8	100,0	2,73
The growing number of newcomers from Iran strengthens Turkish society	11,3	28,7	41,4	15,0	3,7	100,0	2,71
If Iran continues its nuclear program, international community must authorize military action	10,0	31,5	41,9	12,1	4,5	100,0	2,70
Iran should continue its nuclear program and access nuclear weapons	10,1	31,2	42,2	12,4	4,2	100,0	2,69
Iran is pursuing its nuclear program for peaceful purposes	11,9	29,5	43,3	11,1	4,2	100,0	2,66
Iran is working to promote peace and stability in the Middle East	13,7	29,6	40,1	12,0	4,7	100,0	2,64
I support Iran's actions and politics in Iraq	13,2	30,0	41,3	10,1	5,4	100,0	2,64
US should apply and increase sanctions on Iran	13,3	36,1	35,2	11,6	3,8	100,0	2,57
I support Iran's actions and politics in Syria	19,7	28,2	35,2	13,3	3,7	100,0	2,53
Russia contributes to peace and stability in the Middle East	16,4	36,9	30,6	12,0	4,1	100,0	2,51
Saudi Arabia contributes to peace and stability in the Middle East	21,5	31,7	34,1	8,8	4,0	100,0	2,42
The United States contributes to peace and stability in the Middle East	26,1	35,7	27,7	7,0	3,5	100,0	2,26
Iran is a role model for my country	32,7	31,6	22,1	10,0	3,6	100,0	2,20

3.3.7. Iranian Identity and Culture

The last part of the questionnaire tries to understand the Turkish people's view toward Iranian people, their identity and culture. For this, the first question asked was "What is the first word to cross your mind once you hear the word "Iranian people"? Among all, about 27.4% of answers are related to religion; these answers include "Muslims, Religious, Shias, and Hijab." Interestingly, about 2.7% of the answers is "Arab people" and only 7.4% of the answers include positive words such as "our brothers, cultured, respectful, educated, honesty, being tolerant, friendly, trustworthy, and modern." Some other answers are as follows: "being oppressive, being rich, uneducated people, oil, undeveloped, beautiful girls, nuclear weapon, war, music, Persians, execution, carpet, etc.".

Figure 3.2 shows the Turkish public respondents view toward Iranian people. As shown, the sum of "somewhat unfavorable" and "very unfavorable" views (41.9%) is much more than neutral (35.8%) and the sum of "somewhat favorable" and "very favorable" (22.3%) views, which means that most Turkish public respondents have a generally unfavorable view toward Iranian people.

Figure 3. 2: Turkish public respondents view toward Iranian people.

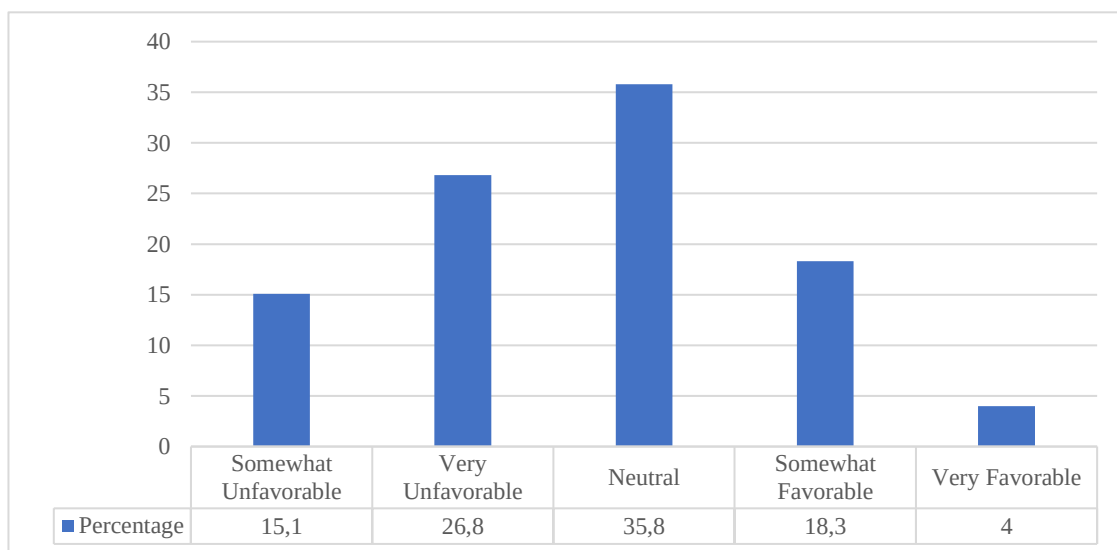


Table 3. 10: Turkish public respondents view about Iranian people, their identity and culture.

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Slightly Disagree	3- Neither Agree nor Disagree	4- Slightly Agree	5- Strongly Agree	Total (Percentage)	Average
Turkish culture is superior to Iranian culture	5,9	7,5	29,8	32,1	24,7	100,0	3,62
Iranians are happy with living in Turkey	8,4	10,3	28,9	36,5	15,8	100,0	3,41
Iranians are modern people	9,7	16,4	39,5	24,5	10,0	100,0	3,09
Iranians are hard-working people	7,4	18,9	45,4	20,9	7,5	100,0	3,02
Iranians have a high standard of living	6,4	21,7	44,3	19,4	8,2	100,0	3,01
I like Iranian movies	8,7	20,4	39,0	25,2	6,8	100,0	3,01
Iranian people are generally polite	7,6	19,2	45,1	23,7	4,3	100,0	2,98
Iranians often get angry quickly	6,7	17,9	51,3	19,3	4,7	100,0	2,97
Iranians are people just like me	13,1	21,9	29,5	26,7	8,8	100,0	2,96
Iranians don't like meeting people of different races	6,6	18,8	53,0	16,3	5,2	100,0	2,95
I like the Persian language	9,8	22,0	37,5	25,2	5,5	100,0	2,95
I like Persian music	7,6	23,0	42,4	22,0	5,0	100,0	2,94
Iranians have great personal values and moral standards	16,1	12,9	37,5	29,8	3,6	100,0	2,92
Iranians often exhibit exciting attitudes	7,0	19,3	52,4	17,1	4,3	100,0	2,92
I like Persian food	9,8	22,2	40,3	21,6	6,2	100,0	2,92
Iranian people are generally educated	9,9	17,9	47,1	21,1	4,0	100,0	2,91
Iranian people care about education as a pathway to success	12,1	20,1	38,1	25,5	4,1	100,0	2,89
Iranian people generally value the opinions of others	9,3	20,0	49,2	17,2	4,3	100,0	2,87
Iranian culture is very close to the Turkish one	11,9	25,5	31,4	27,6	3,6	100,0	2,86
Iranians are nationalistic	14,5	20,2	40,0	20,4	4,8	100,0	2,81
Iranians have made a positive contribution to Islam	13,4	21,1	40,1	21,6	3,8	100,0	2,81

When respondents are asked if they know about the official language of Iran, 58.5% of the respondents answered the Persian language. However, there are some respondents who wrongly believe that Arabic (23%) or Turkish (0.7%) is the official Iranian language. In addition, 17.8% of respondents said that they do not know what the official language of their neighboring country - Iran - is. What is complementary to this fact is that strangely, there are only 7.7% of respondents who believe that they are familiar with Iranian history.

As the last part of the questionnaire, respondents rated their ideas about Iranian people; the answers are given in Table 3.10. In a nutshell, the average of Turkish public respondents believe that Iranians are modern, hard-working, have a high standard of living, and are happy with living in Turkey. In addition, they approach Iranian people as nationalistic and do not believe that they generally value the opinions of others. Yet, Turkish public respondents generally do not believe that Iranian culture is close to Turkish culture.

3.4. Regression Analyses

In order to explore the relation between the view of Turkish public respondents toward Iran and Iranians and various dependent variables, an Ordered Logistic Regression has been applied. Table 3.11 presents the Ordered Logistic Regression models of Turkish public respondents' view of Iranians and various independent variables. The dependent variable is the view of Turkish public respondents toward Iranian people, and the independent variables are the age of respondents, gender, education (having at least a university degree or more), income level, religiosity, knowing an Iranian, feeling closer ties to European culture, having positive feelings toward Americans and Arabs, view toward Iran as a country, trusting Iran, internet usage, the impact of Iranian music, movies, food and language.

The first model in Table 3.11, which tests the impact of age and gender on Turkish respondents' view toward Iranians, is our base model. In the model, there is a highly

significant positive effect of age of the respondents on their view toward Iranians at the .01 level, which means as respondents get older, they have a more positive view toward Iranian people. In addition, the same model suggests that there is a positive relation between female respondents and their view toward Iranian people.

The second model adds education, income, and religiosity level of the respondents to our base model. The model shows no significant relationship between education level (having at least a university degree and more) and respondents' view toward Iranians, which directs us to the fact that if we consider highly educated people as elites, there should not be a major difference among elites and public opinion toward Iranian people. Moreover, there is a significant positive relationship between high income level and view toward Iranians at .05 level, and surprisingly there is a highly significant positive relation between being religious and a positive view toward Iranian people.

On one hand, it seems normal that religious people have a much more positive view toward Iranians because of an Islamic state ruling in Iran with application of Islamic rules in the constitution of the country. On the other hand, it is surprising because Iranian people are generally and increasingly not linked to religion as religious people in Turkey may imagine. In my paper (2019), "The Gap between Media Portrayals and the Reality of Islam and Islamism in Iran and Turkey," I have explained why there is a huge gap between how Turkish people assume religiosity in Iran is and how it really is. In a nutshell, Iranian youth, who make up about 60% of the Iranian population, are getting less religious. This is obvious in many aspects of Iranian youths' daily life such as Iranian music, political movements, social displays, and writings (Aghazadeh, 2019). Moreover, the mosque attendance rates in Iran— as an important indicator of religious practice - are surprisingly low (Tezcur et al., 2006). The best description for today's Iranian contribution to Islam can be found in the work of Eric Roulaue (1999)— a profound western expert on Iranian studies — words which explained how "Islam confronts Islam in Iran." Therefore, as among 1150 respondents there are only 4 who have visited Iran at least once in their life, it seems normal to witness such a gap between the reality and the perception of Turkish

people about Iran. The second model also shows a highly significant relationship between “knowing an Iranian” and a positive view toward Iranians, which confirms Aliport's “contact hypothesis” that was explained in detail in Chapter 1.

The third model evaluates the relation between Turkish public respondents’ view toward Iranians and the degree that they feel themselves closer to European culture, having a positive feeling toward Americans and Arabs, their view toward Iran and the amount of their trusting Iran. Results show a highly significant positive effect of having a positive feeling toward Arabs, view to Iran and trusting Iran on respondents’ view toward Iranians at the .01 level. There is also a highly significant negative relation between feeling closer to European culture and view to Iranians at the .01 level. There is no significant relationship between positive feelings toward Americans and view toward Iranian people.

The fourth model examines the effect on internet usage of the respondents and their view toward Iranians. Results show no meaningful relationship between using more internet and view toward Iranian people.

The effect of cultural indicators on respondents’ view toward Iranians have been tested in the fifth model, which suggest a highly significant relationship between Turkish public respondents’ view toward Iranian people and their feelings about Iranian music and movies at the .01 level. There is no meaningful relationship between respondents’ feeling toward Iranians and their ideas about Iranian food and language.

Table 3. 11: Ordered Logistic Regression models of view of Turkish public respondents to Iranians and various independent variables.

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Age of the Respondents	1.01 (4.09)***	1.01 (3.45)***				1.004 (1.01)
Female Views	1.3 (2.51)**	1.39 (3.07)**				1.32 (2.51)**
Having at least a University Degree and more in Education Level		1.06 (0.50)				1.08 (0.68)
High Income Level		1.13 (0.77)**				1.12 (0.72)
Being Religious		1.54 (3.68)***				1.16 (1.22)
Knowing an Iranian		2.45 (6.43)***				1.23(1.48)
Feeling Closer to European Culture			0.45(-6.95)***			0.51 (-5.48)***
Positive Feeling toward Americans			0.94(-0.34)			0.91 (-0.50)
Positive Feeling toward Arabs			2.69(6.38)***			2.22 (5.02)***
View toward Iran			4.55 (9.75)***			4.10 (8.79)***
Trusting Iran			1.95 (4.08)***			1.71 (3.20)***
Not Using Internet				0.70 (-0.28)		0.266 (-0.98)
Low Using Internet				0.41(-0.73)		0.225 (-1.12)
Mid Using Internet				0.24 (-1.14)		0.17 (-1.30)
High Using Internet				0.23 (-1.16)		0.15 (-1.38)
Iranian Music					1.88 (4.43) ***	1.47 (2.60)***
Iranian Movies					1.71 (3.06)***	1.88 (3.36)***
Iranian Food					1.24 (1.33)	0.94 (-0.31)
Iranian Language (Persian)					1.01 (0.08)	0.81 (-1.17)
Pseudo R2	0.0064	0.233	0.0936	0.0107	0.0292	0.112

Notes:

Each cell contains the Odds Ratio and the Z values in parentheses

*p< .10; **p< .05; ***p<. 01

N = 1,150 for all variables

As elaborated in this chapter, only about 58% of the respondents knew that the official language of their neighbor country – Iran – is Persian, so observing no significant relationship between respondents' view toward the Persian language and their view toward Iranian people can be justified. Finally, Model 6 adds the effect of all the mentioned variables. In the model, again, there is a significant effect of gender (female respondents at .05 level), feeling closer to European culture, a positive feeling toward Arabs, view toward Iran, trusting Iran, Iranian music and movies (at .01 level) on respondents' view toward Iranians, while other variables have no effect.

Table 3.12 presents the Ordered Logistic Regression models of Turkish public respondents' view of Iran and various independent variables. Here, the dependent variable is the view of Turkish public respondents toward Iran, and the independent variables are the age of respondents, gender, education (having at least a university degree or more), income level, religiosity, knowing an Iranian, having a positive view toward Iranians, trusting Iran, respondents' view toward Iran's nuclear program, seeing Iran as a partner of Turkey, trust degree regarding different presidents of Iran, internet usage, the impact of Iranian music, movies, food and language.

The first model in Table 3.12 evaluates the relation between the age and gender of the respondents to their view toward the Islamic Republic of Iran. The results show that there is no meaningful relation between the gender of the public respondents and their view toward Iran. Also, the first model reveals that there is a significant positive relationship between the age of the respondents on their view toward Iran at the .10 level, which means as respondents get older, they have a more positive view toward Iran.

Model 2 adds the impact of education level, income level, religiosity and knowing an Iranian to the first model. While the income level and education level have no significant relation with public respondents' view toward Iran, there is a highly significant positive relationship at the .01 level between the religiosity and knowing an Iranian and the respondents' view toward Iran. This implies that as the respondents get more religious,

they have more a positive view toward Iran. In addition, knowing an Iranian affects a respondent's view toward Iran in a positive way.

The results of the third model suggest that there is a highly significant relation between the public respondents' view toward Iran and their positive view toward Iranians, the degree they trust Iran, believing that Iran should continue its nuclear program and seeing Iran as a partner of Turkey, all at .01 level . In the same way, the fourth model evaluates the effect of Turkish public respondents' view toward Iranian presidents and their view toward Iran. Interestingly, there is a highly positive relation between a respondent's trust level to President Rowhani (2013-now) and President Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) at .01 level. There is also a positive relation between respondents' view toward Iran and the degree to which they trust President Hashemi Rafsanjani (1989-1997) at .10 level.

However, there is no meaningful relation between respondents' view toward Iran and their trust level to President Khatami (1997-2005), who was the only president of Iran who attracted global attention during his first election to the presidency when he received almost 70% of the vote (BBC News, 2001).

According to the fifth model, there is no meaningful relation between the degree of internet usage of the respondents and their view toward Iran. The sixth model suggests that there is a highly significant relationship between public respondents' perception and experience of Iranian music and food at the .01 level. In addition, there is a significant connection between respondents' view toward Iran and their view of Iranian movies at .05 level and Persian language at .10 level.

Table 3. 12: Ordered Logistic Regression models of view of Turkish public respondents to Iran and various independent variables.

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Age of the Respondents	1.007(1.80)*	1.003 (0.95)					1.001 (0.41)
Female Views	1.0005(0.01)	1.080 (0.72)					1.14 (1.16)
Having at least a University Degree or more in Education Level		1.01 (0.15)					0.99 (-0.03)
High Income Level		1.29 (1.61)					1.31 (1.63)
Being Religious		1.59(3.91)***					1.37(2.61)***
Knowing an Iranian		2.99(7.76)***					1.63(3.31)***
Having a Positive View toward Iranians			6.03(10.33)***				4.82(8.61)***
Trusting Iran			2.27 (4.91)***				1.98(3.97)***
Believing that Iran Should Continue its Nuclear Program			1.83 (3.71)***				1.56(2.67)***
Seeing Iran as a Partner of Turkey			1.71 (3.64)***				1.43 (2.34)**
Trust President Hassan Rouhani				3.19(3.37)***			1.11 (0.33)
Trust President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad				2.06(2.86)***			1.26 (0.87)
Trust President Mohammad Khatami				1.74 (1.28)			1.07 (0.17)
Trust President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani				0.49 (-1.65)*			0.55 (-1.33)
Not Using Internet					4.62 (1.48)		1.21 (0.18)
Low Using Internet					3.07 (1.11)		1.13 (0.12)
Mid Using Internet					2.64 (0.96)		1.39 (0.32)
High Using Internet					4.28 (1.42)		1.98 (0.65)
Iranian Music						1.78(3.97)***	1.33 (1.93)*
Iranian Movies						1.46 (2.17)**	1.47 (2.07)**
Iranian Food						1.63(2.94)***	1.37 (1.83)*
Iranian Language (Persian)						1.37 (1.91)*	1.08 (0.48)
Pseudo R2	0.001	0.25	0	0.0152	0.0038	0.0433	0.118

Notes:

Each cell contains the Odds Ratio and the Z values in parentheses

*p< .10; **p< .05; ***p<. 01

N = 1,150 for all variables

Finally, the last model merges all the independent variables altogether. As such, the results reveal that there is a meaningful relation between public respondents' view toward Iran and their religiosity degree (at .01 level), knowing an Iranian (at .01 level), having a positive view toward Iranians (at .01 level), the degree they trust Iran (at .01 level), their belief in Iran's right to continue its nuclear program (at .01 level), seeing Iran as a partner of Turkey (at .01 level), trusting President Rowhani (at .01 level), the degree they like Iranian music (at .10 level), Iranian movies (at .05 level), and Iranian food (at .10 level).

3.5. Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, based on firsthand data, the views of Turkish public respondents toward Iran and Iranians have been analyzed in four main areas, including the Turkish public view toward the Iranian state, general image of Iran, Turkish security and its relation with Iran, Iranian people in general and the degree of religiosity in Iran.

When it comes to the Iranian state, it seems that older Iranian presidents are known better in Turkey, which may mean that older people know more about Iranian presidents. In addition, results demonstrate that on average, respondents believe that there are violations of human rights in Iran and so the current regime in Iran should change. They also believe that Iran follows a sectarian (Sunni-Shiite) foreign policy towards the Middle East. The average of answers about the respondents' view towards the Iranian state is either neutral or they do not have a favorable opinion toward the Iranian state. Moreover, the average of the Turkish public respondents who consider Iran as a competitor or a rival—rather than a partner – of Turkey, is the same as those who do not know the answer, affirming the wide literature that puts Iranian-Turkish relations as somewhere between competition and collaboration.

The average of Turkish public respondents has either a “somewhat unfavorable” or “neutral” views toward Iran. Compared with the same answers for the same question in PEW Global Attitudes Project of 2017 (that have been explained in detail in Chapter 3),

if not considering the “neutral” answers for 2019 respondents, there is a 30% decrease in the “very unfavorable” view of Turkish people toward Iran in 2019. At the same time, the “very favorable” view of Turkish people toward Iran increased from 1.43% to 5.2%, and their “somewhat favorable” view increased from 13.81% to 19%. All of which implies good news for Iranian-Turkish future relations.

The results of ordered logistic regression analyses models suggests that there is a highly positive relation between the Turkish public view toward Iran and their age, their religiosity degree, their view toward Iranians, the degree they trust Iran, believing that Iran should continue its nuclear program and seeing Iran as a partner of Turkey, the degree they trust Iranian Presidents, their experience with Iranian music and food (and not Iranian movies). This is while the gender, income level, education level and the degree of internet usage of respondents have no significant relation with their view toward Iran.

When it comes to security, while the average of the Turkish public respondents believe that Iran is not a threat for Turkish security and Turkey should build a strong relationship with Iran, they believe that Iranian policy is contributing to a sectarian division in the Arab world, it does not take the interest of other countries in the Middle East into account and it is not working to promote peace and stability in the region. They also believe that if Iran continues its nuclear program, the international community should not authorize military action and the USA should not apply or increase sanctions on Iran. However, they generally do not agree with Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon, and they do not believe that Iran’s pursuing a nuclear program would be for peaceful purposes.

Moreover, the average of Turkish public respondents believes that firstly the United States, then Saudi Arabia, then Russia and lastly Iran do not contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East. Turkish public respondents listed the most untrustworthy countries as Israel, Syria, United States of America, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, China, Iran, Russia, and Germany in order. What is obvious from the results is that Turkish people definitely do not believe that Iran is a role model for their country.

And finally, regarding Iranian people, the Turkish public perceive Iranian people mostly as either Muslims, religious, or Shias. The average of Turkish public respondents believe that Iranian people are quite religious, which is at odds with the reality, especially when it comes to Iranian youth. A considerable amount of the respondents considers Iranians as Arabs and their official language as Arabic. In addition, according to the results, most Turkish public respondents have a generally unfavorable view toward Iranian people, although they attribute certain positive traits such as being modern and hardworking to Iranians. Yet, Turkish public respondents generally do not believe that Iranian culture is close to Turkish culture. Finally, Turkish public respondents have a more positive view toward Iranians, compared with Spanish, Germans, Italians, Arabs, French, Chinese, British and Americans in order.

While only a few of the Turkish public respondents have been abroad before, those who have traveled to a foreign country feel their culture is closer to Iranian culture. Moreover, the results suggest that when Turkish respondents have the chance of knowing an Iranian, the possibility that they have a more positive view toward Iranians increases. These imply an important role for experience, and that when Turkish people get more experienced through being abroad or knowing an Iranian, the possibility that they have a more positive view to Iranians increases. This has been affirmed in the regression model analysis of the chapter, which suggests that as respondents get older, they have a more positive view toward Iranian people. In addition, the results of this chapter affirm the “contact theory” or the “contact hypothesis.” However, sadly, most of the Turkish public respondents have not met any or a few Iranians before, and they are rarely interested to become a friend, meet, or deal with Iranians.

In this chapter, the results of ordered logistic regression analyses models suggest that there is a highly positive relation between Turkish public view toward Iranians and female respondents, income level of the respondents, their religiosity degree, their connection with Iranian music and movies, their having a positive feeling toward Arabs, their view to Iran and the degree that they trust Iran. Note that there is a negative relation

between feeling closer to European culture for Turkish public respondents and their view toward Iranian people.



CHAPTER FOUR:

DATA, METHODOLOGY, AND THE EMPIRICAL RESULTS OF ELITE RESPONDENTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to examine the Turkish elite respondents view toward the general image of Iran, Iranian state acts, Iran and its effect on Turkey's security, religion in Iran, Iranian identity, and culture. It includes 4 main parts including data and methodology, empirical results, regression analyses and conclusions.

4.2. Data & Methodology

The same as data for public respondents, data for the analysis of elite perception were achieved through conducting a face to face questionnaire on a Turkish elite population aged 18 and over living in Turkey. As mentioned in Chapter 2, in this thesis the elite concept refers to Turkish people who graduated from some university degree level with a family monthly income level of 8000 – 8500 TL on average, that is about four times the minimum wage level (about 2020 TL) in Turkey. As such, elites in this study have university degrees that have supplied them with specialized expert knowledge that let them access occupations such as a government officer, doctor, engineer, lawyer, architect, journalist, lecturer, manager, academician, etc. Moreover, several of these elites run their own businesses and have their own occupational group. There are some 7.5% elite respondents who have less than 7500 TL monthly income, but they possess high educational levels (example: retired academicians).

The questionnaire for elite respondents is the same as public respondents, but it includes 5 more questions that were open-ended. The sample size for the Turkish elite is 121 persons with respondents from different cities of Turkey including Istanbul (38%),

Ankara (37.2%) and Izmir (24.8%). The analysis of data will follow a similar strategy to the previous chapter.

4.3. Empirical Results

4.3.1. Demography

The first part of the survey evaluates the respondent's demographic information. According to the results, 60.3% of respondents were male and the rest were female respondents. About 6.6% of the respondents were 18-24 years old, 44.6% were 25-34 years old, 24% were 35-44 years old, 19% were 45-54 years old, 4.1% were 55-64 years old and 1.7% were more than 65 years old. Again, compared with PEW's generation groups for American adults' segmentation, the average of Turkish public respondents can be identified as Millennials,⁸ which is the same as in the Turkish public respondents average age group.

As expected, the elite respondent's education level is minimum a bachelor's degree and above. About 8.3% of respondents hold a PhD or a Post Doctorate degree. Further, the total monthly income level of the family of the elite respondents (about 7,500 – 8,500 Turkish Lira (65.8%), which is about 1,322 USD to 1,500 USD, ⁹) is about three times the average of the public respondent's monthly income (Table 4.1). Moreover, 45.5% of the respondents are married, 44.6% are single, 2.5% are divorced and the rest are either widow/widower or gave no answer.

Table 4. 1: Monthly income and education level of Turkish Elite respondents.

Income Level (Monthly)	Percentage	Education Level	Percentage
Less than 7,500 TL	7.5%	Bachelor's degree	67.8%
7,500-8,500 TL	65.8%	Master's degree	24.0%

⁸“Generations and Age” Retrieved on 31.08.2019 from <https://www.pewresearch.org/topics/generations-and-age/> .

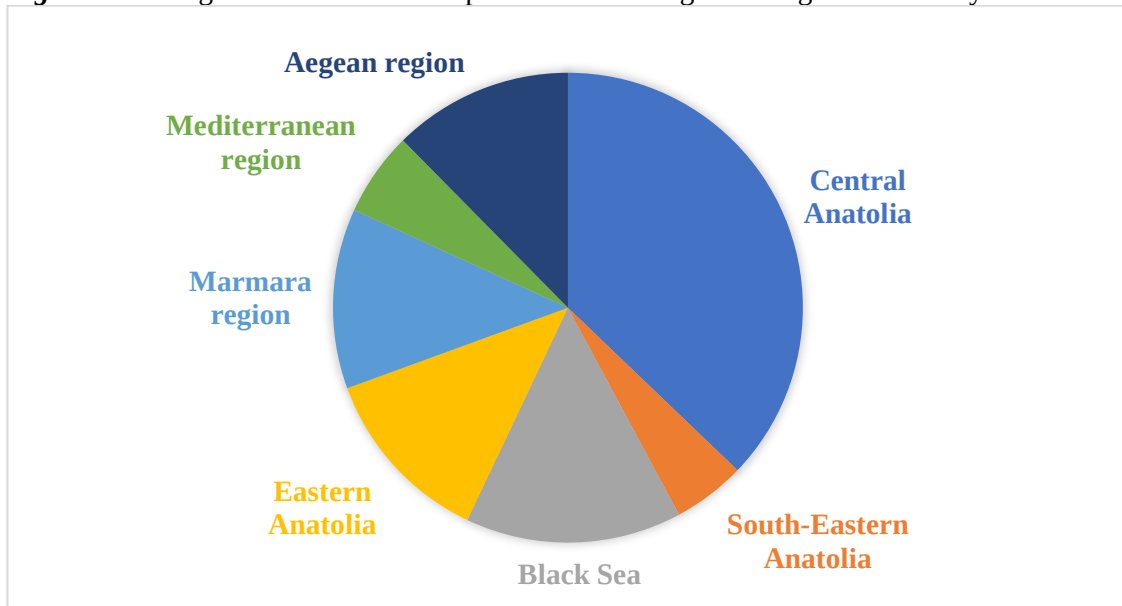
⁹ Considered rate: 1 USD = 5.6792, Central bank of Turkey's rate on 08.03.2019, retrieved from http://www.tcmb.gov.tr/kurlar/kurlar_tr.html .

8,500-9,500 TL	20.9%	PhD Degree	6.6%
9,501-10,000 TL	5.8%	Post Doctorate Degree	1.7%

The occupation of most of the Turkish elite respondents are as follows in order: government officer, university lecturer, school teacher, doctor, engineer, lawyer, architect, journalist, accountant, veterinary, dentist, real estate agent, air cabin services, medical expert, interior architect, international trade, philologist, electrician, bank officer, actor/actress, etc.

According to the results, 37.2% of the Turkish elite respondents are originally from the Central Anatolia region of Turkey, 14.9% are from the Black Sea region, 12.4% from the Eastern Anatolia region, 12.4% from the Aegean region, 12.2% from the Marmara region, 5.8% from the Mediterranean region, and 5% from the South-Eastern Anatolia region (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4. 1: Origin of Turkish elite respondents according to the regions in Turkey.



4.3.2. Information about the Respondents and Their Past Experience with Iran and Iranians

The second part of the survey for elite and public respondents is the same. Accordingly, elite respondents were asked about their daily internet usage. Results show that 49.6% of the elite respondents use the internet at least 2-3 hours a day, and about 29.8% of them use the internet about 4-5 hours a day. There are 10.8% respondents who use the internet more than 6 hours a day.

Compared with public respondent's internet usage, while there are about 19% of public respondents who do not use the internet in a day at all, almost all the elite respondents use the internet at least one hour a day. Elite respondents generally use the internet more than public respondents, but when it comes to using the internet more than 6 hours a day, public respondents show more time spent on their daily internet usage. Table 4.2 suggests that internet dependency is less common among the elites.

Table 4. 2: Comparing Turkish elite and public respondent's daily internet usage.

Daily Internet Usage	Public Respondent's Internet usage	Elite Respondent's Internet usage
Not using internet at all	19.1%	0.8%
Using internet less than an hour	18.6%	9.1%
2-3 hours a day	28.2%	49.6%
4-5 hours a day	17.3%	29.8%
6-7 hours a day	8.6%	5.0%
More than 8 hours a day	8.2%	5.8%

In addition, Turkish elite respondents were asked about the culture that they feel is closer to Turkish culture. About 70.3% of the respondents feel themselves closer to European culture, 15.3% to Arab culture, 9.3% to Central Asian culture, and only 3.4% feel closer to Iranian culture. As a result, there are about 4.2% more public respondents than elite respondents who feel themselves in a closer tie with Iranian culture.

Considering if Turkish respondents prefer to live in another country rather than Turkey, there are approximately 23.5% more respondents in elite level compared with public respondents who wish to live in another country. Their preferences are mostly to live in Britain (13.1%), Germany (13.1%), France (11.1%), United States of America (8.1%), Netherlands (7.1%), Sweden (6.1%), Canada (5.1%), Japan (4%), Italy (3%), Spain (3%), India (2%), Switzerland (2%), Greece (2%), New Zealand (2%), North Korea (1%), Austria (1%), Norway (1%), Russia (1%), Finland (1%), Belgium (1%), Brazil (1%), Cuba (1%), Kuwait (1%), Denmark (1%), Australia (1%), Venezuela (1%), and Colombia (1%).

According to the results, 67.8% of Turkish elite respondents know at least one foreign language, which is about 46% more than public respondents. The most common languages that elite respondents know are English (20.7%), German (7.3%), French (92.7%), Spanish (7.3%), Arabic (4.9%) and Russian (1.2%). Noting that out of 82 respondents who know at least one foreign language, there are 11 elite respondents who know more than one foreign language.

It is interesting to know that only 30.6% of the elite respondents have been abroad at least one time before (18% of them have been in multiple countries), and only 2 of them have ever been in Iran. The purpose of the trips of these two people was tourism, health tourism and business; and they have only visited Tehran – the capital of Iran. Elite respondents traveled to countries as follows: Germany (37.8%), Britain (16.2%), France (16.2%), Italy (13.5%), Netherlands (8.1%), United States of America (8.1%), China (2.7%), Spain, Russia (2.7%), Jordan (2.7%), Romania (2.7%), Portugal (2.7%), Czech Republic (2.7%), and Iran (1.7%). The average number of countries that elite respondents have been to is 3, given that a one-time trip is the minimum and 9 is the maximum number that one has been abroad.

Based on the results, most of the elite respondents (31.9%) have met some Iranians before, 16% have/had Iranian friends, 9.2% have some Iranian neighbors, 9.2% have/had worked with Iranians, 8.4% have/had some Iranian classmates on the same course, and

2.5% have/had shared the same house/room with an Iranian student. Moreover, elite respondents were asked their feelings about “becoming a friend with Iranians, visiting Iran, becoming a neighbor with Iranians, becoming a roommate with Iranians, working in Iran, study in Iran, living in Iran, marrying with an Iranian person” and responses were the same as public respondents answers. The average of elite respondents’ answers fell somewhere between “not positive” and “neither positive nor negative” view (Table 4.3).

Table 4. 3: Elite respondents’ ratings of their feelings about living with Iranians or visiting and living in Iran.

	1	2	3	4	5		
	Not Positive at all	Not Positive	Neither Positive nor Negative	Positive	Very Positive	Total	Average (out of 5)
Visiting Iran	27,3	18,2	28,9	18,2	7,4	100,0	2,60
Becoming a Friend with Iranians	26,5	21,5	25,6	23,1	3,3	100,0	2,55
Becoming a neighbor with Iranians	29,7	18,2	31,4	19,0	1,7	100,0	2,45
Becoming a roommate with Iranians	36,3	15,7	36,4	9,9	1,7	100,0	2,25
Marry with an Iranian person	38,8	16,5	33,1	9,9	1,7	100,0	2,19
Study in Iran	43,8	19,0	28,1	9,1	-	100,0	2,02
Working in Iran	43,0	19,0	31,4	6,6	-	100,0	2,02
Living in Iran	45,4	24,8	20,7	9,1	-	100,0	1,93

In addition, results show that elite respondents have generally an almost negative view toward Iranians. Compared with other countries, the elite population of Turkey has a more positive view toward Germans, Spanish, Italian, Russian, French, Japanese, Azeri, British, Chinese, Americans, Iranians, and Arabs in order. It is interesting that the average

Turkish elite respondent view toward Azeri people is “neutral” and they have a more positive view of Iranians only compared with Arabs. This is while the most of Turkish public respondents have a more positive view toward Azeri people more than every other country that they have been asked about. It should be noted that both elite and public respondents have a generally negative view toward Iranians (Table 4.4).

Table 4. 4: Comparing elite and public view toward different nationalities.

	The average of elite respondents' views out of 5	The average of public respondents' views out of 5	Comparing elite and public views
Americans	2,68	2,00	Elite have a more negative view to Americans than public
Arabs	2,22	2,35	Both elite and public have generally negative view to Arabs
Azeris	3,01	3,18	Both elite and public have generally a neutral view toward Azeris
British	2,81	2,25	Elite have a more positive view to British than public
Chinese	2,76	2,30	Both elite and public have generally negative view to Chinese
French	3,08	2,32	Elite have a much more positive view to French than public
Germans	3,26	2,59	Elite have a much more positive view to German than public
Iranians	2,50	2,62	Both elite and public have generally negative view to Iranians
Italians	3,10	2,50	Elite have a much more positive view to Italians than public
Japanese	3,07	2,64	Elite have a more positive view to Japanese than public
Russians	3,09	2,63	Elite have a much more positive view to Russians than public

4.3.3. General Image of Iran

Same as in the public questionnaire, respondents were asked to say the first word coming to their mind once they hear the word “Iran.” About 8.3% of elite respondents answered this question as “Sharia” and the rest of the most frequent answers are respectively as follows: bigotry, neighbor, war, regime, hijab, religiosity, Persian, Khomeini, Muslim,

Iranian movies, religion, Arabs, oil, revolution, nuclear weapon, a historical country, pressure, conservatism, natural gas, Iranian carpet, Iranian cat, anti-democracy, execution, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Shia, culture, undeveloped, being rich, a powerful country, being against women, missile, hookah, smuggling, poem, civilization, hate, Alevies, a society dominated by men, and strict management.¹⁰

Interestingly, there is not much difference between public and elite responses regarding the first word coming to mind once one hears the word “Iran”. While only 5 words (including a historical country, culture, being rich, a powerful country, and civilization) can be considered as having a positive weight, 12 answers have a negative weight (including bigotry, war, pressure, conservatism, anti-democracy, execution, undeveloped, being against women, smuggling, hate, a society dominated by men, and strict management).

Moreover, according to the results, on a 1-5 scale, 3.4% of elite respondents have a very favorable view toward Iran, 19% somewhat favorable, 24.8% neutral, 17.9% somewhat unfavorable, and 34.2% of the elite respondents have a very unfavorable view toward Iran. The average of the results is 2.40 out of 5, that means the average of elite respondents have a somewhat negative view toward Iran. The average of the results for elite respondents is slightly more negative than public respondents, for whom the average was about 2.74 out of 5.

Table 4.5 shows the elite and public view toward Iran in general aspects. As is obvious by the results, in all aspects public respondents have a more positive view than elite respondents on average. In addition, elite respondents believe that among others, Books, Second Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.), Media (TV,

¹⁰ Exact answers in Turkish language are: “şeriat, yobazlık, komşu, savaş, rejim, tesettür, dindarlık, farsça, Humeyni, Müslüman, filmleri, din, Arap, petrol, devrim, nükleer silah, köklü, tarihi ülke, baskı, muhafazakarlık, doğalgaz, İran halısı, İran kedisi, antidemokratik, idam, Mahmud Ahmedinejad, Şii, gelişmemişlik, zenginlik, güçlü ülke, kadınlara düşmanlık, füze, nargile, kaçakçılık, şiir, medeniyet, nefret, alevi olmaları, erkeğin egemen olduğu bir toplum olması, sıkı yönetim”

Newspaper, Radio and Journals), Friends' Ideas, the Iranians that the respondent knows /observes and music have respectively affected their idea about Iran and Iranians the most.



Table 4. 5: Comparing elite and public view toward Iran in general.

	1 Strongly Disagree		2 Slightly Disagree		3 Neither Agree nor Disagree		4 Slightly Agree		5 Strongly Agree		Total	Average (out of 5)	
	Elite	Public	Elite	Public	Elite	Public	Elite	Public	Elite	Public		Elite	Public
Iran is a country with an important cultural legacy	25,6	10,7	15,7	16,3	19,0	31,8	22,3	28,2	17,4	13,0	100	2,90	3,16
International powerful countries are negatively biased toward Iran.	19,8	10,2	21,5	15,5	20,7	33,0	27,3	32,4	10,7	8,9	100	2,88	3,14
Iran has been focusing on foreign policy goals beyond her economic and military power, and capability.	20,0	10,6	22,5	13,6	20,0	42,3	28,3	25,6	9,2	7,8	100	2,84	3,06
Iran has begun to have more say in international politics.	20,0	9,4	25,0	13,7	25,0	38,8	21,7	29,9	8,3	8,2	100	2,73	3,14
Iran is an economically developed country	22,3	11,0	25,7	17,6	22,3	39,7	19,0	21,9	10,7	9,8	100	2,70	3,02
Iran is a beautiful country.	30,6	11,3	19,8	14,5	14,9	38,0	27,3	29,3	7,4	6,9	100	2,61	3,06
Iran is a secure country	33,1	14,0	32,2	25,7	19,8	38,1	12,4	15,1	2,5	7,2	100	2,19	2,76
Iran is a country with a democratic government system	52,0	23,4	17,4	24,4	21,5	32,3	6,6	12,9	2,5	7,0	100	1,90	2,56

Predictably, among Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, most of the respondents (63.6%) consider Turkey as the regional power in the Middle East, 13% chose “none of them,” 9.9% chose Iran, 8.3% chose Saudi Arabia, 3.3% chose “I don’t know,” and 0.8% chose Egypt. They also chose the same order of countries when asked to answer the same question but in ten years’ time. This means that Turkish elite respondents – the same as Turkish public respondents - believe that the main regional power is Turkey and Iran stands in second place, either now or in the near future.

4.3.4. Iranian State Policies

The fourth part of the questionnaire evaluates the elite respondents’ view toward Iranian state acts. Results shows that 40.8% of Turkish elite respondents know of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, 38.3% know of President Hassan Rowhani, 31.7% know of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and 30.8% know of Mohammad Khatami. Compared with Turkish public respondents, elites generally know less about Iranian presidents.

Turkish elite respondents’ view toward the Iranian state is represented in Table 4.6. According to the results, most of the elite respondents believe that there are human rights violations in Iran, that the current regime in Iran should change and that Iran follows a sectarian (Sunni-Shiite) foreign policy toward the Middle East. Elite respondents gave neutral answers on whether Iran is a victim of biased propaganda of enemies or not. In sum, the elite respondents have an unfavorable view toward the Iranian state.

As the last question of views toward the Iranian state, among Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, 67.8% of the elite respondents believe that Turkey contributes more to regional peace than the others. In addition, about 23% believe none of the mentioned countries contributes to regional peace, and only 1.7% considered Iran as a country that contributes more to peace in the Middle East than the others. None of the elite respondents chose Saudi Arabia as an answer for this question.

Table 4. 6: Turkish Elite respondents' view toward the state of Iran.

	1	2	3	4	5		
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Average (out of 5)
There are human right violations in Iran	12,7	15,3	16,1	20,3	35,6	100,0	3,51
The current regime in Iran should change	8,5	19,7	16,2	23,9	31,5	100,0	3,50
Iran follows a sectarian (Sunni-Shiite) foreign policy towards the Middle East	14,4	15,3	28,8	22,0	19,5	100,0	3,17
Iran is a victim of biased propaganda of enemies	15,4	17,1	38,5	16,2	12,8	100,0	2,94
Government of Iran respects the personal freedoms of its people	39,7	31,4	13,6	10,2	5,1	100,0	2,09
In a broad view, I have a favorable opinion toward the state of Iran	41,2	37,0	5,0	15,1	1,7	100,0	1,99

4.3.5. Opinion Toward Religion in Iran

This part of the questionnaire evaluates the Turkish elite respondents' view toward religion in Iran. It starts with asking the respondent's view toward religion itself and their

degree of being religious. According to the results, 84.2% of elite respondents believe that they belong to a religious denomination and among those who are not, 63.2% are Atheist and 31.6% are Agnostic. Among those who considered themselves as being denominated to a religion, 91.1% are Sunni Muslims and 8.9% are Alevi Muslims.

Achieved results demonstrate that 47.3% of elite respondents considered themselves as “quite religious,” 23% as “unsure /neutral,” 14.9% as “not religious at all,” 13.5% as “not very religious,” and 1.4% as “very religious.” Like the public respondents, most of the elite respondents considered themselves as “quite religious,” but the percentage of non-religious people among elites is much more than public respondents. Table 4.7 gives a comparison between Turkish public and elite respondents’ religious practices frequency.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, this survey considered the rate of “praying Namaz” for Turkish respondents as the degree of their religiosity. According to the results in Chapter 3, this survey concluded that about 55.9% of the public respondents were religious, and about 44.1% of them were unreligious. As such, we can give an overall total that 72.2% of the elite respondents are unreligious and the rest (27.8%) are religious. Accordingly, there is a huge difference between Turkish public and elite’s degree of religiosity in practice.

Another considerable result from this part is the difference we see among people’s impressions about themselves as being religious or non-religious and the amount of the religious practices that they fulfill. As an example, 48.7% of the elite respondents considered themselves as either quite or very religious. However, only 27.8% almost always, usually, or often pray Namaz. Moreover, most of the elite respondents do not spend time in private religious activities or attending mosque or other religious meetings. These observations guide us to the question “What are people’s criteria to consider themselves as religious or non-religious?”. In other words, while people are not practicing Muslims, why do they consider themselves as religious?

Table 4. 7: Comparing Turkish public and elite respondents' religious practices frequency.

Being Religious	Praying Namaz	Spending time in private religious activities, such as prayer, or reading Quran	Attending mosque or other religious meetings
Turkish Public Respondents			
37.7% quite religious	32.6% rarely	31.7% couple of times in a week	23% never
31.6% unsure/neutral	23.7% often	27% a few times a month	21% a few times a year
17.2% very religious	16.7% almost always	20.2% a few times a year	20.6% a few times a month
10.2% not very religious	15.5% usually	10.9% once a year or less	18% couple of times in a week
3.3% not religious at all	11.5% never	10.2% never	17.4% once a year or less
Turkish Elite Respondents			
47.3% quite religious	41.6% rarely	36% never	43.5% never
23% unsure/neutral	30.6% never	28% once a year or less	29.7% once a year or less
14.9% not religious at all	12.9% often	18% a few times a year	20.8% a few times a year
13.5% not very religious	11.9% usually	12% a few times a month	4% a few times a month
1.4% very religious	3% almost always	6% couple of times in a week	2% couple of times in a week

First, in order to understand the “religious practicing Muslim,” one should understand the 5 pillars of Islam that are: firstly *Shahadah* – an Arabic word for claims to accept the words of the declaration of faith that there is only one god (Allah) and that Mohammed is his last messenger and also that Allah is the ultimate authority. Second, *Salat* or *Namaz* – performing daily prayers five times each day. Third, *Zakat* – paying taxes to benefit the poor. Fourth, *Sawm* – fasting during the month of Ramadan and finally *Hajj*, performing the pilgrimage to Mecca. However, according to Prophet Mohammad

and Imam Ali – the most important faces of Islam – *Salat* or *Namaz* is the “column of religion.”¹¹ As a result, there is much emphasis for Muslims to perform their daily prayers.

By nominating themselves as Muslims, Turkish respondents are confirming the first pillar of Islam. As this study considers the second pillar of Islam – *Salat* or *Namaz* – as the criterion for measurement of religiosity of the respondents, there is a probability that Turkish respondents – especially elite respondents - consider themselves as a religious Muslim mostly according to their beliefs and intellectual perspectives. However, understanding Turkish people’s religious self-perception may need a much deeper study that is out of the current thesis’s aims and context.

After evaluating the self-perception of the respondents about the degree of their religiosity, they were asked about their view toward Iranians in the religiosity aspect. According to the results, 37.5% of Turkish elite respondents consider Iranians as “very religious,” 25% as “quite religious,” 17.5% as “not very religious,” 7.5% as “not religious at all” and 12.5% were not sure about their answer (Table 4.8). Same as public respondents, the average of elite respondents considers Iranians people as “quite religious.”

Table 4. 8: Comparing public and elite respondent’s view toward Iranians in religiosity aspect.

	Public Respondents		Elite Respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1- Not Religious at all	38	3,3%	9	7,5%
2- Not very Religious	117	10,2%	21	10,2%
3- Unsure/Neutral	363	31,6%	15	12,5%
4- Quite religious	433	37,7%	30	25,0%
5-Very religious	198	17,2%	45	37,5%
Total	1148	100.0%	120	100.0%
Average	3,82 out of 5		3,82 out of 5	

¹¹ The Quran, Alkafi, 3/9/266 & Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon No. 47.

Furthermore, Turkish elite respondents have been asked if they prefer that religion and politics become combined in Turkish governmental structure, the same as in the state of Iran. 86% of the respondents were not in favor of such a system and only 3.3% prefer no separation between religion and politics in the Turkish governmental system. In addition, comparing Shia and Sunni Muslims, 49.2% of Turkish public respondents believe that Shias are more radical than Sunni Muslims, 31.4% believe that Sunni Muslims are more radical and 19.5% of respondents did not know the answer.

In the elite respondent's survey, there are a couple of explanatory extra questions. One of these questions is "What are the differences and similarities between Iranian and Turkish societies in terms of religiosity and the social role of religion? Could you please explain why?". The results for this question are in Table 4.9. The results suggest that about 22% of the elite respondents believe that there is no similarity between Iranian and Turkish societies. Some 16% believe that they are similar in religious understandings and about 15% see the similarity in the fact that they are both Muslim societies. There are about 16% who mentioned the different relationship between religion and politics in Iranian and Turkish societies.

Table 4. 9: Elite respondents view toward the differences and similarities between Iranian and Turkish societies in terms of religiosity and social role of religion.

The differences and similarities between Iranian and Turkish societies in terms of religiosity	Frequency	Percentage of answers*	Why?	Frequency	Percentage of answers
We have no similarity	27	22,3	Because they are both Islamic	12	13,8
Both countries are similar about religious understandings	20	16,5	Because of the secular approach that applies in Turkey	11	12,6
Both states are Muslim	19	15,7	Because Sharia rules apply in Iran	9	10,3
There are differences in religious acceptance	11	9,1	No answer	9	10,3
There are differences in the impact of religion on politics	10	8,3	Because religion is being used to increase power	6	6,9
There are differences in political structuring	9	7,4	Because there are same historical routes among Turkey and Iran	5	5,7
I have no idea	6	5,0	Because they (Iranians) are living religion in a heavy way	5	5,7
There are differences in terms of pressure on society	4	3,3	Because of being easily deceived through religion	5	5,7
There are similarities in their cultures	3	2,5	Because we are geographically close, neighbors	4	4,6
Equal pressure from both governments applied to their people	3	2,5	Because religion is applied in politics and governmental system in Iran	4	4,6
Equals in terms of dominance of religious leader in country administration	3	2,5	Because freedoms are restricted	2	2,3
There are similarities in the behavior of the religious sector	3	2,5	Because there is democracy in Turkey	2	2,3

They are similar about applying politics through religion	3	2,5	Because Turkey's administrator is religious	2	2,3
There are similarities in their music	2	1,7	Because everyone dresses according to their own preferences in Turkey	1	1,1
Both are bigot countries	2	1,7	Because they have relationships based on interests and benefits	1	1,1
There are differences in dress codes	1	0,8	Because they are both not democratic	1	1,1
There are similarities in customs and traditions	1	0,8	Because religious practices are compulsory in Iran	1	1,1
both countries are irreligious	1	0,8	Because they are in different positions	1	1,1
There are differences in modernity	1	0,8	Because the religious people caused antipathy in both countries	1	1,1
Religious discriminations are applying in both countries	1	0,8	Because privileges are given to those who are close to Islam	1	1,1
Differences in food culture	1	0,8	Because both states are oppressive	1	1,1
There are differences in applying force in religion	1	0,8	Since both states are Muslims	1	1,1
Unconscious behavior of governments in both countries	1	0,8	Because some life cycles are based on religion	1	1,1
both countries people are unconscious	1	0,8	Because cultural elements determine social life and economy	1	1,1
No answer	1	0,8			
Total	135	111,6	Total	87	100,0
*Multiple responses received.					

4.3.6. Iran & Turkey's Security

Turkish public opinion toward Iran in security aspects was evaluated in this part of the questionnaire. The result of the first question that was designed to ask Turkish elite respondents about their consideration of Iran as a partner or as a competitor of Turkey show that while 29.8% of respondents consider Iran as a competitor, 38% believe that Iran is a partner of Turkey. There are 32.2% of respondents who did not know the answer.

Turkish elite respondents' threat evaluation about different issues in the Middle East are shown in Table 4.10. On average, among all choices Turkish public respondents considered the Syrian civil war as the highest threat for Turkey. The next considered threats are Iran's nuclear program, Islamic extremist groups, international sanctions on Iran and political instability in Iran in order.

Table 4. 10: Elite and public respondents threat evaluation about different issues in the Middle East.

	Not a Threat	A Minor Threat	Average Threat	Threat	A Major Threat	Total	Average*	Average (Results for public respondents)
The Syrian civil war	0,8	4,2	12,6	40,3	42,0	100,0	4,18	3,56
Iran's nuclear program	2,5	4,2	17,6	26,9	48,7	100,0	4,15	3,45
Islamic extremist groups	0,8	4,2	21,8	31,9	41,2	100,0	4,08	3,41
International sanctions on Iran	2,5	3,4	21,2	42,4	30,5	100,0	3,95	3,43
Political instability in Iran	3,4	5,1	20,3	37,3	33,9	100,0	3,93	3,32

*The Average has been calculated from 1-5 rates

Table 4. 11: Turkish elite respondents view toward security issues in the Middle East.

	1 -Strongly Disagree	2- Slightly Disagree	3- Neither Agree nor Disagree	4- Slightly Agree	5- Strongly Agree	Total (Percentage)	Average
Iranian policy is contributing to sectarian division in the Arab World	16,5	20,7	29,8	26,4	6,6	100,0	2,86
Iran is pursuing its own agenda to serve its interests	15,7	27,3	28,1	24,8	4,1	100,0	2,74
Iran and Turkey can become allies	22,0	16,1	39,8	20,3	1,7	100,0	2,64
Iran is a threat for Turkish security	23,3	26,7	22,5	21,7	5,8	100,0	2,60
Turkey should build a strong relationship with Iran	25,8	30,0	20,0	16,7	7,5	100,0	2,50
Turkey contributes to peace and stability in the Middle East	27,3	24,8	24,0	22,3	1,7	100,0	2,46
The growing number of newcomers from Iran strengthens Turkish society	35,8	20,8	18,3	18,3	6,7	100,0	2,39
I support Iran's actions politics in Syria	23,1	42,1	19,0	9,9	5,8	100,0	2,33
Iran is having a great influence on the way things are going on in Turkey	31,7	22,5	32,5	12,5	,8	100,0	2,28
US should apply and increase sanctions on Iran	30,8	30,0	30,0	6,7	2,5	100,0	2,20
Iran should continue its nuclear program and access nuclear weapon	38,3	19,2	31,7	8,3	2,5	100,0	2,18
I support Iran's actions politics in Iraq	27,7	39,5	21,0	11,8	0	100,0	2,17
Iran is pursuing its nuclear program for peaceful purposes	30,0	37,5	21,7	7,5	3,3	100,0	2,17
The growing number of newcomers from Iran threatens traditional Turkish customs and values	33,3	32,5	22,5	8,3	3,3	100,0	2,16
Iran takes into account the interest of other Middle Eastern countries	35,5	32,2	16,5	14,0	1,7	100,0	2,14
If Iran continue its nuclear program, international community must authorize military action	36,7	29,2	25,8	8,3	0	100,0	2,06
Russia contributes to peace and stability in the Middle East	39,7	28,1	21,5	9,1	1,7	100,0	2,05
Iran is working to promote peace and stability in the Middle East	37,2	35,5	15,7	10,7	,8	100,0	2,02
Saudi Arabia contributes to peace and stability in the Middle East	35,5	38,8	19,8	5,0	,8	100,0	1,97
The United States contributes to peace and stability in the Middle East	33,9	50,4	10,7	1,7	3,3	100,0	1,90
Iran is a role model for my country	62,0	25,6	9,1	3,3	0	100,0	1,54

Table 4.11 represents the Turkish elite opinion about different issues on the security of the Middle East. The average of respondents slightly disagree that Iran and Turkey can become allies. They also generally do not believe that Iran is a threat to Turkish security. Moreover, the average of elite respondents does not support Iran's actions or politics in Syria and Iraq, and they mostly agree that Iran is not a role model for Turkey. In addition, they believe that none of Turkey, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia or the U.S. generally contributes to promoting peace and stability in the Middle East but Turkey partakes more than Russia, Russia more than Iran, Iran more than Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia more than the USA.

Elite respondents generally slightly disagree with the applying or increasing of the USA sanctions on Iran, but they do not agree with Iran's continuing its nuclear program and obtaining a nuclear weapon. They do not believe that Iran is pursuing its nuclear program for peaceful purposes, but they are against authorizing military action by international communities in that case that Iran continues its nuclear program. Moreover, it should be noted that Turkish elite respondents listed the most untrustworthy countries for Turkey as Israel, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, United States of America, Iran, Russia, China and Germany in order.

Another extra added explanatory question for the elite's questionnaire is "What do you think about the state of Iran after the revolution and its policies toward Turkey and the region?". The answers are summarized in Table 4.12. According to the results, about 12.4% of the elite respondents believe that post-revolution governments of Iran have applied oppressive policies. About 16.6% perceive Iran negatively and as a country without democracy after the Islamic revolution. Among the answers, there is not even a single positive statement about the state of Iran after the revolution.

Table 4. 12: Elite perception toward Iranian post-revolution government and its policies toward Turkey and the ME.

What do you think about the state of Iran after the revolution?	Frequency	Percentage of answers*	What do you think about the Iranian state policies towards Turkey and the ME	Frequency	Percentage of answers*
Have no idea	21	17,4	Have no idea	27	22,3
Having oppressive applications	15	12,4	No effect, insufficient to have any effect	22	18,2
A country with Sharia	11	9,1	I find its policies negative	10	8,3
A country without democracy	10	8,3	No answer	9	7,4
Being a country that I found negative	10	8,3	The state of Iran strengthened its Sharia supporters	8	6,6
Failed government and administration	3	2,5	They change the perception of religion in society	5	4,1
A strong state in terms of defense industry	3	2,5	They followed false policies	3	2,5
A government with negative effect on the region	3	2,5	They have negative effect in the region	3	2,5
No answer	3	2,5	They reflect their own ideals on us	3	2,5
A country with no value to little human rights	3	2,5	Their Nuclear weapon program adversely affects the region	3	2,5
A conservative country	3	2,5			
A reactionary government that is hostile to freedom	3	2,5	It is a political threat.	3	2,5
A dictatorship	2	1,7	They do not have benefit on Turkey's reputation	3	2,5
One man one regime	2	1,7	There are some impacts from Iran on Turkey because they are neighboring countries	2	1,7
Our neighbor country	2	1,7			
I have a positive view toward the state of Iran	2	1,7	They have a positive effect in the region because they have an Ummah understanding	2	1,7
A country that knows how to stands on its own feet	2	1,7			
A country that follows its own interests	2	1,7	I think they're messing up the region	2	1,7
A bigot government	2	1,7		2	1,7

A government born from USA politics	2	1,7	They have a negative effect because it is an undemocratic government		
A country with an unstable economy	2	1,7	Injustice emerges	2	1,7
A country whose people live in a bad way	2	1,7	Having oppressive applications	2	1,7
A country that has been revolutionized	2	1,7	There is an influence because it is a regional power	1	,8
A reassuring government	1	,8	I think it has a great effect on Turkey and the region	1	,8
International trade relations	1	,8			
Being a threatening country	1	,8	A country that can do anything it deems necessary to get what it wants	1	,8
A country that stands upright against imperialist forces	1	,8			
A country that can do anything it deems necessary to get what it wants	1	,8	Commercially positive	1	,8
They became an aggressive country	1	,8	I find Iran's policy in Syria negative	1	,8
A country that has good trade relations with Turkey	1	,8	There is a positive effect	1	,8
Untrustworthy country	1	,8	I find it difficult to have a positive effect because Iran to considers its own interests	1	,8
A government that grows antipathy with its conservative policies	1	,8	They're having a negative impact on people's perception of religion	1	,8
A Country fighting economic sanctions	1	,8	Human rights abuses leave a bad impact	1	,8
A country that should stop its nuclear program	1	,8	They are resulting political groupings	1	,8
A country with political turmoil	1	,8	Because of being a strong and unbreakable country in the region, it is advantage for the ME	1	,8
A government against women	1	,8			
Total	123	101,7	Total	122	100,8
*Multiple responses received.					

Table 4. 13: Turkish elite respondents' view toward the implications of nuclear Iran for Turkey.

what are the implications for Turkey of Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons	Frequency	Percentage of answers	What should Turkey do in this situation?"	Frequency	Percentage of answers
A threat for Turkey	39	32,2	No answer	27	22,3
No effect	23	19,0	I have no idea	21	17,4
I have no idea	17	14,0	Turkey should stay away	16	13,2
No answer	15	12,4	Turkey should prevent this situation	13	10,7
The emergence of war	10	8,3	Turkey should agree with Iran	12	9,9
The collapse of the Turkish economy	5	4,1	I have no suggestions	9	7,4
Political effects	5	4,1	Turkey must be peaceful	8	6,6
Geographical effects	4	3,3	Turkey should do inspection	6	5,0
A national threat	3	2,5	Turkey should not comply with the USA	3	2,5
			Turkey should launch a war against Israel	2	1,7
			Turkey must have a say	2	1,7
			Turkey should have a nuclear weapon	2	1,7
Total	121	100,0	Total	121	100,0

The next explanatory question – added only for elite respondents – is “what are the implications for Turkey of Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons? What should Turkey do in this situation?” As shown in Table 4.13, respondents mentioned the emergence of war, collapse of the Turkish economy, political and geographical effects as implications of a nuclear Iran for Turkey. In this situation, they believe that Turkey should not interfere, act to restrain this situation, pursue agreement with Iran and not align with the USA, and it should have a voice or own a nuclear weapon itself. The other explanatory question designed for elite respondents is “What is your view on Iran's Syria policy?” and it is interesting to see that most of the elite respondents have a negative view toward Iran’s policy in Syria. Answers to this question are presented in Table 4.14.

Table 4. 14: Turkish elite respondents view on Iran’s Syria policy.

What is your view on Iran's Syria policy?	Frequency	Percentage of answers
I have no idea	38	31,4
No answer	18	14,9
A discriminatory policy	12	9,9
Iran wants to divide the country	11	9,1
I have a negative view	9	7,4
Iran supports Assad	8	6,6
Iran want to ensure the regional stability	7	5,8
The war must end	6	5,0
I have a positive view	5	4,1
To prevent division	2	1,7
Imposing sanctions	2	1,7
Not trustworthy	1	,8
Iran wants to have a say in the region	1	,8
Iran wants to make Syria democratic	1	,8
Total	121	100,0

The last explanatory added question for elite respondents in this part is “Do you think that there could be a possible cooperation between Turkey and Iran over Syria? If possible, how can this cooperation be shaped?”. It is thought-provoking to see that 75.7%

of the Turkish elite respondents do not think that there could be a possible cooperation between Iran and Turkey on Syria. For those who considered a possible cooperation, they believe that Turkey and Iran can do so through applying the same policies together, trusting each other and trying to have economic cooperation over Syria.

4.3.7. Iranian Identity and Culture

The first question of the last part of the questionnaire asks about the first word coming to a respondent's mind when they hear "Iranian people". The most commonly received answers for this question from elite respondents are as follows in order: uneducated, Muslims, being religious, persecution, being oppressive, educated, black dress code for women, Persians, distance from global society, respectfulness, sharia, war, neighbor country, beautiful girls, honesty, sincerity, cultured, our brothers and sisters, being tolerant. As can be seen, most of the answers have a rather positive weight. Turkish public and elite respondents' view toward Iranian people are compared in Table 4.15. The average of both views is close to a "somewhat unfavorable" view, with elites being slightly more unfavorable toward Iranians.

Table 4. 15: Comparing Turkish elite and public views toward Iranian people.

View toward Iranians	Percentage of Elite Respondents	Percentage of Public Respondents
1- Very unfavorable	38.3	26.8
2- Somewhat unfavorable	10.8	15.1
3- Neutral	24.2	35.8
4- Somewhat favorable	19.2	18.3
5- Very favorable	7.5	4.0
Average	2.47 out of 5	2.69 out of 5

When elite respondents were asked about the official language of Iran, only 71.9% gave the true answer – Persian. The rest of the answers are Arabic (22.3%), Turkish (3.3%) and "I don't know" (2.5%). Among the 120 elite respondents, there is only one person (0.8%) who is very interested and 13 persons (10.8%) are interested in Iranian history. The rest of the elite respondents are either neutral (21.7%), know very little about the

history of Iran (35%) or do not know anything about Iranian history (31.7%). Moreover, 85.7% of the elites believe that they do not have enough information about Iranian society, history, culture, and structure. What should be an important question point for the state of Iran here is that 63.2% of elite respondents believe that it is not important to have information about Iran.

Table 4.16 compares elite and public respondents' rating of their ideas about Iranian people, identity, and culture. What stands out in the table is that there is a difference between elite and public views on rating whether "Turkish culture is superior to Iranian culture." While the average of public respondents almost slightly agree that Turkish culture is superior to Iranian culture, elite respondents neither agree nor disagree with this statement. This seems quite normal when considering priorities for cultures is not expected from elites in general.

To put it briefly, the average of elite respondents slightly disagree that Iranians are modern, hard-working, generally educated, generally polite, value the opinions of others, having a high standard of living, or have made a positive contribution to Islam. Closer inspection of the table shows that public respondents have generally a more positive view toward Iranians compared with elite respondents.

When elite respondents were asked about the possible effects of Iranian culture on Turkish culture, about 33.1% believed that there is no impact from Iranian culture on Turkish culture. There are 9.1% who believed that there is a negative impact, 5% mentioned religious impacts, 4.1% named linguistic impacts, and the others named tolerance, effects on music, bad reflection of Islam, historical effects, food culture, introducing backgammon into Turkish culture, Sufi influences, and effects on movies.

Table 4. 16: Comparing Turkish elite and public respondents' views about Iranian people, their identity and culture.

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Slightly Disagree	3- Neither Agree nor Disagree	4- Slightly Agree	5- Strongly Agree	Total (Percentage)	Average for Elite Respondents (Out of 5)	Average for Public Respondents (Out of 5)
Iranians are happy with living in Turkey	21,8	13,4	26,1	26,1	12,6	100,0	2,94	3,41
Iranians are people just like me	27,5	15,8	20,0	15,0	21,7	100,0	2,88	2,96
Turkish culture is superior to Iranian culture	22,5	16,7	25,8	21,7	13,3	100,0	2,87	3,62
Iranians have great personal values and moral standards	25,8	21,7	10,0	32,5	10,0	100,0	2,79	2,92
Iranians are modern people	25,0	15,8	27,5	26,7	5,0	100,0	2,71	3,09
Iranians are hard-working people	22,5	18,3	32,5	20,0	6,7	100,0	2,70	3,02
Iranian culture is very close to Turkish culture	21,7	25,0	24,2	23,3	5,8	100,0	2,67	2,86
I like Iranian movies	27,5	17,5	26,7	20,0	8,3	100,0	2,64	3,01
Iranian people are generally educated	23,3	19,2	34,2	17,5	5,8	100,0	2,63	2,91
Iranian people are generally polite	24,2	19,2	30,8	22,5	3,3	100,0	2,62	2,98
Iranian people care about education as a pathway to success	24,2	25,0	23,3	20,8	6,7	100,0	2,61	2,89
I like Persian music	27,5	20,0	25,0	19,2	8,3	100,0	2,61	2,94
Iranians don't like meeting people of different races	23,3	20,0	33,3	20,0	3,3	100,0	2,60	2,95
I like Persian language	30,0	19,2	21,7	21,7	7,5	100,0	2,58	2,95
I like Persian food	30,0	19,2	26,7	17,5	6,7	100,0	2,52	2,92
Iranian people generally value the opinions of others	23,3	25,0	35,0	11,7	5,0	100,0	2,50	2,87
Iranians often exhibit exciting attitudes	19,2	27,5	40,0	10,8	2,5	100,0	2,50	2,92
Iranians are nationalistic	29,2	20,8	27,5	18,3	4,2	100,0	2,48	2,81
Iranians often get angry quickly	21,7	24,2	41,7	10,8	1,7	100,0	2,47	2,97
Iranians have made a positive contribution to Islam	31,9	16,0	28,6	21,8	1,7	100,0	2,45	2,81

Table 4. 17: Turkish elite respondents' view on the future or Iran-Turkey relations.

	Frequency	Percentage of answers
No relationship should be established	29	24,0
Neighborhood relationship should be established	27	22,3
I have no idea	21	17,4
No answer	16	13,2
Establish a relationship based on mutual interest	13	10,7
A peaceful relationship should be established	4	3,3
Economic interests should be considered	4	3,3
They should establish a political alliance	4	3,3
They should provide a ground for continuous negotiations	1	,8
They should manage their relations in a democratic way	1	,8
Religious interests must be respected	1	,8
Total	121	100,0

4.4. Regression Analyses

In this chapter, the Ordered Logistic Regression has been applied to understand the relation between the view of Turkish elite respondents toward Iran and Iranians and various dependent variables. Table 4.18 represents the Ordered Logistic Regression models of the views of Turkish elite respondents to Iranians and various independent variables in 6 different models. The dependent variable is the view of Turkish elite respondents toward Iranian people, and the independent variables are the age of respondents, gender, education, income level, religiosity, knowing an Iranian, feeling closer ties to European culture, having positive feelings toward Americans and Arabs, view toward Iran as a country, trusting Iran, internet usage, the impact of Iranian music, movies, food and language.

The first model in Table 4.18 represents the relation between age, gender, and education level of Turkish elite respondents with their view toward Iranians. In the model, there is no significant relation between the age and education level of the elite respondents (as they all hold at least a university degree) and their view toward Iranian people. There

is 0.56% more possibility for a Turkish elite member to have a negative view toward Iranians if the respondent is female (at .10 level).

In Model 2, the impact of religiosity, income level and having the experience of knowing an Iranian have been added. The same as for public respondents, there is a highly significant relationship between “knowing an Iranian” and having a more positive view toward Iranian people for elite respondents. The model shows no significant relationship between the income level and religiosity degree of elite respondents and their view toward Iranians. This may be because of the fact that the income level of the elite respondents is more than average. Also, compared with the public respondents, the low number of elite respondents may be the reason behind there being a significant relationship between religiosity and view toward Iranians among public respondents and not among elites.

The third model evaluates the effect of the degree that elite respondents feel closer to European culture, having positive feelings toward Americans and Arabs, their view toward Iran and the amount they trust Iran on their view toward Iranian people. Results show a highly significant relationship between elite respondents’ view toward Iran and their view toward Iranians at the .01 level. In addition, there is a significant relation between the degree that the elite respondents trust Iran and their view toward Iranian people at .10 level).

The effect of internet usage has been evaluated in the fourth model. The regression analyses results show that there is a significant relationship between the elite respondents’ view who do not use the internet and those who use the internet 4-7 hours a day, which is in the “mid usage of internet” category, and the respondents’ view toward Iranians at .05 and .10 levels respectively.

Model 5 evaluates the impact of cultural indicators, including the impact of Iranian movies, music, food, and language on elite respondents’ view toward Iranians. In the model, only being interested in Persian language had a significant effect.

Table 4. 18: Ordered Logistic Regression models of view of Turkish public respondents to Iranians and various independent variables.

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Age of the Respondents	1.00006(0.00)	0.98 (-0.84)				0.98 (-0.78)
Female View's	0.56 (-1.67)*	0.53 (-1.82)*				1.31 (0.66)
Education Level	1.21 (0.80)	1.12 (0.48)				1.03 (0.10)
Income Level		1.02 (0.25)				0.92 (-0.61)
Being Religious		2.08 (1.39)				0.56 (-0.80)
Knowing an Iranian		3.66(3.47)***				0.63 (-0.88)
Feeling Closer to European Culture			0.91 (-0.23)			1.02 (0.05)
Positive Feeling toward Americans			0.85 (-0.41)			1.03 (0.07)
Positive Feeling toward Arabs			1.57 (0.80)			2.30 (1.18)
View toward Iran			41.36(6.14)***			23.079(4.64)***
Trusting Iran			3.27 (1.65)*			2.15 (0.93)
Not Using Internet				148.86(2.48)**		27.55(1.32)
Low Using Internet				2.37 (0.98)		1.78 (0.64)
Mid Using Internet				5.43(1.87)*		4.23 (1.55)
High Using Internet				1 (omitted)		1 (omitted)
Iranian Music					1.33 (0.50)	1.32 (0.39)
Iranian Movies					1.32 (0.47)	0.85 (-0.21)
Iranian Food					2.32 (1.38)	1.50 (0.59)
Iranian Language (Persian)					7.27(3.04)***	6.30 (2.30)**
Pseudo R2	0.0097	0.0508	0.1843	0.0322	0.1444	0.2593
Notes:						
Each cell contains the Odds Ratio and the Z values in parentheses						
*p< .10; **p< .05; ***p<. 01						
N = 121 for all variables						

While Iranian movies and music had a highly significant effect on public respondents, it shows no meaningful impact on elite respondents and their view toward Iranians. Finally, model 6 adds all the variable effects together. In the model, view of elite respondents toward Iran and Iranian language have a significant effect at the .001 and .05 level respectively while other variables have no effect.

Table 4.19 presents the models of Turkish elite respondents' views toward Iran and various independent variables. The first model in the table assesses the effect of age, gender and education level on elite respondents' view toward Iran, in which none of the variables show a significant effect.

The lack of any significant effect of age, gender and education level suggests that among Turkish elite respondents, there is no difference among being male or female, being young or old, or holding a university degree or PhD in their view toward Iran. The second model adds the effects of the income level of the elite respondents, their religiosity degree and having the experience of knowing an Iranian. The results show that none of the variables are significant but just "knowing an Iranian", that means having a contact or knowing an Iranian, for elite respondents highly increase their positive view toward Iran.

In the third model, the impact of having a positive view toward Iranians, trusting Iran, considering Iran as a threat for Turkish security, believing that Iran should continue its nuclear program and seeing Iran as a partner of Turkey on Turkish elite respondents view toward Iran have been examined. There is a positive significant relationship between having a positive view toward Iranians and having a positive view toward Iran at .001 level. In addition, there is a positive significant relation between the degree to which elite respondents trust Iran and their positive view toward Iran at .05 level. The model also represents a meaningful relation between a positive view toward Iran and the respondents believing that Iran should continue its nuclear program (at .10 level) and seeing Iran as a partner of Turkey (at .05 level).

Table 4. 19: Ordered Logistic Regression models of view of Turkish elite respondents to Iran and various independent variables.

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Age of the Respondents	1.008(0.59)	0.99 (-0.29)					1.002 (0.15)
Female Views	0.85 (-0.48)	0.81 (-0.62)					2.07 (1.70)*
Education Level	1.04 (0.20)	1.03 (0.12)					1.16 (0.52)
Income Level		1.02 (0.30)					0.93 (-0.054)
Being Religious		2.24 (1.49)					0.80 (-0.30)
Knowing an Iranian		3.07(3.02)***					1.02 (0.06)
Having a Positive View toward Iranians			20.41(4.74)***				23.01(4.26)***
Trusting Iran			4.87 (2.21)**				6.08 (2.13)**
Considering Iran as a Threat for Turkish Security			0.56(-1.36)				0.604(-0.97)
Believing that Iran Should Continue its Nuclear Program			2.53 (1.66)*				2.48 (1.38)
Seeing Iran as a Partner of Turkey			2.84 (2.41)**				3.56 (2.40)**
Trust President Hassan Rouhani				2.88(0.96)			3.83 (1.00)
Trust President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad				2.17(0.98)			0.73 (-0.32)
Trust President Mohammad Khatami				1.70(0.38)			0.65 (-0.25)
Trust President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani				3.30(1.05)			0.93 (-0.05)
Not Using Internet					101.88(2.68)***		237.64(2.46)**
Low Using Internet					3.78 (1.53)		7.308 (1.97)**
Mid Using Internet					5.72 (1.96)**		14.40 (2.58)**
High Using Internet					1 (omitted)		1 (omitted)
Iranian Music						1.86(1.18)	1.49 (0.56)
Iranian Movies						1.54(0.82)	0.97 (-0.04)
Iranian Food						3.11(1.99)**	2.68 (1.51)
Iranian Language (Persian)						2.09 (1.30)	0.361(-1.33)
Pseudo R2	0.002	0.0331	0.2152	0.0305	0.0223	0.0976	0.2642
Notes:							
Each cell contains the Odds Ratio and the Z values in parentheses							
*p< .10; **p< .05; ***p<. 01, N = 121 for all variables							

The fourth model evaluates the effect of elite respondents' view toward Iranian Presidents from President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to President Hassan Rouhani. The results support that there is no significant relationship between the elite respondents' view toward Iranian Presidents and their view toward Iran. This means that the elite respondents' view toward Iran is detached from their view toward Iranian Presidents and their acts, which may suggest either that they do not have enough information about the Presidents, or they see Iran and the policies of the state of Iran as independent from the acts of its Presidents.

The impact of the amount of internet usage in a day on elite respondents' view toward Iran was assessed in the fifth model. There is only a positive significant relation between those who do not use the internet at all (at .001 level) and those who use a middle level of internet in a day (at .10 level), which has been considered as 4-7 hours a day, and their view toward Iran. The sixth model evaluates the impact of cultural indicators. There is a positive significant relation between elite respondents' perception of Iranian food and their view toward Iran at .05 level.

Model 7 adds all the variables together, and it suggests a positive significant relation between female elite respondents and their view toward Iran (at .10 level), having a positive view of elite respondents toward Iranians (at .001 level) and their degree of trusting Iran (at .05 level) with their view toward Iran. In addition, the results of the model suggest that seeing Iran as a partner of Turkey has a positive significant relation with the view of elite respondents toward Iran at .05 level. Moreover, using low, middle, and high level of internet have a positive significant effect on elite respondents' view to Iran at .05 level. None of the other variables show a significant result.

4.5. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter analyzed the views of Turkish elite respondents toward Iran and Iranians.

According to the results, elite respondents have generally an almost negative view toward Iranian people; and they have a more positive view of Iranians only compared with

Arabs. Compared with elite respondents, there are more public respondents who feel themselves in a closer tie with Iranian culture, as more than 70% of elite respondents feel themselves closer to European culture.

There are a considerable number of elite respondents who thought that the official language of Iran is Arabic, and only about 10% are interested in Iranian history. Moreover, most of the elites believe that they do not have enough information about Iranian society, history, culture, and structure. The same as for public respondents, the average of elite respondents consider Iranian people as quite religious. As mentioned before, an important consideration for the Iranian state here is that 63.2% of elite respondents believe that it is not even important to have information about Iran. Most of the elite respondents believe that there is no impact from Iranian culture on Turkish culture. Furthermore, while it is not economically or logistically difficult for elites to travel to Iran, only two elite respondents have ever visited Iran; however, most of them have met some Iranians before. Elite respondents are generally not positive toward becoming a friend with Iranians, visiting, or living in Iran. However, the same as for public respondents, there is a highly significant relationship between “knowing an Iranian” and having a more positive view toward Iranian people for elite respondents.

The Ordered Regression Analysis models results show no significant relationship between the income level and religiosity degree of elite respondents and their view toward Iranians. However, there is a positive relation between elite respondents’ view toward Iran, the degree they trust Iran with their view toward Iranian people. Furthermore, while Iranian movies and music had a highly significant effect on public respondents and their view toward Iranians, Persian language had a significant effect on elite respondents.

In addition, the average of elite respondents has a “somewhat negative” view toward Iran. The average of the results for elite respondents is slightly more negative than public respondents. Most of the elite respondents believe that there are human rights violations in Iran, that the current regime in Iran should change and that Iran follows a sectarian (Sunni-Shiite) foreign policy towards the Middle East. Elite respondents gave

neutral answers about whether Iran is a victim of biased propaganda of enemies or not. In sum, the elite respondents have an unfavorable view toward the Iranian state.

Turkish elite respondents – the same as Turkish public respondents - believe that the main regional power is Turkey and Iran stands in second place, both now and in the near future. A considerable number of elite respondents' advocate establishing positive relations between Iran and Turkey. They emphasized that in their relations, Iran and Turkey should consider economic, political, religious, and other mutual interests.

The average of elite respondents slightly disagrees about whether Iran and Turkey can become allies. They also generally do not believe that Iran is a threat for Turkish security. In addition, the average of elite respondents does not support Iran's actions and politics in Syria and Iraq, and they mostly agree that Iran is not a role model for Turkey. In addition, they believe that none of Turkey, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia or the U.S. generally engenders peace and stability in the Middle East but Turkey contributes more than Russia, Russia more than Iran, Iran more than Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia more than the USA.

As mentioned, elite respondents generally disagree with applying or increasing the USA sanctions on Iran, but they do not agree with Iran continuing its nuclear program and obtaining a nuclear weapon. They do not believe that Iran is pursuing its nuclear program for peaceful purposes, but they are against authorizing military action by international communities in the case that Iran continues its nuclear program. In addition, elite respondents believe that the emergence of war, collapse of the Turkish economy, political and geographical effects are the possible implications of a nuclear Iran for Turkey. In this situation, they believe that Turkey should refrain from interfering, act to prevent this situation, it should find agreement with Iran and should not side with the USA, and it should have an input or possess a nuclear weapon itself.

Moreover, it should be noted that Turkish elite respondents listed the most untrustworthy countries for Turkey as Israel, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan,

United States of America, Iran, Russia, China, and Germany in order. In addition, most elite respondents negatively view Iran's policy in Syria. It is thought-provoking to see that 75.7% of the Turkish elite respondents do not think that there could be a possible cooperation between Iran and Turkey on Syria. For those who considered a possible cooperation, they believe that Turkey and Iran can do so through applying the same policies together, trusting each other and trying to have economic cooperation over Syria.



CONCLUSION

This dissertation assessed the perception of Iran in Turkey by utilizing primary and secondary data. Regarding the image of Iran in Turkey, the best available previous study belonged to the American based PEW Global Attitudes Project. The results from that study suggest that from 2002 to 2017, Turkish people had a generally negative views toward Iran. However, although the Pew study has been helpful to understand the general image of Iran in Turkey, it only focused on Turkish people's view toward the Iranian state. There was no examination of Turkish people's view toward Iranian people, their culture and religion. In Pew studies there was also no differentiation between Turkish elites and the general public. As such, this study has filled this gap by analysing both the Turkish elite and public view toward Iran in general, the Iranian state and Iranian people using primary data. Primary data was collected from two separate samples representing the general public and the elite.

The results of the primary data analyses have revealed several important outcomes. It revealed that gender of the respondents, cultural components, having the experience of knowing an Iranian before, the degree of trust in Iran and its relations with Turkey, and the internet usage level are the main predictors of perception of Iran in Turkey. In addition, while this dissertation expected to see some differentiation between elite and general public views toward Iran, the result for different determinants of perception of Iran in Turkey are mostly convergent among the public and elites. Thus, as the regression analyses also affirms, there is no link between the education and income level of

respondents and their view toward Iran, which drives us to consider other criteria for defining “being elite” in Turkey for upcoming studies.

One of the interesting results of this study was the general public and elite view toward Iranian Presidents. Elite respondents do have a more positive view toward President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad – the former controversial President of Iran who came to power following the Green Movement protests in 2009 – than general public respondents. In addition, compared to President Rouhani, there is a more favourable view toward President Ahmadinejad from both the elite and general public of Turkey.

Overall, this dissertation supports the position that the view of Turkish people toward both Iran and the Iranian state is unfavourable. However, there is a slightly more positive view toward Iranian people rather than its government. Moreover, the analysis supported a positive relation between knowing an Iranian and having a more positive view toward Iranians for Turkish respondents. This result affirms the Contact Theory and it can be considered as another practical example to support this theory. It should be noted that most of the Turkish respondents have not met no or a few Iranians before, and are rarely interested in becoming a friend, meeting, or dealing with Iranians. This may explain their general negative attitude toward Iran.

In addition, the results suggest that while only a few of the Turkish public and elite respondents have been abroad before, those who have travelled to a foreign country feel their culture is closer to Iranian culture. Moreover, there is a positive link between respondents’ age and having a more positive view toward Iranian people, suggesting older people’s remembrance of Iran before the Islamic Revolution.

One of the questions that the results of this research helped to answer was whether the view of Turkish people towards Iran would be related to their view toward other countries like the United States or European countries. By analysing the PEW Global Attitudes data, we found that there is no significant correlation between Turkish people’s view toward Iran and their view toward other countries.

Findings also revealed that most of the elite respondents and almost all the public respondents generally agree that Iran is not a role model for Turkey. However, they do not believe that Iran is a threat to Turkish security. Regarding Iran's nuclear program, both Turkish elite and public respondents generally disagree with the applying or increasing of the USA sanctions on Iran, but they do not agree with Iran continuing its nuclear program and obtaining nuclear weapons. In addition, Turkish respondents do not believe that Iran's pursuing a nuclear program would be for peaceful purposes. In addition, elite respondents believe that the emergence of war, collapse of the Turkish economy, political and geographical effects are possible implications of a nuclear Iran for Turkey. In this situation, they believe that Turkey should not interfere, it should prevent this situation, and it should agree with Iran and should not take the side of the USA, and it should have a say or a nuclear weapon itself.

Moreover, the results demonstrate that on average, public respondents believe that there are violations of human rights in Iran and so the current regime in Iran should change. They also believe that Iran follows a sectarian (Sunni-Shiite) foreign policy toward the Middle East. Moreover, the average of the Turkish public respondents who consider Iran as a competitor – rather than a partner – of Turkey, is the same as those who do not know the answer, affirming the wide literature that puts Iranian-Turkish relations as somewhere between competition and collaboration. On the other hand, a considerable number of elite respondents' advocate establishing a positive relation between Iran and Turkey. They emphasized that in their relations, Iran and Turkey should consider economic, political, religious, and other mutual interests. The average elite respondent slightly disagrees whether Iran and Turkey can become allies. In addition, the average of elite respondents does not support Iran's actions and politics in Syria and Iraq, and they believe that none of Turkey, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia or the U.S. generally contributes to promote peace and stability in the Middle East but Turkey partakes more than Russia, Russia more than Iran, Iran more than Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia more than the USA. Besides, most of the elite respondents have a negative view toward Iran's policy in Syria. It is thought-provoking to see that 75.7% of the Turkish elite respondents do not think that there could

be a possible cooperation between Iran and Turkey on Syria. Those respondents who considered a possible cooperation believe that Turkey and Iran can do so through applying the same policies together, trusting each other and trying to have economic cooperation over Syria.

When it comes to the view of Turkish people toward Iranian people, as mentioned above, most of Turkish public and elite respondents have a generally unfavourable view toward them. In Pew research results, we were not sure if only the perception of Iran is negative in Turkey, or it is the same case for Iranian people as well. According to the results of this study, Turkish people – both general public and the elite – have an unfavourable view of Iranians as well. However, Turkish public respondents have a more positive view toward Iranians, compared to Spanish, Germans, Italians, Arabs, French, Chinese, British and Americans. This is while Turkish elite respondents have a more positive view of Iranians only compared with Arabs. Compared with elite respondents, there are more public respondents who feel themselves in a closer tie with Iranian culture, as more than 70% of elite respondents feel themselves closer to European culture. Again, according to the implications of the “Contact Theory,” one of the important reasons behind this may be because of the fact that at least 30% of the Turkish elite have been abroad (mainly Europe) before. Thus, beside many other reasons, more contact and connection with Europeans would have increased a more positive view of the Turkish elite toward them.

Furthermore, the average of both public and elite respondents considers Iranian people as quite religious. That is at odds with the reality, especially when it comes to Iranian youth: there is a considerable and increasing generational gap in terms of religiosity in Iran. In addition, a considerable amount of both public and elite respondents considers Iranians as Arabs and their official language as Arabic. This may be understandable for low-educated respondents but considering Iranians as Arabs among well-educated and elite Turks shows a great deficiency of Iran in introducing its language and culture in Turkey.

The worse news for the Iranian state is that about 63.2% of Turkish elite respondents believe that it is not even important to have information about Iran. Most of the elite respondents hold that there is no impact from Iranian culture on Turkish culture. Furthermore, while the economic situation of elites is generally good and they do not need a visa to travel to Iran, there are only two elite respondents who have visited Iran. Results show that the elite respondents are generally not positive toward becoming a friend with Iranians, visiting, or living in Iran.

In addition, the results of Ordered Logistic Regression analysis models suggest that there is a highly positive relation between Turkish public view toward Iranians and female respondents, income level of the respondents, their degree of religiosity, their connection with Iranian music and movies, their having positive feelings toward Arabs, their view of Iran and the degree to which they trust Iran. Note that there is a negative relation between feeling closer to European culture for Turkish public respondents and their view toward Iranian people. On the other hand, the Ordered Regression Analysis models results show no significant relationship between the income level and religiosity degree of elite respondents and their view toward Iranians. However, there is a positive relation between elite respondents' view toward Iran and the degree they trust Iran with their view toward Iranian people. Furthermore, it is no surprise that while Iranian movies and music had a highly significant effect on public respondents and their view toward Iranians, Persian language had a significant effect on elite respondents.

While the average of Turkish public respondents has either a “somewhat unfavourable” or “neutral” view toward Iran, the average of elite respondents has a “somewhat negative” view toward their neighbouring country. Compared with the same answers for the same question in PEW Global Attitudes Project of 2017, there is a considerable decrease in the “very unfavourable” view of Turkish people toward Iran in 2019. At the same time, compared with PEW results of 2017, “very favourable” and “somewhat favourable” views of Turkish people toward Iran have increased slightly in 2019; all of which implies good news for Iranian-Turkish future relations.

In sum, while Iran and Turkey share common geographical boundaries, similar cultural, religious, linguistic, ethnical, and social context, the level of the closeness of their people, and the information and perception that they have of each other is not at a satisfying level. As it is also clear from the results of this study that Turkish people do not have a bright picture of the people of Iran and their culture, history, and language. Both Turkish elites and the general public respondents have a neutral to unfavourable view toward Iran, the state of Iran and its people, which shows a huge gap among two nations.

This is where the special importance of country image in political issues arises: if Turkish people continue disfavouring Iran, or increase their unfavourable view toward their neighbouring country, it would be very hard for the Turkish government to apply a positive approach in its foreign policies toward Iran. On the other hand, this will make it hard for the Iranian state to establish close relations with Turkey as well. Again - as mentioned before in this study - the liberal theories can best explain the reason behind the undeniable role and importance of country image for governments: “liberal theories find public opinion to be relatively stable, sensibly structured, consistent, and consequently impactful on foreign policy, as presidents take into consideration public opinion when making foreign policy decisions” (quoted by Dorani, 2018). Even if – as Fayyaz and Shirazi (2013) put it - the media do not reflect the real Iran, the Iranian state can still have an important role in applying policies at least to promote Iranian culture, language and history in Turkey and elsewhere in the world.

Consequently, there are some policy recommendations resulting from this study, as follows: Firstly, this study revealed that there is a meaningful negative relation between being female and having a positive view toward Iran in Turkey. This implies that Turkish women generally have a more negative view toward Iran and Iranians that is possibly linked to their perception about the situation of women in Iran. There is a lot of media portrayal about women in Iran, the violation of women’s rights, gender discrimination and repression in this country. Thus, this image cannot be changed unless some new changes regarding women’s rights happens in Iran.

Secondly, this study affirms the Contact Theory and that there is a highly significant relationship between knowing an Iranian and having a more positive view toward Iranian people for Turkish elite and public respondents. Accordingly, there should be more interaction, connection and contact between Iranian and Turkish people to effectively reduce prejudice and increase positive feelings of both sides toward each other. Therefore, the importance of special tourism policies for Turkish tourists gain an extra importance, which is not only important because of its economic, social, and cultural aspects, but also because of its political aspect to ally more the Turkish and Iranian nations.

Thirdly, this study suggests that cultural components have an important effect on Turkish people's view toward Iran and Iranians. Iranian movies, music, food, and language should become more widely known in Turkey. Making mutual movies and music concerts, extensive training in the Persian language in Turkey, cultural activities, etc. are recommended.

Finally, besides only Turkey, there is an extensive need of measuring other countries' perception of Iran. The result would be particularly important in political, economic, social and cultural policy making strategies. At this time, the United States of America is the pioneer country which regularly evaluates its image in the world and applies its policy making accordingly, realizing that it will not be easy to employ long-term policies without people's consenting to them.



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