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Anti-Semitism in Turkey

Introduction

This paper will examine the worsening conditions for the Jewish community in Turkey as a result of increased racial discrimination over the past decade. Within this critique, the methodology will encompass various theories and media articles relating to ethnic discrimination and violence, specifically involving anti-Semitism. The term 'anti-Semitism' is said to date back to 1879 when Wilhelm Marr used it whilst hoping to facilitate greater adoption of racial hatred of Jews, this implies that it is a form of racial discrimination as opposed to religious discrimination due to its attempt to promote opposition to the Jewish race (Kenneth L. Marcus, 2015). The paper will largely be nation specific, following Frank Dikötter's (2008, p.1494) interactive approach to understanding racism, in which racism is 'based on local cognitive traditions and political agendas'. However, the research will also take influence from Goldberg's (2009) methodology through using racial comparisons of different countries. This paper will therefore provide in depth analysis of anti-Semitism within the Turkish context.

The rise of Islamic extremism and Turkey's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has produced increased interest in the discrimination of the Turkish Jewish community, creating a large amount of research surrounding this form of discrimination. Consequently, this analysis will examine four key aspects of Jewish discrimination that will provide a focus to this research. The first section will explore governmental policy that has impacted on the levels of anti-Semitism. It will argue that legislation present at the beginning of the Turkish Republic, including assimilation processes; have had a lasting impact on cultural discrimination. It will also include contemporary political discourse and explain the negative effects it has had on racism. This will be the most detailed section of the research, as the governmental influence seems to have made the largest direct impact to racism.
The second section will focus on popular perceptions of anti-Semitism, examining the opinions of Turkish Jews as well as viewing European and American perspectives through the use of media and governmental research. It will demonstrate the differing viewpoints on the topic that have resulted in difficulty in finding the genuine discriminatory situation. The third section will attempt to explain the precariousness of the Turkish Nationality, and how the blurring boundaries of nationalism, ethnicity and religion have impacted on tensions between the Turkish Muslim community and Turkish Jewish community. This section will discuss Max Weber's (1978 cited in Stephen Kalberg, 2015) theory of a 'race-ethnicity-nation' and use it to explain the complex racial and ethnic definitions within contemporary Turkey. The final section will explore the effects of worsening anti-Semitism on the lives of the ever-decreasing Jewish community in Turkey. The rise of emigration and racial violence, primarily due to Turkey's involvement in the global War on Terror, are effects of increased racism combined with a lack of anti-discriminatory policy.

Governmental Policies Affecting Anti-Semitism

In order to fully understand the current situation for the Jewish community in Turkey, it is important to explain the basis of the Turkish Republic. The Republic is based on the 1923 Constitution, which established a secular state, separating religion and politics (Soner

Cagaptay, 2004). The Republic formally acknowledges Jews as one of three minority religions within Turkey, along with Greek Orthodox Christians and Armenian Orthodox Christians (US Department of State, 2006). As a result Turkish Jews are living within a Muslim dominated country that claims to be tolerant of Freedom of Religion (Cagaptay, 2004).

Turkey attempts to portray itself as inclusive and hence declares that 'the inhabitants of Turkey are considered Turks by virtue of citizenship irrespective of religious and racial differences' (Cagaptay, 2004). Despite this, the Constitution is said to have aimed to assimilate both non-Turkish Muslims and Jews into the Turkish nationality. The concept of Kemalism is a key feature of this assimilation process, which evolved out of a Turkish nationalist movement in the 1920s and 1930s, aiming to allow state and party to dominate all spheres of life (Oxford Reference, 2004). Despite Kemalism no longer holding as much importance within Turkish politics, the concepts of nationalism and secularism are still incorporated into governance; this poses problems for the recognized minority religions within Turkey, as Islam is seen as part of the Turkish national identity. There is therefore a slight oxymoron between the proposed secularism and the overwhelming Muslim majority. The Turkish government has attempted many assimilation policies, a prime example being the 'Citizen, Speak Turkish!' campaign of the 1930s, which was organized to ensure minority groups, including Jews, spoke Turkish (Sule Toktas, 2006). This provoked a mass reaction against minorities for their language differences (Toktas, 2006). This is an example of how institutionalized racism, and a consequent neglect of individual rights, can evolve into an individual level and lead to social discrimination. The Turkish government has attempted to create a mono-ethnic society through these assimilation projects; Robert Miles (as cited in Ian Law, 2010) argues that although the Jewish community is a recognized minority religion, this concept confirms a second-class status, and does not promote equality. Supposed integration projects such as the 'Citizen, Speak Turkish!' campaign could lead to over integration and a form of forced assimilation or 'Turkification'. Thomas Eriksen (2002) argues that assimilation policies are often believed by the state to help their target groups to achieve equal rights and improve their social standing, however they can often result in suffering and a loss of dignity of the assimilated group as it is implied that their own tradition is not of value. Eriksen's (2002) argument suggests that the Turkish government did not view assimilation as being detrimental to the Jewish community, and did not recognise the status issue that Miles (cited in Law, 2010) highlights. Much of the religious discrimination that is present in Turkey could manifest itself against other minority religious groups, for example the Armenian population. Parts of this research could be applied to these other minority groups; however this analysis will specifically focus on discrimination against the Turkish Jewish community. It should be noted that although these assimilationist policies are no longer in practice, their legacy has had a lasting impact on social perceptions of the concept of Turkishness and of segregation of religions.

Since the beginning of the millennium, anti-Semitism in Turkey has changed significantly. Ten years ago, both Jewish elites and state officials stated that anti-Semitism in Turkey was nearly non-existent, and that the anti-Semitism that was present, originated from Arab countries that have conflicts with Israel (Toktas, 2006). This removed the racial issue from within Turkish society and placed the blame elsewhere; implying the Turkish government had no role in tackling the discrimination. Despite this claim, the Jewish population has decreased from 25,000 in 2006 to only 17,000 in 2015 (US Department of State, 2006, Ilan Ben Zion, 6/6/2015). This alarming decrease implies that Turkey is no longer considered a suitable place for Jews to live; and that anti-Semitism has become a prominent issue within Turkish society; contradictory to previous official rhetoric. The United States Religious Freedom Report (2006) does argue that the Turkish government generally respected Freedom of Religion; however research undertaken by the government's Human Rights Consultation Board issued a report on the minority religions and documented several restrictions into state careers such

as the armed forces. This institutional racism provides evidence that official discourse has attempted to hide a growing anti-Semitic problem over the last decade.

In recent years, there has been more global acknowledgement of anti-Semitic discrimination. The Secretary of the Anti-Semitism Watch (2016) claims that much of the rhetoric in Turkey in recent years has been focused on proving how much the country has progressed in terms of tackling anti-Semitism; this implies there are increased pressures on Turkey to improve their policy surrounding discrimination. In March 2015, the Government funded a $2.5 million restoration program of the Edirne Gret Synagogue, and with 15,000 Jews arriving at the opening ceremony of what was once Europe's second largest synagogue, it proved a popular event (ASW, 2016). However, this was perceived to only be a symbolic gesture to the Jewish community and not a true acceptance of a multi-religious society (Zion, 2015). In addition, 2015 was the first year that the Turkish government officially participated in the International Holocaust Memorial Day. The Turkish EU Minister spoke at the Day: 'We have been unfortunately observing that anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and xenophobia, which we can define as an epidemic disease… have had an impact on some marginal circles in our country from time to time. Regardless of the religious, ethnic and sectarian identity targeted, it is not possible for us to tolerate any discourse of hate' (Zion, 2015). This appears to acknowledge that anti-Semitism is a real and current issue with Turkey, however this rhetoric is not mirrored within the policies of the current political leaders the Justice and Development Party, led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Zion, 2015). Interestingly, data from the Global Anti-Semitism Index (2015) shows that 55 per cent of Turks agreed with the statement that "Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust', a number that has increased by 12 per cent from the previous year. Therefore this government involvement in the Day, does not appear to be due to public pressures surrounding the matter, and implies that the Government itself used this as an initiative to portray an image of inclusiveness to outside observers and not the Turkish Muslim community.

Anti-Semitic rhetoric does however seem to be a continuing problem within Turkish politics. The headline 'Turkish Official Fired After Wishing Death On Israelis Hurt in Bombing' from March of this year, demonstrates that although the Justice and Development party are taking action against racist behaviour in government, this form of discrimination still remains within the public eye (ASW, 9/3/2016). The Party's leader, Erdogan has repeatedly expressed anti-Semitic view points, Ahren Raphael (5/2/2014) writing for the Times of Israel argues that these attitudes promoted by government will be 'difficult to reverse'. Raphael (2014) continues by claiming that 'after 12 years of Erdogan rule, we are at a more dangerous place. The anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic feelings are deeper and stronger. And to be frank, even after Erdogan and AKP are gone… it will take us quite some time to mend inter-societal relations'. Anti-Semitic discourse within politics has perhaps had more of an impact than any discriminatory legislation against the Jewish community.

Turkish officials claim that paranoia associated with Islamic fundamentalism is present through out the Muslim world, and fears within the Jewish community are not a uniquely Turkish problem (Zion, 2015). They insist that if some Turks have negative feelings directed at Judaism, it is towards Israeli policies and not towards the Jews themselves (Zion, 2015). This is as a result of Turkey's support of the Muslim majority country, Palestine in her current conflict with Israel. This relaxed attitude is criticized within an article on the Middle East Forum entitled 'Turkey's Runaway Anti-Semitism'; it states that when it comes to diplomatic conflict between Turkey and Israel or Turkish anti-Semitism, there is always an unusual optimism from Israeli officials or Jewish community leaders (Burak Bekdil, 4/3/2016). The Executive Vice Chairman Malcolm Hoenlein in a Conference held for Presidents of major American Jewish organisations assured that Turkey's Jews felt safe and secure despite living within the political feud between Turkey and Jewish Israel. Bekdil (2016) argues that if Turkish Jews felt 'safe and secure', they would not be compelled to protect their schools and synagogues with heavy security. The increasing level of Jewish

emigration from Turkey also undermines this argument. This need for a level of protection implies that the state of anti-Semitism has become increasingly worse, creating a society in which Jews no longer feel safe. This is a clear example of the state under-estimating or deliberately downplaying the extent of racial discrimination to the Jewish community within Turkey.

Differing Popular Perceptions of Anti-Semitism in Turkey

Widespread anti-Semitism has changed dramatically within the past decade, and as a result there are varying viewpoints on the severity of the racial discrimination within Turkey. Public perceptions of anti-Semitism in Turkey have been difficult to distinguish as a result of two factors: the quiet nature of the Turkish Jewish community and the lack of distinction within Turkey of a general non-Muslim xenophobic nature and a more specific anti-Semitism (Toktas, 2006). In an article 'Jews Flee Over Anti-Semitism', the author describes how the Jewish community within Turkey shuns attention and keeps a low profile (Tali Farkash, 24/10/2013). As a result, there are few accounts of experiences of Turkish-Jews and hence it is challenging to gain a full understanding of the current discriminatory environment. This quietness does however imply a level of fear, which provides insight in itself. Attacks to synagogues over the last decade have been detrimental to the positivity of the Jewish community (Farkash, 2013). In an article by Sam Sokol (1/6/2015) for the Jerusalem Post, it is explained by an émigré that 'the Turkish Jewish community will prefer to keep their mouths shut because of their public safety, and they are right to do this', when referring to the suggested links with Israel. The article attempted to interview a member of the local Turkish Jewish community within Istanbul, but they refused to provide an open interview due to the sensitive conditions within the city (Farkash, 2013). In addition to this, Farkash (2013) argues that ordinary Muslims in Turkey fail to distinguish between Israel and local Jews, and if a citizen is non-Muslim then they cannot be considered a Turk. This concept therefore separates non-Muslims as a collective category from Turkish citizens. As a result some aspects of discrimination cannot be considered to be specifically anti-Semitic but merely an extremist nationalist feeling against all other religions and races, a form of xenophobia.

Examining evidence gathered prior to the beginnings of terror threats within Turkey, the Jewish community demonstrates a more positive and open outlook. A study was conducted in 2003 entitled 'Perceptions of Anti-Semitism among Turkish Jews' in which researchers attempted to investigate the claims that, 'it is commonly believed that there is little or no anti-Semitism in Turkey' (Toktas, 2006). The empirical research was collected through a series of interviews conducted from September 2002 until September 2003. Importantly, this was before the 2003 Synagogue Bombings in Istanbul, which offset increasing research into the nature of Jewish discrimination within this predominantly Islamic, although secular, state. The results of the study showed that all respondents believed that on the whole, Turkey was not anti-Semitic on official or state levels, however agreed that anti-Semitism existed on an individual level (Toktas, 2006). Respondents did agree that much of this apparent institutional racism was against non-Muslims generally and was not anti-Semitism but xenophobia (Toktas, 2006). In addition to this, those who believed that there were not specific laws preventing employment of Jews, agreed that there were invisible social barriers hindering their success; within these were the stereotypes applied to Jews; which included richness, meanness with money and power (Toktas, 2006). Bernard Lewis (1984) suggests that anti-Semitism derives from Christianity and as a result there is no basis for Jewish hatred within Islamist ideology. Therefore respondents agreed that anti-Semitism did not have a religious base but it was emerging due to pressures from Islamist fundamentalism and further foreign influences such as Arab nationalism and the War on Terror (Toktas, 2006).

The discussions of the extent of anti-Semitism in Turkey have also reached a European scale. In an article entitled 'Europe: An Unfamiliar Spectre Rises; Turkish Anti-Semitism' in 2006,

the author claims that despite historically being treated well by Turkish society, anti-Semitism is now growing (The Economist, 2006). An example is provided of the Chief of the General Staff, Yasar Buyukanit who in 2006 was harassed and falsely criticised of being Jewish, in the hope this would harm his career (The Economist, 2006). The article refers to a Pew Global Attitudes Survey in which it is claimed that only 15 per cent of Turks look kindly upon Jews (The Economist, 2006). Increasing numbers of the Jewish community said they no longer felt secure, with community leaders receiving death threats (The Economist, 2006) These fears began growing after Turkish suicide bombers with links to al-Qaeda blew up two synagogues in Istanbul in 2003 (The Economist, 2006).

The United States has also become involved within the Anti-Semitic issue in Turkey by conducting a Religious Freedoms Report (2006). It argues that Turkey is generally compliant with the secular nature of Kemalism (U.S Department of State). The report concludes that 'Jews and Christians from most denominations freely practiced their religions and reported little discrimination in daily life' (U.S Department of State, 2006). However, the concept of 'religious pluralism' was seen by many as a threat to Islam and to Turkeys national unity (U.S Department of State, 2006). This implies an issue with nationalism within Turkish society, as extreme nationalism has come to be interchangeable with racism. This global concern of anti-Semitism in Turkey, demonstrates the worsening conditions and growing awareness of discriminatory behaviour within Turkey.

As well as research into the ordinary experiences of Turkish Jews, there has also been a study into the nature of anti-Semitism within the media. The Jerusalem Post produced an article claiming that 'anti-Semitism is the most common racial or religious prejudice in the Turkish media', according to a study carried out by the Hrant Dink Foundation (Sokol, 2015). Derogatory coverage was tracked between May and August of 2015 which found that Jews and Armenians were the subjects of just over half of the recorded incidents (Sokol, 2015). Within an article focusing on the diminishing size of the Jewish community within Turkey, Zion (2015) describes how Jews feel rejected Turkey, due to being 'faced with anti-Semitic rhetoric that has been given free rein by the government in recent years and amplified by social media'. The presence of anti-Semitism within the media demonstrates a lack of activism to tackle discrimination by the Turkish government and is perhaps indicative of their attitudes towards the discrimination of Jews as a whole.

The Definition of a 'Turk': The Precariousness of the Turkish Nationality

A fundamental issue within Turkish society is differing perceptions of what constitutes a Turkish citizen; this ambiguity has resulted in racism and has contributed to the anti-Semitic problem within contemporary Turkish society. Mesut Yegen (2007) argues that the frontiers of Turkishness have historically been precarious territorially, culturally and politically. The Turkish state therefore cannot give consistent answers to fundamental questions regarding Turkish nationalism. It is unclear who is classified as a 'Turk' or as 'Turkish' and a lack of official policy regarding Turkish citizenship has resulted in prejudice and racial discrimination. Turkishness is considered by some to be simply based on citizenship and a political status, however can also portray cultural status that is developed or be linked with ethnic origin (Yegen, 2007). The existence of both discriminatory and assimilationist citizenship practices in Turkey have contributed to this current confusion with the definition of Turkishness. Practices such as 'Citizen, Speak Turkish!', aiming to create a monolingual political community, indicate how the concept of Turkishness became a cultural issue. This has left a lasting impression of social perceptions of the Turkish culture. The confusion concerning the boundaries of Turkishness is continuing to worsen, particularly due to religious tensions between the Muslim and Jewish communities in Arab countries. Illa Xypolia (2016, p.120) writing for the Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies claims that 'as Turkey moves deeper into the 21st Century, a sense of confusion about ethnicity, nationhood, religion, secularity and the country's role in the world is very pronounced'. The

concept of a Turkish "pure race" has began to develop, this form of racism is influenced by a global racial hierarchy, in which white Europeans are considered superior to other races (Xypolia, 2016). Viewing Turkey's racial hierarchy within a global perspective highlights Goldberg's (2009) relational approach to racism studies. Turkish officials desire to join the European Union is perhaps a reflection of this perceived hierarchy and a need to be viewed as European (Xypolia, 2016). This accession process in to the European Union began in the 1990s, and has forced Turkey to appear to be taking a liberal approach to nationalist policy. However Turkey is yet to receive EU status, which implies that this approach has not been realised. Richard Jenkins (1952) acknowledges that globalization is having an impact on racial tendencies; he argues that local ethnicities may reassert themselves as a defensive reaction to the increasingly global nature of social life. The Turkish community may therefore place more importance on their Muslim identity, in the face of this EU accession process and more general globalization processes, including terrorism.

Toktas (2006, p.206) argues that 'despite a strong commitment to secularism as the official state policy, Islam has always played an essential role in Turkish culture and served and instrumental role in Turkish nationalism'. This implies that the integration of religion into the Turkish identity is not a result of governmental policy, but of social norms. By definition, Turk is often equated with Muslim, and therefore the non-Muslim minorities are excluded from this nationality (Toktas, 2006). The state has been unable to remove this religious and ethnic link within Turkey and as a result, the majority of the Turkish population does not view Jews living in Turkey as Turkish. This issue is the fundamental basis of anti-Semitism within Turkey, a secular state policy which has been in practice for nearly a century has not provided a solution to this problem It has perhaps even made it worse as the Turkish Muslims look to solidify their national identity as a result of international religious conflict. Thomas Eriksen (2002) discusses this concept of nationalism and claims that it is simply a sentiment, where citizens seek to find a link between a cultural group and a state. In the case of Turkey, this may be applied to Turks attempting to find a sense of security within the period of terror; and as a result place increased importance on the relationship between the Islam, as a cultural group and Turkey, as the state. Eriksen (2002, p.110) also argues that 'like other ethnic identities, national identities are constituted in relation to others…peoples that are not members of nation are disregarded'. The Jewish community in Turkey is therefore not included in this Islamic identity and in order to solidify this community, they are excluded from the Turkish identity.

As well as historical internal tensions, recent foreign factors including the on going tensions with Israel and Islamic fundamentalists has resulted in Rabbi Levi Brackman speaking in the Jewish World News to claim that Jews are no longer considered Turkish and are being 'othered' and excluded from mainstream Muslim society (Farkash, 2013). Ian Law (2010) argues that the importance of ethnicity depends on the social context that it is in, and therefore the current tensions within Turkish society have heightened the importance of a Turkish ethnicity; attempting to exclude threats to its legitimacy. Ethnicity is constantly evolving; it is defined with ethnic markers, including language, religion, culture and the notion of a 'homeland' (Law, 2010). Popular perceptions within Turkey imply that the Jewish community's homeland is not Turkey; Jews connection with Israel and the current conflict has resulted in increased emigration by Turkish Jews to the Jewish country of Israel. Speaking in an article written for the Times of Israel newspaper, a young Turkish Jew from Istanbul claims that 'I always felt I didn't belong to the Turkish people, I felt like a stranger, like I didn't belong to them' (Zion, 2015). Religion and culture have become interchangeable within this Muslim majority country; as 99 per cent of Turkish identify themselves as Muslim (U.S Department of State, 2006). Ethnic categories can cross into racial terms through the discussion of ethno-racial groups, which are categorized both racially and ethnically; Jews are considered to be in a separate ethno-racial group than 'true Turks', whose religious background provides them with a separate ethnicity. Turkishness is therefore as much about a political nationality as ethnicity. Max Weber (1978 cited in Kalberg, 2005) established a

'race-ethnicity-nation' complex that explains the links between ethnic groups and nationality. He proposes that they share the notion of common descent, however ethnicity can imply a link regardless of an objective blood relationship; it can descend from common languages or religious beliefs (cited in Kalberg, 2005). As religion plays a role in defining ethnicity and the Muslim identity has embedded itself in Turkish history; it is clear how these two aspects of identity can become indistinguishable.

The Reality of Discrimination: Racial Violence and Emigration

Anti-Semitism has created a hostile environment for the Turkish Jewish community. Milton J. Esman (2004, p.26) argues that ethnic related violence 'is the leading source of violence in international affairs', something that Turkey has found itself increasingly involved in. Islamic fundamentalism has created an unsafe environment for the Turkish Jewish community. This racial violence has become increasingly frequent since the 1984 bombing of the Neva Shalom Synagogue in Istanbul, which was linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict following the discovery that was suicide bomber was an Arab (Toktas, 2006). Following this, bombings in 2003 and 2004 heightened Jewish fears within Istanbul, links with al-Qaeda turned these attacks into terror threats. In January of this year, a Turkish synagogue in Istanbul has been vandalized with anti-Semitic graffiti after holding its first prayer service in 65 years (The Jerusalem Post, 20/1/2016). These provide examples of both physical and emotional racial violence within contemporary Turkey. An article issued in March 2016, by the Anti-Semitism Watch entitled 'Turkey warns ISIS is planning synagogue attacks tomorrow' incited global fear (ASW, 2016). The police warned that Jews and Christians are likely to be targets as ISIS jihadists have been searching for churches and synagogues to attack (ASW, 2016). As this Islamist fundamentalism is attacking any non-Muslim religious groups, this once again, can not be fully seen as anti-Semitic. Nevertheless, the situation for Jews in Turkey has become increasingly dangerous. Contemporary research is moving away from the sources of this prejudice and is now focusing on the level of safety provided for Jews and other non-Muslims by the Turkish government during this period of Terror. International conflicts have increased Turkish nationalism and shifted its focus towards the Muslim identity. This extreme nationalism is shown within a study from the Global Anti-Semitism Index (2015) who recorded that 71 per cent of Turks harbour anti-Semitic attitudes.

Explanations of racial violence come from economic, political and social processes and are often outside the control of authorities or community groups (Law, 2010). Within the example of Turkey, the attacks are coming from extremist Islamist groups, which the Turkish government are struggling to prevent as they are coming from outside influencers. The current situation in Turkey can be explained through the concept of international hostilities that have created a current War on Terror which the Jewish community in Turkey has now become a part of. This War on Terror has produced asylum seekers fleeing from Turkey, as Jews are moving to safer places with less racial and ethnic discrimination. Within an article entitled 'Aliya from Turkey to Double', Etgar Lefkovits (2009) claims that there was an expected doubling of emigrants from Turkey to Israel in that year, due to rising anti-Semitic incidents. The immigrants were said to be mainly student and young couples; meaning the Turkish Jewish community is aging which threatens the lifespan of this community within Turkey. 'Immigration to Israel by Turkish Jews has remained steady at roughly 100 per year since 1980. In the past decade, 1002 Turkish Jews have immigrated to Israel, according to statistics published by Israel's Immigration and Absorption Ministry' (Zion, 2015). This clear mass movement of this minority group to Israel demonstrates the importance of a sense of ethnicity, and implies that the Turkish ethnicity and nationality has rejected the Jewish religion as part of its make-up. This has caused Zion (2015) to state that 'there is no future for Jews in Turkey'.

Conclusion

This essay has attempted to explain that anti-Semitism in Turkey has become increasingly severe since the beginning of the millennium, and has created an environment today that is unwelcoming to the Jewish Community. These racial prejudices began as a result of assimilationist governmental policy; which created the concept of a superiority of the 'true' Turk, who spoke Turkish and followed the Islamic faith. Therefore, despite the Republic of Turkey being a secular state, religious prejudices still remain. The Justice and Development Party have failed to acknowledge the increasing threat to the declining Jewish community, although recent activities involving the Edirne Gret Synagogue and the International Holocaust Memorial Day demonstrate how they have attempted to show improving relations between the two religious communities, contributing to this downplaying of the severity of anti-Semitism (ASW, 2016; Zion, 2015). Research conducted in 2006 showed that the Turkish Jewish community did not feel there was an anti-Semitism problem within Turkey, this information contrasts with the fear felt by the Jewish community today, as a result of terror threats, predominantly from external pressures (Toktas, 2006, ASW, 2016). The governments approach to control over the media regarding anti-Semitism is indicative of their overall approach to this form of racism; anti-Semitism being the most common prejudice within the Turkish media also demonstrates popular opinion of the Jewish community; due to this media demand (Sokol, 2015)

This discrimination comes from a lack of clarity over what constitutes a Turkish citizen; deriving from historical Turkish policy and Islamic influences. Differing perceptions over nationality and ethnicity within Turkish society can be explained through the theories of Weber (1978, in Kalberg, 2005) and Eriksen (2002) over where nationalism emerges. As a result, both ethnic and racial conflict has led to discrimination within Turkey causing terror threats and creating a migrating community. Lack of attempts to tackle anti-Semitism in Turkey by the Turkish government is perhaps due to a focus on other issues within Turkish politics. Attempts of accession into the EU have been dominating foreign relations throughout this decade. In addition threats from the PKK terrorist group to the entire Turkish population have been dominating domestic defence policy. These issues have potentially distracted from anti-Semitism, which only negatively impacts on a small percentage of the population. This account of Anti-Semitic racism in Turkey can contribute to the wide sociological research. Turkey's involvement in the current War on Terror as well as being situated in between Europe and Asia means this research can provide a different perspective to previous racial analysis.

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