The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of the spines of several old, worn books. The spines are made of dark, textured material, possibly leather or cloth, and show signs of age with some cracking and discoloration. The books are arranged vertically, creating a rhythmic pattern of light and shadow. A solid orange vertical bar is on the left side of the cover.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE KURDISH QUESTION IN TURKEY

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ACRONYMS

AK Parti: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi; The Justice and Development Party.

CHP: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi; The Republican People's Party.

MHP: Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi; The Nationalist Movement Party.

DTP: Demokratik Toplum Partisi; The Democratic Society Party.

TBMM: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi; The Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

TRT-6: Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu; The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation-6
(broadcasting in Kurdish).

PKK: Kürdistan İşçi Partisi; The Kurdistan Workers' Party.

SETA: Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı; The Foundation for Political, Economic and
Social Research.

Pollmark: Pollmark Araştırma Kurumu; The Pollmark Research Corporation.

PREFACE

“Public Perception of the Kurdish Question” is based on a Turkey-wide survey conducted by the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) and Pollmark.* The main objective of this large-scale survey was to map public perceptions of the Kurdish question and the government’s intensively debated Democratization Initiative or in other words, Kurdish Initiative. This report presents the main findings of the survey.

This is not the first time that Turkish public is discussing the Kurdish question and it seems that this issue will remain an important item on the agenda for years to come. However, understanding the emerging dynamics and new dimensions of the problem has become extremely complicated in light of recent events and developments. Today, there is almost a completely new context in the approaches to Kurdish question as far as the political dynamics and grounds for discussion are concerned. Undoubtedly, this new ground builds upon the tensions, successes, failures and transformations in the last twenty-five years.

At this present time, however, it is no longer possible to use the language and rhetoric that were employed during the past ten or twenty years. To put it more precisely, the framework used to discuss the Kurdish question will have to differ in the future in order to pursue a meaningful debate. It is not an overstatement to describe the current period as the beginning of such a transformation. The most important characteristic of this new period is that the Kurdish question is increasingly considered a political problem by the public in contrast to the previous perspectives, which used to take the issue essentially as a security problem.

The importance of this survey lies in its ability to clearly capture the picture of this transitional period. At the same time, the report touches on the structural and periodic

* <http://www.setav.org> and <http://www.pollmark.com.tr>.

features of the Kurdish question and discusses how the public perceives all these variables. This research presents voluminous data on how Turkish society perceives the Kurdish question, where it sees the solution, what the public thinks about the positions of the ruling and opposition parties towards the new initiative. It also documents what Turkish people think about the origins of the Kurdish question and demonstrates the common values that can facilitate social integration in Turkey. We believe that the data presented in this report will increase the quality of discussion on this issue by enabling the readers to see different aspects of the problem.

Taha Özhan
Director General, SETA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey revealed that public perception of the Kurdish question in Turkey has three essential features.

The first significant finding is that the majority of society views the Kurdish issue as the most important political issue in Turkey. Moreover, great majority of the respondents upholds that policies focusing on the security dimension of the problem alone in the last 25 years have failed. In stark contrast to that, the majority of people put responsibility on political actors such as political parties, government and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), and expect them to take action for the settlement of the Kurdish question. In this context, the results show that there is strong public support to the Kurdish Initiative and majority of society does not approve the policies of the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) towards the initiative.

The second significant finding of the survey is the presence of strong integration between citizens who describe themselves Kurds and Turks. The research shows that roughly every one out of three Turks has a Kurdish friend, relative or neighbor and two out of three Kurds have a Turkish friend, relative or neighbor. Likewise, despite all the suffering and tensions caused by the Kurdish question, no significant perception of enmity has emerged among the people. Neither the Turks nor the Kurds have developed hostile sentiments towards each other. In addition to the strong social integration and trust, majority of respondents attribute the greatest importance to common faith and values in maintaining a viable social unity. While these findings imply that the ideal for a common future is shared by all segments in the country, there are visible differences among them in their approach to the political issues between the Turks and the Kurds.

The third significant finding of the research relates to political differences between Turks and Kurds. Despite the greater support for Democratization Initiative there is a political divergence between the Kurds and the Turks, which becomes most notable on the matter of believing if the Kurds want a separate state. Majority of citizens who identify themselves as Turks believe that Kurds want their own independent state, which leads to the emergence of strong feelings of fear that the country will be divided along ethnic lines. Because of this fear and concerns, there is a visible resistance, particularly among Turkish people, on the issue of constitutional recognition of Kurdish identity, liberalization of policies on the Kurdish language and the introduction of a more liberal constitution that will address the objections of the Kurds. However, it should be noted that the respondents seem to be more lenient with respect to cultural rights and concrete democratization actions such as launching of TRT-6's broadcasting in Kurdish language. In contrast to Turkish respondents, Kurdish respondents do not see the separation as the ultimate goal of the Kurdish political demands.

This lack of convergence between social and political perception of Turkish and Kurdish respondents implies that, unless the issue is resolved, there is a dangerous possibility of disrupting the existing integration and unity in Turkish society. To this end, all responsible actors, including politicians, opinion leaders and even ordinary citizens, should be focused on addressing the emergent divergence in political discourses of Turkish and Kurdish citizens of Turkey, despite current efforts at unity and integration created by coexistence throughout the centuries. Furthermore, this disparity displays the immediate need to find a resolution of Kurdish question.



RESEARCH | **1**
METHODOLOGY

A national survey entitled “Public Perception of the Kurdish Question” was carried out between 7 and 15 August 2009, following the announcement of Kurdish Initiative by the government, in order to collect large-scale data on this question. A total of 10,577 respondents in 601 urban and rural areas, and in 2,497 locations were sampled. Experienced pollsters used a structured questionnaire and carried out face-to-face interviews with respondents. The survey was conducted in 12 regions in Turkey, namely Istanbul, Western Marmara, Aegean, Eastern Marmara, Western Anatolia, the Mediterranean, Central Anatolia, Western Black Sea, Eastern Black Sea, Northeastern Anatolia, Central-eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia. Upon the completion of survey, all the questionnaire forms were returned to Ankara and the results were analyzed with SPSS 15.0. A group of political scientists, sociologists, economists, social psychologists and international relations experts contributed to the design and execution of the survey.



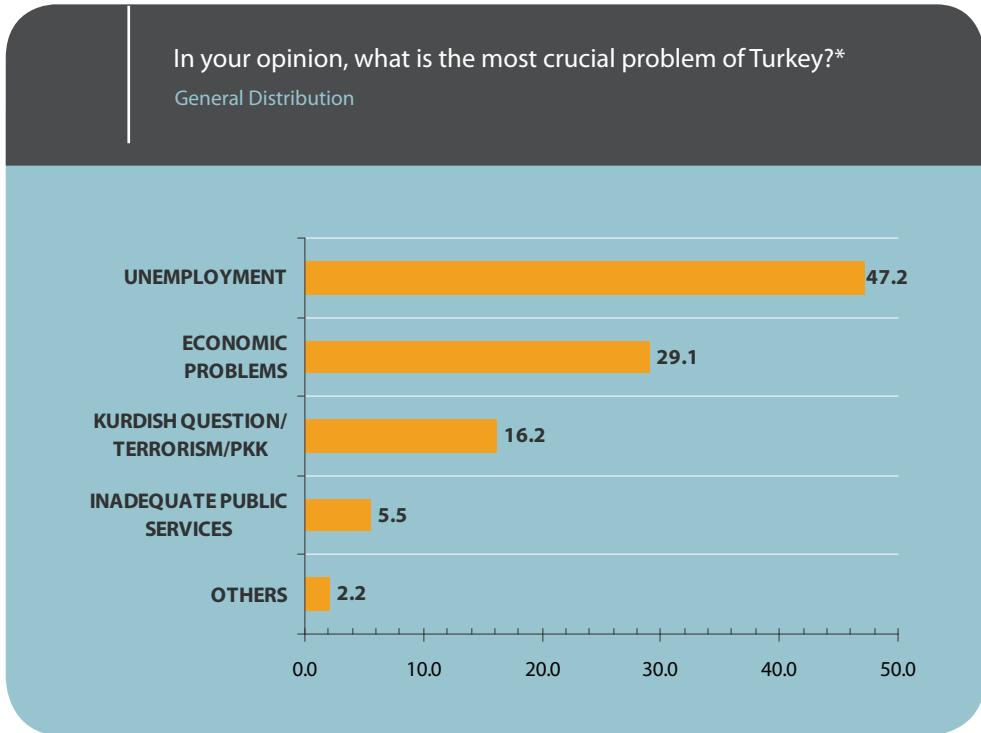
PROBLEMS and | **2**
COMMON GROUND

Five questions, of which two were open-ended, were asked in this section to find out opinions of the respondents on salient problems, the most important values contributing to social solidarity and unity, the factors influencing the perception of collective integrity and the reasons behind the emergence of the Kurdish question. The data indicate that there is a considerable consensus on shared values for social integration across ethnic lines in Turkey. However, when it comes to the questions on the sources of the Kurdish question, there is a notable difference in responses according to ethnic backgrounds.

The survey's results demonstrate that the Kurdish question and the issues related to it are increasingly gathering more attention in society apart from such issues as unemployment and economic problems, the issues that appear to be considered the most pressing problems. The survey shows that the majority of society views the Kurdish issue as the most important political issue of Turkey after unemployment, which is also related to the economic problems. Overall, the Kurdish issue is perceived to be the most important political problem in Turkey, which means that the political parties and institutions cannot overlook Kurdish Question.

As noted above, there is a considerable consensus among the respondents regardless of ethnic origins as to the most important values that bridge ethnic differences. According to the results, 85% of the respondents attribute social cohesiveness to shared values, beliefs and history. Of those surveyed, 26.7% single out "religion". When analyzed on the basis of ethnic origins, 25.8% of Turks and 31.9% of Kurds say that "religion" is the most important factor in social cohesion. Responses to other survey questions on the significance of shared values for a collective life confirm this observation and 55.9% of the Turks and 59.2% of the Kurds consider shared beliefs as important common grounds. In total, 86.2% of the respondents attribute great meaning to the citizenship of Turkish Republic as a legal and civil category of belonging to political community. The survey's results indicate that there is a marked difference along ethnic backgrounds on the causes and origins of the Kurdish question. Kurdish respondents in the sample state that discrimination, state policies, and social and economic problems are the main causes whereas Turkish respondents assert that in addition to social and economic problems, foreign intervention and the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) and terrorism are the main causes of the Kurdish question.

1 In your opinion, what is the most crucial problem of Turkey?



In your opinion, what is the most crucial problem of Turkey?*

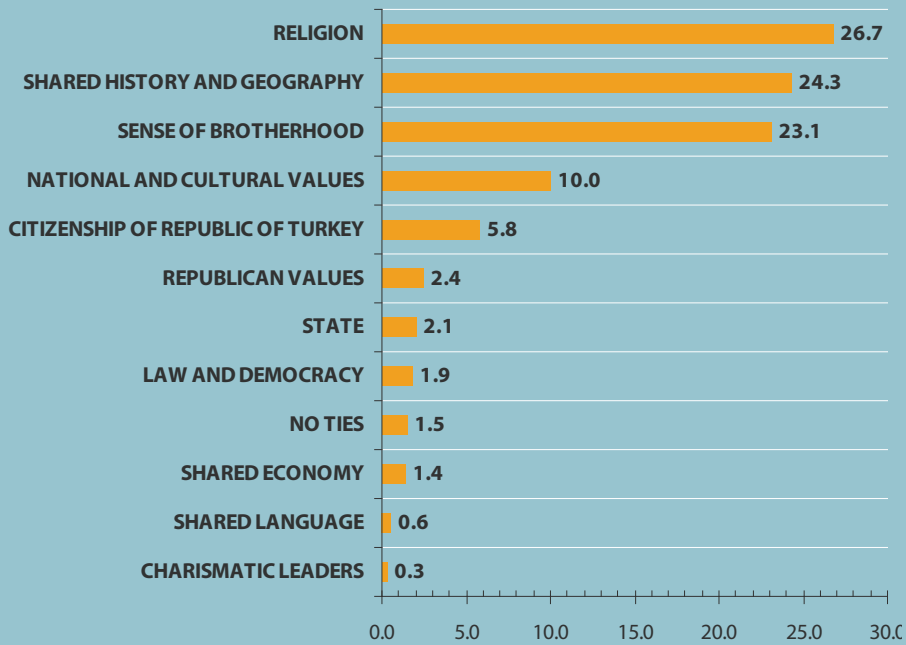
Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
UNEMPLOYMENT	48.3	40.0
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS	31.4	18.0
KURDISH QUESTION/TERRORISM/PKK	12.3	36.7
INADEQUATE PUBLIC SERVICES	5.8	3.6
OTHERS	2.2	1.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

In your view, what is the most important bond which holds people of different origins such as Turkish, Kurdish, Laz or Circassian together in Turkey? 2

In your view, what is the most important bond which holds people of different origins such as Turkish, Kurdish, Laz or Circassian together in Turkey?

General Distribution



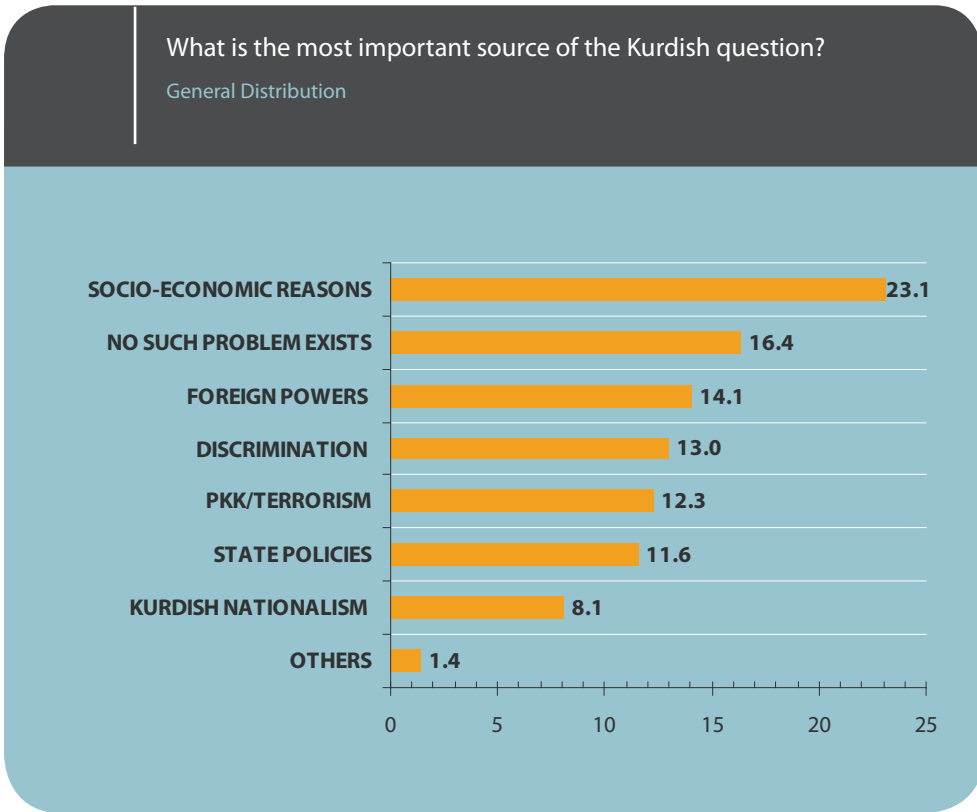
In your view, what is the most important bond which holds people of different origins such as Turkish, Kurdish, Laz or Circassian together in Turkey?

Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
RELIGION	25.8	31.9
SENSE OF BROTHERHOOD	21.8	28.9
SHARED HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY	25.3	18.3
NATIONAL AND CULTURAL VALUES	11.0	5.7
CITIZENSHIP OF REPUBLIC OF TURKEY	6.3	3.1
LAW AND DEMOCRACY	1.5	4.1
REPUBLICAN VALUES	2.4	3.0
STATE	2.2	1.6
NO TIES	1.5	2.0
SHARED ECONOMY	1.5	1.1
SHARED LANGUAGE	0.6	0.2
CHARISMATIC LEADERS	0.3	0.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

What is the most important source of the Kurdish question?

3

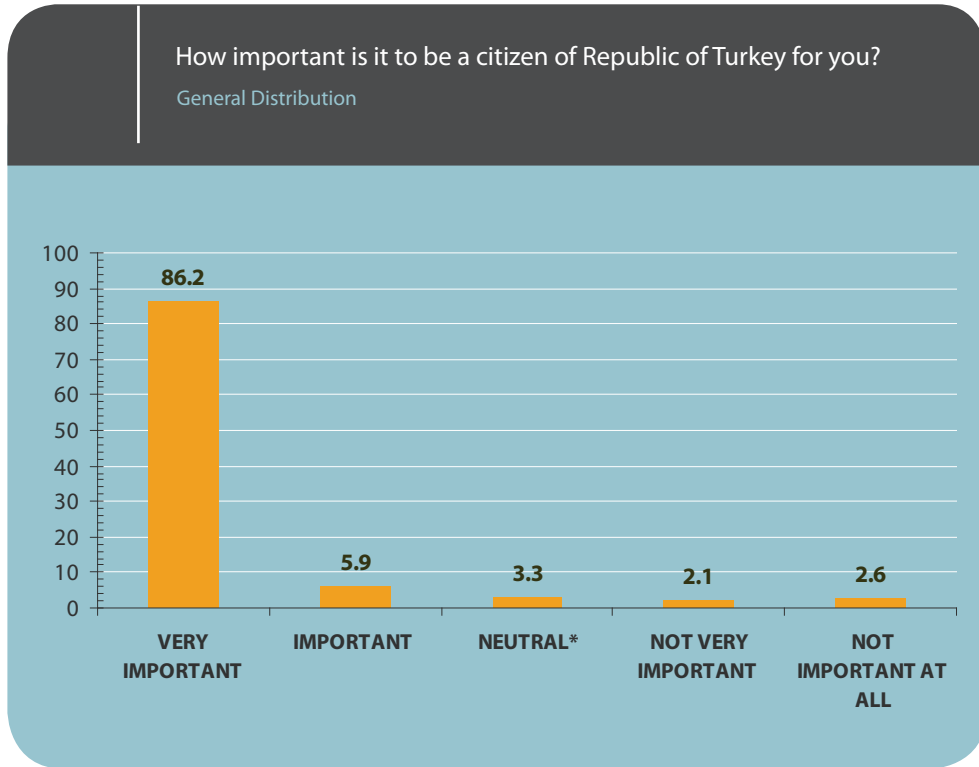


What is the most important source of the Kurdish question?

Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
SOCIO-ECONOMIC REASONS	22.0	27.6
NO SUCH PROBLEM EXISTS	19.6	3.8
FOREIGN POWERS	16.2	5.6
DISCRIMINATION	9.2	28.0
PKK/TERRORISM	14.5	3.3
STATE POLICIES	10.0	18.2
KURDISH NATIONALISM	7.4	10.9
OTHERS	1.1	2.5
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

How important is it to be a citizen of Republic of Turkey for you? 4

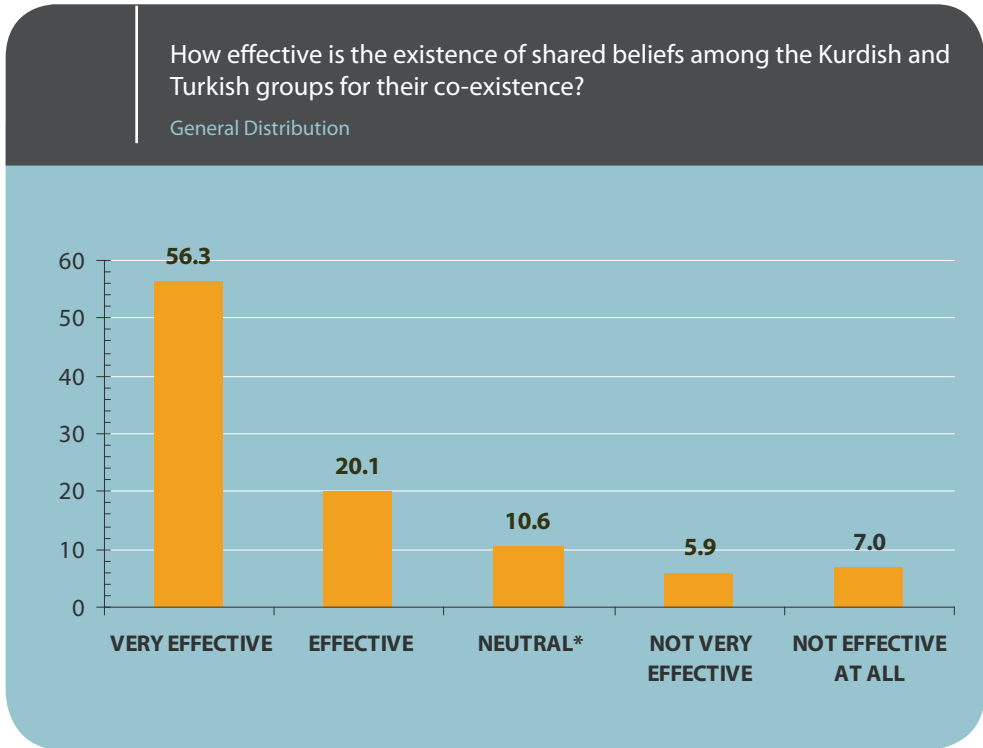


How important is it to be a citizen of Republic of Turkey for you?
Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
VERY IMPORTANT	90.9	62.8
IMPORTANT	4.4	13.7
NEUTRAL*	2.2	8.7
NOT VERY IMPORTANT	1.2	6.0
NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL	1.2	8.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

* Neither important nor unimportant

5 How effective is the existence of shared beliefs among the Kurdish and Turkish groups for their co-existence?



How effective is the existence of shared beliefs among the Kurdish and Turkish groups for their co-existence?
Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
VERY EFFECTIVE	55.9	59.2
EFFECTIVE	20.2	19.8
NEUTRAL*	10.9	9.1
NOT VERY EFFECTIVE	6.0	5.3
NOT EFFECTIVE AT ALL	7.0	6.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0



HOW TO RESOLVE THE
KURDISH QUESTION?

3

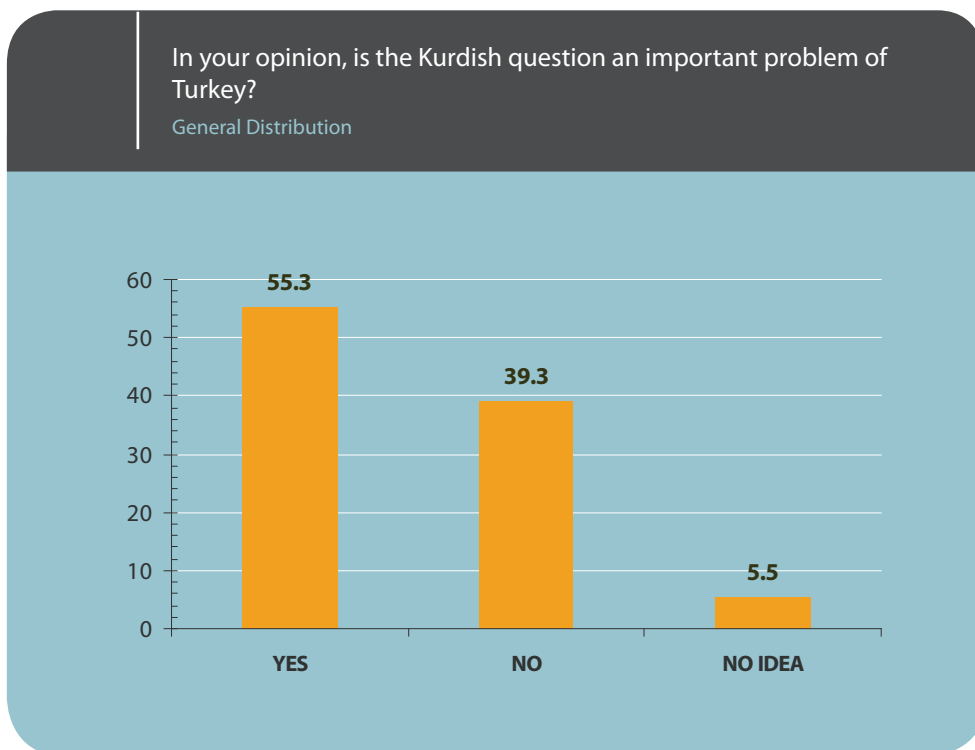


The seven questions included in this section aimed to describe views on the significance of the Kurdish question and the ways in which it can be resolved, as perceived by the respondents. The results indicate that more than half of the respondents (55.3%) believe that there is a Kurdish question in Turkey and 71.1% think that the methods that have been used to solve this problem have been unsuccessful to date. Thus, they expect political institutions (the parliament, the government and political parties) to take a new initiative.

At the same time, 59.9% of the respondents hold that state institutions and the political parties represented in the parliament should cooperate, and 64.5% believe that all state institutions, including the military, should work together to develop an initiative for the solution of the Kurdish question. Also, more than half of the respondents (55.6%) assert that the Kurdish question cannot be resolved even if military forces neutralize the PKK, or if the PKK hand over their weapons (51.1%). According to the research, 71.1% of the respondents say that the policies of the last twenty-five years, namely focusing on the security dimension of the problem alone and avoiding the other complex dimensions of the issue, have failed. Those who defend these views think that the complex dynamics and realities on the ground should be faced, apart from the military strategy against the PKK, to find a solution to the Kurdish question. This means that the political establishment has the overall responsibility. The survey's results also indicate that 25% to 30% of the respondents associate the Kurdish question with the PKK and insist on military measures whereas 15% to 20% are convinced that there is no solution to this problem at all.

A noteworthy finding in this section pertains to the difference between Turkish and Kurdish respondents about the nature of and possible methods for the solution of the Kurdish issue. The difference increases on the role of the PKK and involvement of the military in this process and decreases as far as non-PKK factors and the roles assigned to the political establishment are concerned. The Kurds emphasize the role of the political establishment while ignoring the position of the army whereas Turks seem to place more emphasis on the political institution while acknowledging the role of the military.

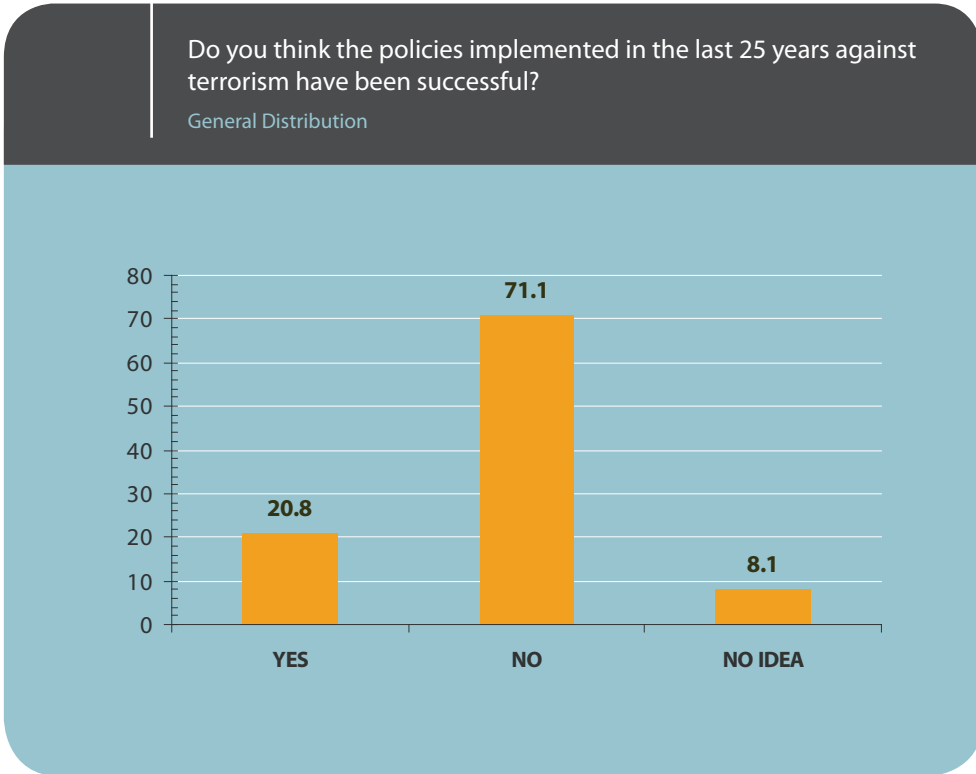
6 In your opinion, is the Kurdish question an important problem of Turkey?



In your opinion, is the Kurdish question an important problem of Turkey?
Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	51.2	75.8
NO	43.3	19.0
NO IDEA	5.5	5.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Do you think the policies implemented in the last 25 years against terrorism have been successful? 7



Do you think the policies implemented in the last 25 years against terrorism have been successful?

Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	21.9	14.8
NO	70.4	75.0
NO IDEA	7.7	10.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Do you think the policies implemented in the last 25 years against terrorism have been successful?

Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	31.0	15.3	20.0	5.2
NO	59.2	78.8	75.1	89.7
NO IDEA	9.8	5.9	4.9	5.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Do you think the policies implemented in the last 25 years against terrorism have been successful?

Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Kurdish

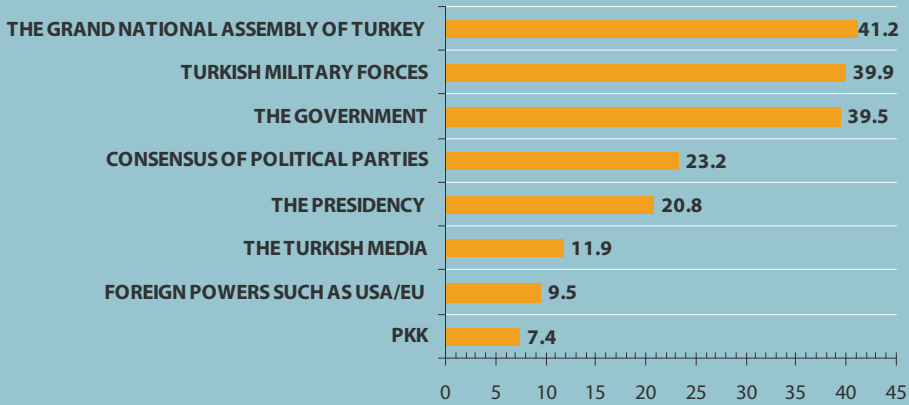
	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	22.5	10.0	17.2	6.9
NO	62.2	83.3	75.9	87.9
NO IDEA	15.3	6.7	6.9	5.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In your opinion, which of the below will be the most effective in the process of settlement of the Kurdish question?

8

In your opinion, which of the below will be the most effective in the process of settlement of the Kurdish question?

General Distribution

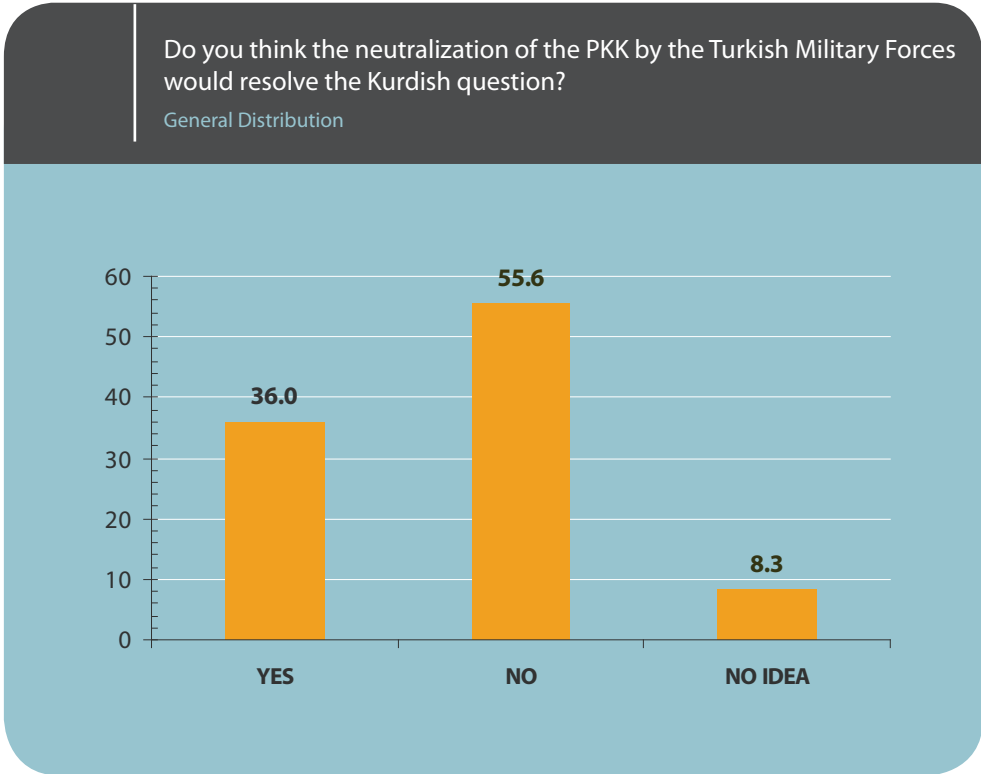


In your opinion, which of the below will be the most effective in the process of settlement of the Kurdish question?

Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TURKEY	39.4	50.7
TURKISH MILITARY FORCES	43.8	21.2
THE GOVERNMENT	38.4	45.4
CONSENSUS OF POLITICAL PARTIES	23.0	25.2
THE PRESIDENCY	19.3	28.3
THE TURKISH MEDIA	11.8	11.5
FOREIGN POWERS SUCH AS USA/EU	8.9	12.9
PKK	5.2	18.8

9 Do you think the neutralization of the PKK by the Turkish Military Forces would resolve the Kurdish question?



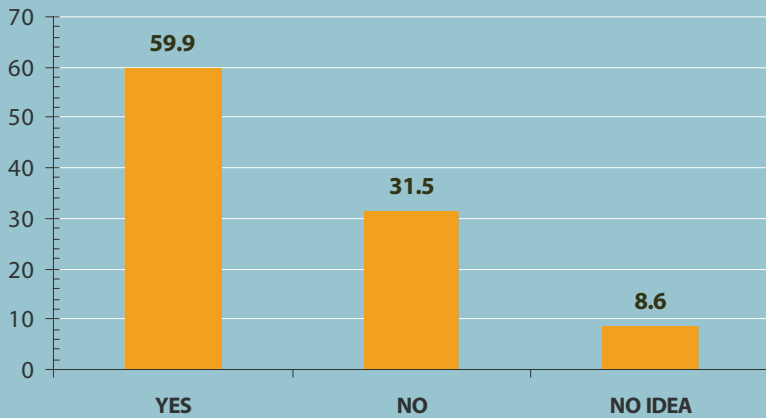
Do you think the neutralization of the PKK by the Turkish Military Forces would resolve the Kurdish question?
Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	40.1	16.1
NO	51.7	75.3
NO IDEA	8.2	8.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Do you think that an agreement on the settlement of the Kurdish question among the political parties (AK Parti, CHP, MHP, DTP) represented in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey would resolve the Kurdish question?

Do you think that an agreement on the settlement of the Kurdish question among the political parties (AK Parti, CHP, MHP, DTP) represented in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey would resolve the Kurdish question?

General Distribution

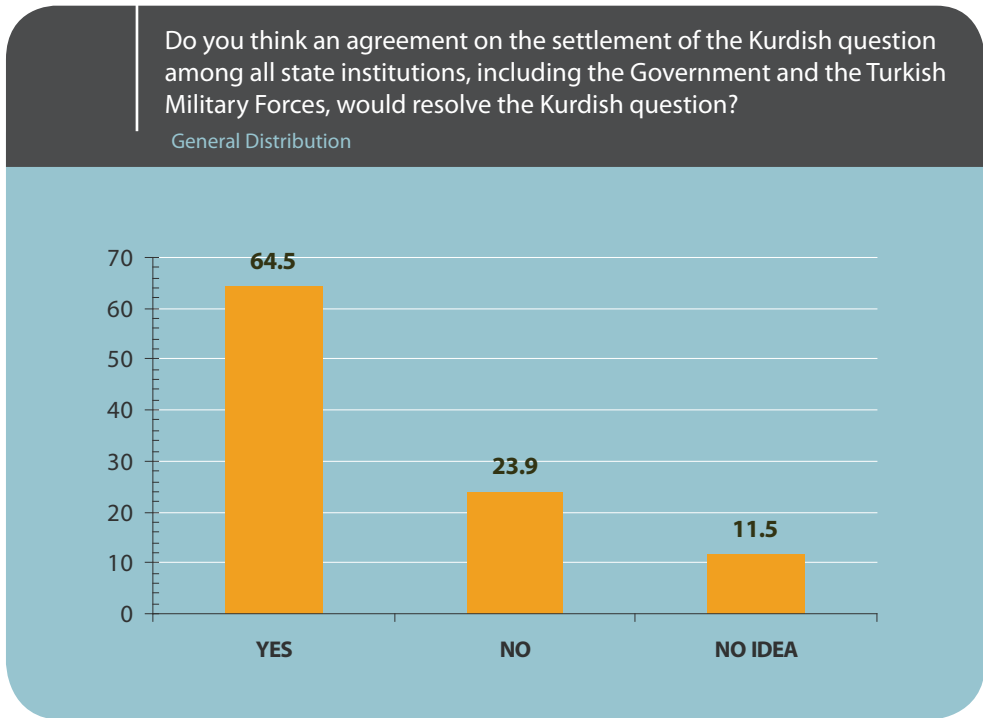


Do you think that an agreement on the settlement of the Kurdish question among the political parties (AK Parti, CHP, MHP, DTP) represented in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey would resolve the Kurdish question?

Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	56.9	75.5
NO	34.2	17.9
NO IDEA	9.0	6.5
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

11 Do you think an agreement on the settlement of the Kurdish question among all state institutions, including the Government and the Turkish Military Forces, would resolve the Kurdish question?



Do you think an agreement on the settlement of the Kurdish question among all state institutions, including the Government and the Turkish Military Forces, would resolve the Kurdish question?

Ethnic Distribution

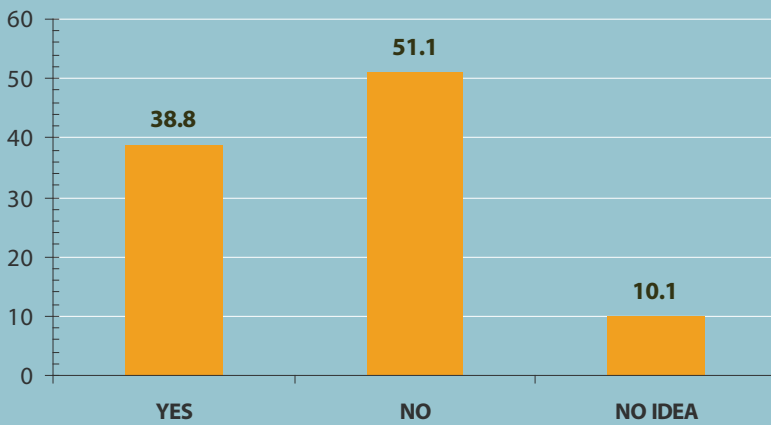
	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	63.8	68.5
NO	24.8	20.2
NO IDEA	11.4	11.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Do you think, PKK's giving up of arms and participation of its members in civil life would settle the Kurdish question?

12

Do you think, PKK's giving up of arms and participation of its members in civil life would settle the Kurdish question?

General Distribution



Do you think, PKK's giving up of arms and participation of its members in civil life would settle the Kurdish question?

Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	38.8	38.4
NO	51.4	49.9
NO IDEA	9.8	11.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0



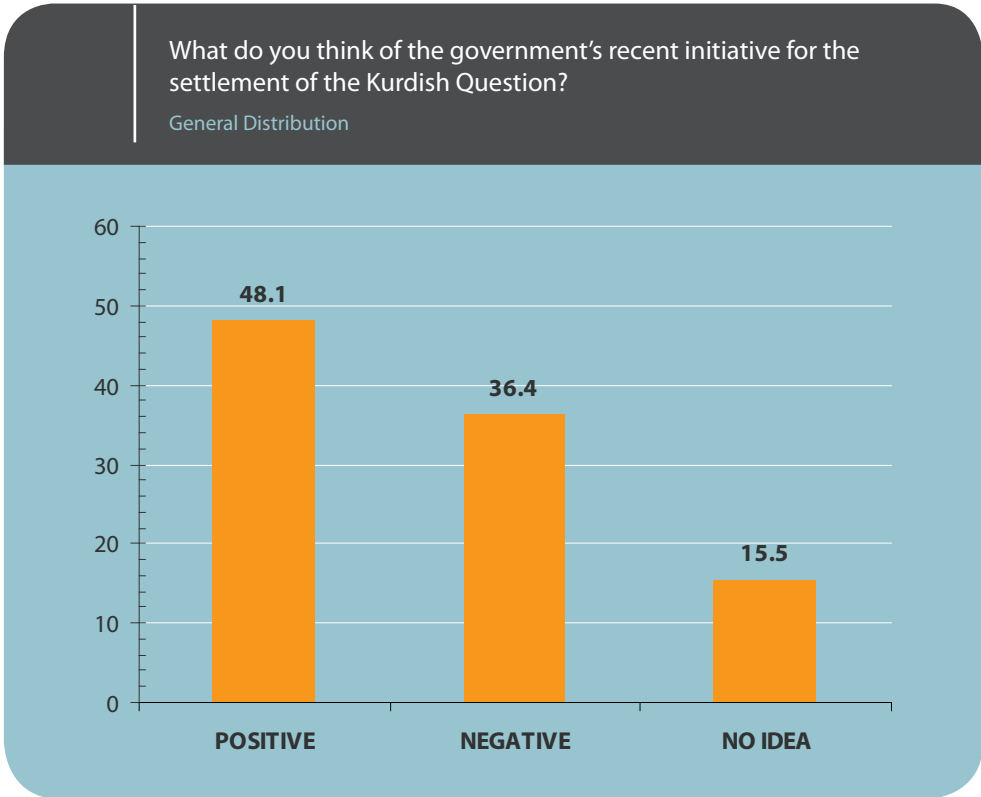
**THE DEMOCRATIZATION
INITIATIVE and
POLITICAL PARTIES**

4

This section of the survey included six questions that explored how the public in Turkey perceives the government's Democratization Initiative for the solution of the Kurdish question and how they evaluate the positions of the political parties. This section also sought to discover if political party affiliations make a difference in this regard. The survey's results indicate that there is a general approval of the Democratization Initiative, yet there is a group of 15.5% undecided respondents. The total support for the Democratization Initiative is 48.1% compared to 36.4% who find the initiative "negative". Among Kurds, 75.7% firmly back the plan, and 42.7% of Turks also back the government's plan. This can be interpreted in two ways. The strong support toward the initiative in the public is an encouraging sign for the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Parti), given the strong opposition of the MHP and the CHP. However, it also signifies that there is a lack of public information about the content and direction of the initiative. Contrary to the support given to the AK Parti's initiative, only 16% of participants find the CHP and the MHP's policies "positive". 64% of participants find the CHP's position and 62% of participants find the MHP's position "negative". These results call for a reconsideration by both opposition parties (the CHP and the MHP) on their policies toward the government's initiative. As far as position of the Democratic Society Party (DTP) is concerned, there seems to be a higher rate (35%) of those who find its position "positive" compared to the CHP and the MHP, as opposed to those who view (41%) it "negative". This indicates that if the DTP pursues a constructive policy, this will contribute to a better perception of the DTP among political actors and in public opinion.

As far as political party affiliations and support for the parties' policies on the Kurdish problem, the AK Parti seems to have convinced its supporters better when compared to the CHP and MHP. In total, 60% of the AK Parti supporters, 33% of the CHP supporters and 40% of the MHP supporters approve of the respective policies of their parties. The CHP and the MHP still need to convince a considerable portion of their electorate who find their own parties' position "negative" with regards to the initiative. When asked if the current initiative means "separatism," as claimed by the opposition, a majority (59.7%) of the respondents state that it is not "separatism". As far as a breakdown on ethnic lines is concerned 55.9% of the Turks and 79.1% of the Kurds reject such a claim.

13 What do you think of the government’s recent initiative for the settlement of the Kurdish Question?



What do you think of the government’s recent initiative for the settlement of the Kurdish Question?
Ethnic Distribution

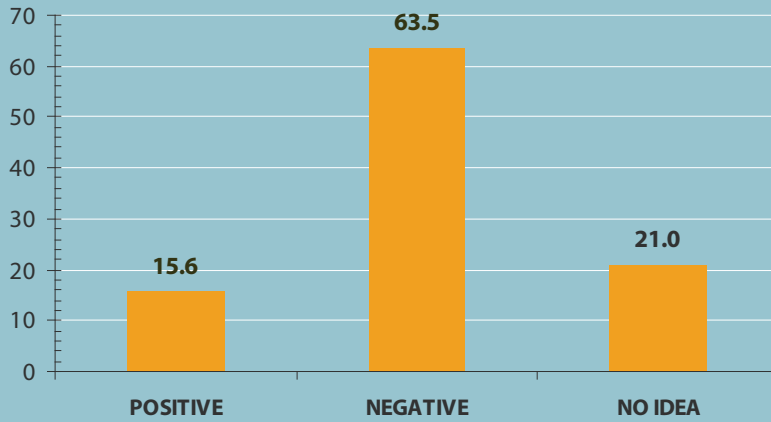
	TURKS %	KURDS %
POSITIVE	42.7	75.7
NEGATIVE	40.8	13.9
NO IDEA	16.5	10.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

What is your opinion on the CHP's approach to the government's Kurdish initiative?

14

What is your opinion on the CHP's approach to the government's Kurdish initiative?

General Distribution



What is your opinion on the CHP's approach to the government's Kurdish initiative?

Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
POSITIVE	17.3	6.5
NEGATIVE	60.2	79.8
NO IDEA	22.4	13.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

What is your opinion on the CHP's approach to the government's Kurdish initiative?

Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
POSITIVE	8.5	33.0	22.3	29.3
NEGATIVE	70.7	47.4	58.2	67.2
NO IDEA	20.8	19.6	19.5	3.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

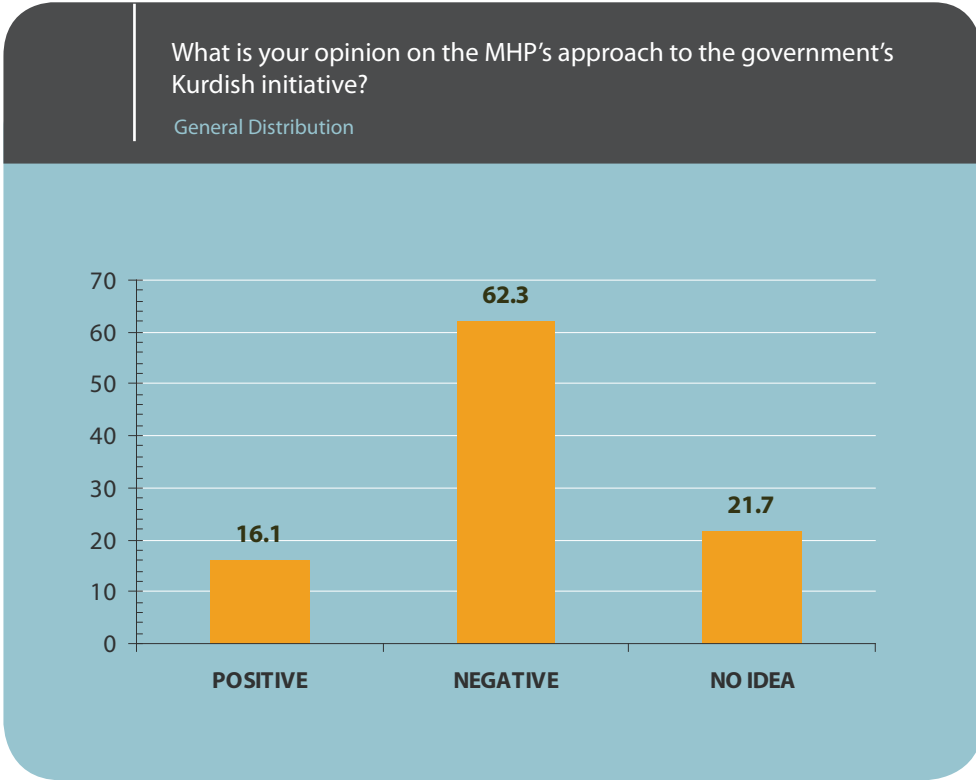
What is your opinion on the CHP's approach to the government's Kurdish initiative?

Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Kurdish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
POSITIVE	4.4	23.3	20.0	3.0
NEGATIVE	77.8	57.5	66.7	91.6
NO IDEA	17.8	19.2	13.3	5.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

What is your opinion on the MHP's approach to the government's Kurdish initiative?

15



What is your opinion on the MHP's approach to the government's Kurdish initiative?

Ethnic Distribution

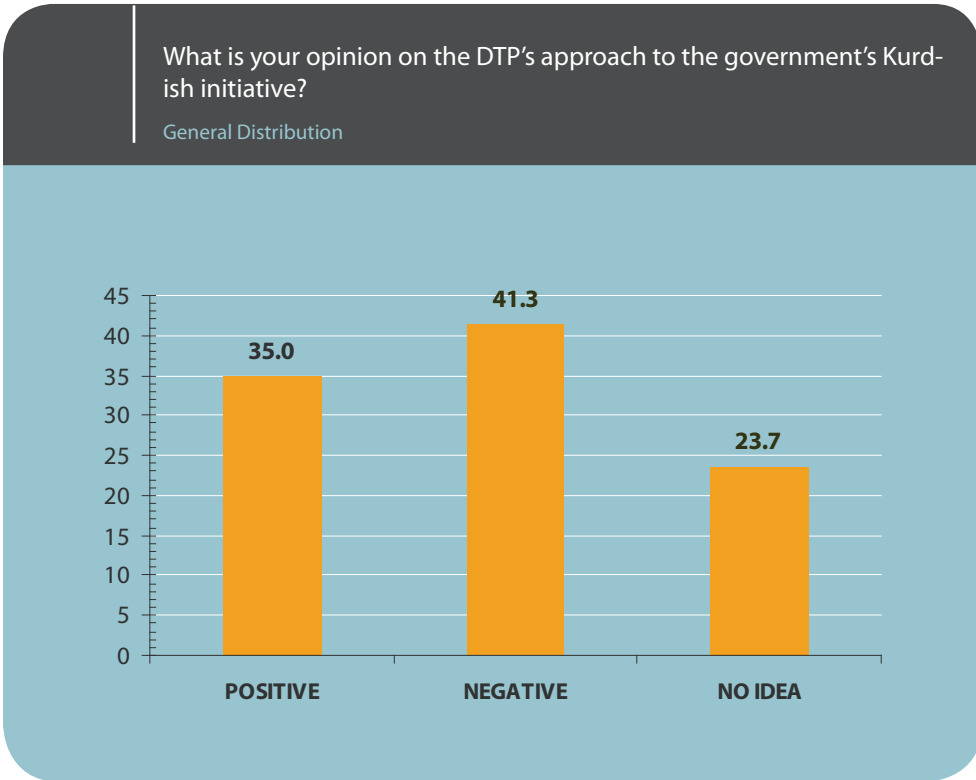
	TURKS %	KURDS %
POSITIVE	18.3	4.2
NEGATIVE	58.7	81.1
NO IDEA	23.0	14.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

What is your opinion on the MHP's approach to the government's Kurdish initiative?

Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
POSITIVE	12.2	19.7	40.4	5.1
NEGATIVE	65.9	58.7	43.3	91.5
NO IDEA	21.8	21.6	16.3	3.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

What is your opinion on the DTP's approach to the government's Kurdish initiative? 16

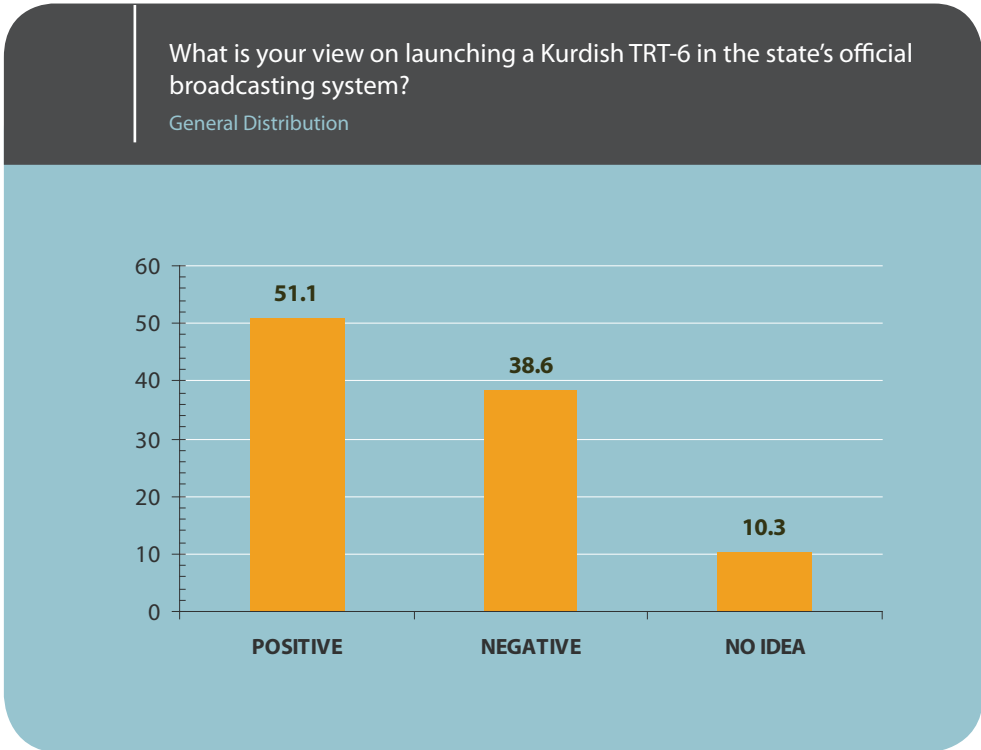


What is your opinion on the DTP's approach to the government's Kurdish initiative?

Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
POSITIVE	28.9	65.8
NEGATIVE	46.0	18.2
NO IDEA	25.2	16.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

17 What is your view on launching a Kurdish TRT-6 in the state's official broadcasting system?

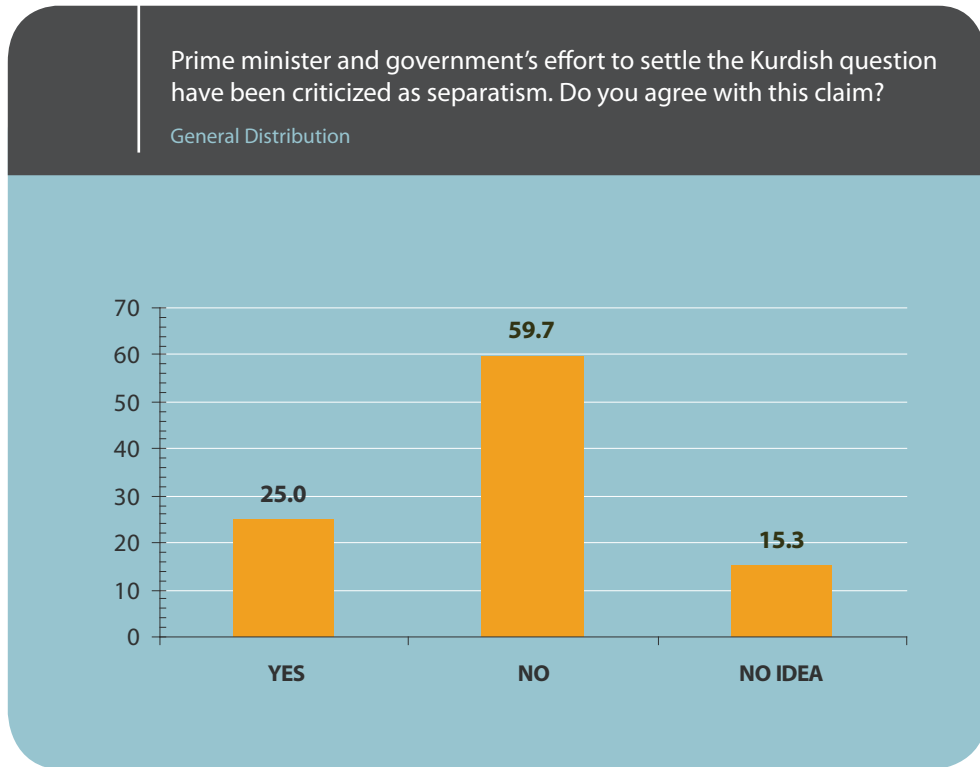


What is your view on launching a Kurdish TRT-6 in the state's official broadcasting system?
Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
POSITIVE	47.9	67.1
NEGATIVE	41.4	25.0
NO IDEA	10.7	7.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Prime Minister and government’s effort to settle the Kurdish question have been criticized as separatism. Do you agree with this claim?

18



Prime minister and government’s effort to settle the Kurdish question have been criticized as separatism. Do you agree with this claim?

Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	28.3	9.0
NO	55.9	79.1
NO IDEA	15.9	11.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Prime minister and government's effort to settle the Kurdish question have been criticized as separatism. Do you agree with this claim?

Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	12,2	43,8	44,7	19,0
NO	75,0	39,5	42,6	53,4
NO IDEA	12,8	16,7	12,7	27,6
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0



FEARS and
ANXIETIES | 5

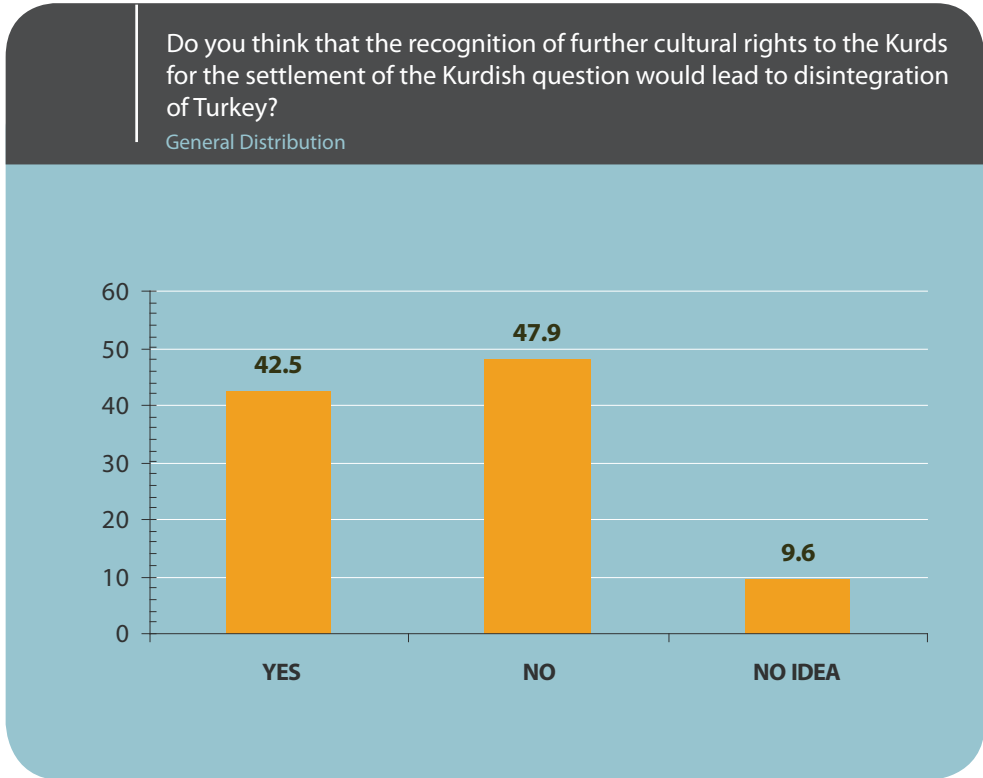
The three questions in this section of the survey related to fears and anxieties sparked by Kurdish claims for political and cultural rights. The results show that there is a significant difference between the Turks and the Kurds on the issue of claiming and granting rights and that there is a gap between social reality and public perceptions, which indicates a lack of empathy.

Three main topics, namely the granting of cultural rights to the Kurds, the lifting of the prohibitions on using the Kurdish language, and a constitutional recognition of the Kurdish identity, were used to measure the level of fear and anxiety of the respondents. Among the respondents, 47.9% think that granting cultural rights to the Kurds would not harm the unity and integrity of Turkey as opposed to those (42.5%) who claim that such a policy would lead to disunity. In terms of ethnic background, there is a notable difference in the attitudes and approaches of Kurds and Turks. A total of 47.3% of Turks believe that recognizing rights will do some harm to the integrity of the country whereas 74.6% of Kurds stress that this is not the case. However it is still a significant finding that 42.6% of the Turkish respondents are of the opinion that granting cultural rights to the Kurds would not disintegrate Turkey. Moreover, some supporters of the MHP (35.3%), which airs the strongest opposition to the initiative, believe that more cultural rights would cause no harm in societal unity in Turkey.

The survey's findings suggest that respondents are almost equally divided on the issue of removing the ban on the use of the Kurdish language. Of the respondents, 44% approve the removing of the prohibitions on the use of the Kurdish language for the solution of Kurdish question whereas 45.8% do not see this as acceptable, which confirms the existence of deeply rooted anxieties and fears in society. In terms of ethnic background, 78.2% of Kurds state that the ban on the use of the Kurdish language should be lifted whereas 52% of Turks say this is unacceptable.

On the issue of a constitutional recognition of the Kurdish identity, in total 65.2% of all the respondents state that this is not acceptable as opposed to 24.1% who find a constitutional recognition of the Kurdish identity as acceptable. Of Turks, 74% find recognition of the Kurdish identity in the constitution as unacceptable while 67% of Kurds believe that this is an immediate need. These findings suggest that there is currently no consensus or a strong ground for the discussion of constitutional recognition of the Kurdish identity. This is partly due to the perception that Kurds want to establish an independent state.

19 Do you think that the recognition of further cultural rights to the Kurds for the settlement of the Kurdish question would lead to disintegration of Turkey?



Do you think that the recognition of further cultural rights to the Kurds for the settlement of the Kurdish question would lead to disintegration of Turkey?

Ethnic Distribution

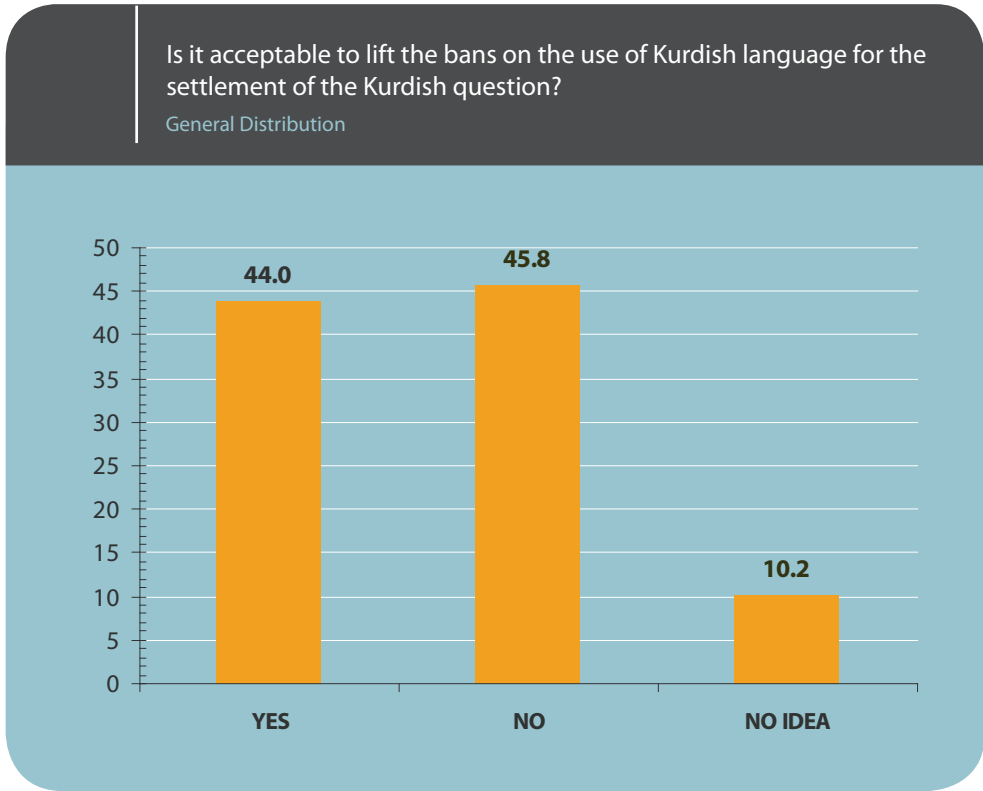
	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	47.3	18.8
NO	42.6	74.6
NO IDEA	10.2	6.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Do you think that the recognition of further cultural rights to the Kurds for the settlement of the Kurdish question would lead to disintegration of Turkey?

Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	41.2	48.9	58.7	20.3
NO	47.3	42.6	35.3	76.3
NO IDEA	11.5	8.5	6.0	3.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

20 Is it acceptable to lift the bans on the use of Kurdish language for the settlement of the Kurdish question?



Is it acceptable to lift the bans on the use of Kurdish language for the settlement of the Kurdish question?
Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	37.2	78.2
NO	52.1	14.4
NO IDEA	10.7	7.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Is it acceptable to lift the bans on the use of Kurdish language for the settlement of the Kurdish question?

Distribution According to Political Parties/ Ethnic Origin - Turkish

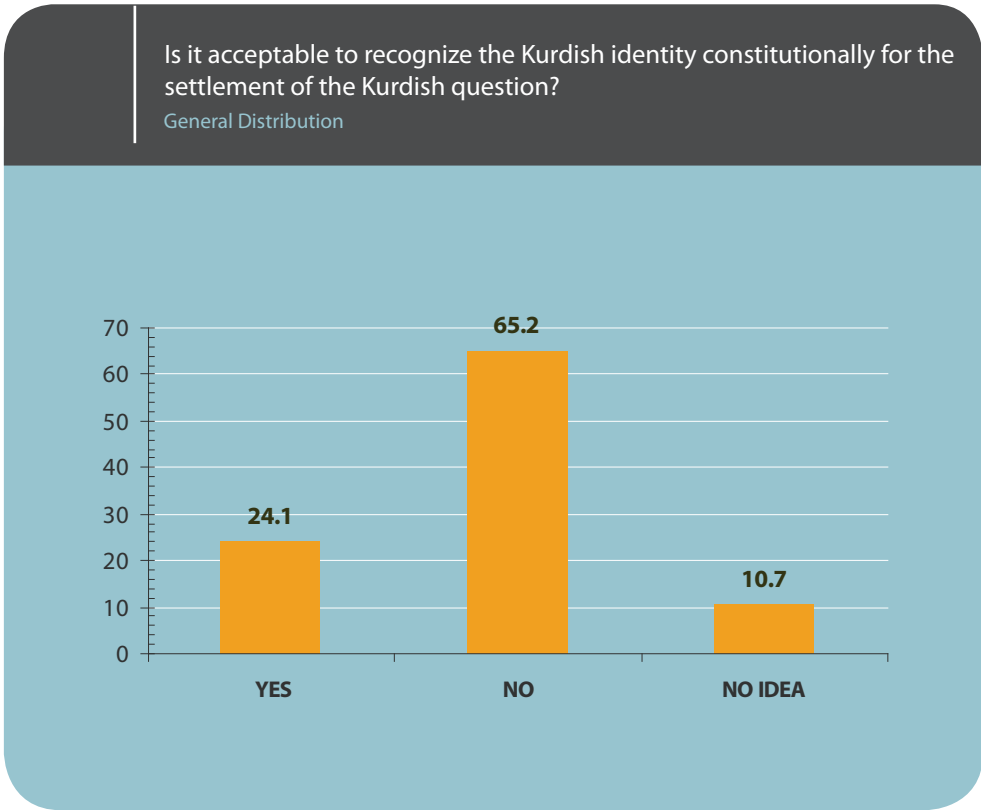
	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	41.2	38.9	27.2	74.1
NO	47.0	52.8	64.7	22.4
NO IDEA	11.8	8.4	8.0	3.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Is it acceptable to lift the bans on the use of Kurdish language for the settlement of the Kurdish question?

Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Kurdish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	74.1	67.5	58.6	87.2
NO	16.7	24.2	27.6	9.9
NO IDEA	9.2	8.3	13.8	2.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

21 Is it acceptable to recognize the Kurdish identity constitutionally for the settlement of the Kurdish question?



Is it acceptable to recognize the Kurdish identity constitutionally for the settlement of the Kurdish question?
Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	15.5	67.3
NO	73.9	22.1
NO IDEA	10.6	10.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0



SOCIETAL PERCEPTION | **6**
of **KURDS**

This section of the survey included four questions to illustrate societal perception of Kurds and of legal and illegal Kurdish political movements. The survey's results indicate that society seems to be divided into two as far as political representation, claims and hidden intentions of Kurds are concerned, which is a dramatic mix-up of perception and reality. Social or collective political perceptions work differently than those perceptions based on daily experience. This difference might prove to be an opportunity if managed effectively; otherwise, it can result in serious problems. Such a reality denotes the responsibilities of public opinion makers and political actors in dealing with these socially significant issues.

The results reveal the dominant and widely held perceptions in Turkey on the issues under discussion: 64.4% of the respondents believe that the Kurds want to establish an independent state; 24%, on the other hand, do not share this view. Of the Turkish respondents, 71.3% state that the Kurds want to have a separate state while only 30.3% of the Kurdish respondents share the same view. Of the Kurdish respondents, 59% think that Kurds have no demand for a separate state.

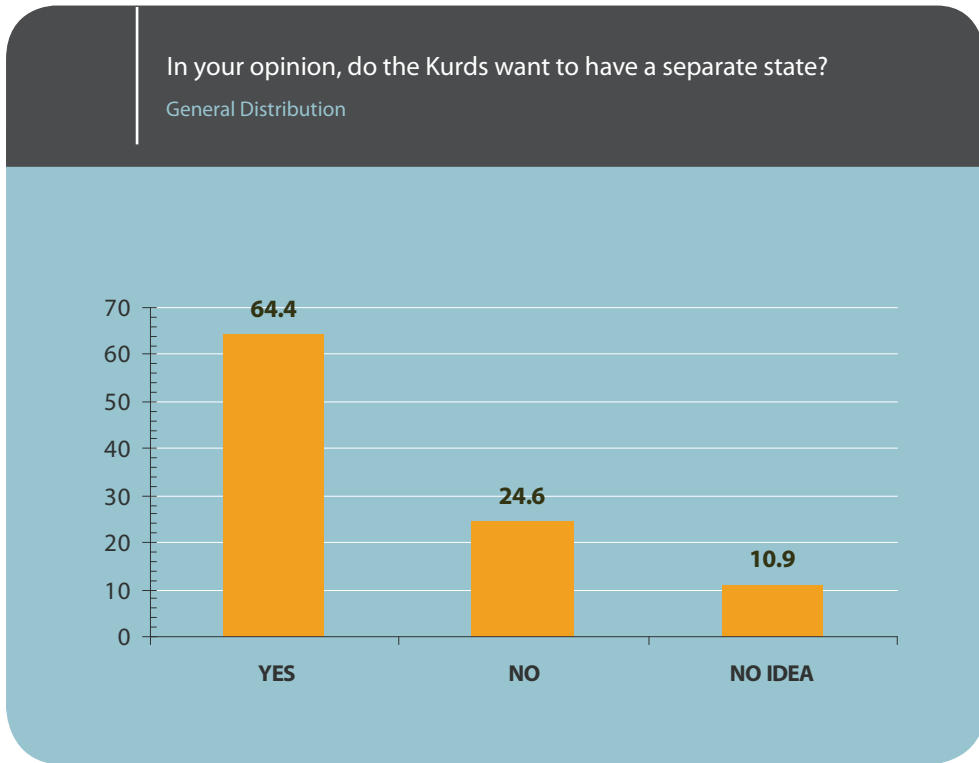
An interesting finding in this section relates to the perception of the DTP. When asked, "do the DTP's political views represent all Kurds in Turkey", only 38.1% of the respondents state that the DTP represents all Kurds while 50% note that there is no such representational relationship between the DTP and the Kurds. However, 46.4% of the Kurdish respondents think that DTP represents all Kurds in Turkey.

On the question of "whether the political views of Abdullah Öcalan and the PKK represent all Kurds in Turkey", 37.4% of the respondents believe that the PKK represents all Kurds while 50.1% disagree. The link between the DTP and the PKK has always been a subject of debate. In order to have a better picture of public opinion on this issue, respondents were asked whether they see an organic connection between the DTP and the PKK. The majority of respondents (78.7%) seem to think that there is an organic connection between the DTP and the PKK whereas only 7% see no such relation. The findings in this section seem to contradict those presented in the following section on the social distance between the Turks and the Kurds. In fact, the difference of opinion lies in matters of political nature rather than the social issues pertaining to collective

life. Disagreements on political issues between the two groups, despite the positive indicators of co-existence, can be considered signs of tension and the deepening of cleavages in political issues that might endanger social cohesion if the Kurdish question is not settled.

In your opinion, do the Kurds want to have a separate state?

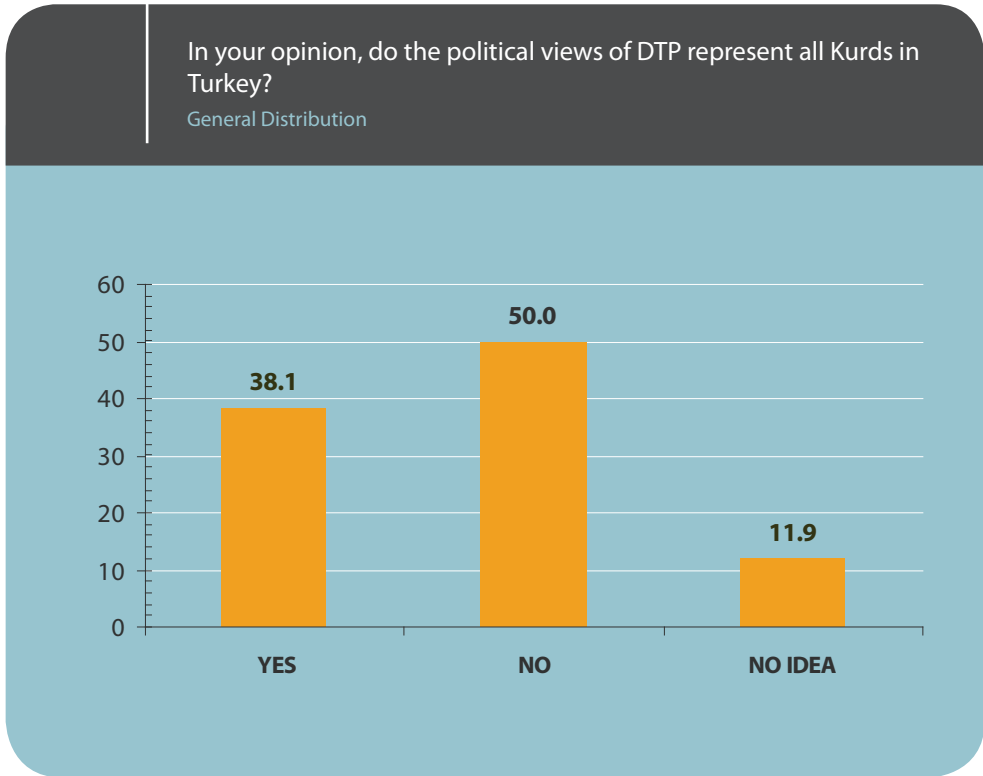
22



In your opinion, do the Kurds want to have a separate state?
Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	71.3	30.3
NO	17.9	59.0
NO IDEA	10.8	10.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

23 In your opinion, do the political views of DTP represent all Kurds in Turkey?



In your opinion, do the political views of DTP represent all Kurds in Turkey?
Ethnic Distribution

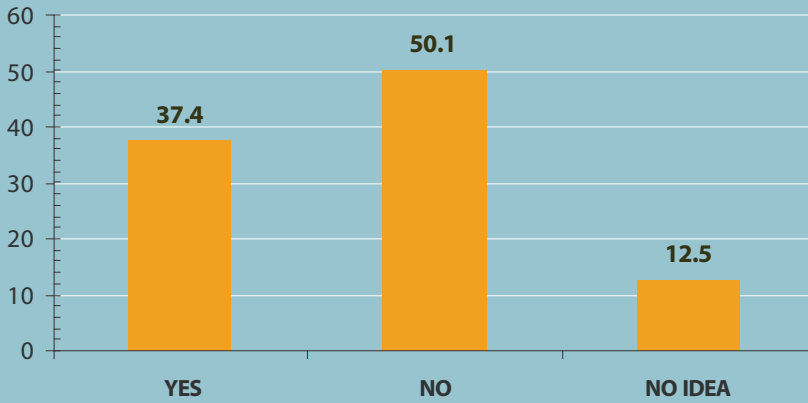
	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	36.4	46.4
NO	51.9	41.0
NO IDEA	11.6	12.6
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

In your opinion, do the political views of Abdullah Öcalan and the PKK represent all Kurds in Turkey?

24

In your opinion, do the political views of Abdullah Öcalan and the PKK represent all Kurds in Turkey?

General Distribution

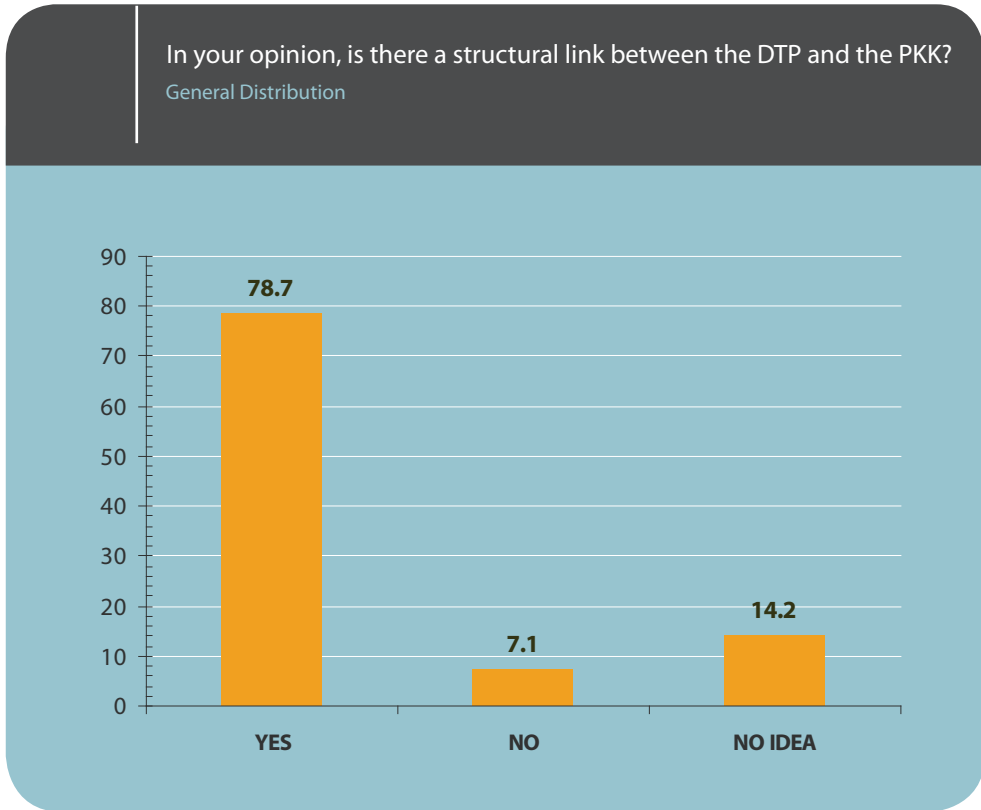


In your opinion, do the political views of Abdullah Öcalan and the PKK represent all Kurds in Turkey?

Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	37.1	38.1
NO	51.8	42.7
NO IDEA	11.1	19.2
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

25 In your opinion, is there a structural link between the DTP and the PKK?



In your opinion, is there a structural link between the DTP and the PKK?
Ethnic Distribution

	TURKS %	KURDS %
YES	82.9	58.0
NO	4.8	18.9
NO IDEA	12.3	23.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0



TURKS & KURDS:
HOW FAR, HOW CLOSE?

7

This part of the survey aimed to measure social distance/proximity and to illustrate the nature of relations between Turks and Kurds. In this section, eight questions were asked to find out how far violence, terror, intimidation, and loss of lives and property on both sides in the last twenty-five years have influenced social relations and whether past events have created distrust and enmity between these groups.

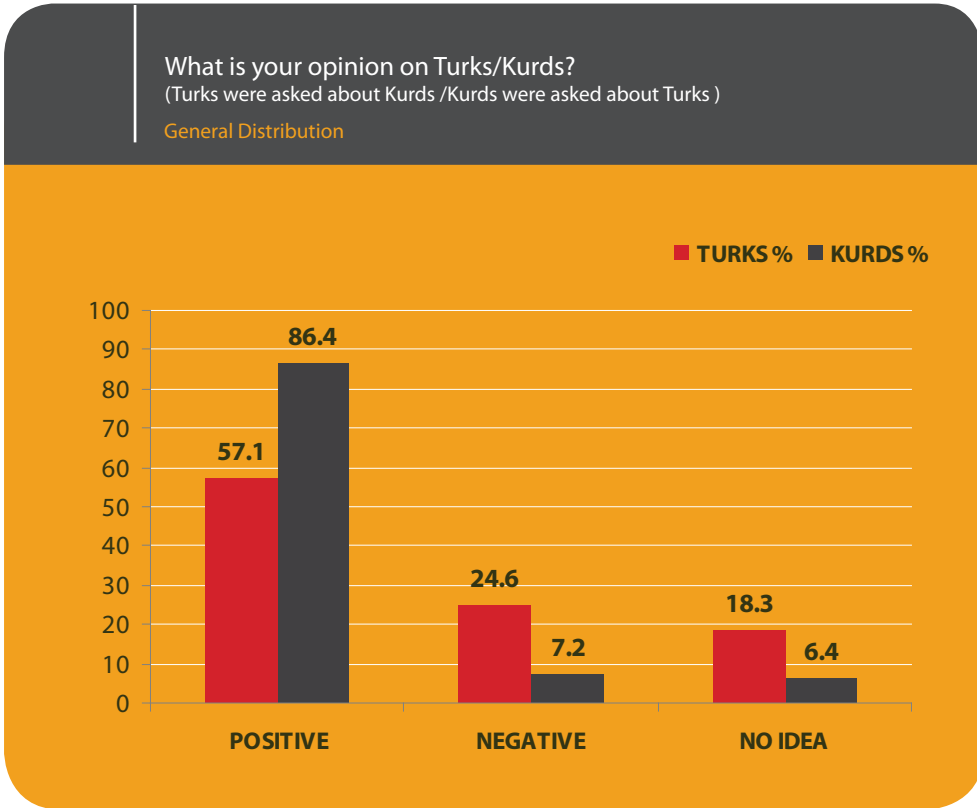
The research shows that opinions of Turks and Kurds towards each other are generally positive (57.1% and 86.4% respectively). Moreover, relations between Turks and Kurds are close despite the expectations of those who fail to see social cohesion in Turkey. The survey's findings support this observation: for example, 33.8% of Turks state that there is a Kurd among close relatives and 69.9% say that establishing a familial relation with a Kurd through marriage would not bother them. Of the Kurdish respondents, 67% say that there is a Turk among close relatives and 87.1% state that establishing a familial relation with a Turk through marriage would not disturb them. This indicates that racism does not have social grounds among neither the Turks nor the Kurds in Turkey. In terms of voting preferences, there is no significant difference among the Turkish supporters of the AK Parti (35.8%), the CHP (33.8%) and the MHP (31%) as far as having a familial relation with a Kurd is concerned. In other words, regardless of whether they are conservative, liberal, democrat, leftist or nationalist, the familial ties of Turks and Kurds bear greater importance than their political and ideological preferences.

Social mobility, migration and changing settlement patterns in Turkey in recent years have considerably increased the chances of everyday contact between Turks and Kurds. The demographic breakdown of Turks and Kurds shows that members of these two groups live together in urban areas. Considering that İstanbul has 1.5 million Kurdish people and is the city with the largest Kurdish population, it becomes evident that the social and familial ties between the two communities are fairly comprehensive. Friendship patterns between the members of these groups are yet another indication of the existence of social cohesion and close proximity. Of the Turkish respondents, 59.4% state that there is a Kurd among his/her close friends and 75.5% look favorably at making a close friend with a person of Kurdish origin. Of the Kurdish respondents,

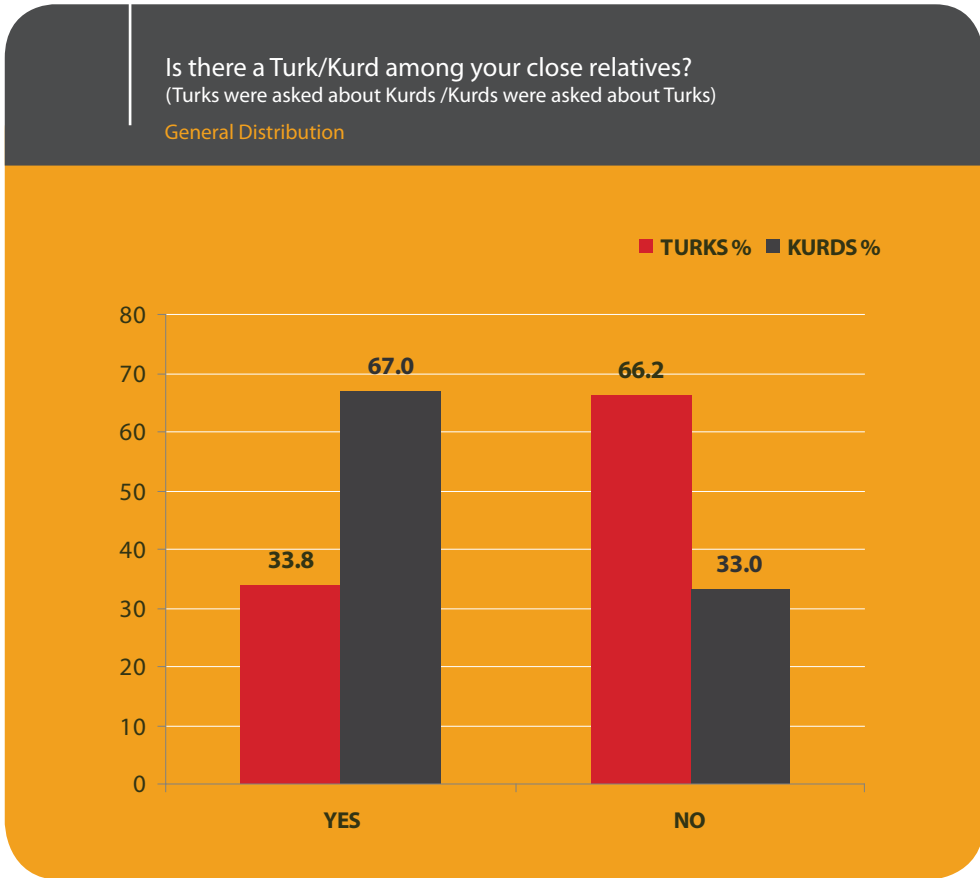
83.6% say that they have a close Turkish friend and 92% claim that they can become a close friend to a person of Turkish origin. These findings demonstrate that there is a strong sense of trust between the Turks and the Kurds on individual levels in everyday life. Neighborhood relations seem to strengthen the existing sense of trust and deepen the social relations even further. More than half of the Turkish respondents (54.1%) point out that they have a Kurdish neighbor and 78.3% hold that it would not bother them having a Kurdish neighbor. Of the Kurdish respondents, 70% note that they have a Turkish neighbor while as much as 90.5% state that they would not mind having a Turkish neighbor. Along with these findings, high mutual trust in business relations (74% with the Turks and 88.5% with the Kurds) suggests that there has been a multilayered and multidimensional social integration between the Turks and the Kurds over the centuries. In short, despite the political polemics, violence and terrorism that have been occupying the agenda of Turkey for many years, no enmity, hostility, distrust and social disintegration is occurring in Turkey.

What is your opinion on Turks/Kurds?

26



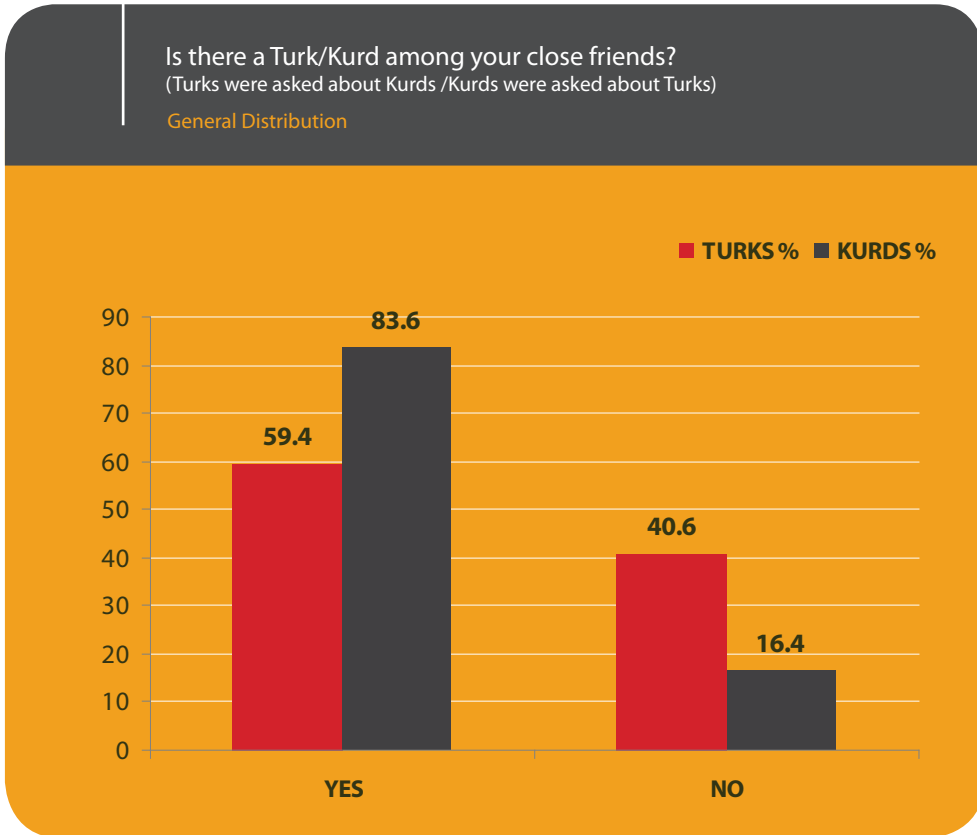
27 Is there a Turk/Kurd among your close relatives?



Is there a Turk/Kurd among your close relatives?
Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	35.8	33.8	31.0	74.1
NO	64.2	66.2	69.0	25.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

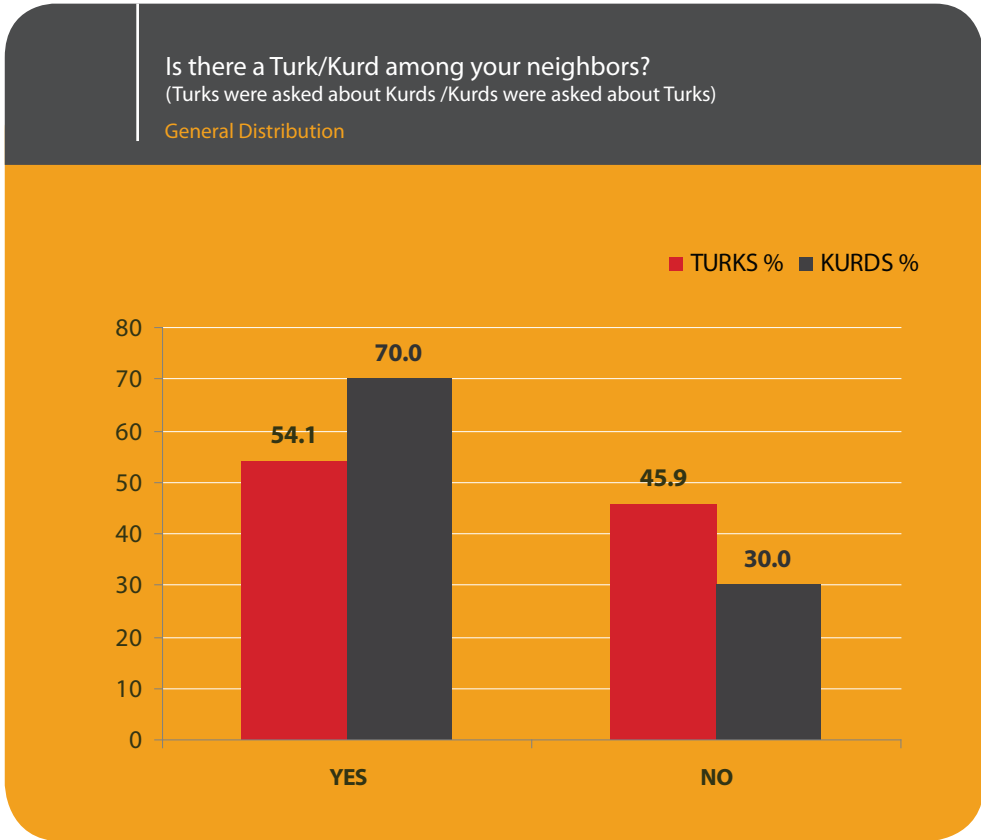
Is there a Turk/Kurd among your close friends?



Is there a Turk/Kurd among your close friends?
Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	56.8	64.9	58.9	84.7
NO	43.2	35.1	41.1	15.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

29 Is there a Turk/Kurd among your neighbors?



Is there a Turk/Kurd among your neighbors?
Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	54.4	56.7	52.0	56.1
NO	45.6	43.3	48.0	43.9
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

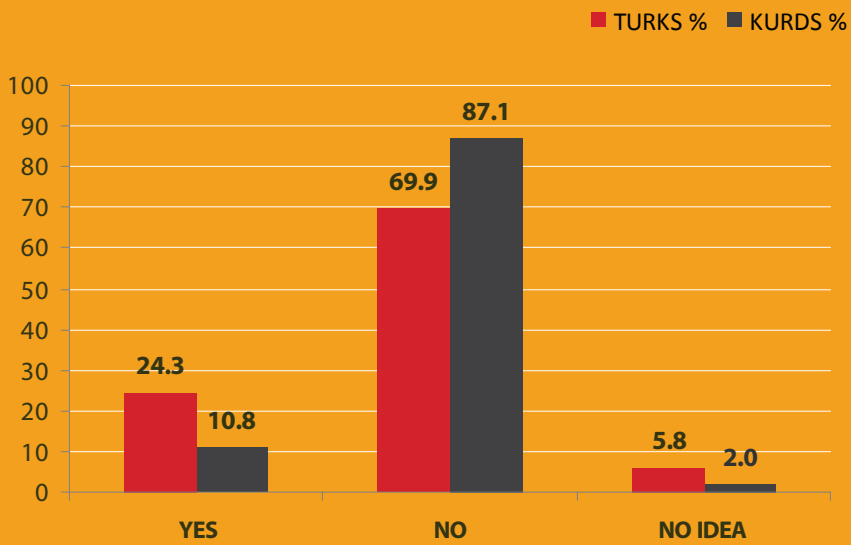
Would you be disturbed if a Turk/Kurd becomes your relative through marriage ties?

30

Would you be disturbed if a Turk/Kurd becomes your relative through marriage ties?

(Turks were asked about Kurds /Kurds were asked about Turks)

General Distribution

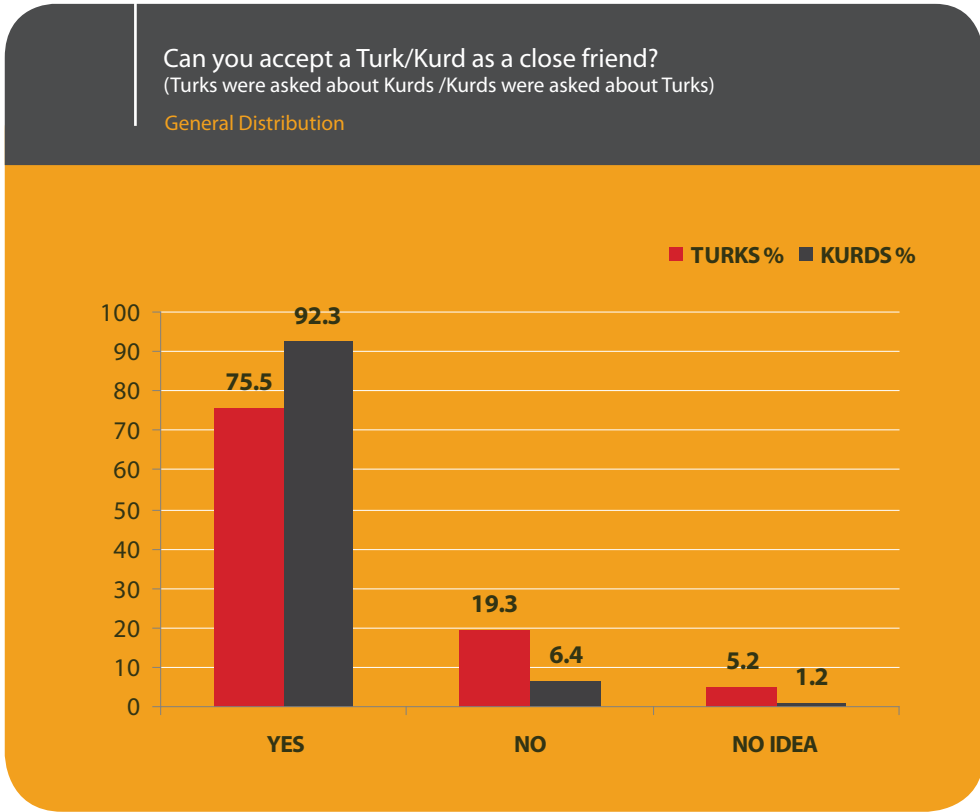


Would you be disturbed if a Kurd becomes your relative through marriage ties?

Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	21.4	23.9	31.4	12.1
NO	72.7	70.4	62.4	84.5
NO IDEA	5.8	5.8	6.2	3.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

31 Can you accept a Turk/Kurd as a close friend?

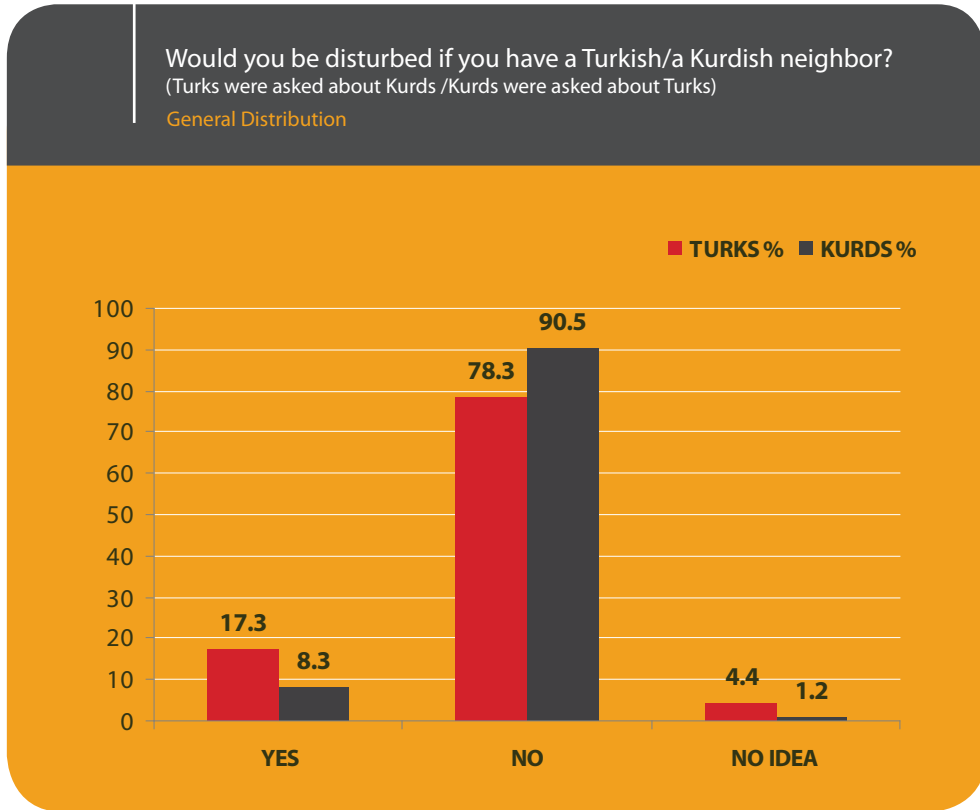


Can you accept a Kurd as a close friend?
Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	76.6	77.9	70.2	83.1
NO	18.4	18.3	24.4	13.6
NO IDEA	4.9	3.8	5.4	3.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Would you be disturbed if you have a Turkish/a Kurdish neighbor?

32



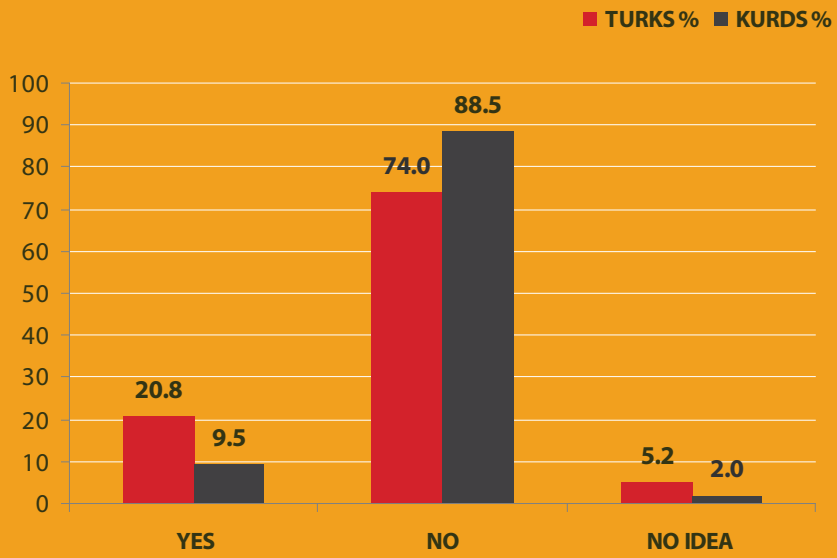
Would you be disturbed if you have a Kurdish neighbor?
Distribution According to Political Parties / Ethnic Origin - Turkish

	AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP
YES	15.4	16.8	23.4	13.6
NO	80.4	79.4	72.1	84.7
NO IDEA	4.1	3.8	4.6	1.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

33 Would you be disturbed if you have a Turkish or Kurdish colleague? (Turks were asked about Kurds /Kurds were asked about Turks)

Would you be disturbed if you have a Turkish or Kurdish colleague?
(Turks were asked about Kurds /Kurds were asked about Turks)

General Distribution



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“Public Perception of the Kurdish Question” is based on a Turkey-wide survey conducted by the Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) and Pollmark. The main objective of this large-scale survey was to map public perceptions of the Kurdish question and the government’s intensively debated Democratization Initiative or in other words, Kurdish Initiative. This report presents the main findings of the survey.

This is not the first time that Turkish public is discussing the Kurdish question and it seems that this issue will remain an important item on the agenda for years to come. However, understanding the emerging dynamics and new dimensions of the problem has become extremely complicated in light of recent events and developments. Today, there is almost a completely new context in the approaches to Kurdish question as far as the political dynamics and grounds for discussion are concerned. Undoubtedly, this new ground builds upon the tensions, successes, failures and transformations in the last twenty-five years.

At this present time, however, it is no longer possible to use the language and rhetoric that were employed during the past ten or twenty years. To put it more precisely, the framework used to discuss the Kurdish question will have to differ in the future in order to pursue a meaningful debate. It is not an overstatement to describe the current period as the beginning of such a transformation. The most important characteristic of this new period is that the Kurdish question is increasingly considered a political problem by the public in contrast to the previous perspectives, which used to take the issue essentially as a security problem.

The importance of this survey lies in its ability to clearly capture the picture of this transitional period. At the same time, the report touches on the structural and periodic features of the Kurdish question and discusses how the public perceives all these variables. This research presents voluminous data on how Turkish society perceives the Kurdish question, where it sees the solution, what the public thinks about the positions of the ruling and opposition parties towards the new initiative. It also documents what Turkish people think about the origins of the Kurdish question and demonstrates the common values that can facilitate social integration in Turkey. We believe that the data presented in this report will increase the quality of discussion on this issue by enabling the readers to see different aspects of the problem.