

## RETHINKING PEACE: OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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### Abstract

In the recent times, there has been an upsurge in conflicting circumstances in Turkey. In this context, re-building a peaceful environment and understanding the socio-psychological obstacles facing the peace building process have been more crucial. The aim of in this study is to investigate the relationship between certain socio-psychological variables, i.e., conservatism, normative-humanistic attitudes, system justification, political trust regarding peace and attitudes toward peace with pro-peace behavioral intentions. The sample consisted of 454 participants from different regions of Turkey. Data was collected via an inquiry containing Socio-demographic Information Form, Polarity Scale (Tomkins 1978), Pro-peace Behavioral Intentions Scale (Bizumic et al. 2013), Attitudes toward Peace and War Scale (Bizumic et al. 2013), Political Trust regarding Peace Scale, Conservatism Subscale (Rattazzi, Bobbio, & Canova 2007) and General System Justification Scale (Kay & Jost 2003). The findings revealed that conservatism, normative-humanistic attitudes, system justification are significantly associated with attitudes toward peace and pro-peace behavioral intentions. Results also demonstrate a significant relation between system justification and background variables such as political and religious opinions. The results of the study were discussed in socio-psychological perspective considering geographic, cultural and ethnic differences in Turkey.

**Keywords:** pro-peace behavioral intentions, normative-humanistic attitudes, system justification, political trust regarding peace, conservatism, attitudes toward peace

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In Turkey, there has been an ethno-political issue going on since the foundation of the republic. Since the foundation of the republic, Turkey has been dealing with an ethno-political issue. The attempts and policies utilized for a move towards westernization, secularity and centralization and nationalism embraced through the early years of the republic also affected the ongoing ethnic-based political tension in the country. No matter how the Republic implemented policies to assimilate minorities, the Kurdish people who are a part of minority constituting the 16% of the country were denied these policies and the Kurdish rebellions have become one of the most prevailing problems in the Republic (KONDA 2010).

The ethno-political conflict has become more apparent in 1980s. Uluğ (2016, p. 14) stated that the Kurdish-Turkish conflict has caused cruel outcomes such as over 40.000 deaths and three million people being forcibly displaced. Following PKK's leader Abdullah Öcalan's capture in 1999, *the Kurdish Question* has gained a different dimension.

In 1999, Turkey was accepted as a nominee country by the European Union. Through westernization attempts and EU's commitment to impose changes forced Turkey to reform its policies regarding the minority issues and to approach towards the Kurdish Question in a different way (Çelik, 2016, p.80). As a result of these efforts, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the governing party, started a process called 'Kurdish Initiative' in 2009 which promised an unarmed solution for the Kurdish Question and included developments in minority rights and some reforms regarding to human rights. In public, the project was called as "democratic initiative" and "peace project". The peace negotiations that maintained since 2009 progressed slowly and public support has been inadequate (Avcı 2014, p.15). From the people's perspective, the most consoling possible outcome of this effort was the fact that there were efforts for a non-violent solution and possibility of receiving no death news from either side. Although the process gave a hope for peace, the negotiations both progressed slowly. The process which was slowly progressing since 2009 was replaced by armed clashes

again. The clashes which initially emerged around some parts of the the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Turkey then spread over a wider area of the region and the western part of the country as well. Many civilians lost their lives and most people were forced to leave their homes during the conflicts.

All in all, the Kurdish Question has been one of the most important issues in Turkey's domestic politics since 1980s. According to a survey conducted by Antalya Int'l University in December 2015, Turkey's biggest problem is stated as terrorism (48.2%) (Antalya International University 2016). Again, according to another survey which was conducted the same year, terrorism (39.3%) is listed as the biggest problem in Turkey (Kadir Has University 2016) Although Turkey's government has taken considerable steps for solution of the Kurdish Question in recent years, we witness social differentiation and conflicts between Turks and Kurds (Çelik 2010, p.1). For the peaceful conclusion of the ethno-political conflict which was outlined above, we need to demand peace effectively.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The approaches that have determined the theoretical framework of the current study are summarized and showed how they relate below.

#### **Conservatism**

Conservatism has been studied by historians (e.g. Diamond 1995), journalists (e.g. Lind 1996), political scientists (e.g. Carmines & Berkman 1994), sociologists (e.g. Miller 1994), philosophers (e.g. Habermas 1989) and social psychologists (e.g. Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway 2003a). According to one of the new and inclusive social psychological approaches conservatism has two features: resistance to change and endorsement of inequality. The resistance to change dimension of conservatism is associated with right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) (Jost & Banaji 1994, p.10-11; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski & Sulloway, 2003a, p.342-343).

Altemeyer (1981) asserted that authoritarianism was acquired through social learning and also developed the theory of right-wing authoritarianism whilst working with Canadian students. Right-wing authoritarianism consists of three interrelated components: authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression and conventionalism. Authoritarian submission means an unquestioned obedience to authority; authoritarian aggression is the feeling of aggression towards people who violate rules and conventionalism means to literally dependence on traditions, values and rules (Altemeyer 1981 p.148). However, Duckitt and Fisher (2003, p.205) combined authoritarian submission and conventionalism to re-identified it as 'conservatism', which is adhesion to conventional rules, values, institutions and authorities. Conservatism is associated with the social-psychological variables including fear and aggression (e.g. Adorno et al. 1950), dogmatism and intolerance of ambiguity (e.g. Fibert & Ressler 1998), uncertainty avoidance (e.g. McGregor et al. 2001), need for cognitive closure (e.g. Golec 2001), personal need for structure (e.g. Altemeyer 1998), terror management (e.g. Greenberg et al. 1990), group-based dominance (e.g. Pratto et al. 1994), and system justification (e.g. Jost & Banaji 1994). These variables, as either independently or in combination, contribute to the adoption of conservative ideological contents (Jost et al. 2003a).

There is an interaction between authoritarian predispositions and perceived threat (Feldman & Stenner 1997, p.741; Onraet, Hiel & Cornelis 2013, p.10). Also when people are faced with threatening conditions (terrorist attacks, conflicts and so on) they indicate more conservative trends to cope with threat and uncertainty (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway 2003a; Bonanno & Jost 2006, pp.320-321). In this study, it is thought that conservatism may be associated with attitudes toward peace. It has also been suggested to be associated with the system justification (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway 2003a).

## **System Justification Theory**

System justification means that current societal conditions and regulations about political, economical, sexual, social or legal are approved and legalized (Jost & Banaji 1994, p.9-11). The main focus of system justification theory is that stereotypes and other supportive ideologies are used in order to maintain current system (Jost & Hunyady 2002, p.36-37; Jost & Kay 2005, p.506-508). Jost & Hunyady (2005, p.260) note that:

The Protestant work ethic, meritocratic ideology, fair market ideology, economic system justification, belief in a world, power distance, social dominance orientation, opposition of the equality, right-wing authoritarianism and political conservatism system legitimating ideologies are of system justification ideologies.

These ideologies are positively correlated with uncertainty avoidance, need for order, structure, closure and prevention-oriented regulatory, dangerous world beliefs and fear of death. However, they are negatively correlated with cognitive complexity and openness to experience (Jost et al. 2003a, p.352; Jost et al. 2003b, p.392; Jost & Hunyady 2005, p.261-262). According to system justification theory, both advantaged and disadvantaged groups tend to system justification (Jost & Hunyady 2005, p.260). However, it is specifically to understand how and why, under some circumstances, that disadvantaged groups (compared to advantaged group) tend to more justify the status quo more (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon & Sullivan 2003c, p.30)

There are many studies indicating the effects of threat on system-justifying attitudes and the endorsement of conservative (Willer 2004; Echebarria-Echabe & Fernandez-Guede 2006; Ullrich & Cohrs 2007; Economou & Kollias 2015; Van de Vyver, Houston, Abram & Vasiljevic 2015 as cited in Sterling, Jost & Shrouf 2016, p.3). In addition, system justification tendencies are associated with politically conservative structures (beliefs, opinions, and values so on) (Jost, Nosek, & Gosling 2008, p.130).

Toorn, Tyler and Josh (2011, p.130) reported that system justification is associated with trust and obedience to political authority. Perceived legitimacy increased when authority is fair and obeyed to authority. In line with the research, it is expected that system justification negatively correlates with attitudes toward peace and pro-peace behavioral intention within this research.

### **Political Trust**

Political trust corresponds with belief about the political system and its components will operate according to people's expectations (Miller 1974, p.989; Hetherington 1998, p.791). It is considered as a component of political support and it facilitates perceived legitimacy of the political system (Wang 2005, p.157). The source of political trust is from beliefs based on cultural norms and performance of political institutions (Mishler & Rose 2001, p.420).

Political trust is associated with religion, values, economic conditions of the country, perceived threat to the country, support of governmental policy, representations of personality traits of leaders, conservatism, traditionalism, system justification, authoritarianism (Citrin & Green 1986; Williams 1996; Hetherington 2005; Henry & Saul 2006; Çoymak 2009; Schwartz, Caprara & Vecchione 2010; Sekulić & Sporer 2010).

The most trusted institutions in Turkey are the Army, Presidency of Religious Affairs, Presidency and the Judiciary (Eser 2010 as cited in Sönmez 2014, p.7). In another study, the most trusted political components in Turkey have been expressed as Presidency, the Army, the Police, the Prime Minister and Turkish Grand National Assembly. According to the same research, the least trusted political component are politicians in general (Metropoll 2013 as cited in Sönmez 2014, p.7).

Political trust has been examined by different researchers in different categories (political actors, culture, religion, values, regime change and so on) in the literature (Billings & Scott 1994; Norris 1999; Devos, Spini & Schwartz 2002; Bilodeau & Nevitte 2003; Wang,

2005; Sönmez 2014). However, this study has examined political trust regarding peace in an atmosphere of conflict in Turkey. Accordingly, the scope of the political field includes not only state institutions (examples include presidency, army, police, prime minister etc.) and civilian components (NGOs, media and so on) but also people's common sense factor.

### **Ideology and Tomkins' Script Theory**

The concept of ideology is defined in different ways in the social sciences. In psychological research area, ideology is described as inner beliefs and organizations which are shared by a group of people (Göregenli 1997). Ideologies are contextualized by bi-dimensional attitudes suggested by Tomkins (1978). Tomkins (1978) named these bi-dimensional attitudes as scripts –which were also known as conservative-liberal- and proposed that human thought is constructed by normativism or humanism. Tomkins (1978) assumed that ideologies have many aspects emerged in religion, child rearing practices, science theories and in other areas. He indicated that the relationship between ideology and personality evolved as normative and humanistic dispositions. Tomkins named this ideological left and right personality distinctness as ideo-affective postures or scripts. According to Tomkins (1978) personality is formed by these scripts. Various researches support that right-wing persons are more normative and authoritative as indicated in Tomkins theory. De St. Aubin (1996, p.160) indicated political conservatives are more normativist whereas political liberals are more humanistic. In Carlson and Brincka's (1987, p.572) research conducted in the United States with university students and adults, Republicans are found more normativist; on the contrary Democrats are found more humanistic. Thorisdottir, Jost, Liviatan and Shrout (2007, p.198) also indicate liberalism is characterized by equality and social change; whereas conservatism is characterized by acceptance inequality and favoring traditions. Nilsson and Strupp-Levitsky (2016, p.8) also found normativism is related with seeing people and the world as static and immutable, respect for authority and protection of sanctity. Additionally, they

found humanism is related with constructionist view of society, intrinsic preferences, fairness and self-transcendence. Also, in Rubinstain's (1996) research with Jewish and Muslim students, right-wing political party supporters have more authoritarian tendencies than left wing supporters. In the same research, secular-oriented students' authoritarian scores were lower than the others. Just one crucial findings of the study is that right-oriented and authoritarian persons in both Muslim and Jewish participants are more against the peace processes. As for research conducted in Turkey, there are few that have used Polarity Scale to learn about people's worldviews. In Gürşimşek and Göregenli's research (2005, p. 755), humanistic orientation is negatively related with system justification; whereas it is positively related with universal equality and democracy. Another piece of research demonstrates that teachers with normative tendencies have authoritarian tendencies and discipline beliefs (Gürşimşek & Göregenli 2004, p. 88). These findings are related to other studies in that they indicate individuals whose personal ideologies are defined as high normative preserve a more conservative and authoritarian orientation (e.g. Carlson & Brincka 1987; De St. Aubin 1996).

### **Attitudes toward Peace and Pro-Peace Behavioral Intentions**

Peace is generally defined as absence of war (Galtung 1969). Over the course of time its meaning has been enriched to a broader extent, which includes the social and political structures that promote peace. Peace is a positive societal state that neither structural nor direct violence is not likely to occur (MacNair 2015, p.19). Direct violence has the aim of hurting-harming the body, mind or spirit; whereas structural violence refers to social structures and institutions harm people by preventing them from their basic needs and it is related to social injustice (Galtung 1969, p.183; 1996, p.31). Galtung also (1969, p.183; 1996, p. 61) distinguishes negative peace from positive peace. Negative peace refers to the absence of war and violence; whereas positive peace refers to absence of structural violence and

egalitarian distribution of power and resources. Galtung (1969) emphasized that structural violence is particularly important in understanding peace.

Attitudes toward peace and attitudes toward war differ according to ideologies, values and personality traits. Social dominance orientation (SDO) is related to ideological beliefs about group inequality. When it is about protecting group based hierarchies SDO has a positive relation with pro-war attitudes (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle 1994, p.754-755). On the other hand, values which favor harmony and equality are related with pro-peace attitudes. Attitudes toward war are related to high RWA and national strength; whereas attitudes toward peace are related to low SDO (egalitarian ideology) and international equality (Bizumic, Stubager, Mellon, van der Linden, Iyer and Jones 2013, p. 688). Also, Bizumic et al. (2013, p. 682) showed that attitudes toward peace are positively correlated with pro-peace related behavioral intentions, whereas attitudes toward war are positively correlated with pro-war related behavioral intentions. A number of studies support that RWA and SDO are important indicators of attitudes toward war and peace (e.g. McFarland 2005; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle 1994; Cohrs and Moschner 2002; Cohrs, Moschner, Maes and Kielmann 2005).

The conceptual frameworks briefly outlined above has contributed to the aim of this study; which is to investigate the relations between attitudes toward peace, pro-peace behavioral intention, conservatism, political trust, normative-humanistic attitudes and system justification.

## **METHOD**

### *Participants*

The data for this study was collected through both online and paper-based surveys in classroom settings of the Ege University as well as face-to-face interviews with both student and adult sample. The sample consisted of 454 participants with the sex distribution of the

participants being 259 women (57%), 191 men (42.1) and 4 people who did not report their sex. Except 6 participants who did not report their ages, the remaining participants' age range was between 18 and 70 ( $M = 27.18$ ,  $SD = 8.59$ ).

The participants' place of birth varied; 107 participants were born in the Aegean region (23.6%), 82 participants in Marmara region (18.1%), 76 participants in Southeastern Anatolia (16.7%), 50 participants in Eastern Anatolia (11%), 47 participants in Central Anatolia (10.4%), 42 participants in Mediterranean region (9.3%) and 27 participants in Black Sea region (5.9%). 11 participants' place of birth were outside the above mentioned regions and a further 12 participants did not reply this question.

### *Materials*

A questionnaire battery consisting of six scales, described in detail below, were completed by the participants. Also, basic demographic information was collected to obtain the participants' sexes, ages, occupations, education levels, income levels, and the place where they lived the longest. In addition to these demographic questions, there were questions asking about political orientation and religious affiliation (on a 7-point Likert type question) and languages other than Turkish spoken among their family members –a question intended to glean participants' ethnic backgrounds-.

*Conservatism Scale:* This scale is a short version of the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) Scale, which was devised by Rattazzi, Bobbio and Canova (2007) and translated to Turkish by the authors of this study. This scale has 7 items ( $\alpha = .76$ ) that are rated on a 7-point scale from -3 (*totally disagree*) to +3 (*totally agree*). However, in this study items were rated on a 5-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items were “Homosexuals and feminists should be praised for being brave enough to defy ‘traditional family values’” (reverse-scored) and “Everyone should have their own lifestyle, religious beliefs, and sexual preferences, even if it makes them different from

everyone else” (reverse-scored). Higher scores in this scale indicate a higher level of conservatism. The internal reliability of this scale for the current study was satisfactory ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

*General System Justification Scale (GSJS)*: The GSJS was developed by Kay and Jost (2013) and adapted to the Turkish context by Göregenli (2004, 2005). The Cronbach’s alpha reliability of the original scale and its Turkish adaptation were .87 and .71, respectively. This scale was used to assess individuals’ tendency to legitimize the general system that they live in. The GSJS consisted of 8 items that were rated on a 5-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include “In general, you find society to be fair” and “Our society is getting worse every year” (reverse-scored item). Higher scores in this scale indicate higher tendency toward a general system justification. The Cronbach’s alpha of the GSJS for the current study was calculated to be .72.

*Political Trust regarding Peace Scale (PTP)*: The PTP Scale was constructed by the authors of this study in order to examine political trust towards various political agents such as the governing party (AKP), the parliament, the army, and intelligentsia etc. in regards to the achievement of peace. This scale had 12 items that were rated on a 5-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items of the PTP Scale are “My actions in accordance with my political views will bring peace”, “The common sense of the people of Turkey will bring peace” and “The civil society organizations’ works will bring peace”. Higher scores indicate a higher level of political trust in regards to the achievement of peace.

*Polarity Scale (PS)*: The Polarity Scale was developed by Stone and Schaffner (1988). The scale has 59 items with the Cronbach’s alpha reliability of .84. This scale was adapted to Turkish context by Göregenli (1997) and by eliminating 14 items they obtained the Cronbach’s alpha as .69 for the remaining 45 items. The PS assesses a person’s life

orientations as either humanistic or normative ideologies. The PS has paired items and participants are asked to determine which statement reflects their ideas the best amongst each of the pairs. Sample paired item of the PS are “Play is childish. Although it is proper for children to play, adults should concern themselves with more serious matters,” –reflecting normative orientations-, and “Play is important for all human beings. No one is too old to enjoy the excitement of play” –reflecting humanist orientations. Items related to normative orientation were scored as 1 and humanistic orientation were scored as 2. Thus, higher total scores in this scale indicate tendency to a humanistic orientation and lower scores indicate tendency to a normative orientation. In this study, a short version of the PS which was abbreviated by Gürşimşek and Göregenli (2005) was used ( $\alpha = .73$ ). This short version of the PS had 20 items. The Cronbach’s alpha of the short version of PS was calculated for this study to be .54.

*Attitudes toward Peace and War Scale (APW):* The APW Scale was developed by Bizumic et al. (2013) and translated into Turkish by the authors of this study. The APW Scale has 16 items and two sub-scales, namely attitudes toward peace ( $\alpha = .83$ ) and war ( $\alpha = .90$ ). In this study the APW Scale was used unidimensionally and so items were rated on a 5-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). This scale was used to examine individuals’ attitudes toward peace and war. Sample items were “I believe that peace is extremely important” and “Under some conditions, war is necessary to maintain justice”. The internal reliability of the overall APW Scale for this study was satisfactory ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

*Pro-peace Behavioral Intentions Scale (BEH-P):* This scale was developed by Bizumic et al. (2013) and translated into Turkish by the authors of this study. The BEH-P Scale has 6 items ( $\alpha = .90$ ) rated on a 9-point Likert type scale. However, in this study items were rated on a 5-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly*

*agree*). This scale examines individuals' behavioral intentions for supporting peace. Sample items include "I will join a human barricade to promote peace" and "I will risk imprisonment to promote peace". The internal reliability of the BEH-P Scale for this study was satisfactory ( $\alpha = .87$ ).

### *Procedure*

The study is cross-sectional research and the data was collected in March, 2016. After getting the consent for voluntarily participation, the participants filled the questionnaire by themselves. It took on average 20 minutes to fill out the questionnaire completely.

## **RESULTS**

Before running the main analyses, we first tested the correlations between BEH-P, APW, Conservatism, GSJ, and PS. Thereafter, we examined the differences between participants' responses as a function of ethnic identity, political orientation, and religiousness. The results were as we expected in general.

**Table 1.** Intercorrelation matrix (Pearson's *r*) for 454 participants

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Pro-peace Behavioral Intentions (BEH-P)	1				
2. Attitudes Towards Peace and War (APW)	.39*	1			
3. Conservatism	-.25*	-.45*	1		
4. General System Justification (GSJ)	-.24*	-.32*	.42*	1	
5. Polarity Scale (PS)	.18*	.30*	-.22*	-.12	1

\*  $p < .01$

### Relations between the Scales

Results demonstrated that all of the components we measured have a significant relationship with each other. As shown in Table 1, BEH-P is positively correlated with APW ( $r = .39$ ) and humanistic attitudes ( $r = .18$ ), and negatively correlated with conservatism ( $r = -.25$ ) and GSJ ( $r = -.24$ ). That is, participants who are more inclined to take action for peace have more positive attitudes towards peace and have more humanistic attitudes. Likewise, APW is positively related with humanistic attitudes ( $r = .30$ ), and negatively related with conservatism ( $r = -.45$ ) and GSJ ( $r = -.32$ ). As expected, there was a strong positive correlation between conservatism and GSJ ( $r = .42$ ), on the other hand conservatism is negatively correlated with PS ( $r = -.22$ ) which means that the conservative beliefs are more associated with normative attitudes than humanistic attitudes are. Lastly, the correlation between GSJ and PS was negative ( $r = -.12$ ), but not significant as the only exception.

**Table 2.** Means and standard deviations for scales as a function of ethnic identity

	<b>Turkish</b>		<b>Kurdish</b>		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Pro-peace Behavioral Intentions (BEH-P)	19.19	5.18	22.54	5.94	-4.94**
Attitudes Towards Peace and War (APW)	62.53	8.98	65.59	9.70	-2.57*
Conservatism	14.57	6.00	13.62	5.45	1.29
General System Justification (GSJ)	16.64	4.66	14.04	4.07	4.65**
Polarity Scale (PS)	34.94	2.69	35.11	2.74	-.51

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

### *The Effects of Ethnic Identity*

For the purpose of finding out the differences between Turkish and Kurdish samples, first we created three groups as Turkish (N = 220), Kurdish (N = 95), and the Others (N = 46) in accordance with ethnic background that is reported by participants. We then conducted independent *t*-tests in order to investigate whether the ethnic identity has an effect on each variable. Results indicated that Kurdish participants are more intended to take action for peace ( $t(297) = -4.94, p < .001$ ), and have more positive attitudes towards peace than Turkish participants do ( $t(284) = -2.57, p < .05$ ). On the other hand, Turkish participants are seen to justify the system more than Kurdish participants do ( $t(303) = 4.65, p < .001$ ). The differences between two ethnic groups for the dimensions of conservatism and normativism/humanism were not statistically significant (see Table 2).

In order to study possible differences in PTP between Turkish and Kurdish participants, separate *t*-tests were used for each item of the scale since it's not a unidimensional measure. Nine of 12 items were shown significant difference between Turkish and Kurdish samples. In general manner, Turkish participants trust more in army, police, security forces, and judiciary regarding settlement of peace than Kurdish participants do. On the other hand, Kurdish participants trust more in the party which they voted for, civil society organisations, the parliament in the meaning of the solidarity of all parties, intelligentsia and artists, and the opposition parties than Turkish participants do. Trust in the acts of the governing party and the president were relatively low for both Turkish and Kurdish participants. They also trust in the common sense of the people of Turkey in a similar extent (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Means and standard deviations for items of PTP as a function of ethnic identity

	<b>Turkish</b>		<b>Kurdish</b>		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
1. My actions in accordance with my political views will bring peace.	2.81	1,15	3,71	.99	-6.54**
2. Works of the party I voted will bring peace.	2.83	1.1	3.83	.93	-8.24**
3. The civil society organizations' works will bring peace.	3.20	.97	3.60	1.07	-3.17**
4. The parliament's works as a whole will bring peace.	3.15	1.20	3.52	1.24	-2.45*
5. The governing party's works will bring peace.	2.03	1.06	1.81	1.11	1.65
6. The president's works will bring peace.	1.88	1.11	1.65	1.02	1.78
7. The army's works will bring peace.	2.39	1.09	1.47	.87	7.88**
8. The police and security forces' works will bring peace.	2.24	1.17	1.50	.91	5.97**
9. Intelligentsia and artists' works will bring peace.	3.44	1.15	4.03	1.03	-4.53**
10. The opposition parties' works will bring peace.	2.68	1.12	3.20	1.14	-3.73**
11. The judiciary's works will bring peace.	3.00	1.15	2.62	1.33	2.40*
12. The common sense of the people of Turkey will bring peace.	3.71	1.21	3.57	1.37	.81

\* p&lt;.05

\*\* p&lt;.01

**Table 4.** Means and standard deviations as a function of political orientation.

	<b>Left-wing</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Right-wing</b>		
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Partial <math>\eta^2</math></i>
Pro-peace Behavioral Intentions (BEH-P)	21.22 (5.62)	17.97 (4.93)	18.53 (4.16)	11.41**	.06
Attitudes Towards Peace and War (APW)	64.89 (9.28)	61.70 (8.46)	57.51 (7.59)	12.56**	.07
General System Justification (GSJ)	14.56 (4.23)	17.85 (4.21)	20.40 (4.72)	41.30**	.19
Polarity Scale (PS)	35.22 (2.67)	35.15 (2.54)	33.85 (2.53)	4.67*	.03

\*  $p < .05$ \*\*  $p < .01$ *The Effects of Political Orientation*

Participants were asked to state their political orientation on a 7-point scale (from 1 = *extremely left* to 7 = *extremely right*), and we created three categories as left-wing oriented (N = 245), moderate (N = 60), and right-wing oriented (N = 42) participants based on this scale. As can be seen in Table 4, the results of separate ANOVAs showed that left-wing oriented participants are more intended to take action for peace than moderate and right-wing oriented participants are ( $F(2, 337) = 11.41, p < .001$ ). Likewise, their attitudes towards peace are more positive than the others' attitudes are ( $F(2, 316) = 12.56, p < .001$ ). Right-wing orientation are seen to be more related to justifying the system ( $F(2, 344) = 41.30, p < .001$ ), and normativism ( $F(2, 309) = 4.67, p < .05$ ).

*The Effects of Religiousness*

We asked participants whether they believe in any religion, 67% of them replied positively to this question. After that, these participants who believe in a religion rated the degree of influence of the religious beliefs on their daily life on a 7-point scale (from 1 = *not at all*

*influential* to 7 = *completely influential*). Based on this scale, three groups were created as follows: lowly religious (N = 105), moderately religious (N = 54), and highly religious (N = 87). We then compared these three groups using ANOVAs, and found that highly religious participants ( $M = 60.32$ ,  $SD = 8.92$ ) have less positive attitudes towards peace than lowly religious participants do ( $M = 65.15$ ,  $SD = 8.26$ ;  $F(2, 229) = 7.06$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .06$ ). Additionally, they ( $M = 18.25$ ,  $SD = 4.69$ ) tend to justify the system more than lowly religious group do ( $M = 14.89$ ,  $SD = 3.93$ ;  $F(2, 243) = 13.36$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .10$ ).

## DISCUSSION

This research firstly purposed to examine the social psychological processes in the ongoing conflict environment in Turkey and potential ways of achievement of peace. In accordance with this purpose, the participants' attitudes toward peace and war were investigated through the aspect of their relation stance towards conservatism, pro-peace behavioral intention, political trust regarding peace, system justification and normative-humanistic attitudes. These variables were examined in terms of political orientation, ethnic identity and religiousness.

Our results constitutively indicated that conservatism, political orientation, ethnic identity and religiousness were essentially associated with the attitudes toward peace and war. Conservatism and system justification were positively correlated with each other and they were also negatively correlated with attitudes towards peace.

In detail, our results support the literature about left-right political orientation. Results indicate that as political orientation progresses from right to left; pro-peace behavioral intention, attitudes towards peace and humanism increases, while system justification level decreases in accordance with previous research (e.g. Kay, Czaplinski & Jost 2009, Göregenli and Karakuş 2012). In line with the former research and as expected, pro-peace behavioral intention and attitudes towards peace are affirmatively associated (Bizumic et al. 2013).

Additionally, as religiousness level progresses high to low, system justification level decreases, which is coherent with the existing literature (Yılmaz 2013).

As a central component of the ongoing conflict, ethnic identity is highly correlated with the better part of the variables. In the light of the results, Kurdish people seem to be eager about 'pro-peace behavioral intention' and also have more favorable attitudes towards peace. Despite their enthusiasm, Turkish people are more prone to justifying 'the system' than Kurdish people (Göregenli 2005, p. 113). Furthermore, Kurdish people's belief in their actions in accordance to their political view is significantly higher than Turkish people.

Kurdish people's denial of their disadvantaged status in the existing system and their belief in the ability to change the system might be the reason their system justification level is lower. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979) suggests six strategies for changing negative social identity status. The results should be considered in terms of one of these strategies, *realistic conflict*: Kurdish people endeavor to change their disadvantaged status in the lasting system with a collective behavior. Due to their acquisitions gained by realistic conflict strategy, they rely on their own actions and are less prone to legitimate the ongoing system. In conjunction with this, Tajfel (1978) suggests that if the existing system is not perceived as legitimate and permeable, political and social actions may arise. Thus this perspective reveals that Kurdish people use every means possible for changing their disadvantaged status in the system. Alternatively, Turkish people are apt to seemingly keep and reproduce their advantaged status in the existing system. Tajfel and Turner (2004) indicate that when the minority group takes step to change the existing system, the majority group may try to maintain the system through fear, threat and an uncertain environment. Accordingly, people of the majority group may tend to legitimize the existing system by changing their political perspective towards conservative ideologies. These findings are supported by the essentials of System Justification Theory (Jost & Banaji 1994).

The results for the point of political trust regarding peace showed; independent from ethnic identity, that participants trust civil society organizations, the parliament as whole, intelligentsia, artists and common sense of people of Turkey. Complaints about lack of public support from the West part of the country had widespread media coverage, yet participants seem to still count on civilian endeavors. In addition to this trust, participants have another common ground such as low levels of trust the government party and the President from the viewpoint of peace. Apart from that, some differences took place about political trust in regards to peace between the groups of two ethnic identities. Turkish people trust government bodies such as army, police, security forces and the judiciary in the matter of achieving peace in the country, which is opposite for Kurdish people in comparison. This result supports the previous research that indicated Turkish people trust the army more than Kurdish people do (Göregenli 2005, p.108). To continue the difference in trust in terms of bringing the peace; the actions regarding participants' political view, the political party they voted for, civil society organizations, parliament as a whole, intelligentsia, artists and opposition parties were trusted more by the Kurdish people than the Turkish people.

In comparison to the Turkish people, the Kurdish people show a higher ethnic identification level (Göregenli 2012, s.88; Şen 2014, s.87), moreover they are disadvantaged in the system. For this reason, Kurdish people lean towards more egalitarian and more democratic ways in connection with political trust regarding peace. This perspective conforms to Tajfel and Turner's study (2004), which indicated disadvantaged groups were more inclined to an egalitarian political opinion. Turkish people in contrast, are advantaged group thus trust more normative ways to come to peace because they may feel themselves closer to power sources.

Tomkins' Script Theory (1978) has an important role in this research. As expected, humanism dimension is negatively correlated with conservatism; and positively correlated

with pro-peace behavioral intentions, especially with the attitudes toward peace and war. Also the results are consistent with the literature (e.g. De St. Aubin 1996; Carlson & Brincka 1987, Gürşimşek & Göregenli 2005). Tomkins' Script Theory and its associations with different socio-psychological variables may be an interesting area for further research.

This research is important to investigate the ways of establishing peace in the minds of lay people, since the Question has not examined it adequately so far (see Uluğ 2016; Başer & Çelik 2014). Albeit, our study still kindly demonstrates that in spite of all the ongoing conflict processes in Turkey, people acutely maintain the belief in peace. It is hopeful that both Kurdish participants and Turkish participants trust in the common sense of people within Turkey to reach peace. As Sherif (1968) stated, to reduce the hostile attitudes between the conflicted groups they must take joint action to attain desired outcomes. These desired outcomes are defined as *superordinate goals* by Sherif (1968). Superordinate goals refer to promptly desired outcomes which are concerning to all groups. These superordinate goals that interest each group promote cooperation between them and eventually facilitate friendly attitudes. Since peace is one of the superordinate goals desired by both Turkish and Kurdish people, it could be said that both of these groups have motivational basis for cooperation.

In the future there should be research into the factors affecting the attitudes towards peace should be elaborated for a better understanding of essential requirements of peace environment.

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