

TURKEY



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NEIGHBORS

GEORGIA

ARMENIA

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TURKEY

SYRIA

IRAQ

The majority of Turkey's neighboring countries (Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia, and Georgia) exist on the eastern end of Turkey. This

works to the geopolitical advantage of Turkey, as leaders do not need to focus heavily on border protection against these

countries (as opposed to Russia), due to the geographical borders. The most densely populated and centralized cities

exist on the western end of Turkey, only bordered by one country—Bulgaria.



ETHNICITY

The ethnic makeup of Turkey is Turkish and Indo-European. Surprisingly, the ethnic makeup is fairly homogenized in certain regions of the country. The west-

ern end is primarily Turkish, and the eastern end is primarily Indo-European. This is a testament to the population density. As Turks comprise the majority of

the population (72.5 to 75 percent) and other groups compose the minority, it is no coincidence that the majority would inhabit the most densely populated areas

and the minority would reside in the least densely populated regions.

MOUNTAIN
ELEVATION

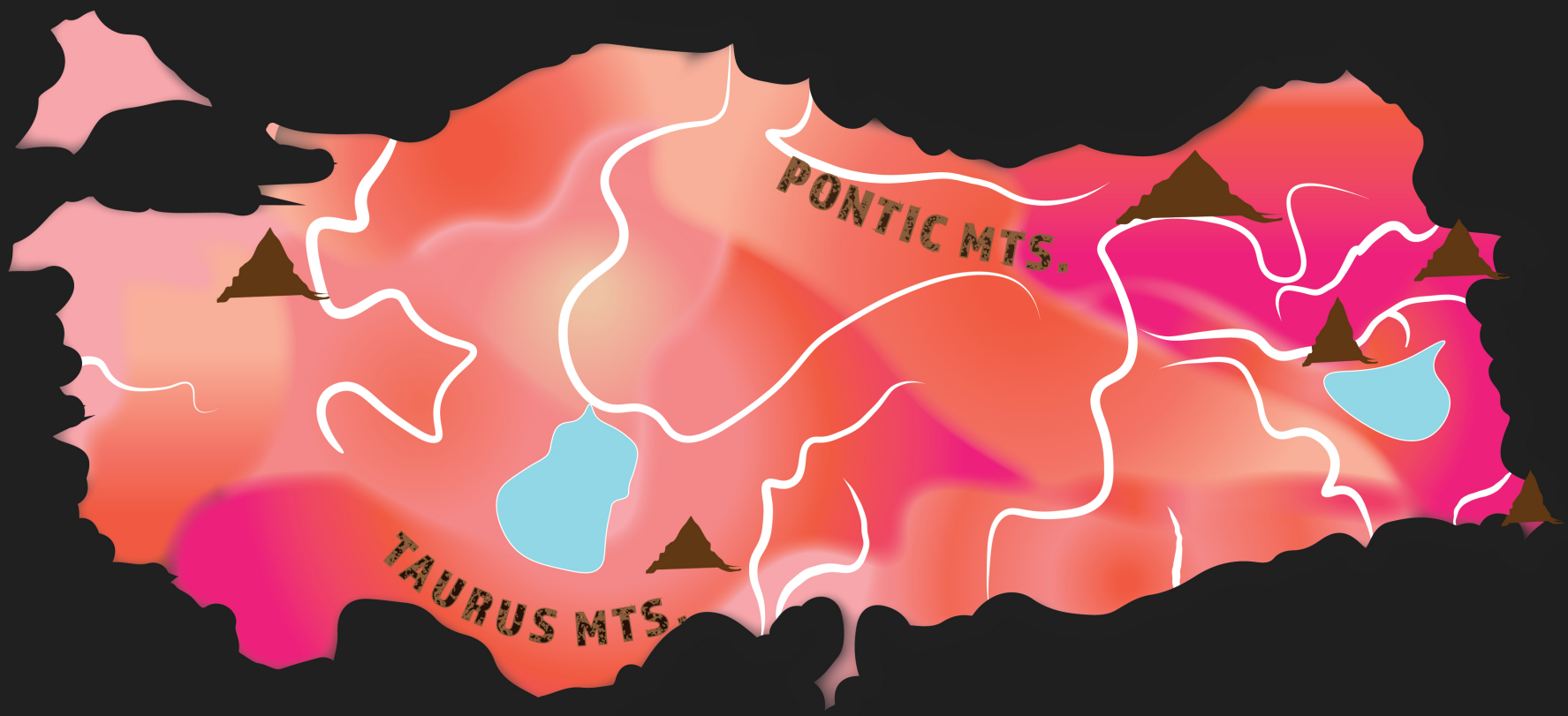
HIGH

LOW

LAKE

RIVER

PEAK



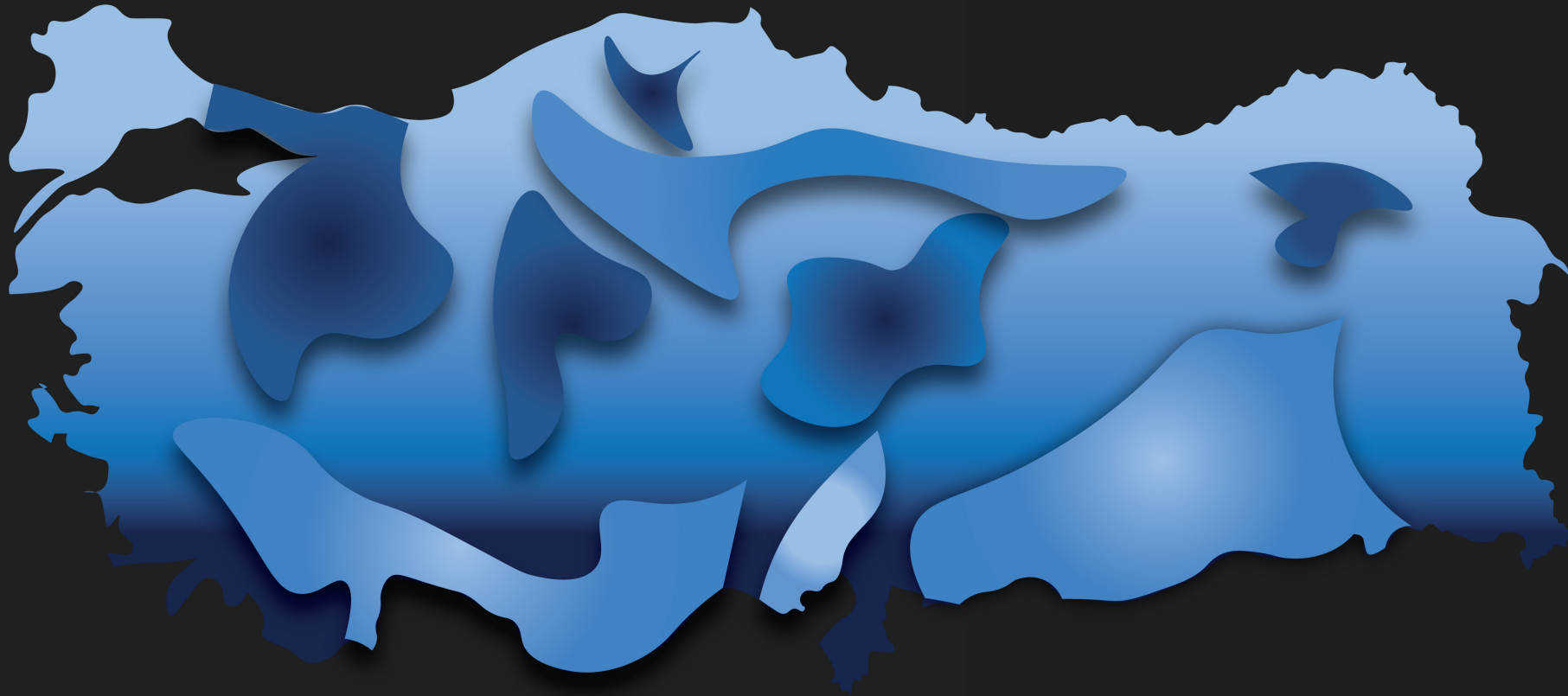
Harm de Blij writes about the impact of a country's geography on political decision-making in *Power of Place*. Turkey's geographi-

cal makeup includes mountains in the eastern front of the country, with rivers scattered across the country, centrally. The map

key highlights the varying mountain elevations of Turkey, as it is not enough to merely note the presence of mountains. The variations

in elevation heavily impact the population density, which brings us to our next map.

GEOPOLITICS



RAINFALL

The map represents the variations in rainfall levels throughout the country. Most rainfall occurs in

the southern end, with a slight section of the northern end. The rest of the country is relatively dry.

Understanding the variations in rainfall is crucial in understanding the rates of agricultural production, as

rainfall creates an ideal environment for harvesting, and dry climates may make this difficult.

Technology

According to a report by the Open Society Foundations, television is the dominant media technology of Turkey. Almost all households possess at least one

fostered growing homogenization" (Tunc, Gorgulu, 6). Movement towards the dilution of regulation on foreign ownership and the entrance of Al Jazeera Turkey

information society branch of the Ministry of Development reported that 73 percent of users logged on to check email, 64 percent visited chat rooms,

broadcasters and media professionals as a kind of service in the name of Islam, and a "social responsibility" aimed at helping the state reinforce families

identity of the ruling AKP government, but also in defining its neoliberal social policies.

The Turkish welfare regime has undergone major transfor-

security programs that have been undermined by neoliberal policies, the AKP government has put family at the heart of its social policies. By portraying the family

arbitrary interference, instead promoting "government through the family," whereby families are empowered to control their own actions and to pursue their own

Kocamaner, Hikmet. "Strengthening the Family through Television: Islamic Broadcasting, Secularism, and the Politics of Responsibility in Turkey/Televizyon Aracılığı İle Aileyi Kuvvetlendirmek: Türkiye'de İslami

Televizyon Yayıncılığı,

"Moreover, diversity in content is limited and there are concerns that the culture of immediacy in news provision has fostered growing homogenization"

television set, and 11% have three or more. Most households have radios, and around 40% have a personal computer with internet access. For every ten Turks, nine have a mobile phone.

"Moreover, diversity in content is limited and there are concerns that the culture of immediacy in news provision has

are viewed as positive developments, the authors write.

The main channel of receiving television is terrestrial (23.6%), satellite (70.4% ownership), and cable (7.2% ownership).

Radio transmission is mostly terrestrial.

The average time of internet consumption just exceeds an hour a day. "The

online forums, and interactive news sites, 59 percent read news, 56 percent searched for information about goods and services, and 51 percent for downloading games, music and films."

Television

The rationale for family-focused programming in Turkey is described by TV

against social immoralities and threats. However, the constant focus on "family values" and "strengthening the family" is not solely about fostering a religiously motivated, traditional ethos.

Strengthening the family and its perceived ideals plays a central role not only in defining the neo-conservative

mations as a result of the structural adjustment programs imposed by the IMF, the socio-economic reforms undertaken to incorporate Turkey into the European Union and the advent of non-governmental actors in the provision of charity and social assistance. In order to compensate for the health and social

as inherently the most ideal place to provide physical, emotional, and psychological support for the elderly, disabled, and children, the government's discourse has tried to shift responsibility for ensuring social security and support to the family. The state refrains from regulating families through direct and

well-being through advice given by experts such as physicians, psychologists, counselors, pediatricians, and so forth. Such expert advice serves as a way by which families could normalize and assess their lives, their actions and those of their children.

Laiklik ve Sorumluluk Siyaseti/Fortalecendo a Família Através Da Televisão: Transmissão Islâmica, Secularismo, e a Política Da Responsabilidade Na Turquia." *Anthropological Quarterly*, no. 3, 2017, p. 675

BAİBÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 2019, Cilt: 19, Sayı: 2/Yaz: 327-345

Turkey

32
/100

NOT FREE

Political Rights

16 /40

Civil Liberties

16 /60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

31 /100 ● Not Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale [See the methodology](#)

Mainstream media, particularly television broadcasters, represent government roles and regularly cover the same headlines. While some independent publications and blogs continue to exist, they face substantial political scrutiny and are regularly threatened for prosecution. More than 150 media outlets were suspended in the months after the failed coup in 2016.

In August 2019, Parliament further constrained the freedom of the media by offering internet video content under the jurisdiction of the High

Council for Broadcasting (RTÜK), the country's broadcast regulator. As a result, internet video creators must receive broadcasting licenses in Turkey, even though they work overseas. Members of the RTÜK are designated by the parliament of AKP and its parliamentary partner, the MHP, almost exclusively.

Recent closures and arrests of journalists are taking place on a daily basis, with a spike after the Turkish incursion into Syria in October 2019. The Committee to Safeguard Journalists

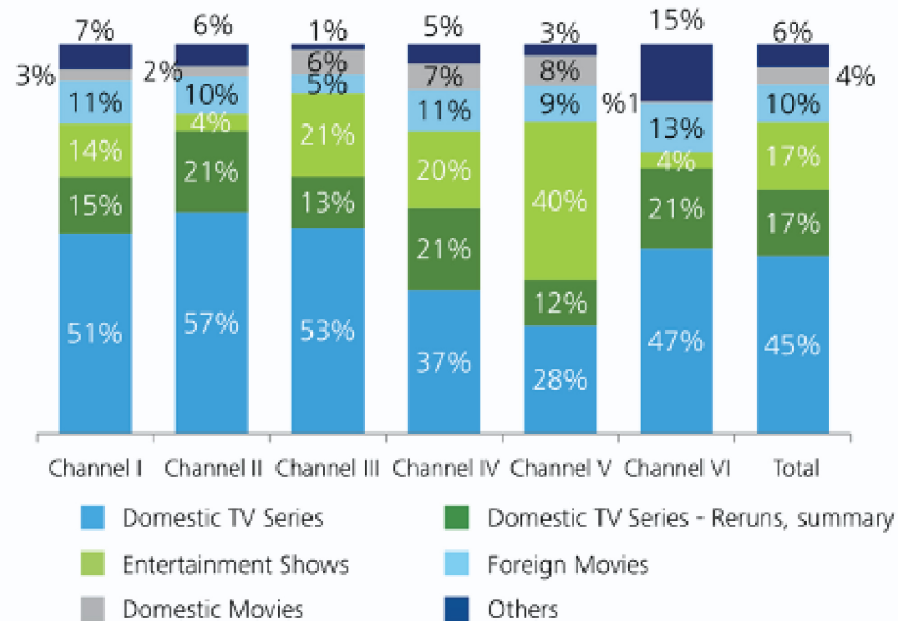
announced that 47 journalists have been incarcerated since December. A party of 13 journalists and executives employed for the independent newspaper Cumhuriyet were recalled and imprisoned on charges of extremism in November 2019, even though their initial indictment was reversed by the Court of Cassation; the group stayed eligible to appeal at the end of the year. Human Rights Watch noted that the authorities were unreasonably harassing Kurdish media, and that news from inside the mainly Kurdish southeast

was extremely restricted.

In 2017, the Turkish administration used Wikipedia to ban national security forces saying that the website featured extremist contents. In a ruling by Ankara, the same year, the Court rejected the ban and found that the initial decision infringed freedom of speech in late December 2019. The Constitutional Court dismissed the decision.

"Turkey." Freedom House, [freedom-house.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2020](https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2020).

Top 6 Broadcasters- Prime Time Program Distributions – 2013-2014 Season



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featured extremist contents. In a ruling by Ankara, the same year, the Court rejected the ban and found that the initial decision infringed freedom of speech in late December 2019. The Constitutional Court dismissed the decision. The majority of broadcasted programs are domestic. This correlates heavily to the promotion and reinforcement of instated social morals through family-focused programming, described as a kind of service in the name of Islam.

When did this all start? New broadcasting activities had begun post-Cold War, a time when the Turkish government started adopting a more transparent and expansive approach towards the outside world. The cultural and political re-encounter of Turkey with the Turkic peoples of the former Soviet Central Asian republics was an important background. At the same time, there was also an increasing knowledge

of the importance of the Turkish population living as migrants in the European region. TRT aimed at meeting these widely scattered people, whether Turkish or Turkish, and at being one of the largest cross-border media organizations in the world - broadcasting 'from the Atlantic Ocean to the Grand Wall of China.'

In the case of the Turkish republics (Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan), the goal was to re-establish cultural and political ties, based on linguistic affinity, religious popular culture and mutual Turks in the Soviet period, by using Satellite Television. TRT began its cultural project in Central Asia in 1992 with a new satellite channel, TRT Avrasya.

"World's most colorful screen TV series sector in Turkey," Deloitte, August 2014

GLOBAL SKINS

Much news coverage of Turkey poses a villainized bias on the country's government, ranging from rising interest rates to a potential war with Greece due to resource disputes. Though these reports hold truth to affairs involving Turkey, news

Turkey as a whole and belligerent biases perpetuated by media outlets fail to provide a true, holistic perspective on Turkey's culture, local governments, social climate, and cultural advancements. The biases presented to viewers may cause

However, the sparse news stories that involve citizens directly pose a pretense that aside from elitists, the Turkish citizenry lives in poverty. Poverty represents a portion of the population in Turkey, but isn't representative of the Turkish population as a

the sole focus on Turkey as a hostile force poses the bias that Turkey is the "enemy."

Media outlets fail to include information about the citizen population in response to these international affairs, and fears that may exist due to tensions with Greece

information about economic stability within the citizen population, given these tensions and disputes.

Youtube immediately inundates viewers with belligerent thumbnails and projections to a war with Greece. Turkey is portrayed as a danger-

and lifestyle videos, it was difficult to find content that focused specifically on the people of the country directly. The content presented appears to be detached from the people.

On Netflix, films and shows about Turkey are

amidst of a war or battle of some sort. Other thumbnails of women either express fear or sexualization. Additionally, Netflix does not include many shows, movies, or documentaries featuring the cultural richness of Turkey, creating a false

site aims to market the country as culturally and historically enriched, in an aim to persuade travelers to visit Turkey. Though it provides the most holistic view of Turkish culture, history, and geographical landmarks, the site detaches itself from the

"...the sole focus on Turkey as a hostile force poses the bias that Turkey is the 'enemy.'"

outlets fail to multifariously cover matters that affect the citizen population more directly, including but not limited to, local infrastructure, social inequity, socioeconomic disparities, countrywide violence and peace, cultural advancements, and celebrations.

The bleak view of

people to refrain from exploring the country further, leading to further perpetuation of negative stereotypes.

Though news coverage on Turkey focuses primarily on the Turkish government's affairs, it sparsely includes stories involving the citizen population directly.

whole.

The focus on Turkey and its international affairs present Turkey's assertion as a belligerent world power that is in constant conflict with other countries. Though conflict is common within a majority of international affairs throughout the globe,

and the possibility of a war due to resource disputes. Citizen voices play a large role in the understanding of the impact of government decisions, and provide a perspective on the level of detachability a population has to its government. Additionally, these sources fail to include

ous place and its culture is pictured to be centered on violence upon a first browse. While searching further, travel "vlogs" about the geography and landmarks of Turkey, food, customs, and traditions of the country can be found. However, even in the populated "vlogs"

thematically saturated in war and violence narratives. It is portrayed that the government is based strongly in militarism, presenting viewers with the perspective that citizens live in fear of the government. Thumbnails of men oftentimes portray aggressive facial expressions, often in the

pretense that violence encompasses Turkish culture. Content that is populated typically doesn't include tradition and history either.

GoTurkey is a travel site dedicated to educating tourists on the culture, history, foods, and attractions that are specific to Turkey. This

people of Turkey, as it does not include information about customs, styles of dress, and the various ethnic groups that exist within the country (Turks, Kurds, Circassians, Bosnians, and Albanians).

NATION BRANDING

MEDIA TENSION

AKP- (Turkey's Justice and Development Party), and also even TRT (24 hour Turkish state/international news outlet)

TRT- Turkish state news channel that runs for 24 hours a day (also reports international news). 70%

of its funding comes from electricity bills that have been levied by tax. It's strongly geared towards conservatism. It has a very

pro-government stance in national politics and a right-wing bias.

-Pursuant to the same Law 'new regulations were introduced about the ownership and shareholding ratios within media organization; it is stipulated that total

annual commercial communication income of media service providers where a real or legal person holds shares directly or indirectly shall not exceed thirty percent of the total commercial communication income of

the sector in order to prevent concentration; a limitation was introduced specifying that a media service provider organization can own only one radio, one television and one on-demand media service provided that the number of media organizations with territorial

broadcasting licence where a real or legal person is a direct or indirect shareholder shall not be more than four" (RTUK, 2017).

"Partisan media (pool media)" and "opposing media" are the two

sectors that dominate media in Turkey today. Akşam, Yeni Şafak, Star, Yeni Akit, Sabah, ATV, are owned by shareholders with direct and "organic relations" with the AKP, dominant party in Turkey. Moreover, while the Andalou Agency doesn't have an organic bond

with the AKP.

NTV, Doğuş Ciner, and Demirören groups use pro-AKP journalism and function as if they're a group. Furthermore, Doğan Group, which resists to succumb to a pro-AKP stance, and

Sözcü, Cumhuriyet, Aydınlık, BirGün (all anti-AKP), along with opposing newspapers, comprise the oppositional group and "may behave as a media monopoly in terms of content."

In Turkey, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) is in

charge of preventing media monopolization along with the Turkish Competition Authority.

Radio and Television Supreme Council is responsible for incorporating media diversity.

Tensions

As a conservative democratic party, the AKP identifies itself. However, because of the origins of its leaders in the Islamist politics of previous decades, many refer to it as an Islamic or religious conservative party.

Since 2002, the AKP

has been in power as the majority party.

Although the democratic standards, economic performance and regional influence of Turkey have improved in the Middle East (especially during its first term

in office), the AKP government has been accused of becoming an authoritarian and polarizing society.

The faultline between AKP supporters and opponents has deepened in recent years. This faultline is reflected in a divide between the

'socio-cultural liberal and secular coastal provinces and the more religious conservative hinterlands' although the geographical divide has faded in recent elections.

Since the AKP's rise reduced the votes of the

other conservative and liberal parties, this divide is represented as AKP supporters versus opponents; a divide that became more obvious after the Gezi protests of 2013 and during the presidential election of 2014, the national elections of June 2015, and

the repeat elections of November 2015.

The failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016 also shows that there was an anti-AKP movement in the state institutions, such as the military, bureaucracy, schools,

etc., although societal support for the coup was low.

Ayşe Betül Çelik, Rezarta Bilali & Yesim

Iqbal (2017) Patterns of 'Othering' in Turkey: A Study of Ethnic, Ideological, and Sectarian Polarisation, South European Society and Politics, 22:2,217-238

DOI:

10.1080/13608746.2016.1250382

"the AKP government has been accused of becoming an authoritarian and polarizing society."

GOVERNMENT

MEDIA LITERACY

Turkey's initiative in media literacy education was initially promoted by the Radio and Television Supreme Council as a way of addressing the effect of mass media on the cultural values of the Turkish people. This is

point for media literacy education. Since digital and media literacy education focuses on study pedagogy, scholars have suggested that the revision of the Turkish curriculum should concentrate on asking

approach has been introduced, aimed at improving skills in the production of written, visual and interactive content (Minister of Education, 2013).

Teachers often enjoy the numerous opportuni-

ties of use of instructional technology were identified between teachers, based on their topic of specialty, with science teachers more likely utilizing media and technology.

Since educators have a

...It is important to explore attitudes that could influence the decision of teachers to use digital media for learning.

part of a wider political policy to encourage self-regulation as an alternative to government regulation of the media.

Turkish education is highly structured, and the original justification for the program stressed that early media learning could minimize susceptibility to media control, underscoring the ideals of nationalism, militarism, family, and other traditional, conservative Turkish ideals.

However, several Turkish educators have an empowering view

"how" and "why" questions to encourage critical thinking and learner autonomy, inviting learners to understand "the political economic context and historical complexities of media production processes.

The media literacy curriculum was updated in 2013 on the basis of these debates and general curriculum changes. In the current curriculum, students' abilities to access, interpret, evaluate and improve have been taken as key points. In addition, a production-based

ties that media and technologies will offer. For example, 75% believe that technology engages and motivates learners, and 17% agree that the media has a beneficial effect on pro-social actions by "exposing them to diverse perspectives and experiences."

Notably, all five studies showed that the teacher comfort level was one of the main obstacles to the introduction of technology into teaching, with fewer than one in five teachers classified as "tech-savvy." Other discrepancies in

range of views and attitudes on the best ways to promote students' analytical thought, innovation, communication and teamwork skills through advertising, computer-based technology and media development resources, it is important to explore attitudes that could influence the decision of teachers to use digital media for learning.

Hobbs, Renee, and Sait Tuzel. "Teacher Motivations for Digital and Media Literacy: An Examination of Turkish Educators." *British Journal of Educational Technology*, vol. 48, no. 1, Jan. 2017, pp. 7-22

TIMELINE

1923-1938: Ataturk's reforms began to take place, allowing for a secularized government, equal rights for women, substitution for the Latin alphabet with the Arabic alphabet, and the Turkification of city names. These reforms allowed Turkey to gain its independence and form its identity as its own country.

1945: Throughout World War II, Turkey remained neutral. Relating to the media, this neutrality didn't prompt any overt, unilateral propaganda provided by the government.

1948: Turkey has a multi-party democracy. Woo-hoo!

1960: Military junta organizes a coup. Soon after, power is handed back to civilians.

1971: Turkey instates martial law as a result of increased violence.

1999: Recep Tayyip Erdogan is arrested for reciting an Islamic poem. He served a four month sentence.

2003: Erdogan is no longer banned from political office because of his conviction, and he was declared Prime Minister.

2008: The AKP was almost taken down, and its leaders were set to go down with it. However, the party was saved by one vote.

2011: Erdogan and the AKP won a third term

2015-16: the AKP loses then regains the parliamentary majority. Isis and the Kurdistan Workers Party are blamed for terrorist attacks.

2020: Turkey came to the assistance of its Turkish allies in Azerbaijan shortly after a long-simmering conflict in the South Caucasus erupted into open warfare late last month. Arms and, reportedly, fighters transferred from Syria were supplied, although that was denied in Ankara.

VISIT THESE WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54547304>

<https://turkeytravelplanner.com/details/History/Timeline.html>

Serkan (Seko)

Serkan is a vital part of Burlington, Vermont's Istanbul Kebab House. When he was 14 years old, him and his family migrated from Turkey to the United States. They had a mission- to spread Turkish culture to the Burlington community through food. The restaurant serves Turkish dishes and delights, never deviating from tradition for the sake of assimilation. Seko had given me a tour of the restaurant to point out vital pieces of artwork, photos, and crafts stationed all throughout.

How much of your life was spent in Turkey? I was born in Turkey, actually. I was 14 years old when I arrived in the United States.

What inspired you to work at this restaurant? This restaurant is a family restaurant. My father is a chef here, and we all work at the restaurant. This is my culture, which is why I wouldn't want to work at any other restaurants. I love it here.

How do you feel about being able to spread Turkish culture in an area where Turkish representation is minimal? I like sharing culture through food, and it's pretty interesting sometimes because we use different types of meat. People like our breakfast, too, because it's different.

What are your most popular dishes at the restaurant? The lamb is very popular here, because it's very tender and we use a lot of Turkish spices. We mainly use chili powder and schmuck.

How about the Chicken Adana? I had it two nights ago and it was delicious! It's a little spicy, but people like it! People who like it spicy order it spicy.

Have you had to alter any recipes to cater to the Burlington community, or is every dish fully authentic? Everything is authentic. A lot of our spices and foods come from Turkey, and we keep the recipes the same. We stay true to the culture and don't change anything.

Can you tell me about some of the art on the walls? Some of the art on the walls are from Istanbul, and we have a painting of a mosque (Aya Sophia), which is very popular in Turkey. It's beautiful on the inside.

How has COVID impacted the restaurant? For one month, we closed the restaurant because everyone was afraid to go out. We came together and changed the system allowing for orders. We don't open inside, but if customers want to eat inside, we open it at 50% capacity. For the first month, we almost closed because we lost a lot of money. Now, we're doing much better.

How were you able to maintain relationships with your customer base? We used Facebook, Instagram, and posted 10% deals for customers through social media. If they liked the food then they would come back again.

What is your favorite dish here? I really like the ground lamb, the spiced one. It's a bit spicy.

Any advice for people thinking about trying Turkish food? If you want to try different foods, try Turkish food! The spices and marinades are very different because it's all fresh. Our food is very tender, and people should really try it!

Kaeshi Chai

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Kaeshi Chai is a performer, theater director, instructor, and award-winning designer based in NYC. She co-founded Bellyqueen, the professional bellydance company and academy, and PURE (Public Urban Ritual Experiment), a global collective centered on dance and music on healing and social change. In contemporary dance, physical theatre and Silk Road dances spanning the Middle East to China, Kaeshi has had comprehensive training over the course of many years, in 47 states and 38 nations. Having spent much time in Turkey, she was able to apply her experiential learning into her teaching. Where did belly dance originate from? Bellydance is one of the oldest dances in the world. There is a movement in the community to rename it MENAHT, and that stands for Middle Eastern, North African, and Turkic. The dance originates from these regions of the world that encompass western Asia to the Middle East. If you look on a map, it's North Africa and reaches as far as western China. These are the Turkic regions of the world, meaning people who speak a Turkic language.

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What is the Turkic influence in western China? In Western China, they speak Turkic language and it's similar to Turkish, which is what you would hear in Turkey. When I was there in 2015, they said they were the motherland of people in Turkey and migrated to Turkey, reasoning for why many people in Turkey have Asiatic features. If you go to Istanbul and take a cruise to the Bosphorous, you have the European side, and to the east you have the Asia side. Istanbul (ancient name Constantinople), is the crossroads for Europe and Asia. There was a lot of cross-fertilization of music and dance. There are these beautiful movements that come from Central Asia and make up bellydance. It is a dance of the Silk Road.

What about the media history of how bellydance was portrayed? In the 1940s (film industry), bellydance was documented more in Hollywood than other places. This doesn't mean it hadn't been practiced in other places, it just means that the film industry documented it more.

How long have you been doing belly dance? I've been doing it since February 1996, 24 years. This is my full time job and has been since 2001, 19 years.

How has bellydance served as a form of cross-cultural communication? Bellydance is a form of movement that doesn't require communication through language. I've had the honor of teaching the art in countries where I don't speak the native language. Dance in itself is a form of communication, and I have had the privilege to communicate with people through movement. Even though you don't speak the same verbal language, you can still connect with people.

Are there differences in the evolution of the dance on a country-by-country basis? It's interesting watching how the dance has evolved from country to country, what songs are chosen, and what the influences are. It depends how long the dance has been in the specific country. In the US, it became a dance shared in the classroom in the late 50s, and the pioneers include Ibrahim Farah.

Kaeshi Chai

A large part of the culture of what is taught in America has stemmed out of this, and you take other countries like China where bellydance had started in only 2004-2005, compared to the US. In Asia, a large part of what they're influenced by are DVDs. When you first start out, you learn from the media, and I would say it has to do with what looks more impressive (media glamorization), and this influences the style and popularity as well. People go based on what looks impressive, rather than seeking a teacher to teach based on its origins. If you come from a culture where people are given more freedom to express their individuality without extracting from the roots, there is more pioneering.

How has music influenced bellydance? Music has always crossed borders. We didn't always have movies or TVs to entertain, and musicians used to entertain kings and queens. They would cross borders and infiltrate (influence) wherever they would go. They would inspire the local population based on who had access to musicians. I think that with anything, music and dance is something that will constantly involve, and it is an expression of what people grab onto.



Photo Courtesy of Kaeshi Chai

MONZEEKI

ANONYMOUS

My anonymous source is a woman who lived dually in both the United States and in Turkey. She blogs about fashion, lifestyle, and beauty. In our interview, we discussed similarities in dress between Turkey and the United States, and her experiences and fears with media censorship. She was brief in her answers due to fears around censorship and the AKP, but I was able to extract information about the experience of censorship in Turkey and what it's like experiencing media in both the United States and Turkey.

What is it like being a beauty blogger who lived in both Turkey and the United States? Are the styles of dress different?

It is really interesting to witness the similarities of dress in both countries. Turkish fashion is just as westernized as the United States. However, as a predominantly Sunni Muslim country, people are a bit more conservative with their dress. They do not wear as many revealing clothing because our religion focuses a lot on modesty. In the United States, you'll see people wearing crop tops and very short shorts. Of course, many also wear hijabs, and they are often paired with complementary colors based on their outfits.

When blogging in Turkey, do you feel a pull towards subtracting certain content? If so, why?

Because the people are typically more conservative with dress, I ensure that I am blogging with this in mind. Our media strongly reinforces Islamic ideals, and I try my best to make sure that everything I publish is in line with these standards.

What is your experience with media censorship and the AKP? The AKP has grown stronger and more powerful over the years, and as someone with a strong online presence, I am very careful with what I post. I fear saying and posting the wrong things, as I do not want to be arrested.

Do you know of anyone who faced punishment as a result of publishing certain content?

Yes, a friend of mine, a former journalist, was arrested for writing against the AKP. In Turkey, you are not allowed to speak against the government, it is illegal. One day, the police had shown up to her doorstep and she was immediately under arrest. I don't know when she will be released. Ever since then, I have been paranoid about what I post online.

RIFTS

Religious

In Turkey, the Kurds have historically undergone different forms of discrimination and prejudice. However, since the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) emerged in 1984, the Kurdish issue is typically defined as a conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state.

Throughout the 1990s, a time marked by high numbers of deaths and fatalities, human rights abuses, and forced relocations of large numbers of Kurdish people from their villages to large western cities, the conflict between the state army and the PKK guerrillas inten-

sified.

In Turkey, such a stigma about Kurds exists everywhere. The polarization between Turks and Kurds has increased

between 2011 and 2013, violence re-escalated. The Kurdish Opening was still in progress in November 2014, and the reports of

is the identity of the Alevi. With various incidents of violence against Alevis, including the Maras massacre (1978), the Sivas

ing to Turkish laws, but this alone can't give legal protection against discrimination to the LGBTQ community, since there is no regula-

LGBTQ people from public service. The public's general view against LGBTQ people remains largely negative, with the majority

unhidden LGBTQ communities in metropolitan cities, despite the challenges listed above, and the LGBTQ rights movement has

the two opposition parties in the Turkish Parliament (including the Republican People's Party and the People's Democratic Party), are placing pressure on successive Turkish governments to accept the equal rights of LGBT citizens and to enact anti-discrimination laws on sexual identity and gender

“... this alone cannot give **legal** protection **against** discrimination...”

since the mid-2000s, particularly in the big cities of western Turkey. When talks were announced between the PKK and the Turkish government in mid-2009, this tense environment calmed down for a while. The talks continued until mid-2015, but after the breakup of the talks

the Wise People's Committee showed that there was a high level of hope for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. A unique focus on the Turkish-Sunni nation-state resulted in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic, denying ethnic and religious differences, one of which

massacre (1993), and more recently the all-Alevi deaths in the 2013 Gezi protests, the Sunni-Alevi divide has sharpened over time.

Sexuality and Gender Identity

“Homosexuality and transgenderism are not a crime accord-

tion on anti-discrimination covering sexual orientation and identity. Furthermore, courts and policy practitioners have often interpreted ambiguous legal terms such as actions incompatible with public morals in order to exempt LGBTQ people from public service. In order to exclude

(78%) opposing homosexuality's social acceptance. As a result, Turkey was ranked at the bottom of the LGBT inclusion ranking by the European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association at 47 out of 49 countries.” There are vibrant,

been one of the most active social movements in the world since the mid-2000s. Across Turkey, there are over 20 LGBT associations, university student clubs, and programs. Both international (in particular the European Union) and domestic political players, including

and gender. Nonetheless, heavy resistance from the AKP, which has dominated the country for more than a decade, has blocked any meaningful moves in accepting LGBT citizens' equal rights.

DIVIDES

FOOD

"Meals are eaten in the home; whatever God provides is eaten there and everything stays within the home. One doesn't say what one ate to others. If one is compelled to say, one says, It's shameful to say so, but today we ate chicken." People who gloat about what they ate are disliked. The privacy condition of the home is that what is consumed there isn't spoken to anyone

about. The Turks ensure they eat all the food on their plates and scrape the bottom of the dish. Leaving a part on a plate is deemed to be a sin; this is based on a biblical rule on the prevention of waste.

However, it is usually considered impolite in Europe to leave anything on the plate. The term "isten artmaz, disten artar" is an expression of the need to eliminate waste and to be frugal in the kitchen. This frugality

is also apparent from the fact that leftover food is likely to be used the next day.

Particularly in the countryside, one eats loudly, belches, and licks one's fingers. In towns, such conduct is seen as disrespectful and shameful, and this leads to tension between young people and parents who choose to act in towns. We need to be more educated about not making people unhappy when

they're eating.

Before you sit down to eat, you wash your face, and it's customary to wash your hands and mouth after you have eaten. "Eating Habits of the Turks."

Eating Habits of the Turks and Their Associated Behaviors, www.turkish-cuisine.org/culinary-culture-202/eating-habits-of-the-turks-



These are bulgur croquettes. What are they?

To learn more, visit:

DRAMA ARTS

Village Plays

These are short plays played by volunteer amateur players, the village people. The plays are put on to commemorate significant seasonal phenomena such as the start of spring to be celebrated. These plays are thought to originate from shamanistic religious practices, which persisted until the introduction of the Muslim faith in a different form. They are not based on a written narrative, but typically consist of an order of (ritualistic) occurrences

and utterances that are predictable. Typically, the intention of the play is to amuse and rejoice, and so the atmosphere is festive.

Folk Theatre

The folk theater consisted of plays that were performed at festivities and on days of celebration. The artist was a professional, educated in a partnership of master and apprentice, and the theatre company consisted of one or only a few individuals. Folk theatre plays have a basic,

unscripted structure; each is peculiar and in conjunction with the reactions of the crowd. Much of it is improvised.

Court Theatre

In the Ottoman Empire, after the Tanzimat period, theatre was conducted in the Western context. In 1859, the first Turkish play "S air Evlenmesi" (The poet's marriage) was composed by Ibrahim S inasi in 1859. It was a comedy that was influenced by Moliere's plays. In the mid 19th century, the first theater was

established in Istanbul, and by the end of the 19th century, independent theater companies started to emerge. Centered on improvisation, they called themselves "Improvised Theater" (Tuluat tiyatrosu). This is considered to be the first effort to blend traditional Turkish theatre with the Western comedy genre, a product of the Western master-slave comedy's translation into Turkish society.

**Korkut, P. (2018).
"Creative
Drama" in
Turkey.**

THEATRE

MUSIC

Turkish pop culture started in the late 1950s with Turkish cover versions of a broad variety of imported mainstream forms, including rock and roll, tango and jazz.

Bangir Bangir, Gulsen– This pop hit single from Gulsen’s album, *Bangir Bangir*, highlights female empowerment and the reclamation of power in romantic relationships. The chorus, “you woke up the peacefully sleeping snake,” is used to describe the female protagonist’s kickback to the male antagonist’s overconfidence and descending efforts placed into his relationship with Gulsen. The Turkish singer- songwriter still produces music after her debut in 1996, and in 2015, claiming the top spot for most Youtube views among all Turkish artists. Retrieved November 03, 2020, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icZ-OIVSvb4>



Isim Olmaz, Tarkan– Tarkan’s 2010 single remains a popular choice among many in Turkey, reigning over 28 million streams. This song is about Tarkan’s outpouring love for a woman, noting that no trial or tribulation will lead him to second guess the woman he is in love with. Hamsterka26trk. (2010, July 29). -TARKAN- Isim Olmaz. Retrieved November 03, 2020, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=An-Ziw7qXSVU>



Uzulmedin mi, Simge– This single by Simge, is about a woman who faced much difficulty in a relationship, yet is seeing the true colors of her partner. After seeing that he is not a great match for her, she decided to claim her independence and seek a better life for herself. Netdmuzikk. (2017, November 29). Simge - Uzulmedin mi? Retrieved November 03, 2020, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jeDBZpT7-Rl>



STATISTICS

LITERACY LEVELS

Male- 98%, Women- 92% Youth- 99%

DEMOGRAPHICS

Male- 98%, Women- 92% Youth- 99%

MEDIA

Internet Access- 82%,
Smartphone Users- 90%

MEDIA

Internet Access- 82%,
Smartphone Users- 90%

ETHNICITY & RELIGION

Turkish- 72.5 to 75%
Kurds- 12.7 to 19%
Zaza Kurds- 4.0%
Circassians- 3.3%
Bosniaks- 2.6%
Georgians- 1.3%
Albanians- 1.2%
Arabs- 1.1%
Pomaks- 0.8%
Other- 0.5%
Islam- 92% (67% Sunni, 25% Other Islam)
Agnostic- 8%

AGRICULTURE

Wheat Production- 2.5 tonnes/hectare

COVID-19

Overall cases- 319,000
Deaths- 8,195
Recovered- 279,749

POPULATION SIZE

82,000,000

HEALTH

Human Development
Index Ranking (UN)- 0.806
Life expectancy at birth- 77.4
Expected years of schooling- 16.4
Mean years of schooling- 7.7

TURKEY BALANCE OF TRADE IN US DOLLARS

-6278.02

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN US DOLLARS

\$62,360

COUNTRY

Turkey	Georgia	Russia
agricultural land: 49.7%	agricultural land: 35.5%	Agricultural land: 13.1%
Agriculture: tobacco, cotton, grain, olives, sugar beets, hazelnuts, pulses, citrus; livestock	Agriculture: citrus, grapes, tea, hazelnuts, vegetables; livestock	Agriculture: grain, sugar beets, sunflower seeds, vegetables, fruits; beef, milk
Population: 81,257,239	Population: 4,000,000	Population: 142,122,776
Religion: Muslim 99.8% (mostly Sunni), other 0.2% (mostly Christians and Jews)	Religion: Orthodox (official) 83.4%, Muslim 10.7%, Armenian Apostolic 2.9%, other 1.2% (includes Catholic, Jehovah's Witness, Yazidi, Protestant, Jewish), none 0.5%, unspecified/no answer 1.2%	Religion: Russian Orthodox 15-20%, Muslim 10-15%, other Christian 2%
Contraceptive prevalence: 73.5%	Contraceptive prevalence: 53.4%	Contraceptive prevalence: 68%
Suffrage: 18 years old	Suffrage: 18 years old	Suffrage: 18 years old

I chose to compare Turkey and Georgia due to their proximity, paired with historical differences as to what other regions/entities had ruled each country (Turkey-Ottoman Empire, Georgia-Soviet Union). Additionally, Turkey and Russia pose as an interesting contrast in the ability to produce agriculture. Agricultural land varies throughout all three countries. As the left front of Turkey has rivers, lower mountain eleva-

tions, and less arid weather, it is ideal for agricultural production. A large portion of Russia is not ideally habitable, and the cold temperatures make it difficult to produce a lot of agriculture. Georgia's climate and soil are ideal for producing agriculture, and it is one of the country's most successful economy sectors. In the Soviet era, many swamps were drained through irrigation canals, allowing for the

land to be salvaged and used for crop production.

Additionally, Georgia has the most religious diversity, though an overwhelming percentage of the population practices Orthodox. This stems all the way back to the 4th century, when Christianity was made Georgia's official religion. Georgia has full freedom in religion, meaning that individuals are not required by law to practice the Orthodox faith.

Like Georgia, Russia's majority religion is Orthodox. In 1997, Russia instated a law allowing for religious freedom.

The majority of Turkey practices Sunni Islam, with a small percentage practicing Judaism and Christianity. Muslim ideas are perpetuated through the media, instilling social, moral, and family values based on Islam in television shows and other broadcast, domestic programming.

COMPARISON

CONTINUED

Turkey

Area:

total: 783,562 sq km

land: 769,632 sq km

water: 13,930 sq km

Natural resources:

"coal, iron ore, copper, chromium, antimony, mercury, gold, barite, borate, celestite (strontium), emery, feldspar, limestone, magnesite, marble, perlite, pumice, pyrites (sulfur), clay, arable land, hydropower"

Geopolitics- Strategic location for the defense of the Turkish Straits (Bosporus, Marmara Bay, Dardanelles) connecting the Black and Aegean Seas; located in Europe, 3% of the Turkish territory north of the Straits bears the names of European Turkey, Eastern Thrace or Turkish Thrace; Anatolia is known as 97% of the country in Asia; Istanbul is the only metropolis straddling the Bosporus;

Economy- Turkey's largely free-market economy is dominated by its manufacturing and, increasingly, service sectors, while its traditional agriculture sector still accounts for about 25 percent of employment. The automotive, petrochemical, and electronics industries have risen in importance within Turkey's export mix and have surpassed the traditional textile and apparel sectors. However, the recent period of political stability and economic dynamism has given way to domestic uncertainty and security problems, causing stock market turmoil and weighing on Turkey's economic outlook.

Georgia

Area:

total: 69,700 sq km

land: 69,700 sq km

water: 0 sq km

("approximately 12,560 sq km, or about 18% of Georgia's area, is Russian occupied")

Natural Resources

"timber, hydropower, manganese deposits, iron ore, copper, minor coal and oil deposits; coastal climate and soils allow for important tea and citrus growth"

Geopolitics

note 1: Georgia dominates most of the Caucasus Mountains and the passageways through them, strategically situated east of the Black Sea.

Fun Fact: "the world's four deepest caves are all in Georgia, including two that are the only known caves on earth deeper than 2,000 m: Kruber Cave at -2,197 m (-7,208 ft; reached in 2012) and Veryovkina Cave at -2,212 (-7,257 ft; reached in 2018)"

Economy

"Georgia's main economic activities include cultivation of agricultural products such as grapes, citrus fruits, and hazelnuts; mining of manganese, copper, and gold; and producing alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages, metals, machinery, and chemicals in small-scale industries. The country imports nearly all of its needed supplies of natural gas and oil products. It has sizable hydropower capacity that now provides most of its electricity needs."

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