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Prioritizing Identities: Cross Categorization of Ethnicity and Religious Sects in Turkey Identities: Ethnicity and/or Religion

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate how different ethnic groups (Turkish/Kurdish) and religious sects (Alevi/Sunni) are perceived in Turkey. These groups have a long history of conflicts. In order to examine the perception of these conflicting group identities, we adopted the theoretical frameworks of simple and cross categorization developed by the Social Identity Theory and the Category Differentiation Model. Both theories converge on the idea of in-group favoritism in the case of simple categorization while they offer different explanations for cross categorization condition. In order to test these differing theoretical propositions, we asked our participants to evaluate simple and cross categorization conditions based on variables of ethnicity and sect. Our sample consisted of 106 individuals from two ethnic groups (Kurdish/Turkish) and two religious sects (Alevi/Sunni). The participants completed a questionnaire based on Zavalloni's focused introspection technique. Within subjects repeated measures ANOVA analysis were carried out for both simple and cross categorization. The results of the analysis revealed that the participants emphasized in-group similarities and out-group differences both for ethnicity and religious sect in the simple categorization condition. Moreover, in-group similarities based on religious sects rather than ethnicity were prioritized in the cross categorization condition. The results confirmed the Social Identity Theory's assumptions generally. Results were discussed in terms of relevant literature, and in relation to historical and political issues regarding ethnicity and sects in Turkey.

Keywords: Cross categorization, minority, ethnicity, religious Sect.

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1.0 Introduction

Individuals define who they are by the help of their identities, which consist of traits, characteristics, social relations, roles and social group memberships (Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2012). People have many social group memberships such as gender and age, as well as ethnicity and religion. These different group memberships lead them to define themselves in terms of social categories. In other words, they become members of different groups based on social categories. To be a member of a social group means to identify with that particular group's norms, values, and expectations in social life.

In this study, we investigated the interactions that occur when belonging to different ethnic groups (Turkish/Kurdish) and religious sects (Alevi/Sünni) in Turkish culture. These groups have a long history of conflicts and several studies demonstrated significant cultural differences between Kurdish and Turkish as well as Alevi and Sunni groups (e.g., Cornell, 2002; Kalay, 2014). The studies focusing on these issues are generally based on sociological and/or political approaches (e.g., Kentel, Ahıska, Genç, 2007). There are few studies investigating this issue from psychological or social psychological perspectives (e.g., Arkonaç, Tekdemir-Yurtdaş and Çoker, 2012). For that reason in the present study, we aimed to analyze these intergroup relationships from a social psychological perspective which may contribute to understanding these intergroup relationships. In fact no research has yet investigated conflicts regarding ethnicity and sects using simple and cross categorizations of identities framework to our knowledge.

We used two theoretical frameworks as a basis for our study, specifically, Social Identity Theory and Category Differentiation Model. Firstly, we will present the two main perspectives that explain intergroup relationships. Then, the literature regarding ethnic (Turkish/Kurdish) and sect (Alevi/Sünni) identities is briefly introduced. Lastly, the aim and the questions of the study are given.

1.01 Social identity theory and category differentiation model

There are two main theoretical models that explain the individuals' behaviors of group differentiation: Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity theory and Doise's Category Differentiation Model (Van Oudenhoven, Judd, & Hewstone, 2000). Social identity theory basically proposes that individuals have a tendency to view themselves positively, and one source of self-esteem is the groups they belong to. Because of this tendency, they want to see their groups perceived positively and valued highly in social life in order to maintain their positive self-evaluation as members. For that reason, individuals are motivated to exaggerate the value of their own groups (in-groups) and use social comparisons with other groups (out-groups) so that the outcome of these comparisons results in favor of the in-group. However, aside from gaining positive self-evaluations, these comparisons also lead to discriminatory intergroup attitudes and behaviors (Knippenberg & Ellemers, 1990; Vanbeselaere, 2000).

According to Doise's Category Differentiation Model, the aim of these comparisons is to make classifications about in-groups and out-groups in order to render the group relationships more understandable and consistent, rather than to utilize them as a source for positive self-evaluations. Moreover, this model proposes that categorizing individuals into two groups will lead to an exaggerated perception of similarities within groups and differences between groups (Doise, Deschamps, & Meyer, 1978, cited in Vanbeselaere, 1991).

Although the Social Identity Theory and the Category Differentiation Model offer different explanations about the causes of the in-group and out-group comparisons, they both emphasize the perception of differences among two categories. In other words, they propose a cognitive mechanism that applies when only two groups are compared (Van Oudenhoven, Judd, & Hewstone, 2000). Deschamps and

Doise (1978) labeled this process as “simple categorization” (cited in Vanbeselaere, 1991). Beyond simple categorization, the researchers of the Category Differentiation Model also proposed another type of group categorization that occurs when two different kinds of social categories (i.e., age and gender) are involved in social comparisons. It has been called a cross-categorization of social categories, thus, social identities. Specifically, in such a situation a dichotomous categorization (A/B) is crossed by a second one (X/Y). When two categorizations are crossed, the convergence between the categories will weaken the intragroup effect, whereas the divergence within each category will weaken the intergroup effect. This process will result in reducing or eliminating the discrimination between the groups (Deschamps & Doise, 1978, cited in Diehl, 1990; Vanbeselaere, 1991; Hewstone, Islam, & Judd, 1993). Deschamps and Doise (1978) confirmed their model’s assumptions using an experimental study. However, Brown and Turner (1979) criticized the study’s theoretical basis and methodology and carried out another experimental study, which confirmed the Social Identity Theory’s assumptions regarding cross-categorization. Vanbeselaere (1978) tested both theories’ assumptions in another experimental study and found similar results in line with the Category Differentiation Model (Deschamps & Doise, 1978; Brown & Turner, 1979; Vanbeselaere, 1978, cited in Arkonaç, 1995).

There is a variety of different experimental studies in the literature supporting both of these two theoretical approaches. For example, Lemyre and Smith (1985) supported the main predictions of Social Identity Theory by confirming the link between in-group favoritism and self-esteem. Vescio, Judd, and Kwan (2004) performed two experimental studies about cross-categorization. In the first study, they manipulated race (Asian/Caucasian) and gender (female/male), and in the second study they manipulated relationship status (single/has a partner) and hometown size (big town/little town). Both of these studies showed that group categorizations were weaker in cross-categorization conditions when a dimension of one of the categories was in common (for example, when identities of female and male, having racial identity in common (e.g., Asian), were involved in a group evaluation) compared to simple categorization conditions. Similarly, Hall and Crisp (2005) showed in their two experimental studies that multiple social categorizations reduced intergroup bias. Vanbeselaere (2000) also investigated the same issue and provided evidence supporting simple categorization and partially crossed categorization. The researcher demonstrated that the participants perceived their own category different from the other category, as in simple categorization. However, in the cross-categorization process where there were two categories, the participants only perceived the out-group in both categories (the double out-group) as different. In other words, there were no differences perceived when the participants’ own categories overlapped partially with one of the two categories.

In Turkish culture, Arkonaç (1995) performed a study on cross-categorization in terms of the categories of gender (women/men) and age (young/adult). The results of this study on the cross-categorization condition confirmed the assumptions of the Category Differentiation Model that the perceived intergroup differences significantly decreased when there were overlapping cross-categorizations. Curun and Tekdemir-Yurtdaş (2015) replicated this study 19 years later and showed that in-group and out-group evaluations differed in both the gender and age dimensions in terms of simple categorization. However, the cross-categorization results confirmed the Category Differentiation Model only when the age variable was the out-group category.

In summary, as shown in the research examples presented above a variety of researchers have tried to examine the dynamics of simple and cross-categorizations in order to understand group relationships and social identities using different theoretical frameworks. In this study, we aim to explore the simple and cross-categorization paradigms in an attempt to understand group perceptions when ethnicities (Turkish/Kurdish) and religious sects (Alevi/Sünni) that are present in Turkish culture are concerned.

1.02 Turkish/Kurdish identities and Alevi/Sunni sects in Turkish culture

The majority of the population in Turkey is composed of people of ethnic Turkish identity and the Sunni sect. However, as Karimova and Deverell (2001) point out, Turkey is comprised of a mosaic of different

identities including religious and ethnic, as well as linguistic. In their study of minorities in Turkey, they classified minorities and identities in Turkey under three headings: religious communities, predominantly ethnic communities, and linguistic communities. Religious communities include Alevi, Armenians, Jews, Greeks and Assyrians. The predominant ethnic communities include Kurds, Romans, Caucasian groups, Arabs, Balkan immigrants, while linguistic communities include Zazas and Laz. When these groups are considered, the Kurdish people constitute the numerically highest group among the ethnic communities and the Alevi people are the numerically highest group among the religious communities.

Turkey has a long history of intergroup conflict between Turks and Kurds and Alevi and Sunnis. There are significant cultural differences between both Kurdish people and Alevi people and the majority, mainly of Turkish and Sunni identity. When Kurdish people are considered, they have tribal, linguistic, religious, symbolic, and regional differences. For example, most Kurdish people speak the Kirmanci dialect, while some speak Zaza. Geographically, the Kurds are settled in a single area in Turkey—the southeastern part of the country—that is relatively distant from the administrative center. They are mainly socially organized in tribes called “ashiret.” These tribes are geographically oriented and religiously shaped (Cornell, 2002; Kalay, 2014). Kurdish people are also not homogenous about their religious orientation. Although most are Sunni Muslims, a minority is of the Alevi sect, and a very small number are Yezidis (Karimova and Deverell 2001). It has been suggested that the Alevi Kurds have experienced a dilemma about their loyalties toward their ethnic or religious communities. Çelik (2003) indicated that the Alevi identity has always been more dominant than the Kurdish identity among the Alevi Kurds.

There are also significant cultural differences between Alevi and Sunnis in Turkey. Although this is a deep theological issue outside the expertise of the researchers of the present study, in general, Alevi differ from Sunnis in their worship practices, lifestyles, and ideologies. While Sunni belief is based mainly on believing in the Kuran as God’s book, and the five pillars, such as fasting during Ramadan for a month, Alevi follow the Alevi conditions of Islam. They worship in places named “cem” houses with very different rituals from Sunnis. Ali, a nephew of Muhammed, is a highly significant religious figure for Alevi, aside from Muhammed, who is the prophet in the religion of Islam. They are interested in the moral values suggested by Islam in terms of controlling “your hands, tongue, and loins.” They generally define themselves as left-oriented politically, modern and secular (Shankland, 1993). Like Kurdish people, they have been the target of prejudice and discrimination since the Ottoman years.

In summary, the long history of intergroup conflicts between Turks and Kurds and Alevi and Sunnis has resulted in many serious consequences in theological and political terms, as well as serious acts of violence. Thus, we believe that the effects of the combination of these identities (i.e., Turkish Sunni, Kurdish Alevi) are very important in analyzing these conflicts. For that reason, examining the intergroup perceptions when both simple as well as overlapping identities are present might contribute to a better understanding of these intergroup conflicts.

1.03 The present study

As stated earlier, the present study aims to examine the perceptions of different ethnic groups (Turkish/Kurdish) and sects (Alevi/Sunni) that have a long history of conflict in Turkish culture. As presented briefly in the introduction, most of the studies about these issues were examined experimentally. However, Crisp, Hewstone, and Cairns (2001) criticized this approach in their study by asking an important question: “Does work into cross categorization have a descriptive or explanatory value outside of strictly controlled laboratory environments and can it have important and useful implications for real world issues?” (p. 502). Sharing the same opinion, in this study we used interviews and scales, which are presented in detail in the method section.

The specific research questions considered in this study were:

- 1 Do participants' attributes of in-groups and out-groups regarding ethnicity differ in the basic categorization condition?
- 2 Do participants' attributes of in-groups and out-groups regarding religious sects differ in the basic categorization condition?
- 3 Do participants' attributes of in-groups and out-groups presented by crossing different group identities related to ethnicity and sects differ in the cross categorization condition?

To summarize, we aim to analyze simple categorization and cross-categorization between groups depending on the assumptions of the Category Differentiation Model. We also took the social identity framework into consideration in explaining these dynamics. We expect significant in-group and out-group differences in terms of simple categorization, depending on both the Category Differentiation Model and the Social Identity Theory framework. Moreover, we expect intergroup differences to decrease significantly in the cross-categorized condition, as proposed by the Category Differentiation Model.

2.0 Method

2.01 Participants

There were 106 participants in the study; 61 were women and 45 were men. Among the participants, 72 defined themselves as young and 34 defined themselves as adult. The education levels of the participants of the study were diverse; 9 (8.5%) of the participants had primary school education, 5 (4.7%) had middle school education, 13 (12.3%) had a high school degree, 10 (9%) had college degrees, 75 (70.8%) had a university degree and 3 (2.8%) had graduate degrees. In terms of ethnicity, 53 (50%) of the participants defined themselves as Turkish and 53 (50%) defined themselves as Kurdish. Moreover, 52 (49.1%) of the participants reported their religious sects as Sunni, and 52 (50.9%) of the participants reported their sects as Alevi.

2.02 Procedure

Several interviews were conducted with the participants in houses, workplaces, university cafeterias and on campus. Undergraduate students of the Department of Psychology at Istanbul University, who were trained by the researchers, performed these interviews. The written consent of the participants was collected before the interviews were started. The structured interviews were based on Zavalloni's (1971) questionnaire, which is presented in detail in the instruments section below. The participants were instructed to evaluate groups both in simple and cross-categorization conditions. Each question was asked to the participants in the same way and in the same order. The interviewer wrote down the answers given. Interviews lasted between approximately 20 and 30 minutes.

2.03 Instruments

A demographic information form and a questionnaire based on Zavalloni's (1971) focused introspection technique were used.

2.3.1 Social identity inventory based on Zavalloni's (1971) focused introspection technique

Participants were interviewed with a social identity inventory based on Zavalloni's (1971) focused introspection technique, which was used in Arkonaç's study (1995). In the present study, Arkonaç's (1995) version of the technique was used without any change except that a five-point Likert-type response format was used, as in Zavalloni's original work, rather than Arkonaç's four-point format.

Zavalloni's (1971) social identity inventory has a multi-stage nature, and its basic aim is to determine the cognitive attributions of the individuals' social and personal identities in the context of group affiliations. In the first part of the inventory, participants are asked to write down adjectives related to a

category of interest in the research (i.e., gender, age) based on a free association technique. In the second part, participants are instructed to evaluate each adjective they reported earlier, using a five-point Likert format, as to what extent each adjective was appropriate for them (ranging from totally appropriate to totally not appropriate). Participants performed the same evaluation for a simple categorization in-group/out-group condition for each category, a partial cross-categorization in-group/out-group condition for either category and a cross-categorization out-group condition for both categories.

In the first part of the present study, the interviewers instructed every participant to report the adjectives about their in-group based on ethnic category (Turkish or Kurdish). Then, the same procedure was done for the out-group ethnic category. The same procedure was applied for in-group sect evaluation (Alevi or Sunni), as well as for the out-group sect. Then the participants evaluated these adjectives in terms of appropriateness for them. These evaluations constituted the data for the simple categorization conditions.

In the second part of the interviews, the participants were instructed to evaluate the cross-categorizations in the same way. In this case, the participants reported adjectives for in-groups and out-groups based on the crossing of two categories. Resulting categories were: in-group ethnicity/in-group sect, in-group ethnicity/out-group sect, out-group ethnicity/in-group sect, and out-group ethnicity/out-group sect.

3.0 Results

In this section, in accordance with the aims of the study, first the results for the simple categorization evaluations will be presented. Then the results of the cross-categorizations will be given.

3.01 Simple categorizations (ethnicity and sect)

Firstly, in order to determine whether participants' evaluations differ in terms of their own ethnic group (in-group) and the other ethnic group (out-group), a 2 (Turkish and Kurdish) × 2 (Sunni and Alevi) × 2 (participants' own in-group and out-group ethnicity evaluations) Within subjects repeated measures ANOVA design was used. The results of the analysis demonstrated that in-group and out-group descriptive evaluations, in terms of ethnicity, differed significantly [$F(1, 104) = 79.762, p < 0.001$]. In other words, both Turks and Kurds reported that the adjectives they used to describe their own ethnic identities defined themselves more than the other ethnic group. Moreover, simple contrast analysis was performed and there were no significant differences regarding the participants' evaluations of in-groups and out-groups, depending on the participants' own ethnicities. Means and standard deviations of ethnicity evaluations are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of ethnicity-based evaluations (Turkish and Kurdish)

	Ethnicity	M	SD	N
In-Group Ethnicity Evaluations	Turkish	3.37	1.10	53
	Kurdish	3.73	0.81	53
Out-Group Ethnicity Evaluations	Turkish	2.29	1.02	53
	Kurdish	2.36	1.06	53

Secondly, in order to determine whether participants' evaluations differ in terms of their own sect group (in-group) and the other sect group (out-group) a 2 (Sunni and Alevi) × 2 (Turkish and Kurdish) × 2 (participants' own in-group and out-group religious sect evaluations) Within subjects repeated measures ANOVA design was used. The results of the analysis revealed that in-group and out-group descriptive evaluations, in terms of religious sects, differed significantly [$F(1, 104) = 66.88, p < .001$]. In other words, both Sunnis and Alevis reported that the adjectives they used to describe their own sect

identities defined themselves more than the other sectarian group. Means and standard deviations of sect group evaluations are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Means and standard deviations of sect-based evaluations (Sunni and Alevi)

	Sect	M	SD	N
In-Group Sect Evaluations	Sünni	3.19	1.10	52
	Alevi	4.08	0.82	54
Out-Group Sect Evaluations	Sünni	3.07	0.91	52
	Alevi	1.94	0.96	54

Moreover, the participants' evaluations of in-groups and out-groups, depending on the participants' own sect categories, revealed significant differences [$F(1,104) = 53.936, p < .001$]. The results of a simple contrast analysis revealed that participants who defined themselves as Sunni did not perceive the Sunni group ($M=3.2$) as significantly different from the Alevi group ($M=3.1$) in terms of the appropriateness of the adjectives they assigned to each group. However, participants who defined themselves as Alevi evaluated the Sunni group ($M=1.9$) as significantly different from the Alevi group ($M=4.1$) participants, which indicated that the adjectives assigned to the Sunni group were perceived less appropriate for the participants themselves. Thus, the Alevi participants were found to perceive the Alevi group as being more similar compared to the Sunni group.

3.02 Cross-categorizations

3.2.1 The evaluations of ethnicity as the baseline comparison value

In the case of cross-categorization, participants made assessments for the four groups that were created by crossing ethnic and sectarian categories. These resulting groups of cross-categorization were: Turkish Sunni, Kurdish Sunni, Turkish Alevi, and Kurdish Alevi. Specifically, they evaluated their in-groups on both categories (own ethnicity/own sect), partially overlapping in-group and other-group (own ethnicity/other sect and other ethnicity/own sect, respectively), and double out-groups (other ethnicity and other sect). For analyzing whether participants' evaluations differed in these cross categorization conditions, a 2 (Turkish and Kurdish) \times 2 (Sünni and Alevi) \times 5 (four cross-categorization group evaluations and the evaluation of ethnicity in the simple categorization condition) one-way repeated measures ANOVA design was used. The means and standard deviations of cross-categorizations are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of cross categorizations based on ethnicity

	Ethnicity	M	SD	N
In-Group Ethnicity Evaluations	Turkish	3.36	1.12	50
	Kurdish	3.73	0.81	53
In-Group Ethnicity In-Group Sect Evaluations	Turkish	3.88	1.02	50
	Kurdish	3.74	1.02	53
In-Group Ethnicity Out-Group Sect Evaluations	Turkish	2.82	1.24	50
	Kurdish	2.71	1.08	53
Out-Group Ethnicity In-Group Sect Evaluations	Turkish	2.92	1.13	50
	Kurdish	2.89	1.03	53
Out-Group Ethnicity Out-Group Sect Evaluations	Turkish	2.20	0.99	50
	Kurdish	2.28	0.99	53

Since assumption of sphericity has been violated, according to Mauchly's Sphericity Test [$X^2(9) = 82.309, p < .001$], the degrees of freedom values were fixed using Greenhouse-Geisser sphericity estimates ($\epsilon = .745$). A within subjects repeated measures ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction determined that participants' evaluations about in-group ethnicity differed significantly from the cross-categorization evaluations [$F(2.86, 288.8) = 41.673, p < .001$]. In order to address which evaluations of group, or groups, differed from the participants' evaluation, based on simple categorization of ethnicity, simple contrast analysis was performed.

Firstly, the results of the contrast analysis showed that when descriptive values of the ethnicity are taken as the in-group baseline evaluation, the in-group ethnicity/in-group sect classification significantly differed from single ethnicity evaluations [$F(1, 101) = 5.74, p < .05$]. So the participants perceived the group who had the same ethnic and religious identity as being more similar to themselves. Next, the analysis was performed regarding whether the participants' own ethnicities (being Turkish or Kurdish) were related to the evaluations of cross-categorizations. The results revealed that when the participants assigned descriptive adjectives for the group overlapping their own sect, being Turkish or Kurdish resulted in significant differences [$F(1, 101) = 5.414, p < .05$]. The mean differences among the group evaluations showed that Turkish respondents ($M = 3.88$), especially, defined the combined group (Turks and own sect) as being more similar to themselves when compared with the ethnic in-group ($M = 3.36$). Although Kurdish participants also defined themselves as being more similar to the combined group ($M = 3.73$) than their ethnic in-groups ($M = 3.74$), this increase was very small (see Table 3).

Secondly, another analysis was performed for in-group ethnicity/out-group sect categorization, taking descriptive values of the ethnicity as the in-group baseline evaluation. The results were significant, demonstrating that participants perceived the groups who had different religious identity in terms of sects different from themselves, although the group had the same ethnic identity [$F(1, 101) = 47.504, p < .001$]. When the relationship between the cross-categorization evaluations and the participants' own ethnicities was analyzed, the result was significant [$F(1, 101) = 4.532, p < .05$], which showed that in this case both Turkish ($M = 2.824$) and Kurdish ($M = 2.708$) participants perceived this group as less similar to themselves.

Thirdly, the same analyses were repeated between out-group ethnicity/in-group sect classification and the result was also significant [$F(1, 101) = 18.67, p < .001$]. However, when the means of the group evaluations were examined, it was found that the participants perceived the group overlapping in sect as a cross-categorization condition ($M = 2.91$) more similar to themselves when compared with the group with the same ethnic identity ($M = 2.766$). Therefore it might be argued that sect identity is more important than ethnic identity for the participants in the present study. Moreover, in this case there was not a significant relationship between the participants' own ethnic identities and cross-categorization evaluations [$F(1, 101) = 1.821, p > .05$].

Lastly, the analysis was performed for the last classification, which involved the group of out-group ethnicity/out-group sect categorization. This analysis also revealed significant results [$F(1, 101) = 99.950, p < .001$]. Consistent with the expectations of the present study, the participants perceived the group of out-group ethnicity and out-group sect ($M = 2.242$) categorization as most different from themselves. Moreover, the analysis showed that the relationship between the participants' own ethnic identities and this group was not significant [$F(1, 101) = 1.241, p > .05$].

3.2.2 The evaluations of sect as the baseline comparison value

The analysis presented earlier was repeated to examine the participants' evaluations of the four groups of cross-categorization of ethnicity and sects in relation to their in-group sect evaluations. For analyzing whether participants' evaluations differ in these cross-categorization conditions when in-group sect evaluation was taken as the basic value, a 2 (Sünni and Alevi) \times 2 (Turkish and Kurdish) \times 5 (four cross-

categorization group and evaluation of sect in simple categorization condition) within subjects repeated measures ANOVA design was used. The means and standard deviations of cross-categorizations are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Means and standard deviations of cross-categorizations based on sect

	Ethnicity	M	SD	N
In-Group Sect Evaluations	Turkish	3.15	1.08	51
	Kurdish	4.07	0.82	52
In-Group Ethnicity In-Group Sect Evaluations	Turkish	3.48	1.03	51
	Kurdish	4.13	0.89	52
In-Group Ethnicity Out-Group Sect Evaluations	Turkish	3.30	0.99	51
	Kurdish	2.24	1.07	52
Out-Group Ethnicity In-Group Sect Evaluations	Turkish	2.60	1.01	51
	Kurdish	3.21	1.06	52
Out-Group Ethnicity Out-Group Sect Evaluations	Turkish	2.55	0.86	51
	Kurdish	1.94	1.01	52

Since assumption of sphericity has been violated as determined by Mauchly's Sphericity Test [$X^2(9) = 82.309, p < .001$], the degrees of freedom values were fixed using Huynh-Feldtsphericity estimates ($\epsilon = .808$). The results demonstrated that participants' evaluations about the descriptive means of groups created by cross-categorization of ethnicity and religious sects differed significantly from the participants' in-group sect evaluations [$F(3.23, 326.51) = 48.027, p < .001$]. In order to determine which of the evaluations of the four groups differed from the evaluation of simple categorization, a simple contrast analysis was performed.

The results of this analysis showed that the participants' in-group descriptive values of sect did not differ significantly from the evaluations of the group of in-group ethnicity/in-group sect [$F(1, 101) = 3.627, p > .05$]. Next, the analysis was performed to determine whether the participants' own sects (being Sunni or Alevi) were related to the evaluations of cross-categorizations. The results revealed that the participants' evaluations of this group did not differ significantly based on the participants' own sect identities [$F(1, 101) = 1.691, p > .05$].

Secondly, the analysis showed that there were significant differences between the participants' in-group sect evaluations and the evaluations of the group of in-group ethnicity/out-group sect [$F(1, 101) = 33.896, p < .001$]. Looking at the mean values, it can be suggested that the participants perceived the group with a different sect, regardless of ethnic identity, as more distant from themselves ($M = 2.769$). In order to address which evaluations of group or groups differed from the participants' evaluations, based on simple categorization of sect, a simple contrast analysis was performed. The results revealed that the participants' evaluations of this group differed significantly based on the participants' own sect identities [$F(1, 101) = 46.959, p < .001$]. The Sunni participants perceived the non-Sunni group who had the same ethnic identity ($M = 3.151$ and $M = 3.300$, respectively), while Alevi participants did not demonstrate the same tendency for the non-Alevi group ($M = 4.071$ and $M = 2.238$, respectively).

The next analysis showed that there were also significant differences between the participants' in-group sect evaluations and the evaluations of the group of out-group ethnicity/in-group sect [$F(1, 101) = 40.134, p < .001$]. When we look at the mean values, the participants perceived the group with the overlapping sect as being more similar, compared to the group with overlapping ethnicity ($M = 2.904$ and $M = 2.769$, respectively). Therefore, it can be suggested that the participants in this study prioritize religious sect identity over ethnic identity. The simple contrast analysis conducted in this case showed

that the participants' evaluations of this group did not differ significantly based on the participants' own sect identities [$F(1, 101) = 2.008, p > .05$].

Lastly, when a group of double out-group was analyzed, the evaluation of this group significantly differed from the in-group sect evaluations [$F(1, 101) = 83.139, p < .001$]. Consistent with expectations, the participants perceived this group as the most distant group. Simple contrast analysis was performed to analyze the relationships between these cross-categorizations and the participants' own sect identity. The results demonstrated that being Sunni or Alevi resulted in significant differences in evaluating out-group ethnicity/out-group sect [$F(1, 101) = 26.125, p < .001$]. Moreover, descriptive means showed that both Sunni ($M = 2.55$) and Alevi ($M = 1.94$) evaluated this group as the most distant group.

4.0 Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, we aimed to explore social categorization phenomena in terms of simple and cross-categorization of identity categories in an attempt to understand the perceptions of the major and conflicted ethnicities in Turkish culture of Turkish/Kurdish and the religious sects of Alevi/Sunni. This study is one of the few studies adopting a social psychological perspective.

As presented in the introduction, we expected to find significant in-group and out-group differences in the simple categorization condition (both for ethnicity and sect), as proposed by both the Category Differentiation Model and the Social Identity Theory. The analysis carried out for the simple categorization condition confirmed these expectations. That is, in this study both Turks and Kurds reported that the adjectives they used to describe their own ethnic group defined themselves more than the other ethnic group. The same results were found for the perceptions of sectarian groups; both Sunnis and Alevis reported that the adjectives they used to describe their own sect identities defined themselves more than the other sectarian group. The participants in our study demonstrated the tendency proposed by both theories of group identity, that is, emphasizing the in-group similarities and out-group differences, which might indicate that the participants viewed the group they were a member of more positively compared to the group of others (Van Oudenhoven, Judd, & Hewstone, 2000).

Since the findings supported the in-group/out-group differentiation, we wanted to find out whether participants' own ethnic and sectarian identity led to differences in-group perceptions. The results showed that while there were no significant differences about the participants' evaluations of in-group and out-group, depending on the participants' own ethnicities, their evaluations differed significantly based on their own sectarian identities. In other words, although both Alevi and Sunni participants reported that the adjectives they used to describe the in-group sect defined themselves more than the other sectarian group, this tendency was more pronounced for Alevi participants. They perceived the Sunni group very different from themselves, while the similar case was not relevant for the Sunni participants. This finding was the first signal that being Alevi was an important factor involved in group evaluations, which will be discussed in detail after the results of the cross-categorizations are presented.

Participants made assessments for the four groups that were created by crossing ethnic and sectarian categories in the case of cross-categorization. These are: Turkish Sunni, Kurdish Sunni, Turkish Alevi, and Kurdish Alevi. Specifically, they evaluated their in-groups (own ethnicity/own sect), partially overlapping in-group (own ethnicity/other sect and other ethnicity/own sect) and double out-groups (other ethnicity/other sect). In order to measure the differences due to crossing of identity categories, firstly, in-group ethnic evaluation was taken as the baseline value and was compared to the evaluations carried out in four cross-categorization conditions. Then the same analyses were carried out by taking in-group sect evaluation value as the baseline. In both cases, the results of the analysis showed that the participants tended to perceive crossed identities differently compared to the in-group. These results are in line with the Social Identity Theory, which proposes that differentiated perception of groups will

continue to take place even when two different identity categories are crossed. In other words, participants in this study tended to favor their ethnic or sectarian in-group identity even when a partially overlapping group identity on one of the categories was evaluated. This confirms Tajfel and Turner's argument that in-group favoritism would continue during the cross-categorization process (Brown & Turner, 1979, cited in Vanbeselaere, 1991).

In the first cross-categorization condition, the resulting group consisted of in-groups in both ethnic and sectarian identity categories. In this condition, the participants perceived the double in-group as being more similar to themselves than their ethnic in-group, as well as their sectarian in-group. So when the group has common characteristics on both dimensions with the participants, perception of in-group similarity is more pronounced, which can also be accounted for by the Social Identity Theory.

When the participants evaluated the groups of partly overlapping characteristics on one of the categories (for example, crossing of ethnic in-group and sectarian out-group), the participants perceived these groups differently as well. However, when we compared the crossing categories using ethnicity versus sect, participants perceived the crossed groups where the overlapping category was religious sect as more similar when they shared the same sect, compared to the condition where the common category was ethnicity. According to Zavalloni, (Zavalloni, 1975; cited in Meşe, 1991) the group characteristics such as gender, occupation, age, ethnicity and religion may acquire a more dominant position depending on the situation the person is in. So the results indicate that religious sect might be a more dominant social category compared to ethnicity when members of crossed identity groups are taken into account. Although different results have been found regarding evaluations of people of religious sects, the religious identity of being a Muslim was especially found to be of first priority in this society. Lastly, as expected the participants perceived themselves most distant from the double out-group category.

The basic contrast analysis revealed interesting results. Firstly, Turkish participants perceived the double in-group ethnicity and sect as being more similar to themselves compared to Kurdish participants, which might suggest that ethnicity was a strong characteristic for Turkish participants. However, when the group with common ethnicity and different sect was evaluated, both Turkish and Kurdish participants perceived the group to be less similar. Moreover, when being Sunni and Alevi was taken into account, while Alevi participants in the cross-categorization condition of in-group ethnicity and out-group sect perceived the Sunnis different from themselves regardless of having common ethnic identity, Sunnis did not display such a preference.

The same result was found for the other partly overlapping group composed of out-group ethnicity and in-group sect. The participants found themselves similar to the group with whom they had the same identity of sect rather than ethnicity. Looking at the mean values, it can be suggested that the participants perceived the group of different sect, regardless of ethnic identity, as more distant from themselves. However, the Sunni participants perceived the non-Sunni group, who had the same ethnic identity, similar to themselves while Alevi participants did not demonstrate the same evaluation.

Castells (2006) talks about two different identities: justifying identity and resisting identity. Justifying identity is defined as identity development with the support of dominant institutions in a society with an aim to maintain and increase already existing power. Resisting identity, on the other hand, is the identity constructed by those who are positioned below in a society. Being Alevi and being Kurdish in Turkish society means to be a member of a minority. So being Alevi might be perceived as having a resisting identity. Historically, since both Selcuk and Ottoman times, Sunnis were supported institutionally, leading Alevi groups to emphasize their differences from the Sunni group with an aim to protect their religious and cultural identities (Yapıcı, 2009). Thus, the results regarding Alevi participants in this study might reflect such a sociocultural positioning.

Theoretically, one of the main criticisms directed from Social Identity Theory to the Category Differentiation Model is that the category dimensions in cross-categorization might differ in terms of the psychological strength attached to them by the participants (Brown & Turner, 1979, cited in Vanbeselaere, 1991). Perception of discrimination against Alevi had been reported to be very common even among the Kurdish Alevi (Bilgiç & Akyürek, 2012). Thus, it is possible to argue that sect compared to ethnicity is psychologically more important for our participants, especially for Alevi participants.

We chose two major and conflicted minority identities (Alevi and Kurds) against the identities of the majority in Turkish culture, assuming that being a member of both minority groups might result in similar identity issues in our society. Discussions and conflicts regarding ethnicity mostly focus on Kurdish ethnic identity (Erkan, 2005). Kurdish people are the largest minority group in Turkey. The Kurdish-Turkish conflict has a long history and the conflict still continues. Today, in discussion programs on TV, in newspapers and even in social media, one of the most popular topics is the solving of the Kurdish “problem.” In the last twenty years, how Kurds and Turks fought side by side against a common enemy in the Çanakkale War, as well as the independence war of the country before the republic was established, had been commonly expressed in several mediums, as well as by the Kurds themselves (Karakurt-Acar, 2007). Thus, we suggest that such discourses of historical solidarity and open discussions about the identity issues and conflicts might account for the results regarding ethnic categorizations in this study.

On the other hand, Shankland (1993), an anthropologist who lived in Alevi and Sunni villages in Turkey, suggested that Alevi must change more than the Sunnis in order to be part of the Turkish nation. Thus, due to the open conflict Kurds might feel themselves as a part of the Turkish nation, however, because of the introversion Alevi tend to differentiate themselves more from the other categorizations.

This study has some limitations. Firstly, we compared the descriptive means of the participants in order to analyze the simple and cross-categorizations. Aside from their quantitative evaluations, the content of the adjectives might be important in analyzing their group relationships. Therefore, in future studies a detailed content analysis can be performed to evaluate the group characteristics attributed in simple versus crossed categorization conditions. Secondly, in future studies, before analyzing the cross-categorizations, the psychological importance of the social categories involved might be measured.

Aside from these limitations, to our knowledge this study was the first attempt to analyze cross-categorization of ethnic identities (Turkish and Kurdish) and religious sects (Sunni/Alevi). We believe that such studies promote understanding among members of different groups and might contribute to solving intergroup conflicts.

This study reveals the importance of religion and sect identity in Turkey. As presented above, Alevi participants tended to differentiate themselves from the other categories. Alevi sect not only involves a belief system and religious rituals, but also involves life style practices. Therefore, this tendency of intergroup bias among Alevi can be reduced by emphasizing a common in-group identity of being citizens of Turkey explicitly and institutionally as proposed by Davidio, Gaertner and Saguy (2007) as well as promoting common values and lifestyle practices among all groups living in Turkey.

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