Impact of the Recent Political Conflicts on Turkish and Turkey Images in Israeli Society

Son Politik Çatışmaların İsrail Toplumunda Türk ve Türkiye İmajı'na Etkisi

Fikret Efe[1]

Abstract

Purpose of this study is to examine influence of the recent political conflicting events on Turkish and Turkey images in Israeli society. Turkey and Israel relations in the 1990s have changed drastically in recent years after Israel's sudden attacks on Gaza in 2008, and killed more than 1400 people. Later on, Prime Minister Erdogan showed his rigid reaction at Davos Summit, and finally with Mavi Marmara crises, already deteriorated relations have worsened. Therefore, the political conflicts between Turkey and Israel have been addressed as a priority. The study is basically a survey, but it also used qualitative data through interviews and observations in the field. A sample of 611 respondents was chosen through quota and random sampling procedures. We have thrown a glance at these political conflictive issues first, and then measured how and to what extent they have affected Turkey and Turkish image in Israeli society, and tried to determine what factors are the most crucial in the image formation. The study has suggested that the recent political crises do have a strong effect not only on the states and governmental relations but also on the Israeli people's perceptions and evaluations of Turkish and Turkey images. Thus, the study has provided an overall contribution to the lag in the field; to country image theory, image building, and a better understanding the country image in general.

Keywords: *Israeli society, Country image, Turkish-Israeli relations, Mavi Marmara Flotilla, Erdoğan, AKP (JDP).*

[1]Assist Prof., Sakarya University, Social Work Department, Faculty Member.

Özet

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, son siyasi olayların İsrail toplumunda Türk ve Türkiye imajı algılamasına etkisini incelemektir. 1990'lı yıllarda Türkiye-İsrail ilişkileri İsrail'in 2008 yılında Gazze'ye ani saldırısı ve 1400′den fazla kişinin ölümünden sonra, büyük ölçüde değişmiştir. Bu siyasi gelişmeler daha sonra, Başbakan Erdoğan'ın Davos Zirvesi'nde göstermiş olduğu sert tepki ve son olarak Mavi Marmara krizi ile zirveye yükselmiştir. Bu nedenle, makalede Türkiye ile İsrail arasındaki siyasi çatışmalar bir öncelik olarak ele alınmıştır. Çalışma temelde survey olmakla birlikte, alanda yapılan gözlem ve mülakatlarla elde edilen kalitatif veriler de kullanılmıştır. 611 denek kota ve tesadüfi örnekleme teknikleriyle seçilmiştir. Çalışmada önce son siyasi çatışma konusu olan olaylara değinilmiş, sonra bu olayların İsrail'de Türk ve Türkiye imajına nasıl ve ne ölçüde etki yaptığı ve hangi etkenlerin burada en önemli belirleyiciler olduğu saptamaya çalışılmıştır. Çalışma son siyasi krizlerin yalnızca devlet ve hükümet ilişkilerine değil, aynı zamanda İsrail halkının Türk ve Türkiye algılarına da güçlü etkileri olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Böylece çalışma alandaki boşluğa; ülke imajı kuramına, imaj oluşturma ve genel olarak ülke imajının daha iyi anlaşılmasına tam bir katkı sağlamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *İsrail toplumu, ülke imajı, Türkiye-İsrail ilişkileri, Mavi Marmara Gemisi, Erdoğan, AKP.*

Introduction

People of Turkey and a great portion of Israeli Jews once were living under a single flag as the citizens of the same state and sharing the same destiny, common culture and much more. Two peoples' relations go back into hundreds of years and historical ties are much longer than the two states' establishments. For this reason the peoples' reciprocal social relations and interactions would be much smoother relatively than the states' official or political relations even though they may be influenced in accordance with the evaluation and interpretation of the circumstances that their states and/or through their agencies create.

We can easily find in the writings of contemporary writers how they perceive and interpret the recent events under the influence of their historical past. Mavi Marmara and Davos Summit are suitable examples in this regard. A right-wing Israeli commentator, Mordechai Kedar (2010), wrote on Ynet: "Who is the master of this region?… The forces of the Ottoman Empire, who aspire again to rule the Middle East…will be stopped at Gaza's shore." Yet, the centrist daily newspaper Maariv demanded the resignation of Defence Minister Ehud Barak on Mavi Marmara crisis (Mitnick, 2010). It is obvious that today's political events are perceived, evaluated and interpreted on the base of their past experiences. Such grate range social events form the peoples' long term images.

Image of a country is created by plenty of factors, but national characteristics, history, representative products, economic and political background, and traditions are the most common and influential ones (Nagashima, 1970: 68). Country image might also be influenced by some other factors, like culture, media, and sport, the political and social environment (Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2002). Hence, it is expected that Turkey-Israel relations in the past would have an effect on the present images, and today's events would have an impact on the formation of future perceptions and imaginations of both societies' peoples.

Although their long historical background Turkey-Israel relationships have been very fluctuating, and took shape according to changed balances in the Middle East, not because of any direct difficulties in bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel but mainly with the stance of either of the two toward third parties (Bengio, 2010). It is known that Turkey has politically followed a pro-Palestinian policy (Yilmaz at all, 2005). But Turkey also has tried to balance its relations with Israel up until Israel's attack on Mavi

Marmara flotilla. Afterwards, both countries relations have broken never witnessed before. Turkey has recalled its ambassador to Ankara, and not sent him back Tel Aviv yet. While Turkey's current Middle East policy is appreciated satisfactorily by Arabs (Salihi, 2011), it has annoyed Jews. In a public opinion survey, Esmer (2009) found that while after Azerbaijan (6.89 out of 10), Palestine (5.77 out of 10) is the second highest ranking nation towards which Turkish citizens have the most feeling of warmth and affinity, yet their feeling of warmth and affinity towards Israel ranks very low (1.15 out of 10). Religion here plays very crucial role. A survey (Kucukcan, 2010) indicates that 33.2% of Turkish public opinion holds a considerable positive perception toward Arabs.

Israel-Turkey relations have been usually studied by the scholars of international relations and some historians, but events in agenda have been focus of columnists. We cannot see one single academically research dealing with the Turkish and Turkey image in Israel though there have been done Turkish image in Egypt by al-Daquoqi (2001) and more recently work Perception of Turkey in the Middle East conducted by Akgün and Gündoğar (2012) for TESEV (The Foundation for Turkish Economics and Social Studies) in November-December, 2011. The former study deals with the subject with multiple method research and the later uses surveys. But both studies have some crucial lacks in their methodologies. For example, while taking a total sample 2,323 of participants from 16 different Middle Eastern and North African countries to the study, KA Research Company (which determined the methodology and carried out the surveys) chose a sample of only 153 participants from Egypt (having over 83 million population), yet they chose 284 participants from Palestine (having 4 million population). The company justifies its methodology with weight factor (Akgun and Gundogar, 2012: 27). On the other hand, al-Daquoqi's work is a content analysis of documents (especially newspapers) in basic, but he at the same time used surveys which do not have an ability of representation for the research universe qualitatively and quantitatively. In addition, Uysal's study (2011) deals with perception of Turkish affairs as reflected in the Arab media, aiming at reflecting how the developments in Turkey is perceived in Egyptian public opinion after the Arab revolution. It is a documentary research, suggesting that Turkey's image increasingly became positive and the Turkish model was seen as a potential to the huge problems.

Zimet (2009) says he conducted a survey regarding Turkish image in Israel, but unfortunately we could not find such a report or an article, even though

we attempted to get it. What we could get from Zimet himself is a report prepared for a practical purpose, dealing with marketing brand of Turkey to Israelis after Israel's attack on Gaza in 2008. The report does not contain any image measurement data at all, but claims it did. Anyhow, this report suggests that "image of Turkey, a Moslem country, has always been a unique marketing challenge in the process of promoting tourism from Israel to Turkey. Although Israel is a rather small country, it ranks amongst the top 10-15 largest source countries for incoming tourism to Turkey. To tackle the challenge, our promotional campaigns continuously reshape Turkey's image to express the enjoyable and contemporary attractions of the country. In so doing, we successfully offset the negative perception of a political reality wherein Israel is banned by most Moslem countries in the world, thus, creating an apriority prejudicial Israeli attitude towards Turkey."

What distinguishes our study from others is that it deals with a timely problem; the impact of the recent hot political developments in the region on the perception of Turkish and Turkey image by Israeli public by using quantitative data efficiently together with qualitative data. The study is in essence a survey based on a questionnaire, but we also made observations and interviews to eliminate the contradiction of quantitative and qualitative research results and findings, and their discrepancy and insufficiency when used alone (Mechanic 1989). We believe that a more comprehensive and structured analysis of image can be ensured with mixed qualitative and structural quantitative methods.

The paper hypothesizes that the recent political crises do have a strong effect not only on the states and governmental relations but also on the peoples of both societies. However, the effects of these events on people pose a unique feature. The study attempts to investigate how these events have influenced on people's perceptions, imaginations, and interpretations. All these events occurred during current AKP (Justice and Development Party) rule. We would like to throw a glance at these political conflictive issues first, then we will measure how and to what extent they have affected Turkey and Turkish image in Israeli society. The study also aims at setting out the dynamics of image formation and of image changes in Israeli society: ethnicity (Jewish-Arab), edots (Ashkenazi-Sephardi-Sabra), religion, media, and identification. Thus, the study will provide an overall contribution to the lag in the field; to country image theory, image building, and a better understanding the country image in general.

On the base of our field observation and interviews we can argue that what combines these people, differing in race, ethnicity, culture and edots, is that they consider themselves "derelict others" or "lepers". We cannot see a unique common culture in Israel except an outcry of "we have been 'discriminated', 'segregated' and 'oppressed' people". We can easily find it in Jewish literatures. "Most (Jews) had experienced manifestations of anti-Semitism such as discrimination, persecution, and violent attacks." (Kaplan, 2010; Bali, 2011; Hayim, 2011).

Research Design

Universe of the Study

Universe of the study comprises Israeli citizens; Jewry, Arabs and others. Total population of Israel in 2009 is 7.552,000, and of it 5.703,700 (%7.,5) is Jewry, 1.535,600 (%20,3) is Arabs, and 312,700 (%4,1) is other. As for religious structure, Judaists are 5.656,300, Muslims are 1.270,300, Christians are 121,400, Druze are 124,300, and other is 281,900 (CBS, 2010:110-111).

Sample and Sampling of the Study

For a better representation of the sample maximum attention was given while choosing the most representative cities in Israel. A considerable portion of the questionnaires were applied on the trains travelling from Tel Aviv to Haifa and Tel Aviv to Jerusalem lines. The chosen cities for the sample were Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Petah Tiqwa, Bene Beraq, Haifa, Jaleel Region: Umm al Fahm and Akko, and Taiba and Kafr Qasim.

A total of 611 participants were chosen through quota sampling and simple random sampling procedures: Jewry: 449 (73,5), Arabs 151 (24,1), and other: 11 (2,4). But we analyzed the data many times according to Jewry-Arab ethnicity, extracting other. In this case the distribution becomes: Jewry 74.8% and Arabs 25.2%. In addition, we tried to consider the rate of edots (Jewish communities) in sampling procedure. Ashkenazi, Ashkenazi-Sabra: 43.0%, Sephardi, Sephardi-Sabra: 33.0%, Sabra (Israeli born): 24.0%. These rates vary to some extent from some research findings. The main reason is that to be Ashkenazi is a socially desirable value, and in case of intermarriages one considers oneself Ashkenazi.

Date Collection Tool and Procedure

The study presents both descriptive and explanatory characteristics. First the researcher reviewed the relevant literature in Turkey, and he continued the review of literature when he arrived at Israel, and at the same time interviewed with academicians, politicians and lay people from different ethno-religious beliefs. He made observations and took more than thousand camera and video images. He immediately recorded what he interviewed, and observed in the field as soon as possible. If the interviewee was politician he took verbal permission for video recordings. At the same time we followed Israeli and Arab media through internet mostly. This process served for formulation of hypotheses and for determining the indicators, eventually preparing the questions. This process took us nearly two and half months.

In the study a new image measurement scale was produced on the basis of various dimensions suggested by Jenes at all (2008) and Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002); Martin and Eroglu (1993) including the items on politic, economic, technological, historical, tourism, cultural, and social dimensions. In the questionnaire 106 questions were asked, but restricted number of questions is analysed in the paper. Besides few open-ended questions the others were close-ended questions and statement type of questions, rated as a 5-point Likert scale (5= very high and 1= at all).

The questionnaire was initially developed in English. Then a translator rendered the English version to the Hebrew. Six questions that were related to religion and ethnicity were different. Finally, another translator did the translation back to English. A final Hebrew version was printed, and 30 copies were implemented for pre-test. Later 750 copies were produced according to the religion and ethnicity ratio in Israeli society. We could pick up back some 650, omitting those questionnaires not exceeding the first 20 questions during reviewing process.

We then formed the questionnaire, and after pre-test we copied them. The researcher hired one Jewish Ashkenazy female interviewer and one Arab female Muslim interviewer to carry out the survey. The researcher trained them and together with them, distributed the questionnaire to the respondents. Of course, to make Jewish people to participate in the surveys was very difficult in deed in their households. Nevertheless Jews working at workplaces and Arabs in the households easily accepted to fill the

questionnaires. During implementation of the survey the researcher met some difficulties created by some officials and by a few extremists showing their reactions to Turkey and Turks due to the recent political issues. But in general both Jews and Arabs behaved the researcher and the pollsters normal or friendly.

Timing of the Study

For the topic of the study timing was very crucial, since its objective was to measure the impact of political crises on the people's opinion about Turkey and Turkish images. It initiated in Israel in 1st May 2011 and ended in 31st July 2011. Surveys were carried out 15-30 July 2011, when the Mavi Marmara flotilla once again intended to cross the Israeli blockade on Gaza. So, the political and public tension was quite high. But this was an opportunity for the study purpose.

A Brief Overlook to Turks-Jews Historical Relations

We consider useful to have a brief look at Turkish-Jewish historical relations and Israel's social and cultural structure since these relations and societal structures are expected to affect the recent relations in all aspects and public imaginations.

Turkih-Jewish historical relations go back the Seljuk Empire, but Ottoman period is worthy to handle. When Fatih conquered Istanbul, some Jews also were living there. But especially the year 1492 constitutes a milestone in both peoples' relations, when Sephari Jews were expelled from Spain and accepted by the Ottoman State. They held very crucial positions in the empire (www.diyanet.gov.tr; Duzgun, 2006). This togetherness continued with the establishment of Turkish Republic. Some disturbing situations during the transition to the National State overcame in a short period of time, and the good relations re-established as before (Karpat, 1974; Duzgun, 2006). According to common view among the Turkish authorities Jews never rebel against the State, they lived in Turkish rules in safe and welfare, and tolerance and friendship feelings (Duzgun, 2006). But the same opinion cannot be said about Jewish authors. For example, according to Bali (2011), who is a Turkih Jewish, for many of Turkey's Jews, during single-party rule under the Republican People's Party were repeatedly exposed to anti-Semitism, discrimination, and chauvinism on the part of the intellectual elites or the authorities. They were subjected to heavy pressures toward "Turkification", in other words -assimilation into Turkish society-from the

Kemalist political and intellectual elite (Bali, 2011; 1999), and they viewed Jews as an ungrateful. 'Nili' "was the name of a small Jewish underground organization in Palestine during the First World War which helped the British Army liberate Palestine from the Turks" (Zionist Glossary.mht). To argue Turkey-Israel relations in the past were good and friendly looks a single sided pleasing rhetoric. Therefore the images of Turkey and Turkey would probably differ in Israel and in the Jewish world.

Turkey-Israel Relations

As for more recent days' relations, Turkish governments frequently say proudly that Turkey became the first Muslim majority nation to recognize Israel in 1949 shortly after its founding in 1948. And this recognition and the accompanied political relations have been real cause of embarrassments between Turkey and Arab nations (Karpat, 1974) and between Turkey and Israel. But for Israel, relations with Turkey have been a source of pride and legitimacy (Bengio, 2009: 46).

Second part of 1950s is the years when strategic association reached to the top between both countries. But as from 1960s, Turkey's Middle East politics began to show some changes. Turkey's changed politics was seen in Arabian-Israel war in 1967. Turkey explained that it contradicts to take area to use force in war and it blamed Israel. This manner continued in 1970s, especially in 1973 war. As a sum up, it can be said that Turkish-Israel relationships have taken shape according to changed balances in Middle East. Hence, Turkey's relations with Israel have always been an acid test of Turkey (Bali, 2011).

More Recent Israeli-Turkey Political Issues

Relations Before AKP Rule

The 1991 Gulf War and many factors in mid-1990s combined to create a fertile environment for a rapprochement between Turkey and Israel. This rapprochement evolved throughout the last decade rather rapidly with the burgeoning economic relations and the signing of a free trade agreement, increasing cooperation in cultural and educational issues, and perhaps most importantly with the signing of several agreements advancing military security cooperation between the two countries (Altunisik, 2000; Uysal, 2011). In these years the Turkish army and military elite was wirepuller and held very close links with Israel. They played a leading role in the

rapprochement and dictated Turkey's foreign policy lines (Bengio, 2009). Even according to Laciner (2012:194) Israel backed the military elite in the 28 February postmodern coup to topple Refah-Yol coalition government.

The improvement of Turkey-Israel relations beginning in mid-1990s made it possible for Turkey to assume such a third party role (Altunisik and Cuhadar, 2010). Numerous changes in the international system and the regional dynamics begin with the 1990s have affected Turkey's new orientation towards the Middle East conflicts (Altunisik and Cuhadar, 2010). This transformation not only led to Turkey's now image a civilian-economic power, in intuition to its already existing military might, but also led to increasing confidence. These developments encumbered a more constructive foreign policy role for Turkey, lad to improvement in Turkey's relations with its neighbours and to the emergence of a more positive image of Turkey in the region (Altunisik and Cuhadar, 2010).

Relations During AKP Rule

After coming to power in 2002, the government of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) worked to forge close relations with neighbours and a profound transformation took place in Turkey's foreign policy towards the Middle East as an outcome of domestic and regional developments. But this transformation has been perceived and interpreted by the actors of the region quite differently, since the actors have been in conflicts among themselves since decades. For example, many Israelis consider the rise to power of AKP as a potential threat to Israel: the rise of ultranationalist and Islamic trends pose a potential threat to Turkey's relations with the state of Israel and brought with it anti-Semitism (Bengio, 2009: 45; Bali, 2011). According to Bengio (2009; 2010b) under the rule of AKP Turkey made a U-turn by changing its previous military-backed-strategy and affiliating with Iran and Hamas, that are the most deadly enemies of Israel.

We can trace the perception of Turkey's current Middle East policy a Foreign Ministry source told to Today's Zaman (www.yenisafak.com) "In the past there was scepticism of Turkey's intentions in undertaking an active role in the Middle East. There was this obsession with the Ottoman past. Today they realize that Turkey is sincere in its efforts. They willingly come to and collaborate with Turkey…", and "… the Arab world is not only receptive to

Turkey's role but also has a feeling of reverence toward Turkey and the Turkish prime minister".

Most of the factors that helped bring about a rapprochement between Turkey and Israel in the 1990s have changed drastically in recent years after Israel's attacks on Lebanon in 2006, especially on Gaza in 2008, and killed more than 1400 people. Later on, Prime Minister Erdogan showed his reaction at Davos Summit, and finally with Mavi Marmara crises it raised up the peak. Since then any of the common denominators between the two countries no longer prevail anymore. Three major issues are involved: the changing strategic map of the region, the impact of these changes on Turkish-Israeli relations, and the impact of the recent crises on the relations.

Israel's Attack on Gaza

The recent political relations first time crucially alarmed because Turkey's role in the Middle East issues in general and in Palestinian cause in particular. The Israeli three-week offensive in Gaza had an extremely damage both countries' relations. Turkey's reaction to the offensive became harsh on both the official and popular level. Prime Minister Erdogan led the way by warning Israeli leaders that history will judge them for the black stain they are leaving on humanity. He even went as far as to declare that the blood of the dead Palestinian children would not be left on the floor, and that Israel's deeds were 'a crime against humanity' 'disrespectful behaviour against Turkey', 'we'll not take side with the oppressors' (Bengio, 2009: 52; Hurriyet, 2009).

Davos Summit (One Minute) 2009

Short after Israel's attack on Gaza, the Davos incident broke out in World Economic Forum 2009 at the end of January in which Prime Minister Erdogan demonstratively walked off the stage during his debate with Israeli President Shimon Peres by protesting the mediator in appearance. Erdogan's reaction and his speech during negotiation made him a hero by not only by Turks but also Gazans and all Muslim worlds. Later times, Erdogan continued to display his reaction openly in various statements in a very emotional manner. Erdogan was extremely concerned with the fact that the Israeli operation started immediately after Israeli Prime Minister Olmert's visit to Ankara where he discussed with his Turkish counterparts the last round of Israeli-Syrian talks.

Danny Ayalon's Attitude toward Turkish Ambassador in 2010

Israel Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon publicly snubbed Turkey's ambassador during Davos Summit over his country's persistent criticism of the Jewish state in regard to Israel's offensive on Gazans, with a government official refusing to shake the envoy's hand and making him sit on a lower seat at a meeting. As the meeting started, Ayalon told cameramen the ambassador was pointedly seated on a sofa lower than his own chair. He also noted there was no Turkish flag on display and that Israeli officials weren't smiling. Turkey's Foreign Ministry issued a statement calling on Israel "to abide by diplomatic courtesy and respect." (Associated Press, 2010).

Mavi Marmara Flotilla Raid 2010

The assault, which targeted the lead Mavi Marmara resulted in nine dead and dozens injured, most of them Turkish activists. Turkey is shocked and outraged not only because of the killing and wounding of innocent activists, but also because this is the first such attack against civilian Turkish citizens by a foreign military force in our republic's 87-year history.

One of the greatest diplomatic casualties of the Israeli raid on the Turkish-led Gaza freedom flotilla may be irreversible damage to Turkey-Israel relations (Shleifer, 2010). Following the flotilla raid, Turkey summoned its ambassador to Israel back to Ankara, and has not yet sent back to Tel Aviv since then. Prime Minister Erdogan branded the Israeli operation as a "bloody massacre deserving every kind of curse," and declared that "if America did not punish Israel for insolently trampling on human decency, Turkey would." He said "Hamas is not a terrorist organization, since they are Palestinians in resistance fighting for their own land, whereas the Israelis were no better than Somali pirates" (Bengio, 2010).

As Israel gets an international scolding for the deaths in a botched Israeli raid on the Gaza freedom flotilla that challenged Israel's three-year blockade, the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has come under a storm of criticism from Israelis themselves (Mitnick, 2010).These political developments have strengthened Turkey's hand in the region, and got good deal of sympathy in the Arab and Islamic world (Shleifer, 2010). There is now more reason for Turkey to take a more active part in the events of the Middle East, and it can justify its anti-Israeli positions since it has suffered personally from this attack. All the political events mentioned so far

would affect the perceptions of images of Turkey and Turkish people in Israeli society in some way.

Impact of The Recent Political Relations on The Perception of Turkey and Turkish Images

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Definition of Country Image

Three main approaches are known in the conceptual terms of country image: general country image definitions, product-country image definitions, and country related product image (country-of-origin) definitions (Jenes, 2010). In this study will explain the topic within the theoretical framework of general image approach, which is a relatively newer one. In this approach it is widely recognized that the name of a country can often act in a similar way as the name of a brand (Anholt, 2002). Countries, like items in the supermarket, sell better with clever advertising. Therefore Israel, long frustrated by its image as a country tarnished by danger and strife, and -like Turkey (Zimet, 2009) and other countries- wants to rebrand itself -as hip, cool, cultured, fun and creative (Economist, 2008). In most of the cases the main aim is to promote a country and its cultural, economic and political interest.

Country image studies are very few, and if any, they are mainly concentrated on country of origin for the purpose of marketing goods and services. And it has been studied extensively in consumer research and international marketing to measure affect of country image in a consumer's attitudes or purchasing intentions towards foreign products (Martin and Eroglu, 1993; Jenes 2010; Jenes at all, 2010). But country image should possess much broader meanings and implications, and is also examined by the researchers in the fields of international relations/affairs, sociology, social psychology, and theory of cultural differences, societal and historical development.

Nagashima (1970) defines country image as the picture, the reputation, and the stereotype that businessmen and consumers attach to products of a specific country. Country image is an overall picture of a specific country. According to Martin and Eroglu (1993), country image is the complete set of descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs about that given country. Country image is the sum of beliefs, ideas, impressions (Kotler et. al. 1993)

and perceptions (Allred et. al. 1999) people have about a given country or places. The impressions or perceptions regarding a certain country rely on the country's economic condition, political structure, culture, conflict with other countries, labour conditions, and stand on environmental issues.

In practice, country image can be either spontaneous (individual pre-conceived ideas) or can be directed and consequently formed and modified somehow by external factors, and continuously change and shape internal and external country images (Jenes, 2010; Jenes at all, 2010). Country image is formed on the basis of experience and opinions about the nation or country and on, primarily, information received through the various channels such as politics (internal affairs and foreign policy), telecommunication (phon, tv, internet), entertainment (movies) and rumour. Country image, in more broader sense, includes many elements such as national symbols, colours, clothing, typical buildings, objects, tunes, pieces of literature, specialties of the political system, customs, historical and cultural heritage and national symbols and many more (Jenes, 2010).

According to traditional image interpretations, country image is a mental representation process (Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999) and formed in consumers' minds and can be heavily influenced by conscious communication through education, training, advertisement and propaganda. Thus people's spontaneous evaluation of any given country might be shaped and controlled through an established country image concept accompanied by well-designed, targeted communication efforts through mass media. With regards to its direction, Jenes (2007: 40) suggests two types of country image internal country image 'what citizens think about their own country' and external county image 'what others/foreigners think about our country'.

Dimensions of Country Image and Its Measurement

The dimensions of a country image comprise foreign environmental influence, the politics or political environment, cultural environment, economic environment (Wang and Lamb 1983), appearance, culture, people and economy, natural landscape, climate, competence, creativity, positive and negative feelings, tourism, economic and political situation, public safety, culture, people (Jenes at all, 2008).

People's beliefs about countries may be descriptive, informative or inductive, and these beliefs are formed in different ways. Descriptive beliefs

are established through experience while informative beliefs are shaped by information from external sources (e.g. media, friends). Inductive beliefs originate from the perception of a relationship between some past event and a stimulus in the present. The impact of these direct and indirect experiences on people, are important factors considering country image (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Jenes 2010).

Although evolving and getting more attention recent times country image is not a well-defined construct and findings from different studies often conflict due to the different measurements used (Li, Fu and Murray 1997; Roth, 2006; Jenes, 2010). It can be summed up main and common characteristics of county image for measurement:

1. Country image is what people think about a certain country, comprising: i) impressions; ii) ideas, iii) stereotypes; iv) schemas; v) associations; vi) perceptions; vii) attitudes; viii) beliefs.

2. Country image is a multidimensional concept, and its general dimensions are: i) economic environment; ii) cultural environment; iii) political environment; iv) geographical environment/natural endowments; v) technological development; vi) people; vii) tourism; viii) emotions/feelings. The topic of country image is a rather diverse one, with some sub-topics partially overlapping and complementing each other (Jenes, 2007).

Survey Findings

Israel's Social and Cultural Structure

According to Davutoglu (2011: 373) Israel needs to be analyzed in a more extensive manner as a political element that such factors as Semitism, anti-Semitism, Zionism and Judaism having historical depth and brought it out. And it is so understood that sustenance and solidarity of Israeli society relies on these conjunctive elements. Therefore we tried to investigate the role of Zionism and anti-Semitism in the imaginations of Israelis.

Reason of Immigration to Israel and Role of Zionism

A central tenet of Zionism is that Jews share a common heritage and destiny. Zionist ideology plays a fundamental role in the establishment of a Jewish state, maintenance of Jewish culture, and the later political developments. It can be proclaimed that existence of Israeli state depends on continuation of

this ideology. For this reason, declining attachment to this ideology is considered as a declining attachment to Israel (see www.jawishagency.org). The 2000/2001 National Jewish Population Survey found that the major Jewish membership organizations in the United States suffered a nearly 20% decline in affiliation over the decade of the 1990s alone. The study also found that younger American Jews are less likely than their elders to strongly agree that ''Jews in the United States and Jews around the world share a common destiny.'' American Jews today tend to have fewer Jewish friendships, and an increasing number of Jews state that their best friends are not Jewish (Waxman, 2010: 228).

Another study (www.jawishagency.org) showed that a declining attachment of young Jews to Israel over a wide variety and large number of indicators testifies to the breadth, depth and irrefutable nature of that decline. "Each Jewish age group is less Israel-attached than its elders, suggesting we are in the midst of a long-term and ongoing decline in Israel attachment" (www.jawishagency.org). Taking into consideration of probable impact of Zionist ideology on the perceptions of the Israelis regarding Turkey and Turkish images, we have questioned this subject in the survey.

According to our findings 65.4% of the Jews see the main cause of their immigration to Israel is Zionist ideology. For only 13.8% 'better economic life' is a cause for their immigration. More interesting point is that those stating 'save ourselves from discrimination' remains 6.1% and 'more religious life' only 2.0%. The data suggest that religion or religious life either is not considered an important role player for the Jewish immigrants or they were not suppressed because of their religious beliefs and activities. So, understanding of the role and function of Zionist ideology for the Israeli society gains more and more significance in this case. They thereby would evaluate every undesirable incident against Zionism and their Zionist and Semitic identity.

Role of Zionism in the identification of Israelis' identities

Zionist ideology has a strong role combining Jews around a single nation. Therefore it is expected this ideology should be a decisive in Jewish identification. In the study, 65.2% of the respondents stated that they identify themselves Jewish Zionist Israeli, and only 6.0% stated Jewish non-Zionist Israeli. Another interesting point here is that while 14.4% of the Arab respondents identify themselves as 'Arab Palestinian Israeli', only 5.6% identified themselves as 'Arab Palestinian', and 2.1% as "Arab Zionist

Israeli". This result indicates that a great majority of the Arabs in Israel are accepting Israeli identity and even Zionist ideology to a very small extent. Although there are some disagreements among the researchers in a number of points, general tendency of the findings shows significantly declining attachments to Israeli Jewish identity in abroad (Waxman, 2010).

Immigration to Israel and Edots

Israeli society is consisted of heavily immigrants, and Jews are subdivided according to their country of origin and ethnicity. The Jewish "ethnic sub-groups" are referred to as "Edot". Although it is possible to identify dozens and perhaps even hundreds of Jewish "edot" in Israel, the notion of ethnic identity is associated primarily with immigrant groups, and they are marked by four prominent social and geo-cultural divisions. Orthodox observant (haradim) vs. secular, veteran settlers (sabra) vs. new immigrants (olim), the haves vs. the have-nots and Geo-cultural origin (European (Ashkenazi) vs. Middle Eastern or Oriental (Sephardi)). The last dimension has often been the source of ethnic humour –gefilte fish vs. shish kebab, but is in fact, a serious "kulturkampf" over the image of the country (Berdichevsky, 2009). Although Sephardi Jews, like Ashkenazi, came in limited numbers to live in Israel throughout history, larger numbers of Sephardi Jews (for example from Bulgaria and Turkey) came to Israel only after its establishment in 1948.

Israel is a roundup Jewish state; its inhabitants -beside Arabs and a few ratio of veteran Jews- are immigrants from tens of different countries, races, cultures and subcultures, ethnicities, and even to some extent religious beliefs such Judaism, atheism, theism, etc. around the globe, and this feature distinguishes it from other states. Among the immigrants from Turkey 78,700 people, and 1,4% of the total population. Immigrants from the former USSR are the highest ratio with 16.1%, and Morocco is the second with an 8.9% (495,200 people). Using the criteria of father's birthplace, as of December 31, 1993, 39.9% of Israeli Jews were of European and American origin (Ashkenazim for the most part), 36.3% were of Asian or African origin (essentially Oriental Jews) and 23.8% were of Israeli origin. It would appear, at present, that there is a numerical balance between Ashkenazim and Oriental Jews. But by the time of Israeli origins' (veterans) rate has arrived 38.7% (CBS, 2010: 156).

The correlation between political and ethnic divisions tends to focus attention on ethnic particularities. According to Berdichevsky (2009) and

Kaplan (2011) Israeli political parties, with the exception of Shas and a few short-lived ethnic parties, have not identified with the interests of particular "edot". However, many Oriental Jews support the Likud and other more hard-line parties whereas most Ashkenazim support Labour and parties on the so-called Left. The success in reaching positions of influence within a particular party, most Ashkenazi and Oriental Jews find themselves voting against each other at election time. But ethnic identity is not felt by most Israelis to be a matter of great importance.

Jews in different lands and living under different social, cultural and religious conditions developed different customs, manners and cultural expressions. Immigrants brought with them their values and traditions, and these cultural features in turn would influence their imaginations about any country or nation. In the study we determined the ratios of edots: Ashkenazi, Ashkenazi-Sabra 43.0%, Sephardi, Sephardi-Sabra 33.0%, Sabra (Israeli born) 24.0%. These rates vary to some degree from some research findings. The main reason is that to be Ashkenazi is a socially desirable value, and in case of intermarriages one considers oneself Ashkenazi. Of course there might be probable sampling error, too.

Israelis' Relations with Turkey

Relations with Turkey and Countries Israelis mostly Visit

As stated above, larger numbers of Sephardi and Oriental Jews came to Israel from the countries which were once Turkish land. Such a common historical relationship would make Israelis question their past via documents like literatures or via physical structures like buildings, bridges, tombs etc., and via their Turkey-immigrant neighbours. Those Jews immigrated from Turkey to Israel are expected to play an interactionist role in both countries' relations, since some of them still have close ties with Turkey and double citizenship, and speak Turkish fluently as opposed to common Turkish belief.

Leisen (2001) suggested that tourists 'choice between the various destinations depends on the favourable image of the places in question. Image acts as a transmitter of tourists' expectations to the destination, thus the images in the individuals' minds might lead to marketing success. The marketability of any destination is always vulnerable to sudden changes in market perception. Political or economical instability or a sudden crisis can transform the reputation, desirability and marketability of most popular

tourism destination overnight. A research (Zimet, 2009) in 2004 indicated that Turkey is mostly associated with the 'sea, sun' images.

In social life people communicate and interact more frequently with their friends and neighbours. Therefore Turkey-immigrant Jewry would tell stories that they either themselves experienced or listened from their elders about Turkey and Turkish people. Thus they would be influenced what they have learned and will make up their perceptions, expectations and images, in short, their subcultures. They would put their opinions accordingly.

Our survey data demonstrate that 22.4% of Israelis have a Turkey-immigrant neighbour or friend. And the countries Israelis visited most is USA 15.7%, then Turkey 12.4%. Egypt, France, Italy, and Greek are lower visited places as compare to Turkey. Of the respondents 55.1% have visited Turkey at least once. The data also indicated that the former SSRU immigrants do not frequently visit their previous home.

Official documents show that Israelis started to visit more frequently Turkey in 2000. The year 2000 marked an all-time record: 311,000 Israelis visited and toured Turkey- an impressive increase of 54% compared to 1999, the year of the earthquake. 560,000 Israelis visiting Turkey in 2008 secured its prominence as Israel's number one outbound tourism brand, indicating that branding of a country, similar to many consumer products, has to be emotionally appealing with high conversational and celebrity value (Zimet, 2009).

Purpose of Visit to Turkey and Sources of Information

The purpose of the Israelis' visit to Turkey differs. But as it is expected tourism took first turn: 83.4%, commerce second: 4.6% and visiting relatives and friends third: 4.3%. For those visiting Turkey the most interactive feature is availability of lots of sightseeing 42.7%, country history 16.6%, attractive culture 14.9%, good climate 13.0%.

We questioned where Israelis get their information on Turkey and Turks. Given them right of choosing more than one answer category, they stated that: TV 58.4, Own Experience 29.6, Printed press 27.2, Communication with friends, family and so on 22.7, Radio 20.9, Social Network 11.8, literature and movies 11.1, Internet forums 10.6, Special web sites 6.5, Turkish Tourist Information Office in Tel Aviv 3.8. It is understood that Israelis' images are formed heavily through media. It is expected that Israeli media would affect

public opinion on Turkey and Turkish images according to their interests or relations with Turkey.

Image of Turkey and Turkish People In Israeli Society

While measuring image we traced two types of questions: (i) open-ended questions about Turkey ("Please write 2 positive characteristics of Turkey.", "Please write 2 negative characteristics of Turkey.") and Turkish people (Please write 2 positive characteristics of Turkish people.", "Please write 2 negative characteristics of Turkish people."), and (ii) close-ended questions; the first set of questions consisting of 22 items about Turkey and the second set consists of 19 items about Turkish people. We thought that such a method would serve the purpose more effectively.

Israelis' Positive Images on Turkey

Among the most frequently stated-positive images of Turkey are country and geography-related answers such as 'good county/geography, beautiful country/geography, nice country/geography' 19.1%, sea-water-vista 10.8%, people 10.6%, tourism and tourists 8.7%, cheap 6.9% and boarding 6.3%. This result points out that Turkey due to its geographic situation per se has a very high positive image and value for Israelis.

Israelis' Negative Images on Turkey

As for the negative image of Israelis on Turkey, among the most frequently stated-negative images are (political) Relations with Israel 20.2%, Religion and Islam 18.6%, Anti-Semitism and Zionism 9.1%, Nervous people, bad treatment 7.8%, Relations with Arabs 7.5% and boarding 6.3%, and Untrustworthy and hypocrisy 7.2%. It appears that Turkey image is evaluated on the basis of political and religious understandings (38.8%). Even anti-Semitism and Zionism, and relation with Arabs, and untrustworthy and hypocrisy all (22.5%) can be considered as a result of the same understanding and interpretation.

If we compare numbers of the respondents who mentioned positive and/or negative images, we can see that while 554 items of positive image perception were written, 307 items of negative image perception were written. That means that Turkey has much more positive images than negative images in Israeli society; 64,3% of the respondents who wrote any answers mentioned a positive idea, perception, impression or evaluation,

and 35.7% of them mentioned negative ones about Turkey. If we care the time of conducting the survey, it may be considered as an optimist result.

Turkish People Positive Images

One's considerations and perceptions may differ about a country and its people. While finding country beautiful one may not evaluate the people at the same manner. However the ideal one is that images of both country and people should proceed on the same line. In addition, to distinguish country and people, while rating them, may not be obvious. They may be evaluated in intercommunicative or interactively. Our survey data clearly put forth that Turkey and Turkish people images are perceived together.

For example, while Israelis evaluate Turkey image, a given portion of their perceptions are related to Turkish people. Answering the relevant question they state that good people (10.6%), Turks behave tourists in a proper manner (8.7%), hospitality (4.5%) is high, (not knowing foreign) language (= communication problem), and discriminations all are related to peoples relations and interactions with each other rather than country itself. It appears that both country and people in combination have interactive influence and disclose country image better. For this reason we examined Israeli public opinion on Turkish people image evaluations.

The number of those responding this set of questions is 256, being less than that of those responding the Turkey (country) image 554. That means that Israeli people do not know Turkish people enough to be able to express their opinions, beliefs, and impressions. Another point needs to underline is that while Israelis are in Turkey, they do not interact with native people; they come, eat and drink, enjoy and turn back.

The most remarkable images of Turkish people perceived by Israelis are 'respectful, good, nice, humble, noble' 18.1%, 'moral, decent, merciful' 18.0%, 'genial, good-humoured, friendly, trustworthy' 12.9% , 'hospitable, generous' 12.5%, and 'religion, Islam, religiosity' 5.1%. It might be come into mind that how Jews bear positive image about Islam and religiosity. We should remind that the sample of the study is consisted of Arab Muslims, too. Such kind of views is of them as mentioned below.

Negative Perceptions of Turkish People Images

One of the most distinctive features of Jewish culture is that they always claim they were and have been treated badly throughout history (Kaplan, www.jewishagency.org). Such a hate would result in a hate. As discussed above Turkish policy in respect to Middle East has been changed crucially after a number of political hot events such as Israel's attack on Gaza in 2008, Davos Summit (One Minute) 2009, Danny Ayalon's attitude toward Turkish Ambassador in 2010 and the latest and the most staggering occasion Mavi Marmara Flotilla raid 2010. And these events and political developments would cause negative imaginations.

Negative images of Israelis on Turkish people concentrate on certain number of points: Turks are 'our enemy' 17.8, they hate Israel and Israelis 10.5, pro-Arab people 9.2, rude and crude people 9.2, anti-Semitic people 6.6, discrepant, hypocrite, betrayer people 6.6, and issues related to tradesmen 5.9.

Those stating their opinions negatively in regard to Turkish people is 152 people/responses, and this number is much less than that those stating their opinions in favourable manner 256 people/responses. Comparing the number of the positive and negative images of the respondents we can conclude that Israeli people in general have more positive images on Turkish people than that they have negative ones.

But we should immediately point out that the sample includes Arabs, and most of them do not have negative attitude to Turkish people. So, it appears mandatory of cross tabulation between ethnicity; Arabs and Jewry. From Jews 149 (89.2%) respondents and from the Arabs (Christians and Druze included) 18 (10.8%) respondents responded to this question. Arabs hold less negative images on Turkish people than that Jews do. The relation is very significant (P= .000). Arabs also have more positive images on Turks than that Jews do. The relation here is very significant, too (P= .000). It appears that religion plays an important role in image formation.

Total Performance of Turkey and Turkish People Images in Israeli Society

As briefly explained above, in order to measure the images of Turkey and Turkish people we asked close-ended questions consisting of 22 items about country image and 19 items about people image. We summed up these items, and measured the **total** images of Turkey and Turkish people.

Table 1. Total performance of Turkey image by ethnicity

Evaluation of Turkey Image Performance	Ethnicity			
	Jewry	Arabs	Other	Total
Very high	16,6	33,6	36,4	21,9
High	26,1	29,9	20,6	27,1
Somewhat	34,4	25,3	21,5	31,5
Little	14,3	8,0	11,2	12,5
Not at all	8,6	3,2	10,3	7,0
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

"Please evaluate Turkish people in point of following items according to your knowledge, imagination and impression."

While 33.6% of Arabs evaluated Turkey image performance very high, 16.6% of Jews evaluated it very high. And while 3.2% of Arabs is not appreciated with Turkey image at all, 8.6% of Jews are not appreciated with Turkey image at all. Arabs have much higher positive images than Jews do (P= .000).

Table 2. Total performance of Turkish people image by ethnicity

Evaluation of People Image Performance	Ethnicity			
	Jewry	Arabs	Other	Total
Very high	15,5	21,8	17,2	17,2
High	23,7	28,2	17,2	24,8
Somewhat	33,4	28,2	27,6	31,9
Little	18,4	12,8	13,8	16,8
Not at all	9,0	9,0	24,1	9,3
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

"Please evaluate Turkish people in point of following items according to your knowledge, imagination and impression."

We can observe a same tendency regarding Turkish people image. While 21.8% of Arabs evaluate Turkish people image very high, 15.5% of Jews evaluate it very high. The sensory difference between the ethnic groups is quit meaningful (P= .000). When we analyze the data in accordance with religious affiliations, we see that while 32.9% of Muslims find Turkey image very high, only 15.7% of Jews find it very high, and 24.9% of Christians find it very high. The relationship between the religious groups is very significant (P= .000). We can understand that religion and ethnicity are important factors for image formation. Muslims and Christians are from the same ethnic group, and their images overlap in a considerable level.

Prime Minister Erdogan Image in Israel

According to Jordanian columnist Hamadeh Faraneh Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular perceived Turkey's stance during the recent Gaza carnage with reverence and veneration. Turkey's new activism will reshape Arab feelings toward Turkey. "Today, Turkey overcame the memories of World War I. I can say that since World War I, Turkey's image in the Arab world has never been better" (Balcı, 2009).

Observing Turkey's strong stance against Israel's operations in Gaza and the harsh language used by Prime Minister Erdogan to criticize Israel, the Arab streets and intellectuals have started to question their perceptions of Turkey. In Israel and Palestine we made interviews with tens of people from every status in regard to Turkey and Turkish people. During interviews the two names came into discussion more frequently; Erdogan and Mavi Marmara. We observed that while Arabs approved Erdogan's policies regarding Middle East and appreciated his support for Arab uprising, on contrary, Jews were sceptical on him and a considerable number of them hate him, charging him with being anti-Semitic and fundamentalist/radical Islamist. Even we twice encountered with that an Arab musician group was praising Erdogan and criticizing Arab leaders while singing native songs. Such a situation is expected to refer in survey data, too.

Table 3. PM Erdogan's image by ethnic identities

Responses	Ethnicity			
	Jewry		Arabs	
	f	%	f	%
He has developed Turkey	28	3,6	48	25,8
He is a very strong political figure	105	13,5	63	33,9
Turkish foreign policy gained respect in his leadership	29	3,7	26	14,0
He is an ordinary man, not worthy to care	20	4,0	3	4,0
He has brought Turkey back	116	14,9	9	4,8
He is an extremist Muslim	112	14,4	5	2,7
He is a very dangerous person for Israel	115	14,8	5	2,7
He is an enemy of Zionism	84	10,8	4	2,2
He has very strong anti-Semitic feelings	130	16,7	4	2,2
Other	38	4,9	19	10,2
Total	777*	100,0	186	100,0

The participants were allowed to give more than one response!

In the question we asked three degrees of images: positive, neutral, and negative respectively. The analysis indicated that while total positive imaginations rated by Jewry is 20.8% and their total negative imaginations rate is 71.6%; as for Arabs, their total positive image rate is 59.7% and their total negative image rate is 14.6%. Among the negative images of Jewry on Erdogan 'He has very strong anti-Semitic feelings' is the highest ratio with 16.7%. As pointed out previously, the most distinctive characteristic of Israeli Jews is that they have a prejudice that whoever does not approve Israeli policies is a (at least potential) anti-Semitic. To our observations Israel's politics depends on a conflicting strategy. So, Israeli Jews are usually propagated latently that 'others' are anti-Semitic and are not trustworthy. For us, for this reason a considerable number (52.6%) of Jews perceive Turkish people anti-Semitic.

Turkey's Role in the Arab Uprising

We observed that Israeli media and people with number of whom we made intervies trace PM Erdogan's declarations regarding Arab uprising. The study was carried out in a time when Arab uprising was lasting in full career. We asked the participants how they consider Turkey's role on the Arab uprising. They see Turkey's role in the Arab uprising effectively: those citing very effective 16.7%, effective 24.2%, and ineffective 15.7% and very ineffective 5.9%. 40.9% of Isaelis evaluate Turkey's role on the Arab uprising very significant.

The Most Influential Factor that modified Israelis' Opinions About Turkey and Turks

We inquired whether the recent political issues such as Israel's raid on Gaza, Davos Summit, Danny Ayalon's humiliating attitude to the Turkish ambassador, Mavi Marmara flotilla affected Israelis' beliefs about Turks and/or Turkey. Overwhelming majority of the respondents (74.2%) stated that these events affected their views on Turkey and Turkish people, and 25.8% stated that they did not affect. We asked a question to the respondents how the recent political issues affected their opinions. Majority of the respondents stated that they were affected negatively 37.6% and 30.2% very negatively. However, 9.8% of them answered they were affected very positively and 10.1% of them were affected positively.

The most influential factor in the Israelis' opinion change positively or negatively about Turks and/or Turkey is Mavi Marmara raid 69.4%, Israel's

attack on Gaza in 2008 12.1% and Danny Ayalon's humiliating attitude to Turkish Ambassador 10.9%, and Davos Summit (One Minute) 2009 7.7%. Thus it is understood that all of the recent events have contributed to some degree to Turkey and Turkish images in Israeli society, but Mavi Marmara is the most crucial one.

No doubt media has an influence on the public opinions. A research (Engin and Gül, 2010) using content analysis of four national newspapers in Turkey and applying framing analysis examined how the selected newspapers framed the image of Prime Minister Erdogan and national image of Turkey after the Davos incident, and found that the newspapers differ in their portrayal of the incident and in their construction of the images of Erdogan and Turkey. Newspapers in the republican-laic side of the political spectrum in Turkey assessed the incident in negative terms and reflected a more negative image for both Prime Minister Erdogan and Turkey, whereas newspapers with a conservative- democrat line portrayed more positive images. To see how Israeli media has an effect on the Israeli public opinion, we asked which newspaper they read, and compared the result through cross tabulation.

The survey findings showed that 91.1% of Maariv newpaper's readers and 88.8% of Yediot Ahronot's readers and 71.9% of Haaretz stated they were affected. After the Ki-Square test difference between the newspapers was determined as very meaningful (P= .000). Haaretz is a secular-leftist newspaper and known as more neutral. It appears that Israeli media also has an influential power in directing public opinions in regard to Turkish image in line of their government.

Israeli newspapers' reader comments regarding the issues of Mavi Marmara flotilla to come second time to Gaza in July 2011 and of PM Edogan attracted our attention very much. The most influential newspaper Yediot Ahronot in Hebrew and English was containing hundreds of reader comments in its web sites. We had Hebrew comments translated into English or Arabic languages (that the research speaks). We could not see almost one single positive comment on this issue. Moreover, they were quit irritant and sadistic. As we could not observe such a rigid attitude in Israeli society, we inquired this situation in depth through survey. In order to understand whether such comments were added to canalize the public opinion or not, we asked to the respondents "If Mavi Marmara or other aid flotillas would come to Gaza, how should Israel react?".

It is very interesting that 43.7% of the respondents were in the opinion that the flotilla must be obstructed 'with a more suitable policy than that before'. This response is very rational as compared to the newspapers' reader comments, 'kill only mischief-makers as before' 18.7% and 'bomb and kill all of them' 4.9%. This result clearly indicates that the reader comments regarding Mavi Marmara and Erdogan were added to manipulate the Israeli public opinion and to create social solidarity at home intentionally on the one hand, and to affect international public opinion, on the other.

Analysing the role of ethnicity in the interpretation of Mavi Marmara issue, we see that it plays very significant role; while 64.9% of the Arabs are in the opinion that the supporters should be allowed to help Gaza, only 6.6% of the Jewry are in this view (P= .000).

Israelis' Perception of Anti-Semitism in Turkey and Turks

'Anti-Semitism' can be methodologically defined as a measurement tool to weigh one's attitudes toward Jews. One may encounter with this concept everywhere. If one is in favour of Israel that means one is pro-Israeli and Semitic. Otherwise, one is anti-Semitic.

More than one third (36.2%) of the respondents have no idea about whether Turks have any anti-Semitic sentiments. However, 35.3% believe that Turks have strong anti-Semitic feelings and 17.3% believe it is very strong. The question coming to mind is that how and where Israelis obtain such opinions. While replying the open-ended image questions Israelis did not mention very high negative image expression on Turkey and Turks, here more than half (52.6%) of them stated that Turks are anti-Semitic. Even among the negative images -it must not be forgotten that only 307 responses were given, although they have a right of giving two answers to the relevant question- we cannot come across with such responses very much: "Anti-Semitism-Zionism (9.1%), discrimination (1.3%)"; that constitute only a small portion of the total negative impressions. From here it can be concluded that Israelis are very biased about Turks. Religion-Islam and relations with Arabs (27.7%) is the most determinative root of their bias.

To dig out this matter a little more, we asked to the Israelis what the real reason of the fact that they do not visit Turkey. We cannot see here also very high negative imaginations as a reason of not visiting Turkey. Rather, 'state and company oppression' may be considered very high 25.0%. Those stating 'I protest Turkey by not visiting' are 33.4% and 'it is heresy to the Zionist

consciousness' are 15.5%. For us the most interesting point here is that societal pressure is very low in Israeli society only 1.5% and on contrast, state (18.8%) and company (6.2%) oppression is quite high 25.0%, those stating 'if I go, I would be attacked on' 18.3%. We can conclude that Israel is a much organised state, using oppression on its citizens through its agencies, like companies, media, and so on. To support our view we would like bring a qualitative data from the field; once a security man (having arm) stopped the researcher at a train station and asked why he did not take a newspaper, although it is free. The researcher surprised very much and felt pressure. As he said he was a foreigner, and could not speak Hebrew the security allowed him to go ahead. There were hundreds of news paper in the compartments, and a considerable number of people were reading them.

Discussion and Conclusion

Historical ties and cultural associations have a determing role in the past relations and present interactions in the people imaginations, perceptions and evaluations of the social, cultural and political events. As a great portion of Israelis and Turks were once the citizens of the same state and the members of common culture, their past relations function as a stabilizer and constructive role for the maintenance of smoother social and political relations than the politicians' or states' relations. Both our qualitative and quantitative data demonstrate that political events possess very significant effect in the imaginations of the people, and even though they are influenced or forced to be influenced in accordance with the goverments' political evaluation and interpretation of the circumstances, they insist for their preestablished imaginations. As a result of this fact, Israeli people images on Turkey and Turkish people are relatively much optimistic than that are reflected through the politicians' languages in Israili media. When looked at the survey data as a hole, it appears that Israelis evaluate Turkey and Turkish images more positively. The number of positive responses to open-ended questions much higher than that of nevative ones; it is somewhat less than twice: Turkey positive image: 64.3% nevative image: 35.7% and Turkish people positive image: 62.8% and negative image 37.2%). In addition, other obvious evidence in this regard is that Turkey is still the most visited country by Israelis despite heavy pressures from the state of Israel and companies (25.0%).

The survey data in regard to total performance of Turkey and Turkish people images through concrete items (i.e. close-ended questions) show that

Jews evaluate Turkish image more positively as compared to the fact that they evaluate it through open-ended questions. Yet, we can infer that Israelis, especially Jews are very biased about Turkey and Turkish people, and media has an influential role in this concern. Israeli media intentionally tried to manipulate public opinion in regard to political developments such Israel's raid on Mavi Marmara flotilla and Gaza. Newspapers' reader-comments are the obvious proof of this. Despite the most influential newspaper Yediot Ahronot's web sites comprised hundereds of irritant and sadistic reader comments, as if Israeli society has settled on one single certain opinion, that is 'kill mischief makers, bomb and kill all of them on board' we could not observe such a general extrimist attitude in Israeli society. After diging out this issue through survey, and analysing the relevant question we can suggest that such comments were added to canalize the public opinion: more than half of the Jewish participants' views were realistic; 52.7% cited 'prevent them (the aid activists) with a more suitable policy than that before'. We, however, never ignore the existence of a quite high countable of the extrimists 29.1% in Israeli soceity, stating 'kill only mischief-makers as before', 'bomb and kill all of them'. Our objection is to the huge gap between our findings and number of newspaper reader comments! If only extremists add comments to the newspapers, then there is no room to tell. But it is subject of new studies. Another poin that need to underline is that if we consider such kind of vilurent comments are true comment, how then Jews charge others with anti-Semitism! Else, Jewish blood is holy! It seems to us that Israeli elites and stratejists never question such types of directed comments would result in what.

The biggest differentiation between Jews and Arabs is in regard to Prime Minister Erdogan. The data analysis indicated that Jews' **total negative** imaginations rate is 71.6% and Arabs' **total positive** image rate is 59.7% and their total negative image rate is 14.6% (as demonstrated in Table 3 the Arab participants' responses include 'he is 'He is a very dangerous person for Israel', 'He is an enemy of Zionism' 'He has very strong anti-Semitic feelings'. Yet, many Arabs' views are not overlap with Jews in regard to Zionism, anti-Semitic, etc. at all.

Israeli politicians are pride of being only democratic country in the Middle East. But when we inquered this matter a little more in depth, asking the real reason of not visiting Turkey, 25.0% of the participants stated that Israeli state make pressure on them or their companies do as to not viset Turkey.

While reviewing relevant literature we could not come across the fact that Jewish scholars question the role of Israel in the 28 February postmodern coupe in Turkey, with which hundreds of billion dollars were stolen professionally, according to many Turkish politicians and columnists, who accuse Israel was the backstage (Laciner, 2012: 194). In addition, as many Jewish scholars, Bengio (2009: 46) also accuses the Turkish media; "most of its reports on the Palestinian problem are one-sided and biased against Israel".

Consequentely we suggest the same topic should be studied in Turkey, focusing on only Israel and Jewish image in Turkey. Thus there can be clearified a number of points yet has not investigated sufficiantely and in depth. Country image requires more systematic and comparative analyses.

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