

## **When Global Scripts Do Not Resonate: International Minority Rights and Local Repertoires of Diversity in Southern Turkey**

**Zeynep Ozgen & Matthias Koenig**

New York University Abu Dhabi & Heidelberg University

Under what conditions do global scripts resonate among ordinary people? Neo-institutional world polity theory has tended to sideline this question by privileging macro-comparative explanations of states' adoption and social movement activists' framing of global scripts. Adopting a negative case approach, we draw on concepts from cultural sociology to explain why global scripts fail to resonate among ethno-religious minorities in Antakya, Turkey. Antakya has been exposed intensely to global minority rights and multiculturalism discourses; it has been targeted by various ethnic movement activists, and its diverse population has long experienced stigma and discrimination stemming from Turkey's model of nationhood. Yet, ordinary people there have seldom utilized global diversity scripts in their everyday struggles for recognition. Drawing on longitudinal qualitative fieldwork between 2004 and 2015, we find that global scripts fail to match people's cultural schemas of perceiving and reproducing boundaries—their local repertoires of diversity—due to a deep-seated ambivalence toward the category of “minority.” This lack of resonance potentially weakens popular support for substantial policy reforms advancing minority rights and is one among several factors explaining why Turkey's turn from an exclusionary to an inclusionary model of nationhood has remained largely ceremonial.

*Keywords:* Boundaries; Minority rights; Neo-institutionalism; Resonance; Turkey

### **Introduction**

Since the mid-twentieth century, minorities residing in Antakya, a multiethnic city in southern Turkey, have faced persistent discrimination and exclusion. Mabel,<sup>i</sup> an Arab Orthodox from an Antakya suburb, experienced this firsthand. During periods of strained relations with Greece, she remembers, Orthodox Christians faced political pressure to leave Antakya. At other times, the state arbitrarily confiscated Church properties or prevented repairs to them. Berdil, a Kurdish Alevi from a town outside Antakya, experienced constant stereotyping. Even though her brother served and died in the Turkish military during the armed conflict with Kurdish militants of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) in the Southeast, Sunni Turks made sarcastic comments about her

Kurdishness and Alevi lineage; they questioned whether her family performed the practice of *mum söndü* (insinuating incest) and whether her brothers were circumcised (a ritual in Islam linked to cleanliness). Similarly, Emin, an Arab Alawi from downtown Antakya, was ridiculed for his sectarian affiliation during high school religious education classes. During his six-year prison sentence following the 1980 coup, Emin was tortured repeatedly for being both a labor activist and an Alawi.

We collected these stories during three waves of longitudinal qualitative fieldwork between 2004 and 2015, during a period when Turkey's model of nationhood was undergoing a historic transformation from ethnic exclusion and assimilation to multiethnic inclusion. Since the early 2000s, the Turkish state has implemented constitutional and policy reforms responding to pressure from European institutions to adopt global norms of minority rights and multiculturalism. In this process, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government celebrated Antakya as exemplifying Turkey's "multiethnic mosaic" and religious coexistence. The state's openness to minorities from above hastened ethnic mobilization in Antakya, much like it did in the rest of Turkey. And yet, while activists translated global norms into the local context to mobilize broader support, ordinary people did not reciprocate this adoption of global norms. Antakya's minorities were, at best, ambivalent about multiculturalist reforms and, at worst, overtly opposed to them. None of the ones we talked to, including those cited above, self-identified as a "minority" or regarded minority rights as a means of emancipation. Why have ordinary people refused to embrace globally legitimated diversity scripts in their struggle for recognition?

In addressing this question, our article contributes to two theoretical debates. First, we expand neo-institutional world polity theory by scrutinizing the cultural conditions for script resonance. Explaining variation in the local adoption of global scripts has become a key concern

in the neo-institutional study of global diffusion (Boyle et al. 2015; Pope and Meyer 2016). While early world polity theory regarded script adoption as highly ceremonial and decoupled from practice, recent scholarship has shown how ceremonial promises can yield substantial political change when local social movements draw on globally legitimated scripts to mount pressure on governments (Almeida and Chase-Dunn 2018; Kay 2011; Tsutsui et al. 2012; Velasco 2018). However, scholars still know little about the precise conditions under which global scripts gain traction among ordinary people—individuals whose “everyday activism” (Mansbridge 2013) is, after all, vital to the success of social movements. We suggest greater attention to the cultural dynamics of script resonance, which we define as an alignment between global scripts and local cultural schemas, and argue that script resonance is a necessary condition for social movements aspiring to both mobilize popular support and press their government to adopt substantive, not simply ceremonial, policies protecting minorities.

Second, we go beyond policy-centered approaches to minority rights and multiculturalism by investigating local diversity repertoires among ordinary people. Since the late twentieth century, global diversity scripts have delegitimized (Boli and Elliot 2008; Kymlicka 2007) the nationalist principle that political and cultural units be congruent (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008; Mylonas 2013; Wimmer 2002). Promoted by transnational advocacy networks, supported by intergovernmental organizations, and enshrined in international human rights law, these scripts have celebrated public expressions of cultural difference and bolstered minorities’ demands for equal recognition. However, while scholars have amply demonstrated states’ and social movements’ adoption of global diversity scripts (Tsutsui 2018), researchers have focused less on the subjective dimension of such scripts among ordinary people who struggle for recognition. Drawing from the boundary making approach (Lamont and Molnár 2002; Wimmer 2013), we

argue that global diversity scripts resonate locally when they, at once, match minority members' taken-for-granted perceptions of boundaries and provide practical solutions for remaking such boundaries.

In developing these two theoretical contributions, we adopted the negative case method (Emigh 1997, 649; Goertz 2006, 177–210), studying a single case where the outcome predicted by existing theory was absent. Specifically, our selected case—Antakya, in southern Turkey—exhibits three conditions world polity theory deems critical for achieving substantial multiculturalist reform: strong exposure to global diversity scripts; enough minority activists communicating global scripts vis-à-vis local audiences; and several minority groups sharing experiences of stigma and discrimination. Despite these preconditions, however, the case does not exhibit popular support for global diversity scripts essential to reform. This negative case points to cultural conditions for script resonance and lets us explore the consequences of non-resonance for the transition from ceremonial to substantive practice.

We examined local diversity repertoires through various qualitative data collected in three waves (2004, 2007, and 2015) over an eleven-year span using the longitudinal qualitative research method (LQR). The data came from in-depth interviews, local and national news reports, social media accounts, websites of minority organizations, and visual representations of Antakya. Longitudinal approaches study social processes by “situating subjects diachronically” (Hermanowicz 2013, 193) and by identifying temporal change in interpretations in response to a broader context (Saldaña 2003, 3–5). LQR let us align ethnography and its interest in subjective meaning with historical sociology and its interest in the temporality of social life. More specifically, it enabled us to capture the temporal dimension of script resonance as an emergent process situated in the historical transformation of Turkey's model of nationhood.

In the first part of this article, we develop our analytical framework by elaborating the concept of script resonance and articulating the boundary approach as a way of theorizing conditions for the resonance of global diversity scripts. We then provide background on Turkey's model of nationhood and its recent ceremonial transformation under the impact of global and European diversity scripts. In the empirical section, we demonstrate that global diversity scripts fail to match local diversity repertoires due to a deep-seated ambivalence among ordinary people toward the category of "minority" and owing to a preference among these individuals for alternative routes to undoing stigma. Finally, we discuss the implications of our study and present avenues for future research.

## **Theorizing Script Resonance**

### **Neo-Institutional World Polity and Script Resonance**

Neo-institutional world polity theory argues that isomorphism (i.e., similarities in the formal structure) of states results from an increasingly dense institutional environment composed of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), and professional communities that facilitate the global diffusion of rationalized and universalistic models, schemas, and scripts (Meyer et al. 1997). The more that states are involved in the global institutional environment, according to this theory, the more likely they are to adopt global scripts ceremonially and without necessarily altering substantial practices.

More recently, world polity scholars have revised the standard view of "ceremony without substance" by turning attention to local variations of global diffusion (Cole and Ramirez 2013;

Pope and Meyer 2016). Drawing insights from social movement theory, these scholars have argued that global institutions provide material or organizational resources, present opportunities to stage contentious claims, and produce legitimate frames for articulating such claims, thereby enhancing both transnational activism and the mobilization of social movements (Almeida and Chase-Dunn 2018, 195; Tarrow 2005; Tsutsui et al. 2012). As transnationally embedded movements draw from globally legitimated scripts, activists can pressure governments to put their ceremonial promises into substantive practice. For instance, states' ratification of human rights treaties—an oft-cited instance of “empty promises”—seems to improve human rights practice only when local social movements linked to human rights INGOs exhort governments to honor principles to which they have formally consented (Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Risse et al. 2013). Similarly, local women activists have successfully mobilized international norms to fight discriminatory policies (Liu and Boyle 2001), and the advocacy efforts of international LGBT organizations have facilitated the global diffusion of LGBT policies (Chua 2019; Velasco 2018). Selected empirical studies have also compared social movement activists' selective adoption of global scripts across national contexts (Liu 2006), scrutinized their strategic framing efforts as local norm brokers (Ayoub 2016), or traced their influence as issue entrepreneurs for the vernacularization of global scripts across local settings (Levitt and Merry 2009; Merry 2006).

This notwithstanding, scholars have yet to consider sufficiently when and why global scripts are utilized by ordinary people whose everyday activism is a critical component of social movement success. To advance neo-institutional scholarship, we scrutinize the dynamics of *script resonance* and explore its meaning “on the ground,” so to speak. The concept of resonance is well-established in social movement scholarship, where it refers to the successful framing of a movement's strategic objectives vis-à-vis the cultural values and identity of its target audience

(Benford and Snow 2000; Bloemraad et al. 2016; Ferree 2003). Pragmatist theorists have further refined the concept by examining the emotional and interactional characteristics of situations where a cultural object's cognitive alignment both intersects with its perceived capacity to resolve practical problems and spreads through networks of individual and collective actors (McDonnell 2014; McDonnell et al. 2017).

Against this backdrop, we define script resonance as an emergent process in which global scripts penetrate ordinary people's cultural repertoires. In theorizing the conditions for script resonance, we emphasize the subjective perspective of ordinary people, specifically their historically embedded cultural repertoires that consist of taken-for-granted schemas for perception and practice in everyday life (DiMaggio 1997). We argue that scripts legitimated in the world polity are cultural objects that, if they are to resonate, must both align with the cultural repertoires of ordinary people and offer novel solutions to their everyday problems. Given that script resonance is sensitive to contingent situations, it should be understood as a temporal process that unfolds in evolving historical contexts. Conditions of script resonance merit closer attention because they can explain whether social movements are positioned to turn ceremonial promises into substantial policy reform by successfully mobilizing popular support for global scripts.

### **Global Diversity Scripts and the Dynamics of Boundary Making**

Diversity scripts have proliferated in the world polity since the late twentieth century (Koenig 2008; Kymlicka 1995; Niezen 2003). By promoting the inclusion of subordinated groups, these scripts have delegitimized both assimilationist ("anti-ethnic") and exclusionary ("mono-ethnic") models of nationhood that had long prevailed in nation-states while advancing accommodationist

(“multiethnic”) policies (Aktürk 2012; Mylonas 2013). One version of global diversity scripts, known as *minority rights*, obliges states to recognize minority groups and their collective identities. Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992), the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992), and its Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) embody both these principles and the political traction they gained. Another version of global diversity scripts, aptly labeled “façade diversity” (Boli and Elliot 2008), delegitimizes policies of exclusion and assimilation by celebrating ethnic, linguistic, or religious differences under the umbrella of *multiculturalism*. UNESCO’s promotion of intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogues is a prime example of this phenomenon.

Existing research has demonstrated how global diversity scripts have been (at least ceremonially) adopted by nation-states in their constitutions (Beck et al. 2012), citizenship regimes (Soysal 1994), immigration policies (Koopmans 2013), and school curricula or textbooks (Bromley 2014). Research has also shown how social movement organizations have pressured states to turn such ceremonial promises into substantial policies, such as in Colombia, where the Black movement drew on global scripts to achieve a constitutional shift from color blindness to multiculturalism (Paschel 2010); or in Japan, where organizations initiated, facilitated, and reoriented movement mobilization among ethnic Koreans, Ainu, and Barukumin (Tsutsui 2018). And yet, policy-centered research has tacitly assumed that global diversity scripts respond to grievances of minority members on the ground when, in fact, we know little about whether and when global diversity scripts help ordinary people in their struggle for recognition.



To theorize the conditions for the resonance of global diversity scripts, we draw on analytical tools of cultural sociology that illuminate how ethnicity and nationhood are produced and reproduced in everyday life (Brubaker et al. 2006), or that reveal how these notions are “engaged and enacted” by ordinary people (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008, 537). More specifically, we rely on the boundary approach to overcome inherent assumptions of ethnic or national collectivities as bounded entities displaying a monolithic identity (Brubaker 2002, 169; Ozgen 2015). Against such presumptions of “groupness,” the boundary approach draws attention to the cultural processes that generate salient distinctions between collectivities (Lamont and Molnár 2002; Wimmer 2013). In everyday life, boundary making involves taken-for-granted schemas for *perceiving* and *reproducing* boundaries. Through schemas for perceiving boundaries, people highlight salient markers of categorical difference (e.g., ethnicity, language, religion, and historical origin), ascribe cultural worth to members of a categorical group, and interpret their own status as either dominant or subordinate. Through schemas for reproducing boundaries, people turn categorical differences into social distinctions, whether by stigmatizing or discriminating against subordinate groups or by contesting the hegemony of dominant groups.

The boundary approach allows us to analyze how, in their daily struggles for recognition, ordinary people counter cultural stigmas and challenge social exclusion (Lamont et al. 2016). Indeed, subordinate groups can pursue various ideal-typical strategies to remake their nation’s boundaries (Wimmer 2013, 44–78). Through *boundary expansion*, for example, they can redefine boundaries as more encompassing, such as by highlighting achievable (“civic”) rather than ascriptive (“ethnic”) criteria of membership. By affirming full membership in the nation, this strategy exemplifies “everyday nationhood”—that is, the vernacular in which people talk about the nation (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008, 539–40). With *boundary blurring*, minority members de-

emphasize the salience of a given boundary by highlighting local, civilizational, or universalistic levels of belonging rather than national membership. Finally, with *boundary transvaluation*, minority groups attempt to reverse their negative stigma and pursue equal respect by distinguishing themselves in cultural terms from the dominant group.

The boundary approach clarifies the cultural logic of global diversity scripts. As institutionalized in the world polity, these scripts promote the transvaluation of boundaries, envision the social world as composed of multiple groups, and legitimate practices of accommodation, inclusion, and equal recognition. Minority rights, complementing the standard package of liberalism (i.e., equal citizenship, individual rights, and state neutrality) with equal group recognition, justify minority actors' strategies to transvalue the nation's boundaries and alter existing political power configurations. Unlike minority rights, multiculturalism promotes a kind of boundary transvaluation that alters the symbolic prestige of dominant and subordinate groups but leaves political power configurations largely unaffected. We argue that whether global diversity scripts resonate among ordinary people depends on how such scripts map onto these individuals' taken-for-granted schemas for perceiving and reproducing boundaries, meaning that resonance turns on achieving a cultural match with local repertoires of diversity.

### **Revising Theory Through a Negative Case Study**

We develop our theoretical contributions through a negative case study, an approach that attends to anomalies as a way of rethinking theories (Emigh 1997, 657–658) by focusing on instances where predicted outcomes do *not* occur. Distinguishing negative from irrelevant or trivial cases requires following what Goertz (2006, 186) calls the “possibility principle”—that is, studying only

those negative cases “where the outcome of interest is possible” or even likely. Scrutinizing why a possible outcome failed to occur can present causal pathways not evident under an existing theory. We utilize the negative case method to establish the importance of script resonance and to revise neo-institutional world polity theory, although this approach also has the benefit of avoiding the bias toward successfully mobilized groups that has characterized much scholarship on ethnicity and nationhood (Brubaker 2002, 168).

For our specific research question, the negative case approach requires selecting a local setting where neo-institutional theory would typically expect minorities to successfully capitalize on global diversity scripts while mobilizing for inclusive policies and to achieve substantial multiculturalist reform. Such settings have three features: strong exposure to the world polity and global diversity scripts; organized minority activism transmitting and translating these scripts to local audiences; and a demographic presence of sizable minorities with shared experiences of stigma and discrimination. To explain why ordinary people in such a likely setting have *not* capitalized on global diversity scripts in pursuing recognition, we highlight the cultural mismatch of these scripts with local diversity repertoires. However, before justifying our selection of Antakya as a negative case and presenting our empirical findings in greater detail, we present some historical background on Turkey’s (ceremonial) adoption of global diversity scripts.

### **Turkey’s Model of Nationhood and its Ceremonial Transformation Since the 1990s**

The modern Turkish nation-state was shaped upon the fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. Its model of nationhood combined “anti-ethnic” and “mono-religious” visions of the nation; and, despite a formal commitment to equal citizenship, it perpetuated the assimilation and social

exclusion of religious and ethnic others (Icduygu and Soner 2006). Departing from the Ottoman Empire's repertoire of diversity, the Turkish Republic under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's leadership developed what some authors call an anti-ethnic regime of nationhood (Aktürk 2012, 6), discouraging the public expression of ethnic or linguistic differences—and even denying their existence. Hence, “Turk” became an umbrella category for various Muslim groups, and subnational ethnic categories were rendered invisible in censuses, official registers, the school system, and formal politics (Ozgen 2015, 33–34). The founding principle of the nation's oneness (*ulus birliği*) was included in constitutional law and repeatedly affirmed by the Constitutional Court (Bayir 2013). In addition, secularism (*laiklik*) enshrined in Turkish constitutions since 1928 ensured the state's hegemony over the religious field while discouraging the public expression of religious or sectarian differences (Dressler 2013).

However, the Turkish Republic was not unanimously anti-ethnic; following the Ottoman Empire's repertoire of diversity, the Republic also drew on a mono-religious identity to determine the status of minorities. Formally, and based on the Lausanne Treaty (1923), the Republic guaranteed minority rights (freedom of religion, use of mother tongue, community schools, etc.) to former *millets*—Greek, Armenian, and Jewish minorities—following the Ottoman *millet* system, a flexible administrative apparatus that guaranteed communal rights to non-Muslims (Masters 2001, 17–40). Informally, however, the Republic reproduced the Ottoman conception of non-Muslims' inferior political status by restricting the access of these minorities to certain professions, by imposing name changes and arbitrary taxes, by enabling property confiscations, and even by tolerating violent attacks (Ekmekcioglu 2014; Grigoriadis 2008, 31–32). In addition, non-Muslims were explicitly stigmatized as “suspects,” “betrayers,” and “ungrateful” (*nankör*)

children of Ottoman history (Bayir 2013, 70; Neyzi 2002, 140). Even the very term “minority” (*azınlık*) acquired negative connotations in both the elite and popular imagination (Oran 2004).

To designate the status of Muslim minorities, the Republic employed the Ottoman conception of Islamic brotherhood, legally disregarding Muslim minorities such as Kurds, Arabs, Bosnians, and Circassians (Icduygu and Soner 2006, 449). This principle justified homogenization policies by conceiving of non-Turkish Muslim groups as folkloric elements dissolvable within the “Turkish nation,” and it expected heterodox Muslim minorities like Alevis, Nusayris, and Caferis to identify with, and assimilate into, the Turkish-Sunni national identity (Neyzi 2002, 140; Yegen 2004, 56–58). In sum, on its way to creating the new “nation,” Turkey’s model of nationhood mixed anti-ethnic and mono-religious elements to legitimate assimilationist policies against non-Turkish minorities and exclusionary policies against non-Muslim minorities. The transition from empire to nation-state thus produced various grievances of stigma and exclusion among Turkey’s inherently diverse religious and ethnic communities.

Since the late twentieth century, world polity institutions advancing liberal reforms have increasingly gained influence in Turkey. For example, Turkey ratified the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1978); it signed the Council of Europe’s protocols on the Convention on Human Rights (1985, 1990, 1994) and the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (2000); and, at the Helsinki Summit (1999), the country began negotiating EU membership. As a result, Turkey was exposed regularly and thoroughly to global scripts of minority rights and multiculturalism with two significant consequences for social movements and the Turkish state.

First, global trends triggered a wide range of domestic social movements advocating for identity politics. Activists increasingly deployed global diversity scripts to frame Kurdish, Alevi,

Roma, Circassian, and Armenian mobilizations and to call for pluralistic citizenship, equal recognition, and collective rights, along with local self-rule and confederalism in certain cases (Casier and Jongerden 2010; Dressler 2013; Grigoriadis 2008; Özgül 2014; Rumelili and Keyman 2016). Over time, these social movements accumulated organizational resources, and Kurdish and Alevi movements, in particular, became firmly embedded within transnational activist networks while creating large but diversified followings within Turkey (Massicard 2013; Sahin 2005).

Second, although the Turkish state had long resisted minorities' demands for recognition, in the early 2000s, grassroots activism combined with international pressures created an impetus for policy reforms that generated what may seem like a multiethnic transformation of the Turkish model of nationhood (Aktürk 2012, 117–125). The reform process followed from the 1999 Helsinki Summit, where Turkey agreed to the Copenhagen criteria stipulating improvements in democratic governance, human rights, and minority accommodation. Constitutional reform initiatives, referencing individual as well as collective rights, thrived during the ensuing decade. The coalition government of Bülent Ecevit (1999–2002) passed thirty-four constitutional amendments in 2001, while its successor AKP government (elected in 2002) passed another ten in 2004 (Müftüler-Baç 2005; Özbudun 2007). Constitutional changes and subsequent policy reforms expanded minority rights by granting legal protections and deepening the recognition of ethnoreligious diversity (Aktürk 2012).

However, there is strong evidence that Turkey's adoption of global diversity scripts has remained largely ceremonial, without substantially altering the hegemonic Turkish-Sunni vision of nationhood and without eradicating institutionalized discrimination and public prejudice against ethnic and religious minorities. Even more, scholars have argued that Turkey's way of translating

global minority rights scripts into domestic public policy aimed to contain rather than overcome minorities' grievances (Casier et al. 2011, 104–6; Dağtaş 2012, 141; Tambar 2014, 1–26).

One example of such containment, according to scholars, has been AKP's embrace of Islamic multiculturalism. This discourse has portrayed Turkey as a multiethnic mosaic and its minorities as nostalgic vestiges of a conflict-free and tolerant Ottoman society (Dağtaş 2020). AKP also supported artistic and intellectual representations of historically cosmopolitan cities like Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Antakya as living proof of religious coexistence (Biner 2007; Dağtaş 2012; Gourlay forthcoming). But while the invocation of the Ottoman legacy of multicultural coexistence may have symbolically shifted the nation's boundaries (toward greater inclusion), it did so by preserving Sunni Muslim hegemony to frame its model of coexistence and thereby failed to improve the subordinate status of minorities.

Other examples of the containment of minority grievances, for observers, were AKP initiatives officially known as the Alevi Opening (*Alevi açılımı*) and the Kurdish Opening (*Kürt açılımı*). Starting in 2009, AKP took steps to address long-standing Alevi problems, including granting legal status to Alevi houses of worship (*cemevi*); abolishing mandatory religion classes or making them include Alevism; and abolishing or restructuring the Directorate of Religious Affairs (henceforth Diyanet) to include Alevism as a sect (Dressler 2013, xiv–xv). Through well-publicized meetings with representatives of Alevi communities, AKP touted the initiative as a process of democratic pluralist reform even though it achieved no substantial political change. Instead, AKP continued to impose the frame of Sunni Islam on Alevis (Dressler 2013, xiv–xv) and reinforced the Republic's disciplinary discourses of unity and the indivisibility of the nation (Tambar 2014, 51).

Similarly, the AKP government introduced a series of reform processes to resolve persistent Kurdish demands for cultural rights and self-rule. The initial phase of reforms between 2009 and 2010 included policies for easing restrictions on Kurdish language education, publishing, and broadcasting; opening Kurdology departments in universities; incentivizing regional economic development; and offering amnesty to PKK fighters in return for them laying down their arms (Casier et al. 2011, 117). In the subsequent phase, 2013–2015, the Turkish state negotiated a ceasefire with the PKK and took further steps to recognize cultural rights, leading to certain policy reforms (on broadcasting and education) without offering an enduring legal framework to address minority demands conclusively. The Kurdish Opening was paralleled by a process of “closing” in which the Kurdish issue was, in 2006, securitized through an expanded anti-terror law (Yonucu 2018, 410) that led to a widespread crackdown on activists coalescing under the pro-Kurdish liberation organization known as KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) (Casier et al. 2011, 107).

In addition to these containment strategies, AKP’s turn to sectarian and authoritarian policies since its electoral success in 2011 intensified the de-coupling of ceremonial promises from substantial practice (Sommer 2016, 487). For instance, contrary to Alevi’s demands for religious freedom, and notwithstanding the Alevi Opening, the government increased and diversified mandatory religion classes based on Sunni Islam in public schools. What’s more, the government ignored Kurds’ demands for representation by maintaining the 10% electoral threshold that had been introduced by the military junta, in 1980, to exclude radical parties. AKP’s foot-dragging and ultimate failure to deliver a democratic and inclusive constitution-making process (2011–2013) also exemplified its authoritarian tendencies (Bayar 2017). While AKP might long have harbored illiberal sentiments toward minorities, this posture became more evident during the Gezi protests



and the Syrian civil war of the 2010s. These events underscored contradictory trends in policy as AKP both embraced minority discourses and attempted to suppress them.

During the nationwide anti-government rallies of 2013—known as the Gezi protests, which were staged against the government’s anti-environmental and neoliberal policies—the government linked the demonstrations to Alevis so as to polarize public opinion along sectarian lines (Karakaya-Stump 2018, 56–57, 62). Specifically, the government pointed to the Alevis’ considerable participation in protests and to the fact that Alevi-majority neighborhoods were centrally located among intense clashes with the police as indicators of Alevi “resistance” to the state. In addition, the fact that six of the eight people who died from police violence were Alevis—two of whom were from Antakya—led many to observe that the state purposefully targeted the minorities to incite sectarian conflict and undermine minority demands.

AKP’s authoritarian tendencies hardened during the Syrian civil war. Around the same time as the Gezi protests, the military successes of the PKK-supported Kurdish fighters in Northern Syria against the Islamic State (ISIS) deepened AKP’s fears of an emerging proto-Kurdish state on its doorstep and of triggering Kurdish activism for greater autonomy within Turkey (Akkoyunlu and Öktem 2016, 518). In addition, Turkey’s backing of the Syrian opposition and provision of arms and safe haven to radical jihadists (Karakaya-Stump 2018, 57) accompanied terror attacks against Kurdish civilians in Turkish cities and led waves of refugees into Turkey, with one of the largest groups arriving in Antakya. This rising authoritarianism removed the means for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue and has, since 2011, weakened the rule of law, threatened civil liberties and freedom of expression, and encouraged the personalization of power through an illiberal presidential system. All of these changes have facilitated large-scale repression of the

Kurdish movement and arrests of Kurdish activists, mayors, and politicians (Akkoyunlu and Öktem 2016, 506; Somer 2016, 487).

That ceremonial policy reforms have not translated fully into a substantial change in Turkey's model of nationhood has been well established in previous scholarship; still, most work has focused on the government's authoritarianism and on the ongoing power struggle among secular, Islamist, and nationalist political elites in blocking a liberal democratic transformation of Turkish politics. Without denying the relevance of these macro-level political factors, we argue that micro-level cultural dynamics merit equal attention to explain the de-coupling of ceremony and practice. More specifically, we argue that the lack of resonance of global diversity scripts among ordinary people reflects widespread ambivalence among subordinate groups toward notions of "minority rights" (Rumelili and Keyman 2016; Tambar 2014), which, by implication, results in both weak support for transnationally oriented minority activists and reduced pressure on the government to implement ceremonial promises. In the next section, we explore the conditions for this surprising lack of script resonance through the study of Antakya in southern Turkey.

### **Case Selection, Data, and Method**

We conducted ethnographic research in Antakya, the administrative center of Hatay province, which is located along Turkey's Syrian border, for three reasons.<sup>ii</sup> First, Antakya and the greater province have sizable Arab and Kurdish minorities that differ in religious and linguistic terms from the Sunni Muslim Turkish majority. Turkish-speaking Sunnis constitute about 50% of the population in the broader province while Arabic-speaking Alawis and Christians represent 40%

and 2% of the population, respectively.<sup>iii</sup> Kurdish speakers of Alevi or Sunni origin are estimated to account for only 5% of the population (Özsoy et al. 1992).<sup>iv</sup> While Arab Alawis and Kurdish and Turkish Alevi are sociologically and historically distinct groups,<sup>v</sup> they belong to similar strands of non-Sunni Islam—and, of particular significance here, both groups were subject to nationalist exclusion because Turkish Sunnis doubted their loyalty to the state due to the role they allegedly played in delaying Hatay’s addition to Turkey in 1936 (Dağtaş 2012, 127).

Second, as was the case throughout the country, Turkey’s engagement with the EU and global discourses opened new political spaces for minority mobilization in Antakya. While the EU provided 37 million Euros to Hatay between 2005 and 2015—including 8.3 million Euros for civil society initiatives— and thus contributed material resources (Hatay Valiliği 2016), the government’s EU-driven legislative reform packages exposed the province to new vocabularies of minority rights. Moreover, using Islamic multiculturalism discourses, AKP governments and national media spotlighted the province as living proof of Turkey’s multiethnic mosaic and religious coexistence. This was showcased during an interfaith event called the “Meeting of Civilizations,” organized in 2005 under the patronage of the prime minister at the time, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and attended by state dignitaries and European ambassadors (NTV 2005). The government’s self-conscious promotion of Antakya as “the city of tolerance,” coupled with grassroots artistic and intellectual initiatives such as the “Rainbow Chorus” (2007), “Antakya Biennale” (2007, 2010, 2012), and the “Alawi-Sunni Brotherhood and Ashura” Panel (2013), promoted Antakya as a center of religiously driven multiculturalism.

**Table 1** Minorities by Linguistic and Religious Affiliation in Antakya

		Linguistic Affiliation			
		Turkish	Arabic	Kurdish	Armenian
Religious Affiliation	Sunni	*	*	*	
	Alawi/Alevi	*	*	*	
	Christian		*		*

Third, several local minority organizations emerged in Antakya and the broader province following the government's multicultural policies in the early 2000s,<sup>vi</sup> mobilizing for increased public recognition of Alawis, Kurds, and other minorities by drawing on global diversity scripts. From 2010 on, local norm-brokers strongly criticized AKP's Islamic multiculturalism and portrayal of Antakya as a locus of peaceful coexistence when minorities had seen little improvement. The timing of their establishment and the frames they employed offered further evidence of Hatay's strong exposure to global scripts.

For these reasons—sizable minorities with experiences of discrimination, exposure to global diversity scripts, and organized minority activism—Antakya is a likely case where ordinary people should have drawn on global diversity scripts and mobilized for equal group recognition. However, they did not, and popular support for such scripts has remained strikingly weak.

To solve this puzzle, we investigated conditions for the non-resonance of global diversity scripts on the ground. Our empirical research drew on multiple types of qualitative data, including in-depth interviews, local and national news reports, social media accounts, and websites of minority organizations, as well as visual representations of Antakya, collected over eleven years and in three waves—2004, 2007, 2015—using LQR. LQR centers on data collected for two or more distinct time periods, drawn from identical or similar samples, and analyzed in comparison

to one another (Hermanowicz 2013, 189–90). Scholars have used LQR to examine personal perspectives on one’s career trajectory, biographical transitions, or changing micro-level perspectives on macro events (Corden and Mill 2007, 586).<sup>vii</sup> More broadly, they used it to study a social process and people’s interpretations of it diachronically. Our longitudinal research method was motivated less by “temporality” as experienced individually (Saldaña 2003, 4–5) and more by sensitivity to the temporal nature of script resonance as an emergent process situated in broader historical transformations.

Our initial research design did not include a longitudinal focus; however, after realizing that repeated fieldwork would allow us to observe whether and how scripts might slowly unfold over time, we introduced a temporal dimension to the study. The number and frequency of prospective field trips were determined by significant events and in order to allow adequate time between events to observe changes (Hermanowicz 2013, 196–97) in people’s schemas of perception and practice. Three field visits roughly aligned with such events: the early 2000s coincided with the start of Turkey’s aforementioned multiethnic turn; the late 2000s saw slowing reforms and AKP’s consolidation of power; and the 2010s witnessed Alevi and Kurdish Openings and democratic backsliding. In follow-up visits, we adjusted our questions rather than asking the same ones again, and we focused our analysis on emerging themes as much as recurring ones to capture stability and change in the reception of minority scripts. Finally, while our respondents varied across the three waves, we kept the samples comparable in terms of ethnic, religious, age, gender, and professional characteristics, for example, so as to maximize the diversity of our data.

Longitudinal qualitative interviews—our primary source of data—were conducted with forty-eight individuals, including Sunnis, Alevis, and Christians, and participants were located through snowball sampling in Antakya as well as in the adjacent city of İskenderun, the town of

Kırıkhan, which has a significant Kurdish population, and the villages of Vakıflı and Serinyol, which have Armenian and Alawi populations. Twenty-four interviewees were middle- or upper-middle-class professionals (such as doctors, lawyers, or teachers) or opinion leaders (such as imams or journalists). The remaining respondents came from working- or lower-class backgrounds and worked as, for example, waiters, bakers, coffeehouse owners, or farmers—or they were simply unemployed. All interviews lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours. Forty-two of the interviews were conducted in a one-on-one fashion while three interviews took place in groups of two individuals each. All interviews were transcribed and coded using the qualitative data analysis program MAXQDA. Our interpretive coding scheme focused on three broad themes: personal experiences of discrimination, perceptions of belonging and group boundaries, and practical strategies for reversing exclusion and remaking boundaries.

Local and national news reports, social media accounts, and websites of minority organizations helped us observe the field of ethnic movements and their mobilizing frames. We identified twenty-five self-proclaimed ethnic organizations (four Kurdish, sixteen Alevi, four Christian), some of whom were connected to nationwide associations while others were locally grown. Through local and national news media and internet search engines, we collected information about their public activities for every year from 2004 to 2015 while also analyzing applicable social media accounts (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) and webpages.

Visual representations of Antakya's cultural diversity illuminated the public embodiment of new minority discourses. During field visits, we took pictures of streets, banners, souvenirs, and signboards, and so too did we collect images from the internet when searching for minority organizations and multicultural initiatives in Antakya.<sup>viii</sup> Combining multiple sources increased

the scope of our data and let us decipher meaning structures at the micro-level of Antakya while comparing these structures to macro trends in Turkey.

### **Repertoires of Diversity in Antakya**

Overall and with striking consistency, our data revealed that global diversity scripts do not match local repertoires of diversity in Antakya and thus do not resonate among ordinary people. This conclusion rests on two overarching empirical findings. First, local repertoires contain schemas of perceived boundaries, discrimination, and stigma in ways that make all ethno-religious groups highly ambivalent toward global diversity scripts. Asked to interpret their experiences of exclusion, respondents offered contradictory accounts on group status (whether individuals perceive their community as a minority), unjust treatment (whether individuals perceive themselves as subject to discrimination), and claims for recognition (whether individuals demand collective rights).

Second, ordinary people reject the strategy of boundary transvaluation as legitimated by global scripts due to their practical schemas for remaking boundaries. Both Muslim and non-Muslim minorities reject being identified with their categorical (linguistic, religious, ethnic) differences as a path to recognition. They oppose the concept of “minority” as well as “minority rights” because they view such concepts as a means of perpetuating cultural stigmatization. In their day-to-day struggles for recognition, these minorities engage in strategies of boundary expansion and boundary blurring aimed at establishing equal citizenship within the Turkish nation-state.

The timing of our field visits certainly generated variation in these responses.<sup>ix</sup> Iterative data collection revealed a steady increase in articulations of discrimination, with the most

significant change occurring in 2015—an uptick presumably linked to the shifting political context that rendered the majority-minority distinction more salient. Nonetheless, these articulations did not motivate claims for collective minority rights; by contrast, rejection of the term “minority” was strikingly consistent across the entire decade. This tendency demonstrates the robustness of our general finding that boundary transvaluation is an undesirable solution to problems of stigma and discrimination. In the following sub-sections, we elaborate in greater detail on how local repertoires of diversity prevent global scripts of minority rights and multiculturalism from resonating among ordinary people in Antakya.



**Table 2** Local Repertoires of Diversity

Boundary strategy	Definition	Varieties and examples	Strength
Boundary transvaluation	Redefines prestige of a given boundary by claiming equal group recognition and equal symbolic worth	(1) Collective minority rights: Rejected  (2) Façade diversity: HATAY logo with Star of David, Cross, and Crescent; Antakya Choir of Civilizations	Absent  Weak
Boundary expansion	Redefines boundaries as more encompassing by highlighting achievable (“civic”) rather than ascriptive (“ethnic”) criteria of membership	(1) Asserting equal national belonging: "I am an Alevi, and I am a Turk [not Arab]"  (2) Demanding equal citizenship: "If I'm a Turkish citizen, I should have all the rights that other [citizens] in Turkey have"	Strong  Strong
Boundary blurring	De-emphasizes salience of given boundary by highlighting universalistic or local levels of belonging	(1) Referencing shared humanity: "Political parties should not pursue identity politics; they should pursue humanistic politics"  (2) Emphasizing shared local traditions: "Hatay is a unique place; here, people live as if they are in a mosaic"	Moderate  Strong

### **Perceptions of Boundaries, Stigma, and Exclusion**

One primary condition for the lack of script resonance in Antakya is the ideational mismatch of these scripts with perceptions of stigma and group discrimination. Whereas global diversity scripts presume a strong cultural consensus over salient categorical distinctions and a shared sense of discrimination, local diversity repertoires in Antakya are more ambivalent. In this section, we analyze this ambivalence among Muslim and non-Muslim minorities.

Muslim minorities in Antakya and the broader province, including Arab Alawis, Kurdish Alevis, and Sunnis, have all experienced cultural stigma and discrimination. As is the case for Alevis and Kurds in Turkey, Antakya's non-Turkish Muslim minorities are not recognized as distinct religious or linguistic groups but are instead conceived of as folkloric elements within the Turkish-Sunni brotherhood. The state's assimilationist policies required Antakya's Muslim minorities to take mandatory religion classes and pay taxes without representation within Diyanet while also excluding them from appointed positions within the local administration, education bureaus, and police. In addition, Hatay's Kurdish Alevis were targets of communal violence during the left-right conflict of the 1970s.

Despite policies of assimilation and exclusion, the lack of any cultural consensus regarding salient categorical distinction is striking, notably among Arab Alawis and Kurdish Alevis. To be sure, both middle- and working-class respondents encountered stereotyping and pejorative inquiries in daily life—being asked, for example, whether their “teeth grow at night” (as if, by being Alawi, they possessed occult traits); whether they perform incestuous practices at night (*mum söndü*); whether men are circumcised (a ritual in Islam linked to cleanliness); whether they

shower after sexual intercourse; and whether they eat food taken from the trash (implying dirtiness).

Paradoxically though, experiences of cultural stigma coexist with denials of formal exclusion. The majority of respondents from the first two waves denied any mistreatment at the hands of the state and emphasized their equal status as Turkish citizens. In this vein, a Kurdish Alevi truck driver ('04)<sup>x</sup> argued, “Who is an Alevi, who is a Sunni [implying any distinction would be artificial]? I also went to school, did military service, and worked in this country [like the Sunnis did]. These are all politics.” Kurdish Sunni responses echoed similar views. Like Kurdish Alevis, Sunnis did not articulate ethnic grievances in the first wave. Instead, they indicated having “no difficulty” realizing social mobility, citing from their immediate family and broader society examples of Kurds who attained educational and professional status. When discussing Kurds’ problems, respondents framed them as something experienced by Kurds elsewhere (in the Southeast) and explicitly distanced themselves both from the political (People’s Democratic Party, HDP) and military (PKK) wings of the Kurdish nationalist movement. A Kurdish Sunni hairdresser’s ('04) comment exemplifies this framing:

“*I am a Kurd . . . I don’t deny that. But I am not a Kurdish nationalist. We don’t dream and speak of Kurdistan within the family. . . . I feel like a Turk. I never felt like a minority. I have never been mistreated in government offices because I’m a Turkish citizen [emphasis added].*”

This stance, broadly shared among Kurdish Sunni interviewees, demonstrates the ambivalent perception of group status. The respondent identifies as a “Kurd,” making him a minority; at the same time, he sees himself as a “Turk,” meaning he is part of the majority. Respondent’s stance also runs counter to the Kurdish political movement, which has mobilized over the years on the “basis” of systematic discrimination against Kurds.

Antakya's non-Muslim minorities, who faced even greater cultural stigma as religious "outsiders," were also ambivalent toward the perception of discrimination. As with Arab Alawi, Kurdish Alevi, and Kurdish Sunni respondents, Orthodox Christians, in the first wave of interviews, suggested they faced no discrimination and seldom, if at all, mentioned exclusion or diminished legal protections. For example, a Christian farmer ('04) expressed a common response we encountered among Christians at the time: "We have no difficulty (*sıkıntı*) here. We can go to the church, do our prayer, [and] celebrate our religious holidays."

Many Arab Alawis shared this perception of equality, which aligned well with the Turkish state's professed anti-ethnic regime. As an Alawi baker ('07) put it:

"In Turkey, minorities [Alawis] are not in a dire situation. They live their lives just as any normal person does, meaning they have the right to vote and get elected; they pay their taxes, do military service, [and] they can worship [freely]. In such a free country, I don't believe in [arguments like] 'Some are a minority; they have fewer rights.' This is all about politics."

Similar reactions existed vis-à-vis language, especially among Alawis, as some of them regarded the freedom to speak Arabic at home and informally in public as an indicator of non-discrimination. Perceiving equal treatment in this fashion seems to dismiss the history of assimilating non-Sunni Muslims to the extent that they undermine popular support behind minority rights. In a "free country," according to this view, the idea of "minority mobilization" serves as a mere pretext for seeking power by ethnopolitical entrepreneurs.

While the majority of respondents in the first wave and half of respondents in the second wave denied having been discriminated against, the majority of respondents in the final wave acknowledged having experienced such treatment. In the second wave, primarily middle-class respondents suggested that the state's exclusionary policies against non-Sunni Muslims violated

notions of equal citizenship and state neutrality. In the words of an Arab Alawi psychology teacher ('07):

“Many Alevis are against compulsory religion classes because they teach hegemonic Sunni Islam. The state provides [Sunni] imams’ salary, mosques’ electricity, water, and land. But none of this is provided for Alevis. They have to finance their own tombs [and imams, utilities, and so on], . . . and they don’t have a place within universities. In Istanbul University or Ankara University, there are research programs even for [the ancient civilization of the] Hittites or lost cultures of Anatolia. There is not a single one for Alevis. Why? Because they are ‘nonexistent.’ . . . In my view, the state is not secular. *It doesn’t stand in equal distance to all religions* [emphasis added].”

Perceptions such as this one indicate that, by reproducing hierarchical boundary configurations among the Turkish Sunni majority and non-Turkish Muslim minorities, the Turkish state shirks its obligations to equal citizenship and secular neutrality.

In a manner paralleling the decade-wide shift, non-Muslim minorities increasingly articulated discrimination and exclusion as part of their schemas of perception. The current president of the Orthodox Church’s foundation ('15), for example, recounted Christians’ troubles in this regard:

“When I examine the [accounting] books of the foundation, I witnessed the political pressures. After 1974, the state confiscated four large plots of land. They also turned down any request of the community to maintain its buildings. In the 1980s, the second floor of the parish house in the Orthodox Church complex collapsed due to neglect, but state officials would not allow its repair. . . . During the 1963 Cyprus events, the board members feared political pressure so much they changed the foundation’s name from Greek to Turkish Orthodox.”

The foundation’s president suggested during our interview that members of the Orthodox community broadly shared this sense of unjust treatment.

Overall, the longitudinal data show that perceptions of “no discrimination” coexist with “broken promises of equal citizenship” among Antakya’s minorities. While mindful of Turkey’s anti-ethnic and mono-religious regime that privileges the Turkish-Sunni majority, respondents

were divided on the history of discrimination or even the status of groupness. We observed an increasing tendency to challenge assimilationist policies among Alawi and Orthodox community members, likely encouraged by the policy reforms, new political spaces after the Alevi and Kurdish Openings, and AKP's reproduction of hegemonic Sunni Turkish discourses. Yet, this tendency was not shared unanimously, and a lack of cultural consensus over group boundaries persisted throughout the decade.

### **Practical Strategies for Remaking Boundaries and Undoing Stigma**

The second major factor explaining the non-resonance of global diversity scripts is their inability to resolve problems of stigma and discrimination in everyday life. Ordinary people were suspicious of scripts that legitimated strategies of boundary transvaluation through notions of equal group recognition. Despite this common trend, in the third wave of research, we observed increased demands for the state to publicly recognize ethnic or religious identities. Some middle-class respondents also articulated these demands in the vocabulary of rights; however, rather than drawing on minority rights or multiculturalism scripts, these articulations emphasized individual rights and equal citizenship. Unlike global diversity scripts, respondents did not want the state to differentiate the population into various groups; they wanted it to treat everyone equally.

### **Boundary Transvaluation**

As we argued above, global diversity scripts advance two versions of boundary transvaluation: minority rights and multiculturalism (or façade diversity). An important finding from our

fieldwork is that minority rights, embraced by the European Union in particular, created profound anxiety among both middle- and working-class respondents across all waves. First, by making the category of “minority” not less but more salient, minority rights contravene the principle of equal citizenship unequivocally demanded by members of stigmatized minorities. Second, by praising categorical differences, minority rights risk reproducing the cultural stigma that minority members seek to overcome—a stigma rooted in minorities’ alleged betrayal of the Ottoman and Turkish states. Put simply, “minority” (*azınlık*) carries negative connotations in collective memory and, consequently, global diversity scripts remain disconnected from local diversity repertoires.

Here, we highlight three examples from the interview data that convey this disconnect throughout the decade. An Arab Alawi lawyer (‘04), for example, rejected global scripts by emphasizing the authenticity of Alawis:

“The EU tells Turkey to grant [group] rights because it declares that we [Alawis] are a ‘minority.’ This is wrong. We [Alawis] are a constitutive element (*esas unsur*) of the state. Our fathers fought in the Battle of Gallipoli [during World War I]. Alawis and Sunnis share the same path. We are no different than one another.”

The quote clearly displays the disjuncture between global scripts and locally embedded schemas for remaking boundaries. In the EU context, the concept of minority is premised on the idea that minorities share grievances, a collective identity, and demands for equal treatment; however, in the local context, the concept draws on proximate understandings of history and culture, such as war and common religious practices. This cultural mismatch between global and local understandings prevents minority rights scripts from resonating.

We observed a similar disjuncture in the perceptions of both Kurdish Alevis and Sunnis. As an unemployed Kurdish Alevi man (‘07) explained to us:

“I am not a minority; I am actually [part of the] majority. The one that seems minority to me is the European Union. Okay, my race is Kurdish Alevi. But I see

myself as neither Kurdish nor minority. I am Turkish. Those who defend [the idea of] minority, who say we are a minority are being subservient [to the EU].”

This example complements the previous one while also showing the resentment against international pressure to adopt minority rights. This respondent, along with many others, refused global scripts epitomized in the EU’s Copenhagen criteria of minority accommodation because these criteria seemed to reproduce practices of stigmatization by stabilizing categorical distinctions. The disjuncture between global scripts and local repertoires of diversity was most ironically displayed in the case of Christians who *are*, in fact, legally categorized as a “minority” in Turkey. In this regard, an Orthodox Christian financial analyst (‘15) noted:

“This term [*minority*] bothers me. It is a way of othering [us]. When they say *minority*, they mean numerically small. If we are numerically small, it is not our mistake. But it puts me in that category. It’s saying to me, ‘You’re not Muslim [not from the majority], but we are trying to show you some respect, and by the way, we are othering you.’”

Reactions like this one, found across the decade, reflected the uneasiness associated with this category among ethno-religious populations of Antakya. Only in 2015 did one middle-class and two working-class Arab Alawis explicitly identify as members of a minority in response to the government’s increasingly sectarian policies, especially in the context of the Gezi protests and the Syrian civil war.

We also observed weak resonance of the second version of global diversity scripts among ordinary people—even as such resonance appeared, on the surface, to be pervasive. As discussed earlier, local inter-faith initiatives underpinned the construction of Antakya and the broader Hatay province as the crossroads of a religiously driven civilization, suggesting the adoption of global scripts of façade diversity. For instance, the crossroads image was depicted in the new logo of the province, in which the letters *A*, *T*, and *Y* in the name *Hatay* were replaced by a Star of David, a cross, and a crescent. Different versions of this visual were printed on street walls, banners,



souvenirs, and signboards; so, too, were they displayed in public offices and private houses (Dağtaş 2012, 141).

To a limited degree, ordinary people embraced façade diversity through the Antakya Choir of Civilizations, a local initiative established in 2007 to draw attention to the “peaceful coexistence” of religions during a time of violence and hostility in the region. The Choir consisted of members representing six ethno-religious groups in Antakya—Sunnis, Alawis, Armenians, Jews, Orthodox Christians, and Catholics—and built a repertoire that ranged from local religious hymns to Turkish national tunes to Beethoven’s ninth symphony (Dağtaş 2012, 142). After gaining nationwide attention, the Choir transformed into a more institutionalized initiative by establishing a Choir foundation, increasing the number of singers, standardizing clothes designed by the renowned fashioner Bahar Korçan, enlarging the repertoire, and adding whirling dervish shows. Since 2007, the Choir has given concerts in national and international venues and, in 2012, it was even nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize (Dağtaş 2020).



**Fig. 1** Various Displays of Hatay’s Logo

While the Choir may seem like a full-scale enactment of global diversity scripts, it is actually only a weak and deeply vernacularized version; instead, the ideal of multiculturalism promoted by the Choir articulates an “Islamic multiculturalism” informed by the Ottoman millet

system. The Choir's logo, for instance, comprises an eight-pointed star, a common motif in Ottoman and Islamic architecture, superimposed onto a conglomerate of a cross, crescent, and Star of David. In this way the logo invokes the power disparity enshrined in the Ottoman principle of "separate, unequal, and protected" (Barkey 2010, 99) between (Sunni) Muslims and non-Muslims. Although accentuating the idea of coexisting identities, such initiatives do not alter the symbolic, let alone political, hierarchy between the dominant and subordinate groups; rather, they reproduce the Ottoman model where Sunni Muslims enjoy the dominant position and, by implication, non-Sunnis are of secondary status.

Overall, global diversity scripts in their "collective minority rights" and "façade diversity" versions either do not resonate or resonate only weakly among ordinary people in Antakya. The residents we interviewed rejected the first version because categorization as a minority invokes a pejorative cultural stigma. To counter this "mark," some respondents relied to a limited degree on the second version, albeit in a highly vernacularized fashion that reproduced prevailing understandings of Turkish nationhood and the state's Ottoman heritage.

Having said that, we should highlight the temporal changes in the resonance of global diversity scripts in tandem with Turkey's shifting political context. In line with AKP's embrace of the Ottoman coexistence discourse and the Alevi and Kurdish Openings, we observed respondents identifying with this past, referencing ethnic harmony, and participating in artistic/intellectual multiculturalism initiatives. From 2011 on, however, AKP's sectarian and authoritarian policies increased minority communities' anxiety about being different.



**Fig. 2** The Logo of the Antakya Choir of Civilizations and Choir Members in Front of the Antakya Civilization House with Mosaic Depiction

This was especially evident when we compared how respondents talked about their ethno-religious or national identities. In the first two waves, for example, when articulating their identity, all but one middle-class respondent referred to communal or personal experiences rather than the external political context. However, in the last wave, almost all respondents mentioned Alevi/Kurdish Openings, the Gezi protests, and the Syrian civil war without any prompt, arguing that AKP's sectarian policies heightened majority-minority distinctions and thus leading them to identify with their ethnic and religious "roots" more than they had previously. That said, while the novel situation from 2011 onward may have aggravated feelings of exclusion and rendered ethno-religious identification more salient, we observed neither an uptick in references to global diversity scripts nor a discernible preference for boundary transvaluation.

### **Boundary Expansion**

Despite the changing political context, a standard practical schema for de-stigmatization has been to expand the nation's boundaries to include hitherto excluded groups. This strategy aligns closely

with the schemas of perceiving broken promises of equal citizenship mentioned above and comes in two distinctive versions: reaffirming a civic understanding of Turkish nationhood and claiming individual rights for equal treatment. The first version of boundary expansion includes minorities' assertion of full membership in the nation, leading groups ironically to embrace aspects of everyday Turkish nationalism. We found the strongest nationalist discourse among Kurdish Sunnis and Alevis, followed by Arab Alawis and Christians. Here, a Kurdish Sunni farmer echoes the dominant sentiment ('04) by emphasizing:

“My daughter doesn't know how to say [a simple word like] *bread* in Kurdish. Why? Because I didn't teach her. Why would I teach her? I live under the Turkish flag. My child has to be Turkish. What am I going to gain by saying to her, ‘You are Kurdish’? What can she do? What does it mean to be a Kurd? We are all Turks.”

The anti-ethnic character of the Turkish model of nationhood has, it seems, deeply penetrated ordinary peoples' diversity repertoires. In addition, ethnic mobilization or even the transmission of ethnic group identities is often rejected because such emphasis is thought to ensconce rather than erase stigmatization. Such responses seem to evince the state's triumph in assimilating Kurds into the Turkish national fold; but, on a more careful reading, they actually indicate people's conscious choices in identifying with one ethnicity over another. Many Kurdish respondents, including the one cited, recounted that they could have rejected Turkishness and adopted an ethnicized identity, especially by teaching the Kurdish language to their children and making Kurdishness more central in their lives. But they chose not to. Instead, they have expanded the boundaries of the Turkish nation by talking about themselves as Turks who also speak Kurdish.

Arab Alawis exhibited a similar desire to align with the mainstream by stressing their Turkishness in all three waves of the study. In the following passage, an Alawi teacher provided a rationale for Alawis drawing on a nationalist discourse to pursue a strategy of boundary expansion ('07) by noting:

“Arab Alawis see themselves the same [as Turks]. For example, when you talk to them, they [first] say, ‘I am Alawi’; they put religious identity above being an Arab. [Then] they would say, ‘I am a Turk.’ In reality, they are Arab, but they won’t accept it. Why? Because they don’t want to be in conflict with the system. It’s interesting, they would say, ‘I’m a Turk,’ but they won’t say ‘I’m an Arab.’”

“Conflict with the system” is a serious concern for Antakya’s minorities because it can lead to stigmatization and discrimination. To avoid these potential problems, minorities opt to redefine national boundaries as more inclusive than they actually are.

The expansionist strategy with a nationalist bent is a stable one across the decade, especially among Kurdish respondents. A Kurdish Sunni coffeehouse owner (‘15) we interviewed in the final wave exemplified this notion, explaining that:

“I personally conducted research and found out that there is no separate ethnicity called Kurdish. All Kurds come from the pure Turkish tribe from central Asia known as the *Oğuz* tribe. . . . I don’t think the Kurdish Opening is a good thing. As a Kurdish person, I don’t experience any difficulty in Turkey; why is there an Opening all of a sudden? The Kurdish Opening aims to divide Turkey. It benefits external powers. They want to create a conflict between brothers [Turks and Kurds], incite social movements, and take revenge on the Crusades. This is part of the big game that is played over Turkey. The [AKP] government is taking directives from external powers.”

Once more, as this quote illustrates, minorities increasingly articulated unjust treatment that reached its apex in 2015, within the same period that they regularly deployed the strategy of boundary expansion through nationalist articulation.

The second version of boundary expansion helps minority members reverse exclusion by demanding individual rights and non-discrimination. If there are no legitimate differences between the majority and minorities, this notion suggests, the state should treat everyone as an equal citizen. This way of claiming “rights” affirms minorities’ *equality* as individual citizens without affirming the equal worth of cultural *differences*.<sup>xi</sup> We observed this articulation across the three waves, especially among middle-class interviewees. An Armenian financial analyst (‘04) expressed this

well by asking, “In Turkey, why are we using the term *minority*?” “If I am a Turkish citizen,” he continued,

“should I not have all the rights that other people [citizens] in Turkey have in religious or social respects? I don't accept a separation between people as, ‘You are a minority; you are not [a minority].’ And if we enter the EU, of course, the EU will want to apply its own rules. They give freedom to people there. It should be the same here as well. But this doesn't mean Kurdistan should be established in the East [the eastern part of Turkey]. As a Turkish citizen living within the national borders of Turkey, I would like to have all the rights that a modern free person has.”

This respondent de-emphasized ascriptive ethno-religious criteria of membership by arguing that non-Muslim and Muslim Turkish citizens were no different, thus enabling him to demand rights without positioning minorities outside the boundaries of the Turkish nation.

Such a strategy of boundary expansion was also present among Arab Alawis. A well-respected Arab Alawi religious leader (‘15) demonstrated this while talking about his community’s grievances:

“We suffer from the problem of equal citizenship. In official state discourse and institutions, our identity is not recognized. In Turkey, there is a deep-rooted Sunni Turkish and Hanafi domination. But we want everyone to be treated as equal citizens. As a secular and social state governed by the rule of law [referencing Article 2 of the Constitution], Turkey must maintain equal distance to all religions and sects.”

Interestingly, this Arab Alawi imam did not refer to any collective rights claimed by the broader Alevi movement in Turkey. During our conversation, he identified various demands such as granting legal status to Alawi places of worship or offering merit-based appointments of Alawi to official positions, but he framed these requests by emphasizing rights to equal citizenship rather than proffering group-specific claims. If the state grants legal status to Sunni mosques or appoints Sunnis to official positions, in other words, he felt it should do the same for Alawis since, under the Constitution, they too are Turkish citizens. Expanding the nation's boundaries in this way—increasing its number of equal members—is essential to boundary making because it allows

minorities to address individual grievances without de-aligning their political and ethical belonging from the nation.

In sum, we found strong empirical evidence that both Muslim and non-Muslim minorities in Antakya addressed their experiences of stigma and discrimination by emphasizing equal belonging within the nation, and this was especially true for middle-class interviewees claiming equal citizenship rights. These two versions of expansion aim to redefine the boundaries of the nation by making it more encompassing, even as they can also, somewhat ironically, perpetuate a nationalist discourse.

### **Boundary Blurring**

Boundary blurring is another practical schema within Antakya's local repertoires—one that, unlike boundary expansion, de-emphasizes the salience of the nation altogether. Boundary blurring highlights universal or local notions of belonging: the universal notion draws on humanistic ideals, while the local notion is rooted in various symbolic representations of a given place. As the passages below demonstrate, rather than celebrating cultural differences, universalistic ideas embrace the shared solidarity of all humans.

Many interviewees used this strategy consistently across the decade by articulating their grievances in terms of the lack of individual human rights. Couching their claims in the universalistic language of “being human,” these respondents reaffirmed the notion of equal worth. An Arab Alawi waiter ('15) who criticized political parties that advocated minority rights instead of advocating for a humanistic agenda expressed this well by saying:

“Political parties should not pursue identity politics; they should pursue humanistic politics. They should defend the rights of everyone. You will give rights to ten Jews

or one hundred thousand people [Turks]. I would not vote if that party says, ‘I am a party for Alevi, for Kurds’; I vote for those who bring all [differences] together, with the ‘human’ as its core [philosophy].”

Like strategies of boundary expansion, boundary blurring downplays categorical distinctions in claims for equal rights and anchors such claims in common humanity rather than in shared nationhood.<sup>xiii</sup>

In addition to universal notions, minorities can blur boundaries by emphasizing Antakya’s shared *local* characteristics. Antakya’s residents frequently compared the province’s diversity to the acclaimed Roman mosaics in the Antioch Archaeological Museum. This trope was underpinned by the idea that, although each tile was separate, together they created a harmonious mosaic instantiating the “peaceful coexistence” of ethnic groups (Ozgen 2015, 43). Making this point, a Kurdish Alevi schoolteacher (‘07) observed that:

“I always give Antakya as an example to people. I say, ‘Antakya is such a unique place; it is a mosaic. Even the presence of a mosaic museum is a blessing.’ Here, people live as if they are in a mosaic; people from every race, language, religion live [together] and manage to live well. If people [in the rest of Turkey] want, they can as well.”

The mosaic metaphor is among the most stable practical schemas we encountered, one that substitutes a history of exclusion and (local and national) violence for a narrative of peace. Moreover, by underlining the integration of—rather than distinctions among—communities, this metaphor blurs the religious and linguistic boundaries that constitute the Turkish nation.

In sum, certain minority members have countered the stigma they confront in everyday life by employing universalistic or local strategies of boundary blurring. While boundary expansion paradoxically reproduces Turkish nationalism, boundary blurring de-emphasizes national belonging through universal or local notions of belonging. Either way, the prominence of boundary expansion and boundary blurring within local diversity repertoires prevented the resonance of



global diversity scripts in Antakya. As we show in the following subsection, this non-resonance weakens the capacity of local ethnic associations to mobilize support for minority rights and multiculturalism while, at the same time, strengthening alternative political strategies for redressing exclusion.

### **Implications for Social Movement Mobilization**

Unlike ordinary people, local ethnic organizations in Antakya view collective minority rights as a critical strategy to solve problems of discrimination and stigma. For example, many claim recognition by embracing boundary transvaluation in its “collective minority rights” version. Additionally, unlike ordinary people, these organizations dismiss façade diversity initiatives as distractions and advocate for group recognition. The final declaration of the “Arab Alawism Conference,” organized in 2015 by the Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Arab Peoples, demonstrates local organizations’ skepticism:

“Ethnically, Arab Alawi identity has always been denied, suppressed, or marginalized. . . . Like any [ethnic] group outside of the Turkish-Sunni identity, Arab Alawis were never officially accepted or granted collective identity rights. . . . For us to be self-sufficient, we need to gain formal legal recognition and group rights through an identity struggle whose logic is outside the ‘culture-mosaic-color’ frame.” (Ortadoğu Arap Halkları Araştırma Enstitüsü 2015)

Among other local NGOs we studied, this stance was common; it indicates that local norm-brokers take up global diversity scripts but fail to garner broad popular support, as our longitudinal data analysis revealed. While non-resonance was not the only reason for weak popular support, our data provide specific cues about its prospects.

For example, we observed that public activities of ethnic organizations attracted small audiences and remained fragmented. Moreover, many of organizations were acutely aware of

coordination, publicity, and outreach problems. They arranged periodic workshops to discuss strategies for increasing their membership, connecting protest activities to one another, and making their ideas reach the broader public (Asya Gazetesi 2014; Atayurt Gazetesi 2014; Ortadoğu Arap Halkları Araştırma Enstitüsü 2015). Most importantly, our interview data indicated that, while minority members experienced grievances of stigma and discrimination, they were less likely to support organizations that asked for minority rights. In other words, ordinary people's everyday activism remained detached from organized activism. Several respondents articulated this distinction, but an Arab Alawi medical doctor and long-time political activist did so most clearly. As a founder and former vice-president of the Antakya Alevi Culture Foundation, which is part of the nationwide Alevi and Bektaşî Federation in Turkey, this doctor was uniquely positioned to assess civic participation in Antakya ('15). "We do not have strong [ethnic] associationism [in Hatay] to express demands," he explained.

"If you ask Alawis here, 'Would you like to improve your Arabic?' they will say yes. Or [if you ask them,] 'Is it okay if the state pays Sunni imams' salary with your taxes?' they will say no. But ninety-nine percent of them are not aware that organizing can achieve [demands]. Those who are aware are organized, but we cannot claim that this is popularly spread across society. Ninety percent of those who demand rights come from the NGOs [not the general public]."

The quote shows that people share common problems but resist or at least do not embrace collective action. Such ambivalence hinders local organizations from creating a broad consensus supporting global diversity scripts.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

It is worth restating the key empirical finding yielded by our negative case study of global script resonance: in Antakya, ordinary people's schemas of perceiving and remaking boundaries—their

local repertoires of diversity—prevented global diversity scripts from resonating during a critical period of Turkey’s (ceremonial) transition to multiethnic nationhood. This cultural mismatch has limited mobilization of the popular support necessary to pressure the government toward substantial policy reforms. In this final section, we build from these findings and draw out theoretical implications for both neo-institutional world polity theory and the study of minority rights. We also situate our work within the literature on Turkey’s multiethnic transformation and discuss this study’s limitations as well as avenues for future research.

Our work contributes to the neo-institutional debate about ceremonial script adoption and the role of social movements (Pope and Meyer 2016; Tsutsui et al. 2012) by addressing the overlooked question of whether global scripts match with the cultural understandings of ordinary people through the concept of *script resonance*. With this concept, we draw attention to locally embedded schemas of perception and practice—to the “habits of thought and action” (McDonnell et al. 2017) that affect the capacity of global cultural objects to resonate among ordinary people and to inform everyday activism. Research on the global diffusion of human rights (Cole and Ramirez 2013), women’s rights (Boyle et al. 2015), LGBT rights (Chua 2019), or other global scripts would benefit from scrutinizing these cultural dynamics of script resonance in greater detail, particularly in that the concept can reveal the local variability of global script adoption and engender a better understanding of “contingent diffusion” (Pope and Meyer 2016, 293).

Our work also contributes to the sociological literature on minority rights and multiculturalism, which has focused disproportionately on law and public policy. The tendency to prioritize macro processes while leaving ordinary people’s perception of discrimination and stigmatization underexplored is pervasive in studies of states’ compliance with globally institutionalized diversity scripts (Bromley 2014; Kymlicka 2007; Paschel 2010). Moving beyond

legalistic accounts, we employ tools from cultural sociology, specifically the boundary approach to ethnicity and nationhood (Lamont et al. 2016; Wimmer 2013) and find the rejection of boundary transvaluation as a means of achieving de-stigmatization. Instead, our study indicates that ordinary people mobilize notions of equal citizenship, thus expanding boundaries of the national community or that they rely on universalistic and local ideas of belonging to make such boundaries more porous. The boundary approach, in this respect, helps unpack situations where global diversity scripts have failed to resonate and perhaps lack the capacity to resonate.

Finally, our qualitative longitudinal research in Antakya enriches recent debates over Turkey's transition from an anti-ethnic and mono-religious model of nationhood to a "multiethnic regime of ethnicity" (Aktürk 2012). A recurrent feature of our interviews across all waves was the considerable ambiguity that Muslim and non-Muslim minorities displayed toward experiences of formal and informal discrimination. This ambiguity engendered a pronounced skepticism toward minority rights and multiculturalism, resulting in what anthropologist Kabir Tambar (2014) calls "ambivalent pluralism." This finding is consistent with research conducted in other multiethnic cities in Turkey, such as Diyarbakır (Gourlay forthcoming) and Mardin (Biner 2007), and among other ethnoreligious groups, such as Armenians (Rumelili and Keyman 2016) and Circassians (Kaya 2014). A wide range of disagreements among minorities around the meaning of terms like *cosmopolitanism*, *multiculturalism*, and *cultural coexistence* has resulted in a tepid commitment to minority rights (Kurban 2003; Kymlicka and Pfössl 2014; Tambar 2014). As our negative case study suggests, global scripts can, in fact, exacerbate the inherent tension between minorities' desire to gain equal citizenship and their craving for equal group recognition, a tension depending more than anything on boundary configurations on the ground.

Our case study has some limitations that could be overcome by further research on the cultural dynamics of script resonance. First, while our use of the negative case method suggests that, for movements to gain popular support, cultural congruence between global scripts and local diversity repertoires is necessary, we do not propose that non-congruence is the only—or even primary—reason for the lack of such support. Other causal factors need to be studied closely. States' ability to repress demands inspired by global scripts, movements' inability to command organizational resources, or counter-movements' efforts to mobilize public opinion for alternative scripts (nationalist, religious) could hinder popular support crucial for movements to pressure governments to comply with global norms. Future research should systematically compare both negative and positive cases to explain the role of script resonance in generating popular support and turning promises into practice.

Second, while sensitive to changes between 2004 and 2015—during AKP's embrace of multicultural policies and its later consolidation of authoritarian power—our empirical data do not allow us to assess the long-term durability of local diversity repertoires in Antakya. Although we found only minor changes in people's practical schemas for remaking boundaries of exclusion over our decade of research, we cannot rule out subsequent changes in local boundary dynamics that could increase (or even further decrease) the attractiveness of global diversity scripts. For example, 2015, with its repeated parliamentary elections, marked a turning point in entrenching AKP's authoritarian populism. Moreover, located at the border of war-torn Syria, Antakya has experienced considerable demographic and political turmoil due to the arrival of thousands of refugees (Bianet 2016), a transition that could affect perceptions of ethno-religious boundaries. This raises the larger theoretical issue of determining the precise situational triggers for script resonance (McDonnell et al. 2017). To scrutinize the cultural dynamics of script resonance, future

research would benefit from focusing on the critical moments where and when scripts *start* resonating.

Third, while capturing the local schemas of perceiving and remaking boundaries that have hindered global diversity scripts from taking root among Antakya's minorities, our empirical data do not account for where such local repertoires originated. Their origins could lie in local collective memories of exclusion dating back to the French mandate of broader Syria (1920–38) or the process of Hatay's incorporation into Kemalist Turkey (Shields 2011). They could also be a function of the particular trajectory of nation-state formation in Turkey and the imprint of that process on everyday nationhood. Last but not least, resistance to global diversity scripts could be a function of layers of *prior* global or regional diffusion of scripts (Wimmer 2021), such as those we encountered among our respondents who recycled tropes emphasizing citizenship and individual human rights. Cast in these related ways, further research on the cultural dynamics of script resonance promises to offer the more historicized conception of diffusion processes that is so urgently needed in the study of global culture.

## Appendix

### Turkish-Language Media Sources

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#### National

*7 Sabah*  
*Agos*  
*Arkitera Mimarlık Yayını*  
*Avrupa Postası*  
*BBC*  
*Bianet*  
*Cumhuriyet*  
*Evrensel*  
*Gazete Duvar*  
*Gazete İpekyol*  
*Haberler.com*  
*Hürriyet*  
*IHA*  
*Kültür Servisi*  
*Lora Baytar Blog*  
*Milliyet*  
*Mimarizm Mimarlık Yayını*  
*NTV*  
*Sabah*  
*Siyasi Haber*  
*Yeni Asya*

#### Local

*Alevinet*  
*Antakya Haber*  
*Asya Gazetesi*  
*Atayurt Gazetesi*  
*Hatay Express*  
*Hatay İnternet TV*  
*Hatay Mahalli Haber*  
*Hatay Valiliği*  
*Hatay Vatan Gazetesi*  
*Hatay Yaşam Gazetesi*  
*HRT Medya Grubu*  
*İlk Kurşun Gazetesi*  
*İskenderun Haber*  
*İskenderun Ses*  
*İskenderun.org*  
*Pir Haber Ajansı*  
*Samandağ Ayna Haber*  
*Samandağ Gazetesi*

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**Table 3** List of Interviews

Year	Occupation	Place	Gender	Language	Religion
2004	Businessman	Antakya (center)	M	Turkish	Jew
2004	Secretary	Antakya (center)	F	Arabic	Orthodox
2004	Cleaning personnel	Antakya (center)	F	Arabic	Orthodox
2004	Retired museum director	Antakya (center)	F	Arabic	Orthodox
2004	Housewife	Antakya (center)	F	Arabic	Orthodox
2004	Priest	Antakya (center)	M	Arabic	Orthodox
2004	Retired teacher	Antakya (center)	F	Turkish	Sunni
2004	Financial analyst	Vakıflı (Antakya village)	M	Armenian	Gregorian
2004	Farmer	Vakıflı (Antakya village)	M	Armenian	Gregorian
2004	Truck driver	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Kurdish	Alevi
2004	Farmer	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Kurdish	Sunni
2004	Shopkeeper	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Kurdish	Alevi
2004	Hairdresser	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Kurdish	Sunni
2004	Management consultant	Antakya (center)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2004	Farmer	Serinyol (Antakya village)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2004	Secretary	Zülüflühan (Antakya village)	F	Arabic	Alevi
2004	Lawyer	Iskenderun (port city)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2004	Journalist	Antakya (center)	F	Turkish	Sunni
2007	Unemployed	Iskenderun (port city)	M	Kurdish	Alevi
2007	Mechanic	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Kurdish	Sunni
2007	Teacher	Antakya (center)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2007	Teacher	Antakya (center)	M	Turkish	Sunni
2007	Teacher	Antakya (center)	F	Arabic	Alevi
2007	Writer	Antakya (center)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2007	Baker	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2007	Tinsmith	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2007	Sales representative	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	F	Kurdish	Alevi
2007	Teacher	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	F	Kurdish	Alevi
2007	Housewife	Antakya (center)	F	Turkish	Sunni
2007	Businessman	Antakya (center)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2015	Priest	Antakya (center)	M	Italian	Catholic
2015	Housewife	Antakya (center)	F	Arabic	Orthodox
2015	Medical doctor	Antakya (center)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2015	Financial analyst	Antakya (center)	M	Arabic	Orthodox
2015	Housewife	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	F	Arabic	Alevi
2015	Student	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2015	Coffeehouse owner	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Kurdish	Sunni
2015	Medical doctor	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	F	Arabic	Alevi
2015	Imam	Serinyol (Antakya village)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2015	Waiter	Harbiye (Antakya suburb)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2015	Imam	Ekinciler (Antakya suburb)	M	Arabic	Alevi
2015	Farmer	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Kurdish	Sunni



**Table 3** (continued)

Year	Occupation	Place	Gender	Language	Religion
2015	High school teacher	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Turkish	Sunni
2015	Municipality administrator	Antakya (center)	M	Turkish	Sunni
2015	Sales representative	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	F	Kurdish	Alevi
2015	Media assistant	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	F	Kurdish	Alevi
2015	Electric technician	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Kurdish	Alevi
2015	Shop owner	Kırıkhan (adjacent small town)	M	Kurdish	Sunni

Table 4 Local Minority Associations in Hatay

#	Ethno-religious Affiliation	Location	President (at the time of the research)	Year
<b>A Kurdish Sunni Organizations</b>				
1	People's Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi)	Antakya	Kerem Nalbant Sultan Başaran	2012
2	Human Rights Association (İnsan Hakları Derneği)	İskenderun	Servet Akbaba Ergül Sayın	1986
3	Socialist Emancipation Once Again Party (Sosyalist Yeniden Kurtuluş Partisi)	Antakya	Mahir Gülbül	2013
4	Anatolian Culture and Research Association (Anadolu Kültür ve Araştırma Derneği)	Antakya Armutlu	Sinem Badem Cemal Andaç	–
<b>B Turkish/Kurdish Alevi Organizations</b>				
1	Antakya Alevi Culture Association (Antakya Alevi Kültür Derneği)	Defne	Cemal Ercan	2011
2	İskenderun Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Anatolian Culture Foundation / İskenderun Cemevi (İskenderun Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı)	İskenderun	Halil İbrahim Ayaz	1994
3	İskenderun Alevi Culture Foundation (İskenderun Alevi Kültür Dernekleri)	İskenderun	Kemal Soystüren	2011
<b>C Arab Alawi Organizations</b>				
1	Mediterranean Arab Language and Culture Institution (Akdeniz Arap Dili ve Kültürü Enstitüsü Derneği)	Defne	Ümit Şen	2015
2	Association for Research on Alevi Culture (Alevi Kültürünü Araştırma Derneği)	İskenderun	Nihat Yemniş	2012
3	Antakya Imam Ali Belief and Culture Association (Antakya İmam Ali İnanç ve Kültür Derneği)	Antakya	Sadık Açıkgöz	–
4	Antakya Ehl-i Beyt Culture and Solidarity Foundation (Antakya Ehl-i Beyt Kültür ve Dayanışma Vakfı)	Antakya	Ali Yeral	–
5	Institute for the Study of Middle Eastern Arab Peoples (Orta Doğu Arap Halkları Araştırma Enstitüsü)	Antakya	Selim Matkap	2014
6	Samandağ Alevi Values Association (Samandağ Alevi Değerleri Derneği)	Samandağ	Zülfikar Çiftçi	–
7	Samandağ Mediterranean Culture-Solidarity Association (Samandağ Akdeniz Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği)	Samandağ	Mevlüt Oruç	–
8	Samandağ Cemevi Association (Samandağ Cemevi Derneği)	Samandağ	Tevfik Fatmaoğulları	2015
9	Samandağ Divine Values Association (Samandağ Ulvi Değerler Derneği)	Samandağ	Zülfikar Çiftçi	2010

Table 4 (continued)

#	Ethno-religious Affiliation	Location	President (at the time of the research)	Year
10	Samandağ Service Foundation (Samandağ Hizmet Vakfı)	Samandağ	Mithat Nehir	2013
11	Organization for Sustainance of Alawi Islamic Belief (Alevi İslam İnancını Yaşatma Derneği)	Harbiye	Nasreddin Eskiocak	2000
12	Arab Alevi Youth Parliament (Arap Alevi Gençlik Meclisi)	–	–	2017
13	Association for Protecting & Sustaining Arab Alevism (Arap Aleviliğini Koruma ve Yaşatma Derneği)	–	Ahmet Ak	2015
D Arab Orthodox Christian Organizations				
1	Hatay Arab Orthodox Community (Hatay Arap Ortodoks Cemaati)	Antakya	Fadi Huriğil	–
2	İskenderun Arab Orthodoxy Community (İskenderun Arap Ortodoks Cemaati)	İskenderun	–	–
3	Anatolian Semitics Dialogue & Reconciliation Association Anadolul Arap Mihallemileri Toplumsal Diyalog ve Uzlaşma Derneği	–	Mehmet Salih Bayar	–
4	Samandağ Development Foundation (Samandağ Kalkındırma Derneği)	Samandağ	Orhan Cabir	–

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> All private names are pseudonyms.

<sup>ii</sup> Antakya's population was 370,000 in 2019 (Dağtaş 2020, 190); Hatay's was 1.6 million in 2019 (Hatay Valiliği 2020).

<sup>iii</sup> Ninety percent of Christians are Orthodox; the majority of the rest are Catholic, Protestant, or Armenian Gregorian.

<sup>iv</sup> Numbers at the city level do not exist, but additional local population figures can be found in Ozgen (2015, 43).

<sup>v</sup> The former is a heterodox Muslim community residing along Turkey's southern Mediterranean coast (in the cities of Mersin, Tarsus, Adana, and Antakya), as well as in coastal Lebanon and Israel. While Alevis in Central and Eastern Anatolia speak predominantly Turkish or Kurdish, Alawis in Antakya speak Arabic, and their religious practices are influenced by Arab Islamic culture. For example, they exclude women from religious rituals; they fast for thirty days in Ramadan; and they worship at mosques or tombs of Alawi saints rather than at a cemevi (a house of gathering for Turkish and

Kurdish Alevis). Notwithstanding distinct doctrinal orientations and communal identities, both Alawis and Alevis share grievances of stigma and exclusion.

<sup>vi</sup> See Table A2 in Appendix.

<sup>vii</sup> Similar to “extended fieldwork,” LQR takes various forms, such as continuous research in a single community, follow-up visits to the original site, or re-interviewing the same informants periodically. What sets LQR apart is the “deliberate way in which temporality is designed into the research process making change a central focus of analytical attention” (Thomson et al. 2003, 185).

<sup>viii</sup> See Appendix for the Turkish language local and national media sources, local ethnic organizations, and the interviewee profiles.

<sup>ix</sup> Class background (measured by educational attainment and professional occupation), rather than gender, age, or geographical location, created the greatest variation in responses. Educated and professional interviewees followed the national news and local initiatives, were more receptive to rights discourses, and a few were politically engaged. Working-class respondents were more skeptical of rights discourses; if not opposed to rights, these respondents were at least indifferent to them, suggesting that “rights were useful” albeit not something they were asking for.

<sup>x</sup> Throughout the text, the number in parentheses denotes the year the interview was conducted: A (‘04) stands for a 2004 interview.

<sup>xi</sup> Such claims for individual rights might *also* be anchored in global scripts, notably in the standard package of liberalism that has characterized the post-war human rights regime. However, because we have focused on global *diversity* scripts (collective minority rights; multiculturalism), we did not explore the potential influence of *other* global scripts.

<sup>xii</sup> Akin to claims for equal citizenship rights, the “universalistic” strategy of boundary blurring might draw on global human rights tropes. But what is crucial for our argument is that both strategies are anchored in local repertoires of diversity such as “peaceful history,” “mosaic,” or “collective fight in the war.” As a consequence, global diversity scripts emphasizing categorical distinctions cannot resonate among ordinary people.

**Zeynep Ozgen** is Assistant Professor of Sociology at New York University Abu Dhabi. Her research agenda focuses on the role of culture in oppositional politics and in the formation of new political subjectivities. She is currently working on a book based on an ethnographic and historical study of sociopolitical Islamization in Turkey since the 1970s. Her previous research has appeared in *Nations and Nationalism* (“Meaning of a Textbook,” 2021) and *Theory and Society* (“Maintaining Ethnic Boundaries in ‘Non-Ethnic’ Contexts,” 2015).

**Matthias Koenig** is Professor of Sociology at Heidelberg University, Germany. His research focuses on empirical macrosociology and, in particular, on the interplay of global and local dynamics of institutional and cultural change. He has contributed to theoretical debates on world society, multiple modernities, and secularization, and he has conducted empirical research on religious boundaries and immigrant integration in Europe. His publications have appeared in leading scholarly venues such as *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Ethnicities*, *International Migration Review*, *International Sociology*, *Law & Social Inquiry*, and *Social Science Research*. With Wolfgang Knöbl and Willfried Spohn, he recently co-edited *Religion and National Identities in an Enlarged Europe* (Palgrave 2015).