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### **ATTITUDES AND DISTANCES OF THE ETHNIC BULGARIANS OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE TOWARDS MIXED MARRIAGES WITH BULGARIAN NATIONALS OF TURKISH DESCENT**

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**Abstract:** *Data from a representative sociological survey with persons of reproductive age in the Republic of Bulgaria are analysed and discussed in the article. The focus is on the attitudes and distances of ethnic Bulgarians towards the Bulgarian nationals of Turkish origin. Fifteen key attitudes towards the Bulgarian nationals of Turkish descent are analysed in addition to an age-related interpretation of the attitudes towards the mixed marriages between ethnic Turks and ethnic Bulgarians. From a social integration perspective, the analysis and interpretation take into account important characteristics of the ethnic Bulgarians such as their education, gender, place of residence, etc. The results show that among the Bulgarian community, the negative attitudes towards mixed marriages dominate, although among the different subgroups the attitudes are nuanced and ambiguous.*

**Keywords:** Bulgarian nationals of Turkish origin; social attitudes and social distances; mixed marriages.

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## INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of this paper is to present and discuss the results of a sociological survey prepared and conducted in the first half of 2018 under the project “Measures to overcome the demographic crisis in the Republic of Bulgaria.” The survey results disclosing the attitudes and distances of ethnic Bulgarians towards mixed marriages, presented and analysed from age perspective, are a few but nevertheless are a very significant part of the whole survey. The purpose of this analysis is to expose maximum information with value added on the topic in the most compact form possible so those who would be interested in this agenda could find it useful.

The subject of this study is interdisciplinary. Interpretations on the topic thereof (and some other similar to it) may be made from a number of different sociological, statistical and demographic, psychological and ethnological paradigms, where the agenda associated with the attitudes and distances between the individual social groups is among the major topics of research. However, the interpretations of a number of different paradigms would go beyond the limits of this study. The interdisciplinarity makes the exhaustive review and the critical analysis of research works from different disciplines associated with the reported attitudes and distances versus the Turkish ethnic group in the Republic of Bulgaria an objective that would be practically impossible in one paper alone. Therefore, while analysing and providing explanations to the results we have restricted ourselves to several (quantitative) studies that are quite similar in terms of the data that are analysed hereinafter. The other limitation imposed by the goal set and the specific limitations of a research article is that in the present exposition we partially abstract (without ignoring) the stereotypes and mechanisms by which the reported attitudes and distances are built and shaped.

The Bulgarian society faces a number of challenges related to the integration of the different. Living together and marriage (formal or informal) are both key tools for bridging the gap between ethnic groups and perhaps the best indicator of how far the integration process has gone to: mutual acceptance and respect for differences. The presence of negative attitudes and large distances, respectively, presupposes great inequalities, inequities and serious challenges for the institutions, whose main mission is to consolidate and unite the different groups in today’s Bulgarian society. We hope that this paper will contribute in practice to facilitate and improve the work of the institutions in charge.

## METHODOLOGY

The results describing the distances and attitudes of ethnic Bulgarians towards Bulgarian nationals of Turkish descent called hereinafter Turks or Bulgarian Turks in this study are based on data from the survey entitled *Attitudes to fertility, family policies and vulnerable communities*. The survey is representative at national level for people in reproductive age. The sample included 1506 adult respondents, 1287 (85%) of whom self-identified as ethnic Bulgarians. The discussion below is an analysis of their attitudes.

The paper discusses solely on the attitudes of the ethnic Bulgarian majority towards the Turkish community. Only 92 persons in the sample identified themselves as Turks. Thus, from a statistics point of view, it was impossible to reliably study facts and patterns about the attitudes and distances of Bulgaria's Turks towards ethnic Bulgarians in structural terms.

Via a standardised face-to-face interview, the reported opinions of men of reproductive aged 18–55, and women of reproductive aged 18-50 who permanently reside in the Republic of Bulgaria were collected and tabulated. Pensioners and persons of pre-retirement age were completely excluded from the survey, with the exception of a few respondents who because of their specific status (former military and MoI employees) are pensioners and fall into the above age bands. In general, these respondents do not significantly affect the results, but the exclusion of persons over 55 does not allow conclusions about the macro-society as a whole. The relative share of persons excluded from the survey represents about one third of Bulgaria's population according to Eurostat data for 2018. Following this line of thought, we should keep in mind that people aged 55 and over are among the nationals who are actively exercising their right to vote and their opinion has political weight on all issues, including integration policies, for which attitudes and distances between ethnic groups are crucial. These specifics of the data analysed below cannot be overcome or ignored. This is due to the fact that the current analysis is based on data that was designed and collected with a priority different from clarifying attitudes and distances between the different ethnic groups. However, the usefulness of the data is significant because it allows to achieve goals beyond the designed. Furthermore, the results are representative for a population of more than 3 million people and includes age groups that are key for the demographic and economic development of Bulgaria. The representativeness of the results and the relatively small stochastic error was achieved through a multilevel nested random sample, stratified by NUTS-2 regions, districts and type of settlement: capital, large city, medium-sized city and small settlement. The field work was conducted between 26<sup>th</sup> of February, 2018 and 30<sup>th</sup> of March 30, 2018 (Market Links, 2018).

### **ATTITUDES AND DISTANCES OF PEOPLE SELF-DETERMINED AS ETHNIC BULGARIANS TOWARDS BULGARIAN NATIONALS OF TURKISH DESCENT**

All in all, the survey results disclose a familiar situation concerning the attitudes and distances of the ethnic Bulgarians towards the Bulgarian nationals of Turkish descent, a situation known from in previous surveys over the past thirty years (Tomova & Bogoev, 1991; Tomova, 1992; Georgiev, Tomova, Grekova and Kanev, 1993; Mitev, 1995; Mitev, 1998; Tomova, 2000; Tomova and Yanakiev, 2001; Tomova, 2005; Kanev, Cohen and Simeonova, 2005; Tomova, 2009; Pamporov, 2009). The percentage differences and deviations reported below are mainly due to the fact that the survey is designed to represent only part of the population, the persons of reproductive age, while the cited papers examine the total adult population.

According to Kanev, Cohen and Simeonova, approximately one-fifth of the ethnic Bulgarians are so opposed towards Roma and Turks that they are reluctant to recognise their right to live in a country together with “pure Bulgarians”. Overall, however, attitudes among ethnic Bulgarians in 2005 show that many of them do not mind making friends with Turks (62% approve), living with them in the same neighbourhood (69% approve) or working together on one and the same place with them (74% of Bulgarians do not mind). Eight out of ten ethnic Bulgarians approve of living in a village with Turks, and 82% “agree to live together with Turks in Bulgaria” (Kanev, Cohen and Simeonova, 2005: 40-47).

The specificity concerning the Turks is that the level of negative ethnic prejudice against them among ethnic Bulgarians has followed a trend of increasing tolerance for the period 1992–2005, which has not been the case with other ethnic groups, such as Roma for example (Tomova, 2000; Tomova and Yanakiev, 2002; Kanev, Cohen and Simeonova, 2005: 46).

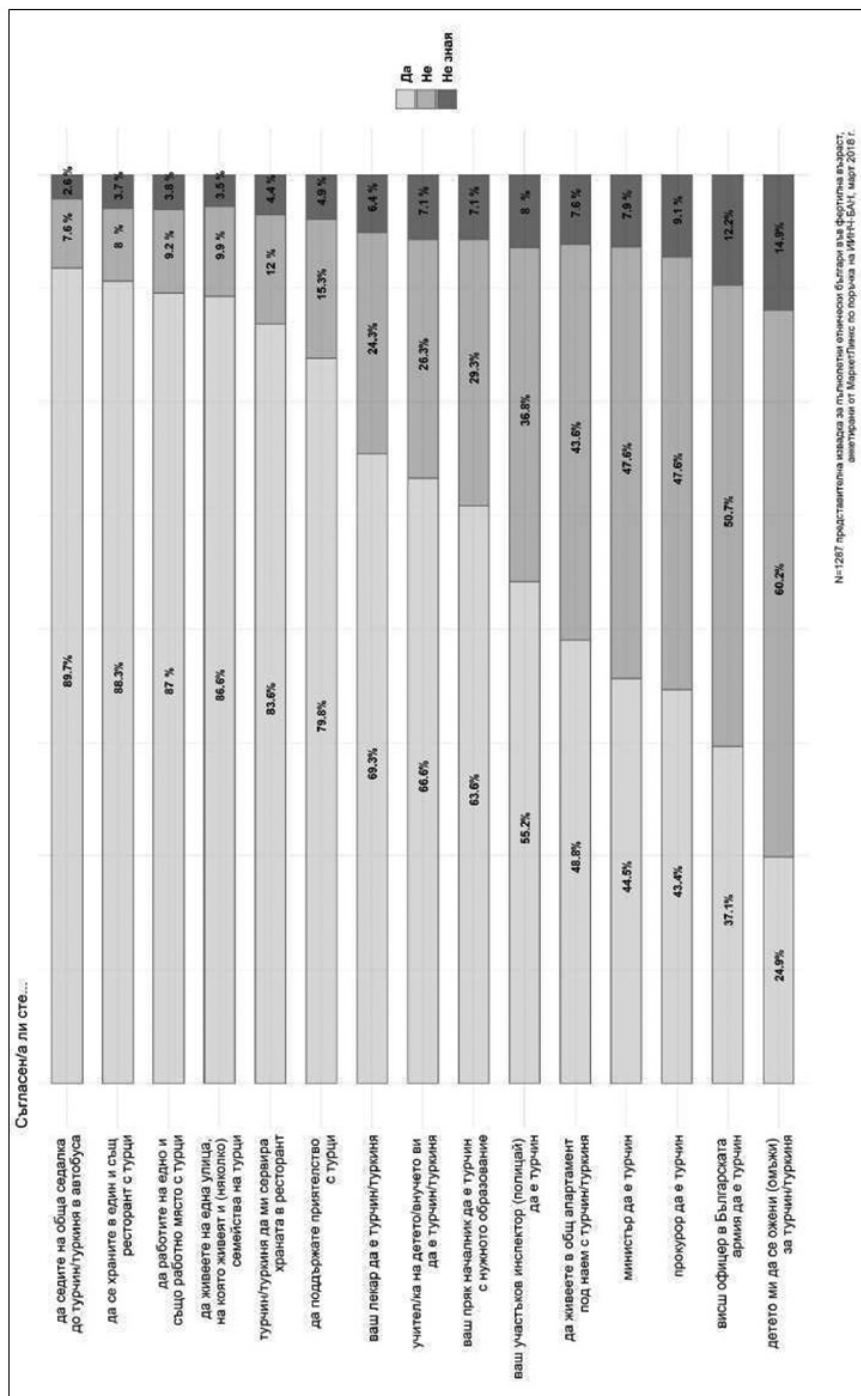
Fig. 1 summarises attitudes and distances of ethnic Bulgarian respondents of reproductive age towards Bulgarian Turks. The questions reveal the extent to which those self-identified as ethnic Bulgarians are willing/tend to admit members of the Turkish community in their personal and socio-political life in the country.

More than 80% of the surveyed Bulgarians declare tolerant attitudes towards the members of the Turkish minority in situations in which their family and relatives are not directly involved. This tolerance is expressed in interactions, communication and joint activities with Turks, for which the specific is that in the event of possible (but unlikely) unpleasant situations, the negative consequences can be easily minimised. It is all about the shared use of public transport and places for public catering (pubs, restaurants, and bars), working together with colleagues of Turkish descent, as well as maintaining good neighbourly relations with Turkish families. In practice, these are the shortest distances between the two communities.

On the other hand, between 8% and 12% of the ethnic Bulgarians of reproductive age are generally reluctant and unwilling to accept or participate in joint activities with the two ethnic groups, even in activities that do not require much effort from them. The results reveal a situation in which one in ten Bulgarians shares attitudes that suggest and support the introduction and implementation of segregation measures/rules in areas of life such as public transport, housing, food and industry/services, which is definitely a major challenge for the integration process, because in absolute terms it is a group of about 300 thousand people of reproductive age.

It is noteworthy that nearly half of the ethnic Bulgarians share the opinion that Bulgaria’s Turks may not or should not occupy higher posts in the Government or in the Army or at the Prosecutor’s Office. A little lower is the share of ethnic Bulgarians disapproving of ethnic Turks to be “included” into the lowest levels within the structures of the Ministry of Interior (neighbourhood/regional police officers), with almost 37%, which is something that neither seems favourable from the perspective of different ethnic groups’ social inclusion.

The strong rejection of too close or intimate relations with members of the Turkish community is the greatest distance between the two major ethnic groups and cannot go unnoticed. There is some tolerance to maintaining friendships with Turks – four out of five respondents believe that Bulgarians and Turks can be friends. How-



Source: author's calculations based on data from Market Links OOD ordered by ИПИС-БАС  
**Figure 1.** Attitudes and distances of ethnic Bulgarians towards the Bulgarian nationals of Turkish descent

## Legend in English:

съгласен ли сте...	Would you approve of...
да седите на обща седалка до турчин/туркиня в автобуса	sitting at a shared seat next to a Turk in the bus
да се храните в един и същ ресторант с турци	having a meal in the same restaurant with Turks
да работите на едно и също работно място с турци	working at the same workplace with Turks
да живеете на една улица, на която живеят и (няколко) семейства на турци	living on a street where there would be (some) Turks' families, among others
турчин/туркиня да ми сервира храната в ресторант	at a restaurant, meals to be served by a Turk
да поддържате приятелство с турци	being friends with Turks
ваш лекар да е турчин/туркиня	your physician to be a Turk
учител/ка на детето ви да е турчин/туркиня	the teacher of your child to be a Turk
ваш пряк началник да е турчин с нужното образование	your supervisor to be a Turk
ваш участъков инспектор (полицай) да е турчин	your neighbourhood police inspector (police officer) to be a Turk
да живеете в общ апартамент под наем с турчин/туркиня	living in shared housing with a Turk
министър да е турчин	a minister to be a Turk
прокурор да е турчин	a prosecutor to be a Turk
висш офицер в българската армия да е турчин	a senior officer in the Bulgarian Army to be a Turk
детето ми да се ожени/омъжи за турчин/туркиня	your child to marry a Turk

ever, on the other hand, more than half of the respondents do not accept representatives of the two ethnic groups to rent a shared house (including as room-mates), while marriage between members of the Bulgarian and Turkish communities when it comes to the closest family (children or grandchildren) makes the most insurmountable distance – less than a quarter of Bulgarians declare that they would be willing to accept such a situation.

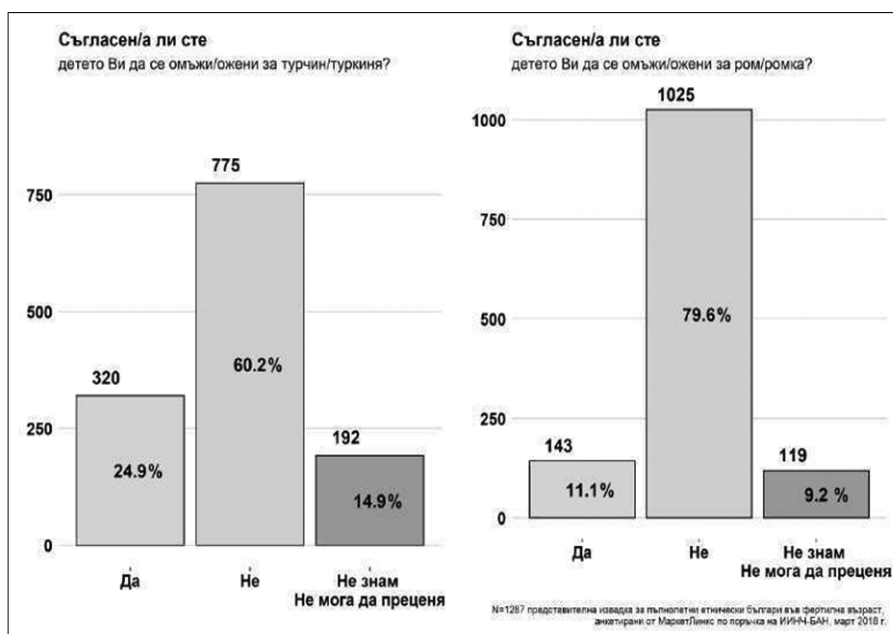
### **MIXED MARRIAGES BETWEEN BULGARIANS AND BULGARIAN NATIONALS OF TURKISH DESCENT**

The official entering into a mixed marriage with a representative of the Turkish community in Bulgaria is definitely the most difficult distance to overcome (out of the 15 surveyed) of those Bulgarian nationals who self-identified as

ethnic Bulgarians. Kanev, Cohen and Simeonova summarise that “like the Roma, the Turks are not wanted for marriage”, as 86% of the surveyed Bulgarians are “against” any such mixed marriages (Kanev, Cohen and Simeonova, 2005: 47).

Approximately five years later, the survey entitled *Social Distances and Ethnic Stereotypes for Minorities in Bulgaria* detected similar attitudes and distances: about 15% of ethnic Bulgarians tend to accept mixed marriages between Bulgarians and Turks, and only 11.5% would approve of mixed marriages between members of the Bulgarian and Roma communities (Pamporov, 2009: 30-31).

Fig. 2 illustrates the situation ten years later. The comparison of the percentages, taking into account all methodological considerations on the need for additional analysis to validate this comparison statistically, unequivocally suggests the following conclusions:



Source: author's calculations based on data from Market Links OOD ordered by IPHS-BAS

**Figure 2.** Attitudes and distances of the Bulgarians of reproductive age towards Bulgarian nationals of Turkish and Roma descent

Legend in English:

съгласен ли сте...	Would you approve of...
детето ми да се ожени/омъжи за турчин/туркиня	your child to marry a Turk
Да	Yes
Не	No
Не знам / Не мога да преценя	Don't know / Can't say

- the trend toward progressive tolerance towards Turks among ethnic Bulgarians in 1992–2005 continues: we do not have access to raw data from the 2005 survey to be able to produce the same results by age bands and make the necessary comparative statistical analysis to test this hypothesis, but it is very likely that this is the case;
- Despite the very strong negative distances and attitudes between Bulgarians and Turks, historically caused by the fact that ethnic Bulgarians were in a subordinate position for nearly five centuries within the Ottoman Empire and the difficult confrontation in the late 1980s in the times of the so-called Revival process, a positive development can be reported in terms of integration in the intergroup relations of the two ethnic groups over the last thirty years; it should also be noted that there are still huge challenges that remain unresolved, such as hate speech (far-right nationalist media and political formations) and insults with ethnic qualifications (especially at sporting events, especially football), discriminatory treatment based on ethnic and religious affiliation (exclusion of members of the ethnic group in a minority position in a given region to certain resources or positions), etc.;
- the structural analysis also shows that the members of the Turkish ethnic community are accepted with more tolerance and respect than those of the Roma community, where the levels of rejection (especially with regard to mixed marriages) are visibly much higher (see fig. 2; Tomova, 1992; Georgiev et al., 1993; Ivanov and Tomova, 1994; Tomova and Yanakiev, 2002; Yanakiev, 2003) and who until the appearance of the topic of immigrants and refugees in the media and the ensuing public debate there were the most rejected community in the Republic of Bulgaria<sup>1</sup>.

Any changes to attitudes and distances that have existed for centuries require a lot of time. There are many such examples thereof, however, that of the United States is quite indicative. As far back as in 1958, a mere 4% of the Americans were not against interracial marriages. This share crossed the psychological threshold of 50% almost 40 years later in 1997, and for this to happen, integration legislation was enforced and applied in the United States for many years, and policies to include many African American families into the middle class. In 2013, the supporters of mixed marriages reached the impressive 87% of the adult population (and 96% in the 18–29 age band). In short, it takes decades of implementing policies that promote equality to see results at the macro level (Newport, 2013). Accordingly, the situation with the attitudes towards Bulgaria's Turkish community members is in a process whose assessment requires more time and effort so that we can take into account such a convergence of attitudes that does not create socio-cultural or religious obstacles to the realisation of joint projects not only political and economic but also intimate and personal.

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<sup>1</sup> The dataset supplying data to this analysis contains a variable reflecting the attitude towards migrants and their children. The analysis of these data and those of the Eurobarometer (for details see <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/>) shows that by 2018, immigrants from the Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan were more rejected even by the Roma.

## MIXED MARRIAGES BETWEEN BULGARIANS AND BULGARIAN NATIONALS OF TURKISH DESCENT: SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS BY AGE

The data analysis assumes different distributions – according to gender, education, and place of residence, income and other socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. It becomes more informative when the data allow not only one-dimensional distributions, i.e. a sufficient number of observations. Age in combination with other variables, such as education, has a potential high enough to reveal such patterns and facts that have not only theoretical value but also practical usefulness. However, age analyses – widely used in sociology, economics, statistics and demography, often remain underestimated and insufficiently exploited in research and analysis of social attitudes and distances between members of different ethnic communities in Bulgaria. To illustrate this observation, suffice it to say that a number of studies did not collect respondents' age to date of the interview (i.e., the final dataset contains no interval variable for respondents' age), usually, information on the age group in which respondents fall had been collect (typically, by 5-year age groups).

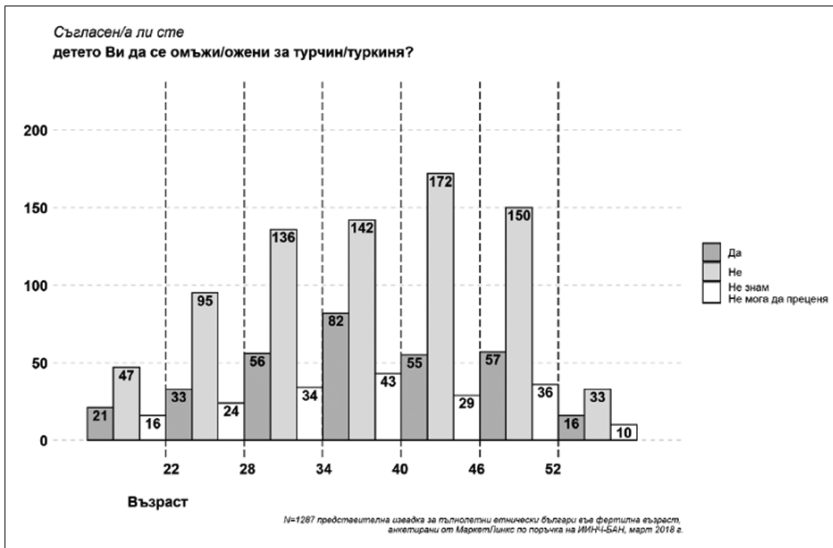
In a unique way, age simultaneously reflects and synthesises a large number of other factors in an interaction, complex to explain though, which increases the risk of incorrect and erroneous misinterpretations. Some of the age-related factors are social in nature: education, socialisation (social roles), profession, labour status and socio-economic status, cultural identity and more. Others are biological, related to the processes of maturation, fertility, ageing, physiological health and so on. Therefore, when making a cross section by age, it is most practical to consider the results as a very good starting point in the search for determinants of differences.

Negative attitudes towards minorities and especially towards Turks are relatively evenly distributed among age, social and educational groups (Kanev, Cohen and Simeonova, 2005: 40). This conclusion from almost 15 years ago deserves to be studied again today, because if younger generations are carriers of change (regardless of the type of change, i.e. in which direction it develops), we should observe less continuity in attitudes. and more differences between them and the older generations.

The histogram in Figure 3 reveals the attitude towards mixed marriages with members of the Turkish community distributed by respondents' age. The purpose is to see whether any change occurs between particular generations/age groups and whether there exist any essential structural differences between them.

The distribution into 7 groups provides a good visual visualisation of the data. Each group includes individuals, whose ages varies within 5.3 years where the lowest age for both sexes is 18 while the highest age (because of specificities associated with fertile ages) for men is 55, while for women, it is 49. The highest age group formed, i.e., the group of the individuals who are 52 or more years old consists of males exclusively and therefore it would be correct to hold back from any excessive focusing on this age group, without ignoring it.

All age groups are dominated by negative attitudes towards mixed marriages with members of the Turkish community. In the group of those who are 22–33 years



Source: author's calculations based on data from Market Links OOD ordered by IPHS-BAS

**Figure 3.** Attitudes and distances by age of the Bulgarians of reproductive age towards mixed marriages with Bulgarian nationals of Turkish descent

Legend in English:

съгласен ли сте...	Would you approve of...
детето ми да се ожени/омъжи за турчин/ туркиня	your child to marry a Turk
Възраст	Age
Да	Yes
Не	No
Не знам / Не мога да преценя	Don't know / Can't say

old, which almost overlaps the demographic cohort of the so-called millennials (i.e. the Generation Y), the percentages of supporters of mixed marriages vary between 22% and 25% of all respondents<sup>2</sup>. However, among them we do not find significantly higher levels of openness and tolerance compared to the other generations in the sample, i.e. Generation X (born in 1980–81 or earlier) and Generation Z (born after 1997). Among Generation Z, the share of the mixed marriage supporters is 25% (but this percentage is rather conditional as a value and may deviate greatly as an estimate

<sup>2</sup> According to the dominant paradigm, Generation Y were those born between 1981–1996 (for details on generations, see Rauch, 2018).

of the real parameter, given the few observations in this group: only 84). The age group of 34–39 year olds is interesting (an intriguing mixture between people from the last X generations and the first Y generations). The respondents who dominate among them are people born in the 1980s. What most of them have in common is that they were educated and socialised over the hardest, socio-economically, initial years of the transition to democracy and market economy. The highest shares of those who support mixed Bulgarian-Turkish marriages (31%) are among them. As a counterpoint to this relatively higher tolerance and openness in the older age group, that of those aged 40–45, support is at its lowest level: 21% of respondents. Respondents from this group were raised, socialised and received their primary education (at least up to eighth or higher grade) during the years of late socialism and the so-called *perestroika*. A quick look at history and homeland studies textbooks from this period shows a predominantly negative discourse towards Turks/Ottomans, which is probably projected in the attitudes of these people and especially among those who have never really had personal experience with Turkish ethnicity.

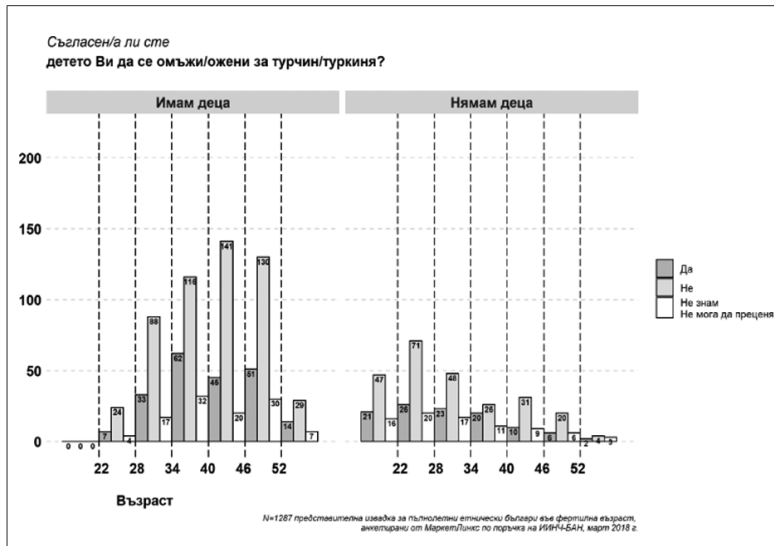
The result is interesting when we interpret the answers to the question through the lens of age and taking into account the fact whether the respondents have children of their own, given that the information about the attitude towards mixed marriages is collected indirectly, i.e. not asking the respondents if they would marry a Turk, but if they approve of their children marry a Turk (fig. 4). The following considerations and calculations should be noted:

- those who do not have children and are aged 18–39 tend to be a little more open to their unborn children possibly marrying members of the Turkish community: the range from different age subgroups of those who agree is between 22% and 35%; among the respondents with children aged 22–39<sup>3</sup>, in the subgroups, the percentage of those who approve of varies between 20% and 30%;
- if we consider the surveyed Bulgarians aged 40+ who have their own children, we can say that they are slightly more open to their children marrying representatives of the Turkish community: 22%–28% is the range of those who approve, if the individual age subgroups are taken, while among those aged 40+ who have no children of their own, in the subgroups, the number of those who approve is between 19% and 22%.

Such contradictions and differences with available data are difficult to explain. Parents with children of their own declare from the positions of people for whom the situation is really/potentially possible (most consider it an unwanted situation or a threat, and very few accept it as a natural and normal process). Adults with no children of their own answer on the basis of a mentally constructed situation, which is much less likely to happen to them in a personal capacity (and among them the majority interprets it as a threat). In general, marriage preferences are not in favour of mixed marriages at all, i.e. the ethnicity of the future spouse is of great importance for the parents (including potential ones). However, it is possible – given the present

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<sup>3</sup> The sample does not cover people aged under 22, who self-defined as Bulgarians and who have no children of their own.



Source: author’s calculations based on data from Market Links OOD ordered by IPHS-BAS

Figure 4. Attitudes and distances by age and own children of the Bulgarians of reproductive age towards mixed marriages with Bulgarian nationals of Turkish descent

Legend in English:

съгласен ли сте...	Would you approve of...
детето ми да се ожени/омъжи за турчин/туркиня	your child to marry a Turk
Имам деца	I have children
Нямам деца	I do not have children
Възраст	Age
Да	Yes
Не	No
Не знам / Не мога да преценя	Don't know / Can't say

survey results, among some parents aged 40+ having their own children and among respondents under 40 without children – that a process that makes them relatively more likely to accept non-traditional marriages for the Bulgarian community is undergoing. Establishing this process and its determinants is important for those pursuing integration policies, but it is beyond the scope of quantitative research as it is now. Qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and the included observations have much more potential to reveal such information.

This is where it is worth noting that it should be borne in mind that some of the percentages above are based on a few (from a statistical point of view) observations – mainly about the older ages of respondents without children, so that we have

a reason to stand their validity with full confidence. However, we can confidently conclude that the presence or absence of children is not a key determinant of whether such parents would be more sceptical than those who do not have children of mixed marriages, despite our preliminary expectations that regardless of age, parents with children would be much more sceptical about mixed marriages with Turks.

Among the productive approaches to analysing data is the addition of different analytical perspectives. Education is undoubtedly such a perspective. Fig. 5 illustrates the connection between education and attitudes of ethnic Bulgarians towards mixed marriages with members of the Turkish ethnic group at a declarative level. The graph with the naked eye shows that the ratios of those who accept mixed marriages are greater among ethnic Bulgarians with higher education than among high school graduates. The only exception is the group of people aged 40–45, which has already been discussed above and in which



Source: author's calculations based on data from Market Links OOD ordered by IPHS-BAS

Figure 5. Attitudes and distances by educational attainment of the Bulgarians of reproductive age towards mixed marriages with Bulgarian nationals of Turkish descent

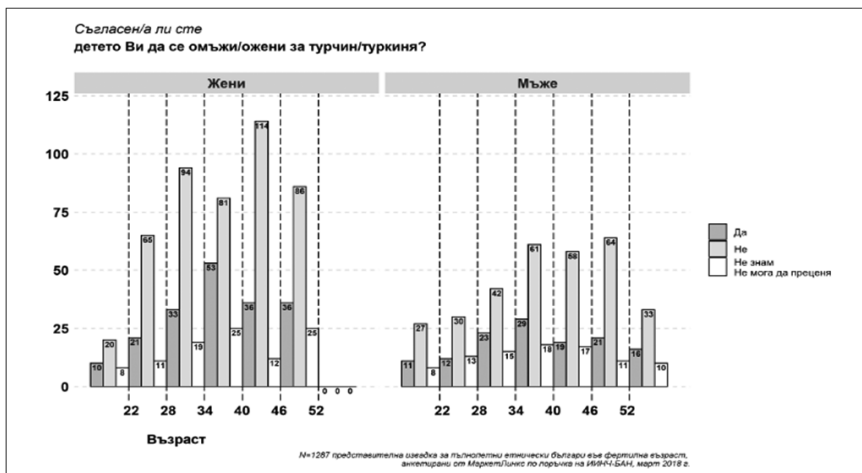
Legend in English:

съгласен ли сте...	Would you approve of...
детето ми да се ожени/омъжи за турчин/ туркиня	your child to marry a Turk
Висше	Tertiary education
Средно	Secondary education
Основно и по-ниско	Primary education or lower
Възраст	Age
Да	Yes
Не	No
Не знам / Не мога да преценя	Don't know / Can't say

attitudes and distances are most likely determined by a different mechanism, which is not contained in the analysed data.

With regard to persons with the lowest level of education, the observations in the sample are too insufficient for reliable conclusions or analyses. Fig. 5 provides grounds to draw a conclusion that would be different from the ones quoted above by Kanev, Cohen and Simeonova that “negative attitudes towards minorities and especially towards Turks are relatively evenly distributed among... educational groups”. At least at a declarative level, it can be said that structurally, among high school graduates, attitudes and distances towards Turks are more negative and attitudes towards mixed marriages are more intolerant than among university graduates.

However, in contrast to education, the analysis of data by sex shows that there are no significant structural differences between males and females (see Figure 6). In fact, both sexes, regardless of their assigned social roles, interpret the actual or potential situation of their child’s mixed marriage to a Turk in an identical way. No matter what the age is, these marriages are unacceptable regardless of respondents’ sex. Given that in Bulgaria conservative values are widespread and dominate<sup>4</sup> (Gallup International, 2019) and the system of social expectations is related to this, i.e. still men and women are expected to do different things in social terms, and respectively the surveyed generations have been brought up and socialised in different ways, there is reason to conclude that these attitudes towards mixed marriages are most likely determined by processes, which are supra-individual and common to all, regardless of the other social roles that biological sex determines to one degree or another.



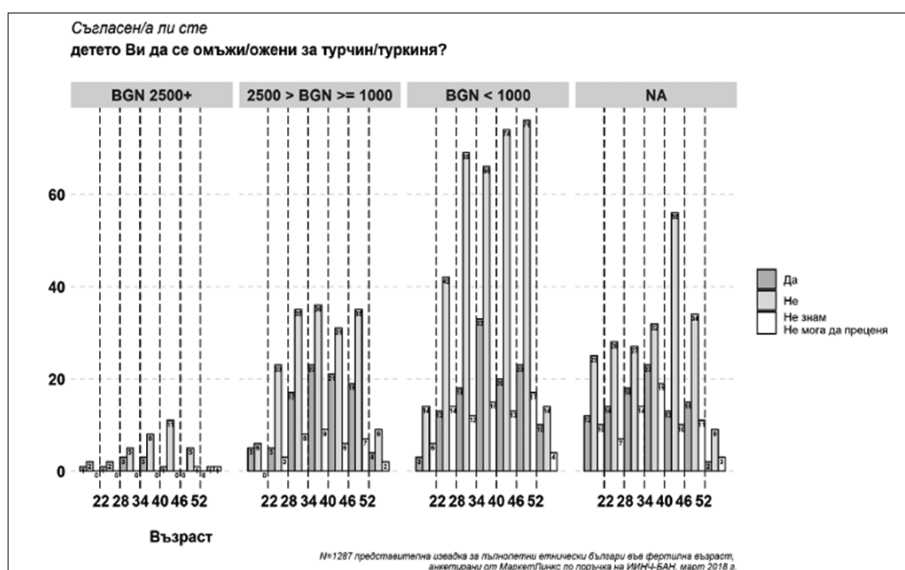
Source: author’s calculations based on data from Market Links OOD ordered by IPHS-BAS

**Figure 6.** Attitudes and distances by gender of the Bulgarians of reproductive age towards mixed marriages with Bulgarian nationals of Turkish descent

<sup>4</sup> According to a Gallup study in 2019, the majority of Bulgarians declaratively present themselves as conservative, prone to routine in everyday life. They value more the closeness in the relations mainly with relatives, acquaintances and people from their own culture.

Legend in English:

съгласен ли сте...	Would you approve of...
детето ми да се ожени/омъжи за турчин/ туркиня	your child to marry a Turk
Жени	Females
Мъже	Males
Възраст	Age
Да	Yes
Не	No
Не знам / Не мога да преценя	Don't know / Can't say



Source: author's calculations based on data from Market Links OOD ordered by IPHS-BAS

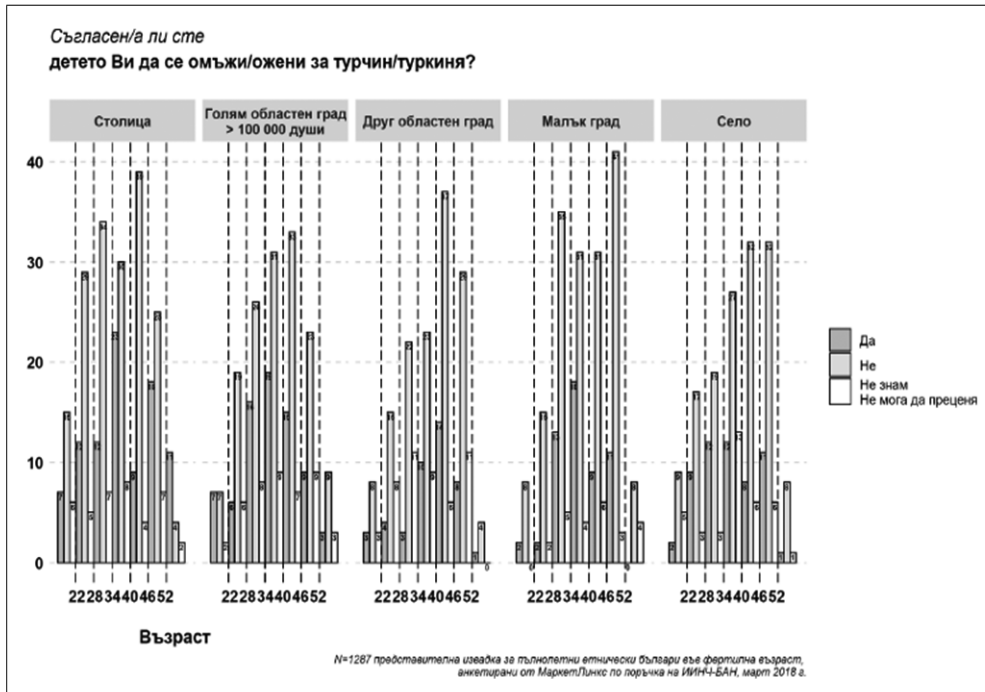
**Figure 7.** Attitudes and distances by income groups of the Bulgarians of reproductive age towards mixed marriages with Bulgarian nationals of Turkish descent

Legend in English:

съгласен ли сте...	Would you approve of...
детето ми да се ожени/омъжи за турчин/ туркиня	your child to marry a Turk
BGN	Bulgaria's currency (1 EUR, 1.95583 BGN)
Възраст	Age
Да	Yes
Не	No
Не знам / Не мога да преценя	Don't know / Can't say

Although 382 of the surveyed ethnic Bulgarians refused to indicate their income (Figure 7, column NA), the remaining 905 respondents offered an interesting and reflective distribution. A structural difference is quite evident – the relative share of those who reject mixed marriages with Turks from ethnic Bulgarian households with incomes below BGN 1,000 is much greater than that in ethnic Bulgarian households with incomes between BGN 1,000 and 2,500. Given the low number of observed individuals from households with incomes over BGN 2,500 in 2018, we can consider their distribution in Figure 7 as mainly informative or as a starting point for hypotheses. Further research is needed both because of the sensitivity of the issue and because of the relative ambiguity of the mechanisms that determine it. The distribution is also the basis for the hypothesis that low incomes are key to sharpening negative attitudes and increasing the distances. It is implicit in the conclusion that a successful integration policy is difficult to implement when large groups of the population are at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The final touch of this survey is in terms of the type of settlement in which the respondents live. The general view shows that structurally the most distant and biased towards mixed marriages with Turks are the ethnic Bulgarians in the provincial capitals with a population of less than 100 thousand people and those in the small towns and villages.



Source: author’s calculations based on data from Market Links OOD ordered by IPHS-BAS

**Fig. 8.** Attitudes and distances by place of residence of the Bulgarians of reproductive age towards mixed marriages with Bulgarian nationals of Turkish descent

Legend in English:

съгласен ли сте...	Would you approve of...
детето ми да се ожени/омъжи за турчин/ туркиня	your child to marry a Turk
Столица	Capital
Голям областен град > 100 000 души	Large provincial capital > 100 000 population
Друг областен град	Provincial capital
Малък град	Small town
Село	Village
Възраст	Age
Да	Yes
Не	No
Не знам / Не мога да преценя	Don't know / Can't say

In the other types of settlements, i.e. the national capital and the large capitals of provinces, negative attitudes also dominate, but the relative shares of those who accept to those who do not accept mixed marriages are visibly greater among all age groups. The cultural and ethnic diversity in its various forms and situations offered by the capital and the largest cities predispose to a point of view that would be somewhat more tolerant, not very much though, yet visibly different and nuanced.

## CONCLUSION

The survey disclosed that over 80% of those who identify themselves as ethnic Bulgarians declared and shared relatively tolerant attitudes towards Bulgaria's Turks. It is mostly about attitudes such as the shared use of public transport, places for public catering, and joint work with colleagues of Turkish origin in the service and maintaining good neighbourly relations with Turkish families.

At the same time, almost half of the ethnic Bulgarians stand the opinion that Bulgarian Turks cannot or should not hold senior positions in the government, army and prosecutor's office, and nearly 37% are those who do not approve of ethnic Turks could/ should be "included" at the lowest levels within the structures of the Ministry of Interior (neighbourhood/regional police officers). In terms of full participation of the Bulgaria's Turks in the administration of the State and the power structures, the attitudes are "hardening" and the distances are increasing.

The strongest expression on the part of the ethnic Bulgarians remains the non-acceptance of very close or intimate relations with representatives of the Turkish community. More than half of the respondents do not consider it normal and natural that the members of the two ethnic groups should live together in shared housing (including as room-mates), and marriages between members of the Bulgarian and Turkish communities, especially when it comes to the closest relatives (children or grandchildren) turn out to be the most difficult distance for ethnic Bulgarians of reproductive age to cover: less than a quarter of them would approve of such a situation.

Collected empirical data shows that the tendency of progressive tolerance among the ethnic Bulgarians towards the Turks, characteristic for the period 1992–2005, continues. It is also indisputable that the representatives of the Turkish ethnic community are received with more tolerance and respect than those of other communities such as the Roma community or immigrants. With regard to mixed marriages with members of the Turkish community, all age groups and all generations of reproductive age are dominated by negative attitudes. In the 34–39 age group, the share of those who approve of mixed marriages between Bulgarians and Turks is the highest. Conversely, in the group of 40–45-year-olds, support is at its lowest level and it stands at 21%. Despite our preliminary expectations that ethnic Bulgaria parents with children would be much more sceptical about mixed marriages with Turks than ethnic Bulgarians without children, empirical results reject the hypothesis that own children are the determinant that has the potential to strongly influence and predetermine whether parents would be more sceptical.

Despite the different social roles and functions in society attributed to them by traditionalists, there are no significant structural differences between men and women's assessments when facing a real or hypothetical situation in which their child would wish to marry a Turk. Generally speaking, both sexes interpret the situation in a similar way, i.e., their ideas are identical. Structurally, the analysis of the distributions by education showed that secondary school graduates are more negative and distant from Bulgarian-Turkish mixed marriages than tertiary education graduates. More distant and biased towards mixed marriages with Turks are the Bulgarians who live in the provincial capitals with a population of less than 100 thousand people and those in the small towns and villages. The survey also reveals empirical grounds that low incomes are very likely to be essential for exacerbating negative attitudes and increasing the distances between the Bulgarian and Turkish ethnic communities.

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