

Measuring Social Exclusion: a Study from Turkey

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Abstract *In this study we aimed to assess the feelings of social exclusion in a Turkish community. We used the Social Exclusion Scale developed by Jeboel-Gijsbers & Vrooman. A total of 2493 volunteer participants were included in the study. We found that the feeling of social exclusion diminishes as people become older, and the length of residency in the city increases. Married people feel themselves less socially excluded than those who are divorced or widowed. Illiterate people feel themselves 4.4 times more socially excluded than those with university degrees. People with a low economic level feel themselves 10.6 times more socially excluded than those at with a high economic level. People who do not own a home feel themselves 1.6 times more socially excluded than those with home ownership. In conclusion, 25.0% of our study participants felt themselves socially excluded. We hope our research will provide an opening for further studies in Turkey.*

Key words: *Social exclusion; poverty; Turkey.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Social Exclusion Terms and Definitions

During the past ten to twenty years, the concept of social exclusion has become increasingly popular. It involves five defining criteria: social exclusion is multidimensional; it is concerned with dynamic

processes; it is relational as much as distributional; it focuses on collective resources (for example, local areas and communities rather than on the individual or household); and it directs attention to catastrophically ruptured links in a wider society (Dahl, Flotten & Lorentzen, 2008). Social exclusion is of increasing interest because it has gained a primary role in official documents, and in the political debate in Europe; more recently, in Australia, Canada and the United States. The concept of social exclusion has had an increasing impact on analysis of social disadvantage in Europe over the past couple of decades, and, in many instances, replaced the concept of poverty (Aasland & Flotten, 2001).

A person is said to be socially excluded if she/he is unable to “participate in the basic economic and social activities of the society in which she/he lives”. In the European Commission’s Program specification for “targeted socioeconomic research”, social exclusion is described as “disintegration and fragmentation of social relations, and hence a loss of social cohesion”. For individuals in particular groups, social exclusion represents a progressive process of marginalization, leading to economic deprivation and various forms of social and cultural disadvantage (Chakravarty & D’Ambrosio, 2006).

Social exclusion is a relative concept, in the sense that an individual can be socially excluded only in comparison with other members of a society; there is no “absolute” social exclusion, and an individual can be declared socially excluded only with respect to the society in which she/he is considered to be a member. An additional relative feature is that social exclusion depends on the extent to which an individual is able to associate and identify with others (Bossert, D’Ambrosio & Peragine, 2007).

Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional phenomenon appearing economically, structurally and socio-culturally in life (Bhalla & Lapeyre, 1997; Chakravarty & D’Ambrosio, 2006; Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman, 2007; 2008; Kenyon et al., 2002). Commins (1993) considered social exclusion under the four headings of exclusion: citizen integration, labor market, welfare benefits and family-society. Silver (1994), on the other hand, dealt with the concept of social exclusion as having economic, social, political and cultural dimensions. Many researchers considered the concept of social exclusion under the four dimensions of impoverishment or exclusion from sufficient income and resources, exclusion from labor, exclusion from services, and social relationships (Bradshaw et al., 2000; Gordon et al. 2000).

1.2 Social Exclusion and Social Policies in the European Union

Although social exclusion is a relative concept and merely depends on one’s perception, the four dimensions of social exclusion are obviously closely related to social policies. Developing social policies which specifically address the causes of social exclusion such as poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, lack of educational opportunity, and lack of proper access to social and health services etc. will change one’s perception of social exclusion. The Lisbon policy program of the European Union, to combat social exclusion, is framed in four sets of objectives and activities: facilitating participation in employment and accessible resources for all, rights, goods and services; preventing the risks of exclusion; helping the most vulnerable; and mobilizing all relevant bodies (Lisbon Treaty 2007/C 306/01). These objectives are a guide to how member states should reorganize their social policies on a broad-ranging social program. Participation, prevention, assistance and political mobilization are the four core elements of the social policies of the member states (Commission of the European Communities, 2005).

Turkey formally opened European Union accession negotiations in October 2005. The Turkish social policy has been dominated by strong state-led model through paternalistic authoritarianism, with a relatively successful development in participation, prevention, assistance and political mobilization. From the year 1999 there has been a serious attempt to move social policy towards European Union priorities in the areas of education, human rights, non-governmental organizations, women and minorities, and effective regulation. The European Union Progress Report, for the year 2010, indicated some progress in the field of social policy with a limited scope of employment, labour market, enforcement of health and safety legislations and general policy framework to combat social exclusion. In the area of social dialogue some progress, particularly in the public sector, has been realized. Amendments have been made to the Constitution, granting the right to collective bargaining and collective agreements for civil servants and other public employees. However, the legal framework to which the Constitution refers in view of regulating the rights to negotiate, to organize collective actions for workers, employees and civil servants remains restrictive and needs to be brought into line with European Union standards. The number of workers covered by collective labour agreements cover a total of 767,582 workers which is still very low compared to number of people in employment, which is around 23,5 million. Labour force participation and employment rates are 50% and 44.7% respectively which are very low compared to the European Union average. Youth unemployment remains high (19.1%). The coverage rate of the unemployment is

extremely low (6%). About 44.8% of the people in employment are not registered within the social security system and hence are deprived of the protection of labour law and pension rights. The overall administrative capacity of Turkey's public employment service and the inspection capacity for the undeclared work remain insufficient compared to the wide scope of the informal economy. Turkey has no comprehensive policy framework to address poverty. The percentage of the population at risk of poverty remains high. In the field of social inclusion a small amount of progress has been realized, in the form of an amendment to the Constitution concerning positive discrimination for children, the elderly and disabled people. There has been little progress in the field of social protection. The percentage of people covered by the social security system remained at 80%. The draft law on social assistance and payments without premiums is still pending. Large deficit in the pension system still exists. Access to primary health services and extension of the general health insurance scheme has been improved, but there are still problems in collecting the health insurance premiums. The gatekeeper function of the general practitioners has not been activated and long waiting lists along with crowded outpatient units of the secondary health care institutions are still a reality. There has been no progress made in the field of anti-discrimination. There is no definition in Turkish legislation for discrimination and the EU acquis covering discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation has not been transposed. Equal opportunities for men and women have not been achieved. Although the Constitutional amendment exists, women are disproportionately affected by informal work conditions, unpaid works and pay gaps. Furthermore, women's employment and labour participation rates remain lower than all the European Union Member States which are 22.3% and 26.0% respectively. Legislation and policies aiming to harmonise work and family life do not exist and the provision of affordable child care remains insufficient. As a consequence of these common features, Turkey is generally characterized by fewer resources, relatively low levels of social expenditure, weak state support for the poor, a major role for the family and religious organizations in the provision of welfare, relatively low levels of labour market participation (particularly among women), and overall limited success in alleviating poverty and overcoming social and economic gaps.

In the present study we aimed to assess:

- (a) The reliability and validity of the Social Exclusion Scale which was developed by Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman (2007) that we have translated and adapted into Turkish.
- (b) The existence and level of social exclusion and contributing factors among a group of Turkish people who are living in a big city of Turkey which is located in the western, most socio-economically developed part of the country.
- (c) The relevance of existing social policies to social exclusion in the light of our findings.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Place

The city of Bursa is a metropolitan residential area and is the fourth-largest city in the country, with several local municipalities, which are connected to the metropolitan city municipality. There are a total of 172 neighborhoods within the boundaries of the metropolitan city municipality. Bursa is an ancient city, located on the famous historical Silk Road, and was the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. Bursa has always been an in-migration city throughout its history. During the late periods of the Ottoman Empire, rapid increases occurred in the urban population due to intensified migrations of Balkans and Caucasians. After the 1960s, the city became a center for the automobile and textile industries, which accelerated internal migration from the eastern and north-eastern parts of the country. In 1991 Bursa was awarded the Europe Prize, which has been given annually since 1955 by the European Council to a city that has been especially successful in promoting the European ideal. In the year 2000 Bursa was accepted into Phase III of the World Health Organization's Healthy Cities project, and was the first city in Turkey to become a member of this project.

2.2. Study Participants

Our study group was composed of 2493 participants who were residents of the city of Bursa. We used a stratified sampling method and the number of individuals in every stratum was proportionally distributed. According to the latest census, the population of the city of Bursa was 1,813,452. We calculated the sample size with a sampling error of 3% and confidence interval of 99% as being 1847 individuals. We

distributed a total of 3000 questionnaires and 2753 of them were returned. Among the returned questionnaires, 260 were missing data and they were excluded from the analysis. Finally, we analyzed the data obtained from 2493 individuals.

2.3. Selection Process of Study Participants

We used the health centers' registry cards, which are compulsory for every person who receives primary health care service, from the corresponding health center. These cards are updated annually. At the time of this study there were about 146 health centers in the city. We found it appropriate to consider the different districts of the city as a stratum and first calculated the sample size for every stratum proportional to the actual population of the district, according to the total population of the city. The health centers, according to the districts, are not uniformly distributed because they are based on population basis (one health center for 10,000-15,000 population) and the population of districts is different. Therefore we calculated separately the number of participants, drawn from every health center's area, to be included into our study. Then we visited all these health centers and selected our possible study participants from personal health cards by using random numbers. We selected 10 % more than the calculated sample size, in order to compensate for those who would not participate or those who would not be able to be reached. During this selection process persons younger than 18 and older than 80 years of ages were excluded. We made lists of those who were selected as possible participants with their names and addresses. Thirty university students, who were delegated and received a training session for this study, distributed the questionnaires to the addresses of the participants. They explained the purpose of the study and asked for the participant's consent. If a person did not want to participate another person from the list was visited. If the participant gave his/her consent, instructions for filling in the questionnaires and a date for the collection of the questionnaire were given. Generally the questionnaires were collected back seven days after distribution. The questionnaires were filled in by the participants. For those who were illiterate, questions were read by the students, and answers given by the participants were marked on the form by the students. Since we could collect the information concerning the educational level of the participants from their personal health cards, illiterate participants were known previously. All of the participants were asked not to mention their identities on the questionnaires. After the distribution and collection process of the questionnaires, the names and addresses of the participants were deleted.

2.4. Instruments

We used the social exclusion scale developed by Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman (2007) together with a questionnaire about socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education level, etc. The social exclusion scale had not been used in the Turkish language before, therefore a panel of two English language teachers, one native English speaker with good Turkish language skills and the other a native Turkish speaker with good English language skills, translated the scale into Turkish and then back into English. A pilot study with a Turkish version of the scale was performed on 50 volunteer university students in order to check for any discrepancies and misunderstandings. We found no discrepancies or misunderstandings on the Turkish version of the scale, so we decided to use it for measuring social exclusion in Turkey.

In this scale, there are four dimensions: financial deprivation, obtaining social rights, social participation, and cultural integration (Table 1). The dimension of obtaining social rights has been considered in two separate sub-dimensions. While the first sub-dimension includes being able to benefit from public institutions and receive aid in terms of social rights, the second sub dimension consists of being able to benefit from suitable housing and a secure environment.

Table 1. *The dimensions of the social exclusion scale and their descriptions*

Dimensions	Description
Dimension I: Material deprivation	Deficiencies in relation to basic needs and material goods; lifestyle deprivation; problematic debts; payment arrears (e.g. housing costs).

Dimension IIA: Inadequate access to social rights (inadequate access to social institutions and provisions)	Waiting lists, financial impediments and other obstacles to: health care, education (especially of children), housing, legal aid, social services, debt assistance, employment agencies, social security, and certain commercial services (such as banking and insurance); insufficient safety.
Dimension IIB: Inadequate access to social rights (inadequate access to good housing (conditions))	Waiting lists, financial impediments and other obstacles to: health care, education (especially of children), housing, legal aid, social services, debt assistance, employment agencies, social security, and certain commercial services (such as banking and insurance); insufficient safety.
Dimension III: Insufficient social integration	A lack of participation in formal and informal social networks, including leisure activities; inadequate social support; social isolation
Dimension IV: Insufficient cultural integration	A lack of compliance with core norms and values associated with active social citizenship, indicated by a weak work ethic; abuse of the social security system; delinquent behavior; deviating views on the rights and duties of men and women; no involvement in the local neighborhood and society at large.

For each of these dimensions, questions were arranged according to the 5-point Likert-type scale, which, in turn, were answered from never (1).... to always (5), with higher scores meaning higher levels of social exclusion.

2.5. Analyses

Internal reliability was assessed by means of Cronbach's α scores and item-total correlations. The factorial validity was examined by the implementation of the Categorical Principal Component Analysis (CatPCA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Finally, a ROC analysis was performed to decide the most appropriate cut-off scores of the Turkish version of the social exclusion scale. SPSS for Windows version 17.0, AMOS 17.0 and MedCalc statistical software were used for statistical analysis.

CatPCA was formerly known as Princals (Principal components analysis by alternating least squares). This technique combines nonlinear optimal scaling with principal component analysis (Gifi, 1990). CatPCA is an appropriate technique if different indicators are expected to refer to one common underlying latent concept and some, or all, indicators have a nominal or ordinal measurement level.

In order to perform the CFA, AMOS 17.0 was used and the model parameters were estimated by using maximum likelihood (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001). In this study, adequacy of the model was assessed by: (1) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), which should be below 0.05 for a good fit; (2) the absolute fit, χ^2 / df measure such that χ^2 minimum fit function test depends on sample size (Bollen, 1989; Hair et al. 1998) was used, which should be between 2 and 5 for a good fit; (3) Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), which shows the amount of variances and covariance explained by the model and should be greater than 0.90 for an adequate fit of the model; and (4) Comparative Fit Index (CFI), which also should be greater than 0.90 for an adequate fitness.

A Receiver Operating Characteristics (ROC) graph is a technique for visualizing, organizing and selecting classifiers based on their performance (Fawcett, 2006). The total area under the ROC curve is a measure of the performance of the diagnostic test since it reflects the test performance at all possible cut-off points. ROC analysis yields an effect size called the "Area Under the Curve" (AUC). The AUC is the probability that a randomly chosen person who scores positive on the dependent measures (Mossman & Somoza, 1991). In this study the ROC curve was performed using MedCalc statistical software.

3. Results

3.1. Participants' Characteristics

Our study group was composed of 2493 participants, of whom 45.0% were female. The mean age was 38.16 ± 12.06 (mean \pm SD) years and within the range of 18–80 years. The mean length of residence in the city and in the neighborhood was 22.45 ± 13.97 and 14.22 ± 11.47 years respectively. Distribution of the participants by demographic characteristics is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographics of the participants

	N	%			N	%
Age groups				Gender		
18-28	657	26.4		Male	1370	55.0
29-39	713	28.6		Female	1123	45.0
40-50	739	29.6				
51+	384	15.4		Working Status		
				Employed	1657	66.5
Marital Status				Unemployed	209	8.4
Married	1756	70.4		Not seeking for a job	627	25.1
Divorced/Widowed	138	5.6				
Education level				Occupation		
Illiterate	57	2.3		Blue-collar worker	606	24.3
Primary	738	29.6		Officer	375	15.0
High school	873	35.0		Tradesman	217	8.7
University+	825	33.1		Professional	248	9.9
				Other	257	10.4
House ownership				Unknown	790	31.7
Yes	1621	35.0				
No	872	65.0		Economic Situation		
				Good	625	25.1
Social Security				Medium	1471	59.0
Yes	2129	85.4		Bad	397	15.9
No	364	14.6				

3.2. Reliability

Cronbach α values were calculated to assess the internal consistency of the scale and they were found to be within the acceptable limits (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Carter, 1997) (Table 3).

Table 3. Cronbach α values

Scales	Item	Mean	S. Deviation	C. Alpha
Social exclusion	35	78.77	18.21	0.85
Dimension I: Financial deprivation	8	20.81	6.31	0.79
Dimension IIA: access to social rights (access to social institutions and provisions)	5	11.43	4.52	0.82
Dimension IIB: access to social rights (access to good housing(conditions))	8	15.20	5.66	0.80
Dimension III: social participation	9	18.90	5.43	0.77
Dimension IV: normative integration	5	11.12	3.66	0.67

3.3. Indices for Separate Dimensions

The indices for financial deprivation (dimension I), access to social institutions and provisions (dimension IIA), access to good housing conditions (dimension IIB), social participation (dimension III) and normative integration (dimension IV) have been constructed by applying the categorical principal component analysis (CatPCA). Four items with factor loadings < 0.45 were excluded from the analysis.

The excluded items were as follows: “has difficulty in making ends meet,” “often a victim of crime over the last five years,” “social contacts hampered by disability,” and “no/little membership of clubs, societies.” Results for the CatPCA are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of optimal scaling procedure (Categorical Principal Component Analysis -CatPCA) for each dimension: component loadings and reliabilities

Social Exclusion Scale Dimensions	Component loadings	C. Alpha
Dimension 1: Material deprivation		0.79
Payment of fixed expenditures is very hard (MD1)	.785	
Has payment arrears (MD2)	.704	
Worries often/continuously about financial situation (MD3)	.723	
Finds it more difficult to make ends meet than 2 years ago (MD4)	.530	
Lacks consumer durables due to financial deficits (MD5)	.508	
Cannot afford basic expenditures (MD6)	.583	
Membership of club is too expensive (MD7)	.523	
Has difficulties in obtaining a loan (MD8)	.669	
Dimension 2a: Social rights: access to institutions and provisions		0.82
Often treated badly by public agencies (SRA1)	.815	
Often long waiting periods for appointments/treatments at public agencies (SRA2)	.803	
Often problems with public agencies (SRA3)	.849	
Refused by commercial service organizations (banks, insurance companies etc.) (SRA4)	.604	
Benefit (according to respondent) wrongfully refused or terminated (SRA5)	.704	
Dimension 2b: Social rights: access to adequate housing and safe environment		0.80
Frequent disturbances in neighborhood (SRB1)	.648	
Wants to move house within 2 years (SRB2)	.544	
Had/expects a long search period in finding a new house (SRB3)	.582	
Little social cohesion in neighborhood (SRB4)	.661	
Unsafe feeling in neighborhood (SRB5)	.720	
Unsafe feeling if one is home alone (SRB6)	.548	
Noise in neighborhood (SRB7)	.703	
Dirty in neighborhood (SRB8)	.698	
Dimension 3: Social participation		0.77
Feels left out of society (SP1)	.495	
Does not/hardly go out for amusement (SP2)	.459	
Experiences lack of social contacts (SP3)	.693	
No/little diversity in social contacts (SP4)	.695	
Like to spent some time with friends (SP5)	.616	
Has no/little people to discuss intimate matters (SP6)	.582	
Has little social support (SP7)	.619	
Trouble in relationships (SP8)	.638	
Social contacts hampered by health (SP9)	.481	
Dimension 4: Cultural/normative integration		0.67
A false testimony is allowed if a friend faces trial (NI1)	.668	
Trespassing the law is no problem as long as one does not get caught (NI2)	.671	
Acceptance of paid second job (NI3)	.636	
Acceptance of paid job of those who received money for unemployment or social fund. (NI4)	.675	
Acceptance of the usage of others health or insurance documents in order to being examined or treated free of charge (NI5)	.622	

3.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The evaluation of model fit was done by using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).



It is evident that all the factor loadings were high, indicating a strong association between each of the latent factors and their respective items. For example, loadings of the items for the material deprivation dimension ranged from 0.35 to 0.65. The factor loadings also made substantive sense and were meaningful and statistically significant. The results showed that convergent validity was achieved. The direct effects of the second-order factors (0.30–0.83) were strong, so a relatively small proportion of the variance remains unexplained for each first-order factor. As indicated by the GFI in Figure 1, the model accounted for 95% of the variances and co-variances in the observed items. The RMSEA was 0.04 and all other fit indices showed a good fitness, therefore no further modifications were performed on the model to achieve a better fit.

3.5. ROC Analysis

In this study we wanted to obtain a cut-off point for the social exclusion scale. For this purpose we performed a ROC analysis by taking into account the answers to a single question which was in our

questionnaire. This question was: 'Do you feel yourself as socially excluded?' We found that the cut-off point for social exclusion was equal to or higher than 89 points, corresponding with a sensitivity of 80.23% and specificity of 73.14%. Table 6 shows the sensitivity and specificity of alternative cut-off points.

Table 5. Cut off points and coordinates of the ROC curve

Cut off point	Sensitivity	Specificity	+LR	-LR
<=77	55.88	91.17	6.33	0.48
<=78	58.87	90.46	6.17	0.45
<=79	60.95	89.75	5.95	0.44
<=80	63.21	85.87	4.47	0.43
<=81	65.48	85.51	4.52	0.40
<=82	67.29	84.81	4.43	0.39
<=83	69.19	82.33	3.92	0.37
<=84	71.13	80.92	3.73	0.36
<=85	72.71	79.86	3.61	0.34
<=86	74.66	78.09	3.41	0.32
<=87	76.61	76.33	3.24	0.31
<=88	78.46	74.56	3.08	0.29
<=89 *	80.23	73.14	2.99	0.27
<=90	81.63	71.38	2.85	0.26
<=91	83.03	67.49	2.55	0.25
<=92	84.52	63.25	2.30	0.24
<=93	86.06	62.19	2.28	0.22
<=94	87.42	60.42	2.21	0.21
<=95	88.14	59.36	2.17	0.20
<=96	89.28	58.30	2.14	0.18

The area under the ROC curve (AUC) for social exclusion was 0.855 ($p < 0.001$; 95.0% CI 0.841–0.869). Figure 2 shows the ROC curves for the Turkish version of the Social Exclusion Scale

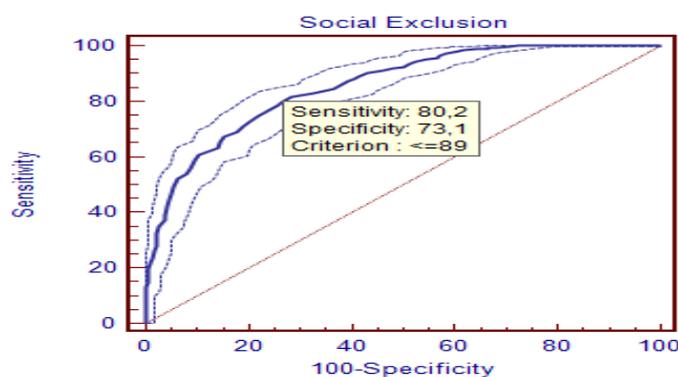


Figure 2. Receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve for Social Exclusion

We performed a logistic regression analysis between independent factors (such as age, gender, marital status, education, occupation, economic level, social security, house ownership, household size, and length of residency in the city and in the neighborhood) and the dependent factor (feeling of being socially excluded). Participants who received a score ≥ 89 points on the social exclusion scale were accepted as those who felt themselves to be socially excluded. Of the 2493 participants, 644 (25.80%) received a score equal to or above 89 points and 1849 (74.20%) below 89 points. Results of the logistic regression analysis are shown in Table 6 and distribution of participants according to various socio-demographic characteristics and their feelings of being social excluded or not, are shown in Table 7.

Table 6. Logistic Regression Analysis

Variables	Coefficient (β)	p-value	Estimated Odds Ratio $\text{Exp}(\beta)$	%95 Odds Ratio	
				Lower	Upper
Age	-.022	.000	.979	.967	.990
Gender ¹	.176	.116	1.192	.958	1.483
Marital Status ²		.026			
Single	-.341	.203	.711	.420	1.202
Married	-.535	.019	.586	.375	.916
Education Level ³		.000			
Illiterate	1.475	.000	4.371	2.172	8.794
Primary	.397	.006	1.488	1.118	1.979
High	.280	.028	1.323	1.030	1.699
Working Status ⁴	.042	.746	1.042	.811	1.340
Social Security ⁵	.254	.076	1.289	.974	1.707
Economic Situation ⁶		.000			
Medium	1.070	.000	2.915	2.152	3.949
Poor	2.363	.000	10.623	7.464	15.117
House ownership ⁷	.494	.000	1.638	1.325	2.025
Household size	.032	.415	1.033	.956	1.116
Length of residence in the city	-.011	.030	.989	.978	.999
Length of residence in the neighborhood	.003	.659	1.003	.991	1.015
Constant	-1.800	.000	.165		

All the variables: -2log likelihood = 2445.733; $\chi^2(15)=402.748$, $p=0.000$.

Hosmer-Lemeshow statistics = 8.333 with 8 df, $p=0.402$.

¹Female; ²Divorced/Widowed; ³University +; ⁴Not working; ⁵Yes; ⁶Good; ⁷Yes.

We found that gender, working status, social security, household size and the length of residency in the neighborhood had no significant statistical relationship with a feeling of social exclusion. On the other hand, age, marital status, education, economic level and residency in the city were found to be related to the feeling of being socially excluded. The feeling of social exclusion diminishes as people become older and when the length of residency in the city is increased. Married people felt themselves to be less socially excluded than those who were divorced or widowed. Illiterate people felt themselves 4.4 times more; people with primary education 1.5 times more; and people with high education 1.3 times more socially excluded than those with university degrees. People at a bad economic level felt themselves 10.6 times more, and people at a medium economic level 2.9 times more socially excluded than those at a good economic level. People who are not home owners felt themselves 1.6 times more socially excluded than those with home ownership.

Table 7. Distribution of participants according to various socio-demographic characteristics and social exclusion

	Feelings of social exclusion			
	Absent		Present	
Age groups	N	%	N	%
18-28	450	68.5	207	31.5
29-39	509	71.4	204	28.6
40-50	575	77.8	164	22.2
51+	315	82.0	69	18.0
Gender				
Male	1003	73.2	367	26.8
Female	846	75.3	277	24.7
Education level				
Illiterate	28	49.1	29	50.9
Primary	532	72.1	206	27.9
High school	630	72.2	243	27.8

University +	659	79.9	166	20.1
Marital Status				
Single	418	69.8	181	30.2
Married	1337	76.1	419	23.9
Divorced/Widowed	94	68.1	44	31.9
Working Status				
Employed	1238	74.7	419	25.3
Unemployed	116	55.5	93	44.5
Unemployed (not seeking for a job)	495	78.9	132	21.1
Social Security				
Yes	1627	76.4	502	23.6
No	222	61.0	142	39.0
Economic Situation				
Good	567	90.7	58	9.3
Medium	1115	75.8	356	24.2
Bad	167	42.1	230	57.9
House ownership				
Yes	1300	80.2	321	19.8
No	549	62.9	323	37.1

4. Discussion

In this study we made an attempt to measure the perceived social exclusion by using a numerical index which was developed by Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman (2007). To the best of our knowledge, this may be the first study, which assessed the state of social exclusion in an objective and measurable manner, to be performed in Turkey. There are a few studies about social exclusion in Turkish literature but they did not depend on a numerical index and cannot be regarded as having a multi-dimensional concept.

Our statistical analysis of the Turkish version of the social exclusion scale developed by Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman (2007) showed a good validity and reliability. Therefore we can conclude that this instrument may be an important policy tool, which can be used to set priorities and to develop policy strategies which tackle risk factors that produce social exclusion. We found that one in four participants felt themselves socially excluded, so we can conclude that perceived social exclusion is a widespread phenomenon.

The feeling of social exclusion is found to reduce with increasing age. Similar findings were obtained from the studies of Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman (2007), Poggi (2003), Aasland & Flotten (2001) and Adaman & Ardic (2008). On the other hand, Bradshaw et al. (2000) found no significant relationship with age.

We did not find significant differences between male and female participants whereas Bradshaw et al. (2000) found that women felt themselves more socially excluded than men. Studies of Aasland & Flotten (2001) and Adaman & Ardic (2008) also found no significant differences in terms of gender.

In this study we found that those divorced or widowed felt themselves more socially excluded than those who were married; similar results were obtained from the study of Bradshaw et al. (2000).

Educational level is found to be an important factor in feelings regarding social exclusion and with the increasing level of education this feeling diminishes. Similar results were reached by the studies of Aasland & Flotten (2001); Adaman & Ardic (2008); Devicienti & Poggi (2007) and Poggi (2003).

In this study, having a bad economic situation was found to be related to feelings of social exclusion and those who reported themselves as being in a bad economic situation felt themselves to be 10 times more socially excluded than those with a good economic situation. Poverty could be a predictor of social exclusion. According to Devicienti and Poggi (2007), poverty and social exclusion show a low correlation over time for the same individual and they are not two sides of the same coin, plus there are dynamic cross effects, implying that poverty and social exclusion are mutually reinforcing. Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997) brought up an important point in their paper: "In poor societies, economic deprivation is at the heart of the problem of exclusion. Any claim in these societies to income has a greater relative weight than a claim to political and civil rights". It is clear that when a large part of the population is struggling for survival, when people are excluded from the main sources of income, their first priority is survival and a basic livelihood.

Unfortunately, Turkey has no clear and effective social policies to combat poverty. With a per

capita gross national income (GNI PPP) of 13,710 international dollars (World Bank, 2010) Turkey is ranking in the 78th place among 213 countries and is classified as a country with upper middle income. However, the income distribution is not equal and Turkey has the second highest GINI coefficient (0.41) after Mexico among the OECD members (OECD, 2008). Income share held by the highest 20% is 8.5 fold more than those of by the lowest 20%. Contemporary state national development plans and social policy vision statements continue to give an important place to religious welfare provision and charity, which takes away state responsibility in the preservation of social citizenship and rights (Jawad & Yakut-Cakar, 2010; Gal, 2010). Family continues to have precedence over the state as the primary provider of social support in times of need (Bugra & Keyder, 2006). A pronatalist movement is being encouraged by advising having three children, at least. On the other hand, analysis has shown that the risk of poverty increases as the number of children is increasing (Aran, Demir, Sarica, Yazici, 2010)

If social exclusion is a euphemism for poverty, then joblessness of individuals is important because it makes people poor. Our results were not in line with this statement hence we did not find a statistically significant relationship between being unemployed and feelings of being socially excluded. A possible explanation for this result could be put down to the composition of the unemployed participants. About 25.1% of them were not looking for a job and mostly were either housewives or retired persons, only 8.4% were really unemployed. This is lower than the unemployment rate (11.4%) for the whole country (TurkStat 2010). In contrast to our results we are still thinking that unemployment could be an important factor of social exclusion. Turkey's employment policy has made some progress by prolonging job creation incentives, making an attempt to prepare its national employment strategy and registering and delivering services to unemployed people. However, the coverage rate of unemployment benefit is too low and only 6% of the unemployed received benefits from the fund in March 2010 (European Commission 2010). The overall social policy regarding labor participation and unemployment should be strengthened and priority policies on employment need to be established. In Turkey, having social security membership means free access to health care and retirement pensions. We expected that people within the social security system should feel themselves stronger and therefore being included in this system might have an effect on one's feeling of social exclusion, but we did not find a statistically significant relationship among feelings of social exclusion and having, or not having, social security membership. Because most of our study group (85.4%) were under the social security umbrella. In contrast to our findings we think that having social security is an important component of social exclusion in Turkey, hence 44.8% of the people in employment are not registered within the social security system and are deprived of the protection of labor and pension rights. On the other hand, inspection capacity remains insufficient compared to the wide scope of informal work capacity. Turkey has to develop new social policies to combat informal labor and employment.

In our study, home ownership was found to be an important factor in relation to feelings of social exclusion. At the same time, owning a house depends on a good economic situation and therefore this relationship seems to be reflecting the effects of economic levels on social exclusion rather than home ownership. In Turkey, the process of land occupation and housing construction in urban areas, especially near metropolitan cities, which welcome thousands of immigrants from the eastern parts of the country, has changed dramatically over the past 10 years. A new state agency, the Mass Housing Administration (TOKI), has been established, and inexpensive flats in large apartment blocks are being constructed. Big private construction firms have also entered into the competition for building gated communities and middle-class housing complexes. The formation of housing cooperatives which offer inexpensive long-term credit to buyers has been encouraged. As a result of this action the new immigrants to big cities have to enter as tenants, and often in the least desirable, the cheapest and the meanest dwelling units. Therefore, the establishment of the Mass Housing Administration and its efforts to realize home ownership for every family should be accepted as a positive initiative in terms of producing social policy.

In this study we found that with the increasing years of residency in the city the feelings of social exclusion are diminishing. This could be explained by the attachment to the city, inclusion in its social environment and culture and familiarity with institutions and people. Social contact is an important factor which diminishes the feelings of social exclusion and is one of the main psychological functions attributed to place attachment (Fried, 1982; Korpela et al., 2001).

In this study we wanted to measure the feelings of social exclusion in a Turkish community by using the Social Exclusion Scale developed by Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman (2007). However, because social exclusion is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, it is not easy to represent it with a single item. A numerical index for social exclusion, which allows an absolute threshold to be drawn above or below

where social exclusion can be said to exist, is needed. We believe that Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman's scale (2007) could be further developed and used as an objective measurement of social exclusion. There are some limitations to our study which can be summarized as follows: Firstly, the data we used depended on self-reporting and may have been the cause of recall bias and under-reporting. Secondly, the data we used was cross sectional, therefore two-way causal effects cannot be estimated. Detailed longitudinal data is needed to create enough time distance between causes and consequences. Thirdly, we did not take ethnicity and religious beliefs into account, which may have some impact on feelings of social exclusion.

As a conclusion, 25.0% of our study participants felt themselves socially excluded. Being of younger age, being divorced or widowed, being illiterate, being in a bad economic situation could be the predictors of feelings of social exclusion. On the other hand, longer residency in the same place could diminish feelings of social exclusion. The concept of social exclusion has universal validity although it has not gained much attention in developing countries. We hope our study will provide an opening for further studies in Turkey. Thus social cohesion should also be regarded as one of the main dimensions of development.

Forty years ago Dudley Seers wrote: "The questions to ask about a country's development are: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have become less severe, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result "development," even if per capita income doubled" (Seers 1969:3).

Now it is time to add a fourth question to them: What has been happening to social exclusion?

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