Stereotypes and social representations as intercultural dialogue facilitators or impediments

Yanka Totseva, Margarita Bakracheva

Abstract: The study is focused on the relations among social stereotypes and social distance, shared values in terms of culture and conspiracy theories related stereotypes. The outlined gender, age, education and social status effects can differentiate the profiles and the motivation for commencing communication and, respectively, avoidance of communication and intercultural dialogue. The dynamics of the social context and the related uncertainty may be a factor reinforcing stereotypes supported. The opportunity of establishing intercultural dialogue is therefore impeded, however it can be stimulated by the more general picture, delineating the groups that are more likely to engage in dialogue and through them the barriers maintained by the unwilling participants to be circumvented. To this end the results can be implemented for targeting the mechanisms promoting willingness and motivation for inclusion.

The questions that we try to answer, are: Is there a difference in the stereotypes concerning the familiar Self and the new Other? What is the social distance in this respect? How in particular are stereotypes associated with the maintained personal attitudes and affiliations? Which are the indicators/markers, according to which we take someone like self or other/alien? What are the qualitative categories that we use in categorising in-groups and out-groups?

Keywords: stereotypes, social representations, intercultural dialogues.

Theoretical background

The commonly supported and shared social stereotypes and social distance can facilitate or impede commencement and flawless maintenance of intercultural dialogue. Social stereotypes represent categories or beliefs - specific attributed personal characteristics shared by a large number of people. Indeed, they are generalizations and contain not only descriptive, but also evaluation elements and are relatively stable. Social representations (Moscovici, 1984) [1] or collective processes of social perception / attribution, stereotypes and prejudices have influence on social relationships (Tajfel, 1981). [2] Two main practical guidelines towards decrease of prejudices are outlined: joint activities based on the hypothesis of intergroup contact role (Hewstone, 1996) [3] and the social cognitive approach that tries to transform group stereotypes by presenting contradictory information (Wilder et al., 1996). [4] According to the recategorization and cross social categorization mechanism (Dovidio et al., 2006) [5] belonging and affiliation to different social groups lead to self-determination in different categories (white, male, father, etc.) Thus, stereotypes tend to have less influence on social interactions, in view of the different social crossings. Attribution of people to broader social categories or their recategorization into other groups reshape and remodel the boundaries among categories and has a positive impact on reducing stereotypes and discrimination.

Our first suggestion concerns the effect of ethnic stereotypes on the social representations that are common in the Bulgarian society, which is multicultural, however the country's Constitution describes all communities as pertaining to one nation. The second suggestion concerns the influence stereotypes and social representations have on the willingness and preparedness for engagement with social dialogue.

A large body of sociological research reveal the negative attitudes of the majority of the Bulgarian community towards the willingness to communicate with disadvantaged groups.

Design of the study

Traditionally, Bulgarians share negative stereotypes and representations to the representatives of the Romani ethnos, but not to Turks and Jews. Thus in the design we selected to include attitudes towards Self and Other – the well-known and the new Other, reflecting general and shared beliefs, personal stories, perceptions and fears. We designed 3 scales, measuring
- Attitudes towards minorities
- Attitudes towards immigrants
- Stereotypes of the specific features of 6 groups - the ethnic and generalized groups included in the items refer to: Bulgarians, Turks, Greek, Roma, Arabs, Black.

The study was performed online during February-May 2017. 1000 links to the scales of the e-platform; returned 250, fully completed 72. The purpose is two-fold: first the author scales are piloted and improved for future research and second, a general first impression of the attitudes of Bulgarians is gained.

Results
According to the general tasks, the results are outlined as follows:
- Scales reliability and internal consistency
- Shared stereotypes of the 6 ethnic groups
- Attitudes towards immigrants
- Attitudes towards minorities
- Relations

Internal consistency and reliability of the scales
The scale *Perception of immigrants* comprises 11 items and 5-point Likert scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".
The items form two factors - factor 1 explains 38% of the variation and factor 2 - 15%. This indicates the need for correction of two items of the scale. Their connotation in Bulgarian may be is misleading, so two items, expressing negative attitude are a part of the factor, revealing positive attitude towards immigrants. Cronbach's alpha ,738.

Table 1. Attitudes towards immigrants scale

	Component	
	1	2
the immigrants shall have the same rights as the nationals of the host country		,657
the immigrants deserve to be rejected aid		,824
the immigrants have no reasonable ground to leave their country		,672
the immigrants are dangerous in large groups	,709	
the immigrants cause problems	,542	
immigrants are a tax burden	,752	
immigrants will never go back in their native country	,675	
the culture of the immigrants is dangerous for us	,772	
the immigrants are a threat for national security	,783	
the immigrants are not intelligent as us	,548	
the immigrants enjoy much more preferences	,778	

The *Scale, measuring attitudes towards minorities* comprises 9 items and a 5-point Likert scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

Factor 1 explains 30 % of the variation (Cronbach's alpha ,830), and factor 2 - 29% (Cronbach's alpha ,794). The items load according to the expectation – positive and negative attitudes. This scale has good internal validity and reliability.

Table 2. Attitudes towards minorities scale

	Component	
	1	2
minorities do not pay taxes as we do	,784	
minorities are harmful for economy because they reply only on state aids	,827	
minorities receive benefits they do not deserve	,768	
minorities can go to schools and universities if they wish	,573	
minorities are hostile to others	,691	
minorities have rich culture		,746
minorities do not cause problems		,703
minorities are in a disadvantageous position		,838
minorities have not enough support		,819

The *Scale, measuring stereotypes and attitudes towards the ethnic groups* comprises 12 features, referred to below for the 6 studied groups and a 5-point dichotomous scale. The features are:
1. good-bad
2. kind -rude
3. friendly-hostile
4. calm – short-tempered
5. of high – of low intelligence
6. loyal – disloyal
7. just-unjust
8. honest-dishonest
9. observe / break the rules
10. clean-dirty
11. industrious-lazy
12. pleasant-unpleasant.

The items, describing typical features of four of the groups - Bulgarians and Roma (100%), Turkish and Greek, load into four individual factors. Arabs and Black, however, all the time form one factor. This is interesting and indicative that the perceptions of the portraits of Us (Bulgarians) and Roma (the well-known Other) are most shared. The same goes for the Turkish community also and the neighbouring Greek. The new "Others", however, are not well differentiated.
The reason for this common perception of immigrants maybe is to some extent due to the few years of living in one country, but separated, as immigrants are in camps.
The factor with items for Arabs and black explains 18%, Bulgarians 13% Roma 13%, Turkish 9%, Arabs and Black 18% and Greeks 7% of the variation. The last factor explains 8% of the variation. Because of the dichotomous choice all scales have very high Cronbach's alpha, as they measure one thing – the attitude towards the respective ethnic group – Bulgarians ,932; Turks - ,930, Greek - ,930, Roma - ,949, Arabs - ,943, Black - ,958.
Table 3. Factor analysis – perception of the different groups

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Bulgarians						
good-bad		,577				
kind -rude		,713				
friendly-hostile		,613				
calm – short-tempered		,633				
of high – of low intelligence		,694				
loyal – disloyal		,623				
just-unjust		,794				
honest-dishonest		,818				
observe - break the rules		,672				
clean-dirty		,757				
industrious-lazy		,718				
pleasant-unpleasant		,747				
Turks						
good-bad					,559	
kind -rude				,477		
friendly-hostile				,571		
calm – short-tempered				,588		
of high – of low intelligence					,578	
loyal – disloyal				,691		
just-unjust				,455		
honest-dishonest				,629		
observe - break the rules				,695		
clean-dirty				,753		
industrious-lazy				,786		
pleasant-unpleasant				,669		
Greek						
good-bad					,707	
kind -rude						,527
friendly-hostile						,566
calm – short-tempered		,436				
high – low intelligent		,472				
loyal – disloyal						,559
just-unjust						,653
honest-dishonest						,654
observe / break the rules						,474
clean-dirty						,460
industrious-lazy						,612
pleasant-unpleasant		,460				
Roma						
good-bad			,759			
kind -rude			,539			
friendly-hostile			,645			
calm – short-tempered			,554			
of high – of low intelligence			,637			
loyal – disloyal			,628			
just-unjust			,704			
honest-dishonest			,823			
observe - break the rules			,816			
clean-dirty			,856			
industrious-lazy			,769			
pleasant-unpleasant			,787			
Arabs						
good-bad					,623	
kind -rude	,478					
friendly-hostile	,531					

calm – short-tempered	,588				
of high – of low intelligence	,672				
loyal – disloyal	,633				
just-unjust	,741				
honest-dishonest	,742				
observe - break the rules	,678				
clean-dirty	,776				
industrious-lazy	,798				
pleasant-unpleasant	,626				
Black					
good-bad				,623	
kind -rude	,490				
friendly-hostile	,509				
calm – short-tempered	,552				
of high – of low intelligence	,727				
loyal – disloyal	,735				
just-unjust	,734				
honest-dishonest	,769				
observe - break the rules	,765				
clean-dirty	,788				
industrious-lazy	,705				
pleasant-unpleasant	,629				

Factor 5 comprises only several items – good vs. bad for Turks, Greeks, Arabs, and Black. This is an interesting point, deserving future research interest.

The above results are very indicative of the well-known ethnic groups. We-the Other items load into different factors. Nevertheless, the items, describing Arabs and Black form two factors, these two groups are always perceived identically. The second factor also has the item, describing Turks and Greek as good-bad and Turks as intelligent. The item, describing Greeks as intelligent, falls into the factor, describing Bulgarians but in relation to the characteristic calm – short-tempered Greeks are in one factor with Arabs and Black.

Maybe the ethnic categorization also plays a role.

Correlations

The results of the correlation analysis reveal that in general when one group is assessed and perceived in a positive manner this usually predicts that other groups will also be perceived in a positive manner. The same refers to negative attitudes – when they are high to one group, this suggests they will be negative to others as well.

The exceptions from the general line of shared perceptions, notwithstanding positive or negative, is indicative of the differentiation of the areas and life domains people make when they access the Other. This reveals and supports the conclusions that Bulgarians are tolerant and accepting as far as their rights are not directly affected.

Good-bad

Good-bad has strong positive correlations between Bulgarians and all other ethnic groups, except for Arabs. (Turkish ,518**; .000), Greek (,678**; .000), Roma (,266*); ,024), Black (,373**; .001).Turkish have strong positive correlations with all others (Greek ,790**; .000), Roma (,498**; .000), Arabs (,473**; .000) and Black (,476**; .000). Greeks have also strong positive correlations with all other groups (Roma ,537**; .000), Arabs (,558**; .000) and Black (,624**; .000). Roma has positive correlations with all the remaining groups (Arabs ,754**; .000) and Black ,698**; .000). Arabs and Black also correlate positively for this characteristic with all other ethnic groups (the correlation Arabs – Black is ,791**; .000).

Kind –rude
For the characteristic kind -rude ""the data reveal the same trends. The only lack of correlation is between perceptions of Bulgarians and Roma. Bulgarians – Turks ,612**; .000; Bulgarians – Greek ,567**; .000; Bulgarians – Arabs - ,340**; .004 and Bulgarians – Black ,438**; .000). Turks – Greek ,802; .000; Turks-Roma ,242; .041`; Turks-Arabs ,395**; .001), Turks-Black ,584**; .000. Greeks – Roma ,248*; .035), Greeks – Arabs ,521**; .000 and Greeks-Black ,570**; .000. Roma-Arabs ,551**; .000 and Roma-Black ,565**; .000). Arabs – Black ,669**; .000).

Friendly-hostile
For friendly-hostile there are no exceptions, only strong positive relations. Bulgarians – Turkish ,572**; .000, Greeks ,498**; .000; Roma ,303**; .010; Arabs ,334**; .004, and Black ,441**; .000). Turkish – Greek ,534; .000; Turkish-Roma ,484; .000, Turkish – Arab ,447; .000 and Turkish – Black ,511; .000. Greek – Roma ,485; .000; Greek – Arab ,509; .000, and Greek – Black ,525; .000. Roma – Arab ,543; .000 and Roma-Black ,588; .000. Arab-Black ,676; .000.

Calm-short-tempered
Calm-short-tempered has no correlation solely for Bulgarians – Roma and Bulgarians – Arabs. All other correlations are on, positive moderate and high. Bulgarians – Turks ,442*; .000, Bulgarian – Greek ,450; .000, Bulgarians – Black ,476; .000). Turkish – Greek ,458; .000; Turkish-Roma ,252; .033, Turkish – Arab ,409; .000 and Turkish – Black ,607; .000. Greek – Roma ,352; .002, Roma – Arabs ,331; .004, Roma- Black ,439; .000. Roma – Arab ,678; .000 and Roma-Black ,372; .001. Arab – Black ,492; .000.

Of high – low intelligence
For the characteristic of high – of low intelligence there are no correlations only between Bulgarians and Roma. Bulgarians – Turkish ,639; .000; Bulgarians – Greek ,646; .000; Bulgarians – Arab ,292; .0`13 and Bulgarians – Black ,447; .000. Turks – Greek `,749; .000; Turks – Roma ,473; .000; Turks – Arab ,562; .000 and Turks – Black ,668; .000. Greek – Roma ,384; .001, Greek – Arab ,537; .000, Greek – Black ,638; .000. Roma-Arab ,563; .000, Roma-Black ,609; .000. Arab – Black ,683; .000.

Loyal – disloyal
Loyal-disloyal has no correlations between Roma and Bulgarians and Roma and Turks. Bulgarians – Turks ,509; .000, Bulgarians – Greek ,497; .000, Bulgarians – Arabs ,301; .010 and Bulgarians – Black ,477; .000. Turkish – Greek ,504; .000, Turks – Arabs ,395; .001 and Turks – Black ,465; .000. Greek – Roma ,368; .001, Greek – Arabs ,475; .001, Greek – Black ,571; .000. Roma – Arabs ,457; .000, Roma – Black ,442; .000. Arabs – Black ,867; .000.

Just – unjust
Just – unjust the only lack of correlation is between Bulgarians and Roma. Bulgarians – Turks ,397; .001; Bulgarians – Greek ,436; .000; Bulgarians – Arab ,301; .010 and Bulgarians – Black ,477; .000. Turks – Greek ,681; .000. Turks – Roma ,395; .001, Turks – Arabs ,485; .001 and Turks – Black ,501; .000. Greek – Roma ,353; .032, Greek – Arab ,506; .000 and Greek – Black ,464; .000. Roma – Arab ,688; .000, Roma – Black ,570; .000. Arab – Black ,744; .000.

Clean – dirty
For the characteristic clean – dirty there are no correlations between Roma and Bulgarians, Greek and Turks. Bulgarian – Turks ,561; .000, Bulgarians – Greek ,650; .000, Bulgarians – Arab ,270; .022 and Bulgarians – Black ,253; .032. Turks – Greek ,667; .000, Turks – Arabs

,559; .000, Turks – Black ,442; .000. Greek - - Arab ,472; .000, Greek – Black ,297; .011. Roma- Arab ,360; .002 and Roma – Black ,407; .000. Arab-Black ,664; .000.

Observe – break the rules
For observe – break the rules there is no correlation between Bulgarians – Roma and Arabs; Turkish and Roma. Bulgarians – Turks ,543; .000, Bulgarians – Greek ,456; .000, Bulgarians – Black ,287; .014. Turks – Greek ,554; .000, Turks – Arabs ,304; .009, Turks – Black ,447; .000. Greek – Roma ,285; .015; Greek – Arabs ,337; .004, Greek – Black ,523; .000. Roma – Arabs ,486; .000, Roma-Black ,522; .000. Arab – Black ,707; .000.

Industrious – lazy
Industrious – lazy reveals no correlations between Bulgarians and Roma, Bulgarians and Arabs Turkish and Roma and Turkish and Arabs. The last differentiation of Arabs from Bulgarians and Turks is an interesting point. Bulgarians – Turks ,531; .000, Bulgarians – Greek ,296; .012; Bulgarians – Black ,283; .016. Turkish – Greek ,520; .000, Turkish Black ,282; .016. Greek – Roma ,414; .000, Greek – Arab ,518; .000, Greek - Black, 478; .000. Interesting is also the correlations between Greek ethnos and Roma and Arabs except for Black. Roma – Arabs ,609; .000, Roma – Black ,479; .000. Arab – Black ,738; .000.

Pleasant – unpleasant
Pleasant – unpleasant interestingly has no exceptions. Bulgarians – Turks ,602; .000, Bulgarians – Greek ,726; .000; Bulgarians – Roma ,279; ,018; Bulgarians – Arabs ,254; .031, Bulgarians – Black ,331; .005. Turks – Greek ,725; .000; Turks – Roma ,559; .000, Turks – Arabs ,612; 0.000, Turks – Black ,622; .000. Greek – Roma ,442; .000, Greek – Arabs ,530; .000; Greeks – Black ,630; .000. Roma-Arabs ,767; .000, Roma – Black ,736; .000. Arabs – Black ,880; .000.

Different perceptions of the ethnic groups
It shall be first noted that the scale 1-5 rarely is above the cut point 3 and this is only in respect to Bulgarians. Turks are above the middle in respect to the characteristics industrious; Turks and Greek – for the category clean vs. dirty.
The ranges are identical for almost all specific features. Most negative attitudes for all the characteristics are attributed to Roma. The black in all cases are before the Arabs. Turks and the Greek are the categories that change their position until Turks are perceived as more industrious, observing the rules, clean, honest, just, loyal, intelligent, polite, intelligent and good, the Greek are preferred as more friendly, calm and pleasant.

Table 4. Different perceptions depending on the ethnic group

good-bad / Mean		polite-rude/ Mean		friendly-hostile/ Mean		calm – short-tempered/ Mean		observe – break the rules/ Mean		industrious - lazy/ Mean	
Bulgarians	3,68	Bulgarians	2,93	Bulgarians	3,25	Bulgarians	2,89	Bulgarians	2,79	Bulgarians	3,22
Turks	3,19	Turks	2,92	Greek	2,81	Greek	2,78	Turks	2,86	Turks	3,46
Greek	3,04	Greek	2,78	Turks	2,75	Turks	2,75	Greek	2,72	Greek	2,37
Black	2,68	Black	2,42	Black	2,49	Black	2,33	Black	2,28	Black	2,35
Arabs	2,31	Arabs	2,26	Arabs	2,00	Arabs	2,10	Arabs	2,11	Arabs	2,18
Roma	2,26	Roma	1,58	Roma	1,99	Roma	2,01	Roma	1,49	Roma	1,53

high-low intelligent/ Mean		loyal - disloyal/ Mean		just - unjust/ Mean		honest - dishonest/ Mean		clean-dirty/ Mean		pleasant - unpleasant/ Mean	
Bulgarians	3,46	Bulgarians	2,75	Bulgarians	3,04	Bulgarians	2,90	Bulgarians	3,54	Bulgarians	3,35
Turks	2,86	Turks	2,71	Turks	2,64	Turks	2,71	Turks	3,38	Greek	2,76
Greek	2,85	Greek	2,43	Greek	2,57	Greek	2,47	Greek	3,19	Turks	2,68
Black	2,46	Black	2,31	Black	2,33	Black	2,22	Black	2,50	Black	2,31
Arabs	2,42	Arabs	2,15	Arabs	2,10	Arabs	2,15	Arabs	2,44	Arabs	2,06

Positive view for Us

For the category *good-bad* Bulgarians are evaluated as much better compared to Roma (t=8.123; .000), Arabs (t=7.656; .000), and Black (t=6.527; .000), whereas there is no significant difference in respect to Turks and the Greek. For *politeness* Bulgarians are evaluated as much more polite compared to Roma (t=8.570; .000), Arabs (t=4.464; .000) and Black (t=3.917; .000). There is no difference with Greek and Turks. Significant differences are outlined for *friendship – hostility,* whereas Bulgarians differ from all other groups Turks – t = 4.273; .000; Greek t = 3.603; .001; Roma t = 8.539; .000, Arabs t = 8.960; .000 and Black t = 5.856; .000. For *calm vs. short-tempered* there are no differences among the perceptions of Bulgarians, Turks and Greeks. Bulgarians are assessed as calmer compared to Roma (t=4.318; .000), Arabs T=4.477; .000) and Black(t=4.240; .000). Interesting is also, that Bulgarians are considered more *intelligent* compared to all other ethnic groups. Turks t = 5,741; .000, Greek t = 6,112; .000; Roma t = 10,939; .000, Arabs t = 6,719; .000, and Black t = 7,374; .000. For *loyalty* Bulgarians are ranked higher that the other ethnic groups, except for that there is no difference between Bulgarian sand Turks. (Roma t = 6,881; .000, Arabs t = 3,845; .000, Black t = 3,392; .001). For *justice* Bulgarians differ from all other groups. Bulgarian – Turks = 3,118; .003; Bulgarian – Greek t = 3,926; .000; Bulgarian – Roma t = 8,250; .000, Bulgarians – Arabs t = 6,566; .000, Bulgarians – Black t = 5,776; .000. For *loyalty* there is no difference again only between Bulgarians and Turks. Bulgarians are considered much more loyal than the Greek (t = 3,689; .000), the Roma (t=9,523; .000), Arabs (t=5,172; .000) and the Black (t=5,594; .000). For category *just – unjust* Bulgarians are considered much more just than all other groups – Turks (t=3,118; .003), Greek (t=3,926; .000), Roma (t=8,250; .000), Arabs (t=6,566; .000), and Black (t=5,776; .000). For *loyalty – disloyalty* the respondents have not differentiated only Bulgarians and Turks. Bulgarians are assessed as much more loyal compared to Greeks (t=3,689; .000), Roma (t=9,523; .000), Arabs (t=5,172; .000), and Black (t=5,594; .000). For the *clean – dirty* dimension there is no difference only between Bulgarians and Turks. Bulgarians are perceived as much cleaner compared to Greeks (t=3,048; .003), the Roma (t=11,398; .000), Arabs (t=6,235; .000), and the Black (t=6,320; .000). In respect to *observing - breaking the rules* there is no difference in the perception of Bulgarians, Turks, and Greek.

Bulgarians are assessed as much more inclined to observe the rules compared to the Roma (t=8,026; .000), Arabs (t=4,147;.000), and the Black (t=3,354; .001). For *industrious – lazy* Bulgarians are considered more industrious compared to the Greek (t=5,327; .000), the Roma (t=11,383; .000), Arabs (t=6,413; .000), and the Black (t=5,621; .000. There is no difference in the perception of Bulgarians and Turks in respect to industry. Bulgarians are considered more *pleasant* compared to all other groups (Bulgarian – Turks = 5,697; .000, Bulgarian – Greek t = 5,812; .000, Bulgarian – Roma t = 9,494; .000, Bulgarians – Arabs t = 8,012; .000, and Bulgarians = Black t = 6,831; .000).

Differences for other ethnic groups
There is no difference between Turks and Greeks for the category *good-bad*. Turks and Greeks are perceived as better than the Roma (t=6.504; .000 and 5,784; .000), Arabs (t=, 6,141; .000 and t = 5,676; .000 respectively) and the Black (t=. 3,712; .000 and t = 3.163; .000). There is no difference between Arabs and Roma. The Black are considered better than the Roma (t = 3,738; .000) and Arabs (t=4,095; .000). Concerning *politeness* there are no differences in the perception of Turks and Greeks, Arabs and the Black. Turks and Greeks are considered more polite than the Roma (t=8,851; .000 and t = 8,323; .000 respectively), Arabs (t=4,660; .000 and t = 4,272; .000), and the Black (t=4,540; .000 and t = 3,372; .001). The perception of Arabs and the Black is that they are more polite than the Roma (t=5,670; .000 and t =7,448; .000). There are no differences between Arabs and the Black. In respect to *friendly vs. hostile* there are no significant differences between Turks and Greek as well as between Roma and Arabs. Turks and Greeks are considered more friendly than the Roma (t=8,851; .000) and t = 8,323; .000), Arabs (t=4,660; .000 and t = 4,272; .000), and the Black (t = 4,540; .000 and t = 3,372; .000). Black are considered more friendly compared to Roma (t=7,448; .000) and Arabs (t = 5,670; .000). Roma, Arabs, and Black, are perceived as equally *short-tempered*. Turks and Greeks are considered significantly calmer compared to them (Turks – Arabs t = 5,668; .000; Turks – Black t =2,084; .041; Greek – Arabs t = 6,638; .000, Greek – Black t = 2,626; .011). and there is no difference in perceptions of Turks and Greeks. The Roma are considered more short-tempered compared to Arabs (t = --4,916; .000) and the Black (t = --4,916; .000). Greeks and Turks, as well as Arabs and the Black are perceived as sharing an equal level of *intelligence*. Turks and Greeks are considered more intelligent than Roma (t = 9,548; .000 and t = 9,038; .000), Arabs (t = 3,751; .000 and t = 3,637; .001) and Black (t = 3,944; .000 and t = 3,745; 000 respectively). Arabs and Black are more intelligent than the Roma in the opinion of the respondents (t = 6,225; .000 and t = 7,022; 000). There are no differences in the perceptions of Greeks and Turkish in respect to *loyalty*. It is interesting that there is only a tendency for Greeks to be considered more loyal than Arabs (t = 2.066; .041). This is supported by the lack of differentiation between the Greek and the Black. Arabs and the Black also share one group of perceptions. Turks are more loyal than the Roma (t = 6,401; .000), Arabs (t = 4,017; .000), and the Black (t = 2,705; .009). Arabs and the Black are more loyal compared to the Roma (t = 3,429; .001 and t = 5,185; .000). There is no difference in perception of Greeks and Turks in respect to being *just*. These two groups are considered more just compared to the Roma (t=6,616; .000 and t = 6,108; .000), Arabs (t = 4,446; .000 and t = 4,096; .000), and the Black (t = 2,588; .012 and t = 2.002; .049). It shall be noted, however that there is only a trend for Greeks to excel Arabs. Black are perceived as being more just than Arabs (t = 2,704; .009) and Roma (t =4,974; .000) and Arabs more just than Roma (t = 3,309; .001). There is a trend for the Turkish to be considered more *honest* than the Greek (t=2.004; .049). There is no difference in the perception of Arabs and the Black in respect to honesty, whereas both groups are perceived as dishonest as a whole. Turks and Greek are considered much more honest compared to the Roma (t=8,031; .000 and t = 7,351; .000), Arabs (t=4,059; .000; and t = 2,592; .012), and the Black (t = 3,886; .000 and t = 2,592; .012). Once again, Arabs and the Black are considered better and more honest compared

to the Roma (t = 4,856; .000 and t = 5,541; .000). The respondents consider the Greek and the Turkish *clean* to a high extent (above the middle point of the scale). They do not differentiate Arabs and the Black and consider Turks and Greeks cleaner compared to the Roma (t = 10,130; .000 and t = 9,321; .000), Arabs (t = 6,632; .000 and t = 4,905; .000), and the Black (t = 5,968; .000 and t = 4,238; .000) and the Roma significantly dirtier compared to the Black and Arabs (t =-6,259; .000 and t = - 5,186; .000). Turks and Greeks, as well as Arabs and Black share equal representations in respect to *observation of the rules*. Nevertheless all ranks are describing all the five ethnic groups as inclined to break the rules, Turks and Greek are perceived as excelling Roma (t = 8,283; .000 and t = 8,466; .000), Arabs (t = 4,905; .000 and t = 4,222; .000), and Black (t = 4,313; .000 and t = 3,650; .000). Arabs and the Black are considered much more disciplined compared to the Roma (t = 4,969; .000 and t = 6,586; .000). The results for *industriousness* are interesting. Turks are the only group with a score above the middle of the scale. They are differentiated as more industrious compared to all other ethnic groups (Turks – Greek t = 7,926; .000, Turks – Roma t = 11,398; .000, Turks – Arabs t = 6,998; .000, Turks – Black t = 6,835; .000). Arabs, Greeks, and the Black are perceived in a similar manner, however less lazy than the Roma (t = 5,912; .000, t = 6,140; .000 and t = 6,524; .000). Greeks and Turks are perceived as equally *pleasant*, nevertheless the score is below the middle point. They are much more admired compared to the Roma, Arabs, and the Black (Turks – Roma t = 6,801; .000, Turks – Arabs t = 5,384; .000 and Turks – Black t = 3,279; .000. Greek – Roma t =6,442; .000, Greek – Arabs t = 5,372; .000 and Greek – Black t = 3,920; .000. Black are assessed as more pleasant compared to Arabs (t = 3,855; .000), and both the Black and Arabs are preferred to the Roma (t = 4,876; .000 and t = 2,439; .017). The Roma are perceived as the most *unpleasant* ethnic group.

Discussion of ethnic stereotypes
In all the comparisons above the tolerance to one of the minority groups with which the respondents have been living for years (Turks) is distinctive as is the expressed negative attitude to the other common minority group (the Roma). This shows Bulgarians' tolerance to neighbouring and living with other ethnic groups, however, based on the real characteristics, not due to stereotypes. Having in mind the positive attitudes towards Turks, the respondents rank the Roma below Arab and Black representatives. Nevertheless, the last two groups, as well as the Greek community are not well represented in Bulgaria, i.e. they are more alien, and not a part of the daily life, they are appreciated and perceived better, which proves that the negative experience Bulgarians accumulate on a daily basis forms attitudes, which are conscious stereotypes supported by real examples and personal experience.
It shall be noted that all the responses for all the ethnic groups are not evenly distributed and less positive than the average. Notwithstanding the better evaluation given to Us the respondents are careful in their estimates.

Results for the attitudes towards immigrants
Above the middle point of the scale are the evaluations of the respondents that the immigrants are dangerous in large groups, the immigrants cause problems, put national security at risk and two replies related to the life standard that has a direct effect on the perceptions of Bulgarians – immigrants are a tax burden and receive more preferences than the nationals of the country. In comparison to the other responses, this reveals that attitudes are more negative when people perceive danger for their security, status and social injustice or feel being mistreated in their own country. The evaluation of immigrants' intelligence, the fact that they bring a culture that is dangerous for us (that is an indirect threat) and the reasons that had made them leave their native land cause less negative feelings.

Table 5. Immigrants – general statistics

items	Mean	STD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
immigrants shall have the same rights as the nationals of the host country	2,58	1,35			
immigrants deserve to be rejected aid	2,79	1,42	16,231	,000	2,58333
immigrants have no reasonable ground to leave their country	2,01	1,20	16,640	,000	2,79167
immigrants are dangerous in large groups	3,72	1,17	14,189	,000	2,01389
immigrants cause problems	3,64	1,12	27,099	,000	3,72222
immigrants are a tax burden	3,47	1,41	27,639	,000	3,63889
immigrants will never go back in their native country	2,63	1,51	20,837	,000	3,47222
culture of the immigrants is dangerous for us	2,71	1,44	14,706	,000	2,62500
immigrants are a threat for national security	3,08	1,38	15,978	,000	2,70833
immigrants are not as intelligent as us	2,04	1,27	18,939	,000	3,08333
immigrants enjoy more preferences	3,11	1,49	13,620	,000	2,04167
			17,746	,000	3,11111

Correlations

Immigrants shall have the same rights as the nationals of the host country has a negative correlation with their perception as dangerous in large groups (=289; .014), that they are a tax burden (-382; .001), bring culture that is dangerous for us (-317; .007) and are less intelligent than us (-298; .011) but receive more preferences (-334; .004). Positive relations are demonstrated for the perception that immigrants shall be denied aid and that they have no good reason to leave their native country. (256; .030) The higher the perception that immigrants had not reasonable ground to leave their country is, the higher the shared belief that they shall be rejected aid and assistance is. The lack of reason for immigrants to leave their country is positively related to perceiving them as a threat for national security (,287; .014).

Perception of immigrants as dangerous in large groups is positively related to the fact they are perceived as bringing their own problems (,387; .001), that they are a tax burden (,587; .000), that they will never be back to their country of origin (,387; .001), and that they bring a culture detrimental for us (,438; .000) and represent a danger for our national security (,373; .001), that they are of low intelligence (,369; .001) and receive unreasonable preferences (,497; .000).

Bringing problems to our country correlates positively with the tax burden for the nationals of the country (,520; .000), that immigrants share a dangerous system of values (,368; .001) and will never be back to their countries (,302; .010), thus endangering our culture (,294; .012) and security but enjoy unreasonable preferences (,363; .002).

Perceptions of immigrants as people who intend to remain in the country increase the perceptions that they are dangerous (,434; .000), represent a tax burden (,400; .000) and put our culture and security at risk (,470; .000) and despite not being as intelligent as us (,247; . .036) enjoy preferences (,544; .000).

Perceptions of immigrants as carriers of adangerous culture (,531; .000), make people perceive them as dangerous for our security (,432; .000), and being detrimental to economy because of the groundless claims and preferences (,540; .000) because of the long-lasting experienced and perceived danger for national and daily security in view to their intention to settle in the country.

Attitudes towards immigrants as a risk for national security are linked to their projected intention to settle in the country (,728; .000), bringing their own problems and use of preferences (,483; .000) and living on state aids.

Perceptions of immigrants as less intelligent than us has low and moderate correlations with the danger they represent in large groups (,369; .001), the foreign culture (,345; .003) and their intention to leave their native country in search for aids (,308; .008) and support without efforts, which makes them a danger for national security (,479; .000).

Perceptions of immigrants as beneficiaries of unreasonable preferences has moderate and high correlations with the perceived danger they are going to settle here for long (,450; .000) and are carrying a foreign culture (,483; .000) and represent danger for national security (,578; .000).

Results – shared perceptions of minorities in the country

Above the middle point of the scale are the responses revealing that the respondents consider minorities have no restrictions, but have a suction pump effect on the economy because of the aids, on which they completely rely but have no contribution to the budget, thus receive benefits and allowances they do not deserve. Low shared is the concept that minorities do not cause problems and that they are not given enough support. To a great extent tolerance is demonstrated in the idea that they have a rich culture but are in a disadvantaged position. There are significant differences among the individual items.

Table 6. Shared perceptions about the established minority group (Roma)

items	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
minorities can go to schools and universities if they wish	4,63	,76	28,954	,000
minorities are harmful for economy because they reply only on state aids	4,22	1,32	27,061	,000
minorities do not pay taxes as we do	4,19	1,23	20,403	,000
minorities receive benefits they do not deserve	3,71	1,54	51,722	,000
minorities are hostile to others	2,97	1,24	14,815	,000
minorities have rich cultures	2,35	1,34	20,267	,000
minorities are in a disadvantaged position	2,43	1,40	12,929	,000
minorities do not have enough support	2,19	1,34	14,705	,000
minorities do not cause problems	1,89	1,24	13,591	,000

Correlations

The shared view that minorities do not pay taxes as Bulgarians do is positively related to the perception they cause problems to the budget (,674; .000) and live on state aids and receive benefits without giving anything (,558; .000), that are hostile to others (,418; .000), as well as a weak negative relation to the evaluation of the minorities as bearers of rich cultures (-272; .021).

The perception of minorities as bearers of rich cultures is positively related to the attitudes towards them as people who do not start problems (,708; .000) but are in a disadvantaged position (,266; .024) and are deprived of enough support (,423; .000).

The attitudes towards minorities as harmful for the economy are related to the attitudes that they receive benefits they do not deserve, nevertheless, no one restricts their right to study (,375; .000), as well as the fact that they are hostile (,451; .000). The negative attitude that minorities enjoy unreasonable benefits is related to the position that no one restricts their rights but that

they are hostile to others (,451; .000) and cause problems (-319; .000). The correlation between perception of minorities as bearers of rich culture (-290; .030), receive insufficient support (-445; .000), as well as the fact they are in a disadvantaged position (-429; .000) is negative.

Minorities can study if they will and this has a weak positive correlation with their perceiving as hostile to others (,257; .029). Perceiving the minorities as hostile to others is related to the attitude towards them as causing problems (-276; .019).

Minorities can study if they will and this has weak positive correlation with their perceiving as hostile to the others (,257; .029). Perceiving the minorities as hostile to others is related to the attitude towards them as causing problems (-276; .019).

Perceptions of minorities as not causing problems is positively related to the shared opinion they are in a disadvantaged position (,498; .000) and do not receive enough support (,494; .000). Perceiving minorities as a disadvantaged group is logically related to the lack of enough aids and support (,614; .000).

All these positive and negative relations evidence of a tolerant picture of acceptance and reasonable perception.

Discussion

The attitudes towards immigrants and minorities have a high correlation (,442; .000). The more negative the attitudes towards the well-known minorities are, the higher the negative attitudes towards the "new others" and vice versa are. High positive correlations are accounted also for the perceptions of the typical features of the three ethnic groups – Bulgarians, Turks and Greeks. The perceptions for each of the groups are related with the perceptions of the remaining two – in a positive or a negative manner. This is replicated for the shared perception of the Roma, Arabs and the Black. Extremely high positive relations are accounted for the negative and positive perceptions of the Roma, Arabs, and the Black. Each of these ethnic groups is perceived either in a positive or a negative manner, whereas there are commonly shared attitudes and stereotypes about the features describing the ethnic groups.

The scales, measuring attitudes to minorities and stereotyping ethnic groups are have good internal consistency and reliability

The scale measuring attitudes towards immigrants has to be reviewed for future research.

All data presented reveal that Bulgarian respondents are tolerant and have positive attitudes to Others. This, however, is due most of all to personal decision-making and verification of perceptions and reality

This is supported by the positive attitudes towards Turks on the one hand and the acceptance of the new others (Arabs and the Black) despite the perceived fears.

The positive attitude towards one group of others is promoting the positive attitude towards others in general. This is important for practice, trainings and work in a multicultural environment.

Based on the experience from real life with "others" in the full range of "otherness " is the foundation that makes people more accepting and tolerant on a deeper level.

Perceived fear and injustice are the reasons, which make Bulgarians have negative attitudes. This implication remains in the vast social and political area.

Limitations of the study and future directions

This is the first study of its type, moreover, employing new scales. Thus our first task was to design and confirm the reliability of the scales. This study includes only Bulgarians and measures their attitudes. In addition, there may be some concerns of gender, age, income, place of residence, occupation and other individual factors. We plan to include also the attitudes of

other minority, disadvantaged, excluded and vulnerable groups in order to describe a better overall picture.

General purpose and benefits
The education, gender, age, social status, and place of residence effects on formation and stability of social representations have been accounted. The dynamics of the social context and the related uncertainty may be a factor reinforcing stereotypes supported. The opportunities of establishing intercultural dialogue are therefore impeded, however they can be stimulated by the more general trends, delineating the groups that are more likely to engage in dialogue and through them the barriers maintained by the unwilling participants to be circumvented.

References
[1] Moscovici, S. (1984). The phenomenon of social representations. In: R. M. Farr and S. Moscovici (Eds.), *Social representations*. (pp. 3-69). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[2] Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
[3] Hewstone, M. (1996). Contact and categorization: Social psychological interventions to change intergroup relations. In: N. MacCrae, C. Stangor, & M. Hewstone (Eds.), Foundations of stereotypes and stereotyping (pp. 323-368). New York: Guilford.
[4] Wilder, D. A., Simon, A. F. & Faith, M. (1996). Enhancing the impact of counterstereotypic information: dispositional attributions for deviance, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*, 276-287.
[5] Dovidio, John F., Jane Allyn Piliavin, David A. Schroeder, and Louis A. Penner. (2006). *The Social Psychology of Prosocial Behavior*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bibliography
Dovidio, John F., Jane Allyn Piliavin, David A. Schroeder, and Louis A. Penner. (2006). *The Social Psychology of Prosocial Behavior*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Hewstone, M. (1996). Contact and categorization: Social psychological interventions to change intergroup relations. In: N. MacCrae, C. Stangor, & M. Hewstone (Eds.), Foundations of stereotypes and stereotyping (pp. 323-368). New York: Guilford.
Moscovici, S. (1984). The phenomenon of social representations. In: R. M. Farr and S. Moscovici (Eds.), *Social representations*. (pp. 3-69). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
Wilder, D. A., Simon, A. F. & Faith, M. (1996). Enhancing the impact of counterstereotypic information: dispositional attributions for deviance, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*, 276-287.