Causes and Consequences of Public Attitudes toward Syrian Refugees in Turkey

Cengiz Erişen[1]
[1]Yeditepe University, cengiz.erisen@yeditepe.edu.tr

Abstract

Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war, millions of refugees have to settle in Turkey. Today, although it has not been acknowledged politically, Turkish society has a Syrian minority. The process through which the Syrians could integrate to the society at large is an important challenge and thus in requirement of state policies. To that end, this article relies on intergroup theories of prejudice to understand the relations between the Turkish society and the Syrians and addresses the level of support/opposition for the governmental policies dealing with the issue. I use a representative sample of the Turkish population to test these expectations. The empirical analysis presents that social distance

is an important indicator of prejudice as well as negative emotions toward the Syrians. I conclude with discussion of the societal and policy implications of this study.

Keywords: Syrian refugees, perceived threat, prejudice, emotions, intergroup relations

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Türkiye'de Suriyeli Mültecilere Karşı Kamusal Tutumların Neden ve Sonuçları

Öz

Suriye iç savaşının başladığı günden bu yana, milyonlarca mülteci Türkiye'ye yerleşmek zorunda kaldı. Günümüzde, her ne kadar siyasi olarak kabul edilmemiş olsa da, Türk toplumunun Suriyeli bir azınlığı bulunmaktadır. Suriyelilerin toplumun geneline nasıl uyum sağlayacağı önemli bir sorunsal olmakla beraber, bu konuda devlet politikalarına ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma, gruplar arası iletişim teorilerindeki önyargı unsuruna dayanarak Türk toplumu ile Suriyeliler arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamaya ve konuyla alakalı hükümet politikalarına yönelik destek/karşıtlık seviyesini açıklamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Türkiye nüfusunu temsil eden verileri kullanarak beklentilerimi test etmekteyim. Görgül analizler göstermektedir ki, Suriyelilere yönelik olumsuz duygular kadar, sosyal mesafe de önyargıyı artıran önemli bir unsurdur. Makaleyi, çalışmanın sosyal ve siyasi etkilerini tartışarak bitirmekteyim.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Suriyeli mülteciler, tehdit algısı, ön yargı, duygular, gruplar arası ilişkiler

1. Introduction

Since the civil war erupted in Syria, approximately seven million people have faced forced immigration to other countries. According to the UNHCR (2018), about 3.6 million Syrians have entered Turkey seeking asylum, the highest among all countries that have received Syrian refugees so far. Besides Turkey, with nearly one million refugees, the highest ratio of Syrian refugees (equals to 1 in 4 citizens) lives in Lebanon today. Approximately one million Syrians live in Jordan and Iraq, combined. In Europe, around one million Syrian refugees have settled in Germany as opposed to 700.000 living in the remaining European Union (EU) member states, plus Norway and Switzerland. According to the American and Canadian State Departments, approximately 60.000 Syrian refugees are resettled in the US and Canada ("Admissions & Arrivals," n.d.; "#WelcomeRefugees," 2017).

Considering the millions of Syrians living with the public, various issues have become critically important. Among those, perceived threat and the integration process of the refugees are the two top issues facing the host countries today. As a result of the influx, either through migration from Africa to Europe or through the civil war in Syria, refugees have become a domain of threat for various events across distinct contexts. In Turkey, various confrontations have taken place, most especially in cities with higher Syrian refugees. In Europe, several events have occurred in different countries (including Germany, France, Norway, and others) where refugees were the primary perpetrators. Most important of all, social and political concerns regarding the integration of the refugees to the society have been raising various question marks.

When it comes to understanding the process of integration, we see that the rise of global populism lies at the center of the challenges of refugees and immigrants. The rising tide of populism, coupled with the xenophobic rhetoric of political leaders and the strengthening position of far-right political parties across Europe, and issues related to immigrants and refugees have taken a prominent role in political debates. In Europe, there has been growing opposition toward refugees and immigrants in general. A major reason for immigration taking a prominent

role in the news and policy circles has been the terror attacks conducted by ISIS in Paris, Brussels, and Nice with the potential of future sporadic, or lone-wolf attacks. The rise in perceived threat of the immigrants and refugees has taken place about the same time as the refugees (some of which are only Syrians but mostly from African countries) were entering Europe. As a result of these changes, far-right leaders and parties have found the political leverage to voice extremist rhetoric. Today, several European parliaments (including, France, Germany, and the Netherlands) have a major (if not a minor) opposition of far-right political parties.

Considering the large-scale effects of migrants and refugees in Europe and Turkey, scholarly research could better understands the relevant content of the issue in Turkey. According to official numbers, only one a small portion of refugees has been living in camps in Turkey and the rest had to find their place in the public. Approximately 800.000 of the 3.6 million refugees in Turkey are at school age and most of them have no or very limited knowledge of Turkish. On average, the adult refugee population is unable to communicate with the society at large and find a job to get a steady household income. So far, according to governmental reports, 31 billion USD has been spent for the Syrian refugees in Turkey. Yet, there has been no official state policy dealing with the refugees in a comprehensive manner. Only partial solutions to urging issues have been addressed, yet, the effectiveness of these programs requires various evaluations. Having said that there needs to be an overall program to map out the process of integration of these refugees, most of which at the end will prefer to stay in Turkey as opposed to returning to Syria. That is also why this research aims to fill a gap in the literature by examining the potential determinants of attitudes toward Syrian refugees in Turkey.

These contextual situations placed emphasis to intergroup theories that explain how groups contact and communicate with each other. Among those, I will primarily rely on identity theories and the intergroup contact hypothesis that in essence explore the potential needs of group relations and integration of migrants and refugees to the host

countries. Stemming from earlier research in political science and social psychology, this article uncovers the foundations of perceptions of the Syrian refugees and their integration to the society by the use of a representative survey of the Turkish population.

To that end, in the following pages, I first explain the theoretical basis of intergroup relations and then propose hypotheses relevant to the study. Methods, data and empirical analysis follow these sections to test the causes and consequences of public attitudes toward Syrian refugees in Turkey. I conclude with the general discussion and implications of the findings.

2. Group Conflict and Intergroup Contact Hypothesis

Taking a large array of studies in political science and social psychology into account, we see that intergroup theories address group relations exploring the integration stages of out-groups (such as immigrants, refugees, and minorities) to the society. The first concept that appears as the main factor of group conflict, as reported in these studies, is prejudice. As proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) decades ago, social identities conflict with each other for an overemphasis of in-group preference over the out-group. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), individuals need a positive self-concept and compare their group's worth with other groups, which also indirectly contribute to group members' self-esteem. As people find their in-group identity stronger and "better" than the out-group, their prejudice toward the out-group eventually increases (Tajfel, 1978).

Especially in divided societies, where the public is separated across a number of indicators, including ethnicity, language, and religion, people may maintain strong in-group identities with a strong out-group hostility, which divides the public into friends and foes. For those who do not find commonalities with the Syrians and Syrian refugees, such a powerful division is an obvious cause of a decline in tolerance and a reason for increased prejudice toward the out-group. On the other hand, those who find connections with the Syrians whether this is religious or ethnic or linguistic, they will be more likely to feel closer to them and

perceive less prejudice. In the context of Turkey, this suggestion is in fact quite possible for the religious people who may feel closer to the Syrians assuming that most refugees share the same religious values as they do. Relatedly, governmental rhetoric on the Syrian refugees and closeness to the government ideologically would lower perceived prejudice whilst for those afar from the government would be less likely to do that.

One alternative theory of group relations is the realistic group conflict (Hardin, 1995)**.** Instead of identity based divisions, realistic conflict theory suggests that individuals identify with a group because of economic interests and groups competing on the basis of these economic interests. The primary challenge in realistic conflict is thus for the competition of scarce resources. Considering the Syrians' social and economic status in Turkey, it is possible to expect that realistic group conflict explains the mechanism in which people interact. In that regard, those who are most affected by the presence of the Syrians in their primary economic market would be significantly more likely to compete against them and be prejudiced toward the group.

One possible solution to group-level conflict -- whether it is based on identity or economic interests -- comes from Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Hypothesis. More than half a century ago, Allport postulated that prejudice should decrease when people contact with the members of the group that were the potential source of the stereotype in the first place. Allport's seminal work focused on placing conflicting groups in a shared setting that motivates contact and communication. The primary assumption is that as a result of contact people's prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination toward the other group should diminish. Although there are additional requirements for the hypothesis (e.g., equal group status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support of authorities) to function properly, Allport's motivation was to decrease the level of prejudice via possible means in inter-group relations (Pettigrew, 1998).

In that regard, prejudice regarding the Syrians could stem from a number of reasons and it is hard to solve. The less trust there is for the

members of the group, or the more disinterest there is for becoming friends with the members of the group, the higher the prejudice toward these individuals would be. Equally important, as I propose and test in this article, is the role taken by emotions. As addressed by earlier studies, anxiety and negative emotions increase the level of prejudice and thus limit the potential positive effects of contact (e.g., Devine, Evett, & Vasquez-Suson, 1996). Other studies have also shown how intergroup emotions are powerful mediators in changing levels of prejudice between competing groups (Miller, Smith, & Mackie, 2004), especially when contact is present between the members of the groups. Although some earlier research took the Syrian conflict as a domain of study with the use of emotions (e.g., Erişen, 2013, 2015), there is much to be achieved to explain how emotions are relevant in the study of public attitudes on Syrians refugees. We will put these arguments in test in the context of Turkey where millions of Syrian refugees are scattered across the country.

3. Hypotheses

The first group of Syrian refugees entered Turkey in 2012. They have been living here for the last six years and they will fully become a part of the public in the following years. Currently, both the academic literature and governmental policies are quite limited in their scope of the problem and in their ability to address the major problems of the issue. Most of the current studies have focused on the economic consequences of the Syrian refugees (Bahcekapili & Cetin, 2015; Del Carpio & Wagner, 2015; Tumen, 2016) or overall perception of the refugees with various social effects to the public at large (e.g., Erdoğan, 2015). Only a few studies have examined the distinct effects of Syrians in public opinion related domains, such as voting (Fisunoğlu & Sert, 2018), domestic conflict (Getmansky, Sınmazdemir, & Zeitzoff, 2018) and policy preferences (Matland, Erişen, Clifford, & Wendell, 2018).

Nonetheless, whether we acknowledge the fact now or later, the Turkish Republic has a Syrian minority. These individuals have become a part of the society although we are not sure how the integration pro-

cess was or has been. On that note, it is essential that academic research explains the connection (or the disconnection) between the refugees and the hosting country public from the lens of intergroup theories. As a result of this examination, the government could then develop policies and the state could implement programs to understand the steps to be taken for a healthy integration of these groups to the society.

In line with the previous discussion, the goal in this article is to explore the determinants of prejudice toward the Syrian refugees and the indicators of policy preferences dealing with the issue of Syrian refugees. In suit of the intergroup theories and thinking of the possible ways of integration, a number of domains appear to be important. First, prejudice is a key component of intergroup conflict which, according to Allport's hypothesis, decreases as people get in touch with each other whether this is through exposure to the group members and/or via acceptance of social engagement with the group members.

Stemming from the earlier discussion on intergroup relations, I first test whether social distance and exposure to Syrians are influential on one's level of prejudice. The primary expectation here would be to understand what promotes or diminishes level of prejudice. In line with the assumption of Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis, those who are unwilling to get closer to the Syrians or Syrian refugees in various social contexts are more likely to be prejudiced toward them. A reflection of this assumption is the situation that people would remain afar from the source group of prejudice. Taking these expectations in tandem, I propose the following hypotheses to test the intergroup contact hypothesis:

H1a: Social distance promotes greater prejudice toward the Syrians.

H1b: Exposure to Syrians decreases the level of prejudice toward the Syrians.

Following the discussion regarding the foundations of intergroup contact hypothesis, I next introduce emotions as a central factor in attitude formation toward the Syrians in the country. Current research on emotions is a multidisciplinary endeavor with growing interest and scholarly publications. Taken as a central element of human behavior,

emotions activate certain action tendencies. Whilst one part of the literature focuses on discrete emotions and neural systems of emotions in separate strands, the other part explores general affective reactions toward different objects (see also Brader & Marcus, 2013; Erişen, 2013). In line with the premises of the affective valence approach, positive reactions motivate approach toward the object of emotion, whereas negative reactions promote withdrawal from the object (Erişen, Lodge, & Taber, 2014). Similarly, positive assessment on an object would decrease a negative trait associated with the object, just as the negative assessment on that object would increase the negative trait associated with it. In the current study, I follow the valence approach and argue that positive emotional reactions of Syrians would decrease prejudice toward them whereas negative emotional reactions would increase the level of prejudice. I thus propose:

H2: Positive emotions decrease prejudice, whereas negative emotions increase prejudice toward the Syrians.

One step further in exploring the integration process of Syrian refugees is particular policy domains. Some of those policies are against the Syrian refugees whereas others are supportive of the situation of the refugees in Turkey. Considering previous indicators of interest, those who accept social bonding situations with the Syrian refugees would be more likely to support pro policies and oppose anti policies. Also, in line with Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis, those who are exposed to the Syrian refugees in their daily lives would be more open to support pro policies but oppose anti policies. Taking these together, individual preferences for policies stem from certain individual tendencies. I thus propose:

H3: Greater social distance, less exposure to refugees and negative emotions toward Syrians decrease the probability of support for pro policies and increase the probability of support for anti policies.

In line with these hypotheses, in the next sections, I introduce the data and the measures to capture these domains and then discuss the findings.

4. Data and Methods

A research design composed of a stratified random probability was used to draw a sample of 1224 participants representing Turkish voters. The distribution of the sample across geographical areas and provinces was based on the NUTS classification in order to cover the whole country including urban and rural settlements. These interviews included an oversample from four municipalities (Adana, Mersin, Şanlıurfa and Mardin) in the south and southeastern parts of the country where Syrian refugees are settled in larger numbers.

All of the interviews were conducted face-to-face during May 5-18, 2017. The average length of the interview was approximately 24 minutes. According to American Association of Public Opinion Research standards, the response rate in the study was 19%, the cooperation rate was 36%, and the refusal rate was 34%.

4.1. Measurement

To capture the primary dependent variable, prejudice, I relied on a general index that captures how much one thinks via stereotypes. The Prejudice domain included a four items response scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) capturing the degree of prejudice towards the Syrians. These items were: "I have difficulty understanding the lives and customs of the Syrian refugees;" "I believe Syrian refugees are likely to commit crimes;" "Syrian refugees are as trustworthy as Turks (reversed);" "Syrian refugees only think about their own group." These items scaled well together (alpha=0.62) and thus were combined into a single measure.

In the list of primary explanatory variables, exposure to Syrian refugees, acceptance of social contact, and negative and positive emotional reactions toward Syrians were the top relevant ones. To measure social distance, an item referring to seven social conditions was used. These asked whether the participant accepts encountering the Syrians (or Syrian refugees) by marriage, as a friend in a group, as a neighbor, as a colleague at work, as a citizen in the country, as a visitor in the country, or prefer that they should be excluded from the country (reversed).

The response scale for the social distance battery items ranged from 1 (Strongly favor) to 5 (Strongly oppose). Each one of these situations was presented to the participants separately and then a combined measure (alpha=0.83) was generated by taking the arithmetic mean of the items.

To capture exposure to Syrian refugees, the survey included an item referring to various social contexts where the participant may have seen a Syrian refugee family (or Syrians). The variable specifically asks whether the participant has ever seen/had a Syrian refugee family (or Syrians) in any of the following social contexts: Living in your building, working where you work, in your neighborhood, at your children's school, on the street, in a shopping mall, and in a mosque that you visited. Each context was selected by the respondent as Irrelevant (0), No (1), and Yes (2), whose scores were then summed up. Higher values indicated more contact with the Syrian refugees in various social contexts.

To detect the emotional reactions, among a list of emotions toward to the Syrian refugees those with negative connotations (animosity, dislike, hatred, exclusion, fear, anxiety, and anger) were selected and combined into a single measure (alpha=0.85) reflecting the degree of negative out-group emotion. Those with positive connotations (enthusiasm, accept, love, sympathetic, compassion, and warmth) were combined into another single measure (alpha=0.84) to measure the degree of positive out-group emotion. The response scale for all these items ranged from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Extremely).

Finally, the control variables --to detect any differences against the primary variables of interest-- referred to the following variables of interest and demographics. Among the list of variables with substantive association with the study, the empirical models included a dummy variable for the vote for the AKP government in the previous elections, political ideology (1=Left; 10=Right), religiosity (combination of two items: Pray Frequency: 1=Never; 6=Five times a week; Fasting Frequency: 1=Never; 4=During Ramadan and other religious days), and political knowledge (correct answers given to the four multiple choice items on the identification of the Speaker of the Parliament, identification of Minister of

Foreign Affairs, number of MPs in the Parliament prior to the 2017 ref-erendum, and number of refugees that Turkey has so far received). In the list of demographics, the models include gender (female=1), Kurdish Ethnicity as indicated by the participant, social class (1=Lower; 6=Up-per), income per month (1=0-999TL; 8=9.000TL and more), and educa-tion (1=No formal education received; 9=MA/PhD degree).

4.2. Policy preferences

Attitude formation on policies dealing with the issue of Syrian refu-gees and their integration to the society is an important domain for this study. There have been several different policies that address the prob-lems of their needs and their integration to the society at large Among those, some policies are quite progressive by giving certain rights to the Syrian refugees whilst others are protective in a way that show the long and hard way of becoming a member of the society. To capture these different views, the survey included a policy battery including six separate items, with the same response scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree), asking pro and anti policies dealing with the Syrian refugees in Turkey.

Anti policies included the following items: "Begging should be pro-hibited in Turkey," "If Syria becomes safe, the government should en-courage Syrian refugees and their families to leave Turkey," and "Ref-ugees coming to Turkey increase the danger of disease outbreaks." Pro policies included the following items: "Immigrants who are not Turkish citizens, but who live in Turkey, should have the same access to welfare programs as Turkish citizens," "Syrian refugees should be given the right to work in Turkey," "Those Syrian refugees that invest 500.000TL anywhere in Turkey could receive Turkish citizenship." To detect any foundational differences across these items, each policy will be studied separately in the following analyses.

5. Results

In this section, following the above-mentioned hypotheses, I first introduce the descriptive inferences, then discuss the findings on the

intergroup contact hypothesis, and finally present policy-based models tackling various issues with regards to the Syrian refugees in Turkey.

5.1. Descriptive Evaluations

Considering the primary indicators of interest, presented in Table 1, we see that the level of prejudice (as measured by the items in this study) averages around 3.72 (Standard Deviation = 0.87), which is quite high when thinking of the midpoint of the five-point scale. In comparison to the primary dependent variable, the social distance measure is equally high (Mean = 3.73; Standard Deviation = 0.93). Exposure to Syrian refugees in the population is quite high (Mean = 10.05; Standard Deviation = 2.19, on a 0-14 scale) indicating that the public has had significant exposure with the Syrians across various social situations. Negative and positive out-group emotion measures follow these results by showing some negative emotions toward Syrians (Mean = 2.69; Standard Deviation = 1.23, on a 1-7 scale) as opposed to lower positive emotions (Mean = 2.21; Standard Deviation = 1.19, on a 1-7 scale).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

|	Observations	Mean (SD)	Scale
Prejudice	1207	3.72 (0.87)	1-5
Social Distance	1216	3.73 (0.93)	1-5
Exposure to Refugees	1224	10.05 (2.19)	1-14
Negative Emotional Reactions	1222	2.69 (1.23)	1-7
Positive Emotional Reactions	1221	2.21 (1.19)	1-7

Following these descriptive results, below I provide figures that plot the distribution of the relevant control variable (income, education, religiosity, ethnicity, age, and political ideology) across prejudice, social distance, and negative emotions on Syrian refugees. These figures include six boxplots showing the distribution of the subgroups of the control variable on the primary variable of interest. Each boxplot presents the distribution of the observations with the minimum and maximum

values and the dark black line inside the box for the mean values. Outliers are shown with the black dots above or below the box plot. The comparative t-tests are shown with lines above the box plots and the p-values for the comparative tests are reported for the subgroups of the relevant control variables.

Starting from the variable of prejudice, we find that there is a significant difference among low-, mid-, and high-income earners across Turkey. As stated earlier in the theoretical section, realistic conflict of interest suggests that groups that are in competition with each other are more likely to clash on income sources. In that regard, low-income earners could perceive Syrians as a significant source of competition for the same jobs or occupations they are hoping to get. The plots for level of income support this finding that low-income earners are significantly more prejudiced toward Syrians as opposed to mid and high income earners. As opposed to income effects on prejudice, we do not see any differences across subgroups of education and age groups. Different levels of education and different age groups do not seem to present distinct levels of prejudice.

Regarding the politically relevant control variables, we see a significant difference between Turks and Kurds as the former appears to be more sensitive toward Syrians. Similarly, those who score less on religiosity present higher prejudice toward Syrians and those who place themselves on the left are significantly different from those on the center and the right. Given that religiosity and political ideology relate to the AKP government's position on the Syrian refugees, it is reasonable to observe these differences. Highly religious people are more likely to observe Syrians closer to their religious identity, so their prejudice could be lower compared to less religious people. Similarly, those who place themselves on the right of the political scale are more likely to associate themselves with the Syrians as most of them could be more conservative coming from a Muslim majority country.

Figure 1. Distribution of control variables on the level of prejudice
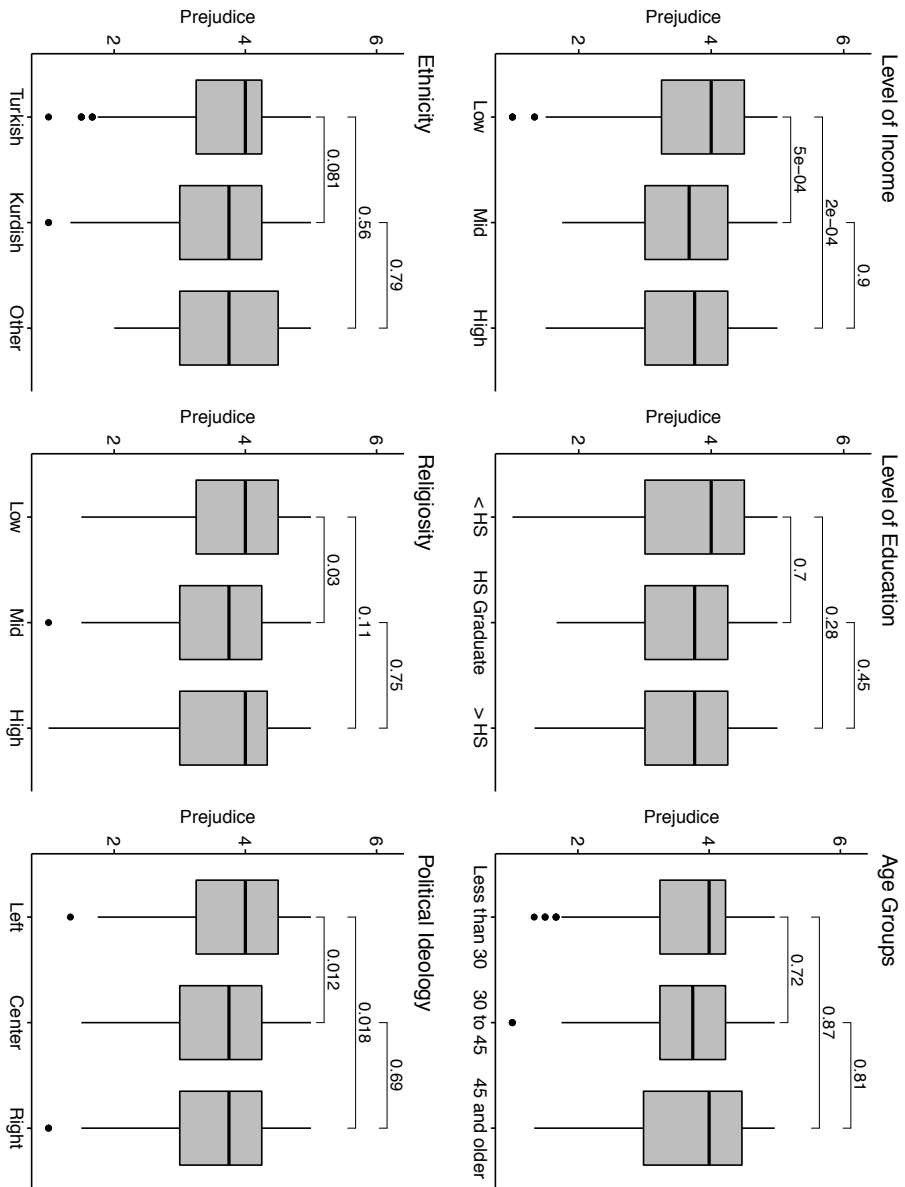
Following these results, I applied the same method to social distance toward the Syrians. We confirm previous findings on prejudice that low-income earners are more likely to be distanced toward Syrians whereas education and age have no bearing on this. We confirm the ethnicity effect that Turks are significantly less likely than Kurds and other ethnic groups to be closer to the Syrians across distinct social contexts. We also confirm that less religious people are more likely than highly religious people to be distanced from the Syrians. Similarly, those who place themselves on the left (of the ideology scale) are significantly different by being more distanced to Syrians as opposed to those who place themselves on the center and the right.

I next plotted the same models for the negative emotional evaluations on the Syrians and report them in Figure 3 below. In contrast to earlier results, we see that low-income earners are less negative toward the Syrians, as opposed to mid and high-income earners. The comparisons are quite robust across subgroups of income. With respect to education, less than high school degree holders are less negative toward the Syrians as opposed to high school graduates and those who hold more than a high school degree. Consequently, although low-income earners and less educated individuals are more prejudiced toward the Syrians, they are not overly negative about them, when compared to the other sub-groups in that domain.

As before, we do not see any differences across age groups. Regarding ethnic identity, we see that Turks are significantly more negative toward the Syrians as opposed to those who self-claim their identity as Kurd or any other ethnic group. As before, less religious people appear to obtain more negative emotional evaluations of Syrians as opposed to highly religious people. With respect to political ideology, those on the left are more negative toward Syrians as opposed to those who are on the right of the political ideology scale.

Taken together, these results suggest that there is certainly a variance across the subgroups of demographic indicators and other relevant control variables. Given these findings, we next tackle the particular hypotheses in the study.

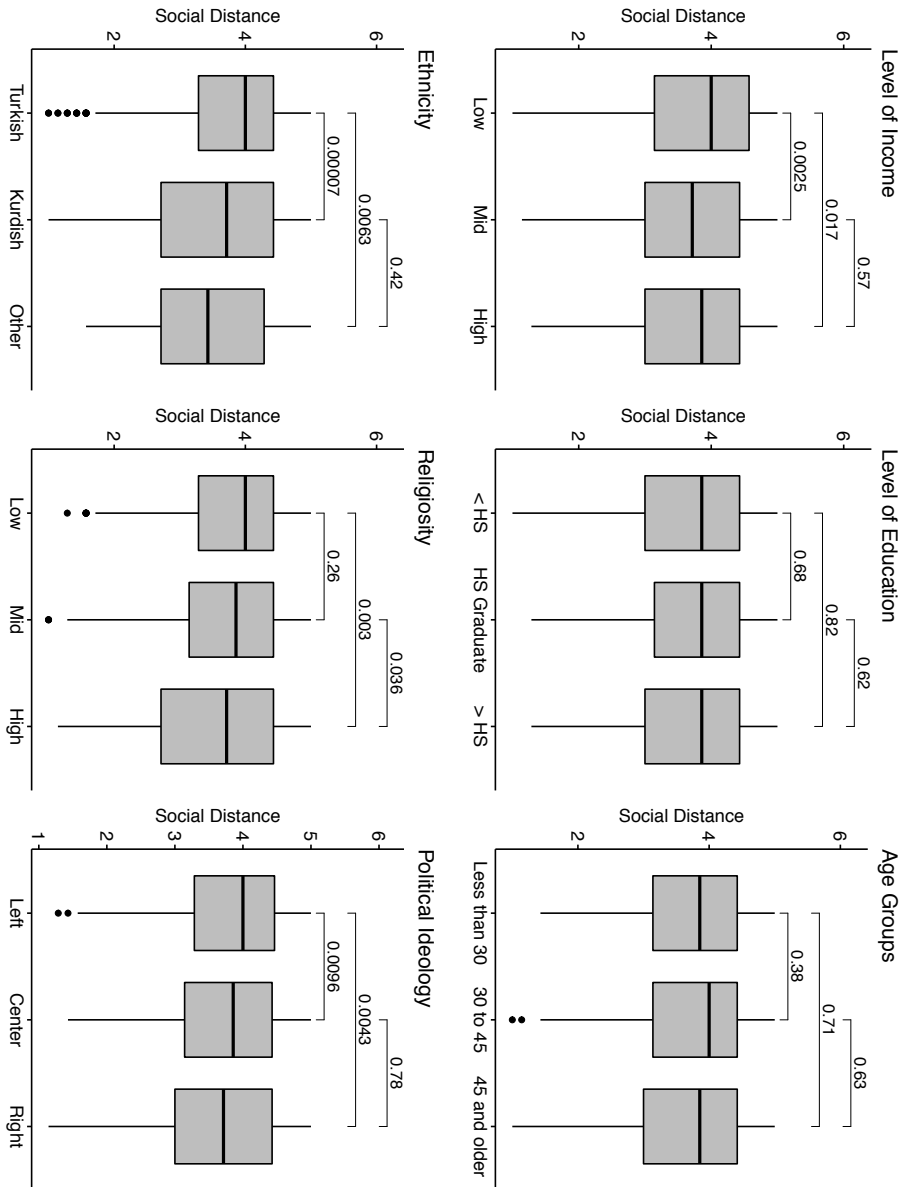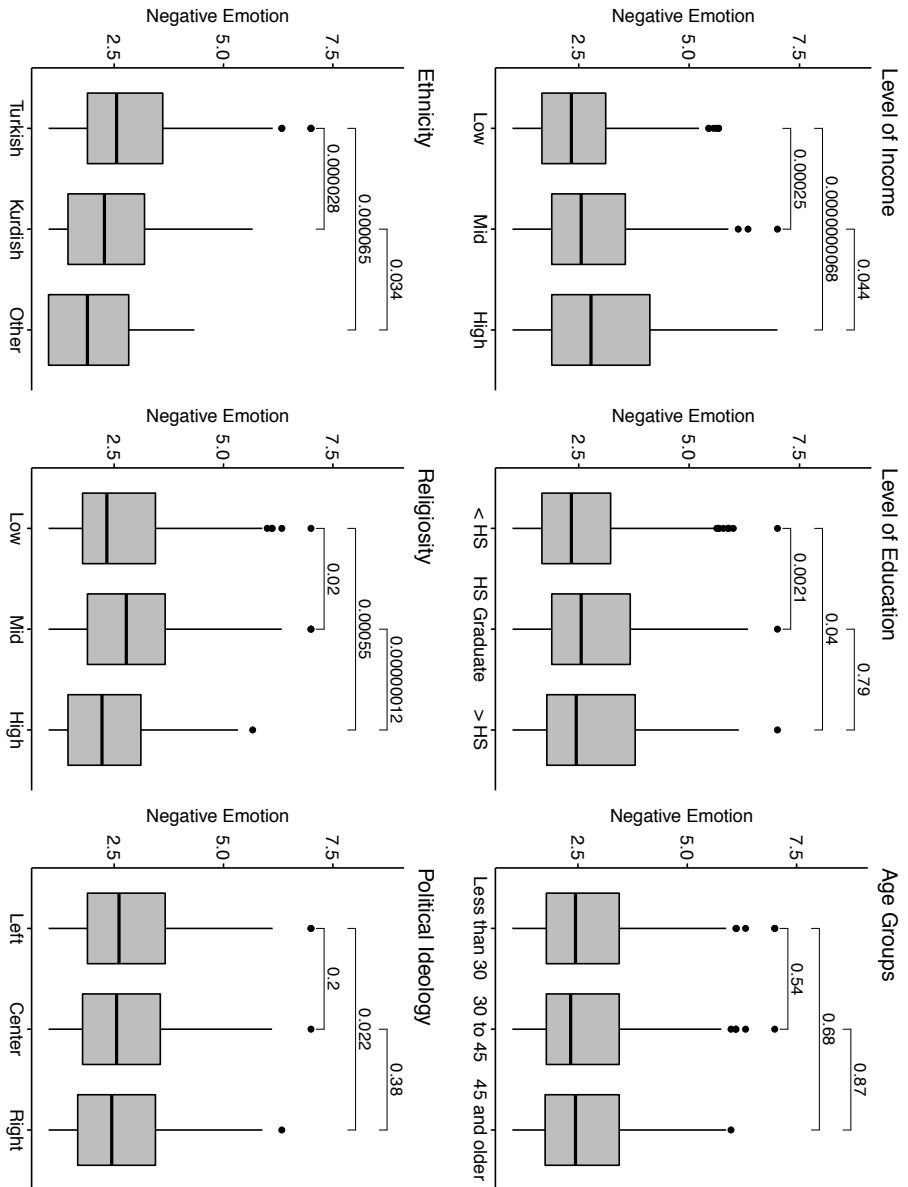*Figure 2.* Distribution of control variables on the level of social distance

Figure 3. Distribution of control variables on the level of negative emotions

5.2. Testing Allport's Intergroup Contact Hypothesis

I begin by testing the intergroup contact hypothesis by predicting the level of prejudice toward the Syrian refugees via the primary explanatory variable of social distance. As introduced above, social distance is a combined measure of seven different social situations where the participants would agree to socially accept Syrians in bonding situations (such as accepting them as a family member or living with them in the same neighborhood or building, etc.). Model 1 (in Table 2) presents that as people want to dissociate themselves from engaging in socially bonding situations with Syrians, their level of prejudice significantly increases ($p<.001$). Socially refusing Syrians or Syrians families is a robust predictor of why individuals become prejudiced toward them.

Next, in Model 2, we introduce exposure to the Syrians measure to see if daily exposure could decrease prejudice. We thus predicted prejudice by using two primary variables of interest and found that as social distance increases people are still more prejudiced toward the Syrian refugees ($p<.001$). However, as exposure to refugees increases, people become less prejudiced toward them as well ($p<.001$). In that regard, exposure to Syrians in various contexts in daily life in fact promotes greater tolerance and understanding toward them whereas the consideration of accepting them in bonding situations (as a family member, or as a neighbor, or an as a colleague, etc.) significantly increases prejudice.

Since Syrian refugees are not distributed across the country equally, the latter situation is not possible for all Turkish citizens, but the former is more likely for the public. It is thus important to note that Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis may provide a solution to the dissociation between the Syrians and the Turkish public.

When we include all the control variables (in Model 3) as previously used, the findings still hold. That is social distance significantly increases prejudice across the public whereas the effect of exposure to refugees is only marginally significant ($p<.07$). All of the control and demographic variables are insignificant in this model.

Following these models, in Model 4, I include emotional reactions as potential indicators of prejudice. In line with the expectations, neg-

ative emotions about Syrians significantly increase prejudice ($p<.001$) whilst positive emotions significantly decrease it ($p<.001$). That is, positive evaluations about Syrians lower the level of prejudice toward them as opposed to the negative evaluations which evidently increase the level of prejudice. These effects are quite robust in comparison to the other two primary variables of interest, social distance and exposure to refugees. In addition, we should note that these effects are confirmed while controlling all the remaining variables (shown in Model 5) as included in the previous models.

As a result, one could indicate that the emotional reactions are potential new factors altering the level of prejudice toward Syrians. These results should be taken within the growing comparative political behavior literature exploring the various roles emotions play in understanding the attitudes on immigrants, refugees, and minorities in populist regimes (Erişen & Kentmen-Cin, 2017; Vasilopoulos, Marcus, & Foucault, 2017; Vasilopoulou & Wagner, 2017).

Table 2. Testing the Intergroup Contact Hypothesis

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Social Distance	0.423*** (0.0293)	0.411*** (0.0292)	0.428*** (0.0326)	0.252*** (0.0315)	0.264*** (0.0354)
Exposure to Refugees	-	-0.0420*** (0.0111)	-0.0233[+] (0.0126)	-0.0368*** (0.0100)	-0.0214[+] (0.0114)
Negative Emotions	-	-	-	0.0985*** (0.0192)	0.128*** (0.0232)
Positive Emotions	-	-	-	-0.232*** (0.0232)	-0.246*** (0.0270)
Constant	2.109*** (0.114)	2.569*** (0.180)	2.463*** (0.274)	3.359*** (0.188)	3.092*** (0.274)
Controls Included	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	1203	1203	969	1203	969
R2	0.21	0.22	0.25	0.31	0.34

Note. Ordinary least regression coefficients are reported with robust standard errors in parentheses. Control variables include political knowledge, political ideology, religiosity, vote for AKP, gender, ethnicity, income, social class, education, and age. Population weight is used in the estimation of these models. [+] stands for p<.10, * stands for p<.05, ** stands for p<.01, and *** stands for p<.001.

In sum, those who are exposed to the Syrians are significantly less likely to be prejudiced against them although this exposure does not primarily lead to social acceptance of the refugees in various contexts. I thus find supporting evidence for Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis for the Syrian refugees in Turkey. Equally important in these findings is that emotional reactions toward Syrians present major effects in changing levels of prejudice. As a result, there are additional indicators that we should take into account when studying prejudice. Yet, these results do not necessarily answer the public support for the potential policies that the government has considered (or has been considering) to deal with the issue. I tackle these in the following multivariate models.

5.3. Preferences on Policies Dealing with the Syrian Refugees

As explained above, six governmental policies (three of which are anti and three of which are pro) were used to address the issues with regards to the Syrian refugees in the country. Each participant was able to report his/her disagreement or agreement toward the policy on a 1-5 scale. Since the dependent variable is ordered, Table 3 reports the ordered logistic regression models with odds ratios of change (z-values of statistical significance shown in parenthesis). Odds ratios present the degree of change in odds for one-unit increase in a continuous predictor variable or when changing levels of a categorical variable, holding other variables in the model constant. Population weight is used in estimation of the following models.

Among all indicators, we see that social distance toward the Syrians is a robust and consistent predictor of individual policy preferences. As people prefer distancing themselves from the Syrian refugees, they

become significantly more likely to support the anti policies that would take Syrians away from the public and significantly more likely to oppose the pro policies that would benefit the Syrians. Regardless of the policy domain, whether it focuses on begging in the country or citizenship opportunities for the Syrian investors, social distance imposes major effects on policy preferences of the Turkish public.

Unlike the consistent effects of social distance, exposure to Syrian refugees in distinct social contexts appears to be influential in two particular policies, the begging ban and the government's encouragement of refugees to leave Turkey. On both of these anti-refugee policies, as people get exposure to the Syrians refugees during their daily lives, they are significantly more likely to oppose these policies. Hence, these individuals with more exposure to refugees in fact prefer taking an opponent position against policies that would ban begging and get them out of the country given the opportunity. In other words, these individuals disapprove of these two specific anti-refugee policies. Specific for these policies is the fact that having voted for the government equally and significantly lowers the level of support for the anti-policies as opposed to those who voted for another political party in the previous elections.

In evaluation of the emotional reactions, we see a number of interesting results. First, both negative and positive emotional reactions present consistently significant effects across almost all policy domains. Second, as expected, positive emotional evaluations of the Syrians increase the probability of support for the pro policies and decrease the probability of support for the anti policies (except for the begging ban policy). In contrast, negative emotional evaluations increase the probability of opposition for the pro policies and increase the probability of support for the anti policies (except in two policy domains). Thus, there is significant evidence for the hypothesis that emotional reactions strongly and consistently alter how one evaluates governmental policies. Finally, the substantive effect of emotional reactions reveals a number of interesting issues. The positive feelings of association toward a group promote an approach behavior by supporting the policies that protect

the group members in every possible way, in this case with the support of pro policies and opposition of anti policies. In a similar vein, negative feelings of association toward a group is a primary source for growing opposition and withdrawal from the group in every possible way, in this case with greater opposition of pro policies and greater support of anti policies. These results strongly correlate with earlier studies where affective reactions are central to individual thought and behavior in politics (e.g., Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000).

An overview of the control variables and demographics suggests no consistent effects across the policies. It is interesting to observe no effects of political ideology, political knowledge, or religiosity on policy preferences. Similarly with regards to the demographics, we do not see any major effects of education, social class, gender, ethnicity, age, and income. There is only one exception with high-income earners who are eager to ban begging. Furthermore, for the citizenship item, those who place themselves on the right of the political spectrum and tend to be older than the median participant are more likely to support this policy. We should however note that these effects are mostly policy-specific.

Having said that, it is equally important to emphasize the conceptual importance of intergroup related indicators in assessing public opinion on policies that deal with the Syrian refugees. More importantly, these indicators are the essential concepts to understand the integration process of Syrians to the Turkish society, as this will become a more pressing issue over the following years.

Table 3. Preferences on Politics Dealing with Syrian Refugees

	Anti Refuge Policies			Pro Refugee Policies		
	Begging should be prohibited	Government should encourage refugees to leave Turkey	Refugees increase the danger of disease outbreak	Refugees should have the same access to welfare as citizens	Refugees should be given the right to work in Turkey	Refugees that invest 500,000TL in Turkey could receive citizenship
Social Distance	1.229* (2.13)	1.528*** (4.46)	1.516*** (4.07)	0.709*** (-3.97)	0.608*** (-4.97)	0.607*** (-4.89)
Exposure to Refugees	0.915* (-2.28)	0.920* (-2.43)	1.041 (1.27)	1.035 (1.13)	1.021 (0.69)	1.007 (022)
Negative Emotions	0.969 (-0.45)	0.764*** (-4.01)	1.290*** (3.95)	0.801*** (-3.33)	0.808*** (-3.35)	1.036 (0.53)
Positive Emotions	0.942 (-0.83)	0.831*** (-2.62)	0.764*** (-3.40)	1.706*** (7.14)	1.456*** (5.30)	1.335*** (3.52)
Political Ideology	1.032 (0.94)	1.042 (1.34)	0.945+ (-1.83)	0.987 (-0.48)	1.034 (1.21)	1.082* (2.50)
Vote for AKP	0.665* (-2.17)	0.530*** (-3.67)	0.824 (-1.15)	0.965 (-0.23)	0.972 (-0.18)	1.021 (0.12)
Political Knowledge	0.955 (-0.75)	1.113+ (1.75)	0.968 (-0.59)	0.951 (-0.93)	0.948 (-1.03)	0.966 (-0.57)
Religiosity	0.964 (-0.56)	1.036 (0.57)	1.110+ (1.82)	0.989 (-0.19)	0.992 (-0.14)	0.915 (-1.40)
Female	0.909 (-0.61)	1.091 (0.59)	1.130 (0.86)	0.995 (-0.04)	1.106 (0.72)	1.152 (0.94)

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	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Kurdish	1.413	0.742	0.822	0.755+	0.741+	0.747
	(1.60)	(-1.43)	(-1.02)	(-1.66)	(-1.85)	(-1.59)
Income	1.253**	1.058	1.017	1.003	1.088	0.951
	(3.18)	(0.83)	(0.26)	(0.05)	(1.30)	(-0.73)
Social Class	1.015	1.110	0.905	0.974	0.934	0.905
	(0.20)	(1.40)	(-1.59)	(-0.40)	(-1.05)	(-1.37)
Education	0.929	1.113+	0.968	0.951	0.948	0.966
	(-1.58)	(1.75)	(-0.59)	(-0.93)	(-1.03)	(-0.57)
Age	1.000	1.003	0.996	0.993	1.003	1.015*
	(0.06)	(0.55)	(-0.69)	(-1.26)	(0.52)	(2.49)
N	966	966	932	961	961	948
Chi2	39.54	118.2	144.8	127.2	157.4	146.1

Note. Odds ratios from ordered logistic regression are reported with z statistics in parentheses. Population weight is used in the estimation of these models. + stands for p<.10, * stands for p<.05, ** stands for p<.01, and *** stands for p<.001.

6. Conclusion

In this brief article, my goal was to provide a test of the intergroup relations and level of prejudice toward the Syrians with the use of representative survey data. The results are in partial support of Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis motivating greater exposure to the Syrians decreasing the level of prejudice toward them. However, this effect is not a stand-alone direct finding as social distance toward the Syrians and emotional reactions about the Syrians impose greater effects. Most especially, the results demonstrate that negative and positive emotional reactions on Syrians produce significant effects in altering the level of prejudice and the probability of showing support for (or opposition to) the governmental policies dealing with the issue.

In sum, this article offers a basic introduction to the study of Syrian refugees' integration to the Turkish society. Although the presence of the Syrians in the Turkish society is well-known, the potential of having them stay in Turkey for good and become a part of the society is not acknowledged at all. The importance to understand and address the needs of the Syrians and Syrian refugees living in Turkey for the last few years is an important task for decision-makers as well as for academics, journalists, non-governmental organizations and other relevant parties interested in this issue.

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