THE ROLE OF POLITICAL SOPHISTICATION AND POSITIVE CONTACT IN REDUCING ANTI-IMMIGRATION ATTITUDES: EVIDENCE FROM EUROPE

by
ZEYNEP NUR SARI

Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Sabancı University
July 2023

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Approved by:

Prof. MELTEM MÜFTÜLER-BAÇ ....
(Thesis Supervisor)

Assoc. Prof. BAŞAK YAVÇAN ....

Asst. Prof. OYA YEĞEN ....

Date of Approval: July 26, 2023

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL SOPHISTICATION AND POSITIVE CONTACT IN REDUCING ANTI-IMMIGRATION ATTITUDES: EVIDENCE FROM EUROPE

ZEYNEP NUR SARI

POLITICAL SCIENCE M.A. THESIS, JULY 2023

Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Meltem Müftüler-Baç

Keywords: political sophistication, contact theory, migration, Turkey, Germany

Despite migrants representing a small fraction of the global population, their numbers have increased. Negative media portrayal has contributed to an exaggerated perception of migrant numbers, fostering concerns regarding national security, economy, and culture. Extreme right-wing parties have focused on these perceived threats to gain electoral support. Existing research has largely focused on the rise of far-right parties and their positions, leaving gaps in understanding the factors influencing anti-immigration attitudes. In order to address this, this thesis investigates the relationship between political sophistication, positive contact with migrants, and anti-immigration attitudes by examining Turkey and Germany as case studies. The World Values Survey and special flash surveys conducted by GESIS are used to understand the phenomenon. The study expects to find that individuals with higher political sophistication are less likely to have negative attitudes towards migrants, due to their access to diverse information and ability to comprehend complex issues. The regression estimations demonstrate that in the case of Turkey, political sophistication has a role to reduce anti-immigration attitudes; nonetheless, for the German respondents, the hypothesis does not find evidence based on the available data. Furthermore, positive contact with migrants plays a vital role in reducing anti-immigration sentiments, aligning with the contact theory's predictions in both countries. Likewise, individuals are less likely to support a right-wing party if they have positive interaction with migrants.

ÖZET

ANTI-GÖÇ EĞILIMLERININ AZALTILMASINDA SIYASAL SOFISTIKASYONUN VE POZITIF TEMASIN ROLÜ: AVRUPA'DAN KANITLAR

ZEYNEP NUR SARI

SİYASET BİLİMİ YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, TEMMUZ 2023

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Meltem Müftüler-Baç

Anahtar Kelimeler: siyasal sofistikasyon, temas teorisi, göç, Türkiye, Almanya

Göçmenler küresel nüfusun küçük bir kesimini temsil etmelerine rağmen, sayıları artmıştır. Olumsuz medya sunumları, göçmen sayıları konusunda abartılı bir algı oluşmasına katkıda bulunmuş ve milli güvenlik, ekonomi ve kültür konularında endişelerin doğmasına yol açmıştır. Aşırı sağ partiler, bu algılanan tehditlere odaklanarak seçim desteği elde etmeye çalışmışlardır. Mevcut araştırmalar genellikle aşırı sağ partilerin yükselişi ve pozisyonları üzerinde yoğunlaşmış, bu da anti-göç eğilimlerini etkileyen faktörleri anlamakta boşluklar bırakmıştır. Bu tez, siyasal sofistikasyon, göçmenlerle pozitif temas ve anti-göç eğilimleri arasındaki ilişkiyi Türkiye ve Almanya'yı ele alarak araştırmaktadır. Fenomeni anlamak için Dünya Değerler Anketi ve GESIS tarafından yapılan özel anketler kullanılmaktadır. Araştırma, daha yüksek siyasal sofistikasyona sahip bireylerin, çeşitli bilgiye erişimleri ve karmaşık konuları anlama yetenekleri nedeniyle, göçmenlere yönelik daha az negatif tutumlara sahip olmalarını beklemektedir. Türkiye örneğinde yapılan regresyon tahminleri, siyasal sofistikasyonun anti-göç eğilimlerini azaltmada rol oynadığını göstermektedir; ancak Alman katılımcılar için mevcut verilere dayalı olarak hipotez destek bulamamaktadır. Ayrıca, göçmenlerle pozitif temasın anti-göç eğilimlerini azaltmada önemli bir rol oynadığı, her iki ülkede de temas teorisinin öngörüleriyle uyumlu bir şekilde ortaya çıkmıştır. Benzer şekilde, bireyler, göçmenlerle pozitif etkileşim içinde olduklarında sağ partilere destek vermeye daha az eğilimlidirler.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sabancı University holds a significant place in my heart as one of my most cherished experiences. It provided me with invaluable professors, wonderful friends, a conducive working environment, and opportunities for personal growth during my journey into graduate education. Notably, the university stood by me in times of difficulty, like after the devastating February 6th earthquake, reminding me that I was not alone. Beyond being an educational institution, Sabancı became a defining element of my identity, and I am grateful to be a Sabancı University graduate.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my advisor, Meltem Müftüler-Baç, who has been a constant source of motivation and a strong female role model. Working with her has been a privilege.

I would also like to express my thanks to Mert Moral, who always responded promptly to my emails regardless of the day or time. Despite challenging us with demanding classes and assignments, he made my Sabancı experience very unique and priceless. He patiently guided me through difficult concepts and supported me during extended Zoom sessions. His door is always open to me, and I am thankful for the immense impact he had on my personal growth. I'm glad to take courses from him.

I owe my appreciation to my esteemed professor, Başak Yavçan, whose work inspired me to pursue a career in academia. Despite the fact that I did not know anything about migration, her research captured my interest, leading me to write two master's theses on the subject. Moreover, her acceptance to be a part of my thesis jury brought me immense joy and honor. Her constructive feedback and kind remarks are invaluable to me.

I am also grateful to Oya Yeğen, who accepted my invitation to be a part of my thesis jury. Her comments and notes played a crucial role in shaping the final version of my thesis.

I want to thank my cohort, with whom I embarked on this online master's journey. Although we had limited face-to-face interactions, we supported each other through WhatsApp sessions and we are bounded by trauma. Their presence made challenging courses like POLS529 less suffering. Being surrounded by such remarkable

individuals motivated me and kept me positive throughout my master's. I extend my special thanks to İrem Aydaş, Dicle Kızılkan, and Umut Duygu for creating a wonderful dorm environment.

I express my heartfelt appreciation to my dear brother Erkam and sister-in-law Çağıl, regarding the fact that I initially planned to stay for a few weeks during online education but ended up spending the entire academic year with them at their home. Their patience and unwavering support enabled me to complete my assignments successfully. I cannot thank them enough. Kayra Ege, you are fortunate to have such wonderful parents and also an aunt like me.

My parents deserve my gratitude for their unwavering support throughout my graduate education. The journey was not easy, but they kept providing motivation to me.

I want to thank my dear coworker, friend, and sister, Nihan Barutçu, who stood by me during the writing of my thesis, providing support for my mental well-being. In a city like Şanlıurfa, which faces many challenges, including earthquakes and floods, her support means the world to me. I wish her all the best in everything she pursues.

Finally, I want to thank my girls: Ceros, Ecebüş, Nazlijan, Selo, Peniz and Aygül (Since 2010). It does not matter where we are physically. We are always together. Without you, my "bacılar", I would be incomplete and I could not laugh at very stupid questions.

To my family

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fabien Toulme, in his comic book series *L'Odyssée d'Hakim* (Hakim's Odyssey), tells the story of a Syrian gardener named Hakim, who escaped from the civil war and tried to reach Europe, through Turkey. In the opening part of the series, Toulme explaines how he started to be interested in a journey of a migrant[1], comparing two different news that was broadcasted on the same day (2021). First, the Germanwings Flight 9525 crash in which all passengers and crew died received media attention in 2015. Almost every detail of the incident has been analyzed by the experts, thus, individuals such as the writer of the book kept following the news regarding the clash. On the same day, however, there was another devastating incident in which hundreds of migrants lost their lives during a boat accident in the Mediterranean. Nonetheless, the media outlets did not provide details and experts did not discuss the accident. According to Toulme, there were just numbers and he confessed that he did not have sufficient knowledge about the so-called refugee crisis and was not able to understand the news about the sinking boats. In fact, he clearly stated that he cannot demonstrate any sign of emotion to the numbers that appeared on TV regarding the migrants who tried to cross the Mediterranean and died on the road (Toulmé and Chute 2021). He said that he would understand how terrifying to die on a plane is; nonetheless, he cannot comprehend why a group of people was on a boat. Further, he mentioned that if he was a migrant escaping from a conflict, he would not take a dangerous journey, instead, he would buy a plane ticket and leave the country. As clearly stated, his conditions were different than the migrants coming from Africa and the Middle East; and due to the lack of information and empathy, he did not think of the incident properly. This situation has been changed due to the question of his kids: who were these people? After this point, Toulme realized that he was not informed well about the refugee crisis and did not have any connection

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[1]The definition of a migrant has been debated among the scholars and professionals. Currently, there is no official definition for this term. However, the IOM prefers a comprehensive explanation, including categories such as economic migrants, asylum seekers, illegal migrants (IOM 2019). Shortly, the IOM accepts every individual who leave their hometowns as migrants. Thus, in this study, the term, 'migrants' would be used as such, and in some cases, 'refugees' would be used interchangeably.

with a migrant to understand the root causes of these waves. Consequently, he searched for an individual who would be willing to tell his or her story as a migrant and, found Hakim.

Toulme's personal experience signals that individuals might not have sufficient knowledge about certain issues despite their saliency as seen in the case of migration. This situation could be explained by several factors such as the media coverage and how news has been framed; the level of education or one's general interest. To put it differently and simply, individuals might not be informed or the information they have received might reflect certain perspectives and opinions rather than providing full coverage, or people are not interested in it. All of these scenarios have led to different outcomes regarding the formation of opinions, and their transition to attitudes.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) has declared that as of 2020, approximately 285 million people are considered migrants, and the majority of the migrant population has left their countries due to economic concerns (2022). Comparing this number of people to the overall world population, it is seen that the percentage of migrants is limited to 3.6%. However, the media coverage and negative frames have created an image in which the perceived number of migrants is high and migrants tend to enter the territories illegally, and lastly, they might posit a threat to national security, economy, and culture (McCann, Sienkiewicz, and Zard 2023). All of this misinformation or perceived threats have been utilized as tools to increase the number of electorates by the extreme right-wing parties (IOM 2022). The outcomes of the strategies of the far-right have affected the migrants in the sense that members of the host community have reacted to their presence negatively and anti-immigration attitudes have become more visible.

Although the migration issue has been heavily debated in Europe, the studies have focused on the positions of the political parties, especially the rise of far-right parties that have introduced this phenomenon to the political arena, and the electorates who have voted for these parties. These analyses have tried to understand to what extent, how, and why political parties and electorates reacted to the issue. Indeed, the findings have shaped the literature and provided insightful information; nonetheless, these have explained the party preferences rather than anti-immigration attitudes and the factors that have affected the negative behaviors and opinions.

Several considerations are taken into account while selecting political sophistication and positive contact as the main independent variables for this thesis. Firstly, political sophistication has been considered an essential feature regarding individuals' engagement with complex societal issues. The previous research has undermined

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how varying levels of political knowledge and cognitive abilities affect electorates' perceptions of migrants and immigration-related issues. This study tries to provide a response to this specific shortcoming. Secondly, positive contact, rooted in psychological theories, has been investigated by scholars to address prejudice and to what extent interpersonal experiences would decrease negative attitudes or bias in general. In this thesis, employing the contact theory, the focus point would be anti-immigration attitudes in order to comprehend how the behaviors and opinions of natives concerning migrants can be changed through meaningful interactions. By investigating political sophistication and positive contact within the context of Turkey and Germany, this thesis focuses on the effect of these factors on anti-immigration attitudes and whether these independent variables have different impacts on diverse cases. To put it differently, in this thesis, I would focus on anti-immigration attitudes in general and under which circumstances these would be decreased. Specifically, the first research question of this study is: "are the politically sophisticated individuals less likely to have anti-immigration attitudes?". In other words, I do argue that as the level of political sophistication increases, anti-immigration attitudes decrease. The expectation is that politically sophisticated individuals are open to seeking information, and able to combine different sources. Thus, their cognitive abilities might lead them to understand complex issues such as migration. That is to say, they might learn the perspectives of the policy-makers, the positions of the opposition parties, the general attitude of the public, and the viewpoints of migrants, and then form their own opinions. Since they receive sufficient information, including different dimensions of the issue, it is expected that highly sophisticated individuals are less likely to have anti-immigration attitudes.

In a similar vein, interaction with migrants might increase one's general knowledge about the issue through curiosity and experience. If this interaction is negative, the individuals might develop anti-immigration attitudes, focusing on the perceived threats; however, if one enjoys being in touch with a migrant, this person could have more positive opinions. In order to test the effect of positive contact, based on the contact theory, in this thesis, I also argue that positive contact with migrants reduces anti-immigration attitudes. Likewise, the last argument is that positive contact reduces the likelihood of supporting a right-wing party. Although attention has been given to the far-right parties, in this thesis, the focus point is the right wing in general in the sense that according to the literature, extreme-right parties might push the center-right to the right side of the spectrum in which their positions have become stricter compared to the previous eras. In order not to lose their electoral bases, the center-right parties might have tougher positions on the issue of migration. Moreover, it should be noted that in the eyes of electorates, extreme-right parties

might not be perceived as legitimate actors; therefore, despite having questions regarding the migration issue, they might still cast votes for the mainstream parties. Thus, instead of far-right parties, all right-wing parties would be included in the analysis.

In order to test the arguments mentioned above, Turkey and Germany have been selected as case studies. Both countries have hosted millions of migrants currently, and their overall populations are close to each other. The population and the number of migrants residing in these countries are essential because of the fact that it provides information concerning the ratio between the host community and migrants, and lastly migrants' visibility within the country. Apart from this, Turkey and Germany have been affected by similar events that led individuals to leave their countries. Specifically, the Syrian civil war has influenced the policies of these countries. During 'the refugee crisis', the ruling parties of these countries were categorized as conservative right-wing parties. In Turkey, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), and in Germany, the Christian Democratic Union of Germany and the Christian Social Union of Bavaria (CDU/CSU) adopted an open-door policy, highlighting the moral responsibilities. However, this decision has not been welcomed by the public, and in order to demonstrate their dissatisfaction, some electorates have voted for extreme right parties such as the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) or *Zafer Partisi* (Victory Party) in Turkey; or they have supported another party from the opposition that has a strict position on migration.

For making comparisons and analyzing the cases, quantitative research would be designed by employing data from the World Values Survey's (WVS) seventh wave. The seventh wave of the WVS includes respondents from Germany and Turkey while providing sufficient information to test the arguments. The surveys were conducted in a period when elections were held and ruling parties have abandoned the open-door policy. Nonetheless, this situation has changed for the German case due to the Russian-Ukranian war and the arrival of new migrants from the warzone. Consequently, in order to examine the attitudes of Germans toward Ukrainians, the special surveys conducted in 2022 by GESIS would be used as well.

In this thesis, before the empirical findings, I would provide a literature review. Since every migration wave has been an outcome of a combination of several factors, the reasons behind migration vary. Therefore, a theory that could explain the majority of the movements has not been proposed. Nonetheless, previous studies have suggested that economic and social factors might increase the likelihood of immigration (For the classic studies, please refer to Ranis and Fei (1961), Massey (1990), Massey et al. (1993) and Piore (1979); for recent research, please refer to

Portes and Böröcz (1989), Carling (2002), Zolberg (1989), Richmond (1993), and Holland and Peters (2020)). Similarly, the perception of migrants has been affected by these factors, too. The literature takes economic indicators and perceived threats to culture, and social norms into account to explain in which scenarios migrants have been depicted as contributors and intruders. Since these portrayals have been used as propaganda tools by the far-right parties, the change in the party positions would be examined in the literature review to demonstrate that the emergence of far-right parties might affect the party politics and electoral behavior. Lastly, whether the attitudes towards migrants are constant or affected by the saliency of the issue, has been added to the assessment.

In the third chapter of this thesis, political sophistication and the contact theory would be explained. First, the literature on political sophistication would be analyzed. It should be noted that political sophistication has been considered a hard indicator to be measured due to the fact that scholars have not agreed on the definition and it has a complex structure. As a result, each group of scholars has used different ways to measure this variable. Secondly, the contact theory and its transfer effect would be explained through the conducted studies and findings. Lastly, these two theories would provide a theoretical framework for this thesis.

In the fourth chapter, briefly, the historical background of migration in Germany and Turkey would be assessed. The research design, operationalization of main variables and empirical findings would be presented by providing necessary regression estimations and graphs.

Lastly, in the conclusion part, a discussion would be made in order to compare these two cases and whether the arguments of this thesis would find evidence or not. Based on the literature, theoretical framework, and research design, the limitations would be explained for further studies in the last chapter.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Human beings are social creatures who tend to form groups. This phenomenon has been examined by scholars and tested with different settings. One of the best-known examples of these experiments is the minimal group paradigm where the individuals are asked to choose either Klee or Kandinsky paintings (Tajfel 1970, 1974). After they make their decisions and form their groups without knowing the members in person, in the second stage, subjects are asked to allocate money among the groups. As a result of these steps, Tajfel found that this 'minimal condition', preferring whether Klee or Kandinsky, created a situation in which members of both groups favored their own groups when it came to the allocation of money (1970; 1974). The experiment demonstrates that the formation of groups comes naturally. The subjects did not know each other but they knew who preferred which painting, and two groups occurred due to the choices. Lastly, the members of the Klee group showed ingroup favoritism against the Kandinsky group and vice versa. The reason for ingroup favoritism is that individuals within the same group consider the rest as 'others'. To put it differently, people feel an attachment to the ingroup and differentiate themselves from the outgroup and discriminate against them in order to favor the ingroup. Within the scope of this thesis, the reflection of these processes could be seen in the migration issue. The citizens of a country might exclude immigrants, simply because they are members of the outgroup (Bauer and Hannover 2020). More specifically, the people who identify themselves with the ingroup have shared different elements such as a territory. This collective ownership, the land mass where people live, leads to a situation in which the immigrants are perceived as a threat to what citizens have (Verkuyten and Martinovic 2017). Therefore, it is expected that in terms of the attitudes towards immigrants, the citizens, the members of the ingroup, have a tendency to take a negative stance (Bagci, Verkuyten, and Canpolat 2022).

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In this chapter, I will try to focus on the attitudes toward immigrants and what has been discussed by scholars. The studies dealing with the question of why immigrants are considered a threat will be analyzed. After the reasons that are proposed by the scholars, I will continue with the implications of these on electoral behavior. The rise of the far-right parties and their electoral bases will be added to the literature review. Lastly, the discussion that is related to whether attitudes are constant, or dynamic will be examined to comprehend the recent so-called 'refugee crisis' in Europe. The latest studies also include the effect of the deglobalization trend and the COVID-19 pandemic that has paved the way for travel restrictions across the globe. However, due to the lack of proper data, the number of available studies is few and their scopes may be constrained.

2.2 Threat Perception

How do people evaluate the immigration issue? This question has been asked by different scholars, and the answers are clustered around two main indicators: individual or national economic situation and socio-psychological factors (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014) such as personality traits or dominant religion within a given country. Although these two indicators are at the center of scholarly debates, disciplines have worked separately from each other (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). In other words, for instance, psychology scholars and economy scholars have rarely followed each others' studies despite similar arguments and findings. This disconnectedness has been diminished recently; however, as will be seen below, the classic works are not interdisciplinary.

To begin with, economy-related variables have been used to understand the individuals' reactions to immigrants. Giving importance to the composition of the labor market, Mayda (2006) argues that people who are considered 'skilled' are less likely to adopt restrictionist policies for migration. The condition for her argument is the relative advantage of the natives. To put it differently, if, overall, a country hosts highly skilled individuals, these 'skilled' people are eager to demonstrate positive attitudes toward migrants. The expected effect of this argument has increased if the national economy has been doing great, and its impact diminishes for the relatively poor countries (O'rourke and Sinnott 2006). The result of Mayda's study could be interpreted in a way that highly skilled individuals might not hold fears when it comes to losing their jobs, simply because they assume that the newcomers would not be skilled as they are. In fact, this interpretation finds evidence. Irrespective

of the number of migrants in a country, blue-collared workers are less likely to support pro-immigration policies due to the fact that they are concerned about their personal economic gains or loss such as their wages (Scheve and Slaughter 2001). Similarly, the competition between low-skilled natives and migrants might be originating from the capacity of the state regarding social services (Cavaille and Ferwerda 2023; Dancygier 2010). In this case, migrants could be perceived as a 'burden' on the national economy because their contribution to the economy would be little while they would receive 'so many' benefits through social services. Nonetheless, if the migrants are perceived as highly skilled, the natives who are less skilled might have a different attitude toward them (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010). Namely, based on the findings of Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010) regardless of the skill level of citizens, they are open to accepting high-skilled migrants. This positive environment could be challenged, however. If the national economy has faced difficulties or even crises, natives are less likely to prefer new waves of immigration or existing migrant groups despite the features of immigrants such as education. For instance, while new sectors such as IT-related job opportunities have increased rapidly, some sectors might be shrinking because of the decrease in the demand side. In these cases, the people who work in the growing sectors tend to favor migrants; nevertheless, the others who already might lose their jobs, tend to oppose them (Dancygier and Donnelly 2013). Similarly, globalization pushes different firms to compete in the global arena in which countries such as China have a comparative advantage in terms of low wages and labor force. In these cases, business people might not be in favor of liberal trade policies in order to protect their domestic market and interests, as seen in the election campaign of Donald Trump: "Make America Great Again". Although the demand for restrictionist policies in trade is not directly related to migration, the overall support for the migration might decrease (Leblang and Peters 2022). This demonstrates that apart from the national economy, the sectors might shape individuals' opinions on migration because they evaluate their personal conditions through their occupations and how long they are able to work in these sectors.

Despite these conducted studies mentioned above, many scholars claim that economic concerns are secondary (Halikiopoulou and Vlandas 2020; Kocijan and Kukec 2022; Lubbers and Güveli 2007; Lucassen and Lubbers 2012; Otto and Steinhardt 2014; Sides and Citrin 2007; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). This group of scholars acknowledges that economic variables impact attitude formation; nevertheless, according to their claims and findings, the effect of culture-related concerns is higher and shapes the opinions of the natives more. By examining the European countries that have already established far-right parties, Lucassen and Lubbers (2012) find that individuals see the migrants as a threat to their culture and norms,

and then this perception would be more likely to be translated into a vote for a far right-party whose manifestos focusing on how the national identity has been eroded over the years because of the existence of the migrants and how they would stop this wave of immigration. In other words, far-right parties tend to emphasize culture-related problems and anti-immigration attitudes have been formed through their discourse; therefore, instead of economic concerns, cultural differences come to the forefront to explain this phenomenon. In short, cultural homogeneity is considered essential for the natives . Likewise, Sides and Citrin (2007) demonstrate that respondents of the European Social Survey are more likely to favor people who share the same ethnicity as they have. They also analyze the responses to the different groups of migrants by adding the question of what is the origin country of the migrants. However, their finding is not statistically significant in this matter. To put it differently, anyone who is originally from outside of the given country is seen as an 'other' regardless of his or her county of origin. This finding has been contested, however, because migrants are not established as a homogenous group (Hellwig and Sinno 2017). In this regard, Hainmueller and Hangartner (2013) conduct a natural experiment in Switzerland to find out which group of migrants preferred to be accepted as Swiss citizens. According to the research, natives tend to choose 'Europeans' over Turkish or Yugoslavian migrants. In fact, Hainmueller and Hangartner (2013) claim that in order to get citizenship, the most essential indicator is the country of origin rather than language skills or the type of employment. It shows that national identity and cultural similarities between the migrants and the host community do matter. In other words, it could be said that the perception of a threat to national identity or culture, in general, has increased anti-immigrant attitudes (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004) due to the fact that some migrants are considered a very distant group that have a different set of norms, traditions, and symbols that might be in contradiction with the existing cultural environment (see Hellwig and Sinno (2017)).

The ethnocentric attitude explained above could deepen the situation where Europeans also consider the very existence of a supranational organization, namely the European Union (EU). Since the member states have been bounded by the rules and regulations of the EU, member states have lost their sovereignty in some areas such as the issue of migration and border security. This problem has been underlined by several political parties and found a place in public debates (Lahav 2004). Even further, it has been one of the strong arguments of the 'leave' side during the Brexit campaign that eventually succeeded and led the United Kingdom out of the EU. In this particular example, the supporters of the 'leave' side have been located outside of big, 'multicultural' cities (the same situation could be observed in other European

countries such as Italy, see Barone et al. (2016)) and they have been worrying about
the British identity, the number of migrants, and how the European integration went
too far (Hobolt 2016). In short, Brexit has shown that there is a clear relationship
between being anti-immigrant and a Eurosceptic. The natives might consider the
EU as a political body that could limit member states' decisions on whom to accept
to their lands. Due to the structure of the EU, citizens who hold anti-immigrant
sentiments are more likely to oppose European integration or the idea of the EU in
general (De Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005). Overall, it could be claimed that being
obliged to a sui generis entity might lead individuals to reconsider the immigration
issue because of the problem of European integration and how deep it should go.
The consequences of this complex relationship, indeed, could be observed in the
party formation and the electoral choice of the people in Europe.

2.3 Issue-Owners and the Electorates

Although it was claimed that European politics had been shaped by the traditional
cleavages, and became 'frozen' (Lipset and Rokkan 1990, 1967), single-issue parties
have entered the political arena in many European countries and gained recognition
through the number of supporters they have gotten since the 1980s (De Lange
2012). To put it differently, based on the formation of political parties in Europe,
Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argue that the rivalry between state and church; center
and periphery, and owners and workers have led to the establishment of political
parties as we've known as 'mainstream parties' and their political positions have
remained same. Nevertheless, the traditional cleavages have been challenged. The
change in the class structure within the societies and generational differences have
cleared the way for new issues in politics (Kriesi 1998). Namely, the 'value change'
(Abramson and Inglehart 1995; Inglehart 1971) within the societies has an impact
on the political arena if we think of the supply-demand graphic where the electorates
have needed political parties that could provide responses to their concerns.

The classic parties that have been defined by their positions on economic and social
issues were unable to address the electorates' demands when it comes to climate
change or migration (Tavits 2008). This situation has provided a window of op-
portunity for the niche parties[2], simply because they are the ones who introduce
the new issues and own them by emphasizing the latest concerns of the electorates.

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[2]Meguid (2005) uses this term to make a distinction between mainstream parties and the newly emerged
parties that have a very limited political agenda in which traditional cleavages are secondary.

In this regard, individuals might cast 'protest' votes to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the mainstream parties (Mayer and Perrineau 1992), but also they simply in favor of restrictionist immigration policies due to the perceived threat to national identity or security of the country in general (Ignazi 1992, 2003). In short, electorates might have different motivations to cast a vote for a niche party.

The question of under which circumstances people support a far-right party has been discussed by many scholars. The literature has paid attention to the interaction between institutional settings such as the electoral laws and the number of effective parties and the cleavages and demographic structure of a given country (Neto and Cox 1997; Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1994). The institutional settings are essential due to the fact that despite the saliency of the issue if the electoral system is not suitable, individuals would not prefer wasting their votes (Cox 1997; Golder 2003). In other words, social cleavages fall short to explain the support for a niche party; therefore, one should consider other variables such as the formula for the allocation of the seats. To illustrate the explanatory power of the interaction between these two, Golder (2003) builds several regression models where he finds that the more seats are allocated to one district, the easier niche parties get support from the electorates and the level of unemployment affects this support only if the number of migrants is high.

Apart from the formal settings, the strategies of the political parties also have an impact on the position and the electoral success of niche parties. According to the argument of Meguid (2005) if the mainstream parties take a negative stance against the niche parties, *"being the enemy"* would be beneficial for the newcomers. This is because the *adversarial strategy* of the mainstream parties might pave the way for the legitimatization of the niche parties (Meguid 2005). Since the niche parties own the issues, if mainstream parties do bother with the topics presented by them, this situation strengthens niche parties' hands. In fact, electorates who support these parties have perceived them as any other political party (Van der Brug and Fennema 2003; Van der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie 2000). To put it differently, if the mainstream parties try to push the niche parties out of the political system, their exclusionary strategy might create a situation in which voters consider single-issue parties as legitimate actors, and would cast their votes according to their preferences. In a similar vein, if mainstream parties underline a firmly negative position for the migration policies, it would increase the legitimacy of the niche parties, or in this case, the far-right parties (Dahlström and Sundell 2012). As a result of this new position-taking, the issue of migration would be salient and increase the vote share of the far-right parties (Abou-Chadi 2016). Furthermore, it is argued that while mainstream parties could provide quick responses to the changes in public opinion

and adopt mild positions, the niche parties are unable to do that. Since niche parties target a very specific audience as their electoral base, a moderate stance or a change in the positions toward the center might be costly for them. In order not to lose the 'core voters', the best strategy for them is to remain where they stand in terms of the issues they have owned (Adams et al. 2006). Nonetheless, it should be noted that to add on the number of 'core voters', they could make connections between economic and social concerns, and through this strategy, their electoral base might become mixed but high in number (Halikiopoulou and Vlandas 2020).

If the electoral settings are suitable for taking niche parties into consideration, then who supports them? As discussed above, economic and socio-psychological indicators could be used to find an answer to this question. However, if we look at the far-right parties in a detailed way, it has been shown that the type of voters might differ from one country to another, or even from one electoral term to another (Carvalho 2014; Cools, Finseraas, and Rogeberg 2021). For instance, while Italians who voted for an anti-immigrant party are concerned about the level of crime in the early years of the 2000s, British electorates did pay attention to the economic conditions and cast their votes accordingly (Carvalho 2014). Here, the essential part is that the triggering point for the electorates might change depending on the economic and social events in their countries, meaning that instead of security-related issues, Italians might worry about the level of unemployment and might perceive migrants as scapegoats, thus support the far-right parties in the upcoming elections due to another reason apart from security. This situation might indicate that electorates might not make a distinction between these two main variables. To be more specific, as highlighted by Kriesi et al. (2006), globalization has produced its own 'winners' and 'losers', and from the perspective of the losing side, economic and social concerns are intertwined. For the European electorates, the complexity has increased due to the European integration question, as well. In short, new topics such as migration have been introduced, and instead of taking different positions for each one of them, voters might consider merging these topics with the existing dimensions (Kriesi et al. 2006). This leads to a very heterogeneous group of voters, however. It is argued that people who have authoritarian tendencies and who are ethnocentric are more likely to prefer anti-immigrant parties (Van der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie 2000). It means that the individuals who are already on the right side of the spectrum hold anti-migration attitudes. Nevertheless, scholars have understudied left-wing authoritarianism. Individuals might favor egalitarian economic policies but also give importance to the maintenance of traditions, customs, and other social-life-related regulations that might make a group very distinct (Federico, Fisher, and Deason 2017). Within the 4t of anti-immigration attitudes, this gains

importance because of the fact that as in the case of right-wing authoritarianism, left-wing authoritarianism is likely to exclude migrants. In other words, although these two camps have different opinions on economy-related matters, they could unify around the issue of migration (Ivarsflaten 2008) if this topic is salient enough. Left-authoritarians, therefore, should be accounted for to explain the electoral bases of anti-immigrant parties (Abou-Chadi 2016; Kriesi et al. 2006).

If we examine the features of the far-right party supporters, it is claimed that these individuals are less-educated, blue-collar workers, or unemployed (Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers 2002), meaning that they might see immigration as a threatening phenomenon due to the scarcity and the competition in the job market as well as access to the social services and assistance (Norris 2005). Nevertheless, some scholars argue that class politics is not sufficient to describe the far-right party voters (Van der Brug, Fennema, and Tillie 2000). As seen in the case of the French elections, electorates might be categorized as middle-income or higher, yet, they could support the anti-immigrant parties (Mayer and Perrineau 1992). In a similar vein, Norris (2005) points out that instead of looking at the individuals who are currently unemployed, the voters who had suffered from unemployment in their lifetimes could be useful to comprehend the situation. In terms of gender and age, however, the literature provides consistent findings. Anti-immigration sentiments and support for a far-right party are associated with being a man and older (Norris 2005; Norris and Inglehart 2019). In line with *the silent revolution theory* put by Inglehart, younger cohorts have different concerns because of the higher level of education they've received compared to previous generations. Young individuals are more likely to prioritize post-materialist values; nevertheless, older cohorts are considered materialistic. Therefore, it is expected that each generation has a different set of preferences when it comes to voting, and older cohorts tend to be threatened by the migrants due to their materialistic values.

2.4 Constant or Dynamic: Attitudes Towards Migrants over Time

In light of the arguments mentioned above, it is seen that the number of migrants and their relations with the natives have gained importance to understand the rise of the far-right parties across Europe. Especially after the so-called refugee crisis, the migration issue becomes a salient topic among the electorates. According to the scholars, the suddenness of the issue has led to a situation where natives calculate the number of migrants wrongly and has increased the support for the

anti-immigrant parties (Arzheimer 2009; Charitopoulou and García-Manglano 2018; Enos 2023; Erisen and Vasilopoulou 2022; Kaufmann 2017). From these studies, it is understood that because of the unexpected waves of migrants, negative attitudes toward migrants have increased. In other words, the change in the attitudes of voters is dynamic and heavily affected by the political context. For instance, Czymara and Schmidt-Catran (2017) found that although the German public tends to accept people who are from Europe and those who are escaped from war, the migration flow during 2015-2016 has changed public opinion. According to their studies, the host community has reacted negatively to the migrants coming from Africa and the Middle East despite the conflicts in these regions. Nevertheless, recent studies disagree with the fact that the crisis fuels anti-immigration attitudes. Employing data from the European Social Survey, Stockemer et al. (2020) find that there is no significant change in the attitudes of the electorates when it comes to migration. They explain this finding by emphasizing the complexity of the phenomenon. Similarly, Kustov, Laaker, and Reller (2021) conclude that the refugee crisis is not sufficient to explain far-right voting. Individuals do discuss migration because of the saliency; however, their attitudes have been set well before the crisis. The crisis only has paved the way for an increase in the number of debates regarding migration, and therefore, people might prioritize the issue more compared to previous years. To put it differently, individuals have already an opinion about migration; nevertheless, in the absence of a 'real' concern, they do not reveal their ideas and do not turn them into a vote. In fact, it is argued that nowadays, the COVID-19 pandemic has decreased the salience of the issue due to the fact that health-related topics have been prioritized in Europe (Dennison, Kustov, and Geddes 2023). Lastly, Lancaster (2022), by using panel data, finds that attitudes are constant and younger cohorts have a similar attitude pattern as older cohorts. It means that despite the argument of Inglehart, both older and younger generations question the migration issue, and this similarity among different generations might explain the increasing electoral support of the far-right parties in Europe.

2.5 Conclusion

Both individual and group-level analyses have focused on the perception of threat to clarify anti-immigration attitudes. The perception of threat could be related to either economic or socio-cultural issues. Indeed, 'crime' (Chapin 1997; Dinas and van Spanje 2011) or 'terrorism' (Böhmelt, Bove, and Nussio 2020) might be another concern for the natives; however, literature generally finds that different topics have

been intertwined. This situation also demonstrates that throughout the years, the level of complexity in the political arena has increased, and electorates might take different stances on different issues. Although electorates are able to distinguish each type of threat concerning the migration flow (Erisen and Kentmen-Cin 2017), the electoral bases of the far-right parties are very heterogeneous compared to other political parties due to the fact that every individual prioritize different component of the issue. Some of the supporters are the 'real' advocates of the anti-immigrant parties; however, some might cast their votes to indicate their dissatisfaction with the mainstream political parties and their policies. Nonetheless, the essential point here is that electoral settings as well as the salience of the issue might provide an opportunity for the far-right parties to compete.

The refugee crisis-related news has been covered in different European newspapers, TV channels, and social media platforms. As a result, the topic has been widely discussed by different cohorts, and people who come from different social and economic backgrounds. Since the migration issue is salient, some groups of scholars mentioned above argue that the crisis has led to an increase in anti-immigration. Nowadays, this argument has been challenged and it is claimed that anti-immigration attitudes have been set previously; however, due to the lack of salience, individuals did not focus on this topic.

As understood, in the area of migration or migration-related studies, some results are mixed and there are questions that need to be answered. For instance, the relationship between the level of education and anti-immigration has been studied by scholars; nonetheless, the cognitive abilities of the individuals or their knowledge on politics have been disregarded. In a similar vein, due to the heterogeneous nature of migration, theories could not adequately address the question of why people leave their countries. In short, migration-related topics whether it is electoral behavior or root causes of migration, are unique for each society and each migration flow. Therefore, country-specific variables and events should be taken into account.

3.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Individuals are an essential part of a fully functioning democracy. By casting their ballots, they have an impact on the decision-making process. Before voting, however, they should form their opinion on certain issues, and choose among the candidates or political parties that they consider the best option regarding their policy preferences. In this regard, Zaller (1992) summarizes the formation of an opinion as *"a marriage of information and predisposition: information to form a mental picture of the given issue, and predisposition to motivate some conclusion about it"* (p.6). It means that individuals collect data and blend them with their pre-set beliefs, biases, or attitudes and eventually, produce a new idea. Nonetheless, the extent to which an electorate is informed depends on his or her interest in politics or what she or he is "exposed to" (Bennett 1996). Likewise, if individuals have sufficient knowledge or capability, they tend to seek out more information in order to generate well-formed opinions (Converse 2000). These factors show that it is not only the pre-judgments but also the way in which a person acquires knowledge, through what or who, that shapes the whole process.

Whether it is called "political awareness" or "sophistication", scholars agree on the fact that the level of knowledge among the voters does vary (Bennett 1988; Converse 2000; Dalton 1984; Delli Carpini 2000; Jerit, Barabas, and Bolsen 2006; Zaller 1992). Some might know the name of the president of the country but do not pay attention to the local officials or only focus on the policy areas that are related to their personal lifestyles such as abortion. Nevertheless, academics have been divided into two camps when it comes to determining what kind of factors have an impact on political knowledge acquisition and whether the percentage of highly informed voters has increased or not. In order to demonstrate the debates in the literature, in this chapter, I will focus on the explanatory variables discussed

by the scholars to explain political sophistication and how an increase in political knowledge affects an individual's electoral behavior and what is the trend in terms of the number of politically sophisticated voters. After that, in light of the findings of the scholars, I will consider political sophistication as the main independent variable for my argument, claiming that the relationship between anti-immigration attitudes and political sophistication is negative. Then, in order to comprehend the gist of the 'biased' attitudes and how this behavior could be eliminated, as discussed by scholars, contact theory would be examined. In line with the contact theory, I will argue that positive contact would diminish the negative attitudes toward migrants and also the support for right-wing parties.

3.2 Political Sophistication

According to the literature, the decision of whom to vote for by an electorate is shaped by two models: party mobilization and cognitive mobilization (Dalton 1984). While party mobilization suggests that individuals follow cues provided by the elites due to the fact that it is an easy way to collect information, cognitive mobilization requires a more complex process in which individuals should have the capabilities and channels to acquire knowledge, and are able to form their opinions without relying on elite-cues (Dalton 1984). In other words, cognitive mobilization has been associated with being politically sophisticated, as discussed by Luskin (1987) who claims that those who comprehend the complex structure of politics are considered sophisticated. In fact, Luskin (1990) provides an equation to measure political sophistication. He mentions 5 different components.

First, it is expected that people who are interested in politics tend to be more politically sophisticated due to the fact that less involvement in politics might lead to poor knowledge or misinformation (Judd, Krosnick, and Milburn 1981). Indeed, if someone is not interested in a certain topic, she or he is less likely to review or expand her or his knowledge. From the other side of the picture, the more interest in politics, the more knowledgeable an electorate is. Furthermore, it is noted that the level of interest in politics is stable for many voters (Prior 2010). However, this pattern could be changed because of a shocking event such as the collapse of the Berlin Wall where people reported that they were highly interested in politics due to the reunification of Germany (Prior 2010). Apart from this exception, nonetheless, an individual either is interested in politics or not, and her or his knowledge about politics would be different accordingly. Overall, since the level of interest has an

impact on one's willingness to collect political information, it is perceived as an essential element of political sophistication.

Second, the role of education has been discussed by several scholars. It has been argued that education provides an opportunity for individuals to be aware of social issues and increase their capabilities in terms of abstract terms (Campbell et al. 1960). Employing a qualitative study, for instance, Neuman (1981) finds that highly educated people are good at the conceptualization of political ideas compared to less educated ones. This result implies that years of schooling might increase the capability of solving and understanding complicated topics. In this regard, however, it could be argued that education does not have a direct effect on political knowledge. Rather, it functions as an auxiliary element that helps boost one's cognitive capabilities (Dalton 2000, 2007). Similarly, in schools, people might learn basic political knowledge such as the regime type and the name of the president at that time (Barabas et al. 2014). Nevertheless, details or up-to-date information require more personal effort. In order to deepen political knowledge, individuals should seek new sources of information such as the media channels, as highlighted by Luskin; however, education might assist individuals in terms of detecting credible sources.

Being exposed to political information through media is the third component of Luskin's equation. According to him, media channels are the main sources of information for individuals (Luskin 1990). Whether an individual is an active or passive actor while listening to a TV program, for example, this person could learn the existence of an issue or details of it (Fiske, Lau, and Smith 1990). However, it is argued that the type of media affects political sophistication. Gordon and Segura (1997) claim that the usage of TV programs as a source of information is negatively correlated with political sophistication. In order to observe a positive effect, electorates should collect information through printed media such as newspapers due to the fact that they become active information receivers while they are reading an article (Gordon and Segura 1997). In a similar vein, Jerit, Barabas, and Bolsen (2006) argue that TV programs tend to adopt an easy language to ensure that the audience could understand. Therefore, less educated people are more likely to collect political information through TV channels and highly educated people could follow printed media because they are cognitively able to do so (Jerit, Barabas, and Bolsen 2006). Apart from the traditional media outlets, the internet has been perceived as a new environment in which especially younger cohorts obtain political knowledge. Despite the counterarguments, it is demonstrated that the information collected through the internet could be kept in long-term memory; however, new generations are less likely and slower to recall what they have been exposed to (Kleinberg and Lau 2019). This finding might indicate that older cohorts are familiar with the con-

cepts mentioned in the political news due to the fact that some of the issues are not 'new', even repetitive for themselves, and that is why they tend to recall the stored information faster than the younger generations.

Furthermore, intelligence plays a critical role to define political sophistication. In fact, Highton (2009) argues that instead of education, cognitive ability has an impact on sophistication. He states that previous research included adults who already got their degrees; thus, the relationship between political sophistication and education was measured incorrectly (Highton 2009). In order to solve the puzzle, he added high school students and their parents to his sample and finds that before attending school, individuals have a certain level of cognitive ability that pave the way for understanding the world around them. In other words, education only has a minor role in political sophistication and might provide factual information to the electorates; however, intelligence enables individuals to learn, seek more information, and comprehend the situation.

Lastly, according to Luskin (1990), occupation does matter. People, depending on their job sectors, might feel that they should know the details. Therefore, they could follow relevant events and topics. For instance, Luskin (1990) gives the example of a farmer, saying that this person is knowledgeable on agriculture-related policies. In short, knowing specific issues in terms of politics might yield a benefit for certain occupations. Consequently, these people tend to become highly sophisticated.

In sum, the political sophistication equation formulated by Luskin is concluded as:

Political sophistication = Political interest + Level of Education + Exposure to media + Intelligence + Occupation

Each component in this equation has been tested and used as independent and proxy variables to measure. Nevertheless, as seen above, the role of education creates confusion due to the fact that this variable influences other elements such as one's occupation. Likewise, intelligence has been considered a vital factor; however, the measurement regarding this issue is open to debate. American National Election Studies (ANES) datasets include a variable where the respondent is assessed by his or her 'apparent intelligence'. This measurement is rested on the pollster's own evaluation of a person, instead of objective questions. Thus, scholars tend to avoid this variable and use education as a proxy variable to measure intelligence. Also, it should be noted that not many datasets contain 'intelligence' questions or variables as such. Similarly, the questions concerning one's level of political knowledge have not been added to open datasets, generally (Carpini and Keeter 1993). Even if these are found, whether these test general knowledge or refer to specific policy domains

generates another scholarly discussion. This is because, as mentioned above, basic political information could be learned at schools, meaning that it is widely known by the electorates and lacks other dimensions. However, it is assumed that highly sophisticated individuals are more likely to know more about politics; therefore, policy-specific questions could be used to differentiate the level of sophistication among the voters. Nevertheless, policy-specific questions are related to individuals' interested topics. An electorate might be interested in welfare policies but at the same time, this person might not know anything about the recent change in speed limits, for instance. Alternatively, Luskin's equation ignores the informational environment (Highton 2009). If an individual has been raised in a home where parents talk about politics, this person would likely be interested in politics as well (Highton 2009). In a similar vein, the electoral system might push voters to seek or unintentionally collect information. Niemi and Westholm (1984) explain this situation, underlying that in the multiparty systems, in order to demonstrate its distinctive features, political parties would provide clear messages. Subsequently, the more straightforward a political party is, the more likely to be supported by the public (Kangas, Niemelä, and Varjonen 2014). Last but not least, a competitive political arena and compulsory voting might increase political sophistication at the public level, because, political issues are debated heavily (Gordon and Segura 1997).

3.2.1 Voter Types

Based on the division between cognitive ability and party mobilization, scholars discuss the various types of electorates in terms of their level of sophistication. Dalton (1984, 2007) provides a schema where the level of attachment to a political party and one's capability to understand political phenomena are the indicators to comprehend the differences between electorates.

Table 3.1 Voter types based on Dalton's categorizations (1984; 2007)

Strength of Partisanship			
		Not Very Close/Non-Partisan	Close/Very Close
Cognitive Mobilization	High	Apartisan	Cognitive Partisan
	Low	Apolitical	Ritual Partisan

In Table 3.1, those who do not have a strong attachment to a political party are named either "apartisan" or "apolitical". These categories do differ in terms of their level of interest and accumulated political knowledge. While apolitical individuals

are less likely to know and collect political information and become less sophisticated (Dalton 2007), apartisans already have a certain amount of knowledge and follow what has been happening (Dalton 1984, 2007). The distinct feature of apartisans is being independent of attachment. In other words, they are involved in politics; however, they do not tend to support a political group constantly and might change their positions regarding the knowledge and predisposition they have. In fact, it is suggested that individuals who critically examine the differences between political parties concerning their positions have questioned these parties and are more likely to move away from any kind of attachment (Brader and Tucker 2018).

Cognitive partisans are interested in politics; and, they cognitively comprehend current events and political issues which enables them to form opinions despite the lack of elite cues (Dalton 1984, 2007). To put it differently, they might follow elite cues but in the absence of it, they are capable to collect the necessary information. Ritual partisans, on the other hand, focus on the cues provided by their political parties. If the issue is discussed by the elites, they might be aware of the party positions; if it is not debated, they are less likely to have an opinion (Dalton 1984, 2007). Concerning these categories, it could be claimed that apoliticals and ritual partisans have seemed as less sophisticated and apartisans and cognitive partisans form the sophisticated voter group.

Regarding numerical data, Campbell et al. (1960) argue that, as a general rule, individuals possess a limited understanding and knowledge. The percentage of the population that enjoys a high level of political sophistication is relatively small. However, there exist scholars who claim that this portrayal has been changed due to the widespread availability of information that has come about as a result of both mass education and the reduced cost of accessing knowledge through the mass media (Banducci, Giebler, and Kritzinger 2017; Dalton 2000, 2007; Inglehart 1977; Iyengar and Hahn 2009). For instance, Dalton (2000, 2007) underlines that a general increase in the public's overall education level and the availability of different media outlets have paved the way for more crowded apartisans and cognitive partisans. This leads to a situation where the political arena seemed volatile because of the fact that cognitive partisans and, especially, apartisans are able to switch different political parties from one election to another. However, it should be noted that still, ritual partisans prefer elite cues due to the fact that is it less costly (Dancey and Sheagley 2013). In short, the cost of information has reduced; nonetheless, seeking information instead of getting cues from political parties requires time, motivation, and cognitive abilities.

3.3 Psychological Aspect: The Contact Theory

The political science literature has paid little attention to attitude formation at the group level. However, it is essential to comprehend why one group of people, namely, the natives, tend to show less friendly behavior toward outsiders. Allport (1954) explains this phenomenon by saying that when people create groups, they have certain opinions about them. These 'prejudgements' could turn into prejudice if individuals keep rejecting the new information that could contradict what they do believe at the beginning. After that, it is claimed that prejudice generates a hostile environment in which one group of people is excluded because of their group identity. Even though human beings get in touch with individuals rather than a whole group, people are not assessed independently from their group identities. Consequently, it leads to a disconnection between groups; and the lack of contact would increase the tension and the misperceptions. Blumer (1958) explains this situation by highlighting the asymmetrical relationship between the groups. He argues that in a racial setting, the dominant group believes that they are better than the rest, and the others are 'foreign'. Since they are members of the superior group, these people think that they deserve privileges over foreigners. Additionally, the dominant group has doubts about the inferior group because of a perceived or real threat that could change the power dynamics between the existing groups. In order to protect their position, the dominant groups might react to this so-called problem by adopting a defensive strategy, namely race prejudice as mentioned by Blumer (1958). In other words, compared to what Allport claims, Blumer adds different layers to demonstrate why some people are biased and explains this phenomenon emphasizing the hierarchical order within a society. Due to the existence of an order, race prejudice might not be easy to overcome and might be resistant to change. The proposed suggestion to minimize the effect of prejudice is the frames adopted by the elites. According to him, if the elites do not treat others as scapegoats or do not exacerbate an issue, the tension between groups would decrease (Blumer 1958).

Unlike Blumer, in order to ease the conflict, Allport underlines the importance of contact in his work. He argues that the best strategy to decrease the level of prejudice requires four elements. First, groups should have equal status and then could be gathered around one shared interest. After that, they might cooperate and the effect of the contact would be higher if institutional settings provide an opportunity for further connection (Allport 1954). As understood, instead of competition, cooperation should exist and this cooperation should occur among 'equal' individuals who share the same aim, and lastly, their interaction should be supported by ex-

ternal factors such as customs. Nevertheless, even in the absence of some elements, people have reported positive contact (Pettigrew 1998). This demonstrates that the conditions for positive contact might differ from one case to another. In addition to this, later, scholars claim that the quantity (Brown et al. 2007) and the quality (Hewstone 2015) of the contact also have an impact on reducing prejudice between groups. If the members of a group meet the others in person regularly, it is expected that they would adopt a more positive attitude. For instance, natives could work with non-natives at their offices, and due to the necessities, they spend time and communicate. Because of the communication they have at the office, natives are less likely to vote for a far-right party (Andersson and Dehdari 2021). Nonetheless, these daily contacts might not be resulted in positive outcomes. In the case of a neighborhood, the natives might reject renting the apartments to the 'foreigners' or they might simply refuse to get in touch with them. This situation could maintain the level of prejudice between groups (Wagner, Hewstone, and Machleit 1989). Similarly, negative contact might enhance the existing prejudice because people might sense a threat either at the individual level or at the national level such as the security of the country (Pettigrew and Tropp 2013). To put it differently, having connections with the members of the 'others' might not change the status quo or might worsen the overall situation due to negative experiences. A positive impact, however, has been produced by 'friendship' (McLaren 2003; Wagner, Hewstone, and Machleit 1989) rather than encountering the members of the others.

As seen, the contact theory provides an optimistic picture to reduce prejudice. Nevertheless, as indicated by scholars, to start an interaction between two groups, at first, people should be willing to talk (Ron et al. 2017). If they are avoiding the possibility of contact, it demonstrates that they might suffer from anxiety. Stephan and Stephan (1985) claim that as individuals, groups as a whole could have higher levels of anxiety and this situation has become an obstacle to the initiation of the contact. According to their findings, the reasons for anxiety are the number of previous contacts, the relationship dynamics in terms of hierarchy, the lack of knowledge about others when it comes to their cultural and social norms, negative stereotyping, and ethnocentrism. Because of these factors, groups might avoid or even further, reject each other in order to reduce the level of anxiety they have. In other words, the existence and the possibility of contact with others would cause anxiety, and to deal with this problem, avoidance or rejection has been used by the members of the ingroup. In a similar vein, if they have to encounter the outgroup, the ingroup might focus on the behaviors, and sentences that are in line with the negative stereotypes. This is because, as a strategy to reduce anxiety, cognitively, they have created an image regarding the outgroup and they expect others to perform these actions while

ignoring the dissimilarities. Moreover, Gadarian and Albertson (2014) argue that the natives who are anxious tend to collect information and internalize the negative frames and stories about 'migrants' in the news. In short, they seek information that approves their fears and are more likely to become biased because of high levels of anxiety. Eventually, their anxiousness remains salient.

In order to eliminate the negative outcomes of bias and anxiety, two different approaches have been introduced. Miller and Brewer (1984) suggest that during the interaction, instead of prioritizing the group identities, people could focus on individuals since the contact takes place among persons. They argue that existing categories should not be repeated by assigning roles in line with the expectations due to the fact that categories would remain salient (Miller and Brewer 1984). For instance, based on the White-Black categories, they mentioned that if in a workplace Black people continue to perform low-skilled jobs and Whites get higher positions, these racial categories would be more noticeable through the occupations as well. However, if some of the Whites are also included as blue-collar workers and some Black people perform high-skilled jobs, the level of bias would be reduced (Marcus-Newhall et al. 1993). In other words, mixed roles have led to a de-categorization process which ultimately decreases prejudice.

The second approach has been developed by Gaertner et al. (1989). Instead of de-categorization, their suggestion is the re-categorization by forming one broad group that could include the members of the outgroup. This argument is based on the experiments in which members of the two groups have been forced to act individually and all together in different scenarios, to detect whether re-categorization works and if it does, under which circumstances it would provide better results to reduce bias. According to their findings, establishing one inclusive group make members close to each other compared to a situation where two different groups exist. To put it differently, within a two-group setting, ingroup members underline the differences between groups and favor their members; however, within a single-group setting, they would become friendlier to the previous members of the outgroup. Lastly, if individuals remain separate without forming any groups, they are less likely to have positive attitudes toward their previous teammates. Consequently, re-categorization might function as a tool to reduce bias due to eliminating the differences and focusing on the similarities.

Alternatively, similar to the findings of Gaertner et al. (1989), Pettigrew and Tropp (2013) state that a segregated environment might not resolve the tension; nonetheless, intergroup contact could be used. In fact, it is claimed that an improvement between two groups could be generalizable for the other groups, thus, might decrease

the level of prejudice within a community in general (Pettigrew et al. 2011). This secondary transfer effect refers to a situation wherein positive interactions have the potential to impact relationships with others, even when direct contact is absent. Moreover, the similarity between primary and secondary groups is not necessary for this effect. It means that one of the out-groups could be different in terms of religion, and another out-group could be distinct from the ingroup due to belonging to another ethnic group (Schmid et al. 2012). The crucial point is the existence of positive contact with an outgroup and its impact on attitudes toward all other out-groups, especially in the case of extended friendship (Pettigrew 1998; Turner et al. 2007). The same generalization could be done through imagined contact (Crisp and Turner 2009). In this setting, the ingroup does not encounter the outgroups; nevertheless, they mentally focus on the scenario in which they interact. Consequently, they would become less biased toward outgroups. However, the effect of imagined contact is higher for similar groups (Harwood et al. 2011). In short, through the secondary transfer effect whether it is imagined or not, individuals might become more tolerant and more open to receiving information about others (Pettigrew and Tropp 2013).

Although studies indicate an optimistic picture, a high level of attachment to ingroup or collective narcissism could be a crucial challenge. Cichocka et al. (2022) discuss that members of the ingroup might think that they deserve special treatment and wish to maintain their positions, thus, in order not to lose any privileges, they could reject newcomers or migrants. In other words, rather than the lack of contact, one group could emphasize their interests and act accordingly. Furthermore, by employing a natural experiment, Hangartner et al. (2019) find that the natives who live on the islands that have faced waves of migrants tend to oppose pro-immigration and cast a vote for an anti-immigrant party. If we examine this finding from the perspective of the contact theory, it is seen that islanders and migrants are in 'contact'; however, this situation has increased the level of anxiety among the natives; therefore, it does not generate the expected positive outcome. It could be argued that this finding also indicates the difference between contact and exposure. While the former refers to a steady situation, the latter implies a sudden wave, and this flow might increase the level of anxiety among the natives (Rudolph and Wagner 2022; Steinmayr 2021). Consequently, it could be claimed that natives might have a fear of losing what they've owned, and be concerned about their security, and thus, their attitudes are hostile.

3.4 Arguments

As previously discussed, it is stated that salient topics enjoy a high degree of public awareness, regardless of whether individuals rely on cues from elites or their own cognitive abilities. Put differently, while information sources and information-seeking behaviors may differ among electorates, it is generally expected that they are aware of salient issues because of the exposure. Consequently, it could be claimed that migration is one of the hot topics in European countries where the right-wing parties have managed to increase their electoral base. While certain segments of the public might be exposed to negative frames when it comes to migration-related topics, it is plausible that other voters are motivated to seek out additional information to form opinions. In line with the findings concerning political sophistication and anti-immigration attitudes, the hypothesis is:

- Politically sophisticated individuals are less likely to have anti-immigration attitudes.

The supposition is that politically sophisticated individuals are inclined to collect more information regarding the issue and might be aware of the 'positive' side or frames that lead them to become less biased.

Nonetheless, Taber and Lodge (2006) argue that "citizens are biased-information processors". In other words, people may have a tendency to favor information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs (Iyengar and Hahn 2009) such as in the case of migration (Gadarian and Albertson 2014; Glinitzer, Gummer, and Wagner 2021), and to ignore information that is in contradiction (Zaller 1992). This can lead to a situation where people are not evaluating information objectively, but instead are processing it in a way that reinforces their existing attitudes and, even might insist on inaccurate information (Reedy, Wells, and Gastil 2014; Shapiro and Bloch-Elkon 2008). In short, people might seek information; but it does not mean that they accept the information they've received if it does not fit with political values. Likewise, it is discussed that people who are interested in politics and choose to rely on elite cues are more likely to be 'misinformed' (Dancey and Sheagley 2013). Consequently, it could be claimed that supporters of right-wing parties might already have opinions about migration-related issues and since elite cues are perceived as an easy way to collect information, this group of voters might be biased and reject other sources of information. In this regard, contact theory might play a role in which citizens whether they are biased or not, are able to change their attitudes towards migrants through their positive experiences. Thus, the arguments are:

- Positive contact with migrants reduces anti-immigration attitudes.

- People who have positive contact experiences are less likely to support a right-wing party.

As mentioned above, indeed, the environment in which the interaction takes place and the relationship between the members of different groups play an essential role to determine the effect of contact. In this respect, friendship has reduced bias more in terms of human affairs and might lead individuals to seek more information about the outgroups. This information-seeking process and reduction in bias could be applied to the other groups as well. In other words, the secondary transfer effect should be taken into account. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the lack of *meaningful* interaction between the host community and migrants might increase hostile attitudes (Rudolph and Wagner 2022), which also demonstrates the importance of the quality of the contact.

Within the scope of this thesis and available data, only the reported positive contact or being open to contact would be included in the analysis. These contacts might include friendship or acquaintance; however, because of the questionaries, the nature of the interactions is unknown. In the next chapter, this situation would be explained in detail.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The economic and social conditions of a country and its historical background in terms of migration and origin of the immigrants have an effect on the receiving countries; however, this impact varies depending on the host community. In short, attitudes towards migrants have been shaped by several indicators and all of them create a unique response throughout history.

The literature tends to focus on economic and social indicators to explain this phenomenon. Nevertheless, within the scope of this thesis and in order to find responses to the questions of whether the high level of political sophistication and positive contact with migrants decrease anti-immigration attitudes; and does the positive contact with migrant reduce the likelihood of supporting a right-wing party or not would be explored. In order to address these research questions, based on the available datasets, Turkey and Germany would be examined in this chapter.

Both Turkey and Germany have received a massive influx of migrants recently and the total populations of these countries are similar to each other, exceeding 80 million people. The total number of people is essential to understand the visibility of the migrants within the host country and the absorption capabilities of the receiving countries. Regarding this population question, while Turkey is the country that hosts the most number of refugees as of 2023, Germany is the third largest country by having 2.2 million refugees. Likewise, both countries were ethnically homogenous before the 1950s and were not considered receiving countries at that time. However, this picture has been changed due to the shortage concerning the workforce, family reunification, and turmoils in the vicinity.

To understand how migration issue has evolved in these countries, in this chapter, first, I would provide a historical background concerning different waves of migration.

Then, in line with the hypotheses, the research design would be explained and the findings of the regression analyses would be presented.

4.2 The Case of Turkey: General Outlook

After World War 2, Turkey has been known as a sending country in terms of migration. The rapid industrialization process pushed people to settle in urban areas rather than rural ones in the 1950s and 1960s. However, due to the lack of employment opportunities in big centers, this internal migration movement has changed and turned into an international flow (Sayarı 1986). Notably, following the Recruitment Agreement of 1961 with Germany, the pace of emigration has increased and approximately 876.000 people from rural areas of Turkey have become 'guest' workers in West Germany (Federal Foreign Office 2021). The official recruitment of Turkish workers persisted until 1973 when European countries decided to ban further movement because of the oil crisis (İçduygu and Aksel 2015); however, the number of Turkish people increased because of the fact that 'guest workers' decided to apply for the family reunification process to bring their family members (Portes and Böröcz 1989). During that period of time, the Turkish government also supported emigration to Europe in general (İçduygu and Aksel 2015). Officials have perceived recruitment agreements as a solution for the high level of unemployment within the country, and the positive impact of the remittances on the fragile Turkish economy, especially in terms of trade deficit, has been welcomed (Sayarı 1986). In other words, initially, economic challenges in Turkey prompted migration and their decision to leave has been encouraged by the officials to solve the economy-related issues. Further movements have happened due to the establishment of networks and family reunification and, in the 1980s, Europe became a destination for political refugees as well (European Commission 2000).

In terms of receiving migrants, until the 1980s, newcomers have shared culture, norms, and religion (İçduygu and Aksel 2015). That is why, migrants have been not considered 'foreign'. Nonetheless, the turmoils in the Middle East such as the Iranian Revolution and the collapse of the Soviet Union have paved the way for new human flows in which Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans, and Eastern Europeans choose Turkey to work and seek refuge (İçduygu 2004). The geographical location of the country and relatively good economic and social conditions in the 1990s and early years of the 2000s and liberal visa policies (Paçacı-Elitok and Straubhaar 2010; İçduygu and Aksel 2015) attract people who were at risk. However, although Turkey is a party

to the Geneva Convention of 1951, the Republic holds a geographical limitation clause, indicating that only people coming from the European side of the country would be able to obtain refugee status. Consequently, Iraqis, Afghans, and Iranians do not receive legal status as such. This is problematic in the sense that non-European migrants have been pushed outside of the system, meaning that they tend to become a part of the informal economy and be open to exploitation until they find a third country to migrate to (İçduygu 2004). In order to provide a solution to their vulnerability, the Turkish government introduced the Asylum Regulation of 1994. According to the Regulation, those who wish to seek asylum in Turkey must submit the required documents within 5 days, or otherwise, they might be deported (Kirişçi 2012). If their applications were rejected, they could appeal the cases within 15 days (Republic of Turkey 1994). However, the Regulation has gained criticism due to the time constraints for potential asylum seekers. Most importantly, the Regulation did not prioritize the non-refoulment principle, which prohibits sending individuals to countries where they could face persecution or torture (Kirişçi 2012).

Table 4.1 Applications under 1994 regulation in Turkey (1995–2010)

Country	Applications	Accepted Cases	Rejected Cases	Pending Cases	Undetermined Status
Iraq	30342	15647	5368	6720	2607
Iran	35468	21784	3723	7434	2527
Russia	99	15	52	14	18
Afghanistan	5947	571	368	4912	96
Uzbekistan	402	96	75	189	42
Azerbaijan	55	3	25	16	11
Other	144	58	64	11	11
Other (non-European)	4973	994	477	3248	254

Table[3] 4.1 demonstrates the number of applications under the 1994 Regulation from 1995 to 2010. As seen, the majority of the applicants were Iranians, Iraqis and Afghans. In total, 77.430 people sought asylum in this period. While 39.168 cases were accepted, 10.152 individuals received a rejection. The ones whose cases were rejected either applied to appeal or were deported.

The origin of the migrants has been changed due to the Syrian civil war. In 2011, after the civil war has broken out, approximately 400.000 Syrians crossed the border and sought refuge in Turkey (İçduygu and Aksel 2015). This sudden flow of migrants has been welcomed through an open-door policy (İçduygu and Nimer 2020). Nonetheless, the officials thought that the civil war would not last too long and the

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[3]Note: Non-European refers to the people who come from Africa, Central Asia and Far-East Asia, the Middle East, Serbia and Montenegro, and the United States of America. Note 2: Other category includes the people from the Balkans (except Serbia and Montenegro), Armenia, Georgia, Switzerland, Ukraine, and EU member states. Source: (Kirişçi 2012).

Syrians would not be permanent residents of Turkey, thus, the regulations concerning the Syrians were ad-hoc in nature (Özçürümez and İçduygu 2022). As the civil war continued in Syria, the attitudes of the officials changed and the government introduced the Law on Foreigners and International Protection in 2013, and then the Temporary Protection Regulation in 2014 to improve the conditions of Syrians and provide a legal status (Özçürümez and İçduygu 2022). With the help of these new regulations, Syrians are able to access social services in Turkey without obtaining refugee status. However, their rights are limited in the sense that they are only able to access social services or receive assistance in the cities they are registered (Müftüler-Baç 2022). In addition to this, their right to travel within the country is restricted. Consequently, the border cities have dealt with massive flows coming from Syria and hosted the majority of the migrants despite the lack of sufficient capability in terms of accommodation, job opportunities, or social services such as health.

Although Turkey has attracted migrants from its neighborhood, it has been a transit country for many people who wish to have better living standards in Europe (İçduygu and Aksel 2014). However, the EU countries are not in favor of receiving a massive influx of migrants, and in order to protect the borders of the Union, the European Union Council requested the removal of geographical limitation, as a part of Turkey's accession process to become a full candidate (The Council of the European Union 2008). Nevertheless, the officials in Turkey have perceived the geographical limitation clause as an instrument to maintain the security of the country (Kirişçi 2004); therefore, it has not been lifted. As a response to the requests coming from the EU side, Turkish officials agreed on the readmission agreement in 2013 and three years later, signed the EU-Turkey 'deal' where the third-country nationals would be sent back to Turkey if they cross the border illegally. To put it differently, Turkey has become a final destination for migrants even though their ultimate aim is to seek refuge in the developed world.

Figure 4.1 The ratio of Syrians who are under temporary protection to the population of the province where they are registered (2016)

The ratio of Syrians who are under temporary protection to the population of province where they are registered (2016)

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Percentage

0,02%   93,50%
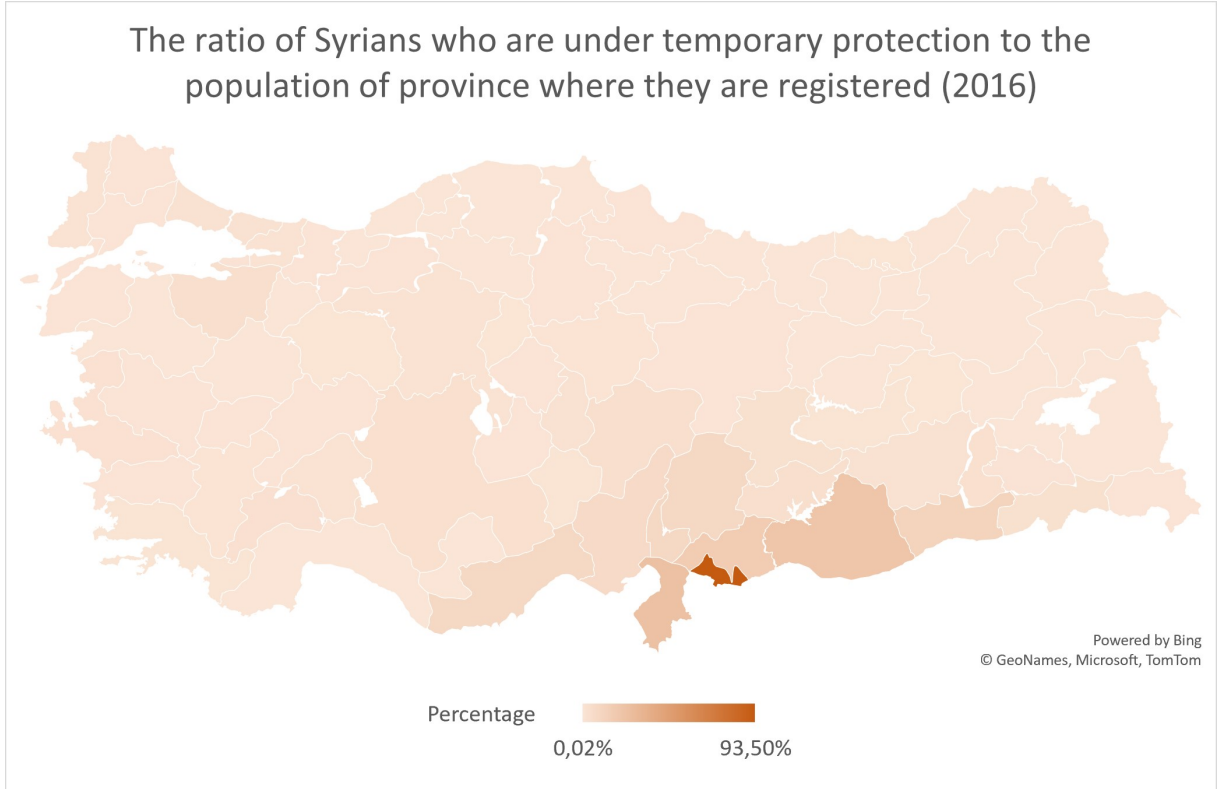
As seen in Figure[4] 4.1, in 2016, Kilis, one of the border cities, has been affected by the migration flow in a way that the demographic ratio in the city is almost 1 to 1, meaning that the population of the city has been doubled and for one Turkish citizen, there was also one Syrian who is under temporary protection. Kilis' unique position has originated from the fact that it is close to Aleppo and other trade cities in Syria and apart from the economic relations, the residents of Kilis are also familiar with Syrian culture and language through family ties (İncili and Akdemir 2016). In a similar vein, Gaziantep, Hatay, and Şanlıurfa have received thousands of Syrians due to their shared history with the region.

[4]Source (İçişleri Bakanlığı Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü 2017)

Figure 4.2 The ratio of Syrians who are under temporary protection to the population of the province where they are registered (April 2023)

The ratio of Syrians who are under temporary protection to the population of province where they are registered (April 2023)

Powered by Bing
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Percentage

0,02%   33,58%
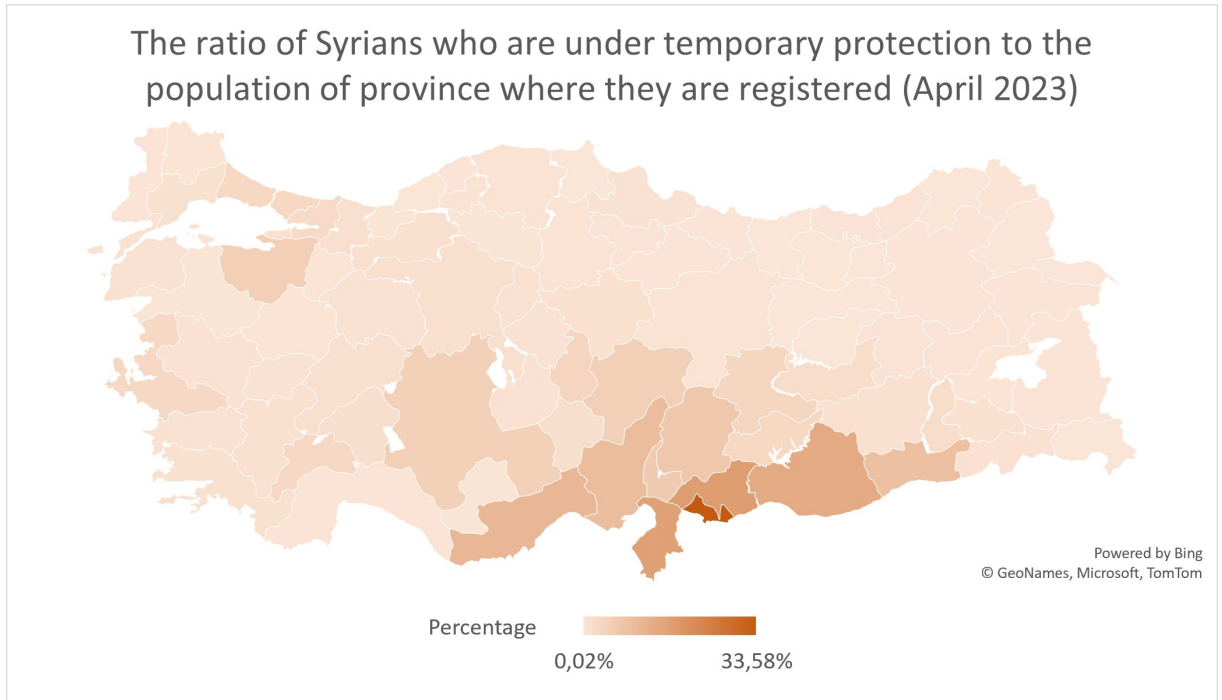
Over the course of 7 years, as seen in Figure[5] 4.2, the distribution of Syrians across Turkey has changed and a more balanced picture in terms of the ratio of Syrians to the natives has occurred. Indeed, the border cities still are at the top; however, big cities such as Mersin, Konya, and Bursa also have received huge numbers of Syrians as well. This redistribution of Syrians might increase the visibility of migrants in Turkey in the sense that the citizens could see migrants in daily life. This situation was different in the early years of the Syrian civil war because of the fact that border cities have functioned as a buffer zone, thus, for the residents of Central Anatolia, for instance, the likelihood of seeing a migrant on the street or city center was low. In other words, interaction with migrants outside of the border cities is a relatively new phenomenon.

As of February 2023, approximately 4 million people have received international and temporary protection in Turkey (UNHCR 2023). While international protection has been provided to Afghans, Iraqis, and Iranians mostly, the temporary protection status has been introduced for Syrians who had escaped from the civil war, and currently, 3.6 million Syrians have been registered as such. As seen in the pictures above, Syrians generally live in the South-east of Turkey; however, due to the broad job opportunities in more developed cities such as Istanbul and Bursa, a considerable

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[5]Source (İçişleri Bakanlığı Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı 2023)

amount of migrants reside in these cities. It should be noted that the UNHCR does not provide any information regarding the number of illegal migrants in Turkey. This unknown situation has paved the way for speculations concerning the total number of migrants in the country. Ümit Özdağ, the head of the *Zafer Partisi*, has kept underlining that in Turkey, there are 13 million migrants coming from mainly the Middle East and Africa and this number covers both legal and illegal stays (Cumhuriyet 2022). According to his claims, more than 1.5 million Syrians have received Turkish citizenship, and since they have dual nationalities, the official numbers concerning temporary protection do not include them (T24 2023). In short, on the one hand, the official numbers indicate that Turkey hosts 4 million people who have official documents to obtain international or temporary protection; on the other hand, some politicians have argued that the number is higher due to the existence of illegal migrants.

The different statements regarding the number of migrants are also found in the stances of the political parties in Turkey. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war, the AKP has been the ruling party and their officials introduced the open door policy, underlining the humanitarian aspect of the issue with a religious connotation (Apaydın and Müftüler-Baç 2022; Polat 2018). Although Turkey decided to close the border for eliminating further illegal crossing in 2016 (Morgül and Savaşkan 2021), the 'Muhajir-Ansar' frame has been repeated by the AKP officials (Polat 2018). In fact, President Erdoğan criticized the opposition by saying that:

> "We have a culture in which migration and hospitality play essential roles, regardless of whether someone comes from Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq. We do not talk to the people who do not know and do not understand what migration and hospitality refer to. We know the era when the Prophet Muhammed was a migrant and the time when he hosted others. We follow the same understanding on this matter... We won't send them back to the arms of the murderers. We will continue to demonstrate our generosity as we have done so far." (BBC Türkçe 2022).

This saying shows that the ruling party and its members set a framework for the international audience, in which Turkey has been portrayed as a powerful actor to defend the people who are in need in the region (Polat 2018). Similarly, for the domestic audience, the AKP highlights the 'victimhood' of the 'Muslim' brothers and sisters to signal their virtuous position as opposed to the other parties in Turkey. To put it differently, focusing on the moral side of the issue provides a distinct feature to the AKP in Turkish politics due to the fact that except for the Nationalist

Action Party (MHP), which has been a member of the alliance with the AKP, other parties in Turkey have been in favor or restrictionist policies in terms of migration. This situation also be seen in the parliamentary debates in which the opposition parties have focused on the negative effect of migration on economy-related topics (Apaydın and Müftüler-Baç 2022). In order to eliminate or minimize the negative impact, during the Presidential election campaign, the Millet Alliance, notably the head of the Republican People's Party (CHP) Kılıçdaroğlu has clearly stated that Syrians would return to their countries within two years *"with drums and trumpets"* (TRT Haber 2021). Having a more negative tone, the candidate of the far-right Zafer Partisi, Sinan Oğan said that a 'forced return' would be possible for Syrians (Abatay 2023). In short, the AKP and, relatively the MHP despite being a nationalist party, do not show hostility against Syrians; however, the opposition bloc has expressed a need for a policy to enable Syrians to be sent.

The Turkish electorates have evaluated the arrival of Syrians in two ways: the supporters of the opposition are more likely to have negative attitudes towards migrants, while the people who have voted for the ruling party are less likely to have such attitudes (Altındağ and Kaushal 2021). Based on this finding, it could be argued that the religious discourse of the AKP has influenced the attitudes of conservative voters. However, as noted by Morgül and Savaşkan (2021) if the economic conditions deteriorate, the religious connotation does not turn into a sympathetic attitude towards Syrians. In other words, economic concerns play a significant role to determine whether a conservative individual adopts a positive stance or not. A similar argument was presented by Saraçoğlu and Bélanger (2019) who claim that the overall negative attitudes towards Syrians have originated from the fact that the citizens have worried about the national economy and social life.

Furthermore, the regulations that provide access to social services indicate that Syrians would stay in Turkey for an undetermined period of time (Çelik and İçduygu 2019). Consequently, the natives' attitudes towards migrants have been affected by these new changes. In the beginning, Syrians were perceived as 'guests'; however, due to their long stay, Turkish electorates have started focusing on the so-called 'privileges' provided to Syrians (Erdoğan 2014). The priority given in the hospitals, and taking a different form of examination to be admitted to the universities are the prominent examples of the privileges mentioned by the natives. Because of the lack of sufficient capacity when it comes to social services, the residents complain about these problems by underlining that "guests know their limits" (Erdoğan 2014). However, these criticisms do not have a statistically significant and negative impact on the vote share of the AKP (Fisunoğlu and Sert 2019).

In short, the literature suggests that the flow of Syrians does not significantly affect the votes of the ruling party and the supporters of the AKP could be mobilized through the religious interpretation of a humanitarian crisis. Therefore, currently, it could be expected that the AKP electorates have positive attitudes compared to the supporters of the opposition. Nonetheless, as the duration of Syrians' stay increases, local residents might focus on the problems associated with migrants rather than their needs. Likewise, if the economic conditions are worsening, people might adopt a new stance. Last but not least, due to the distribution of Syrians across Turkey, almost half of the population has interacted with migrants (Erdoğan 2014). However, the nature of these contacts has been unknown, and the conducted studies imply that perceived threats and anxieties have led to negative attitudes.

4.2.1 Research Design and Findings

In order to test the arguments for the Turkish case, the seventh wave of the World Values Survey (WVS)[6] has been used. The fieldwork period of this wave started in March 2018 and finished in May 2018. During this period of time, Turkish politics focused on the general elections that would be held on the 24th of June, 2018 when political parties had formed alliances for the parliamentary election. Nonetheless, concerning the presidential election, the opposition parties had decided to support their own individual candidates, rather than agreeing on a single contender.

Based on the alliances built for the parliamentary election, it could be argued that the AKP and the MHP on the one side, the CHP and İYİP on the other side had a similar and close political stance to each other. As mentioned above, despite the fact that the İYİP and the CHP are located on two different edges of the left-right scale, when it comes to migration-related policies, these two parties have supported the same argument and favored more restrictionist policies. In a similar vein, both the AKP and the MHP, regardless of being right-wing parties have been the advocates of the open-door policies. Therefore, in the beginning, the alliances are coded whether it is the incumbent or the opposition. After this, in order to control each political party's position regarding the left-right scale, another variable is added to the study. While the AKP, MHP and İYİP are coded as right-wing parties, the CHP and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) are coded as left-wing parties. As a result of running two different regressions, it has been seen that these two variables, alliances and individual political stances, have the same effect on the analysis. In the end, the position of each political party on the left-right scale is used as it is in line with

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[6](Haerpfer et al. 2022)

the arguments of the study.

Concerning the attitudes towards migrants, or migration in general, the World Values Survey covers several dimensions. First, 'immigration increases the crime rate' and 'increases the risk of terrorism' is used for measuring how security-related concerns have affected electorates' attitudes toward migrants. Moreover, the respondents to the question of whether immigration leads to social conflict or not, are added to this study to determine the impact of the social threats. In addition to this, materialistic concerns might be influential for anti-immigration attitudes; therefore the question related to the relationship between the unemployment rate and immigration is added to the analysis as well. Last but not least, respondents have evaluated the impact of the migrants on their countries' development and whether they are in favor of restrictionist or pro-immigration policies. All of these questions form a scale to measure anti-immigration attitudes for this study and become the dependent variable. The higher values of this scale indicate that individuals demonstrate anti-immigration attitudes.

The main independent variables are political sophistication and positive contact with migrants. As mentioned previously, the measurement of political sophistication has been debated among scholars, and due to the lack of available data, latent variables such as political interest or the level of education have been used. Since the seventh wave of the WVS includes factual questions regarding political information, the operationalization of the independent variable is made through a scale (see (Zaller 1992)) where the correct answers to these questions are coded as 1 and inaccurate or 'do not knows' is considered as 0. The reason for combining don't knows and inaccurate responses is the fact that respondents might have hesitations regarding the accurate answers; however, since they cannot be sure, they would choose the 'do not know' option. In this circumstance, insufficient knowledge is treated as inaccurate (Luskin and Bullock 2011). This approach could be seen as problematic due to the fact that people might not know that specific problem or they are not able to remember it even though they are aware of the issue. Nonetheless, in the WVS, the factual questions could be classified under the category of general knowledge because of the fact that these are related to the permanent members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council and the location of the headquarter of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Indeed, these types of questions are perceived as 'easy' (Converse 2000); thus, it is expected that individuals might obtain the necessary information.

The literature highlights that political sophistication is related to cognitive abilities and these require understanding complex topics; nonetheless, factual questions have

measured whether a person acquires accurate information or not. In order to address this complexity and cognitive abilities problem, the types of media outlets preferred by the respondents are added to the analysis.

In terms of positive contact, however, this dataset does not contain a direct question. Instead, it has been asked to the respondents whether is there a group of people that cannot be accepted as neighbors. Among the categories, immigrants and foreign workers exist. Thus, concerning the study, the other main independent variable, positive contact, is operationalized through this question in which the value of 1 is given if the respondents mentioned that they could not accept migrants or foreign workers as their neighbors. If they don't mention it, the variable takes the value of 0. In other words, in order to measure the effect of positive contact, a latent variable is used. If individuals do not prefer an immigrant as their neighbor, it might indicate that as a member of an ingroup, they could be anxious, and to overcome the anxiety they have, they might choose not to interact with migrants. This situation suggests a lack of positive contact. If they do not signal any rejection, concerning migrants, it might demonstrate that they either have positive contact with them or they are open to interaction.

In order to test the hypotheses, the ordinary least squares (OLS) method has been used. The equation for the first and second arguments of this thesis:

$$
\begin{aligned}
\textit{Anti-immigration Scale} = \\
\beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{PoliticalSophistication} + \beta_2 \text{PoliticalInterest} \\
+ \beta_3 \text{PartyChoice} : \text{Right} - \text{wing} + \beta_4 \text{BeingOpentoContactswithMigrants} \\
+ \beta_5 \text{InformationSource} : \text{Newspaper} + \beta_6 \text{InformationSource} : \text{TV} \\
+ \beta_7 \text{InformationSource} : \text{SocialMedia} + \beta_8 \text{Age} + \beta_9 \text{Education} \\
+ \beta_{10} \text{SubjectiveSocialClass} + \beta_{11} \text{Gender} \\
+ \beta_{12} \text{Religiosity} + \beta_{13} \text{Left} - \text{rightPoliticalScale} + \varepsilon
\end{aligned}
$$

(4.1)

The equation of the third hypothesis:

$$
\begin{aligned}
\textit{Supporting a Right-Wing Party} = \\
\beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{BeingOpentoContactswithMigrants} + \beta_2 \text{PoliticalInterest} \\
+ \beta_3 \text{Age} + \beta_4 \text{Education} + \beta_5 \text{SubjectiveSocialClass} \\
+ \beta_6 \text{Gender} + \beta_7 \text{Religiosity} + \beta_8 \text{Left} - \text{rightPoliticalScale} + \varepsilon
\end{aligned}
$$

(4.2)

Table 4.2 OLS regression on anti-immigration scale (Turkey)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Political Sophistication	-0.249**	-0.279***	
	(0.111)	(0.108)	
Political Interest	-0.172		
	(0.105)		
Supporter of a right-wing party	0.027		
	(0.208)		
Not Accepting Neighbors: Immigrants and Foreign Workers	1.999***	2.098***	
	(0.158)	(0.155)	
Information Source: Newspaper	-0.149***		
	(0.056)		
Information Source: TV	0.346***		
	(0.107)		
Information Source: Social Media	0.091		
	(0.059)		
Age	0.007		0.003
	(0.007)		(0.007)
Education Level	-0.023		-0.062
	(0.045)		(0.047)
Subjective Social Class	-0.023		-0.143
	(0.089)		(0.093)
Gender	0.068		-0.108
	(0.182)		(0.184)
Religiosity	0.023		0.010
	(0.049)		(0.051)
Left-right political scale	-0.013		0.028
	(0.039)		(0.034)
Constant	14.849***	16.149***	17.308***
	(0.692)	(0.131)	(0.472)
N	1618	1618	1618
R^2	0.116	0.103	0.006

As seen in the regression estimation in Table 4.2, the effect of political sophistication on anti-immigration attitudes is negative and statistically significant. This result demonstrates that the more individuals know, the less they become anti-immigrant, which is in line with the hypothesis of this study. Likewise, following the news through newspapers have a similar impact. Since it is assumed that there is a positive relationship between cognitive abilities and reading newspapers regularly (Jerit, Barabas, and Bolsen 2006), it could be argued that these individuals are sophisticated in a way that they are able to understand the different dimensions of migration-related issues. Nonetheless, using TV channels as a primary source of information increases anti-immigration attitudes. This situation could be explained

by the fact that the tone and frames that have been used by the media outlets have influenced the audiences and if these channels adopt negative language and focus on negative examples, individuals might develop more negative attitudes towards migrants. Interestingly, the social media platforms are not statistically significant, meaning that attitudes towards migrants might not be affected by the usage of the Internet as a source of information.

Regarding the contact theory, Table 4.2 demonstrates that those who rejected the idea of having a migrant or foreign worker as their neighbors are more likely to have anti-immigration attitudes. In a reverse setting, the individuals who do not mention that they would not accept migrants as their neighbors are less likely to have negative attitudes. It should be noted that since the contact theory is operationalized through a latent variable, the exact relationship between the positive interaction and anti-immigration attitudes is unknown. However, it could be claimed that the respondents who would be fine if they have migrants as their neighbors tend to be open to the initiation of contact or deepening of the relationship with a migrant.

The results also show that the control variables are not statistically significant to explain this phenomenon. Additionally, supporting a right-wing party does not have a substantial impact on the anti-immigration attitudes in the Turkish case. This situation could be described by the fact that although the MHP and AKP are located on the right side of the scale, they did not adopt an anti-immigrant approach and policies. Nevertheless, the CHP and the İYİP have taken a negative stance against the presence of Syrians, Iraqis, and Afghans by highlighting the Turkish culture and national identity (Balta and Sert 2022). To put it differently, the variation among the right-wing parties in Turkey and the anti-immigrant position of the CHP might lead to this regression result in which the variable is not statistically significant.

Table 4.3 OLS regressions on different types of perceived threats (Turkey)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Immigration and Security Threats	0.266***		0.182***
	(0.011)		(0.012)
Immigration and Economic Threats	0.294***	0.662***	
	(0.024)	(0.045)	
Political Sophistication	-0.037**	-0.042	0.040**
	(0.016)	(0.031)	(0.016)
Political Interest	-0.009	-0.050*	0.011
	(0.015)	(0.030)	(0.016)
Supporter of a right-wing party	0.011	-0.007	0.009
	(0.030)	(0.058)	(0.031)
Not Accepting Neighbors: Immigrants and Foreign Workers	0.111***	0.058	0.006
	(0.023)	(0.045)	(0.024)
Information Source: Newspaper	-0.010	0.004	-0.017**
	(0.008)	(0.016)	(0.008)
Information Source: TV	0.017	0.006	0.032**
	(0.016)	(0.030)	(0.016)
Information Source: Social Media	0.019**	-0.006	-0.006
	(0.009)	(0.017)	(0.009)
Age	0.003***	-0.003	-0.000
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Education Level	0.004	-0.005	-0.003
	(0.007)	(0.013)	(0.007)
Subjective Social Class	0.017	0.008	-0.037***
	(0.013)	(0.025)	(0.013)
Gender	-0.039	0.077	0.022
	(0.027)	(0.051)	(0.027)
Religiosity	-0.003	-0.007	0.012
	(0.007)	(0.014)	(0.007)
Left-right political scale	-0.014**	0.018*	0.002
	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.006)
Immigration and Social Threats		0.989***	0.300***
		(0.041)	(0.024)
Constant	0.262**	0.815***	0.886***
	(0.111)	(0.214)	(0.111)
N	1618	1618	1618
R^2	0.554	0.561	0.456

The Table 4.3 above includes regressions where each threat type is treated as the main dependent variable instead of the anti-immigration scale. The reason for this choice is the fact that these regression analyses allow us to determine which threat type has come to the forefront for the Turkish electorates.

The dependent variable in Model 1 is social threats originating from immigration. In line with one of the arguments of this thesis, political sophistication and social threats have a negative relationship, meaning that politically sophisticated individuals are less likely to perceive social threats related to migrants in Turkey. Those who identify themselves with left-leaning political ideologies, however, tend to highlight social threats as opposed to the individuals who locate themselves on the right side of the scale. This empirical finding is interesting in the sense that in Europe, far-right parties have focused on the national identity and the differences between migrants and natives in terms of culture, language, and religion; thus, it is expected that changes in the social life or demography might influence electorates in a way that they are mobilized through right-leaning parties. This contrast might be the result of the unique position-taking of the Turkish political parties.

Furthermore, among the models introduced above, only the relationship between social threats and contact through neighboring is statistically significant. This result demonstrates that the idea of having an interaction with a migrant is more likely to be rejected due to social-cultural concerns.

In Model 2, the dependent variable is security threats concerning migration. As seen in the table, self-placement in terms of the left-right scale is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level. The level of political interest is also statistically significant; however, the relationship between these two variables is negative. This means that the more an individual is interested in politics, the less this person perceives security threats concerning migration.

In Model 3, the dependent variable is economy-related threats due to migration. In this model, as opposed to other models above, the politically sophisticated respondents tend to have economic concerns. In a similar vein, subjective social class has an impact on economy-related threats as Scheve and Slaughter (2001) claimed. If individuals are afraid of losing their economic gains or have doubts about the future of the national economy, they might perceive migrants as a threat. Also, politically sophisticated individuals might have negative expectations for the national economy as well. Thus, the findings of Model 3 could be related to pessimistic views of an individual's economic situation and the general economic conditions in Turkey.

Table 4.4 OLS regression on support for a right-wing party (Turkey)

	Support for a Right-Wing Party
Not Accepting Neighbors: Immigrants and Foreign Workers	0.041**
	(0.019)
Political Interest	0.004
	(0.012)
Age	-0.001
	(0.001)
Education Level	-0.007
	(0.005)
Subjective Social Class	-0.001
	(0.011)
Gender	-0.041*
	(0.022)
Religiosity	0.040***
	(0.006)
Left-right political scale	0.103***
	(0.004)
Constant	-0.108*
	(0.059)
N	1618
R^2	0.377

In order to test the third hypothesis, another model is built in which the support for a right-wing party is a binary variable. This variable takes the value of 1 for the AKP, MHP, and İYİP supporters, and takes the value of 0, if the individuals reported that they would cast a vote for the CHP and the HDP. To have consistent results, the same sample is used, reaching 1618 observations as reported in other regression tables.

As understood, the rejection of migrants as neighbors is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, indicating that individuals who do not wish to have migrant neighbors are more likely to support a right-wing party in Turkey. To put it differently, it could be claimed that the respondents who do not reject this idea tend not to support these parties. Once again, it should be highlighted that due to the constraints in the dataset, it is assumed that accepting migrants as neighbors is an indication of being open to interaction. Therefore, a conclusion as such could be made through the available data.

Overall, for the Turkish case, the hypotheses of this study found evidence. The Turkish electorates who are politically sophisticated tend to demonstrate less anti-immigration behaviors. Being open to contact with migrants, a latent variable, is

statistically significant and reduces both anti-immigration attitudes and the likelihood of casting a vote for a right-wing party. In addition to these findings, it could be said that social concerns might become obstacles to the interaction between natives and host community members.

4.3 The Case of Germany: Historical Background and General Trend

Although currently, 27.2% of German citizens indicate that they are descendent of migrants (Janjevic 2022), the ethnic composition of the country was different in the 1950s. The residents of the county mostly were Germans and German-speaking minorities who were forced to leave the territories of Central Europe after the War (Hess and Green 2016; Kurthen 1995). Thus, it could be concluded that Germany was ethnically a homogenous country in this period of time. However, this situation has changed due to new waves of migration to the country.

In order to meet the demand for the workforce after the War and the division of Germany, West German politicians decided to introduce a new mechanism for the recruitment of workers from the Mediterranean countries (Kurthen 1995). The first agreement was put into force with Italy in 1955 by providing a temporary residence permit for the workers (Ellermann 2021). After the construction of the Berlin Wall, West Germany decided to sign several agreements with other countries such as Portugal, Greece and Turkey in order to provide the arrival of workers who were needed (Ellermann 2021). Apart from this guestworker system, until 1961, more than 2.5 million German crossed the border from East Berlin to West Berlin, without facing serious obstacles or restrictive border control (Heilig, Büttner, and Lutz 1990). However, the construction of the Berlin Wall increased border control and decreased the number of East Germans who wished to settle on the West side of the city. In fact, until the destruction of the Wall, between 1962 and 1988, approximately 600.000 ethnic Germans were able to move to West Germany and 68% of them used legal documents such as family reunification and the rest crossed the border illegally (Heilig, Büttner, and Lutz 1990). In short, within a short period of time, West Germany received different groups of people who either came for work or escaped from the political atmosphere in the Soviet bloc. Both the economic opportunities and relatively stable political environment functioned as an attraction for migrants, and the policies were designed to maintain these flows.

These pro-immigration policies were interrupted by the slow-paced economic growth in the late years of the 1960s. The majority of the German public did not welcome

the guest workers, arguing that they would not contribute to the economy as they should (Ellermann 2021). The Oil Crisis of 1973 led to further discussion about the cost and benefits of the guest-worker scheme and due to the economic problems and the burden on the social security system in Germany, the politicians decided not to accept new workers from other countries and banned further movements (Ellermann 2021).

Despite banning further movements, the number of migrants in West Germany did not decrease. In fact, because of family reunification and guest workers' decision to remain in Germany, the migrant population has become stable (Kurthen 1995). On top of that, political turmoils around the region have increased the number of asylum applications in the 1980s. Some Turkish citizens left Turkey due to the military coup in 1980, and people from the Eastern Bloc decided to migrate due to the instability in terms of economics and politics (Jones 1990). Before the unification of Germany, the number of foreign workers exceeded 1.5 million on the West side, and only 94.600 foreigners resided in the East, demonstrating that West Germany implemented a liberal policy when it comes to migration and East Germany only hosted migrants from former colonies and other countries that were considered 'fellows'.

Table[7] 4.5 is important to understand the attitude differences between the West and East side of the country. While West Germans have had a long experience with migrants, East Germans did not have such an interaction due to the limited numbers of foreign workers. To put it differently, East Germany kept a homogenous population, allowing few migrants to reside; however, West Germany accepted both German-speaking groups and other 'foreigners', providing residence permits for the needed workers.

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[7](Heilig, Büttner, and Lutz 1990)

Table 4.5 Foreign workers in East and West Germany (1989)

Country of Origin		Foreign Workers (in thousands)
	East Germany	
Poland		7.0
Vietnam		60.0
Mozambique		16.0
Angola		1.0
Cuba		9.0
China		1.0
North Korea		0.6
Total		94.6
	West Germany	
European Community		497.3
Italy		178.9
Greece		101.7
Spain		61.6
France		41.3
UK		36.5
Other		77.3
Rest of Europe		1.023.4
Turkey		561.8
Yugoslavia		300.9
Austria		88.7
Poland		25.4
Czechoslovakia		11.6
Other		35.0
Africa		40.4
Americas		34.8
Asia		73.7
Other		19.7
Total		1.689.3

The reunification of Germany and the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Soviet bloc caused an increase in the number of asylum seekers. In order to reduce this sudden influx, in 1992, Germany put a restriction on the right to seek asylum and started requesting language certificates from the individuals who wished to settle (Hess and Green 2016). The amount of financial assistance and rights of asylum seekers were regulated strictly in order to make Germany less attractive to potential migrants (Crage 2016). This period of time is also essential because of the fact that German politicians have emphasized the absorption capacity of the country and the need for integration policies while rejecting that Germany was a country of immigration (Boswell and Hough 2008; Ellermann 2021). In other words, Germany was

considered at its limit regarding the admission of new migrants, and the priority was to ensure that migrants would be successfully integrated into German society and culture. Nevertheless, despite the rejection of being a country of immigration, Germany has continued to introduce new mechanisms such as the Blue Card for the arrival of highly-skilled migrants for its economic growth (Hess and Green 2016). It could be claimed that migrants are welcomed if they produce benefits to the German economy, therefore, there is a space for highly educated professionals from other countries. However, other groups of migrants might be seen as a burden on the social security system due to the fact that they would receive financial assistance from the state and the country should allocate money for integration policies as well.

Moreover, it should be mentioned that the objective of the guest worker scheme was to provide labor to the German economy for a short period of time. Nonetheless, guest workers have decided to remain within the territory of Germany. In line with the objective of the policy and the public's reaction to the low-skilled migrants, politicians tried to encourage guest workers to return to their countries of origin, for example providing financial assistance to those who were willing to leave Germany (Boswell and Hough 2008; Ellermann 2021). However, this attempt failed due to the fact that guest workers did not return. Consequently, the focus point has been changed from the voluntary return to integration policies. Germany has enabled naturalization policies for guest workers and their family members by offering citizenship. This change regarding the policies demonstrates that on the one hand, Germany has followed a liberal policy for highly skilled workers, on the other hand, low-skilled workers were not considered 'guests' any longer, therefore, voluntary return if applicable or naturalization if they manage to integrate have become the highly discussed options for these migrants.

Until 2015, Germany's migration policies managed to regulate the number of arrivals to the country. However, the so-called refugee crisis and the position of Chancellor Angela Merkel altered the situation. On 31 August 2015, Merkel announced that Germany would suspend the Dublin Regulation that regulates asylum applications among the member states (Mushaben 2018). According to Article 13 of the Regulation, individuals have to seek asylum from the country that they entered in the first place (The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union 2013). Because of this rule, during the crisis, countries on the Balkan Route, as well as the Mediterranean members of the Union, have received massive migration flows and applications. In order to provide a balance among the member states, Germany decided to accept applications even though it was not the first entry point for migrants. Merkel announced this decision by saying:

"Germany is a strong country. The motive with which we approach these things must be: Wir haben so vieles geschafft—wir schaffen das: "Wherever something stands in our way, it has to be overcome . . . .The federal government will do everything in its power—together with the federal states, together with the municipalities—to achieve exactly this" (Winig 2020).

Although Merkel approached this issue from a humanitarian angle, the CDU/CSU has not been known as the pro-immigration party in the history of Germany. In terms of social life-related issues, the CDU/CSU is a conservative party in which Christian values are highly emphasized and associated with the German culture, itself (Hertner 2022). Migrants who have non-European origins have been perceived as a threat to the culture because of following another religion, namely Islam (Boswell and Hough 2008). Since 2005, however, the CDU/CSU officials have focused on the question of how Muslims could be integrated and become one of 'them' through integration policies (Hertner 2022). This shift in their mindset implies that Muslims would be accepted, and even, become a part of German society despite differences. Nonetheless, as discussed by one of the CDU/CSU officials, Muslims could complete the integration process and be welcomed by German society; however, it does not mean that Islam would be a part of German culture (Hertner 2022). Through this statement, it is understood that religion plays a crucial part in terms of determining migration policies from the perspective of the conservative wing of the party. However, as seen, the CDU/CSU has not taken a negative stance regarding the issue of migration. Instead, this negative position has been possessed by the AfD. The party has been considered extreme; therefore, other political parties in Germany have excluded the AfD (Arzheimer 2019) by trying to throw them out of the political system. Nevertheless, AfD has managed to mobilize electorates and used migration issues as a tool for further polarization (Atzpodien 2022). To put it differently, the AfD has found a special place on the spectrum by becoming the anti-immigration political party in Germany, while other political parties have positioned themselves far from the AfD and sent mixed signals to the electorates due to the conflicts within parties as in the case of the CDU/CSU. Lastly, it should be noted that although the CDU/CSU adopted a pro-immigration discourse, the EU-Turkey deal of 2016 reveals that they have shifted their position in order not to lose their electoral base.

Germans have reacted to the sudden migration flows in two ways. First, since the migrants tried to escape due to the civil war and persecution in their countries of origin, the German public did not develop a negative attitude towards them. However, the attacks that happened around 2016 and onwards have had an impact on the public attitude in a negative way. Highlighting the cultural differences between

Germany and the Middle East, and indeed, the original identity of the attackers, Germans have evaluated the Muslims negatively (Czymara and Schmidt-Catran 2017). In a similar vein, it has been claimed that Muslims are considered symbolic threats, therefore, their acceptance as migrants would be low compared to other groups of people such as Ukrainians (De Coninck 2023; Rudolph and Wagner 2022). All of these findings suggest that cultural proximity has an essential role in accepting migrants, each group of people has been treated in a different way despite similar settings. Especially the Russian-Ukraninan War that started in February 2022 could be a piece of evidence for this claim in the sense that Ukrainians have been accepted by the host community with open arms. This situation has been examined and found that Westerners are able to make empathy with the Ukrainians due to the common enemy figure who is the Russian President Vladimir Putin. Consequently, Ukrainians are perceived as members of the in-group and their acceptance could be explained by in-group favoritism (Roth 2022).

Table 4.6 Persons seeking protection by protection status, regions and countries of origin (citizenship) until 31 December 2022 (Germany)

Citizenship	Foreign Population	Persons seeking protection	Unsettled	Recognized	Refused
Ukraine	1,164,200	1,009,215	270,545	736,660	2,015
Syria	923,805	674,060	59,180	607,995	6,885
Afghanistan	377,240	286,350	48,765	210,900	26,690
Iraq	284,595	210,870	30,855	145,870	34,140
Turkey	1,487,110	100,625	36,405	55,170	9,055
Iran	143,555	74,320	16,210	46,970	11,140
Russian Federation	290,615	69,380	10,040	44,760	14,585
Eritrea	81,955	65,415	2,915	60,820	1,680
Kosovo	280,850	42,640	420	37,270	4,950
Somalia	55,470	41,540	5,685	31,075	4,780
Nigeria	83,470	39,340	9,010	14,280	16,050
Serbia	251,365	34,695	1,480	24,675	8,535
Pakistan	84,250	23,160	4,075	11,290	7,795
Bosnia and Herzegowina	233,775	19,360	500	16,165	2,700
Georgia	44,390	18,860	8,695	4,580	5,585
Azerbaijan	33,460	17,605	2,950	10,585	4,070
Lebanon	45,525	17,500	2,545	8,930	6,025
Armenia	30,875	17,120	2,060	9,710	5,350

As seen in Table[8] 4.6, the majority of the people who seek protection consist of Ukrainians due to the war. Ukrainians have been able to enter the territory of Schengen without obtaining a visa for 3 months; therefore, when the war started on 24 February 2022, European countries such as Poland and Germany became destinations for them. On 4 March 2022, the EU countries decided to provide temporary protection status to Ukrainian citizens that extend their stays until 2025

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[8](Statistisches Bundesamt 2023)

(Kelly, Swash, and Fallon 2022). Nevertheless, this status is not provided to other nationals escaping from violence such as Afghans or Syrians. These individuals have to go through the asylum application process, and they might face rejection decisions by the authorities. In this situation, however, individuals who have received rejection decisions do not have to go back to their countries of origin; because officials simply tolerate them if they stay in Germany without official documents (Boswell and Badenhoop 2021). They remain in the country as irregular migrants and although they are known by the authorities, they would not be deported due to moral concerns (Boswell and Badenhoop 2021).

In short, in order to sustain economic growth and fill the requested positions, Germany has focused on the arrival of highly-skilled migrants while trying to find solutions for the low-skilled workers who were recruited through the guest-worker scheme. The importance of integration policies has been debated; nonetheless, the differences between the host country and the migrants also have been underlined in the political arena. This so-called 'clash' has an effect on the acceptance of different groups of people in terms of migration. While Syrians were admitted to the country due to the moral concerns emphasized by Merkel, the public has a negative attitude towards them especially after terrorist and criminal incidents. On the other hand, although Ukrainians are larger in terms of numbers, they are welcomed by the Germans and this change in attitudes has been explained by the cultural proximity.

4.3.1 Research Design and Findings

As in the case of Turkey, the seventh wave of the WVS is used to understand whether political sophistication and positive contact with migrants have an impact on anti-immigration attitudes. The collection of data started right after the German Federal Election in October 2017 and lasted until March 2018, relatively longer than the Turkish case.

The main variables have been operationalized in the same way. Nonetheless, for the German case, three political knowledge questions have been asked. The different question is about the working area of Amnesty International which is missing in the case of Turkey. Apart from this, the supporter of a right-wing party variable is defined in a way that the CDU/CSU, Free Democratic Party (FDP), and lastly AfD are coded as right-wing parties; and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SDP), the Greens and the Die Linke are categorized as non-right wing parties. This division has been made through the Chapel Hill Expert Survey in which experts have examined different political parties across Europe, covering different policy

dimensions to determine these political parties' positions (Jolly et al. 2022). In order to make the distinction between political parties, both their general left-right position and their stance on immigration are taken into account.

Table 4.7 OLS regression on anti-immigration scale (Germany)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Political Sophistication	-0.024	-0.240	
	(0.145)	(0.157)	
Political Interest	-0.545***		
	(0.128)		
Supporter of a right-wing party	0.880***		
	(0.208)		
Not Accepting Neighbors: Immigrants and Foreign Workers	1.764***	3.054***	
	(0.458)	(0.493)	
Information Source: Newspaper	0.084		
	(0.064)		
Information Source: TV	0.297***		
	(0.101)		
Information Source: Social Media	-0.057		
	(0.058)		
Age	0.014**		0.020***
	(0.006)		(0.005)
Education Level	-0.200***		-0.253***
	(0.055)		(0.056)
Subjective Social Class	-0.499***		-0.575***
	(0.128)		(0.130)
Gender	0.406**		0.219
	(0.183)		(0.184)
Religiosity	-0.209***		-0.201***
	(0.052)		(0.053)
Left-right political scale	0.296***		0.471***
	(0.059)		(0.052)
Constant	15.031***	14.806***	14.676***
	(0.712)	(0.223)	(0.533)
N	1017	1017	1017
R^2	0.218	0.039	0.164

This regression Table 4.7 above demonstrates that in the case of Germany, political sophistication does not have an impact on anti-immigration attitudes. Instead, as the political interest decreases, anti-immigration attitudes increase among the German respondents. Similarly, the level of education is statically significant, and highly educated individuals tend to oppose anti-immigration. If the information sources are examined, only the usage of TV channels affects anti-immigration attitudes. These variables, level of education, political interest, and the TV as a primary source of

information have been used for the operationalization of political sophistication and also added to the equation introduced by Luskin (1990). Nonetheless, while the level of education and political interest are positively correlated with political sophistication, the TV channels might decrease it due to the fact that these media outlets make audiences passive actors (Gordon and Segura 1997) and these channels are more likely to present the news by reducing the complexity of the issue (Jerit, Barabas, and Bolsen 2006). Overall, although the elements of political sophistication are statistically significant, the political sophistication variable which includes political knowledge questions is not statistically significant in this regression analysis. This situation could be explained by the fact that political knowledge questions could be seen as too specific for the respondents, and they might not be familiar with these topics or they cannot be sure about the correct answer, thus, they might choose 'don't know' option which is coded as inaccurate in this study.

One of the main independent variables, the contact variable, is statically significant, indicating that individuals who refuse interaction with migrants tend to become more anti-immigrant. To put it differently, the respondents who did not mention such an exclusion, are less likely to have anti-immigration attitudes.

Table 4.8 OLS regression on different types of perceived threats (Germany)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Immigration and Security Threats	0.122***		0.165***
	(0.014)		(0.021)
Immigration and Economic Threats	0.064***	0.365***	
	(0.022)	(0.046)	
Political Sophistication	-0.002	0.031	-0.075*
	(0.031)	(0.066)	(0.045)
Political Interest	0.055**	-0.175***	-0.112***
	(0.027)	(0.059)	(0.040)
Supporter of a right-wing party	-0.048	0.399***	0.006
	(0.044)	(0.095)	(0.065)
Not Accepting Neighbors: Immigrants and Foreign Workers	0.026	0.511**	-0.021
	(0.097)	(0.209)	(0.141)
Information Source: Newspaper	0.007	0.016	0.019
	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.020)
Information Source: TV	0.008	0.121***	-0.012
	(0.021)	(0.046)	(0.031)
Information Source: Social Media	0.004	-0.039	0.004
	(0.012)	(0.027)	(0.018)
Age	-0.000	0.006*	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Education Level	0.012	-0.073***	-0.018
	(0.012)	(0.025)	(0.017)
Subjective Social Class	-0.033	-0.106*	-0.038
	(0.027)	(0.059)	(0.040)
Gender	-0.031	0.216***	-0.019
	(0.039)	(0.084)	(0.056)
Religiosity	-0.013	-0.021	-0.032**
	(0.011)	(0.024)	(0.016)
Left-right political scale	0.016	0.051*	0.055***
	(0.012)	(0.027)	(0.018)
Immigration and Social Threats		0.570***	0.135***
		(0.066)	(0.046)
Constant	1.878***	2.387***	1.060***
	(0.165)	(0.373)	(0.254)
N	1017	1017	1017
R^2	0.117	0.277	0.159

In terms of types of threats concerning migration, political sophistication is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level only for economy-related issues. In Model 3, as the level of political sophistication reduces, there is an increased tendency to view migrants as threats to the economy.

Nevertheless, the contact variable is only valid in Model 2 in which the dependent

variable is the security threats. Security-related concerns have also a positive relationship when it comes to supporting a right-wing party. In contrast to the Turkish case, German respondents have focused on the security dimension of the migration issue. This finding could be explained through the example of the 2016 Berlin truck attack. The attacker entered the territory of the EU illegally after the Arab Spring and faced a deportation decision by German officials in 2016 when his asylum application was rejected. However, instead of going back to his country of origin, which was Tunisia, he was involved in a terrorist attack in which 12 people died and more people were injured in a Christmas market. He was found in Italy after the attack, and before he was shot by the police, he said "God is the greatest" in his mother tongue, Arabic (BBC 2016).

This attack has fuelled debates about the number of migrants in the country and Merkel's open-door policy (Futák-Campbell and Pütz 2022). Political leaders from both sides of the spectrum have criticized the immigration policies. For instance, in a more moderate tone, Die Linke mentioned that an open-door policy comes with consequences (Connolly 2016). By adopting a more negative tone, the far-right party, the AfD leaders underlined the role of religion in the sense that the recent migration wave to Germany at that time has increased the number of Muslims in Germany (Connolly 2016), and these so-called refugees have posited a threat to security (Joffe 2016). Even within her party, some politicians have criticized her open-door policy (Futák-Campbell and Pütz 2022). More specifically, the economic and the Christian wing of the party have adopted a pro-migration approach by highlighting possible gains in terms of workforce and underlying the duties of a good human being; nevertheless, the conservative bloc has a tendency to focus on the differences between the cultures of the host community and newcomers and possible integration problems (Hess and Green 2016). In short, as seen, when it comes to supporting the open-door policy or being critical about this, each political group prioritizes another dimension of the issue; but most importantly, the debate around the policy led to discussions within the ruling coalition, indicating that Merkel was not supported fully on this matter.

For Model 1, the level of political interest is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Based on this finding, it could be said that the more individuals are interested in politics, the more they tend to have social concerns regarding migration. On the other hand, political interest has negative relationships with both economic and security-related threats.

Table 4.9 OLS regression on support for a right-wing party (Germany)

	Support for a Right-Wing Party
Not Accepting Neighbors: Immigrants and Foreign Workers	0.200***
	(0.069)
Political Interest	-0.005
	(0.019)
Age	0.001
	(0.001)
Education Level	0.002
	(0.008)
Subjective Social Class	0.001
	(0.019)
Gender	-0.021
	(0.028)
Religiosity	0.018**
	(0.008)
Left-right political scale	0.140***
	(0.008)
Constant	-0.219**
	(0.087)
N	1017
R^2	0.284

The third hypothesis finds evidence based on the regression estimations above. By using the same sample, it is seen that the individuals who refuse interaction with migrants are more likely to support a right-wing party. If they are open to interaction, they tend not to support a right-wing party, meaning that contact with migrants could affect voting choice.

In order to examine the effect of contact, especially the reported positive contacts, I also use a series of short surveys concerning the Ukrainian refugees in Germany. The first survey was conducted in March 2022 (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Berlin 2022), one month after the Ukrainian-Russian War. The following study took place in July 2022 (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Berlin 2023a) and lastly in October 2022 (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, Berlin 2023b). During this period of time, a massive influx of Ukrainians crossed the border and entered the territory of Germany as well as other border countries such as Poland.

The first special survey conducted in March did not include any questions to measure the effect of contact. However, it reveals to what extent Germans supported the arrival of Ukrainians and their opinions on the total number of migrants in the

country.

Regarding the third hypothesis of this study, a positive contact variable has been constructed in line with the questions of whether respondents have a neighbor who is a migrant or not. The following question in the survey deals with the types of contact. If individuals reported a positive interaction with migrants, it is coded as 2. If respondents do not have contact with a migrant, the variable takes the value of 1, indicating a neutral position due to the lack of interaction. If people reported negative experiences with migrants, a value of 0 is given. Based on this scale, the regression estimations below support the third hypothesis.

Model 1 includes the available control variables in the dataset and Model 2 only includes the dependent variable which is the support for a right-wing party and the main independent variable which is positive contact. As seen from both models, as the positive contact with migrants increases, the likelihood of supporting a right-wing party decreases. This finding is statistically significant at the 99% level of confidence. In Model 1, it is seen that East Germans, men, older individuals, and relatively lower-educated people tend to support right-wing parties in Germany.

Table 4.10 The effect of positive contact on the support for a right-wing party (July 2022)

	Model 1	Model 2
Positive Contact	-0.119***	-0.146***
	(0.028)	(0.028)
Gender	0.122***	
	(0.036)	
East Germany	0.120***	
	(0.043)	
Education	-0.090***	
	(0.017)	
Age	0.003***	
	(0.001)	
Constant	0.761***	0.804***
	(0.099)	(0.043)
N	679	679
R^2	0.120	0.037

The explanatory power of these models is relatively low. The first model above explains 10% of the phenomenon while the second model could reach 3%. This

situation could be explained by the fact that the observation number is 679, comparatively lower than other surveys. Furthermore, since these surveys have been conducted as 'flash' barometers, the questions and options are limited in terms of numbers. The main questions dealing with the recent events, in this case, accepting refugees from Ukraine, have been designed in a way that respondents could either declare their support or not. In other words, for these surveys, the Likert scale was not used; therefore, the variation among the Germans regarding the migration issue could not be measured.

Based on the data collected through the survey in October 2022, the regression estimations indicate that the third hypothesis found evidence. Similar to the previous wave of the survey, Model 1 includes the control variables and Model 2 only examines the relationship between supporting a right-wing party and the positive contact with migrants. Respondents who reported that they have positive interactions with migrants have a tendency not to support a right-wing party in Germany. Likewise, women are more likely to cast a vote for a non-right-wing party and an increase in the level of education decreases the likelihood of supporting a right-wing party. In this model, however, age and coming from the East side of the country do not have an impact on party preference.

Table 4.11 The effect of positive contact on the support for a right-wing party (October 2022)

	Model 1	Model 2
Positive Contact	-0.141***	-0.145***
	(0.027)	(0.027)
Gender	0.127***	
	(0.034)	
East Germany	0.045	
	(0.042)	
Education	-0.047***	
	(0.016)	
Age	-0.001	
	(0.001)	
Constant	0.729***	0.609***
	(0.098)	(0.043)
N	784	784
R^2	0.061	0.034

To conclude, the level of political sophistication is not able to affect the attitudes towards migrants in Germany as seen in the regression estimations. The findings suggest that political sophistication might influence the behaviors of the natives regarding economy-related concerns, however, this result is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level. On the other hand, hypotheses related to positive contact have found evidence while employing the WVS and special surveys about Ukranianins in Germany. If individuals have positive experiences with migrants, they are less likely to have anti-immigration attitudes and support a right-wing party.

5. CONCLUSION

Due to the nature of human beings, individuals tend to make categorizations among themselves, and this situation might pave the way for the 'othering' process and increase biased towards a specific group or groups. This situation has been examined by scholars and social identity theory explains this phenomenon through the need for associating ourselves with the group we would like to be in. Although the formation of groups does not mean that the members of the outgroup have been evaluated negatively, this assessment process concerning the existing groups indicates that individuals have certain opinions. The 'prejudgments' as put by Allport (1954) have been affected by the information we've received. To put it differently, the information environment in which we have been living could shift our prejudgments, and make them negative or positive. We, as individuals, could seek or be exposed to information through media outlets or experience. We could either agree with the new information or reject them, however. Consequently, it has been seen that our attitudes towards certain groups are the outcomes of how the ingroup and outgroup have been perceived by ourselves and under which circumstances we receive information, and to what extent we are open to accepting this.

This situation demonstrates that political sophistication and being in interaction with 'others' have shaped the formation of opinions and attitudes. While the lack of cognitive abilities, necessary information, and positive contact might fuel negative evaluations and turn them into prejudice, the existence of the capability to understand, sufficient knowledge, and positive interaction could enable individuals to decategorization or recategorization, depending on the context. By doing so, perceived differences or threats could be mitigated.

In this thesis, focusing on intergroup relations, namely the relationship between the members of the host community and migrants, the anti-immigration attitudes have been analyzed. It was argued that a high level of political sophistication and positive interaction with migrants would decrease anti-immigration attitudes, and lastly, positive contact would decrease the likelihood of supporting a right-wing

party. In order to test these arguments, a quantitative method, namely the OLS regression, has been used by employing data from the WVS and special surveys conducted by GESIS in 2022.

The selected cases were Germany and Turkey due to their national population, the number of migrants they've received within 10 years because of comparable events, and the similar positions of the ruling parties in these countries. Specifically, during the refugee crisis in 2015, both countries followed an open-door policy and underlined the humanitarian aspect of the issue. However, because of the internal conflict within the CDU/CSU and the decrease in their votes, the policy was abandoned and replaced by the externalization of migration governance through the EU-Turkey deal, until 2022 when Ukrainians have to flee from their countries because of the outbreak of the war. In the case of Turkey, the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and the Russian-Ukrainian war have led to new migration waves; nonetheless, the numbers are limited compared to Syrians who are under temporary protection. In short, Germany and Turkey have welcomed individuals who have left their countries of origin due to the conflicts. While the majority of Syrians came to Turkey, Ukrainians have tended to seek refuge in Germany due to their geographical and cultural proximity.

The regression estimations in this thesis supported that both in Germany and Turkey, positive contact reduces anti-immigration attitudes in general. Nonetheless, in terms of different types of perceived threats, electorates' reactions differ. On the one hand, from the perspective of Turkish voters, the effect of contact is statistically significant only in the context of social threats. This finding demonstrates that through interaction, the perceived social threats could be reduced. In the case of security and economic threats, positive contact does not have a statistically significant impact. On the other hand, in the German case, the perceived security threat comes to the forefront. This situation could be explained by the several attacks in which the offenders were migrants. Because of these unfortunate incidents, German electorates might not accept migrants as their neighbors, suggesting that they would not prefer to interact with migrants. This finding could be re-examined through the group anxiety theory in the sense that negative experiences and stereotyping could make the natives more anxious and to reduce their level of anxiety, they could avoid engaging with the members of the outgroups.

In terms of political sophistication, its positive impact to reduce anti-immigration attitudes could be seen in the Turkish case. As political sophistication increases, anti-immigration attitudes decrease and this finding could be supported by the type of source of information as well. While being the TV audience increases the gen-

eral negative attitude, following the news through newspapers decreases it. This is in line with the claims made by scholars who argue that media outlets might influence political sophistication. Furthermore, it was found that political sophistication and perceived economic threats have a positive relationship, meaning that as political sophistication increases, economy-related concerns regarding migration increase, too. This situation could be explained by the economic conditions in the country or individuals' own economic evaluations. The literature highlights that economic indicators might affect the attitudes toward migrants, especially if the national economy gets worse. Likewise, scholars such as Taber and Lodge (2006) and Zaller (1992) claim that individuals might focus on what they already know about a certain issue and reject new information. This could give an explanation to the question of why politically sophisticated voters in Turkey are more likely to perceive economic threats originating from migration. Lastly, the reverse relationship could be seen in the case of the perceived social threats. To put it differently, a high level of political sophistication reduces the perceived social threats in the Turkish case.

The German case, however, signals another dynamic within the society. The impact of political sophistication on anti-immigration attitudes is not statistically significant. The statistically significant relationship is only observed in the economic concerns and migration. As the political sophistication increases, the perceived economic threats decrease in Germany. This finding might be related to the fact that German migration policies have been shaped by the economic needs of the country and the politicians have introduced several formal mechanisms to be worked in the country. In other words, in the past blue-collar workers, nowadays white-collar workers have been accepted into the country through legal ways, and sophisticated voters might focus on migrants' contribution to economic growth, thus are less likely to have anti-immigration attitudes.

The third hypothesis also found evidence in both cases. Positive contact reduces the propensity to vote for a right-wing party in Germany and Turkey, based on the employed data from the WVS. However, the seventh wave of the WVS was conducted in 2017-2018 and since then Germany has received Ukrainian refugees as well. In order to examine the general attitude towards Ukrainians, GESIS designed special surveys and asked German respondents whether they have migrant neighbors and whether their interaction with them is positive or negative. Although these special surveys are limited in terms of their scope and questions, it provides an opportunity to test the third hypothesis and based on the regression estimations, it has been shown that positive experience with migrants decreases the support for a right-wing party.

Overall, all hypotheses found evidence; however, in the case of Germany, the effect of political sophistication is not statistically significant on anti-immigration attitudes in general; but could decrease the perceived economic threats originating from migrants at the 90% confidence level. Moreover, the historical context and findings demonstrate that migration is a *sui generis* issue for each society. In one case, security concerns might shape the attitudes; in another case, the perceived social threats could be prioritized and influence the opinions of the natives. In order to investigate the puzzle of how and why host communities respond to the migration issue, and under which circumstances anti-immigration attitudes could be reduced, further studies are needed. Special surveys could be conducted to understand why a certain group of migrants is welcomed and others are not. Similarly, due to the limitations regarding the operationalization of political sophistication and positive contact, these analyses are able to explain a part of the question, rather than providing a whole picture. Especially in the case of political sophistication, there are few datasets that include factual questions to measure political knowledge. These questions are limited in terms of numbers and their scopes. Thus, a more detailed set of questions should be asked. Lastly, for the regression estimations coming from the WVS, the positive contact is operationalized through a latent variable. The respondents provided an answer to the question of which groups of people would not be accepted as neighbors. If individuals mentioned the migrants, it is assumed that they do not want to interact with them. If not, it is assumed that they would be open to interaction with migrants. Nonetheless, as asked in the special surveys prepared by GESIS, contact questions should be directly asked and through this way, more robust analyses would be made.

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