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Refugee Exposure and Attitudes Toward Refugees in A Developing Country Context

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Abstract

There is a scarcity of evidence on how refugee exposure affects local attitudes in developing countries, despite a high concentration of refugees in these areas. Using a quasi-experimental setting and administrative data on the spatial distribution of refugees in a developing country that hosts the world's largest refugee population, I examine the causal impact of refugee exposure on local attitudes and migration policy preferences. To identify this effect, I use the instrumental variables approach. Empirical findings show that refugee exposure significantly impacts perceptions of economic burden, insecurity, social distance, and migration governance. Negative attitudes predominantly arise from relative deprivation of the hosting population, leading to biased perceptions of cultural alienation. Moreover, competition in the labor market and access to public services emerge as primary factors shaping negative attitudes. Religiosity minimally affects attitudes but plays a role in shaping beliefs. Additionally, in line with the integration paradox hypothesis, increased interaction with refugees triggers cultural conflicts, portraying refugees as a perceived threat to the majority's culture.

Keywords: Syrian refugees, theory of exposure, contact hypothesis, social cohesion, Türkiye.
JEL Classifications: D01; J15; O15; F22.

ملخص

هناك ندرة في الأدلة على كيفية تأثير تعرض اللاجئين للمواقف المحلية في البلدان النامية، على الرغم من ارتفاع تركيز اللاجئين في هذه المناطق. باستخدام بيئة شبه تجريبية وبيانات إدارية حول التوزيع المكاني للاجئين في بلد نام يستضيف أكبر عدد من اللاجئين في العالم، أدرس التأثير السببي لتعرض اللاجئين على المواقف المحلية وأفضليات سياسة الهجرة. لتحديد هذا التأثير، أستخدم نهج المتغيرات الأداتية. تظهر النتائج التجريبية أن تعرض اللاجئين يؤثر بشكل كبير على تصورات العبء الاقتصادي وانعدام الأمن والمسافة الاجتماعية وإدارة الهجرة. وتنشأ المواقف السلبية في الغالب من الحرمان النسبي للسكان المضيفين، مما يؤدي إلى تصورات متحيزة عن الاغتراب الثقافي. علاوة على ذلك، تظهر المنافسة في سوق العمل والوصول إلى الخدمات العامة كعوامل رئيسية لتشكيل المواقف السلبية. يؤثر التدين بشكل طفيف على المواقف ولكنه يلعب دورًا في تشكيل المعتقدات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تماشياً مع فرضية مفارقة الاندماج، يؤدي التفاعل المتزايد مع اللاجئين إلى نشوب صراعات ثقافية، مما يصور اللاجئين على أنهم تهديد متصور لثقافة الأغلبية.

1. Introduction

Among 80 million forcibly displaced people worldwide by mid-2020, 30.5 million were refugees and asylum-seekers (UNHCR 2019). Given the increasingly high number of refugees, drivers of public attitudes toward them are crucial, particularly for three main reasons. Firstly, it enables us to establish evidence-based policies to increase social cohesion systematically and thus decrease social tension in the receiving countries. Secondly, understanding the channels that shape negative or positive attitudes toward refugees can help policymakers design better policies to improve refugees' integration levels. Furthermore, analyzing the impact of refugee exposure would inform better ways to design residential allocation policies in host countries.

Nevertheless, most available evidence in the literature studies the case of developed countries, which host only 14% of the total refugee population in the world and have relatively more significant labor markets and infrastructural capacities to absorb this small population of refugees. Moreover, refugees hosted by developed countries are, on average, more educated than those staying behind in developing countries due to selective migration policies or the liquidity trap for many low-educated, low-income refugees who can, therefore, only emigrate to neighboring countries of the conflict areas.

This paper relies on the instrumental variables approach to analyze the impact of refugee exposure on local attitudes and its channels, where micro-level representative survey data on the hosting population and the administrative data on the population distribution of Syrian refugees in different Turkish provinces are used as the primary data sources. In addition, the predicted migration flow weighted by the distance between each Syrian governorate and Turkish province centers is used as an instrument for the Syrian population shares in each province. This analysis of refugee exposure's impact on various anti-refugee sentiments is followed by checking the relevant mechanisms using subsets of data for different theoretically driven channels, explained in Section 3.

Thus, the findings of this study contribute to the literature on attitudes toward refugees in three main ways. First, this is the first causal evidence from a pertinent setting of refugee hosting, where a developing country currently hosting the world's largest refugee population is used. So, using Türkiye as a research field provides relevant yet missing information in the literature. Therefore, the findings will also be helpful in other developing country contexts. Second, evidence on the essential mechanisms of this impact helps identify the relevant policy areas to improve social cohesion in refugee-hosting developing countries. Thus, these findings on mechanisms contribute to the literature on migration management. Third, the available causal evidence of the effects of refugee exposure on the attitudes of local populations focuses on a case where refugees are transient and thus have very limited or no meaningful contact with the local population. The protracted nature of Syrian refugees in Türkiye provides a case that enables us to test the impact of long-term exposure to refugees on attitudes. Thus, the interaction variation among the hosting population allows for testing the effect of interaction levels and exposure on hospitality or hostility toward refugees. Moreover, the non-transient

nature of refugees caused inevitable interactions with locals in a political environment where refugees are presented and perceived as 'guests' in the early years of refugee inflows. Relatedly, Syrian refugees in Türkiye are not provided a legal refugee status but only a temporary protection status.[1] Fourth, the paper's attitude measurement is not downward biased due to a higher hospitality level in the early years of the Syrian crisis since the studied survey was conducted in 2016. This means that the current analysis provides a long-term analysis of attitude formation instead of a contemporaneous one, as Syrian refugee inflows in Türkiye started in April 2011.

This article is structured as follows: Section 2 offers a nuanced literature review of the multifaceted impact of refugee exposure on attitudes toward refugees, and Section 3 explains the theoretically suggested mechanisms for this impact. Details about the context are provided in Section 4. The data and empirical strategy employed are explained in Section 5, while empirical results are presented in Sections 6 and 7. Finally, Section 8 concludes.

2. The role of refugee exposure on anti-refugee sentiments and policy preferences

Understanding people's attitudes and policy preferences is essential not only to unpack the effect of refugee exposure on voting preferences in host societies (Dinas et al., 2019; Gessler et al., 2019) but also to capture the role they play in changing the existing refugee protection policies and normative debates about them. That said, public views act as "an important feasibility constraint on public policymaking on asylum and refugee protection" (Ruhs 2022: 5), which is crucial in achieving the long-term sustainability and feasibility of policies. Therefore, understanding how the public negotiates competing objectives, such as socio-tropic concerns against humanitarian views, is vital to sustainable policymaking in migration management.

Immigrants and refugees, as out-groups in many societies, can easily be the target of exclusionary attitudes (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014; Bansak et al., 2016). Such exclusionary attitudes harm immigrants' integration (Aksoy et al., 2023). They can even lead to violence against out-groups and, thus, harm social cohesion, as we saw in recent European examples (Dancygier, 2010; Graeber & Schikora, 2021). That is why, for many years, researchers from different social science disciplines tried to explain ways to decrease prejudices and negative attitudes toward out-groups and, related to that, ways to increase the inclusion of out-groups into society.

However, there is limited evidence about the role of refugee exposure in anti-refugee sentiments. Even studies focusing on economic migrants do not have a prevailing consensus. In some contexts, the correlation between the share of immigrants in a region and the discriminatory attitudes of hosting population toward them is found to be positive (Kaufmann & Harris, 2015; Schlueter & Scheepers, 2010), whereas in others, it is found to be negative (Zorlu, 2017). Although relatively small, there is also a related strand of the literature that

[1] I still use the term 'refugee' when I talk about Syrians with temporary protection status, referring to the international definition of their conditions. Details about the context are provided in Section 4.

focuses on the impact of refugee or asylum- seeker exposure on the rising votes for the radical right after the so-called 'Refugee Crisis' in Europe. While Dinas et al. (2019) and Hangartner et al. (2019) found an increase in the popularity of far-right parties in Greece, the cases of France and Austria showed support for the contact hypothesis (Vertier et al., 2020; Steinmayr, 2020). For Hungary, Gessler et al. (2021) found no overall impact of refugee exposure on the vote shares of right-wing parties. Thus, the impact of refugee exposure on the political attitudes of hosting population is also ambiguous in developed countries.

Among the few papers focusing on how refugee exposure affects attitudes towards them, Hangartner et al. (2019) show that refugee exposure negatively affects the views of natives on migrants and refugees in Greek islands. However, it must be noted that the Greek context is enormously different from the Turkish or other developing countries' cases because most refugees in those countries are in a protracted situation. Importantly, it is not only transient exposure or proximity but also higher contact levels that might shape attitudes toward refugees in such settings. This difference is crucial because, as the growing literature on the social threat hypothesis (Stenner, 2005; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009), politicized places hypothesis (Hopkins, 2010), and community discord hypothesis (Williamson, 2015) shows, outgroup hostility might become prevalent in the long term as it leads the hosting population to reveal latent anti-immigrant sentiments. Moreover, the longer migrants live in a region, the higher the level of feeling of threat would be as natives and migrants start competing for scarce resources, which may trigger negative attitudes. That said, the conjoint experiment results of Alrababa'h et al. (2021) provide the only evidence about the role of refugee exposure on native attitudes in a developing country context. They find that cultural and humanitarian concerns outweigh the egocentric and sociotropic concerns in understanding the attitudes towards Syrian refugees in Jordan. However, the case of Jordan is also distinct from the Turkish setting in many ways. Notably, the host community and Syrian refugees share different languages, unlike in Jordan. This affects both the social and cultural proximity between refugees and host society and the labor market opportunities of Syrian refugees in Türkiye. Moreover, Jordan had a stricter employment policy towards Syrian refugees. In contrast, Syrian refugees in Türkiye could work in the informal sector right after their migration and apply for a formal work permit after 2016. Furthermore, Türkiye hosts almost 4 million registered Syrian refugees who are mainly scattered around urban areas, while only half a million are hosted in Jordan and primarily live in refugee camps. Thus, interaction with the host community is limited in the Jordanian context compared to Türkiye.

Overall, benefiting from the previous literature on the impacts of migration on the attitudes of the hosting communities, the empirical analysis in this paper will test if refugee exposure affects six primary attitude outcomes, namely the economy component, insecurity component, migration policy component, behavioral component, exclusionary component, and finally, the anti-refugee component, which is a summary index for the previous five components. Section 5.1 explains how these outcome variables are constructed from the survey. Before moving to the empirical results, it is essential to discuss how different individual and household-level characteristics might mediate our impact estimations. The following section will present the

theoretical explanations for potential mechanisms, which will also be proxied and tested in the empirical analysis.

3. Theoretical explanations for the potential mechanisms

Although it is crucial to understand how migrants and refugees impact natives' attitudes, it is even more vital to identify the mechanisms of this impact to design evidence-based policies to improve social cohesion in refugee-hosting societies. Four broad theoretical mechanisms are suggested in the literature. The first mechanism is related to individual- and household-level economic conditions (i.e., egocentric economic concerns). This implies that we can expect natives who are negatively affected by refugees due to relative deprivation and labor market competition to have higher negative attitudes toward them. However, we see mixed evidence on this issue in developed countries. The only finding from another developing country setting, Alrababa'h et al. (2021), finds no support for these egocentric economic concerns in the case of Jordan. Secondly, and at a macro level, it is crucial to understand how individuals perceive that their country's economy, welfare system, and public service provision are affected by refugees.

These sociotropic economic concerns also shape attitudes toward migrants. Available empirical findings provide strong support for this mechanism in developed country contexts. However, it was a weak factor in Jordan's case. Thirdly, in addition to economic concerns, whether at the individual or country level, cultural and religious factors also play an important role because these are argued to determine if migrants are regarded as threats to the majority's or in-group's norms and identities. We see the importance of this channel as a form of "anti-Muslim" bias in developed countries. Cultural and religious differences or similarities, and perceptions about these, also play a role in developing countries. However, we can see untapped exclusionary or discriminatory attitudes toward migrants showing themselves once there is a strong perception of refugees as a burden and if natives start to feel like secondary citizens when accessing public services or aid provisions. This could be observed even in cases where both objectively and subjectively refugees are vulnerable, and therefore, negative attitudes were suppressed and kept latent if they existed. This affirmation is mixed in developed countries, although natives in the latter have higher welfare on average than those in the former. Finally, humanitarian concerns are suggested as another crucial mechanism in the literature on attitudes toward refugees. In this respect, it is essential to understand whether or not natives regard refugees as 'vulnerable' and needing help. Finally, I test if contact intensity is an important mechanism. Contact is argued to be an essential mechanism in this respect. In Allport’s theory of contact, the reduction of prejudice and the growth of empathy depend on natives and migrants sharing equal status and the absence of competition between in-groups and out- groups over limited resources. However, we can still observe out-group hostility even in long-term cohabitation and interaction with out-groups. Or, more importantly, we might see the revelation of latent anti-immigrant sentiments, which could be initially hidden but revealed once the population of out-groups increases and if the majority population starts to feel their cultural identity is threatened (Stenner, 2005; Hetherington & Weiler, 2009). This aligns with

the social threat hypothesis (Liska, 1992). Moreover, as Hopkins (2010) argues in the politicized places hypothesis, in addition to the high population sizes of immigrants, a sudden out-group influx increases the feeling of a threat if national and local conditions suit it. We also see populist politicians exploit natives' sentiments by linking migrants with unrelated threats, thus creating exclusion in such societies (Adida et al., 2018). Relatedly, exposure to or regular contact with out-groups might trigger latent negative attitudes in such situations if the securitization of migrants is at a high level.

As explained in the data section, I will use several survey questions to proxy these five broad mechanisms suggested in the literature above and test if they matter for the context of this study. Before doing so, providing some information about the contextual background is helpful.

4. Syrian refugee flows to Türkiye

Since the start of the Syrian civil war in April 2011, Türkiye has become the main door for millions of Syrians escaping the brutal conflict. As of December 2023, there were slightly more than 3.2 million registered Syrians in Türkiye, making it the largest refugee-hosting country in the world since 2015. In the initial years of the conflict, Syrian refugees were mainly hosted in temporary refugee camps in border provinces. However, as time passed and the conflict in Syria was far from being settled, the capacities in those camps started to be insufficient to absorb the continuously increasing refugee inflows, particularly after 2013.[2]

Given the low capacity of temporary accommodation centers, Syrian refugees[3] were allowed to relocate within the country by the legal registration of DGMM (the Directorate General of Migration Management in Türkiye) in certain provinces. Thus, we see a sharp increase in the urban refugee population after 2014. As of November 2022, the total Syrian refugee population in camps was only 47,727, making up 1.3% of Türkiye's entire Syrian refugee population. This urbanization of the refugee population coincided with Türkiye's economic slowdown, which was particularly felt by the urban population.

Although Syrians have been allowed to obtain a work permit to engage in the formal sector since 2016, the application procedure and other constraints, such as lower education and language barriers, resulted in deficient demand for legal work permits. Thus, citizens with low education levels who work in the informal sector started competing with refugees, as most working refugees are in the informal sector (Kayaoglu and Erdogan, 2019; Kayaoglu, 2020). Moreover, urban Syrian refugees are unevenly distributed across provinces and within any province; they are more concentrated in districts with lower housing costs. Thus, competition over public service provision and public goods was more intense in low-income neighborhoods.

[2] In 2013, the population of Syrian refugees sharply increased from 224,655 to over 1.5 million. In 2014, it increased to 2.5 million which kept increasing afterwards until 2021.

[3] Syrians in Turkey are not provided refugee status, but instead, they have temporary legal protection.

This rivalry over labor market opportunities, public goods, and services, President Erdogan's announcements about the total government spending on Syrians, the possibility for the Syrians to get Turkish citizenship, terrorist attacks by ISIS in Türkiye, increase in housing costs, and perceptions about rising crime rates, among others, resulted in rising social tensions between natives and Syrians. Given these negative views of Syrians, the Turkish government planned to resettle Syrian refugees in the safe zone it aimed to establish in the north of Syria. However, it is found that only a tiny proportion of them plan to return soon because they either wait for a foreseeable change in the regime in Syria or any improvement in living conditions to enable them to restart (Kayaoglu et al., 2022). However, a significant majority of natives want Syrian refugees to return to Syria, according to various public surveys (see Erdogan 2020, for example).

5. Data and methodology

5.1. Micro-level data and outcome variables

The survey data used in the empirical analysis was collected by the KONDA Research and Consultancy Barometer ("Perceptions on Syrian Asylum-Seekers"), a well-known survey company in Türkiye. The field survey was conducted on February 6-7, 2016. The sample was selected through stratification of the data on the population and educational attainment level of neighborhoods and villages based on the Address Based Population Registration System (ADNKS) in Türkiye and the results of the 2011 General Elections in neighborhoods and villages. First, the administrative units were grouped as rural/urban/metropolitan, and then the sample was created based on the 12 regions. Within the survey scope, 2649 respondents were interviewed face- to-face in 136 neighborhoods and villages in 98 districts - including central districts - of 27 provinces. Thus, the survey is conducted in provinces with high, low, or almost no Syrian refugee populations.

Moreover, the survey has questions on perceptions toward Syrians (and asylum seekers), hostility, support for restricting border policy, and various socio-economic characteristics of respondents themselves. As explained below, these individual characteristics are used to construct variables to test the mechanisms behind our main results. The survey data is merged with the spatial distribution of Syrian refugees in Türkiye, obtained from the DGMM (the Presidency of Migration Management).

Six outcome variables are constructed using multiple survey questions, which are named: (1) economy component, (2) insecurity component, (3) migration policy component, (4) behavioral component, (5) exclusionary component, and (6) anti-refugee component. For each category (except 2 and 4), a polychoric principal component (PC) analysis is performed to reduce the measurement error, and the 1st PCs (normalized with a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1) are used as dependent variables so that coefficients can be directly compared to each other. The economy component includes information about three variables: (1) whether the respondent believes that refugees harm the Turkish economy, (2) whether refugees should

be provided with a work permit, and (3) whether job opportunities become scarcer because of Syrian refugees. The insecurity component concerns respondents' views on the cities becoming less safe after the arrival of Syrian refugees. The migration policy component is constructed using respondents' views about (1) whether refugees should be provided with a residence permit and (2) whether there should be no more refugees allowed to enter the country. The behavioral component summarizes whether the respondent helped Syrian refugees or not. The exclusionary component is constructed using (1) the preferred distance measures of respondents towards refugees and (2) whether they prefer refugees to live only in camps in Türkiye. Finally, the anti-refugee component considers all the above dimensions together, so it is an overall measure of having negative attitudes towards asylum seekers. Moreover, as with all other component scores, a higher value implies a more negative attitude of the respondent. Summary statistics of these measures are provided in the Appendix.

5.2. Macro-level data and the identification strategy

The key independent variable is the share of Syrian refugees among the total population in each province4. I used the refugee share instead of the refugee population in a province because the former is more relevant for measuring the refugee exposure of natives, and it also internalizes the size of a province, which can be related to the total absorption capacity in a hosting area. The OLS regression of the refugee share in each province on the outcome variables described in the data section might result in biased estimates because of selection bias. In other words, refugees' decision to internally migrate (at least in the long-term) to different provinces could be related to the pre- existing hostility/hospitality levels of natives in those places. Therefore, to find the impact of refugee exposure on attitudes and perceptions, I use an instrumental variable (IV) method as well as compare individuals with similar characteristics according to their age, gender, and education but who are exposed to refugee populations at different intensities. The standard errors are clustered at the province level in all analyses. The second stage equation in the IV regressions is as follows:

$$y_{i,p} = \alpha + \delta * exposure_{i,p} + X'_{i,p}\beta + \epsilon_{i,p} \quad (1)$$

The outcome variables are the six constructed attitude/perception indices of each respondent i in province p, explained in Section 5.1. Following Kayaoglu (2022), the instrument used in the empirical analysis is a predicted population flow into each Turkish province in the sample, weighted by the distance between each Syrian governorate and the Turkish province center. Furthermore, exclusion restrictions are checked with placebo tests on gender, age, and education, which show that provinces hosting larger refugee shares are not statistically different from those hosting smaller refugee shares regarding gender, age, and education distributions of refugees. Finally, the instrument is statistically relevant as first-stage F-statistics are above 90 in all specifications in the following section, which are provided in the main results section in the Appendix.

5.3. Variables to test the potential mechanisms

In addition to presenting the impact of refugee exposure on the perceptions and attitudes toward refugees and migration policy, I also test the theoretical mechanisms suggested in the earlier studies. The first mechanism is related to egotropic economic factors, namely economic competition and relative deprivation, which are proxied by four dummy variables: (1) if the respondent is unemployed; (2) if the per capita household income is in the lowest quartile of the sample distribution; (3) if the respondent could not make ends meet in the last month before the survey; and (4) if the respondent expects financial difficulties in their lives in the coming months.

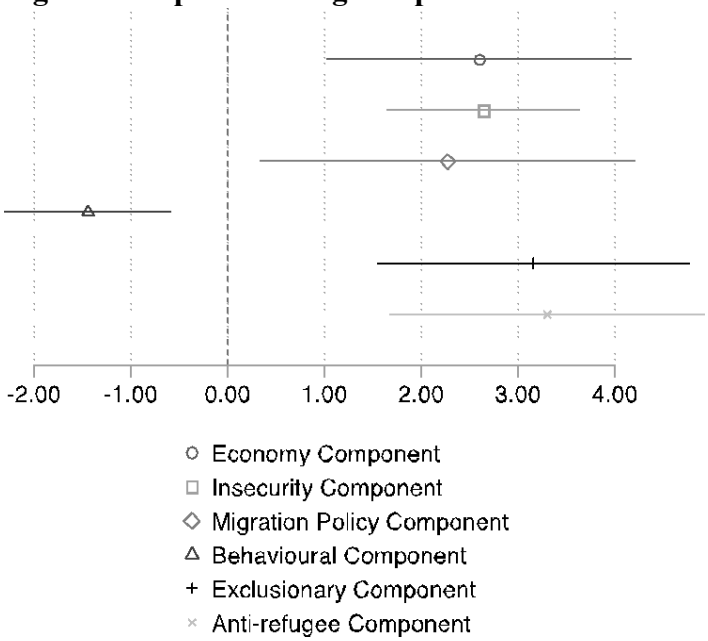
The second mechanism is cultural and religious concerns, which reflect the respondents' perceptions about the cultural (dis)similarity of Syrian refugees to the Turkish population and their religiosity level. The religiosity level of respondents is coded into three categories: nonbelievers, believers, and religious, using the respondents' views about their religiosity levels. The sample size for non-believers was small (N = 70), so I focused on the other categories in our analysis. Thirdly, we test if humanitarian concerns are important factors that cause different impacts of refugee exposure on our outcome variables. To measure humanitarian concerns, I use the subjective categorization of Syrian refugees, which is also highly correlated with respondents' political views and the political narratives they follow in Türkiye. Four indicator variables are used to construct this third mechanism. The first binary variable is equal to 1 if the respondent agrees with either of the following statements: "Syrians are opportunists who come to our country for economic gain by using the war as an excuse" or "They are a burden to us". The second dummy variable indicates whether respondents agree that "Syrian refugees are our religious brothers/sisters". The third binary variable equals 1 if the respondents agree with the statement "Syrian refugees are our guests". The last category equals 1 if the respondents agree with the statement: "Syrian refugees are people fleeing persecution". Moreover, the fourth mechanism is the contact intensity of the host population with the refugees. To explain the contact intensity, I first use a variable that shows the frequency of contact with Syrian refugees.

It is coded as a 7- point Likert scale from 'never' to 'every day'. In addition to this contact intensity information, I also created dummy variables if the respondent comes across Syrians either in (1) a neighborhood/street, (2) a bazaar, (3) a workplace, (4) a school, (5) a mosque, or (6) public transportation. The summation of these dummy variables informs us if the contact between the respondent and Syrian refugees occurs in a few or many locations. The final mechanism is the sociotropic concerns of respondents, and it is equal to 1 if s/he is expecting a financial crisis in Türkiye in the coming months and 0 otherwise. Summary statistics of these variables are also provided in the Appendix.

6. Main Results

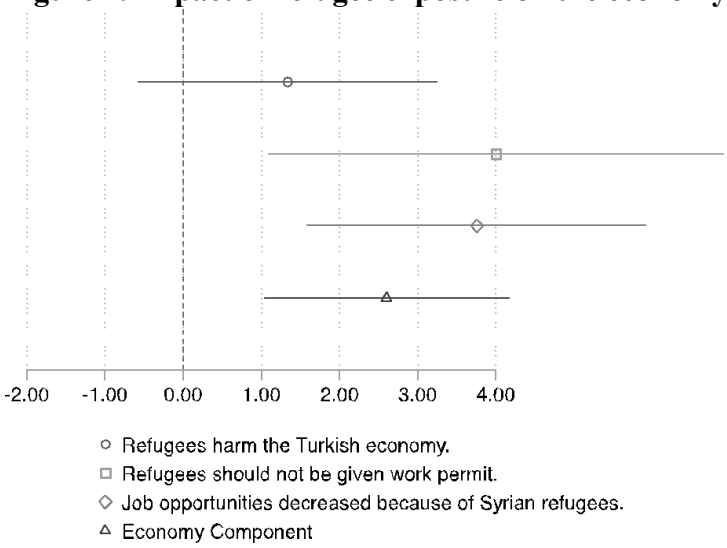
As explained in the data section, the higher the score, the greater the hostility toward refugees in all the dependent variables, the first principal components for each summary measure with a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1. As you can see from Figure 1, overall negative attitudes toward Syrian refugees exist in all the outcome categories. In other words, exposure to refugees significantly increases anti-refugee sentiments in Türkiye in all dimensions. The only exception is how the behavioral component is affected. I find that higher exposure to refugees did not keep the host society from helping them, even if their hostility increased in other dimensions simultaneously. Also, interestingly, exclusionary and anti-refugee components increase more than all other outcome components, which rise by 2.81 SD ($p < 0.001$) and 2.76 SD ($p < 0.001$), respectively, as shown in Table A2 in the Appendix.

Figure 1. Impact of refugee exposure on attitudes and perceptions of the host society



When we look at the details for each component, we see how exposure to the refugee population shapes them. For example, Figure 2 shows that sociotropic economic concerns are essential for anti-refugee sentiments. Exogenous exposure to refugees increases the views about banning refugees from working legally by 4 SD ($p = 0.007$) and the belief in the host country about refugees' decreasing job opportunities by 3.75 SD ($p = 0.001$).

Figure 2. Impact of refugee exposure on the economy component



When it comes to the migration policy component regarding the refugees, Figure 3 shows that although, on average, natives in provinces with a higher refugee population share stronger beliefs that asylum seekers should not be given a residence permit or not accepted into the country at all, these findings are not statistically significant. For the summary measure of migration policy, though, we find that it increases by 1.55 SD ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 3. Impact of refugee exposure on the migration policy component

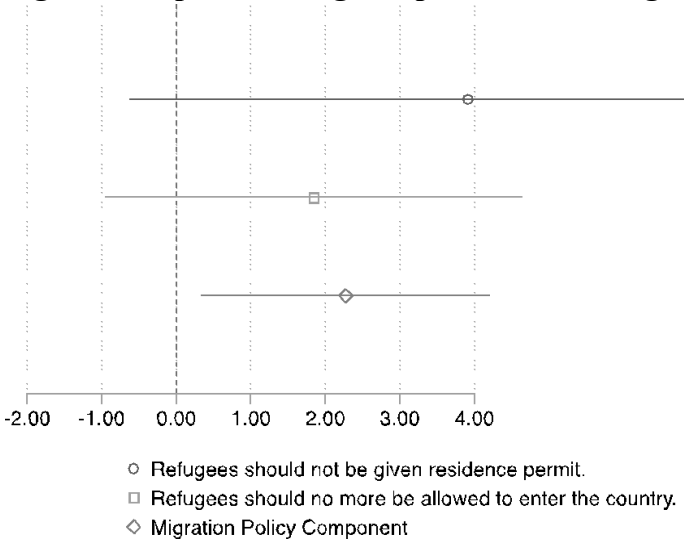


Figure 4 presents the estimates of all the variables that are used to construct the exclusionary component. It shows that the largest impact of refugee exposure is on the view of the host society about refugees being only allowed to live in camps (7.49 SD with $p < 0.001$). This is important to understand the long-term effects of refugees on social cohesion as camps have started to be closed and, currently, less than 1.5% of the total refugee population lives in camps. This finding is also important because it shows that natives, on average, do not want to live with Syrian refugees in urban centres. Moreover, we also see that an exogenous increase in

refugee exposure increases the views of natives not having refugees in their close circle (in the same apartment or among their friends). Furthermore, as Figure 5 shows, the perception of higher crime rates (cities being less secure because of Syrian refugees) is significantly higher (2.61 SD with $p < 0.001$) for natives who are more exposed to refugees. Importantly, the insecurity component is found to be more important (in terms of economic significance) than the economy component.

Figure 4. Impact of refugee exposure on the exclusionary component

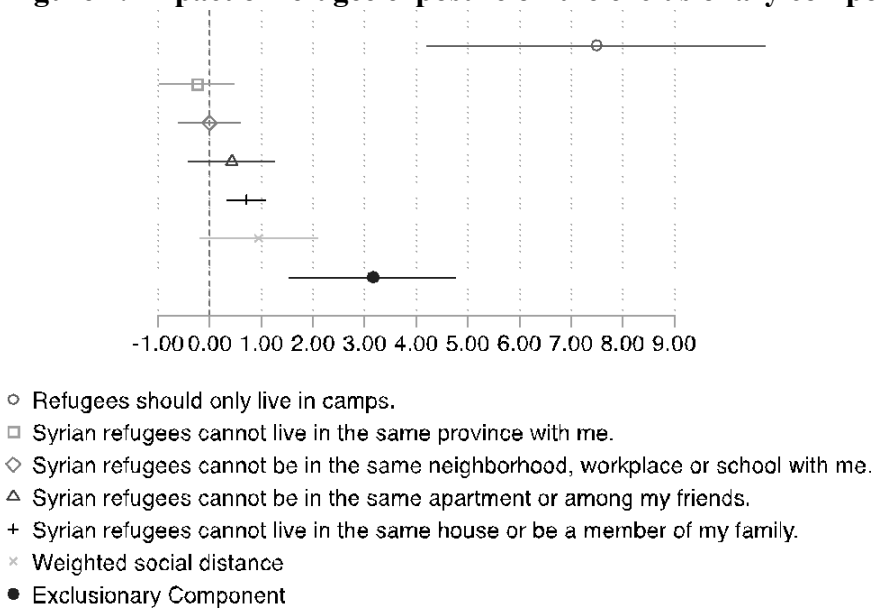
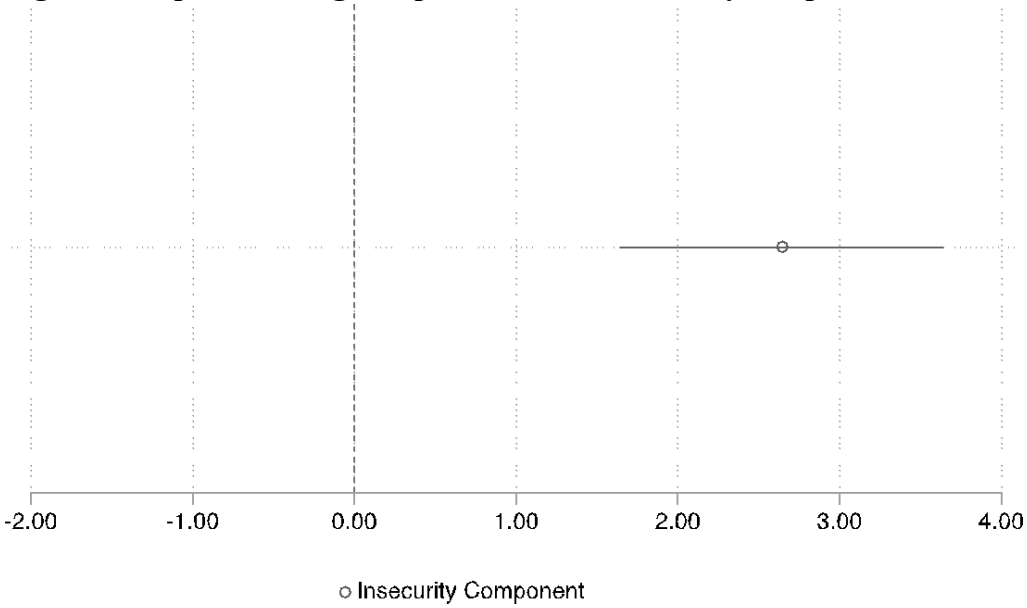


Figure 5. Impact of refugee exposure on the insecurity component



7. Empirical findings about the mechanisms

The previous section shows that refugee exposure has a statistically significant and sizeable impact in all dimensions except the behavioral component. Yet, it is crucial to understand the sources for these impacts so that effective and tailored policies can be designed to target achieving social cohesion in refugee-hosting provinces. Empirical findings on the mechanisms are provided in Table 1. As all the dependent variables are normalized, the coefficients can be compared to each other to understand which mechanism's role is dominating the others. That said, a crucial observation from the findings is that negative attitudes towards Syrian refugees are common across society, although at different intensities. This is worrisome as it implies that social cohesion is difficult to achieve in the short term.

When we look at the role of economic competition and relative deprivation, we see that students who have worries about their future job prospects and unemployed individuals have higher anti- refugee sentiments than individuals in other labor market categories. This implies that aggregate demand induced job creation was not enough not to cause negative attitudes towards refugees. Thus, it is crucial for the government to follow policies that will create jobs in refugee-hosting regions. As the literature already provide evidence about the job replacements of natives in the informal sector as a result of refugee inflows, either job creation policies should be a core focus or residential policy distributing refugees in provinces with lower labor market saturation is vital. In addition, training natives would ensure that job or sectoral transition would be smoother. Relatedly, retired individuals do not have any significant anti-refugee sentiment. Moreover, when we look at the distribution of per capita household income and its role in attitudes toward refugees, we find that high-income families have higher anti-refugee sentiments across all categories. However, when it comes to poverty, we see that families who have difficulty making ends meet have higher economic, insecurity, and policy concerns. We also checked if egocentric economic concerns are relevant to natives' attitudes and found statistically significant impacts for all attitude categories.

Moreover, natives who believe that Syrian refugees are culturally similar to Turkish people have fairly lower economic, insecurity, and migration policy concerns linked to refugees compared to those who believe the opposite. However, for the exclusionary component, the impact of refugee exposure on anti-refugee sentiments is even higher for the group that thinks Syrian refugees are culturally similar to the host community. We also checked if empathy or humanitarian concerns matter for attitudes toward refugees. It is found that even natives who defined Syrian refugees as 'people fleeing persecution' had, on average, higher negative attitudes once they had higher exposure to refugees. It seems that it is only for people who defined refugees as 'religious brothers/sisters' following the political rhetoric of the AK Party government (the ruling political party); there were no economy-, insecurity- or policy-related concerns associated with refugee exposure, but importantly, they also wanted to see refugees only living in camps once their exposure is at higher levels.

Furthermore, I wanted to check whether Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis was valid in Türkiye. Table 1 shows that it is not relevant in our context because natives who reported having high levels of personal contact are found to have higher anti-refugee sentiments in general. However, the contact level decreases the exclusionary component slightly, although it is still positive and statistically significant. Finally, it is found that religiosity is an essential characteristic of natives with more welcoming attitudes. However, even for people defining themselves as religious, higher exposure to refugees leads them to support the exclusionary component.

Overall, the empirical findings on the potential mechanisms show that the significantly negative attitude towards refugees is a trend that we see for people with different demographic, socio- economic, and cultural characteristics. Moreover, comparing all the behavioral and attitudinal components, empirical findings show that, on average, a larger effect is found on the exclusionary component.

Table 1. Impact of refugee exposure on the negative attitudes of host community

		Economy component	Safety component	Migration policy component	Behavioural Component	Exclusionary Component
Labor Market Status	Employed	2.768** (1.179)	3.845*** (.978)	2.004** (.975)	-2.734*** (.767)	3.128** (1.451)
	Unemployed	1.336 (2.071)	4.206*** (1.077)	3.994 (3.769)	-.467 (1.451)	6.355** (3.090)
	Student	3.155*** (.944)	4.070*** (.820)	1.330 (1.095)	-2.561*** (.903)	3.893*** (1.126)
	Housewife	2.131*** (.875)	1.339** (.586)	1.196* (.712)	-2.171** (.864)	2.409*** (.494)
	Retired	.641 (2.335)	.999 (2.610)	.751 (1.162)	-2.292 (1.677)	.809 (1.226)
Household per capita income	In the lowest quartile	1.626 (1.285)	1.824** (.907)	.836 (1.149)	-.988* (.518)	1.175 (1.065)
	Above the lowest quartile	2.216*** (.624)	2.905*** (.399)	1.737** (.684)	-1.289*** (.378)	3.302*** (.899)
Financial Difficulty	Last month	2.560** (1.158)	2.328*** (.763)	2.200** (.961)	-1.169** (.478)	1.961** (.903)
	Expected in the future	2.268*** (.844)	2.687*** (.500)	2.431*** (.759)	-1.052* (.559)	3.384*** (.698)
Cultural (Dis)similarity Perceptions	Cultural Similarity	1.322** (.597)	2.530*** (.541)	.593 (.808)	-1.235*** (.470)	3.064*** (.918)
	Cultural Dissimilarity	2.655*** (.765)	2.814*** (.331)	1.969** (.856)	-1.380*** (.316)	2.683*** (.596)
Subjective Categorization of Syrian Refugees	Burden	3.075*** (.897)	2.621*** (.890)	2.487** (1.184)	-1.384*** (.309)	3.092*** (1.087)
	Religious brothers/sisters	.961 (1.830)	1.547 (2.209)	1.783 (1.104)	-.413 (.844)	3.936*** (1.258)
	Guests	3.658*** (.789)	2.625*** (.585)	2.328* (1.414)	-.590 (.717)	5.301*** (1.750)
	Refugees	2.537*** (.923)	3.350*** (.521)	1.683* (.923)	-1.224** (.606)	2.637*** (.731)
Contact	Below mean	.698 (1.157)	1.736** (.846)	1.283 (1.200)	-1.281*** (.370)	3.088** (1.426)
	Above mean	3.354*** (.535)	3.363*** (.731)	1.598** (.786)	-.835 (.527)	2.731*** (.399)
Sociotropic concerns	Expecting a financial crisis in Turkey	2.551*** (.709)	2.350*** (.475)	2.771*** (.694)	-1.211** (.548)	3.235*** (786)
Religiosity	Believer	3.826*** (1.128)	5.315*** (1.078)	1.263 (1.031)	-.953 (.789)	1.586 (1.321)
	Religious	2.004*** (.769)	2.543*** (.538)	1.656** (.710)	-1.155*** (.387)	3.017*** (.766)

Size of impact	< 2 SD	[2 SD; 3 SD]	[3 SD; 4 SD]	>4 SD

8. Conclusion

Using an instrumental variables strategy, this paper provides evidence for the impact of exposure to refugees on attitudes toward them in a developing country setting. Empirical findings show that relative deprivation and economic competition, expectedly, increase economic concerns along with other dimensions. Moreover, strong support is found both for egotropic and sociotropic concerns. Thus, social protection policies for the host community population that is asymmetrically affected by the refugee inflows are needed to decrease social tensions in society.

The perceptions about cultural alienation are also found to increase anti-refugee sentiments in all dimensions. The exclusionary component is highly significant, and it is found that the host community strongly prefers refugees to live only in camps. As an overwhelming majority of refugees live in urban areas in Türkiye, this finding shows that effective residential and integration policies should be designed and implemented without losing more time. It is also interesting to observe that the government's rhetoric of presenting refugees as "guests" works in the opposite direction. In other words, one can say that viewing them as guests does not overcome the adverse effects of exposure to refugees. Although anti-refugee sentiments are observed in all dimensions, it is also found that humanitarian concerns still matter for anti-refugee sentiments in Türkiye. In other words, the host society still keeps helping refugees either directly or through some associations once their exposure to refugees increases.

That said, personal exposure increases the negative attitudes, on average, which is in line with the qualitative and anecdotal evidence showing that the majority of Turkish people are disturbed by Syrian refugees' different lifestyles. This is also helpful to interpret the finding that even natives

who define Syrian refugees as being culturally similar or as their religious brothers/sisters want to see them living only in camps. Thus, further research is needed to understand the reasons behind this, particularly whether these effects also change depending on the level of residential segregation between natives and refugees in a province.

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Appendix

Table A1. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Obs
Age	**41.02**	**14.67**	**17**	**88**	**2647**
Education categories Below high school	.508	.500	0	1	2642
High school	.327	.469	0	1	2642
Above high school	.165	.372	0	1	2642
Female	.471	.499	0	1	2643
Refugees harm the Turkish economy	4.416	1.658	1	6	2627
No work permits to refugees	3.805	1.794	1	6	2617
Lower job opportunities due to Syrian refugees	4.444	1.720	1	6	2610
Syrian refugees cause insecurity in cities	4.462	1.631	1	6	2616
Refugees should only live in camps	3.810	1.846	1	6	2616
Syrian refugees cannot live in the same province with me	.276	.447	0	1	2619
Syrian refugees cannot live in the same neighborhood, be in the same workplace or school with you	.429	.495	0	1	2612
Syrian refugees cannot live in the same apartment with you or be your friend	.593	.491	0	1	2602
Syrian refugees cannot live in the same house or be a member of your family	.863	.344	0	1	2591
Weighted social distance	1.594	.848	0	2.5	2586
Did not help Syrian refugees directly or indirectly	.525	.499	0	1	2629
Refugees should not get residence permit	4.064	1.786	1	6	2608
No more refugees should be allowed to enter the country	4.063	1.814	1	6	2613
Economy component	0	1	-2.472	1.506	2584
Insecurity component	0	1	-2.122	.943	2616
Migration policy component	0	1	-2.134	1.440	2584
Behavioral component	0	1	-1.051	.950	2629
Exclusionary component	0	1	-2.138	1.447	2561
Anti-refugee component	0	1	-2.634	1.681	2496

Main Estimates

Table A2. 2SLS regression estimates on (1) economy component, (2) insecurity component, (3) migration policy component, (4) behavioral component, (5) exclusionary component, and (6) anti-refugee component

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Refugee	2.150***	2.608***	1.550**	-1.184***	2.815***	2.762***
exposure	(.754)	(.458)	(.716)	(.398)	(.789)	(.740)
Female	.008	.147	.012	.042***	.048	.045
	(.055)	(.055)	(.061)	(.014)	(.056)	(.059)
Age	.002	.000	.012	-.001	.001	.002
	(.002)	(.002)	(.061)	(.001)	(.002)	(.003)
High	.056	.077	.029	-.023	-.024	.034
school	(.049)	(.049)	(.041)	(.027)	(.040)	(.040)
Above high	-.089	-.013	-.145**	-.043	-.120	-.135*
school	(.066)	(.081)	(.073)	(.030)	(.077)	(.074)
Intercept	-.160	-.184	-.116	.579***	-.139	-.167
	(.146)	(.154)	(.157)	(.045)	(.153)	(.159)
Obs	2569	2601	2569	2614	2546	2481
Kleibergen- Paap rk Wald F statistic	139.728	137.119	140.636	132.991	142.363	145.43
Cragg- Donald Wald F statistic	9867.027	9910.501	9853.497	9843.373	9857.355	9681.762

Notes. Standard errors in parentheses are robust and clustered at the province level (27 clusters). Below the high school education level is the reference category for the education level categories listed in the table.

**p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01*

Table A3. 2SLS regression estimates for the Economy Component Details. Impact of Refugee Exposure on (1) Refugees harm the Turkish economy, (2) Refugees should not be given work permits, (3) Job opportunities decreased because of Syrian refugees

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Refugee exposure	.797	3.523**	3.676***
	(1.108)	(1.790)	(.996)
Female		-.097	.045
		(.061)	(.090)
Age	.004*	.002	.001
	(.003)	(.004)	(.004)
High school	.101	.137	-.062
	(.076)	(.074)	(.109)
Above high school	.076	-.119	-.331**
	(.117)	(-.119)	(.147)
Intercept	4.098***	3.617***	4.363***
	(.225)	(.253)	(.235)
Obs	2612	2602	2595
Kleibergen-Paap rk Wald F statistic	134.825	133.718	137.268
Cragg-Donald Wald F statistic	9890.466	9824.387	9886.483

Notes. Standard errors in parentheses are robust and clustered at the province level (27 clusters). Below the high school education level is the reference category for the education level categories listed in the table.

**p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01*

Table A4. 2SLS regression estimates for the Policy Component Details. Impact of Refugee Exposure on (1) Refugees should not be given residence permits, (2) Refugees should no longer be allowed to enter the country

	(1)	(2)
Refugee exposure	2.369	1.640
	(2.055)	(1.302)
Female	-.035	.113
	(.088)	(.111)
Age	.004	.003
	(.003)	(.004)
High school	.236***	-.114*
	(.083)	(.071)
Above high school	-.029	-.397**
	(.130)	(.142)
Intercept	3.789***	3.942***
	(.236)	(.283)
Obs	2593	2598
Kleibergen-Paap rk Wald F statistic	138.175	135.509
Cragg-Donald Wald F statistic	9872.639	9856.748

Notes. Standard errors in parentheses are robust and clustered at the province level (27 clusters). Below the high school education level is the reference category for the listed education level categories in the table.

**p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01*

Table A5. 2SLS regression estimates for the Exclusionary Component Details

Impact of Refugee Exposure on (1) Refugees should only live in camps, (2) Syrian refugees cannot live in the same province with me, (3) Syrian refugees cannot live in the same neighborhood, be in the same workplace or school with me, (4) Syrian refugees cannot live in the same apartment with me or be among my friends, (5) Syrian refugees cannot live in the same house or be a member of my family, (6) Weighted social distance.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Refugee exposure	6.993***	-.111	-.159	.367	.656***	.806*
	(1.893)	(.281)	(.248)	(.315)	(.155)	(.446)
Female	-.039	.017	.020	.039	.034***	.076*
	(.108)	(.022)	(.022)	(.025)	(.011)	(.040)
Age	.003	.001	.002	.000	-.000	.001
	(.004)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)
High school	-.125	-.038	-.014	-.026	.048***	.011
	(.084)	(.020)	(.026)	(.024)	(.014)	(.039)
Above high school	-.238**	-.024	-.033	-.058	-.014	-.077
	(.116)	(.034)	(.043)	(.042)	(.023)	(.074)
Intercept	3.593***	.248***	.368***	.568***	.820***	1.500***
	(.233)	(.060)	(.077)	(.076)	(.037)	(.134)
Obs	2601	2604	2597	2587	2576	2571
Kleibergen-Paap rk Wald F statistic	141.427	131.397	131.237	131.283	131.577	131.709

Notes. Standard errors in parentheses are robust and clustered at the province level (27 clusters). Below the high school education level is the reference category for the education level categories listed in the table.

**p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01*