

Focusing on Differences? Contextual Conditions and Anti-immigrant attitudes' Effects on Support for Turkey's EU Membership

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Abstract

A key predictor of support for Turkey's EU membership is citizens' attitudes toward immigrants. How anti-immigrant attitudes relate to support is not obvious and has remained unclear thus far. We argue that the presence of immigrants in a country reduces support for Turkey's membership. Second, the stronger this presence, the stronger the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support. Third, the more salient immigration issues in a country, the stronger the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support. Using cross sectional survey data ($N = 26,344$) from 20 EU member states, we find support for these claims. Our findings provide a prime example of how politicians and media can influence citizens' thinking about specific issues, and, in doing so, can influence public opinion.

Turkey's road to EU membership seems to be never-ending. The road may not come to an end as long as support for Turkey's membership among EU citizens is low. This is because several European leaders have committed to holding a referendum on Turkey's membership. It is, therefore, important to investigate what determines public support for Turkey's accession. Why is it so low?

Research on public support for EU enlargement with Turkey has mainly concentrated on individual-level factors. Recent studies focus on citizens' economic and political attitudes (e.g., Gerhards & Hans, 2011; Karp & Bowler,

2006). De Vreese, Boomgaarden, and Semetko (2008) compare the strength of these predictors and show that anti-immigrant attitudes are relatively strong. Work by Azrout, Van Spanje, and De Vreese (2011) confirms this and shows that the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes is driven by citizens' categorizing others as an out-group in combination with their negative bias toward out-groups.

Support for Turkey's accession varies systematically not only between individuals but also between countries (McLaren, 2007). This leads one to suspect that aspects related to individuals' political and media context play a role here. The impact of contextual factors on public support for Turkey's EU entrance has, however, remained largely unexplored. This is perhaps surprising, as contextual factors explain cross-country differences in levels of, e.g., support for EU integration (e.g., Anderson & Reichert, 1996) and cross-country differences in, e.g., effects of individual-level predictors on EU support (e.g., Garry & Tilley, 2009).

Notable exceptions to the rule that contextual effects have not been studied with regard to Turkey's membership include Jones and Van der Bijl (2004) and McLaren (2007). Jones and Van der Bijl (2004) show that trade with and distance to the candidate country matter for levels of support for entrance of that candidate country. McLaren (2007) demonstrates that the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's membership substantially varies by country. In this article, we build on these studies and extend them, providing a comprehensive account of the role of context in public support for Turkey's EU access. We contribute to the literature by examining the effect of various contextual factors on support for Turkey's EU membership. Applying the Negative Contact Hypothesis (e.g., Putnam, 2007; Taylor, 1998), we aim to examine how the presence of and experience with out-groups (citizens of Turkish origin as well as Muslims) explain differences in levels of support for Turkey's EU entry. Also, because we focus on out-groups at the contextual level, we examine the question how the interaction with anti-immigrant attitudes, as an indicator for perceptions of out-groups at the individual level, affects support for Turkey's accession.

Theory

How can we explain differences in the level of support for Turkey's EU membership? To answer this question, we follow research by McLaren (2007). In that study, McLaren argues that it is the proportion of a country's population that is of Turkish origin that explains the degree of support.

Following Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954), which states that intergroup contact would reduce prejudice, it is plausible to

assume that the presence of people of Turkish descent in a country increases support for the Turkey's candidacy. This is because through contact with Turks, other citizens in the country become familiar with them, getting a more favorable attitude toward them in the process. However, intergroup contact is likely to reduce intergroup prejudice under four conditions: Shared common goals, inter-group cooperation, equal status between the groups, and support by the authorities (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Taylor, 1998). However, it is argued that under unfavorable conditions, contact may increase prejudice and intergroup tension (Amir, 1976; Forbes, 1997). Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior (2004) show that direct contact between native citizens and immigrants under such conditions is scarce in contemporary Europe. According to Paolini, Harwood, and Rubin (2010), negative contact increases the importance of group categorization. When group categorization is more important, conflict may arise through competition over limited economic resources, cultural differences, or political struggle (Blalock, 1967; Putnam, 2007; Taylor, 1998). In line with this, several authors find that high concentrations of immigrants may lead to feelings of hostility toward these immigrants among natives (e.g., Bobo, 1988; Giles & Hertz, 1994; Oliver & Mendelberg, 2000; Quillian, 1995; Taylor, 1998; Valenty & Sylvia, 2004).

Whether from an economic, cultural, or political (perceived) conflict, McLaren argues that the presence of Turkish immigrants may lead to feelings of hostility toward these immigrants, and that "such hostility is likely to carry over into feelings about whether a country ought to be able to join the European Union, and that higher concentrations of Turkish immigrants in a member state will mean individuals in that member state have a lower probability of supporting Turkish candidacy" (McLaren, 2007, p. 259). Building on her work, we first hypothesize:

H1: The greater the share of the population from Turkish descent in a country, the greater the opposition against Turkey's membership in that country.

However, an issue with the concentration of Turks as a contextual explanation is the question whether Turkish immigrants come under the rubric of "Turks" or under the rubric of "Muslims." It has been argued that Turks are increasingly stereotyped as Muslims (e.g., Marranci, 2004; Poynting & Mason, 2007). However, Turks are not the only Muslims in the world and Turkish immigrants are also not the only Muslims living in EU member states. But Muslims are perhaps easier recognized as a group than are Turks, for instance by the head scarf women wear. This means that if the contextual effect is about high concentrations of a discernible group, then perhaps the group we should focus on is the more easily recognizable group of Muslims, rather than on Turks.

Van Spanje, Azrout, and De Vreese (2010) show that the dominant religion among the population of applicant countries is important in explaining

support for EU membership. By means of an experiment, they show that knowledge about the fact that about half of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina is Muslim leads to significantly and substantially less support for Bosnia's membership among British, Danish, and German citizens. Van Spanje et al. argue that fear of Islam is what drives this effect, as they also show that this effect is moderated by the degree respondents fear immigrants' religious practices.

From this, we can follow the same argument as previously, but replace "Turkish immigrants" and "Turkey" with "Muslims" and "a Muslim country," respectively. We thus argue that high concentrations of Muslims are likely to be associated with strong feelings of hostility toward Muslims, and that "such hostility is likely to carry over into feelings about whether a *Muslim* country ought to be able to join the EU, and that higher concentrations of *Muslims* in a member state will mean individuals in that member state have a lower probability of supporting a *Muslim country's* candidacy [authors' alterations of the original quote in italics]" (McLaren, 2007, p. 259). We thus hypothesize:

H2: The greater the share of the population in a country that is Muslim, the greater the opposition against Turkey's membership in that country.

There is, however, another issue with the number of Turks as a contextual predictor, and the same issue with the number of Muslims. There are few Turkish migrants and Muslims (in the EU the proportion Turkish immigrants does not exceed 3% and the proportion Muslims 6%), and they tend to be so geographically concentrated that most EU citizens do not have everyday contact with them (Sniderman et al., 2004). As the Negative Contact Hypothesis suggests that it is physical proximity that leads to hostility (Putnam, 2007, p. 142), we should perhaps not expect any strong effects.

We propose to extend the argument and argue that direct contact with Turkish migrants or Muslims is not required. Conflict theory states that physical proximity of "others" leads to higher levels of distrust of these others. However, physical proximity may not even be necessary if there is mediated proximity. We propose that such mediated proximity is the degree to which the immigration issue is important in a polity. We argue that the more important the immigration issue, the more attention is given to the issue in interpersonal communication, and in political and media debates. As a result of a higher salience of the immigration issue in interpersonal, political, and media communications, citizens are reminded of the presence of immigrants or Muslims time and again. Through this, citizens are likely to engage in more elaboration about the presence of immigrants, which acts as a substitute of direct contact.

Obviously, importance of the immigration issue is more likely in a country that has seen higher levels of immigration than in a country with a relative low

number of immigrants. Yet, the degree of importance of the immigration issue is partly independent of the share of (Turkish) immigrants and the share of Muslims. In particular, public opinion on immigration tends to be fickle, whereas immigrant shares of the population only gradually change. As a result, immigration issues may be important in a context of relatively low shares of Turkish and/or Muslim migrants, and not important in a context of relatively high shares. In this article, we consider immigration issue salience as a predictor of support for Turkey's membership along with actual immigration shares. We thus hypothesize the following, in analogy to our hypotheses stated earlier in the text:

H₃: The more important the immigration issue in a country, the greater the opposition against Turkey's membership in that country.

Given that our aforementioned hypotheses are based on the Negative Contact Hypothesis, and that we expect citizens to define Turkish immigrants as an out-group, we should also look at how these contextual factors relate to the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's accession. Anti-immigrant attitudes are among the strongest predictors of EU attitudes (e.g., De Vreese et al., 2008; McLaren, 2002) and its effect is driven by whether individuals are inclined to categorize the world in terms of in-group and out-groups (Azrout et al., 2011; De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005). Therefore, what would be the effect of the presence of a (perceived) out-group? McLaren finds evidence that the strength of the effect (also) depends on the number of Turkish immigrants (2007, p. 270), but how can we understand why anti-immigrant attitudes are a more important predictor in countries where a larger share of the population is of Turkish descent than in countries with relatively fewer Turkish immigrants?

Azrout et al. (2011) propose a model of how the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's potential accession might work. Building on Social Identity Theory, they argue that the effect can be understood in three steps: First, anti-immigrant attitudes are not so much interesting for researchers as an attitude, but the collection of several evaluations of immigrants are to be seen as a measure of a general tendency to categorize others in an in-group and an out-group. Second, when someone with strong anti-immigrant attitudes is confronted with a specific issue such as EU enlargement, his or her general tendency to categorize is used to "frame" the issue of the country's entrance in terms of in-group or out-group. Third, if the candidate country is classified as an out-group member, either on economic or cultural grounds, the EU citizen will be negatively biased toward that "other", either through in-group favoritism or out-group rejection.

For individuals "to frame" is described in the literature as the process of selecting certain aspects of reality to guide individuals' processing of information (e.g., Scheufele, 1999; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). By selecting

certain aspects of an issue and neglecting certain others, a particular interpretation of the issue is promoted above others (e.g., Entman, 1993). For example, an individual can frame the issue of enlargement in terms of the economy or in terms of in-group and out-groups. The chosen frame would lead this individual to interpret enlargement, respectively, as an issue of weighing gains and losses, or as an issue of whether the applicant country belongs to “us.” To be able to apply a certain “frame” to a specific issue, considerations belonging to that particular frame need to be stored in memory to be available to the individual (e.g., Chong & Druckman, 2007b; Slothuus & De Vreese, 2010). And the presence of Turkish immigrants makes it more likely that a frame defining Turkish immigrants as an out-group is available.

In a country where only few Turkish immigrants reside, individuals are less likely to have thought about Turkish immigrants. But the more Turkish immigrants in a country, the more likely individuals are to have thought about them as a group, as it is more likely they encounter these immigrants (either in real life, through interpersonal communication, or in the media). Individuals who are negatively predisposed toward immigrants (and who thus, we assume, have a strong tendency to categorize) are likely to have thought about the Turkish immigrants as an out-group. Thus, the frame of people of Turkish descent as an out-group is most available for those individuals who have strong anti-immigrant attitudes and live in a country where there are relatively many Turkish immigrants. And when confronted with the question whether someone supports or opposes Turkey’s EU membership, those who have the frame of Turkish immigrants as an out-group most readily available are most likely to use the frame and show a negative bias toward the out-group, rejecting Turkey’s EU membership. We thus hypothesize the following:

H4: The greater the share of the population of Turkish descent in a country, the stronger the negative effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey’s membership.

Of course, with the same aforementioned arguments, we may argue whether the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey’s accession is affected by the presence of Turkish immigrants, or affected by Muslims, or affected through indirect contact with immigrants. This leads to the hypotheses:

H5: The greater the share of the population in a country that is Muslim, the stronger the negative effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey’s membership.

H6: The more the immigration issue is important in a country, the stronger the negative effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey’s membership.

Methods

Survey

We conducted a survey in 20 countries of the EU, 3 weeks before the 2009 European Parliament Elections. In selecting which countries to include, we took into consideration that the sample would include larger and smaller member states, countries from North, South, East, and West, and long-term and new members to the EU. The countries included were Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and UK. From the TNS databases and their partners, a sample was drawn, with quotas enforced on age, gender, and education to ensure representativeness.¹ A total of 26,344 respondents participated. The average response rate (AAPOR RR1) was 23% (with a minimum of 13% in Denmark and a maximum of 46% in Lithuania).

The questionnaire was developed in English and translated by TNS (who also translated the Eurobarometer surveys) into different languages. As an additional check, all translated questionnaires were retranslated back into English. Irregularities and problems arising from this process were resolved by deliberation.

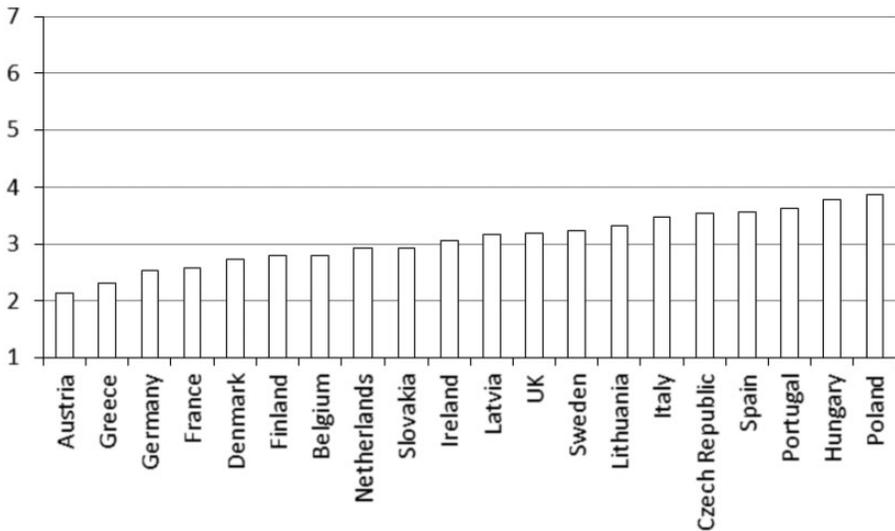
Variables

Support for Turkey's membership. The dependent variable is the degree to which an individual EU citizen supports or opposes Turkey's membership of the EU. We asked the respondents to score on a scale from 1 to 7 whether they are "*strongly against*" Turkey's EU membership (1) or "*strongly in favor*" (7) (see Appendix for precise question wording and descriptive statistics). As we are interested in country difference, we plotted the means of the dependent variable for each country in Figure 1. In Austria, citizens are the least supportive of Turkey's EU membership, with an average score of 2.14; in Poland, citizens are the most supportive of Turkey's EU membership, although even here the mean lies below the middle point of the scale.

Anti-immigrant attitudes. The main independent variable is an individual EU citizen's attitude toward immigrants. As we follow Sniderman et al. (2000) that the collection of anti-immigrant attitudes is a measure of the readiness to categorize and subsequently negatively evaluate the ones who are categorized as different, we do not make a distinction between economic or cultural threat perceptions. We measured anti-immigrant attitudes using

¹The results presented are unweighted. When applying a weight with regard to age, gender, education, and region of residence, the results are similar and lead to the same conclusions. Weighted results are available from the authors on request.

Figure 1

Mean support for Turkey's EU membership per country

five items, which also include the items McLaren used to measure economic and cultural threat to the in-group. Using exploratory factor analysis (principal component), we found that the items loaded onto one factor (eigenvalue = 3.12; 62.39% explained variance) and by taking the mean we constructed a highly reliable scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$).

Number of Turkish migrants. A first contextual variable is the share of a country's population that is of Turkish origin. We retrieved these data using the Eurostat online database. Concerning the number of Turkish citizens in 2009 in 16 countries, this was unproblematic. For Belgium and Lithuania, the last estimate was from 2008, for France 2005, and for Greece 2001. For these countries, the most recent estimate was used.

Number of Muslims. A second contextual variable is the percentage of Muslims in each country. We used estimates from the report on the global Muslim population of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2009). The sources used in the report include national censuses and general population surveys, such as the European Social Survey and the World Values Survey. The estimates of the 2009 figures are projections based on data from 1999 to 2009 under the assumption that the Muslim population would grow at the same rate as the general population.

Importance of the immigration issue. To assess the degree to which the immigration issue is important in a polity, we focus on the general public, on political parties, and on the national media. From various sources we constructed country-level variables for each of these.

For the degree to which the public finds the immigration issue important, we used the data from our survey. We asked respondents to rate on a scale from 0 (*not at all important*) to 6 (*very important*) how important they thought the immigration issue was. As we are interested in the degree to which the issue is important in each country, we aggregated up individual scores by calculating their country-level means.

We used data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey that was conducted in 2006 to construct our measure of the importance political parties attach to the immigration issue. In this survey, professional researchers who have published on political parties in a particular country (excluding graduate students, party officials, and journalists) were contacted. From each country, the principle investigators received between 4 and 13 filled in questionnaires. In the questionnaire, the experts were asked to score political parties on a number of issues on both the position each party took on the issue and on the importance it attached to the issue (for a more elaborate discussion of the CHES data, see Hooghe et al., 2010). We used the items by which parties were scored on how important immigration policy, integration of immigrants, and issues relating to ethnic minorities were to them. The items load onto one factor (eigenvalue = 2.41; 80.26% explained variance), and by calculating the mean we construct a highly reliable scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$). Country scores were computed by taking the country mean, weighing each party by its size in their national parliament.²

To assess the importance of the immigration issue in the national media, we used the media dataset of the 2009 European Election Study (details about the media study can be found in: Schuck, Xezonakis, Banducci, & De Vreese, 2010). In this dataset, three national newspapers and two national television-news shows were analyzed in the 3 weeks before the 2009 European Parliament Election. The unit of coding in the media dataset is the news story, where a story in a newspaper is defined as an article and in television-news defined by its topic. We used items about the primary, secondary, or tertiary topic of the story to score whether immigration-related issue were part of the story. For each country, we then calculated what the percentage of the stories of which the primary, secondary, or tertiary topic was immigration. With both tabloids and quality newspapers from each country and television news from both public broadcasting and commercial stations, the chosen outlets in the European Parliament Election Study media dataset are a representative sample of the media in each country.

Controls. In our models, we will control for the most relevant factors from recent literature and demographics. They include exclusive national identity (Hooghe & Marks, 2004), government satisfaction (Franklin, Van

²We also ran analyses without weighing for party size in parliament. This leads to similar results, available from the authors on request.

Table 1
Country Level Correlations

	Number of Muslims	Importance public	Importance parties	Media salience
Number of Turks	.67***	.24	.42*	.05
Number of Muslims		.35	.52**	.25
Importance public			.66***	.57***
Importance parties				.59***

Note: Entries are Pearson's r correlations between independent variables at the country level. $N = 20$.
*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; $p < .1$ (two-tailed).

der Eijk, & Marsh, 1995), economic evaluations (Gabel & Palmer, 1995), political ideology (Gabel, 1998), political interest, age, gender, education, and ethnicity.

Data Analysis

Because our dataset consists of individual respondent clustered in different countries, we first assess the intraclass correlation coefficient. We find a significant proportion of the variation (5.9%) at the country level, and thus use multilevel modeling techniques (see, e.g., Hox, 2002), also known as hierarchical linear modeling, to test our hypotheses.

We start our analysis with two baseline models: one random-intercept only model, by which we assess the variation in support for Turkey's EU membership at the country level, and one which only contains individual-level predictors, by which we assess the variation in the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on such support. Consecutively, we add the country-level variables. Given the strong correlation between the relative number of Turks and the relative number of Muslims, and the strong correlations between the various indicators of importance of the immigration issue (Table 1), it would be unwise to add all contextual variables in one model. We can, however, combine one of the proportion indicators with one of the issue salience indicators. First, we test the main effects of the contextual predictors (H_1 , H_2 and H_3), and, second, the interactions of the contextual predictors with anti-immigrant attitudes (H_4 , H_5 and H_6).

Results

We first turn to Model 1 (Table 2). We find an average intercept over all countries of 3.08. Across the 20 countries in our dataset, we find a variance of 0.220, which significantly differs from zero at the $p < .001$ level. This means

Table 2

Multilevel models explaining support for Turkey's EU membership

	Model 1	Model 2
Intercept	3.08**** (.11)	4.22**** (0.10)
Anti-immigrant attitudes		-0.36**** (0.02)
Exclusive national identity		-0.09**** (0.01)
Government satisfaction		0.08**** (0.01)
Economic evaluations		0.08**** (0.01)
Political ideology (left-right)		-0.021**** (0.00)
Political interest		-0.00 (0.01)
Age		-0.01**** (0.00)
Female		0.12**** (0.02)
Education low		0.16**** (0.03)
Education high		-0.10**** (0.03)
Member ethnic minority		0.15**** (0.05)
Variance of random components		
Intercept	0.220****	0.125****
Anti-immigrant attitudes effect		0.010****
Residual	3.495****	3.027****
Deviance (-2LL)	107,815.89	104,068.46

Note: Level 1: individual, $N = 26,344$; level 2: country, $N = 20$. Standard errors within parentheses.
 **** $p < .001$; *** $p < .01$ (one-tailed).

that there is cross-country variation in support for Turkey's membership. Turning to Model 2 we see that the individual-level predictors do explain some of the cross country-level variation, but the remaining variance (0.125) is still significant at the $p < .01$ level.

Concerning anti-immigrant attitudes, we find in Model 2 of Table 2 a significant effect (at the $p < .001$ level) with a coefficient of -0.36 . This means that for every 1 point score more negative toward immigrants (on a scale from 0 to 6), support for Turkey's membership drops on average 0.36 points (on a scale from 1 to 7). Again, this is an average effect across the 20 countries in the data. The variance of the effect is 0.010 and significantly different from zero at the $p < .01$ level. Therefore, there is also cross country variation in the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's membership.

Turning our hypotheses, we should start out by reminding the reader of the modest size of the country-level variation: it is only 5.9% of the total variation in the dependent variable (and 4.0% of the variation left after adding the individual-level predictors). Thus, the effects of country-level factors that we report in this section are meaningful yet small. In Models 3, 4, and 5 (Table 3), we test the main effect of the presence of Turkish immigrants, controlled for the three different indicators of importance of immigration. In all three models, we find a significant negative effect of the relative number of Turkish immigrants on support for Turkey's membership (ranging from

Table 3
Multilevel models explaining support for Turkey's EU membership

	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Anti-immigrant attitudes	-0.36**** (0.02)	-0.36**** (0.02)	-0.36**** (0.02)	-0.39**** (0.02)	-0.36**** (0.02)	-0.36**** (0.02)
Number of Turks	-0.32** (0.14)	-0.33** (0.15)	-0.36**** (0.14)	-0.10** (0.04)	-0.09** (0.05)	-0.10**** (0.04)
Number of Muslims	0.13 (0.15)	0.07 (0.06)	-10.38 (8.77)	0.15 (0.15)	0.07 (0.07)	
Importance parties						
Media salience						
Variance of random components						
Intercept	0.110****	0.104****	0.137****	0.115****	0.109****	0.147****
Anti-immigrant attitudes effect	0.010****	0.010****	0.010****	0.010****	0.010****	0.010****
Residual	3.027****	3.027****	3.027****	3.027****	3.027****	3.027****
Proportions of reduced variances (compared with Model 1)						
Intercept	.120	.166	-.095	.078	.128	-.180
Anti-immigrant attitudes effect	.001	-.001	.005	.004	.003	.007
Deviance (-2LL)	104,064.49	104,064.51	104,064.21	104,064.70	104,064.90	104,064.86

Note: Level 1: individual, $N=26,344$; level 2: country, $N=20$. Standard errors within parentheses. Models also include intercept, exclusive national identity, government satisfaction, economic evaluations, education low, education high, age, gender, member of ethnic minority, political ideology, and political interest, but are not shown in the table.
 **** $p < .001$; *** $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .1$ (one-tailed).

−0.32 in Model 2 to −0.36 in Model 4). The negative coefficient is as expected, as it means that more Turkish immigrants lead to less support for Turkish immigrants. The observed Turkish immigrant share ranges from ~0% to just >2%. Model 2 predicts a difference in support of 0.70 (on a 7-point scale) between the country with the lowest and the country with the highest Turkish immigrant share. These findings support our first hypothesis.

In Models 6, 7, and 8 (Table 3) our H_2 , concerning the main effect of the presence of Muslims, is tested. In these three models, we also find significant negative effects. With coefficients between −0.09 and −0.10, the effect of the presence of Muslims seems to be much weaker than the effect of the presence of Turkish immigrants. However, if we take into consideration that the relative number of Muslims in each country ranges between ~0% and almost 6%, Model 4 estimates a maximum difference of 0.55. This implies that the relative number of Muslims has a weaker effect on support for Turkey's accession than the relative number of Turks, but the difference is not as large as a first look at the coefficients may suggest and is not statistically significant.³

The last hypothesis about main effects was about the importance of the immigration issue in the polity (H_3). In Models 3 and 6, this hypothesis is tested using importance for citizens; in Models 4 and 7 using importance for political parties; in Models 5 and 8 using importance in the media. In none of these models we find significant effects; thus, the data do not support our hypothesis.

We now turn to the hypotheses about the variation in the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's membership. Models 9, 10, and 11 in Table 4 are used to test H_4 : The greater the share of the population of Turkish descent in a country, the stronger the negative effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's membership. The interaction between anti-immigrant attitudes and the relative number of Turkish immigrants has a significant negative effect in all three models. This negative interaction effect means that the more people of Turkish descent in a country, the stronger the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's membership. Between countries with the lowest and highest number of Turkish immigrants, the models predict a difference in effect of anti-immigrant attitudes of 0.12 in Model 10 and 0.21 in Model 11. This supports our fourth hypothesis.⁴

³To test whether the difference between the effect sizes is significant we stacked the data. In this new dataset, each individual is represented twice: once in combination with the number of Turkish immigrants and once with the number of Muslims. Because of the different range of the presence indicators, we standardized them both to make them comparable. Consecutively, we analyzed models with an interaction of the standardized number of Turkish immigrants/Muslims and a variable identifying whether the presence indicator refers to the number of Turkish immigrants or the number of Muslims. This interaction is not significant at the $p = .1$ level (two-tailed), which implies that the effect sizes do not differ significantly.

⁴To illustrate the conditionality of the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's EU membership, graphs are found in the Appendix.

Table 4
Multilevel models explaining support for Turkey's EU membership

	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13	Model 14
Anti-immigrant attitudes (AIA)	-0.02 (0.17) [.000]	-0.07 (0.07) [.058]	-0.27 ^{*****} (0.03) [.870]	-0.04 (0.16) [.002]	-0.08 (0.06) [.079]	-0.25 ^{*****} (0.03) [.862]
AIA* number of Turks	-0.09 ^{***} (0.04) [.291]	-0.06 ^{**} (0.03) [.182]	-0.10 ^{*****} (0.03) [.360]	-0.03 ^{***} (0.01) [.398]	-0.02 ^{**} (0.01) [.279]	-0.03 ^{*****} (0.01) [.476]
AIA* number of Muslims				-0.06 [*] (0.03) [.138]		
AIA* importance public	-0.07 [*] (0.04) [.194]				-0.05 ^{*****} (0.01) [.477]	
AIA* importance parties						
AIA* media salience						
Variance of random components						
Intercept	0.106 ^{***}	0.102 ^{***}	0.117 ^{***}	0.109 ^{***}	0.105 ^{***}	0.122 ^{***}
Anti-immigrant attitudes effect	0.005 ^{*****}	0.003 ^{*****}	0.004 ^{*****}	0.005 ^{*****}	0.003 ^{*****}	0.004 ^{*****}
Residual	3.027 ^{*****}	3.027 ^{*****}	3.027 ^{*****}	3.027 ^{*****}	3.027 ^{*****}	3.027 ^{*****}
Proportions of reduced variances (compared with Model 1)						
Intercept	.147	.179	.059	.120	.150	.017
Anti-immigrant attitudes effect	.457	.682	.509	.540	.720	.647
Deviance (-2LL)	104,053.62	104,044.91	104,049.17	104,050.99	104,043.34	104,046.52

Note: Level 1: individual, N=26,344; level 2: country, N=20. Standard errors within parentheses. Between the square brackets is the proportion reduced variance in the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes compared with a model where the specific variable is omitted. Models also include intercept, exclusive national identity, government satisfaction, economic evaluations, education low, education high, age, gender, member of ethnic minority, political ideology, political interest, and the main effects of the contextual variables, but are not shown in the table.

****p < .001; ***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1 (one-tailed).

For *H5*, about the moderation by the relative number of Muslims, and *H6*, about the moderation by the importance of the immigration issue, we find similar results. In all models (Models 12, 13, and 14 for the relative number of Muslims, Models 9 and 12 for importance for the public, Models 10 and 13 for importance of political parties, and Models 11 and 14 for media salience), we find that the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes is significantly moderated by our contextual variables. Between low and high score countries on these contextual variables, we find differences in effects of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's membership between 0.12 (for the relative number of Muslims in Model 12) and 0.25 (for importance for political parties in Model 9). These findings support the fifth and the sixth hypothesis.

The question that remains is which contextual variables best explain the variation in strength of the effect. For this, we also calculated for each interaction how great a proportion of the variation could not be explained when the interaction was omitted from the model. With this, we can see how much of the variation in the effect is explained by this interaction. These numbers are represented in Table 4 between the square brackets. Here, we see that the models predict that the relative number of Muslims explains more variation in the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes than the relative number of Turkish immigrants does. This difference is, however, not statistically significant.⁵ Comparing the presence of Turkish immigrants and/or Muslims with the importance of the immigration issue, which contextual factor is most important depends on which indicator we use. Importance for political parties is the strongest predictor of the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes. Importance for citizens is a significant predictor, but not as strong as the relative number of Turkish immigrants or Muslims. But as all the interaction effects hold in all models, importance of the immigration issue in the polity and number of Turkish immigrant or Muslims each predict substantial variation in the strength of the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's membership.

Conclusion

In this article, we asked the question which contextual conditions affect levels of support for Turkey's EU membership. Following the work of McLaren (2007) and building on conflict theory, we first hypothesized that in a country with more Turkish immigrants support for Turkey's accession would be lower. We went beyond the literature in two ways. First, as Turkish

⁵We tested this in a similar fashion as we tested the difference between the main effects. Because we are interested in whether sizes of interaction effects differ, we tested this with a three-way interaction with the identifier variable.

immigrants may be primarily seen as Muslims and Turkey may be primarily seen as a Muslim country, we also hypothesized that more Muslims would lead to less support for Turkey's membership. Second, as most citizens do not have direct experience with Turkish immigrants or Muslims, we argued that what is crucial is their *indirect* experience with immigrants of hearing about immigrants. We expected that when the immigration issue is more important in a polity, citizens would have more indirect experience with immigrants, and thus hypothesized that the more important the immigration issue, the less support we find for Turkey's EU membership.

As our expectations with regard to the effects of the contextual conditions is based on Conflict Theory, and thus the expectation that citizens define Turkish immigrants as an out-group, we also looked at how these conditions moderate the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on Turkey's EU membership (because the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support is also based on defining others as an out-group). We hypothesized that the higher the relative number of people of Turkish descent, the higher the relative number of Muslims, and the more important the immigration issue is in a country, the stronger the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's EU membership.

Using data from a survey of EU citizens in 20 countries, we found partial support for our hypotheses concerning the main effects. Keeping in mind that the cross-country variation was low but significant, we found that the relative number of Turks and the relative number of Muslims turn out to matter, with no significant difference between the effect sizes of both indicators. We found no support for our expectation that the importance of the immigration issue affected support for Turkey's EU membership. We expected the main effect of population proportion Muslims to have a stronger effect than population proportion of Turkish descent. That we do not find this proves us wrong concerning our reasoning that Muslims might be more visually distinctive than Turks and thus show greater contact effects.

The hypotheses about the moderation of the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes were all supported by our data. Similar as for the main effects, there was no significant difference between the number of Turkish immigrants and the number of Muslims in predicting the effect size of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's EU membership. The importance of the immigration issue is a significant predictor of the effect size of anti-immigrant attitudes. When operationalized as the importance *political parties* attach to the immigration issue, it is also the strongest predictor. With the contextual predictors affecting the effect size of anti-immigrant attitudes, it seems that the relevance of the contextual factors for support for Turkey's EU membership is primarily indirect through affecting the strongest predictor of support in the literature.

Theoretically, we argued that the presence of Turkish immigrants (or Muslims) moderates the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey's EU membership. But could this moderation also work the other way around? Could it be the case that individuals with strong anti-immigrant attitudes react more strongly to the presence of Turkish immigrants? This may seem likely, and with our data, we are unable to test for the direction of the moderation. We argue, however, that for the interaction between anti-immigrant attitudes and "indirect contact" there are theoretical reasons to expect the direction we proposed in this article. We argued that through indirect contact citizens learn to think in terms of "us" and "them," and thus when the issue of Turkey's potential accession comes to mind, it is likely that with more indirect contact, citizens think more in terms of "us" versus "them," and the effect is thus stronger. In this case, the other direction is less likely: Why would individuals who think more in terms of "us" and "them" be more opposed to Turkey's EU membership, if the immigration issue is highly politicized? As we contrast "direct" and "indirect" contact, and argue that both types of contact effect support for Turkey's membership through the same mechanism, we argue a similar direction of the moderation.

Our findings on the main effects imply that public opinion is affected by direct experiences with "others," and not by indirect experience through the importance of the immigration issue. We should, however, be careful with how to interpret this direct experience. As we argued earlier in the text, the presence of Turkish immigrants or Muslims does not imply direct contact at the personal level. Although given our method of analysis, we can strictly speaking only conclude contact at the country level, we may argue that citizens are aware of the presence of either Turkish immigrants or Muslims through which their presence works down to the personal level. How this contact at the country level works down to the personal level should, of course, be examined in future studies.

The significant effect of the relative number of Muslims indicates that for citizens the religion of Turks is of importance in deciding on support for Turkey's membership, which is in line with other studies (Azrout, Van Spanje, & De Vreese, 2013; Hobolt, Van der Brug, De Vreese, Boomgaarden, & Hinrichsen, 2011; Van Spanje et al., 2010). However, given the similar effect size of the relative number of Turkish immigrants and the relative number of Muslims, we may wonder whether citizens actually differentiate between Turks and Muslims when forming an opinion about the potential accession of a Muslim country. In line with this, we already noted that several authors claim that Turks are increasingly being stereotyped as Muslims (e.g., Marranci, 2004; Poynting & Mason, 2007). But if citizens have trouble to differentiate between

Turks and Muslims, does that mean that the presence of Turkish immigrants also affects support for other Muslim countries aspiring EU membership?

Also, if the presence of Muslims is important in making people think in terms of “us” and “them” (i.e., affects the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for membership), this raises the question to what degree these findings may hold for other, non-Muslim, applicant countries. We argued that the presence of Muslims increases the likelihood of citizens having thought about them, and for those who hold strong anti-immigrant attitudes it increases the likelihood to have thought about Muslims as an out-group. When the consideration of Muslims as an out-group is stored in memory and thus available, it is likely to be applied when asked about a Muslim country. But except for a consideration to be available, it is described in the framing literature that to be applied a frame should also be applicable (e.g., Chong & Druckman, 2007a; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). A frame where Muslims are described as “others” is not likely to be applicable for non-Muslim countries. But the question is whether citizens learn to focus on differences with Muslims or to focus on differences in general from the presence of Muslims in their country. Of course, considerations of focusing on differences in general can indeed be applied to non-Muslim countries. Thus, future studies should examine whether the considerations to focus on differences, learned from the presence of Muslims, are Muslims specific or of a more general nature.

Finally, we found that mediated contact through the importance of the immigration issue explained part of the variation in the strength of the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on support for Turkey’s EU membership. Although all our importance indicators had a significant effect, the strength of the effects clearly differed. Importance for the public was the weakest predictor of the effect size, salience in the media of the immigration issue being stronger, and importance of political parties being the strongest predictor. This implies that citizens are probably less aware of what other people think about the immigration issue and more susceptible to cues from the media and politicians. Of course, we should ask ourselves whether cues from the media and from politicians are not themselves cued by the public, i.e. a representation of ideas that exist among the public. Steenbergen et al. (2007) showed that political elites both respond to and shape ideas of their constituencies, thus making politicians (at least partially) instigators. Also, politicians because of their authoritative status, often act as primary definers of issues and ideas in the media (Benson, 2004; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke, & Roberts, 1978). In light of the position politicians take in cueing both public and media, our findings may not imply direct influence of political elite’s on citizens’ thoughts, it does seem to imply that elites have the ability to steer the criteria by which citizens form their opinion.

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