

DIFFERENCES IN ACCULTURATION ORIENTATIONS OF ADVANTAGED AND DISADVANTAGED MEMBERS OF THE HOST COMMUNITY IN TÜRKIYE TOWARD NEWCOMERS: THE ROLES OF ETHNIC AND NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND PERCEIVED OUTGROUP THREAT

Gülden Sayılan^{*}, Sami Çoksan^{**}, and Mine Can^{***}

This study examines the links between ethnic identification, perceived threat, and acculturation expectations of the host members in samples of Turks and Kurds. Using a cross-sectional correlational method, we test whether (1) the members of the advantaged and disadvantaged groups differ in terms of their acculturation orientations; (2) the ingroup identification becomes salient when host members evaluate their relationship with the newcomer differs between them, and (3) members of the advantaged and disadvantaged groups differ in terms of the relationship ethnic and national identification have with the perceived threat from Syrian refugees and their acculturation orientations. Results (N=579) from a series of simple mediation models indicated that perceived outgroup threat mediates the link between ethnic identification and acculturation expectations among Turks for the models including assimilation, segregation, exclusion, and individualism-based acculturation expectation as the outcomes. We found no mediating role of the perceived outgroup threat for Kurds. The mixed-model MANCOVA results show that Kurds had more integration-based expectations than the Turks. Turks had more assimilation and exclusion-based acculturation expectations than Kurds. We discussed the results in the context of the social identity approach.

Keywords: *acculturation expectancies, refugees, ethnic identification, national identification, perceived outgroup threat.*

1. Introduction

Türkiye has become one of the countries hosting the most significant number of refugees worldwide. As of 2022, approximately 4 million Syrians have taken refuge in Türkiye (UNHCR, 2022), and the economic and social problems triggered by mass migration have become one of the critical agenda items. Initially residing in temporary protection centers in cities on the Syrian border, they began to move to cities in various regions of Türkiye and had more contact with the

^{*} Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Türkiye.

^{**} Western University, Canada; Erzurum Technical University, Türkiye.

^{***} Bursa Technical University, Türkiye.

host population. These indicate that Syrians living in Türkiye are not perceived as refugees and are included in a cultural adaptation process (Çakal & Husnu, 2022).

However, the acculturation process does not only convey the adaptation of newcomers to the new culture; the process includes psychological and sociological processes on both parties (Sam & Berry, 2016). Moreover, the hierarchical positions of the groups in the host society, that is, their advantageous and disadvantaged positions, as well as the sociological and political power differences between them, will likely affect the relations between these groups (Saguy & Kteily, 2014). In this study, we focused on the acculturation expectations of the hosts towards the Syrian refugees through the Turks and the Kurds, the two prominent representatives of the host people in Türkiye. First, we tested whether Turks (the advantaged group in the host community) and Kurds (the disadvantaged group in the host community) differ regarding acculturation orientations towards the newcomers. Second, we tested whether the mediating role of threat perceptions in the relationship between ingroup identity and acculturation orientations differ between the two types of ingroup identification for the advantaged and disadvantaged groups in the host community.

2. Acculturation

Throughout history, people have migrated from one region to another for various reasons. These voluntary or forced migration experiences cause immigrants and hosts to encounter people with different cultural characteristics. This contact pushes us to think about acculturation, which can be referred to as the process through which individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds come into contact and interact with each other, leading to changes in their cultural patterns that involve both cultural and psychological adjustments (Berry, 1980, 2019). Although these changes occur in physical, political, and cultural arenas, the psychology literature mainly focuses on psychological acculturation. The most widely used theoretical framework to explain the psychological acculturation process experienced by members of groups in contact is Berry's (1980) bidimensional model of psychological acculturation. This model includes the strategies adopted by the newcomers or minority members in the acculturation process and the strategies used by the hosts or majority members in living with the newcomer. In fact, the bidimensional model of psychological acculturation operates on two key assumptions. First, it posits that individuals' acculturation experiences are influenced by both the culture of origin and the culture of the receiving society. Second, it suggests that individuals' acculturation attitudes and behaviors can be classified into four categories: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. These assumptions provide a framework for understanding how individuals navigate the complexities of cultural adaptation when encountering new cultural environments.

The Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) (Bourhis et al., 1997) is a refinement of Berry's model with a focus on the interactive nature of the acculturation process. The IAM, the main theoretical framework of this study, integrates the acculturation orientations of the newcomers and the host community and the interpersonal or intergroup outcomes resulting from the combinations of the acculturation orientations. Accordingly, the acculturation process cannot be reduced to the acknowledgment and incorporation of newcomers. Instead, it involves

incorporating newcomers' cultural characteristics into the host's culture and transforming the hosts' culture in the long run (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2004).

The acculturation strategies of the hosts, which are the focus of this study, are determined along two dimensions: their tendency to accept newcomers to (a) maintain their own culture and (b) adapt to the host culture. The first strategy means that individuals focus on preserving their own culture. In this strategy, newcomers tend to maintain their culture's values, beliefs, and traditions. This strategy aims to preserve one's original cultural identity and affiliation. The second strategy means that individuals focus on adapting to the majority culture. In this strategy, the tendency is to adopt the values, norms, and behavioral patterns of the new culture. This strategy aims to integrate the person more easily into the host society. These strategies are extended to six by Bourhis and Montreuil (2013), which are integrationism, assimilationism, segregationism, exclusionism, individualism, and transformation-integrationism (see also Montreuil et al., 2004; Snell & Zhou, 2015).

Integrationism implies that the host community accepts immigrants preserving their heritage culture while also embracing the mainstream culture of society. *Assimilationism* denotes the host community's stance that immigrants can embrace the mainstream culture of society only upon relinquishing their heritage culture. *Segregationism* implies that the host community allows immigrants to preserve their heritage culture but declines to integrate them into the mainstream culture of society. *Exclusionism* suggests that the host community either sees no necessity to engage with immigrants or advocates for fewer immigrants in their society. *Individualism* entails that the host community views it equally acceptable whether immigrants maintain their heritage culture or adopt the mainstream culture of society since every individual possesses free will. *Transformation-integrationism* implies that the host community ought to adapt elements of its own culture to accommodate diverse cultural values from immigrants. Among them, integrationism, transformation-integrationism, and individualism are considered welcoming acculturation orientations, whereas assimilationism, segregationism, and exclusionism are considered rejecting orientations (Bourhis & Montreuil, 2013).

Although acculturation explains the change experienced by both groups in contact, in societies such as Türkiye, where it is less focused on in the literature (Henrich et al., 2010), psychology research often focuses on how newcomers or minority members adopt or reject the cultural characteristics of hosts (e.g., Güler & Yildirim, 2022; Kurt et al., 2021; Safak et al., 2024; Şafak-Ayvazoğlu et al., 2021). However, as the theoretical background we mentioned above indicates, the acculturation process is two-sided, and the establishment of harmonious relationships is only possible by including the acculturation expectations of the hosts in the analysis. To reduce this gap, this study examines the acculturation expectations of the two groups, who numerically represent the host people living in Türkiye for the newcomers.

Moreover, although the coexistence of sub-national host communities within host societies is common in multicultural states (Fishman, 1999), research on the acculturation processes of host community members tends to consider the dominant culture as culturally and linguistically homogeneous. Multicultural societies often consist of subnational host communities whose linguistic, cultural, or religious tensions existed before the arrival of migrants (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2004). In Türkiye's cultural context, Turks represent the ruling majority, whereas Kurds represent the most significant ethnic minority in the country (KONDA, 2022).

This study conceptualizes Turks as the advantaged group and Kurds as the disadvantaged group in the host community for several reasons. First, the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic focused on the ideals of a common nation and language; the centralized power denied the existence of the Kurdish identity. Second, the regions where Kurds are predominant receive less investment, and education opportunities are more limited. Third, political parties founded by Kurds have been closed for various reasons. More importantly, although no law prevents this, Kurds cannot use their native language in public. Turks, on the other hand, represent the advantaged group, and throughout the Turkish Republic's history, Turkish parties have established governments. Moreover, the regions where Turks are predominant receive relatively more investments (See Kirişçi & Winrow, 1997 for a review). Mutual trust between Turks and Kurds is low (Çelebi et al., 2014), and the groups hold negative stereotypes about each other (Bilali et al., 2014).

Despite the power differentials and conflicting relationships, Turks and Kurds are the two prominent ethnic groups among the Türkiye citizens, allowing a common ingroup identity. It predicts host members' acculturation expectations toward refugees (Kunst et al., 2015). Moreover, past studies (e.g., Baysu et al., 2018) have revealed that common group identity differentiates behaviors towards the outgroup in these samples. For instance, Turks and Kurds classifying themselves in a common ingroup reduces negative stereotypes within the context of the Kurdish conflict in Türkiye (van Delft, 2013). Thus, when they evaluate outgroup members (Syrian refugees), they may identify themselves with a common identity, such as citizenship, which can affect their intergroup orientations (Gaertner et al., 1993). Accordingly, this study tests whether Turks and Kurds differ in their acculturation orientations toward newcomers (RQ1).

3. Ingroup identification

The unintended contact resulting from the mass migration of Syrian refugees to Türkiye may cause host people, who had no contact with these people and the culture they represent, to show prejudiced attitudes and behaviours towards the newcomers (Çoksan et al., 2023; Erdoğan & Semerci, 2018). These findings are consistent with the existing literature suggesting that contact can increase bias in some contexts (Hartley & Pedersen, 2015; Pedersen et al., 2000). A common social problem is that refugees are perceived as a threat and exposed to discriminatory behaviour by the host people in the regions where they settled (Caricati, 2018). Moreover, locals' identification with their ingroup is also associated with negative evaluations of the newcomer (Verkuyten, 2009). Moreover, ingroup identification also affects members' attitudes toward acculturation (Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Bourhis et al., 2007). Existing studies show that identification with one's ethnic or national group is associated with less welcoming orientations toward newcomers as it fosters the boundaries between *us* and *them* (e.g., Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Bourhis et al., 2007; Montaruli et al., 2004, 2011). This finding is valid for the relationship between Turks, Kurds, and Syrian refugees (Çoksan et al., 2023).

The social identity approach argues that individuals tend to perceive themselves positively and that their group membership is one of the determinants of this positive evaluation. People can identify themselves with one or more groups. These groups include acquired identities such as

socioeconomic status, ideological identity, or being a football team supporter and ascribed identities such as family, ethnicity, or nation (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Within this framework, commitment and belonging to the group is called ingroup identification (Spears, 2007). Members' ingroup identifications affect their evaluations of their group -usually positively- and their evaluations of other groups -usually negatively- (Turner, 1982; Brown, 2000). In other words, social identity constitutes a lens through which individuals define themselves and differentiate their ingroups from the relevant outgroups (Verkuyten, 2006).

How this differentiation occurs, however, is open to further investigation (Brown, 2000). According to the *reactive distinctiveness hypothesis*, the more similar the outgroup is perceived to the ingroup, the greater the distinctiveness threat and the more negative attitudes the groups tend to exhibit towards each other. The competing *reflective distinctiveness hypothesis*, on the other hand, suggests that individuals tend to associate themselves with those who are like them; therefore, they tend to have more positive attitudes toward groups similar to them and negative attitudes toward those not (Jetten et al., 2004). We believe these hypotheses would be relevant to understanding how identification with the ethnic group is related to the acculturation orientations of Turks and Kurds toward Syrian refugees. We test these hypotheses in line with our first research question.

According to the reactive distinctiveness hypothesis, we expect Kurds will be more likely than Turks to perceive Syrian refugees as similar to themselves because of their disadvantaged position in society. Accordingly, they will be more likely to differentiate themselves from the newcomers and adopt the rejecting acculturation orientations. Turks, who represent the ruling majority in Türkiye, however, would be less likely to have the urge to differentiate themselves from the newcomer and hence adopt the welcoming acculturation orientations (H1a). In line with the reflective distinctiveness hypothesis, on the other hand, we expect that Turks would be more likely to perceive the newcomers as clearly distinct from themselves and have rejecting acculturation orientations towards Syrian refugees. Kurds, however, will be more likely to perceive Syrian refugees as similar to themselves and adopt welcoming acculturation orientations (H1b).

In addition to these, we have some hypotheses for the relationship between ethnic and national identities and acculturation orientations host members endorse. For instance, self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) indicates that people's self-categorization affects intergroup attitudes and behaviors. One of these is acculturation processes and acculturation expectations. Especially in multicultural societies, minority and majority group members may prefer different acculturation processes in line with their own values, identities, world views, and cultural backgrounds (Stathi & Roscini, 2016). The reason why different groups have different acculturation expectations may be that groups focus on different functionalities in their relations with target groups. For example, minority group members may demand the integration of other minority group members into a common ingroup, which may highlight potential cooperation between groups. For instance, Smokova (2013) revealed that minority and majority members with different ethnic identifications have different acculturation expectations. As we mentioned above, even though Turks and Kurds in Turkey can classify themselves as a common ingroup, they have different languages, historical backgrounds, and, most importantly, economic and political power. Depending on this theoretical background, we test whether groups differ in their

acculturation expectations of newcomers based on their relative position in the host community based on their different ingroup identifications (RQ2). In other words, our second research question will focus on whether advantageous (Turks) and disadvantaged (Kurds) groups with different characteristics will have different acculturation expectations towards newcomers (Syrian refugees), depending on their ethnic identification.

In fact, for Turks, the salient group identity would be the ethnic identity because, due to the social identity politics, they would likely believe that ethnic Turks own the country. On the other hand, their national identification would have weaker relationships with acculturation orientations (H2a). For Kurds, however, evaluating the newcomers based on their ethnic identity might not help them to perceive themselves as positively distinct from the newcomers. On the other hand, national identity would be more advantageous for social comparison. Accordingly, we believe that the salient social identity through which they perceive the newcomers would be their national identity, and it would have stronger relationships with their acculturation orientations than their ethnic identity (H2b).

4. Intergroup threat

According to the Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT, Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Stephan et al., 2009), perceived outgroup threat leads to prejudice toward the outgroup. This threat may arise from the competition of groups for limited resources (Sherif, 1966) or from the perception that the outgroup would undermine the values and norms of the ingroup (Stephan et al., 2009). ITT's assumptions have been tested on a wide range of groups, including ethnic (Stephan et al., 1999) and gender groups (Stephan et al., 2000), and gained empirical support in various intergroup contexts (Riek et al., 2006). Immigrants and refugees are also among these groups (Rios et al., 2018); the higher the perceived threat, the greater the negative attitudes toward newcomers (Renner et al., 2018).

According to ITT, the perceived threat is affected by several antecedent variables, including intergroup relations, cultural dimensions, situational factors, and individual differences (Stephan et al., 2009). Ingroup identification is also essential in forming threat perceptions (Riek et al., 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). The perceived threat from the newcomers mediates the link between ingroup identification and the acculturation orientation of host members toward the newcomers (Bourhis & Dayan, 2004; Caricati, 2018; Rohmann et al., 2006, 2008). Similarly, a study conducted in Türkiye (Yangın-Kiremit & Akfırat, 2021) reports that perceived outgroup threat mediates the link between ingroup identification and acculturation expectations toward Syrian refugees.

According to self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), the salient group identity provides a lens that makes individuals more sensitive to anything that concerns or is likely to harm their group. Accordingly, higher ingroup identification would predict increased threat perception and indirectly affect their acculturation orientation toward the newcomer. Moreover, these salient identities would make host members more sensitive to perceived threats from the newcomer. For Turks, the mediating role of threat perceptions would be more likely to be seen in the relationship between ethnic identification and acculturation orientations than the one

between national identity and orientations (H3a). For Kurds, on the other hand, threat perceptions would be more likely to mediate the link between national identification and acculturation orientations rather than the path from ethnic identification to acculturation orientations (H3b).

5. Contextualization

In recent years, the relations between the hosts in Türkiye and Syrian refugees have become quite complex. With the start of the civil war in Syria, Turkey attracted the attention of the international community by hosting millions of Syrian refugees. However, among the side effects of this situation was the increase in social tensions and especially the deepening of tensions in relations between hosts in Türkiye and Syrian refugees. For instance, both Turks and Kurds, who represent the majority of hosts in Türkiye¹, perceive an intense threat from Syrian refugees (Çoksan et al., 2023). Negative attitudes towards Syrian refugees are a very common finding (see Çakal & Husnu, 2022). In addition, hate speech (Filibeli & Ertuna, 2021) and aggression (Kivilcim, 2016) are increasing day by day. This points to an intergroup context where extreme prejudice and discrimination occur in daily life, including physical violence and aggression between groups (Çakal & Husnu, 2022). The intergroup context, where these prejudices are intense, also includes the variable intergroup context, but differently, it indicates that for a deep conflict to take root, an intense perception of symbolic and realistic threat begins to settle between groups, which may lead to a difficult conflict (Çoksan et al., 2023).

While Türkiye's refugee policies and attitude towards Syrian refugees are criticized from time to time by international human rights organizations and other countries, they also cause political debates within Türkiye. For instance, despite hosting the highest number of refugees worldwide (UNHCR, 2022), Türkiye is still classified as "comprehensive integration" in the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). In terms of integration, especially in terms of labor market mobility and political participation, Türkiye is at the bottom of the world rankings (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). In recent years, the participation of a political party in Turkish politics whose main argument is "sending refugees out of the country" provides detailed information about the general perspective towards refugees. This whole process seems to further increase the importance of integration, promotion of multiculturalism, reconciliation, and humanitarian approaches.

Depending on this contextualizing and theoretical background we stated above, we aimed to examine three hypotheses that are pointed out through the text, as well as two research questions, which are (1) do Turks and Kurds differ in their acculturation orientations toward newcomers? and (2) Do acculturation expectations differ depending on ethnic identification among host members?

¹ Turks are the majority group in Turkey. Kurds are the largest minority group, making up approximately 15-20% of Türkiye's population (Minority Rights Group, 2024).

6. Method

6.1 Participants

We ran two power analyses with G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009) since we have separate research questions requiring intergroup comparison and mediation analysis. First, in terms of the between-group comparison, we found that we needed to reach 398 participants in two groups (Turks and Kurds) with six repeated measures (acculturation expectancy strategies) for which we expected a maximum correlation of .10, an effect size of .10, a statistical power of .95, and a type I error of .0083 (Bonferroni corrected). Second, for the mediation analysis, we calculated that for the same statistical power and type I error level, with an effect size of .10 and four predictors (a predictor, a covariate, a mediator, and predictor X mediator), we needed to reach a total of 514 people from 2 groups. As a result, we aimed to reach approximately 570 people, considering there may be 10% missing data.

Five hundred and seventy-nine people (354 female, 61.1%, $M_{age} = 23.48$, $SD_{age} = 5.13$) participated in the study voluntarily. Two hundred and four participants (35.2%) were Kurds ($M_{age} = 24.49$, $SD_{age} = 4.38$), and 375 (64.8%) were Turks ($M_{age} = 22.93$, $SD_{age} = 5.42$). Thirty-three participants (5.7%) were high school graduates, 408 (70.5%) were university students, and 138 (23.8%) had bachelor's degrees. Participants were reached via the snowball sampling method.

6.2 Measurements

We measured participants' ethnic ingroup identification with the scale developed by Kenworthy et al. (2011) and adapted to Turkish by Çoksan and Cingöz-Ulu (2022). The scale consisted of 8 items rated on a 5-point scale ($\alpha = .94$). Higher scores indicated stronger ingroup identification.

We measured perceived outgroup threat from Syrian refugees using McLaren's (2003) short version of the outgroup threat perception scale (Stephan et al., 1999) that was adapted to Turkish by Yangın-Kiremit and Akfırat (2021). The scale consisted of 5 items rated on a 5-point scale ($\alpha = .78$). Higher scores indicated that more threats are perceived from Syrian refugees.

We measured the host members' expectations towards the acculturation of Syrian refugees as outgroup members using the host community acculturation scale developed by Bourhis and Montreuil (2013) and adapted to Turkish by Yangın-Kiremit and Akfırat (2021). The scale consisted of 18 items (3 items for each acculturation strategy) rated on a 7-point scale ($\alpha = .76$). Higher scores on a factor indicated that the participant expects Syrian refugees to use the acculturation strategy expressed by that factor more.

We measured participants' identification with Türkiye as a common ingroup identity for both groups using the identification with Türkiye scale developed by Balaban (2013). The scale consisted of 5 questions rated on a 5-point scale ($\alpha = .94$). Higher scores indicated stronger identification with Türkiye.

6.3 Procedure

We aimed to reach participants by announcing the research on the university's website. We also invited students to participate in the study using university participant pools. In fact, after obtaining IRB permission, we announced the purpose of the study on departmental websites, social media accounts, the participant pool of the university, and some e-mail groups. Volunteers who wanted to participate in the study reached the Qualtrics online link of the study and filled in the demographic information form, followed by the ingroup identification scale, identification with Türkiye scale, threat perception scale, and host community acculturation scale. After receiving feedback from the participants about the research, the research was terminated. The students who participated in the study received 0.5 points for their participation. No incentives are offered to lay people from the community sample. The study took 25 minutes on average. The data collection process started in September 2022 and ended in January 2023. The research was approved by the Human Subjects Ethics Committee of the Middle East Technical University and the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University.

6.4 Analytical approach

This research has a cross-sectional correlational design. First, we used a mixed-model MANCOVA for between-group comparisons. Assumptions were not violated in the analysis. Accordingly, Pearson correlations are reported for research question 2. Third, employing the PROCESS Macro Model 4 (Hayes, 2022) with 95% confidence intervals and 5000 bootstrapped samples, we conducted six sets of mediation analyses for the six types of acculturation expectancy for Turkish and Kurdish groups separately. The models included ethnic identification as the predictor (X), six types of acculturation expectations (assimilation, integration, separation, exclusion, individualism, and integration-transformation) as the outcome (Y), national identification as the covariate, and the perceived outgroup threat as the mediator (M). We reported findings by controlling the covariate.

7. Results

7.1 Intergroup comparison

We ran a mixed-model MANCOVA to examine our first research question (RQ1). The six acculturation orientations were repeated measures, and ethnic identification, perceived outgroup threat, and national identification were controls. Ethnic identification ($M = 3.51$, $F_{G-G}(4.47,894.64) = 2.52$, $p = .034$, $\eta_p^2 = .012$), perceived outgroup threat ($M = 3.00$, $F_{G-G}(4.47,894.64) = 22.85$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .103$), and national identification ($M = 4.28$, $F_{G-G}(4.47,894.64) = 4.40$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .022$) had a confounding effect on the repeated measurement analysis for Kurds. We observed that they preferred the types of acculturation expectation at different levels when these confounding effects were controlled ($F(5,196) = 17.55$, $p < .001$, η_p^2

= .309, Wilk's Λ = .691). Individualism was the most common acculturation expectation among Kurds ($M = 5.53$). This tendency was followed by segregationism ($M = 3.81$), integrationism ($M = 3.78$), exclusionism ($M = 3.24$), transformation-integrationism ($M = 2.25$), and, lastly, assimilationism ($M = 2.14$) at 0.01 significance level.²

On the other hand, ingroup identification ($M = 3.21$) and national identification ($M = 4.42$) did not have a confounding effect on the repeated measurement analysis for Turkish participants; however, perceived outgroup threat had it ($M = 3.25$, $F_{G-G}(4.44, 1646.78) = 160.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .172$). We observed that they preferred the types of acculturation expectation at different levels when these confounding effects were controlled ($F(5, 367) = 91.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .554$, Wilk's $\Lambda = .446$). Turks' most common acculturation expectation was individualism ($M = 5.17$). This tendency was followed by exclusionism ($M = 4.02$), segregationism ($M = 3.92$), integrationism ($M = 3.83$), assimilationism ($M = 2.75$), and transformation-integrationism ($M = 1.90$) at 0.001 significance level.³

Ethnic identification did not have a confounding role in between-group comparison; however, national identification had it on the assimilationism ($F(1, 574) = 8.21$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .014$), integrationism ($F(1, 574) = 11.71$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .020$), segregationism ($F(1, 574) = 8.87$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$), and individualism ($F(1, 574) = 10.01$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .017$). On the other hand, perceived outgroup threat had a confounding role in assimilationism ($F(1, 574) = 181.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .240$), segregationism ($F(1, 574) = 31.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .052$), exclusionism ($F(1, 574) = 291.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .337$), individualism ($F(1, 574) = 76.74$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .013$), and transformation-integrationism ($F(1, 574) = 12.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .021$). We observed that there was a significant difference between Kurds and Turks in terms of acculturation expectations when the confounding effect was controlled ($F(6, 569) = 6.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .065$, Wilk's $\Lambda = .935$). Turks tended more toward assimilationism ($M_{Turks} = 2.67$, $M_{Kurds} = 2.28$) and exclusionism ($M_{Turks} = 3.92$, $M_{Kurds} = 3.43$). On the other hand, Kurds tended more transformation-integrationism ($M_{Kurds} = 2.22$, $M_{Turks} = 1.92$) when compared to one another.

7.2 The relationships between ethnic and national identification, and acculturation orientations

We conducted correlation analyses in the two subgroups in our sample to test whether there are any differences between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups among the host regarding the relationships between ethnic and national identity and acculturation orientations toward Syrian refugees (RQ2). Our hypotheses were as follows: For Turks (advantaged host group), we expected the ethnic identification to be more strongly related to acculturation orientations than national identification (H2a). For Kurds (disadvantaged host group), conversely, we expected national identification to have stronger relationships with acculturation orientations than ethnic identification (H2b).

² This finding briefly pointed to a pattern in the following order: individualism > segregationism = integrationism > exclusionism > integration-transformationism = assimilationism.

³ This finding briefly pointed to a pattern in the following order: individualism > exclusionism = segregationism = integrationism > assimilationism > integration-transformationism.

As presented in Table 1, the bivariate correlations among the ethnic and national identity and acculturation orientations supported our expectations. For Turks, ethnic identification was correlated to assimilationism ($r = .23, p < .001$), separationism ($r = .11, p = .03$), exclusionism ($r = .29, p < .001$) positively and individualism ($r = -.26, p < .001$) negatively. National identification, on the other hand, was correlated to assimilationism ($r = .17, p = .001$), exclusionism ($r = .15, p = .001$) positively, and individualism ($r = -.18, p < .001$) negatively.

On the other hand, Kurds' national identification was related to all acculturation orientations except transformation-integrationism. Among them, it had positive correlations with assimilationism ($r = .22, p = .001$), integrationism ($r = .20, p = .001$), separationism ($r = .27, p < .001$), exclusionism ($r = .15, p = .03$) and a negative one with individualism ($r = -.18, p = .01$). Ethnic identification, on the other hand, had positive correlations only with integrationism ($r = .18, p = .01$), and individualism ($r = .24, p < .001$).

As for the relationship between ingroup identifications and perceived threats from Syrians, we found a similar pattern. For Turks, the correlation between threat perceptions and ethnic identification ($r = .33, p < .001$) was more robust than the one between threat perceptions and national identification ($r = .15, p < .001$). For Kurds, on the other hand, threat perception had a stronger correlation with national identification ($r = .19, p = .01$) than ethnic identification ($r = -.09, p > .05$).

Table 1. Correlations between variables

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Ethnic identification		.04	.09	.06	.18*	.06	.05	.24**	.08
2. National identification	.69**		.19**	.22**	.20**	.27**	.15*	-.18*	.03
3. Perceived threat	.33**	.15**		.39**	.17*	.37**	.51**	-.26**	.10
4. Assimilationism	.23**	.17**	.57**		.22**	.23**	.38**	-.45**	.34**
5. Integrationism	.08	.17**	.01	.16**		.28**	.25**	.03	.19**
6. Separationism	.11*	.09	.18**	.16**	.25**		.29**	.02	.07
7. Exclusionism	.29**	.15**	.64**	.45**	.01	.13*		-.15*	.17*
8. Individualism	-.26**	-.18**	-.41**	-.36**	-.01	.13*	-.32		.01
9. Transformation-Integrationism	-.07	.02	-.12*	.17**	.27***	.04	-.10	.15**	
Mean	3.31	4.37	3.16	2.53	3.81	3.88	3.74	5.30	2.02
St.dev.	1.1	1.17	.94	1.48	1.57	1.75	2.02	1.57	1.27
α	.937	.941	.779	.862	.844	.892	.935	.873	.885

Note. The values above the diagonal describe Turks, and the values below the diagonal describe Kurds. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

7.3 The Mediating role of perceived threat

Our last research question was whether members of the advantaged and disadvantaged groups among the host differed in terms of the relationship ethnic and national identification have with the perceived threat from Syrian refugees and their acculturation orientations. To

explore this question, we conducted six sets of mediation analyses for the six types of acculturation orientation for Turkish and Kurdish groups separately. We ran the analyses employing the PROCESS Macro Model 4 (Hayes, 2022) with 5000 bootstrapped samples.

Results indicated that perceived outgroup threat is predicted by national identification ($b = .09$, $SE = .03$, $t(3201) = 2.65$, $p = .009$) but not by ethnic identification for Kurds. For Turks, on the other hand, ethnic identification ($b = .36$, $SE = .06$, $t(372) = 6.33$, $p < .001$) predicted perceived outgroup threat positively, whereas national identification ($b = -.08$, $SE = .04$, $t(372) = -3.11$, $p = .035$) predicted it negatively.

7.3.1 Assimilationism

The model in which assimilationism is the outcome was significant for Kurds ($F(200, 3) = 4.38$, $R^2 = .18$, $p < .013$). According to the results, national identification predicted assimilationism both directly ($b = .11$, $SE = .05$, $t(200) = 2.32$, $p = .021$) and through the mediation of perceived outgroup threat ($b = .05$, $SE = .02$). In contrast, neither direct nor indirect prediction effects of ethnic identification were significant.

The model was also significant for Turks, $F(371,3) = 61.83$, $R^2 = .33$, $p < .001$. For this sample, neither national nor ethnic identification predicted assimilationism significantly. However, the indirect prediction effect of ethnic identification was significant ($b = .31$, $SE = .06$).

7.3.2 Integrationism

The model in which integrationism was the outcome was significant for Kurds ($F(200,3) = 7.42$, $R^2 = .10$, $p < .001$). National identification predicted integrationism both directly ($b = .16$, $SE = .06$, $t(200) = 2.65$, $p = .009$) and through the mediation of perceived outgroup threat ($b = .02$, $SE = .02$) whereas ethnic identification predicted the outcome only directly ($b = .30$, $SE = .10$, $t(200) = 2.97$, $p = .003$).

The model for Turks was also significant ($F(371,3) = 3.72$, $R^2 = .03$, $p = .012$). National identification directly predicted integrationism ($b = .18$, $SE = .06$, $t(371) = 2.89$, $p = .004$), but its indirect prediction effect was insignificant. Ethnic identification, on the other hand, did not predict integrationism either directly or indirectly.

7.3.3 Segregationism

When segregationism was taken as the outcome, the model was significant for Kurds ($F(200,3) = 15.63$, $R^2 = .19$, $p < .001$). National identification predicted segregationism both directly ($b = .20$, $SE = .06$, $t(200) = 3.29$, $p = .001$) and through the mediation of perceived outgroup threat ($b = .06$, $SE = .03$). However, the direct and indirect prediction effect of ethnic identification was not significant.

The same model was also significant for Turks ($F(371,3) = 4.80$, $R^2 = .04$, $p = .003$). Results indicated that national identification did not directly or indirectly predict segregationism, whereas ethnic identification predicted segregationism only through the mediation of perceived outgroup threat ($b = .11$, $SE = .04$).

7.3.4 Exclusionism

The model in which exclusionism was the outcome was significant for Kurds ($F(200,3) = 23.37$, $R^2 = .26$, $p < .001$). National identification predicted the outcome variable only through the mediation of perceived threat ($b = .06$, $SE = .03$). Ethnic identification, on the other hand, did not have direct or indirect prediction effects on exclusionism.

The model was significant for Turks ($F(371, 3) = 91.01$, $R^2 = .42$, $p < .001$), as well. Like Kurds, neither national nor ethnic identification directly affected the outcome variable. However, ethnic identification predicted exclusionism positively through the mediation of perceived outgroup threat ($b = .46$, $SE = .09$).

7.3.5 Individualism

When individualistic orientation was taken as the outcome, the model was significant for Kurds ($F(200,3) = 10.12$, $R^2 = .13$, $p < .001$). National identification predicted individualism only through the mediation of perceived outgroup threat ($b = -.03$, $SE = .02$). Identification with the ethnic group, on the other hand, had a positive direct prediction effect ($b = .29$, $SE = .09$, $t(200) = 3.22$, $p = .001$) and a negative indirect ($b = -.03$, $SE = .02$) prediction effect on individualism.

The model was significant for Turks ($F(371,3) = 28.93$, $R^2 = .19$, $p < .001$). National identification did not predict the outcome construct either directly or indirectly. Ethnic identification, on the other hand, had a negative indirect prediction effect on individualism ($b = -.22$, $SE = .05$).

7.3.6 Transformation-Integrationism

When transformation-integrationism was taken as the outcome, the model was insignificant for Kurds. For Turks, on the other hand, the model was significant ($F(371,3) = 2.87$, $R^2 = .02$, $p = .037$). However, neither of the predictor variables was directly or indirectly associated with the outcome variables. All results are summarized in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Lastly, for the relationship between ethnic and national identification and perceived threat from Syrian refugees, we found that the two types of group identification predicted threat perceptions differently for the advantaged and disadvantaged groups in the host community. For Kurds, national identification predicted perceived threat positively ($b = .09$, $SE = .03$, $t(200) = 2.65$, $p = .009$), whereas the link between ethnic identification and threat perception was nonsignificant. For Turks, on the other hand, ethnic identification predicted perceived threat perception positively ($b = .36$, $SE = .06$, $t(371) = 6.33$, $p < .001$). In contrast, national identification had a weaker negative link with the perceived threat from the Syrian refugees, $b = -.08$, $SE = .04$, $t(371) = -2.11$, $p = .035$.

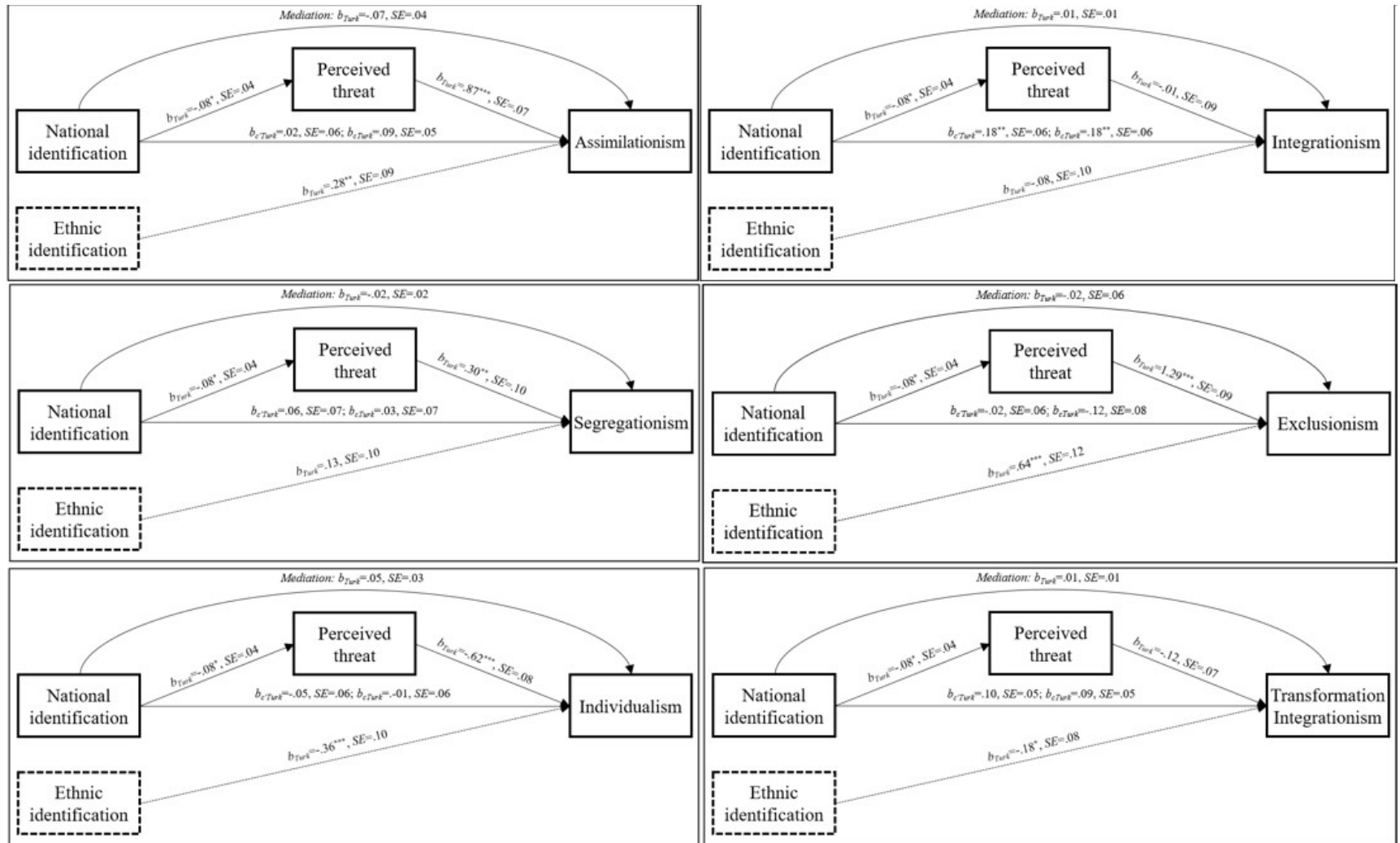


Figure 1. Results of mediation models for Turks

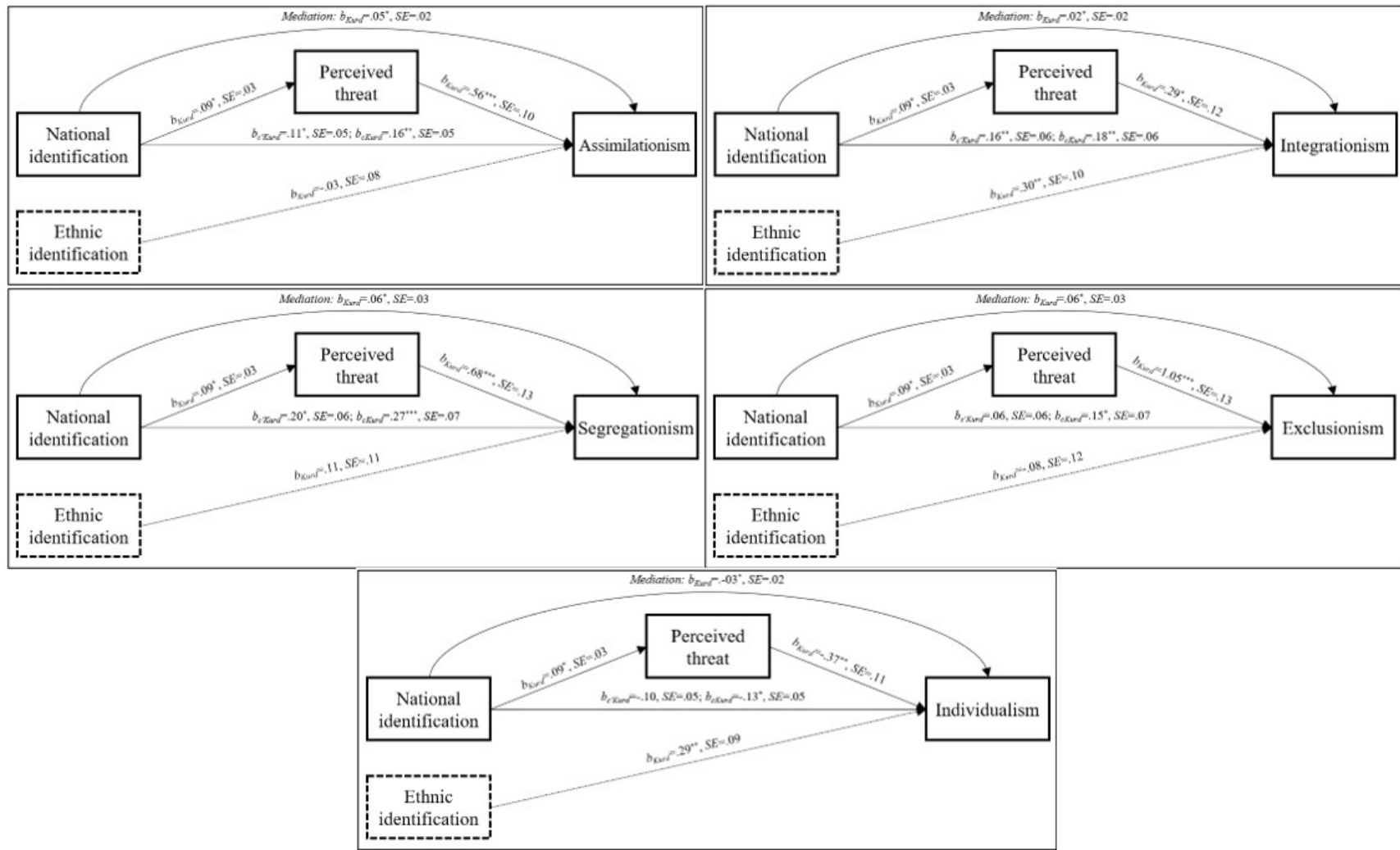


Figure 2. Results of mediation models for Kurds

8. Discussion

Current research has revealed three key findings. First, both groups expect Syrian refugees to adopt the individualism acculturation strategy the most, compared to other strategies. Integration-transformationism and assimilationism are the least expected strategies. Second, compared to Kurds, who are members of disadvantaged groups, Turks, who are members of advantaged groups, prefer the more negative strategies of assimilationism and exclusionism. Kurds, on the other hand, prefer the integration-transformationism strategy. Third, when ethnic identification was controlled, the mediating role of perceived outgroup threat in the relationship between acculturation strategy preferences and national identification was observed among Kurds in all strategies except integration-transformationism. The mediating role of perceived threat was not observed in the Turkish sample.

In line with RQ1, we found that the Kurds endorsed integrationism more than the Turks. In contrast, the Turks endorsed assimilationism and exclusionism more than the Kurds. These findings align with the reflective distinctiveness hypothesis (H1b) derived from social categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), which posits that individuals tend to evaluate similar others more favorably than dissimilar ones. We also think that two potential arguments can explain this finding. First, the cities where Kurds predominantly live are close to the Syrian border, and because of this neighbourhood status, Kurds have more social interaction with Syrians than Turks. The existing social interaction with the outgroup may have led Kurds to perceive Syrians as more similar to themselves than Turks and develop accepting acculturation expectations towards the newcomers. This finding also aligns with Phinney et al.'s (2007) finding that secure identification with the ethnic minority identity might provide a basis for more open and accepting relationships with other groups or cultures. On the other hand, Turks may have perceived Syrian refugees as dissimilar to themselves and endorse rejecting acculturation orientations more than Kurds.

Moreover, Turks' tendency may be associated with the desire of high-status groups to maintain their dominant position in society (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Jetten et al., 2004; Schmitt et al., 2003). Considering the tendency of the advantaged group to retain its dominant position (Morrison et al., 2009), assimilationist and exclusionist acculturation orientations may be associated with the continuation of the existing system in their favor. Furthermore, Turks and Syrian refugees began to know each other after forced contact. This obligation can harm intergroup relations more than voluntary contact (Bağcı-Hemşinlioğlu & Turnuklu, 2019). In addition, this compulsory contact may make accepting the newcomers and their culture difficult.

Second, we tested whether the ingroup identification that becomes salient when host members evaluate their expectancies toward the newcomer differs (RQ2). For Turks, we expected that ethnic identification would have stronger relationships with their acculturation orientations than national identity (H2a). Results supported our hypothesis in showing that ethnic identification was correlated to assimilationism, separationism, exclusionism positively, and individualism negatively. On the other hand, national identification was related to assimilationism, exclusionism positively, and individualism negatively. Moreover, the strength of

the correlations between ethnic identification and acculturation orientations was generally higher than the ones between national identification and acculturation orientations toward the Syrian refugees.

For Kurds, on the other hand, we expected national identification to have stronger relationships with acculturation orientations than their ethnic identification (H2b). Similarly, findings supported our hypothesis as national identification was related to all acculturation orientations except transformation-integrationism. Among them, it had positive correlations with assimilationism, integrationism, separationism, and exclusionism, and a negative one with individualism. Ethnic identification, on the other hand, had positive correlations only with integrationism and individualism.

When these findings are evaluated within the framework of the social identity approach, they support the assumption that higher ingroup identification is associated with an increase in the tendency to favour the ingroup over the outgroup and maintain the culture of the ingroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Moreover, this study contributes to the existing literature by showing that the salient group identity by which host members evaluate their relationship with the newcomer differs for the advantaged and disadvantaged groups in the host community. This difference may be related to the power differences between the Turkish and Kurdish groups, as stated above. While the increase in ethnic identification of advantaged groups is effective in their tendency to make more negative judgments against the outgroup (Bettencourt et al., 2001), the increase in ethnic identification of disadvantaged groups may be effective in making more positive judgments towards the outgroup. (Staerkle et al., 2005). Considering the current study, although Kurds belong to the host community, they represent the disadvantaged group in the majority. Their disadvantaged status may impact their acculturation expectations regarding Syrian refugees.

Lastly, we tested whether the host members differ in terms of the relationship ethnic and national identification have with the perceived threat from Syrian refugees and their acculturation orientations. For Turks, we expected that threat perceptions would mediate the link between ethnic identification and acculturation orientations but not the one between national identification and acculturation orientations (H3a). Findings supported the hypothesis that perceived outgroup threat mediated the links between ethnic identification and assimilationism, segregationism, exclusionism, and individualism. Perceived outgroup threat did not mediate the relations between national identification and acculturation orientations. For Kurds, however, we expected the mediating role of threat perceptions in the relationship between national identification and acculturation orientations rather than the one between ethnic identification and acculturation orientations (H3b). Results showed that perceived threats from Syrian refugees had a mediating role in the links between national identification and all acculturation strategies except transformation-integrationism. Ethnic identification, on the other hand, had a negative indirect effect on only the individualistic orientation.

These findings are in line with literature showing that the increase in perceived threat is associated with negative evaluations of the outgroup to protect the dignity and resources of the ingroup and to repel the outgroup (Stephan et al., 2009; Sherif, 1966; Stephan & Renfro, 2002) as well as rejecting acculturation orientations toward the newcomer (Bourhis & Dayan, 2004). The acculturation orientations for which we found a mediating role of perceived threat were the

rejecting ones for both groups. Moreover, we found that the salient identities anteceding the relationship between perceived threat and rejecting acculturation orientations were different for the advantaged and disadvantaged groups. For Turks, it was the ethnic identity. For Kurds, the national identity provided a lens by which they become more sensitive to outgroup threats and, in turn, endorse rejecting acculturation orientations. In our view, these findings indicate that Kurds, the disadvantaged minority in Türkiye, are united with the advantaged group through national identity when evaluating newcomers.

On the other hand, we found that for Kurds, identification with the ethnic group predicted integrationism and individualism positively. Ethnic identification was not associated with increased threat perceptions. Moreover, perceived threats from Syrians played a mediating role only for individualism. In line with the existing finding that disadvantaged groups reacted to outgroup threats less negatively than advantaged groups (Bettencourt et al., 2001), Kurds may be showing implicit solidarity among disadvantaged groups, turning into accepting acculturation orientations toward Syrians. Considered long-term, integrating different underprivileged groups can potentially affect social change in favour of the disadvantaged (Uluğ & Uysal, 2021).

For Turks, on the other hand, increased national identification was related to participants' tendency to endorse integrationism, and threat perceptions did not mediate the relationship between national identification and any acculturation orientations. High national identification is associated with classifying different identities into a common one (Lowe & Muldoon, 2014). Similarly, integration indicates that the newly arrived group is integrated into the dominant culture; they classify themselves with the dominant common identity (Bourhis et al., 1997).

These findings are critical in demonstrating that intervention programs targeting national identity can be beneficial if they aim to ensure that the indigenous population in Türkiye can establish harmonious relations with newcomers. Given the tendency of Kurds to identify themselves with the majority in terms of threat perception, targeting national identity in programs aimed at reducing perceived threat may prevent disadvantaged groups from perceiving newcomers as a threat to Türkiye and developing rejecting acculturation orientations.

Lastly, our findings indicated that transformation-integrationism was not a prevalent acculturation orientation in Türkiye's two prominent ethnic groups. For Kurds, the model in which transformation-integrationism was not significant. Even though the model was significant for Turks, we found no direct or indirect effects of the two ingroup identification on this acculturation orientation. Given that transformation-integrationism requires active efforts by the locals to transform themselves to establish harmonious relations with the newcomers, the findings may indicate that the two prominent groups representing the people of Türkiye have yet to make such an effort. Moreover, similar to Paksoy and Çelik's (2019) argument, it might indicate that a multicultural environment is not yet demanded in Turkish society.

Determining the attitudes and behaviours of the host community towards immigrants plays a vital role in understanding the acculturation process. Moreover, the findings are critical in establishing more harmonious relations with immigrants and increasing the social welfare environment in Turkish society, where migration continues. In this ongoing migration flow, social and psychological intergroup processes are as important as the legal and political processes experienced by refugees (Yangın-Kiremit & Akfırat, 2021). Accordingly, we made a unique contribution to acculturation literature by shedding light on the social-psychological phenomena

underlying acculturation expectations regarding refugees. In addition, many studies (e.g., Bourhis et al., 2010) emphasized that immigrants can adapt to different ethnic cultures and that the multi-ethnic structure of the host community should be considered in acculturation studies. In this sense, our findings are critical in showing that the relationship patterns might differ for the advantaged and disadvantaged groups in the host community.

The findings of the study offer valuable insights into the practical applications of understanding intergroup dynamics, particularly from an ecological perspective, within the context of host-refugee relations. From an ecological standpoint, the study illuminates how proximity to refugees influences intergroup attitudes and acculturation orientations among the Kurdish and Turkish populations in Turkey. The identification of Kurds endorsing integrationism more than Turks suggests the importance of social interaction and shared experiences in fostering positive intergroup relations. This highlights the significance of creating opportunities for voluntary, meaningful interactions between host communities and refugees to promote understanding and acceptance.

Moreover, the study underscores the role of group identities, both ethnic and national, in shaping acculturation expectations and perceptions of threat towards newcomers. For instance, the stronger correlations between ethnic identification and acculturation orientations among Turks, as well as the mediating effect of perceived threat on these orientations, indicate the need for interventions targeting national identity to mitigate negative perceptions and foster integration. This highlights the potential efficacy of programs to promote a shared national identity encompassing diverse ethnic groups, thus facilitating social cohesion and reducing intergroup tensions.

Additionally, the absence of a prevalent orientation towards transformation-integrationism suggests a need for further efforts to cultivate a multicultural environment and encourage active participation in intergroup reconciliation efforts. This emphasizes the importance of promoting dialogue and cooperation among different ethnic groups to foster mutual understanding and support the integration of refugees into the broader societal fabric (see also Garrido et al., 2019).

Overall, the study highlights the importance of considering social and psychological factors in shaping intergroup relations and acculturation processes within multicultural societies like Turkey. By elucidating the nuanced dynamics between host communities and refugees, the findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, community leaders, and practitioners involved in designing interventions and initiatives to promote social harmony, foster integration, and enhance the overall well-being of host communities and refugees.

Our study has four main limitations. First, convenience sampling was used to reach participants, and their education level was higher than in Türkiye. Thus, this issue should be considered when evaluating the findings. Further studies may focus on a representative sample to reach higher ecological validity. Second, we are fully aware that mediation models are more suitable for experimental designs and, accordingly, methods from which causal inferences can be made (Rohrer et al., 2022); however, the current research is in correlational design. Future studies may overcome this limitation by examining similar models with the same analyses using experimental or quasi-experimental designs. On the other hand, future studies with qualitative methods that focus on subjective experiences in an in-depth manner will reveal a more detailed portrait of this topic. Third, although this research was conducted at a time when the effects of

COVID-19 were relatively over, the potential effects of this event that affect the whole world should be considered when evaluating the findings. Finally, this research focuses only on hosts' attitudes. However, focusing on the perspectives of both hosts and refugees together is essential for a more comprehensive understanding of the relations between these groups (Navas et al., 2007). Therefore, it would benefit future studies to focus on both groups simultaneously. In addition, intersectional analyzes focusing on the coexistence of different identities will be very important for developing different perspectives on this issue.

9. Conclusion

This study offers crucial insights into the dynamics of intergroup relations and acculturation processes within the context of host-refugee interactions in Turkey. The findings highlight the significance of social interaction and shared experiences in shaping attitudes towards newcomers, with Kurds showing a greater tendency towards integrationism than Turks. Moreover, the role of group identities, particularly ethnic and national identification, emerges as influential factors in shaping acculturation expectations and perceptions of threat towards refugees. Interventions targeting national identity among Turks may prove effective in fostering integration and reducing intergroup tensions. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of cultivating a multicultural environment and promoting dialogue among different ethnic groups to support the integration of refugees into the broader societal fabric. However, it's important to acknowledge the limitations of the study, including the use of convenience sampling and correlational design, suggesting avenues for future research to enhance the ecological validity and causal inference of findings. Overall, these insights are valuable for policymakers, community leaders, and practitioners striving to promote social harmony and enhance the well-being of both host communities and refugees in Türkiye.

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