How the Presence of Syrian Refugees Affects Elections in Turkey

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April 30, 2024

Abstract: *The 2023 elections in Turkey brought negative national sentiment towards Syrian refugees to the fore in both campaign messaging and public opinion polls. This thesis explores how the presence of refugees affected the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey and the mechanisms and theories that shape this relationship. The following research assesses the impact of the presence of Syrian refugees on voting for the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections through a mixed methods approach consisting of regional voting, survey data and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analyses. In the presidential elections, the results indicated that the presence of refugees did not have a statistically significant effect on voting for the anti-refugee candidate, Kemal Kilicdaroglu. Conversely, in the parliamentary elections, the results suggest that a higher concentration of refugees in a province, particularly in major metropolitan centers, correlates with increased support for extreme single-issue anti-refugee parties, exemplified by the findings for the Zafer Party. The research also considers how the mechanisms of intergroup contact between Syrian refugees and Turks impacts voting for anti-refugee parties and finds that contact may lead to a slight increase in support for anti-refugee candidates. These findings underscore the importance of single-issue anti-refugee parties in the nexus between the presence of refugees and electoral outcomes in host countries.*

Acknowledgements: *I am forever grateful to everyone who provided me tremendous support and advice throughout this process. First and foremost, this thesis would not have been possible without the support of my wonderful advisor Professor Wendy Pearlman who guided me through this work from start to finish. Second, I am tremendously thankful to Professor Andrew Roberts who provided me with constant support and feedback throughout the research and drafting stages. I would also like to thank Kelsey James Ryland and Arne Holverscheid who provided me with excellent resources and guidance throughout the design of my GIS and statistical methods. Further, this research would not have been possible without the funding I received from the Northwestern Department of Political Science through the Ginsberg Grant. With this funding, I was able to procure data from Konda Research and Consultancy, which I employed to execute a key component of my methodology. Lastly, I am thankful for the support of my peers in the thesis seminar, my friends, and my family who provided encouragement and served as a sounding board in this journey. Together, this support team helped me accomplish my goals and achieve this final product.*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War in 2011, 3.1 million Syrian refugees have sought refuge in Turkey (UNHCR Operational Data Portal 2024). President Recep Tayyip Erdogan granted 200,000 of them citizenship to give those who were highly qualified "the chance to work as citizens" (Al Jazeera 2023). Some charge that this motion was to secure more votes, leading to a rise in xenophobia and anti-refugee sentiment that gained traction within the public discourse (Levkowitz 2023). To respond to the rising hostility towards Syrian refugees, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the 2023 presidential opposition candidate, as well as the candidates representing anti-refugee parties in the parliamentary race, instrumentalized anti-refugee sentiment in their campaigns and promoted restrictive immigration policies (Balta et. al 2023). In May 2023, Turkey held a presidential and parliamentary election. The presidential race, notably the closest since Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) rose to power in 2002, led to a runoff election in June that paved the way for Erdogan's 20th year in office. Conversely, in the parliamentary elections, the AKP won 36% of the vote and lost seats (Balta et. al 2023).

This thesis focuses on how the presence of refugees affected the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey and the mechanisms and theories that shape this relationship. Overall, the findings suggest that a higher refugee presence, particularly in provinces with major metropolitan centers, correlates with greater support for single-issue, anti-refugee parties such as the Zafer Party (ZP). This applies more specifically under the condition of parliamentary elections when voters have more flexibility in voting for a niche party that aligns with their key priorities. The findings for relatively anti-refugee parties in the parliamentary elections, namely the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Good Party (IYI), presented less statistically

significant results. This indicates a less clear correlation between the presence of refugees and voting for multi-issue parties with anti-refugee ideologies. In the case of the presidential elections, the findings illustrate a statistically insignificant relationship between the presence of refugees and voting for the more anti-refugee candidate Kemal Kilicdaroglu. This indicates that under the conditions of a presidential election, the presence of refugees may have a less influential role in determining voting behavior. Additionally, an assessment of survey data on intergroup contact between Syrian refugees and Turks illustrate that the bivariate relationship of contact between the two groups and voting for anti-refugee parties could serve as a mechanism to explain how the presence of Syrian refugees affects voting. However, the contact models with added controls lacked statistical significance, which warrants future research on how external factors may influence the efficacy of intergroup contact as a mechanism to improve in-group out-group relations.

How does the presence of refugees affect voting in host countries? The puzzle of how the presence of refugees affects voting in Turkey is two-fold. The first element is a question of under what conditions refugees play a role in affecting election outcomes. In the case of Turkish elections, it is important to consider how the political and social dynamics relating to refugees impact both the presidential and the parliamentary elections. The question emerges of why candidates in both electoral races would choose to instrumentalize anti-refugee discourse rather than run on another platform.

The second element of this puzzle is whether the increase in presence of refugees in different electoral districts negatively or positively affects voting for anti-refugee parties. Given the divergence in the presidential and parliamentary election results, the direction of the relationship is not entirely clear. One hypothesis could be that more refugees in a voting district

would lead to increased social contact and positive feelings towards them, which would make anti-refugee candidates less appealing. Another hypothesis could be that increased ethnic and cultural diversity could lead to feelings of cultural threat and hostility between locals and refugees, which would lead to more support for the candidate that promotes anti-refugee messaging and policies.

In current literature, there is a lack of studies on nations that host the majority of the global refugee population and have more fragile democracies. In the scope of existing research on the topic, there are conflicting findings. In some cases, the presence of refugees increases support for far-right anti-immigrant parties (Harmon 2014), and in others, contact between host populations and refugees increases positive attitudes and vote shares for pro-immigrant parties (Steinmayr 2016). Additionally, making sense of how refugees affect voting is especially interesting to decipher in the Turkish context where democracy is tremendously under threat and quasi-authoritarian. As in 2022 preceding the 2023 elections, Freedom House gave Turkey a score of 32 and categorized it as "Not Free", indicating the fragility of the state of democracy in the country (Freedom House 2022).

To reconcile contradictory evidence from past studies, more research is necessary to discern how the presence of refugees affects voting for pro- and anti-refugee parties. Further, it is important to consider how the duration of refugee settlement, demographics of refugee populations, and the degree of social contact and trust, among other factors, impact intergroup relationships. Understanding how these refugee-host population dynamics unfold in the Turkish context will provide an insight into the ways in which policymakers, researchers, institutions, humanitarian organizations, and other actors can develop sustainable solutions to intergroup conflict on a broader scale. Individual nations and international institutions increasingly find

themselves grappling with the political and electoral challenges associated with the international refugee crises. As such, discerning how the presence of refugees affects the dynamics of host populations, politics, and policymaking is an essential area of research to explore.

In the following chapters, I explore how the presence of refugees affected voting in the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey and make sense of the mechanisms that shape this relationship. Chapter 2 assesses the literature on how refugees, and immigrants more broadly affect politics and elections as well as the forces that underlie this dynamic. Chapter 3 narrows the scope to Turkish politics and the refugee situation there, first making sense of the political backdrop in the country and second, situating refugee politics within the conversation. Chapter 4 explains the theory and hypotheses underlying the methodological approach in the research. Chapter 5 outlines a high-level overview of the three methodological approaches taken in this research as well as a description of the data sources. Chapter 6 presents the methods and results for the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis I incorporate to supplement my statistical findings. Chapter 7 presents the regional voting analyses executed through an OLS regression of a provincial level dataset for the 2023 elections. Chapter 8 advances a survey analysis through logit regressions to discern how a proxy measure for intergroup contact impacts voting for anti-refugee parties. Chapter 9 presents a discussion of these methods, and Chapter 10 concludes the thesis and proposes areas for further research.

Chapter 2: Current Scholarship on Refugees and Elections

The following literature review assesses how previous studies evaluate the effects of refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers on politics, as well as the theoretical and empirical frameworks they have yet to consider. Scholars have primarily focused on two main aspects of the effects of migrant populations on voting and elections in host states: polarization and intergroup relations. More specifically, research on the dynamics between immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers and host populations focuses on how migrant populations motivate support for anti-immigrant parties as well as how contact between refugees and host populations mediates public opinion.

First, immigrant and refugee arrivals facilitate increased polarization by exacerbating divides between political parties and national ideological priorities. A study by Mader and Schoen of the shock of the refugee crisis in Germany found that immigration driven by globalization creates "political potentials that can transform electoral competition in Western societies" (Mader and Schoen 2019). A study of the effect of refugee arrivals on Norwegian politics confirmed this trend with similar results that refugee shocks lead to stronger polarization (Finseraas and Strøm 2022).

An additional aspect of exacerbated polarization is that immigrant arrivals lead to increased support for far-right parties and candidates. Studying Denmark, Harmon found that the escalation of local ethnic diversity led to an increase in votes for right-ward, anti-immigrant and nationalist candidates, and facilitated a shift away from support of left-wing parties (Harmon 2014). Research found similar outcomes in Hungary (Gessler et. al 2021), Germany (Otto and Stienhardt 2014), Norway (Sørensen 2016), and Italy (Barone et. al 2016). Increased support for extreme right parties with an influx of Muslim asylum seekers more specifically also emerged in

a study of Greece (Dinas et. al 2019). Although there are very few studies that address this phenomenon in the Global South context, one case of Venezuelan refugees in Colombia also corroborates the trend that refugee arrivals increase support for far-right parties (Rozo and Vargas 2021). The research on the association between arrivals and increased support for far-right parties indicates that this trend persists for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. These investigations focus more on shifts in support for political parties rather than whether refugees and immigrants hurt incumbents, illuminating an area that requires more research. Additionally, recontextualizing this literature in the case of Turkey, political parties are not as easily categorized on the left versus right spectrum, but rather, they fall along religious-secular divides (Aydogan and Slapin 2015). Along these cleavages, the secular parties tend to maintain more anti-refugee ideologies, similar to that of the "far-right" discourse in studies of Western politics, however, more research is needed to discern if the finding holds for anti-refugee parties that are not necessarily considered as "right-wing".

Research attributes cultural threat as one of the key drivers of this increased support for anti-immigrant, far right parties that result from refugee shocks. In Spain, Mendez and Cutillas found that Spanish natives' attitudes towards immigrants was primarily driven by "noneconomic factors like dissimilarities between natives and immigrants in language, religion, and race" (Mendez and Cutillas 2014). The Norwegian case emphasizes this idea as anti-immigrant attitudes tend to be fueled by cultural resentment and less towards competition for welfare and economic resources (Sørensen 2016). In Italy, competition in the labor market and for public services had a higher salience in driving refugee attitudes, but cultural diversity still emerged as a key factor that led to heightened support for far-right candidates (Barone et. al 2016). Further, Hainmueller and Hopkins note in an aggregate analysis of several Western countries that public

concerns about cultural impacts, not feelings of economic competition, drive anti-immigration attitudes that in turn drive polarization (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014). As such, the notion of cultural threat associated with refugee and immigrant shocks often explain adverse attitudes towards them and lead to increased votes for candidates who promote more restrictive policies.

It is important to note that these studies surrounding cultural threat of immigrant arrivals as a key driver to polarization primarily apply to the category of "immigrants." Several studies address how refugees more specifically generate concerns around cultural threat and reduce trust of the outgroup (Barman 2020; Esses et. al 2017; Fajth et. al 2019). Further, in a few studies in the Global South, a similar trend emerges of feelings of cultural threat driving xenophobic attitudes towards refugees more specifically. For example, research on Kenya and Ethiopia (Konečná 2021), South Africa (Gordon 2014), and a broader survey of African countries with high ethnic diversity (Whitaker and Giersch 2015) present results of hostility towards refugees and immense xenophobic sentiment in the population. However, these studies do not address how these anti-refugee attitudes as response to cultural threat and increased ethnic diversity impact voting behavior or drive polarization. Therefore, there is a gap in existing research surrounding how feelings of cultural threat pertaining to refugees more specifically impact voting for anti-refugee parties.

The second trend in literature is the use of the social contact hypothesis to explain the effect of refugees on politics. This could serve as a mechanism to understand how the presence of Syrian refugees in Turkey may lead to more intergroup contact with Turks, and in turn, affect their voting behavior. The social contact hypothesis pertains to the idea that intergroup contact yields the most positive effects between groups. This is especially true when those interacting are of equal group status, share common goals, practice intergroup cooperation and authority and

institutional support (Allport 1954). In this framework, the more contact refugees have with host populations, the more likely their host counterparts will hold positive attitudes towards them. The first dimension of the social contact hypothesis in the context of refugee politics is the duration of contact between refugees and host populations. In an Italian study on the association between immigration and voting, Bratti et. al found that being closer to refugee centers, which led to short term contact with refugee groups, increased the proportion of voter turnout and anti-government votes (Bratti et. al 2017). A study in Denmark noted that larger allocation of refugees led to increase of vote share for right leaning parties, however, in urban districts more specifically, the opposite trend occurred, indicating differing effects of attitudes depending on social distance (Dustmann et. al 2018).

These differing effects of proximity to refugees and voting may partially be attributed to the amount of time refugees spend in voting districts. A study from Hungary argues that short term contact leads to different outcomes then in areas where refugees settle for a while. Their results found that "settlements through which refugees traveled showed significantly higher anti-refugee voting in a national referendum in 2016." (Gessler et. al 2021). Conversely, in areas where refugees and immigrants settle for longer periods of time, studies find that increased frequency of contact leads to more positive attitudes. In Austria, Stienmayr found that in line with the contact hypothesis, hosting refugees in communities for a longer duration dampens support for the far-right parties (Steinmayr 2016). The results from a study in Norway also aligned with the contact hypothesis in that more direct contact with immigrants alleviated concerns with respect to native cultural threat (Sørensen 2016). The contradictory evidence in these studies illustrate that it is essential to consider urban versus rural divides, locals' social distance from refugee or immigrant populations, duration of integration, and intergroup contact

when deciphering the effects of immigrants and refugees on recipient countries' politics and elections. The literature also emphasizes the centrality of the contact hypothesis in explaining positive attitudes towards refugees. That said, as these studies on contact are based in wealthy countries with established democracies, research must determine how the contact hypothesis plays out in countries where democracy is fragile, and the population is more broadly impoverished.

Considering this survey of literature, an important phenomenon to note is that the majority of existing literature examines Western, democratic host countries, despite the fact that 76% of forcibly displaced persons worldwide reside in low- and middle-income countries (UNHCR 2024). Therefore, it is essential to consider studies that explore the effects of refugees on politics in authoritarian contexts more specifically. Studies on authoritarian countries indicate that regimes instrumentalize refugee populations and asylum politics to maintain power. Refugee and migrant arrivals "significantly impact people's voting behavior in the midst of party competition," although the extent to which the masses can speak up about refugee issues and influence candidates to address refugees in their campaigns and policies can significantly differ in democracies versus autocracies (Higashijima and Woo 2020). This is because the economic benefits of migrants and refugees may influence autocracies to develop refugee policies that may differ from the sentiment amongst their constituents (Shin 2017). In the case of Zimbabwe, asylum has served as a tool of patronage (Wellman 2023), and in Sudan, the Nimeiry regime used refugees as a scapegoat to maintain legitimacy and withstand the forces of opposition groups (Ek and Karadawi 1991). Thus, the presence of refugees has an immense effect on politics and public opinion of regimes in authoritarian contexts, yet how they affect election outcomes and voting behavior of host populations more specifically is less clear.

This survey of existing literature on the relationship between the presence of refugees and politics indicates several key gaps in research. First, existing literature fails to consider how the presence of refugees affects voting for anti-refugee parties under different conditions and electoral contexts. As such, there has yet to be studies that assess how the impact of the presence of refugees differs between presidential and parliamentary elections in a country. Understanding how the presence of refugees impacts voting under different electoral conditions is important to consider as it can shed light on the role of institutional factors in shaping attitudes towards refugees. This is because parliamentary systems may provide avenues for the representation of more diverse opinions on refugees, whereas in presidential elections, candidates may be incentivized to adopt a more polarized position on refugee issues to mobilize their electoral base.

Second, and relatedly, existing scholarship lacks research on how the presence of refugees affects voting for single-issue anti-refugee parties versus more mainstream, multi-issue parties. Examining the impact of the presence of refugees in voting for single-issue anti-refugee parties can provide insights into the determinants of support for these parties and the social tensions that may underlie xenophobic attitudes within an electorate. Conversely, exploring how refugees impact voting for mainstream, multi-issue parties is crucial as it can shed light on the salience of refugee issues in the broader political landscape that the parties consider. In other words, it provides insights into the extent to which voters may prioritize refugee policies over other social, economic, and environmental issues in electoral decision making. Lastly, discerning the impacts that the presence of refugees has on voting for single-issue anti-refugee parties versus multi-issue parties can provide a framework to consider how different candidates instrumentalize anti-refugee discourse and ideologies within their campaign strategies.

Third, there is a lack of research on the effect of refugee politics on elections in countries undergoing democratic backsliding, which distinguishes the case of Turkey from other studies on the subject. Although authors have examined refugee host states in the Middle East (Norman 2020; Sahin-Mencutek and Tsourapas 2023; Abdelaaty 2021), they are an exception to the norm of studying these dynamics in the advanced democracies and do not explain the question of electoral outcomes. Filling this gap in research is important given that the majority of refugee-hosting countries tend to have less stable democratic institutions, and higher rates of poverty in their populations.

Chapter 3: Political Competition in Turkey and Refugee Politics

3.1 Turkish Politics

Now to center more specifically on Turkish politics, it is first important to consider perspectives of cleavages within the population and voting behavior, and how that maps onto refugee politics in the country. The Justice and Development Party (AKP), the incumbent party that centers its discourse on Islamist, family-centered ideology, rose to power in 2002 when the country was undergoing a severe political and economic crisis (Shukri and Hossain 2017). Recep Tayyip Erdogan led the party through a series of victories in elections in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2018, and, most recently, 2023 (Fraser 2023). In 2016, a coup attempt backfired, as Erdogan initiated a state of emergency that allowed him to tighten his grip on power and push the 2017 Referendum through parliament to change the system of government from a parliamentary to a presidential (Quamar 2017). The referendum allowed Erdogan to further consolidate his power, allowing him to run for two more terms and maintain his stronghold on the Turkish government (Kirisci and Ekim 2017). Following the 2017 referendum, he initiated a series of policies and mechanisms to facilitate democratic backsliding, such as replacing bureaucrats and head of agencies, packing the courts with AKP representatives, controlling the media, and curbing military power (Kirici and Sloat 2019). The policies and discourse of Erdogan and his regime has also been described as populist and authoritarian (Ozpek and Yasar 2018). The context of the evolving rise of authoritarianism made the most recent 2023 elections particularly salient, as they were an opportunity to destabilize the AKP regime and bring power to the secular pro-democratic opposition.

As Erdogan continues to consolidate his increasingly autocratic power in the country, polarization in Turkey has become particularly pronounced and pervades not only on the level of

political elites, but also throughout the population. Much of polarization in the country is based on two formative identity-based rifts, the first is between Turks and "outsiders", such as non-Muslims, Kurds, and Alevis (the largest religious minority in the country), and the second is the rift between secular and religious citizens (Somer 2018). According to Laebens and Ozturk, partisanship in Turkey is strong, with low electoral volatility and defection rates (Laebens and Ozturk 2021). Considering this polarized context, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the main opposition candidate in the presidential elections openly identified as Alevi, which may have ultimately hurt him in the elections (Yildiz 2023).

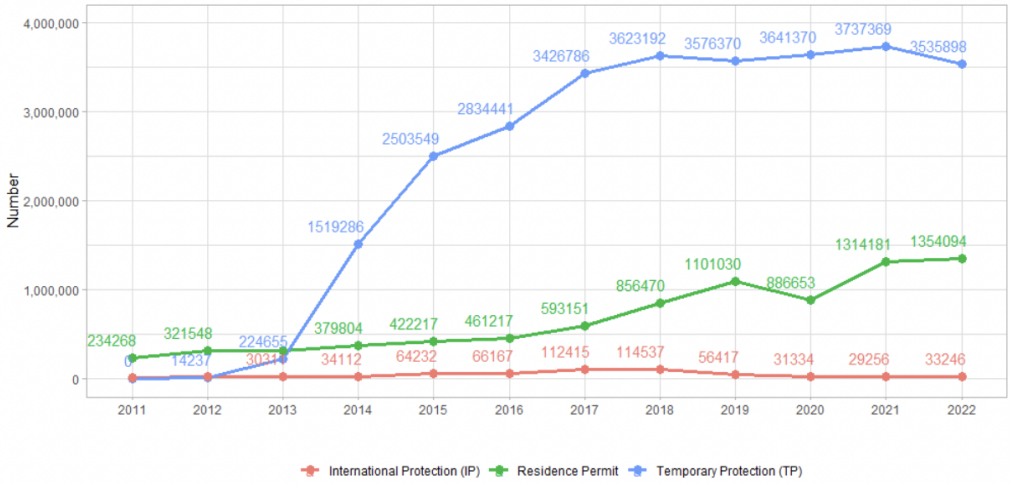
In the 2023 elections, several coalitions emerged along these preexisting cleavages. The first is the People's Alliance, who had Erdogan as their presidential candidate. The coalition consists of the AKP, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), the Grand Unity Party (BBP), and the New Welfare Party (YRP) (Tol 2023). The second is the Nation Alliance who had Kilicdaroglu as their presidential candidate and served as the key opposition to the People's Alliance. The coalition consists of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Good Party (IYI), Democracy and Progress Party (DEVA), Felicity Party (SP), Future Party (GP), and the Democrat Party (DP) (Tol 2023). Although not officially part of the coalition, Kilicdaroglu received endorsements from the pro-Kurdish Party of Greens and the Left Future (YSGP), the People's Democratic Party (HDP), and the Zafer Party (ZP) (Uras 2023; Hayatsever and Kucukgocmen 2023). The People's Alliance Campaign ran on the front that it will fix the problems of Turkey employing a populist, Islamist, and nationalist sentiment in its discourse, whereas the Nation Alliance pledged to uphold democracy and the rule of law, promoting sentiments of "change". (Uras 2023; Tol 2023). Political analysts claimed that the opposition coalition in the 2023 elections has been "the strongest attempt of Turkey's opposition parties to

forge a joint plan that explicitly prioritizes democratization" (Tahiroglu 2022) and that "party alliances have never been as relevant and as transparent as today" (Somer 2023). Studies have found that party membership activism has increased in Turkey since the beginning of the 21st Century, but parties have not been able to mobilize society as much as they could in the past (Sayari et. al 2018). Thus, the strength and unity of the coalitions in the 2023 elections signals a turning point in Turkish politics, in that the votes fell more along partisan lines, especially in the presidential elections, to mobilize change in the quasi-authoritarian state.

3.2 Refugee Dynamics and Politics in Turkey

Turkey, recently surpassed by Iran, hosts the second largest refugee population of all host countries in the world of around 3.1 million as of 2024, almost all of whom are Syrian refugees (UNHCR 2024). The conflict in Syria has displaced 14 million Syrians, leading 5.5 million to seek refuge in bordering countries (USA for UNHCR 2024. To understand the scope of the situation in Turkey and Syria in the global context, since 2011, the worldwide forcibly displaced population grew from about 40 million to 110 million at the end of 2023 (UNHCR 2024). These mass refugee flows over the past decade have led to increased ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity across nations and pressures on welfare systems. Figure 1 illustrates the number of Syrian refugee inflows to Turkey since the beginning of the Civil War in Syria.

Figure 1: Syrian Refugee Inflows to Turkey Over Time[1]



The issue of refugees in Turkish politics has been a salient issue since the beginning of the Syrian Uprising and war in 2011, and the 2016 EU-Turkey deal. Most Syrian refugees live in urban and semi-urban areas near the border as the camps established after the start of the war reached capacity nearly as fast as the government could build (Makovsky 2019; Cerre 2016; Erdogan 2018). As 97.77% of Syrian refugees live in cities, the refugee issue has become a salient topic in Turkish politics in the past decade (Refugees Association 2023). The AKP overall has been welcoming towards refugees, as their discourse promotes religious solidarity to protect the oppressed Muslim people of the world, treating Syrians as 'our own brothers', and presenting Turkey in a positive light in the geopolitical sphere (Demirtas 2020; Polat 2017; Farkas 2021). Erdogan's welcoming stance towards refugees can also be attributed to his stance against Bashar Al Assad, the president of Syria, who Erdogan claims "has no respect for his people's rights to life" (Farkas 2021). In addition to their relatively pro-refugee discourse,

[1] Image Source: Balta et. al 2022; Data: PMM, 2022.

Erdogan and the AKP made an effort to welcome Syrian refugees in its Open Door Policy and pro-refugee campaigns.

In the earlier years of the crisis, Turkish public opinion signaled a high degree of social acceptance towards refugees in line with Erdogan and the AKP's discourse, but this feeling has changed dramatically over time. The change in attitudes has been attributed to Turkey's economic crisis that started in 2017, the influx of Afghan refugees in 2021 who came to Turkey after the US withdrew from Afghanistan and rising perceptions that Syrian refugees are increasingly unlikely to leave (Tahiroglu 2022). To demonstrate this shift in attitudes numerically, a 2012 Metropoll survey signaled that 52% of Turks disagreed with the decision to allow Syrian refugees in the country, whereas in 2018, 83% percent of Turks said that they viewed Syrians negatively (Makovsky 2019). The 2021 Syrian Barometer by Murat Erdogan also found a significant increase in adverse perceptions of Syrians, in that support for sending refugees back to Syria increased from 48.9% in 2017 to 82.0% in 2021 (Erdogan 2021). Additionally, a 2023 survey from a Turkish public opinion company found that 70 percent of Turks would vote for the party that enforces the most restrictive policies on Syrian refugees (Duvar Gazette 2023). Thus, there has been a significant shift in perceptions of refugees over time as more have sought asylum in Turkey. Due to this pressure to address the refugee crisis, Erdogan moved to end the Open Door Policy in 2022 and announced he would return 1 million Syrian refugees to their home, although he has not yet met this goal and continues to promote a discourse to maintain positive relations towards refugees (Petillo 2022; Morgul 2023). The Open Door Policy allowed Syrian refugees to cross the border freely and seek refuge in Turkish processing centers, and thus, reversing this policy was a substantial blow to Syrian refugee mobility and pathways to citizenship.

In addition to the shift in approach to the refugee crisis for the incumbent AKP, the increasingly anti-refugee attitudes amongst the Turkish public are visible in the discourse of opposition candidates and parties. Instrumentalizing anti-refugee discourse in campaigns emerged as a common trend from social media to campaign slogans and speeches (Ozduzen et. al 2021). During the 2019 municipal election cycle, disinformation that Syrian refugees posed security threats and caused economic challenges, among other false claims, spread on social media and eventually led to violence against refugees (Akdeniz and Karyemez 2019). Analysts argue that the success of the CHP in the 2019 election cycle is attributed to its campaign to repatriate refugees (Tahiroglu 2022). Subsequently in 2021, ZP, formed by the Turkish politician Umit Ozdag, started to gain traction with messaging that the refugee influx was "strategically engineered migration" and proposed to "ship all refugees away within a single year" (Karsit 2022). ZP is distinguished from other parties in that its main issue is anti-refugee policy and targets security at multiple levels, which has given negative sentiments towards refugees more visibility in the public sphere (Irgil and Balcioglu 2022; Balta et. al 2022).

Although ZP arguably centralizes anti-refugee sentiment the most of any party that ran in the 2023 elections, members of the Nation Alliance, primarily the CHP and IYI, have also adopted anti-refugee stances in their campaigning (Balta et. al 2023). For example, Kilicdaroglu promoted starkly anti-Syrian policies and a discourse that threatened national security with the campaign slogan "Syrians Will Go", promoting the intention to repatriate Syrian refugees and prevent employment of those in Turkey illegally (D'ignoti 2023; Ashawi and Kucukgocmen 2023; Balta et. al 2023). He also proposed that he would send an exaggerated "10 million refugees" home (Al Jazeera 2023). Although the IYI party adopts a less harsh stance on refugees in comparison to ZP and CHP, party representatives also claimed that the "prolonged presence of

refugees was a symptom of the AKP's failure" and campaigned on negotiating with political actors to repatriate Syrian refugees (Secen et. al 2024). The increased instrumentalization of anti-refugee discourse in campaigns, policies, and initiatives in the 2023 elections coincides with an increasingly xenophobic undertone in public opinion and national sentiment compared to previous years.

Figure 2, from a report on the saliency of the refugee issue in Turkey after the emergence of ZP by Balta et. al illustrates how the salience of the issue changed for the five most mainstream parties in the country, the AKP, CHP, HDP, IYI, and MHP (Balta et. al 2023). In the "negative" category we see the negative attitudes towards refugees increase for the relatively anti-refugee IYI and CHP parties, a slight shift in the positive direction for the MHP, and positive attitudes towards refugees for the AKP and the HDP. This figure presents a spectrum in which to consider where these mainstream parties fall in terms of being pro- or anti-refugee.

Figure 2: The Tone and Saliency of The Syrian Refugee Crisis Before and After the Emergence of the Zafer Party [2]

[2] Image Source: Balta et. al 2023, Figure 3; Data: Balta et. al 2023.

For this research, I employ this spectrum to categorize these mainstream parties in the "anti-refugee" and "pro-refugee" buckets. ZP falls on the most starkly anti-refugee side, followed by IYI then CHP. MHP falls in the middle as its attitudes towards refugees have fluctuated over time and the issue was not a central priority in their 2023 campaign (Balta et. al 2023). On the more pro-refugee side the AKP would be considered the most pro-refugee as it has maintained the most consistently positive view towards refugees over time, followed by the HDP. Indeed, categorizing these parties under "anti-refugee" and "pro-refugee" categories holds different salience depending on whether the party is more single-issue like ZP, versus a multi-issue party like IYI and CHP. Nonetheless, this spectrum of attitudes towards refugees will be important to keep in mind in the methods section of this research where I explore how the presence of refugees impact voting for "anti-refugee" parties.

Several studies have measured the effect of refugees on elections in Turkey and reached different conclusions. Some research has found that the effects of refugee inflows on voting outcomes was negligible and statistically insignificant. One study by Altindag and Kaushal on the 2011 and 2015 general elections measured the effect of Syrian refugees with public opinion data. They employed two instrumental variables to measure refugee distribution based on interpolation of the 1965 census of Arabic speakers and the driving distance between Turkish provinces and Syrian governorates. They performed an initial regression of public opinion on AKP vote shares and another OLS and 2SLS regression of their instrumental variables on votes for four different parties (Altindag and Kaushal 2021). A different study by Fisunoğlu and Sert on the 2007, 2011, and 2015 general elections used data from the Directorate General of Migration Management to measure the refugee ratio per province and used AKP vote share to measure voting behavior. They conducted an OLS and GLS regression of the refugee ratio on the

AKP vote share (Fisunoğlu and Sert 2019). In both cases, the refugee variable had null effects on the vote share of the incumbent AKP in the general elections.

Other research has found that the presence of refugees leads to a positive effect on vote shares for anti-refugee parties. One study on the 2015 parliamentary elections used internet data to measure public sentiment towards refugees and refugee ratios derived from TurkStat. The study found that the refugee crisis led to an increase in votes for the MHP (an anti-refugee party until 2017 and has since become more pro-refugee) in regions with higher refugee ratios, whereas for all other parties, including the AKP, the relationship was statistically insignificant (Karacuka 2019). A 2021 study by Apayadin and Muftuler-Bac covered elections from 2011 to 2018 measuring vote shares from the Turkish election council and refugee presence using data from Directorate General of Migration Management. They also included a key measure of the distance of cities from the Syrian border. Using an OLS regression and a difference-in-difference test of the refugee variables on party vote share, they found increased support for the CHP opposition party where the refugee ratio increased (Apayadin and Muftuler-Bac 2021).

Lastly, there have been some recently published discourse and content analyses on the role of anti-refugee attitudes in political parties surrounding 2023 elections that are important to consider. One study published in 2022 conducted a discourse analysis of the speeches from five major political parties in parliament from 2010-2021 (AKP, CHP, HDP, MHP and IYI). The researchers argue that the emergence of anti-immigration parties impacted the anti-refugee discourse of all parties, but that this was particularly true of IYI whose anti-refugee attitudes have shifted in line with the emergence of ZP (Balta et. al 2022). It is important to note that the study did not code speeches after 2021 when ZP, the most starkly anti-immigrant party, gained traction in the political landscape preceding the 2023 election. Another similar content analysis

study by the same group of researchers on the 2023 elections found the overall the tone of migration moved toward the negative from 2021 (Balta et. al 2023.) Although these findings will be important to consider in my research, neither of these studies directly examine how the presence of refugees affect voting outcomes such as the aforementioned studies on earlier elections. Thus, there has yet to be a statistical assessment of what the relationship between the presence of refugees and voting for anti-refugee parties looked like in the 2023 context.

Existing literature signifies competing conclusions: that refugees either have no effect on elections or have a positive effect on the opposition anti-refugee parties' vote share. The differences of these results are attributed to the fact that the negligent effects derive from analyses primarily of the incumbent AKP, whereas studies with positive effects include anti-refugee parties. Additionally, there have been different measures of the distribution of refugees across provinces, which also may have contributed to the variability of findings in previous studies. Therefore, research must look at how the presence of refugees affects the vote share of anti-refugee parties more specifically across provinces. Additionally, more recent content analyses signal that the tone and salience of refugees for different political parties has fluctuated and presented inconsistent patterns in recent years, which brings to question what the effect of refugees on anti-refugee politics in the more recent context looks like. Lastly, these studies solely focus on the general elections rather than both the presidential and parliamentary, which present different conditions to assess the relationship between the presence of refugees and voting.

The research for my thesis fills three gaps in existing literature on Turkey. The first gap in previous research is that there is a lack of understanding of how refugees affected voting behavior in Turkey in the 2023 elections, and in elections more broadly after the 2017 referendum that shifted the system of governance from a parliamentary to a presidential

structure. Understanding this gap is important because it serves as an example to discern how refugee-host population dynamics may shift during processes of democratic backsliding. Additionally, in comparison to prior elections addressed by previous literature, in the most recent presidential elections there was a significant increase in anti-refugee discourse, a more united opposition party, a recent dire economic crisis, an earthquake recovery process, and an increased quantity of Syrian refugee inflows. The emergence of new anti-refugee parties, namely ZP, which was established in 2021 after the 2018 elections, may have also shifted the role of refugees in politics in a way that would be challenging to discern in analyses of previous elections.

The second gap in research is that previous studies have not reviewed how the presence of refugees impact the voting behavior of both the presidential and parliamentary elections. Understanding the different impacts between presidential versus parliamentary elections will provide an approach to make sense of under what conditions the presence of refugees impact election outcomes.

The third gap is a lack of research into Social Cohesion Theory and Intergroup Contact Theory as frameworks that mediate the relationship between the presence of refugees and elections in Turkey. With the anti-refugee candidate Kemal Kilicdaroglu as the key opposition candidate in the 2023 elections and the newly formed anti-refugee ZP gaining traction in the political sphere, the current example will be well suited to explain the effect of refugees on voting behavior. As such, my research will work to discern the mechanism that mediates the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and answer my research question in a way that other works have not.

Chapter 4: Theory and Hypotheses

Theory 4.1

The following section outlines the core theoretical frameworks in which my hypotheses and methods are structured. As this research focuses on how the presence of Syrian refugees affects voting, it is important to consider theories regarding intergroup relations as well as how voters react to perceptions of threat and competition to resources. Understanding intergroup relations is useful to build hypotheses about the presence of refugees. Although direct interactions between the ingroup and the outgroup are not precisely the same, these theories are nevertheless useful to consider when evaluating the effect of the presence of refugees on voting. The following theories could explain what causes the underlying xenophobic perceptions of the outgroup that motivate voting for anti-refugee parties. Additionally, intergroup relations theories can serve as a framework to understand potential mechanisms to employ to reduce tensions and voting for parties that discriminate against refugees.

The key framework that relates to conflict between social groups is the idea of social identity theory or theories of discrimination which suggest that people dislike individuals who identify with the outgroup (Tajfel 1974). Preference for the in-group pertains to the desire to promote one's own identity to preserve self-esteem at the expense of the outgroup, which can lead to intergroup conflict and hostility (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Obst et. al argue that the dimensions of social identity theory are multidimensional and can be mediated through prototypicality of group members and their perceptions of the outgroup (Obst et. al 2011). In the case of Turkey, the core distinction between the Turkish ingroup and the Syrian refugee outgroup is ethnic and linguistic differences. A core similarity between the two groups that may act as a mediating force in the relationship is similarities in religious identity. Social identity

theory can explain biases that local Turks may feel towards Syrians especially in rural areas as locals may feel more threatened by the outgroup with whom they interact less frequently. One gap within the theoretical framework of social identity theory in the case of Turkey is that it does not necessarily explain how and why this varies across provinces and in turn, how that translates into voting behavior.

Another dimension of social identity theory are the forces at play that exacerbate tensions between groups based on identity. In the case of voting behavior, voters may feel increasing intergroup hostility when there is competition for resources or perceptions of threat from the outgroup. Alesina and La Ferrera argue that competition in the labor market in tandem with interethnic tensions and fragmentation motivates voting behavior that reduces resources in welfare systems (Alesina and La Ferrera 2005). Additionally, Colantone and Stanig illustrate that increased globalization, which contributes to local economic competition and vulnerability, leads to support for more nationalist and isolationist parties (Colantone and Stanig 2018). In the context of host population-refugee dynamics, influxes of refugees may lead to increased sentiments of threats to access to resource and heightened competition in the labor market. As such, voters may lean towards more anti-refugee parties to reduce access to resources for the refugee outgroup to ensure their own security and protect those with a common identity.

Social identity theory or theories of discrimination contrasts with intergroup contact theory which argues that more positive exposure to the outgroup increases the ingroup's positive attitudes towards them. I draw on the theory of intergroup contact from Gordon Allport and Thomas Pettigrew. Allport argues that intergroup contact yields the most positive effects where those interacting are of equal group status, share common goals, practice intergroup cooperation and authority and institutional support (Allport 1954). In the case of Turkey, Erdogan's more

pro-refugee stance relative to other parties in the country could embody the fourth mechanism of authority support for positive intergroup contact. Supplementing this theory, Pettigrew argues that the processes to achieve optimal intergroup contact consist of learning about the outgroup, changed behavior, affective ties, and ingroup reappraisal (Pettigrew 1998). More recent studies on intergroup contact theory found that contact also increases trust and forgiveness for past transgressions (Pettigrew et. al 2011). The theory of intergroup contact thus suggests that more incidences of contact between groups reduce biases and acts of prejudice against the outgroup. Thus, contextualizing this theory in Turkey, in areas where Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees interact more frequently would lead to increased positive attitudes towards them, subsequently leading them to reject voting for anti-refugee parties.

Hypotheses 4.2

The following set of hypotheses presents two mechanisms between my independent and dependent variable that I intend to test in response to the question *How does the presence of refugees affect voting in host countries?* In the first hypothesis, I explore the effect of the presence of refugees on the anti-refugee party vote share for the presidential elections, and the parliamentary elections. In the second hypothesis, I examine how intergroup contact between Syrian refugees and the Turkish host population affects voting behavior for anti-refugee parties.

The first set of hypotheses apply social identity theory. In the Turkish case, social identity theory could explain factors that might affect cleavages between Syrian refugees and Turks. In response to feelings of threat from the presence of the Syrian refugee outgroup due to ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences, Turkish voters may respond by voting for more anti-refugee parties that would restrict refugee inflows and integration into their communities. Perceptions of

competition in the job market as well as access to public services, resources, and state provided provisions would exacerbate these sentiments. H1 presents social cohesion theory as a mechanism that exacerbates adverse attitudes towards refugees, and thus motivates voting behavior for anti-refugee parties. Therefore, in provinces with more refugees, we would anticipate increased support for anti-refugee parties. When the presence of refugees has the opposite effect in provinces with greater refugee populations, I would reject social cohesion theory as a key theoretical force that shapes voting behavior of Turkish voters in response to the presence of Syrian refugees.

H1: More refugees in a province will increase voting for the anti-refugee party.

Building on H1, the second hypothesis examines intergroup contact theory as an alternative mechanism that could explain the relationship between the presence of refugees and voting in Turkey. I frame this hypothesis to as an alternative explanation to challenge the notion in H1. I pose that the more Turkish citizens are exposed to Syrian refugees, the less likely they will vote for anti-refugee parties. Therefore, provinces with a smaller proportion of Syrian refugees to Turkish citizens will be more likely to vote for anti-refugee parties. In contrast, provinces with a higher concentration of Syrian refugees will be less likely to vote for anti-refugee parties. If my results lead me to reject H2, the findings would further corroborate social cohesion theory as the key mechanism that shapes the relationship between the presence of refugees and voting as outlined in H1.

If my results lead me to confirm H2, the findings will convey that intergroup contact serves as a mechanism to reduce tensions between Syrian refugees and Turks rather than

exacerbate them. This would align with the framework of intergroup contact theory as explained in section 4.1, where contact can serve as a mediating force that creates positive relationships between refugees and host populations. In this alternative case, the more that Turkish citizens interact with Syrian refugees, the more positive attitudes they will feel for them, which will then in turn decrease their support for anti-refugee parties.

H2: More intergroup contact between Turks and Syrian refugees in a province will decrease voter preferences for anti-refugee parties.

These hypotheses aim to explore the complex relationship between the presence of refugees and voting behavior in Turkey. I base my theoretical framework on social cohesion theory and intergroup contact theory to explore mechanisms that mediate intergroup relations within my analysis. I test these hypotheses and explore responses to my research questions in the methods and results chapters that follow.

Chapter 5: Data and Methods

5.1 Methodological Overview

To test my hypotheses, I use three strategies to assess how the presence of refugees across provinces affects voting. The first is a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis, the second is a regional voting analysis, and the third is a survey analysis which includes self-reported contact with refugees. The statistical methodology for the following research draws partially on a synthesis of two studies that examined how refugees affected elections in Turkey in previous elections. These studies are by Altindag and Kaushal (2019) and Fisunoğlu and Sert (2018). In both studies, the researchers use OLS regressions of the AKP party vote shares on a measure of the distribution of refugees across provinces. In Altindag and Kaushal's study, they use a provincial level dataset where the refugee ratio is drawn from the Directorate General of Migration Management (GIGM) and the AKP vote share is from the Turkish elections office. In Fisunoğlu and Sert, the variation of refugees across provinces is measured by the UNHCR and GIGM and the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), which they utilized to create two instrument-based measures of refugees based on the location of Arab speakers in the 1965 Census and distances from the Syrian border. They also use the AKP vote share from the elections office in their analysis. What distinguishes Fisunoğlu and Sert is that they also include survey data from Konda Research and Consultancy to supplement their analysis of what drove voting behavior for the AKP. The following data sources and methodological approaches draw on a combination of both methodological approaches in the these models and advance a different approach to integrating survey data as a measure of intergroup contact.

The first methodological component advances a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis of my elections dataset to make sense of how the spatial distribution of the independent

variable of the presence of refugees corresponds to the dependent variable of the vote shares of anti-refugee parties. GIS is a system that connects maps to all types of data by integrating location data with descriptive information (ESRI 2024). GIS enables a comprehensive understanding of geographical patterns and relationships associated with the spatial distribution of refugees and their impact on the voting landscape. Mapping out the dependent and independent variables allows one to spatially analyze crucial geographic influences on the relationship that cannot be facilitated in a numerical statistical approach. I primarily use GIS to map bivariate relationships between the variables of the distribution of refugee ratios and vote shares for anti-refugee parties across provinces. The GIS analysis serves as a supplementary component that complements the regression analysis results rather than as a method to be considered in isolation as it assesses how the variation of the presence of refugees in a province correlate to vote shares. The addition of GIS is also a methodological component that distinguishes this research from previous studies on how the presence of refugees affect elections in Turkey.

The second methodological component, a regional elections analysis, advances an OLS regression of ZP, IYI, CHP, and AKP (for a basis of comparison) party vote shares in the case of the 2023 parliamentary elections and CHP party vote shares in the case of the 2023 second round presidential elections on the refugee ratio across provinces. What distinguishes this approach from the studies I draw from is that I employ the vote shares of the anti-refugee parties in addition to the AKP party which is relatively more pro-refugee. Using the anti-refugee party vote shares as my dependent variable allows me to draw a more direct link between the presence of refugees and their effects on choosing to vote for a party that is more explicitly anti-refugee. Choosing the AKP is a less clear-cut party to operationalize as the dependent variable because

the vote shares for the AKP are also impacted by the incumbency advantage, networks of patronage, corruption in the system of the elections, among other factors. I chose to employ an OLS regression model in my statistical analysis because it facilitates a method in which to assess the linear correlation between the presence of refugees and vote shares for the anti-refugee vote party.

The third methodological component looks at how intergroup contact plays a role in the relationship between the presence of refugees and election outcomes. I will execute this analysis using a question about intergroup contact in a survey from Konda Research and Consultancy to serve as a proxy measure of contact between refugees and the local Turkish population. The survey also poses a question for which party the respondent plans to vote for in the next election, which I incorporate as the dependent variable of voting for anti-refugee parties. I analyze the data through a logit regression analysis to understand the effect of intergroup contact on voting for anti-refugee parties. This is treated as a separate analysis from the first statistical method for two reasons. The first is that the independent and dependent variables as well as the controls are operationalized using questions from the survey for more precision. The second is that the survey only contains data for 38 of the 81 provinces, and thus, the intergroup contact analysis functions as a quasi-case study given that the total N cannot be evaluated in the analysis.

5.2 Data

The key variables that emerge from the research question *How does the presence of refugees affect voting in host countries?* are the presence of refugees and election outcomes in host countries. The presence of refugees more specifically pertains to the ratio of Syrian refugees to Turkish voters. I operationalize refugees as the ratio of refugees in a province rather than

refugee inflows or the population of refugees nationwide to discern how interactions between host populations and refugees impact voting behavior on a provincial level. Operationalizing the refugee ratio to the total provincial population as my main explanatory variable will allow me to test theories of intergroup contact and social cohesion in local contexts, which would not be possible if I were to operationalize the population or inflow of refugees on a nationwide aggregate level.

The key outcome variable I intend to explore in this study is the vote shares of anti-refugee parties in both the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections across provinces. In the presidential elections, this outcome variable will be operationalized as the vote share of Kemal Kilicdaroglu in the CHP, who was the primary relatively anti-refugee candidate that ran against the AKP. In the parliamentary elections, this outcome variable will be operationalized as the vote share of ZP, IYI, and CHP which all possess anti-refugee attitudes. I also include a model for the AKP as a basis of comparison.

To execute these methods, I developed a dataset that includes the distribution of Syrian refugees and election data on a provincial level.[3] My dataset contains a selection of cases from the 81 provinces in Turkey to assess the relationship between my independent and dependent variables. These provinces vary in population size and refugee ratios, urban versus rural settings, unemployment rates, partisanship trends, and other local differences. Therefore, the provincial level measure allows for a unique basis to assess how local level distinguishing characteristics between provinces illuminate how the presence of refugees affects voting behavior. By including the cases of all 81 provinces rather than a select few, I will avoid selection bias associated with

[3] Full list of variables and data sources included in Appendix I.

choosing fewer provinces that could favor my hypotheses. Additionally, I avoid the potential to exclude critical cases that may alter my analysis significantly. Potential weaknesses to this provincial level approach are issues with aggregated data such as obscuring heterogeneity within provinces or the ecological fallacy. As such, the lower-case level reduces the complexity and generalizability of my analysis. Nonetheless, given the data that was available through publicly available sources, the provincial level approach was the most straightforward and logical approach to pursue for these methods.

To prepare my provincial level data, I drew from both publicly available sources as well as survey data procured from Konda Research and Consultancy. I first compiled a dataset and cleaned my data using R Studio. I conducted diagnostics within the software to identify outliers, issues within the data, and distributions of my key variables. I then implemented the data within ArcGIS software and executed regression analysis and robustness checks in R studio.

5.2.1 Data on refugees and control variables

The process to procure data on Syrian refugees that measures the variation of the population on a provincial level at precisely the time of the 2023 elections was difficult to achieve. The Directorate General of Migration Management (GIGM) in Turkey publishes the provincial breakdown of Syrians living under temporary protection per province. These statistics update on the website every month. However, there are no archival databases of what these population numbers look like from past months on the UNHCR or the Directorate website. Thus, to access the provincial breakdown of registered Syrian refugee populations per province in May 2023 before the June elections, I used the Wayback Machine Internet Archive to procure a screen grab of the web page from that time. To measure the proportion of refugees to the total

population of Turks living in the area, I calculated the ratio of the Syrian refugee population to the total population per province from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat).

It is important to note that although this source is the most accessible data on the provincial breakdown of the Syrian refugee population it is not the most reliable measure of the true population of Syrian refugees. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the state underestimates the true number of refugees as many are undocumented or do not possess temporary registration status. The second is that many refugees may move between provinces to be with family or to have access to work in the informal sector, which may also lead to an incorrect measure of the true population. Nevertheless, this data is useful for this research as it provides the most accurate prediction of the Syrian refugee population across provinces compared to other data sources that measure demographics of Syrian refugees.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of the 12 provinces that have the highest proportion of Syrian refugees out of the 81 provinces. As the data illustrates, there are a few provinces that host a disproportionately high number of refugees in comparison to the others, namely Kilis, Gaziantep, Hatay, Ordu, Sanliurfa, Adana, Sinop, and Mardin.

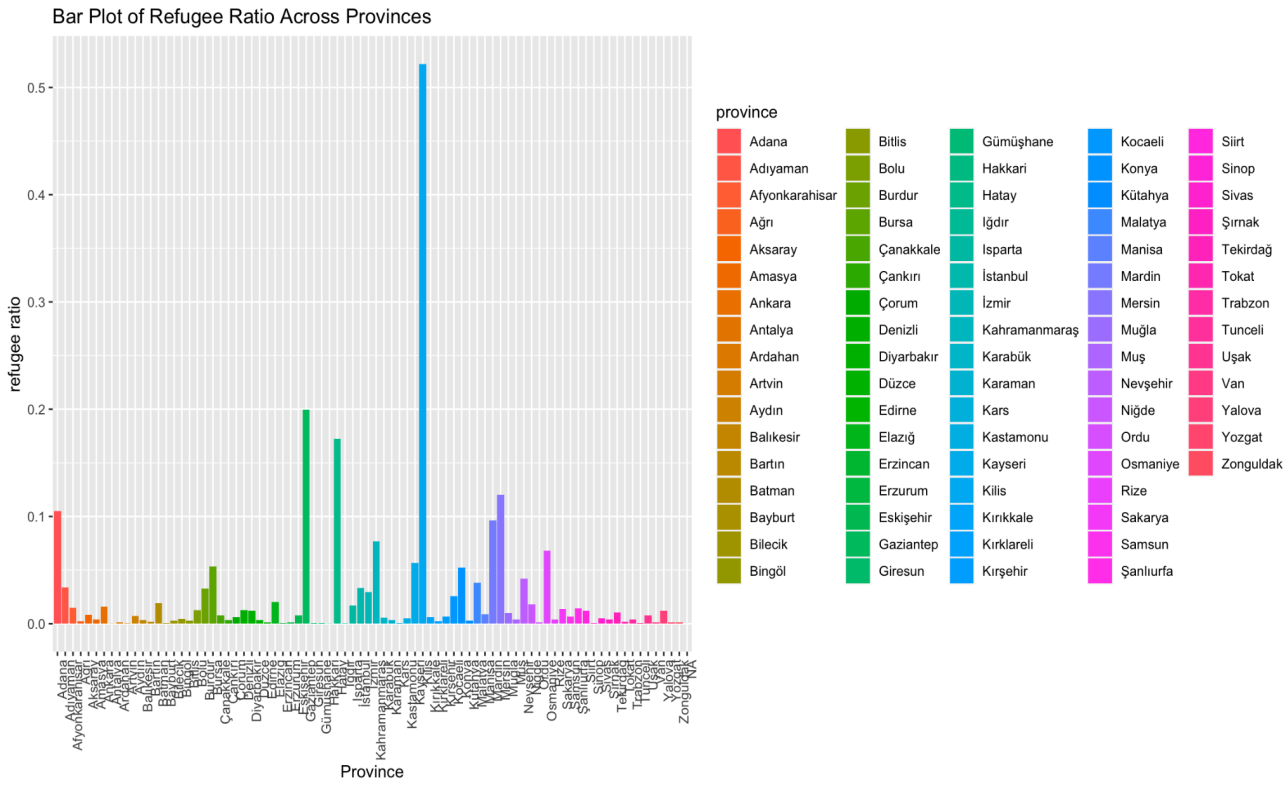
Table 1: Refugee Population Summary by Province [4]

Province	Total Refugee Population	Total Population of Province	Refugee Ratio per Province
Kilis	72	145826	0.34
Gaziantep	55	2130432	0.17
Hatay	43	1670712	0.16
Ordu	4	760872	0.15
Sanliurfa	46	2143020	0.14
Mersin	36	1891145	0.11
Adana	37	2263373	0.10
Sinop	33	218408	0.10
Mardin	76	862757	0.09
Kahramanmaras	79	1171298	0.07
Osmaniye	48	553012	0.06
Bursa	31	3147818	0.05

[4] Full table of the descriptive statistics for the refugee distribution across provinces in appendix II. Source: GIGM

Figure 3 presents a visual distribution of Syrian refugees across all 81 provinces. The plot demonstrates the extent to which the small subset mentioned in Table 1 host a disproportionately higher number of refugees in comparison to the rest of the country. Even though these provinces are outliers in the dataset, I include them in my statistical analysis. This is because they are important cases that demonstrate the effects of provinces that have high refugee populations on election outcomes.

Figure 3: Bar Plot of Refugee Ratios Across the 81 Turkish Provinces.



The key control variables incorporated in my regression models are education level, unemployment, public service provisions, and previous voting behavior on a provincial level, all of which are drawn from TurkStat. These controls are inspired by the methods from Fisunoğlu and Sert (2018). Education level is measured through the ratio of higher educated individuals in

the population. Education level would impact voting behavior in that higher educated individuals tend to have higher voter turnout and consist of people who are more willing to vote for policies that improve civil liberties (Kim 2023; Mintz 1998). Unemployment rate is measured by the percent of the population that is unemployed out of the total population per province. Unemployment is another key factor in determining voting behavior in that those who experience unemployment are less likely to vote for parties that prioritize growth and provide equal opportunity to individuals who may contribute to competition in the labor market (Grafstein 2005; Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck 2013). Public service provisions are measured through a proxy variable of the number of hospital beds per 1000 people. Public services would affect voting as voters who feel that their government isn't providing sufficient resources for welfare would motivate voting for parties that centralize public service funding in their campaigns (Hager 2024).

Furthermore, the recent earthquake in Turkey and Syria that occurred in February 2023, right before the elections, will be important to incorporate, yet extremely challenging to measure. The earthquake in Turkey might affect the test of my hypotheses as it could have displaced Syrian refugees to surrounding provinces, which could potentially cause a discrepancy in the locals' perceived scope of the refugee population versus the true distribution of Syrian refugees across provinces. The earthquake may have influenced voting behavior in reaction to Erdogan and the AKP's response to the catastrophe. As such, to account for this issue I incorporated a dummy variable of whether provinces were impacted by the earthquake using a record of provinces affected from United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Lastly, the proxy measure of partisanship as a control draws from the Supreme Election Council (YSK) as a binary measure of whether the province voted majority for AKP in the 2018, 2015, and 2011 elections. This will account for the role of partisanship and previous voting behavior as an influence in the 2023 election outcomes. Partisanship affects voting behavior in that it tends to mobilize voters and generates support for mainstream candidates (Rau 2021).

It is important to note that a key limitation to the control variables in the study is the lack of a measure of religiosity. There was no provincial level data on the variation of religious sects, practices, or degree of religiosity from TurkStat or other key statistical databases in the country. Therefore, I could not find a measure to operationalize religiosity in my analysis to explain how religion may influence both where refugees are located and how Turks may vote in response to them. As such, this is a limitation to my research as religiosity may serve as a key explanatory variable that mediates the relationship between the presence of refugees and election outcomes.

5.2.2 Data on Turkish Election Results

Election results from both presidential and parliamentary levels are publicly available on YSK website. For this research, I employ the provincial breakdown of election results for the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections as well as elections from 2018, 2015, and 2011 to control for voting behavior in the previous election. In the parliamentary elections, I use data for a broader array of parties, ZP, IYI, CHP, and AKP. In the presidential elections, I solely analyze data on the CHP.

The vote share of each party is calculated as a ratio of the total votes for the candidate or party in the province of interest out of the total votes for all candidates in that province. For the presidential elections, the CHP and their candidate Kemal Kilicdaroglu won around 48% of the

votes in the second-round election. In the 2023 parliamentary elections, CHP won 23%, IYI won about 10%, and ZP won about 2.5% of the total votes in the election (YSK Ballot Box Results and Minutes 2023). It is important to note that in the parliamentary elections, a recent law in 2023 changed the election threshold to 7% from 10%, in that all parties must receive 7% of the vote to gain seats in parliament (Reuters 2023). Nonetheless, because ZP only won 2.5% of the total vote share, they didn't win any seats in parliament. That said, the vote share is still a substantial proportion given that the party emerged in 2021 and ran for the first time in the 2023 elections.

It is important to note that the vote share data employed in the following methodology only includes votes casted domestically, rather than both domestic and abroad. I chose to exclude cases from abroad because to study how the presence and variation of Syrian refugees across provinces in Turkey affected elections, the dependent variable must only consist of vote shares in those provinces. Including results from voters abroad would potentially skew the analysis in that those who do not live in Turkey may not be surrounded by Syrian refugees or be impacted by their presence to the same extent as within the local context.

5.2.3 Survey Data

The survey data employed in this empirical assessment comes from a Turkish polling company called Konda Research and Consultancy who releases surveys called the Konda Barometer to measure Turkish public opinion in the country. I employ the public opinion data to serve as a proxy measure for intergroup contact between Syrian refugees and Turkish populations in my third methodological approach. The Konda Barometer survey rounds that include data on Syrian refugees from February 2016, January 2019, July 2019, November 2019

and January 2022. These are the surveys where respondents answered questions pertaining to the opinion of Syrian refugees. As the 2019 and 2022 surveys are the most current and occurred after the 2018 elections, they will be the primary measure to inform my empirical analysis.

The question I employ as a measure of intergroup contact in the survey regression models uses the responses to *How often do you come across Syrian asylum-seekers?* as the independent variable. I utilize the responses to *If there was an election today, who would you vote for?* as the dependent variable to measure voting preferences. I also incorporate the control variables of employment status, religiousness, and education level as well as age and gender dummy variables.

Questions on general opinion towards Syrian refugees:

Question	Measure	Survey Rounds
How often do you come across Syrian asylum-seekers?	Nominal, Likert Scale 1-7	February 2016, July 2019
If there was an election today, who would you vote for?	Categorical, 29 categories	February 2016, January 2019, July 2019, November 2019 and January 2022.
Employment Status	Categorical, 14 categories	February 2016, January 2019, July 2019, November 2019 and January 2022.
Religiousness	Categorical, 5 categories	February 2016, January 2019, July 2019, November 2019 and January 2022.
Education level	Categorical, 8 categories	February 2016, January 2019, July 2019, November 2019 and January 2022.

Spatial Data 5.1.5

To execute a GIS analysis in ESRI ArcGIS Pro, I integrated layers for Turkish provinces, cities, borders, and urban zones using data from Natural Earth Data. With the support of Northwestern Library's GIS team, we used the Turkish province boundaries and performed a table join based on the province name in my broader dataset so that the refugee and election variables would map onto spatial layers. The specific geographic variables that are integrated in this analysis are urban versus rural divides, distance from refugee camps and whether a province shares a border with Syria. Because most Syrian refugees are now unevenly dispersed throughout the country and mainly populate urban areas, the urban versus rural variable is likely to be the most pertinent in terms of influencing the outcome of my research. The distance from refugee camps and whether the city shares a border with Syria, although important to consider, may not have as much of an influence due to the fact that the majority of Syrian refugees no longer live in camps.

Chapter 6: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Spatial Analysis

6.1 GIS Methods

To supplement my statistical regression analysis, I developed a series of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps of my data to analyze spatial patterns between the location of refugees and anti-refugee party vote shares. I developed the GIS maps with ESRI ArcGIS Pro, linking geocodes for Turkish provinces to my elections dataset that contained refugee ratios, vote shares, and control variables. I then executed a series of layered maps to develop a spatial comparison of the presence of refugees (independent variable) and the anti-refugee party vote shares (dependent variable).

Advancing a GIS analysis in addition to a classic statistical analysis of my data to test my hypotheses enhances this research in several ways. The first is that GIS allows for operationalizing the independent and dependent variables as a geographic distribution and provides a method to assess the spatial correlation between the presence of refugees and voting. Thus, the mapping provides an outlook unto how geographical proximity to bordering countries, urban areas, bodies of water, and refugee camps, among other factors, has an impact on observed patterns between the presence of refugees and anti-refugee vote shares. Second, visualizing data spatially could reveal patterns that may not be immediately visible and easy to discern in a statistical analysis. This is because GIS bivariate maps provide a visualization to assess whether the correlation of the independent and dependent variable may be influenced by proximity to the Syrian border or bodies of water, urban versus rural territories, or provinces that host major metropolises. Therefore, GIS provides important context to understand how these trends in voting behavior relate to location. Third, GIS provides a visualization to identify provinces that could serve as interesting cases to examine local level differences. For example, the map could

illuminate a border province with a high refugee population and low anti-refugee party vote shares or a rural with a high anti-refugee party vote shares and a low refugee population, which could signal specific provinces to further explore as case studies. Fourth, GIS provides another outlet to discuss how the following research could facilitate social and policy implications. This is because understanding how geographical patterns of refugee distribution relate to votes for anti-refugee parties can inform allocation of resources and local interventions that take account of provincial variation.

To execute this GIS analysis, I first created maps to visualize my independent and dependent variables individually. The map of the independent variable of the presence of refugees demonstrates how Syrian refugees are distributed, including the populations' distances from urban areas, refugee camps, and the Syrian border. This visualization provides an outlook into which areas may facilitate higher interactions between refugees and local Turks as well as areas that may host refugee camps, which could facilitate a different dynamic than provinces that host refugees in urban areas.

The maps of the dependent variable illustrate how the vote shares for anti-refugee parties, the CHP for the presidential elections and the ZP, IYI and CHP parties for the parliamentary elections, vary across provinces. The anti-refugee party vote share maps are placed in comparison to a map of the AKP presidential and parliamentary vote shares to illustrate which provinces leaned more towards the more anti-refugee parties in comparison to the more pro-refugee AKP party.

The second series of maps present bivariate visualizations of how anti-refugee vote shares are distributed relative to the refugee population. Bivariate maps are a form of choropleth maps, where areas are shaded to correspond with proportions of specified variables. Bivariate

choropleth maps illustrate how two separate phenomena, visualized simultaneously on one map, relate to each other across space. Bivariate maps made with ArcGIS Pro display two variables on one map, which are represented by different color codes to distinguish the variables and how they overlap. The maps in the following section are shaded with 9 color codes that show high and low proportions of vote shares and refugee ratios, coded through single color gradients. Areas with overlapping vote shares and refugee ratios are shaded with a gradient that combines the colors in the individual variable gradients, in which the darkest combined color indicates areas with the highest refugee ratios and party vote shares.

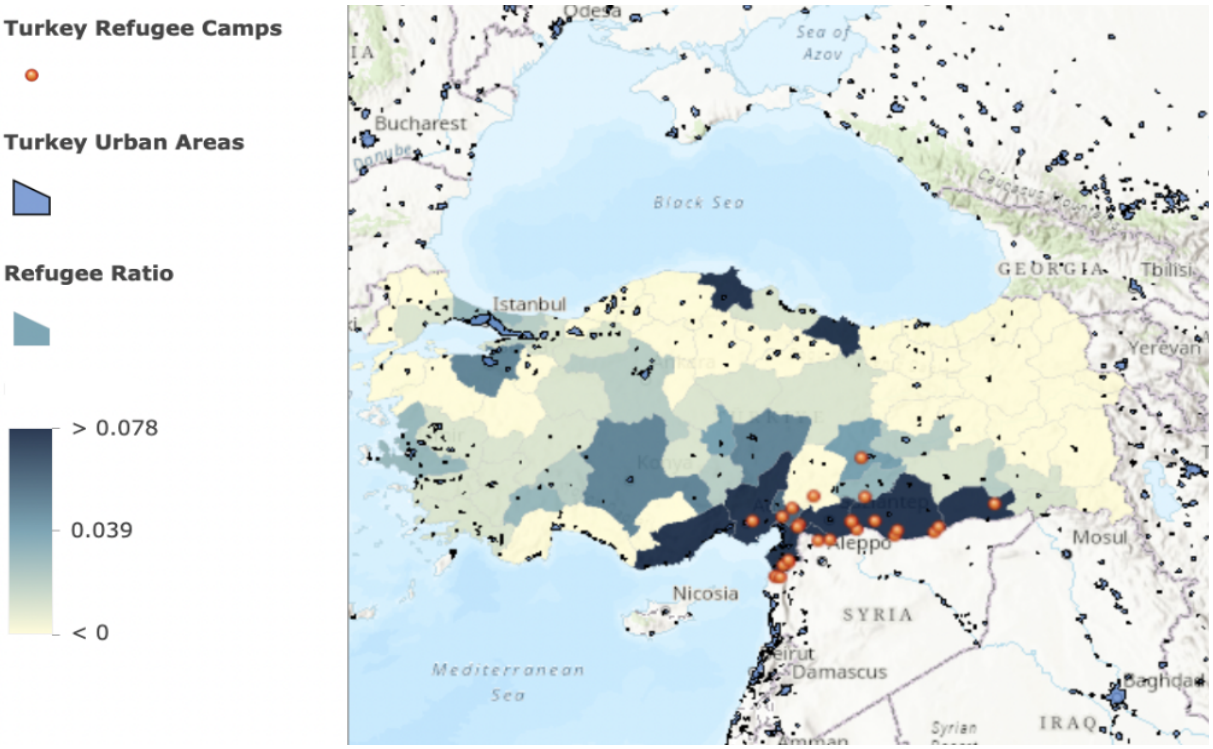
Thus, in the case of the parliamentary elections, the bivariate maps show how the distribution of the ZP, CHP, IYI, and AKP overlap with the refugee ratios across provinces. Similarly, for the presidential elections, the maps illustrate how the vote shares of the more anti-refugee CHP and more pro-refugee AKP map onto the spatial distribution of refugee ratios. These maps are followed by an analysis of the spatial correlations and trends that emerge from the visualizations.

6.2 GIS Analysis Results

The following results respond to the research question *How does the presence of refugees affect voting in host countries?* through GIS visualizations. Prior to presenting the results of the multivariate statistical analyses, it is first important to situate the data in a geographic context to make sense of the spatial factors that influence the distribution of refugees and voting districts. Through an observational analysis, these maps aim to assess trends as they pertain to H1, which is that *more refugees in a province will increase voting for the anti-refugee party*.

Most refugees settle in provinces near the Syrian border as well as in urban areas. Provinces that host the majority of Syrian refugees are represented in Figure 4. The orange dots illustrate where the refugee camps are located, which also correlate with the provinces that share a border with Syria and have the highest ratios of refugee populations to the total population. The other provinces that have slightly lower, but still notable refugee populations are those where more urban areas and populous cities are located.

Figure 4: Map of the Distribution of Syrian Refugee Ratios Across Provinces



Keeping the distribution of refugees in mind, I now turn to the spatial distribution of vote shares for the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections for anti-refugee parties, complemented by maps of the more pro-refugee AKP party. After providing the maps of the vote shares in isolation, I then present a bivariate GIS analysis of the spatial distribution of refugees in relation to the vote shares in the presidential and parliamentary elections.

6.2.1 GIS Analysis of the 2023 Second Round Presidential Election results

Figures 5 and 6 depict choropleth maps of the vote shares for the AKP and CHP candidates in the 2023 second round presidential elections, which are Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Kemal Kilicdaroglu respectively. Upon initial observations, the provinces that had the highest vote shares for the anti-refugee CHP candidate appear on the western border and in provinces that hold large metropolitan areas. The concentration of the vote shares for the more pro-refugee AKP candidate, are more widely distributed throughout the county with a concentration of the votes in central provinces and a few of the border provinces.

Figure 5: AKP Presidential Vote Share

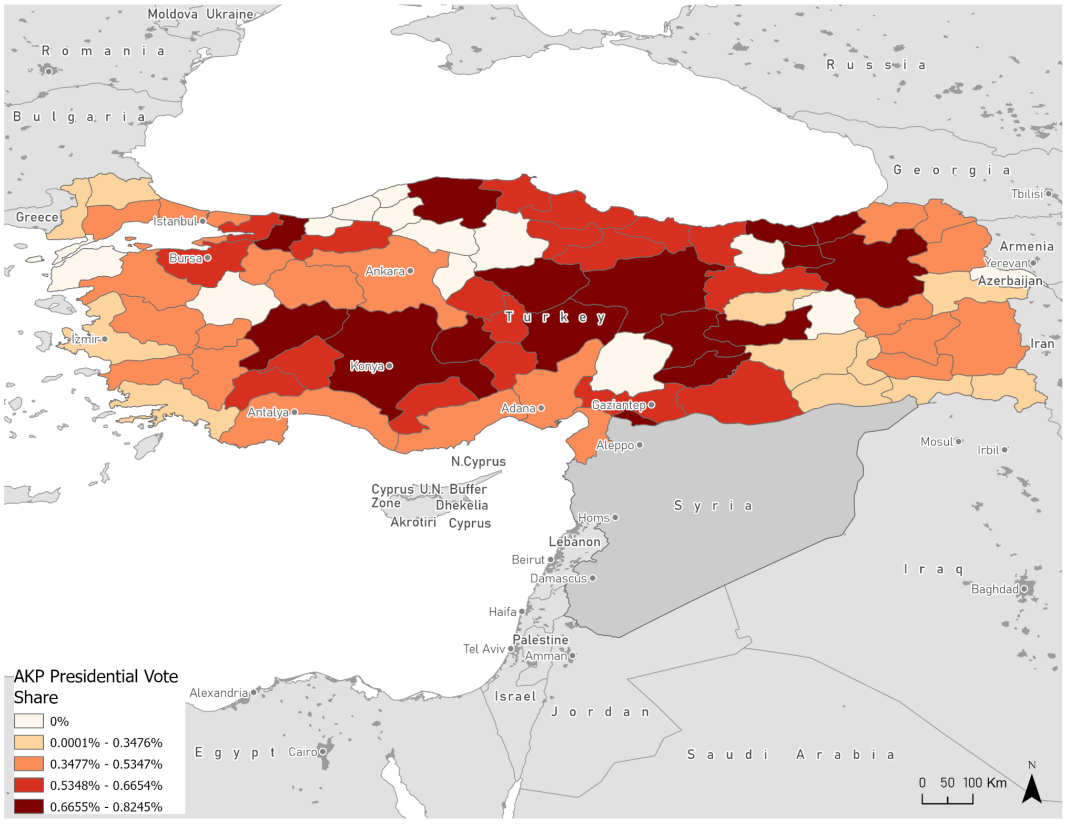
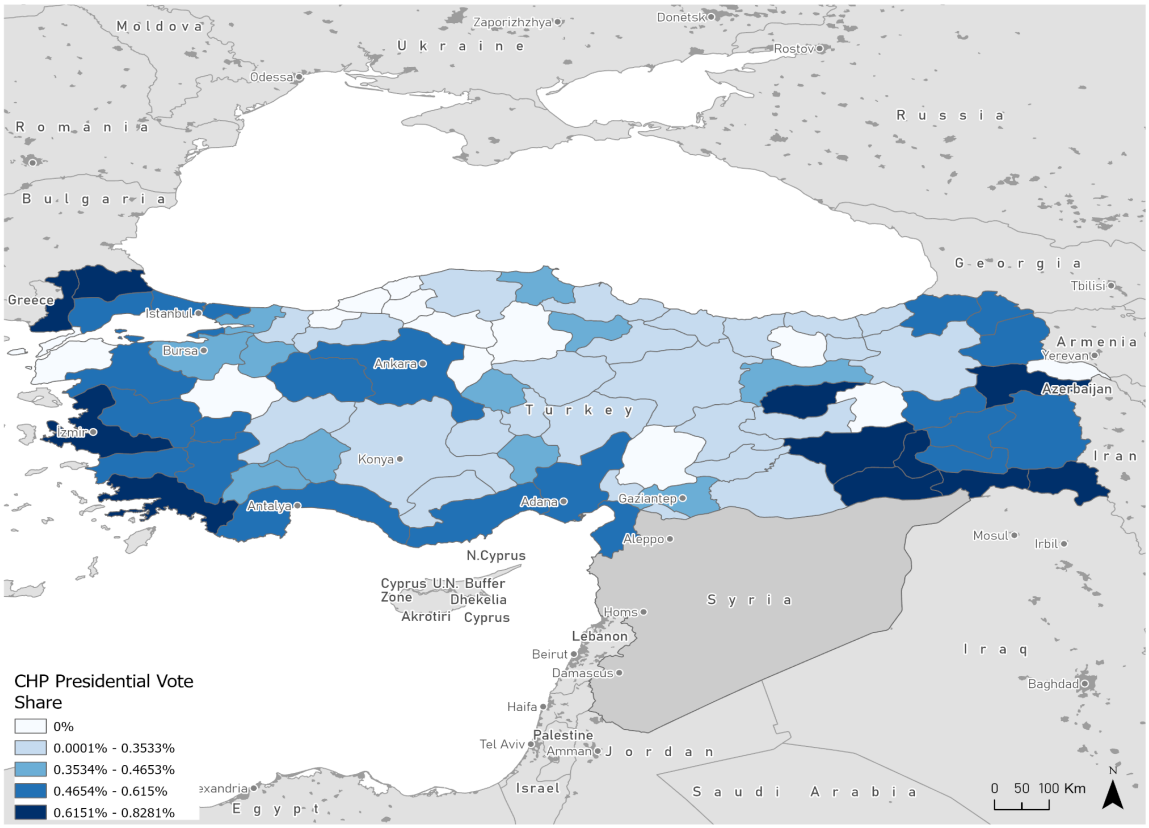
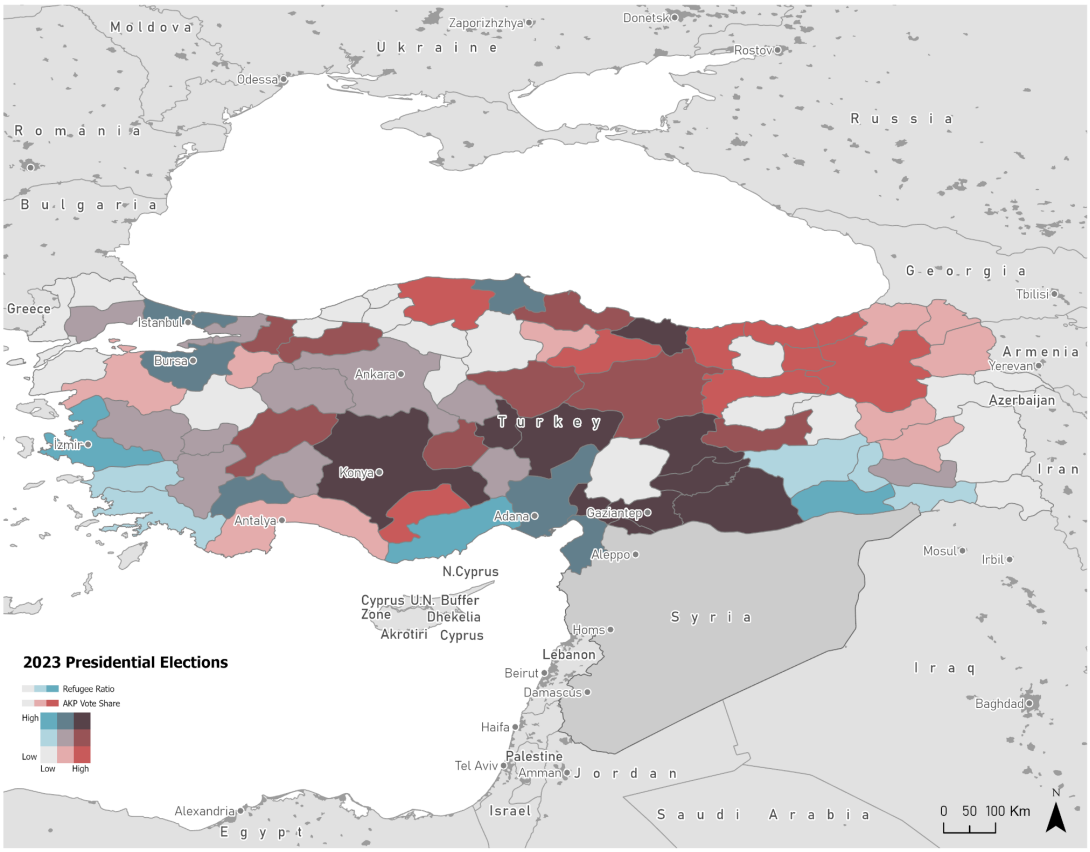


Figure 6: CHP Presidential Vote Share



With this comparison of the spatial distribution of vote shares for the two presidential candidates in the second-round elections, I now turn to a bivariate GIS analysis of the refugee ratio mapped onto the presidential vote share distribution. Figure 6 illustrates the bivariate correlation between the refugee ratio and the AKP vote share. Interestingly, this map shows through the darker brown color that many of the provinces with high refugee ratios such as Gaziantep, Konya, Sanliurfa, and Kilis, also had high vote shares for the AKP. There was an exception to this pattern with Izmir and Mardin, which have high refugee ratios, but presented low vote shares for the AKP. This illuminates that the majority provinces with high refugee ratios tended to correlate with high AKP presidential vote shares, but this was not a universal trend as can be seen by the few provinces noted.

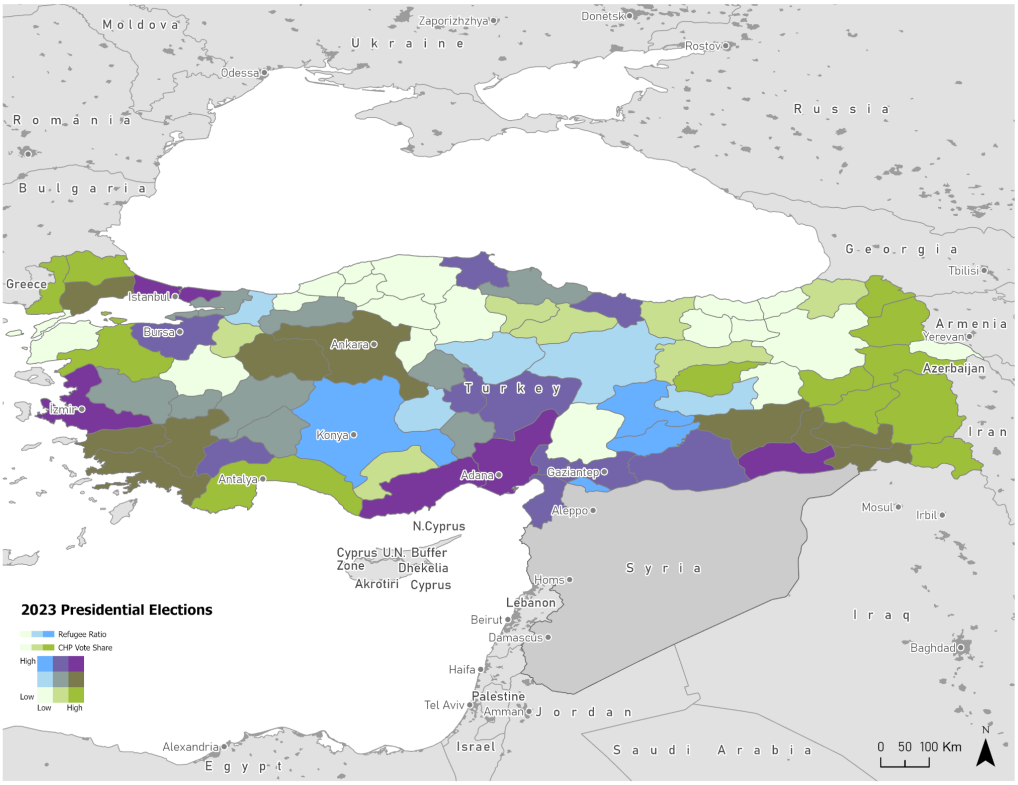
Figure 7: Bivariate Map of the AKP Presidential Vote Shares and the Distribution of Refugee Ratios



The bivariate GIS map of the CHP vote shares, and the refugee ratio depicted in Figure 8 fills the gap with the outlier provinces with high refugee ratios that did not have high AKP vote shares. Mardin and Izmir both present dark purple color coding, illustrating that these provinces had both a high refugee ratio and a high CHP vote share. The map also illustrates that Istanbul, the most populated city in Turkey with a high refugee ratio also presented a high CHP vote share. That said, it is important to note that these bivariate maps cannot control for historic voting for or against the AKP, and thus, although there may be correlations between high refugee ratios and voting for the CHP, these maps cannot allow me to draw a causal relationship between the presence of refugees and voting for the CHP in these provinces. This is especially due to

polarization as Izmir has tended to lean towards the CHP since the 2009 elections (Daily Sabah 2018). It is also important to note that most provinces that had high CHP vote shares also had low refugee ratios. This could suggest that provinces that have populations that may interact with refugees less often but receive information about them on the media or through cue taking could increase their support for the anti-refugee candidate.

Figure 8: Bivariate Map of CHP Presidential Vote Shares and Refugee Ratios



These trends suggest the opposite effect than what is proposed in H1 as the bivariate maps indicate that overall, more refugees in a province correlates with less votes for the anti-refugee party, apart from a few outlying provinces. More specifically, the maps illustrate that under the condition of the presidential election, many provinces with high refugee ratios, despite their proximity to the Syrian border voted for the AKP. Provinces with high refugee ratios who leaned towards the CHP candidate tended to host major progressive cities, such as Izmir and

Istanbul, who historically have been more inclined to support the pro-democratic policies of the CHP. The results suggest that whether the province is urban or rural, if it hosts a major metropolis, or shares a border with Syria, may serve as mediating factors between the presence of refugees and voting for anti-refugee candidates in presidential elections.

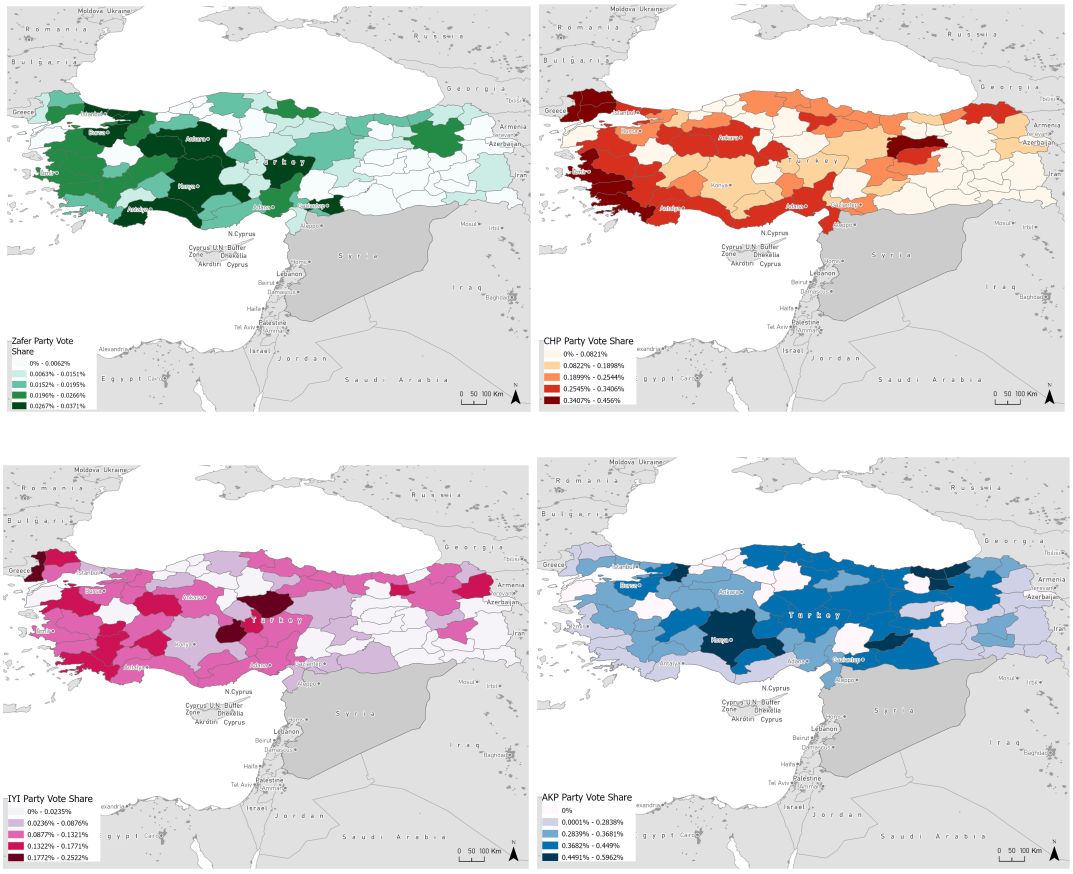
Given that these maps do not control for other factors that may influence the relationship between the presence of refugees and presidential vote shares, I cannot fully reject H1 from these results. This is because the figures indicate correlations–or lack thereof– between the presence of refugees and voting for anti-refugee parties but do not necessarily convey causality or statistical significance, which the following chapters on statistical methods will account for. Nonetheless, the results still distinguish provinces that present cases that challenge the notion posed in H1, as there were many provinces with high refugee ratios and high AKP vote shares. It will be important to keep these spatial trends in mind when evaluating the multivariate statistical analysis of the presidential election with controls to discern to what extent these observational trends hold true in a regression analysis.

6.2.2 GIS analysis of Parliamentary Election results

The GIS mapping of the parliamentary elections demonstrates voting behavior in Turkey on a more nuanced level, as parliamentary parties represent the greater diversity of ideologies and political opinions throughout the country. The maps depicted in Figure 9 illustrate the spatial distribution of votes for three of the key anti-refugee parliamentary parties, ZP, IYI, and CHP, as well as the distribution of votes for the AKP. For ZP, the green map illustrates that provinces on the Syrian border did not vote for the party, and rather provinces with key metropolitan areas show higher Zafer party vote shares. This indicates that the majority of support for the most

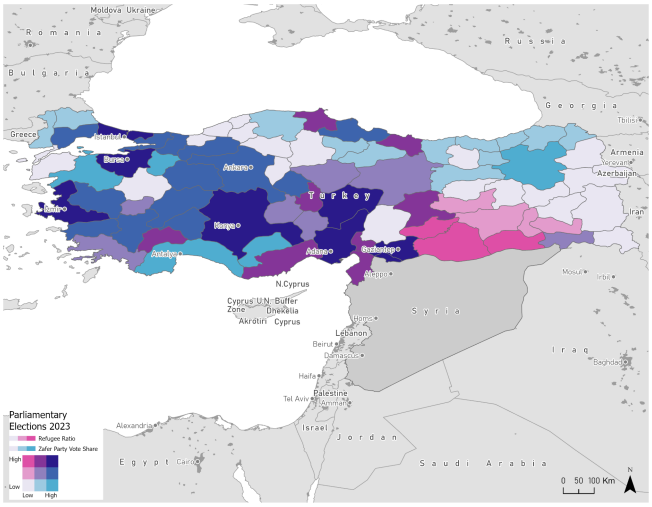
blatant anti-refugee party has the strongest representation in urban areas where local Turks may be surrounded by a much greater proportion of the Syrian refugee population and may also be more likely to serve as secular opponents to the AKP. The orange map of the CHP vote distribution illustrates a similar trend where the majority of the provinces on the Syrian border did not vote for the CHP party, and rather, they saw the greatest support in urban areas and provinces on the western side of the country, further from the Syrian border. The pink IYI party map shows that the party has some marginal representation in a few of the Syrian border provinces such as Gaziantep, but the map shows a more consistent distribution of vote shares throughout the country. However, similar to Zafer and CHP, many of the other provinces along the Syrian border show limited support for the IYI. Lastly, the AKP party map illustrates that the majority of the vote shares are throughout the more rural parts of the country, with the exception of strong support in Konya. The map also illustrates that provinces along the Syrian border expressed stronger support for the AKP in contrast to the three anti-refugee parties depicted in the other maps. The key trend to point out from these four maps is that the anti-refugee parties saw more consistent support in urban areas, and limited support along the Syrian border.

Figure 9: Choropleth Maps of Parliamentary Election Vote Shares for Zafer, CHP, IYI, and AKP.



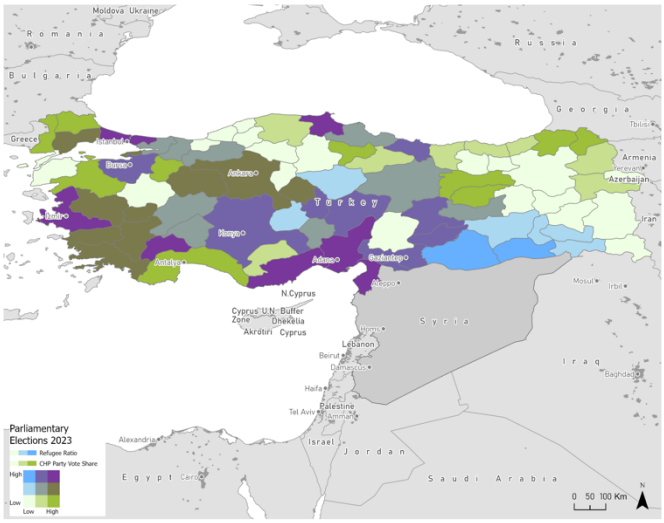
Given the assessment of key trends from the maps of the vote shares for the four parliamentary parties, I next incorporate the bivariate maps that include the refugee ratio distribution across provinces. To start with ZP, the bivariate map depicted in Figure 10 illustrates that the areas with high refugee ratios and high Zafer party vote shares occur in provinces that have key metropolitan areas. The map also indicates that the border provinces with high refugee ratios did not have as much support for the Zafer party. Many provinces with low refugee ratios also had low Zafer party vote shares.

Figure 10: Bivariate Map of Zafer Party Parliamentary Vote Shares and Refugee Ratios Across Provinces



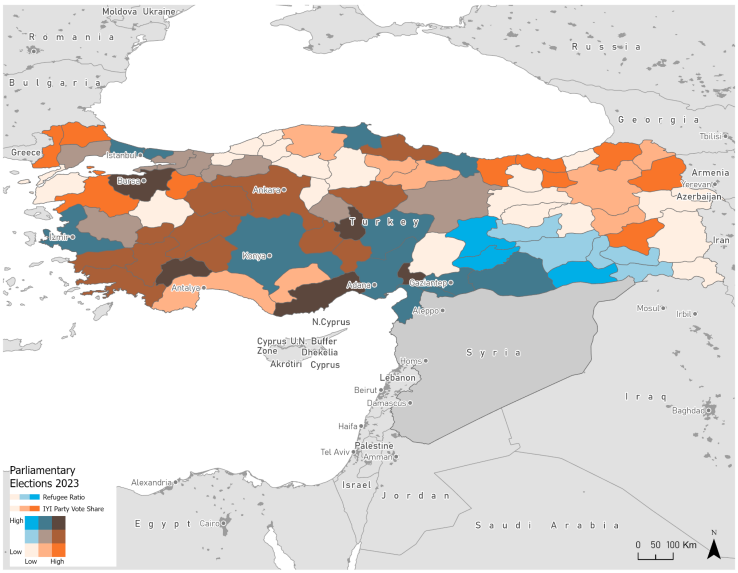
Similarly, to the Zafer party, as depicted in the map in Figure 11, the CHP presented low vote shares in the Syrian border provinces with high refugee ratios. Many of the provinces with both high refugee ratios and high vote shares were in provinces with major metropolitan areas, however, the CHP presented a less clear pattern of the correlation between the distribution of refugees and vote shares in comparison to the Zafer party. The CHP map also illustrates that many of the provinces with low refugee ratios also had low CHP vote shares.

Figure 11: Bivariate Map of CHP Parliamentary Vote Share and Refugee Ratios Across Provinces



Interestingly, the IYI bivariate map depicted in Figure 12 illustrates that the areas with the highest refugee ratios and highest IYI vote shares were less consistently in provinces with major metropolitan cities and rather were dispersed throughout both rural and urban areas. The IYI map also presents the same trend of limited IYI vote shares along the border provinces with high refugee ratios. The map indicates that IYI also had more votes in rural areas in comparison to the other anti-refugee parties. Otherwise, because the IYI vote share was more evenly dispersed throughout the country, no other clear spatial patterns that emerge.

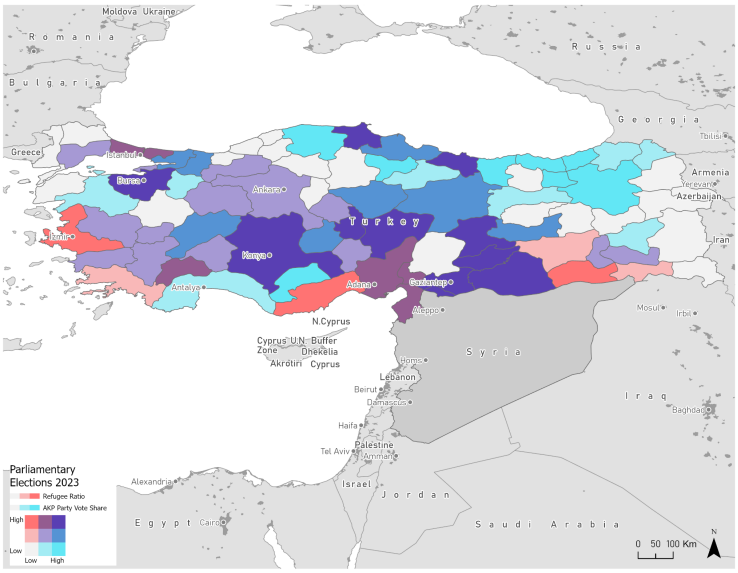
Figure 12: Bivariate Map of IYI Parliamentary Vote Shares and Refugee Ratios Across Provinces



Lastly, the AKP bivariate map depicted in Figure 13 indicates high AKP vote shares both in areas with high refugee ratios and without. The areas with both high refugee ratios and high AKP vote shares correlate in some provinces with large metropolitan areas as well as other provinces that are in more rural parts of the country. Importantly, several of the provinces on the Syrian border with high refugee ratios also have high AKP vote shares. Overall, because the

AKP has such a vast distribution of votes, the map indicates that their supporters were widespread throughout the country.

Figure 13: Bivariate Map of AKP Parliamentary Vote Shares and Refugee Ratios Across Provinces



The key finding from this series of bivariate maps for both the 2023 presidential and parliamentary election results is that ZP, which is a single-issue anti-refugee party, presented the most consistent correlation between provinces that had high refugee ratios and high ZP vote shares. This would confirm H1 more specifically for the ZP case. The maps also indicate that proximity to the Syrian border, whether the province hosts a key metropolitan city, and whether the region is rural versus urban play key roles in determining the magnitude of the correlation between the refugee ratio and the vote share for anti-refugee parties. Notably, most of the provinces along the Syrian border that host a high population of refugees voted more in favor of the AKP, whereas urban areas that also host a high concentration of refugees voted more in favor of anti-refugee parties. Although the overlap between urban areas and votes for anti-refugee parties was the most consistent for ZP, this also held true to an extent for the multi-issue CHP

and the IYI parties. Therefore, I cannot as confidently confirm H1 for the more mainstream, multi-issue anti-refugee parties.

As in the case of the presidential elections GIS analysis, it is important to note that these maps solely illustrate correlations between the presence of refugees and voting for anti-refugee parties in a spatial context. Because these maps do not include control variables, there is a limitation in using these maps to derive concrete conclusions about whether to confirm or reject H1. As such, the maps will be considered as supplementary findings to the multivariate regression analyses that follow. Nonetheless, the local level differences illuminated within these maps suggest that the extent to which the presence of refugees correlates with voting for anti-refugee parties are likely to be highly influenced by local level differences and ideologies.

Chapter 7: Regional Voting Analysis of Syrian Refugees and the 2023 Elections

The following chapter presents the empirical assessment of the effect of the presence of refugees on voting for the 2023 parliamentary and second round presidential elections. The basis of the methodological approach and construction of the OLS regression models are followed by the regression results for both elections. Based on the continuous nature of my independent and dependent variables, the presence of refugees and voting for anti-refugee parties respectively, I pursued an OLS regression method.

OLS statistical models are ideal to execute a multivariate analysis wherein I can assess the simultaneous impact of multiple control factors that could influence voting behavior. Further, OLS models produce coefficients that represent the change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable, which provides a straightforward interpretation of the results. Therefore, the OLS method allows for a more nuanced understanding of the correlations between the presence of refugees and voting. The results section presents the findings from the OLS multivariate regression analysis of the dataset including the refugee ratio per province from GIGM, the vote share for the anti-refugee parties in the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections from YSK, and control variables from TurkStat, OCHA, and YSK. This section builds on the previous analysis of the bivariate GIS maps for the different presidential and parliamentary parties by allowing for the inclusion of controls for other factors. As such, these results will help situate the trends found in the previous section through a statistical analysis.

7.1 Methodological approach

The empirical assessment in this research examines how the presence of refugees affected the vote shares of the anti-refugee opposition candidate in the 2023 second round presidential

and parliamentary elections. The method aims to test H1: *More refugees in a province will increase voting for the anti-refugee party*. The presence of refugees, which serves as the independent variable in this analysis, operationalizes the presence of refugees as the ratio of the Syrian refugee population to the total population in the assessment of both elections. The measure of the refugee population per province draws from GIGM data.

For the presidential elections, I chose to solely focus on the second-round election results as it officially facilitated Erdogan's ultimate victory. Therefore, the data on vote shares solely contain the votes for Erdogan and Kilicdaroglu. The regression operationalizes the dependent variable of vote shares for anti-refugee parties as the vote shares for Kilicdaroglu, the candidate that represented the relatively anti-refugee CHP party, and more broadly the opposition coalition of the Nation's Alliance that was endorsed by several anti-refugee parties. The dependent variable is measured as a ratio of the CHP vote share out of the total votes per province from YSK. As mentioned in the analysis of Turkish politics in Chapter 3, Kilicdaroglu also instrumentalized starkly anti-refugee discourse and policies in his campaign, which further strengthens the approach to use his vote share as a measure for votes for anti-refugee candidates.

The second empirical assessment makes sense of how the presence of refugees affected the vote share of ZP, IYI, and CHP parties in the 2023 parliamentary elections. The ZP model is the most precise as it is the most starkly anti-refugee of any of the parties that ran in the parliamentary elections. The IYI and CHP are included to serve as other examples of voting for relatively anti-refugee parties. The assessment also includes a model for the more pro-refugee AKP as a basis of comparison.

In addition, in the models for the presidential and parliamentary elections, there are several other key explanatory variables included as controls. These controls are inspired by the

model in the study of the effect of the presence of refugees on AKP vote shares from Fisunoğlu and Sert (2018), which found that the refugee variable had null effects on voting for the AKP. First I include controls for socioeconomic status measured through the unemployment rate of the province as well as the ratio of the higher educated voters. These controls draw on data from TurkStat. The unemployment control is included as an explanatory variable for two reasons. First is that the unemployment rate could impact where refugees are located as it could motivate their intentions to relocate to a place where it would be easier to find work. Second is the fact that employment is a factor that may motivate voting behavior for Turkish citizens. Previous studies on the effects of unemployment rates on voting have found that higher unemployment leads to increased tensions with refugees, indicating that high unemployment rates may have a positive effect on voting for more anti-refugee parties (Vadlamannati 2020; Barone et. al 2016).

Higher education is also included as a control variable in this analysis as populations that are more educated may be more forgiving towards refugees. This is because higher educated people have a stronger understanding of the scope of Syrian refugees' impact on the Turkish economy and society. Additionally, those who have higher education may feel less threatened by refugees as there would be less competition for jobs that require advanced degrees compared to blue collared sectors where more refugees tend to work upon initial relocation (although many Syrian refugees possess advanced degrees). Therefore, an anticipated effect would be that higher education would yield a more negative effect on voting for anti-refugee parties.

Another control variable related to competition for resources in the regression analysis is the provision of public services measured as a proxy variable for hospital beds per 1000 people. This variable is also measured by TurkStat data. Including the control variable of the provision for public service is essential in that Syrian refugees may be more drawn to provinces that have

more provisions for public services, and Turks may feel more inclined to vote for pro-refugee parties if they feel that there are sufficient public service provisions for both them and refugees.

Two additional variables included in both election models that are distinct from the model advanced by Fisunoğlu and Sert (2018) distinguishes my regression analysis and considers the recent electoral landscape preceding the 2023 elections. First is a dummy variable measure for provinces that were affected by the February 6 earthquake in Turkey and Syria that destroyed infrastructure, homes, and public service access in several Turkish provinces. This control variable is included in the following analysis as the earthquake not only may have impacted where refugees live (as it could have caused Syrians to relocate to safer areas) but also could have put increased pressure on existing support systems in afflicted provinces that Turkish citizens needed access to. Additionally, the incumbent leadership's response to the earthquake both in parliament and through Erdogan's initiatives may have influenced Turkish citizens to vote against the AKP to bring leadership into office that would improve the earthquake response.

The final variable in the regression models for the presidential and parliamentary elections is a proxy measure of partisanship. Turkey has become increasingly polarized, as explained in Chapter 3, which would potentially motivate voters to continue to vote for the same parties they supported in previous election years, despite the influence of the presence of refugees. As there are more than two leading parties in Turkey, it is challenging to measure partisanship categorically in a way that could be meaningfully applied to a statistical analysis. Therefore, partisanship is operationalized as a dummy variable in three different models for whether the province voted majority in favor of the AKP in the 2018 elections, the 2015 elections, and the 2011 elections (before the Syrian Civil War). I include models for these three

different election years to account for changes in partisanship attributed to the inflow of Syrian refugees over time.

To execute my results, I cleaned my data, conducted diagnostics, and executed OLS regressions in R Studio. The empirical model of the effect of the presence of refugees on the 2023 second round presidential elections and parliamentary elections for the multivariate OLS regression analysis is as follows:

$$log(Y_i) = \beta_0 + \beta R_i + \beta \mathrm{X}_i + \epsilon_i$$

In this model, Y refers to the vote share of the anti-refugee CHP party per province i in the presidential elections, and the vote share of the anti-refugee parliamentary parties ZP, CHP, IYI, and AKP in the parliamentary elections. The variable Y is logged in the model for the dependent variable to follow a more normal distribution as the raw data is continuous between 0 and 1. β_0 refers to the intercept. R refers to the refugee ratio per province i. X refers the vector of explanatory control variables which are $\beta_3 \times$ earthquake effect + $\beta_4 \times$ higher education ratio + $\beta_5 \times$ unemployment rate + $\beta_6 \times$ hospital beds per 1000 + $\beta_7 \times$ whether the province voted for the AKP in the 2018, 2015 or 2011 elections. The variable ϵ refers to the error term.

7.2 Results

The following section presents the results for the OLS multivariate regression analyses for the presidential and parliamentary elections on the presence of refugee ratios. In the presidential elections section, I present several models for the anti-refugee CHP party vote share on the refugee ratio across provinces with added controls. In the parliamentary elections section, I present models for three of the major anti-refugee parties, ZP, IYI, and CHP, as well as the

AKP. Using the same approach, I regress the vote shares for each party on the distribution of vote shares across provinces with controls.

7.2.1 Presidential Elections Analysis Results

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the 2023 second round presidential elections. Important patterns to note in the data are that the refugee ratio across provinces was relatively low, given the mean of 0.027 or 2.7% of the total population, with the few exceptions of outlier provinces explained in Chapter 5 and 6. There is also moderate variability of the unemployment rate and higher education ratio controls which will be important to consider in the regression analyses. Lastly, there is significant variability in the proxy measure of public service provision through the hospital beds per 1000, which could also factor into the regression results. Not depicted in the descriptive statistics table are the provinces that were impacted by the February 2023 earthquake. These provinces are Adana, Adiyaman, Diyarbakir, Elazig, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaras, Kilis, Malayta, Osmaniye, and Sanlifura, of which many share a border with Syria and host higher proportions of refugee populations.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Presidential Data

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Refugee Ratio	81	0.027	0.053	0.000	0.340
CHP Vote Share	81	0.445	0.152	0.175	0.828
AKP Vote Share	81	0.555	0.152	0.172	0.825
Total Population (in millions)	81	1.045	1.914	0.084	15.841
Total Votes (in millions)	81	0.635	1.204	0.048	9.890
Higher Education Ratio	81	0.149	0.049	-0.188	0.257
Unemployment Rate	81	0.104	0.035	0.060	0.190
Hospital Beds per 1000	81	296.074	82.376	133	538

Table 3 presents the results of the multivariate OLS regressions of the 2023 second round elections on the logged vote share of the anti-refugee CHP party candidate, Kemal Kilicdaroglu. The F statistics are highly statistically significant for all 5 models indicating the models overall have a good fit. The R^2 values are 0.013, 0.319, 0.738, 0.595, and 0.728 for models 1 through 5 respectively. These values indicate that models three, four and five capture a high amount of variability in the log transformed dependent variable of the CHP vote share. Whereas the independent variable in models one and two have lower explanatory power.

Table 3: CHP Presidential Vote Share Regression Models

	Dependent variable:				
	Log of CHP Vote Share				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Refugee Ratio	-0.226	-0.179	-0.012	-0.055	0.063
	(0.222)	(0.234)	(0.147)	(0.183)	(0.151)
Earthquake Effect		-0.045	-0.034	-0.049*	-0.040*
		(0.036)	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.023)
Higher Education Ratio		0.404*	0.157	0.134	-0.043
		(0.213)	(0.135)	(0.170)	(0.142)
Unemployment Rate		1.253***	0.439**	0.608**	0.428*
		(0.322)	(0.215)	(0.266)	(0.219)
Hospital Beds per 1000		-0.0003**	-0.0001	-0.0003**	-0.0001
		(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Province Voted AKP in 2018			-0.160***		
			(0.015)		
Province Voted AKP in 2015				-0.120***	
				(0.017)	
Province Voted AKP in 2011					-0.157***
					(0.015)
Constant	0.369***	0.276***	0.435***	0.432***	0.431***
	(0.013)	(0.068)	(0.045)	(0.057)	(0.046)
Observations	81	81	81	81	81
R^2	0.013	0.319	0.738	0.595	0.728
Adjusted R^2	0.001	0.274	0.717	0.562	0.706
Residual Std. Error	0.104 (df = 79)	0.089 (df = 75)	0.055 (df = 74)	0.069 (df = 74)	0.057 (df = 74)
F Statistic	1.041 (df = 1; 79)	7.024*** (df = 5; 75)	34.818*** (df = 6; 74)	18.114*** (df = 6; 74)	33.000*** (df = 6; 74)
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The results for the bivariate model without controls indicates that the presence of refugees has a negative correlation of -0.226 on the logged CHP vote share with a one unit increase of the refugee ratio. The second model includes added controls apart from partisanship. The model indicates that a one unit increase in the refugee ratio has a negative relationship of -0.179 on the logged CHP vote share. Both models 1 and 2 indicate that the presence of refugees would correlate with a slight decrease in voting for the CHP. However, as these results are not statistically significant, I cannot draw a concrete conclusion from this result.

In the models with the added controls of the partisanship variable for 2018 and 2015 the effect of the presence of refugees across provinces on election outcomes indicates a relatively small negative correlation of -0.012, and -0.055 the logged CHP vote share with a one unit increase of the refugee ratio. Similar to models 1 and 2, the results for models 3 and 4 would suggest that provinces that have a higher density of refugees experienced a negative association with the CHP vote share. Interestingly, the model with the partisanship control for 2011 has a slight positive correlation of 0.063 on the logged CHP vote share, which could be explained by a slight shift in CHP support since the 2011 elections or with an unknown interaction between variables that could impact the value of coefficient. However, similar to the other models, the results for the models with added partisanship controls are not statistically significant, and thus, are non-conclusive. Overall, the results indicate that there is no significant correlation between the presence of refugees and voting behavior for the anti-refugee candidate in the 2023 second round presidential elections. Therefore, I cannot fully confirm nor reject H1.

The unemployment rate coefficient presented statistically significant results and demonstrated that it serves as an influential factor in determining provincial level voting behavior in Turkey. The unemployment rate coefficients indicate that a one unit increase in the unemployment variable correlates with positive coefficients of 1.253 with a p-value of less than 0.01 for model 2, and 0.439, 0.608, and 0.428 for models 3 through 5 with a p-value of less than 0.05. In other words, provinces with a one unit increase in unemployment rates also experience a notable increase in the logarithmic CHP vote share variable. This positive correlation suggests that individuals may feel more motivated to vote for the CHP in response to the lack of macroeconomic stability that resulted from the incumbent AKP's response to the economic situation in the country.

The education control, which also serves as another socioeconomic indicator, had a less strong correlation compared to that of the unemployment control. Model 2 had a slightly statistically significant result of 0.404 with a p-value of 0.1 with a one unit increase in the higher education ratio variable. Models 3 and 4 had coefficients of 0.157 and 0.134 respectively, which shows a continued positive correlation, but with no statistical significance. Model 5 had a coefficient of -0.043 also with no statistical significance. The slight negative correlation in this model could be explained by the added control of the 2011 partisanship variable, which could have introduced a confounding factor or interaction that changed the relationship between the two variables. Overall, the higher education ratio may have a slight positive relationship with the logged CHP vote share, although the coefficients considered collectively do not indicate a clear conclusion.

The partisanship variables for models 3 through 5 present a negative and statistically significant correlation with the logged CHP vote share. The coefficients for the 2018, 2015, and 2011 partisanship variables are -0.160, -0.120, and -0.157 respectively, which indicates that a one unit increase in provincial voting preference for the AKP from before and after the Syrian Civil War has a consistently negative correlation with voting for Kemal Kilicdaroglu in the 2023 elections. The results indicate that partisanship has remained consistently influential, with higher provincial preference for the AKP corresponding to a decreased logged CHP vote share. This suggests that across multiple elections, a trend persists wherein commitment to partisan allegiance coincides with consistency in voting behavior.

The earthquake effect and the public service provision coefficients presented weak correlations with the logged CHP vote share, indicating that they are less influential determinants of voting behavior in the context of the presidential elections. The earthquake coefficients

indicate a consistent slight negative correlation ranging between -0.034 and -0.049, which was slightly statistically significant (p-value<0.1) for models 2 and 4. This illustrates that the earthquake effect has a slight negative relationship with voting for the CHP, which could potentially indicate that the earthquake could mildly benefit the incumbent. However, the low magnitude of these coefficients indicates that this correlation is negligible. The public service provision coefficient also has an extremely small and negative coefficient ranging between -0.0001 and -0.0003. Although models 2 and 4 present statistically significant effects, the extremely small coefficients also indicate that this variable is negligible.

Overall, the results for the regression models for the condition of a presidential election show that the presence of refugees does not have a significant correlation with voting for the relatively anti-refugee CHP candidate. This could be because when there are a multitude of issues voters hope to address, the presence of refugees takes lower priority over other issues such as security, economic concerns, healthcare, etc. Additionally, the findings demonstrate that unemployment and polarization factors play a more consequential role in determining voting behavior. Lastly, the presence of refugees may actually have a slight positive association with voting for the incumbent pro-refugee party, although the lack of statistically significant results limits the extent to which this statement is conclusive.

7.2.2 Parliamentary Elections Analysis Results

Using the same model from the presidential election multivariate OLS regression, the following section presents the results for the effect of the presence of refugees on the 2023 parliamentary election outcomes. Table 4 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the 2023 parliamentary elections dataset across provinces. It is important to note that N=87 in this dataset

compared to the presidential election where N=81. This is because YSK breaks down Ankara, Bursa, Istanbul, and Izmir into 2-3 sections for the parliamentary election votes. The trends in the refugee ratio, unemployment rate, higher education ratio and hospital beds per 1000 hold true from the presidential analysis as the dataset is the same for both cases. The descriptive statistics also present the vote share of three anti-refugee parties, Zafer, IYI, and CHP as well as the more pro-refugee AKP party. Of these four parties, the AKP had the highest mean of the provincial vote shares of 0.359, followed by the CHP with 0.216, the IYI with 0.095, and lastly, the Zafer party with 0.017.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Parliamentary Data

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Refugee Ratio	87	0.027	0.051	0.000	0.340
CHP Vote Share	87	0.216	0.113	0.000	0.456
Zafer Vote Share	87	0.017	0.010	0.000	0.038
IYI Vote Share	87	0.095	0.057	0.000	0.252
AKP Vote Share	87	0.359	0.086	0.121	0.596
Total Population (in millions)	87	1.557	2.989	0.084	15.841
Total Votes (in millions)	87	0.605	0.676	0.049	3.770
Unemployment Rate	87	0.105	0.034	0.060	0.190
Higher Education Ratio	87	0.154	0.051	-0.188	0.257
Hospital Beds per 1000	87	296.425	79.759	133	538

Table 5 illustrates the results of the multivariate OLS regression of anti-refugee party vote shares on the variation of refugee ratios across provinces. The table includes three of the parties with the most anti-refugee stances: the ZP, the single-issue anti-refugee party, and the CHP and IYI, multi-issue parties that have promoted anti-refugee policies. I include these three parties to make sense of whether the trends are consistent across single- and multi-issue parties

that promote anti-refugee ideologies, and how it may vary depending on the party's extremism regarding anti-refugee politics. The table also includes the model for the relatively more pro-refugee AKP as a basis for comparison. The F statistic for all four of the party's models are statistically significant indicating that the models are a good fit. The R^2 values for the CHP, Zafer, IYI, and AKP regressions respectively indicate that the models capture a moderate degree of variability and explanatory power for the independent variable. The differences of variability correlate with the varied demographics of constituents who would prefer more specific single issue anti-refugee parties like ZP and IYI, versus more mainstream parties like CHP and AKP that cover a wider array of issues.

Table 5.1: Parliamentary Elections for ZP

	Dependent variable:				
	Log of ZP Vote Share				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Refugee Ratio	0.020	0.059***	0.057***	0.059***	0.057***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Earthquake Effect		-0.007**	-0.006*	-0.007**	-0.007**
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Higher Education Ratio		0.068***	0.067***	0.069***	0.071***
		(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Unemployment Rate		-0.084***	-0.091***	-0.081***	-0.078***
		(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.030)	(0.029)
Hospital Beds per 1000		0.00001	0.00001	0.00001	0.00001
		(0.00001)	(0.00001)	(0.00001)	(0.00001)
Province Voted AKP in 2018			-0.002		
			(0.002)		
Province Voted AKP in 2015				0.0005	
				(0.002)	
Province Voted AKP in 2011					0.001
					(0.002)
Constant	0.016***	0.011*	0.012*	0.010	0.009
	(0.001)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Observations	87	87	87	87	87
R^2	0.011	0.389	0.393	0.389	0.392
Adjusted R^2	-0.0003	0.351	0.348	0.343	0.346
Residual Std. Error	0.010 (df = 85)	0.008 (df = 81)	0.008 (df = 80)	0.008 (df = 80)	0.008 (df = 80)
F Statistic	0.974 (df = 1; 85)	10.305*** (df = 5; 81)	8.645*** (df = 6; 80)	8.498*** (df = 6; 80)	8.598*** (df = 6; 80)
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 5.2: Parliamentary Elections for CHP Party

	Dependent variable:				
	Log of CHP Vote Share				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Refugee Ratio	0.044	0.214	0.054	0.286	0.390**
	(0.203)	(0.224)	(0.180)	(0.210)	(0.191)
Earthquake Effect		-0.018	0.027	-0.019	-0.018
		(0.035)	(0.028)	(0.032)	(0.029)
Higher Education Ratio		0.584***	0.468***	0.394**	0.373**
		(0.189)	(0.151)	(0.183)	(0.163)
Unemployment Rate		-0.931***	-1.449***	-1.330***	-1.437***
		(0.305)	(0.253)	(0.304)	(0.271)
Hospital Beds per 1000		-0.00004	0.0001	-0.00002	0.0001
		(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Province Voted AKP in 2018			-0.118***		
			(0.017)		
Province Voted AKP in 2015				-0.070***	
				(0.019)	
Province Voted AKP in 2011					-0.104***
					(0.018)
Constant	0.190***	0.208***	0.288***	0.306***	0.296***
	(0.012)	(0.064)	(0.052)	(0.065)	(0.056)
Observations	87	87	87	87	87
R^2	0.001	0.240	0.527	0.349	0.468
Adjusted R^2	-0.011	0.193	0.492	0.300	0.428
Residual Std. Error	0.096 (df = 85)	0.085 (df = 81)	0.068 (df = 80)	0.080 (df = 80)	0.072 (df = 80)
F Statistic	0.047 (df = 1; 85)	5.125*** (df = 5; 81)	14.863*** (df = 6; 80)	7.141*** (df = 6; 80)	11.738*** (df = 6; 80)
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 5.3: Parliamentary Elections for IYI Party

	Dependent variable:				
	Log of IYI Vote Share				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Refugee Ratio	-0.105	0.098	0.081	0.118	0.121
	(0.112)	(0.123)	(0.124)	(0.122)	(0.125)
Earthquake Effect		-0.038**	-0.033*	-0.038**	-0.038**
		(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Higher Education Ratio		0.139	0.127	0.085	0.111
		(0.104)	(0.104)	(0.107)	(0.106)
Unemployment Rate		-0.490***	-0.544***	-0.604***	-0.557***
		(0.168)	(0.175)	(0.177)	(0.176)
Hospital Beds per 1000		0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
		(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Province Voted AKP in 2018			-0.012		
			(0.012)		
Province Voted AKP in 2015				-0.020*	
				(0.011)	
Province Voted AKP in 2011					-0.014
					(0.012)
Constant	0.093***	0.100***	0.108***	0.127***	0.111***
	(0.006)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.038)	(0.036)
Observations	87	87	87	87	87
R^2	0.010	0.246	0.256	0.275	0.259
Adjusted R^2	-0.001	0.200	0.200	0.220	0.203
Residual Std. Error	0.053 (df = 85)	0.047 (df = 81)	0.047 (df = 80)	0.046 (df = 80)	0.047 (df = 80)
F Statistic	0.876 (df = 1; 85)	5.288*** (df = 5; 81)	4.589*** (df = 6; 80)	5.049*** (df = 6; 80)	4.659*** (df = 6; 80)
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 5.4: Parliamentary Elections for AKP Party

	Dependent variable:				
	Log of AKP Vote Share				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Refugee Ratio	0.113	0.087	0.198*	0.017	-0.056
	(0.137)	(0.150)	(0.117)	(0.127)	(0.114)
Earthquake Effect		0.025	-0.006	0.026	0.025
		(0.023)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.017)
Higher Education Ratio		-0.223*	-0.142	-0.039	-0.051
		(0.126)	(0.098)	(0.111)	(0.097)
Unemployment Rate		-0.774***	-0.415**	-0.388**	-0.362**
		(0.203)	(0.165)	(0.184)	(0.161)
Hospital Beds per 1000		0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	-0.00000
		(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Province Voted AKP in 2018			0.082***		
			(0.011)		
Province Voted AKP in 2015				0.067***	
				(0.012)	
Province Voted AKP in 2011					0.085***
					(0.011)
Constant	0.302***	0.375***	0.320***	0.280***	0.304***
	(0.008)	(0.042)	(0.034)	(0.039)	(0.033)
Observations	87	87	87	87	87
R^2	0.008	0.253	0.556	0.476	0.585
Adjusted R^2	-0.004	0.207	0.523	0.437	0.554
Residual Std. Error	0.064 (df = 85)	0.057 (df = 81)	0.044 (df = 80)	0.048 (df = 80)	0.043 (df = 80)
F Statistic	0.686 (df = 1; 85)	5.491*** (df = 5; 81)	16.689*** (df = 6; 80)	12.135*** (df = 6; 80)	18.821*** (df = 6; 80)
Note:					*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

These results indicate important findings about how the presence of refugees correlates with vote shares for distinct anti-refugee parties to different extents. The key takeaway is the highly statistically significant refugee ratio coefficient for the logarithmic variable of the ZP vote share in all models with added controls. Table 5.1 shows moderately positive coefficients ranging between 0.057 and 0.059, in models 2-4 with a p-value of less than 0.01. The findings indicate that a one unit increase of the refugee ratio correlates with an increase in voting for ZP. This suggests that the greater the presence of refugees in a province measured via the refugee ratio, the more likely voters will choose to vote for the starkly anti-refugee ZP.

Following the results for the ZP, it is interesting to consider the coefficients for both the CHP and the IYI. Both parties take a relatively anti-refugee stance, but also promote a broader array of issues in their campaign messaging. For the CHP, all models illustrated a slight positive correlation between the presence of refugees and voting for the party, with a coefficient of 0.044 in the bivariate model and 0.054-0.390 in the models with added controls. Importantly, the only coefficient with a statistically significant result is model 5 with the control of voting for the AKP in 2011 in model 5 with a coefficient of 0.390 and a p-value of 0.05. Considering these findings, controlling for sociodemographic factors as well as whether the province voted for the AKP before the start of the Syrian civil war correlates with a one unit increase in the refugee ratio. Without the partisanship control from before the Syrian Civil War, the correlation between the presence of refugees and voting for the CHP in the parliamentary elections is less statistically significant and conclusive.

For the IYI, the bivariate model interestingly showed a negative correlation of -0.105 with a one unit increase in the logged IYI vote share. However, with the added controls, the presence of refugees had a positive relationship with voting for the IYI ranging from 0.098-0.121

in models 2-5. The model with the greatest positive coefficient is the model including the control for whether the province voted for the AKP in 2011. This illustrates that when controlling for provincial level voting behavior for the IYI before the Syrian civil war, the presence of refugees has a stronger positive correlation with voting for the party.

In the case of the AKP, the relatively pro-refugee party included in this analysis, the results indicate that the presence of refugees had a positive association with a one unit increase in the AKP vote share in models 1-4. The coefficients in models 1-4 ranged between 0.113-0.017, with a slightly statistically significant coefficient for model 3. The exception is the coefficient in model 5 that had a negative correlation of -0.056 with the added control of whether the province voted for the AKP in 2011. This discrepancy could be explained by the fact that this variable accounts for partisanship before the Syrian Civil War that initiated the influx of Syrian refugees into the country. These results suggest that a one unit increase of the refugee ratio may correlate with a slight positive effect on the AKP parliamentary vote share. Although in aggregate these findings were not as statistically significant as the ZP results. Nonetheless, these findings, which conflict the argument posed in H1, still merit consideration.

Upon examining the relationship between the presence of refugees and voting behavior for the parliamentary models, H1, which posited that an increase in the presence of refugees would lead to higher voting shares for anti-refugee parties, led to contrasting perspectives, reflecting both expected and unexpected outcomes. From the results, I find that H1 is confirmed for the starkly anti-refugee single-issue ZP that instrumentalized the refugee issue in the center of their campaign and policy structure. Yet, the same cannot be said for the other multi-issue parties that promote anti-refugee policies. Although the presence of refugees had a positive association with voting for the IYI and the CHP with added controls, these coefficients were predominately

statistically insignificant. The one exception to this was a statistically significant positive correlation between the presence of refugees and voting for the CHP controlling for whether the province voted in favor of the AKP in 2011 before the Syrian Civil War. However, because the coefficient was only statistically significant result of the five models, I am cautious to claim that there is a relationship between the presence of refugees and voting for the CHP. Additionally, the results for the AKP would lead me to reject H1 as the presence of refugees had a slight positive correlation with voting for the pro-refugee party. A potential alternative explanation to these results could reflect intergroup contact theory where increased contact between Syrian refugees and Turks could lead to more positive feelings towards them, and, in turn yield more support for the AKP. An additional explanation could be the incumbency advantage and strong partisan support for the AKP, which would motivate voters to support the party in the parliamentary elections despite their attitudes towards refugees.

Another trend to point out from the regression results is the statistically significant negative correlation between unemployment rate and voting for all four parties across all models with added controls. The consistent negative effect can be seen through the coefficients of -0.078 through -0.091 for the logged ZP vote share, -0.931 through -1.449 for the logged CHP vote share, -0.490 through -0.604 for the logged IYI vote share, and -0.388 through -0.774 for the logged AKP vote share. These results are statistically significant for all coefficients with a p-value of less than 0.01 for the three anti-refugee party coefficients and less than 0.05 for those of the AKP party. The statistically significant coefficients suggest that with an increase in unemployment rate, voting for all four parties decreases by a significant extent. This finding appears counterintuitive for the anti-refugee parties given that standard theories of economic voting relate economic suffering with voting for the opposition. One potential explanation for

this could be that Turkish constituents may be supporting other opposition parties not included in this empirical analysis to combat issues of unemployment, such as the Gelecek Party or the DEVA Party (Coskun and Ülgen, 2022). Another theory could be that there is lower voter turnout in areas that have high rates of unemployment. For the relatively pro-refugee AKP party, the negative coefficients align more with the idea that voters who feel frustrated by the current economic situation in the country may feel less inclined to support the incumbent.

The coefficients for the higher education variable have an interesting trend particularly for the ZP and the CHP. The results indicate that an increase in a higher education ratio within a province correlates with an increase in vote shares for the logarithmic CHP and ZP vote shares, which range from 0.373-0.584 and 0.068-0.071 respectively. These coefficients indicate that provinces with populations that have higher levels of education are more likely to vote for the CHP and the ZP, although the CHP had a much stronger association in this regard than the ZP. This is likely attributed to the fact that the CHP is a more mainstream and multi-issue party that promotes pro-democratic policies. Interestingly, in the case of the IYI party, although it had positive coefficients as well, it was not statistically significant, which suggests that the higher education trend does not have as much of an influence in voting behavior in comparison the ZP and CHP. This indicates that education may have varying influence on the anti-refugee party support and that other factors may be at play in the relationship between the presence of refugees and voting for anti-refugee parties. In contrast to the three anti-refugee parties, the AKP party had a negative coefficient for the higher education ratio ranging from -0.039 through -0.223, which suggests that those with higher education are less inclined to vote for the AKP. However, as this coefficient was not statistically significant for three of the four models, the result is not conclusive.

The earthquake effect control demonstrates a very limited effect on all four parties' vote share. The ZP and IYI coefficients presented moderately statistically significant negative coefficients averaging around -0.006 and -0.038 respectively. These results indicate that the seismic shocks had the potential to slightly decrease support for these parties, but overall had very little influence on their vote shares. The AKP had a range of both slight positive and slight negative, statistically insignificant coefficients between -0.006 and 0.026 in the four models with the control, which would indicate that the earthquake had negligible effects on the support for their party in the parliamentary elections, and that unknown interactions between variables could be leading to these conflicting coefficients. Similarly, the CHP party also had statistically insignificant and varied coefficients between -0.019 and 0.027, which indicates that the earthquake also had little to no influence on support for the party. The minimal results of the earthquake effects for all four parties could be partially attributed to the fact that natural disaster events tend to have immediate effects which quickly fade over time. These events may move public opinion for a few days, but ultimately more long-term issues take hold in influencing voters' opinions.

The last result to point out in this analysis is the partisanship control variables. These variables, whether the province voted for the AKP in 2011, 2015 and 2018 are included in models 3-5. For the ZP, the partisanship variables for all three years are negligible, with a coefficient of -0.002 for 2018, 0.0005 for 2015, and 0.001 for 2011. These effects could be explained by the fact that Zafer emerged in 2021, after the 2018 election, and therefore, those who chose to vote for them more likely supported them purely out of alignment with their policies and ideology rather than partisan responsibility. The IYI had similar weak coefficients for the partisanship variables of -0.012 in 2018, -0.020 in 2015 and -0.014 in 2011, which also

could be attributed to the fact that the IYI emerged in 2017, after the 2011 and 2015 elections. Conversely the CHP, which is the main competitor to the majority AKP party demonstrated a statistically significant negative relationship between provincial preference for the AKP and voting for the CHP. A one unit increase in the partisanship variable correlated with a decrease in the logarithmic variable of the CHP vote share by -0.118 for 2018, -0.070 for 2015 and -0.104 for 2011. The partisanship coefficient for the AKP had a positive and statistically significant coefficient of 0.082 for 2018, 0.067 for 2015 and 0.085 for 2011, indicating that those who voted for the AKP in the last elections were more likely to vote for them again in 2023. These findings illustrate that parties that are more mainstream may be more impacted by polarization than niche anti-refugee parties that appeal to constituents with more specific xenophobic attitudes.

7.3 Discussion of Regression Results

Reviewing the results from the OLS regressions for the 2023 second round presidential elections and parliamentary elections, two interesting discrepancies arise. The first is the differences in the key relationship between the independent variable of the presence of refugees and the dependent variable of vote shares for anti-refugee parties. In the presidential election models with the CHP, the coefficients indicated no significant correlation between the presence of refugees and the CHP vote share. In contrast, in the parliamentary election, an increase in the presence of refugees correlated with an increase in support for anti-refugee parties, more specifically the single-issue Zafer Party. These conflicting results raise the question of under what conditions the presence of refugees impacts voting behavior in Turkish elections and confirms the mechanism explored in H1.

In the parliamentary elections where Erdogan has less control and there are opportunities for voting for more niche, single-issue parties, the impact of other determinants of voting behavior may be more prevalent and easier to detect. This is exemplified by the statically significant correlation between the presence of refugees and voting for the ZP. These findings align with previous studies that have found that ideological motivated voting and the "issue ownership" model to explain individual voting behavior may be easier to detect in multi-party systems, which is especially true when the issue increases in salience (van der Brug 2004; Belanger and Meguid 2008). Further, the findings align with another study that illustrated that despite highly polarized elections, issue preferences in multiparty elections can hold more weight than the net direct effect of leaders on voting choice (Bellucci et. al 2013).

The second discrepancy is the role of unemployment rates in determining voting behavior in the presidential versus the parliamentary elections. In both cases, the results were highly statistically significant indicating that unemployment rates have a key influence in determining the voting behavior of constituents. In the presidential elections, the unemployment rate across provinces had a positive effect on the vote shares of the anti-refugee CHP party. This could be attributed to the fact that voters hoped to find solutions to the economic crises in the country by voting for the opposition candidate in presidential elections. Conversely, in the parliamentary elections, unemployment rates had a negative effect on relatively anti-refugee parties, which could be the result of voters choosing other parties who had better economic policies, such as promoting job creation, implementing social welfare programs or promoting economic reforms, compared to those included in this research.

There were also several similarities between the two regression analyses. The first similarity is the role of higher education as a key influence of voting behavior. In both the

presidential and parliamentary elections, the higher education variable led to an increase in vote shares for the anti-refugee parties. This could be attributed to the fact that some of the anti-refugee parties presented policies that aligned with more pro-democratic policy approaches that appeal to people with higher education. However, this does not necessarily imply that highly educated voters support them because of their anti-refugee policies, but rather that they could be supporting them because they have more pro-democratic views. Although the coefficient in the parliamentary AKP model for higher education was statistically insignificant, it was the only party that had a negative relationship between higher level education and vote shares.

The second similarity is the role of partisanship in both electoral contexts. Interestingly, the partisanship variable had strong and statistically significant associations with voting for the more mainstream CHP party in both the presidential and parliamentary elections. The partisanship variable also had strong statistically significant effects on the AKP, which is the other mainstream party included in this analysis. This observation aligns with the historic trend of the enduring influence of partisan alignment on electoral outcomes, especially due to the consistency of AKP support and polarization in the country. The similarity in these results indicate that partisanship plays a key role in determining voting behavior for mainstream parties. As candidates for less popular parties did not make it to the second-round presidential elections, and thus, are not included in my model for the presidential regression, it is not possible to compare how partisanship affects voting for less popular parties in the presidential versus the parliamentary elections. That said, as the partisanship coefficients for the ZP and IYI parties were not statistically significant, the results suggest that partisanship may have a negligible influence on voting for parties that have a smaller presence in the political mainstream.

The third similarity in the two election results is the miniscule effect of both the public service provision and the earthquake effect on all the models for the two elections. The lack of high statistical significance and small coefficients for these variables in each model demonstrate that the earthquake as well as access to public services do not play as important of a role compared to the refugee crisis, economic issues, and partisanship factors.

These discrepancies and similarities suggest that the conditions for an election, whether it is presidential or parliamentary, matter in determining the relationship between the presence of refugees and voting behavior. In the presidential elections, other determinants to voting behavior emerge as more influential than the presence of refugees. However, when given the option of a single-issue anti-refugee party in the parliamentary elections, the presence of refugees appears to have a significant correlation with voting for the starkly anti-refugee ZP. These results also indicate that socioeconomic status, education, and partisanship play a key role in determining voting behavior in Turkey.

Overall, the findings from both 2023 elections emphasize the complexity of the voting landscape in Turkey and the factors that influence voting in presidential versus parliamentary elections. It is interesting to consider why there was broad attention to the refugee issue in many of the campaigns preceding the 2023 elections even though the results indicate that the presence of refugees does not seem to be a strong determinant of voting. One explanation for this could be that Turkey is highly polarized and candidates are fighting over a small group of undecided or independent voters where the refugee issue can serve as a mobilizing force. An alternative perception could be that candidates may instrumentalize the refugee issue in their campaigns in response to public opinion on refugees without realizing the lack of influence that the presence of refugees has on determining voting behavior when it comes to election day. Future research

should examine why and how candidates instrumentalize the anti-refugee issue in their campaign messaging to further assess the key drivers of the phenomenon.

Chapter 8: Survey Analysis of the Mechanism of Intergroup Contact

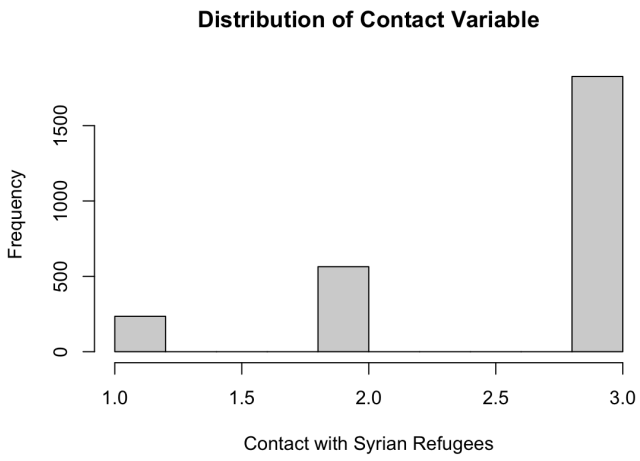
8.1 Methods for Statistical analysis for public opinion data as a measure of intergroup contact

The following empirical assessment tests the alternative explanation of how the presence of refugees affects elections as is explained by Hypothesis 2. H2 posits that *more intergroup contact between Turks and Syrian refugees in a province will decrease voter preferences for anti-refugee parties*. These regressions employ survey data from Konda Barometer as a proxy measure of intergroup contact, which is operationalized as the independent variable of the presence of refugees. The independent variable is measured through responses to the question *How often do you come across Syrian asylum-seekers?* I created a three-point scale for the frequency of meeting Syrian refugees from rarely to frequently to serve as the measure in response to this question.

I chose to focus my regression analysis on the July 2019 survey round for several key reasons. Firstly, the July 2019 survey round provides a measure of perceptions of intergroup contact that is the most recent and can gauge the sense of intergroup contact between Syrian refugees and Turks after the 2018 elections and preceding the 2023 elections. Secondly, to ensure robustness in my models, it did not make sense to include both the 2019 and 2016 survey rounds in the regression model. This is due to the potential introduction of confounding factors and issues related to multicollinearity. More specifically, including data from multiple time periods would introduce the possibility of temporal confounding where changes in the socio-political landscape could impact the validity of the analysis. Further, if the measures of intergroup contact from both survey rounds correlate, there would be a higher risk of inflated standard errors and misleading interpretations of the coefficients. Thirdly, during the design

process of operationalizing the dependent variable, I examined the distribution of responses for the more niche parties in the 2022 survey round. Interestingly, none of the respondents indicated a preference for ZP, which I had intended to pursue for a disaggregated analysis. Consequently, due to the absence of data on respondents favoring ZP, I opted to maintain the focus on the 2019 dataset to ensure greater precision in my regression model.

Figure 14: Histogram of Intergroup Contact Variable in July 2019 Survey



The dependent variable, voting for anti-refugee parties is measured through the response to the question *If there was an election today, who would you vote for?* The respondents answered this question with 8 options where 1 = AKP, 2 = CHP, 3 = MHP, 4 = HDP, 5= IYI, 6 = other parties, 7 = swing voter, and 8 = nonvoter. I recoded the dependent variable so that 1=the respondent would vote for an anti-refugee party and 0= the respondent would vote for a pro refugee party. Using the findings of anti-refugee and pro-refugee party categorization from a 2022 study by Balta. et al discussed in Chapter 3, I placed the AKP in the pro-refugee category and the CHP and the IYI in the anti-refugee category (Balta et. al 2022). I excluded the MHP and HDP from this categorization as their politics are not as overtly anti- or pro-refugee compared to

the AKP, IYI and CHP. For robustness checks, I ran an OLS regression including an alternate dependent variable where -1 = pro-refugee party, 1=anti-refugee party, and 0 =all other parties and responses. To consider how contact affects voting for the individual parties, I also disaggregated the dependent variable to include models with dichotomous variables for supporting the AKP, IYI, and CHP as an additional robustness check which is included in the appendix.

As the dependent variable is dichotomous, I pursued a logit regression for this analysis. The controls in this analysis also come from the Konda dataset to ensure stricter precision and measurement on an individual level, which was not possible for the broader provincial level elections analysis in Chapter 7. The controls I employed in this model pertained to measures of socioeconomic status, and religiousness, based on self-reported categorical measures of these demographic features within the survey. The control variable of education level is measured by the survey answers of the respondent through an 8-level Likert scale, which I included as a continuous control variable. The employment variable is measured on a 14-level Likert scale, which I converted into a dummy variable for unemployed (1) and employed (0) to better align with my analysis of unemployment in the regional voting method. The religiosity variable is operationalized as a 5-level Likert scale ranging from secular to devout. The model also includes demographic variables for gender and age with dummy variables for female respondents, and a 4-category scale for age where 1=15-17, 2 = 18-28, 3 = 29-43, and 4=44+.[5]

To execute my results, I cleaned my data and conducted logit regressions in R Studio. The empirical model that is employed to assess how intergroup contact, which results from the

[5] More details on Konda variable recoding process in Appendix III.

variation of presence of Syrian refugees across provinces correlates with voting behavior of the Turkish host population in a multivariate logit regression:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_i C + \beta_i X + \epsilon_i$$

In this model, *Y* represents the respondent's preference for the anti-refugee party in the next election per province *i*. β_0 refers to the intercept. *C* refers to the frequency of intergroup contact per province *i*. X is a vector for the three following control variables: $\beta_3 \times$ Job Scale + $\beta_4 \times$education level + $\beta_5 \times$ religiousness + $\beta_6 \times$ Woman + $\beta_7 \times$ Age. The variable ϵ refers to the error term.

8.2 Results for Statistical analysis for intergroup contact via Konda Public opinion data

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics for the key variables used in my logit regression analysis. The statistic for the dichotomous voting variable indicates that on average about 47% of the respondents support anti-refugee parties. I also include descriptive statistics on whether the respondents said they would support three of the key parties discussed in Chapter 7 to contextualize how public opinion relates to actual voting data. These variables illustrate that the AKP has the highest proportion of support amongst respondents followed by the CHP, and IYI, 32.7%, 25.5%, and 3.3% respectively. This ranking of popularity aligns with how these parties are supported on a broader national level.

The mean for intergroup contact, which is 2.603, indicates that the average frequency of interaction that respondents have with Syrian refugees is relatively high, as 3 corresponds to interacting with refugees on a daily/weekly basis and 2 corresponds to interactions on a monthly basis. Moving to the socio-demographic indicators included in the dataset, the unemployed

dichotomous variable presents a standard deviation of 0.490, with the average falling at 0.600 between 0 and 1, indicating that a significant proportion of the respondents fell into one of the unemployed categories. The education level variable has an average of 4.169, which indicates that respondents are on average of at least primary school education. This variable has significant variability with a standard deviation of 1.420. The religiosity measure illustrates that the average of 3.703 among respondents translates to most often identifying between a "believer" and "religious." This indicates that religion plays a role in the identity amongst many respondents in the sample. The gender dummy variables indicate that the survey is about half men and half women with the mean for women at 0.504 and for men at 0.489. The descriptive statistics for age indicate that all respondents were between the groupings of 2 and 4 and thus, all respondents were between the ages of 18-44+. The statistics indicate that the 2019 survey did not include any respondents between the ages of 15-17.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Konda Data

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Support for Anti Refugee Parties	1,518	0.469	0.499	0	1
Supports CHP	2,468	0.255	0.436	0	1
Supports IYI	2,468	0.033	0.179	0	1
Supports AKP	2,468	0.327	0.469	0	1
Frequency of Intergroup Contact	2,468	2.603	0.648	1	3
Unemployed	2,466	0.600	0.490	0	1
Education Level	2,468	4.169	1.422	1	7
Religiousness	2,468	3.703	0.797	1	5
Woman	2,468	0.504	0.500	0	1
Man	2,468	0.489	0.500	0	1
Age	2,468	3.198	0.785	2	4

Table 7 presents the results of the logit regression analysis for the dichotomous measures of aggregate voting for anti-refugee parties on the proxy measure of intergroup contact. The table includes an aggregated model for pro-refugee and anti-refugee parties based on the July 2019 survey round. There are three models included in Table 7. The first is a bivariate logit regression model of the dichotomous variable for support for anti-refugee parties on the independent variable of the proxy measure for intergroup contact. The second model includes controls for the key socio-demographic factors namely, unemployment, education level and religiousness. The third model adds additional controls for gender (whether the respondent is female) and age. The log likelihood and Akaika Information Criterion (AIC) convey the goodness of fit of the models. The similar log likelihood and AIC values of Models 2 and 3 indicate that they have a similar fit, which are better compared to that of model 1.

Table 8 presents OLS regressions with the alternate version of the anti-refugee dependent variable (where -1 = pro-refugee and 1=anti refugee) as a robustness check. The F statistic for all three models is highly statistically significant, indicating that the models are a good fit. The R^2 values of 0.003 for model 1 and 0.113 for models 2 and 3 indicating that the independent variable has very low explanatory power and does not capture the majority of the variation observed for the dependent variable, which will be important to keep in mind when assessing the results.

Table 7: Logistic Regressions for Intergroup Contact and Support for Anti Refugee Parties

	Dependent variable:		
	Would Vote for Anti Refugee Party		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contact Frequency	0.231***	0.085	0.091
	(0.082)	(0.093)	(0.093)
Unemployed		0.168	0.146
		(0.121)	(0.132)
Education Level		0.256***	0.271***
		(0.046)	(0.048)
Religiousness		-1.181***	-1.192***
		(0.094)	(0.095)
Woman			0.057
			(0.128)
Age			0.074
			(0.080)
Constant	-0.731***	2.853***	2.563***
	(0.222)	(0.508)	(0.593)
Observations	1,518	1,516	1,516
Log Likelihood	-1,045.245	-890.502	-890.009
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,094.491	1,791.004	1,794.019
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 8: OLS Robustness Check for Alternate Anti Refugee Variable

	Dependent variable:		
	Would Vote for Anti Refugee Party		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contact Frequency	0.066***	0.019	0.020
	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Unemployed		0.038	0.032
		(0.032)	(0.034)
Education Level		0.067***	0.069***
		(0.011)	(0.012)
Religiousness		-0.274***	-0.275***
		(0.020)	(0.020)
Woman			0.017
			(0.033)
Age			0.010
			(0.021)
Constant	-0.210***	0.623***	0.582***
	(0.065)	(0.122)	(0.146)
Observations	2,468	2,466	2,466
R^2	0.003	0.113	0.113
Adjusted R^2	0.003	0.111	0.111
Residual Std. Error	0.782 (df = 2466)	0.738 (df = 2461)	0.739 (df = 2459)
F Statistic	7.419*** (df = 1; 2466)	78.243*** (df = 4; 2461)	52.210*** (df = 6; 2459)
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

In Table 7, the key independent variable of the proxy measure for the frequency of intergroup contact in each model varies in statistical significance but presents a consistent positive coefficient for all three models. The first model reports a positive and statistically significant coefficient of 0.231 with a p value of less than 0.01, thus, a one unit change in the contact variable correlates to an increase in the odds of voting for an anti-refugee party by 23.1%. Thus, the coefficient suggests that as the frequency of intergroup contact increases, the odds of voting for an anti-refugee party also increases. In Table 8 with the alternate anti-refugee party dependent variable and an OLS regression, a similar pattern occurs in that the bivariate relationship presented a positive and statistically significant coefficient for the contact variable. For model one, a one unit increase in the contact variable correlates with an increase by 0.066 with a p-value of less than 0.01.

In the second and third model for Table 7, we still see a positive coefficient of 0.085 and 0.091 respectively, although neither result is statistically significant. These results mean that holding all other variables constant, with a one unit increase in contact, the odds of voting for an anti-refugee party increases by 8.5% and 9.1% respectively. However, because neither result is statistically significant with added controls, these results are not conclusive. Table 8 illustrates a similar pattern in that with added control variables, the strength of the correlation between contact and voting for anti-refugee parties, although still positive, decreases with the coefficients of 0.019 and 0.020 respectively. The lack of statistical significance in the second two models indicate that when incorporating the influence of other socio demographic variables that influence voting behavior, the relationship between intergroup contact and voting for anti-refugee parties becomes weaker.

As an additional robustness check, I ran logistic regressions for the CHP, IYI and AKP parties individually to discern if different results would emerge with a disaggregated dependent variable.[6] These results also appear to be consistent with the aggregate dependent variables employed in Tables 7 and 8 in that a one unit change in the contact variable correlates with a positive coefficient for voting for the relatively anti-refugee CHP and IYI. Interestingly the CHP had a larger and statistically significant coefficient compared to that of the IYI, which did not have a statistically significant coefficient. I do not have a clear explanation for this discrepancy of statistical significance, and thus, a disaggregated analysis of how contact impacts voting for individual parties warrants further research. Additionally, the AKP had a small and slightly positive coefficient that was not statistically significant, and thus the correlation is negligible. These results indicate that the contact variable has a stronger correlation with voting for the relatively anti-refugee parties compared to the pro-refugee AKP, which aligns with the results in the aggregate models.

These results lead me to cautiously reject H2 in the case of the bivariate relationship between intergroup contact and voting for anti-refugees, in that more intergroup contact leads to more voting for anti-refugee parties rather than less. The findings better align with the hypothesis posed in H1 in that more refugees in a province lead to increased votes for anti-refugee parties. However, once other factors are considered in this relationship, the effect of intergroup contact becomes statistically insignificant. Therefore, in isolation, intergroup contact may have a moderate positive correlation with voting for anti-refugee parties, however, with added controls,

[6] Results for additional robustness check included in Table 9 in Appendix IV.

the results do not allow me to draw a definitive conclusion about the nature of this relationship and further, whether I can confirm or reject the mechanism posited in H2.

The unemployment control coefficients in models 2 and 3 for both Tables 7 and 8 illustrate that respondents who are unemployed correlate with voting for the relatively anti-refugee parties although these results lack statistical significance. In Table 7, models 2 and 3 indicate that with a one unit increase in unemployment, the odds ratio of voting for an anti-refugee party increases by 16.8% and 14.6% respectively. In Table 8, a one unit increase in unemployment correlates with an increase in voting for anti-refugee parties by 0.038 and 0.032 for models 2 and 3. Although these coefficients indicate that there may be a slight positive relationship between unemployment and voting for anti-refugee parties, the lack of statistical significance for all four coefficients suggest that the two variables do not have a strong correlation.

The education level variable in models 2 and 3 in both Tables 7 and 8 present statistically significant results with a p-value of less than 0.01 In Table 7, the second model reports a positive coefficient of 0.256 and the third model reports a coefficient of 0.271, which indicates that with a one unit increase in education level, the probability of voting for an anti-refugee party increases by 25.6% and 27.18% respectively. In Table 8, a one unit increase in education level leads to coefficients of 0.067 and 0.069, which indicates a slight positive correlation between the two. These results could be attributed to the fact that the CHP and IYI anti-refugee parties are in opposition to the AKP and present more pro-democratic policies that would align with individuals who have higher levels of education. However, this does not necessarily mean that individuals who have higher level degrees are more inclined to support these parties because they hold anti-refugee stances.

The religiousness variable in models 2 and 3 for both tables demonstrate a negative relationship between a 1 unit increase in religiosity and support for anti-refugee parties. In other words, the more religious one is, the less likely they will support voting for anti-refugee parties. In Table 7, the coefficients are -1.181 and -1.192, which indicates that a one unit increase in religiosity decreases the odds of voting for a relatively anti-refugee party by 118% and 119% respectively. In Table 8, a one unit increase in religiousness has a negative correlation with voting for anti-refugee parties with the coefficients of -0.274 and -0.275. All four coefficients indicate that religiousness has a strong negative correlation with voting for relatively anti-refugee parties, which could potentially be explained by the fact that the majority of AKP supporters identify as highly religious. Further, as explained in Chapter 3, the sense of brotherhood and camaraderie shared by Turks and Syrian refugees because of their common Muslim religion also may decrease negative feelings towards them.

Lastly, it is important to address the identity-based coefficients in model 3 for both tables. The age and gender coefficients have no statistical significance and coefficients with negligible effects for both models. These minimal effects indicate that gender and age do not have a strong correlation with voting for anti-refugee parties amongst survey respondents. In future research, it would be interesting to see if a larger sample across provinces would lead to results where gender and age serve as a stronger determinant to voting behavior.

Overall, these results indicate that contact has some correlation with voting for anti-refugee parties, although this relationship is the strongest considering a bivariate relationship between the two variables. With added control variables, the correlation weakens between contact and voting for anti-refugee parties. The findings demonstrate that education is the best predictor for determining voting behavior for anti-refugee parties, although it is important to note

that this may be convoluted with voting for parties that promote more pro-democratic policies. In other words, it is challenging to disaggregate whether highly educated individuals vote for relatively anti-refugee parties because they possess anti-refugee attitudes or because they support the opposition. As there were no respondents within this survey that expressed voting preferences for ZP, the main single-issue and starkly anti-refugee party, it is challenging to discern whether contact may have an influence on determining voting behavior for more niche candidates. Therefore, future research should execute similar models with data that contains supporters for ZP to discern if contact and the key education determinant influences voting behavior.

Chapter 9: Discussion

The methodological approaches advanced in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 respond to the research question of *How does the presence of refugees affect voting in host countries?* The synthesis of the GIS spatial analysis, the regional voting analysis, and the survey analysis results provide a multidimensional perspective in which to consider under what conditions do the presence of refugees affect elections in host countries. After considering each approach individually, I put the methods in conversation with each other to understand what the results illustrate about my hypotheses, refugee politics, and the broader electoral landscape in Turkey.

Overall, the findings suggest that a higher refugee presence, particularly in provinces with major metropolitan centers, correlates with greater support for single-issue, anti-refugee parties. This applies more specifically under the condition of parliamentary elections when voters have more flexibility in voting for a niche party that aligns with their key priorities. The results from the Zafer party spatial and regional voting analyses are the key findings that support this conclusion and confirm H1. Based on this finding, an area for future research to further explore is how the increase in the presence of refugees impacts voting for multidimensional anti-refugee parties that circulate more in the mainstream. Additionally, the question emerges as to whether this finding is consistent with voting behavior for other single-issue anti-refugee parties in different countries. The complement of the survey analysis with the proxy measure for intergroup contact suggest that increased contact between Syrian refugees and local Turks could serve as a mechanism that exacerbates voting for anti-refugee parties, although the lack of statistical significance in the models with more controls warrants future research on the phenomenon. Thus, the results would lead me to cautiously reject H2 when considering the relationship between intergroup contact and voting for anti-refugee parties in isolation.

Nonetheless, future studies should collect more precise and nationwide measurements on intergroup contact between the two groups to discern a clearer understanding of the mechanism's relationship to voting.

In the spatial analysis section, there were several key trends that emerged in the bivariate maps of the presidential and parliamentary election results. In the presidential results, the maps illustrated that most provinces with high refugee ratios voted in favor of the AKP, with a few exceptions. Provinces that voted in favor of the CHP had the highest vote shares in the areas that primarily had the least refugees, with the exceptions of Istanbul and Izmir, which are major progressive and metropolitan areas. The correlations depicted in the presidential elections map illustrate findings that conflicted with H1, as the more refugees in a province correlated to more votes for relatively pro-refugee AKP.

In the case of the parliamentary election results, the GIS mapping illustrated that provinces along the Syrian border tended to vote more for the AKP rather than the anti-refugee parties. Conversely, provinces that have major metropolitan areas and high refugee ratios tended to present high vote shares for anti-refugee parties. This was the truest for ZP, but also held consistent for the IYI and the CHP to some extent. These results demonstrate that in the case of the parliamentary elections, high concentration of refugees and high vote shares for anti-refugee parties correlate in urban areas, but not in Syrian border zones. This could indicate that those who witness the reality of Syrian refugees' experiences on the border may feel sympathetic towards them and vote for the more pro refugee AKP party. Whereas in urban areas where both groups are integrated in each other's spaces, voters may interact with refugees more frequently and develop less sympathetic or hostile feelings towards them.

In the regional voting analysis results, where I incorporate controls, we see that in the case of the presidential elections, the presence of refugees had a negative relationship with the CHP vote share, although these results were not statistically significant and thus inconclusive. That said, these results correspond with the bivariate map of the CHP in that provinces with less refugees tended to correlate with more votes for the CHP. In the parliamentary elections, the results indicated that the presence of refugees had the most statistically significant and strongest positive relationship with the vote share for the ZP. These results resonate with the bivariate map in that most provinces with the highest ZP vote shares also had high refugee ratios. Given that the ZP is the most starkly anti-refugee party of all parties running in the parliamentary elections, these results indicate that the presence of refugees has the strongest effect on voting for parties that are explicitly anti-refugee and primarily instrumentalize the issue in their discourse and campaign.

The regional voting analysis regressions presented a lack of statistically significant results for the relationship between the presence of refugees and the parliamentary vote shares for the IYI and CHP. Similarly, in the GIS maps for both parties, it was more challenging to discern a clear pattern between the vote shares and presence of refugees in the choropleth depictions. This could be attributed to the fact that the IYI and the CHP, although both anti-refugee parties, also run on a series of other issues that resonate with voters. The greater complexity of the issues that both the CHP and IYI promote within their messaging and ideologies may explain a less clear correlation between the presence of refugees and voting for those parties in both the GIS and regional voting analysis approaches.

Interestingly, the regressions for the AKP in the parliamentary elections also indicated a positive relationship between the presence of refugees and the AKP vote share, however these

coefficients were not statistically significant. What could explain this finding is the fact that the AKP had high vote shares in the outstanding provinces with high refugee ratios that did not vote in favor of the anti-refugee parties. Several provinces with relatively high refugee ratios depicted in the maps, such as Sanliurfa, Adiyaman, and Kayseri, that did not swing as much in favor of the anti-refugee parties may contribute to the results being positive and statistically significant. Overall, out of the provinces with higher refugee ratios, the AKP had high vote shares in areas along the border and in more rural areas whereas the more urban provinces with high refugee ratios swung in favor of anti-refugee parties. These findings indicate that in some provinces there could be stronger anti-refugee sentiment than others due to local level factors that lead voters to perceive refugees and anti-refugee parties differently.

Incorporating the results of the survey analysis regressions for intergroup contact into the discussion, I found that when solely considering the bivariate relationship between intergroup contact and voting for anti-refugee parties, higher frequency of intergroup contact correlates with increased support for anti-refugee parties. This would lead me to reject H2, that more intergroup contact would decrease support for anti-refugee parties. Although the contact coefficients continued to have a positive correlation with supporting anti refugee parties in the other models with added controls, I cannot fully reject H2 given that the coefficients were statistically insignificant. The lack of statistical significance in the models with more controls makes it more challenging to determine the extent to which intergroup contact truly motivates support for anti-refugee parties, when there are other factors at play such as economic competition, religion, etc. Nonetheless, the findings indicate that intergroup contact could be a mechanism in which the presence of refugees affects voting for anti-refugee parties and elections more broadly. This could especially be true in the case of the Zafer party as the GIS maps showed that most of the

provinces that had higher vote shares for the party were also in areas with major metropolitan centers, which would facilitate more frequent contact between voters and refugees.

The findings from the control variables in the regional voting and survey analyses also illustrate that there are several other important factors that serve as stronger determinants for voting behavior in comparison to the presence of refugees. The analyses illustrated that those who are more educated are more likely to vote for the parties that have relatively hard-line stances against refugees. This could be attributed to the fact that these parties also promote more secular and pro-democratic values. Therefore, it is challenging to determine whether higher education directly correlates to voting for anti-refugee parties because of their refugee ideologies or if it motivates support for other pro-democratic policies the parties stand for.

Unemployment also emerged as a consistently influential determinant of voting behavior, which was especially true in the voting analysis. Interestingly, in the elections analysis, unemployment had a negative association with voting for the relatively anti-refugee parties in the parliamentary elections and a positive association in the presidential analysis. In the survey analysis, unemployment had a positive correlation with voting for the anti-refugee parties, although the coefficients were not statistically significant. This discrepancy between the two methods could be attributed to differences in measurement and sample size between the two unemployment variables. Given that the regional voting analysis contained unemployment rates for each of the 81 provinces and had statistically significant coefficients, I am more inclined to draw on those results to discern my analyses compared to the survey, which covered less than half of the total provinces. The positive coefficients in the presidential voting analysis could be attributed to the fact that unemployment may motivate voting for the opposition candidate for the presidential elections. For the parliamentary, the negative coefficients could be explained by the

notion that unemployment could motivate voters to choose different parties rather than those included in the analysis that better align with their specific national economic goals.

In addition to the socioeconomic factors, the partisanship control variable in the regional voting analysis also proved to be an important determinant of voting behavior. For the regional voting regression analysis, provinces that leaned AKP in 2018, 2015 and 2011 were less likely to vote for the more mainstream CHP party in the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections. For ZP and IYI party, the impacts of the AKP voter preference control variable on support for these parties were negligible, which could be attributed to the fact that the parties emerged in 2021 and 2017 respectively. Therefore, their more recent emergence in the political sphere could have limited their ability to attract voters solely based on historical partisanship. These results suggest that partisanship remains a crucial factor in shaping voting behavior especially for the more mainstream parties, but that the influence of political allegiances may not extend to newer and more niche parties to the same degree. Further, these findings suggest that partisan allegiance may not always align with voters' attitudes towards refugees, especially when voting for the more mainstream candidates within the CHP or the AKP.

Lastly, a dimension the survey regression analysis allowed me to explore is the role of religiosity in determining voting behavior. Interestingly, all models including the religiosity control demonstrated a highly statistically significant and negative relationship between voting for anti-refugee parties and being religious. Therefore, the finding suggests that religion may serve as a mediating force that leads to more sympathetic views towards refugees. However, as I could not integrate a religiosity variable in the regional voting analysis dataset, I cannot discern if this trend applies to voting behavior in Turkey on a broader scale. Thus, the religiosity mechanism serves as an area for further research.

There are several limitations to this research that are important to acknowledge in the discussion of the results. The first limitation in the regional voting regression analysis is the lack of precision of the measure of the presence of refugees across provinces, as well as some of the control variables, primarily the partisanship variable. For the former, the GIGM tends to undercount the actual number of the Syrian refugee population, due to the undocumented status of many refugees and the movement of refugees between provinces. For the latter, the partisanship variable was based on a binary measure of whether the province voted in favor of the AKP in past elections, which does not sufficiently capture the nuance and vastness of polarization throughout the country that a measure such as a nationwide partisanship survey could. Additionally, the lack of an added control for religiosity in the regional voting analysis potentially excluded a key dimension of the election landscape and an attitudinal determinant towards refugees that could have significantly impacted the results. Lastly, the provincial level dataset leads to an ecological inference problem in that the data allowed for conclusions about the relationship of provincial level factors and voting, but it does not explain individual level differences.

The second limitation in the survey regression analysis is that the survey covered less recent data, as the analysis considered data from 2019. Therefore, I could not sufficiently evaluate how a recent shift in anti-refugee attitudes, especially with the rise of ZP in 2021, played a role in this dynamic. Additionally, although the proxy measure for intergroup contact in the dataset was the most accessible way to measure the phenomenon, it is still not entirely precise as people may exaggerate how they perceive their interactions with refugees due to aggravated feelings towards them. In future research, ideal data to test H2 would be a more recent nationwide survey that measures the instances of contact between Syrian refugees and

individual Turks on a weekly basis to discern the true scope of intergroup contact across provinces over a longer period of time.

The third limitation is that in the past few years preceding the 2023 elections the whole country has collectively become more anti-refugee, exemplified in a 2018 survey where 83% of Turks said they viewed Syrians negatively and a similar 2023 survey that found that 70 percent of Turks would vote for the party that enforces the most restrictive policies on Syrian refugees (Makovsky 2019; Duvar Gazette 2023). This political landscape makes the nuance of anti-refugee attitudes amongst different parties more challenging to distinguish and disaggregate in my analysis. This is especially complex as even Erdogan and AKP representatives have started to take a more anti-refugee perspective to maintain support amongst their constituents and better align their policies with the climate of public opinion surrounding the refugee crisis (Karakas et. al, 2023). To understand why Erdogan and the AKP have moved in the more anti-refugee direction and account for the complex dynamics of the Syrian refugee situation in Turkey, it would be interesting to examine how the situation has changed over time with an analysis of several elections including the 2023 results.

The fourth limitation is that Turkey has increasingly become a quasi-authoritarian state through democratic backsliding facilitated by the AKP and Erdogan. Therefore, the degree of liberty within the population's voting behavior is challenging to determine from quantitative data, and thus, makes it difficult to derive precise conclusions about how refugees impact election outcomes in the country. Given that mechanisms of democratic backsliding often happen in ways that are complex to measure and account for in a statistical approach, such as the state-controlled media and repression of the opposition, I could not incorporate a control for this factor within my analysis. These quasi-authoritarian circumstances make it more challenging to discern popular

attitudes due to the censorship of the opposition, especially if people feel pressured to answer the polls in ways that do not align with their true perspectives. Nonetheless, my study advances a valuable insight as it provides an understanding into how the presence of refugees fits into this landscape of repression within Turkish politics.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

The research presented in this thesis responds to the research question of *How does the presence of refugees affect voting in host countries?* through an analysis of the case of Syrian refugees in the 2023 Turkish elections. I consider how the presence of refugees influences voting for anti-refugee parties, which in turn impacts election outcomes. Through this assessment, I examine how this may differ between the presidential versus parliamentary elections. The puzzle of how refugees affect elections is especially pertinent to address in the case of Turkey for several reasons. The first is that it is a country with a fragile democracy and an unstable economy, which distinguishes it from other wealthier and Western host countries that dominate the literature on the subject. The second is that it has unique cleavages within the political landscape that pertain to ideological differences that are distinct from the classically "left" and "right" divides. The third is that Turkey has recently shifted to a presidential system after the 2017 referendum, and thus, it serves as an outlet to understand how refugees play a role in voting under a recently transformed governmental system. The fourth is that in recent years there has been a spike in anti-refugee sentiment and single-issue anti-refugee parties in the country which makes the case of the 2023 elections particularly interesting to study.

The key finding in this research is that a greater presence of refugees in a province correlates with increased support for single-issue anti-refugee parties under the condition of parliamentary elections, especially in provinces that host major metropolitan centers. The research also illuminates that the effect of the presence of refugees on more mainstream, multi-issue parties that promote anti-refugee ideology is less clear to discern, and thus warrants future research. Leading studies of the effects of refugees on past Turkish elections by Altindag and Kaushal (2019) and Fisunoğlu and Sert (2018) focused primarily on how refugees affected the

incumbent AKP in previous elections. Both studies found that Syrian refugees had negligible effects on election outcomes for the incumbent AKP. My findings improve upon and challenge the results from previous studies on the effect of Syrian refugees on voting in Turkish elections by disaggregating the effects of the presence of refugees on different relatively anti-refugee parties. Further, my research illuminates the different magnitudes of effects that Syrian refugees have on voting for more niche single-issue anti-refugee parties versus more multi-issue and mainstream parties that promote anti-refugee ideology. The results align with the aforementioned studies in that the effects of refugees on voting for more mainstream parties, especially in the presidential elections context, is relatively negligible. However, my findings challenge past studies, and provide a unique contribution to the literature, by presenting a strong correlation between the presence of refugees and voting for the single-issue anti-refugee Zafer party in the parliamentary elections context. Additionally, although the correlation between intergroup contact and voting for anti-refugee parties was weak, the research advances upon previous works by proposing contact as a specific mechanism in which the presence of refugees affects voting for anti-refugee parties in the Turkish context. These novel contributions to the literature on Turkish politics illuminate how Syrian refugees may impact support for single-issue versus multi-issue parties as well as how the presidential versus parliamentary election context plays a role in mediating these effects.

The key finding from the Zafer party model indicates an area for future research on how the presence of refugees affect voting for more explicit and single-issue anti-refugee parties in other countries in the Global South that share similar refugee-host population dynamics. Turkey is distinct in that it has a vast array of parties that fall within the religious and ethnic cleavages in the country rather than the "left" and "right" divides that we see in existing literature about the

effects of refugee and immigration on politics. Further, incumbents usually take advantage of anti-refugee sentiments to mobilize their constituency, however, Erdogan did not do this until recently. Thus, the question emerges as to how the relationship between the presence of refugees and voting for single- versus multi-issue anti-refugee parties manifests in other countries with different party structures, cleavages, and political landscapes.

The Zafer party finding also provides an avenue for future research to explore how policy interventions may serve to facilitate community bonding between the host population ingroup and the refugee outgroup to reduce voting for parties that promote discriminatory and harmful anti-refugee discourse and policies. Given that most provinces that had the highest voter turnout for the Zafer party also host major metropolitan areas, a policy approach could be to develop interventions in urban community centers to bring both groups together differently to celebrate and share cultural and ethnic diversity. Additional policy solutions to this could be social cohesion initiatives, community integration programs, and education and awareness campaigns tailored to local contexts.

Furthermore, the alternate determinants of voting included as control variables in my regression analyses illuminate avenues for future research to explore additional dimensions of voting for anti-refugee parties in Turkey and beyond. The first would be to further explore how partisanship trends impact voting for anti-refugee parties, especially given how Turkey is in a state of intense polarization. Incorporating a different, more direct measure of polarization and partisanship would provide insights into the nuances of party affiliation and supporting anti-refugee candidates. The second would be to make sense of how religiosity, and more specifically identifying as Muslim, impacts voting for anti-refugee parties. Given the discourse of brotherhood through the Muslim identity between Turks and Syrian refugees, conducting a

nationwide analysis that explores this relationship would be important to discern. The third would be to conduct a content or discourse analysis of the campaign materials and speeches of anti-refugee candidates to decipher how they instrumentalize refugee discourse in their campaigns and how that maps onto different provinces with varying proportions of refugee ratios. The fourth would be to consider whether the highly educated support base for the multi-issue anti-refugee parties is attributed to their alignment with these discriminatory ideologies or because they support the other policies advance in the parties' campaign messaging. The fifth would be to conduct a province level case study analysis comparing urban, rural and border provinces to discern how local level differences may lead to diverging trajectories in voting behavior as was seen in the GIS maps. Exploring individual provinces on a case study level would also provide insights into tailored potential policy solutions to mitigate tensions between the host population and refugees.

The research presented in this thesis illuminates that the tension between the Turkish host populations and Syrian refugees is a divisive force that may have motivated voters to support parties in the 2023 elections that promote discriminatory ideologies. Further, there is an increased worry that things could get worse, especially if Erdogan and the AKP determine that populist and anti-refugee positions are good politics. Supporting parties like Zafer and giving their representatives a platform to disseminate their harmful discourse in the mainstream may further exacerbate conflict. Therefore, it is imperative to actively seek policy solutions and other avenues to establish conflict diffusion between the two groups. This research should not only serve as a diagnostic tool of the electoral landscape in Turkey, but also as a call to action to foster dialogue, celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity, and catalyze peaceful coexistence for a more inclusive future.

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Appendix

Appendix I: Data Sources and Variables

Variable	Measure	Dataset
Presence of Refugees	Refugee Ratio per province; continuous variable	Directorate General of Migration Management (GMM)
Refugee Inflows	Inflows over time; continuous variable	UNHCR
AKP Vote Shares	AKP vote ratio per total vote; continuous variable	Supreme Elections Council (YSK)
Attitudes towards refugees	Public Opinion Data measured via Likert scale; continuous variable	Konda Barometer
Earthquake control	Affected versus not affected provinces; dichotomous	OCHA Services
Socioeconomic status control	% Unemployment per province; continuous	Turkstat
Education control	Ratio higher education per all education; continuous	Turkstat
Demographic dummy/ordinal variables	Age, gender, household type, etc., dichotomous/ordinal	Turkstat

Appendix II: Extension of Table 1

Refugee Population Summary by Province

Province	Total Refugee Population	Total Population of Province	Refugee Ratio per Province
Kilis	72	145826	0.34
Gaziantep	55	2130432	0.17
Hatay	43	1670712	0.16
Ordu	4	760872	0.15
Sanliurfa	46	2143020	0.14
Mersin	36	1891145	0.11
Adana	37	2263373	0.10
Sinop	33	218408	0.10
Mardin	76	862757	0.09
Kahramanmaras	79	1171298	0.07
Osmaniye	48	553012	0.06
Bursa	31	3147818	0.05
Kayseri	73	1434357	0.05
Konya	9	2277017	0.05
Malatya	42	808692	0.04
Nevsehir	18	308003	0.04
Adiyaman	34	632148	0.03
Burdur	77	273716	0.03
Istanbul	62	15840900	0.03
Izmir	21	4425789	0.03
Ankara	80	5747325	0.02
Batman	14	626319	0.02
Elazig	12	588088	0.02
Isparta	71	445678	0.02

Amasya	15	335331	0.00
Antalya	56	2619832	0.00
Ardahan	6	94932	0.00
Artvin	64	169543	0.00
Balikesir	54	1250610	0.00
Bartin	53	201711	0.00
Bayburt	61	85042	0.00
Bilecik	65	228334	0.00
Bingoel	11	283112	0.00
Bitlis	5	352277	0.00
Cankiri	69	196515	0.00
Duezce	22	400976	0.00
Edirne	63	412115	0.00
Erzincan	20	237351	0.00
Erzurum	81	756893	0.00
Giresun	40	450154	0.00
Guemueshane	13	150119	0.00
Hakkari	59	278218	0.00
Igdir	70	203159	0.00
Karaman	74	258838	0.00
Kars	28	281077	0.00
Kastamonu	32	375592	0.00
Kirklareli	2	366363	0.00
Kuetahya	26	578640	0.00
Mus	25	405228	0.00
Rize	16	345662	0.00

Kocaeli	60	2033441	0.02
Nigde	66	363725	0.02
Afyonkarahisar	7	744179	0.01
Aksaray	49	429069	0.01
Aydin	75	1134031	0.01
Bolu	50	320014	0.01
Canakkale	52	557276	0.01
Corum	41	526282	0.01
Denizli	19	1051056	0.01
Diyarbakir	35	1791373	0.01
Eskisehir	68	898369	0.01
Karabuek	23	249287	0.01
Kirikkale	29	275968	0.01
Kirsehir	30	242944	0.01
Manisa	17	1456626	0.01
Mugla	3	1021141	0.01
Sakarya	24	1060876	0.01
Samsun	78	1371274	0.01
Siirt	51	331980	0.01
Sirnak	38	546589	0.01
Sivas	45	636121	0.01
Tekirdag	10	1113400	0.01
Usak	39	373183	0.01
Yalova	47	291001	0.01
Yozgat	58	418500	0.01
Agri	8	524644	0.00

Tokat	1	602567	0.00
Trabzon	44	816684	0.00
Tunceli	57	83645	0.00
Van	27	1141015	0.00
Zonguldak	67	589684	0.00

Appendix III: Konda Variables

For the question on *how often do you come across Syrian asylum-seekers?* The respondents answered the question on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 = Never, 2 = Once every few months, 3 = once a month, 4 = A few times a month, 5 = Once a week, 6 = A few times a week, and 7 = Every day. I grouped this Likert scale into bins to enhance the interpretability. The new scale for intergroup contact was 1 = never, 2 = on a monthly basis, and 3 = a weekly basis for the purpose of statistical analysis. Konda asks the question about contact with refugees in the February 2016 and July 2019 survey round.

The dependent variable, voting for anti-refugee parties is measured through the response to the question *If there was an election today, who would you vote for?* The respondents answered this question with 8 options where 1 = AKP, 2 = CHP, 3 = MHP, 4 = HDP, 5= IYI, 6 = other parties, 7 = swing voter, and 8 = nonvoter. I recoded the dependent variable so that 1=the respondent would vote for an anti-refugee party and 0= the respondent would vote for a pro refugee party. Further, since I could not disaggregate the different parties under "other parties", "swing voter" or "nonvoter" responses in the survey question, I also excluded these categories from the recoded variable.

The control variable of education level is measured by the survey answers of the respondent through an 8-level Likert scale, which I included as a continuous control variable.

The categories for education are listed as 1=illiterate, 2=literate without degree, 3=primary school graduate, 4= primary education/middle school graduate, 5= high school degree, 6=university graduate, 7= postgraduate/doctorate, 8= unknown. I recoded the unknown variable to the center of the scale to reduce complication with the distribution of responses. Lastly, the religiosity variable is operationalized as a 5-level Likert scale ranging from 1=atheist, 2=unbeliever, 3=believer, 4=religious, and 5= devout.

For the unemployed dummy variable, I categorized public officers, private sector employees, workers, small retailers, merchants, businessmen, self-employed individuals, farmer, agriculturer, stock breeder, and other as employed. I coded these employed categories to equal 0. I categorized individuals who were retired, housewives, students, or falling under unemployment categories such as being unemployed, unemployable, or involved in the marginal sector as unemployed. I coded unemployed categories to equal 1.

Appendix IV: Additional Disaggregated Robustness Check for Intergroup Contact

Table 9: Logistic Regressions for Intergroup Contact and Support for CHP, IYI and AKP

	Dependent variable:		
	Would Vote for CHP	Would Vote for IYI	Would Vote for AKP
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Contact Frequency	0.160**	0.060	0.036
	(0.080)	(0.191)	(0.069)
Unemployed	0.036	-0.198	-0.184*
	(0.110)	(0.247)	(0.105)
Education Level	0.193***	0.255**	-0.136***
	(0.040)	(0.099)	(0.036)
Religiousness	-0.703***	-0.264**	0.735***
	(0.065)	(0.132)	(0.070)
Woman	0.301***	-0.758***	0.086
	(0.106)	(0.266)	(0.101)
Age	0.157**	0.250	0.141**
	(0.066)	(0.154)	(0.063)
Constant	-0.459	-4.123***	-3.445***
	(0.474)	(1.108)	(0.466)
Observations	2,466	2,466	2,466
Log Likelihood	-1,301.031	-342.747	-1,450.851
Akaike Inf. Crit.	2,616.062	699.493	2,915.701
Note:			*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01