

Feelings toward refugees and non-Muslims in Turkey: The roles of national and religious identifications, and multiculturalism

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Abstract

The current study, conducted in Turkey, examined feelings toward Muslim refugees among Turkish participants ($n = 605$) in comparison to feelings toward established non-Muslim national minority groups. Using the social identity perspective, these feelings were examined in relation to national and religious group identifications, and the endorsement of multicultural beliefs. The feelings toward both refugees and minority communities were similarly negative, yet the processes behind these feelings were somewhat different. While stronger national identification was associated with more negative feelings toward Muslim refugees, stronger religious group identification was associated with more negative feelings toward non-Muslim minority communities. Further, higher endorsement of multiculturalism was associated with less negative feelings toward both refugees and minority communities, but only for relatively low national identifiers.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Worldwide there are currently some 21 million refugees who predominantly have fled to and live in neighboring countries (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2016a). Hosting large numbers of refugees is a major challenge for receiving societies. It raises important political and policy questions and leads to strong public debates. Some sections of the public are likely to resist the accommodation of refugees, while other sections of the population will tend to support and help refugees to settle in. Various social psychological factors might underlie these individual differences such as intergroup contact (e.g., Cameron, Rutland, Brown, and Douch, 2006), perceived symbolic and realistic threat (e.g., Louis, Duck, Terry, Schuller, and Lalonde, 2007; McKay, Thomas, and Kneebone, 2012), and shared humanity (e.g., Nickerson & Louis, 2008). For example, authoritarian beliefs and perceptions of symbolic and realistic threats might drive unfavorable attitudes toward refugees (Murray & Marx, 2013; Nickerson & Louis, 2008; Schweitzer, Perkoulidis, Krome, & Ludlow, 2005), whereas equality beliefs and the endorsement of cultural diversity might underlie more favorable attitudes (Anderson, Stuart, & Rossen, 2015; Perry, Paradies, & Pedersen, 2015).

The arrival of a great number of refugees implies increasing cultural diversity and social psychological research has examined the intergroup consequences of ethnic, racial, and religious diversity in terms of social categorization processes (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009), group identifications (Verkuyten, 2006), and diversity ideologies (Plaut,

2010). The social identity perspective provides a coherent theoretical framework that emphasizes the role of group identification and ideological beliefs for intergroup relations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Reynolds, 2001). Based on this perspective, the current study examines among self-identified Turks the associations between feelings toward refugees with national and religious group identification and the endorsement of multicultural beliefs (Morrison, Plaut, & Ybarra, 2010; Quezada, Shaw, & Zárate, 2012). In so doing, we want to make a contribution of the scarce literature on attitudes toward refugees and to the social psychological research on multiculturalism that predominantly has been conducted in North America and Western Europe (see Deaux & Verkuyten, 2014; Guimond, Sablonnière, and Nugier, 2014; Whitley, 2016).

For understanding the nature of Turkish people's feelings toward refugees we make a comparison with their feelings toward national minority groups in Turkey. The reason is that feelings toward refugees might be specific or rather reflect more general feelings toward minority groups. Therefore, we compared the feelings toward refugees with those toward the three officially recognized non-Muslim minority groups in Turkey, namely the Greeks, Jews, and Armenians (Türkmen & Öktem, 2013).

1.1 | Group identifications

Social identity theory argues that individuals tend to show intergroup bias in which they favor ingroup members over outgroup members (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identities are defined in comparative

terms and groups that differ on a particular categorization dimension (e.g., religion, ethnicity, nationality) are appropriate outgroups. Intergroup bias occurs within a specific category and in relation to a specific comparison group (e.g., nationals vs. non-nationals; religious vs. non-religious). Bias is especially likely for higher ingroup identifiers who view their group as an important reflection of the self and therefore are motivated to think and act in their group's best interest. And under conditions of perceived outgroup threat, group identifiers tend to show not only ingroup positivity but also outgroup negativity. There is a substantial body of research in support of this theoretical reasoning (see Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje, 2002; Hewstone, Rubin, and Willis, 2002). Group members who more strongly identify with their ingroup are more likely to have negative attitudes toward relevant and threatening outgroups.

While some parts of the Turkish society are supportive toward Syrian refugees (Dinçer et al., 2014; European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance [ECRI], 2011), there also are intergroup tensions in communities hosting Syrian refugees (İdiz, 2015; Özden, 2013; Yalçın, 2014). Public surveys indicate that Syrians are often seen as a symbolic and realistic threat to the country (Orhan, 2014; Özden, 2013), and 86% of the Turkish people want the government to stop the intake of refugees and 30% support the view that refugees should be sent back to their home country (The Center for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies, 2014). Therefore, it can be expected that stronger national identification is associated with more negative attitudes toward non-national Syrian refugees, but not necessarily toward the established national minority groups.

Research on the worldview-conflict and religious values conflict proposition demonstrates that dissimilar values, beliefs, and morals between groups contribute to outgroup rejection (Brandt, Chambers, Crawford, Wetherell, & Reyna, 2015; Brandt & Van Tongeren, 2017). People seek to affirm the validity of their own beliefs and worldviews and therefore tend to reject groups whose beliefs and worldviews are dissimilar to their own. This has been found among individuals high and low on measures of religious identity (Brandt & Van Tongeren, 2017), but the rejection is stronger among those with stronger religious group identification. This leads to the hypothesis that higher Muslim identifiers will be more negative toward non-Muslim national minorities but not toward Muslim refugees.

Additionally, we explored whether the interaction between national identification and religious group identification predicts outgroup attitudes. Research on social identity complexity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002) has shown that the combination of relatively strong ethnic and strong religious group identifications implies a simplified or exclusive identity structure that is related to less positive outgroup attitudes (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012). Individuals with a relatively simplified structure perceive a strong overlap and interrelation among their identities which strengthens the distancing from outgroup members and increases the cognitive basis of ingroup bias (Brewer & Pierce, 2005).

1.2 | Multiculturalism

Social identity theory emphasized from the start the role of ideological beliefs in relation to minority groups (Tajfel, 1978, 1981). The theory

argues that an account of intergroup relations needs to examine the beliefs that people use "to make sense of, explain, justify, and rationalize their intergroup relations" (Turner & Reynolds, 2001, p. 147). Multicultural ideology is about group identities and intergroup relations and research has examined its intergroup consequences from a social identity perspective (e.g., Verkuyten, 2006). Yet, multiculturalism is a difficult and controversial issue and there are various understandings. In general, multiculturalism views cultural groups as a valuable source of difference between people which should not be ignored but rather celebrated (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Multiculturalism combines the recognition of minority identities with the advancement of intergroup equality (Hahn, Banchevsky, Park, & Judd, 2015), but there are country differences in the specific forms that multiculturalism takes (Guimond et al., 2014; Ng Tseung-Wong & Verkuyten, 2014).

In Turkey, multiculturalism is typically discussed with regard to the rights of the Kurds (Keyman, 2012; Özkırmlı, 2014) and of non-Muslim minority communities (Heper, 2007; Kaya, 2013). Furthermore, there is increased discussion about the equal rights of Syrian refugees in relation to employment, education, and cultural practices (Kirişçi, 2014). According to a survey research, 64% of the Turkish people agrees that cultural minorities in Turkey should be able to maintain their own traditions, and 70% indicates that newcomers should adapt to the majority's culture but should also be able to maintain their heritage culture (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2013). Majority members endorsing multiculturalism tend to be more accepting and positive toward minority outgroups (see Deaux & Verkuyten, 2014; Rattan & Ambady, 2013; Whitley, 2016, for reviews). Thus, we expected stronger endorsement of multiculturalism to be associated with more positive feelings toward both Syrian refugees and non-Muslim national minority groups. Yet, these expected associations are likely to differ for lower and higher national identifiers and for lower and higher religious identifiers.

Research has demonstrated that majority group members can perceive multiculturalism as a source of threat to their own values and dominant position (Ginges & Cairns, 2000; Verkuyten, 2005). High ingroup identifiers are more likely to show group-level responses relative of the responses of low identifiers, especially under conditions of threat (Ellemers et al., 2002; Hewstone et al., 2002). For example, highly identified majority group members have been found to support hierarchical intergroup relations more when their perceived ingroup's interests, status or core values are threatened (Morrison & Ybarra, 2009; Morrison, Fast, & Ybarra, 2009). Multiculturalism calls for a more equal and cultural heterogeneous society and this might be threatening for relatively high national and high religious majority group identifiers (Morrison et al. 2010; Verkuyten, 2005). Furthermore, in Turkey higher compared to lower national identifiers are more concerned about state unity and anything that might undermine this unity, such as minority cultural demands (Bilali, 2014; Çelebi, Verkuyten, Köse, & Maliepaard, 2014). Additionally, for many Turkish people there is a very strong association between Muslim group identification and Turkish identity (e.g., Bilali, 2014; Çelebi, Verkuyten, and Smyrioti, 2015). This means that for higher national identifiers and for higher religious identifiers, multiculturalism might not have beneficial effects for outgroups and thus is not associated with more positive feelings toward refugees and

minority outgroups. In contrast, for lower national identifiers and for lower religious identifiers, stronger endorsement of multiculturalism can be expected to be associated with more positive outgroup feelings. Thus, we predicted that stronger support for diversity and preserving cultural identities (multiculturalism) will be relevant for feelings toward Syrian refugees and non-Muslim minorities for lower national identifiers and for lower religious identifiers, but not for higher national identifiers and higher religious identifiers.

1.3 | Refugees and non-Muslim minorities in Turkey

For years, Turkey has been an attractive route for refugees and asylum-seekers who escaped conflicts and wars in Iraq and Syria. Turkey has declared an open door policy for these refugees and provides them a temporary protection since April 2011 (Krajeski, 2012). Currently there are around three million Syrian refugees in the country, making Turkey the largest host of Syrian refugees in the world (UNHCR, 2016b). However, Turkey does not grant Syrians a refugee status which would imply legal rights (Başak, 2011). Turkey follows an open-door policy and for humanitarian reasons accepts Syrian refugees as guests upon their arrival (Orhan, 2014). Syrian refugees receive temporary protection status by which they are not required to get a visa to come to Turkey and will not be deported to Syria (Krajeski, 2012). Yet, these people are referred to as refugees in the media, in daily conversations, and in politics. It is estimated that no more than 13% of the Syrian refugees lives in refugee camps (Erdoğan, 2014) and the others live in almost all the cities of Turkey (Directorate General of Migration Management, 2017).

Public opinion research shows that the reactions of Turkish people toward Syrian refugees vary (Erdoğan, 2014; Orhan, 2014; Özden, 2013). Some studies indicate that Turkish people think that accepting Syrian refugees is a humanitarian duty (Erdoğan, 2014) and that Turkish people are in general accepting and supportive toward refugees and asylum-seekers (Dinçer et al., 2014; ECRI, 2011). However, refugees themselves do not only indicate that they are thankful for the support and hospitality that they receive from Turkish people (International Crisis Group, 2016; Kocalar, 2017), but also report facing aggression, hostility, and a failure to take account of their specific needs (ECRI, 2011).

In order to understand the feelings of Turkish people toward (Syrian) refugees who are predominantly Muslim, we make a comparison with the feelings toward Greeks, Jews, and Armenians as the three main established non-Muslim minority communities of Turkey. According to the 1923 *Lausanne Treaty*, these three communities are the only officially recognized minority groups in Turkey (Türkmen & Öktem, 2013). Since we focus on non-Muslim minorities and because the Kurdish question in Turkey is politically sensitive, we did not ask people about their feelings toward Kurds.

Examining the feelings toward Greeks, Jews, and Armenians allows us to assess whether the outgroup feelings are specific toward refugees or rather more general toward minority groups. It is possible that established minority groups living in Turkey elicit similar outgroup feelings, but it might also be the case that the feelings toward refugees differ. For example, familiarity with established minority groups due to

mass media and actual contacts with these groups might make the feelings of Turkish people toward these groups more positive than toward refugees (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Moreover, this comparison allows us to examine whether similar processes of group identification are involved in the feelings toward refugees and minority communities. More specifically, Turks with relatively high national identification might be less positive toward non-Turkish refugees than toward established Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Turkish communities. In contrast, Turks with relatively strong Muslim group identification might be more positive toward Muslim refugees than toward the non-Muslim minority communities in Turkey. In addition, the endorsement of multiculturalism might differ in its importance for the feelings toward refugees and national minority groups that have a history of living in Turkey.

1.4 | To summarize

Using survey data among a relatively large sample of Turkish people we will first examine to what extent feelings toward the predominantly Muslim refugees in Turkey are similar or different as the feelings toward the non-Muslim Greek, Armenian, and Jewish national minorities of Turkey. Second, we investigate whether the feelings toward refugees are related to national and religious group identifications and to the endorsement of multiculturalism, and whether these associations are similar as for the feelings toward the non-Muslim national minorities. Third, we examine whether the associations between the endorsement of multiculturalism and feelings toward refugees and non-Muslim minorities are moderated by national or religious group identifications.

In our statistical analyses, we will control for regular demographic characteristics that might be associated with the different constructs and therefore might be responsible for the associations found. Specifically, we considered age, gender, ethnic group, and city, whereby the latter served as a proxy for the opportunity of intergroup contact with Syrian refugees. Intergroup contact is important to consider because it has been found to be associated with out-group feelings (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Contact can be positive but also negative and therefore can result in more positive or rather more negative attitudes (Graf, Paolini, & Rubin, 2014). Thus, those who live in the cities where there is a relatively high number of Syrian refugees might have more positive or more negative feelings toward Syrian refugees because they have more opportunities for positive and negative contacts.

2 | METHOD

2.1 | Participants

The study was conducted by the research company Optimar in May and June 2015 among 605 Turkish Muslim participants between 18 and 81 years of age ($M = 39.6$, $SD = 14.4$). The addresses of the participants were selected by the Turkish Statistical Institute from six cities of Turkey. There are seven regions in Turkey and the selected cities are the largest ones from the four regions that vary in the ratio of the Syrian population. The data are from community samples gathered by a

two-stage clustering method. The first stage involved clusters that were composed of 100 addresses that were selected by applying probability proportional to size by taking into account the sample size and the number of addresses in each cluster. In the second stage, 10 addresses were selected by systematic sampling from each cluster in the sample. The respondents came from Istanbul (33.4% of participants), Antalya (22.3%), Gaziantep (13.7%), Adana (13.4%), Samsun (8.9%), and Kilis (8.3%). These cities differ in the ratio of the Syrian refugee population with Samsun and Antalya having a relatively low number of Syrian refugees (0.1% and 0.5%, respectively), Adana and Istanbul having a somewhat higher ratio of Syrian refugees (2.5% and 2.6%, respectively), and Gaziantep and Kilis having a relatively high number of Syrian refugees (14% and 41%, respectively) (Directorate General of Migration Management, 2017; Turkish Statistical Institute, 2006). Of the participants, 43.6% were male and 56.4% were female. Furthermore, 87.6% self-identified as Turks, 6.9% as Kurds, 1.5% as Arabs, 0.8% as Zaza, and 3.1% was from other ethnic groups. The respondents participated in the survey voluntarily and after providing informed consent and a survey-taker administered the paper-and-pencil questionnaires in the houses of the participants. It took about 20–25 min to complete the questionnaire.

2.2 | Measures

Outgroup feelings were measured with the well-known feeling thermometer that has been validated and used in many studies (e.g., Cairns, Kenworthy, Campbell, and Hewstone, 2006; Verkuyten, 2005). The respondents were asked to indicate their feelings toward the different minority groups on a scale from 0 to 100. The introduction was:

Please use the feeling thermometer to indicate whether you have positive or negative feelings towards the Syrian refugees, the non-Muslim communities of Turkey (Greeks, Jews, and Armenians), and the refugees in Turkey other than Syrians. While 50 degrees represent neutral feelings, markings above 50 represent positive or warm feelings and markings below 50 represent cold or negative feelings.

Religious group identification was measured with three items that reflect the importance of religion for Turkish national identity: "I strongly identify with people of my religion," "My religion gives me the feeling that I am a member of the Turkish state," "My religion is what keeps Turkey united." All items were rated on a 5-point scales (1 = *certainly not agree* and 5 = *certainly agree*). An average score of these items was computed ($\alpha = .85$).

National identification was measured by three items that focus on Turkish citizenship and that have been used in previous studies (e.g., Çelebi et al., 2014; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007): "I am proud to be a citizen of Turkey," "Being a citizen of Turkey is an important part of who I am," "I strongly feel that I am a citizen of Turkey." All items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *certainly not agree* to 5 = *certainly agree*). An average score of these items was computed ($\alpha = .91$).

TABLE 1 Percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations for the thermometer ratings of the five outgroups

Thermometer ratings							
Outgroups	0	10–40	50	60–90	100	M	SD
Greeks	34.2%	30.2%	19.1%	13.9%	2.5%	27.8 ^a	27.7
Jews	41.8%	34.5%	13.6%	8.3%	1.8%	22.1 ^b	26.0
Armenians	42.5%	32.4%	13.7%	9%	2.3%	21.3 ^b	26.9
Syrian refugees	31.3%	41.7%	15.4%	8.7%	2.8%	24.9 ^c	26.6
Non-Syrian refugees	22.0%	46.6%	19.5%	9.1%	2.8%	28.9 ^a	26.0

Note. Mean scores with different superscript differ significantly ($p < .02$) from each other.

Factor analysis with maximum likelihood extraction and oblimin rotation showed that the national identification and religious group identification items formed two distinct empirical constructs. National identification items loaded high on the first factor ($> .78$; on the second factor highest load = .09) that explained 55.7% of the variance, and the religious identification items loaded high on the second factor ($> .70$; highest load on the first factor = .06) that explained 25.8% of the variance.

Endorsement of multiculturalism was measured with three items taken from previous research (e.g., Levin et al., 2012): "Immigrant parents must encourage their children to retain the culture and traditions of their homeland," "A society with different ethnic and cultural groups can better address its societal problems," "We should help ethnic and cultural minorities to preserve their cultural heritage in Turkey." All items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *certainly not agree* to 5 = *certainly agree*). An average score of these items was computed ($\alpha = .72$).

3 | RESULTS

A one-sample *t*-test showed that the mean score of national identification ($M = 4.29$, $SD = .76$) was significantly above the neutral mid-point of the scale, $t(597) = 41.66$, $p < .001$. The mean score of religious group identification ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .91$) also was above the neutral mid-point of the scale, $t(598) = 23.46$, $p < .001$. Thus, on average respondents had relatively strong national and religious group identifications whereby the former was stronger than the latter, $t(592) = 10.53$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, national and religious identification were positively associated ($r = .37$, $p < .001$). The average endorsement of multiculturalism ($M = 3.28$, $SD = .89$) was around the midpoint of the scale, $t(590) = 7.77$, $p < .001$, and this endorsement was not associated with national identification ($r = .01$), and was associated negatively with religious group identification ($r = -.10$, $p = .019$).

3.1 | Feelings toward different outgroups

Table 1 shows the percentages and mean scores for the feelings toward the different target groups. One-sample *t*-tests indicated that the feelings toward all target groups were significantly ($ps < .001$)

TABLE 2 Correlations between outgroup feeling, national, and religious group identifications, control variables, and the endorsement of multiculturalism

Outgroups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Greeks	-															
2. Jews	.82**	-														
3. Armenians	.75**	.86**	-													
4. Syrian refugees	.22**	.26**	.34**	-												
5. Other Refugees	.28**	.34**	.38**	.71**	-											
6. National identification	.00	-.08	-.14**	-.22**	-.21**	-										
7. Religious identification	-.17**	-.21**	-.27**	-.13**	-.14**	.37**	-									
8. Multiculturalism	.07	.09*	.17**	.25**	.19**	.01	-.10*	-								
9. Age	.04	.05	.01	.03	-.03	.08*	.12**	-.05	-							
10. Gender	.07	.04	.02	.05	.04	.04	-.08	.07	-.01	-						
11. Non-Turkish	-.11**	-.10*	-.13**	-.13**	-.14**	.26**	.13**	-.03	.03	-.02	-					
12. Adana	-.23**	-.11**	-.02	.05	.16**	-.31**	.04	-.14**	-.06	-.16**	-.13**	-				
13. Antalya	-.09*	-.14**	-.10*	.20**	.14**	.05	-.08*	.15**	-.03	.04	.12	-.21**	-			
14. Gaziantep	-.19**	-.16**	-.13**	.00	-.10*	-.08	-.08*	.01	.00	-.04	.00	-.16**	-.21**	-		
15. Kilis	.03	.03	-.03	.03	-.02	.01	.01	.00	.06	.05	.08	-.12**	-.16**	-.12**	-	
16. Samsun	.05	.08	-.08	.00	.05	-.19**	-.19**	.23**	-.09*	.02	.05	-.12**	-.17**	-.13**	-.09*	-

Note. Istanbul is the reference category for the city associations shown.

** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

below the neutral mid-point of the scale (50), indicating quite strong negative feelings toward all outgroups. In general, around 64% to 76% of the sample reported negative feelings (< 50). More than 40% of the participants reported the strongest negative feelings (0°) toward Jews and Armenians, and this was the case for more than 30% in relation to Greeks and Syrian refugees.

A repeated measures analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with the five groups' ratings as a repeated measures factor. This analysis yielded a significant within-subjects effect for group ratings, $F(4, 598) = 18.523$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .030$. The least negative feelings were toward the non-Syrian refugees in Turkey. The second least negative feelings were toward the Greek community, followed by feelings toward the Syrian refugees, the Jewish community, and the Armenian community. Post hoc pairwise comparisons (Bonferroni) showed that there were statistically significant differences between the Syrian refugees and all the other target groups ($p_s < .02$). The feelings toward Syrian refugees were more negative than toward non-Syrian refugees and the Greeks, and less negative than the feelings toward the Armenians and the Jews. Furthermore, the feelings toward the non-Syrian refugees were less negative than toward the Jews and Armenians, but similar as toward the Greeks. The feelings toward the Jews and Armenians were equally negative and significantly more negative than toward all the other groups.

As shown in Table 2 there were relatively high correlations between the feelings toward the various target groups. In particular, the associations between the three non-Muslim national minority

groups and the association between the two Muslim refugee groups were high ($> .70$). In order to reduce the number of outcome variables and because of these relatively high correlations, factor analyses with maximum likelihood extraction and oblimin rotation was conducted. The feelings toward the three non-Muslim communities (Greeks, Jews, and Armenians) loaded on one factor (explaining 60.51% of the variance; lowest factor loading = .85; highest factor loading on the second factor = .10), and the feelings toward Syrian refugees and non-Syrian refugees loaded on a second factor (explaining 26.27% of the variance: lowest factor loading = .73; highest factor loading on the second factor = .09). The feelings toward the three non-Muslim communities formed a reliable scale ($\alpha = .93$) and the average feelings were negative ($M = 23.70$, $SD = 25.07$) with 45% of the sample indicating very negative feelings (< 10) and 77.5% indicating negative feelings (< 50). The two items for the refugee groups also had high reliability ($\alpha = .83$) and the average feeling toward these groups was also negative ($M = 26.83$, $SD = 24.27$) with 38% indicating very negative feelings (< 10) and around 3 in 4 respondents scoring on the negative side of the scale (< 50). The feeling scores for the two outgroups were moderately associated ($r = .35$, $p < .001$).

3.2 | Feelings toward refugees

A sequential regression analysis was conducted with feelings toward refugees as the predicted outcome variable. In a first step the demographic control variables age, gender, ethnicity (Turkish as reference category),

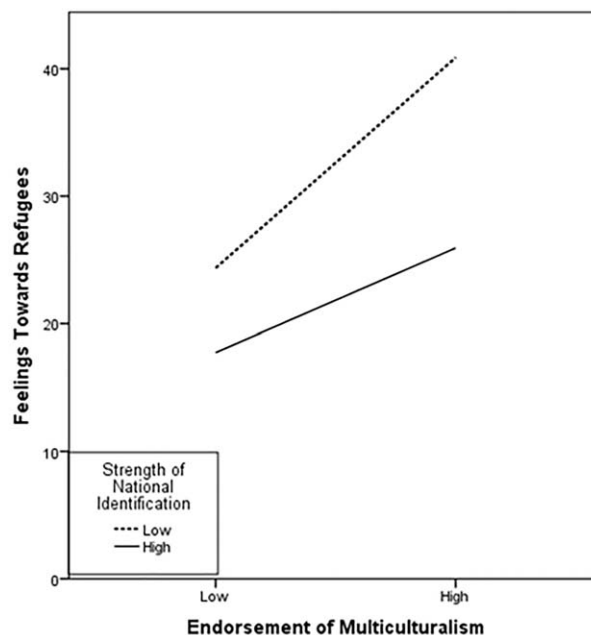
TABLE 3 Sequential multiple regression analyses predicting feelings toward refugees in Turkey

Variables	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)
Age	.04 (.07)	.05 (.07)	.05 (.07)
Gender	.06 (1.97)	.05 (1.91)	.05 (1.90)
Non-Turkish	-.18 (2.95)***	-.12 (2.97)**	-.12 (2.95)***
Antalya	.30 (2.61)***	.23 (2.63)***	.25 (2.68)***
Adana	.21 (3.14)***	.15 (3.22)***	.19 (3.37)***
Samsun	.13 (3.57)**	.05 (3.69)	.06 (3.70)
Kilis	.12 (3.82)**	.09 (3.71)*	.12 (3.76)**
Gaziantep	.05 (3.21)	-.01 (3.18)	.02 (3.28)
National identification		-.18 (1.43)***	-.16 (1.59)**
Religious identification		.00 (1.16)	.01 (1.19)
Multiculturalism		.22 (1.12)***	.24 (1.13)***
National Identification x Religious Identification			.00 (1.05)
National Identification x Multiculturalism			-.10 (1.66)*
Religious Identification x Multiculturalism			-.05 (1.35)
R^2	.11	.18	.20
ΔR^2	.11	.07	.01
ΔF	9.08***	15.65***	3.28*

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

and city of residence (Istanbul as reference category) as a proxy for the opportunity of intergroup contact with Syrian refugees, were entered. In a second step national identification, religious identification, and endorsement of multiculturalism were entered (all centered scores). In a third step, the interactions between national identification and religious identification; national identification and endorsement of multiculturalism; and religious identification and endorsement of multiculturalism were added.

As shown in Table 3 the regression equation in Step 1 accounted for 11% of the variance. Self-identified non-Turkish respondents had more negative feelings than Turkish respondents, and residents of Antalya, Adana, Samsun, and Kilis had more positive feelings than the residents of Istanbul. The model in Step 2 accounted for an additional 7% of the variance. As expected, higher national identification was related to more negative feelings, whereas stronger endorsement of multiculturalism was independently related to less negative feelings toward refugees. Religious group identification had no independent statistical main effect. The entry of the interactions in Step 3 accounted for an additional 1% of the variance. The interaction between national identification and multiculturalism made a significant contribution to the prediction of feelings toward refugees, whereas the interaction between religious identification and multiculturalism was not significant.

**FIGURE 1** Interaction effect between endorsement of multiculturalism and strength of national identification on feelings toward refugees

To examine the significant interaction and thereby the moderating role of national identification on the association between endorsement of multiculturalism and feelings toward refugees, simple slope analysis was performed. As expected, this analysis demonstrated that for respondents with a relatively low level of national identification (-1 SD) the positive association between multiculturalism and feelings toward refugees was stronger than for respondents with a relatively high national identification, $B = 9.32$, $SE = 2.27$, $t = 4.11$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [4.86, 13.78], and $B = 4.61$, $SE = 1.56$, $t = 2.96$, $p = .003$, 95% CI [1.55, 7.68], respectively. For the mean level of national identification there also was a significant positive association between multiculturalism and feelings, $B = 6.88$, $SE = 1.16$, $t = 5.91$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [4.59, 9.17]. Thus, as shown in Figure 1, for low, compared to high, national identifiers the endorsement of multiculturalism was relatively more important for their feelings toward refugees.

Although we had no theoretical reasons, we added in a fourth step the three-way interaction between national identification, religious identification, and multiculturalism to the regression equation. This explained an additional significant part of the variance 1% with $B = .12$, $SE = 1.37$, $t = 2.65$, $p = .008$. Furthermore, the findings were substantially similar when the non-Turkish respondents were not included in the analysis. The only differences was that the interaction between national identification and multiculturalism was not significant ($p < .05$). Additionally, a regression analysis without the demographic control variables yielded somewhat stronger coefficients for the different social psychological constructs but a similar pattern of findings. In this analysis the interaction between national identification and multiculturalism also was not significant.

3.3 | Feelings toward non-Muslim minorities

A similar sequential regression analysis was performed for explaining the feelings toward non-Muslim minorities in Turkey. As shown in

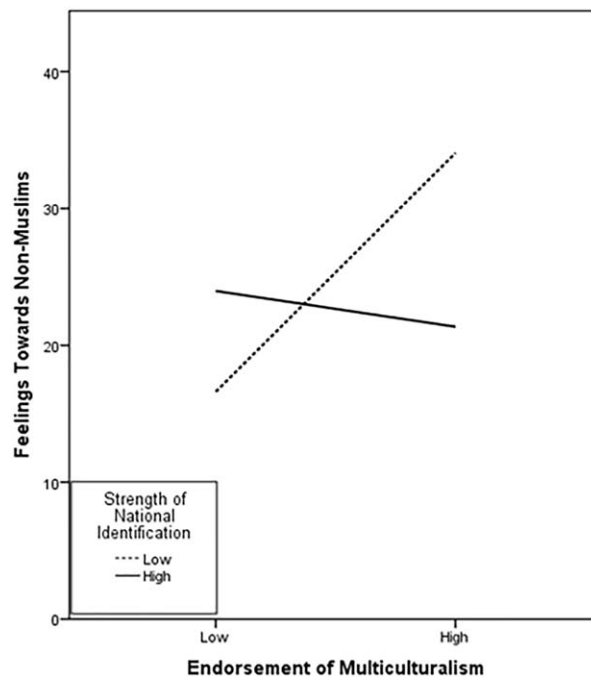
TABLE 4 Sequential multiple regression analyses predicting feelings toward non-Muslim communities of Turkey

Variables	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	β (SE)	β (SE)	β (SE)
Age	.03 (.07)	.06 (.07)	.06 (.07)
Gender	.01 (2.05)	-.02 (1.95)	-.03 (1.94)
Non-Turkish	-.12 (3.09)**	-.05 (3.07)	-.05 (3.05)
Antalya	-.23 (2.70)***	-.33 (2.68)***	-.29 (2.72)***
Adana	-.24 (3.25)***	-.28 (3.28)***	-.23 (3.42)***
Samsun	-.03 (3.70)	-.15 (3.77)***	-.13 (3.76)**
Kilis	-.07 (3.95)	-.10 (3.78)*	-.07 (3.82)
Gaziantep	-.27 (3.33)***	-.34 (3.25)***	-.30 (3.33)***
National identification		-.07 (1.47)	-.02 (1.62)
Religious identification		-.27 (1.19)***	-.25 (1.23)***
Multiculturalism		.13 (1.14)***	.15 (1.15)***
National identification x Religious identification			.07 (1.07)
National identification x Multiculturalism			-.12 (1.71)**
Religious identification x Multiculturalism			-.04 (1.44)
R^2	.12	.21	.23
ΔR^2	.12	.09	.02
ΔF	9.33***	21.66***	5.11**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4 the model in Step 1 accounted for 12% of the variance. Age and gender had no effects while non-Turkish respondents had more negative feelings than the Turkish respondents, and residents of Antalya, Adana, Samsun, and Gaziantep had more negative feelings than residents of Istanbul. The model in Step 2 accounted for an additional 9% of the variance. As expected, stronger religious identification was associated with more negative feelings toward the non-Muslim minorities, while stronger endorsement of multiculturalism was associated with less negative feelings. National identification was not associated with outgroup feelings. The model in Step 3 accounted for an additional 2% of the variance and indicates that only the interaction between national identification and multiculturalism contributed to the explanation of feelings toward the non-Muslim communities in Turkey.

As shown in Figure 2, simple slope analysis showed that for respondents with a relatively low level of national identification there was a positive association between multiculturalism and feelings toward non-Muslim minorities, $B = 9.84$, $SE = 2.41$, $t = 4.09$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [5.11, 14.56], while for higher national identifiers there was no significant association between these two constructs, $B = -1.47$, $SE = 1.43$, $t = -1.03$, $p = .305$, 95% CI [-4.29, 1.34]. For the mean level of national identification there was a significant positive

**FIGURE 2** Interaction effect between endorsement of multiculturalism and strength of national identification on feelings toward non-Muslims

association between multiculturalism and feelings, $B = 3.99$, $SE = 1.24$, $t = 3.22$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [1.56, 6.42].

The three-way interaction between strength of national identity, strength of religious identity, and endorsement of multiculturalism did not make a significant contribution to the feelings toward non-Muslims in Turkey. Furthermore, the findings were substantially similar when the non-Turkish respondents were not included in the analysis, including the significant interaction between national identification and multiculturalism. Furthermore, an additional regression analysis without the demographic control variables yielded a similar pattern of findings, including the significant interaction between national identification and multiculturalism.

3.4 | Feelings toward refugees and non-Muslim minorities

We further examined the differences in strength of the associations of national and religious identification with feelings toward Muslim refugees and national minorities. We found that the association between national identification with feelings toward Muslim refugees was significantly stronger compared to the association with feelings toward national minorities, z -value = 1.936, $p = .026$. Similarly, religious identification was more strongly associated with the feelings toward national minorities compared to feelings toward Muslim refugees, z -value = 4.618, $p < .001$.

4 | DISCUSSION

Turkey is hosting many refugees from neighboring countries and from Syria in particular. The current research is one of the very few studies

examining attitudes toward refugees outside of North America, Western Europe, and Australia, and one of the first on people's feelings toward refugees from a neighboring country. In order to assess whether these feelings are specific or rather more similar to the ways in which national minority groups are perceived, we made a comparison between people's feelings toward Muslim refugees with their feelings toward established non-Muslim national minority communities of Greeks, Armenians, and Jews.

Overall, the feelings toward the different target groups were very negative and this might result in negative outgroup behavior, depending on the social, economic, and political circumstances. Thus, although refugees and national minority communities are in many ways very different outgroups, the feelings toward these groups were quite similar. Yet, the participants did make a distinction between their feelings toward refugee groups and national minority groups. Their feelings toward the two refugee groups were strongly associated, as were their feelings toward the three national minorities. Thus, although the average outgroup feelings were quite similar, a distinction between two categories of outgroups could be made. This indicates that similar negative feelings can have different underlying meanings and reasons.

In support of this interpretation we found that higher national identification was significantly associated with more negative feelings toward the non-national refugees, and higher religious group identification was significantly associated with more negative feelings toward non-Muslim minority groups. Furthermore, national identification was more strongly associated with feelings toward non-national refugees than toward national minorities, whereas religious identification was more strongly associated with feelings toward non-Muslim national minorities than toward Muslim refugees. This means that national and religious group identification played a different role in the feelings toward refugees and non-Muslim minorities. These findings are in line with social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) which argues that higher ingroup identifiers are inclined to make an intergroup distinction toward a relevant outgroup, that is to say an outgroup on the same categorization dimension (nationality or religion). This pattern of findings further suggests that the difference in feelings between the non-Muslim national minorities and the Muslim refugees is not simply due to the distinction between co-nationals and other-nationals, or co-believers and other-believers. If that were the case then national identification could be expected to be associated with more positive feelings toward co-nationals and religious identification with a more positive attitude toward co-believers (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

Social identity theory further emphasizes the importance of ideological beliefs for understanding intergroup relations (Turner & Reynolds, 2001). The endorsement of multiculturalism was found to be associated with less negative feelings toward both Muslim refugees and non-Muslim minorities. This finding is in line with survey research and experimental studies in other countries that have found that multiculturalism has positive implications for attitudes toward minority outgroups (see Deaux & Verkuyten, 2014; Rattan & Ambady, 2013; Whitley, 2016). However, this research also has shown that majority members sometimes see multiculturalism as threatening to their own cultural identity and dominant position (e.g., Morrison, Plaut, & Ybarra,

2010; Verkuyten, 2005). We found that the positive association between endorsement of multiculturalism and outgroup feelings predominantly existed for lower national identifiers and not, or less strongly, for higher national identifiers (see also Morrison et al., 2010). Higher national identification implies stronger sensitivity for anything that could harm the unity of the nation, while multiculturalism calls for a more heterogeneous society (Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Takaki, 1993). In Turkey, high national identifiers are less tolerant of ethnic groups that they view as "the other" (Konda Research & Consultancy, 2012) which is difficult to reconcile with cultural diversity and minority rights (Çelebi et al., 2015). For lower national identifiers, multiculturalism probably is less of a threat to the nation and to their national identity. As a result, the beneficial role of multiculturalism for outgroup feelings exists most clearly for lower national identifiers. Religious group identification was not found to moderate the positive role of multiculturalism endorsement for outgroup feelings. A possible reason for this is that multiculturalism is typically understood in relation to ethnic and cultural differences rather than religious group differences (Rattan & Ambady, 2013), and this is reflected in the items we used to measure multiculturalism. So, the emphasis was on the importance of the recognition of ethnic and cultural minorities within the country and not on the recognition of religious differences.

However, it should be noted that the interaction effect between national identification and multiculturalism was robust in explaining the attitude toward non-Muslim minorities but not in explaining the attitude toward refugees. Additional analyses without non-Turkish respondents and also without the demographic control variables did not show a significant interaction effect for the latter attitude. This pattern of findings might indicate that the issue of national belonging with the recognition of cultural diversity is more meaningful in relation to non-Muslim minority groups than toward refugees. It might also indicate that especially non-Turkish minority group respondents find it difficult to reconcile national identification with the acceptance of minority rights for refugees. One reason might be that non-Turkish minority members perceive the cultural recognition of refugees as threatening to their own minority position.

4.1 | Limitations

Some study limitations should be mentioned. First, the survey research does not allow to determine directions of influence. In principle, it is possible that more positive outgroup feelings lead to weaker group identifications. However, this seems less likely compared to the direction of influence that we examined and that was theoretically derived.

Second, it should be acknowledged that there is a possible confound in the study because a comparison of attitudes toward Muslim refugees versus non-Muslim minority groups corresponds to the distinction between non-established and established minority outgroups. This latter distinction might be more important than the religious one. However, and in line with the social identity perspective, we found that stronger national identification was associated with more negative feelings toward non-national Muslim refugees, and stronger religious group identification was associated with more negative feelings toward

non-Muslim national minorities. This suggests that the non-Turkish national background of the refugees and the non-Muslim background of the Greeks, Jews, and Armenians were the relevant intergroup differences. This is further suggested by the finding that the interaction between religious and national identification as an operationalization of social identity complexity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2012) was not associated with outgroup feelings. Low social identity complexity means that different social identities are embedded in a single ingroup representation making an individual who is an outgroup member on one dimension also an outgroup member on another dimension. This increases the ingroup-outgroup distinctions and thereby strengthens the distancing from outgroup members. In the current study, however, we found that the different group identifications were independently associated with specific outgroup targets.

Third, we were able to collect data from a variety of cities by using two stage cluster sampling but we do not know in how far the current findings reflect the situation in Turkey as whole. Turkish cities differ in various respects (e.g., geographical location, size, ethnic composition) and it is unclear in how far these differences are relevant for people's attitudes toward minority groups. Further, it might be argued that the presence of a survey taker raises social desirability concerns. However, the feelings toward the different target groups were very negative which suggests that respondents did not have any difficulties in expressing their views.

Fourth, there are other possible factors and moderating conditions that we did not consider, such as perceived threats that might play a role in the feelings toward refugees and non-Muslim communities. And although the ratio of Syrian refugees in the different cities can be seen as a proxy for intergroup contact opportunities, we did not have information on actual contacts. Additionally, there are various economic, political, and sociological factors that could be examined. For example, household income, political ideology, and education level of the respondents were not asked in the survey and these might play a role in people's feelings toward refugees and non-Muslim communities.

5 | CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the current research shows that the Turkish respondents had very negative feelings toward (Syrian) refugees, similar to the negative feelings that they had toward established minority groups in Turkey. Further, higher national identifiers were more negative toward non-national refugees, and higher Muslim group identifiers were more negative toward non-Muslim minorities. Stronger endorsement of multiculturalism was associated with less negative feelings toward refugees and minority groups, but predominantly among lower national identifiers. Thus, an emphasis on cultural diversity and multicultural values might lead to more positive feelings toward refugees and other minority groups. Yet, for strong national identifiers, the intergroup benefits of multiculturalism were weaker or did not exist. In general, the current findings indicate that in Turkey there are important intergroup tensions and that it is a real challenge to develop future positive relations between the Turkish majority and the different minority groups,

including refugees. Multiculturalism was found to be associated with less negative attitudes both toward refugees and non-Muslims minorities but especially for low identifiers. Thus, promoting multiculturalism might be a way to improve these outgroup feelings for some sections of the population. Yet, research has shown that multiculturalism might be perceived as a threat for high identifiers (Ginges & Cairns, 2000; Verkuyten, 2005) and further studies could investigate other factors that are related to why multiculturalism is not associated with less negative feelings toward outgroups for high identifiers. If multiculturalism is indeed perceived as a threat then, we suggest that both civil society organizations and government officials can foster public campaigns about the positive sides of living together with people with culturally different backgrounds. Also, future studies should investigate what other factors might be important for reducing the negative feelings of high identifiers.

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