

Political Turmoil and Attitude Change Among the Diaspora. The Impact of the 2016 Attempted Military Coup on Homeland Orientation Among Recent Turkish Immigrants in the Netherlands

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Abstract

This study underscores the significance of home-country events in shaping connections between diaspora and their country of origin. Focusing on immigrants from Turkey who migrated to the Netherlands in 2012/2013, our panel-study sheds light on post-migration developments concerning interest in Turkish politics and sense of identification with Turkey. Leveraging the 2016 failed military coup as a natural experiment, we apply also rally effect theory. Our findings reveal that political interest increased in the aftermath of the coup attempt and stronger so among immigrants who supported the AK-party. Conversely, identification with Turkey declined, while remaining stable among migrants identifying as Turkish majority members. This research demonstrates the importance of examining responses to home-country events, elucidating on variations observed across subgroups.

In the summer of 2016, Turkish flags were waving in the streets of Cologne (Germany) and Rotterdam (the Netherlands) as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan successfully thwarted a military coup. The Turkish diaspora in Western Europe demonstrated their support for Erdogan again in March 2017 when they protested against the ban on Turkish representatives campaigning for a “yes” vote in the Turkish referendum to increase Erdogan’s power. The voting results among Turkish immigrants in Europe further reinforced the pro-Erdogan image, with nearly three-quarters of voters in Austria (73%), Belgium (75%), and the Netherlands (71%) supporting Erdogan in the referendum, followed by somewhat lower percentages in France (65%) and Germany (63%) (BBC, 2017). However, the voter turnout among Turkish immigrants abroad was low at 48% (Seçim.haberler, 2019), and a substantial minority voted against Erdogan, highlighting that the Turkish diaspora is highly diversified and politically polarized (Erişen & Kentmen-Cin, 2017). It is hypothesized that major events such as an attempted coup in the home country significantly impact the relationship between diaspora members and their home country, but only a few studies have explored the importance of such events for immigrant ties with their home country. In this study, we aim to investigate whether and how the diversity among a group of Turkish immigrants who left Turkey a few years before the attempted coup and relocated to the Netherlands translated

into differential reactions to this watershed event in terms of their orientation towards Turkey.

Erdogan attributed the attempted coup to his opponent Fehdullah Gülen (Yavuz & Koç, 2016) and took measures to dismiss public officials suspected of having ties to the Gülen movement. Erdem (2016) reported that the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) also collected information on individuals suspected of affiliations with the Gülen movement in Western European countries, including the Netherlands. This issue garnered attention in the Dutch context, with a parliamentary commission investigating the influence of foreign countries on religious and societal organizations (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 2020). Against this backdrop, it is expected that the attempted coup has had various impacts on the Turkish immigrant community in the Netherlands.

In the field of political science and public opinion, events like the ones in Turkey in 2016, similar to international attacks on a nation or international crises, are known to trigger a rally effect, wherein people rally behind their government or leader (Baker & Oneal, 2001; Jakobsson & Blom, 2014; Frey, 2020). Much research has examined the rally effect following the 9/11 attacks (Hetherington & Nelson, 2003; Skitka, 2005). Baker and Oneal (2001) theorize that a military crisis is a sufficient condition to generate an increase in loyalty to the government in power, at least in the short

term. The attempted coup in Turkey in 2016 meets the conditions theorized to be relevant for a rally effect: it was sudden, dramatic, and had international repercussions. Therefore, we expect that such rally effects not only affect support for the president among individuals in the country but also influence the orientation towards the home country among recent immigrants. However, since the attempted coup was not an external threat but arose from internal political struggles, we anticipate divisions between supporters and opponents of the government in the aftermath of the event, following social identity theory. Therefore, in the case of Turkey and the attempted military coup of 2016, we expect any potential effect on the diaspora to be diverse, aligning with the significant diversity within the Turkish immigrant community (Erişen & Erdoğan, 2019). We will first examine the extent to which different subgroups of recent Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands, who arrived between 2012 and 2013 primarily due to family motivated migration, differed in their orientation towards Turkey immediately after migration, before the attempted coup. Subsequently, we will analyze the varying reactions of these respondents to the attempted coup.

Homeland orientation can encompass different dimensions (e.g., Portes, 2001; Mügge, 2016), such as the political informative dimension, which refers to the extent of (political) interest in the political events of the home country (Koopmans, Statham, Giugni, & Passy, 2005; Alinia, Wahlbeck, Eliassi, & Khayati, 2014; Baser, 2014). However, an increase in political interest does not have to signal a rally effect; it may occur also among people who are opposed to the regime and distance themselves from the nation. Another dimension of homeland orientation is the affective dimension, involving identification with the home country (Engbersen, Leerkes, Grabowska-Lusinska, Snel, & Burgers, 2013), in which an increase after a major event is likely to signal a rally effect. We will examine both dimensions of homeland orientation by longitudinally analyzing interest in Turkish politics and identification with Turkey.

This study contributes to our understanding of homeland orientation among the diaspora in the first years after immigration, utilizing a three-wave panel survey conducted among recent Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. We provide two specific contributions to the literature on political events and immigrants' homeland orientations. Firstly, we examine the impact of a shock event on the diaspora, and secondly, we investigate how this event differentially affects homeland orientations among recent immigrant groups within the diaspora, known for its diversity in political matters.

Theory

The Turkish Diaspora and the 2016 Attempted Coup

The Turkish immigrant population is among the largest in Europe and, compared to other migrant communities, it is relatively strongly oriented towards the country of origin (Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2010; Agirdag, Phalet, & Van Houtte, 2016). The transnational politics literature also shows that migrant Turks are relatively actively engaged in Turkish politics (Boccagni, Lafleur, & Levitt, 2016; Escobar, Arana, & McCann, 2015; Lafleur, 2015; Mügge, Kranendonk, Vermeulen, & Aydemir, 2021; Østergaard-Nielsen, 2003). Turkey plays a part in keeping these ties close and is known for its active diaspora policy, which Erdogan implements to strengthen the government's political leverage among the

Turkish diaspora (Akçapar and Aksel, 2017; Mügge et al., 2021). Whereas most research in the field has studied second-generation and longer established first-generation immigrants in Turkey, this study focuses on more recent immigrants that migrated from Turkey in 2012 and 2013. As the first years after migration are considered a dynamic phase (Diehl, Lubbers, Mühlau, & Platt, 2016), we argue that studying how homeland orientations develop among this group is of interest and builds on these previous insights among more established groups.

Among Turkish immigrants in Europe, the current president of Turkey, Erdogan, enjoys great support. In the 2023 Turkish Presidential elections, around 70% of the Dutch Turks voted for Erdogan. Moreover, this was already so before the attempted coup, with 64% of the Turks in the Netherlands voting for the AK Party (AKP: Justice and Development Party) in 2015 (against 41% of the voters in Turkey) (Seçim.haberler, 2019). However, a sizable minority also criticized the president and Turkey for the undemocratic turn the country has taken (Van Beek & Becker, 2017). Some people who migrated out of Turkey before the attempted coup may have made this choice because of the political situation in Turkey. Previous research henceforth highlighted the internal heterogeneity of the Turkish diaspora (Ehrkamp, 2005; Isik-Ercan, 2014; Kunuroglu, Yagmur, Van De Vijver, & Kroon, 2018).

The Attempted Coup and General Stronger Orientation on Turkey

A high orientation towards the homeland is shaped by several factors, such as immigrants' (political) socialization in the origin country and their socio-economic position in the receiving society (Chaudhary, 2018). Major political events in the home country can function likewise as a trigger for stronger orientation to that country. One kind of major event is a military or terrorist attack on a nation, which is thought to cause stronger cohesion among people identifying with the nation and people to rally behind their government or leader (Lambert, Schott, & Scherer, 2011). This effect has been labeled the 'rally-round-the-flag effect' (Mueller, 1970). We anticipate that the 2016 attempted military coup has caused an overall increase in orientation towards Turkey among the Turkish diaspora and that people rallied round the nation.

The literature on rally effects discusses the role of opinion leadership to explain the rally effect. Lambert et al. (2011) have formulated it as the general reduction in openly criticizing political leaders. Esen and Gumuscu (2017) describe this as what happened in Turkey. To protect Turkey's stability, Erdogan insisted that all parties formed a front against the movement of Gülen, presumed to have initiated the coup. Rally effects are often tested using measurements of identification and support for (governing) parties. We analyse such a rally effect on identification with Turkey, but also test whether such an event affects the political informative dimension of homeland orientation (political interest), which allows us to explore differences between a rally effect and a more general event-effect.

Notwithstanding an approving or critical stance to the regime, a critical event will likely increase interest in the nation's politics among all. Both among proponents and opponents of Erdogan and the AKP, and thus among those more explicitly or not at all targeted by AKP's diaspora policy (Arkilic, 2022), we expect interest in Turkish politics to be higher in the aftermath of the attempted coup. We do

assume that there are different levels of interest in Turkish politics among the diaspora, for instance that the higher educated show greater political interest, since it is a classical and general finding that education stimulates political interest (Jackson, 1995; Mayer, 2011; Persson, 2015). Yet, we do not expect that the attempted coup has brought about a different effect among subgroups. Thus, we expect that the attempted coup evoked an overall increase in interest in Turkish politics within the Turkish diaspora (*Hypothesis H1*).

Diversity Within the Turkish Diaspora and Conditional Rally Effects

A heterogeneous population may respond differently to watershed political events where it concerns affective outcomes. In the literature, this is described as conditional rally effects, even though these boundary conditions have not received much empirical attention yet (Ojeda, 2016). Given the documented diversity within the Turkish diaspora, different subgroups within the Turkish immigrant population may have responded differently towards the attempted coup.

Theoretically, the expectation about conditional rally effects is based on the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010), and it captures the second explanation for rally effects offered by Lambert et al. (2011). The social identity approach posits that people strive for a positive social identity. In case of attacks on the ingroup and threats to the ingroup's status or continuity, people would strengthen their ingroup identification and bolster their positive ingroup evaluations. An external threat, or the perception thereof, strengthens the salience of the threatened identity, in this case Turkish national identity, even further (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Based on identity threat theory (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999), external threats evoke collective rather than individual response among those who already strongly identified with their ingroup, while at the same time decreasing ingroup identification among the low identifiers. According to this line of reasoning, the threat to the Turkish nation posed by the attempted coup would lead to further polarization within the Turkish diaspora depending on their prior levels of identification with Turkish national identity.

More specifically, when it comes to identification with Turkey as indicator of homeland orientations, we expect rally effects to be conditional on the major cleavages within the Turkish diaspora. More religious immigrants, immigrants belonging to the majoritarian Muslim denomination of Sunnis, immigrants who are lower educated and identify themselves as belonging to the Turkish majority as well as supporters of the AKP will identify stronger with Turkey when they arrived in the Netherlands. Among these subgroups, the attempted coup is expected to have created an even stronger identification with Turkey, as would follow from the rally effect literature, whereas identification with Turkey is expected to have decreased after the attempted coup among less religious immigrants, immigrants who are higher educated, who identify with a Turkish ethnic minority and support political parties other than the AKP (*Hypothesis H2*).

We include immigrants' level of education, their religiosity, ethnic group membership and party choice in the last Turkish elections in which they participated as indicators of their support versus opposition towards Erdogan and the AKP government, as we do not have a direct measurement of support for Erdogan or the AKP at the time of the attempted coup. We

reason that immigrants who support the AKP will most likely endorse Erdogan's position and actions; we expect them to be least critical of Turkey and Erdogan's politics, and to identify more strongly with Turkey compared to immigrants who are less supportive of Erdogan. To position AKP support in the social structure of the Turkish diaspora, a study on its electoral base in Turkey by Gidengil and Karakoç (2016) showed that religious identification and denomination are strong predictors of AKP support among Turks in Turkey, with more religious Turks and those identifying as Sunni more likely to vote for the AKP. Moreover, they found that education has a strong effect on AKP support, with lower educated Turks being more likely to vote for Erdogan. We also anticipate that the division between the Turkish ethnic majority and minorities plays a role in understanding variation in orientation towards Turkey, although it is not as straightforward that all Turkish Kurds oppose Erdogan. The literature has documented that Kurds also vote for Erdogan (in which it is mostly suggested that conservative religious Kurds do so) and that Erdogan managed to break into Kurdish regions that were known to be pro-minority HDP (People's Democratic Party) (Alptekin, 2019; Uncu, 2018; Yavuz & Özcan, 2006).

Context, Data, and Measurements

The Netherlands was one of the European countries that recruited labour migrants from Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s, after which family (re-)unification took place. It made the Turkish immigrant group one of the largest non-EU groups in the country, with a population close to 410,000 in 2019 (Statistics Netherlands, 2020a). Since stricter regulations on family migration were imposed in the early 2000s, the number of Turkish immigrants dropped from around 5,000–6,000 annually in the 1990s to 3,000–4,000 since 2004 (Statistics Netherlands, 2020b). Up to 2015 the majority of new immigrants from Turkey came as family migrant or study migrant. In recent years, after the attempted coup, both the total number of immigrants as well as the number of asylum requests from Turkey have been on the rise (Statistics Netherlands, 2020c). This study, however, focuses on Turkish immigrants who entered the Netherlands in the years before the attempted coup of 2016. These migrants differ from the existing Turkish diaspora in some respect as they are on average more likely to be well-to-do individuals and academics from large cities like Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara. Presumably, the changes in government in the early 2000s played a role in their decision to migrate (Elveren, 2018).

In 2013, the collection of longitudinal data we rely on started: among Turkish immigrants above the age of 18, who were born in Turkey and who registered as a new resident of the Netherlands between May 2012 and September 2013 (New Immigrant Survey the Netherlands—NIS2NL; Lubbers, Gijsberts, Fleischmann, & Maliepaard, 2018). Statistics Netherlands identified this group in the municipal population registers. The immigrants were approached in Winter 2013/2014. All correspondence and questionnaires were provided in the Turkish language. The response rate was 27%, which is reasonable for a written questionnaire among recent immigrants. In total 921 Turkish immigrants participated. Fieldwork for wave 2 started in March 2015. Of the wave 1 respondents, 8% had refused to participate a second time and 10% had moved abroad. A share of 56% from the eligible respondents participated in the second wave. The third wave started in September 2016, almost two months after

the attempted coup of 15 July 2016. A response rate of 64% resulted in 265 respondents in the third wave. The balanced panel, including only respondents who participated in the three waves, thus consists of 265 recent Turkish immigrants. In our analyses, we make use of all respondents in the different waves, to test for variation between subgroups in their orientation to Turkey and to estimate changes at the same time, but also test our models on the balanced panel only.

Measurements: Dependent Variables

Interest in Turkish politics. Interest in Turkish politics was measured with a widely used question in international studies: ‘How interested would you say you are in Turkish politics?’ Respondents could choose: 1. Very interested; 2. Somewhat interested; 3. Not very interested; 4. Not interested at all. The item was recoded so that higher scores indicate more interest in Turkish politics.

Identification with Turkey. Immigrants’ level of identification with Turkey was measured asking whether (1) they ‘feel a strong sense of belonging’ to Turkey, with five answer categories ranging from totally agree to totally disagree and (2) ‘how important is the country where you were born for your sense of belonging’, with four answer categories, ranging from very important to not important at all. The items are recoded such that a high score refers to a stronger level of identification with Turkey. Both items correlate .57 and after transformation into the same scale length, were combined into a single scale of identification with Turkey.

Measurements: Independent Variables

Party voted for before migration in Turkey. In wave 1 (winter 2013/2014), respondents were asked what the party was they had voted for in last general elections in Turkey before they migrated. Close to 20% of the respondents answered that they did not know or did not want to answer. These people “without specific party” are distinguished from respondents with a preferred party. Of those providing a party voted for, 41% mentioned the AKP, which is 8 percent points below the actual voting results of 2011 in Turkey. The centre-left CHP (Republican People’s Party) was voted for by 35% of the immigrants in our survey whereas this party received 23% of the votes in the elections of 2011. The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) was voted for by 6.5% in our survey, whereas they obtained 13% of the votes in the 2011 elections. All other (minor) parties added up to 15% of the vote, while they jointly acquired 11% of the votes in the 2011 election. The immigrants in the survey are thus less supportive of the AKP and MHP than the population in Turkey as well as compared to the existing Turkish immigrant population in the Netherlands. The AKP initiated together with the MHP the referendum of 2017 to expand the President’s authority and change the constitutional system into a presidential one. Because of this political alliance, AKP- and MHP-supporters are contrasted to all other party voters in our analyses.

Religion—identification. To measure the religiosity of respondents, in each wave they were asked: ‘Independent of whether you attend religious worship or not, how religious would you say you are?’. Respondents could indicate they were ‘not religious at all’, ‘not very religious’, ‘fairly religious’ and ‘very religious’.

Religion—denomination. Respondents were also asked what their current religion is. Various Muslim denominations were presented, next to other religious denominations. The

majority describes themselves as ‘Sunni’, which is the reference category in the analyses. Other Muslims (of which the largest group is ‘Muslim (without further specification)’) form a separate category, with another category created for ‘Alevi’. Other denominations than Muslim were taken together and were distinguished from ‘not belonging to a denomination’. Since there is hardly any change in religious denomination within our respondents, we consider the first-wave answer of respondents in the analyses.

Education. Education is measured in the first wave, by asking for the highest education completed in Turkey. The ordinal scale runs from 1 (no education completed) to 9 (a master’s education completed). A small share of the immigrants came for reasons to study in the Netherlands and completed a master’s degree during the time of the interview. The relative change on the level of education is however too small to test for within-effects.

Ethnic minority in Turkey. To gauge whether respondents consider themselves to belong to another group than majority Turks, the question in wave 1 was asked: ‘Various groups of people live in Turkey, such as Turks, Lazi, Kurds, Circassians and many others. Which of these groups do you think you belong to?’. Lazi (3%), Kurds (13%), Circassians (1%) and others (5%) were coded as ‘ethnic minority’.

Controls

Gender, age, motive for migration, and length of stay in the Netherlands are controlled for. Immigrants were asked in wave 1 for their main motive for migration and we distinguish “family motive,” “economic motive,” “study motive,” and “political or other motive.” Length of stay is the difference between the month of survey and the month the respondent had indicated in wave 1 to have moved to the Netherlands. We also control for region of origin and the general support for Erdogan in that region. To capture regional diversity in support for Erdogan, we merged information about the results from the referendum from 2017 by province. Although this referendum took place *after* the data collection we rely on, the provincial results from the referendum provide a good proxy of how much support Erdogan enjoys in a region the immigrant emigrated from. In wave 1, immigrants were asked in which province they lived before migrating to the Netherlands. A large part of the immigrants came from Istanbul, whereas another major share came from central Anatolia, a region where many Turkish immigrants to the Netherlands originate from (Akgunduz, 1993).

Analyses

We provide descriptive statistics of the Turkish immigrants based both on the balanced panel (respondents who participated in all the three waves) and the whole wave 1 sample. Then we describe what changes have taken place in interest in Turkish politics and identification with Turkey. Subsequently, we estimate hybrid models with Stata panel analyses, for the unbalanced panel and balanced panel respectively. Results from the hybrid models provide evidence for explanations of both between-respondent variance and within-respondent variance and are estimated based on all information from all respondents in the waves. Since religious identification is the only independent variable that can change over the waves, in these hybrid effect model specification in Stata, we included both the average score of religious identification over the waves (to estimate its between-effect) and the deviation per

Table 1. Univariate distributions among Turkish immigrants in wave 1 and the three waves of the balanced panel

		All respondents		Balanced panel	
		Wave 1	Wave 1 Winter 2013/2014	Wave 2 Spring 2015	Wave 3 —Sept-Oct 2016
Interest in Turkish politics	1–4	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9
Identification with Turkey	1–5	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.8
Preferred party in Turkey before migration		41.4	43.0		
–Other (= ref)					
–AKP/MHP		37.6	36.2		
–No supporter of a specific party		21.0	20.8		
Religious denomination at wave 1		55.4	57.7		
–Sunni (ref)					
–Alevi		6.8	8.7		
–Other Muslim		27.3	21.9		
–Non-Muslim		3.7	4.9		
–None		6.8	6.8		
Religious identification	1–4	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.4
Level of education at wave 1	1–9	6.3	6.5		
Turkish minority at wave 1		21.5	20.8		
Men		53.4	53.2		
Age	16–65	30.9	31.2		
Motive of migration		61.9	64.2		
–Family (ref)					
–Economic		12.5	18.1		
–Study		12.5	6.0		
–Political		13.1	11.7		
Length of stay in NL		27.8	28.3		
–<half a year (ref)					
–Between half a year and a year		15.7	17.0		
–>1 year, <2 years		18.9	22.6		
–>2 years, <5 years		10.4	12.5		
–>5 years		5.4	4.2		
–Missing on length of stay		21.7	15.5		
Region: % yes voters in 2017 referendum	19.6–75.6	52.6	51.9		
N		921	265		

Source: New immigrant survey—the Netherlands (2018).

wave from the mean (to estimate its within-effect). To model the impact of the attempted coup, we include two time-dependent impact-functions (Andreß, Golsch, & Schmidt, 2013). First, we model the changes we hypothesized about. These are the changes that occur between wave 2 (spring 2015) and wave 3 (September–October 2016). If the attempted coup has an effect, we should find them between these two waves. We estimate this change between wave 2 and wave 3 as the ‘coup effect’. However, the potential change that occurs between wave 2 and wave 3 can be part of ongoing changes, that already started from wave 1, which, based on classical immigrant integration accounts (e.g., Diehl et al., 2016), is most likely a trend towards less interest in Turkish politics and a weaker identification with Turkey. Therefore, secondly, we model a linear trend over the three waves, next to the coup effect. This linear trend denotes a general change in the outcomes among the immigrants with increasing length of stay, which we label ‘the enduring-stay effect’.

To test whether developments varied (in strength) among certain groups of Turkish immigrants, we interacted the time-variables (both the coup effect and the enduring-stay effect) with the independent variables in the model. This provides a test of significance of group-specific coup and enduring-stay effects, which are considered to be tested better in the models tested here than in fixed-effect models (Brüderl & Ludwig, 2015). We decided not to show the results of all these interactions in the tables, but to show, if significant, the marginal effects in graphs.

Results

Description of the Turkish Immigrant Population in this Study

The data show that of the Turkish immigrants from the early 2010s, the majority is Muslim: 55.4% is Sunni, 6.8% is Alevi, and another 27.3% identifies as “other” Muslim (Table 1).

A very small group reports to belong to another religion (3.7%) and 6.8% identify as not belonging to any denomination. Religious identification on a scale from 1 to 4 is has a mean of 2.4 and is quite stable over time. The respondents in the survey are relatively highly educated as compared to the full Turkish diaspora population in the Netherlands (Wennekers, Boelhouwers, Van Campen, & Kullberg, 2019). The group that identifies as Turkish minority (20.8%) mainly consists of Kurds. Immigrants come from regions in Turkey that vary strongly in their support for Erdogan in the referendum: some of the immigrants come from Tunceli, with 20% support; some from Rize with 76% of the population supporting Erdogan. These figures are based on the sample from wave 1, with 921 respondents.

A comparison of the independent variables between all wave 1 respondents ($n = 921$) and the balanced panel respondents (who participated in all three waves; $n = 265$) shows that in particular Turkish immigrants who came for study and those who identify as ‘other Muslim’ have been more likely to leave the panel study (Table 1). Study immigrants, who typically come to follow a Master at a university, are likely to return after two years of study.

The descriptive statistics mainly show stability between the three waves: the average scores in interest in Turkish politics and identification with Turkey hardly changed over the waves. Interest in Turkish politics started out and remained high on average (score of 3 on a scale from 1 to 4) and identification with Turkey started out and remained high (3.9 on a scale from 1 to 5) (Table 1). We find no difference between all wave 1 respondents and the balanced panel in terms of their interest in Turkish politics and identification with Turkey.

The average stability among the immigrants may disguise individual-level changes. A closer description of changes in the interest in Turkish politics and identification with Turkey is given in Table 2. This Table presents the shares of immigrants who remained stable in their attitudes and the share who changed their position between wave 2 and wave 3, that is, before and after the attempted coup. Political interest remained stable for the majority (58%), however increased among 23% and decreased among 19%. Identification with Turkey remained stable among merely 35%, whereas 26% expressed a stronger sense of belonging to Turkey after the attempted coup, and 39% showed a weaker sense of belonging. These changes are notable, but considered across the entire sample, may be random. Therefore, we proceed by testing our hypotheses whether certain groups have been more likely to change in either direction.

Explanations of Homeland Orientation

Interest in Turkish politics. We assumed that Turkish subgroups would not differ much in their general interest in Turkish politics and that changes in political interest after the

attempted coup would increase among all identified groups. As for the between-respondent effects, we do find that immigrants across the political spectrum do not differ much in their interest in Turkish politics. Migrants who indicated to have voted before migration for Erdogan’s AK party or the MHP, the parties that supported the yes-vote in the referendum to grant more power to the president in 2017, do not differ in interest in Turkish politics as compared to immigrants who had voted before migration for other parties. Only immigrants who did not vote or did give an answer show lower interest in Turkish politics, which aligns with earlier findings that political disinterest and non-voting are associated (e.g., Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995). Also, religiosity and ethnic minority status hardly affect political interest (Table 3, model 1a), but we do find that immigrants with a religious denomination other than Muslim or no denomination show somewhat more interest in Turkish politics. In line with previous research, a higher education is associated with more interest in Turkish politics among recent immigrants, and, men show more political interest than women (Kostelka, Blais, & Gidengil, 2019).

The coup effect (the change between waves 2 and 3), next to the enduring-stay effect (the linear change over time) represents the change within respondents. As we would expect based on classic assimilation theories (Alba & Nee, 1995), the findings show that in each subsequent wave, a change towards less interest in Turkish politics takes place ($b = -.15$). However, we also expected a (general) attempted military coup effect, and indeed, the findings support this expectation (H1): interest in Turkish politics increased between the second and third wave ($b = .26$).

We expected this coup effect on interest in Turkish politics to be a general effect, that is, changes are not expected to be stronger for certain subgroups. To examine this we included interaction terms between ‘after the attempted coup’ and AKP/MHP-preference, religiosity, education, and minority status (as well as between these characteristics and the ‘wave’ variable), respectively, to examine to what extent the coup effect is general indeed. Significant coup or enduring-stay interaction effects as well as those for which we found that the coup or enduring-stay effects are tested significant in one group but not in the other, are presented in Figure 1a–c.

The coup effect turns out to be larger for supporters of the AKP/MHP parties than among supporters of other parties, which is at odds with our expectation. Irrespective of which party the immigrants had voted for before immigration, we find an overall decrease in interest in Turkish politics over time. For AKP/MHP supporters, this decline is reversed after wave 2, after the attempted coup, whereas for supporters of other parties the decline continued, yet slowed down (Figure 1a).

There are also differences found in the coup effect depending on religious denomination. For Sunni identifiers there is

Table 2. Change and stability after the attempted military coup in interest in Turkish politics and identification with Turkey (in percentages, $N = 265$)

	Interest in Turkish politics	Identification with Turkey
Increased after the attempted coup	23	26
Remained stable	58	35
Decreased after the attempted coup	19	39

Source: New immigrant survey—the Netherlands (2018).

Table 3. Parameters from the hybrid models to explain (changes in) interest in Turkish politics, from unbalanced and balanced panel

	Unbalanced panel			Balanced panel		
	<i>b</i>	S.E.			S.E.	
After the attempted coup (<i>coup effect</i>)	0.26	0.08	**	0.21	0.10	*
Wave (<i>enduring-stay effect</i>)	-0.15	0.04	***	-0.12	0.06	*
Preferred party in Turkey before migration						
-Other (ref)						
-AKP/MHP	-0.10	0.08		-0.03	0.15	
-No supporter of a specific party	-0.80	0.07	***	-0.65	0.14	***
Religious denomination at wave 1						
-Sunni (ref)						
-Alevi	-0.17	0.12		-0.07	.18	
-Other Muslim	-0.02	0.07		0.06	.12	
-Non-Muslim	0.27	0.15	~	-0.00	.23	
-None	0.25	0.13	*	0.10	.21	
Religious identification (mean)	0.03	0.07		-0.04	.11	
Religious identification (change)	0.02	0.06		0.03	0.07	
Level of education at wave 1	0.13	0.01	***	0.13	0.02	***
Turkish minority ID at wave 1	-0.00	0.07		-0.14	0.12	
<i>Controls</i>						
Men at wave 1	0.18	0.06	**	0.01	0.09	
Age at wave 1	0.00	0.00		0.01	0.01	
Motive of migration at wave 1						
-Family (ref)						
-Economic	0.11	0.09		0.22	0.13	
-Study	0.12	0.10		0.42	0.22	~
-Political	0.07	0.09		0.15	0.15	
Length of stay in NL at wave 1						
-<half a year (ref)						
-Between half a year and a year	0.03	0.09		0.01		
->1 year, <2 years	-0.04	0.08		-0.09		
->2 years, <5 years	-0.08	0.10		0.02		
->5 years	0.21	0.14		0.42		
-Missing on length of stay	-0.01	0.08		0.03		
Region: % Yes voters in 2017 referendum	0.00	0.00		-0.00		
Observations	1516			744		
Respondents	896			261		

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. ~ $p < .10$.

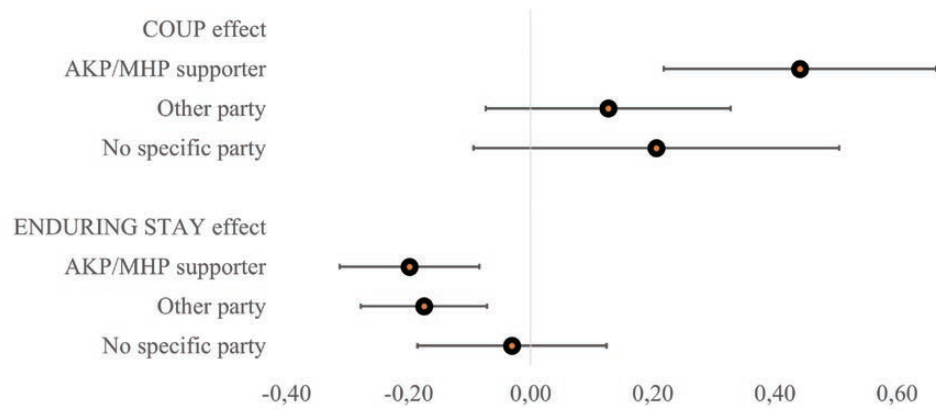
Source: New Immigrant Survey—the Netherlands (2018).

a significant increase in Turkish political interest after the attempted coup, but not for the other religious groups. Finally, the enduring-stay effect is conditional on the level of education. The higher the level of education, the stronger the decrease in political interest in Turkey over the waves (Figure 1c). Moreover, the coup effect turns out to be there only among the higher educated, even though the interaction effect is not significant on level of education.

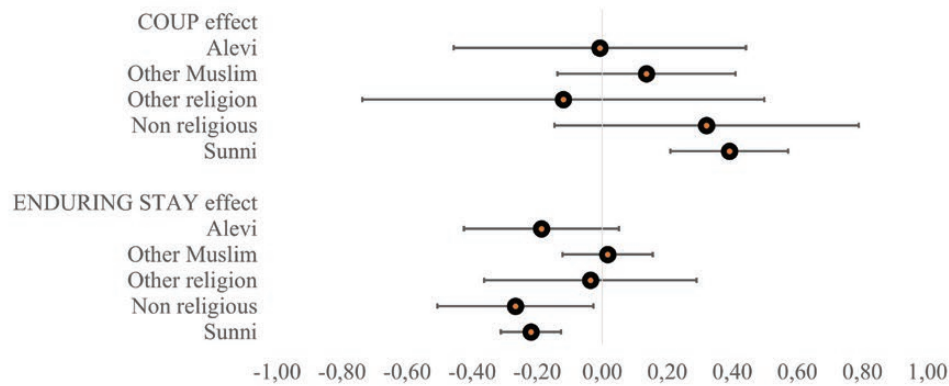
The coup effect is neither dependent on strength of religious identification nor on ethnic minority status. Overall, we can conclude that the coup effect with respect to the increasing interest in Turkish politics is rather general in line with *H1*, but with a stronger coup effect among immigrants who had voted AKP/MHP before migration and migrants identifying as Sunni Muslim.

Identification with Turkey. As expected, the immigrants who had voted for the AK/MHP parties before immigration identify stronger with Turkey than supporters of other parties. In line with previous research and expectations (Maliepaard, Lubbers, & Gijsberts, 2010), we also find that immigrants who report to be more religious identify more strongly with Turkey (Table 4, model 2a). Alevi and other Muslims identify significantly less with Turkey than Sunni Muslims. In particular people who are religious but not Muslim and non-religious Turkish immigrants identify less with Turkey than Sunni Muslims. Level of education is not associated with identification with Turkey. Immigrants belonging to an ethnic minority group in Turkey identify less with Turkey than immigrants from the ethnic Turkish majority. This is in line with earlier research that showed that Kurds identified less

A *Average marginal effects on interest in Turkish politics by party voted for in Turkey*



B *Average marginal effects on interest in Turkish politics by denomination*



C *Average marginal effects on interest in Turkish politics by level of education*

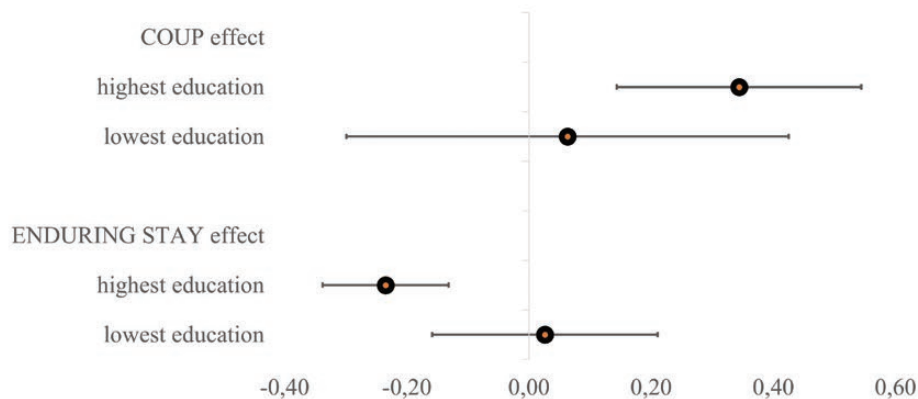


Figure 1. Average marginal effects on interest in Turkish politics. (a) By party voted for in Turkey, (b) by denomination, and (c) by level of education.

with Turkey (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Finally, the findings show that those who migrated because of political or other reasons identify less with Turkey than the other categories.

The model provides evidence for an effect of the attempted coup. The effect is small though and in contrast to the expectations: after the attempted coup, the level of identification with Turkey *decreased* among Turkish immigrants. The model also shows that there is no evidence for a general enduring-stay effect; over the three waves, immigrants did not

change significantly in their identification with Turkey. The significance of the within-effect of religious identification here denotes that an increase in religious identification is associated with stronger identification with Turkey over time.

We hypothesized that a coup effect on identification with Turkey would be different for the various subgroups. We do find support for such a significant differential effect from the coup only between migrant ethnic minority and migrant ethnic majority members. For Turkish ethnic minority members

Table 4. Parameters from the hybrid-models to explain (changes in) identification with Turkey, from unbalanced and balanced panel

	Unbalanced panel			Balanced panel		
	<i>b</i>	S.E.		<i>b</i>	S.E.	
After the attempted coup (<i>coup effect</i>)	-0.16	0.09	~	-0.20	0.11	~
Wave (<i>enduring-stay effect</i>)	-0.0	0.05		0.04	0.06	
Preferred party in Turkey before migration						
-Other (ref)						
-AKP/MHP	0.25	0.08	**	0.26	0.16	
-No supporter of a specific party	-0.04	0.08		-0.01	0.15	
Religious denomination at wave 1						
-Sunni (ref)						
-Alevi	-0.26	.12	*	-0.32	0.20	
-Other Muslim	-0.13	.07	~	-0.11	0.13	
-Non-Muslim	-0.83	0.16	***	-0.99	0.25	***
-None	-0.53	0.13	***	-0.64	0.24	**
Religious identification (mean)	0.28	0.08	***	0.28	0.12	*
Religious identification (change)	0.14	0.06	*	0.11	0.07	
Level of education at wave 1	0.02	0.01		0.02	0.03	
Turkish minority ID at wave 1	-0.30	0.07	***	-0.39	0.13	**
<i>Controls</i>						
Men at wave 1	-0.06	0.06		-0.06	0.10	
Age at wave 1	-0.00	0.00		0.00	0.01	
Motive of migration at wave 1						
-Family (ref)						
--Economic	0.01	0.09		-0.18	0.15	
-Study	-0.02	0.10		-0.15	0.24	
-Political	-0.30	0.09	**	-0.38	0.17	*
Length of stay in NL at wave 1						
-Less than half a year (ref)						
-Between half a year and a year	0.02	.09		0.24	0.16	
-More than 1 year, less than 2 years	0.10	0.08		0.14	0.15	
-More than 2 years, less than 5 years	0.03	0.10		-0.00	0.18	
-More than 5 years	-0.06	0.15		0.15	0.31	
-Missing on length of stay	0.01	0.09		-0.24	0.17	
Region: % Yes voters in 2017 referendum	-0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	
Observations	1521			748		
Respondents	898			263		

*** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. ~ $p < .10$.

Source: New immigrant survey—the Netherlands (2018).

the effect is significantly more negative than for Turkish majority members (Figure 2), which implies that identification with Turkey after the attempted coup decreased for Turkish ethnic minority members, whereas it did not decrease among the migrants identifying as Turkish majority. This finding is in only party in line with hypothesis 2, because we formulated that the coup would evoke an increase in identification among majority members, next to a decrease among the minority members. We found that the attempted coup prevented a decline in identification with Turkey among immigrants identifying as the Turkish ethnic majority.

We found no significant difference in either the coup effect or enduring-stay effect on identification with Turkey dependent on the level of religious identification, religious denomination, level of education or party voted for before migration,

which is at odds with *H2* that expected a widening gap in homeland identification after the attempted coup.

Conclusions and Discussion

The 2016 attempted coup in Turkey presented a unique opportunity to investigate the impact of major political events in the home country on the homeland orientations of recent immigrants. Through a longitudinal data collection, encompassing measures before and after the attempted coup, we have demonstrated that interest in Turkish politics among recent immigrants from Turkey increased following the coup, aligning with an expected coup effect. This coup effect disrupted the declining trend of diminishing interest in Turkish politics observed as immigrants spent more time in

Average marginal effects on Turkish identification by minority identification

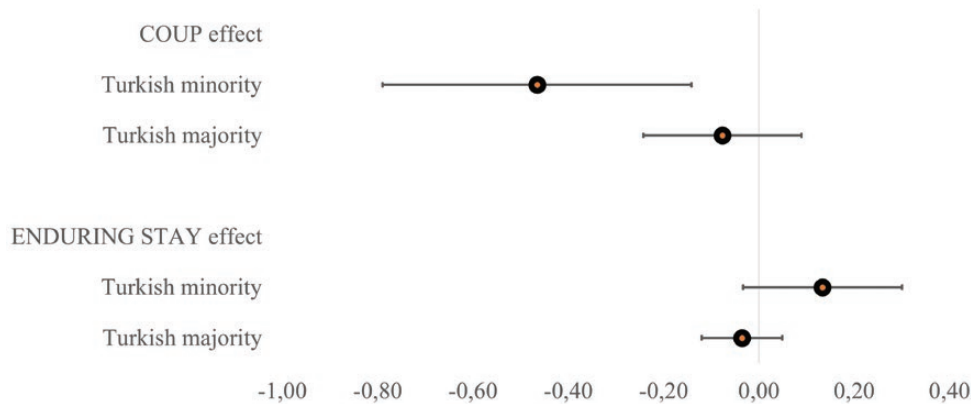


Figure 2. Average marginal effects on Turkish identification by minority identification.

the destination country, as predicted by classical assimilation theories. However, there was a slight decline in identification with Turkey after the attempted coup, which deviates from rally-around-the-flag-effect expectations.

One of the central propositions of this article is that rally effects can be conditional upon membership in relevant subgroups, an aspect that has been largely overlooked in the literature on rally effects (Ojeda, 2016). Our findings do underscore the relevance of studying conditional effects from major political events, but did not provide strong evidence for the initially hypothesized conditional rally effects.

We posited that conditional coup effects would be particularly relevant for identification with Turkey, but not necessarily for interest in Turkish politics. A stronger identification with a country can be considered an expression of the more positive affective relation to the country, and as such was expected to work in line with the rally-round-the-flag framework. Political interest is regarded an indicator of the political informative dimension, not necessarily denoting that people rally-round-the-flag when it is increasing. Therefore, regarding the latter, we expected an increase across all subgroups in response to the attempted coup. However, we found that the increase in political interest was more pronounced among immigrants who had voted AKP or MHP before migration and people identifying as Sunni Muslims. Those who already “rallied” behind the president were the ones increasing their interest in Turkish politics even stronger after the attempted coup. Although not hypothesized, these unexpected conditional effects could be a sign of a rally-round-the-flag effect.

Identification with Turkey experienced a decline after the attempted coup. Instead of an overall rallying effect, we found that the attempted coup pushed migrants away from identifying with Turkey. Only for among Turkish immigrants who self-identified as members of the ethnic majority, identification after the coup remained stable, which was significantly different from the decrease in identification after the coup among Turkish immigrants who self-identified as ethnic minority. This specific finding aligns with the foundation of rally effects (Lambert et al., 2011) and social identity theory, suggesting that group members who strongly identify with their group will maintain or even strengthen their attachment when confronted with a threat to the group (Branscombe et al., 1999). While it was anticipated that identification would become more positive after the attempted coup, this study

demonstrates that, in the context of migration where classical assimilation theories predict a gradual decrease in attachments to the country of origin with increasing length of stay in the new society, a threatening event to the country of origin can halt this process for those who already had a stronger sense of country-of-origin identification prior to the threatening event. At the same time, we found convincing evidence for this only comparing immigrants identifying as majority Turks versus minority Turks, and not among others, such as more religious migrants, those identifying as Sunni Muslims or AKP/MHP-supporters before migration, for who the effects were (just) not significantly different from their counterparts.

This study aligns with the broader understanding that when studying immigrants, the role of the home country is central. This notion has been proposed not only in the transnationalism literature (Engbersen et al., 2014) but also in the voting literature, which increasingly emphasizes the interest in voting both ‘here’ and ‘there’ (Chaudhary, 2018; Mügge et al., 2021). Our study demonstrates that watershed events in the home country have repercussions for immigrant communities, providing further evidence for the significance of home country relations in shaping immigrants’ orientations. While immigrant-receiving countries often stress and discuss the importance of immigrants’ orientation towards the receiving country, this study reveals that not only is orientation towards the country of origin high in the years after immigration, but it is also subject to change depending on developments in the origin country. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize that events in the home country will continue to impact immigrants’ orientation towards the country of origin. This impact may vary among diasporas depending on the extent to which the country-of-origin state engages with the diaspora, offering a promising avenue for future research. The outcomes we study here ideally should be extended to measure that more explicitly capture rallying effects; such as loyalty or support to the President, ruling party and state, even when one disagrees. Only in the third wave of our study, such a measure on loyalty towards Turkey was included. Analysis on that item showed mainly the same divisions in the sample as in identification with Turkey (see [Supplementary Table A1](#)), but for which we, straightforwardly, could not test changes and hence could not test a rally effect.

However, also for changes in the outcomes we did study, we must acknowledge that other events or ongoing changes

during the same period as the attempted coup may have influenced the patterns observed in our study too. The disappointing reactions from the receiving Dutch society towards immigrants in general (Erişen & Kentmen-Cin, 2017) and specifically towards Turkish immigrants' support for Erdogan, expressed, for example, through the obstruction of AKP campaign activities in the Netherlands, may have reinforced orientations towards Turkey among a segment of the Turkish immigrant population. The diaspora engagement policy implemented by the AKP, which even intensified after the coup (Mügge et al., 2021), might have also contributed to changes between wave 2 and wave 3 in our study that differ from those observed between waves 1 and 2. Research designs that follow immigrants over a longer period and collect data more frequently can help disentangle the effects of specific events from more gradual influences originating from both the home and receiving countries. However, such study designs would be costly, and strong incentives, both monetary and non-monetary, are needed to reduce the high panel attrition rates commonly observed and often even stronger among immigrant groups.

Given the current study design, we were unable to examine whether coup effects differ between the established diaspora and the recent immigrants studied here. Additionally, we could not explore whether Turkish immigrants differed in their response to the attempted coup compared to Turks residing in Turkey. Based on our theoretical rationale, we expect that conditional rally effects can also be found among Turks in Turkey. However, some of these effects might be even more pronounced within the diaspora. Since a significant portion of the diaspora experiences a process of weakening orientation towards the country of origin while another part remains strongly attached to their homeland, home country events can be expected to have an even stronger differentiating effect within the diaspora compared to the home-country population. This hypothesis should be examined in future studies. Another relevant avenue for investigation is to study differences between first and second-generation immigrants. Our study focused solely on first-generation immigrants who migrated approximately four years before the attempted coup. Analyzing variations within a potentially more diverse second generation could provide further insights into the conditioning of rally effects. Moreover, the specific characteristics of our sample prevent us from generalizing our findings to the entire Turkish diaspora community in the Netherlands, a substantial portion of which migrated much earlier than the recent immigrants we sampled.

Despite these limitations, by employing hybrid models in this study, we were able to provide insight in how the attempted coup affected Turkish migrants' homeland orientation. The attempted coup in Turkey heightened a strong political orientation towards Turkey, particularly among those who already displayed strong support for the regime right after migration. Its impact on identification with Turkey was small; only among those identifying as Turkish majority, it prevented a further decrease in identification with longer length of stay and widening the gap with those identifying as minority, within the already diverse Turkish diaspora.

Supplementary Data

Supplementary data are available at *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* online.

Funding

The data used in this study are granted under NWO Middelgroot. New Immigrant Survey Netherlands – Longitudinal data collection among recent immigrants to the Netherlands (NIS-2NL) Grant number (420-004).

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