

The Effect of Social Media and News Channels on Public Attitudes Toward Refugees and Migrants in Host Countries: A Multi-Dimensional Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The process of migration and asylum-seeking has always existed throughout history, becoming even more prominent in the past decade. With the popularity of social media and news channels as the most used sources for gathering information and following daily news, the role of these media types has become determining in how refugees and migrants are portrayed and perceived by natives who live in countries that host groups of refugees and migrants. The present study aimed to see how intergroup interaction, direct or indirect, can affect and shape attitudes toward out-groups. Also, since refugees and migrants are sometimes portrayed negatively and as political and economic threats, it can have some consequences on natives' attitudes, especially on natives who have right-wing political affiliations, and have a labor job with job security issues. This study aimed to find relationships between having these attributes and how they perceive refugees and migrants.

This study used a survey method for gathering data, that comprised a total of 221 respondents. This study focused on theoretical foundations such as the contact theory and threat perception theory and formulated four main hypotheses. After conducting the survey, the results indicated that the (positivity in) the sentiment of the direct or indirect interaction can result in more positive attitudes and reduce negative attitudes of natives towards the out-groups. On the other hand, the results also indicated that the increased frequency of portraying refugees and migrants as threats in the media is associated with more negative attitudes. This study also found that native right-wing supporters perceive higher threats from refugees, compared to migrants or both groups combined. Finally, the study found no significant relationship between having a labor job, having job security issues, and perceiving refugees and migrants individually or combined as political and economic threats. This study's findings can help policymakers legislate policies regarding immigration, employment, and social programs regarding refugees and migrants, particularly through better awareness of the in-group and out-group interaction. This study is also valuable for people in the media industry, as it delves deep into the possible impact that news channels and social media can have on forming attitudes and how media can become a determining tool in creating sentiments toward out-groups.

KEYWORDS: *Refugees and migrants, Intergroup interaction, Social media and news channels, Political affiliation, Labor job*

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1. Introduction

Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the number of migrants and refugees fleeing from their countries to mostly developed countries while seeking a better quality of life (Steele & Abdelaaty, 2018, p. 1833). Nowadays, refugees and migrants originate from various backgrounds, highlighting a mix of economic and global issues rather than being limited to a specific ethnicity or country and being distributed all around the globe. Based on the latest statistical data from the UNHCR website, there were 110 million people worldwide until May 2023 who were forced to be displaced which includes people from the Syrian Arab Republic with 6.5 million refugees, Afghanistan with 6.1 million refugees, and Ukraine with 5.9 million refugees (UNHCR, 2023). The process of migration and seeking asylum can be a multi-dimensional phenomenon and its consequences go beyond individual problems, including political, social, and economic dimensions (Brunner & Kuhn, 2014, p. 1; Foged & Peri, 2015, p. 3). These consequences can appear in different forms such as demonstrations against the refugees within host countries and are rooted in the conflicts and tension that arise from the perception of newcomers' imposing on the livelihoods of the host countries' people in various areas, including their job security, cultural differences, and political ideologies (Dinas et al., 2019, p. 244).

Media in general can have a significant impact on shaping people's perceptions and attitudes (Keskin et al., 2020, p. 2). Nowadays, many people hold opinions about refugees, migrants, and the refugee crisis due to extensive media attention and coverage surrounding the issue (Butkus et al., 2016, p. 286). In particular, social media platforms and news channels also have contributed to the shaping of attitudes toward refugees and migrants (Keskin et al., 2020, p. 2; Sutkutė, 2023, p. 3), often through negative portrayal of refugees and migrants, pigeonholing them as threats to security (Keskin et al., 2020, p. 2). In contrast to news, social media provide people with a space where they can share their opinions freely, the totality of which can be characterized as "large-scale public discourse produced spontaneously and in real-time by politically diverse populations" (Uluğ et al., 2023, p. 1). Thus, social media posts can facilitate our understanding of host country residents' viewpoints towards refugees and migrants (Uluğ et al., 2023, p. 1). It is also noteworthy to understand that the negative feelings and reactions of host country people can be worsened in certain situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic when the negative and threatening feelings toward refugees and migrants were increased (Uluğ et al., 2023, p. 2).

According to Dinas et al. (2019), refugees and migrants tend to enter a host country that harbors beneficial features such as "religious or cultural proximity, labor market conditions, and openness toward refugees" (p. 245). During the refugee crisis in Europe, these expectations have been challenged, resulting in an increase in anti-refugee sentiment, often promoted or supported by right-wing political forces (Sutkutė, 2023, p. 2). Consequently, the political landscape of host countries can and has shifted, for one through the changing of party affiliations by host country residents affected by the refugees and migrants entering the host country (Dinas et al., 2019, p. 244). On the other hand,

unlike in the past, nowadays the process of migration and refugees seeking shelter in host countries are completely displayed and shared with the public through the media which results in mediatization (De Coninck et al., 2022, p. 27). Mediatization refers to the politics and policies being associated more with mass media which results in audiences reliant on media to gather information and shape their attitudes (De Coninck et al., 2022, p. 27).

Another significant aspect of refugees and migrants entering a host country is their effect on its labor market and the perception that their presence exacerbates the scarcity of jobs in the host country, thus increasing economic competition and reducing job security (Uluğ et al., 2023, p. 7; Dennison et al., 2018, p. 33). Many reasons explain the negativity towards refugees and migrants regarding the economic aspect such as considering the whole process costly for the country, (Fussell, 2014, as cited in Dennison et al., 2018, p. 33) and blaming the refugees and migrants as the main reason of “stretching the limited resources and services, and increasing competition over jobs” (Uluğ et al., 2023, p. 7). These concerns of negative impact are intensified when given attention and echoed by the media, thus furthering more extreme negativity towards the newcomers such as racism (Van Dijk, 1991, 2000, as cited in Keskin et al., 2020, p. 2). Furthermore, portraying refugees and migrants as potential threats to the economy of the host country and low-skilled people in the media can affect how natives perceive them (Brader et al., 2008, p. 962).

Beyond political and economic dimensions, the dynamics of in-group and out-group interactions within social networks also play a critical role in shaping sentiments towards refugees and migrants. Some evidence demonstrates that non-negative “inter-group interaction may contribute to more positive in-group attitudes towards a particular out-group” (Betts et al., 2023, p. 1). The most effective interactions are the ones where there are shared beliefs and equal or balanced socio-economic conditions (Betts et al., 2023, p. 17). Thus, an investigation into these interactions in both online venues such as social media, and outside of social media can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the host country natives’ perspective and their formation.

All this leads to the research question:

“How and to what extent do social media channels and inter-group interactions affect attitudes towards refugees and migrants?”

And a sub-question: *“To what extent do the political and economic concerns of natives regarding refugees and migrants relate to their political affiliation and economic conditions?”*

1.2. Academic Relevance

There has been extensive research regarding refugees and migrants in different contexts. Most studies regarding refugees and migrants focus on countries where the migrant and refugee population is quite high such as European countries including the Netherlands and Greece, and also non-EU countries such as Turkey, and only focus on that specific region which often neglects the global angle such as studies by Uluğ et al. (2023), Sutkutė (2023), Gönültaş and Mulvey (2023), and Dinas et al. (2019). In this thesis, no specific country or region is selected to focus exclusively, as this thesis opts

for a global sample and data that can be generalized. Furthermore, multiple studies have focused on networks in the context of refugees and migrants such as Betts et al. (2023), Brader et al. (2008), and Riek et al. (2006); however, the comparisons of intergroup interaction both directly and indirectly through social media shaping their attitudes and perspectives towards refugees and migrants has remained under-researched. Moreover, while studying attitude formation regarding refugees and migrants has already received scholarly attention multiple times from different researchers such as Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014) and Dennison et al. (2018), attitude formation regarding refugees and migrants in social media in the context of in-group and out-group effects and the mediating factors such as economic and political concerns can be further investigated.

1.3. Societal Relevance

This study is also significant through its social relevance. The study of refugees and migrants has gained considerable attention and increased in importance, especially in the past few years, as evidenced by the research noted above. Understanding the underlying reasons for positive or negative attitudes that natives might have towards these people is vital as it contributes to social cohesion and shapes a community with mutual understanding between citizens. The outcome of this thesis will be significant for policymakers in legislating policies regarding immigration, employment, and social programs regarding refugees and migrants, particularly through better awareness of the in-group and out-group interaction (Betts et al., 2023, p. 2). This research can also inform or enlighten the media industry, as it delves deep into the possible impact that news channels and social media can have on forming attitudes and how media can become a determining tool in creating both positive and negative sentiments toward out-groups (Sutkutė, 2023, p. 3). Moreover, by exploring the attitude formation in social media towards refugees and migrants, factors contributing to the negative attitudes can be pinpointed and possibly mitigated. Finally, studying refugees and migrants from the economic angle can be fruitful for understanding their impact on the job market, and the overall economy and addressing the way low-skilled natives perceive them to develop policies that can benefit refugees, migrants, and natives.

1.4. Chapter Outline

After the introduction chapter, the theoretical framework chapter explores various theories and past literature to provide a basis for forming hypotheses. In the theoretical framework chapter, theories such as contact theory and threat perception theory are addressed and literature regarding social media, refugees and migrants, intergroup interaction, and political and economic aspects that relate to refugees and migrants are analyzed. Following this chapter, the methodology and research design chapter discusses the chosen method for conducting the thesis, the survey design, the sampling of respondents via the prolific platform, and data analysis. After this, the results chapter reports the primary regression analysis of the survey data, leading to support or rejection of the hypotheses. Finally, the conclusion and discussion chapter discusses the practical and theoretical implications of

the results and also the possible reasons for rejection or support of the hypotheses, limitations of the study, and future research suggestions.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Migrants and Refugees Definition

It is vital to draw a line between the words ‘migrants’ and ‘refugees’, as they portray two different kinds of people. Although in some literature these words are used interchangeably, “migrants” are defined as “people who move by choice rather than to escape conflict or persecution, usually across an international border (‘international migrants’), for instance, to join family members already abroad, to search for a livelihood, or for a range of other purposes” (UNHCR, 2019, para.1). “Refugees” on the other hand are defined as “people forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country. They are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution for who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder.” (UNHCR, 2022, para.1). The differences between a ‘migrant’ and a ‘refugee’ lie in the fact that refugees were forced to flee from their home country, and returning to their country is considered to be hazardous for them, while migrants chose to leave their country without the fear that refugees suffer and have the opportunity to return to their home country when desired (Keskin et al., 2020, p. 1). According to Butkus et al. (2016, p. 287), the factors leading to attitude formation toward these two groups are mostly the same, therefore these factors will be addressed together in this thesis.

2.2. Social Media and News Channels' Effect on the Attitude Formation

With the rise of social media channels, the majority of people gather their daily information through these channels including migrants and refugees (Gintova, 2019, p. 2). These social channels can shape people’s viewpoints regarding social occurrences such as events surrounding migrants and refugees (Sutkutė, 2023, p. 3). Many types of mass media cover information regarding refugees and migrants including “social media platforms (Instagram, X, Facebook) and TV news and broadcast media (TV programs, news, etc.), and print media (newspapers and magazines)”(Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2023, p. 2). However, this thesis only focuses on social media platforms and news channels. recognizing the unique affordances of these platforms in shaping public discourse and attitudes. One of the characteristics that sets social media apart from other types of media is the opportunity for users to create their own content, making the media truly "social" as users both create and collaborate on content (Karahanna et al., 2018, p. 739). Based on this article, social media has given more agency to its users by allowing them to communicate and share their thoughts through comments and sharing their ideas and content freely on social media. It is worth pointing out that social media does not always display truthful and valid information and can increase the flow of biased beliefs and information among its users (Sutkutė, 2023, p. 3).

Nowadays, social media and news channels not only reproduce and shape public opinion and discourse, but they also shape the understanding of social phenomena and their format of truth (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019, p. 23). The observed widespread negative viewpoints and hate speech targeted at refugees and migrants portray the power of these channels in shaping people’s attitudes

(Sutkutè, 2023, p. 3). Furthermore, public opinion about refugees and migrants is not necessarily shaped by real encounters between host country natives and refugees and migrants, it is mostly shaped by how this group is represented in mass media, highlighting the great impact of media on the attitude formation of people (Klingeren et al., 2014, p. 269). Based on De Coninck et al. (2020b, p. 886), refugees and migrants are usually represented negatively in mass media and also portrayed as economic threats to the host country. This negative representation is also believed to appear more in commercial television rather than on public television news channels (Jacobs et al., 2016, p. 645).

The visual feature of media tools also contributes to having a deeper effect on the attitude formation of its audience and users (Keskin et al., 2020, p. 2). Some research has shown that visuals portraying refugees and migrants can trigger stereotypes and strong biases (Kesner et al., 2020, p. 3). For instance, when the image of the dead Syrian child refugee who died while fleeing from Syria appeared on a host of mass media platforms, it portrayed a negative discourse on child refugees (Kesner et al., 2020, p. 3). Child refugees are mainly portrayed as “victims” and are associated with illnesses, poverty, and violence (Akgul Gok & Gökçearsan Çifci, 2017, p. 245). This also suggests that refugees and migrants are pigeonholed in different ways in mass media. Two ways of addressing refugees and migrants in social media are categorizing them as either an “innocent victim” or a “stranger as an intruder” (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019, p. 25). The victim label can imply a positive connotation of people in need and the natives’ humanitarian duty to aid them (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019, p. 25). In contrast, the ‘intruder’ label suggests a negative connotation in its association with threats from which a country’s natives feel the need to protect themselves (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019, p. 25).

Additionally, how refugees and migrants are portrayed in social media and news channels can also be associated with other factors such as media narratives distinguishing host country natives versus refugees and migrants as “us” and “them” (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019, p. 23). The authors state that this can be related to the in-group and out-group effects.

2.3. Positive In-group and Out-group Interaction

Understanding the dynamics of in-group and out-group interaction is essential for comprehending the attitude formation toward migrants and refugees. The positivity or negativity of the interaction between people within a group (in-group people) and the people outside of that group (out-group) emerges from several theoretical perspectives. The positive interaction can be explained by the contact hypothesis proposed by Allport (1954) which enumerates four conditions that must be fulfilled to achieve a positive intergroup interaction and reduce prejudice towards the out-groups. These four conditions consist of having an “equal status between the groups in the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and the support of authorities, law or custom” (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 752). Equal status typically implies equal perceived socioeconomic statuses (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 752). However, achieving these four conditions in the refugee and migrant context can be difficult as they do not have equal status as the natives of the host country (Betts et al., 2023, p. 3).

On the other hand, the presence of all four conditions is not always necessary for achieving a positive relationship between in-group and out-group people (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 767). Natives having more positive personal contact with refugees and migrants can diminish the negative and threatening feelings toward them (Paas & Halapuu, 2012, p. 3; De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 884). Some research claims that having more frequent and positive contact with refugees can yield a better understanding of native people about immigrants and improve acceptance of their differences and consequently improve acceptance of their presence (Halla et al., 2017, p. 1342). It is vital to note that the quality of the contact has a deeper impact on attitude formation than the quantity of the contact, making rich and close friendships with the out-group valuable for determining the condition of the contact (De Coninck et al., 2020a, p. 884). Furthermore, this positive contact can occur directly (being physically in contact with refugees and migrants) or indirectly (being in contact with migrants and refugees through news channels and social media).

People raised in a diverse environment having close and direct contact with out-groups, in general, tend to have more positive attitudes toward migrants and refugees (De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 884). Additionally, the authors state that countries with high populations of refugees and immigrants are less prejudiced toward refugees and migrants. This manifests through “positive interethnic friendships and social interactions in neighborhoods with ethnic diversity” (McKenna et al., 2018, as cited in De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 884). Conversely, people in countries where the national identity is based on ethnicity, and where diversity is less present or valued, are less likely to support immigration compared to those in countries where diversity is more present (Dennison et al., 2018, p. 35). Thus, personal and close experiences with out-groups, like refugees and migrants, can potentially override negative media portrayals, since positive contact can foster positive attitudes which make the host country’s natives more resistant to media influence (Schemer & Meltzer, 2019, p. 235). The authors further state that media effects are stronger among those who lack direct experiences and contact and whose attitudes are less stable and more prone to change.

Alongside direct contact, indirect contact or exposure - which can be facilitated through mass media such as news channels and social media - plays an important role in indicating the quality of the contact and can be more influential than face-to-face contact (De Coninck et al., 2020a, p. 219). This form of contact simulates contact between different groups of people that they do not meet in regular everyday life (Joyce & Harwood, 2014, as cited in Schemer & Meltzer, 2019, p. 233). One could argue that this form is ‘parasocial contact’ which is when “people observe members of an outgroup in the media”, or a ‘vicarious contact’ which is “observing ingroup members in contact or interacting with members of an outgroup” (Schemer & Meltzer, 2019, p. 233). Regarding parasocial contact, it is believed to be effective in reducing prejudice towards the out-group when people are exposed to them through media (Schemer & Meltzer, 2019, p. 233). The authors state that media audiences may also witness positive interactions through vicarious contacts, such as citizens from a welcoming country engaging with refugees, which can further influence attitudes towards refugees.

Another example can be by showing in-group people visuals that demonstrate refugees and migrants participating in everyday human activities or prompted to recall shared childhood experiences; their attitudes towards immigration tend to become more positive (Dennison et al., 2018, p. 38). In other words, observing successful intergroup interactions in the media can lead to improved attitudes, suggesting that real-life intergroup contact can be also beneficial (Schemer & Meltzer, 2019, p. 234).

2.4. Negative In-group and Out-group Interaction

Negative feelings can be more easily fostered when there is no close contact between the in-group and out-group ones (Paas & Halapuu, 2012, p. 3). A plethora of studies have shown that in many situations negative direct or indirect contact outweighs positive interaction (e.g., Schemer & Meltzer, 2019, p. 232; Barlow et al., 2012, p. 1630). Unlike the contact theory that proposes contact can lead to positive interaction between in-groups and out-groups, the perceived threat theory proposes the opposite by raising conflict between groups (De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 883). Threat perception can be defined as anticipation of adverse outcomes and damage arising from out-group members directed toward or otherwise impacting those within the in-group (Riek et al., 2006, p. 336). Moreover, negative stereotypes and biases towards out-group people can also increase the threat intergroup members perceive (Stephan et al., 2002, p. 1244). According to the intergroup threat theory, realistic and symbolic threats can shape discriminated attitudes towards refugees and migrants as they are perceived as a threat to society (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2023, p. 2).

Realistic threats consist of “threats to the very existence of the ingroup (e.g., through warfare), threats to the political and economic power of the ingroup, and threats to the physical or material well-being of the ingroup (e.g., their health)” (Stephan et al., 2002, p. 1243). In contrast, symbolic threats include “perceived group differences in morals, values, standards, beliefs, and attitudes” (Stephan et al., 2002, p. 1243). Both of these threats target out-groups which typically include refugees and migrants (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2023, p. 2). The significance of economic, cultural, and security concerns regarding refugees continue to grow within host communities as these concerns strengthen the perspectives of individuals who tend to view out-groups as a potential threat (Çirakoglu et al., 2020, p. 2985). There is also evidence that both realistic and symbolic threats can have a negative impact on attitude formation (De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 884).

Research has shown that having a negative direct interaction with out-groups can result in negative attitudes toward them (Barlow et al., 2012, p. 1630; De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 883). Terroristic attacks, for instance, can have a profound effect on the host country's citizens especially the families as they can become more concerned about social alterations and the presence of refugees and migrants in their country (Dennison et al., 2018, p. 36). The authors further explain that negative impressions, adverse stereotypes, and damaging experiences tend to be more memorable and impactful than their positive equivalents, emphasizing the power of negative interactions. Other examples can include associating refugees and migrants with illegal actions, diseases, and robberies as a result of being directly influenced by them (Çirakoglu et al., 2020, p. 2985). This also challenges the

contact theory which suggests that close contact will lead to positive attitudes, while based on the threat perception theory, more contact leads to feeling more threatened by out-groups (De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 884). This further emphasizes the importance of the quality over the quantity of the direct contact which needs to be positive to result in positive attitudes toward the out-groups since multiple negative contacts cannot lead to positive attitudes (De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 222).

Direct and close contact with out-groups may not always be feasible, whereas indirect contact through social media and news channels is more likely to occur in everyday life. Additionally, in the absence of face-to-face contact, the role of media in shaping attitudes becomes more significant (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2023, p. 7). According to Sutkutė (2023, p. 3), the perception of threat can be intensified through news and social media channels. Some researchers suggest that how refugees and migrants are portrayed in social media and news channels can vindicate the plight of refugees and migrants, but also exacerbate vindictiveness and resentment in natives towards refugees and migrants especially when they are portrayed, and perceived as threats (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2023, p. 3). Refugees and migrants, as people who are considered out-groups can be represented negatively in different ways in media. Being represented as poor people and desperate for help, the host country's natives can label them as threats to their society (Çirakoglu et al., 2020, p. 2986). Regarding negatively depicted parasocial contact in media, in-groups often shape negative attitudes toward out-groups (Schemer & Meltzer, 2019, p. 233). Thus, a negative parasocial contact is often more common in media than a positive one, framing refugees and migrants as out-groups who are culprits or terrorists and also a threat to the economy and culture of the host country (Schemer & Meltzer, 2019, p. 233; De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 886), which would lead to the expectation that consuming negative news is associated with negative attitudes toward out-groups (Eberl et al., 2018, p. 210).

From the above discussions, these hypotheses can be posed:

H1a: *The sentiment of direct interaction between in-group people and out-group ones, is positively associated with the positive attitudes in-group members (natives) have about out-groups (i.e. refugees/ migrants).*

H1b: *The sentiment of indirect interaction through social media and exposure through news channels between in-group people and out-group ones, is positively associated with the positive attitudes in-group members (natives) have about out-groups (i.e. refugees/ migrants).*

H2a: *The (positivity in) sentiment of direct interaction between in-group people and out-group ones is negatively associated with higher negative attitudes and the consumption of media that portray out-groups as threats is positively associated with the negative attitudes in-group members (natives) have about out-groups (i.e. refugees/ migrants).*

H2b: *The (positivity in) sentiment of indirect interaction between in-group people and out-group ones is negatively associated with higher negative attitudes and the consumption of media that*

portray out-groups as threats is positively associated with the negative attitudes in-group members (natives) have about out-groups (i.e. refugees/ migrants).

2.5. Effect of Migrants and Refugees on Political Attitudes of Host Country Natives

With the flow of refugees and migrants to European countries, the number of native people in these countries who started supporting far-right-wing political parties has increased (Halla et al., 2017, p. 1342). In some cases, the arrival of refugees and migrants to the host country has intensified the political unrest and flamed the hatred and racism towards these out-groups (Uluğ et al., 2023, p. 3). Consequently, antipathy towards refugees and migrants and anti-immigration attitudes can increase the support for right-wing political parties as these parties have anti-immigration policies (Halla et al., 2017, p. 1342). One of the potential reasons for supporting right-wing parties can be the lack of general trust in government and policies regarding their oversight of refugees and migrants entering a host country (Paas & Halapuu, 2012, p. 7). Moreover, right-wing parties are transparent about their principles and anti-immigration attitudes and focus mostly on national identity and values which can be appealing to some host countries' natives (Algan et al., 2018, p. 1). That is, in addition to their clear anti-immigration policies, right-wing parties also aim to “safeguard the nation’s majority culture and to keep the nation as ethnically homogenous as possible” (Rydgren, 2017, p. 485; Steele & Abdelaaty, 2018, p. 1833). Research has also shown the converse: having negative attitudes toward refugees and migrants is less common among people with liberalist political viewpoints (De Coninck et al., 2020a, p. 222).

Throughout these developments, social media and news channels play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward refugees and migrants, with portrayals in media influencing political sentiments (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014, p. 233). The effect of media on the political beliefs of natives can be stronger in countries where immigration is a prominent sociopolitical and socioeconomic issue (Dennison et al., 2018, p. 39). It is believed that portraying ethnic minorities negatively in media can trigger negative political attitudes toward these groups of people (Schemer, 2013, p. 531). The attention to social and economic diversity by the media can be followed by negative attitudes toward refugees and migrants for those natives who value tradition and conformity. Additionally, individuals who feel marginalized by the political system and feel that they do not have a voice in the political process, tend to point their frustration at refugees and migrants and therefore support political parties who share their anti-immigrant and refugee sentiments (Rustenbach, 2010, p. 57). Furthermore, the size of the refugee and migrant population in the host country can also influence political attitudes, with a larger population potentially lowering political tolerance and increasing anti-immigrant feelings among natives (Paas & Halapuu, 2012, p. 4). This interaction between media, political beliefs, and demographic factors can be found in countries where immigration is a recently emerging political issue (Paas & Halapuu, 2012, p. 4).

Sometimes political parties exaggerate the volume of migrants and refugees arriving in their countries and their impact on political and economic aspects, to gain more votes and followers (Roza

& Vargas, 2021, p. 2). This tactic also leads to increased support for right-wing parties, as voters become more concerned about the effects of migration. By intensifying fears and concerns about migration, these parties aim to gain an advantage over their rivals and attract more followers and voters (Rozo & Vargas, 2021, p. 2). In some cases, people who were not opposed to immigration policies in the first place can become against them due to the manner in which they are presented by political parties (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014, p. 238). While left-wing parties such as liberals occasionally foster anti-immigrant and refugee ideologies and become more supportive of strict immigration policies if these are addressed as a “national security threat” (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014, p. 238). The prevailing trend is right-wing parties’ anti-immigration positions and influencing opinions of natives sharing concerns over newcomers. This can demonstrate the power of politicians regarding issues such as migration and it highlights how right-wing parties can affect people’s opinions. For the scope of this thesis, the linkage to political parties is reframed to that of political affiliation. This leads to the third hypothesis:

H3: *Perceived political and economic threats from refugees and migrants will be higher for those natives who have right-wing political affiliations.*

2.6. Effect of Out-groups on Native Workers' Status and Job Competition

“Refugees are portrayed as economic migrants of dubious status, exploiting the social security system, lazy people, and dependents of the state.” (Sutkutė, 2023, p. 23). As implied before, the flow of refugees and migrants also carries negative perceived impacts on a host country’s economy and the job market, a narrative that receives much political attention, especially from the right (Steele & Abdelaaty, 2018, p. 1834). Refugees and migrants arriving from a poor country can represent a threat to the host country’s economy since natives perceive them as an economic burden but also as an invasive workforce that will compete over jobs with the host country’s natives (Brader et al., 2008, p. 962). A study conducted by Scheve and Slaughter (2001, p. 144) demonstrated that regarding the competitive job market, less-skilled workers tend to prefer limits on the number of migrants entering their country. The reason for this lies in the fact that refugees and migrants are portrayed as low-skilled workers who will compete with low-skilled natives for low-skilled job opportunities (Rustenbach, 2010, p. 59). Further research has also found that people with low-skilled jobs and lower levels of education tend to be less tolerant towards the presence of refugees and migrants and have negative attitudes toward them (Paas & Halapuu, 2012, p. 3; Barone et al., 2016, p. 5). The perception of economic competition can also exist at the national level, across the sociopolitical spectrum, when there is high unemployment, resulting in an overall sense of a competitive labor market and further negative attitudes toward the admission of refugees and migrants (Rustenbach, 2010, p. 59). Still, economic competition is more relevant to segments of a host country’s population for people who feel their job security and opportunities are threatened by migrants and refugees entering their country (Butkus et al., 2016, p. 287).

Unsurprisingly, negative attitudes toward refugees and migrants regarding job competition and economic factors are more prevalent in poor countries than in richer ones (Paas & Halapuu, 2012, p. 3). Another distinguishing perspective lies in how the host country's natives evaluate themselves and their skills (i.e. their skill class) and how new competition will affect their wages and jobs, compared to the skills of the refugees and migrants (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014, p. 227). Specifically, an influx of low-skilled immigrants may hinder job opportunities and wages for low-skilled native workers while benefiting high-skilled native workers. Conversely, an influx of high-skilled immigrants may be beneficial and can improve wages for low-skilled native workers. But in most countries, the natives can become intolerant of refugees and migrants since they believe that refugees and migrants are the main cause of their problems such as “stretching the limited resources and service, increasing competition over jobs, and fueling unsocial behavior” (Uluğ et al., 2023, p. 7).

The media, and not just right-wing media, can also stoke the fear of job competition by portraying refugees and migrants as socioeconomic threats to the natives of a country. They can be portrayed negatively as being linked to criminal activities or as willing to accept lower wages, which in turn are believed to diminish the earning potential of native workers (Uluğ et al., 2023, p. 3). Thus, the further portrayal by the media of refugees and migrants as threats to scarce resources and jobs can worsen attitudes toward them, particularly in countries where economic problems exist and the number of refugees and migrants is high (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2023, p. 2). Overall, people tend to be more negative about immigrants when they feel pessimistic about their own financial status (Dennison et al., 2018, p. 33). Moreover, national economic recession, high unemployment rates, and referring to migration as a costly burden for the country can cause anti-migration attitudes (Dennison et al., 2018, p. 33). This leads to the formation of the fourth hypothesis:

H4: *Perceived political and economic threats from refugees and migrants will be higher for those natives with lesser-skilled or labor jobs and job security issues.*

3. Methodology

3.1. Quantitative Method

The chosen method for this thesis is a quantitative method to collect the data and conduct the analysis. The reason for choosing this method can be justified by describing quantitative research. Based on Meadows (2003, p. 520), the quantitative method allows the researcher to delve deep into details of issues that need deeper analysis and also ease the process of generalizing the results as the gathered data are statistical numbers. Pointing out the nature of the research question of this thesis, the quantitative method is fruitful since an investigation into the research question considers potential causal effects and measures the relationship between variables, such as social media channels and attitude formation about refugees and migrants. Furthermore, a quantitative method is useful as it can be used when the form of the research is deductive, based on past theories and literature, and aims to answer the research question by testing the hypotheses (Fallon, 2016, p. 3). Thus, the quantitative approach is a well-suited methodology for investigating the research questions and achieving the objectives of the research.

The quantitative data was gathered using a survey. A survey harbors a host of advantages, such as providing representative data to a varying extent, and can be an effective method in data collection of sensitive data (Meadows, 2003, p. 521). Since it is not feasible to gain access to the entirety of a population, a survey is an appropriate method to gather information from a sample of the population which ideally could be representative of the whole population (Davies, 2020, p. 11). Specifically, an online survey was published since it is less time-consuming for both the researcher and respondents than traditional paper surveys and can also guarantee the respondents' anonymity (Davies, 2020, p. 12). Additionally, Davies states that online surveys can ease the data analysis process compared to traditional paper-based surveys. Therefore, the choice of an online survey aligns with the research objectives and ensures the collection of representative data for in-depth analysis and interpretation.

3.2. Sampling

This thesis uses one type of sampling method which is non-probability sampling. In non-probability sampling certain respondents are approached by the researcher; therefore, not everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected (Berndt, 2020, p. 224). This thesis employs convenience sampling which involves choosing participants from a group of people who are willing to participate in the study. Specifically, snowball sampling is employed which entails reaching a broader network by asking participants to share the survey with people they know (Berndt, 2020, p. 226). The link to the survey was distributed among friends and family and they were asked to share it within their social network and the survey was also shared on the researcher's Instagram page to gain more respondents. Furthermore, the population this thesis aims to reach is a global sample, meaning there will be no preference for any specific country, gender, or age in respondents. A global sample

can further expose regional variations and differences between countries regarding the research question. To achieve this goal of a more global and more representative sample, the online crowdsourcing platform “Prolific” was used to distribute the survey to reach a sufficient number of respondents. This tool allows the researcher to gather data from all around the globe in a short period. Participants who filled out the survey from Prolific also received a small amount of money in return for their participation. The total sample size was $N = 221$.

3.3. Operationalization

Following the sampling procedure, different measures were chosen for measuring different variables. Since the methodology employed in this thesis involves a survey, it is necessary to operationalize the concepts using different scales. These scales have been subtly modified to suit the requirements of this research. Furthermore, although the terms “migrants” and “refugees” are addressed together in the survey, they are divided throughout the survey since these terms can evoke different connotations for people and can lead to distinct results. The ordering of variables discussed here mirrors the order in which they appear in the survey. Appendix B contains the full survey.

3.4. Demographics, News consumption, etc

The survey starts with demographic questions and some news consumption and attitudinal questions. These questions ask the participants about the frequency of encountering news about refugees and migrants on social media and news channels which ranges from never (1) to always (7). Then, participants are asked about whether they associate refugees and migrants with threats (cultural, political, and economic). The answer options for these questions are the same as the previous one. Additionally, participants are asked about the channel in which they consume their news from. This is followed by general demographics such as participants’ highest level of education, age, gender, country of origin, country of residence, job, and political affiliation (left-wing, centrist, and right-wing). Then, they are asked whether they consider their job, a “labor job”, or whether their race or nationality is the same as the majority of their residence country, or whether they consider themselves a “refugee” or a “migrant”.

3.5. Positive and Negative Interaction Scales

This section of the survey starts by asking participants whether they ever had direct or indirect interactions with refugees and migrants. Questions regarding the frequency of interaction between natives and refugees/migrants were added to the survey with a clear distinction between positive and negative interactions to measure H1. This concept was measured using the scale provided by Berry and Hansen (1996), which is an 8-point Likert scale with answers that range from not at all (1) to very much (8). There were 11 items in the original scale that measured the extent of both positivity (or negativity) of these interactions by asking the participants to indicate the extent of sentiment in these items, some of which indicate positivity, and others negativity, in interactions. Choosing one of the first four options (Not at all (1), slightly (2), somewhat (3), moderately (4)) indicated the opposing sentiment valence of an item while choosing the last four options (Considerably (5), very (6),

extremely (7), very much (8)) supported the valence of the item. These items included for example “The extent to which the interaction was satisfying” or “The extent to which the interaction was forced, strained, and awkward” (Berry & Hansen, 1996, p. 798). To make the survey length less taxing on respondents, only 5 items were included. This scale was used twice, separately for refugees and migrants, and analyzed separately. Moreover, the scale was also separated for direct and indirect interaction and measured separately. The negative items in the scale were reversed so that a higher value indicated more positivity in the interaction.

3.6. Attitudes Toward Refugees and Migrants Scale

The concept of ‘attitudes towards refugees and migrants’ was measured by the scale generated by Stephan et al. (1999) which is about attitudes toward an out-group. The items in this scale included 12 items that asked the participants to “Indicate the degree to which they felt 12 different evaluative and emotional reactions toward immigrants on a 10-point scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely)” (Stephan et al., 1999, p. 2225). The wording of the items was adjusted to fit the migrant and refugee context. The items included in the survey include hospitality, disliking, acceptance, superiority, affection, approval, hatred, sympathy, and rejection. This scale was used to measure refugees and migrants separately. Later in the analysis, this scale was divided into two separate scales of positive and negative aggregated attitude variables based on the factor analysis results. Moreover, this scale was used twice, separately for refugees and migrants, and analyzed separately. The negative items in the positive attitude scale were reversed while the negative items in the negative attitudes were not reversed so that more interaction indicated a more negative attitude.

3.7. In-group Attitudes Toward Out-group Scale

For measuring overall in-group and out-group attitudes to supplement analysis into H1, the intergroup anxiety scale formulated by Stephan and Stephan (1985) was used. This scale has 12 items asking participants (in-groups) about their feelings about out-group members who are of different racial groups than themselves. Using this scale was vital as it captured the attitudes of natives who perhaps have double nationalities (e.g. a half Turkish-half Dutch native) who might feel empathetic towards refugees and migrants who share the same nationality as them (e.g. Turkish refugees or migrants). At the same time, these questions provided insights into natives' attitudes toward refugees and migrants who do not share the same nationality as the natives. The items included in the survey include being uncertain, worried, anxious, threatened, comfortable, trusting, friendly, confident, and safe. The answer option for this 10-point Likert-type scale ranged from “not at all” to “extremely”. Later in the analysis, this scale was divided into two separate scales of positive and negative aggregated attitude variables based on the factor analysis results. Moreover, this scale was used twice, separately for refugees with different nationalities and migrants with different nationalities, and analyzed separately.

3.8. Job Security Scale

Based on the previous research by Kuhnert and Palmer (1991), one of the sub-scales of the job security scale, “job permanence”, is used to measure whether host country natives feel their job security is at risk because of external factors. This sub-scale also measures the extent to which employees believe their job will continue in a specific organization (Kuhnert & Palmer, 1991, p. 190). Items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, in which a high value equals high job security. For instance, items include “I’m not sure how long my job will last” or “I am afraid of losing my job” (p.190). The original items in the scale measured both job security and insecurity; therefore, the insecurity items were reverse scored for aggregating the scale into a variable.

3.9. Threat Perception Scale

For measuring the political and economic concerns of natives regarding the refugees and migrants' presence in their country, a question asking the respondents about their jobs and if they consider their jobs to be a ‘labor job’ is present in the survey. Also, the perceived threat perception generated by Stephan et al. (1999) is used which included 15 items that measure the realistic and symbolic threats which include political and economic aspects. Symbolic threats refer mostly to the values and attitudes that contradict the natives’ attitudes (Stephan et al., 1999, p. 2222). In contrast, realistic threats refer to “competition for scarce resources, such as territory, wealth, or natural resources” (Stephan et al., 1999, p. 2222). Items include statements such as “Immigrants get more from this country than they contribute” or “Immigrants are not displacing American workers from their jobs” (p. 2237). Since some of these items were irrelevant to political and economic aspects, only 6 of them were included in the survey. The original scale is generated for Asian immigrants migrating to America; therefore, the items needed to be altered into refugees/migrants and native people in general. The answer option for this 10-point Likert-type scale ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This scale was used three times for refugees, migrants, and both groups combined, and analyzed separately.

3.10. Pre-test

After finalizing the final design of the survey, a pre-test was conducted to test the quality of the questions and their clarity among peers and friends to ensure that participants understood the questions without any ambiguity and to ask for their opinions to improve and detect the nuanced details of the survey. The draft version of the survey was sent to 6 people in total which were sampled through convenience sampling. After the pre-test, some changes were applied to the survey and then the final version of it was ready to be published on April 29th.

3.11. Survey Procedure

The total sample size of $N=221$ was gathered using both convenience and snowball sampling. The data collection procedure started on the 29th of April and finished on the 2nd of May. Apart from the 221 respondents, a total number of 10 respondents were omitted from the analysis as they had not completed the survey or they had given unqualified answers. The online survey was created on and

hosted through Qualtrics which is an online platform for creating and distributing surveys. Using the Qualtrics tool, the researcher has access to several options and can easily examine the gathered responses and evaluate their quality. Qualtrics also allows the researcher to display the survey in languages besides English to gather data among certain non-English speaking communities. As the survey was also distributed among families and friends of the researcher, a Persian language version of the survey was also deployed to gather more accurate responses from people who are not fluent in English. Since the base language of the survey was English, the data gathered in Persian was automatically translated and submitted in English in Qualtrics. The estimated time of completion of the survey comprising 32 questions was 5 to 8 minutes. The questions format varied from multiple choices to matrix tables.

3.12. Ethical Considerations

The survey began with an informed consent form and a brief description of the aim of the study. The consent form explained how ethical considerations were also taken into account when gathering data. In this form, respondents were assured that their contribution would remain anonymous and their data would be only used for the sake of this master thesis. Additionally, they were told that their participation was completely voluntary, that they could withdraw whenever they desired, and that there was no risk or discomfort associated with completing the survey. Furthermore, the survey began by asking demographic questions and ended with questions that measured variables. At the end of the survey, a question was asked the participant about whether they were thinking about the general immigrant population rather than refugees and migrants individually while filling out the survey. This distinction check question helped the researcher to understand whether respondents made a distinction between refugees and migrants, or if they addressed them the same.

3.13. Data Analysis

The survey data was analyzed using SPSS version 29. Using this program, different kinds of tests can be used to analyze the data. The first approach was to look at descriptive statistics as it would provide some key basic information about the results. Following this step, a factor analysis was conducted for each scale followed by a series of multiple regressions which was used to answer the hypotheses that spanned the effect of social media, in-group and out-group interaction, and political and economic concerns on the attitude formation of natives toward refugees and migrants, job security, and having right-wing political affiliation. One point of note is that participants who referred to themselves as refugees or migrants were filtered out of the hypothesis testing reporting in results and only natives were included.

3.14. Validity and Reliability

Validity is an important part of the research. According to Meadows (2003), validity can be explained by “confidence that we are measuring what we think we are; the accuracy of our results. Do the results reflect what is happening or are they due to something else?” (p.524). Validity can be improved by using pre-tested scales which have been demonstrated to be valid. Therefore, the

practicality and usefulness of the chosen scale must have been approved over time and in different research (Meadows, 2003, p. 525). To reach validity in research, the chosen scales must be able to distinguish between different stages of a measured item (Meadows, 2003, p. 525). The scales that are used in this thesis have been generated by researchers and used in multiple studies, therefore they are considered valid scales.

Furthermore, reliability in research points out the precision and consistency in data measurement that can be reproduced by another researcher (Meadows, 2003, p. 524). In quantitative research surveys, the chosen scales must be reliable tools for measuring the chosen concepts. The reason is that items in chosen scales need to correlate with each other. Therefore, conducting a reliability analysis is the most important step in determining the reliability of the chosen scales (Meadows, 2003, p. 524). A reliability analysis is a statistical method that can be conducted through SPSS to ensure the consistency of the measurements. By conducting this, the consistency of the items in the scale is evaluated to determine if they measure what they should. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha, which is a statistical measure, aids the process by assessing the reliability of the scale items. After the factor analysis, the reliability analysis of all scales was conducted to achieve Cronbach's alpha, presented in Table 1. This table shows the Cronbach's alphas for the scales from the data collection.

Table 3.1. Cronbach's alpha reliability tests

Item	Cronbach's alpha
Positive and non-negative (negativity reversed) interaction	.924
Attitudes toward refugees and migrants	.791
In-group attitudes toward out-group (intergroup anxiety)	.945
Job security	.729
Threat perception	.870

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Before testing the hypothesis, the descriptive statistics about the demographic questions in the survey are presented to understand the diversity in the sample. The total sample size of the survey was $N = 221$. The sample's age range varied from 18 to 78 years old, and the average age was 31.55 ($SD = 11.84$). The sample consisted of ($N = 91$, 41.2%) male respondents, but the majority comprised ($N = 127$, 57.5%) female respondents, ($N = 2$, 0.9%) non-binary/third gender, and ($N = 1$, 0.5%) preferred not to say their gender. Since the number of non-binary/third-gender was low, for analysis involving gender, this category was valued as 0 for the created binary indicator called *IsFemale* for the regressions; the indicator takes on a value of 1 for respondents who indicated their gender was female. The country of origin of the sample was distributed among 41 countries in the world with the plurality of respondents from Iran (16.3%), followed by the United Kingdom (14%), and Portugal (11.3%). On the other hand, the country of residence of the sample was distributed among 30 countries with the Netherlands being the most (18.1%), followed by the United Kingdom (14.9%), and Portugal (11.3%). The number of samples who have the same nationality as the majority in their country is ($N = 170$, 76.9%), described as natives. The most frequent educational level of the sample was a Bachelor's degree (48.4%), followed by a Master's degree (26.7%), and high school graduate (22.6%). Regarding the news channels that the sample mostly consumed, news channels on TV (62.9%) were the most used channel, followed by Instagram (59.3%), YouTube (41.2%), Twitter/X (40.7%), Facebook (38.5%), and Audio (28.1%).

The political affiliations of the respondents were mostly centrist and moderate (34.4%), Left-wing (31.2%), none of the above-mentioned (14.5%), prefer not to say (10.4), and Right-wing (9.5%). For the regression analysis involving this variable, only participants who had right-wing political affiliation was included in those analyses. The respondents who considered themselves refugees were only $N = 3$ (1.4%), while the respondents who considered themselves migrants were $N = 45$ (20.4%). The number of respondents who did not consider their job to be a labor job was $N = 159$ (71.9), while only $N = 5$ (2.2%) considered their job to be a labor job. Regarding the frequency of consuming news about refugees, $N = 70$ (31.7%) stated 'sometimes consume news', $N = 46$ (20.8%) 'occasionally consume news', and $N = 39$ (17.6) 'rarely consume news'. Furthermore, $N = 64$ (29%) of participants 'sometimes consume news about migrants', followed by $N = 47$ (21.3%) 'occasionally', and $N = 41$ (18.6%) 'frequently'. Regarding the respondents who consume news that portrays refugees as a threat to their values, $N = 54$ (24.4%) responded 'rarely', $N = 52$, (23.5%) responded 'sometimes', and $N = 46$ (20.8%) responded 'occasionally'. Moreover, regarding the participants who consume news that portrays migrants as a threat to their values, $N = 57$ (25.8%) responded 'sometimes', $N = 50$ (22.6%) responded 'rarely', and $N = 42$ (19%) responded 'occasionally'. Also, $N = 52$ (23.5%) participants responded that the news they consume sometimes portrays refugees as a threat to the host country's

economy, $N = 47$ (21.3%) responded 'rarely', and $N = 42$ (19%) responded 'occasionally'. Moreover, $N = 56$ (25.3%) participants responded that the news they consume 'rarely portrays migrants as a threat to the host country's economy', $N = 39$ (17.6%) responded 'frequently', and $N = 37$ (16.7%) responded 'often'. Finally, natives who indicated they had direct contact with a refugee or a migrant were $N = 133$ (76.4%), and natives who indicated they had indirect contact with a refugee or a migrant were $N = 83$ (47.7%).

4.2. Factor Analysis of Scales

4.2.1. Attitudes Toward Refugees

The 9 items were entered into an exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with oblique rotation (direct oblimin) based on Eigenvalues (> 1.00), $KMO = .88$, $\chi^2 (N = 221, 36) = 1122.23$, $p < .001$. The $KMO > .60$ and the significance of the Bartlett Sphericity test indicate an adequate model; this applies to all the factor analyses below in this subsection. The resultant model explained 70.5% of the variance in attitudes toward refugees. Factor loadings of individual items onto the two factors found are presented in Appendix A.

Positive attitudes toward refugees: The first factor includes 5 items which consist of approval, affection, hospitality, acceptance, and sympathy.

Negative attitudes toward refugees: The second factor includes 4 items which consist of hatred, rejection, superiority, and dislike.

4.2.2. Attitudes Toward Migrants

The 9 items were also entered into an exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with oblique rotation (direct oblimin) based on Eigenvalues (> 1.00), $KMO = .86$, $\chi^2 (N = 221, 36) = 1114.18$, $p < .001$. The resultant model explained 71% of the variance in attitudes toward migrants. Factor loadings of individual items onto the two factors found are presented in Appendix A.

Positive attitudes toward migrants: The first factor includes 5 items which consist of approval, affection, hospitality, acceptance, and sympathy.

Negative attitudes toward migrants: The second factor includes 4 items which consist of hatred, rejection, superiority, and dislike.

4.2.3. Attitudes Toward Refugees With Different Nationalities (In-group Attitudes Toward Out-group Scale)

The 9 items were entered into an exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with oblique rotation (direct oblimin) based on Eigenvalues (> 1.00), $KMO = .89$, $\chi^2 (N = 221, 36) = 1789.21$, $p < .001$. The resultant model explained 81.7% of the variance in attitudes toward refugees with other nationalities. Factor loadings of individual items onto the two factors found are presented in Appendix A.

Positive attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities: The first factor includes 5 items which consist of feeling confident, trusting, friendly, safe, and comfortable.

Negative attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities: The second factor includes 4 items which consist of feeling anxious, worried, threatened, and uncertain.

4.2.4. Attitudes Toward Migrants with Different Nationalities (In-group Attitudes Toward Out-group Scale)

The 9 items were entered into an exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with oblique rotation (direct oblimin) based on Eigenvalues (> 1.00), $KMO = .89$, $\chi^2 (N = 221, 36) = 1913.1$, $p < .001$. The resultant model explained 83.3% of the variance in attitudes toward migrants with other nationalities. Factor loadings of individual items onto the two factors found are presented in Appendix A.

Positive attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities: The first factor includes 5 items which consist of feeling confident, trusting, friendly, safe, and comfortable.

Negative attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities: The second factor includes 4 items which consist of feeling anxious, worried, threatened, and uncertain.

4.2.5. Positive and Negative Direct Interactions With Refugees and Migrants

The 10 items were entered into an exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with oblique rotation (direct oblimin) based on Eigenvalues (> 1.00), $KMO = .75$, $\chi^2 (N = 221, 45) = 932.24$, $p < .001$. The resultant model explained 75.1% of the variance in positive and negative in-group direct interaction with refugees and migrants. Factor loadings of individual items onto the three factors found are presented in Appendix A. Although the factor analysis divided the scale into three different factors, the scale was used as a whole in further analysis since the research aimed to measure both positive and negative interaction at the same time and the found factors did not align with the context of the research and what the hypothesis was aiming to measure.

4.2.6. Positive and Negative Indirect Interactions With Refugees and Migrants

The 10 items were entered into an exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with oblique rotation (direct oblimin) based on Eigenvalues (> 1.00), $KMO = .88$, $\chi^2 (N = 221, 45) = 1295.88$, $p < .001$. The resultant model explained 81.3% of the variance in positive and negative in-group indirect interaction with refugees and migrants. Factor loadings of individual items onto the two factors found are presented in Appendix A. Although the factor analysis divided the scale into two different factors, the scale was used as a whole in further analysis based on the above-mentioned reasons.

4.2.7. Job Security

The 6 items were entered into an exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with oblique rotation (direct oblimin) based on Eigenvalues (> 1.00), $KMO = .73$, $\chi^2 (N = 221, 15) = 262.73$, $p < .001$. The resultant model explained 63% of the variance in job security issues. Factor loadings of individual items onto the two factors found are presented in Appendix A. Although the factor analysis divided the job security scale into two different factors, the scale was used as a

whole in further analysis for two reasons. Firstly, the goal of the research was to analyze the job security variable as a whole variable; thus, breaking it down into two different factors would harm the generalizability of the variable as a whole. Secondly, the identified factors did not align with the context of the research and what the hypothesis was aiming to measure.

4.2.8. Threat Perception Refugees and Migrants

The 12 items were entered into an exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with oblique rotation (direct oblmin) based on fixed factor 2, $KMO = .75$, $\chi^2 (N = 221, 66) = 1280.18$, $p < .001$. The resultant model explained 53% of the variance in the threat perception of refugees and migrants. Factor loadings of individual items onto the two factors found are presented in Appendix A. Although the factor analysis divided the threat perception scale into two different factors, the scale was used as a whole for similar reasons as Job Security above: the goal of the research was to analyze the threat perception variable as a whole. Also, the political and economic threats are embedded in both of these factors and there is not a clear distinction between the political and economic ones as these two correlate closely with each other. Secondly, the identified factors did not align with the context of the research and what the hypothesis was aiming to measure.

Overall, the factor analyses showed no great distinction between the responses for refugees and migrants when the separate scales for these were combined. However, to retain the subtle distinction between these two groups, migrants and refugees were analyzed separately for regression analysis.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

After data cleaning, removing the missing data from the dataset, selecting only natives, and filtering out respondents who believe they are migrants or refugees, the hypotheses were tested individually. Before conducting the multiple regression analysis, a few of the negative items in the scales were reverse-scored so that the scales would have consistent valence ordering. This applies to all scales used in the survey except for the negative attitudes toward out-groups scale which was left un-reversed. The sum of each scale per respondent was computed as the scale's aggregate and used in the tests below, which report standardized regression coefficients.

H1a: The sentiment of direct interaction between in-group people and out-group ones, is positively associated with the positive attitudes in-group members (natives) have about out-groups (i.e. refugees/ migrants).

4.3.1. The Sentiment of Direct Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and In-groups' Positive Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Refugees)

The first hypothesis analyzed the effect of in-group people's (natives) sentiment after having a direct interaction with a refugee on their attitudes toward out-groups (refugees). A multiple linear regression was conducted with positive attitudes (the positivity part of the attitude scale based on the factor analysis labeled as 'PositiveAttitRefugee') toward refugees as the dependent variable. The predictor was a direct interaction with refugees (InteractionDirectRefugee). The model was found to

be significant $F(1, 115) = 104.36, p < .001, R^2 = .476$, so 47.6% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a direct interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups (refugees) was found to be a significant positive predictor of having positive attitudes toward refugees ($b^* = .690, p < .001$). This indicates that the more positive the direct interaction quality is, the more positive the attitudes natives will have. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in positive sentiment from direct interaction confers a 0.690 increase in the standard deviation of the positive attitudes. Thus, part of H1a is supported.

4.3.2. The Sentiment of Direct Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and In-groups' Positive Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Migrants)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with positive attitudes toward migrants as the dependent variable (PositiveAttitMigrant). The predictor was a direct interaction with out-groups (InteractionDirectMigrant). The model was found to be significant $F(1, 139) = 74.12, p < .001, R^2 = .348$, so 35% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a direct interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant positive predictor of having positive attitudes toward migrants ($b^* = .590, p < .001$). This indicates that the more positive the direct interaction quality is, the more positive the attitudes natives will have toward migrants. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in positive sentiment from direct interaction confers a 0.590 increase in the standard deviation of the positive attitudes. Thus, part of H1a is supported.

4.3.3. The Sentiment of Direct Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and In-groups' Positive Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Refugees Who Have a Different Nationality Than the Natives)

This dependent variable focused on refugees who have a different racial group and nationality from the natives who responded (PositiveAttitRefugeeD, where the 'D' indicates 'Different'). For these tests, the dependent variable is the sentiments derived from the out-group/in-group scale. A multiple linear regression was conducted with positive attitudes towards refugees with different nationalities as the dependent variable. The predictor was a direct interaction with refugees (InteractionDirectRefugee). The model was found to be significant $F(1, 115) = 86.46, p < .001, R^2 = .429$, so 43% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a direct interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant positive predictor of having positive attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities ($b^* = .655, p < .001$). This indicates that the more positive the direct interaction quality is, the more positive attitudes natives will have toward refugees of different nationalities. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in positive sentiment from direct interaction confers a 0.655 increase in the standard deviation of the positive attitudes. Thus, part of H1a is supported.

4.3.4. The Sentiment of Direct Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and In-groups' Positive Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Migrants Who Have a Different Nationality Than the Natives)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with positive attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities as the dependent variable (PositiveAttitMigrantD). The predictor was a direct interaction with out-groups (InteractionDirectMigrant). The model was found to be significant $F(1, 139) = 62.40, p < .001, R^2 = .310$, so 31% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a direct interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant positive predictor of having positive attitudes toward migrants ($b^* = .557, p < .001$). This indicates that the more positive the direct interaction quality is, the more positive the attitudes natives will have toward migrants of different nationalities. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in positive sentiment from direct interaction confers a 0.557 increase in the standard deviation of the positive attitudes. Thus, part of H1a is supported.

H1b: *The sentiment of indirect interaction through social media and exposure through news channels between in-group people and out-group ones, is positively associated with the positive attitudes in-group members (natives) have about out-groups (i.e. refugees/ migrants).*

4.3.5. The Sentiment of Indirect Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and In-groups' Positive Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Refugees)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with positive attitudes toward refugees as the dependent variable (PositiveAttitRefugee). The predictor was an indirect interaction with out-groups (InteractionIndirectRefugee). The model was found to be significant $F(1, 96) = 66.56, p < .001, R^2 = .409$, so 41% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having an indirect interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant positive predictor of having positive attitudes toward refugees ($b^* = .640, p < .001$). This indicates that the more positive the indirect interaction quality is, the more positive the attitudes natives will have toward refugees. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in positive sentiment from indirect interaction confers a 0.640 increase in the standard deviation of the positive attitudes. Thus, part of H1b is supported.

4.3.6. The Sentiment of Indirect Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and In-groups' Positive Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Migrants)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with positive attitudes toward migrants as the dependent variable (PositiveAttitMigrant). The predictor was an indirect interaction with out-groups (InteractionIndirectMigrant). The model was found to be significant $F(1, 111) = 84.54, p < .001, R^2 = .432$, so 43.2% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having an indirect interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant positive predictor of having attitudes toward migrants ($b^* = .658, p < .001$). This indicates that the more positive the indirect interaction quality is, the more positive the attitudes natives will

have toward migrants. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in positive sentiment from indirect interaction confers a 0.658 increase in the standard deviation of the positive attitudes. Thus, part of H1b is supported.

4.3.7. The Sentiment of Indirect Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and In-groups’ Positive Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Refugees Who Have a Different Nationality Than the Natives)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with positive attitudes towards refugees with different nationalities as the dependent variable (PositiveAttitRefugeeD). For these tests, the dependent variable is the sentiments derived from the out-group/in-group scale. The predictor was an indirect interaction with refugees (InteractionIndirectRefugee). The model was found to be significant $F(1, 96) = 74.95, p < .001, R^2 = .438$, so 44% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having an indirect interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant positive predictor of having attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities ($b^* = .662, p < .001$). This indicates that the more positive the indirect interaction quality is, the more positive the attitudes natives will have toward refugees of other nationalities. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in positive sentiment from indirect interaction confers a 0.662 increase in the standard deviation of the positive attitudes. Thus, part of H1b is supported.

4.3.8. The Sentiment of Indirect Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and In-groups’ Positive Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Migrants Who Have a Different Nationality Than the Natives)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with positive attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities as the dependent variable (PositiveAttitMigrantD). The predictor was an indirect interaction with out-groups (InteractionIndirectMigrant). The model was found to be significant $F(1, 111) = 59.58, p < .001, R^2 = .349$, so 35% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having an indirect interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant positive predictor of having attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities ($b^* = .591, p < .001$). This indicates that the more positive the indirect interaction quality is, the more positive the attitudes natives will have toward migrants of other nationalities. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in positive sentiment from indirect interaction confers a 0.591 increase in the standard deviation of the positive attitudes. Thus, part of H1b is supported.

Table 4.2. Multiple regression analysis to predict positive attitudes toward refugees and migrants (standardized coefficients)

Predictors	Positive attitude refugee	Positive attitude migrant	Positive attitude refugee with	Positive attitude migrant with
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			different nationality	different nationality
Direct interaction with out-groups	.690***	.590***	.655***	.557***
R^2	.476	.348	.429	.310
N	117	141	117	141
Indirect interaction with out-groups	.640***	.658***	.662***	.591***
R^2	.409	.432	.438	.349
N	98	113	98	113

Note. *** indicates $p < .001$

H2a: *The (positivity in) sentiment of direct interaction between in-group people and out-group ones is negatively associated with higher negative attitudes and the consumption of media that portray out-groups as threats is positively associated with the negative attitudes in-group members (natives) have about out-groups (i.e. refugees/ migrants).*

4.3.9. The Sentiment of Direct Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and Portraying Out-groups as Threats Predicting In-groups' Negative Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Refugees)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with negative attitudes (the negativity part of the attitude scale based on the factor analysis labeled as 'NegativeAttitudeRef') toward refugees as the dependent variable. The predictors were a direct interaction with out-groups (InteractionDirectRefugee) and the frequency of portraying them as threats (FrequencyThreatRefu). The model was found to be significant $F(2, 114) = 16.255, p < .001, R^2 = .222$, so 22.2% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a (more positive) direct interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant negative predictor of having negative attitudes toward refugees ($b^* = -.440, p < .001$), while the frequency of portraying refugees as threats was found a not significant positive predictor of having negative attitudes toward refugees ($b^* = .115, p = .170$).

4.3.10. The Sentiment of Direct Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and Portraying Out-groups as Threats Predicting In-groups' Negative Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Migrants)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with negative attitudes toward migrants (NegativeAttitudeMig) as the dependent variable. The predictors were a direct interaction with out-groups (InteractionDirectMigrant) and the frequency of portraying them as threats

(FrequencyThreatMig). The model was found to be significant $F(2, 138) = 16.76, p < .001, R^2 = .195$, so 19.5% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a direct interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant negative predictor of having negative attitudes toward migrants ($b^* = -.361, p < .001$), and the frequency of portraying migrants as threats was found to be a significant positive predictor of having negative attitudes toward migrants ($b^* = .215, p = .006$).

4.3.11. The Sentiment of Direct Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and Portraying Out-groups as Threats Predicting In-groups' Negative Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Refugees With Different Nationalities)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with negative attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities (NegativeAttitudeRefD) as the dependent variable. The predictors were a direct interaction with out-groups (InteractionDirectRefugee) and the frequency of portraying them as threats (FrequencyThreatRefu). The model was found to be significant $F(2, 114) = 15.28, p < .001, R^2 = .211$, so 21.1% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a direct interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant negative predictor of having negative attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities ($b^* = -.356, p < .001$), and the frequency of portraying out-groups as threats was found to be a significant positive predictor of having negative attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities ($b^* = .243, p = .005$).

4.3.12. The Sentiment of Direct Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and Portraying Out-groups as Threats Predicting In-groups' Negative Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Migrants With Different Nationalities)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with negative attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities (NegativeAttitudeMigD) as the dependent variable. The predictors were a direct interaction with out-groups (InteractionDirectMigrant) and the frequency of portraying them as threats (FrequencyThreatMig). The model was found to be significant $F(2, 138) = 22.97, p < .001, R^2 = .250$, so 25% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a direct interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant negative predictor of having negative attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities ($b^* = -.419, p < .001$), and the frequency of portraying out-groups as threats was found to be a significant positive predictor of having negative attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities ($b^* = .225, p = .003$).

These results partially support H2a. While the (more positive) direct interaction between in-groups and out-groups consistently negatively predicts negative attitudes toward different out-groups, the relationship with the frequency of portraying out-groups as threats is inconsistently significant across different analyses. Thus, it partially supports H2a.

H2b: *The (positivity in) sentiment of indirect interaction between in-group people and out-group ones is negatively associated with higher negative attitudes and the consumption of media that portray out-groups as threats is positively associated with the negative attitudes in-group members (natives) have about out-groups (i.e. refugees/ migrants).*

4.3.13. The Sentiment of Indirect Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and Portraying Out-groups as Threats Predicting In-groups' Negative Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Refugees)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with negative attitudes toward refugees (the negativity part of the attitude scale based on the factor analysis labeled as 'NegativeAttitudeRef') as the dependent variable. The predictors were an indirect interaction with out-groups (InteractionIndirectRefugee) and the frequency of portraying them as threats (FrequencyThreatRefu). The model was found to be significant $F(2, 95) = 12.43, p < .001, R^2 = .208$, so 20.8% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having an indirect interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant negative predictor of having negative attitudes toward refugees ($b^* = -.406, p < .001$), while the frequency of portraying refugees as threats was found to be a weakly significant positive predictor of having negative attitudes toward refugees ($b^* = .153, p < .10$).

4.3.14. The Sentiment of Indirect Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and Portraying Out-groups as Threats Predicting In-groups' Negative Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Migrants)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with negative attitudes toward migrants (NegativeAttitudeMig) as the dependent variable. The predictors were an indirect interaction with out-groups (InteractionIndirectMigrant) and the frequency of portraying them as threats (FrequencyThreatMig). The model was found to be significant $F(2, 110) = 6.65, p = .002, R^2 = .108$, so 10.8% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having an indirect interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant negative predictor of having negative attitudes toward migrants ($b^* = -.248, p = .007$), and the frequency of portraying migrants as threats was found to be a weakly significant positive predictor of having negative attitudes toward migrants ($b^* = .196, p = .032$).

4.3.15. The Sentiment of Indirect Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and Portraying Out-groups as Threats Predicting In-groups' Negative Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Refugees With Different Nationalities)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with negative attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities (NegativeAttitudeRefD) as the dependent variable. The predictors were an indirect interaction with out-groups (InteractionIndirectRefugee) and the frequency of portraying them as threats (FrequencyThreatRefu). The model was found to be significant $F(2, 95) = 13.59, p <$

.001, $R^2 = .222$, so 22.2% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having an indirect interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant negative predictor of having negative attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities ($b^* = -.296, p = .002$), and the frequency of portraying out-groups as threats was found to be a significant positive predictor of having negative attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities ($b^* = .324, p < .001$).

4.3.16. The Sentiment of Indirect Interaction Between In-groups (Natives) and Out-groups and Portraying Out-groups as Threats Predicting In-groups’ Negative Attitudes Toward Out-groups (Migrants With Different Nationalities)

A multiple linear regression was conducted with negative attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities (NegativeAttitudeMigD) as the dependent variable. The predictors were an indirect interaction with out-groups (InteractionIndirectMigrant) and the frequency of portraying them as threats (FrequencyThreatMig). The model was found to be significant $F(2, 110) = 11.63, p < .001, R^2 = .175$, so 17.5% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having an indirect interaction between in-groups (natives) and out-groups was found to be a significant negative predictor of having negative attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities ($b^* = -.341, p < .001$), and the frequency of portraying out-groups as threats was found to be a weakly significant positive predictor of having negative attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities ($b^* = .214, p = .015$).

The results indicate that indirect interactions with out-groups are negatively associated with negative attitudes toward them. Moreover, the results about the frequency of portraying out-groups as threats predict more negative attitudes toward them. Thus, H2b is supported.

Table 4.3. Multiple regression analysis to predict negative attitudes toward refugees and migrants (standardized coefficients)

Predictors	Negative attitude refugee	Negative attitude migrant	Negative attitude refugee with different nationality	Negative attitude migrant with different nationality
Direct interaction with out-groups	-.440***	-.361***	-.356***	-.419***
R^2	.222	.195	.211	.250
N	117	141	117	141
Indirect interaction with out-groups	-.406***	-.248**	-.296**	-.341***
R^2	.208	.108	.222	.175
N	98	113	98	113

Note. ** indicates $p < .01$ *** indicates $p < .001$

Table 4.4. Multiple regression analysis to predict negative attitudes toward refugees and migrants (standardized coefficients)

Predictors	Negative attitude refugee	Negative attitude migrant	Negative attitude refugee with different nationality	Negative attitude migrant with different nationality
Frequency of threat portrayal direct	.115	.215**	.243**	.225**
R^2	.222	.195	.211	.250
N	117	141	117	141
Frequency of threat portrayal indirect	.153 ~	.198 ~	.324***	.214 ~
R^2	.208	.108	.222	.175
N	98	113	98	113

Note. ~ indicates $p < .10$ ** indicates $p < .01$ *** indicates $p < .001$

H3: *Perceived political and economic threats from refugees and migrants will be higher for those natives who have right-wing political affiliations.*

4.3.17. Perceived Political and Economic Threats From Refugees and Having Right-wing Political Affiliation

A multiple linear regression was conducted with perceived political and economic threats from refugees as the dependent variable (ThreatPolEcoRefu). The predictor was having a right-wing political affiliation, which is a binary indicator variable labeled 'IsRight' which the indicator takes on a value of 1 for respondents who indicated their political affiliation is right-wing and 0 otherwise. The model was found to be weakly significant $F(1, 172) = 3.360, p = .069 < .10, R^2 = .019$, so 20% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a right-wing political affiliation was found to be a weakly significant positive predictor of perceived political and economic threats from refugees ($b^* = .138, p < .10$).

4.3.18. Perceived Political and Economic Threats From Migrants and Having Right-wing Political Affiliation

A multiple linear regression was conducted with perceived political and economic threats from migrants as the dependent variable (ThreatPolEcoMig). The predictor was having a right-wing

political affiliation, which is a binary indicator variable labeled ‘IsRight’. The model was found not significant $F(1, 172) = 1.198, p = .275, R^2 = .007$, so 7% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a right-wing political affiliation was found to be a not significant positive predictor of perceived political and economic threats from migrants ($b^* = .083, p = .275$).

4.3.19. Perceived Political and Economic Threats From Refugees And Migrants and Having Right-wing Political Affiliation

This analysis was conducted to analyze the difference in the regression coefficient when threats from migrants and refugees combined in one whole variable. A multiple linear regression was conducted with perceived threats from both refugees and migrants (combined) as the dependent variable (ThreatPolEcoRefuMig). The predictor was having right-wing political affiliation. The model was found not significant $F(1, 172) = 2.476, p = .117, R^2 = .014$, so 14% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having right-wing political affiliation was found a not significant positive predictor of perceiving refugees and migrants as political and economic threats ($b^* = .119, p = .117$).

The results do not provide consistent support for perceiving threats from migrants and refugees and migrants combined. However, native right-wing supporters perceive higher threats from refugees, compared to migrants and both of them combined. Therefore, H3 is partially supported.

Table 4.5. Multiple regression analysis to predict perceived threats from refugees and migrants (standardized coefficients)

Predictors	Perceived threat refugees	Perceived threat migrants	Perceived threat refugees and migrants
Right-wing political affiliation	.138 ~	.083	.119
R^2	.019	.007	.014
N	174	174	174

Note. ~ indicates $p < .10$

H4: *Perceived political and economic threats from refugees and migrants will be higher for those natives with lesser-skilled or labor jobs and job security issues.*

4.3.20. Perceived Political and Economic Threats From Refugees Predicted by Natives with Labor Jobs and Job Security Issues

A multiple linear regression was conducted with perceived threats from refugees as the dependent variable (ThreatPolEcoRefu). The predictors were having a labor job (SomeLabor) and job security issues (JobSecurity). The model was found not significant $F(2, 146) = .558, p = .574, R^2 =$

.008, so 8% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a labor job was found a not significant negative predictor of perceiving refugees as political and economic threats ($b^* = -.040, p = .633$). Having job security issues was also found a not significant negative predictor of perceiving refugees as political and economic threats ($b^* = -.076, p = .360$). This indicates that there was no statistically significant relationship between having a labor job, having job security issues, and perceiving refugees as political and economic threats.

4.3.21. Perceived Political and Economic Threats from Migrants Predicted by Natives with Labor Jobs and Job Security Issues

A multiple linear regression was conducted with perceived threats from migrants as the dependent variable (ThreatPolEcoMig). The predictors were having a labor job and job security issues. The model was found not significant $F(2, 146) = .314, p = .731, R^2 = .004$, so 4% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a labor job was found a not significant negative predictor of perceiving migrants as political and economic threats ($b^* = -.033, p = .686$). Having job security issues was also found a not significant negative predictor of perceiving migrants as political and economic threats ($b^* = -.055, p = .509$). This indicates that there was no statistically significant relationship between having a labor job, having job security issues, and perceiving migrants as political and economic threats.

4.3.22. Perceived Political and Economic Threats from Refugees and Migrants Predicted by Natives with Labor Jobs and Job Security Issues

This analysis was conducted to analyze the difference in the regression coefficient when threats from migrants and refugees combined in one whole variable. A multiple linear regression was conducted with perceived threats from both refugees and migrants (combined) as the dependent variable (ThreatPolEcoRefuMig). The predictors were having a labor job and job security issues. The model was found not significant $F(2, 146) = .487, p = .615, R^2 = .007$, so 7% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained through the independent variable. Having a labor job was found a not significant negative predictor of perceiving refugees and migrants as political and economic threats ($b^* = -.039, p = .638$). Having job security issues was also found a not significant negative predictor of perceiving refugees and migrants as political and economic threats ($b^* = -.070, p = .400$).

This indicates that there was no statistically significant relationship between having a labor job, having job security issues, and perceiving refugees and migrants individually or combined as political and economic threats. Thus, H4 is rejected.

Table 4.6. Multiple regression analysis to predict perceived threats from refugees and migrants (standardized coefficients)

Predictors	Perceived threat refugees	Perceived threat migrants	Perceived threat refugees and migrants
Having a labor job	-.040	-.033	-.039

Job security issues	-.076	-.055	-.070
R^2	.008	.004	.007
N	149	149	149

4.3.23. Positive and Negative Attitude Predicted by Right-wing Political Affiliation

Although there was no specific hypothesis for the relationship between having positive or negative attitudes toward out-groups and having right-wing political affiliation, analyzing the relationship between these two variables could help to better understand the impact of political affiliation on how natives perceive refugees and migrants and complement the previous analysis. A multiple regression analysis was conducted and the results are shown in table 4.7. Based on the analysis, people who have strong right-wing political affiliations tend to have less positive attitudes toward refugees and more negative attitudes toward them. On the other hand, the relationship between having positive or negative attitudes toward migrants and having right-wing political affiliation was not significant.

Table 4.7. Multiple regression analysis to predict positive and negative attitudes and right-wing political affiliation (standardized coefficients)

Predictors	Positive attitude refugee	Negative attitude refugee	Positive attitude migrant	Negative attitude migrant
Having a right-wing political affiliation	-.190**	.152*	-.118	.082
R^2	.036	.023	.014	.007
N	174	174	174	174

Note. * $p < .05$ ** $p < 0.01$

4.4. Refugee/Migrant Distinction Check

Before finishing the survey, a distinction check question was asked. This question asked the participants whether they were thinking of the whole immigrant population rather than distinguishing migrants and refugees from each other while filling out the survey. The results indicated that ($N = 69$, 31.2%) stated that it was somewhat likely that they were thinking of the whole immigrant population rather than distinguishing migrants and refugees from each other, ($N = 60$, 27.1) stated somewhat unlikely, ($N=39$, 17.6%) stated neither likely nor unlikely, ($N = 37$, 16.7%) stated extremely unlikely, and ($N = 16$, 7.2%) stated extremely likely. This question suggests a limitation in the gathered data which is further discussed in the final chapter's limitation section.

4.5. Effects of Demographics: Age and Gender

After analyzing all four main hypotheses, they were measured again while adding the variables Gender (IsFemale, a binary indicator variable) and Age (AgeNumeric). After conducting a multiple regression analysis, the result indicated no significant prediction in any of the relationships between the dependent variables of all hypotheses and demographics. The results of standardized coefficients are displayed in the following tables.

Table 4.8.

	H1a: refugee	H1a: migrant	H1a: refugee with different nationality	H1a: migrant with different nationality	H1b: refugee	H1b: migrant	H1b: refugee with different nationality	H1b: migrant with different nationality
Age	.086	.126	.071	.087	.094	.090	.075	.052
Gender	-.078	-.035	-.001	-.028	-.024	.032	.062	.020

Table 4.9.

	H2a: refugee	H2a: migrant	H2a: refugee with different nationality	H2a: migrant with different nationality	H2b: refugee	H2b: migrant	H2b: refugee with different nationality	H2b: migrant with different nationality
Age	-.007	.069	-.101	-.070	-.034	.058	-.065	-.040
Gender	-.103	.017	-.048	-.127	-.129	.089	-.031	-.087

Table 4.10.

	H3: refugee	H3: migrant	H3: refugees and migrants
Age	-.027	-.056	-.044
Gender	-.026	-.033	-.032

Table 4.11.

	H4: refugee	H4: migrant	H4: refugees and migrants
Age	-0.100	-0.099	-0.106
Gender	-0.106	-0.105	-0.113

5. Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to determine the impact of social media and news channels on shaping attitudes toward refugees and migrants. This study compared having a direct and face-to-face interaction with having an indirect interaction via social media and exposure through news channels with refugees and migrants. The main focus was comparing the host country's natives against refugees and migrants or in other words, in-groups, and out-groups. Since this study was a multi-dimensional analysis, other political and economic aspects were also analyzed. For this purpose, having a right-wing political affiliation and having labor and job security issues were analyzed to determine the relationship between these and perceiving refugees and migrants as threats. Thus, this research aimed to answer these research questions: *How and to what extent do social media channels and inter-group interactions affect attitudes towards refugees and migrants?* and *to what extent do the political and economic concerns of natives regarding refugees and migrants relate to their political affiliation and economic conditions?* An online survey was conducted to answer four hypotheses of this thesis.

5.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications of the Main Findings

H1a analyzed the relationship between the sentiment of direct interaction between in-groups and out-groups and having positive attitudes toward refugees, migrants, refugees with different nationalities, and migrants with different nationalities. The hypothesis was supported which means that the sentiment of direct interaction with out-groups can positively affect having positive attitudes toward out-groups. Based on the coefficients, the strongest interaction was the direct interaction between natives and refugees, followed by refugees with different nationalities, migrants, and migrants with different nationalities. Thus, the direct interaction with refugees was more significant compared to the interaction with migrants. Moreover, H1b analyzed the relationship between the sentiment of indirect interaction between in-groups and out-groups and having positive attitudes toward refugees, migrants, refugees with different nationalities, and migrants with different nationalities. The hypothesis was supported which means that the more positive sentiment of an indirect interaction through social media and news channels with out-groups can positively affect having positive attitudes toward out-groups. The beta value was almost the same for all out-groups while having an indirect interaction with out-groups correlated most significantly with positive attitudes toward refugees of different nationalities.

The overall findings of the H1 also align with the findings of Pettigrew and Tropp (2006, p. 767) who stated that for achieving positive attitudes between intergroup interactions, implying that the presence of the four conditions of the contact theory proposed by Allport (1954) is not necessary. The findings are also compatible with the findings of Paas and Halapuu (2012, p. 3) and De Coninck et al. (2020b, p. 884) which suggested that having positive personal contact between in-groups and out-groups can lead to positive attitudes toward them. Based on the findings of H1 and comparing the direct and indirect coefficients, except for interaction with refugees, having an indirect interaction

leads to more positive attitudes towards out-groups. This can be explained by the findings of De Coninck et al. (2020a, p. 219) which stated that interaction facilitated by media can determine the contact quality and can be more influential than face-to-face contact. The nuanced differences between different types of out-groups can also suggest the complexity of intergroup relationships and the small differences between how natives perceive these groups based on media roles or personal contact. The practical implication of these findings is to provide opportunities that allow natives to have direct and face-to-face contact positively with out-groups to increase the chances of having positive contact in a positive atmosphere such as local and community events, educational events in schools, and any social program which fosters a positive attitude towards out-groups (De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 894). Moreover, based on the results, positively portraying outgroups in social media and news channels can profoundly affect the positive attitudes of natives toward them (De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 894); therefore, by considering this, representing out-groups positively and diversely in media should be prioritized.

H2a and H2b both analyzed the relationship between the sentiment of direct and indirect interaction between in-groups and out-groups and portraying out-groups as threats in social media and news channels and having negative attitudes toward refugees, migrants, refugees with different nationalities, and migrants with different nationalities. The hypotheses were partially supported, meaning that the (positivity in) sentiment of direct and indirect interaction with out-groups is negatively associated with negative attitudes toward out-groups. Based on the coefficients of both hypotheses, the most powerful interaction was the direct and indirect interaction between natives and refugees and the direct interaction with refugees was more significant compared to the interaction with migrants. On the other hand, the frequency of portraying out-groups as threats was positively associated with having negative attitudes toward out-groups. This suggested that the more out-groups are portrayed as threats, the more natives have negative attitudes toward them. Also, the strongest coefficient belonged to the frequency of portraying refugees with different nationalities as threats.

The result of the overall H2 also aligns with the threat perception theory which suggests that a negative contact can lead to negative attitudes and conflict toward out-groups (De Coninck et al., 2020b, p. 883). It also supports the findings of Barlow et al. (2012, p. 1630), De Coninck et al. (2020b, p. 883), and Gönültaş and Mulvey (2023, p. 8) which stated that negative direct interaction with out-groups can result in negative attitudes toward them. Furthermore, comparing the results of the quality of the contact and the frequency of portraying out-groups as threats supports the findings of De Coninck et al. (2020a, p. 895) which stated that the quality of contact is more impactful on attitude formation compared to the quantity and frequency of contact. These findings highlight the importance of quality of contact and can suggest that social programs that require the members of the in-group and out-group to work together in a positive atmosphere can be beneficial in reducing negative attitudes and feelings of threat (Riek et al., 2006, p. 348). These results also help

policymakers and governmental authorities to possibly use social media and news channels as a way to diminish threatening portrayals of out-groups (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2023, p. 8).

H3 analyzed the relationship between perceiving political and economic threats from refugees and migrants and having a right-wing political affiliation. The results indicated that there is only a relationship between perceived political and economic threats from refugees and having a right-wing political affiliation while no relationship was found for migrants, and refugees and migrants combined; therefore, the hypothesis was partially supported. The result is also partly supported by Halla et al. (2017, p. 1342) which suggested that resentment towards refugees and migrants, along with anti-immigration attitudes, can increase support for right-wing political parties, as these parties often support anti-immigration policies. The results are also aligned with the findings of Schemer (2013, p. 531), which stated that portraying out-groups negatively and as threats, can lead to having negative political attitudes toward out-groups. The results also supported Roza and Vargas's (2021, p. 2) statement regarding the strategy that right-wing political parties gain support from natives by portraying the whole process of migration as threatening and concerning.

While Halla et al. (2017) addressed refugees and migrants together, the results indicated a difference between refugees and migrants in their significance. This difference could lie in the definition that defines each of these out-groups. Since refugees are defined as people who were forced to flee from a conflict in their country and seek shelter in a host country (UNHCR, 2022, para.1), this could trigger public opinion and identify refugees with threats and fears, both politically and economically. On the other hand, migrants are mostly addressed in a less intense or threatening language compared to refugees as people who move by their own decision (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019, p. 28). This difference can result in finding refugees more politically and economically threatening compared to migrants. Moreover, the way refugees are portrayed in social media and the news coverage assigned to them due to the refugee conflicts in the past years, identify them as more threatening than migrants (Torkington & Ribeiro, 2019, p. 25) who may receive less attention in social media and news channels. This result addresses the potential role of media in reducing the negativity right-wing affiliated natives harbor by providing a positive, more accurate, and better image of refugees and also migrants. Moreover, it points out the potential impact of political campaigns in supporting refugees and migrants and non-right ideologies.

Apart from the analysis mentioned above, another analysis was conducted to verify the obvious and what was already supported by the literature. The analysis analyzed the relationship between having positive or negative attitudes toward refugees and having a right-wing political affiliation. The result indicated that natives who have a stronger right-wing political affiliation tend to have less positive attitudes toward refugees and have more negative attitudes. This finding is supported by Halla et al. (2017, p. 1342) who stated that having negative and anti-immigration attitudes can increase the support for right-wing political parties. This finding can have implications for social programs that tend to integrate refugees into the host country community which increase the

chance of positive contact between natives and refugees. Since positive contact can result in positive attitudes (Paas & Halapuu, 2012, p. 3), it may also result in a reduction in having strong right-wing political affiliations.

H4 analyzed the relationship between perceiving political and economic threats from refugees and migrants and having a labor job and job security issues. The hypothesis was rejected, indicating there was no significant relationship between having a labor job and job security issues and perceiving refugees and migrants as threats. This result was the opposite of the primary literature of this research. Multiple studies such as the study by Brader et al. (2008, p. 962) stated that refugees and migrants can represent a threat to the host country's economy since natives perceive them as an economic burden and also as an invasive workforce that will compete over jobs with the host country's natives, or the study by Dennison et al. (2018, p. 33) which stated that people could have negative feelings toward out-groups when they already have job security issues which can be further affected by high unemployment rates. The possible reason that the H4 results were not significant can be explained by the underlying personal contact and relationships that people with labor jobs have with out-groups. Since many out-groups, especially refugees, have labor or low-skilled jobs (Rustenbach, 2010, p. 59), natives who have the same jobs can have personal direct contact which can result in positive attitudes toward them. Moreover, perceiving out-groups as threats can vary based on the culture and the country's economic status.

After testing the hypotheses, this thesis also tested all hypotheses with demographics added to the analysis. The result indicated no significant result for none of the variables and demographics which were age and gender. Evidence found from literature stated that women tend to be more patient towards out-groups and younger people accept out-groups more easily than older people (van Klingeren et al., 2014, p. 274), but the data did not support any of this literature.

A general finding of this thesis is the distinction between refugees and migrants. Based on the results, there were nuanced differences between refugees, migrants, refugees with different nationality, and migrants with different nationality and how people perceive them. This finding contradicted what most literature discussed which was addressing these out-groups as one single group without differentiation (Butkus et al., 2016, p. 287). This finding is also supported by Lee and Nerghe (2018, p. 1), who made a clear distinction between refugees and migrants and highlighted the importance of labels that people attribute to them as these labels can have social consequences for them and ultimately shape attitudes toward them. This finding is significant as it helps to differentiate these two groups and reminds policymakers and the host country's natives of this distinction and the different needs and characteristics of each group.

5.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although this research resulted in interesting findings, several questions remain, and some limitations ought to be highlighted. A few issues limited this study, including the respondents' ability to distinguish between refugees and migrants. The literature explored in the theoretical framework,

often treated refugees and migrants as one group; therefore, their union grouping was examined, within the analyses. However, and crucially, they were measured separately in the survey to examine whether nuanced differences. Although the definitions of refugees and migrants were clearly written in the survey, many respondents conflated these two together. This can affect the reliability of the results and the nuanced differences between the gathered data for refugees and migrants can become unclear. Thus, this confusion can cause imprecision in understanding the differences between the attitudes toward refugees and migrants. In future research, alongside providing a clear definition for these two groups, the structure of a survey must also change so that all questions about refugees appear separately from all questions about migrants. This approach can diminish the chances of conflating the two groups together.

Another limit in terms of generalizability was the low number of participants who had a right-wing political affiliation, also combined with those who considered their job a labor job and were also a native. Due to the nature of the research, to answer the hypotheses, respondents who did not meet the criteria of having a right-wing political affiliation, being a native, or considering their job a labor job were excluded from the analysis. This exclusion reduced the sample size for analysis and could have affected the generalizability of the findings of this study. Future research ought to be more expansive in its data gathering, e.g., sharing the survey in online or offline communities to ensure that people with certain demographics- underrepresented in this study- are solicited.

The scope of this study was limited in terms of the number of countries included in the sample. The sampling method included acquiring respondents from the Prolific tool. Since this website is based in the United Kingdom, most of the respondents were from that country. On the other hand, since the survey was also distributed among friends and family members of the researcher and were asked to share it within their social network, many respondents were also from Iran. This can also impact the generalizability of the data as the study aimed to reach conclusions that can be drawn globally and not only about a few certain countries. This also demonstrates the limitation of using snowball sampling as a sampling method (Berndt, 2020, p. 226). Future research can narrow the analysis to only a certain country or expand the sample size to achieve more samples from different parts of the world to reach a generalizable result. Limiting the usage of snowball sampling and using different online platforms alongside Prolific can result in a more global sample.

The study was also limited by asking respondents whether they consider their job a labor job. This question was designed as a matrix question which only allowed the respondent to choose one option. This function narrowed the possibility of choosing two options or writing an explanation for their choice. This can be problematic for people who have more than one choice and one job (being a student and working part-time) to decide based on which one of their jobs they should answer that question.

Moreover, this study did not differentiate between the content of social media and news channels in the survey and addressed them together. Since the content and the way audiences interact

with each type of media are different (Jacobs et al., 2016, p. 646), it can impact the way people receive the message regarding refugees and migrants and ultimately affect their attitudes towards refugees and migrants. Future research can divide these two media types and measure them separately in the analysis. Also, other types of media such as written media can be added to the analysis in future research.

One important limitation of this study is using a cross-sectional survey design as a tool to capture causality between variables. Although this study explores using a generalized relationship coefficient to suggest a causal direction, this method is not a definite tool to detect causation. The reason lies in the fact that a cross-sectional survey does not provide information on the sequence of the effect of variables and makes it difficult to identify which variable affects the other one as this tool only measures the variable at a certain point in time. This limitation can be further addressed in future research by combining the survey with an experiment to identify the hidden patterns and variables and easily pinpoint the effect of variables.

This study also analyzed the attitude scale individually and divided the scale into two negative and positive attitudes sub-scales. This division might have decreased the chances of achieving more detailed information regarding the attitudes of native people. Future research can also use the scale as a whole and combine both the negative and positive sub-scales to achieve a nuanced result.

Furthermore, future research can delve deep into the psychological factors contributing to shaping attitudes toward refugees and migrants and identify underlying reasons for shaping a negative or a positive attitude. Although considerable studies have already been conducted regarding this topic, exploring different aspects thoroughly and continuously in the context of refugees and migrants is a must as it can be affected over time by present incidents and changes in policies and political shifts.

Finally, future research can focus on how the frequency of interaction (between natives and refugees/migrants) can shape attitudes toward refugees and migrants. The quantity of the interaction can have a determining impact on the quality of the interaction as well. Thus, adding the quantity variable in future research can lead to more comprehensive research and elicit valuable information about the frequency of interaction and attitude formation. Future research can analyze if a consistent negative interaction will be more powerful in shaping attitudes or a positive consistent interaction.

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Appendices

Appendix A- Factor analysis and reliability check of scales

Table A.1. Factor loadings explained the variance and reliability of the two factors found for the scale “attitudes toward refugees”

Item	Positive refugee	Negative refugee
Approval	.88	
Affection	.86	
Hospitality	.83	
Acceptance	.80	
Sympathy	.79	
Hatred		.83
Rejection		.81
Superiority		.79
Dislike		.77
R^2	.51	.19
Cronbach's α	.90	.82

Table A.2. Factor loadings explained the variance and reliability of the two factors found for the scale “attitudes toward migrants”

Item	Positive migrant	Negative migrant
Approval	.90	
Hospitality	.87	
Affection	.86	
Sympathy	.82	
Acceptance	.82	
Hatred		.84

Rejection		.82
Dislike		.80
Superiority		.73
R^2	.48	.22
Cronbach's α	.91	.80

Table A.3. Factor loadings explained the variance and reliability of the two factors found for the scale “attitudes toward refugees with different nationalities”

Item	Positive refugee different	Negative refugee different
Confident	.94	
Trusting	.95	
Friendly	.92	
Safe	.89	
Comfortable	.89	
Anxious		.94
Worried		.93
Threatened		.83
Uncertain		.81
R^2	.59	.22
Cronbach's α	.95	.91

Table A.4. Factor loadings explained the variance and reliability of the two factors found for the scale “attitudes toward migrants with different nationalities”

Item	Positive migrant different	Negative migrant different
Confident	.94	

Trusting	.93	
Comfortable	.92	
Friendly	.91	
Safe	.91	
Worried		.91
Threatened		.90
Anxious		.90
Uncertain		.87
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R^2	.59	.24
Cronbach's α	.92	.96
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Table A.5. Factor loadings explained the variance and reliability of the one factor found for the scale “In-group direct interaction with refugees and migrants”

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
The extent to which they enjoyed the interaction (refugees)	.89		
The extent to which you would like to interact with them again (refugees)	.89		
The extent to which the interaction was smooth, natural, and relaxed (refugees)	.80		
The extent to which they enjoyed the interaction (migrants)	.76		
The extent to which the interaction was smooth, natural, and relaxed (migrants)	.75		
The extent to which you would like to interact with them again (migrants)	.73		
The extent to which the interaction was intimate (migrants)		.95	

The extent to which the interaction was intimate (refugees)		.90	
The extent to which the interaction was forced, strained, and awkward (migrants)			.91
The extent to which the interaction was forced, strained, and awkward (refugees)			.84
<hr/>			
<i>R</i> ²	.44	.17	.12
Cronbach's α	.90	.79	.84
<hr/>			

Table A.6. Factor loadings explained the variance and reliability of the one factor found for the scale “In-group indirect interaction with refugees and migrants”

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
The extent to which the interaction was pleasant (migrants)	.92	
The extent to which the interaction was satisfying (migrants)	.91	
The extent to which the interaction was smooth, natural, and relaxed (migrants)	.91	
The extent to which the interaction was pleasant (refugees)	.90	
The extent to which you would like to interact with them again (refugees)	.89	
The extent to which you would like to interact with them again (migrants)	.88	
The extent to which the interaction was smooth, natural, and relaxed (refugees)	.87	
The extent to which the interaction was satisfying (refugees)	.86	

The extent to which the interaction was forced, strained, and awkward (refugees) .92

The extent to which the interaction was forced, strained, and awkward (migrants)

R^2	.64	.17
Cronbach's α	.89	.85

Table A.7. Factor loadings explained the variance and reliability of the two factors found for the scale “Job security”

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
Someone could easily come in and replace me in this position	.83	
I'm not sure how long my job will last	.78	
I'm afraid of losing my job	.66	
Management is planning to lay off employees	.49	
It is very unlikely that my job will be terminated		-.87
I can keep my job here for as long as I want it		-.77
R^2	.43	.19
Cronbach's α	.70	.71

Table A.8. Factor loadings explained the variance and reliability of the two factors found for the scale “Threat perception refugees and migrants”

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2
Arriving migrants from different countries are undermining the host country's culture	.81	
Arriving refugees from different countries are undermining the host country's culture	.80	

The values and beliefs of migrants regarding social relations are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most of us	.74	
The values and beliefs of refugees regarding social relations are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most of us	.73	
Refugees get more from this country than they contribute	.68	
Migrants get more from this country than they contribute	.66	
Refugees have increased the tax burden on the host country's natives	.63	
Migrants have increased the tax burden on the host country's natives	.57	
Migrants should learn to conform to the rules and norms of the host country's society as soon as possible after they arrive	.55	
Refugees should learn to conform to the rules and norms of the host country's society as soon as possible after they arrive	.55	
Migrants are not displacing host country's native workers from their jobs		.68
Refugees are not displacing host country's native workers from their jobs		.64
R^2	.40	.53
Cronbach's α	.87	.69

Appendix B

Survey

Dear participant,

Thank you for your interest in my study. My name is Paniz and I'm studying at Erasmus University Rotterdam. My study aims to analyze the way refugees and migrants are portrayed in social media and news channels and the underlying reasons for how they are portrayed. Your participation in my survey will help me to gather data about this topic. If you decide to participate, you'll engage in an online survey lasting about 5-8 minutes. Your involvement in this research is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any point without needing to justify your decision. There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this survey. All gathered data will be anonymized and no sensitive questions will be asked. Your responses will be exclusively used to complete my Master's thesis. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via my email:

paniz6764@gmail.com

Do you consent to participate in this research project?

- I consent
- I do not consent

1. How often do you consume news about **refugees** on social media or news channels? (Consuming news means watching, reading, or listening to such news)

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Often
- Always

2. How often do you consume news about **migrants** on social media or news channels? (Consuming news means watching, reading, or listening to such news)

- Never
- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Often

- Always
3. How often does the news you consume or follow portray **refugees** as threats to your values (economic, political, cultural)?
- Never
 - Rarely
 - Occasionally
 - Sometimes
 - Frequently
 - Often
 - Always
4. How often does the news you consume or follow portray **migrants** as threats to your values (economic, political, cultural)?
- Never
 - Rarely
 - Occasionally
 - Sometimes
 - Frequently
 - Often
 - Always
5. How often does the news you consume or follow portray **refugees** as a threat to the host country's economy?
- Never
 - Rarely
 - Occasionally
 - Sometimes
 - Frequently
 - Often
 - Always
6. How often does the news you consume or follow portray **migrants** as a threat to the host country's economy?
- Never
 - Rarely
 - Occasionally

- Sometimes
 - Frequently
 - Often
 - Always
7. Which of the following media channels do you use to consume news? You can choose more than one option.
- Instagram
 - Facebook
 - Twitter (X)
 - YouTube
 - News channels on TV
 - Audio (e.g. radio or audio streaming)
8. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- Less than high school
 - High school graduate
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - Doctorate
 - Prefer not to say
9. What is your age?
10. What is your gender?
- Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary/third gender
 - Prefer not to say
11. Where is your country of origin? Choose a country.
12. Where is your country of residence? Choose a country.
13. Is your race or nationality the same or similar to the majority in your current country of residence?
- Yes

- Maybe
- No

14. What is your job?

15. Do you consider your job, a "labor job"? (Jobs such as construction worker, factory worker, cleaner, etc.)

- Definitely not
- Probably not
- Not sure
- Probably yes
- Definitely yes

16. What is your political affiliation?

- Left-wing (Democrat, Socialist, Communist)
- Centrist and moderate
- Right-wing (Republican, Libertarian, Conservative)
- None of the above-mentioned
- Prefer not to say

17. Do you consider yourself to be a refugee? (Refugee: Someone who has been forced to flee their home country due to persecution, war, or violence, and who seeks refuge or safety in another country.)

- No
- Maybe
- Yes

18. Do you consider yourself to be a **migrant**? (Migrant: Someone who moves from one place to another on their own choice, often for better opportunities or living conditions.)

- No
- Maybe
- Yes

19. Have you ever had **direct** (face-to-face, verbal, or via texting/SMS) contact with a refugee or migrant?

- Definitely not
- Probably not

- Not sure
- Probably yes
- Definitely yes

20. Please rate the following aspects of your direct interaction with a **refugee**.

- a. The extent to which they enjoyed the interaction
 - b. The extent to which the interaction was smooth natural, and relaxed
 - c. The extent to which you would like to interact with them again
 - d. The extent to which the interaction was forced, strained, and awkward
 - e. The extent to which the interaction was intimate
- Not at all
 - Very little
 - Somewhat
 - Moderately
 - Quite a bit
 - Very much
 - Extremely
 - Not applicable

21. Please rate the following aspects of your direct interaction with a **migrant**.

- a. The extent to which they enjoyed the interaction
 - b. The extent to which the interaction was smooth natural, and relaxed
 - c. The extent to which you would like to interact with them again
 - d. The extent to which the interaction was forced, strained, and awkward
 - e. The extent to which the interaction was intimate
- Not at all
 - Very little
 - Somewhat
 - Moderately
 - Quite a bit
 - Very much
 - Extremely
 - Not applicable

22. Have you ever had **indirect** (through social media and news channels) contact with a refugee or migrant? (Indirect could mean any kind of interaction on social media or online forums or comment threads).

- Definitely not
- Probably not
- Not sure
- Probably yes
- Definitely yes

23. Please rate the following aspects of your indirect interaction with a **refugee**.

- a. The extent to which the interaction was smooth natural, and relaxed
- b. The extent to which you would like to interact with them again
- c. The extent to which the interaction was forced, strained, and awkward
- d. The extent to which the interaction was satisfying
- e. The extent to which the interaction was pleasant

- Not at all
- Very little
- Somewhat
- Moderately
- Quite a bit
- Very much
- Extremely
- Not applicable

24. Please rate the following aspects of your indirect interaction with a **migrant**.

- a. The extent to which the interaction was smooth natural, and relaxed
- b. The extent to which you would like to interact with them again
- c. The extent to which the interaction was forced, strained, and awkward
- d. The extent to which the interaction was satisfying
- e. The extent to which the interaction was pleasant

- Not at all
- Very little
- Somewhat
- Moderately
- Quite a bit
- Very much
- Extremely
- Not applicable

25. Please indicate the degree to which you feel these emotions toward a **refugee**.

- a. Hospitality
- b. Disliking
- c. Acceptance
- d. Superiority
- e. Affection
- f. Approval
- g. Hatred
- h. Sympathy
- i. Rejection
- Not at all
- Very little
- Somewhat
- Moderately
- Quite a bit
- Very much
- Extremely

26. Please indicate the degree to which you feel these emotions toward a **refugee**.

- a. Hospitality
- b. Disliking
- c. Acceptance
- d. Superiority
- e. Affection
- f. Approval
- g. Hatred
- h. Sympathy
- i. Rejection
- Not at all
- Very little
- Somewhat
- Moderately
- Quite a bit
- Very much
- Extremely

27. Please indicate the degree to which you feel these emotions toward **refugees** who belong to **different racial groups or nationalities than you**.

- a. Uncertain
- b. Worried
- c. Anxious
- d. Threatened
- e. Comfortable
- f. Trusting
- g. Friendly
- h. Confident
- i. Safe
- Not at all
- Very little
- Somewhat
- Moderately
- Quite a bit
- Very much
- extremely

28. Please indicate the degree to which you feel these emotions toward **migrants** who belong to **different racial groups or nationalities than you.**

- a. Uncertain
- b. Worried
- c. Anxious
- d. Threatened
- e. Comfortable
- f. Trusting
- g. Friendly
- h. Confident
- i. Safe
- Not at all
- Very little
- Somewhat
- Moderately
- Quite a bit
- Very much
- Extremely

29. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding **your current job**.

- a. I'm not sure how long my job will last
 - b. I am afraid of losing my job
 - c. I can keep my job here for as long as I want it
 - d. It is very unlikely that my job will be terminated
 - e. Someone could easily come in and replace me in this position
 - f. Management is planning to lay off employees
- Strongly disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Strongly agree
 - Not applicable

30. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the presence of **refugees** in your country.

- a. Refugees should learn to conform to the rules and norms of the host country's society as soon as possible after they arrive
 - b. Arriving refugees from different countries are undermining the host country's culture
 - c. The values and beliefs of refugees regarding social relations are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most of us
 - d. Refugees get more from this country than they contribute
 - e. Refugees have increased the tax burden on the host country's natives
 - f. Refugees are not displacing host country's native workers from their jobs
- Strongly disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Strongly agree

31. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the presence of **migrants** in your country.

- a. Migrants should learn to conform to the rules and norms of the host country's society as soon as possible after they arrive
- b. Arriving migrants from different countries are undermining the host country's culture

- c. The values and beliefs of migrants regarding social relations are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most of us
- d. Migrants get more from this country than they contribute
- e. Migrants have increased the tax burden on the host country's natives
- f. Migrants are not displacing host country's native workers from their jobs
 - Strongly disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Strongly agree

32. How likely was it that when you filled in this survey, you were thinking of **overall immigrants** rather than specifically of refugees or migrants?

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely