

The Relationship Between Affective Polarization and Perspective-taking: A Multi-method Assessment

by

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The Relationship Between Affective Polarization and Perspective-taking: A Multi-method Assessment

Koç University

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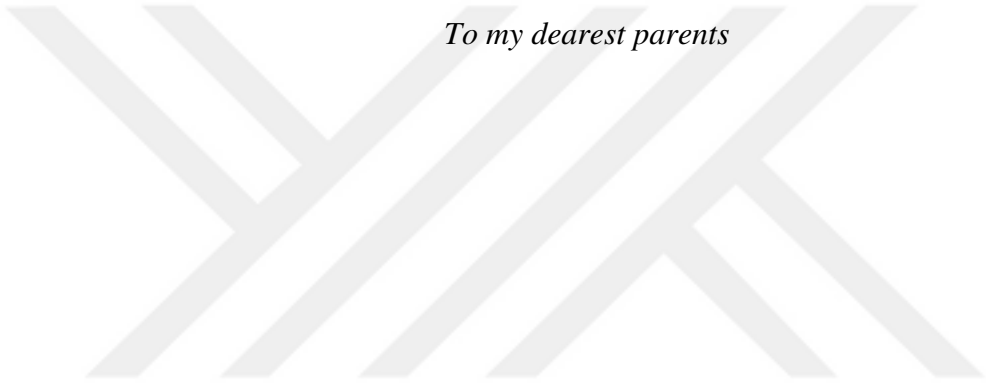
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To my dearest parents

ABSTRACT

The Relationship Between Affective Polarization and Perspective-Taking: A Multi-Method Assessment

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**Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science and International Relations
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In this dissertation, I aim to scrutinize the relationship between perspective-taking and affective polarization using multi-method assessment and cross-national data. First, I delved into the dynamics of affective polarization and the process of out-partisan perspective-taking in a typical multi-party context in Turkey. In-depth interviews with 23 partisans showed that the “out-party” is represented not only by the least-liked party but also by all the parties outside the electoral alliance. Additionally, perspective-taking that is focused on “out-partisans” rather than “opposing policies” worked better. Therefore, in the second study, I designed an out-partisan perspective-taking intervention based on the “Out-group Experience Effect” framework and the logic of “Perspective-getting” to enhance the out-partisan perspective-taking process. I conducted the experiments in two countries with alarming levels of partisan animosity: the U.S. (n=386) and Turkey (n=605). I found that the intervention improved positive attitudes towards the individual target out-partisan. In addition, the effect spilled over to feelings of warmth towards the out-partisan group in general and supporters of all parties outside one’s electoral alliance (only in Turkey). The third study provided observational large-N evidence for the link between perspective-taking and out-party attitudes using representative survey data. Moreover, I tested the role of attitudes towards a politicized social group, immigrants, in the model via two studies. First, in a preliminary study, I investigated the link between immigrant empathy and anti-immigrant prejudice across 32 European countries (1500 individuals on average from each country) using European Values Survey (EVS) 2017 data. Then, in the main study, I used the American National Election Survey (ANES) 2020 data (n=8,280 for pre-election interviews and n=7,449 post-election re-interviews) to test the role of immigrant prejudice in mediating the immigrant perspective-taking and out-party sympathy in the U.S. I found that anti-immigrant prejudice mediates the link between perspective-taking and out-party sympathy. Overall, the dissertation provides cross-national, multi-method evidence for the link between perspective-taking and out-party animosity.

Keywords: Affective Polarization, Perspective-taking, Multiparty systems, Turkey, the U.S., Multimethod Assessment

ÖZETÇE

Duygusal Kutuplaşma ve Bakış Açısı Alma Arasındaki İlişki: Çok Yöntemli Bir Araştırma

Cansu Paksoy

Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler, Doktora

26 Eylül 2024

Bu tez çalışması, bakış açısı alma ve duygusal kutuplaşma arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Ülkeler arası veri setleri ve çoklu yöntem kullanarak yürüttüğüm bu çalışmada öncelikle tipik bir çok partili bağlam olan Türkiye’de duygusal kutuplaşma ve diğer parti taraftarlarına yönelik bakış açısı alma sürecini inceledim. 23 parti taraftarı ile yaptığım derinlemesine görüşmeler, “diğer parti”nin sadece en az sevilen partinin taraftarlarını değil, kişilerin taraftarı olduğu partinin seçim ittifakı dışındaki tüm partilerin taraftarlarını temsil ettiğini göstermiştir. Ayrıca, “diğer parti taraftarı” odaklı bakış açısı alma yöntemi, “karşıt politikalar” odaklı yöntemle kıyasla daha başarılı olmuştur. Bu nedenle, diğer parti taraftarlarına karşı bakış açısı alma sürecini desteklemek için, ikinci çalışmada “Dış-Grup Deneyimi Etkisi” (Out-group Experience Effect) çerçevesi ve “Bakış Açısı Edinme” (Perspective-getting) tekniğinden esinlenerek bir diğer parti taraftarı bakış açısı alma yöntemi geliştirdim. Deneyleri duygusal kutuplaşmanın kritik düzeylerde olduğu A.B.D. (n=386) ve Türkiye’de gerçekleştirdim (n=605). Sonuçlar, bakış açısı alma müdahalesinin hedef diğer parti taraftarına karşı olan olumlu tutumları artırdığını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, bu etki tüm diğer parti taraftarlarına ve kişinin kendi partisinin seçim ittifakı dışında kalan tüm partilerin taraftarlarına karşı (sadece Türkiye’de) duyulan sıcaklık derecesini olumlu etkilemiştir. Üçüncü çalışmada, bakış açısı alma ve duygusal kutuplaşma arasındaki ilişkiye temsili örneklem ile bir kanıt sunmayı amaçladım. Bunu yaparken, politize olan gruplara, bkz. göçmenler, karşı tutumların modeldeki rolünü inceledim. Öncelikle, 36 Avrupa ülkesinden (her ülke için ortalama 1500 kişi) örneklemden oluşan Avrupa Değerler Araştırması 2017 veri setini kullanarak göçmenlere karşı duyulan empati ve göçmenlere karşı önyargı arasındaki ilişkiyi inceledim. Daha sonra, ana çalışmada, Amerika Ulusal Seçim Çalışması 2020 veri seti (seçim öncesi için n=8,280 ve seçim sonrası için n=7,449 görüşme) ile göçmen bakış açısı alma ve diğer parti taraftarlarına duyulan sempati arasındaki ilişkide göçmenlere karşı önyargının rolünü test ettim. Anazliler, göçmen karşıtı tutumların bakış açısı alma ve dış-parti tutumları arasında aracı rolü olduğunu göstermiştir. Özetle, bu tez çalışması, bakış açısı alma ve duygusal kutuplaşma arasındaki ilişkiye ülkeler arası ve çok yöntemli bir kanıt sunmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Duygusal kutuplaşma, Bakış Açısı Alma, Çok Partili Sistemler, Türkiye, A.B.D., Çok Yöntemli Bir Araştırma

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ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
ANES	American National Election Studies
AP	Affective Polarization
BILGI-Migration	Istanbul Bilgi University Center for Migration Research
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CHP	Republican People's Party
CNIE	Civic National Identity Endorsement
CSES	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems
DEVA	Democracy and Progress Party
EMEP	Labor Party
EVS	European Values Study
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLM	Generalized Linear Model
GMF	German Marshall Fund of the United States
GP	Future Party
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party
HKP	People's Liberation Party
HÜDA-PAR	Free Cause Party
IRB	Institutional Review Board
IRI	Interpersonal Reactivity Index
IYIP	Good Party
LDP	Liberal Democrat Party
Memleket	Motherland Party
MHP	Nationalist Action Party
MTurk	Amazon Mechanical Turk
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PG	Perspective-getting
PID	Party Identification
PT	Perspective-taking
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SCM	Stereotype Content Model
SD	Sweden Democrats
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SOL	Left Party
SP	Felicity Party
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
TIP	Workers' Party of Turkey
TKP	Communist Party of Turkey
TURKSTAT	Turkish Statistical Institute
TurkuazLab	Strategies and Tools for Mitigating Polarization in Turkey Project
YRP	New Welfare Party
ZP	Victory Party

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Topic

“There’s a lot of talk in this country about the federal deficit, but I think we should talk more about our empathy deficit — the ability to put ourselves in someone else’s shoes, to see the world through those who are different from us — the child who’s hungry, the laid-off steelworker, the immigrant woman cleaning your dorm room.”¹

Since Barack Obama addressed Northwestern University’s graduating class in 2006, the need to address the “empathy deficit” seems to be a key problem not only between the majority and disadvantaged groups but also between supporters of different political parties. As the Pew Research Center 2022 report showed, cross-partisan antipathy rose sharply from 1994 to 2022 in the U.S.²

Most importantly, partisan animosity is not an issue specific to the U.S. Partisan hatred is a global problem that is prevalent in several countries, including various European countries (Garzia et al., 2023; Knudsen, 2021) and Turkey (Laebens & Öztürk, 2021; Wagner, 2021). The spread of partisan animosity in a wide range of countries is key to today’s world in terms of its pernicious consequences, including discrimination against out-partisans in various spheres of life (Carlin & Love, 2018; Iyengar et al., 2019).

The rise of populist radical right parties (Harteveld, 2021) polarizing political campaigns, including messages attacking the out-group (Iyengar et al., 2012), “hyper-partisan” news (Tucker et al., 2018), and media censorship (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2021), has widened the affective gap between supporters of different political parties. Polarized partisans, in turn, prefer limited contact with other party supporters (e.g.,

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MhMRYQ9Ez8>

² <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/08/09/as-partisan-hostility-grows-signs-of-frustration-with-the-two-party-system/>

McConnell et al., 2018) and tend to rely on attitude-consistent political information (e.g., Stroud, 2010), giving rise to misperceptions about political opponents (Druckman et al., 2022). These all contribute to the intensification of partisan hatred. Therefore, the “empathy deficit” between partisans is a key problem in the recent political landscape and needs to be resolved to reduce partisan animosity. As a result, this dissertation focuses on the relationship between affective polarization and perspective-taking using cross-national data.

In polarized political contexts, partisans prefer limited contact with other partisans (Lelkes & Westwood, 2017; McConnell et al., 2018). They even prefer to live in separate neighborhoods from the out-party (see Iyengar et al., 2019, for a review). This reduces the chance of getting to know political opponents or perceiving common ground between the partisan groups (Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020).

Additionally, partisans tend to obtain information from attitude-consistent media sources in polarized contexts. This “selective exposure” in the communication networks contributes to the intensification of bias toward the political outgroup, thereby polarization (Stroud, 2010; Wilson et al., 2020). In this attitude-reinforcing “echo chamber,” partisans will likely have a flawed understanding of the other side. For instance, Democrats and Republicans perceive other party supporters as more ideologically extreme than they really are (Druckman et al., 2022; see also Ahler, 2014). These stereotypes, in turn, intensify negative feelings toward their opponents. Furthermore, a recent study showed that partisans have misperceptions of political opponents’ commitment to democratic norms (Braley et al., 2023). Accordingly, Democrats and Republicans tend to exaggerate the other side’s willingness to subvert democracy. This misperception of political opponents, in turn, made partisans more willing to subvert democracy. Overall, partisans’ flawed understanding of the opposing side can intensify their animosity and hinder their commitment to democratic norms.

To depolarize partisans, some studies countered misperceptions by giving partisans realistic information about political opponents (Druckman et al., 2022) or focused on politically heterogeneous discussion networks (Kim, 2015; Mutz, 2002; Mutz & Mondak, 2006). These attempts decreased partisan hatred and increased awareness of legitimate points on the other side. However, factual knowledge alone does not always promote peace (Bail et al., 2018). That is because partisan animosity

is primarily an interpersonal affective state that involves the “hating” out-partisans (see Iyengar et al., 2019). Furthermore, the dislike or antipathy of other partisans can be intensified, even though extreme issue positions become more moderate (Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016). Therefore, factual information must be accompanied by affective or interpersonal strategies to touch the core of affective polarization (Muradova, 2021; Muradova & Arceneaux, 2022; Kubin et al., 2023). In other words, cognitive processes, such as understanding the views of political opponents, and affective processes, like empathy, simultaneously play a role in reducing partisan hatred. As a result, depolarization attempts should consider both to obtain successful results.

In light of these problems in the literature, this dissertation tests the role of perspective-taking (PT) in predicting reduced affective polarization (AP) using cross-national data. PT is an effective technique for reducing prejudice and conflict (Galinsky, 2002; Todd et al., 2011; Paluck, 2010). This is because PT targets both affective (empathy) (e.g., Negd et al., 2011) and cognitive (overlap in mental representation of self and other) processes to reduce out-group prejudice (Davis et al., 1996; Galinsky, 2002; Todd & Galisky, 2014). Therefore, by impacting both cognitive and affective processes, PT can be an effective depolarization strategy in political contexts (Warner et al., 2020).

However, some studies have found that PT revealed some adverse influences on partisan attitudes. These studies have some contending issues. To illustrate, these studies treat PT as a dispositional construct, showing a general tendency to take other people's perspectives (Davis, 1983), which yielded inconsistent results. One study found that PT is not related to AP in the U.S. (Simas et al., 2020). Nevertheless, this finding has failed to be replicated in other national contexts (Schumacher et al., 2023). Furthermore, dispositional PT is mainly directed at in-group members; therefore, it may not benefit out-group-related attitudes such as AP (Falk et al., 2012). Other studies have found null effects of PT in political contexts focused on changing policy attitudes rather than out-partisans (i.e., individuals supporting the other party) (Brophy & Mullinix, 2023; Catapano et al., 2019; Tuller et al., 2015).

Contrary to these approaches, in this dissertation, I focus on PT towards out-partisans, adopting a contextual rather than dispositional approach to PT. I test out-partisan PT in predicting lower levels of AP. Previous research has shown that

experimentally induced or contextually defined PT directed to out-groups successfully promotes peaceful attitudes toward them (Warner et al., 2020; Kalla & Broockman, 2022; Sirin et al., 2016). Therefore, I test this approach in the context of partisanship. Another issue to consider here is that in polarized contexts where non-political social identities tend to overlap with partisanship (Mason, 2015; 2018a), it is necessary to understand politicized issues or social groups to address AP. Nevertheless, previous studies have tended to neglect the role of politicized social groups or issues in predicting out-party attitudes (Wagner, 2024). Therefore, there is a need for a broader approach to depolarization by considering the role of politicized social groups in alleviating partisan hatred. Lastly, studies that attempt to reduce AP have mostly focused on sui generis cases in Israel and the U.S (Bassan-Nygate., & Weiss, 2020; Druckman & Levendusky, 2019; Garrett et al., 2014; Iyengar et al., 2019). Therefore, our knowledge of depolarization processes beyond those cases (e.g., typical multiparty contexts) is very limited.

As a result, in this dissertation, I conducted three studies that aim to fill the summarized gaps in the AP literature. In the first study, I conducted in-depth interviews to shed light upon AP and out-partisan PT in Turkey in a highly polarized and typical multiparty context. My purpose was to investigate depolarization beyond well-studied cases that are crucial regarding AP levels. Second, I conducted experiments in the U.S. and Turkey to test the effect of out-partisan PT in reducing partisan hatred. Lastly, in the third study, I tested the role of a politicized non-partisan group (immigrants) in the relationship between PT and out-party sympathy.

1.2 Contributions

In this dissertation, I have made several contributions to literature. First, I focused on a factor that predicts a reduced level of partisan animosity. Depolarization attempts are crucial in developing ways to eliminate the pernicious consequences of AP. AP is partisans' dislike, distrust, and avoidance of interacting with those from the other party (Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar et al., 2019). This leads to preferential treatment of in-party members, discomfort in interacting with out-party members, and discrimination against out-partisans in economic transactions (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2021; Lelkes & Westwood, 2017; McConnell et al., 2018; Carlin & Love, 2018). In

sum, by testing the effect of perspective-taking in predicting reduced partisan animosity, this dissertation contributes to our knowledge of essential tools for harmonious citizen interactions.

Second, I used a qualitative approach to examine the AP and PT links in a multi-party setting (Chapter 3). Studies regarding AP in general and reducing AP in particular have focused on two-party contexts such as the U.S. or the *sui generis* case of Israel (see Bassan-Nygate., & Weiss, 2020; Druckman & Levendusky, 2019; Garrett et al., 2014; Iyengar et al., 2019). However, multiparty contexts have been largely neglected, with a few exceptions (Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021; Knudsen, 2021; Wagner, 2021). Therefore, very little is known about AP in multiparty countries, especially in terms of measurement. Having no consensus on measuring AP in these contexts restricts our ability to design context-suitable depolarization techniques and conduct comparative cross-national studies.

In this dissertation, I provide information to shed light on assessing AP in multiparty contexts and the out-partisan PT process using in-depth interview data. I aimed to clarify the measurement of AP in multiparty countries. Moreover, to understand and solve the potential backfire effects of PT, as mentioned in the previous section, on political opponents in depolarization attempts, the qualitative study also assesses the extent to which partisans take the political out-group perspective. A qualitative method was used to provide details of the out-partisan PT process. The information gathered from in-depth interviews can potentially inform future depolarization studies, as I did in the following experiments.

Another contribution of this dissertation is that it introduces a new PT technique that has been found to be successful in reducing partisan hatred. Combining the logic of the “Outgroup Experience Effect” (e.g., Kubin et al., 2021; Kubin et al., 2023) and “Perspective-Getting” approaches (Eyal et al., 2018; Kalla & Broockman, 2022), along with the cautions taken to avoid backfire effects (e.g., Sassenrath et al., 2016) in experiments in Turkey, the results showed that out-partisan PT increased feelings of warmth towards least-liked party supporters (Chapter 4). This effect spilled over to supporters of all parties outside the electoral alliance. The success of the intervention also contributes to the literature on AP reduction, which tends to find inconsistent results and weak effects, advising this new approach to PT.

This dissertation also contributes to the literature by examining the role of attitudes toward other politicized social groups in the context of AP (Chapter 5). According to the “social sorting” argument, in highly polarized settings, party identities align with non-political identities (Harteveld, 2021; Mason, 2015, 2018a). Therefore, partisans are aligned with other group identities and demographic, social, and cultural characteristics. This politicizes various social identities. Nevertheless, politicized social identities in the context of AP are understudied (Wagner, 2024). Therefore, whether and how the attitudes towards politicized social groups are related to out-partisan prejudice is a relatively unknown topic to discover. Moreover, whether and how PT towards politicized social groups can reduce partisan prejudice has not yet been studied.

To fill this gap, I examined the link between attitudes towards immigrants and AP via anti-immigrant prejudice in the U.S. Accordingly, partisans aligned their attitudes toward immigrants. This makes immigrants a highly politicized social group to examine in AP contexts. The results provided evidence for the “social sorting” hypothesis in that attitudes towards a politicized non-partisan group are related to attitudes towards the out-party. Moreover, empathy and PT towards immigrants were related to reduced prejudice towards a pro-immigrant party (the Democrat Party) among anti-immigrant Republicans.

1.3 Case Selection

The final contribution of this dissertation is the case selection. Turkey is one of the cases on which this dissertation focuses. I focus on the Turkish case through two studies. One is the experimental study that aims to reduce the AP. The other is the qualitative study, which delves into the affective polarization in the context of this multi-party setting.

Turkey is a crucial case to study AP for two main reasons. First, from a comparative perspective, Turkey has an alarming level of AP. Cross-national studies that used the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) data showed that Turkey is the world leader in AP among more than 40 countries (Lauka et al., 2018; Wagner, 2021).

Representative field surveys have also provided a pessimistic picture of the country. The dimensions of polarization in Turkey study by Uyan-Semerçi and Emre Erdoğan showed that, as of 2020³, 75 percent of the respondents did not approve of their daughter marrying an “other party” supporter, and 72 percent said they do not want to be involved in a business relationship with someone supporting the “other party.”⁴ Moreover, while 67 percent of the partisans did not approve of their child playing with the children of parents who support the “other party,” 61 percent indicated disapproval of having a neighbor who supports the “other party.” In addition, more than 80 percent of participants found out-partisans to be hypocrites, arrogant, and selfish while finding supporters of their party patriotic, smart, open-minded, and honorable. Second, Turkey provides an opportunity to investigate AP in a typical multiparty setting, which is a neglected aspect of AP studies, as mentioned above.

Another case that I focused on is the U.S. The case of the U.S. was a focus of experimental studies on depolarization. In addition, I examined the link between immigrant PT and out-party attitudes in the U.S. Therefore; I will discuss why the U.S. case is essential in two respects: AP research and the role of immigrant issues in the context of partisan animosity.

First, similar to Turkey, the U.S. is also a highly polarized country. A recent study found that, among 12 OECD countries, the highest increase in AP was observed in the U.S. over the past four decades (Boxell et al., 2020). The Pew Research Center 2022 Report compared Republicans’ and Democrats’ party ratings in three different years: 2016, 2019, and 2022.⁵ The report demonstrates that partisans will increasingly find out-party supporters dishonest, close-minded, and immoral by 2022. It was also shown that out-party antipathy has increased over the past two decades. Therefore, investigating the case of the U.S. is critical for AP. Second, the U.S. case is important for another aim of this dissertation: testing the role of attitudes towards immigrants. As mentioned above, one of the aims of this dissertation is to examine whether and

³ This study is part of a project, i.e., Strategies and Tools for Mitigating Polarization in Turkey Project (TurkuazLab), which was launched in partnership with the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) and the Istanbul Bilgi University Center for Migration Research (BILGI-Migration) and through financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

⁴ <https://www.turkuazlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Ozet-Bulgular.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2022/08/09/as-partisan-hostility-grows-signs-of-frustration-with-the-two-party-system/>

how attitudes toward politicized non-partisan social groups are related to AP. Taking immigrants at the forefront, this dissertation examined immigrant-related attitudes in a partisan context.

A public opinion survey from the Chicago Council on Global Affairs by Kafura and Sullivan, conducted in 2022, pointed to partisan differences regarding immigrant-related attitudes⁶. While Republicans tend to see immigrants as a threat to the country, Democrats tend to focus on legalization processes and think that diversity makes the country a better place to live in. The intense partisan division along the immigration issue makes the U.S. a very suitable case to examine immigrant attitudes regarding partisan hatred.

Europe is also a very crucial context to study immigrant-related attitudes. Europe has experienced a sharp increase in the number of immigrants in recent decades, as documented in the World Migration Report.⁷ Longitudinal and cross-national studies have also shown that anti-immigrant prejudice has intensified over the years. Using data from the European Values Study (EVS) from 1990 to 2017, one study showed that, on average, anti-immigrant sentiments have increased in Europe (Bell et al., 2021). The rise in support for right-wing populist parties, typically anti-immigrants, has also made the immigration issue key across Europe. As a result, this dissertation examines the link between immigrant empathy and anti-immigrant prejudice in Europe as a critical context for focusing on immigrant attitudes. This provided preliminary evidence for the mediation hypothesis testing the effects in the context of partisan prejudice in the U.S.

1.4 Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical background of this study. This chapter first presents the definition of affective polarization (AP), along with its nature and causes of affective polarization. The chapter then discusses the definition of perspective-taking (PT) and its dispositional and contextual types. Next, this chapter provides information on the mechanisms of PT. Finally, Chapter 2 discusses the relationship between PT and AP.

⁶ <https://globalaffairs.org/research/public-opinion-survey/american-views-immigration-and-diversity>

⁷ <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/what-we-do/world-migration-report-2024-chapter-3/europe>

Chapter 3 asks the following questions to be tested in the Turkish context: How do partisans perceive out-partisans (individuals who vote for a different party)? To what extent can the AP measurement frameworks used in Western countries be applied in the Turkish context? How and to what extent are partisans involved in adopting an out-partisan perspective? A Qualtrics survey link to find volunteers for interviews was distributed through Facebook advertisements and various social media platforms in Turkey. In-depth interviews were conducted with 23 volunteer participants with different party identifications. Interviews revealed that AP descriptions center on the incumbent party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), or the People's Alliance for partisans who support the opposition. However, there are also findings supporting the alliance-based formulation of AP. Voters tend to favor or are neutral parties within the alliance, despite ideological discrepancies, while opposing parties are outside their alliance. This tendency was more evident among the supporters of the incumbent alliance, in which parties are more ideologically aligned than the main opposition alliance. Furthermore, partisan-focused PT yielded more detailed and favorable answers than did policy-centered PT. However, many respondents had difficulty taking the out-party perspective even in the partisan-focused PT or relied on negative stereotypes in their descriptions of the out-party. Therefore, a less effortful type of partisan-based PT, that is, perspective-getting, which does not allow stereotyping, would be appropriate for depolarizing partisans.

Chapter 4 tests the causal link between PT and AP in the U.S. and Turkey in two critical countries. As suggested by the findings from Chapter 3, a specific form of PT called perspective-getting (PG) was used to reduce AP. In addition, alliance-based construction of AP in multiparty settings was included in the Turkish study, which was found to be suitable in the previous chapter. First, the results of an experiment conducted in the U.S. are discussed. Subsequently, survey results from Turkey are described. The results of both studies are then discussed. In both national contexts, a between-subjects design was used in the experiments, and the participants were randomly assigned to one of the following conditions: experimental or control. In the experimental condition, participants read a vignette describing the harmful personal experience of a fictional out-partisan (or least-liked party supporter), explaining why the target out-partisan votes for the out-party. On the other hand, the control condition mentioned the reasons for supporting the out-party without

mentioning any personal information. The results showed that PT improved favorable attitudes towards the target out-partisan group. However, this was not fully carried over to boost positivity towards all out-party supporters. Specifically, in the U.S., this effect is mainly found among Republican respondents. On the other hand, the results for PT's effect of PT were more promising in Turkey, where better-designed experiments were used to obtain stronger effects. In addition, party identification strength is an important factor in determining the depolarization effect of PT.

Chapter 5 provides large N cross-national evidence for the link between PT and AP using available data. Furthermore, it touches on how attitudes towards a politicized out-group, immigrants, are related to out-party attitudes. Chapter 5 summarizes the results of these two studies. First, using the EVS 2017, a preliminary study provided evidence of the link between immigrant empathy and immigrant prejudice across 32 European countries. Second, the main study extends the model to partisan prejudice by using the American National Election Studies (ANES, 2020). It was found that partisan prejudice is predicted by immigrant empathy and PT via the reduction of anti-immigrant prejudice. Therefore, anti-immigrant prejudice mediates the relationship between immigrant empathy and partisan prejudice. Nevertheless, the direct effect of empathy on partisan prejudice was stronger than its indirect effect on anti-immigrant prejudice. This supports the "partisan sorting" argument in that, in polarized contexts, partisans are aligned according to various characteristics, including demographics and policy attitudes, which determine. Therefore, immigrants might be considered within the same out-group category as a pro-immigrant Democratic Party and vice versa, creating consistency in their attitudes towards both. This also shows that emphasizing a politicized minority group might improve favorable attitudes towards a party that supports that group. Finally, the chapter ends with a general discussion of the results.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation by discussing the results. Next, this chapter presents the unexpected results and shortcomings of this dissertation. Finally, the chapter presents ideas for future studies.

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this chapter, I explained the dissertation's theoretical background. First, I covered the definition of affective polarization, its nature, and its causes. Next, I summarized the depolarization attempts to date. Subsequently, I explained the definition of perspective-taking, its types, and the main mechanisms behind perspective-taking. Finally, I analyzed the theoretical relationship between perspective-taking and affective polarization.

2.1 *Affective Polarization*

Affective polarization (AP) is partisans' dislike, distrust, and avoidance of interacting with those from the other party (Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar et al., 2019). AP has been one of the critical issues in the recent socio-political landscape worldwide. This is because of two main reasons. First, negativity towards political opponents has intensified in several countries over the last six decades (Garzia et al., 2023). Therefore, it is more of a global problem than a country-specific issue representing the negative sentiments between the partisan groups supporting different parties (Gidron et al., 2019; Knudsen, 2021; Wagner, 2021).

Second, AP has several pernicious consequences in society. To illustrate, AP leads to preferential treatment of in-party members, the discomfort of interacting with out-party members, and discrimination against out-partisans in economic transactions (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2021; Carlin & Love, 2018; Lelkes & Westwood, 2017; McConnell et al., 2018). In addition, AP also leads to unwanted health-related responses. For instance, in the U.S., partisan animus is related to decreased concern about COVID-19 and support for policies against the spread of the virus among

Republicans (Druckman et al., 2021). Therefore, reducing AP is crucial for healthy citizen interaction and public health.⁸

2.1.1 *The Nature of Affective Polarization*

Two competing but interrelated accounts have dominated the literature in explaining the nature of AP. These are the “policy-over-party” and “the party-over-policy” hypotheses.

The policy-over-party approach sees policy preferences as the leading causes behind partisanship and interpersonal effects (Lelkes, 2021; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016a; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017). As a result, according to this approach, policy views or ideological orientations determine party identification and AP. According to this school of thought, AP has increased as partisans ideologically move apart. To illustrate, using American National Election Studies (ANES) data from 1978 to 2012, Webster and Abramowitz (2017) showed that Republicans’ and Democrats’ issue positions on social welfare are strongly connected with their feelings towards the opposing partisans and political leaders.

On the other hand, the party-over-policy approach asserts that partisanship directly affects policy preferences and feelings toward the partisans. Besides, partisanship also drives feelings via its effect on policy views. The party-over policy hypothesis is rooted in Social Identity Theory (SIT). The basic premise of SIT is that when people identify with a social group, they divide the world into an in-group and an out-group (Tajfel, 1978; Turner & Tajfel, 1979). This in-group/out-group distinction elicits positive feelings toward the in-group and negative evaluations towards the out-group (Billig & Tajfel, 1973). The party-over-policy account takes partisanship as an essential social identity. Therefore, partisanship can trigger positive feelings toward in-party and negativity toward out-party members. According to this

⁸ AP also has negative consequences in political spheres of life. AP hinders legislative success in democratic systems (Orriols & León, 2020) and weakens the power of elections to hold the government into account (Iyengar & Krupenkin, 2018). However, the evidence for the political implications of depolarization studies is weaker than that of interpersonal ones, especially for anti-democratic tendencies (Broockman et al., 2023; Voelkel et al., 2023). Depolarization studies showed that attempts to reduce AP do not necessarily reduce anti-democratic norm endorsement. Therefore, the effect of depolarization has been found to be overestimated when it comes to support for anti-democratic norms. As a result, I emphasized the interpersonal implications of the depolarization.

approach, party attachment is the leading cause behind the AP. That is to say, identification with a political party drives positive feelings towards the party one supports (in-party) and negative feelings towards the opposing parties (out-party) (Dias & Lelkes, 2022; Huddy et al., 2015, 2018; Iyengar et al., 2012; Robison & Moskowitz, 2019; West & Iyengar, 2022).

Research has shown stronger support for the partisanship-based approach by providing evidence in the context of various policy issues and the correlates of AP. On the other hand, the policy-based approach is only limited to some issues, such as social welfare, and does not test the emotions related to AP. Widening the scope of policies revealed that the policy-AP link is built through the party cues.

To illustrate, Dias and Lelkes (2022) found that policy preferences do not drive the AP unless the policy issue signals the partisan identities. Accordingly, researchers categorized the policy issues as partisan branded, or the issues that signal the party identity, such as child adoption by same-sex couples, and unbranded issues, or the issues that do not signal the party identity, such as eminent domain and whether mobile carriers should sell customer data. Researchers experimentally tested the effects of these types of issues on interpersonal effects. Subjects read vignettes describing a target partisan in three ways: partisanship, the explicit statement of policy preferences, and what stated policy preferences signal about partisan identity. Then, subjects filled out the AP questions. The effect of partisanship and policy preferences on AP is tested based on different issues. It is found that the effect of partisanship on AP is affected by policy preferences only when the issue signals party identity. Therefore, partisanship has primacy over policy preferences in driving the AP. Similarly, a study in a multiparty setting found that individuals tend to favor their in-party significantly more than the others, even if the others are within the same coalition in line with the in-party's ideological orientation (Huddy et al., 2018). Another study demonstrated that individuals' party identification strength determines bias, political activation, and AP-related emotions (i.e., anger) (Mason, 2015). This effect is robust across a person's issue positions.

Although policy preferences and ideological orientations have some effect, partisanship is the primary driver of AP. Therefore, this thesis adopts the party-over-policy approach to AP based on the SIT. Relatedly, in the present paper, partisanship

or party identification is considered a social identity, which gives rise to attitudes towards one's party and the other party's supporters.

2.1.2 Causes of Affective Polarization

Literature that takes a stance on the identity-based definition of AP has identified various individual-level and contextual-level causes of AP. One individual-level factor is the perception of the threat toward one's group and the anger elicited by this perception. For instance, a study conducted in Germany and Sweden tested the effect of threat perception on AP in the context of immigration, a contesting issue between European parties (Renström et al., 2023). It is found that when immigration issue is presented in a threatening way, partisans are more likely to experience anger and feel negativity toward opposing partisans.

Moreover, "social sorting" or "partisan sorting" is an essential hypothesis explaining AP that is in line with the identity-based framework. Partisan sorting is based on the idea that the negative effect on political opponents is intensified due to aligning party identities with non-political identities (Harteveld, 2021; Mason, 2015, 2018a). Therefore, individuals' party identities are aligned with other group identities against a composition of different identities, which increases negative feelings among the opposing partisans. For instance, in the U.S., Democrats and Republicans are increasingly divided along social, demographic, and cultural characteristics, which in turn contributes to heightened negative affect between them (Mason, 2018a). That is, in 2016, Republicans were dominated by individuals who are male, religious, White, and high-income, while Democrats tend to be composed of educated, Black, and Hispanic individuals. Fewer cross-cutting identities between partisans, in turn, have been found to increase bias, anger, and political activism toward the opposing side.

Other individual-level causes include social desirability and self-presentation (Connors, 2023), deep-down worldview differences between partisans, i.e., value extremity (Enders & Lupton, 2021), "opinion-based-identities" or opinion-based political group identification (Hobolt et al., 2021, p. 1476).

On the other hand, contextual-level factors explaining AP include media and elite-driven causes. The effect of mainstream and social media on partisan attitudes is critical to understanding how partisan hatred can be intensified (Van Bavel et al.,

2021). Media channels become very polarized in polarized contexts because they are likely to convey the news from partisan lenses. Therefore, the citizens will likely be exposed to “hyper-partisan news” or politically slanted information, which in turn intensifies partisan polarization (Tucker et al., 2018, p. 26). For instance, a study conducted in the U.S. and Israel showed that partisan media exposure is related to high levels of AP (Garrett et al., 2014; see also Törnberg et al., 2021; Tsfaty & Nir, 2017). Exposure to hyper-partisan news demotivates partisans to contact out-partisans and stick to their point of view, creating “echo chambers.” These homogenous political networks, in turn, contribute to an unwillingness to understand opposing views and not empathize with out-partisans, thereby causing negative feelings towards them. Therefore, as individuals rely more upon attitude-consistent sources reinforcing their political views, they become more polarized in their attitudes toward political opponents. In contrast, exposure to the opposing side's views can reduce negativity by showing that the opposing side has some legitimacy and shares common ground (see also Mutz, 2002).

Elite-level causes include electoral salience (Hernández et al., 2021), elite polarization (Banda & Cluverius, 2018; Boxell et al., 2020), populist radical right parties (Harteveld, 2021), and exposure to political campaigns, including messages attacking the out-group (Iyengar et al., 2012). To illustrate, using Comparative Studies in Electoral Systems (CSES) post-election surveys for 42 countries between 1996 and 2016, a study demonstrated that electoral salience is related to increasing partisan animosity. This is because partisan identities are activated during elections, and the ideological differences between partisans become more visible. On the other hand, as elections lose salience, the level of AP decreases. Another longitudinal study using ANES showed that elite-level polarization is linked with an increased level of AP in the U.S. (Banda & Cluverius, 2018). This is because partisans tend to rely more on elite discourses and perceive the opposing side as more threatening in polarized contexts, which makes them avoid contact with political opponents.

2.1.3 Attempts to Reduce Affective Polarization

Depolarization studies can be categorized into two broad approaches. One approach of depolarization is based on policy preferences, while the other focuses on group processes and has roots in Social Identity Theory. In this dissertation, my focus is the group process approach to depolarization since it was shown as superior to a policy-based approach (Huddy & Yair, 2021).

The research that adopts a group-based approach to depolarization has used many techniques, including correcting misperceptions, self-affirmation, common ingroup identity endorsement, and inter-group contact. First, correcting misperceptions highlights partisan stereotypes. Partisans mostly rely on stereotypes when they imagine out-partisans. This reliance leads them to misestimate the extremity of out-partisans' political views. However, the partisan animosity fell when partisans' misperceptions were corrected by informing them that most out-partisans were moderate (Ahler & Sood, 2018; Druckman et al., 2022). Although correcting misperceptions works well to depolarize partisans, the extent to which this technique applies to real-world settings is questionable. In polarized environments, partisans tend to get political news from sources that reinforce their political views (Peterson et al., 2021). Therefore, citizens will likely continue to follow their partisan media channels after the correction. Additionally, corrections can fail in realistic settings (Nyhan & Reifler, 2010).

Second, according to the Self-Affirmation Theory (Sherman & Cohen, 2006), when people have an opportunity to name and explain their most critical self-defining values, they evaluate a negatively stereotyped group more positively than when they do not (e.g., Fein & Spencer, 1997). Additionally, when people affirm their values, they evaluate out-partisans more positively (Binning et al., 2010). However, some research failed to find the effect of self-affirmation in reducing partisan animus (Levendusky, 2018a).

Another technique to reduce partisan animus is creating a common ingroup identity (i.e., superordinate identity). Creating a common group identity reduces the salience of group identities and decreases the perception of outgroup threat, which in turn increases positive outgroup attitudes among both ethnically (Black and White) and political-ideologically (Democrats and Republicans) prejudiced out-groups (Riek

et al., 2010). For instance, research shows that priming a common national identity (e.g., U.S.) instead of partisan identity (e.g., Democrat or Republican) reduced AP (Levendusky, 2018b). However, this technique may have harmful consequences (e.g., negative evaluations toward nonnationals, Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020) or may not work outside the experimental context (Levendusky, 2018a).

Finally, contact with out-group members increases empathy and reduces prejudice toward them (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). However, in political contexts, inter-group contact reveals contradictory results in reducing prejudice. For instance, Huddy and Yair (2021) found that reading about positive contact between the leaders of two antagonistic political groups reduces prejudice toward out-partisans. Nevertheless, other studies failed to find a direct impact of intergroup contact in decreasing partisan animus (e.g., Wojcieszak and Warner, 2020). Similarly, another study showed that the depolarizing effect of the cross-partisan interaction depends on the topic (Santoro & Broockman, 2022). For instance, cross-partisan contact in disagreement topics does not reduce affective polarization.

In sum, techniques previously used to reduce partisan hostility are problematic in two fundamental ways. First, the results of survey experiments to reduce affective polarization are inconsistent. For example, some studies have shown no direct effect of self-affirmation (Levendusky, 2018a) and intergroup contact (Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020) in reducing affective polarization. However, these techniques have successfully reduced similar biases in other contexts (Binning et al., 2010; Fein & Spencer, 1997; Huddy & Yair, 2021; Wojcieszak & Garrett, 2018). Second, some initiatives, such as “priming for a common national identity,” can have negative consequences (e.g., “negative evaluations of national out-groups,” Levendusky, 2018b). Therefore, we need stronger primes that work well in real political settings.

Increasing the level of understanding of the out-partisans’ situations might help mitigate negative feelings towards them. As a result, PT emerges as an effective tool to help decrease the tendency to view the world based only on partisan identities by encouraging people to “step the out-partisans’ shoes” (see Batson & Ahmad, 2009; Todd & Galinsky, 2014). This, in turn, increases empathy and positive feelings and has the potential to depolarize society.

2.2 *Perspective-taking*

Perspective-taking (PT) is one of the most effective techniques in reducing intergroup conflict and prejudice (e.g., Galinsky, 2002; Paluck, 2010). PT is defined as “active contemplation of others’ psychological experiences” (Todd et al., 2011, p. 1), and it involves a willingness to consider, accept, and legitimize others’ stances or positions (McPherson Frantz & Janoff-Bulman, 2000). Individuals who take the perspective of others tend to be involved in pro-social behaviors and have positive implicit and explicit attitudes towards prejudiced groups (e.g., Paluck, 2010; Shih et al., 2009).

There is a conceptual vagueness in the literature; however, when it comes to defining PT as a cognitive capacity or a state involving both cognitive and affective processes. In some contexts, PT is defined solely as a cognitive ability, distinguished from an affective ability to empathize with others (e.g., Davis, 1983). These approaches distinguish PT from empathic concern; an affective capacity involves feeling compassionate towards others. On the other hand, some scholars use the term “empathic perspective taking,” highlighting the co-existence of cognitive and affective components of PT (De Waal, 2008). Accordingly, PT is rooted in empathy, a common capacity in humans and other animals “to be affected by and share the emotional state of another” (De Waal, 2008, p. 281). It involves both understanding the situation of others as a separate process from their own and emotional arousal. For instance, helping based on others’ specific needs, defined as targeted helping, is one manifestation of empathic perspective-taking. Furthermore, PT boosts both affective (e.g., empathy) and cognitive (e.g., overlapping in the mental representation of self and the other) processes (Todd & Galinsky, 2014).

In addition to that, another conceptual vagueness is related to whether PT is a dispositional trait or is a contextually bound variable. Dispositional PT sees PT as a stable trait likely to backfire in an intergroup context (e.g., Davis, 1983; Simas et al., 2020). On the other hand, situational approaches to PT tend to examine PT within a specific context and see PT as a changeable individual difference characteristic. Therefore, in the intergroup context, those approaches focus on PT targeted to out-groups (i.e., PT towards immigrants, racial out-groups) (e.g., Sirin et al., 2017; Todd et al., 2012). In the next sections, I will summarize the different approaches to PT to clarify how and why the current paper defines PT in detail.

2.2.1 *Types of Perspective-taking: Dispositional PT or Contextual PT*

In literature, PT is conceptualized in two main ways. The first category of studies defines PT as a dispositional or trait-like characteristic (Schumacher et al., 2023; Simas et al., 2020) and assesses PT via scales like Davis's (1980) Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) and Questionnaire of Cognitive and Affective Empathy (QCAE; Reniers et al., 2011). These measures include items assessing one's general ability to empathize or take the perspective of others without specifying any individual or group ("I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the other's point of view" and "I am good at predicting how someone will feel"; "I am inclined to get nervous when others around me seem to be nervous").

The second approach takes a situational/context-dependent stance while approaching PT. This approach takes PT within a specific context. The second approach can be grouped into two categories. One involves experimental manipulation of PT. The other represents PT, which centers around the out-group perspective.

First, many studies on PT involve manipulation of PT through instructions (e.g., Coke et al., 1978) or experiments (e.g., Saveski et al., 2022; Todd & Galinsky, 2014). Typically, these studies focused on contextually induced emphatic prompts (e.g., "If you see something you disagree with, think of a time you and a friend disagreed," Saveski et al., 2022) or PT instructions ("Imagine a day in the life of [the] individual as if you were that person, looking at the world through his eyes and walking through the world in his shoes,") (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000) or giving the out-group perspective (Kalla & Broockman, 2022; Kubin et al., 2023) directly and tested their effect on the attitudes towards out-groups. The standard strategy in all experimentally induced PT is that PT is defined as a non-dispositional but situational construct.

Furthermore, some of the observational studies also use a contextual approach to PT by focusing on a target out-group perspective. For instance, inspired by an experimental PT logic, Sparkman and Blanchar (2017) developed their own cultural PT measure to assess PT towards other cultures ("I think about things from the perspective of different cultures" and "I think about the differences among cultures."). Similarly, Sirin et al. (2017) adopted a trait empathy scale by targeting immigrants

and tested the attitudes of minority ethnic groups toward undocumented immigrants. The resulting scale (“Group Empathy Index”) measures empathy towards other racial and ethnic groups (e.g., I often have tender, concerned feelings for people from another racial or ethnic group who are less fortunate than me”). Findings showed that group empathy is strongly and negatively associated with empathic reactions towards immigrants and immigrant-related policy attitudes.

Overall, the dispositional approach takes PT as a general tendency to take the perspective of others. In contrast, contextual approaches directly focus on PT towards specific out-group members or experimentally manipulate PT towards those group members. Therefore, the former represents stable and trait-like characteristics. On the other hand, the latter approaches PT as an individual difference characteristic that can be manipulated or changed and directed at specific out-group members, which is not necessarily related to the general tendency to PT.

Considering the attitudes towards other groups, these two types of PT tend to reveal different results. Dispositional PT is mainly directed to in-group members (Falk et al., 2012). Therefore, it may not help to change negative attitudes towards the out-group members in some contexts. To illustrate, a study found that dispositional PT does not affect partisan prejudice (Simas et al., 2020) in the U.S., while another study found that it decreases partisan prejudice in the Netherlands (Schumacher et al., 2023). However, contextual PT is demonstrated as an effective technique in promoting intergroup relations in various contexts (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Shih et al., 2009; Simonovits et al., 2018), including the political contexts (Sirin et al., 2017; Warner et al., 2020). As a result, the current study takes a contextual approach to PT.

2.2.2 Main Mechanisms of Perspective-taking

PT results in decreased conflict via two main mechanisms. Namely, PT shows its positive intergroup effects via affective and cognitive mechanisms. First, empathy is the primary affective mechanism resulting from PT. To illustrate, a study found that PT is associated with interpersonal liking, stronger approach-oriented behavior (approach-oriented action), and the tendency to accept intergroup inequality among group representatives through empathy (Gutenbrunner & Wagner, 2016).

Similarly, PT has increased empathic responding (Negd et al., 2011). Some researchers have distinguished types of empathic responding as parallel and reactive empathy and showed that both forms are associated with PT (Stephan & Finlay, 1999; Todd & Galinsky, 2014). Parallel empathy is experienced when individuals feel the same emotions as the target. For instance, individuals watching an immigrant experiencing harsh discrimination can feel anger or resentment towards those committing the discriminatory action. On the other hand, reactive empathy involves empathic concern or feeling concerned for the other's situation. For instance, feeling concerned about the well-being of homeless individuals is a form of reactive empathy. Both forms of empathic responding are related to more positive attitudes towards the target group.

However, the emotional consequences of involvement in parallel and reactive empathy forms can differ. For instance, Batson et al. (1997) experimentally tested how reactive and parallel empathy differ regarding the emotional responses they evoke. Accordingly, respondents listened to an interview with women in serious need. Instructions about listening to the interview varied based on the conditions. In the control group, participants were told to remain objective. In the first experimental group, they were instructed to imagine how women feel (reactive empathy). In the second experimental group, participants were asked to imagine how they would feel in the same situation (parallel empathy). Results showed that "imagining how you would feel" and "imagining how others feel" evoked empathy. Nevertheless, while the former yielded personal distress, the latter triggered altruistic motivation.

Second, the primary cognitive manifestation of PT is the increased overlap in the mental representation of the other and self (self-other overlap). In this way, PT predicts positive evaluations towards outgroup members. As this self-other overlap increases, perspective takers see themselves as more related to the outgroup (Davis, 1983, 2018). Thus, while the perception of similarity between groups increases, negative evaluations towards the outgroup decrease after PT. For example, PT reduces group-based stereotypes and increases positive out-group evaluations (Galinsky, 2002; Todd & Galinsky, 2014).

Two processes described from PT to self-other overlap (Galinsky et al., 2005). One is the "application of the self to the other." That means the representation of the other becomes the self-representation of the perspective-taker. This improves social

relationships by decreasing prejudice and stereotyping toward the target. On the other hand, the second process involves oneself becoming other-like. That means the characteristics of the target become part of the self-description of the perspective-taker. This increases coordination with others and improves social bonds. Therefore, in the individual's mind, the other becomes like the individual themselves, while the individual becomes like the other.

Another cognitive manifestation of PT is that PT leads to shifts in attributional thinking. To illustrate, perspective-takers are more likely to attribute causes of out-group behavior to non-dispositional factors like situational reasons. That is to say, PT helps individuals emphasize factors beyond the target out-group members to explain their behavior while lessening the importance given to the factors caused by the target. Experimental evidence shows that taking the perspective of an African American student increased pro-Black attitudes by fostering situational attributions to explain occurrences faced by Jamal (e.g., Vescio et al., 2003). Accordingly, undergraduate students listened to an interview with an African American male, Jamal, who was talking about the hard times he had as a result of his racial group members (e.g., difficulty asking professors for help when he had trouble with the course material, feeling insecure about his academic abilities, feeling out of place and different from most others).

Participants were assigned to three conditions: objective-focus, “imagine-self,” and “imagine-other.” Instructions for listening to the interview varied according to the conditions. Respondents in the objective-focus condition were asked to remain emotionally detached and objective while listening to the student’s experiences. On the other hand, the “imagine-self” group was instructed to imagine themselves in the same situation as Jamal. Lastly, participants in the imagine-other condition were asked to imagine how Jamal felt through these experiences. To assess attributional thinking, participants were described various situations faced by the target student (e.g., “Jamal described difficulty asking professors for help when he has trouble with course material) and asked to rate to what extent factors beyond Jamal caused each experience. Higher ratings for the factors beyond Jamal’s control mean a higher tendency to explain causes by situational factors.

Results showed that, in general, PT tasks increased pro-Black attitudes. Participants who adopted the target African American student’s perspective while

listening to the difficulties the student faced due to his racial group membership tended to emphasize situational causes to explain these difficulties. Similarly, this shift in the attributions manifests itself in acknowledging the intergroup disparities. For instance, following PT towards Black or Latino targets, individuals tend to use discrimination-based explanations rather than motivation-based explanations to explain intergroup inequalities (Todd et al., 2012).

Overall, PT is a shared capacity for all humans and produces favorable intergroup outcomes via cognitive and affective mechanisms (see also De Waal, 2008). Nevertheless, this reveals two main confusions regarding its effects. First, whether both cognitive and affective mechanisms are equally necessary and sufficient conditions for PT to reduce out-group prejudice is not clear. Second, which mechanism works better in which conditions is another important issue. Knowing that would lead to making precise predictions about PT's outcome regarding AP, which is measured in both affective and cognitive ways (see Druckman & Levendusky, 2019; Iyengar et al., 2019).

First, out-group PT is an important mechanism of inter-group contact through which the contact experience reduces prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Therefore, to understand the necessary and sufficient conditions of PT in reducing partisan animosity, one can look at the optimal conditions of intergroup contact to reduce prejudice, as described by Allport (1954). Accordingly, the conditions include equal group status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority support. Therefore, in a non-threatening cooperative setting where partisans are given equal status and have the authority support for contact, inter-party contact would produce beneficial outcomes, thus reducing polarization (see also Pettigrew, 1998). Therefore, in a warmth-inducing setting where partisans simply are encouraged to emphasize the other or feel the other, a depolarization attempt would be successful. Namely, the effect of intergroup contact on prejudice reduction can be mainly through affective (e.g., emotional reactions) rather than cognitive channels (e.g., stereotypes) (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005; see also Finlay & Stephan, 2000). Therefore, one should acknowledge that cognitive mechanisms such as understanding the out-partisans might not be sufficient or necessary to depolarize partisans.

Second, some explanations have been provided for the conditions that interact with the mechanisms in producing beneficial outcomes. Therefore, rather than

focusing on which mechanisms apply more, this line of work focuses on the conditions in which each of the mechanisms works better. One explanation is that when the information about the target (e.g., information about negative experiences) is high, cognitive mechanisms (self-outgroup merging) are likely to operate compared to affective mechanisms (empathy) (Todd & Galinsky, 2014). If we consider that partisans hardly have contact with those from the other parties, we can estimate that the level of knowledge about out-partisans will be limited in general. Therefore, cognitive mechanisms are unlikely to operate. However, some studies showed that this is not the case. For instance, one study testing the effect of perspective-taking in a narrative-writing exercise on political polarization showed that PT reveals both cognitive and affective intergroup outcomes favorably (Warner et al., 2020). Specifically, PT increased the self-other overlap, decreased the attribution of malevolence for the out-party behavior, and improved the effect on the out-party. Even the cognitive mechanisms were stronger than the effective ones. Therefore, in this study, it is predicted that the PT will reveal its influence in both affective and cognitive dimensions of partisan prejudice.

In sum, in the current investigation, I focused on out-group targeted PT and defined PT as involving both cognitive and affective states in predicting affective polarization.

2.3 Perspective-Taking and Affective Polarization

In polarized contexts, individuals prefer to interact with those who have similar ideological opinions or tend to get information from attitude-consistent media sources. In other words, partisans tend to live in ‘echo chambers’ where exposure to ideological diversity is very limited. This “selective exposure” in the communication networks contributes to the intensification of bias toward the political outgroup, thereby polarization (Stroud, 2010; Wilson et al., 2020). To illustrate, a study testing the effect of exposure to pro-partisan media on AP in Israel and the U.S. found that attitude-consistent information exposure via media increases polarized attitudes toward candidates and party supporters (Garrett et al., 2014).

In this attitude-reinforcing environment, partisans tend to be misinformed about politics and have a biased perspective in evaluating political outgroups. For instance, a study in the U.S. demonstrated that Democrats and Republicans consider

their political opponents more ideologically extreme and politically engaged than they are (Druckman et al., 2022). These stereotypes, in turn, increased the negative feelings toward their opponents. Similarly, another study showed that partisans tend to be misinformed about the extremity of political out-groups and in-groups (Ahler, 2014). That is to say, individuals tend to overestimate the ideological extremity of both conservatives and liberals, and this bias contributes to their policy positions. Overall, in polarized contexts, partisans are likely to view the political world with a biased perspective, which can contribute to the intensification of partisan hatred.

However, when people have an opportunity to encounter facts, their attitudes toward political opponents can become more positive. In other words, correcting partisan misperceptions or exposing partisans to attitude-inconsistent information has yielded promising outcomes regarding cross-partisan relations. To illustrate, an experimental study tested whether more realistic information about the political opponents' ideological extremity and political engagement influences AP. It was found that AP decreased considerably after evaluating ideologically moderate and less engaged out-partisans (Druckman et al., 2022). In other words, realistic information about the out-group reduced partisan animosity toward the out-party. Moreover, another study finds that politically heterogeneous discussion networks are related to greater awareness of the legitimate reasons for opposing views (e.g., Kim, 2015; Mutz, 2002; Mutz & Mondak, 2006). In other words, discussing politics with politically dissimilar others is linked with understanding why political opponents hold up opposing views. The increasing out-group understanding, in turn, contributes to political tolerance. Providing partisans with realistic information about political opponents via cross-cutting exposure or correcting misperceptions can eliminate partisan animosity.

However, factual knowledge by itself does not always work. In other words, giving factual knowledge is not always enough to reveal beneficial consequences in developing positive interpersonal outcomes. To illustrate, a study examining the effect of exposure to opposing views on social media found that cross-cutting exposure increases polarization on issue attitudes among Democrats and Republicans (Bail et al., 2018). Instead, as an affective state indicating hatred towards the out partisans, partisan animosity requires targeting with affective or interpersonal strategies.

For instance, a study examined the effect of exposure to opposing feeds on Twitter on understanding people with opposing views (Saveski et al., 2022). This study found that simply exposing partisans with opposing views did not increase the understanding of political opponents. However, partisans reported more understanding when opposing feeds were framed with an empathic prompt. In other words, when participants were asked to recall a disagreement with a friend while reading an opposing feed, they were more likely to understand why others wrote opposing feeds. Therefore, positive cross-partisan relations will likely occur when factual information is combined with empathic activation. Similarly, Muradova (2021), showed in her case study with Irish Citizens' Assembly members that when objective information about the members accompanied by personal stories increases, the tendency to understand the experiences and feelings of others increases. This, in turn, had a positive outcome regarding the intergroup negotiation. Moreover, another study testing the link between political disagreement and empathy supported this argument with experimental evidence (Muradova & Arceneaux, 2022). Accordingly, participants read a vignette about a fictional character named Sarah, with her picture seen, who has opposing views on a policy issue. Participants were asked to imagine Sarah's feelings and thoughts in the experimental condition and write what they imagined. There were no additional instructions in the placebo condition. Results showed that participants who imagined the target person's feelings and thoughts reported more reflective reasoning on political issues and empathic concern toward those with opposing views (see also Kubin et al., 2023)

Overall, individuals perceive the world through their partisan lenses in polarized environments, contributing to the heightened negativity towards opposing partisans. However, correcting those biases or encountering opposing views can reduce polarization as long as they are accompanied by strategies targeting interpersonal relations. Therefore, both cognitive and affective mechanisms need to eliminate partisan animosity. This would help to correct biases and understand others (cognitive) while activating positive feelings such as empathy (affective).

As a result, PT emerges as a very successful strategy to eliminate partisan animosity. PT eliminates out-group prejudice by both cognitive and affective mechanisms. For instance, PT is related to the increased overlap in the mental representation of the other and self (self-other overlap) and reduced group-based

stereotypes (Galinsky, 2002; Todd & Galinsky, 2014). These represent the cognitive mechanisms of PT. On the other hand, PT is related to empathic responding (e.g., Negd et al., 2011) and multiple forms of empathy (Stephan & Finlay, 1999; Todd & Galinsky, 2014). These represent the affective mechanisms of PT. Overall, with impacting cognitive and affective processes, PT can be a very effective depolarization strategy. For example, an experimental study demonstrated that narrative writing exercises, including perspective-taking towards an out-partisan target, increased perceived similarity with an out-group target and decreased AP (Warner et al., 2020).

However, PT has not always resulted in desirable outcomes regarding intergroup relations. Knowing that when PT potentially has backfire effects, it would be helpful to understand the appropriate approaches to PT in depolarizing political opponents.

2.3.1 Undesirable Effects of PT in Political Contexts

PT does not always yield positive outcomes in political contexts. That is because of a few reasons. First, PT is a cognitively effortful process that individuals might be willing to avoid sometimes. Second, dispositional PT and empathic concern may not help produce positive outcomes regarding out-group evaluations. Third, there are some conditions under which even non-trait-based PT produces undesirable results. Specifically, competitive environments and situations where the social distance level between groups is high tend to play a role in producing the backfire effects of PT. On the other hand, perceived similarity, familiarity, social closeness, positive past experiences, and cooperative relations with the target person increase the likelihood of empathic activation. This, in turn, can positively affect PT in terms of out-group evaluations.

First, PT requires cognitive effort (Davis et al., 1996; Fennis, 2011). That is because the process of taking the others' perspective involves mentally distinguishing the self from the other (e.g., Gerace et al., 2013). Namely, to take the perspective of others, one needs to leave "selfish" focus at the expense of "others." However, some studies made the PT less effortful by focusing on the "imagine-self" instead of "imagining other." That is, rather than asking individuals to put themselves in the shoes of others, they asked respondents to imagine themselves in the situation of

others (e.g., Vorauer & Sasaki, 2014). Nevertheless, “imagine-self-concept” is not suitable for partisanship since imagining oneself in a position of the out-partisans would be even more difficult. That is because of the nature of the partisanship. Partisanship operates as more of a collection of multiple social identities like ideology, religion, and race in polarized contexts (Mason, 2018a; Mason & Wronski, 2018). Given the deep and broad meaning of partisanship for individuals, PT towards out-partisans would mean imagining oneself in a totally different world. As a result, “imagine-self” does not seem to be a suitable solution to decrease the effort of PT in the context of partisanship. We need other solutions to develop an effective PT technique in a partisanship context.

Second, some studies center around dispositional empathy, and PT failed to find an effect of empathy in political contexts. To illustrate, a study showed that empathic concern toward political adversaries intensifies negative political out-group assessments, while PT has no effect in the U.S. (Simas et al., 2020). However, another study conducted in the Netherlands context failed to replicate the findings of Simas et al.’s (2020) study regarding PT (Schumacher et al., 2023). Specifically, as opposed to empathic concern, PT was linked with reduced levels of AP towards political opponents. Another study found that dispositional PT predicted lower levels of political outgroup avoidance in the U.K. and the U.S. (Harper & Fido, 2018). However, the results were not that promising regarding dispositional empathy. Therefore, while the results for empathic concern are not promising, trait-PT is related to lower prejudice towards political opponents.

It is also worth noting that these studies considered PT as a trait-based construct. Trait-based PT, or dispositional PT, is mainly directed at in-group members; therefore, it may not always benefit out-group-related attitudes like AP (Falk et al., 2012). This might be the reason for the inconsistent results for the effect of dispositional PT. On the other hand, when PT is directed to out-group, it reveals positive outcomes. In other words, environmentally induced, out-group PT has successfully reduced outgroup hostility in many contexts (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). For instance, Muradova (2020) showed in her case study with Irish Citizens' Assembly members that PT increases people's reflective judgment during democratic negotiations. Specifically, the survey study and in-depth interviews showed that when objective information about the members accompanied by personal stories of them

increases, the tendency to understand the experiences and feelings of others increases. This, in turn, had a positive outcome regarding the intergroup negotiation. This has the potential to reduce animosity. Even the belief in the utility of cross-partisan empathy decreases partisan animosity (Santos et al., 2022).

Third, some experimental studies have yet to find an effect of PT in reducing polarization in political contexts. However, those studies targeted change in attitudes towards policy issues rather than out-partisans (Brophy & Mullinix, 2023; Catapano et al., 2019; Tuller et al., 2015). Likewise, some other researchers tested how political opponents would think about a list of news headlines and found that PT exaggerates partisan biases (Gonzalez et al., 2024). However, PT is not solely based on a rational process; instead, it involves thinking of subjective experiences and the affective state of the other. Therefore, based on those studies, we can not infer a link between out-partisan PT and attitudes toward political opponents.

Fourth, apart from the “no effect” problem, PT can result in backfire effects in some environments. Accordingly, PT is likely to backfire if the context is competitive and the inter-group differences are high (e.g., Sassenrath et al., 2016). However, previous studies have mostly focused on non-political contexts using experimentally manipulated games (e.g., Pierce et al., 2013). Therefore, there is no information on the validity of the backfire effects of the competition in political contexts such as electoral competition. Still, we can anticipate that PT might have a backfire effect because of the heightened perception of competition during electoral salience. This is because as elections get closer, partisan hatred increases (Hernández et al., 2021).

However, competition in electoral contexts might not manifest its adverse attitudinal effects towards partisans. Instead, electoral salience might lead to increased negativity towards political leaders and parties as the main actors of competition. In addition, citizens may evaluate parties, leaders, and partisans differently (Druckman & Levendusky, 2018); therefore, electoral competition does not necessarily result in perceiving the relations between masses as competitive. In addition, some studies showed that PT can be beneficial in some competitive contexts. To illustrate, experimental evidence shows that PT is related to prosocial negotiation outcomes (Galinsky et al., 2008). This is because PT increases individuals' ability to discover hidden agreements and claim resources during bargaining.

Finally, PT backfires if the target is perceived as very different from the self or in the context of negative self-evaluation (Vorauer et al., 2009). In other words, when the target is too different from the self, PT increases threat perception towards the self-values. On the other hand, inducing similarity can help PT to reduce out-partisan hostility (Warner et al., 2020). Besides, if the context where the PT takes place evokes negative meta-stereotypes in the sense that the perception regarding how the out-group perceives the individual, then PT backfires. To illustrate, an experimental study that reported null findings regarding PT effects on AP has followed an intervention strategy with a risk of negative meta-stereotyping (Inaltekin, 2023). In the experiment, participants read a study about an out-partisan target person discriminated by the in-group in one PT condition. In this story, the participants' political group was pictured as threatening and had a bad image in the eyes of the out-group. The fact that PT did not work out here might be because it implies negative self-evaluation (see Sassenrath et al., 2016).

All in all, all those works point to some caution on when to use PT to obtain desired effects. PT can result in undesired effects in reducing partisan animosity, depending on the type of PT and the characteristics of the context. Situationally induced or out-partisan-focused PT might better predict lower partisan prejudice than dispositional PT. In addition, PT does not yield positive outcomes in contexts that highlight negative meta-perceptions, inter-party differences, and electoral competition. Instead, conditions that help to activate empathic processes would be helpful to boost the understanding of others' mindsets. Those conditions include perceived similarity, familiarity, social closeness, positive past experiences, and cooperative relations with the target (De Waal, 2008b).

Still, PT can effectively mitigate partisan prejudice if it targets the out-group and is exercised in appropriate contexts. For instance, a study investigating the effects of PT on opposing Tweets on social media found that PT increases the tendency to understand why tweeters with opposing views and different opinions are willing to communicate with them in the future (e.g., Saveski, 2022). Therefore, PT towards political opponents increased understanding and willingness to contact political opponents. Understanding legitimate rationales for political opponents' views positively predicts political tolerance (e.g., Mutz, 2002). Therefore, PT might be related to increasing political tolerance.

In addition, an experimental study involving door-to-door canvassing about a salient political issue (undocumented immigrants) and the 2020 presidential elections in the U.S. demonstrated the prosocial implications of PT toward political adversaries (Kalla & Broockman, 2022). The canvassing involved the exchange of narratives between political activists and study participants. During those communications, participants heard about the personal experiences of political adversaries and, therefore, had the opportunity to learn about the out-partisan perspective. This, in turn, improved their attitudes towards political out-group members and undocumented immigrants. Similarly, another experimental study showed that narrative writing exercises involving PT tasks reduced out-party hostility (Warner et al., 2020). These findings show the promising effects of PT regarding depolarization.

2.4 Concluding Remarks

Following the party-over policy hypothesis rooted in Social Identity Theory (SIT), this dissertation tests PT, an intergroup conflict reduction technique, in predicting less AP. In polarized contexts, voters have limited knowledge about the political opponents because of reasons like selective exposure, media effects, and partisan sorting. This, in turn, is likely to result in the intensification of partisan hatred. However, processes that motivate individuals to understand the feelings and thoughts of political opponents have vast potential to fill the knowledge gap while encouraging them to humanize the other side.

Chapter 3

A QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION: THE CASE OF TURKEY

In this chapter, I aim to shed light on the dynamics of affective polarization (AP) in multiparty systems using information from in-depth interviews conducted in Turkey, a typical multiparty context. Another aim here is to explore the process of taking the out-partisan perspective. In doing so, findings contribute to the experimental study conducted in Turkey and the U.S., which I describe in the next chapter. Accordingly, I recommend alliance-based AP measurement in Turkey and an out-partisan-based PT intervention technique in the experiments (Chapter 4) based on the information from the present chapter.

Measuring the AP in two-party systems is straightforward. A typical measure is based on the difference in ratings for the most and least-liked parties (e.g., Druckman & Levendusky, 2019; Iyengar et al., 2019). However, measuring AP in multiparty contexts is more complex because there are multiple parties with differing ties. Researchers have not yet reached a consensus on measuring AP in multiparty systems. Various approaches have been used, ranging from reductionist approaches to more complex frameworks. Although a coalition-based complex form seems to capture AP in multiparty settings better, the studies have relied on specific contexts (e.g., Sweden) with stable coalition structures overlapping ideological divisions (e.g., Reiljan & Ryan, 2021). Therefore, our knowledge of how to use AP measures in multiparty settings beyond these contexts is very limited.

In this chapter, I recommend using qualitative methods to develop contextually valid AP measures for multiparty systems. I argue that assessing AP in multiparty systems can be context-dependent in the sense that an approach suited to one national context might not work in another. In doing so, I focus on the Turkish case, which is a

typical multiparty context in which the alliance structure is not completely based on the ideological differences of the parties.

My other aim here is to explore which type of perspective-taking (PT) technique might help partisans to have more positive attitudes towards out-partisans. The dispositional type of PT, which measures one's general tendency for PT, does not always help improve intergroup positivity (Falk et al., 2012; Simas et al., 2020). On the other hand, situationally induced PT directed toward target out-groups successfully reduced out-group animus in various contexts (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). Two main types of situational PT have been used to reduce intergroup conflicts. One is policy-based PT, which involves reasons for holding opposite policies (e.g., Brophy & Mullinix, 2023; Catapano et al., 2019; Tuller et al., 2015). The other is person-focused or partisan-focused PT, which involves thinking about the legitimate stances of an out-partisan (Todd et al., 2011; Warner et al., 2020). Therefore, in this chapter, I aim to understand whether and how partisan-based and policy-based PT techniques can help partisans understand out-partisan perspectives.

The data was based on in-depth interviews conducted with 23 participants recruited through various social media channels and Facebook advertisements. The main questions that I focused on are as follows: How do party identification and out-group evaluations shape AP in Turkey? To what extent can the AP measures used in Western countries be applied to a multiparty Turkish context? What traits are attributed to political outgroup members? How are participants involved in the out-partisan PT process? How can partisans take the perspective of out-partisans in a way that boosts positive intergroup attitudes?" I discussed the findings in light of the identity-based approach to AP and alternative PT interventions to reduce cognitive effort in the PT process.

I found that partisans are more likely to describe their in-party in a more favorable way than the least-liked party. In addition, the descriptions of parties within the alliance were not generally negative. On the other hand, participants in opposition tend to indicate unfavorable attitudes towards the two largest parties within the People's Alliance. Furthermore, I observed a tendency to favor parties within the alliance, although less salient among Nation Alliance supporters. This shows that, while the in-party has primacy, individuals have adopted within and between the alliance distinction. This supports the fact that in-group and out-group distinctions are feasible between in-parties and out-coalitions in the Turkish context. Additionally, PT focusing on out-partisans

rather than opposing policies yields deeper and more positive evaluations of out-party supporters.

Utilizing qualitative data in this type of study has two main advantages. First, the in-depth information gathered from the interviews helped me understand partisan perceptions regarding their most liked and least liked party supporters and the alliance groupings. This helped me to explore affective blocs to be constructed to measure AP in Turkey. Second, interviews captured the details of the out-partisan PT processing, which provided the necessary information on how to use effective PT intervention techniques to reduce AP. I discussed the results considering out-partisan PT in general, AP measures in multiparty systems, and partisan prejudice in the context of Turkey.

Now, I will continue with an explanation of reductionist and complex views on measuring AP in multiparty systems. Next, I will describe the policy- and partisan-based PT. Then, I will briefly discuss the current electoral scene in Turkey. Subsequently, I will summarize the data and the main findings of the interviews. Finally, I will conclude the chapter.

3.1 Reductionist vs. Complex Views in Assessing AP in Multiparty Systems

Various approaches have been adopted to assess AP in multiparty systems to date. Those approaches can be classified into two categories: reductionist and complex views. Reductionist approaches treat multiparty systems as two-party systems and typically divide parties into two groups (e.g., Gidron et al., 2019; Iyengar et al., 2012; Garrett et al., 2014). For example, one can take the average distance between one's feelings toward the party they support (in-party) and all other parties (out-party). Similar reductionist tendencies are also observed in studies comparing multiparty and two-party systems. Some of these studies focused only on two main parties in the electoral scene (e.g., Gidron et al., 2019; Iyengar et al., 2012). On the other hand, other studies divided the parties into two groups along the left-right dimension.

For instance, Garrett et al. (2014) divided the parties in the Israeli multiparty context into two groups on the left-right dimension to compare Israel with the two-party U.S. Similarly, to assess AP in the multiparty Norwegian context (Knudsen, 2021) divided Norwegian respondents into two coalition blocks (i.e., government coalition, and opposition coalition). to compare Norway and the U.S. regarding the AP levels. Although

the reductionist approach to AP provides simplicity and the ability to compare a multiparty system with other two-party systems, this approach has some limitations. For instance, the reductionist approach neglects the nature of multiparty systems in that multiparty systems involve more than two parties, and partisans can have positive or negative feelings toward more than two parties.

On the other hand, complex views recognize that each partisan can have positive feelings toward more than one party. For instance, Wagner's (2021) "spread" measure involves the average absolute party-like-dislike difference relative to each respondent's average party-like-dislike score. This score is also weighted based on the percentage of the parties' votes. Although the "spread" measure captures the nature of multiparty systems, it does not prioritize an individual's in-party feelings. Rather, the spread approach treats in-party ratings as those of all other parties. Specifically, no "in-party" score is specified in the formula. This is against the premise of Social Identity Theory (SIT) on which the AP was built (Hobolt et al., 2021; Iyengar et al., 2019; Iyengar et al., 2019). Social Identity Theory (Turner & Tajfel, 1979) asserts that group identity plays a crucial role in determining out-group (party) prejudice. Therefore, one should consider in-group (party) attachment as a primacy in assessing partisan animus.

A few studies have been conducted in the Swedish multiparty context that have acknowledged the crucial role of in-party attachment in their measure of AP (e.g., Huddy et al., 2018; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021). However, it is not yet known whether this framework suits other multiparty contexts. For instance, in Sweden, there is an almost perfect overlap between the ideological stances of parties and coalition blocs. However, the multiparty contexts vary in their degree of overlap between the ideological stances of the parties and coalition structures and the coalition instability, which in turn can affect the feelings towards the "other" parties.

However, a few other studies conducted in the Swedish multiparty context have acknowledged the primacy of in-party ratings in AP measurements. Renström et al. (2021) concentrated on the ratings for the preferred party and like-dislike scores for all other parties. Since the participants' preferred party was known (in-party), the differences in ratings between the ingroup and outgroup parties were calculated. Overall, the AP score was calculated based on the difference between the like-scoring for the in-party and each out-group party, and the sum of these differences was then averaged. Although this approach suits the SIT premises, an important feature of multiparty systems has been

neglected. Parties within multiparty systems generally form alliances; this, in turn, affects individuals' perceptions of both parties. Consequently, an approach that considers the effect of alliance structure might provide a more realistic picture of how AP looks like an individual in a given national context. This is because individuals can feel loyal not only to their in-party but also to the parties of the in-coalition in a multiparty system.

For instance, Huddy et al. (2018) used an AP measurement in a Swedish multiparty context, considering the alliance structure. Accordingly, two types of AP assessments were used. In the first AP measure, the ratings for the parties within the coalition, except for the in-party, are referred to as out-party ratings. In the second AP measure, the composite ratings for all parties in the out-coalition are considered as out-party ratings. Therefore, in-party favoritism has priority in both measures (see. Reiljan and Ryan, 2021, for a similar approach).

However, there is no information on whether this approach is suitable for other national contexts. The Swedish case is *sui generis* in the sense that the coalitional governments in Sweden are based on the left-right dimension. In addition, individuals highly favor within-coalition parties in Sweden. This might not be the case in other contexts, especially where coalitions are not always clearly distinguished based on ideological differences. For example, while considering the polarization of political parties or coalition blocks along the left-right dimension is suitable in the context of Israel (e.g., Garrett et al., 2014), Sweden, and Norway, it may not be appropriate in other multiparty countries (see, Sigelman & Yough, 1978). To illustrate, in Turkey, electoral alliances do not overlap with the ideological orientations of the political parties. In addition, there are multiparty systems characterized by shifting government coalitions, such as Finland (Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021). Therefore, an approach used in one multiparty context does not necessarily apply to another. An exploratory perspective is needed to assess AP in each multiparty context to capture context-specific interrelationships between parties. Nevertheless, studies examining AP in multiparty systems mostly prioritize grouping parties based on blocs or government coalitions. As a result, our knowledge of context-specific exploration of AP in multiparty systems is limited.

Therefore, the present chapter aims to fill this gap by conducting an exploratory study on affective polarization in Turkey. I argue that each multiparty system has its own unique conditions regarding the overlap between ideology and electoral coalitions and the

stability of government coalitions, which should guide the way of assessing AP in that specific multiparty context. Turkish case provides an opportunity to test these assumptions within a typical multiparty context where coalition structures are unstable or overlap the ideological distinction between parties.

3.2 *Current Electoral Scene in Turkey*

At the time of the data collection for the present study, the Turkish electoral scene was composed of six main political parties: The ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), the main opposition party, Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP), Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) and Good Party (İyi Parti, İYİP), the Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP), Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP). The People's Alliance (Cumhur İttifakı) is an electoral alliance established between AKP and MHP to contest the 2018 general election. On the other hand, an oppositional alliance called Nation Alliance (Millet İttifakı) was formed among the main opposition party, CHP, and the two other opposition parties (İYİP and SP) against the incumbent alliance.

The structure of these alliances is not fully related to their ideological differences. Although the parties in the People's Alliance are right-wing conservative parties, parties within the Nation Alliance are ideologically different. Specifically, the main opposition party, CHP, is a social democratic, secularist party. On the other hand, the İYİP and SP are right-wing nationalist and pro-Islamist parties, respectively. Therefore, there are large ideological differences within the oppositional alliance. However, the parties maintained peaceful relations and united against the presidential system, the newly elected President Erdogan, and the People's Alliance. The lack of overlap between ideological orientations within one of the alliances makes measuring AP a more challenging issue compared to the other national contexts, which have a stable coalitional division along the left-right dimension (Huddy et al., 2018; Reijlan & Ryan, 2021). This is because partisans do not consistently rate within coalition parties favorably because of the ideological divisions. Therefore, considering the parties in the coalition as one group does not make sense regarding the affective dimension of the polarization. Below, the graph shows the like-dislike ratings of the six main parties by the partisans in 2018 based on the data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems. Accordingly, participants rated their evaluations of each political party on a 10-point Likert-type scale from 0 (strongly dislike) to 10

(strongly like). The graph shows that all partisans rated their party as the most liked one, an expected finding highlighting the in-group favoritism. When we look at the ratings for the parties within one's coalition, AKP and MHP supporters rated each other favorably. However, partisans who support the parties in the oppositional alliance cannot be considered homogenous regarding their ratings for the parties within the alliance.

3.3 *Policy-based PT vs. Partisan-based PT*

As outlined in the theoretical chapter, situational or contextual PT can effectively reduce out-partisan prejudice. There are two types of contextual PT: policy- and out-partisan-based. Typically, in a policy-based PT process, individuals are asked to try to understand the reasons behind opposing policy views. These studies have revealed conflicting results regarding the effects of PT. For example, Tuller et al. (2015) showed that if individuals do not meet the target and are not held accountable for their views, PT does not change their attitudes towards opposing political views (for a similar study, see Catapano et al., 2019). However, another study found that taking a policy issue-based perspective positively predicts political tolerance (e.g., Mutz, 2002).

However, attitudes toward policy issues differ from those toward partisans. While the former concerns one's issue positions, the latter is relational. Therefore, AP is rooted in cross-partisan relations, which can manifest differently from policy-based attitudes. For instance, Muradova and Arceneaux (2022) showed that participants who imagined the target person's feelings and thoughts reported more reflective reasoning about political issues and empathic concern toward those with opposing views (see also Kubin et al., 2023). Out-of-partisan PT yielded more favorable out-party attitudes in other experiments (Warner et al., 2020). Nevertheless, out-partisan-based PT has been shown to trigger undesirable effects (Sassenrath et al., 2016).

Overall, both policy- and partisan-based PT can result in unwanted consequences. Understanding the underlying mechanisms of these effects is important for the effective use of PT in the context of partisanship. Therefore, in-depth interviews were used in the current study to understand the out-partisan PT process in detail. This study can inform future experimental studies that prefer using PT to reduce partisan hatred.

Therefore, in the current chapter, inspired by Mutz's (2002) "Understanding the Rationales for Opposing Viewpoints" Scale and typical PT interventions (Todd et al.,

2011), I constructed two types of PT techniques (partisan-based PT vs. policy-based PT) to understand whether and how PT might help to encourage cross-partisan PT.

In this chapter, I have two main purposes. First, I seek to understand how existing AP assessments can be used in Turkey. Second, I examine the role of PT in the context of partisanship to inform future studies on how PT interventions can eliminate AP. I used a qualitative methodology, i.e., in-depth interviews, to shed light on the details and underlying mechanisms. In addition, I focused on the current highly polarized and typical multiparty Turkish case with a distinctive alliance structure.

3.4 Data

I collected the data in two steps. First, I distributed a short Qualtrics survey link on social media channels (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp) to find suitable volunteers for the interviews. The survey included questions about demographics, party identification, and contact information. Also, respondents were asked if they wanted to participate in interviews as follow-up research. Volunteered participants left their contact information, and I contacted them via e-mail or phone, depending on the type of contact information.

Between the 11th of December 2021 – 31st of March 2022 and the 11th of December – 25th of February, I manually shared the anonymous survey link through various social media channels. However, since the data remained very limited to people with certain demographics and party identities, I used Facebook advertisements to recruit participants following the guidelines of Neundorff and Öztürk's handbook (2021). Four periods of data collection are as follows: 25th February - 4th March 2022, 9th – 16th March 2022, 11st – 16th March 2022, 24th -31st March. Using Facebook Ads helped me reach a broader sample with different party identities compared to the previous sample.

A total of 939 participants provided consent to participate in the study. Among them, 280 (29.8%) agreed to participate in the interviews and left contact information. Among the volunteers, I decided who to invite to the interviews based on three main criteria. The first criterion was whether or not the participant supported any of the five political parties (AKP, CHP, HDP, IYIP, and MHP; $n=231$, 82.5%). The second was having a party identification level equal to or above five out of ten ($n=237$, 84.64%). However, I ceased to recruit CHP supporters as a sufficient number of the group members

were interviewed ($n=10, 43.48\%$)⁹. The third was centered around the notion of saturation in that no further invitation was sent after the new interviews no longer provided new insights for the research question (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Ultimately, I invited 99 participants to participate in the interview; among them, 23 (Female=12, 52.2%) participated. Table 3.1 shows the demographic characteristics of the study sample. Apart from CHP, 4 (17.4%) were AKP, 3 (13%) were HDP, 5 were IYIP (21.7%), and 1 (4.3%) were MHP supporters. Participants are highly educated, as 9 (39.1%) reported undergraduate degrees, and 7 (30.4%) reported graduate degrees. Most of the participant's income level is described as middle ($n=12, 52.2\%$)¹⁰.

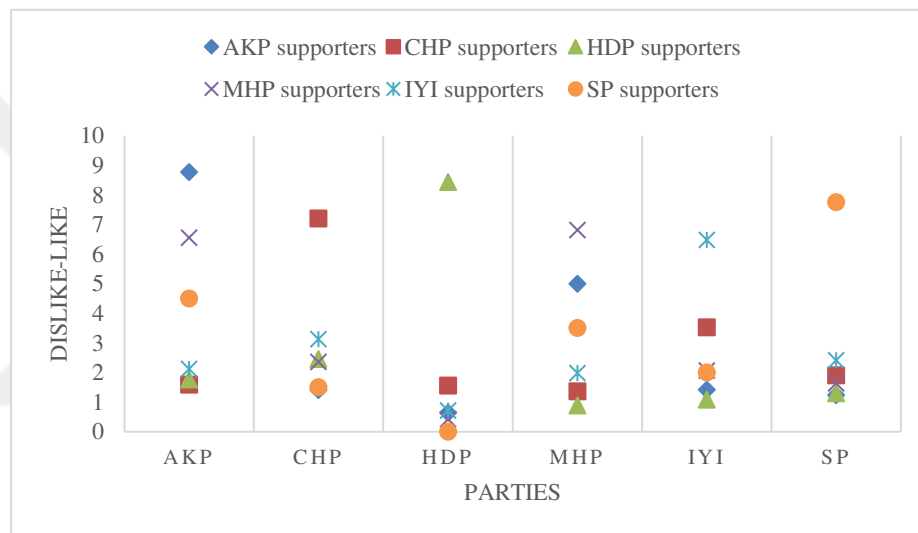


Figure 3.1: Party like-dislike Scores Across Partisans (CSES, 2018).

⁹ Most volunteers were CHP supporters ($n=135, 48.2\%$).

¹⁰ Income level categorization was as follows: 1= Low: 1.000-5.000, 2: Middle= 5.000-11.000, 3. High= 12.000 and higher

One explanation for the lack of coherence in ratings within the Nation Alliance can be ideological dissimilarity between the parties. On the other hand, parties in the People's Alliance share a common ideological stance by being conservative right-wing parties; thereby, they rate each other favorably. However, this does not explain why SP, a far-right party, highly disliked the parties in the People's Alliance. Besides, for IYIP supporters, the most liked out-party is CHP, although it is still far beyond "liking". As a result, we cannot explain the incoherence of the ratings solely based on the ideological differences between parties in the oppositional alliance. It seems that both ideological similarities and alliance structures played a role in determining AP in Turkey. Therefore, AP assessment in Turkey is not straightforward and requires further investigation.

Given the heterogeneity of the ratings of parties by different partisans, existing strategies assuming ideological homogeneity within coalitions would be insufficient for use in Turkey. Therefore, leaving the apriorist assumptions behind, in this chapter, I explore what kind of AP representation partisans have in Turkey. My other goal in the present chapter is to explore the process of getting an out-party perspective in reducing partisan hatred. The next section briefly describes the policy- and partisan-based techniques used in this study.

Table 3.1: Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample.

Party	Education	Age	Income level	Female	Male
AKP	High school	41	2		1
		47	1		1
		57	1		1
	Graduate	42	2		1
CHP	Primary School	45	1	1	
	High school	60	1		1
	Undergraduate	25	2	1	
		55	2	1	
		64	2	2	
		75	2	1	
		39	3		1
	Graduate	42	2	1	
		58	2		1
	High school	58	1	1	
HDP	Graduate	32	2	1	
		71	3		1
	High school	62	2	1	
IYIP		57	2		1
		61	1		1
		73	3	1	
	Graduate	63	3		1
MHP	Undergraduate	34	1	1	

3.5 Procedure and Measurement

The participants answered a list of questions that I grouped into five sections. In the first section, participants answered a few general questions, including where they lived, whether they worked, and whom they lived with. In the second section, respondents indicated their political views. The questions were about political interests, political orientation, and political identification. I also asked if they have encountered very different political views, how they defined opposing political views, and how they (or would) react to people with opposing political views. The third section focuses on AP. In this section, I asked respondents if they think there is animosity between people with different political views in Turkey, how they define these camps, if they lean towards one of the camps, what kind of emotions they felt towards the supporter of the opposing political group (s), and how they define the characteristics of the members of the opposing groups. In the following section, questions centered on the AP regarding political party identification are presented. Therefore, questions were mostly like the third section but focused on parties rather than groups as defined by the respondents.

The last two sections consisted of questions about two types of PT (see Table 3.2 for a full description)¹¹. The fourth section focused on issue-based PT. Accordingly, respondents indicated their own opinion about a randomly selected policy issue among four alternatives (reconverting the Hagia Sophia Museum into a mosque, the presidency system, privatization of important industries, and education in the mother tongue)¹². Then, they elaborated on why they supported or opposed that policy. After obtaining their own opinions, I asked why their opponents think in the opposite way (“There are some people who have the opposite view on this issue. If we ask one of them about the reasons why he/she thinks like that, what would he/she say to us?”). For instance, if respondents supported the presidential system, I told them that some people opposed the presidential

¹¹ I was inspired by Mutz’s (2002) “Understanding the Rationales for Opposing Viewpoints” scale in developing issue-based PT questions. The partisan-based PT questionnaire was similar in structure but centered around the out-group members, which is similar to the PT experiments (see Todd et al., 2011).

¹² Three of the issues (reconverting the Hagia Sophia Museum into a mosque, the presidency system, and education in the mother tongue) were taken from Erdoğan and Semerci’s research presentation on the dimensions of polarization in Turkey in 2020 (<https://www.turkuazlab.org/>). The privatization issue was added to include an economic policy.

system in Turkey. Then, I asked them to indicate why those people might oppose the presidential system.

The last section focuses on out-partisan-PT. This time, I asked the participants about out-partisans themselves rather than opposing views. Specifically, respondents answered why they supported the political party that they supported. After that, I asked them what kind of reasons they could tell for other people who support the party that the respondent indicated as the “least-liked” (“If we would ask an out-partisan about the factors play a role in his/her support to that particular party, what would she/he say to us?”).

Table 3.2: Policy vs Person-Based PT.

	A. Policy-based	B. Partisan-based
Self	1-) What do you think about [POLICY ISSUE]? Do you support or oppose that policy? <i>-Presidency System</i> <i>-Conversion of Hagia Sophia Museum to a Mosque</i> <i>-Privatization of the institutions¹³</i>	1-) What factors might play a role in having a particular political view or feeling close to a political party but not others? 2-) What factors have played a role for you?
Other	2-) <i>-IF SUPPORT -></i> Why are some people opposed to [POLICY ISSUE]? ¹⁴ <i>-IF OPPOSE-></i> Why do some people support [POLICY ISSUE]?	3-) Why do people who support the [LEAST-LIKED PARTY]? What kind of factors would they tell us if there were one of those people here with us and were asked the same question?

¹³ 1. Do you support the transition to the presidential system in Turkey? 2. Do you support the conversion of the Hagia Sophia Museum to a Mosque? 3. Do you support the privatization of institutions?

¹⁴ This question was continued as such: “If there would be one of those people here with us and are asked to same question, what reasons would they tell us for supporting this idea?” to encourage participants to give an answer due to the fact that some respondents were reluctant to give an answer to the original question.

3.6 Main Findings

I transcribed the interviews partly manually and using voice docs, i.e., a web tool for transcribing audio data.¹⁵ Then, I coded transcripts to describe the main categories of AP assessment in Turkey and to use PT in the context of partisanship.

3.6.1 Assessing AP in Turkey

Main Actors: AKP vs Others

The main political actors of the AP were centered around the incumbent party, the AKP. Participants tended to provide clearer attitudes when describing the side of the incumbent party or incumbent alliance compared with the oppositional alliance or parties in the opposition. Therefore, participants described the main actors of polarization as those who supported or opposed the incumbent party. To illustrate, a male CHP supporter (39 years old, with a graduate degree and high income) indicated that “the main distinction is between the incumbent and the opposition.”. Similarly, a male AKP supporter (57 years old, high school graduate, low-income) argued that “...the Millet alliance has harmony within itself. On the other hand, others... There is no harmony between the incumbent and the opposition.”

Similarly, participants who pointed to Islamic-Secular or Kurdish-Turkish nationalism also named AKP as a main actor of polarization:

“I do not wear a headscarf. I have worked in my job for years. They look at us differently. Actually, I have religious beliefs. For instance, today, I read “cüz” from Kuran-I Kerim. But they judge us as if we do not wear headscarves. They gave us an evil eye just because we work. ...I do not know. They discriminate between us when they provide goods for the public. In general, AKP does that” (A female IYIP supporter, 62 years old, high school graduate, middle-income)

Another participant also argued that “There is a polarization between Turkish nationalists and Kurdish nationalists. Regarding political parties, AKP and MHP supporters certainly do not like CHP supporters [....]” (A female MHP supporter, 34 years old, undergraduate degree, middle-income)

¹⁵ <https://voicedocs.com/en>

When it comes to describing who is in- and who is out-group, “Cumhur Alliance” emerged as a main actor for both supporting Cumhur Alliance and oppositional alliances. For instance, incumbent alliance supporters tended to be comfortable mentioning both in-alliance parties (AKP and MHP), regardless of their party identification based on nationalism or Islamic values. This is expected since both parties are within the Cumhur Alliance and have a similar ideological stance closer to right-wing Islamism and nationalism.

“In general, nationalism... This is one of the commonalities between MHP and AKP. This is one of the things that bind both parties. It is true that they [MHP AND AKP] give crucial importance to nationalism. [...] Since nationalism is very important to me, I feel close to AKP and Cumhur Alliance.” (A male AKP supporter, 47 years old, high school graduate, low-income)

Similarly, respondents who support one of the oppositional alliances often indicated their negative feelings towards not only the least-liked party they stated but also all incumbent alliance parties (AKP, MHP). The results show that the incumbent alliance played an essential role in shaping partisans’ perceptions of AP in Turkey. To illustrate, a participant asserted, “The party that I like the least is AKP. MHP follows that” (A male CHP supporter, 58 years old, graduate degree, middle-income). Likewise, while indicating the least-like party, another participant revealed, “I really do not know if I should say AKP or MHP. However, I think MHP has turned out to be a very little thing. Therefore, there is no need to talk about it [MHP]. I would say AKP.” (A female HDP supporter, 32 years old, graduate degree, middle-income).

Although less frequently, supporters of the opposition also pointed to the similarities between parties within the alliance that they support despite ideological differences. For example, a female CHP voter made a clear distinction between two pro-Islamist parties, one of which was within the same alliance with the Felicity Party (CHP) and the other in the incumbent alliance (AKP).

“Religious” individuals can be secular, too, right? I distinguish “religious individuals” from “religionists”. By religionists, I mean those who do religious politics and push the public to polarization. I do not see AKP as a “religious” party. I see [AKP] as a “religionist” party. However, I see that the Felicity Party includes “religious” and capable individuals. (A female CHP supporter, 64 years old, undergraduate degree, middle-income)

Still, respondents in opposition did not mention in-alliance parties as frequently as incumbent alliance supporters. Rather, they distinguished their parties from other

alliance parties. Whereas for the incumbent alliance supporters, AKP and MHP can be considered as “in-party” together, for oppositional alliance supporters, in-party tend to be separated from the within alliance parties. Regardless of the party or alliance identification, respondents tended to indicate their favorability towards the other parties within the alliance they supported. Therefore, the “out-party” evaluations should be distinguished from the evaluations of parties within the alliance. Thus, it is better to conceptualize the out-party as composed of the evaluations of out-alliance parties. As a result, “in-party versus out-coalition/alliance blocs’ logic would be suitable to assess AP in Turkey.

Trait Ratings: illiteracy and fascism

Respondents used various traits to describe out-partisans, including the ones commonly used in trait-based AP subscales, such as extremity, morality (Huddy & Yair, 2021), selfishness, hypocrisy (e.g., Erdoğan and Semerci, 2020¹⁶; Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020). However, other traits often emerge to describe out-partisans. For instance, respondents in opposition who defined AKP as the least-liked party tend to use “illiteracy” and “ignorance” to describe AKP supporters:

“They have no standard of moral, conscience, religious or national standard of judgment... If you ask them for it, they would say, “I am Muslim, and I am an ethical, nationalist person.” However, they are not related to those concepts at all....Most of them are illiterate and uneducated....Illiterate people’s situation is explained by their illiteracy. Are there any educated people in this group? There are. Those (educated people) are completely immoral.” (A male CHP supporter, 58 years old, undergraduate degree, middle-income)

“They are selfish and greedy and want everybody (thinks, behaves, etc.) to like them. They do not defend the right to live of anybody who is not in their group. Being like them is like valuing property, a particular ancestry, some fabricated historical things...They do not have any tolerance towards those who do not share their opinion. They do not want their existence (those who think differently)...They have no tolerance towards others in the sense that they can extinguish the others.” (A female HDP supporter, 32 years old, graduate degree, low-income)

All of them are poor, uneducated, and illiterate. They get help (from the party). I hate those who get help. I do not even want to talk with them. Still, I pity them. I pity them because they are not questioning anything. [...] They are ignorant. Their brains have turned to be something... Is this because they get help (from the party) or something? [...] Their brain was affected (badly) by watching the partisan media channels.... They say, “Our leader is good, our city is good, and

¹⁶<https://www.turkuazlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Turkiyede-Kutuplasmanin-Boyutlari-2020-Arastirmasi.pdf>

foreign powers do that. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is an unbeliever. We will lose our religion.” (A female İYİP supporter, 62 years old, high school graduate, middle-income)

In addition, most of the respondents who indicated that they supported incumbent parties described the HDP as the least-liked party. “Nationalism” and “fascism” were the most used traits for out-parties for these participants:

“Of course, they have a common characteristic.... They are more ideological (ideologically extreme) than us. This is because, in general, they are Kurdish voters. They can unite along Kurdishness (Kurdish nationalism). ... Even if others call Turkish people fascists, the level of fascism is higher among this segment of the population (compared to Turkish people). (In the past) I have noticed various self-interested behaviors among the HDP voters. They sell their friends or a family member for their benefits [...] You cannot trust them. Also, they are hypocrite [...] They have very distinct personality characteristics.” (A male AKP supporter, 47 years old, below high school degree, low-income)

I cannot say something bad about their intelligence. If they support that party (HDP), then they are nationalists. In the past, HDP used force in the East. This might be a reason for them to support (HDP). I cannot know about farsightedness. They can be patriotic. A Kurdish person may support “Kurdishness”. (A female MHP supporter, 34 years old, undergraduate degree, low-income)

Inconsistency Between the Main Argument and The Content of The Statements

Participants' explanations did not seem to be consistent when asked how they would feel when encountering different kinds of interactions with out-partisans. In other words, although many participants argued that “it is OK to be interacting with out-partisans,” their explanations involve some negative attitudes toward the out-group. This was especially evident in the question about attitudes towards partisans' children playing with children from the out-party.

This outcome aligns with concerns regarding the validity of the social distance subscale of AP in surveys (Druckman & Levendusky, 2019). Therefore, social distancing questions may yield more accurate results when asked in interviews compared to self-report scales. To illustrate, a participant who disliked HDP most indicated that “If I know about the family (of the children) and the family members are Kurdish nationalists, not separationists, then it will not be a problem for me.” (A male AKP supporter, 47 years old, high school degree, low-income). Another participant whose least liked party is MHP asserted that “I do not have a right to say something about marriage (of my children). Therefore, I cannot say anything.... But I may feel worried about that (the fact

that the respondent's child marries someone supporting the out-party)" (A female CHP supporter, 42 years old, graduate degree, middle-income).

Similar contradictions were revealed by other participants who disliked AKP most:

"This (issue) is not related to my child. They (out-partisans) can impose some values on their children. However, I can guess how my child would feel when he/she plays with their (out-partisans') children. My child would know about what is "right" and "just" as he/she is living in my house. She/he would know what to do when he/she is exposed to an unjust situation. Then I would say OK. She/he can play." (A female HDP supporter, 32 years old, graduate degree, low-income)

"[...] I would not oppose the woman just because her father supports AKP. [...] I would minimize my interaction with the bride's family. [...] It is OK for me as long as the family is not from the extreme group. [...] But I do not believe that my son would choose that way [marry a woman who is supporting AKP]. Still, there is "no" "no way". Everything is possible." (A male CHP supporter, 58 years old, graduate degree, middle-income)

3.6.2 *The Role of PT in the Context of Partisanship*

Partisan-based PT vs. Policy-based PT

My second aim in this study is to explore how partisans take the perspective of out-partisans. To do so, I asked respondents two types of PT questions. The first was about policy-based PT, and the second was about the person (out-partisan)-based PT. Answers to the out-partisan PT included more details about how the out-partisan might feel, think, and experience events underlying their party choice compared to issue-based PT. Besides, individuals were more likely to attribute the reasons to contextual factors when taking partisan PT rather than issue-based PT. The emphasis on contextual factors instead of individual factors when explaining out-group behavior can also be described as a lack of in-group bias in attributions of responsibility (Rudolph, 2016). Situational attributions to explain others' behavior are an essential indicator of the cognitive mechanisms of PT (Vescio et al., 2003) (see Tables 3.3-3.7). That is to say, when partisans focus directly on "partisans" rather than "issues," they become more positive in their attitudes toward the out-party members.

Table 3.3: A female MHP supporter (Age: 34, Education Level: College degree, Income: Low).

Issue-based Perspective-Taking	Out-partisan based Perspective-taking
Issue: Hagia Sophia Museum Stance: Against conversion of Hagia Sophia Museum to a Mosque	Least Liked Party: HDP
<i>I guess the CHP converted Hagia Sophia into a museum. It seems that CHP closed a mosque and turned it into a museum. Also, they say about Fatih Sultan Mehmet's bequest on this issue. However, the existence of this bequest is not very accurate. They influence people in part through religion. "CHPs (supporters) are non-believers. It closed the mosque and turned it into a museum."</i>	<i>For instance, my father. If my father does not have an interest in nationalism... If he had voted for CHP, I would have been like a CHP voter. But there is more. Reading is important. I have read about this issue. If I would not, then I would not support that idea. But I will contradict myself now. I do not know. They take it (this idea/ideology) from their family, then. They are raised there. They grow up in that specific culture. They follow that culture. But I will also say this... People who read and search for information can also support a party.</i>

Table 3.4: A female HDP supporter (Age: 32, Education Level: Graduate Degree, Income: Low).

Issue-based Perspective-Taking	Out-partisan based Perspective-taking
Issue: Presidency system Stance: Against presidency system	Least Liked Party: AKP
<i>I do not think that he/she would think about and explain the reason for this issue. I think that he/she would say one of the readymade reasons given.... "We will be so strong in this way. That is why we do this like that." "Disunity in the country will disappear. Turkish societies have lived with one president for many centuries. Therefore, this (presidency system) is very logical." Bla bla...</i>	<i>That party provides a ground for him/her to develop her/his ideology. ... She/he believes that that party will realize his/her expectations. Also, "inaction" is one of the expectations that he/she has. If I had an expectation that I do not have to think, and if a party would help me on this issue, then I support that party.... This person might want to be rich....Or believe the pledges of the party... (would they say those reasons?) I have said those reasons from a distant point. However, they would make different sentences. Because the AK party has been so successful to date and helped the country to develop further, they (the party) should not leave (the incumbency) at the time of the eve of achieving everything (they would say). I say those as they think they are like that, (but) they would tell those reasons faithfully.</i>

Table 3.5: A female IYIP Supporter (Age: 62, Education Level: High School, Income: Middle).

Issue-based Perspective-Taking	Out-partisan based Perspective-taking
Issue: Privatization of important industries Stance: Against privatization	Least Liked Party: AKP
<i>They want it because they are a member of the political party that supports privatization or they are around like-minded people with them (the party). They have a profit from that. They might find a job....They would think that our government won.</i>	<i>“The party provided me with a job opportunity.” (they would say) The municipality here is from AKP. The party has thermal springs and employs everyone in positions at the thermal springs and hotels. The unemployment rate is very high in the country. People support the AKP as the party provides them with food and bread. They believe that AKP provides them with benefits from a newly opened job place like KOSGEB. In fact, everyone can benefit from this opportunity, right? Partisans are mostly primary school graduates or have not had any formal education at all. They are ignorant.... I do not underestimate them. They are my neighbors. I like them [...]</i>

Table 3.6: A male HDP supporter (Age: 71, Education Level: Graduate Degree, Income: High).

Issue-based Perspective-Taking	Out-partisan based Perspective-taking
Issue: Hagia Sophia Museum Stance: Against conversion of Hagia Sophia Museum to a Mosque	Least Liked Party: MHP/IYI Party
<i>I do not know how those men’s minds work. I do not understand. They cannot get out from the borders of formal doctrine. [...] Medieval age...I cannot put myself in their place.</i>	<i>In general, extreme nationalism... However, it is impossible for me to know which individuals are looking for their benefits among them. Among these individuals, some of them would support [MHP/IYI Party] for their benefit, while some others would support the party since they were raised with nationalist doctrines. There are individuals who are living in an environment where many people are nationalist or traditionalist. This is so in many regions of our country.</i>

Table 3.7: A male CHP supporter (Age: 60, Education Level: High School, Income: Low).

Issue-based Perspective-Taking	Out-partisan based Perspective-taking
Issue: Privatization of the important industries Stance: Against privatization	Least Liked Party: AKP/MHP
<i>They do not think. They do not have “opinion”. They think that the rulers would always do right. [...] This is not their thought. If he (president) says so, that would be true.</i>	<i>Some kind of manipulations, using religion and heroism... Or people follow [out-party/out-party identity] with feelings of nationalism. Religion does not involve politics. I feel so sorry [about this situation]. A real Muslim... Islam is a sacred religion. [The party] pictures the other side as if this side is a monster.</i>

However, person-based PT also yielded some undesired answers. For instance, some participants' answers to person-based PT continued to have a negative sentiment (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Examples of Undesired Outcomes for Person-based PT

A male CHP supporter (Age: 58, Education Level: Graduate Degree, Income: Middle; Least Liked Party: AKP).

*...They would mention faith and nationalism. They would talk about “nation, homeland, Sakarya. They would talk about religious faith. **But I do not believe these are their genuine thoughts. [The reason why they support AKP] is all about their benefits.** That is because I have observed them in real life. I have seen many people turn 180 degrees. [...]*

A male IYIP supporter (Age: 61, Education Level: Undergraduate Degree, Income: Low; Least Liked Party: AKP)

What can they say? [They would say] Even though economic conditions are bad, [everything] is still going great.** They would say everything is good and the context is good. The electricity and natural gas bills have not arrived yet. **I wonder what they would say when we get the bills.

Moreover, regardless of which PT questions they answered, respondents seemed to have difficulty taking the out-partisan perspective, or they were reluctant to do so in the first place. This finding is in line with the argument that PT requires cognitive effort, and individuals may not be willing to make this effort, especially in polarized contexts

(Davis, 1996; Fennis, 2011; Sassenrath et al., 2016). For instance, when I asked respondents why the out-partisan would think in an opposite way or vote for the least-liked party, some responded like “I do not know,” “How would I know the reasons why the others think like that?”, “You should ask them if you want an answer to this question.” To help them take an out-partisan perspective, I reformed the question to make it more concrete: “Imagine we have another respondent right here with us answering the same questions as you have done. Just as I asked your reasons for supporting that political party, suppose that I asked a least liked party supporter why they support that party. How would that person answer this question?” However, this seemed to help obtain more detailed answers from only a few of the respondents.

3.7 Conclusion

I had two main goals in the present chapter. First, I aimed to provide the necessary background for measuring AP in Turkey. The present chapter recommended using qualitative techniques to explore AP in a multiparty context before taking the available measures to assess AP in two-party contexts for granted. Second, I aimed to explore ways to use the PT technique to encourage partisans to understand the out-partisan stance, hopefully reducing partisan hatred in future experimental studies.

Overall, I provided insights into measuring AP in a multiparty context using a qualitative method. In Turkey, partisans have two types of “out-party” representations. One is the least-liked party, and the other is all parties within the alliance. Therefore, AP measures including out-coalition ratings are more appropriate than a spread measure (Wagner, 2021), dividing parties along the left-right continuum (Garrett et al., 2014) or treating multiparty systems as a two-party system by focusing only on two coalition blocs (Knudsen, 2021).

In addition, a PT intervention that centers around out-partisans encouraged participants to think or feel positively for “the out-partisan”; therefore, it had a better potential to reduce partisan hatred than a policy-based intervention. In this respect, PG can be a better alternative by giving individuals accurate perceptions of out-party supporters (Kalla & Broockman, 2022; Kalla & Broockman, 2023; Kubin et al., 2023).

The next chapter tests the effect of PG in reducing partisan prejudice in Turkey and the U.S. In addition, the formulation of AP in Turkey included feelings of in-party and out-coalition, as suggested by the findings of the interviews.



Chapter 4

REDUCING PARTISAN ANIMOSITY USING PERSPECTIVE-TAKING IN THE U.S. AND TURKEY

In the present chapter, my aim is to test the causal link between perspective-taking (PT) and affective polarization (AP) in Turkey and the U.S. by utilizing the information in the previous chapter. Doing that contributes to the depolarization literature by bringing a typical multiparty context, Turkey, by using a more promising technique to reduce partisan hatred compared to the previous techniques, called perspective-getting (PG). The previous chapter provided insights into the mental representation of the AP in a multiparty Turkish context. Specifically, I found that the alliance-based construction of AP is a feasible way to measure AP in the Turkish context. Furthermore, the previous study sheds light on how out-partisan PT can be effectively used in depolarization attempts. To illustrate, PT techniques based on partisans rather than policies that require a low level of effort and do not rely on individuals' own stereotypes of the out-party can be more effective in promoting favorable out-party attitudes. Therefore, the current chapter uses a specific form of PT called PG as a potentially superior technique to reduce partisan hatred. Furthermore, it uses alliance-based categorization to describe affective blocs in Turkey.

I conducted experiments in two national contexts with alarming levels of partisan animosity: the U.S. (Study 2.a.) and Turkey (Study 2.b.). Participants were randomly assigned to either PG or control condition. In all conditions, participants read vignettes written by a fictional out-partisan explaining why they support the out-party. I expected that PG would improve attitudes toward the target out-partisan. Additionally, I expected PG treatment would improve attitudes towards the out-partisans in general. Overall, the results can be summarized as follows. Studies provided partial evidence for the expectations. First, in the U.S., the treatment improved the attitudes towards the target in most dimensions while

the effect spilled over to the out-party only on the feeling of warmth. In addition, I found the effect of the out-party is only for Republicans but not for Democrats. However, better-designed experiments in Turkey revealed stronger results. Partisan prejudice was reduced via PT for all partisans, except for a small portion of partisans supporting far-left parties. The results also showed that party identification strength is an important factor in determining the effectiveness of the intervention.

In the following section, I describe the PG technique and summarize studies showing its effectiveness in reducing partisan prejudice. Then, I provide background information on AP in the U.S., including the methodology and results of the experiments. I finish the section by discussing the results. After that, I describe the Turkish case in the context of partisan hatred. Next, I provide the methodology, analysis strategy, and results of the experiments conducted in Turkey. Finally, I will discuss the results.

4.1 *Getting the Perspective*

As I outlined in the theoretical chapter, PT can result in backfire effects in some environments. Knowing that PT potentially has backfire effects or no effect at all, it would be beneficial to specify the type of PT that can effectively depolarize partisans. Accordingly, studies that have focused solely on policy-based PT (Brophy & Mullinix, 2023; Catapano et al., 2019; Tuller et al., 2015) or trait/dispositional PT (e.g., Davis, 1983; Simas et al., 2020) have revealed undesired effects of PT. In addition, PT can backfire when the environment is competitive, and the groups are very different (Sassenrath et al., 2016; Vorauer et al., 2009).

Therefore, studies aiming to design PT to reduce partisan hostility should carefully design these techniques. For instance, conditions that help activate empathic processes would also be helpful in boosting the understanding of others' mindsets. These conditions include perceived similarity, familiarity, social closeness, positive past experiences, and cooperative relationships with the target (de Waal, 2008). To illustrate, in the context of partisanship, a fictional out-partisan target could be designed to have the same demographic characteristics as the participant to increase their sense of similarity and familiarity.

All of these works point to some caution when using PT to obtain the desired effects. Still, out-partisan PT exercises can mitigate out-partisan animosity if they are not trait-based

and focused on out-partisans rather than policy issues. For instance, when empathy is directed toward out-group (“cross-partisan empathy”), partisans tend to discover commonalities between in-party and out-party members (Kalla & Broockman, 2020). This has the potential to reduce animosity. Even belief in the utility of cross-partisan empathy decreases partisan animosity (Santos et al., 2022).

Recent research on perspective-taking has focused on a specific form called “perspective-getting” (PG). PG is defined as “hearing about the experiences of an outgroup member (from them or others)” (Kalla & Broockman, 2022, p. 186). Therefore, rather than imagining what others think, feel, and behave, an outgroup perspective is provided to individuals.

PT in the form of PG can be a better way to cope with prejudice than traditional PT in reducing affective polarization for three main reasons. First, PG eliminates potential risk factors that trigger the backfire effects of PT. For instance, the accuracy of information regarding the outgroup perspective is lower when individuals imagine the perspective (PT) than when they get the perspective (PG) (Eyal et al., 2018). In a polarized context, where political groups perceive each other as threats, the imagined perspective of the outgroup is likely to include negative sentiments; this, in turn, will not produce favorable opinions about the out-group (e.g., Sassenrath et al., 2016). On the other hand, when an accurate perspective of the out-group is provided in a positive context, individuals would develop positive attitudes toward out-group members. The situational factors that produce backfire effects can be eliminated from this perspective. For instance, vignettes or conversation contexts that are non-competitive, pointing out some similarities (similar values), including no evidence of negative self-evaluation, would eliminate the risk of a backfire effect and trigger empathic activation. Overall, PG does not allow individuals to rely on their negative stereotypes as PT does, predicting better outcomes regarding intergroup relations. To illustrate, the non-judgemental exchange of narratives (or perspectives) reduced partisans’ exclusionary attitudes towards stigmatized social groups such as immigrants (Kalla & Broockman, 2020).

In contrast to traditional PT, which mainly produces “self-outgroup merging,” PG works through various additional mechanisms to improve intergroup attitudes. PG increases the tendency to “dehumanize” political out-group members and increase their tolerance

towards them. Besides, after obtaining a perspective of political out-group members, individuals start to “dehumanize” outgroup members, which involves seeing out-group members as non-monolithic, heterogeneous individuals (Kalla & Broockman, 2022; Kubin et al., 2023). This, in turn, increases tolerance towards political outgroups and decreases affective polarization. Third, there is experimental evidence proving the superiority of PG in prejudice reduction by a study comparing PG with different types of PT interventions (e.g., vicarious, analogic) in prejudice reduction (Kalla & Broockman, 2023).

PG studies in a political context have focused on the success of hearing about the personal stories of outgroup members. This experience worked to reduce prejudice towards political opponents. For instance, In addition, studies pairing facts with personal experiences have yielded beneficial outcomes regarding intergroup attitudes in a political context. These studies show that learning about political facts while getting information about other people's thoughts, feelings, and behavior increases positive attitudes in political contexts (Kubin et al., 2023; Muradova, 2020).

In addition, there is experimental evidence that acquiring the perspective of a political opponent itself reduces affective polarization and prejudice toward immigrants. To illustrate, in a canvassing experiment, political activists implemented door-to-door conversations about salient political issues (undocumented immigrants) and the 2020 presidential election in the U.S. (Kalla & Broockman, 2022). These conversations reduced affective polarization and improved attitudes towards immigrants through perspective getting. Specifically, the exchange of narratives between political activists and study participants, including the personal experiences of out-group members, helped participants obtain an out-partisan perspective on the same issue, improving their attitudes towards out-partisans and undocumented immigrants.

One important reason PG works well might be because it involves the “Outgroup Experience Effect” (e.g., Kubin et al., 2021; Kubin et al., 2023). This framework is based on the idea that when an out-group member justifies their stance on a policy issue using harmful personal experiences rather than facts, their ideas are perceived to be more rational, which increases their feeling of respect towards them (Kubin et al., 2021). One study showed that learning about harmful personal experiences behind political opponents’ views improved

attitudes toward them (Kubin et al., 2023). Specifically, when individuals learn that the reason behind the opponent's views on guns comes from their harmful experiences (e.g., being pro-gun after using a gun for protection from an intruder) rather than facts (e.g., being pro-gun after learning the fact that guns are used for self-protection by millions each year), the tendency to dehumanize and tolerate political opponents increases. The effect did not change when the personal experience was combined with factual information, indicating that the harmful experiences of out-partisans carried the effects. However, these studies relied on policy issues and did not examine out-party effects. Therefore, we do not know whether PG, through the harmful experiences of out-party members, reduces affective polarization. In this study, I tested the effect of hearing harmful personal experiences on affective polarization. That is, hearing about an out-party member's party preference justified by harmful experiences is expected to reduce affective polarization.

One study testing the effects of hearing about harmful personal experiences of out-party members, explaining the reason behind their party preference, showed that this technique works to reduce affective polarization. Even this study has been included in the winners list of Stanford University's Democracy Challenge under the category named "Interventions that significantly reduced partisan animosity" (Kubin et al., unpublished study¹⁷). Although this study is beneficial in showing the use of harmful experiences as a promising technique in the context of affective polarization, there is room for improvement in the technique to be considered a full PG technique in some respects. First, the out-group narratives are too short to provide an out-group perspective. In other words, stories do not include information on how the out-partisan feels, behaves, or thinks about harmful experiences. In addition, there are three out-partisan targets in the intervention, which prevent respondents from developing warm feelings for a specific out-party member. This is important because PT techniques that work well to reduce prejudice first aim to trigger positive feelings toward a specific out-group member. Finally, the topic selection was one-sided. This means that topics were the same across partisans (e.g., pro-gun for Republican targets vs. anti-gun for Democrat targets). In fact, the salience of each issue differs across partisans, with domestic violence, healthcare, and climate care being salient among

¹⁷ <https://www.strengtheningdemocracychallenge.org/winning-interventions>

Democrats, whereas guns, unlawful immigrants, and religiosity are salient among Republicans. Therefore, the content of this technique might not be fully applicable to everyday inter-partisan interaction.

4.2 *Hypotheses*

In the present chapter, I test the effect of PT, in the form of PG, on reducing partisan animus. In doing so, I focus on two national contexts that are crucial in their affective polarization level: the U.S. and Turkey. Overall, the current study tests the central hypothesis that PG reduces AP in Turkey and the U.S. Thus, the primary expectations are to increase positive attitudes toward the individual target out-partisan, whose perspective was given, and then all the out-partisan group in general.

Based on this information, the hypotheses of the current study are as follows:

H1: Perspective-taking (PT) increases positive attitudes towards the target out-partisan.

H2: PT increases positive attitudes towards out-party supporters.

H3: PT decreases affective polarization (AP).

4.3 *Study 2.a.: The Case of the U.S.*

The U.S. is the most studied context regarding AP in general and reducing AP in particular (see Iyengar et al., 2019; Druckman & Levy, 2022; Druckman & Levendusky, 2019; Huddy & Yair, 2021; Lee et al., 2022; Phillips, 2022). The U.S. case is crucial in the sense that it has experienced the largest intensification of partisan hatred over the four decades among other OECD countries (Boxell et al., 2020). Accordingly, Republicans and Democrats have increasingly disliked each other over the past two decades, which has had various pernicious political consequences. Therefore, a U.S. case is crucial for such a study aimed at reducing AP. In addition, the well-studied U.S. case will provide a safe comparison context for the next study conducted in a rarely studied case in Turkey.

To test the hypotheses in the U.S. context, Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) workers completed an online survey experiment using Qualtrics. Respondents who accepted informed consent and felt close to either the Republican or Democratic Party were allowed to complete the survey. After a series of screening questions asking for party identification, party identification strength, and gender, participants were randomly assigned to either the PG or control group. In the PG, respondents read a vignette about the personal story of a fictional character, Casey, explaining why they supported the out-party. On the other hand, in the control group, respondents only read a short vignette about Casey, who explained why they supported the out-party without any personal information (see Appendix A for the vignettes). Following the manipulation, respondents indicated their attitudes towards Casey, as well as all the out-party supporters. It is expected that participants in the PG will have more positive attitudes toward Casey than those in the control group. Moreover, this effect will be carried over to all out-partisans. Mean difference tests showed that the PG had more positive attitudes towards Casey in most of the attitude dimensions. However, this effect was not fully extended to all partisans, especially Democrat respondents. Nevertheless, PG increased Republicans' feelings of warmth towards Democrats, which is a fundamental component of AP. Mixed findings were discussed based on the content of stories and intervention strategies.

4.3.1 Method

Participants

I conducted the survey using the Qualtrics online survey platform. Upon obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the Office of Research Compliance, Division of Human Subject Protection at Stony Brook University, I distributed the link through the survey experiment to MTurk workers through CloudResearch. The study was advertised as one related to social and political attitudes in the U.S. Respondents who clicked on the survey link confirmed that informed consent was bonused at \$0.10. Those who completed the survey received an additional bonus of \$0.50.

Participants were asked about party identification to determine their eligibility for the study. A quota of 300 was determined for each partisan to balance the number of Democratic and

Republican respondents. The survey ended with respondents who identified with a party for which the survey had already reached its quota. Also, those who did not identify with or lean toward any of the parties were excluded from the survey¹⁸. Besides, to balance the number of Democrat and Republican respondents, I determined a quota of 300 for each partisan on the survey platform. Overall, the analyses were conducted using data from 386 eligible respondents (186 Republicans and 200 Democrats) who had finished the survey. The survey was fielded on 11 March 2023.

Measures

Demographic Measures: Participants answered several demographic questions, including their gender, education level, income level, religious identification, birth year, and the state in which they currently live.

Gender: Participants indicated their gender by selecting among four alternatives (male, female, non-binary/third gender, prefer not to say). The variable was recoded so that “0” referred to male, and “1” referred to female. The non-binary/third-gender option was eliminated because only one participant selected this alternative.

Education level: Respondents were asked about the highest education level they had completed. The choices ranged from “No grades” (1) to “Doctorate” (14). The variable was re-coded to have 5 categories. Therefore, in the end, the categories were as follows: 1 "some school," 2 "high school," 3 "some college, no degree," 4 "Bachelor's degree," 5 "Graduate degree.”

Income level: Respondents indicated the total income of their family in 2022 from “less than \$10.000” (1) to “more than \$150.000” (12). This variable was also recorded to have 3 categories (low, medium, and high).

¹⁸ 461 started, but 423 cases completed 100% of the survey. Among those who finished the survey, Independents (n=87, 20.57%) were asked if they lean towards the Republican or Democratic Party. Pure Independents, i.e., those who did not lean towards any of the parties (n=29, 6.86%), were dropped. Those who identified another party (n=8, 1.89%) were also dropped. This resulted in a sample size of 386.

Religious identification: Respondents rated how often they attend religious services on a 6-point Likert-type scale from “more than once a week” (1) to “never” (6). This item was reverse-coded such that higher scores indicated a higher level of religious attendance.

Age: Participants’ age was calculated based on their answers to the question regarding their birth year.

Party Identification: Participants indicated whether they considered themselves to be Democrat, Republican, Independent, or some other party. If independent, they answered an additional question asking whether they felt closer to the Democratic Party, Republican Party, or neither. The survey ended for the pure independents.

Party Identification Strength: Participants who indicated that they consider themselves either Republican or Democrat also rated the strength of their identification (e.g., Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not very strong?) by choosing one of the two options (i.e., strong and very strong)

Party Identification Strength Summary: The Party identification strength summary measure was calculated based on the answers given to the party identification question(s) and party identification strength, following the ANES coding manual¹⁹. Accordingly, the scale ranges from 0 (strong Democrat) to 6 (strong Republican). Participants who indicated themselves as Democrats and also called themselves strong Democrats were coded as 0, whereas weak Democrats were coded as 1. Independents who considered themselves closer to Democrats were coded 2. Pure independents were coded 4. Independents who considered themselves to be closer to Republicans were coded as 5. Finally, strong Republicans were coded as 6.

Attitudes towards Casey: Attitudes towards Casey were measured by various questions tapping into feelings of warmth, care, sorry, and sympathy, as well as understanding, argument strength, and future contact interest.

Feeling sorry about Casey: Respondents rated to what extent they felt sorry about Casey (“While reading the passage, how SORRY did you feel for Casey?”) on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (very sorry) to 4 (not at all sorry).

¹⁹ <https://electionstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/20091208PartyID.pdf>

Feeling sympathy for Casey: Participants rated the level of sympathy they felt towards Casey on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (no sympathy at all) to 5 (a lot of sympathy).

Caring for Casey: Participants indicated how much they care about Casey (“How much do you CARE about Casey?”) on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (no care at all) to 5 (care a great deal).

Warmth towards Casey: On a feeling thermometer that ranges from 0 (coldest) to 10 (warmest), respondents rated the level of warmth they felt towards Casey (“On a scale from 0 (COLDEST) to 10 (WARMEST) how do you feel about Casey?”).

Argument strength: Respondents rated to what extent they think the reason why Casey supports the Democratic or Republican Party, depending on the out-party for the respondent, is strong (“In your view, how weak or strong is Casey's reason for supporting the Democratic Party?”) on a 4-point Likert type scale from 1 (very weak) to 4 (very strong).

Understanding Casey: Respondents also rated to what extent they understand why Casey identifies with the Democratic Party or Republican Party (“How well do you understand why Casey identifies with the Republican Party?”) at a 4 point-scale from (not at all) to 4 (a great deal)

Future contact interest: Participants’ future contact interest (“How interested are you in meeting and talking with Casey if the opportunity arose?”) was measured using a 5-point Likert type scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely interested).

Attitudes Towards In-party Supporters and Out-party Supporters: The same scales measuring sympathy, care, understanding, future contact interest, and warmth, which were used to assess attitudes towards Casey, were modified to measure attitudes towards both in-party and out-party supporters. That is, all respondents indicated their attitudes towards both Republicans and Democrats. Nevertheless, only two subscales, understanding and future contact interest, were rated for out-partisans. Democratic respondents rated the extent to which they understood the reasons why Republicans supported the Republican party, whereas Republican respondents rated their attitudes toward Democrats. The wording for future contact interest differed from that of the future contact interest measure targeting Casey.

Future Contact Interest with Out-partisans: Participants rated their future contact interest with out-partisans (“If you were at a social event and discovered that you were talking to a Democrat, how likely are you to end the conversation and move on?”) on a 4-point Likert type scale from 1 (not at all likely) to 4 (extremely likely).

Affective Polarization (AP): AP was calculated by subtracting the out-party warmth score from the in-party warmth score.

4.3.2 Experimental Design and Procedure

After giving consent for participation, respondents answered a series of screening questions about their gender, party identity, and party identification strength²⁰.

Participants were then informed that they would read a vignette written by an out-partisan called Casey, explaining why they supported the out-party. In fact, I prepared the vignettes inspired by the information from interviews with partisans taken from various web sources^{21,22}. Casey’s party was changed according to the respondent’s party identification. All partisans were introduced so that Casey supported the out-party. For example, for Republican respondents, Casey was Democrat, whereas for Democrat respondents, Casey was Republican. Respondents then read a vignette from Casey’s perspective, explaining why they supported the out-party. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of three experimental vignettes or a control vignette. Following experimental manipulation, the respondents answered a series of questions measuring their attitudes toward Casey, out-partisans in general, and demographics.

Vignettes were changed based on the respondents’ party identification, regardless of the condition they were assigned. While Republican respondents saw a vignette from the eyes of a Democrat (Casey was introduced as a Democrat), Democrat respondents read a vignette written from a Republican (Casey was introduced as Republican) perspective. Therefore, three experimental and one control vignettes were prepared for each of the two

²⁰ Eligible participants continued the survey, while non-eligibles were bonused with \$0.10 and thanked for their participation. Eligibility criteria are determined based on the quota for each party and whether the respondent leans towards one of the parties. Pure independents and out-of-quota respondents were not eligible to continue with the survey.

²¹<https://www.c-span.org/video/?475445-1/personal-stories-shared-2020-democratic-national-convention>

²²<https://www.upbeacon.com/article/2019/04/conservatives-on-campus>

partisan perspectives. Each experimental vignette focused on Casey's experiences related to a different policy.

Specifically, vignettes explain why Casey supports that party through their support for a policy issue based on a harmful personal experience. Three experimental vignettes from a Democrat perspective are focused on "domestic violence," "climate change," and "health care." On the other hand, vignettes from a Republican perspective are either about "unlawful immigrants," "religious faith," or "gun policy." For example, an experimental vignette for Republican respondents, which is related to climate change, explains how Casey's asthma worsened because the Camp Fire broke out in Northern California, which, in turn, led her to support the Democratic Party. The control vignette explains why Casey supported the out-party based on various general policy arguments without including any personal rationale (see Appendix A).

Upon finishing reading the vignette, all participants answered manipulation check questions asking about the name and political party identification of the out-partisan, how closely they read the vignette, and how interesting they found the story. Following the manipulation check questions, participants filled in a series of questions about their feelings and thoughts about Casey and Casey's argument. The respondents then answered a series of questions about their general out-party attitudes. The survey ended with the demographic questions.

4.3.3 Results

I re-scaled all the measures to 0-1 metrics before conducting the analyses. I conducted the analyses in three steps. First, I tested the mean difference in attitudes towards Casey across conditions. Second, I examined the mean differences in attitudes towards out-partisans and AP. Finally, I conducted multiple regression analyses to test the treatment effect after controlling for potential demographic characteristics. The descriptive statistics of the study variables are presented in Table 4.1. and 4.2.

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics of the study variables.

<i>Variable</i>	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Treatment	386	0.76	0.43	0	1
Party Identification	386	0.48	0.50	0	1
Party Identification Strength	386	0.66	0.36	0	1
Gender	383	0.55	0.50	0	1
Education	386	0.66	0.15	0	1
Religiosity	386	0.27	0.32	0	1
Income	386	0.53	0.29	0	1
Age	386	0.34	0.21	0	1
Feeling sorry for Casey	386	0.54	0.33	0	1
Feeling sympathy for Casey	386	0.41	0.31	0	1
Caring about Casey	386	0.40	0.29	0	1
Warmth towards Casey	386	0.53	0.26	0	1
Strength of the Casey's opinion	386	0.40	0.32	0	1
Understanding Casey	386	0.65	0.30	0	1
Interested in future contact with Casey	386	0.30	0.31	0	1
Feeling sympathy for Out-partisans	386	0.25	0.25	0	1
Understanding Out-partisans	386	0.56	0.29	0	1
Caring about Out-partisans	386	0.31	0.26	0	1
Contact Interest with Out-partisans	386	0.72	0.32	0	1
Warmth towards Out-partisans	386	0.35	0.27	0	1
Warmth towards In-party	386	0.67	0.22	0	1
Affective Polarization	386	0.32	0.32	-1	1

Table 4.2: Frequency Statistics for Categorical Variables.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Partisanship	Democrat	51.81	200
Strength of Party Identification	Weak	15.03	58
	Moderate	37.82	146
	Strong	47.15	182
Gender ²³	Female	53.28	209
	Male	45.08	174
Education level	Some school	1.81	7
	High School	8.55	33
	Some college/associate	22.8	88
	B.A.	44.04	170
	Post-graduate degree	22.8	88
Religious service attendance	Often	18.65	72
	Sometimes	13.73	53
	Rare	67.62	261
Condition	Treatment	75.91	293

Attitudes Towards Casey

In most dimensions, participants in the experimental group rated Casey more positively than those in the control condition (see Figure 4.1). Specifically, participants in the experimental group felt sorrier ($M=0.62$, $SE=0.02$) for Casey compared with participants in the control group ($M= 0.26$, $SE= 0.03$), $p < .001$. Moreover, participants in the experimental condition rated Casey as more sympathetic ($M=0.48$, $SE=0.02$) than those in the control condition ($M=0.19$, $SE=0.03$), $p < .001$. Similarly, the experimental group respondents indicated that they care about Casey ($M=0.43$, $SE=0.02$) significantly more than the control group respondents ($M=0.31$, $SE=0.03$), $p<.001$. In addition, experimental group respondents rated Casey as warmer ($M=0.57$, $SE=0.01$) on the feeling thermometer scale than the control group ($M=0.41$, $SE=0.03$), $p < .001$. However, the level of understanding, contact interest, and opinion strength ratings did not differ across conditions.

²³ Remaining two did not answer the question and one participant identified as non-binary.

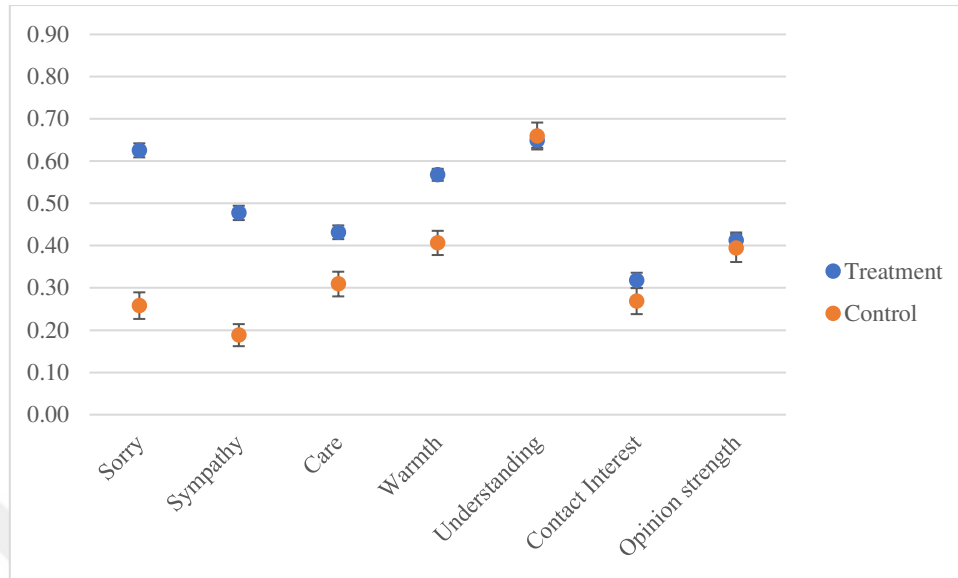


Figure 4.1: Ratings for Casey.

Attitudes Towards Out-Partisans

Ratings for the Out-Party: All Respondents

I conducted mean difference tests to examine out-party ratings across conditions (see Figure 2). Accordingly, PG treatment increased feelings of warmth and contact interest with the out-party. Respondents in the treatment condition rated out-partisans warmer ($M=0.37$, $SE=0.02$) than those in the control condition ($M=0.31$, $SE=0.03$) at a marginally significant level, $p = 0.067$. In addition, the contact interest level was higher among the treatment group ($M=0.74$, $SE=0.02$) than the control group ($M=0.67$, $SE=0.04$) at a marginally significant level ($p = 0.076$). The effect of treatment on sympathy, care, understanding, and affective polarization were all insignificant (see Figure 4.2)

However, as the following sections showed, the effect was only found in Republican respondents. Therefore, Republican respondents mostly carried out this effect. The effect for none of the other indicators of out-party attitudes was significant (see Figure 4.2).

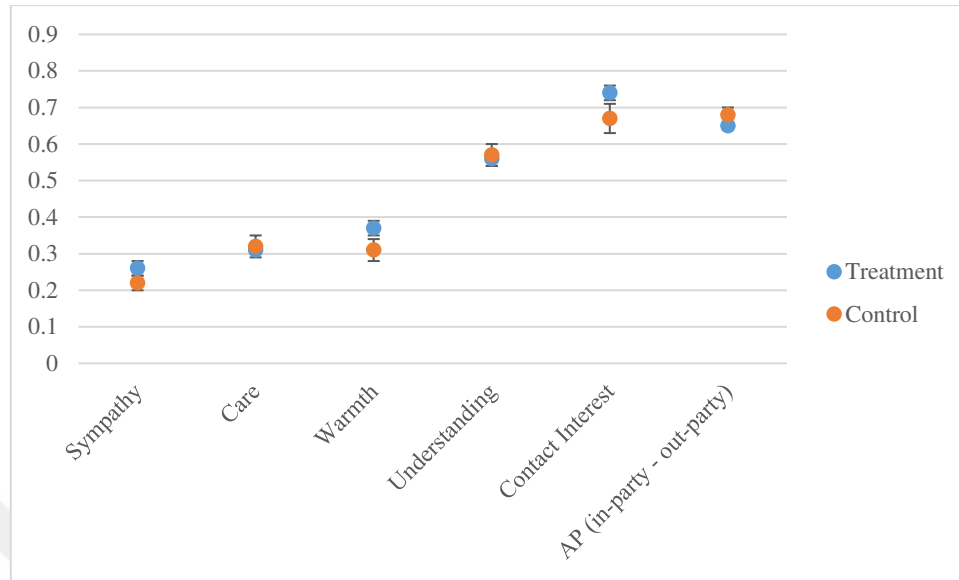


Figure 4.2 Out-party ratings.

Out-party Ratings by Party Identification

I also checked whether partisans differed in out-party ratings across conditions (Figure 4.3). In other words, I examined the extent to which the out-party ratings of Republicans and Democrats differed across conditions.

Republicans in the treatment condition rated Democrats significantly warmer ($M = .42$, $SE = .02$) and more interested in contact with them ($M = 0.79$, $SE = 0.02$) than those in the control condition ($M = .30$, $SE = .05$, $p < .05$; $M = 0.69$, $M = 0.06$, $p = 0.089$). No effect was found for any of the dimensions for Democrat respondents. One interesting finding is about the “understanding” ratings of Republicans for Democrats. Republicans in the treatment group indicated a lower level of understanding of why Democrats voted for the Democratic party ($M = .54$, $SE = .02$) compared to their control group counterparts ($M = .64$, $SE = .05$) at a marginally significant level ($p = .0065$). This shows that even though PG backfires in a cognitive dimension, it can still positively influence the affective dimension of out-party evaluations.

In general, all partisans rated the out-party highly in contact interest. However, the treatment effect is only found in Republican respondents. Republicans in the treatment group

were more interested in contact with Democrats compared to their control group counterparts at a marginally significant level.

AP ratings also did not change across the conditions for either partisan group. Considering the significant change in the out-party warmth level, the insignificant effect on AP among Republicans shows that there is no significant change in in-party identification by treatment.

Overall, the treatment was more effective for Republicans than for Democrats, considering out-party warmth and contact interest. Despite the more positive attitude ratings for warmth and contact interest, Republicans reported less understanding of Democrats in the treatment group. Considering the null findings for the other cognitive dimensions, opinion strength, and understanding for Casey, it can be asserted that treatment is likely to primarily boost affect rather than cognition. A lower level of understanding of the control condition for Republicans shows that even though PG backfires in a cognitive dimension, it can still have a positive influence on the affective dimension of out-party evaluations.

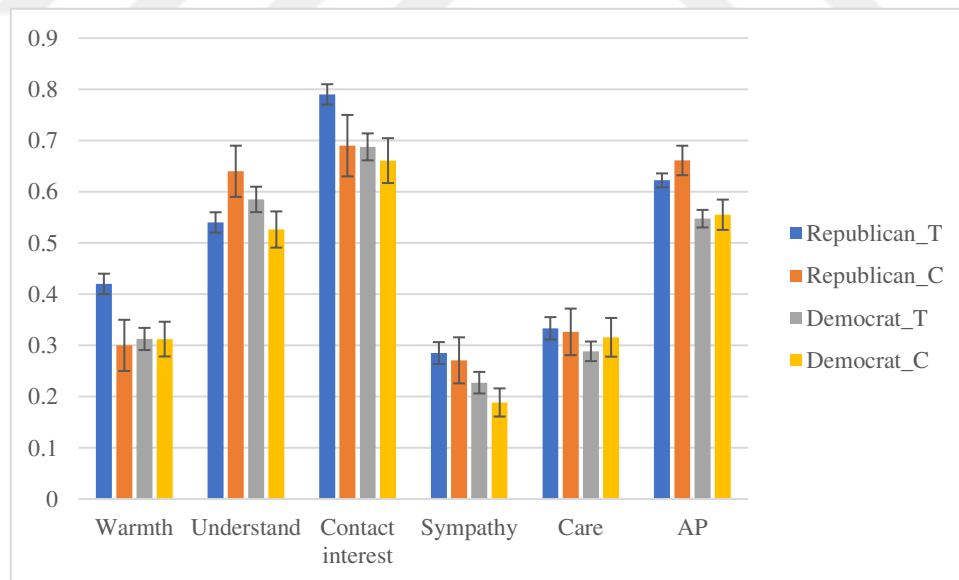


Figure 4.3: Out-party Ratings by Party Identification.

Out-party Ratings by Story

As there is no significant effect of PG treatment on out-party attitudes among Democrats (See see Figure 4.3), I only presented the results for the out-party ratings for Republican respondents. As I indicated above, Republicans' feelings of warmth towards Democrats increased after the PG intervention. However, I found no effect of treatment for other dimensions such as sympathy, care, understanding, and contact interest. Understanding and contact interest levels were even higher for those in the control group. To understand whether there is any possibility of this variation resulting from the content of the stories, I analyzed the mean differences in out-group attitudes by individual stories (see Figure 4.4).

Accordingly, participants who read the domestic violence story had almost the same level of AP as the control group. Similarly, there is a relatively lower level of warmth, although not significant, for the domestic violence story than for the other stories. In addition, respondents who read the domestic violence story also indicated a lower level of understanding of Democrats compared to other participants who read other stories. Therefore, the domestic violence story is the least efficient story to make Republicans feel warmer and sympathetic toward Democrats. Namely, the out-party warmth score did not significantly differ between the domestic violence story ($M=0.39$, $SE=0.05$) and the control condition ($M=0.30$, $SE=0.05$, $p=.1684$). However, the healthcare ($M=0.41$, $SE=0.04$) and climate change ($M=0.43$, $SE=0.03$) stories significantly increased warmth towards Democrats, for both $p < .05$. Nevertheless, there was no significant difference between stories regarding care, warmth, sympathy, and contact interest. This might be because domestic violence targets human perpetrators to blame, and stories on climate change and healthcare focus on non-human, systemic failures. I discussed this issue below.

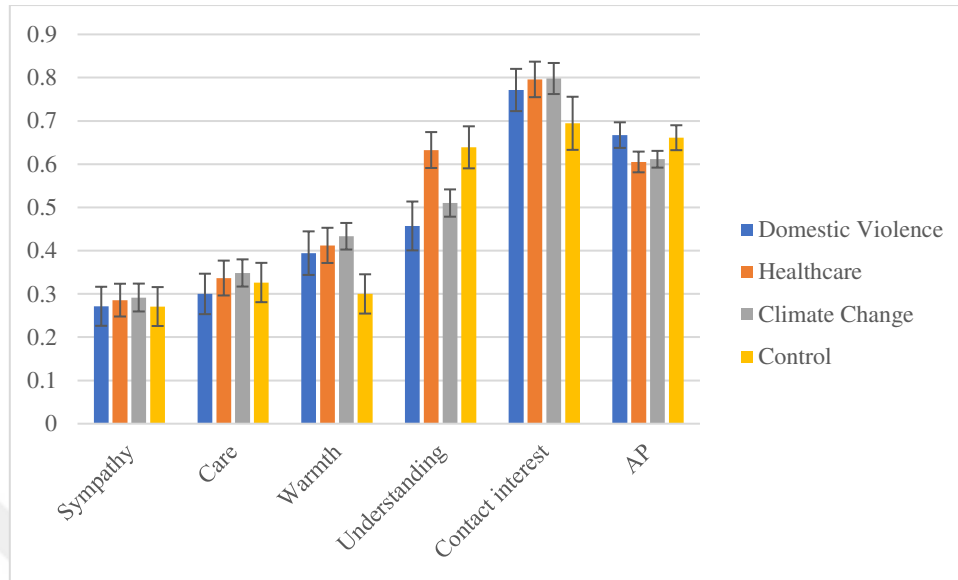


Figure 4.4: Mean Out-Partisan Ratings by Story: Republicans' Ratings for Democrats.

Regression Analyses

I conducted multiple regression analyses to predict warmth towards Casey, warmth towards the out-partisans, and AP levels, with three models in each. The first model tested the treatment effect on the dependent variable. I added the party dummy (1= Republican) to the second model. I added control variables in the final model. Table 4.3 presents the standardized beta coefficients predicting warmth towards Casey, the out-party, and the AP.

First, the treatment significantly predicted warmth toward the target across all models ($p < .000$). This means that the treatment condition effectively boosted warmth toward the target after controlling for PID strength, education, gender, religiosity, income, age, and party identification.

Second, treatment predicted warmth towards the out-party in the first model at a marginally significant level ($\beta=.09, p=0.067, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.00, .12]$). However, by adding party identification to the model, the treatment no longer predicted warmth. On the other hand, being Republican was related to an increased level of out-party warmth ($\beta=.14, p<.05, 95\% \text{ CI } [.02, .13]$). Adding other control variables, the treatment significantly and positively predicted the out-party warmth ($\beta=.10, p<.05, 95\% \text{ CI } [.01, .13]$).

Finally, I found no treatment effect in predicting AP scores, although the coefficients were in the expected direction. This means that the treatment did not influence the distance between in-party and out-party warmth. Being a Democrat, being older, having a strong party identification, and being less religious are related to higher AP (all $p < .05$).

The weak effects can be partly attributed to strategic design mistakes. That is, in Qualtrics, respondents could skip to the next page while reading the vignettes. MTurk workers have probably filled out many surveys on the same day, and the primary motivation for them to join the survey is probably to finish the survey as soon as possible and get the bonus payment. Therefore, future online experiments should make the “the next” button invisible for a while to keep the respondents on the page where they read the vignettes. This might have increased respondents’ level of engagement with the story, thereby strengthening the experimental effect.

Second, stories were found to have a differential effect on out-party attitudes. The different effects across the stories show differences in the quality of the content, allowing respondents to take an out-partisan perspective. For example, among Democrat respondents, vignettes focused on Guns and Unlawful immigrants tended to reveal more positive attitudes towards Casey than religious faith (see Appendix B). This could be because “the physical harm” in the religious faith story was not a salient factor. According to the Theory of Dyadic Morality (Schein & Gray, 2018), harmful personal experiences effectively reduce negative affect since moral judgments are centered around perceptions of harm. On the other hand, for Republican respondents, although all three stories targeted perceptions of harm, one was significantly weaker than the others. Specifically, the Domestic violence story was weaker than the climate change and healthcare vignettes. This might be due to the differences in the importance and stance of the issue for partisans. For instance, for a Republican who places critical importance on the domestic violence issue and supports policies to fight this problem, it might be offensive to read that this is mainly a concern only for the Democratic Party.

Overall, experiments in the U.S. revealed promising results regarding the effect of PG on increasing positive attitudes towards out-partisans, at least for Republicans. The second study aimed to reduce partisan animosity by using the same PG technique in Turkey. However, to obtain better results, I have modified the PG technique. First, respondents could

not skip the experimental manipulation page for some time. Second, the vignette page includes a picture of the fictional out-partisan to help develop PT and increase the dehumanization process. Third, participants are assigned to conditions based not only on their in-party but also on their gender. To illustrate, each partisan reads the vignette from a same-gendered out-partisan. I considered gender-matching to increase similarity perception with the aim of empathic activation (de Waal, 2008).



Table 4.3: Predicting Out-Party Attitudes by the Treatment and Controls.

	Target Warmth			Out-party Warmth			Affective Polarization		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(3)
Constant	.41*** (.03)	.38*** (.03)	.26*** (.07)	.31*** (.03)	.28*** (.03)	.23** (.07)	.36*** (.03)	.40*** (.03)	.19** (.08)
Treatment	.26***	.24***	0.25***	.09*	0.08	0.10**	-0.07	-0.05	-0.07
Party dummy		.15**	.11**		0.14**	0.11**		-.17**	-0.14**
PID Strength			-0.02			-0.05			0.27***
Gender			0.6			0.09*			-0.01
Education			0.03			0.04			-0.03
Religiosity			.20***			0.28***			-0.19***
Income			0.03			-0.07			0.1
Age			0.07			-0.08			0.15***
R ²	0.07	0.09	0.13	0.01	0.03	0.12	0	0.03	0.15
N	386	386	383	386	386	383	386	386	383

4.4 Study 2.b.: The Case of Turkey

In Turkey, there have been identity-based *kulturkampfs* mainly based on Islamic-Secular and partly along Turkish-Kurdish divides since the early years of the Republic (Çarkoğlu & Toprak, 2007; Kalaycıoğlu, 2012; Mardin, 1973). Accordingly, society has been divided based on two distinct politico-cultural world views, beliefs, norms, and value orientations. The secularist “Center” represented the culturally and ethnically homogenous urban “ruling elite” who is educated and oriented to modern values as opposed to the relatively weak pro-Islamist “Periphery” consisting of ethnically heterogenous groups from rural areas, who are oriented to traditional values, and religion.

The center vs periphery divide has turned into mutually antagonistic camps, highlighting “us vs. them” thinking in society under the Justice and Developmental Party’s (AKP) polarizing politics and weak opposition since 2002 (Kutlu et al., 2019; Laebens & Öztürk, 2021; Somer, 2019). A recent “Social Cohesion Report” from the Istanbul Policy Center revealed critical findings regarding socio-political divisions in Turkey based on a representative sample (Ataseven & Bakış, 2018). Accordingly, the main divisions are based on “Identity Politics,” and the central tension areas are grouped as ethnicity (Kurdish vs. Turkish), politics (those who support the government vs. those who are in the opposition), and secularism (Islamists vs. Secularists). The report demonstrated that trust in people across these groups is very low. Overall, heightened authoritarian policies have sharpened identity-based conflicts in Turkey along Islamic, secular, and Kurdish ethnic identities (see also Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2017).

The value differences among political groups have manifested themselves in political party identifications. To illustrate, utilizing representative field survey data, Kalaycıoğlu (2008) demonstrated that both secularism vs Islamism and ethnicity correlated with partisanship in Turkey. Specifically, political Islam and sensitivities concerning freedom of conscience and religion are associated with being identified with the AKP. On the other hand, those who identify with CHP tend to support laicism. Finally, ethnicity (feeling Turkish) played a crucial role in determining partisan affiliations towards the MHP. In addition, political socialization is a very crucial factor in predicting party affiliations. In other words, in the childhood environment, parents provide hints of partisanship, conveying information

on the value orientations. Therefore, the value orientations are transmitted to the new generation through political socialization (see also Kalaycıoğlu, 2021).

Thus, socio-political divisions representing contrasting identities and value orientations still effectively shape political behavior in Turkey. Therefore, one can expect political party identities to come from deep value orientations, leading to the differential treatment of other people based on party identification.

4.4.1 *Partisan Attitudes*

A recent cross-national study that used the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) data showed that Turkey is the world leader in AP among more than 40 countries (Lauka et al., 2018; Wagner, 2021; Garzia et al., 2023). Accordingly, participants were asked to what extent they liked or disliked each political party in Turkey. Then, the spread of the differences between like scores for each party was calculated for each respondent to assess AP (Wagner, 2021). The results revealed an alarming AP level in Turkey. In other words, individuals tend to favor the parties they support while extremely disliking others.

Moreover, research on the dimensions of polarization in Turkey by Pınar Uyan-Semerci and Emre Erdoğan provided a detailed picture of AP in Turkey based on the data collected in 2015, 2017, and 2020^{24,25}. In assessing AP, researchers measured social distance, moral superiority, and political tolerance. In 2020, social distance concerns the extent to which partisans approve of being involved in different kinds of social interactions with the out-partisans. To illustrate, 75 percent of the respondents did not approve of their daughter marrying an “other party” supporter, and 72 percent said they do not want to be involved in a business relationship with someone supporting the “other party.” Besides, while 67 percent of the partisans did not approve of their child playing with the children of parents who support the “other party,” 61 percent indicated disapproval of having a neighbor who supports the “other party.” Moral superiority measures the extent to which partisans attribute positive personal traits (e.g., smart, open-minded) to in-partisans and negative traits (e.g., hypocrite, selfish) to out-partisans. The results showed that more than 80 percent of participants found

²⁴ <https://www.turkuazlab.org/en/home/>

²⁵ <https://www.turkuazlab.org/en/dimensions-of-polarization-in-turkey-2020/>

out-partisans to be hypocrites, arrogant, and selfish while finding the supporters of their party patriotic, smart, open-minded, and honorable.

Partisans were also found to be very intolerant of the supporters of the out-party. Half of the respondents were against allowing out-partisans to organize a protest march. More than 30 percent of partisans think that out-partisans should not be allowed to have meetings, get education according to their needs, and issue a press statement. All these findings showed how serious the AP issue is in Turkey.

4.4.2 Reducing Affective Polarization in Turkey

Under the rule of AKP, which emerged as a predominant party after two decades of rule, polarization has led to democratic backsliding via the deterioration of democratic institutions, intimidation of the opposition, restrictions of civil liberties, and freedom of the press (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2021; Somer, 2019). Therefore, reducing AP in Turkey is very important for the democratic functioning of institutions, protection of civil liberties, and harmonious citizen interaction. As a result, overcoming polarization is of utmost importance in Turkey.

A few studies have focused on reducing polarization in Turkey, which is worth mentioning. Nevertheless, these studies either focused on macro-level solutions or included no experimental evidence showing that the recommended techniques work. Therefore, we need to experimentally test possible techniques to reduce polarization to obtain systematic evidence in the context of Turkey.

Regarding macro-level solutions, a comprehensive review article approached polarization in Turkey with a comparative perspective focused on the establishment of alternative political parties, institutional reforms such as altering electoral laws, type of leaders (polarizing vs. unifying), and strategies of the opposition party (Aydın-Düzgit, 2023). Another solution could be to limit disinformation dissemination through the media by the government, news institutions, and media companies.

Various field studies have provided individual-level solutions in different areas of the country. To illustrate, the Strategies and Tools for Mitigating Polarization in Turkey Project (TurkuazLab) was launched through a partnership between the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) and the Istanbul Bilgi University Center for Migration Research

(BILGI-Migration). The Turkuaz Lab is one of the prominent research groups that has made valuable efforts to foster awareness regarding socio-political divisions in the society funding by the. To illustrate, the field research “Dimensions of Polarization in Turkey” demonstrated how serious the issue of polarization in Turkey is with individuals living in their “echo chambers” and tend to dehumanize the “other.” The lab website has disseminated useful information about polarization, including educational programs and a publicly available gamified training tool. In addition, the lab organized workshops in different cities to increase awareness of the issue and discuss what can be done (see Footnote: 25). The aim of all these efforts is to encourage individuals to gain awareness about polarization and have a critical perspective on their behaviors, attitudes, and environment to start discussions. The ultimate goal is described as living in harmony despite our differences (Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2022).

In addition, Ortak Değerler Hareketi (Movement of Common Values)²⁶ is a social responsibility project aiming to reduce polarization in Turkey. This project involved field research that described common values in the population, organized a project competition to promote shared values and produced publicly available games to reduce socio-political divisions.

Overall, there have been crucial attempts to cope with AP in Turkey by fostering awareness and disseminating possible solutions to depolarize. However, the effect of these solutions on reducing AP has not yet been systematically tested. Therefore, we do not know if highlighting common values and contact in promoting “living in harmony despite our differences” reduces the level of AP among individuals.

In the current study, PG, including the “Outgroup Experience Effect,” provided an opportunity for the individual to gain a sense of sharing a common value and acknowledging the differences. Therefore, the current study allowed us to test the recommended solutions in an experimental setting in Turkey. Overall, I tested the effect of PT on attitudes towards the target out-partisan, least-liked party supporters in the case of Turkey. In addition, considering

²⁶ <https://www.ortakdegerlerhareketi.com/>

the multiparty structure of the country, I also tested the effects regarding attitudes towards out-alliance supporters. Therefore, I tested two additional hypotheses in this study.

H4. Perspective-taking (PT) increases warmth towards out-alliance supporters.

H5. PT decreases out-coalition polarization, as measured by the difference between the in-party and out-alliance warmth scores.

4.4.3 Method

Participants

I prepared the survey experiment on the Qualtrics online survey platform. I obtained the IRB approval from the Committee on Human Research at Koç University (approval number: 2023.219.IRB3.102); the link through the survey experiment was distributed to social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) via Facebook and TikTok Advertisements. Purposive sampling was used to balance the sample by party identification. This is because the number of participants supporting the People's Alliance is very small. To illustrate, 71.59% (n=63) of participants who support the incumbent party (AKP) and 68.76% (n=22) of the MHP supporters were included via purposive sampling²⁷.

This study was introduced to the participants as it is related to social and political attitudes in Turkey. In the end, participants were provided with detailed descriptions of the study. Participation in this study was voluntary. In other words, respondents were not provided with any incentive to participate in the survey. Participants first filled out screening questions to determine their eligibility for the study. Those who did not identify with or lean towards any party were excluded from the survey. In addition, those who did not select any 5 biggest parties as their "least-liked" party were excluded²⁸.

²⁷ I consulted a few AKP and MHP district headquarters in Istanbul, and the link through the survey was distributed to the WhatsApp groups consisting of those working in the headquarters. Besides, I used my own social network to distribute the link to the supporters of the People's Alliance parties.

²⁸ Among 944 participants who completed 100% of the survey, 218 (23.09%) participants who did not have a party identification or lean towards any party were excluded. An additional 12 (1.27%) participants who provided non-classifiable open-ended answers were dropped. Among the remaining 714 participants, those without a least-liked party preference (n=19, 2.66%) or who selected a least-liked party beyond the

However, no substantial difference was found between those excluded and the retained effective sample regarding their party attachment²⁹. Therefore, the results were generalizable only to those who identify themselves with a political party and have a least-liked party preference among the five parties with the highest vote share. According to the 2023 general parliamentary and presidential elections, the turnout rate was 88.92%³⁰. Overall, the analyses were conducted using data from 605 eligible respondents who finished the survey.

The sample was reasonably diverse, although it reflected biases common in online samples, such as sampling and non-response biases (see Greenacre, 2016). To illustrate, respondents recruited through social media are those who have access to the internet and a social media account. Besides, there are people who do not have a social media account or have an account and decide not to click on or participate in the survey. Nationally representative studies report that about 56% of the population does not use the Internet, and 61% of the population never use social media in Turkey (Andı et al., 2019). The survey was conducted between January 1, 2024, and April 11, 2024.

Measures

The questions measuring attitudes towards Casey in the U.S. survey were translated and adopted in the Turkish context, except for the sympathy item. Accordingly, attitudes towards Fatma/Ahmet were composed of items measuring feelings of warmth, care, sorry, understanding, argument strength, and future contact interest towards the target.

For male respondents, the target was Ahmet, which is a typical male name in Turkish, while all other participants rated their attitudes towards Fatma, which is a typical female

five biggest parties (n=80, 11.20%) were removed. Finally, 10 (1.4%) participants whose least-liked and most-liked party preferences were the same were deleted. This resulted in 605 cases.

²⁹ The popular parties and their respective percentages were roughly the same across the two groups. For the effective sample, the ranking of the parties was like the following: CHP (40.2%), TIP (15.4%), AKP (15.0%), DEM Party (7.3%), ZP (6.2 %), İYİP (2.6 %), MHP (5.2%). For the excluded, the ranking was found as follows: CHP (27.3%), TIP (23.2 %), AKP (10.1%), DEM Party (11.1 %), İYİ Party (4%), YRP (4%), MHP (2%) and ZP (2%)

³⁰ <https://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/14-mayis-2023-secimleri/82491>.

³¹ However, to my knowledge, currently, there is no representative data showing the population ratings for those with no least-liked party preferences in Turkey. Therefore, the population size regarding the overlap between supporting five main parties and not having a least-liked party cannot be estimated.

name in Turkish. Questions about attitudes towards Fatma and Ahmet were the same. The only difference was the name of the target.

Feeling sorry about Fatma/Ahmet: Respondents rated to what extent they felt sorry about Fatma/Ahmet (“While reading the passage, how SORRY did you feel for Fatma/Ahmet?”) on a 4-point Likert type scale from 1 (very sorry) to 4 (not at all sorry). The scale was reverse-coded such that higher scores represented higher levels of sorry felt for the target.

Caring for Fatma/Ahmet: Participants indicated how much they care about Fatma/Ahmet (“How much do you CARE about Fatma/Ahmet?”) on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (no care at all) to 4 (care a great deal).

Warmth towards Fatma/Ahmet: A Turkish adaptation of the feeling thermometer scale was used (Haddock et al., 1993). Accordingly, on a feeling thermometer that ranges from 0 (coldest) to 100 (warmest), respondents rated the level of warmth they felt towards Fatma/Ahmet (“Please indicate to what extent you feel warmth towards Fatma/Ahmet on a feeling thermometer scale below. In this thermometer, 0 indicates COLDEST, and 100 indicates WARMEST feelings. Fifty indicates NEUTRAL feelings. Please indicate your feelings using this rating scale.”).

Argument strength: Respondents rated to what extent they think the reason why Ahmet/Fatma supports the out-party is strong (“In your view, how weak or strong is Ahmet/Fatma’s reason for supporting the [LEAST-LIKED PARTY NAME]?”) at a 4-point Likert type scale from 1 (very weak) to 4 (very strong).

Understanding the Reasons: Respondents also rated to what extent they understand why Ahmet/Fatma identifies with the least-liked party (“How well do you understand why Casey identifies with [LEAST-LIKED PARTY NAME]?”) at a four point-scale from (not at all) to 4 (a great deal)

Future contact interest: Participants’ future contact interest (“How interested are you in meeting and talking with Fatma/Ahmet if the opportunity arose?”) was measured using a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 4 (extremely interested).

Realism Level: Respondents also rated to what extent they think the content sounds realistic on a 4-point Likert-type scale from 1 (not realistic at all) to 4 (totally realistic).

Attitudes Towards the Out-Partisans in General

Attitudes Towards the Least-Liked Party Supporters: Four items were adopted to assess attitudes towards the target person (Ahmet/Fatma) and measure partisan attitudes in measuring attitudes towards least-liked party supporters. Therefore, this time, participants indicated their attitudes towards the least-liked party supporters. Respondents' choice of the least-liked party in previous questions was used here as the target. Therefore, the measures included feelings of care and warmth, understanding, and contact interest towards the least-liked party supporters. Additionally, an item measuring social distance was added.

Future Contact Interest: Participants rated their future contact interest with partisans of the least liked party (e.g., "If you were at a social event and discovered that you were talking to a CHP supporter, how likely are you to end the conversation and move on?") at a 4-point Likert type scale from 1 (not at all likely) to 4 (extremely likely).

Social Distance: Participants rated how they would feel about one of their family members marrying someone who supports the least-liked party (How would you feel if someone in your family, for example, siblings, children, married someone supporting [LEAST-LIKED PARTY NAME]? on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (very unhappy) to 4 (does not matter to me).

Warmth Towards the "Out-Alliance" Supporters: To understand how supporters of parties within the other alliances are rated, a composite score was constructed based on the mean ratings for out-alliance parties. The measure for out-alliance parties included ratings for five main parties (AKP, CHP, MHP, IYI Party, and DEM Party), excluding those within the in-group alliance. If the respondent's in-party was one of these five parties, then ratings for that party were excluded while calculating the mean score. If not, the alliance tie between the respondents' party and the five main parties was considered. In other words, ratings for any party with which respondents' in-party had an alliance tie were excluded from calculating the out-alliance warmth score. For example, for a respondent who supports AKP, the ratings

for the parties within the People's Alliance, that is, AKP and MHP, were excluded. Therefore, out-alliance warmth is calculated based on the ratings for all out-alliance parties, such as the CHP, IYI Party, and DEM Party.

Affective Polarization Measures

In-Party Warmth: Using the feeling thermometer, respondents rated their feelings of warmth towards the party to which they felt closest. The thermometer scale was the same as that used to ask for feelings of warmth towards Ahmet/Fatma. The question was reframed to target "in-party" supporters (e.g., "Please indicate to what extent you feel warmth towards [IN-PARTY NAME] on a feeling thermometer scale below. In this thermometer, 0 indicates the COLDEST, and 100 indicates the WARMEST feelings. 50 indicates NEUTRAL feelings. Please indicate your feelings using this rating scale."). The "in-party" was the answer given to the "Party Identification" question.

In-party-Out-party Feelings: The warmth score given to the least-liked party supporters was subtracted from the score given to the in-party supporters to obtain in-party-out-party feelings.

Out-Alliance Polarization: The warmth score given to out-alliance party supporters was subtracted from the score given to party supporters to obtain out-alliance polarization (see Huddy et al., 2018).

Empathic concern and Dispositional perspective-taking: To measure empathic concern and dispositional perspective-taking, I used Engeler and Yargıç's (2007) Turkish adaptation of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) developed (Davis, 1983). The IRI has four subscales: fantasy, perspective-taking (PT), empathic concern (EC), and personal distress, each with seven items. In this study, only the PT and EC items were used. Accordingly, respondents rated to what extent each item describes them at a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (does not describe me well) to 5 (describes me very well). Empathic concern measures individuals' tendency to feel concerned or compassion towards others. The scale includes "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me." Dispositional PT assesses the ability to take the perspective of others with items like "I

sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.” Higher scores indicated higher functionality in respective subscales. Factor analyses were conducted separately for both subscales. Contrary to the literature, PT items were loaded in two factors, with two reverse-coded items loaded in one and the other four loaded in another dimension. I only used the letter as the items tap into a more general tendency for PT. On the other hand, the letter centers around a general tendency toward PT and has a reasonable reliability score ($\alpha=.69$). Moreover, all the EC items were loaded on a single factor, yielding a reasonable reliability level ($\alpha=.60$).

Party Identification (PID): Participants indicated the party they considered the closest to among the alternatives. Choices included eight parties with a vote share higher than 1% in the last general elections on the 14th of May, 2023. These are AKP, CHP, DEM Party/HDP (Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party), MHP, İYİP, YRP (New Welfare Party), TİP (Workers' Party of Turkey), and ZP (Victory Party). I added the Democracy and Progress Party (DEVA), Future Party (GP), and SP under the main opposition alliance to the list. Participants were also allowed to write to any other party they preferred. None of the respondents who chose “none of them” answered an additional question asking if they felt closer to any parties from the same list of parties. The survey ended for the pure independents.

Alliances: I grouped respondents under five alliance categories based on their responses to the party identification question. Accordingly, categories included the People's Alliance led by the incumbent AKP, the Nation Alliance led by the main opposition center-left CHP, a far-left group, the pro-Kurdish DEM Party, and other non-allied parties³². People's Alliance is the incumbent alliance, which is constituted of pro-Islamist and nationalist right-wing parties. Far-left parties included parties with far-left orientation and pro-Communist

³² People's Alliance consisted of the pro-Islamist AKP (n=88, 67.18%), the nationalist National Action Party (MHP) (n=32, 24.43%), the ultraconservative New Welfare Party (YRP) (n=10, 7.63%) and Grand Unity Party (BBP) (n=1, 0.76%). The Nation Alliance included the secular CHP (n=241, 87.32%), the right-wing İYİP (n=16, 5.80%), the liberal-right Democracy and Progress (DEVA) Party (n=9, 3.26%), the center-right Future Party (GP), the ultra-conservative Felicity Party (SP) (n=7, 2.54%), and the right-wing Democrat Party (n=3, 1.09%). The far-left group included the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) (n=95, 90.48%), the Labor Party (EMEP) (n=1, 0.95%), the People's Liberation Party (HKP) (n=1, 0.95%), the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) (n=4, 3.81%), the Left Party (SOL) (n=4, 3.81%). DEM Party constituted a category by itself (n=45). Finally, the other seven parties, including the Victory Party (ZP) (n=38, 79.17%), The Free Cause Party (HÜDA-PAR) (n=2, 4.17%), and Liberal Democrat Party (LDP) (n=3, 6.25%), Motherland Party (Memleket) (n=3, 6.25%) were under the other party's category.

values. DEM Party is a left-wing pro-ethnic party that centers its politics around pro-Kurdish policies. On the other hand, there is no ideological overlap among the Nation Alliance in that the alliance includes parties from center-left orientation to ultra-conservative parties. Nevertheless, in the current study, the center-left CHP supporters dominate the category (n=233, 87.3%). The remaining parties were categorized as the other parties.

Party Identification Strength (PID Strength): Participants who indicated that they consider themselves close to one of the parties in the first question also rated the strength of their identification (e.g., Would you call yourself a strong AKP supporter or not very strong?) by choosing one of the two options (i.e., strong and very strong).

The PID strength summary measure was calculated based on the answers to the party identification question(s) and party identification strength. Accordingly, the scale ranged from 0 (weak) to 1 (strong). To illustrate, participants who indicated themselves as supporting AKP and called themselves strong partisans of AKP were coded as 1. In contrast, weak AKP partisans and independents who consider themselves closer to AKP were coded as 0. This procedure was repeated for all parties.

Least-liked Party Choice: Participants were asked to select the party they disliked most from the same list used in the previous questions.

Political Interest: To assess political interest, respondents were asked to what extent they are interested in politics. The answer choices ranged from 1 (very interested) to 4 (not at all interested). The item was reverse-coded so that higher scores represented a higher level of political interest.

Demographic Questions: Participants answered several demographic questions, including their gender, education level, income level, religious identification, and birth year.

Gender: Participants selected one of the four alternatives to indicate their gender (“male,” “female,” “other,” or “Prefer not to answer”). Gender was dummy coded, with females coded as 1 and males coded as zero, since there were no cases selecting the other options.

Education Level: Respondents indicated the highest grade of school they completed from the following categories: primary school (1), primary school (8 years) (2), high school (3), high school, left college (4), undergraduate degree (5), master's degree (6), PhD (7).

Income level: Respondents reported their household yearly income from “5.000 TL and below” (1) to “40.000 and above” (7).

Religious Affiliation: Respondents were asked if they identify themselves with any religion. The answer choices include “No” (1), “Yes, I am a Muslim” (2), “Yes, I am a Christian,” “Yes, I am a Jewish” (3), and “Other:.” The scale was dummy-coded so that participants who indicated a belief in a religion were coded as 1, whereas others were coded as 0.

Religiosity Level: Frequency of Praying: Participants who identified as Muslim were asked to rate how often they pray from 1 (never) to 9 (every day).

Age: Participants chose their year of birth from a dropdown list of years ranging from 1920 to 2005. The birth year was subtracted from 2024, the year of data collection.

Manipulation check questions:

Name of the Target Out-partisan: Participants were asked to choose the name of the out-partisan who wrote the vignette. The alternatives for female respondents were Fikriye, Fatma, Feride, Funda, and Filiz. On the other hand, male respondents chose from a list of male names, including Ayhan, Ahmet, Aziz, Arif, and Akif. Respondents selected Ahmet or Fatma were coded as 1, and all other answers were coded as zero.

The Relationship between the Story Character and Out-partisan: In some stories, the out-partisan target was telling a story about their family members. To check if the respondents noticed this, whose experiences Ahmet or Fatma were talking about were also asked. The choices were the out-partisan themselves and their brother, sister, mother, or father. The correct answer depends on which story the respondent read. In the stories about the AKP, IYIP, or CHP supporters, Ahmet and Fatma talk about their mother. On the other

hand, the main character in the story about MHP supporters is Ahmet's or Fatma's brother. Lastly, Ahmet and Fatma discuss their experience in the DEM Party supporter vignette.

Experimental Design

The design of the second study is similar to the first study (the U.S. study) except for some differences. First, I manipulated the experimental procedure to get better results. To illustrate, the gender of the target and the respondent were matched. All male respondents read vignettes written by a male out-partisan, while female respondents read vignettes written by a female out-partisan. I expect gender match to foster perceived similarity between the respondent and the out-party member, increasing the intervention's effectiveness (Warner et al., 2020) and decreasing the risk of the backfire effects of PT (Sassenrath et al., 2016).

Moreover, I used small facial pictures representing out-partisans to help respondents imagine the other as vividly as possible. I gathered the pictures from the American Multiracial Face Database (Chen et al., 2020). I selected pictures based on two criteria. First, faces like those of an average Turkish woman or man were selected. Second, faces with neutral expression poses instead of smiling faces were selected (see Appendix C).

Another addition to the manipulation process was that respondents were made to believe the random selection of the target (see Todd et al., 2012, for a similar strategy). Accordingly, respondents were given six numbered boxes before encountering the vignettes. They were told that each box represent a different partisan. Upon clicking on one of the boxes they chose, respondents saw a photograph of the target person and the vignette. In reality, the selection was not random. All respondents were assigned to the least-liked partisan target whose gender matched with the respondents.

In addition, the findings show that PG intervention is more successful when it is combined with a writing task where respondents briefly summarize what they just read, and a short writing task was added to the conditions (Kalla & Broockman, 2023). Specifically, after reading the vignettes, all participants were asked to summarize what they read without considering their subjective opinions about the issue.

The last change that has the potential to contribute to intervention effectiveness is keeping the respondent on the screen where they read the vignettes for a while³³. To do this, I removed the “next” button for a certain period to ensure that respondents read the paragraph.

The second main difference between the first and second studies relates to some measures. To illustrate, the survey included two subscales of Davis’s Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), Empathic Concern and PT, to test the effects of empathic concern and dispositional PT. Moreover, as one of the outcome measures, I dropped the “sympathy” question from the survey because its meaning was incompatible with Turkish and the U.S. contexts. In addition, I added the social distance dimension in measuring out-party attitudes and “realism” ratings for the target in the second study.

The third difference was about the manipulation check questions. Instead of a party of the target out-partisan, respondents were asked about the relationship between the target and the main character in the vignette.

Procedure

After providing consent for participation, respondents answered screening questions about their gender, political interest, emphatic concern, dispositional perspective-taking, party identity, party identification strength, and the least-liked party. The participants were then asked to select one of the six boxes to read the vignette. Each box was told to represent a vignette written by a partisan from a different party.

The gender and party of the vignette writer varied based on the participants’ gender and least-liked party. Specifically, male participants read the vignettes indicated to be written by a male called Ahmet. On the other hand, female respondents read vignettes written by a female called Fatma. For all respondents, the writer of the vignette was indicated to be a partisan of the respondent’s least-liked party. To illustrate, a male participant who indicated that he dislikes “CHP” most read a vignette by Ahmet, a CHP partisan. On the other hand, a female participant who indicated their least-liked party as AKP read a vignette by Fatma, who supports AKP.

³³ Respondents were kept in the screen for 30 seconds for the treatment vignette, 15 seconds for the control vignette.

All vignettes explain why the out-partisan supports the least-liked party based on a policy issue. Each party selected different policy issues based on the most salient issues. Accordingly, vignettes about AK Party supporters centered around the headscarf issue (see Appendix D). On the other hand, MHP supporters focused on terrorism. CHP and IYIP supporter vignettes focused on the Istanbul Convention and domestic violence. Lastly, the vignettes written by DEM Party supporters centered around the right to education in one's mother tongue.

Respondents were randomly assigned to either experimental or the control vignette conditions. In the control vignette, the target out-partisan introduces themselves with their name and the party they support. In addition, they argued that they supported the out-party because of the party's position towards a policy issue. In the experimental vignette condition, participants read an extra paragraph including the out-partisan's personal story on why they support the least-liked party, which is related to policy issues. For example, male respondents whose least-liked party is the AK Party read a vignette written by Ahmet, who supports AKP because of the party's accomplishments and efforts regarding the headscarf issue in the control condition. On the other hand, in the experimental condition, respondents read an extra paragraph that included a personal story about Ahmet's life. Accordingly, his mother, who is a lawyer, had to quit her job because head-scarfed women were discriminated against and had low-paying jobs.

Upon finishing reading the vignette, all participants were asked to write a summary of the vignette they had just read. Then, they answered manipulation check questions asking the name of the out-partisan, the relationship between the out-partisan and the main character in the personal story (e.g., respondent's mother, respondent's spouse), and how realistic they found the vignette. Following the manipulation check questions, participants filled in questions asking their feelings and thoughts about the target out-partisan (Fatma or Ahmet). The respondents then answered a series of questions regarding out-party attitudes. The survey ended with demographic questions.

4.4.4 Results

I re-scaled all measures into 0-1 metrics before conducting the analyses. Multiple imputation was conducted before proceeding with the analyses³⁴. I conducted the analyses in three steps. First, I tested the mean differences in attitudes towards Ahmet/Fatma, the least-liked party supporters, and out-alliance party supporters across the conditions. Second, I tested the out-party warmth by grouping the respondents by alliance. Lastly, I conducted multiple regression analysis results conducted to test the hypotheses controlling for potential demographic suspects.

Table 4.4 and Table 4.5 show descriptive statistics. Table 4.4 shows that nearly half of the sample is female (45.48%, $n=272$). Participants' age ranged from 19 to 87 ($M=0.51$, $SD=0.22$). Most were university graduates (73.55%, $n=445$) and had a high income ($M=0.80$, $SD=0.23$). Most of the participants supported the Nation Alliance (45.62%, $n=276$). The incumbent alliance (21.65%, $n=131$) and the far-left groups (17.36%, $n=105$) followed this. The remaining supported the DEM party (7.44%, $n=45$) and the other parties (7.93%, $n=48$). Most respondents indicated that they believe in religion (72.31%, $n=423$), and among them, the frequency of praying is moderate ($M=0.43$, $SD=0.41$). Participants were highly interested in politics ($M=0.78$, $SD=0.23$). Almost half of the participants were in the treatment group (49.26%, $n=298$).

³⁴ PID Strength ($n=3$), gender ($n=7$), income ($n=16$), and age ($n=14$) were the variables that have the missing cases. I used a chained type of multiple imputation analysis to get information from all variables of interest in filling in the missing data. To illustrate, education, income, age, PT, EC, warmth scores for the target, least-liked party supporters, out-alliance party supporters as well as political interest were imputed via regression, treatment dummy, gender, and PID strength were imputed under the "logit" category. The alliance category was imputed under the "logic" category.

Table 4.4: Frequency Statistics for the Categorical Variables.

Variable Name	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	272	45.48
Education	Primary School	28	4.63
	High School	132	21.82
	Undergraduate Degree	301	49.75
	Graduate Degree	144	23.80
Belief in a Religion	Beliefs in a religion	423	72.31
PID Strength	Strong Party Identifier	384	63.79
Alliance	People's Alliance	131	21.65
	Nation Alliance	276	45.62
	Far-left Group	105	17.36
	DEM Party	45	7.44
	Others	48	7.93
Condition	Treatment ³⁵	298	49.26
Total		605	100

³⁵ Least-liked party preferences were as follows. More than half of the respondents disliked AKP most (58.51%, n=354). HDP was the second most popular party for which participants indicated dislike (24.79%, n=150). MHP (9.75 %, n=59), CHP (6.78%, n=41), IYIP (0.17%, n=1) followed that.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Age	601	0	1	0.51	0.22
Education Level	605	0	1	0.63	0.22
Income level	589	0	1	0.80	0.23
Religiosity Level: Frequency of Praying	570	0	1	0.43	0.41
Political interest	605	0	1	0.78	0.23
Feeling sorry for the target	605	0	1	0.41	0.33
Warmth felt for the target	605	0	1	0.39	0.28
Care for target	605	0	1	0.50	0.36
Opinion strength of the target	605	0	1	0.30	0.32
Contact interest with the target	605	0	1	0.52	0.37
Perceived level of realism in the story	605	0	1	0.29	0.30
Warmth Felt for In-party	605	0	1	0.43	0.36
Warmth: Least-liked Party Supporters	605	0	1	0.79	0.20
Care: Least-liked Party Supporters	605	0	1	0.21	0.22
Understanding: Least-liked Party Supporters	605	0	1	0.32	0.34
Contact interest: Least-liked Party Supporters	605	0	1	0.45	0.38
Social Distance (reverse): Least-liked Party Supporters	605	0	1	0.54	0.34
Warmth: Out-alliance Party Supporters	605	0	1	0.28	0.28
AP 1: in-party affect - least-liked-party affect	605	0	1	0.33	0.20
AP 2: in-party affect - out-alliance-parties affect	605	-0.47	1	0.57	0.30
General PT	605	-0.38	1	0.45	0.27
Dispositional EC	605	0	1	0.62	0.17

Attitudes Towards the Ahmet/Fatma

Upon reading the vignettes, participants first rated the target out-partisan (i.e., Ahmet for male respondents and Fatma for female respondents) on various dimensions, including feeling sorry for, caring for, understanding, opinion strength, and being interested in contact with the target out-partisan (see Figure 4.5). In addition, respondents rated the extent to which the story told by the target was realistic. Except for understanding, the treatment improved attitudes overall dimensions.

Accordingly, participants in the treatment group felt sorrier ($M = 0.51$, $SE = 0.02$) for the target out-partisan compared to their control group counterparts ($M = 0.31$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .001$). In addition, participants in the treatment group reported significantly warmer feelings towards the target ($M = 0.45$, $SE = 0.02$) compared to the control group ($M = 0.33$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .001$). Similarly, treatment condition participants cared about the target significantly more ($M = 0.56$, $SE = 0.02$) than the control group participants ($M = 0.44$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .001$).

Participants in the experimental group found the opinion of the target ($M = 0.33$, $SE = 0.02$) stronger and more realistic ($M = 0.38$, $SE = 0.02$) compared to the participants in the control group ($M = 0.28$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .05$; $M = 0.20$, $SE = 0.01$, $p < .001$, respectively). Also, experimental group participants reported significantly more interest in contact with the target ($M = 0.56$, $SE = 0.02$) than the control group participants ($M = 0.49$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .05$). On the other hand, there was no difference between control conditions in terms of the understanding target out-partisan ($p = .285$). Overall, PT treatment increased positive attitudes toward the target out-partisan over all dimensions. This supports H1.

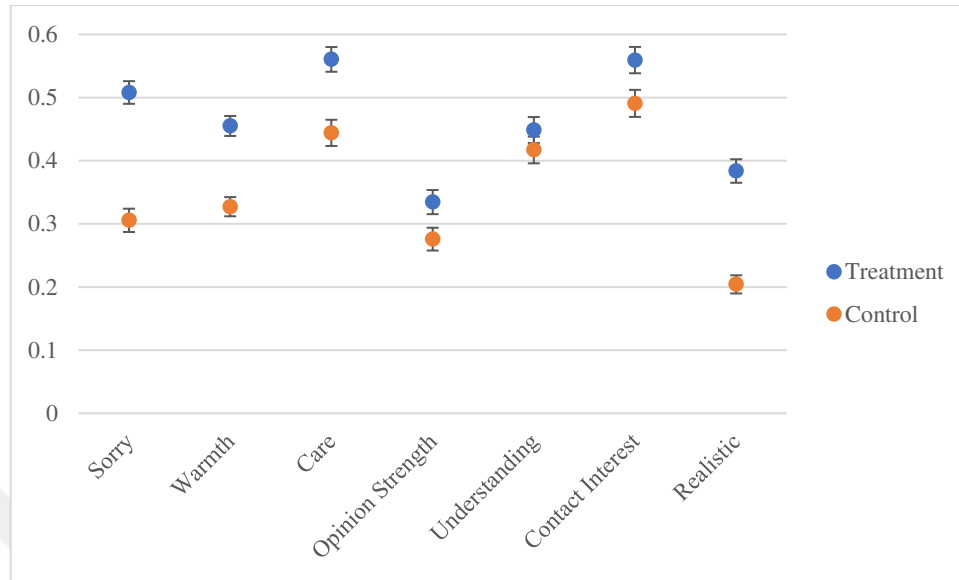


Figure 4.5: Attitudes Towards the Target Out-partisan (Ahmet/Fatma).

Attitudes Towards the Least-Liked Party Supporters

To understand whether the improvement of the attitudes towards the individual out-partisan carried over the evaluation of the least-liked party supporters in general, I calculated the mean differences for the least-liked partisan evaluations across the conditions (see Figure 4.6). Accordingly, participants in the experimental group evaluated the least-liked party supporters significantly warmer ($M=0.23$, $SD=0.01$) than the control group participants ($M=0.20$, $SD = 0.01$, $p < .05$). The results showed no statistically significant difference between the conditions over the other dimensions. Overall, H2 is partially supported in that PT treatment increased warmth but did not change other attitudes toward the least-liked party supporters.

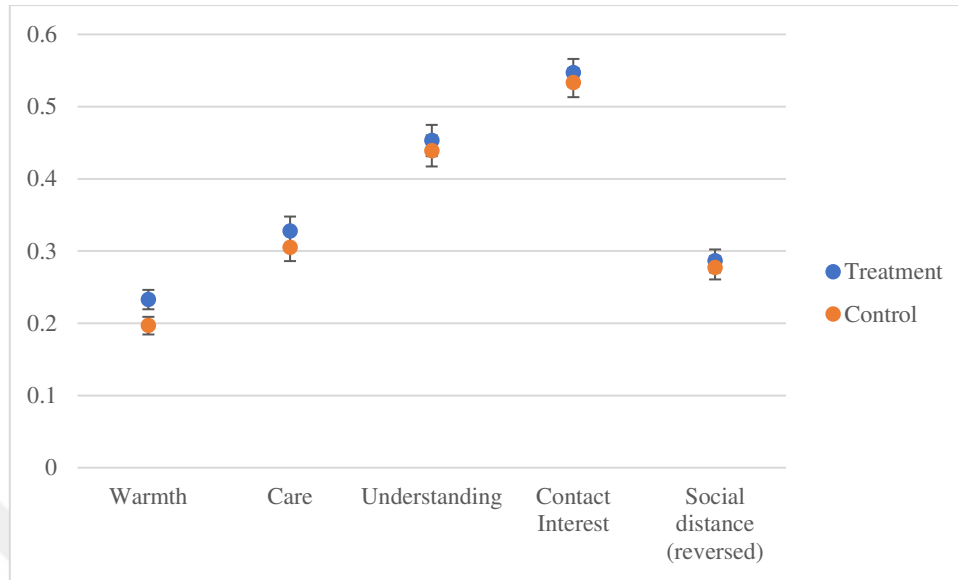


Figure 4.6: Attitudes Towards the Least-Liked Party Supporters Across Conditions.

Feelings of Warmth Towards the Target Out-Partisan, Least-Liked Party Supporters, and Out-alliance Party Supporters

Given that the feeling thermometer measure is the most popular and fundamental measure of AP, it is worth presenting the warmth scores given to the three main targets across the conditions (see Figure 4.7). Specifically, the graph below shows how the warmth score varied across the experimental conditions and the target out-group/or out-group member. It is shown that the experiment not only increased warmth feelings towards the target out-partisan and least-liked party supporters but also increased warmth towards the supporters of the out-alliance parties in general ($M=0.35$, $SE=0.01$) compared to the control condition ($M=0.32$, $SE=0.01$, $p < .05$). Overall, H3 is supported by the fact that PT treatment increased warmth towards the supporters of out-alliance parties.

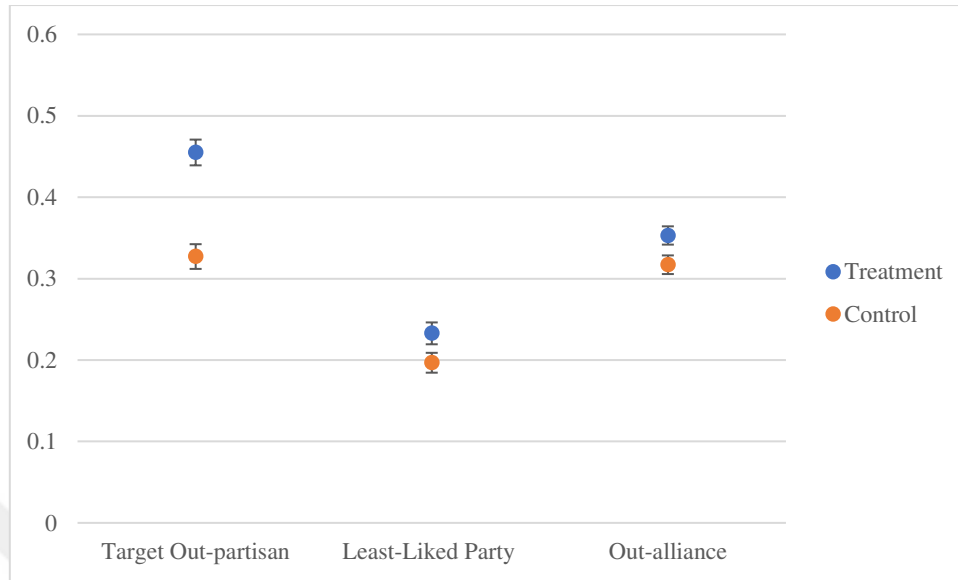


Figure 4.7: Warmth Scores Across Conditions.

Figure 4.8 shows the affective polarization scores according to condition. Accordingly, none of the AP measures differed across the conditions. Overall, although treatment altered the warmth level given to the target out-party members and the out-party groups, it did not change the level of AP. Given the significant increase in the warmth scores towards the target person and least-liked party supporters, one would expect AP scores to decrease with treatment. However, although insignificant, the in-party warmth score is higher in the treatment ($M=0.80$ $SE=.01$) compared to the control condition ($M=0.77$ $SE=.01$), $p=.114$. Therefore, the simultaneous increase in the out-party and in-party ratings explains why AP scores did not change across the conditions.

As expected, respondents' mean evaluations for out-alliance party supporters were significantly warmer than those of least-liked party supporters. However, H3 and H5 were rejected since no AP change was observed across the conditions.

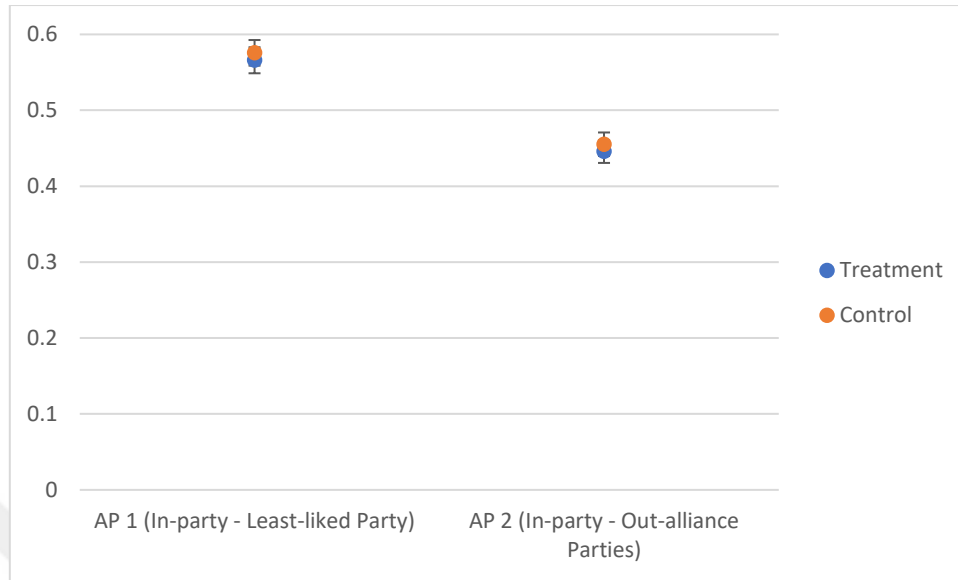


Figure 4.8: Affective Polarization Levels by Condition.

Finding that the out-group warmth scores increased by treatment, I checked whether this change in the warmth scores differed among the alliance groups³⁶. Figure 4.9 shows the mean warmth score differences across conditions and by electoral alliance groups. The results showed that all warmth scores increased significantly among all alliance groups except the far-left group. Specifically, both the incumbent alliance formed along Turkish-Islamist sentiments and the main opposition alliance led by the main opposition party, pro-secular and center-left CHP, were responsive to the treatment effect in the expected direction. In other words, participants supporting the parties within the two biggest electoral alliances reported significantly warmer feelings towards the target out-partisan, least-liked party supporters, and all out-alliance party supporters in the treatment condition than in the control condition.

Considering the warmth ratings for the target out-partisan, respondents supporting the People's Alliance reported significantly warmer feelings in the experimental condition ($M=0.44$, $SE=0.04$) than in the control condition ($M=0.25$, $SE=0.03$; $p < .001$). Similarly, participants supporting the Nation Alliance rated the target warmer in the experimental

³⁶ Scores for DEM party supporters and other party supporters were not presented due to the fact that both have less than 30 cases for each cell.

condition ($M = 0.46$, $SE = 0.022$) than in the control condition ($M = 0.33$, $SE = 0.023$, $p < .001$). No significant difference is observed for the far-left group across the conditions ($p = .599$).

In general, the warmth ratings were lower for the least-liked party supporters. Nevertheless, the differences were significant across the conditions for the two biggest alliance groups. Specifically, supporters of the People's Alliance indicated warmer feelings in the experimental condition ($M = 0.21$, $SE = 0.02$) compared to the control condition at a marginally significant level ($M = 0.14$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .080$). Similarly, ratings of the Nation Alliance supporters were also warmer in the experimental condition ($M = 0.26$, $SE = 0.02$) compared to the control condition ($M = 0.20$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < .05$). Again, no significant difference is observed for the far-left group across the conditions ($p = .958$).

Lastly, out-alliance warmth scores tend to be higher than least-liked party ratings. Similar to the ratings for target out-partisan and least-liked party supporters, The People's and Nation alliance supporters' ratings were significantly higher in the experimental group. To illustrate, The People's Alliance supporters rated out-alliance supporters significantly warmer in the experimental condition ($M = 0.36$, $SE = 0.03$) than in the control condition ($M = 0.28$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < .05$). Similarly, supporters of the Nation alliance rated out-alliance party supporters significantly warmer in the experimental condition ($M = 0.36$, $SE = 0.03$) compared to the control condition ($M = 0.30$, $SE = 0.02$). Finally, no significant difference is observed for the far-left group across the conditions ($p = .977$).

Overall, the out-party supporters are rated significantly warmer in the experimental group by the supporters of the two biggest electoral alliances. However, no difference was observed in the ratings for the far-left group.

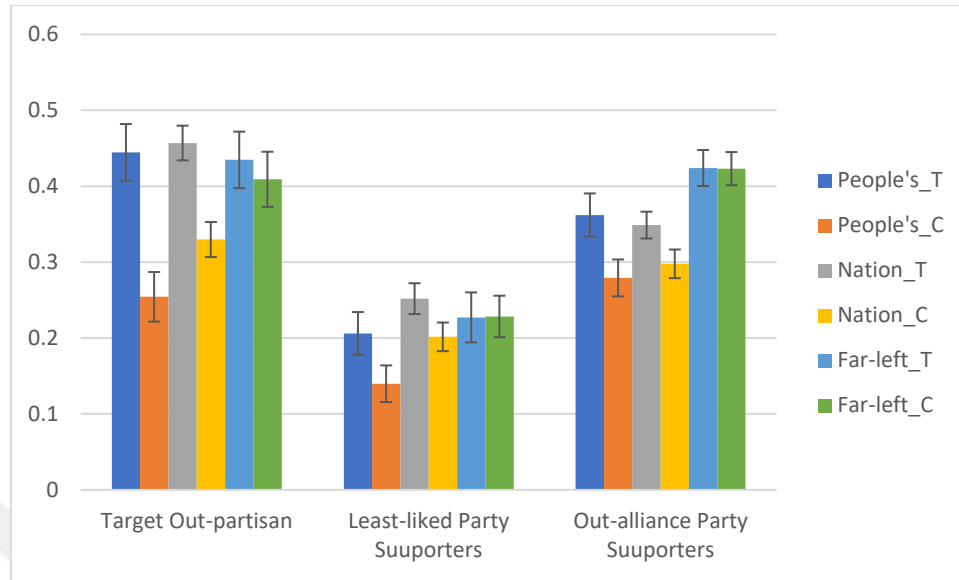


Figure 4.9: Warmth Scores by Electoral Alliance Group.

Note. The bar graph shows the mean scores of the treatment and control conditions and standard errors for each alliance group. *People's_T*: People's Alliance treatment condition, *People's_C*: People's Alliance control condition, *Nation_T*: Nation Alliance treatment condition, *Nation_C*: Nation Alliance control condition, *Far-left_T*: Far-left group treatment condition, *Far-left_C*: Far-left group control condition.

Regression Analyses

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the treatment effect after controlling for the potential confounders and testing a moderator effect. Table 4.6 shows the unstandardized Beta coefficients in predicting warmth toward three targets: target out-partisan, least-liked party supporters, and out-alliance supporters³⁷. The first model shows the null model without control variables. The second model included control variables. Dummy-coded alliance categories were added, with The People's Alliance as the reference category.

First, the treatment significantly increased warmth towards the target out-partisan. Adding the control variables, PT treatment remained significant and positive ($B=.13$, $SE=.02$, $p < .001$). Women and highly educated participants tended to report warmer feelings than men ($B=.13$, $SE=.02$, $p < .05$), and less educated ($B=.19$, $SE=.05$, $p < .001$) participants did.

³⁷ Post-estimation after the multiple imputation in STATA did not provide standardized coefficients in the regression. Therefore, I only provided unstandardized coefficients with standard errors.

Moreover, both dispositional PT ($B=.12$, $SE=.02$, $p < .064$) and EC ($B=.11$, $SE=.02$, $p < .054$) positively predicted out-partisan target warmth at a marginally significant level. Nevertheless, after controlling their effect, PT treatment is still positive and significant ($p < .001$). This indicates that regardless of the dispositional tendency towards PT and empathizing, PG treatment is effective in influencing the attitudes toward target out-partisans.

Second, the treatment effect is significant in predicting warmth towards the least-liked party supporters ($B=.04$, $SE=.02$, $p < .05$). After controlling for the demographics and dispositional empathy dimensions, the treatment still predicts the warmth ratings ($B=.04$, $SE=.02$, $p < .05$). Third, the treatment effect is more evident in predicting the attitudes towards the out-alliance party supporters after adding the controls. To illustrate, across all models, treatment is marginally significant ($B=.04$, $SE=.02$, $p < .05$, for all models). In addition, higher education is related to warmer feelings towards the out-alliance supporters ($B=.09$, $SE=.04$, $p < .05$). Regarding party identification, the far-left group ($B=.08$, $SE=.03$, $p < .05$) and other parties ($B=.10$, $SE=.03$, $p < .05$) reported warmer out-alliance feelings than those in the People's Alliance (reference) group. This contrasts with what I found while examining the mean warmth score differences across the alliance groups and treatment above (see Figure 4.9). However, finding different results in the regression analyses might be related to education levels, which was found to be a significant and positive predictor of the warmth score across almost all models. Additionally, there is a significant difference among the alliance groups regarding education level in that the far-left group ($M=.69$, $SE=.02$) overscores that of the others ($M=.56$, $SE=.02$ for The People's Alliance, $M=.64$, $SE=.01$ for Nation Alliance)³⁸. The highly educated far-left group already rated the out-group at a highly warm level at the baseline (control) (see Figure 4.9), which would prevent them from increasing their feelings of warmth when they get the treatment. On the other hand, the models predicting AP 1 (in-party – out-party feelings) and AP 2 (out-alliance polarization) revealed no treatment effects after controlling for the demographics. Therefore, Hypotheses 3 and 5 were rejected.

³⁸ DEM party and other party groups are now included in the comparison due to the limited sample sizes in the treatment and control groups, as mentioned earlier. These two categories were only included in the regression analyses.

Overall, PT treatment predicted warmth towards the political out-group across all models, even after controlling for the possible confounding variables. In addition, the education effect is also robust across all models, indicating that as education increases, political out-group warmth increases. This further supports hypotheses 1 and 2 in that PT increases warmth towards the target and least-liked party supporters. Moreover, these results provide further support for the H4 regarding out-alliance warmth.



4.5 Conclusion

The current chapter provided partial evidence for the causal link between out-partisan PT and AP across the U.S. and Turkey.

In both countries, the treatment increased overall favorable attitudes toward the target out-partisan with a few exceptions, such as the understanding scores. Regarding the partisan attitudes, the effect was mainly carried out by Republicans in the case of the U.S. The weak effect might be because of some strategic failures in the U.S. study. Therefore, I made some improvements in designing the experiments in Turkey. To illustrate, I increased participant-target similarity, ensured that respondents engaged with the vignette, and balanced the stories regarding issue salience and the level of harm experienced by the out-partisan target.

The results in the Turkish context were more promising regarding the depolarizing effect of partisan PT. Partisan PT improved warmth towards the least-liked party supporters and all out-alliance party supporters. One important finding in this context is that alliances differed in their baseline out-party warmth. Specifically, People's Alliance supporters in the control condition had a significantly lower out-party warmth score than their Nation Alliance and the far-left party counterparts. The null effect for far-left partisans is considered to be due to the ceiling effect since they have the highest warmth levels in the control group.

Overall, the current chapter showed that PT leads to increased warmth towards out-partisans. However, we do not know if this link is valid for representative data. The next chapter provides cross-country large-N evidence for the link between PT and out-party animosity using cross-national data. In the next chapter, I also expanded this link by investigating the role of attitudes towards politicized social groups within the relationship between PT and out-party attitudes.

Chapter 5

THE ROLE OF IMMIGRANT-RELATED ATTITUDES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSPECTIVE-TAKING AND OUT- PARTY ATTITUDES: A CROSS-NATIONAL EVIDENCE

This chapter uses representative cross-country data to test the link between perspective-taking (PT) and affective polarization (AP). In doing that, I also focus on the role of immigrant-related attitudes in the relationship between PT and AP. Considering that immigration and immigrants have been a very contentious issue dividing partisans, PT towards immigrants can be considered an essential factor within the context of depolarization. Two studies test the link between immigrant empathy and PT and partisan hatred via anti-immigrant prejudice.

First, using European Values Study (EVS) 2017 data, I tested the link between immigrant empathy, as an essential manifestation of PT, and anti-immigrant prejudice in 32 European countries. The main reason for using EVS data is that it provides an opportunity to simultaneously get data on immigrant empathy and prejudice in a cross-cultural context. Second, in the main study, I added partisan prejudice to the model. I tested whether empathy and PT towards immigrants are related to a reduced level of partisan prejudice via reducing anti-immigrant prejudice. I tested this mediation model in a highly polarized U.S. context using the American National Election Studies (ANES) 2020 data.

The chapter starts with an introduction to how immigrant attitudes and affective polarization are related. Following the introduction, the hypotheses and the conceptual map of the two studies are explained. Next, the chapter continues with the preliminary study. I provide the results with a discussion of the findings. Subsequently, I briefly mention the case of the U.S. regarding the link between immigrant attitudes and polarization. The section ends

with the main findings of the mediation model. Then, I discuss the findings of two studies. Finally, I conclude the chapter.

5.1 *Immigrant Attitudes and Affective Polarization*

The discussions over the main mechanism of the AP have been centered around party-over-policy and policy-over-party hypothesis. The former asserts that policy attitudes or ideology are the main mechanism behind AP intensifying (Lelkes, 2021; Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017). On the other hand, inspired by the Social Identity Theory, the latter approach sees partisanship as an essential social identity and, therefore, a main determinant of the attitudes towards in and out-party (Dias & Lelkes, 2022; Huddy et al., 2015, 2018; Iyengar et al., 2012; Mason, 2015; 2018b). While the latter approach has more support, policy attitudes have also influenced partisan attitudes. In addition to that, in a polarized context where social sorting creates a partisan division along non-partisan identities, politicized social identities are crucial to understanding partisan animosity. However, these politicized social identities in the context of AP are a neglected topic among scholars (Wagner, 2024). Therefore, in the current work, I test how policy attitudes play a role within an identity-based model of AP. I focused on the attitudes toward immigrants as it has become a highly divisive issue among partisans worldwide in recent years.

The rise of right-wing populist parties worldwide put a particular sociopolitical conflict issue in front: the issue of immigration. Studies showed that the immigration issue divides parties, with the right-wing populist parties' extreme anti-immigrant stances triggering partisan hatred. To illustrate, in Sweden, partisan animosity has centered around the negative attitudes towards the right-wing populist Sweden Democrats (SD), who are significantly against immigration. A study showed that among many cultural-identity-related issues, pro-immigration attitudes are the strongest predictor of the affective polarization between SD and mainstream parties (Reiljan & Ryan, 2021). Similarly, another large-scale survey study in Sweden demonstrated that anti-immigrant attitudes are related to affective polarization (Renström et al., 2022). Furthermore, this effect is found to be stronger among right-wing authoritarians, who tend to perceive immigration as a threat to their in-group.

Moreover, similar findings regarding the link between immigration issue stance and AP are found in other national contexts. To illustrate, the parties' position on the immigration issue is a critical factor intensifying the AP in the Netherlands (Harteveld, 2021). Furthermore, the immigration issue was more vital to AP than the other issues (economy). Therefore, this study showed that parties' stances on the immigration issue are essential in determining the attitudes toward the partisans. In other words, out-parties that are dissimilar on the immigrant issue are disliked more than those that share the stance on the immigration issue. Similarly, in Turkey, the world's leader in Syrian refugee hosting, partisanship is found to be an essential predictor of immigrant attitudes (Çarkoğlu & Elçi, 2021), which has the potential to give rise to the polarization of partisan attitudes (Altındağ & Kaushal, 2021).

Overall, immigrant attitudes have become a key issue in determining partisan attitudes. Out-partisans are likely to be disliked more if they support a party that has a stance on immigration different than one's own. On the other hand, similar stances on immigration issues may attenuate negative out-partisan attitudes. Given the PT-prejudice link, PT towards immigrants is likely to reduce immigrant prejudice, especially among those who support parties that have an anti-immigrant stance.

In the current study, I used the ANES data to test the link between PT and AP via immigrant attitudes. In other words, I investigated whether immigrant PT is related to a lower level of partisan hatred by promoting positive immigrant attitudes. I expect this effect only applies to Republicans. That is because Republicans tend to have stronger anti-immigrant attitudes than Democrats (Enns & Jardina, 2021; Sanderson et al., 2021). Therefore, I expect that, among Republicans, higher immigrant PT is related to lower prejudice towards Democrats via more positive attitudes towards immigrants.

5.2 Hypotheses

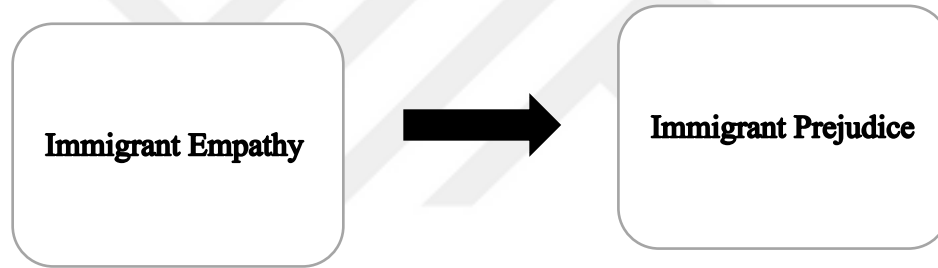
Overall, I hypothesized that PT towards immigrants attenuates prejudice towards immigrants (H6), predicting a lower level of partisan prejudice (H7). In other words, I expected that PT towards immigrants fosters pro-immigrant attitudes, attenuating the affective polarization among those who support a party against immigration. I showed the conceptual map of the studies in Figure 5.1.

H6: Immigrant empathy is related to reduced anti-immigrant prejudice.

H7. Immigrant perspective-taking (PT) and empathy are related to increased out-party warmth among Republicans via reducing anti-immigrant prejudice.

I conducted two studies to test the hypotheses. First, a preliminary study used EVS 2017 data to test the link between empathy, as an essential manifestation of PT, and prejudice towards immigrants. Second, adding partisan animosity to the model, I tested whether reduced immigrant prejudice by empathy is related to reduced partisan prejudice in a highly polarized U.S. context using the ANES 2020 data.

Preliminary Study (EVS)



Main Study (ANES)

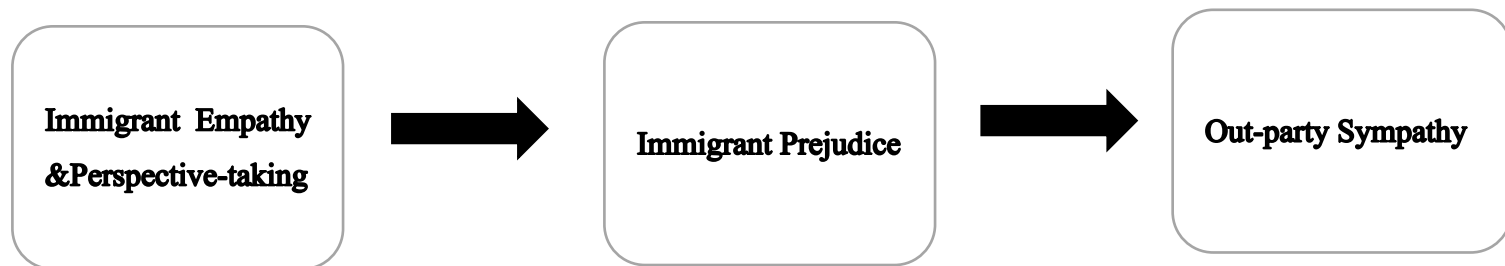


Figure 5.1: Conceptual Map of the Studies.

5.3. Preliminary Study

In this study, I aimed to examine the relationship between immigrant empathy and immigrant prejudice. I showed that immigrant empathy negatively predicts anti-immigrant prejudice cross-culturally. Then, in the next study, I tested whether this effect of immigrant empathy carries over reduced partisan prejudice. Therefore, the preliminary work provided evidence for the first path of the mediation model in the sense that immigrant empathy decreases immigrant prejudice, which in turn is expected to attenuate partisan prejudice. I tested the H6 in the current study, as summarized in the previous section.

5.3.1 Data

Study data was based on the latest wave of EVS. EVS is a large-scale, cross-national, longitudinal survey research program on fundamental human values conducted every nine years from 1981 to 2017.

5.3.2 Participants

EVS data includes 59,438 respondents from 36 European countries (1500 individuals on average from each country) collected between 2017 and 2020 (EVS 2022). Since the study focuses on prejudice towards immigrants as an out-group, I excluded non-native respondents from the analyses. Therefore, I excluded participants who were not born in the survey country ($n=4,289$)³⁹. Moreover, I also excluded four countries (i.e., Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and

³⁹ I also excluded respondents who did not answer this question ($n=63$) and those who indicated that they did not know the answer ($n=8$).

Portugal) from the analyses⁴⁰. In the end, the data consisted of 50,502 individuals from 32 countries⁴¹. Descriptive statistics are provided in Table 5.1.⁴²

5.3.3 Measurement

Immigrant Prejudice: In EVS, participants were presented with a list composed of seven group names (e.g., people of a different race, heavy drinkers, immigrants/foreign workers) and then asked, “Could you identify any that you would not like to have as neighbors?”. This question measures social distance towards the list of the groups. For the current study, I only take the item regarding immigrants/foreign workers. I coded this item so that a respondent got 1 for mentioning the immigrants and a 0 otherwise. A value of 1 thus indicated social distance (i.e., prejudice) towards immigrants, while 0 indicated a lack of social distance.

Empathy Towards Immigrants: Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they feel concerned about the living conditions of a list of four groups, including elderly people, unemployed people, immigrants, sick and disabled people, on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (very much) to 5 (not at all). I only took the item for the immigrants and reversely coded. Therefore, higher scores indicate higher concern for the living conditions of immigrants or empathy for them.

Civic National Identity Endorsement (CNIE): Civic national identity endorsement, as a form of inclusive adoption of one’s national identification, is shown to be related to pro-immigrant attitudes (e.g., Heath and Tilly 2005; Kunovich, 2009; Raijman & Hochman, 2010). Therefore, it is an essential predictor of immigrant prejudice. The current study includes this variable as a potential confounder.

⁴⁰ Sweden, Norway, and Iceland data were dropped due to very few participants mentioning immigrants in the social distance measure ($n < 100$). Portugal was dropped as the income variable is not available.

⁴¹ Countries included Albania, Azerbaijan, Austria, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Belarus, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, North Macedonia, Great Britain.

⁴² These are the statistics before the imputation. Post-estimation analyses were conducted with 50,502 individuals in total.

Participants rated how important they think the following is for being truly [NATIONALITY] from 1 (very important) to 4 (not important at all): “To have been born in [COUNTRY],” “To have [NATIONALITY] ancestry,” “To respect [COUNTRY]’s political institutions and laws,” “To be able to speak [THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE],” “To share [NATIONAL] culture.”

Of these five items, I picked the items related to ancestry and institutional/law representing ethnic and civic national identifications, respectively. Furthermore, the literature shows that individuals often hold a mixed national identity perception, including elements of both civic and ethnic components (see Rajzman and Hochman, 2009). To ensure that I included strictly civic-oriented respondents, I created a dummy variable (“civic only”) in which 1 indicates supporting civic national identity definition but not an ethnic definition, whereas 0 indicates all choices that include support for ethnic definition. Accordingly, participants who rated the civic term as 4 (very important) and 3 (important) and rated the ethnic term as 1 (not important at all) and 2 (not important) were coded as 1, whereas others were coded as zero.

Demographic variables: Participants’ gender, age, education level, income level, left-right political orientation scores, and employment status were taken as control variables.

Gender: Gender was coded as 1 for males, whereas 0 for females.

Education level: I used a 3-categorical education variable to assess education level in the current study. Accordingly, the first category indicating low education level (low = 1) includes less than primary, primary, and upper secondary school education. The second category (medium = 2) includes upper-secondary, post-secondary, and non-tertiary education. Finally, all other categories higher than them (short-cycle tertiary, bachelor, and graduate degrees) all belong to the highest (high = 3) education level category.

Income level: Participants were asked about the household’s total net income to assess income level. I used a standardized 10-category income variable ranging from the 1st decile to the 10th to assess income level in the current study. Higher scores indicate a higher level of income.

Left-right political orientation: To assess their political orientation, respondents answered the following question by placing themselves on a 10-point Likert scale from 1(left) to 10 (right): “In political matters, people talk of ‘the left’ and ‘the right.’ How would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking?” Higher scores indicate a higher level of leaning toward the right.

Employment Status: Participants who work (more or less than 30 hours a week) and are self-employed are coded as 1 in their employment, whereas all other categories (e.g., retired, housework, student, military service, unemployed, etc.) were coded as zero.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables.⁴³

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Outcome Variable</i>					
Immigrant prejudice	47,831	0.25	0.44	0	1
<i>Explanatory Variables</i>					
Empathy	49,609	2.76	1.12	1	5
Civic ID	49,729	0.33	0.47	0	1
Gender	50,496	0.56	0.50	0	1
Age	50,232	49.41	17.69	18	82
Education	50,157	2.13	0.71	1	3
Income	43,738	4.92	2.68	1	10
Employment	50,192	0.52	0.50	0	1
Left-right	40,080	5.52	2.33	1	10

I conducted multiple imputation analyses to deal with missing cases before proceeding with the analyses. First of all, I recorded the data in a wide style. Second, I registered all the individual-level variables as imputed. Third, I included all variables in the model that were imputed according to their type using the chained imputation strategy. (StataCorp., 2023)⁴⁴.

⁴³ These are the statistics before the imputation. Post-estimation analyses were conducted with 50,502 individuals in total.

⁴⁴ To illustrate, dummy coded variables (immigrant prejudice, inclusive national identification, gender, and employment status) are imputed under the logit category, continuous variables (empathic concern, age, left-

After the imputation, I first conducted the regression analysis that predicted immigrant prejudice by empathy and control variables (civic national identification, gender, age, income, employment status, and left-right ideological orientation), including the country dummies. I used a binomial GLM approach for post-estimation. Then, the same GLM regression analyses were conducted separately for each country to see the cross-country patterns.

5.3.4 Results

Regression Analyses

I estimated a multiple regression model using a GLM (Generalized Linear Model) binomial estimation with a logit link to predict immigrant prejudice with empathy, controlling for the civic national identification, gender, age, education level, income, employment status, left-right political orientation, and country dummies. Table 5.2 shows the coefficients and odds ratios of immigrant prejudice. Accordingly, it is found that empathy significantly and negatively predicts social distance ($b=-0.29$, $OR= 0.75$, $p< .001$). More specifically, and in support of H6, for every unit increase in empathy, there is a 25% decrease in the odds of immigrant prejudice.

I re-run the analyses separately for each country. Figure 5.2 shows the unstandardized beta coefficients and standard errors of empathy taken from the GLM binomial regression analyses by country. Results showed that, with a few exceptions, immigrant empathy negatively predicts immigrant prejudice in all countries, controlling for the demographic suspects and civic national identification. This further provided support to H6.

right, income) are imputed under the regression category, and categorical variables (education) are imputed under the ologit category.

Table 5.2: Regression Analysis Predicting Immigrant Prejudice by Immigrant Empathy and Other Covariates.

	Coef.	Std. Err.	P>t	OR
Immigrant Empathy	-0.29***	0.01	0.00	0.75
Civic National Identification	-0.50***	0.03	0.00	0.60
<i>gender</i>				
female	-0.02	0.02	0.00	0.98
<i>age</i>	0.00***	0.00	0.00	1.00
<i>education</i>				
medium	-0.10***	0.03	0.00	0.91
higher	-0.22***	0.04	0.00	0.80
<i>income</i>	-0.03***	0.01	0.00	0.97
<i>employment status</i>				
employed	0.06**	0.03	0.03	1.06
Left-right	0.05***	0.01	0.00	1.05
<i>Country</i>				
Azerbaijan	1.48***	0.12	0.00	4.41
Austria	1.50***	0.12	0.00	4.48
Armenia	2.3***	0.12	0.00	10.27
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.89***	0.12	0.00	6.61
Bulgaria	2.70***	0.12	0.00	14.84
Belarus	1.97***	0.12	0.00	7.14
Croatia	1.32***	0.12	0.00	3.76
Czechia	2.99***	0.12	0.00	19.81
Denmark	0.61***	0.12	0.00	1.84
Estonia	1.61***	0.12	0.00	5.02
Finland	0.76***	0.13	0.00	2.14
France	0.55***	0.13	0.00	1.73
Georgia	1.79***	0.11	0.00	6.01
Germany	0.42***	0.14	0.00	1.53
Hungary	2.37***	0.12	0.00	10.66
Italy	1.06***	0.12	0.00	2.9
Latvia	1.65***	0.12	0.00	5.2
Lithuania	1.85***	0.12	0.00	6.38
Montenegro	3.07***	0.12	0.00	21.62
Netherlands	1.13***	0.12	0.00	3.08
Poland	0.98***	0.12	0.00	2.66
Romania	1.75***	0.12	0.00	5.73
Russia	1.89***	0.12	0.00	6.61
Serbia	1.40***	0.12	0.00	4.06

Slovakia	2.40***	0.12	0.00	11.05
Slovenia	1.57***	0.13	0.00	4.8
Spain	1.02***	0.14	0.00	2.78
Switzerland	-0.05	0.14	0.73	0.95
Ukraine	1.50***	0.12	0.00	4.47
North Macedonia	1.70***	0.13	0.00	5.49
Great Britain	0.22	0.14	0.12	1.25
Constant	-1.98	0.12	0.00	0.14
N	50,502			
Average RVI	0.0799			
Largest FM	0.31			

*p<0.05; ***p<0.001

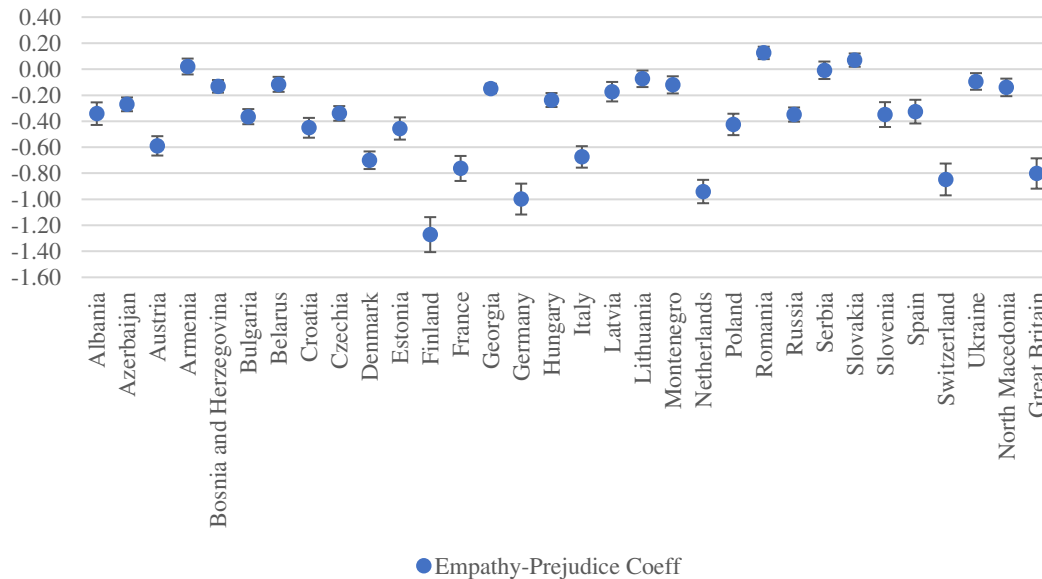


Figure 5.2: Immigrant Prejudice Predicted by Immigrant Empathy by Country.

5.4 The Main Study: The Case of U.S.

In the previous study, I provided cross-cultural large-N evidence for the link between immigrant empathy and anti-immigrant prejudice. In the main study, I tested the full mediation model by adding partisan attitudes. In other words, I tested whether immigrant empathy predicts positive out-party attitudes via immigrant prejudice in the U.S. (H7).

The U.S. is a crucial case regarding the partisan polarization caused by immigrant attitudes. Immigrants constitute a high proportion of the U.S. population, with 13.9 percent in 2022⁴⁵. The sharp increase in the number of illegal immigrants crossing from the southern border⁴⁶ and Republican elites' anti-immigrant discourses⁴⁷ have been essential factors contributing to the politicization of the issue. Although Americans have been more favorable towards immigrants compared to the early years of immigration flows, partisan division is higher compared to the past. Therefore, American partisans have increasingly polarized on the issue of immigration.

According to the Pew Research Center's report, Republicans center around the issue of border security and the deportation of illegal immigrants⁴⁸. On the other hand, Democrats tend to emphasize paths toward the legal status of illegal immigrants. Similarly, according to the Chicago Council Survey in 2022, while Democrats see the growing diversity as a positive thing making the country a better place to live, Republicans tend to remain natural or are unfavorable about it⁴⁹. The partisan divide was very evident in the 2016 presidential election. Immigrant attitudes determine whether to vote for Trump or Clinton (Hout & Maggio, 2021).

As a result, the case of the U.S. is crucial to testing the immigrant empathy and partisan prejudice link. The current study tests this link in the U.S. using ANES 2020 Time Series Study data. This provides an opportunity to test the hypotheses in a large-N sample where partisan polarization over the immigration issue is very high.

Based on the theoretical introduction at the beginning of the chapter, I expect that for Republicans (a party with an anti-immigrant stance), empathizing with immigrants reduces anti-immigrant prejudice, predicting favorable out-party attitudes (Democrat Party, pro-immigrant) (H7).

⁴⁵<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states-2024>

⁴⁶<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/15/us/politics/immigration-border.html>

⁴⁷ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/05/01/politics/trump-immigration-what-matters/index.html>

⁴⁸ <https://pewrsr.ch/3D7vVJb>

⁴⁹<https://globalaffairs.org/explore-research/lester-crown-center-us-foreign-policy/chicago-council-survey>

5.4.1 Data

I used the ANES 2020 Time Series Study (ANES, 2021) to test the hypothesis. The data consists of a series of election studies conducted since 1948. The ANES is a very valuable data source for analyzing public opinion and voting behavior in U.S. presidential elections. The current wave has 8,280 pre-election interviews and 7,449 post-election re-interviews. Descriptive statistics and the frequencies for the categorical variables of the current study are found in Tables 5.3 and 5.4.

5.4.2 Measures

Out-party warmth: Participants rated to what extent they like the Republican Party and Democratic Party on a 10-point scale from 0 (strongly dislike) to 10 (strongly like). Respondents' ratings for the out-party were taken to create an out-party warmth rating. In doing that, the party identification of the respondents was used. Therefore, a composite out-party warmth score was calculated based on the respondents' party identification. The ratings for the Republican Party of Democrat respondents and the ratings for the Democratic Party of Republican respondents constituted the out-party warmth score.

Immigrant Empathy: ANES included four questions measuring emphatic feelings and perspective-taking towards immigrants. Four items measuring empathy towards people of other racial or ethnic groups constituted the immigrant empathy scale. Accordingly, participants rated how often they engage in emphatic concern ("How often would you say that you have tender, concerned feelings for people from another racial or ethnic group who are less fortunate than you?"), perspective-taking ("How often would you say you try to better understand people of other racial or ethnic groups by imagining how things look from their perspective?") towards people of another racial or ethnic group. In addition, participants also rated how often they put themselves in place of people of another racial or ethnic group ("Before criticizing somebody from another racial or ethnic group, how often do you try to imagine how you would feel if you were in their place?") and feel protective towards them (When you see someone being taken advantage of due to their race or ethnicity, how often do you feel protective towards them?). The response options ranged from 1 (very often) to 5 (not often). The items were reverse coded so that higher scores indicate higher empathy

towards immigrants. Factor analyses revealed that the one-factor solution and the resulting scale are reliable, with a high Cronbach's alpha score ($\alpha=0.86$).

Immigrant Prejudice: The survey includes some questions measuring out-group attitudes. I selected the three out-group attitude items regarding immigrants and created a composite score of immigrant prejudice. Accordingly, participants rated their level of agreement with three arguments about immigrants (e.g., "Immigrants are generally good for America's economy," "America's culture is generally harmed by immigrants," "Immigrants increase crime rates in the United States") at a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree strongly). The latter two items are reverse-coded so that higher scores indicate a higher level of anti-immigrant prejudice. Factor analyses revealed a one-factor solution and the resulting scale is reliable, with a high Cronbach's alpha score ($\alpha=0.80$).

Control Variables:

Sex: I coded respondents' sex was coded as 0 if the respondent indicated that they were male or 1 if female.

Age: The summary variable calculated for respondents' age using the respondents' birth year, month, and day was used.

Education: I used the summary education variable, including 5-categories of education, to assess the level of education. The categories indicate the level of education, including less than high school credential (1), high school credential (2), some post-high school, no bachelor's degree (3), Bachelor's degree (4), and graduate degree (5). Higher scores showed a higher level of education.

Employment Status: Participants were asked if they worked for pay last week. The answers were coded as 1 (Yes) and 2 (No, did not work/retired). I dummy-coded the item so that 1 indicated employment and 0 indicated unemployment.

Civic National Identity Endorsement (CNIE): I calculated the CINIE, or civic identification measure, using the same strategy as the preliminary study. In the ANES survey, respondents were asked about the criteria that are important for being truly American. Accordingly, they rated a series of items on a 4-point Likert-type scale from 1 (very

important) to 4 (not important at all). The criteria include “To have been born in the United States.” “To have American ancestry.” “To be able to speak English.” and “To follow America’s customs and traditions.” I took the item about following customs and traditions as an indicator of civic national identity endorsement. Furthermore, I took the ancestry-based definition as an indicator of the endorsement of ethnic national identity. Like the preliminary study, I constructed two dummy variables for civic and ethnic national identification by recoding “very important” (1) and “fairly important” (2) as 1 (civic/ethnic identification) and “not very important” (3) and “not important at all” (4) as 0 (non-civic/non-ethnic identification). Using these two dummies, I created a composite dummy variable where 1 refers to respondents who adopt a civic identification but not ethnic identification (see the measurement section in the preliminary study for details), while 0 involves all other responses.

Party Identification (PID): Respondents who indicated they felt close to any particular party were asked which party they felt closest to. They chose one of the three alternatives: the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, and the Other Party. In the following question, the respondents who chose the other were asked to specify the party they felt closest to. Since the current study focuses on Republicans and Democrats, I coded the other party choice as missing ($n=212$, 29.83%), while 1 refers to the Republican Party, and 0 refers to the Democratic Party.

Party Identification (PID) Strength: Participants rated to what extent they feel close to the party they indicated on a three-point scale from very close (1) to not very close (3).

Income: I used the summary income variable coded by ANES coders to measure income using a variable asking for the total combined income of all members of the family/respondent’s total income during the past 12 months. The summary variable measures yearly income in 22 categories from the lowest income level, under \$9,999, (1) to the highest income level, \$250,000 or more (22).

Political Orientation: Left-right political orientation was assessed by asking respondents to place themselves on an 11-point Likert-type scale from 0 (left) to 10 (right). Lower values indicate right-wing orientation, while higher scores indicate left-wing orientation.

Table 5.3: Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	7,932	51.59	17.21	18	80
Education	8,149	3.39	1.11	1	5
Income	7,980	11.73	6.74	1	22
Left-right	7,250	5.64	2.74	0	10
In-party Warmth	5,805	8.11	1.80	0	10
Out-party Warmth	5,802	1.87	2.06	0	10
AP	5,802	6.24	3.10	-10	10
Immigrant prejudice	7,367	2.29	0.95	1	5
Immigrant Empathy	7,353	3.51	0.87	1	5

Table 5.4: Frequencies of the Categorical Variables.

Variable	n	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	4,450	54.18
Male	3,763	45.82
<i>Education</i>		
Below high school	376	4.61
High school credential	1,336	16.39
Some post-high school, no bachelor's	2,790	34.24
Bachelor's degree	2,055	25.22
Graduate degree	1,592	19.54
<i>Employment</i>		
Employed	4,607	55.86
Unemployed	3,640	44.14
<i>PID</i>		
Republicans	2,677	46.08
Democrats	3,133	53.92
<i>PID Strength</i>		
Leaners	671	11.15
Weak Identifiers	3,408	56.65
Strong Identifiers	1,937	32.20
<i>National Identification</i>		
Civic NI	4,591	62.43
Ethnic NI	2,317	31.51
Only Civic ID (Civic ID is important; ancestry is not important)	2,579	35.11

Before proceeding with the analysis, I re-scaled all continuous variables into 0-1. Following that, I tested my assumption that the level of immigrant empathy is lower and the level of anti-immigrant prejudice is higher among Republicans compared with Democrats. Figure 5.3 shows the mean levels of empathy and prejudice by partisans with standard errors. The results were in line with the assumptions. Then, I conducted the mediation analyses to test the relationship between empathy towards immigrants and out-party-like via immigrant prejudice.

I conducted Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized mediation model. The model included empathy toward immigrants as the predictor, immigrant prejudice as the mediator, and out-party-like (warmth) as the outcome variable. I added control variables (i.e., CNIE, PID strength, political orientation, gender, age, education, income, employment status) as covariates to predict the mediator and the dependent variable. I conducted the analyses using party identification as the grouping variable. Therefore, I presented the analyses separately for Republicans and Democrats.

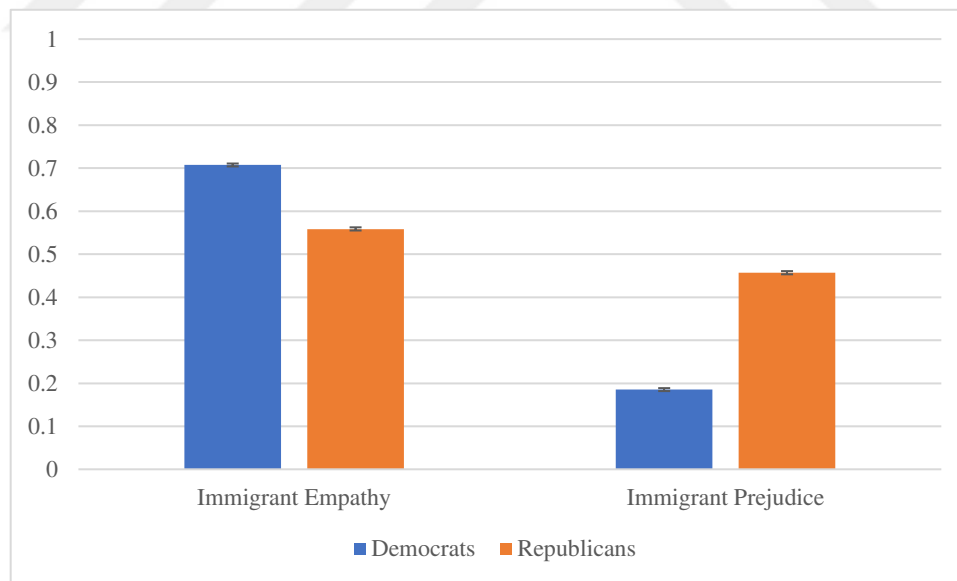


Figure 5.3: Mean Levels of Immigrant Empathy and Anti-immigrant Prejudice.

I assessed model fit using indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The mediation model fits the data quite well, with the CFI = 1.00, RMSEA

= 0.000, and SRMR = 0.000. The goodness-of-fit of the regression model was assessed using the overall R-squared statistic. For Democrats, the R-squared value was .35, indicating that the model explained 35% of the variance. On the other hand, the model run for Republican respondents indicated the R-squared value of .29, indicating that the model explained 29% of the variance.

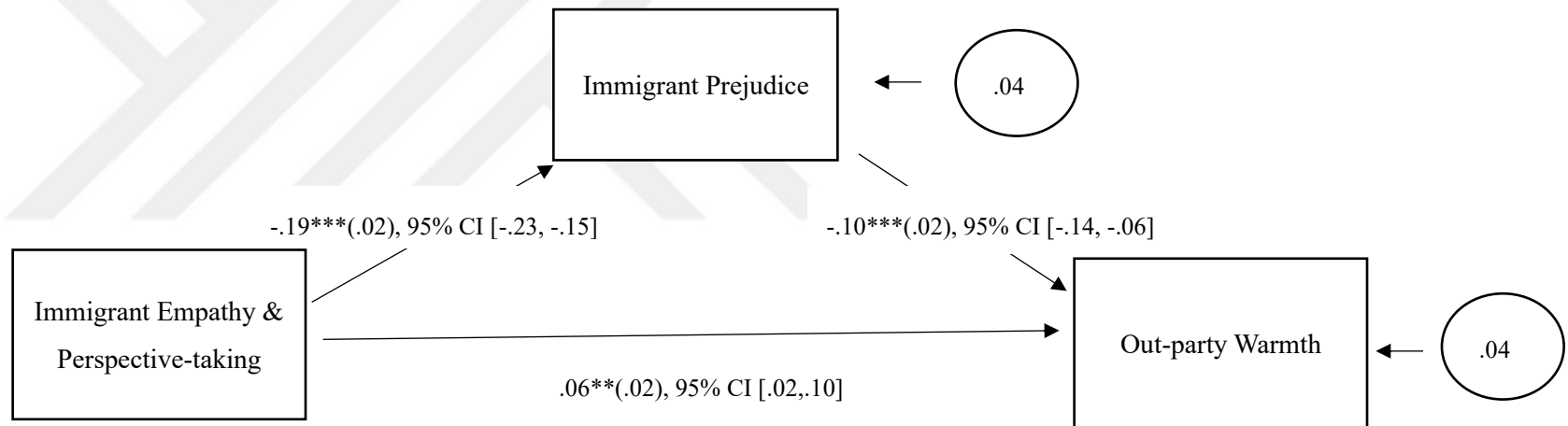
For Republicans, as I expected, empathy had a significant direct effect on out-party warmth ($b=.06$, $SE=.02$, $p<.001$, 95% CI [.02, .10]). Additionally, immigrant empathy had a significant indirect effect on out-party warmth through immigrant prejudice ($b=.02$, $SE=.00$, $p<.001$, 95 % CI [.01, .02]), supporting the hypothesized mediation. The proportion of the total effect mediated was calculated by dividing the indirect effect by the total effect and found to be 24%. The ratio of indirect to direct effect is 31%. This indicates that the direct effect of empathy to out-party warmth is higher than that of the indirect effect through immigrant prejudice. (see Figure 5.4).

For Democrats, the direct effect of immigrant empathy on out-party warmth was significant and negative ($b=-.10$, $SE=.02$, $p<.001$, 95% CI [-.14, -.06]). That is to say, among Democrats, empathizing with immigrants is related to decreased warmth towards the Republican party. Additionally, immigrant empathy had a significant and negative indirect effect on out-party warmth through immigrant prejudice ($b=-.03$, $SE=.01$, $p<.001$, 95 % CI [-.04, -.02]). Therefore, immigrant empathy decreases out-party warmth by decreasing immigrant prejudice. The proportion of the total effect mediated is calculated by dividing the indirect effect by the total effect and found at a moderate level of 23%. On the other hand, the ratio of indirect to direct effect is 29%. Like the Republican model of mediation, here, the direct effect of empathy on out-party warmth is higher than that of the indirect effect through immigrant prejudice (see Figure 5.5).

Overall, in line with expectations, immigrant prejudice mediates the relationship between empathy and out-party warmth among Republicans. In other words, developing empathy with immigrants reduces prejudice towards them, enhancing warmth towards Democrats (H7). On the other hand, the results show that for Democrats, immigrant empathy can have detrimental effects regarding attitudes towards the Republican party, which supports the anti-immigrant policies. Furthermore, a stronger direct effect compared to the indirect

effect shows that immigrant empathy influences out-party attitudes directly with a significant proportion.



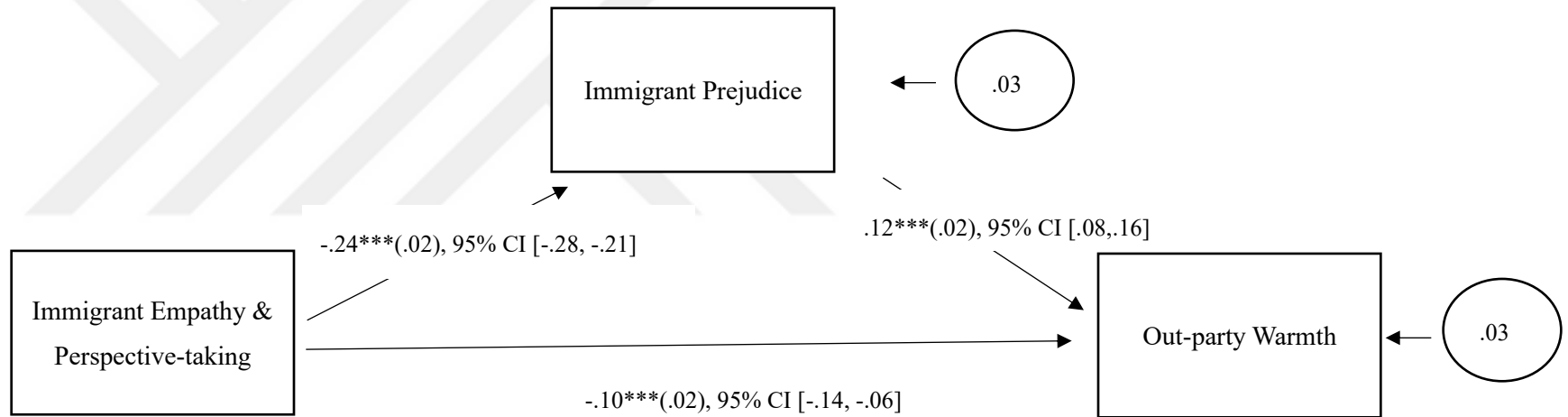


Indirect effect: $.02^{***}(.00)$, 95 % CI $[.01, .03]$

Total Effect: $.08^{***}(.02)$, 95 % CI $[.04, .11]$

N=2434

Figure 5.4: Mediation Model for Republican Respondents.



Indirect effect: $-.03^{***}(.01)$, 95 % CI $[-.04, -.02]$

Total effect: $-.13^{***}(.02)$, 95 % CI $[-.16, -.09]$

N=2931

Figure 5.5: Mediation Model for Democrat Respondents

5.5 Conclusion

The current chapter examined how empathy and perspective-taking towards immigrants are related to out-party attitudes via their effect on anti-immigrant prejudice. For this purpose, I conducted two studies. Finding the link between immigrant empathy and prejudice in the preliminary study, the main study tested whether this effect spilled over to out-party attitudes in the case of the U.S. context. Specifically, I expected that as anti-immigrant Republicans empathize more with the immigrants, they will have less level of anti-immigrant prejudice, which in turn increases their warmth towards the pro-immigrant Democratic Party.

Using the EVS data, the preliminary study provided cross-cultural evidence for the link between immigrant empathy and immigrant prejudice in 32 European countries. The main study further supported this link in the U.S. context using ANES 2020 data. Additionally, it expanded the empathy-prejudice to the context of partisanship. In other words, for partisans who support a party with an anti-immigrant stance (Republican Party), emphasizing immigrants was related to increased warm feelings towards a party with a pro-immigrant stance (Democratic Party).

The mediation analyses provided support for the hypothesis. However, finding a stronger direct effect of immigrant empathy on out-party attitudes indicates that empathy towards immigrants can influence attitudes towards immigrants and other groups who support the immigrants. While this shows a promising potential of immigrant empathy for depolarization attempts, it also demonstrates that empathy can harm out-party attitudes. To illustrate, increasing immigrant empathy for Democrats lowered warmth towards Republicans. If the out-party's stance is anti-immigrant, then immigrant empathy was related to stronger out-party dislike. Therefore, in political contexts, the generalizing effect of empathy depends upon the policy stances of the target political group.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 *Discussion of the Results*

Perspective-taking (PT) has a negative relationship with partisan animosity. In other words, PT is associated with favorable attitudes towards out-partisans. This dissertation started by investigating this argument. The three different studies with differing methodologies confirmed this hypothesis.

Thinking of an out-party supporter perspective is a challenging task to do (Chapter 3). PT becomes easier and more effective when the focus is on the out-partisans themselves instead of opposing policy attitudes. Furthermore, partisans can have two representations of “out-partisans” in multi-party systems in their minds. One is the least-liked-party supporters, and the other one is the supporters of all parties outside the alliance of in-party (out-alliance) (Chapter 3). Building from the analogies of the “Outgroup Experience Effect” and “Perspective-getting,” the out-partisan-centered PT technique successfully improved positive attitudes toward the target out-partisan in the U.S. and Turkey. The intervention increased warmth toward all least-liked party supporters and out-alliance partisans in Turkey (Chapter 4). The technique worked partially in the U.S., with most of the effects carried out by Republicans. Finally, attitudes toward politicized social groups play an important role in the relationship between perspective-taking and out-party attitudes (Chapter 5). Empathy and perspective-taking towards immigrants boosted warmth towards a pro-immigrant party (Democratic Party) by reducing anti-immigrant prejudice among those who support a party with an anti-immigrant stance (Republican Party).

As I showed in Chapter 3, affective polarization (AP) revolves around the attitudes towards the incumbent party, AKP, or the People’s Alliance in Turkey. This supports the findings that the authoritarian policies have increased polarization and partisanship strength

under Turkey's competitive authoritarian regime (Laebens & Öztürk, 2020). Similarly, I demonstrated that being pro- and anti-AKP have crucially determined the perception of polarization in Turkey. This, in turn, brings us to conclude that partisans picture affective blocs as "incumbent" and "opposition" in Turkey.

However, the "affective blocs" were constructed differently by different alliance supporters. Specifically, supporters of the incumbent alliance were comfortable mentioning AKP and MHP together. On the other hand, respondents who support the parties in opposition tended to differentiate their in-party from all other parties and mentioned AKP and MHP together when it comes to describing the parties they dislike. This might be because as MHP and AKP have ideologically aligned more within years under the religious and nationalist populism (Sandal, 2021), the new superior partisanship category ("The People's Alliance") including both parties become a representative of "out-party" in the minds of partisans. On the other hand, parties within the main opposition alliance ("The Nation Alliance") diverge ideologically, which leads to weaker affective ties among the supporters of different parties within the alliance. Still, I found that some partisans indicated their favorable attitudes towards within-alliance parties; if not, there was no indication of negative sentiments toward them.

Therefore, the results were mostly in line with the previous studies, which include out-coalition as an alternative "out-party" group in the Swedish multi-party system (Huddy et al., 2018; Reijlan & Ryan, 2021; Renström et al., 2021). Overall, attitudes towards in-group (in-party), least-liked party, and all parties within the outside alliances all play a role in assessing AP in the multi-party Turkish context.

In addition to that, the validity of the social distance measure is open to question. Respondents' answers tended to include arguments that conflict with each other. For instance, even though most of the partisans indicated that they were okay with their children marrying an out-partisan, they also added their feelings of discontent about this contact. In other words, even though participants indicated their support for interacting with out-partisans, they felt very uncomfortable doing so. These results might explain a low correlation between the social distance scale and other AP subscales (e.g., Druckman and Levendusky, 2019). That

said, using surveys does not seem to produce a valid measure of the actual level of partisan prejudice regarding social distance.

How are partisans involved in the out-partisan PT process? Chapter 3 also delves into this question by asking two types of PT questions in the interview. One is partisan-based PT, where respondents were asked to elaborate on why out-partisans support the out-party. On the other hand, the other one is named policy-based PT, where respondents elaborated on why others think the opposite way about a policy. Respondents tend to mention out-partisans' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors more in partisan-based PT. Besides, in the partisan-based version, some participants attributed the cause to contextual factors rather than dispositional factors, which is also an indicator of reduced ingroup bias (see Rudolph, 2016). On the other hand, the answers to policy-based PT questions mainly included negative sentiments and tended to be short.

Even though the partisan-based PT seemed more promising than the policy-based exercise, taking the out-partisan perspective seemed a challenging task for participants. Moreover, respondents were likely to answer what “they think about the out-party” rather than “how the out-partisans think.” This might be either because the PT itself requires a cognitive effort or partisans are unwilling to take the perspective of an out-partisan in a polarized context (e.g., Davis, 1996; Sassenrath et al., 2016). Therefore, partisan-based PT needs to be configured as requiring low effort to encourage partisans to take out partisans' perspectives and promote favorable out-party attitudes.

In Chapter 4, I used a partisan-based PT intervention strategy and designed it to require minimum cognitive effort. This technique successfully reduced out-partisan prejudice in Turkey and the U.S. Following the “Outgroup Experience Effect” (e.g., Kubin et al., 2021; Kubin et al., 2023) and “Perspective-Getting” (Kalla & Broockman, 2022, p. 186) frameworks, I provided participants to out-partisan perspectives including the subjective experiences and feelings of an out-partisan. In other words, rather than imagining the other's perspective, participants read what is given to them as an out-party perspective. This also prevented the risk of backfire effects arising from relying on existing stereotypes. That said, compared to “imagining other”, “getting the perspective” provides more accurate information about out-partisans in a non-competitive, positive environment, which in turn

decreases the risk of the backfire effect (Eyal et al., 2018; Sassenrath et al., 2016). Specifically, in Chapter 4, across two national contexts, experiments tested whether learning about a harmful personal experience of an out-partisan (the U.S.) or a least-liked party supporter (Turkey) explaining their support of the out-party reduced partisan animosity.

PT inducement made respondents feel sorry for the out-partisan (or the least-liked party supporter) after reading about their harmful experiences. In addition, PT increased feelings of warmth towards and care for the out-partisan. In addition, sympathy levels, only assessed in the U.S., were improved. Taking an out-party perspective increased empathy (feeling sorry for the harmful experience) and warmth towards that out-partisan. Furthermore, most importantly, the effect of taking an out-partisan perspective spilled over to the feelings of warmth towards all out-party supporters.

In addition, conducting the experiments in a multi-party Turkish context gave me an opportunity to test the effects of the attitudes towards out-alliance supporters (i.e., all partisans who support the parties outside one's alliance). Therefore, I tested the carry-over effects of PT in Turkey to a larger out-party group as in the case of other studies in the Swedish context (Huddy et al., 2018; Reijlan & Ryan, 2021; Renström et al., 2021). Results showed that improving attitudes towards a target least-liked party supporter increased not only warmth towards all least-liked-party supporters but also all partisans supporting all parties outside one's alliance.

Furthermore, Chapter 4 also showed that the treatment effect continued after controlling for the usual suspects like demographics, party identification, party identification strength, political interest, dispositional PT (only Turkey), and dispositional EC (only Turkey). In sum, the results mostly supported the hypotheses. Namely, the PT treatment boosted positive attitudes toward the target out-partisan in general. Additionally, the intervention increased feelings of warmth towards all least-liked party supporters and out-alliance supporters (applicable only in Turkey). Nevertheless, the effect was mostly carried out by Republicans in the U.S. Moreover, I found no effect for AP across the two countries. I discussed these two points in the following sections.

Comparing the experimental effects in the two countries, the effect was stronger in Turkey than in the U.S. To illustrate, the experiments worked over a broader segment of

political groups. Namely, supporters of the two biggest electoral alliance groups reported warmer out-party ratings with the treatment in Turkey. Also, PT increased contact interest with the target, and the rated target's arguments were stronger in Turkey, which were not observed in the U.S. This showed that while the effect was restricted to feelings (warmth) in the U.S., prejudice reduction was observed in all dimensions in Turkey, including behavioral (contact interest) and cognitive (argument strength and realism level).

I think that the stronger results in Turkey are partly due to the experimental design improvements in light of related research in the experiments in Turkey. After finding a null effect for Democrats in the U.S., I re-constructed the designs of the vignettes for the experiments in Turkey. Accordingly, I matched the gender of the respondent and the target out-partisan to induce similarity (Warner et al., 2020) and decrease the risk of the backfire effects of PT (Sassenrath et al., 2016). In addition, I put small facial pictures above each vignette to help respondents visualize the out-partisans. Another addition to the manipulation process was that respondents were made to believe the random selection of the target to eliminate the risk of suspicion (see Todd et al., 2012, for a similar strategy). In addition, I added a short writing task to the conditions where respondents were asked to briefly summarize what they had just read (Kalla & Broockman, 2023). My aim was to increase the effect of the treatment. The last change that could contribute to intervention effectiveness is keeping the respondents on the screen while they were reading the vignette. I did this by removing the "next" button for a certain period to ensure that respondents read the paragraph.

Another reason for the stronger effects in Turkey than in the U.S. might be related to the extent to which the parties represent societal division. In the U.S., two parties have dominated the electoral arena, and they have differed in their organizational style, worldview, and policy approaches since their establishment (Freeman, 1986). The recent surge of partisan polarization in the country has become characterized by deep divisions among Republicans and Democrats along non-political social identities, which in turn trigger stronger emotional responses to partisan cues (Mason, 2016). On the other hand, in Turkey, despite the center-periphery divide, the main cultural cleavage in the society dating back to the establishment of the republic, there is no monolithic party representation of either side, and parties of either side carry the traits of both sides (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2021). For

example, the main electoral alliances that competed in the last two general elections were formed only six years ago. In addition, the oppositional alliance led by the main opposition center-left CHP consists of pro-Islamist parties (SP, DEVA, GP), which have historical and ideological ties with the incumbent AKP. Overall, the lack of overlap between the center-periphery division and party system might have prevented voters from having deep feelings for the in-party and the out-parties. As a result, the depolarization attempts in the current investigation provided weaker results for the deeply divided U.S. sample than the Turkish sample.

Chapter 5 expanded the scope of the main hypothesis by including attitudes towards another politicized social group: immigrants. Using the ANES 2020 data, I found that immigrant empathy is positively related to out-party liking by reducing anti-immigrant prejudice among supporters of an anti-immigrant party. I showed that empathizing with immigrants reduced anti-immigrant prejudice, improving favorable attitudes toward Democrats among Republicans.

Another finding worth noting here is that immigrant empathy had a stronger direct than indirect effect on out-party liking. This signified that empathy toward immigrants directly and strongly predicts increasing warmth toward the out-party. This effect was not mainly due to immigrant prejudice. This also showed that empathy towards an out-group can have a spillover effect by improving attitudes towards other out-groups in the context of politics. In other words, higher empathy with immigrants was related to warmer attitudes toward the other party that supports immigrant rights. This aligns with the research showing the generalized reduction of prejudice. To illustrate, an experimental study found that priming a counter-stereotypic mindset reduced prejudice towards multiple out-groups, including the elderly, disabled, asylum seekers, HIV patients, and gays (Vasiljevic & Crisp, 2013). In addition, empathy and perspective-taking also affect generalized reduction in prejudice. To illustrate, it is found that perspective-taking and empathy predict a reduction in negative attitudes toward a range of groups (Levin et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, one should also note that the two groups in Chapter 5 are not completely independent. To illustrate, immigrants and the Democratic Party represent a pro-immigrant policy stance. Therefore, instead of the spillover effect of empathy or generalized reduction

of prejudice, social sorting might be the main reason for the effect of empathy on party attitudes and anti-immigrant attitudes (Mason, 2015; 2018a). That is because partisans are increasingly divided along demographical characteristics and policy attitudes. As an essential determinant of party attitudes, immigrants can be perceived as a representative of Democrats in the polarized or socially sorted U.S. context. Therefore, improving favorable attitudes toward immigrants is likely to manifest in attitudes toward a pro-immigrant party.

Another finding worth raising here is that the beneficial outcome of empathy depended upon partisanship. Accordingly, a higher level of empathy towards immigrants is likely to result in out-party dislike via anti-immigrant prejudice among Democrats. That is to say, Democrats disliked Republicans more as they empathized with immigrants more and had a lower level of anti-immigrant prejudice. Nevertheless, this might be a result of attitude extremity as Democrats are already strongly pro-immigrant in their attitudes and high level of empathy towards the immigrants (see Figure 5.3). It is shown that extremists tend to have more negative out-group attitudes. To illustrate, extremism along left-right political orientation predicts affective polarization (Wagner, 2021).

Nonetheless, these findings are in line with the literature showing the link between immigrant policy attitudes and out-party attitudes (e.g., Hartevelt, 2021; Renström et al., 2022). Specifically, partisans felt warmer towards the out-partisans whose stance on the immigration issue aligns with theirs. This dissertation also adds to that by including immigrant empathy. Immigrant empathy is beneficial in reducing partisan hatred when the party has a pro-immigrant stance.

6.2 Final Contributions and Implications of the Results

Using multi-method, cross-national data, the dissertation demonstrated the link between PT and partisan animosity. In-depth interviews provided insights into PT and AP in a typical multi-party context. Then, experiments provided causal evidence for PT and out-party attitudes in two critical countries with their alarming level of polarization: Turkey and the U.S. Finally, the dissertation expanded this link by showing the relevance of immigrant attitudes.

The dissertation contributes to literature in five main ways. First of all, I showed that PT is negatively related to out-partisan animosity when it is focused on out-group (out-partisans in Chapters 3 and 4; immigrants in Chapter 5). This shed light upon the contradictory findings on the effect of PT in depolarization attempts. The studies finding the null effect or backfire effect of PT on AP did not focus on out-partisan PT. Rather, they mostly had a policy-based (Gonzalez et al., 2024; Tuller et al., 2015) or dispositional PT approach (Davis, 1996; Simas et al., 2020). Taking an “out-partisan” perspective is a different process than thinking about an opposing viewpoint, as shown in Chapter 3. I explained why policy-based PT approaches did not work by showing that partisan-based approaches could successfully foster partisans' elaboration on the political opponents' minds, emotions, and experiences. In addition, a general tendency to take the perspective of others (i.e., dispositional PT) is not necessarily related to out-party attitudes (Falk et al., 2012), and in Chapter 5, I showed that out-party PT treatment is effective in controlling dispositional PT and empathic concern.

Second, the dissertation contributes to the literature by advising on using qualitative methods to understand AP in multiparty contexts and out-partisan PT (Chapter 3). I showed that there are multiple parties that can play a role as “out-party”, and “in-alliance” parties are not regarded as “out-partisans” in the minds of partisans in Turkey. This supports the non-reductionist approaches used in other multiparty contexts like Sweden (e.g., Huddy et al., 2018; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021).

Third, the dissertation also contributes to the literature on the discussion between policy-over-party (Lelkes, 2021; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017) vs. party-over-policy hypotheses of AP (Dias & Lelkes, 2022; Huddy et al., 2015, 2018; Iyengar et al., 2019). That is because Chapter 5 expanded the scope of the party-over-policy hypothesis by looking at the interplay of ideological and affective factors in the context of immigrant attitudes. Therefore, it gave insights into when and how policies can play a role in the partisanship-based AP. Namely, I showed that policy attitudes play a role in AP via their effects on group-related attitudes. In other words, I found empathy and PT towards immigrants to be linked to out-party attitudes via anti-immigrant prejudice.

Fourth, the dissertation made another important contribution. It expands the “social sorting” argument, saying that various non-political identities and attitudes are aligned with partisanship in polarized contexts, and these further increase partisan animosity (Mason, 2015, 2018a). I showed that partisan animosity may be reduced by targeting these attitudes. In other words, if non-political identities and attitudes are aligned with partisanship and increasing out-party animosity, then targeting those attitudes can alleviate polarization. Namely, I demonstrated that empathy towards a politicized social group, immigrants, predicted reduced anti-immigrant prejudice, which led to increased out-party sympathy.

In light of these contributions, I would like to elaborate on a few essential implications of the finding that personal narratives boost warmer feelings towards out-partisans. To illustrate, the media reports or news can combine factual or policy-based information with personal narratives to increase the perception of realism and feelings of warmth towards the out-party. Moreover, policy-based reports can include some personal narratives from partisans representing different stances to make readers involved in the humanization process (Kalla & Broockman, 2022; Kubin et al., 2023) and perceive what they read as more realistic (Eyal et al., 2018). In addition, political discussions among leaders in the media can include the personal experiences of partisans, which contributed to their support of the particular parties. Positive contact among leaders was found to be an effective depolarization strategy (Huddy & Yair, 2021) and would be more effective when it includes personal experiences giving way to support parties or policies.

6.3 *Unexpected Findings*

Besides the contributions, there were some unexpected results. To illustrate, no experimental effect was found for AP, as measured by the difference between in-party warmth and the out-party warmth score. Nor did the ANES study mediation analysis produce results for the AP due to the limited variation.

Ideally, an experiment to reduce AP would decrease attachment to the in-party and increase liking to the out-party. In addition, in-party liking is more important than out-party

prejudice in determining AP (e.g., Lelkes & Westwood, 2017). However, in the present dissertation, PT only affected out-party attitudes but not in-party attitudes.

This can be explained by the fact that the current study's treatment vignettes might work to reduce threat perception, which primarily influences out-party liking. In the experiments, hearing about a harmful experience of an out-group might reduce the tension or threat perception in a way that respondents indicated warmer feelings after reading the stories. On the other hand, there was no specific content to trigger in-party liking in the conditions.

This still does not fully explain the null effects of the AP measures. Even if only out-party warmth scores changed, AP scales constructed using out-party warmth scores would change in the same direction. The null results for the AP scales are because in-party warmth scores were slightly increased with treatment. This is probably because the salience of the policy issues in the treatment triggered the partisan identity. For instance, studies showed that policy issue salience is strongly linked to party attachments (e.g., Neundorff & Adams, 2018). Voters tend to reward parties that emphasize policies that they find important. Returning to the experiments, reading about a story justifying an out-party policy might have triggered in-party attachments. This is because partisans might think that the issues are important and owned by the in-party. However, there is no way to test this argument given the current study's data since I did not assess the importance ratings of the policies mentioned in the vignettes. Therefore, future studies using out-party PT treatments should test the impact of issue salience on the link between in-party attachment and PT treatments.

As Chapter 4 outlines, in the U.S., the effect was not robust across the partisans. Specifically, Republicans' feelings of warmth towards Democrats increased with PT. On the other hand, no effect was found for Democrats. There are two reasons that might reveal this difference. The first reason might be that Democrats are more reluctant to change their out-party attitudes than Republicans (see Huddy and Yair, 2021, for a similar study). This can be because conservatives are found to have a higher external and lower internal political efficacy compared to liberals (Wolak, 2017). Those who have high political efficacy believe that government officials are mostly responsive to the needs and desires of the citizens. On the other hand, individuals with high internal efficacy tend to believe in personal competence

and communicate their preferences in politics. Therefore, internal efficacy might lead liberals to be less responsive to personal information (or more responsive to policy-related information). On the other hand, high reliance on the government for political affairs would make conservatives more vulnerable to changing their out-party attitudes after getting person-based information. Thus, personal narratives would be more effective over Republicans than Democrats. However, a longitudinal study in the U.S. found that conservative ideology is negatively linked with external political efficacy (Davis & Hitt, 2017). In addition, the same study also showed a positive link between supporting a winning candidate and external efficacy. Given that, since, at the time of data collection, the Democratic Party has been ruling the country, one might expect the opposite. Specifically, Democrats can be expected to have higher external efficacy and are more likely to be vulnerable to personal information and, therefore, to be depolarized than Republicans.

Second, given the fact that many depolarization interventions have failed to find a consistent moderation effect of party identification or cross-partisan difference in the treatment effects (see Kubin & von Sikorski, 2021; Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020; Voelkel et al., 2023), the differential results for Republicans and Democrats might be related to some issues regarding the current study design or sampling. To illustrate, the Republican sample recruited through MTurk was highly educated (61.83% having at least a Bachelor's degree) and had a strong party identification (44.62% were strong identifiers). In addition, there were some differences in the content of the vignettes in the two groups, which might influence the experimental effect. While the successful stories reducing Republicans' negative attitudes towards Democrats blame non-human sources (i.e., cancer, natural disasters), stories about Republicans include personal offenders like unlawful immigrants or the target person themselves. In the story about religious faith, where the offender is the target of the out-partisan's younger version, respondents might still continue to blame the partisan for harmful experiences, which prevents the boost of warmer feelings towards the out-partisans.

In the unlawful immigrant case, blaming immigrants might lead to a clash between ideological stance and empathic activation, which in turn caused suppression of empathy among Democrats (e.g., Feldman et al., 2020). However, I observed an emphatic activation among Democrats since their attitudes toward the target out-partisan improved. These

improvements did not apply to their attitudes towards Republicans. It shows that Democrats showed empathic activation but may suppress it regarding the out-party. Future studies might focus on the mechanisms that hinder the empathic spillover effect from out-partisan targets to all out-party supporters.

On the other hand, in Turkey, supporters of either of the two biggest alliances (People's Alliance and Nation Alliance) indicated warmer feelings towards the supporters of the least-liked party and out-alliance parties following the PT treatment. However, no treatment effect was found for the respondents who support a far-left party.

There is no way to know that it is because of the content of the vignettes since each party got only one type of vignette in the Turkish context. This is because a larger sample is required to test multiple vignette effects in multi-party contexts. However, the ceiling effect is one possible reason for the far-left group's null findings. The very high baseline (control group) warmth scores given by the far-left group might have reduced the chance of improvement by the treatment for this group of participants (see Andrade, 2021). It is also important to note that a clearer effect is observed among the incumbent alliance relative to the Nation alliance, whose baseline (control group) warmth score is significantly higher in the sense that The People's Alliance participants in the control group reported significantly warmer feelings to the out-groups compared to the control groups in both Nation Alliance and Far-Left group participants. This might decrease the chance of boosting treatment effect for the latter groups. In addition, the far-left group is superior to others in terms of education, which is found to be related to out-party warmth. The highly educated far-left group might resist more, indicating warmer feelings after the treatment.

Another unexpected finding is that the PT's effect on depolarization was only found for the warmth ratings of the out-partisans. In fact, the warmth ratings are the main measure of partisan animosity (see Druckman & Levendusky, 2019; Lelkes & Westwood, 2017), and the positive contact experience mainly taps into the affective dimension of prejudice (Aberson, 2015). Therefore, one can assert that my experimental procedure realized its primary depolarization aim in the sense that it boosted out-party warmth. However, PT techniques produce beneficial intergroup outcomes in both cognitive and affective dimensions of prejudice. Therefore, it is important to understand why PT attempts failed to

improve cognitive attitudes in the current investigation. Weaker effects on cognitive dimensions such as understanding and opinion strength (in the U.S.) might be because cognitive processes are better captured with implicit measures than explicit measures (Greenwald et al., 1998). This is because belief assessments are susceptible to biases such as social desirability (e.g., Smallpage, 2023). Future studies should consider using implicit measures to assess the effect of PT intervention on out-party-related beliefs. On the other hand, weaker cognitive effects might also signify that a depolarization intervention can be purely effective and still be very efficient. In other words, one can develop warmer feelings for the target out-partisan without learning about the reasons why that person chose the out-party over the others. Instead, a non-threatening setting where the target out-partisan shares their personal harmful experiences for a non-partisan issue would be sufficient to boost warmth toward them. To illustrate, following the intergroup contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), as long as the optimal conditions of inter-partisan contact are present (equal group status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and authority support), one can expect to reach a successful depolarization solely through an affect-based intervention. Namely, the effect of intergroup contact on prejudice reduction can be mainly through affective (e.g., emotional reactions) rather than cognitive channels (e.g., stereotypes) (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Therefore, understanding the reasons for the other side might not be a necessary condition to depolarize partisans. Alternative depolarization strategies, thus, can be warmth-inducing inter-partisan contact (e.g., Huddy & Yair, 2021) to boost out-partisan empathy.

Even though the experimental effect was more prominent regarding the affective dimensions, I observed a differential treatment effect for each affective subdimension. To illustrate, the experiment improved the warmth but not caring for or feeling sympathy towards out-partisans. This can be because individuals can avoid feeling compassion (or caring) for distant others who are suffering when compassion is perceived as cognitively costly or less efficacious (Scheffer et al., 2022). The present study's null or weak findings for the cognitive dimensions, especially understanding, might indicate a cognitive cost for feeling compassion. Thus, it may be the case in the current study that partisans did not report caring for the out-party as it is difficult to understand them. The process of feeling sympathy, as a similar construct related to compassion, also abides by similar boundary conditions.

There are also specific conditions that determine the strength of sympathetic feelings, such as the degree of overlap between one's past experiences and the target's misfortunes (Loewenstein & Small, 2007). In the current study, the effect could vary between participants who were familiar with the target's experiences by hearing from a friend or family and those who are completely distant from these experiences. Still, the feeling of warmth is also generally regarded as a component of compassion, along with care and sympathy (Crawford et al., 2014). The improvement in warmth might be related to the number of response options that differed across the dimensions. The warmth was rated at a 10-point Likert-type scale (the U.S.) or a 100-point feeling thermometer scale, while care and sympathy were rated at 4 or 5-point scales. Participants might feel more comfortable giving higher scores at longer scales. On the other hand, there are more obvious changes in the shorter-scale options. For instance, it might be easier to give out-party "80" out of 100 than 4 out of "5" as the former choice seems more distant from the top positive (100/5) rating. Nevertheless, the current investigation does not allow me to test this assumption. Therefore, future studies should use the same number of choices across all scales measuring out-party attitudes and examine the boundary conditions unique to each affective component to understand why this might be the case.

Nevertheless, experiments improved the favorability of the target-out-partisan in a variety of dimensions, including care, sympathy, opinion strength, and contact interest. However, those improvements did not carry towards the attitudes towards the whole partisan group. According to the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Fiske, 2018), perceived social structure (cooperation, status) predicts stereotypes (warmth, competence). The stereotypes, in turn, predict affective dimensions of prejudice. Then, those affective states predict behavioral dimensions of prejudice called discrimination (active and passive help and harm). Based on this model, one can make sense of getting immediate and stronger results for out-party warmth compared to other affective dimensions (care and sympathy) and behavioral dimensions (contact interest). To illustrate, low competence perception arose by hearing a harmful experience of an out-partisan might result in warmer feelings towards them. However, feelings of warmth might not be sufficient enough to produce sympathy or contact interest. Future studies might consider using stronger PT interventions to get results in other dimensions of partisan prejudice.

Lastly, for 8 out of 32 European countries, I found no effect on the link between empathy and immigrant prejudice. Specifically, the coefficients were not significant for Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lithuania, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Slovenia, while it was unexpectedly positive in Romania (The World Bank Report, 2018)⁵⁰. These countries emerge as hosting a very low rate of immigrants compared to their Western European counterparts, which might contribute to the unexpected results of empathy for predicting anti-immigrant prejudice due to the lack of salience of the immigration issue in the country (World Migration Report, 2022)⁵¹.

6.4 *Shortcomings and Limitations of the Dissertation*

Despite all useful contributions, this dissertation has three main limitations. The first limitation is the sampling technique used to recruit experiment participants in Turkey (Chapter 4). Using social media ads to recruit participants provides a time and cost-effective way to collect data. However, this method creates a representativeness problem (Shaver et al., 2019). To illustrate, the sample is more educated than the population⁵².

Therefore, a demand effect might have occurred in the volunteer-educated sample of Turkey, whereby respondents in the treatment condition caught on to the purpose of the study and tried to help with good results. Moreover, even though it has an effect, I used a strategy before the treatment to eliminate the risk of behavior adjustment due to suspicion. Even though some participants still caught the intention, experimental studies showed that being aware of the researcher's intent does not result in a change in the treatment effects (Mummolo & Peterson, 2018). In addition, I did not find a stark difference between the control and the treatment conditions, which also reduces the possibility of demand effects.

⁵⁰ The World Bank Report notes that the highest increase in emigration rate among the EU countries occurred in Romania since 1990. The low rate of immigration despite the high emigration might contribute to the unique understanding of immigrant empathy and anti-immigrant prejudice in Romania (<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/210481530907970911/pdf/128064-SCD-PUBLIC-P160439-RomaniaSCDBackgroundNoteMigration.pdf>)

⁵¹ According to World Migration Report in 2022, Armenia (%6.4), Bosnia (%1.1.), Lithuania (5.3%), Serbia (9.4%), Slovakia (3.6%), Ukraine (11.4%), and Romania (3.7%) have very low levels of immigrant rates compared to their total population (<https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2022-interactive/>).

⁵² TURKSTAT (Turkish Statistical Institute) reported 9,3 years for the mean years of education by 2022. The mean education is .63 (.22), corresponding to more than 12 years of education (<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=National-Education-Statistics-2022-49756>)

In addition, Han (2022) found a positive link between the level of education polarization and political engagement. Given the very high political interest and the high baseline AP levels, the sample might particularly give me an opportunity to test the intervention effect in the context of a difficult sample. Furthermore, the sample was older than the population average⁵³. Nevertheless, aging also would lead to resistance to depolarization attempts, making the present study's successful results more promising regarding the effect of PG (see Philips, 2022).

In addition, I applied a purposive sampling strategy to increase the representativeness of the party's identification. That is because the number of participants supporting the People's Alliance was very small. I faced the same problem in Chapter 3 while recruiting the interview sample. Participants who supported the main opposition party, CHP, dominated the sample. There were only four AKP supporters, and only one respondent supported MHP. Therefore, evaluations of the incumbent alliance supporter's results mostly come from a few individuals. In experiments, I increased party representation using purposive sampling. To illustrate, 71.59% of participants who support the incumbent party (AKP) and 68.76% of the MHP supporters were included via purposive sampling.

Another limitation regarding party representation is about excluding an important partisan group (DEM Party supporters) from a party of the analysis in the experiments conducted in Turkey. That is because the sample size was limited for other party supporters, and I had to exclude them from the mean difference analysis (see Footnotes 29, 32, and 36). This prevents me from making an inference about pro-Kurdish voters, who constitute approximately 9% of the population. Future studies should use a random sampling method and recruit enough participants for the parties to have more than a %1 vote share at that time.

Another limitation of the experiments conducted in Turkey is that participants who selected a party beyond the biggest five parties as their least-liked party (n=80, 11.20%) did not get treatment; thereby, they were excluded from the analyses. This led to a considerable decrease in sample size. I did not include them since creating personal stories representing

⁵³ According to the TURKSTAT (Turkish Statistical Institute) report in 2024, the mean age is 34, and the sample mean age is 51 (SD=22) (<https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Adrese-Dayali-Nufus-Kayit-Sistemi-Sonuclari-2023-49684>).

each party's policy stances was a challenging process, and including more parties would increase the number of participants needed. For instance, the Future Party (GP) and the Felicity Party (SP) are both right-wing pro-Islamist parties but allied with center-left CHP in the 2023 general elections. Neither proposed an independent salient issue differentiating them from the remaining political parties. This makes a story creation almost impossible. Another related issue is that participants' least-liked party preferences centered around pro-Islamist AKP and pro-Kurdish HDP/DEM Party. Accordingly, more than half of the respondents chose AKP, and around 25% chose HDP as their least-liked party preference. As a result, this limited my ability to understand the experimental effect on participants who disliked the other parties most. Still, these findings are aligned with the studies conducted with representative data in Turkey⁵⁴. Additionally, it further supports the studies that highlighted the main divisions around Islamic vs secular and Kurdish ethnic identity frameworks (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2021; Kalaycıoğlu, 2021).

Furthermore, the study did not test the effect of focusing on different policy stances as I did in the U.S. study. Again, I had to limit the number of vignettes due to the multi-party nature of the country context and the sample size limitation. Future studies can test the hypotheses using other contentious issues that divide parties, such as immigration.

Furthermore, in some interviews (Chapter 3), participants answered both PT questions consecutively; therefore, the first question might influence the answer for the second one. Specifically, in those interviews, participants first answered policy-based PT and then person-based PT. The positive sentiment and increased length of the person-based answers might be because the respondent had already had a PT exercise during the policy-based PT. Still, person-based PT can be thought of as superior in AP studies since partisan-based PT targets the same thing as AP does: out-partisans. Partisan-based intervention is suitable for reducing AP because the main goal of decreasing AP is to decrease negative feelings towards "the partisans," not "the issues."

Third, using different strategies in the experimental designs in Turkey and the U.S. limited my ability to compare the two countries regarding the effectiveness of PT

⁵⁴Erdoğan and Semerci's research on the dimensions of polarization in Turkey in 2020 (<https://www.turkuazlab.org/>).

intervention. Therefore, we can not fully attribute weaker effects in the U.S. compared to Turkey to country-related factors such as individualism levels, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or the party system or the extent to which the party system represents the division in society. Rather, it can be concluded that better-designed experiments in Turkey revealed stronger depolarization outcomes. Still, it is not possible to know if the better version of the intervention would bring the same outcome in the deeply divided U.S. context, as I discussed in section 6.1.

Finally, I compromised perfect measures of the variables in expense to reach a representative, broader sample from multiple countries in Chapter 5. Specifically, the preliminary study uses EVS's humanitarian concern measure to assess empathic concern toward immigrants inspired by other studies that focus on the "affective" dimension of empathy (e.g., Batson et al., 1997; Pavey et al., 2012; Sirin et al., 2017). Therefore, I did not measure PT as a cognitive dimension of empathy (Clark, 2010; Davis, 1983; Hogan, 1969). I acknowledge that this is not an ideal measure; however, it allowed me to use a cross-cultural data set of good quality to provide preliminary evidence for the link between immigrant empathy and prejudice in a broad context. Additionally, empathy (empathic concern) and PT are two constructs that are closely related, as the ANES study showed. In addition, empathy is an essential mechanism of PT (Negd et al., 2011); thereby, it can be used as a related construct to assess PT tendencies. Moreover, in the main study, I compensated for this limitation by showing that immigrant empathy and PT toward immigrants are loaded on the same factor, and they are related to anti-immigrant attitudes.

Another measurement issue is related to assessing out-party attitudes in the ANES study. I used ratings of "out-party" rather than attitudes towards partisans. However, research on AP measurement showed that partisans tend to distinguish between out-party and out-partisans (Druckman & Levendusky, 2019). To illustrate, partisans tend to think of elites, not partisans, when evaluating the parties. Nevertheless, the like-dislike score, called out-party sympathy, has been a widely used measure to assess out-party animosity using available cross-national data such as CSES (Bettarelli et al., 2023; Wagner, 2021). Therefore, one should evaluate the results for the PT-partisan animosity link in Chapter 5 with caution.

In addition, similar to the EVS study, the ANES study also compromises perfect measures to provide evidence for the PT-prejudice link using large-N, representative survey data. To illustrate, in the items measuring immigrant empathy and PT, the focus was “the individuals from another racial or ethnic group.” However, there can be various kinds of immigrant groups that participants would think of considering racial or ethnic outgroups in the U.S. To illustrate, for an Anglo-American participant, the ethnic or racial out-groups can be Latin Americans or Asian Americans who are completely different from unauthorized immigrants or legal temporary residents in many respects, including the legal status and the extent to which they are naturalized to the host population. Nevertheless, a study found that empathy and PT towards other racial and ethnic groups strongly predict attitudes toward undocumented immigrants in the U.S. (Sirin et al., 2017). Therefore, participants might tend to think of undocumented immigrants while answering the questions.

6.5 *Recommendations for Future Studies*

In light of the contributions, unexpected findings, and limitations summarized above, I listed some recommendations for future studies. First, I found that better-designed experiments in Turkey revealed stronger results compared to the ones in the U.S. (Chapter 4). The technique combined the logic of the “Out-group Experience Effect” with that of “Perspective-getting,” along with some improvements based on the research showing the backfire effects of PT.

Nevertheless, across both countries, the experimental effects were weak in the sense that the positive attitudes towards the target out-partisan did not spill over to the out-partisan group in general, except for warmth. This finding is in line with other studies finding a limited spillover effect of the intervention from target-related attitudes to the whole outgroup (see Bor & Simonovits, 2021; Gutenbrunner and Wagner, 2016). One explanation for this is that participants might perceive the target as a good “exception” to the out-group (Brown, 1986). Therefore, one way to overcome this problem is to increase the prototypicality of the target out-partisan so that this individual is perceived as a typical representative of the out-party. Future depolarization studies that use the PG technique may consider focusing on the experiences that uniquely represent each partisan group as a whole. In addition, some studies found that PT’s effect is limited to a few attributes of the political group (Bilali & Godfrey,

2021). Therefore, future work is needed to investigate ways to increase the effect of PT interventions in the context of inter-partisan relations. One way to obtain a stronger intervention effect can be to apply multiple consecutive treatments (e.g., multiple vignettes, Gallardo et al., 2021; Kubin et al., unpublished intervention⁵⁵) to boost the intervention's effectiveness. Future studies can consider using multiple vignettes giving the perspective of various out-partisans. Focusing on multiple targets and multiple out-party policies can also increase the likelihood of generalization of the target-related attitudes to the whole partisan group.

Going further, this technique can be applied to more realistic settings to get better and long-term results. The alternative settings include the fast-friends paradigm (Santoro & Broockman, 2022), online cross-partisan interaction (Rajadesingan et al., 2023), or gaming apps for stimulating perspective-taking (Behm-Morawitz et al., 2016). In addition, one improvement in the Turkish survey was matching the respondent's sex and the target out-partisan to induce similarity. Future studies might consider checking the effect of similarity-inducing in other areas to see if they work better. To illustrate, other demographic determinants of AP, such as age, income level, employment, and urban/rural residence, can be used to match the characteristics of respondents and the fictional target out-partisan (Hernández et al., 2021)

Second, the association between immigrant empathy and partisan animosity would depend on the national context. Future studies should investigate the same mediation model in different country contexts. For instance, what would the results look like if the data were collected from Turkey, the world's leader in Syrian refugee-hosting?⁵⁶ Interpretation of the association between immigrant attitudes and partisan prejudice would be more complex than the U.S. That is because the incumbent government, led by the right-wing conservative AKP and its ultra-nationalist (Turkish nationalist) ally MHP, have pro-immigrant stances. On the other hand, the main opposition, center-left secular CHP, is opposed to immigration. The lack of overlap between ideological orientation and party policy stances would make it difficult to form a clear immigrant-related attitude for participants. This potential difficulty or

⁵⁵ <https://www.strengtheningdemocracychallenge.org/winning-interventions>

⁵⁶ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>

confusion, in turn, would effect the process of forming out-party attitudes. Nevertheless, the studies with representative data in Turkey showed that co-religiosity built under the Muslim identity and populism are important in determining partisans' attitudes towards immigrants (Çarkoğlu & Elçi, 2021). To illustrate, the shared Muslim identity highlighted by populist AKP led the supporters of AKP to consider Syrians as less of a problem. Similarly, supporting a pro-minority party, the pro-Kurdish HDP partisans were very positive about the Syrian immigrants. On the other hand, as expected, the ultra-nationalist MHP supporters were more negative towards them because of the pro-nationalist sentiments of the party. In addition, the main opposition, left-leaning CHP supporters who are non-populists, were found to be negative towards immigrants. This could be explained by their perception of the threat to Secular values by hosting Syrians. Therefore, empathic activation could be constructed through multiple channels in Turkey among voters of anti-immigrant parties. Future studies should investigate how immigrant empathy and PT can be boosted in multiparty contexts hosting large numbers of immigrants, like Turkey, to be able to recognize the complexity of party ties and ideological orientations in the best way to depolarize partisans.

Third, finding that immigrant attitudes are important in predicting partisan attitudes, future studies can test the role of other politicized social groups in depolarization attempts. These include women getting abortions and LGBTI+ individuals in the U.S., as gay rights and abortion issue predicts partisan affect (Webster & Abromowitz, 2017). On the other hand, increasing positive attitudes towards individuals of Kurdish origin and Syrian refugees in Turkey also allow us to test the depolarization in the ethnic nationalism context in Turkey⁵⁷

Fourth, participants tend to describe out-partisans via the traits used in trait-ratings scales. These were extremity, morality (Huddy & Yair, 2021), selfishness, and hypocrisy (e.g., Erdoğan and Semerci, 2020⁵⁸; Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020). Still, other unused traits also emerged. To illustrate, AKP supporters were mostly defined as being “illiterate,” “uneducated,” or “ignorant,” while HDP supporters were defined as being “extremely nationalist” or “fascist.” These traits can be measured in future studies to assess partisans' trait ratings in Turkey. Finally, future studies should address the problem of recruiting

⁵⁷These issues were found to be important in the Erdoğan and Semerci's research on the dimensions of polarization in Turkey in 2020 (<https://www.turkuazlab.org/>).

⁵⁸ <https://www.turkuazlab.org/ilgili-projelerimiz/turkiyede-kutuplasmanin-boyutlari-2020/>

individuals who support the People's Alliance in Turkey. To illustrate, studies using social media ads to recruit participants can develop partisan-specific ways to attract particular segments of society using specific images or study descriptions. Alternatively, other social media channels like "X" can be used with hashtags targeting the People's Alliance supporters.



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Appendix A

VIGNETTES USED IN STUDY 2.a. (THE U.S.)

Casey is a Democrat

Experimental Vignettes:

(1) To answer the question, “Why am I a Democrat?” I go back to terrible times when I experienced constant domestic violence.

In 1992, my husband injured me with a knife during an argument. For 13 years, my son and I were abused by him. We finally escaped, but he tracked us down. Back then, there was limited help available. Local shelters were full. I did not even know the name of what was happening to me then. Domestic violence. Now, working to end domestic violence is my life's work. When I started to look for information about domestic violence, I was shocked to find out how many people, including children, experience physical or sexual abuse. And I committed myself to the movement to end this violence.

In my small hometown, I did not feel like I could speak out about my experience with sexual assault. But when I went back to university as an older student, I met an incredible group of people working to end the culture of sexual assault. I went from survivor to advocate.

The Democratic Party works to eliminate domestic violence by initiating legislation such as the Violence Against Women Act. We need Congress to reauthorize and enhance that law. That's why I support the Democratic Party.

(2) To answer the question, “Why am I a Democrat?” I go back to terrible times when I was diagnosed with cancer.

I came from rural Missouri. My family and I put off going to the doctor because we did not have health insurance. I finally went to the doctor, who looked at my throat and said, you have cancer. Stage four. The worst kind of cancer you can have. My wife applied for Obamacare, and my coverage began on April 1, 2012. I started chemotherapy and radiation that same day, and it saved my life. And I know that I was not the only one who could not have afforded the expense of medical treatment for a serious illness without Obamacare. We definitely need an inclusive healthcare system so that people can afford the cost of medical treatment.

The Democratic Party has been fighting to fix our broken health-care system for years by trying to lower the cost of healthcare and cut down on the rate of uninsured Americans. That's why I support the Democratic Party.

(3) To answer the question, “Why am I a Democrat?” I go back to the time when the disastrous Camp Fire broke out in Northern California and worsened my asthma.

I was 13 years old when the Camp Fire, the most destructive fire in history, occurred. My asthma flared up badly. I could hardly breathe. After that bad experience, I decided to work against climate change. I have been organizing young people to take action on climate change since 2018. Climate change is affecting us now and robbing my generation of the future. For people my age, every aspect of our lives, from where we go to school, the kind of careers we pursue to whether we can raise a family, depends on us taking climate change seriously right now.

The Democratic Party will not solve this crisis in four years. No one can, but the party will put us back on track so my generation has a fighting chance. I do not want to let our future go up in flames. That's why I support the Democratic Party.

Control Vignette:

(4) The answer to “Why are you a Democrat?” is easy: because I care about every man, woman and child. I want them to have affordable health care and housing. I want the poor and suffering seeking a better life for their families to be

treated humanely. I want everyone to be free from gun violence and discrimination. I want our children and grandchildren to be able to enjoy real democracy and have a fighting chance as the earth gets hotter and hotter.

Casey is a Republican

Experimental Vignettes

(1) To answer the question, “why I am a Republican,” I go back to the time when my son was attacked by an unlawful immigrant ten years ago.

I used to live in California with my son, Dominic. In June 2012, we watched a baseball game on TV at home, and he left to meet with his close friends. After two and half hours or so, I got a call from a hospital. Dominic had a traffic accident, so he was in the emergency room. When I get there, I learned that he was terribly injured, and his leg was broken when his motorcycle was hit by an undocumented immigrant. He had to stay in the hospital for weeks. During that time, I was so stressed and hoping my son had no permanent damage and got well. This was horrible.

I talked to the police, and I learned that the undocumented immigrant who hit the motorcycle reportedly had a history of DUI arrests. And I know that this is not the only destructive incidence caused by illegal immigrants in this country. I believe that we need an administration that cares more about legal citizens than about illegals, putting all our children’s lives at risk.

Republican party works for border security and deportations of immigrants who are in the country illegally. That’s why I support the Republican Party.

(2) To answer the question, “why are you a Republican?,” I go back to the times when I regained my life thanks to my religious faith.

I grew up in the Evangelical Church, but in middle school lost my faith in God. From eighth grade through my first two years of high school, I was an atheist. During my period of atheism, I hit rock bottom. I was contemplating suicide. It was bad. I almost got expelled because I bullied kids. I caused them physical harm. I hated everybody. I hated the world. What got me out of that dark place was my mom convincing me to go to a church retreat with my sisters. My mom had to force me to go but once I got there I spoke to God, and I asked for help. After some time, I felt peaceful being there. I trusted in God again and my life got better. A big part of my political identity comes from my religious identity what I consider a “morality standpoint”. There are a lot of troubled young people out there and they need to believe in something bigger than themselves.

I believe the Republican Party respects Christians and understands the comfort that religion provides to young people who have lost their way. That’s why I am a Republican.

(3) To answer the question, “why I am a Republican,” I go back to the time when I was attacked by a group of strangers in the street.

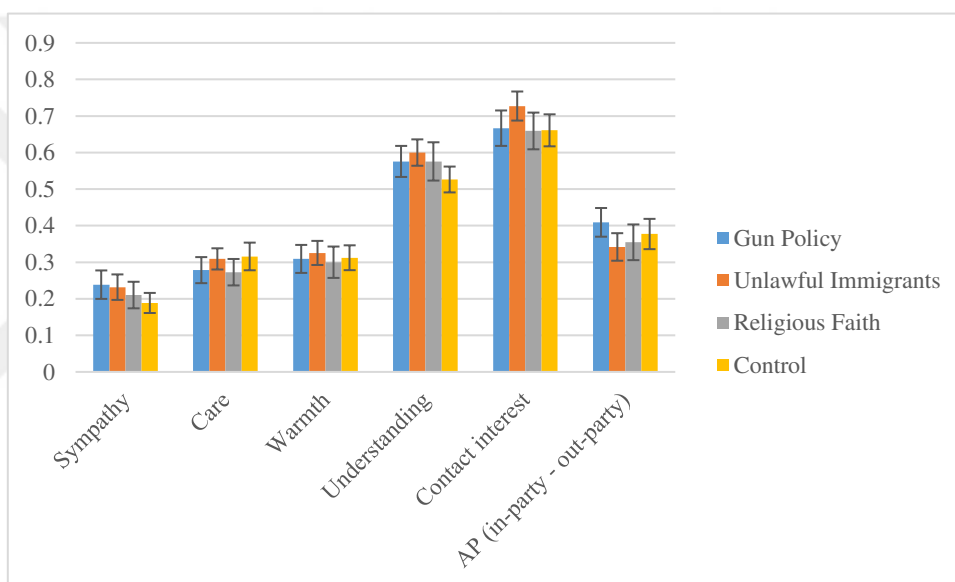
I live in Texas. Ten years ago, after hanging out with some friends at the beach, I walked to my car at 2 a.m. at night. There was no one in the street when I finally found my car. Suddenly, a group of men appeared and approached me. They threatened me. There were no police officers around to protect me. I was scared and attempted to get into my car and flee, but the group prevented me from doing so. The last thing I remember is that one of the men brought out a big knife pulling towards me. When I woke up, I was in a hospital with my brother. I was hospitalized for weeks and finally returned back to my normal life. However, the trauma of this horrible event is still with me.

On that night, if I had a gun for self-defense, I would never have experienced such a terrible incident. And I know that I was the lucky one. Every day in this country, many people lose their lives because of violent attacks from strangers. Republican party works best for protecting people’s right to self-defense. Therefore, I support the Republican party.

Control Vignette:

The answer to “Why are you a Republican?” is easy: because I care about every man, woman, and child. I believe everyone has a right to live given by God. I want to maximize the role of people and minimize the role of government. I want lower taxes, less bureaucracy, stronger national security, greater enforcement of criminal law, vigilance against terrorism, and free market competition in health care and other compassionate programs.

Appendix B

**MEAN OUT-PARTISAN RATINGS BY STORY: DEMOCRATS'
RATINGS FOR REPUBLICANS**

Appendix C

FICTIONAL TARGET OUT-PARTISAN PICTURES USED IN STUDY

2.b. (TURKEY)

Ahmet



Fatma (AKP)



Fatma (Others)



Appendix D

VIGNETTES USED IN STUDY 2.b. (TURKEY)

Ahmet/Fatma Supports AKP: Experimental Condition

Merhaba. Ben Fatma/Ahmet. “Neden AK Parti (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) taraftarıyım?” sorusunun cevabı benim için annemin başörtüsü nedeniyle yaşadığı zorluklara dayanıyor. Annem başörtülü bir avukattır. Fakat, 90’lı yılların sonunda iş bulmakta çok zorlanmıştı. Sonunda bir büroda iş buldu ama maaşı oldukça düşüktü. Arkadaşlarının çok daha yüksek maaş aldığını bildiği için bir gün konuyu patronuna açmış. Patronu ona “ama başörtülüsün, zaten başka bir yerde iş bulamazsın. Kabul etmiyorsan çık” demiş. Annem de çalışmayı bıraktı. Bu durum beni çok üzdü. Türkiye’de annem gibi başörtüsü yüzünden iş hayatında sorun yaşayan pek çok kadın var. Ben başörtülü kadınların hakettikleri koşullarda rahatça çalışabilmelerini istiyorum. AK Parti’nin başörtüsü yasağına karşı attığı adımları sevinçle takip ediyorum. Başörtüsüne anayasal güvence verilmesine yönelik atılımlarını da takdir ediyorum. Tüm bu sebeplerden ötürü AK Parti’yi destekliyorum.

Ahmet/Fatma Supports AKP: Control Condition

Merhaba. Ben Fatma. “Neden AK Parti (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) taraftarıyım?” sorusunun cevabı benim için başörtüsü konusuna dayanıyor. Ben başörtülü kadınların hakettikleri koşullarda rahatça çalışabilmelerini istiyorum.

AK Parti’nin başörtüsü yasağına karşı attığı adımları sevinçle takip ediyorum. Başörtüsüne anayasal güvence verilmesine yönelik atılımlarını da takdir ediyorum. Tüm bu sebeplerden ötürü AK Parti’yi destekliyorum.

Ahmet/Fatma Supports MHP: Experimental Condition

Merhaba. Ben Fatma. “Neden MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi) taraftarıyım?” sorusunun cevabı benim için abimin terör saldırısında sakatlanmasına dayanıyor.

Abim 2007 yılında Tunceli Pülümür’de askerlik görevini jandarma olarak yapıyordu. Görevinin bitmesine üç ay kala, 4 Haziran’da, televizyonda bir çatışma haberi gördüm. Abimin bulunduğu Kocatepe Jandarma Karakolu’na saldırı olmuş. Bir süre ondan haber alamadık. Bu beni çok korkuttu. Nihayet, ertesi sabah yaşadığını öğrendik. Fakat, bacağından yaralanmıştı. Uzun süre fizik tedavi görse de bir daha eskisi gibi yürüyemedi. Türkiye’de abim gibi terörden zarar gören pek çok genç var. Ben gençlerin huzur ve güvenle yaşamalarını istiyorum.

MHP’nin toplum güvenliği için kararlı bir duruş sergilediğine inanıyorum. Ayrıca terör mağduru vatandaşlara yönelik, “sosyal yardımlaşma ve dayanışma” teşvik fonu ve istihdam gibi konulardaki çabalarını takdir ediyorum. Tüm bu sebeplerden ötürü MHP’yi destekliyorum.

Ahmet/Fatma Supports MHP: Control Condition

Merhaba. Ben Fatma. “Neden MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi) taraftarıyım?” sorusunun cevabı benim için terör konusuna dayanıyor. Ben gençlerin huzur ve güvenle yaşamalarını istiyorum.

MHP'nin toplum güvenliği için kararlı bir duruş sergilediğine inanıyorum. Ayrıca terör mağduru vatandaşlara yönelik, “sosyal yardımlaşma ve dayanışma” teşvik fonu ve istihdam gibi konulardaki çabalarını takdir ediyorum. Tüm bu sebeplerden ötürü MHP'yi destekliyorum.

Ahmet/Fatma Supports CHP/IYI Party: Experimental Condition

Merhaba. Ben Fatma/Ahmet. Benim için “Neden CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)/IYI Parti taraftarıyım?” sorusunun cevabı annemin babam tarafından şiddet görmesine dayanıyor.

Babam alkolikti. Annemi sık sık döverdi. Özellikle içmediği zamanlarda çok sinirli olurdu. Bir gün akşam yemekte anneme dolaptaki eti neden pişirmedi diye bağırırmaya başladı. Eline geçenleri fırlatıyordu. Ben korkudan odama koştum. Babam evden çıkar çıkmaz polisi aradık. Bizi bir sığınma evine yerleştirdiler. Fakat, biz oradayken babam annemi eve dönmesi için sürekli tehdit etmeye başladı. Uzun süre korkuyla yaşadık. Türkiye’de annem gibi şiddet mağduru pek çok kadın var. Ben kadınların huzur ve güvenle yaşamasını istiyorum.

CHP’nin/ IYI Parti’nin İstanbul Sözleşmesi ile ev içi şiddete karşı köklü bir mücadele vereceğine inanıyorum. Mağdurların ruhsal ve hukuki olarak desteklenmesi, ve faillerin cezalandırılmaları konusundaki çabalarını takdir ediyorum. Tüm bu nedenlerle CHP’yi/IYI Parti’yi destekliyorum.

Ahmet/Fatma Supports CHP/IYI Party: Control Condition

Merhaba. Ben Fatma. Benim için “Neden CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) taraftarıyım?” sorusunun cevabı benim için ev içi şiddet konusuna dayanıyor. Ben kadınların huzur ve güvenle yaşamasını istiyorum.

CHP’nin İstanbul Sözleşmesi ile ev içi şiddete karşı köklü bir mücadele vereceğine inanıyorum. Mağdurların ruhsal ve hukuki olarak desteklenmesi, ve faillerin cezalandırılmaları konusundaki çabalarını takdir ediyorum. Tüm bu nedenlerle CHP’yi destekliyorum.

Ahmet/Fatma Supports HDP : Experimental Condition

Merhaba. Ben Fatma. Neden “DEM Parti/HDP (Halkların Eşitlik ve Demokrasi Partisi) taraftarıyım?” sorusunun cevabı benim için ilkokula başladığımda anadilimi konuşmadığım için yaşadığım zorluklara dayanıyor.

Diyarbakır’da 4 çocuklu Kürt kökenli bir ailenin en küçük çocuğuyum. İlkokula başladığımda neredeyse hiç Türkçe bilmiyordum. İkinci dönem ben hariç herkes okumayı sökmüştü. Bir gün öğretmen kitaptan bir cümle okumamı söyledi. Okuyamayınca elindeki sopayla avucuma sertçe vurdu. Eve ağlayarak döndüm. Okuma yazmayı ancak 4. sınıfa geldiğimde sökebilmişim. İlkokulda yaşadığım bu başarısızlık duygusu tüm eğitim hayatımda sürdü. Türkiye’de benim gibi anadilini kullanamadığı için sorun yaşayan pek çok çocuk var. Ben herkesin ana dili ile eğitim alabilmesini istiyorum.

DEM Parti/HDP’nin anadilde eğitim için mücadele vereceğine inanıyorum. Anadilde eğitimin anayasal düzeyde sağlanması, ve tüm kimliklerin özgürce yaşanabilmesi için gösterdiği çabayı takdir ediyorum. Tüm bu sebeplerden dolayı DEM Parti/HDP’yi destekliyorum.

Ahmet/Fatma Supports HDP : Control condition

Merhaba. Ben Fatma. Neden “DEM Parti/HDP (Halkların Eşitlik ve Demokrasi Partisi) taraftarıyım?” sorusunun cevabı benim için anadilde eğitim konusuna dayanıyor. Ben herkesin ana dili ile eğitim alabilmesini istiyorum.

DEM Parti/HDP’nin anadilde eğitim için mücadele vereceğine inanıyorum. Anadilde eğitimin anayasal düzeyde sağlanması, ve tüm kimliklerin özgürce yaşanabilmesi için gösterdiği çabayı takdir ediyorum. Tüm bu sebeplerden dolayı DEM Parti/HDP’yi destekliyorum.