

Us and Others: Turkish People's Autochthony Beliefs and Views on Refugees

Davut Gürel¹

Bartın University, Bartın, Türkiye

Abstract: This study aims to examine the autochthony beliefs of local people in Türkiye, which is at the center of migration movements, especially by Syrian refugees. Enrolling participants (N=1820) with different demographic characteristics from seven geographical regions of Türkiye, the study collected data using a survey method. Quantitative statistical methods were used to analyze the collected data. The findings revealed that the Turkish people's overall scores on the autochthony beliefs survey were not affected by gender or age variables but were affected by geographical region and education level variables. In addition, as a result of the multiple linear regression analysis conducted to reveal how the perception of fear/threat from refugees, the tendency to act together against refugees, and the perception of global and national identity, which are thought to have an impact on autochthonous beliefs, predict the autochthonous beliefs of the Turkish people, it has been concluded that the perception of threat/fear, the tendency to act together and the perception of global and national identity have a significant relationship with autochthonous beliefs.

Keywords: Autochthony beliefs, refugees, Türkiye, immigrants, national belonging

Today, in almost every region of the world, people migrate to other places, individually or as communities. Migration movements can sometimes be voluntary, and sometimes they are caused by necessity arising from the circumstances. Mainly due to reasons such as wars and civil conflicts, terrorist incidents, and political or economic pressures, people settle or take refuge in other countries for more acceptable living conditions and a safer life (Türkoğlu, 2011; Weiner, 1996). Immigrants, for whatever reason, cause major changes in our streets, markets, neighborhoods, and every aspect of our social life. The high proportion of immigrants in the population of receiving countries can bring about serious problems. The problems include disruption in services such as education, health, and transportation, worsening economic conditions, deterioration in social and cultural areas, and concerns about social security (Akar & Erdoğan, 2019; Akgül et al., 2021; Aydın & Kaya, 2020; H. E. Brown, 2011; Chase, 2020; Genc et al., 2022; Gürel & Büyüksahin, 2020; Kaysili et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2022; Markowitz, 1996; Nilsson & Badran, 2021; Pavli & Maltezu, 2017; Robertson et al., 2016; Rye, 2018; Tarman & Gürel, 2017). This situation may negatively affect the view of citizens, in other words, the primary elements of the countries, towards immigrants. One of the countries that has most intensely experienced all these processes and consequences is, undoubtedly, Türkiye (Aras & Duman, 2019; İcduygu & Toktas, 2002; Koca, 2016; Tarman & Gürel, 2017).

Due to its location, Türkiye has hosted people of various ethnic origins and religious beliefs from the past to the present (Joshua Project, n.d.). Türkiye's characteristics, such as its location as a bridge between Asia and Europe, its imperial past, its democratic and secular

¹ Corresponding Author: Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Social Studies Education Department, Bartın University, Bartın, Türkiye. Email: gureldavut@gmail.com

constitution, and its developing economy, make Türkiye a destination point for the people of other countries in the same region. Today, people from far and near Asian countries, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Palestine, Turkmenistan, and neighboring countries, such as Iran, Iraq, Georgia, and Ukraine migrate to Türkiye to settle or use it as a transit to European countries (Baban et al., 2017; Düvell, 2019; Tarman & Gürel, 2017). Due to its open border policy, especially during the Syrian civil war that started in 2011, Türkiye hosts 2,820,362 Syrians under temporary protection as of 27.02.2025, according to official figures (Presidency of Migration Management [PMM], 2025). There are more than five million foreigners in Türkiye who are under temporary protection or international protection status (refugees) or who have come to the country legally and received a residence permit. As a result, changes have been observed over time in local people's attitudes towards these foreigners, whose numbers are constantly increasing (Aksoy Araştırma, 2022; Ekici, 2019; International Crisis Group [ICG], 2016). Reasons such as security risks caused by foreigners (Karasu, 2018; Kızmaz, 2018), increasingly noticeable economic problems (Boyras, 2015; Güney & Konak, 2016; Pearlman, 2020), rumors that foreigners have been granted citizenship or will vote in elections (S. Öztürk, 2021; Şimşek, 2022), foreigners entering the country illegally (Düvell, 2019; Pearlman, 2020), statements made by the authorities that the refugees in the country would not be sent back to their countries (Cumhuriyet, 2021; Hürriyet, 2014; Sputnik, 2021), and the local people's perception of the foreign population as a survival problem for the country (Rumelili & Karadağ, 2017) are the general sources of local people's reactions. This situation is believed to make it crucial to investigate Turkish people's autochthony beliefs, particularly their attitudes toward foreigners who have settled in the country due to mass migrations. To this end, the study first focused on the concept of autochthony and its relationship with migrations by examining the relevant literature. Next, the study explored Turkish people's views about refugees and their autochthony beliefs. Finally, based on the findings, the study made some inferences.

Autochthony Beliefs, Migration, and Türkiye

The term autochthony derives from Ancient Greek and refers to a bond established between individuals, regions, or communities that is highly authentic or natural (Zenker, 2011). The concept essentially evokes "belongingness." The sense of belonging is related to the perception that a particular object, place, or idea belongs to an individual or a group (Pierce & Jussila, 2010). For instance, just as an employee feels a sense of belonging to a company (Brylka et al., 2015), the concept of autochthony is related to the idea that lands belong to the first settlers (Nooitgedagt et al., 2021), with the belief of "our land" (Verkuyten & Martinović, 2017). In this context, the belief that the first inhabitants of a region are entitled to property and certain rights in different matters can be expressed as autochthony (Geschiere, 2009; Martinović & Verkuyten, 2013).

Studies on autochthony have reported that the first settlers of a region strongly believed their rights could be taken away by newcomers and that this resulted in various social consequences (Martinović & Verkuyten, 2013; Mitchell, 2012). This causes the local people to further resist the rights claims of newcomers. For example, a study by Mitchell (2012) emphasized that, due to democratization movements in many countries on the African continent, even debates about who can vote or be a candidate in elections fed the autochthony beliefs of indigenous peoples. Similar situations can arise in almost every society since people need a reference to determine a direction in their lives, and they find this in the smaller communities they live in (Verkuyten, 2014). This strengthens their sense of belonging, helps them experience the feeling of being part of a larger group, being accepted by them, and taking on a role within that group, and helps ensure collective unity (Gattino et al., 2019). On the other

hand, it can be said that rapid changes in the population and social structure of communities reinforce this psychological sense of belonging and the autochthony beliefs of individuals.

The more people feel a sense of belonging to their society, the more they tend to take action for that society (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). This also has an impact on their collective action intentions. The strong social bonds established by people who have lived together for centuries can be seen as a motivating factor against risks that may cause these bonds to weaken. In particular, the perception that newcomers to a group may pose a threat to the balance within the group can mobilize group members into collective action (Hasbún López et al., 2019). In this respect, the incorporation of other groups into a community through mass migration may naturally result in that community developing a collective reflex to resist these groups.

Individuals tend to resist events that may threaten the continuity of their community or refuse to accept outsider groups that seek to join that community (Gurer, 2019; Jetten & Hutchison, 2011; Jetten & Wohl, 2012; Kuper, 2003). In particular, the possibility that foreigners, whose numbers are increasing, may become the dominant group in the community may cause concerns that the historical and cultural continuity or social integrity of the host community will be disrupted (Geneveave, 2024; Jetten & Hutchison, 2011). A similar situation can be observed in Turkish society, where a strong perception of historical and cultural continuity prevails. Indeed, the popular saying “Lands can be left behind, but not customs” supports this. As a matter of fact, a new order can be established and continuity can be achieved through customs and traditions, but with their disruption, the elements that bring the people together may disappear and this situation may be a threat to the sense of being “us” (Rumelili & Karadağ, 2017; Yıldırım, 2000). From this perspective, it can be thought that the dramatic increase in the number of foreigners in Turkish society triggered this anxiety and thus led to the emergence of a negative perception towards foreigners. Moreover, this situation can also be associated with individuals’ autochthony beliefs, which express the need to protect their homeland from foreigners who have immigrated to their homeland and who, according to local people, may take over it (Zenker, 2011).

The phenomenon of migration is considered one of the most important phenomena that have affected countries in social, economic, and political domains in the last century (Mitchell, 2012). The latest report by the International Organization for Migration [IOM] (2022) expresses the number of people migrating worldwide in 2020 as approximately 281 million. On the other hand, the ratio of migrating people to the world population, which was 2.3% in 1970, increased to 3.6% in 2020. According to the report, which clearly reveals the global dimension of migration, Syria ranks as the 5th country of origin of international migrants, while Türkiye ranks as the 12th country that welcomes the most immigrants. Individuals with strong autochthony beliefs can be expected to be more sensitive to outsiders in their society or country. Türkiye hosts millions of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, so elucidating Turkish people's autochthony beliefs and views of immigrants can give us an idea to better understand the current situation. Hence, this study aims to explore the subject in depth and identify similarities and differences with previous research in the literature. As the first study conducted in Türkiye, the study is expected to fill a critical gap in the literature and guide future research. Based on these purposes, the study seeks to examine the thoughts of individuals of different educational backgrounds and age groups from different regions of Türkiye regarding refugees and their autochthony beliefs. The study also aims to explore the relationship (if any) between these two. Based on this main objective, the research seeks answers to the following questions:

1. Do the Turkish people’s autochthony beliefs differ according to gender?
2. Do the Turkish people’s autochthony beliefs differ according to education level?
3. Do the Turkish people’s autochthony beliefs differ according to geographical region?

4. Do the Turkish people's autochthony beliefs differ according to age?
5. What is the relationship between the scores from the autochthony beliefs survey constructs and the overall survey scores?

Data and Methods

The study used the survey method, one of the quantitative research methods, and was designed specifically with reference to the study titled *Support for collective action against refugees: The role of national, European, and global identifications, and autochthony beliefs* by Hasbún López et al. (2019).

Data, Data Collection, and Participants

Data were collected through a survey administered to a total of 1917 people throughout Türkiye in 2023. Data was collected online from people of different age groups living in seven geographical regions. Participants aged 18 and above, with diverse educational backgrounds, were selected for the study. The survey aimed to include participants who are more likely to encounter refugees in their social lives due to work, education, etc., and who can relate to the survey questions. Care was taken to ensure that participants were represented by at least 100 people from each geographical region, different educational levels, and various age groups. Thus, the aim was to achieve maximum diversity in data representation.

After examining the collected data, 117 questionnaires with extreme values (entirely marked as 1 or 5) and those deemed unreliable were excluded from the evaluation to ensure the reliability and structural integrity of the questionnaire and its dimensions. Consequently, analyses were conducted on the data from the final sample of 1820 participants. Table 1 presents the demographic information of the 1,820 participants included in the study. Of these participants, 60.7% are women, and 39.3% are men. A significant portion of the participants have a post-high school education level, and their ages are mostly in the 18-30 age range. In terms of geographical regions, the majority of participants are from Central Anatolia, the Marmara region, and the Black Sea region.

Table 1
Demographic Data of the Participants

Variable		<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Woman	1,104	60.7
	Man	716	39.3
Education Level	Primary School	113	6.2
	Secondary School	110	6.0
	High School	775	42.6
	University and above	822	45.2
Age Distribution	18-25	983	54,0
	26-30	224	12,3
	31-35	165	9,1
	36-40	131	7,2
	41-45	133	7,3
	45 and above	184	10,1
Geographic Region	Mediterranean Region	126	6.9
	Eastern Anatolia Region	142	7.8
	Aegean Region	120	6.6
	Southeastern Anatolia Region	142	7.8
	Central Anatolia Region	536	29.5
	Black Sea Region	283	15.5
	Marmara Region	472	25.9
Total		1,820	100.0

Measurement Instruments and Data Analysis

In the study, a questionnaire consisting of 22 items was used as the data collection tool, which was adapted into Turkish as a 5-point Likert scale from the 7-point Likert scale developed by Hasbún López et al. (2019). Options range from (1) *strongly disagree* to (5) *strongly agree*. The survey has five constructs: (1) Collective action intentions, (2) Autochthony, (3) Threat, (4) National identification, and (5) Global identification. The identification dimension in the original scale comprises three sub-dimensions: European identification, national identification, and global identification. Since the European identification dimension and the two items within it were not aligned with the study's objectives, they were excluded from the questionnaire form. The other two sub-dimensions were designated as the primary dimensions. Moreover, in their study, Hasbún López et al. (2019) stated that some of the items included in this questionnaire were adapted from the works of Van Zomeren et al. (2008), Martinović and Verkuyten (2013), Verkuyten (2009), and Der-Karabetian and Ruiz (1997). Additionally, in this study, data were collected from participants from 11 different European countries, a significant number of whom were students, with various political ideologies and professions. Therefore, it differs from the current study in terms of the variables examined.

The original scale, which is in English, was re-prepared as a questionnaire form in Turkish with the assistance of two language experts after obtaining the necessary permissions. For this purpose, the clarity of the questions, word and sentence structures, and cultural appropriateness were reviewed with the assistance of language experts. Initially, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the validity of the developed questionnaire. As a result of CFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of the survey was 0.915, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity test result was 0.000 ($p < 0.001$).

In the study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall survey was found to be 0.854. Accordingly, the survey is reliable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Tests for the normality of the data obtained from the overall survey and sub-dimensions showed the skewness and kurtosis values between +1 and -1 and revealed that they met the normality values (Hair et al., 2013;

Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Therefore, parametric tests were employed to analyze the data. Table 2 displays the means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach's Alpha Values of the Constructs

Construct	Means	<i>SD</i>	α
Collective action intentions	3.22	3.35	0.638
Autochthony	3.60	4.43	0.625
Threat	3.94	9.10	0.917
National identification	4.19	2.06	0.727
Global identification	3.36	2.31	0.586

Collective Action Intentions

The collective action, which has different dimensions from psychological, sociological, and political perspectives, refers to the actions undertaken by group members to achieve group goals, such as fostering a sense of belonging among individuals and promoting social change (Louis, 2009; Van Zomeren, 2016). Due to the strong relationship between group identity and the act of collective action, this dimension was included in the questionnaire (Hasbún López et al., 2019). The survey includes a total of three items related to this construct. The items are as follows: "I sign a petition to restrict the number of refugees arriving in Türkiye," "I participate in democratic demonstrations against refugees," and "I support policies aiming at expelling refugees from Türkiye." The average of the answers to the items was 3.22, and the reliability value of the construct was 0.638.

Autochthony

There is a strong relationship between being the first settlers in a place and the belief that the first settlers should have priority in decision-making about that place (Martinović & Verkuyten, 2013). Therefore, in alignment with the study's objectives, it was deemed appropriate to include this dimension in the questionnaire. The survey contains a total of five items about this construct. Examples are "Every country belongs primarily to its first inhabitants," "We were here first," and "The earliest inhabitants of a country should have the most right to define the rules of the game." The average of the answers to the items was 3.60, and the reliability value of the construct was 0.625.

Threat

Belonging to a group provides individuals with emotional and psychological support, helping them feel more secure. It offers opportunities for collective action toward common goals, increases their commitment to the group, and makes them more sensitive to external threats to the group (Cikara et al., 2011; McClain et al., 2009; Spaulding, 2007; Spears, 2021). The threat construct was covered by items such as "Refugees pose a threat to Türkiye's culture," and "refugees are slowly taking the country from the Turkish people." The average of the answers to the items was 3.94, and the reliability value of the construct was 0.917.

National Identification

Previous studies have shown that national identity can be a significant factor in promoting collective action (Hasbún López et al., 2019). The perception of national identity can strengthen the sense of belonging and shared identity, thereby helping individuals create conditions for working together towards common goals. Furthermore, the relationship between autochthonous beliefs and the perception of national identity necessitated the inclusion of this dimension in the questionnaire. The construct is covered by two items: “I strongly feel Turkish” and “My national identity is an important part of me.” The average of the answers to the items was 4.19, and the reliability value of the construct was 0.727.

Global Identification

There is an inherent opposition between a strong perception of global identity and autochthonous beliefs. Individuals with a developed sense of global citizenship, who see themselves as citizens of the world, are likely to be more tolerant towards the “other” (McFarland et al., 2019). This can be seen as an effective method for removing barriers to the integration and social acceptance of refugees. Therefore, the questionnaire includes three items on the dimension of global identity perception: “I feel like my fate and future are bound with all of humankind,” “I feel I am related to everyone in the world as if they were my family,” and “I think of myself as a citizen of the world.” The average of the answers to the items was 3.36, and the reliability value of the construct was 0.586.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Social and Human Sciences of Bartın University, under protocol number 2022-SBB-0334, dated July 7, 2022. Following the acquisition of ethical approval, participants were selected using the maximum variation sampling method to align with the study's objectives. Participants were provided with essential information regarding the purpose and characteristics of the study, and it was emphasized that participation was voluntary, and that the data obtained would be used solely for scientific purposes.

Findings

This section presents the findings related to the problem statements derived from the main purpose of the research.

Do the Turkish People’s Autochthony Beliefs Differ According to Gender?

A t-test was conducted to find out whether there was a significant difference between the participants’ scores from the constructs according to the gender variable. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3*Independent Samples T-Test Results*

Survey/Construct	Gender	<i>n</i>	\bar{x}	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	
Constructs	Autochthony beliefs survey	Woman	1,104	85.12	15.14	1.68	0.094
		Man	716	83.93	14.31		
	Threat	Woman	1,104	35.71	9.15	1.23	0.217
		Man	716	35.17	9.02		
	Collective action intentions	Woman	1,104	9.72	3.41	0.99	0.322
		Man	716	9.56	3.26		
	Autochthony	Woman	1,104	18.02	4.44	0.38	0.703
		Man	716	17.93	4.41		
	Global identification	Woman	1,104	10.13	2.33	1.44	0.151
		Man	716	9.97	2.27		
	National identification	Woman	1,104	8.47	2.04	2.31	0.021*
		Man	716	8.24	2.09		

Note. $p < 0.05$

As can be inferred from Table 3, there is no difference between participants' scores from the overall survey according to the gender variable ($t: 1.68, p > 0.05$). Only the scores from the *national identification* construct showed a significant difference in favor of women. Accordingly, it can be argued that women's national identification is stronger than that of men.

Do the Turkish People's Autochthony Beliefs Differ According to Education Level?

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to find out whether there was a significant difference between the participants' scores from the constructs according to the education level variable. Table 4 presents the results. On the other hand, to determine the source of the significant difference in the constructs with a significant difference, Tamhane's T2 test was performed.

Table 4*One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results*

Survey/Construct		Education Level	<i>N</i>		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Difference
Autochthony Beliefs survey	Primary School	113	Between Groups		2,254.96	751.65	3.43	3	0.016*	HS-U
	Secondary School	110								
	High School	775	Within Groups	397,770.04	219.04					
	University and above	822								
Constructs	Primary School	113	Between Groups		198.43	66.14	3.38	3	0.018*	HS-U
	Secondary School	110								
	High School	775	Within Groups	35,499.08	19.55					
	University and above	822								
Threat	Primary School	113	Between Groups		603.91	201.30	2.44	3	0.063	None
	Secondary School	110								

Collective action intentions	High School	775	Within Groups	150,101.10	82.66	4.03	3	0.007*	PS-U PS-HS		
	University and above	822									
	Primary School	113	Between Groups	134.84	11.15						
	Secondary School	110									
Global identification	High School	775	Within Groups	20,253.08	44.95	1.89	3	0.129	None		
	University and above	822									
	Primary School	113	Between Groups	30.17	10.06						
	Secondary School	110									
National identification	High School	775	Within Groups	9,641.65	5.31	32.533	10.84	2.56	3	0.053	None
	University and above	822									
	Primary School	113	Between Groups	7,691.539	4.24						
	Secondary School	110									

Note. $p < 0.05$

As can be inferred from Table 4, there is a significant difference between participants' scores from the overall survey according to the education level variable ($F_{3-1816}: 3.43, p < 0.05$). The source of the difference was examined using Tamhane's T2 test, and it was found that it was between the high school graduates (HS) and university and above graduates (U). Accordingly, it can be argued that education level has an effect on autochthony beliefs. Table 4 also presents data on whether education level makes a difference in the scores from the constructs. Accordingly, autochthony ($F_{3-1816}: 3.38, p < 0.05$) and collective action intentions ($F_{3-1816}: 4.03, p < 0.05$) differed significantly according to education level. Autochthony differed between HS and U, while collective action intentions differed between primary school graduates (PS) and HS and U. On the other hand, there was no difference between the participants' scores on the constructs of threat, global identification, or national identification according to education levels.

Do the Turkish People's Autochthony Beliefs Differ According to Geographical Region?

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to find out whether there was a significant difference between the participants' scores from the overall survey according to the geographic region variable. Table 5 presents the results. On the other hand, to determine the source of the significant difference in the constructs with a significant difference, Tamhane's T2 test was performed.

Table 5
One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results

Survey/Construct	Region	N		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	df	p	Difference
Autochthony beliefs survey	Marmara R.	472	Between Groups	13,313.67	2,218.94	10.40	6	0.000*	MR-CAR MR-SAR AR-BSR
	Aegean Region	120							
	Black Sea R.	283							
	Central Anatolia R.	536	Within Groups	386,711.32	213.30				
	Southeastern Anatolia R.	142							
	Eastern Anatolia R.	141							
	Mediterranean R.	126							
Autochthony	Marmara R.	472	Between Groups	798.51	34.07	6.91	6	0.000*	EG-BSR BSR-CAR BSR-AD BSR-SAR
	Aegean Region	120							
	Black Sea R.	283							
	Central Anatolia R.	536	Within Groups	34,899.00	11.13				
	Southeastern Anatolia R.	142							
	Eastern Anatolia R.	141							
	Mediterranean R.	126							
Threat	Marmara R.	472	Between Groups	4,702.70	783.78	9.73	6	0.000*	MR-CAR MR-EAR MR-SAR BSR-AR BSR SAR BSR-CAR BSR-EAR
	Aegean Region	120							
	Black Sea R.	283							
	Central Anatolia R.	536	Within Groups	146,002.30	80.53				
	Southeastern Anatolia R.	142							
	Eastern Anatolia R.	141							
	Mediterranean R.	126							
Collective action intentions	Marmara R.	472	Between Groups	204.40	34.06	3.06	6	0.006*	BSR-CAR
	Aegean Region	120							
	Black Sea R.	283							
	Central Anatolia R.	536	Within Groups	20,183.52	11.13				
	Southeastern Anatolia R.	142							
	Eastern Anatolia R.	141							
	Mediterranean R.	126							
Global identification	Marmara R.	472	Between Groups	39.35	6.56	1.24	6	0.285	None
	Aegean Region	120							
	Black Sea R.	283							
	Central Anatolia R.	536	Within Groups	9,632.49	5.31				
	Southeastern Anatolia R.	142							
	Eastern Anatolia R.	141							
	Mediterranean R.	126							
National identification	Marmara R.	472	Between Groups	41.071	6.845	1.62	6	0.139	None
	Aegean Region	120							
	Black Sea R.	283							
	Central Anatolia R.	536	Within Groups	7,683.001	4.238				
	Southeastern Anatolia R.	142							
	Eastern Anatolia R.	141							
	Mediterranean R.	126							

Note. $p < 0.05$

As can be inferred from Table 5, there is a difference between participants' scores from the overall survey according to the geographic region variable ($F_{6-1813}: 10.40, p < 0.05$). A Tamhane's T2 test was conducted to find out the source of the difference. Accordingly, the Marmara Region (MR) significantly differed from Central Anatolia (CAR) and Southeastern Anatolia Regions (SAR), and the Aegean Region (AR) from the Black Sea Region (BSR). The test results showed that there was a significant difference between regions in terms of autochthony ($F_{6-1813}: 6.91, p < 0.05$), threat ($F_{6-1813}: 9.73, p < 0.05$), and collective action intentions ($F_{6-1813}: 3.06, p < 0.05$). Accordingly, AR participants' scores from the autochthony construct differed significantly from BSR participants' scores, whereas BSR participants' scores differed significantly from CAR and SAR participants' scores. Similarly, MR participants' scores from the threat construct differed significantly from CAR, SAR, and EAR participants' scores, and BSR participants' scores differed significantly from AR, SAR, and

EAR participants' scores. In addition, another significant difference was found between CAR participants' and BSR participants' scores from the collective action intentions construct. On the other hand, as can be inferred from Table 5, no significant difference was found between regions in terms of national identification and global identification scores.

Do the Turkish People's Autochthony Beliefs Differ According to Age?

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to find out whether there was a significant difference between the participants' scores from the overall survey according to the age variable. Table 6 presents the results. On the other hand, to determine the source of the significant difference in the constructs with a significant difference, Tamhane's T2 test was performed.

Table 6
One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results

Theme	Age	<i>N</i>		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Difference
Autochthony Beliefs survey	a) 18-25	983	Between Groups	2,158.39	431.68	1.97	5	0.080	None
	b) 26-30	224							
	c) 31-35	165							
	d) 36-40	131	Within Groups	397,866.61	219.33				
	e) 41-45	133							
	f) 45 and above	184							
Autochthony	a) 18-25	983	Between Groups	241.67	48.33	2.47	5	0.031*	a-f
	b) 26-30	224							
	c) 31-35	165							
	d) 36-40	131	Within Groups	35,455.84	19.55				
	e) 41-45	133							
	f) 45 and above	184							
Threat	a) 18-25	983	Between Groups	667.91	133.58	1.62	5	0.153	None
	b) 26-30	224							
	c) 31-35	165							
	d) 36-40	131	Within Groups	150,037.09	82.71				
	e) 41-45	133							
	f) 45 and above	184							
Collective action intentions	a) 18-25	983	Between Groups	57.75	11.55	1.03	5	0.398	None
	b) 26-30	224							
	c) 31-35	165							
	d) 36-40	131	Within Groups	20,330.17	11.21				
	e) 41-45	133							
	f) 45 and above	184							
Global identification	a) 18-25	983	Between Groups	15.77	3.15	0.59	5	0.706	None
	b) 26-30	224							
	c) 31-35	165							
	d) 36-40	131	Within Groups	9,656.05	5.32				
	e) 41-45	133							
	f) 45 and above	184							
National identification	a) 18-25	983	Between Groups	37.04	7.41	1.75	5	0.120	None
	b) 26-30	224							
	c) 31-35	165							
	d) 36-40	131	Within Groups	7,687.03	4.24				
	e) 41-45	133							
	f) 45 and above	184							

Note. $p < 0.05$

As can be inferred from Table 6, there is no difference between participants' scores from the overall survey according to the age variable ($F_{5-1814}: 1.97, p > 0.05$). Accordingly, it can be argued that participants' autochthony beliefs are not affected by their age. On the other hand, analyses of the survey constructs yielded a significant difference only in the *autochthony* construct ($F_{5-1814}: 2.47, p < 0.05$). A Tamhane's T2 test was conducted to find out the source of the difference. Next, the Games-Howell test was performed, and it was found that a significant difference was between the 18-25 age group and the 45 and above age group.

What is the Relationship Between the Scores from the Autochthony Beliefs Survey Constructs and the Overall Survey Scores?

Multiple regression analysis was performed to test the H1 hypothesis (Do threat, collective action intentions, and national and global identification affect participants' autochthony beliefs significantly?) Table 7 presents the results.

Table 7

Regression Analysis Results for the Correlations Between the Constructs

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p	Zero-order	Partial
Constant	3.722	0.506	-	7.35	0.000	-	-
Threat	0.256	0.008	0.525	30.17	0.000	0.548	0.578
Collective action intentions	0.581	0.022	0.439	26.16	0.000	0.469	0.523
Global identification	-0.083	0.032	-0.043	-2.55	0.011	-0.040	-0.060
National identification	0.048	0.038	0.022	1.27	0.206	0.222	0.030
R= 0.708	R ² =0.501						
F ₍₄₋₁₈₁₅₎ = 455.024	p= 0.000						

Multiple linear regression analysis that was conducted to reveal how threat, collective action intentions, and national and global identification predicted participants' autochthony beliefs showed that those four constructs significantly correlated to autochthony beliefs ($R=0.708$, $R^2=0.501$) ($F_{(4-1815)}=455.024$, $p<0.000$). Accordingly, data related to the constructs explain 50% of the change in autochthony beliefs. According to the standardized regression coefficients, the effect of the predictive variables on autochthony beliefs is as follows, in order of importance: threat ($\beta=0.525$), collective action intentions ($\beta=0.439$), national identification ($\beta=0.022$), and global identification ($\beta=-0.043$). On the other hand, the relationship between global identification and autochthony beliefs is negative. In other words, as global identification strengthens, autochthony beliefs weaken, and as autochthony beliefs strengthen, global identification weakens. Considering the significance values of the regression coefficients, threat ($p<0.01$), collective action intentions ($p<0.01$), and global identification ($p<0.05$) are significant predictors of autochthony beliefs, whereas national identification ($p>0.05$) is not. Considering the relationship between predictive variables and autochthony beliefs, autochthony correlates to threat at the ($r=0.548$) level [$(r=0.578)$ when the effect of other predictive variables is controlled], to collective action intentions at the ($r=0.469$) level [$(r=0.523)$ when the effect of other predictive variables is controlled], to global identification at the ($r=-0.040$) level [$(r=-0.060)$ when the effect of other predictive variables is controlled], and to national identification at the ($r=0.222$) level [$(r=0.030)$ when the effect of other predictive variables is controlled]. According to the regression analysis results, the regression equation predicting autochthony beliefs is as follows:

$$\text{Autochthony beliefs} = (0.256 \times \text{threat score}) + (0.581 \times \text{collective action intentions score}) + (-0.083 \times \text{global identification score}) + (0.048 \times \text{national identification score})$$

Conclusion and Discussion

An increase in negative rhetoric and actions towards immigrants or refugees in a society can lead to more significant problems over time. Specifically, the inability to empathize with different groups within society can result in insensitivity to the suffering of out-groups and even lead to harm being inflicted on these groups (Cikara et al., 2011). It is believed that a better understanding of these and similar situations can be achieved by considering the autochthonous beliefs of the local population along with their perspectives towards out-groups. Based on data collected from various regions throughout Türkiye and multiple groups, this study is believed

to have yielded significant findings that can shed light on the Turkish people's autochthony beliefs and their perspectives on refugees. Political parties' campaigns in the 2023 Turkish presidential and general elections that all refugees, especially Syrians, would be sent back to their countries and it is evident that there is an increase in the level of political discourse being developed on the subject (Euronews, 2023; Gündoğmuş & Mete, 2024; İleri & Akgün, 2023; Kentmen-Cin et al., 2025). The main reason underlying this increase can be autochthony beliefs aiming to protect "these lands that are ours" from newcomers.

One of the most significant results of the study is that autochthony beliefs are not independent of gender in Türkiye and are slightly higher in women than in men. Nooitgedagt et al. (2021), Smeekes and Verkuyten (2015), and Martinović and Verkuyten (2013) found a significant relationship between gender and autochthony beliefs, which is consistent with the current study. In contrast, Smeekes et al. (2015) did not find a significant relationship. On the other hand, Martinović & Verkuyten (2013) found that men had stronger negative attitudes towards immigrant groups, while in the current study, national identification and anti-refugee sentiment were stronger in women than in men. From this, it can be concluded that women's refugee-related security concerns strengthen their autochthony beliefs and sense of national identification. Women's role in ensuring the reproduction and continuation of a nation is considered very important for the strengthening of nationalist sentiment in society (Avcil, 2020; Yuval-Davis, 2007). Some studies have revealed that women have a high tendency to participate in collective actions (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996). Turkish women's low participation in the workforce, the fact that they spend most of their time at home, and the reflection of refugee-related social and economic problems in households directly affect women. Additionally, the fact that possibility of Syrian women marrying Turkish men as second wives creates fear in Turkish women of losing their spouses, the idea that such situations pose a threat to Turkish family life by increasing domestic violence and divorce, and widespread news that young refugee men, in particular, pose a major security problem for Turkish women (Doğanay & Keneş, 2016; Göker & Keskin, 2015; Ortadoğu Araştırmaları Merkezi [ORSAM], 2015; Tarman & Gürel, 2017) may increase Turkish women's anti-refugee sentiment. It can be thought that all these factors feed anti-refugee and nationalist attitudes among Turkish women.

In the study, it was found that high school graduates and university graduates (and above) significantly differed in their scores regarding autochthony. Similarly, their scores on collective action intentions differed significantly. Previous studies also found out-group prejudice, which refers to the idea that those who join a society later challenge the rights of the dominant groups (Martinović & Verkuyten, 2013). Nooitgedagt et al. (2021) revealed that education level was a significant source of difference in autochthony beliefs between early inhabitants and newcomers. Similarly, Smeekes et al. (2015) found a significant, albeit negative, relationship between education level and autochthony beliefs. Considering that educated individuals are more aware of their citizenship rights and the importance of being tied to a country through citizenship, it is an expected result that education level creates a significant difference. In contrast, Martinović and Verkuyten (2013) found that educated individuals held fewer negative attitudes toward immigrants. Despite different results in different studies, which may be due to differences between communities, they also underline the need for further studies on this subject. Furthermore, it is emphasized that multicultural education practices can have positive effects on attitudes towards refugees or immigrants (Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2016; Unal Gezer, 2019; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2019). Therefore, it is believed that implementing multicultural education activities in educational settings, regardless of the level of education, can increase individuals' acceptance tendencies towards foreigners, particularly refugees.

Since individuals' autochthony beliefs denote the original ownership of a region or area, there is a strong relationship between these beliefs and the geographical context in which they reside. Historical ties between individuals and their geography are significant factors that

reinforce their sense of belonging to that region (Martinović, & Verkuyten, 2013; Verkuyten et al., 2015; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). The finding obtained in the research supports this inference. In the study, it was found that participants' geographic regions had a significant impact on their views of refugees and their autochthony beliefs. On the other hand, global or national identification did not differ according to geographical region. In their study on Syrian refugees in Türkiye, Tarman and Gürel (2017) found that the views of Turkish citizens living in settlements where refugees are densely populated and more visible in everyday life differed from those of citizens living in areas with fewer refugees. It was also observed that people who were directly affected by the refugee problem had more negative attitudes towards refugees than those who felt this problem less. Nooitgedagt et al. (2021) demonstrated that group size had a decisive effect on autochthony beliefs. Similarly, in the current study, it was found that scores from the collective action intentions, threat, and autochthony constructs were higher in the Southeastern Anatolia Region, where refugees reside in high densities. On the other hand, the fact that national identification is more pronounced in the Southeastern Anatolia Region (where the Kurdish population is dense) than in regions where nationalist ideology is more dominant, such as Central Anatolia, Black Sea, Aegean, and Mediterranean regions (Aydoğan Ünal, 2020; Çarkoğlu, 2014; Keser, 2018; A. Öztürk, 2019) may suggest that fear of refugees strengthens this identification. The fact that the majority of people living in these regions are engaged in agriculture and farming may have a reinforcing effect on their autochthony beliefs (Kuper, 2003; Leonhardt, 2006), or the fact that refugees settling in these regions where unemployment is high causes local people to lose jobs in agricultural areas may also strengthen their autochthony beliefs (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], 2017; Mitchell, 2012; Pearlman, 2020). The fact that the mean autochthony score in the Marmara Region, where there is a lower agricultural population, is lower than in other regions also supports this inference. On the other hand, studies also show that strong national identification or nationalist sentiment is effective in both the acceptance and rejection of immigrants (Triandafyllidou, 2001; Tuncel & Ekici, 2019).

Some studies show that autochthonous beliefs begin at a very early age, with the ownership of objects, toys, etc., gradually evolving into the ownership of regions or land (Verkuyten et al., 2015; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2019). In addition, some studies have demonstrated that age has an effect on autochthony beliefs (Nooitgedagt et al., 2021; Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2015), whereas some other studies have reported that it has no effect (Martinović & Verkuyten, 2013; Smeekes et al., 2015). In the study, it was observed that age had a significant effect only on the autochthony construct and did not have any significant effect on the overall survey or other constructs. It was determined that the autochthony beliefs of the 18-25 age group and the 45 and above age group differed significantly. The fact that refugees are a source of concern for young people about the future of the country and society may explain the effect of age on autochthony beliefs. It is also thought that the unemployment problem has an impact on Turkish youth's attitudes toward refugees (Çoban, 2018), which contributes to their autochthony beliefs. Based on the results, further research is recommended to determine whether age influences autochthony beliefs.

Considering the correlations between the survey constructs, Turkish people's perception of threat, collective action intentions, and national identification tend to increase as their autochthony beliefs rise. These results seem to be consistent with some of the results of the previous study conducted by Hasbún López et al. (2019) in eleven European countries. The authors reported that national identification had a positive relationship with autochthony beliefs in all countries studied; however, there was no significant relationship between autochthony beliefs and collective action intentions in nine of the countries. In the current study, a significant relationship was found between autochthony and collective action intentions. Another result obtained in the current study is an inverse relationship between autochthony and global

identification. In other words, as autochthony becomes stronger, global identification weakens. Similarly, Hasbún López et al. (2019) revealed that autochthony did not support global identification, in other words, the tendency for global citizenship. In this regard, the findings obtained in this study are supported by literature. It can be thought that the weakening of global identification or global citizenship is a natural consequence of the increase in the sense of group belongingness. This is because, while personal identification emerges within the social-cultural environment of a group, global identification requires awareness of belonging to a global community (de Rivera & Karson, 2015). A sense of psychological belonging can have a profound impact on individuals and groups alike. Additionally, it can be stated that the sense of security derived from being in a group stems from the sense of collective belonging (Pierce & Jussila, 2010). Ha and Jang (2015) reported a stronger emphasis on national identification due to increased cultural threats from immigrants. It can be said that this situation strengthens the sense of group belonging and supports collective action against threats. This is because national identification or nationalism sentiment has the potential to produce the perception of “us” and “others” (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2014). Strengthening this perception brings with it a stronger sense of belonging to inhabited lands (Brylka et al., 2015).

G. Brown et al. (2005) argued that the thought or fear that the lands are threatened by strangers caused defensive behaviors in inhabitants. Reasons such as Syrian refugees’ strong cultural identification and attachment to their traditions may be an obstacle to their social integration in the receiving society. This is because as commitment to cultural identification increases, acculturation decreases (Canbey Özgüler, 2018). As revealed in this study, Turkish people’s strong autochthony beliefs may make this problem even more evident. On the other hand, Syrian refugees’ similarities with the Turkish people in terms of religious beliefs and other cultural characteristics may reduce Turkish people’s perception of the threat from Syrian refugees (Erkan, 2016; Tarman & Gürel, 2017). Therefore, foreigners’ similarities with/differences from local people can be considered an important factor in their acceptance or rejection (Giovanis et al., 2024; Gündoğmuş & Mete, 2024). The past is very important for our national identification, and the past needs to be known to understand who we are now (Jetten & Hutchison, 2011; Jetten & Wohl, 2012; Keegan, 2021; Sani et al., 2012; Toibazar et al., 2025). In this regard, it can be stated that the fact that Syrian lands were under Ottoman and Seljuk rule for several centuries had a positive impact on the acceptance of Syrians by the Turkish people. Therefore, future studies may focus on this issue to show the relationship between autochthony beliefs and the past. The fact that no study has been conducted on this subject in the Turkish context creates a limitation for the more effective discussion and generalization of the findings. On the other hand, the strength of this study, being the first of its kind, it is expected to lie in its pioneering nature, as it is expected to inform and guide future studies. Additionally, the selection of participants using the maximum variation sampling method in this study is expected to contribute to the generalizability of the results and their comparability with other studies.

Limitations and Future Research

This study examined Turkish people’s autochthony beliefs and their view of refugees from a descriptive perspective. Future experimental studies and comparisons with studies conducted in other countries may provide more comprehensive insight into the subject from different perspectives. Since the sense of ethnic belonging is a strong predictor of autochthony (Smeekes & Verkuyten, 2015), further studies can compare the autochthony beliefs of the Turkish, Kurdish, and Arab communities, which are the essential elements of Türkiye, and the attitudes of these communities toward refugees. Similarly, shared religious beliefs are highly significant for group membership (Verkuyten & Yıldız, 2007). Therefore, future studies could examine the relationship between individuals’ religious beliefs and autochthony. Finally, since

this study uses the survey method, participant bias may have occurred due to the possibility that participants did not respond to the items honestly enough. Therefore, future studies can use qualitative and quantitative methods in combination to obtain more objective results.

References

- Akar, S., & Erdoğan, M. M. (2019). Syrian refugees in Turkey and integration problem ahead. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 20(3), 925–940. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0639-0>
- Akgül, A., Güner, C., & Aydın, H. (2021). Exploring the victimization of Syrian refugees through the human security model: An ethnographic approach. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 21(1), 46–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sena.12338>
- Aksoy Araştırma. (2022). *Türkiye Monitörü (30. hafta)* [Monitor of Türkiye (Week 30)]. <https://www.aksoyarastirma.com/tr/turkiye-monitoru-30-hafta-sonuclari-aciklandi/>
- Aras, B., & Duman, Y. (2019). I/NGOs' assistance to Syrian refugees in Turkey: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 21(4), 478–491. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19448953.2018.1530382>
- Avçıl, C. (2020). A theoretical view on the relationship of nationalism and gender. *Mukaddime*, 11(2), 468–484. <https://doi.org/10.19059/mukaddime.715857>
- Aydın, H., & Kaya, Y. (2020). The educational needs of and barriers faced by Syrian refugee students in Turkey: A qualitative case study. In M. Catarci, M. P. Gomes, & S. Siqueira (Eds.), *Refugees, interculturalism and education* (pp. 131–148). Routledge.
- Aydoğan Ünal, B. (2020). Geographical cluster analysis of voter preferences in Turkey: Elections of June 24, 2018. *Pamukkale University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 39, 21–32. <https://doi.org/10.30794/pausbed.688598>
- Baban, F., Ilcan, S., & Rygiel, K. (2017). Syrian refugees in Turkey: Pathways to precarity, differential inclusion, and negotiated citizenship rights. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(1), 41–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1192996>
- Boyras, Z. (2015). Syrian refugees in Turkey as an example of migrant problem. *Zeitschrift für die Welt der Türken/Journal of World of Turks*, 7(2), 35–58.
- Brown, G., Lawrence, T. B., & Robinson, S. L. (2005). Territoriality in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 30(3), 577–594. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2005.17293710>
- Brown, H. E. (2011). Refugees, rights, and race: How legal status shapes Liberian immigrants' relationship with the state. *Social Problems*, 58(1), 144–163. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2011.58.1.144>
- Brylka, A., Mähönen, T. A., & Jasinskaja-Lahti, I. (2015). National identification and intergroup attitudes among members of the national majority and immigrants: Preliminary evidence for the mediational role of psychological ownership of a country. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 3(1), 24–45. <https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v3i1.275>
- Canbey-Özgüler, V. (2018). Migration and integration policies. *GSI Journals Serie B: Advancements in Business and Economics*, 1(1), 1–14.
- Çarkoğlu A., & Kalaycıoğlu, E. (2014). *Türkiye’de ve Dünyada Milliyetçilik [Nationalism in Turkey and the World]*. <http://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/publication/ispp2013-raporu-dunyada-ve-turkiyede-milliyetcilik/>
- Çarkoğlu, A. (2014). Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose: Consolidation of the AKP's predominance in the March 2014 local elections in Turkey. *South European Society and Politics*, 19(2), 169–192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2014.939853>
- Chase, E. (2020). Transitions, capabilities and wellbeing: How Afghan unaccompanied young people experience becoming ‘adult’ in the UK and beyond. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(2), 439–456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1584704>

- Cikara, M., Bruneau, E. G., & Saxe, R. R. (2011). Us and them: Intergroup failures of empathy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20(3), 149–153. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721411408713>
- Çoban, B. (2018). The challenges of Syrian youth to access in Istanbul labor market in the context of unemployment profile in Turkey. *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 1(56), 193–216.
- Cumhuriyet. (2021, July 27). AKP'li Özhasseki'den 'mülteci' açıklaması: Sanayiye onlar ayakta tutuyor; gönderemezsiniz [Refugee” statement from AKP's Özhasseki: They keep the industry alive; you cannot send]. *Cumhuriyet*. <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/akpli-ozhassekiden-multeci-aciklamasi-sanayiye-onlar-ayakta-tutuyor-gonderemezsiniz-1855656>
- De Rivera, J., & Carson, H. A. (2015). Cultivating a global identity. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 3(2), 310–330. <https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v3i2.507>
- Der-Karabetian, A., & Ruiz, Y. (1997). Affective bicultural and global-human identity scales for Mexican-American adolescents. *Psychological Reports*, 80(3), 1027–1039. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1997.80.3.1027>
- Doğanay, Ü., & Keneş, H. Ç. (2016). Syrian ‘refugees’ in printed press: Construction of rational and emotional justifications of discriminatory discourses. *Mülkiye dergisi*, 40(1), 143–184.
- Düvell, F. (2019). The ‘Great Migration’ of summer 2015: Analysing the assemblage of key drivers in Turkey. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(12), 2227–2240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2018.1468385>
- Ekici, H. (2019). Threat perceptions of Turkish society towards Syrians and policy recommendations. *Sosyal Politika Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 19(44), 695–730.
- Erkan, E. (2016). Syrian immigrants and religious life: Adaptation, encounter, affinity Gaziantep example. *Journal of Academic Researches in Religious Sciences*, 16(2), 51–92.
- Euronews. (2023, May 24). Ümit Özdağ, 28 Mayıs Cumhurbaşkanı Seçimi'nde Kılıçdaroğlu'nu destekleyeceklerini açıkladı [Ümit Özdağ announced that they will support Kılıçdaroğlu in the May 28 Presidential Election]. *Euronews*. <https://tr.euronews.com/2023/05/24/umit-ozdag-28-mayis-cumhurbaskani-seciminde-kilicdaroglunu-destekleyeceklerini-acikladi>
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2017). *Turkey Syrian Refugee Resilience Plan 2017–2018*. https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/FAO_SyriaRefugeeResiliencePlanforTurkey_web.pdf
- Fruja Amthor, R., & Roxas, K. (2016). Multicultural education and newcomer youth: Re-imagining a more inclusive vision for immigrant and refugee students. *Educational studies*, 52(2), 155–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2016.1142992>
- Gattino, S., Tartaglia, S., Rollero, C., & De Piccoli, N. (2019). The relationship between local identification, urban disorder sensitivity, and ethnic prejudice: The role of autochthony. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 64, 232–241. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12348>
- Genc, I. H., Naufal, G., & Gahramanov, E. (2022). Impact of Syrian refugees on Turkish prices. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 35(1), 139–158. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feab089>
- Geneveave, B. (2024). Review of Grounded Theory for Mental Health Service and Migrant Health Research. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 8(3), 44–59. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/14888>

- Geschiere, P. (2009). *The perils of belonging: Autochthony, citizenship, and exclusion in Africa and Europe*. University of Chicago Press.
<https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226289663.001.0001>
- Giovanis, E., Akdede, S. H., & Ozdamar, O. (2024). Sociocultural influences on subjective well-being. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 11(4), 253–282.
<https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2222>
- Göker, G., & Keskin, S. (2015). News media and refugees: Representation of Syrian refugees in Turkish press. *Journal of Communication Theory and Research*, 41, 229–256.
- Gündoğmuş, B., & Mete, M. (2024). The politics of fear: Fear of migrants as an instrument shaping the political environment. *Erciyes İletişim Dergisi*, 11(1), 61–80.
<https://doi.org/10.17680/erciyesiletisim.1352206>
- Güney, Ü., & Konak, N. (2016). Syrian and Iraqi refugees in Bolu: Perception of the other based on nationalism, masculinity and citizenship. *Alternative Politics*, 8(3), 505–535.
- Gürel, D., & Büyüksahin, Y. (2020). Education of Syrian refugee children in Turkey: Reflections from the application. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 16(5), 426–442. <https://doi.org/10.29329/ijpe.2020.277.26>
- Gurer, C. (2019). Refugee Perspectives on Integration in Germany. *American Journal of Qualitative Research*, 3(2), 52-70. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ajqr/6433>
- Ha, S. E., & Jang, S. J. (2015). Immigration, threat perception, and national identity: Evidence from South Korea. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 44, 53–62.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2014.12.001>
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2013). *Multivariate data analysis*. Pearson Education Limited.
- Hasbún López, P., Martinović, B., Bobowik, M., Chrysoschoou, X., Cichocka, A., Ernst-Vintila, A., Franc, R., Fülöp, E., Ghilani, D., Kochar, A., Lamberty, P., Leone, G., Licata, L., & Žeželj, I. (2019). Support for collective action against refugees: The role of national, European, and global identifications, and autochthony beliefs. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(7), 1439–1455. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2608>
- Hilgers, M. (2011). Autochthony as capital in a global age. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 28(1), 34–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276410380939>
- Hürriyet. (2014, October 6). *Kurtulmuş: 1.6 milyon Suriyeli kalıcı* [Kurtulmuş: 1.6 million Syrians are permanent]. <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/kurtulmus-1-6-milyon-suriyeli-kalici-27525856>
- İcduygu, A., & Toktas, S. (2002). How do smuggling and trafficking operate via irregular border crossings in the Middle East? Evidence from fieldwork in Turkey. *International Migration*, 40(6), 25–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2435.00222>
- İleri, K., & Akgün, T. (2023, May 19). Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Suriyeli mültecilerin ülkelerine dönmesini sağlayacağız [President Erdogan: We will ensure the return of Syrian refugees to their countries]. *Anadolu Ajansı*.
<https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-suriyeli-multecilerin-ulkelerine-donmesini-saglayacagiz/2901446>
- International Crisis Group. (2016). *Turkey's refugee crisis: The politics of permanence*.
https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/241-turkey-s-refugee-crisis-the-politics-of-permanence_0.pdf
- International Organization for Migration. (2022). *World migration report 2022*.
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/WMR-2022_0.pdf
- Jetten, J., & Hutchison, P. (2011). When groups have a lot to lose: Historical continuity enhances resistance to a merger. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 41(3), 335–343. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.779>

- Jetten, J., & Wohl, M. J. (2012). The past as a determinant of the present: Historical continuity, collective angst, and opposition to immigration. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 42(4), 442–450. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.865>
- Joshua Project. (n.d.). *People groups*. <https://joshuaproject.net/countries/TU>
- Karasu, M. A. (2018). Security risks in cities in Turkey caused by Syrian asylum seekers. *Hacettepe University Journal of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, 36(2), 51–74. <https://doi.org/10.17065/huniibf.297796>
- Karipek, Y. Z. (2017). Asylum-seekers experience and acculturation: A study of Syrian University students in Turkey. *Turkish Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2017, 105–133. <https://doi.org/10.26513/tocd.316150>
- Kaysili, A., Soylu, A., & Sever, M. (2019). Exploring major roadblocks on inclusive education of Syrian refugees in school settings. *Turkish Journal of Education*, 8(2), 109–128. <https://doi.org/10.19128/turje.496261>
- Keegan, P. (2021). Critical affective civic literacy: A framework for attending to political emotion in the social studies classroom. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, 45(1), 15–24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2020.06.003>
- Kelly, C., & Breinlinger, S. (1995). Identity and injustice: Exploring women's participation in collective action. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 5(1), 41–57. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2450050104>
- Kentmen-Cin, C., Sunay, S., & Baltepe, N. E. (2025). Framing of Syrian refugees in Turkish politics: An analysis of Turkish Grand National Assembly debates. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2025.2451342>
- Keser, H. (2018, July 4). Selçuklu toprağına ricat: 2018 seçimleri MHP seçmen coğrafyası [Retreat to Seljuks land: 2018 elections MHP voter geography]. *Gazete Duvar*. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/forum/2018/07/04/selcuklu-topragina-ricat-2018-secimleri-mhp-secmen-cografyasi>
- Kim, G. U., Jung, E., Shim, M. S., & Kim, G. S. (2022). Association between post-traumatic stress symptoms and functional health among internally displaced people in Myanmar. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 29(4), 555–567. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpm.12837>
- Kızmaz, Z. (2018). Syrian asylum seekers: Security concerns and crime. *Journal of Bitlis Eren University Institute of Social Sciences*, 7(2), 392–431.
- Koca, B. T. (2016). Syrian refugees in Turkey: From “guests” to “enemies”? *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 54, 55–75. <https://doi.org/10.1017/npt.2016.4>
- Kuper, A. (2003). The return of the native. *Current anthropology*, 44(3), 389–402. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/368120>
- Leonhardt, A. (2006). Baka and the magic of the state: Between autochthony and citizenship. *African Studies Review*, 49(2), 69–94. <https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2006.0110>
- Louis, W. R. (2009). Collective action: And then what? *Journal of Social Issues*, 65(4), 727–748. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2009.01623.x>
- Markowitz, F. (1996). Living in limbo: Bosnian Muslim refugees in Israel. *Human Organization*, 55(2), 127–132. <https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.55.2.b7tx8030177580n8>
- Martinović, B., & Verkuyten, M. (2013). ‘We were here first, so we determine the rules of the game’: Autochthony and prejudice towards out-groups. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(7), 637–647. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.1980>
- McClain, P. D., Johnson Carew, J. D., Walton Jr, E., & Watts, C. S. (2009). Group membership, group identity, and group consciousness: Measures of racial identity in American politics? *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12, 471–485. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.102452>

- McFarland, S., Hackett, J., Hamer, K., Katzarska-Miller, I., Malsch, A., Reese, G., & Reysen, S. (2019). Global human identification and citizenship: A review of psychological studies. *Political Psychology*, 40, 141–171. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12572>
- Mitchell, M. I. (2012). Migration, citizenship and autochthony: Strategies and challenges for state-building in Côte d'Ivoire. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 30(2), 267–287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589001.2012.664415>
- Nilsson, M., & Badran, D. (2021). Conflicts and relative deprivation in Ein El Hilweh: Palestinian refugees in the shadow of the Syrian civil war. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34(1), 453–473. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez011>
- Nooitgedagt, W., Figueiredo, A., Martinović, B., & Marambio, K. (2021). Autochthony and investment beliefs as bases for territorial ownership and compensation in settler societies: The case of Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups in Chile. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 85, 236–253. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-021-00362-3>
- Ortadoğu Araştırmaları Merkezi. (2015). *Effects of the Syrian refugees on Turkey*. <https://www.orsam.org.tr/en/effects-of-the-syrian-refugees-on-turkey/>
- Öztürk, A. (2019). Doğu Karadeniz’de milliyetçi muhafazakarlık [Nationalist conservatism in the Eastern Black Sea Region]. In K. Özbey (Ed.), *Doğu Karadenizde Toplumsal Araştırmalar* [Social research in the Eastern Black Sea region] (pp. 35–52). Siyasal Kitabevi.
- Öztürk, S. (2021, November 16). 900 bin Suriyeli oy kullanmaları için Türk vatandaşlığına alındı [900,000 Syrians were granted Turkish citizenship to vote]. *Sözcü*. <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2021/gundem/900-bin-suriyeli-oy-kullanmalari-icin-turk-vatandasligina-alindi-6830043/>
- Pavli, A., & Maltezos, H. (2017). Health problems of newly arrived migrants and refugees in Europe. *Journal of Travel Medicine*, 24(4), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jtm/tax016>
- Pearlman, W. (2020). Host state engagement, socioeconomic class, and Syrian refugees in Turkey and Germany. *Comparative Politics*, 52(2), 241–272. <https://doi.org/10.5129/001041520X15681326148598>
- Pierce, J. L., & Jussila, I. (2010). Collective psychological ownership within the work and organizational context: Construct introduction and elaboration. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(6), 810–834. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.628>
- Presidency of Migration Management. (2025). *İstatistikler/Geçici koruma* [Statistics/Temporary protection]. <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>
- Robertson, C. L., Savik, K., Mathiason-Moore, M., Mohamed, A., & Hoffman, S. (2016). Modeling psychological functioning in refugees. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, 22(3), 225–232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078390316641489>
- Rumelili, B., & Karadağ, S. (2017). Migration and security: Critical approaches. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 140, 69–92.
- Rye, J. F. (2018). Labour migrants and rural change: The “mobility transformation” of Hitra/Frøya, Norway, 2005–2015. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 64, 189–199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2017.12.003>
- Sani, F., Bowe, M., Herrera, M., Manna, C., Cossa, T., Miao, X., & Zhou, Y. (2007). Perceived collective continuity: Seeing groups as entities that move through time. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 37(6), 1118–1134. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.430>
- Şimşek, B. (2022, August 24). Türkiye’deki Suriyelilerin vatandaş olma ve oy kullanma koşulları neler? [What are the conditions of citizenship and voting for Syrians in Turkey?]. *BBC News Türkçe*. <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/articles/c1rereyd30ro>

- Smeeke, A., & Verkuyten, M. (2015). The presence of the past: Identity continuity and group dynamics. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 26(1), 162–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2015.1112653>
- Smeeke, A., Verkuyten, M., & Martinović, B. (2015). Longing for the country's good old days: National nostalgia, autochthony beliefs, and opposition to Muslim expressive rights. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 54(3), 561–580. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12097>
- Spaulding, S. (2017). How we think and act together. *Philosophical Psychology*, 30(3), 302–318. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2017.1295640>
- Spears, R. (2021). Social influence and group identity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 72, 367–390. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-070620-111818>
- Sputnik. (2021, July 21). Erdoğan'dan Suriyelilerle ilgili açıklama: Allah'ın bize sığınan kullarını katillerin kucağına atmamız [Statement by Erdogan on Syrians: We will not throw the servants of Allah who took refuge in us into the arms of murderers]. *Sputnik*. <https://sputniknews.com.tr/20210721/erdogandan-suriyelilerle-ilgili-aciklama-bize-siginan-allahin-kullarini-katillerin-kucagina-atmayiz-1045019603.html>
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2013). *Using multivariate statistics*. Pearson.
- Tarman, B., & Gürel, D. (2017). Awareness of social studies teacher candidates on refugees in Turkey. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*, 41(3), 183–193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2016.11.001>
- Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2, 53–55. <https://doi.org/10.5116/ijme.4dfb.8dfd>
- Toibazar, A. ., Dautova, G. ., Aliyev, Y. ., Turdali, T. ., & Zhalgasbayeva, K. . (2025). Ethnic narratives in education: The role of Kazakh epics in preserving cultural heritage and identity. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 12(1), 154–177. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2414>
- Triandafyllidou, A. (2001). *Immigrants and national identity in Europe*. Routledge.
- Tuncel, G., & Ekici, S. (2019). Political impact of migration: The impact of Syrian immigrants to Turkey's political life. *Individual and Society Journal of Social Science*, 9(2), 48–72. <https://doi.org/10.20493/birtop.648831>
- Türkoğlu, O. (2011). Refugees and national/international security. *Uludağ Journal of Economy and Society*, 2(30), 101–118.
- Unal Gezer, M. (2019). Looking through the multicultural glass: Re-examination of Syrian refugee children education in Turkey. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 303–322. <https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.599275>
- Van Stekelenburg, J., & Klandermans, B. (2013). The social psychology of protest. *Current Sociology*, 61(5–6), 886–905. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00113921134793>
- Van Zomeren, M. (2016). Building a Tower of Babel? Integrating core motivations and features of social structure into the political psychology of political action. *Political Psychology*, 37, 87–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2018.1479347>
- Van Zomeren, M., Spears, R., & Leach, C. W. (2008). Exploring psychological mechanisms of collective action: Does relevance of group identity influence how people cope with collective disadvantage? *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 47, 353–372. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466607X231091>
- Verkuyten, M. (2009). Support for multiculturalism and minority rights: The role of national identification and out-group threat. *Social Justice Research*, 22, 31–52. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-008-0087-7>
- Verkuyten, M. (2014). *Identity and cultural diversity: What social psychology can teach us*. Routledge.

- Verkuyten, M., & Martinovi'c, B. (2017). Collective psychological ownership and intergroup relations. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(6), 1021–1039. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617706514>
- Verkuyten, M., & Thijs, J. (2019). Being here first: Ethnic majority children's autochthony beliefs and attitudes toward immigrants. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 48, 1281–1295. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01015-0>
- Verkuyten, M., & Yıldız, A. A. (2007). National (dis) identification and ethnic and religious identity: A study among Turkish-Dutch Muslims. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(10), 1448–1462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167207304276>
- Verkuyten, M., Sierksma, J., & Martinovi'c, B. (2015). First arrival and collective land ownership: How children reason about who owns the land. *Social Development*, 24(4), 868–882. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12128>
- Weiner, M. (1992). Security, stability, and international migration. *International Security*, 17(3), 91–126. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539131>
- Yıldırım, D. (2000). Türk Sözel Kültüründe Süreklilik: Osmanlı Hanedanlığı Döneminden Cumhuriyete [Continuity in Turkish oral culture: From Ottoman Dynasty to Republic]. *Türkbilig*, (1), 32–45.
- Yuval-Davis, N., (2007). *Cinsiyet ve Millet* [Gender and nation]. (A. Bektaş, Trans.), İletişim Yayınları.
- Zenker, O. (2011). Autochthony, ethnicity, indigeneity and nationalism: Time-honouring and state-oriented modes of rooting individual-territory-group triads in a globalizing world. *Critique of Anthropology*, 31(1), 63–81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X10393438>

Notes on Contributors

Davut Gürel obtained his Ph.D. from the Department of Social Studies Education at Gazi University in 2018 and M.Ed. in the same field at Erzincan University in 2013. In the same year, he began working as a research assistant in the field of social studies education at the Faculty of Education, Bartın University. He has been an associate professor since 2022. His research interests include citizenship education, civic education, refugee education, social studies education, and intangible cultural heritage.

ORCID

Davut Gürel, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2309-9202>