

Framing Immigration: Exploring Media Effects on Immigrants' Perception of Discrimination and Political Attitudes

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Abstract

The impact the framing of immigration has on public opinion has been studied extensively in the existing literature. Yet, research that explores media effects on immigrants, as a sub-group, is scarce. This thesis proposes that negative narratives of immigration in the media resonate differently with immigrant populations than with the general public, which predominantly does not share an immigrant identity. Building on earlier findings of media effects on immigrants' feelings of discrimination and extending further the theory of out-group status on immigrants' political attitudes, a causal chain mechanism is hypothesized: Immigrants exposed to negative framings report higher levels of discrimination (H1), feel closer to other immigrants (H2), support more positive immigration policies (H3), and show less support for anti-immigration parties (H4).

The hypotheses were tested through an online randomized controlled survey experiment (n = 260) involving Turkish immigrants in Germany, where half of the participants were exposed to negative framings regarding immigration. The effect of the treatment was assessed through multiple linear regressions, controlling for covariates. The findings yielded significant results for H1, indicating that negative framings increase feelings of discrimination among immigrants. However, for H2, H3 and H4 the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. This research provides important insights into the effects of media framing on immigrants and underscores the need for further research into the political aspect of these effects.

Keywords: Media framing, Immigration, Public opinion, Prejudice, Discrimination, Political behavior, Survey experiment, Turkish immigrants, Germany

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1 Introduction

“Germany is now truly a country of immigration - with all the consequences. With immigration, crime caused by immigrants is on the rise”

This statement was recently reported in one of the biggest mainstream German media¹. What effects could such framing have on people's attitudes? Previous studies have extensively explored the issue of framing effects, coming to a consensus that negative framings of immigration can lead to more prejudiced attitudes towards immigrants as an out-group (Conzo et al., 2021; Esses et al., 2013; Fuochi et al., 2020), decreased support for positive immigration policies (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Djourelouva, 2023; van Klingeren et al., 2015), and increased support for anti-immigration parties (Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007; Burscher et al., 2015). However, the effect that the negative framing of immigration has on immigrants themselves still remains unexplored. In other words, how does a negative narrative of immigration in the media resonate among those who share an immigrant identity?

In this thesis, I aim to fill this gap in the existing literature by shifting focus of media effects to the immigrants' perspective. I argue that media consumers that share an immigrant identity themselves find a personal relevance to the matter, leading to effects that possibly differ from the ones of the general public. Unlike public opinion as a whole, which consists predominantly of people without an immigrant background and thus share no common experiences with the mis-represented group, immigrants can personally endure feelings of discrimination when exposed to negative framings (Etchegaray & Correa, 2015; Ólafsson & Zielińska, 2010; Saleem & Ramasubramanian, 2019). This significant distinction provides

¹ This is a quote from an article in Focus, posted on March, 2024. The original text in German: “Deutschland ist jetzt wirklich Einwanderungsland - mit allen Konsequenzen. Mit der Migration steigt die Kriminalität durch Migranten.” (Reitz, 2024).

suggestive grounds for hypothesizing that negatively prejudiced media can exhibit different effects among immigrants as a subgroup, compared to the general public.

Utilizing the scarce existing research on media effects on immigrants, I hypothesize that negative framings cause higher feeling of discrimination among immigrants (H1), as well as increased closeness to other immigrants (H2). Furthermore, building on the out-group status theory regarding immigrants' political behavior (Kuo et al., 2017; Sanders et al., 2014; Strijbis, 2021), I argue that media effects on immigrants also extend to their political behavior, an aspect that has been very much neglected in previous research. I, therefore, hypothesize that prejudiced media will lead immigrants to report higher support for positive immigration policies (H3) and less support for anti-immigrant parties (H4).

To test these hypotheses, I employed an online survey experiment, in which the participants were divided into a treatment and control group. In the treatment group, participants were exposed to negatively prejudiced media, which portrayed immigrants as being responsible for increasing crime and burdening the welfare state. In the control group, individuals were not exposed to any framing. The experiment was conducted online in Germany, a country experiencing a significant increase in its immigrant population (DW, 2024b). This study focused solely on people of Turkish origin, Germany's biggest immigrant group which is expected to gain more political influence in the near future (DW, 2024a).

The analysis revealed that exposure to negative media framings significantly increases the feelings of discrimination reported among immigrants. Such results support H1. However, the hypotheses whereby such exposure would enhance the feelings of closeness with other immigrants (H2), increase support for positive immigration policies (H3), and decrease support for anti-immigration parties (H4) were not supported.

Through empirical evidence, this thesis highlights the potential consequences of media framing for vulnerable populations who experience feelings of discrimination. Furthermore, this study bridges the gap in media effects research by collating evidence regarding the broader public opinion with that of immigrants as a subgroup. In the contemporary political context where immigrants are integrated and naturalized in the host states, a deeper understanding of their political behavior is essential. By shedding light on the nuanced dynamics between media representation and the experiences of immigrant groups, this thesis strives to foster a more inclusive discourse surrounding immigration issues.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Out-group and In-group Status

Social identity theory explains how individuals form their identities based on group memberships. Based on this approach, people categorize themselves into “in-groups”, meaning groups to which they identify with or belong to, and “out-groups”, meaning groups they do not. This categorization fosters a sense of belonging and enhances favoring the in-group (Brewer, 1999) over the out-group, often leading to prejudice and discrimination against the out-group (Tajfel et al., 1971). Such key groups regard nationality, ethnicity, religion, cultural identity, etc. In this sense, the terms are also used beyond an individual perspective to describe dynamics between majorities and minorities in a social context. Within this framework, immigrants are often considered as members of the out-group, facing prejudice and discrimination.

However, based on a country's distinct hierarchy, a stratified system that assigns status to various groups within a nation, different levels of out-group status can exist (Hagendoorn, 1993, 1995). Accordingly, people may hold different perceptions between different immigrant groups based on their perceived status. For example, according to De Coninck (2020), newcomers who share the ethnicity of the host country and come from “rich” or European countries enjoy preferential treatment, compared to others. Furthermore, these dynamics change over time depending on the demographic reality of the state. Fouka and Tabellini (2022) explore how social boundaries are affected by the influx of immigrants, studying Mexican immigration in the US. Supporting the re-categorization argument, they argue that exposure to a new immigrant group leads to a reassessment of existing groups’ status, often resulting in more positive attitudes and reduced prejudice towards the pre-existing out-groups (Fouka & Tabellini, 2022).

In society's perceptions of in-groups and out-groups, the media seem to play a crucial role. Especially on the topic of immigration, the media seem to have a particular influence on how this issue is perceived by the public (Wenzel and Żerkowska-Balas, 2019). Previous research has argued and empirically assessed that the media have the power to construct public opinion around the perception of immigrants as an out-group (Conzo et al., 2021; Esses et al., 2013; Fuochi et al., 2020; Schemer & Meltzer, 2019), often reproducing or even constructing prejudice (van Dijk, 1989). In doing so, the media contributes to the formation of social hierarchies. This influence of media is performed in various ways, and in general terms, it is described as media effects.

2.2 Framing Immigration: Media Effects on Public Opinion

Previous influential studies in the field of political science, supported by robust empirical data, underscore the significant role of media effects in shaping public opinion and political behavior (DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2007; Ladd & Lenz, 2009). The three main models of media effects include framing, agenda-setting, and priming. Both agenda-setting and priming rely on the accessibility of information, making specific topics more prominent. Framing extends beyond salience by influencing how people perceive and interact with an issue (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In more explicit terms, media framing refers to the way an issue is presented in the media and the consequential influence of this portrayal on the public's comprehension of the specific matter (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). In previous research framing has been often operationalised as an independent variable in order to explore media effects (Scheufele, 1999).

Starting first with how immigration is actually framed in the media, Eberl et al. (2018) in their review of the pertinent literature find that immigrant groups are overall framed negatively in the media. Furthermore, they conclude that media coverage affects public

attitudes and significantly shapes public opinion (Eberl et al., 2018). Wenzel and Żerkowska-Balas (2019) support the claim that immigration is an issue where framing has a more significant effect on public opinion, compared to other ones. They support their argument by testing the distinction between emotionally charged (“easy”) issues, like immigration, and analytically demanding (“hard”) issues, like the rule of law. Their research concludes that negative framings of immigration affect people's attitudes regardless of their level of cognition.

As early as in the 1920s, Lippmann (1922) has made a claim that media and news shape our perception of reality by relying on stereotypes. As most individuals do not have daily interactions with out-group members, such as immigrants, hostile attitudes towards them seem to be communicated in other ways, for example through media coverage. In this context, the media does not simply reflect societal attitudes but actively constructs and disseminates prejudices (van Dijk, 1989). Grande et al. (2018) further argue that the media play a further role in the emergence of immigration as a highly politicized issue, by covering campaign debates and amplifying the efforts of political parties, particularly radical right populists.

Overall, there is a consensus in the literature that the media's portrayal of immigration has a profound effect on public opinion and political behavior (Eberl et al., 2018). Delving into empirical research, I suggest that this effect has mainly been captured in the existing literature through variables such as perceptions of the in-group and the out-group, attitudes towards immigration and voting behavior. Firstly focusing on attitudes towards the in-group and the out-group, studies from the field of psychology highlight that negative depictions of immigrants provoke physiological and emotional hostility towards them, leading to in-group favoritism (Conzo et al. 2021; Schemer & Meltzer, 2019). Additionally, Fuochi et al. (2020) have argued that negative news regarding immigration was associated with more negative attitudes towards the out-group members. Conversely, the parasocial contact hypothesis,

proposed by Schiappa et al. (2005) as an extension of the contact hypothesis, proposes that positive exposure to different out-groups in the media can help reduce prejudice against them (Schiappa et al., 2005). This theory has also found empirical support (Alrababa'h et al., 2021).

Secondly, concerning immigration attitudes, Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2009) argue that the media's coverage of immigration is connected to the broader macro-level dynamics of anti-immigration attitudes. Again, conversely, positive news on the topic reduces anti-immigration attitudes (van Klingereren et al., 2015). Moreover, even though capturing media framing is difficult through observational studies, Djourelouva (2023) conducted a natural experiment exploring the ban on the term “illegal immigrant” by the Associated Press (AP) and its subsequent diffusion across U.S. media outlets. Importantly, the study reveals that the ban and the change of framing in the media influenced public opinion on immigration policies, leading to decreased support for intensifying border security in areas with higher exposure to AP news.

Thirdly, regarding voting behavior, Burscher et al. (2015) have studied the impact of the media on anti-immigration party voting. Utilizing media content analysis along with a voter panel survey across 11 European countries, they conclude that exposure to news related to immigration and crime correlates with a higher probability of voting for anti-immigration parties, holding other factors constant. Interestingly, Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart (2007) contend that an increase in the sheer volume of news media coverage on immigration correlates with a higher tendency for individuals to vote for anti-immigration parties.

2.3 Framing Immigration: Media Effects on Immigrants

While the media is shaping public opinion as a unified and singular entity, it also shapes along the attitudes of its sub-populations. Having established that media can have significant effects on public opinion (Alrababa'h et al., 2021; Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2007;

Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009; Burscher et al., 2015; Conzo et al., 2021; Djourelouva, 2023; Eberl et al., 2018; Fuochi et al., 2020; Wenzel & Żerkowska-Balas, 2019), this thesis shifts focus from the general public to the immigrants as a distinct sub-group. Notably, very little is known about the effect that the framing of immigration has on immigrant populations. Deriving from fields like psychology or ethnography, this scarce existing research overlooks the political aspect of media effects on immigrants' attitudes.

Perez Portilla's (2018) theoretical, comparative analysis reveals the negative impact of media “(mis)representation” on marginalized groups such as refugees and immigrants, perpetuating harm and vulnerability among individuals belonging to such groups. Similarly, the qualitative work by Christoph (2012) proposes that biased media portrayals hinder the integration process of immigrants, exacerbating social division. Smets et al. (2019) further examine the effects of media on immigrants through victim-prejudiced representation. Their qualitative findings underscore the negative consequences of the victimization narratives on the members of the out-group, hindering refugees' recognition as capable individuals and fostering feelings of inferiority or shame. Conversely, De Poli et al. (2017) suggest that the portrayal of out-group members as victims alleviates prejudice against them in public opinion. Such nuanced findings highlight the complexities of immigrants' perspectives on media portrayal and its impact on their self-perception when compared to the experiences of public opinion as a whole.

Some other works focus on media effects regarding perceptions of discrimination among immigrants. Ólafsson and Zielińska (2010) studied Polish immigrants and their views on Icelandic media, using interviews and survey data. They found that Poles generally perceive the media discourse about immigrants in Iceland as negative and concluded that the more

proficient the respondents became in Icelandic, and the more frequently they read newspapers, the more they viewed the media discourse as discriminatory against their ethnic group.

Etchegaray and Correa (2015) have explored the link between media exposure and perceptions of stigmatization among immigrants, concluding that immigrants who exclusively consume media from the host country perceive higher levels of discrimination against them compared to those who also consume media from their country of origin. Additionally, Saleem and Ramasubramanian (2019) explored media portrayals and personal experiences of discrimination in the identity management strategies of Muslim American students. They concluded that students who viewed negative media depictions of their religious group were more likely to refrain from interactions with majority members, emphasizing that discrimination can compound negative intergroup relations.

Thus, existing research highlights that the negative framing of immigration in the media considerably affects out-group members on an identity level, causing them to experience negative emotions such as being discriminated against and hindering their integration and social recognition (Christoph, 2012; De Poli et al., 2017; Etchegaray & Correa, 2015; Ólafsson & Zielińska, 2010; Pérez Portilla, 2018; Saleem & Ramasubramanian, 2019; Smets et al., 2019).

Yet, the political aspect of media framing on immigrants is missing in the existing literature. The research of Merolla et al. (2013) is a rare example deriving from political science. More specifically, they examine the effect of framings on public attitudes towards immigration policies. Their findings indicate that while equivalent frames have limited impact on the general public, they significantly affect first and second-generation immigrants, influencing their support towards more positive immigration policies. It is reported that such populations tend to push back against the “illegal” label, showing even greater support for positive immigration policies compared to when the frames “unauthorized” or

“undocumented” are used. The authors justify these findings by reporting that immigrants and their children typically hold strong predispositions to immigration policies compared to other non-immigrant populations (Merolla et al., 2013).

Although the work of Merolla et al. (2013) was not specifically directed at studying the attitudes of immigrants, it offers significant insights, highlighting that such populations deserve to be studied as a distinct group and that the media effects on immigrants extend beyond the feeling of discrimination. In contrast to the great body of literature that focuses on the political impact that the framing of immigration has on public opinion, both in terms of immigration attitudes and voting behavior, such a dimension is omitted when the population in focus is immigrants. As the existing research fails to address a relationship between media effects and these dimensions, I will examine the dependent variable of immigrants’ political behavior through the theory of “out-group status and perceived discrimination” (Just & Anderson, 2015; Kuo et al., 2017; Sanders et al., 2014; Strijbis, 2021; Strijbis & Polavieja, 2018).

2.4 Political Attitudes of Immigrants

Beyond the dearth of research on the effects of media framing on immigrants, the available literature on immigrant’s political attitudes and voting behavior is similarly sparse. Yet, as the number of immigrants increases in our globalized modern world, the understanding of the relationship between immigrant background and political attitudes has become more critical. Strijbis (2021) provides a summary of the most popular theories that try to illustrate the logic behind the voting behavior of people with an immigration background. For the purpose of this research, the focus is put on the theory of “out-group status and perceived discrimination”².

² For a more thorough review of the other theories on immigrants’ voting behavior, please refer to Strijbis (2021).

As the social hierarchy theory (Hagendoorn, 1993, 1995) and the re-categorization argument (Fouka & Tabellini, 2022) suggest, immigrants may experience different levels of discrimination, depending on their ethnicity, religion, culture, etc or social context. (De Coninck, 2020). Following a similar rationale, Strijbis (2021) argues that the differences in group status affect political attitudes. This approach goes beyond sharing the immigration background as such and takes into account the experiences of individuals. The different experiences on discrimination and perceptions of belonging to the in-group or the out-group seem to significantly affect the political attitudes of immigrants (Just & Anderson, 2015; Kuo et al., 2017; Sanders et al., 2014; Strijbis & Polavieja, 2018).

On the one hand, when immigrants do feel discriminated against, they are more likely to support political parties or candidates who advocate for positive immigration policies. Kuo et al. (2017) have argued that individual experiences of exclusion based on race or ethnic affiliation can shape one's political identity. To test this hypothesis, they employed a nationally representative survey alongside a lab experiment in the US to investigate partisanship among Asian Americans. They concluded that individuals who perceive that they are marginalized by a political party due to their racial or ethnic identity are less likely to endorse such a party. Moreover, Sanders et al. (2014) focus on the 2010 general elections in the UK and argue that for ethnic minority groups, deriving from an immigrant-origin population, the perception of discrimination comes to be crucial when it comes to selecting a political party. Their findings highlight that individuals who perceive their ethnic group as discriminated against (sociotropic discrimination) were more inclined to vote for Labour.

On the other hand, immigrants who may not perceive themselves as members of the out-group and share the feeling of belonging to the in-group, when they compare themselves with the majority, often attempt to distance themselves from the considered out-group.

Therefore, their voting choices can even show support to political parties that hold negative views on lower-status immigrants (Strijbis, 2021). The findings of Strijbis and Polavieja (2018) from the 2014 Swiss “against mass immigration” referendum challenge the traditional assumption that immigrant voters would be less likely to favor anti-immigration policies compared to native-born individuals. In their case under study, immigrants exhibited unexpectedly robust support for the immigration-limiting initiative, mirroring the levels of the native population. However, acknowledging *Secondo* identity³, which refers to a high-status ethnic group within the Swiss social structure and job market sheds light on this paradox.

Furthermore, Just and Anderson (2015) explore immigration perspectives of immigrants, utilizing data from the European Social Survey (ESS). Their work suggests that there are two opposing factors that shape these perspectives. On one hand, kinship, solidarity, as well as shared immigrant experiences, would predict positive attitudes toward immigration. On the other hand, integration into the host society might lead to greater compliance towards the new country, resulting in more negative attitudes regarding immigration. They conclude that foreign-born individuals are generally more supportive of immigration than native-born citizens. Yet, immigrants who have attained citizenship in the host countries tend to hold more critical views on immigration compared to those without citizenship.

This thesis contributes to existing research as it highlights and bridges the disparities that exist in media studies that focus on the broader public opinion compared to immigrants as a sub-group. Furthermore, this work builds on findings regarding media effects on issues of identity and discrimination among immigrants and extends them to a political dimension by proposing a causal chain mechanism triggered by negative framings.

³ In Switzerland, the term *Secondo*, derived from Italian, describes children of immigrants, particularly Italian and Spanish, who were born in Switzerland, have lived there for many years, and might be naturalized. It is a term positively connotated (Strijbis & Polavieja, 2018).

3 Theory

As deduced from the existing literature, the negative portrayal of immigration in the media is studied through different dimensions for the general population as a whole, when compared to immigrants. In the greatest part of the research, which focuses on public opinion, the dimension of discrimination is notably absent, as the general public does not share an immigrant background in its majority. However, studies focusing on immigrants as a sub-group conclude that prejudiced media leads to greater feelings of discrimination (Ólafsson & Zielińska, 2010), stigmatization (Etchegaray & Correa, 2015) and dehumanization (Smets et al., 2019). This signifying difference proposes that immigrants exposed to media that negatively portray immigration identify a personal connection to the issue and, to a certain extent, internalize this negative discourse. As immigrants compose a more vulnerable population in this sense, the effects of media on them as a sub-group should be further studied.

Building on existing research, this thesis first explores the impact of negative media framings on immigrants' feelings of discrimination. In line with previous findings, I hypothesize that immigrants exposed to negatively prejudiced framings about immigration report higher levels of discrimination, as such framings may personally offend them or trigger memories of past discrimination.

H1: Negative media framing makes immigrants feel more discriminated against.

Turning to concepts that have been studied in the literature focusing on public opinion, it has been argued that the media influence people's perception of the in-group and the out-group. More specifically, the negative framings lead to the predilection of the group to which an individual belongs to. In the context of public opinion this is translated as hostility towards the immigrants (out-group) and in-group favoritism (Conzo et al., 2021; Fuochi et al., 2020).

Accordingly, I suggest that the negative portrayal of immigration in the media causes a reaffirmation of the immigrant identity among populations with an immigrant background. I, therefore, hypothesize that such framings make immigrants feel closer to other populations that share such the immigration experience.

H2: Negative media framing makes immigrants feel closer to the out-group.

This thesis further extends existing research by investigating media effects on immigrants from a political perspective. Firstly, I investigate the effect of the media on immigrants' attitudes towards immigration. As Strijbis (2021) concludes, immigrants who share an out-group status and experience discrimination further support positive immigration policies. Furthermore, building on the encouraging findings of Merolla et al. (2013), I argue that negative media framing has an effect towards the opposite direction of findings regarding public opinion. While negative framings lead to less support for positive immigration policies in the general public (Djourelouva, 2023; Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009), I hypothesize that immigrants push back against such framings showing greater solidarity with other immigrants by supporting more positive immigration policies.

H3: Negative media framing makes immigrants have more positive attitudes towards immigration.

Finally, I explore the effects that the prejudiced media framings have on immigrants' voting behavior, an aspect that previous research has not addressed before. As proposed by the out-group status and perceived discrimination theory (Strijbis, 2021) immigrants who experience discrimination tend to vote for left-wing parties that oppose discriminatory practices. Therefore, I hypothesize that as prejudiced media framings introduce discriminatory discourse and trigger feelings of discrimination (Ólafsson & Zielińska, 2010), stigmatization

(Etchegaray & Correa, 2015) and dehumanization (Smets et al, 2019), this will also lead immigrants to show less support for anti-immigrant parties.

H4: Negative media framing makes immigrants show less support for anti-immigration parties.

Accordingly, the null hypotheses of this study posit that negative media framings have no significant effects on immigrants concerning their feelings of discrimination (H1-null), feelings of closeness to other immigrants (H2-null), attitudes towards immigration policies (H3-null), and support for anti-immigrant parties (H4-null).

To conclude, the overarching hypothesis of this paper is that exposure to prejudiced media frames concerning immigration leads to a reinforcement of immigrant identity and out-group status in response to external negativity and discrimination. I thus propose a causal chain mechanism triggered by the prejudiced portrayal of immigrants in the media, which extends to four different dimensions.

I argue that the media effects of negative framing start from a heightened perception of discrimination. By stimulating individuals' immigrant identity, media also intensify the identification of immigrants with the out-group. Furthermore, I suggest that this effect has also political extensions. The prejudiced media not only reflects social discrimination, but also actively contributes to shaping immigrants' perceptions and attitudes regarding immigration, as well as their voting behavior. Thus, I propose that this negative portrayal of immigrants leads to a reaction, according to which immigrants feel the need to support positive immigration policies and show less support to far-right anti-immigration parties. To test these hypotheses an online survey experiment was employed.

4 Methods and Research Design

4.1 The Case of Turks in Germany

Given this complex structure of social hierarchies (Hagendoorn, 1993, 1995), the current research avoids the issue of oversimplification encountered in previous studies that treat immigrants as a homogeneous group (Eberl et al., 2018). Recognizing the potential differences between various immigrant populations, I choose to focus on a single group; the Turks of Germany.

Germany is a country with a long history of immigration that also received vast numbers of refugees and immigrants in the last decade. In 2022, immigrants accounted for over 18% of the country's population, marking a notable increase compared to previous years (DW, 2024b). Even though not all of these immigrants are eligible to vote, in the 2021 election around 12% of the electorate had an immigrant background⁴ (Scholz, 2021). More specifically, the Turkish population in Germany reaches 2.7 million, constituting the largest ethnic minority of the country (DW, 2021). In 2021, approximately 1.5% of all voters eligible in the country, totaling about 900.000 individuals, had Turkish roots (Topcu, 2021). In recent decades, the population of Turkish immigrants has been increasing in absolute numbers, while their relative percentages have also been consistently risen.

Moreover, due to a legislation passed on 19 January 2024 by the German federal parliament, the number of citizenships provided to immigrants with Turkish ethnic background is expected to multiply in the near future (DW, 2024a). The legislation simplifies the

⁴ Notably, since immigrant's interests are overall underrepresented, the turnout among such groups is pretty low. More specifically, in 2017 there was a 20% difference on the turnout between immigrants and general population (Scholz, 2021).

naturalization process for non-EU citizens⁵, while children born in Germany to at least one parent who has resided legally in the country for five or more years will automatically acquire German citizenship. This reform is particularly important for the country's Turkish community; approximately 50,000 naturalization applications from people of Turkish origin are expected in the following years (DW, 2024a).

At the same time Germany, as many other countries in Europe and beyond, is experiencing a rise of the far-right, with AfD⁶ experiencing a significant increase in its support after the last elections in 2021 (Politico, n.d.). Despite its anti-immigration stance and the promotion of extreme policies, such as the “remigration” plan⁷, AfD nowadays seeks to further attract voters with an immigrant background. There are reports that in the face of this facilitation of the citizenship granting process, the AfD is attempting to mobilize immigrants with a Turkish national background, promoting positions such as patriotism, conservatism and traditional family values (Hockenos, 2024; Nicholson, 2024). Even the issue of immigration is being invoked with messages such as “Turks in Germany should vote for the AfD. Turks in Germany should vote for a party that says no to further immigration because those coming into the country now affect you” (Nicholson, 2024). Such approaches seem to have some positive reinforcement from the immigrants (Drüten, 2024). At any rate, many of these voters share

⁵ People will be able to apply for citizenship after five years, instead of eight, while individuals who show significant levels of integration qualify to apply after three years. In addition, the legislation further eases restrictions on holding dual citizenship (Knight, 2024).

⁶ The party was established in 2013 with a focus on Euro-sceptic and market-liberal ideas, but it quickly adopted a clear anti-immigration and populist stance. After the last elections in 2021, AfD's support has risen significantly in the polls (Goerres et al., 2018b).

⁷ In 2024, AfD members were involved in a meeting outside Berlin, discussing the deportation of people with a non-German ethnic background, including citizens, namely the “remigration” plan (BBC News, 2024; Alternative für Deutschland, 2024).

conservative and nationalistic views and support the hard-right when it comes to the Turkish elections⁸ (Hockenos, 2024; Adar, 2019).

Further information on Turkish immigrants' voting preferences in the German context is reported in the first Immigrant German Election Study (IMGES), which was conducted in 2017. This report focuses on two groups, German resettlers from the former Soviet Union⁹ and Turkish immigrants, who accounted for 65% of all naturalised immigrants in Germany in 2017. The key findings of this analysis show that Turkish immigrants have left-leaning voting tendencies, with 35%, 16%, and 13% of votes going to the SPD, Left, and Greens, respectively (Goerres et al., 2018a; Mayer, 2024). Yet, this research has not studied immigrants' attitudes toward the topic of immigration. Although the support for Turkish migrants in AfD in the past was negligible (Goerres et al., 2018a; Mayer, 2024), currently it is unknown.

On the one hand, this immigrant group still faces discrimination. Qualitative research on Turkish populations in Germany shows that Turks often face the challenge of integrating into a national identity that is frequently perceived as ethnically homogeneous, being “both German and Other” (Moffitt et al., 2018). As this community is still facing discrimination and prejudices it has to strive for its destigmatization (Çelik, 2018). On the other hand, according to the re-categorization argument (Fouka & Tabellini, 2022), as new immigrants arrive, the Turks who acquire further German citizenships are moving up the social hierarchy and potentially drifting apart from the immigrant identity (Just & Anderson, 2015).

Thus, Turkish immigrants in Germany are nowadays in a transitional state, at a crossroads of in-group and out-group belonging. As more Turkish immigrants acquire

⁸ In the context of Turkish elections, Turkish immigrants in Germany vote by a significant majority for Recep Tayyip Erdogan's conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP) (Adar, 2019).

⁹ The resettlers coming from Russia have more right-wing oriented preferences, with 15% voting for AfD (Goerres et al., 2018a; Mayer, 2024).

citizenship, the political influence of their community is set to increase in the near future. These considerations make the case of Turks in Germany an ideal case study for this thesis. Such a case allows for an examination of how prejudice-introducing media influences behavior and attitudes of immigrants during a critical period of social and political transformation.

4.2 Experimental Design

This thesis utilizes quantitative methods to assess the effects of media on immigrants' perception of discrimination and attitudes. Studying and identifying the effect of media is difficult, especially in observational studies as other confounding variables are almost unlikely to be ruled out. In particular, when it comes to the framing of immigration, an issue that has always had a negative connotation, determining the independent variable or setting a treatment can be proved difficult. For this reason, many researchers approach the framing effect through experimental studies (Eberl et al., 2018; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). The frames often regard economic, cultural, and security issues or otherwise evolve generic negative framings (Eberl et al., 2018; Igartua & Cheng, 2009).

This study employs an online survey experiment, a method that has recently gained popularity in the field of political science (Brady, 2000) in order to examine the impact of media framing on immigrants as a subgroup. The experiment was designed in Qualtrics and followed a between subjects design, where participants were randomly assigned (R) to treatment and control groups (Druckman et al, 2011). According to a classification of experimental designs provided by Kalaian (2008), this study falls under the "Randomized Two-Group Posttest-Only Design." In this case, the independent variable has two levels according to the two conditions; treatment (T) and control (C). The impact of the experimental treatment on the dependent variable is assessed at the posttest observation (O):

Experimental Group: R T O

Control Group: R C O

By adhering to the principles of a randomized controlled trial (RCT), i.e. random allocation to treatment and control groups, it can be ensured that these two groups have no fundamental differences that could act as confounding factors. In other words, similar pre-treatment characteristics between groups can ensure that any observed differences in the outcome can be attributed to the treatment itself (Druckman et al., 2011). As this study aims to infer a causal relationship between prejudiced media framing exposure and changes in attitudes, randomization was crucial. This was achieved through the Qualtrics randomizer, an element of the survey flow that allows for even exposure between the control and treatment conditions. A group balance check was later employed in the analysis to ensure that the two groups did not significantly differ.

It is important to mention that the questions of the experiment were formulated in German. This ensured that the people who took part in the survey are also able to understand, at least to some extent, the language of the host country. Therefore, participants have an increased chance of following the media from which the framing statements originated in a real-life setting. Alternatively, if the survey was not designed in German, the question of whether the participants could even engage with such content would arise, reducing the external validity of the experiment. In addition, all survey questions were mandatory to answer in order to solve the problem of item non-response. However, for some more sensitive questions, such as ethnic identity, the option “I do not want to answer” was offered (see Appendix A).

4.3 Independent Variable

The independent variable in this study is the exposure to media framings (“group”). While in the control condition the participants will not be exposed to any framing, in the treatment group, individuals were exposed to different media stimuli in the form of extended headlines (16 to 18 words) concerning the issue of immigration¹⁰. The framings included two prominent prejudiced framings of migrants in the German context. The first one portrays immigrants as criminals and the second one as a burden to the welfare system¹¹.

These short texts were not fabricated, nor did they come from radicalized news outlets. On the contrary, they derive from mainstream German online news websites, with a long history of publishing, namely; Bild, Focus, and Handelsblatt. However, the origin of the quotes was not disclosed to the participants, to minimize any preconceived biases that participants might have towards these media. Furthermore, the articles from which the stimuli were derived were all recently published, in the first months of 2024. The stimuli included the following framings, originally in German:

“In a recent media release from one of Germany's largest media companies, the following statement was made: ‘Germany is now truly a country of immigration - with all the consequences. With immigration, crime caused by immigrants is on the rise’.”¹²

“Another established media outlet in Germany recently reported the following: ‘Immigration will not be able to save our economy, our pension and social systems!’ and ‘Immigration costs more than it brings in’.”¹³

¹⁰ After the exposure, participants were asked if they have encountered such information. These answers were not used in the analysis as they were employed only to increase the engagement with the framings.

¹¹ Initially, the idea was to include a framing of the well-known “economic threat” of immigrants, who deprive the natives of employment opportunities. However, this perspective was absent in recent articles in mainstream German media. Alternatively, the framing that portrays immigrants as an economic burden on the welfare state was chosen. This narrative was significantly more prominent.

¹² The original text in German was retrieved from the website of Focus: “Deutschland ist jetzt wirklich Einwanderungsland - mit allen Konsequenzen. Mit der Migration steigt die Kriminalität durch Migranten.” (Reitz, 2024)

¹³ The second stimulus was a blend of two different sources. The first half was retrieved from the website of Bild. The original text in German: “Zuwanderung wird unsere Wirtschaft, unsere Renten- und Sozialsysteme nicht retten können!” (Tiede & Vehlewald, 2024) The second half was retrieved from

By using media widely consumed in Germany, the study enhances its external validity and relevance. Moreover, a manipulation check was employed to test the effectiveness of the exposure in the experimental condition and account for noncompliance (Harden et al., 2019), by asking the participants to indicate what was the content of statements they were exposed to. The choice of shorter texts, rather than long and heavy articles, in combination with the manipulation check enhanced the internal validity of the study (Druckman et al., 2011; Harden et al., 2019). Finally, the media framing was not narrowed down to “Turkish immigrants” to enhance the wider application of the findings, to mitigate the activation of biases, and to address ethical issues by not targeting a specific group. This approach also simplifies the analysis by focusing on the effects of negative media framing itself rather than the interaction between media framing and ethnic identity.

4.4 Dependent Variables

The dependent variables (DV) are several, following the four hypotheses of this study. For H1, participants indicated their perception of the discrimination (“discrimination”). For the assessment of the first DV (DV1), the Everyday Discrimination Scale, proposed by Williams et al. (1997), was employed. This is one of the most widely used measures that captures the self-reported frequency of discriminatory experiences in everyday social situations. The scale includes nine items describing various discriminatory experiences, and six response points regarding the frequency of these experiences, elicited from “Almost every day” to “Never”.

The second DV (DV2) concerned the feeling of closeness to immigrants. This block of the survey included three items that measured “how close” participants feel to Germans, Turks and immigrants (“close_germans”, “close_turks”, “close_immigrants”). As proposed by H2,

the website of Handelsblatt. The original text in German: “Die Zuwanderung kostet mehr, als sie einbringt.” (Specht, 2024)

the aim was to assess how Turkish immigrants feel about immigrants as an out-group. To isolate the feelings towards immigrants, without this including necessarily people of Turkish descent, participants were first asked separately how they feel about Germans and Turks. The item regarding immigrants was formulated as “On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means ‘very distant’ and 7 means ‘very close’, how distant or close do you feel to other immigrants in Germany?”.

Participants were then asked about their views on the issue of immigration to test for H3. In the items of this DV (DV3) the focus was less on policies that affect the lives of immigrants in the host country, and more on whether immigration to Germany should be further strengthened and whether or not it harms the country. This enabled the testing of immigrants' attitudes toward immigration as a phenomenon rather than toward policies that might necessarily affect the participants themselves. This variable comprised six items inspired by the first round of the European Social Survey (European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure, 2023). Some of them were reversed to enhance the reliability and validity, while all of them were later aggregated into one variable (“migration_attitudes”).

Finally, for H4 two questions were used to measure participants' political preferences. The first (DV4a) asked about their support for the policies of the main political parties in Germany (“party_policies”), while the second (DV4b) focused on their voting propensity (“part_voting”). Although H4 specifically involves anti-immigration parties, in the case of German AfD, participants were asked about the main six parties in the country to ensure a more balanced and less biased approach and to avoid causing any negative reactions. The inclusion of both of these questions allowed participants to express their party preferences based on their policies, without necessarily declaring their party identity, but also captured their actual intention to vote.

4.5 Control Variables

In the beginning of the survey, all participants provided some information on their demographics, such as gender, age, education and subjective income¹⁴. Such data were collected to conduct supplementary exploratory analyses, aiming at a more comprehensive investigation of sociodemographic factors. Furthermore, the participants were asked if they or their parents and grandparents have moved to Germany from another country, specifying the time, the country of origin, as well as their ethnic identity and if they hold German citizenship. These measures aimed to capture participants' immigration status.

4.6 Debriefing

At the end of the survey a debriefing message was included to inform participants about the survey subject, which for some could be considered relatively sensitive due to the negative framings of immigration. Through the clarifications of this message, the ethical standards of the thesis were preserved. The message also further stated that the framings used did not reflect the personal views of the researcher or the views of the University.

4.7 Data Collection and Recruitment Challenges

The aim of this thesis is not to capture the attitudes of immigrants within the framework of public opinion, but solely focus on immigrants as the population of the study. Yet, studying immigrants via surveys poses challenges stemming from difficulties in collecting reliable data (Méndez & Font, 2013). Bigger projects, like the Immigrant Citizens Survey (ICS), have tried to conduct a representative survey among non-EU immigrants in seven EU countries, yet faced

¹⁴ Survey questions about income are often associated with the problem of item non-response (Yan et al., 2010). For this reason, a measure of subjective income was chosen as an alternative. More specifically participants were asked: "When you think about Germany as a whole, which income group do you belong to?" Respondents could choose one of the following answers: 'Very low income', 'Low income', 'Average income', 'High income', 'Very high income'.

many challenges. In the case of ICS, alternative sampling methods, such as centres of aggregation sampling, random dialling, and focused enumeration as a variant of random household sampling, were employed. Yet such methods require presence in the field and high budget, while they still face low response rates and accuracy issues (Reichel & Morales, 2017).

As such methods are beyond the scope of this thesis, other means of recruitment needed to be employed. Confirming the concerns in the existing literature, recruiting participants proved to be a challenge. To target the population under study, methods like Facebook targeting ads, snowball sampling, centres of aggregation, and recruitment through the research panel Prolific were used. The expenses for the recruitment were funded through the departmental research grant, supported by the Central European University Foundation of Budapest. Part of this funding was utilized to provide an incentive to the participants. The data collection was carried out from May 12th to May 30th, 2024. Despite initial recruitment challenges, a total of 260 completed surveys were collected.

Initially, Facebook targeted ads were employed. Previous research have successfully used this method for sampling immigrants, by employing the targeting option "expats" (Pötzschke & Braun, 2017). However, this approach was proved to have significant problems, including the \$50 (around €46) per day spending limit, the recent changes in Meta's targeted ads policy¹⁵ (Hutchinson, 2024; Meta, 2024), the recent legislation of Digital Services Act¹⁶ (European Commission, 2024), as well as the lack of a specific filter for expats from Turkey . Such challenges should be taken into consideration for future research.

¹⁵ Meta has announced that starting January 2024 they are "discontinuing some detailed targeting options" such as race or ethnicity, as they are considered sensitive or because of legal or regulatory requirements." (Facebook, n.d.; Hutchinson, 2024)

¹⁶ This is a legislation applying for all EU states. The European Commission claims that "targeted advertisement on online platforms is also prohibited when profiling uses special categories of personal data, such as ethnicity, political views, sexual orientation" (European Commission, n.d.).

After two days during which none of the responses received were Turkish immigrants in Germany, the Facebook ad was discontinued and alternative methods of targeting were employed. These endeavours all followed the closest possible format to the advertisement to ensure consistency between recruitment methods, including an incentive for participation (see Appendix B). More specifically, participants had a chance to win a €100 Amazon voucher which was initially promoted in the ad and later on to the other methods. Participants could enter their email address at the end of the survey to enter the draw. Acknowledging public concerns on data protection, those who did not want to register their email were able to choose between nine humanitarian and environmental organizations to donate the €100 prize.

Staying on the Facebook platform, I attempted to share my research with Facebook groups that had Turkish residents in Germany as their topic. However, none of the administrators of these groups approved the posting of the survey. I, therefore, decided to mobilize social networks by attempting snowball sampling. The sampling technique of centers of aggregation was also employed in an online context. Firstly, I reached out to the Turkish Community in Germany (TGD)¹⁷. Secondly, the survey was shared in WhatsApp groups of Turkish students in Germany, coordinated by the Turkish Student Community (TSG)¹⁸. Although these methods yielded some responses, they were not sufficient to constitute a sufficient sample.

Thus, the main recruitment of this study was made possible through Prolific, a research panel platform especially used in the fields of social and economic sciences (Palan & Schitter,

¹⁷ The Turkish Community in Germany (Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland/Almanya Türk Toplumu) is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1995 and is currently based in Berlin-Kreuzberg. It represents the interests of Germans of Turkish origin and Turks living in Germany.

¹⁸ These groups are addressed to Turkish students in Germany and were set up by the Turkish Student Community (TSG - Türkische Studentengesellschaft / Türk Öğrenci Topluluğu). This community is present in different cities in Germany. I posted the survey to 15 groups of the Turkish Student Community on WhatsApp for the cities of Berlin, Bremen, Cologne, Darmstadt, Dortmund, Dresden, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Hannover, Heidelberg, Karlsruhe, Mannheim, Munich, Nuremberg, and Stuttgart.

2018). Compared to other similar platforms like Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), Prolific's advantages include transparency, high data quality, and more diverse and naïve participants (Palan & Schitter, 2018). Furthermore, Prolific participants demonstrated a higher likelihood of successfully passing attention checks, offering meaningful responses, having distinct IP addresses, and taking sufficient time to answer, when compared to MTurk, Qualtrics, or SONA (Douglas et al., 2023). At the same time, Prolific has high cost efficiency, showcasing the lowest cost compared to the other paid platforms (Douglas et al., 2023). Regarding this research, its main advantage, apart from cost, was its variety of pre-screened features.

On Prolific, Germany was chosen as the location, while the pre-screening item used to ensure the targeting of Turkish immigrants was Turkish as the “Earliest Language in Life”¹⁹. In total, the recruitment of 198 participants²⁰ was requested for an 8-minute survey, compensating £1.50 (around €1.7) for each completed item. Since Prolific does not allow any other rewards than monetary payment within its platform, participants were also offered a chance to win an additional €25 through a lottery as a bonus payment. This incentive was given on top of the decided Prolific payment in order to keep the content of the experiment and its promotion as consistent as possible between the different recruitment methods.

¹⁹ This measure was chosen among others, like selecting Turkey as a country of birth or Turkish nationality, as it allows for the inclusion of second or third-generation immigrants who may not have a Turkish nationality. Among other linguistic criteria such as “First Language” or “Fluent Languages” this choice also seems to have greater relevance for later generation migrants. In general, this item brought the most endorsement from participants compared to other Turkish identity items and it reliably identifies individuals who are likely immigrants of Turkish descent. At the time the survey was published, Prolific was identifying 525 eligible participants who were falling under the chosen criteria and had been active in the past 90 days. As stated on Prolific website a 40-50% response rate from the eligible participants is expected.

²⁰ Data collection via Prolific was carried out in two rounds: the first took place between the 21st and 24th of May and the second on between the 28th and 29th of May. This was due to the fact that in the first round it was not known to me whether the payment would also require a transfer fee or currency exchange fee, since the platform only accepts payment in Pound sterling. Therefore, I made a more conservative estimate by requesting 185 participants, leaving some amount of money as leeway. As no commission was retained and I still had some funds available, I held a second round, increasing the number of participants to 198.

5 Data

5.1 Data Preparation

The data were processed and analyzed using R Studio. As the responses originated from various methods of recruitment, five different but identical projects were created in Qualtrics in order to identify the source of sampling. The data preparation began by consolidating the data into one dataset and creating a new variable for the source of recruitment. The variables measured by multiple items, namely discrimination²¹ and immigration²² attitudes were aggregated, and re-coded to follow the same rationale. In addition, based on the block the participants gave their answers to, a new variable was added identifying the control and treatment group.

The total number of the people that started the survey was 390, while 311 completed it. However, not all of these individuals were members of the population under study. The data were cleaned by keeping only the responses of those who gave their consent to participate, were over 18 years old, stated that they were living in Germany, either themselves, their parents or grandparents had moved to Germany and they either identify as ethnically Turkish or their country of origin is Turkey²³. Thus, this ensures that the data in focus belong to the population

²¹ The aggregation of discrimination was carried out based on the frequency-based coding of EDS, where each item response was given a value according to the likert scale ('never'=1 to 'almost every day'=6). The responses were summed across items for each participant producing a score ranging from 10 to 60 (Michaels et al., 2019).

²² The aggregation of the immigration items into one variable was carried out using the mean of each row in the data set, i.e. the mean of the responses to each item for each participant.

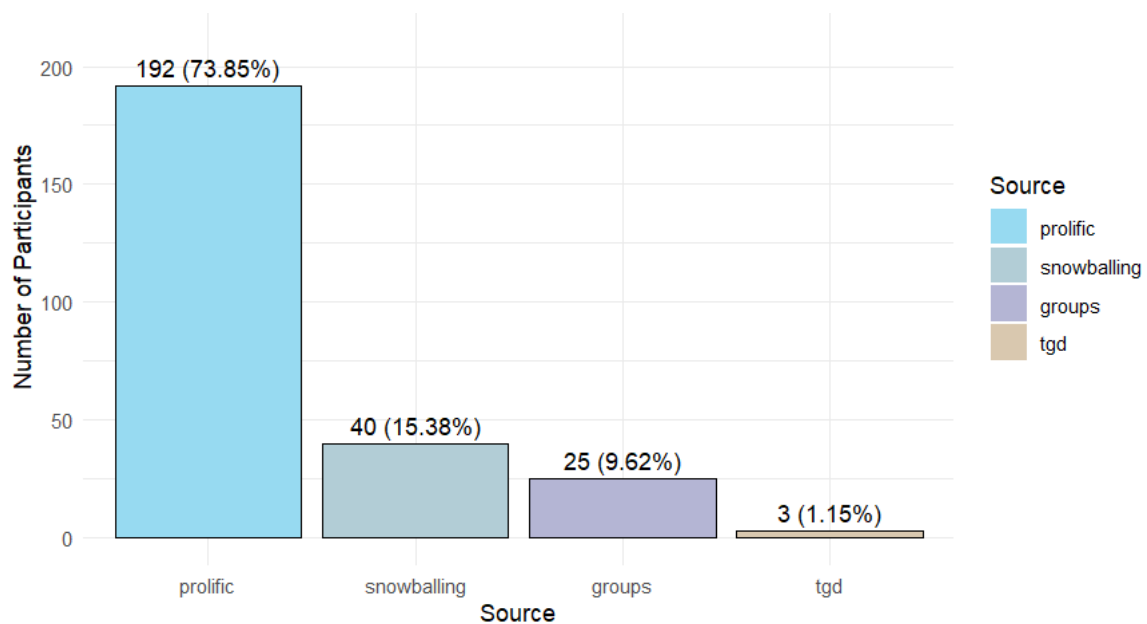
²³ There were two variables included in the survey determining the Turkish origin of the participants. The first was the country from which the individuals immigrated to Germany and the second was their ethnicity. The item for ethnicity included the option "I do not answer" for sensitivity reasons. To identify the population of interest, I chose to include individuals who either have Turkey as their country of origin or identified as Turkish. This approach ensures that all relevant participants are captured, including those who originate from Turkey but do not explicitly identify as Turkish and those who identify as Turkish but did not originate from Turkey. Using both criteria separately avoids the overly strict exclusion that would occur if both were required concurrently.

studied in this thesis; Turkish immigrants currently residing in Germany. Finally, all dependent variables were re-coded to have the same scale, ranging from 0 to 1.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

In total, 260 people of Turkish origin residing in Germany successfully completed the survey. As shown in Figure 1, 73.85% (192) of the participants derived from the Prolific platform²⁴, 15.38% (40) from the snowball sampling, 9.62% (25) from the WhatsApp groups of Turkish students in Germany, and 1.15% (3) from the distribution through TGD. None of those who completed the survey via the Facebook ad, 37 in total, fell under the study population of this research. Out of the initial 305 participants in the filtered data, a total of 45 eligible participants dropped out of the survey, accounting for a 14.75% dropout rate. Yet, a low rate was expected since the vast majority of the participants derive from a panel.

Figure 1: Sampling Source Distribution

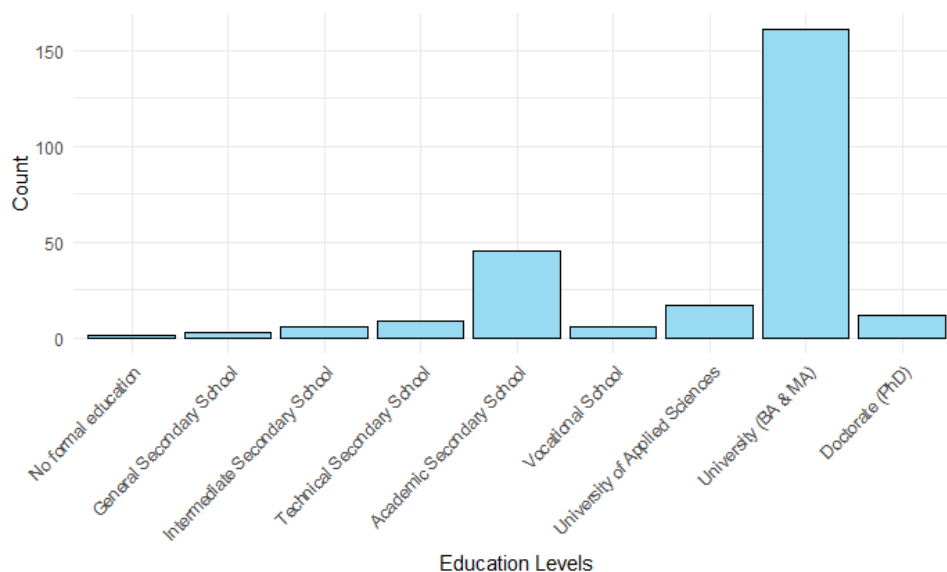


²⁴ Of the 198 participants recruited by Prolific, 192 actually belong to the population of this study. This indicates that the selection of Turkish as the “Earliest Language in Life” as a pre-screener was an effective choice.

Regarding gender, 50.77% of the participants were female and 48.85% male, while 00.38% were non-binary²⁵. Gender quotas were selected in Prolific, ensuring equal recruitment of male and female participants. Even though the proportions of gender varied in the other sources of sampling, the two groups are overall balanced. The age range of the participants is from 19 to 62 years old, with a mean age of 31, indicating a relatively young sample (Table 1).

Furthermore, the sample has a high representation of Bachelor's & Master's Degrees holders, indicating a high level of education among the participants²⁶ (Figure 2). Higher level of education was also somehow expected since the survey was distributed mainly through Prolific, a platform that requires at least some levels of digital literacy, student groups, and personal networks of other fellow students or office workers. In addition, the income distribution is negatively skewed, with fewer participants reporting higher incomes (Figure 3). Around 80% of the participants are first-generation immigrants, while 18% are second-generation and only 2% are third-generation immigrants. Furthermore, 26% of the participants hold German citizenship.

Figure 2: Educational Level



²⁵ None of the participants in the filtered data chose the option “I don't want to answer.”

²⁶ The participants were asked what is the highest level of education they have completed. The options that were offered were following the German educational system to correspond with the German context.

Figure 3: Levels of Education

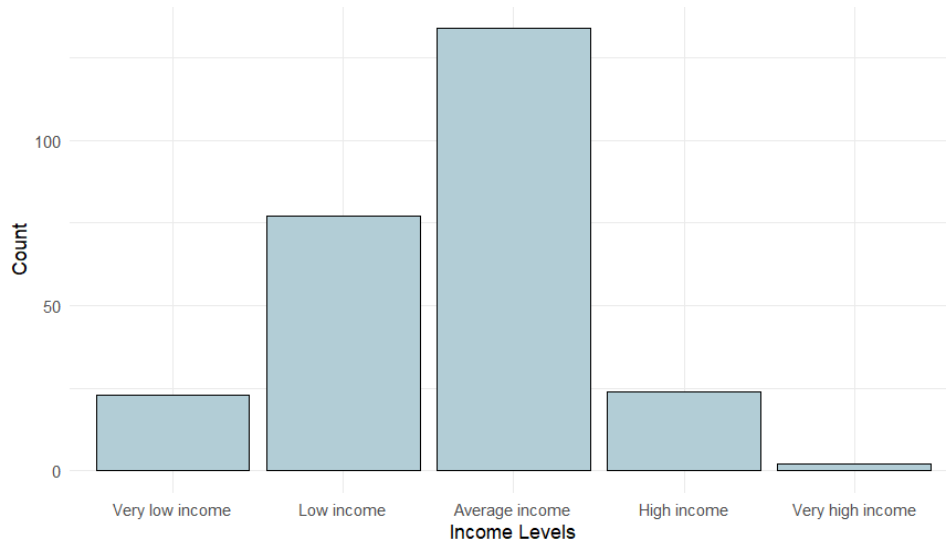


Table 1 presents the summary statistics for all the numeric variables of the data set, reporting the number of participants (N), the mean (Mean) score, the standard deviation (St. Dev.), the minimum (Min), and the maximum (Max) scores. It is worth noting that the discrimination variable has a mean score of 0.32 with a standard deviation of 0.22, indicating moderate experiences of discrimination on a scale from 0 to 1. Immigration attitudes, and feelings of closeness to Germans, and immigrants have mean scores around 0.5, suggesting balanced perspectives. The mean is higher for closeness to Turks, the ethnic group in which the participants belong to. Regarding parties' policies preferences and voting propensity, SPD is rated the highest, followed by LINKE and GRUNE. These statistics are in line with previous findings according to which Turkish immigrants vote for SPD, LINKE, and GRUNE (Goerres et al., 2018a; Mayer, 2024). AfD has by far the lowest mean score in both policy preferences (0.11) and voting propensity (0.07), showing a lack of support.

Table 1: *Summary Statistics of Numeric Variables*

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev	Min	Max
Age	260	30.93	8.14	19.00	62.00
Years in Germany	260	14.16	19.45	0.00	64.00
Discrimination	260	0.31	0.21	0.00	0.98
Migration Attitudes	260	0.54	0.17	0.08	1.00
Close Germans	260	0.52	0.23	0.00	1.00
Close Turks	260	0.68	0.25	0.00	1.00
Close Immigrants	260	0.51	0.27	0.00	1.00
SPD Policies	260	0.52	0.23	0.00	1.00
CDU Policies	260	0.36	0.23	0.00	1.00
GRUNE Policies	260	0.49	0.26	0.00	1.00
FDP Policies	260	0.38	0.22	0.00	0.90
AFD Policies	260	0.11	0.19	0.00	0.90
LINKE Policies	260	0.49	0.25	0.00	1.00
SPD Voting	260	0.48	0.30	0.00	1.00
CDU Voting	260	0.28	0.27	0.00	1.00
GRUNE Voting	260	0.42	0.30	0.00	1.00
FDP Voting	260	0.30	0.25	0.00	1.00
AFD Voting	260	0.07	0.18	0.00	1.00
LINKE Voting	260	0.41	0.30	0.00	1.00

Finally, Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the dependent variables for the hypotheses of this study, divided into control and treatment groups. The boxplots of Figure 4 show that discrimination levels (DV1) to some extent vary, while feelings of being close to immigrants (DV2) and immigration attitudes (DV3) remain unchanged between groups. The bar plots in Figure 5, focusing on attitudes towards AfD policies (DV4a) and voting propensity (DV4b), do not reveal either any substantial differences between control and treatment groups. It is, however, notable that the distribution is highly positively skewed.

Figure 4: Discrimination, Close to Immigrants and Immigration Attitudes by Group

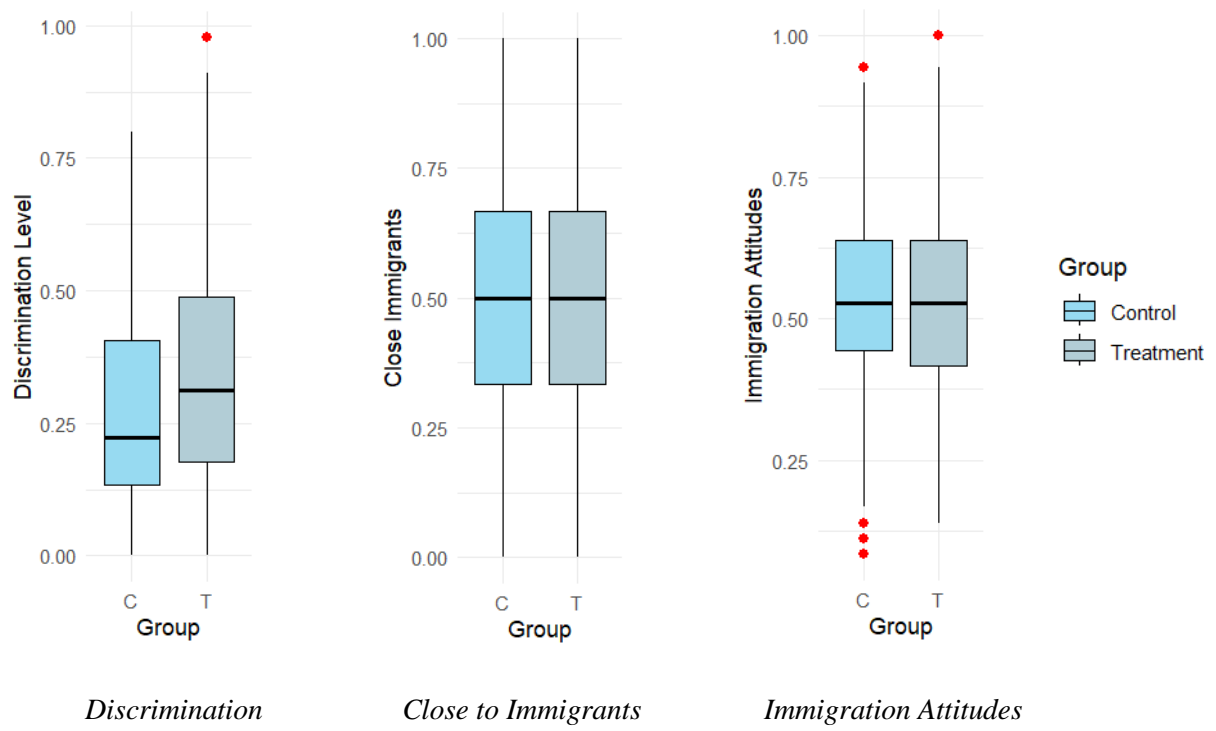
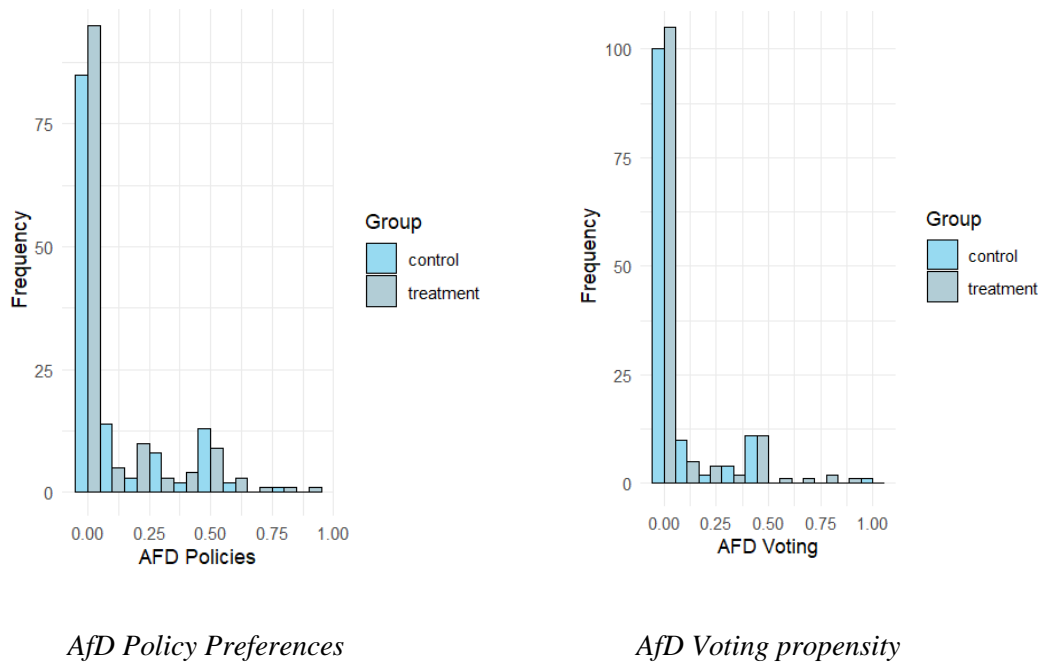


Figure 5: AfD Attitudes by Group



5.3 Group Balance Check

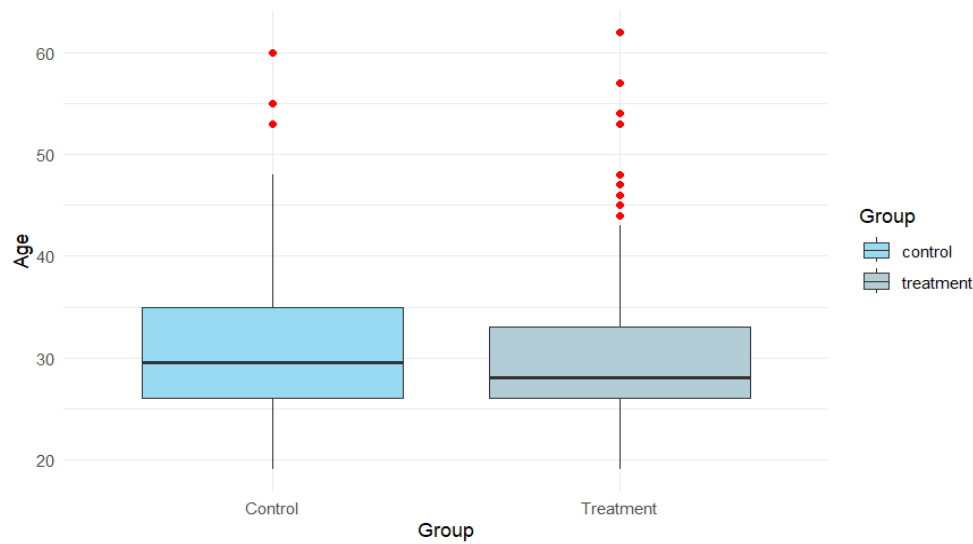
Using Qualtrics' randomizer tool, 128 (49%) participants were included in the control and 132 (51%) in the treatment group²⁷. A balance test was necessary to investigate the validity of the randomization process (Gerber et al, 2014; Martini & Olmastroni, 2021). Such tests investigated if the two groups differed significantly before the treatment was applied, comparing the key control characteristics of participants.

More specifically, the gender (Table 2) and age variables were overall balanced (Figure 6). The income and educational levels slightly differed, as the treatment group had a higher percentage of people reporting low income (33.33%) compared to the control group (25.78%) (Table 3), while a higher proportion of university degree holders was assigned to the control group (67.97%) compared to the treatment group (56.06%) (Table 4). Even though the vast majority of the sample is first-generation immigrants, generational status further varied, with the control group having a higher percentage of first-generation immigrants (88.30%) compared to the treatment group (72.73%) (Table 5). When it comes to years in Germany, the higher Interquartile Range (IQR) in the treatment group also reflects the findings for the immigrants' generation (Figure 7). A notable imbalance also exists in German citizenship status, with 32.58% of the treatment group holding the citizenship compared to only 19.53% of the control group (Table 6).

Table 2: Gender by Group

	Total (N=260)	Control (N=128)	Treatment (N=132)
Female	132 (50.77%)	68 (53.12%)	64 (48.50%)
Male	127 (48.85%)	59 (46.10%)	68 (51.50%)
Third Gender	1 (00.38%)	1 (00.78%)	0

²⁷ Even though the sample size in the two groups is quite balanced, it is important to highlight that when multiple projects are used in Qualtrics, which are later combined, some discrepancies can arise. Using the randomizer across multiple projects can accumulate small imbalances in the group sizes into bigger ones. Such an issue was observed when the sample of this study was smaller.

Figure 6: Age by Group**Table 3: Income by Group**

	Total (N=260)	Control (N=128)	Treatment (N=132)
Very low income	23 (08.85%)	10 (07.81%)	13 (09.85%)
Low income	77 (29.61%)	33 (25.78%)	44 (33.33%)
Average income	134 (51.54%)	69 (53.90%)	65 (49.24%)
High income	24 (09.23%)	14 (10.94%)	10 (07.58%)
Very high income	2 (00.77%)	2 (01.56%)	0

Table 4: Education Level by Group

	Total (N=260)	Control (N=128)	Treatment (N=132)
No formal education	1 (00.38%)	0	1 (00.76%)
General Secondary School	3 (01.15%)	1 (00.78%)	2 (01.51%)
Intermediate Secondary School	6 (2.31%)	1 (00.78%)	5 (03.79%)
Technical Secondary School	9 (03.46%)	1 (00.78%)	8 (06.06%)
Academic Secondary School	45 (17.31%)	19 (14.84%)	26 (19.70%)
Vocational School	6 (02.31%)	2 (01.56%)	4 (03.03%)
University of Applied Sciences	17 (06.54%)	9 (07.03%)	8 (06.06%)
University (BA & MA)	161 (61.92%)	87 (67.97%)	74 (56.06%)
Doctorate (PhD)	12 (04.62%)	8 (06.25%)	4 (03.03%)

Table 5: Generations of Immigration by Group

	Total (N=260)	Control (N=128)	Treatment (N=132)
First Generation	209 (80.38%)	113 (88.30%)	96 (72.73%)
Second Generation	46 (17.69%)	15 (11.70%)	31 (23.48%)
Third Generation	5 (1.92%)	0	5 (03.79%)

Figure 7: Years in Germany by Group

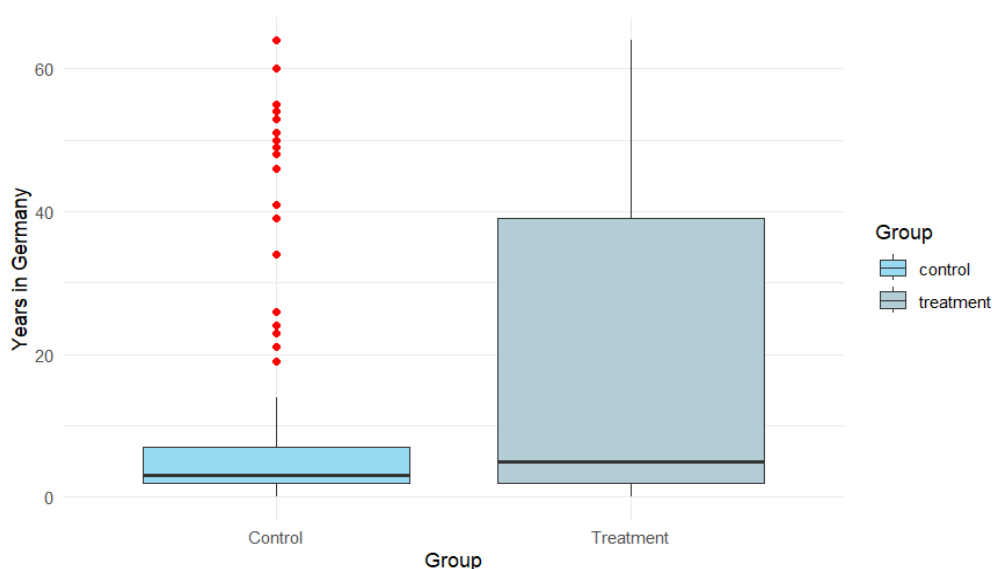


Table 6: German Citizenship by Group

	Total (N=260)	Control (N=128)	Treatment (N=132)
Yes	68 (26.15%)	25 (19.53%)	43 (32.58%)
No	192 (73.85%)	103 (80.47%)	89 (67.42%)

To determine whether these imbalances indicate that the two groups are significantly different from each other, chi-square tests for categorical variables (gender, education level, income level, generation of immigration, nationality) and t-test or Wilcoxon tests for continuous variables (age, years in Germany) were performed. According to the results of these tests most of these imbalances are not statistically significant. With p-values greater than 0.05, the observed differences are likely due to random variation. However, the differences for citizenship and immigrant generation were significant, suggesting that regarding these variables the control and treatment groups indeed differ. Yet, as the majority of the differences in these variables seem to have occurred by chance, the randomization procedure was generally effective.

5.4 Manipulation Check

A manipulation check was also employed to account for noncompliance. In the treatment group, after the exposure to the negative framings participants were asked to choose the two most suitable answers from a list of options, which matched the content they had read on the previous page. The options included statements about immigration's impact on crime, economic and social costs of immigration, cultural diversity in Germany, technological advances in Germany, economic and social costs, and sports achievements. The manipulation check results show that 77.27% of the treatment group successfully identified both correct statements. This reinforces the internal validity of the experiment, confirming that the manipulation was effectively communicated to the participants. Interestingly, the rate of the participants that identified correctly both of the stimuli differed based on the source of recruitment (Table 7).

Table 7: *Manipulation Check Success Rates*

Total	Prolific	Snowballing	Groups	TGD
77.27%	82.47%	56.52%	72.73%	100%

6 Analysis and Results

6.1 Model Building

The main statistical method used in this study includes Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) models. Regressions allow for flexibility and can provide insights into the influence of multiple explanatory variables on the outcome. For the comprehensive assessment of the treatment effects, the analysis incorporates three regression models for each dependent variable. The first model (M1) includes solely the group variable, with the control group serving as the baseline, providing a preliminary estimate of the treatment effect without accounting for the effects of any other predictors. The second model (M2) builds on the first one by including the covariates that failed the group balance check, and vary significantly between the treatment and control groups, namely immigrant generational status and citizenship. This step is essential to account for potential confounders. The third and final model (M3) incorporates all the control variables obtained from the survey. This fully integrated model allows control for further factors potentially affecting the dependent variables, such as age, gender, education, and income²⁸.

Model 1: Baseline Model
Treatment vs. Control

Model 2: Adding Confounders
Treatment vs. Control + Immigrant Generation and German Citizenship

Model 3: Full Model
Treatment vs. Control + Immigrant Generation and German Citizenship + All control variables (age, gender, education, income, years in Germany)

²⁸ Age, gender, education and income are being used as control variables since previous research has considered them as predictors of immigration attitudes and political behavior (Dražanová et al., 2023; Giger, 2009; Hersh & Nall, 2016). Furthermore, research focusing on Germany and Turkish immigrants confirms the existence of the “integration paradox”, according to which immigrants with higher levels of education report higher levels of perceived discrimination (Steinmann, 2018).

Furthermore, regression diagnostics were employed to assess the validity inferred from the analyses. Overall, the models confirmed their statistical validity, with some exceptions, especially in the case of AfD (see Appendix C).

6.2 Assessing the Treatment Effect

6.2.1 Discrimination

The first hypothesis examines the impact of the treatment on feelings of discrimination (DV1). Across all models for DV1, the treatment group shows a statistically significant positive effect on the outcome variable, indicating that the immigrants who were exposed to the treatment reported an increased feeling of discrimination (Table 8). Focusing on the final model, which includes all the assessed covariates of the survey, the coefficient of the treatment group ($b = 0.054$) indicates that, holding all other variables constant, being in the treatment group is associated with an increase of 0.054 units in discrimination compared to being in the control group. This effect is statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.048, suggesting that there is less than a 5% chance that this result is due to random variation. These results support the hypothesis that prejudiced media framings lead to higher feelings of discrimination.

The examination of covariates revealed a significant impact of age and low income. To meaningfully interpret age, the variable was centred to the mean value (30.93), in the beginning of the analysis. Hence, the negative estimate ($b = -0.004$, $p = 0.049$) indicates that with every year increase from the average age, people report lower scores of discrimination. Taking into account that stereotypes against immigrants mainly involve younger men, these results hold. This may be further explained by the fact that younger people often interact in environments where discrimination can often occur, such as schools or work, while older people often share a higher social status and greater resilience. However, this finding contradicts previous research which highlights that older people feel overall more discriminated (Ayalon & Gum, 2011).

Table 8: Summary of Model-Building Process for H1 (Discrimination)

Variables	M1			M2			M3		
	b	SE	p	b	SE	p	b	SE	p
Intercept (Control)	0.279	0.02	.00***	0.273	0.02	.00***	0.208	0.22	0.345
Group - Treatment	0.064	0.03	0.016*	0.054	0.03	0.048*	0.054	0.03	0.048*
Citizenship				0.003	0.04	0.941	-0.005	0.05	0.911
Second Immigrant Generation				0.052	0.05	0.291	0.005	0.07	0.943
Third Immigrant Generation				0.097	0.10	0.354	0.048	0.11	0.677
Age (centered)							-0.004	0.00	0.049*
Gender							0.005	0.03	0.851
General Secondary School							-0.143	0.25	0.567
Intermediate Secondary School							0.056	0.23	0.808
Technical Secondary School							-0.186	0.23	0.411
Academic Secondary School							-0.038	0.22	0.863
Vocational School							-0.052	0.23	0.823
University of Applied Sciences							0.015	0.22	0.947
University (BA & MA)							-0.026	0.22	0.906
Doctorate (PhD)							0.056	0.22	0.799
Low Income							0.119	0.05	0.021*
Average Income							0.063	0.05	0.205
High Income							0.023	0.06	0.718
Very High Income							0.265	0.16	0.101
Years in Germany							0.002	0.00	0.190
	R ²	p		R ²	p		R ²	p	
	0.018	0.016		0.019	0.063		0.044	0.050	

Note: b = unstandardized fixed coefficients, SE = standard errors, p = p-values, R² = adjusted R². Dummy-coded: 0 = control group, 1 = intervention group (Group); 0 = female, 1 = male (Gender).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Focusing on income, having a low income, compared to a very low income, is associated with increased levels of discrimination ($b = 0.122$, $p = 0.021$). While it seems to be established that there is a correlation between low income and discrimination (Assari, 2020), these findings imply that people who describe their income as “low” have a significant difference in discrimination perceptions compared to those with “very low” income. This could suggest that individuals with very low income may be so marginalized that they experience fewer interactions where discriminatory behaviors occur. None of the other covariates were significantly different from the baseline.

The adjusted R^2 values improve progressively from 0.018 in M1 to 0.044 in M3, indicating a better model fit with the inclusion of more predictors. According to the R-squared value of M3 (0.044), approximately 4.4% of the variance in discrimination scores is explained by the included variables. These values indicate that factors other than those examined in the present study may also influence the discrimination values. The overall model is barely statistically significant ($p = 0.050$).

6.2.2 *Feeling Close to Immigrants*

The second hypothesis was tested through regression models focusing on the feeling of closeness to immigrants. However, to better capture this feeling, participants were asked to indicate how close they feel to Germans, Turks and other immigrants in separate questions. This allows the assessment of media effects explicitly towards immigrants beyond the specific Turkish ethnic identity that the participants share. In accordance with H2, the following analysis focuses on the feeling of closeness to immigrants (DV2). For the results regarding the feeling of closeness towards Germans and Turks see Appendix D.

Similarly to the model regarding discrimination, the fully integrated model has low but slightly higher values of adjusted R-squared compared to the first two (M1 adjusted R-squared

= -0.004, M2 adjusted R-squared = 0.009, M3 adjusted R-squared = 0.037), while none of the three models is statistically significant (Table 9).

The regression analysis of M3 reveals that while the effect of media framings for those being in the treatment group is in the expected positive direction, meaning that individuals who received the treatment feel slightly closer to immigrants ($b = 0.009$), it is not statistically significant ($p = 0.790$). Thus, these results do not support H2, while H2-null is upheld.

Looking at the covariates, third-generation immigrants report significantly lower levels of closeness compared to first-generation immigrants ($b = -0.310$, $p = 0.032$). This suggests that third-generation immigrants feel less connected to the immigrant community than their first-generation counterparts. At the same time, years spent in Germany positively affect the outcome ($b = 0.004$, $p = 0.020$). Although this finding initially appears to be in contrast to the previous one, it can be suggested that immigrants, especially those of first-generation, might experience greater discrimination the longer they stay in the host country (Ólafsson & Zielińska, 2010) and thus realize further their immigrant identity, reporting closer feelings to other immigrants. Age, gender, citizenship, various education levels, and income do not show significant effects, indicating that they did not have a significant impact on the dependent variable.

Table 9: Summary of Model-Building Process for H2 (Feeling Close to Immigrants)

Variables	M1			M2			M3		
	b	SE	p	b	SE	p	b	SE	p
Intercept (Control)	0.509	0.02	.00***	0.496	0.02	.00***	0.465	0.28	0.094
Group - Treatment	-0.003	0.03	0.933	-0.007	0.03	0.838	0.009	0.03	0.790
Citizenship				0.034	0.05	0.531	-0.029	0.06	0.632
Second Immigrant Generation				0.058	0.06	0.341	-0.055	0.08	0.510
Third Immigrant Generation				-0.189	0.13	0.151	-0.310	0.14	0.032*
Age (centered)							-0.003	0.0	0.222
Gender							-0.004	0.03	0.900
General Secondary School							-0.171	0.31	0.585
Intermediate Secondary School							-0.102	0.29	0.724
Technical Secondary School							-0.106	0.28	0.708
Academic Secondary School							0.061	0.27	0.824
Vocational School							0.116	0.29	0.690
University of Applied Sciences							0.115	0.28	0.677
University (BA & MA)							0.039	0.27	0.884
Doctorate (PhD)							0.205	0.28	0.463
Low Income							-0.092	0.06	0.151
Average Income							-0.040	0.06	0.515
High Income							0.044	0.08	0.587
Very High Income							-0.127	0.20	0.531
Years in Germany							0.004	0.00	0.020*
	R ²	p		R ²	p		R ²	p	
	-0.004	0.933		0.009	0.180		0.037	0.079	

Note: b = unstandardized fixed coefficients, SE = standard errors, p = p-values, R² = adjusted R². Dummy-coded: 0 = control group, 1 = intervention group (Group); 0 = female, 1 = male (Gender).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

6.2.3 *Immigration Attitudes*

For the testing of the third hypothesis, the models in Table 10 examine the impact of the treatment on immigration attitudes, successively controlling for other covariates. In this case, no significant results were obtained. The coefficient of the treatment, which is negative across all models, proposes that exposure to prejudiced media may lead to lower support for positive immigration policies. Yet, these coefficients stay very close to zero and are not statistically significant (M1 $b = -0.008$, M2 $b = -0.018$, M3 $b = -0.008$). Such insignificant results suggest that there is no substantive evidence indicating that the treatment has a significant impact on immigration attitudes when compared to the control group. Hence, H3 is not supported and H3-null is retained. This lack of significance also suggests that any observed differences are likely due to random variation rather than an actual treatment effect.

Similar to the group coefficient, no significant results were found across the control variables when compared with the respective baselines. The adjusted R-squared of the models is increasing as more predictors are added, however, it remains low indicating that the models do not explain sufficiently the variance in the outcome variable (M1 adjusted R-squared = -0.003 , M2 adjusted R-squared = 0.014 , M3 adjusted R-squared = 0.032). The p-values of all models remain insignificant, indicating that the predictors used do not explain a significant portion of the variation in immigration attitudes (M1 $p = 0.701$, M2 $p = 0.109$, M3 $p = 0.102$).

Table 10: Summary of Model-Building Process for H3 (Immigration Attitudes)

Variables	M1			M2			M3		
	b	SE	p	b	SE	p	b	SE	p
Intercept (Control)	0.544	0.01	.00***	0.532	0.02	.00***	0.493	0.17	.00**
Group - Treatment	-0.008	0.02	0.701	-0.018	0.02	0.399	-0.008	0.02	0.697
Citizenship				0.047	0.03	0.174	0.020	0.04	0.603
Second Immigrant Generation				0.027	0.04	0.479	0.002	0.05	0.963
Third Immigrant Generation				0.017	0.08	0.835	-0.027	0.09	0.769
Age (centered)							-0.000	0.00	0.779
Gender							-0.028	0.02	0.191
General Secondary School							-0.073	0.20	0.713
Intermediate Secondary School							-0.137	0.18	0.453
Technical Secondary School							0.065	0.18	0.716
Academic Secondary School							-0.052	0.17	0.766
Vocational School							-0.015	0.18	0.935
University of Applied Sciences							0.045	0.19	0.799
University (BA & MA)							0.055	0.17	0.749
Doctorate (PhD)							0.147	0.18	0.405
Low Income							-0.009	0.04	0.825
Average Income							-0.018	0.04	0.644
High Income							-0.001	0.05	0.977
Very High Income							0.047	0.13	0.718
Years in Germany							0.002	0.01	0.203
	R ²	p		R ²	p		R ²	p	
	-0.003	0.701		0.014	0.109		0.032	0.102	

Note: b = unstandardized fixed coefficients, SE = standard errors, p = p-values, R² = adjusted R². Dummy-coded: 0 = control group, 1 = intervention group (Group); 0 = female, 1 = male (Gender).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

6.2.4 Voting Behavior

The fourth hypothesis regards immigrants' voting behavior, which was measured by two different variables; participants' attitudes towards political parties' policies and voting propensity. Including both of these measures allowed participants to express their policy preferences without explicitly declaring their party affiliation, while also capturing their actual voting intentions. Since H4 concerns parties with anti-immigration policies, the analysis will focus only on the far-right, anti-immigration party, AfD²⁹. Three regression models were carried out for the two variables.

The results from the regression models examining the impact of the treatment on attitudes toward AfD and its policies show no significant effect (Table 11). The third and most comprehensive model, shows a positive coefficient for the treatment, which is however close to zero and non-significant ($b = 0.005$, $p = 0.841$). As the treatment coefficients remain statistically insignificant across all models, no substantial evidence that the treatment influences attitudes towards AfD policies can be obtained. The adjusted R-squared values remain low, suggesting that the models do not explain much of the variance in the outcome variable (M1 adjusted R-squared = -0.003, M2 adjusted R-squared = 0.014, M3 adjusted R-squared = 0.032).

Similar results were obtained from the regression models on AfD voting propensity (Table 12), where the treatment led to no significant effects, compared to the control group. In all three models the treatment coefficient is positive, but remains non-significant (M1 $b = 0.014$,

²⁹ Interestingly, the findings of the full model on the CDU Party suggest that the participants that received the treatment increased their support for CDU policies. The treatment effect is positive and significant at the 0.1 level ($b=0.050$, $p=0.0815$). This model is overall significant ($p = 0.007$) with an adjusted R-squared of 0.07. This is potentially attributable to the party's immigration policies under Angela Merkel's leadership and the decision to admit large numbers of immigrants to Germany. The results of the full model, corresponding to voting propensity, do not show statistically significant results regarding the treatment coefficient. This suggests that while Turkish immigrants exposed to prejudiced media view CDU policies more favorably, they are not necessarily more likely to vote for the party compared to the control group.

M2 $b = 0.026$, M3 $b = 0.018$; M1 $p = 0.531$, M2 $p = 0.248$, M3 $p = 0.414$). Since the treatment does not significantly affect political attitudes towards AFD, H4 is not supported and H4-null is retained.

Focusing on the covariates, this model indicates that having a General Secondary School education is a significant predictor ($b = 0.509$, $p = 0.012$), suggesting higher AFD voting propensity for individuals with this education level compared to those with no formal school education. However, as levels of education show high multicollinearity, the interpretation of these results should be considered with caveat (see Appendix C). In this case, too, the adjusted R-squared remained low, but gradually improved over the models. While M1 is not overall significant (M1 $p = 0.531$), M2 and M3 have significant p-values (M2 $p = 0.038$, M3 $p = 0.002$), meaning that the models significantly explain the variation in the dependent variable.

Table 11: Summary of Model-Building Process for H4 (AfD Policies)

Variables	M1			M2			M3		
	b	SE	p	b	SE	p	b	SE	p
Intercept (Control)	0.107	0.02	.00***	0.121	0.02	.00***	0.077	0.20	0.698
Group - Treatment	-0.003	0.02	0.893	0.011	0.02	0.653	0.005	0.02	0.841
Citizenship				-0.051	0.04	0.189	-0.034	0.04	0.441
Second Immigrant Generation				-0.037	0.04	0.395	-0.016	0.06	0.788
Third Immigrant Generation				-0.081	0.09	0.390	-0.082	0.10	0.435
Age (centered)							-0.002	0.00	0.432
Gender							0.037	0.02	0.136
General Secondary School							0.244	0.23	0.282
Intermediate Secondary School							0.149	0.21	0.478
Technical Secondary School							0.178	0.21	0.387
Academic Secondary School							0.070	0.20	0.726
Vocational School							0.035	0.21	0.870
University of Applied Sciences							0.053	0.20	0.791
University (BA & MA)							0.053	0.19	0.787
Doctorate (PhD)							0.014	0.20	0.946
Low Income							-0.039	0.05	0.396
Average Income							-0.021	0.04	0.631
High Income							-0.016	0.06	0.784
Very High Income							0.222	0.15	0.132
Years in Germany							-0.001	0.00	0.321
	R ²	p		R ²	p		R ²	p	
	-0.003	0.893		0.020	0.056		0.024	0.163	

Note: b = unstandardized fixed coefficients, SE = standard errors, p = p-values, R² = adjusted R². Dummy-coded: 0 = control group, 1 = intervention group (Group); 0 = female, 1 = male (Gender).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 12: Summary of Model-Building Process for H4 (AfD Voting Propensity)

Variables	M1			M2			M3		
	b	SE	p	b	SE	p	b	SE	p
Intercept (Control)	0.068	0.02	.00***	0.083	0.02	.00***	0.014	0.18	0.938
Group - Treatment	0.014	0.02	0.531	0.026	0.02	0.248	0.018	0.02	0.414
Citizenship				-0.066	0.04	0.065	-0.028	0.04	0.485
Second Immigrant Generation				-0.015	0.04	0.714	-0.047	0.05	0.391
Third Immigrant Generation				-0.042	0.09	0.627	-0.076	0.09	0.417
Age (centered)							-0.002	0.00	0.176
Gender							0.028	0.02	0.206
General Secondary School							0.509	0.20	0.012*
Intermediate Secondary School							0.131	0.19	0.482
Technical Secondary School							0.023	0.18	0.901
Academic Secondary School							0.052	0.18	0.766
Vocational School							0.037	0.19	0.846
University of Applied Sciences							0.010	0.18	0.956
University (BA & MA)							0.040	0.17	0.818
Doctorate (PhD)							0.029	0.18	0.873
Low Income							0.014	0.04	0.739
Average Income							0.013	0.04	0.737
High Income							0.021	0.05	0.680
Very High Income							-0.028	0.13	0.833
Years in Germany							-0.000	0.00	0.811
	R ²	p		R ²	p		R ²	p	
	0.002	0.531		0.024	0.038		0.087	0.002**	

Note: b = unstandardized fixed coefficients, SE = standard errors, p = p-values, R² = adjusted R². Dummy-coded: 0 = control group, 1 = intervention group (Group); 0 = female, 1 = male (Gender).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

However, as the diagnostic checks for the models regarding the attitudes towards AfD showed that the assumptions about homogeneity, normality and outliers are violated (see Appendix C), a secondary analysis was carried out. Specifically, Wilcoxon rank sum tests, a nonparametric alternative to t-tests for the comparison of two independent sample groups, were conducted. Although this analysis does not take into account the other variables included in the regressions, it better accommodates the structure of the data. As shown in Figure 9, Wilcoxon rank sum tests indicate that there is no significant difference between the means of the treatment and control group for both AfD policies preferences ($p = 0.47$) and voting propensity ($p = 0.95$).

Figure 8: Wilcoxon rank sum test for AfD policies

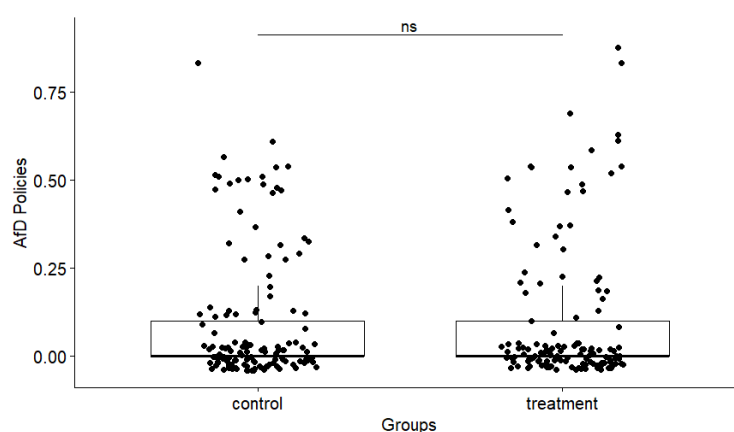
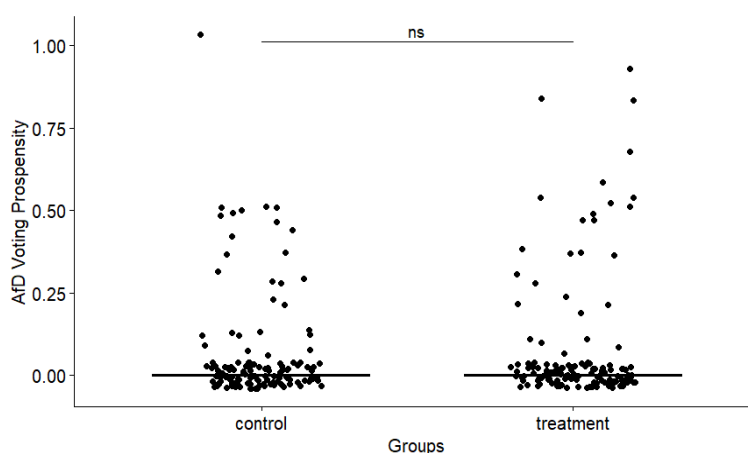


Figure 9: Wilcoxon rank sum test for AfD voting propensity



6.3 Statistical Power

To explore the robustness of my findings, I conducted a post hoc power analysis using G*Power software (Faul et al., 2007, 2009) for the statistical computations involved in my study. The test of “Linear multiple regression: Fixed model, R^2 deviation from zero” was employed to test the statistical power of the fully integrated models of the analyses. With a small effect size ($f^2 = 0.02$), a significance level (α) of 0.05, a sample size of 260, and only one predictor, as in M1, the statistical power was computed at 62%. However, when adding all the predictors of the fully integrated M3, 8 in total, the statistical power drops to levels of 30%. Thus, this study has only a 30 to 60% chance of detecting an effect, if there is one. Compared to conventional power levels of 80% the yielded results reveal that the analyses were overall underpowered. The results of the statistical power tests can be explained by the relatively small sample size.

7 Discussion

The experimental design of this study and the random assignment of participants to the treatment and control groups aim to infer causality from the media framing effects on the dependent variables. Additionally, using recent and existing frames published in some of the biggest mainstream media outlets in Germany enhances the external validity of the study, making the findings more relevant to real-life settings.

The results of this analysis support H1, according to which negative media framing makes immigrants feel more discriminated against. The findings of the regression analysis showed that being in the treatment group, which was exposed to negative media framing, means an increase of 0.056 units in the discrimination scale compared to participants being in the control group. These results are in line with existing research which concludes that the exposure of immigrants to the media of the host country leads to higher levels of perceived discrimination (Etchegaray & Correa, 2015; Ólafs & Zielińska, 2010; Saleem & Ramasubramanian, 2019).

Despite the encouraging results of the analysis on the perception of discrimination, the remaining hypotheses are not confirmed. After assessing how close the participants felt to immigrants, their attitudes towards immigration and their views on the AfD party, it was concluded that the treatment group did not show statistically significant differences when compared to the control group. Therefore, for H2, H3 and H4 the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Even though no significant results were found regarding immigrant's attitudes on the issue of immigration (DV3) and their attitudes towards AfD (DV4a and DV4b), existing literature suggests that the feeling of discrimination indeed plays a role in shaping these attitudes. According to the theory of out-group status and perceived discrimination (Strijbis, 2021), immigrants' experiences regarding discrimination seem to significantly affect the

political attitudes of immigrants (Just & Anderson, 2015; Kuo et al., 2017; Sanders et al., 2014; Strijbis & Polavieja, 2018). Such findings highlight the importance of further research on this matter.

In addition to the findings, this research offers important insights into the recruitment of participants belonging to a specific, narrower, population. Although studying immigrants through surveys has historically been a difficult endeavour (Méndez & Font, 2013; Reichel & Morales, 2017), past research has found targeted ads on Facebook to be an effective solution (Pötzschke and Braun, 2017). However, the present thesis has shown that this strategy is likely to face problems under the new EU legislation and the Digital Services Act. Thus, flexibility and pre-planning of diverse alternative methods are necessary.

The sampling carried out for this research comes with some limitations. The methods employed for recruitment included snowball sampling, centers of aggregation, and the Prolific panel platform. Although these methods proved to be relatively effective in the data collection process, they limited the sample to mostly educated first-generation immigrants of younger age. Furthermore, the fact that the majority of the participants are considered “click workers”, combined with the incentive offered, might have led to issues like selection and/or self-selection bias. Taking these factors into account, the sample of the present thesis is not representative of the population under study and it does not adequately reflect the demographic and socioeconomic diversity of Turkish immigrants in Germany. This limitation needs to be taken into account when interpreting the findings, as it may affect the generalizability of the results.

Another limitation of this research concerns the language in which the experiment was conducted. The survey experiment was designed in German to increase the probability of the participants following German media and in a real-life setting, thus increasing the external validity of the study. However, this choice limits the sample to only Turkish immigrants in

Germany who speak German. In this sense as well, the findings may not fully represent the entire Turkish immigrant population in Germany.

In addition, the relatively low statistical power of approximately 30% for the fully integrated models (60% for M1) also poses some limitations to this study. This low statistical power can be attributed to the sample size of 260 participants, which can be considered relatively small. Such a limitation suggests that there is a greater likelihood of Type II errors, signifying that the study may have failed to capture existing effects. To overcome this limitation, future research should increase the sample size and ensure that it is more representative of the target population.

This study provides encouraging results for further research to investigate the effects of media framing on immigrant populations. Future studies should explore the effects of different types of framing, including neutral or positive stimuli. In this way, the importance of inclusive discourse in communication and media can be further explored. Furthermore, the theoretical framework tested in this thesis should be applied to contexts beyond the Turkish community in Germany. Examining different immigrant groups and/or different national contexts may help us to better understand the broader application of theories on media effects on immigrants.

8 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore media framing effects on immigrants as a subgroup of public opinion. Building on the scarce existing literature, this thesis proposes that immigrants differ from the general population in how they perceive media framing around the topic of immigration, as it resonates with them on a personal level. A causal chain mechanism was hypothesized, whereby immigrants exposed to prejudiced framings express heightened perceptions of discrimination, feel closer to immigrants as an out-group, support more positive immigration policies, and show lower support for anti-immigration parties. This theory was tested through a survey experiment with Turkish immigrants in Germany.

Significant results were obtained for the influence of media framings on immigrants' perception of discrimination, supporting H1. However, as the remaining dependent variables did not yield significant results, the null hypotheses cannot be rejected for H2, H3, and H4. Even though the proposed causal chain mechanism could not be fully established through the current findings study, previous research argues that feelings of discrimination can shape both the immigration attitudes and the voting behavior of immigrants (Just & Anderson, 2015; Kuo et al., 2017; Sanders et al., 2014; Strijbis & Polavieja, 2018; Strijbis, 2021).

This thesis contributes to the literature on media effects and migration studies by bridging the gap between findings on discrimination and the political dimensions they may have, offering encouraging insights for future research. Within a political context where immigration is a highly polarized topic, immigrant populations gain a political voice via naturalization, and far-right parties target them as potential voters, a deeper understanding of the media effects is more needed than ever. Shifting the focus to the discriminated population, namely immigrants themselves, can lead to a better assessment of the complex political reality. Thus, the political dimensions of media's impact on immigrants need to be further studied.

Appendix A: Survey Questions in English

The questions of the survey were originally in German. Here is the translated version in English:

[I. Informed Consent]

1. Welcome to our study! Thank you for participating in this research, which is an important part of a Master's thesis at the Central European University. The survey will take about 10 minutes. Please answer honestly. As a thank you for your time and effort, you will be entered into a prize draw at the end of the survey for the chance to win a €100 Amazon voucher. Your answers will be treated confidentially and completely anonymously. However, due to academic requirements, the data collected will be available online in the archive of the Central European University in Vienna. No personal information will be published. Should any questions arise in the further course of the survey, you can contact master.thesis.ceu@gmail.com. By continuing, you confirm your understanding of this information, your willingness to participate and that you are at least 18 years old. Click "Agree" to begin the survey. Answer (A): Agree, Disagree

[II. Germany]

2. Do you currently live in Germany? A: Yes, No

Note: Participants who responded "No", were led to the end of the survey.

[III. Demographics]

3. Which of the following statements best describes your gender identity? A: Female, Male, Non-binary / third gender, I prefer not to say
4. In which year were you born? A: [dropdown list]
5. What is your highest level of education? A: No degree, Secondary school diploma, Middle school leaving certificate/secondary school certificate, University entrance qualification, High School / General qualification for university, Vocational training, University degree, University degree (BA & MA), Doctorate (PhD)
6. When you think about Germany as a whole, which income group do you belong to? A: Very low income, Low income, Average income, High income, Very high income

[IV. Immigration Background]

7. Have you moved to Germany from another country? A: Yes, No
8. [if "No" in 7] Did your parents move to Germany from another country? A: Yes, No
9. [if "No" in 8] Did your grandparents move to Germany from another country? A: Yes, No
10. [if "Yes" in 7 or 8 or 9] Which country did you or your ancestors come to Germany from? If you have several backgrounds, please choose the country with which you identify most. A: [dropdown list]

11. [if “Yes” in 7 or 8 or 9] In which year did you or your ancestors come to Germany? A: [dropdown list]
12. What is the best way to describe your ethnicity? A: [dropdown list]
13. Do you have German citizenship? A: Yes, No

The blocks of Treatment and Control Groups were randomized

[V. Treatment Group]

14. In a recent media release from one of Germany's largest media companies, the following statement was made: “Germany is now truly a country of immigration - with all the consequences. With immigration, crime caused by immigrants is on the rise”. Are you familiar with this statement? A: Yes, No
15. Another established media outlet in Germany recently reported the following: “Immigration will not be able to save our economy, our pension and social systems!” and “Immigration costs more than it brings in”. Are you familiar with this statement? A: Yes, No
16. After reading the statements on the previous pages, which of the following statements best matches the content you read before? Please select the 2 most appropriate answers.
 A: “Germany has become a true immigration country, and this has led to an increase in crime committed by immigrants.”,
 “Immigration significantly improves cultural diversity in Germany.”
 “German technological advances are leading in Europe.”,
 “It is reported that immigration costs more than it brings to the economy and social systems.”,
 “Sports achievements have improved through increased investment in youth programs.”
17. In your day-to-day life, how often do any of the following things happen to you?
- You are treated with less courtesy than other people are.
 - You are treated with less respect than other people are.
 - You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.
 - People act as if they think you are not smart.
 - People act as if they are afraid of you.
 - People act as if they think you are dishonest.
 - People act as if they're better than you are.
 - You are called names or insulted.
 - You are threatened or harassed.

A: Almost every day, At least once a week, A few times a month, A few times a year, Less than once a year, Never

[VI. Control Group]

18. In your day-to-day life, how often do any of the following things happen to you?
- You are treated with less courtesy than other people are.
 - You are treated with less respect than other people are.

- c. You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.
- d. People act as if they think you are not smart.
- e. People act as if they are afraid of you.
- f. People act as if they think you are dishonest.
- g. People act as if they're better than you are.
- h. You are called names or insulted.
- i. You are threatened or harassed.

A: Almost every day, At least once a week, A few times a month, A few times a year,
Less than once a year, Never

[VII. Group Identification]

- 19. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means “very distant” and 7 “very close”, how distant or close do you feel to the Germans? A: 7-point scale (1 = very distant, 7 = very close)
- 20. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means “very distant” and 7 “very close”, how distant or close do you feel to Turks? A: 7-point scale (1 = very distant, 7 = very close)
- 21. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means “very distant” and 7 means “very close”, how distant or close do you feel to other immigrants in Germany? A: 7-point scale (1 = very distant, 7 = very close)

[VII. Immigration Attitudes]

- 22. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 7 means “strongly agree”, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about immigration in Germany?
 - a. Immigration opportunities for foreigners should be made easier.
 - b. Germany should allow people from poorer countries outside Europe to enter and live here.
 - c. Immigrants are taking away jobs in Germany.
 - d. People who come here and commit crimes should be expelled from the country.
 - e. Germany is becoming a worse place to live due to immigration from other countries.
 - f. Germany must take more measures to prevent further immigration.

A: 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 = Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree)

[X. Party Policies Preferences]

- 23. How do you feel about the policies of the following political parties? Please rate each party on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means “very negative” and 10 means “very positive”. A: 11-point scale (0 = very negative, 10 = very positive)

[XI. Voting Preferences]

- 24. If elections were held next Sunday, how likely would you be to vote for the following parties? Please rate each party on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means “not at all likely” and 10 means “very likely”. A: 11-scale (0 = very likely, 10 = not at all likely)

[XII. Exit Message]

Exit Message A (for Facebook ads, Snowball sampling, WhatsApp Group and TGD)

25. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! The aim of this study is to investigate how so-called “media framing” influences participants' opinions. During the survey, some of the participants may have been confronted with prejudiced media images. Please note that these “framings” were used solely to assess their impact on attitudes and do not reflect our personal views or those of the university. We are aware of the sensitivity of this issue and assure you that all responses have been anonymized and will be used for academic purposes only. If you have any questions, please contact the email master.thesis.ceu@gmail.com. As a token of our appreciation, you can enter a prize draw for the chance to win a €100 Amazon voucher. The winner will be chosen at random at the end of June and notified via the email address provided. If you would like to take part in the prize draw, please enter your e-mail address below. Please do not enter any other personal information. Your e-mail address will only be used for the prize draw. All e-mail addresses will be deleted at the end of the competition.
26. If you do not wish to enter your e-mail address, you can select one of the following organizations to receive the prize of 100 euros as a donation if you win. A: Ärzte ohne Grenzen, Deutsche Kinderkrebsstiftung, Deutsches Rotes Kreuz (DRK), Deutsche Umwelthilfe, Greenpeace Deutschland, Terre des Femmes, UNICEF Deutschland, Welthungerhilfe, WWF Deutschland

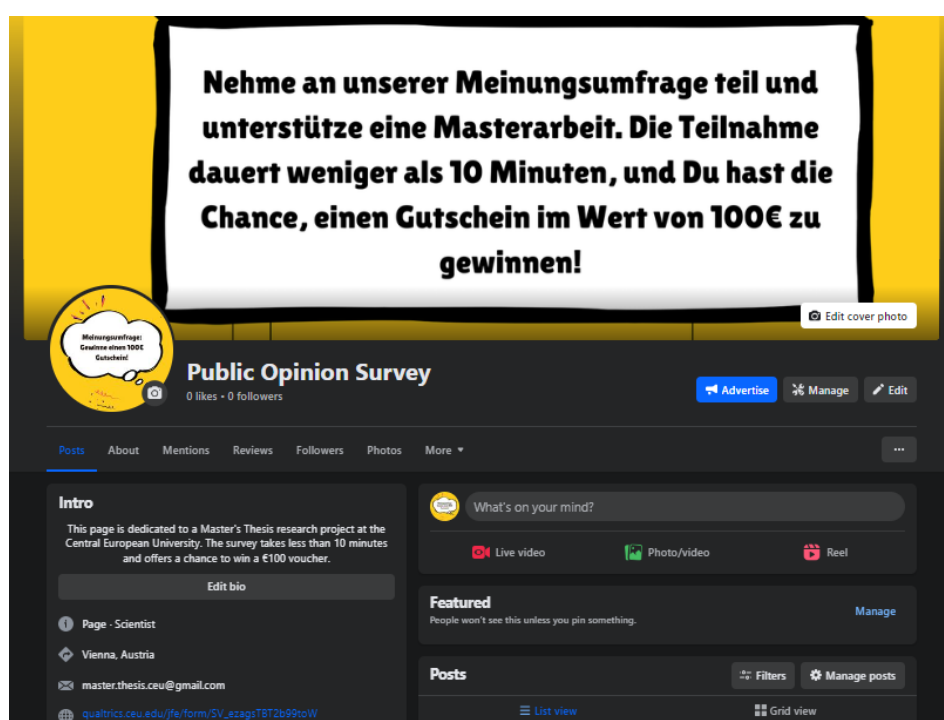
Exit Message B (for Prolific)

27. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! The aim of this study is to examine how so-called “media framing” influences the opinions of participants. During the survey, some participants may have been confronted with potentially biased media images. Please note that these “framings” were solely intended to assess their impact on attitudes and do not reflect our personal views or those of the university. We are aware of the sensitivity of this topic and assure you that all responses have been anonymized and will only be used for scientific purposes. If you have any questions, please contact us at master.thesis.ceu@gmail.com
28. What is your Prolific ID? Please note that this answer should automatically be filled in with the correct ID. If your Prolific ID is not automatically filled in correctly, please enter it manually.
29. As a token of our appreciation, you can participate in a lottery where you have the chance to win an additional 25 euros. The winner will be selected randomly and notified via Prolific. Please ensure that you have entered your Prolific ID correctly in the previous answer. If you would like to participate in the lottery, please select “I would like to participate”. A: I would like to participate, I would not like to participate
30. Thank you for participating in this survey. Please click the button below to return to Prolific and register your contribution.

Appendix B: Survey Promotion

Various methods were employed to distribute the survey. The initial method concerned Facebook advertising. As required, I created a Facebook page (Figure B1) and configured a campaign, which also required the use of an accompanying image. For the targeting ads, I used the general category “expats” and expats’ families, which I accompanied with other interests such as Turkey or Turkish provinces as a location, Turkish music, literature, cuisine, drama shows or sport teams to narrow the targeting on people of Turkish descent. It is important to clarify that these elements were not exclusive, but they rather targeted users who matched any one of these criteria or a combination thereof. Furthermore, the targeting included people of all genders above 18 years old, living in Germany and speaking Turkish or German.

Figure B 1: Facebook Page of the ad



After being highlighted by a comment from a user and the advice of the CEU legal office, a legal Imprint was added to the Facebook page to provide users with some basic information about who is liable for this study. This Information is displayed in the About section

Figure B 2: Legal Imprint of Facebook page

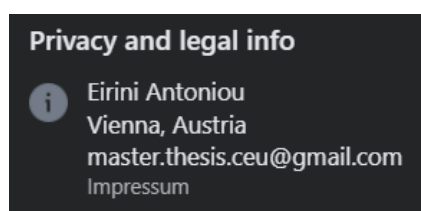


Figure B 3: Facebook advertisement

However, as the Facebook ad was not proving successful, other methods were also implemented. The format of the promotion in those methods simulated the Facebook campaign as much as possible to achieve the same kind of exposure of the participants in the pre-treatment setting. The poster used in the promotion of the survey for the snowballing and the WhatsApp groups is displayed in Figure B4. It also included the legal Imprint itself, since the people that received it did not have access to the Facebook page. The same poster was also sent to the association Turkish Community in Germany (TGD) from which in the end no participants were recruited.

Finally, the main method of data collection turned out to be Prolific which unfortunately does not allow the use of images but also does not allow providing incentives that are non-monetary (like the Amazon voucher used in the other methods) and attributed outside the platform. Therefore it was decided to offer as an incentive, in addition to the payment of the participants. This incentive regarded the possibility of participating in a draw for 25 euros using the bonus payment function of Prolific. As the platform's guidelines underline, this process was also described in detail in the description of the survey on Prolific for the sake of transparency. The survey on Prolific was displayed to the participants as in Figure B5.

Figure B 4: *Poster for Snowball sampling and WhatsApp groups*

Public Opinion Survey
Gewinne 100€ durch die Teilnahme an unserer Umfrage!



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Nehme an unserer Meinungsumfrage teil und unterstütze eine Masterarbeit. Die Teilnahme dauert weniger als 10 Minuten, und Du hast die Chance, einen Amazon-Gutschein im Wert von 100€ zu gewinnen!

Impressum
Eirini Antoniou
Vienna, Austria
master.thesis.ceu@gmail.com

Figure B 5: *Survey in Prolific*



Meinungsumfrage: Gewinne zusätzliche 25€ durch die Teilnahme an unserer Umfrage!

By student.ceu.edu

£1.50 • £11.25/hr
8 mins
198 places

Nehme an unserer Meinungsumfrage teil und unterstütze eine Masterarbeit. Die Teilnahme dauert weniger als 10 Minuten und Sie haben die Chance, bei einer Verlosung zusätzliche 25€ zu gewinnen!

Um an der Verlosung teilzunehmen, vergewissern Sie sich, dass Sie Ihre Prolific-ID korrekt ausfüllen und nach Abschluss der Umfrage Ihr Einverständnis zur Teilnahme geben. Einer der Teilnehmer wird am Ende der Datenerhebung nach dem Zufallsprinzip ausgewählt und erhält das Preisgeld und eine Benachrichtigung über Prolific.

Devices you can use to take this study:

Desktop
 Mobile
 Tablet

[Open study link in a new window](#)

Appendix C: Assumptions Check

Following the model-building process, the fully integrated models were checked for conformity with the assumptions for the multiple regressions to ensure reliability. The assumption checks tested both statistically and graphically for linearity, homoscedasticity, independence, normality, and outliers (Regorz, 2021a, Regorz, 2021b).

The examination of the residuals generally did not reveal severe violations of normal distribution or homoscedasticity. While some discrepancies appeared between the graphical and statistical assessments, with slight violations in one method but not the other, these were never simultaneous and thus deemed not severe. However, severe violations regarding these assumptions were observed in the models for policy support and voting propensity concerning the AfD. Violations are likely due to the skewed distribution of the variables, which could indicate a floor effect where most participants indicated very low support for the AfD and close to zero propensity to vote. Further diagnostics of linearity were met in all models.

High levels of multicollinearity were found for the levels of education across all models, indicating a high correlation among them. This can be attributed to the fact that the levels of education are quite extensive, with nine categories, and belong to the same underlying factor. For this reason, the interpretation of the education effects should be considered with great caveat. Due to their intercorrelation, the estimated coefficients are unstable and can change with small modifications to the model. However, for the other variables, the absence of strong multicollinearity allows for their interpretation despite the high multicollinearity of the education predictors, as these biases pertain only to the education factor. The assumption of independence is also given, which results from the study design in which each participant can only contribute to the variables in one of the conditions due to the controlled experimental design. Furthermore, strong outliers were present only in the case of AfD voting propensity.

Based on these results, multiple regression analysis was considered appropriate for most models. However, the violations for AfD policies support and voting propensity were too severe to interpret the models reliably. Therefore, given the skewed distribution and violations of homoscedasticity, a non-parametric comparison of means was performed using the Wilcoxon rank sum test (Mann-Whitney U test), which is appropriate for these types of violations.

Appendix D: Further Regression Tables

This is a summary Table of the fully integrated models (M3) for the measurements of “Closeness to Germans” and “Closeness to Turks”.

Table D 1: *Full Model for “Close to Germans” and “Close to Turks”*

Variables	Closeness to Germans M3			Closeness to Turks M3		
	b	SE	p	b	SE	p
Intercept (Control)	0.480	0.24	0.044*	0.907	0.25	.00***
Group - Treatment	-0.031	0.03	0.285	-0.196	0.03	0.534
Citizenship	-0.100	0.05	0.065	-0.145	0.06	0.011*
Second Immigrant Generation	0.052	0.07	0.470	-0.068	0.08	0.376
Third Immigrant Generation	0.160	0.12	0.198	-0.280	0.13	0.035*
Age (centered)	0.004	0.00	0.100	-0.001	0.00	0.548
Gender	0.014	0.03	0.623	-0.036	0.03	0.256
General Secondary School	0.256	0.27	0.340	-0.122	0.29	0.671
Intermediate Secondary School	-0.046	0.25	0.854	-0.090	0.27	0.734
Technical Secondary School	-0.075	0.24	0.758	-0.188	0.26	0.470
Academic Secondary School	-0.087	0.23	0.712	-0.244	0.25	0.334
Vocational School	0.082	0.25	0.744	-0.318	0.27	0.236
University of Applied Sciences	-0.120	0.24	0.614	-0.124	0.25	0.624
University (BA & MA)	-0.050	0.23	0.830	-0.210	0.25	0.395
Doctorate (PhD)	-0.193	0.24	0.420	-0.323	0.25	0.207
Low Income	0.086	0.05	0.117	-0.015	0.06	0.799
Average Income	0.130	0.05	0.015*	0.026	0.06	0.653
High Income	0.147	0.07	0.034*	0.068	0.07	0.357
Very High Income	0.014	0.17	0.935	-0.181	0.19	0.392
Years in Germany	0.001	0.00	0.521	0.004	0.00	0.019*
	R ²		p	R ²		p
	0.073		0.006	0.047		0.041

Note: b = unstandardized fixed coefficients, SE = standard errors, p = p-values, R² = adjusted R². Dummy-coded: 0 = control group, 1 = intervention group (Group); 0 = female, 1 = male (Gender).

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

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