A Nationalist Backlash to International Refugee Law: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Turkey

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Abstract

How do international laws affect citizens' willingness to accept refugees? In full and partial democracies, citizens' attitudes can influence national policy. A growing literature suggests international institutions can influence citizens' attitudes on foreign policy issues, and therefore lead to policy change. But those studies are almost entirely confined to domestic human rights and U.S.-based respondents; none consider refugee policy. Using data from a survey experiment administered in September 2017 via face-to-face interviews with 1335 citizens of Turkey, we investigate how international norms affect citizens' willingness to accept refugees. Our findings are surprising: reminding people about the government's responsibility under the Refugee Convention to accept refugees triggers a backfire effect, *decreasing* support for accepting them. This effect appears driven by respondents who support the incumbent AKP party and by lower-educated respondents. We therefore provide evidence that international refugee law – and perhaps international institutions generally – can trigger a political backlash, undermining the very policies that they promote.

Keywords: *migration, immigration, refugees, experiment*

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I Introduction

The volume of refugee flows has exploded in recent years. New conflicts in Syria and South Sudan have caused millions to migrate to neighboring countries and across the globe. Ongoing conflicts in Iraq, Libya, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Myanmar, and other places have driven out millions more. The global stock of refugees is now estimated at almost 20 million, up from about 10 million just a decade ago.[1] If some of the predictions about the effects of climate change materialize, many more may follow. Massive refugee migrations obviously have enormous humanitarian implications, both for the migrants and the people who stay behind. They also affect the economies, culture, domestic politics, and general welfare of receiving states. For those reasons, the global refugee crisis is increasingly seen as among the biggest challenges for global politics and international cooperation.

The main international set of rules relevant to this crisis is the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Optional Protocol (the "Refugee Convention"). The Convention requires states to extend certain legal protections to those, who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion," find themselves outside of their country of nationality. This instrument was drafted with the atrocities of World War II in mind. Critics have since noted its shortcomings in addressing current challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, civil wars, and episodes of gang violence. Most notably, only a small portion of those seeking refuge fall within the Convention's narrow definition of refugee, and the Convention does not require states to provide permanent solutions for refugees, who can reside in camps for decades (Goodwin-Gill and McAdam 2007; Martin 2007; Fitzpatrick 1996). Moreover, since protections extend only to those who reach a country's borders, the burden of accepting refugees under the Convention recently has fallen most heavily on nearby states, many of which are ill-equipped to handle them. Countries in the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia have taken the lion's share of refugees, even though many are themselves experiencing conflict or economic distress. Despite these issues, the Refugee Convention is the only major international institution[2] that imposes meaningful obligations on states to aid refugees who reach their shores.[3]

The Refugee Convention is legally binding on states, but its actual power to change state behavior is limited by two aspects of international refugee law: it is ill-suited to reciprocity-based enforcement, and no international legal body exists to enforce the Convention's terms.[4] The force of many treaties stems largely from one or both of these two

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[1] UN High Commissioner for Refugees, *Population Statistics Database*, available at http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview (last accessed April 6, 2019).

[2] We use the definition of "institution" prevalent in the the political science, economics, and international relations literatures, which define institutions as "human constraints" comprising "both informal constraints ... and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights)" (North 1991, 97) (see also Morrow 2014).

[3] A series of regional instruments within Latin America, Europe, and Africa impose additional rules on participating states, but their scope is limited.

[4] The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has some monitoring responsibilities but no legal authority to sanction non-compliance.

features (Guzman 2008). In their absence, international refugee law's power to affect state behavior depends largely on domestic legal and political mechanisms, such as judicial sanctions and political mobilization (Simmons 2009).

A review of recent headlines shows that many countries' political climates are increasingly hostile toward international legal obligations regarding refugees. States have developed new ways around those obligations, such as intercepting and turning back refugees at sea or processing them outside the national territory (Goldenziel 2015). In 2015 Hungary began building a razor-wire fence across its border.[5] Other policies simply flout international law. In 2017, Hungary adopted an accelerated asylum procedure whereby asylum claims could be rejected within a day,[6] a policy that some commentators argue violates the Convention.[7] In 2018, the U.S. Department of Justice implemented a policy of criminally prosecuting all would-be immigrants – including asylum-seekers – who cross the U.S.-Mexico border outside designated ports of entry and some asylum-seekers at ports of entry.[8] A primary goal of the policy is ostensibly to discourage refugees (and other migrants without visas) from entering the country, which may violate the Convention. Even Denmark, which was the first state to ratify the Convention, has called for it to be renegotiated entirely if the crises persist.[9] Meanwhile, right-wing parties riding anti-internationalist and anti-immigrant platforms have gained strength in the United States and Europe. Their growing power has important implications for immigrants, as many candidates and elected officials have called for state action to stem the flows of refugee flows across their borders.

In this article, we explore popular attitudes towards the Refugee Convention and the extent to which it sways public support for admitting refugees. Specifically, we investigate whether support for policies to reduce refugee flows is affected by respondents' being told that these policies violate international law. The motivating assumption is that popular support for international law is a key mechanism through which international legal obligations are upheld or violated. If citizens oppose their countries' violating international legal law, they might successfully pressure democratic governments to avoid those violations or punish those governments that commit them (e.g., Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1992; Rodman 1998). If, however, the public is skeptical or even hostile to international legal constraints, the opposite might happen.

To explore the Refugee Convention's potential impact on support for domestic refugee policy, we fielded a survey experiment in Turkey. Working with a Turkish public polling firm, we conducted 1335 face-to-face interviews throughout Turkey in September 2017. Ours

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[5] "Migrant crisis: Hungary's closed border leaves many stranded." BBC News, Sept. 15, 2015, *available at* http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34260071.

[6] "The End of the Right to Asylum in Hungary?," The European Database of Asylum Law, May 3, 2017, *available at* http://www.asylumlawdatabase.eu/en/journal/end-right-asylum-hungary.

[7] See Steven Simmons, "Hungary Refugee Policy and the Refugee Convention," MICH. ST. INT'L L. REV. LEGAL FORUM (May 23, 2017), *available at* https://www.msuilr.org/msuilr-legalforum-blogs/2017/5/23/hungary-refugee-policy-and-the-refugee-convention.

[8] American Civil Liberties Union, MS. L v. ICE, *available at* https://www.aclu.org/cases/ms-l-v-ice.

[9] "Danish PM questions Refugee Convention," Politico EU Edition, Dec. 28, 2015, *available at* https://www.politico.eu/article/danish-pm-questions-refugee-convention/.

is among the first survey experiments conducted in the Middle East or Africa on attitudes toward refugees, where nearly half of the world's refugees reside. We are also among the first to examine citizens' willingness to accept refugees using an experimental approach. Moreover, we know of no existing studies that explore international refugee law's impact systematically using either experiments or observational data.

Our findings are surprising. Based on prior research on the impact of other areas of international law, we expected the Refugee Convention to sway popular opinion by decreasing support for initiatives that violate the Convention. Instead, we find robust evidence of the opposite effect: respondents who were told that rejecting refugees would violate international law showed *greater* support for those anti-refugee initiatives. This result implies a backlash against the Convention, perhaps spurred by a general hostility towards international law.

Notably, this effect appears to be driven by two groups of respondents. The first group comprises supporters of President Erdoğan's nationalist party, the Justice & Development Party ("Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi" or "AKP"). The second group comprises lower-educated respondents. Both groups respond to knowledge of the Refugee Convention's requirements by indicating increased support for anti-refugee policies that would violate it. We validate, explain, and expand on these findings by consulting (1) existing survey data and qualitative sources on Turkish attitudes toward nationalism and international laws and organizations, (2) the content of President Erdoğan's public statements over the last several years, and (3) and the opinions of Turkish experts on the relationship between politics and international law in Turkey. We conclude that Turkey's longstanding, contentious relationship with international bodies and institutions – which are perceived as Western-dominated – have caused nationalist-oriented citizens of Turkey to exhibit a backlash to those institutions' making demands on Turkey. We believe that this relationship between the Turkish state, its people, and international politics drives the unexpected backlash to international law that we observe.

This article contributes to at least two different bodies of research. First, we add to the growing experimental literature on the effect of international law on popular opinion (Tomz 2008; Wallace 2013, 2014; Chilton 2014). These studies have generally found that respondents are less likely to support policies that violate international law, suggesting that they value international law *qua* law. Our findings indicate the opposite. While we acknowledge and discuss the possibility that our results are unique to Turkey and/or to international refugee law, it is also plausible that they provide a glimpse into a more general challenge to the international legal order: a growing polarization around international law and an increasing opposition among some groups towards international cooperation. Indeed, one of the two other experimental studies on international law to date conducted outside the United States finds a similar backfire effect among one treatment group in Israel (Lupu and Wallace 2017). Further exploration of when international law can backfire is therefore an important avenue for future research.

Second, we expand the research on attitudes towards immigrants. A large body of survey and experimental research over the last two decades has investigated the predictors of citizen preferences for immigration (e.g., Wright, Levy and Citrin 2016; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015; Sniderman, Hagendoorn and Prior 2004). But this literature has not meaningfully

addressed either international law or attitudes towards refugees specifically.

The rest of the article proceeds as follows. Section II provides a brief background on public opinion, refugees, and international law and motivates the research question. Section III explains the case selection, research design, data-collection strategy, and methods of analysis. Section IV discusses our analyses. Section V qualitatively validates, explains, and expands on the story behind our empirical findings. Section VI concludes with suggestions for future research.

II   Public Opinion, Refugees, and International Law

A.   International Law and Public Opinion

A growing body of research explores the degree to which international law can sway popular opinion (e.g., Chilton and Versteeg 2016; Wallace 2013; Putnam and Shapiro 2017; Chilton 2015; Kreps and Wallace 2016). This research has two motivating assumptions, both with empirical support. The first is that, where international legal enforcement mechanisms are weak (as they often are), domestic norms, laws, and organizations can sometimes facilitate states' compliance (e.g., Simmons 2009; Lupu 2013, 2015; Hafner-Burton 2013; Cope and Creamer 2016).

The second and related assumption is one of the core insights of democratic theory: that elected leaders respond to popular opinion, even, to a lesser extent, in quasi-democracies and competitive authoritarian regimes (Magaloni 2006; Frye, Gehlbach, Marquardt and Reuter 2017; Guriev and Treisman 2015). Though popular opinion may have somewhat less impact on foreign relations policy issues, such as whether to go to war (e.g., Saunders 2015), theoretical and empirical research shows that popular opinion can still meaningfully affect state foreign policy, including policy touching on international law (e.g., Kaempfer and Lowenberg 1992; Rodman 1998). [10] Specifically, public opinion can affect immigration policy (Fetzer 2012). Public opposition to liberal immigration policies can cause leaders to implement restrictionist policies (Schain 2006), particularly in election years (Fetzer 2012), and particularly if the opposition is sustained over time (Moran 1987).

Therefore, if international law can impact popular opinion, and public opinion can impact policy, then domestic and international pressure groups should be able to use international law in normative arguments aimed at persuading leaders to adopt policies consistent with those international rules. Overall, then, we should expect international law to cause both (1) domestic political and legal mobilization for compliance; and (2) increased government international law compliance—*but only* if the public is positively predisposed toward international law.

Experimental studies implicitly building on this reasoning have generally shown that, indeed, international law has a significant, positive normative impact on the public's pol-

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[10] Indeed, legislators in some countries routinely frame their arguments over foreign policy in international law terms (Cope 2015).

icy preferences (e.g., Chilton and Versteeg 2016; Wallace 2013; Putnam and Shapiro 2017; Chilton 2015; Kreps and Wallace 2016). That is, when respondents are told that a certain domestic or foreign-relations policy is consistent with international law, they are more likely to support that policy, and when told that it violates international law, they are less likely to. These findings are significant for their implication that international law *qua* law can have a significant normative pull on some electorates.

Other studies on how international law can impact human rights outcomes through other mechanisms are also optimistic (see generally Cope, Creamer and Versteeg 2019). For example, Simmons (2009) has found that human rights treaties are most effectively enforced through domestic political mobilization. For instance, Israeli activists successfully used the Convention Against Torture to pressure the Knesset to not overrule a high court decision, *Public Committee Against Torture in Israel v. Israel*, [11] on torture by Israeli security forces (Simmons 2009). While Israelis are generally skeptical of many international institutions, generally speaking, this kind of mobilization is surely more forthcoming and more effective when the domestic public views international law favorably. Moreover, domestic courts sometimes curb government policies that violate international law [2-2](Benvenisti 2008), and public-law scholars have shown how both social mobilization and popular opinion can affect their decisions as well (Dahl 2017; Epstein, Knight and Shvetsova 2001).

Nonetheless, these findings give little insight into whether *most* forms of international law – including refugee law – sway *most* of the world's citizens. First, with only two exceptions (Anjum, Chilton and Usman n.d.; Lupu and Wallace 2017), [12] all of the existing studies were conducted in North America with North American subjects. This is potentially a limitation because we would expect that international law's normative pull differs across the world's legal and political cultures.

Second, because the vast majority of studies concern human rights or international humanitarian law, these findings may not generalize to other legal areas. Despite the fact that both human rights and refugee law depend on domestic mechanisms, it is plausible that international refugee norms impact public opinion differently. This is true for two reasons. First, while international human rights law applies to all those in a territory, the majority of those covered by human rights protections are citizens. It is possible that respondents view international refugee law differently because it entails legal obligations owed to political "others," that is, foreigners seeking admission. It requires states to dedicate resources toward outsiders with different cultural, ethnic, or religious backgrounds from that of the state's majority. While citizens may accept the legitimacy or normative force of international norms mandating how the government treats *themselves*, they might be warier of external norms that

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[11] H.C. 5100/94, Public Committee Against Torture in Israel v. Israel (Sept. 9, 1999) 26

[12] Anjum, Chilton and Usman (n.d.) found that telling respondents at a Pakistani university that a UN agency supported a proposed policy concerning women increased respondent support for the policy. Given that this survey sample comprised 76% respondents with graduate degrees, the finding probably does not generalize to the normative effect of international law on other citizens' attitudes. In fact, as we explain below, we find that education is a strong predictor of response to an international law cue. Lupu and Wallace (2017) found that Indian respondents were less likely to support a policy once they were told it violated international law, while Israeli respondents so told were actually more likely to support that policy.

protect political strangers and others. The second reason that the Refugee Convention may affect public opinion differently from rights and humanitarian law is that many of the destination countries have seen a rising wave of national-populist sentiment, which might further undermine the Refugee Convention's ability to sway popular opinion. Right-wing nationalist parties have been growing in the United States, Hungary, Poland, Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, and other states. To some extent, these views are directed at globalist and international institutions generally. But the national-populist wave also has revealed a pervasive anti-immigrant sentiment among the public in these countries, and these parties have built winning coalitions in part on anti-immigrant campaigns. It is possible, therefore in countries where anti-immigrant sentiments run high, respondents will be particularly hostile towards international refugee law. Indeed, despite experimental studies finding a positive normative effect of international law on human rights attitudes, government practice on refugees has often deviated from international law, and those practices have often received little public criticism. [13]

B.   Popular Attitudes Toward Refugees

Though experimental studies of international law's normative impact on public opinion have not generally addressed migration or migrants, a body of political science literature has explored the general determinants of attitudes toward migrants. Among its most important findings is that symbolic and ideological concerns can be strong predictors of negative attitudes towards immigrants, more so than economic conditions (e.g., Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Sniderman, Hagendoorn and Prior 2004). While some studies find a relationship between economic conditions and attitudes toward immigration (Wilkes, Guppy and Farris 2008; Kehrberg 2007), the bulk of more recent research suggests that symbolic or ideological concerns, i.e., concerns over "threats to intangible social constructs, such as the national economy or national identity about the nation as a whole," better explain attitudes toward migrants (e.g., Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Sniderman, Hagendoorn and Prior 2004).

These studies offer important insights into how people view immigrants, including refugees, but they provide only limited insights into our question of interest. First, most of them concern migrants generally rather than refugees. Second, none of the studies in this literature have explored the impact of refugee or immigration law on attitudes towards migrants. Third, as with the studies on international law's normative impact, these studies have a limited geographic scope. All but a few were conducted in Western, migrant-receiving countries (Europe and North America) and not in Asia, Africa, or the Middle East (Alrababa'h, Dillon, Williamson, Hainmueller, Hangartner and Weinstein n.d.). Notably, over 85% of the world's refugees now reside in developing countries, with a large fraction in the Middle East. As Alrababa'h et al. (n.d.) argue in a working paper, the literature's "almost exclusive focus"

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[13] *See, e.g.*, Sale v. Haitian Centers Council, 509 U.S. 155 (1993) (holding that a U.S. policy of repatriating refuge-seeking Haitians intercepted on the high seas does not violate U.S. law or the Refugee Convention). Given that the experimental surveys conducted in the United States have not addressed refugees or immigration broadly, these real-world policy and practice examples do not necessarily undercut the past experimental findings.

on the West and the "resulting imbalance" between where the studies' locations and where migrants reside is "a major limitation of existing academic knowledge on this topic."

Responding to this deficit, a few scholars have just recently turned to the Middle East and Asia to gauge the determinants of attitudes toward refugees. For instance, although they do not address international law or norms, Getmansky, Sınmazdemir and Zeitzoff (2018) gauge some determinants of Turkey's citizens' attitudes toward refugees. They find that respondents who received information about refugees' ties to militant groups predictably viewed them less favorably, while emphasizing their economic costs generally had no discernible effect. Likewise, Alrababa'h et al. (n.d.) find that humanitarian and cultural concerns trumped economic ones in Jordanian citizens' attitudes toward Syrian refugees. Thus, at least as to the general determinants of attitudes toward refugees, the little experimental research to date fielded in the Middle East has found similar patterns and determinants of attitudes as past research conducted in North America and Europe. This suggests that findings from Middle Eastern refugee-receiving countries like Turkey may generalize better to attitudes elsewhere than some might have expected. At the same time, however, those studies do not consider whether and how international law can change attitudes.

III Research Design

As we witness a backlash against both international law and immigration in many of the traditional refugee destination countries, can the Refugee Convention sway popular opinion? If so, how? To gain insight into these questions, we fielded a survey experiment about attitudes toward refugees in Turkey.

A. Case Selection

We chose Turkey for four main reasons. First, as stated, one of the major limitations of the experimental literature in international law is that it focuses almost entirely on U.S. respondents; all but two studies were fielded in the United States. Given American exceptionalism in international law and internationalism (e.g., Koh 2003), it is unclear to what extent findings about U.S. attitudes toward international law generalize to those from other countries. Indeed, as mentioned, the only published study to date that includes non-U.S. respondents also suggests that U.S.-based studies may not generalize to other parts of the world (Lupu and Wallace 2017).

Second, Turkey is the leading destination for refugees, with nearly 3.4 million Syrians having fled there since the crisis began in 2011. No other country has accepted more from any location. This means that public attitudes in Turkey toward immigration could matter for those fleeing conflict and persecution elsewhere in the Middle East. [14] Incoming refugees

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[14] We found that citizens of Turkey were generally knowledgeable about the number of refugees that Turkey had accepted; 72.3% of respondents knew that the country had received over 3 million Syrian refugees. About another 27% chose "1 million–3 million."

are now subject to a high-profile 2016 agreement with the European Union, which eases EU travel barriers and resumes EU accession talks in exchange for Turkey's accepting additional refugees. Some have argued that the recent refugee deal between Turkey and the European Union is critical to the future of the EU, and even liberal democracy in Europe. [15]

Third, Turkey has been swept up in the nationalist wave of recent years, with several parties taking nationalist positions. For instance, the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, or "MHP") has been called "AKP's lifeline" because the two parties have formed a coalition on moral and social issues, as well as supporting President Erdoğan's reelection in 2018 and the 'yes' position on the 2017 Erdoğan-backed constitutional referendum. Our own data show that MHP members are considerably more hostile to refugees than are members of the AKP, probably in part because of Erdoğan's positions. This finding is consistent with the party's public positions on refugees, which is less open than the AKP's and warier of security risks from the refugees. The MHP is also the chief modern proponent of pan-Turkism, a movement that seeks to unite all Turkic people under one sovereign.

The center-left, democratic-socialist Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, or "CHP") is the chief opposition to the AKP and has been perhaps the most critical of accepting refugees. [16] Several other minor nationalist parties exist with just a few or no representation in parliament. [2-1, 2-2]

Yet President Erdoğan, who leads the nationalist AKP, has supported accepting the largest number of Syrian refugees of any other country, which gives Turkish politics a wrinkle not present in most other states that have taken a nationalist turn. Some have suggested that this paradox – the nationalist Erdoğan administration's unusual openness to Syrian refugees – stems from his vision of reviving the past glory of the Ottoman empire or a sense of solidarity with the predominantly Sunni-Muslim population fleeing Syria. The AKP seeks to extend Turkey's domain under the banner of neo-Ottomanism, which envisions the restoration of the Ottoman empire, which once included much of Syria. Yet the refugee policy has grown unpopular with most citizens in Turkey. [17] Our survey found that 80.7% of Turkish respondents generally opposed accepting additional refugees, with majorities in the four largest parties preferring to turn away further refugees (albeit at very different levels) [2-2]. Turkey therefore provides a unique survey setting: a context where the public have strong nationalist feelings (especially AKP and MHP voters) and a place that is home to a large

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[15] *See, e.g.*, "Newsletter of the European Stability Initiative" (Oct. 11, 2016) ("What happens if the agreement fails? ... [T]he Western Balkans turn into a battleground for migrants, smugglers, border guards, soldiers and vigilante groups, destabilising an already fragile region. And ever larger numbers begin to arrive again in Central Europe. Such a scenario would be a devastating blow to those leaders in Europe who argued that it is possible to have a humane and effective EU policy on border management while respecting the refugee convention.")

[16]Our survey data show findings consistent with this position, as its members are the most supportive of any party of stopping the Syrian refugee inflows.

[17] Bowing to public pressure, the Turkish government reportedly returned thousands of Syrians to their country in 2016. "Turkey forcibly returned thousands of Syrian refugees to war zone — Amnesty," 4/1/2016, RT, *available at* https://www.rt.com/news/338011-turkey-syria-refugees-amnesty/.

volume of refugees.

Fourth, for technical international legal reasons, there exists some ambiguity about the extent of Turkey's obligations under the Refugee Convention. Turkey ratified the 1967 Optional Protocol (which extends the application of the 1951 Convention both geographically and temporally to include refugees from outside of Europe and for events that took place after 1951) with a reservation that it does not accept the extension of the Convention's geographic scope.[18] If that reservation is valid, Turkey is obligated to provide protections to refugees from Europe only; it has no legal obligations in the context of the Syrian crisis. Yet such a reservation most certainly undermines the object and purpose of the Convention, and its validity under the law of treaties is therefore uncertain. (Notably, in discussing its obligations under the Convention and in its actual treatment of Syrian refugees seeking entry, Turkey itself has not emphasized the limited geographic scope of its obligations.) International legal experts can therefore disagree in good faith about whether Turkey must accept Syrian refugees. We leverage this ambiguity by designing a survey experiment that presents participants with two distinct and legally defensible views on international law: that rejecting refugees violates the Convention, and that it does not.[19]

B. Data Sample

Our population of interest is all adult citizens of Turkey. We worked with KONDA Research and Consultancy, a leading Turkish survey research firm with significant experience conducting survey experiments.[20] KONDA first recruited a nationally representative, probability-based sample of citizens of Turkey. The sample was stratified based on the population and educational attainment level of neighborhoods and villages.[21] We collected data on these characteristics from the Address Based Population Registration System (ADNKS) in Turkey, and the results of the November 1, 2015, General Elections in neighborhoods and villages. Following stratification of the sample, 56 neighborhoods and villages throughout Turkey were randomly selected. Figure 1 shows the geographic distribution of respondents across the country. KONDA surveyors then randomly selected and conducted face-to-face

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[18] https://treaties.un.org/pages/ShowMTDSGDetails.aspx?src=UNTSONLINE&tabid=2&mtdsg_no=V-5&chapter=5&lang=en.

[19] Our primary interest, though, is in the first treatment, as we wish to understand whether international legal obligations influence public support for refugees, and not whether the absence of these legal obligations influences support.

[20] KONDA has extensive experience fielding surveys like this, including recruiting representative samples of respondents. U.S. embassy officials in Turkey have praised KONDA's professionalism and methods. *See* https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09ISTANBUL180_a.html (noting that "Emre Erdogan noted Konda used good methods and was not influenced by politics. ... The head of Genar Research, M. Teyfik Goksu told us Konda ... strive[s] to conduct sound polling without a political bias ... (SBU) Chairman Agir Dir told us Konda has been conducting scientific polls in Turkey for over two decades, following methods used by American polling firms.").

[21] Local administrative units were classified as rural, urban, or metropolitan, and the sample was drawn from all 12 Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) regions across Turkey.

interviews with 1,335 respondents from residences across these locations.[22] The survey was fielded on September 23 and 24, 2017.[23]

Though erosions in free speech protections – and Turkey's recent withdrawal from various international collaboration efforts following the 2016 coup attempt[24] – have made residents of Turkey wary of speaking freely on certain political questions, this concern is less salient for this survey and for questions about refugees generally. First, the surveyors acquired no contact information or other personally identifying information, so the respondents could be sure that their responses were anonymous. Second, as explained in note 20, *supra*, KONDA has conducted many other national surveys on contentious political issues in Turkey. Its accurate poll-based predictions of the most recent national election results suggest that respondents felt free to reveal their true political views – including opposition to the current regime – to KONDA pollsters. Moreover, the great majority of respondents (80.7%) revealed that they oppose accepting additional refugees, even though Turkey's open refugee policy surely would not exist in its current had President Erdoğan opposed it. [1-16][25] So while social desirability bias (Fisher 1993) and preference falsification (Kuran 1997) are common problems in conducting surveys in authoritarian contexts, we have no reason to believe those issues affected respondent answers in our survey.

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[22] The response rate (American Association for Public Opinion Research method 2) was 0.313. The refusal rate was 0.354. (Of the 2,848 people with whom the surveyors made contact, 1,335 participated.) For key demographic traits including region, the mean of the survey sample is close or equal to the mean of the Turkish population, meaning it is unlikely that the non-responses biased the results. In fact, this in-person, door-to-door survey method is the same that KONDA used in surveys that accurately predicted several recent nationwide Turkish election results.

[23] A surveyor error resulted in 1 participant not being assigned to a treatment. 43 subjects did not complete the survey. We drop these 44 respondents from our sample, leaving us with 1,292 participants. Dropping the respondents who did not complete the survey might be considered problematic because their attrition could be the result of our experimental cues (Montgomery, Nyhan and Torres 2016). To account for this possible source of bias, we estimate a multinomial logistic regression that treats missing values in our outcome measure as a meaningful response. Our results from this model are substantively similar as those we report below. This provides some evidence that attrition is not a problem for our results.

[24] Binali Yıldırım ("Turkish PM: coup suspects' testimony points to Gülen's involvement". The Guardian. 26 July 2016

[25] Since the survey was fielded in September 2017, President Erdoğan has begun to take a more restrictive approach to Syrian refugees. Mr. Erdoğan has more recently backed off his support for accepting unlimited numbers of Syrians, developed plans to return them to Turkey-controlled "safe zones" in Northern Syria, and used the refugees as leverage in negotiations with the EU, threatening to permit large numbers of refugees to travel on to Europe. Carlotta Gall, "Turkey's Radical Plan: Send a Million Refugees Back to Syria," N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 10, 2019), *available at* https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/10/world/middleeast/turkey-syria-refugees-erdogan.html. Although "Mr. Erdoğan was long seen as a champion for Syrian refugees," "[h]is tougher policy on them comes after his party suffered a humiliating defeat in the election for mayor of Istanbul in June [2019], and as a deepening recession, soaring unemployment and inflation have stoked anti-Syrian feeling among Turks." *Id.*

Figure 1: Geographic distribution of survey respondents
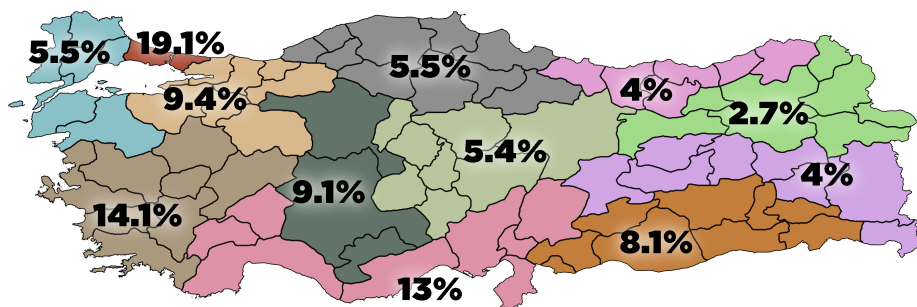
C.   Survey Design

In the first part of the survey, enumerators asked respondents to answer a series of questions about themselves. The first set of questions relates to respondents' demographics and includes gender, age, level of education, religious observance, and the party that they supported in Turkey's most recent parliamentary elections. Participants were also asked about their personal exposure to refugees. In addition to collecting these covariates, surveyors also recorded the region and size of the community where the respondents lived. [26]

In the second part of the survey, enumerators presented respondents with a brief vignette that contained our experimental manipulation. Figure 2 presents the English version [27] of the Turkish text used in the survey. [28] We used this wording for several reasons. One is that we wanted to keep the treatment short, as the survey was conducted during face-to-face interviews. The concern here, voiced by KONDA's representatives, is that some people can lose focus while being read long statements. [29] Another reason is that we wanted to avoid presenting arguments for and against accepting refugees; these arguments are complicated, and many people in Turkey are familiar with them already. For instance, 81.3% of respondents said they thought that the refugees had had a "bad influence" on the national economy, 12.0% thought they had either a "good" influence or "no effect," and just 6.7% did not know.

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[26] This part of the survey was combined with another experiment conducted by Chilton and Versteeg. While these two experiments were administered consecutively, they share only some introduction questions and were pre-registered separately. Each treatment version of the first survey contained a one-sentence variation early in the survey about the legality of blocking Wikipedia, which corresponded with one of the refugee-related treatments. The two treatment variations were each ordered randomly and are not substantively related to each other. There is thus no reason to believe that these variations affected the inferences we make about the effect of our randomized cues (Gerber and Green 2012).

[27] We worked closely with native-Turkish-speaking scholars (who are also fluent in English and who studied law in the United States) to ensure that the Turkish wording captured the subtleties of our intended meanings. All translations were then reviewed by the bilingual KONDA polling experts.

[28] Appendix A contains the original Turkish version.

[29] Initially, we developed a more richly detailed and nuanced vignette. After KONDA ran a pilot survey, though, the directors determined that some of the respondents lost focus while being read this vignette. This lead them to propose the simpler version provided above. Surveyors provided no evidence that participants wavered in attention while this version was read to them.

Including arguments for and against accepting refugees would have dramatically increased the length of the vignette, potentially increasing cognitive demand, and thereby magnifying the risk that the treatment would be lost amidst the other information.

Figure 2: English translation of short paragraph

```
You know people are migrating to other countries because of
the civil war in Syria.  Turkey has already accepted more than
3 million refugees.  But people still continue to migrate to
Turkey and other countries.  This issue has been discussed
very much in Turkey.  Suppose that the government of Turkey
has decided not to accept any new refugees, and if this policy
is passed, from the next month, Turkey will close the doors to
the newly arrived Syrians and force them to return to Syria or
to seek refuge elsewhere.  <Treatment>
```

Note: $< Treatment >$ represents the randomly assigned elements.

To test our hypotheses, we randomly varied the contents of the third paragraph. As shown in Table 1 below, there were five treatment arms — four treatments and one strict control. The treatment arms differ only in the extent to which they indicate that international law or norms promote Turkey's continuing to accept refugees.[30] The first version, our control condition, provides no additional information on international laws or norms. The second version indicates that international law requires Turkey to accept refugees; it is intended to test the effect of binding international law on citizens' foreign policy preferences. This treatment would be effective in promoting willingness to accept refugees if and only if respondents view international law as a constraining force — either because they expect that non-compliance will trigger sanctions (through international shaming, ostracizing, economic, or military), because violating it would be immoral, or because its widespread acceptance signals that complying would also be desirable for Turkey. The third version, that Turkey is not obligated under international law to accept all arriving refugees, is (like the second version) intended to test the effect of binding international law on citizens' foreign policy preferences, but in the negative. This treatment would be effective in reducing willingness to accept refugees if and only if respondents view international law as a constraining force, and knowing that it does not constrain shapes their view on the policy for one of the reasons above (sanctions, morality, or signaling). The fourth version, that many other countries have accepted refugees and plan to continue doing so, is intended to test the effect of norms, or people taking some action because others are taking it. The fifth version

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[30] Following much of the international law/relations literature (e.g., Versteeg 2015), we define "international norms" as a set of international rules (usually but not always informal and nonbinding) and "international law" as formal, binding international rules (here, a treaty). Law is thus a subset of norms. Thus, when we refer to norms, we include both (1) the global practice of accepting refugees, even where not legally required (manifested here in the 'other countries' treatment); and (2) the requirements of the binding Refugee Convention.

indicates that Turkey is one of many countries that has promised other countries to accept all arriving refugees; it is intended to test the effect of people's valuing upholding international commitments. This treatment is similar to the international law treatment above, but it emphasizes the effect of voluntary, "bottom-up" commitment, as opposed to the "top-down" imposition of rules on a country and its citizens. Treatments were completely randomized, so each participant had an equal probability of receiving any individual treatment.

Table 1: Treatments (English version)

Treatment	Text	N
1. CONTROL	*[None]*	257
2. INTERNATIONAL LAW	*Regardless, Turkey is obligated under international law to accept all arriving refugees in situations like this.*	266
3. NO INTERNATIONAL LAW	*Regardless, Turkey is not obligated under international law to accept all arriving refugees in situations like this.*	251
4. OTHER COUNTRIES	*Regardless, many countries in the Middle East — such as Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan — and many countries in Europe — such as Germany and Sweden — have collectively accepted millions of Syrian refugees into their countries and plan to continue doing so in the coming years.*	259
5. PROMISE	*Regardless, Turkey is one of many countries that has promised other countries to accept all arriving refugees in situations like this.*	258

Note: Treatments were included in the <Treatment> area of the vignette, as shown in Figure 2. Treatments were completely randomized with each participant having an equal probability of receiving any individual treatment.

In the third part of the experiment, we asked what the participants thought about the government of Turkey's newly proposed policy – as described in the Figure 2 vignette above – to start returning refugees. [31] We provided respondents with five possible answers ranging from 'Strongly Support' (5) to 'Strongly Oppose' (1). Our outcome measure, SUPPORT, is based on how participants replied to this question, with higher values indicating greater agreement. The mean value of SUPPORT on this 5-point scale is 4.13, indicating strong overall support for rejecting future Syrian refugees. [32]

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[31] The English translation of the question language is, "What is your view about the government's proposed new policy to start turning away additional refugees from Syria?"

[32] Our results are robust to collapsing this ordered variable into an alternative binary measure coded 1 if respondents indicate that they strongly or somewhat support the proposed policy change, and 0 otherwise.

As stated above, this survey was fielded in September 2017. We have no reason to believe that our findings depend on the survey's particular timing: there had been no significant shocks to the political climate or major changes in the refugee situation in the preceding months; rather long-term trends – steady flows of Syrian refugees and Mr. Erdoğan's push to expand executive power and restrict certain civil liberties – continued in the year before the survey was fielded. [1-8] [33]

Our experimental design is innovative in two ways. First, because we were able to obtain a large sample of respondents, we were able to fine-tune the treatment in two different ways, which allow us to better understand how it is that international law makes a difference. We gave some respondents a positive international law treatment (that not taking more refugees violated the Convention), while others received a negative international law treatment (that not taking more refugees did not violate the Convention). Doing so allowed us to account for the possibility that the difference between the control group (no statement regarding international norms) and the treatment group (statement of binding international law) may be capturing not international law itself, but the presence of any statement at all. Including a statement of non-bindingness provides a sort of second 'control' that better isolates the effect of the binding international law treatment.

Second, we provided different international treatments associated with different normative mechanisms and varying degrees of formality: from binding law, to "promises" to other countries, to the behavior of other countries. This allows us to isolate the normative effect of law *qua* law and separate it from other international normative effects, such as the behavior of peer states and the fact that international legal commitments represent promises made on behalf of the country. Each of these mechanisms might exert some form of normative pull. For example, it is possible that people are swayed by an international law treatment not because it is law, but because its legal status leads them to assume that peer states have taken similar actions, a form of herding effect (Goodman and Jinks 2004; Scott and Meyer 1994). Asking about international law and the actions of other countries separately allows us to disentangle the effects of those as well. Likewise, it is possible that people are not swayed by international law per se, but because the cue implies that their country has made a voluntary promise, which citizens may feel is important to uphold. Indeed, a body of experimental literature has drawn attention to the importance of promises to legal behavior (e.g., Ederer and Stremitzer 2017). Our separate treatments for international law and promises allow us to disentangle these two effects. Especially in a time of growing anti-internationalist sentiments, it is important to understand the mechanisms by which international legal commitments might sway the public.

Before analyzing the data, we first summarize our key measures in Figure 3. This figure presents histograms for our outcome measure and three individual-level covariates: sex; age,

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[33] In September 2017, large numbers of Syrian refugees continued to enter the country. President Erdoğan was proceeding with a multi-year push to restructure the government and increase presidential power. The July 2016 attempted coup had occurred 14 months prior, and, in April 2017, a constitutional referendum on whether to expand the president's power (among other things) passed by a narrow margin. In late 2017, Mr. Erdoğan was continuing his push to restrict liberties and suppress dissent, especially among civil servants.

and education. The vertical axis denotes the observed count of the variable values.

Figure 3: Respondent data summary
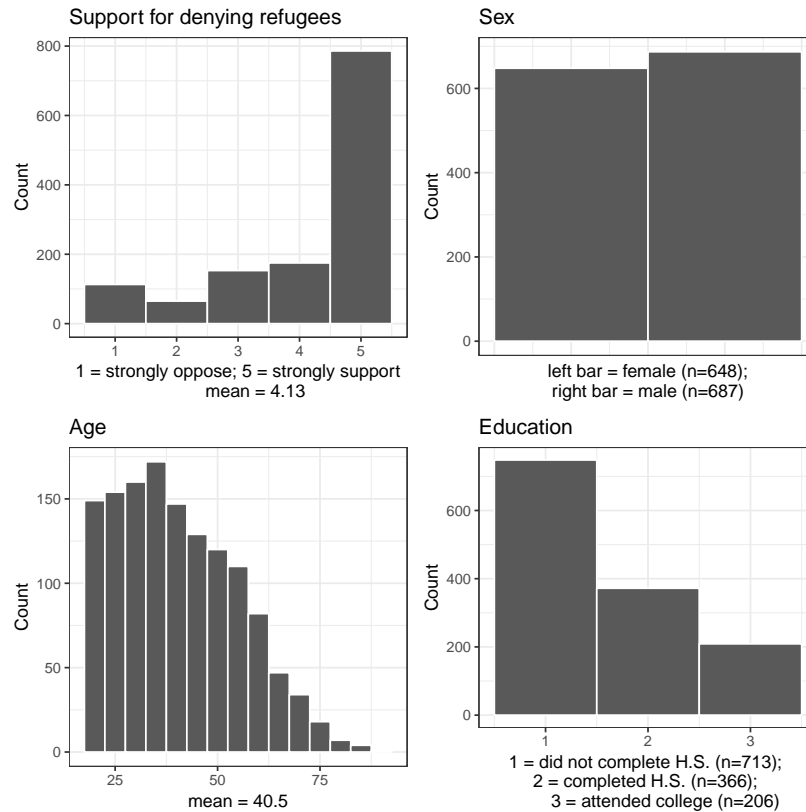
Note: This figure presents histograms showing the respondent-count for the outcome measure and three individual-level covariates.

We then check the integrity of the randomization procedure by examining whether participant covariates are balanced across treatment groups. Typically, this might be done by conducting t-tests to see if covariate distribution differs across treatment conditions. Since we have a large number of treatments, though, this would be unwieldy. To account for this issue, we model treatment assignment as a function of pre-treatment covariates. Since the treatments do not have any natural order, we use a multinomial logit model. As reported in Appendix B, we find that none of the pre-treatment covariates are statistically significant at conventional levels (i.e., 0.05). This indicates that they do not correlate with treatment status and suggests that randomization was 'successful.' [34]

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[34] We have no evidence that differential exposure or noncompliance affected our randomization and our understanding is that the randomization mechanisms functioned properly. One view is that when researchers have 'clean data' such as this, they should not conduct balance tests, as the results might lead to inaccurate conclusions (Mutz, Pemantle and Pham 2018). The general idea here is that random assignment does not ensure that treatment groups are always comparable, so checking for differences across groups is not an indication of a failure in randomization. We agree with the spirit of this argument, but provide the results of our randomization

IV   Results and Discussion

A.   Results

Did our treatments influence participant support for the proposed legislation? For our first cut at this question, we present the raw outcome data in Figure 4. It plots the values for SUPPORT across all five treatment conditions. Plotted points denote the raw data (jittered), horizontal bars denote the mean SUPPORT value for each group, and boxes indicate 95% confidence intervals. The level of SUPPORT is clearly highest (4.26) for respondents who receive the international law treatment. Since the confidence interval bars for that treatment barely overlap with the bars for respondents who received the control condition, it might be that this difference is statistically significant. If this effect were small, we might simply dismiss it as an unusual but substantively meaningless finding. The effect of this treatment, though, is relatively large. On average, participants assigned to this treatment increased their support for the restrictive policy by 0.25 compared to those assigned to the control condition, which is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a standard deviation in SUPPORT. That we find some effect for our INTERNATIONAL LAW treatment is striking given the overall level of SUPPORT on our sample, which could lead to ceiling effects. [35]

Figure 4: Data distributions: International law increases policy support
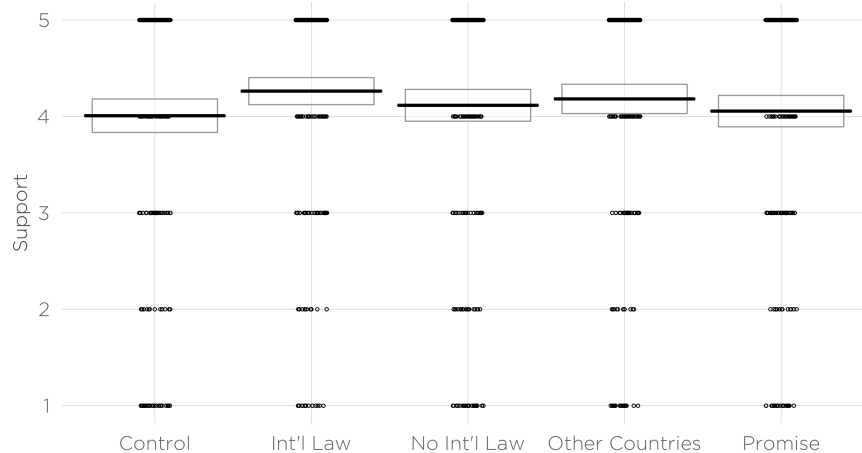

Note: The figure plots the values for SUPPORT across all five treatment conditions. Plotted points denote the raw data (jittered), horizontal bars denote the mean SUPPORT value for each group, and boxes indicate 95% confidence intervals.

To examine this potential relationship more closely, we estimate an ordinary least squares

check to demonstrate that group differences do not exist.

[35] In other words, there was little 'space' for groups of respondents to increase their support for the proposal to restrict refugees, as nearly 81% of all respondents supported it.

(OLS) regression model. [36] Following standard practice, we use HC2 robust standard errors to account for heterogeneity in the error term (Lin and Green 2016). The outcome measure is SUPPORT. On the right-hand side of the equation, we include binary indicators for each of our treatments (except the pure control condition): INTERNATIONAL LAW, NO INTERNATIONAL LAW, OTHER COUNTRIES, and PROMISE. We also include a set of covariates that are plausibly predictive of public support for the government's proposed policy, such as AGE, EDUCATION, and SEX. In addition, we include two latent measures of respondents' AWARENESS OF CURRENT EVENTS and CONSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE. Finally, we include a measure of partisan support (AKP VOTER), which is coded 1 if the respondent voted for the AKP and 0 otherwise.

Figure 5: OLS results: International law treatment increases policy support
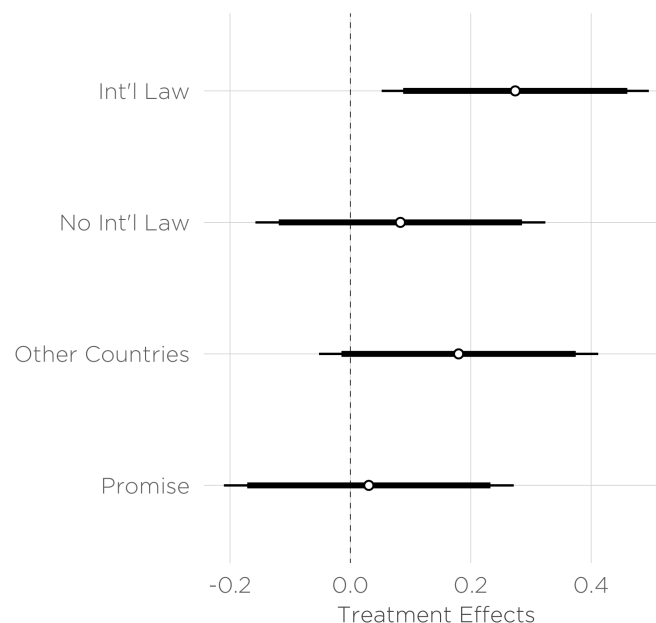
Note: The figure plots the results from an OLS model containing treatment indicators and covariates. Plotted black points indicate estimated coefficients from the model. Thin black bars indicate 95% confidence intervals and thick black bars indicate 90% confidence intervals. The reference category is the control condition.

Figure 5 shows the results of this model, and Appendix C contains the tabular results.

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[36] One of the advantages of using OLS instead of t-tests here is that we can include a set of pre-treatment covariates in our model, allowing us to increase the precision of our estimates (Gerber and Green 2012). While our outcome measure is ordered, we use OLS because the results are easy to interpret and because coefficient estimates are unbiased if the model is specified correctly (Lin and Green 2016). Our model is specified correctly since we only include dummy variables for our experimental treatments (Wooldridge 2010*b*). To ensure that our results are not model dependent, we also estimate ordered logit and ordered probit models. The results from these models, shown in Appendix C, are substantively similar.

The figure plots the estimated coefficients (black points) from the model along with 95% confidence intervals (thin black bars) and 90% confidence intervals (thick black bars). The reference category is the control condition. Contra to our expectations, we see little evidence that most of our treatments influence SUPPORT. Specifically, we cannot reject the null hypotheses that the NO INTERNATIONAL LAW, OTHER COUNTRIES, and PROMISE cues have no effect on SUPPORT ($p > 0.05$). This is shown in Figure 5, which indicates that the 95% confidence intervals of the coefficients for those treatment indicators cover the 0 line.

While we cannot rule out the possibility that the effects of these treatments are 0, we also cannot reject the possibility that they are substantively meaningful. In line with Rainey (2014)'s recommendations, we examine the 90% confidence intervals for the NO INTERNATIONAL LAW, OTHER COUNTRIES, and PROMISE coefficients. We see that the range of possible effects for the NO INTERNATIONAL LAW and PROMISE coefficients includes both 0.2 and -0.1. These numbers correspond to about a $\frac{1}{7}$ a standard deviation increase and a $\frac{1}{14}$ of a standard deviation decrease in SUPPORT, respectively. The range of effects within the 90% confidence interval for the OTHER COUNTRIES coefficient are nearly all positive, and include 0.3, or about a $\frac{1}{3}$ standard deviation increase in SUPPORT. We think that within the context of this survey, those are reasonably large effects. Taken together, these effects highlight the need for additional research on how the absence of binding legal commitments, the existence of international norms, and the presence of international commitments influence public opinion on immigration policy.

As discussed above, though, we are primarily interested in the effect of our INTERNATIONAL LAW treatment. The coefficient on this variable is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that reminding participants about Turkey's legal obligation to accept refugees does influence public agreement with the proposed policy. This finding is surprising, given the high-level of SUPPORT among respondents, which would limit our ability to identify treatment effects.[37] But surprisingly, and contra to our pre-registered expectations, our treatment *increases* rather than decreases support, as indicated by the positive sign on the estimated coefficient for INTERNATIONAL LAW. This effect, 0.274, is substantively meaningful, and roughly equivalent to a $\frac{1}{5}$ increase in SUPPORT.

While the effect of INTERNATIONAL LAW is different from 0, we might be interested in whether this effect is different from the effects of our other treatments. We investigate this by formally testing the equality of our treatment indicator coefficients in a series of Wald tests.[38] Importantly, we can reject the null hypothesis that the effect of the INTERNATIONAL LAW treatment is not different than the effect of the NO INTERNATIONAL LAW treatment ($p < 0.10$). The confidence intervals for these coefficients in Figure 5 overlap slightly, but overlapping confidence intervals are not necessarily evidence that the differences between point estimates are statistically insignificant (Gelman and Stern 2006). We can also reject the null hypothesis that the effect of the INTERNATIONAL LAW treatment is not different

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[37] The high level of support for Erdoğan's policy is potentially one reason why our estimates for the effect of other treatment indicators are imprecise.

[38] We could also make these comparisons by changing the reference category in our OLS model (Wooldridge 2010*a*).

than the effect of the PROMISE treatment ($p < 0.05$). Interestingly, though, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the effect of the INTERNATIONAL LAW treatment is not different than the OTHER COUNTRIES treatment ($p > 0.29$). This finding underscores the need for more research on the role that international commitments play in shaping public policy preferences.

B.   Quantitative Exploratory Analysis

The positive effect of our INTERNATIONAL LAW treatment presents a new empirical puzzle. It is not obvious why people would more readily support a proposed policy when presented with information that it would violate international law. We therefore delve deeper into the data to better understand our international law finding.

One explanation is that our finding is a 'statistical fluke.' We therefore conduct a Studentized permutation test (Gerber and Green 2012) to rule out this possibility. The test compares the t-statistics from our OLS model with the "average treatment effect . . . under random reassignments of treatment that follow the same randomization scheme as the actual experiment" (Gerber and Green 2012, 117). The p-value returned from this test represents the fraction of test statistics strictly greater than the statistic for our sample (Lin and Green 2015). The results from this procedure are very similar to those reported above.[39] We again find evidence that people who are told that Turkey has an international legal obligation to admit refugees are more likely to support the government's proposed policy to stop admitting refugees.[40]

One possible substantive explanation for this finding is that it might be limited to some subgroups of participants. Specifically, considering that hostility towards international law is common among nationalist parties, it is possible that that the observed effect of the INTERNATIONAL LAW treatment might be driven by party affiliation. Indeed, the initial regression results suggested that the effect of INTERNATIONAL LAW on SUPPORT might be more positive for AKP supporters than opponents. As described above, Erdoğan's AKP has increasingly used nationalist rhetoric and implemented nationalist and authoritarian policies. Around the world, right-wing populism and nationalism are associated with opposition to international institutions and anti-globalization generally. To different degrees, Great Britain's UK Independence Party (UKIP),[41] France's National Front, Italy's Northern League, and the U.S. Republican Party under Donald Trump[42] are other examples.

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[39] Since we have a relatively large sample and use robust standard errors, we would expect that they would be in line with our LPM results (Gerber and Green 2012).

[40] The results of the permutation test also provide additional evidence that our other treatments do not affect how people view Turkey's planned refugee restrictions.

[41] Fintan O'Toole, "Brexit is being driven by English nationalism. And it will end in self-rule," THE GUARDIAN (June 18, 2016), *available at* https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/18/england-eu-referendum-brexit.

[42] Paul D. Miller, "Trump's Nationalism Is Arbitrary, Dangerous, Incoherent, and Silly," FOREIGN POLICY (Jan. 3, 2018), *available at* http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/03/trumps-nationalism-is-arbitrary-dangerous-incoherent-and-silly/ ("Whatever else U.S. President Donald Trump has done, he has spent his first year in office continuing and strengthening his

To examine this possible moderating relationship, we split our data sample based on whether respondents were supporters ($n = 503$) or opponents ($n = 788$) of Erdoğan's party, and re-estimate the OLS model described above.[43] The vertical axis denotes the effect of INTERNATIONAL LAW and the horizontal axis denotes whether individuals voted for the AKP. Plotted points indicated estimated coefficients, thick lines indicate 90% confidence intervals, and thin lines indicate 95% confidence intervals.

This plot vividly shows that the positive effect of INTERNATIONAL LAW is much higher for respondents who cast ballots for the incumbent party.[44] Indeed, the positive effect is roughly twice as large (0.44 compared to 0.12). This difference is equivalent to roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of a standard deviation in the outcome measure. Just as importantly, the effect of INTERNATIONAL LAW is statistically significant for supporters of Erdoğan's party ($p < 0.05$) but not for opponents ($p \approx 0.40$). AKP voters, then, appear to exhibit a much stronger backlash against international law than opponents of the regime.

Another potentially interesting heterogeneous treatment effect might be at work, one driven by the less-educated respondents in our sample. There are at least a couple reasons why this might be the case. First, prior work has shown that feelings of nationalism and education-level are often inversely related, which might mean that backlash is strongest among the less educated (Golder 2016; Mudde 2007). Second, respondents with less education may be less likely to understand the consequences of violating international law.

We investigate this potential subgroup variation by splitting our sample based on our three-category indicator of respondent education and re-estimating our OLS model.[45] It measures whether respondents did not complete high school (713), completed high school (366), or attended college/education beyond high school (206). The vertical axis denotes the effect of INTERNATIONAL LAW and the horizontal axis denotes whether respondents are less educated, educated, or more educated. Plotted points indicated estimated coefficients, thick lines indicate 90% confidence intervals, and thin lines indicate 95% confidence intervals.

The general pattern in this plot supports the idea that our counter-intuitive finding regard-

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commitment to nationalist rhetoric."); "Trump: I Am A Nationalist In A True Sense," REAL-CLEAR POLITICS (Feb. 27, 2017), *available at* https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2017/02/27/trump_i_am_a_nationalist_in_a_true_sense.html; Elizabeth Bruenig, "Opinion: Trump's solution to America's crisis: Nationalism," WASHINGTON POST (Jan. 30, 2018), *available at* https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/trumps-solution-to-americas-crisis-nationalism/2018/01/30/db5f15f4-062f-11e8-94e8-e8b8600ade23_story.html?utm_term=.4e8cc322b43e.

[43] Since we split the sample based on whether respondents voted for AKP, we drop that indicator from the model. One concern might be that splitting the sample in this way is akin to splitting it based on educational background. The idea here is that less educated voters might be more likely to support the AKP, and thus we might confuse the source of any subgroup difference here. We do not consider this to be a potential problem, since AKP VOTER and EDUCATION correlate at -0.2, as shown in Appendix D. In other words, there is only a weak relationship between whether individuals support the incumbent party and their level of education. To remove any other potential concern on this point, we continue to control for education in each of our subgroup models.

[44]To check if this difference is statistically significant, we estimate a model that interacts INTERNATIONAL LAW with AKP VOTER. We find that this interaction term is statistically significant ($p < 0.10$).

[45] Since we split the sample based on respondent education, we drop the education variable from the model.

Figure 6: International law treatment increases support among AKP voters
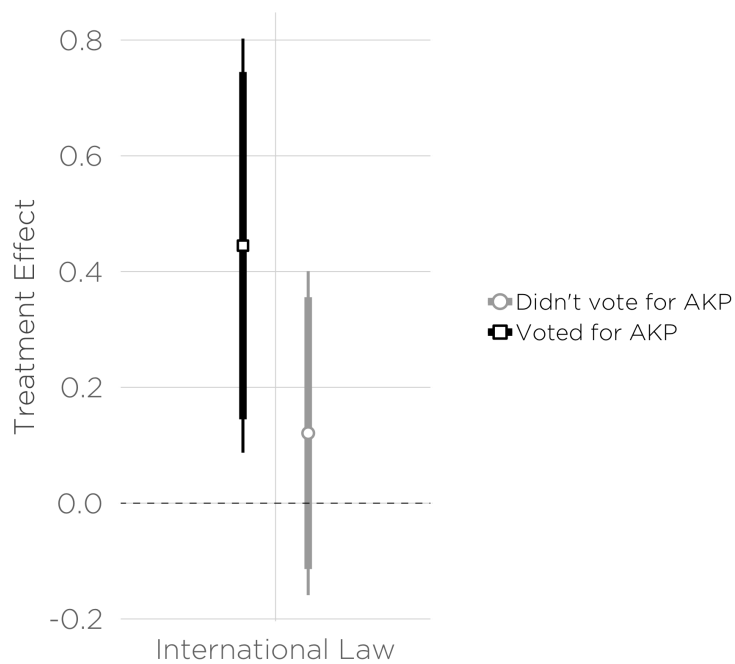
Note: The figure plots the results from two OLS models containing treatment indicators and covariates. The models are estimated using data from (1) AKP supporters ($n = 503$) and (2) opponents ($n = 788$). Plotted points indicate estimated coefficients. Thin bars indicate 95% confidence intervals and thick bars indicate 90% confidence intervals. The reference category is the control condition.

Figure 7: International law treatment increases support among less educated
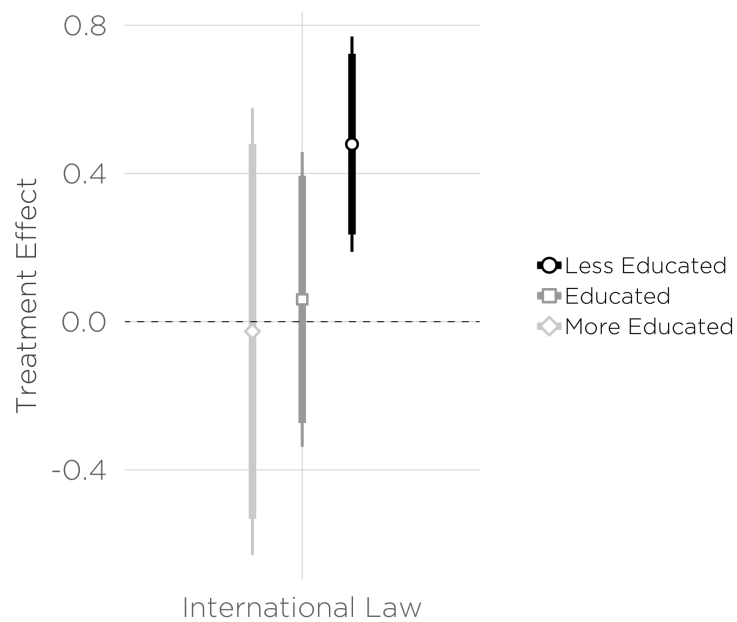
Note: The figure plots the results from three OLS models containing treatment indicators and covariates. The models are estimated using data from (1) respondents who did not complete high school (713), (2) completed high school (366), and (3) attended college/education beyond high school (206). Plotted black points indicate estimated coefficients. Thin bars indicate 95% confidence intervals and thick bars indicate 90% confidence intervals. The reference category is the control condition.

ing the effect of INTERNATIONAL LAW is partially driven by less-educated respondents. We see that this effect is positive and substantively large for respondents with low levels of education (i.e., less than a high-school degree). Participants in this group respond to the INTERNATIONAL LAW treatment by increasing their support for the government's proposed policy by about 0.48, or about a $\frac{1}{3}$ of a standard deviation in SUPPORT. While the estimated effect is still positive for respondents with moderate levels of education (i.e. those who completed high school), it is substantively trivial and estimated much less precisely. Importantly, the effect is negative for subjects who continued their education past high school, though this effect is also small and estimated imprecisely.[46] Taken together, though, these effects tell a suggestive story about the role that levels of education play in moderating individual responses to international law.

Both the party and education-based heterogeneous treatment effect findings suggest the need for additional theorizing about why the public might support domestic policies that ostensibly cut against international law.

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[46] We formally test the hypothesis that the effect of international law on support for Erdoğan's policy is conditioned by education by interacting the treatment indicator with our education measure. The multiplicative term is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that these subgroup differences are statistically significant.

V   Validation and Discussion

Despite our findings' robustness to different statistical tests, skepticism of this backfire phenomenon is understandable, especially given the qualitative and quantitative literature (including that discussed in Section II above) which heralds international law as a potentially effective normative force. The notion that knowledge of the Refugee Convention makes some people more willing to exclude refugees – and that international legal commitments can invoke a negative, backfire response – is counterintuitive.[47] Yet backfire effects have been documented elsewhere in other experimental contexts. A number of studies have found that providing people with unwelcome information or instructions might create such a backfire effect, encouraging opposition (Fein, McCloskey and Tomlinson 1997; Nyhan and Reifler 2010; Peffley and Hurwitz 2002; Kugler and Cooper 2010). Other studies in social psychology have shown a backfire-like phenomenon called "psychological reactance," which is "the state of being aroused in opposition to a perceived threat to personal choice" (Ringold 2002). For instance, respondents are more likely to flout advice to avoid violent films when they are told, "[t]he U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that television violence has harmful effects on viewers" than when they are simply told, "[t]his film contains some violent content. Television violence has harmful effects on viewers" (Bushman and Stack 1996).

A backfire effect to international law has been experimentally documented just once before. In the only published study to date on international law's normative impact conducted outside America, Lupu and Wallace (2017) find a backfire effect of international law among Israeli respondents. Presented with a vignette describing a violent crackdown by the Israeli government on a non-violent opposition group, respondents who were told that the government's actions were illegal under international law were actually more likely to support it than those who are told nothing about it.[48] But for international law to trigger a backlash of the kind that Lupu and Wallace (and now, we) find, it is not enough that society views international law as normatively irrelevant or unimportant; in that case, international legal cues should have little or no effect at all. Instead, for this backfire effect to exist, some fraction of the population must in some way associate international law with a set of values that they view negatively.

Our survey experiment's findings suggest that this is happening in Turkey, but other survey and qualitative evidence corroborates those findings. To validate and give richer context to the experimental findings, we review: (1) existing survey data on evolving public attitudes toward nationalism in Turkey, the West, and international institutions; (2) Mr. Erdoğan's and his surrogates' public statements on those same topics over his tenure as president; and (3) the opinions of Turkish experts on the changing relationship between domestic politics, refugees, and international law in Turkey. Together they help to explain the effects we ob-

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[47] As noted above in footnote 13 and the surrounding text, the Western public has often accepted government immigration policies that likely violate international refugee law.

[48] Lupu and Wallace find the expected effect on respondents all treatment groups in India; those who are told the government action violates international law are less likely to support it. They find no evidence of an effect for their Argentinian respondents.

serve.

It seems that during Mr. Erdoğan's prime ministership, but before his presidency and nationalist shift, citizens of Turkey were generally warier of international law than much of the world. A survey conducted by World Public Opinion in 2009 found that, of the twenty-four countries surveyed, citizens of Turkey were third least supportive (tied with Iraq) of their country's "consistently follow[ing] international laws" even if "it is not in [their] nation's interest."[49] citizens of Turkey were also particularly skeptical of international organizations. Asked in face-to-face interviews whether they thought "the [International] Court[of Justice's] decision would be fair and impartial" if their country were involved in a case before it, 26% (+/- 3.7%) of Turkish respondents said that they were "not at all confident" that it would be (versus only 10% who said they were "very confident"). The percentage not at all confident was highest among the twenty-three countries surveyed, including Pakistan, Russia, and the Palestinian Territories.[50] These surveys did not disaggregate by party, but it appears that citizens of Turkey as a whole are unusually predisposed toward skepticism of – perhaps even hostility to – international institutions. A scholar we interviewed confirmed that this sentiment is widespread in Turkey, including among jurists.[51]

The general international-law skepticism of citizens of Turkey might partially explain and validate the backlash effect, but what explains the robust differential treatment effects, where less-educated respondents and supporters of President Erdoğan's AKP party show a significant backlash to the international law cue? Mr. Erdoğan's increasingly harsh anti-internationalist and anti-Western rhetoric may offer an answer. That rhetoric, which by all accounts has persuaded many citizens of Turkey and proven a successful political device (Yildirim 2018), may be driving his AKP supporters in particular to link the West with international institutions, and, therefore, with Turkey's foreign enemies.

Mr. Erdoğan began his prime ministership in 2003 courting European and U.S. favor and moving the country closer to membership in the EU and other international organizations. Since his landslide victory in the 2014 presidential elections, however, he has increasingly demonized the West and internationalism (Özpek and Yaşar 2018; Dinç and Aydemir 2016). According to a Turkish senior fellow at Wellesley College's Freedom Project, Erdoğan now "refuses to tolerate any limits imposed on his power by the international community and the liberal values it promotes" (Akyol 2015). He has linked his anti-Western themes with the need for a new Turkish nationalism, coupled with the rejection of international institutions.

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[49] World Public Opinion, "World Public Opinion on International Law and the World Court," *available at* http://worldpublicopinion.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/WPO_IntlLaw_Nov09_quaire.pdf (finding that just 46% agreed more with the statement, "Our nation should consistently follow international laws. It is wrong to violate international laws, just as it is wrong to violate laws within a country" than with the statement, "If our government thinks it is not in our nation's interest, it should not feel obliged to abide by international laws," which was tied for third-to-last among the countries surveyed. This figure contrasts with, for example, Germany (70%), the United States (69%), and Kenya and Nigeria (both 65%)).

[50] *Id.*

[51] Email Interview with Sibel Safi, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Migration, Refugees and Belonging, University of East London (April 19, 2019) ("It is believed among ... scholars as well that [the] ICJ may give a negative political decision against Turkey.").

For example, in March 2017, after the Dutch government prevented his ministers from attending rallies in the country, Erdoğan stated in a live television speech, "We know the Netherlands and the Dutch from the Srebrenica massacre. We know how rotten their character is from their massacre of 8,000 Bosnians there."[52] On Europe Day 2017, his official statement read in part, "[s]uch social diseases as discrimination, cultural racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia are unfortunately becoming widespread across the [European] continent. . . . This kind of tendencies and policies, which are on the rise in Europe, are poisoning Turkey-EU relations as well."[53] A year later his Europe Day message had similar themes: "[t]he future seems to be dark in Europe where hardly a day passes without places of worship being set on fire, businesses owned by Muslims being attacked and people being verbally and physically assaulted because they have a different language, religion or color."[54] His Human Rights Day statement in late 2018 read in part, "[t]he incompetence of international mechanisms . . . such as the United Nations Security Council, is one of the most important factors making human rights violations so common."[55] Moreover, Erdoğan has argued – and his supporters may largely believe – that Western meddling is responsible for the 2016 coup against his government.[56] Turkey's Prime Minister, an Erdoğan loyalist, noted in a July 2016 interview that "since the leader of [the Gülen] terrorist organisation is residing in the United States, there are question marks in the minds of the people whether there is any U.S. involvement or backing [in the 2016 coup attempt]."[57]

In addition to his own rhetoric, Erdoğan reportedly channels much of his anti-Western message through his media surrogates. According to Henri J. Barkey of the Council on Foreign Relations, "[t]he Turkish press, controlled almost entirely by Erdoğan's either directly or indirectly, engages daily in foreigner bashing. The targets are almost exclusively Western."[58]

Finally, in a rebuke to the core principles of founder Kemal Atatürk, Mr. Erdoğan has pushed (increasingly since the July 2016 coup attempt) to Islamize Turkey's public institutions, especially its schools and universities (Özpek and Yaşar 2018).[59] This shift is significant for the purpose of this study because research has shown that states with legal and

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[52] Jon Henley, "Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: 'We know Dutch from Srebrenica massacre,'" *The Atlantic*, July 25, 2017, *available at* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/14/turkish-sanctions-bizarre-as-netherlands-has-more-to-be-angry-about-dutch-pm.

[53] "Europe Day Message by President Erdoğan," May 9, 2017, *available at* https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/speeches-statements/558/75123/avrupa-gunu-mesaji.

[54] "Europe Day Message," May 9, 2018, *available at* https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/speeches-statements/558/94170/europe-day-message.

[55] "President Erdoğan's Message on Human Rights Day," Dec. 10, 2018, *available at* https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/speeches-statements/558/100031/president-erdogan-s-message-on-human-rights-day-.

[56] Binali Yıldırım ("Turkish PM: coup suspects' testimony points to Gülen's involvement". The Guardian. 26 July 2016.)

[57] *Id.*

[58] Henri J. Barkey, "Erdogan's Anti-Westernism Picks Up Speed," *The Atlantic*, July 25, 2017, *available at* https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/07/erdogan-turkey-detention-coup-gulen/534813/.

[59] Rauf Baker, "The Islamization of Turkey," *Begin Sadat Center for Strategic Studies*, Apr. 22, 2018, *available at* https://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/islamization-turkey/.

political systems rooted in Islamic law tend to engage less with international institutions, including treaties and organizations (Powell 2013). Some Muslims see those institutions as incompatible with Islamic values, in part because they require subjugating Muslims to non-Muslim arbiters (Powell and Mitchell 2007). As states increasingly adopt Islam-oriented domestic institutions, they may become less willing to engage with non-Muslim international institutions (Powell 2015). Though Turkey is still far from joining the ranks of the Islamic-law states, this movement away from secularism in formal legal institutions might be partially responsible for some citizens' apparent rejection of this international refugee institution.

We interviewed several scholars from Turkey with expertise on various aspects of the law and politics of international law and refugees in Turkey. They told a similar story about modern Turkish perspectives toward international law and the West, and about President Erdoğan's effect on his AKP supporters' attitudes in these matters.[60] For instance, one said that while "[p]eople from coastal provinces . . . believe that international law is the guarantor of the fundamental human rights[,] . . . the public is beginning to think that international law is an imperialist sanction imposed upon Turkey."[61] Another scholar echoed these sentiments, saying that, "from a layperson's perspective it is hard to discern the EU from the UN or any other international organization." This is partly because President Erdoğan's political rhetoric "stir[s] a general reaction against any international institution perceived as western and European."[62] Others confirmed that President Erdoğan has succeeded in convincing a large fraction of the nation that Europe and international institutions are to blame for Turkey's woes.[63]

Thus, Turkey has shown a baseline skepticism of international institutions; its governing party constantly beats the drums of nationalism, anti-Westernism, and anti-internationalism; and Mr. Erdoğan is moving the government away from secular legal institutions. Moreover, although the West is linked to internationalism in many citizens' minds, it is Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and other Middle East countries – not European or North American states – that have accepted the great majority of Syrian refugees to date. It is therefore unsurprising that AKP supporters would react negatively to the notion that international refugee law requires Turkey to do something (here, accept possibly millions of additional Syrian refugees) which Western countries are not willing to do, and which a majority of the nation considers contrary to its national interest.[64]

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[60] Email Interview with Esra Özyürek, Associate Professor and Chair for Contemporary Turkish Studies, European Institute, London School of Economics (April 15, 2019).

[61] Email Interview with Sibel Safi, *supra* note 51.

[62] Email Interview with Ayşe Güzel Öztürk, LL.M. Candidate, George Washington University Law School & Alp Öztürk, International Finance and Development Fellow, NYU Law School (April 19, 2019).

[63] *E.g.*, Email Interview with Sibel Safi, *supra* note 51.

[64] Email Interview with Sibel Safi, *supra* note 51 ("It is believed that the western institutions do not have [a good faith] approach . . . to Turkey" concerning refugees.); *see also* "Message by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on World Refugee Day" June 20, 2017, *available at* https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/speeches-statements/558/77644/dunya-multeciler-gunu-mesaji ("In the face of the crisis in Syria which has been going on since 2011, Turkey has passed a great test of humanity and taken care of over 3 million refugees without any discrimination. Many developed countries, claiming to be the defendants of fundamental rights and humanitarian

Why, then would why AKP supporters respond negatively to international law cues about accepting refugees given that President Erdoğan himself initially championed a liberal Syrian refugee policy? In essence, Mr. Erdoğan has attempted to sell the open refugee policy, not as an international imperative imposed by global government or the West, but as a way of promoting a form of neo-Ottomanism that would revive the Empire's practice of welcoming all comers (Osmanbaşoğlu 2019; Latif 2002). It is an act of solidarity with fellow Syrian Turkmen and other Syrian Muslims, which Mr. Erdoğan believes would redound to Turkey's long-term economic and cultural advantage, expanding Turkey's influence in the region. But AKP followers (and others) have become skeptical. They are increasingly concerned about how the growing Syrian population increases competition for jobs (Bahcekapili and Cetin 2015) and housing (Erdoğan 2015), how it strains local and regional economies, and how the Syrians' language and cultural differences inhibit full integration. So for these anti-internationalist AKP members, who are already skeptical about the refugee policy, prefacing the question with the claim that international law requires accepting refugees appears to compound their hostility toward them.

Other experimental studies showing a positive response to international law cues are not inconsistent with this explanation. Even Anjum, Chilton and Usman's study, which finds a positive effect of international norms on Pakistanis' support for a gender-related policy, is consistent; it was conducted on the campus of a university, and all of the respondents in that study held graduate degrees (Anjum, Chilton and Usman n.d.). We likewise find that the most educated citizens (all those with education beyond high school) were positively affected by an international law cue. Those effects are not statistically significant, but because we surveyed a representative sample of the Turkish population, our analysis did not disaggregate the very small set of respondents who hold graduate degrees from those with education beyond high school (approximately 16% of males).

Our findings are also consistent with Lupu and Wallace (2017)'s backfire findings in Israel. Although they address government civil rights violations, not refugee law, we observe in both settings a public skeptical of international law's legitimacy pushing back against that authority. Lupu and Wallace reasoned that "Israeli respondents may not perceive of international law as legitimate and thus view the information that the government violated such law as a signal that the government must have had an important and justifiable reason to respond as it did." In both cases, international law was purporting to limit the country's sovereignty by forcing it to stay its hand against political outsiders. Both countries are important geopolitical players that have historically enjoyed strong ties with the United States, even as they both have dual affiliations, caught between the Middle East and Europe. But the experimental context is different in a meaningful way, in that immigration is a more obvious subject of international concern than internal treatment of opposition groups. The fact that many citizens of Turkey responded with apparent hostility toward the Refugee Convention is therefore significant.

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values, unfortunately have failed in duly responding to this humanitarian tragedy and turned their back on the oppressed at their gates.").

VI Conclusion

Ours is the first study to explore the impact of the Refugee Convention on popular opinion. Surprisingly, we find evidence of a backlash against the Convention, especially among AKP supporters and less-educated voters. Our analyses raises important questions for future research, most notably, whether our findings are specific to the Refugee Convention or whether they generalize to other instruments of international law. As we noted, the Refugee Convention differs from the human rights agreements featured in previous experimental studies, in that the duties are owed to foreigners, not those with existing legal status in the country. It is possible that this feature makes people more hostile to the Refugee Convention than to other international agreements. Yet, the Turkish case casts doubt on this notion. Specifically, the AKP platform is anti-international but not anti-refugee. That is, while Erdoğan has increasingly taken nationalist positions, he has also insisted on accepting more Syrian refugees than any other country. This suggests that what drives the backlash is the international legal obligation itself, rather than the fact that the obligation concerns refugees.

A related question is whether this backfire effect is unique to Turkey. Perhaps the fact that supporters of President Erdoğan's AKP party drive the effect implies that we might find a similar effect in other countries experiencing similar political trends. As discussed, the AKP runs on an increasingly religious and nationalist platform and has shown growing hostility towards the West.[65] Non-AKP voters are actually moved in a positive direction, although the effect is not statistically significant. This observation does not reveal what element of the AKP platform causes the negative response, but interviews and other qualitative evidence suggest that nationalism itself, or relatedly, *anti-inter*nationalism, is a primary cause.

As anti-internationalist sentiments are becoming powerful political forces, we may find a similar effect in places with large nationalist movements. In this respect, it is significant that one of the few other experimental studies to date conducted outside the United States (in Argentina, India, and Israel) found a similar backfire effect in Israel. Lupu and Wallace (2017) do not disaggregate their sample by party or educational demographics, but they do note the possibility that international law can generate very different sentiments in different settings. Our findings suggest that their results might have been driven by supporters of Benjamin Netanyahu's conservative Israeli Likud party. If so, we may find a similar backfire effect among French supporters of Marine LePen, Hungarian supporters of Viktor Orbán, Dutch supporters of Geert Wilders, and American supporters of Donald Trump.[66]

It is therefore possible that our backlash findings offer a glimpse into an important emerging challenge for international law. As anti-internationalist sentiments persist in places most relevant to refugee protection, international law may become increasingly polarized, making

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[65] Pınar Dinç & Irem Aydemir, "The EU-Turkey Deal: Ambiguities and Future Scenarios," LSE *Euro Crisis in the Press* Blog (Oct. 27, 2016), *available at* http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/eurocrisispress/2016/10/27/the-eu-turkey-deal-ambiguities-and-future-scenarios/ (noting a "rising euro-skepticsm and anti-Westernism in Turkey").

[66] One study found that the two personal traits that most accurately predicted support for Donald Trump's presidential candidacy were identifying as supporting authoritarianism and fear of international terrorism (MacWilliams 2016).

some more likely to favor policies that violate that law. In essence, it appears that international institutions can sometimes trigger political backlashes, potentially undermining the very policies they are designed to promote.

A   Appendix

A.   Appendix A

This Appendix presents (1) the English-language version of our experimental instrument and (2) its Turkish translation (performed by a Turkish citizen and native Turkish-speaking research assistant, with some edits by Turkish employees of the polling firm, KONDA).

English Version

> As you know, because of the civil war in Syria, people immigrate to other countries. So far, Turkey has accepted more than 3 million refugees. However, the migration continues both to Turkey and other countries. This matter has been very much discussed in Turkey.
>
> SURVEY VERSION 1: None
>
> SURVEY VERSION 2: Regardless, Turkey is obligated under international law to accept all arriving refugees in situations like this.
>
> SURVEY VERSION 3: Regardless, Turkey is one of many countries that has promised other countries to accept all arriving refugees in situations like this.
>
> SURVEY VERSION 4: Regardless, Turkey is not obligated under international law to accept all arriving refugees in situations like this.
>
> SURVEY VERSION 5: Regardless, many countries in the Middle East — such as Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan — and many countries in Europe — such as Germany and Sweden — have collectively accepted millions of Syrian refugees into their countries and plan to continue doing so in the coming years.
>
> Suppose that the government of Turkey has decided not to accept any new refugees, and if this policy is passed, from the next month, Turkey will close the doors to the newly arrived Syrians and force them to return to Syria or to seek refuge elsewhere.
>
> What is your view about the government's proposed new policy to start turning away additional refugees from Syria?
>
> 1. Strongly Support
> 2. Somewhat Support
> 3. Neither Support or Oppose
> 4. Somewhat Oppose
> 5. Strongly Oppose

Turkish Version

Biliyorsunuz Suriye'deki iç savaştan dolayı insanlar başka ülkelere göç ediyor. Türkiye de şimdiye kadar 3 milyondan fazla mülteciyi kabul etti. Ama insanlar hala hem Türkiye'ye hem de başka ülkelere göç etmeye devam ediyor. Bu konu Türkiye'de çok tartışıldı.

ANKET VERSİYON 1: Yok

ANKET VERSİYON 2: Her hâlükârda, Türkiye uluslararası hukuka göre, böyle durumlarda, gelen mültecileri kabul etmekle yükümlüdür.

ANKET VERSİYON 3: Her hâlükârda, Türkiye, böyle durumlarda, gelen mültecileri kabul edeceğini diğer ülkelere taahhöt etmiş olan çok sayıdaki ülkeden biridir.

ANKET VERSİYON 4: Her hâlükârda, Türkiye uluslararası hukuka göre, böyle durumlarda, gelen tüm mültecileri kabul etmekle yükümlü değildir.

ANKET VERSİYON 5: Her hâlükârda, Ortadoğu'daki çok sayıda ülke -Mısır, Lübnan, ürdün gibi- ve Avrupa'daki çok sayıda ülke -Almanya ve İsveç gibi- hep birlikte milyonlarca Suriyeliyi ülkelerine kabul ettiler ve ilerleyen yıllarda buna devam etmeyi planlamaktalar.

Farz edin ki Türkiye hükümeti yeni gelecek olan mültecilere kapıları kapatmaya yönelik bir politika hazırlığı içinde. Eğer bu politika hayata geçirilirse, gelecek aydan itibaren, Türkiye yeni gelen Suriyelilere kapıları kapatacak, onları Suriye'ye geri dönmeye veya başka bir yere iltica etmeye mecbur bırakacak.

Hükümetin yeni gelen Suriyelilere kapıları kapatmayı öngören yeni politikası hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

1. Kesinlikle destekliyorum
2. Kısmen destekliyorum
3. Ne destekliyorum ne karşıyım
4. Kısmen karşıyım
5. Kesinlikle karşıyım

B.   Appendix B

This Appendix provides some evidence of successful randomization. Here we model treatment assignment as a function of pre-treatment covariates. Since the treatments do not have any natural order, we use a multinomial logit model. The results of this model are presented in Table 2. Cell entries contains estimated coefficients and standard errors in parentheses. The outcome base category is the control condition. The reference category for the model is male, less educated, non-AKP voters.

We find that none of the pre-treatment covariates are statistically significant at conventional levels (i.e., 0.05). This indicates that they do not correlate with treatment status and suggests that randomization was 'successful.' [67]

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[67] We have no evidence that differential exposure or noncompliance affected our randomization, and our understanding is that the randomization mechanisms functioned properly. One view is that when researchers have 'clean data' such as this, they should not conduct balance tests, as the results might lead to inaccurate conclusions (Mutz, Pemantle and Pham 2018). The general idea here is that random assignment does not ensure that treatment groups are always comparable, so checking for differences across groups is not an indication of a failure in randomization. We agree with the spirit of this argument, but provide the results of our randomization check to demonstrate that group differences do not exist.

Table 2: Covariates Do Not Correlate with Treatments

| Outcome category: | Dependent variable: Treatment condition | | | |
	Int'l law	Promise	No int'l law	Other countries
FEMALE	−0.074	0.010	−0.080	0.149
	(0.188)	(0.192)	(0.189)	(0.190)
AGE	0.039	−0.032	−0.151	−0.010
	(0.121)	(0.123)	(0.121)	(0.122)
EDUCATED	0.250	0.391	−0.086	0.260
	(0.235)	(0.236)	(0.235)	(0.230)
MORE EDUCATED	0.298	0.334	−0.388	−0.442
	(0.273)	(0.279)	(0.284)	(0.295)
AKP VOTER	−0.130	−0.328	−0.346	−0.169
	(0.184)	(0.189)	(0.186)	(0.185)
AWARENESS OF CURRENT EVENTS	−0.098	−0.357	0.293	0.333
	(0.274)	(0.279)	(0.275)	(0.277)
CONSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE	0.330	0.271	−0.232	0.154
	(0.353)	(0.363)	(0.380)	(0.359)

Note: Cell entries contains estimated coefficients and standard errors in parentheses. The outcome base category is the control condition. The reference category for the model is male, less educated, non-AKP voters. $^*p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$

C. Appendix C

This Appendix provides the tabular results from our OLS model, shown in Table 3. Following standard practice, we use HC2 robust standard errors to account for heterogeneity in the error term (Lin and Green 2016). The outcome measure is SUPPORT. On the right-hand side of the equation, we include binary indicators for each of our treatments (except the pure control condition): INTERNATIONAL LAW, NO INTERNATIONAL LAW, OTHER COUNTRIES, and PROMISE. We also include a set of covariates that are plausibly predictive of public support for the government's proposed policy, such as AGE, EDUCATION, and SEX. In addition, we include two latent measures of respondents' AWARENESS OF CURRENT EVENTS and CONSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE. Finally, we include a measure of partisan support (AKP VOTER), which is coded 1 if the respondent voted for the AKP and 0 otherwise.

Table 3: OLS results

Treatment	Coefficient estimate	Standard error
Int'l law	0.274	0.112
No int'l law	0.083	0.122
Other countries	0.180	0.118
Promise	0.031	0.122

Note: Table 3 presents the results of our OLS model. Cells contain estimated coefficients and HC2 robust standard errors. The dependent variable is SUPPORT.

In Table 4, we provide results from an ordered logit model with the same treatment indicators and covariates. Cells contain estimated coefficients and standard errors.

Table 4: Ordered logit results

Treatment	Coefficient estimate	Standard error
Int'l law	0.321	0.176
No int'l law	0.103	0.176
Other countries	0.184	0.176
Promise	−0.014	0.175

Note: Table 4 presents the results of our ordered logit model. Cells contain estimated coefficients and standard errors. The dependent variable is SUPPORT.

In Table 5, we provide results from an ordered probit model with the same treatment indicators and covariates. Cells contain estimated coefficients and standard errors.

Table 5: Ordered probit results

Treatment	Coefficient estimate	Standard error
Int'l law	0.223	0.105
No int'l law	0.069	0.104
Other countries	0.135	0.104
Promise	0.012	0.104

Note: Table 5 presents the results of our ordered probit model. Cells contain estimated coefficients and standard errors. The dependent variable is SUPPORT.

D.   Appendix D

This Appendix illustrates the relationships between the measures used in our analyses. Figure 8 visualizes these via a correlation plot. Cell entries contain Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (ρ). Darker orange values indicate stronger positive relationships, and darker blue values indicate stronger negative relationships.

Figure 8: Correlation plot of measures
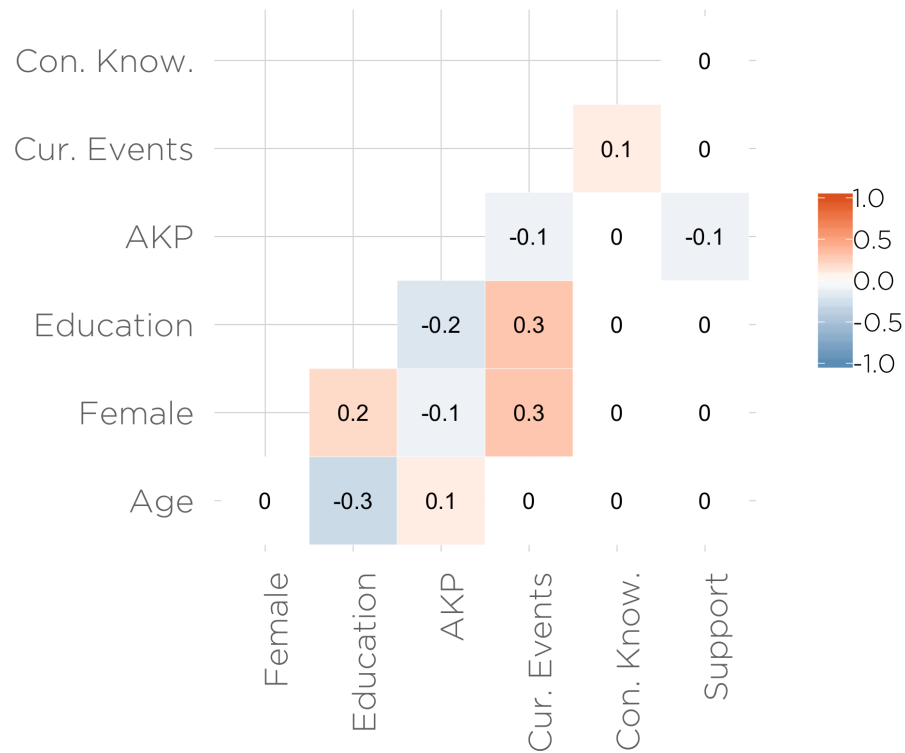
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