

Social Integration and Interpersonal Contact:
The Case of Turkish Refugees in Finland

Master's Thesis in
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Abstract

Aim: The study aimed to investigate the relationship between interpersonal contact and social integration among Turkish refugees in Finland.

Method: An online questionnaire was completed by 60 Turkish immigrants in Finland. One-way ANOVA and correlations were used. Qualitative analysis was used to examine the reasons for the refugees' migration.

Results: No correlation was found between positive interpersonal contact with Finns and social integration. Meanwhile, positive interpersonal contact with Turks demonstrated a weak correlation with social integration. Qualitative analysis results indicated political factors as the primary motivation for migration.

Conclusions: Overall, the results of the study did not align with existing literature. Further research is needed and to employ more robust measurements to investigate this complex relationship.

Key Words: Migration, Social Integration, Social Capital, Finland, Refugees, Turkey

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aim of the Study

This study examines the intertwined relationship between social integration, interpersonal contact, and its quality and frequency. In this context, it focuses on Turkish refugees in Finland, people who sought asylum in Finland mainly because of the deteriorating political climate in Turkey. The study investigates the relationship between refugees' social integration levels and their interpersonal contact with Finns and Turks.

The importance of social networks for integration is investigated through the social capital theory. However, it is worth noting that this thesis does not claim to study the whole complex structure of social capital but only one part at the micro level.

This section provides a theoretical framework for the central themes of the thesis. The migration process is examined through Lee's (1966) push-pull model, while Berry's model of acculturation is employed for a better understanding of integration. Furthermore, Putnam's social capital theory is closely linked to interpersonal contact.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

1.2.1 Migration

Migration is "the movement of people from one geographical region to another" (Giddens & Sutton, 2021). Although it has not been a new phenomenon, migration became more prevalent with industrialisation and became an integral part of globalisation. While migration rates did not change much during the last century, the attention migration receives from academic scholars, media, and political actors considerably increased (de Haas et al., 2020).

Many migration theories strongly emphasise the economy as the leading cause of migration. Although this thesis does not primarily focus on economic aspects, acknowledging some significant theories in the field is essential. Firstly, Neoclassical equilibrium theory sees migration as a consequence of disparities between the supply and demand for labour. (Becker, 1960). At the micro-level, it assumes immigrants are rational decision-makers who decide on migration after a cost-benefit calculation. At the macro-level, it views migration as an optimiser for the labour market (Todaro & Maruszko, 1987). The new economics of labour migration theory is another perspective to Neoclassical equilibrium theory, proposing migration as a household decision rather than an individual decision (Stark, 1991). It investigates migration at the meso-level and emphasises the importance of kinship and social ties in the decision-making process. Lastly, as another economy-centred theory, the Dual Labour theory draws attention to social hierarchies and argues that migrants fill positions deemed undesirable by the host population (Piore, 1979).

The push-pull model (Lee, 1966) of migration is a trendy analytical framework for studying migration. The model identifies economic, political, and environmental factors that can push individuals out of their origin country or pull immigrants toward the destination country (Haas et al., 2020). Push factors often involve negative factors in the origin area, such as economic recession and political insatiability, while pull factors usually include demand for labour or political freedoms (de Haas, 2020). For many immigrants, push and pull factors are often in the same line. For example, if the high unemployment rate is a push factor from the home country, employment opportunities would be a pull factor from the destination country.

Social Networks Theory explains how interpersonal ties connect migrants to other individuals in origin and destination areas (Massey et al., 1998). It argues that individuals do not make migration decisions alone in isolation; instead, they rely on social networks and connections for information regarding migration (Granovetter, 1973). Social networks theory also explains a phenomenon called chin-migration, where immigrants from origin often migrate to the same destination area due to social networks (Scott, 2000). The migration networks later create social capital, which can help immigrants with integration and decision-making (Haug, 2008). This concept will be investigated in a later section.

Migration can be investigated under several categories, each offering insight into this complex social process; it can be classified as internal or international depending on whether individuals move within the same country or cross national borders. Although the difference seems simple initially, it may differ depending on border policies between countries or cultural groups within countries. For instance, EU citizens can migrate from, let us say, France to French-speaking Belgium and experience very little difference between cultures or languages and have a more straightforward adaptation. Meanwhile, internal migration in ethnically diverse countries like India or China can be much more challenging in adapting to a new culture. In this categorisation, for example, the place of intra-EU migrants is blurred and can even be seen as an in-between category (Faist, 2000).

Secondly, migration can be temporary or permanent (de Haas, 2020). Whether or not a migration can be temporary or permanent depends on the destination country's resources for the future and the immigrants' intention to return (Ozkan et al., 2021). During migration and integration, immigrants' decisions can change; temporary residents may become permanent, or permanent migration can become temporary. Lastly, migration can be voluntary or forced. Voluntary migration is a conscious choice for movement. It can be because of several motives, like seeking a better opportunity in terms of education, job, or life quality. Forced migration, on the other hand, happens when the individuals can no longer see the option to stay in their origin country without a violation of their human rights.

1.2.1.1 Forced Migration

The concept of forced migration is central to the study of migration, capturing the involuntary nature of the movement. Forced migration can be investigated in various forms. The most prominent group is refugees, defined as “someone unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.” (United Nations, 1951) Forced migrants may not immediately receive refugee status when they leave their countries. During this uncertain period, they are referred to as asylum seekers. Additionally, when individuals are forced to flee their homes but stay in their origin country, they are recognised as Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) (UNHCR, 2020).

As of 2023, 108.4 million people were forced to leave their home country in fear of conflicts, incarceration, and countless human rights violations (UNHCR, 2023). So-called European refugee crises brought new political salience to migration issues and policies (Haas, 2020). The term ‘crises’ has been criticised by several scholars; Menjivar et al. (2019) criticised the overuse of the term by media and officials, and Mcadam (2014) drew attention to the risk of pathologising the movement. Nevertheless, migration has been widely discussed in many areas in the last decade.

Violent conflicts are the most apparent reason for forced migrants, especially for mass migration (Castles, 2000). However, structural violence can drive individuals to flee their home country (Galtung, 1996). Structural violence refers to social, political, and economic structures that can create and perpetuate inequalities and injustices. They may not be as apparent as direct violence, such as armed conflicts, but they immensely affect individuals’ life quality.

Forced migration can be investigated with push-pull models. For forced refugees, factors like war, human rights abuses, and repression can be pushing factors, and the pull factors can also depend on what they escape from in their home country. For instance, if the refugee is escaping from wrongful incarceration, a country with a strong reputation for justice could be an ideal destination.

1.2.2 Integration

Immigration from one socio-cultural context to another leads to cultural exchange between newcomers and the host community. This cultural exchange is more of a process than a momentary event, requiring effort from both sides (Berry, 1997). The way migrants find a job, housing, or learn the language of the host country depends on how the migrant and the host country manage this process. This process can be called acculturation.

According to Berry (2001), immigrants can adopt four different strategies upon acculturation: assimilation, separation, marginalisation and integration. Simultaneously, the host community can also adopt one of four ideologies: melting pot, segregation, exclusion and multiculturalism. When immigrant gives up on their cultural identity in exchange for establishing connections with the host

community, assimilation is defined. This strategy corresponds to the melting pot ideology in the host community, promoting cultural homogeneity. Separation refers to the process where immigrants protect their cultural heritage by not contacting the host community, and this strategy mirrors segregation ideology in the host community. Marginalisation and exclusion happen when immigrants cannot maintain ties to their original culture or develop new ties with the host community. Finally, the most ideal strategy, integration, occurs when there is interest in creating new ties with the host community and maintaining ties with one's cultural heritage. Integration strategy can be pursued in the host communities with multiculturalism ideology.

Integration suggests strong ties with one's own and host culture (Heckman, 2004). Immigrant integration occurs on micro-, meso-, and macro-levels. At the micro-level, integration refers to individuals' experiences in the social system. The micro level-integration investigates how immigrants navigate in a new environment, learning a language or establishing social networks. At the meso-level, the integration process includes institutions and organisations in the host culture. The role of educational or social institutions in the integration is investigated at this level. Finally, the macro-level involves national policies and societal attitudes (Asselin et al., 2006). The current study investigates integration at micro- and meso-level, particularly focusing on social integration.

1.2.2.1 Measuring Social Integration

Social integration refers to the process where immigrants become part of the social life of the destination country (Blau, 1960). It includes various dimensions, such as health education and social inclusion (Berry, 1997). The current study investigates social integration through four dimensions: education, law and security, social inclusion and economy based on the measurement by Acikalin et al. (2020).

Firstly, access to education plays a crucial role in successful integration as it can provide a wide range of opportunities for immigrants and refugees (Jeon, 2019). Understanding how the previous education from the home country equates to the educational system in the destination country or knowing vocational training programs can also provide individuals with the necessary skills for employment in the new country can be good indicators for social integration. Furthermore, educational institutes can unite people and become centres for social integration (Mac Dabara, 2023).

As a primary concern for refugees, law and security is the second dimension. The legal security of migrants can be pointed out as a prerequisite for integration (Council of Europe, n.d). Understanding the legal framework in a destination country and knowing one's rights are essential to adapting to the new country (Massey et al., 1998). For this reason, for example, integration courses can include modules regarding the destination country's legal system (Hannafi & Marouani, 2023)

Social inclusion is an essential part of social integration. Shared beliefs and values or mutual respect for different beliefs can foster social inclusion (Daley, 2007). Social inclusion can foster a sense of belonging among refugees and promote psychological well-being (Berry, 1997; Tip et al., 2019). The refugees who are included in the society can partake in the benefits of the social capital and find their place in the host society (Cr)

Finally, the economic dimension highlights the importance of financial freedom during the process of social integration. It emphasises the significance of individuals knowing how to earn money to facilitate their livelihood (Cruz, 2008). Equipping individuals with the skills and resources needed for employment and economic stability can enhance social integration by reducing income disparities (Marten et al., 2019).

1.2.3 Social Capital and Interpersonal Contact

Social capital is a multidisciplinary concept studied across various academic fields such as economics, sociology, and political science (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Three scholars have played a remarkable role in developing and popularising this concept (Field, 2003; Garip, 2008; Williams et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021;). Bourdieu (1986), as the first scholar to define the concept in its current meaning, described social capital as resources that individuals or groups acquire through networks of relationships. He argued that the accumulation of social capital, along with economic and cultural capital, can contribute to inequality and social stratification. On the contrary, Coleman's (1988) work suggested social capital as a valuable resource for underprivileged groups. His understanding of social capital brings light to the individual, viewing social capital as a product of interpersonal connections. (Coleman, 1988)

Understanding social hierarchies was central to Bourdieu's work. Hence, he thought of social capital as a tool for the privileged to maintain and improve their social class, and there was not much space in his theory about the possible ways for less privileged groups to utilise social capital. On the other hand, working in the education field with less privileged students, Coleman recognised the value of social networks for both the disadvantaged and the privileged. Both approaches viewed social connections as a form of exchange. Neither focused on issues like individual affection and often overlooked issues outside rational calculation (Field, 2003).

While Coleman and Bourdieu's work was recognised within the academic field, Putnam became the most widely recognised scholar for social capital with his work 'Bowling Alone' (2000). Putnam's work heavily focused on the American context (which is not directly related to this thesis), emphasising the erosion of social capital with fewer and less trustworthy relationships. One of Putnam's most significant contributions to literature has been the introduction of bridging and

bonding social capitals, which will be central in this thesis while looking at social capital through migration lenses. Bonding social connects the individual to their homogenous group, whereas bridging capital connects the individual to broader society. (Kindler et al., 2015) Therefore, in migration, bridging social capital is seen as social networks with host communities, whereas bonding social capital is seen as social networks with ethnic communities (Haug, 2008).

Measuring social capital is a challenge as it has several components, which, in some studies, are used almost as synonyms for social capital (Hawkins & Maurer, 2011). Trust and social networks are essential components of social networks. Trust, in particular, is a complex and abstract subject that is hard to measure (Putnam, 2007). On the other hand, social networks can be measured on various levels: at the micro level through interpersonal contacts, at the meso-level through structures of groups and organisations, and at the macro level through broader consideration for societal norms and institutions (Lin, 2001). For micro-level measurement of social networks, the frequency of interactions and the relationship quality can be valuable indicators of the impact of social networks (Hynie, 2018).

In the context of migration and integration, this current study investigates social networks at the micro-level as an essential part of social capital. This paper, looking at social networks from two different perspectives, relates bonding social capital to ethnic networks and bridging social capital to intergroup contact.

1.2.3.1 Bonding Social Capital and Ethnic Networks

Bonding social capital refers to close social relationships formed within homogenous groups. These homogenous groups can share the same ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds (Putnam, 2000). Bonding social capital is characterised by stronger social connections based on trust and a sense of reciprocity. Ethnic networks are an integral part of bonding social capital, and their effects can be seen in various stages of migration and integration.

For the majority of the population, social capital is cumulative, and it only grows over time. However, immigrants can lose their social capital during displacement (Coleman, 1988) and need new networks upon migration (Erel, 2010). For this reason, immigrants can consider places where they already have some interpersonal connections or places known to have individuals from their own culture. Therefore, social networks can be essential in deciding the destination country (Haug, 2008). Haug (2008) argues that after the pioneer immigrants deal with the first hardships of migration, they start to build their community in the destination country, which makes the transfer of bonding social capital easier.

Ethnic social networks can also support immigrants during settlement and integration. Immigrants can seek help from the more experienced immigrants in their ethnic community upon arrival. These networks can provide valuable information, such as ways to find affordable housing, job opportunities, and other resources that can help new immigrants adapt to a new society (Nee & Sanders, 2001)

Ethnic social network's role in integration can be complicated. On the one hand, having a sense of familiarity in a foreign country, communicating with people with the same background, and sharing information about adapting to the same society can contribute to integration (Nee & Sanders, 2001; Strang, 2008; Bulcholtz, 2019). At this stage, ethnic networks can become a valuable source of bonding social capital. On the other hand, strong social bonding with the same homogenous group can also posit the risk of fostering segregation. Small communities may be more exclusive than inclusive, and when membership in these groups constitutes distrust of outgroups, these networks can become a negative form of bonding social capital (Kindler et al., 2015). For this reason, intergroup contact, particularly positive intergroup contact, is necessary for establishing social bridges (Brinkerhoff, 2009)

1.2.3.2 Bridging Social Capital and Intergroup Contact

Bridging social capital can unite people from different backgrounds (Field, 2003). The social ties are weaker in bridging social capital, primarily due to the absence of shared cultural and social values (Putnam, 2000; Haug, 2008). Nonetheless, bridging social capital remains essential for integration and can even be seen as an indicator of social integration (Kindler et al., 2015). In the migration context, interactions between immigrants and members of the host community establish the core of bridging social capital (Ager & Strang, 2008).

These interactions between immigrants and host community members can also be investigated under Allport's (1979) intergroup contact theory. Allport's theory mainly focuses on prejudice. Still, it also states that group interaction can decrease prejudice while increasing social cohesion and integration. However, the positive impact of intergroup contact on integration depends on both the quality and quantity of these interactions (Hynie, 2018). On the other hand, limited and negative interactions with outgroups can have the opposite effect, potentially promoting the motivations for segregation or fostering intentions to return to one's home country (Ozkan et al., 2021).

Current literature mainly supports the positive relationship between bridging and bonding social capital. For example, a study from Denmark (Svendsen et al., 2008) investigated positive and negative social bonding at the meso-level by exploring the immigrants' participation in intra-ethnic and intra-

ethnic voluntary organisations. The study's findings showed a positive relationship between bridging and bonding social capital, defying ethnic networks as an obstacle to bridging social capital. Furthermore, their sample consisted of non-Western immigrants, including Turkish refugees. Another study in the UK has found that bonding social capital could give immigrants the confidence they need for bridging social capital (CIC, 2007; as cited in Kindler et al., 2015). Furthermore, ethnic networks can foster economic integration, as people can find work through these networks (Marten et al., 2019).

1.2.4 Formation of Social Networks

Network formation can be random at times or evolve through the current structure of networks, with an accumulation of social capital (Jackson & Rogers, 2007). Meeting through common friends can be an example of expanding the social network. Shared interest within the friend group can provide a basis for meaningful connections (Yu & Leung, 2023). This can be the most common way of meeting within homogenous ethnic groups (Zierch et al., 2023). However, intergroup contact can be a little more challenging (Kauff et al., 2021w). Cross-ethnic relationships require more confidence in communication since shared values are less visible (Bagci et al., 2019). First, outgroup friendships can be challenging, while further friendships reduce prejudice and foster integration (Pettigrew, 2008)

Workplaces are another place to form new social networks (Ellwardt et al., 2012). People spend considerable time in their workplaces, and for many, their social ties are the most frequent. Therefore, the way of meeting through work can affect the quality and quantity of interpersonal contact (Bandiera et al., 2008). For refugees, workplaces can be crucial for creating social networks with the host community. Managers' support for intergroup contact in the workplace can increase the cooperation between individuals from different backgrounds and foster forming quality relationships (Koschate & van Dick, 2011). Notably, negative intergroup contact, which increases prejudice, can also occur in workplaces (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)

Meeting people through social services, for example, volunteer programs or social organisations, can create unique social bonds. For immigrants, community events or intercultural exchange events can be places where they can meet new people from their ethnic group and others (Evans et a, 2022). For refugees, this can also include reception centres as the first place where they meet with people from the same background, and the bonds they create with these connections can foster integration (UNHCR, 2020). These different ways of forming social networks can affect the quality and quantity of relationships.

1.3 Contextual Background

1.3.1 Immigration and Integration in Finland

Finland, like many other European countries, has seen increased immigration rates in the last decade due to various reasons such as work conditions, globalisation and humanitarian reasons. Although Finland has a relatively small immigrant population compared to other European nations, it has become a popular destination within the last decade (Anniste et al., 2017).

For the first time in the 1980s, immigration outnumbered emigration in Finland (Kaasalainen & Huuhka, 2016), and from the beginning of the 1990s, immigration rates snowballed. (Martikainen et al., 2012) This resulted in an unprecedented level of ethnic diversity in Finland. In 2022, there were almost 50,000 immigrants in Finland, not including more than 40,000 Ukrainians, who have been granted temporary protection status (Migri, 2023). Besides Ukraine, migration to Finland has increased significantly from Russia, the Philippines and Turkey recently (Statics Finland, 2023). This increased rate of immigration brought new attention to integration policies.

Poyhonen and Tarhanen (2015) investigated Finland's integration policies under five phases between the 1970s and 2010s. Finland accepted refugees in the 1970s for the first time, mainly from Chile and Vietnam. This wave of refugees marked the first phase of Finland's integration policies, which can be defined as 'fulfilling humanitarian approaches' (Saarinen, 2011, p. 147). During the second phase in the 1990s, Finland accepted many ethnic Finns upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, and policies during this phase mainly had a 'national, ethnic obligation' discourse.

The third phase was marked by Finland's entry into the European Union in 1995. During this phase, Finnish integration policies focused on promoting free movement within the EU and in 1999, Finland became one of the first countries in the EU to enact an Integration Act. Work-related migration from non-EU and Eastern-European states in the early 2000s characterised the fourth phase. With the effects of economic recession, immigration is seen as a resource and government-adapted policies promote active immigration and integration through language teaching. However, with the changes in the political climate, 'active immigration policy' slowly vanished from the agenda while intense language teaching policy for integration remained intact.

Extensive debates regarding immigration and integration defined the last phase listed by Poyhonen and Tarhanen (2015). The discourse showed contradictory viewpoints, with some voices opposing migration, multiculturalism and integration and some favouring multiculturalism, showing concern about cultural erasure among immigrants (Holm & Poyhonen, 2012). Amid the debates, Finland passed the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration in 2010, advocating for equal opportunities for all immigrants (Finnish Integration Act 2010). Since 2011, Finland's integration policies have

shown a positive attitude towards immigrants, albeit with some criticism. This is about to change in 2023, though, now that the far-right and anti-immigrant Finns Party, as a part of the new coalition government, has proposed new unwelcoming policies towards immigrants and refugees (Mac Dougall, 2023). Since the effects of this shift are not yet to be seen, it will not be further covered in this paper.

In the current integration system in Finland, asylum seekers' professional competencies are assessed at the reception centres. After this assessment, individuals can receive courses recommended according to the immigrants' needs, including language courses, vocational and civic courses, and rehabilitation within a 'personalised integration plan' (Karlsdottir et al., 2017, p. 15). Although high migrant and refugee unemployment rates are one of the biggest challenges in Finland (Masoud et al., 2019), in practice, the time spent on language courses increased while job-seeking classes decreased. Labour mismatch is another problem, and although the competence-based qualification system in Finland attempts to recognise immigrants' qualifications, it is not adequate for identifying foreign or informal qualifications (Karttunen, 2015)

1.3.2 Turkish Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Since the 1960s, Turkey has been mainly an emigration country (Kanik, 2015). In order to decrease unemployment and boost the economy, the Turkish state signed agreements with various nations to send Turkish workers (Ay, 2015). Some of these workers returned to Turkey, while a considerable number of immigrants settled in their destination countries. As a result, currently, there are more than 6.5 million Turks live in Western European countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, 2023). The emigration rates dropped substantially since early 2000 with increased economic stability. Furthermore, due to conflicts in neighbouring countries, Turkey has become the country hosting the largest population of refugees (UNHCR, 2022).

Although the early two terms of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government, which came to power in 2002, were marked by a stable economy and low emigration, political instability increased when AKP laid the democratisation process aside and employed a populist discourse that is driven from victimisation and blaming (Ercetin & Erdogan, 2023). The Erdogan government utilised the failed coup attempts in 2016 to purge all opposition. More than half a million people were detained, and almost 100,000 people were arrested by the government with accusations of terrorism (Sade, 2020). Declaring the state of emergency gave the government exponential power over the rule of law. Furthermore, replacing the parliamentary system with a presidential system in 2017 further strengthened Erdogan's authority and gave Erdogan executive power (Zingg, 2018).

The authoritarian regime dramatically set back the human rights situation in Turkey, and a large number of Turkish refugees had to leave their home country to escape from political incarceration. The status of Turkey is complex as it receives many Syrian and Afghan refugees while producing Turkish refugees at the same time (Sirkeci, 2017). Furthermore, Syrian refugees' wishes to leave Turkey for other European nations indicate Turkey is an insecure country (Sirkeci, 2017; Simsek, 2017).

1.3.3 Turkish Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Finland

Since 2016, 1,590 Turks have applied for asylum in Turkey, with 921 receiving positive decisions. Among various nationalities applying for asylum, Turks constitute Finland's seventh-largest group of asylum seekers (Migri, 2023). Finland and Sweden's pursuit of NATO membership brought attention to Turkish refugees due to Turkish authorities' requests for the extradition of refugees. A list shared in a Turkish newspaper revealed the names of 45 people sought by Turkey, which included journalists and teachers (BBC, 2022). Although President Erdogan claimed Sweden 'promised' to extradite the requested refugees, Finnish and Swedish authorities stated that the NATO request did not affect the law (BBC, 2022; Yle News, 2022). In June 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Turkey, Finland and Sweden indicated that extradition requests from Turkey must be thoroughly investigated with the evidence provided by Turkish authorities. This MoU brought many concerns regarding refugee rights and human rights and caused considerable panic in Turkish refugee communities (Pelliconi, 2022).

One aspect to highlight about Turkish refugees in Finland is the significant cultural difference stemming from their religious practices. The dominant religion in Finland is Christianity, and Muslims constitute one of the smallest religious minorities in Finland (Martinen et al., 2013). Around 50,000-60,000 Muslims are assumed to reside, accounting for 1% of the population. The early Muslim immigrants in Finland were mainly from Mediterranean countries, including Turkey. Some research showed lower integration and employment rates for Muslim populations. However, Turks were not included in this group, and they showed a higher employment rate than the average immigrant in Finland (Martikainen, 2013). Furthermore, Muslim women, especially the ones who choose to wear headscarves, experienced discrimination in their workplace and often felt excluded in Finnish society due to their clothing (Honkatukia & Rattila, 2023)

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does the positive intergroup contact with Finns relate to social integration?

Hypothesis

Positive interpersonal relationships with Finnish people may lead to higher social integration scores.

2. How does the positive ethnic contact with Turks relate to social integration?

Hypothesis

Positive interpersonal contact with Turkish people will correlate significantly with social integration scores.

3. How does the way of contact affect the frequency and quality of the relationship?

Hypothesis

The way of meeting individuals may correlate with the relationship's perceived positiveness and/or frequency.

4. What were the primary reasons for Turkish refugees leaving Turkey and seeking asylum in Finland?"

2. Method

2.1 Sample

The sample consisted of 60 Turkish refugees living in Finland, 44 females and 16 males. The mean age was 38.8 (*SD* 5.9) for females and 44.8 (*SD* 5.5) for males. The age difference was highly significant ($t_{(58)} = 40.41, p < .001$). The age range was between 20 and 54 years. The educational background, the migrant status, and the length of stay in Finland are presented in Table 1.

The educational level options were presented in a format familiar to Turkish respondents. For example, middle school and high school were presented separately rather than combined under a single secondary-level category. They were also asked about their reason for leaving Turkey and coming to Finland to discover the perceived causes of forced migration. Additionally, respondents were asked about their country of birth to be sure that only Turks responded to the questionnaire.,

Table 1
Demographics of the Respondents (N = 60)

Variable	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Female	44	73.3
Male	16	26.7
Education		
PhD	3	5.0
Master's Degree	12	20.0
Bachelor's Degree	38	63.3
High School	5	8.3
Middle School	1	1.7
Primary School	1	1.7
Migration Status		
Permanent Residence	20	33.3
Temporary	13	21.7
Residence		
Asylum Seeker	27	45.0
Living in Finland		
1-2 years	10	16.7
3-4 years	46	76.6
5 -10 years	3	5.0
10 or more years	1	1.7

2.2 Instrument

The questionnaire contained measurements of social integration and interpersonal contact. All items were presented to the respondents in Turkish.

The social integration scale was adapted from the 22-item scale developed by Acikalin et al. (2019). The scale consists of four subscales: education (3 items), law and security (10 items), social inclusion (5 items), and economic (4 items). The items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha values for each scale were as follows: law and security ($\alpha = .78$), social inclusion ($\alpha = .57$), education ($\alpha = .32$), and economic ($\alpha = .23$). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the full scale was .78. Items belonging to the sub-scales are presented in Table 2.

The scale was originally developed in Turkish and translated to Arabic to study Syrian refugees in Turkey. In the study with Syrian refugees, the whole scale showed high internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = .94). Two questions from the original scale were omitted while adapting the scale to Finland. The omitted questions were from the law and security subscales and pertained to temporary protection status, which was not applicable in the Finland case.

The researcher created the interpersonal contact questions. The questions measure interpersonal contact between Finns and Turks. The following questions were included: a) How often do you communicate with Turks in Finland?, b) How often do you communicate with Finns in Finland?, c) Write the names of the three Turks you encounter most frequently in Finland (you can use nicknames). How did you meet them and how often do you meet? How would you rate your relationship? (1-5). The same questions were also posed regarding Finns.

Perceived quality was measured by the question *How would you rate your relationship?* and frequency was measured by the question *How often do you meet?*. Both variables were continuous on a scale from 1 to 5. The categorical variable meeting ways was measured by the question *How did you meet them?* And participants were given three options, which were a) *Through the social system*, b) *Through work*, and c) *Through common friends*.

Table 2

Single Items of the Integration Scale

Sub-Scales	Items
Education	<p>1 I attend vocational training courses to help my family economically.</p> <p>2.I think that the education I received in my home country will enable me to have the skills to be successful in Finland.</p> <p>3. I can easily continue my education at educational institutions in Finland without any obstacles.</p>
Law and Security	<p>4. I know my rights and freedoms under temporary protection status/Asylum Seeker/Refugee.</p> <p>5. I know what sanctions I will face if I do not comply with Finnish law</p> <p>6. I know which authorities I should apply to get temporary protection / Asylum / Refugee status.</p> <p>7. I am not worried about being alone at home or walking outside in Finland.</p> <p>8. I rarely encounter disturbing people or events around me.</p> <p>9. In Finland, I believe the security forces can protect me.</p> <p>10. For my safety, I do not carry a gun / cutting tool / injuring tool in my bag.</p> <p>11. I know how to use the security services in Finland.</p>
Social Inclusion	<p>12. I respect the beliefs and values of Finnish society.</p> <p>13. I think the lifestyles of Turks and Finns are similar.</p> <p>14. People in Finland treat us warmly</p> <p>15. I do not intend to go back to Turkey</p> <p>16. I think Turks and Finns respect each other in terms of beliefs and values.</p>
Economy	<p>17 I know how to make money in Finland.</p> <p>18. I support the opening of more Turkish businesses.</p> <p>19. I can earn my living through association, foundation or government support.</p> <p>20. I think that the working conditions in Finland are better than in Turkey.</p>

2.3 Procedure

The responses were gathered through convenient sampling and snowball effect. A link was sent to the online questionnaire to several refugees with social connections, and they distributed the link to the questionnaire through WhatsApp chats and social gatherings.

The questionnaire was created in Google Forms in Turkish. To ensure transparency and ethics, respondents were presented with informed consent on the first page of the Google Forms, which included information about the scope of the research, the researcher, the supervisor, and the nature of voluntary participation. To continue with the survey, respondents had to choose yes for the statement: *I have read the above information and completely voluntarily participated in this research.*

For the distribution of the form, the first several community members were contacted via WhatsApp through convenient sampling and delivered the questionnaire link to them. Later, these participants reached more refugees through several WhatsApp groups that promote in-group communication between Turkish refugees in Finland. The questionnaire collected responses from February 15 to April 12, 2023, with most responses received during February.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to the principles regarding human research ethics in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013) and the guidelines for responsible conduct of research from the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012).

3. Results

3.1 Correlations Between Positive Interpersonal Contact with Finns and Social Integration Scores

The relationship between social integration scores and the quality of the relationship with Finns is presented in Table 3. Quality of relationship is measured by the answers to the question *How would you rate your relationship? (1-5)*.

No significant relationship between the subscales and the perceived quality of the relationship to Finns was found, which does not support the first research question. Significant positive correlations were found between the merged total social integration scores, education, and law and security.

Table 3
Correlations between the Four Subscales Measuring Social Integration and the Quality of Interpersonal Contact with Finns (N = 60)

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Quality of the Relationship					
2. Total Integration Scores	.02				
3. Education	-.20	.60**			
4. Law and Security	.11	.82**	.24		
5. Social Inclusions	.04	.72	.24	.45**	
6. Economy	.03	.73	.50**	.39**	.44

3.2 Correlations Between Positive Interpersonal Relationships with Turks and Social Integration Scores

This section investigates the relationship between social integration scores and the perceived quality of the relationship with Turks. The analysis showed a low significant correlation ($r = .27$) between the overall integration score and perceived quality, providing moderate support for Hypothesis 2. Results are presented in Table 4

Table 4
Correlations between the Four Subscales Measuring Social Integration and the Quality of Interpersonal Contact with Turks (N = 60)

	Total Integration Scores	Education	Law and Security	Social Inclusions	Economy
Quality of the Relationship	.27**	.18	.20	.14	.31**

3.3 Associations between the Way of Meeting Individuals and the Perceived Quality and Frequency of the Relationship

This section investigates whether ways of meeting people relates to the perceived quality of the relationship and the frequency of meetings. Participants answered three questions for six different individuals in their lives (three Turks and three Finns).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the impact of the way of meeting on the quality and frequency of relationship for three Turks (Table 5) and three Finns (Table 6). As seen in Tables 5 and 6, no significant relationship was found, except for one, for the way of meeting with the Turkish person participants identified first. Only one *post hoc* analysis was conducted for this one significant result.

Table 5
Ways of Meeting Other Turks

	SS	F	p
Person 1			
Frequency	14.41	5.86	.005*
Quality	1.1	.562	.526
Person 2			
Frequency	3.2	1.5	.216
Quality	.243	.151	.860
Person 3			
Frequency	1.5	1.3	.26
Quality	1.69	.91	.407

$df = 2$

In a *post hoc* analysis, a significant difference was observed for Person 1 ($p < .05$) in terms of the frequency of meeting people through work compared to meeting people through the social system. This finding may suggest that participants meet people whom they come to know through work more frequently than people those they met through the social system. Notably, this difference was specific to Person 1 and was not observed for the other two identified individuals. Furthermore, due to the limited sample size and high variability, it is difficult to consider this finding as statistically reliable, nonetheless, it is reported here as part of the results.

Table 6
Ways of Meeting Finns

	SS	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Person 1			
Frequency	.4	.21	.80
Quality	1.4	.69	.50
Person 2			
Frequency	3.5	1.8	1.6
Quality	1.2	.74	.48
Person 3			
Frequency	4.1	1.9	.15
Quality	3.2	1.3	.27

df = 2

3.4 Qualitative Analysis of Reasons for Migration

Participants were also asked about their reason for leaving Turkey and coming to Finland with short open-ended questions. One participant did not answer either of these questions. The answers from 59 participants were analysed in this section. Some of the participants gave almost identical answers to both questions; most participants' answers shared a common thread for both questions. Political reasons for leaving Turkey and forced migration for coming to Finland were mentioned by 21 participants.

The answers were categorised as, political factors, security, asylum, justice and freedom, family, and education. Only one participant cited education both as the reason for leaving Turkey and coming to Finland.

Table 7
Reason for Migration (N = 59)

	Political Factors	Security	Asylum	Justice & Freedom	Family	Education
Reason for Leaving Turkey	33	9	3	11	2	1
Reason to come Finland	10	10	30	4	4	1

4. Discussion

4.1 Summary of the Results

The study examined the relationship between interpersonal contacts and social integration among Turkish refugees in Finland. The study also explored the impact of the way people meet on the frequency and the quality of the relationship. The results also included a qualitative analysis for an understanding of refugee's journey from Turkey to Finland.

This section provides insights into the findings and proposes potential explanations for them. While the findings highlight some aspects of Turkish refugees' experience in Finland, the results should be approached cautiously due to various limitations. These limitations will be discussed in more depth in the next section. However, it is essential to note that some of the findings presented in this section may be attributed to limited validity, reliability, and sample size.

The absence of any significant correlation between contact with Finns and Social Integration subscales was particularly intriguing. This finding does not support the first hypothesis, which suggests that positive contact with the host community would improve social integration. Furthermore, it contradicted previous literature, indicating that intergroup contact with the host community typically enhances integration (Berry, 2001; Hynie, 2018; Paolini et al., 2018). Some studies even propose intergroup contact (as a component of bridging social capital) as an indicator of social capital (Field, 2003; Haug, 2008; Kindler et al., 2015). Therefore, a potential explanation for this finding can be an error in this study. The validity of asking one item for rating the quality of the relationship could be called into question. In addition, although participants were instructed to answer the questions about three individuals in their lives to improve the survey's realism, asking about three specific people might have brought personal biases that could influence the results, especially given the limited sample size.

The findings vaguely support the second hypothesis, which proposes a positive correlation between interpersonal contact with Turks and social integration. Notably, the quality of interpersonal contact with Turks demonstrates the strongest correlation with the economic subscale ($r=.33$) while correlating with overall social integration scores at $r = .27$. While these correlations are statistically significant, they are both relatively low. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the potential errors mentioned for the correlation between interpersonal contact with Finns and social integration may also be relevant in this context.

The third and final hypothesis suggested possible impacts of the way of meeting with people on the frequency and quality of interpersonal relationships. Participants were provided with three options for ways of meeting, which are through work, through the social system, and familiar friends. The finding showed no significant relationship except for the first individual identified among the Turks.

Tukey's *post hoc* test conducted for this relationship revealed that the frequency of meetings was higher when respondents met someone through their work rather than through the social system. In a general overview, the findings did not support the hypothesis.

The qualitative analysis regarding reasons for migration provides insight into respondents' motivation. One finding worth mentioning is that many participants provided nearly identical answers for leaving Turkey and coming to Finland as their destination. This may suggest that many participants viewed their migration as a cohesive journey, and their motivation for leaving one country did not differ so much from entering another. However, it is essential to acknowledge that similarities in answers may also be due to the wording of the questions. If participants were asked why they chose Finland as their destination country, the answer might have provided a more nuanced response. On the same note, even with more specific questions, the answers might have stayed similar or revolved around broad security or political concepts. This was because the sample primarily consisted of forced migrants with limited options for destination countries. Forced migrants often prioritise safety and refuge, and as a result, their choices may be influenced less by other pull factors such as the destination's attractiveness. Furthermore, it is essential to recognise that more than half of the participants cited political factors as their reason for leaving Turkey. This finding aligns with the challenging political climate that has existed in Turkey since 2016.

4.2 Limitations

While this study offered a brief insight into the integration of Turkish refugees in Finland, it was impossible to draw significant results due to various limitations. Among these limitations, the sample size stands out prominently, as it only consisted of 60 participants. This sample size was insufficient for establishing statistical correlations. It is worth noting that a small number of participants were expected given that there is a small Turkish refugee population in Finland. Most recent numbers from 2016 only report around 900 (Migri, 2016). Nevertheless, the actual sample size was even smaller than anticipated. Due to the small sample size and the use of convenient sampling, the generalizability of the study findings is quite constrained.

Besides sample size, some limitations arose from the instruments. The reliability of social integration scores was considerably low, partially explained by the small sample size. However, it can also cast doubt on the validity of the measurement for this sample. Furthermore, some measurements were created and included in this research without concerns regarding validity and reliability. This was a regrettable oversight that impacted the quality of the research.

4.3 Implications of Study and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite its limitations, this thesis contributes to understanding social integration and interpersonal contact among Turkish refugees. Although most of the findings are inconclusive in this study, some points remain to be considered. For future research to be more reliable, employing more comprehensive and valid instruments for the quality and frequency of interpersonal contact is imperative. Furthermore, trust, a fundamental component of social capital (Putnam, 1993), should be included in future studies to understand interpersonal contact better.

In future research, it is essential to address the study's limitations. The most prominent limitation of this study is the sample size. Therefore, future research should aim for a larger sample size for a more robust statistical analysis. The absence of a significant correlation between interpersonal contact with Finns and social integration challenges the common understanding that positive contact with the host community leads to better integration. Additionally, the reliability and validity of the measurements should be tested vigorously to ensure that the instruments are measuring what they are intended to measure. Given the small Turkish refugee population in Finland, exploring other methods of analysis that can yield meaningful results even with a small pool of participants can also be a promising approach for future research. For example, in-depth qualitative interviews can provide a more comprehensive understanding of refugee's experiences of migration and integration.

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