

EXAMINING THE ATTITUDES OF TURKISH ADULTS TOWARDS SYRIAN
CHILDREN FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF INTERGROUP CONTACT
THEORY AND SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

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ABSTRACT

EXAMINING THE ATTITUDES OF TURKISH ADULTS TOWARDS SYRIAN CHILDREN FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF INTERGROUP CONTACT THEORY AND SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

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Master of Arts, Migration Studies

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This thesis research aims to examine the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children and the variables influencing these attitudes within the framework of the Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory. Studies have revealed that negative attitudes towards Syrian children are one of negative conditions to which Syrian children are exposed. The research hypotheses were tested with 254 participants (185 Female, 61 Male, $M_{age} = 28.04$) through an online survey consisting of various scales. Results revealed that when a Turkish child exerts more effort to obtain the reward, Turkish adults tend to and consider it fair to distribute the reward based on the principle of equity. However, when a Syrian child exerts more effort to obtain the reward, they tend to and consider it fair to distribute the reward based on the principle of equality. In addition, social distance (more willingness to engage with Syrians through a variety of means), (positive) emotions toward refugee children, (higher) religiosity and parenthood (having a child) were positively associated; while (more) exposure to Syrian refugees and (higher) income were negatively associated with attitudes toward refugee children. Finally, group attachment was positively correlated with negative attitudes toward Syrian refugee children.

Keywords: Syrian Children, Attitudes, In-group Favoritism, Intergroup Contact Theory, Social Identity Theory

ÖZ

TÜRK VATANDAŞI YETİŞKİNLERİN SURIYELİ ÇOCUKLARA YÖNELİK TUTUMLARININ GRUPLAR ARASI TEMAS KURAMI VE SOSYAL KİMLİK KURAMI AÇISINDAN İNCELENMESİ

KOÇAK, İlke

Yüksek Lisans, Göç Çalışmaları

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Bu tez araştırması, Türkiyeli yetişkinlerinin Suriyeli çocuklara yönelik tutumlarını ve bu tutumları etkileyen çeşitli değişkenleri Gruplar Arası Temas Kuramı ve Sosyal Kimlik Kuramı çerçevesinde incelemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmalar, Suriyeli çocuklara yönelik olumsuz tutumların Suriyeli çocukların maruz kaldığı olumsuz koşullardan biri olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Araştırma hipotezleri, 254 katılımcı (185 Kadın, 61 Erkek, *Ort.yaş*= 28.04) ile çeşitli ölçeklerden oluşan bir online anket üzerinden test edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, ödülü elde etmek için Türk bir çocuk daha fazla çaba sarf ettiğinde, Türk yetişkinlerinin ödülü hakçalık prensibine göre dağıtma ve bunu haklı bulmaya eğilim gösterdiklerini ortaya koymuştur. Ancak, Suriyeli bir çocuk ödülü elde etmek için daha fazla çaba sarf ettiğinde, Türk yetişkinlerin ödülü eşitlik prensibine göre dağıtma ve bunu haklı bulma eğilimi gösterdikleri görülmüştür. Ayrıca, sosyal mesafe (Suriyeliler ile sosyal temas kurmaya daha fazla istekli olma), (olumlu) duygular, (daha yüksek) dindarlık ve ebeveynlik (çocuk sahibi olma) Suriyeli çocuklara yönelik tutumlar ile pozitif olarak ilişkilirken; (daha fazla) Suriyeli mülteciye maruz kalma ve (daha yüksek) gelir ise Suriyeli çocuklara yönelik tutumlar ile negatif olarak ilişkili bulunmuştur. Son olarak, gruba bağlılık değişkeni ile Suriyeli çocuklara yönelik olumsuz tutumlar arasında pozitif bir korelasyon olduğu bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Suriyeli Çocuklar, Tutumlar, İçgrup Yanlılığı, Gruplararası Temas Kuramı, Sosyal Kimlik Kuramı



Dedicated to all displaced children...

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The question of how I could contribute to the collective effort to make childhood no longer a space occupied by adults formed the basis of this study. Therefore, this work has been more than an academic text for me; it has been a wonderful journey in which I rebuilt myself and took action instead of merely criticizing and stepping aside. Thus, I would like to thank myself for my hard work in completing this thesis. Then, I am deeply grateful to my advisor, Asst. Prof. Suzan Ceylan Batur, for her invaluable support throughout my journey. She is the person who motivated me to study in the field of Social Psychology and made me believe in my potential. I am also thankful to Assoc. Prof. Bařak Yavçan Meriç from the TOBB ETU family and all the faculty members who had a great influence on me. My dear professors at METU raised me not only academically but also as a person who embraced ethical values. I am grateful to my esteemed professors for their contribution to my pursuit of a meaningful purpose. Although it is not possible to express in words the contributions of my beloved family, who have always been with me with their deepest love and endless support, not only throughout this thesis process but also throughout my life; I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my father Hayri Koçak, my mother Zeynep Koçak, and my sister Eylem Koçak. My lifelong friends Hilal Kılıç, Elif Öztürk and Fatma Nur Solak, with whom I grew up, have never left me alone in my thesis process as in every moment. Additionally, Eda Yıldırım, Mehtap Yurdakul, Beril Özdemir, Tuğba Avcı, Eylül & Melike Kara; Utha and Aylak Madam families gave me courage, joy, and inspiration with their unique souls and perspectives on life. I am also very happy to have met Cemre Aysel, Pırıl Zaim, and Süeda Kaçdıođlu from the Anonymous Thesisaholics Community, as well as the entire graduate cohort, particularly Dilruba Tař, Meriç Ergündüz, Orçun Demir and Olcay Özkaya at TOBB ETU. Furthermore, I thank all my colleagues at ASAM, especially dear Nilay Tercan, Bahar Dağ, Selin Akbař, Ayřenur Rodoplu, Sena Çiçekli, Hasan Basri Akkanat, Cansu Avan, Zahirshah Mohammadi, Nor Al-Deen Mohammad Jasım Jasım, řerife Yaman, and Hasan Arıkbuđa for encouraging me to complete my study during the intensive fieldwork. Finally, I thank all those who fight against prejudice and discrimination for their efforts.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASAM	: Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants
DEMP	: Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency
ILO	: International Labor Organization
IOM	: International Organization for Migration
MoI	: Ministry of Interior
OCHA	: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMM	: Presidency of Migration Management
UN	: United Nations
UNCRC	: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNFPA	: United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	: United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
UNICEF	: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UN Women	: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WWII	: World War II

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The worldwide movement of people has been on the international agenda in recent years. According to global migration data provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 3.6 percent of the global population is part of human mobility due to a variety of factors, including safety issue (World Migration Report 2022). Furthermore, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicates that 103 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide, representing approximately half of the total global human mobility (UNHCR 2022). Additionally, 53.2 million of all forcibly displaced persons are internally displaced, while the remainder are asylum seekers, refugees and persons seeking international protection who have fled to other countries due to devastating conflicts (UNHCR 2022).

As of 2011, widespread violence in the Syrian Arab Republic has led Syrian people to seek humanitarian protection outside their country of origin, mainly in neighbouring countries such as Türkiye, Lebanon, Iran, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt (UNHCR and Government of Türkiye 2023). Currently, the largest number of people seeking international protection in the face of widespread violence have sought refuge in Türkiye from the Syrian Arab Republic due to geographical proximity and the open-door policy (UNHCR and Government of Türkiye 2023). In addition, contrary to public discourse on the voluntary repatriation of Syrians in Türkiye, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of Syrian refugees in Türkiye since 2011 (Presidency of Migration Management 2023). This is evidence that the vast majority of Syrians in Türkiye are long-term permanent members of Turkish society rather than temporary guests.

Moreover, according to available data, registered Syrian children under the temporary protection regime alone constitute almost half of the Syrian population in Türkiye, which is approximately 3.5 million Syrian people (PMM 2023). This

means that there is a considerable group of children at risk living in Türkiye. Displaced children, including Syrian minors, are recognized as being at risk and in need of protection due to their vulnerability to harm, such as maltreatment, various forms of exploitation, critical health and safety issues, as per the UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (UNHCR 2007).

It is evident that the exposure of Syrian refugee children to prejudice and discrimination in the country of asylum further exacerbates the existing vulnerability of this already at-risk group of children. Existing studies referred to in the literature review section of this thesis also support the argument that the adverse conditions to which children are exposed are interrelated. More specifically, serious violations of children's rights, such as forced child marriage, child labor, child poverty and being out-of-school, are not independent of negative attitudes of local adults towards refugee children. In this regard, this thesis argues that the negative conditions surrounding Syrian children, including negative attitudes, trigger each other, much like a domino effect. Based on this point, this thesis aims to explore the attitudes of Turkish adults toward Syrian children living in Türkiye, and the various factors determining these attitudes.

In her seminal work, Elisabeth Young-Bruehl (2021) critiques the vertical hierarchy and systematic domination of adults over children through the concept of Childism. This concept draws attention to the prejudices to which children are subjected by adults in a system constructed by adults. Young-Bruehl (2021) argues that adults disregard the unique potential of children in order to instrumentalize them for their own ideological purposes. Throughout history, adults have rationalized this unequal power relationship by continually reproducing prejudiced attitudes and discrimination towards children through family, religion, school, and other institutional apparatuses (Young-Bruehl 2021). When evaluating the situation of Syrian children in Türkiye through the lens of Childism, it can be seen that the disadvantaged position is not inherent to a certain group of children, but rather is constructed by adults. Thus, instead of defining refugee children as passive and victimized subjects, this study considers them as active participants whose access to

rights is restricted by the external conditions. Attributing vulnerability to a specific group of children obscures the root causes of grave violations of children's rights. Therefore, this thesis seeks to answer the question of whether it is refugee children who are disadvantaged or the external conditions, including social exclusion through negative attitudes, surrounding them.

It is an indisputable fact that the mass arrival of Syrian refugees in Türkiye within a relatively short period of time has created discontent among the local population (Erdoğan 2020, 2021, 2022). At the beginning of the Syrian exodus, refugees were perceived as victims and guests by Turkish citizens. However, as the discourse of the voluntary return of Syrian people lost its credibility, the negative attitudes of the local population towards Syrians escalated. With the realization that Syrian refugees might be permanent members of the society in Türkiye, Syrian refugees started to be perceived as threats instead of victims (Erdoğan 2022). Currently, destructive social repercussions of local people's negative attitudes towards Syrian refugees, including physical violence, hatred, and hostility, are reported via various channels of the media. This situation highlights the need for more academic studies on intergroup bias that barriers to peaceful coexistence and social cohesion in the case of Türkiye.

The puzzle here is that local citizens, who may have nothing in common with each other in the private sphere, and even members of social groups in constant ideological conflict with each other, can immediately come together under the root of the nation-state identity against non-citizens in the public sphere. As Benedict Anderson states, "...even members of the smallest nation will never know, meet or even hear the names of most of its members...", individuals still feel a sense of belonging to the imagined communities (Anderson 1983,360). Since the nation-state identity permeates every aspect of social life, who is excluded and who is included is perfectly defined by the nation-state identity through myths, symbols, and stereotypes.

As children are the group most affected by negative exposures for the longest period of time, this study problematizes the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children living in Türkiye. Although there is a significant accumulation of knowledge on negative attitudes towards Syrian children in the relevant literature - some of which is presented in the following chapter - there is no comprehensive study that examines the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children based on the Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory. Consequently, in this thesis, a series of questions were asked to holistically explore the attitudes of Turkish citizens towards Syrian children and various variables that have effect on the attitudes:

(I) To what extent do people in Türkiye distribute rewards between a Turkish and Syrian child based on principles of equity versus equality? (II) To what extent do people in Türkiye consider it fair to distribute rewards between Turkish and Syrian children based on principles of equity versus equality? (III) What variables predict Turkish adults' attitudes towards Syrian children? (IV) What is the correlation between Turkish adults' attitudes towards Syrian children and variables of social distance, exposure to Syrian refugees, group attachment, and emotions towards refugee children?

In this thesis, Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory is utilized to investigate how the social contact affects the negative attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children. Allport posits that increased social contact between diverse social categories can reduce the level of intergroup prejudice, provided certain conditions are met, such as group members being of similar status, having common goals, or authority figures playing an influential role in intergroup interaction processes (Allport 1954). However, later studies proved that quality social contact can reduce negative attitudes to some extent, whether or not Allport's conditions are met (Pettigrew et al. 2011). Another Social Psychology theory used in this thesis is the Social Identity Theory developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979). This theory provides a theoretical basis to explain the in-group identification processes and ingroup bias tendencies of Turkish adults.

It has been observed in the literature that the attitudes of local citizens in Türkiye towards refugee children is generally limited to attitude measurement and scale development studies in the field of Educational Studies. These include various scale development and adaptation studies on Turkish students' attitudes towards refugee students (Aslan and Kan 2021; Kılcan, Çepni and Kılınç 2017) and teachers' attitudes towards refugee students (Çiftçi et al. 2019; Sağlam and Kanbur 2017). At the beginning of this thesis, there was no comprehensive Turkish scale measuring local adults' attitudes towards refugee children. Therefore, in the first phase of the study, the necessary preliminary research, ethics committee application, and data collection processes were carried out for the adaptation of the Attitudes Towards Refugee Children Scale developed by Angelidou et al. (2019). However, since a valid and reliable Turkish version of the same scale was published by Aydoğdu and Akça (2021) in the subsequent period, the scale adaptation study, which constituted the first study of this thesis research, was not continued for ethical reasons.

In this thesis, data on the research questions mentioned above were obtained through the online application of the Attitude Scale Toward Refugee Children (Aydoğdu and Akça 2021); the social distance and exposure to Syrian refugee sub-scales utilized by Erişen (2018); the group attachment sub-scale (Roccas and Liviatan 2006) adapted into Turkish by Özkan (2014); two vignettes together with the measurement of fairness in reward allocation based on the principles of equity and equality to examine ingroup bias; and demographic form, all of which were to the research participants.

In this context, this thesis consists of six main chapters. The introductory chapter outlines the essence and perspective of the study. Chapter II presents the existing literature on the current situation of Syrian children living in Türkiye, as well as Turkish adults' current attitudes towards Syrian refugee children. The study-specific conceptualization of Syrian refugee children is also presented in this section. Chapter II also provides the theoretical framework of the study, which is

grounded on Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory and includes fundamental principles of distributive justice. Chapter III describes the methodological framework, while research results are revealed in the fourth chapter. Finally, discussion and conclusions of the study are presented in Sections V and VI.



CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Disadvantaged Children, or Disadvantageous Conditions?

The phenomenon of international migration has too many complex dimensions and components to be explained from a single perspective (Sert 2018). This study aims to address the negative attitudes that Syrian refugee children are exposed to in the country of asylum and some of the factors affecting these attitudes of local adults from a child rights-based approach among the numerous perspectives explaining the phenomenon of international migration. To do so, the negative attitudes through in-group favoritism and the relation of various variables, including social distance (in terms of willingness to establish social contact with Syrian refugees); exposure to Syrian refugees, feeling towards refugee children and group attachment to these attitudes of local adults towards Syrian children under temporary protection are investigated based on the Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory.

When analyzing Turkish adults' perception of Syrian children, the principle of the best interests of the child is at the center of all arguments presented in this thesis. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), one of the four guiding principles, adults are obliged to prioritize the best interests of the child in all their actions and to ensure that children have access to their fundamental rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, in addition to placing the best interests of the child at the center in all circumstances, guarantees children's right to life, development, and participation without discrimination (UNICEF n.d). In this context, it is indisputable that the gravest violations of children's rights have occurred during the war and displacement to which Syrian children have been exposed as of 2011. The increasing trend in child displacement has prompted all stakeholders from global to local level migration management to address the needs

of Syrian children; however, risks factors that adversely affect the well-being of children still persist (Şahin et al. 2021).

In light of the above, this chapter first focuses on the conceptualization of Syrian children. This is followed by a literature review on the disadvantageous conditions surrounding Syrian children. Then, an examination of the negative attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children living in Türkiye, which adversely affect the well-being of Syrian children living in Türkiye. In this way, a general framework is drawn to illustrate the current position of Syrian children under temporary protection status in Türkiye.

2.1.a. Conceptualization of Syrian Children

Focusing mainly on Turkish adults' perceptions of Syrian children, this thesis problematizes widely accepted representations of Syrian children such as threat, failure, beggar, oppressed, vulnerable, needing to be integrated into the system, sinless, poor or disadvantaged. In this context, this thesis argues that ensuring children's well-being is an unattainable goal without rethinking the current perception of the child instrumentalized by major political structures. All forms of attributions lead to children's life experiences being determined by relations of domination and mechanisms of control. In fact, children represent nothing but their own essence and unique potential. However, the various roles attributed to children by major political apparatuses such as family, religion, school, ideology, norms, and traditional values construct representations that serve to maintain vertical hierarchy and unequal power relations (Kara 2019,30-34). In this context, the first step in preventing prejudice and discrimination against children is to purify the concepts of child and childhood from the definitions imposed by the major structure.

When the concepts of child and childhood are evaluated in their historical context, it is stated that the modern understanding of the child began to take shape in the 20th century. The reason why the concepts of child and childhood became more visible in this period is known as the severe violations of rights that children

were exposed to during the Second World War (Sağlam and Aral 2016). From prehistoric times to the modern era, children have been labeled by adults as weak, miniature adults, source of cheap labor, vulnerable and subjects to be controlled by hegemonic masculinity (Erkut, Balcı and Yıldız 2017). It is emphasized that with the steps taken towards the institutionalization of children's rights in the twentieth century, childhood was reconceptualized as a life stage separate from adulthood (Dirican 2018). On the other hand, Postman (1994) argues that the distinction between adulthood and childhood has become blurred due to the rise of electronic media.

Considering these above, this study treats the childhood as a separate category since it adopts a rights-based perspective. In this direction, developments such as the publication of the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the establishment of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the promulgation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) have eliminated the miniature adult approach towards children, at least at the legal level, and emphasized childhood as a separate social category (Dirican 2018; Erkut, Balcı and Yıldız 2017).

Nevertheless, even though rights-based measures framed the concept of the child and children's rights in the twentieth century, the child's experience continues to be manipulated because of the adults' prejudice towards children. The clearest example of this is that schools, courts and orphanages, which are under the authority of adults, are still the institutions where children's rights are most restricted and violated (Güçlü 2016). Similarly, although the UNCRC prohibits the incarceration of children, the United States continues to support policies to incarcerate children it defines as dangerous and criminal (Young-Bruehl 2021,11). Young-Bruehl (2021) criticizes this contradiction between theory and practice through the concept of Childism. This concept draws attention to how the harm done to children by adults is legitimized through prejudice. Just like homophobia, sexism, racism and antisemitism, childism instrumentalizes and controls the

potential of a particular group positioned as "other" through systematic prejudice. Therefore, Young-Bruehl (2021) argues that disadvantage is not inherent to a specific group of children, but rather is created by adults' existing prejudice towards children. That is, without questioning why some underprivileged groups, including refugee children, are subjected to multiple layers of vulnerability; accepting these groups as disadvantaged by default legitimizes control mechanisms that reproduce unequal power relations and perpetuates multi-layered vulnerability of children (Çarıkçı, Hoşgör and Tılıç 2016).

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2019), child vulnerability can stem from individual factors, such as immigration background, disability, critical mental and physical health problems, as well as environmental factors, including conditions of access to resources and welfare, and structures surrounding the child, such as family, school and neighbourhood, which are not conducive to child development. There are two key features of the concept of child vulnerability that should be emphasized here. Firstly, the vulnerability level of any child is dynamic, not static. In other words, layers of vulnerability can be eliminated over time with the appropriate approach and practices. For example, a child who is living in poverty may be more vulnerable to health risks due to lack of access to proper nutrition and healthcare. However, with the right interventions, such as access to nutritious food and regular medical check-ups, this layer of vulnerability can be reduced. Similarly, a child who is living in an unstable home environment may be more vulnerable to emotional and psychological distress. However, providing psycho-social support can contribute to the well-being of children. Secondly, the conditions that lead to child vulnerability are often interacting and intertwined with each other. For example, forcibly displaced Syrian children may be simultaneously exposed to child poverty, child labor, lack of access to rights and services, or exploitation. As discussed in detail in the following section, in many cases, one adverse condition that children are exposed to can set the stage for the other (OECD 2019).

Overall, this study does not deny the fact that the majority of Syrian children in Türkiye are among the most vulnerable groups. However, when defining a particular group of children as vulnerable or disadvantaged, the main emphasis of this thesis is on the adverse conditions surrounding them. It is also recognized that not only Syrian children, but all children are exposed to various forms of vulnerability within the adult-constructed system. Furthermore, while the concept of the Syrian children utilized in this thesis focuses on the layer of vulnerability attributed to a group of children displaced from Syria, it does not ignore the fact that each child's experience, potential and resilience mechanisms are unique, including traumatic experiences such as war and displacement. It should be noted that personal experiences of children are highly determinant in the identity formation process (Şimşek 2016,3). All in all, the expression of Syrian children used in this thesis is conceptualized to emphasize the most fundamental violations of rights that surround these children, rather than to homogenize the experiences of all forcibly displaced Syrian children. In this respect, the terms Syrian children, Syrian refugee children, disadvantaged children, vulnerable children, or children under temporary protection regime are sometimes used interchangeably within the context of this study. Consequently, these terms are not intended to ascribe a positive or negative attribute to Syrian children. Rather, the concept of Syrian children simply describes the group of children under the age of eighteen who are in Türkiye due to war and forced displacement.

In addition to the ontological dimension of the concept of the Syrian child, another dimension to be discussed in this section is the legal dimension of the concept of the Syrian children. To understand the legal dimension of the term Syrian children, both of globally accepted definition of the child and temporary protection regime in Türkiye will be briefly mentioned. However, this section of the study will not provide a comprehensive overview of the developmental phases of global and national migration regimes, the institutional structures of migration management, and the various definitions of legal statuses for foreigners, as there is an abundance of readily available information on this topic. Nevertheless, considering the confusion of concepts in the migration-related literature and in

order to present the concept of the Syrian children as a whole with both its ontological and legal dimensions, this part of the study will include related legal definitions.

Considering the national legal frameworks for children in different countries, there is no consensus on when the childhood era ends, and adulthood begins. However, the concepts of child and childhood in the UNCRC, to which a total of 142 countries including Türkiye are parties, is the international agreement that addresses children's well-being and children's rights in the most comprehensive manner (Öktem 2018). The convention is significant in that it emphasizes children's rights to protection, access to basic services and participation in society. The framework of this convention treats children as active citizens and right holders, rather than passive subjects to be helped by adults. The UNCRC defines every human being under the age of eighteen as a child (UNICEF 2019). Similarly, the national legislation on children in Türkiye also recognizes individuals under the age of eighteen as children. For example, Law 5395 Juvenile Protection conceptualize juvenile as "any individual that has not yet completed age eighteen whether they have reached full legal age earlier" (Juvenile Protection Law 2005). These legal instruments, which define children as a social category separate from adults, also determine the responsibilities and obligations of states, institutions and adults in access to children's fundamental rights.

Another aspect of the legal definition of the Syrian children in Türkiye is the temporary protection regime. Although, there is a confusion about the status of Syrian individuals living in Türkiye, the accurate legal usage regarding the status of Syrians in Türkiye is temporary protection. Temporary protection status was introduced by the Law 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, which entered into force in 2013, and the Temporary Protection Regulation, which entered into force in 2014, in order to facilitate the status determination process for Syrians who took refuge in Türkiye en masse from Syria. However, the term refugee is also used as an umbrella term, unless a specific legal usage is required for the situation of Syrians in Türkiye. This is because Syrians in Türkiye meet the requirements for

refugee status as defined by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. According to the Convention, a refugee is defined as an individual who "...owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion..." leaves his or her country and seeks international protection within the borders of another country (UNHCR 2011).

All in all, the concept of Syrian children is used to refer to individuals under the age of eighteen who have sought refuge in Türkiye en masse due to the risk to their safety resulting from the widespread indiscriminate violence in the Syrian Arab Republic and who are exposed to multiple layers of vulnerability in a world constructed by adults.

2.1.b. An Overview of the Multi-faceted Vulnerability of Syrian Children

Due to the ongoing conflict and escalating violence, children in the Syrian Arab Republic still lack access to safe and child-friendly spaces (Save The Children 2022). Currently, more than 14.6 million people in the Syrian Arab Republic, including an estimated 6.5 million children, are in need of protection due to the extensive violations of human rights (UNICEF 2022). Given the harsh climate conditions, earthquake, food insecurity, Covid-19 pandemic and cholera outbreak, especially in Northwest Syria, children continue to struggle to survive in conditions that violate human dignity (The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2023). In addition, girls' participation in education and social life is further restricted due to gender-based discrimination, particularly in the northern regions of Syria (Save The Children 2022). Consequently, Syrian children, including those with disabilities and special needs, who are often at greater risk, are fleeing en masse to Türkiye (Human Rights Watch 2022).

In the country of asylum, however, these children continue to face intertwined exposures to various forms of exploitation, lack of access to education, poverty, gender-based violence, and lack of access to basic needs and services

(UNICEF 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the devastating effects of the earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş and Hatay, has further deepened the challenges Syrian children face in the country of asylum (UNICEF 2023). In the relevant literature, there are numerous official reports on the disadvantageous position of Syrian children in Türkiye, particularly in terms of access to education facilities. Despite some initiatives to ensure Syrian children's access to education, significant numbers of Syrian children are still out of school due to language barriers, peer bullying, and financial constraints (UNICEF 2019). Among Syrian children those enrolled in school do not have access to the same level of education as their Turkish peers due to their prolonged absence from education during displacement. Syrian children who attend school up to a certain level are forced to drop out of school, particularly at the secondary and high school levels, due to language barriers, adaptation difficulties, and poverty (UNICEF 2019). Some of the main factors impeding Syrian children's access to quality education in Türkiye include livelihood challenges, security issues in places of residence that Syrian families can afford, and capacity issues in schools in terms of educator competence (Büyükhan and Karagöl 2021). Similarly, Yavuz and Mızrak (2016) emphasize that, in addition to the financial difficulties encountered by Syrian families, the lack of valid diplomas required for children fleeing the conflict in Syria to be included in the education system of Türkiye also causes Syrian children not to attend school.

Taştan and Çelik (2017) analyze the factors why Syrian children are out of school under three categories. The first category includes children who are out of school due to loss of orientation, logistical deprivations, and problems arising from the attitude of the school administration, which can be eliminated in the short term. In the second category, children are those who can be included in education through institutional intervention and follow-up systems. It is stated that these children are out of school due to financial inadequacies, the necessity to change residence frequently, and the traditional norms adopted by families. Finally, the third category refers to children who are out of school by reason of permanent obstacles such as critical health issues, inability to be included in formal education due to being out of school for a long period of time, child labor, and forced marriage at an early age.

Economic empowerment of families and long-term follow-up of children in the third category are critical for these children to access their right to education (Taştan and Çelik 2017). While Syrian school-age children in Türkiye are already struggling to access quality education due to the aforementioned reasons, the COVID-19 pandemic and high inflation rate have made it even more difficult for them to access education. Without access to school, this group of children is unfortunately more vulnerable to the worst forms of violations of children's rights (UNICEF 2023).

According to the International Labor Organization (2020), 88.4 percent of Turkish boys under the age of fifteen attend school, compared to 12.9 percent of Syrian boys. Furthermore, 86.8 percent of Turkish girls under the age of fifteen attend formal education, while only 29.4 percent of Syrian girls have access to school. In the light of this data, it is estimated that Syrian children, especially boys, are employed informally (ILO 2020). While components of migration governance in Türkiye have taken various steps to minimize child labor by promoting education, a large proportion of children under temporary protection remain in the informal economy due to serious livelihood problems and socially constructed gender roles (Chaffin 2021). Child labor in seasonal agriculture is one of the worst forms of violation of children's rights that Syrian children are also frequently exposed to in Türkiye. According to a field study conducted by Semerci and Erdoğan (2017) with seasonal agricultural workers and their children in various districts of Adana, financial insecurity is the main trigger that leads to child labor. This study, which examines the situation of children of seasonal agricultural workers from the perspective of child well-being, reveals that children are adversely affected by poverty, deprivation, inadequate living spaces in terms of hygiene, comfort and safety, lack of access to health and education facilities, negative attitudes of teachers in schools, peer bullying and gender-based restrictions during leisure time activities. As this example clearly shows, multi-layered violations of children's rights expose children to negative coping mechanisms like child labor (Semerci and Erdoğan 2017).

Another negative coping mechanism adversely affecting refugee children is forced marriage at an early age. Child marriage is a form of discrimination and a violation of children's rights (Ergöçmen et al. 2020). A study provided by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (2014) on the demographic situation of Syrian girls and women living in Türkiye shows that Syrian girls between the ages of 15 and 18 are subjected to forced marriage. According to the report, higher the level of education of females, the lower the rate of child marriage (DEMP 2014). Similarly, according to a fact sheet provided by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), Syrian girls living in Türkiye are pushed into child marriage as a result of the multi-layered disadvantageous conditions they are exposed to. This report underlines that the limited participation of Syrian children, especially girls, in social life in Türkiye exacerbates their vulnerability (UN Women 2019). Child marriage among refugee communities in Türkiye is mainly driven by child poverty, gender-based discrimination, child abuse, lack of access to education and harmful traditional practices, including honor culture (Öztürk et al. 2021).

Considering children's fundamental right to development, the various challenges in accessing a healthy life are also noteworthy. There are numerous studies on the lack of access to health and nutrition of Syrian children in Türkiye. Özen and Tuncay (2022) emphasize that forced displacement and ongoing hostilities lead to high mortality and malnutrition rates, especially among refugee children. According to the report by the Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM 2021), the prevalence of malnutrition among Syrian children living in Türkiye is high due to financial difficulties and lack of access to healthy food. According to the report, malnutrition leads to other critical health problems and even increased child mortality rates (ASAM 2021). It is also highlighted that girls under temporary protection in Türkiye encounter struggles in accessing menstrual hygiene. A research report presented by the United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA 2022) reveals that Syrian girls lack access to information about the menstrual cycle, experience menstrual poverty, and are subjected to taboos and stigmatization of menstruation by society. In addition, the COVID-19

pandemic has exacerbated the existing vulnerability of Syrian children. Children's access to health services and psycho-social support has been restricted throughout isolation precautions (ASAM 2021). To summarize, the existing literature on the disadvantaged position of Syrian children living in Türkiye reveals that all the adverse conditions, including prejudice and discrimination, children are exposed to are interconnected.

2.1.c. A Review of Prejudice and Discrimination against Syrian Children in Türkiye

Hoping for effective implementation of child protection mechanisms without rethinking existing prejudice and discrimination against refugee children is like expecting local anesthesia to work in open heart surgery. The reason for this is that even though there are regulations securing children's rights at the legal basis, children are directly or indirectly affected by the perception of adults at home, at school, in the neighborhood, while using social media tools or communicating with their peers. This thesis argues that children's development is determined by interconnected systems surrounding children. These interconnected systems include the family, school, street-level bureaucrats, or relatives with whom the child comes into contact. All these interactions determine children's experiences to a certain extent (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Given this interaction of the systems surrounding children, it is undeniable that prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviors towards children adversely affect children's well-being.

Evaluating outgroup members with over-generalized information, or stereotypes, leads to the formation of prejudiced attitudes. Prejudice refers to negative attitudes towards a group or group members, while discrimination is basically defined as behavior patterns that occur as a consequence of these negative attitudes. Discrimination is directly related to the vertical hierarchical relations established between different social groups. The disadvantageous positioning of one group by another due to a certain distinguishing feature leads to discrimination. In other words, discrimination occurs when the negative attitudes and feelings of the ingroup towards the outgroup are mobilized through domination over outgroup

members (Göregenli 2018, 21-25). In addition, discursive exclusion leads to social exclusion, further deepening the vulnerability of disadvantaged groups within society. According to Deniz, Ekinçi and Hülür (2016, 48-61), stigmatization is one of the most prominent indicators of discursive exclusion. In the case of Syrians in Türkiye, it is found that local citizens tend to exclude Syrian refugees by spreading urban myths and reproducing negative stereotypes (Deniz, Ekinçi and Hülür 2016, 48-61).

According to the latest findings of the Syrians Barometer, the most comprehensive panel survey in the relevant literature, conducted by Murat Erdoğan (2022), Turkish citizens tend to perceive Syrians as a danger, a burden and fugitives who do not protect their homeland. Looking at the change in Turkish citizens' perception of Syrians over the years, it is observed that the tendency to see Syrians as victims has decreased over the years, while the rate of perception of Syrians as a source of danger has increased. Similarly, it is reported that Turkish research participants' tendency to describe Syrians with negative adjectives such as unreliable, rude and lazy has increased over time (Erdoğan 2022, 103-108). Since there is a general consensus in the relevant literature that the attitudes of the citizens of Türkiye towards Syrians are negative, it has been observed that studies on this subject have mostly focused on the determinants of the negative attitudes. For example, in the relevant literature, many studies focusing on dimensions of negative attitudes towards Syrians such as multiculturalism and altruism (Kaya 2019); alienation practices (Polat and Kaya 2017); blind patriotism and external personal religious orientation (Tepe et al. 2019); perception of security threat (Yılmaz and Güney 2022); identity, threat perception, ingroup favoritism and social distance (Taşdemir 2018) agree on the point that the perception of the local population of Türkiye towards Syrians is negative.

The main conundrum here is whether the existing perceptions of Turkish adults are also negative when it comes to the Syrian children. The reason behind this is that adults are expected not to develop negative attitudes and behaviors towards children within the framework of the responsibilities imposed on adults by

the principle of the best interests of the child. However, existing literature focusing on this issue, unfortunately, point to the opposite. Syrian children are exposed to discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, especially due to the language barrier (Ergün and Özsöz 2022; Orman and Aydemir 2022). Studies in the literature support the argument that Syrian children are exposed to negative encounters in many different areas of social life in Türkiye. Refugee children are perceived as rescued victims by the mainstream media channels (Akbaş 2019); as a source of cheap labor in the informal economy (Ayalp, Bolgün and Aygüler 2022); as vulnerable and in need of help by administrative staff and teachers at school (Serin and Bozdağ 2020); as unsuccessful and problematic students who negatively affect the school environment by parents (Bucak 2021; Çelik and İçduygu 2019; Demir and Özgül 2019); as a burden by health professionals (Terzioğlu 2015); and as beggars, poor and powerless by Turkish adults (Doyran 2015).

All these studies make important contributions to the literature on the current negative conditions of Syrian children, especially in terms of school adaptation and access to education. However, these studies are mostly limited to measuring attitudes towards Syrian children and do not reveal the correlation between prejudice and discrimination against children. The literature review revealed that there is no study that addresses the perception of Turkish adults towards Syrian children in a holistic manner through attitudinal and behavioral dimensions. This study therefore aims to fill this gap in the literature by considering the strong relationship between prejudice and discrimination that jeopardizes the best interests of the child and harms children's well-being.

2.2. Intergroup Contact Theory

In the Social Psychology literature, Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory is one of the most widely utilized theories for investigating intergroup prejudice. Intergroup Contact Theory elucidates the dynamics between direct intergroup social contact and the level of prejudice. Therefore, the framework applied to this thesis to examine the relationship between the frequency and

willingness of intergroup social contact (Hewstone et al. 2002) and the attitudes of Turkish adults toward Syrian children is the Intergroup Contact Theory.

The earliest studies that are thought to have had an influence on the theory concentrated on prejudice against minorities in American society at the commencement of the Second World War (Pettigrew 1998). Even after so much time has elapsed, the destructive repercussions of prejudicial attitudes, negative stereotypes, institutionalized discrimination, and implicit biases towards the members of the outgroup remain evident in the present day. Therefore, the current focus is still on diminishing discrimination that leads to social unrest and division through the implementation of high-quality intergroup interactions.

According to Allport's Contact Theory, prejudiced attitudes can be reduced through increased social contact between groups, provided that certain conditions are adhered to (Allport 1954). Allport postulated that as knowledge of the outgroup increases, the potential for intergroup prejudice to diminish also increases. He further suggested that when individuals belonging to different groups have equal status, share a common goal, act cooperatively towards this goal, and the relationship between groups is endorsed by existing authorities, the probability of a positive experience of social contact between groups is heightened. In this manner, the groups' appraisals of one another are also favorable. Group members tend to generalize their knowledge of this positive experience of social contact with outgroup members to the entire outgroup (Allport 1954). Consequently, under certain conditions, increased intergroup social contact can be effective in diminishing negative attitudes and feelings towards the outgroup.

A meta-analysis by Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) examined the results of a large number of studies conducted over the years to assess the validity of Intergroup Contact Theory in elucidating the negative relationship between social contact and prejudice based on race and ethnicity. The results of the meta-analysis indicated that intergroup contact is associated with a decrease in prejudice, suggesting that contact between members of different groups can be an effective way to reduce prejudice

and foster positive intergroup relations. Likewise, there are valid and reliable studies in the relevant literature that demonstrate that intergroup contact is the most effective way of reducing prejudice against outgroup members and increase positive intergroup attitudes (Davies et al. 2011; Paolini et al. 2004; Tropp and Pettigrew 2005).

However, conditions suggested by Allport for reducing bias in intergroup social contact are not always sought after, as there are numerous variables that can influence the contact experience (Pettigrew and Tropp 2005). Studies in the relevant literature have shown that the relationship between social contact and outgroup prejudice can be affected by mediating variables such as emotional processes (Pettigrew and Tropp 2008); perception of intergroup threat (Stephan and Stephan 1985) or empathy (Batson et al. 1993; Selvanathan et al. 2018; Stephan and Finlay 1999). These studies show that it is not always necessary to meet the conditions proposed by Allport for social contact to reduce intergroup prejudice. When analyzing all these studies, it is widely accepted in the literature that increased quality social contact reduces prejudice. However, the direction and extent of this relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice may vary depending on the unique characteristics of the sample and external factors.

On the contrary, some studies have indicated that not all experiences of social contact may be conducive to reducing prejudice. In certain contexts, increased negative contact with outgroup members can lead to the development of negative outgroup attitudes, including intergroup tension and hostility, a sense of threat, or anxiety (Aberson 2015; Barlow et al. 2012; Islam and Hewstone 1993; Pettigrew 1998). The fact that studies on the connection between intergroup contact and prejudice have yielded disparate findings has prompted researchers to investigate which of positive and negative contact is more influential on prejudice. For instance, a large-scale study involving participants from different countries found that the impact of negative contact on prejudice was three times greater than that of positive contact. Nevertheless, positive contact experiences were found to occur more frequently than negative contact experiences across groups.

Consequently, it has been suggested that the effect of negative contact on prejudice is counterbalanced by the prevalence of positive social contact experiences (Graf, Paolini, and Rubin 2014). Upon consideration of all evidence, there is a greater body of literature that suggests intergroup social contact reduces prejudice against the outgroup.

Contact Theories are also categorized according to whether the intergroup contact is direct or indirect. Indirect forms of contact, such as extended, imagined, vicarious, electronic, and parasocial contact, may be utilized when there is no direct communication between groups (Crisp and Turner 2009; Dovidio et al. 2011; White et al. 2020). Especially the precautionary measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have made social distancing an inevitable part of daily interactions. However, although this study was conducted under such conditions, the sample and methodology of the study overlap with direct intergroup contact, as Syrians and Turks live together in almost all cities in Türkiye. According to data from the PMM (2023), only less than 2 percent of Syrians under temporary protection live in temporary accommodation centers in border provinces, with the rest of the Syrian population living with the Turkish community in cities. In other words, Turkish adults and Syrian children are in frequent contact with each other in the public sphere.

Advantaged groups perceive disadvantaged communities as a potential threat to their privileged status. Consequently, discrimination is utilized by those with the resources and political power to dominate minority groups (Jackman 1994). This explains why studies in the relevant literature have largely focused on the relationship between prejudice against underprivileged groups and contact. In addition, while studies on the correlation between prejudice of advantaged groups against disadvantaged groups are much more common, there are also studies on prejudice of unprivileged groups against privileged groups (Pettigrew and Tropp 2005). In light of these, this thesis addresses the attitudes of Turkish adults--the privileged groups that hold the resources--towards Syrian children, who are

disadvantaged due to their lack of access to rights and resources in a system constructed by adults.

In the related literature, there are numerous studies that have examined the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice through various social categories. For instance, Sakallı and Uğurlu (2002) have studied the relationship between social contact and prejudice of heterosexuals against homosexuals; Fırat and Ataca (2022) have investigated the relationship between the national majority and ethnic and migrant minorities; Güler (2013) and Kaçmaz, Türnüklü and Karazor (2019) have explored the relationship between Turkish origin groups and Kurdish origin groups; and Bağcı, Stathi and Acar (2022) have examined the relationship between Turkish, Kurdish and Alevi majority groups and Armenian, Greek and Jewish minorities. These studies, which focus on intergroup relations between different social categories in Türkiye, have also demonstrated that social contact can reduce intergroup prejudice.

Among the studies examining the relationship between intergroup prejudice and social contact in Türkiye, there are also a number of studies examining the out-group attitudes of Turkish citizens towards Syrians (Çırakoğlu et al. 2021; Özkeçeci 2017; Yanbolluoğlu 2018). These studies demonstrate that prejudice will diminish as the quantity and quality of contact between Turkish and Syrian communities increase. Taken together, this thesis argues that there is a significant relationship between the negative attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children and the inadequate quality and quantity of social contact that Turkish adults have with Syrian children.

2.3. Social Identity Theory

Another theory utilized in this study is the Social Identity Theory developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the mid-1970s. This theory is a "Social Psychology theory that deals with group membership, group processes, and intergroup relations" (Demirtaş 2003,124). After the WWII, the increasing

polarization and conflict within society prompted social psychologists of the period to examine prejudice and discrimination from an intergroup perspective (Allport 1954). Today, academic research on intergroup discrimination still frequently refers to the propositions of Social Identity Theory. This is because the theory comprehensively addresses the indicators of intergroup discrimination through intergroup processes. In addition, the theory provides a multidimensional perspective with its socio-psychological, system and societal components (Rubin and Hewstone 2004, 824).

Minimal group experiments have a significant role in the advancement of Social Identity Theory. These experiments involve randomly assigning participants to groups and then examining the impact of group membership on outgroup attitudes. Minimal group experiments investigate the correlation between group membership and intergroup prejudice, demonstrating that group membership affects individuals' self-perception. Tajfel et al. (1971) conducted an experimental study that revealed that randomly assigned in-group and out-group members who were previously unfamiliar with each other were likely to appraise their in-group members more favorably. Participants gave a larger share of the reward to in-group members, even though they themselves would not receive any tangible benefit (Tajfel et al. 1971). Similarly, Billig and Tajfel (1973) conducted a study that showed participants exhibited intergroup bias when groups were defined according to arbitrary criteria. In conclusion, minimal group experiments demonstrate that social categorization can lead to intergroup discrimination, which serves as a foundation for the conceptualization of social identity developed within the framework of Social Identity Theory.

Social Identity Theory treats interpersonal and intergroup behavior as distinct processes (Hogg and Vaughan 1995; Tajfel 1978). This distinction is deliberately emphasized to define the concept of social identity as separate from that of personal identity. While individual characteristics constitute personal identity, the features that determine the social group of the individual constitute social identity (Hortaçsu 1998). Both identity categories together constitute the

individual's self (Tajfel 1981). Therefore, how an individual perceives their social identity directly affects their self-perception (Göka 2019). It is important to note that the theory does not reject personal identity; rather, based on the conceptual explanations of the theory, it can be suggested that there is a constant dialogue between an individual's personal identity and social identity. Nevertheless, interpersonal and intergroup relations are still identified as two distinct processes.

In conceptualizing social identity, scholars have brought together theoretical explanations of group membership, group processes, and intergroup relations over time (Demirtaş 2003, 128). This theory explains concepts such as social identity, social categorization, social comparison, and ingroup bias in a systematic way, which are entwined in a continuous dialogue and consistency. According to Tajfel (1982), social identity encompasses an individual's evaluations of other social categories. This implies that an individual's in-group and out-group evaluations shape their perception of social identity (Hogg and Abrams 1990). Individuals tend to view their own group as superior to other groups in order to create a positive self-image (Tajfel 1981). In other words, group members tend to develop a positive social identity to enhance their self-esteem (Turner 1982, 33). Consequently, social identity is directly impacted by individuals' needs for respect and sense of belonging (Tajfel and Turner 1979).

The process of social categorization enables individuals to identify the external world and adapt more readily to external conditions, which is highly functional as it facilitates individuals' information processing mechanisms (Hewstone 2000). Through social categorization, individuals identify themselves with certain social groups, and the sense of belonging that group members feel towards the ingroup is referred to as in-group identification (Hogg et al. 2004). Group attachment is one of the concepts discussed in conjunction with group identification. Group attachment refers to the level of ingroup identification of group members. It is characterized by a sense of belonging, loyalty, and commitment to the group, and is often based on shared values, beliefs, and experiences (Özkan 2014; Roccas et al. 2006). Group attachment is an important

factor in the development of social identity (Tajfel and Turner 2004). Thus, it is clear that group attachment is an important factor in the development of social relationships and should be taken into consideration when examining intergroup prejudice and discrimination. In the literature of Social Psychology, the concept of group attachment is generally seen to be addressed in studies of patriotism and nationalism (Blank and Schmidt 2003; Kelman 1997; Kosterman and Feshbach 1989; Li and Brewer 2004). However, for the purposes of this thesis, the relationship between the concept of group attachment and the concepts of patriotism and nationalism is not addressed. Instead, the concept is used in its simplest form to measure the level of group attachment that Turkish adults feel towards their Turkish citizenship.

Within the process of social comparison, individuals generally tend to evaluate their own group members more favorably than outgroup members (Rubin and Hewstone 1998; Tajfel and Turner 1979). As the value attributed to social identity directly impacts the individual's self-perception, either positively or negatively, individuals are inclined to perceive their own social identity more positively. This more favorable evaluation of ingroup members than outgroup members is a form of discrimination referred to as ingroup favoritism (Tajfel 1981; Verkuyten and Nekuee 1999). In cases of high group identification and positive perceptions of social identity among group members, the likelihood of exhibiting in-group prejudice is also expected to be high (Aberson, Healy and Romero 2000; Mummendey, Klink and Brown 2001). The more favorable evaluation of the ingroup compared to the outgroup points to the cognitive dimension of in-group bias. The behavioral dimension of in-group favoritism is generally observed within the process of resource allocation (Çoksan 2019).

There are many social groups categorized according to major divisions such as religion, ethnicity, country of origin, age or gender. Additionally, smaller group formations, such as those based on support for a particular team or university affiliation, have also been observed. It is possible for an individual to belong to multiple major and smaller social categories concurrently. For instance, a Syrian

child may identify with their country of origin and age group, while also feeling a sense of belonging to the music group of her school, as well as the branch of her class. In particular, the impact of discrimination at the intersection of major social categories such as race, gender, and age, which define individuals belonging to minority groups, is quite pronounced. This is because these individuals are subjected to discrimination not only on the basis of a single social identity characteristic, but also on the basis of multiple social categories simultaneously (Crenshaw 1991). Consequently, it is estimated that Syrian children in Türkiye are exposed to heightened discrimination due to the intersection of ethnicity and age. Thus, Syrian children were identified as the outgroup in the study, while Turkish adults were identified as the in-group due to their privileged position as citizens and adults. In addition, there is no similar study in the relevant literature that measures the ingroup bias exhibited by Turkish adults towards Syrian children. This thesis also seeks to fill this gap in the literature.

2.4. Distributive Justice

The concept of distributive justice encompasses the principles that play a role in perceiving the allocation of positive or negative outcomes among in-group and out-group members as fair. Studies in the field of distributive justice have addressed the principles of equity, equality, and need (Deutsch 1975; Greenberg and Cohen 1982; Leventhal 1976). This thesis research primarily focuses on the principles of equity and equality while investigating the perception of fairness of Turkish adults towards various reward distribution ratios between an in-group (a Turkish child) and an out-group (a Syrian child) member. The principle of equity focuses on the input, i.e., the contribution of individuals to the outcome, in the process of distributing resources among groups. In other words, resource allocation according to contribution is perceived as fairer (Adams 1965; Cook and Hegtvedt 1983). On the other hand, according to the principle of equality, it is considered fair if the output is divided equally among individuals regardless of the input in terms of contribution (Deutsch 1985; Leventhal 1976). Finally, the principle of need is another decisive principle in allocation processes. The principle of need is based on

the needs of individuals rather than the level of contribution to the output. In other words, it is deemed fair for the individual who needs more to receive a share in line with his/her needs (Deutsch 1975; Murphy-Berman and Berman 2002). Nevertheless, the principle of need was not addressed in this study, as it did not have a significant impact on the analysis of the inclination of research participants to favor their in-group.

Examining perceptions of fairness regarding the distribution of resources reveals a distribution of either positive resources in terms of rewards or negative resources in terms of prices (Deutsch 1975; Lerner 1974; Leventhal 1976). Related studies have found that ingroup favoritism shown by group members over reward and price allocation is not consistent (Kayser and Lamm 1980; Mummendey et al. 1992; Otten and Mummendey 1999; Törnblom and Jonsson 1985). In other words, in the existing literature, positive and negative resource allocation processes are generally considered as distinct processes, as the in-group favoritism tendencies of group members differ during the allocation of the positive outcome in terms of reward and the negative outcome in terms of price (Törnblom and Jonsson 1987; Törnblom and Ahlin 1998).

Recent studies have focused on the impact of in-group favoritism on perceptions of fairness in resource allocation processes, generally showing a tendency to demonstrate ingroup bias in reward allocation processes, although there is no consensus that in-group favoritism is more pronounced in reward allocation processes than in price allocation processes (Ceylan-Batur 2019; Şahin 2003). This is likely due to the fact that making outgroup members pay a higher price is considered selfish and immoral by society. As group members tend to develop positive perceptions of their self and social identity, they naturally avoid imposing a higher price on out-group members and consequently being seen as selfish and immoral (Otten and Mummendey 1999). Thus, ingroup favoritism is likely to be more prevalent in reward allocation processes than in price allocation processes. Consequently, in examining Turkish adults' in-group favoritism against Syrian

children, this study focuses on Turkish adults' perceptions of fairness in the process of allocating the reward rather than the price.

In this thesis, the level of ingroup prejudice of Turkish adults towards Syrian children is measured through the perception of fairness in resource allocation processes. To investigate this, Turkish adults were presented with scenarios in which a positive resource obtained by two high school students, Deniz, a Turkish student, and Kawa, a Syrian student, was allocated in different proportions and their perceptions of fairness in reward distribution were assessed. Given that Turkish citizens originate from a collectivist culture, they tend to be more lenient towards members of their own in-group when it comes to the process of resource distribution, and they justify this attitude (Berman, Çukur, and Berman 2002). Therefore, if research findings demonstrate that Turkish adults exhibit in-group bias in resource distribution processes and justify their attitudes based on principles of equity and equality within a distributive justice framework, this finding will be consistent with the relevant literature.

2.5. The Aim of the Study, Research Questions and Hypotheses

The current literature presented in the previous sections has demonstrated that Syrian children living in Türkiye are exposed to a multitude of child rights violations, such as child poverty, child marriage, child labor, and difficulty accessing rights and resources in an intertwined manner. When looking at the existing literature on attitudes towards refugee children, it is clearly seen that the negative attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children living in Türkiye have deepened the current vulnerability of these children. In this context, it has been observed that there is a need for more academic studies that take into account the current perspectives, attitudes, and various factors influencing these attitudes towards Syrian children living in Türkiye in a holistic manner. There are two main reasons for taking a holistic approach to the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children. The first is that Syrian children in Türkiye make up almost half of the entire Syrian population in Türkiye (PMM 2023). Revealing the negative

attitudes towards the Syrian population in Türkiye is essential to study, as it can provide insight into the challenges faced by Syrian children in the country. If Syrian children become a 'lost generation', this will not only neglect the fundamental rights of the children; but also this will have a negative impact on the social, economic, cultural, and political characteristics of Türkiye in the long run. Furthermore, understanding the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children can help inform policymaking and implementation of child-friendly policies. By understanding the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children, policies can be implemented in Türkiye, helping to ensure that Syrian children are not left behind.

The second is that Türkiye is one of the countries that have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees fundamental rights of children. In this context, it is important to investigate the barriers to ensuring the best interest and well-being of children in Türkiye without discrimination on the basis of religion, language, race, gender, or affiliation to any social group, and to provide an academic resource to decision-makers to improve the conditions of children.

In this context, this study poses the following research questions and tests the hypotheses below while taking into account the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children living in Türkiye and the various factors influencing these attitudes within the framework of the Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory:

RQ1. To what extent do adults in Türkiye distribute rewards between a Turkish and Syrian child based on principles of equity versus equality?

H1. When the child who exerts more effort to obtain the reward is Turkish (a member of the ingroup), Turkish adults in Türkiye will distribute the reward based on the principle of equity, which takes into account the individual needs and contributions of each child, rather than simply distributing the reward equally.

When the child who exerts more effort to obtain the reward is Syrian (a member of the outgroup), they will distribute the reward based on the principle of

equality, which distributes the reward equally regardless of any differences between the children.

RQ2. To what extent do adults in Türkiye consider it fair to distribute rewards between Turkish and Syrian children based on principles of equity versus equality?

H2. When a Turkish child (a member of the ingroup) exerts more effort to obtain the reward, Turkish adults in Türkiye consider it fair to distribute the reward based on the principle of equity. However, when a Syrian child (a member of the outgroup) exerts more effort to obtain the reward, they consider it fair to distribute the reward based on the principle of equality.

RQ3. What variables predict Turkish adults' attitudes towards Syrian children?

H3. Age, gender, education level, income, socio-economic status, ethnicity, religious affiliation, religiosity, parenthood, social distance, exposure to Syrian refugees, group attachment, and emotions towards refugee children are likely to predict Turkish adults' attitudes towards Syrian children.

Age: Older adults may hold more negative attitudes towards Syrian children due to generational differences and socialization.

Gender: Men and women may have different attitudes towards Syrian children due to gender stereotypes and cultural norms.

Education level: More educated individuals may have more positive attitudes towards Syrian children due to exposure to diverse perspectives and critical thinking skills.

Income: Higher income individuals may have more positive attitudes towards Syrian children due to financial stability and greater exposure to multicultural environments. Many studies in the relevant literature have found that attitudes towards refugees are more positive as income levels increase. (Akyüz, Eyitmiş and Doğan 2011; Güzel 2021; Hansen, Albada and Otten 2021; Kurt 2006)

Socio-economic status: Individuals with higher socio-economic status may have more positive attitudes towards Syrian children due to greater access to resources and exposure to diverse cultures.

Ethnicity: Ethnic majority individuals (Turkish people) may hold more negative attitudes towards Syrian children due to perceived threats to their cultural identity.

Religious affiliation: Individuals with different religious affiliations may have different attitudes towards Syrian children due to religious teachings and beliefs.

Religiosity: More religious individuals may hold more positive attitudes towards Syrian children due to similar religious beliefs with Syrian children. Many studies in the relevant literature have found that attitudes towards refugees become more positive as the level of religiosity increase (Aktaş, Kındap Tepe and Ronald 2018; Tepe et. al. 2019).

Parenthood: Parents may have more negative attitudes towards Syrian children. The majority of studies in the relevant literature demonstrate that Turkish parents have a negative attitude towards Syrian children (Bucak and Erginer 2021; Çelik and İçduygu 2019; Demir and Özgül 2019). It is known that adults with children are more likely to avoid risks than adults without children (Chaulk et al. 2003); and that Turkish adults perceive Syrian refugees as a risk factor (Erdoğan 2022).

Social distance: The more likely Turkish adults prefer to have close contact with refugees, the more likely they are to have positive attitudes towards Syrian children.

Exposure to Syrian refugees: Exposure to Syrian refugees may either increase or decrease positive attitudes towards Syrian children depending on the nature of the exposure and its impact on the individual.

Group attachment: Attachment to one's national group may increase negative attitudes towards Syrian children.

Emotions toward refugee children: Positive emotions towards refugee children may increase positive attitudes towards Syrian children. Similar studies in the literature have also demonstrated a positive association between positive emotions and attitudes towards refugee children (Angelidou et al. 2019; Erişen 2018).

RQ4. What is the correlation between Turkish adults' attitudes towards Syrian children and variables of social distance, exposure to Syrian refugees, group attachment, and emotions towards refugee children?

H4.a. There will be a positive correlation between social distance preference and attitudes towards Syrian children, such that the more likely Turkish adults prefer to have close contact with refugees, the more likely they are to have positive attitudes towards Syrian children.

H4.b. There will be a positive correlation between exposure to Syrian refugees and attitudes towards Syrian children, such that more exposure to Syrian refugees leads to more positive attitudes towards Syrian children.

H4.c. There will be a negative correlation between strong group attachment and positive attitudes towards Syrian children, such that individuals who have a stronger attachment to their group or community will be more likely to have negative attitudes towards Syrian children.

H4.d. There will be a positive correlation between positive emotions towards refugee children and attitudes towards Syrian children, such that individuals who have positive emotions towards refugee children will be more likely to have positive attitudes towards Syrian children.



CHAPTER III

METHOD

3.1. Participants

This study was conducted with a sample of Turkish citizens aged 18 and over residing in various cities across the country. A total of 36 cities were included in the research. The majority of the participants (59.1%) were from Ankara, 13% from Istanbul, 2.4% from Izmir, and 2.4% from Bursa. The remaining 58 participants (22.8%) were from other cities (e.g., Adana, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş and Şanlıurfa). Of the participants, 185 identified as female and 61 as male, while 7 preferred not to specify their gender ($M_{age}=28.04$; $SD_{age}=9.09$).

The vast majority (89%) of the participants who are citizens of Türkiye identify themselves as Turkish. Additionally, 6.3% of the research participants identified their ethnic origin as Kurdish, 0.8% as Arab, and 3.1% specified their ethnic origin as "other" (e.g., Georgian and Laz). Moreover, most of the participants (60.2%) indicated that they belonged to the Islamic religion; 19.3% of the participants declared themselves as Atheists, 3.5% as Deists. Additionally, 16.5% of the participants fell under the category of other (e.g., Pantheist, Christian and Theist). The mean religiosity score of the study participants was 2.78 ($SD_{religiosity}=1.77$) on a 7-point Likert scale, in which higher scores indicate a higher level of religiosity.

When examining the educational background of the participants, it is observed that 37% hold an associate's or bachelor's degree, 36.6% are enrolled as university students, 12.6% have earned a master's degree, and 4.7% are currently enrolled in a master's program. Analysis of the participants' professions revealed that 10.2% reported being engineers in various sectors such as construction, computer science, agriculture, and textiles. Furthermore, 8.7% were educators who

reported being faculty members or teachers, while 6.3% reported being employed in the health sector (doctors, nurses, dietitians and mental health professionals). Additionally, 2.4% reported being architects, while 3.5% reported being unemployed. Beyond these predominant professions, 27.2% of the participants reported belonging to other professions (e.g., home-based workers, beauty specialists and social service professionals).

In addition, participants were asked to rate their socio-economic status (in terms of access to income, education, and status) on a demographic form, with the lowest score being 1 and the highest score being 10. It was found that the average score for the participants' perceptions of their socio-economic status was 6.04 ($SD = 1.55$). The income level analysis of the participants indicates that 9.8% of the participants' income falls within the range of 0 to 5.499₺, 20.5% falls within the range of 5.500 to 10.999₺, 23.2% falls within the range of 11.000 to 16.499₺, 19.3% falls within the range of 16.500 to 21.999₺, and 24.8% of the participants earn more than 22.000₺. (It should be duly noted that during the time of data collection for this study, 5.500₺ was identified as the minimum wage in Türkiye). Lastly, it is reported that the majority of the participants (82.2%) do not have children. Details of the demographic information of the participants are presented in Table 3.1. below.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	185	72.8
Male	61	24.0
Region		
Ankara	150	59.1
İstanbul	33	13.0
İzmir	6	2.4
Bursa	6	2.4
Other	58	22.8
Education Level		
High school graduate	6	2.4
Associate / Undergraduate student	93	36.6
Associate / Bachelor's degree	94	37.0
Graduate student	12	4.7
Master's degree graduate	32	12.6
PhD student	5	2.0
PhD graduate	7	2.8
Income		
0-5.499 ₺	25	9.8
5.500 - 10.999 ₺	52	20.5
11.000 - 16.499 ₺	59	23.2
16.500 - 21.999 ₺	49	19.3
More than 22.000 ₺	63	24.8
Occupation		
Student	94	37.0
Education Sector	22	8.7
Health Sector	16	6.3
Lawyer	11	4.3
Engineer	26	10.2
Architect	6	2.4
Unemployed	9	3.5
Other	69	27.2
Religious Affiliation		
Islam	153	60.2
Atheism	49	19.3
Deism	9	3.5
Other	42	16.5
Ethnicity		
Turkish	226	89.0

Kurdish	16	6.3
Arab	2	0.8
Other	8	3.1
Parenthood		
Yes	46	18.1
No	207	81.5

Table 3.1 Demographic Profile of Participants

3.2. Measures

3.2.a. The Tendency of In-Group Bias in Reward Allocation Processes Among Turkish Adults

Vignettes. Turkish student Deniz and Syrian student Kawa participated together in a high school project competition on the topic of Encouraging Scientific Research. Two stories were written about their joint project being selected as the first prize and the students winning a prize of 20,000 TL. However, in one of the conditions, Deniz had contributed more effort towards achieving a positive outcome in terms of finding creative ideas, conducting research, and preparing materials, while in the other condition, Kawa had contributed more effort than Deniz. Since the research sample consisted of Turkish adults, both stories were prepared in Turkish. The stories were distributed randomly to the participants; that is, half of the participants answered the story and related questions in which Kawa had contributed more to the positive outcome, while the other half corresponded to the condition in which Deniz had contributed more to the positive outcome (see Appendix A).

In-group Favoritism in Reward Allocation Process. Participants had not been informed of the two different conditions prepared for the prize allocation. After reading the story corresponding to each participant, they were asked to share the 20,000 TL prize between the Syrian student Kawa and the Turkish student Deniz, and to state their opinion on why the prize was shared in this way.

Perceptions of Fairness Regarding Reward Allocation. Participants were asked a second question related to the story they had read. In this question, participants were presented with three different reward distribution options for the prize won by Kawa and Deniz. Participants were asked to evaluate how fair they found the specified reward distributions on a five-point scale ranging from completely unfair to very fair (see Appendix B).

3.2.b. Attitude Scale for Refugee Children

The original version of the Attitude Scale towards Refugee Children was developed by Angelidou, Aguaded-Ramírez and Rodríguez-Sabiote (2019) with the aim of providing a valid and reliable scale to measure attitudes towards refugee children. Angelidou and colleagues note that prior to their work, there was no valid and reliable scale for assessing the attitudes of the local population in the country of asylum towards refugee children (Angelidou et al. 2019, 3). The original version of the scale developed by Angelidou et al. consists of two sub-dimensions and 34 items. The attitude sub-dimension towards refugee children in the local population comprises a total of 24 items. Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements in each item using a 5-point Likert scale. The second sub-dimension of the scale consists of 10 items about feelings toward refugee minors. Participants were expected to indicate the intensity of the feelings expressed in each item on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from very weak to very strong.

Aydoğdu and Akça (2021) removed three items from the original scale developed by Angelidou et al. through confirmatory factor analysis, thus obtaining a 31-item scale. Analysis of validity and reliability conducted revealed that of the 31 items, 22 items formed the attitude subscale, while 9 items were under the feeling subscale for the Turkish culture. Participants were asked to rate the items in the scale on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "definitely disagree" to "definitely agree". The given scale indicates higher scores for positive attitudes and feelings towards refugee children. Additionally, of the 22 items in the attitude towards

refugee children subscale, 9 items (1-2-3-4-5-9-11-13-18) were coded as reverse items, and of the nine items in the feelings towards refugee children subscale, 4 items (2-5-7-9) were coded as reverse items (see Appendix C). It was noted that the correlation values between the subscales were strong and positive. Additionally, Cronbach Alpha values were reported as .91 for the attitude subscale and .83 for the feeling subscale. This tool, presented as a valid and reliable measure to assess attitudes towards refugee children, is suggested to be used in studies focusing on the attitudes of Turkish adults towards refugee children (Aydođdu and Akça 2019, 317). In this regard, for the purpose of measuring the attitudes and feelings of Turkish adults towards Syrian children, the items adapted to Turkish by Aydođdu and Akça were used after communication with the authors in this thesis.

3.2.c. Representative Survey on Exposure of Turkish Citizens to Syrian Refugees and Acceptance of Social Contact

Erişen (2018) conducted a study examining the causes and consequences of Turkish voters' public attitudes towards Syrian refugees, emphasizing the importance of analyzing intergroup relations and feelings in relation to the integration of Syrians into Türkiye, which has become one of the minority groups in Turkish society. To this end, 1224 Turkish voters residing in the provinces of Adana, Mersin, Urfa and Mardin were administered a four-item prejudice scale, a seven-item social distance scale containing social statuses, a seven-item exposure to Syrians scale, a seven-item negative connotations towards Syrian refugees scale, and a six-item positive connotations towards Syrian refugees scale, all of which were used as data collection tools.

In this thesis, the subscales of Social Distance and Exposure to Syrians from the scale used by Erişen to measure the social distance level of Turkish adults and the frequency of encountering Syrians in public spaces were used as a measuring tool. Prior to the data collection process, contact was made with Erişen to obtain the necessary approval. On the Social Distance subscale, Turkish participants were asked to rate on a 5-point scale how willing they were to encounter Syrians as a

partner, friend, neighbor, co-worker, citizen, and tourist. Additionally, in the seventh item, participants were asked to indicate their evaluations regarding the deportation of Syrians from Türkiye. A higher score on the given scale indicates a greater degree of willingness to engage with Syrians through a variety of means. Additionally, the last item (the seventh one) on this scale has been coded as a reverse item.

In the dimension of exposure to Syrian refugees, Turkish participants were asked to evaluate whether they had encountered Syrians in social contexts such as apartments, workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, streets, shopping centers, and mosques on a three-point scale. In this thesis, an additional item was added to the seven items included in the dimension of Syrian exposure. In this eighth item, Turkish participants were asked whether they had encountered Syrians through various social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Participants were asked to read these eight social contexts and give 0 points if the encounter with Syrians in these social contexts was irrelevant for them; 1 point if the encounter with Syrians in these social contexts was not irrelevant for them but the participants did not encounter Syrians in the specified social contexts; and 2 points if the participants encountered Syrians in the specified social contexts. Participants' higher scores on the three-point scale provided indicate that participants have encountered Syrians in various social contexts (see Appendix D).

The data obtained from these scales was then analyzed using the SPSS software program in order to measure the level of social distance of Turkish adults towards Syrian refugees and the level of interaction with Syrians in daily life.

3.2.d. Demographic Information Form

A demographic form was used to ascertain the profile of the participants. This form gathered information such as age, gender, education level, occupation,

city of residence, income, whether participants had children, ethnicity, and religious affiliation. Additionally, the participants were asked to indicate their level of religiosity and economic status (see Appendix E).

3.2.e. Group Attachment Subscale

The original Group Identification Scale developed by Roccas, Klar, and Livitan (2006) consisted of 16 items, eight of which measured attachment to the national group and eight which measured glorification of the national group. This study examines the paradox of group-based guilt, which is the idea that people can feel guilty for the actions of their in-group, even when they are not personally responsible. The study found that people with a strong national identification were more likely to feel guilty for the in-group's moral violation, but only when the conflict was perceived as intense. Furthermore, the study found that guilt was associated with a desire to repair the damage caused by the in-group's violation. Group attachment and group glorification are defined as two modes of national identification in the article. Group attachment is a form of identification that is based on a sense of belonging and loyalty to one's nation, while group glorification is a form of identification that is based on pride and admiration for one's nation (Roccas et al. 2006).

The 16 items translated by Özkan (2014) into Turkish, 8 of which were related to the dimension of group attachment, were applied to the participants due to their relevance to this thesis in order to measure the level of in-group attachment among Turkish participants (see Appendix F). Participants were asked to rate their evaluation of each item on a five-point scale, with higher scores indicating strong attachment (Özkan 2014, 20). In this study, the sub-dimension of group attachment from the two modes of national identification was preferred to investigate the effect of Turkish adults' attachment and loyalty to Turkish identity on the variables influencing the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children. This was because it was decided that measuring the group glorification level of Turkish adults was not relevant to the purpose of this thesis research. However, it is

suggested that future research to investigate the national identification level of Turkish adults and the group-based guilt should include both sub-dimensions of the scale.

3.3. Procedure

Prior to data collection, the necessary ethical approval was obtained by applying to the Human Research Evaluation Board of TOBB University of Economics and Technology. Once ethical approval had been obtained, the scales and experimental stories detailed above were presented to the participants via a software program (Qualtrics, LLC) used to facilitate online data collection. Following the data collection period, the data was downloaded from the software program and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In addition, participants were informed through the informed consent form that participation was voluntary, that no personal information was requested from them, that the study was for scientific purposes, and that they had the option to discontinue their participation at any stage.

Participants were randomly assigned to two experimental scenarios. Data were collected through the application of the Attitude Scale Toward Refugee Children (Aydođdu and Akça 2021), the questionnaire developed by Erişen (2018), group attachment subscale of the Group Identity Scale (Roccas and Liviatan 2006) translated into Turkish by Özkan (2014), and two experimental scenarios designed by the researcher to measure ingroup bias and demographic form, all of which were administered online. Care was taken to ensure that the sample was heterogeneous in terms of gender, age, occupational group, and place of residence. Participation in the research was voluntary and consensual.



CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

4.1. Reward Allocation Attitudes

In order to assess the attitudes of participants toward the Syrian child presented in the vignettes, a Chi-Square analysis was conducted. The analysis revealed a significant association between the condition and the reward allocation type, $X^2(1) = 9.30, p = .002$. Participants in the Kawa condition (where Kawa made a higher contribution) tended to allocate the reward based on the equality norm (the norm that requires that everyone be treated the same, regardless of individual differences or circumstances), whereas participants in the Deniz condition (where Deniz contributed more) tended to allocate the reward based on the equity norm (the norm that seeks to distribute resources and benefits in a way that is fair and just, taking into account individual differences and circumstances (see Table 4.1).

Condition	Equity		Equality		Total
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
Kawa	49	39.5	60	60.0	109
Deniz	75	60.5	40	40.0	115

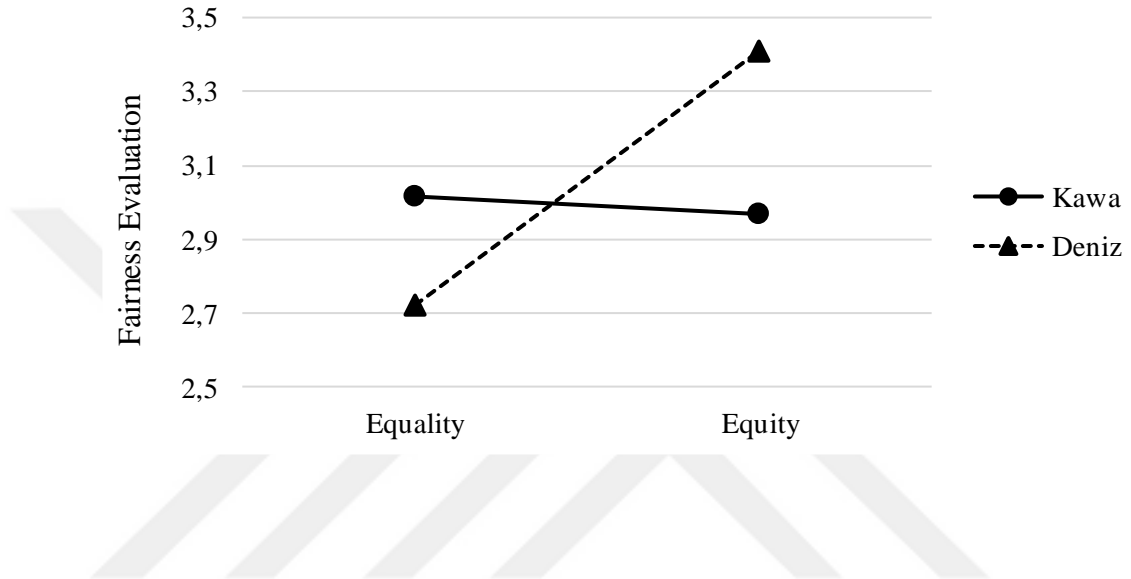
Table 4.1. Chi Square Test Across Conditions

4.2. Fairness Evaluation

In order to analyze the participants' perception of the fairness of reward distribution between Deniz and Kawa, a 2 (condition: Kawa vs. Deniz) x 2 (reward allocation type: equity vs. equality) repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The analysis revealed that *condition x reward allocation type interaction effect* was significant, $F(1, 251) = 6.49, p = .011$. Participants who were assigned to the Kawa condition (where Kawa made a higher contribution)

perceived a fairer distribution of rewards when the allocation was based on the equality norm, whereas those who were assigned to the Deniz condition (where Deniz contributed more) perceived a fairer distribution of rewards when the allocation was based on the equity norm (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1. The Association Between Condition And Reward Allocation Type In Terms Of Fairness Evaluation



4.3. Factors that Determine Attitudes toward Refugee Children

To explore the link between various factors and attitudes toward refugee children, a stepwise regression analysis was conducted. The variables considered in this analysis included age, gender, education level, income, socio-economic status, ethnicity, religious affiliation, religiosity, parenthood, social distance, exposure to Syrian refugees, group attachment, and emotions toward refugee children. The final model included social distance ($\beta = .34$, $SE = .03$, $t = 10.29$, $p < .001$); emotions toward refugee children ($\beta = .33$, $SE = .04$, $t = 7.62$, $p < .001$); exposure to Syrian refugees ($\beta = -.02$, $SE = .01$, $t = -2.97$, $p = .003$); income ($\beta = -.03$, $SE = .01$, $t = -2.23$, $p = .027$); religiosity ($\beta = .03$, $SE = .01$, $t = 2.61$, $p = .010$); and parenthood ($\beta = .14$, $SE = .06$, $t = 2.35$, $p = .020$) as significant predictors of attitudes toward refugee children. The model was statistically significant, $F(6, 212) = 130.77$, $p < .001$. The adjusted R-squared value for the model was .78, indicating that 78% of

the variance in attitudes toward refugee children could be explained by the predictor variables. Social distance (more willingness to engage with Syrians through a variety of means), (positive) emotions toward refugee children, (higher) religiosity and parenthood (having a child) were positively associated with attitudes toward refugee children. On the other hand, (more) exposure to Syrian refugees and (higher) income were negatively associated with attitudes toward refugee children.

4.4. Correlation Analyses

Table 4.2 demonstrates zero-order correlations between study variables, attitudes toward refugee children, emotions toward refugee children, social distance, exposure to Syrian refugees, and group attachment. Results reveal that the relationship between attitudes toward refugee children, emotions toward refugee children, and social distance were positively correlated. In addition, the group attachment was negatively correlated with attitudes toward refugee children, emotions toward refugee children, and social distance.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. ARC	3.59	.63	-				
2. ERC	3.31	.76	.80**	-			
3. SD	3.13	1.02	.84**	.77**	-		
4. GA	3.54	.96	-.28**	-.22**	-.33**	-	
5. ESR	9.41	2.92	-.09	-.05	-.05	.15*	-

Table 4.2. Correlations among Study Variables

Note. ARC = Attitudes towards refugee children; ERC = Emotions towards refugee children; SD = Social distance; GA = Group attachment; ESR = Exposure to Syrian refugees; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This thesis research aims to examine the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children and the variables influencing these attitudes within the framework of the Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory. In this context, the negative attitudes towards refugee children in terms of in-group favoritism were examined in relation to the attitudes and feelings towards refugee children (Angelidou et al. 2019; Aydođdu and Akça 2021), exposure to Syrian refugees (Erişen 2018), social distance towards Syrian refugees (Erişen 2018) and in-group attachment (Özkan 2014; Roccas, Klar and Liviathan 2006). In addition, research participants were randomly assigned to two conditions, in which the child who exerts more efforts to obtain the reward was either an in-gup or an out-group member. In this way, the aim was to investigate the potential of the intergroup discrimination shown by the Turkish adults through in-group favoritism. Moreover, the correlations between the attitudes towards refugee children and various factors, including emotions towards refugee children, social distance, exposure to Syrian refugees and group attachment were outlined.

The hypotheses put forward in the previous sections of the thesis, in relation to the research questions established, were tested with the aim of investigating the attitudes of Turkish adults towards refugee children through the in-group favoritism and identifying the association between the various variables that influence the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children. In this framework, the first of the four research questions posed is to ask to what extent adults in Türkiye distribute rewards between a Turkish and Syrian child based on principles of equity versus equality. The second one is to investigate to what extent adults in Türkiye consider it fair to distribute rewards between Turkish and Syrian children based on principles of equity versus equality. In addition, the third research question is to explore what variables predict Turkish adults' attitudes towards Syrian children.

Lastly, the fourth research question is to examine the correlation between Turkish adults' attitudes towards Syrian children and variables of social distance, exposure to Syrian refugees, group attachment, and emotions towards refugee children.

In this chapter, the findings obtained from statistical analyses will be discussed in the context of current academic literature and research hypotheses. Additionally, the limitations of the research and suggestions for future research will also be presented in this chapter.

5.1. Evaluation of Research Findings

When the research participants were assigned to the condition in which the Turkish student Deniz who exerts more effort to obtain the reward, the participants allocated the reward based on the equity principle. In other words, the participants gave Deniz more of the reward for exerting more effort. However, when the Syrian student Kawa exerts more effort to obtain the reward, the participants shared the reward according to the equality principle. That is, despite Kawa putting in more effort to earn the positive outcome, the participants shared the reward equally between the Turkish student Deniz and Kawa. This indicates that the participants exhibited in-group favoritism. The findings of this study are consistent with relevant literature on the in-group favoritism during the reward allocation process. For example, a minimal group experiment conducted by Tajfel et al. (1971) showed that participants show a tendency to favor their own group members when the reward was to be distributed between the in-group and out-group members, despite the fact that they would not gain any rational benefit from the reward. Similarly, the findings of this thesis also showed that the Turkish adults exhibited in-group bias when distributing the reward in between Turkish and Syrian children, despite the fact that they would not gain any rational benefit from the reward.

In addition, the demonstration of ingroup favoritism by Turkish adults in reward allocation processes is consistent with the fundamental approaches of Social Identity Theory. Individuals tend to view their own group as superior to other

groups in order to create a positive self-image (Tajfel 1981). Within the process of social comparison, individuals generally tend to evaluate their own group members more favorably than outgroup members (Tajfel and Turner 1979). As the value attributed to social identity directly impacts the individual's self-perception, either positively or negatively, individuals are inclined to perceive their own social identity more positively. This more favorable evaluation of ingroup members than outgroup members is a form of discrimination referred to as ingroup favoritism (Tajfel 1981). At this point, it appears that when research participants compare members of the in-group (Turkish citizens) to those of the out-group (Syrians under temporary protection status), they tend to demonstrate a bias in favor of their own social identity, evidenced by the more positive evaluations they bestow upon in-group members in reward allocation processes.

The findings regarding the participants' perception of the fairness of distributing the reward according to the principles of equity and equality between Turkish and Syrian children are also supportive of the first hypothesis. The participants considered it fair for the Turkish child (a member of the in-group) to receive a larger share of the reward if they exerted more effort to obtain it, in accordance with the principle of equity. In other words, when the child who exerted more effort to obtain the positive outcome was a member of the in-group, the Turkish participants consider it fair for the Turkish child (a member of the in-group) to receive a larger share of the reward than the Syrian child (a member of the out-group). However, when the Syrian child (a member of the out-group) exerted more effort to obtain the reward, the Turkish adults deemed it fairer to distribute the reward equally between the Turkish and Syrian children. The perception of fairness of in-group favoritism exhibited by Turkish adults was suggested to be due to their collectivist cultural structure, whereby they tend to be more loyal to in-group members and less responsive to out-group members (Berman, Çukur, and Berman 2002). However, it is not possible to infer that Turkish adults' perception of fairness of the in-group bias is a result of their coming from a more collectivist society culture based on the current data of this thesis. To ascertain whether Turkish adults' attitudes towards in-group bias are justified by a collectivist social structure, the

underlying principles of distributive justice of Turkish adults in reward allocation process should be compared to those of participants from countries known to have no collectivist cultural structure in their out-group distribution processes.

When the aforementioned findings are taken into consideration, it is evident that Turkish adults demonstrate in-group favoritism when allocating rewards between a Turkish and Syrian child, and they perceive this negative attitude as fair. This finding indicates that Turkish adults participating in the study viewed Syrian children as inferior to Turkish children. In other words, it can be concluded that the attitudes of Turkish adults participating in the study towards Syrian children were negative. In this regard, this thesis research has found that Turkish adults possess negative attitudes towards refugee children, which is in accordance with existing literature that suggests a negative sentiment of Turkish adults towards Syrian children (Akbaş 2019; Ayalp, Bolgün and Aygüler 2022; Bucak 2021; Doyran 2015; Serin and Bozdağ 2020). In addition, these studies assessing local adults' attitudes towards refugee children have largely concentrated on evaluations and emotions towards the children. Nevertheless, the results of this thesis have demonstrated that comprehending negative attitudes towards refugees is not restricted to the negative evaluations and emotions of local adults. Whether attitudes towards refugees are negative or not can also be examined through the inclination of in-group bias. It is believed that this thesis research will contribute to the relevant literature in this regard.

Contrary to expectations, the findings of this study indicate that age, gender, educational level, ethnic origin, socio-economic status and religious affiliation variables are not significant predictors of attitudes towards refugee children. According to the research findings, religiosity, income, parenting, social distance, exposure to Syrian refugees and emotions towards refugee children are significant predictors of attitudes towards refugee children.

The research findings indicate that social distance (being more willing to engage with Syrians in various ways) is positively associated with attitudes toward

refugee children as it is expected. In other words, the attitudes of Turkish participants who exhibited a positive attitude towards co-existing with Syrians were also found to be more positive towards Syrian children. This finding is consistent with Erişen's (2018) findings. In his study examining public attitudes towards Syrian refugees, Erişen (2018) demonstrated that the reluctance of Turkish citizens to interact with Syrians in the same social environment is a robust predictor of prejudice towards refugees. Moreover, the research findings demonstrate a positive association between emotions and attitudes towards refugee children. It can be inferred that when adults possess more positive feelings towards refugee children, their attitudes towards them become more positive in kind. This finding of the research was found to be consistent with the findings of other related studies examining the relationship between attitudes and feelings towards refugees or refugee children (Angelidou et al. 2019; Erişen 2018).

In addition, research findings show that as the religiosity level of Turkish participants increases, the feelings towards refugee children are also more positive. These results are similar to findings that investigate a positive relationship between university students' religiosity level and positive attitudes towards refugees (Aktaş, Kırdap Tepe and Ronald 2018). It is possible that as religiosity increases, feelings towards refugee children are also more positive due to the fact that the majority of Turkish people and Syrians belong to the same religion. However, the data from this study is not sufficient to make such a direct inference. According to Tepe et al. (2019), who conducted a more in-depth examination of the concept of religiosity in relation to attitudes towards refugees, religiosity should be evaluated in two different categories: external-personal religiosity and internal-religiosity. While there is a direct relationship between external-personal religiosity and the individual's benefit; internal-religiosity implies that the individual is completely devoted to their religious affiliation. Therefore, Tepe et al. (2019) show that as external-personal religious orientation increases, attitudes towards refugees are more negative. On the other hand, as participants' internal-religiosity increases, attitudes towards refugees are also more positive. This study is quite remarkable for taking the religiosity variable into account in two layers. However, the data from this

thesis is not also sufficient to evaluate the participants' religiosity level as external-personal or internal.

Investigating another variable that may influence attitudes towards refugee children, parenting was explored. Contrary to expectations, research findings revealed a positive association between parenting (having children) and having more favorable attitudes towards refugee children. Prior to testing the research hypothesis, it was expected that Turkish adults with children would have more negative attitudes towards Syrian refugee children than adults without children, as literature indicated that Turkish parents had generally negative attitudes towards Syrian children (Bucak 2021; Çelik and İçduygu 2019; Demir and Özgül 2019). Additionally, it was known that adults with children had a tendency to avoid risk factors (Chaulk et al. 2003). Research findings from panel studies conducted by Erdoğan (2020, 2021, 2022) on attitudes of Turkish citizens towards Syrians also indicate that negative attitudes of Turkish adults towards the mass mobility of Syrian refugees are to some extent influenced by beliefs that Syrians constitute a symbolic and realistic threat factor. In fact, Erdoğan's research findings show that there has been an increase in the degree to which Turkish people perceive Syrians as a risk factor over the years, as a result of the diminishing validity of discourses on Syrian temporariness in Türkiye (Erdoğan 2022). However, the findings of this thesis showed that adults with children had more positive attitudes towards refugee children than adults without children. Although this study did not have the necessary findings to explain the positive correlation between parenting and positive attitudes towards refugee children, it is thought that empathy towards children in parents may positively influence attitudes towards refugee children. Future studies may focus on the role of empathy in Turkish parents' attitudes towards refugee children.

On the other hand, higher exposure to Syrian refugees and higher income were found to be negatively associated with attitudes toward refugee children. The findings of this study particularly presented the negative relationship between attitudes towards refugee children and exposure to Syrians. Contrary to

expectations, it was found that an increase in the level of contact with Syrians in various social contexts among Turkish adults led to a decrease in positive attitudes towards Syrian children. This research finding contradicts Allport's (1954) suggestion that increased intergroup contact leads to a decrease in prejudice towards the out-group. Here, it is thought that the social contact experience among Turkish adults could have a significant effect on their attitudes, whether it is positive or negative. Indeed, while the majority of the relevant literature suggests that increased intergroup contact leads to a decrease in prejudice towards the out-group (Davies et al. 2011; Paolini et al. 2004), there are also findings in the relevant literature that suggest that if the intergroup contact experience is negative, then increased intergroup contact can further increase prejudice, or negative attitudes, towards the out-group (Aberson 2015; Graf, Paolini, and Rubin 2014; Islam and Hewstone 1993).

Moreover, contrary to expectations, it was observed that as the income of Turkish participants increased, their positive attitudes towards refugee children also decreased. This finding is contrary to the hypothesis formulated prior to the study, which assumed that participants with higher incomes would be more financially stable and have more possibilities to experience more multicultural environments, such as more travel abroad, due to their income levels. However, this hypothesis was not confirmed by the research findings. Albada, Hansen and Otten (2021) in their study on attitudes towards refugees and migrants in Germany, found that participants with more access to resources and opportunities had more positive attitudes towards refugees. Similarly, the majority of studies in the literature demonstrate a negative relationship between the local population's income level and their positive attitudes towards refugees (Bakan, et al. 2011; Güzel 2021; Kurt 2006). However, the negative relationship between income and positive attitudes towards refugee children found in this thesis contradicts the findings in the existing literature. In this case, it is possible that the economic situation in the country, the increases in the minimum wage, and the perceptions of Turkish adults towards their socio-economic position have changed during the period in which the thesis research was conducted. However, the data obtained in this thesis is not sufficient to

make direct inferences about this. Additional research is required in order to make these evaluations.

Finally, as predicted in the research hypothesis, a negative correlation was observed between the level of group identification in terms of attachment of Turkish adults and the attitudes of Turkish adults towards refugee children. In other words, an increase in the level of attachment to the nation-state identity of Turkish adults was associated with a decrease in positive attitudes towards the out-group (Syrian children). This finding on group attachment is in line with the fundamental approaches of Social Identity Theory, which postulates that group attachment is one of the modes of group identification (Özkan 2014; Roccas, Klar and Liviatan 2006). The attachment that individuals feel towards the in-group in the social categorization process implies that the individual has identified with a particular group (Hogg et al. 2004). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that as the level of group identification increases, the tendency to develop negative attitudes towards the out-group increases through in-group favoritism (Rubin and Hewstone 1998; Tajfel 1981). Furthermore, it has been seen that the findings of Tepe et. al. (2019) is consistent with the current research that reveals an increase in the level of blind patriotism among Turkish citizens has a negative effect on their positive attitudes towards refugees.

5.2. Limitations

This research has both contributions to the relevant literature and some limitations. The research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have had an indirect influence on variables such as social distance (willingness to engage in social relationships with refugees in various settings) and exposure to Syrian refugees. Additionally, while the research adopted a child rights-based approach, the difficulty of conducting interviews with children during the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the inclusion of a child perspective in the research. The inability to apply the principle of child participation in research on children is a limitation of this study, which is a common occurrence that was highlighted during

the literature review process. Another limitation of the research is that it overlooks the effect of negative contact experience when examining the relationship between intergroup contact and attitudes towards refugee children. Nevertheless, the research findings suggest that the nature of social contact experience between Turkish and Syrian groups necessitates a more thorough analysis.

5.3. Suggestions for Future Research

Finally, in this section, some suggestions will be made for future research. Firstly, studies addressing attitudes towards refugee children in the relevant literature are largely focused on the field of Education. Given that almost half of the Syrian population in Türkiye consists of children, there is a need for more studies that address attitudes towards Syrian children in a more comprehensive and diverse context. Secondly, studies on attitudes towards refugee children have seen relatively fewer critical approaches to the concept of the child, childhood and disadvantaged/vulnerable/at-risk children compared to the mainstream approaches. There is a need for more studies that develop alternative approaches to those that view the child as a group that needs to be integrated into the world constructed by adults and is more passive than adults. This is because studies based on the assumption of a vertical hierarchy between adults and children are thought to be outdated in the social realities of children. Thirdly, it is suggested that in future studies, the distinction between positive and negative contact should be taken into account when examining the relationship between intergroup contact and attitudes towards children.

5.4. Policy Recommendations

This thesis study on the attitudes of Turkish citizens towards Syrian children reveals a tendency to show discriminatory attitudes towards Syrian children even in the simplest processes, such as reward allocation, which is expected to be seen less, thus providing a framework for negative attitudes towards refugees and asylum-seekers in Türkiye. In this way, this thesis research puts forward a framework that

can be utilized in the policymaking and implementation processes of the migration management components involved in the social cohesion process of Syrians in Türkiye. Despite various discourses on the temporariness of Syrians under Temporary Protection Status in Türkiye appearing in mainstream media, it is known that there are approximately 3.5 million Syrians, half of whom are children, living in Türkiye at present (PMM 2023). This thesis research, however, puts forth certain indications regarding attitudes towards Syrian children in terms of the possibilities of living in peace in Türkiye. Meanwhile, this thesis has not addressed policymaking and implementation processes related to Syrians while taking into account attitudes towards Syrian children due to the utilization of methods and tools from the discipline of Social Psychology in the previous chapters. However, this chapter aims to include some relevant policy recommendations due to the intriguing findings obtained from future research on the same topic, policy-making and implementation processes.

The most striking finding of this research was that Turkish adult citizens showed a tendency towards in-group bias in reward allocation processes and found this discriminatory attitude to be justified. In other words, it can be seen that Turkish adults may have a tendency to show discriminatory attitudes even when allocating rewards within the framework of an ordinary school event attended by high school students. The fact that children are normally considered by adults to be an innocent, vulnerable and protected group suggests that Turkish adults may not show discriminatory attitudes towards Syrian refugees and asylum seekers when it comes to children population. However, findings of this thesis support the possibility of a large-scale and increasingly violent social tension arising when it comes to these Syrian adults and processes other than reward allocation in a school event. Of course, as mentioned in the discussion section, these research findings are based on hypothetical scenarios. Further studies are needed to determine whether negative attitudes towards Syrians are also present in real conditions. However, when the research findings are considered together with field reports that reveal the conditions of Syrian children in Türkiye, it is seen that there is a need for supportive policies and practices for ensuring access of Syrian children to fundamental rights

and services and for enhancing social cohesion. Based on the research findings and related field reports, some of the policy recommendations are presented below:

- ***Awareness-raising activities concerning perceptions of children and child rights should be developed and disseminated within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.*** It is essential to increase the perception of children and awareness of their rights in society according to the fundamental principles set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This convention is a legally binding international agreement that sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. It is important to ensure that children are aware of their rights and that society is aware of the importance of protecting and promoting these rights. This can be done through education, public awareness campaigns, and other initiatives that promote the rights of children. It is also important to ensure that governments and other stakeholders are held accountable for upholding the rights of children. By doing so, we can ensure that children are given the opportunity to reach their full potential and that their rights are respected and protected.
- ***Supporting academic research and field studies to investigate the variables that determine negative attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers in Turkish society.*** The research and field studies conducted to investigate the variables that determine negative attitudes towards refugees and asylum seekers in Turkish society are of utmost importance. Such research can help to identify the underlying causes of such attitudes and provide valuable insights into how to address them. It can also provide a better understanding of the social, economic, and political factors that shape the attitudes of Turkish citizens towards refugees and asylum seekers. Such research can help to inform policy makers and other stakeholders on how to create more inclusive and welcoming environments for refugees and asylum seekers in Türkiye.

- ***Refugee children living in Türkiye should be made aware of their access to fundamental rights and services by professionals.*** Organizing awareness-raising trainings for refugee and asylum-seeking children to learn about their rights and enhancing child participation is an important step in ensuring that these children are aware of their rights and are able to participate in decision-making processes. Such trainings should be tailored to the needs of the children and should be conducted in a safe and secure environment. The trainings should also focus on providing the children with the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to effectively participate in decision-making processes. Furthermore, the trainings should also provide the children with the opportunity to express their opinions and to be heard. By doing so, these children will be empowered to take an active role in their own lives and to be able to make informed decisions. In addition, facilitating access to tools that enable children to learn about their rights and entitlements is also highly important in order to support the resilience of children who are currently exposed to disadvantaged situations such as child labor, forced marriage, or lack of access to education. In addition, developing sessions to facilitate the learning of children's rights, not only for refugee children but also for Turkish children, plays a critical role in supporting the well-being of children and social cohesion as well. Awareness-raising sessions should also include refugee and Turkish parents, school administrators, and professionals working directly with children; and awareness-raising trainings should be repeated at regular intervals, with impact analyses conducted.
- ***There should be an increased prevalence of activities that enable Turkish and refugee communities to experience positive social contact together within the framework of social cohesion.*** The integration both of Turkish and refugee communities is essential for social cohesion. To achieve this, it is important to increase activities that allow both communities to interact and experience quality social contact together. This could include activities

such as sports, art, music, and other cultural activities. These activities should be designed to foster mutual understanding and respect between the two communities, and to create a sense of belonging and inclusion. By creating a safe and welcoming environment, both communities can benefit from the positive effects of social cohesion. When planning these activities, findings from the literature regarding increased social contact experiences leading to increased prejudice towards refugees should also be taken into account. When planning activities, consideration should be given to activities in which different groups come together to produce a common output rather than competitive activities, the potential for social tension and risk possibilities should be assessed as much as possible before the activities, and experts in the field should be appointed to the activities in order to reduce the possibility of negative social contact experiences.

- ***Training for educators should be developed with a rights-based and child-friendly approach and should be regularly applied to professional groups working with children.*** Educators play a vital role in supporting refugee children adjust to their new environment. To ensure that educators are equipped with the necessary skills to do so, it is important to increase the number of educational training sessions for them. These sessions should be organized by relevant experts in schools and the impact of these sessions should be monitored at regular intervals. Educators need to be equipped with the right skills and knowledge to be able to provide the best possible support to refugee children. To ensure this, it is important to increase the number of educational training sessions for educators. This training should cover topics such as cultural sensitivity, language barriers, and trauma-informed approaches. The impact of these sessions should be monitored at regular intervals to ensure that the educators are able to provide the best possible support to the refugee children. This will help to ensure that the refugee children are able to adjust to their new environment and have access to the same educational opportunities as other children.

- ***Materials aimed at developing awareness of discrimination should be included in curricula for school-age children.*** Including materials to develop an awareness of discrimination in the curricula of school-age children is an important step in creating a more equitable and inclusive society. By teaching children about the various forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism, they can learn to recognize and challenge these forms of oppression. This can help to create a more tolerant and understanding environment in which all students can feel safe and respected. This can include learning about the history of discrimination, understanding the impact of discrimination on individuals and communities, and developing strategies to combat discrimination.
- ***Extracurricular activities that both refugee and Turkish children can participate in together should be developed and disseminated.*** In order to foster a sense of community and understanding between refugee and Turkish children, it is important to increase the number of extracurricular activities in which they can participate together. These activities can range from sports teams to art classes, and can provide a safe and fun environment for children to learn about each other's cultures and backgrounds. When planning activities, the views of the children should also be taken into consideration. By providing these activities, we can help to bridge the gap between refugee and Turkish children, and create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all. In addition to increasing the number of extracurricular activities in which both refugee and Turkish children can participate together, it is also important to ensure that these activities are accessible and affordable for all. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that the activities are tailored to the needs of both refugee and Turkish children, so that everyone can feel comfortable and included. By providing these activities, we can foster a sense of community and understanding between refugee and Turkish children.

- ***Discourse analysis of anti-refugee and discriminatory rhetoric produced through media channels, as well as awareness sessions, should be conducted periodically.*** Media channels have become a powerful tool for spreading anti-refugee and discriminatory rhetoric. To combat this, it is important to analyze the discourse and hold awareness sessions to educate people on the dangers of such rhetoric. Through discourse analysis, the underlying messages and ideologies that are being spread can be identified, and through awareness sessions, we can provide people with the knowledge and tools to recognize and challenge such rhetoric.
- ***The role of local mechanisms in activities aimed at strengthening social cohesion should be emphasized.*** By providing refugees with access to education, employment, and other resources, these mechanisms are helping to decrease the existing tension between social groups. Furthermore, they are helping to create a sense of belonging and acceptance for refugees, which is essential for successful integration. Additionally, local governments are engaging in dialogue with refugees and their host communities to build bridges and foster understanding. Furthermore, local authorities are providing support to refugees to help them integrate into their new communities, such as language classes and cultural activities. All these initiatives are helping to create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for refugees and are proving to be effective in improving attitudes and strengthening social cohesion.
- ***The coordination and collaboration between the components involved in migration management should be strengthened.*** Migration management is a complex process that requires the participation and collaboration of multiple components. To strengthen the participation and collaboration of these components, it is important to create a platform for dialogue and exchange of information. This platform should be open to all stakeholders,

including governments, civil society, and the private sector. Additionally, it is important to ensure that all stakeholders have access to the same resources and information. This will help to ensure that all stakeholders are able to contribute to the process of migration management. Finally, it is important to ensure that all stakeholders are able to participate in decision-making processes. This will help to ensure that all stakeholders are able to have their voices heard and that their interests are taken into account.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This thesis research aims to examine the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children and the variables influencing these attitudes within the framework of the Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory. Current literature on Turkish adults' attitudes towards Syrian children is largely composed of studies on attitudes in the field of Education. Furthermore, the existing literature typically focuses on Turkish adults' emotions and evaluations towards Syrian children. However, this study has focused on Turkish adults' attitudes towards in-group bias in reward allocation processes and their perceptions of fairness for these attitudes. As there is no similar study in the related literature, this thesis fills an existing gap in the field. The findings of this research have revealed that when the child in the in-group (a Turkish child) had made more effort to obtain the reward, Turkish adults distributed the reward according to the principle of equity; however, when the child in the out-group (a Syrian child) had made more effort to obtain the reward, Turkish adults tended to ignore the extra contribution of the Syrian child by sharing the reward according to the principle of equity. Additionally, Turkish adults also found it fair to share the reward in this way. In other words, Turkish adults show in-group bias in reward distribution and find their attitudes to be legitimate, which suggests that the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children tend to be negative. In this case, It is possible to assert that Turkish adults tend to perceive Syrian children negatively and to engage in intergroup discrimination. However, the findings of this study reflect the attitudes of the research participants. It remains to be seen whether Turkish adults will actually demonstrate in-group bias when distributing positive resources in practical life.

After it was determined that the attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children were negative, the variables that predicted these attitudes were also examined. As a result of testing the hypotheses formulated in accordance with the

relevant literature, it was found that there was a positive association between the variables of (more) willingness to be in the same social contexts as Syrian refugees, (positive) emotions towards refugee children, (higher) level of religiosity, and being a parent are positively associated with the attitudes towards refugee children. On the other hand, it was found that there was a negative association between the (higher) income level and (more) exposure to Syrian refugees and attitudes towards refugee children. Additionally, it was observed that there was a negative correlation between the level of group attachment of Turkish adults and positive attitudes towards refugee children.

The primary motivation of this thesis research was to focus on the conditions that surround and create the layers of disadvantage, rather than automatically accepting a particular group of children as being disadvantaged. In this regard, the widely-accepted classifications of Syrian children, including disadvantaged, vulnerable and at-risk propositions, has been primarily problematized. In this context, representations of Syrian children in a world constructed by adults and the inequality planes caused by these representations have been discussed. In other words, a critical conceptual framework has been developed to challenge approaches that overly generalize children based on their origin, war and displacement experience, and accept them as powerless and passive. In this framework, emphasis has been placed on the fact that Syrian children are not disadvantaged, but rather the external conditions surrounding them are the ones that are disadvantaged. Subsequently, a background has been presented in the light of research reports in the relevant literature on the interrelated vulnerability layers to which Syrian children living in Türkiye are exposed, such as social exclusion, child labor, child poverty, child marriage, lack of access to education and difficulty in accessing basic needs. Studies and field reports on the conditions of Syrian children living in Türkiye have shown that, like a domino effect, one violation of rights leads to another, resulting in an decrease in the well-being level of children.

Having outlined a general framework concerning the disadvantaged conditions surrounding Syrian children, this thesis then delves deeper into the

negative attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children and the various variables influencing these attitudes within the frameworks of the Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory. One of the most important reasons for specifically addressing the attitudes of Turkish adults towards refugee children is to reveal the potential for prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviour resulting from them, as Turkish adults are impacting the life experiences of Syrian children in institutions, schools, neighbourhoods and all other public spheres of life. Therefore, it is thought that the first step to effectively prevent the violations of children's rights that Syrian children are exposed to in the public sphere is to analyse the existing attitudes of Turkish adults towards Syrian children and the conditions influencing these attitudes. Indeed, according to Young-Bruehl's (2021) concept of Childism, adults' prejudices towards children are negatively impacting the life experiences of children. Upon analyzing the relevant literature and the findings of this study, it has been revealed that a significant portion of the Syrian population in Türkiye is comprised of children who are subject to numerous violations of their rights. Nevertheless, further research is necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes towards refugee children from a child rights-based perspective.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. In-group Favoritism in Reward Allocation Process

Vignette 1. Aşağıda Türkiye ve Suriye kökenli iki lise öğrencisinin yer aldığı bir senaryo yer almaktadır. Lütfen bu senaryo ile ilgili soruları okuyarak size en uygun şekilde cevaplandırınız. Soruların doğru veya yanlış cevabı bulunmamaktadır. Önemli olan kendi düşüncelerinizi samimiyetle belirtmenizdir.

Deniz ve Kawa, 11. sınıfta eğitim gören iki lise öğrencisidir. Bir gün okulda ‘Bilimsel Araştırmaları Teşvik’ konulu bir proje yarışması duyurusu yapılır. Duyuruda, birinciliğe layık görülen projenin, 20.000 TL değerinde ödüllendirileceği yazmaktadır. Türkiyeli öğrenci Deniz ve Suriyeli öğrenci Kawa yarışmaya birlikte katılmaya karar verirler. Ancak projenin devamında, yaratıcı fikirler, konu taraması, materyallerin hazırlanması gibi konularda Deniz pek çaba göstermezken, vaktinin büyük bölümünü bu projeye ayıran Kawa daha çok çaba harcamıştır. Jüri değerlendirmesi sonucunda, Deniz ve Kawa hazırladıkları proje ile birinci olmuşlardır. Şimdi de 20.000 TL değerindeki ödülü aralarında paylaşacaklardır.

Siz 20.000 TL ödülü Deniz ve Kawa arasında nasıl paylaşırdınız? Neden?

.....

Vignette 2. Aşağıda Türkiye ve Suriye kökenli iki lise öğrencisinin yer aldığı bir senaryo yer almaktadır. Lütfen bu senaryo ile ilgili soruları okuyarak size en uygun şekilde cevaplandırınız. Soruların doğru veya yanlış cevabı bulunmamaktadır. Önemli olan kendi düşüncelerinizi samimiyetle belirtmenizdir.

Deniz ve Kawa, 11. sınıfta eğitim gören iki lise öğrencisidir. Bir gün okulda ‘Bilimsel Araştırmaları Teşvik’ konulu bir proje yarışması duyurusu yapılır. Duyuruda, birinciliğe layık görülen projenin, 20.000 TL değerinde ödüllendirileceği yazmaktadır. Türkiyeli öğrenci Deniz ve Suriyeli öğrenci Kawa yarışmaya birlikte

katılmaya karar verirler. Ancak projenin devamında, yaratıcı fikirler, konu taraması, materyallerin hazırlanması gibi konularda Kawa pek çaba göstermezken, vaktinin büyük bölümünü bu projeye ayıran Deniz daha çok çaba harcamıştır. Jüri değerlendirmesi sonucunda, Deniz ve Kawa hazırladıkları proje ile birinci olmuşlardır. Şimdi de 20.000 TL değerindeki ödülü aralarında paylaşacaklardır.

Siz 20.000 TL ödülü Deniz ve Kawa arasında nasıl paylaşırdınız? Neden?

.....



APPENDIX B. Perception of Fairness Regarding Reward Allocation

Öyküde anlatılanları göz önüne alarak, aşağıdaki ödül paylaşımlarını ne derece adil buluyorsunuz?

	Hiç adil değil	Adil değil	Kararsızım	Adil	Çok adil
Deniz: 15.000 Kawa: 5.000					
Deniz: 10.000 Kawa: 10.000					
Deniz: 5.000 Kawa: 15.000					

APPENDIX C. Attitudes Towards Refugee Children Scale

Aşağıda, Türkiye'deki yerel halkın Suriyeli mülteci çocuklara yönelik tutumlarına ilişkin bazı ifadeler yer almaktadır. Lütfen her bir ifade ile ne derece hemfikir olduğunuzu verilen ölçekteki sayılardan uygun olanını seçerek belirtiniz:

1: Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

2: Katılmıyorum

3: Kararsızım

4: Katılıyorum

5: Kesinlikle katılıyorum

1	2	3	4	5
Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum

1. Mülteci çocuklar ülkemizdeki okullara hastalık bulaştırabilir.
2. Eğer bir çocuk evlat edinirsem, çocuğun başka bir ülkeden olması beni rahatsız eder.
3. Oğlumun/kızımın mülteci bir sınıf arkadaşı olursa bu durum sorun olabilir.
4. Mülteci çocuklar sınıfta sorun çıkarır.
5. Oğlumun/kızımın mülteci bir arkadaşı olursa bu durum sorun olabilir.
6. Herkese eşit saygı gösterilmelidir.
7. Mülteci çocuklar dinlerinden bahsetme hakkına sahip olmalıdır.
8. Mülteci çocuklar kendi dini bayramlarını ülkemizde kutlama hakkına sahip olmalıdır.
9. Mülteci çocuklar gelecekte dinlerini bize dayatmak isteyecekler.
10. Başka ülkelerden gelen insanlara saygı göstermeliyiz.
11. Mülteci çocuklar ülkemizdeki çocuklardan daha değersizdir.
12. Mülteci çocuklar ana dillerini konuşma hakkına sahip olmalıdır.
13. Ülkemiz tüm mülteci çocukları sınırdışı etmelidir.

14. Mülteci çocuklar sayesinde başka kültür ve dilleri öğrenebiliriz.
15. Mülteci çocuklar sayesinde yeni fikirler edinebiliriz.
16. Mülteci çocuklar sayesinde yeni gelenek/görenekler öğrenebiliriz.
17. Ülkemizdeki çocuklara nasıl davranıyorsak mülteci çocuklara da aynı şekilde davranmalıyız.
18. Mülteci çocuklar ülkemizdeki suç oranını arttıracaktır.
19. Mülteci çocuklar, ülkemizdeki çocuklarla aynı okullara gitme hakkına sahip olmalıdır.
20. Kamu hizmetleri, mülteci çocuklara yardım etmeye daha çok odaklanmalıdır.
21. Okullar, mülteci çocukların gereksinimlerini karşılamak için eğitim programları düzenlemelidir.
22. Tüm çocuklar eğitim hakkına sahip olmalıdır.

Aşağıda, Türkiye'deki yerel halkın Suriyeli mülteci çocuklara yönelik duygularına ilişkin bazı ifadeler yer almaktadır. Lütfen her bir ifade ile ne derece hemfikir olduğunuzu verilen ölçekteki sayılardan uygun olanını seçerek belirtiniz:

- 1: Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
- 2: Katılmıyorum
- 3: Kararsızım
- 4: Katılıyorum
- 5: Kesinlikle katılıyorum

1	2	3	4	5
Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum

- 1.Mülteci çocuklara hayranlık duyuyorum.
- 2.Mülteci çocuklardan nefret ediyorum.
- 3.Mülteci çocuklara şefkat duyuyorum.
- 4.Mülteci çocuklara üzülüyorum.
- 5.Mülteci çocuklardan korkuyorum.

- 6.Mülteci çocuklarla dayanışma içinde olduğumu hissediyorum.
- 7.Mülteci çocuklar konusunda ilgisizim.
8. Mülteci çocukları merak ediyorum.
9. Mülteci çocuklardan hoşlanmıyorum.



APPENDIX D. Representative Survey on Exposure of Turkish Citizens to Syrian Refugees and Acceptance of Social Contact

Aşağıda Türkiye'deki Suriyelilerle bir arada olma ihtimaliniz bulunan sosyal ilişki durumları yer almaktadır. Lütfen maddelerin her birini okuyup Suriyeli kişilerle hangi sosyal durumlarda bir araya gelmek istediğinizi/istemediğinizi değerlendiriniz. Buna göre her bir soruyu 1 puan (Kesinlikle karşıyım) ve 5 puan (Kesinlikle karşı değilim) olacak şekilde puanlandırınız.

- 1: Kesinlikle karşıyım
- 2: Karşıyım
- 3: Kararsızım
- 4: Karşı değilim
- 5: Kesinlikle karşı değilim

1	2	3	4	5
Kesinlikle karşıyım	Karşıyım	Kararsızım	Karşı değilim	Kesinlikle karşı değilim

- 1.Suriyeli biriyle evlenmeye...
- 2.Suriyeli bir grup ile arkadaş olmaya...
- 3.Suriyeli biriyle komşu olmaya...
- 4.Suriyeli biriyle iş arkadaşı olmaya...
- 5.Suriyeli birinin Türk vatandaşı olmasına...
- 6.Suriyeli birinin ziyaretçi/turist olarak Türkiye'ye gelmesine...
- 7.Suriyelilerin sınır dışı edilmesine...

Aşağıda yer alan maddeleri Suriyelilerle gündelik hayatınızda karşılaştığınız ortamları düşünerek işaretleyiniz. Eğer belirtilen ortamlarda bulunmuyorsanız (örneğin bir iş yerinde çalışmıyorsanız veya sosyal medya platformlarını

kullanmıyorsanız) “Geçersiz” seçeneğini; belirtilen ortamlarda bulunuyor fakat buralarda Suriyeli kişiler ile karşılaşmıyorsanız “Hayır” seçeneğini; eğer belirtilen ortamlarda bulunuyor ve Suriyeli kişilerle karşılaşıyorsanız “Evet” seçeneğini işaretleyiniz. Soruların doğru ya da yanlış yanıtları yoktur. Önemli olan kendi düşüncenizi samimiyetle belirtmenizdir.

0: Geçersiz

1: Hayır

2: Evet

0	1	2
Geçersiz	Hayır	Evet

1.Yaşadığınız apartmanda...

2.Çalıştığınız iş yerinde...

3.Mahallenizde...

4.Çocuğunuzun okulunda...

5.Sokakta...

6.Alışveriş merkezinde

7.Camide

8.Çeşitli sosyal medya araçları (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram vb.) yoluyla...

APPENDIX E. Demographic Information Form

1)Cinsiyetiniz:

Kadın

Erkek

Diğer (Belirtiniz)

Söylememeyi tercih ediyorum

2)Yaşınız:

3)Yaşadığınız Şehir:

4)Eğitim durumunuz (Eğitiminiz hala devam ediyorsa belirtiniz):

5)Mesleğiniz/İşiniz:

6)Evinize giren ortalama aylık gelir miktarını belirtiniz:

5.499 TL ve altı

5.500 – 10.999 TL

11.000 – 16.499 TL

16.500 – 21.999 TL

22.000 TL ve üzeri

7) Aşağıdaki merdivenin Türkiye'deki insanların durduğu yeri temsil ettiğini düşünün. Merdivenin üstündekiler her şeyin en iyisine (en çok paraya, en iyi eğitime ve en saygın mesleklere) sahip olanlar.

Merdivenin en altındakiler ise, en kötü koşullara sahip olanlar (en az paraya, en az eğitime ve en az sayılan mesleklere sahip olanlar ya da hiçbir işi olmayanlar).

Bu merdivende daha yüksek basamaklarda olmanız en üstteki insanlara daha yakın olduğunuzu; daha aşağıda olmanız ise en alttaki insanlara daha yakın olduğunuzu gösterir.



Mevcut koşullarınızı düşünerek, bu merdivende kendinizi nereye yerleştirirdiniz? (1 = en alt, 10 = en üst)

8) Çocuğunuz var mı?

Evet

Hayır

9)Etnik Kökeniniz:

Türk

Kürt

Arap

Diğer (Belirtiniz)

10)Dini inancınız (İsterseniz mezhep belirtebilirsiniz):

11) Kendinizi ne kadar dindar tanımlarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hiç dindar değil						Çok dindar

APPENDIX F. Group Identification Scale – Group Attachment Subscale

Değerli katılımcı, bu bölümde aşağıdaki düşüncelere ne ölçüde katıldığınızı belirtmeniz istenmektedir. İfadelerin doğru veya yanlış cevabı yoktur. Lütfen her bir ifade ile ne derece hemfikir olduğunuzu verilen ölçekteki sayılardan sizin için uygun olanını seçerek belirtiniz. Lütfen her bir ifade ile ne derece hemfikir olduğunuzu verilen ölçekteki sayılardan uygun olanını seçerek belirtiniz:

- 1: Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
- 2: Katılmıyorum
- 3: Kararsızım
- 4: Katılıyorum
- 5: Kesinlikle katılıyorum

1	2	3	4	5
Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum

1. Türkiye'yi seviyorum.
2. Türk olmak kimliğimin önemli bir parçasıdır.
3. Milletime katkıda bulunmak benim için önemlidir.
4. Kendimi Türk olarak görmek benim için önemlidir.
5. Kendimi fazlasıyla milletime adanmışım.
6. Herkesin beni Türk olarak görmesi benim için önemlidir.
7. Milletime hizmet benim için önemlidir.
8. Türkler hakkında konuşurken genellikle "onlar" yerine "biz" derim.