



**REVISITING REFUGE THROUGH
A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE: A
MARXIST EXPLANATION OF
SYRIAN REFUGE TO TÜRKİYE**

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AFYON KOCATEPE UNIVERSITY
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MARXIST EXPLANATION OF SYRIAN REFUGE TO TÜRKİYE**

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TEXT OF THE OATH

I hereby affirm that the doctor of philosophy dissertation titled “**Revisiting Refuge Through A Critical Perspective: A Marxist Explanation of Syrian Refuge to Türkiye**” was composed by me in adherence to academic standards and ethical guidelines. I also confirm that all sources utilized in this thesis are listed in the references section. I attest to the truth of these statements with my honor.

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ABSTRACT

REVISITING REFUGE THROUGH A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE: A MARXIST EXPLANATION OF SYRIAN REFUGE TO TÜRKİYE

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Existing refugee research has been mainstreamed in a liberal and normative perspective on the root causes of refugeeness, and the relationships and experiences of refugees. However, the multifaceted feature of refuge makes this mainstreaming insufficient to address historical-structural explanations. Therefore, this dissertation adopts a critical perspective through the case of Syrian refugees in Türkiye. The framework in this dissertation addresses the refugee phenomenon from a critical Marxist perspective to reveal overlooked and ignored terms through Syrian refugees in Türkiye. Based on a qualitative-descriptive approach, the dissertation analyzes the research on Syrians in Türkiye, identifies the main themes and missing points, and thus draws an overarching deconstructive framework for revisiting the Syrian refugee experience. In this context, the issue of Syrian refugees in Türkiye is discussed from a Marxist approach through the arguments of accumulation by dispossession, surplus population, class formation and struggle, and industrial reserve army. Asserting that the critical perspective is generally overlooked in the existing research on Syrian refugees in Türkiye and through a Marxist revisit, this dissertation reveals that the global capitalist structure is the main cause of refugeeness, refugees create the surplus population and emerge in the class formation and struggle, and dispossession from the means of financial and human capital forms an industrial reserve army; thus, refugees are exploited under precarious working conditions. In particular, in the case of Syrians in Türkiye, it is argued that refugeeness is a process of dispossession, and it continues in a vicious cycle from dispossession to accumulation by dispossession.

Keywords: Marxism, Syrian Refugees in Türkiye, Dispossession.

ÖZET

MÜLTECİLİĞİ ELEŞTİREL BİR PERSPEKTİFTEN YENİDEN OKUMAK: TÜRKİYE'DE SURIYELİ MÜLTECİLİĞİNE MARKSİST BİR YAKLAŞIM

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Mevcut mülteci araştırmaları, mülteciliğin ana sebeplerine, içerdiği ilişkilere ve mültecilerin deneyimlerine liberal ve normatif perspektiften bakan bir ana akımlaşma içerisindedir. Ancak mülteciliğin çok yönlü yapısı nedeniyle bu ana akımlaşma, tarihsel-yapısal açıklamalar yapmada yetersiz kalmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu tez, Türkiye'deki Suriyeli mülteciliği örneği üzerinden Marksist bakış açısı ile mülteciliğe eleştirel bir yaklaşımı benimsemektedir. Bu tezde sunulan çerçeve, mülteci fenomenini eleştirel Marksist bir perspektiften ele alarak Türkiye'deki Suriyeli mülteciler üzerinden gözardı ve ihmal edilmiş kavramları ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Nitel-betimleyici yaklaşıma dayanan tezde, Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler üzerine yapılan araştırmalar incelenmekte, ana temaları ile eksik bıraktıkları noktalar ortaya çıkarılmakta ve böylece Suriyeli mülteci deneyiminin yeniden okunmasına yönelik kapsayıcı yapı-sökümcü bir çerçeve çizilmektedir. Bu kapsamda, Türkiye'deki Suriyeli mülteciler konusu, Marksist bir yaklaşımla mülksüzleştirme yoluyla birikim, artık nüfus, sınıf oluşumu ve mücadelesi ve endüstriyel yedek ordu argümanları üzerinden ele alınmaktadır. Türkiye'deki Suriyeli mültecilere ilişkin mevcut literatürde eleştirel perspektifin büyük oranda gözardı edildiğini ileri süren tez, Marksist bir yeniden okumayla, küresel kapitalist sistemin aslında mülteciliğin ana sebebi olduğunu, mültecilerin artık nüfus ile sınıf oluşumunun ve mücadelesinin ortaya çıktığını, finansal ve beşeri sermayeden mülksüzleştirme ile endüstriyel yedek ordu oluşumu ve bu yolla mültecilerin güvencesiz çalışma koşullarında sömürüye maruz kaldığını ortaya koymaktadır. Özellikle, Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler özelinde mülteciliğin bir mülksüzleştirme süreci olduğu ve bunun bir kısır döngü halinde mülksüzleştirme yoluyla birikime yönelik olarak devam ettiği ileri sürülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Marksizm, Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Mülteciler, Mülksüzleştirme.

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I hope that this dissertation will serve to understand the refugee process from critical domains in academia.

Atahan DEMİRKOL
2025, Afyonkarahisar

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

%: Percentage

3D: Dangerous, Dirty, and Demeaning

DGMM: Directorate General of Migration Management

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

INGO: International Non-governmental Organizations

JDP: Justice and Development Party

LFIP: Law on Foreigners and International Protection

NGO: Non-governmental Organizations

PMM: Presidency of Migration Management

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

VP: Victory Party



INTRODUCTION

Currently, we are living in an era of rapid human movement. Wars, atrocities, climate change, food insecurity, and lack of available resources in many locations force people to move to wealthier areas. In line with this trend, the people of the Syrian Arab Republic experienced one of the most intense, prolonged, and wild human security issues in 2011. The outbreak of the civil war in Syria between the opposition and the Assad regime led people to fear persecution in their own homelands. In fact, the political and economic conditions in the country with low capacity of democratic institutions and political freedom, as well as a lack of welfare under the global capitalist system's uneven development impacts, have resulted in the spread of the Arab Spring to Syria and created the turmoil in the country. In this situation, the tragedy on Syrian streets urged their instinct to survive and live, thus pushing them to flee.

The migration of Syrians created turbulence in the region and Europe as their rapid movement directed to diverse locations. Most Syrians found refuge in neighboring countries, including Türkiye. The mass migration flow of Syrians arrived at the Turkish border in April 2011. Hosting more than 60% of Syrian refugees, Türkiye became the world's leading refugee-hosting country in a short span of time, only three years after the Syrian mass migration started (Çelik & White, 2022: 356). Currently, close to 5 million Syrians are still under the UNHCR's refugee status mandate in Türkiye (UNHCR, 2025a).

As a result of this drastic development, Türkiye has become a role model and a trial-and-error case for most countries regarding refugee management. In other words, policymakers in many countries started to benefit from the practices and experiences in Türkiye.

Beginning with the Syrian refugee movement, there has also been a tremendous increase in scholarly works on refugee studies in Türkiye. Türkiye's academic attention has particularly been focused on migration, refugees, and integration issues. Indeed, integration and security have been the most frequent topics in Türkiye's refugee studies. Investigating their theoretical foundations, it can be asserted that there has been a predominance in Türkiye's refugee studies by liberal normative mainstream approaches. The vast majority of refugee research in scholarly debates devotes the pivotal role to refugees' economic impacts, integration, social dynamics, and political consequences. Policy-oriented or normative research on refugees is comprehensive yet insufficient to

resolve the problems of global historical-structural debates. The puzzle of refugee hosting and its consequences is, thus, still worth exploring. However, employing a critical deconstructive perspective is required to contribute to general wisdom.

In this connection, this dissertation argues that rather than mainstream liberal and normative approaches, Marxist theory can fill the gaps in refugee studies by focusing on the historical-structural and economic dynamics in refugee flows. The Marxist perspective can expose the hidden and ignored historical-structural economic and political exploitation of refugee labor in host countries. Hence, the research problem in this dissertation is *how Marxist theory can augment the understanding of refugee migration by utilizing the Marxist terms of the accumulation by dispossession, surplus population, class formation and struggle, and industrial reserve army of labor*. This dissertation, accordingly, proposes that current mainstream approaches to refugees lack historical-structural and political-economic perspectives to expose the role of the capitalist mode of production and the global capitalist structure in refugee flows and refugee labor. Thereby, this research finds its motivation to contribute to the literature in several ways: Firstly, a critical revisit of refuge is *per se* valuable due to the predominance of mainstream approaches in refugee research. Secondly, Türkiye has been a unique case for refugee studies by hosting the majority of Syrian refugees for a decade in the country, which has led to novel practices in refugee management and policy making that have been a role model for other countries. Hence, this dissertation is an attempt to fill the gap in the existing scholarly research that has chiefly ignored the critical understanding of the root causes and processes of refuge in host countries.

Particularly, this dissertation has three main objectives: Firstly, on the basis of a critical perspective, it is an attempt to expose hidden institutions, relationships, and concepts in refugee research, which are frequently ignored by problem-solving mainstream approaches. It determines that the vast majority of research on Syrians in Türkiye neglects the historical-structural and global capitalist features in approaching the refugee problem. Secondly, the dissertation aims to debate the current theoretical sets of refugee research with a critical perspective. Ultimately, the study aims to dig into the famous Marxist terms used in its critique of the capitalist mode of production, namely, the accumulation by dispossession, surplus population, class formation and struggle, and the industrial reserve army of labor. On the ground level, this research depends on the assumption that the root causes of the refugee movements from less developed countries

are the global capitalist structure, and refugees' lives have been shaped by the economic exploitation of capital through the implicit approval of governments. Hence, one should read the refuge process and refugee experiences rather through a critical lens, particularly a Marxist one, to underline the historical-structural aspects of the refuge phenomenon.

Marxism has a remarkable standpoint in explaining migration through class politics and economics. Generally, Marxism aims to expose the hidden relationships of a bourgeois worldview. It also serves to understand governments' intentions and roles in migration management. Therefore, Marxism can provide an alternative way to approach the migration management process of governments in two ways: first by interpreting the migration and refugee issues through the inequalities caused by global capitalism and uneven development; second, by defining the migrants' and refugees' problems in the context of class relations in the host country. However, there are a few studies utilizing Marxist international migration approaches in the existing literature (Brown, 1992; Ritchie et al., 2022b), yet none solely focuses on the relationship between Marxist assumptions and refugee movements. Therefore, a study that aims to discuss this connection is significant and valuable, particularly for international relations, political science, and migration studies. In this connection, this dissertation's main contribution to these fields is that it adopts a unique approach to refugee research through a Marxist lens. Given the fact that problem-solving approaches provide only a superficial explanation of the refugee experience. However, a critical outline of the refugee experience would allow researchers and readers to understand the structural reasons for refugee movements and their impact on refugee experiences.

To achieve this mission and address the research problem, the dissertation utilizes the research on Syrians in Türkiye and Syrians' refugee experience in Türkiye as a case study. Therefore, this study digs into scholarly research on Syrian refugee flow to Türkiye to both create a thematic map of them and reveal the ignored perspectives and approaches. Indeed, Türkiye has been the leading refugee-hosting country in the world for more than a decade, with an overwhelming portion of Syrian refugees over other refugee groups in the country. Moreover, the Türkiye case is worth to be explored for several reasons: Firstly, Syrians in Türkiye have not acquired official refugee status under the UNHCR mandate; the case of experience has mostly been led by the Turkish government as a reactive process to an emerging agenda of refugee hosting. Therefore, Syrians have faced fluctuating policies over the course of their presence in Türkiye. Secondly, as the leading

refugee-hosting country, Türkiye has been a valuable source for refugee research. Thirdly, the mainstream problem-solving approaches lack a critical overview of refugee research. All in all, the Türkiye case provides a valuable contribution to the literature both through the existing research on Syrians in the country and the refugee management and experience. Certainly, the readers should cautiously interpret the findings and assertions of this research, as refugee experiences and policies are diverse all around the world. However, this is not to say that the findings and ideas in this dissertation cannot be expanded to refugee experiences and research worldwide.

The dissertation utilizes a qualitative-descriptive method in inquiring into the research problem and a deductive methodology in terms of the organization of the research. Taking the issue from a general perspective on refugee migration, the study delves into the debate on critical and problem-solving theories to explore whether critical theories, particularly Marxism, can contribute to the extent of refugee research. Then, it zooms in on the case study of Türkiye to test whether refugee research could benefit from Marxist concepts of the accumulation by dispossession, surplus population, class formation, struggle, and industrial reserve army of labor in regard to Syrian refugee flow and its impacts on the economy, social cohesion, and politics.

The dissertation is organized as follows. After outlining the background and main components of the dissertation in the introduction part, the first chapter dives into the main migration theories to frame the root causes of general migration. Elaborating on the nexus between migration theories and refugee flows, the research dwells on Robert Cox's classification of critical and problem-solving theories. Nourished upon the utilization of critical theories, the Marxist theory and its scientific stance to social sciences is explained to provide a brief understanding. Then, the research goes on with Marxist terminology of the accumulation by dispossession, surplus population, class formation and struggle, and industrial reserve army of labor to determine whether these terms could be used in explaining refugee migration. The first chapter is finalized with the overall evaluation of Marxism in terms of refugee migration. The second chapter provides a discussion and theoretical argumentation about refugees' precarity, class formation and struggle, discrimination in the labor market, and structural obstacles to living in non-encampment areas. This chapter serves to understand the nexus between refugees and the Marxist interpretation of it. On the other hand, the third chapter focuses on the refugee studies on Syrians in Türkiye to extract their main themes, theories, and assumptions. The

dispossession of Syrians in Türkiye, their class formation, and surplus population are also discussed in this chapter. The fourth chapter is a discussion of the findings. Firstly, the dissertation scrutinizes the extracted themes, theories, and concepts in currently qualified papers on refugees in Türkiye to expose whether they ignore or hide the historical-structural and political-economic lenses of critical perspectives. Secondly, the possible contribution of the Marxist approach to refugee research is discussed with a focus on the case of Türkiye by the Marxist terminology of accumulation by dispossession, surplus population, class formation and struggle, and industrial reserve army of labor. The dissertation ends with the conclusion, where the main ideas and findings from the research are wrapped up.



THE FIRST CHAPTER

LITERATURE REVIEW: UNVEILING THE CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON REFUGEE STUDIES

1. INTRODUCTION

The interconnectedness of refugee studies makes it a complex issue to comprehend. Moreover, the majority of research today utilizes problem-solving theories as a lens to scrutinize complex issues such as integration, macroeconomics, demography, and politics in hosting countries. Today, without ignoring the current debates, one should also seek critical perspectives on refugee studies to shed light on the driving factors and issues in hosting countries. As Ritchie et al. (2022a) rightly put it, migration studies are mostly state-centric, and Marxian critiques are lacking.

For more than a decade, the world has witnessed tremendous numbers of various refugee flows, with the leading community being the Syrians after the civil war. Following this, Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Venezuela have been sources of refugee flows, affecting especially neighboring countries such as Türkiye in the case of Syrian refugees. The current number of 122 million forcibly displaced people worldwide is a trending phenomenon that people are moving not only because of economic or environmental reasons but also because of fear of persecution (UNHCR, 2025a). Almost 40 million refugees under the UNHCR mandate are hosted in various locations globally, facing severe problems in integrating into host communities, conditions of precarity in urban areas, legal issues, and mental health problems (UNHCR, 2025a). Under these circumstances, focusing on refugees or forced migrants rather than voluntary migration is an urgent issue.

Emerging in the 19th century, the history of migration studies is long, yet refugee research is still under development, especially with the impact of recent trends in the number of refugees. Flagging the debates on whether these categories are valid today to separate immigrants from refugees, one could contend that there are still particularities between refugees and immigrants in a country regarding legal responsibilities, access to the labor market, equal working conditions and wages, political rights, and representation. Given the fact that these are the disparities between immigrants and refugees, one should not only scrutinize research on refugees but also approach the field *critically*. As the definition of migration falls beyond the distance and duration criteria, the decisions made

by individuals to reside in a country for a short or long term can be perceived as migration (Lee, 1966: 49). Whereas migrants and refugees have diverse motivations to move and do not converge with the same rights and opportunities in host countries, the movement *per se* is still migration, that is, the connection between migration and refugee studies.

The trends in refugee research tend to discuss the issues mostly from the lens of liberal or realist perceptions. On the one hand, a liberal understanding of refugee studies stresses the humanitarian needs, social and economic integration policies, international burden-sharing, and networks such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). On the other hand, realist approaches to refugee studies quest for security, stability of host countries, and power relations in international or domestic refugee governance. Nevertheless, as such problem-solving theories have their own limitations, we should flag the need for critical perspectives, such as Marxist concepts, to utilize them in refugee studies.

The promising potential of critical theories and Marxism, in particular, may shed light on overlooked explanations in problem-solving theories in refugee research. Structural inequalities might be shadowed by grasping the issue of refuge and all its components through a lens of individual or group-based perspectives regarding the motivation of the movement. To scrutinize the critical approaches to refugee studies, this chapter first delves into the three main categories of migration theories, beginning with a theoretical background of migration decisions. In the critical overview of migration theories and the comparison with forced migration studies, the chapter continues with the dispute between the critical and problem-solving theories, utilizing Robert Cox's classification. Then, to provide a basis for the Marxist components of refugee movements, their methods and views on real-world issues are scrutinized. Finally, this chapter attempts to reach a conclusion about whether the industrial (global) reserve army of labor, accumulation by dispossession, and class struggle, as the Marxist explanations of the bourgeoisie and proletariat dialectic, can be utilized in refugee studies. All in all, this chapter is a debate on whether Marxism is a useful theoretical framework for refugee studies.

2. MIGRATION THEORIES AND REFUGEE STUDIES

Nourished by voluntary decisions to move or be sent into exile, humans choose to change their settlements or be forced to leave. Nonetheless, factual cases of movement

have come to the scientific grounds centuries after the first human mobility. Praising the beginning of research in the 19th century, migration has been a topic for scholars, policymakers, governments, multinational companies, and NGOs. The academic attempts to identify the driving factors of the movement began with Ravenstein's seminal works in 1885 and 1889 to discuss migration patterns in scholarly terms (Ravenstein, 1885; 1889).

Ravenstein's papers, as the first piece of migration research, focus on economic and social factors behind human mobility. In his explanations, the economic drivers are the principal features for the migration decisions of humans. This economic focus on migration has lately been led by neoclassical economic theory, where population movements result from economic motivations such as uneven economic opportunities among various geographical locations (Massey et al., 1993: 432). Accompanied by Ravenstein's law-like assumptions and explanations about migration, in this set of theories, people tend to move from low- to higher-wage countries and from poorer to wealthier systems (O'Reilly, 2022: 4). However, one should remember that there is a background of decision-making involved in initiating the migration. In this respect, neoclassical economic theories and push-pull factors took the first step in approaching the reasons behind migration decisions. From the 19th century until the present, de Haas (2021) argues that migration is still an under-theorized field as it mostly frames a regression of theories and depends on 19th-century models, as Massey et al. (1993) noted.

The following sections seek a critical evaluation of the main migration theories to provide a better systemic approach to the rationale and explanation of the movement. The remainder of the chapter is organized as follows. First, neoclassical economic theory is explored as the starting point of migration studies. Then, the research delves into the historical-structural theories of migration, where the dependency theory, dual labor market theory, and world systems theory are discussed. Lastly, the new economics of labor migration (NELM) is enhanced as a third-way alternative to these two forms.

2.1. NEOCLASSICAL ECONOMIC THEORY OF MIGRATION

The neoclassical economic theory of migration is the first starting point for the driving forces of migration. Taking economic decision-making to its base arguments, the neoclassical economic theory of migration perceives migratory flows as a result of rational choice (O'Reilly, 2022: 4). Hence, it emphasizes the individualistic perspective

on the root causes of migration. With the combination of push and pull factors, intervening obstacles, and personal factors, Lee (1966) introduced the push-pull theory of migration. This approach suggests that pushing factors in the country of origin that led people to move, and pulling factors in a destination country, attract people. Individuals make intrinsic calculations for better economic and social gains while deciding to leave country A to arrive in country B. The macroeconomic view of this theory assumes that uneven economic development is the primary determinant of migratory movements. Nonetheless, the microeconomic perspective puts the rational choice of people who make a cost-benefit calculation to migrate into the center of the migration decision (Berninghaus & Seifert-Vogt, 1992). Accordingly, the human capital model of migration regards migration as a calculation of future benefits over today's costs (Sjaastad, 1962). Nonetheless, migration is a rational choice of *homo economicus* for a better life course.

Rational choice, cost-benefit calculation, economic development, and individualistic perspective can be classified as key components of the neoclassical economic theory of migration. In this systematic, it should be noted that migration is a result of push and pull factors in countries that force people to leave and attract them to immigrate, cost-benefit analysis for making the decision such as higher welfare or wealth, a human capital investment for migration agents that will improve their skills or maximize the economic potentials, and lastly the market equilibrium that will be reached as a convergence among regions with higher and lower wages. Migration, in that sense, according to this theory, is a development fostering economic activity based on an individual's determination for a better life in advanced capitalist societies where labor is scarce (Wood, 1982: 300). That is, an equilibrium model to eradicate imbalances among regions. However, there have also been harsh criticisms against the neoclassical economic theory. The equilibrium assumption of neoclassical theories stresses that the labor market is like any other market that comes to an equilibrium when demand and supply converge (Hirsch, 1980). Criticisms arise on challenging the equilibrium model of the theory to indicate that supply and demand are a simplistic explanation of the driving forces of migration decisions and lack the structural features that force people to leave (Massey et al., 1994).

In short, this theory of migration employs an understanding of economically driven root causes for migration. Moreover, it takes the migration choice from the perspective of the rational choice of *homo economicus*. The neoclassical economic theory

of migration interprets migration as a result of disequilibrium between economic opportunities among regions, and individuals decide to migrate to maximize their economic gains.

2.2. HISTORICAL-STRUCTURAL THEORIES OF MIGRATION

Criticizing the neoclassical economic theories by their sole emphasis on downgrading the migration decision to the economic well-being of individuals, historical-structural approaches mainly focus on the “*structural demand for migrant labor in advanced capitalist societies*” (Abreu, 2012: 49) rather than on individuals. The historical-structural theories of migration posit a comprehensive set of models, including the dependency theory, internal colonialism, center-periphery frameworks, and the global accumulation perspective. Hence, in the 1950s and 1960s, historical-structural theories of migration emerged as a critique of neoclassical economic theories that put rational choice at the core of migration. Although the historical-structural theories have diverse explanations, they commonly share the Marxist premises as their primary components (Morawska, 2012). For instance, the neo-Marxist political economy reinforces disequilibria instead of equilibrium models of neoclassical economic approaches by emphasizing social inequalities and uneven development as the root causes of migration (de Haas, 2014: 10–11). Therefore, the theory reiterates its arguments on the falsification of the neoclassical economic theory of migration.

Indeed, these theories perceive migration as a historical set of broad structural–social formations (Wood, 1982: 302). Their particularity lies in the background of migration dynamics and interprets migration as the extensive recruitment of labor by immigration, both as a consequence of colonialist heritage, inequalities, and wars. Hence, they scrutinize whether people have a free choice to migrate. Apparently, they respond that people lack free will to decide on migration under obviously unequal conditions (Castles et al., 2014: 31–32). In this aspect, individuals or groups of people are *forced* to migrate by a comprehensive set of components, such as lack of opportunities, low wages, insecure employment, and lack of hope for prosperity in their country of origin. That is also a reflection of uneven development in poorer countries that resulted in the capitalist world system’s pressure on their economic empowerment.

Particularly, the dependency theory approaches migration as a macro issue rather than focusing on individual-level analyses as neoclassical theories do. The imbalance

between third-world countries -the post-colonial countries- and the first-world countries -colonizing countries- undermines the development of underdeveloped countries, as disadvantaged countries are mostly labor-exporting countries to better economic expectations of people in those countries (Horevitz, 2009: 750; Kearney, 2004: 144). The capitalist evolution in the developed countries led to asymmetrical relations with periphery countries, labor exploitation of immigrants from those countries as a fuel for a cheap labor force, and created the uneven status among developed and underdeveloped regions (Arango, 2000: 285).

Moving forward, there is also the segmented (dual) labor market theory of migration. By emphasizing the duality of the labor force in the market, this theory particularly defines the source of migration as the primary need for a cheap labor force in industrialized or modern economies (Çam, 2019: 10). Following the historical-structural approach and criticizing the neoclassical framework's incapacity to explain some of the problems, such as wage differentiation or racism (Hirsch, 1980), this theory dwells upon the understanding that migration is not an individual rational choice but a systemic problem caused by the tension between industrial capitalism and underdevelopment. The duality in this sense derives from the continuous demand for immigrant labor in advanced countries that need a labor supply in capital-intensive and labor-intensive sectors to maintain a constant supply to meet demand. As a result, the hierarchical structure of the labor market forms an uneven system for immigrant laborers in a low-skilled workforce and promotes the local workers to high-skilled jobs after the immigrants' penetration into the production and service sectors (Massey, 2015: 282). In that systematic approach, as Piore (2014) stresses, there are two markets in the model: primary and secondary. Primary markets offer higher wages and better work conditions, whereas secondary markets have less attractive and insecure jobs. The cycle pushes the disadvantaged people to be employed in the secondary market, where they can only access the primary market if they eliminate poverty. Hence, immigrants in a country without creditable skills or certifications or the advantage to be hired in the primary market are deemed trapped in the secondary market for lower, labor-intensive, and harder jobs. The penetration of immigrant labor into the secondary market creates an opportunity for native workers to be upgraded to the first segment of labor, as well. Piore's seminal idea, therefore, concludes that people do not migrate due to the push factors in the country of origin but the pull factors in destination countries, which is the intrinsic need for labor (Massey et

al., 1993: 440). Hence, this explanation transcends beyond the argument that developed economies only seek the high-skilled immigrant workforce (Castles et al., 2014: 35).

The changes in historical-structural features of economic systems led scholars to merge Wallerstein's (2011) seminal research with the deviation in the labor demand, culture, and economics in countries to understand the driving factors of migration (Bakewell, 2014: 302). The economies in the center of the world trade system and developed powerful countries featured a system for migration that continuously seeks a foreign labor force, and poorer countries look for suitable jobs in foreign markets, which are workforce exporters. The idea behind the world systems theory is that there is a hierarchy in the global economic market, and core nations are taking advantage of peripheries or semi-peripheries to import the labor force. The industrialist and capitalist world system is consistently preparing conditions for people to move for work with the enhancement of the flow of goods and capital. Hence, migration is an outcome of economic disparities and capitalist industrialization that creates a hierarchical global market of the economy. According to Massey et al. (1993), the world systems theory has six main hypotheses: i) international migration is an inevitable outcome of capitalist market relations in the developing world, ii) international flow of labor and international flow of goods and capital follows each other in opposite ways, iii) international migration mostly occurs between former colonies and past colonial states, iv) international migration flows is irrelevant to wage differentiations but about the structure of the global economy and its dynamics, v) governments ultimately aim to protect the investments abroad and to do so they conduct military or political interventions to reach an expanded global market; if they fail to achieve they *produce* refugee movements from peripheral countries to core countries, vi) governments shape global economic conditions to address the root causes of migration instead of just depending on its own features or nature.

Given these features, international migration should be examined through the lens of macroeconomic structures that cause the uneven development of regions and unequal opportunities among societies. Within this understanding, international migration is a result of the macrostructure of the capitalist mode of production, imperialism, and exploitation.

2.3. NEW ECONOMICS OF LABOR MIGRATION

The two camps in scholarly debates on migration theories between historical-structural approaches and neoclassical economic theories of migration were stuck during the 1980s. As a new alternative to these two camps, NELM emerged as a third way (Stark & Bloom, 1985). NELM mainly claims a solution to the insufficient theoretical assumptions of neoclassical economic theory and the stress on structural features by historical-structural theories (Abreu, 2012: 47). The practical point of NELM lies in the definition of the decision-maker of migration. Diverging from the two approaches to focus on individuals or structures, NELM suggests that migration is determined in a group, such as a household (Porumbescu, 2015; Taylor, 1999). Hence, migration is not a decision for the ultimate individual benefits but for increasing the relative benefits of the households (Massey et al., 1993: 438). The hypothesis of NELM introduces that the *“households facing imperfect markets decide whether or not to participate in migration”* (Taylor et al., 2003: 76). Indeed, this theory puts the rationality of individuals at its core, as the neoclassical theory they criticize (Abreu, 2012: 59). Therefore, it is criticized to be “old wine in new bottles” by Fine (2006).

Built upon the group dynamics of the migration decision, this theory allows researchers to analyze household preferences and their voices to determine the movement. Rather than the neoclassical theory, this approach underscores the importance of the household as a group to take the issue from a more comprehensive perspective rather than individualistic meanings.

2.4. THE DISCUSSION OF VOLUNTARY AND FORCED MIGRATION THEORIES

Scholarly wisdom dictates that although there is no precise categorization of whether a migratory movement is voluntary or forced, it can be asserted that some migrants have an option not to migrate, while others are obviously forced to leave their homelands (Piguet, 2018). Here, after providing the main theories of migration, the distinction between voluntary and forced migration is discussed.

2.4.1. Voluntary Migration

Theories on voluntary migration allow researchers to frame more rational and individual-based preferences on the decision to migrate. Their rationale, thereby, lies back in the proposition that migration is a rational decision to reach ultimate gains such as the

expectation of higher wages and better life benefits. The push-pull factors, in this case, play a significant role in the migration decision.

From the beginning till now, the three main courses of migration theories in the scholarly debates are provided. Accordingly, this dissertation advocates that all have some valuable points, yet deserve criticism. Starting with the neoclassical approach, that theory focuses on the economic rationality and benefit tracking of individuals to better life conditions and work opportunities to migrate. This theory stresses rational choice but limits it to the economic determinants of life. Nevertheless, the migration experience is a complex set of criteria and a hard decision on many occasions. As a response, the historical-structural theories of migration also take the migration issue granted from the view of uneven development among regions or the tension between developed and underdeveloped countries. Their perception of handling the migration issue from a development system and inequalities lacks the presumption of voluntary decisions. Furthermore, as the theoretical framework of historical-structural approaches only considers the system as the driving factor of migration, they miss the individualistic or particular governmental strategies on migration. The NELM, on the other hand, again puts economic variables for migration decisions in its core and lacks the integrated perspective on reasons for migration. Unlike the others, NELM considers the migration decision to be a consensus among households rather than an individual decision.

All perspectives mentioned here regarding voluntary migration theories assume migration in an isolated mindset from the other determinants such as global uneven development and capitalist exploitation or, of course, life-threatening events such as wars, climate change, etc. This critique of voluntary migration theories underlines that migration is not solely voluntary but mostly forced by various deep causes. We should understand that individual or group decisions on migration are a combined set of forcing factors instead of pulling factors, and a focus should be placed on the forcing factors instead of pulling factors like better economic gains. Though there is an economic perspective in voluntary migration theories, it lacks a deepened approach to what causes the uneven development of economic sources and capabilities in countries with worldwide coverage. Therefore, NELM or neoclassical economic theories overlook the structural processes that *force* people or individuals to leave their homelands. In this case, the distinction in voluntary migration theories concerning individual or group action of

decision to migrate is irrelevant. However, a focal point of why people are making these decisions is vital.

Hence, voluntary migration theories can be assumed outdated in understanding the complicated and multi-layered structure of migratory decisions and driving factors. To explore a better understanding of international migration, it is proposed that forced migration phenomena should be more scrutinized, as every migration decision includes a forcing factor to move.

2.4.2. Forced Migration

This research utilizes refugee studies, thereby discussing the theoretical assumptions of refuge. When putting refugee studies into the emphasis of these theories, voluntary migration theories obviously lack the initial point of the refugee movement as they mainly focus on economic drivers for migration decisions. Indeed, Zolberg (1983: 25) also states that “*social scientists who theorize about the causes and consequences of international migration generally exclude refugee movements.*” As a result of this, one should solely elaborate on forced migration. However, “*attempts at theorizing refugee flows are therefore scarce, and focus strictly on the role of the state in ‘making’ refugees*” (Piguet, 2018: 21), and therefore, theorizing forced migration has been overlooked by an excessive focus on migration theories (Mandić, 2022: 62).

According to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees Article 1(a), a refugee is a person who “*as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.*” Hence, refugees have a different motivation than voluntary migration, which is overlooked by the abovementioned theories. Their focus on economic determinants to decide migration lacks the application of refugee movements. However, historical-structural theories allow us to evaluate the processes refugees face while being hosted in a country.

Forced migration occurs as a result of several factors. Zolberg (1983) underlines that the creation of new nation-states can be a push factor for forced migration as a new country formation “*often associated with violence, revolution or annexation*” (Piguet,

2018: 22). Refugees, therefore, or forced migrants, are displaced by selective or generalized forcing factors that leave them with only one option: to leave (Mandić, 2022: 63). This unanticipated nature of *refugeeness* is diverging them from voluntary migrants who made their rational individual or group decisions to leave rather than a relatively sudden event. In this distinction, the focus of forced migration theorization should underline the diverging conditions of refugees than emigrants who leave with an option to stay without any life-threatening danger. Theories in forced migration, therefore, both have a focus on the root causes of migration and the severe and specific conditions that forced migrants face rather than voluntary migrants in the host country.

One good example of explaining the conditions of refugees in host countries, for our focus in this research, is the dual labor market theory, which means refugees face precarious work and life conditions, is useful to elaborate on. In this theoretical framework, there is a segmentation in labor market in countries, where some works are require skills and less dangerous with more salaries, whereas the other type of jobs that are dangerous, dirty, and demeaning (3D) for mostly unskilled and low-paid workers. When entering the labor market in a host country, refugees are disadvantaged by the language barrier, skill proficiency, and lack of credentials, and they mostly end up working in precarious work conditions as 3D jobs with lower payment to upgrade the native workers for more paid and skilled jobs. Therefore, the segmentation in labor market occurs.

The trend of urban refugee phenomena especially impacts the precariousness of penetrating the local labor market and facing harsh wages and work statuses. The dual labor market theory primarily signifies the need for labor in advanced societies and primary and secondary markets for the labor force. In such an economy, there are jobs for high-skilled labor and places for low-skilled or unskilled workers. Refugees, as a disadvantaged group to be formally recruited under equal conditions with native workers, ultimately face 3D working environments since they usually lack their previous skill credentials, official documents, recognition, and language barrier from time to time. Therefore, if a hosting economy is a developing one with industrial production sectors, policymakers or employers may tend to allow the informal participation of refugees in the labor market for a cheaper opportunity to foster their profits. Concomitantly, if the country is short of high-skilled labor, there might be no advantage for native workers to be promoted from secondary market jobs to first ones. Hence, wage theft and native-

foreigner turnout occur in the labor market. The informality, insecurity, and precarious conditions of refugees may attract capital owners to hire them instead of a politically stronger and official employment category, native workers. In that case, researchers should delve into the historical-structural features of the host country's macroeconomics to understand the current tendencies in policymaking and real-life relations.

To do so, one should recall the critical theories, such as historical-structural theories of migration, instead of mainstream liberal or realist ones as they perceive the issue as it is. Critical theories elaborate on the issue from a deconstructive matter to identify the issue and provide a solution or explanation. Thus, the following section scrutinizes the debate between critical and problem-solving theories, particularly referencing Robert Cox's classification to be prepared for a Marxist understanding of refugee research.

3. EXPLAINING THE BATTLEGROUND: CRITICAL OR PROBLEM-SOLVING?

*“But then, also thinking of Marxism as an ideology,
it's by far the single most powerful historical alternative to the liberal tradition.*

We need to understand why that is.”

Ian Shapiro

Starting with agricultural production, humanity has experienced a dependency on the place. It is going to be a juxtaposition to claim that dependency on place has led to more and more movements of the human race, as people have been seeking the most efficient location for agricultural production. The compression that has occurred in human lives between settling down and looking for better places has started with this narrative. Refuting the idea of the age of migration by de Haas et al. (2020), I advocate the perspective of the eternal movement of humanity in regard to migration for centuries.

The predominance of mainstream theories in political science research is not premature. Moreover, there is the best knowledge that can support this idea in the current academia. The bias of selecting particular theoretical perspectives on scientific research has led us nowhere to durable solutions in political science. Nourished Robert Cox's (1981: 128) quote, “[t]heory is always for someone and for some purpose.” Due to the fact that every theory is value-based and includes a legitimation of a specific ideology or approach for Cox's arguments (Sarı, 2014), he points out that theories have two functions.

The first one is the theory that provides the solution from the theory that identifies the problem to solve the issue. These are called problem-solving theories, as they find the solution to the problem in the theory that directly identifies the issue. On the other hand, the second group of theories mostly focuses on the theory development process. These theories clearly look for the relationship between the problematic perspective and the other perspectives. Due to this fact, Cox names them critical theories (Cemgil, 2021; Cox, 1981). The main goal of the problem-solving theories is to utilize the present institutions and social and power relations in harmony to solve the problem. In contrast, critical theory transcends this, discusses the existing order, and attempts to understand the transformation (Cox, 1981). Therefore, critical theory is *“the theory of transformation, and it is historical, and it advocates that social institutions that were built by humans could be changed by humans, and even it has been being changed any moment”* (Cemgil, 2021: 213). All in all, problem-solving theories approach the existing structure as natural and seek the solution in the existing system, while critical theories question the natural structure of the existing (Klevis, 2014: 140–141).

For years, in academia, there has not been a formal distinction between theoretical frameworks. Scholars have not yet underlined the debatable nature of theories. However, in the 1980s, a renowned scholar, Robert Cox, sparked the match and caught the attention of the academic community on the diverse features of theories. While doing so, Cox also emphasized the biased structure of theories. One controversial point has always been that there should be postulates. Theories in social sciences, particularly in political science, consist of conceptual frameworks and explanations around their subjective definitions. Each theory grabs issues from specific aspects and elaborates on the solution within the same framework. This dissertation, respectfully, regards problem-solving theories in this discussion. Yet, it should be pointed out that researchers should think outside the box to provide durable solutions, but not give populist responses. This idea is formally based on the grounds of Robert Cox’s distinction between problem-solving theories and critical theories.

As cited above, Robert Cox claims that theories are subjective and they always have a purpose. The purpose of theories is to identify issues and provide solutions while attempting to understand and give meaning to the whole case. This process results in subjectivity. In this category, theories usually regard cases as problematic and aim to solve those problems. Problem-solving theories have the potential to contribute to real-

world issues, yet they have deficits. The main adversity of this category is identifying the problem and proposing the solution within the very same framework. This group of theories takes the relationships and issues for granted and does not question the root causes. However, this is not sufficient to provide effective solutions. Critical theories open a new phase in social sciences. Rather than admitting that issues occur under certain circumstances and that we should find solutions in a similar framework, critical scholars attempt to deconstruct the given features, causes, relationships, and concepts to identify an issue. That is why this dissertation prefers to utilize a critical outline, namely Marxism.

4. EXPLORING THE MARXIST UNDERSTANDING IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

Understanding Marxism is a complex and interconnected issue. It provides a perspective on current life, connects it with history, applies a particular methodology to given issues, and utilizes a critical window and possibly a novel understanding in refugee studies. It is yet a question whether Marxism is a philosophy, ideology, or approach. Lenin stated that Marxism is not a philosophy, but its philosophy is materialism (Lenin, 1968). However, Allen (1974) notes that it is, at some point, a philosophical position as it utilizes normative ethical theory. It is also a belief that Marxist ideas and thoughts left themselves outside of the main philosophical domains, so it attracted fewer academic debates at the beginning of the 20th century (Anderson, 1935). Kautsky's explanation is that Marxism is "*fundamentally an overarching theory of history or historical materialism*" (Westra, 2019: 366). The Marxisms that emerged in the 20th century have also made it diverse and a chorus of many different voices. Its broad content and versions in scientific literature make it hard to generalize a Marxist understanding. Yet, here the attempt is that to categorize common features in Marxist approaches within the view of social sciences and methodology to explore the class structure of Marxism, critique of capitalism, historical materialism, and dialectical methods. This understanding will allow readers to scrutinize Marxist concepts in the upcoming chapters related to Syrian refugees in Türkiye; thus, it will serve as a background of Marxist understanding as a preliminary introduction. To complete the ultimate goal of this section, the research will scrutinize the concept of the global (industrial) reserve army of labor, accumulation by dispossession, and class struggle.

This section is, therefore, devoted to comprehending the basics of Marxism and its scientific philosophy. Only with this background will readers be able to decide whether Marxism can be a perspective on refuge or not. Marxism is a lens for real-world issues

from the scientific perspective of social evolution, and it discovers the features of human society and its transformation. It accompanies economic explanations with historical and social experiences and facts. As it stresses the experiences and facts, it cannot be posited as a completed or finished theory, but an evolving one (Burns, 1957: 6). Marxism approaches history to deal with people and their movements rather than a static understanding of history. Along with Engels, Marx first expressed his ideas in the Manifesto of the Communist Party (Marx & Engels, 1848). However, his ideas in the Manifesto were refuted after the defeat of the Communist League in the 1848 revolutions (Sayers, 2021).

The approach in Marxism comprehends that material conditions determine social relations as well as ideologies. Therefore, Marxist theory is the outset of the economic interpretation, more precisely, the outset of the mode of production of history, and is generally based on a few components, such as deterministic logic, succession of stages, and inevitable proletarian revolution (Anderson, 1935: 25; Mouzelis, 1988). Although especially throughout the developments of the 20th century, Marxist debates have led some concepts to be open for discussion, at its core, Marxism has the labor theory of value, historical materialism, and class structure and struggle (Wright, 1995). Still, the Marxist philosophy of history entails holistic, economic, materialistic, and fatalistic approaches (Addis, 1966). The classical or traditional Marxist perspective apprehends the issue from the perspective of private ownership or control of production (Resnick & Wolff, 2013: 154). The explanation here lies in the ground that private ownership in the capitalist mode of production leads to class exploitation, that is, the source of capitalist power. The capitalist class in a capitalist system is the owner of the means of production that can exploit the labor of the proletariat, that is, the class struggle. In the conceptualization, the proletariat forcibly sells their labor to capitalists as a commodity. The force behind this argument derives from the situation that the proletariat must sell their labor in a capitalist system to *survive*. The capitalists, on the contrary, need proletarian labor to produce and sell the commodities to gain profits and sustain the surplus value. In this cycle, there is a dialectical link between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie that is a result of the deprived proletariat and capital accumulation (Fuchs & Seignani, 2013: 247; Pomeroy, 2015).

The methodological aspects of Marxism in social sciences are also a complex issue. Marx, in his writings, did not form any methodological scientific manifesto.

However, it is still possible to extract the Marxist methodology from his seminal works. Marxism mainly starts with *doubt*, following Descartes. Marx, in that sense, understands firsthand that true human knowledge cannot be possible if there is no doubt to challenge current or historical issues. Therefore, Marxist philosophy is critical, that is, questioning real-world issues through the lens of refutation. To do so, Marx wrote critiques of his predecessors and contemporaries to reveal the inconsistencies and inadequate explanations in their perspectives (Sharma, 1985: 273–274). The second characteristic of Marxist methodology is the working class. His understanding of social facts counts for interdependence rather than fragmentation. Hence, Marx depends on evidence to support his arguments in an honest, empirical way (Little, 2007: 230). Accordingly, Marx’s dialectical method requires a systematic manner as he starts with the origins of capitalist society and its future, a united theory of knowledge, and necessary connections to explain the knowledge and action (Ollman, 2003: 20).

Historical materialism is the most prominent feature of Marxist methodology. Marxism, as a theoretical scientific ground, analyzes history through the lens of class struggle (Burns, 1957: 9). The class struggle emerges as the inevitable outcome of the capitalist mode of production, where social inequalities are common. Adding the lens of dialectical materialism, scientific knowledge is also rooted in the material realities of society and class struggle. Marx or Engels has not uttered the term dialectical materialism, yet their philosophy of science stresses the primary function of real-world socio-economic structures (Zwart, 2022: 67). Therefore, scientific knowledge is not an abstract value. Rather, it is perceived as a set of dynamic socio-economic transformations throughout history. Marx, in that sense, intentionally insisted on the scientific nature of his thought more than any other theories or approaches (Mayo, 1952). The historical materialism of Marx acknowledges that history and society have a transformative pattern of predictable laws of motion (Mayo, 1952: 487). Therefore, it is a set of thoughts that society is evolutionary in material terms, and the movement or evolution of history is connected to the development of material forces of society (Sharma, 1985: 275). Marx, in that sense, emphasized the “*scientific analysis of capitalism as a system*” in all of his life and works, and he devoted his efforts to constructing “*a scientific analysis of the capitalist mode of production*” (Little, 2007: 230). Therefore, the Marxist view on science is, at least, a positivist manner to claim historical iron laws (Thomas, 1976: 8).

4.1. THE INDUSTRIAL RESERVE ARMY OF LABOR

Initially, the Marxist terminology of the industrial reserve army of labor referred to the national surplus labor, which capitalists can utilize as a threatening tool for active workers. Marx's less attention to migration during his works made the concept rarely stressed throughout the theorization. Accordingly, the focus of the current research on the industrial reserve army emphasizes both the national surplus labor and virtually mentions international migratory movements. However, as the urban refugee phenomenon has been the primary strategy in host countries to manage refugee populations, we are now at a phase to discuss the formation of urban refugees as surplus labor populations or, concisely, the industrial reserve army of labor. This section, accordingly, elaborates on the nexus between the reserve army of labor and refugees while delving into the origins of the concept.

The role of immigration or foreigners in a native labor market has been an issue since the 19th century when US capitalists employed European migrants instead of unionized native workers (Brass, 2017b: 357). Since then, an essential issue for capital accumulation has been the industrial reserve army (Pröbsting, 2015: 334), a structural necessity of capitalism (Basu, 2013). The industrial reserve army, thereby, has emerged as a necessity and formation of social class that has triggered class struggles within the universal working class and divided it, that is, another benefit for capital owners to keep them in line.

The socialist arguments have underlined that the industrial reserve army has been a powerful tool for the dispute between capitalists and the working class (Brass, 2024: 187). According to that term, the capitalist class always keeps a reserve worker class to pressure the workers. This pressure can be called mobbing today, which creates the fear of losing a job because the population outside is willing to do the same job for lower wages. As Pröbsting puts it, “[w]hen in the 1950s and 1960s there was near full employment in the imperialist metropolises, the capitalists desperately needed migrants to form an industrial reserve army” (Pröbsting, 2015: 335).

In that context, for the Marxist migration approach, capital increases its profit by pressuring local workers through the migrant-workers class regarding wages (Meyers, 2000: 1247). Vogel (2013: 2) also states that “[t]he existence of a reserve service and production workforce, a class of workers who can be employed at below-average wages during periods of economic expansion and summarily discharged without serious

political consequences during periods of contraction, is an essential element of all capitalist economies.” Marx (1995), in this respect, stressed that the capitalist mode of production ultimately aims to keep wages from rising to a certain threshold for increasing its continuous profits. Marx’s interpretation of this issue starts with the surplus labor population. To define the surplus labor population, Marx notes that *“the labouring population therefore produces, along with the accumulation of capital produced by it, the means by which it itself is made relatively superfluous, is turned into a relative surplus-population; and it does this to an always increasing extent”* (Marx, 1995: 474). Grasping the issue from this perspective, he contended that capital owners always favor a larger labor force with the same total cost. That is why they tend to change it from younger or women to men, unskilled to skilled, inexperienced to experienced (Foster & McChesney, 2017: 489).

Hymer (1979) concludes in his work that capital accumulation results in an increase in the proletariat. That argument follows the fostering of a number of external reserve armies in third-world countries and internal reserve armies in developed countries. Ultimately, this situation allows capital owners to globalize or internationalize production to attach the external reserve army to the local market as a subsidizing factor for the costly native labor force. The global (international) reserve army of labor is the core of the polarized world system in terms of wage distribution, particularly diverging between the North and South or the First World and Third World. Companies or firms, in that sense, do not tend to compete for the final prices of their goods, that is, the loss of profit for all parties, but tend to achieve relatively lower production costs, which is primarily due to the workforce (Foster & McChesney, 2017: 486). Globalization, thereby, has fostered the potential number of workers (Kaarsholm, 2020). With the new sources and opportunities for transportation today, the working class and labor are at their ultimate mobility rate. Accordingly, the global capitalist system introduced almost 1.5 billion new workers to the global workforce through China’s, India’s, and the Soviet Union’s integration into the global capitalist system by 2000 (Freeman, 2007: 25). Hence, it has increased the potential of an industrial reserve army under the capitalist mode of production.

The issue of global surplus labor and the global reserve army of labor is not a retrospective approach, as it reflects the current situation. Accompanying Marx’s thoughts on the global reserve army or surplus labor force, Jameson (2011: 71) comments

that it is not a matter of joke in the post-World War era as the globalization of industrial production, and it is also a relevant terminology for America today (Mosk, 2021: 357). Per the introduction of migration control and border management for immigrant laborers, such as guest worker programs, specific sectors of global capitalist production have become advantageous in importing a cheaper labor force, such as an industrial reserve army, into the system (Kaarsholm, 2020).

The importance given to the industrial reserve army by Marx was not just because of the commonality of the situation in the working class but also because of its significant factor in the control of wages in the capitalist mode of production (MacDonald, 2018: 6). Following his arguments, Marx contends, “[t]he greater the social wealth, the functioning capital, the extent and energy of its growth, and therefore also the greater the absolute mass of the proletariat and the productivity of its labour, the greater is the industrial reserve army. The same causes which develop the expansive power of capital, also develop the labour-power at its disposal. The relative mass of the industrial reserve army thus increases with the potential energy of wealth. But the greater this reserve army in proportion to the active labour-army, the greater is the mass of a consolidated surplus population, whose misery is in inverse ratio to the amount of torture it has to undergo in the form of labour” (Marx, 1995: 798). The industrial reserve army, hereby, is not separated from the active working class but is an internalized factor for its accumulation and reproduction (Colombini, 2020: 410). Rather, “the industrial reserve army grows as the process of capitalist accumulation intensifies; it shrinks as the capitalist accumulation process atrophies” (Mosk, 2021: 350). In this idea, the concept is helpful in understanding the capital’s crises and their impact on migrants, that is, the feature of the capitalist mode of production (Farris, 2015).

The industrial reserve army has two components in terms of surplus labor, favoring capital owners. The first factor is that they serve as a reserve when the need for labor or the demand is high. Secondly, and most significantly, they also serve as a pressuring tool against current workers to keep the wages at a certain level, put them in fear of unemployment or turnover, and leave them *voiceless*. On the second occasion, capitalists use the reserve army to hire a less skilled, cheaper, and weaker workforce (Brass, 2017b: 358–359). Therefore, it becomes advantageous to use carrots and sticks in work environments for capital owners to pressure native or current workers on their rights in both political and economic means. That is both a threat to precarity and the use of it

as a tool. Dividing the global working class between citizen and migrant labor, states and capitalists have gained the opportunity to lock the transnational labor in a permanent, insecure nature, which makes immigrant workers vulnerable to civil, political, and labor rights (Robinson & Santos, 2014: 6–7).

The use of division in the working class and wage theft by capital owners has become easier with the globalization of labor. The migratory movements, whether they are voluntary economic decisions or forced migration as refugee flows, and the increasing urbanization of migrants have raised the issue of the industrial reserve army of labor. Within the survival of urban life, refugees mostly tend to penetrate into the local labor markets either formally or informally. The formal employment opportunities of refugees are limited, and the capitalist mode of production has always been looking for more profits with lower costs, so they inevitably create the industrial reserve army of labor in host countries. This situation results in the precarity of refugees with harsh conditions at work and lower wages, and a threat to active workers to ask for less. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the impact of refugees on the labor market from a critical framework to understand the transformative dynamics of host countries' macroeconomic structures.

4.2. ACCUMULATION BY DISPOSSESSION

Nourished by the primitive accumulation notion exposed by Marx (Glassman, 2006: 608), it is comprehended as a permanent and expansive nature of capitalism (Bonefeld, 2011: 380). Marx's explanation of primitive accumulation begins with the inequality between the capital owners and the peasants as a response to Adam Smith's theory of classical economics, which interprets the division of labor as the driving force of capital accumulation. Instead of focusing on the slave trade, colonization, and protected monopolies, Smith regarded the so-called primitive accumulation as the savings of economic producers (Batou, 2015: 14–15).

Marx contends that the production tools were not a commodity but needed to be transformed. For this transformation, there should be two sides: one with the capital to own production tools and the second one only with their labor to sell, the workers. This polarization brings the capitalist mode of production, where capitalists exchange the labor of free workers. Capitalist gains tend to separate the workers from their possessions to alienate them; therefore, the capital can transform independent producers into waged workers (Marx, 1995). *"The peasantry, in being expropriated from the land, is 'freed' in*

order to be reconstituted as the essential motor force of capitalism itself: labor power as a commodity” (Walker, 2011: 386). In this position, we should frame capitalist accumulation triggered by social classes as a distinction between the people who were the owners of the means of production and those who only had their labor power. Before the capitalist mode of production, those who only had their own labor power were free from the ties of production for others but only for themselves with their mode of production, yet they had to sell their power to the owners of the mode of production. Therefore, they created surplus value over the production that would be purchased and also sold by the capitalists more than the value of labor. That is a cyclical vicious process of commodification and capitalist mode of production (Bin, 2018: 76).

That is the process of the first, indeed, primitive accumulation. The primitive here refers to the pre-historical meaning of the accumulation in the capitalist mode of production. Following these, Marx assumes that the capitalist economy was built on the feudal economic structure and notes that “...*the history of this, their [workers'] expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire*” (Marx, 1995: 688). That is, especially Marx’s formulation of the commodity-money-commodity and money-commodity-money equation. Marx asserts that there are two stages of primitive accumulation. The first phase was in the pre-capitalist-agricultural societies that lived during the Middle Ages. Profoundly, the second phase started in the 15th century when modern banking, taxation, public debts, monopolies, colonization, and the slave trade occurred. During that period, the capital was globally accumulated, which led to the industrial revolution (Batou, 2015: 15–16).

Depending on these explanations, “*primitive capitalist accumulation is, in its fullest and richest sense, not an accumulation of previously created capital stock (although some accumulation is required for labour to be divided), but a process by which capitalist institutions are established*” (Millar, 1978: 386); thus, it is the beginning of the capitalist mode of production. Hence, we should argue whether there is a starting point for accumulation in the capitalist mode of production. Marxist theory responds to the question as the cycle of possessing capital, which is not an outcome of the capitalist mode of production but the triggering point of it (Read, 2002: 26). Therefore, primitive accumulation attempts to explain the beginning of the capitalist mode of production and the emergence of capitalism. Capitalism, in that sense, is not only money, but also labor, materials, and human capacity that are private and used for the exploitation of labor in a

capitalist system (Pena & Wendland-Liu, 2024: 340). In addition to this, Luxemburg (2003: 350–351) asserts that in the 19th century, it was the most common weapon and tool of capitalism to dispossess the peasants, particularly in England and all over Europe as well, and contends that force is the crucial solution for the capital. That is in line with Marx's perception of the concept, as he illustrates the process as the "*clearing of the commons in England, whereby land, forests, and natural resources, which were previously held to be the common property of all, were privatized. The inhabitants were forced off the land and into the growing urban workshops to sell their labor power*" (Englert, 2020: 1656). By doing so, people were dispossessed and left the only choice to sell their human capacity to capital owners, where the surplus value of labor would be produced.

Adding the bricks on top of it, Harvey emphasizes primitive capitalist accumulation as accumulation by dispossession by the dominant form of accumulation rather than an attempt to solve capitalism's crises (Bonefeld, 2011: 379). Against the economic structure of the 1950s and 1960s and the pre-historic capitalist primitive accumulation, Harvey asserts that capitalist accumulation has not been built upon the growth of capital but the dispossession since the 1970s. Dispossession occurs in various forms, such as the dispossession of workers in terms of housing, credits, rights, and wage theft. The reemerging feature of primitive accumulation, which is noted as the pre-historic preposition of Marx, is that the redistribution of surpluses is profoundly more significant than the accumulation of surpluses in the neoliberal context. Therefore, the contemporary form of neoliberal capitalism is the dispossession as opposed to the accumulation by growth in historical capitalism (Bin, 2018).

Filling the gaps left by Luxemburg regarding under-consumption as the explanation of capitalist crises on overaccumulation, Harvey (2003) signifies reinvestment to fuel the demand for capital products. Indeed, he focuses on lowering the costs of inputs, such as labor costs, which is critical for capitalist crises to resolve the dilemma. Opening up non-capitalist regions to the capitalist mode of production in terms of investment provides lower costs for production through the benefits of lower raw materials, workforce, land, etc., that would support the profit gain (Harvey, 2003: 140). Nonetheless, this is also a process of "*transferring public wealth into an increasingly concentrated private sector*" (Cáceres, 2015: 116), that is, the solution to the capital crisis of overaccumulation.

Overaccumulation emerges where surplus capital is nothing to use for profitable means anymore. Accumulation by dispossession, here, suggests the explanation for low costs for inputs, particularly the cost of labor. As Marx explained the situation, the over-accumulated capital can seize the lands, force people to leave those areas, and provide them to private capital owners (Harvey, 2003: 149). In this cycle, over-accumulated capital turns assets into commodities from which they can profit. As Harvey (2003: 154) expresses, “*accumulation by dispossession can here be interpreted as the necessary cost of making a successful breakthrough into capitalist development with the strong backing of state powers.*”

4.3. CLASS FORMATION AND STRUGGLE

Classical Marxism contends that conflict between labor and capital is a core principle. The assumption arises from Marx’s interpretation that the profits of capital owners and worker wages are in an inverse relationship; that is, the material base of the conflict, which must be the primary reason for workers to overthrow capitalism (Wilks, 1995: 17). Hence, class has always been a part of history, and there has always been a struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat classes. Explicitly, Marx and Engels (1848: 7) note that “[t]he history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” It has various sides in the history of society, such as lord and serf, but generally oppressor and oppressed, class struggles have always been a part of societies. Indeed, Marxism puts the assumption that class analysis is an essential necessity for understanding either individuals or groups (Kazin, 1987: 498).

The Marxist conceptualization of class begins with the primitive communism times when hunter-gatherer societies were based on common ownership (Heller, 2019). However, by the end of this primitive communist era, family and state power triggered the private properties along with agriculture and evolved the economic class structures (Engels, 1942). The working class, in that sense of Marxism, is the only class that requires the abolition of class per se; hence, class struggle is the struggle for political power (Wood, 1983: 240). The concept itself gives the nuance that class struggle is necessary for the proletariat revolution that would lead to the communist regime. The tension between the oppressor and the oppressed in the capitalist mode of production, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, is in search of political power, which brings the struggle. Class struggle, therefore, is the source of the control and exploitation of workers by the capital owners. The Marxist definition of class struggle, indeed, includes the

presupposition that capitalism is a social project in favor of dominant class interests, where capital is the leading part of power relations. That is to say that Marxism also approaches the class struggle in a way that is a two-sided and politicized issue (Neilson, 2007: 98–99). Within this framework, class struggle is not only regarded as oppression by capitalists but also as the resistance of workers. Class is, in that sense, defined by the dominant economic logic in addition to the political struggle that redefines it (Neilson, 2007: 99).

Capitalism, in Marxist understanding, has its foundations deep in the structural separation of workers and conditions of production, which creates the alienation of workers from the commodity that their labor creates. Class structure, in line with that, arises from this separation, which causes the mass population to lack production abilities, therefore forcing them or leaving them without any option to sell their labor. The distinction between wealth and capital, in terms of the capitalist mode of production, fosters bourgeois gains in “*effective right to initiate and control the productive processes and legal ownership over whatever the workers produce*” (Øversveen & Kelly, 2023: 322).

Marx’s thoughts on class struggle are elucidated as contradictory independence of labor and capital, and they are socially formed classes (Ritchie et al., 2022a: 23). However, in that class formation, workers are “*un-free because they have been “freed” from any control over or access to the means of production*” (Harvey, 2020: 73). However, in his analysis, continuous change is strictly emphasized, and Marx specified that political-economic change is inevitable; just as feudalism gave way to capitalism, the latter will be replaced by socialism (Brass, 2017a: 199). Class formation, in this sense, occurs between the two as bourgeoisie and proletariat, which are socially and economically constructed by capitalism. The struggle in Marxist nuances is a result of the contradictory interests of those two classes; one of them seeks surplus labor, whereas the other is an unfree worker selling their labor to survive and provide accumulated profits for capitalists.

Nevertheless, currently, class struggle not only occurs between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat but is also visible as an intra-class struggle. There are cases such as Latino migrant workers’ mass demonstrations in the US, indicating the promising feature of immigration in the class struggle (Pröbsting, 2015: 346). The universality and uniformity of the worker class are also essential for the Marxist approach. Dwelling on

this, one should interpret the refugee flows as a reserve army of labor that is being pumped to local labor markets by a capitalist structure to boost the accumulation of profits and capital by suppressing the current labor wages or lowering them. The content of this structure allows capital owners to divide the working class into natives and foreigners, that is, migrants and refugees, respectively. In this structure, the uniformity and universality of laborers can be demolished in favor of capitalism to rule, exploit, and control them within their intra-class struggles. Class struggle as an outcome of class contradictions may happen with refugee integration into the labor market, particularly informal integration, as it creates segmentation, exception, and exclusion by displaced populations in the market due to the capitalist mode of production (Ritchie, 2022: 519).

5. CONCLUSION

Concluding the chapter, there are highlights as the primary takeaways of the discussion here. From Ravenstein to contemporary migration theories, there has always been an attempt to provide an understanding of the root causes of human mobility. Whether it is voluntary or forced mobilization, scholars have made their efforts on the decisions taken by individuals or groups to permanently or temporarily move. The problem-solving theories, in accordance with Cox's classification, have utilized stability in their framework in a way that there is an issue of human mobility, and we could only resolve or explain this mobility issue within the same framework. This has been the case for almost a century of overall migration research. If there is human mobility, the problem-solving theories, mostly the mainstream ones, have predominantly captured and framed it within normative liberal perspectives and sought explanations and solutions within the same understanding. However, when we retrospectively evaluate the refugee experiences in the world and the scholarly debates, it should be asserted that problem-solving theories have been insufficient to address the real structural problems, although they have been successful in identifying the shallow causes and processes in refuge. In this dissertation, therefore, it is claimed that we should scrutinize critical perspectives to provide a deconstructive understanding of refugee experiences and, in particular, utilize Marxist domains to elaborate on the historical-structural dimensions of refugee experiences.

THE SECOND CHAPTER
THEORY ARGUMENTATION: APPROACHING REFUGEE LABOR
THROUGH DECONSTRUCTIVE MEANS

1. INTRODUCTION

The refugee movement has been a case for more than a century, but has rapidly become an inevitable reality in this era. Increasing instabilities, uneven development, wild capitalism, political or ethnic persecutions, environmental crises, and atrocities have been sources of people's will to move to another country. Piling numbers of people nowadays seek asylum or refuge as safe havens in other countries than their citizenship. As this is the case in the 21st century, refugees have also been of scholarly interest to various disciplines. Till the 21st century, scholarly research was essentially from mainstream theoretical to policy-driven, yet we need critical perspectives to deal with the actual refugee cases (Black, 2001). Accordingly, the fact that refugees are mostly sourced from low-to-medium-income countries means that the number of refugees' origin countries has been narrowing, whereas the final destinations continue to vary (Fransen & de Haas, 2022); thus, refugee issues have become a more complex case for host countries worldwide.

As the income level in home countries is decisive for refugees, scholarly attention should also be given to refugee labor through deconstructive means. This attention covers the refugee labor situation by means of exploitation, overwhelming and underpaid working conditions, life struggles, wage theft, and surplus population to the industrial reserve army, and from dispossession to precarity. To achieve this coverage, this chapter begins with scrutinizing refugee labor in global capitalist economies. Global capitalist economies predominantly approach refugees as a source of a cheap labor force, while realist perspectives criticize the refugee presence in the labor market as a threat to native workers by wage theft and pressure for lower wages to native workers. Moreover, the research on refugee employment overwhelmingly diverges from that of immigrants through the assumption that refugees increase the unemployment rate among native workers by informality in the labor market and thus create unrest in host countries (Ceritoglu et al., 2017; Demirkol, 2024; Tumen, 2016, 2023). Therefore, one of the points that should be examined is refugee labor in global capitalist economies to understand the refugee experience in today's world.

Secondly, this chapter allows readers to investigate refugee precarity as a significant concern. Refugee precarity within this work's context refers to the lack or deprivation of essential needs for a minimum quality of an honorable life and survival. The concept is challenging and assertive, yet it needs to catch academic interest at this point to delve into the refugee experience from a deconstructive perspective. The section discusses the causal impacts of the urbanization of refugees, the capitalist mode of production, and the effect of society and state on precarity. Lastly, this chapter challenges mainstream theories with an alternative way of refugee research by recommending the utilization of Marxism to connect all the points mentioned in the chapter. Classical Marxism, in its essence, does not consider migration or refugees as a major concern to theorize. Nevertheless, the concepts suggested in the Marxist framework are retrospectively and today meaningful to understanding precarity, exploitation, and dispossession.

All in all, this chapter will serve as the argumentative phase of the dissertation, addressing refugee research using Marxist concepts and comprehending their contribution to academic knowledge through a novel lens.

2. REFUGEE LABOR IN GLOBAL CAPITALIST ECONOMIES

Refugee labor in global capitalist and neoliberal economic structures has caught multidisciplinary attention worldwide. Investigating refugees' impact on the native labor market and unemployment rates (Demirkol, 2024), economic growth (Gomes et al., 2024), public finance and expenditure through financial aid (Zetter, 2012), and overall economic impacts (Betts et al., 2017; Zhu et al., 2024) have overwhelmingly been on the scholarly agenda throughout the last decade (Esen & Oğuş Binatlı, 2017). Nonetheless, there are disparate scholarly views on the economic impact of refugees in host countries, and the research in the context of forced labor is still insufficient (Szulc & Szymaniak, 2023: 1). Scholars who advocate the positive impact of refugees mostly rely on their formal penetration into the labor markets to boost economic activities through production and their expenditures in urban areas (Pittaway, 2015). Accordingly, scholars such as Cortes (2004) present that refugees' labor market outcomes might be higher than those of economic immigrants in some cases.

Although the attention on migrant integration into the economic structure of host countries has been high, there are certain points that distinguish migrants and refugees in

terms of labor and integration into the global capitalist economic structure in host countries. Firstly, rather than migrants, refugees cross the border without preparation to be integrated into the formal labor market as they usually flee from political, environmental, or life-threatening conditions that do not allow them to contact the networks in the host country or in particular, do not let them prepare their credentials such as certifications or diploma to be formally hired in the destination country (Chiswick et al., 2005; Huq & Venugopal, 2021). Hence, there is a disparity between immigrants and refugees in occupational sectors and wages (Brell et al., 2020; Connor, 2010). Secondly, as a consequence of the first one, most refugees are prone to be employed in the informal labor market (Ertorer, 2021). Indeed, the impact of the refugee work permit maze poses an obstacle to obtaining work permits through legal ways for refugees (Lenner & Turner, 2019).

Accordingly, one should cautiously interpret the nexus between refugees and labor market integration in the global capitalist system. Adding bricks on top of the Marxist theoretical framework of Chapter I, we should grasp the issue from a critical perspective. Firstly, we have to recall that the global refugee regime is under the mandate of UNHCR, which decided in 2009 to make a policy shift to provide refugee protection in urban settlements rather than camps, which they had been actively promoting since 1997 (UNHCR, 2009). The recent phenomenon of urban refugees, therefore, squeezes refugees between surviving on their own financial capacities and wage theft (Demirkol, 2024). Wage theft is, at its core, refers to the wage-related violations of certain jobs in formal or informal sectors and is considered a severe form of exploitation (Bélanger & Saraçoğlu, 2022: 264). In this vein, there are two sides to the pendulum. On the one hand, host countries have started to be depressed by the economic and social impacts of refugee hosting in relation to the number of refugees hosted in the country and the duration (Wright & Moorthy, 2018). On the other hand, there is also an economic gain from the capitalist mode of production, which provides a cheaper, insecure, and precarious workforce to the market. Hence, refugee flows have diverse impacts on the global capitalist economy, as both a possible stress on native workers and an opportunity for capitalists to lower their costs, so that they would gain more profit.

3. REFUGEE PRECARIETY

Refugees are vulnerable to economic and political rights, as their economic and political rights are determined predominantly by the host country, along with UNHCR's

mandate. The trajectory of insecurity in the economic, legal, and social sectors for refugees does not portray a positive image (Szulc & Szymaniak, 2023), as they are mostly prone to those insecurities in their *protected resettlements*. The 1951 Geneva Convention posits basic access to work for refugees in host countries, yet host countries hold in reserve whether refugees can work in public or private sectors or could be self-employed (Sahin Mencutek & Nashwan, 2021: 617). In the case of Greece, as Tazzioli (2022) highlights, refugees can even be sources of capitalization for international organizations and state authorities through their unemployment status by engaging in unpaid labor activities. This situation primarily occurs in the case of voluntary, unpaid recruitment of refugees in international organizations, as they are unemployed but used as a labor force. Therefore, their unemployment would lead to unpaid labor through their unemployed status and lack of opportunities.

3.1. THE IMPACT OF URBANIZATION ON REFUGEES

As a result of the widespread policy to settle refugees in urban areas rather than camps, which was a decision made due to humanitarian concerns about the camp life in prolonged/extended encampment of refugees in host countries, most countries decided to close refugee camps or temporary protection centers to direct refugees to the urban areas. The decision, nevertheless, was twofold here. The first rationale behind this decision was, as mentioned, the humanitarian concerns mostly vocalized by UNHCR and other refugee organizations to emphasize the unnatural conditions of life in refugee camps (Demirkol, 2023b). Encampment for long durations in the refugee camp can undermine the adoption of the natural life cycle for refugees after their repatriation. The working life, daily life, experiences, and structures are, therefore, unnatural and artificial in refugee camps as they are protected and preserved areas for a short period of time to shelter them. Additionally, the protracted refugee encampments may lead to mental and physical health problems and distress (Spira et al., 2025). Till here, the narrative mostly signifies the humanitarian perspectives.

The second part of the urban refugee policy is more prone to a capitalist narrative. From the second aspect of the closure of refugee camps, host countries' remonstrations regarding so-called burden-sharing are at the core. The uneven distribution of the burden to shelter and protect people in need of protection, refugees or asylum-seekers, results in harsh economic conditions for host countries. The effort by UNHCR to provide a basis for a just burden-sharing system through GCR (Miller, 2019) is also deemed not

promising in resolving the issue (Ineli-Ciger, 2019). For instance, the government of Türkiye has received 6 billion Euros from the FRIT funding of the EU for refugees in the country, whereas the government announced that at the end of 2019, they had spent over 35 billion euros for Syrian refugees in Türkiye (BirGün, 2019; Euronews, 2024). This debate is not only particular to Türkiye. The unequal distribution of refugees across EU member states, especially the border countries, has increased the criticism of the burden-sharing policies of the EU (Thielemann, 2018).

Now, let us take the issue from this background to the refugee precarity of a structural capitalist model. To approach the issue from this lens, we have some prepositioning. The first one is that refugees are victims of dispossession. As they are structurally forced to leave their homeland, they arrive in the host countries with limited economic and human capital capacities (Brell et al., 2020: 94–95). Their money for livelihood is limited; sometimes, they arrive without any financial resources. Concomitantly, their human capital capacity is limited in the host country as they usually lack previous credentials, such as educational proficiency or certification of occupational training. These two conditions, while separating them from immigrants, pose a threat to their daily lives in the host country in case they become urban refugees.

Urban as a place for contradictory interests (Şengül, 2009) is a wild economic struggle for people. Beginning with the refugees' presence in urban areas, the first problem arises in accommodation. There is an economic sector for refugee accommodation, which is determined by race and status to profit and accumulate capital; therefore, this is one way to capitalize on the economy of refugees (Kreichauf, 2023: 472). Secondly, the labor markets have their specific limitations and capacities in urban areas, and the options are few except in metropolitan cities (Bevelander, 2020). The financial aid and support from INGOs, NGOs, and governments are not always sufficient for the livelihoods of refugee residents in cities (Bélanger & Saracoglu, 2020). Therefore, they start to seek positions in labor markets. The limited human capital, especially the language and occupational credentials, limits workers from being hired in low-skilled jobs. As in the case of Syrian refugees in the USA, Gowayed (2019: 269) notes that *“these systems push the poor into the labor market, unsupported by a safety net, while ignoring persistent drivers of poverty: skill deficits, health and care work burdens, and poverty wages.”* Hence, the poverty of refugees in urban areas shapes their destiny in the labor market as they need to survive and race for their livelihood with limited resources in a contemporary

global neoliberal capitalist economic structure, where job security has been dismantled, and precarity has spread (Dlaske, 2022: 78).

3.2. PRECARIETY AND CAPITALIST MODE OF PRODUCTION

The capitalist mode of production has always sought profit gains and low production costs. Leggett (1964: 226) notes that “*early industrial society is characterized by endemic economic insecurity,*” and it continues to expand its sphere today with a neoliberal capitalist economic structure. Economic insecurity, therefore, is an expansion of the capitalist mode of production due to the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, which have diverging interests (Olawoyin & Akinrinde, 2023: 176). As in the case of the US economic structure, the labor pools, as Kalleberg (2009: 2) puts it, by migratory flows, are sources for the growth of precarious work. Within the framework of the particular cases, indeed, precarity is a common feature of the capitalist neoliberal economic structure. Hence, it is not specific to a group but “*inherent to all labor-capital relationships, to varying degrees*” (Alberti et al., 2018: 449). The universality of precarious work and insecurity, nonetheless, should be revisited in terms of refugee migration. Albeit it is inevitable to see welfare for the working class in the capitalist system from the Marxian understanding, refugee precarity and insecurity have diverse features.

The unfree labor, in Marx’s writings, resonates with urban refugees’ daily lives in host countries. The precarity of refugee lives forces them to sell their labor for the sake of the capitalist mode of production. Thus, they do not freely decide to work for them but seek a livelihood to survive. The cycle that will be explained in the upcoming sections is that refugees are dispossessed by the capitalist imperial world structure, which causes uneven development, economic and social vulnerabilities, and precarity in peripheral regions. Hence, the unstable economic and social conditions in those regions foster the vulnerability to resilience and resistance, that is, the root cause of people to move or flee. From a structural perspective, refugee labor would not be possible without international regulations and domestic/governmental interventions. The uneven development, as a root cause of refugee flows, should be underlined to solve the puzzle. Hillier’s arguments to define the root causes of displacement in the economic relationships of imperialism are helpful in comprehending the issue (Uludag, 2015: 82).

Progressing the topic from the previous section to here, we should contend that the refugee precarity, therefore, emerges from the primary feature of refugees per se: dispossession. Dispossession occurs in many various paths, such as dispossession of their rights, legal status, recognition, human capital, and financial freedom. Hence, refugees who are left with no choice but to integrate into the urban *encampment* face serious and critical problems in their livelihoods to survive. Here, we refer to being an urban refugee as an *urban encampment* to emphasize the distressing feature of being a stranger without sufficient capacities to work and survive in urban areas formally. Refugees' openness to exploitation as cheap labor and their precarity to accept informality in the labor market is (Kougkoulos et al., 2021), therefore, a result of a capitalist mode of production in a neoliberal economic structure. Furthermore, the precarious working conditions of refugees also nourish from the surplus value of labor; thus, "*refugees are subject to socialized, racialized, and deskilled, shitty jobs [that] are quite simply shit*" (Frydenlund, 2023: 2).

What are the conditions that lead refugees to penetrate the labor markets informally? Diverging from economic migrants, refugees pose a strictly different scenario for labor market integration. Their particular position in the labor market derives from the vulnerability that they bring and have in terms of traumas and a lack of sufficient networks and credentials for qualified employment (Demirci & Kırdar, 2023). Furthermore, the restrictive applications and regulations of host countries may result in refugee labor exploitation and precarity through underpaid labor (Badalič, 2023; Eder, 2015; Rajaram, 2018; Turner, 2015).

There is a new collective mantra, as Lenner & Turner (2019: 66) put it, to turn refugee crises into a development opportunity by the neoliberal economic system. That has been the case in countries such as Türkiye and Jordan, the main host countries for refugees in the last decade (Hailat et al., 2024; İçduygu & Diker, 2017). Indeed, this process of refugee labor informality is undoubtedly accompanied by international and national policies. The international pillar of refugee labor informality rises on the urban refugee policy by the UNHCR. The UNHCR's policy shift from temporary protection centers or refugee camps for sheltering them to urban/local integration policies creates the vulnerability of refugees in the labor market integration. Refugees, as a dispossessed population, seek to earn their livelihoods in city life, where they are strangers to the language, culture, and daily lives to survive. Under these circumstances, refugees are

primarily a source of low-paid, dirty, dangerous, and demanding (3D) jobs, as suggested by dual labor market theory (Dimitriadis, 2023: 265; Sanyal, 2012: 638).

In some cases, the inconsistencies between official refugee policies and the actual applications in daily life, in line with the lack of monitoring for regulations, may result in an obstacle to refugee formality (Muhumad & Jaji, 2023: 81). Urban refugees, thus, rather than the positive fruits of integration into the natural life, receive the risks of exploitation and marginalization (Darling, 2017: 81). Hence, labor policies that do not effectively address the formal refugee labor market integration are, per se, becoming the root cause of labor exploitation through informality (Almasri, 2023: 10). It is evident that most refugees opt for informal employment and lower-wage sectors (Andersson et al., 2019; Fang et al., 2018).

Refugees, as unfree workers in the capitalist global economic structure, are forced to migrate first and then find their livelihoods in the wild capitalist system. The formation of urban refugees opens them to vulnerabilities in labor market integration due to regulations such as discriminatory quotas, work-permit obstacles, language barriers, credentials recognition, and endless precarity. They are usually securitized as economic threats to host countries through their employment (Soguk, 2021), so they face the risk of discriminatory practices in the labor market orientation.

3.3. PRECARIETY, SOCIETY, AND STATE

Nevertheless, refugee precarity does not only occur in the labor market. As pointed out by Bhagat (2021), asylum seekers in Paris have been exploited by landlords through higher rents as they are known to receive the Asylum Seeker Allowance. Similarly, in Türkiye, *“Syrian refugees have been incorporated into the Turkish real estate market as the ‘providers of rent’ and into the labor market as the ‘providers of cheap labor’”* (Bélanger & Saracoglu, 2019: 282). This kind of exploitative force is also a cause of refugee precarity that fuels their financial hardship and need for work to survive, no matter the working conditions and wages. In this sense, although it is a relatively new and ignored sphere to focus on refugee livelihoods, refugees’ labor exploitation, and class relations in scholarly debates (Berg et al., 2022: 37; Pascucci, 2019: 584), it enlightens the critical perspective on precarity and valuelessness of refugee labor by the capitalist mode of production.

One point to approach refugee precarity and its link with society and the state is the process of wage theft. Generally, migrants, and particularly refugees, are more prone to “*experience wage-related violations than others*” (Bélanger & Saraçoğlu, 2022: 265). The violations crystallize under the process of wage theft, which refers to an “*employer’s non-compliance with minimum wage laws*” (Clibborn & Wright, 2018: 207). The lack of or the weakness of their social and political rights to report employers under wage violations, refugees face the risk of exploitation, underpaid labor, and a vicious cycle of precarity. The cycle is vicious, as they need to work either formally or informally to survive and fear reporting or complaining to employers for wage theft due to their precarity (Farbenblum & Berg, 2018).

From another aspect, the determination of the legal status of refugees per se can be the reason for exploitative vulnerability, such as temporary protection and asylum-seeking. Berg et al. (2022), accordingly, reveal the impact of the temporariness of refugees as a governmental power to decide refugees’ legal status, which leads to exploitative working conditions in Australia. That is another source of precarity, and the legal status provided by the state authority per se is the way for capital owners to access cheap labor in the labor market. The temporariness of their status fosters insecurity in the labor market integration through formal ways (Foley & Piper, 2021). As employers grasp the opportunity to increase their profits by reducing production costs, particularly employee costs, refugees in limbo provide a labor pool for them to receive short-term, underpaid, and insecure employment offers.

The process occurs in a way that the determination of the legal status of forced migrants in a country also shapes the framework for their rights, obligations, opportunities, and costs. The state is the superior authority over providing legal status to them; thus, it is also the policymaker for refugees’ daily life practices, such as work and employment conditions. By defining the role of a forced migrant within the society and their place of shelter, such as a camp or urban area, the state is the primary power in shaping refugee lives. Within this framework, forced migrants can enjoy their status and rights in country A, whereas country B provides temporary protection status to them and implements restrictive policies on labor market integration.

4. COULD MARXISM BE THE NOVEL LENS ON REFUGEE?

The Marxist approach to international migration is worth exploring. *“For many a decade past, the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeois and of its rule”* (D’Amato, 2014: 1). Explaining and analyzing this revolt’s history was the responsibility of Marxists such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. According to Burns (2019: 9), *“Marxism is a world view that explains the evolution of societies.”* From this point of view, Marxism is both an ideology and an approach. Marxism mainly focuses on communities and societies rather than individuals, so its focal point is class structure (Burns, 2019: 14). The class structure of international migration and the class-based society that migration has created are obvious facts. Therefore, Marxism could be useful in analyzing the class-based effects of international migration.

According to the Marxist perspective, the first approaches to international migration could be shaped around the need for cheap labor in a capitalist economy, and this issue mirrors the State’s management of migration (Brown, 1992: 131–132). At this point, the State has a vital role: establishing the distinction between the local labor force and migrant workers (Castells, 1979). The state, therefore, is the one that makes the decision on whether one will be a migrant worker and which rights the migrant will have (Brown, 1992: 134). The State’s role in managing migration differs according to the meaning it attributes to the migration. At its core, one can infer that realist and liberal migration policies could define the State’s role in migration management. Yet, Marxism is another alternative to comprehending the State’s role in it through class politics and political economy.

Indeed, it is also possible to analyze and discuss international migration through a Marxist political economy (Abreu, 2012; Castles & Kosack, 1972; Nikolinakos, 1975). From the historical-structural approach, migration is a social and political-economic process rather than an individual one (Abreu, 2012: 55). Historical-structural theories evaluate migration as it provides a cheap and exploitable labor force (Castles et al., 2014: 28). The historical-structural approaches that also consist of Marxist and Neo-Marxist theories are the main theoretical framework for the Marxist view of migration. From the lens of Marxism, migration is basically the essential part of the super-exploitation process between Third World countries and capitalist First World countries (Pröbsting, 2015:

330). Capitalism and hierarchy are the main reasons for mass migration from underdeveloped countries from the Marxist point of view. Uneven development has been created by the developed countries and caused the migration waves from Third World countries to First World countries (Yin, 2021). Additionally, neo-Marxist migration approaches apprehend capitalism, uneven development, and capitalist production modes as the main reasons for migration (Gidwani & Sivaramakrishnan, 2003: 188; Hollifield, 1992: 571). As Rey puts it, capitalism is the main reason behind migration (Gerold-Scheepers & Binsbergen, 1978: 28).

Hence, it is relatively easier to link Marxism to international migration, and particularly, refuge. According to Brown (1992), a number of migration scholars have come from Marxist schools. *“Marxist approaches harness a different system logic to explain migration: at the heart of these explanations lie efforts by dominant classes to sustain or expand levels of (absolute and relative) surplus extraction by exploiting spatially uneven patterns of proletarianization and de-peasantization”* (Gidwani & Sivaramakrishnan, 2003: 189). As Gidwani & Sivaramakrishnan (2003: 189) noted, Marxism sees the uneven spatial development of capitalism as the main source of refuge, and Marxists are skeptical about whether migration occurs after a conscious choice. Migration, according to them, *“is the outcome of spatial variations in class interaction and capital’s penetration of agriculture”* (Gidwani & Sivaramakrishnan, 2003: 189). Additionally, migration is an inseparable part of the capitalist economy. For instance, as de Haas puts it from the point of neo-Marxism, *“migration not only reproduces but also reinforces the capitalist system based on class and spatial inequalities”* (de Haas, 2010: 238). Therefore, migration becomes a vital apparatus of the capitalist system. As Meyers (2000: 1247) highlighted, Marxist approaches to migration assume that migration policies have been shaped through political economy and class politics.

Castells’ (1979: 361) view that migrant workers have played a vital role in solving the capital’s economic crises makes it compulsory to analyze migration’s political economy. According to Castells (1979), migrant workers may create a deflationary effect against the inflation problem in the capitalist world. On any occasion, migrants and refugees are governed by the means of capitalist exploitation to create a surplus population (Rajaram, 2018). According to Rajaram, especially irregular migrants create a surplus population for a neoliberal political economy (Rajaram, 2015). To make it clear, it should be highlighted that it is the exploitation of migrant workers, a global problem.

As Hanieh provided, “[t]he position of Gulf rulers crucially depends upon the presence of a precarious class of migrant workers drawn from nearby countries (Hanieh, 2016: 54).” Yet, there are not enough quantitative studies on that topic to create arguments. “If we can determine the role of immigrant labor in the management of these key problems of advanced capitalism, we shall have simultaneously established its place in the structural contradictions and in the social interests underlying different immigration policies and underlying the protests of the workers themselves” (Castells, 1979: 361). Therefore, capitalism uses two main strategies to solve its problems: extending working hours and increasing the intensity, and decreasing the workers’ costs. To use both of the strategies, it should be remembered that migrant workers are important for capitalism (Castells, 1979: 361) as migration is one of the most significant results of uneven capital accumulation and its nature (Hanieh, 2019: 54).

In this regard, Castells mentions four important issues. First, the capital, especially, hires young migrant workers to avoid extra expenses, such as health expenses. Second, as migrant workers are generally single, the capital again avoids extra expenses such as public housing, school, and hospital, which should be provided to married ones. Third, the living standards of migrant workers are commonly lower than those of local workers. Lastly, as a reflection of exploitation, migrants work longer hours and in harder working conditions than local workers (Castells, 1979: 362). Migrant workers are generally located in the lower classes in working life (Pröbsting, 2015: 331). Additionally, their legal and political stance in the hosting country makes migrant workers vulnerable. Hence, migrant workers usually do not benefit from political rights such as unionization and being under national pressure as they are not part of the majority of the nation (Castells, 1979: 363; Pröbsting, 2015: 331). Due to these reasons, migrant workers are perceived as exploitable and a useful tool for profit maximization by capital; thus, their presence is supported by capital.

The well-known migration theory, dual labor market theory, basically explains the capital and class relationships of migrants and refugees in the capitalist countries. It utilizes the view that international migration is a result of labor demand from capitalist advanced countries (Massey et al., 1993: 440). As Piore (2008: 26) puts it, “[t]he most prominent explanations suggest that migration: (1) is a response to general labor shortages; (2) satisfies the need to fill the bottom positions in the social hierarchy; and (3) meets the requirements of the secondary sector of a dual labor market.” According

to Müller (2003), immigrants are generally subjected to low-wage jobs. This creates a segmented or dual labor market between locals and immigrants/refugees. In the segmented/dual labor market, employers basically demand workers for inadequate working conditions, and workers who will often work as unskilled labor (Gurieva & Dzhioev, 2015: 104). One can conclude that especially refugees who lack international refugee status provided by the United Nations (UN) are open to the exploitation of their labor through the capitalist system if governments give the capitalists enough window to do so. Therefore, Marxism comes to the fore to explain why refugees or immigrants are exploited in the labor market as unskilled or low-wage workers. This can also be named as wage theft, which is the non-compliance of employers in regard to minimum wage laws (Clibborn & Wright, 2018: 207). Refugees are vulnerable to wage theft as they generally lack political rights, such as unionization. This results in the exploitation of their labor by capital owners to meet their needs for a cheap labor force.

In light of the above-mentioned arguments, it is not possible to put international migration into an individual or mass framework through Marxism, but it can be based on class politics (Brown, 1992: 135). For Marxist theory, the universality and integrity of the working class have been threatened by migrant workers as the insecurity in the labor market is the best way to grasp an opportunity for dividing the laborers and increasing their labor for more profit gains (MacDonald, 2018: 6) because *“the reserve army provides employers with a pool of workers ready to accept working conditions that tie them to a specific employer under abusive contracts”* (Montero Bressán, 2018: 69). Thus, the long-term benefits of socialism and the working class have been damaged (Brown, 1992: 135).

Accordingly, Marx and Engels have clearly mentioned in their well-known Communist Manifesto that workers do not have a country or nation (Genova, 2016: 31). Yet, international migration causes problems for effective class politics (Brown, 1992: 136) as the presence of migrant workers' class damages the unity of the working class and causes the emergence of alternative classes (Meyers, 2000: 1249). In the letter that he wrote to Sigfrid Meyer and August Vogt, Karl Marx summarizes the issue as: *“...[a]nd most important of all! All industrial and commercial centers in England now have a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who forces down the standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker, he feels himself to be a member of the*

ruling nation and, therefore, makes himself a tool of his aristocrats and capitalists against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself” (Marx, 1988: 474). Accordingly, Lenin states that “[t]he exploitation of worse paid labour from backward countries is particularly characteristic of imperialism” (Lenin, 1964: 168).

The class struggle and Marxist understanding of the industrial reserve army occur in a way that now the value of labor is not determined within the borders of the country, but it transcends to a global workforce that threatens the workers’ equal rights as emerging a diversification of the value of labor between migrants and natives (Hanieh, 2022: 40). Since *“migrant appears as a particularly effective element of a reserve army of labour, able to be easily ‘imported’ and ‘exported’ according to the requirements of production”* (Swain, 2022: 161), they are open to exploitation and precarity that concomitantly a risk for active workers in the host country. Indeed, this is also the case today for Gulf Arab states, where temporary migrant workers are more than half of the total workforce (Hanieh, 2019). Therefore, *“[p]recarious migrants are thus a quintessential example of what Marx terms the industrial reserve army: coveted by business as “cheap labour” during times of economic expansion, but liable to be thrown out onto the streets—and even expelled from the country—during a downturn”* (Feldman, 2022: 236).

5. CONCLUSION

All in all, taking the issue of refugee labor from a deconstructive means, this chapter elaborates on the refugee labor in global capitalist economies and the reasons for refugee precarity under this structure of global capitalism. The refugee labor in contemporary capitalist economic structure is open to exploitation and dispossession of human and financial capital in the labor market, which is augmented by the impact of urbanization of refugees, the capitalist mode of production, and society and state. Marxist concepts such as industrial (global) reserve army, accumulation by dispossession, particularly dispossession, and class formation and struggle can be helpful key points to explore the current refugee precarity and exploitation through a deconstructive approach. The liberal/normative problem-solving approaches to refugee research are deemed to be insufficient in exploring refugee precarity as they provide the solution within the same lens of problem identification, hence, a lack of critical perspective. Marxism, in this respect, as a critical theory, may shed light on the root causes of refugee flows from the uneven development and structural inequalities in periphery countries, the process of

dispossession of refugees that starts with their action to leave the homeland and progress in the host country, their struggle in host countries due to the urbanization of refugees and precarity in daily lives and labor market as well. To scrutinize the impact of society and state, Marxism can also provide the class formation processes between refugees and host communities that can be visible in social life and supported by state policies to foster these disparities between the two communities in urban areas. Therefore, the next chapter will delve more into the case of Türkiye from a Marxist lens to explore how it can be utilized as a tool for analyzing Syrian refugees' situation in the country.



THE THIRD CHAPTER

REVISITING REFUGEE FROM A CRITICAL OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION

To the extent that refugee lives are shaped by the policies and decisions of host countries and a broader refugee governance regime, we should grasp the issue from a social dynamic perspective that implicitly includes the class formation that refugees face in societies. Within this framework, capturing refugee lives and refugee policies only from a legal perspective lacks the social dimension, which is mostly unrecognized by mainstream theories to comprehend refugee issues. Hence, being a refugee is a social status along with precarity and insecurity, rather than only a legal definition. *Refugeeness*, in this regard, points out the class-based relationship that they live in and their hierarchical struggles in society.

Rightly noted by Rithchie et al. (2022a: 11), the European thought of migration is nation-state-centered, which they call the “*notion of national fixedness*,” and “*these ideologies asserted the superiority of societies organized into states with private property laws and legal systems for denying rights to non-nationals and subjugated peoples*.” Hence, the Eurocentric mainstream approaches to refugees lack class formation and critical views, and these approaches’ legal focus on refugees denies their particular rights and social status.

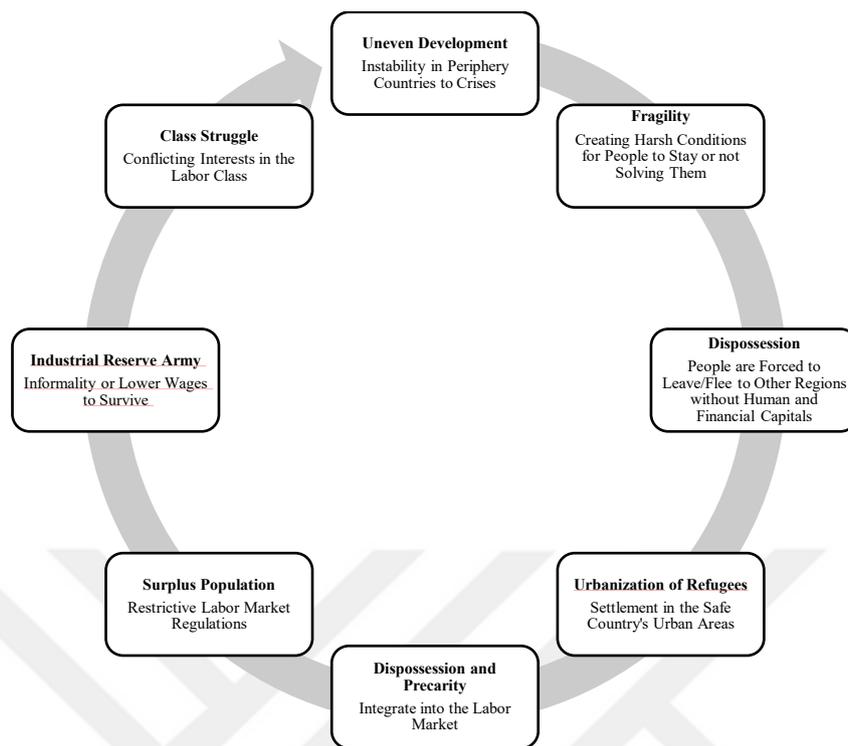
When we dig into the numbers, it is clear that refugees mainly originate from vulnerable areas in the world due to economic, political, and social instabilities. The first four refugee-source countries, according to UNHCR, are the Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela, Ukraine, and Afghanistan, and 71% of them are hosted in low- and middle-income countries (UNHCR, 2025a). This is to say that refuge is mostly a case for underdeveloped or developing countries, both as a source and as a host country. In 2022, Fransen and de Haas (2022) revealed that the number of refugee-originating countries is shrinking due to the recurrent conflict cycles in those countries. Although the refugee numbers have not fluctuated tremendously over the years, the source and host countries are giving some hints about the uneven development’s impact on refugee situations. Undoubtedly, refugees are a class that global regimes, regulations, statutes, and policies seek to seize their right to make their own decisions in their lives. Beginning with being forced to leave their homelands, they face coercion and dispossession of their human

capital and financial capacities. This coercive process leads them to flee due to the instability of their home countries and their vulnerability due to uneven worldwide development, being fed by the global neoliberal economic structure.

Capturing the issue with a focus on capitalism and class formation, it is not possible to separate the global capitalist system, uneven development, fragility, and refugee situations worldwide. They are deeply interconnected from the beginning of fleeing, being hosted in a safe country, rights and livelihood struggles in the host countries, and, indeed, precarity. As discussed in former chapters, refugee precarity is an impact of the global neoliberal economic structure. While refugees are forced to flee, they are being dispossessed as a result of instability in the unevenly developed, hence underdeveloped, regions. The governance of refugees, thus, is a process of capitalist exploitation to create a surplus population in host/destination countries, which is becoming particularly clear for irregular/undocumented refugees or immigrants in host countries (Rajaram, 2015, 2018, 2021).

Extracting from the critical perspective of refugees, one should focus on the proposition that suggests the deconstructive means of the refugee life cycle. Unlike the mainstream perspectives, the critical way of looking into refuge requires a class-based and historical-structuralist understanding to undermine the common and widely agreed-upon definitions of the refuge process. Figure 1 summarizes the critical perspective on the refuge cycle through Marxist domains.

Figure 1. The Cycle of Refuge in Marxist Domains



Source: Author.

Figure 1, accordingly, represents the Marxist view of refuge by utilizing the concepts of class, surplus population, and dispossession. Dispossession here is recommended as the source and conclusion of the refuge cycle. Refugees are vulnerable and fragile individuals who are forced to leave their human and financial capital under harsh conditions. The loss of capital of the two different types leads them to acquire the adjective “dispossessed”. As mentioned earlier, capital accumulation, according to Harvey, is not an outcome of profit marginalization but the process of dispossession. That is to say, dispossession has been the primary condition and necessity of the capitalist mode of production since the post-WWII era and especially after the 1970s. The nexus between dispossession and refuge lies in the process of refuge, as Figure 1 emphasizes. Therefore, I propose that dispossession is the main reason for and feature of the process of refuge in the modern era.

To discover the critical outline of refugee studies in Türkiye, the chapter is organized as follows: Firstly, the position between mainstream and critical approaches to refugee studies is explained. This section will serve to understand what mainstream theories in refugee research are, in particular, liberalism and realism, and then refute their assumptions with a critical outline and its necessity and benefits to employ a critical

perspective to refugee research. Secondly, the reasons to fit Türkiye in employing the critical overview of refugee research are discussed. To do so, a brief background of Syrian refuge in Türkiye and the Marxist framework of dispossession of refugees in Türkiye with a legal perspective and through the lens of human and financial capital are provided. After outlining these frameworks, it attempts to discover and expose the refugee and class formation nexus in the case of Türkiye, dwelling on the refugee research on Türkiye, particularly focusing on studies on Syrian refugees. In this context, the aim is to prompt the questions of whether Syrians in Türkiye just acquire a legal status or posit a social class, how and why urban life fuels the class formation in Türkiye against Syrians, and Syrians' labor market penetration through the formation of surplus population and industrial (global) reserve army of labor, which is, in this sense a class struggle.

2. REFUGEE TO TÜRKİYE: MAINSTREAM VS. CRITICAL APPROACHES

In this dissertation, the main point is that the predominant perspectives of the research on Syrians in Türkiye utilize mainstream liberal/normative frameworks. Although it is a decision or perspective chosen by researchers, this predominance leads to blindness in scholarly debates. Hence, this part of the research investigates what the excessive amount of research on Syrians in Türkiye captures and what they miss from a critical Marxist perspective. To do so, in this section, mainstream vs. critical theories and their functions are discussed. After providing the debate on problem-solving vs. critical theories, the background of Syrian refugee flow to Türkiye is further summarized to better understand why we should also utilize a critical Marxist view of the topic in the next sections.

2.1. LIBERAL OR REALIST: THE MAINSTREAM LABELS OF REFUGEE RESEARCH

Within the context of this research, two main theoretical approaches in Türkiye's refugee research are identified. One is liberal, and the second one is realist. It should be noted that this classification does not label the researchers as liberal or realist, or the research as realist or liberal. Yet, their reading of the issues and their focus are either on liberal perspectives or realist investigations. Bearing this in mind, from a liberal perspective, there are few studies on refuge in Türkiye that mention the honor of human and Syrian refugees. However, their perspective also reflects on the legal basis and the determination of their legal statuses and rights that they should enjoy and be implemented

(Kaya, 2016). Mostly, the research in Türkiye explains the extraordinary and almost unique situation, as only four countries in the world are still implementing it, using geographical limitations to the refugee definition. Flourishing on legal means, the papers in the liberal approach mainly discuss the limitation, either in a neutral and lawful way (Atak & Demir, 2020; Poyraz, 2012) or in a critical and denouncing tone (Baykal & Yılmaz, 2020), and the legal basis of Syrians' presence in Türkiye. This group of research includes a detailed examination and listing of Türkiye's legislation and regulations. Nonetheless, although maintaining the legal perspective and grounds is significant, promoting the rights and opportunities of refugees deriving from their legal statuses (Vardarlı et al., 2019) is only an optimistic explanation.

From the realist perspective, the research on Türkiye analyzes the narrative of refugees as a possible threat to the economic, cultural, and social dimensions. Having said that, these studies do not categorize refugees in Türkiye as threats, but they analyze the cases from this perspective or focus on threatening perceptions towards refugees in Türkiye. In this vein, there are a number of studies concerning anti-refugee attitudes toward Syrians in Türkiye from the perspective of understanding the emergence and utilization of these sentiments (Efe & Ülker, 2024; Morgül & Savaşkan, 2025; Özdemir et al., 2023; Türk, 2024). The research from the realist perspective assures that, as a problem-solving mainstream theory, refugees are perceived as a threat by Turkish society and, particularly, political parties as a securitization tool, and attempts to reveal this victimization and the possible reasons for that (Erdoğan, 2020; Koca, 2016). In extension, most research in this category discusses the solutions with a harmonization focus and underlines the integration issues.

Liberal perspectives on refugees are generally nourished by human rights perspectives, which rely on the UNHCR's mandates, terms, definitions, statutes, and solutions. Boswell (2000: 539) uses the term "*liberal universalist approach to asylum*" as "*the individual rights-based concept of refugee protection, as codified in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees.*" As explained in Cox's classification between problem-solving theories and critical theories, liberal approaches to the refugee, in my opinion, fall under the problem-solving section that defines and promotes the solution from the same framework. To clarify it, liberal approaches to the refugee define the problem as a humanitarian issue with legal terms such as the Geneva Convention's provisions and request or propose solutions within the same framework of humanitarian

legal perspectives. On the other hand, realism is another problem-solving mainstream approach to the refugee that provides its definition of the case from the security concerns and power relations between the host countries and the source countries, and suggests its key solutions in a security framework rather than a humanitarian or other perspective. Realist assumptions about the refuge consistently take the issue from international relations or social, economic, or military security, and their suggested solutions aim to achieve a greater securitized environment within the presence of refugees in host countries.

2.2. WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH ON SYRIANS IN TÜRKIYE INQUIRE ABOUT?

What the main themes are represented in Türkiye's refugee research is a catchy question, as Türkiye has been the leading refugee-hosting country for more than a decade. Extracting the main themes of refugee research in Türkiye may help researchers scrutinize the most significant topics in refugee research in the world's most refugee-hosting countries; thus, it will allow scholars to identify major stresses on refugee hosting.

Accordingly, here, the thematic literature review of refugee research on Türkiye is first presented before delving into the main arguments and findings of these studies. As a systemic approach, the thematic analysis here suggests diverse methodologies than traditional narrative reviews with a more detailed and minimized bias approach to the unit of analysis, and it offers a thorough prompt to relevant research questions (Tranfield et al., 2003: 209). Thematic analysis, therefore, "*should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis*" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 78). Within the thematic analysis framework, we aim to identify patterns in the data. A pattern or theme, in this sense, refers to "*something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set*" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82). As an alternative method to grounded theory and discourse analysis, thematic analysis has been proposed as a solution to that combination's philosophical incompatibility (Braun & Clarke, 2019: 591). Therefore, it is "*a theoretically flexible methodology rather than a theoretically informed and constrained methodology*" (Braun & Clarke, 2019: 592).

2.2.1. The Methodological Procedure

In this research, we included the journal articles indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection and then framed our search with thematic coding. Following Braun & Clarke (2006), the procedure for the thematic analysis has six steps:

The first step is familiarizing yourself with the data. In this step, the researcher reads and notes down the main assumptions, theories, and findings of the research on Syrians in Türkiye. The second step includes generating initial codes through NVivo software, which will capture the primary layers of the unit of the research. After generating codes, the researcher interprets the units to code them accordingly under the initial codes. Following this, the third step covers the attempt to search for themes, in which the researcher groups the codes with potential themes and patterns. Fourthly, the researcher reviews the themes to see whether they work with the entire data set. Proceeding with the fifth step, the researcher defines and names the themes, and finally, in the sixth step, the researcher produces the report. In this dissertation, the six steps are utilized as follows:

In the first step, the data was read and re-read, which consists of 81 Web of Science journal articles on Syrians in Türkiye. To collect this data, the search query in the Web of Science document search is refined to include the keywords “refugee or migrant,” “Syria,” and “Turkey or Türkiye” in the topic parts. The topic search covers the titles and abstracts of the articles. The time coverage of the data is from 2011 to 2024 and includes all indexes that have a place in the Web of Science Core Collection. Articles are selected with the preference of language as English or Turkish, and econometric and medical studies are excluded. The first results from the search query refined 98 articles; however, after completing the first step of the thematic analysis, 17 of them were excluded due to their irrelevance to the research. Directly reading the articles, the researcher noticed 17 of them out of topic regarding the Syrian refugees in Türkiye. After gathering the data for analysis, the titles, abstracts, introductions, theory argumentations, findings, and conclusions of the articles are read and re-read to explore potential codes for the analysis.

In the second step, the codes are generated as 1) repatriation and return, 2) migration governance and international relations, 3) legal status and temporary protection, 4) government policies, 5) socioeconomic problems, 6) labor market penetration, 7) informal work, 8) economic contributions, 9) integration challenges and

process, 10) urban refugees, and 11) gender issues. The codes are generated by the researcher after the first reading the articles in line with related repetitive contents of them. After generating the initial codes, the articles were re-read to extract the main themes and focal points in their theory, argumentation, and findings.

The third step is to generate and search for the roof for the codes to group them under themes. The themes are determined as government and policy responses, economic integration and challenges, and social integration and daily life. Hence, the initial codes were grouped under relevant themes. After reviewing the themes to decide whether they fit with the codes in the fourth step, it proceeded with defining and explaining the themes and finally reported the findings.

2.2.2. Findings of the Thematic Analysis

The findings of the thematic analysis of 81 Web of Science publications related to Syrian refugees in Türkiye are presented below.

Table 1. Findings

Government and Policy Responses	N	% (of 81)
Repatriation and Return	6	7,4
Migration Governance and IR	11	13,6
Legal Status and Temporary Protection	16	19,8
Government's Policies	29	35,8
Economic Integration and Challenges		
Socioeconomic Problems	16	19,8
Labor Market Penetration	17	21,0
Informal Work	9	11,1
Economic Contributions	7	8,6
Social Integration and Daily Life		
Integration Challenges and Process	44	54,3
Urban Refugees	6	7,4
Gender Issues	4	4,9

Source: Author.

The findings report that most percentage of the studies, 54% of them, focus on integration challenges and processes. Among the 81 articles, 44 of them utilized the challenges posed against Syrians in Türkiye in terms of integration and how the challenges could be overcome. They also scrutinized the integration process of Syrians from education to local policies and upper-level public policies. As integration policies are mostly a liberal framework, we can assert that the predominant theoretical perspective in refugee research on Türkiye is the liberal framework. This group of research mainly

captures social acceptance (Aydın Yıldırım & Gümüş Şekerci, 2022; Erdoğan, 2020), local services provided by NGOs (Özgüzel, 2019), the role of education and culture dimensions (Dayıoğlu et al., 2024; Özdemir et al., 2023; Siviş, 2023), integration challenges (Küçükcan, 2022), and social issues such as marriages and family relations (Öztek, 2022).

The least emphasized theme is gender issues, and almost all research with that theme approaches the issue of refuge in Türkiye from a critical perspective. The research that fell under this category emphasizes the experiences of Syrian women in Türkiye (Dağtaş, 2018a), refugee masculinities (Koray Öcal et al., 2024), refugee women's precarity (Sallan Gül et al., 2023), and intention to return or resettlement (Özkan et al., 2023). Government policies also have weight in themes, considering that Türkiye has had several policy shifts toward Syrians from 2011 onwards. Interestingly, repatriation and return are not emphasized themes in studies, although they have been trending in public discourse in Türkiye in recent years.

On the other hand, informality has also been one of the least focused themes within the topics of the articles that were analyzed. Interestingly, there are a number of studies from an economic perspective that investigate the impact of Syrian refugees or migrants on the local labor markets or macroeconomics of Türkiye, but they are still overlooked in the literature. It should also be noted that behind these findings, it is evident that most studies that mention informality or economic burdens on the Turkish economy are from the economic discipline or utilize econometric methods.

An attempt to frame what the literature on Syrians in Türkiye captures here suggests that it mainly concerns the legal, policy, and normative issues in which social and economic factors play secondary roles. Although we will provide a deeper examination in the following chapters, this exploration summarizes the main themes in the existing studies. From my perspective on the interpretation of the findings, most research grasps the refugee issues from a liberal approach that includes policymaking, rights, duties, and integration. However, the critical outlines in this framework are overlooked or ignored as the mainstream approach utilizes a problem-solving theory basis.

2.3. THE PROBLEM OF UTILIZING A PROBLEM-SOLVING THEORY

The dilemma between realist and liberal theories, which are the problem-solving theories hereafter, leads to a vicious cycle in which researchers focus on the issue from a given lens and seek the solution within the same lens, taking the relations, institutions, and cases as given and *ceteris paribus*. One wake-up call was given by Odhiambo-Abuya (2005) to criticize the Westernized-liberal refugee system, which does not provide effective, real solutions to the human rights concerns of refugees in Africa. Within all its humanitarian contexts, liberalism, as Odhiambo-Abuya (2006: 195) contends, “*assumes a closed society and ability of States to control borders.*” Hence, liberalism’s lens through refuge requires both humanitarian-visioned legal precautions and state-centered legal measures to control it. Therefore, liberalism also conflicts with the humanitarian response to refugee movements and the protection of sovereign states, as argued in Lamey’s (2012) views. Nonetheless, this conception is more likely to be applied to the right to asylum and protection of borders, as seen in the example of actions taken by the liberal EU policies, which promote the human rights of refugees but particularly the promotion in extra-EU regions to control the refugee movements or externalize the refugee policies to neighboring countries for the sake of fortress Europe (Jünemann et al., 2017).

The legal dilemma of Syrians in Türkiye has also been a significant topic for refugee studies; thus, Syrians’ confusion has not only been an internal issue but also an external one. The UNHCR’s mandate and statistics label Syrians in Türkiye as refugees, although their legal presence does not allow them to be refugees in Türkiye due to geographical limitations. Accordingly, at the beginning of the Syrian refugee flow, the dilemma of describing their status as refugees or as people under temporary protection has been discussed in scholarly debates (Poyraz, 2012). Whether they are threatening perceptions in social life, economic environments, political discourse, or utilizing their legal statuses, it is still a static evaluation to categorize or define refugees in research. However, this fact should allow us to think outside of the box. Are refugees only in legal status, and if so, should they enjoy the same rights in all countries under similar conditions and as a result of the same incidents, or are they a social class that, regardless of their legal definition, experiences the same precarity, social threats, economic burdens, and dispossession? The answer is, indeed, not included in mainstream refugee research in a critical outline that deepens the understanding of the background root causes of refugee movements.

From this research perspective, several problems lead to neglecting vital critical points with mainstream perspectives in scholarly research on Syrians in Türkiye. First of all, mainstream problem-solving theories define the issue as only a humanitarian crisis through the lens of a normative framework. Accordingly, most research, particularly the mainstream (normative/liberal) studies, start with the definition of refugees or, in particular, the legal status of Syrians in Türkiye. The excessive focus on the research on Syrians in Türkiye has flourished on the temporary protection regime and the lack of refugee status for Syrians. Determining their position in front of the law leads to a position of the research that the researcher should consider Syrians with temporary status, and they are only legal entities rather than a human combined with experiences of dispossession, trauma, class struggle, and exploitation by all means. In this case, the research on Syrians in Türkiye excessively ignores or misses the point that Syrians have a social status rather than a legal one, which is a result of the legal lens that dispossesses them of their experiences. Hence, the normative/liberal approach utilizes a lens that defines refugees only with legal means, neglecting their humanistic nature. Even when the research mentions the humanitarian heritage of Türkiye to help people under serious threat, such as noted by Açar & Yalçinkaya (2023: 212) that *“Turkey has traditionally tended to act with humanitarian concerns during the domestic crises of its neighbors, and helped the people who are fleeing from the conflict area,”* these arguments still miss the point that refugees are not only vulnerable people but humans; although, they underline that *“the public perception towards migration has evolved in the recent years with more security-oriented concerns”* (Açar & Yalçinkaya, 2023: 212). Nevertheless, studies with normative perspectives on Syrians in Türkiye generally grasp the issue from a legal perspective. In Kaya’s (2016) research, it is emphasized that *“rights of Syrians in their new countries do matter in terms of human dignity.”* This perception directly links the dignity and the Syrians’ human-being feature to the legal definition of them, their legal rights, and duties. This is, therefore, the mainstream normative approach in refugee research on Syrians in Türkiye.

Secondly, the legal/normative approaches in the scholarly research on Syrians in Türkiye, therefore, link their arguments with international politics, security, and securitization that misses the vitality of refugees as victims and captures the attention to the regulations that allow people to freely seek asylum, move, and be provided with international protection. However, there is more than humanitarianism in the experience

of refugee movements. Interestingly, according to Bayır & Aksu (2020: 325), although Türkiye has put more weight on the humanitarian perspectives on migration, it also considers the international affairs among source and destination countries. Therefore, Türkiye considers a balance between human rights and benefit-security dilemmas. Focusing on these macro points, the literature consistently overlooks the root causes of refugee movements from a critical perspective that would shed light on the actual reasons behind people's fleeing, not just a civil war or threat.

Thirdly, this policy-oriented predominance in the literature does not allow readers to uncover the real refugee experience and its nexus with global structures such as capitalism. Overwhelmingly explaining the integration policies and international affairs dimensions of Syrian refugees in Türkiye is visible in the existing literature. Focusing on these aspects, the refugee experience is elaborated on in international politics rather than a sociological perspective. Fourthly, the economic research on Syrians' impact on Türkiye considers that Syrians are only economically driven entities, and their effect on the labor market and unemployment could be formulated. The cold face of this literature remains superficial in that Syrian refugees are only numbers in the population, and they cause specific impacts.

When we delve more into the research on Syrians in Türkiye, we see the absolute question of who a refugee is. Defining refugees to the 1951 Geneva Convention's Article I, a refugee is a person who *“as a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”* However, this terminology lacks the structural reasons that lead people to move. In a historical-structural analysis, we can claim that refugees are on the move primarily due to the lack of democratic institutions and heritage in their countries, that is, the lack of stability in terms of political and economic rights, or lack of capacity to cope with environmental or other types of crises due to the uneven development caused underdevelopment of those countries. The legal status of refugees, therefore, is represented as a vital element in the existing literature as *“their legal status*

is primarily ... provides an opportunity to analyze a number of issues” (Berker, 2023: 205).

The existing literature overwhelmingly cites the 1951 Convention to determine refugee status and overlooks the social and class-based approach to it. Well, in that case, why is this important for utilizing a critical theory, and what is the issue with problem-solving theories? To explain this, we should remind ourselves of the distinction between critical and problem-solving theories. Problem-solving theories primarily define the issue within a given structure. In a cleaner explanation, in this case, the problem-solving approach to Syrian refugees in Türkiye captures the problem through legal/normative ways and accepts the refugee movement as it is, then provides the solution through the same mindset that allows researchers to utilize normative regulations. On the other hand, critical perspectives would attempt to expose the historical-structural factors that play a significant role in Syrian refugees in Türkiye. The distinction occurs here: Are Syrians only refugees due to their compliance with the definition of the 1951 Geneva Convention, or does their social status make them refugees? The vast majority of the literature on Türkiye inquires about the first question, which is the problem-solving approach, while the latter is neglected as a critical aspect. Although the legal/normative framework hints at a more humanitarian/rights-based approach, it indeed poses a restrictive understanding of refugees that have specific rights or duties before the legislation, and that is, essentially, it.

We can assert that an analysis of the literature on Syrians in Türkiye would expose a second main topic: integration. The preliminary acceptance that the Syrian civil war would not end as soon as expected led to the development of integration policies (Utar, 2024: 359), which is a good example of utilizing the problem-solving perspective. Most research has followed the outline that integration should be planned, and it has a positive meaning through local governments and NGOs along with integration policies (Aydın Yıldırım & Gümüş Şekerci, 2022; Imrie-Kuzu & Özerdem, 2023; Kale & Erdoğan, 2019; Koser Akcapar & Simsek, 2018). As the increasing population of Syrians in urban areas has resulted in questions on social acceptance and harmonization, the mainstream research has been directed to this area without any critical focus on it. The main course of idea behind these scholarly works has been that Syrians are in urban areas now, which is the problem in the problem-solving methodology, and should be integrated into the community, which is the solution in the same logic. Although the normative approach

defined Syrians under *temporary* protection, the integration studies started with the acceptance that “*the majority of migrants in Türkiye, especially Syrians, will continue to stay in Türkiye*” (Ünsal & Doğan, 2024: 536). Integration, in the mainstream research, is elaborated as a necessary and multidimensional process that includes national policies, local policies, NGOs, and INGOs. Furthermore, citizenship and integration debates have also been discussed in these works; the citizenship option can also be a tool for the integration of Syrians in Türkiye (Koser Akcapar & Simsek, 2018). The *liberal* refugee policies in Türkiye are also a topic for mainstream research on how the cultural similarities and open-door policies allowed Syrians to integrate better (Imrie-Kuzu & Özerdem, 2023). The problem in these studies is shaped around the better integration policies, the benefits of integration, and the elaboration of refugee experiences in urban areas of Türkiye. Another strand of the literature catches the integration issue from a perspective of which tools could be useful for integration, i.e., education (Açıklalın et al., 2021).

The research on integration is, thereby, labelled as mainstream for several reasons in this dissertation. Firstly, the integration issue is not elaborated with its background to analyze it in a deconstructive manner, explaining why these people need to be integrated, and whether there are any policy failures in the integration process. Secondly, these research studies, without elaborating on the structural means of exploitation, evaluate integration as the only way for public peace between the host community and refugees. Lastly, their main research question is centered on how the Syrian refugees could be integrated instead of why the problem occurred and what the alternative solutions are. Although some researchers catch the issue from more critical outlines such as feminism and the role of gender in integration (Altunkaynak, 2016; Duran, 2018; Ustubici, 2020), integration itself is a problem-solving mainstream approach that proposes that refugees are becoming a problem in the host country and need to be integrated in some way. However, a critical approach here would look at this issue in a way that explains why refugees are having problems and what the roles of institutions in this process are.

Furthermore, from the mainstream approach, Syrians’ integration into the host country has been posed as a key factor for their economic gains and enlarged social acceptance (Açıklalın et al., 2021; Eser et al., 2023); moreover, the main integration problems have been linked to the economic conflicts between the Turkish population and Syrian refugees (Yılmaz & Ünal, 2018). However, it is evident that “...*many studies*

conducted in the field [expose] that Syrian immigrants are seen and used as cheap labor potential” (Dođanođlu, 2022: 2446). Noted by oban (2018: 212), “The main way to integrate Syrian refugees into labor markets is passes from the cleaner framework of their legal status.” However, this approach, again, lacks a critical perspective to inquire about why refugees should be seen as a labor force in the host country that would allow them to be exploited in the labor market. Accordingly, Giovanis & zdamar (2021: 633) claim that “Other policies include the implementation of realistic scenarios to integrate the refugees in the domestic labour market that will be beneficial for the domestic economy. Furthermore, national governments and authorities should maximize the job creation potential by collaborating with international actors.” The overwhelming dominance of observing Syrian refugees in Trkiye as an economic gain, both for the domestic economy and their economic gains, still neglects the critical perspective that would underpin the possibility of economic exploitation of refugees in the labor market of the host country. Therefore, the labor market integration and the exploitation link are mostly neglected in the research, although there are exceptional studies, such as Blanger et al. (2021).

Related to the integration, there is also a policy-oriented strand of literature on Syrians in Trkiye. These studies are mainly concerned with the international or domestic policies on Syrians and their impacts on international affairs and domestic politics. For instance, this path of the existing research asserts that *“the Syrian displacement crisis is increasingly affecting the European countries too”* and *“poor conditions in host countries and despair over a chance to return to their country of origin drive Syrians to seek safety in Europe”* (Elitez, 2018: 95) in the case of Syrians’ international politics dimension in relation to their presence in Trkiye, to the extent that Trkiye has utilized them as leverage in international relations (Kaya, 2020) or a foreign policy tool (Teke-Lloyd, 2019). Returning to the domestic policies, besides the integration policies, the overall policy-based literature is also solid. Investigating the public policy perspective (Yılmaz & nal, 2018), there are studies dwelling on the policy-making and implementation processes (Biriz Karaay, 2024).

All in all, the research on Syrians in Trkiye follows this cycle: First, the Syrian civil war broke out in 2011. Secondly, Syrians following the 1951 Geneva Convention became persons under threat of persecution and put in life-threatening danger, thus, they looked for safe havens. Thirdly, as a neighboring country, Syrians mostly passed through Turkish borders to be temporarily accommodated. Fourthly, their increasing numbers and

lack of proper legal refugee status led them to be mobilized to the cities where they needed to be integrated into the society and the labor market. Finally, they live on their own, and the problem is solved. Nonetheless, the story is different in critical perspective other than the problem-solving mainstream approaches.

It should be summarized why these groups of research were labelled as mainstream and problem-solving. The attempt in this section has been to extract the main themes and arguments of the existing group of literature on Syrians in Türkiye. The analytical perspective here reveals that research on Türkiye signifies integration, economic impacts, legal/normative perspectives, and finally, policies that mostly cover integration policies. Their main research questions and arguments lack a deeper critique of the given framework. Therefore, they follow a presupposition that just because of the civil war that broke out in Syria led Syrians to be refugees in Türkiye, and their increasing numbers in the country made it necessary to develop integration policies. The problem-solving idea in these research lies in this mindset that there is a given problem and the solution is *per se* in it. Although critiques of the governmental policies or international organizations can be found in the literature, they are far away from utilizing a critical theory framework as they remain superficial to investigate deep root causes of the refuge and the role of global capitalist structure on their integration processess, the perception that they can be a tool for international and domestic politics, and therefore, they define the problem and provide the solution without deconstructive means. Thereby, the research on Syrians in Türkiye primarily relies on problem-solving rather than critically handling the whole refugee experience in Türkiye and can be labeled as mainstream as they center around similar theoretical frameworks and perceptions regarding refugees' presence and experiences.

3. SYRIANS IN TÜRKİYE: DISPOSSESSION

Dispossession is an indivisible part of refugees' lives. Dispossession, in terms of refugees, occurs in two essential ways: Dispossession of material values and dispossession of rights and social status, which is dignity (Chowdhory & Poyil, 2023). Dawn Chatty states that refugee research "*cries out for moral positioning,*" and dispossession should be recognized (Marfleet, 2013: 302). Rightly noted by her, here it is emphasized that dispossession is not only a loss of economic value or limited access to the economic sphere (Bhandar & Bhandar, 2015; Hanieh & Ziadah, 2025) but also a loss of social status in host countries experienced by refugees (Canefe, 2018). Although the

gendered dispossession of refugees is visible in the literature (Fernandez & Athukorala, 2024), I expand the dispossession of refugees in terms of legal status and human and financial capital.

The Syrian civil war initiated the refugee flows originating from Syria to many neighboring countries and other various worldwide locations. Indeed, the predominance of the mainstream literature utilizes the origin of refugee movements from Syria as the outbreak of civil war or Arab Spring (Akar & Erdoğan, 2019; Fabbe & Sınmazdemir, 2018; Oztig, 2022). Nevertheless, the mainstream framework misses the point that the refugee flow is also a dispossession process for people who leave their homes and reside in a new country with a new status or even without a status (Saraçoğlu, 2024).

In the case of Türkiye, due to the limitation that the Turkish Government did not lift concerning the 1951 Geneva Convention, Türkiye has not provided legal refugee status to people who flee from persecution and migrate from non-European countries (Açar & Yalçınkaya, 2023: 214), although it has been a negotiation between the EU and Türkiye to lift the geographical limitation on refugee status (Gökalp Aras, 2019: 51). Hence, the limitation affected the legal terms of Syrian refugee flow; it was not possible for Turkish authorities to provide legal refugee status to them. Instead, Türkiye provided a temporary protection regime to all Syrians, Palestinians, and stateless persons living in Syria and crossing Turkish borders (Koca, 2016: 63; Siviş, 2023: 662) and following that in 2014, the provisions in the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), granted temporary protection status to Syrians in Türkiye (Bidinger, 2015: 225). Hence, after three years of limbo, Türkiye enacted LFIP and provided the legal basis for a new migration management system under the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) mandate inherited by the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM). Introducing temporary protection and conditional refugee status, which has the exact definition of the refugees in the 1951 Geneva Convention's Article 1(a) but utilized for people who are not geographically covered in this definition, Türkiye allowed Syrians to enjoy temporary protection as a whole community with the decree of the prime minister, which currently falls under the authority of the president. The conditional refugee status has been used as an emergency plan to apply it for population movements toward Türkiye, particularly Syrians, who are not geographically provided with refugee status. According to LFIP Article 62(1), a conditional refugee is "*A person who as a result of events 'occurring outside' European countries and owing to wellfounded fear of being*

persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it, shall be granted conditional refugee status upon completion of the refugee status determination process. Conditional refugees shall be allowed to reside in Turkey temporarily until they are resettled to a third country.” As can be seen, compared with the refugee definition in the 1951 Convention, the only difference is the extension of coverage to events *occurring outside European countries*.

In the first five years of Syrian flow to Türkiye, most Syrians were accommodated in camps, yet there were no regulations for issuing work permits to them. Accordingly, one of Türkiye’s most vital policy shifts in migration management after 2011 was closing the refugee camps and regulating the working permits of foreigners. In 2016, almost 2.2 million SuTPs were living outside of the camps in Türkiye, which is higher than 90% currently (Yıldız & Uzgören, 2016: 196). While settling in urban areas, Syrians in Türkiye have lost their protection against precarity in cities, harsh and even impossible conditions to penetrate the workforce to survive, and their social statuses in Syria were recognized only as Syrians under temporary protection, asylum-seekers, or refugees in their daily lives. The dispossession of the status of refugees hereafter occurs in a way that citizens in their home country, with their rights, obligations, and responsibilities, lose these privileges and duties in the host country after a legal definition is assigned to them and are pushed to *normal* life in urban life under *abnormal* conditions. The belonging and citizenship as social and legal status, hence, transform into a new phase where their rights and previous social statuses are restricted and dispossessed under a new international protection regime and a social definition in everyday urban life.

All in all, it is right to assert that, in the case of Türkiye, Syrian refugees have allocated surplus labor and population positions in the labor market through government policies and legal status (Nimer & Rottmann, 2021) and they have formed a social class, not just a legal one. Hence, not only is it enough to claim Syrian refugees’ labor market integration, but it is also essential to scrutinize their position in society through class-based lenses, as put by Saraçoğlu (2024). From their perspective, refugees experience the

whole working-class life plus their displaced position. In this vein, refugees only survive by selling their labor under dispossessed circumstances (Saraçoğlu, 2024: 33–34).

3.1. THE BACKGROUND OF REFUGE AND DISPOSSESSION OF REFUGEES

The Arab uprisings, called Arab Spring, started in December 2010 in Tunisia as a quest for democracy in protests; it only seemed successfully operated in its origin country but left the others with a humanitarian disaster and instabilities, particularly in Syria, with more than a decade under the worst humanitarian conditions after Rwanda in 1994 (Heydemann, 2013). Inevitably, contrary to President Bashar al-Assad's thoughts, the spread of the Arab Spring found its place in Syria in March 2011. In the wake of the protests, Asad, rather than addressing the socio-economic problems of the country that feed the protests and societal unrest, chose to blame external enemies for the protests. Given opportunities for incremental democratic development, political reforms, and adherence to non-violent attitudes toward protestors, Asad has failed to comply with them (Lesch, 2011: 424). This is not to say that Syrians were triggered by capitalist structure to protest and flee from their countries as a result of conflicts, but to say that the structural instabilities and uneven development created the fragility and vulnerability of the country for political backlashes, that is, to one of the reasons that people felt insecure after the beginning of the Arab Spring in Syria. In the background of the social unrest, there were indeed economic crises, such as high unemployment rates, increasing prices, and inflation, and social reasons, such as authoritarianism (Aksu Kargin, 2018). Hence, people in countries such as Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, Tunisia, and Syria similarly ask for freedom, justice, equality, and democracy (Ma'oz, 2014).

A short time later, the protests propagated in Syria, and on April 29, 2011, Türkiye opened its borders as a process of an open-door policy to the humanitarian needs of Syrians to host them in the country (Batalla Adam, 2017; İçduygu & Simsek, 2016; Kale, 2017), and that open-door policy led more than 600,000 Syrians to settle in Türkiye in less than two years, which raised to millions afterward (Dinçer et al., 2013). Nonetheless, in five years, there were slightly less than 3 million Syrians in Türkiye, and that marked the historical migration source country, Türkiye, as a destination and the world's most refugee-hosting country (Sirkeci, 2017).

Before the outbreak of civil war in Syria, the historical relationship between Türkiye and Syria was deemed to be on good terms of alliance, particularly with the

Adana Agreement in 1999, regarding the extradition of Abdullah Öcalan, the terrorist group leader who has been active in Türkiye. The mutual visits and travel between Hatay and Syrian cities have strengthened the ties between the two countries as well. However, shortly after the Syrian uprisings started, Türkiye also began to criticize the Assad government and changed its position against the Syrian regime (Karakoç & Doğruel, 2015: 352–353). Regarding the Syrian refugee flows, Türkiye decided to implement an open-door policy with a liberal and humanitarian discourse (Batalla Adam, 2017); however, it was suspended from time to time by an increasing number of refugees crossing borders (Koca, 2015: 216, 2016). Nevertheless, the efforts to maintain the open-door policy by the Turkish government had a backlash from the local people, mainly in border cities, soon after the numbers started to pile up. In May 2013, in Reyhanlı city in Hatay, Turkish citizens staged a march against Syrian refugees in their cities to criticize their presence as cultural and economic threats and a mere source of unrest (Karakoç & Doğruel, 2015: 361). This perception and positive emotions toward Syrian refugees in Türkiye continued to fade and shade, especially in the light of mass flows in 2014 and 2015 (Akar & Erdoğan, 2019).

Refugees, from a broader perspective, are victims of dispossession in their home countries and possible victims in the host countries, as well. The dispossession of refugees sparks in the home country, with the dispossession of security and prosperity, then reiterates in the host country in various aspects. Dispossession, in terms of refuge, has several layers. In the first layer, we identify the dispossession of financial capacities and human capital. When refugees leave their countries, most of them also leave their proficiencies, such as credentials for skilled work, networks for the job market, social statuses, and financial capacities (Brell et al., 2020; Huq & Venugopal, 2021). It is a highly recognized phenomenon that refugees have several barriers to labor market penetration in the host countries. Most refugees do not have the skills and documentation to obtain legal working permits, or the procedure is even too harsh for them to cope with, which is the work permit maze, Lenner & Turner (2019) noted. The procedures of proving their skills and recognition of their previous credentials to a comfortable labor market orientation are, in most cases, not possible for refugees.

The precarity of dispossession occurs in a cycle of refugees, as victims of uneven development and instability among regions lose their financial and human capital while leaving their homelands to survive in host countries and seek safety and security.

Therefore, the urban refugee policies in host countries push them to settle in cities and survive, relying on social and financial aid from NGOs and governments or competing in the labor market to earn their livelihoods. The precarity that they live in host countries transforms into another type of precarity as a result of the dispossession of their human and financial capital, that is, the precarity in the labor market and work. Their need to survive in the host country, in addition to financial and social aid, is to seek opportunities in local labor markets to be recruited to support their livelihoods. However, due to the lack of their credentials, sometimes rights to work, or limitations to work, they face the risk of precarity and exploitation in the workplace.

The second step of dispossession falls within the social sphere and is linked with their legal status; that being said, refugees lack some of their rights and are only allowed to act through the host countries' provisions. Being covered under the 1951 Geneva Convention's mandate as refugees or domestic legal statuses, dispossessed and internationally displaced people share identical experiences. Precarity, obstacles, survival, and other types of struggles leave them in limbo and vulnerable positions in society. Due to these vulnerable experiences, being a refugee transcends beyond a legal definition but emerges as a social phenomenon. Hence, the next sections aim to re-investigate the relevant literature on Türkiye and Syrian refugees from the perspective of dispossession and formation of the surplus population.

3.2. DISPOSSESSION IN SOCIAL STATUS

When one reads the research on refugees in Türkiye, one will notice that the vast majority of the existing studies start with defining refugees with the 1951 Convention's provisions (Biriz Karaçay, 2024; Ceylan & Uslu, 2019; Poyraz, 2012). Handling the definition with legal terms is an absolutely safe way for researchers, yet it represents a *per se* position to the refuge.

In 2015, almost 200,000 of 1.7 million Syrians were living in 22 refugee camps run by the government of Türkiye (Bircan & Sunata, 2015: 226). Concomitantly, nearly 4 million Syrians were seeking safe havens in other neighboring countries, either in camps or urban areas, and either under UNHCR's refugee status and mandate or other legal statuses. Could we claim that their legal status was more important and a stronger determinant than their social relations in the host countries and class-based interactions? It is a seemingly tricky question, but the answer is relatively easier than the prompt itself,

which is ignored by the mainstream legal-based approaches, which I suggest as a liberal perspective on refugee research. Regarded as legal entities, the research in Türkiye on refugees misses the point that refugees are a socially constructed class in the host country. Beginning with their journey, refugees leave their identities, citizenship rights, and human and financial capital while crossing the borders' cutting edge. Contrary to their social status in their homelands, they acquire legal entities in host countries, and the sharpness of the reality is that they are more than legal beings.

Following the legal terms, a refugee is a person who is under threat of persecution due to their religion, ethnicity, race, or political views and who is forced to leave their country because of life dangers and threats. The legal term applies to certain people and under certain circumstances in various countries. For instance, in Türkiye, due to the geographical reservation of the refugee definition of the Geneva Convention's geographical scope, it only provides legal status to people coming from European countries (Ceylan & Uslu, 2019: 202; Kırdım & Demirkol, 2021; Kutlu, 2020: 35). Although the EU has made numerous attempts and requests to lift the geographical limitation on the refugee term, Türkiye has maintained its position to keep it for decades (Teke-Lloyd, 2019: 510). This situation has led to confusion among people who fled to Türkiye to enjoy their rights, duties, and opportunities as refugees, people under international protection, or asylum-seekers.

Still, Syrians in Türkiye have acquired temporary protection under international protection, whereas some other nationalities have obtained conditional refugee status or other legal statuses. International protection in Turkish legislation covers refugees, conditional refugees, and subsidiary protection for people who cannot ask for protection from their home country's government, but in an international sphere. In line with this, stating that Syrians are refugees in Türkiye is a normatively true but legally wrong definition, neither claiming that they are asylum-seekers nor immigrants. This confusion in determining their legal or social statuses in Türkiye has been an ongoing issue within the daily lives of Syrians, Turkish citizens, and scholars. Grasping the issue of Syrians in Türkiye, we can contend that Syrians, under a legal and social limbo, have been dispossessed in terms of their human value, as indicated by Agamben as *homo sacer* (Agamben, 1998). In line with this, Siviş (2023: 669) expresses that “*national citizenship status takes precedence over class, race, ethnicity, and religious characteristics in the agenda of the host society while identifying themselves and categorizing Syrians.*”

From a more sociological perspective than a legal/humanitarian/liberal one, Syrians' journey began with the dispossession of their material assets when they had to flee and left almost all of their immovable properties back home. They crossed the borders of Türkiye either legally or illegally, which has been another debate, but out of this research's topic, with mixed feelings of hope for a home and hopelessness of leaving their homelands, and uncertainty about their future whether they will be able to come back to their lands or struggle for a new life starting in another country. Covered in this limbo and ambiguous situation, they also experience a distressing factor in themselves: dispossession. This dispossession is an umbrella concept encompassing material and immaterial loss. Nevertheless, the mainstream approaches to the refuge are far away from capturing these features and perceptions. For instance, a number of liberally constructed research studies within a humanitarian framework give references to the traumas of Syrians in Türkiye and the support for tackling these vulnerabilities (Al Husein & Wagner, 2023; Fabbe & Sınmazdemir, 2018; Kutlu-Tonak, 2016; Sayın & Akbulat, 2018); though, they miss the point of the dispossession of Syrians' *self* in this journey.

Accordingly, the overuse of the legal definition of refugees, according to the so-called constitution of refugee law, the 1951 Geneva Convention, in Türkiye's refugee research. Defining refugees with a legal term is a neutral-liberal perspective that posits legal neutrality for them. Legal neutrality derives from the perception that refugees are legal entities; they have a legal status but not a social one. Also, the liberal state-protective terminology defines refugees' roles in society, rules that they are tied to, duties, responsibilities, and rights that they are subjected to. The melting pot of legal definitions of displaced people seeking asylum in host countries puts them under one category: refugees. Nevertheless, when we dive into critical approaches to refugees, we can observe other features that are identical to refugee experiences and daily lives, rather than their definition in front of the legislation in host countries.

Furthermore, within this research's framework, losing social status in home countries and recognition with only legal terms or *guest* labels are dispossession processes for refugees. Legal dispossession begins once they leave their homelands and proceed to their home countries in various ways. Defining people who are seeking shelter in another country with the status of refugees, temporary protection, asylum-seekers, or migrants in general terms misses the point that they are human beings and dispossesses them of their human value to downgrade just legal entities or even illegal ones who do not have a right

to stay in the host country from the perspective of host society or politicians. Nevertheless, “*being dispossessed indicates that the subjects are disowned and degraded by normalizing powers active in the society, where the subjects are differentiated,*” and it is a “*full or partial loss of material and non-material existence*” (Chowdhory & Mohanty, 2023: 537).

By scrutinizing the missing point in the research of Syrians in Türkiye, we can observe the lack of socially constructed dispossession, which is the dispossession in social status by the limbo of legal definition and loss of immaterial self-being in a host country. The history of Syrian refuge, thereby, started with the dispossession at home and proceeded with the dispossession of social status in Türkiye.

3.3. DISPOSSESSION OF HUMAN AND FINANCIAL CAPITAL

Dispossession is also visible in the loss of human and financial capital for refugees. Syrians forfeit not only their material and immaterial assets but also human and financial capital to survive and live in peaceful, normal conditions. Human capital is both “*a measure of skills and capacities that are productive in a labor market*” (Gowayed, 2019: 254) and social networks. When refugees leave their homelands, they give up their networks, relations, proven abilities, and credentials of their skills under a rapid and vital flee condition against a serious life threat. Although the human capital and voluntary migration nexus have been applied to refugees in the manner that they are also making rational decisions on using their human capital upon arrival in the host country (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003: 339), the case of refugees is, indeed, a different story than voluntary migration in terms of keeping and using human capital in a new country.

Besides the immaterial human capital, refugees also lose their financial capital while on the move. Leaving their homes with limited resources, they mostly arrive in host countries with precarious and barely livable financial conditions. The wealth transfer from their home country to the host country under life-threatening situations, such as the civil war, most Syrians in Türkiye have lost their financial capital upon arrival. When they arrived in Türkiye, it was unclear to them what to do and how to survive with limited financial resources, and the ambiguity of financial support to them has also been a stressful process (Baban et al., 2017: 43).

The dispossession of financial capital has also had a triggering effect on various facets of Syrians in Türkiye. Firstly, their loss of financial capital leaves them unprotected

and without a choice to be employed in precarious conditions with relatively lower wages in the labor market (Giovanis & Ozdamar, 2021). In the labor market with limited human capital and financial power, their dispossession of this capital results in exploitation and hopelessness to survive by settling for selling their labor under the minimum wage, in general (Dilek & Yıldırım, 2023: 193; Dođanođlu, 2022: 2451). Secondly, the dispossession of financial capital also boosts the hostile attitudes toward Syrians in Türkiye due to the unemployment risks and perceptions of the Turkish community as they serve the labor market as cheap labor (Akar & Erdođdu, 2019; Demirkol, 2024).

4. SYRIANS IN TURKISH CITIES: CLASS FORMATION AND STRUGGLE

From a legal approach to more sociological theorization, this research attempts to provide the foundations of the argument of refugees' class-based formation in host countries to define them. Within this perspective, refugees generally suffer from traumas, exploitation, domination, and inferiority in social life in host countries. This situation is almost identical for refugees as they share similar destinies, and this fact helps us to classify the class formation of refugees to define them. As suggested by Stolzman & Gamberg (1973: 105–106), "*All known human societies exhibit some inequalities of rank in the various positions occupied by their members in the overall social division of labor.*" This case leaves us with the conception that ranks in society are almost inevitable, and one of the cases in which societal ranking is visible is refugeeness. The stratification in society, hereby, happens between refugees in Türkiye and capital owners and the Turkish people in most cases.

Marxian class structure predominantly focuses on the ensemble of property relations and the means of production in relation to social forces, and fails to address the racial structures in class formation as they are not related to the means of production. In Marxist class formation, workers are "*un-free because they have been 'freed' from any control over or access to the means of production*" (Harvey, 2020: 73). Class formation, in this sense, occurs between the two as bourgeoisie and proletariat, which is socially and economically constructed by capitalism. The struggle in Marxist nuances is a result of the contradictory interests of those two classes; one of them seeks surplus labor, whereas the other is an unfree worker selling their labor to survive and provide accumulated profits for capitalists. Nevertheless, currently, class struggle not only occurs between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat but is also visible as an intra-class struggle. Later Marxists,

such as Michael Burawoy, shifted the focus to labor and economic, political, and ideological determinants of class formation. The main nexus between race and class for Marxism is that racial relations divide the universal working-class identity (Satgar & Williams, 2017: 43–44).

Unlike the lack of a class-based approach in refugee research in Türkiye, class in Marxist tradition is the core of the theoretical assumptions and premises, along with historical materialism. The class formation of Marxism flourishes in the position that social change and conflicts occur in specific places where there are usually conflicts of interest between two groups. That is why they usually refer to the class struggle as the pivot of history (Wright, 2005) and capitalist society and the nature of capitalism (Satgar & Williams, 2017: 42). Furthermore, in line with class formation from the Marxist perspective, according to Marx’s radical egalitarianism thesis, “*human flourishing would be broadly enhanced by a radically egalitarian distribution of the material conditions of life*” (Wright, 2005: 2). In the case of refuge, the opposition to radical egalitarianism occurs in the uneven distribution of rights, justice, and materials between refugees and capital owners, in some cases, generally local people. Following this thesis, Marx’s historical possibility thesis and anti-capitalism thesis also work as a refuge. Marx contends that capitalism blocks the egalitarian distribution of materials, and it will be possible under certain circumstances, such as in highly productive economies. Therefore, Marxist class analysis is deeply related to exploitation and domination, which are superior power relations between two classes, e.g., refugees and capital owners (Wright, 2005).

Other than race, vulnerability is also a source of class formation through precarity and hopelessness. Refugees, as victims of distress, pose a fragile class among the citizens of the host country, with regard to their past and present traumas. Yet, virtually none of the studies on Syrian refugees in Türkiye underline the stress, traumas, and vulnerabilities of refugees (Aras & Kaya, 2021; Tanrikulu, 2018), and only a few of them consider these features as a class formation (Saraçoğlu, 2024). Furthermore, most of these studies mentioning the traumatizing and vulnerability of refugees in Türkiye are on refugee children’s education rather than their social statuses (Cırtı Karaağaç & Güvenç, 2019; Harunoğulları et al., 2019; Kocaoğlu & Güner Yıldız, 2023). Traumas and vulnerabilities, contrary to their use of research in Türkiye on refugees, are more than a casualty of other disadvantaged positions. Moreover, they are the root causes of their class formation in the host country, and the stress factors start pre-migration and continue while in transit

and during the post-migration periods, such as family members killed in war or damage to the house in Syria, are the main reasons for mental health problems (Aksu Kargin & Trix, 2021; Balcilar et al., 2022). Due to these vulnerabilities, refugees in a host country appear as a new class, which is open to exploitation and precarity under most circumstances.

4.1. THE ROLE OF URBANIZATION

Class formation is not only a stratification in society but also an experience in daily life in urban areas. Urban, as a contradictory place (Şengül, 2009), is sometimes an inhibitor of integration, and in some cases, it threatens social cohesion as daily life interactions between the host communities and refugees can be intense. Accordingly, when one thinks about the spatial distribution of Syrian refugees in Türkiye, one can observe that they are spread among the poorest urban areas, as in the case of Gaziantep, pointed out by Atmaca & Zaman (2023). This spatial distribution is reflected in social life as exclusion from society or social poverty. In other words, that is, the lack of connection between the host community and refugees. The situation here reinforces social stratification as the beginning of a class formation. Spatial segregation and its impact on class formation between refugees and host communities are also visible in neighborhoods in Türkiye, according to Saraçoğlu & Belanger (2018). Their observations in Basmane, İzmir, evidence that the exclusionary media discourses against Syrians in Türkiye reflect the daily lives in Turkish urban places. Again, according to Saraçoğlu & Belanger's (2019a) arguments, the perception of loss, especially becoming visible by the urban mobilization of refugees, is deeply connected with Turkish citizens' loss of urban space and national cohesion.

Urban refugees fall under the hierarchy of the host community as a social class. In the case of Türkiye, most research addressed the issue of using the *guests* definition toward Syrians (Altunkaynak, 2016; Küçükcan, 2022; Oktav & Çelikaksoy, 2015: 417), which also underpins the hierarchical top-down class formation as a homeowner and the guest, who is only temporarily here in a non-belonging area, with a limited time and rights. Rightly put by Imrie-Kuzu & Özerdem (2023: 1609), "*Syrians want to leave as a result of the hostile environment that their protracted guest status has created, but it is the very same system of guesthood or temporary protection that prevents them from legally seeking resettlement in third countries of their choice.*" It is also evident in

Türkiye that even NGOs occasionally refer to Syrians as guests as an excuse to exclude them from meetings (Onay-Coker, 2019: 376).

Between 2011 and 2013, most Syrians in Türkiye were accommodated in TRCs in line with the government's open-door policy toward Syrians (Jauhiainen et al., 2022: 198). The increasing number of Syrians in refugee camps pushed the limits of the services provided to camps and free spaces for more Syrians to settle, and most Syrians in Türkiye have become urban refugees (Kujawa & Main, 2024). Concomitantly, UNHCR's policy shift to promote urban integration of refugees in host countries derived from the humanitarian provisions of refugee hosting and the adverse impacts of extended camp life, Türkiye has eased the process for Syrians to settle down in various urban areas in the country. Today, nearly 98% of Syrian refugees live in urban areas instead of TRCs or other types of protected camp areas (Fabbe et al., 2024; Saraçoğlu, 2024). This situation undoubtedly led to another case for the Syrian community in Türkiye as a new class formation.

The procedure of letting Syrian refugees settle in urban areas is a financial burden on the Turkish government to provide them with camp-based services in urban life, and this situation has also been seen and felt in the Turkish community's everyday life (Imrie-Kuzu & Özerdem, 2023: 1616). The burden is also shared with local governments with limited resources that rely on public funding from the government based on the population of Turkish citizens, not including the refugees. Therefore, the burden on local governments has been expanded due to the financial insufficiencies and supported by various NGOs to provide financial aid to Syrians (Memişoğlu & Yavçan, 2022). Nevertheless, on the other hand, the urbanization of Syrians and their presence in the urban life of Turkish cities increased their visibility. Even in low-Syrian-populated cities, the spatial preferences of Syrians in poorer areas made them visible in city centers to seek jobs in the labor market and access public services and public buildings, such as in the case of Afyonkarahisar, where the Syrian population is low, yet the social interactions are dense due to the location of poorer areas close to the city center (Demirkol, 2023b). Being visible in urban areas, refugees are left without protection against exclusion, alienation, and otherness. The rising visibility of Syrians in Turkish cities led them to experience hierarchical class formation in urban daily life. Accordingly, over the years, the protracted status of Syrians in Türkiye and the provision of prolonged temporary protection to them triggered visible public unrest all around the country in urban areas as the status and living

in cities allowed them and left them with the conditions to need to enter the labor force, enjoy health, and other related public services. Concomitantly, the Syrian refugee population in the country became visible in cities, and the ambiguity of their duration of stay in Türkiye fueled the public narratives against their presence. Furthermore, negative security perceptions against Syrians in Turkish cities augmented these discourses (Açar & Yalçınkaya, 2023; Keskin & Yanarışik, 2021: 64). As emphasized by Avaner and Ocaklı (2024), the problems of social cohesion between Syrian and Turkish communities in urban areas resulted in negative perceptions regarding security concerns against them. Indeed, the refugees' vulnerability in urban areas opened them to be victims of criminalization by host communities (Getmansky et al., 2018: 494; Tunca & Özkil, 2023; Whitaker, 1998), particularly as a result of the nation-state and social belonging of the citizens (Jaskulowski, 2017). In the case of Türkiye, a number of studies address this issue accordingly. Explored by Nelik & Yıldız (2022: 1133), some social media users on the internet in Türkiye define Syrians as a national security threat as a result of national politics, but I assert that, moreover, it is a result of their public visibility.

All in all, the research on Syrians in Türkiye is well-structured regarding the security perceptions against Syrians in Turkish cities with field research and case studies; however, they lack the root causes of these perceptions in the social hierarchy between Syrians and the Turkish community.

4.2. THE ROLE OF POLICIES AND POLITICS

The host community-refugee tension is not only a process of urban life or social stratification but also an outcome of politics and policies. Türkiye provides evidence that shifting policies regarding refugees may trigger social unrest among refugees, as in the case of Syrians and the changing narratives in the political sphere. The changing narrative by the ruling party in Türkiye, the Justice and Development Party (JDP), from *Muhajir* to *guests*, is one example of the social class formation between refugees and the Turkish community (Devran & Özcan, 2016: 44). The open-door policy under the administration of Ahmet Davutoğlu, former prime minister of Türkiye, has allowed Syrians to safely enter the country and provided a safe haven rather than following a security-based policy, but a humanitarian one (Açar & Yalçınkaya, 2023; Batalla Adam, 2017).

The majority of studies on Syrian refugees in Türkiye clearly frame the humanitarian efforts given by the Turkish government, especially in 2011, to provide

safety to Syrians who had to flee their countries under devastating conditions (Açar & Yalçınkaya, 2023; Batalla Adam, 2017; Osmanbaşıoğlu, 2019). Hence, the state-led humanitarian policy of Türkiye has been widely endorsed in the academic sphere and research compared with the European countries' responses to the crisis (Cetinoglu, 2019). Starting with the refugee flows, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the former head of the state and now the president, vocalized the primary political discourse of the JDP in the following statement, "*We are Ensar, and they are Muhajir. This nation is doing the same as the Ensar had done to Muhajir*" (Sabah, 2015). The narrative of Ensar, Muhajir, and the *guests* provided an environment of hospitality toward Syrians in the country.

Refugee-hosting countries can leverage the refugee presence as a diplomatic tool. (Altıok & Tosun, 2020: 688). Accordingly, Türkiye, in the case of hosting the most Syrian refugees in the world, acquired leverage in international politics and diplomacy as a soft power (Bélanger et al., 2021; Gökalp Aras, 2019; A. Kaya, 2020; Okyay & Zaragoza-Cristiani, 2016). The leverage here is accompanied by the increasing power of Türkiye vis-à-vis the EU negotiations (Aydin, 2016). Hosting millions of refugees and becoming a buffer zone for the EU to protect the so-called *fortress Europe* (Jünemann et al., 2017), Türkiye has also followed its own benefits by leveraging refugees' presence (Kırdım & Demirkol, 2021), which is barely addressed in scholarly research as a critical outline.

Politics is not only a mechanism for utilizing refugees as an advantage in the international relations sphere, but also an issue in domestic politics. Along with the security concerns, Syrians in Türkiye faced securitization, which resulted in another form of social stratification. Securitization is the process by which politicians and powerful actors utter security threats to referent objects (Buzan, 1983). Among the three securitization schools, Aberystwyth, Paris, and Copenhagen Schools (CS), CS conceptualizes securitization as a speech act. In this process, "*a security issue is posited (by a securitizing actor) as a threat to the survival of some referent object (nation, state, the liberal international economic order, the rain forests), which is claimed to have a right to survive*" (Buzan & Wæver, 2003: 71). During securitization, security becomes a socially constructed object (Taureck, 2006). To do so, a powerful actor, usually the media or politicians, steps forward to claim that something is a vital threat to national security, culture, the state itself, the economy, etc. After that, they affect the audience, which is usually citizens in a country, and wait for affirmation or acceptance of their arguments. The key point here is that they construct the threat without any solid evidence and vocalize

it to impact the audience. When the audience is convinced, securitization occurs. Hence, immigrants or refugees, who are labeled as *aliens* in host countries, are most often open to securitization in terms of economy, national security, and culture (Demirkol, 2023a). The rise of far-right parties in the EU has spread to other countries in recent years (Štefančík et al., 2021, 2023), particularly to Türkiye. The trajectory of far-right populist discourses in Turkish politics was reflected in the daily social lives of citizens to fuel them against Syrians in Türkiye in the last couple of years (Keskin & Yanarışık, 2021: 64; Nelik & Yıldız, 2022: 1133; Tunca & Özkil, 2023).

Accordingly, we should also emphasize the role of securitization by the media and political parties. As mentioned before, initiating the open-door policy in 2011, the JDP followed a policy to share most of the burden of providing a safe haven to people fleeing from Syria. However, the protracted stay of Syrians in Türkiye and the open-door policy also triggered public backlash in the following years. The terrorist attacks in Türkiye in various provinces and the possibility of terrorist recruitment among Syrians in Türkiye created a snowball effect against them to utilize securitizing discourses, which can also be observed in Türkiye's legislation and regulations after 2014 (Bayır & Aksu, 2020).

Hence, the policy shift from *Muhajir* to temporary protection and then *guests*; moreover, interpreting refugees as *leveraging* agents for diplomacy (A. Kaya, 2020; Kırdım & Demirkol, 2021) became visible after 2016 when the Syrian population in Türkiye reached millions. In this context, whereas temporary protection covers some duties and responsibilities to hosting parties, the concept of *guests* does not indicate the same but eventually has a meaning that hosting them is a charity, which is a given status for a charity from a *superior* (Ceylan & Uslu, 2019: 212; Osmanbaşoğlu, 2019: 203).

5. SYRIANS IN TURKISH LABOR MARKET: SURPLUS POPULATION AND INDUSTRIAL RESERVE ARMY

Refugees, as a social phenomenon instead of a legal status, emerge as a new layer in society in the host country. The new layer derives from their origin, ethnicity, culture, language, experiences, rights, and legal statuses, as well. Being dispossessed from their home country to the host country, they face barriers, limitations, obstacles, traumas, and problems. This is not to say that all refugee experiences are ultimately in a negative mode, yet the positive nuances in the course of events are extremely rare. Given that nature, the refugee experience is a set of hardships from the beginning to the destination. According to Harvey (2022: 318, 335), keeping migrants or refugees has been one of the vital

conditions for accumulation, and in a broader sense, open-door policies have fueled the source of a cheaper labor force in capitalist societies.

Nonetheless, the refugee experience in camps and urban areas is different in terms of the means of survival, strategies, and daily lives of refugees. Refugees who lack the right to acquire new citizenship and enjoy citizenship rights most often fall into disadvantaged conditions to survive, particularly by means of economic survival (Bhagat, 2022; Savran, 2022: 14). Within this framework, refugees are generally forced to accept lower-paid work without any assurance in the labor market as they struggle to maintain their livelihoods in a foreign country with limited rights and options under the circumstances of lacking previous credentials for skilled and well-paid jobs (Saraçoğlu, 2024: 40). To understand this context, we should link the industrial reserve army or relative surplus population with refugee studies (Savran, 2022: 17). One of the useful cases to analyze this relation is Türkiye for several reasons. Firstly, Türkiye, a well-known refugee-hosting country, has hosted millions of refugees for more than a decade, particularly Syrians. Secondly, the Turkish labor market and unemployment rates have been clearly affected by refugees in the long term (Demirkol, 2024). Thirdly, Türkiye hosted almost all of the refugee population in urban areas rather than encamped areas. Therefore, it is worth implementing Türkiye as a case to discuss the surplus population and reserve army concepts in terms of the refugee population.

5.1. SYRIANS IN TÜRKIYE AS SURPLUS POPULATION

The surplus population of refugees constitutes a population that cannot transform its labor into value due to cultural and legal limitations. Hence, the surplus population of refugees is not ousted from the labor force but integrated into the labor market for cheaper, insecure, and exploitative working environments that they serve for capitalist profits (Rajaram, 2021). This is, indeed, related to racial ideologies, where *“racial ideology provides an opportunity for capital accumulation, and is extended with further nuance by the way systems of production operate, determining differences in how individuals are included in the productive class of labourers, and how and under what conditions they are cast into a surplus population. Put another way, racial ideologies can determine the relative security and command that individuals and groups have over their labour and the capacity to sell that labour at a commensurate price”* (Rajaram, 2021). Rajaram (2018: 627) indicates that *“studying refugees as surplus populations allows for a sense of the common marginalisations of subaltern and racialized groups before*

capitalism, and questions the treatment of refugees and migrants as ‘strangers.’” Hence, it is possible to see that in the capitalist mode of production, refugees pose as surplus labor in urban areas, who are dispossessed in terms of their financial and human capital (Coddington et al., 2020: 1433; Nimer & Rottmann, 2021), and they are not excluded from capitalist modes of production with precarious working conditions under capitalism as cheap and unprotected labor, which is another hierarchy in the labor market (Fernandes & Onuma, 2024: 9; Osseiran & Nimer, 2024: 7).

According to Toğral Koca (2016: 70), Syrians in Türkiye constitute a human surplus that the Turkish government has allegedly utilized to mobilize support in favor of reducing their destabilizing effects. This process, in the lack of proper economic policies and comprehensive integration strategies for them into the labor market and urban life, has been the primary cause of the creation of the surplus population of Syrians. In line with the policy preferences of the government, which resulted in chaos in the country for both parties, as the host community and Syrians, the urbanization of refugees in Türkiye as a policy was particularly triggered in 2018 by shutting the TRCs down (Danış, 2018). Directing refugees to urban areas had a clear outcome: They were left in need to seek income besides the social and financial aid provided by various institutions to support their livelihoods. In this process, Syrians in Türkiye formed a surplus population in Turkish cities that needed to sustain their lives. The urbanization and the emergence of a surplus population of Syrians, according to Saraçoğlu & Bélanger (2019b), reformed Syrians as a class in Türkiye as a result of regulating the relationships between capital and labor in the state. Aligning with this, Syrians in Türkiye can be classified as “*displaced migrant workers*” as a surplus population (Bélanger & Saraçoğlu, 2022b: 263; Saraçoğlu & Bélanger, 2019b: 162) that serves to fuel the profits of capital owners (Bélanger & Saraçoğlu, 2020).

Not only the urbanization of refugees in Türkiye but also the legal restrictions on them to work legally propagated the process of the emergence of the surplus population. From the first entry of Syrians in 2011 to 2016, due to their legal status, the Turkish government did not provide them the right to work formally. After the increasing urban refugee population in Türkiye and the negotiations with the EU declared in the EU-Turkey Statement on 18 March 2016, “*Turkey and the European Union reconfirmed their commitment to the implementation of their joint action plan activated on 29 November 2015. Much progress has been achieved already, including Turkey's opening of its labour*

market to Syrians under temporary protection” (European Council, 2016), by January 2016, the government started to provide work permits for Syrians who had been in the country for more than six months, yet with a limited quota application. In this regard, the quota limited Syrians in the workplace to not be higher than 10% of Turkish workers (Içduygu & Simsek, 2016: 60–61). The regulation per se has posed an obstacle for Syrians in Türkiye to formally recruit in the labor market, which is competitive in terms of skills and open to informality in Türkiye’s mode of production. The limitations to entering the labor market for urban refugees, who were seeking livelihood and survival in those areas, created a huge labor force supply for the capitalist mode of production. Also, as indicated in an ILO working paper, relying on refugee labor for employer sponsorship is increasing the vulnerability of refugees, such as “conditioning the right to work on employer sponsorship increases refugees’ vulnerability to abuse. If an individual’s right to work is dependent on an employer sponsor, he or she loses that right on leaving the job or being fired” (Gordon, 2019: 30).

Within this framework, Syrians were pushed for informal employment in the labor market, where precarity and exploitation occur more easily. Especially by the termination of refugee camps or TRCs, Syrians have been left unprotected in urban areas to survive and find their own livelihood. This insecurity pumped the informality in the labor market (Kayaoglu, 2020; Khawaldah & Alzboun, 2022). For instance, in a survey after 2016 of the work permit regulation, 30.4% of urban refugees in Istanbul declared their main problem area as unemployment (A. Kaya & Kıraç, 2016). In this sense, they became a surplus population in Türkiye (Koca, 2016: 70), which is especially the worker surplus that leads to native unemployment and downgrading the price of labor (O. Kaya & Aydın, 2021: 1172).

The refugee research on Türkiye captures the informality and Syrians’ need to enter the labor force to survive in urban areas. However, almost none of the studies cover the issue from the perspective of the surplus population. Indeed, Syrians in Türkiye, particularly after mobilizing them to the Turkish cities, have formed a surplus population who cannot transform their labor into real value due to xenophobia, legal regulations such as quotas to enter the workforce, and a lack of credible professions and skills. This framework led them to enter the labor market illegally or informally to maintain their daily livelihoods, other than the limited financial support provided to them. Instead, the research on Türkiye focuses on their informality and economic impacts or their financial

burden and hardships rather than the formation of a surplus population as a critical outline (Arvas & İsaoglu, 2020; Ceritoglu et al., 2017; Demirkol, 2024; Doğan & Karakuyu, 2016; Tumen, 2016).

This is, undoubtedly, another shortage and limitation of mainstream predominance in refugee research on Türkiye. The problem-solving theories and their framework only emphasize the economic burdens of these on the local markets or their financial problems without reference to structuralist perspectives. However, refugeeness itself is a historical-structural and materialist process rather than a static or *ceteris paribus* economic condition to dwell on.

5.2. SYRIANS IN TÜRKIYE AS INDUSTRIAL RESERVE ARMY

Refugee-hosting countries and immigration-prone countries apparently have segmentation in the labor market. As Piore (2008) rightly puts it, most countries have two economic sectors: one for locals and another for immigrants, which are more insecure and precarious (Aksu Kargın & Sirkeci, 2023: 859). Initially, the Marxist terminology of the industrial reserve army of labor referred to the national surplus labor, which capitalists can utilize as a threatening tool for active workers. Marx's less attention to migration during his works made it less emphasized throughout the theorization of the concept. Accordingly, the focus of the current research on the industrial reserve army stresses both the national surplus labor and virtually mentions international migratory movements. However, as the urban refugee phenomenon has been the main strategy in host countries to manage refugee populations, we are now at a phase to discuss the formation of urban refugees as surplus labor populations or, concisely, the industrial reserve army of labor.

The industrial reserve army is highly connected with the formation of the surplus population (Basso, 2021: 219; Savran, 2022: 17). In that cycle, refugees, when they are mobilized to the urban areas, pose a surplus population that they need to work to survive and live normally. The legal restrictions and labor market barriers push them to be a surplus population that cannot turn their labor into value. To overcome this, they seek opportunities informally or with lower wages under precarious conditions to penetrate the labor market. Thus, they start forming an industrial reserve army, an alternative for capital owners to the native regular laborers to pressure for wage raises and political rights. As Basso (2021: 218) notes, "*a growing surplus population is created as the capitalist mode of production advances worldwide and supplants precapitalist social relations,*" and this

surplus population serves as an industrial reserve army, which is a result of capitalist commodity production. Furthermore, to achieve continuous accumulation, a permanently unemployed worker class is a necessity (Harvey, 2022: 291), which results in the formation of the Marxian industrial reserve army, which belongs to the capital owners. Hence, for Marx, capital owners consistently increase this population for self-valorization and leave them in precarity (Marx, 2017: 623).

Marx (2017: 619) notes that every worker is a part of a surplus population when they are part of full or partial unemployment. The surplus population of labor, thereby, serves for the capital owners' sake. Capital, according to Marx's thought, has one primary goal: unlimited self-valorization. To do so, capital owners have to increase the surplus labor time, which is the uncompensated partial time of workers, and intensify working days (Basso, 2021: 218). That is, the major economic mechanisms for capital owners to boost capital accumulation through the eradication of the social and political rights of workers and the division of the working class that will benefit capital owners to segment and pressure the workers (Savran, 2022: 18).

In Türkiye, Syrians' mobilization to urban areas triggered the increase of surplus population throughout their presence, and the insufficient public policies and financial capacities of the governments have led to their precarity. As a direct consequence of precarity, they tend to seek working opportunities in the labor market either legally or illegally, which is the informal sector. Accordingly, Türkiye's capitalist production sectors have depended on the industrial production, construction, and service industries. Indeed, it is evident that research in Türkiye captures the economic exploitation of refugees and their integration into the labor market. Most of them are econometric studies that investigate the impact of Syrians on local labor markets and Türkiye's macro or regional economy with few exceptions to local economies (Ceritoglu et al., 2017; Erçakar & Güvenoğlu, 2020; Tumen, 2016; Yalçın, 2016), they calculate their impact on unemployment (Demirkol, 2024), and time to time mention their economic burdens to survive in Türkiye (Bélanger & Saraçoğlu, 2020, 2022) or economic consequences of their presence (Kaya & Aydın, 2021; Sezgin, 2019). However, we do not see the majority of research in Türkiye on Syrians, to mention the structural exploitation that they are subjected to in the labor market, that is, the creation of an industrial reserve army.

The legal regulations in Türkiye regarding the labor market participation of Syrians, particularly individuals under temporary protection, with a 10% quota to work

in Turkish economic sectors, left them without choice but to informal economic integration into the labor market in urban areas (Özyürek, 2024: 10). In line with this argument, most research reports that Syrian refugees are a burden on the Turkish labor market (Aksu et al., 2022; Aracı et al., 2022; Demirci & Kırdar, 2023). However, other than their informality as a reason for the' negative impact on the labor market, we should emphasize the root causes of their informality on economic integration. As explained in the previous sections on human capital, Syrians in Türkiye as refugees lack previous credentials to prove their skills, diplomas, or proficiencies to be formally recruited. Moreover, the dispossession of their human capital as networks and legal restrictions to work legally augmented the preference for informality in economic sectors with urbanization after 2016, to the policy shift from hosting them in refugee camps to mobilizing Syrians into the urban areas. As a result of this policy shift, they could not rely on the financial aid provided by the government and NGOs and had to seek employment to support their livelihood.

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the Marxist domains of understanding Syrian refugees in Türkiye through dispossession, class formation and struggle, industrial reserve army, and surplus population. Starting with the mainstream vs. critical theories' debate, this chapter summarizes that the mainstream narrative in research on Syrian refugees in Türkiye mainly focuses on liberal/normative perspectives that utilize integration, policies, and labor market issues without a deconstructive methodology and framework. Labeling them as problem-solving theories, in this chapter, it is understood that mainstreaming in refugee research on Syrians in Türkiye overwhelmingly defines the refugee issues through a liberal/normative lens and provides proposals for solution within the same framework, whereas critical perspectives are lacking in this formation.

In line with this argument, in summary, Syrian refugees' dispossession of financial and human capital, which is the dispossession of material and immaterial belongings, has been ignored in the mainstream literature. The dispossession of Syrians, in this regard, occurs in social status, such as citizenship and human and financial capital in Türkiye. Furthermore, their urbanization that mobilized them to Turkish cities is a deepening factor of dispossession to face precarity and a catalyst of social class formation in everyday life and labor market integration. In this process, urbanization, policies, and politics play the pivotal role. Penetrating into the labor market, Syrian refugees in Türkiye

face barriers that limit them from acquiring legal status in the market and getting legal work permits, whereas, concomitantly, the work permit maze and politics in the national discourse label them as threats to the culture and economic security. Therefore, they form a surplus population, which cannot transform their labor into value. Due to this fact, they accumulate as surplus population to the local population, and create an industrial reserve army in the labor market, which is a secondary source that capital owners can utilize for their own benefits to pressure native workers in terms of their political and financial rights. In sum, it is deemed that the literature on Syrians in Türkiye has been mainstreamed to miss these points and capture only legal, normative, and liberal perspectives. Hence, utilizing critical perspectives as a deconstructive tool can provide a solution to the mainstreaming in the existing research to expose hidden or ignored perspectives.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

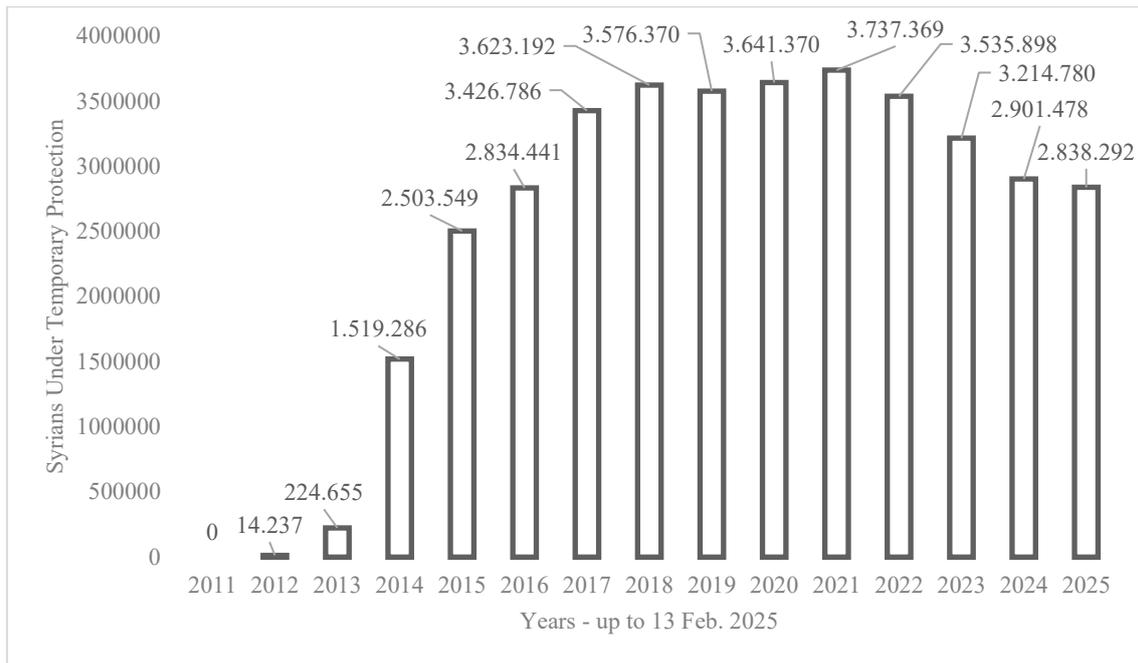
DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses how we could revisit Syrian refugees' experiences and stories in Türkiye from critical domains. Indeed, there is a valuable amount of in-depth research on Syrian refugees in Türkiye from various perspectives and disciplines. From economics to sociology, education to health, and international relations to politics, Syrians in Türkiye have been a hot topic for scholarly debates. Over a decade, researchers have effectively scrutinized Syrian refugees' presence in Türkiye and concluded a number of vital points.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is clearly evident from the existing literature that Syrians in Türkiye are portrayed as victims of the civil war and have acquired legal status in the host country after years of limbo since their first arrival. Throughout the first couple of years after their arrival, they were hosted as *guests*, specifically under the JDP's *Muhajir* policy, often uttered by President Erdoğan in his public speeches. The first response of the Turkish government to Syrians who were seeking safe haven under life-threatening conditions in their homelands was to follow an open-door policy to provide them with temporary shelter, as Ahmet Davutoğlu, the minister of foreign affairs at that time, expressed his determination a couple of times to "*pray at Umayyad Mosque after visiting Damascus*" (Çelenk, 2018). The neo-Ottomanist approach followed by Davutoğlu (Bakir & Ersoy, 2022: 268) at the beginning of the civil war, known as strategic depth (Davutoğlu, 2011), boosted the imagination of a rapid change in Syria's Assad regime that would result in the repatriation of Syrian refugees in a short span of time. As a reflection of humanitarian policies, Türkiye opened its borders to Syrians in 2011 after the outbreak of the Arab Spring spread to Syria. As Figure 2 shows, in three years, millions of Syrians have resettled in Türkiye for their safety under the humanitarian policy of the Turkish government.

Figure 2. Statistics of Syrians in Türkiye over the Years



Source: Presidency of Migration Management of Türkiye (2025).

As seen in the figure, the rapidly increasing numbers of Syrians and UNHCR's global policies to provide more natural and humane conditions to traumatized refugees under protracted refugee status, along with the Turkish government's policies and financial burden due to refugee hosting, have resulted in the mobilization of Syrians to Turkish cities. In 2016, when most of the refugee camps or Temporary Protection Centers (TRCs) started to be closed, Syrians began their second journey of internal migration within Türkiye. As a result of this, today, almost half a million Syrians either live in İstanbul or Gaziantep, and around 200.000 of them are mostly spread among Şanlıurfa, Adana, Hatay, Mersin, and Bursa. This urban mobility of Syrians has indeed led to some economic and social problems that have hampered their integration, instead playing a pivotal role between the two communities to enhance their interactions and the harmonization process, which is the third pillar.

Depending on this background, Syrians' labor market orientation has resulted in their economic securitization. Along with the economic securitization, their urban integration has caused problems in the public sphere of Türkiye in various cities. The ghettoization of Syrians in particular neighborhoods within cities, such as Önder neighborhood in Ankara, made them visible even though their numbers are low in some Turkish cities.

This visibility has also had consequences in the political area as the rise of populist right-wing parties in Türkiye uttered their narratives against the Syrians' economic and demographic threats to Türkiye. Moreover, the JDP's statements about the financial support given to Syrians in Türkiye, more than 30 billion dollars in 2017 (Ergül, 2017), and the financial burden on Türkiye's shoulders have been criticized in political and public opinions due to the ongoing economic instability in the country over the years. Syrians' need for livable financial conditions in urban areas left them without a choice but to seek recruitment opportunities in local labor markets. Indeed, this situation created a limbo among native workers and resulted in partial job losses among them as Syrians provided a cheaper labor force with insecure jobs (Akcan, 2018; Aygül, 2018). The harsh economic conditions that Syrians have been experiencing in Turkish cities have also affected their integration processes (Dinçer et al., 2024). Concomitantly, there has been political support for Syrian economic sector integrations, especially in mass production and agriculture sectors, due to the claim that they boost the economic growth in the country, particularly uttered by the JDP with a narrative of their "3,5 billion dollar investment and 100,000 employment" (Alioğlu, 2020). On the contrary, some right-wing nationalist parties, such as the Victory Party (VP), under the leadership of Ümit Özdağ, former scholar at Gazi University in Türkiye, have consistently uttered their threat to the economic security of the country and a possible demographic change due to Syrians' presence in the country (Zafer Partisi, 2025b). The tension between right-wing parties and Syrians has deeply shaped the politics, as VP has decided their primary motto as "VP will come to power, all refugees and irregular migrants will be gone" (Zafer Partisi, 2025a).

2. DISCUSSION ON THE SUGGESTED CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

The abovementioned factors and the experiences of Syrian refugees in Türkiye have been excessively studied in the literature. Here, the main themes and the primary focal points of the existing research will be summarized to then elaborate on the critical domains of Syrian refuge in Türkiye.

2.1. GLOBAL CAPITALIST STRUCTURE AS THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE REFUGE

First of all, almost all research on Syrians in Türkiye begins with references to the civil war as a reason for their migratory flow within various disciplines (Ceritoglu et al., 2017; Eser et al., 2023; Fabbe & Sınmazdemir, 2018; Getmansky et al., 2018; Özdemir

et al., 2023; Ünsal & Doğan, 2024). Indeed, this refugee flow to various neighboring countries, including Türkiye, has been a result of the Syrian civil war, but here, it is suggested that re-reading this issue from a critical outline to a detailed focus on the grassroots grounds for the Syrians' fleeing is needed.

The Eurocentric and conventional analyses of the Syrian refugee movement suffer from critical perspectives (Yalvaç & Mengüaslan, 2024). The critical overview of the refugee flows, thus, the perception of dispossession and labor dynamics are the primary sources of the asylum experience (Saraçoğlu, 2024: 55). For instance, the neo-Marxist political economy reinforces disequilibria instead of equilibrium models of neoclassical economic approaches by emphasizing social inequalities and uneven development as the root causes of migration (de Haas, 2014: 10–11). Additionally, neo-Marxist migration approaches count capitalism, uneven development, and capitalist production modes as the main reasons for migration (Gidwani & Sivaramakrishnan, 2003: 188; Hollifield, 1992: 571). As Rey puts it, all in all, capitalism is the main reason behind migratory movements (Gerold-Scheepers & Binsbergen, 1978: 28), including refugee movements.

The key concepts here are instability and uneven development. Uneven development, according to Harvey's geographical concentration thesis, is a process of capitalism as "*capitalism requires the purchase and sale of commodities. Commodities (including labor power) need to move in geographical space*" (Das, 2017: 512). However, this thesis coexists with spatial dispersal for the limit to concentration within the structure of market relations (Das, 2017: 513). Additionally, as Smith (2000) notes, to concentrate and disperse labor, which has been a source of cheap production in particular places, migratory movements have been witnessed since the late 1970s. Thereby, the refuge is not isolated from capitalist structural inequalities; furthermore, it is a deeply connected issue with the global capitalist mode of production that prioritizes capital accumulation. This economic focus on migration has lately been led by neoclassical economic theory, where population movements result from economic motivations such as uneven economic opportunities among various geographical locations (Massey et al., 1993: 432).

Indeed, capitalist and imperialist global systems consistently seek cheap labor to boost their profits and produce a consumer society with lower labor costs and higher exchange value. In this process, "*migration appears as an expression of uneven development and structural pillar of imperialist strategies intended to weaken and*

cheapen the labor force on a global level” (Wise & Covarrubias, 2011: 57). The geographical instabilities and economic fragilities, along with political uncertainty in the global South and countries that lack democratic institutions, pose a vulnerability in terms of their economic and political conditions. Therefore, citizens tend to leave or are forced to leave due to these vulnerabilities, which cause political conflicts and a lack of political safety and human security.

In the case of Syria, we observe the uneven development of the region and political instability. Nevertheless, the stability here does not necessarily mean continuity in the government; it is merely the inconsistency in the democratic applications of government and institutions (Heydemann, 1999). Barely expressed in the existing literature but rightly noted by Yalvaç & Mengüaslan (2024: 111), *“historically, development in Syria and Libya resulted from the uneven and combined pressure of the capitalist world economy and imperialist intervention.”* The focus of Yalvaç & Mengüaslan’s rhetoric emphasizes that the fragile structure of Syria and its uneven development are historical existential issues of the capitalist expansion in the 19th century. Hereby, this dissertation also asserts that Syria, with a prolonged governmental deficit in terms of democracy, was vulnerable to political unrest, and the uneven development of the region has been utilized as a tool of mobility by the global capitalist structure, which is the per se source of the uneven development, too. Then, I contend that Syria faced its designated destiny as the outbreak of the civil war due to the uneven geographical development and fragile political environment in the country (Bakkour & Sahtout, 2023; Suliman et al., 2024), which resulted in the worldwide displacement of millions of people. Within this framework, revisiting Syrians’ refuge in Türkiye poses a new narrative than the mainstream one, which solely focuses on the civil war as a source of refugee flows.

The global capitalist structure has always needed uneven geographic development to enhance labor mobility from vulnerabilities provided by cheap labor. The uneven development, thus, has been a source of cheap labor due to the inhumane and harsh conditions in fragile periphery countries and regions through the economic and political spheres. In line with this argument, Syria has experienced uneven development in both fields, and the fragility caused by these factors sparked during the Arab Spring uprising. Not to mention the conspiratory theories on the outbreak of the Arab Spring, the refugee flows as a result of the civil war in Syria have their roots in the fragility of the country due to the global capitalist structures' need for labor mobility and precarity for increasing

the profits through cheap labor and their precarious conditions, and the reconstruction and redevelopment in Syria as a source of *spatial fix*.

Syria's economic structure and policies also played a pivotal role on the uneven development as the root cause of refuge before the civil war. Uneven regional development, crises in the agriculture sector, neoliberal policies that failed and led to social inequalities around the country, and unemployment accompanied by lower gross domestic product (GDP) have all adverse impacts of the uneven development in the country. It was the pre-civil war period that the belief occurred as "the country's economy was a test site for Bashar al Assad and the continuation of his regime" (Ünver, 2019: 9). With the impact of Al-Assad's policies, the private sector owned 66% of GDP by 2010, and the new economic model of the country was labeled as social market economy. However, the social market economy plan of the Al-Assad government failed to address market liberalization (Matar, 2019). The governmental policies, in line with this assumption, have allegedly maintained the empowerment of a certain network among capital owners standing by the government (Ata & Abdulkarim, 2021).

As noted by Ünver (2019: 9-10), as of 2000, Syria started to transform their economy from a socialist perspective to neoliberal approach that led the privatizations, becoming a member of the World Trade Organization, and having free-trade agreements with neighboring countries. Concomitantly, at that time, Syria decreased the interest rates from 22% to 1% for provoking investments. Nevertheless, all these efforts have failed as visualizing the pre-civil war period, real GDP growth between 2001-2010 was averaged about 4.7% in Syria (Devadas et al., 2021). According to World Bank (2025) data, in 2010, Syria had 5.2% annual GDP growth with the lowest rate among Türkiye (8.4%), Iran (5.8%), and Iraq (6.4%). Although the numbers are close to each other, the most pronounced economic factor in Syria's pre-war period has been the Human Development Indicators that present the overall poverty in the country. Albeit there is a relatively smaller but averagely considerable GDP growth in the country and increasing foreign currency reserves, the Syrian population has ultimately suffered due to the increasing and diminishing poverty rate as 28% in 2010 and high inequalities in distribution of incomes. By saying this, we can infer that the macroeconomic parameters and the positive image of them could not be spread to population in the country (İletişim Başkanlığı, 2025: 51). Inequalities, in this respect, have been a failure of neoliberal policies of Assad government that protected and empowered the private sector owners as bourgeoisie and

the inequalities as marginalization among society persists (Alnafrah & Mouselli, 2020). Under these circumstances, we should also note that the conditions at pre-civil war in Syria have prepared the Syrian refugee after the war. It can be emphasized that the same pre-conditions did not lead people to flee the country before the Arab Spring due to the authoritarianism in the country. All in all, we can assert that Syria has suffered political, geographic, and economic uneven development pre-civil war period. The economic instability and inequalities undermined the social harmony within the population and political and democratic instabilities and underdevelopment deepened the public unrest. Therefore, the global capitalist structure had an undermining effect on the fragility within Syrian community that later led the unsolved crises.

2.2. SYRIAN REFUGEES AS A SOCIAL CLASS OF DISPOSSESSED PEOPLE

After the outbreak of the civil war in Syria due to the fragility of the country and its uneven geographical development characterized by the global capitalist structure, today, 4,675,126 Syrian refugees under the UNHCR mandate have spread all over the world, with a significant portion of whom have been residing in Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan over a decade (UNHCR, 2025a). Nevertheless, their definition and expression of their presence in the literature on Türkiye also excessively pose a liberal/normative approach rather than a critical Marxist outline.

Dispossession, in terms of refugees, occurs in two essential ways: Dispossession of material values and dispossession of rights and social status, which is dignity (Chowdhory & Poyil, 2023). Dawn Chatty states that refugee research “*cries out for moral positioning,*” and dispossession should be recognized (Marfleet, 2013: 302). Rightly noted by her, I here emphasize that dispossession is not only a loss of economic value or limited access to the economic sphere (Bhandar & Bhandar, 2015; Hanieh & Ziadah, 2025) but also a loss of social status in host countries experienced by refugees (Canefe, 2018; Saraçoğlu, 2024).

Along with dispossession, accumulation is also a related context, and in the last two decades, scholars, especially Harvey, have given growing attention to surpluses and dispossession. Bin (2018: 75) argues that “*alongside the exploitation of the labor of others, the dispossession of the means of subsistence of others has assumed an important place within the study of historical capitalism.*” Elaborating on Marx’s primitive accumulation, which is the source of class formation, a historical process cutting the ties

between producer and production, Harvey (2003) constitutes his critique as accumulation by dispossession. In Harvey's (2003: 144) application, "*a general re-evaluation of the continuous role and persistence of the predatory practices of 'primitive' or 'original' accumulation within the long historical geography of capital accumulation*" is necessary. To link it with migration, Harvey (2007: 39) contends that "*what those migrants will do in the cities remains unclear, though the vast physical infrastructural plans now in the works will go some way to absorbing the labor surpluses released by primitive accumulation.*" Then, in his expression (Harvey, 2007: 34–35), the accumulation by dispossession is a process that "*(1) the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations (as in Mexico and India in recent times); (2) conversion of various forms of property rights (common, collective, state, etc.) into exclusively private property rights; (3) suppression of rights to the commons; (4) commodification of labor power and the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption; (5) colonial, neocolonial, and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources); (6) monetization of exchange and taxation, particularly of land; (7) the slave trade (which continues, particularly in the sex industry); and (8) usury, the national debt, and, most devastating of all, the use of the credit system.*" Here, the implicit link between refugees or general migration with dispossession in general and accumulation by dispossession has "*emerged as a process increasingly central to a historical conjuncture marked by both heightened migration and anti-immigrant nationalism*" (Schiller, 2021). Therefore, dispossession in refuge is a multiple type of dispossession that is not only related to the accumulation of capital but also includes dispossession from economic, social, legal, and humanitarian means (Ziadah, 2016).

Most research, particularly the mainstream (normative/liberal) studies, starts with the definition of refugees or, in particular, the legal status of Syrians in Türkiye. The excessive focus on the research on Syrians in Türkiye has flourished on the temporary protection regime and the lack of refugee status for Syrians. Determining their position in front of the law leads to a position of the research that the researcher should consider Syrians with temporary status, and they are only legal entities rather than a human combined with experiences of dispossession, trauma, class struggle, and exploitation by all means. In this case, the research on Syrians in Türkiye excessively ignores or misses the point that Syrians have a social status rather than a legal one, which is a result of the

legal lens that dispossesses them of their experiences. Legal definitions and legal perspectives on Syrians are, indeed, necessary to frame and capture the issue, maybe, but it is insufficient to address refugees in Türkiye. When research approaches the refugees from a starting point of only legal definitions, it poses a limitation to researchers to expand their understanding in a manner that Syrians, as legal entities in Türkiye, have certain rights, duties, responsibilities, and destinies. However, this limitation should be extended to cover the fact that refugees are not only given status by the 1951 Geneva Convention or LFIP of Türkiye, but their citizenship and social statuses are dispossessed throughout their refugee experience. Grasping the issue of Syrians in Türkiye from a dispossession of status, it should be emphasized that dispossession, rather than its mere link with accumulation and economic means, is also a social phenomenon that refugees start to experience at the very beginning of their journeys. When they left their homeland, Syrians left their social and citizenship statuses. Thus, they were dispossessed of the social manners they had acquired. Hence, one should perceive the refugee presence in Türkiye as a process of dispossession that started in Syria and continued with normative approaches in the host country. In the case of utilizing such a perspective, the research on Syrians in Türkiye could have inquired about the real social impact of refugeeness instead of a position to describe the legal rights that they can enjoy or the integration policies that would be so-called helpful to them to live in a peaceful environment in the host country. However, the underrepresentation of these critical approaches to Syrian refugees in Türkiye may also be one of the sources of public backlash that emerged from citizens' questioning of Syrians' status here rather than understanding and sympathizing with their experience of dispossession.

The complexity of refugee experiences and dispossession also spread to the field of human and financial capital. When Syrians left their countries on the way to Türkiye and other neighboring countries, they "*had to leave all their property to run away when the bombings started,*" as noted by a Syrian interviewee in Dagtas' (2018b: 368) study. Hereby, the dispossession has another facet of the dispossession of the financial and human capital. In this research's approach, human capital is both "*a measure of skills and capacities that are productive in a labor market*" (Gowayed, 2019: 254) and social networks. The dispossession here, which is excessively overlooked in the literature on Syrians in Türkiye, has occurred again from the starting point of their way to Türkiye and reflected on their experiences in Turkish cities. Only scrutinized by Saraçoğlu (2024: 35–

39), Syrians in Türkiye are dispossessed as a precondition to working-class formation, and this dispossession is multi-faceted as a unique form of refugee experience.

The financial dispossession of Syrians has been visible in their need to enter the labor force as informal and cheap working-class under precarious conditions to survive in urban life, which is deeply connected to the next step of surplus population and industrial reserve army formation of Syrians in Türkiye. In the Syrian case, the loss of their financial freedom and their compulsory mobilization to Turkish cities made the financial and human capital dispossession more brutal. Without equal opportunities in the labor market integration, mainly caused by the Turkish legislation on the work permit of individuals under temporary protection and its limitation to a 10% quota for Syrian workers in Turkish economic sectors, has deepened the dispossession of financial capital. Besides, when leaving their country, most Syrians in Türkiye also left and lost their social networks, which could have contributed to their social and economic statuses. As a result of this, they experienced the dispossession of both capital types in Turkish cities, which led to precarity and inhumane conditions in urban life.

Syrians' presence in Turkish cities has also led to another facet due to the dispossession of financial and human capital, as the constitution of a social class, which has been overlooked in the existing literature. The class formation of Syrians in Türkiye occurs in this way: Syrians, as people who are dispossessed in terms of their financial and human capital, are mobilized to Turkish cities as a policy of the Turkish government after 2016 in compliance with the UNHCR's policy shift. Arriving and settling in Turkish cities, most Syrians experienced a significant loss of financial capital due to the harsh economic conditions of urban life. Then, they attempted to earn a living to gain financial support to survive, yet they faced legal and social barriers to being formally employed in the Turkish labor market. Xenophobia and exclusion from society are social barriers, and not being able to provide their previous experiences, credentials, skills, and legal documents, such as diploma recognition, as well as the lack of a network, results in a maze in which they cannot find formal options to employment. Opting for an informal and cheap labor force in the labor market, Syrians negatively affected the unemployment of Turkish workers (Demirkol, 2024) by causing a replacement in the labor market. Mostly, being paid less than native workers and often under the minimum wage had a negative economic impact on the Turkish workers, but a positive boosting effect for capital owners, who are a part of the global neoliberal capitalist structure and owners of

the capitalist mode of production. The economic struggles of native workers in the labor market created a perception that Syrians are the source of loss of economic gains, and it also triggered negative perceptions toward Syrians as a threat to national cohesion and the integrity of urban life (Saraçoğlu & Bélanger, 2019a; Simsek, 2020). Within this framework, instead of being urban refugees, they emerged as a social class that is a threat in economic sectors and fueled the class struggle in the labor market, and a demographic and social threat by means of the perception of Turkish people as having a loss of urban space and national identity.

The increasing Syrian population in Turkish cities, rather than boosting the integration, resulted in segmentation and social stratification that put them at the lower levels of social hierarchy in the society in Türkiye. Accordingly, refugees fall under the hierarchy of the host community as a social class (Peretz, 1977). In the case of Türkiye, most research addressed the issue of using the *guests* definition toward Syrians (Altunkaynak, 2016; Küçükcan, 2022; Oktav & Çelikaksoy, 2015: 417), which also underpins the hierarchical top-down class formation as a homeowner and the guest, who is only temporarily here in a non-belonging area, with a limited time and rights. Rightly put by Imrie-Kuzu & Özerdem (2023: 1609), *“Syrians want to leave as a result of the hostile environment that their protracted guest status has created, but it is the very same system of guesthood or temporary protection that prevents them from legally seeking resettlement in third countries of their choice.”* The dispossessed urban refugees in Türkiye, therefore, are again dispossessed in terms of their social status after the dispossession of legal status as citizens before, and are now in limbo as guests, an economic threat, and a threat to urban space and national cohesion.

All in all, from the dispossession of legal status to human and financial capital and the class formation as a result of financial and social dispossession, Syrians in Türkiye have been experiencing not only a refugee situation but also a process of class formation and dispossession by all means in urban life.

2.3. SYRIAN REFUGEES AS SURPLUS POPULATION AND INDUSTRIAL RESERVE ARMY

To further develop the vicious cycle of refuge of Syrians in Türkiye, we should also elaborate on the formation of a surplus population and the industrial reserve army as an insecure, cheaper, and precarious working class. Syrian refugees in Türkiye constitute a surplus population for several reasons. First, they are a population in urban life that

cannot transform their labor into value because of the limitations of legal regulations and exclusionary practices in daily life. Secondly, they are not totally ousted from the labor force but integrated into the labor market as a cheaper and insecure precarious class, that is, the formation of a surplus population of refugees, as Rajaram (2021) indicates.

Rajaram (2018: 627) further elaborates on the issue of the perception of refugees as a surplus population and contends that this perception allows us to expose the “*common marginalisations of subaltern and racialized groups before capitalism and questions the treatment of refugees and migrants as ‘strangers.’*” Hence, it is possible to see that in the capitalist mode of production, refugees pose as surplus labor in urban areas, who are dispossessed in terms of their financial and human capital (Coddington et al., 2020: 1433; Nimer & Rottmann, 2021), and they are not excluded from capitalist modes of production with precarious working conditions under capitalism as cheap and unprotected labor, which is another hierarchy in the labor market (Fernandes & Onuma, 2024: 9; Osseiran & Nimer, 2024: 7).

After the mobilization of Syrians, as mentioned in earlier sections, they formed a new class in urban areas, which is dispossessed by legal means and human and financial capital. Syrians' precarity in the urban environment to support their livelihood and economic survival, along with legal restrictions to being formally employed, resulted in the emergence of a surplus population. Indeed, “*Marx agreed with Malthus and other political economists of the day that surplus populations were a necessary condition of modern industry*” (Lynch, 2002: 44). Therefore, as a part of the global capitalist economic structure, the background of Syrians' emergence in the labor market as an insecure and precarious class has been favorable for capital owners in Türkiye, as they form a surplus population in Turkish cities. Further, as Lynch (2002: 45) argues, “*Marx claims that surplus populations are relative to capitalistic productive demand, increasing and decreasing as needed and that population will exceed the productive output of the means of subsistence.*” Moreover, directly imposed by Marx, (1992: 782) “*it is capitalist accumulation itself that constantly produces, and produces indeed in direct relation with its own energy and extent, a relatively redundant working population, i.e. a population which is superfluous to capital's average requirements for its own valorization and is therefore a surplus population.*”

The class formation of Syrians in Türkiye is apparently reflected in the labor market as well. Although the Ensar-Muhajir narrative has been utilized as a political

narrative, it could not help to prevent the class formation and exploitative relationships in the Turkish labor market (Dođanođlu, 2022). There is a number of research on Türkiye addressing the issue that Syrians are working under lower wages in the Turkish economic sectors (Çoban, 2018; Dođan & Karakuyu, 2016; Karakoç & Dođruel, 2015; Uyan-Semerci & Erdođan, 2018). However, what is missing is that their economic situation in the labor market and urban sphere creates a surplus population, and thus, their only opportunity to survive becomes informal or precarious employment, further resulting in the creation of an industrial reserve army in the labor market. Moreover, the legal regulations in Türkiye regarding the labor market participation of Syrians, particularly individuals under temporary protection, with a 10% quota to work in Turkish economic sectors, left them without choice but to informal economic integration into the labor market in urban areas (Özyürek, 2024: 10).

The industrial reserve army is highly connected with the formation of the surplus population (Basso, 2021: 219; Savran, 2022: 17). In that cycle, Syrian refugees, when they are mobilized to the urban areas, pose a surplus population that needs to work to survive and live normally. The legal restrictions and labor market barriers push them to be a surplus population that cannot turn their labor into value. To overcome this, they seek opportunities informally or with lower wages under precarious conditions to penetrate the labor market. Thus, they started forming an industrial reserve army, an alternative for capital owners to the native regular laborers to pressure for wage raises and political rights. As Basso (2021: 218) notes, “*a growing surplus population is created as the capitalist mode of production advances worldwide and supplants precapitalist social relations,*” and this surplus population serves as an industrial reserve army, which is a result of capitalist commodity production. Furthermore, to achieve continuous accumulation, a permanent-unemployed worker class is a necessity (Harvey, 2022: 291), which results in the formation of the Marxian industrial reserve army, which belongs to the capital owners. Hence, for Marx, capital owners consistently increase this population for self-valorization and leave them in precarity (Marx, 2017: 623)

As a result of these affairs between Syrians and the Turkish economy, this research contends that their presence in urban areas created a surplus Syrian population, then forced them to constitute an industrial reserve army as an alternative to relatively higher-waged and secure native employment. It should also be noted that in Türkiye’s economic structure, unemployment and informality have always been a problem among particularly

young generations and for the whole Turkish population overall (Kirişçi, 2020). Therefore, the creation of surplus labor in Marxist domains occurred in two ways in Türkiye. First, Syrians were mobilized to Turkish cities without, or with almost impossible, legal working rights, by the governmental policies. The financial support provided to them was also not enough for a regular Syrian family's daily life and survival in urban areas. Their legal and social dispossessions affected their unemployment for a period. Thus, they became a surplus population. Secondly, although unemployment was a problem for the Turkish community, it was also an issue for the Turkish capital owners in some sectors, such as agriculture and production, to find native workers. The precarious and risky conditions in such sectors and the wage-labor imbalance have led Turkish people to opt not to work in these fields. Therefore, the surplus Syrian population in Türkiye found an opportunity to attach to these economic fields in favor of capital owners with dangerous and dirty jobs and especially with a lower wage under informal employment, which was an ultimately profitable function for the capital owners with lower costs (Aksu et al., 2022; Demirci & Kırdar, 2023). Noted by Demirkol (2024: 262), Syrians in Türkiye *“provide cheaper labor and cannot demand political rights from capital owners, such as unionization, they are more favorable in the labor market. Ultimately, they fuel capital owners' profits while replacing the jobs that were previously occupied by native workers.”*

Within this framework, in the research on Syrians in Türkiye, it is observed that the economic exploitation of refugees with lower wages in the labor market and relative exclusion in the economic sectors. However, the excessive literature misses the point that they formed a surplus population due to the mobilization policy of Syrians to Turkish cities, and that is the core reason for their negative impacts as they are formed as surplus labor in the cities have to work, and their limitations to penetrate the labor market by means of social and legal positions have led them to informally and relatively lower-costed employment by capital owners in Türkiye.

3. CONCLUSION

The refugee experience in the existing literature is mostly underlined by liberal/normative approaches to Syrians in Türkiye. This predominant perspective primarily lacks the critical outlines by deconstructive means and ignores/overlooks the historical socioeconomic dynamics, actors, and relationships. This fact is visible when the publications on Syrians in Türkiye are examined. Almost half of the studies on the

topic focus on the integration challenges and processes, whereas the second and third most frequent subjects are government policies, legal status, and temporary protection. Yet, the articles that have been examined barely vocalize wage gaps, barriers to entering the labor market, gender, precarious working conditions or exploitation, informal work, and urban refugees. This is a result of the lack of critical theoretical frameworks in the overall research on Syrians in Türkiye.

The following table, accordingly, summarizes the main arguments in the dissertation and provides a comparison with the predominant liberal approaches in terms of Syrian refugees in Türkiye.

Table 2. Comparative Outcome of Research

Dimension	Liberal/Normative Approaches	Marxist Approaches
Theory Type	Problem-Solving	Critical
Source of Refuge	Civil War	Uneven Development and the Global Capitalist System
Refugee Definition	Normative/Legal Terms	Social/Class-Based Approach
Refugee Integration	Positive Means (Socioeconomic Integration)	Exploitation Risk in the Capitalist Structure
Refugees	People Who Need Protection	Dispossessed People
Refugee-Society Relations	Horizontal/Host Community Perspective	Vertical/Class Struggle & Surplus Population

Source: Author.

When we discuss the main arguments and findings of the dissertation, along with the research question and rationale behind the study, in the end, the final arguments can be summarized as follows: Refuge is an exploitative and exhausting process for refugees that begins with dispossession and continues with the process of dispossession, too. The problem-solving approaches to Syrians in Türkiye overwhelmingly cite that the very source of Syrian refuge is the outbreak of the civil war in Syria. On the other hand, from the critical Marxist perspective, the source of Syrian refuge to Türkiye is also the uneven development of the country and the global capitalist system behind this uneven development that led to instability and fragility of the country by means of economic, political, and structural deficiencies. Therefore, instead of the visible layer in the problem-solving theories, it is suggested that the critical Marxist approach envisions a deeper layer behind the most vocalized source of the refugee flow to Türkiye.

The second significant factor in the comparison of problem-solving and critical theories is the definition of refugees. Most research prominently uses the legal/normative definitions of refugees to frame the refugee experience in Türkiye. However, this approach gives us a perspective that refugees are not a part of the social and economic class but just legal entities. In contrast, the Marxist approach can help us to unveil the refugees' socioeconomic status in Türkiye, including whether they constitute a class structure and suffer from a class struggle. Along with this, Syrian refugees in Türkiye, as a result of the normative approach, are mostly attributed to being people who should be well-integrated into the community, as they constitute the urban refugee phenomenon. Therefore, integration is seen as a positive process that will contribute to both parties. Rather, in Marxist domains, integration is seen as a cautiously approached issue as it may be the very source of socioeconomic exploitation. This feature of refugee perception leads to a horizontal relationship within two communities in Türkiye, where Syrians are hosted and should be integrated into the Turkish population, and thus, harmonization should be achieved. Yet, the Marxist approach gives us hints about the exploitative features of hosting and hosted communities' relations in Türkiye, as Syrians have created a surplus population in Turkish cities; thus, a vertically class-based structure has been built.

The problem-solving and liberal approach, from beginning with its definition of Syrians in Türkiye to integration challenges, utilizes a normative lens of Syrians in Türkiye and their affairs with the host community, whereas the Marxist approach gives us a framework for critical-deconstructive domains. In this vein, utilizing a Marxist approach to Syrians in Türkiye, it is eagerly suggested that the refugee experiences, and thus, refugeeness, is not a normative process that can be defined by legal/normative means but a process of dispossession that runs as a vicious cycle. In other words, in the case of Syrians in Türkiye, refugeeness is not only a displacement but also an extreme form of endless dispossession.

CONCLUSION

It should be stressed that the history of overall migration studies is predominantly invaded by liberal/normative approaches or the examination of anti-refugee/anti-immigrant sentiments or actions. As Robert Cox asserts, there have been problem-solving theories on one side and critical theories on the other side in the social sciences. Whereas problem-solving theories have attempted to identify the problem and address the solution within the same framework and take the issue and solution as given, critical theories work in a deconstructive manner to define the problem and suggest the solution. Therefore, researchers should change the traditional lens that has been used for decades and adopt a critical perspective to refugee research to understand the multifaceted, complex structure of refuge and refugee experience. Indeed, only through the critical perspectives that attempt to comprehend the complex causes of refuge and refugee experiences can we explore the deconstructive dimensions of the topic. This dissertation has sought a response to the main research question of *how Marxism can be utilized to contribute to refugee research*, instrumentalizing the Marxian concepts of accumulation by dispossession, surplus population, class formation, struggle, and industrial reserve army. To comply with the research question, the main hypothesis is that *Marxism is helpful to explore the deeper process of the refugee experience in Türkiye through its critical and deconstructive features*. Focusing on the case of Syria and Syrian refugee flow to Türkiye, the dissertation's findings are summarized in the following paragraphs.

First of all, to emphasize the global capitalist structure as the root cause of the refugee crisis, the dissertation claims that uneven development as a result of the global capitalist structure is the most impactful reason for this historical refugee situation. Syrians were under a hereditary dictatorship from 1971 till 8 December 2024, starting with Hafez al-Assad's power gain in the country after the 1971 coup d'état. Over the years, Bashar al-Assad, the latest leader from the Assad family, has ruled the country after his father's death in 2000. The beginning of Bashar's power brought optimism for a Westernized administration, yet Syria faced revolutionary turmoil in the country only eleven years later. His use of authoritarian power for privatization and exploitation of economic gains in the country to "*shifting public assets to crony capitalist 'networks of privilege'*" led to public backlash and unrest in the country after 40 years of autocratic Assad regime (Hinnebusch, 2012: 95). These practices of neoliberal economic policies have adversely affected the rest of the population in the country by deepening the existing

inequalities. Therefore, an obvious uneven development has emerged as a result of the oppression in the country under the Baathist authoritarian-populist state, which caused for shortcomings in terms of democracy and human rights (Hinnebusch, 1993: 246). This economic and political situation is commonly considered to be the root cause of the Arab Spring and its consequences in the country. The predominant portion of the literature on the conflict captures the source of the refugee flows as the unrest in the country and the civil war. However, this dissertation deepens the perception of the Syrian conflict as the uneven development and state fragility under the global capitalist system. Framing the source of refugee movement such an issue of uneven development under the global capitalist structure, this dissertation then asserts that the refugee experience of Syrians in Türkiye began with the global capitalist structure's outcomes, particularly uneven development and fragility in the country.

Second, the dissertation claims that the refugee experience is a vicious cycle of dispossession that has three stages. The first stage occurred when refugee flows started from Syria. At the beginning of their journeys, Syrians began to experience a dispossession process that continued in their experiences in Türkiye. While leaving their homelands, they left most of their properties and most of their financial and human capital in Syria. With being dispossessed of both types of capital, they also lost their citizenship status and their legal rights after entering the host country as the second stage of dispossession. The third stage of dispossession was a result of the short period of encampment. Due to their fast mobilization to urban areas without sufficient well-designed public policy that would enable them to regain the necessary financial and human capital to live in Turkish cities. In other words, their urbanization that mobilized them to Turkish cities is a deepening factor of dispossession to face precarity and a catalyst of social class formation in everyday life and labor market integration.

Third, this dissertation recognizes Syrians in Türkiye as a surplus population and a new class. According to the Marxist understanding, the surplus population refers to a population that cannot transform its labor into value. Indeed, due to the social exclusion in the local areas, as well as the legal restrictions for formal employment opportunities, they faced barriers to entering the labor force, thus creating a surplus population. The dissertation unveiled the class formation and struggle of Syrians in Türkiye. This Syrian surplus population in Turkish cities had to seek informal employment opportunities in the labor market for mostly dirty and dangerous jobs under a precarious, insecure working

environment. The precarity of Syrians, then, deepened in the labor market as well as in their social lives, starting a class formation, called ‘Syrians’ within the hierarchy of the host community. This issue resulted in the segmentation of society into guests and homeowners as a hint of class formation and struggle.

Fourth, the dissertation concludes that Syrians have formed an industrial reserve army in Türkiye, becoming a cheaper labor force for the capital owners. Their mostly informal integration into the economy has caused a duality in the labor market between Syrians and native workers. The formation of the industrial reserve army by Syrians constitutes a threat to the unified working class and a source of class struggle. The struggle between Syrian workers and native ones led to increased tensions between the two parties. While there has been widespread unrest about Syrians, there has been only one winner: the capital owners who have been accumulating their capital and profits over the dispossession of the Syrian reserve army, which is the last step of the vicious cycle of refugeeness in Türkiye.

All in all, the dissertation unveils that Syrians in Türkiye started their journey with a dispossession that continued in Turkish cities and the labor market. The process of dispossession experienced by Syrians in Türkiye, together with class formation and struggle, as well as industrial reserve army processes, ultimately served the capital owners’ accumulation of capital. These conclusions make the dissertation a theoretical exploration where Marxist understanding and concepts can expose the hidden perspectives and concepts in refugee research through the experiences of Syrians in Türkiye. No doubt to say, there should be more critical investigation on refugee research, which distances from mainstream normative approaches and delves more into the historical-structural understanding of refugee experiences. Accordingly, further research with critical approaches should adopt a quantitative method regarding the processes experienced by Syrians in Türkiye, as mentioned above. Similarly, policymakers should focus on structurally well-planned integration policies to achieve better integration that could lead to a material and immaterial possession process on the refugees’ side.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

İçinde bulunduğumuz dönem hızlı bir insan hareketliliği çağıdır. Savaşlar, zulümler, iklim değişikliği, gıda güvensizliği ve dünya üzerinde birçok yerde mevcut kaynakların yetersizliği insanları daha zengin ve refah düzeyi yüksek bölgelere yönelmeye zorlamaktadır. Bu eğilim doğrultusunda, Suriye Arap Cumhuriyeti halkı 2011 yılında tarihin en yoğun, uzun süreli ve vahşi insani güvenlik sorunlarından birini yaşamıştır. Suriye’de muhalifler ve Esad rejimi arasında patlak veren iç savaş, Suriye vatandaşlarının kendi vatanlarında zulüm görme korkusu yaşamalarına neden olmuştur. Suriye’deki siyasi ve ekonomik koşullar, demokratik kurumlar ve siyasi özgürlük konusundaki düşük kapasite ve küresel kapitalist sistemin eşitsiz kalkınma konusundaki etkileri altında gelişen refah eksikliği, Arap Baharı’nın Suriye’ye de yayılmasıyla sonuçlanmış ve ülkede kargaşa yaratmıştır. Bunun bir sonucu olarak Suriye sokaklarında yaşanan trajedi, Suriyeliler’in hayatta kalma ve yaşama içgüdülerini harekete geçirerek onları ülkelerinden kaçırmaya itmiştir.

Suriyelilerin göçü ile başlayan bu hızlı insan hareketliliği sürecinin bölgedeki ve Avrupa’daki farklı yerlere yönelmesi yönelmesi nedeniyle bir bölgede ve Avrupa’da ciddi bir kriz hali yaşanmıştır. Bununla bağlantılı olarak Suriyelilerin çoğu, aralarında Türkiye’nin de bulunduğu komşu ülkelere sığınmıştır. Suriyelilerin kitlesel göç akını Nisan 2011’de Türkiye sınırlarına ulaşmıştır. Suriyeli mültecilerin %60’ından fazlasına ev sahipliği yapan Türkiye, kitlesel Suriyeli göçünün başlamasından sadece üç yıl sonra, yani oldukça kısa sürede dünyanın en çok mülteci barındıran ülkesi haline gelmiştir (Çelik & White, 2022: 356). Bugün halen Türkiye’de 5 milyona yakın Suriyeli, BMMYK’nın mülteci rejimi altındadır (UNHCR, 2025a).

Bu ciddi gelişmenin bir sonucu olarak Türkiye, mülteci yönetimi konusunda çoğu ülke için bir rol model ve politikalar hususunda deneme-yanılma vakası haline gelmiştir. Bir başka deyişle, birçok ülkede politika yapıcılar, Türkiye’denin uygulamalarından ve deneyimlerinden faydalanmaya başlamıştır.

Suriyeli mülteci hareketliliğiyle birlikte Türkiye’de mülteci çalışmaları üzerine yapılan akademik çalışmalarda da ciddi bir artış olmuştur. Türkiye’deki akademik odak özellikle göç, mülteciler ve entegrasyon konularına yoğunlaşmıştır. Gerçekten de son dönemde entegrasyon ve güvenlik, Türkiye’deki mülteci çalışmalarında en sık ele alınan konular olmuştur. Bu konuların teorik temelleri incelendiğinde, Türkiye’deki mülteci

çalışmalarında liberal normatif ana akım yaklaşımların baskın olduğu söylenebilir. Akademik çalışmalarda mülteci araştırmalarının büyük çoğunluğu, mültecilerin ekonomik etkilerine, entegrasyonuna, sosyal dinamiklerine ve siyasi sonuçlarına odaklanmaktadır. Mültecilere ilişkin politika odaklı veya normatif araştırmalar oldukça kapsamlı bir çerçeve sunmakla birlikte, tarihsel-yapısal tartışmalara ilişkin sorunları çözmede yetersiz kalmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, dünya üzerinde ülkelerin mülteci ev sahipliği ve bunun sonuçları araştırılmaya hala değerlidir. Ancak, genel akademik bilgiye katkıda bulunmak için ise eleştirel yapıbozumcu bir bakış açısının kullanılması gerekmektedir.

Bu bağlamda, bu tez, ana akım liberal ve normatif yaklaşımlar yerine, Marksist teorinin mülteci akınlarındaki tarihsel-yapısal ve ekonomik dinamiklere odaklanarak mülteci araştırmalarındaki boşlukları doldurabileceğini savunmaktadır. Marksist perspektif, ev sahibi ülkelerdeki mülteci emeğinin gizli kalmış ve göz ardı edilmiş tarihsel-yapısal ekonomik ve siyasi sömürsünü açığa çıkarmakta işlevsel olabilir. Dolayısıyla, bu tezin araştırma sorusu *Marksist teorinin, mülksüzleştirme yoluyla birikim, artı nüfus, sınıf oluşumu ve mücadelesi ve yedek işgücü ordusu gibi Marksist kavramları kullanarak mülteci göçüne yönelik anlayışını nasıl geliştirebileceğidir*. Bu tez, mültecilere yönelik mevcut ana akım yaklaşımların, kapitalist üretim tarzının ve küresel kapitalist yapının mülteci akınları ve mülteci emeği üzerindeki rolünü ortaya koyacak olan tarihsel-yapısal ve politik-ekonomik perspektiflerden yoksun olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Dolayısıyla, bu araştırmanın literatüre çeşitli şekillerde katkıda bulunma yönünde motivasyonları bulunmaktadır: İlk olarak, mülteci araştırmalarında ana akım yaklaşımların baskın olması nedeniyle mülteciliğin eleştirel bir şekilde yeniden ele alınması başlı başına değerlidir. İkinci olarak, Türkiye on yıl boyunca Suriyeli mültecilerin çoğunluğuna ev sahipliği yaparak mülteci çalışmaları için benzersiz bir örnek teşkil etmiş, bu da mülteci yönetimi ve politika yapımında diğer ülkeler için rol model olacak yeni uygulamalara yol açmıştır. Dolayısıyla bu tez, ev sahibi ülkelerdeki mülteciliğin temel nedenleri ve süreçlerine ilişkin eleştirel anlayışı göz ardı eden mevcut akademik araştırmalardaki boşluğu doldurmaya yönelik bir girişimdir.

Özel olarak, bu tezin üç temel amacı bulunmaktadır: İlk olarak, bu tez eleştirel bir perspektif temelinde, mülteci araştırmalarında sorun çözücü ana akım yaklaşımlar tarafından sıklıkla göz ardı edilen gizli kurumları, ilişkileri ve kavramları ortaya çıkarma yönünde bir girişimdir. Böylece tez, Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler üzerine yapılan araştırmaların büyük çoğunluğunun mülteci sorununu ele alırken tarihsel-yapısal ve

küresel kapitalist meseleleri ihmal ettiğini tespit etmektedir. İkinci olarak tez, mülteci araştırmalarının mevcut teorik yapılarını eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Nihayetinde çalışma, kapitalist üretim tarzının eleştirisinde kullanılan Marksist kavramları, yani mülksüzleştirme yoluyla birikim, artı nüfus, sınıf oluşumu ve mücadelesi ile yedek işgücü ordusu kavramlarını irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Temelde bu araştırma, az gelişmiş ülkelerden gelen mülteci hareketlerinin temel nedeninin küresel kapitalist yapı olduğu ve mültecilerin yaşamlarının devletlerin örtülü onayıyla sermayenin ekonomik sömürsü tarafından şekillendirildiği varsayımına dayanmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, mültecilik olgusunun tarihsel-yapısal yönlerinin altını çizmek için mültecilik sürecini ve mülteci deneyimlerini eleştirel bir bakış açısından, özellikle de Marksist bir bakış açısından okumak gerekmektedir.

Marksizm, göçü sınıfsallık ve sınıf ekonomisi üzerinden açıklamada dikkate değer bir bakış açısına sahiptir. Genel olarak Marksizm, burjuva dünya görüşünün gizli ilişkilerini açığa çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Aynı zamanda hükümetlerin göç yönetimindeki niyetlerini ve rollerini anlamaya da aracılık etmektedir. Bu nedenle Marksizm, hükümetlerin göç yönetimi sürecini anlamak için iki şekilde alternatif yol sağlamaktadır: birincisi, göç ve mülteci sorunlarını küresel kapitalizmin ve eşitsiz kalkınmanın neden olduğu eşitsizlikler üzerinden yorumlayarak; ikincisi, göçmenlerin ve mültecilerin sorunlarını ev sahibi ülkedeki sınıf ilişkileri bağlamında tanımlayarak. Mevcut literatürde uluslararası göçe yönelik olarak Marksist yaklaşımları kullanan az sayıda çalışma (Brown, 1992; Ritchie vd., 2022b) bulunmakla birlikte, hiçbiri doğrudan Marksist varsayımlar ile mülteci hareketleri arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanmamaktadır. Dolayısıyla, bu bağlantıyı tartışmayı amaçlayan bir çalışma, özellikle uluslararası ilişkiler, siyaset bilimi ve göç çalışmaları için önemli ve değerlidir. Bu bağlamda, bu tezin söz konusu alanlara temel katkısı, mülteci araştırmalarına Marksist bir bakış açısıyla bakarak özgün bir yaklaşım benimsemesidir. Bununla birlikte, mülteci deneyiminin eleştirel bir bakışı, araştırmacıların ve okuyucuların mülteci hareketlerinin yapısal nedenlerini ve bunların mülteci deneyimleri üzerindeki etkilerini anlamalarını sağlayabilecektir.

Tez, bu amaca ulaşmak ve araştırma sorusunu da ele almak için, Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler üzerine yapılan araştırmaları ve Suriyelilerin Türkiye'deki mülteci deneyimini bir vaka çalışması olarak ele almaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, hem tematik bir harita oluşturmak hem de göz ardı edilen bakış açılarını ve yaklaşımları ortaya çıkarmak için

Türkiye’deki Suriyeli mültecilere ilişkin akademik çalışmaları irdelemektedir. Gerçekten de Türkiye, Suriyeli mültecilerin ülkedeki diğer mülteci gruplarına göre dikkate değer bir çoğunluğuyla on yıldan uzun bir süredir dünyada en çok mülteciye ev sahipliği yapan ülke konumundadır. Dahası, Türkiye örneği birkaç nedenden dolayı incelenmeye değerdir: İlk olarak, Türkiye’deki Suriyeliler BMMYK yetkisi altında resmi mülteci statüsü kazanmamışlardır. Bu sebeple mülteci deneyimi çoğunlukla Türkiye’de hükümet tarafından üretilen mülteci politikalarına ilişkin reaktif bir süreç olarak yönetilmiştir. Bu nedenle, Suriyeliler Türkiye’de buldukları süre boyunca değişken politikalarla karşı karşıya kalmışlardır. İkinci olarak, Türkiye, en çok mülteciye ev sahipliği yapan ülke olarak mülteci araştırmaları için değerli bir kaynak olmuştur. Üçüncü olarak, ana akım sorun çözme yaklaşımları, mülteci araştırmalarına eleştirel bir bakış açısından yoksundur. Sonuçta, Türkiye örneği, hem ülkedeki Suriyeliler üzerine mevcut araştırmalar hem de mülteci yönetimi ve deneyimi aracılığıyla literatüre değerli bir katkı sağlamaktadır. Mülteci deneyimleri ve politikaları tüm dünyada çeşitlilik gösterdiğinden, okuyucular bu tezin bulgularını ve iddialarını dikkatli bir şekilde yorumlamalıdır. Ancak bu, bu tezdeki bulguların ve fikirlerin dünya çapındaki mülteci deneyimlerine ve araştırmalarına genişletilemeyeceği anlamına da gelmemektedir.

Bu tez, araştırma sorusunun ele alınmasında nitel betimleyici bir yöntem ve araştırmanın organizasyonu açısından tümdengelimsel bir metodoloji kullanmaktadır. Konuyu mülteci göçüne ilişkin genel bir perspektiften ele alan çalışma, eleştirel teorilerin, özellikle de Marksizm’in mülteci araştırmalarına katkıda bulunup bulunamayacağını araştırmak için eleştirel ve sorun çözücü teoriler üzerine tartışma yapmaktadır. Ardından, mülteci araştırmalarının, Suriyeli mülteci akını ve bunun ekonomi, sosyal uyum ve siyaset üzerindeki etkileri konusunda mülksüzleştirme yoluyla birikim, artı nüfus, sınıf oluşumu, mücadele ve yedek iş gücü ordusu gibi Marksist kavramlardan yararlanıp yararlanamayacağını test etmek için Türkiye örneğine odaklanmaktadır.

Tez bu amaçla aşağıdaki şekilde bölümlere ayrılmış ve organize edilmiştir. Giriş bölümünde tezin arka planı ve ana yapısı özetlendikten sonra, ilk bölüm göçün temel nedenlerini ortaya koymak için ana göç teorilerine odaklanmaktadır. Göç teorileri ve mülteci göçü arasındaki bağlantıyı detaylı ele alan tez, Robert Cox’un eleştirel ve sorun çözücü teoriler sınıflandırması üzerinde durmaktadır. Marksizme kısa bir giriş sağlamak için eleştirel teorilerden Marksist teori ve Marksizmin sosyal bilimlere yönelik bilimsel bakış açısı açıklanmıştır. Ardından tez, mülksüzleştirme yoluyla birikim, artı nüfus, sınıf

oluşumu ve mücadelesi ve yedek işgücü ordusu gibi Marksist terminoloji ile devam ederek bu kavramların mülteci göçünü açıklamada kullanılıp kullanılmayacağını ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır. İlk bölüm, Marksizmin mülteci göçü açısından genel bir değerlendirmesiyle sonlanmaktadır. İkinci bölüm, mültecilerin güvencesizliği, sınıf oluşumu ve mücadelesi, işgücü piyasasındaki ayrımcılık ve kamp dışı alanlarda yaşamının önündeki yapısal engeller hakkında bir tartışma ve teorik yaklaşım sunmaktadır. Üçüncü bölüm ise Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler üzerine yapılan mülteci çalışmalarına odaklanarak bu çalışmaların ana temalarını, teorilerini ve varsayımlarını ortaya koymaktadır. Türkiye'deki Suriyelilerin mülksüzleştirilmesi, sınıfsal oluşumları ve artı nüfus da bu bölümde tartışılmaktadır. Dördüncü bölüm bulguların tartışıldığı bölümdür. Tez ilk olarak Türkiye'deki mültecilerle ilgili mevcut akademik çalışmalardan çıkarılan temaları, teorileri ve kavramları inceleyerek, bu çalışmaların eleştirel perspektiflerin tarihsel-yapısal ve politik-ekonomik bakış açılarını görmezden gelip geldiklerini ortaya çıkarmaya çalışmaktadır. İkinci olarak, Marksist yaklaşımın mülteci araştırmalarına olası katkısı, mülksüzleştirme yoluyla birikim, artı nüfus, sınıf oluşumu ve mücadelesi ve yedek işgücü ordusu gibi Marksist kavramlar üzerinden Türkiye örneğine odaklanılmaktadır. Tez, araştırmadan elde edilen ana fikir ve bulguların özetlendiği sonuç bölümüyle sona ermektedir.

Sonuç olarak tez, Türkiye'deki Suriyelilerin mültecilik sürecine başlarken Türkiye kentlerinde ve işgücü piyasasında da devam eden bir mülksüzleştirme ile yola çıktıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Türkiye'deki Suriyelilerin yaşadığı mülksüzleştirme süreci, sınıf oluşumu ve mücadelesinin yanı sıra yedek işgücü ordusu süreçleriyle birlikte nihayetinde sermaye sahiplerinin sermaye birikimine hizmet etmiştir. Bu sonuçlar, Marksist yaklaşım ve kavramların, Türkiye'deki Suriyelilerin deneyimleri üzerinden mülteci araştırmalarındaki gizli perspektifleri ve kavramları ortaya çıkarabileceğini teorik olarak anlamlandırmaktadır. Şüphesiz, ileride mülteci araştırmaları konusunda ana akım normatif yaklaşımlardan uzaklaşan ve mülteci deneyimlerinin tarihsel-yapısal boyutuna daha fazla eğilen eleştirel çalışmalar yapılmalıdır. Bu doğrultuda, Türkiye'deki Suriyelilerin yaşadıkları süreçlere ilişkin eleştirel yaklaşımlarla yapılacak ileriki araştırmalarda nicel bir yöntem benimsenmelidir. Benzer şekilde, politika yapıcılar, daha iyi bir entegrasyon için yapısal olarak iyi planlanmış entegrasyon politikalarına odaklanmalıdır.