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SYRIAN REFUGEES AND SOCIAL COHESION: A QUALITATIVE  
ANALYSIS OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES PROVIDED  
BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

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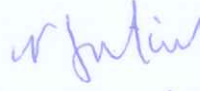
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SURİYELİ MÜLTECİLER VE SOSYAL UYUM: SİVİL TOPLUM KURULUŞLARININ SAĞLADIĞI NON-FORMEL EĞİTİMLERİN NİTELİKSEL ANALİZİ

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**FOREWORD**

To my sisters

for loving and supporting me

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AFAD: Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency

BBC: British Broadcasting Company

European Center for Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)

HRW: Human Rights Watch

KADAV Kadın Dayanışma Vakfı, Women's Solidarity Foundation

MoNE: Ministry of National Education

NFE: Non-Formal Education

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

ORSAM: Center For Middle Eastern Strategic Studies

TECs: Temporary Education Centers

TÜRKSAM: Türkiye Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Stratejik Analizler Merkezi

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WFP: World Food Programme

YEÇED: Yeryüzü Çocukları Derneği, Children of Earth

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## ABSTRACT

Diversity has many different impacts on social structures and social cohesion. Social cohesion can be negatively affected by diversity. However, negative effects can be reduced by education because education can change the way people think about others. After the Syrian refugee crisis, diversity has increased in Turkey. In recent years, refugee education has been the subject of many researches in Turkey but debates on education are mostly limited with provision of education. Education is a shared responsibility. In Turkey, over centralized structure of formal education makes difficult to answer pluralistic needs of refugees. During the Syrian refugee crisis, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) do not only play important role in meeting basic needs of refugees such as food and accommodation they also play a big role in education by providing compensatory, supplementary and alternative forms of non-formal education. In this thesis, I investigate the role of non-formal educational activities provided by NGOs in social cohesion. By doing that, I used qualitative methods and I benefited from social contact theory as a theoretical framework to understand the role of non-formal education in social cohesion in Turkey.

**KEYWORDS:** Refugee Education, Social Cohesion, Non-Formal Education, Social Contact Theory, Syrian Refugees

## ÖZET

Çeşitliliğin sosyal yapılar ve sosyal uyum üzerinde bir çok farklı etkisi vardır. Sosyal uyum çeşitlilikten olumsuz yönde etkilenebilir. Fakat, olumsuz etkiler eğitim yolu ile azaltılabilir çünkü eğitim insanların başkaları hakkındaki düşüncelerini değiştirebilir. Mülteci krizinden sonra Türkiye’de çeşitlilik arttı. Son yıllarda, mülteci eğitimi bir çok araştırmaya konu oldu ama çoğu tartışma mültecilere eğitimin sağlanması ile sınırlı. Eğitim ortak bir sorumluluktur. Türkiye’de resmi eğitimin aşırı merkezi yapısı mültecilerin bir çok ihtiyaçlarına cevap vermeyi zorlu hale getiriyor. Suriye mülteci krizi boyunca sivil toplum kuruluşları (STK) sadece barınma ve yiyecek gibi temel ihtiyaçları karşılamıyor; telafi edici, tamamlayıcı ve alternatif formda non formal eğitimler sağlayarak eğitim alanında da önemli bir role sahipler. Bu tezde STK’lar tarafından sağlanan non formal eğitim aktivitelerinin sosyal uyumdaki rolünü açıklamaya çalıştım. Bunu yaparken, niteliksel yöntemler kullandım ve Türkiye’deki non formal eğitimlerin sosyal uyumdaki rolünü anlamak için teorik çerçeve olarak sosyal temas teorisinden faydalandım.

**ANAHTAR KELİMELER:** Mülteci Eğitimi, Sosyal Uyum, Non- Formal Eğitim, Sosyal Temas Teorisi, Suriyeli Mülteciler

## INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary way to solve future problems as well as it helps to build peaceful and inclusive societies. It is a fundamental right that should always be maintained even in the most difficult conditions. In the current refugee context, four million refugee children all around the world are out of school although all refugees, migrants and displaced people have right to access public education according to international law (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2018, p. 4). Refugees face diverse challenges related to displacement. One such challenge is to access education. It is as important as food, shelter, water and health care. Schools and other learning spaces symbolize opportunity for future and it gives a hope to everyone. Without education, all vulnerable people especially refugees are under the threat of exclusion, marginalization and crime. When they attend to formal, in formal or non-formal education (NFE), they see themselves as a member of a wider community. They gain safety, peace and social networks through education. Going to school gives them a hope to start a new life and the feeling of normalization. Both children and adults can adjust their new life smoothly with the help of education and learn how to stand on their own feet. Schools do not just supply knowledge and skills but also, they have a key role in promoting social cohesion and social inclusion in culturally diverse societies.

Civil war in Syria has been lasting more than seven years and over five million people are forced to live out of Syria. The world is witnessing the biggest refugee crisis since the Second World War. At the beginning of the crisis, all host countries conducted short term responses against to the crisis. Governments postponed their long-term responses about social, economic and political regulations because of the uncertainties of the civil war. As time passing away it is accepted that Syrian refugees will not return to their home for years and refugee crisis is a long-term issue like United Nations (UN) stated in reports. According to

UN, average length of a time a refugee spends in exile is more than 20 years (UNHR, 2016, p. 24). That means migration has long term effects on hosting community and refugee community. Influx of refugees leads to social and cultural changes in daily life. The crisis evolved into a new era, after the permanence of the refugees is accepted. Host countries start to think beyond the survival needs of refugees. Finding some comprehensive solutions for including them in economic, social and cultural life became important. At this point, education is considered as critical in the settlement of refugees. It improves refugee access to livelihood, employment and health. Furthermore, Schools are one of the major contact points for the two communities. Places for interaction with each other are limited. Although they share same neighborhoods, apartments, school buildings, hospitals; local people and Syrian refugees have very little interaction. Educational areas provide social interaction which can leads social integration. Refugee integration is a process that has both the national and local level. Every actor has different roles while supporting refugees in the new education system. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), government and intergovernmental organizations have different roles. Intergovernmental organizations like United Nations and World Bank has extensive experiences about refugee education. They provide some political and practical frameworks to ensure all refugees are attending educational activities. Governments have the primary responsibility to deliver education and NGOs serve as a bridge between communities and authorities. NGOs can develop complementary and innovative approaches to the educational crisis. They have bottom up approach that allows them to develop better solutions and understand the dynamics better.

The concept of social cohesion encompasses peace building; equal citizenship; trust among citizens and citizen and state trust; respect for economic and social equality; and pluralistic acceptance of “the other”, faiths, ethnics and political ideologies (Harb, 2017). In the thesis, the focus is on the pluralistic acceptance of ‘the other’. That’s why, NFE activities provided by NGOs are chosen for observation. NFE activities serve as a bridge between the refugees and the host

community and initiate a meaningful social contact which helps to foster social cohesion. This qualitative research is conducted to observe the participants of these activities to understand social relations deeply. Origin of this research is based on the assumption of a quantitative research which claims that simple interpersonal contact with refugees can help to decrease potential prejudice and discrimination across national boundaries, cultures, and languages ( Fleming , Esipova , Pugliese , Ray, & Srinivasan, 2018, p. 129). Unlike this qualitative study, I conduct a research on social cohesion to generate qualitative knowledge by considering Syrian refugees. In this regard I benefited from the NGO experiences. Main objectives of this thesis are to present an overview of the NFE activities produced by NGOs that aims to foster social cohesion in Turkey and critically examine the role of non-formal education in the context of Syrian refugees.

## **SECTION ONE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this chapter, I will present the theoretical framework, which will later be used for the analysis of the data collected. In this section, I will present background, statement of purpose and significance of the study. Then I will present Syrian refugees' issues in Turkey. Then, I discuss the social cohesion, social contact and non-formal education concepts.

### **1.1. BACKGROUND**

Over five million Syrian people lives out of Syria. Most of them immigrate to neighboring countries. Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are the major countries that host Syrian refugees. Turkey is the largest refugee hosting country

with 3.6 million refugees (UNHR, 2018). The existing legal framework does not provide refugee status to Syrians. They are under the temporary protection. At the beginning of the civil war, Syrian refugees were invisible in the urban areas. They were mostly living in the camps and border cities but when the civil war gets speed up, things started to change. Limited capacity of camps couldn't answer the needs of Syrians. Most of them moved to large cities where they were able to access livelihood opportunities. This situation is in accord with the global trends. Currently, there are totally 5,652,186 Syrian refugees all over the world and nearly 90 per cent of them live in urban, peri-urban and rural places (UNHR, 2018). Only 363,368 refugees live in the camps, the other refugees live out of the camps (UNHR, 2018). Same trend is valid for Syrian refugees in Turkey. As time passing away, refugees started to live in cities among Turkish people. This enormous number of refugees living in urban setting has inevitable effects on social, economic and cultural life. Refugee population has caused crowding in hospitals, schools and neighborhoods. In some neighborhoods, rents get higher and wages decreased because of refugees. Conflicts came out between host community and newcomers because of the competition for same jobs and services. All these pressures have potential to increase social tensions in cities. Social tension is important for social cohesion. Some researches claim that high social tensions keep refugees out of employment opportunities and children out of schools. At the end, isolation may become inevitable and tensions get rise. High social tensions between communities may lower social cohesion which may contribute to violence and marginalization (Guay, 2015, p. 5). So, social cohesion and stability should be maintained to live together for years. In Turkey host community has tendency for accusing refugees for unfair competition, for job loss, less wages and high rental prices in cities (International Crisis Group, 2018). Apart from social tensions, in this thesis social interaction between two communities will be discussed. There are different ways of promoting social cohesion in the context of refuges. In this thesis, role of social interaction and civic dialogue in social cohesion will be researched.

## 1.2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Civil war, conflict and instability affect the lives of people in the region. Millions of people moved out of Syria. Syrians and their host communities have been living together for seven years and it seems they will live together in the next years. Consequences of the conflict and diversity can be dramatic. They are besieged by traumas, insecurity and poverty. Health and shelter are accepted as the most important needs of refugees. Education stays in the background and it is often seen as a secondary concern after families have access to food, water, shelter and health. However, it is as essential as shelter, food and health to cling them to normal daily life and prepare them a peaceful environment. Educational areas are intersection points for host community and refugee community. These areas provide an intercultural dialogue opportunity which is vital for achieving social cohesion. Surely, education alone cannot build and maintain social cohesion. However, it has a major role to play together with social and economic integration in the context of refugees.

The main purpose of this thesis is to describe the relation between NFE activities provided by NGOs and social cohesion in the context of Syrian refugees. While doing that, social contact theory is applied because intergroup contact refers to interactions between members of different groups. The huge influx of Syrian refugees has been raising the diversity and diversity has several effects on social, economic and cultural life. Diversity can negatively affect social cohesion and trust. On the other hand, diversity can have positive effects. Contact can mediate the effects of diversity on outgroup trust and social cohesion (Hewstone , 2015). Contacts often take place within a social network (school or an organization) and it is not a one-way relationship (Hewstone , 2015). In this study, NFE areas are considered as the major social network places because these areas offer structured intergroup activities for host community and refugee community. NFE can make a great contribution to diminish prejudice, discrimination, and social exclusion by building bridges between different groups and communities. A lot of studies

conduct researches on intergroup contact and most of them have focused on the impact of positive contact such as interethnic friendship. NFE areas can be considered as one of social networks and a mediator for positive contact. It meets optimum conditions and facilitates positive intergroup relations. This kind of interaction would allow the different groups to learn about each other and develop affective relationship.

### **1.3. SIGNIFICANCE**

Social cohesion is a decisive component of peace and coexistence. It is even more important where there is historically conflict and mistrust exist between different identity groups and between the state and its citizens (Ataseven & Bakış, 2018). Turkey is a country that has diverse and variety identity groups. In recent years, with the massive influx of refugees, diversity has increased. It is argued that migration has contributed to the diversity and diversity has inevitable effects on social cohesion and society.

The longevity of the conflict in Syria was not predicted from the beginning. Early humanitarian interventions focused on providing basic needs for Syrians, rather than on building resilience and ensuring good community relations. However, since 2014 there has been more focus from donors and the humanitarian community on building social cohesion (UNHR, 2014). Donors and agencies started to address social relations together with basic needs of the refugees. Social cohesion has been supported by a wide range of programs to improve mutual positive attitudes. Fostering social cohesion is not the responsibility of the government alone. Local governments, civil society, non-state actors, media and the people of Turkey all have important roles to play in. I believe that NFE activities which aim to foster social cohesion supported by NGOs have an important role. They aim to build meaningful and targeted dialogue between different communities. Social contacts are a way to create social cohesion by

reducing mutual prejudices. Structured dialogues can lead strong, positive, integrated relationships and acceptance of different identities. These kinds of relationships are perceived as high social cohesion, whereas exclusive identities and weak, negative, fragmented relationships mean to low social cohesion (Guay, 2015, p. 9).

It is important to build contacts between different groups. In the refugee context, activities aim to build relationship with other groups are much more important because refugees start a new life in a new and unfamiliar society and they have limited social links. Non-formal education gives them opportunity to adapt everyday life. By doing that, NFE enables their social inclusion in community. With the help of structured social contact, it is possible to break prejudices and stop marginalization and at the end promotes social cohesion. Role of non-formal education in fostering social cohesion remains heavily under researched in Turkey. In an effort to fill this gap, this study focuses on non-formal educational activities. Aim of the thesis is to get new insights from the field and to open up new discussions on the relation between NFE and social cohesion. There is a need for holistic approach to reframe non-formal education in the light of social cohesion. Non-formal educational activities are more accessible for every refugee (especially for housewives and children who lost years in education from all ages) and it enables them to receive emotional and educational support. These educations also enable them to access communities and social networks. Formal educational system may not meet all refugee student needs. Teachers and schools may not response to the complex needs of young refugees. Out of school activities are important in that sense. Social cohesion cannot be improved with only building school programs, economic integration and providing livelihoods. To strengthen social cohesion, both inclusion in every field of life and building structured contacts with different groups are necessary. Social contacts pave the way for social acceptance and social cohesion. Non-formal educational activities lead social dialogue. So, this thesis aims to bridge social cohesion studies and

refugee education studies by focusing on non-formal educational activities lead by NGOs.

Social cohesion can be measured with different instruments. I think social contact is a practical instrument for measuring social cohesion in the context of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Starting from this, this thesis assigns social contact as the core variable and treats NFE areas as the core contact points for two communities. Indeed, informal social interaction exists in every phase of the daily life but NFE areas offer structured dialogue and interaction. In addition to this, %37.65 of refugee children in Turkey cannot go to school and there are a lot of children who lost years in education (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2018). With the help of NFE provided by NGOs, it is possible to access them and other adult refugees. To sum up, conducting a qualitative research about social cohesion and non-formal education is significant in the context of Syrian refugees. Host community and refugee community relations help to understand social cohesion and living together tendencies. Social contact points are limited with NFE areas because these places present quality contact areas which is important while fostering social cohesion.

This current research attempts to explore the relationship between Syrian refugees and social cohesion across one of the indicators of social cohesion, social contact. NFE areas are considered as the major social contact points because they facilitate opportunities for positive contact.

#### **1.4. SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY**

When Syrian refugees came to Turkey, they faced many challenges including getting a legal status, accessing livelihoods, shelter and education. In this section I attempt to summarize some of their challenges and effects on the host community. They live mostly in the cities and this cause to raise social tensions between newcomers and host community.

#### 1.4.1. Legal Status of Syrians

Before the Syrian crisis, Turkey was known as a transit country for refugees and migrants whose dream was to go to Europe. After the Syrian Civil War, this phenomenon has changed. Turkey is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention. It has maintained geographic a limitation to Geneva Convention and its 1967 Additional Protocol which means that people who flee countries outside of Europe cannot receive refugee status in Turkey (Resmi Gazete [Official Gazette], 1961, p. 5927). Turkish law does not recognize Syrians as refugees or grants them asylum. The only legal regulation -the Regulation on Asylum in 1994- was implemented on the asylum seekers and refugees at the beginning. However, its scope was too narrow. For this reason, it could not be applied to the Syrian refugees.

Over time the number of refugees has dramatically increased but there was no legal framework on refugees until 2014. In 2011, at the beginning of the crisis Turkey established a “temporary protection” regime and it is enshrined in law in 2014 (İçişleri Bakanlığı [Ministry of Interior], 2013). The legal regulation on Syrian Refugees Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) strengthened the temporary protection scheme for Syrians. All registered Syrian refugees are under the temporary protection regime now. This regime granted them formal legal status and allowed them to live outside of the camps. Also, with this legal status, Syrian refugees have been receiving Temporary Protection Identification Document that enables them to access to some government services such as health, education and legal work. This law protects Syrians against forcible returns and the regulation enshrines rights, services and assistance to Syrians who are under temporary protection. These services and rights include access to free health care system, free public education system, social assistance, psychological support and access to the formal labor market. At the end, Turkey has made progress in improving its asylum framework and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of state institutions. The provision of rights and services are

guaranteed at the administration level. However, the Turkish government call Syrians as guests but this word is not recognized by the international law. Government still persists to use same expression that reveals itself in the government reports (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency [AFAD], 2017).

The definition of 'Syrians' as a refugee, migrant, asylum seeker or guest is not simply an amphiboly. Definition of the new comers has significant consequences because their rights are defined as their legal status. Definition of Syrians as guest, refugee or migrant is out of this thesis consideration but in the thesis, I appeal to them as refugees because refugees are specifically defined and protected in international law. According to the 1951 Convention refugees are people who are outside of their country of origin because of violence, persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion conflict or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and, as a result, require international protection (UNHR, 2010).

#### **1.4.2. Economic Strains**

Economic strains directly or indirectly influence social cohesion (World Food Programme [WFP], 2018, p. 10). Some studies show that Syrian refugees has negative effects on economy such as job losses for the locals, reduction in the wage rates, increase in food prices and rent inflation (Center For Middle Eastern Strategic Studies [ORSAM], 2015, p. 9). People think Syrian refugees are the source of economic imbalances. Host communities' perceptions of Syrian refugees are affected by economic conflicts. According to World Food Programme online survey, more than 40% of the Turkish people think that the presence of Syrians in their neighborhood has affected the cost of living (WFP, 2018, p.11). In some cases, economic strains are one of the main drivers of social tensions that raise violence and negative feelings against the refugee community

(Guay, 2015, p. 11). Tensions arising from economic competition are one of the significant indicators for social stability and social cohesion.

In Turkey, the Regulation on Work Permits of Refugees under Temporary Protection was adopted in 2016. This law enabled refugee community to access formal job market. This is an important step for economic integration and resilient, but refugees were not benefitted from the opportunities of this law. They can't find qualified jobs. They continue to work at casual, irregular and predominantly unskilled jobs. Although they have work permission which is expected to decrease economic inequalities, currently most of them have to work in the informal sector such as seasonal agricultural work, construction, shoemaking, manufacturing and textiles. Reasons for attending informal labor market are ranging from bureaucratic barriers, quota on foreign employees to having no choice to accept informal employment (International Crisis Group, 2018). When they work in a formal job they are paid less. For this reason, majority of the Syrian refugees prefer to work unqualified works. Another issue about economic strains is that host community is very unhappy about unregistered shops and unofficial businesses (International Crisis Group, 2018, p. 17). Some Syrian entrepreneurs opened local shops, tourism agencies without legal permission. They do not pay taxes because they are informal, and this situation is perceived as unequal competition in the business sector and raises tensions among host community. Developing equal formal economy and creating equal opportunities for refugee community is needed to maintain positive social relations.

To conclude this section, a lot of host community members think that Syrian refugees are getting financial aid from the government. However, according to formal statistics, the situation is not just like host community perceives. Syrian refugees who receive in-kind/financial aid from a non-governmental organization is %36.10 and who did not receive such aid is %63.90; also, the percentage of Syrian refugees who receive in-kind / financial aid from a governmental organization is 29.10 and who did not receive such aid is %70.90 (AFAD, 2017,

p. 67). This survey result is important to understand that most of the Syrian refugees are not receiving in-kind or financial aid from NGOs or the government. This means that most of them have to work in order to live. For this reason, diminishing strains over economy is very significant. Creating equal wages, equal formal job opportunities and equal work conditions feels them they are part of the large community. By that way social cohesion can be raised. Even though economic growth is considered as a contributor of social cohesion, but mere economic growth cannot foster cohesion.

### **1.4.3. Social Tensions**

People's positive or negative evaluations of other groups have a direct impact on social tensions and the potential for social conflict. Competition over resources such as housing, lack of access to quality education and the role of international aid, economic strains, diminishing quality of public services, differences in social norms, the negative role of the media and lack of social networks are seen as core drivers that exacerbate tensions between Syrian refugees and host community. Rising tensions have consequences on equitable access to public spaces, urban governance, basic services, livelihood opportunities and humanitarian and development assistance. Some researchers support that when social tensions raise, isolation of refugee families from urban social life becomes inevitable (Guay, 2015). For this reason, while conducting a research about social cohesion within refugee context, thinking social tensions is a necessity.

At the first years of the civil war, Turkey welcomed the refugees warmly, but tensions based on economic, demographic and cultural considerations are rising in some districts. Over pressures on public services, over competition in labor market, overcrowded in public schools are some of the reasons why there are growing anti-refugee ideas between hosts (International Crisis Group, 2016). Academics in Turkey have been conducted many researches to asses tolerance and

acceptance of Syrian refugees and describe cohabitation experiences (Erdogan, 2018; ORSAM, 2015; International Crisis Group, 2018). They all emphasize that Turkish perception on Syrian refugees are about to change after their permanence become inevitable. Sometimes, Syrian refugees are perceived as a threat to security and media highlights criminal cases between host community and refugees (Türkiye Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Stratejik Analizler Merkezi [TÜRKSAM], 2018). According to studies, host community members think that crime rates had increased in their neighborhoods because of the Syrians refugees (WFP, 2018, p.15). However, social tensions and social conflict rates are lower than host communities' perception. Official statistics demonstrate that only 1.32% of reported security incidents in Turkey involved Syrians either as perpetrators or victims from 2014 to 2017 (İçişleri Bakanlığı [Ministry of Interior], 2017). Even though Syrian refugees did not involve in crime, high amount of host community members perceive Syrian refugees as a threat (WFP, 2018, p.18). The refugee influx started in 2011 and has transformed the sociopolitical dynamics in Turkey. Over three million Syrian nationals have fled in Turkey and a recent research show that social tensions undulate between host community and refugees (Kavas & Kadkoy, 2018).

Education for refugees can decrease social tensions but if education is not inclusive and quality, the other way around effects can be possible. Concerns of overcrowded classrooms, access to quality education raise social tensions in Turkey (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2015).

#### **1.4.4. Education**

Huge influx of refugees raises questions about social cohesion and solidarity within Turkey. In that sense, education is perceived as a tool for building social cohesion but national education system has faced challenges to meet the needs of the newcomers because national administrators were not open to work with

culturally different communities and school environments were not inclusive, respectful for different cultures and ready for intercultural relations (Tezel McCarty, 2018, p. 3). However, education as an emergency response should provide a protective and stable environment and help to meet the psychological and social needs of children affected by conflict (UNHR, 2016). For long term, with education, economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in the society. On the other hand, schools can promote ideas and practices that weaken cohesion by remaining unresponsive to the social, cultural and linguistic needs of the refugees. In this context, providing education for refugees is not enough, education must be quality and inclusive in order to create social cohesion. To sum up this section, promoting social cohesion needs to be an integral part of host country policy where new and multiple identity groups came in and their staying is thought to be longer. Thinking education as an instrument for social cohesion is meaningful because it has ability to create strong bonds within a group and through different groups. Educational environments and schools have become major contact points for the different groups.

Prior to the conflict, the primary school enrollment rate in Syria was 99 percent and lower secondary school enrollment was 89 percent (HRW, 2015, p.5). These numbers were quite high. However, now Turkey hosts 976.200 school aged Syrian children and only 608.702 of them are enrolled in formal education (MoNE, 2018 ). A remarkable number of children are still out of school. Accessing to education is essential. It has impacts on both host country and country of origin. In the first years of the crisis, refugees' educational access and attainment were invisible for the host country government. The conflict is assumed to be short-termed by Turkish government. After refugee camps established in 2011, educational institutions and educational services were established as a humanitarian response but only people inside of the camps benefited from these education opportunities. The courses for them conducted in Arabic according to Turkish curriculum. Education was not delayed for

newcomers, but it is restricted to the camps and formed in Arabic. Targeting only children inside the camps and using Arabic as instruction language show the intention of the Turkish Government. Government was expecting that the crisis will not go on long and Syrian refugees will return to their homes soon, so short term educational policies are developed as a response to the influx of refugees (BBC, 2015). Children outside of the camps were ignored. Their rights to access education are not guaranteed until 2013. Then, Ministry of Education (MoNE) issued a circular letter about Syrian refugees residing out of the camps. That circular did not concentrate on the solutions but it was important because of two reasons: this is the first formal document about Syrian Refugees education and secondly, presence of Syrian schools which ran by civil initiatives, charitable associations and individual donors which use Arabic language and Syrian curriculum was recognized (Tezel McCarty, 2018, p. 10). In the same year, government made its public-school system available to Syrian children that hold temporary resident permit and at the end of the 2014. By means of Law on Foreigners and International Protection and Temporary Protection accessing to formal and free education became available for Syrian children who live out of the camps. Clearing bureaucratic barriers and encouraging refugees to attend schools are an important step for providing educational rights. Over the past couple years, significant progress has been made to increase Syrian refugees' access to formal education. Yet, despite continued investment, the eliminating bureaucratic barriers and campaign for formal schools, 37.65% of refugee children in Turkey are reported to be out of school (MoNE, 2018).

#### **1.4.4.1. Turkish Public Schools, Temporary Education Centers and Non-Formal Educational Activities**

Policies on refugees have evolved over the years. Education policies implemented with the assumption that Syrian refugees would leave soon. Over years,

humanitarian and emergency responses replaced with long-term development plans concerning educational needs. While educating Syrian refugees who were primary and secondary school age, two different kinds of school systems emerged. One of them is public school system through formal education facilities and second system is education through temporary education centers (TECs). Temporary education centers were formed by civic initiatives or NGOs. In the first years, these Syrian schools were against the law, but this did not prevent their existence and operations. In 2014, MoNE began to accredit TECs so that they could be united into the national education framework. However, TECs are useful to satisfy the short-term needs. Long term solutions are needed to ensure inclusive and equitable access to education. In the long term, building refugee-exclusive systems are not sustainable. That means they should be included in national education systems, educational institutions and programs (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2017, p. 20). Indeed, TECs were creating parallel systems and they tend to create segregation which hampers dialogue and social cohesion. For this reason, Turkey is integrating these specific schools to the national education framework and includes Syrian children and youth to the national system. Also, UNHCR recommends that refugees should be included in national education systems and follow national curricula (UNHR, 2016, p. 18). In brief, their roles are temporary and subsidiary rather than abiding. They complete their life and they are gradually being closed or being turned into private schools (Cumhuriyet, 2017). Formal public schools have been open to the non-camp Syrian children since 2013. Enrollment is free, but some other costs make access to education harder. Children who did not receive formal education or cannot afford TECs join non-formal education from mosques, unregistered temporary education centers, or NGOs (HRW, 2015). However, in the non-formal education centers students do not receive certificates and holding a certificate is an important precondition for finding a formal job in Turkey.

#### 1.4.4.2. Barriers to Education

Refugee children have educational disadvantages at schools. They face linguistic barriers, discrimination, isolation, limited teacher-student relationship. Out of the school, their main problem is economic difficulties of the family. In most of the cases, children must work and contribute to the family income.

Education has different roles in every phase of the conflict. According to Alan Smith, if the violent conflict is still exists education may have a 'protective role; in the peace building processes, education may be a means of 'contributing to social transformation' and in the post-conflict development era its role ensuring the 'truth and reconciliation' (Smith, 2010). In Turkey, at the beginning of the crisis, education was not in the center of the discussions. This ignorance is visible in the surveys. The schooling rate among Syrian Refugees is %62.35 in 2018 and it was %30 in 2014 (MoNE, 2018). We do not know the previous rates, but we know that until 2013 non camp Syrian refugee children cannot enroll to the schools. These school enrollment numbers are relatively low. Clearly, there is a generation who did not benefited from the protective role of the education. There are large numbers of refugee children who missed out several years of school because of displacement.

Education is a shared responsibility. Schools and teachers should work in a harmony with government. In Turkey, national education system is over centralized. It does not allow school administrators to take decisions about local needs independently (Tezel McCarty, 2018, p. 5). However, the central structure of the government decreased temporarily in the front of the huge influx of culturally, linguistically and ethnically diverse population. Top down decisions in centralized educational governance is not able to meet the whole refugee needs (Tezel McCarty, 2018, p. 5). Nevertheless, governments have the main responsibility to protect the right to education, and have a central role to provide efficient, equitable, effective management and financing of public education

(UNESCO, 2016, p.9). There is much more work to be done. Everybody is responsible for eliminating the educational disadvantages of the refugees. Governments and other sector partners should work together to strengthen a national education policy framework, expand access to education and improve inclusive and quality learning environments.

In 2018, there are approximately 976.200 Syrian refugee children aged 5 to 17 in Turkey (MoNE, 2018). Government of Turkey has taken important steps for realizing Syrian refugee children's right to education. They make Turkish public schools legally accessible to Syrian refugees and accredit TECs. However, removing legal obstacles is only a first step. In practice, there are many obstacles that prevent Syrian children from attending school. They have educational disadvantages before attending to schools. Human Rights Watch research found that a number of addressable barriers that prevent Syrian refugee children from attending school. These are language barriers, lack of information, economic hardship and child labor (HRW, 2015). In most of the cases, children must work and contribute to the family income. After attending to the school, children face linguistic barriers, discrimination, isolation and limited teacher-student relationship. All these obstacles should be removed for social integration.

## **1.5. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, I will present the non-formal education, social cohesion and social contact concepts.

Various attempts have been made in the literature to measure social cohesion and some instruments are developed gradually. The objective of developing an instrument is to determine the indicators. Indicators show the changes in certain dimensions and can change over time. Measuring social cohesion or developing an instrument to measure social cohesion is out of this thesis consideration. However, while forming a framework for social cohesion, some concepts are

borrowed from measuring social cohesion literature. This study is grounded on intergroup dynamics which is applied to Syrian refugee context. Consequently, social contact concept is borrowed as the most critical instrument for social cohesion.

People's estimation of other groups and state authorities have impact on social tensions, social conflict and consequently, social cohesion. There are two types of social cohesion; horizontal and vertical. Horizontal social cohesion concentrates on the relationship between individuals and groups in a particular environment while vertical social cohesion concentrates on the relationship between individuals and institutions that govern them (Guay, 2015, p. 9). Asking questions about the relationships between citizen and state and asking questions about the relationships between various social groups are two different ways to understand social cohesion. Interpersonal interactions, sense of belonging, emotions, trust and collective action can be example variables for horizontal social cohesion while example of vertical social cohesion variables can be perceptions of state and local authorities. In the light of this distinction, this study will focus on horizontal citizen to citizen relationships. Also, Social Cohesion for the Arab Region Project specifies core, medial and peripheral indicators for assessing social cohesion. Core variables are vertical and horizontal attitudes and collective action; medial variables are identities (belonging), emotions (motivation) and trust; peripheral variables which provide a contextual understanding of social cohesion are perceptions of threat (human security), justice, measures of contact and levels of participation and representation (Harb, 2017). It is possible to measure social cohesion by indicators and there are a lot of indicators lists developed by various organizations. Sometimes interpersonal trust, civic co-operation and violent crime used as indicators. At the time of the crisis, some observers use social tensions as variable and after the conflict, observers prefer to use human security and intergroup perceptions as variable to assess social cohesion (Harb, 2017). Social contact is accepted as a peripheral variable in that project but in my study social contact is considered as the core variable.

Some theorists interested in reducing intergroup prejudice and discrimination has focused on contact as a mediating variable. They have differentiated dimensions of contact into two: contact quantity and contact quality. Quantity of contact refers to the frequency of meeting while quality of contact refers to participants' subjective assessment. Both types influence intergroup attitudes, perceptions and relations (Harb, 2017). All in all, migration has to be treated as a matter for both host community and refugee community. Their relationship and perception of other are important for understanding the social cohesion. They are living together and ineluctably they are in contact. In some cases, two communities ignore each other and construct parallel lives but this is not sustainable and healthy. Dynamics between groups are worth observing. According to a recent report that measures social cohesion level of Turkish society finds out that social cohesion in Turkey is at medium level. Further, the study shows that intergroup relations are poor although intragroup relations are at the highest level and accordingly, trust between group members is high but trusting to someone out of the group is low (Ataseven & Bakış, 2018, p. 5). In Turkey, people in the same group have strong connections but relations between different groups are weak. This point is a significant indicator for living together. Traditionally, different identity groups live together in Turkey for years. The study shows the major obstacle for living together is not the different identity groups or the Syrian refugees, major obstacles for living together is arrayed as security, unemployment and then justice (Ataseven & Bakış, 2018). This study is not specifically focused on Syrian refugees, but it shows the whole picture in Turkey. As a result, intergroup and intragroup relations are components of the social cohesion. In the thesis, I will pay attention to this component.

To sum up, non-formal education areas offer specific learning environments that are not regulated by the formal educational concerns. Some of their activities aim to rebuild contacts between two communities. NFE programs bring social needs into the forefront. Specific non-formal educational activities are designed to meet this kind of needs. In literature, there are significant number of researches on

refugee education and social cohesion; however most of the data is focused on formal education, not on the non-formal education provided by NGOs. This omission in the literature is notable. Non-formal education treats refugee education from a different angle.

### **1.5.1. Non-formal Education Literature Review**

Syrian Refugee crisis highlights the discussions on the purposes of learning and raises questions about the relation between education and diversity. As societies become increasingly multicultural and diverse, education gains more attention. Debates on education are not limited with provision of education. Debates on quality and inclusiveness of education gain momentum especially after the influx of socially, linguistically and culturally different population. Education's role in social cohesion is also debated in the time of high diversity. It is well known that education can contribute social cohesion. According to Heyneman (2000), education contributes to social cohesion in three different ways. Firstly, education offers public knowledge about social contracts. Secondly, in the education area students learn about appropriate behavior for upholding social contracts through heterogeneous experiences. Thirdly, education provides citizens to understand expected consequences of breaking social contracts (Heyneman, 2000). In addition to this, education can contribute social cohesion by teaching how to live together. Heyneman's this definition is narrow and excludes newcomers, migrant and refugees. On the other hand, when we talk about education, different roles of education should be remembered. According to UNESCO there are four pillars of education. These are:

Learning to know: to provide broad general education to comprehend the world

Learning to do: to provide skills to do a job of work enables to participate in the society

Learning to live together: to provide social skills to understand others, to provide respect for human rights, democratic principles, pluralism and peace and to live in peace and harmony

Learning to be: to provide development of personality and strengthen them affectively as well as physically (UNESCO, 1996, p. 21)

Education is not only related with professing job skills. It is much more than gaining job skills. Some aspect of the education is much related with guiding students in daily life. In the learning environment, people also practice how to live together. The other three pillars of education cannot be disregarded but in this thesis the living together pillar of the education process is accepted as the most important pillar because the society is in the process of change.

UNESCO categorizes levels of education in five stages: 1) pre-school and primary levels, 2) General secondary education and technical and vocational education, 3) Higher education 4) Reaching out-of-school youth and 5) Adult education (UNESCO, 2006). Reaching out of school children and adults are emphasized in the educational stages. This is because in many countries formal education excludes these two groups. However, non-formal education differently pays attention to these groups. Learning cannot be restricted with the period of childhood or early adulthood. Education is a lifelong learning process for all people and it is not only associated with formal educational areas. In the thesis, all age groups are included.

Lastly, education has three categories: informal education, non-formal education and formal education. Informal education refers to get knowledge from daily experience throughout childhood and adulthood. It symbolizes the natural learning process. It is not organized and outcome oriented. Formal education refers to structured system lasting from primary school to university through standard classroom style. The non-formal education on the other hand stands in the middle and refers to any organized educational activity apart from the formal learning process. Formal, non-formal and informal education is not opposite to each other.

They are different but not exclusive. Three of them overlap in many cases. Drawing a strict line between them is not possible.

A broad and unclear term NFE has been part of educational discussions since the 1960s. It is largely debated in the context of developing countries where formal education fails to create peace and security. In that sense NFE takes an active role in solving some of the problems that formal education creates. It has both an alternative and a complementary role to the formal education.

NFE is a loosely defined concept and it is frequently used in the literature. Coombs (1968) was the first to use the concept of 'non-formal education' (Coombs, 1968). Then in 1974, Coombs and Ahmed define NFE as

“Non-formal education is any organized, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children” (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8).

According to this definition, NFE programs can have many different forms including afterschool programs, trips and sport programs with adults and children. Socialization is an important part of the NFE. Coombs in the book “The World Educational Crisis” claims that NFE activities are outside of the formal system and at the same time they are complementary to the formal education as a means for individual and national development (Coombs, 1968, p. 138). However, following in the footsteps of Coombs and Ahmed, La Belle (1982) further developed the concept and stated that non-formal learning can take place in schools in the form of extra-curricular activities (La Belle, 1982). So NFE activities are not necessarily stand outside of the formal system. They can exist in the formal system.

Then, Hoppers (2000) divided NFE provision into three categories: supplementary (to do enrichment activities), compensatory (to help people who can't access formal education), and alternative (an alternative to formal educational needs)

(Hoppers, 2000, p. 9). Non-formal education can have various different roles. This classification is designed according to NFE relationship with formal education.

NFE is also defined by international organizations. UNESCO's definition of non-formal education prioritizes the relationship between academic skills and NFE. Definition of non-formal education according to UNESCO is:

“Non-formal learning consists of learning embedded in planned, organized and sustained education activities that are outside formal education institution, responding to education needs for persons of all ages. The purpose of NFE is to provide alternative learning opportunities for those who do not have access to formal schooling or need specific life skills and knowledge to overcome different obstacles.” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 39).

Non-formal education is a planned and organized process which offers specific learning environments and opportunities. Yet, it does not just aim to teach skills but also aims to help people to understand global issues. It is learner centered. European Center for Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) emphasizes that non-formal learning is intentional and reflects the learner's point of view (CEDEFOP, 2008, p. 133). Adults who are excluded from formal educational opportunities can attend NFE activities. In other words, NFE programs tend to focus on the needs of disadvantaged learners. Education for all vision was adapted by UNESCO to support the idea that all people have the right to access education. This effort has led to extend the importance of the concept of non-formal education and the concept has become popular world widely. After that, non-formal education is being used increasingly within the context of lifelong learning. Reaching to out of school children and young people who are not taking part in educational activities are main concerns for non-formal education.

There are many different types of NFE activities. Peer education, basic education such as literacy and numeracy, technical and vocational education, catch-up programs, small business development training, life skills development training,

awareness-raising for safety and security programs, agricultural extension and training programs, health education, computer classes, protection and psychosocial support programs, sports, drama, art and music. Hoppers collect all these activities under seven titles. These are para formal education, popular education, personal development, professional and vocational training, literacy with skills development, supplementary NFE programs and early childhood care and education (Hoppers, 2006, p. 61). Non-formal learning in community settings in the forms of cultural activities with community members such as sports activities, language learning programs, reading groups or debate workshops between different societies can be one type of non-formal educational activities. Non-formal education may happen in a variety of contexts and they have different functions.

Objectives and purpose of non-formal education can be guided by specific circumstances. For example, some NFE activities can aim to reach out of school children but at the same time some other NFE activities can aim awareness-raising. Local and national issues can shape aim and objectives of the NFE activities. They all have participatory learning system with not necessarily conduct exam and they have age, time, curriculum and content flexibility. They don't have a standard structured curriculum. NFE activities can be held by both community organizations, professional associations, voluntary and non-profit organizations or educational institutions. They are influenced by participants' background and needs of disadvantaged groups. In that sense, formal education is linked with schools, non-formal is linked with community groups, and informal learning covers with friends, family groups (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). To sum up, NFE activities are community related and flexible.

### 1.5.1.1. Non-Formal Education and Social Cohesion

At the beginning of the crisis, accessing to formal education was not easy for Syrian refugees in contrast; non-formal educational areas were free from formal regulations and were more accessible. In addition to that, formal education sometimes cannot foster social cohesion between different groups and create divisions but NFE can often prohibit issues arising from formal educational environments. Formal education may have trouble to adapt the diversity of students because of the over centralized and hierarchical structure of the formal educational system but non-formal education is more flexible. Formal educational systems adapt too slowly to the socio-economic changes. NFE programs organized by non-government organizations fall outside to the authority of the state. In time, central authority limited some kind of non-formal education which aims to substitute formal education. Non-formal education aims to make a positive effect on society and culture. Refugees have to live in a new and unfamiliar society. Non-formal education gives them opportunity to adapt everyday life. By doing that, NFE enables their social inclusion in community and promotes social cohesion. NFE is a tool for inclusive education. Social cohesion is not unilateral it is reciprocal. It is important to build contacts between different groups. Inclusive education requires very big changes. MEB tries to change its approach. However, NGOs are more open to changes and they adapt new situations better. With the help of constructed social contact, it is possible to break prejudices and stop marginalization.

Social cohesion is the result of many interacting forces. It includes economic, political, cultural and social elements. Education is just one side of the social cohesion concept, but it has a special concern because of its nature. It has many forms and it is a complementary force for social cohesion. Education has power to change the way people think by establishing social relationships with other people. All educational areas are major contact points for the two communities. However, I have chosen NFE areas as the major contact points because I think

NFE areas present structured intergroup contact opportunities which enables me to observe and understand the intergroup contact experience. NFE activities are considered as a mediator of intergroup relations that build generalized trust and positive emotions.

In the literature much attention has been given to the formal education and little has been given to NFE activities. However, an important deficit in the formal school system exists due to its hierarchical structure. Schools instead of serving as the provider of social cohesion, they can be discriminator by remaining unresponsive to the social, cultural and linguistic needs of the refugees. In this situation, formal schools' response can be late. Formal system is mainly based on academic achievements and social needs stays background. If formal schools are not inclusive and quality, then their environment cannot be open to the social changes. On the contrary, non-formal education areas offered specific learning environments that are not regulated by the government or academic achievement concerns. NFE activities are usually more flexible and open than the formal education. Due to its flexible nature, non-formal education can be adapted the situation faster and practices multicultural educational concerns. NFE is a way to bring members of different communities together and it helps to build understanding, tolerance, and friendship among groups. NFE areas can have a powerful role in decreasing the distance between different groups. The non-formal education concept in Turkey does not have deep roots. It is a newly argued concept. During the major societal changes, education and especially adult education comes to the forefront because of its important role in social integration. Because of its nature, non-formal education has ability to act quickly and meet new comer's needs. Non-formal education in this context is related to the concepts of lifelong learning, inclusion, social cohesion and community education.

In some cases, inclusion is understood as being part of the job market, but inclusion is much more than economic concerns. Inclusion involves mutual relationships and trust in a society. Non-formal education is a way to supply

inclusion. It is generally agreed that inclusion is a process and requires participation of newcomers and people who are already belong to society. Contacts in the non-formal areas are seen as a prerequisite for the sustainability of inclusion. Non-formal education is believed to provide the conditions for a structured social contact and further creates necessary social networks (Wiktorin, 2017, p. 24). So NFE areas lead social inclusion and create social networks by serving as a meeting point for different communities. Participants of non-formal education can access to social contact areas and social networks.

NFE activities are observed because non-formal education seems better to meet the individual needs of students (Dib , 1988, p. 3). Also, they are more flexible and inclusive. In this research, NFE activities which support community building and social cohesion activities are investigated. NFE activities which often take place outside of the formal educational institutions and target different groups and ages are selected for investigation. Activities aim to inclusion of refugees by creating mutual understanding of host community and refugees are accepted the main non-formal educational services to create social cohesion. This study is guided by the UNESCO's definition of non-formal education that refers to the process of the lifelong learning and programs on work skills as well as life skills and social or cultural development. In UNESCO's definition NFE does not necessarily be a continuous activity and mostly not lead to formal qualifications at all. It can be alternative or a complementary to the formal education and it aims for people of all ages. Short courses, workshops or seminars are some forms of NFE. (UNESCO, 2011).

### **1.5.2. Social Cohesion Literature Review**

Social Cohesion is an elusive, complex and sophisticated concept. Several theoretical interpretations and understandings assign different meanings to the concept. A lot of researches emphasize the multidimensionality and complexity of

the social cohesion. Social cohesion is still a loosely defined concept. Divergent definitions exist across disciplines like sociology, political science, health. Also, various stakeholders such as academics and policy makers address the concept. In this section, I seek to outline some different meanings of the term and finally reach a relevant definition of the social cohesion.

### **1.5.2.1. Academic Approach to Social Cohesion Theory**

Social cohesion is not a newly invented concept in sociology. It dates back to beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when rapid social changes such as industrialization, huge population movements and urbanization take over. Alexis de Tocqueville, Tönnies, Émile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons are known as fathers of the social cohesion theory. Their works range from solidarity, social integration and social order to association membership, community relations, socialization and interaction processes.

Social cohesion theory is still under construction that means there is a place for new meanings through new interpretations. Over time, the term gave birth to new discussions and applied different study fields. For instance, it is applied to education studies, health studies and economic studies. Adaptable feature of the term makes it easy to attach new dimensions to the concept. To understand social cohesion and its various meanings, I summarize several definitions which dominate the literature.

Jenson in 1998 created three theoretical traditions: First one is social cohesion theories which are defined as common values and derived from Durkheim and Parsons' social theory; second one is classical liberalism theories which refer to Tocqueville and locate themselves between social network and market; the last theoretical tradition is democracy theories which indicate economic equality and equity (Jenson, 1998, p. 12). At this point, Jenson emphasized that these three approaches specify different mechanisms. Last two theories highlight institutional

processes and conflicting interests and first theoretical tradition highlights values. Soroka, Johnston and Banti (2006) tried to carry social cohesion concept forward and identified three approaches to the social cohesion theory. First approach is derived from the term of “collective conscience” formed by Émile Durkheim. National identities and common values are emphasized, and ethnic diversity is clearly seen as a threat. Second approach views social cohesion as a process and underlines the importance of finding new ways to live together. Various identities and values are accepted in a cohesive society as long as conflicts resulting from diversity are solved through political engagement and civic participation. Last approach refers to the idea that social capital equals to social cohesion. It can be measured by social networks and trust (Soroka, Johnston , & Banti, 2006).

Judith Maxwell’s definition of social cohesion is based on social and economic considerations (Maxwell, 1996, p. 13). He both emphasizes shared values and communities of interpretation on one side, equality in wealth and income on the other side. According to Jenson economic considerations are important but there are other five main dimensions:

Belonging vs isolation: It is related to shared values and collective identities. Isolation is the core threat to social cohesion.

Inclusion vs exclusion: It is related to the markets. Potential threat to social cohesion is exclusion from market opportunities.

Participation vs non-involvement: Balanced national unity and local diversity is needed. Local and central level participation is the key for the production of social cohesion.

Recognition vs rejection: Institutions are mediator and all kinds of institutions should recognize differences. Rejection and intolerance make national states less livable.

Legitimacy vs illegitimacy: Institutions are mediators of different interests (Jenson, 1998, pp. 15-17).

Jenson (1998) finds out five dimensions for the concept of cohesion: belonging, participation, legitimacy, recognition and inclusion (p.15). That means social cohesion can be defined in five ways: shared values and a sense of belonging to a community; social, economic and cultural equality among individuals; participation to the decision-making process and institutions such as political parties and unions; mediating conflicts over access to power and resources; mediating different political opinions.

The definition of social cohesion differs among research topics. Nature of social cohesion concept makes it difficult to find a well-defined concept that fits all contexts. Some authors like Jenson (1998) attempt to unite several dimensions of the concept. While social cohesion concepts were being discussed passionately dissimilar social cohesion scholars widely, Bernard (2000) criticized the concept as being a hybrid concept. According to Bernard social cohesion concept has two faces; it is considered as a scientific concept and it is considered as a political concept because of its unscientific nature (Bernard, 2000, p. 2). So, social cohesion is a largely used and generally abused concept (Green, Janmaat , & Han, 2009, p. 5)

Kearns and Forrest (2001) have been described five dimensions of social cohesion. First of all, to be a cohesive society there is a need for a shared sense of morality and common purpose. Secondly, in a cohesive society social disorder should be absent and social control instruments should exist. Thirdly, social solidarity and policies to reduce income and wealth inequalities must be present. Fourthly, in cohesive society ways of social interaction within communities and civic participation mechanisms should be robust. Finally, a sense of belonging to place or an identity is an important dimension of the social cohesion because it makes a society more cohesive (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). I think social cohesion is not necessarily

Chan, To and Chan also attempt to constitute a shared form of definition and they develop their own social cohesion definition:

“Social cohesion is a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society as characterized by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioral manifestations.” (Chan, To , & Chan, 2006, p. 290)

Social cohesion in many cases defines by its absence but Larsen defines absence of social cohesion as “social erosion” and defines social cohesion as (Larsen, 2014, p. 2):

“...the belief held by citizens of a given nation-state that they share a moral community, which enables them to trust each other. ”

Larsen emphasizes common understanding in this definition. On the other hand, some other scholars highlight related dimensions of social cohesion not just attempt to define social cohesion. Woolley drew the attention to the social interaction by linking social cohesion and the voluntary sector (Woolley, 1998). Interaction is both a process and a consequence that defines and creates social cohesion; the interaction can be destructive as well as cooperative (Woolley, 1998).

Green, Janmaat , & Han (2009) analyse academic and policy texts find three types of discourse around social cohesion concept. These are liberal, republican and social democratic discourses. Each of discourses emphasizes different essential elements. Liberal discourse emphasis trust through positive interactions between individuals and groups and stress the role of active civil society; the social democratic discourse emphasize equality and the role of state and state sanctioned national civil society organizations; the republican discourse emphasize shared values and common identities through active political engagement and a sense of belonging and the state rather than civil society (Green, Janmaat , & Han, 2009). Too much accent on shared values and common identity contradicts with other liberal principles of respect for other cultures and freedom. Republican policies have tendency for assimilation of immigrants to the national culture. Conversely,

liberal discourse overrates individual freedom and cultural diversity. Correspondingly intergroup dialogue is propounded as a mechanism to prevent divides and enable to live together. Liberal discourse emphasis on process and living together, as opposed to demanding criteria of shared values and identities and highlights the importance of social contact as the most critical variable for social cohesion. Importantly, intergroup contact is a bottom-up indicator. This approach is a necessity when refugees are on the focus.

Gordon Allport's classic hypothesis 'Social Contact Theory' has close ties with liberal perspective (Allport, 1954). Allport's assumption is clearly different from Putnam's assumption. Putnam envisages a negative relationship between trust and ethnic diversity but Allport is much more optimistic. He supports that trust can be developed through interactions between individuals and social groups. Civic participation is a key to cohesive society.

According to Putnam, changes in economic, social and cultural areas are seen as a threat for social cohesion (Putnam, 2007). Potential threats for social cohesion discussed in the literature can be summarized as raising income inequality, unemployment, crime, the decline of the traditional family and increased immigration and the segregation of migrant communities (Green, Janmaat , & Han, 2009). Here, migration has a special position as a thread. Its potential consequences can exacerbate other conflicts by increasing negative perceptions. Migrants in many cases are seen as source of unemployment, crime and the decline of the traditional family. Refugees and migrants can lead social change and raise diversity in many areas and diversity may cause social tensions especially in newly diverse communities (Green, Janmaat , & Han, 2009). However, Pettigrew and Tropp support that Putnam is half right and half wrong with his assumption. They support that diversity alone cannot reduce social cohesion but if group segregation accompanies diversity, then diversity can reduce social cohesion and trust (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Also, they claim that diversity involves both intergroup threat and greater contact (Pettigrew & Tropp,

2011, p. 167). So, social contacts provide mechanisms for building social cohesion and breaking down the prejudices.

#### **1.5.2.2. Institutional Approach to Social Cohesion Theory**

The concept social cohesion has been increasingly applied by institutions at the national and international level. One of the first attempts to embodying social cohesion into government policies came from the Canadian Federal Government. Social Cohesion Network which is one of the most active social cohesion research groups were set up in 1996. They define social cohesion as:

“The ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity within Canada, based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity among all Canadians.” (Department of Canadian Heritage, 1997, p. 14)

In 2006 a criticism to that definition comes from Chan, To and Chan who support that it is possible to conduct a single definition of social cohesion. They argue that a good definition of a term should have minimal scope and daily use but in the Canadian Government definition, social cohesion is perceived as a process which is not true in a daily use. They say “cohesion refers to the level of cohesiveness of a group or community; it is therefore clearly a state of affairs, not a process” (Chan, To , & Chan, 2006).

Council of Europe, European Union, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank also have been paying attention to social cohesion, but they are mostly interested in the impacts of social cohesion in economic development and growth. Social cohesion is treated as a tool to improve economic performance and development. However, Council of Europe’s definition of social cohesion emphasis human rights:

“The Council of Europe defines social cohesion as the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members – minimizing disparities and avoiding marginalization – to manage differences and divisions and ensure the means of achieving welfare for all members. Social cohesion is a political concept that is essential for the fulfillment of the three core values of the Council of Europe: human rights, democracy and the rule of law.” (Council of Europe, 2010)

OECD describes a cohesive society as (OECD & OCDE, 2011):

“One which “works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility.” As such social cohesion is both a desirable end and a means to inclusive development.”

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs define social as:

“A cohesive society is one where people are protected against life risks, trust their neighbors and the institutions of the state and can work towards a better future for themselves and their families. Fostering social cohesion is about striving for greater inclusiveness, more civic participation and creating opportunities for upward mobility. It is the glue that holds society together. For the analysis, social cohesion is built around three key values: social inclusion, social capital and social mobility. Social inclusion refers to the degree to which all citizens can participate on equal footing in the economic, social and political life, including whether people are protected in times of need.” (United Nations [UN], 2012)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) claims that “Social cohesion is easier to recognize by its absence than by any definition” (UNDP, 2009, p. 14) . Lack of social cohesion refers to increased social tensions, violent crimes, violations of human rights, targeting of minorities and ultimately, violent conflicts. According to UNDP social cohesion means institutionally and individually tolerance and respect to the diversity including religion, ethnicity, economic situation, sexuality, gender and age diversity (UNDP, 2009, p. 14).

According to UNDP two principal dimensions or goals of social cohesion are

- 1) The reduction of disparities, inequalities and social exclusion: Strategies for engaging excluded groups should be developed because all people from different backgrounds should have similar life opportunities”
- 2) The strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties: “social capital in all its forms should be developed because social cohesion is an ‘invisible glue that keeps a society together (UNDP, 2009, p. 14)

Social cohesion is an umbrella term that has strong ties with different concepts such as identity, social capital, social networks, social solidarity, common values, civic culture, social order and social control, social integration, community cohesion, inclusion and exclusion, interculturalism-multiculturalism.

There are not clear distinctions between social cohesion, community cohesion and social capital and sometimes they are used interchangeably. Some scholars see social cohesion as an overarching and broader term which includes community cohesion and social capital (Demireva, 2017; Jenson, 2010; Forrest and Kearns, 2001). Many other researchers treat social capital as a different field. Community cohesion researches lead by Candle and social capital researches lead by Putnam.

Ted Candle (2018) criticize the social cohesion concept as being a highlighter for economic inequalities, social class and political divisions but on the other hand, community cohesion focuses on the issues between different ethnic, faith or cultural groups and highlights racism or religious intolerance (Candle, 2018). So, community cohesion is suggested as an inclusionary term. However, Ratcliffe and Newman (2008) uncovered the blind side of the community cohesion concept. They argue that community cohesion mainly focuses on minorities which is despised as sick and unable to get into the society without any help (Ratcliffe, Newman, & Fuller, 2008, p. 15).

Robert Putnam’s social capital theory simply claims that diversity affects individuals and groups negatively (Putnam, 2000). He added another operable

dimension to the social capital concept. Bridging and bonding forms of social capital helps to understand in group and between group relationships. Bonding social capital refers to the in-group relations and bridging social capital refers to the intergroup relations (Putnam, 2000). In a group, people can support each other and produce a common identity which can be exclusive for out groups. Intergroup relationships between heterogeneous groups can lead to create shared ideas to live together. Social cohesion is different from social capital. Social capital refers to social resources of individuals (Green, Janmaat , & Han). Social cohesion and social capital may sometimes use similar indicators like trust. Social capital richness does not automatically translate into inter-group harmony.

#### **1.5.2.3. Social cohesion and Syrian Crisis**

More than seven years of civil war, Syrian conflict has branched out to different areas in the host country context. Issues on infrastructure, labor market and livelihood have risen. Early humanitarian interventions focused on providing for Syrians' basic needs, rather than on building resilience and ensuring good community relations. Then, many international organizations and international non-governmental organizations developed projects to solve these issues by framing their responses with the concept of social cohesion. Social cohesion has been identified as a key priority for the stability. The concept helps them to understand issues deeply, build long term solutions and improving mutual positive attitudes. In this part I sort out some definitions of social cohesion which are written by international organizations about Syrian refugees, resilience and social cohesion.

During the Syrian crisis, an international aid organization REACH conducted a research in Jordan and defined social cohesion as:

“Social cohesion is understood as a perceived measure of trust and level of tension between members of community groups as well as between community members and local institutions.” (REACH, 2014, p. 7)

Save The Children definition of social cohesion is based on assessment of social tensions:

“Tensions between Syrian Refugees and Lebanese nationals competing for the same resources and services are at a breaking point. Multiple social cohesion and community support initiatives were implemented to improve intercommunity relations” (Harb & Saab , 2014, p. 4)

While creating a framework for social cohesion in Turkey, issues related to refugee participation within host community and the host community’s responses to refugees are needed to take into consideration.

### **1.5.3. Social Contact Theory Literature Review**

The second concept central to this thesis is social contact. Indirect intergroup contact can have various forms; extended contact, vicarious contact, imagined contact, and electronic contact. This study highlights the importance of social contact as the most critical variable. Researchers from different backgrounds investigate how ethnic diversity is related with social cohesion, what kind of effects diversity have on social cohesion, whether it is harmful to social cohesion or not. At the end, ‘intergroup contact reduces prejudices’ is a well-accepted claim in the social contact theory literature. Many different researches verified the theory’s basic argument. However, these various questions become crucial again while forcibly displaced population (refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people) numbers have been rising across the world (UNHR, 2018, p. 13). It is clear that the world is becoming more diverse place and people face new outgroups.

A general tendency on the social contact researches was that ethnic diversity, minorities, refugees have detractive effect on some of the social cohesion indicators and most commonly trust (La Ferrara, 2002; Putnam, 2007). Additionally, Putnam's work on diversity and social cohesion relationship indicates that ethnic diversity leads people to withdraw from social life because diversity is perceived as a multiplier effect for threat and fear (Putnam, 2007). As a result of increased threat and fear, isolation from social relationships became inevitable. Unlike Putnam, some other researchers suggest that ethnic diversity has not merely negative effects social cohesion. For example, Van Der Meer and Tolsma (2014) find out that negative effect of diversity cannot be generalized because its negative effects are only limited to intra-neighborhood cohesion (Van Der Meer & Tolsma, 2014, p. 472). Similarly, The British Commission on Integration and Cohesion Report, Johnson and Soroka (1999) and 2001 Citizenship Survey in Britain find no link between ethnic minority and differences but, in where rapid new immigration exists, they find a negative correlation between diversity and cohesion (Green, Janmaat, & Han, 2009, p. 14). This shows that, the effect of diversity on trust, intergroup attitudes, social capital and social cohesion is diverse. It is related to context and country (Hewstone, 2015, p. 419). Hewstone, Schmid and Ramiah tested the relationship between diversity and trust and find out that diversity does not desperately cause to insecurity and isolation, but social contacts offer a choice to diminish negative effects of diversity on trust (Schmid, Al Ramiah, & Hewstone, 2014). Diversity does not have necessarily cause negative effects on social cohesion and trust. It offers opportunities to engage in face-to-face contact with members of outgroup contact and then it has potential positive indirect effects (Hewstone, 2015, p. 422). At the end, social contact is an important mediating process that helps to understand the link between diversity and outcomes and it is widely accepted that intergroup contact diminishes intergroup prejudice.

Allport's (1954) contact theory has a long history in the social sciences (Allport, 1954). The theory highlights that direct interpersonal contact with members of

other social groups can help to reduce stereotype, prejudice and intergroup conflict and improving intergroup relations (Allport, 1954). A lot of researches have conducted on Allport's hypothesis. Over years, this theory has been extended and reformulated. First of all, necessities of the key four conditions claimed in the contact hypothesis are questioned. According to Allport (1954), positive effects of intergroup contact occur only in four key conditions: equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals, and support of social and institutional authorities. Pettigrew's researches add another condition to this: The contact situation must have "friendship potential" (Pettigrew T. , 1998). However, some studies show that even in some cases where "optimal conditions" were absent, social contact has ability to reduce prejudice and intergroup conflict (Pettigrew T. , 1998, p. 80). According to Pettigrew and Tropp optimal circumstances are not essential but they enhance the effects (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). A recent data survey finds out the same result that is optimal circumstances determined by Allport are not necessary preconditions for positive effect (Fleming et al., 2018, p. 129). Secondly, how social contact reduces prejudice question is searched in the literature. Allport's (1954) emphasis was on the knowledge as a key mediator. Learning about outgroup was the main way to reduce prejudices. Over time, some other mediators added by several scholars. Social contact reduces prejudice by reducing negative effects (anxiety about outgroup), enhancing knowledge about outgroup and increasing positive affects (empathy and perspective taking) (Pettigrew & Tropp , 2008, p. 922). These are the most studied mediators in the social psychology literature. Pettigrew and Tropp's study supports that affective factors, such as empathy and anxiety reduction, are more effective mediators as compared to the mediator of knowledge supported by Allport (Pettigrew & Tropp , 2008, p. 929). In the end, social contact is a mechanism for reducing stereotype and prejudice and intergroup contact theory offers a more optimistic view of the consequences of diversity for trust and intergroup attitudes (Hewstone , 2015, p. 420). The beneficial effects of intergroup contact were significantly greater when the contact situation was structured to include Allport's facilitating conditions for optimal contact.

To sum up this section, some scholars support the idea that ethnic diversity has negative effects on trust and social cohesion at least in the short term (Putnam, 2007) but Putnam's thesis is contested. Yet, unlike Putnam's finding Hewstone did not find a significant effect of diversity on in-group trust, nor on out group attitudes (Hewstone , 2015). So, there are two main streams in the literature. One is diversity may affect intergroup relations negatively because it reduces trust. The other is diversity lead intergroup contact and if the contact is positive, outcomes become positive and positive outcomes such as positive attitudes to outgroups tend to foster social cohesion (Hewstone , 2015, p. 420). So, diversity affects intergroup relations positively in some contexts. Also, it is figured out that contact has more beneficial effects than previously thought (Hewstone , 2015).

#### **1.5.3.1. Social Contact Theory and Non-Formal Education**

Interpersonal contact theory focuses on racial attitudes, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and disability status (Fleming et al., 2018, p. 105). This theory can be adapted to the current situation refugees and their environment. Social cohesion usually becomes a matter of public issues after conflicts such as urban riots or migration (Peisker & Robertson, 2015, p. 75). Some conflicts cause social change especially migration lead social change and increase diversity because it brings unfamiliar people together. Such social changes increase the likelihood of high social tension between new comers and host communities (Peisker & Robertson, 2015, p. 79). General tendency on the social cohesion researches is that ethnic diversity, minorities and refugees have detractive effect on some of the social cohesion indicators, most commonly trust. Trust is important because decreased trust can cause to raise social tensions and high social tensions are perceived as low social cohesion (Guay, 2015) Also, It is argued that rising social tensions cause to withdraw of refugees from daily life

which ends up in isolation (Guay, 2015). Isolation and discrimination may reduce access to employment and livelihood opportunities for Syrian refugees.

## **SECTION TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this section the chosen methodology for the research will be presented. Starting with a description of research design, research questions, role of the researcher is explained. Then, participants, sampling, recruitment process and data collection is presented.

### **2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Turkey is witnessing a huge social transformation because of the refugee crisis, in this respect; I want to put a special emphasis on the role of NFE activities which has potential for fostering social cohesion. I have chosen NFE activities provided by NGOs because I believe that these places can be one of the major contact points for host community and refugee community. Contact between people from different groups becomes fundamental concern especially after migration. It is generally accepted that migration raises diversity and diversity -particularly new outgroups- is a threat for social cohesion. However, social contact theory has a different prediction. Intergroup contact has potential to promote positive intergroup outcomes. By taking into consideration to these discussions in the literature, I decided to write about mutual relations between host community and refugee community. I believe that Turkish community lives apart from Syrian community is not going to deliver peace and justice. We need more cooperation than divisions, we need an integrated community. It is possible to live together with differences. In this study, intergroup contact theory is applied to understand

the relationship between refugees and social cohesion. My main objective is not to measure social cohesion in the context of Syrian Refugees. I want to explain and understand the intergroup relations in the social cohesion framework.

The rarity of the studies that focus on the relationship between NFE activities and social cohesion is worthy for attention. The existing literature on social cohesion is mostly based on empirical quantitative researches. I therefore realized that a new study which focuses on the NFE activities regarding social contact theory and social cohesion theory can initiate new discussions in the literature. I believe that a thesis about Syrian refugees and social cohesion should be focus on intergroup social contacts. This study seeks to explore the social phenomena of social cohesion and social contact. The delimitation of the analyses covering the period 2011-2018 coincided with the Syrian refugee crisis which had great effects on Turkey.

Quantitative researches are mostly result oriented but qualitative researches are exploratory and try to answer questions 'why and how'. This thesis aims to produce a qualitative knowledge because qualitative research brings subjects' feelings, experiences and ideas to the fore by using their own expressions (Kümbetoğlu, 2008). In this regard, I decide to use ethnographic methods for this thesis. I think ethnographic methods are the most appropriate method while working with sensitive issues. Also, with the help of participant observation technique, I get chance to observe interpersonal interactions and the socialization of individuals in their natural habitats. So, ethnographic methods are important to get detailed and accurate information about the objects of the study.

Lastly, this thesis focuses on non-formal educational activities and aims to bridge social cohesion studies and social contact studies. Analysis of this thesis is focused on the level of the NFE activities. Also, this thesis focuses on social inclusion activities which contains both host and refugee community.

## **2.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main purpose of this thesis is to describe the relationship between NFE activities provided by NGOs and social cohesion by addressing social contact theory and considering to the Syrian Refugees in Turkey. After the literature review I conducted my research question. The research question of the thesis is:

What is the relationship between NFE activities provided by NGOs and social cohesion in Turkey regarding to the Syrian Refugees?

These sub-questions will be answered in order to answer the research question:

What kind of NFE activities are provided by NGOs in order to foster social cohesion regarding to the refugee crisis? How it is related with the Syrian refugees?

How NFE activities affect intergroup relations?

Social contact concept is mostly studied by social psychologists and this area is dominated by quantitative assessments. However, this study used qualitative research design to examine the NFE activities. Qualitative study symbolizes thinking beyond numbers. Quantitative studies aspire to produce hypothesis and get a social reality. However, aim of the qualitative studies is not to establish cause effect relationship but aim of these studies are to understand the social life, daily experiences and relations deeply (Kümbetoğlu, 2008, p. 56). This study concentrates to the today's circumstances and processes.

## **2.3. ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

Researchers' social background, ideological attitudes and personal experiences shapes their choices. As a researcher I need to state my position and the reason why I decide to study this topic. Maintaining a close contact with a Syrian family

in my personal life played an important role in forming this thesis. This has provided me a broader perspective to analyze the current situation. This thesis is born out of my suspicion about relationship between social cohesion, social contact and NFE activities provided by NGOs.

How to reduce conflict and social tension questions led me to research. In the first years of the, Syrian refugee crisis was a matter that I follow on the mass media. They were living in the refugee camps and have limited social interaction with Turkish citizens. As time passing, they became visible in the streets of metropolis cities. Then, I realized I personally do not have direct contact with any refugee family. We live in the same neighborhood, we are using same transportation, we share the same environment, but we do not have any contact. Then, I have met with a Syrian family thanks to my sister who is a teacher in a public school. We were not living in the same neighborhood and the school became a mediator for getting in touch. We did not just greet each other; we established a dialogue over time and later on we move beyond. I went to their home, eat their traditional foods and they visit us. After I met them personally, deepness of the crisis became more visible for me. Since then, I have been witnessing their struggle to build a new life in a totally strange city. Close relationship with the family enables to me to understand their agenda beyond to the livelihood concerns. I observed that they don't expect only financial support from their neighbors or host community but and they want to be a part of this country. Children want to play with other children, they want to enhance neighborhood relations and earn money with their own efforts without any discrimination. They do not just have economic difficulties in their new environment. They feel lonely and dissociate although their neighbors help them for basic needs. They want to set up social ties beyond economic concerns. If I didn't meet them personally I had not able to understand how vulnerable they are and what kind of difficulties, they face in Turkey. My interpersonal contact with a family has changed my emotions, opinions and presuppositions about Syrian refugees. That's how I decide to study Syrian refugees in the context of their social relationships.

## 2.4. PARTICIPANTS

In these study participant NGOs are selected based on their intention to foster social cohesion. Selected participant NGOs has some kind of social cohesion projects between refugees and host communities. NGOs which also work with refugees by only providing health care, livelihoods and educational aid are out of this thesis concern. NGOs which provide social cohesion activities which involve both host communities and refugee communities are selected. I have visited Yuva Association, Hiraeth Association, Mülteciler Association (Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association), KADAV (Women's Solidarity Foundation) and Yeryüzü Çocukları Association (YEÇED).

I have conducted interviews with eight people who are trainers or managers. I have met with three managers from the Mülteciler Association working in social cohesion department, one program manager from Hiraeth Association, two managers from the Children of Earth Association, one manager from Yuva and one manager from KADAV. All interviews are conducted with program managers or trainers. There are two reasons for only interviewing with managers and trainers. First one is that after workshops or trainings asking questions to participants seems like a monitoring and evaluation process. This anxiety of being perceived as a person who makes monitoring and evaluation retains me to conduct interviews with participants. I have not another chance to meet participants again because participants attend workshops only once. Secondly, participants especially Syrian refugees were not enthusiastic about talking with a researcher because of their previous experiences. The manager of Mülteciler Association said that 'women who stay in place of refuge for women are not happy with the researches and they do not want to speak with researchers.' For these two reasons, I only interviewed with managers and trainers, but I attend to the events as a participant observer and made small informal talks with participants.

I could not interview with some well-known NGOs due to their busy schedule and some other NGOs did not reply. Finally, I was able to recruit eight participants.

**KADAV (Women's Solidarity Foundation):** It was founded after the Marmara Earthquake in 1999. After the earthquake, women who went to the crisis area realized that women who were affected by earthquake did not have time for suffering trauma. They were engaging in rebuilding their lives, looking after children. So, women solidarized with the women during the crisis. After this period, KADAV was founded. Syrian Civil War caused a crisis and women were suffering from the same traumas and there was a need for solidarity. After the Syrian Crisis, the foundation was engaging with refugee women increasingly. They give sewing course, music and art classes for refugee women. Also, home visit and talking groups are organized in order to strengthen solidarity between women. They have a community center in Sefaköy in Istanbul.

**Mülteciler Association:** This association was founded in 2014 after Syrian Crisis. It is in Sultanbeyli district which hosts a significant Syrian Refugee population in Istanbul. In the first years, the association was hosting activities which aimed to Syrian Refugees. Then, it has turned into a big association. Now, they have several branches including rehabilitation center, Turkish education center, women guest house, refugee health center, vocational training center, legal support desk and social cohesion unit. Social cohesion center was founded in 2016 August. Projects support their social participation and projects aim to answer refugee's socio-cultural needs have been developing by the social cohesion unit. These activities are seen as an important tool for the development of social cohesion between two communities.

**Yuva Association:** Yuva was founded as an environment association in 2010. Their aim is 'to foster a life that respects the rights of all living beings'. They responded to the Syrian Crisis differently. They did not only provide aid for Syrian refugees; their main intention is to create interaction between Syrian refugees and host communities. So they integrated human rights and civic,

intercultural and political education to their mission. Their works range from providing livelihoods, protection, advocacy to education. Yuva has adapted their method according to community based non-formal education. They are using non-formal methods while creating social cohesion in the society. They set up trainings, workshops on different topics.

**Yeryüzü Çocukları Association:** It is founded officially in 2017 by a group of volunteers who are very eager to help Syrian refugee children. They are a volunteer-based association. They do not have any professional paid workers. In 2016, they initiate a project for child workers. They provide conditional support to families of child workers because children have to work in order to look after their families. They worked closely with the Syrian associations during the determination process of which families of the child workers will be supported. They still give support families and at the same time they provide non formal educational activities for Syrian children as a complementary for formal education. These classes are backed up with drama, art and storytelling workshops. In addition to these classes and workshops, they run a mentorship project. A university student and a Syrian child is matched, and they meet once a week for some joint activities or just for doing homework. They help Syrian refugee children to reach formal education and support them for staying in the system.

**Hiraeth Association:** It is officially established in 2017 by a group of university student as a response for Syrian Refugee crisis. They are working with children since 2014. They run a project in Istanbul Commerce University called the bond project. More than 50 Syrian children attend activities which includes homework groups and non-formal activities. Morning session is designed as tutoring session. Volunteers help children's homework or teach according to basic education curriculum. In the afternoon both volunteer and child attends workshops which are designed as non-formal education. These workshops are entertaining and aim to support their integration and wellbeing. Art, language, drama and intelligent games are some examples of the workshops.

## **2.5. RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

Two different recruitment processes are applied in this thesis. I send e-mail to some participants and I use my personal network to reach some other participants. First of all, participants were invited to take part in the study through an e-mail that demonstrates the purpose of the study, research questions and research method. This e-mail was sent to their contact addresses available in their websites. I made contact with Mülteciler Association through e-mail. They kindly invite me to their building and help me while I was making my investigation. Also, snowball sampling is used in this study. I reached Hiraeth Association and Yeryüzü Çocukları Association through my personal network. I met with KADAV foundation in a workshop in the Mülteciler Association building. Then, I met with them in their building and visited their community center.

## **2.6. SAMPLING**

In the qualitative studies, nonprobability sampling is used mostly because qualitative researches do not intend to produce statistical knowledge. By contrast, quantitative methods use probability sample because aim is to produce statistical knowledge. Purposive sampling is a technique in the nonprobability sampling method. Researchers decide the sample according to their knowledge of the population and the goal of the study. The sample is selected on particular characteristics of the study. The present study used purposive sampling to select potential participants. This technique allows researchers to use his/her own expertise and knowledge in selecting the sample. The study also used snowball sampling which is another nonprobability sampling technique.

## 2.7. DATA COLLECTION

Interviews and participant observation methods are used together. In the thesis, participant observation is the main method for gathering information and interviews are also thought as an important tool for collecting information because interviews complement and deepen the knowledge acquired during the participant observation. Interviews are a practical method for learning how people think and feel. All interviews presented in the study are conducted as face-to-face.

Interviews have many different kinds. One of them is open-ended interview which can be either discursive or semi-directed. In the thesis, I used discursive open-ended interview method because discursive interviews enable interviewees to say what is relevant and important to them. Firstly, I asked broad questions, and this make the atmosphere flexible and allow respondents to use their own words. I avoid asking biased questions and wording is kept simple.

During the data collection I attend to the activities as a participant observer and conducted face to face interviews. The interviews were conducted with program managers and trainers primarily. Each interview lasted about one hour and not all interviews were recorded for transcription purposes. Interviews were conducted before the NFE sessions and all of them were in the NGO's buildings. I have conducted open ended interviews with social cohesion project managers. In these interviews, I asked questions about what kind of activities they organize, how these activities affect intergroup relations. Before moving on the essence of the interview, I asked some buffer questions because these interviews are the first contacts between me and the organization and I need to gain their trust. So, firstly, I asked questions about associations and their works. This also helps me to get deep information about the association which is not written on their website. Talking about their association allow them to describe their association in their own words and soften the atmosphere.

After the interviews, I attended to their social cohesion activities. Presence directly in the non-formal educational areas helps me to observe the reciprocal aspect of the social contact and interviews with the trainers and managers help me to get information deeply. I try to observe participants individually and at the same time I try to understand how two communities interact. During the observation, I take notes. Notes can include the conditions and circumstances in which interview takes place and the general feelings (Bray, 2008). Instead of using tape recorder, I prefer to write down notes and quotes as fast as I could. I wrote them on the computer later. That's why my citations of people were not precisely but the essence of what the informants said is reflected.

## **2.8. DATA ANALYSIS**

Data I gathered during fieldwork mostly consist of field notes, interview notes and a mix of description of events. They are all self-reflectively elaborated notes. I define central categories and then I located the collected data in each related category. I use this data together with information gathered from wide literature of social cohesion and social contact theories.

There are different ways of data analysis, whether it can be narrative (the researcher telling the story), discursive (the informant telling her story), or punctuated (Bray, 2008, p. 313). In this thesis, I tell the story by using narrative method.

## SECTION THREE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings which are collected through ethnographic methods which constitute face to face interviews and participant observations. While discussing the findings, the theoretical debates mentioned above are considered. I benefited from the literature in the fields of social cohesion and social contact theory. This section is divided into two parts. Part one shows the non-formal educational activities provided by NGOs and part two discusses the role of the non-formal educational activities in social cohesion and debates how these activities affect intergroup relations. This study attempts to understand the relation between non-formal educational activities provided by NGOs and social cohesion regarding to the Syrian refugees in Turkey.

### 3.1. NON-FORMAL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY NGOs

NFE programming includes community-based education, psychosocial activities, catch-up programs, basic literacy and numeracy programs, drama, art, cultural programs and accelerated learning programs. I have attended activities which are designed for children, young and adults because non-formal education is a lifelong learning process and NFE activities can aim adults and children and it cannot be restricted with age and sex. In this part, I summarize NFE activities provided by NGOs that I visited and try to explain the educational practices that comprise NFE programming.

First of all, I attended a workshop in the Yuva Association. It was training about living together titled 'living together: Migration and Social Cohesion Training'. It was an all-day long training and participants were mostly youngsters from host community and Syrian refugee community. Training was designed according to non-formal educational priorities. Name games, ice-break games were played.

Playing these games made atmosphere warmer and friendlier. We were sitting in a circle form and debate about what means Istanbul, neighborhood and migration for us and the meaning of social cohesion. Then we divided into four groups and tried to write a story. In the small group we got chance to talk directly with Syrian participants and we cooperate for the writing. In this meeting, Allport's all four conditions and additionally Pettigrew and Troops condition were available. Members of the two communities were equal during the contact. The story writing activity requires cooperation. We discussed and shared our ideas in order to write a story that reflects all of our desires. We met for the same goal to talk about living together. Also, writing a story activity served as a common goal for every participant. The atmosphere was not competitive; it was more cooperative. During the activity it was obvious that the activity was supported and guided by an authority. The activity also contained friendship potential. After the meeting, participants were very willing to contact again. Some of the participants took phone numbers and social media addresses of their new friends. I clearly observed that, this NFE activity meets the all conditions declared by Allport. Equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goal and support of authority existed. Also, the activity had friendship potential as claimed by Pettigrew and Troop. In my opinion, Allport's conditions were very facilitating to create positive outcomes. In this activity, outcomes were positive for me and positive for the other participants as I observed.

Secondly, I spent my one day with Hiraeth Association. Hiraeth is a volunteer homework support group. Members of association are creative and dynamic because all of them are university students and volunteer. They help children to stay in school by providing homework, curriculum and language support. Its fund is based on largely personal and fundraising activities and donations. They started to work with children in 2014. Now, they are helping more than 50 children. They organize workshops and homework support programs for children who live in Yeşilpınar and Akşemseddin districts because these neighborhoods are shantytowns and host a significant number of Syrian refugees. In the first years,

they make psycho-drama and painting workshops for children as a psycho-social support. Teaching language was not the main objective of the project but the manager of the Hiraeth said that 'After for a while we realized that without Turkish language, it is impossible to talk about social cohesion'. Then, they run a project called 'Dream Tent Project'. In this project, they focused on children's education and language proficiency more. Children who went to Syrian schools and children who could not go to any school were attending the project together. Then, they realized that children who couldn't go to school were losing their ability to learn. They were coming to the project but that was not enough for them. Since then, they developed and changed their style. They continue to give lessons to them and they started to campaign for enrolment of children to any organized education. Some of the children enrolled the Temporary Education Centers and some of them chose to enroll Turkish formal schools. They helped Syrian families for enrolment by providing in-kind aid (i.e. service fee) and act as a bridge between families and schools. Now, they aim to integrate Syrian children to the formal schools.

Manager told that families were very enthusiastic about education but sometimes they were driven to the despair because of economic reasons and harsh attitudes of the school managers toward Syrian families. During our conversation, she shared her observations from the field. She said that 'many of the family lost their hope to turn back, just a few families were talking about going back to Syria and now I don't know what they feel, I don't think that they still have any hope for turning back'. Her observation is parallel with the statistics. After the association had understood the situation, they wanted to enroll children to the Turkish formal schools. Anyway, Temporary Education Centers have been closed slowly. Just a family rejected to enroll their small children to the Turkish schools. The family was thinking going back to Syria and parents have anxiety about their children to forget native language Arabic. The family accepted to send their two older children to the Imam Hatip High Schools because in there, Arabic language lessons exist. This example shows that families who have hope to go back have

anxiety of losing identity and families who lost their hope for going back attempts to integrate to the country.

The association has contact with the families and schools. They guide Syrian families during the enrolment processes. The enrolment system as she told is very complex and arbitrary. She says 'the system does not allow a typical Syrian family to enroll a Turkish school. Some school managers do not know the system and send Syrian families back'. The association supports the Syrian families during the enrolment process and after enrolment. They visit schools and contact with teachers and share information about Syrian children. They support children's cohesion for school by cooperating with the family. This cooperation is important because as Ungar states that interaction between school, family and community promotes children's development and their resilience (Ungar, 2012, p. 14). She told a devastating event that a Syrian child faced at Turkish school. That Syrian girl was accused of stealing. All children in the class accused the girl and teacher could not protect the girl because she was inexperienced. The association went to the school and stand by the girl, but the girl stopped going to the school now. They try to convince girl for turning back to school. Beside from cooperating with the family for fostering social cohesion, they try to teach them Turkish by using non-formal methodologies. Additionally, they support their academic achievement by providing homework support and by organizing workshops which aim to support their well-being. They do not just provide mere entertainment or mere academic support for them. The association has so far managed to enroll participant children in a formal school. Every weekend, they primarily organize homework group and tutoring for math, science, and physics and, they offer informal Turkish language education courses as well as Arabic language classes and drama and art educations. Learning environment promotes protection for these Syrian children and contributes to the psychosocial well-being of learners. Children are very eager to come to the lessons. So, the purpose is to integrate Syrian children into formal schools and ensure that they are included and

staying in the system. Currently, more than 50 children are coming to the lessons provided by Hiraeth.

In Hiraeth Association, I have attended both homework and workshops sessions. Each child is coupled with a volunteer. In the morning session, they study lessons together and after lunch the volunteer and the children attend workshops together. The workshops are ranging from art, language, cultural values to drama and intelligent games. In the art workshops, they made portraits and emphasize differences between people. In the drama workshop, they organized a 'the voice' competition and children song in Turkish and Arabic. They built a model neighborhood from recycled materials. I have attended a workshop about 3-D printers. In this workshop based on technology, children saw a video about how 3-D printers work and they learned about their different uses. Then, I have attended workshop based on cultural values. It was about continents and countries. They were learning about continents and oceans. It was not like a formal environment. The facilitator used different materials to attract children. After that, I have attended another workshop about language learning. The atmosphere was very competitive because it was designed as a competition. The facilitator was reading the question which one of the children had chosen from the bag and other group members try to find the answer. It was very stormy, and children were entertaining. Workshops after homework sessions are helpful for their language learning process. Workshop was not designed as objective oriented lessons. Students do not memorize words, but instead they learn informally and use their creativity.

To sum up, I observed that tutoring is a form of non-formal education that encourages Syrian refugee children's participation in social life, increases their motivation and self-esteem. In this association non-formal education is not just formed for academic success. In here, children feel safety and develop sense of belonging.

Thirdly, I have visited Mülteciler Association. It was established after the Syrian refugee crisis in 2014. After two years they set up social cohesion department. It has a refugee-centered approach. The idea behind the association was to serve as an area for satisfying the cultural needs of the Syrian Refugees. However, now they are a professional and large association which has many different branches and two different buildings in Sultanbeyli. They founded Refugee Councils for fostering social cohesion. They thought that ‘They have been living here for years but they are not represented by any institution. However, these councils did not meet the expected objectives. According to a manager in the social cohesion branch, people who attend the councils were mainly debating about the economic needs of the refugees, but the project managers expected to talk about refugee rights and political representation. Then they freeze the councils, but the women council continued and changed its form. According to the manager, women more tend to be in solidarity with each other, so they continue to meet.

They work with children, women, men and youngsters. They run many different kinds of non-formal educations. When I have visited their building, they were giving a vocational course about construction. Additionally, they run a kindergarten. Host community members and refugee families can send their children and children receive education together. Moreover, they open courses for supporting school curriculum. This course is open to both Syrians children and host community children. The manager states that ‘this year host community members are very interested in these courses. This term, 30 host community members enrolled, and the others are waiting for the enrolment as well’. The host community has been exploring the association recently. Because of its name and its majority of Syrian beneficiaries, host community perceived the association that only give services to the refugees. So, the association works together with all age groups in a wide area. According to manager, ‘it is easier to reach and work with children in comparison with women because it is easy to break prejudices of a child. Adults have stricter attitudes and they do not even want to share same places.’ ‘Adults hardly establish friendly relationships and Sultanbeyli is a place

where stereotypes are very common'. Nevertheless, the manager said that 'after an event, we heard that a woman from host community told the Syrian women: 'we do not know you like that''. In this association, I have attended two different activities. First one was as the breakfast format and second one was a workshop about gender inequality.

The first meeting was in a café in Sultanbeyli. There were four Syrian woman and five Turkish women. A translator and a moderator came from the association. Women did not know each other. Their children were taking same courses in the association. This was their common ground to start a dialogue. During the breakfast, everyone introduced themselves and talk about children, neighbors and children's academic achievements. Moderator were asking questions and participants were answering one by one but after for a while conversation turned into individual talks. Still, two groups were not separated sharply. They continue to interact and not excluded each other. They complained about impishness of their children. A Syrian mother stated that 'my neighbors complain about my children because he is very noisy, and I try to stop him but he is very stubborn. I can't stop him'. All Turkish participants said all children are same; it is not about being Syrian or being Turkish. Their children also make noises and neighbors should be more tolerant. So, identity and migration issues were discussed. Related to these issues, aids provided to Syrians were also discussed. Every participant estimates the issue according to their experiences in their neighborhoods. However, majority of the Turkish participant perceive that 'Syrians get aid much more'. While talking about neighbor relations, Turkish families emphasize that they have positive relations with their Syrian neighbors. A Turkish woman said that 'in the special days we deliver food to our neighbors and we do not exclude them and also they send us what they cook. We get on well'. Syrian women also told their positive stories. Then, we told our migration stories and we realized that everybody has a migration background. A Syrian woman told that she did not see her family for two years and added if her family was here, she would have felt less alienated because at least she would have someone to share her feelings about

being a stranger in a different country. Then, we talked about being a mother and sharing housework with partners. In the end, we made great time and share our feelings about being a woman. This was the first meeting for the project and after the breakfast the manager told me that the format is not well suited, so they want to change the format and find new ways to bring together women.

The second meeting was in the association's additional building. I have attended an education designed according to non-formal educational considerations. Majority of the participants were Syrian women who stay in the association's guest house. There were only three women from the host community. We began the education with a name game. We discussed who gave our names to us. Majority of the participant's names are given by fathers or grandparents. From this point of view, we discussed social gender inequality. We played ice breaker games and watched a video about early marriage. Participants and facilitators gave examples from their lives. The woman solidarity is emphasized. Also, being a migrant in Turkey is discussed. They gave some positive and negative answers. They said in Turkey, they learned Turkish and embroidery. Another woman told her story. She had a serious traffic accident in Turkey. A truck hit her and run away. When she was in the hospital, police officers came and after they learnt she is from Syria, they make discrimination and they minimize the accident. She said she felt very humiliated.

In my opinion, the second event was more efficient. The first event was more informal and the environment setting made dual conversation difficult. Syrian women were speaking with Syrians and Turkish women were speaking with Turkish participants more. Dialogue among groups was limited. The conversation was infertile. However, I think second event was more entertaining and supportive for interaction. Two groups interact more and encouraged to understand each other. The conversation was structured and purposive. The ice break games the atmosphere positive and warm. They feel comfortable to talk and the games help to construct trust among participants.

To sum up, the association provides many different kinds of non-formal education. One is vocational courses for supporting economic social integration and also hand craft courses for women from every community. Secondly, they provide language courses for Syrian refugees. Thirdly, they provide kindergarten education for early school aged children. Fourthly, they provide catch up and supporting basic education programs for two communities. Fifthly, they run many different kinds of cultural and art events aim to bring together different communities for children and woman.

Fourthly, I have visited the Yeryüzü Çocukları Association which is established in 2017 officially. In 2016, a group of friends ran a project called 'their job is education' which aims to provide education for children who have to work. During a year, they gave free basic education to them because at that time education provision was decentralized and Syrian children were not able to go to formal Turkish schools and Temporary Education Centers were not free. The manager of the association told that 'at that time thirty children were attending classes in every weekday and we provide basic education to them in a complementary and catch-up form'.

YECED take the road for helping to the children who have to work. Children who work face significantly higher barriers in accessing formal education, so it is important to take them from workplaces to the educational areas. The association gave in cash aid for the families whose children were working and provided education to them for a year. At that time, NGOs were playing an increasing role in education service delivery for refugees because giving education to out of camp Syrian children were not officially and legally supported by Ministry of National Education. So, NFE activities rose in the form of providing public education. Then, Ministry of National Education took responsibility for refugee children and children started to enroll to the formal schools. Many NGOs have adapted to the situation. It seems that the association has experienced the same transformation. The association was providing basic education in the form of non-formal education. However, after the Ministry of National Education changed its policy,

it also has changed its policy as a response. So, the association lasts its cash aid for families but changed its tactic. Actually, they never attempt to be an alternative for formal education, but they provide education during a year because of the circumstances of that time. After this transformation, they formed a summer course as a catch-up education program for the Syrian children who had to work and who were already students and who had no previous schooling. During the education planning they faced many different problems. One of them was related to the curriculum. There was no official curriculum and manager of the YECED said that 'we develop our own curriculum in here for summer course'. After the summer school, they have initiated a mentor program. Manager of the YECED explained that they decide what to teach by considering the children psychological and academic needs together. She stated that 'children lose years because of the war and when they start to the school they usually had to go to lower classes. In addition to this, they confront with language barriers. These cause psychological problems. We try to solve this problem by providing accelerated learning programs, catch-up programs, language classes and psychosocial activities together. And we developed a mentor program for this reason'. Mentor program has many advantages. First of all, children learn Turkish language but can't have opportunity to practice it. YECED managers I talked stated that 'these children do not have many Turkish friends. They have limited interaction. They feel lonely, disharmonious and isolated'. In this program, refugee students speak Turkish with their mentors. This is important because they have limited opportunities for learning Turkish through interaction with their peers. Secondly, mentors help their lessons. A significant focus is placed on students' proficiency in reading, writing in Turkish and math through non-formal lessons with mentors. They tended to focus heavily on language acquisition because they believe that Turkish is the most important precondition for enrolment and staying in a formal school in Turkey. That's why they have a library and students can borrow a book from the library and after a week they debate about the book with their mentor. Thirdly, mentor program not just support academic success, it gives affective support to

the Syrian refugee children. In the association they share emotions and the relationship is based on mutual trust, empathy and respect.

I have attended one of their mentor programs. They currently serve in three different places. I went to their building in Küçükçekmece. They run their project in a building that another NGO gave them for two years. When children came to the association, they follow the daily routine that was decided by managers according to their level. First of all, they talk with mentors about their books that they already borrowed and then, students read their diaries if they want. The association encourages students to write dairies in order to develop their writing skills. Then, the mentor teaches five Turkish words to the child and child teaches five Arabic words to the mentor. This session is designed for develop their language proficiency. I think word sharing process is very important because children feel themselves valuable. When they did not speak Turkish, they are treated like they do not know any language. However, this activity respects their language and emphasizes that social cohesion is a bi directional. Then they move on to the lessons. A mentor has average three students. Mentors give lessons to them according to their needs. After the lessons, they play box games together.

YECED is a volunteer organization which targets out of school refugee children. For YECED coordinator, keeping students off the streets is the main purpose and other purposes are to provide accession opportunities to formal schooling and support Syrian students in formal schools.

Lastly, I have visited Woman's Solidarity Foundation which is a professional foundation works with woman, disaster and migration issues for many years since 1999 Marmara Earthquake. After the earthquake, it is realized that women who were affected by natural disaster did not have time for suffering a trauma. The foundation aimed to help women by providing rehabilitation programs and supporting their economic independence by supporting their production activities. They began with disaster solidarity between women and in time they included other women issues like social gender inequality and advocate for woman rights.

They now have special focus on woman convict and refugee woman because each group is subjected to multiple discriminations. A refugee woman is exposed to discrimination because of her woman identity and secondly because of her refugee identity. War is a mankind disaster and women are affected by this disaster more. They try to rebuild their lives. They continue to look after their children and do housework. They do not have time for trauma. KADAV foundation aims to help them. They traditionally work with migrant women, but they have special focus on Syrian Refugee Women.

They opened a community center in Sefaköy. They give sewing courses, music, art workshops for Syrian women. At the beginning, women were not interested in the courses. They set course time align with their children's courses and they open courses according to their demand. Majority of the woman requested to learn practical Turkish. The foundation on the other hand formed a talk group. Talk groups are important because women need to talk about their identities and share their problems. In these groups, women learn about their identity, realize social gender inequality and develop a solidarity mechanism.

I visited their office in Beyoğlu and met with a trainer who is a program manager at the same time. They are working with Syrian refugee women since 2016. They do not provide aid to refugees, but they develop some psycho-social support activities for them. They have two different ways to reach refugee women. One is contact through home visits. Second is contact through community center. A woman invites her neighbors and opens her doors to KADAV. They meet in a house and talk about women issues, solutions and legal rights. In the home visits, they meet many women from different identities. Manager states that 'meeting in a mixed group sometimes become risky. Syrian women are subjected to double discrimination. When we say we also face discrimination and abuse it is because of our woman identity, it seems we overestimate their migration background'. During the home visits, they use non-formal educational methods. They play some name games and ice break games. They determine the topic of the meeting and moderate the talk. The manager also states that 'it is important to answer

some of their needs such as helping to issue identification card or direct them to the aid'. By doing this, they trust our foundation and they start to visit our community centers. After they attend our workshops, they trust us much more and in the talk groups they tell their stories which they did not tell before. They do not tell their real stories before trusting'. So, trusting to the foundation is important and I think in this chain non-formal education has a role to play. NFE helps to break ices between participants, facilitates to develop empathy and increases trust. NFE also help trainers by blurring the lines between KADAV managers and all participants and places them as equal during the activity.

To sum up, their aim is to get women out of the home and provide them psychosocial support and sense of solidarity. KADAV aims to make sure Syrian refugees are aware of their rights as a woman and some protection and solidarity programs available to them. The foundation uses non-formal educational methods while working with woman.

As stated before, non-formal education has three different roles: compensatory, supplementary and alternative (Hoppers, 2000, p. 9). Compensatory type of non-formal education includes basic education and vocational education programs. Supplementary non-formal education includes catch-up programs, remedial programs. Alternative non-formal education includes psychological support activities, community building programs, thematic workshops and civic dialogue.

KADAV mostly provides alternative type of non-formal education through socio-psychological support and community-based programs. Hiraeth and YECED provide supplementary kind of non-formal education through catch up programs and remedial programs such as tutoring and mentoring. YECED before was implementing compensatory form of non-formal education. During a year, they gave education to the children in weekdays and developed their own curriculum. Then, they organized a summer course for students who missed periods and adapt them to the new system. Their intension for using basic form of non-formal education is to allow children to access education. When government allowed the

Syrian refugee students to enroll formal schools, they changed their policy. They focused on supplementary form of non-formal education by developing mentor system for refugee children. Similarly, Hiraeth Association uses tutoring method to keep children at schools and also, they use alternative non-formal educational method to help their social integration. Mülteciler Association and Yuva Association are more professional on refugee issues comparing with the others. They have social cohesion branches, community centers and large budget. They all provide all these three kinds of non-formal educations. They have vocational programs for refugees, community based educational activities and they support civic dialog through thematic workshops for all age groups. Mülteciler Association has catch up programs for children from host community and refugee community. They also provide vocational courses for man and woman. They carry on many different workshops with children from two communities and with woman and youngsters. Yuva Association naturalized non-formal educational methods. They run multiple projects at the same time. They provide protection, advocacy, livelihood and education to refugees. They have a community-based approach and use alternative methods of non-formal educational activities more. They organize workshops to bring communities together.

Table 1: NGOs and Their NFE Activities

	Compensatory Non-Formal Education		Supplementary Non-Formal Education		Alternative Non-Formal Education
	Vocational Education	Basic Education	Catch-up Programs	Remedial Programs	
KADAV					X
Hiraeth				X	X
YEÇED		X		X	
Yuva Association	X	X	X		X
Mülteciler Association	X		X		X

### 3.2. ROLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN SOCIAL COHESION

Compensatory non-formal education enables vulnerable children to re-entry to the formal system. Usually basic education and vocational education is perceived as compensatory education. In the context of Syrian refugees in Turkey, non-formal education was provided in the form of basic education in the first years of the crisis because the answer of the question regarding how long they will stay in Turkey were absent in these years. NGOs and temporary education centers were providing educational services as independent actors. There were many actors in the field and they were neither under the state nor the UNHCR's regulations. Additionally, there were no standard curriculum and language of instruction for refugees who attend lessons in the NGOs. Curriculum, language of instruction and finally education provision were highly decentralized. Due to these constraints, NGOs had to focus on providing basic education in the non-formal education formatted. At that time, except for KADAV, all associations I have contacted support basic literacy and numeracy programs in the non-formal education formatted to support formal education. Accessing to education is protective for refugee children but providing formal education may not necessarily foster social cohesion. There are many hidden barriers and NGOs realized the situation and work for to decrease these barriers by providing academic lessons in the catch-up formatted and by providing language lessons to them. Now, NGOs are more aware of the children's issues in the social life. So, some of the NGOs also focus on the social needs of refugee children in a different format of non-formal education. In the end, NFE programs fill a major gap by providing access to education and create a safety environment for children. Education has a protective role to decrease the war effects and going to formal school is not enough for social cohesion.

The other compensatory type of non-formal education is vocational education programs. They become widespread increasingly. Vocational trainings enable refugees to compete fairly in the job market. It increases their employability and

opportunities to find a qualified job. Employment is one side of the social cohesion. Of course, employment does not solve all the social problems, but it is a 'sine qua non'. Compensatory type of non-formal education can increase social cohesion by increasing employment and secondly by ensuring that refugee children go to school.

Supplementary non-formal education programs including catch-up and remedial programs have a crucial role in the adaptation of the refugee students to the school by strengthening the links between formal and non-formal education. These programs are organized for refugee children who have missing years and who are already students but have difficulty to adapt new curricula. They try to catch up to the level with the help of these programs. Flexible and adaptable structure of NFE is an advantage for expanding schooling opportunities for refugees and NFE areas create healthy environment for learning. They provided basic education to children when they did not have opportunity to reach formal schools. However, after refugee children enroll to formal school, they face other problems related to their identities and some of them did not want to go to school. So, NGOs changed their strategy and adapted to the situation. They introduced supplementary NFE programs to support them in the schools. Beyond the academic needs, NFE meets the affective needs of refugees. NGOs may support social cohesion through education. Mülteciler Association organizes courses in their buildings. They have professional teachers and serve both host community and refugee community. On the other hand, Hiraeth and YECED use NFE methods in the form of remedial programs such as tutoring and mentoring. YECED on the other hand formed catch-up programs and basic programs for the Syrian Children. They use NFE methods to expand formal education opportunities among Syrian refugees. They help to facilitate their matriculation to formal schooling and then support them in the schools. These tutoring and mentoring programs also support refugee children's well-being because mentoring is not just about giving academic support. Mentors also build an affective relationship. They sometimes visit schools with children's families and act as their protector. Mentors take

responsibility for their social activities. So, these programs have an important role in social cohesion by creating affective relationship. Supplementary NFE increases social cohesion by creating welcoming and safe environment for learners; by facilitating positive group interaction; by giving lessons which offers opportunity to develop the students' integration into the host country culture; by buffering issues they are facing outside of the classroom and finally by encouraging them and giving them hope for the future.

Alternative types of non-formal educational methods are also applied by NGOs in a widespread manner. Psychological support activities are the answer of the refugees' need of social inclusion. KADAV's home visits are designed for this purpose. Psychological support meetings are different from psychological therapies. These programs usually contain NFE methods and aim is to share problems, establish supportive relationships and act with solidarity. Working in a community-based manner is also another fruitful way for creating social cohesion. Refugees have different educational and psychosocial needs. For children going to school alone may not able to meet their needs and for woman who stuck at home may not be sustainable for her wellbeing. So, participation in some activities beyond school and family environment may promote opportunities for social inclusion. Non-formal education in that sense gains importance because it can facilitate their inclusion in society by providing several learning contexts for all ages. Community based education fosters social cohesion because it supports active citizenship by serving as a mean between communities. Also, these types of programs increase commitment to neighborhood and encourage participation and make refugees more active in society and support their well-being. Thematic workshops and civic dialogue make refugees' environment more inclusive. In these places, conversation is contextualized, and the meetings aim to increase interaction between two communities. These places serve like a contact point and forms positive contact. During the meeting, with the help of the non-formal educational methods empathy is supported. In my opinion, this kind of NFE is much more effective. As I observed, in the first place when they enter the new

environment participants feel nervous but ice-breaking games, energizers and the NFE methods transform the environment into a friendly and safety place. Participants interact much and trust each other.

To sum up, all NFE activities provide a social environment that facilitates their well-being and positively affect refugees' sense of belonging. Also, NFE areas open the way for social networks which is important for social cohesion because it helps to generate beneficial forms of social capital. Additionally, NFE areas increase interaction between two communities and accordingly prevent social exclusion. Catch-up programs aim to refugee children's social cohesion in the school. Alternative NFE programs like can be seen as a means of self-expression and which leads to understand other cultures and increases empathy. Psycho-social NFE programs aims to increase trust. Some other NFE activities teach their rights as a refugee and increases social cohesion. Workshops which bring host community and refugee community together also aim to build trust and sharing experiences. All these activities also aim to contribute on the language acquisition and consequently social inclusion of refugees. Alternative non-formal education should be provided for Syrian refugee education because non-formal education has an important role for developing personal, social and professional skills (Council of Europe, 1999) and most importantly, these NFE activities contribute to a broader idea of living together and social cohesion.

### **3.3. ROLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE CREATION OF SOCIAL CONTACT**

All kind of NFE activities differently contribute to the social cohesion. Social cohesion can be supported through education, economy and interaction. I observed that some NGOs focus on education in order to create social cohesion; some others focus on economy through vocational educational activities and very little directly prioritize the social interaction as a mean for fostering social

cohesion. It is accepted that the living conditions of Syrian refugees are extremely challenging in Turkey. They face high rates of poverty because of lack of job opportunities and lack of affordable housing. These economic and social difficulties are important regarding social cohesion because these barriers make social integration difficult. Vocational trainings provided by NGOs aim to help social cohesion by enhancing employability. It is believed that non-formal education provides added value for economy and society (Council of Europe, 1999). However, economic growth does not always contribute positively to social cohesion (Harb, 2017). There is no standard formula for achieving social cohesion. I accept that increased economic opportunity, access to basic services, increased political participation and representation will foster social cohesion. On the other hand, I believe that social interaction is a substantial contributor to social cohesion between host communities and migrants. In this thesis, I mostly focused on this horizontal side of the social cohesion and I believe that non-formal educational areas which aim to bring host community and refugee community together strengthens the social cohesion by increasing empathy, reducing prejudices and providing knowledge about each other. I observed in the field that, this kind of NFE activities' atmosphere was more friendly and positive comparing to the other kinds of NFE activities.

In addition, I believe that quality of the contact is important for creating positive contact and NFE areas offer positive contact opportunities. Contribution of both parties is the precondition of the two ways interaction. Nevertheless, bringing two communities under the same roof do not always produce positive results. Informal social interaction for example does not ensure positive results because participants may not know how to get involved and interact with each other. However, non-formal educational areas can be an alternative to create positive social interaction. In these NFE areas, participants interact with each other in a structured way. I think the NFE activities meet with the conditions which are stated by Allport in order to create positive interaction. NFE essentially contains all the conditions; equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation,

institutional support and additionally friendship potential which is stated by Pettigrew and Troop. Although, Pettigrew and Tropp noted, that optimal circumstances are not necessary preconditions for the contact, they facilitate to create positive outcomes (Pettigrew and Troop 68). They also state that real life conditions cannot meet all these conditions. However, NFE areas have potential to create these conditions.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the entire research, recommendations and limitations. In this study, I attempt to identify the role of NFE activities provided by NGOs and understand the relation between non-formal educational activities provided by NGOs and social cohesion regarding to the Syrian refugees in Turkey. My focus is on the impact of NFE on social cohesion in the context of refugees. In the literature much attention has been given to the formal education and little has been given to NFE activities. I used qualitative methods because qualitative studies symbolize thinking beyond the numbers and facilities to understand situation.

Employment, health, education, housing and social dialogue are important factors of social cohesion. I believe that education is the most suitable way of building social cohesion between host community and refugee community because education has power to change the way people think about others and also changes the scope and quality of their social relationships with other people (Musick & Wilson, 2007, p. 126). However, schools instead of serving as the provider of social cohesion, they can be discriminator. In Turkey, the formal educational system is not providing inclusive and quality education for all (European Association for the Education of Adults [EAEA], 2018, p. 61). Also, it is believed that formal education alone cannot answer to the challenges of society

especially at the time of increased diversity and for solution of this problem Council of Europe recommends non-formal education as a de facto answer (Council of Europe, 1999).

Non-formal education has three main roles in refugee education. They are compensatory, supplementary and alternative. Compensatory NFE consists of basic education which aims to open possibility for reentry to the formal schools and vocational education which aims to increase formal job opportunities. Supplementary NFE consists of catch-up programs and remedial programs. They are based on supporting to the children in the formal school system. Alternative NFE consists of psychological support activities, community building programs, thematic workshops and civic dialogue.

In Turkey, political, legal and institutional arrangements were late for educational needs of refugees who live out of the camps. State remained unresponsive but non-state actors involved in education and deliver non-formal educational services. The institutions that provide educational services derived from international aid agencies, INGOs, local NGOs to NGOs which are established after the crisis. In the first years of the crisis, NFE filled a gap in education service provision as providing basic education for refugee children. After formal schools become accessible for all Syrian refugee children, compensatory non-formal educational activities have changed its form and turned into supplementary form. It seems that NFE programs are not a stopgap, they are adapting to the new circumstances.

Most of the Syrian children want to go to a formal school where they can get certificate which facilitates their access to labor market. Vocational forms of non-formal educational activities are still available for all ages. Supplementary forms of NFE activities support to children in the schools by providing catch up and language programs. Some NGOs give lessons in a classroom, some others run tutoring and mentor projects. Alternative NFE aims to social inclusion and intercultural learning. All NFE programs aim to foster social cohesion in different

ways. Compensatory NFE activities especially vocational programs aim to foster social cohesion by expanding employment opportunities for refugees. Supplementary programs aim to foster social cohesion through improving educational attainment and supporting them in there because it is believed that school spaces protect refugees from isolation. Alternative NFE programs support social cohesion in many ways. They facilitate interaction by bringing two different communities together. Contact has an important role in reducing prejudices. According to Pettigrew and Troop prejudice limit intergroup contact and contact reduces prejudices (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011, p. 160).

Refugee influx in Turkey does not only bring unfamiliar people together. It caused to change in the social structures and demography. More importantly, it heightens social tensions between newcomers and host community. When host country community perceives that refugees are the source of unemployment, violence and high rents, this negatively impacts social cohesion. People's estimation of other groups and state authorities have impact on social tensions, social conflict and consequently, social cohesion. There is a need to combat discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance against refugees. Every actor has different roles for social integration of refugees.

The findings emphasize that there is a need for holistic approach to refugee education across contexts of formal educational concerns. Schools cannot meet the needs of refugees. Activities which promotes social inclusion should be maintained. Alternative form of educational activities can help to facilitate refugee's inclusion by creating affective and inclusionary environments. These alternative form of NFE activities can complement and supplement formal schooling and education provides an intercultural dialogue opportunity which is vital for achieving social cohesion. Besides academic subjects, in the alternative form of NFE areas refugees and host community can learn about citizenship and human rights together. I observed that the activities which are designed according to alternative NFE methods much more effective for creating social cohesion. In these activities, participants feel more self-disclosure because the environment is

flexible, supporter and warmer. The dialogue is structured and people who participates in the activities have common goal. People feel equal during the activity. NFE methods mostly requires intergroup cooperation and supported by an authority. Additionally, NFE areas have friendship potential. All these conditions exist in the NFE activities. I observed that activities which are designed according to NFE concerns are more effective. This outcome is consistent with Pettigrew and Tropp's thesis which claims that positive relations, especially which contain affective ties have power to decrease prejudices by learning about outgroup. My observations in the field is parallel with social contact theory.

Social interaction is a mechanism for reducing stereotyping and prejudice and consequently fosters social cohesion. Prejudices can be decreased via affective processes. I believe that NFE activities provided by NGOs are suitable places for positive contact because both host community and refugee community come together under an authority. The authority supports positive contact and NFE methods facilitate to form affective relations. At the end of the affective relations prejudices can be decreased. NFE can form social cohesion through reducing intergroup anxiety or increasing empathy or reducing intergroup threat perceptions or just providing knowledge about outgroup (Hewstone , 2015, p. 420). NGOs have an important role in the building trust between communities by supporting dialogue among the various parties. So, I believe that, formal education and NFE education are at the same level of importance because in the NFE areas NGOs support quality intergroup relationship. Also, the flexibility and adaptability nature of NFE are so important in this situation.

## **LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

I want to emphasize that the finding of this study cannot be generalized but contributes to the qualitative research areas and improves the understanding of the

social cohesion and NFE relationship. NGOs that I have met put emphasis on NFE programming to expand education access to Syrian refugees and help to facilitate their matriculation to formal schooling. I suggest conducting a case study with an NGO which uses alternative NFE methods to understand social cohesion and NFE relationship deeply. Additionally, the NGO's have an important Syrian refugee children resource. This resource can help researchers who works on social contact theory. On the other hand, I suggest that researchers should bear that in mind that all NGOs have different procedures for academicians.

During the study, I faced important limitations. Firstly, I could not discuss the effects of metropolitans on refugees. Living in a border city and living in a metropolitan may have different effects on trust, belonging and contacts. Metropolitans have their own dynamics and strains. People who live in metropolitans may have exclusive identities and may have limited intergroup relations or vice versa. So, questions on how these dynamics are related with social cohesion could not be answered.

Secondly, I could not answer the question how these NFE activities can be attached with to the formal education system. These activities should be embedded to the formal educational system because the number of refugees is very high and state actors can reach them easily. In Europe, NFE activities are mostly out of the schools but sometimes NFE activities can be performed in the school areas as a complementary form. By considering the numbers of refugees, embedding NFE activities into the formal system makes sense. Shared activities between refugees and host communities can facilitate integration. Formal education and non-formal education together can increase inclusive education opportunities by providing additional services and activities. In this thesis, I could not suggest any model, but new researches can be conducted for suggesting a model.

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