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CULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND POLICIES OF  
THEATRE FOR CHILDREN:  
İSTANBUL METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY CITY THEATRE  
CHILDREN’S UNIT

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Çocuk Tiyatroları Kültür Yönetimi ve Politikaları: İBB Şehir Tiyatroları Çocuk Tiyatrosu Birimi

Cultural Management and Policies of Theatre for Children:

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicated this research to two million children who died in recent wars!



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

IMM: İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality

IMMCT: İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality City Theatre

AMMCT: Antalya Metropolitan Municipality City Theatre

ACPC (AÇOK): Anatolia Children's Play Club

ECoC: European Capital of Culture

TYP: Theatre for Young People

TIE: Theatre in Education

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the theatre for children in cultural management context in connection with the art and cultural policies for children and gives İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Theatre Children Unit as a case example.

Impacts of cultural policy and management of theatre on the dynamics of theatre for children, such as programming/repertoire, location, architecture, design of theatre halls, use of technology, playwrights, education of actors, and the audience were investigated through case study research method. İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality City Theatre as a cultural institution was analyzed according to the 'Implications of Good Governance' by Jacques Bourgault, and variables that have impacts on the development of theatre for children in İstanbul were defined to understand the reasons behind why theatre for children could not be institutionalized in Turkey since its establishment in 1935. In addition, the answers to such questions as why governments and big corporations deal closely with cultural activities of children, theatre for children as a social engineering instrument, and if cultural policies follow the changing children's culture in the information era were scrutinized. According to the findings, variables of both supply and demand functions of theatre for children were defined and constraints that have an impact on these variables were determined under three categories; psychological, political, and socioeconomic. As a result, the development of theatre for children in Turkey and efficiency in the management of theatre strictly depend on the resolution of these constraints.

Apart from the inadequacy of tangible/intangible cultural infrastructures, today the biggest challenge of the theatre for children in Turkey is the problem of perception: the perception of 'the child' of policymakers, and the actors'/directors' perception of the theatre for children.

**Keywords:** Theatre for Children, Cultural Management of Theatre for Children, İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality City Theatre Children's Unit, Art and Cultural Policies for Children, Children's Culture, Cultural Policies of Theatre for Children, Publicly Funded Repertoire Theatres

## ÖZET

Bu tez, çocuk tiyatrolarını kültür yönetimi çerçevesinde çocuklar için sanat ve kültür politikalarıyla bağlantılı olarak ele alır ve İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Şehir Tiyatrosu Çocuk Birimi'ni kültür kurumu yönetimi açısından analiz eder. Bu doğrultuda sanat politikaları ve tiyatro yönetiminin, programlama/repertuar, yer, mimari, tiyatro salonlarının tasarımı, teknoloji kullanımı, oyun yazarlığı, oyuncu eğitimi ve seyirci gibi tiyatro/çocuk tiyatrosu dinamikleri üzerindeki etkilerini vaka çalışması yöntemi ile araştırır, İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Şehir Tiyatrosu'nu kültürel bir kurum olarak inceleyerek Jacques Bourgault'un “İyi Yönetişim Etkileri'ne” göre analiz eder ve çocuk tiyatrosunun 1935'te kuruluşundan bu yana kurumsallaşamamasının nedenlerini ortaya koyar. Ayrıca, hükümet ve büyük şirketlerin çocukların kültürel faaliyetleri ile neden ilgilendikleri, çocuk tiyatrosunu bir sosyal mühendislik aracı olarak nasıl kullandıkları, Türkiye'de kültür politikalarının bilgi çağında değişen çocuk kültürünü nasıl takip ettiği sorularının cevaplarını arar. Bulgulara göre çocuk tiyatrosunun arz ve talep fonksiyonlarının değişkenleri tanımlanmış ve bu değişkenler üzerinde etkisi olan kısıtlar psikolojik, politik ve sosyoekonomik olarak üç kategoride belirlenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, Türkiye'de çocuk tiyatrosunun gelişimi ve tiyatro yönetimindeki verimlilik bu kısıtların çözümüne bağlıdır. Taşınabilir ve taşınamaz kültürel altyapı yatırımlarının yetersizliği dışında, Türkiye'de çocuk tiyatrosunun en büyük problemi algı problemidir: Kanun koyucuların çocuk algısı ve oyuncuların/tiyatro yönetmenlerinin çocuk tiyatrosu algısı.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Çocuk tiyatrosu yönetimi, çocuk tiyatrosu kültür politikaları, çocuk kültürü, çocuklar için kültür ve sanat politikaları, kamu tarafından finanse edilen repertuar tiyatroları, İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Şehir Tiyatroları Çocuk Tiyatrosu Birimi

## INTRODUCTION

Children are always the chief topic on the political agenda, especially whenever the world passes through a historical turning point. It happened when the printing press and other breakthroughs were invented, whenever empires have collapsed, and nation states arose; the governments for the social transformation concerns aimed to benefit from the instructive power of theatre for children. Indeed, this mindset, and to teach languages, religion or cultural values through the plays which accommodate both the joy and ritual at the same time have existed throughout the history of humanity according to the anthropologists and historians. Children reproduce their own culture through play. However, worldwide debates on playing are continuing due to the significant decrease in natural and free playing in contrast to increasing in playing under the control of governments and big corporations which are violating the UN Convention on the Rights of Child Article 31 about the right to play free (UN, 1989). Among many others, this cause to increase in demand for theatre –as one of the main social activities of children- which can be taken easily into the boundaries of control by the governments and the corporations.

For the last few decades thanks to the invention of the internet together with huge technological breakthroughs tied to its tail, the entire world has been reordered. In this era driven by change policy, makers and leaders are dealing with rapid changes in business models, competitive market forces, technology, resource scarcity, and global challenges. Business and societal troubles are not solely technological challenges or management ones but are systems challenges that require new types of solutions based on system strategies.

Whereas, Societal Transformation Lab was founded at MIT in 2006 (MIT Center for Organizational Learning, 2019). And, Japan launched Society 5.0 in 2016 as a vision for super-smart society (Keidanren, 2019). This new world is

the sum of connected cities, and the ones that have the strongest connections with the rest of the world are ‘Gateway Cities’ who have to include art and culture as its integral part of the ecosystem. İstanbul is one of the gateway cities who has no choice but has to take art seriously and invest in it.

Thus, is what’s happening in culture market now a coincidence? Giants like Facebook, Amazon are investing in the digital TV industry after the success of Netflix on which the average time spent is two hours per each member per day. In addition, Disney Company took over the 21st Century Fox becoming one of the most powerful actors of the family entertainment business. Children are the target population not only by giant corporations but also by the governments. So, why does the population policy of Turkey demand more children? In 2011, the Family and Social Politics Ministry was included in the cabinet. If we look at the citizen identity construction mechanisms of the states, we see that children are invested heavily as future citizens as had happened in the time of the invention of the printing press. Now, the question is how the identity of citizens of new Turkey is being defined.

Therefore, the cultural politics for children in Turkey or what happens to the children of the world need to be researched. The children (0-18) population of Turkey is 31%, 25.608.596 as of December 31, 2018 (Statistic Institute of Turkey, 2019). Thus, to some extent does Child Rights Policies of Turkey exist? The last debate about the children in parliament on February 2019 was the law for the minimum working age of 15. Obviously, there has been a huge gap between child rights, policies for children, and changing culture of children and societies of 21st century.

On the other hand, the ratio of attending a live performance, cultural participation out of the house is one of the most important indicators of socioeconomic status about a country, set aside the hot debates on closing State Theatres of Turkey through the last decade. According to the report of Cultural

Participation and Inclusive Societies by Council of Europe (Regina A. List, 2017) cultural participation is strongly related to the generalized trust, tolerance and other dimensions of a socially inclusive society. Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy (IFCD) measures the correlation 0,75 between cultural participation and tolerance, and 0,83 between cultural participation and generalized trust within societies. For instance, in Canada 2016-2017, 60% attended at least one live performance according to the Arts and Heritage Access and Availability Survey, in 2015 the EU average on cultural participation (at least once in the previous 12 months) is 43%. (Eurostat, 2019). Turkey is 18% after Romania, Bulgaria.

**Table 1. Cultural Participation in Live Performances (%)**

Canada	60
EU	43
<b>Romania</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Turkey</b>	<b>18</b>

Resource: Eurostat, 2019

The latest rate on Turkstat was 1,5% for theatre participation in the reference month in 2006, and in 2017 The rate of Household (with at least one kid) who used to go to the cinema, theatre or sports events in Turkey is 9,8 % (Statistic Institute of Turkey). However, according to 2018 IPSOS Understanding Turkey Guide, 44% of us never go to the cinema; 35% of us do not read any books; 66% never attended an event like a concert, theater. 31% does not read a newspaper at all. The most common activity is watching television with 83 percent. And 72% believe in faith. (IPSOS, 2018)

Regarding childhood experiences as a powerful resource to contribute to the creation of acquired tastes, the very first experiences of young audience in theatre become decisive for their future relations with performing arts.

Recently, The New Victory Children's Theatre in New York published the outcomes of a five-year longitudinal research about the impacts of arts on kids, and whether or not kids need theatre (The New Victory Theatre, 2019). According to their findings, the intense engagement and integration of theatre in a school community affect the perception of self and the hope about the future in children. As has been one of the most significant indicators of children's socio-cultural life, theatre for children deserves to be scrutinized in academic research in all aspects for its instrumentality or its true functions as an art form.

Throughout the last few decades, the academic interests and researches on theatre for young audience has been increasing significantly in the world. Furthermore, just for this mission, some organizations have found such as the International Theatre for Young Audiences Research Network (ITYARN), which is the international research network of the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People ASSITEJ, and Theatre for Children in the UK Research Network. However, theatre for children is a recent phenomenon and newly emerging in Turkey. Especially after the 2000s such cities as İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Bursa, Mardin, and Van have been hosting international festivals of theatre for children. Whereas, even in İstanbul which more than 3 million children live does not have a single private theatre designed and built for children. IMMCT has the only two stages with limited capacity.

Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is an analysis of theatre for children in İstanbul to elevate the study to cultural policy and management context, to generate empirical knowledge for understanding and evaluating the reasons why theatre for children is underestimated. For instance, İstanbul in which almost 4 million kids live does not have a single private theatre designed and built for children. And, İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality City Theatre (IMMCT) did not institutionalize since its establishment in 1935. In addition to

the conceptual development of theatre for children, to seek the trace of potential paths for policy and action, to shed light to sector professionals, actors, and policymakers were aimed. Through the in-depth interviews with theatre directors and sector professionals, current conditions and practices of contemporary theatre for children in Istanbul, the variables that affect the development of theatre for children, and cultural policymaking process are demonstrated in the light of changing culture of children and society.

So that, a case study conducted for children Unit in IMMCT. Because this subject is almost untouched in Turkey, dozens of questions has appeared to be researched such as:

- Correlations between the cultural policies, organizational efficiency, and development of theatre for children
- Financial and market performance of publicly funded IMMCT
- The reasons behind the increase in the children's plays after 2010
- Where and how theatre for children is produced and presented today, where and how it is consumed today, how it is changed over the decade, subjects of the plays and how plays are selected to be performed
- To what extent the repertoire policy is independent of the government's political view, how IMMCT as a public repertoire theatre can become inclusive in management, how representative IMMCT is,
- How to shift from the politically centralized public institutions in the cultural industry to the ones that guarantee autonomy in decision making about the arts
- What is the scale of performing arts for the young audience in the cultural economy
- How young audience acquire the taste of art or how they select the performance they see
- Current conditions of performing arts venues, actors, employees, independent theaters or imported live performances for youth



- To be able to catch today's frenetic advancements in technology, what kind of rules or policies need to be set to understand the young audience and how to produce performing arts for them

So, this research aims to fulfill the need for information to some extent in the area. Because there are so rare qualitative research and limited quantitative data on the subject, the case study method used as pioneering research, so that in the light of the insights found, the hypothesis will be checked such as:

- 'Government policies consider theatre for children as instrument'
- 'Establishing a separate institution for theatre for children is related with the vision of the general art manager'
- 'Theatre for children is consumed just by some elite'
- 'Use of technology to communicate with youth is a powerful tool to increase the participation rates'
- 'Current performances have the capacity and the potential for giving a vision of art to children'
- 'IMMCT can work effectively to fulfill its artistic functions'
- 'IMMCT theatre management is well aware of the new design of the cultural organizations in the 21th century'
- 'Organizational structure of the IMMCT, and procedures prevent it from adopting the innovations'
- 'The reason behind not to participate in children performances is economic'
- 'Theatre management is efficient to access the majority of children in Istanbul'
- 'Quality of the performances are related the political procedures and mechanisms'

Qualitative research will be conducted on the topic. Among major research method, the subject of theatre for young audiences investigated best through pragmatism and symbolic interactionism.

Pragmatism, in the work of Dewey and Pierce, argues that all animal behavior - including human- is based upon a problem solving adaptation to the environment, but whereas in animals this behavior is 'instinctive', in human beings it is 'a matter of thought and reflection'. Unlike animals, human beings are 'conscious and sentient creatures' and 'their environment is a symbolic universe' with which they engage in terms of their understanding as well as their senses (Seale, 2004).

Ontological assumptions of pragmatism are that the nature of the reality is 'complex, rich', and external 'Reality' is out of "ideas, the flux of processes, experiences, and practices". Epistemological assumptions are that "true theories and knowledge bear successful action, focus on problem solving and informed future practice as contribution". Axiological assumptions (role of values) of pragmatism are that research initiated and sustained by "researcher's doubts and beliefs, value-driven research, researcher is reflexive" (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016).

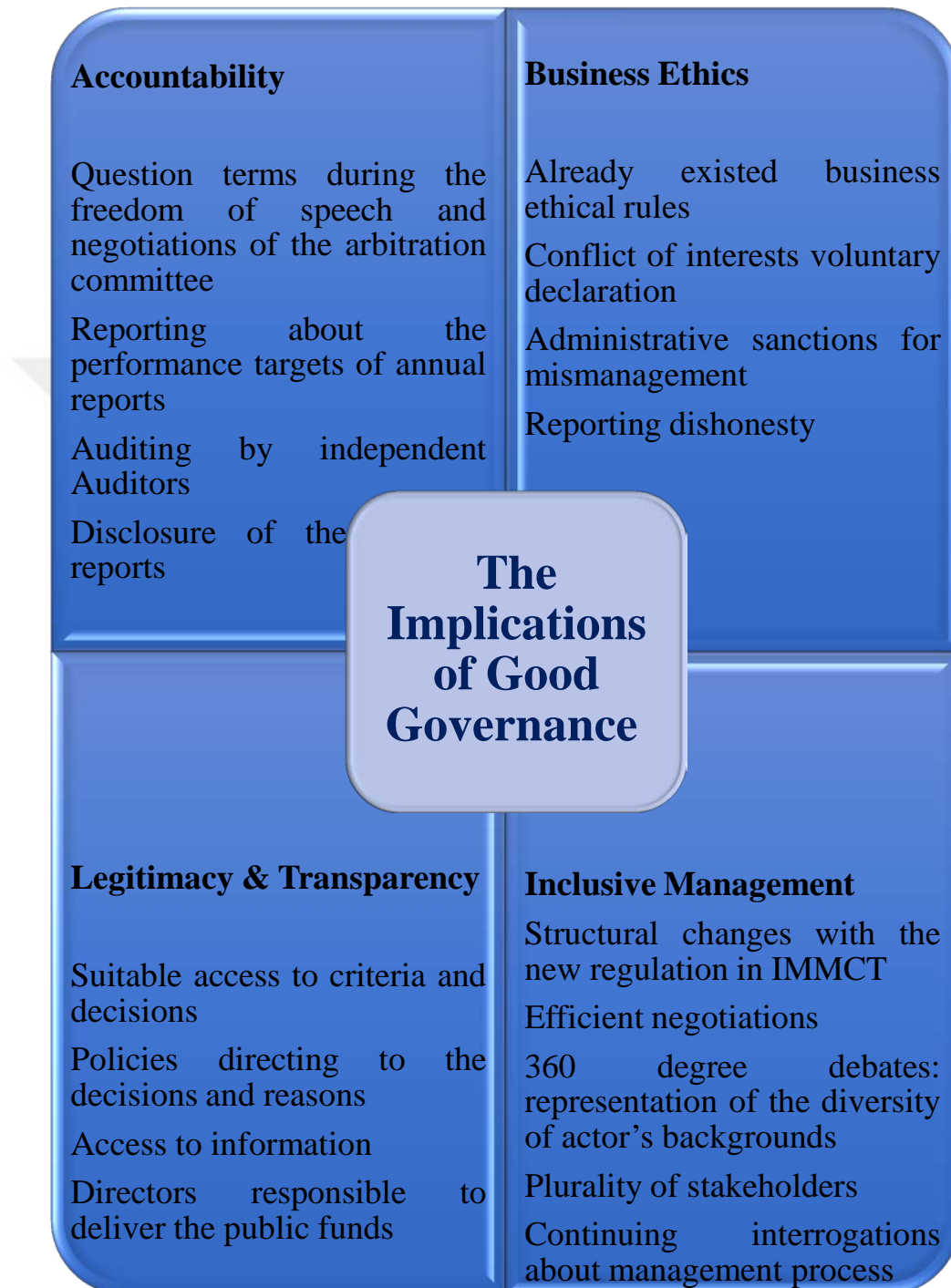
In addition, symbolic interactionism comes along with the research methodology pragmatism, apparently the best model researching the field of children. Human behavior is 'neither mechanical nor explicable in terms of laws'. Symbolic interactionists argue that human action can be investigated most effectively by 'gaining access to the meanings which guide it'. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016) This involves learning the culture or subculture of the people under study and means that the social world is best investigated in 'naturally occurring situations rather than under artificial conditions' (Seale, 2004). Three assumptions frame symbolic interactionism: individuals 'construct meaning via the communication process', 'self-concept is a

motivation for behavior’, and ‘a unique relationship exists between the individual and society’ (Seale, 2004). Drama is strongly suggested in language development and communication skills, and theatre that demonstrates the relations between individual and society. Furthermore, theatre for children is a world of symbols. That’s why symbolic interactionism suits best for this research.

Case study as a method will be applied and as an example, the children unit of IMMCT will be studied in its value-free, objective, and natural environment with contextual variables including political, economic, social, cultural, historical, and organizational factors. The reflexivity capacity of the research for Turkey can be thought as highly significant because 18,3 percent of Turkey’s population (82.003.882) lives in Istanbul who is the 2010 European Capital of Culture (ECoC). And in the 2017-2018 season, 28% of theatre halls, 41% of the total audience, 51% of the plays produced, and 41% performances in Turkey took place in Istanbul (Turkstat, 2018). A similar tendency can be assumed for the theatre for children as well.

In 2007 the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey released the report of the third National Culture Council arguing why Turkey does not have a policy of children’s culture. First and foremost, the variables that affect the cultural policy making process for children need to be defined, so do the variables that affect the theatre for children management. The measurement of the current applications of IMMCT management as a publicly funded cultural organization is based on the logical framework of the good governance by Jacques Bourgault (Corkery, 1999).

**Figure 1. The Implications of Good Governance**



Resource: Governance: Concepts and Applications, 1999

In free market conditions, the diminishing dualism rule between the artistic excellence and cultural entrepreneurship/management occurs. However, in public cultural institutions, artistic excellence plus independence are connected to the relationship between the general directorate of art and the culture, so in-depth interview questions outline prepared differently for these clashing stakeholders of management. Additional measurements were made for the theatre management: cost, box office sales, efficiency, leadership positioning of IMMCT, so were made for the General Art Director: leadership style, the competitiveness of the children's plays with the globe, reactions to political interventions, connections with the international network for theatre for children, usage of technology.

Through cross sectional, illustrative case study methodology multilevel investigation of the policy context, and the theatre for children management were carried through semi-structured in-depth interview technics with the managers of IMMCT, and sector professionals approximately for 2h. Focus group method with children as audience, parents & children was applied. In addition, content analysis of some plays, observations of performances, and audience, ethnographic research with theatre halls, culture centers, were benefited from. A holistic approach was used to analyze the data. Secondary data were collected from Turkstat, Eurostat, ASSITEJ Global, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality City Theatre website, social media pages, media sources, and theatre for children NGOs. The library of IMMCT also provided several historical documents that followed the establishment of the theatre for children in the organization.

At the very beginning of the research, the biggest difficulty was setting a meeting with the directors of IMMCT for the interview<sup>1</sup>. The General Art

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<sup>1</sup> I applied with a petition because IMMCT is a public institution, the directors were avoidant to set a meeting, and because of the lack of transparency most of the questions left unanswered.

Director Süha Uygur just arranged two artists responsible for the children unit for me to meet with. But, they also did not set a meeting for the in-depth interview. So, I ended up questionnaires on Google forms by Tolga Yeter, the Assistant General Art Director.

On the other hand, the statistical data set of Turkstat was another kind of limitation. First, to understand the developed countries and how the dynamics of the sector work, a bunch of foreign industry data sets were investigated such as, Arts Council England, UK Theatre and SOLT, the London Theatre Report, Purple Seven and the ITC, and EuroStat etc. Then, when Turkstat data were analyzed, significant limitations came across to be able to make meaningful inferences. For instance, data for ICT/internet and the changing role of passive audiences into active participants never exist – a trend that is widespread in the world. Even the demographic data does not exist for audience researches, set aside the level of education, household structure, income levels, art knowledge of the theatregoers. However, in 2015-2019 Strategic Plan of Ministry of Culture and Tourism, a Project states ‘in cooperation with TurkStat, setting a meeting/seminar with the participation of EUROSTAT and UNESCO to collect and compile cultural statistics at a comparable level internationally’. And this project is still in process with the collaboration of İstanbul Bilgi University (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2019).

Although the scope of this thesis is not audience research, it can be an insight for the cultural policy makers or future researchers. Time spent on cultural activities is the only statistical indicator taken into consideration by Turkstat, though it does not mention how frequent respondents participate in theatre, or the percentage of people who have attended at least one performance within the last 12 months. Turkstat says just the number of people, performances, and the theatre halls.

Besides the definition and historical background of theatre for children, to understand arts management and policy development on it, the concept of child and its change in time, emerge of 'children's culture', children and cultural policy, children's rights on access and participate equally in culture, rise of cultural economy, marketing/branding efforts through theatre for children will be analyzed in details.

Although most researches in the globe about theatre for children have argued its instrumentality for both governments and corporations, closer examination demonstrates that theatre for children issue was not evaluated seriously in Turkey. And its advancement is related to the perception of the child, and understanding the children's culture in a contemporary way.

## **1. THEATRE FOR CHILDREN**

### **1.1. CONCEPT OF CHILD AND CHILDREN'S CULTURE**

The concept of the child conveys different meanings throughout the historical era, in various societies, even in diverse communities of the same society, so that it is social and cultural concept, which is formed according to the social norms and values (Tan, 1989). Ancient times leave almost no trace but the absolute authority of father about the child. Until the 12th century children were not involved in any form of art. On the drawings of child shorn of any features and expressions in manuscripts book from the 12th century the only difference appeared to be size compared to adult pictures (Daşçı, 2008). Postman says that childhood is the biggest discovery of the Renaissance (Postman, 1995). Together with the science, nation states, freedom of faith, childhood arose in the 16th century thanks to the printing press, because the printing press depicted a new symbolic world, which sets the borders separating the child from the adult world.

In all resources until the 19th century, the child has been considered not a separate being, but a young adult, for instance, Factory Acts which permitted 9 years old children could work 16 hours per day per cotton mills passed in UK parliament in 1833 (Cooper, 2019). And, child slave issue is argued in the book 'Stolen childhood: slave youth in nineteenth-century America' by Wilma King (King, 1995). And, Gander called the 20th century as 'century of Child'. Modernism defined a protected world of the play, fantasy, and innocence for the child. According to Boyden:

'Adult nostalgia for youthful innocence is symbolized by the whimsy of London's Museum of Childhood, with its display cabinets full of mechanical toys, china dolls, hand painted dolls' houses, tin soldiers,



electric train sets, and Dinky cars. There is no place in this kind of childhood for labor in the factory or mine' (Boyden, 1990).

When it comes to the Turkish societies before Islam, children were taken seriously. Especially the education of boys was so important as depicted in the stories of Dede Korkut, and tutelage of the father on the child was not endless (Arı and Karatepe, 2010). In the middle age, Turkish Muslim society in Anatolia differentiates from Europe so that children were given special care in the context of innocence till the age of 7, and were educated till adolescence accompanying father authority (İnan, 1983). In the 10th century, Farabi influenced the understanding of childhood indicating the physical and mental differences, and İbn Tufayl examines the development of a child in the philosophical context in his book 'Hayy İbn Yaqzan'. Later on Yunus Emre, Hacı Bektaşî Veli, Mevlâna, and Nasreddin Hodja handle the children in Anatolia (İnan, 1983). During ottoman times children were under the custody of the father, but mother and grandmother dealt with the education. Girls were not allowed to continue the education after the children school (Sübyan Mektebi) till the 1839, Tanzimat. (İnan, 1983)

In his notes playwright and poet Nurettin Sevin (1938) states that the 19th century prepared the 20th century through scientific developments, but separated it from the understanding of decency of old times. With the appearance of consumer child image under capitalism and neoliberal politics, the lost item play and loss of childhood argument started towards the end of the 20th century (Postman, 1995).

Besides the conceptual development of childhood, the notion of children's culture in sociology started to emerge in the 1970s, and ever since numerous arguments have been continuing on it. Sociological literature demonstrates how "children are actively involved in interpreting meaning in their social worlds, forming identities and negotiating the broader system of power" (Adler, 1998).

This knowledge provides with the wider perspective that children ‘interpret the cultural and structural environment and incorporate it into their lives and behaviors’. Yet children are actively engaged in ‘‘constructing meaning’’ and do so from their unique perception of the social world that is different from that of adults (Corsaro, 2005). Accordingly, Katya Johanson states in her article *Culture for or by the Child?*:

“What has persisted throughout the arguments about children’s culture since the 1970s is the view that children should be seen as more than simply adults in training, and that their cultural production or expressions are as valid and interesting as those of adults. The radical change in thinking is that childhood is no longer seen ‘as being about learning to be the kind of person you are supposed (by appropriate adults) to be – socially acceptable and conforming to the prevailing norms of society’ (Catling, 2003, quoted in Wake, 2008, p. 429). There is a growing interest in children’s cultural expressions, and how children contribute to broader culture’’ (Johanson, 2002).

On the other hand, today through the social media sites like MySpace, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube children are not so much engaging with the culture they have inherited, but are rather creating a distinctly new culture unknown to adults, as quoted by Buckingham:

“The global scale of marketing to children’ threatens to construct ‘a homogenized global children’s culture, in which cultural differences are being flattened out and erased, and in which parents’ attempts to sustain their cultural values are increasingly in vain. The media is seen to have disrupted the process of socialization, upsetting the smooth transition from one generation to the next (Buckingham, 2007).”

YouTube Kids strongly supports this argument. Number one is Ryan's Toys Review (7 years old), in Forbes' annual list of the highest-earning YouTube celebrities, with 18 million subscribers and more than 16.5 trillion video views (as of today) and makes \$11 US million a year among top ten YouTubers according to Business insider. The example in Turkey is Princes Elif (5 years old) YouTuber. Her account was opened in 2016, and she has 2,8 million followers and more than 4 billion views.

It is historically confirmed that the culture of children derived from play, education, and oral & written traditions. Along the changes of culture from traditional, modern towards postmodern period childhood has been instrumentalized. Apparently, the generation gap is decreasing in childhood today. While each generation is fed by the previous one, they also reproduce their own culture. So according to the studies, children are not simply adults in training, but producers of culture in different and innovative ways.

## **1.2 WHAT IS THEATRE FOR CHILDREN**

Because theatres that involve children are various such as theatre for children, theatre with children, or theatre by children, a number of definitions on term theatre for children exist. Here, theatre for children denotes the performance of plays by professional actors for the audience of children less than 12 years of age. According to Rosenberg and Prendergast theatre for children is largely predetermined theaters to be performed to the young people (Rosenberg and Prendergast, 1983), and it is classified as an art form by Maguire and Schuitema. (Maguire and Schuitema, 2012). Goldberg's definition is 'formal theatrical experience in which a play is presented for an audience of children. The goal of theatre for children is to provide the best possible theatrical experience for the audience' (Goldberg, 1974). He claims that "theatre for children" is the same as the 'adult theatre'. While saying so, he means professionalism and aesthetics. Otherwise, there exist so many differences such

that theatre for children tries to look through the children's point of view, dig deep into their world, and talk to their imagination letting them experience a wonderful adventure. On the contrary to the adults, children do not force themselves into the stage by applying the willing suspension of disbelief. They simply believe in what they see like flying dragons, and talking flowers, far from judgment. And, children will not tolerate 'poor' production (Klein and Schonmann, 2009). They are open-minded. They do not just sit, and watch the performance as adults do. They can openly react to a change that attracts their attention or if they are bored. Children do not pretend.

The creative process for adult and children theatre is also different. Actors employ different techniques, tools and methods. The acting style for theatre for children is different. A melodramatic acting style including emotions, actions, movements, storyline, etc. are so important in theatre for children but this may not be good in adult theatre. Hence, they both may go through special and different training. Theatre for children needs to be seen as a discipline itself, a high level of professionalism must be part of its production by employing all the techniques and principles in theatre generally. Stanislavsky suggests that the only important difference between theatre for children and theatre for the adult is that theatre for children should be better (Goldberg, 2008).

In *Homo Ludens*, Huizinga describes the stage as a playground so as a magic circle; forbidden spots, hedged round, hollowed, within special rules obtained, a temporary world within the ordinary world. And he considers the magic circle as the ritual space demonstrating the play elements of ritual and the ritual elements of role playing (Huizinga, 2013). For the instructive aspect of the art of theatre, Aristoteles asks the question if the art of the poem can contribute to the education of a good citizen, and provides with favorable answers regarding theatre both as a tool of entertainment and education in *Poetika*. In the Roma period, Horatious in *Ars Poetika* suggests the use of theatre in the education of traditional values. (Sezgin, 2015) In the 18th century, the role of emotions in

reaching the human, which has widespread use in marketing today was already discovered. Diderot put forwards that theatre realizes instructive functions through the emotions because they are the shortest way to touch the people (Sezgin, 2015).

After 1945, in western developed countries like England, German, and the USA Theatre in Education (TIE) concept arose as a new genre in theatre for children which is constructed for school education. The professional actors orchestrate both spectacle and interactive performances with kids. According to Prof. Tony Jackson, after WW II in the need for reconstruction of society theatre was considered as a powerful education tool during the social transformation. Trial of political theatre by Brecht and Boal have influenced the emergence of TIE. (Jackson, 2013)

The education dimension of theatre is significant for also the development of the democratic society. So, Helen Nicholson emphasizes the impact of state politics, and education and culture policies on the theatre in education. For instance, instead of bringing school children to the theatre, the creative drama as a pedagogical tool was scheduled in the curriculum which allows children to express themselves spontaneously and freely. The philosophical background of creative drama was developed by John Dewey who illustrates the function of the experience of art through structured plays in the cognitive and emotional development of children. Art is a special place that combines seriousness and joy at the same time letting the children exercise their thoughts and emotions. It is accepted a breakthrough in the understanding of education. (Sezgin, 2015). In addition, Reason states that; theatre for children “inevitably operates within contexts of education and learning” (Reason, 2010: 5)

According to Wolfgang Schneider, theatre is always an ‘education in aesthetics’. The theory of education recognizes three ways: Aesthetic experience comes along with ‘rational-scientific understanding’, in addition to

moral and ethical aspects. Theatre is just as much about ‘interpretation of patterns of meaning and symbolic interaction’ as it is about rational awareness. Children can acquire the artistic taste, because it delivers meanings in ‘multidimensional poetic images’ (Schneider, 2013).

### **1.3 THEATRE FOR CHILDREN IN THE WORLD**

Plays have existed since Ancient Greece. There was never a time when adults did not play for the children, and the profession of acting for children has own history and tradition in every culture. In early modern theatre, around the 16th century, children were acting for companies, and Gertraude Dieke in his book about the history of theatre for children, describes the period 1740-1820 as ‘the blossom of theatre for children’ characterized by the pantomime with music. (Dieke, 1934)

One of the earliest incidences that a children’s theatre company became the subject of policy makers is Pollard’s Liliputian Opera Company in Australia, 1880 (Arrighi, 2017). In the article The Controversial Case of the Opera Children in the East, The Emigration Bill (1910) that prevents children performers from touring out of Australia is discussed. Children were employed in Victorian theatre, and child performers appeared to be a ‘social class of laborer’ across all genres spanning comic opera, variety, minstrelsy, circus, and main-stage drama, and all major theatres of western Europe applied this system. Since then, industrial and educational reforms had been gradually adjusting the cultural attitudes to children (Arrighi, 2017).

However, the development of the theatre for children which is the scope of this research has risen within the past century. In Russia, Simeon Polotsk and F. Prokopovich in the 17th and early the 18th century organized theatrical performances combining educational functions with ideological aims. A Russian actor, Natalie Sats, started the first theatre for the young to be

performed by adult professionals in Moscow, shortly before the 1917 revolution. The first theatre for children in modern terms established in Leningrad in 1922 by Alexander Brjanzew. (James, 2019) Also in that time, pedagogue Asja Lācis establishes Experimental Children's Theater workshops in Orel, Latvia, in 1918 for the orphan and homeless children of the aftermath of WWI. Afterward, she collaborated with Bertolt Brecht, Max Reinhardt, Fritz Lang, Bernhard Reich, Erwin Piscator, Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, Fyodor Komisarjevsky, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Vladimir Bill-Belotserkovsky, Sergei Eisenstein, Victor Shestakov, Dziga Vertov, Sergei Tretyakov, Linards Laicens, Leons Paegle, and they created avant-garde theatre for children (Documenta14, 2014). (Figure A.15)

Later on, similar groups followed them in England, the US, and Europe in the years between the two world wars (James, 2019) For instance, Scottish theatre for children started to perform in the 1930s in the UK. Unicorn Theatre club and Midland Art Center, following Theatre in Education (TIY) can be considered the strong emphasis on theatre for children in England.

In the USA, New York Theatres began to produce adaptations of fairy tales that were very popular with family audiences (1878-1903). Broadway produced an average of one play for children per year for the next 30 years. J.M Barrie credited with writing the first original play for young audiences "Peter Pan" was written for the stage, not adapted, in 1905. During the great depression, the Works Progress Administration formed the project to create jobs for theatre professionals. In 1920s Constance D'Arcy Mackay published 'How to', and when it came to 1953 'Criteria for Evaluating plays' developed by the Theatre for Children Committee. Professional actors and directors were also collaborating with acrobats and magicians and other variety performers. Today, almost every major city in the US has a resident theatre for the young audience (Scribd, 2019). Theatre for children conferences Association of Junior Leagues of America was held in Cleveland in 1932, in Baltimore in 1936. And

the American Educational Theatre Association was formed as a nonprofit organization encouraging the development of theatre in education. (American Alliance for Theatre and Education, 2019). Today Palo Alto, The New Victory Theatre, Florida University Department of Drama, Seattle Youth Programs, International Children's Theatre, Minneapolis Children's Theatre are the prominent ones for cultural policies in theatre for children in the US.

Joy Coghill and Myra Benson founded Holiday Theatre the first theatre for children in Vancouver, Canada in 1953. In 1977 Young People's Theatre (now Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People) in Toronto became the first Canadian company to have own place devoted exclusively to young audiences. In the 1980s, limited resources and changing personnel led to the shift towards family series while the artistic direction committed for young people. And, contemporary issues have taken their place beside the archetype, and legend in the repertoire. Subjects have included 'the prevention of sexual abuse, the issues of immigration and illiteracy and the concerns of peer pressure and schoolyard violence' (Doolittle, 2019). The trend in the 1990s was the emergence of in-house programming for teenagers, and workshops with children for plays. Many companies rely on school touring, and touring imposes the economy of means to problems of 'small casts, 45-minute plays and rudimentary technical resources' (James, 2019). Long runs in original plays encourage neophyte actors to develop skills in creating and then sustaining characterizations for hundreds of repeat performances. Major problems:

- educational content is implied, if not dictated,
- extensive study guides required from companies with limited resources to research and write them,
- budgets often strike first at live theatre,
- artists feel isolated,
- mass media and peer feedback,



- touring one-act plays for months of two-performance days in school gymnasiums is grueling and exhausting.

These companies needed to develop extensive workshops programs after the cutbacks in the education system. Schools are replacing the year-long commitments to week-long programs, and theatre for young people (TYP) companies are being asked to provide residencies rather than performances. The effect this will have on scripts and audience development remains to be seen. In particular, collaboration between playwrights, directors and designers produces striking results. ‘Improvisation, mime, mask work, collective creation and puppetry’ enrich the theatrical style. Distinctive Canadian styles of writing and production have developed (Doolittle, 2019).

In 1969 Grips Theatre was founded in Berlin, and still performs as one of the most influential groups today. When it comes to the non-Eurocentric countries; for instance, in Japan, as beginning to emerge in the 1930s, TYP has risen steadily increasing in the number of ensembles from 70 to over 200 between 1980 and 1995. This impressive growth was made possible not only by great enthusiasm of artists, parents and teachers but also by effective collaboration through special cultural associations. Parents-Children-Theatre, the marketing association to build theatre audiences was founded in 1966. The merger of all these theatres into the Japanese Union of Theatrical Companies for children and young people occurred in 1974 (Rubin, 2001). In China TYP has been tremendously respected and an integral part of performing arts, in which only the best actors would be allowed to act for children. This is due primarily to the respect that these countries hold for the minds and intellects of children. Therefore, only the most honest, most genuine and truthful, and best performances will satisfy and be beneficial to an audience of children (American Alliance for Theatre and Education, 2014).

International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (Assitej) was founded in 1965 in France. It unites theatres, organizations and theatre for children professionals from 100 countries throughout the world. Assitej is dedicated to the artistic, cultural and educational rights of children and young people across the globe and advocates on behalf of all children regardless of nationality, cultural identity, ability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or religion (Assitej, 2019). Exchange programs among the member countries, touring groups across Europe and international festivals triggered the development of theatre for children in the world. In October 2006, the University of Agder, Norway, in collaboration with the University of Hildesheim Faculty of Cultural Sciences and Aesthetic Communication, Assitej International, and Norwegian Children's and Young People Center SEBUT, organized a symposium in Kristiansand, Norway. Nine representatives from universities of six different countries (Japan, Korea, Norway, Germany, Turkey, and the US) were invited to examine the status of scholarship in the field of theatre for children and youth which was in short supply. So, the International Theatre for Young Audience Research Network (ITYARN) was established. (Assitej, 2019)

The initial efforts to develop TYP in Africa were made by the Assitej in 1999 in Zimbabwe. Ever since then many festivals, meetings and workshops were held in various parts of the region. These included: Durban (South Africa), Kampala (Uganda), Nairobi (Kenya), Mauritius, Windhoek (Namibia), Lusaka (Zambia), Cape Town (South Africa), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Ezulwini, Swaziland, Johannesburg, South Africa. In March 2007 the name African Children and Youth Theatre Arena (ACYTA) was adopted by the network. Assitej South Africa hosted the 19th World Congress for the first time in 2017. (Assitej, 2019)

International Festivals of theatre for children keep strategic importance in terms of the development of the theatre for children. Some of the prominent

festivals; Scotland Imagine Fest, Holland Utrecht Tweetakt Fest during the whole April.

After the 2000s, family entertainment centers within malls started to emerge in the world, and the profitability is significantly higher in that product positioning. So, theatre for children is being produced targeting to entertain the whole family. Turkey is not out of this global trend. The actor of Tiyatrotem, Ayşe Selen states that although children are the primary consideration, they target all family in their artistic production. Entertaining all together is invaluable family times. So, they just determine the bottom line as 6 years old, there is no upper age limit to be able to have three generations together. Özer Tunca, the ex-actor of State Theatres says that there is now a family theater concept in the world. Mother, father, sister, grandfather, grandma is going to the theater not only during the day but also at soiree too. We need to make theatre for children as much seriously as adult theatre in Turkey (Tunca, 2019).

On the other hand, in the US there is a tendency towards professional touring companies among amateur theatres that get funds (Goldberg, 2008). Furthermore, recent developments in digital transformation and changes in education policy affect the sector. Spurred on by digital innovation, new forms of theatre production and performances, like live streaming and site-specific works, have also risen in recent years, creating new opportunities for some in the sector, and challenges for others. For Instance, according to the report of the Art Council of England, most theatre organizations currently engage in live broadcasting for audience development reasons due to streamed performances connect a wider audience, but there is concern about whether they displace existing audiences (Art Council of England, 2019).

So, it can be concluded that the highest advancement in theatre for children happened to be in Northern Europe during the last few decades.

## **2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THEATRE FOR CHILDREN IN CULTURAL POLICY CONTEXT IN TURKEY**

Apart from the traditional Turkish puppet/shadow theatre Karagöz plays, theatre for children has first appeared during the times of Sultan Abdülhamid II in the westernization context. Tanzimat (1839) can be accepted for the beginning of modern theatre in the Ottoman Empire for which the local enterprises such as Vartaryan Theatre initiated the establishment of theatre groups (Güllü, 2008). Theatre was not considered just for fun but a tool for education so included in the school curriculum thanks to İsmail Hakkı Bey (Baltacıoğlu). Learned from poet and playwright Nurettin Sevin, theatre used to be in schools in those days. For the first time, Mr. İsmail Hakkı staged some historical plays at school Şemsülmekatip in 1903, the times of the first private schools in Ottoman state. During the Abdülhamit period, many schools such as Maarifli, Marifetli, İrfanlı were inviting prominent theatre groups at the end of the semester to recover budget deficit and promote their schools. After the Meşrutiyet constitution (1908), instead of inviting famous theatre groups school management let their children perform on the stage as has been in western countries. In 1914, the mayor of İstanbul doctor Cemil Topuzlu invited Andre Antoine to İstanbul for the education of actors, and out of their program, the first theatre Darü'l Beday-i Osmani was founded. Following these events, in 1915, a regulation of school performances called 'Mektep Temsillerinin Usul-ü Tedris-i' was released explaining in the first part theatre and education relations, and the second part how to do theatre at schools in details. The publication of first children's books copyright and translation was seen in these times also. After the outbreak of WW I, these practices stopped. İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu has very important works on the theatre at school which preserves its validity today (Kuyumcu, 2016).

### **2.1.1 Theatre for Children as a Tool (1930-1970)**

At the beginning of the 1900s, the emergence of theatre for children in today's concept corresponds to the times that empires were collapsing, and new republican-nation states started to rise. As a consequence, children, as a 'symbolically potent image' in public policy (Best, 1990) have appeared to be an 'instrumental figure' in the view of the government's eyes to invest in its future sovereignty. And, Mark Twain says that 'it is my conviction that theatre for children is one of the very great inventions of the 20th century' (Ward Theatre, 2019).

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early decades of the twentieth century "ad hoc interventions in the field of culture", can be considered defining the identity of the nation state in all of the world. The establishment of museums, galleries, and the publicly funded cultural institutions contributed to the social construction of national public culture (Roche, 1998).

Nevertheless, national identity construction policies are not peculiar to the 19th century, it continued even in the second half of the 20th century in any part of the world. For instance, according to the article Cultural Policy and the Performing arts in Southeast Asia, in Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand, the government department for culture were established immediately after independence in 1945, it states that:

"The speed with which the new post-colonial Southeast Asian nations set up government portfolios specifically for culture indicates the importance placed on culture in establishing nationhood. From the outset, culture was identified as a state-directed tool of national identity. Religion-as-culture is encapsulated in the official Thai definition of culture as a 'way of life', and expressed in the official policy of

preservation and protection of a cultural identity that is largely defined through religion (Lindsay, 1995).”

So, the use of theatre for children in building national identity was widespread in all parts of the world in the past century, beginning mainly in the UK, US, Europe, Russia, and China. The Turkish Republic was no exception from this historical fact. When the Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923, the identity of the Turkish nation based on the synthesis formula of Ziya Gökalp which combined Turkish civilization with the western sciences. All the political mechanisms were put into action to construct the identity of the new State through the Kemalism and Republican ideology (Aksoy, 2015).

Within the cultural policy context, The National Stage (Milli Sahne) is the first private theatre which had government grants through the establishment of the NGO Society of Protection of Turkish Theatre (Türk Tiyatrosunu Himayet Cemiyeti) by Fikret Şadi after the foundation of Republic. And, in 1927 the Law of Exemption of Excise Duty for Theatre passed by Turkish Grand National Assembly thanks to the proposal of the Directorate of Fine Arts (Sanayi-i Nefise Müdürlüğü) under the Ministry of National Education. The first support of the Republic of Turkey thus realized in addition to the scholarship for the students of Darü'l-Bedayi (Sevengil, 2015).

Accordingly, in new Turkey the biggest task of the newly founded Republic was the education of the public in all areas, Muhsin Ertuğrul the director of İstanbul City Theatre deeply believed in theatre for this idea. During the debates of the repertoire policy of the theatre, for instance Hüseyin Rahmi (Gürpınar) claimed that if they perform the plays that conveys the aesthetics and artistic criteria the audience of İstanbul would snore in the theatre. So, education of the audience was a challenge. However, Muhsin Ertuğrul was deeply impressed by the Bulgarian theatre which was created from nothing and blossomed (Şeyben, 2009: 204)

In the 1930s, he was commissioned to establish the theatre for children. And, theatre for children branch was opened in 1935 by Muhsin Ertuğrul with the support of Kemal Küçük, Ferih Egemen. The first play ‘Our First lesson is Theatre’ was written and staged by Kemal Küçük. In 1947-48, children’s plays took place at Ankara University State Conservatory Practice Stage (Tatbikat Sahnesi), and continued with the foundation of State Theatres in 1949. State Theatre of Republic of Turkey were founded as the first public theater in the countrywide aiming to increase the cultural literacy and educational level of the public. However, it turned to a failed attempt because ‘theatre is an art form primarily’, and ‘imposing civic purposes does not necessarily coincide with the aesthetic dimensions’ (And, 2015).

The first private theatre for children, Karagöz and Puppet Theatre (Karagöz ve Kukla Tiyatrosu) was founded by the Institution of Child Protection in Ankara in 1940 but it could not survive long. In 1950, a few independent theatres for children who entered into the market for commercial interests is known. (Ergün, 2010) In 1954, the board of State Theatre accepted the regulation about permanent actors for children theatres, however, they could not have come to the realization.

During the 1960s, fluctuations in the political environment started to affect the State Theaters as well as the City Theaters. According to the party policies, even according to the personal preferences of the directors of Municipality, it is observed that IMMCT is intervened in the administration through structural changes in the regulations of the institution, and change of General Art Directors frequently according to the political power. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2019).

### **2.1.2 Political Movements (1970-1980)**

After Brecht and Boal, left-wing political movements rose towards the end of the 60s, and the first Theatre in Education (TIE) Belgrade Theatre was founded in 1965 at Coventry, England. Helen Nicholson states in Theatre and Education that the first groups of TIE were avoidant to adopt the commercial model rather in the influence of Marxism and Socialism. Social protests, peace movements, environmentalists, human rights, feminist and homosexual movements created the libertarian climate of cultural values of Generation '68 (Nicholson, 2009).

In the 1970s, in Turkey, theatre techniques in the west started to be adopted, while preserving own traditional style in the work of playwrights, directors, and in the ways of acting. And private theatres for children flourished thanks to the sponsorship of banks. For instance, some private theatres for children from this period are; Reha Bilgen's Tale Reality Theater, İdil Yazgın's İdil Abla Children's Theatre, Children's Section of the Tevfik Gelenbe and Nokta Theatre in İstanbul, Ali Hürol Children's Theatre, Çan Theatre, Children Section of the Folk Theatre and the Anatolian Art Center. Following, members of the Association of Short Period Artists established the "Çağdaş Sahne" (Modern Stage). Çağdaş Sahne operated as a multi-cultural institution administered by the Ankara Cinematique Association and arranged plays and concerts. This theatre gained a distinguished position by staging children's plays among certain age groups. (Turkish Cultural Foundation, 2019)

Muhsin Ertuğrul was impressed by the performance The King's New Clothes on one of his trips in Europe. After his arrival, in 1973 he encouraged Ümit and Turgut Denizer to establish Anatolian Children's Plays Club (ACPC) (Anadolu Çocuk Oyunları Kolu) as he has foreseen that the public theatres are not efficient in theatre for children. ACPC became one of the most prominent theatres for children who won the play of the year prize with Keloğlan in 1977 (Figure A.1).



ACPC understood that children's plays have age categories when they tour in Europe fests in 1975, and they started to play tailored to the age intervals. Today producing plays for the proper ages still fails due to commercial reasons. For instance, there is no play for the children between the ages 10 and 14. (Denizer, 2019)

Besides, some other plays of ACPC are Hodja Nasreddin and Timur the Lame (Figure A.3), Country of Happiness (Figure A.4), Flying Umbrella (Figure A.5), and Stain, Line, Spot, Color (Figure A.12) which was adapted for the theatre play by Ümit Denizer from a poem by Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu. About Stain, Line, Spot, Color Denizer wrote in his journal (Denizer, 2015):

“October 1, 1978, Sunday at 11.00... Üsküdar Theater reopens with the play ‘Stain, Line, Spot, Color’ by ACPC after the bombing in the 1978-1979 season. The second note is: “November 17, 1978... Our brother Aziz Çolak from ACPC (AÇOK)... was shot while hanging the poster of the play at night...”

So, the political climate of the 1970s deadly affected not only the theatre for children but, all parts of life. As has been one of the immediate places to see the face of the society, the stage is like a reflection from the mirror. Between 1965 and 1980 general art directorate of IMMCT changes between Muhsin Ertuğrul and Vasfi Rıza Zobu, former as the representative of progressive/left party, and conservative party as the latter. Yazıcıoğlu states that he worked under both of them, in times of the conservative management even some parts of Shakespeare's plays were censored (Yazıcıoğlu, 2019).

### **2.1.3 After 1980 Military Coup- Neoliberalism**

After the 1980s conservative governments came to power in the USA and England. And in Turkey, the article 64 of the 1982 constitution which came after the military coup of 1980 says that “The State protects the art activities and the artist. The artists and artworks should be protected, supported and evaluated’. And, soon after the first government in 1984, grants started to be delivered regularly to the independent theatres (Alkan, 2008).

However, as a tradition in Turkey, laws and their implementations work in opposite ways. For the situation of the theatre environment in that time, Prof. And states that;

“After September 12, the salaries of the State Theater artists were raised to the highest state officials. The reason for this is that artists are given a privilege. This, however, is the product of a flawed understanding as if the actors who do not work for the State Theaters are not the ‘artist’. However, among the artists in the private theater, most of them do not take any money and work for almost toughness and can not find the theater to act, this is utter injustice. Moreover, many of the State Theater artists act only in one play in a year or never act in any play, there have long summer holidays. So, we see them on the television series rather than theatres.” (Alkan, 2008)

Indeed, in 1975 Muhsin Ertuğrul, the director of IMMCT wrote that nothing has changed since he had warned ten years ago in an article of a children magazine (Ertuğrul, 1989). Later, he declared in the 50th anniversary of theatre for children in 1985:

“In my point of view, the cities would not find audiences for their theatres unless they have started developing them from childhood.

Today's child is tomorrow's teen and so is the future's intellectual audience. If the city of Istanbul could find audiences and actors for its theatres today, it should seek the reasons of this in the theatre for children, and student drama of yesterday. In this framework, the most important problem of the theatres is the theatre for children." (Ertuğrul, 1985)

Nevertheless, a good example in 1985, a private theatre for children Ankara Contemporary Art Theatre produced almost 60 plays for the ages of 3-6, and 15 plays for 6-12 ages since its foundation. It is an active member of Assitej today.

During the 1990s, the number of theatre for children changed between 15 and 20, however, the quality dimension was criticized as getting worse than before. When it comes to the policies and regulations regarding theatre and education towards the end of the 1990s, Ministry of National Education involved the drama/theatre in the school curriculum, but as a result, all the literature teachers applied for the certificate in drama to be able to earn the extra hour payment. Today, suitcase theatre groups (Theatre groups who travel with their costumes) are performing at schools sometimes even 5 performances a day free from any legal regulation or control. The directors of state schools create a foundation connected to the Ministry of Education, and they make revenue from ticket sales for their foundation through suitcase theatres. For instance, if the theatre ticket is 10 TL (most of the time attendance is mandatory for students), it is shared as 2 TL theatre group, 2 TL school family union, and 6 TL the revenue of school foundation. There is no information about how these performances are controlled in terms of scientific, aesthetic, and pedagogic criteria. Even though they are controlled by the school teachers, didactic and moral criteria are the ones sought for in contents by the authorized. (Direklerarası Theatre for Children Conference, 2019) Obviously, suitcase theatre groups are one of the best examples of the neoliberal policies out of which artists are working for the

pocket money not having any social security or social rights. Following neoliberal policies, privatization of the state institutions started in this term, however, for the State Theatres, it came to the agenda after 2010.

In terms of the payment policies for the theatre for children, former the Director General of the State Theatres, Tamer Levent gives an example from his own experience; he was paid half of the price for the dubbing of the children's plays compared to the dubbing of the adult plays when he was working for State Theatres (Levent, 2019).

In 1992, new regulations appeared concerning state support for theatre, however, the amount of this subsidies, their granting criteria, and members of the committee are always a matter of discussion ever since then<sup>2</sup>.

1996 becomes a breaking point in terms of determining the position of IMMCT. A congress held in 1996, the art policy, administrative structure, rights and responsibilities of the employees are examined and new decisions are taken. Yazıcıoğlu expressed this meeting in the interview that he was completely restricted to make a difference for the sake of art against the authorities due to these compromises made during Kenan Işık period (Yazıcıoğlu, 2019).

Research Lab which had been founded in 1988 at IMMCT by prominent theatre professionals Ayla and Beklan Algan, was shut down in 2002.

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<sup>2</sup> In 2007 another change happened on the law, but the debates have increased even more. For the 2018-2019 season 118 private, 48 children's, 41 amateur, and 54 traditional theatres, in total 261 private theaters were funded.

#### **2.1.4 After the 2000s: The Period of Justice and Development Party**

After 2000s, thanks to public reforms in government, new cultural centers opened in many district municipalities which hosts children's plays especially on weekends. Theatre Tem which differentiates in quality of artistic performance among the others emerged immediately in 2000. So, not only theatre for children, but independent theatres dramatically increased in the number particularly in Kadıköy. Uluç in his column at Sabah stated that he has been seeing plays beautiful than each other at independent theatres who never funded by neither state nor municipality, indicating the interest of the audience in the theatre (Uluç, 2009).

According to the article of Mimesis theatre journal, after 2000 sponsorship accelerated with municipalities and corporates like Zorlu, Eti, Pınar, however, they just support the 'theatre for children with music and dance' that has no scientific or artistic base. Performances including hidden ads, open ads, product promotions, juice, milk, fun games are shaping future consumers. (Mimesis, 2019)

An actor, director, and playwright of theatre for children, Ümit Denizer described the art policy of this term:

'Theatre for children is severely affected by the understanding of art, which is compelled by religious politics. Some theatre groups who sell plays for the municipalities of the ruling party appeared immediately. Quality has been further lowered down. And there are commercial groups that put on the television cartoons on stage. They perform playback shows with sloppy costumes and cheap decors. There may be one ideal theater for children in three big cities.' (Denizer, 2019)

After the budget law that suggests decentralization policy and provided municipalities with more power in 2005, the supplementary budget of IMMCT changed to the general budget. Although it was obvious like a daylight ever since then, the discussions on closing the State Theatres, changing the regulation of the IMMCT, and establishing Art Council of Turkey, which will operate directly connected to the Presidency (TÜSAK law) as a mechanism of social engineering, became the hot topic on the agenda in 2012. Following the Conservative Art Manifest by İskender Pala, the regulation of IMMCT was changed. According to the new regulation the article first that states IMMCT is an art institution removed, and instead of 4 selected members of the repertoire commission by the sector professionals (2), dean of conservatories (1), and the artists of cadre (1), all the 7 members of Repertuar Commission is appointed by the Mayor. The director of the theatre was also involved in the repertoire commission. The General art director has already been appointed by the Mayor in the previous regulator as well.

Accordingly, many highhanded practices like the removal of The Rosenbergs should not die (Rosenbergler Ölmemeli) from the programming, and introducing Hot Patience (Ateşli Sabır), furthermore in 2014 the appointment of previous constabulary manager and wrestler referee Şevket Demirkaya as the manager of the IMMCT gave rise to the protests of the labor union of IMMCT (İSTİSAN) (Oruç, 2019).

The President of Theatre Education Association Kemal Oruç illustrates how theatre professionals counteracted after the law proposal about the shutdown of the State Theatres on his website:

“State-Theatre Relations Commission was a very important action, and the Labor Union of IMMCT (İSTİSAN) took an active role in. Together with Theatre Platform, Enterprise of Artists, Foundation of the Employees of State Opera and Ballet the ‘Law- Art Meeting’ was

realized and signed a cooperation protocol. It was an important step. They are artists in the organized struggle of both the State Theaters and the City Theaters to resist the bureaucracy, religious backwardness, and obscurantism. In the last few years, many stages of State Theaters have been closed, demolished and sold. After the İrfan Şahinbaş Workshop Stage was plundered, Akün and Şinasi Stages were secretly sold for 33 million TL under the instruction of the Minister of Labor and Social Security'' (Oruç, 2019).

In fact, the reason for this policy change was to redefine the cultural identity of the 'new Turk' of new Turkey, which was started to be restored by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government since they had come to the power in 2002. For those who want to track the history of cultural policy in Turkey briefly, investigating the memory of space of Atatürk Culture Center (AKM) on Taksim Square is enough; as one of the main icons of the Turkish Republic representing the Kemalist identity, once every fifteen years on average it was reconstructed after a fire or used as a police station for years (As a result of opposition politics against The Republican People's Party). So, the State Theatres were another significant icon in the cultural identity of the Turkish Republic which made it target to be attacked too. So, with this new identity contrary to the synthesis argument of the Turkish Republic, they create polarization between secular/western and the Muslim/Ottoman or 'Us' and 'the other' (Aksoy, 2015).

The actions following these policies for instance; IMM Director of Department of Cultural and Social Affairs Rıdvan Duran, states on Habertürk News that he increased the number of local and national plays in City Theater such as Mustafa Kutlu's *Blue Bird* and İskender Pala's *Tulip Era* will be staged since March 2019. On the contrary, many plays were censored like *Daily Salacious Secrets* (Günlük Müstehcen Sırlar) from the repertoire in 2012.

It seems like the last change of regulation caused the general art directorate lose autonomy, however, literature research shows that it started in the 1960s first when Muhsin Ertuğrul resigned from İstanbul City Theatre, and later in 1976 changing the name of İstanbul City Theatre to İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality was an important step towards the management of bureaucracy. When it came to 1996, it was the biggest deal with the art management and the municipality (During the period of President Erdoğan in IMM, after Gencay Gürün, the General Art Director post was offered to Kenan Işık).

The clash between the two parties, namely art management and the Municipality management can be explained with the regulation and radical change diagram of Burrell and Morgan (1979)

**Table 2.1 The Regulation and Radical Change Dimension**

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The regulation perspective ⇔ The radical change perspective
Advocates the status quo ⇔ Advocates radical change
Looks for order ⇔ Looks for conflict
Looks for consensus ⇔ Questions domination
Looks for integration and cohesion ⇔ Looks for contradiction
Seeks solidarity ⇔ Seeks emancipation
Sees the satisfaction of needs ⇔ Sees deprivation
Sees the actual ⇔ Sees the potential

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Source: developed from Burrell and Morgan (1979) in their book *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis*

Instead of benefiting from the resistance as a cultural institution to improve inclusive management as researches suggested, IMM strictly eliminated the oppositions firing the prominent artists from the theatre. Researchers question not only the behavior of individual managers but also the very societal systems within which that behavior is situated.



Interestingly during all this unstable environment in 2009, the only children theatre halls of İstanbul Ferih Egemen and Kemal Küçük Stages opened with the suggestion of theatre for children professionals to IMMCT.

Nowadays theatre for children is limited to both the State Theatres, and Municipal Theatres, and the plays are chosen according to the norms of today's Turkey. However, the Istanbul Municipality Theatres have directed some significant workshops to create a new way for theatre for children in the Children's Unit of IMMCT. There has also been a significant increase in independent theatre plays for children (Levitas, 2014).

Out of the hunger for the qualified theatre for children around the country, in 2014 for the first time in Turkey, Antalya Municipality City Theatre established the Children and Youth Theatre Department with a separate general art director, actors tailored to it, in addition to its orchestra. This historical step is very important as being the first Public-funded cultural institution dedicated to theatre for children in Turkey. Özer Tunca the art consultant of the theatre for children tells us how they succeeded in founding this theatre:

“Theatre for children is not taken seriously in Turkey, considered unnecessary, and has been performed in slipshod mindset. So, the qualified plays are so rare. A few good plays appear thanks to the personal efforts of some good groups. I knew Antalya City Theater General Art Director Mehmet Özgür interested in theatre for children, we two together took the initiative to establish a strong international institution with the support of the former Mayor Menderes Türel. We had young players who graduated from the Department of Theater at Akdeniz University. We had been working with them on the Replaced Kids game. They were a great team. Why not we said, and we set off. One-year work program, and the repertoire were done. A list of the directors who will manage the plays from abroad, a list of the directors

who will hold workshops, a list of plays, festivals were determined and the program was carried out without any surprise. We have a lot of awards. We participated in international festivals such as Germany, Bulgaria, India, Tunisia. Then the Puppet Unit was founded. At the moment, there are 4 puppets plays with 8 children and youth plays. Plays are not consumed in 1 year. The theater has its orchestra. It's being taken seriously all that much.' (Tunca, 2019)

One of the plays from the 2015-2016 season is *The Replaced Kid* by the Nobel prize winner playwright Selma Lagerlöf. Prof. Tülin Sağlam states in her writing about the play *The Replaced Kid* (Figure A.1, A.2, A.3) by Antalya Municipality Theatre for Children that theatre as an art form should be able to offer an experience of art to the children. Childish, didactic, crude or as a mean of entertainment, theatres can not make a sense to children, and reach their imagination world set aside to trigger it. Our children deserve more than singing and dancing rabbits.

*The Secret* directed by Soren Ovesen, *An Hamster Musical* and *Escape to Freedom* (Figure A.4) directed by Özer Tunca are other examples of Antalya Municipality Theatre (Figure A.6, A.7) for Children and Youth. Plays are qualified in scientific and artistic terms. Plays like these are seen neither at IMMCT nor İstanbul State Theatres. nor any private theatre stages in İstanbul due to their budget limit.

In terms of private theatres, in Turkey the first theatre hall which has the architectural design in particular for the children Ankara Çağdaş Sanat Theatre was founded in 2009 as a member of Assitej. They get government grants regularly. Although they perform for adults also, the stage has versatile platforms for children 3-6 and 8-12 years old. Lobby, food court and the toilets are also suitable for kids. And they produce a new children's play every month during the season. Publications, radio broadcasts, and conferences in

connection with the universities in Ankara are their other activities. (Ufuktepe, 2019)

Following, Theatre Tempo with the capacity for 100 children was opened in 2017 in Ankara by the Haluk Yüce, a worldwide prominent puppet theatre professional.

When it comes to the legal status of theatres, in all developed countries theatre is regulated by laws, for instance, in Denmark Theatre Act was passed in 1963. However, in Turkey, there is no law for theatres or theatre professionals. One of the prominent actors of his time Ulvi Uraz states in 1958 that:

“The Turkish Republic who has numerous laws did not have a single law which describes the actor or the theater worker and regulates his rights. It is not clear who we are. Are we paid? No. We're intellectual workers? No. Are we an officer? No. Are we heavy industry workers? No. Who are we? Not certain! ... Set aside the social warranties we have still not found our identity with a law clause in a society. Our entire existence is in the mind of the appreciative audience, in the realm of thought. I guess we will have to make some effort to be citizens (Uraz, 1966).”

Today, the theatre act is still not on the agenda, but the recurring attempts to shut down the State Theatres keep going. Last year, the Foundation Law of State Theatre 5441 was abolished first, and then renewed in favor of bureaucracy. (Cumhuriyet, 2018)

Indeed, education policies which are strongly connected with theatre for children create a firm ground for the conservative cultural policies. According to the article Early Childhood Education in Neoliberal, Religiously Conservative Times in Turkey:

“During the 15 years of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) governments, not only a neoliberal transformation but also a Sunni Islam-based religious transformation has accelerated in Turkey regarding preschool education. The ambitions for creating a “religious generation” as occasionally expressed by the founders of AKP was accelerated in particular employing the 4+4+4 system. First, the obstacles blocking a system similar to ‘sıbyan mektepleri’, which existed during the pre-Republican period, was removed by the 4+4+4 system...The void created by this system, which annulled the obligation of preschool education, has immediately started to be filled by the Directorate of Religious Affairs through its “Quran Courses Preschool Religious Education Project” intended for 4- to 6-year-olds.” (Aksoy and Eren Deniz, 2017)

The book *Cultivate Pious Generation* which analyses Justice and Development Party education policies in terms of curriculum and textbooks, appointment of teachers and principals, project school management, and education councils, and it is observed that under the guise of freedom of faith religious education was imposed by various educational policies and the content of the education became more religious as a social engineering mechanism (Eroler, 2019).

According to the article *The Comparison of Some Data in Turkish Preschool Education with the OECD, EU Member Countries*; in 2015-16 the number of students continuing to preschool education is 1.209.106, 52% boys, and 48% girls in Turkey.

**Table 2.2 2015-16 Preschooling Rates of Turkey (%)**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>3 years old</b>	<b>4 years old</b>	<b>5 years old</b>
Total	11,74	33,56	67,17
Boy	11,67	33,62	67,42
Girl	11,81	33,50	66,91

Resource: Ministry of Education-Formal Education 2015-2016

The comparison of Turkey and the OECD and EU on 2014 data shows that the average of Turkey on three years old is 8% while OECD and EU are 71%.

**Table 2.3 Preschooling Rates2014 (%), Compulsory Education Start Age**

	3 YearsOld	4 Years Old	5 Years old	Education Start Age
OECD	71	86	95	6
EU	71	89	95	6
Turkey	8	32	71	5-6

Education at a Glance 2016, OECD Indicators (2016)

2016-2017 Preschooling Rates in 4-5 years old in Istanbul is 37% with 176.854 students, number of schools are 2.957 both private and public (Ministry of Education, 2018) These data prove the need for education in every term. However, leaving children's interaction with culture in the educational framework will not fulfill the conditions of the 21th century.

The relations of theatre for children and kindergarten or preschools are not subjected to the regulation or any policy. Indeed, although laws, cultural

policies or regulations had been made, most probably it would not have made a difference, simply because the policy history of Turkey is proven to be problematic in practice.

To demonstrate the publications about theatre for children will help to depict the big Picture of theatre for children in Turkey in detail. Publications on theatre for children are very limited: The book “Theatre for Children in Turkey” by Tekin Özertem, "Children's Theater" 12-14 May Symposium Book, and the book “Theatre for Children” by Sevda Şener, Melahat Özgü, Metin And have the publication date 1979 by the General Directorate of State Theatres. İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu's “What is Theatre” (2006, Mitos Publications), Özdemir Nutku's "Play, Children and Theater" (1998, Özgür Publications), Nihal Kuyumcu's “Theatre for Children” (2000, Mitos Publications), and “Which Children’s Theatre” (2016, Mitos Publications). Obviously, this is not a coincidence. It is promising that theater for children books have increased over the last two decades. Theatre journal Mimesis launched the archive project to compensate for the gap in the area.

The number of critiques published for theatre for children during the last decade was asked to the Association of Theater Critics (on e-mail), and they replied that the only resource is the book ‘Which Children’s Theatre’ by Nihal Kuyumcu in 2016. Even they could not give a number.

In the new policies on the theatre for children, immediate precautions should be taken on these points; in terms of quality, a good play for the children over 5 years old is so scarce in Turkey. A performance for 300 kids at auditoriums is too far from the interaction. And the absence of pedagogues specialized in theatre is the important problem. (Assitej Conference, 2019)

To sum up, before the 1950s instructive theatre models appeared in worldwide, and thanks to Piscator and Brecht in the 1960s Theatre in Education groups

were on the stage. Following the neoliberal policies of the 1980s, and the conservative policies of the 2000s theatre for children in Turkey is still waiting for the urgent actions to be taken by the policymakers. Because after the 2000s the role of the state changed worldwide, so did cultural policies such that the decentralization strategies, marketization policies, and the tax policy to promote the private investment in the cultural sector (Aksoy & Enlil, 2011). Theatre for children sector has both pros and cons with those changes. Although it can benefit from the tax policies, being abundant at the mercy of the market is too far to flourish a sector.

## **2.2 CULTURAL POLICIES AND CHILDREN IN TURKEY**

In today's postmodern world which is depicted as vast masses of refugees, stateless groups, and transnational flows of capital, societies and new structured states are struggling to define themselves seeking protection or development of new forms of cultural identity. Where do children take place under these circumstances? As though they already meet their rights to shelter, food or health care, does talking about 'children's rights to culture' make a sense? Robert Coles claims in *The Political Life of Children* (Cole, 1986) that a child's everyday psychology is shaped by the politics of her country.

In fact, how children appeared in cultural policies is thanks to the discourses of children's rights. This trend is obviously the result of international agreements in UN conventions, and the work of transnational bodies like the European Union (Fisher, 1993). As agreed in 1989 by the United Nations:

“Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. Member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate

and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.’’ (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989)

Turkey signed the Convention on September 14, 1990. It was ratified by the parliament in 1994 and released in the Official Gazette in 1995, and ever since then, Turkey offers to the UN Children's Rights Council a national report every four years. However, Turkey does not make its legislation compatible with international treaties and conventions, and looks like being delayed country in establishing legal and administrative measures and implementing structures in this area. The most typical example that illustrates Turkey's current situation is the report of Turkey Children's Rights Strategy and Implementation Plan 2012-2016 (Prepared in 2011). It was published in the Official Gazette on 10.12.2013. However, The Child Rights Strategy Document and the Action Plan (2013-2017) was not implemented any of its strategies and action proposals.

One of the latest civil actions regarding child rights was taken by an NGO Child Agenda (Gündem Çocuk) which had launched a campaign ‘Why Turkey does not have a child policy?’ in 2007. Nevertheless, not only their attempt failed, but also the NGO was closed by the government following the failed military coup in 2016.

On the other hand, a study focuses on the children’s own view of cultural policy. Findings of the That’s My Art: A Case Study on Children’s Views of Cultural Policy (2016) demonstrates that:

“All children in this case study shared privileged cultural backgrounds. In this respect, sociological research has shown that children stemming from a culturally active family background learn to know and appreciate culture more easily than other children, adopting more



smoothly the cultural values their parents and teachers transmit through education (Nagel, 2016).”

Television production is not a formal educational context of arts participation, nevertheless a heavily managed, asymmetrical power context, in which ‘ordinary people’ are always reminded of the boundaries. The children, also, acknowledged and accepted this power, and found it difficult to challenge the decisions that TV production entails. Overall, TV production is not a nourishing context for symmetrical child–adult relations.”

On the contrary to this case, one of the best example of children participation in TV production in Turkey is ‘From 7 to 77 with Barış Manço’ in 1990s. Symmetrical child–adult relation observed in our case on the dialogues between children and the legendary star.

Together with women and disadvantaged groups participation of children in culture is highly emphasized in international policy documents. For instance, Article 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child indicates the children’s opportunities to participate in media productions. A UNICEF initiative called Voices of Youth can be considered as one of the important example for which children can participate in and let their voices be heard. As stated by Banet-Weiser (2007, 20), ‘involving children’ could be of great importance for an ‘efficient cultural policy’. This approach illustrates well the cultural imaginary of ‘children-as-experts’, found in many other contemporary child media, Nickelodeon often given as the first example. It constructs a child world in which ‘adults’ authority is playfully defied and children’s autonomy, sovereignty and competence are strongly articulated’ (Banet-Weiser, 2007; Steinberg, 2011).

Cultural participation is strongly connected with the access to the cultural events issue. The Arts Council of England ran New Audiences Fund Program

between 1998- 2003 with a total budget of £20 million. And in 2000, they launched the New Generation Audiences Project for funding young audience development. (Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) of UK, 1998). So since the beginning of the 21st century, new models and approaches have been put into action in cultural policies.

In this respect, where does İstanbul stand? According to the IMM 2018 Performance Report on table of Expenditures Based on Strategic Targets, the amount of access to culture is 611.187.294 TL. No data could be obtained to understand that what percent of this amount is the share of performing arts or theatre for children.

However, as has learned from the firsthand experiences of actress Ayşe Selen, although cultural policies for the democratization of culture are properly set and realized, it does not guarantee the aims of the policies. In the theatre journal of Mimesis, Ayşe Selen illustrates the reality of daily life perfectly, even though the policy makers work on the issue of cultural democratization what happens in practice:

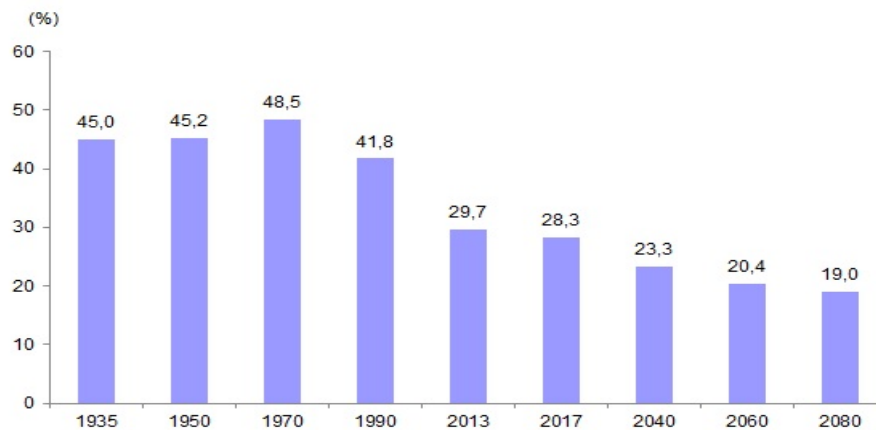
“The saloon was full, Turkish kids were the majority of the audience, mostly boys, a few girls in white headscarf, and a few women in headscarf were sitting. When we started, Turkish children realized that Şehsuvar is a well-known actor who plays in a television series. From that moment on, they start recording with cell phones, taking pictures, calling Şehsuvar with the name in the series, and they were starting to say loud words. Some people were directed to the scene to touch Şehsuvar; teachers were hampering. They did not watch the game, they did not listen, they just yelled. From time to time I hear them calling me aunt (Yenge). The few Turkish and German spectators were deeply in shock watching what’s happening. The turmoil continues. We were difficulty performing, so we had to cut some scenes short. As soon as

the end of the performance they attacked to the stage, surrounded Şehsuvar, and wanted to take pictures. He would like them to leave the hall because he knew this is an unacceptable situation. They did not listen. The turmoil continues. Someone who got angry that he had not been photographed, was kicking lights on the stage floor. The hall was barely taken out. We were going to have a conversation with them after the play. Some people asked us questions, so they were taken back to the hall. Then the fanatical audience who saw them entering, also entered with them. As they did not ask questions, they continue to be annoying. When the questions did not come back, they all went out. I stand by the door: They asked me where I was from; they were from Konya; they asked me which team I'm supporting; They were Fenerbahçe supporters. After the last spectator, we feel like we are out of a war. We started preparing for the game at 11:00. Festival officials were coming and asking why Turkish children behave like this. We try to explain as we could. So why are Turkish children so different? For 50 years they have been living side by side, we were surprised for this question. Hanni explains: We told the families that a Turkish theatre would come. We thought that they're going to be so happy and they're going to send their kids right away. But it never happened. They said that no need for theater. They are already learning in school. We've put together this group with difficulty. In the second session there were only 20-25 spectators. What is the reason for all this? We are surprised at this question. We are once again witnessing that both sides live side by side and never look at each other. The play at 11:00 was good; There were 5 Turkish children, watching the play, asking questions after the play, they came behind the scenes, play the images, have a good time, have fun. We are relieved. We talked a long time with the festival managers. They said that the things they witnessed today are lessons for them, and they decide to reconsider the Turkish children issue. We rejoice. Graz, 2.2.2010'' (Selen, 2019)

Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital may challenge the efforts made in participation or audience development projects by arguing that competence in receiving various messages inscribed in cultural products derives from early family socialization and schooling, and that this is how the dominance of culture by a certain class is reproduced. Sociological aspects claim that art for all in cultural policy is far from reality, because art and culture itself is a mean to legitimize the class differences. Bourdieu states that although statistics shows that educated and cultured classes have a prerogative in cultural and artistic consumption, art is accessible to everyone who does not isolate themselves from it (Bourdieu, 1979).

When it comes to the participation rates of children in Turkey:

**Figure 2.1 Children Population/Total Population of Turkey (%) 1935-2080**



Resource: TUIK, General Census, 1935-1990

TUIK, Address based population registration system, 2008-2017

TUIK, Census Projection, 2018-2080

**Table 2.4 Children Population**

Age	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-17	Total	Percentage in Total Population
Turkey	6 484 986	6 358 920	6 340 423	3 736 093	<b>22 920 422</b>	<b>28</b>
İstanbul	1 152 651	1 101 334	1 077 975	1 077 975	<b>3 962 162</b>	<b>26.3</b>

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Resource: Turkstat, 2019

Some statistical indicators of children:

- Registered workforce participation between 15-17 age is %20,3
- Schooling rate in primary school is %91,2
- Official marriage rate of girls at the age of 16-17 in the total number of marriages is %4,2
- The baby mortality rate of Istanbul is 0,7% the average of developed countries is 0,2 %.

As the numbers have indicated, the social structure is too far from supporting the cultural development of the children. There is no statistical data for the cultural participation of children in Turkey.

The only sentence in Council of Europe Culture in Turkey National Report 2013 about cultural policies for children is, ‘Developing Children’s and Youth Theatre’, stated among the purposes of State Theatre of Turkish Republic. In the 10th Development Plan 2014-2018, analysis of children and youth states that the inadequacy of quality, supporting, and preventive early childhood programs and the limited availability of preschools prevent the children from reaching their potential. The goal is supporting early childhood development. The policy is based on developing holistic models that will support children's well-being, providing better education and health services, improving the basic skills, and the quality of life of especially children under risk groups, and their integration into society (Presidency of Republic of Turkey Strategy and Budget Department, 2013).

Accordingly, in the art and culture section, it is stated that the establishment of cultural policies in a way that will reinforce the unity and solidarity of the society and reinforce the idea of a common identity is an important issue in the way of becoming a strong society. With the arrangements made, it has been ensured that the cultural workers who are deprived of social security have become under social security. The need to involve civil society initiatives, local administrations and the private sector in the provision of cultural and artistic services continues. The main objective is to strengthen the social integrity and solidarity around the national culture and common values through the dissemination of cultural and artistic activities. Priority will be given to policies and practices that reinforce the environment of tolerance, social dialogue and common culture to increase social integration and solidarity. The role of local administrations, private and civil initiatives will be increased in the development and presentation of cultural and artistic activities, especially visual, audio and performing arts. To prevent erosion and alienation in the Turkish language, correct and effective use of Turkish in all areas of life will be ensured, especially in science, education, and broadcasting organizations. Reading culture will be expanded and children will be educated in culture and arts at an early age (Presidency of Republic of Turkey Strategy and Budget Department, 2013).

The Report of Children and Culture of the 3rd National Culture Council as of 3-5 March 2017 was released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the main framework of if Turkey has a child policy. No less than a confess it is announced that:

“Although one-third of the culture is related to children and childhood, the theme of Child and Culture is an area of little work on. This subject, which has been passed through a sentence or paragraph in the Government Programs and Five-Year Development Plans, is thought-provoking in terms of our country, in which Children are one-third of

the population. In the 1st National Culture Council (1982), and the 2nd National Culture Council (1989), no commission was established for the child and the report was not prepared. Three congresses by Ankara University Children's Culture Research and Application Center (CRCC) in 1997, 1999, 2001 are the parts of first comprehensive study on child culture in Turkey. Children and Culture Commission is established for the first time in the 3rd National Culture Council.” (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2017).

This report depicts a general picture of the current situation of Children and Culture in Turkey, determines the structural problems, and puts forward the policy advice for the Turkey Culture Strategy Report 2018-2022. Main problems are determined such as cultural development of children is being neglected, educational philosophy about how to raise a child is changing continuously, and training of the teachers about sociocultural aesthetics is waiting on the list to be done. Limited empirical research focusing on the sociology of children and culture in Turkey. Children and public space relationship in the current urban design of our cities are limited. Culture produced by adults for children is undermining the child, and has didactic outputs in theatres or cartoons, and considers children just like a consumer (toys, stationery, clothes, junk food, etc.). Today the children in Turkey are suffering from digital games, alienation, weakening sense of reality, and being test workers. The main target group of the popular consumer culture of globalization is often made up of children.

Out of the stated problems, some suggested policies are:

- ✓ The establishment of the Children's Commission in the Turkish Grand National Assembly,
- ✓ Development of socio-cultural education, aesthetics and science education models starting from early childhood,

- ✓ Establishing civic and autonomous structures for the Child Rights Supervision,
- ✓ Monitoring and Evaluation System,
- ✓ Writing contemporary plays from the traditional theater for children and so do performing,
- ✓ Supporting the development of children's theater playwriting field,
- ✓ Improving legal regulations for increasing the efficiency of private children's theaters (show permission, game text selection, training of trainers for the players, issuance of certificate and training formation, coordination between relevant authorities provisioning etc.),
- ✓ Establishment of Traditional Turkish Theater Institute in Istanbul,
- ✓ Inclusion of the works children friendly cities by various ministries in the zoning legislation,
- ✓ Children and school libraries should be increased in the number, and their qualifications should be improved besides the higher budget allocation for children's book and employing well-trained librarians in setting up the reading habits in children,
- ✓ Establishment of department of children's literature in universities  
'Culture and Civilization Values for Media Content Creation Framework' (Guide) is prepared and put into service of the media sector,
- ✓ Transformation of closed village schools into culture and art studio,
- ✓ To support the examples of children's arts organization of national and international biennials,
- ✓ Establishment of a multi-purpose Art and Music Studios in each school,
- ✓ Workshop and mobile models to ensure poor children's access to culture and art,
- ✓ Establishment of the Institute of Children's Culture in Culture and Tourism Ministry of Turkey,



- ✓ The development and dissemination of children's play and toy museums, children's libraries, children theaters and natural toy making workshops either separately or as part of the Children's Culture Centers.

In the analysis of the current conditions of state institutions that those policies refer to, for instance; Digital Games Symposium was held by the Information and Communication Technologies Authority, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports, and Ministry of Family and Social Policy (MFSP) on October 9-11, 2017. The Social Media Team was established within the MFSP to identify the risks that children may face in digital games and the social media. The social media team intervenes in cooperation with Information Technology and Communication Authority, Directorate General of Cybercrime Department of the General Directorate of Security in cases such as neglect and abuse that children are exposed to on the internet. It also carries out activities related to games that can affect the psychosocial development of children.

The Project of Creating the Lists of Books with proper content for Children at the age of 0-6; book review commission was established within the scope of the project who review a total of 250 books. It is planned to publish this list and establish libraries in institutions, and aimed to guide the selection of books to the families while drawing attention to the books in the content that will adversely affect their development. Protection of Young People from Mischievous Publications: General Directorate of Family and Social Policy examines the printed materials and books that may hurt children and young people and informs the Protection Committee for the Protection of Young People from Mischievous to be evaluated within the scope of the related law.

Under the Directorate General of Libraries and Publishing, the number of active children's library is 45 in 32 cities of Turkey. Under the Ministry of Education 356 preschool, 7456 primary school libraries exist. Istanbul has 6

children's libraries in Kadıköy, Beşiktaş, Üsküdar, and Bahçelievler. 78 cities have Z-library (referring to the z generation). 50.000 children's book is being published by 10.000 publishing house annually.

The number of new books that Directorate General of Libraries and publishing purchases annually to children's libraries and children's departments of other libraries is 400.000 which constituted one-third of the total publishing bought. Children's libraries allocate extra budget for books of local publishers. In 2012, a project for the renovation of children's libraries and for accessing the new visitors started. To understand the reading habits and the reader's profile, a prominent market research company SONAR was commissioned to prepare the reading map of Turkey. According to the reading map of Turkey (with the 0,95 confidence interval), people at the age between 7-14 read 12 books/year on average in 2011, read regularly and selective 0,35%. DG of Libraries and Publishing organizes the World Children's Book Week in second week of every November. In 2018, the New Generation Children New Generation Libraries Conference, and the first International Symposium of Children's Libraries in collaboration with the University of Marmara indicated that this issue has started to be taken seriously by the government (Department of Public Relations Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2019). Uncle Ali (Ali Dayı) Library in Ankara is shown as the ideal children's library with its architectural concept tailored to the children, educational toys in addition to the books, a librarian, a teacher, and its preschool section for 3-7 years old kids. (Uncle Ali Children's Library, 2019)

On the contrary, children's museum which helps children to create their own culture does still not succeed in capturing that attention in Turkey. In 2000 Children's Museum Association was founded in Ankara. However, on the cover page info of the book Children's Museum and Museum Education by Zilcioğlu, Ş. in 2008, it is stated that Children's Museum has a history of hundred years in Europe, but Turkey did not have a single children's museum

or do a single publication about it (Zilcioğlu, 2008). 2014 European Commission Award winner, Mevra Kamali demonstrated the reasons behind the anxiety and prejudice of the adult visitors not to understand the art in her article ‘Why We Need Children’s Museum?’ as the perception of a world which they think they do not belong to (Kamalı, 2019). So, she emphasizes the need of engagement for art at very early ages, and suggests the children’s museum as the solution. In 2011, the first private children’s museum opened in Ankara similar to the European concept (Kültürportali Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2019).

The General Directorate for Cultural Properties and Museums makes some efforts to attract children such as workshops, drama performances, seminars, conferences, temporary exhibitions in the museums. Children Friendly Museum project offers an interactive learning experience in museums across the country. And The “Children Training Rooms” project, which, organized in the collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT), launched Training Rooms in Erzurum and Kars Museums. As a result of collaboration between Ankara University and Çorum Museum Directorate in 2013, museum experts and school teachers had courses on performance arts, drama and curatorship to make the museum a better place for the kids. In terms of access to the museum, Turkish citizens under 18 years old as well as student groups and their accompanying teachers, children of foreign nationality under 12 years old are exempted from the entrance fee.

Children’s theatre fests are the main events for free to reach more children. Van State Theatre Akdamar Children fest started in 2002, ever since then they have regularly organized the fest in which some determined schools from Van and Erzurum perform. Every year 5000 children on average participate in. Mardin International Children and Youth Theatre Fest is the only children fest of Southeast Anatolia since 2009 with the support of Ministry of Culture of Turkey, State Theatres of Turkey, Municipalities, Ministry of Culture of

Poland, Embassy of Holland, and European Union. Since 2005 Little Ladies and Little Gentlemen fest has been organized by State Theatres in Ankara. This year, 10 plays from Turkey, 14 plays from abroad 24 plays were on 11 different stages with 205 performances in total. 23th Bursa Children and Youth Theatre Fest was made this year. Eskisehir International Children and youth festival has been performing since 2006 with the participant countries from England, Spain, Japan, Iran and so on. Izmir children's theatre fest started in 2015 with 37 performances.

In 2004 and 2005 with the laws numbered 5216, 5393, and 5302 of the metropolitan municipality, and special provincial administration, the administrative structure of local government dramatically changed. Social services passed on from the central government to the local governments giving them the opportunity of dealing with social and cultural issues in a more comprehensive way. For instance, public spaces and children are really important matters. In today's İstanbul children are barely taken into account in city design. Intensive construction, traffic, dangerous streets, nucleus family, scarce parks, playground, and green areas push them into the houses. And houses are designed focusing on adult needs in modern understanding. According to Çakırer Özservet, today play refers directly to the toys, so children having been restricted the capacity of movements play with toys in the rooms or in the limited environments. (Çakırer Özservet, 2015). So, nowadays in the world in Turkey child friendly city concept is developing. IMM founded a Children Assembly serving with 21 commissions in 2005.

Children are one of the main concerns in the policy of some district municipalities in İstanbul such as Şişli, Beyoğlu, Kadıköy, Üsküdar, Esenler, Küçükçekmece. Şişli Municipality in the last five years opened women children center, 6 kindergartens, 3 children science house, and 2 game libraries. Game libraries, in which children interact with other peers, and enjoy art activities serve between 10am-6pm for the all children from 6 months old, and

have baby breeding room besides other facilities. They offer free performances on every Sunday (Koca, 2019). This year, out of the partnership with Tampere Municipality in Finland, Şişli Municipality exercises the Finland model of children's center in Mehmet Emin Sungur Center designed as a green building (with the LEED certificate), and includes daycare house, family consultancy, reading children, and game library (Birgün, 2019).

Because Beyoğlu is considered a significant area in the economy of the city for culture, Beyoğlu Municipality gives special attention in their policy and invests in the cultural education of children and youth as future cultural professionals and demanders. It offers vocational training, and free courses in a short film, music, modern/traditional dance, painting, theatre, and sports activities in 13 district houses (Konak). In addition, 13 preschools in those districts serve with the capacity of 70 children on average each one of them. Parallel to these activities every year 500 children enjoy summer and winter camps.

Kadıköy Municipality has a Children Arts Center, Üsküdar and Küçükçekmece Municipalities have Children Universities. Esenler Municipality has a children assembly under the Women and Family Services, to exercise the right of selecting and to be selected, and dealing with the problems of children at the age of 10-14. It closed the two streets to traffic and designed as pedestrian walkway 'Children Street'. Mother and Child Campus and Science Park also serve the children. Another platform, The Young Voices, for children culture in İstanbul was founded in 2017 at İstanbul Bilgi University to promote child rights and child participation in culture.

In the 2015-2019 strategy plan of IMM, cultural policy is based on preserving the cultural heritage of İstanbul stated in the plan with a visual displaying conquest of İstanbul. There exist no statement regarding children and culture. So, projects and cultural investments are being produced following this policy.

### **2.3 ECONOMICS OF THEATRE FOR CHILDREN**

Theatre for children can be considered as one of the locomotives of cultural economy while the family entertainment trend is rising in the globe. Cultural economy as a term started to appear in academic literature at first in the very beginning of the 20th century, however after the book written by W. Baumol and W. Bowen "Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma" (1966), it was accepted as one of the sub disciplines of economics (Frey, 2003). Since then this economy keeps growing every decade, and the proportion of cultural economy in GDP is increasing significantly in every country.

Since 1950s, arts and culture sector has come to the strategic position is thanks to the technological breakthroughs. Today, global information economy of the 21st century can be interpreted as 'web that consists of nodes and connections', cities are regarded as nodes, among them the ones which have strong connections with the rest of the world not only through airports and transportations but also through the web of InfoTech, are called 'Gateway Cities' or 'Magnet Cities'. In 2018 Global Connectivity Index Turkey's ranking is 52 among 79 countries. Science, technology, innovation, finance, infrastructure, and best human resources combine in the perfect ecosystem. Cultural industry is the integral part of this ecosystem because of 'ensuring the interaction with the subsectors, and the access of market and consumers as well as attracting the intellectuals, creative crew, and overqualified professionals'. So, competitive gateway cities have to make their cultural policies in accordance with these dynamics (Uçkan, 2019). Therefore, why arts and culture are a critical component of thriving economies today is due to a shift in the global industry base. Technological innovation fuels the global economy the way manufacturing once did. The paradigm of private business development has shifted as a result. Entrepreneurs are seeking to invest in communities that offer a strong quality of life with an abundance of skilled workers, cultural activities, and environmental assets for outdoor recreation. For the position of İstanbul in this context, Prof. Çağlar Keyder states that although

İstanbul, thanks to its history and geography, has the potential to become a global city in terms of becoming an important crossroads in the global economy, this potential remains largely unrealized. The reasons why this opportunity has not been exploited are, first and foremost, the failure to fulfill the legal and infrastructural conditions necessary for a city to become a global city for political reasons. After the initial excitement generated by liberalism, political transformation of Turkey remained unfinished (Keyder, 2013).

Therefore, becoming European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2010 brought to İstanbul an invaluable opportunity to reconsider itself in this context. Since then what kind of cultural policies have been made to better integrate İstanbul with the globe or to set it in a competitive position should be questioned according to the different branches of cultural sector. Here theatre for children which is considered as future investment in audience in general, is focused on.

According to the article Public funding and repertoire conventionality in the German public theatre sector, econometric indicators of publicly funded repertoire theatres:

- **Political index:** share of conservative and liberal politicians in the municipal council, arithmetical mean. (This index is not valid in IMM which have all members from the ruling party, however after the June 23th, 2019 election the distribution of the members of the city council changed.)
- **Subscription income** from season tickets as percentage of total income; there is no season ticketing system at IMMCT
- **Maximum seating capacity** of the main drama venue as offered to the audience. (With 629 seats Sultanbeyli Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Auditorium which is too far from the normal sizes of the theatre for children)
- **Total population** in millions at municipal level

- **Disposable income per capita** of private households at municipal level;
- **Education**; third level education as percentage of the population subject to social security contributions with a third level qualification (University Graduates) (Neligan, 2006)

To see the big picture of theatre sector better in Turkey, the latest macroeconomic data of cultural economy is illustrated:

**Table 2.5 Cultural Expenditure of Turkey in 2017-2018**

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The total cultural expenditure/ GDP = 1,4 %
From the central state budget 66.5%
From the local government budget 33.5%

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Resource: Turkstat Cultural Economy Data, 2019

**Table 2.6 Distribution of Households' Total Cultural Expenditure in 2017**

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Television and TV broadcasting	31.2%
Books, newspapers and magazines	14.7%,
Cable /private TV broadcast services	12%,
Data processing equipment	10.9%,
Stationery and drawing materials	10.1%,
Theater and concert	<b>5.6%</b>

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Resource: Turkstat Cultural Economy Data, 2019

The turnover of the cultural goods and services of the enterprises increased 20.1%, and the contribution of VAT of cultural goods and services increased by 27% in 2017 compared to 2016. (Turkstat Cultural Economy Data, 2019)



The share of Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the General Budget is changing between 0,40-0,53 since 2010. In 2018 the total incentive for the private theatres (5,3 million TL) which was 0.001 per cent of the budget of the Ministry. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2019) This comes to prove that the development of independent art sector is not a priority for the state policies. In the 2018/2019 season among the 61 applicants of children's theatre 48, 78% was funded.

**Table 2.7 Government Subsidies for Private Theatres**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Children</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Amount TL</b>	<b>Children's Share (%)</b>
2018/2019	48	261/434	5.246.000	16,8
2017/2018	39	229/438	5.234.000	15
2009/2010	26	152/298	3.000.000	14

Resource: Ministry of Culture and Tourism Directorate of Fine Arts, 2019

In 2010 children's share is 14% (420.000/3000000) in total grants. For the 2017 and 2018 the amounts of grants for each category is not announced, but just the list of granted theatres were released on the website of the Directorate of Fine Arts. So the data is obtained by email from the Directorate on August 8, 2019. (Directorate of Fine Arts, 2019)

Board of Evaluation:

- Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Ministry/ Undersecretary
- General Director of Fine Arts/ Deputy Undersecretary
- General Director of Fine Arts, General Director of State Theatres
- 3 non fix members; General Art Director of some City Theatres
- A member of Atatürk Culture Center Science Committee,
- A Dean of Fine Arts Faculty of different universities
- A dramaturg

Criteria:

- If the applicant theatre had utilized the previous funds before, and if so, was it according to the protocols,
- The value added to the theatre art, the artistic quality of the play and the success of the performance,
- If the play writer is Turkish, if they performed the play before or a new performance,
- If the applicant theatre performs in the first degree priority of developmental zone,
- Total grant per theatre is 50% of its cost at max. and can not be more than 80.000 to be adjusted by inflation rates each year.

On the contrary to the first criteria, recurrent theatres are seen each year on the granted lists announced by the Ministry.

Not only for the theatre, cultural policies about the government incentives have always driven to the hot debates. In his book *Introduction to the Cultural Policies in Turkey*, Serhan Ada asks that 'How many bold entrepreneurs have been able to overcome the bureaucracy and apply for the Law on the Encouragement of Cultural Investments (2004), issued to provide direct incentives for the private sector to enter the cultural field, set aside benefiting from? (Could the Minister of Culture Ertuğrul Günay who said that "No one has applied to benefit from this law" answer to this question?)' (Ada, 2009). So, it is matter in the structural changes, which in cultural sector seems to be beyond the cultural sector.

On the other hand, in terms of microeconomic data of theatre; what Turkstat says about the changes in supply/capacity and the demand/audience between 2009-2019:

**Table 2.8 Theatre Statistics of Turkey 2009-2019**

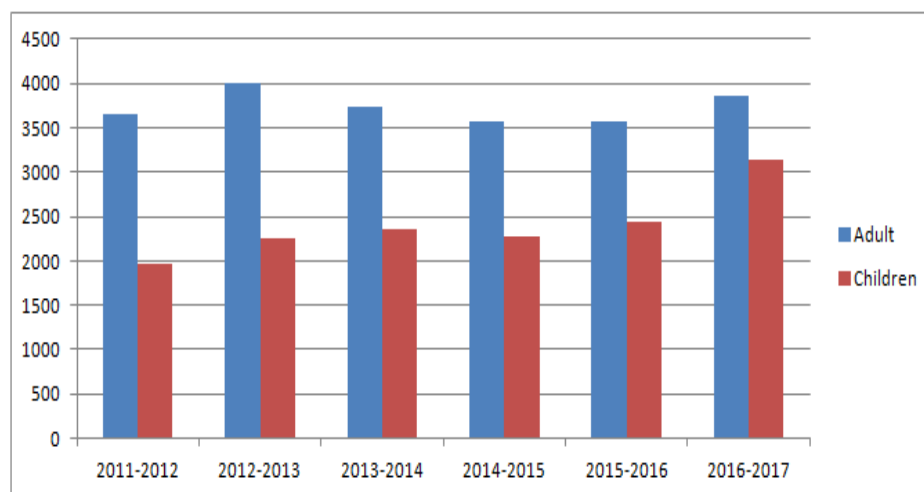
Years	Theatre	Plays			Audiences	
	Halls	Total	Turkish	Foreign	Total	Children
2009-2010	430	3 694	2 918	776	5 248 226	1738000
2010-2011	511	4 252	3 470	782	5 385 588	1904000
2011-2012	606	5 539	4 485	1054	5 621 066	1971000
2012-2013	678	6 219	5 301	918	6 244 821	2251000
2013-2014	611	6 642	5 631	1 011	6 076 128	2348000
2014-2015	719	6 825	5 820	1 005	5 853 445	2280000
2015-2016	721	7 766	6 622	1 144	6 016 762	2441000
2016-2017	783	8 948	7 638	1 310	7 006 410	3148000
2017- 2018	736	9 376	7 926	1 450	<b>7 841 353</b>	<b>3435000</b>

TurkStat, Theatre Statistics, 2019

The tour activities are included in, and the numbers denote the tickets for the children's plays which mean that parents are included.

**Figure 2.2 The Number of Spectators Children/Adult 2011-2017**

(Thousand)

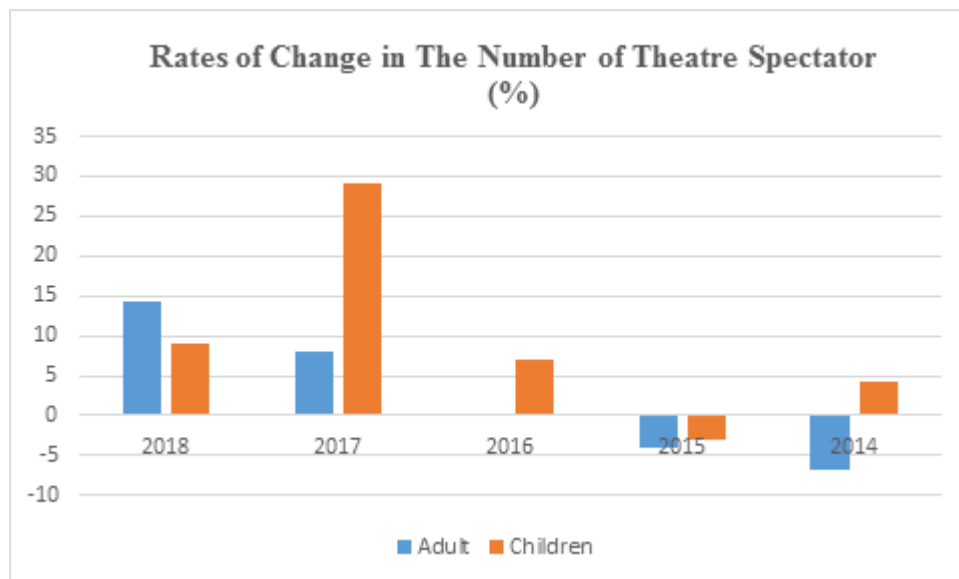


Resource: Turkstat, 2019

In 2018, the number of spectators for children's plays is 3.435.000 among the total population of children 19.184.329 between 0-14 years old (Turkstat). So, the rate is 17,9 %, but participation of the children can be roughly assumed half of it 9% due to the parents' participation in performances.

For the cost efficiency the industry average is at least 30.000-40.000 spectators for a play before it excluded from the programming. There is no data to track the life cycle of a play in Turkey. And in Turkstat website, when the numbers of audience are searched, the only subcategory appears to be the number of audiences for local and international plays. There is no subcategory like children/adult. The numbers of children audience were collected from the News Bulletin section of Turkstat for each year. In the book *Unfolding Theatre (Tiyatro Açılımı, 2011)*, Ali Poyrazoğlu questions the production policy of repertoire theatres, mainly State Theatres and IMMCT, that why after 5 or 10 performances plays are disappearing from the stages at the end of the season. And Kenan Işık replies as extravagance.

**Figure 2.3 Rates of Change in the Number of Theatre Spectators 2014-2018**

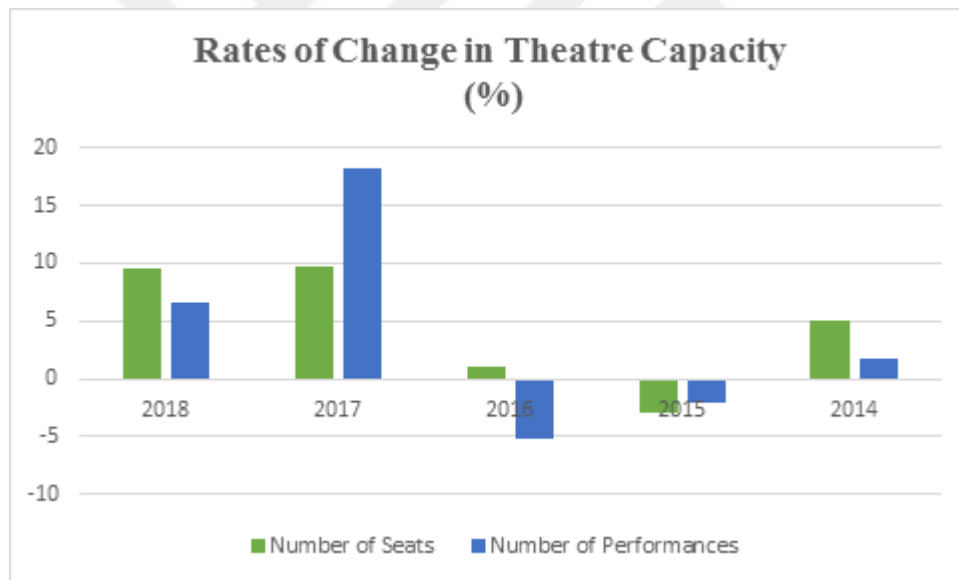


Resource: Author

As the Figure 2.3 shows, the number of children audience increases and decreases from time to time suggesting the absence of the audience development policies. However, it significantly increased in the number by 29 % while the population growth rate is %12,4 in 2017.

In the supply side, for the 2017-2018 season the number of seats is 31.4479, and the number of performances is 33.772 with the increase %6,6 compared to the previous season.

**Figure 2.4 Rates of Change in Theatre Capacity of Turkey 2014-2018**

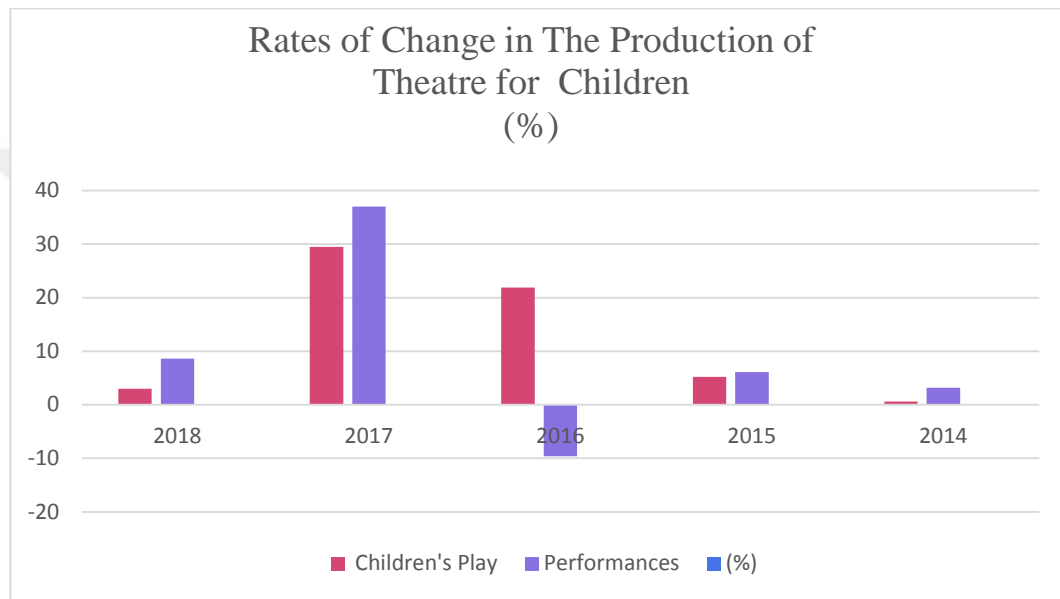


Resource: Author

Derived from Turkstat data the number of seats and the number of performances, the supply capacity of the theatres changes from time to time. The increase of children audience in Figure 2.3 in 2017 can be depend on the increase in the performances. These data show the theatre halls for adults. Unfortunately, there exists a few theatre halls for the children in Turkey. For instance, in 2009 Ankara

Contemporary Arts Theatre opened stage which is versatile also for children. And, in 2017 Haluk Yüce Puppet Theatre for Children.

**Figure 2.5 Rates of Change in The Production of Theatre for Children 2014-2018**



Resource: Author

Number of performances of children's play in 2018 is 16.358 with the increase of 8,6 % compared to the previous season. 2017 is the year of capacity increase. While the performances increase 37%, the production of the children's play increased almost 30%.

## **2.4 MANAGEMENT OF THEATRE FOR CHILDREN**

According to Mosses Goldberg, existence of so many children's theatre is so impressive even though the kind of people in a theatre, the conditions of education institutions and civil society organizations, economic inadequacy of the performing arts industry, and the notorious image of the arts for children. So, the first responsibility of the theatre management is to define the strategic targets and policies for sustainability. The organizational structure of theatres is more or less similar. Every theatre needs a board of directors, a chairman, a manager, a general art director. If there is an NGO for the theatre, a committee can lead the management. In addition to the board of directors, a board of advisors which represents all society becomes a significant indicator between the success and the failure. (Goldberg, 2008)

The fundamental difference for the children's theatre is that the shopper and the consumer are different. Although, child development experts say that children older than 7 are able to choose the play to see, tickets are bought by the parents or teachers. To some extent the choice of children is realized is a question mark, and in general expectations and needs of these two generations have conflicts. So, the manager should allocate the artistic and monetary resources efficiently, define the policies and the objectives, communicate these objectives to the shoppers (parents and teachers), and create a sound business plan to realize these objectives.

### **2.4.1 Making Policies**

Different than the other theatres in children's theatre, policies are made according to the philosophy of its leader and the needs of the society. Business compliance and cooperation are attained only if the team clearly understands and accepts the management objectives. And after that priorities must be determined for each objective. But, for the conflicting objectives case, a

method must be prepared in advance to end up the optimum choice. The policy document should be announced publicly to get the reputation, and let everybody know that theatre is directed by not the authority of the manager but by the objectives (Goldberg, 2008).

Children's theatres have diverse policies; some produce a few plays for children, some got funds for touring or make agreements with schools, others prefer just performances. There is no textbook that formulates the ideal policies for those cases. The ultimate objective is to elevate the artistic comprehension of children, and balancing the artistic standards and the resources (Goldberg, 2008).

In the information and experience economy era, marketing strategies focus on demand chains rather than the product, and supply chains (Jon Sundbo, 2013). And, marketing of the theatre for children is not free from the general marketing principles for performing arts. With the right positioning, connecting the program with the right audience is the first thing to do, and then community building, communication of the program.

For the audience development, utilizing the personal and social media networks like the connection with families, schools, businessmen, NGOs or opinion leaders. Campaigns and P&R strategies must be suitable for the different audience segments supporting the image of the theatre. Communication with the teachers should convey the relationship between learning and pleasure, and the benefits of children's theatre such as socialization, language abilities, deep learning, and emotional development. (Goldberg, 2008)

However, the most important thing is the bookkeeping, audience and sales data for the research and the future policies.



## 2.4.2 Finance of Theatre

Financing of theatre in Western Europe consists of diversified income as stated below in the report of Arts Council of England (Art Council of England, 2016):

**Public funding:** includes grants from any public organization – e.g. the Arts Council or the Regional Development Agency

**Earned income:** sometimes referred to as traded income, which reflects the fact that this income is generated by activities that the organization delivers to which some price/ charge/ fee is attached (e.g. ticket sales, workshop fees, selling publications, or other commercial activities (e.g. bar, café, shop), if run as part of the organization rather than as independent subsidiaries)

**Contributed income:** philanthropy income given by trusts & foundations, individuals and businesses; in addition to transactional income generated through business sponsorship

**Private revenue/income:** all revenues that are not public funding (i.e. Earned income and Contributed income)

**Marketisation/ marketised:** i.e. a situation in which market forces have a greater influence, where supply and demand are reconciled via the price mechanism and competition, rather than by public funding. This phrase is generally used for sectors that are not wholly commercial.

For instance, in Finland, theatres get supports from the state and the subsidies from the local councils. Theatre for children gets bigger support from the state compared to the subsidies from the local councils. Public funding makes it possible to keep the ticket prices low. Apart from the cultural funding legislation, the state supports the performing arts with grants for some unlisted theatre groups or amateur activities. The state Dramatic Council provides funding for guest directors, scenographers, short-term dramatic experiments, promotion of drama, cooperation between theatre companies, and professional training (Wilmer, 2008).

Another example that has a rooted theatre culture is Bulgaria. 38 theatres are owned and 80% funded by the State. 2016 budget was 27 million € for these theatres and 15 opera&ballet while more than 22% of the population is below the poverty threshold, and over half a million pensioners live on less than £2.40 a day. There are also 10 municipal theatres, funded by mainly by the municipalities, as well as independent theatres, mainly in the capital and often short-lived, which depend on project funding (Stefanova, 2018).

The financing of England Theatres, after reductions grants Arts Council still accounted for 24%, but 'Other public funding' (principally Local Authority funding) accounted for only 4%. Theatre organisations are utilizing a range of new initiatives in public funding, cultural and social investment, tax relief, loan finance, enterprise investment schemes and commercial investment to grow and diversify their finances (Naylor and Lewis, 2016).

#### **2.4.4 Box Office**

The tickets of children's theatres are never being given for free although they are publicly funded theatres or have sponsorships. In that case, children will learn that performing arts does not worth to pay, it is cheap or fake. Because the decor, costumes, and technical equipment cost higher compared to the adult theatre, it should not be projected to the ticket prices. Instead, the cost can be compensated with extra small plays each week or school performances. Price discrimination according to the location of the seats can be another method. However, price discrimination should not be applied as children and parents. This may cause to decrease in ticket sales in total. (Goldberg, 2008)

Direct sales or group sales all the ticket sales methods are valid for children's theatre as well. Due to the direct connection with the audience, the box office staff is highly important. A season ticketing system is widespread in Europe or

in the US. It is a great advantage to know your risks at the beginning of the season.

#### **2.4.5 Theatre Saloon Management**

The burden of the performance is on the shoulder of the saloon manager. Keeping the comfort and control of the audience is not similar to the adult theatre. Traffic, parking lot, placement, cloakroom, ushers, beverages, program handout, restrooms, security, and children with special needs are under his control. Calm and experienced ushers are key persons to control the children. Uniforms help them in their job. But their attitudes are crucial, hence create all atmosphere of the theatre. For the groups, to know the age intervals and the number of children in advance is critical to arrange them. Children should feel as if they are at home. Too much authority decreases participation rates. Delivering the program to children help them to learn to prepare for the performance. First aid and fire protection systems are guaranteed by the manager, and he makes sure that all the actors and employees also leave the theatre in content (Goldberg, 2008).

#### **2.4.6 Civic/Social Roles of Theatre for Children**

Atatürk's famous quotation 'the ground of Turkish Republic is culture' is not a coincidence. So, cultural policies have direct connection to the regulation of the social order. And, technically, legitimacy of policies relies on the society. All the performing arts have direct connection with the society, but theatre itself is a simply projection of the society.

According to Kongar, in his article of Theatre in Terms of Sociology, why theatre compared to other disciplines of art becomes the subject of sociology is due to three reasons. First, the nature of its production. The writer, the director,

and the actors all have certain social roles and statues. In combination with the music, decor, light and other technical parts it is produced out of a group work for which sociology deals with inevitably. Second, audience is the integral part of theatre requiring a direct channel between the transmitter and the receiver. And third, theatre is a social happening because it refers to human relationships. Being derived from the society as an art form, it reflects back to the society. So, every play has a social message beyond conscious choice of the writer or the director. This powerful social functionality works for the purposes- mainly conservative or progressive- of its users making theatre equipped with civic roles. Today, the society in Turkey is seeking for new common grounds for the changing social structures, so the importance of its civic role is relatively higher. As a result, the social function of theatre is help to diminish human-human conflict through opening the minds regarding human relations. In another word solving the human-human conflict means to stop the exploitation of human by human. (Kongar, 1979)

The theatre historian Oscar Brockett explains these social functions (for progressive and conservative purposes) in a way that every society has constant and dynamic structures. While one part of the society prioritizes the protection of certain values, the other part encourages the progression, and change. Generally, a tendency towards one side is observed in a certain period, and the society can shift between the opposite poles from time to time. All these movements impose civic roles on theatre in the society (Brockett, 2008). Therefore, cultural policies of countries follow as default, the ideology of ruling government in accordance with their position in conservative or progressive parties in all over the world.

So, today many theatre professionals are tired of the meanings attached to their job, and just want to do their art.

### 3. CASE STUDY RESEARCH

#### 3.1 MAPPING OF THEATRE SECTOR IN İSTANBUL

İMM undertakes a direct role in the supply of theatre thanks to the İMMCT with 11 stages, whereas it makes outsourcing on production at 17 culture centers of district municipalities to compensate the need. According to the Turkstat the theatre data of İstanbul:

**Table 3.1 Theatre Statistics of İstanbul 2009-2019**

Years	Theatre Halls	Seats	Plays	Performances	Audiences
2009	71	32.448	1347	8282	2.029.489
2010	137	45.886	1927	12200	2.358.146
2011	147	54.736	1748	9003	1.736.783
2012	159	55.999	2602	10454	1.881.176
2013	189	61.459	3673	12926	2.510.265
2014	178	68.159	3077	12.858	2.112.046
2015	224	76.749	3.438	11140	2.134.685
2016	201	69.493	3810	11279	2.257.499
2017	227	71.603	4579	13278	2.580.069
2018	211	80.781	4472	14176	3.003.641

Resource: Turkstat, 2019

There were 184 professional performing arts enterprises in 2011 (Aksoy and Enlil, 2011: 107). In 2014 according to the article by Tonga Uriarte, 149 independent theatres were determined, and 24 of them participated in her empirical study. She found that 40% of the theatres do not have their stages; 43,5% of them can not provide social security to the employees; total audience is 303.109 whose loyalty is inconsistent; ticket prices are above the average

purchasing power of Turkey, and the actors invest their earnings from TV series in theatre to sustain. She concluded that the flourishing of the sector since 2000 is derived just from the personal efforts of actors and theatre professionals, and this creates a kind of perception that being an actor demands sacrifice for the young generations. (Uriarte, 2016)

Today, 7 theatre halls of State Theatres (With the occupancy rate increased from 80% to 90% between 2010 and 2017), 11 theatre halls of City Theatres, Bakırköy Municipality Theatres, and Bahçelievler Municipality Theatres, and performances at 17 culture centers of IMM are the supply of public side. In the private sector, 307 performing arts enterprises, and 197 arts center enterprises are registered in the İstanbul Chamber of Commerce (İstanbul Chamber of Commerce, 2019). Among them there exist 121 theatre companies, and 20 of them are registered as the theatre for children company at the İstanbul Chamber of Commerce. 16 theatres public or private are members of Assitej Turkey, 5 of them are based in İstanbul including IMMCT.

On the other hand, according to the data taken from DasDas Theatre, there exist 1200 private theatres for children just in the Anatolian side of İstanbul. Most of them are considered as Suitcase Theatre who travels with their costumes. However, a few professional theatre groups performing on scientific and aesthetic bases are still struggling to do their art for instance, Theatre BeReZe, Tiyarotem, Dasdas Theatre, Theatre Yeniden, İdil Aunt Theatre, Fairy Tales Reality Theatre.

Some Private Theatres for Children in İstanbul:

Zorlu /Eti/ Pınar children's theatre, Altınok Theatre, Theatre Elephant, İstanbul Children Art, Hayalbaz Theatre, Fairy Tales Truth Theatre, Theatre Yeniden, Theatre Mie, Uygur children's theatre, Kidzania, Trump Children's Theatre, Theatre Alkış, Sarıyer Art children's theatre, Theatre Pan, Theatre 34, Birdirbir children's theatre, Theatre Minerva, Öykü Stage, Theatre Işık, Theatre Mie,

Theatre Liman, Theatre Gramofon, Flying Hands Puppet Theatre, Colorful Stage, İdil Aunt Theatre.

In İstanbul, IMMCT fest since 1984, Doğa School Children's Theatre Fest since 2010, Ataşehir Municipality Children's Theatre Fest since 2010, Sarıyer Municipality Children's Rights Fest since 2013 has been organized regularly every year. Besides, Sarıyer Municipality Theatre for children fest reaches 5000 kids during the semester holiday.

Zorlu Children Art Fest in semester holiday offers ticket 55TL/\$10. Sarıyer life Park Children Fest with culture and art in the family entertainment concept is selling tickets 30TL/\$6 since 2017. Creative Child Fest in Küçük Çiftlik Park Maçka delivers tickets 60TL/\$12, 4 people family ticket is 200TL/\$40.

The distribution of theatre halls and venues appear to be two main geographic cultural clustering; the first one is culture triangle of Fatih, Beyoğlu, Beşiktaş, Üsküdar, Kadıköy including historical peninsula. The second is the north of Büyükdere Avenue with the axis of Beyoğlu-Levent-Maslak. This area becomes the house of more than 50% of the cultural industry including cultural heritage, contemporary art, fashion, and advertising by offering the main cultural infrastructure. (Aksoy & Enlil, 2011: 159).

The number of production of plays, performances, and festivals are considered as sector output. The relation between supply and demand is crooked as has been demonstrated by the data. In İstanbul, there exist only two theatre halls with 403 seats in total for children under 6 at IMMCT, however, children's plays performed at the 7 adult theatre halls on every Sundays in two sessions. 9 adult theatre halls have 3.624 seats in total. 402 seats per the theatre hall on average.

The capacity of private theatre for children: Zorlu PSM Turkcell Platinum Stage 678 seats, and their production crew changes, Theatre Tempo performs 2003-2006, BKM theatre 2006-2012, Dramatist and Theatre GC 2012- present. Some of their plays with 20TL/ \$4 tickets are The Little Match Girl Musical, The Land of Snow, The Ugly Duckling etc. They also tour around Turkey.

Pınar children's theatre performs with plays like The Little Black Fish, The End of Nasreddin Stubborn for free since 1987 touring all around Turkey, and they reached 3 million children with 44 plays till today.

Eti Children's Theatre performs for free since 2000 touring all around Turkey, they reached 2 million kids with the plays such as Alice in Wonderland, Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, Pinocchio, King Naked.

The supply of IMM is in the 2017-2018 season 750 performances by 84 theatre groups at 15 culture centers, which opened between 2004 and 2008 open a culture center in every district Municipalities. So, each culture center has 1,5 play on average for a week during the season.

The children population of Istanbul is 3.960.458 (Turkstat, 2019). To be able to forecast the demand the number of the population who wants to go to the theatre and can pay 5TL/\$1 per kid is needed, so is the data of the socio-economic profile of Istanbul. According to the 'my neighborhood İstanbul' project (Mahallem İstanbul) by İstanbul University Department of Economics and İstanbul Development Agency; 8 socio-economic categories of population were defined: 1,6 % A+ (20 neighborhoods; Beşiktaş 10, Kadıköy 4, Beyoğlu 2, Bakırköy 2, Şişli and Beykoz 1), 4,4% A, 16,3% B+ and B, 42,2% C+ and C. So, the population with low socioeconomic status is 35,1%. Therefore, even though people in the lowest category have 5 TL for a ticket, it is still questionable if they would like to go to the theatre. Because there is no data on



how many children do the C and the upper levels have, we can assume that 65% of the total children population, 2.574.297 to be total demand.

On the supply side, writer development, and original plays are so scarce. Kuyumcu criticizes in *Which Children's Theatre* book that one of the biggest problems of the theatre for children sector in Turkey is the belief. Everybody thinks that they could write a play for children. Instead of paying copyright, they attempt to be a writer. And this case study analysis supports this argument: the playwrights of 6 plays among 14, 42% of the plays in the 2018-2019 season in IMMCT are the actors working for IMMCT. The situation is worse in the private sector side. She also criticizes that plays about to be a martyr are scheduled for 3-5 years old children before their developmental level for the understanding of the concepts.

Tangible and intangible cultural infrastructure in terms of theatre for in Turkey keeps being the chief topic of criticism by the sector professionals. Özer Tunca, art consultant of the Antalya Municipality City Theatre for Children states that the theater for children in Turkey is like a stepchild. There is little information about theatre for children in people's minds, so is awareness. Cultural infrastructures do not exist. Everybody is making theatre for children without any scientific knowledge. It's seen as a revenue generator. This has to be banned. In conservatories or universities which have the theatre department should open the theatre for children department separately, and education must be in both theory and practice. The theater buildings and scenes should be constructed with proper architecture and design such as suitable bathrooms and chairs for children. It should not be forgotten that the child is an individual and should not be underestimated.

For the first time in Turkey, State Theatres released a video on the 20th of March, 2019 for the theatre for children day to increase the awareness. It can be a sign for the future movements that are just starting.

### 3.2 ANALYSIS OF IMMCT CHILDREN’S UNIT

As has been stated above, Darü’l Beday-i Osmani was founded in 1914 as the first theatre of Turkey, and following its foundation, in 1918 the first theatre journal ‘Temaşa’ began to be published till today in the names of Darü’l Bedayi, Türk Tiyatrosu, and Şehir Tiyatrosu as one of the longest living theatre periodicals in the World.<sup>3</sup> In 1934 the name of Dar’ül-Beday-i Osmani changed to İstanbul City Theatre officially<sup>4</sup>. In 1935 children’s theatre unit opened, for the first time in Turkey. (IMMCT, 2019)

In terms of institutional identity IMMCT still conveys its tradition about being a folk theatre. Tamer Levent the former General Art Director of the State Theatre, states in the interview that Muhsin Ertuğrul directed both the State Theatres and the IMMCT. However, he applied different art policies in these theatres. He followed Carl Ebert school in the State Theatres, but in the IMMCT traditional improvisation theatre continued in the 1970s. For instance, Vasfî Rıza Zobu or Bedia Muvahhit was starting to talk about daily issues or personal anecdotes in the middle of the play for which the play was extending half an hour (Levent, 2019).

The first Director of State Theatres Carl Ebert describes 19th century theatre in İstanbul in his letters of Cevad Memduh Altar that ‘cheap performances to give fun to the masses do not fulfill the artistic expectation of the theatre audiences. Furthermore, Armenian and Greek actors damage the Turkish language’ (Erten, 1985). So an interesting consistency is seen today after a century later in IMMCT. For instance, comments about the plays of IMMCT on the ekşisözlük

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3 In 2015, all the City Theatre Journal archive was digitalized online.

4 Later in 1976 another change happened to be İstanbul Municipality City Theatre, not only in the name but also the identity, as the name suggested from Darü’l Beday-i ‘House of Wonders’ to Municipality Theatre.

entries announce that the season plays are on the level that is too far from capturing their attention into the play. Tolga Yeter, the Assistant Art Director also stated in his answers for the questionnaire that IMMCT is proud to conserve its historical traditions.

Because IMMCT Children's Unit does not have a separate General Art Director, here the General Art Directors of IMMCT is analyzed starting with the founder of the Children's Unit, Muhsin Ertuğrul:

**Table 3.2 List of General Art Directors of IMMCT**

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Muhsin Ertuğrul 1935 (changes from time to time till 1979)
Vasfi Rıza Zobu 1979-1984
Gencay Gürün 1984-1994
Erol Keskin 1994-1996
Kenan Işık 1996- 2001
Şükrü Türen 2001-2002
Nurullah Tuncer 2002- 2004
Mazlum Kiper 2004-2006
Nurullah Tuncer 2006-2008
Orhan Alkaya 2008- 2009
Ayşenil Şamlıoğlu 2009- 2012
Hilmi Zafer Şahin 2012-2014
Erhan Yazıcıoğlu 2014-2015
Suha Uygur 2015-Present

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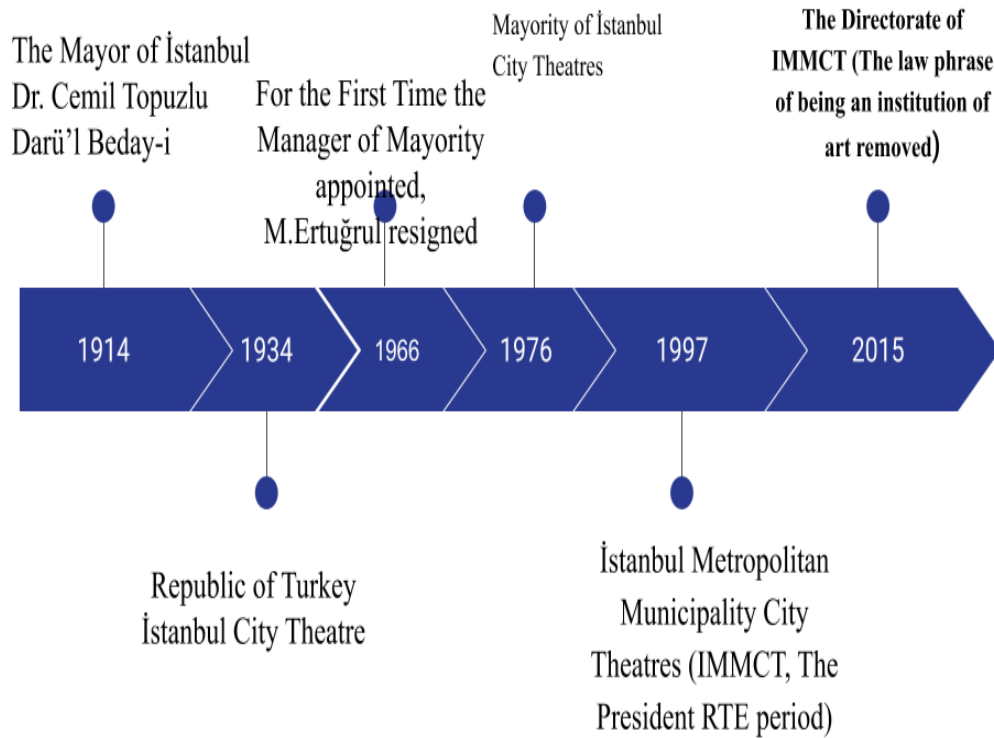
Resource: Author, 2019

The autonomous management of cultural institutions in Turkey is strongly connected with leadership styles due to the lack of laws and institutionalization. This list reports a widening gap between leadership skills

demand (particularly offstage) and supply. Concerns were particularly raised about the demands on leadership skills.

For instance, before Gencay Gürün was appointed to the General Art Directorate in 1984, the artists of IMMCT were working in the private sector for the cheapest wages. And in general, they were in the middle of nowhere in accordance with the political turmoil and military coup in the country in 1980 (Yazıcıoğlu, 2019). After the arrival of Gürün everything was dramatically changed, she encouraged the artists, and restored the self-esteem of them. To be able to stage the Evita she succeeded in deals with the Istanbul Municipality (Yazıcıoğlu, 2019)

**Figure 3.1. Timeline of Institutional Memory of IMMCT**



Resource: Author, 2019

### 3.2.1 Objectives of IMMCT

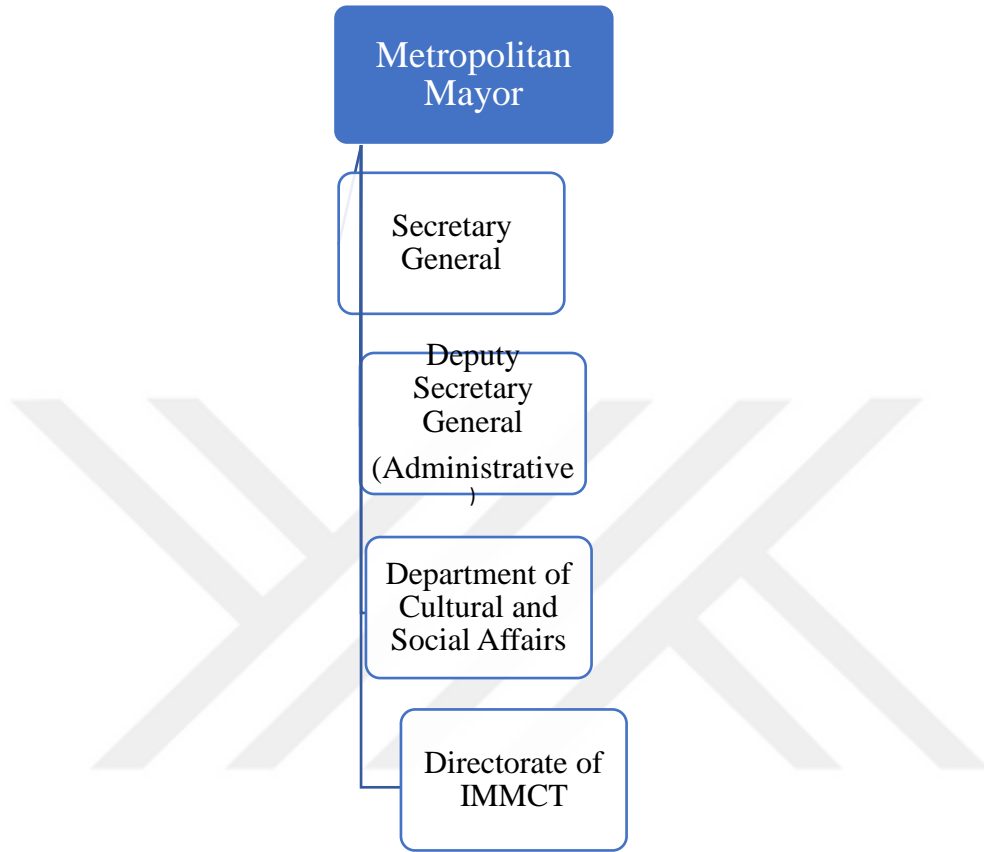
- To ensure the presentation of outstanding examples of local and foreign plays to the audience,
- To improve the art and aesthetic feelings in society,
- To keep the general ethical values of the society in the service of art without deviating from the establishment purpose of the theater,
- To make researches about the theater,
- To educate local playwrights, actors and directors, to encourage the development of local playwrights and the exhibition of their works,
- To make joint productions of theater, to organize national and international festivals, award-winning, award-free events.

In the policy document provided by the director mission and vision statements are combined:

“Since its foundation in 1914, IMMCT with the identity a city theatre has in accordance with the civic role of the arts in particular theatre, the mission and vision of polishing the cultural values, contemporary education, raising the awareness of art in the public which is guaranteed by the constitution as a fundamental right, and contribution to the further development of Turkish language and literature, to be able to do this providing the audience with distinguished plays in Turkish or translation, and leading the progression of Turkish theatre towards future.”

The hierarchy of the management of IMMCT in the Municipality is illustrated below:

**Figure 3.2 Organizational Structure of City Theatre in IMM**



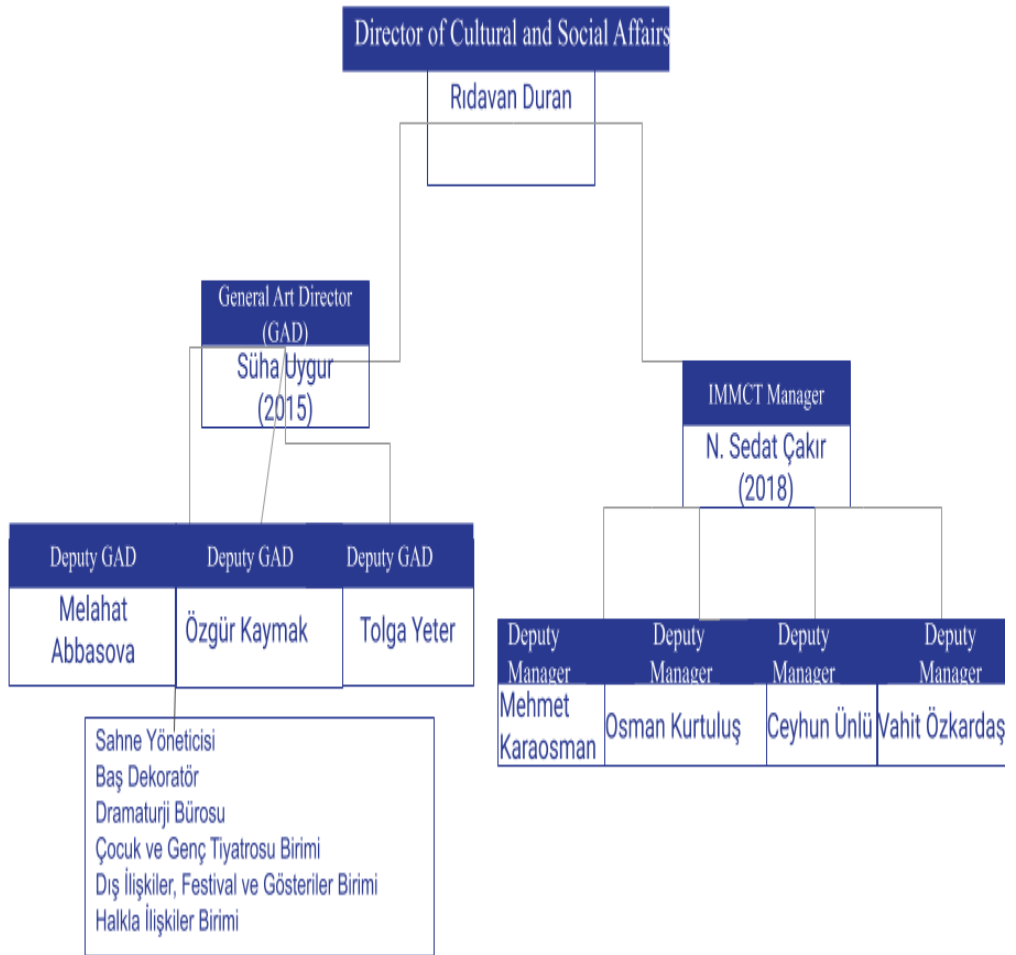
In the light of the information provided above, that institutional identity defined and the organisational objectives are not compatible with the dynamics of theatre for children. According to Wolfgang Schneider, the dangerous approach of the adult's culture to the children's culture -which appears to be the city theatricalization of the theatres for children- makes children difficult to find themselves in society. So, theatre for children should not follow the policies for the theatre of common, on the contrary, it must put a distance in particular, and create innovative ways for itself. (Schneider, 2005) So, the worst thing for a theatre for children is being directed by the General Art Director of a city theatre. Since 1935, it is the case for IMMCT Children's Unit. The Director of İstanbul Municipality City Theatre Muhsin Ertuğrul

might have understood this, so commissioned Denizer brothers to establish a private theatre for children at the beginning of the 1970s. (Denizer, 2019)

And following, the organizational chart of the IMMCT management:

**Figure 3.3 IMMCT Organizational Chart as of May, 2019**

## IMMCT Organizational Chart as of May, 2019



Resource: Author, 2019

### **Competitive Analysis:**

IMMCT has 11 theatre halls in different parts of the İstanbul. Muhsin Ertuğrul Stage takes place in Şişli at the Congress and Hotel Valley of İstanbul including İstanbul Congress Center, CRR concert hall, Lütü Kırdar congress center, Cemil Topuzlu open-air stage, TRT İstanbul Radio, and Hilton Hotels among many others in the cultural cluster. Opened in 2009 İstanbul Congress Center has Harbiye Theatre Hall with a world class stage consists of 9 parts elevating 106 cm from the surface, and 3700 seats. In the circle within the 30 miles' radius centering the Muhsin Ertuğrul Stage, there exist Taksim, Beyoğlu, Beşiktaş, Mecidiyeköy, Levent as the cultural hubs of the city and plenty of AVMs offering children's theatre and family entertainment programs. In addition, İstanbul Modern Museum of Modern Art Children Education Department, Pera Museum Kids, Aksanat Puppet Theatre take place. In terms of private children's theatres; Theatre Tem, Theatre BeReZe, İstanbul Children's Theatre, Uygur Children's Theatre.

### **3.2.3 SWOT Analysis**

#### **Strengths**

- 106 years of historical endowment
- The intellectual heritage of Muhsin Ertuğrul and his memory as an identity of the institution
- Production Infrastructure & Versatility; IMMCT is the largest theatre equipped to produce plays for 11 stages around İstanbul from musicals to traditional theatre
- Public Status competitive advantage: no risk for financial difficulty
- Locations: venues distributed around the city provide relative ease of access for the audience from different parts of İstanbul



- Becoming a member of ASSİTEJ: collaboration with international children's theatre network and the possibility of joint production with international theatres
- Transportation: the venues are easy to access with public transportation.

There is no strong competitor as being the producer of 14 children's plays per year

### **Weaknesses**

- Public Status: due to the frequently changing General Art Directors, there is no efficiency or stability
- No theatre researches or audience researches exist, the pre-existing ones like Theatre Research Lab of Ayla Algan shutdown in 2002.
- Lack of leadership skills of the general art directorate
- Statistical data system does not provide enough data to make meaningful analysis
- Incompetent directors and administrative labor for an art institution
- Performing children's play on the adult stages: adult auditorium can cause the small children to get bored from theatre
- Capacity problem; there exists only two theatre halls for children, and auditorium capacity is limited
- Concession Infrastructure: some theatre halls do not have concession for which children might want to eat at any time
- Some of the actors are employees at unskilled worker status instead of artist cadre
- Wrong attitudes and communication skills of staff
- No education unit for children in theatres. Children Education Unit serves as a school for only 35 selected students
- No formal collaboration or partnership with schools

- Actors tired from the adult performance on previous night perform in children's play
- Seating Versatility: Theatre halls can increase or decrease to some extent to obtain the optimum capacity
- Problems on the online ticketing system of the website: it is complicated to use
- The delivery of the monthly program is too late, sometimes a few days ago from the upcoming month
- The Season ticketing system is not in use, together with other audience development technics it can be put into operation

## **Opportunities**

- Gateway City: Istanbul is one of the most attractive gateway cities around the globe.
- The development of arts must be a priority for its strategic targets. Arts and creative initiatives that were pivotal in urban development, facilitate the growth and revitalization of cities. The importance of arts for gateway city growth is known. The findings of MassINC survey indicate that 47% of Gateway City residents attended a concert in the past 12 months, and 39% attended a live theatre or dance performance. 70% of respondents indicated that having quality arts and cultural events in the community are extremely or very important. It indicates that IMMCT can increase its budget to adjust itself according to the new dynamics
- In some theatre halls, the occupancy rate is around 70% which suggests the abandoned accessible seats
- Large Scale Shows: with good art management, large scale shows can be produced
-

## Threats

- No Theatre law
- Theatre for children is not a separate institution with a general art director and management board
- The perception of Children's Theatre: even the general art director considers children's play a stepping stone to educate new directors, and actors consider acting in children's play as punishment
- Cultural infrastructures are critically insufficient: Theatre departments/conservatoires do not have children's theatre branch, and inconvenient conditions to flourish the new plays for children and playwrights
- Cultural policies for the child does not exist
- Throughout 106 years there is no transfer of experience between the generations of art directors, and the actors
- University education system of actors interrupts the master- apprentice relationship between the professionals and the new generations
- No arts education at schools
- Polarization of artists
- Idle Employees: some actors never come to the theatre from TV sets
- The temporary lifetime of the plays produced
- Decreased quality in plays for the last decade
- No cross sector collaborations
- Foreign language barriers of artists for international projects
- No artist internship program
- No concern in the programming for the changing culture of children in the digital world, and the demographic changes of society due to migrations
- Repertoire committee and Board of directors have no difference in practice, all members are appointed by the Mayor

### 3.2.4 Theatre Production and Programming

Although IMMCT emphasizes the leadership position in art of theatre in their mission statement, it can not be concluded out of the content analysis and observation of the plays that programming model produces the most stimulating original work from the world.

**Table 3.3 IMMCT 2018-2019 Season Children's Plays**

Play	Session	Audience	Occupancy rates (%)
Aladdin	6	2.394	87
Long Live Peace	44	11.449	65
Apple Worm Kırtık	36	11.058	100
One Day One of my Shoes	26	5.180	80
Three Siblings and A Wolf	32	5.963	96
Karagöz Farm Guard	23	5.244	92
The country of Sad Threes	40	13.749	79
A Story of Hencoop	42	15.975	83
The clown Prince	26	8.434	79
Wonders Kitchen	28	7.531	63
My Dear Shoes	29	11.179	96
Stories from Mevlana	10	3.409	72
Biscuits Man	38	12.179	91
Pollyanna	20	10.072	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>106.823</b>	<b>82</b>

Resource: IMMCT Audience Communication Department

The average spectators per the performance is  $106.823/392= 272,5$

A performance for the 272 children is too crowd to be an interactive performance. Then children's plays of IMMCT are mostly spectacle.

Aesthetics and criticism, what should be valued in theatre for young people are the main questions in building the repertoire. As seen from the table above the main genres of the repertoire of IMMCT children's unit are classical fairy tales, traditional theatre, and plays for education and entertainment.

To the question, if the repertoire policy of IMMCT children's unit follows the changing culture of today's children, Assistant General Art Director Tolga Yeter replied that they are trying to follow the world. And for another one, if the plays can communicate with the children's language, he said that unfortunately not all of them (Yeter, 2019).

According to the regulations, all the plays in the program are selected by The Repertoire Committee that consists of 7 people who are the directors of IMM. The repertoire of the children's play shows that 42% of the plays in the 2018-2019 season have a playwright who is also the artist of IMMCT, and only one playwright is foreign. Turkish playwrights are strong within overall production. So, to diversify the repertoire, outsourcing the successful plays from the globe can be considered or exchange programs utilizing the international theatre for children network.

When we look at the efficiency of children's plays according to the number of the audience, Apple Worm Kırtık (Figure A.16) seems to be the best performance in the program, because it is the only play that has occupancy rate of 100% since it had started to perform in 2016. Whereas Wonders Kitchen which has been performing since 2014 has the occupancy rate of 63%. In fact, it was awarded in 1996 at State Theatres. It seems to be the efficiency of performances is not taken into account at IMMCT. For instance, the number of performances of Aladdin is 13 % of that of Long Live Peace, but the number of spectators it reaches is 20% of the Long Live Peace. The size of the theatre hall in which Long Live Peace performs can be assumed to be small, however its occupancy rate is 65%. Although the inefficiency is obvious, this play is in the

program since 2015. However, Assistant General Art Director Tolga Yeter, said that feedback analysis of the plays is considered in programming (Yeter, 2019).

Being funded publicly should not mean the resources could be wasted. As far as it is understood from the interviews, the Assistant General Art Director responsible from the children's unit is avoidant to take initiatives in decision making process (which is done by the directors in IMM) not to take risks about his position. Because, for the question about the appointment of the former constabulary manager to the directorate of theatre in 2015, he replied that as long as it is convenient legally it is not problem for him. This can not be taken as a reaction of an artist in any terms (Yeter, 2019).

On the other hand, IMM Directorate of Culture is adopting a more curatorial approach to the theatre for children programming for their outsourced plays in different district culture centers, which accommodates a range of different voices as part of making program, and thus better represents different audiences. For instance, plays performed in Gaziosmanpaşa Culture Centre contain moral concerns in particular, while the play which was in blacklist not long ago, *The Little Black Fish* is staged in Kadıköy or Bakırköy.

**Table 3.4 Children’s Plays at IMM Culture Centers 2018-2019**

<b>Name of the Play</b>	<b>Theatre Group</b>	<b>Location/ Cultural Center</b>
Tales with Songs	Bende Sanat	Güngören Erdem Beyazıt
Pıtırıcıklar	Masal Gerçek	Kartal Bülent Ecevit
Tales of Hero	Yansıma	Ümraniye
The Little Black Fish	Başakşehir tiyatro akademisi	Bakırköy Cem Karaca
The Donkey of Keloğlan	Mavi kumpanya	Tuzla İdris Güllüce
A Tale of Nature	Tiyatro park çocuk	Başakşehir
For a beautifulworld	İstanbul sanat ofisi	Şile
Prens Frog	Uygur Sanat Tiyatrosu (Belongs to the General Art Director of IMMCT)	Esenler
Bremen Town Musicians	Tiyatro mask	Sarıyer
The journey of punctuations	Cici Tiyatro	Bayrampasa
The box of lies	Tuzla sanat tiyatrosu	Ümraniye
Environmentalist Karagöz	Üstün sanat tiyatrosu	Sultanbeyli Necmettin Erbakan
Rumi and Old Lion	Dream team academy	Yenibosna
Happy Nest	Tiyatral sanatlar akademisi vakfi	Sarıyer

Resource: IMM Culture Website

**Table 3.5 IMMCT Performances / Plays**

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Adult	1018/34	1247/37	1323/38	1412/43
Musical	249/6	178/9	103/5	139/4
Children	316/14	403/8	377/15	580/18
Total	1583/54	1828/54	1803/28	2042/55

Resource: IMM 2018 Performance Report

From 2009 to 2012 the number of performance of children's plays increased by 83 %, and the number of children's plays increased by 28% at IMMCT Children's Unit.

**Table 3.6 IMMCT and IMM Culture Centers Performance/Plays 2012- 2018**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2472/145</b>	<b>1.734/55</b>	<b>1.699/62</b>	<b>1.400/61</b>	<b>1.361/50</b>	<b>1.445/41</b>	<b>1.509/50</b>
<b>IMMCT</b>							
Adult plays	1412/43	1.004/35	913/35	807/32	895/29	963/22	881/26
Musicals	139/4	192/4	264/8	227/7	109/4	130/5	225/7
Children's	580/18	538/16	522/19	366/22	357/17	352/14	403/17
<b>CultureCenters</b>	<b>430/80</b>	<b>612/178</b>	<b>737/392</b>	<b>773/199</b>	<b>1.014/851</b>	<b>1.182/877</b>	<b>1.248/753</b>
Adult Plays	-/-	108/30	207/74	232/57	359/250	518/312	498/325
Children's	430/80	504/148	530/318	541/142	655/601	664/565	750/428

Resource: IMM 2018 Performance Report

From 2012 to 2018, at IMMCT Children Unit the number of performances decreased by 30%, and the number of plays stayed almost the same.



In total, both at IMMCT and culture centers, the number of children's performances increased by 14%, and the number of plays increased by 354 %. This is because, in 2018 428 children's plays were performed 750 show. 25% of the plays were performed just once. Dozens of questions bear in the minds. How many theatres have produced 428 plays is unknown. While the number of performances at IMMCT considerably decreased, the performances at the cultural centers are inflated.

IMM started to schedule the children's plays at culture centers for the first time in 2012, supplying 75% of IMMCT performances. When it comes to 2018, children's theatre in culture centers almost doubled in the number of the performances of IMMCT, which indicates the cultural policy prioritizing the quantity instead of quality at the expense of children's imagination world. It helped directors just to polish their reports. Department of Culture and Social Affairs Share in total budget of IMM is %1,3 in 2018. Directorate of Cultural Events could not give the share of children's theatre in total budget for culture (IMM Performance Report, 2018).

In terms of stage or production technologies, although we can not compare it with western Europe, IMMCT is still modest for a city like İstanbul. And the use of digital technologies in content production varies across the venues like Sultanbeyli stage.

In addition, a new project Pollyanna Musical in the family entertainment concept is planned to be performed on Cemil Topuzlu Open Air Stage this summer which shows the follow in trends in the sector. (Yeşil Mavi, 2019 ASSITEJ Conference). Theatre Vocational Education Program for the high schools and universities should be launched for the sake of future quality of the theatre.

An important part of the total production of theatre for children is touring performances which are considerably low in the number. One or two international tours for a whole season. These data demonstrate the all performances, for the children's performances no data is available.

**Table 3.7 Touring Performances at IMMCT 2015-2019**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Domestic	9	11	16	28	10
International	3	1	2	1	1
Total	12	12	18	29	11

Resource: IMMCT Audience communication department

Frequency of touring shows that more support for touring at the middle and small scales is required. In April, 2019 IMMCT Children's Fest hosted 63 performances for a total of 8.000 audience. In addition, Pollyanna was performed as sound theatre for 100 kids. (IMMCT Audience communication department, 2019)

### **3.2.5 Theatre Halls**

İstanbul City Theatre started to build theatre halls in different districts; in 1960 at Kadıköy, in 1961 at Üsküdar, in 1961 at Fatih, in 1962 Rumeli Hisarı summer theatre, in 1965 at Zeytinburnu. Üsküdar Kerem Yılmaz Stages was renewed and opened in 2007, after the burned theatre of ACPC (AÇOK) in a fire. Last year in 2018, Sultangazi Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Culture Center with 629 seats was taken into IMMCT. And next year in 2020 another stage in Kadıköy

Gazhane will be opened with 200 seats for adult, and 90 seats for children. (Çakır, 2019)

Until the 2018 IMMCT has 10 theatre halls with the capacity 3398, however in the performance reports of IMM the capacity of theatre halls is declared to be 7.789 including Harbiye Cemil Topuzlu Open Air Stage with 4.391 seats in which performances are on the stage just for a week during a whole summer. In fact, the actual capacity is 4027 seats in 11 theatre halls including children's theatres.

In IMMCT, children's plays perform on these stages for adults and auditoriums which do not communicate with the emotions and the body sizes of the kids. And the slope of the saloon is built for the adults, so children who take seats on the second row have to sit on the knees to see the play. In addition, most of the saloons are too big for interactive plays. The situation from the back seats is similar to the watching TV.

The ideal conditions:

- The max distance from the stage is 50 m
- Seat capacity is 150-250 for the interactive plays, and 450-750 for the normal plays
- Convenient slope with the height of the stage
- Restroom size must be arranged for the children
- Extra fire exits
- Technical equipment is efficient if the expert team exists otherwise money and energy loss. (Goldberg, 2008)

The thing is how to use stage artistically. Architecture should consider the needs and lifestyles of actors and employees, and trigger the wish to see and visit on the audience.

The only exemplary children's theatre halls are GOP Ferih Egemen Children's Theatre (Figure A.13) with 260 seats, and Kağıthane Küçük Kemal Children's Theatre (Figure A.14) with 143 seats and 24 cushions. And, they both were opened in 2009. And Istanbul has more than 1 million preschool children who are potential demand.

**Table 3.8 IMMCT 2019 Performance**

<b>Stage Name</b>	<b>Seat Capacity</b>	<b>Play</b>	<b>Performances</b>	<b>Spectators</b>
Fatih Reşat Nuri Stage	336	14	222	61.333
Gaziosmanpaşa Stage	227	19	172	33.430
GOP F.Egemen Children's Stage	260	3	32	5.473
Cemil Topuzlu Open Air Theatre	4.391	6	6	11.516
Harbiye Muhsin Ertuğrul Stage	598	22	226	106.155
Kadıköy Haldun Taner Stage	286	20	218	61.235
Kağıthane Children Stage	143	4	34	3.855
Kağıthane Sadabad Stage	601	20	138	64.138
Ümraniye Stage	404	22	160	58.712
Üsküdar Kerem Yilmazer Stage	214	5	19	3.899
Üsküdar M. Celal Stage	329	22	218	63.785
Sultangazi HAY Sahnesi (2018)	629			
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.418</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>1.445</b>	<b>473.531</b>

### 3.2.6 Audience

Till the 7 years old, children respond to the stage performance in similar ways. From time to time they take the play as if it was real, and express their feelings directly. For instance, if they are scared of something in the play they scream. (Kuyumcu, 2016)

Attracting the children into theatre programming: the importance of “real dialogue” between theatre and the audience, which puts audiences “at the heart of the process” and embraces them not just as consumers, but as equal participants. Educational Program or workshops for kids do not take place in the programming. In Children Education Unit after a two-year education for the children between 8-10 years old, majority of the children do not continue theatre as a profession.

For the children’s plays, the occupancy rates of IMMCT as a public theatre show that the capacity inadequacy can not be put forward as an excuse for the participation rates of children. Some plays are performing for the 40% empty seats. (See Table 3.3)

The theatre manager Sedat Çakır stated that they are happy because the audience with headscarf increased in the number so far. (Çakır, 2019) This audience policy of IMMCT proves the hypothesis of this research: public theatre is used on political purposes. For the theatre for children, they do not employ teaching artists or entrance hall activities before and after the performances. So, engaging with the audience stays limited.

There is no seasonal ticketing system probably because of making plans and realization of those plans are not in common in our society. But, IMMCT even did not try this method which would guarantee its risks in advance. An audience research department does not exist too. Reaching out to different socioeconomic backgrounds is achieved only by opening theatre halls in district municipalities such as Sultangazi, Kağıthane, Ümraniye.

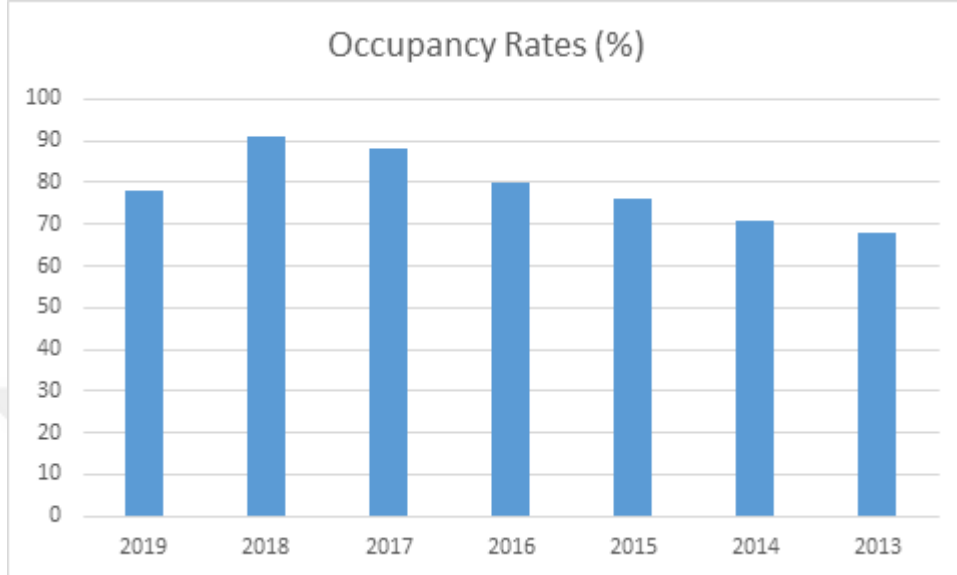
The total supply, the overall achievable attendances of IMMCT in 2019 is 1.578.584 (the number of available seats 4027 (excluded Cemil Topuzlu Open-air Theatre) multiplied by the number of children’s performances in 2019 392, see Table 3.3) The overall achievable attendances per capita per year is

1.578.584/2.574.297 (D category outreach segment of the total children population is excluded from the demand). In the case of just IMMCT children's theatre supply, the chance to see a play at IMMCT is 0,6 for a child in 2019. This result indicates the difficulty of access to children's theatre. In some cities like London, this number is more than 1 play on a day throughout the year. Together with the offer of private theatres and the cultural centers of IMM, each child in İstanbul could barely have a chance to see a few plays in a year. Proximity and ease of access to local cultural infrastructure are also important in attendance shares of venues.

Compared to profiles of audiences in different districts in İstanbul, the actress of IMMCT Derya Yıldırım says that the responses of children to the same play in Gaziosmanpaşa Stage and at Kadıköy Stage are different. For instance, somewhere in the play, her shoes get lost each other, and both of her shoes kiss 'muck muck' when they meet again. At that moment, children in GOP stage are silent and shy, but in Kadıköy Stage they burst into laughter. (Direklerarası Conference, 2019)

The numbers of children audience of IMMCT are 106.823 in 2019 (before May), and 141.622 in 2018. (IMMCT Department of Audience Relations).

**Figure 3.4 IMMCT Occupancy Rates of the 2013-2019 season**



Resource: IMM Directorate of Culture, 2018

For the children's stages the occupancy rates are 90% for Kağıthane Küçük Kemal Stage, and 96 % for GOP Ferih Egemen Stage in 2019.

There is an ongoing debate about the effectiveness and challenges of different audience development approaches such as free tickets, however, the importance of ongoing engagement, rather than short-term activities is still far from the understanding of the management of IMMCT. In audience development, approaches to communicating more directly with audiences through digital technology are increasing worldwide.

### **Civic/Social Roles of IMMCT Children's Unit**

Societies always have a dynamic structure changing constantly due to numerous factors like migrations, political factors, or gender movements. So city theatres always keep in close touch with these dynamics. This chimes with

theatres' increasing focus on their local communities and social functions, and of theatres achieving a cultural purpose within a broader set of civic responsibilities. IMMCT adopts to ensure the 'general moral rule of Turkish society' as a civic role out of the 'conservative art' policies (Çakır, 2019).

### **Education Department**

The Education Department should be revised in the broader context. Many professional theatres for children employ teaching artists who perform lobby activities, and workshops before and after each performance.

The Children Education Unit serves only for the selected 35 students about acting and theatre. The actors are not specialized in children or adult theatres. On Friday and Saturday nights their performances finish at 11 pm, and the next day for 12 am session they come to the children's theatre or Children Education Unit. (Yazıcıoğlu, 2019) This programming directly affects the quality of the children's plays.

### **3.2.9 Funding of IMMCT**

IMMCT does not consider sponsorship or alternative theatre financing models in the near future (Çakır, 2019).

2018 Budget of IMM for the culture: 433.194.000

Cultural events: 324.265.000 (İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality, 2019)

The budget of IMMCT mainly consists of personnel expenses, social security contributions, purchases of goods and services, capital expenses. IMMCT total budget is 77.000.000 (approx. \$15.400.000) for the 2018-2019 season, and 44.000.000 is the cost of personnel approximately of the 400 employees (Çakır, 2019). Personnel cost constitutes the highest cost 57 % of the total budget. This



ratio for instance in Finland repertoire theatres is 65% (Wilmer, 1998). The box office revenue is around 30% of the total budget.

In 2019 The number of children's play/ The number of Adult Plays is 14/32. So, children's plays are 43%. However, applying this ratio to forecast the cost of the production of the children's plays will be misleading because resource allocation is under budgeted in children's theatre unit.

IMMCT never consider sponsorships as finance policy due to the fact that the management avoids the power share on production and programming policy or the other restriction of sponsorship agreement (Çakır, 2019)

### **3.2.10 Human Resources**

IMMCT has around 400 employees, 250 of them are artists and creative employees (Çakır, 2019). Children's Theatre Unit does not employ artists specialized in theatre for children. This can be one of the proofs that IMMCT Children's Theatre Unit can not be considered as a separate institution. Artists perform in children's play on Saturday morning having been performed in an adult play on the previous night. How the actors for children's plays are selected among all is according to the convenience of the actor to that role. (Yeter, 2019)

For the question about the actor workforce policy, and if they have a strategy to diversify the backgrounds of the artists, Assistant General Art Director Tolga Yeter put a smile in the response box. So we can make an inference that artists of IMMCT are still too far from that policy level, but have problems still at the basics.

In this regard, Tamer Levent states that:

‘Acting does not have a definition as a profession in Turkey, it must have as has been in the International Labor Union (ILO) and International Organization of Standardization (ISO). Not only for the acting but for all the backstage crew’s employee rights must be described. Intellectual property rights for the playwrights, theatre directors, and stage designers should be defined including the process of developing creative work. So, for the publicly funded cultural institutions, creative staffs are not managed by the rules of the bureaucracy. For private theatres actors are working even without social security. They do not get paid during the rehearsal period. After the play is staged if the performances sell they get paid. In this insecure and unstable environment problems of theatres never come to an end. To become a sector is a process. The management of theatre should undertake this responsibility starting with developing the ‘theatre culture’ in youth and society.’ (Levent, 2019)

For instance, Finland passed the Artist’s Grant Act in 1969. (Wilmer, 1998) In Turkey, at IMMCT even as a public institution some actors are employed in the unskilled labor status of the Municipality.

The question about the dismissal of some actors after the failed military coup attempt in 2016 was left unanswered by Yeter. So, antidemocratic actions are known at IMMCT throughout its history, but for the democratization, IMMCT workforce diversity should be maintained instead of dismissal of the oppositions.

In addition, the idle workforce who performs only TV series and never shown up at the theatre (Yazıcıoğlu, 2019) should be controlled.

### **3.2.12 Research and Development**

There exists no research of children's theatre or audience research in IMMCT, this year Research and Development Department is opened but it is not working and the administrative employees have no idea about what this department stands for. The biggest limitation of this study became insufficient statistical data on the subject.

### **Cross-sector collaboration**

The global trends in the theatre sector show that collaborations between the public and commercial theatres, as well as between the theatres and schools determine the future proliferation for children's theatre. When the question about collaboration was asked to the director Çakır, He considered the IMM culture center theatre performances the collaboration with the private theatres. Because theatre for children is still on the way to become a sector in Turkey, IMMCT who produces at least 14 plays in a season should take some strategic actions and create policies regarding this point.

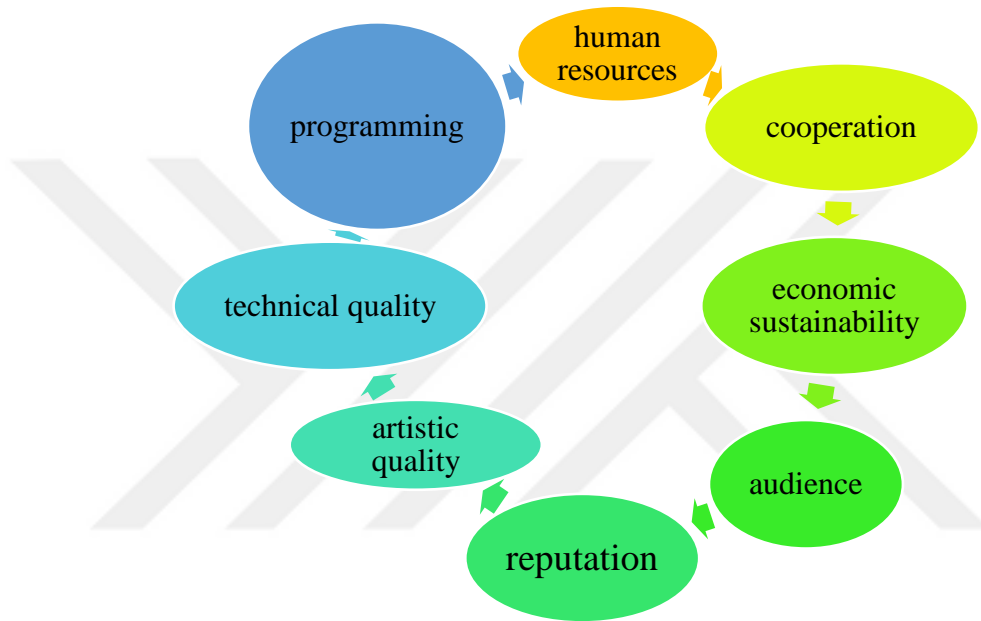
### **Pedagogy in Theatre**

The IMMCT has a pedagogue for children's theatre, however she never replied to neither an interview request nor the emails. No data obtained about how IMMCT children's theatre plays are controlled by the pedagogue. Experts suggest that pedagogue should control the performance at the final stage. Otherwise, it turns to the interventions into artistic production.

To sum up, evaluation of the management of IMMCT Children's Unit is completed under the given data. 'Evaluation contributes towards fulfilling the mission and achieving the targets forecast based on a process of information that is fed back into the planning, execution, or operational management' (Lluís

Bonet, 2018). So, although findings of this research can be input for future plans and performances of IMMCT Children's Unit, not only public theatres for children but also private theatres for children can find some of the knowledge helpful. The areas to evaluate in a theatre is illustrated below.

**Figure 3.5 Areas to Evaluate in a Theatre**



### 3.3 FINDINGS

Out of the researches and the interviews with the Manager of IMMCT Necip Sedat Çakır, the Assistant General Art Director Tolga Yeter, and the observation of the theatre employees, the results of The Implications of Good Governance at IMMCT are demonstrated below:

#### 3.3.1 Legitimacy and Transparency

There is no statement about the art policy of the institution on the website of the theatre. Çakır replied to a question about the audience that during the last

decade, women with headscarf increased in the number due to the change in programming. (Çakır, 2019) It indicates that they are applying the ‘conservative art policy’ which is not written in any document after the manifest of conservative art by İskender Pala in 2012.

The appointments for the Directorate of IMMCT and the General Art Directorate are realized all of a sudden that no one knows which criteria required for the positions. In addition, throughout the last two decades, the turnover rate of the position General Art Directorate is 2.5 years. No one can explain how these appointments are made or what kind of criteria they consider for the appointments. The cases of the actor union of IMMCT (İSTİSAN), and the interrogations of deported actors after the 2016 failed military coup attempt suggested that the legitimacy and the transparency of the institution are severely questionable.

### **3.3.2 Accountability**

Although State Theatre releases the disclosure of the annual report that we can see the balance sheet, income statement, and expenditures, IMMCT does not inform the Public about its activities. The only Public information about the performance of the City Theatre is in the culture chapter of the annual report of IMM. There is no independent audit, and The Turkish Court of Accounts examines the IMM.

IMMCT needs to publish the strategic plans and performance reports on their website to maintain the accountability criteria as State Theatres did.

### **3.3.3 Business Ethics**

First, the change of the article 1 that says ‘IMMCT is an art institution’ in the previous regulation of IMMCT is completely unethical action by the managers of IMM. Following the debates on regulation changes and the failed military coup in 2016, a series of unethical practices regarding the opposition artists were shown. For instance, the case of Kemal Kocatürk and Levent Üzümcü who were fired from the theatre. However, the data is not enough to illustrate the levels of the practices violating the ethical rules. Some of the artists were dismissed even without any interrogation.

Although most of the artists adopt the rules of business ethics, here is the same the traditional problem of all public institutions; idle workforce. Some of the employees prefer to work for Tv series industry. They are the idle capacity (Yazıcıoğlu, 2019). The General Art Directorate should take the necessary precautions for all the cases which are unethical in addition to this.

### **3.3.4 Inclusive Management**

Inclusive management is one of the key features of management. IMMCT does even not have an organizational chart to see the positions and structures on its websites. Before the last regulation change in 2012, the repertoire committee consisted of 7 members; apart from the IMM Director of Department of cultural affairs, IMMCT General Art Director, and 1 playwright or critic selected by the Mayor, the other 3 members have been suggested by sector professionals and 1 member has been suggested by the artists with cadre in IMMCT.

After the new regulation in 2015 the name of Repertoire Committee switched to Literary Committee which consists of; IMM Director of Department of Culture, Director of IMMCT, General Art Director of IMMCT, 3 people

selected by the Mayor among the theatre professionals or members of press, 1 person selected by the Mayor among the employees of IMMCT without cadre.

Board of Directors Before the New Regulation:

- Director of IMMCT,
- General Art Director,
- 1 artist or director with cadre to be selected by the Mayor among the 3 candidates of General Art Director,
- 2 people among the members of the City Council or the staffs of IMMCT to be selected by the Mayor,
- 2 people selected by the artists and theatre directors with cadre among themselves.

Board of Directors in the New Regulation in 2012:

- IMM Deputy Secretary General responsible from culture,
- IMM Director of Department of Culture and Social Affairs,
- Director of IMMCT,
- General Art Director,
- 2 employees without cadre of IMMCT to be selected by the Mayor,
- 1 member of IMM City Council to be selected by the Mayor.

According to the new regulation all the board members are selected by the Mayor. Board of Directors meets once every 15 days. And decision is taken on the majority.

In addition to this structure of management, all the debates since the 2000s on IMMCT indicate that it is unforgettably a failure in inclusive management. In terms of expression of speech and the level of participation in decision making,

the actor of One Day One of my Shoes, Yildirim shared her example that when she wanted to change a line of the play mentioning mother due to some pedagogical reasons, the director did not let her act in that way (Direklerarası Conference, 2019).

The lack of inclusive management in fact, is a general problem of cultural policy making process in Turkey. The best example is the report Culture in Turkey that was prepared for the Council of Europe in 2013. However, another report Cultural Policy in Turkey from a Civic Perspective was prepared by 184 people comprised of culture and arts institutions, civil society organizations, artists and experts who could not find the opportunity to participate in this process. (Cultural Policy and Management Research Center, 2011)

### **3.4 VARIABLES OF THEATRE FOR CHILDREN IN TURKEY**

**First the variables of the production/ supply side:**

- The artistic conditions of the area; scarcity in original playwrights, and inflation in the failed attempts of the sector professionals about being a playwright. Scarcity in theatre directors.
- Education quality of the artists, theatre for children departments
- Investments in tangible and intangible cultural assets, and infrastructures
- (The scarcity of) Awards of theatre for children
- (The scarcity of) Theatre halls for children
- (The scarcity of) Touring theatres
- Grants and funding methods
- Good governance
- Marketing of the performance arts



- (The scarcity of) Pedagogues specialized in theatre (In England MA degree is offered in)

#### **The variables of the demand side:**

- Income level of the audience (Parents)
- Level of Education (Parents), between the income and levels of education the latter is more determinant. The ticket price of children's theatre is low in public theatres.
- Accessibility to the theatre halls
- Digital Technologies AR&VR as a substitute product/service in the experience economy
- Schools kindergartens and theatre agreements
- Allocation of time for making plans for cultural events in advance, and getting used to making plans

### **3.5 FACTORS THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON THEESE VARIABLES**

#### **3.5.1 Psychological Factors**

**Perception of the Child and Theatre for Children:** As developing child concept in time, so does the theatre regarding children develops. Because children were underestimated in society, they were out of sight of the policymakers of that society. When we look at how children's theatre has developed in welfare states, no surprise that the story was the same. Out of big efforts they have come to that point. Since their inception, children's theatre companies in Britain and elsewhere have had to fight a continuing battle to have their work recognized by funding bodies such as the Arts Council of Great Britain or local authorities, and by critics and other members of the theatre profession who do not accord the same value or level of seriousness to the needs of children's theatre. (Barter, 2002)

“Children” novels get a plenty amount of review space, but when it comes to writing about children” theatre, every column inch must still be fought for and over. This lack of coverage matters because it is always the case that what is reviewed in our culture quickly becomes what is valued in our culture. An absence of reviews about theatre that is made for and with children, and a reluctance by arts desks and editors to take children” theatre seriously not only suggests that we do not value that particular area of theatre, but that we do not value children and their experience of the world. (Gardner, 2014).

The question was directed to Özer Tunca; why actors in Turkey adopt the perception that ‘a good actor does not perform in children’s theatre’. He replied that a good actor performs children's theater. He should do. Acting for child requires maturity, experience, superior dexterity, aptitude, ability to recognize the child. Good players always come from children” theater. Because children” theater and acting for children are difficult. The reason behind why children’s theatres could not be institutionalized in Turkey is those prejudices and not to believe. Children” theatre was set up many times in the State Theater, but it was closed down. Some plays are being performed, are they qualified? Sorry but I can say yes. We need a law I think. Support should be provided for the development of creative cadres. They should be encouraged. Awards must be given (Tunca, 2019).

Not only in Turkey, historically taboo in TYA is culturally determined (Water, 2012). Theatre, particularly theatre for children, fires the imagination, it gives our children the skills and the creativity necessary to face the world, to understand it and perhaps to change it too. We should value children theatre and take it seriously and that means treating it with the respect that we would any work of art including reviewing and critiquing it.

**General Belief in Sector Professionals that they can be a playwright:** 42 % of the playwrights of the children's plays in IMMCT are the actors of the theatre. This case is even worse in private theatres perform at the IMM culture centers or other stages due to the budget restrictions or cut of government grants. But, in fact the main motivation is they do not take theatre for children seriously.

**The Expectation of Parents:** The actress of theatre BeReZe, Elif Temuçin states that there is no other art discipline which needs to take into account the expectation of parents. (Temuçin, 2019) The biggest problem of who decides on the play is still on debates. The research suggests that children above 7 can decide themselves on which play to see. However, in Turkey the respect to the people's choices, set aside the children, is a matter of patriarchy culture. Although new generation seems to raise child centered families, they rely on what they think is right for the children, but not their decisions. So, theatre professionals first need to fulfill the expectation of families.

**Individual's Sense of Identity Linked to Their Social Background:** Especially for the 1/3 percent of the whole population who is found outreach category in the analysis, do not consider themselves theatre-goers, as if it belongs to a different class. Letting them participate in theatre is subject to special project.

### **3.5.2 Political Factors**

- Change of Cultural Policies in Each New Government
- Art Policies
- Education Policies of Actors
- Education Policies of Children
- Level of trust in publicly funded services

Investments decisions in cultural infrastructures and assets are always under political pressures. Handicap in the transfer of experience among actors has tremendous impact on actor development, because the relationship of master-apprentice has interfered. Education of theatre for children professionals, playwrights, pedagogues specialized in theatre, construction of the theatre halls designed for kids, the school and theatre relations are the very first issues on the list waiting for the political actions in Turkey. It is understood in Antalya Municipality Theatre for Children example, without general laws, practical solutions on the municipal government level can work to establish children's theatre. However, although all the conditions to flourish this branch of art would have set, governments of the publicly funded theatres will still keep its strategic position as the biggest political factor.

Therefore, unless the mindset of policy makers and implementers of those policies change, any law would not be a solution on theatres. For instance, in Finland, the Council of the Child that employs 5-6 professionals established above the politics in 1966. The time proved that it is working. It can be one of the starting point in Turkey as well.

### **3.5.3 Socioeconomic Factors**

Socioeconomic status is the most important determinant of the demand for the theatre. In İstanbul, according to the data 35 % of the children is in the outreach category in terms of socioeconomic status. Therefore, this is again another component beyond the cultural sector.

## CONCLUSION

The concept of ‘theatre for children’ has risen in prominence in the last four decades especially in Western Europe. The review of literature showed that the theatre professionals there struggled hard to develop and move it to today’s standards. According to the results of the historical analysis, theatre for children in Turkey seems to lag that development process 30 years behind, and is still at the early periods like crawling phase. So, its development depends on numerous variables as stated above. Despite these facts, the participation rate of children in the theatre was found to be 9% in 2019 in Turkey.

The hypothesis at the beginning of the research, ‘institutionalization in theatre for children is related to the vision of the General Art Manager’ has been confirmed with the data from the interviews and literature reviews. Lack of qualified people at the administrative levels in the public theatres or cultural institutions is a serious problem in Turkey. Many organizations in the world prefer hiring professional art managers.

It is apparent in this thesis that theatre for children in Turkey is going through a process of considerable change as has been Turkey itself. Theatres are increasing in the number, and need to become more commercial and entrepreneurial, and consider new structural models of governance, to remain sustainable. This results in a growth in collaborations and co-productions within the sector, as well as new concerns about balancing artistic imperatives and organizational efficiencies. The relatively simple model of private theatres, for the past decades, has been morphing into a more complex ecology of theatres that present a more mixed program of produced and presented work (For instance DADAS theatre), alongside an independent sector that is increasingly flexible, digital and less tethered to the funding system.

The operational environment of theatre for children is changing in general with significant demographic and societal shifts bringing additional opportunities and challenges to the central agendas of access and diversity. In terms of the content of the work, its audiences and workforce development, these issues keep their significance in the sector. Investments in family theatre concept: having been pushed to perform in alternative small theatres, the private theatres for children are not able to reach large audiences. The sustainability is an issue of scale in private theatres. To remain sustainable in the face of declining public funding which is the lowest share like 15% of the grants, children's theatres in Turkey can begin a capacity building consultancy with the following priorities:

- To take a fresh look at scale-of-house and pricing strategies
- To grow membership, ticket sales, and donations
- To take a holistic view of the art management and operations

Literature and data analysis on the case study supports the widely held view that public funding is important to theatres to invest in quality productions and to innovate. In terms of cultural infrastructure and assets of artistic production, preschool children's literature is an area that can be considered new in our country and has not yet been drawn up in theoretical terms. Being a playwright for children is underestimated, and education of values overshadows the literature in outputs. While on children's books in the world, ideological discourse, capitalism, violence, gender perception, multiculturalism, consciousness of democracy, migration, cultural identity are some topics studied, a lot of work remains superficial in Turkey.

The story must have depth and conflicts are not trivialized, watered down, or smoothed away but are presented in their full weight. Children's lives are not a stroll in a paradise, sometimes it can be a hell. And if you do not want to deceive children, then hell should be up there on the stage. If theatre for

children is not shy of the hard realities of social life, then the debates about artistic form can take care of themselves. Children do not want to be pacified in the theatre. Young people feel that they are really taken seriously when they clearly see their own experiences taken to the limit by the action onstage.

IMMCT children's theater ignores the narrative dance and abstract dance elements in artistic production. To develop the playwrights as cultural assets IMMCT library can establish writing center to promote future writers. Researches showed that an effective Theatre RE-DE, and Audience RE-DE departments are a must for IMMCT. In terms of dramaturgy, playwriting and acting, the factors that surround children's world should be analyzed with the scientific data.

In terms of technology use in performing arts, Event Cinema (live or recorded broadcast of live arts or sports events), is newly emerging in Turkey like Seyretix. However, there is no project about digital version of 317 children's plays at Refik Ahmet Sevengil Theatre Library.

In the 2017 annual report of State Theatre, absence of art education at schools was shown as a potential threat. As it is depicted in the first chapter, children are experiencing the deep problems of education system for which they could never get themselves out of it. How does making the art education an integral part of school curricula help generating creative education system so individuals? The question of the century still seeks the answers.

It is not possible to separate the problems of the child and art from the country's policies. It is concluded in this research that theater for children is not taken seriously in Turkey. When theater for children is not academically based, it can not put its principles and weight on its own, and produce scientific data. Institutional efforts, academic studies and experimental theater for children activities are carried out. In this well-intentioned approach, there is no

prospect of a systematic development as there are efforts towards people in the field.

However, the development depends on removal of a bunch of barriers; but many of the practical (i.e. cost), psychological, political, and socioeconomic barriers are beyond the direct control of the arts and cultural sector.

Therefore, theatre for children is an area of cultural policy that is both a policy for children, and an education. The aesthetic education of children requires special support through the creation, maintenance, and development of a lively cultural infrastructure, to strengthen the variety of our culture as nourishment for all. So, theatre for children is a strategic field of cultural policy (Schneider, 2013).



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## **LIST OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS**

Ak, E. (09.04.2019), “Interview with Erhan Yazıcıoğlu: The Former General Art Director of IMMCT”, İstanbul.

Ak, E. (2.5.2019), “Interview with Özer Tunca: Art Consultant of Antalya Municipality Children’s Theatre”, İstanbul.

Ak, E. (29.4.2019), “Sedat Çakır: Manager of IMMCT”, İstanbul.

Ak, E. (7.8.2019), “Tamer Levent: President of TOBAV, Former General Art Director of the State Theatres”, İstanbul.

Ak, E. (25.3.2019), “Ümit Denizer: Actor and cofounder of ACPC (AÇOK)”, İstanbul.

### **Questionnaire Received by Google Forms &E-mails**

Tolga Yeter: Assistant General Art Director of IMMCT Responsible for the Children’s Unit, on 8.2.2019

Fazıl Ufuktepe: Founder and General Art Director of Ankara Çağdaş Sanat Theatre, on 8.17.2019

## APPENDIX



Figure A.1: The Replaced Child (5+), D: Özer Tunca, 2014-Present AMMCT



Figure A.2: The Replaced Child (5+), D: Özer Tunca, 2014-Present AMMCT



Figure A.3: The Replaced Child (5+), D: Özer Tunca, 2014-Present AMMCT



Figure A.4: Rush to Freedom (8+), D: Özer Tunca, 2015- Present AMMCT



Figure A.5: Secret (5+), Director: Soren Ovesen, 2016- Present AMMCT



Figure A.6: Phoenix (5+), Director: Ali Eyidoğan, 2017-Present AMMCT





Figure A.7: Keloğlan, Director: Turgut Denizer, 1975-1983, ACPC (AÇOK)



Figure A.8: Keloğlan, Director: Turgut Denizer, 1975-1983, ACPC (AÇOK)



Figure A.9: Timur The Lame & Hodja Nasreddin, D: Turgut Denizer, 1979, ACPC



Figure A.10: Timur The Lame & Hodja Nasreddin, D: Turgut Denizer, 1979, ACPC





Figure A.11: The Country of Happiness, Director: Ümit Denizler, 1973, ACPC



Figure A.12: Stain, Spot, Line, Director: Ümit Denizler, 1978 ACPC (AÇOK)





Figure A.13: GOP Ferih Egemen Children' Stage



Figure A.14: Sadabat Kemal Küçük Children's Stage



Figure A.15 Asja Lācis, Students with posters, Krasnaya Gazeta, May 2, 1925



Figure A.16 Apple Worm Kırtık, D: B.Çağatay ÇAKIROĞLU, 2016, IMMCT Ferih Egemen Children' Stage