



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of Social Work

**THE ROLES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN SOCIAL
INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF
ECOSYSTEM APPROACH**

Md Sajid KHAN

PhD. Dissertation

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The jury finds that Md. Sajid KHAN has on the date of 06/12/2023 successfully passed the defense examination and approves her PhD Thesis titled “The Roles of Non-Governmental Organizations in Social Integration of Refugees Within the Framework of Ecosystem Approach”.

Prof. Dr. İshak AYDEMİR (Jury President)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aslıhan AYKARA (Main Advisor)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nilgün KÜÇÜKKARACA

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melahat DEMİRBİLEK

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aslıhan Burcu ÖZTÜRK ÇIPLAK

I agree that the signatures above belong to the faculty members listed.

Prof. Dr. Uğur ÖMÜRGÖNÜLŞEN

Graduate School Director

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ETİK BEYAN

Bu alıřmadaki bütn bilgi ve belgeleri akademik kurallar erevesinde elde ettiđimi, grsel, iřitsel ve yazılı tm bilgi ve sonuları bilimsel ahlak kurallarına uygun olarak sunduđumu, kullandığım verilerde herhangi bir tahrifat yapmadığımı, yararlandığım kaynaklara bilimsel normlara uygun olarak atıfta bulunduđumu, tezimin kaynak gsterilen durumlar dıřında zgn olduđunu, **Do. Dr. Ařlıhan AYKARA** danıřmanlığında tarafımdan retildiđini ve Hacettepe niversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstits Tez Yazım Ynergesine gre yazıldıđını beyan ederim.

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ABSTRACT

KHAN, Md Sajid. *The Roles of Non-Governmental Organizations in Social Integration of Refugees Within the Framework of Ecosystem Approach*, Ph.D. Thesis, Ankara, 2024.

The world is currently experiencing one of the most significant refugee crises since World War II, with countries forcing millions of people to flee and seek refuge in other nations. Türkiye is among the nations profoundly affected by this humanitarian exodus, hosting the largest number of refugees globally. Using semi-structured interviews, the study investigates the conceptual understanding of refugee integration among International and local NGOs. It delves into the services and support provided by these organizations to facilitate refugee integration into Turkish society.

Additionally, the research uncovers the major challenges faced by NGOs and refugee and refugee children throughout the integration process, shedding light on how these NGOs navigate and address these challenges. The research findings highlight the diverse interpretations of integration existing among INGOs and NGOs, primarily grounded in the philosophy of harmonization and social cohesion. Moreover, the temporary nature of refugee regulations and the absence of any comprehensive integration policy poses challenges for NGOs in implementing programs and activities towards integration. The confluence of factors such as a shortage of funds, the impact of COVID-19, and February 6, 2023, earthquake has not only hindered ongoing integration efforts but has also compelled NGOs to redirect their focus towards addressing fundamental facilities. The study recommends a reassessment of existing refugee laws and harmonization policies, emphasizing the necessity of aligning them with the changing needs of refugees. The recommendation calls for a comprehensive and organized strategy to enhance the process of refugee integration in Türkiye.

Keywords: Ecosystem Theory, INGOs & NGOs, Refugee, Social Integration, Social Work, Türkiye.

GENİŞ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

KHAN, Md. Sajid. *Ekosistem Yaklaşımı Çerçevesinde Göçmenlerin Entegrasyonu ve Sivil Toplum Kuruluşlarının Rollerini*, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2024.

Dünya II. Dünya Savaşı'ndan bu yana en kritik mülteci krizlerinden birini yaşamaktadır. Bunlar Suriye, Afganistan, Sudan, Yemen, Myanmar, Ukrayna ve daha yakın tarihli Filistin gibi ülkelerde devam eden savaşların sonucudur. Küresel yerinden edilmiş kişi sayısı zaten 110 milyonu aşmış durumda. Bu mülteci akınından derinden etkilenen ülkelerin başında gelen Türkiye, geçen on yılda küresel olarak en fazla mülteci barındıran ülke olarak öne çıkıyor. Bu nedenle, sadece koruma ve temel olanaklar sağlamanın ötesinde, bu mültecileri yerel topluma etkili bir şekilde entegre etmek, hem uluslararası kuruluşlar hem de ev sahibi ülke Türkiye için önemli bir zorluk haline gelmiştir.

Bu araştırma sadece küresel mülteci krizi sorunlarını araştırmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda Türkiye'deki uluslararası ve yerel STK'ların mülteci entegrasyonuna yaklaşımlarını incelemektedir. Çalışmanın odak noktası, Türkiye'deki mültecilerin entegrasyonunu kolaylaştırmada etkin olan hem uluslararası hem de yerel STK'lar üzerinedir. Bu organizasyonlar, ülkedeki mültecilerin topluma entegre olup, toplumun bir parçası olmasına büyük katkı sağlar. Ayrıca, araştırma, entegrasyon sürecinde karşılaşılan temel zorlukları ortaya çıkararak, bu zorlukları aşmak ve çözmek için bu organizasyonların kullandığı stratejilere dair içgörüler sunar. Ekosistem yaklaşımını benimseyerek, araştırma, sosyal entegrasyonu inceleyerek, farklı mülteci ekosistemlerinde STK'ların oynadığı rolleri araştırır.

Araştırma, Ankara, Türkiye'de gerçekleştirildi ve STK kurucular, program yöneticileri, koordinatörler, sosyal çalışmacılar ve diğer profesyonellerle yapılan mülteci ile ilgili çalışmalara katılan uluslararası ve yerel STK'larla yapılan görüşmeler yoluyla veri toplamak, düzenlemek ve analiz etmek için nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanıldı. Bu organizasyonları seçmek için amaçlı örneklem teknikleri kullanıldı ve mülteci konuları ve Türkiye'deki sosyal entegrasyon konusunda yeterli ve anlamlı veri sağlayabilen belirli organizasyonlara odaklandı. Kullanıldı 20 STK belirlenen kriterlere dayanarak seçildi ve bunlardan 14'üyle başarılı görüşmeler yapıldı ve bu örgütlerin verileri çalışma

için kullanıldı. Ek olarak, toplanan bilgiler, cinsiyet, siyasi ve ekonomik yönler gibi çeşitli temalarda STK'ların rollerini açıklayan tematik analiz kullanılarak analiz edildi.

Araştırma bulguları, Uluslararası Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları ile yerel Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları arasında Türkiye'deki sosyal entegrasyon konusundaki farklı bakış açılarını ortaya koyuyor. Bu nedenle, sosyal entegrasyon için benimsedikleri yaklaşımlar ve hizmetler, genellikle mültecilerin karşılaştığı zorlukları hafifletmeye yönelik tek yönlü bir yaklaşımı benimser. Ayrıca, sivil toplum kuruluşları, uzun vadeli entegrasyona odaklanan programları ve projeleri uygulamada zorluklarla karşılaşır. Bu durum, kapsamlı mülteci politikalarının eksikliği ve mülteci yasalarının geçici niteliği nedeniyle sürdürülen çabalar için engel teşkil eder.

Bunun yanı sıra, mülteci entegrasyonuna devam eden çabaları engelleyen, finansman eksikliği, COVID-19'un etkileri ve 6 Şubat 2023'teki Türkiye depremi gibi diğer zorluklar da vurgulanmaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca mevcut yasaların ve sosyal entegrasyon prosedürlerinin mültecilerin değişen taleplerine uygun şekilde ayarlanmasının ve bunların gözden geçirilmesinin önemini vurgular. Öneri, Türkiye'nin mülteci entegrasyon sürecini iyileştirmek için kapsamlı ve iyi planlanmış bir yaklaşımın benimsenmesini savunur.

Son olarak, araştırma, sivil toplum kuruluşlarının mültecilerin sosyal entegrasyonundaki çok yönlü rolünü başka çalışmalar için değerli bir içgörü ve temel sağlar. Bu nedenle, gelecekteki araştırmalar, eğitim, sağlık, istihdam, vatandaşlık ve entegrasyonun sosyal ve kültürel yönleri de dahil olmak üzere mülteci entegrasyonunun çeşitli boyutlarına derinlemesine girebilir. Araştırmacılar, aynı zamanda, çocuklar, kadınlar, yaşlı bireyler, öğrenciler ve genç yetişkinler gibi mülteci alt gruplarını içeren, STK'ların entegrasyondaki özel rolünü inceleyebilirler. Araştırma, ayrıca etnik veya ırksal kökenli mültecileri daha detaylı bir şekilde inceleyerek, bu mültecilerin entegrasyonuna nasıl yardımcı olduklarını da araştırabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekosistem Yaklaşım, Göçmen, Sosyal Hizmet, Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları (STK), Sosyal Entegrasyon, Türkiye.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IOM	International Organization for Migration.
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
IDP	Internally Displaced Person.
DRC	Denmark Refugee Council.
UNDP	United Nations Development Program.
GDP	Gross Domestic Product.
EU	European Union.
WHO	World Health Organization.
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PMM	Presidency for Migration Management.
ASAM	Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers
ILO	International Labor Organization.
NGO	Non-Government Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization.
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund.
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian.
DGMM	Directorate General of Migration Management
CBP	Common Basic Principles
EC	European Commission
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
MUDEM	Refugee Support Center (MUDEM)
MIPEX	Migration Integration Policy Index.
VO	Voluntary Organization
UN	United Nation
CR	Conditional Refugee.
HUGO	Hacettepe University Center for Migration and Politics Research
TRC	Turkish Red Crescent
PMM	Presidency of Migration Management
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
ASEM	Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Refugees

INTRODUCTION

Migration is an integral part of human history and has been extremely complex, affecting various aspects of human lives. The zeal for expeditions and the interest in finding different places for trade and pleasure have always driven humans to explore undiscovered lands. Although this *human movement* is not a recent phenomenon, and people tend to migrate from one place to another, the current volume and intensity of the current exodus have created a significant threat and disparity in the world.

Undoubtedly, contemporary international migration is influenced by a complex interplay of social, cultural, economic, political, and other determinants that impact both the origin and destination countries. A multitude of factors, including but not limited to poverty, violence, conflict, persecution, rapid economic development, geopolitical considerations, education, employment, and technological advancements, have contributed to the heightened frequency and unpredictability of international human mobility. Moreover, the pursuit of improved living conditions and the desire to escape persecution are among the primary motivations for migration. Notably, the past two decades have witnessed an unprecedented surge in the number of international migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In the current globalized world, the connection and interdependencies among nations have reached a new level where any small incident in one region or country has a positive or negative impact on neighboring countries or the entire world. This is evident in the current scenario, where the world faces one of the biggest refugee crises since the aftermath of World War II. With countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Yemen, Myanmar, Ukraine, and more recently, Palestine, forcing millions of people to flee and seek refuge in other nations. Although several other factors contribute to this ongoing global refugee crisis, the recent conflicts in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Philistine have forced millions to flee their homeland and take Shelter in other nations, ultimately increasing the global number of refugees. For instance, the recent Ukrainian conflict, which began in February 2022 alone, has forced more than 4 million refugees to migrate to Europe and neighboring countries, and an estimated 6.5 million are displaced within the country (BBC, 2022). The current crisis has

underscored the pressing necessity for worldwide collaborative efforts towards sustainability, diplomatic conflict resolution, and humanitarian aid for the numerous individuals who have been displaced due to conflict, persecution, and environmental and economic adversities. As the UN High Commissioner Filippo Grandi pointed out, *“Every year of the last decade, the numbers have climbed. Either the international community comes together to take action to address this human tragedy, resolve conflicts and find lasting solutions, or this terrible trend will continue”* (United Nations, 2022)

In the present day, migration has evolved into a complex phenomenon that holds significant importance for governmental authorities, policymakers, and scholars. The increase in both physical and social mobility has led to a surge in migration movements, occurring both domestically and across international borders (Unat, 1995). Within academic circles, two predominant perspectives are employed to comprehend migration and its associated issues. The first perspective pertains to the role of the nation-state in governing and regulating migration flows, encompassing the government's responsibility in formulating policies, managing borders, and determining the legal status of refugees within the state. The second perspective, known as the right-based perspective, gained prominence in 1989 and focuses on advocating for the protection of the rights and well-being of individuals compelled to flee their home countries due to conflict, persecution, or other urgent circumstances. These two viewpoints have significantly influenced the global discourse on contemporary refugee and immigration issues. Consequently, the conclusion of the twentieth century has been characterized as both the "century of immigration" and the "century of rights" (Castles & Miller, 1993; Weiner, 1993).

It is also evident that despite various regional and intra-state/government policies and regulations implemented to control the human exodus, it has often fallen short of addressing the complex issue associated with migration. As Betts (2011) pointed out, *“In the absence of any global migration management regime, it is not easy to manage and control migration”*. Over the decades, many countries have become a source of migration or a host nation for migrants. In December 2018, the United Nations took a significant and historical step regarding improving and governing international

migration in the form of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), a global agreement for safe, orderly, and regular migration. This compact resulted from the long efforts of states, international organizations, civil societies, and other actors who wanted a systematic and organized migration. This has also raised the alarm to make sustainable and permanent solutions to the refugee issues.

Despite facing one of the deadliest pandemics (COVID-19) and enduring various outbreaks of the deadly virus, this human influx continues to increase. The nationwide restrictions or lockdown may have decelerated this movement, but it has not stopped migrants from crossing borders. Moreover, Covid-19 has also increased the number of internally displaced people (IDPs). In the year 2020, the number of international migrants (voluntary and displaced people) reached 281 million (3.6% of the global population), which was 272 million (3.5% of the world population) by the end of 2019 (IOM, 2022, p3). The current count of total people living in displacement is 89.4 million, including refugees, 26.4 million; asylum seekers, 4.1 million; displaced Venezuelan, 3.9 million; and 55 million internally displaced people (IOM, 2022).

In the past ten years, there has been a significant increase in the global population of displaced persons and refugees. In 2020, the number of refugees nearly double to 26.4 million, compared to 14 million in 2000. Similarly, the number of internally displaced persons has risen to 48 million, a significant increase from the 21 million reported in the previous decade (IOM, 2020: p10). Scholars such as Pritchett (2000) and Rodrik (2011) have argued that migration serves as a survival strategy for individuals escaping persecution, war, poverty, climate-related challenges, and various forms of discrimination. Additionally, it is viewed as a means to address demographic deficits, labor shortages, and intellectual imbalances in different regions across the globe (Pritchett, 2000; Rodrik, 2011). The ongoing conflict in Ukraine, which commenced in February 2022, has contributed to this trend. Furthermore, the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban regime in August 2021 has led to the internal and international migration of thousands of individuals. In addition to human-induced disasters, the impacts of climate change and global warming have also compelled people to seek refuge in more hospitable environments. Consequently, these various exoduses have led to a notable

increase in the global population of migrants and individuals affected by these circumstances.

According to the UNHCR Annual Report (2021), Türkiye is the primary host country for refugees, providing shelter to 3.8 million individuals, followed by Colombia, which accommodates 1.8 million refugees. Notably, 69% of the refugees and displaced Venezuelans worldwide originate from just five countries: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar. The main sources of displacement are Syria (6.6 million), Venezuela (3.7 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.2 million), and Myanmar (1.1 million), while the principal host countries are Türkiye (4 million), Colombia (1.8 million), Pakistan (1.4 million), Uganda (1.4 million), and Germany (1.1 million) (UNHCR, 2019). Syria and Afghanistan have consistently been the primary sources of refugees until the close of 2017. Additionally, the recent Ukrainian crisis has further exacerbated the migration crisis in Europe and other regions.

Individuals migrate from conflict-affected areas such as Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Yemen, Myanmar, and other nations, with the expectation of eventually returning to their home countries once the situation stabilizes. However, in many instances, it may take several decades to resolve the conflict, or the refugees may ultimately settle in a third country. For instance, Syrian refugees who sought refuge in Türkiye to escape persecution in their homeland initially aspired to return after the war. Nevertheless, over the past decade, Syrians have encountered obstacles in repatriation and have been granted temporary protection in various countries, including Türkiye.

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The current global crisis marked by an unprecedented increase in asylum seekers and refugees in Europe and other regions has emphasized the crucial significance of social integration for policymakers, researchers, and scholars. Ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, and Palestine have driven millions to seek refuge either within their own countries or internationally, significantly impacting the host nations. As of 2023, the global number of displaced individuals has surpassed 100 million, with a minimal rate of refugee repatriation (European Commission, 2023). Many refugees are unable to return to their

war-torn or conflict-affected home countries even after spending decades in exile. The rehabilitation and integration of these substantial refugee populations have become a highly debated issue in international politics. The influx of refugees has also led to significant demographic changes in many host countries. Due to the irregular and inconsistent nature of this influx, host nations often appear unprepared and inadequate in addressing the major challenges posed by refugees. Refugees frequently report inadequate access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, education, and healthcare. Furthermore, they often encounter hostility, discrimination, and mistreatment from local communities in the host country. This negative and hostile treatment further hinders the successful integration of refugees into their new environment.

Since the beginning of 2011, the global number of refugees and displaced people have increased unprecedentedly. The worldwide population of forcibly displaced people reaches 110 million by the end of 2023 (UNHCR, 2023). Whereas in 2021, this number was up to 89.3 million, of which 27.1 million were under the UNHCR mandate, 21.3 million Palestine refugees under UNRWA, 53.2 million internally displaced people, 4.6 million asylum seekers, and 4.4 million Venezuelans abroad. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in 2021, one in every 30 people was an international migrant (IOM, 2021, p23). According to UNHCR (2022), the global number of displaced people has crossed 100 million by the end of June 2022 (UNHCR, 2022a). Most of these displaced people are taking refuge in developing or under-developing countries.

Scholars have frequently debated the issue of refugee integration, recognizing its multifaceted nature. Numerous researchers have delved into various aspects of refugees and their integration. Notable areas of study include the integration framework (Ager & Strange, 2004, 2008, 2010), social integration (de Alcantara, 1995; Lunstad & Lefler, 2020), economic integration (Kuhlman, 1991), and civic integration (Carrera Wiesbrock, 2009). Additionally, attention has been directed towards the challenges faced by Syrian refugees in Türkiye (İçduyu, 2016; Aydin et al., 2019; Erdogan, 2014; Erdogan et al., 2017; Akar & Erdoğan, 2019). The issue of migration has also garnered political and academic interest on the global stage, leading to the development of various policies, laws, and regulations to manage this phenomenon.

While research on refugees, migrants, and social integration is extensive, studies on the social integration of refugees are limited. Similarly, there is a scarcity of research on the role of non-governmental organizations in refugee integration (Sunata & Tosun, 2019; Collini, 2022; Pelin Gul, 2020). Furthermore, there is a lack of information on the involvement of Turkish NGOs in the social integration of refugees. This underscores the necessity to examine the practices of institutions engaged in refugee resettlement in host countries, including civil, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations. These organizations serve as intermediaries between refugees and the host society, often involved from pre-migration stages through resettlement and integration in the host country. Consequently, the role of these organizations in addressing refugee crises is of paramount importance, warranting an analysis of their involvement in protecting, resettling, and integrating refugees into host nations. This study seeks to comprehend and evaluate the role of international and local non-governmental organizations in refugee integration.

Therefore, this research will help understand the various services and supports international and local NGOs provide to refugee children in Türkiye. It will also focus on how these facilities and services are helping the refugee overcome their problems and how these services are making them more integrated into Turkish Society. Secondly, the research will focus on different barriers for the refugees, such as gender and language and how these barriers affect the social integration of the refugees. It will also address NGOs' various difficulties in implementing social integration programs. The outcome of this research may help international and local NGOs draft more effective social integration policies for refugees in Türkiye.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The concept of integration holds significant importance in the political landscape of Europe and other regions and is increasingly recognized as a pressing need for both developing and underdeveloped nations. The substantial influx of refugees has led to challenges in managing human movement and has emerged as a border security concern, particularly for developing and underdeveloped nations. Consequently, many Western and European countries have prioritized border security measures and the construction of physical barriers over providing support and assistance to migrants

(Szucs, 2017:144). The emergence of far right and anti-immigrant factions in various European countries is no longer unexpected. Social acceptance and inclusion of immigrants and refugees in Western and European nations are on the decline. Presently, the process of integrating into the host society has become increasingly arduous for refugees due to the escalating xenophobic and anti-immigrant activities. Several studies indicate a surge in criminal acts targeting immigrants and refugees in different parts of Europe and America. Furthermore, the stringent and unfavorable immigration policies of many developed countries have drawn criticism. Consequently, the responsibility of accommodating thousands of refugees and immigrants has fallen on developing and underdeveloped nations.

The research aims to evaluate the role and contribution of I/NGOs in supporting and facilitating the social integration of refugees in general. This qualitative study also examines the relationship between NGOs' support and the social integration of refugees. Additionally, the study investigates the extent to which NGOs contribute to developing and implementing policies and strategies to enhance the social integration of refugees in Türkiye. Additionally, the research under the framework of ecosystem approach delves into the diverse system of refugee's lives, such as micro, mezzo, exo, and macro, to understand the impact of I/NGOs' work in the social integration in Türkiye. By scrutinizing the role of NGOs across these interconnected systems, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of how NGO support actively facilitates the social integration of refugee within the Turkish context.

The study also highlights the comprehensive understanding of the concept of refugee integration in the context of Türkiye with a specific focus on the role played by local non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) operating in Türkiye. To achieve this objective, the research employs a qualitative approach that analyzes views and insights from founders, program managers, coordinators, professionals, experts, and social workers actively engaged in refugee integration under various INGOs and NGOs in Türkiye.

Furthermore, the sub-objective of this research is also to explore and analyze the major challenges faced by international/ non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and the refugee communities in integrating refugees. This includes an examination of the

obstacles, barriers, and complexities that both INGOs and refugee communities encounter while striving to achieve successful integration outcomes. Identifying these challenges is essential for developing informed strategies to overcome them and ultimately improve the effectiveness of integration efforts.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the conceptual understanding of social integration among INGOs and NGOs in Türkiye?
2. What services and support systems do non-governmental organizations provide according to the ecosystem approach for refugee integration in Türkiye?
3. What are the major policies and programs for refugee integration developed and implemented by INGOs and NGOs Türkiye?
4. What are the major problems and challenges for these policies and programs?
5. How do gender and the process of integration interplay among refugees?

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research holds significance as it brings attention to a fundamental post-migration challenge faced by both refugees and the host society: Particularly in the context of Turkish migration management, where the debate surrounding refugee integration is new and ongoing. Şimşek & Çorabatır (2016), while citing the UNHCR report, states that, even after the end of the Syrian conflict, it will take 17 years for the first refugees to return home. As a result, many refugees will remain in Türkiye for a longer period. There is a major issue of accommodation and Integration of these refugees into Society (Şimşek & Çorabatır, 2016: 13). It simply points out that Türkiye needs a comprehensive integration policy for refugees. This could also mean that Türkiye needs to have wider policies and regulations.

Many refugees, especially Syrians, are no longer staying in the camps and are mostly settled in semi-urban or urban areas of Türkiye, such as Ankara, Istanbul, Hatay, Gaziantep, etcetera. Some estimates show that 2-4 % of refugees are in camps now.

According to the PMM record, only 50702 Syrians are in 7 camps across 5 districts. A list of Syrian refugees spread across the Türkiye is given below.

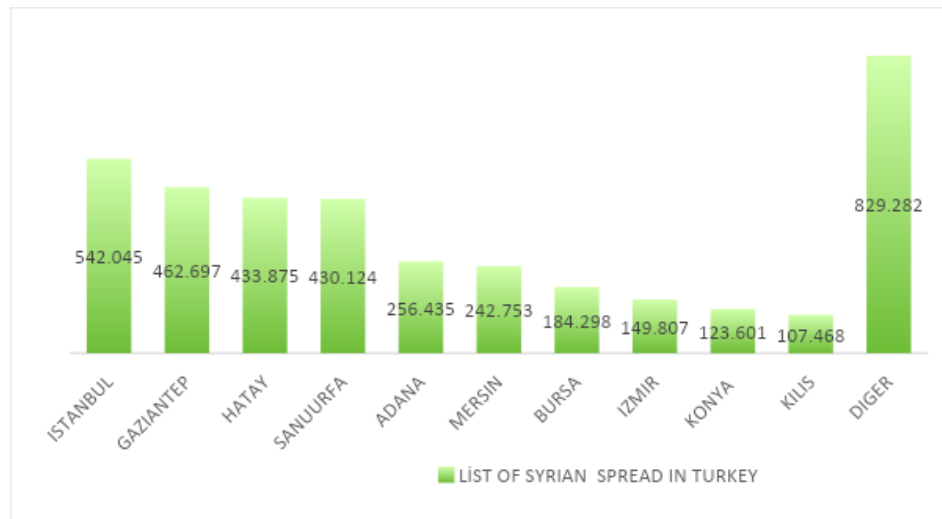


Figure 1: Syrian Refugees Settled in Various Districts of Türkiye.

Source: PMM 2022

The graph shows that most Syrian refugees are no longer in small cities or refugee camps; most are spread in major cities such as Istanbul, Gaziantep, Adana, etc. This makes social integration an extremely important issue for the government, NGOs, and refugees. Moreover, In the 2015 Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX, 2015) report, Türkiye was placed at the bottom (38 ranks out of 38 countries), and it was demarcated as slightly unfavorable for refugee integration (MIPEX, 2015). However, a significant achievement can be seen in Türkiye from 2014 to 2019 as Türkiye made the greatest improvements to its integration policies, with +17 points. Türkiye rose from the bottom 10 MIPEX countries (MIPEX, 2019). This has opened a great opportunity to examine the work of Türkiye for refugee integration. Evaluating the daily interaction and Integration of both communities becomes more significant.

Undoubtedly, both governmental and non-governmental entities are diligently engaged in efforts to ameliorate the circumstances of refugees through the provision of improved housing, education, healthcare, and other forms of social assistance. However, these measures are largely temporary in nature and appear to be predicated on short-term strategies. The primary challenge facing Türkiye and the global community is the

imperative to devise a means of integrating these refugees into the host culture and society, thereby establishing a long-term, sustainable solution. There is a pressing need for a comprehensive reassessment and reevaluation of refugee relocation worldwide. In addition to governmental initiatives, international organizations and non-governmental entities have initiated the development of plans and policies aimed at integrating refugees into mainstream educational programs. According to Aydın & Kaya (2017), Türkiye lacks experience and programs for the education of migrants or refugees. Nevertheless, numerous other studies and research endeavors have indicated that Türkiye encounters difficulties in assimilating a large number of refugees into its society.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the research is to comprehend the conceptual understanding and perspectives on refugee integration in Türkiye, rather than quantitatively measuring the level of integration. The study employs snowball sampling to gather data of selected participants from NGOs, based in Ankara. The study did not encounter significant language barriers, as the researcher conducted the majority of interviews in fluent Turkish or English, languages in which the researcher is proficient. However, the marginal error could be considered as Turkish is the foreign language for the researcher. It is also crucial to acknowledge that the interviews were conducted with limited number of professionals within INGOs and NGOs, and therefore, the findings cannot be broadly generalized to represent the perspectives of all Turkish non-governmental organizations. The study faced challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, causing delays in reaching participants, especially NGO personnel, for interviews and subsequently impacting data collection. The use of virtual interviews was considered as an alternative, potentially affecting the study's comprehensiveness. Another constraint emerged with the February 2023 earthquake in Turkey, as many NGO personnel were occupied with relief efforts in the affected region, hindering their participation in the study. Furthermore, the study is limited in its geographic coverage because it only included experts working for non-governmental organisations in Ankara. Different towns and regions in Turkey may have different perspectives on the integration of refugees. It is important to emphasise that organisations in other areas may have

different perspectives due to their unique work environments and experiences interacting with refugee groups.

6. DEFINITION OF THE TERMS

Refugee: Although the term '*Refugee*' is considered ambiguous and has varying definitions across academic and policy making context, for the purpose of this study we adopt the UNHCR definition of the refugee. In this context the refugees are defined as any individual experiencing a well-founded fear of persecution based on factors such as race, religion, nationality, membership of any particular social or political group. Moreover, they are residing outside their country of origin and are unable to return due to the genuine fear of persecution.

It is also important to highlight that this study considers Syrians under the temporary protection as equals to the status of refugee, as numerous criteria and circumstances align with those applicable to international refugees. This classification is also acknowledged by organizations and scholarly publications on an international scale. Additionally, within the Turkish migration system, there exist other classifications of refugees, including secondary protection. For the purposes of this study, all these classifications are regarded as refugees residing in Türkiye.

Asylum Seeker: An asylum seeker is a person who has left their homeland due to the fear of persecution and significant human rights abuses, seeking refuge in another country. However, they have not yet received legal recognition as refugees and are awaiting a determination on their asylum application. The pursuit of asylum represents a fundamental human right, underscoring the principle that every individual should be entitled to enter another country for the purpose of seeking asylum. This right is grounded in international law and underscores the importance of providing protection to those fleeing persecution.

The legal framework governing asylum seekers in Turkey is primarily based on the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which was enacted in 2014. The Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) now Presidency for Migration Management (PMM) is the key governmental body responsible for overseeing and

managing the asylum process in the country. Asylum seekers are required to register with the PMM, and their cases are processed through a comprehensive evaluation to determine their eligibility for international protection. After 2016, the responsibility for processing asylum applications shifted from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the PMM. The transition aimed to enhance Turkey's capacity to independently manage its asylum procedures and provide more efficient and timely responses to asylum seekers.

Non-Governmental Organizations: Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are private, voluntary, and independent organizations that operate for the purpose of addressing social, environmental, humanitarian, cultural, or economic issues. These organizations are typically non-profit and non-commercial, seeking to make a positive impact on society. NGOs can be involved in a wide range of activities, including advocacy, service provision, community development, humanitarian aid, environmental conservation, and more. They often play a crucial role in addressing gaps in public services, promoting social justice, and contributing to the overall well-being of communities at local, national, and international levels. NGOs can be divided on the basis of their working sectors, geographic location, legal statuses, and their affiliation. In this study we have used the geographical limitation to segregate the local (national) and international NGOs.

International Non-Governmental Organizations which are working with refugees include UNHCR, UNICEF, International Organisation for Migration, Amnesty International, Oxfam, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), Danish Refugee Council, Save the Children, etc. whereas Local NGOs are essential components of civil society, contributing to the development and well-being of communities by addressing the unique challenges faced at the local level. In Türkiye's context some of the prominent local NGOs working for refugee and refugee related issues are Turkish Red Crescent, IHH, Yeryüzü Çocukları (The children of the Earth), Hayat Sende, MUDEM, IGAM, Hiraeth, etc.

Social Integration: Social integration of refugees refers to the process by which individuals who have been forcibly displaced from their home countries become active

participants in the host society. It involves fostering a sense of belonging, inclusion, and participation in the social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of the host community. Social integration aims to break down barriers, promote understanding, and create a cohesive and harmonious environment that benefits both refugees and the host population. It goes beyond mere resettlement to ensure refugees can rebuild their lives and contribute positively to their new communities.

The role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the social integration of refugees is multifaceted and pivotal. NGOs contribute significantly to the social integration process by providing essential services such as language classes, vocational training, and cultural orientation programs. These initiatives empower refugees with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate their new environment smoothly. Additionally, NGOs offer psychosocial support services, counselling, and mental health programs to help refugees cope with past traumas and adjust to their new social context. By assisting refugees in understanding their legal rights, NGOs play a crucial role in navigating bureaucratic processes related to asylum applications and residence permits. Educational initiatives by NGOs provide refugees with access to formal and informal education, contributing to their skill development and active participation in the host society. Advocacy efforts by NGOs raise awareness about refugee challenges, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. Furthermore, NGOs organize cultural exchange programs and social activities that bring together refugees and the host population, promoting mutual understanding and breaking down stereotypes. In the realm of economic integration, NGOs support refugees in finding employment opportunities, providing job placement services and entrepreneurship programs. Overall, the engagement of NGOs is instrumental in creating inclusive societies, enabling refugees to rebuild their lives and become active contributors to their new communities.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The recent conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and Israel and Palestine which added extreme chaos to the world and the European Union, the number of forcibly displaced persons has risen to more than 110 million (UNHCR, 2023a). Some estimates show that more than 6 million refugees are registered in Ukraine (UNHCR, 2021, p6). Countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, Myanmar, South Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, and Venezuela are still key contributors to the global migration exodus. With the global increase in forcibly displaced people and refugees, the researchers have shifted their attention from understanding the social, economic, cultural, political, and other aspects of refugees to the more significant and dynamic aspects of refugees. One such aspect is *Refugee Integration*, also referred to as immigrant Integration. *Integration* is one of three effective solutions the UN agencies UNHCR provides for refugees, resettlement, and voluntary repatriation.

Increasing evidence highlights the crucial role of social integration in promoting the physical and emotional well-being of refugees. A well-organized and systematic refugee integration policy minimizes the suffering of the refugees and helps avoid any threat or risk to the host nation. This chapter discusses the various available studies and literature on refugee and refugee integration. The chapter also examines the different definitions and concepts of integration. The role and concept of INGOs are also scrutinized in this chapter. It also highlights the ecosystem approach of social work and how it relates to refugee integration.

1.1. THE CONCEPT OF REFUGEES & IMMIGRANTS

The concepts of refugees and immigrants are often used interchangeably. Although the two concepts are interrelated internationally, they are distinct from each other in many ways. Refugees, on the one hand, are once forced to flee their homeland and unable to return due to violence, prosecution, or danger to their lives, whereas on the other hand, immigrants are more associated with the economic exodus and search for better life opportunities or careers. Thus, it could be defined as a human movement by choice and

force. This study is focused on the refugees rather than immigrants and, more specifically, on the forced refugees. In this regard, the first issue researchers must deal with is the diverse definitions of “refugee”. There are more than a dozen definitions of this term. One of the major issues that refugees face today, along with the social, political, and economic issues, is the unclear nature and undefined categorization of the refugees—no global or universally accepted definition of refugees (Castles et al., 2002).

The term ‘*Refugee*’ is defined and comprehended differently in different countries. The majority of these definitions are constructed on the UN Refugee Conventions (Shacknove, 1985). In the literary aspect, the Cambridge English Dictionary defines Refugee as “a person who has escaped from their own country for political, religious, or economic reasons or because of a war”. However, there are many other national and internationally known definitions concerning Refugees. The first and primary documents that define refugees are Article 1 (A) (2) of the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugee and its 1967 protocol. The Geneva Convention (1951) was the first document that defines and protects refugees through law. However, this protection was limited to geographical limitation, later removed by a 1967 protocol making it accessible for all. It defines Refugees as persons:

“Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (1951 Convention, p2).

Similarly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is also known as the prime UN Refugee Agency, Defines Refugees as “A person who is outside his/ her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his / her race, religion, membership, in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself /herself of the protection of that country or to return there for fear of persecution (UNHCR 1993:6)”.

It is also significant to highlight that many researchers and scholars use terms such as "migrant" and "refugee" interchangeably, but making a clear distinction between them is imperative due to a legal differentiation. Although the terms "refugee," "asylum seeker," and "migrant" are used to refer to individuals who are in motion, have departed their native lands, and have crossed international borders, there is a major difference in all three.

1.2. CONCEPTUALIZING REFUGEE INTEGRATION

The term "integration" is widely utilized across various academic disciplines for diverse purposes. Its etymological origin can be traced back to the Latin word 'integer,' which conveys the notion of completeness or wholeness (Mortensen 1999, 13). In a broader sense, this concept pertains to the establishment of a comprehensive structure within a society while preserving its diversity. Early examinations of social integration can be found in the works of Durkheim, Marx, and Spencer, each offering distinct perspectives on the subject. For example, the Marxist approach focuses on the communal division of labor, emphasizing dichotomies such as town-country and production-circulation. In contrast, Durkheim's approach critiques individualism within the context of the integration process within social order (Gough and Olofsson 1999, 1-2). Spencer's 'utilitarian' perspective seeks to comprehend functional integration in society through an organismic analogy, highlighting the interrelation between cooperation and solidarity in the integration process, positing that society enables cooperation, and cooperation, in turn, makes society possible (Corning, 1982, 360).

The human movement intensifies daily with the growing number of immigrants and refugees. The concept related to migrants' rehabilitation and coexistence also diversifies in nature. Moreover, in various kinds of literature, the term integration is considered highly abstract due to its vague characteristics. Sometimes, the concept itself revolves around the concept of assimilation and multiculturalism (Goksel, 2014). The other concepts used for the different religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are social integration, assimilation, harmonization, social cohesion, acculturation, adaptation and so on.

Integration is widely described and associated with a key strategy in resettling refugees and migrants. The government and policymakers widely use the process for including new arrivals with the host society. However, this notion of integration is also a very contentious and highly debated concept among policymakers and scholars. There is no unifying definition of integration. Robinson (1998:118) stated, "Integration is a chaotic concept; a word used by many but understood differently by most". Besides this, it is also one of the major subjects for current policymakers and researchers to understand refugee dynamics. Many studies indicate that integration is a complex and multidimensional concept widely misunderstood and often used interchangeably with similar terms such as assimilation, cohesion, adaptation, acceleration, and harmonization (Kuhlman, 2002; Robila, 2018).

As an equally significant concept, it is very important to understand integration and assimilation. Many argue that the former is a desired and intercultural integration, which in its true form is defined as harmony and adaptation of culture with each other without losing their essence, and the latter is a negative, undesired concept that destroys minority culture and language. As a result of assimilation, people will lose their essence by being alienated from the values of their own culture. People can achieve social harmony by carrying and preserving the characteristics of their own culture with cultural Integration. However, the policies of some countries under the name of Integration emerged as the name change of assimilation. According to Castles and Miller (2008), it is impossible to say that every country means the same thing with the word integration. He emphasized that the politicians who run the country do not use the word Assimilation in their statements about minority groups because of the negative connotation. Integration practices that aim to dissolve the minority culture within the existing culture emerge as the polite form of Assimilation. According to Adrian Favell, researchers employ a range of terms that vary in their clarity when discussing the concept of integration. Some terms, such as "absorption," "accommodation," "toleration," "adaptation," or "adoption," are considered by Favell to be "vaguer" in nature. On the other hand, he argues that certain terms are either "too technically precise," like "incorporation," which he suggests will eventually be encompassed by the broader concept of integration, or "too descriptive," lacking political intervention, as seen in terms like "assimilation" or "acculturation". The theories of Assimilation, which

is defined as the complete disappearance of the original culture, which contradicts the cultural pluralism of societies, and which are seen as anti-democratic today, have been replaced by the concept of harmony/integration since the 1960s (Çağlar & Onay, 2015: 46).

Castles et al. (2001) also stated that “There is no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration. The concept continues to be controversial and hotly debated” (p 12). This argument seems correct without any universally accepted definition of Integration. However, it is widely accepted and propagated that Integration should not be understood as equal to Assimilation. This has been also highlighted by Vertovec (2004), who tries to differentiate Integration from Assimilation based on Immigrant social connection where he mentioned that for immigrants, “the country of origin becomes a source of identity and the country of residence a source of right (p 981). UNHCR defines Integration as *“the process by which the refugee is assimilated into the social and economic life of a new national community”* (UNHCR, Mandated: 5).

One of the most widely accepted definitions of Integration is the definition adopted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). UNHCR recognizes compliance as a dynamic, multi-faceted and bilateral process with three interrelated legal, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions. Integration is a bilateral situation in which refugees adapt to the host community without giving up their cultural identity, and the host society, together with its institutions, accepts refugees and meets their needs. In terms of individuals or (ethnic) groups, harmony makes it possible for individuals to participate in all areas, such as culture, school, education, and entry to the profession (Çağlar and Onay, 2015: 48). The issue of Integration is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed with all its dimensions, and the long-term effects of policies and approaches developed on only one dimension are limited. For example, when an approach that focuses on the economic and legal aspects of the issue does not sufficiently take into account the human dimension, serious problems can be experienced in the socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-psychological adaptation of immigrant/refugee individuals (Türker & Yıldız, 2015: 24).

One of the significant understandings about Integration comes from the work of Ager and Strang (2004; 2008; 2010), where they attempted to develop a framework to initialize the process of Integration in the UK. Ager and Strang (2008), while referring to Robinson's description, argue that Integration is "*a Chaotic concept: a word used by many but understood differently by the most*" (p167). Threadgold and Court (2005) put a similar argument that, in general, understanding of Integration is a form of 'Assimilation light'; however, the Scottish Approach appears to have elements of mutual adaptation (Threadgold & Court, 2005, p 8). Harrell and Bond (1986) define Integration as "a situation in which host and refugee communities can coexist, sharing the same resources- both economic and social – with no greater conflict than that which exists within the host community."

Kuhlman (1991), in his studies on refugee integration in developing countries, argues that "Definitions of integration are sketchy or altogether absent, and there has been little theoretical reflection on how to measure integration or on the factors that determine It." His work highlighted the refugee integration within developing countries, where resources are limited and arriving Refugees are extremely poor (Kuhlman, 1991:1).

According to Berry (1994), Integration represents one dimension within the broader acculturation process, defined as a cultural change resulting from continuous contact between two distinct cultural groups. Berry's perspective, rooted in social psychology, views Integration as one of four possible acculturation strategies. In his framework (Berry, 1991), Integration occurs when individuals express interest in preserving their original culture while actively engaging with other cultural groups on a daily basis. Berry argues that Integration is a deliberate strategy chosen by migrants. Alternatively, individuals may opt to 'assimilate,' foregoing the maintenance of their original cultural ties; 'separate,' indicating a lack of interaction with the indigenous population; or, if excluded, become 'marginalized' with minimal contact either with the indigenous population or members of their ethnic group (Phillimore & Goodson, 2008).

Bernard mentioned that "Integration is achieved when a migrant becomes a working part of their adopted society, takes on many of its attitudes and behavior patterns and participates freely in its activities, but at the same time retains a measure of their original cultural identity and ethnicity" (Kuhlman, 1991: 4). That is why Integration as a

conceptual phrase is open to be formulated in many different senses and dependent on political and normative preferences. Bulcha, in his thesis (1988), argues that Integration means that in an African country, especially Sudan, "implies a mutual 'live and let live' attitude based on tolerance of differences, solidarity, and positive interaction. This does not suggest a harmonious equilibrium or a static balance between groups. Conflict is naturally part of the relationship" (1988: 86).

The Interdepartmental Working Group on the Integration of Refugees in Ireland defines it as “... *integration means the ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society, without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity*” (IWG, Ireland 2001: 9), (Ager & Strang 2010: 590).

In conclusion, the concept of refugee social integration is intricate and multifaceted. While the term "integration" may carry varying interpretations across different nations, it generally denotes the reciprocal adjustment process between the host society and the immigrant population. Integration is not merely the segregation of foreigners from their personal experiences, but rather the harmonious coexistence within all social institutions, including work and social life, while maintaining their individual and collective identities. The integration process is influenced by the expectations of both the host country and the immigrants, and it entails the interaction between refugees and host societies to establish peaceful and cohesive cohabitation. It is a crucial aspect in facilitating the settlement of refugees in a new society. Integration is a right that entails obligations and responsibilities, and it necessitates equal participation from both the refugee and host community.

1.3. THE TWO-WAY DIMENSION OF REFUGEE INTEGRATION

Initially, scholars and policymakers have addressed the concept of Integration in one way (Penninx, 2010; Bommes & Thranhardt, 2010; Anthias, 2013; Coello et al., 2014; Schinkel, 2018) which means the responsibility for social Integration lies on the refugees or immigrant itself. Whereas many other scholars, such as Ager Strang 2018. Dwyer, 2009. Robinson 2015, and Berry 2011, claimed that the responsibility for Integration lies in both the host and the refugee communities.

Most of these types of integration policies are also considered assimilation policies. The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) report (2002) highlights that Integration is a reciprocal concept. It described the concept as a “*Dynamic and Two-way*” seeking the participation of the receiving society and the concerned Individuals or Communities. It further states that “refugee integration requires a preparedness to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose one’s own cultural identity” (ECRE,2002: 4). The ECRE also suggested that the integration programs and policies are the establishments of a mutual and responsible relationship between refugees and their communities, civil society, and host states. This means frequent interaction between refugees and the host community is the basic mechanism to fasten the Integration.

The Handbook of Integration (2007) by the European Commission characterized Integration as a two-way process. It relates Integration to its Outcomes and defines it as two processes to improve immigrants’ outcomes. 1. Elimination of inequality and 2. Acquisition of competence. These two processes are further explained as various support measures, learning processes and policies by the host government (EU, 2007).

Ager & Strang (2010), further endorse the notion that Refugee Integration is a two-way process depending on how resourceful the individual is and how open the society is (Ager and Strang 2010). Integration is increasingly viewed as a right accompanied by corresponding responsibility. Furthermore, the 2011 European Commission added another actor and declared that Integration is a *Three-way* process. According to its report, a third key actor in Integration is the countries of the Origin of the Immigrant (European Commission. 2011, p10).

1.4. SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Social Integration of refugees is a highly prominent international agenda. It is also in align with the sustainable development Goal 16, that is to “*Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*”, particularly target 16.10 which focuses on “Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, under national legislation and international agreements” (R, Mihaela, 2017).

Social Integration is one of the Agenda of *The Sustainable Development Goals*. Part 16 of SDG specifically specifies the social Integration of refugees in.... “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”. The UN General Assembly defines ‘Social Integration’ as one of the three interrelated main agendas of structuring the work of the World Summit for social development: decreasing poverty and reducing unemployment are the other two main agendas. (De Alcantara, 1995). De Alcantara further states that the concept of social Integration has three different understandings. Firstly, as an illusionary goal that implies equal opportunity and rights for all human beings. Secondly, its negative connotation is that it imposes unwanted uniformity, and thirdly, it is neither negative nor positive but rather a way of describing the already established pattern of human relations. (De Alcantara, 1995, 61)

To understand Integration, Ager and Strang (2004), based on their empirical work, provided the first comprehensive framework for refugee integration. Based on their qualitative study in two refugee communities in the UK, they shaped the framework and indicator of refugee integration. Another article (2008) defines them in ten domains grouped in 4 headings to achieve better integration. The first domain, Market and Means, is defined as a key aspect of Integration, including Employment, Housing, Education, and Health. The second domain is the social connection, which reflects the broader meaning of feeling acceptance in society. Social bonds, social bridges and social links are seen as an important mediator in this process. The third domain is ‘facilitator’, mainly associated with language, cultural knowledge, safety, and stability. The last prerequisite for integration is the foundation domain, ‘Rights and Citizenship’ (Ager and Strang 2008, 179-181). They also argue that integration involves refugee rights, settlement, and adjustment (Ager and Strang, 2010).

In November 2004, the European Commission presented the Common Basic Principles (CBPs) for Integration. This set of principles was subsequently endorsed by the Council of Ministers responsible for Integration, marking an initial stride towards establishing a unified framework for a European approach to immigrant integration. The CBPs served as a reference point for both the implementation and assessment of ongoing and prospective integration policies (Council of the EU, 2004). To facilitate consultation, the

exchange of expertise, and the identification of policy recommendations, the EU established a platform consisting of representatives from civil society and migrant organizations. Additionally, the European Integration Fund (EIF) was instituted to provide financial support for national programs and community initiatives, boasting a total budget of €825 million for the period spanning 2007 to 2013 (Integration Policy Europe, 2011).

1.5. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN THE TURKISH CONTEXT; A SELECTIVE INTEGRATION APPROACH

It has been more than a decade since the first batch of Syrian refugees arrived in this country, and now it is clear that this is neither limited nor temporary. Even in the various analyses, Syrian's willingness for voluntary repatriation has decreased to a much lower level. For instance, according to the statistical analysis of Syrian Barometer (2020), an annual report published by UNHCR finds that the rate of those who do not want to return to Syria under any circumstances has increased from 16.7 % in 2017 to 77.8 % in 2020 (Erdogan,2020, p230). Moreover, each year, the number of Syrians is increasing with hundreds of new births of children. According to the reports, more than 700,000 children have been born in Türkiye since the war started in 2011 (Duvar,2022).

No doubt, one of the prime reasons for the presence of the large number of refugees in Türkiye is the humanitarian and open-door policy of the Turkish Government that has helped refugees immensely but has also created a disturbance for migration management in the country. Honestly, the Turkish Government was neither prepared nor did Turkish leaders expect this much of the arrival of the refugees. Most of the arrangements were made thinking of the temporary nature of stay and for limited new-coming Syrians. In this context, all the new coming Syrian were initially treated as guests, considering it the religious duty of this Muslim-majority country. However, by the middle of 2012, the Turkish Government announced that it could not shelter more than 100,000 Syrians. However, the number of new refugees kept increasing, which slowly reaches to more than 3.6 million Syrian refugee. Moreover, in the absence of any international law for managing non-Turkic and non-European refugees, the situation becomes more problematic for both the Government and the refugees. Numerous other

studies including those by Dinçer et al. (2013), Karasu (2016), Kağnici (2017), Taş and Özcan (2018), have addressed the social cohesion and integration process between Syrian refugees and members of host community in Türkiye. These studies primarily focus on integration related issues in education and employment sectors.

Although Türkiye's migration policies have been undergoing a remarkable transformation since the early 2000s, there seem to be various paradoxical developments about the direction of these changes. There are uncertainties about whether these changes will lead to more liberalization with new regulations or whether they will be faced with resistance by long-established regulations in migration policies. Evidence from the last decade presents mixed and confusing results.

Since the inception of formulating social policies and programs for refugees in Türkiye, there has been extensive discourse surrounding the conceptual delineation of social integration. The official terminology in government documentation remains 'Uyum', denoting harmonization. Article 34 of the 1951 Refugee Convention does not explicitly reference integration, but instead mandates that states facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees (IGAM, 2016). This entails exerting efforts to expedite naturalization procedures and minimize associated fees and expenses to the greatest extent feasible.

The Presidency of Migration Management (PMM), formerly known as the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), uses specific terminology such as “Social Harmonization” or “Social Cohesion” (*Uyum* in Turkish) instead of social integration. as per its official website, harmonization is explicitly defined as “neither assimilation nor integration rather a voluntary harmonization resulting from a mutual understanding between the migrants and the host society”. This reflects the nuanced approach taken by PMM, emphasizing a collaborative and voluntary process in which migrants and the host society actively engage. The harmonization and communication department, as designated by PMM, is tasked with the responsibility of "executing the duties and procedures regarding mutual harmonization of the foreigners with the society." Harmonization arrangements and efforts target active interaction and voluntary participation between migrants and the host society members.

Moreover, every year, the Government has tried and launched various new laws and policies for the resettlement and rehabilitation of refugees, especially Syrians. Türkiye, which has a history of maintaining a homogenous national identity, is facing difficulty with the arrival of Arabic or non-Turkic refugees. The old policies are not sufficient to manage and resettle the new refugees. Many believe it's insufficient and targets only specific refugees (Şimşek, 2020; Erdogan, 2019).

Türkiye's aspiration to join the European Union, coupled with political liberalization has reshaped the state's traditional conception of national identity. There has been an increasing push to adopt policies recognizing Türkiye's ethnic and cultural diversity. This has influenced the perspective of the Turkish state and society towards foreigners and migrants. Consequently, there is a mounting pressure on government to adjust its policies and laws in align with the evolving reality of Türkiye which is becoming from "migration transition" country to a net immigration country.

1.6. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)

Various interchangeable terms denote NGOs, such as non-profit organizations, voluntary organizations, action groups, etc. Arguments are often put forward to use NGOs as CSOs (civil society organizations). However, many scholars do not adhere to this concept and consider NGOs as CSO sub-part. The current study will use the terms CSOs and NGOs interchangeably. Civil societies and NGOs are often considered the bridge between the Government and society. Today, NGOs appear to be one of the most important partners for the development of any nation. NGOs or civil societies are often seen as an independent group of institutions, controlled by the people and not by the state, working on the people's social, cultural, economic, and political issues. Currently, the scope and nature of NGO work touches almost all fields. NGOs empower people to become active members of the government's decision-making process.

Defining non-governmental organizations (NGOs) poses a challenge for scholars, with various perspectives offered by researchers such as Willets (2011), Vedder et al. (2007), Lewis and Kanji (2009), and Bratton (1989). While a universally accepted definition remains elusive, scholars have outlined fundamental characteristics to provide clarity.

According to Willets (2011), NGOs should exhibit certain traits, including independence from direct government control, avoidance of constitution as a political party, and the absence of affiliation with criminal groups. Importantly, NGOs are generally non-violent and operate on a nonprofit basis. Vedder et al. (2007) contributes additional dimensions to the understanding of NGOs, highlighting that these organizations are often constituted, at least partially, as voluntary citizen groups and rely on donations from private citizens along with voluntary activities—a perspective not explicitly mentioned by Willets.

However, apart from all the above characteristics, many diverse groups of organizations also fall into the categories of NGOs, which generate profit through consultancies, publications, and contracts. Ironically, some NGOs are either directly or indirectly associated with political parties. NGOs are also classified according to the level at which they work, from local to national and international. Non-governmental organizations, often called NGOs, are the by-product of volunteerism and, as a result, are also called voluntary organizations. Bratton (1989, p. 571) introduced the useful distinction between NGOs, which are membership organizations in which these members help each other more like cooperative societies and NGOs, which are service organizations that help others, also called voluntary organizations. It works on people's basic needs, such as health, education, and poverty, to complex issues, such as refugee integration etc.

Theoretically, it was first evaluated in John Locke's writings at the end of the 17th century, then developed by the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers such as Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson, then mentioned by Rousseau, Hegel, and Marx, and finally, dealt with by Tocqueville. Civil society is a "social institution and field apart from the state" (Chambers, 2002; Ehrenberg, 2011). Locke (1823) believes that civil society is the power against the Government, so civil society balances the power of the Government. He advocated for increasing individual rights and freedoms and enlarging civil society.

Adam Ferguson argues that civil society is based on moral values. For Ferguson, the Government and civil society are identical to the political system. But Thomas Paine mentions the differences between Government and civil societies. Paine attaches

importance to freedom and defends that civil societies must benefit from the states. Frederic Hegel also widely separates civil society and government notions. He defines civil society “complex social layout.” Frederic Hegel describes civil society as dependent on the Government. But against Hegel, Karl Marx describes Government as too dependent on civil society. After the Cold War, a great number of countries were faced with a new social order and needed new adjustments. This fact gave rise to democratic demands with the basis of civil organizations. Democracy is based on the notion of civil society. In the present age, Antonio Gramsci is one of the most popular philosophers about civil society. It contrasts with the Government and civil society and approves the Government with a mixture of civil and political society. The term civil society was used with an identical meaning to being a member of a government since being used for the first time in ancient Greece until the 18th century, and in that period, the terms of civil society and Government weren't separated yet. Background of the separation process of civil society and Government, which started in the 18th century in Europe, there are influences of the philosophy of illumination, economic developments that caused the birth of the bourgeoisie, and the sense of politics formed in this perspective. The term civil society gains currency as a device of requests for more independence and democracy. In the conclusion of its transformation, the concept of civil society and being outside the government domain is not the opposite domain.

Civil society is conceptualized as a network of social relations essential for individuals' social lives, encompassing voluntary and organized activities beyond the realms of family and the state (Habermas, 1991; Fraser, 1990; Tusev, 2011). In essence, it is founded on diverse social forms of relationships, spanning volunteer activities, market institutions, religious associations, private and public groups, and organizations built on a foundation of mutual trust (Keane, 1988; Fraser, 1990; TUSEV, 2011). The notion of civil society serves as a conceptual framework for what is often referred to as the "third sector," comprising political, economic, social, and cultural groups formed by societal entities between the state and society, commonly known as NGOs or Voluntary Organizations in Türkiye (Çaha et al., 2013: 13).

The NGOs work on complex issues and differ in their purpose. Therefore, the definition of NGOs also varies according to the objective and nature of their work. However,

many scholars have studied and defined NGOs in their ways. (Bratton, 1989; Vedder et al., 2007; Lewis & Kanji, 2009; Willets, 2011). Each has put forward notable characteristics for calling any organization an NGO. According to Willets (2011), an NGO should be Independent from the direct control of the Government. It should also not be constituted as a political party. It must not be a group of criminals; its prime focus should be nonviolent and non-profit.

Apart from Willet, scholars like Vedder et al. (2007) also presented some features like an NGO should at least be constituted partially as a volunteer group, and some part must be devoted to voluntary activities and partially to donation. (Willet 2011; Vedder et al. 2007). The International Committee of Red Cross defines NGOs as national and international organizations that are constituted separately from the Government of the country in which they are founded (ICRC, 2014).

World Bank (1999) defines an NGO as a private organization that pursues activities to relieve suffering, promote the interest of low-income people, protect the environment, provide basic social services, and undertake community development (UNDP 1993, p. 84)/. Walzer (1991: 1) Defines Civil Society as “the space of uncoerced human association and the set of rational networks – for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology that fill this space (Sunata & Tosun, 2018, P3).

Globally, the NGOs are the key partners and facilitators in refugee Integration governance and management. NGOs are the main actors in handling refugees and integration in many countries. Apart from local organizations, several international and intergovernmental organizations are working to support the refugee crisis. The Government takes all possible support from NGOs in various ways to implement and execute the integration Program for the refugees. At various times, integration measures, programs and policies of the Government are directly or in a directory performed by the NGOs of that country.

On the other hand, NGOs are also considered the mediator and connection between the refugees and the Government. The NGOs are often seen as a bridge between the decision-makers and disrupted refugees. Today, NGOs are significant in addressing major changing issues and societal problems. Through various social, educational,

advocative, and humanitarian work, NGOs are protecting and meeting the needs of vulnerable groups and fulfilling the rights of individuals in a constantly changing society. Especially in migration management, non-governmental organizations have an important responsibility. In the field of migration, they play a role in delivering social assistance to displaced people and providing information about their rights and obligations. The role of NGOs differs from country to country. However, the migration process generally helps asylum seekers establish contacts with the states. NGOs have functions such as helping individuals and families, having information about the rules of the society in the lands they migrate to, and providing communication and coordination between countries. Non-governmental organizations in Türkiye primarily focus on relocating asylum seekers to a safe and healthy place (Kalaycı, 2016).

In summary, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play various roles, including addressing local needs, promoting decentralization in social assistance and services, advocating for public demands, and fostering political participation across different sectors. They also contribute to creating employment opportunities, improving access to justice services, and enhancing environmental and social welfare through pilot projects, resource mobilization, and project implementation. Furthermore, NGOs serve as intermediaries between official policies and the actual needs of irregular migrants. Consequently, current NGOs are striving to safeguard individuals' well-being, develop alternative policies, engage in advocacy efforts, and, most importantly, uphold and advance human rights through rights-based initiatives. NGOs are voluntary entities that operate with and often on behalf of others, focusing on issues and individuals beyond their own staff and membership. This sets them apart from people's organizations, which are democratic bodies representing the interests of their members and being accountable to them. Voluntarism is a defining characteristic of NGOs, as described by Bratton (1989), Tvedt (1998), and Vedder et al. (2007), who define NGOs as non-profit voluntary citizen groups operating at local, national, and international levels, with key features such as being non-profit, comprising at least partially of volunteer citizens, and relying on donations from private citizens or voluntary activities. NGOs are non-violent, independent of the government, and not driven by immediate economic interests, but rather seek socio-political influence, as noted by Vedder et al. (2007). The World Bank (1999) defines NGOs as private organizations engaged in activities to alleviate

suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide essential social services, and undertake community development (UNDP 1993, p. 84). Willet (2011) defines an NGO as an independent voluntary association of individuals working together continuously for a common purpose other than seeking government office, pursuing financial gain, or engaging in illegal activities.

Lehr-Lehnardt (2005) believes that an NGO is an organization that is not part of the government but a part of the space between government and private life. Werker & Ahmed (2007) defines NGOs as private organizations characterized primarily by humanitarian or cooperative rather than commercial objectives that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interest of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community developments in developing countries. NGOs are the subsets of the broader non-profit sectors that engage specifically in international development. This next definition described by Lewis (2007) as a useful, concise is one given by Vakil (1997), which, drawing on elements of operational structure, states that NGOs are self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared toward improving the quality of life of the disadvantaged people. According to Lewis (2007), this definition distinguishes NGOs from other third-sector groups, such as trade union organizations concerned with sports, arts, and other professional associations. For this research, an NGO is defined as a non-governmental, non-bureaucratic, non-political, non-profit, and non-violent association of a group of private individuals involved in humanitarian activities to relieve the suffering of the poor, disadvantaged, displaced, traumatized, and victimized to provide them with the basic tools for inclusion into the society and to promote social cohesion.

1.7. CONCEPTUALIZING NGOS IN THE TURKISH CONTEXT

The NGOs in Türkiye are often regarded as civil societies and named sivil toplum kuruluşları (STK). The term civil society is ambiguous in the context of Türkiye and is categorized depending on its various interpretations. Many believe that Türkiye's political structure and history have not created a suitable environment for the development and growth of CSOs. In Türkiye's political share, civil society is often considered undesirable. For years, the financial access of NGOs has been restricted, their activities have been kept under strict control, and their working areas have been

narrowed (IGAMDER, 2013). Historically, to evaluate civil society development in Türkiye, particularly to determine the relationship between NGOs and the state, the first period to analyze is the political and cultural structure of society in the ottoman empire. However, the emergence of civil society in the ottoman empire did not occur as a form of market-oriented economic and social structures as opposed to an autonomous state in the West (Mardin, 1969).

For this reason, if we define civil society in the broadest sense as outside the area of the state and sorts of social relationships, the concept of civil society became existent in the ottoman empire. In this sense, we could classify religious organizations, chambers, associations, sects and communities, unions, and Ahi as non-governmental social organizations (Mardin, 1997). However, the “Government’s final decision on functioning and autonomy of these organizations are up to discussion (Mardin, 1997).

Lately, in the 1990s, many humanitarian and faith-based organizations flourished in Türkiye after the Bosnian and Kosovo crises. The first rapid growth of NGOs in Türkiye was seen in 1999 during the Marmara earthquake. The 1999 Marmara earthquake changed the perspective and positive images of NGOs and similar organizations. Since the beginning of the 2000s, EU-driven political reforms in Türkiye have softened the obstacles to the work of NGOs. By the 2010s, a more organized civil society that could make its voice heard better strengthened financially, especially with EU funds and diversified interests.

Due to the high number of refugees in Türkiye, hundreds of NGOs and INGOs have become a necessity rather than a choice. The 2011 influx of Syrian refugees has shaped similar to the growth of NGOs in Türkiye (Sunata & Tosun, 2018: 4). Many believe that after the 2011 Syrian crisis, Türkiye has witnessed an outpouring in NGOs. Since 2011, there has been a constant increase in the number of NGOs in Türkiye. According to reports, the number of registered NGOs rose from 88646 to 111 307 in 2017 (Mccreath and Sağçö, 2017). After the exodus of refugees in Türkiye, various institutions and actors directed their attention toward the issue and the problem of refugees. These actors vary from Government organizations to Non-State Groups based on political ideology, right-based groups, humanitarian agencies, faith-based groups, labor unions, solidarity

groups, Voluntary initiatives, Syrian self-help groups, ex-pat collectives, and individuals (Mackreath & Sağnıç, 2017).

The huge influx of refugees to other nations creates an issue with not only providing them protection, food, housing etc. But in the long run, it pursued to start integrating them into the local society. NGOs seem to be one of the key stakeholders in the Integration Process. Civil Societies, whether Humanitarian, faith-based, or Advocacy-based, are working to assist and support Refugee Integration in the new community. International and local NGOs are playing a greater role in meeting the basic needs of refugees. In addition, they are also supporting governments to make proper policies for integrating refugees into the host society. These international and local non-government agencies work at all levels of the immigration process (micro, mezzo and macro) and try to provide refugees with the most comfortable and easy way to adjust to the new society or country. These International and local non-government organizations work with government organizations together to maintain the country's peace and harmony. So, their role in educating these refugees has also become significant, and an assessment is felt as to what extent these agencies can integrate refugees.

According to the report published by IGAMDER (2019), these CSOs are divided into three groups: international, national, and local organizations. Among national and local organizations, it is possible to make a classification as 1) faith-based NGOs, 2) rights-based NGOs, 3) secular aid NGOs, 4) NGOs with previous experience working with refugees, and 5) professional associations such as syndicates and unions. This report shows that, while faith-based originations mostly focus on providing material assistance, such as food, shelter, education, and healthcare, to refugees living outside the camp, rights-based organizations carry out advocacy, reporting, monitoring, and awareness-raising activities. In addition, research-based organizations, which carry on their research attempts about urban refugees and prepare reports, appear in the report as another category. The report also noted that faith based CSOs have intense Islamic tendencies. Despite these concerns, according to the observations acquired as a result of research conducted by HUGO (Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center), *“faith-based NGOs have thus far been the most active in support of Syrians,*

while rights-based NGOs particularly helped through assistance from international institutions and organizations” (HUGO, 2014).

1.8. GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF REFUGEE

Research in the social science and humanities discipline often included gender as one of the significant aspects of the study. Gender-based or gender-sensitive studies are considered significant and key social policy components. In terms of refugee integration, studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between gender and the integration of refugees. Gender is referred to as the socially contracted roles of men and women (boys and girls) that are attributed to them based on their sex in public or private life (WHO, 2022). The role of gender depends on the socio-economic, political, and cultural context and is often affected by factors such as age, race, class, and ethnicity. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which was held in Istanbul, is the first international human rights document that defines Gender in its Article 3 Clause C as *“socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men.”* (CETS, 2011).

It's interesting to note that, at times, gender is mistakenly thought to mean a person's sex, which is incorrect. The European Institute for Gender Equality, an autonomous body of the European Union, provides extensive definitions of Sex and Gender: *“Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define humans as female or male. These sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive, as some individuals possess both, but these characteristics tend to differentiate humans as females or males.”* Whereas *“Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and to the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as to the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialization. They are context- and time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, and decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader*

sociocultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, and age.”

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2006) stresses the importance of gender analysis, noting that women often have responsibility for family integration and are more likely to experience social and structural inequalities in their countries of origin and migration. Others highlight the need for an intersectional approach to studying integration, which examines how gender, faith, ethnicity, and class combine to influence opportunity structures and experiences (Anthias and Pajnik, 2014)

According to Franz (2003), the variation in the integration outcomes can be determined more likely by the gender variable. Studying gender is important as it highlights the stereotyping and discrimination of policymakers and communities, especially against women and girl refugees. Women are forced to maintain the traditional role and are provided few opportunities for integration (Koyama 2014; Casimiro et al. 2007). Pittaway and Bartolomei (2001) argued that racism against refugee populations caused women to remain silent about gender discrimination pressuring them to maintain traditional roles to keep their communities together. Furthermore, the findings of scholars such as Brahmhatt et al. (2007), Phillimore (2011) and Dumper (2002) highlight that women refugees experience further difficulties in access to language classes, healthcare, and employment, respectively. Thus, this study also focused on the gender aspects of refugee integration, where it investigates the difficult experiences of the boys and girls in the social integration of the refugee children.

1.8.1. Refugee Children

The most susceptible victims of these mishaps, children, have been impacted by the numerous wars, conflicts, and humanitarian crises that the world is currently experiencing. The percentage of children living in war zones rose to almost 10% after the Ukrainian War began in 2022 (Relief Web, 2022). Children face serious risks of maltreatment, human trafficking, starvation, smuggling, and other issues. Crime and violence against children are already rampant in several countries, including Yemen, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, and Myanmar. Furthermore, a global study by Save the Children (2021) found that one child in every six was raised in a country afflicted by

conflict. 230 million of these kids were living in high-conflict areas, where there are 1000 battle-related deaths annually. This is a worrying 9% increase from the year before. This could go much higher with the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol (Relating to the Status of Refugees) set standards that apply to children in the same way as to adults:

(1) a child who has a “well-founded fear of being persecuted” for one of the stated reasons is a “refugee”,

(2) a child who holds refugee status cannot be forced to return to the country of origin (the principle of nonrefoulement), and

(3) There is no distinction between children and adults in social welfare and legal rights.

Furthermore, by the mid of 2022, there were 32.5 million international refugees, of which more than half (around 13 million) were children under 18. As far as the forcibly displaced children are concerned, more than 36.5 million (41%) of the total forcibly displaced persons, 89.3 million in 2021 (UNHCR, 2022c). Many believe these children may spend their entire life away from family or their homeland, making them susceptible to generation loss. They may have witnessed or experienced violent acts and, in exile, are at risk of abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, trafficking or military recruitment. Hence, refugee children are facing far greater danger than the average children. The sudden and violent onset of emergencies, the disruption of families and community structures, and the acute shortage of resources with which most refugees are confronted deeply affect refugee children's physical and psychological well-being. Infants and young children are often the earliest and most frequent victims of violence, disease, and malnutrition, which accompany population displacement and refugee outflows. In the aftermath of emergencies and the search for solutions, separating families and familiar structures continues to adversely affect refugee children of all ages. Thus, helping refugee children meet their physical and social needs often means supporting their families and communities. Therefore, evaluating the risk and vulnerability of these many children in host societies is significant.

According to UNICEF (2019), out of 4 million refugees (mostly Syrians) in Türkiye, 1.74 million are children. By the end of 2019, 400,000 children are still out of school. With the current birth rate of refugee children in Türkiye, this number could be much higher. According to Coşkun (2016), approximately half (1,277,018) of the Syrian population migrated to Türkiye, consisting of children between 0-18. Among them are 912,044 school-age children (5-18 years old).

1.9. PROBLEMS OF REFUGEES IN TÜRKİYE

Refugees in Türkiye face various complex problems resulting from their forced displacement and the circumstances they encounter. These challenges encompass a wide spectrum and can have enduring repercussions on their overall well-being, development, and future prospects. To provide a more comprehensive understanding, let's delve into a detailed exploration of the multifaceted challenges faced by refugee in Türkiye:

- a. **Child Labor and Exploitation:** Economic hardships faced by refugee families can lead to child labor and exploitation. Some children are forced to work in hazardous conditions, depriving them of their childhood and preventing them from attending school. They may engage in physically demanding, dangerous, or exploitative jobs, negatively impacting their well-being and development.
- b. **Limited Access to Education:** Many refugee children struggle to access quality education. Language barriers, lack of proper documentation, and overcrowded schools' hinder enrolment and their ability to receive a proper education. Additionally, financial constraints may prevent families from affording school supplies and transportation. **Psychological Trauma:** Refugee children often carry psychological trauma from the conflicts and violence they have experienced or witnessed in their home countries. The trauma can stem from war, displacement, separation from family members, and the challenges of adapting to a new environment. This psychological burden can lead to anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other mental health issues.
- c. **Discrimination and Social Exclusion:** Refugee may face discrimination and social exclusion within their communities and in the host country. They may be stigmatized, marginalized, and face prejudice based on their refugee status,

nationality, or ethnicity. This can hinder their social integration, limit access to social services, and create barriers to forming friendships and relationships.

- d. **Healthcare Challenges:** Access to healthcare services can be limited for refugees, particularly those living in urban or remote areas. They may lack proper medical care, preventive services, and vaccinations. The lack of mental health support services is also a significant concern, as many refugee children require specialized care to address their trauma and emotional challenges.
- e. **Lack of Legal Protection:** Some refugees lack proper legal documentation, making them vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and human trafficking. Without official identification or refugee status, they may face challenges in accessing legal protection, asserting their rights, and receiving essential services such as healthcare and education.
- f. **Language Barriers:** Language barriers pose significant challenges for refugees in Türkiye. These obstacles affect their access to education, hinder communication with peers and teachers, impede understanding of educational materials, and contribute to psychosocial stress. Tailored language support, inclusive school environments, and collaboration among educators and mental health professionals are essential to overcome these challenges. Addressing language barriers is crucial for refugee children to access services, excel academically, and integrate effectively into their new communities.
- g. **Family Separation:** Many refugees in Türkiye have been separated from their families due to conflict, displacement, or migration. This separation can cause immense emotional distress, anxiety, and loss. The absence of stable family structures can hinder their overall well-being and development.
- h. **Financial Problem and Lack of Resources:** Additionally, many refugee families grapple with financial difficulties, making it arduous to cover essential educational expenses like school fees, uniforms, textbooks, and transportation. These financial constraints can be formidable barriers, preventing children from enrolling in school or attending regularly.
- i. **Psychological Trauma Impacting Refugee Children:** Psychological trauma is a pervasive issue among refugee children, stemming from their harrowing experiences in their home countries and during their journey to Türkiye. These

young individuals often come from war-torn regions, where they have witnessed violence, persecution, and the loss of family members, leaving lasting emotional scars. Separation from their families, a common occurrence during conflicts, fosters feelings of fear and anxiety. Additionally, adapting to a new culture, language, and environment can be overwhelming, exacerbating their psychological distress. Many refugee children develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), characterized by intrusive thoughts, nightmares, flashbacks, and avoidance behavior, significantly impacting their daily lives. Moreover, anxiety and depression are prevalent due to uncertainties about their safety, prospects, and family reunification, hindering their overall well-being and daily functioning. Addressing these psychological traumas is crucial, requiring access to mental health services and culturally sensitive approaches to help these children heal and rebuild their lives in their new host country.

- j. Challenges Faced by Refugee Children: Bullying, Social Isolation, and Integration Barriers:** Refugee children encounter a range of interconnected challenges, with bullying, social isolation, and integration barriers particularly prominent. These young individuals are at a heightened risk of experiencing bullying, harassment, and verbal and physical abuse, which can profoundly impact their self-esteem, mental health, and overall well-being. Additionally, the harsh realities of social exclusion often result in a dearth of social networks and support systems for refugee children, making it arduous to forge friendships and connections. This, in turn, gives rise to pervasive feelings of loneliness, isolation, and a persistent sense of not belonging. Such discrimination and social exclusion create formidable barriers to integrating refugee children into their host community. A lack of acceptance and equal opportunities restricts their participation in society, ultimately hindering their capacity to thrive and contribute positively to their new environment. Addressing these challenges necessitates concerted efforts to foster inclusivity, combat discrimination, and provide essential social and psychological support to help refugee children successfully navigate their path to integration. Efforts are being made to address discrimination and social exclusion among refugee children. This includes promoting diversity, inclusion, and equality, raising awareness about the rights

and needs of refugees, fostering intercultural understanding, and implementing programs that promote social integration and cohesion. However, combating discrimination and social exclusion requires a multi-faceted approach involving the government, civil society organizations, schools, and communities. It involves challenging stereotypes, promoting tolerance, providing language and cultural support, and ensuring equal access to services and opportunities for all children, regardless of their background.

Refugees in Türkiye face many challenges that significantly impact their well-being, development, and prospects for the future. The problems they encounter include limited access to education, psychological trauma, child labor and exploitation, discrimination and social exclusion, healthcare challenges, lack of legal protection, and family separation. These interconnected issues create a complex web of vulnerabilities for refugee children. Addressing the problems faced by refugee children in Türkiye requires concerted efforts from the Turkish government, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies. These efforts include providing access to education, healthcare, legal protection, psychosocial support, and measures to combat discrimination and social exclusion. However, the scale of the refugee crisis and limited resources pose significant challenges to achieving comprehensive solutions for all refugee children in Türkiye.

1.10. DEFINING ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

The ecosystem approach is a comprehensive and integrated method for the management of natural resources, which takes into consideration the interconnected and interdependent nature of the entire ecosystem, encompassing both living organisms and their physical environment. This approach acknowledges the complexity and dynamism of ecosystem, emphasizing the need to consider the interactions among various species and the abiotic factors that impact them. It is frequently utilized in environmental management and conservation efforts to promote the sustainable utilization of natural resources while safeguarding the overall health and resilience of the ecosystem. Furthermore, it advocates for a harmonious equilibrium between human requirements and the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services (Wilcox, et al. 2019).

The ecosystem approach provides social workers with strategies that enable them to transition from micro-level interventions to macro-level social treatment. This perspective empowers social workers to influence client systems through a combination of policy and planning activities, psychotherapy, and other micro-level approaches. Consequently, the ecosystem approach allows for the integration of direct and indirect practice strategies into a cohesive practice orientation when engaging with a client system. With an ecosystem approach, the primary aim of social work is to enhance the alignment between clients and their environments, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of interactions. This approach seeks to facilitate a more harmonious relationship between individuals and their surroundings, ensuring that potential for growth and adaptation is realized, and environments become increasingly responsive to people's needs and aspirations (Gitterman & Germain, 1981, p. 44). Social workers employing this approach have the flexibility to intervene at various points within a client's situation, including direct engagement with the transactions involved. This flexibility presents social workers with a multitude of possibilities for action (Mattaini & Meyer, 2002). Consequently, the ecosystem approach empowers social workers to navigate diverse client systems, addressing issues at individual, family, small group, organizational, and community levels (Pardeck, 2015).

The contemporary understanding of the Ecosystem Approach posits that the root cause of human problems is intricately linked to the complex interplay of psychological, social, economic, political, and physical forces. This framework emphasizes the transactional relationship between environmental conditions and human experiences, offering due acknowledgment to the multifaceted nature of these interactions. Such a perspective equips practitioners to effectively address problems and needs across various systemic levels, ranging from individual and family to small group and larger community contexts. In essence, practitioners adopting the Ecological Approach can seamlessly transition between clinical roles and policy and planning roles within the broad framework it provides. Presently, six distinct professional roles have emerged from this ecological framework, identified by various writers as integral to advanced generalist practice (Anderson, 1981; Hernandez, Jorgensen, Judd, Gould, and Parsons, 1985). These six roles enable practitioners to work effectively with five basic client

systems: the individual, the family, the small group, the organization, and the community.

In the realm of social work, the ecosystem approach aligns with the understanding that individuals exist within larger social systems. The social work profession recognizes the importance of considering not only individual well-being but also the impact of social, cultural, and environmental factors on human functioning. The ecosystem approach in social work acknowledges the interconnectedness of individuals with their communities, societies, and broader environments. Ecosystem theory places developing individuals as nested in a series of environments that affect their well-being. To put it in perspective, the person's experiences with its ecosystem environment greatly impact the person's character and character. These nested environments, as developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), are characterized by four interrelated systems that affect a persons' developmental processes: (a) *microsystem*, (b) *mezzosystem*, (c) *exosystem*, and (d) *macro system*. (See also Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998; Sidebotham, 2001). Bronfenbrenner and Morris's (1998) proximal processes – those interactions that occur within the environment operating over time to produce human development, offer an understanding of various ways to contextualize refugee parenting in the milieu of pre-flight, flight and forced migration. Each environment within an ecosystem system is inter-reliant and integral to understanding a child's social development within family constructs and social contexts, which may illuminate varying parenting processes and styles (Dishion et al., 1994; Farrell and White, 1998; George, 2004). George's (2004) research discusses Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) and states that parenting styles are chosen, in part, because of the characteristics present within the microsystem (George, 2004: 10). Additional support for the idea that a child learns about their world through the environments in which they live, and move may be found in research by Masten (2001), Masten and Coatsworth (1998) and Masten and Reed (2002). Belsky (1984) further developed the levels and the factors typically operating within this system to identify the determinants of parenting. Sidebotham (2001: 105) concluded that these settings might not necessarily or immediately involve the developing child as an active participant but may impact that child.

Currently, a model that describes the environment of refugee parenting within pre-resettlement contexts is non-existent. Previous research in flight and migration has not explored individuals, families, and careers during the pre-flight, refugee camp or post-resettlement contexts (Williams, 1990). Changes in culturally based practices, values and family structure occur as early as the pre-flight stage (Allen and Hiller, 1982; Baker, 1983, 1984; Gersony, 1988; Hansen, 1979). While becoming a refugee, the family actively responds to their changing world. Factors such as war, persecution, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) administrative policies mediate shifts in control domains from external to internal. Research into how the changing environment of flight and migration affects parents and careers is also limited. It is important to focus first on the individual refugee family rather than on cost analysis or economic impact, for example, to understand why refugee families are present within child protection systems, which marginalizes families from the research efforts. Without a clear understanding of the day-to-day existence of families in these settings, assumptions have been made about the upheaval they face.

A psychodynamic model considers the individual, personality, personal narrative, and demographic characteristics that may place children at risk (for example, Spinetta and Rigler, 1972). A sociological model, the second strand (see Belsky, 1980; Belsky and Pensky, 1988; Cawson et al., 2000; George, 2004; Hampton and Newberger, 1985), emphasizes external socioeconomic factors affecting risk (Sidebotham, 2001: 102). Combinations of the two perspectives were later developed – a social-psychological model (see Bittner and Newberger, 1981; Gelles, 1973; Sidebotham, 2001: 102). The beginning of ecosystem models as a way of understanding abuse and the environment of the developing child (Belsky, 1993; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Garbarino, 1977, 1985; Garbarino and Collins, 1999), according to Sidebotham (2001: 103), provided a fresh paradigm within which to study child abuse.

The macrosystem, or meta-system, as outlined by Bronfenbrenner (1979), primarily centres on cultural beliefs and values. This macrosystem plays a crucial role in determining consistent behavioural patterns, the societal organization, and the fundamental attitudes and beliefs of a given society or cultural group. When examining the ecology of the refugee parenting experience, it is imperative not to view it as a static

model but rather as a comprehensive, multi-layered, and dynamic process influencing both the developing child and the parents or caregivers within the contexts of pre-settlement. Research on the ecology of parenting experiences among refugees in pre-settlement phases is limited. However, some recent works, such as those by Drachman and Ryan (2001) and Earner and Rivera (2005), have delved into the parenting experiences of immigrants and refugees in post-resettlement contexts. These studies aim to inform social work practices and develop early child maltreatment intervention programs and services that facilitate healthy transitions and family well-being. When constructing ecological models to comprehend child abuse and neglect within refugee populations, it is crucial to consider the applicability of the concept in both cross-cultural contexts and environments where refugee parents adapt their parenting styles or practices due to the challenges posed by flight and forced migration.

Bronfenbrenner states, “There are multiple aspects of a developing child’s life that interact with the child system and affect the child’s behaviors. His work looked beyond individual development, considering wider influencing factors and the development context (or ecology). He proposed the ‘Ecological Systems Theory’ based on the environment’s dynamic interactions on the developing child”. Later, Bronfenbrenner (1994) revised his theory and instead named it the ‘Bioecological model’. Development occurs through progressively more complex reciprocal interactions between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment.’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1995).

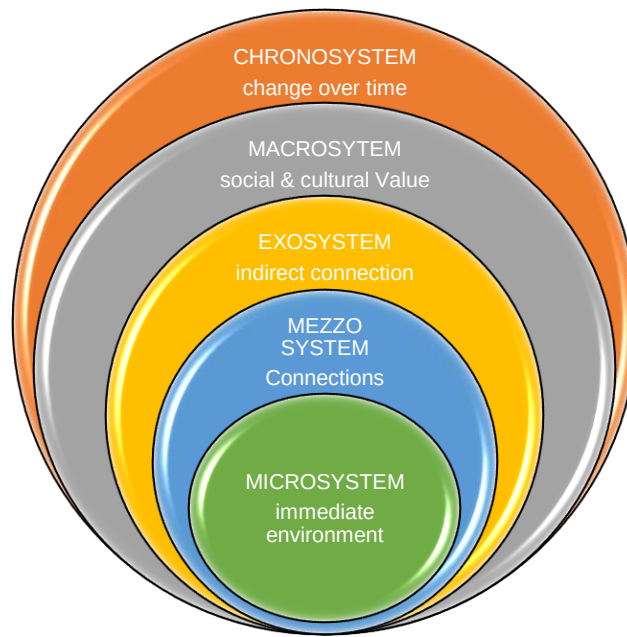


Figure 2: Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Paat (2013) considers how Bronfenbrenner's theory is useful for developing immigrant children. They suggest that their cultural differences will likely shape immigrant children's experiences in the various ecosystem systems. Understanding these children's ecology can aid in strengthening social work service delivery for these children.

1.10.1 The Microsystem

The microsystem, the foundational level within the ecological systems theory, denotes the immediate environment of the individual where direct interactions occur. This includes key figures like parents, siblings, teachers, and school peers. In the microsystem, relationships are reciprocal, signifying that individuals within the child's immediate surroundings can influence the child, and in turn, the child can impact the beliefs and actions of others. Additionally, the child's responses to those in their microsystem can shape how they, in return, are treated.

The interactions within the microsystem are characterized by their personal and intimate nature, playing a crucial role in fostering and supporting the individuals development. For example, a child with a strong and nurturing relationship with their parents is

expected to experience positive effects on their development. Conversely, if the parents are distant and unaffectionate, it is likely to have a negative impact on the child.

In essence, the microsystem represents the immediate and direct influences on the child's life, emphasizing the significance of personal relationships in shaping their development. It underscores the dynamic and reciprocal nature of these interactions, highlighting the potential for both positive and negative effects on the child's well-being based on the quality of relationships within their immediate environment.

1.10.2. The Mezzosystem

The mezzosystem, within the ecological systems theory, involves the interactions between microsystems. Microsystems refer to specific environments or settings where the person directly interacts, such as family, school, or peer groups. In the mezzosystem, these microsystems are not isolated but are interconnected, exerting influence on one another. To illustrate, consider the relationship between a person's parents and teachers or school peers and siblings. If there is effective communication and collaboration between a child's parents and teachers, this interaction can impact the child's overall development positively. The mezzosystem essentially acts as a network of interconnected microsystems, where the dynamics between them play a crucial role in shaping the child's experiences.

In line with the ecological systems theory, the quality of relationships within the mezzosystem is significant. For instance, if there is a positive and cooperative relationship between a child's parents and teachers, it is likely to have favorable effects on the child's developmental outcomes. Conversely, if there is discord or a lack of communication between these microsystems, it may negatively affect the child's development. The mezzosystem, therefore, highlights the importance of understanding and fostering positive interactions among the various microsystems to promote holistic and supportive child development.

1.10.3. The Exosystem

The Exosystem, introduced by Urie Bronfenbrenner in the 1970s, represents the third level of the ecological systems theory. It encompasses both formal and informal social

structures that, while not directly impacting the person, indirectly influence them by affecting one of the microsystems. Examples of elements within the exosystem include the neighbourhood, parents' workplaces, parents' friends, and the mass media. These are environments external to the child's direct experience but have an indirect influence on them.

In this context, the exosystem involves settings in which the child is not actively involved but that still play a role in shaping their development. For instance, if one of the parents has a dispute with their boss at work, it becomes a part of the exosystem. The stress or frustration experienced by the parent in the workplace may be brought home, leading to a short temper, or altered behaviour that can negatively impact the child's development. This exemplifies how events in the broader social structures surrounding the child can indirectly affect their well-being, demonstrating the interconnectedness of various levels within the ecological systems theory.

1.10.4. The Macrosystem

The macrosystem is a component of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory that focuses on how cultural elements affect a person's development, such as socioeconomic status, wealth, poverty, and ethnicity. Thus, the culture that individuals are immersed within may influence their beliefs and perceptions about events that transpire in life. The macrosystem differs from the previous ecosystems as it does not refer to the specific environments of one developing child but the already established society and culture in which the child is developing. This can also include the socioeconomic status, ethnicity, geographic location, and ideologies of the culture. For example, a child living in a third-world country would experience a different development than one living in a wealthier country.

1.10.5. The Chronosystem

This is the fifth and final level added in the later part of the studies by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, known as the chronosystem. This system consists of all the environmental changes that occur over the lifetime that influence development, including major life transitions and historical events. These can include normal life

transitions, such as starting school, and non-normative ones, such as parents getting divorced or moving to a new house.

1.11. CRITICISM OF ECOSYSTEM THEORY

While the Ecosystems theory is a classic framework for understanding child development, but it has faced criticism for its empirical testing challenges. The theory attempts to establish cause-and-effect relationships but struggles to definitively determine whether the identified systems directly cause specific effects. Additionally, it posits that a strong and positive ecological system is necessary for unhindered child development, a claim that has been contested. Critics argue that many well-developed and well-rounded individuals have emerged without the conventional positive influences from their ecosystem. For instance, not all individuals growing up in poverty-stricken areas necessarily experience negative developmental outcomes. Similarly, some children may not be adversely affected if their teachers and parents do not get along, challenging the theory's assertion.

Moreover, in the 21st century, the world has undergone significant changes since the theory's inception. The rapid advancement of technology and science has introduced new elements into the environments of growing individuals, such as social media and modern platforms. These factors were not originally considered in the theory, highlighting a potential limitation in its ability to comprehensively capture the complexities of contemporary developmental contexts.

1.12. PERSPECTIVES OF MIGRATION IN TÜRKİYE

1.12.1. From transitional to net migration country: A paradigm shift of Türkiye.

The term 'Immigrant' or 'Refugee' is not new in the contemporary world nor for Türkiye. The geopolitical position of this country has always attracted people from all corners of the world. Istanbul (former Constantinople) has a history of witnessing human movement within and alongside its borders. Because of its unique geographical location, this country has always been at the crossroads of global migration routes. Türkiye, now one of the world's major refugee-hosting countries, has been primarily a

source and transit for refugees over the decades. For many Immigrants, Türkiye was a gateway to Europe, but now it is a net immigration country outside the European Union. Even today, Türkiye, a net migration country, is the gateway to refuge in European countries. Although for Türkiye mainly, this migration flow was from inside to outside. The history of Turkish migration to Germany and other parts of the world is always famous in migration studies. However, there has been a drastic shift in the refugee situation in the last two decades. Earlier, Türkiye was a refugee-sending country through various trade and labor agreements, and now it has become one of the largest refugee-hosting countries in the world.

Historically, from the Ottoman era, Türkiye accepted refugees from different nationalities and religions. Some are Mongols, Muslims who fled after the invasion, Orthodox Christians who escaped Catholic oppression in 1453, and Jews expelled from Spain in 1492. Moreover, 1,000,000 Circassians escaped the Russian army in 1864, and 30,000 Russians escaped Tsarist Russia in 1905. Even at the time of the Iranian revolution between 1980-1988 Iran- Iraq War, America's intervention in Iraq in 2003, and finally, the Syria civil war created the displacement of individuals from these countries to seek refuge in Türkiye (Yıldız and Sert, 2017, pp. 93-94).

Even after becoming a Republic, Türkiye continued its tradition and hosted 350,000 Greek Muslims in 1923 (under the exchange agreement with Greece). 51,542 people came to Iraq in 1988, 340,000 ethnic Turks from Bulgaria in 1989, and 467,489 people came from Iraq with the mass influx in 1991. Türkiye also took more than 20,000 Bosnians between 1992 to 1997 from former Yugoslavia and 17,746 from Kosovo in 1999 (Bruce & Clarke, 2007). Turkish history is full of immigration stories from the Ottoman Empire to its successive formation of the Turkish Republic. Various small and large groups have migrated and moved into Türkiye. From the 1979 Iranian revolution to the 1980- 88 Iran-Iraq war, then the 2003 American intervention in Iraq and finally the Syrian crisis in 2011 has led to a major crisis in the neighborhood of Türkiye, which consequently, has accumulated thousands of refugees and asylum seeker in Türkiye (Yıldız and Sert, 2017, pp. 93-94).

Besides this, Türkiye is a signatory member of the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees. Hence, it guaranteed refuge for certain geographically located countries.

Furthermore, this geographical limitation has also been removed by adopting the 2013 *Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP)*, which establishes a committed legal framework for Asylum in Türkiye and affirms Türkiye's obligations towards all persons needing international protection. Subsequently, Türkiye has experienced the biggest migration influx for the last decade from countries like Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, etc. Places like Syria and Afghanistan remain the biggest source of refugees until the end of 2017.

The 2011 conflict in neighboring Syria and the influx of refugees into its territories rapidly increased its refugee population. In addition to welcoming the largest number of Syrian refugees, Türkiye has consistently led the list of countries hosting the largest number of refugees for the past 8 years (UNHCR, 2019). Since the war began in 2011, Türkiye has followed its *Open-Door* policy to accommodate the largest number of Syrian refugees. Gradually, Türkiye became the largest recipient of refugees in the world (Ferris & Kirisci, 2015). Refugees from Syria account for about 4.29 percent of Türkiye's total population (Hurriyet Daily, 2017). According to the UNHCR facts report, by the end of June 2021, there are more than 4 million people in concern in Türkiye. Out of which, 3.7 million are Syrian alone. Currently, 1 in every 23 people in Türkiye is either a refugee or a displaced person (UNHCR fact sheet, 2021). These numbers clearly show that the scenario of Türkiye is changing drastically from a refugee-sending or transit country to a net refugee country.

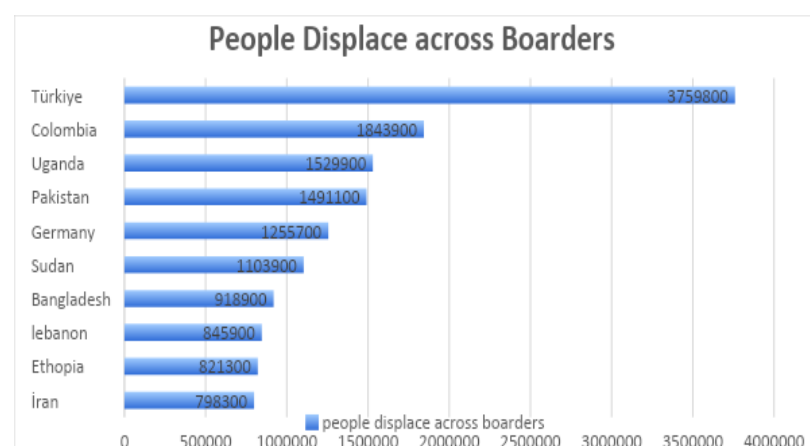


Figure 3: people displaced across the globe.

(Source: UNHCR Global Trends Report 2021, p.19)

According to recent statistics from the Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), till July 2020, there were 3.604910 people under Temporary protection and 56417 under Humanitarian protection. People applying for Humanitarian protection are from three major countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran (DGMM, 2019). Also, 2019 recorded the highest number of Illegal immigrants entering Turkish territories, which was 454662 by the end of the same year. However, this number has decreased to 72850 by July 2020 (DGMM, 2020). The Turkish Government and civil society organizations believe that more refugees are present in Türkiye than has been acknowledged until now (Aydin & Kaya, 2017). Furthermore, according to recent statistics from the Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), till the end of 2021, there are 3.652.234 people under Temporary protection, and 29256 are under humanitarian protection. People applying for Humanitarian protection are from three major countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran (DGMM, 2021).

1.13. Comparing The Old vs. New Immigration in Türkiye

Türkiye is home to over 4 million Syrians and hundreds of thousands of people under humanitarian protection. In the current scenario, migrant and migration policies are way more different than the previous ones. After the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the focus was on creating a homogeneous national identity of the culturally and ethnically diverse Modern Turkish Nation. Therefore, the priorities were given to the migrants who are Muslim Turkish or officially considered ethnic Turkish groups to make a single national identity.

The contemporary immigration in Türkiye differs significantly from the historical immigration that has been familiar to Turkish authorities and immigration scholars. Scholars like Kirisci (2009) have categorized the current migration and migrant crisis as new versus old based on the characteristics and origins of the immigrants. Existing literature indicates that the previous immigration primarily consisted of individuals of Turkic ethnic descent and culture. The resettlement law, which was approved by the National Assembly in June 1934, explicitly permitted individuals of Turkish ethnic descent and those with Turkish cultural backgrounds to immigrate, settle, and eventually obtain Turkish citizenship (Kirisci 2009, p6). Although the law has undergone modifications, the emphasis on Turkish identity for immigration to Türkiye

persisted until 2013. From the establishment of Türkiye in 1923 to 1997, over 1.6 million immigrants arrived and settled in Türkiye, with more than half of them arriving by the early 1950s. These immigrants were effectively assimilated into the "Turkish" national identity. For approximately 70 years, this nation-building endeavor was reflected in immigration policies as assimilationist practices, which were relatively easy to maintain without significant opposition from immigrant groups in Türkiye. Given the limited rights granted to ethnic and religious minority groups in Türkiye, it is not surprising to find documented instances of discrimination and assimilationist measures imposed by the state and societal actors. These factors significantly contribute to explaining the observed patterns of emigration from Türkiye.

Consequently, integrating immigrants into Turkish society is often viewed as synonymous with assimilation, as the desired outcome is for immigrants to adopt the same behaviors and language as native Turkish individuals. This notion of Turkish integration is closely associated with conforming to Turkishness, where immigrants are expected to emulate the Turkish population's exact mannerisms and speech patterns. Turkishness has always been closely associated with the Turkish language. However, when we look at the admission practice, we observe that the task of identifying who belongs to Turkish ethnic descent and culture had been left to the state authorities. With this regard, the concept of Turkishness has been interpreted and reinterpreted intermittently as the historical conjectures concerning the state of Turkish minority populations living outside of Türkiye, namely in the Balkans, former Soviet Union, Iraq and Afghanistan, changed due to specific historical events such as civil conflicts, dissolution of the Soviet Union and Iraq wars (Kirisci, 2009, Icduygu et al., 2014).

This apparent discriminatory standard for the admission of immigrants into Türkiye emanates from the newly established Republic's ambition to create citizens with a fixed national and religious identity (Kirisci, 2009).

1.14. REFUGEE LAWS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS IN TÜRKİYE

Like the refuge and immigrant, Turkish literature also uses many interchangeable terms to denote Refugees in Türkiye, such as Göçmen (immigrant) and "Mülteci" (refugees). We have already discussed the differences in the previous chapters. The Turkish law

complies with the definition of Refugee given by the Geneva Convention 1951, which defines Refugee as:

“Owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it”.

Here, it is important to mention that for this study, we are using the term refugee to refer to all the immigrants who cross the border and take shelter in Türkiye; however, in the legal sense, their status may not be considered refugee in Türkiye, as defined in the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Refugee children are defined as any refugee child under the age of 18.

For migration management, various legal and social frameworks are created in the country where the immigrants are governed. However, this process does not end there. On the contrary, meeting the basic needs of newly arrived human communities and ensuring their integration with the existing society are also considered within the scope of migration management (Kabakuşak, 2014: 6).

Türkiye signed the Geneva Convention on 24 August 1951 with the two originally given limitations: the `period` and `geographical limitation`. However, by signing the 1961 protocol, Türkiye lifted the period limitation but retained the geographical limitation. Türkiye, Monaco, Madagascar, and Congo are the only countries still retaining the geographical limitation. However, since 2011, there have been rapid changes in the refugee and immigration laws and legislation of this country. Since 2013, the Government of Türkiye has been working to implement policies and practices for integrating refugees. The Turkish refugee Integration Policies differ due to refugees' status and nature. The country's largest foreign group, Syrians, is under the Temporary Protection Act. The other refugees are governed under the Law for Foreigner and International Protection (LFIP).

The expectation of developing comprehensive legislation under international law has become more urgent and important, particularly in membership negotiations with the EU. In the 2001 Accession Partnership Document, the demand for “lifting the geographical limitation to 1951 Geneva Convention and developing social support units for refugees” was included among “medium-term” priorities under the title of “Expanded Political Dialogue and Political Criteria”. This same demand was repeated, in a more detailed way, in the 2003 and 2006 Accession Partnership Documents. The last Accession Partnership Document, released by the EU in 2008, included these issues in its 24th Chapter and particularly emphasized the importance of “integrated border management”, “de-militarization”, and “lifting the geographical limitation”. The “EU Council Directive”, which was adopted by the EU in 2001 and introduced the temporary protection status, was also embraced by the Turkish legislation. This Directive was adopted as an outcome of the developments in the Balkans in the 1990s. This important EU document suggests that the main objective of temporary protection is to provide quick passage for asylum-seekers to safety and to secure their basic human rights. According to the EU Council Directive concerning the temporary protection status during mass inflows, temporary protection is overseen as an exceptional tool to be employed during mass inflows, which puts the asylum systems under strain, but without undermining or extorting the regular asylum procedures. In Türkiye, one of the most important documents in this field is the “National Action Plan for the Adoption of the EU Acquis in the Field of Migration and Asylum,” which was adopted in 2005.¹⁵ This plan has also served as a significant background for the new and comprehensive law on migration in Türkiye.

1.15. REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION IN TÜRKİYE

As mentioned, “refugee” is defined under Turkish law, the same as the UN’s Refugee Convention, combined with geographical reservation. Accordingly, refugee status shall be limited to only a *“Person who, as a result of events occurring in European countries and owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his citizenship and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and*

being outside the country of his former residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”. Refugees from European countries or stateless persons can work independently or be employed without a work permit after being granted the status (Turkish Labor Law, 2016; DGMM, 2016). Hence, refugees outside Europe are governed through various other regulations and temporary policies that help determine their status and stay in the country.

It is also noted that in this research, the term “refugee” is used interchangeably with the term “forced migrant” or “migrant” to refer to all people seeking protection in Türkiye, even though the Turkish Government may not officially recognize most of these individuals as legal refugees. The three main legal statuses for forced migrants to Türkiye are: 1. “International protection” for which people receive “conditional refugee status” if they are under direct personal threat in their country of origin (mostly to people from European countries) 2. “Subsidiary protection status” if they come from countries where a general situation of violence prevails, and 3. “temporary protection,” which is currently only given to Syrian immigrants (AIDA, 2019, p. 17).

1.15.1. International Protection: Conditional Refugee

The definition of “conditional refugee” under Turkish law is the same as the definition set out in the Refugee Convention combined with the geographical difference, accepting applications of persons seeking Asylum in Türkiye “as a result of events occurring outside European countries”. Therefore, after the refugee status determination (RSD) process is completed, those who qualify for this definition shall be granted conditional refugee status. Conditional refugees (CR) can reside until resettled in a third country (DGMM, 2016).

This category is usually the most applicable to asylum seekers in Türkiye, particularly Iraqis, Afghans, Iranians, and Somalis (Syrians are excluded as they fall under temporary protection). This temporary protection entitles its holders to limited rights until resettling them to a third country, UNHCR. They automatically do not have a right to work. They may apply for a work permit, but few can obtain one. Moreover, they do not have family unification rights (Gürakar Skribeland, 2016: 14; Turkish Labor Law, 2016).

1.15.2. Subsidiary Protection Status

This type of protection is to be granted for those who do not qualify for Refugee or conditional refugee status under Turkish law but who nonetheless require protection because if returned to the country of origin or country of habitual residence, would:

- a) “be sentenced to death or face the execution of the death penalty.
- b) Face torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- c) Face serious threat to them because of indiscriminate violence in international or nationwide armed conflict situations.” Upon being granted the status, subsidiary protection beneficiaries have the right to work independently or be employed without a work permit and also the right to family reunification. However, this status is not proposed to provide long-standing prospects in Türkiye. (Turkish Labor Law, 2016; DGMM, 2016; Gürakar Skribeland, 2016: 14).

1.15.3. Temporary Protection

Article 91 (1) of Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), which came into effect in April 2014, stipulates that: *“Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Türkiye in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection”* (DGMM, 2014(a): 93) and *“whose international protection requests cannot be taken under individual assessment.”* (DGMM, 2014(b)).

Article 91 of LFIP, however, does not directly explain principles and procedures to be applied to the persons concerned. A regulation has been adopted to lay down the details of the implementation framework of temporary protection. The Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR) was then published in October 2014. All Syrian Refugees are under this Temporary protection and enjoy basic facilities such as health care, education, employment benefits, housing, and other facilities.

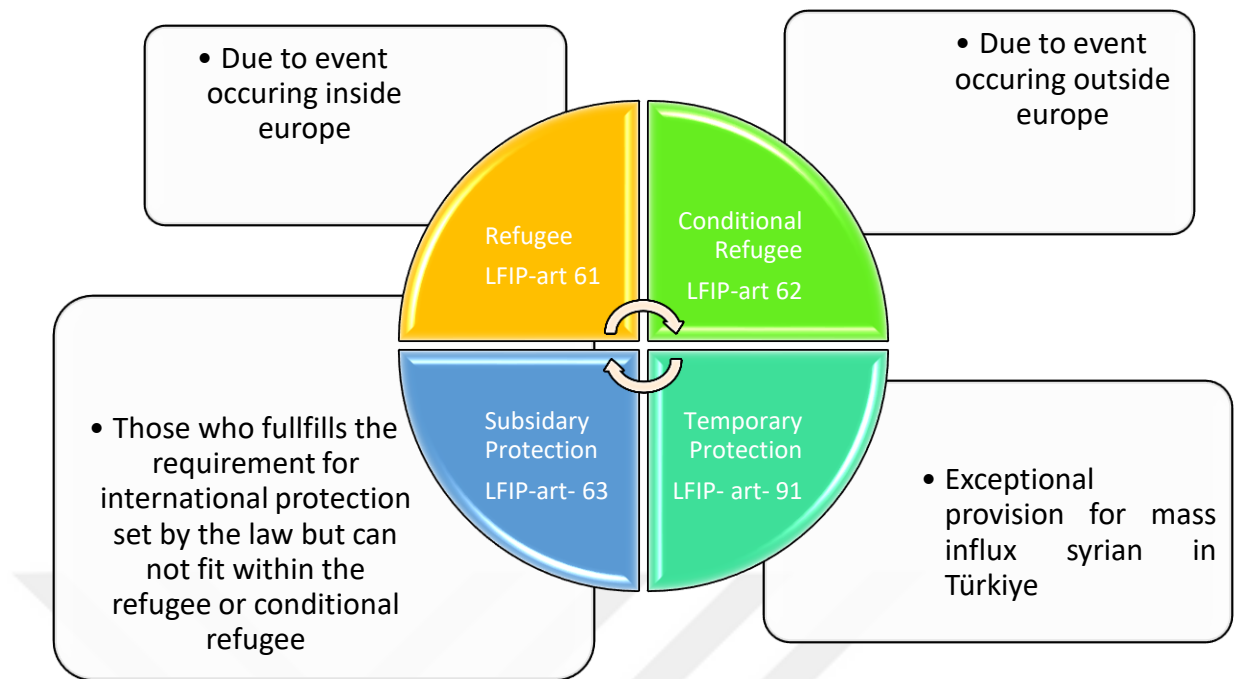


Figure 4: Various Laws For Refugee Status In Türkiye

(Source: Syrian Barometer, 2021, p.30)

1.16. THE LAW FOR FOREIGNERS & INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION (LFIP)

Before 2011 Türkiye had regulation no 1994/6169, which was passed to Procedures and Principles related to Possible population movements and aliens arriving in Türkiye either as Individuals or in groups wishing to seek Asylum either from Türkiye or Requesting Residence Permission to Seek Asylum from another Country. The influx of Syrian in 2011 forced the country to make new regulations and laws to manage a larger group of immigrants arriving there. In 2013, the Turkish Government made legislation for many refugees and asylum seekers arriving from various parts of the world, particularly from non-European countries. The '*Law for Foreigners and International Protection*' was adopted in 2013 and became law in April 2014. Meanwhile, without any specific regulation, Syrian arriving from 2011 to 2013 were legally termed as '*guests*'. It is believed that the most significant reform for safeguarding refugees and constructing refugee understanding of refugee integration is adopting a *law for foreigners and international protection* (LFIP). It is believed that this law will end the

lack of a comprehensive structure in the refugee laws in the country (Elitok, 2013, p.167.).

Article 61 of LFIP defines refugees as:

“A person who, as a result of events occurring in European countries and owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his citizenship and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it, shall be granted refugee status upon completion of the refugee status determination process” (LFIP-Article 61)

This LFIP law was established under the Ministry of Interior, and a specialized civil department was allocated to deal with the international protection, Presidency of Migration Management (previously, Directorate General of Migration Management, DGMM). The LFIP is considered the instrument to specify the rules regarding the entry into, stay in and exit from Türkiye for non-nationals and the information on the organization, responsibilities, and competencies of the Presidency of Migration Management (after this PMM). The purpose of PMM is to deal with the affairs of foreigners in Türkiye, stateless people, and people under international protection. One of this PMM's major goals is to determine new immigrants' status, simply distinguishing the legal immigrant, illegal immigrant, and Asylum seeker, which the country's UNHCR previously did. This directorate also has provisional branches to help manage the work at regional levels.

1.17. IRREGULAR IMMIGRANTS IN TÜRKİYE:

Türkiye has always been a source of transition as its geopolitical location (situated at the intersection of Europe, Asia, and the African continent) opens an opportunity for people from under-developing and politically unstable to cross into the politically and economically developed European country. Moreover, rapid globalization has speeded

up this whole transition process of immigrants. The freedom of communication and travel brought about by globalization has led to an increase in migration mobility worldwide, and Türkiye has been deeply affected by this globalization process. Apart from all that, the ongoing economic development, rise of power and high living standards have also attracted migrants to settle in this country.

Apart from dealing with many legal immigrants and asylum seekers, Türkiye has also become the home for many irregular immigrants from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. While “irregular migration” is frequently used for illegal crossing, some scientists, who consider that this situation mostly occurs out of desperation, prefer the concept of “irregular immigration”. According to İçduygu, irregular migration is a concept that points to informality rather than a direct criminal element (İçduygu, 2004, p.24). The number of irregular migrants apprehended in our country during 2005-2016 is nearly 900 thousand. According to a report in 2019, the number of irregular immigrants was more than 454662 people, which will be reduced to 258838 people by 2022 (PMM, 2022b). every year, hundreds of immigrants lose their lives during this long and tiring journey through various illegal land and sea routes. Türkiye continues to control and fight against irregular immigration by using various strategies such as voluntary return, international cooperation, readmission agreements, and other legal policies and programs. Türkiye continues to sign Readmission Agreements (GAS) with the source countries, which play a deterrent role in irregular migration, and regulate the principles and procedures on a legal basis regarding the return of irregular migrants to their countries of origin in a regular, fast, safe and dignified manner. So far, Türkiye has signed Readmission Agreements with 15 countries (Greece, Russian Federation, Yemen, Nigeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Romania, Syria, Ukraine, Belarus, Montenegro, Moldova, Kosovo, and Norway (MFA, Türkiye, 2022).

1.18. MAJOR CHALLENGES TO SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN TÜRKİYE

Social integration is considered the most difficult and herculean task for any country. To put this in perspective, even classical migration countries such USA, Australia and others still don't have a comprehensive policy for fully integrating the refugees. This is because the integration process involves many stakeholders and requires a comprehensive and diverse plan of action from premigration to post-migration.

For countries like Türkiye, it is much more complicated as it has less experience handling diverse and non-Turkic Refugees. The host society and the refugees have to face several social, economic, and cultural challenges to make a successful integration process. In this context, Şimşek & Çorabatır (2016) have prepared a long report on the Integration challenges and opportunities for refugees in Türkiye where it pointed out that the term refugee integration is a missing expression in Turkish literature (p15). The report further compares various policies and international laws of refugee Integration in countries like Canada, Germany, the UK, and other European countries. The report could summarize Türkiye's need to develop quick, holistic schemes for integrating refugees. It also tries to put forward some suggestions and recommendations for better harmonizing the refugees, particularly Syrian refugees. Some of these challenges are mentioned below.

1.18.1. Managing a Large Number of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

One of the most interesting facts about the global movement of people (migration) is that most immigrants (regular or irregular) stay in developing or under-developing nations. Türkiye is one country home to more than 4 million refugees and asylum seekers, making it the top refugee-hosting nation in the world. Globally, no other country has hosted this huge number of immigrants in their country. More than 3.6 million refugees are from the Arab Republic of Syria alone. The recent crisis in Afghanistan and the subsequent change in the Government have also forced thousands to flee the land and take shelter in Türkiye. The number of *irregular migrants* is also significant in Türkiye.

Although Türkiye is a growing nation with substantial experience managing global transitional refugees, it has little experience managing non-Turkic refugees. It is difficult to manage this huge number of refugees for a country already going through various economic and social crises. After the covid 19 global pandemic, the economic crisis has gotten much worse. Hence, receiving more refugees, accommodating them and eventually integrating them seems an enormous task for the Türkiye.

1.18.2 Unclear Status of Refugee

One prime and most debated challenge for the Refugees as well as researchers in Türkiye is unclear and internationally unrecognized statuses. Many refugees, like persons or groups, still stay under different statuses in Türkiye. These statuses are not internationally recognized, and neither help in a refugee settlement in Türkiye. For instance, the Syrians, which constitutes the major proportion of refugees in Türkiye, are not legally considered refugees. Rather, they are under temporary protection, which helps them get various facilities such as health, education, and other social and legal support. However, they cannot claim citizenship or other internally recognized rights under this status. The first step towards integration is the recognition of refugee status for the immigrants. The terminology used for the country's largest refugees is people under temporary protection, which again is a political gimmick to avoid any international pressure. This special temporary protection status not only puts a social stigma on the refugees but also makes them vulnerable (Saraçoğlu and Bélanger 2019). Due to this unclear nature of refugees, many endanger their lives and leave their countries for more secure places such as Europe.

1.18.3. Lack of Coordination Among Stakeholders

The challenge of managing refugees in Türkiye is impaired by a lack of coordination among major stakeholders, both public and non-public entities. As Seyidov (2019) notes, there is a noticeable absence of coordination and institutionalization between governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), even among the NGOs themselves. This lack of coordination complicates an already complex issue, given Türkiye's significant role as a host country for refugees, particularly from Syria. Without effective coordination, resources may be wasted, services may overlap or be insufficient, and the integration of refugees into Turkish society remains in its early stages. To address these challenges, establishing a structured framework for collaboration, improving communication channels, and fostering cooperation among all stakeholders is imperative to ensure comprehensive and efficient support for refugees in Türkiye.

1.18.4. A Dilemma of Harmonization and Social Integration

The integration of refugees is one concept rarely debated in academic literature (Kirisci, 2009; Icduygu & Sert, 2009; Bilgili, 2012; Tolay, 2011; Erdogan, 2014). Türkiye has often been considered one of the emigration countries for a long time until the recent refugee crisis in the neighboring countries. Its geopolitical position, rapidly growing economy, and uncertain opportunity to become an EU state have recently attracted many, turning it into an immigrant-receiving country (Kirisci, 2009; Icduygu et al., 2014; Tolay, 2012). Now, apart from being the most receiving hosting country, it has seen for the first time a growing number of non-Turkish origin immigrants from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Türkiye's rapidly growing new immigrant population will bring economic benefits and socio-political challenges to its social cohesion, security, and national identity. In this sense, Türkiye's newly minted role as an immigration hub for its neighboring countries indicates the start of a new era for the Turkish immigration scholarship on the politics of post-immigration. While integrating immigrants has been a widely contested issue, studied vigorously within the Western context, it tends to be seen as a non-existent or minor issue by most Turkish people and some migration scholars (Tolay, 2012, p.3).

The approach of these reports to the integration issue is mostly descriptive and lacks the support of a theory of minority rights and democracy. The lack of theory in the Turkish immigration literature might be typical of fields still in early development when scholars must identify and define the studied social phenomenon (Tolay, 2012, p.11). However, I contend that without a sophisticated theoretical framework for addressing the injustices faced by immigrants, which I believe have a profound impact on immigrant integration, the analysis of the postimmigration policies falls short of producing healthy assumptions, concepts and just policy prescriptions.

However, recent immigration law reforms, including adopting the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (YUKK) and establishing a Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) in 2013, signal a growing state-level awareness of integrating immigrants. It studies 'Migration and Integration' for foreigners, host

societies, non-governmental organizations, press members, academia, public institutions, and organizations.

1.18.5. Politics of Disinformation & Fake News; an Impairment to Social Integration

Disinformation and fake news are the endemic and ubiquitous parts of global refugee problems. Almost all the refugees hosting countries have to deal with this increasing disinformation and fake news against refugees. Although this disinformation and fake news is not an old phenomenon, the current digital era and social media have given more fuel and speed in disseminating them. It has become a tool for political gain and used as a weapon to control and terrify the refugees in the country. Even during and after the global COVID-19 pandemic, these organized disinformation campaigns and coordinated fake news propaganda are more widespread and used to harass refugees and asylum seekers. Hence, many countries, including the European Union, created the law on disinformation and fake news. The EU defines disinformation as “*verifiably false or misleading information [...] created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to internationally deceive the public, which ‘may cause public harm [...] [and] threats to democratic political and policymaking processes, as well as public goods.’*” This means that disinformation is:

- a) a deliberate act by the disseminator to make people believe something known to be incorrect.
- b) this act is done out of malicious intent

The current scenario of disinformation and fake news in the Turkish context is quite prevalent regarding some refugees in some places. Like any other major refugee-hosting country, Turkish news media and social media also share false claims about refugees, particularly about the Syrian refugees. Starting from associating the Syrians with frequent offenders, taking a monthly salary from the Government, having a work permit for any work, getting university admission without the test or entrance, having tax exemption for Syrian and so forth, claims are made by anonymous account in social

media (Multeci Der, 2022). Moreover, these claims become more widespread when shared by high-profile diplomats and politicians (Erdogan et al., 2022).

Erdoğan et al. (2022) further argued that this content on Syrian refugees often falls into the information disorder categories of ‘misleading content’ and ‘false connection’, and they often relate to the topics of economy, safety, and violence next to social and political rights. There are many instances where a false claim about Syria has led to assault and violence in the Syrian community (Çavuşoğlu, 2017). Coverages such as the visually aided misinformation content claiming that Syrians have killed a horse in Bursa (Foça, 2017) or stepped on the Turkish flag during a protest in Türkiye (Arabacı, 2019), on the other hand, constitute well-known examples of ‘false connection’ type of information disorders about Syrian refugees that associate visual images or narratives with Syrian refugees when in reality they are not. The same is true about other refugees or asylum seekers in Türkiye, such as Afghan, Iraqi etc. The impact of this fake news is vital and creates community division. This fake news and disinformation constantly threaten Türkiye’s already less emphasized social integration process. Disinformation can fuel declining public trust in institutions and disenchantment with democratic processes. It can undermine the Government’s ability to implement policies and undermine efforts to protect public health and national interests.

1.18.6. Political and Social Challenges

The integration of refugees is often affected by the positive or negative role of political development in the country. The rise of far-right parties/organizations in many European countries and their subsequent policy changes toward refugees and asylum seekers is one of the pieces of evidence to see a shift in the migration management approach. Türkiye is no exception to this. The growing number of refugees and asylum seekers has created many hardliners and political opponents. The impact of this could be seen in the country’s national and international policies. Internationally, the EU Türkiye deal puts enormous pressure to hold these immigrants at the border of the European Union and internally, their political groups are agitating to send them out of the country. In March 2020, the Turkish governmental declarations about “opening borders” at the Turkish-Greek frontier indicated how this “hospitality” is on thin ice once again, and the lives of immigrants are only a trump card for Turkish authorities.

Moreover, the political and social sphere inside Türkiye is also not conducive to any major development in refugee integration. Many old and new political and social groups are against the arrival and the long stay of asylum seekers and refugees. Some groups are also advocating to draft policies and laws to stop the arrival of any new immigrants and to send them back to their homeland. Some political groups also criticize the EU for this whole mess and crisis in the country. Countries at the receiving end of the migration are often anxious about the effects of migration on their political and national security strategies and their international politics (Meyers, 2000).

1.18.7 The Social Outrage Against Refugees

Social media is a more powerful platform than any other platform now. Apart from helping people socially connecting, it has brought many positive and revolutionary impacts. The use of social media in the Arab Spring could be an incredible example of the power of social media. However, it has some negative consequences and is used for wrongdoing, especially against refugees and immigrants.

Türkiye has a huge population of active users of social media. According to some claims, Türkiye is among the top ten countries in social media users, with 67.11 million social media users (statista.com, 2022). Apart from fulfilling other positive purposes, social media platforms have also become a tool to target refugees and immigrants. Fake news, tweets, and disinformation content are often shared on social media, generating hate against refugees, and often becoming a source for orchestrating violence against immigrants. Following the anti-Syrian refugee violence in the Altindag district of Ankara in August 2021, Umit Ozdag, a right-wing politician who recently formed his anti-immigrant party, visited the area, wheeling an empty suitcase and saying the time has come for the refugees to “start packing”. Only a few months later, in October 2021, several Syrians were arrested and faced deportation after the Turkish government authorities accused Syrians of “inciting hatred” on social media platforms. These developments have inevitably damaged the migrant integration process.

Natives often perceive immigrants as an economic threat; thus, they are likely to endorse ‘separation’ acculturation to exclude migrants from scarce economic resources (Rodionov, 2021). Group Conflict Theory (Blumer, 1958) postulates that natives are

expected to develop anti-immigrant sentiments as they perceive immigrants as threatening their individual and collective well-being (Blumer, 1958; Quillian, 1995; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Accordingly, the theory also predicts that natives support exclusionary immigration policies. Historically, the immigration policies of Türkiye aimed at solidifying nation-building by restricting formal immigration channels to people of ‘Turkish descent and culture’ from the establishment of the Turkish Republic (İçduygu, 2015). However, as Türkiye has been facing unprecedented irregular migration flows and temporary protection applications in the last few decades, immigration policies have come into the limelight and public discourse in Türkiye. At the same time, the durable solutions for refugees promoted by UNHCR (2016) entail integration into the host society, resettlement to a third country and voluntary repatriation. The durable solutions that will apply to Syrians in Türkiye are still unclear. As such, the protracted status of Syrian refugees under the temporary protection regime has increasingly become the center of public discussions and political campaigns.

1.19. THE ROLE OF NGOS AND CIVIL SOCIETIES IN THE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF MIGRATION

Globally, civil societies, also called NGOs, are the key partners and facilitators in the refugee Integration governance and management process. NGOs are the main actors in handling refugees and refugee integration in many countries. Apart from local organizations, several international and intergovernmental organizations are working to support the refugee crisis. The Government takes all possible support from NGOs in various ways to implement and execute the integration Program for the refugees. At various times, integration measures, programs and policies of the Government are directly or in a directory performed by the NGOs of that country. On the other hand, NGOs are also considered the mediator and connection between the refugees and the Government. The NGOs are often seen as a bridge between the decision-makers and disrupted refugees.

Kerwin (2009) argues that NGOs play an indispensable role- heightened by the demise of traditional news sources- in challenging governments that fail to live up to their values or to meet the needs of their residents (Kerwin, 2009). In 2000, the European Commission declared the need to deepen cooperation between the EU and non-

government organizations (NGOs) (Lundberg, 2011). In European policy documents and directives, NGOs are frequently cited as important partners in spreading information to the public and sharing knowledge and experience with institutions in preparing and implementing policies (Lundberg, 2011). Because of that, more attention has been placed on civil society's role in addressing the integration challenges. European civil societies play a vital role in integrating immigrants (Freise, 2008; Lundberg, 2011).

1.20. RAPID GROWTH IN THE REFUGEE-CENTRIC NGOS IN TÜRKİYE

Türkiye, the world's largest refugee population, has various international agencies and international and local NGOs to handle the situation. These Non-government organizations are playing a big role in supporting and changing the lives of refugees. The significant role of NGOs in addressing refugee issues is seen after the collaboration between UNHCR and Turkish authorities in the 1960s. Türkiye has witnessed different migration waves from the former Soviet Union and Middle Eastern African countries at different periods (Emrin Cebi, 2017, p138). Some of these Agencies are UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, OCHA, UNFPA, IOM etc. Other international NGOs like Save the Children International, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), the International Middle East Peace Research Center (IMPR), the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), and Caritas Türkiye (Istanbul). In addition to this, local NGOs and institutions like the Turkish Red Crescent (Türk Kızılay), The Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (SGDD-ASAM), Gündem Çocuk Foundation, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Göç ve Siyaset Araştırmaları Merkezi (HUGO) etc., are also playing a significant role in giving proper service to the refugees.

According to Ulas Sunata (2018), the Government has facilitated refugees with various Policies and laws; still, due to various reasons, these policies are not fully accessible to the refugees. The main problems of language, registration, transportation etc. are the main ones. The weak coordination between the Government, ministries, and local Municipalities has affected the implementation of various reforms and Policies (page 2). Civil societies and NGOs have played a significant role in filling this vacuum.

1.21. THE FAITH-BASED NGOS

The role of faith-based organizations cannot be denied in the resettlement of refugees. Although the governments support and assist the refugees in moving and settling into the country, the actual settlement is done and facilitated by the communities where refugees are put. In this case, the local communities and groups are the most important actors in filling the refugees' needs. The communities of various faith groups help welcome refugees into society and encourage social integration between the two groups. After World War II, community-based organizations such as church groups, synagogues, and other religious groups advocated for refugee rights and resettlement. In the USA, the church world service, the Catholic Relief Services, and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society were the major faith-based organizations working for refugee resettlement. Religion is frequently portrayed in international relations scholarship as a source of considerable negativity. Until recently, religion has not been seen as a positive contributor to development projects (Rakodi, 2007; Selinger, 2004: 526). Newly emerging Muslim immigrant NGOs as an agent of development are challenging the negative associations with religion, not only on theoretical grounds but also with empirical data.

Indeed, a quick look at the history of humanitarianism challenges the current association of religion with conflict, violence, and instability. Religious beliefs and organizations, most notably those influenced by Christian theology and ethics, helped to create modern humanitarianism in the early nineteenth century and have shaped its expanding scale, scope and significance. Today, faith-based agencies are scattered worldwide and involved in various projects, enterprises, and programs (Clarke, 2006; McDuie-Ra and Rees, 2010). However, in the literature, much of what is known about faith-based agencies derives from Christian organizations originating from missionary activities, and there is very little knowledge about religiously inspired organizations outside of Christianity. Until recently, this has been especially noteworthy in the cases of Islamic charitable and philanthropic organizations (Benthall, 1997; Cizakca, 2000; Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, 2003; Benedetti, 2006). Nevertheless, there is still hardly any research on charitable Muslim immigrant organizations. The concept of Charity is an established tradition in Islamic history implemented through the institutions of *Waqf* (Endowment)

(Cizakca, 2000) and NGOs (Alms) (Kochuyt, 2009). However, most contemporary Muslim charitable organizations can be traced back to the early 1980s, inaugurated with modest aid and relief activities in conflict-driven areas. In the 1980s, due to their lack of experience and limited numbers, Islamic NGOs were less prepared to compete with Western NGOs, even in crisis areas inhabited by Muslims. However, since the 1990s, when the number of Islamic NGOs increased, more ambitious and successful development/relief projects have been developed by those NGOs (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, 2003), resulting in visible Islamic humanitarian activism in many countries.



CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study uses qualitative research methodology to obtain, organize and analyze the data gathered through interviews with founders, program managers, coordinators, social workers, and other professionals working on refugees in various I/NGOs. As pointed out by Berg (2017), qualitative research refers to a meaning concept definition, characteristic metaphors, symbols, and description of things (Berg, 2017:12). He further explains that “qualitative research properly seeks answers by examining various social settings and the groups or individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative researchers are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth” (Berg, 1996).

This study gathered data from various professionals, directors, managers, and social work practitioners working with different refugee centers, organizations, or International NGOs. Data collection was conducted using Semi-structured questionnaire through Interview methods. Following Creswell's (2014) perspective, the study employs a qualitative approach to delve into and comprehend the significance individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. The research process involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. It's important to note that the study's aim is not to quantify the level of Integration achieved but rather to focus on comprehending Integration dynamics within NGOs and how these organizations support the integration process for refugee children.

In addition to the primary data that the researcher collects through a semi-structured questionnaire, the secondary data from various books, research articles, national and international reports, and newspapers will be collected and analyzed to know the various aspects of the role of International and local NGOs in integrating these refugee children. There are various reasons for using certain methodologies and strategies over others for the study. The research was done during the pandemic, so connecting with the

larger group was difficult. Moreover, this exploratory Analysis is unique as it investigates various untouched refugee integration issues in Türkiye, such as the conceptualization of Integration and the role of NGOs in refugee integration.

2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was conducted in the capital city of Türkiye, Ankara. It is strategically decided as Ankara is the home and one of the prominent locations for international and local NGOs actively involved in refugee-related work. Refugees are also significant in Ankara, making it a more significant place for study.

The research begins with creating a comprehensive list of INGOs and NGOs operating within the refugee and refugee integration sphere in Türkiye. Most of these INGOs are old and famous and have been working for a long time in Türkiye. Along with the refugee issue, these I/NGOs also work in various other fields, such as social, cultural, economic, and humanitarian.

After careful research, a purposive sampling technique was used to shorten the number of organizations and involve specific organizations capable of providing sufficient and significant data regarding refugee issues and refugee integration in Türkiye. Therefore, certain criteria were set to select the organization to be approached for the interview.

Some of these criteria are:

- a) Must be a registered organization (Nationally or Internationally)
- b) It must be recognized as a national and international organization.
- c) Must be actively working for more than 5 years in Türkiye.
- d) Must have policies and programs for refugee integration.
- e) Should have policies based on gender or a gender-sensitive organization.

Finally, 20 organizations were selected for the semi-structured interview, which was thoughtfully crafted based on the extensive literature review and previous studies related to the work of NGOs in refugee integration. Through these semi-structured

interviews, the researcher's primary goal was to acquire in-depth knowledge regarding some of the key research questions mentioned in this thesis. That semi structure Questionnaire carries questions that help get answers to the research question. The researcher also asked follow-up questions during the interview to gain a deeper inside wherever required. Formal approval was also taken for the questionnaire from the Hacettepe University Ethic Commission Senate (see Appendix A).

Furthermore, to identify the potential participants from each selected organization, this study employed the snowball technique wherein, after each interview, the researcher asked the participant if they could recommend or refer any other individual or organization within those 20 selected organizations. Also, interviewees were given complete freedom to suggest any other organization or individual who could be resourceful and suitable under the given criteria for the interview. Coincidentally, most organizations they mentioned were already selected on our list. It is also important to mention that although the researcher has used snowball sampling, he also sends direct formal invitations to all these selected organizations separately. Sometimes, researchers approach 2 or 3 individuals from the same organization to enhance the quality and make the response more diverse.

2.2. COLLECTION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

The data collection process for this research was very challenging, primarily due to the requirement of formal permissions and references by the selected organization to allow the interview. The researcher approaches those organizations as soon as the final section of the NGOs is completed. As mentioned earlier, the researcher approached the 20 selected NGOs comprising both international and national non-government organizations for the final interview. Out of these 20 I/NGOs, successful interviews were conducted with the 14 organizations. It is also noteworthy that the remaining potential interviewees from 6 organizations either declined to grant permission for the interview or did not respond at all to the researcher's outreach. The challenges faced during this phase of data collection highlight the complexities of conducting research in real-world settings, especially when dealing with organizations that may have their protocols and restrictions.

However, despite all these obstacles, the researcher successfully interviewed 17 personnel from 14 organizations. This diverse group consists of 7 females and 10 males, which can provide a well-rounded and gender-balanced perspective on the issue. Unfortunately, 2 organizations did not permit the recording or publication of the transcript. They expressed their willingness to contribute to the research but requested that their input be used in a general and non-attributable manner.

Additionally, 2 organizations give permission to use the data on condition that their names and organizations' names should be kept anonymous. As a result, in this study, the data used for the analysis is derived from the remaining 12 organizations. Among these 12 organizations, there are 5 international and 7 local organizations. Also, the interviewees who participated among them are 7 female and 5 male participants.

2.2.1. The Proceedings of the Data Collection

The interviews were conducted online from January 2023 until June 2023 using Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams. It was done to allow flexibility and accessibility for the participant. On average, each interview lasted 45-50 minutes. The longest interviewee took 1: 30 hours, whereas the smallest took 40 minutes. As mentioned, the researcher uses snowball techniques to reach out the I/NGOs and to arrange the interviews. The interviews were conducted online after securing appointments with the NGO representatives. The participants in these interviews represented a range of professions, including psychologists, protection managers, child welfare officers, social workers, and NGO founders, among others. This diverse set of professionals provided valuable insights into various aspects of refugee integration efforts.

The typical interview format involves several key components. First, the researcher introduces himself and tries to establish a rapport with the interviewee. Then, the researcher clearly explains the purpose and objectives of the research to the participant, followed by a deliberate effort to obtain formal consent to record the whole conversation. This step not only resolves ethical issues but also helps ensure interview transparency. Then, the participants are asked to introduce themselves and their roles in their organizations. The interviews covered topics such as social Integration, child

integration, the role of NGOs in Türkiye, challenges NGOs face, and the programs and laws for refugee children in Türkiye.

The interviews were conducted in both Turkish and English, depending on the participants' preference. Turkish interviews were subsequently translated into English and reviewed by experts for accuracy and fidelity to the original conversations. The English interviews were kept in their original form of Language except for some grammatical corrections to make them more coherent. Interestingly, copies of the interviews were sent to the participants for final approval before Analysis to avoid any ethical and linguistic errors.

During the course of interviews, it was noteworthy to observe that both international and local NGOs extended substantial support and cooperation for research studies. However, a nuanced differentiation emerged, particularly concerning the sharing of details and information about refugees. Some international NGOs exhibited a reduced inclination to disclose such information, with certain entities proving challenging to approach, even after repeated attempts to secure interviews. This reluctance could be attributed to their demanding schedules or possibly influenced by various political and organizational constraints inherent in their operational contexts.

Conversely, local NGOs demonstrated promptness and a higher degree of cooperation, especially when queried about matters pertaining to refugees in Türkiye. The differential response patterns between international and local NGOs underscored potential variations in their engagement dynamics, possibly influenced by organizational structures, operational priorities, and external constraints.

2.2.2. The Analysis of the Data

This study uses a thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006; King, 2004) to analyze the collected data from the semi structures interviews. Thematic analysis is a flexible and systematic approach that allows researchers to uncover insights, patterns, and meanings within qualitative data. It is particularly useful when exploring complex and multifaceted research questions, such as those related to the experiences and perceptions of individuals or groups in various contexts. As Braun & Clarke (2006) described, thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that systematically

identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns or themes within a dataset. This method is widely used to extract meaningful insights from qualitative data. Although Thematic analysis has limitations, it offers a highly flexible and adaptable approach that can be tailored to suit the needs of various research studies, providing a comprehensive, intricate, yet nuanced understanding of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). Unlike some other qualitative methods, thematic analysis doesn't demand extensive theoretical or technical expertise, making it more accessible, especially for researchers who are in the early stages of their research careers (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Following the data collection phase, the researcher begins with a systematic process of thematic analysis. Initially, all interview recordings were diligently transcribed into text (transcript). Then, Each interview was further segmented and labeled according to the organization's status, distinguishing between national and international organizations. This initial step facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the data as the researchers repeatedly reviewed and familiarized themselves with the interview transcripts.

Subsequently, the analysis progressed to scrutinizing the data, where initial codes were generated. These codes served as descriptors for meaningful text sections, capturing the essence of the data and highlighting pivotal ideas and concepts. This coding process was instrumental in distilling the richness of the interviews. The identified codes were then grouped based on their relevance, paving the way for the emergence of potential themes from the data. The systematic review of the transcripts involved identifying recurring ideas, concepts, or patterns that filtered the interviews.

Furthermore, the identified themes were refined and thoroughly checked for their accuracy in representing the interview content. This refinement aimed to enhance the coherence of interpretation. Each theme received a clear and descriptive label that succinctly encapsulated its content.

Lastly, these themes were subjected to further analysis aligned with the research objectives and questions. This stage allowed for a comprehensive exploration of how the identified themes interconnected and contributed to addressing the overarching research inquiries, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of the research topic. This approach assists in understanding the relevant meanings within the data. Below is a

list of some international and local NGOs that will be approached for participation in the study. The list of NGOs will follow in the response.

A. International NGOs

Sr. no	Name of the organization
1	The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), TÜRKİYE
2	The United Nations Children`s Fund (UNICEF)
3	The United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
4	The International Organization for Migration (IOM), Türkiye
5	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
6	The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
7	Save the Children International
8	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE)
9	International Middle east peace research Centre (IMPR)
10	Zakat Foundation International

B. Turkish Local NGOs

Sr. No	Name of the organization
1	Turkish Red Crescent (Türk Kızılayı)
2	The Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM)
3	Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH)
4	Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center (HUGO)
5	The Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM)
6	Refugee Support Center (Mudem)
7	Refugee Integration and Support Association - HIRAETH
8	Refugee Counseling Association (Mülteci Der)
9	The Children of the Earth (Yeryüzü Çocukları)
10	Hayat Sende

2.3. PROFILING SAMPLED INTERNATIONAL & LOCAL NGOs

2.3.1 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), a significant component of the United Nations System, has promoted humane and orderly migration since its inception in 1951. With a staggering 175 member states and an extensive presence spanning over 100 countries, IOM is an indispensable force in addressing the complexities of migration on a global scale. Within its diverse work field, one of the most critical facets is its unwavering commitment to refugee assistance, which extends its protective arm to those displaced by conflicts, persecution, and crises worldwide.

Over its illustrious history, the organization we now know as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has undergone a series of name changes, mirroring its evolution from a logistical agency to a migration agency. Commencing as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME), it transitioned into the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) in 1952. Subsequently, in 1980, it became the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) and finally adopted its current name, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in 1989. This journey reflects the organization's transformation over half a century into a comprehensive migration agency. The IOM has played a pivotal role in responding to various manufactured and natural disasters, from the Hungarian crisis in 1956 to the ongoing European migrant crisis. This dynamic history underscores the organization's commitment to its creed: humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

A profound dedication to the well-being of refugees underpins IOM's mission on the global stage. The organization is instrumental in providing a lifeline to individuals uprooted from their homes. With countless conflicts and crises fueling the global refugee population, IOM is a beacon of hope and support. The latest available data shows that IOM has assisted over 12 million refugees worldwide. This monumental effort encompasses various programs, such as humanitarian aid delivery, shelter provision, healthcare access, and educational opportunities, all aimed at alleviating refugees' immense challenges.

IOM's commitment to refugee assistance extends to Türkiye, a nation hosting millions of refugees, primarily from Syria. With its expansive presence in the country, IOM has played a pivotal role in supporting the refugee population and the host communities. In Türkiye alone, IOM has been instrumental in providing critical aid to millions of refugees and asylum seekers, addressing their diverse needs. This assistance spans a wide spectrum, including health services, education support, livelihood opportunities, and social cohesion initiatives.

The IOM's scope has expanded significantly from its origins as an operational logistics agency. Today, it stands as the leading international agency collaborating with governments and civil societies to deepen the understanding of migration issues, promote social and economic development through migration, and safeguard the dignity and well-being of migrants. This broadened mandate has been accompanied by remarkable growth, with an annual operating budget of US\$1.8 billion and a workforce of approximately 11,500 personnel across more than 150 countries worldwide. As the designated "UN migration agency," the IOM holds a prominent position in the global discourse on the multifaceted implications of migration in the 21st century. In September 2016, it attained the status of a related organization of the United Nations, solidifying its role as a key player in international migration efforts.

2.3.2. Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC), also known as Dansk Flygtningehjælp in Danish, is a distinguished private Danish humanitarian nonprofit organization founded in 1956. DRC operates as an umbrella organization, overseeing 33 member organizations and tracing its origins back to the post-World War II era when it emerged in response to the European refugee crises catalyzed by the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. Since then, DRC has been actively engaged in substantial humanitarian endeavors across the globe. DRC's enduring commitment to humanitarian efforts has made it a significant player in refugee assistance. With a dedicated focus on supporting individuals displaced by conflict, persecution, and crises, DRC's impact is vast and far-reaching. The organization's comprehensive assistance programs encompass emergency relief, protection and advocacy for refugee rights, livelihood support, access to education, and initiatives to foster social cohesion between refugees and host communities.

Throughout its history, DRC has earned a well-deserved reputation as a trusted and effective humanitarian force, offering hope and assistance to countless refugees in their time of need. One of DRC's pivotal historical contributions was delivering half of the international humanitarian aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina during the wars of independence in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s through convoy operations. DRC's humanitarian footprint spans more than 40 countries, focusing on conflict zones such as Somalia in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan in Central Asia, Iraq in the Middle East, and Chechnya in the Caucasus.

DRC is a key humanitarian actor in the Syrian crisis and its neighboring regions, providing emergency relief to over 500,000 individuals monthly. The Syrian conflict represents one of the largest humanitarian crises globally, with 30% of the population displaced due to violence. DRC's efforts include distributing relief aid through mattresses, clothing, blankets, hygiene kits, educational assistance, and rehabilitating shelters in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Türkiye, and Iraq. The organization engages in a diverse array of sectors, including housing and small-scale infrastructure, income generation, food security, legal assistance, social rehabilitation, NGO capacity development, mine action, information management, and logistics. DRC collaborates with various international agencies in demining, logistics, and reconstruction projects, including the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

2.3.3. Save The Children

Save the Children fund, also known as Save The Children, was founded in the UK in 1919 and is a prominent international non-governmental organization dedicated to improving the lives of children worldwide. Founded by Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton, its initial focus was providing emergency relief to children suffering from the aftermath of World War I. With its origins rooted in a mission to alleviate child starvation, Save the Children has evolved to champion children's rights, provide vital aid during crises, and advocate for children's well-being.

Over the years, Save the Children has evolved into a tireless advocate for children's rights and well-being. Notably, during the Russian famine of 1921, the organization's

efforts led to the League of Nations recognition, prompting a shift towards a permanent commitment to safeguarding children's rights globally. Save the Children has played pivotal roles in post-World War II relief efforts, assisting refugee children in Europe and addressing crises worldwide, such as the Korean War and the Nigerian Biafra secession. Eglantyne Jebb's advocacy laid the foundation for the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, underscoring children's material and spiritual development, protection from exploitation, and contribution to society. Moreover, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989 and ratified globally (except in the United States), forms the cornerstone of Save the Children's mission. The organization also actively supports refugee children, including those in Türkiye, providing essential services, education, and vital support to those affected by conflicts and forced migration. Save the Children remains unwavering in its commitment to creating a brighter future for children in need worldwide.

2.3.4. Zakat Foundation International

Zakat Foundation of America is a humanitarian organization with a profound vision and a range of programs to eradicate poverty and inequality. Founded on the principle of servanthood, the Zakat Foundation seeks to serve humanity as an expression of devotion to the Creator. Their vision extends beyond providing simple assistance; they aspire to empower people experiencing poverty, foster sustainable solutions, and create a more just and equitable world. At the core of Zakat Foundation's ethos is the belief that poverty and inequality can be eradicated. This vision is deeply rooted in Islamic principles, as the foundation sees it as a mandate to address these issues. They are committed to achieving this goal within their lifetime through strategic programs and initiatives.

Zakat Foundation's role is multifaceted and encompasses a range of activities. They prioritize the needs of vulnerable communities domestically and internationally by providing comprehensive support. Their programs focus on various areas of humanitarian aid and development. These include food security, where they distribute food and equip communities with the necessary tools and knowledge for sustainable farming and market access. They address water scarcity by installing wells and pumps

while working closely with communities to develop long-term, self-sustaining water sources.

The foundation plays a crucial role in supporting refugees and displaced individuals. They provide essential services such as shelter, resettlement assistance, language education, and vocational training, helping individuals rebuild their lives and regain independence. Zakat Foundation is committed to empowering widows and single mothers through skills acquisition programs, enabling them to attain employment or pursue entrepreneurship opportunities.

Education is a cornerstone of Zakat Foundation's work. They prioritize the well-being and education of orphaned children, ensuring they have access to quality education, healthcare, and a nurturing environment. Additionally, the foundation engages in rebuilding efforts, constructing houses, and revitalizing livelihoods for those affected by conflicts and disasters.

Zakat Foundation is not limited to international efforts; they also address domestic challenges. They combat gun violence through advocacy and support of anti-violence initiatives. The foundation supports struggling families, distributing holiday food and providing toys for children. They also assist individuals and communities impacted by crises, delivering medical aid, hygiene kits, and other essentials. Furthermore, they emphasize environmental conservation and the need to mitigate the causes of climate change.

2.3.5. Refugee Integration and Support Association (HIRAETH)

The Hiraeth Association, founded in 2017 by a dedicated team primarily composed of university students, has been consistently committed to integrating and educating refugee children in their city since 2014. With a history of voluntary work addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by refugee children, this organization has evolved into a beacon of hope and support for those affected by the Syrian refugee crisis, which has profoundly impacted their country in recent years.

The Syrian war since 2011 has compelled millions to flee their homeland, with a significant number seeking refuge in Türkiye. Within their borders, the Hiraeth

Association recognizes the diverse sociological structures and pressing needs of Syrian refugees, particularly the vulnerable children who grapple with the hardships of displacement. Without proper support in a safe environment, these children face elevated risks, including the potential for involvement in criminal activities. Many refugee families have struggled to prioritize education, often relying on employing older male children to contribute to household income. Additionally, the challenges surrounding the integration process and misunderstandings among local Turkish citizens about refugees have hindered these children from making plans and feeling a sense of belonging to society.

In response to these pressing issues, the Hiraeth Association has embraced a vital mission: to develop projects that place education and integration at the forefront of their efforts. Through these projects, the association aims to forge deep connections with refugee children, providing them with the necessary support to overcome their unique challenges and foster brighter prospects for their future. What sets the Hiraeth Association apart is not only its mission but also its motivation. Their journey began with Syrian families and their children living in a shantytown neighborhood, with whom they have nurtured profound relationships over the past two years. By focusing on this community, the association has worked with unparalleled depth, forging a special bond founded on trust and mutual respect. The Hiraeth Association has not undertaken this mission alone; they have garnered essential support from institutions such as the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Eyüp Municipality, Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul Commerce University, and Istanbul Şehir University, as well as from esteemed organizations like LC Waikiki. Furthermore, their tireless work has been made possible by the dedication of over 100 volunteers and the generous contributions of numerous donors, demonstrating a collective commitment to the well-being and prospects of refugee children in their city.

23.6. The Turkish Red Crescent (Türk Kızılay)

Turkish Red Crescent, officially known as the Turkish Red Crescent Association, is Türkiye's largest humanitarian aid organization and is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Turkish Red Crescent is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that provides aid and services voluntarily and works for the

public good. Some of its staff members work as volunteers, while others receive salaries.

The International Red Cross Committee was established in Geneva on August 22, 1864, with the signing of the first Geneva Convention, opening the way for establishing the International Red Cross Committee. The Ottoman government approved this agreement on July 5, 1865. However, the status of the association remained uncertain for the first 40 years.

Initially, there was a belief among the Ottoman government officials that this society would not be beneficial. Nevertheless, in 1867, Dr. Abdullah Bey, a teacher at the Mekteb-i Tıbbiye (Medical School) in Istanbul, was sent as a delegate to the first Red Cross congress held in Paris. At the congress, Abdullah Bey was selected as the delegate for Türkiye to establish an aid association for the wounded within the Ottoman Empire. He obtained a proxy from the President of the International Relief Committee to establish such an association within the Ottoman state.

With persistent efforts and the support of Serdar-ı Ekrem Ömer Pasha, Abdullah Bey obtained the support needed. With contributions from Dr. Aziz Bey from Crimea, the Mecruhin and Marza-yı Askeriyeye İmdat ve Muavenet Cemiyeti (Society for the Assistance and Support of the Homeless and the Invalids of the Military) was established. This society did not use any symbols. The date of its establishment, June 11, 1868, is considered the official founding date of the Red Crescent in Türkiye.

Ottoman Hilâl-i Ahmer Society: The conflicts between the Ottoman Empire, Serbia, and Montenegro in 1876 brought up the necessity of establishing an "aid society for the military" in the country. Slavic soldiers received help from Red Cross Societies (Salib-i Ahmer) during the conflicts, while Ottoman soldiers were left helpless. Red Cross teams could not assist Ottoman soldiers because the rule was that assistance would not be given to soldiers of governments that did not sign or did not fulfill the requirements of the Geneva Convention. Officials from the Red Cross Societies operating in Europe reminded that the Ottoman state could benefit from the aid and suggested establishing an organization in Istanbul to inform other states through the center in Geneva. Thus, efforts to establish a society called Mecrûhîn ve Zuafây-ı Askeriyeye İmdat ve

Muavenet Cemiyeti (Society for the Assistance and Support of the Disabled and the Invalids of the Military) began. Thanks to the efforts of Aziz Bey from Crimea, it was decided to use the Hilâl-i Ahmer (Red Crescent) symbol instead of Salib-i Ahmer (Red Cross). An application was made through Geneva to register the crescent symbol with all states; most states accepted the emblem. The regulations of the society were prepared and submitted to the government for approval. The government approved the regulations after the decision to use the crescent instead of the cross.

The society was officially founded on April 14, 1877. Hacı Arif Bey, the Second Head of the Meclis-i Umum-u Sıhhiye (General Council of Public Health), was appointed society's president. On April 19, 1877, the society's name was officially designated as the Ottoman Hilâl-i Ahmer Society. The society's name was changed to the Turkish Red Crescent Society on April 28, 1935, and on September 22, 1947, it was changed to the Turkish Red Crescent Association.

2.3.7. The Children of The Earth Association (Yeryüzü Çocukları Derneği)

The Children of the Earth Association (YEÇED) was founded in 2016 to support children and women affected by conflict, war, and natural disasters or displaced due to these reasons. Since its inception, YEÇED's focused priority has been to produce sustainable solutions for children as the target group and their psychological, physical, and academic well-being. YEÇED's activities also encompass the well-being of mothers to provide comprehensive support to children. As an organization dedicated to working on special projects for children with its dedicated team, it advocates for children's rights on every platform and takes action whenever necessary. It provides public and social services through professional teams in various regions of Türkiye and abroad. The scope of these activities includes psychosocial support, educational assistance, group support programs for mothers, as well as social assistance to families, including essential aid materials such as food parcels or hygiene products in case of emergency needs. Regarding community service, social services, and psychosocial support, YEÇED's greatest value lies in offering sustainable projects that operate over time with professional teams rather than short-term services. Thus, the organization aims to reach all children and women affected by any disaster-like situation that disrupts their

psychological and physical well-being anywhere in the world and to provide permanent, long-term solutions.

YEÇED, an association run by women and youth, has a very dynamic team whose members are all under 30 and have experience in community service and fieldwork. The organization has an exceptionally special team capable of taking initiative and action as quickly as possible when needed. Members include university students and young professionals in their respective fields, volunteers, social work specialists, interns from political science and law faculties, child rights advocates, and lawyers. International and Turkish participants are from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and ages. YEÇED ensures its volunteers share the same values as the organization's goals and pays extra attention and diligence to motivate them throughout all activities and projects. As it grows, the number of volunteers increases day by day. According to its website, it has worked with 2,400 volunteers, engaging 500 active volunteers and 10 staff members in projects and programs.

2.3.8. The Refugee Support Association (Mülteci Destek Derneği-MUDEM)

The Refugee Support Association (MUDEM), established in Ankara in 2014, addresses the challenges faced by forcibly displaced individuals within Türkiye and abroad. MUDEM provides essential social and legal support, psychosocial assistance, and refugee integration initiatives through a network of centers across Türkiye and a representation office in Dublin, Ireland. Their mission goes beyond borders, promoting empathy and dialogue between refugees and host communities, thus fostering social cohesion. MUDEM operates with a diverse team of professionals, collaborates with local authorities and civil society organizations, and conducts awareness campaigns to enhance understanding of refugee issues. Their vision is a future where migration is driven by personal choices, free from political, economic, or humanitarian pressures, while their values encompass equality, transparency, accountability, and interagency collaboration. MUDEM's mission revolves around ensuring full access to rights and services, empowering women, removing barriers to self-sufficiency, facilitating social integration, and combating stereotypes and prejudices.

2.3.9. The Hayat Sende Youth Academy Association

The Hayat Sende Youth Academy Association, founded in 2007 by a dedicated group of young individuals who grew up under state protection, aims to empower children and youth in state care. They aim to equip these young individuals with essential life skills, ensuring they can step into life without discrimination. Their vision is to create a world where children and youth, whether under protection or transitioning out of it, can access their rights and opportunities equally and with strength, free from discrimination. At the core of their organization are values such as non-partisanship, transparency, and accountability. They firmly believe in a rights-based approach, recognizing the inherent rights of every individual. Equality is a fundamental principle, and they actively combat discrimination based on any characteristic. Their work encompasses various areas, including empowerment and capacity building. They provide psychosocial, economic, and community support, mentoring programs, counseling, psychological support, and scholarships.

Additionally, they focus on raising awareness in the community and advocating for the rights of children and youth in state protection. They work to combat labeling and discrimination, ensuring easy access to rights and opportunities for these individuals. Hayat Sende has garnered recognition for its impactful work, receiving accolades such as the "Difference Maker" award from the Sabancı Foundation in 2012 and being named the "Civil Society Organization of the Year" by the National Youth Parliament in 2014. In 2016, it was acknowledged as one of Asia's 24 most influential organizations by the Asia21 Initiative. In 2021, Hayat Sende was honored as the 3rd Best Social Service Institution in Türkiye, and their president, Tuğçe Ekin, received the Türkiye Awareness Award in the Reducing Inequalities category presented by JCI Istanbul.

2.3.10. The Research Center for Asylum and Migration (IGAM)

The Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM) emerged in 2013 as an independent, nonprofit association founded by a consortium of academics, researchers, journalists, and humanitarian workers. Its establishment addressed the notable absence of an independent research center in Türkiye dedicated to studying asylum and

migration. The fundamental objective of IGAM is to contribute to advancing international refugee laws and principles and foster their effective implementation within Türkiye. Its core activities encompass conducting academic research in this domain, supporting ongoing academic investigations, establishing databases, raising public awareness, delivering training programs, and fostering networking initiatives. In its inaugural year, IGAM established a web presence, organized regular seminars, and actively participated in national and international conferences and presentations.

In February 2014, IGAM published its inaugural report, *"The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in the Syrian Refugee Crisis,"* a field study funded by the European Union. In March 2014, IGAM took the lead in managing a commission for research on health services in Şanlıurfa, sponsored by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Additionally, IGAM collaborated with the Oxford Refugee Studies Center Foundation, supported by the Lebanese Asraf Association, to enhance the quality of education for children in Türkiye. With a strong conviction in the value of NGO collaboration in the realm of asylum and immigration, IGAM spearheaded the establishment of the Türkiye Refugee Council (TMC). This overarching organization brought together 26 NGOs to enhance the efficacy of non-governmental bodies in the field. TMC, which includes associations formed by refugees among its founders, convened its inaugural meeting in November 2017, with participation from numerous NGOs, public institution officials, and international organization representatives. Since its inception, IGAM has expanded its portfolio of projects across diverse fields and activities. In 2018, it earned international recognition as an NGO.

Notably, IGAM's President, Metin Çorabatır, was honored as a "Gulmakai Education Champion" by the Malala Fund in 2018. IGAM takes pride in its role within the global "Campaign for the Creation of a Lost Generation." Collaborating with the experienced women's rights organizations, the Flying Broom Foundation and Ravda Nur Association, IGAM actively contributes to this initiative. In 2018, IGAM was selected as one of the eight best-practice NGOs worldwide in combating xenophobia and discrimination against refugees and migrants by the NGO Committee of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Among these eight organizations, IGAM was the

sole invitee to New York, where it had the opportunity to present before the committee on May 18, 2018. IGAM stands among the few NGOs granted permission to attend the annual Non-Governmental Consultation Meetings held by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for policy development in Geneva.

IGAM collaborated with the international NGO Oxfam in 2017-2018. Recognizing the insufficient inclusion of refugees in humanitarian aid, decision-making, and policy processes in host countries, a congress was organized, with 160 delegates representing 70 NGOs from 27 countries participating – a notable representation of refugees. The final declaration of this congress was presented in Geneva and was supported by the European Union, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and UNHCR. Under the project "Providing Information and Protection to Refugees in Türkiye and Directing Them to Protection Services," IGAM established the Refugee Information and Support Center in Ankara-Keciören in 2018. This center offers counseling services to refugees and conducts information sessions and group activities. IGAM remains resolute in advancing its mission and objectives, actively working to represent refugee rights on both national and international platforms and continuously striving to address the needs of the refugee community in Türkiye.

2.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The ethical clearance for this research was obtained from the senate ethical committee of Hacettepe university on May 25, 2023, which finds it ethically appropriate for the study. (See appendix) Additionally, commonly accepted standards of ethics in social work research were considered throughout the research process. The researcher has also emphasized that the principle of confidentiality will be upheld throughout the collection of data and analysis processes. Before beginning the study, and to ensure the safety and well-being of the participants, all gathered resources from participants has been collected after obtaining explicit permission from the participants in full compliance with the Institutional review board guidelines at Hacettepe University, Ankara. To protect the identity of the respondent's name and Institutions will be coded only gender and position will be used in the study. The participants were free to withdraw at any time during the research. Lastly, the collected data and findings were used only for scientific and academic purposes and will not be disclosed to others.

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

In this chapter, we discuss the most significant part of our research, where we present the findings derived from our study on refugee integration in Türkiye, particularly emphasizing the integration of refugee children. The previous chapters have laid the groundwork, outlining the research's purpose, methodology, and the ethical considerations that guided our data collection process. Now, we transition from theory to practice, unraveling insights gathered through interviews with various International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). As mentioned, the main objective of this study was to conduct a detailed analysis of refugee integration in Türkiye focused on the integration of refugee children. The study also focuses on the work and challenges of INGOs and NGOs working for the refugees. For this purpose, the study systematically collected, organized, and analyzed the interviews of various International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and national Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) under the thematic analysis technique. The researcher carefully analyzed the available transcript and identified several themes and subthemes.

Before conducting the analysis, the researcher obtained permission from all but one organization and interviewee to use their names in the study. However, to ensure confidentiality and protect the identity of the participants, the researcher opted to use a coding method. Each organization involved in the study was assigned a unique code to maintain anonymity. For instance, international organizations were given the code "INGO" followed by a serial number, while local or national NGOs were assigned the code "NGO" followed by a serial number. The study respected the privacy concerns of the participants and made sure to handle the data with utmost care. It is also important to note that those organizations who did not grant permission to use their name in the study are explicitly not named in the list of organizations. Instead, it is called "anonymous" to safeguard their identity further. By employing this coding method and respecting the confidentiality of the participants, the study aimed to maintain the ethical

standards of research while still providing a comprehensive analysis of the interview data.

Table 1: List of INGOs and NGOs and Their Code

S. No	Organization	Status	Gender	Position	Code
1	International Organization for Migration	International	Female	Program Manager	INGO 1
2	Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	International	Female	Children Welfare Officer	INGO 2
3	International Organization (Anonymous)	International	Male	Project Manager	INGO 3
4	Save The Children	International	Male	Children Welfare Officer	INGO 4
5	Zakat Foundation	International	Male	Founder & Director	INGO 5
6	Refugee Integration and Support Organization (Hiraeth)	National	Female	Social Worker	NGO 1
7	Turkish Red Crescent (Turk Kizilay)	National	Male	Director Of Migration Department	NGO 2
8	The Children of The Earth (Yeryuzu Cucuklar)	National	Female	Social Worker	NGO 3
9	Refugee Support Association (Mudem)	National	Male	Project Coordinator	NGO 4
10	Hayat Sende	National	Female	Social Worker	NGO 5
11	The Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM)	National	Male	Founder & Director	NGO 6
12	National Organization (Anonymous)	National	Male	Refugee Experts	NGO 7

3.1. FINDINGS

The concept of social integration is a topic of ongoing academic and global debate due to its ambiguous nature. Despite efforts by scholars and national and international organizations to define a global framework for integration and the integration process, there is no universally accepted definition of the term (Castle et al., 2014). Recent studies on refugees and refugee integration have shown that the concept is subject to various subjective and objective interpretations depending on the nature and understanding of the individuals involved (Clemens, 2022; Ager & Strang, 2008, 2010).

International and national organizations hold differing attitudes toward social integration, defining it as a function of time, space, and structural perspectives. There is no fixed academic definition of social integration, but rather a fluid working definition that varies across different political and social contexts. The approach to social integration also varies among organizations at different levels, with local organizations taking a proactive and dynamic approach that caters to local realities and subjectivities. However, some subjectivities are influenced by unfair and discriminatory political realities. While social integration perspectives may be presented in a positive light for international audiences, the practical implementation of interventions is challenging due to the grounded realities of politics and perceptions.

Similarly, through this study, the researcher focuses on social integration based on the views and perspectives of various NGOs in Türkiye. Various organizations viewed social integration accordingly and presented their concerns on various scales. Though the general perspective on social integration varied from organization to organization horizontally, there have been marked vertical variances as well. Some NGOs interviewed during this research presented a gross economic perspective on social integration.

3.1.1. Revisiting The Concept of Refugee Integration in Turkish Context

The study finds varying responses to this question: What does refugee integration mean for you or your organization? Wherein INGOs and NGOs share different conceptual

understandings of the concept of integration. The concept of integration is understood in multifaceted ways by these organizations. Some NGOs define social integration in terms of cohesion and cultural integration and consider social cohesion, social integration, harmonization, and cultural integration as synonymous and differences in nomenclature as mere phraseological convenience. For other local NGOs, getting economic independence and enjoying life without discrimination can be considered a good integration indicator. Moreover, international organizations conceptualize social integration under the Universal definition and notions of social integration as conceptualized by the United Nations. Their work and activities align with the refugee policies and framework of the United Nations.

“We generally use social cohesion and cultural integration instead of social integration. Social cohesion has two dimensions. Once we say social cohesion, it means a sense of belongingness in the community and relationships among members within the community”. (NGO-1)

“I think the definition of social integration would be for refugees to enable sustainable economic conditions in line with the relevant law”. (INGO-2).

“I understand it (social integration) as people meeting their basic human needs, not feeling alienated, and continuing their lives within society as a part of it, including their participation in various jobs”. (NGO-2)

Various organizations also voiced concern about the government's role in conceptualizing and synchronizing the meaning of social integration as harmonization. In their opinion, harmonization is an incomplete construct that abandons the idea of social integration.

These organizations use an overarching term: peaceful coexistence encompassing social cohesion, integration, and harmonization.

“We don’t only bring them together, but we are also working for social cohesion. We need all parties to recognize each other’s rights and accept

each other as they are. The terminology that we use is peaceful coexistence.” (INGO-1)

However, some organizations use the universal rights discourse to justify peaceful coexistence and compassion and define social integration.

“We believe that both the host community and the asylum seekers who come to Türkiye should live together compassionately and have access to equal rights and services, and should not experience discrimination based on religion, language, or ethnic origin; this is what we generally understand as social integration” (NGO-4).

Some organizations put a caveat in place while defining social integration as they don't want social assimilation to be a part of social integration. as it risks the extinction of the culture of origin of refugee children and puts the instincts and behavior of refugee children at stake. Therefore, these organizations advocate for learning the host culture and remaining in place of the culture of origin.

“For us, social integration is an adaptation or living together, but when I'm saying this, I'm not saying that the children should lose their original cultural codes or other things. I believe these children should keep their national historical and different backgrounds and find a place to live in Türkiye with Turkish culture (NGO-5).

Some NGOs also mentioned Cultural integration, which could be a complex dilemma for refugee children as they strive to adapt to their new surroundings without losing their cultural identities. Some NGOs observed that Language is a vital aspect of culture, but it often becomes a point of conflict. Refugee children, exposed to their native tongue at home but occupied in the language of their host country, may gradually lose proficiency in reading, writing, and formal use of their mother tongue. This linguistic transformation affects their ability to communicate and triggers an identity crisis as they navigate the fine line between embracing their host culture and preserving their cultural heritage. Achieving true integration entails surface-level adaptation and a balance that

allows these children to thrive in their new environment while honoring their cultural roots.

“We tried to consider integration as a separate concept. These children have a Syrian identity, and we tried to approach how they can live compatibly with Turkish society while maintaining their own identity, culture, and self. So, I define integration as being able to live in harmony with society while preserving their own culture.” (NGO-1).

Again, some NGOs also believe that social integration has distinct meaning and praxis in each country and cultural setting. Hence the definition must be revamped according to the local dynamics, cultural perspective, and sociopolitical structure.

“Each country has its own culture, system, public & social structure, and international migrant composition, which can result in different understanding and structure of social integration. However, we can generally observe common elements and shared characteristics when studying such feelings. In this regard, Türkiye has its own unique parameters of social integration and similarities to global parameters of social integration” (NGO-2).

Many NGOs do not view social integration as a monolith but as a collection of several integrated approaches that contribute to the overall well-being of children. However, These approaches are not singled out but complement each other to build resilience and are tailored to cater to the various challenges that refugee children often encounter and often contribute toward social cohesion.

“We believe integrating refugee and Turkish children in schools and providing long-term support, including group and parenting sessions, contributes to social cohesion. We also support entrepreneurship training and cooperative initiatives that unite Turkish, Syrian, and Afghan individuals, fostering friendships and connections among communities”. (INGO-4)

Some organizations see social integration as physical enrolment in institutions and adaptability in those sectors and institutions catering to children's sociopsychological

well-being. Thus, for them, social integration is not only a mere presence in social and public spaces but a less challenging experience for refugee children with improvement in otherwise impediments and better adaptation.

It is also observed that many NGOs willingly avoid terminology such as social integration. Perhaps the terminology that they use is "*Sosyal Uyum*." According to them, the main objectives are to alleviate life's challenges in Türkiye for children, reduce the obstacles they face in their education, increase their participation in school activities, and minimize peer bullying.

Recognizing that enrolling refugee children in school was insufficient for their successful adaptation, one NGO (NGO-5) expanded its efforts to include comprehensive support, particularly in the form of psychosocial assistance. This decision stemmed from observations that some children struggled with adaptation due to inadequate support from teachers and peers. Similarly, another organization (NGO-3) identified issues within the school environment, such as bullying, racism, and discrimination faced by refugee children, as well as a tendency for these children to be relegated to the back of the classroom. Consequently, NGO-3 shifted its focus to encompass aspects of integration, with a primary emphasis on education, facilitating adaptation, and bolstering the psychosocial well-being of these young learners.

The interpretation of different terms related to refugees is indeed a subject of intense deliberation among researchers worldwide, and so is in Türkiye. The lack of a universally acknowledged definition for concepts like "refugee" and "social integration" adds complexity to the discourse. These terms remain fluid and open to interpretation, leading to ongoing debates among scholars attempting to establish a common understanding.

3.1.2. NGOs perspectives on the Role played by Gender in Social Integration

Concerning the social integration of refugees, gender roles are viewed as distinct by the NGOs but largely aligned with the principle of gender equality. NGOs argue that the gender of the refugees can impact the level of integration in the host society. Socioeconomic conditions, cultural norms, and perceived gender are the reasons behind

the particular role of individuals in the refugee community. One of refugees' most common issues and widely accepted norms is the perception of gender roles. Hence, this role could be a barrier or blessing for the refugees regarding their social integration.

It is also observed that many international NGOs do not have gender policies or directly focus on gender issues. However, within the scope of individual case management, these NGOs assist and resolve gender-based issues such as gender inequality, gender-based violence, forced marriages, exploitation, and other points of gender-related conflict.

“We do not have child protection services. But we have case management; under case management, we work on gender-based violence, legal assistance, etc. Under general case management, we work on enabling refugees to access their rights and services” (INGO-2).

“The cultural norms dictate the level of women's access to public spaces and public life. For example, in terms of languages, females face more barriers because they do not interact so much externally, and when they do interact, it's usually within the Syrian communities. So, language skills are not as developed as males. Also, in terms of employment, single female heads households face additional challenges in fulfilling the household's economic needs. This ultimately limits their opportunities to mix with the host population”. (INGO-2)

Many organizations also argue that there is a gender bias among refugee children: male refugee children are more exposed to the outside life, and females are kept indoors. Therefore, it is common for a refugee girl to be discouraged from going to school while boys are directed toward employment. Interestingly, another observation says this norm varies slightly for Syrian refugees according to their cities. There is a slight difference in the mindset between these two cities. For example, refugees from Aleppo and Damascus have a different emphasis on education. Damascus refugees have a higher priority on education. However, Aleppo refugees have a more trade-oriented approach focusing on commerce and a lower literacy rate (NGO-3).

Similarly, many NGOs believe that refugees intentionally do not want to send female refugee children to schools for various reasons, such as safety. When children reach school age, their families may not want to educate their daughters. In such cases, the family says, "We want to send our daughter to school, but we don't want her to walk alone." In response, the NGOs offer them the option of providing transportation for their daughter to school. This way, while their daughter commutes to school by vehicle, they can know she is safe. Unfortunately, NGOs cannot do much at this level except persuade families.

"The issue arises from the perspective of gender and the general dynamics within the refugee population. In refugee communities, men typically assume the role of breadwinners, while women tend to have limited work opportunities and often remain within closed communities. Consequently, their cohesion and integration with society can be limited due to these challenges." (INGO-4).

"They can go anywhere inside the city. But for a girl, it's not easy to reach Kizilay or any other place. But for boys, it is not like this. (NGO-5).

While discussing gender roles for integration, most NGOs express concern for the negative treatment of female refugee children. However, some NGOs also highlight the ill-treatment faced by male refugee children. It has been argued that in society, girls are seen as innocent and harmless, whereas, on the other hand, there is a prejudice against boys. The girls are getting more opportunities and support for integration, whereas the boys, due to their refugee background, are seen as potential criminals. Even in schools, refugee children are seen as harmful to other children. This created a reverse disparity in the treatment of boys and girls refugee children.

Moreover, often, due to the poor economic situation of the refugee family, young boys (13- 14 years old) are sent to work in the industries. Although working at an early age exposes refugee children to learning the host society's language, it's often not guaranteed. It is presumed that boys will learn faster since they are in the street most of the time and have direct contact with the host society.

“Some of our male refugee beneficiaries have Turkish girlfriends, so everything becomes easy for them, like learning the language or knowing the surroundings. And if they decide to marry, it provides additional support in the integration journey” (NGO-5).

“It is worth noting that girls do not spend as much time on the streets as boys do, but they communicate more with us. Building friendships and connections among girls in school seems to happen more quickly. However, for boys, being on the street has its advantages. They are always outside, engaging with various individuals, from local shopkeepers to barbers. This constant interaction has given boys an additional advantage” (NGO-5).

Gender also plays a significant role in categorizing and marginalizing refugee children. Observations reveal a noticeable decline in the participation of female children in schools and other social activities as they grow older. This pattern of decreased involvement raises concerns about the barriers and challenges girls face in accessing education and engaging in community activities as they transition into adolescence and beyond.

“It has significant importance, particularly when it comes to adolescents. If they are not participating in programs, activities, or attending school, engaging with them at a later stage or at that level becomes challenging. Reaching out to them becomes difficult after a certain point. For example, if you are doing an activity for children between the age of 7 and 10, we can have 10 girls and 10 boys, but if you are doing the same activity for 13 to 17 years old kids, it's a bit difficult to reach girls” (INGO-4).

Generally, many international NGOs not only address the gender disparity issues of refugees but also make it a core component of their organizational approach. This issue is very complex, and there are different levels, namely gender awareness, gender neutral, gender-sensitive, and gender transformative. Hence, NGOs put gender policies in place, which help the refugees and bring gender transparency to NGO staff. Local NGOs also receive gender sensitivity training and skills from international NGOs.

Additionally, to balance this gender inequality, many NGOs support special programs for female refugees,

In addition to our staff, whom we trained for gender sensitivity and agree to be gender neutral, we work with refugee communities and strive to promote the concept of gender equality through various forms of education and group meetings, targeting refugee women, families, men, and even younger individuals such as teenagers. We aim to spread these concepts through different educational methods (NGO-6).

Furthermore, when we compare diverse groups of refugee children based on their gender, it is evident that Afghan refugee women face more challenges compared to other refugee populations. This can be attributed to their backgrounds and experiences. In Afghanistan, authorities and officials may lack trust, contributing to their hesitation in seeking registration in Türkiye. This fear may stem from their previous encounters with untrustworthy or disregarding authorities in their home country. These concerns are not limited to Afghan women but also to Afghan girls.

On the other hand, Iraqi women are more resilient and active in various aspects. Based on my observations of the beneficiaries, Iraqi women tend to be more engaged in work travel and have greater financial support. This indicates a higher level of flexibility and financial stability among Iraqi women. (NGO-5)

The study suggests that the gender of the refugee plays a pivotal role in the social integration of these children. Gender stereotypes and biases are affecting the social integration of refugee children. The gender norms within the refugee community marginalize women and girls from getting equal social integration opportunities. In other words, the gender dynamics intersect with the power dynamics and give privilege to the male refugees. The males have more access to social networks and opportunities, whereas the females are indoors. In some cases, male refugees are also discriminated against based on gender.

International and local NGOs are working to dismantle discriminatory practices and policies based on the gender of the refugees. NGOs also advocate for equal opportunities for male and female refugees. And it also talks about the inclusion of refugees in mainstream societies without any gender-based discrimination. NGOs contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable society where social integration is based on equal opportunities and respect for individuals of all gender identities. It's important to note that beyond the efforts of NGOs and the United Nations, a significant portion of the refugee population in Türkiye is also learning about and embracing these principles, both from Turkish society and the international community. Young girls and boys within these communities are becoming more conscious of these issues, and we observe that young women, in particular, are increasingly confident in defending their rights. So, in addition to structured programs and awareness-building, there is also an organic growth in awareness among refugee communities as the number of university and high school students increases and as they watch television and become more aware of the world and its changing ideologies and beliefs.

43.1.3. The Major Challenges for NGOs in Social Integration

Since the Syrian war began in 2011, many immigrants and asylum seekers have been in Türkiye. The number of refugees under mandate increases rapidly, as does the number of NGOs working for these refugees. This situation poses a great challenge for refugees and NGOs to manage them with limited resources. Working with refugees is always challenging for many international and local NGOs, requiring broad information, systematic databases, various skill sets and, most importantly, huge economic resources. Under this theme, various NGOs share the major problems and challenges they may face while working with refugees in Türkiye. They have also mentioned their personal and organizational challenges in supporting refugees in Türkiye. One of the greatest problems for Turkish NGOs was accommodating and giving services to the extensive refugee population that came to Türkiye. The NGOs also argue that the situation gets more compounded with new refugees from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This magnitude of refugees and asylum seekers, along with their diverse social and ethnic backgrounds, seems to greatly threaten to make any common or universal policies for refugees in Türkiye.

“I think, in terms of barriers to social integration. The biggest one would be the legal status because now Syrian refugees are under temporary protections, and their future in Türkiye is a big question mark”. (INGO-2).

“The scale of the refugee population has become a major concern, with more than a million children and the numbers continuing to rise. This poses significant difficulties for our operations and response efforts”. (NGO-2).

“With approximately 4 million refugees from diverse backgrounds, including Syrians, Afghans, and people from sub-Saharan Africa, each community presents unique needs and challenges. Designing a program solely in Arabic and expecting it to benefit Afghans or other sub-Saharan Africans is not feasible. This poses a resource constraint regarding time, money, and human resources. It is challenging for our organization and the government, NGOs, and humanitarian agencies. (INGO-4)

The situation is compounded due to the huge number of refugees in Türkiye. Even within a single city like Ankara, which consists of around 20 different districts, there are extensive and varied needs. However, there is insufficient capacity, both in the government and among NGOs, to address all these needs. (INGO-4)

Many NGOs also pointed out that language remains a significant barrier despite more than 13 years since the first influx of Syrian refugees into the country. Learning the host society's language is often considered the fundamental essential for the social integration process. Language barriers hinder effective communication between refugees and the host society. Refugees often struggle with learning the official language of the host country, which limits their ability to express themselves, access information, and engage in social interactions. In this case, language poses one of the most significant challenges for refugees and the host communities.

“There is a language barrier for NGOs when communicating with refugee’s children and their families. Although this is overcome with the help of translators, I think it is still a major barrier” (NGO-2)

“One of the most prominent problems is peer bullying, language, and communication. If someone does not know the language of another person living in the same region, of course, they will have a problem with the host society”. (NGO-4)

3.1.3.1. Insufficient Funding and Inadequate Organizational Management

NGOs generally work on various projects to support refugees and refugee integration. In this regard, NGOs require funds from national, international, or governmental agencies. The lack of funds and support is also one of the significant challenges for the NGOs, especially for the local NGOs. Many NGOs are already working with fewer funds or getting almost no new funds for their projects.

“Funding is a major problem for us. It's not easy to get funding for our projects. We have to apply for grants continuously, and sometimes, we are rejected, which can be frustrating”. (NGO-1)

“Finding money is the biggest struggle for an organization because it affects everything. Therefore, I can say that money is still one of our biggest challenges. When there is money, our possibilities become much broader” (NGO-3).

Many NGOs also highlight the mismanagement of the funds. It is stated that although funds and grants are available, there is a notable disparity between the extensive needs of affected populations and the limited resources at hand. The available resources are insufficient to adequately address the urgent and significant needs of refugees. It is also highlighted that due to this recent earthquake, most funds are diverted to the earthquake victims.

“There is a mismatch between the immense needs and the limited resources. The available resources often fail to meet the urgent and extensive needs of affected populations. The challenge lies in finding a balance between the overwhelming needs of refugees and the limited resources available for their support and assistance” (INGO-4)

“Securing funding or receiving grants is the most frustrating, I must say. Fundraising has been a challenging issue for us in the past. When we have a project, we need money to implement it. Otherwise, everything becomes much more difficult”. (NGO-3)

It is also observed that due to the lack of coordination between organizations in managing resources and handling the refugees. Sometimes, the same refugee with the same problem benefits various NGOs. On the other hand, some Refugees can't get the basic facilities due to a lack of knowledge and not registering with the organization.

“NGOs aim to increase their beneficiary numbers for their projects, leading them to continuously register new individuals instead of redirecting them to other NGOs that could actually assist them. Consequently, multiple NGOs attempt to address the same basic problem” (NGO-5).

3.1.3.2 The Ghettoization of Refugee

NGOs also complain about segregation or isolation among refugees, meaning they spend time predominantly with their refugee community. This could be termed Ghettoization. According to these observations, there could be limited communication and interaction between the host and refugee groups, ultimately generating prejudice and hate against each other. Therefore, promoting social integration becomes complex and challenging due to prejudice and biases between refugees and host societies. It has also been highlighted in various studies (Erdogan, 2021). However, it is also evident that families actively engaged in schools and various activities find it easier to integrate and establish social cohesion.

“Refugee communities tend to stay within their closed communities. Syrians prefer socializing with Syrians, Afghans with Afghans, etc. There are various reasons behind this behavior, which I can understand to some extent” (INGO-4).

“Maybe the first challenge, especially regarding harmonization, would be the parties' prejudices. Generally, the refugees spend time with only other refugees. There is a kind of Ghettoization. So, as we mentioned about social

mixing, sometimes it's not that easy to bring those people together since they have prejudices towards each other” (INGO-2).

3.1.3.3. Economic Aspects

Economic problems are one of the critical issues of refugee integration in Türkiye. Many NGOs mention refugees’ economic problems in Türkiye, especially after the COVID and earthquake; these problems have increased. NGOs also mentioned the economic issue Türkiye has faced for the last few years. According to several NGOs, the Republic of Türkiye is experiencing a severe economic crisis, leading to significant challenges in the Turkish economy. The devaluation of the Turkish lira has further escalated the situation. Hence, the refugees, already vulnerable, face additional problems and difficulties. All these have a negative impact on the day-to-day life of the refugees. With the limited resources of the government and international agencies, NGOs are finding it difficult to assist refugees in education, healthcare, and social integration programs. NGOs mentioned the numerous economic challenges that refugee children encounter in Türkiye. Since Türkiye is also a developing nation with very limited resources, challenges are further increased by the impact of the COVID pandemic and the recent earthquake in Türkiye.

“Unfortunately, we cannot discuss harmony when such an economic imbalance exists. Basic needs must be met first. After providing access to basic rights, services, and needs, we can intervene more easily if these conditions are equal, but besides language, the most obvious thing I can say is economic problems”. (NGO-4)

3.1.3.4. Legal Challenges of the Refugees

Numerous NGOs believe that the legal status of certain refugee communities, particularly Syrians, poses significant challenges for refugees and the NGOs working towards their social integration in Türkiye. It is widely argued that the temporary protection status assigned to the Syrian community can harm their social integration. This concern is also shown as the temporary protection status may create barriers to long-term stability and inclusion. For example, the temporary protection law in Türkiye

applies specifically to Syrians and is restricted to the city they are registered in. This means that if they are registered in Gaziantep, they cannot live in Istanbul or other cities. While proper controls and checks should be in place, the legal aspects of the situation make it more complex. Some NGOs believe that without a clear path to permanent residency or citizenship, refugees may struggle to access essential services, education, employment opportunities, and full social participation. In the context of working with Syrian refugees, NGOs often encounter specific challenges that are associated with their Syrian identity. Despite their legal status in the country, there remains a prevailing negative perception of Syrians within society. This unfavorable view creates difficulties in the work of the organization.

NGOs also argue that a more secure legal status is necessary to foster a sense of belonging, empower refugees, and facilitate their integration into the social fabric of Türkiye. By highlighting the potential drawbacks of the temporary protection regime, these NGOs seek to advocate for policy changes that would provide more favorable conditions for refugees, allowing them to integrate into Turkish society and contribute to its development fully.

“One of the major challenges we encounter is the uncertainty surrounding the situation of refugees and asylum seekers residing in the Republic of Türkiye. The existence of a temporary protection regime for Syrians and the request for a transition regime create ambiguity and confusion”. (NGO-4).

“The greatest challenge we face as an organization is the uncertainty surrounding government policies, particularly concerning children and education. The constantly changing nature of these policies, coupled with the fact that they are often referred to as temporary, creates a sense of unpredictability for our work”. (NGO-3).

3.1.3.5. Political Challenges of The Refugee

Political concerns were always associated with the refugees and asylum seekers when they arrived in Türkiye. However, due to the recent elections in 2023, these political challenges have become increasingly predominant. This political climate has led to the rise of hate speeches and anti-refugee sentiments among certain segments of society.

This ultimately creates significant obstacles for those who are advocating for refugee rights.

“The current environment has made it difficult to address the needs of refugees openly. Even minor discussions or requests for support are met with negative reactions and resistance”. (NGO-1)

Addressing these political challenges requires efforts at various levels. Advocacy for refugee rights, raising awareness, and fostering dialogue are crucial to counteract hate speech and prejudice. Engaging with diverse stakeholders, including political leaders, community members, and families, is important to promote empathy, understanding, and tolerance toward refugees. Overcoming these political challenges is not easy, but with perseverance and collective action, it is possible to change perceptions and create an environment supporting refugees' rights and well-being. The temporary protection status is not a comprehensive solution as it only applies to Syrians. Many issues need to be addressed from a legal standpoint, such as expanding the scope to include other nationalities and allowing refugees to live in different cities. While having temporary protection is better than having nothing, there are still limitations and challenges that need to be overcome.

The lack of new support and funding is a significant challenge faced by refugee organizations. This scarcity of resources hinders their ability to meet the needs of refugees and provide essential services effectively. Additionally, there is an issue with implementing existing support systems, where refugees cannot fully benefit from national support programs.

Although legislation may not explicitly limit social and economic support to Turkish citizens only, the practical application often restricts access to these benefits solely for Turkish individuals. This creates a disparity in the allocation of resources and exacerbates the challenges refugees face in accessing essential services and support. Furthermore, the perspective of society plays a role in shaping these challenges. There may be a lack of awareness, understanding, or empathy toward the plight of refugees, leading to a limited willingness to extend support and opportunities to them.

“Unfortunately, instead of progressing with a comprehensive and inclusive political agenda, there is a focus on sending refugees back to their home countries. Political parties have different approaches, such as creating safe havens in northern Syria or making agreements with the Assad regime to facilitate returns. However, when considering the responsibilities outlined in international refugee conventions, the emphasis should be on finding durable solutions rather than repatriation or restriction”. (INGO-4)

3.1.3.6. Personal Challenges

Interestingly, in addition to the challenges faced by refugee organizations in helping refugees, sometimes the staff and personnel of these NGOs also encounter instances where they become targets of hate and social abuse. However, it is important to note that such incidents are relatively infrequent and typically not physically harmful. Many staff members of NGOs have expressed their discontent with the way they are treated by society. They have shared their experiences facing hate or negative treatment from their work with refugees. Unfortunately, engaging in refugee support and assistance can sometimes attract criticism and prejudice from certain segments of society. It is worth highlighting that these occurrences are exceptions rather than the norm. While there may be isolated incidents of negativity or hostility, the overall impact on NGO staff is generally limited. Most individuals recognize and appreciate the vital work carried out by these organizations and their personnel in supporting refugees.

Nevertheless, addressing and mitigating such instances of discrimination or prejudice is crucial to creating a more inclusive and accepting society. Education, awareness campaigns, and fostering dialogue can help promote empathy, understanding, and appreciation for the humanitarian efforts of NGO staff in assisting and supporting refugees. This situation is particularly problematic for social workers and advocates who rely on society's resources and support to carry out their work effectively. The increasing hostility and backlash against refugees limit their ability to utilize the available social power and resources for the benefit of refugees. It is also observed that this hindrance affects professional interactions and personal relationships, as hate speech and prejudice against refugees can even be present within families.

“If I talk about it, they show reactions even inside our families. You know, I have worked for three years on the refugee site, and I’m advocating refugees’ rights, but still, even inside my family, there is hate speech or prejudice against the refugees. Sometimes it’s very hard to deal with all of this” (NGO-5)

It is also important to mention that it seems there is a stigma or negative perception associated with refugee-related work in certain circles. They can avoid potential judgment or criticism by reframing their roles more generally, such as working with the less fortunate or poor. This suggests a need to address the societal biases and misconceptions surrounding refugees and the organizations supporting them.

“I have noticed that among my friends and colleagues, there is a hesitancy to openly identify themselves as working with refugees. When they mention their profession, they often refer to themselves as social workers or individuals working with marginalized communities or people in need. This is due to the reactions they may have encountered when stating that they work for refugees”. (NGO-5)

3.1.3.7. Coordination among International and National NGOs

Regarding coordination among international and national NGOs, several issues and suggestions are raised by different non-governmental organizations. Some of them are as follows.

NGO-1 points out the challenge of different mindsets and values between international NGOs and local organizations. They had positive experiences with smaller volunteer groups and NGOs prioritizing children's well-being but had difficulties with larger corporate NGOs.

NGO-4 emphasizes the importance of public support and funding for NGOs involved in youth exchange projects. They also suggest direct support from the Ministry of Justice for projects focusing on children's access to justice.

NGO-5 also emphasizes the need for coordination and cooperation among NGOs. They mention instances where multiple NGOs were working on the same issue with individual refugees, leading to inefficiency and duplication of efforts.

NGO-5 suggests working with schools, addressing teachers' perspectives, and facilitating integration between refugee and local communities. They also stress the importance of working with families to prevent prejudice and negative attitudes towards refugees.

INGO-2 raises the issue of reporting cases where parents may not want to send their children to school, highlighting the responsibility of social workers to ensure legal protection for children regardless of their status or their parent's status in the country.

NGO-3 emphasizes the importance of a flexible and diverse structure for NGOs to effectively address civil society's changing needs. They stress the need for continuous adjustments and growth to assist those in need. NGO-2 highlights the importance of establishing a more active coordination structure regarding job sharing and creating a coordinated approach in child-related areas. While they acknowledge that issues can vary on a case-by-case and province-by-province basis, they emphasize the need for improved coordination among public institutions and NGOs.

This suggests a call for better collaboration and communication among stakeholders in addressing child-related issues.

“I want to express that the needs of civil society organizations in Türkiye are the greatest and constantly changing. For example, when an earthquake occurs, there is a need for earthquake relief, and it is necessary to go to that region immediately. Therefore, it is important to establish a flexible and diverse structure for NGOs with various abilities”. (NGO-3)

“I believe there should be a more active coordination structure in job sharing, establishing a coordinated structure in child-related areas”. (NGO-2)

Within the Syrian or Afghan communities, it's crucial to acknowledge that these communities are not homogeneous; they encompass a diverse spectrum of individuals. It is not possible to make a one-size-fits-all categorization. Among them are highly educated and socially conscious individuals who adhere to more traditional values (NGO-6).

The key themes include the need for coordination and cooperation among NGOs, addressing mindset and value differences, promoting social integration, advocating for equal rights and opportunities, working with schools and families, and maintaining flexibility in responding to evolving needs.

3.1.4. The Future of Refugees in Türkiye

More than 13 years have passed since the first wave of Syrian refugees arrived in Türkiye, followed by other ethnic and religious refugees seeking asylum. This influx of refugees has led to significant demographic, political, social, cultural, and legal changes in Turkish societies. Despite the decade-long efforts of international and local NGOs, there is no clear consensus on how the refugee crisis in Türkiye will unfold. The current stage is marked by extensive debates and politicization of the refugee issue on television and for various political agendas. The concept of "kalecilik geçicilik," where the situation initially began with a guest status and then transitioned to temporary protection, reflects the issue's complexity. It is acknowledged that the return of Syrian refugees is not a simple matter after residing in Türkiye for more than 10 years, and there are political dimensions that will keep this topic relevant for some time. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic and recent earthquakes have redirected refugee programs and policies toward fulfilling basic needs rather than focusing on social cohesion.

“It is difficult to answer your question at this stage definitively. The future of refugees in Türkiye depends on the outcome of the elections and how social tensions, particularly in earthquake-affected regions, will be addressed in the coming days” (INGO-2).

“As a humanitarian aid organization, we continue our work in a rights-based approach, specifically focusing on children's integration issues and

migration matters. Despite being subject to various political debates or being used as a platform or topic, refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers, we, as a rights-based and compassionate institution, continue our work with our agenda” (NGO-2).

“There isn't such a thing as going back because they created a new life here. So maybe in the long term, we will find a way to live together, but in the short term, maybe 2 or 3 years, it will be a subject that politics or the media will exploit” (NGO-5).

As highlighted above by NGO personnel that the next two to three years are expected to bring significant challenges for refugees, as there is a prevailing uncertainty about their potential return. In the context of refugees, we can say that the current situation is characterized by a unsafe environment marked by an increase in negative phenomena such as racism and discrimination for refugees. The intensified presence of these adverse elements raises concerns about the future direction of refugee support and integration process. Unfortunately, there has been a worsening of divisive political rhetoric, with certain political parties advocating for the expulsion of Syrian refugees. One party, in particular, explicitly expresses its intention to send back the entire Syrian population, using this position as a central aspect of its political agenda. The evolving political landscape is a cause for concern, leaving the direction of refugee policies in a state of uncertainty. However, there is no immediate action of policy form the government to repatriate the refugees to any country, but this could be expected under the growing pressure from the public and upcoming general elections in Türkiye.

3.1.5. Impact of covid 19 and Earthquake on NGO Work for Refugee Children

In the last five years of his span, two major incidents have impacted the daily life of the refugee children and reshaped the policies and regulations for refugees in Türkiye. The covid 19 and the recent earthquake in the southern part of Türkiye have changed all the needs and requirements of the refugees. The NGOs not only find it difficult to reassess the needs of the refugees, but also, it has created a big problem of deficiency of resources and funds. The COVID pandemic was seen as more of a global event where

international and national NGOs seemed to be little prepared, but the February earthquake was more of a local event that shocked not only the Turkish community but the whole of the refugee community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the integration of refugee children in multiple ways. The closure of schools and the shift to online learning have created barriers to education, particularly for those with limited access to technology. Social distancing measures have resulted in increased social isolation, affecting their sense of belonging. Mental health challenges have heightened due to limited access to healthcare and support services. Language barriers have been exacerbated, hindering effective communication and integration. Disruptions in support services have made it harder for refugee children to access the assistance they need. Efforts are being made to address these challenges, but comprehensive support and resources are crucial to ensure refugee children's well-being and successful integration during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, most NGOs were working remotely and putting extra attention on their project and their ability to connect with the children remotely. However, many NGOs pointed out that due to the restrictions and safety measures, they could not access indoor areas for 2-3 years, losing contact with the children. This disruption led to some children dropping out of school and others aging out of the target age group, causing disconnection and potential gaps in support and education.

“Generally, COVID-19 has had a significant economic impact on everyone, but especially on refugee children's education, it has affected more. Since during COVID, all education activities were conducted remotely and nobody thought of refugee students, they couldn't understand those lessons for most of the parts. Those lessons broadcast on TV were not understood by refugee children as much as by Turkish-speaking children. So, they couldn't ask questions. Moreover, some refugee children do have a TV or smartphone in the first place (NGO-6)”.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Türkiye adopted remote working models to sustain their operations. Many NGOs conducted thorough assessments of their existing databases to identify clients with

urgent needs and offered information and guidance on vaccination, producing brochures in multiple languages. To ensure accessibility, they established emergency telephone lines for Arabic and Persian speakers. Overall, NGOs successfully maintained their support services and provided uninterrupted assistance during the pandemic.

In addition to the pandemic, the February 2023, earthquake further impacted the work of NGOs with refugee children. Several NGOs deployed their teams to the earthquake-affected area to offer volunteer assistance, shifting their focus towards providing aid and support to the affected communities. Consequently, individuals in other areas requiring assistance were left without support, as the organization redirected its resources and budget towards earthquake relief efforts. The welfare of children was prioritized, recognizing the potential long-term trauma resulting from the incident. Several interviewees offer a thorough examination of the obstacles and tactics utilized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in meeting the educational requirements of refugees, specifically children. They discuss the impact of language and communication barriers on as

“We made considerable efforts to teach the Turkish language to a group of children. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, our teaching ability was severely limited, and their language skills stagnated. During that time, we had minimal contact with the children.”

Many NGOs encountered challenges in fundraising and resource allocation, as donors directed their contributions towards the earthquake victims rather than the organization's regular programs. Their primary focus shifted to providing assistance and support to the earthquake victims. For example, some NGOs reported that their annual clothes distribution had to be postponed as the allocated budget was redirected to support the earthquake victims. This shift in focus and reallocation of resources was necessary to address the immediate needs of the affected population (NGO-1).

“First, COVID-19 and then the earthquake affected the livelihoods of the immigrants very badly. Both harm the livelihood and integration process of refugees.” (NGO-2)

For NGOs, the pandemic necessitated the closure of offices and a transition to online platforms, which posed accessibility challenges for those without resources. In response, NGOs had to provide devices and support to ensure children's participation in online activities. In the aftermath of the earthquake, the focus shifted to addressing immediate and basic needs, such as providing essential items and expanding work in shelter, health, and education.

3.2. ANALYSING THE ROLES OF NGOs IN SOCIAL INTEGRATION WITHIN THE ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

The study uses an ecosystem approach to analyze NGOs' interventions in the various systems of refugee. This theoretical framework helps understand human development and behavior and provides a comprehensive understanding of various interactive systems of refugee. The ecosystem systems approach highlights the importance of understanding the various systems and their interactions to comprehensively grasp human development's complexity. It emphasizes that individuals are not isolated entities but are influenced by multiple layers of environments. Considering these interconnected systems, the approach provides insights into the influences and contexts shaping human behavior, development, and well-being. The ecosystem approach to refugee integration emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of various factors and systems that influence the successful integration of refugees into a host society. It considers the social, cultural, economic, and environmental contexts in which refugees settle and aims to create a supportive and inclusive environment for their long-term integration.

The ecosystem approach to refugee integration involves a multilevel perspective, addressing the individual, family, community, and societal levels. It takes a holistic approach, considering the long-term well-being of refugees across social, economic, health, educational, and psychological aspects. Social support networks play a crucial role in integration, fostering connections and cohesion. Equitable access to resources, such as housing, education, healthcare, and employment, is emphasized. Collaboration among institutions is vital for responsive policies and services. Promoting positive social attitudes and cultural diversity helps create a welcoming environment. Environmental factors are also considered, aiming for sustainable and supportive communities. The ecological approach recognizes that successful refugee integration is

a complex process influenced by various interconnected factors. By considering the broader social, cultural, economic, and environmental contexts, this approach aims to create supportive and inclusive environments that facilitate the integration and well-being of refugees.

In this study, this approach is used as a tool to understand the interplay between NGO support and refugee children's integration processes. As mentioned in the literature review, the ecosystem approach consists of various systems and subsystems, which include the Microsystem, Mezzo system, Exosystem, Macrosystem and Chronosystem. Each system includes various subsystems of individuals, and these systems sometimes overlap. The study highlights the role of NGOs in the various ecosystem of refugees in general and refugee children in particular.

3.2.1. Role of NGOs in the Microsystem of Refugee

Within the scope of this study, the microsystem refers to the immediate and direct environments where refugee children actively engage with their families, school, peer groups, and neighborhood. These close interactions significantly shape refugee children's lives, behavior, and overall development. Through interviews, NGOs have shared various experiences and incidents that highlight the impact of these immediate systems on the social integration of refugee children within the host society. Both positive and negative effects are observed.

Many NGOs have brought attention to refugees, often prioritizing their children's involvement in income-generating activities instead of sending them to school, which can be attributed to their challenging economic circumstances. However, the government has implemented programs and policies to address this concern. Refugee children are not only provided with free education but are also supported through conditional cash transfer schemes, incentivizing their attendance in school. Despite some parents' reluctance to send their children to school, many NGOs actively ensure that these children are registered and enrolled.

“This is what saddens me the most. The school environment, teachers, and other elements are crucial for refugee children. It is the starting point of the

integration process and, undoubtedly, the most important aspect because refugee children attend school and see the teachers, classmates, and principal. Therefore, increasing awareness of his environment is essential".
(NGO-3)

Under their various projects, NGOs assist in registering and monitoring the children's activities and learning progress. Additionally, NGOs provide extra language lessons through their dedicated volunteers to support the children's language acquisition. According to some NGOs, it is crucial to understand the difficulties faced by refugee children in schools. Once there is any issue in the schools, the NGOs must interact with the teachers and try to resolve it. This could have a significant impact on the children and the school.

"After enrolling our children in school, we have seen significant benefits. We visit the children at school at regular intervals, for example. If we notice a problem that a child is facing at school, one of our team members immediately goes to the school to understand the issue better or assist in the other process. Sometimes we help them express themselves better because they face language barriers" (NGO-3).

3.2.2. Role of NGOs in Mezzo System of Refugee

Generally, the term Mezzo system refers to the connections and interactions between different microsystems. This indicated that changes or events in one microsystem could impact other microsystems. For example, a child's experiences at home can influence their experiences at school, and vice versa. Our studies found that a positive relationship between refugee children's various microsystems, such as family school or the neighborhood, is essential and helps in the constructive development of the refugee children. NGOs also recognize and commend the significant role of neighborhood and community support in teaching local languages to refugees and refugee children. The support and assistance provided by the local community plays a vital role in facilitating language acquisition and integration. The interactions and relationships established with neighbors and community members create opportunities for language learning through informal conversations and cultural exchange.

“Surprisingly, a child visited us one day and spoke Turkish fluently. We were amazed because he hadn't even attended school. It turned out that he had learned the language from a Turkish neighbor whom he had spent time with throughout the pandemic year” (NGO-5).

The statement draws attention to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on formal language education efforts. Despite limitations, the resilience of a child who learned Turkish through informal interactions with a neighbor highlights the importance of community connections during challenging circumstances. These organic interactions foster a sense of belonging and facilitate the integration process for refugees and their children. NGOs appreciate and encourage such community support as it greatly contributes to refugees' language development and overall well-being in their new environment. Several other NGO Acting as intermediaries, NGOs advocate for parents and utilize their understanding of the school system and language to facilitate a supportive educational environment, emphasizing the role of clear communication in preventing misunderstandings.

“We engage in various activities to promote more interaction between families and teachers. For example, we organize parent meetings, seminars, and conferences. During these events, we inform families about school policies, student development, and the education process. We also offer guidance materials to support parents in their child's education at home” (INGO-4).

“Establishing a strong connection between students, families, and schools is important. As I mentioned, we communicate with the school on behalf of parents. This could be a better option because we know more about the school system and language. Additionally, language is important for building a strong relationship with teachers. The language you use to communicate with the teacher can determine if there will be any misunderstandings” (NGO-1).

“We organize school visits with parents to allow them to see the school environment and directly communicate with teachers. A family member's

participation in these visits, such as the student's mother, can help overcome language and cultural barriers. This way, we encourage families to be more involved in the school process and actively participate in their child's education” (NGO-3).

This method, especially when it involves a family member, seeks to address language and cultural obstacles, promoting increased involvement of families in educational processes and fostering greater engagement in a child's schooling. Collectively, these narratives reflect a comprehensive approach to addressing the educational challenges faced by displaced individuals, highlighting the importance of informal learning, community connections, effective communication, and proactive engagement to ensure a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

3.2.3. Role of NGOs in Exo System of Refugee

The Exosystem refers to external factors that indirectly influence the lives of refugee children. These factors include local municipalities, the media, ideologies, the local culture, and the host community. While these factors may not have direct contact with refugee children, they substantially impact the other microsystems surrounding them. These external factors can shape the conditions, resources, and opportunities available to refugee children, ultimately affecting their overall well-being and integration.

From this perspective, numerous NGOs have highlighted the positive and negative roles of local municipalities, media, and the host community. They have also emphasized the influence of other NGOs on the refugee community as a whole, including refugee children. Unfortunately, there have been instances where refugees have been unjustly blamed for economic crises, and politicians have exploited the refugee issue for personal gain. NGOs have shared incidents of violence between the host society and Syrian refugees, indicating tensions and conflicts.

Moreover, misinformation about the refugee community among the host society has exacerbated prejudice and bias. Tragically, there have been incidents where refugee communities have been attacked by the host society, resulting in serious conflicts.

These examples underscore the need for accurate information and increased understanding to foster harmonious relations between refugees and the host community.

“Three years ago, a program was implemented to support refugee children's access to education by providing a bus service exclusively. This led to a conflict because the locals expressed frustration, feeling they were also experiencing poverty but not receiving the same benefits...”

This kind of situation further increases discrimination and hate speech. To promote social integration, it is crucial to recognize that everyone is in the same boat. Crises such as poverty affect all individuals, regardless of their status as refugees or local community members. Understanding this shared impact can help foster a more inclusive and harmonious society” (NGO-5).

“There is a divergence in opinions regarding prioritization of assistance creates tensions and conflicts among different groups within society. Helping Syrians is sometimes met with negative reactions, further exacerbating the challenging environment” (INGO-2).

Many NGOs believe that discrimination and bias against refugee children exist in certain schools, where they are often perceived as burdens due to language difficulties. However, these issues are being addressed through direct engagement with these schools and the training of teachers. NGOs recognize the importance of sensitizing educators to refugee children's unique challenges and equipping them with the necessary tools and strategies to support their integration and language development. By working directly with schools and providing targeted training, NGOs aim to overcome these barriers and create inclusive learning environments for refugee children.

“When a Syrian child starts attending a private school, they are usually placed in the back rows. They sit far away, in a corner, away from everyone. However, our efforts have changed this situation”. We have made a difference for security in a school environment” (NGO-1).

3.2.4. Role of NGOs in the Macrosystem of Refugee

This broader ecosystem level represents the macrosystem and encompasses societal and cultural norms, political ideologies, local laws, and policies. It influences individuals on a larger scale, shaping their beliefs, values, and opportunities. The macrosystem provides the overarching framework within which the microsystem operates and can significantly impact individuals' development, behavior, and integration, including that of refugee populations. As the school and the children” (NGO-3).

“Let's say, God forbid, a problem arises at school. The child himself cannot handle it. He also cannot tell his parents even though He tells his parents. They may be unable to go to the school to discuss this issue. This is because of the language barrier. In such times, our involvement helps the school take the students more seriously, and the same goes for school”.

The macrosystem included a national framework and policies for the refugees; it ultimately became extremely significant for integrating the refugee children. A more inclusive and favorable policy will support the refugees in local integration, whereas unfavorable policies and a lack of supportive measures can create obstacles and impede the integration of refugees in the country. Hence, many NGOs advocated for inclusive and comprehensive refugee policies in Türkiye.

It is observed that NGOs were not very happy with the current refugee laws and regulations, which refer to the majority of the refugees (Syrians) as people under temporary protection. This is an area where NGOs cannot do much except advocate for more sustainable and comprehensive laws. NGOs seem powerless when it comes to dealing with government laws and regulations.

“Unfortunately, the current atmosphere in our country lacks a positive sentiment towards this issue.... Overcoming these challenges requires fostering understanding, empathy, and dialogue within society to bridge the gap between different communities. Promoting a more inclusive and harmonious environment where assistance to refugees is seen as a

compassionate and necessary endeavor for the collective well-being of all individuals, regardless of their background, is essential” (INGO-4).

“Unfortunately, the only statement of some political parties has been to send Syrians away. One of them directly says he will send all of them away. I'm afraid I don't know where we are heading politically”. (NGO-3)

Many NGOs agree that integrating refugees, especially children residing in Türkiye for over a decade, is not as challenging as it may seem. Specifically, some NGOs argue that integration is relatively easier regarding Syrian children because many of these refugee children were born here and have never experienced their country of origin. These children are often immersed in the host community, sharing a common Turkish identity, and fostering a sense of belonging. This shared cultural background can facilitate their integration and create a smoother transition into the host society.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have reported that differentiating between Syrian and Turkish children in our current community has become increasingly difficult due to their notable physical similarities. This visual resemblance is seen as a potential mitigating factor against superficial discrimination towards Syrian children. However, it is recognized that issues related to belonging may arise, particularly for those who lack citizenship. The possibility of forced repatriation to Syria is deemed unlikely, contingent upon the absence of drastic decisions and the apparent lack of interest from the government in considering such options, regardless of the specified time frame, whether it be 5 or 7 years. Anticipating a low probability of return, the discussion emphasizes the potential for rapid integration once citizenship matters are resolved. It is argued that, upon obtaining citizenship, these affected children are well positioned for effective integration into society as they grow older.

3.2.5. Role of NGOs in Chronosystem of Refugee

Chronosystem is one of the important components of the ecological system approach. It considers the dimension of time and recognizes that various life transitions, historical events, and societal changes can significantly influence individuals' development. These changes can include personal events such as migration, family dynamics, educational

transitions, and broader historical and societal factors like economic, policy, and cultural shifts. The chronosystem highlights the dynamic nature of human development and the need to understand how these temporal factors shape individuals and their environments.

In the refugee children's contexts, the chronosystem includes their migration journey, the covid 19 pandemic, and the recent earthquake in Türkiye. These events have not only revived the traumatic experiences that refugees were facing back home but also have had a major impact on the health and minds of the refugees and refugee children. Apart from the loss of loved ones in these two major events, the economic impact of these events also needs to be considered, as the pandemic and earthquake have made many refugees jobless. Many daily-wage refugees find it hard to survive in this difficult situation.

NGOs stated that the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent earthquake profoundly affected immigrants' livelihoods and the integration process. These events caused disruptions in NGO operations, leading to the temporary closure of offices and a shift to online platforms for program delivery. This presented challenges, especially for those lacking the necessary online participation resources. Many NGOs had to find ways to support families by providing devices and ensuring their access to online activities. However, the transition to virtual programs could not fully replicate the in-person experience provided in centers. The long-term impact of these challenges and how social tensions in earthquake-affected regions will be addressed in the future remain uncertain.

“First the COVID and then the earthquake affected the livelihoods of the immigrants very badly. Therefore, we can say that harm the integration process”. (NGO-2)

“The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to close our offices and move our programs online, presenting access challenges for those without resources. We provided devices and support, but the virtual experience couldn't fully replicate in-person programs.” (NGO-4)

During interviews, numerous NGOs asserted that they had completed providing the essential facilities and support to refugees before the occurrence of both the COVID-19 pandemic and the earthquake. Their initial plans involved transitioning towards integration or social cohesion programs. However, these two significant incidents disrupted their intended course, compelling them to revert to their previous strategies of offering fundamental support such as food, shelter, and healthcare to the affected refugees.

3.3. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

3.3.1. Navigating the multiple and unclear interpretations of integration in Türkiye.

Firstly, understanding various refugee terms is a contentious subject for the researchers as there is no universally accepted definition of refugee and refugee-related concepts such as social integration. Furthermore, the absence of any comprehensive and universal framework for refugee studies has made this issue more difficult to analyze and often viewed as a blend of harmonization and cohesion. When we see the refugee situation in Türkiye, it's important to note that refugees didn't start arriving in 2013 or with the 2011 Syrian crisis; Türkiye has historically been a country that hosted refugees. During the Cold War, most refugees came from the Soviet bloc, and later, due to events like the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Gulf War, the number of refugees from outside Europe increased significantly. Türkiye had no specific laws regarding refugees until 1995. While it is a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention, it had geographical limitations, meaning it only applied the convention's obligations to refugees from Europe, granting them status and recognizing their rights. It did not extend these rights to refugees from outside Europe, although Türkiye still receives refugees from outside Europe, including Bulgarians of Turkish descent, refugees from the Yugoslav wars, and those from conflicts like the Kosovo conflict. For instance, European countries also include Azerbaijan and Armenia as part of the "Coast of Europe." Therefore, even today, with Law No. 66458 approved by the Turkish Parliament in 2013, the geographical limitation continues to apply. This means that refugees outside Europe cannot obtain refugee status in Türkiye. Article 61 of FLIP mainly applies to those from Europe and has had minimal impact in practice.

Furthermore, Article 91 of LFIP states that a mass influx at borders can be managed through temporary protection regulations. Therefore, under Turkish law, integration is impossible for all refugees, not just Syrians. Even if they meet the conditions that make them refugees, they cannot stay in Türkiye permanently. They will either voluntarily return to their countries if conditions improve or be resettled in a third country by the UNHCR, which acts as their agent. Therefore, it seems there is no integration process in Türkiye's current system for asylum applicants from Europe and non-European countries as understood by international law.

Instead, "harmonization" and "cohesion" bypass this issue. Moreover, during the 1960s, several classical migration countries, including the United Kingdom, began to adopt integration policies that promoted a more multicultural society or embraced ethnic pluralism, allowing different groups to coexist while retaining their distinct cultural identities. This shift in policy direction reflected a growing awareness of the cultural and social aspects of integration alongside economic considerations. As Saggar (1995) argued, UK policymakers demonstrated a persistent concern for integration's cultural and social implications, viewing harmony and disharmony as critical factors. He contended that, as a civilized liberal democracy, the UK placed significant emphasis on the concept of harmony, emphasizing that it was a shared concern among all members of society. This approach underscored the nation's commitment to fostering a harmonious and inclusive society while respecting diverse cultural identities.

Additionally, in the early studies of Ager & Strange (2008) on the concept of integration study at two cities in the United Kingdom, Pollokshaws and Islington, the local understanding of integration is heavily influenced by the expectation of relationships between groups within the area. At the most basic level, absence of conflict and tolerance. Different groups were considered to reflect integration. This means that harmonizing two communities is considered the basis of social integration. However, it is also noted that. Both refugees and the host societies expect beyond this, and many additional factors are important for successful integration.

In the Turkish case, it should be stated that according to Turkish legislation, the local governments cannot develop an integration policy. Therefore, it is an issue that has to be designed and developed at the national level as a kind of long-term strategy that requires

a lot of public institutions' engagement in the first place (Lowndes & Polat, 2020; Memişoğlu & Yavçan, 2020). Afterward, it could be expected that the national integration policy to leave a maneuvering area for local governments to adapt and customize the national policy for better governance of migration-related diversity and inclusion of foreigners. Therefore, the inclusion of local government in policy development at the national level and the flexibility of policy transformation to local should be ensured in implementing policies. It is also significant to note that integration as a common goal of migration policies has some alternative terms, such as inclusion, incorporation, adaptation, accommodation, and cohesion (Unutulmaz, 2012, p. 139). In the Turkish context, the term harmonization is used as another alternative. So, through the term harmonization, the Turkish legislation defines the integration process in a way that immigrant groups may preserve their cultural identity but are expected to live in harmony with the host society (Hoffmann & Samuk, 2016, p. 10). Therefore, the NGOs had to develop new concepts to address this issue. Conditional refugees and secondary protection status were introduced to address this limitation. Secondary protection covers individuals who do not meet the more individualized definition of the 1951 Geneva Convention but have fled due to other reasons such as war, civil war, conflict, rebellion, or occupation. However, this status was rarely used until the conflict in Ukraine. These definitions aside, there's also the refugee concept under Article 61, which mainly applies to those from Europe and has had minimal impact in practice.

Furthermore, Article 91 states that if there is a mass influx at our borders, it can be managed through temporary protection regulations. Therefore, under Turkish law, integration is impossible for all refugees, not just Syrians. Even if they meet the conditions that make them refugees, they cannot stay in Türkiye permanently. They will either voluntarily return to their countries if conditions improve or be resettled in a third country by the UNHCR, which acts as their agent. The concept of integration is empty in Türkiye because there is no legal basis for it.

Integration is fundamentally considered a two-way process wherein refugees and the host society must collaborate to assist each other. The first and foremost problem that both the community experiences is the language issue. Language plays a pivotal role in the integration process. This is particularly crucial for receiving communities, especially those responsible for providing essential services like healthcare. The research has

revealed that numerous NGOs lack fluent volunteers in refugees' languages. Consequently, they rely on volunteers or individuals from the refugee communities to carry out these tasks.

Furthermore, some prominent scholars in the field of social integration have emphasized similar factors. For instance, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) underscore the importance of language proficiency and economic opportunities in integrating immigrant populations. Additionally, Alba and Nee (2003) have argued that the successful integration of newcomers depends on their ability to secure stable employment, access to education, and participation in social networks within the host society. Therefore, addressing the language barrier, enabling refugees to express themselves effectively, facilitating their socialization, and tackling the employment issue, which not only restores their self-esteem but also provides access to the labor market, emerge as key focal points in the broader discourse on social integration.

Ceyhan and Koçbaş (2011), found that migrant students exhibited lower academic achievements in comparison to their non migrant peers. The primary reason was migration itself. Students often struggle to comprehend their coursework due to linguistic barriers. Additionally, the disconnection between teachers and students. Creates more cultural barriers. Bing from diverse places and culture. Further contributed to their challenges, leading to increased introversion among these students. (Bourgonje 2010) emphasizes the importance of understanding what frightens migrant children to provide them with the necessary psychological assistance to overcome trauma (Birman, n.d.). Recovery from stress disorders following trauma can take many years, with signs persisting in migrant children even a decade later (Hos 2012). To help these children, it is crucial for teachers and families to offer their support. To identify emotional and psychological issues in children, educators and families should be attentive to their behaviors (Ayoub 2014). While teachers may not be trained experts in providing psychological assistance, it remains vital to ensure that children who have experienced trauma receive expert psychological help (Bourgonje 2010).

In this study, the NGO personnel shared similar views regarding integration. For them, social integration is viewed as a mutual and interactive process between the host community and refugees. This process is characterized by bidirectional acculturation

and interaction, and it avoids the notion of assimilation, which is in line with the theoretical frameworks outlined by scholars such as Etzinger (1990), Trimble (2002), Dwyer (2009), and Platts-Fawler and Robinson (2015). Participants underscored the importance of fostering cohesion and harmony for preserving cultural diversity. But as of now, no serious programs or legal instrument for integrating refugee children in the Turkish context exists.

The context of the discussion primarily revolved around the current state of the social integration process in Türkiye, with a significant focus on the roles played by governmental entities and NGOs. Participants shared both positive and negative observations regarding this process. On a positive note, they highlighted the valuable contributions of social and cultural activities, the presence of community centers, and the provision of social services by state organizations and NGOs. Conversely, concerns were raised about obstacles to integration, particularly the language barrier and employment challenges, which were seen as impediments that hindered the integration process and contributed to the deepening of prejudices between communities. This aligns with Berry's (1997, 2011) assertion that successful social integration necessitates the establishment of prerequisites such as reduced levels of prejudice, widespread acceptance, and avoidance of categorizing individuals based on stereotypes. The study revealed a divergence in perspectives regarding the role of NGOs in the country's social integration process. On the one hand, there was recognition of the positive contributions made by NGOs, including their involvement in various projects, programs, social activities, and cultural events held within community centers. Conversely, concerns were raised about the limitations faced by NGOs, primarily stemming from challenges related to communication and coordination with governmental organizations and issues surrounding their institutionalization. Notably, it was pointed out that governmental bodies and international funding sources often prefer to collaborate with larger NGOs, which can marginalize smaller local NGOs and hinder their ability to formalize their operations. These issues have further complicated effective coordination among NGOs, exacerbated by a lack of clarity regarding their focus areas. Bülent & Yasin (2018) also share the observation that to deal with the adaptation problem among Syrian children, and the government needs to work with the I/NGOs to decrease discriminatory practices among Turkish children and create more venues for Arabic language education and

training (p.10). There is also a need for cooperation among NGOs by providing information and assisting each other to prevent overlapping and reach out to more refugees (Bülent & Yasin, 2018): p.11). It was noted that this participation is often impeded by specific factors that serve as hindrances to effective integration. In this regard, the state's responsibility lies in removing these barriers to facilitate integration. Among the barriers identified, language proficiency, cultural familiarity, and concerns related to safety and security were recognized as significant impediments. (Hale, 2000: 276)

3.3.2. Gender Dynamics and Refugee Children Integration.

The term Gender, often misunderstood with the term sex, is one of the prominent factors in refugee integration in the world. Gender is considered the socially constructed identity of individuals based on their perceived sex. In contrast, sex is referred to the biological and physical differences between males and females. Gender is not fixed or inherent but constructed and performed through socialization. It encompasses various identities and expressions beyond the binary categories of male and female, including non-binary, genderqueer, transgender, and gender non-conforming individuals. Understanding gender is essential for addressing equality, discrimination, and social justice issues. It involves recognizing and challenging gender stereotypes, promoting gender equality, and ensuring all individuals have equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender identity or expression.

Gender in conflict refers to how gender dynamics and inequalities are shaped by armed conflict or the aftermath of the conflict. It recognizes that conflict affects men, women, boys, and girls differently due to their gender roles, expectations, and vulnerabilities. Here are some key aspects related to gender conflict:

- A. Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Conflict often leads to an increase in various forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, rape, forced prostitution, trafficking, and early or forced marriages. Women and girls are disproportionately affected, but men and boys can also be victims of sexual violence.

- B. **Displacement and Refugees:** Conflict displaces millions of people, and refugees and internally displaced persons face specific gender-related challenges. Women and girls may face increased risks of sexual violence, exploitation, and trafficking, while men and boys may face risks related to recruitment by armed groups or insecurity in camps.
- C. **Access to Services:** Conflict disrupts infrastructure and services, including healthcare, education, and sanitation. Women and girls may face challenges accessing essential services due to cultural, social, or physical barriers, impacting their well-being and rights.
- D. **Gender Roles and Power Dynamics:** Conflict can disrupt traditional gender and power dynamics, creating new opportunities and challenges. Women may take on new roles and responsibilities, including participating in peacebuilding and decision-making processes, while traditional gender norms may be reinforced or challenged in different contexts.
- E. **Women's Participation in Peace Processes:** Including women in peace processes is crucial for sustainable peace. NGOs and international organizations advocate for the meaningful participation of women in all stages of conflict resolution, peace negotiations, and post-conflict reconstruction to ensure gender perspectives are considered and women's rights are protected.
- F. **Gender-Responsive Approaches:** NGOs and humanitarian organizations promote gender-responsive programming, which addresses the specific needs and priorities of different genders, challenges gender inequalities, and promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in conflict-affected settings.
- G. **Engaging Men and Boys:** Recognizing the importance of engaging men and boys in addressing gender inequality and promoting positive masculinity is significant. Some initiatives focus on working with men and boys to challenge harmful gender norms, prevent violence, and promote gender equality.

Addressing gender in conflict requires a comprehensive approach integrating gender perspectives into humanitarian responses, peacebuilding efforts, and long-term

development plans. It involves promoting women's rights, combating gender-based violence, ensuring equal access to services, and fostering gender equality and women's empowerment in conflict-affected contexts.

The study suggests that the gender of the refugee plays a pivotal role in the social integration of these children. Gender stereotypes and biases are affecting the social integration of refugee children. The gender norms within the refugee community marginalize women and girls from getting equal social integration opportunities. In other words, the gender dynamics intersect with the power dynamics and give privilege to the male refugees. The males have more access to social networks and opportunities, whereas the females are indoors. In some cases, male refugees are also discriminated against based on gender.

International and local NGOs are working to dismantle discriminatory practices and policies based on the gender of the refugees. NGOs also advocate for equal opportunities for male and female refugees. And it also talks about the inclusion of refugees in mainstream societies without any gender-based discrimination. NGOs contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable society where social integration is based on equal opportunities and respect for individuals of all gender identities.

However, gender cannot be understood in isolation but must be considered with intersecting identities such as race, class, sexual orientation, and disabilities. Different combinations of identities can lead to the unique experience of social integration and magnify the effects of social exclusion.

In general, schools serve as a crucial point of contact for refugee children and often for their parents as well. They play a significant role in fostering relationships with the local host communities, which can facilitate the process of integration. Additionally, schools and education impart knowledge and skills that directly or indirectly support future employment opportunities, enabling refugee children to become more actively engaged members of the host society. However, the educational experiences of refugee children are often affected by inadequate support for learning the language of the host society, as well as feelings of isolation and exclusion, including instances of bullying, racism, and difficulties in

forming friendships. Ager and Strange (2008) noted that while some schools offer specialized language units to meet the needs of refugee children, such provisions may limit opportunities for interaction with local peers.

3.3.3. Challenges confronting NGOs in refugee integration.

Education is considered one of the most important and first components for integration. The knowledge of the local language not only made the life of refugees easy, but it increased the integration process. Scholars such as Aydin and Kaya (2017) mentioned that Türkiye has no experience or program for educating migrants or refugees, which is not completely correct. The Turkish government and UNICEF provide various programs and schemes for educating refugees in government schools. Dorman (2014) also stated that Education remains the most serious problem for refugees in Türkiye. It is observed that most Syrian refugees in Türkiye live outside official refugee camps and school age. People outside those camps have a low rate of school attendance. Bülent and Yasin (2018) also share that to deal with the adaptation problem among Syrian children, and the government needs to work with the I/NGOs to decrease discriminatory practices among Turkish children and create more venues for Arabic language education and training (p.10).

The COVID-19 pandemic and the earthquake significantly disrupted many organizations' active projects, leading to a disconnection with the children they were working with and a shift in focus toward providing aid to the earthquake-affected communities. Interestingly, some NGOs emphasize that challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic and earthquakes allow people to set aside their prejudices and biases. During these crises, people have been seen to come together and unite, irrespective of their differences, to support and help one another. The shared experience of facing a natural disaster or a global health crisis creates a common ground that transcends societal divisions and allows people to prioritize mutual aid and cooperation. In these moments, people have shown a remarkable ability to overcome prejudice and biases, coming together in solidarity and compassion. Adversities become a symbol of unity and integrity as people unite to assist those directly affected by the crisis and COVID-19 and earthquake victims in general. This collective effort demonstrates a

remarkable display of solidarity, where individuals overlook their differences and work together to provide aid and support to those in need.

Apart from the professional challenges NGOs face, there are also personal challenges experienced by their staff when working with refugees and refugee children. The large number of refugees and limited resources create overwhelming situations where refugees may suffer. Political and economic factors, diverse backgrounds of refugees, language barriers, refugee ghettoization, insufficient funding, and uncertain legal status all contribute to mismanagement and hinder the integration process. These challenges underscore the intricate and multifaceted nature of social integration for refugees, presenting difficulties for NGOs to address them effectively. Efforts are needed to address these challenges and ensure that refugees have equal access to resources and support.

3.3.4. Future of Refugees

The future of refugees in Türkiye remains uncertain, and it is not easy to provide a definitive answer at this stage. The upcoming elections and the social tensions resulting from recent events, such as the earthquake, will significantly shape the situation. Organizations emphasize a neutral and impartial approach to providing assistance and advocating for the rights of refugees. Specific policies and activities after the elections are yet to be determined, but principles of protection, sustainability, and impartiality will guide their work. The issue of refugee status in Türkiye and its impact on social cohesion and integration also remains critical.

Overall, the long-term future of refugees in Türkiye is complex, and political dimensions will continue to be a part of the debate. It is expected that the next few years will be challenging, with refugees facing economic and social difficulties and potentially being exploited for political or media purposes. Active advocacy efforts may be necessary to address these issues in the future.

Lastly, the participants of this study offered recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of NGOs in the social integration process. Two significant suggestions were put forward: firstly, the importance of improving coordination among various

stakeholders, and secondly, the need to enhance the role of NGOs, particularly in the delivery of Turkish language courses and the facilitation of employment opportunities for refugees. Addressing these aspects can significantly increase the impact of NGOs on the social integration process. This complex interplay between the state and civil society has been a recurring theme in research and scholarship. Prior studies by scholars such as Newton (2001), Richardson and Shields (2005), Nash, Wong, and Trlin (2006), Nawyn (2010), and Baur and Palazzo (2011) have consistently highlighted the pivotal role that local NGOs can play in meeting the needs of immigrants and refugees when they collaborate effectively with governmental organizations. These scholars argue that achieving successful social integration necessitates multidimensional coordination, as neither the government nor NGOs can independently foster social bonds between refugees and host community members. Consequently, NGOs must prioritize organizing more social and cultural activities that bring together refugees and host community members, providing opportunities for social interaction and integration. The role of NGOs and INGOs gained much more importance due to the wider gaps between the government and refugees.

Moreover, the government cannot make any comprehensive policies or programs to address the issues of refugees coming from diverse backgrounds. In this scenario, the role of NGOs becomes pivotal. The integration of refugees and non-refugees also depends upon the participation of people from different groups in various activities. Including sports, college classes, religious worship, community groups, and political activities. The underlying principle behind such views appeared to be that if the community is integrated, then the people will participate equally and without prejudice in the activities and pastimes available to it (Ager & Strang, 2010: p180)

Refugee integration is not only one of the key components of 2030 sustainable development programs but also a safe, orderly, and regular migration is the major component of most policy-making bodies.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1. CONCLUSION

“One day, I could also be exposed to a war, who knows? Someday, due to a sudden event, I could face things just like Syrian” (NGO-5)

The quote mentioned above highlights the empathy and personal realization that many individuals working in NGOs have regarding the suffering of the refugees. It acknowledges the unpredictable nature of life and how anyone, including those working in NGOs, could face the same challenges and hardships as refugees. It is also acknowledged that no one is immune to the possibility of being exposed to conflict or crisis, which can change their life at any time. Interestingly this sentiment was expressed by one of the respondents from the local NGO which on one hand shows caring and concerns of Turkish society and on the other hand it emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing refugees' challenges and the need for collective efforts to create a more compassionate and inclusive society.

Moreover, in this study it is emphasized that the social integration of refugee children is a complex and multifaceted process influenced by various factors such as gender dynamics, intersecting identities, organizational challenges, and external events like the COVID-19 pandemic and earthquakes. Throughout this study, several key findings and recommendations have emerged, shedding light on the crucial role of NGOs in facilitating effective refugee integration. By summarizing the key points and insights gathered, we can better understand the significance of addressing these challenges and working towards creating inclusive and supportive communities for refugees.

It is also pointed out that the gender of refugee children plays a crucial role in their social integration. Gender stereotypes and biases within the refugee community contribute to the marginalization of women and girls, hindering their equal opportunity for social integration. This intersection of gender dynamics with power dynamics often privileges male refugees, granting them greater access to social networks and

opportunities, while females are confined indoors. In some cases, male refugees face prejudice and discrimination based on gender.

To combat these discriminatory practices, international and local NGOs actively advocate for equal opportunities for male and female refugees and promote their inclusion in mainstream societies without gender-based discrimination. These efforts aim to create a more inclusive and equitable society where social integration is based on equal opportunities and respect for individuals of all gender identities. However, it is essential to recognize that gender cannot be understood in isolation but must be considered alongside intersecting identities such as race, class, sexual orientation, and disabilities. Different combinations of these identities can lead to unique social integration experiences and amplify the effects of social exclusion.

Besides NGOs' professional challenges, their staff also encounter personal challenges while working with refugees and refugee children. The high number of refugees coupled with limited resources creates overwhelming situations where refugees may suffer. Political and economic factors, diverse backgrounds of refugees, language barriers, refugee ghettoization, insufficient funding, and uncertain legal status all contribute to mismanagement and hinder the integration process. These challenges highlight the intricate and multifaceted nature of social integration for refugees, posing difficulties for NGOs to address them effectively. Efforts are needed to tackle these challenges and ensure that refugees have equal access to resources and support.

Various factors influence social integration, including time, space, and structural perspectives. International and national organizations exhibit different attitudes and approaches to social integration. International organizations often adopt a more universal approach, emphasizing justice and equality, while local organizations take a proactive and dynamic approach tailored to the local realities and subjectivities. However, some subjectivities are influenced by unfair and discriminatory political realities, making it challenging to maintain an intervention in isolation from grounded politics and perceptions. Within the scope of integration, there is an ongoing battle between assimilation and maintaining cultural distinctiveness. Many organizations strive to balance assimilation and preserving cultural identity, adopting a "salad bowl" model where people can unite while maintaining their distinctiveness.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the earthquake significantly disrupted the ongoing projects of NGOs, resulting in a disconnection with the children they were working with and a shift in focus towards providing aid to the earthquake-affected communities. Interestingly, challenging times like these have shown that people can set aside prejudices and biases. During crises, individuals have united and supported one another, transcending societal divisions, and prioritizing mutual aid and cooperation. Adversities become a symbol of unity and integrity as people come together to assist those directly affected by the crisis. This collective effort demonstrates a remarkable display of solidarity where individuals overlook their differences and work together to provide aid and support to those in need.

The future of refugees in Türkiye remains uncertain, and it is challenging to provide a definitive answer at this stage. The upcoming elections and social tensions resulting from recent events, such as the earthquake, will significantly shape the situation. Organizations emphasize a neutral and impartial approach to providing assistance and advocating for the rights of refugees. Specific policies and activities following the elections are yet to be determined, but principles of protection, sustainability, and impartiality will guide their work. The issue of refugee status in Türkiye and its impact on social cohesion and integration also remains critical.

Overall, the long-term future of refugees in Türkiye is complex, and political dimensions will continue to be a part of the debate. The next few years are expected to be challenging, with refugees facing economic and social difficulties and the potential for exploitation for political or media purposes. Active advocacy efforts may be necessary to address these issues in the future.

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations can be made for NGOs' better management and work in refugee integration. By implementing these recommendations, NGOs can enhance their management practices and effectively contribute to integrating refugees, ultimately creating more inclusive and supportive communities.

4.2.1. A Comprehensive Policy for Social Integration

Acknowledging that many refugees will be permanently settled in Türkiye to promote social integration is extremely important. It needs time to develop a permanent solution and social integration policy involving various stakeholders, including government, international and local NGOs, and people from host and refugee communities such as adults, older people, and children is critical.

This solution could be prioritized on the United Nations's three dimensions of a comprehensive approach to migration: resettlement, voluntary repatriation, and local Harmonization. Addressing these dimensions makes it possible to create a more inclusive and supportive environment that fosters the integration of refugees and migrants into the host society. This entails providing opportunities for meaningful engagement, promoting intercultural understanding, and ensuring access to essential services and resources for all individuals, regardless of their age or background. Social integration can be achieved through such a holistic and sustainable approach, leading to a more inclusive and harmonious society for everyone involved.

In addition to the national asylum policies and the absence of a cohesive national integration strategy, it's essential to recognize that the political landscape has also been influenced by the instrumentalization of refugees in Türkiye's foreign policy, particularly in its dealings with the European Union (EU). This instrumentalization implies that refugees have been used as a potential political leverage against the EU. An illustrative instance of this leverage emerged in early 2020 when the Turkish government opened its borders to Europe. This move can be seen as a manifestation of ad-hoc policymaking facilitated by the government's flexibility. Furthermore, this approach appears to prioritize short-term objectives over a long-term strategy.

In parallel with domestic politics, ad-hoc decision-making also seems to extend to foreign policy. Opening the borders was a tactical move to attain immediate goals, with less consideration for the potential long-term consequences. Subsequently, this border opening initiative was terminated once the desired outcomes were achieved, such as securing an additional 6 billion Euros through a new agreement with the EU. This pattern suggests a willingness to make situation-specific interventions to address

immediate needs or policy objectives rather than pursuing planned and sustainable integration policies.

Furthermore, the absence of a well-defined refugee distribution mechanism created a situation where refugees predominantly chose to reside in major urban centers, with more job opportunities and relatively higher living standards. However, the central government introduced a dilution policy in February 2022, particularly in response to the events in Ankara in August 2021, aiming to counter the concentration of refugees in specific neighborhoods. This practical approach can be seen as another example of ad-hoc interventions tailored to specific circumstances rather than part of a comprehensive and enduring integration strategy.

4.2.2. Adherence to Humanitarian Standards

Ensuring adherence to humanitarian standards is crucial for effective and accountable humanitarian aid. To promote this, it is recommended to establish a written document at the national level in Türkiye that outlines and enforces basic standards for organizations involved in humanitarian aid, such as the Core Humanitarian Aid Standard. This document would guide NGOs and other actors, providing clear operational expectations and benchmarks. Additionally, efforts should be made to improve compliance and measurement of adherence to these standards. Regular monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms should be implemented to assess how organizations meet the established standards. By enhancing compliance and measurement processes, humanitarian interventions' overall quality and effectiveness can be improved, ensuring that assistance reaches those in need consistently and accountably.

4.2.3. Financial Sustainability and Independence to the NGOs

Addressing the decreased resources and funding available to them is crucial to ensure the sustainability of NGOs and their vital work. The gradual reduction in financial resources can have detrimental effects, leading to the closure of NGOs and the discontinuation of their activities. To counter this, efforts should be made to explore alternative funding sources, foster partnerships with donors, and advocate for increased financial support from relevant stakeholders. Additionally, it is essential to strengthen

NGOs, especially those working for refugees, by obtaining public support. This can be achieved by raising awareness about the important role of NGOs in addressing social issues, advocating for their recognition and support, and promoting public engagement through donations, volunteerism, and other forms of involvement. Furthermore, there is a need to prioritize capacity building for NGOs, both financially and institutionally, to enhance their organizational capabilities, improve their effectiveness, and enable them to navigate their challenges. By addressing financial sustainability and obtaining public support, NGOs can continue to contribute meaningfully to social integration and humanitarian efforts in the long run.

4.2.4. Effective Focus and Localization

In order to enhance the effectiveness of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in their efforts with refugees, it is crucial to promote a transition towards prioritizing quality and efficacy over quantity. Rather than striving to aid a large number of individuals, NGOs should emphasize the comprehension of the distinct needs of refugees in specific geographical areas. Through thorough assessments and a comprehensive grasp of the local environment, NGOs can customize their interventions to meet the distinctive obstacles and demands of the communities they are assisting. This localized strategy enables more precise and impactful assistance, ultimately resulting in improved outcomes for refugees.

4.2.5. Uncertainty and Rights of Refugee Children

One crucial area that necessitates consideration is the ambiguity surrounding the rights and future prospects of refugee children. It is imperative to develop precise and comprehensive protocols pertaining to their legal status, educational opportunities, and eligibility for citizenship. The lack of such clarity engenders uncertainty among both children and adults regarding their future and impedes their capacity to strategize and assimilate into society. Furthermore, tackling concerns related to work permits and employment prospects for refugees can serve to mitigate their vulnerability to exploitation as a source of inexpensive labor. By safeguarding the rights and welfare of refugee children, we can facilitate their societal integration and afford them a more stable and promising outlook.

4.2.6. Minimizing the Impact of Covid 19 and Earthquake

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental effect on refugees, leading to job losses and decreased financial support. It is essential to acknowledge these challenges and work towards finding solutions to alleviate their impact. Additionally, during natural disasters such as earthquakes, it is crucial to address any discriminatory practices refugees may face and ensure access to suitable shelter and necessary resources. NGOs must adapt proactively to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes shifting their programs to online platforms to provide vital services and support to refugees. During natural disasters, such as the February 6, 2023, earthquake in Türkiye, NGOs should prioritize immediate needs and collaborate with partners to respond effectively to the diverse requirements of affected communities. By being flexible and responsive, NGOs can better serve refugees and contribute to their integration and well-being.

4.2.7. Going Global to Local

It is important to recognize that the struggles faced by NGOs and refugees in Türkiye are not isolated incidents but are part of a global phenomenon. Similar challenges are being experienced in other countries as well. The study highlights the need for increased resources, support, and collaboration on an international scale to effectively address the growing needs of refugees and ensure their successful integration. By acknowledging the shared nature of these challenges, we can work together to find sustainable solutions and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for refugees worldwide.

4.2.8. Role of Social Work & Social Workers

Social workers play a crucial role in the integration of refugees into new communities, undertaking multifaceted responsibilities aimed at ensuring the well-being and successful inclusion of individuals and families. Beginning with comprehensive assessments, social workers examine the unique needs of refugees, considering factors such as trauma, cultural backgrounds, and language proficiency. This process allows for the identification of tailored support strategies. One key aspect of the social worker's role lies in advocacy for refugee rights. They navigate complex legal processes with

refugees, advocating for access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment. Demonstrating cultural competence, social workers respect and understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of refugees, fostering trust and effective communication. In the realm of case management, social workers provide individualized support, guiding refugees through administrative processes and helping them access crucial services such as housing, education, and healthcare. Recognizing the potential trauma experienced by refugees, social workers employ trauma-informed care to address mental health needs through counseling, support groups, and referrals to specialized services. Education and skill-building initiatives are integral to the social worker's role, ensuring refugees have access to language classes, education, and vocational training opportunities. Additionally, social workers actively work to facilitate refugees' entry into the job market, collaborating with employers and providing job readiness training.

Community integration is another focus area, with social workers organizing events to promote interactions between refugees and host communities. Building bridges and fostering understanding contribute significantly to the social integration process. Social workers also engage in networking and partnerships, collaborating with government agencies, NGOs, community groups, and businesses to create a supportive network for refugees. Policy advocacy is a critical component of the social worker's role, influencing policies at local, national, and international levels to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for refugees. Adopting a strengths-based approach, social workers empower refugees, focusing on resilience and strengths, and actively involve them in their own integration process. Finally, ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential. Social workers assess the effectiveness of integration programs, using feedback to make improvements and adjustments as needed. In essence, social workers play a pivotal and dynamic role in supporting refugees, addressing immediate needs, empowering individuals, and communities, and facilitating positive and meaningful integration experiences.

4.3. NOTE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The current research provides valuable insight and a foundation for more intensive and comprehensive studies into the multifaceted role of NGOs in other aspects of the social integration of Refugees. Subsequently, future research can delve into various dimensions of refugee integration, including but not limited to education, healthcare, employment, citizenship, and the social and cultural aspects of integration. The researchers can also investigate NGOs' distinct role in integrating refugee subgroups such as children, women, older people, students and s, and young adults. The research can also be used to research further ethnic or racial refugees and how NGOs help integrate these refugees. From a child focused perspective, future research endeavors can explore the difficulties of parenting in the context of refugee families and how it influences the social and cultural integration of refugee children. Moreover, this could also involve investigating the programs and support mechanisms NGOs offer to the refugee parents to address the needs of refugee children.

In summary, the current research offers valuable insights into the role of NGOs in refugee integration; future studies can expand and enrich our understanding of this multifaceted process. By investigating various dimensions of integration specific to refugee subgroups, such as children, women, and ethnic or racial minorities, researchers can contribute to developing more effective strategies and policies for promoting the successful integration of refugees into host communities.

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APPENDIX A. ETHICS BOARD FORM



T.C.
HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Rektörlük

Sayı : E-35853172-300-00002863258
Konu : Etik Komisyon İzni (Md Sajid KHAN)

25.05.2023

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

İlgi: 04.05.2023 tarihli ve E-12908312-300-00002829352 sayılı yazınız.

Enstitünüz Sosyal Hizmet Anabilim Dalı Doktora Programı öğrencilerinden **Md Sajid KHAN**'ın, **Prof. Dr. Vedat IŞIKHAN** danışmanlığında hazırladığı “**Ekolojik Yaklaşım Çerçevesinde Mülteci Çocukların Sosyal Entegrasyonunda Sivil Toplum Kuruluşlarının Rolünün Değerlendirilmesi**” başlıklı tez çalışması Üniversitemiz Senatosu Etik Komisyonunun **23 Mayıs 2023** tarihinde yapmış olduğu toplantıda incelenmiş olup, etik açıdan uygun bulunmuştur.

Bilgilerinizi ve gereğini rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Sibel AKSU YILDIRIM
Rektör Yardımcısı

Bu belge güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Belge Doğrulama Kodu: F5F1AECA-A1E3-4A7C-BE76-C40B6A87E8E6

Belge Doğrulama Adresi: <https://www.turkiye.gov.tr/hu-ebys>

Adres: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Rektörlük 06100 Sıhhiye-Ankara

E-posta: yazimd@hacettepe.edu.tr İnternet Adresi: www.hacettepe.edu.tr Elektronik

Ağ: www.hacettepe.edu.tr

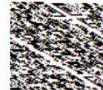
Telefon: 0 (312) 305 3001-3002 Faks: 0 (312) 311 9992

Kep: hacettepeuniversitesi@hs01.kep.tr

Bilgi için: Çağla Handan GÜL

Bilgisayar İşletmeni

Telefon: 03123051008



APPENDIX C. GÖRÜŞME FORMU

GÖRÜŞME FORMU

Katılımcı:

Tarih:

Ad Soyadı: Md. Sajid

KHAN Telefon:

Sorumlu Araştırmacı:	Araştırmacı:
Prof. Dr. Vedat IŞIKHAN	MD SAJID KHAN
Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Hizmet Bölümü 06800 Beytepe	Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Hizmet Anabilim Dalı Doktora Öğrencisi

1. MADDE: Kurumun Demografik Profili

A. Kurumun adı:

B. Görüşülen Kişinin Adı (İsteğe Bağlı):

C. Yaş:

D. Cinsiyet

E. Eğitim durumu

F. Organizasyondaki görevi:

G. Görüşme Yeri: online

H. Organizasyon Türü: a) Ulusal b) Uluslararası

I. Organizasyonun Ana Hedefi: a) Savunuculuk b) insani yardım kuruluşu c) İnanca Dayalı Örgüt) STK'lar

J. Kurumun türü: a) Türk kurum b) Suriyeli c) her ikisi d) diğer uluslararası kurum

2. MADDE: Kurum ile algılı bilgisi

- Kuruluşunuz hakkında bize bir şeyler anlatır mısınız?

- Bu kuruluştaki ne kadar süredir çalışıyorsunuz?
- Kuruluşunuzdan en çok yararlananlar kimlerdir?
- Organizasyonunuzda ne tür gönüllüler var?
- Kurum içinde sosyal entegrasyona yönelik herhangi bir eğitim veya programınız var mı?
- Kuruluşunuzun mültecilere yönelik başlıca faaliyetleri nelerdir?
- Mültecilerin sosyal entegrasyonu, kuruluşunuzun vizyonunun amaçlarından/amaçlarından biri mi?
- Siz/kuruluşunuz devlet tarafından desteklenen/devlet tarafından uygulanan sosyal entegrasyon Projeleri ile çalışıyor musunuz?

3.MADDE: STK'ların Sosyal Entegrasyon Konusunda Bakış Açısı

- Türkiye'deki Mülteci Entegrasyonunu nasıl tanımlarsınız?
- Sizce Türkiye'de mültecilerin entegrasyonunu anlamının farklı bir yolu var mı?
- Türkiye'deki mülteciler için, özellikle çocuk mülteciler için ne tür bir entegrasyon mümkündür.

4. MADDE Ekolojik yaklaşıma ilişkin.

- Okul ve aile gibi bir çocuğun mikrosistemine müdahaleniz nedir?
- Mülteci çocukların ailelerine/anne-babalarına verdiğiniz hizmetler nelerdir?
- Aile ve okul arasındaki uçurumu nasıl ele alıyorsunuz?
- Bir çocuğu dolaylı olarak etkileyen mahalle, Medya ve ebeveynlerin işyerleri gibi dış etkenlerin rolünü nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
- Dış etmenlerin olumsuz etkilerini nasıl azaltırsınız?

- Müdahaleniz bir devlet politikasına veya uluslararası düzenlemelere uygun mu?
- Mülteci çocukların travmatik deneyimlerini (göç öncesi ve sonrası) nasıl hafifletir ve ele alırsınız?
- Mülteci çocukların entegrasyonunu nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

5.MADDE: Toplumsal cinsiyetle ilgili sorular.

- Bir mülteci çocuğun cinsiyetinin entegrasyon sürecinde önemli bir rol oynadığını düşünüyor musunuz?
- Mülteci çocuklar için cinsiyete duyarlı belirli bir programınız var mı?

6. MADDE: STK politika ve programları

- Kuruluşunuzdaki mülteci entegrasyonuna yönelik başlıca projeler, programlar ve politikalar nelerdir?
- Çocukların Ev Sahibi toplumla bütünleşmesi konusunda bildiğiniz temel politikalar nelerdir? Peki, bu politikaları nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
- Türkiye'de mülteci entegrasyonu alanında sivil toplum kuruluşları hangi hizmetleri ve destek sistemlerini sağlıyor?
- Mülteci çocukların entegrasyonu alanında sağlanan hizmetlerin amacına ulaştığını düşünüyor musunuz?

7. MADDE: Zorluklar ve Beklentiler

- Mülteci entegrasyonu alanında çalışırken ne gibi problemlerle karşılaşıyorsunuz?
- Bir Sivil Toplum Kuruluşu olarak Türkiye'de Mülteci Entegrasyonundaki başlıca zorluklar nelerdir?
- Genel olarak mülteciler ve özel olarak da mülteci çocuklar için mülteci entegrasyonunun önündeki en büyük zorluklar nelerdir?

- Türkiye'de Mülteci Entegrasyonunun geleceğini nasıl görüyorsunuz ve STK'lar Mülteci Entegrasyonunu desteklemek için nasıl bir rol oynayabilirler?
- Mülteci entegrasyonunda STK'lar nasıl daha etkili olabilir?
- Mevcut yasa ve politikaların entegrasyona yol açtığını düşünüyor musunuz?
- Türkiye'deki Entegrasyon Süreci ile ilgili olarak paylaşmak istediğiniz başka bir öneri veya bilgi var mı?

