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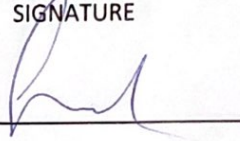
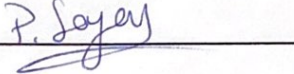
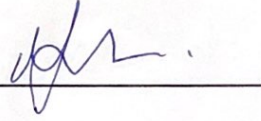
SYRIAN REFUGEE WOMEN'S SOLIDARITY NETWORKS THROUGH KITCHENS

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JUNE 2020

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science and International Relations.

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ABSTRACT

SYRIAN REFUGEE WOMEN'S SOLIDARITY NETWORKS THROUGH KITCHENS

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The primary purpose of this study is to analyze how the kitchens established to facilitate the integration process of Syrian refugee women affect the integration process of Syrian refugee women through the narratives of women, kitchen founders and volunteers. Local integration projects, and non-governmental organizations play a crucial role in filling the gap in this area, as integration policies that take into account the gender issue are wholly insufficient in Turkey. This study demonstrates how local integration projects and relevant non-governmental organizations contribute to the integration process by focusing on kitchens in different cities. In the study, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were conducted using the qualitative method. Through these interviews, the motivations of the kitchens, their contribution to the integration process, their limitations, and the power relationships between the institutions they cooperated with were tried to be analyzed. The data obtained as a result of the interviews point out that the kitchens contribute significantly to the integration process of Syrian refugee women and ease the establishment of solidarity networks among women. However, the power relations with the institutions which these kitchens cooperate can both negatively affect the sustainability of the kitchens and keep contributing to the integration process within a limited framework.

Keywords: Syrian refugee women, integration, kitchen, solidarity, local movements, non-governmental organizations

ÖZ

MUTFAKLAR ÜZERİNDEN SURİYELİ MÜLTECİ KADINLARIN DAYANIŞMA AĞLARI

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı Suriyeli mülteci kadınların entegrasyon sürecini kolaylaştırmak için kurulan mutfakların Suriyeli mülteci kadınların entegrasyon sürecini nasıl etkilediğini kadınların, mutfak kurucularının ve gönüllülerinin anlatıları üzerinden analiz etmektir. Türkiye'de toplumsal cinsiyet meselesini dikkate alan entegrasyon politikaları oldukça yetersiz olduğu için bu alandaki boşluğu doldurmada yerel hareketlerin projeleri ve sivil toplum kuruluşları oldukça önemli rol oynamaktadır. Bu çalışma da farklı şehirlerdeki mutfaklara odaklanarak onların entegrasyon sürecine nasıl bir katkı sunduklarını göstermektedir. Çalışmada nitel yöntem kullanılarak, yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat ve odak grup görüşmeleri yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmeler üzerinden mutfakların sahip oldukları motivasyonlar, entegrasyon sürecine sundukları katkılar, sınırlılıkları ve iş birliği yaptıkları kurumlar ile aralarındaki güç ilişkileri analiz edilmiştir. Görüşmeler sonucunda elde edilen veriler mutfakların Suriyeli mülteci kadınların entegrasyon sürecine önemli katkılar sunduğunu ve kadınlar arasında dayanışma ağlarının kurulmasını sağladığını göstermektedir. Ancak mutfakların iş birliği yaptığı kurumlarla aralarındaki güç ilişkileri hem mutfakların sürdürülebilirliklerini olumsuz etkileyebilmekte hem de entegrasyon sürecine olan katkıyı sınırlı bir çerçevede tutabilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Suriyeli mülteci kadınlar, entegrasyon, mutfak, dayanışma, yerel hareketler, sivil toplum kuruluşları



To Refugee Women

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Figure 2.1 A conceptual framework defining core domains of integration14



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| DGMM | Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management (T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü) |
| EC | European Comission |
| EU | European Union |
| GIZ | German Corporation for International Cooperation |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organisations |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| OKDER | Okmeydanı Social Assistance and Solidarity Association (Okmeydanı Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Derneği) |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With the start of the revolution in Syria in 2011, many Syrians escaped and took shelter in Turkey. For many Syrian refugees, Turkey has been their home for nine years. Although Turkey a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, it maintains a geographical limitation whereby only asylum seekers from Europe can be considered as refugees (Kale & Erdoğan, 2019). In case of Syrian refugees, the Turkish government granted Syrians coming to Turkey temporary protection (Çorabatır, 2016). While Syrians in Turkey are not legally considered refugees, I will refer to Syrians as refugees in this study, because their conditions and the circumstances of their migration are same with the refugees. While temporary protection status offers Syrian refugees fundamental rights, it makes it difficult for Syrians to plan their future, and it might lead to experiences of uncertainty in all areas of life (Baban et al.,2017). This uncertainty negatively impacts integration processes affecting both citizens and Syrian refugees.

Moreover, government discourse that upholds the possibility of Syrian's return to Syria also influences their relations with Turkish citizens as Syrians fear they may be forced to return, and Turkish citizens continue to reject their long-term presence. The ambiguity concerning Syrian refugees' futures in Turkey highlights the lack of clear and officially observed integration policies. With respect to refugee integration, state actors and policymakers give preference to organic integration, with limited state intervention, but leaves the Syrian presence and integration prospects open to politicization and their use in media and political campaigns. This situation both strengthens hate speech towards refugees among local people and increases prejudices about Syrian refugees. The inadequacy of the integration policies affects Syrian refugee women more than other segments of the refugee population (Freedman et al., 2017). Refugee women encounter additional barriers to those faced by refugees in general, including the lack of gender-specific policies, patriarchy within their community, the imposition of traditional gender roles, among other issues. In

the cases where integration policies prevail, projects, and activities developed with the aim of fostering ties between host and refugee communities must account for gender and incorporate a gendered approach.

I was motivated to carry out research concerning refugee women after I undertook fieldwork for my undergraduate thesis. For that research, I interviewed Syrian refugee women from different ethnic groups living in the Fatih district of Istanbul. All the women I interviewed emphasized the difficulties of being a woman in a patriarchal society and being a "foreigner" in Turkey. Their experiences highlighted ways how these issues influenced them and their social relations at different levels. However, when it comes to the women involved in solidarity groups, it was found out that they established among themselves, were less negatively affected than women who had not joined any solidarity networks. This finding prompted me to undertake further research on the role of solidarity networks in Syrian refugee women's lives and their impact on integration.

For this research, I engaged with the Al Shami kitchen project in İzmit, and subsequently with Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen and Kirkayak Kitchen. Located in different cities and with varying structures, three kitchens provided me with insights into the ways of which solidarity kitchens are formed and the types of relations they foster among refugee women, host and refugee women, as well as with local actors such as municipalities. Al Shami Kitchen was the first kitchen to accept me to carry out interviews with their members and volunteers. In the first phase of the research (2018), I had meetings with Syrian refugee women in Al Shami Kitchen. In 2019, I returned and held a focus group meeting with the same group of women. The interviews provided me with insights into the ways women's narratives and perspectives changed after one year. Besides, I interviewed with the founder of Al Shami. In 2019, I held meetings and interviews with the kitchen founders and volunteers at the Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen (Okmeydanı/Istanbul) and Kirkayak Kitchen (Gaziantep) in order to better understand the structure and functioning of the kitchens and to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue. In this way, I had the opportunity to analyze the narratives of local volunteers and

founders on the impact of the kitchens on the integration process of women. These narratives enabled me to analyze the ways in which these kitchen projects struggle with power asymmetries that emerge in their collaborations and how this affects the sustainability of the kitchens. Kitchens' relations with external actors, namely local actors, highly influenced their ability to be sustainable and to foster solidarity among local and refugee women. This sustainability and types of relations fostered impacts on the type of solidarity fostered and, in the long term, influences the role of these networks in fostering the integration of refugee women. My sample has demonstrated that the sustainability of kitchens, which cooperate with institutions that will further strengthen the power asymmetry and leave the area to powerful institutions, is not possible.

The thesis is divided into several chapters. In the second chapter, I will examine the main theories related to integration. Firstly, a general framework of the discussions on integration will be presented, which explains various approaches to the integration of refugees and immigrants. Different types of integration policies (top-down and bottom-up) will be explored to position the role of solidarity, one example of the bottom-up integration. I then continue to discuss the ways how hierarchy and gender affect integration processes.

In the third chapter, the research methods used in the process will be presented. I explain the ways how case studies were selected, the research process, details and profile of interviewees. Lastly, I present the ways through which the research data was gathered and analyzed and then I outline the ethical considerations concerning the research.

In the fourth chapter, Turkey's integration policies towards Syrian refugees will be analyzed. In this context, the macro and micro levels of Turkey's integration policies will be examined with sections on the impact of gender and role of international and national non-governmental organizations (I/NGO) in Turkey play in the integration process.

The three kitchens will be examined comparatively in the fifth chapter. I explore the effect of the kitchens on the integration process through the narratives of the founders and volunteers. The narratives of the kitchen founders enabled me to analyze the power relations within the cooperations and collaborations beyond the effect of the kitchens on integration processes. In the chapter, I focus on three topics that highlight the role of the kitchens in integration processes, namely: equality, solidarity, and empowerment. These themes make it possible to examine the power relationships between the cooperating institutions and the kitchens and also develop an analysis concerning equality, or its absence, in these relations. In that chapter, by comparing this definition with existing literature on the issue to highlight the specificities of this context, I delve into the ways how kitchens' volunteers and founders define solidarity. The chapter then moves on to examine the change and transformation among refugee women involved in the kitchens and highlight the ways these changes are connected to integration processes.

In the sixth chapter of the thesis, I explore the effect of the kitchen on women's lives by analyzing the narratives of the women involved in the Al Shami Kitchen project. The chapter discusses their involvement in the kitchen and the contribution of the kitchen to their integration, highlighting how the women involved developed a solidarity network among themselves. The role of the kitchen creating a space for engagement with locals is explored to argue that the psychological impact of the kitchen extends beyond being just a site of production area to serve as a social area. The follow-up interviews conducted enabled me to gain insights into the ways the women's views change after a year. At that point, I argue that the longer period of exposure resulted in the women's becoming more active subjects who were more confident and aware of their power. I also explore the limitations of the project, especially concerning the projects involved with the local municipality. The hierarchy in the relations of the different actors involved in the Al Shami kitchen project will be analyzed to situate the ways these hierarchies influence integration processes. The discussion about the limitations of the project brings to the fore the ways uncertainty influenced the kitchen project and women's experiences of their involvement. The hierarchical relations at play further raise questions concerning structural limitations

that prevent women refugees' increased economic integration in non-exploitative structures.

In the conclusion chapter, the effects of kitchens and solidarity networks on the integration process will be discussed and analyzed in the light of all the data presented.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The main research question this project seeks to examine is, "How do solidarity networks affect the integration process of Syrian refugee women participating in these kitchen networks?" To properly explore this question, I turned to various literature within the social sciences, including studies on refugee and migrant integration, discussions about solidarity, and hierarchical relations. Since my question's focus is women's solidarity in kitchens, it is necessary to address the gendered dimensions of integration processes. The development of the kitchens at the local level also required to explore relevant literature within the local integration policies and projects.

This chapter composes of an overview on integration, distinctions between migrants and refugees, dimensions of integration, implications, and conclusion. The first section describes what integration is, integration process (one way, two way), and the importance of integration. The second section explains the differences in the integration processes of refugees and migrants. In the third part, local level integration and local level integration policies consist of the top-down approach and bottom-up approach: solidarity will be explained under the main dimensions of integration. In the fourth section, gender and hierarchy as implications that affect the integration process will be explained. The conclusion explains how this literature and the research feed each other.

2.1. Integration: A Literature Overview

2.1.1. Definition

Examining the variety of literature on integration highlights the ways that it is difficult to define integration. Although the concept of integration is used by various authors, it is understood and explained and utilized in different ways making it difficult to develop a singular model for integration (Castles et al, 2002). Integration is defined as a "treacherous concept" that offers no logical criteria for operation and

measurement (Banton, 2001 cited in Göksel, 2018). Grzymala-Kazłowska and Phillimore (2017) claim that integration has recently been considered as a problematic concept due to the ongoing politicization of the concept and the focus of different research on practical results and narrow determinants. They argue that both immigrant groups and host communities are always flux and change, so categories that evaluate integration should be developed (Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore 2017). Ager and Strang explain integration as multidimensional concept and they include conditions for joining the community, real participation in society, and the perception of acceptance into the host society (ECRE 1999 cited in Ager and Strang 2010). According to Pennix and B.Garcés-Mascareñas, integration is the process of being an accepted part of a society (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). Heckmann (2005: 15) defines integration as "a long-lasting process of inclusion and acceptance of migrants in the core institutions, relations, and statuses of the receiving society. Integration is an interactive process between migrants and the receiving society, in which, however, the receiving society has much more power and prestige" (Heckmann, 2005: 15).

Other scholars highlight the ways integration is closely related to belonging, recognition, dignity, and identity, among other themes (Castles et al. 2002). According to Berry, integration is the active participation of individuals and groups while maintaining their cultural belonging (Berry, 1997). Integration is also a very long process and takes place at the macro, meso, and micro levels where macro-level refers to structures, such as the nation-state-society or broader economic, political, socio-cultural systems; meso level consists of the social and organizational context of an individual and social action including organizations, networks, and the market; while micro-level focuses on individuals and interactions or communication between immigrants and citizens (Heckmann, 2005).

Integration is a multidimensional concept and cannot be fully understood without examining all the relevant factors and the interaction of these factors that may adversely affect the process (Phillimore & Goodson, 2008). Phillimore states that integration demonstrates that both newcomers and the host community can

increase the sense of belonging to the host community by renegotiating some identities. Integration, in her conceptualization, also includes the development of social relationships and the different types of social networks, and believe in enjoying rights for resources such as education, work, and housing (Phillimore, 2012). Integration then is regarded as a mutually developing and dynamic process (EC, 2003). In this manner, integration is conceptualized as a process that starts with the arrival of migrants and refugees and ends when they and the host community members are at an equal position. Thus, integration processes are comprehensive and involve the participation of both the host community and the newly arrived; however, debates on whether integration is a one-way or two-way process continue.

2.1.2. Integration: a one-way or a two-way street?

Integration used to be considered unilaterally, but increasingly it is thought that it should be bilateral, involving the transformation of the host society (Göksel, 2018). For the incoming people to adapt to the host community, it is crucial for the integration of the host community to open the existing opportunity areas to the new arrivals, to achieve a positive integration. This is not just a moral or political claim. The fact that the receiving society is open for immigrants to be integrated is one of the basic conditions of integration. Policies are necessary for migrants and refugees to survive and to live in peace in the new countries they migrate to. Integration policies are vital for both immigrants, refugees, and local people to live together seamlessly and to develop practices of living together. Therefore, integration policies are significant for not only refugees/immigrants but also host societies as by acting together, they can reach positive integration practices.

In 2003, the European Commission introduced a comprehensive view on integration policies in an Immigration, Integration, and Employment Communication. According to the European Commission, the obligations of integration belong to both the host community and the refugees/immigrants (European Commission, 2003). Integration requires all members of society, belonging to dominant or migrant groups to participate or to be involved. Castles et al. claim that "Integration of newcomers to society takes place at every level and in every sector of society"(Castles et al. 2002).

However, individual or structural discrimination creates barriers to integration (Heckman, 2004). Integration can only be followed when the sovereign ethnocultural group supports the protection of the cultural heritage of another group and promotes the realization of this desire (Berry, 1997). Also, integration can only be chosen and successfully followed by non-dominant groups when the dominant group is open to cultural diversity and includes them as such mutual acceptance is required to achieve integration, which includes the different groups living together accepting the right of all groups to live as people with different cultures. While this strategy needs non-dominant groups to adopt the core values of the wider society, the dominant group must be ready to adapt national institutions (e.g., education, health) to better meet the needs of all groups and reach a peaceful co-existence (Berry, 2006). Therefore, societies that accept immigrants and refugees must learn new ways to interact with new arrivals and adapt their institutions to their needs. However, the host society and immigrant communities do not share equal economic, demographic, and political power in many respects (Heckmann, 2005; Berry, 1997), while host communities holding much more power and prestige. In cases where ethnic identities and traditions continue, and there is no relationship with society, segregation or separation occurs (Berry, 1992). This situation undermines the integration process.

The host and immigrant/refugee community recognize and transform each other in multiple ways in the actualization of integration policies. In addition, integration policies change over time to respond to shifting circumstances and needs. Although the level of integration of local people and immigrants/refugees varies, integration remains a continuous process rather than a destination (Spencer 2006b: 47, cited in Lomba, 2010). Evaluating levels of integration solely, as a result, deters observers from realizing the factors changing during integration processes and can lead to conclusions.

Adopting and implementing a single policy model for integration policies and practices is insufficient. Integration policies should take into account the diversity of receiving societies, migrating groups, and structural variables. For this reason, integration policies should be developed in accordance with the migrating groups and

the receiving society (Heckmann, 2005). Therefore, applying the two-way process integration model facilitates living together with practices in peace.

2.1.3. Why is integration important?

This research sets up integration as an actor contributing to society is that it provides social harmony and peace within a heterogeneous society. On the contrary, in a pluralistic society, harmony can be achieved through the interaction of different communities that form a bond through recognition of differences and mutual interdependence (Zetter, 2006). However, the important point here is whether people are assimilated as a result of this interaction. Berry (1992) stated that assimilation is one's abandoning its cultural identity and being included in the wider community. On the other hand, integration is to exist within the large community by maintaining one's own identity. Certainly, some changes occur at that point, and it is hardly possible to preserve all cultural features strictly. However, this change may also occur in the dominant group (Berry, 1992).

Rather than using assimilationist approaches within the analysis, in that sense, Berry's (2006) approach of acculturation is relied on conceptualize integration. Cultural harmony is the process of bilateral cultural and psychological change that occurs as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their members. The concept of intercultural exchange (arising from intercultural contact) is considered as a broader aspect where this exchange is believed to cause changes in both dimensions; that is, acculturation takes place in the non-dominant group as well as in the established or dominant group. In that sense, cultural harmony is distinguished from assimilation (Berry, 2006).

In this research, I use two-way approach in my understanding of integration since two-way approach provides a more comprehensive model by including all groups in the society in the integration process. This model, which also facilitates the coexistence of different groups, offers the opportunity to realize the cultural harmony process put forward by Berry.

2.2. Distinction Between Migrants and Refugees

Many factors have influence on the integration process, and one of the most important factors is the status of individuals or groups and which rights come with the status allocated. Legal rights of the person are closely related to their legal status because legal status determines access to rights, and this affects the integration process to a great extent. Therefore, different individuals and groups can experience integration process in different ways due to their status. Legal differences between refugee and migrant status affect integration processes and their results significantly (Lomba, 2010; Castles et al. 2002). According to McDonald and Billings (2007), uncertainty and lack of security about the future can prolong suffering and disrupt individuals' ability to overcome post-traumatic stress and to integrate successfully into society (Lomba, 2010). While migrants usually migrate with a particular set of resources available to them, many refugees are, by definition of their involuntary migration, unable to plan their migration as well as face multiple challenges due to the forced nature of the migration (Castles et al. 2002). Bad experiences and traumas of refugees can make their integration process very difficult. An immigrant's mental health can be better compared to a refugee's, which can make the integration process of that immigrant easier. However, refugees benefit from the rights granted by refugee status and have a more predictable future. While immigrants cannot enjoy the same rights as refugees, they have to build their future in many ways. This has the power to influence the integration process in many ways. Nevertheless, addressing this distinction as the only variable will not be enough to explain everything. Having a legal status can facilitate integration as it avoids certain uncertainties. On the other hand, only having legal status will not ensure the full realization and completion of the integration (Lomba, 2010).

Since the integration process is mutual, it is not only dependent on the immigrants and refugees but also the local people and government institutions. Furthermore, other characteristics of refugees and immigrants can affect this process. Many factors such as demographic status, legal status, social status, religious and cultural elements of the incoming group or person affect integration process. Sometimes it could be concluded that one group is more integrated than the other, and this can cause

hierarchies between "integrable" groups and individuals (Castles et al. 2002). Although this situation may have an impact on hierarchy and negative relations between groups, communities accept the fact that many factors influence the integration process. Therefore, both the local community and immigrants have more chances of being more successful in this process as co-responsible of the integration process.

The integration of immigrants and refugees is not a total process that develops simultaneously with all institutions and communities. Morton Weinfield (1997) considers integration as a "nested process" as in it involves a process within a process. He explains that immigrants do not suddenly begin to integrate into an entire community as the process is gradual and it occurs step by step. It begins with families and extended relatives first, then expands to subgroups and wider ethnic groups, who integrate into their neighborhoods, larger city and finally integrate into the so called national community. Recognizing the intertwined nature of these processes in policy terms is crucial as different policy areas, and domains are affected in all areas of integration (Castles et al. 2002). Although many similar and different factors affect the integration process of immigrants and refugees, the fact that refugees can foresee a clearer future thanks to their status can enable them to take these integration steps more firmly and move forward. Turkey's international obligations to asylum seekers and refugees have been identified in the framework of The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees/ 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol. However, in 1961 Turkey put, "geographical limitation" with a statement to the Convention. According to this declaration, no one from outside of Europe will be accepted as a "refugee." The legal status of Syrians in Turkey is temporary protection. "Temporary Protection Regulation" framework " highlight temporariness (Kale & Erdoğan, 2019). Not accepting their status as refugees prevents them from making plans on their future and causes them to live in an uncertain process. Therefore, this adversely affects the integration process.

2.3. Dimensions of Integration

Various researchers have examined key issues pertaining to integration as part of efforts to evaluate integration. Ager and Strang evaluate the indicators as two separate levels; policy and practice level. While the policy level focuses on what integration is, how it is achieved, and how it is measured, the practice level focuses on service delivery and planning (Ager & Strang, 2004). Ager and Strang (2004) examine at ten areas under four headings to evaluate integration: marker and means, social connections, facilitators, and foundation. Although there are links and interactions between these four main topics, there is no hierarchy among them. Marker and Means highlight several key areas of activity as indicators of successful integration in the public sphere, including employment, housing, education, and health. At that point, I focus on only two factors relate to the my research: employment and housing. Employment is one of the essential factors that inevitably affect many issues such as consistently promoting economic independence, planning the future, meeting members of the host society, providing opportunities to improve language skills, regaining self-confidence, and encouraging self- confidence (African Education Foundation 1998; Bloch 1999; Tomlinson and Egan 2002 cited in Ager & Strang, 2008).

In this regard, another key factor is housing as there is a strong link between the impact of the accommodation on the general physical and emotional well-being of refugees and the feeling of being "at home" (Glover et al. 2001; Dutch Refugee Council / ECRE 2001 cited in Ager & Strang, 2008). Common spaces shared with locals have a key role in terms of integration as they are one of the important areas where refugees and local people get in touch and communication links are established (Ager & Strang, 2008). Whereas the factors included under 'markers and means' focus more on the public aspect of integration, those mentioned under social connections focus on the relationships between institutions, individuals, and groups. Three main areas are included under the heading social connections: Social Bonds, Social Bridges, and Social Links. Ager and Strang describe the differences between these three areas as follows. Whereas, social bonds refer to links within ethnic, religious, national communities, Social Bridges indicates links with other group members, and Social

Links are connections with institutions such as local and central government agencies (Ager & Strang, 2004).

Their model incorporates language and cultural cues as key elements to integration processes and position them as facilitating factors (Facilitators). Alongside these, Safety and Stability serve as facilitator factors for integration processes. Migrants or refugees knowing the language and cultural characteristics of host communities positively affect the integration process as do citizens learning refugee or migrants' language or issues relating to their culture. Safety in terms of a lack of war or violence and stability within a country ease integration process as these factors encourage migrants or refugees to build a future in the host country. Based on this model, Foundations includes rights and citizenship, as having active rights, including citizenship rights, works to facilitate integration processes as much as highlighting the ways through which legal status, and associated rights, impact integration (Ager & Strang, 2004). Thus, defining refugee rights outlines the basis of the government integration policies (Duke et al. 1999; Goodwin-Gill 1999, cited in Ager & Strang, 2008).



Figure 2.1. A conceptual framework defining core domains of integration (Ager and Strang 2008: 170)

Integration policies cover an extensive area, so it is possible to talk about different integration models. The various components involved in integration have important effects on the lives of both local people and newcomers, considering it a two-way process. There are aspects concerning institutions referring to the ways governments, the legal system, markets, institutional actors are also part of these processes (Garcés-Mascreñas & Penninx, 2016). Structural integration concerns the ways migrants and refugees can access or enter positions in government, bureaucracy, business, and the like. Social integration refers to the inclusion of new individual actors in a system, the establishment of mutual relations between the actors, and their attitude towards the social system as a whole (Heckman, 2004).

In sense of another qualification of social integration, Esser (2000) argues that integration includes the following basic forms: acculturation, placement, interaction, and identification. Based on this model, cultivation is the transfer and acquisition of necessary knowledge, cultural standards, and competencies to interact well in society. Placement refers to individuals' access to relevant positions in the society, education system, economic system, professions and professional life as a citizen. For Esser, interaction is conceptualized as the formation of common networks bonding newcomers and locals. While identification concerns recognition that an actor is considered by others in society as a social actor with the right to act and, therefore, indicating a sense of belonging (Esser, 2000 cited in Heckman 2004).

According to Penninx and B. Garcés-Mascreñas, integration takes place in three different spheres: the first is legal and political, the second is socio-economic, and the third is cultural and linguistic. The first one is about having political rights and status. In the second, social and economic position is brought to the forefront. The third one is about how the perceptions and practices of immigrants, and the host community are mutually perceived. These three dimensions are inter-dependent and affect each other. However, these different dimensions can operate in different ways, and the processes of realization may happen in varying ways. For instance, while migrants' participation in economic life may begin in a shorter timeframe, access to health care rights or cultural acceptance may take longer (Garcés-Mascreñas & Penninx 2016).

In Castles and his co-authors' study, they focused on interactions between immigrants and the host community as two separate groups and the ways individuals, organizations, and institutions form three influential levels. They noted that it is of importance to consider policy frameworks, concrete policy measures, and vertical-horizontal aspects of integration policies to analyze integration policies. Their approach is built on comprehensive inclusion of newcomers into all aspects and levels of society while highlighting the ways in which this involves a wide variety of social actors including public officials, political decision-makers, employers, union officials, colleagues, service providers, neighbors, among others (Castles et al. 2002: 13). Ager and Strang evaluate the indicators at two separate levels: policy, and practice level. While the policy level focuses on what integration is, how it is achieved, and how it is measured, the practice level focuses on service delivery and planning (Ager & Strang, 2004).

As these various authors highlight, examining integration necessitates exploring the ways in which integration occurs at various levels and involves many components. In this thesis, I seek to indicate the interaction of these various dimensions and levels as well as highlight the ways articulate the specificities within the Turkey context.

2.3.1. Local Integration as a Level of Integration

Local integration is considered as one of the three "permanent solutions" for refugees (Crisp, 2004). It has a process composed of three interrelated dimensions: Firstly as a legal process - refugees are granted specific rights by the host state (e.g., the right to find employment, to have other income-generating activities, to own property, freedom of movement and access to public services such as education, right to permanent residence or citizenship). Secondly, local integration is an economic process decreasing refugees' dependency on "state aid or humanitarian aid." Thirdly, local integration is a social and cultural process allowing refugees to live among or with the host population without discrimination or exploitation and enables their active participation in social life (Crisp, 2004)

Local integration plays a crucial role in ensuring that needs are identified at the local level, how these needs will meet, and whether the demands of local people, immigrants, and refugees are understood and the policies developed at the macro level are facilitators at other levels. Concerning different spheres making access easier for local actors and increasing the effectiveness of the integration process. Addressing local level integration is likely to increase the applicability and success of the policies as it is possible to include both local people and immigrants/refugees in the processes. According to UNHCR, the process of local integration increases refugees' self-confidence, since they are better able to engage economically and socially and contribute to local development as an asset rather than a "burden"(UNHCR, 2002:3 cited in Meyer, 2008).

The concept of local integration is based on the conception that refugees will remain in the asylum countries, and it is necessary to incorporate them into the country of asylum (Meyer, 2008). Refugee policy is "local" politics as it entails regional district and municipal officials often acting as key gatekeepers regardless of their approach to refugees as a threat or a benefit (Betts et al., 2017). However, refugees are often viewed by the host government and the local community as temporary guests or underserving immigrants who do not have the right to reside in the country. Insecurity in their legal status can lead to dangerous, unstable situations and the host government's involvement in gathering refugees and even sending them back to camps. The willingness of citizens to accept local integration may depend on who is benefiting from the refugee presence and who has sufficiently served (or at least not against) the interests of various actors, especially the most powerful local groups (Jacobsen, 2001). Local actors may consider refugee presence as a threat in situations of scarce resources which results in competition between refugees and certain segments of society over resources (Kibreab, 1985; Waal 1988 cited in Whitaker, 2002); the lack of economic opportunities in certain contexts creates an environment of helplessness and dependency (Dryden-Peterson & Hovil, 2004). According to Kibreab, refugees' arrival to host countries where there is already strain on land or resources, may increase existing economic stress and negatively affect local integration (Jacobsen, 2001). Jacobsen (2001) pointed out that politicians might rely

on discourses claiming that refugees are an economical and environmental burden on the host community or accuse them of being the source of various social problems affecting the local population. Under these circumstances, host governments have made efforts to impose limitations on refugees and have persisted that they only remain temporarily (Jacobsen, 2001). Despite assumptions that refugees are a source of problem or burden (Harrell-Bond, 1989), various research demonstrates the ways refugee migration is equally beneficial to host countries (Kuhlman 1994; Sorenson 1994; J. Baker 1995 cited in Whitaker, 2002).

Furhermore, economic issues are a vital part of local integration. The economic activities of the host country also significantly affect the relationship between refugees and local people. When donors and institutions take care local population as beneficiaries in programs and projects to ensure that local population can accept newcomers not as competitors but as equal members of a community (Baban & Keyman & Paker & Rygiel, 2018). The resources needed to promote local settlement and self- confidence in asylum countries should not be viewed as an expense but as an investment in both local development and regional peacebuilding (Crisp, 2004).

According to Hovil (2014), local integration might have some obstacles in that protection is evaluated in certain contexts but not in others. Local integration can be used as a strategy that creates incredible difficulty and vulnerability for refugees, especially in cases where this integration is marked by informality and comes without official protection mechanisms. For many refugees, being locally integrated in an unwelcome environment may be a strategy for those who cannot return (Hovil, 2014). Therefore, how local integration is established, implemented, and conditions of environment significantly influences its effect. On the other hand, local integration provides opportunities to benefit from development assistance for the mutual benefit of refugees and locals, as well as highlighting the role of local-level institutions (Dryden - Peterson & Hovil, 2004). More than half of the refugees in the world are living in urban areas, and it is increasingly accepted that municipalities can be progressive and effective actors in refugee interventions. Often local level political

actors, such as mayors, can make a difference in refugees' experiences and the modes of implementing policies (Betts et al., 2017).

Local actors play a major role in facilitating communication and dialogue between groups, addressing issues and tensions, questioning myths and prejudices, resolving conflict and promoting participation, and collaborating towards common goals, which are all critical for local compliance practices (Daley, 2007). One example discussed in Baban and his co-authors' report concerns an Italian town (Riace). The town mayor's policies impacted refugees' experiences while fostering social peace in the city. It enabled locals to benefit from the funds allocated for refugees and established cooperatives, where newcomers and locals work together. This approach, among others, demonstrates that fear and conflict arisen between local people and refugees may be reduced or prevented (Baban & Keyman & Paker & Rygiel, 2018).

Local-level policies affect the integration process significantly, but many different dynamics affect the impact of these policies. This thesis aims at indicating the interaction of various dimensions of the integration policies carried out at the local level and the analysis of the power dynamics within the implementation process of these policies in Turkey context.

2.3.1.1. Policies of Local Integration

2.3.1.1.1. Top-down approach: State Policies at Local Levels

Realizing local integration and developing interrelated policies is intimately linked to the governmental structures in place. Factors such as the degree of state centralization, form of central government's relations with local actors, among other factors, influence local integration policies. Effective cooperation with the local actors facilitates achieving integration. Moreover, national development plans are needed to incorporate local level integration policies and plans as well as including government and non-governmental actors into the process, given the important role of all these factors (Boulton, 2009). Effective implementation of many policies, not only in integration policies, is possible in cooperation with the local actors. In this

way, it is possible to reach the whole society. In Banki's studies conducted in Kenya, Nepal, and Pakistan, temporary factors (e.g., the duration of refugee presence), political factors (e.g., state of diplomatic relations between sending and hosting countries), and social factors (e.g., ethnic or linguistic similarities) and the refugee population affect the integration process. He deals with these factors in a sense that they also influence the level of integration at the local level (Banki, 2004: 17, cited in Meyer, 2008). Other than the ways by which local actors affect the type of integration that is sought, the legal status remains a key element that influences local actor efforts, as without any guarantee in terms of legal right to remain, permanent status. Local actors may be de-incentivized to work to integrate refugees present (Jacobsen, 2001).

Changes in policies, accounting for the sensitivities of locals and newcomers, can make the integration process easier. State policies concerning integration issued at the macro-level may organize or set a general overview for the type of integration to be achieved, but implementation and engagement at the local level remain as a vital element to making integration inclusive of all segments of the society. This study will analyze how the integration policies developed by state actors at the local level affect the refugees and the local people and thus will show the limitations of policy development at the local level.

2.3.1.2. Bottom-Up Approach: Solidarity Networks as an Example

2.3.1.2.1. Solidarity

Solidarity is based on a broader sense of community, not limited to pre-existing 'chosen' ones, it extends beyond borders but without reproducing the logic of national borders, and it is produced from below (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). Solidarity creates unity across borders, and serves to develop practices that keep human rights above the interests and limitations of states. Moreover, in most cases, solidarity aims to develop non-hierarchical structures that may be more inclusive of diversities. Refugees and local people joining solidarity networks may use these to fight against violations of rights and to engage in the pursuit of collective good beyond the limitations of national boundaries or agendas. Solidarity practices can, in

general, connect different places or geographies, and enable relationships that go beyond national borders while remaining external to do the interests of nation-states. Practices of solidarity, in their variety, provide significant contributions to integration processes regardless of geographical location as it enables communication between refugees and locals as well as their cooperation to identify common solutions.

Solidarity networks are distinguished from philanthropic entities in multiple ways. While solidarity is premised on equality in relations, charity is described by Durkheim as promoting inequalities among members of society. Accordingly, while philanthropy focuses on solving societal problems, social justice seeks to address power relations and inequalities within society and seeks solutions for these inequalities (Schoenfeld & Mestrovic, 1989). As such, solidarity groups are distinguished by their horizontal relations, and from this perspective, where solidarity is based on the Rancierian notion of equality, this values are the creative dimension of solidarity placed both in the already-existing members of the community and the newcomers (such as refugees) (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019:34). In a similar mode to charitable bodies, humanitarian organizations are established based on vertical relations assigning clear differentiation between "beneficiaries" and aid providers or donors (Schhoenfeld & Mestrovic, 1989). This division feeds into the construction of particular performances of being recipients. In contrast, solidarity goes beyond an empathetic vision and contributes to the formation of a common struggle to overcome labor and border divisions, whereby it is key to achieving transformations in social practice (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019; Bauder & Juffs, 2019).

Another important pillar of solidarity networks is their move to support economic independence among those involved, refugees, migrants, or citizens. As such, solidarity networks as collective bodies are liberating projects and economic practices that go beyond concepts of moral goodness and kindness (Sotiropoulou, 2016). At the same time, it is necessary to recognize diversity in forms of solidarity practices across regions, countries, or in forms of mobilizing cause. Initiatives in different countries have begun to develop new forms of everyday policies and

solidarity actions, and increasing awareness on migration, asylum, and deportation has given rise to growing academic concerns with studying solidarity practices. The migration during the summer of 2015 gave rise to multiple forms of solidarity that varied depending on the country (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019).

Participating in a solidarity network may also facilitate integration processes as individuals within the same network are engaged around the same issues and may communicate more due to their participation. Solidarity networks may produce spaces of acceptance that counter exclusionary spaces based on citizenship (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). Moreover, these networks may impact and even shape political debates at the local or national level (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). These networks do not only have an impact on political debates but also have a positive impact on the mental health of individuals. As Kawachi and Berkman argue "Integration in a social network may also directly produce positive psychological states, including a sense of purpose, belonging, and security, as well as recognition of self-worth" (Kawachi & Berkman, 2001:459). There is close and positive relation between the social ties and mental health (Kawachi & Berkman, 2001:465). This situation is of vital importance, especially for women who may experience additional vulnerabilities alongside those suffered by male refugees. While some studies focus on solidarity networks, there are limited studies undertaken to examine the position and engagement of refugee women in solidarity networks. In addition, this study brings approaching solidarity networks using a gender lens aims to interrogate and contribute to existing studies exploring the role of solidarity networks, their types, and the relations they give rise to. In both mobilization and daily practice, solidarity networks have the power to transform pre-existing solidarity and create the possibility of forming new social alliances. A dynamics of collective identity creation happens through alliance building (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). Thus, as Stavrides (2016) points out, newcomers transform society as they are co-producers of a shared social space. This study aims to show what kind of change and transformation happens at the local level thanks to solidarity networks in Turkey. This study will analyze how the solidarity networks contribute to the integration process of refugee women and local people.

2.4. Implications

2.4.1. Impact of Hierarchy on Integration

Accepting and glorifying cultural diversity without addressing the complicated power relations that ensure the continuation of the social hierarchy among different groups undermine the calls for fair and egalitarian participation within society or political processes (Baban & Rygiel, 2018). This conclusion deeply influences refugees and immigrants arriving to any host society as while policies may aim to facilitate refugee or migrants' presence, relations of power mark their engagement within citizens in different and varied ways. Hierarchical relations may emerge in the discriminatory behavior or even in the ways humanitarian aid projects are developed for refugees. These power relations, visible or invisible, train refugees in many cases on how to behave or engage, especially with persons in positions of power. Refugees maintain their lives as always being aware of this hierarchy. As individuals, refugees gather under detailed bureaucratic structures that 'control' themselves. A key property of these control systems is the use of power by individual actors who act for authority structures at different levels of the hierarchy and often perceive their role as telling 'no' (Harrel-Bond & Voutira, 2007).

Recognized refugees are usually entitled to various rights based on national and international laws, but they are not always able to benefit from these rights. While it is unlikely that any responsible government or agency will welcome failures in protecting refugee rights, violations of refugee rights occur (Harrel-Bond & Voutira, 2007). Acquiring refugee status depends on national laws and protection frameworks in place, so many refugees might not be granted this status, and alternatively, many of those may still face difficulties accessing the rights associated with the status. Refugees then occupy a precarious position with respect to citizens as their continued presence, right to remain, and protection is dependent upon state actors' decisions and laws, which may change influencing them negatively. The domination of the host becomes apparent not only in the absence of the guest but in this presence because the guest's will to be taken in is not only a request for recognition but also a direct claim over the sovereignty of the "I" (Levinas, 1969 cited in Baban & Rygiel, 2018).

One of the most important factors that complicate the integration process is that the presence of refugees and immigrants are regarded by local people as a threat to themselves. This situation both complicates the integration processes and causes hierarchies to be seen more frequently in daily life practices.

Living together from a radical cosmopolitan perspective is conceptualized as not viewing citizens, non-citizens, or the host culture as privileged over guest cultures. Radical cosmopolitanism, which rejects hierarchical ordering of groups and identities, supports pluralism by promoting a better understanding of the cultures that drive different positions of identities, and by promoting interactions based on a constantly evolving community understanding (Baban & Rygiel, 2018). Radical cosmopolitanism aims to develop common ground for humanity. However, while this common humanity is found, it is not essential to show tolerance towards guests or to prepare rules for guests to adhere to. This theoretical approach argues for redefining the domination of hosts by developing mutually constitutive relationships between all those involved (Baban & Rygiel, 2017).

In this study, hierarchical relations will be discussed from a critical perspective. This research aims to explore the relations solidarity networks form with local government officials and the ways hierarchy emerges within the kitchen projects.

2.4.2. Gender Dimension of Integration

According to the 1951 Geneva Convention, "a refugee is someone unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." In that sense, while gender as a dimension was not incorporated, and incorporating gender as a form of "membership in a particular social group" has been debated, there have been no moves to modify the original clause (Indra, 1987). The 1951 Refugee Convention does not recognize gender-based prosecution as grounds for granting protection to refugees, and it includes no explicit statement that gender-based violence can be considered as a form of persecution (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). Resistance to including gender as a dimension comes despite rape

and other forms of gender-based violence being used as a tool of violence and war against women and girls in various wars and genocides such as Rwanda (1994), Yugoslavia (1995) and most recently in the Rohingya refugee crisis (2015) (Indra 1987).

Various feminist theories emphasize that beyond women's rights, general structures and institutions are built around patriarchy, and gender dynamics are not questioned. Concerning the intersection of asylum and feminist theories, Buz (2007) explains that the 1951 Convention cannot be enlarged as being male-oriented. The International Women Movement, feminists, academics, and gender studies scholars have condemned this blind spot and emphasize that the supposed passive role of women coincides with the gender blindness found in traditional migration scholarship which envisions the majority of migrants and refugees as men (Timmerman et al., 2015). Feminist theories analyze the experiences of asylum-seeking women (and men) in light of multiple intersections, such as gender, class, race, and sexuality, while accounting for various inequalities based on these factors. In this way, feminist scholarship has sought to examine the different types of femininity situations in migration (Buz, 2007). According to Grieco and Boyd (1998), gender power relations affect migration processes at the macro, meso, and micro levels, and interactions between these levels must be included in migration research (Timmerman et al., 2015). Although calls to add "gender" as a consideration into the refugee definition have been unsuccessful to date, feminists trying to incorporate women's experiences into refugee law can claim success on several other fronts (Connors, 1997 cited in Oswin, 2001). For instance, after the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the issue of violence against women, in particular, has attracted global attention (Connors, 1997 cited in Oswin, 2001). Despite Ravenstein's comment that "women migrate more than men" in 1884, the positions and situations of women in the immigration processes have not been addressed to a large extent, and women are usually approached as dependents due to their family positions (spouse, mother, daughter). The absence of women in immigration processes reflects the invisibility and secondary status assigned to women in much of the field of migration (Buz, 2007). However, some studies focusing on refugee women provide limited insights

into the particularities of female migrant or refugee experiences. It is seen that a feminist approach is not taken even when focusing on female refugees. Moreover, it is necessary to account for diversity in the experiences of migrant women, rather than approaching them as a homogeneous mass due to their sex (Buz, 2007). Gender, similar to other factors such as class, race, culture, and age, has an impact on migratory and post-migratory experiences (Indra, 1993). Individuals' socio-legal status and their gender influences their work opportunities, residence options, and shape broader changes in their social life (Canefe, 2018). According to Aberman (2014), migration is a gendered, racial, and classified process that requires their analysis and conceptualizes the complexity, flexibility, and robustness of these categories. To build on Aberman, these factors cannot be understood separately from other hierarchies of power and domination (Freedman, 2018). According to Indra, feminist theorists highlighted an important point and emphasized that the historical problem is not the real invisibility of women, but how they are represented and analytically characterized (Indra 1993).

Gender is conceptualized by various authors as a relational category, so in men and women, embodied masculinity and femininity exist only with each other, not independently (Kronsell, 2005). It is necessary to interrogate approaches that link gender to the simple roles of men and women, mistakenly relate women with peace, thus passivity, and men with war, and thus aggression (Clark and Moser 2001, 3; Hollander 2001). This polarized view of conflict creates a worldview where men are never victims, and women are always oppressed (Clark and Moser 2001, 3). The idea that women are always weak and vulnerable is the generalizations that may be problematic, including women themselves when we think of a violent, complex power relationship (Lokot, 2018). According to Timmerman and his authors (2015), the passive and dependent role allocated to female migrants in the migration process must be rejected by exploring women's agency in migration processes. Women deal with current opportunities and constraints, shape their migration trajectories, and express their meaning (Timmerman, Martiniello & Rea & Wets, 2015). It is crucial to highlight the different impacts of war and displacement on women to uncover gender-based power relations and to structure gender neutral approaches to

insecurity in forced migration contexts (Canefe, 2018). Gender relationships and identities are determined only temporarily and contextually, so analysis of the impact of migration on gender relationships and identities requires a longitudinal life process perspective that challenges the traditional divide between migration and integration (Timmerman et al., 2015). Feminists, thus, argue that it is necessary to consider women as “active perpetrators of information gathering” to “make their experiences visible” and “expose” sexist prejudices and implicitly traditional knowledge assumptions (Stacey and Thorne 1985: 303 cited in Fiddian Qasmiyeh, 2014). Feminist perspectives provide the space to examine the ways gender power hierarchies are manifested, visible or invisible, within institutions (Kronsell, 2005).

Grieco and Boyd (1998) place gender at the center of the entire migration process. Although many factors affect the integration process, gender is not considered as a factor in many countries, and integration policies are not implemented by considering gender. While women and men may have equal rights based on national law in various countries, gender hierarchies create inequalities at the level of accessing or activating these rights. Some populations such as older people living outside refugee camps, women, individuals with special needs or persons who identify themselves as LGBTQI may have less access to rights (Women's Refugee Commission, 2014 cited in Freedman et al., 2018) because refugee policies are not developed to account for these groups. For instance - although they are presented in gender objective terms - the three permanent solutions developed for refugee contexts- local integration, return, or resettlement is also sexed in terms of access, experiences, and inferences (Fiddian Qasmiyeh, 2014). The frameworks for organizing these solutions rarely focus on developing them to work for all members of society. For example, regarding local integration, certain individuals and social groups may have access to the legal, political, social, and economic rights necessary to achieve actual integration. However, an individual's gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, age, civil status, religion, and health/disability status can affect their ability to safely integrate into their host environment (Fiddian Qasmiyeh, 2014).

It is possible to see that the boundaries between state and society overlap with the boundaries of public (male) and private (female) genders to create a double hierarchy. The public sphere, and hence the state and state institutions, are areas reserved for men (Kronsell, 2005). For this reason, women who reach the EU and want to apply for asylum due to gender-based violence or persecution encounter significant obstacles in the refugee status determination process. There is evidence that women's asylum claims face significant barriers, both in terms of interpretation of the convention and procedural difficulties (Freedman, 2018). One of the most important issues is that claims of gender-based violence are not generally accepted as "reliable," and it is more difficult to provide material evidence to support these claims (Singer, 2014 cited in Freedman, 2018). So the asylum process disregards refugee women's concerns making gender power relations invisible that are part of the asylum application process. A report in Germany narrates the story of a Syrian woman who is raped and beaten by her husband while living in a temporary camp set up to host new arrivals. The woman was unable to complain to the police and, when she sought, could not obtain any real help from social services or refugee support services. Women seeking asylum face additional vulnerabilities, and during the refugee determination stage, there are insufficient protection mechanisms in place to deal with situations of spousal violence, sexual harassment, or offer protection based on GBV (Freedman, 2018). Research demonstrates that women are more likely to be exposed to two or more times manifestations of human rights violations than men (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). Gender blindness, patriarchal values, and racism compound to provide that refugee women's experiences are not accepted or addressed. Refugee women and their families are much more vulnerable to religious, racial, and gender discrimination and exploitation (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). According to Connell (1995), interests that benefit men result from hegemonic masculinity, especially in state institutions (Kronsell, 2005). The concept of protection is undermined by the ways.

This research aims to show the restrictive effect of policymaking on the integration process by ignoring the gender issue. In this study, the effects of the policies and projects produced considering the gender issue on integration at the local level will

be explained in Turkey. In this context, changes in the integration level of refugee women who are part of these projects will be analyzed.

2.5 Conclusion

Although many researchers and politicians use the concept of integration, debates on the exact definition of integration continue. The lack of a clear definition is determined by the meaning attributed to those who use it and can cause a highly subjective interpretation. However, integration policies, which play a critical role in fostering peaceful social coexistence, remain popular among governments and NGOs. Many factors affect the integration process, including the qualities, characteristics, and policies of refugees, immigrants, and citizens. Gender and power asymmetry between groups is also a key factor affecting this process and the ways it develops. However, in policies developed both at the macro level and at the micro-level, gender is not considered as an important enough issue, and this situation causes some groups to remain out of the integration process. The development of integration policies to cover every group in the community, that is, the acceptance of integration as two-way, shows its importance in daily life as frequently emphasized in the literature. Integration policies developed at the local level continue to be vital as it makes it possible to develop different policies and projects for different groups.

CHAPTER 3

TURKEY'S INTEGRATION POLICIES TOWARDS SYRIAN REFUGEES

Although Syrians has been living in Turkey for nine years, a comprehensive and sustainable integration policies have not been developed. The inadequacy of the integration policies causes an uncertainty to be a critical factor that manifests itself felt in all areas of the lives of Syrian refugees. Turkey has a fairly central administration, and this situation leads to restricting the integration policy that can be developed at the local level. Local movements and non- governmental organizations fill the gap in this field with the projects they develop. The gender is not an issue of sufficient importance in both state-developed policies and projects developed by non-state actors at the local level. This further increases the importance of projects and policies that center the gender issue.

This chapter composes of macro policies, micro policies, gender dimension, and the role of international and national non-governmental organizations in sense of refugee issue. The first section analyzes Turkey's integration policies towards Syrian refugees at the macro level to understand, to draw the general framework and to see the policies developed in the process. In the second part, Turkey's micro policies will be examined because all of the kitchens in the study are located in Turkey, and the kitchens have been developed at the local level. In the third section, since the thesis focus is on women in kitchens, the gender dimension will be addressed to understand Turkey's integration policies' influences on Syrian refugee women. In the fourth part, studies on the role of international and national NGOs in the integration process will be examined to understand the cooperation of kitchens with other institutions and the effects of non-governmental organizations on the integration process. In conclusion, Turkey's integration policies' impact on the lives of Syrian refugee women will be analyzed through these topics.

3.1. Macro Policies

In the spring of 2011, when Syrian nationals began crossing the Turkey-Syria border, the Turkish government announced that Turkey would adopt an open-border policy (Dinçer et al. 2013). However, later in 2014, with the change of Turkey's foreign policy towards Syria, an informal closed-door policy was adopted (Aras & Mencutek, 2015). The Turkish government designated the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) as the leading agency coordinating the response to the refugee situation in May 2011 (Kirisci& Ferris, 2015). AFAD and the Turkish Red Crescent were responsible for founding the first camps to host refugees in September 2011. Assigning responsibility for incoming refugees to AFAD is one example of the Turkish government approaching the refugee presence as temporary (Özden & Ramadan, 2019).

While the Turkish government focused its efforts on establishing and maintaining the refugee camps over the course of the next four years, an increasing number of Syrian refugees chose to live outside the camps (İçduygu, 2015). Syrian refugees chose to live outside of camps or could not live in the camps for several reasons: (1) the large number of refugees arriving resulted in lack of space in camps to receive newcomers; (2) family ties and the desire to be financially independent made many refugees seek to find shelter themselves; and (3) those who have not entered Turkey legally cannot remain in the camps (İçduygu, 2015). As the refugee population in the cities increased, citizens, especially working-class citizens, were affected by the living conditions that became more difficult for refugees, landlords began rising rents due to the rise in demand, and competition for job opportunities increased, and all these resulted in the tensions between citizens and refugees (Çorabatır, 2016). With the rise in the number of Syrians during this period, it became clearer that the government needed to develop a more comprehensive policy to deal with the refugee presence (Kirisci& Ferris, 2015). Therefore, the establishment of the Directorate General of Migration Management in 2013 is a sign that enormous change and the need for long-term planning are recognized (İçduygu, 2015). A more effective enrollment process across the country started with the establishment of the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) in 2014, but methodological

discrepancies in the census of refugees have remained at the local level. DGMM has provincial directorates in 81 provinces, and registration information of refugees is obtained from police departments. The lack of reliable and comprehensive records of the number of refugees in provinces presented difficulties not only in planning the humanitarian response but also caused many challenges related to development, including infrastructure and service allocation (Woods & Kayalı, 2017).

As the Turkish government initially was of the opinion that the crisis in Syria would be resolved very quickly and refugees would return their homes in a short time, they ignored the possibility of Syrian refugees remaining in Turkey for a long term (Dinçer et al. 2013). Therefore, in the initial stage, Syrians were referred to as "guests," though the term has legal weight (Aras & Mencutek, 2015). The most important legal problems faced by the Syrians in Turkey is that they did not receive refugee status because of geographical limitations indicated by law. According to the principle of geographical restrictions adopted by Turkey, only refugees from European countries assumes full legal responsibility (Çorabatır, 2016). Thus, Syrians have been granted an uncertain legal status where they are neither a refugee, in the legal sense, nor a guest (Baban & Ilcan & Rygiel, 2017). Temporary protected status, the mainstream Syrian refugees in Turkey for a "guest" should be understood in the context of discourse; It has served to marginalize the rights-based approach of this discourse and racism (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). The government applied their status to "temporary protection" as long as their exile extended, and the war was not expected to end soon (İcduygu, & Millet, 2016). In 2014, the Turkish government granted Syrian refugees a temporary protected status under the temporary protection regulation. The regulation outlined the access to health and education systems, labor markets, and other services (İcduygu, & Millet, 2016). The rights granted under the status of temporary protection are limited to the province of registered. On the other hand, Syrians have the right to apply to change the province they are registered in, yet successful examples are few. Accordingly, many Syrians living in Istanbul cannot access to such services because they are registered in other provinces (Woods & Kayalı, 2017). According to Syrian refugees, the ability to have mobility develops a

sense of normality. Conditions prevent a sense of belonging and the desire to live a normal life in Turkey due to limited mobility (Memişoğlu, 2018).

Temporary protection rather than offering Syrian refugees protection on the basis of their forced migration situation, emphasize the right to services whereby feeding into the humanitarian aid approach that sees refugees as recipients rather than bearers of rights (Baban, Ilcan, Rygiel, 2017). Policies implemented toward Syrians by Turkey is built on upgrading its image. Turkish authorities in this process, using the Syrian refugees, are trying to create a “savior” image of Turkey, in doing so, they emphasize the importance of Turkey's "global humanitarian role" (Memişoğlu & Ilgit 2017). While creating this image, Turkey brought some qualities to the fore. Turkishness and Islam are two of the most basic qualities that brought to the fore in that sense. Government representatives argue that the policies developed for Syrians stem from Turkish hospitality, and this is a historical responsibility (Memişoğlu & Ilgit 2017). On the other hand, this first period that lasted until the end of 2014: short-term, temporary approach of the state to Syrians, lack of access channels, and civil society actors defending refugee rights made Syrians feel as if they had no rights. This situation caused them to be trapped in the hierarchical relationship that was built between them and the "donors" (Özden & Ramadan, 2019).

Following the basic principles of the European Union in the 2011 Temporary Protection Directive, the temporary protection regime in Turkey also has significant distinctness. The EU Directive sets a maximum of three years for temporary protection and allows individuals to make individual asylum applications at all times. However, Turkey's temporary protected status does not automatically open a way to obtain other types of international protection specified in the Law on Foreigners and International Protection directly (Memişoğlu, 2018).

Since the thesis focuses on refugee kitchens, I will discuss the employment situation of Syrian refugees in that sense. Syrians also experience this uncertainty in many domains, including their economic participation. Most Syrian refugees working in Turkey, work in illegal ways. While Temporary Protection Regime gives them the right

to work, they must still apply for work permits. So far, the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Policy has issued 31185 work permits for Syrian refugees for 2019 (Mülteciler Derneği, 2020). Syrian refugees' formal labor is governed according to the Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners Providing Temporary Protection issued in 2016. The regulation to organize labor while enabling the formal employment of Syrian refugees includes various limitations on their labor and conditions that reduce employers' desire to hire them formally (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). The work permit is a developing process to improve the economic freedom of people under temporary protection. Most urban refugees work either in the informal sector and, in many cases, in unacceptable conditions at very low wages. Cases of child labor and illegal employment activities have been on documents (Deutsche Welle, 2017). Since the Syrian refugee workforce is considered cheap, employers generally prefer to hire Syrian refugees, therefore, undercutting the host population and resulting in increased host population hostility towards Syrian refugees (İçduygu, 2015). According to Kaya's research, the issues that Syrian refugees struggle most are: unemployment, Turkish language problem, poverty, exploitation, discrimination, and limited access to social services. Poverty, exploitation, exclusion, and discrimination are the main problems voiced by refugees (Kaya, 2016).

The Turkish government has always avoided using the concept of "integration" for Syrian refugees due to the long term implication of integration (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). Government discourses have approached Syrian refugees as victims who should be grateful to Turkey due to the help they received (Baban & Ilcan & Rygiel, 2017). Politicians, both in the government and opposition parties, use the refugee issue in domestic and foreign policy. This issue emerges in the political discussion about Syrian refugee presence where they are framed as a social security threat and a political problem: "(a) as a 'rival victim' group; (b) as a 'voter or demographic' threat; and (c) as having 'unfair' access to public services" (Memişoğlu & Ilgit 2017). The lack of a political discourse about integration increases the perceived threat. In addition, temporary protection status does not enable permanent settlement in Turkey (Şimsek & Akcapar, 2018).

As Memişoğlu points out, constructing guest discourse for Syrians create fundamental problems. First of all, defining Syrians as "guests" has made it difficult for refugees to grasp the scope of their actual legal rights and obligations, especially for those who enjoy temporary protection. Secondly, people in the legal framework for refugees and temporary protection, amendments in procedures and policies at the central level with the deprivation of awareness about inconsistencies between practices at the local level make the legal sense of stability in Turkey unclear. Thirdly, the lack of efficient communication channels between Syrian refugees and local authorities makes it even more difficult to access dependable knowledge related to Syrian refugees' legal rights (Memişoğlu, 2018). The policies developed for Syrians have based on uncertainty, and this uncertainty has become a policy that influences Syrian refugees' everyday lives and futures (Biehl, 2015 cited in Baban& Ilcan & Rygiel, 2017).

In this initial period, which lasted until the end of 2014, the Turkish state used two discourses on the issue of Syrian refugees: The "guest" discourse and the religious "immigrant/ensar" discourse. These two discourses freed the state, which approached the refugee issue from a short-term, temporary perspective, from adopting a rights-based perspective for refugees. On the other hand, in July 2016, five years after the arrival of the first refugees from Syria, with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has surprisingly expressed that Syrian refugees in Turkey could be granted citizenship. The number of Syrians granted Turkish citizenship in the statement made by the Ministry of Interior is 110 thousand. 53 thousand of these people are adults, and 57 thousand of them are children (Mülteciler Derneği, 2020)

The Turkish government manages Syrian refugee presence through contradictory measures, so while granting citizenship or work rights, state actors then move to restrict refugee actions with other policies. This kind of ping-pong policy causes local, reactionary reactions, including violent incidents, widespread hostilities, and anti-refugee sentiments (Baban & Ilcan & Rygiel, 2017). As Morell argues "Citizenship represents security and safety for most refugees rather than facilitating the integration process" (Morrell, 2009, cited in Şimşek & Akcapar, 2018). In line with the

relevant literature, the prolonged displacement of Syrian refugees should proceed, similar to other migrant movements, in the stages of acceptance, settlement, integration, and transition to citizenship. However, in the Turkish case, this progression has been stalled at various stages (İcduygu & Millet, 2016). Many Syrians find it difficult to be aware of their rights. The lack of information about how to navigate about a particular situation and obtain reliable information or where to get certain services compels them to pay for the services of informal mediators fluent in both Turkish and Arabic (Memisoglu, 2018). Therefore, supporting them in urban areas is not only a humanitarian issue but also a long-term development and bureaucracy imperative (Woods & Kayalı, 2017).

The uncertainty faced by Syrians living in Turkey does not only have a local and national dimension, but it has also passed beyond the borders of Turkey. In that sense, the EU-Turkey agreement was signed on March 20, 2016. This agreement aims to improve asylum processes, to reduce incentives to use human traffickers, and to reduce the mass movement of refugees and asylum-seekers to Europe. According to this agreement (after the implementation of the EU-Turkey agreement), refugees and asylum-seekers who do not "deserve" international protection will be sent back to Turkey from Greece. Baban, Ilcan and Rygiel claim, "The agreed terms of a 'one for one' refugee return involves one Syrian refugee in Turkey to be transported to Europe for every refugee or asylum seeker who is deported from Greece." (Baban & Ilcan & Rygiel, 2017). Based on the agreement, refugees and asylum-seekers are not only forced to move from Greece to Turkey but also forced to experience the insecurity due to the unpredictability of their lives and status (Baban & Ilcan & Rygiel, 2017). Hate speech and hate crimes towards Syrians after the implementation of EU-Turkey deal began to surface more as the agreement made it clear to Turkish that Syrians will remain in Turkey permanently (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). Syrian refugees have been living in the shadow of politics of uncertainty in the absence of rights-based policy approach. This situation strengthens the existing hierarchy between local people and Syrian refugees. The Turkish government made no efforts to plan for refugees' long term presence until 2015. In many ways, integration as an issue has gained momentum following the EU-Turkey agreement.

3.2. Micro Policies

Local governments or provincial governments can implement limited policies relating to refugees, and much of their role focuses on service provision; however, examining their role and policies provides grounds to discuss the ways how local governments may influence refugee's lives and feed into, or contradict national-level policies concerning refugees. Policies developed at the local level can play an important role both in affecting the integration process positively and in carrying out more effective projects (IMPACT Initiatives, 2016). Turkey has a strong central government, and local governments are awarded limited autonomy, but these bodies remain vital due to their proximity to citizens. Local governments in the form of municipalities or governor offices can play a significant role in ensuring coordination between different actors responding to refugee needs. Platforms could be reinforced/established to promote order and synergy among all partners, including municipal, international, Turkish, and Syrian humanitarian actors. Increased information sharing and joint planning will raise the effectualness of targeting and resource allocation (IMPACT Initiatives, 2016). Local governments have a key role to play yet they often work within a limited competency framework and limited decentralization (UCLG, 2016 cited in Elicin, 2018).

In refugee response policy terms, the role of municipalities is not outlined clearly, which prevents the development of long-term planning and service adaptation (IMPACT Initiatives, 2016). There is a lack of legal clarity on the mandate of municipalities. Furthermore, there is vagueness concerning the legal framework that would organize their efforts to work with refugees and migrants residing in Turkey. Municipal Law No. 5393 was built on the services to be provided to the "citizen." The concept by which non-citizens included in the law refers to "fellow-townsmanship," leaving who falls into that category open to interpretation whereby municipalities may draw on it to work with refugees as others use it to exclude refugees from receiving some municipal services (Erdoğan et al., 2017). Article 13 of the Municipality Law No. 5393 is regulated as follows: 5393-13:

Everyone is a fellow citizen of the town where s/he lives. Fellow citizen has the right to participate in municipal decisions and services, to be informed about municipal activities and to benefit from the municipal administration. The municipality carries out necessary studies on the development of social and cultural relations among its fellow citizens and the protection of cultural values (Erdoğan et al., 2017:40,41).

It could be noted that the provisions related to the "Fellow Countryman Law," create the opportunity and obligation for municipalities to serve refugees. On the other hand, Article 14 of the same law has also arranged that "citizenship" is taken as a basis for providing services. Article 14 is as follows: 5393-14: "Municipal services are offered to the citizens in the closest places and with the most appropriate methods. In the provision of services, methods suitable for the situation of disabled, elderly, fond, and low-income people are applied" (Erdoğan et al., 2017). The fact that these laws do not have a clear framework for Syrians causes their policies to continue with this uncertainty. This cycle of uncertainty harms the Syrian integration process.

In terms of policies for Syrian refugees in recent years, different municipalities in different provinces have taken varying approaches to some of them engaging with Syrian refugees, while others ignore their presence. Municipalities providing social services for the Syrian population encounter difficulties, especially financial, though these initiatives have received support from humanitarian actors (Elicin, 2018). In addition to general financial concerns, municipalities face legal uncertainty regarding the services provided to refugees. The services registered as expenditures for non-citizens, especially those that require resources from the municipal budget, can be described as "irregularity" by the court of the exchequer (Erdoğan et al., 2017).

It is seen that the policies developed at the micro-level are quite similar to those performed at the macro level. Rather than carrying out rights-based studies, humanitarian - aid policies are implemented for refugees who are considered to be poor and in a difficult situation. The works developed by the municipalities for refugees depend on the initiative of the municipality. Defining developed policies as aid and not specifying them as rights may also cause conflicts between local people

and refugees. Local governments can also play an important role in reducing tensions between citizens and refugees by creating alternative common spaces.

3.3. Gender Dimension

Women are one of the groups negatively affected by the war and forced to migrate somewhere else. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to develop legal regulations and protection policies that will prevent all kinds of violence against women refugees. Although Turkey is currently a high immigration country and party to many international conventions, refugee women experience the shortfall of policies designed to meet the needs of refugee women (Soykan & Çakır & Tarıkçı, 2018). Many Syrian women's experiences of living in Turkey are aggravated by sexual and gender-based violence, language barriers, child marriage practices, economic pressures, exclusion from decision-making processes and community organizing, networking, legal uncertainties and access to services with the deprivation of the rights, combined with other problems (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). Factors such as unemployment or underemployment, serious changes in economic and social status, language barriers, social isolation and upsetting traditional family roles can also increase to and/or combine with psychological suffering stemming from the war (Gorst-Unsworth & Goldenberg, 1998; Miller, 1999; Miller et al., 2002; Pernice & Brook, 1996 cited in Murphy & Çiğdem & Nurlu, 2013). Both pre-immigration experiences and post-migration stress factors negatively affect the psychological status of asylum seekers and refugees, especially women and children (Murphy & Çiğdem & Nurlu, 2013). The problems faced by Syrian refugee women are multifaceted, starting with social status, discrimination, poverty, stress, and loss of gender-based violence (Altunkaynak, 2016). Government policies that about women based to respond to Syrian refugee presence has always placed gender perspective in the background. Policies to facilitate women and other groups' access to rights have not been adequately addressed.

According to the research, social support is an important factor in sense of social stress and health processes; socio-emotional support dimensions are very important; close personal relationships are the main source of social support (Pugliesi & Shook,

1998). Social support and solidarity networks to be established between local people and Syrian refugee women have the power to positively affect the integration process. Providing social support to refugees at the local level is possible only by working with refugees or their groups. Working as a partner eases the adaptation process. Partnership models (whether faith-based or secular actors) strengthen the potential for humanitarian assistance to be provided as a form of solidarity and support rather than philanthropy (Fiddian Qasmiyeh, 2016).

The application for international protection is restricted by the Temporary Protection Regulation (Soykan & Çakır & Tarıkçı, 2018). While the temporary element specified in the status of temporary protection affects the coping mechanisms, new life practices, and relations with the new space, it prevents the refugees from leaving the past sociologically (Biner & Soykan, 2016). The legal framework in place may further contribute to Syrian refugee women's problems as the protection does not offer additional or specific protection in cases of gender-based violence, trafficking, forced or early marriage, or forced sex work (Soykan & Çakır & Tarıkçı, 2018).

After Syrian women emigrated, some women experienced gender roles' changes due to changes in family structure – becoming female-headed household – or having to work to help support the family when they did not Syria (Memişoğlu 2018; Özden & Ramadan 2019). Many Syrian refugee women are under pressure and struggle to survive day by day, and they often work under exploitative conditions, which include long working hours, low wages, and lack of security or legal protection (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). Syrian women living in cities are more visibly present in public spaces, and are increasingly exposed to hate speech especially with media construction of Syrian refugee women as dangerous persons, working as sex workers and negatively portrayed in media as stealing Turkish married men affects Syrian refugee women's relations with citizens, women and men alike (Altunkaynak, 2016). Tensions between local people and Syrian refugee women can sometimes result in a violation of Syrian refugee women's rights. Özden and Ramadan (2019) highlight the increased need for legal support to ensure that women are aware of their rights. Many Syrian refugee women do not know when and where they can file a criminal

complaint (Özden & Ramadan,2019). The lack of common spaces for Syrian and Turkish women results in women perceiving each other as rival rather than uniting them, given their common struggles and challenges. Rumors and prejudices also contribute to the lack of communication (Altunkaynak, 2016).

Despite all these adversities, some projects and policies have been developed to provide Syrian refugee women and local women with common spaces to connect and develop an increased understanding of each other. These projects usually center around joint activities such as gastro diplomacy, which is a preferred method to facilitate integration processes and has been incorporated into projects in Turkey and elsewhere. Gastro diplomacy aims to improve dialogue between communities through collective actions for social eating so that different groups interact and have the chance to develop cooperation (Sokol, 2013 cited in Çelik, 2018). In addition, it aims to economically empower refugee women. Strengthening refugee women's economic positions aims to positively impact integration processes. Currently, there a limited number of gastro diplomacy projects underway in Turkey; three such projects are included in this study: Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen, Al Shami Kitchen, Kirkayak Kitchen, Maide Kitchen, etc. are among the refugee women's kitchens.

3.4. Role of International and national NGOs in Turkey

With the rise in the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey, the number of local, national, and international NGOs (INGOs) increased, and already operational organizations developed and diversified their domains and capacities to address refugee issues at various levels (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). Local and international NGOs provide services to urban refugees playing an important role in filling the gap in service provision, though the scope and type of services provided have changed over time (Çorabatır, 2016). Non- governmental organizations have focused on various aspects of refugee presence, providing services to facilitate refugee access to healthcare, education, legal rights, among other issues. Some NGOs have focused on creating new social spaces, enabling them to integrate locally into society (Sunata & Tosun, 2018).

In this process, various INGOs have been established in Turkey too, and while some mainly provide cross-border assistance to northern Syria, some respond to the needs of refugees in Turkey. As part of the Turkish NGO landscape, partnering with already existing Turkish NGOs and working in close cooperation with UN institutions has been favored in many cases (Kirisci & Ferris, 2015). In the initial arrival period, the Turkish government mainly focused on providing some services to refugees in the camps and allowed NGOs to carry out activities in cities where local institutions were not yet equipped to provide services to refugees (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). Some NGOs and rights-based organizations have tried to set up social justice and rights-based agenda that will reduce their insecurity and improve living conditions for Syrians (Bélanger and Saraçoğlu, 2018). During this initial period, NGOs providing services to refugees had a margin of freedom in terms of the types of projects and programs they could design and implement. The Summer of 2015 witnessed the gradual shift towards increased state control over the types of projects being developed for Syrian refugees and which NGOs were providing services. (Mckreath & Sagnic, 2017). Moreover, ties between NGOs and the state increased with NGOs becoming implementing partners for state-developed projects that alter their role from service provision and defending refugee rights to an increasingly service-oriented role (Mckreath & Sagnic, 2017). According to Daniş and Nazli (2018), this is a common phenomenon in so-called underdeveloped countries.

Civil society institutions have especially significant role in exchanging and enabling among locals and newcomers. Successful integration and hospitable newcomers can only come to light when local people and refugees have chances to get to know each other (Baban et al., 2018). NGOs have not only served for the development of the Syrian community; more importantly, they also worked to create new social spaces for business opportunities and social integration (Sunata and Tosun, 2018). Non-governmental organizations initiate action to reduce potential enmity towards refugees and to reduce social othering (Rana, 2011 cited in Çelik, 2018). NGOs and local organizations organizing events that bring together members of the host community and refugees to enable different groups to communicate with each other

contribute to changing concepts of belonging. Such events are valuable in showing how co-existence is possible and how to reach sustainable forms of living together (Baban et al., 2018).

Although NGOs work to ensure integration, different NGOs vary in terms of values and conceptualization of integration. Much of Turkey's civil society has developed after 1980, becoming more visible in the last two decades, especially after the 1999 Marmara Earthquake (Sunata & Tosun, 2018). NGOs in Turkey tend to reflect social and ideological divisions that may influence their position or approaches towards refugees and integration. In some cases, NGOs maintain strong ties with the state, thus this affects their approach to refugees and the capacity to serve as a counterbalance to state policies where necessary. The post-2011, landscape is no different and marked by a heterogeneous civil society structure. While the NGOs, mostly connected to religious groups, played an active role in the first period of Syrians' arrival, since 2014, secular NGOs have become more visible and active in providing support, especially in metropolitan cities (Çorabatır, 2016).

Until 2014, both government and NGOs focused on meeting refugees' basic humanitarian needs, but after 2014, more NGOs started focusing on defending refugee rights and developing integration projects. While a 'need-based' approach focuses on providing additional resources and services to vulnerable groups, a 'rights-based' approach politicizes the process on the basis more equal sharing of available resources and support in defending the rights of individuals is a method to effect a change in the situation (Mckreath & Sagnic, 2017). However, with the state of emergency, which came into force after the military coup attempt of 15 July 2016, resulted in some NGOs to either stop all their activities or limit them to the areas allowed by the state (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). The closure or restriction of rights-based NGOs working for Syrian refugees negatively affects Syrian refugees' lives in Turkey, as rights-based groups often mediate between refugees and the state, and with limitations on their work, this space to mediate also decreased (Mckreath & Sagnic, 2017). The government has affected the NGO landscape in Turkey through its efforts to create and reinforce a civil society understanding based on its religious

ideology and discourse and has created its own NGOs or supported those purporting an ideology close to it. At the same time, it has pushed other NGOs out of the field and used its position as the governing party to push state institutions and close NGOs into the same fields (Sunata & Tosun, 2018).

Collaborations between national NGOs are limited, and there is insufficient coordination among them despite certain UN agency initiatives to increase coordination efforts. This situation creates service gaps with the same beneficiary groups or certain geographical areas, receiving support or services and other groups or continue to survive without knowledge of how to access this support or provisions (Çorabatır, 2016). However, cooperation between local NGOs and INGOs provides mutual benefits in many respects and helps local NGOs to develop capacities (Mckreath & Sagnic, 2017). There is skeptical rhetoric amongst local faith-based NGOs that some international NGOs have “their own agendas” that go beyond “humanitarian intentions,” and some actors claim that 80 percent of international NGOs are used for missionary activities (Memişoğlu & Ilgit, 2017). Such discourses and lack of trust towards INGO’s make it difficult to foster collaboration between national and international NGOs and to work on a joint project (Memişoğlu & Ilgit, 2017).

There are cooperation gaps exist not only among NGOs but also in cooperation initiatives between humanitarian actors and municipal actors. This situation prevents effective planning in the implementation of policies towards Syrians (IMPACT Initiatives, 2016). Another important problem is the lack of a diversified representation of civil society in Turkey. Therefore, the diversity of millions of Syrian refugees in the country has not been sufficiently represented. This brought about a problematic "representation problem" (Schierup et al., 2020). However, the problem is not only diversified, but the area of various non-governmental organizations have also been restricted and even eliminated by gatekeepers.

3.5. Conclusion

Tu sum up, Turkish government adopted a harmonization policy rather than an official integration policy. Therefore, it could be concluded that the development of integration policies for Syrians in Turkey is quite insufficient since the permanence of the Syrians is still not fully accepted by both state institutions and the public. This situation continues to hinder integration policies. Especially, not accepting gender as one of the important components of integration policies causes Syrian refugee women to struggle with many problems. Based on the discussion above, this research uses a gender lens to approach the integration of Syrian refugee women through the case of three solidarity networks.

Even though the solutions developed by local actors have positive results in many areas, they cannot have a wide impact due to the limited resources available and strong centralization. How do these local actors develop projects, and how do they implement these projects and how do these projects significantly influence the integration process? In this research, while it will be analyzed how projects developed by local actors affect the integration process of Syrian refugee women, the integration process will be examined in light of relevant discussions. However, the different relationship styles and working methods in these kitchens cause their effects on the integration process to differ. Analyzing these differentiations also contributes to the existing literature. How these local actors develop projects, and how do they implement these projects significantly influences the integration process? In the next chapter, the kitchens' establishment will be analyzed through the narratives of the founders and kitchen volunteers. In this discussion, I will try to explore the ways the kitchens impact the integration of Syrian refugee women and affect their relations with local women.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Method

The purpose of my study is to understand and analyze how women's participation in solidarity networks affects their level of integration and how power relations work in these solidarity networks. In this study, the narratives of three project executives and volunteers, as well as Syrian refugee women involved in the Al Shami Kitchen Project, will be examined. Within this framework, Al Shami Kitchen Project is at the center of the research, and the two other kitchens (Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen and Kirkayak Kitchen) included here will be examined for a comparative perspective. Drawing on the Syrian women's narratives of their experiences in Turkey, the effects of the project on the integration process of Syrian refugee women will be explored. Qualitative methods were selected to learn about participants social and material situations, experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds, enabling them to explore and interpret the social world of participants in-depth (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In this study, semi-structured interviews and focus group sessions were carried out during the data collection phase in that the semi-structured interview method allows researchers to ask previously formed questions based on specific hypotheses while giving the chance to develop and ask new questions during the interview process (Longhurst, 2003).

4.1.1. Case Selection

Many different projects and events are organized to facilitate the integration process of both immigrants, refugees and the host community. Meeting areas for refugees and host societies are created at the local level in many parts of the world thanks to these events and projects. For example, Hej Främling! enables local people, immigrants, and refugees to come together to do sports activities and to develop their network together in Sweden. Another important project is the Über den Tellerrand in Germany. This kitchen creates spaces for cooking together and meeting. Also, Refugee Community Kitchen in Calais and the United Kingdom not only provides

refugees to access food but also allows volunteers and refugees to come together and allows them to organize different activities together. However, this study will focus on kitchens in Turkey because Turkey continues to be home to the world's largest refugee population. This study will focus on three active and important kitchens in different cities. In this study, the three kitchens, Al Shami Kitchen, Kırkayak Kitchen, and Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen, were chosen to examine the impact of refugee women's solidarity on their level of integration. The kitchens were established in different cities, and they formed different types of relationships with local governments and funders. The Al Shami Kitchen project operates in İzmit, Kırkayak Mutfak in Gaziantep, and the Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen in Okmeydanı/İstanbul. In that sense, selecting cases from different cities provides an opportunity to examine the impact of interaction with local actors on these networks, given the variation in local actors' involvement with refugee issues across geographical areas. In this study, the impact of these three examples on the lives of women will be explored, the power relations within these kitchens will be examined and their relations with local actors will be analyzed.

4.1.1.1. Al Shami Kitchen

After I decided to work on the issue of refugee women's solidarity, I started researching projects and activities in this field. Since the Al Shami Kitchen project is located in İzmit, and there are few studies on the integration of refugees in İzmit, I decided to contact the founder of the kitchen. Afterward, Al Shami Kitchen participants were selected by using purposive sampling. The Al Shami Kitchen project was founded in 2015 by a group of academics and researchers to further facilitate the lives of Syrian women in Turkey and to ensure their economic empowerment. The project is located in İzmit, although a relatively low number of Syrian refugees live in the province. Regardless of the number of Syrian refugees in the province, the project aims to facilitate the integration of Syrian refugee women, which is the main factor of interest in this research. The project managers explained they chose İzmit to establish the project because they were from İzmit, and they know the region both sociologically and geographically.

4.1.1.2. Kirkayak Kitchen and Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen

Kirkayak Kültür was established in 2010 but formally registered in 2011. It has been carrying out activities to bring together Syrian refugees and local people since the Syrian war broke out. It further expanded the fields of its operation by developing a refugee-led kitchen and focusing on involving women in this part of the project. Kirkayak Kitchen is part of Kirkayak Kültür and was established in Gaziantep to facilitate the integration process of women and bring local and refugee women together.

Furthermore, Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen was established in 2017 in Okmeydanı district in Istanbul to facilitate the economic and social integration of Syrian refugee women and emerged as a result of neighborhood solidarity.

After I started interviews with Al Shami kitchen, I decided to have a meeting with Kirkayak Kitchen and Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen to gain a more in-depth perspective on the issue. However, this interviews' aim to examine the functioning of the kitchens, their relations with municipalities, and their impact on the integration of refugee women.

4.2. Data Collection

Data of this research were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. Therefore, women's narratives constitute the cornerstones of this thesis. In Al Shami Kitchen, I only had meetings with the Syrian women involved in the kitchen and the founder of the kitchen, but I was unable to interview the municipal authorities, thus I was unable to gain their perspective about the kitchen and the relationship with it. In addition, I only interviewed the founders and volunteers from Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen and Kirkayak Kitchen, and I did not interview any of the Syrian and Turkish women in these kitchens because of time limitations. This is one of the significant limitations of this research. However, my interviews with founders and volunteers, focused more on the functioning of the kitchens and the cooperation of these kitchens with other institutions countering these limitations.

4.2.1. Participants

Eight Syrian refugee women and five Turkish women participated in the research. All of the Syrian refugee women who participated in the Al Shami Kitchen are Arabs and were born and raised in Damascus. They all explained that they were housewives in Syria, with the exception of one who worked as a volunteer teacher. Five of the Syrian women are high school graduates, they are all married, and all but one has children. They explained that they chose to settle in İzmit because they had connections or acquaintances in the city. They migrated to Turkey at different points in time, six in 2015, two of them in 2014. One of them entered Turkey by crossing the land border on foot, one by ship, and the others by airplane. They all explained that they participate in the Kitchen project to gain economic independence. All of the participants received important support from their families for working in the project.

The interviews were conducted with the kitchens founders and volunteers who hold different professions, including doctors, academics, and a corporate communications manager. The demographic information of participants was not collected because the central issue in the interviews with them was about the kitchens.

4.2.2. Al Shami Kitchen

In 2017, I first contacted the executives of the Al Shami kitchen project over the internet and then over the phone. In this process, I express the subject and purpose of my research to the interviewees. With the permission of the project executives, I interviewed the nine women in 2018. One of them is a local participant also involved in the project as a translator, and others are Syrian refugee women. The semi-structured interview method was used in 2018 during the interview with the women involved in the Al Shami Kitchen project. This method made it easier for women to tell their individual stories. The first interviews were conducted in the kitchen of the Necati Gençoğlu Culture Center. Before the interview, the content and purpose of the research were explained to interviewees, and women's permission was obtained to record the interviews. All interviewees gave their permission to have the interviews recorded, and research participants were informed they could stop

recording at any time. The local participant, one of the project members, assisted as an interpreter. The fact that the translator was one of the project members made women feel more comfortable and secure. The questions were asked one by one and translated thereafter.

In 2019, a focus group meeting was held at the local participant's house. During the focus group session, Syrian refugee women sometimes expressed themselves in Turkish, and some other times in Arabic relying on the local participant to translate their speech. Language preferences were left up to the research participants to increase their sense of security. The focus group interview method provided a productive environment for interviewees because data was produced through participants' interactions (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Also, the focus group interview is preferred to see how women who have been listening to each other's narratives evaluate this process together and to increase their sense of comfort in the focus group session. Although some participants spoke more in the focus group, and some preferred to listen more, a more relaxed conversation about the problems of the project emerged. Semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. The focus group interview with Al Shami participants lasted 1 hour and 45 minutes. An additional semi-structured interview was conducted with the founder of the Al Shami Kitchen project to understand the pre- and post- foundation process of the project in 2019.

4.2.3. Kirkayak Kitchen and Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen

I undertook a semi-structured interview with one of the founders of the Kirkayak Kitchen in 2019. Kirkayak Kitchen conducts its activities in Gaziantep, and the interview was held via Skype. This is the only meeting that was not held face to face. This interview lasted 45 minutes.

I reached out to the Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen during one of their events. I spoke to the volunteers online before attending a tasting event, one of which is held regularly, and stated that I wanted to meet them. They invited me to the tasting day event. We met before the event and held a focus group meeting with the kitchen

volunteers. This interview lasted 32 minutes. Although this interview was a focus group interview, only two participants were vocal. After the focus group interview, I met Syrian refugee women in the kitchen, but I did not interview with them. While attending the tasting day event, I observed how the kitchen functions.

4.3. Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed, and the transcriptions were translated into English. The transcriptions were read several times, and common themes were identified. The quotes included in this thesis were determined according to the themes identified.

4.4. Ethical Considerations

As known, all forms of social research raise ethical issues. Qualitative studies must comply with several rules for ethical values to be appropriate. Participation should be voluntary, and there should be no form of coercion involved. Research must ensure to protect participants at all stages of the research. In particular, further caution is needed when interviewing a more vulnerable group (forced migrants fleeing war). The interview questions should be created considering the psychological status of the participants in that specific topics or issues may trigger a psychological response. Participants should be informed about the content of the research and potential risks. The personal information of the participants should not be shared with the public, and the research should ensure confidentiality (Babbie, 2007).

Before the study, all the interviewees were informed about the content of the study. Voice recordings and interview notes were kept with the permission of the interviewees. Interviews involved in the Al Shami Kitchen project filled permission forms. Verbal permission was also obtained from the Turkish negotiators. This verbal permission was also reiterated in the audio recording by the interviewees. The names of women in the Al Shami Kitchen project have been anonymized. After the interview was over, I informed the women that if they did not want to, or if they regretted giving permission, all the voice recordings could be deleted. However, women

emphasized that it is essential that people learn about their experiences in particular and that I should use the data. All factors that disturb or endanger the interviewees during and after the research were avoided. Ethical approval was obtained from the ethics committee of İstanbul Şehir University.



CHAPTER 5

INTEGRATION THROUGH SOLIDARITY: A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT THREE KITCHEN PROJECTS

The integration policies developed for Syrian refugees in Turkey are quite far from being long-term and sustainable policies. Activities and projects that enable refugees and local communities to come together and get to know each other are insufficient despite the fact that Syrian refugees have been living in Turkey for nine years. This leads to an increase in prejudice against each other and harms social peace. Moreover, the policies developed for this purpose are far from the gender perspective. Therefore, this situation causes many disadvantaged groups to stay out of this process. Syrian refugee women find it challenging to get involved in the integration process because there are very few projects and activities that take into account their situation and wishes. However, some non-governmental organizations and local movements fill this gap. These institutions and movements are developing projects to facilitate the integration process of Syrian refugee women and enable them to come together with local people.

This section will focus on three kitchens that contribute to women's integration. These are Al Shami Kitchen, Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen, and Kırkayak Kitchen/Matbakh (MutfakNa). Although the main goals of these kitchens are similar, they have been established in different ways. The strong relationships between each of these kitchens with the institutions they cooperate with, how they build the kitchen, and how they see the relationship with Syrian refugee women make the kitchens quite different from each other. Kitchens' various and distinctive internal dynamics also differentiates the level and form of their contribution to the integration process. This gives us an opportunity to see many dynamics that affect the integration process of projects and events developed at the local level. This study has revealed that projects and networks that enable equal relations to be established, through which refugee women have a voice and that are the main decision-makers are more sustainable. In this chapter, how the kitchens are

established and how these kitchens affect the integration process of women will be explained through the narratives of the founders and volunteers of the kitchens.

This chapter composes of two parts. Whereas the first section describes the kitchens' foundation process and its activities. In the second part, the effects of these kitchens and the activities of these kitchens on the integration process of women will be discussed. Equality, solidarity, and empowerment will be analyzed through the narratives of the interviewees under the integration title.

5.1. Foundation and Activities

5.1.1. Al Shami Kitchen

The Al Shami Kitchen Project was founded by a group of local women who wished to facilitate the integration process of Syrian refugee women. The founder of the project was from İzmit, and her family was in contact with the Syrian refugees in İzmit, which led her to initiate and carry out the project in İzmit. She has reached out to Syrian refugee women both through her family's connections and the family-friends' connections. The local person involved in the project played an essential role in the founding stage and after. She is also a local participant who takes an active role in volunteering activities for Syrian refugees in İzmit. Therefore, her knowledge of İzmit both in sociologically and regional sense made it easier to reach more Syrian refugee women. The founder of the project arranged a meeting with Syrian refugee women and stated that they would like to conduct a project that would make the life of Syrian refugee women in İzmit easier. The Syrian refugee women determined the content of the project, and this was born as a kitchen project at the request of Syrian refugee women in August 2014. Following the project's writing process, they applied to the MOSAIC Foundation. The application was evaluated positively, and Al Shami Kitchen Project was among the four selected projects (Mosaic News, 2016). In this way, three local people who took part in the project writing process received a 15-day training on the sustainability of the project and cooperation with local governments in Jordan. Following their return from Jordan, the founder and other members of the project proposed cooperation to İzmit Municipality. They have many motivations for submitting proposals to the municipality. For instance, they have thought that the

municipality will facilitate bureaucratic processes; they will receive a training for the cooperation with local governments. However, they have not previously cooperated with non- governmental organizations and long-term funding process of non-governmental organizations. The municipality also accepted the cooperation and they started to work together in 2015. The establishment stage of the kitchen has shown that it could be possible to design the kitchen according to the needs in the projects developed at the local level, and this is very important for the integration process. The design of the project in a very detailed manner and its emergence as a result of consultations increases its contribution to the integration process. However, since cooperation with the municipality will cause power asymmetry, it will bring about some challenges and problems.

5.1.1.1. Activities

As the project was carried out in collaboration with the municipality shortly after the project was written, the activities were conducted with the collaboration of the municipality. Through this cooperation, women started to take part in activities in many areas. Ramadan iftars, which enable both local people and Syrian refugees to come together and share the same table, were carried out under this project. The iftar meals made by the Syrian refugee women involved in the project were served in these iftars. In 2015, the Municipality of İzmit organized a Turkish language course for Syrian refugee women. This course aimed to make women more comfortable in İzmit and enable them to express themselves easily. The municipality has provided a cookery course to facilitate women's employment and participation in working life. Syrian refugee women were informed about general kitchen information, hygiene rules, and the use of kitchen equipment. Women provided catering services to policymakers and non-governmental organizations. They got the opportunity to go to İstanbul and visit the historical and touristic places of İstanbul within the scope of catering services. Moreover, they attended the tree planting event.

5.1.2. Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen

Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen was established in Okmeydanı/ İstanbul. Since Okmeydanı Social Assistance and Solidarity Association (OKDER) played a vital role in

the establishment of the kitchen, it is necessary to touch upon it first. Okmeydanı Social Assistance and Solidarity Association deals with the problems of people living in Okmeydanı and its neighborhood. In the first stage, the people in the association had the conviction that the state helped Syrians and that this help was sufficient. However, these thoughts were just before the Syrians settled in Okmeydanı, and they realized that their such convictions were based on news they watched on television. With the arrival of Syrian refugees in the neighborhood, the association started to take care of Syrian refugees. The association, which focused on the urgent needs in the first stage, then entered into a long-term and sustainable solution search. In 2016, a meeting was held with Syrian refugee women in the neighborhood. In this meeting, to survive economically, they asked these women what they want to do. The Syrian refugee women agreed on a culinary idea and decided to make pickle and jam. A total of 17 women, 16 of those are Syrian and one is from Turkey, started to take part in the kitchen. In the first part, women divided into groups for jams and pickles they made. They prepared jams and pickles in their homes. Overtime, it was noticed that it was quite challenging to continue in this way without an industrial kitchen, and then the attempt to establish a kitchen started. German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) from an international institution has contacted the kitchen and supported the establishment of a real industrial kitchen. Thus, an industrial kitchen was established in Okmeydanı in 2017. The kitchen has been operating since then. The Kitchen functions like a cooperative and is regarded as the kitchen of the neighborhood. The primary purpose of the kitchen is to enable Syrian refugee women to produce and to strengthen them economically as a result of this production process. The fact that refugee women play an active role in the establishment phase of the kitchen and its emergence as a result of solidarity have made the integration process faster and easier. The fact that OKDER, which is always in contact with the neighborhood, plays a role in the establishment of the kitchen, positively affected the communication between the neighborhood and the refugees. This kitchen offers the opportunity to analyze the contribution of the search for a sustainable solution developed by local movements against problems related to integration.

5.1.2.1. Activities

First of all, it was crucial to first represent OKDER's activities prior to the kitchen in that activities started with OKDER, and then continued with the kitchen. Activities and workshops have started to be organized in OKDER to provide psychological support to Syrian refugee children. Volunteer groups organized many activities for these children, such as play events, cookies workshops, and picture workshops. Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen has a children's area for these activities to continue. The presence of this area also allows women with children to work more comfortably in the kitchen. Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen currently produces mostly jams. These jams are sold in bakeries and some cafes. Tasting days are organized several times a year so that the story of the kitchen and productions could reach many more people. The kitchen also provides catering services for organizations organized by non-governmental organizations and institutions.

5.1.3. Kirkayak Mutfak/Matbakh (MutfakNa)

Since Kirkayak Kitchen is kitchen established within Kirkayak Kültür, it would be beneficial to explain the establishment stage of Kirkayak Kültür first. Kirkayak Kültür is an institution established to carry out artistic activities. Fifteen people from various professions founded the institution. It aims to increase cultural and artistic activities and make them better. For this purpose, festivals or movie shows are organized. Although it was established in 2010, it was registered in 2011. Kirkayak Kültür, which is in contact with Syrian refugees who came to Gaziantep in 2011, has kept in touch with refugees since then. Kirkayak Kültür, which deals with cultural and artistic events, also organizes joint events with artists from Syria. Kirkayak Kültür, which wanted to bring together both Syrian refugee women and local women in the future, decided to create a kitchen. First, meetings were held, founders of Kirkayak Kültür went to non-governmental organizations, explained themselves, and created their networks. Later on, the kitchen was established in 2015. The kitchen uses the name "MutfakNa," which means our Kitchen in Arabic. The purpose of the Kitchen is to enable refugee women and local women to get to know each other and each other's cultures and to support this through art. The kitchen was founded based on "We

Learn to Live Together!" philosophy. "Kitchen || Matbakh Women's Workshop" defines itself as follows:

It is a model of solidarity where migrant women and local women make common social and cultural production. Kitchen || Matbakh Women's Workshop including art, food, textile, etc. is a meeting point in the fields. It is not only a physical space but also a space of representation that allows people from different cultures to get to know each other, to contact each other, and to strengthen the bonds between them (Hrant Dink Foundation, 2018).

The Kitchen also has a logo and the logo has a similar meaning in that sense. The logo demonstrates a round table, each spoon represents a different culture, and the olive branch also represents peace. The physical kitchen was settled much later. In 2016, with the support of the fund of an international non-governmental organization, a stone building was restored and turned into a kitchen. Thus, the kitchen provided women with an area where they could produce. The establishment stage of Kırkayak Kitchen shows the advantages of being in contact with refugees for many years and producing in the artistic field with them. Kırkayak Kitchen has managed the establishment stage in a very professional way with its experience and completely for a certain purpose (the purpose of building a life together). This not only facilitated the achievement of their goals but also increased their contribution to the integration process.

5.1.3.1. Activities

Kırkayak Kültür and Kitchen carry out many activities to support the integration process of women via artistic activities. The purpose of the activities is to ensure the visibility of refugee women and to indicate that this visibility could go beyond victimization and make them visible as an intellectual and productive woman. The first event held within the scope of the activities of the kitchen was carried out by Evrim Hikmet Öğüt under the title "Woman Voices in the Middle East". It was carried out in a building belonging to the municipality of Gaziantep since there was no physical kitchen at that time. In this event, women had the opportunity to look at the struggles of musicians in their geographies and the relationships they established through music.

No Borders for Food event was organized under the scope of Tandem project. A humus workshop was held with this event, and they collaborated with a French Institution in this event. Besides, six workshops were organized in the kitchen. Both Arabic and Turkish names are written on all the jars in the Kitchen.

Kırkayak cares very much about using public spaces and being together with the Turkish and Syrian women in the public spaces. For this reason, they use different places in Gaziantep for both trips and events. In this context, a bakery workshop was organized with a pastry chef in Mehmet Reşit Göğüş Culinary Arts. Through this workshop, they had the opportunity to talk about war and migration. They visited the Coppersmith's Bazaar and the Zeugma Museum together. They also use the kitchen as a public space. A Syrian breakfast, which was prepared entirely for the Syrian refugee women in the kitchen, was held at the request of Syrian refugee women and on their initiative. Thus, Syrian refugee women had the opportunity to share the stories of their meals.

One of the important activities of the kitchen is the workshops. In the first workshop, "Women Meeting from Production to Solidarity" was organized under the title of "We learn to live together!" On behalf of "Kitchen & Matbakh Women's Workshop" between 13-14 May 2017. The place of a Syrian institution was used for this event. Its purpose is to bring together various solidarity models and other women's organizations-formations, together with initiatives, cooperatives, and associations, in which refugee-local women carry out joint production (food, textile, art, etc.). The Second Workshop, Migration Space and Gender, was held in 2018. The third workshop was held in 2019 with the theme of "Migration, Art, Gender."

5.2. Integration

Integration serves the purpose of establishing intercultural relationships resting on shared values that contain the right to mutual respect and difference. As I discussed in the Literature Section, integration is a process, and there are many factors that affect this process. Local movements, national and international non-governmental

organizations, are one of the actors that affect the integration process. The projects and activities developed by these actors not only ensure that different groups come together, but also provide opportunities to reflect on the practices of living together in peace.

All three kitchens contribute to Syrian refugee women's integration processes in that all these kitchens provide interaction between women and contribute to the development of social harmony as a whole. The fact that they operate at the local level enables these kitchens to develop activities for needs and differences. With the activities of the kitchens, Syrian refugee women were able to both communicate with local women and get to know the city they live in more closely. The contact between local and refugee women initiated a process that changed and transformed them. After the meeting with all the interviewees, three basic elements came to the fore under the title of integration: Equality, solidarity, and empowerment.

5.2.1. Equality

Looking at Turkey's integration policy which has developed towards Syrians; it could be concluded that Syrians are not recognized as refugees, so they do not have the right to have rights as Arendt pointed out that "the right to have a right"(Arendt, 1996) does not apply to Syrians. Therefore, Syrians who demand rights are considered as "ungrateful." The politicians and the public often express how welcoming they were for Syrians so they are reproducing existing hierarchies. Since the functions of hospitality power asymmetry can be produced in many areas, it could be ensured that "guests" are constantly controlled in all situations and conditions (Herzfeld, 1987). Due to this unequal relationship, Syrians cannot participate in the decision-making processes of the policies developed for them because the developed policies and projects are produced for Syrians, not with Syrians. On the one hand, it also strengthens the hierarchy between the host community and refugees, on the other hand, it prevents the projects from being sufficiently effective. In this case, however, it is possible to get very positive feedbacks from projects carried out by local actors and created in cooperation with Syrian refugees.

Looking at the establishment stage of all three kitchens, it is possible to see that these establishment processes occur as a result of meetings with Syrian refugee women and local women. The adoption of an understanding based on collective decision-making has enabled Syrian refugee women to be active agents of the kitchens. This situation shows that during the establishment of hierarchical relationships that it is seen in the kitchen of Turkey's macro-integration policies. However, it is very difficult to mention that these three kitchens have similar understanding of equality and equality-based relations. At that point, it is necessary to talk about two basic forms of relationship. Firstly, the relationships that kitchens establish institutionally with other non-governmental organizations and municipalities, and secondly, the relations between local women (including the founders and volunteers of the project) and refugee women in the kitchen. There is a hierarchical structure within non-governmental organizations. This hierarchy is inevitably affected by where civil society organizations stand and how their relationship develops. Therefore, cooperating with non-governmental organizations does not directly create a nonhierarchical relationship, but collaborating with the municipality brings a much sharper and structural hierarchy. Relations established by the municipality, to overcome this hierarchical structure is quite difficult conditions in Turkey. All three kitchens have been in contact with different non-governmental organizations. Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen and Al Shami Kitchen cooperate with other non-governmental organizations through the catering service. The interviews purpose no finding on hierarchy among these collaborations. However, Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen explained the relationship between the kitchen and GIZ, an international non-governmental organization, at the stage of receiving funds from GIZ during the establishment of the kitchen, as follows.

The projects come to us, and they say: Let us write a project for you. Let's get that much money, but we get thirty percent. The functioning of the EU funds and funds of the United Nations in Turkey is so interesting. It's a disgusting market. We do not want them to use us and the kitchen. It bothers us very much. It is such a heavy thing to make money from these refugee women. We said the same thing to these funders. OK, let's set up the kitchen, but what good does it do for women, because of cash. The market has entered the marketing method. That's why we refrain. Let your friends sit down in a

meeting, and they will say we need money. I say we need our food processor. They immediately pay for the food processor. But when I say that people are hungry or they need to go to the dentist and fill their teeth, they said that they are sorry that they are not among the funding things. It's a completely different thing (Interviewee 9, 2019).

Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen did not accept the form of funds proposed by GIZ during the establishment of the kitchen. They sat together to talk about the fund's terms and restructured the fund's terms. Thus, nobody could profit from the kitchen and women. The establishment of the kitchen was provided with all the money received. Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen attach importance to establishing an equal relationship under all conditions. They did not accept hierarchical relationships even if they needed money. They sought and found ways to sit at the table again equally and manage the process together. However, it is not possible to state that they can establish this relationship with all individuals and institutions. For example, they could not establish an equal relationship with the municipality. Before the kitchen part, industrial-sized washing machines have been arranged to meet the washing machine needs of Syrian refugee women in the neighborhood. Later, they searched the place to put these machines in the neighborhood. In this stage, Şişli Municipality was interviewed. They requested assistance from the municipality for the facility. However, although the municipality said it was okay in the first stage, it gave up this promise later. The interviewee notes that as the people working in the municipality may change, and this affects sustainability.

Şişli municipality has many properties here. Can he allocate a place, right? Just such a place was found. When they said something to be given, something happened in the municipality. That situation was completely shelved. It didn't work, so... But the important thing is to be together and try to do something together. That feeling is something different. We said ahhhh with the municipality. In our opinion, when someone changes, that is, when the dynamics change within the municipality, the commitments offered to you change. So one person comes in, and another comes out. He said that what's that got to do with me (Interviewee 9, 2019).

Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen was established by local actors, and since the first day the kitchen has had a clear attitude towards vertical relationships, and they were able to reject the relations that would produce hierarchy. This is true not only

in sense of the institutional relations of the kitchen but also among the women in the kitchen. While the kitchen is open to common use in events such as funerals and engagements, Syrian refugee women use the kitchen for production. OKDER and volunteers, leading the establishment of the kitchen, are not included in the kitchen's plans and income-expense status. All plans and economic processes are organized by Syrian refugee women.

Al Shami Kitchen also worked with associations and non-governmental organizations. However, these are not long-term collaborative works. These collaborations consist of maximum two-day collaboration experiences with the institutions that cater service provides. For this reason, it is not possible to argue that Al Shami Kitchen has established a hierarchical or equal relationship with non-governmental organizations with which it has developed such relations. However, after the idea of Al Shami Kitchen was formed, it cooperated with İzmit Municipality to make the process continue faster and more efficiently. A hierarchical relationship has been established between the municipality and the owners of the project carried out at the local level from the first day, and the municipality acted as the main owner of the project. This restricted both the authors of the project and the Syrian refugee women in the kitchen from participating in decision-making processes. The interviewee defined this situation as follows:

You work with a corporate place. They have some expectations. In this sense, they have drawn the way for us. For example, we did not take many initiatives in many points, such as the place of opening and the shape of the kitchen. Especially at the points that would require the financial dimension of the business, yes, management was in their hands (Interviewee 10, 2019).

The municipality did not have fair treatment towards Syrian refugees in this process and this situation made the integration processes of refugees more difficult. Fair treatment is as important as the issue of equality, and its lack has been one of the main factors shaping the process. The fact that there was a very sharp hierarchy between İzmit municipality and this caused the kitchen to become an instrument serving the municipality's advertisement rather than the Syrian refugee women. In the kitchen, the requests of the municipality were fulfilled instead of the requests of

Syrian refugee women. This situation prevented the kitchen from being a sustainable project.

A lot of advertising appeared in the local press. All our events attracted attention from the local press. Frankly, it was also attracted by the national press. We appeared on many television channels by videos. In many ways, we can say that the İzmit municipality has been shown as an example. In general, as I said, too much is being done to help refugees in Turkey, but these efforts have not been systematic, thus they do not help them poured into the project. Usually, to save the day, so more professional with a little more vision needed....For example, our logo appeared; our meals attracted attention. We also gained appreciation in the international press (Interviewee 10, 2019).

It is very difficult to argue that the relations developed in the kitchen environment are based on equality, while a relationship and cooperation away from equal relations with the municipality has been established in Al Shami Kitchen. Although the relationship between the founders of Al Shami Kitchen and the Syrian refugee women in the kitchen is not based on strict hierarchies as much as the relationship between the municipality and the kitchen, it will not be possible to talk about a relationship between equals. There are several reasons for this. First of all, the kitchen was considered a social responsibility project. Secondly, the founders of the kitchen do not live in İzmit, and this hinders a sustainable and continuous communication. Finally, the founders of the kitchen were excluded from the kitchen process with the role of the municipality. All of these factors have built a wall between refugee women and founders in the kitchen.

Since Kırkayak Kitchen opened within the Kırkayak Kültür and Kırkayak Kültür continued its activities in the period before the kitchen, it has provided many advantages to the kitchen at the establishment stage. The fact that it has been operating since 2010 and is in contact with many institutions before the kitchen is installed is one of its important advantages. Kırkayak Kitchen cooperates with both the municipality and international and national non-governmental organizations. They also attach great importance to the fact that these collaborations are based on an equal relationship. If they cannot establish an equal relationship, they do not cooperate.

We work with all institutions; we have connections with the municipality. We usually try to get public institutions involved in this process. We can use the places of the municipality or get support; we can get various printing or billboard support. We meet with the ministry, the municipality, the directorate of migration management with all structures, with which our negotiations continue. If we have a job, we talk with the migration administration for finding a hall for a cultural event. If the municipality wants to do something, we give direction. If a permit is required, they can take via Kırkayak, sometimes a local institution may ask for it, if it is in line with our vision and if it is under the policy of its own. For Kırkayak Kültür, we apply it, they take it through us. In that way, we are always in interaction and dialogue. But generally, we do not do anything. If there is a lot of intervention, we do not work with that institution, and we retreat, we do not continue. They can express their opinions, we are open to it, but we are not open at the point of self-censorship, we are very strict in that sense. We disagree, we retreat, and we express it directly (Interviewee 10, 2019).

Kırkayak Kültür aims at establishing an equal relationship not only among institutions but also among women in the kitchen. The kitchen's activities are intended to ensure that local and refugee groups coexist equally. The demand for an equal relationship is the demand of not only Kırkayak but also Syrian refugee women.

...We aim to live together and establish an equal relationship. Refugees need it, Syrian women need it, so they have a lot of needs. They want to learn the traditions and customs of the society they live in, they want to make friends, they want to sit together and drink coffee, but they want it to be in an equal relationship. So they were saying to us. They said, "Let's drink coffee together, but I will pay it." For example, they said, let's have a car together, let's go to Mersin together, so they want an equal relationship (Interviewee 11, 2019).

It is very difficult for refugees and local people to be equal due to legal differences in the flow of daily life. These unequal situations undermine the integration process. However, demonstrating that it is possible to establish an equal relationship with projects developed by local actors facilitates the integration process of both refugees and local people. The three kitchens also contribute to the creation of places and activities where local people and refugees can come together while trying to create opportunities to establish an equal relationship. According to the European Commission, associations and municipalities play an important role in improving mutual respect and intercultural interaction to achieve integration (Varela, V. V.,

Fernández Suárez, B. and DePalma, R. 2020). These kitchens' activities and events contribute to the integration process for both local women and Syrian refugee women. However, all three kitchens could not establish equal relations with all actors in the same way because of their different power relations and missions.

5.2.2. Solidarity

The concept of solidarity has no clear and single meaning. However, the impact of solidarity networks on the integration process is enormous. According to Featherstone (2012), solidarity produces political subjectivities and collective identities, requires an alliance between various actors, invents a new and common dream, and may require different ways of engaging with institutions. Solidarity practices give a chance to connect different geographies and provide relationships that go beyond national borders (Featherstone, 2012 cited in Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). Nowadays, the criminalization of refugees and strengthening border policies through security increases the importance of solidarity networks. The media's identification of refugees with crime causes local people to develop negative attitudes towards refugees, and this prevents the formation of solidarity networks. However, projects developed by local actors and non-governmental organizations can enable refugees and local people to get to know each other and reduce their prejudices.

Kitchen projects are also important places where local people and refugees could meet, understand each other, and take part in solidarity. Solidarity is defined and experienced by many different institutions and movements in different ways, as well as defining these three different kitchens in different ways. After conducting interviews, I realized that these three kitchens were building a network of solidarity, albeit in different ways. But they all have different internal dynamics. For example, it is not possible to say that a network of solidarity has been established between the founders and Syrian refugee women in Al Shami Kitchen since the relationship between them is very limited because they live in different cities. However, the Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen and Kirkayak Kitchen has created a solidarity relationship between both founders and volunteers, Syrian refugee women, and local

women. Many of the solidarity networks are local and trans-local. Tensions or different perspectives between municipalities and civil society-local movements are produced in different ways of institutionalizing and imagining solidarity (Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). Each kitchen defines the relationship between them differently. While Al Shami Kitchen is located in İzmit, some of the people who wrote the project and lead the establishment of the kitchen live in İstanbul, and some live abroad. For this reason, it is not possible to talk about regular and frequent communication between Syrian refugee women and the project writers/founders. However, a network of solidarity has been built among the women in the kitchen, and this network has become an important factor that goes far beyond the kitchen project and facilitates the daily lives of women. The activities organized by the kitchen enabled Syrian refugee women and local women to come together and get to know each other. However, the fact that the kitchen provides more catering services and it is only used in the production process has prevented sustainable communications between refugees and local women. Since the kitchen could not go beyond the production area as a place, and it could not be a meeting and meeting place with local women. The founder of the kitchen describes the solidarity in the kitchen as follows:

Yes, there is solidarity, but rather than solidarity, ours may also be a social responsibility project... We also had dinner together; we also participated in excursions, but Syrian women have their teams, and they usually work together. Now, for example, many of our friends are abroad, they come once a year and can meet women once a year. There was very little platform for us to work on in the cumulative rather than solidarity here. Some of the team members were in İstanbul, and we meet occasionally, namely from an event to another. A platform where turns into a continuous solidarity project may not have been formed very seriously for everyone... It depends on how you define solidarity, but what I understand from solidarity is to make something common with a double-sided giver. At this point, I can say that ours remained social responsibility at one point and solidarity at some point (Interviewee 10, 2019).

While the founder of the kitchen talks about the two-way giver, she emphasizes that one side is the giver, and the other side is the receiver. As emphasized in the previous title, a relationship style between Syrian refugee women and founders in Al Shami Kitchen for equal relations and co-production has not been developed. The fact that

people live in different cities, and even in different countries is a barrier to solidarity. However, in the next section, I will explain how the Syrian refugee women build a solidarity network among themselves in this kitchen.

Moreover, it is possible to see that there are a very effective and regularly functioning relationship and task integrity in Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen. Volunteers are actively involved in many areas, such as taking jam jars, moving them to the kitchen, or taking part in kermis with refugee women. Besides, in all of these stages, refugee women in the kitchen decide what they want to do. Neither OKDER nor volunteers decide on their behalf. This makes it easier for refugee women to engage with members of the host community as being active agents rather than being victims. Volunteers and people living in Okmeydanı (both refugees and local people) are aware of each other's problems and can develop solutions for them thanks to OKDER. With the establishment of the kitchen, the volunteers of the kitchen have gone beyond not only the supporters of the production and sales process but much more. Thus, they can be part of a larger community seeking solutions to other problems of refugee women. One volunteer of the kitchen states the following regarding solidarity.

Associations showed us, namely the people in the neighborhood, how this work could be done. Because the thing is very easy, for example, there are many social responsibility projects in our school, but social responsibility has many definitions. I am trying to explain to children. We make cakes at home, sell them at school, donate money somewhere. I will try to explain to children who grew up in this culture that you cannot understand solidarity without coming in here and frying falafel with us and without smell your hair like us...that's important. Can we walk with those women or not? There are also questions in our minds about this. Also, how much we can be in fellow sufferers with the women here. We always query whether we are in a correct solidarity setup or not, among us. It happens when we go home and say if I'm doing something right or doing something wrong. But we know that it is important for us to do something with them rather than do nothing.... We have nothing under an ideology to go under political, we have no strengths like this. I cannot do anything to this kitchen; I cannot do anything with my fiction. Because this kitchen is not mine, it is not theirs; this kitchen is the kitchen of the neighborhood. I think this is the best perspective. There is a neighborhood relationship, neighborhood solidarity. For example, I live 30 km away, but I see these women as my neighbors (Interviewee 9, 2019).

The volunteer of Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen emphasized that solidarity was learned at this stage. She stated that they have solidarity with Syrian refugee women, not only from an economic production but from a much wider perspective. Even if the kitchen is not called a direct solidarity kitchen, it is also questioned whether they are in a correct solidarity practice. This situation shows that they are open to learning and transforming in this process.

Kirkayak believes that people must be in an equal relationship so that the solidarity is ensured. For this reason, they care about keeping all the relationships away from the hierarchy because they think that a network of relationships far from hierarchy can only form solidarity. Kirkayak conducts solidarity from many branches. Solidarity plays an important role both in the relations it established with other institutions as a non-governmental organization and in the relationship between women in the kitchen. Kirkayak supported them to be visible in the cultural field by conducting joint activities with Syrian associations and Syrian artists since the first day it was founded. With the establishment of the kitchen, it made efforts to improve the relationship between Syrian refugee women and local women. One of the founders of the Kirkayak kitchen states solidarity as follows:

We tried to establish equal relations as kitchen solidarity... One of the Syrian refugee women who came there said that Kirkayak Kültür is our association. So, it's over. So much ownership... I think that is very important; we are trying to establish an equal relationship; that is, we pay attention to it. Like her home, they already called the Kirkayak Kültür as a Syrian house. For example, we would try to go to all the cultural activities of Syrians... For example, when they asked each other who came to this event from Turkey. They said that anyone will come, of course, Kirkayak Kültür, because they got used to it. Since we have always been active since 2011, in solidarity... It has developed in itself in its naturalness, so we did not discover it again after three years or four years. That process spontaneously developed in itself... Solidarity always existed, never broke but evolved, changed, changed modes, shifted to different fields. They have always changed, but it is always there (Interviewee 11, 2019).

As seen, in this process, solidarity is achieved as is the case with Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen and Kirkayak Kitchen. For this reason, they stated that solidarity

always exists though its form changes over time. Unlike other cuisines, Kirkayak maintains solidarity with Syrian associations and Syrian artists due to its corporate identity and its activities since 2011. This allows it to be included in a wider network of solidarity. The interviewee states that there is an equal relationship, and solidarity is the normalization of life and more:

We have to normalize life and break the hierarchy. It's been eight years. They are one of us. They live with us. We call them as our fellow citizens. Last year, we held the festival with the theme of citizenship and neighborhood. We said that it is possible to live together in the theme of this year's festival. I must say, at the beginning, our women kitchen's workshop has a motto: "We learn to live together." We use it everywhere so that we learn to live together so, it is possible to live together, we learn to live together with our new fellow citizens, our new neighbors... We usually use all these words in our events and meetings, or when we go somewhere. The answer to the question how you would define solidarity is: We learn to live together (Interviewee 11, 2019).

Solidarity is central to the formation of transformative political subjectivities. Solidarity practices can create new alternatives by involving people and communities that are not included in current policies (Bauder, 2016, cited in Agustín & Jørgensen, 2019). With the activities and events of the kitchens, women took part as active subjects in the process of change and transformation. "Solidarity is an important transformative social practice" (Bauder & Juffs 2019). Especially the presence of refugee women and local women in activities and the development of solidarity among them increase the self-confidence of refugee women and have a strengthening effect. The fact that kitchens at the local level lead to the establishment of solidarity networks positively affects the integration process and ensures that societies live together in peace.

5.2.3. Empowerment

There are many definitions of power. One of them is the ability to choose. Therefore, empowerment refers to the processes of gaining such a talent by those who refuse the ability to choose. "Power" - refers to the ability of people to make their own life choices and act according to others' opposition. Empowerment is also closely related to how people see themselves namely related to feelings of self-worth.

Empowerment is not only related to self-worth, it is also related how it is seen by the people and communities around them (Kabeer, 2005). The fact that empowerment is related to both the person and the society in which s/he lives also makes her/him closely related to the integration process. Therefore, policies and projects for empowerment in the integration process are very important. According to Rowlands, empowerment is more than participation in decision making; it should also include processes that have people empowered to make decisions and compel themselves to perceive them competently. Feminist empowerment contains “power to” and “power from within” (Rowlands, 1997).

The lack of policies to facilitate the social integration processes of refugee women has undermined the integration processes and empowerment of refugee women. Syrian refugee women experienced reinforced disadvantaged situations in that both they are refugees in a new country, and they are women in a patriarchal society. In a context in which cultural values restrict women's ability to make strategic life choices, structural inequalities cannot be addressed solely by individuals. Therefore, collectively combating inequalities prevents individuals from paying high costs. Women's empowerment project depends on collective solidarity in the public sphere and individual assertiveness in the private sphere. Especially women's organizations and social movements play an important role in creating the conditions of change and lowering the costs of the individual (Kabeer, 1999). These kitchens help women to collectively exist, helping to overcome barriers to empowerment. Moreover, these kitchens have become a socializing place for Syrian refugee women who have not been able to socialize before. In these venues, refugee women were able to rediscover the power they had with the activities and friendships developed. Thus, they existed as active agents in the city they live in. The people I interviewed stated that after the women started to take part in the kitchen, their self-confidence increased.

The women in Al Shami Kitchen stated that they were very positively and socially affected at that stage. The same statements were expressed by the founder of the kitchen. Al Shami showed both local people and refugees that Syrian refugee women

are productive individuals, not victims. This situation leads to increase in women's self-confidence. The founder explains that the communication of women with other people and institutions makes them feel better thanks to these activities.

Friendships were formed with Turks; people got to know their neighbors. They invited each other; they said they have heard that we have such an event. They became known in the environment they live in. People called to them Al Shami Kitchen's women. So, they felt very valuable in the following sense. We give something to the society we live in; we offer something, we offer a different taste. In this sense, we saw that their self-confidence increased, and they were happy. For example, they are singing while they are working, they are having fun, it was a very nice atmosphere. The bias towards them in İzmit was not only about hygiene. The orientalist images towards Syrian, such as "Syrians do not work, they are lazy, housewives are often adorned at home and give birth to children all the time", was also destroyed. People said that look; these people are working, they are coming to İstanbul, they want to do something, they are studying, they are not expecting anything from outside, they are in an effort. In this sense, yes, I think it was fine (Interviewee 10, 2019).

The most important effect of Al Shami Kitchen on women's empowerment is that it allows to rethink prejudices and provides a production space that will enable women to exist as creative individuals. Thus, women overcame the narrow pattern imposed on them and existed as active agents capable of self-actualization.

Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen also provided Syrian refugee women with economic empowerment and visibility in the social and public sphere. While refugee women achieve an economic strengthening by producing in the kitchen; they became socially stronger by being present in the public sphere, going to the kermess, and the activities of non-governmental organizations. This situation not only helps them to get to know the society and the city they live in, but also reduces their anxiety caused by being refugee and women, and also increases their self-confidence. The volunteer of Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen expresses this stage as follows:

Our friends in the kitchen started taking those jams with us or on their own, without fear for the first time in their lives. This time they started to like going and exhibiting something like that. All of them are pink up; they go with jams in the Metrobus, there are pickles. The moment of participating in that life

began in the first months of 2016. They've only been in Turkey has yet been 2-3 months. While other people do not go out of this neighborhood much, these women could somehow go to Kadıköy by Metrobus or even to Bomonti...., they were precious (Interviewee 9, 2019).

Kırkayak Kitchen did not provide an economic boost, unlike the other two kitchens. Since the main purpose of the kitchen is not to be an economic production area but to build a space that will allow different groups to come together to know and understand each other. Kırkayak Kitchen attaches importance to activities that will make Syrian refugee women visible in the public sphere. This enables women to be a part of the social life of the city. The fact that women produce together in the field of art in the Kırkayak and that these products are exhibited in the exhibition areas play an important role in increasing their trust and belief in themselves.

We were already increasing their visibility in all our activities; our aim was to increase the visibility of women in the public sphere; and to show that there are strong women together in the field of production...Most women knew us, but some didn't. First, they gained self-confidence. We always tell our Aunt Adibe's story. Aunt Adibe is a religious woman and lives alone. She loves traveling, but she never went out. Since she was coming to Turkey, the first time came to us through a friend. The friend took her from home and brought her to us. But for the second or third came, Aunt Adibe was came alone. Aunt Adibe made friends and went shopping. Her self-confidence has developed. She started to exist in that city. The women did not know Arabic at all or did not speak Turkish at all, but they could cry and laugh in the same environment. So, they realized the language barrier. I do not know the language, I can be in the same environment, or I do not know, but I can learn. If I say something to the other person, it is not a problem; even if it's wrong, I can handle this. This self-confidence came to them. In the Turkish side, we had dinner with people who asked questions like "Is it clean or reliable? Can we eat it? How do they cook it? So you're breaking the thing, the bias over there. They started getting recipes from each other... In my opinion, so much prejudice was broken on the Turkish side; also, women came out of the private sphere on the Syrian side. She was leaving her home and coming to Kırkayak and using public transport there or coming on foot, that is, entering the public space. Her self- confidence fulfilled; it was good in that way (Interviewee 11, 2019).

Empowering women involves gaining a voice, having mobility, and creating a public presence. Empowerment contains having some control over or modifying power structures (Johnson, 1992, cited in Rowlands, 1997). These three cuisines have

created the meeting areas of different groups, allowing refugees and local women to get to know each other, providing a space for women to raise their voices and to change and transform both sides in the process. While the local people broke their prejudices as they got to know the refugees, refugee women were able to regain their self-confidence as they socialize and produce. Kitchens provide a socialization and production space for women while speeding up and facilitating their integration process. All these encounters and learning processes increase women's beliefs about themselves and their works. It should be noted, however, that women's empowerment or self-confidence increases through kitchens and activities, not directly by them. In other words, the empowerment of women is not provided by another person and the kitchen; only opportunities are provided for this to occur. Women are empowered by what they have learned through their own experiences and encounters, but of course, kitchens and activities also play a crucial role in this process.

5.3. Conclusion

The lack of adequate integration policies for refugee women by the central government negatively affects women's integration process. However, projects developed by some non- governmental organizations and local movements for the social integration of refugee women have played an important role in the integration process of women. The three kitchens examined in this section cooperate with different institutions and follow a different pattern. However, the main goal of all these kitchens is to bring together local women and refugee women and contribute to the integration process. Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen and Kirkayak Kitchen has an autonomous structure, so the women in the kitchen decide the route and functioning of the kitchen. However, Al Shami Kitchen's cooperation with the municipality has created a barrier both to autonomy and being a sustainable kitchen. The power relations in these cooperations developed by the kitchens with different institutions have been one of the main factors determining the process. Since there are still not enough policies to facilitate the integration process of refugee women, these and similar kitchens will continue to be important component of integration process.

CHAPTER 6

AL SHAMI KITCHEN PROJECT

After the Syrian civil war broke out in 2011, a difficult and intensive migration process started for Syrians. The majority of the population who came to Turkey are women and children. However, the policies produced were aimed at short stays because the ruling party had the conviction that the Syrian war will not last long and that the people who came to Turkey will return soon, and this led to a policy change in the future (Hoffman & Samuk Carignan, 2016). Even though the Syrians have been arriving in Turkey over the past nine years, uncertainty is still ongoing in many areas, and this adversely affects the lives of Syrians. In particular, making policies without considering gender perspective makes it difficult for women to realize social cohesion. In this process, some non-governmental organizations and a few local people have carried out some activities for a better life for the Syrians. Some non-governmental organizations and local people develop projects to facilitate economic integration and social cohesion of Syrian refugee women. This chapter will analyze the Al Shami Kitchen Project, which was founded to contribute to the integration process of Syrian refugee women through Syrian women's narratives. This analysis will help us understand the effects of locally produced projects on the integration process.

This chapter is composed of three sections. The first section describes how Syrian refugee women got involved in the kitchen project and the reasons behind their involvement. The second part explains how the project contributed to the integration process of Syrian refugee women. Relying on participants' narratives, I examine the ways the project positively impacts solidarity, social cohesion, psychological impact, and empowerment issues. In the last part, the limits of the project will be analyzed. These limits concern the role of the municipality, sustained hierarchies, uncertainty, and economic struggles. In this last section, the municipality will be highlighted as the main factor behind the limitations of the project. The impact of the difference between what the municipality promises and what it does on these women are

evaluated on the basis of women's narratives. The effects of the uncertain future of the project on women's integration process, their relations with the municipality, and their economic situation are analyzed.

The analysis conducted in this chapter presents four main findings: 1) the involvement of Syrian refugee women in the culinary project has positively affected their integration by making them visibly active individuals in the city they live in; 2) cooperation with the municipality has disrupted the sustainability of the project due to the power asymmetry between Syrian refugee women and the municipality; 3) the project, which has some problems in itself, led women to become aware of their abilities and increased self-confidence; 4) Syrian refugee women and local people gained knowledge of each other which led to developing positive relationships between them. Since the findings of this chapter are primarily based on the interviews conducted with the project members, the information gathered has the potential of being one-sided. In order to counter this limitation, the interview with the founder of Al Shami Kitchen was included in the previous chapter, and the kitchen was analyzed through the founder's narratives.

6.1. Syrian Women Involved in the Project

The interviews conducted with the participants revealed several insights into the women's decisions to take part in the project. Participants noted that they became involved in the project because they believed that they cooked well and that food would be appreciated by the local people. A local participant explained the project to the families of Syrian women to gain the support of the women's families regarding their participation in the project. The interviews revealed three main factors behind the spouses' support for their wives becoming involved in the project. Firstly, since there would only be women in the work environment, it would not pose a threat to gender relations or security. Refugee women are perceived as cheap and obedient labor, and the harassment of many refugee women causes women and their families to have concerns about their working in a mixed environment. Secondly, the kitchen's cooperation with the municipality increased the acceptance of the project as the municipality said it would provide insurance, income, and many opportunities for

women involved. Thirdly, the income of Syrian refugee men is not sufficient for them to sustain their families due to exploitation (Korkmaz, 2018). This situation has resulted in refugee women's seeking employment, altering pre-existing gender roles. Syrian refugee women who were housewives while in Syria may now seek to enter or forced to enter the job market after arriving in Turkey. The main motivation behind their desire to work is that they want to maintain a more comfortable standard of living.

All of the interviewees said that they came to Turkey with the idea of settling in İzmit due to their acquaintances, relatives, or neighbors in Syria already having settled in İzmit. Chain migration movements observed in many other refugee groups are replicated in the case of Syrian refugees as well (Böcker, 1994). Six refugee women joined the project shortly after they settled in İzmit while two refugee women who had come to İzmit before the project was established, became involved in the project after they had been in the city for over a year. This allowed these women to evaluate and compare their situation before and after they became involved in the project.

6.2. The Project's Contribution to Integration

Interviewees stated that one of the most important goals of this project is to facilitate integration process. The main purpose is to bring local people and Syrians together and develop social harmony. This harmony may have been achieved during Iftar and catering events, which brought refugees and locals together. These events were considered as the right steps to establish positive relationships between refugees and local people. On the other hand, the real success and factor that strengthens social integration is the building of a solidarity network among the Syrian refugee women involved in the project. This solidarity extended beyond the limits of the kitchen. The interviews revealed that this positive relationship network not only improved the women's psychological status significantly but also affected their adaptation to living in Turkey. However, the main effect was the empowerment of women and their increased self-confidence. Despite the project ending without fulfilling its promises, these women still depend on the ties they developed to deal with the problems they experience in their daily lives.

6.2.1. Solidarity

Taking part in the solidarity network not only helps Syrian refugee women to be aware of their existing rights but also enables them to develop a common solution to problems. Although solidarity between Syrian refugee women and local women are particularly challenging to foster, its development will lead to significant gains for the women's rights movement (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). The women in the Al Shami Kitchen Project have managed to establish a significant network of solidarity among themselves. Even if the project is over, which is over for many interviewees, their friendship continues. When Syrian refugee women encounter a problem, they share it with each other and seek to find a solution to the problem together. This is also a method of struggle against their status, the uncertainty and fragility of the policies developed. For example, interviews revealed that women seeking home or work are trying to make this process even easier by keeping each other aware.

The local participant interviewed who is involved in the project and also in the women's solidarity network, speaks Arabic and Turkish fluently. The Syrian refugee women involved in the project have a strong bond with this individual who is a long-time resident in İzmit and a Turkish citizen. She is interested in issues relating to refugee rights and advocacy, and is well connected with the İzmit society. Local participants and Syrian refugee women are fighting for the rights of refugees together. They are sharing their feelings, thoughts, and different ways of supporting each other. Therefore, when I asked Syrian refugee women who is the first person they would go when they had a problem, all of them stated that they would go to the local interviewee. Besides, trying to cope with problems collectively prevents these women from feeling lonely and helpless.

During my interviews in 2018, Syrian refugee women were still hopeful despite their doubts about the continuation of the project. They stated that the friendship between them was not limited to the project. "We loved each other very much; we became sisters. That is the gain of the project. For example, even if this kitchen does not exist, we will always be like sisters. Whether or not, after that, we still live like sisters in the kitchen" (Interviewee 3, 2018). Sharing or having a communal space

accessible to all those participating in the project increases their opportunities to engage and share their problems and concerns. When I asked them: Do you share your positive experiences or problems with these women here? An interviewee stated that “I have no one else, but of course, I will share it with them. I forget them when I share my problems” (Interviewee 8, 2018).

When I interviewed the same women again in 2019, they emphasized that the project was only an activity and that the friendly conversation and relationship between them continued in the same way. The women in the project maintain their social lives by keeping their communication, gathering together, and continuing to spend time together. While this positively affects their psychological state, they also facilitate their social adaptation to the new society and culture.

6.2.2. Social Cohesion

The Al Shami Kitchen Project has two dimensions: Social cohesion and economic empowerment. Although economic empowerment has not been achieved sufficiently, significant steps have been taken in terms of social cohesion. Thanks to the Al Shami Kitchen Project events, local people perceived Syrian refugee women as individuals that produce and strive to survive with their labor. For example, people who have never been in contact with Syrians have had the opportunity to get to know both Syrians thanks to these events. In these Al Shami Kitchen events, Syrian refugee women took part in events not as "passive" but as "active" people in the new society they live in. Syrian refugee women in the media is portrayed as dangerous woman that damages the family structure (Milliyet, 2014) in Turkey and as victim (Narlı & Özaşçılar & Turkan Ipek, 2019). Beyond this dilemma, communicating with Syrian refugee women positively affects the relationship between Syrians and local people. Syrian refugee women who did not know anyone from the local community before the project was also able to communicate with the local people through the activities of the project. An interviewee stated that “Before I got involved in the project, I did not know anyone, and I knew nothing about anything. After participating in this project, I had both Syrian friends and socialized with the Turkish people. It contributed a lot to our lives” (Interviewee 7, 2019).

Therefore, these meetings and relationships affect social cohesion and social peace in the society. Al Shami Kitchen Project organized an iftar program every year with the sponsorship of İzmit municipality where all İzmit people are invited. Within the scope of this Iftar, Syrians and local people had the opportunity to come together and get to know each other. These iftars enabled not only the two groups to know each other, but also different cultures to recognize each other. With the iftar event, Syrian food was tasted and liked. Obtaining very positive results and inquiries about when the next event will take place increased the motivation and self-confidence of the Syrian refugee women. Not only iftar events but also catering events enabled these women to meet people from different groups. The activities carried out within the scope of the kitchen project not only enabled women to communicate with Syrians outside the project but also had an impact on developing positive relationships with the local people.

Our friendships with the Turks developed very well. For example, we had a nice friendship with our brothers, sisters working in the municipality. We won friendships wherever we went. I used to feel completely foreign before the project. Now I feel like one of the people of Turkey's citizens. I feel accepted in society (Interviewee 5, 2018).

Al Shami Kitchen Project created social connections, which is one of the four main domains under the title of "the indicators of the framework" mentioned by Ager and Strang (2004). Social connections have positive impacts on integration (Ager & Strang, 2004). While women came together through the project, women from the same ethnic group had the opportunity to get to know each other, thereby establishing social bonds. Social bridges were set up between different groups that Ager and Strang (2004) mentioned when they started communicating between different groups through events and iftars. Social links mentioned by Ager and Strang (2004) were already established with the sponsorship of the municipality to the project. The women in the project were in communication with the units in the municipality. The project encouraged women who spent all their time in the house to use public spaces, thus facilitated their integration process by enabling them to participate in social life and communicate with local people.

6.2.3. Psychological Impact

When Syrians escaped from the Syrian civil war to Turkey, they inevitably carried the traces of the war, what they experienced during the war was still vivid in their memories. Yet, these facts could be quite difficult for people during and after the forced migration process and as well as during the adaptation period to the host country. Social networks are very effective in producing positive psychological situations such as the sense of belonging, security, and recognition of self-value (Kawachi & Berkman, 2001). Besides, the adaptation process can be facilitated by social activities because these activities can make people forget the bad memories of war, even for a while. Therefore, the creation of social networks and the participation of refugees in social life are vitally important. The fact that women are seen as responsible for domestic labor and child care causes them to spend more time at home. This may cause women to have less connection with the outside world and have a negative impact on their psychology. Therefore, these women who participated in the project stated that the project made them feel good because it created opportunities for them to socialize. There is also a playground for children created by the founders of the project in the kitchen area where women in the Al Shami Kitchen project work. This also allowed children to spend time outside the house. Women stated that this socialization, which helped them feel better by taking part in the project, affected not only them but also their families.

My social life has developed, and I have begun to love Turkey. I have friends. I am not alone; I am happy. We started to come together; friendship has developed. We started touring. We met at the association, participated in the tree planting project, our children traveled. Before the project, my daughter was an introvert, but after we came to this project every day for my cooking course, and even my daughter changed (Interviewee 3, 2018).

Furthermore, Syrian refugee women told that cooking together had a therapeutic effect on their lives. They also asserted that the project had positive effects on their participation in society. During our interviews, they often compared their lives before and after the project. Two interviewees who came to Turkey, one year before the project foundation process and involved in the project with the start of the project,

classify their life in Turkey as pre- and post-project. For instance, two interviewees explained:

A lot has changed. I was dependent on the home environment; I did not know anyone. I have both socialized and expanded my friends' zone. I feel happy, because I have a job. I am part of a project. I feel comfortable (Interviewee 3, 2018).

Of course, the first year was tough. I was like a foreigner, but later I met the Syrians; acquaintances also who appeared from the same neighborhood and school. It was comfortable after that. It is so comfortable with the project. When I first arrived, I did not know many Syrians. I wanted to go to somebody. Thanks to this project, the Syrians scattered in different places came together (Interviewee 1, 2018).

Furthermore, these women who were involved in the Al Shami Kitchen Project stated that the project did not limit the friendship between them, rather extended it far beyond the project. Syrian refugee women who participated in tree planting activities, had a picnic in İzmit, visited the historical sites of İzmit and İstanbul, and organized an iftar dinner under the sponsorship of the municipality during Ramadan. With these activities, Syrian refugee women became more visible in the city and created themselves as Syrian women living in that city. They organized activities and trips that they could not have done alone, and these activities changed their mood in a good sense. The activities carried out in the project were one of the main factors that facilitated their integration process by affecting the psychology of Syrian refugee women positively.

6.2.4. Empowerment

During the interviews, I had the opportunity to observe the changes in the attitudes of the women towards the project and the municipality. In my first meeting, women demanded that the project be turned into a restaurant or café. While expressing their gratitude to the municipality in their narratives, they also criticized the project because of its shortcomings. However, they still had hopes that the project would come true, and they believed that it would somehow be very fruitful. They often talked about the project for bringing and its social benefits. However, in my interview in 2019, the women criticized not only the municipality but also the people who

initiated the project. Moreover, the dose of criticism towards the municipality increased. The main factor affecting this situation is that these women are tired of waiting for a long time, and their hopes for the project are exhausted. The main source of criticism towards the project executives is the lack of regular communication between the project executives and the Syrian women. They stated that the kitchen project process has not been carried out strictly by the kitchen founders. However, the change I observed in women was not only criticism towards the municipality or the project founders. But also, there was a strong belief in women that they could exist autonomously from the municipality and an increase in their self-confidence that they could do whatever they wanted with their abilities. An interviewee stated that “The project is over. These women also do not want to work separately from each other. If we actually establish an association, we will find a possible fund, if we apply to a fund from Europe. We can open an association on behalf of women” (Interviewee 6, 2019).

Women have developed a critical perspective on the power asymmetry between them and the municipality rather than accepting the opportunities that the municipality would offer. As they are not satisfied, they decided to finalize the project on their terms. It is also possible to see that this is a rejection of an existing hierarchical relationship.

6.3. Limitations of The Project

Although the project aimed to facilitate the economic and social integration of Syrian refugee women, it had many important limitations. One of the main reasons for these limitations is that policies developed for Syrians are still based on transience, which is even seen in integration policies too. Although Al Shami Kitchen Project has been developed for social cohesion and integration, the fragile status of Syrians affects the sustainability of the project. Whereas cooperation of this project with the municipality causes significant power asymmetry within the project, it also imposes the presence of Syrian refugee women in the project as passive agents. The emerging hierarchy undermines the economic integration process, which is one of the main objectives of the project by preventing Syrian refugee women from achieving their desired goals.

6.3.1. Municipality

Syrians are not accepted as refugees in Turkey and they benefit from the fundamental rights under temporary protected status. However, the fact that this status renders their future uncertain and does not provide a foreseeable status, so this situation brings about some problems. This uncertainty causes many local institutions and organizations to work on their initiative. This turns into social responsibility or aid-centered policies rather than granting existing rights. The fact that these policies depend on the initiative of local institutions and the interpretation of existing municipal law may cause Syrians to experience this situation differently in different places even though they have the same status. According to the Law on Municipalities, these people could be regarded as fellow citizens and enjoy certain rights, but this is related to the perspective of the municipality (Erdoğan & Şener & Sipahioğlu & Kavukçuer & Başçeri, 2017). Kocaeli is Turkey's tenth largest city. İzmit is one of the eight districts of Kocaeli. It is the Municipality of İzmit that cooperates with the Al Shami Kitchen Project. The mayor of the İzmit Municipality was AKP (Justice and Development Party) member from the foundation stage of the project until the last local elections. The municipality of İzmit was an AKP-based municipality and had not differed from the general attitude of the AKP. The mayor saw Syrians as brothers, sisters and guests. (İzmit Belediyesi, 2017). Thus, social responsibility approach was adopted rather than a rights-based one in the initiation of policies toward Syrians.

6.3.1.1. Municipality's Promises and Outputs

When cooperation was offered to İzmit Municipality for the implementation of the Al Shami Kitchen Project in 2015, the municipality evaluated this proposal very positively and made promises for Syrian refugee women. Interviewees listed these promises are: Women will be able to start working with insurance. A kitchen for women will be allocated, and women will be able to use that kitchen continuously. The children of the women will benefit from the activities and training organized by the municipality, and the children will be enrolled in a swimming course. Turkish language courses will be provided for women. There will be cookery training for women, and since the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) will support this training,

women will receive money for the course they take. At the end of the cookery training, an international document will be issued and will be valid in different parts of the world.

The idea that all these promises are essential and that women will strengthen both in education and in economic terms has both excited Syrian refugee women and their families and increased their expectations from the project. However, in the process, the municipality has changed its promises, failed to meet the expectations of these women. This project started with enthusiasm and turned into an unpromising project for women. There are many reasons for the relative failure of the project. Although the municipality has provided many activities within the scope of the project, many activities were quite insufficient in terms of content. For example, Turkish language education had many problems. The interviewee said that Syrian refugee women who joined the Al Shami Kitchen project later did not attend the language course. Although all the women I interviewed understood Turkish, many of them had difficulty in speaking. Women stated that the language course was not beneficial enough. An interviewee stated that "The course was based on writing and reading rather than speaking. I can read, write, but my practice is weak" (Interviewee 1, 2019).

On the other hand, although these women demanded that education provided to be made more instructive, their requests were not taken into consideration.

The municipality has opened a course for the kitchen. A teacher came. She teaches people who cannot read and write. She teaches me how to hold a pen. We said that we know how to hold a pencil, these women have studied until high school. So, I don't need them. Teachers, they told me, this is the system, it is obligatory, she said I would continue. Then, we wrote our name. I already know my name. We were both very angry and surprised, so there was nothing at that time... Then I said: Can you show me a little something in the present, in the past? She said it was very, very early. We sat for three months, just reading and writing (Interviewee 2, 2019).

According to interviewees, in this language course, the demands of the women were not taken into consideration and that the rules determined by the bureaucracy of the

municipality were applied strictly. The demands were not taken into consideration; besides, the language education models appropriate to the educational level of women were not selected. This made the language education process inefficient. Some of the women still have difficulty in speaking even though they have received an education.

The interviews revealed that another problematic area was the culinary course. This course had many problems both in the course process and conclusion. While these women thought that they would learn new dishes during this training process, what women have learned has not gone far beyond what they know.

Why are we going there? It's just for signing; there's no other lesson, nothing. The first week was okay, and we did the lessons, then she said that my lessons are over. That's what the council gave us. So, after that, you will have to sign for attendance, because you must attend to ISKUR. We were going every day, and we did it there. Everyone was cooking at home, bringing and eating together, and going out. It was like a conversation, but this conversation is compulsory for everyone, everyone is obliged to participate (Interviewee 2, 2019).

The most important reason why these women could not have received practical training is that kitchen utensils and tools were not ready for their use.

When this cookery course began, most of the equipment in the kitchen were not become operative; it was on the practical course rather than the written course we received. We had difficulty in the applied course. Since the natural gas had not arrived yet, the oven was not working yet; the dishwasher was not working. That's why our lessons were a little hampered, that is. We had problems with the municipality until these were corrected (Interviewee 3, 2018).

What was promised in the cookery course was that Syrian refugee women will learn to cook, and at the end of this course, they will receive a chef certificate. However, it was not even taken into consideration whether the kitchen appliances were working while giving a cooking course. This showed that it is not possible to talk about process management based on shared decision making between refugee women and the municipality. When the municipality did not fulfill its promises, it did not come up

with explanations to women. According to interviewees, the demands of them were not taken into consideration. This situation has caused the process to be quite inefficient. Although the municipality first stated that these women would receive an international certificate at the end of this training, then it was stated that they would be given an assistant certificate and a non-international certificate. In the interviews held in 2018, women were excitedly waiting for the certificate of assistant cook despite all the negativities. At the meeting I held in 2019, while the documents were present in the municipality, only one interviewee received the document and did not even feel the need to examine it. They stated that other women lost all motivation to obtain documents.

There is always a big difference between what is said and done at the end. After a six-month cookery course, we would receive a chef's certificate. Then it turned to the assistant cook. A cookery certificate is not an international certificate, only the assistant cook certificate. People are disappointed when there is much difference between what is said and done (Interviewee 4, 2018).

The course's over. The six-month course is over in two and a half months, but at the opening of the kitchen, the mayor said they would give us an international certificate to our sisters, even when they return to their countries tomorrow, this certificate will be valid there. Unfortunately, it is very sad (Interviewee 1, 2019).

Someone working at İzmit Municipality said that whoever wants to take a cookery certificate can go and take the document one month before. Only a person went and got that document, but I didn't (Interviewee 2, 2019).

Interviewees explained that after the culinary course was completed, this time, the municipality wanted to give the Ottoman cuisine course for women. However, when Syrian refugee women stated that they would not cover transportation fees and were told that economic support could not be provided for women, women did not accept this proposal, taking into account their previous experience in culinary training. While the municipality wanted to continue its activities for the Syrians and to advertise these events, the fact that the demands of the women were not met and that the expenses of the courses would belong to the women prevented the formation of a new course.

6.3.2. Sustained Hierarchies

Although the Syrians arriving in Turkey over the past nine years, the relationship between Syrians and state institutions is still in the form of aider and donees. Refugees are considered passive individuals who receive help instead of being considered as active and active agents. Therefore, this perspective strengthens the existing hierarchy (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). The relationship between Syrian refugee women and İzmit Municipality has many dynamics of power. On the one side, there is a municipality belonging to the ruling party; on the other side, there are refugee women from Syria, and they are under temporary protection status. Although this project was not created by the municipality, it is seen in media that the project was initiated by the municipality. Opening speech of the project was also made by the mayor. İzmit Municipality believes that these women involved in the Al Shami Kitchen project will return to Syria and thus İzmit municipality define them as guests. Although the main objective of the project was "integration," the mayor in the opening speech of the kitchen mentioned that Syrians would return to their countries.

Of course, we never forget that our refugee brothers and sisters in our city are members of the family, and they are our guests today. We are trying to support them as much as we can: Supporting the education of women and children, helping them get into business life via our projects. Another thing is that, with our kitchen here, we gain a new taste and a new value to İzmit. In the aftermath of the great suffering, we do these works, of course, with emotionality. But we say that the government of the Republic of Turkey, in strong unity and solidarity, is the sole country to be able to handle this situation. There's no other door. God willing, in the beginning, our government at the very beginning of our state, all the board organizations, they are fighting for all these brothers and this geography to reach peace-happiness. They will continue to fight. They are not alone. They're our brothers. Someday these pains will end. The longing for their homeland will finish. We will pay a visit to them. I hope they will welcome us to their businesses there (IHA, 2017).

The fact that the mayor acts as the owner of the project, even though he was only the partner of the project, and the fact that the mayor himself was the keynote speaker, demonstrate that the hierarchical order has been determined at the

beginning of the project. This hierarchy was not only established between citizens and refugees, but also between women and men.

Another important point where the hierarchy was more visible is that women's security is harmed for advertising. The families of some refugee women live in Syria. For this reason, these women do not want their names to be used in the media. They think that this is likely to harm family members living under the Assad regime. However, Syrian refugee women stated that this was not taken into consideration by both the municipality and the media. The municipality used this project as a means of advertising in the media and caused situations that would risk the security and privacy of individuals.

They told me that I would have only a little chat. I said I don't want it. They said that you are the best Turkish speaker. So, shoots on camera. Then the mayor said: How are things in Damascus? I said I will not say anything because my parents are there. I told everything, I told my mother my father there, I'm scared, so there will be nothing to them because Assad knows everything and does it there, so I was very scared for my parents. Then I talked, and I said that the situation is very bad, I did not say there is war. So, I didn't blame anybody, never said a name. I told them that their situation is very bad, everything is expensive, I explained. But then they asked me to write my name and last name. I do not know what they will write on the Internet. Now when I write my name on the Internet, they come out. They did it for advertising. Look what they said: Kitchen is opening for refugee women in İzmit Municipality, Turkey. That's why I get angry now. If you write my name on Google, it turns out (Interviewee 2, 2019).

The fact that the municipality acted as the owner of this project and often left it in drag caused both obstacles to the existing potential of Syrian refugee women and the long wait for the economic gain of these women. This resulted in a project in which the wishes of the municipality were realized rather than the wishes of women and this did not come to an end in the way women expected. However, it should be noted that these are the findings that arise from the unilateral views. In this section, I present narrations only through their eyes, as I only include the narratives of women who are involved in the project.

6.3.3. Uncertainty

Syrian refugee women living in Turkey encounter sexual and gender-based violence, language barriers, child marriage practices, economic pressures, exclusion from the decision-making and community organizing network, and they are also forced to struggle with many questions, such as legal uncertainty and access to services with the deprivation of the rights and they experience the post-migration process harshly (Özden & Ramadan, 2019). All of these have serious effects on the lives of Syrian refugee women separately. On the other hand, legal uncertainties affect not only the present conditions but also their plans for tomorrow and increase the concerns. Ensuring that Syrians exist in the host community and live by anticipating their future will facilitate adaptation between local people and them. However, the existence of uncertain status and the frequent mention of the return of Syrians by the politicians harshly damage to adaptation and social cohesion. It is not only damages the relationship between the two communities but also adversely affects the sustainability of the policies developed. It is a rather ambiguous policy towards Syrians in Turkey that also affects the policies locally produced. Because of the language established by the government and its policies, Syrians live without foreseeing their future. Syrians are still seen as guests who will return someday; the policies are constructed only for a temporary time.

The women involved in the kitchen project have been involved in training activities since 2015, and the mayor made the speech in 2017. Although it has been almost six years since Syrians arrived, the continued use of the expression of the guest for Syrians and the emphasis on the return of Syrians to their countries are also in contradiction with the main objective of the project, "integration." The project is not finalized, and the promises are not fulfilled. These discourage women's hopes for the conclusion of the project and cause uncertainty. Despite all the criticisms I heard during my meetings with women in 2018, they were still hopeful for project's continuity. However, during my interview in 2019, I observed that these women lost all their hopes for the project because nearly after a year, they provided catering services only once, and they could not get the financial result they wanted.

One of the interviewees who were pleased with the support of the municipality in the first process used the following statements:

I appreciate the municipality, but there's always something missing. In some ways, for example, they do not immediately carry out the issues, they bring them with delay, and I feel a bit uncomfortable with it. There is a proverb in Arabic; they brought it to the middle of the well then cut the rope (Interviewee 5, 2018).

When Syrian refugee women started the Al Shami Kitchen project, they stated that Syrian cuisine and restaurants were not widespread yet in İzmit. So, this situation was seen as an important advantage for their kitchen. However, although women have been involved in this project for four years and made many efforts, they still do not have a kitchen that they can use and produce continuously. Besides, many Syrian restaurants and cafes were opened in İzmit during this period. So even if they have a kitchen right now, it requires them to accept a serious economic race.

We hope again; we did not leave because this project was very good. If a project is conducted, it will be beneficial for everyone. Once this project was accepted, their labor had been very laborious for three years. It was a baby; it is three years old now. God willing, this project will continue elsewhere if it is not here (Interviewee 6, 2018).

Women have not been able to receive compensation for their work during the process, and this has affected their beliefs and aspirations to continue. Many women stated that they no longer want to be involved in the project.

Now, this project is finished, so nothing new is planned for a year. We went to Istanbul only one time this year. Every time, we went there together as six people; we are not satisfied, so there is always a problem because obviously, this project will not continue anymore. So, I quit, even said that I will not come anymore. My other friends went the other time, another time I said I'm not going anymore (Interviewee 2, 2019).

For women, the project vanished in uncertainty before it was realized. This project is over for them because this waiting process has demoralized both them and their families. The fact that women are involved in the project and that the promises made by the municipality in the first place are known to the local people, and other Syrians

have made women feel compelled to explain their situation to them. Many people think that women are provided with salaries and insurance by the municipality. This requires women to struggle with false information constantly.

When the project was first advertised when everyone was informed, my neighbor, who is also my landlord, said “how lucky you are, now you have a salary”. Well, there's nothing, if there's a job, but there's nothing. Of course, she didn't believe me at first, but then she did. I mean, she always sees me, so we're all together all day. But not everyone believes us like my neighbor. They say they lie, they make money, but they don't tell us (Interviewee 2, 2019).

This situation may also adversely affect the communication between women and local people because although the municipality publicized these promises at first, it did not state that promises could not be fulfilled, and this has increased the spread of false information about Syrians. Most of the time, this misleading information can provoke conflicts between local people and Syrians and cause lynch. This situation can easily lead to the marginalization of any demand other than the before mentioned one and can create a lynch environment (Doğanay & Keneş, 2016).

6.3.4. Economic Struggles

One of the most basic requirements of the people who came to Turkey escaping from the Syrian civil war is being economically independent. After a long time, the Syrians arriving in Turkey gained the right to work legally. However, there are many criteria for this. Syrian refugees under Temporary Protection can work legally according to the regulation, but they are under the Temporary Protection Law, and according to this law, people under consideration should first get a work permit to work in Turkey (Resmi Gazete, 2016). However, there are many limitations on people to access these permits: Employees are not aware of the rights of people under Temporary Protection, there is a limit. In that sense, for companies to hire people in the context of Temporary Protection, employers can only hire 1 Syrian refugee for 10 Turkish employees, and employers have to apply for work permissions for the people working for them. The number of employees who are under temporary protection cannot exceed %10 in any workplace. If there are fewer than ten employees in the

workplace, only one temporary protection beneficiary can be recruited. This strict law pushes refugees to work illegally and causes labor exploitation. Also, according to this law, employers are in charge of conducting procedures (they should obtain the online application from e-devlet (e-government) and follow the application process online) for the individuals under the Temporary Protection. As a result, the illegal labor force rates increase because employers approach these procedures as a burden on their shoulders and do not want to hire Syrian refugees. Most of these conditions are not met, and employers want to make more profit; refugees are forced to work for lower wages and longer hours, resulting in a serious labor exploitation cycle.

While it is so difficult for Syrians to work in a legal job, it becomes even more difficult for Syrian refugee women, with the effect of the existing patriarchal system. In particular, the labor of immigrant/refugee women is seen as unskilled, low-paid, and obedient, leading to more problems for women in working life (Freedman & Kivilcim & Baklacioglu, 2017). Therefore, the fact that Al Shami Kitchen Project promises Syrian refugee women a safe working life and environment away from these negativities have increased the importance of this project for women. The negative work experiences that women experienced before was another reason why they were tightly attached to this project. Before joining the Al Shami Kitchen Project, the interviewee briefly used to work as a cook in a kindergarten and described the process as follows:

It was very tiring. I did everything except cooking. I was cooking and bringing the kids to service. Apart from what was said, they started to get things done. The fee was very small. It was 25 lira a day, but they were told that they would only work in the kitchen, cook for the children, and prepare breakfast. But other than that, the expectations were to take the kids, to go up the stairs, and to clean when they all go inside, so I quit. It was on the fourth floor and there was no elevator. So it was very exhausting to bring children to the service (Interviewee 4, 2018).

However, sometimes Syrian women do not want to quit even if they work in very bad conditions because it is not easy to find a new job and it is unlikely that the new job will be better. One of the interviewees involved in the Al Shami Kitchen Project

started working in a mushroom factory while the project was in progress but could not go to work for a few days when she became ill. When she wanted to go to work after recovery, the employer stated that she could not continue working because she had not worked for three days. The interviewee explains that the working conditions are quite difficult.

I used to work from 8 am to 5 pm. I used to earn 1500 Turkish Lira. It wasn't safe; many people fell from the high floor in front of me, they got injured. They have Turkish insurance because they are Turkish, but we do not have that insurance. The employer was bad; they behaved badly; they were always screaming as if we were slaves (Interviewee 7, 2019).

However, she stated that she still wants to continue because she suffers from serious economic difficulties. "I wanted to go back there, although the conditions were bad, they refused. I would like to work if there is an opportunity in the mushroom factory. My husband is ten years older than me, maybe in the future days or years, he will not work, so I have to work" (Interviewee 7, 2019).

Syrian refugee women want to stand on their own feet economically because they want to lead a life compatible with human dignity. Women's motivation for the Al Shami Kitchen Project was so high at first because the project asserted that it would provide economic benefits for these women. However, the lack of economic integration promised in the first process caused women to have to work in other jobs under adverse conditions. However, not every woman in the project can work in another job and does not prefer to work, even if it is economically under challenging conditions. The fact that most of the women in the project do not have work experience before the project and are inexperienced prevents them from applying for other jobs. Education conditions prevent women from working in more qualified jobs. None of the women are university graduates. However, the main issue at that point is the fact that Syrian refugee women and their families do not want women to work in an environment where men work. This makes it very difficult for women to find a job. Although the project is considered an essential step for economic integration, the inability of the municipality to meet its promises in the following

process caused the economic empowerment, which is one of the main pillars of the project, not to be achieved.

6.4. Conclusion

Integration policies developed by Turkey towards Syria have many problems on their essence. The most fundamental of these problems is that policies of uncertainty have been going on for years. The continuation of the uncertainty policy affects social cohesion. The inadequacy of the studies on adaptation and the disregard of the gender perspective makes it difficult for women and other groups to experience this process. The lack of policies and projects focusing on women causes them to spend their lives trapped inside the house. The projects developed by municipalities and individual initiatives provide space for women to exist outside the house, and yet sometimes it could bring about various problems. With the Al Shami Kitchen project, women have begun to experience their city and become more visible. However, the fact that the relationship between the municipality and Syrian refugee women was very hierarchical has led to the domination of the municipality on this project, and women had more limited space in decision-making mechanisms.

Beyond the unequal relationship established with the municipality, women have managed to establish a solidarity network among themselves. Women have been able to end their relationship with the municipality by taking part in this solidarity network. While the municipality identifies Syrians living in the district as ensar, Muslim brothers - sisters and offers support to them, it also underlines their return to their countries and states that they are not permanent here. The municipality builds the hierarchy of networks clearly through the aider-donnee relationship between Syrians and local people in works for Syrian women. However, beyond this visible and rigid hierarchy, women have managed to establish a network between themselves based on horizontal solidarity away from the hierarchy. This success has given them a significant experience that could enable them to establish more equal relationships.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In this study, the effect of the kitchens on the integration processes of Syrian refugee women was analyzed. The research concludes that the most critical factor affecting the integration of Syrian refugees is their status in the host country. Although the status of the Syrians (namely the temporary protection) facilitates their access to fundamental rights, it creates challenges in other domains, especially as it does not enable refugees to develop certainty about their future in Turkey. The lack of policies that will enable them to lead a clear and predictable life and to make a life plan negatively impacts their integration process.

Policymakers in Turkey prefer to use the expression of social cohesion rather than the concept of integration because they believe that social cohesion has a more positive meaning. However, as part of this research has demonstrated, policies to actualize social cohesion are mostly absent in policies concerning refugees. Researchers conclude that integration is a bilateral process (Göksel, 2018), but the Turkish policy approach is built on a unilateral integration process. As this research has indicated, one key aspect of integration involves fostering the development of common ground or meeting spaces for Syrian refugees and citizens, but government policy in this regard has been largely inadequate. Municipal actors' approach to the women involved in the Al Shami Kitchen was built around highlighting their efforts as 'good hosts' towards refugee women rather than fostering solidarity or positive relations among citizens and refugees. The lack of sustained and concrete integration policies leads to difficulties for the two groups to engage and communicate.

In this study, it is argued that it is essential to recognize two-way nature of integration, whereby both groups involved must actively participate in this process. The activities of these kitchens, highlight the possible success of two-way approaches as the kitchens provided a space for local and refugee women to engage and to develop positive relations based on equality and shared activities. At the same time,

a comprehensive approach involving all social actors may be more effective in identifying the needs and priorities of different groups, increasing communication, and clarity within relations.

As this research demonstrated, existing integration policies inadequately take into account gender as an issue of concern. This situation causes women and many other groups to be only incorporated partially or to be excluded from integration processes. The kitchens used as case studies in this research highlight the ways a gender-specific perspective can have a positive impact on women's lives and integration processes. The kitchens' approaches, and a gender-sensitive perspective in integration policies may lead to effectively countering patriarchal relations and women's isolation or exclusion from the public sphere while fostering women's economic independence and their position as decision-makers whether in the kitchen or their personal lives.

The kitchens' relations with local government highlighted another aspect of integration policy that requires further efforts and amendments. Turkey has a strong central management that restricts local level governments from making independent policies concerning refugee issues or other issues. This situation makes it difficult for local actors to develop specific policies for different groups they provide services to. Policies developed by the center government are built as one-size-fits-all and are not refined to meet the variations based on town or city population size nor meet the needs of all residents. However, local movements and non-governmental organizations fill the gap in this field as they have more flexibility to develop and refine projects based on needs on the ground. All three kitchens examined in this study were grassroots projects developed by locals due to a perceived need for communal spaces and economical generation projects. These kitchens fill a critical gap in the needs of both citizens and refugees, especially with the consideration of gender-specific needs. However, variation in the kitchens' internal dynamics and cooperation with different institutions have affected both their effects on the integration process and their sustainability. The research indicates that kitchens maintaining their autonomy or reducing their dependence on the involvement or support of local government actors help making themselves and their activities

sustainable. The power asymmetry between the cooperated institutions both damaged the sustainability of the kitchens and limited its contribution to the integration process.

Existing literature emphasizes that local integration is crucial to foster long term security and social co-existence. In this study, it is argued that policies produced at the local level could result in higher success rates. However, the research equally demonstrated that the internal dynamics of these projects could change the course of the process. The lack of an explicit legal permission to offer services to Syrian refugees at the municipality level in Turkey leaves the issue entirely up to municipalities to initiate projects and to determine the extent of their involvement in refugee response plans. At the same time, the type of municipal involvement is crucial as the case of Al Shami kitchen demonstrated where officials used the kitchen to advertise their efforts. This situation caused the effectiveness and importance of the policies developed to remain in the background and prevented them from making sufficient contributions to the integration process. Moreover, the approach feeds the negative perceptions of Syrian refugees by portraying them as people in need rather than recognizing their agency.

The kitchens studied in this research enabled Syrian refugee women to become more visible and to be presented as producers in the city they live in. The kitchens as spaces enabled them to exist as active subjects and to demonstrate their rejection of the imposition of the role of the victim. Syrian refugee women involved with the kitchens have become a part of society both among the Syrian community and with Turkish citizens. The presence of local and Syrian refugee women in public spaces during catering events and social activities shows the ways coexistence is possible, and it allows for a rethinking of othering processes. The space of the kitchens as a shared space then extends beyond the physical boundaries of the kitchens, by involving locals in events or sharing food produced in the kitchens with them. This extension of the kitchens into the community serves to further raise awareness and contributes to integration efforts.

While Al Shami Kitchen was not a sustainable project, the solidarity of the women involved in the kitchen extended beyond the temporal boundary of the kitchen project. Moreover, the women involved in the project highlighted ways how their involvement increased their confidence and public engagement. The kitchens provided a space for Syrian refugee women to express themselves and spend time with local women, thereby filling an essential gap in the state-managed integration policies. The local level development of the projects further enabled them to respond to women's need by making them more effective than top-down integration policies that remain rigid or lack a localized and gender-sensitive perspective.

This study contributes to integration studies by looking at local actors and gender intersections. The kitchens developed by Syrian refugee women by local actors demonstrate that the power relations between the institutions they cooperate with is one of the determining factors of the integration process. Thus, it is argued that integration processes developed at the local level with a gender-sensitive approach are more effective in fostering social integration and co-existence as well as more positively impacting the women participating in the projects.

On the other hand, this study has some limitations. First of all, the fact that it has not been interviewed with women in Woman to Woman Refugee Kitchen and Kirkayak Kitchen constitutes the main limitation of the research. Although I met women at Woman to Woman Refugee kitchen, I did not interview them because volunteers and founders stated that many researchers interviewed Syrian refugee women, and women were tired of telling the same things. Therefore, I did not want to interview these women because of ethical concerns. Afterward, I decided not to meet Syrian refugee women in Kirkayak Kitchen because I decided to include the narratives of the founders and volunteers in the section where I would compare the kitchens. Another significant limitation of the study is the use of an interpreter while interviewing Syrian refugee women in the research. The person who speaks both Turkish and Arabic very well among women helped me as a translator during the interviews. The fact that the translator is a person that Syrian women know and trust has made my interviews easier and made women feel more comfortable in the interview processes.

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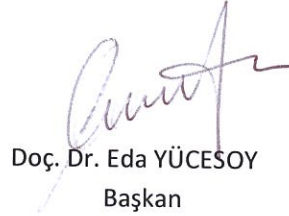
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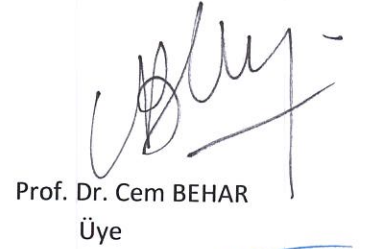
Toplantı Tarihi : 25.03.2019
Toplantı Sayısı : 18/2019
Toplantı Saati : 10:00
Toplantıya Katılanlar : Doç. Dr. Eda YÜCESOY (Başkan)
Prof. Dr. Nihat BULUT
Prof. Dr. Cem BEHAR
Doç. Dr. Elif ÇELEBİ
Doç. Dr. Hızır Murat KÖSE
Doç. Dr. Sinem ELKATİP HATİPOĞLU
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Betül NİZAM
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Eyyüp Said KAYA

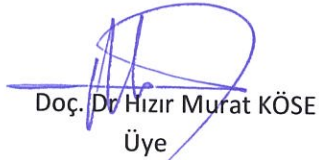
Karar No : 1- İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Araştırma Etik Kurulu, proje araştırmacısı Fatmanur Delioğlu tarafından sunulan, " Mülteci Kadın Dayanışması: Al Shami Kitchen Örneği," isimli proje taslağını değerlendirilerek, projenin uygunluđuna karar verilmiştir.

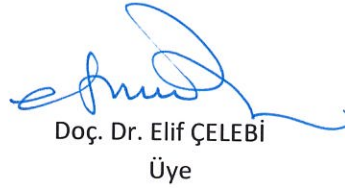
Aşağıda isimleri ve imzaları bulunan İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Araştırma Etik Kurulu üyeleri, araştırmacı tarafından kurula sunulan yukarıdaki bilgiler ışığında, ekte belirtilen araştırmanın yürütülmesinde etik açıdan bir sakınca görmemektedir.

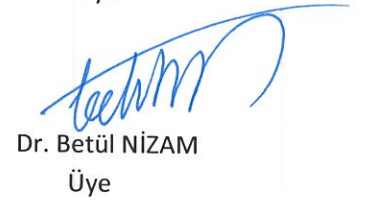

Prof. Dr. Nihat BULUT
Üye

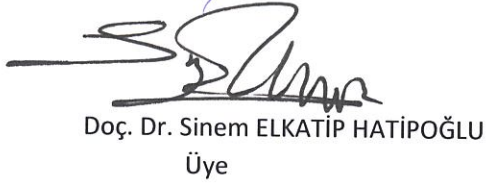

Doç. Dr. Eda YÜCESOY
Başkan


Prof. Dr. Cem BEHAR
Üye


Doç. Dr. Hızır Murat KÖSE
Üye


Doç. Dr. Elif ÇELEBİ
Üye


Dr. Betül NİZAM
Üye


Doç. Dr. Sinem ELKATİP HATİPOĞLU
Üye

KATILMADI

Dr. Eyyüp Said KAYA
Üye