



KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY  
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**INSTRUMENTALIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF  
ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL PRACTICES FOR  
INTEGRATION: THE CASE STUDY OF SYRIANS IN  
TURKEY**

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Master of Arts Thesis

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A thesis submitted to  
the School of Graduate Studies of Kadir Has University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in  
Communication Studies

Istanbul, June, 2022

## APPROVAL

This thesis titled INSTRUMENTALIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL PRACTICES FOR INTEGRATION: THE CASE STUDY OF SYRIANS IN TURKEY, submitted by MURAT DURSUN, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication Studies is approved by

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## **DECLARATION ON RESEARCH ETHICS AND PUBLISHING METHODS**

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- that this Master of Arts Thesis that I have submitted is entirely my own work, and I have cited and referenced all material and results that are not my own in accordance with the rules;
- that this Master of Arts Thesis does not contain any material from any research submitted or accepted to obtain a degree or diploma at another educational institution;
- and that I commit and undertake to follow the “Kadir Has University Academic Codes of Conduct” prepared in accordance with the “Higher Education Council Codes of Conduct.”

In addition, I acknowledge that any claim of irregularity that may arise in relation to this work will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the university legislation.

Murat Dursun

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10/06/2022



*To My Dearest Family...*

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INSTRUMENTALIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTISTIC AND  
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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis aims to explore the interaction of three crucial phenomena: migration, integration, and perception of art and culture through the case study of Syrians in Turkey. For this purpose, the study examines the instrumentalization and implementation of artistic and cultural practices in the integration process of immigrants who migrated to Turkey due to the Syrian civil war in 2011. Migration affects both the host society members and the immigrants, whether voluntary or involuntary, for economic, political, social, or cultural reasons. Also, as seen in the example of Syrians in Turkey, although the initial purpose of migration is temporary, many immigrants become settlers in the receiving country, and since it was understood that immigrants would be permanent, policies and practices for integration have started to be discussed. In this sense, since it is understood that the Syrians in Turkey will be permanent, it requires research that offers new perspectives on what can be done about integration. For this purpose, I interviewed professionals such as coordinators, managers, employees, and artists in art centers and non-governmental organizations that use cultural and artistic activities in order to communicate between the local people and the immigrants in the provinces where Syrians live heavily, to explore the instrumentalization and implementation of artistic and cultural practices in the integration process. As a result, institutions' interviews demonstrated that art, artistic and cultural activities have an essential role in the integration process because they bring people from different countries, cultures, and different social groups together, as in the example of Syrians and local people provided communication, contact, and interaction beyond conflict.

**Keywords:** Migration, Integration, Communication, Art and Culture

SANATSAL VE KÜLTÜREL ETKİNLİKLERİN ENTEGRASYON İÇİN  
ARAÇSALLAŞTIRILMASI VE UYGULANMASI: TÜRKİYE'DEKİ SURİYELİLER  
ÜZERİNE VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

**ÖZET**

Bu tez, Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler vaka çalışması üzerinden üç önemli olgunun etkileşimini keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır: göç, entegrasyon ve sanat ve kültür algısı. Bu amaçla, çalışma 2011 yılında Suriye iç savaşı nedeniyle Türkiye'ye göç edenlerin entegrasyon sürecinde sanatsal ve kültürel pratiklerin araçsallaştırılmasını ve uygulanmasını incelemektedir. Göç, ister gönüllü ya da gönülsüz olsun veya ister ekonomik, politik, sosyal ya da kültürel nedenlerle olsun hem ev sahibi toplum üyelerini hem de göçmenleri etkilemektedir. Ayrıca, Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler örneğinde görüldüğü gibi, göçün ilk amacı geçici olmasına rağmen, birçok göçmen, ev sahibi ülkeye yerleşmektedir ve göçmenlerin kalıcı olacağı anlaşıldığından entegrasyona yönelik politika ve uygulamalar tartışılmaya başlanmaktadır. Bu anlamda Türkiye'deki Suriyelilerin kalıcı olacağı anlaşıldığından entegrasyon konusunda neler yapılabileceğine dair yeni bakış açıları sunan araştırmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu amaçla, entegrasyon sürecinde sanatsal ve kültürel uygulamaların araçsallaştırılmasını ve uygulanmasını keşfetmek için Suriyelilerin yoğun olarak yaşadığı illerde yerel halk ile göçmenler arasında iletişim kurmak için kültür ve sanat etkinliklerini kullanan sanat merkezleri ve sivil toplum kuruluşlarının koordinatör, yönetici, çalışan ve sanatçı gibi profesyonellerle görüşüm. Sonuç olarak, kurumlarla yapılan görüşmeler, sanat, sanatsal ve kültürel etkinliklerin çatışmanın ötesinde iletişim, temas ve etkileşimi sağladığından dolayı, farklı ülkelere, kültürlerden ve farklı sosyal gruplardan insanları bir araya getiren en önemli araçlardan biri olduğunu göstermiştir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Göç, Entegrasyon, İletişim, Sanat ve Kültür

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>ÖZET</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>1.INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Methodology</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1.2 Theoretical Framework</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>1.2.1 Assimilation, multiculturalism and integration discussions</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>1.2.2 Integration theories</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>1.2.3 Dimensions and indicators of integration</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>1.2.4 The legal definition of refugees in Turkey</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>2.THE FUNCTIONS OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) IN MIGRANT INTEGRATION</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>2.1 What are Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)?</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>2.2 The Development of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Turkey</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>2.3 The Functions of Artistic and Cultural Practices Organized by NGOs in the Integration Process</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>3.THE MISSION OF ART CENTERS IN MIGRANT INTEGRATION</b> .....	<b>55</b>
<b>3.1 Art as a tool for Intercultural Communication</b> .....	<b>64</b>
<b>3.2 The Problems Experienced in the Integration Process</b> .....	<b>73</b>
<b>3.2.1 Identity and discourse of art value</b> .....	<b>76</b>
<b>4.THE EFFECT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE INTEGRATION PROCESS</b> .....	<b>81</b>
<b>5.CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>86</b>
<b>6.BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>92</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to explore the interaction of three crucial phenomena: migration, integration, and perception of art and culture through the case study of Syrians who are defined under protection status in Turkey. For this purpose, the study examines the instrumentalization and implementation of artistic and cultural practices in the integration process of immigrants who migrated to Turkey due to the Syrian civil war in 2011.

In this regard, when we look at the phenomenon of migration, it is neither a late-twentieth-century invention nor an invention of modernity disguised as the twins of capitalism and colonialism. The phenomenon of migration has been a part of human history since ancient times. However, after 1945 and especially after the mid-1980s, international migration grew in volume and importance (Castles and Miller 1998, 4). “Overall, the estimated number of international migrants has increased over the past five decades. The total estimated 281 million people living in a country other than their countries of birth in 2020 was 128 million more than in 1990 and over three times the estimated number in 1970” (IOM 2022). Moreover, when unregistered migrants are included, it can be said that there are more international migrants than the number mentioned. So, it is one of the most critical factors in global change as migration seems likely to continue to grow into the new millennium (Castles and Miller 1998, 4), but migration is essential not only because of its high prevalence but also because of its importance to social and economic development (De Haas 2005, 1269). Since immigration is a complex situation that is constantly changing for both receiver and sender societies, it has links to many areas such as social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of both immigrants and host countries. Thus, it has to be understood and analyzed the changes brought about by international migration, especially in this age of mass population movements.

In this sense, there are different perspectives and attempts to understand, explain or classify the phenomenon of migration that has existed throughout human history.

Simply put, migration studies involve not only examining people who move for economic reasons but also those who move for political ones, but it is characterized by a distinction between those who migrate for economic reasons and those who migrate for political ones. People who move for financial reasons are defined as immigrants, whereas those who push for political reasons are defined as refugees, asylum seekers, or internally displaced persons (IDPs). Also, economic migration is often referred to as voluntary migration. In contrast, political migration, often associated with violence, is often called involuntary or forced migration (Tirtosudarmo 2008, 2). Still, even in the case of voluntary migration for better economic conditions, immigrants face many problems in the host society. Hence, when people take refuge in a new society as refugees and asylum seekers, their situation is often worse due to many reasons, such as reception conditions, uncertainties about recognition by the receiving community, and conflicts with local people. At this point, if we look at the situation of Syrians in Turkey, they are defined as “our siblings,” “guests,” and “people under temporary protection” instead of immigrants. With this definition, they are faced with problems in many fields such as economic, political, and socio-cultural.

Just to clarify, the chaos after the protests against President Bashar Assad's regime that started in Syria in March 2011 caused the most severe refugee influx in world history (Erdoğan 2019, 2). The Syrian civil war, which began in 2011, had to leave millions of people and migrate to safer places, especially in neighboring countries. Turkey is one of the countries which accept Syrians. In this context, when we look at the acceptance conditions of the Syrians, we can evaluate the Syrian migration to Turkey as three periods in terms of trends and the legislative process. The first period covers the period from the first entry of Syrians to Turkey in 2011 until 2015. Turkish authorities have built tents in the provinces of Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep, and Şanlıurfa by applying an “open door” policy to Syrian refugees who have no legal rights and are called “guests” who accept temporary and short-term stays (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016, 60–61). In addition, legally, Syrians in Turkey are given “temporary protection” because non-European asylum seekers are not granted “refugee” status due to Turkey's geographical reservation to the Geneva Convention (Erdoğan 2019). In the second period, the conflict in Syria intensified as a result of the failed ceasefire attempts, and more

refugees came to Turkey throughout 2013 (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016, 60). In the third phase of the Syrian civil war in 2013, Syrian refugees' migration to Turkey peaked. The Syrian refugee population in Turkey was over 1.7 million as of mid-March 2015, with the impact of increasing violence in Syria and the capture of large areas by the radical group known as the Islamic State (ISIS) in neighboring Iraq (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016, 60–61). In addition to that, the third period of migration from Syria to Turkey is a process in which policies and practices develop toward integration. For example, the Turkish government has started to give work permits to Syrians who have been in Turkey for more than six months. However, the employment quota was applied so that Syrians cannot exceed 10 percent of Turkish citizens working in the same workplace. As of July 2016, only 5,500 people were granted work permits which correspond to 0.2 percent of the Syrian refugee population (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016, 61–62).

As seen in the example of Syrians, people who are perceived as refugees and asylum seekers fleeing war and violence face a range of different political and social definitions, perceptions in target countries, and a series of barriers caused by these definitions or perceptions. Also, as seen in the same example, after a specific time (when it is understood that immigrants are permanent in the new society), policies and practices for integration begin because, as Castles and Miller (1998) state that although the initial aim is temporary movement, many migrants become settlers in the destination country. Migration networks develop, connect the receiving and sending communities, and cause significant changes in both countries. Migrations not only change demographic, economic, and social structures but also bring a new cultural diversity that questions national identity (Castles and Miller 1998, 4), but many refugees and asylum seekers are perceived as a threat to cultural homogeneity and national identity because of their cultural difference (Castles and Miller 1998, 291). Therefore, when immigrants flee their country due to war and violence and come to a new country, they face many problems in different fields. This situation also means the beginning of a process called “integration” into a society that is characterized by political, social and cultural characteristics different from the immigrants' society.

At this point, if we look at the integration issue, like migration, the phenomenon of integration is associated with various definitions and conceptual frameworks. As Favell points out, the concept of “integration,” which has been widely used to frame advocacy of political tools to deal with the consequences of immigration, emphasizes that it is still the most popular way of conceptualizing the relationship between “ethnic” immigrant populations and the phenomenon of integration is used to describe the social change that occurs in the process of integration of immigrants into the new host society (Favell 2003, 13). Since integration is one of the most popular concepts in today's daily political and academic debates, various problems and difficulties related to the ethnic and cultural diversity that arise during and after the migration process in every country with a large number of immigrants are conceptualized with the phenomenon of integration. Not only what is meant by this term but also how it is attempted to be achieved can vary considerably (Unutulmaz 2021, 203). Thus, Robinson (1998) emphasizes that “integration” is a chaotic concept and is a word used by many but understood differently (Ager and Strang 2008, 167). At this point, Castles argues that “there is no consensus as to what ‘integration’ of immigrants or refugees really means” (Castles et al. 2002, 112). In this context, when we look at the term integration, terminologically, it is most often associated with assimilation, but different concepts such as “absorption,” “accommodation,” “toleration,” “adaptation,” or “acculturation” are used in migration studies to express the same type of process (see Park and Burgess 1921, Eisenstadt 1975, Gordon 1964, Baubock, Heller, and Aristide R 1996, Esser 2010, Kuhlman 1991, Berry 1997).

To make it clear, the study of the integration processes of immigrants actually dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century. Since integration was generally understood as assimilation, it was believed that all immigrants would assimilate into their new environment. The “melting pot” metaphor was used to describe this process. To put it roughly, it was believed that minority groups would fit into dominant cultural patterns. That is, the process will take approximately two or three generations. There will be no separation between newcomers, their children, and members of the host community (Entzinger and Biezeveld 2003, 7). Thus, early approaches, attitudes, and policies in the refugee integration literature are often described by the term assimilation,

which is based on the assumption that integration is a one-way process. In contrast, much of the recent literature emphasizes integration as a two-way process. This process can take place if not only newcomers but also the host community is involved. Although it has various definitional contexts, one of the most general meanings of integration is an interactive process between immigrants and the host society. ECRE and its member organizations have emphasized that the integration of refugees is a dynamic and two-way process that starts from the first-day refugees arrive in a new society (Hudson et al. 2005, 5). At this point, successful integration can only be possible if immigrants are accepted in the host society with access to jobs and services and social interaction with the host society. It, therefore, requires, above all, that new members of society be granted legal and political rights so that they can become equal partners (Castles et al. 2002, 112–14).

Also, after the 1960s, assimilation began to be questioned both in the academic world and in society as the cultural difference between immigrants and the host society remained unchanged even after several generations (Entzinger and Biezeveld 2003, 7) because it does not mean that immigrants abandon their cultural identity, even if they are fully included in the new society during the migration process and even if the immigrants fully participate in the primary institutions of that society (Entzinger and Biezeveld 2003, 7–8). Thus, since “assimilation” is perceived only as a one-way, repressive process, the term needs constant explanation. “Assimilation” does not necessarily mean the suppression of ethnic cultures. Not only Alba but also after Esser, it is used to mean assimilation, diminishing social difference between groups, income differences, and values. Therefore, “Integration” is a better term for pragmatic and communicative reasons than assimilation. Integration is a good concept for scientific purposes and communication with policymakers and the wider public (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 6). As can be understood from the explanations above, one of the essential concepts explaining the communication, contact, and interaction between the host society and the immigrants is “integration.” Of course, at this point, the following question immediately comes to mind, how is this integration process between local people and immigrants possible? The solution to this question can be art, artistic and cultural practices because art expresses the “truth” against “false reality” by turning to

society. It promotes social cohesion by developing a sense of belonging to society. In addition, artistic and cultural events allow immigrants and local people to meet and communicate in a common area as a means of communication. They also enable immigrant communities to recognize their “new” identities by ensuring their visibility in society. Thus, such activities promote social cohesion, facilitate a sense of social cohesion, and build multicultural societies for a common and pluralistic society. In addition to that, such activities promote “incorporation” which includes not only much more society-level participation, but also diversify organizational activity (Soysal 1995, 5).

In this context, just to clarify it, like migration, art is almost as old as human beings (Fischer 1990, 13). Art expresses the significant problems of the period by influencing the feelings and thoughts of individuals and groups. Therefore, art is works created with aesthetic concerns and mirrors the troubles and social events of the period. And it expresses “truth” against “false reality” by turning to the society in which it was born (Tunalı 1998, 128). Thus, art and art practices can be a solution for the integration process that started during and after the mass migration, which is one of the most important events of our age, as in every social problem because, as Fischer points out, in a decaying society, if art is truthful, it must reflect decay. As long as it does not escape its social duty, art should show that the world can change; it should help it change (Fischer 1990, 42). In addition to that, cultural events also have many social benefits, such as promoting social cohesion, facilitating a sense of social cohesion, and building multicultural societies (Hassanli, Walters, and Friedmann 2019, 1). Moreover, artistic and cultural projects are one of the most important ways to ensure the visibility of immigrant communities in urban areas (McDermott 2012, 194). So, art and cultural practices can be one of the most convenient ways to use this integration process because it is one of the most accessible ways immigrants can find a sense of belonging to society (Damery and Mescoli 2019, 1).

Migration is a phenomenon that affects both the host society and the immigrants, whether it is voluntary or involuntary, or whether for economic, political, social, or cultural reasons. In addition, although the initial purpose of migration is temporary,

many immigrants become settlers in the receiving country. Therefore, the integration process between local people and immigrants is becoming more critical. In this sense, the transformation of Syrian refugees in Turkey to long-term migration movements concerning the integration of immigrant Syrians living in Turkey requires research that offers new perspectives on what can be done about integration. In addition, presently, little is known about Syrian immigrants' identities, cultures, attitudes towards their host and country of origin, and hopes and aspirations for themselves and the community's future. Although a high number of migrants to Turkey for many years, only recently have begun to consider the integration of immigrants officially, and although the identities and culture of Syrian immigrants are not at risk of extinction, an understanding of change and continuity in Syrian identities, acculturation, assimilation, integration, disintegration, and adaptation within the dominant culture, traditional values, and shifting sentiments are valuable in shaping policy directions, reforms, and management of anti-immigrant public discourses. Also, it is vital how communication studies with Syrians living in Turkey can contribute to integration problems. So, I used the theoretical migration literature and integration approaches to explore, understand, and explain this process. Also, I did a pilot research on artistic and cultural posts and comments related to Syrians on social media, such as Twitter, to investigate how Syrians are represented in this sharing and interpretation on social media and the effects of this representation on the integration process. Apart from these, within the scope of this study, I interviewed professionals such as coordinators, managers, employees, and artists in art centers and NGOs, Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association (RASAS), Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAMDER), Mavi Kalem Social Assistance and Solidarity Association, Halkların Köprüsü Association, Arthere, Hamisch, Kırkayak Culture, and Art Center which owns the Art Center and the Migration and Cultural Studies Center, Uniq Galery, Sirkhane (social circus school), which use cultural and artistic activities to communicate between local people and immigrants in provinces where Syrians live heavily in Turkey. This dissertation explores intentions and receptions of culture and art throughout the integration practices seeking the reciprocal recognition of receiving society and immigrants. Therefore, this research poses the following research question: What is the

envisioned role of cultural and artistic practices in terms of integration of the recently gathered community and new society of Turkey?

The research questions of this study are as follows:

What recent have artistic and cultural project events been carried out to promote the integration of Syrians in Turkey?

What role have non-government organizations played in this process at national/regional/local levels of culture-art-based integration practices?

## **1.1 Methodology**

The academic literature on immigrant integration has been studied since the 1980s by integrating a wide variety of economic, social, political, and cultural issues into the integration process. However, some issues such as the relationship between various arts such as fine arts, music, visual arts, theatre, literature, performing arts, and immigrant integration have been relatively neglected in this literature (Martiniello 2019, 70). Therefore, this study focuses on the instrumentalization and implementation of artistic and cultural practices for integration.

Integration refers “to the process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration” (Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas 2016, 11). Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) expand the concept a little further and define it as the process of incorporating immigrants into the main institutions, relationships, and status of the host country. They also describe it as not only an interactive process between the immigrants and the receiving society but also the integration of immigrants as a process of learning a new culture, gaining rights, accessing positions and statuses, and establishing personal relationships with members of the host society (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 11). Therefore, in this study, the concept of “integration” will be used, which provides not only the relationship, communication, and contact between the immigrants and the host society but also the immigrants' access to the primary institutions, rights, positions, and statuses of the host country and establishing personal relationships with host members because “Integration” is both the best tool for framing the advocacy of political means to deal with the consequences of migration and the

most popular way to conceptualize the evolving relationship between host societies and the “ethnic” immigrant population. Although many similar concepts, such as absorption, acculturation, incorporation, accommodation, toleration, and assimilation have been used to describe the process of social change that occurs when immigrants “integrate” into their new society, none has such frequent or all-encompassing coverage of the idea of integration (Favell 2003, 13).

First of all, I did a pilot research on artistic and cultural posts and comments related to Syrians on social media, such as Twitter, to investigate how Syrians are represented in this sharing and interpretation on social media and the effects of this representation on the integration process. Through this pilot study, I decided to conduct a qualitative interview to explore the instrumentalization and implementation of artistic and cultural practices in the integration process. In this regard, I chose NGOs and art centers that use art, artistic and cultural practices to bring Syrians and local people together to explore the role of such practices in the integration process, and I conducted 12 qualitative interviews with professionals such as coordinators, managers, employees, and artists in these centers. I preferred semi-structured interviews because of their standard and flexibility, eliminating the limitations in writing and filling out tests and questionnaires and helping to gain in-depth knowledge on a particular subject. In addition, this type of interview allowed the participants to express their thoughts on their own terms. I used snowball sampling as it is a supporting part of my case study and to get the participant profile I wanted. During these interviews, I asked the interviewees about the purpose and activities of their organizations. I also asked about the roles of cultural and artistic activities in terms of integration with a new society. In this sense, I conducted the interviews in Turkish and English between November 2020 and June 2021. More than half of them were conducted over the “Zoom” platform. Also, one interview was conducted face to face, and the other one was conducted over the phone. Moreover, two of them were driven by writing. Therefore, the consent of more than half of the interviewees who participated in this research was taken via telephone or e-mail. The rest had been informed during the interview. As seen, in addition to face-to-face interviews, internet interviews can also be used as a data collection technique.

To make it clear, online interviews are divided into synchronously (in real-time), which includes audio, textual as well as video/visual exchanges, and asynchronous interviews (in non-real-time) (James and Busher 2016, 3). While synchronized interviews are carried out through platforms such as Skype, Messenger, and Zoom (James and Busher 2016, 4), asynchronous calls are usually carried out via e-mail (Gubrium et al. 2017, 180). Due to the implementation of the curfew as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic that affected the whole world, and due to the fact that some of the participants were abroad during my research, I made synchronous and asynchronous interviews both through platforms such as “zoom” and via e-mail because, in synchronized interviews, the researcher and the participant do not need to be in the same place. The interview can be spread over different time intervals. Also, using platforms such as Skype, telephone, Zoom, or video conferencing provides geographic flexibility. It becomes possible for researchers and participants to have computer-to-computer and computer-to-phone conversations (James and Busher 2016, 6). Thus, thanks to this technique, I continued my research and interviewed my participants abroad and those who could not go out during the curfew due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, thanks to the asynchronous technique, I had the opportunity to ask them new questions in line with the answers to my interviews because the method is highly flexible in temporal and spatial terms. Researchers can add the interview questions to their emails at once or more than once, wait for the participant's response, and send new questions again according to the answers given. This process may take a few days, weeks, or even months, depending on the participant (Gubrium et al. 2017, 180). The long-term nature of such conversations allows for in-depth data to be collected through repeated interactions and more closely reflects the interview topics. However, this approach may also result in more socially desirable responses than a spontaneous response generated through a simultaneous interview. Participants may also mention other issues than the subject of research, making the flow of dialogue problematic (Sanders in Gubrium et al. 2017). On the other hand, cost and time efficiency is the most apparent advantage of internet-mediated research procedures (Latkovikj and Popovska 2019, 45). It makes it easier to reach a potentially large population of all kinds of individuals and groups (Ross 1997, 1). In sum, thanks to this technique, I conducted both “synchronous” and “asynchronous” interviews due to the implementation of the curfew as a result of the

COVID-19 epidemic that affected the whole world. In addition to that, thanks to this technique, I had the opportunity to interview my participants who were abroad during my research. Moreover, I had the chance to ask new questions in line with the answers I received since it is very flexible in terms of time and space. Therefore, the long-term nature of such interviews allowed in-depth data to be collected, but I should point out that such interviews can also result in socially desirable responses rather than a spontaneous response generated through a simultaneous interview. On the other hand, the most apparent advantages of this technique were the cost and geographical flexibility, as well as the opportunity to conduct interviews due to curfews during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it has provided to reach a group consisting of many regions of Turkey such as Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Mardin, Gaziantep, and Adana.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

Migration to a country changes the size and composition of the host society. In addition, newcomers need to be included in the host population and in the institutions of the host community (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 2). So, host societies seek effective ways not only to accommodate newcomers but also to ensure social cohesion (Bartolomeo, Kalantaryan, and Salamońska 2017, 1). Depending on this, different terms such as assimilation, multiculturalism, and integration have been used while examining immigrant settlement. Therefore, in this section, firstly, the concepts of assimilation, multiculturalism, and integration will be briefly mentioned in order to understand the settlement and integration of Syrians in Turkey. Then, the integration theories will be explained shortly. Finally, the dimensions and indicators of integration will be described.

### **1.2.1 Assimilation, multiculturalism and integration discussions**

We can explain the integration discussions about international migration and immigrants as four different periods on the basis of the last century. Firstly, from the beginning of the 20th century to World War II, the concept of “assimilation” came to the fore. In this period, there was a prevailing view that immigrants would give up their own culture and fully adapt to the culture of the host society. By the 1970s, as it was

understood that immigrants would not give up their own culture, assimilation discussions were replaced by multiculturalism and integration discussions. But despite the proliferation of institutional structures since the 1980s to promote equality in line with 'multiculturalism' and to provide better social services to ethnic groups, there has been no significant progress in local and national initiatives related to minorities. On the contrary, such developments have excluded rather than included minorities in the public sphere. Thus, in the 1990s, two different trends stand out integration and the revival of assimilation. Therefore, the concepts of assimilation, multiculturalism, and integration will be discussed in a theoretical framework, considering that it can shed light on the integration process between Syrians and local people in Turkey.

The scientific study of the process of settling immigrants in a host society has a long history (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas 2016, 11), but since the integration of immigrants in developing countries is an under-studied topic, almost all of the literature on the integration of immigrants deals with cases of immigrants in the West (Danış 2006, 7). In this context, when we look at immigrant integration, the study of the relationship between refugees, immigrants, and the host society dates back to the 20th century, and early research and theoretical developments on immigrant assimilation /integration are based on the work of the Chicago School (Bloch 2002, 80). Because, at that time, Chicago had a unique opportunity for research on race and ethnic relations, as it was a multilingual city filled with ethnic neighborhoods of recent immigrants from Europe and black immigrants from the South. Thus, Robert Park, his Chicago colleagues, and his students had the opportunity to study all aspects of the local environment, including race and ethnic relations, and they became an important part of modern sociological theory and research on race and ethnic relations in the early 20th century (Alba 1981, 399).

Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, two of the most important names in the assimilation/integration debate, define assimilation as “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (Park and Burgess 1921, 735). This definition

was the dominant model for interpreting race relations in the United States in the twentieth century. This definition, which is metaphorical in its essence, depicts people and groups each other's feelings and attitudes, as well as each other's memories, experiences, and history. This depiction highlights the intimate and complete “intermingling and fusion” of assimilated cultures. On the other hand, it contains not only a scientific definition of what Park and Burgess intended but also a kind of mysticism at its core. Although individuals and groups “are incorporated” with other individuals and groups, the process does not name any organization representatives, as if by magic (Cutler 2015, 4).

In their texts, Park and Burgess cite Israel Zangwill's play *The Melting-Pot* (1908) and a speech by William Jennings Bryan on the impact of assimilation on American culture. Zangwill portrays the game as an exceptional area where immigrants and native US citizens are brought together harmoniously. The protagonist of the play, David Quixano, said “America is God’s crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all races of Europe are melting and re-forming! [. . .] Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians— into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American” (as cited Cutler 2015, 3). While this passage uses racial terminology to describe what we would call national or ethnic groups of European descent, it leaves non-white racial groups out of the pot. Additionally, Park and Burgess quote the Bryan speech as “an expression of belief in the beneficial outcome of assimilation: “Great has been the Greek, the Latin, the Slav, the Celt, the Teuton, and the Saxon; but greater than any of these is the American, who combines the virtues of them all” (as cited Cutler 2015, 4). Bryan portrays American culture both as a benign amalgamation of various European cultures and as the culmination of the history of Western civilization (Cutler 2015, 5). So, by the middle of the twentieth century, assimilation, the culmination of the metaphorical “melting pot,” became an integral part of American self-understanding in social science studies of ethnicity and race (Alba and Nee 2003, 23). This early model of assimilation put forward by Park (1928) has been described as a straight line followed by immigrants in adopting the culture of the host society (Ballard et al. 2016, 190–91). Also, assimilation was used synonymously with “Americanization,” which meant that immigrants, especially Europeans, would do what was described as the

American ways (Kazal 1995, 437). In a word, the most important sociological paradigm related to immigrant assimilation /integration created by the Chicago School is the classical assimilation theory. The classical assimilation theory includes that immigrant groups should follow a more similar straight line over time with the norms, values , and behaviors of the mainstream culture. In the assimilationist model put forward in this context, Western societies were accepted as homogeneous and harmonic. In this sense, it has been emphasized that in order to maintain this harmony, immigrants should assimilate through a process of “acculturation” in order to give up their original cultures and adopt the values, norms, and behaviors of the accepting society since their pre-migration cultures are seen as inappropriate and even harmful in the new environment (Castles 2007, 356).

Pioneered by Chicago School members in the 1920s and 1930s, assimilation theory was the dominant sociological paradigm until the late 1960s (Heisler 2003, 77). In the 1960s and 1970s, however, such ideas began to be questioned because of minorities' struggles against racism, cultural recognition, and social equality (Castles 2007, 356). Also, this linear assimilation model has been criticized for assuming that assimilation is the common goal of not only society but also immigrants because many immigrant groups and their descendants prefer to preserve their ethnic identity instead of “melting” into the mainstream (Portes and Manning 2018, 710). So, since the aspirations of immigrants were important in the settlement process, there was no longer the assumption that the aim of immigrants was to assimilate (see Glazer and Moynihan 1963).

Additionally, the concept of assimilation began to be questioned both in the academic world and in society in general after the 1960s. The main reason for this was the empirical fact that, even after a few generations, the cultural difference between the immigrants and the “host” society had not wholly disappeared. In addition, the immigrants wanted to emphasize their cultural identity, even if they were fully included in the new society. In other words, full participation in a society and its main institutions does not mean abandoning a particular identity (Entzinger and Biezeveld 2003, 7–8).

On the other hand, although the concept was rather murky, there was broad consensus about the scope of assimilation, stemming from the Chicago School's initial formulation. However, clear and coherent operational concepts were not developed that could be usefully used analytically to measure the degree of assimilation of individuals and groups. Over the decades, confusion has accumulated due to the proliferation of sometimes conflicting and sometimes conflicting definitions in certain studies by anthropologists, sociologists, and others (Alba and Nee 2003, 23). The problem of unraveling the chains associated with assimilation was solved in Milton Gordon's *Assimilation in American Life* (1964) in order to reveal the different elements of assimilation and thus form a set of operational concepts that have analytical value in a wide variety of research (Alba and Nee 2003, 23).

Nearly forty years after Park and his colleagues defined the concept of assimilation, Milton Gordon (1964) emphasized that a multidimensional conceptualization is necessary to understand this process since the typology of assimilation consists of different types of assimilations based on American life (Deaux 2006, 131). Therefore, Gordon argued that instead of a singular concept of assimilation, there are seven different dimensions of assimilation, namely acculturation, structural assimilation, marital assimilation, identification assimilation, attitude reception assimilation, behavior reception assimilation, and civil assimilation (Gordon 1964, 71). In proposing a multidimensional concept of assimilation and discussing the ways in which immigrants adapt to their new country, Gordon has managed at least in part to deal with some disturbing inconsistencies that have plagued earlier researchers. However, his schema was more of a descriptive classification. And it was less of a theoretical guide to how and when various processes might be causally linked (Deaux 2006, 132). In a word, although the assimilationist perspective was severely weakened, Gordon worked to reinvigorate assimilation as a “core concept,” basing it on the Chicago School (Portes and Rumbaut 2014, 76) because Gordon tended to support the concept of assimilation by discussing cultural pluralism. Here, Gordon, influenced by the philosopher Horace Kallen, tried to explain that different ethnic elements in society retain their cultural differences by likening the sound of an orchestra to enrichment from the distinctive sounds of assembled instruments. Cultural pluralism is, therefore, the intellectual

progenitor of contemporary multiculturalism, but, as Gordon admits, the main difficulty is that while the cultural integrity of different groups is preserved, the cultural exchange and mixing that result from their interactions are primarily overlooked (Alba and Nee 2003).

Therefore, by the 1960s and 1970s, assimilation was supplanted by multiculturalism (Castles and Miller 1998, 203). And as concepts of multiculturalism began to emerge in the United States at that time, concepts such as the “salad bowl” began to be used, which opposed the notion of homogeneity implied in the melting pot (Deaux 2006, 30). Thus, instead of melting the immigrants in the assimilation pot, it was aimed to preserve their diversity by maintaining cultural distinctions and ethnic solidarity (Calhoun 2007, 285). Compared to the melting pot, the Salad Bowl theory keeps the unique identity of individuals and groups rather than assimilation. One of the key advantages of the Salad Bowl theory is the acceptance of different identities and different cultures in a multicultural society. Thus, contrary to the Melting Pot theory, the Salad Bowl not only preserves the individuality and independence of ethnic groups but also removes the pressure to create homogeneous identities (Berray 2019, 143). The Salad Bowl theory may provide more integrative possibilities than the melting pot. Metaphorically, we can be selective in the ingredients we add to our salad, leaving some out and increasing others according to our needs. Thus, the salad bowl metaphor both allows the individuality of the ethnic identities it represents and provides selective integration on the basis of social integration needs. This advantage of the Salad Bowl theory allows certain cultural norms and lifestyles of immigrant communities to exist in host societies (Berray 2019, 144). As a result, there was a transition to multiculturalism in the 1970s, based on the idea that immigrants preserve their language and culture while respecting the core values of society as legitimate ethnic communities (Castles 1995, 303) because assimilation policies do not support crossing borders from one culture to another. Similarly, segregation policies support the preservation of these boundaries. In contrast, multicultural integration policies aim to increase their permeability. Such policies can help overcome divisions and discrimination as they encourage the continued development of cultures and identities by facilitating the participation of all groups in all social, economic, and political spheres (Rudiger and Spencer 2003, 7).

When we look at European immigrant countries, assimilation was the dominant paradigm in Western European immigration countries, as in the case of the USA, the idea that culturally diverse peoples could be brought together in a great “melting pot” to form a common American culture (Castles 2007, 356). Therefore, assimilation was not only the prevailing model in the United States during the era of mass migration and urbanization but was also the policy of many post-1945 immigrant countries, including Britain, Canada, and Australia (Castles 1995, 297–98). Thus, although the Chicago School of Sociology offered a classical approach to immigrant settlement in the 1920s, “the European experience sheds further light on the meaning(s) of assimilation” (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 4). With the rise of nationalism in European societies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, assimilation was used as an attempt to create culturally homogeneous nations. In the process, “assimilation” became associated with concepts such as ethnocentrism and cultural oppression, as it was often used as a use of violence to force minorities to conform. However, after the Second World War, “assimilation” became a taboo concept, in response to extreme nationalism, fascism, and the suppression and expulsion of minorities, due to the growing importance of human rights and the growing trust and cultural pride of minorities (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 4). Hence, since countries such as Canada, Australia, and the United States, which talk about themselves as multicultural societies, have a long historical migration experience, their efforts to understand and solve the migration that started with assimilation gave way to multicultural studies in the 1960s and 1970s, when it was understood that immigrants would not give up their cultural differences (Modood 2013, 1–5).

Also, starting from the 1970s, under the pressure of immigrant groups, countries such as France and England also rejected the assimilationist model and adopted a pluralistic policy that allowed immigrants to preserve their ethnic heritage (Kymlicka 1995, 14). To roughly exemplify the classification of multiculturalism-related social policies in such countries, Countries like Australia, Canada, Sweden, and the Netherlands follow active social policies linked to multicultural models, while countries like the USA, France, and the UK reject specific social policies for immigrants because, in the USA, particularly social policies towards immigrants are opposed because they are seen as

unnecessary government intervention. Similarly, French governments rejected specific social policies by stating that immigrants should be citizens. However, despite this, there are a number of specific social policies regarding immigrants. For instance, in England, a multicultural-like set of social policies were developed in response to the urban crisis, racial violence, and youth uprisings, despite the ideological rejection of such measures from 1979 to 1997 (Castles and Miller 1998, 228–29). On the other hand, in the 1990s, multicultural policies became controversial in all these countries (Castles and Miller 1998, 29) because the cultural differences aimed at society can produce positive results themselves by creating multicultural patterns or mosaic designs. However, hierarchical relationships still exist between different groups, as cultural multiculturalism does not in itself produce political or economic equality. Political and economic equality is necessary for meaningful respect between cultures (Marcuse 1996, 43).

As Wieviorka (1998) highlighted, multiculturalism not only aims to preserve cultural diversity, such as minority languages but also focuses on the unequal relationship of minorities with mainstream cultures. It is, therefore, dependent on state policy since multiculturalism simply does not arise (Wieviorka 1998, 881). However, in Western societies since the 1980s, there has been no significant progress in local and national initiatives related to minorities, despite the proliferation of institutional structures created to promote equality in line with “multiculturalism” and to provide better social services and expanded resources for the ethnic minority. On the contrary, such developments have excluded rather than facilitated their inclusion in the public sphere of minorities. One of the most important reasons for this is that many public policies and broader political discourses surrounding multiculturalism have functioned socially and politically to separate and alienate certain minority members (Vertovec 1996, 49).

Therefore, in recent years, critiques of multiculturalism have led to a shift from multiculturalism in favor of integration policies, as it hinders integration and keeps immigrants separate from the host population by promoting cultural diversity (Dedeoglu 2014, 37). And such discussions have brought back to the agenda not only the integration discussions but also the assimilation debates. However, these new

assimilation discussions brought a new dimension to assimilation by criticizing classical assimilation because, as immigrant groups have different characteristics and social contexts, it turns out that the one-way idea of immigrant integration claimed by classical theorists is unrealistic (Portes and Böröcz 1989, 615–22). Since assimilation is no longer seen as a simple linear process, there are many ways to integrate immigrant groups. In this context, one of the most important of these is the theory of segmented assimilation (Vermeulen 2010, 1). Based on this, in the 1990s, the segmented assimilation theory emerged as an alternative to the classical assimilation theories. This new view emphasizes that the results of assimilation between generations depend on entirely different trajectories (Ballard et al. 2016, 191), and claims that the results could be totally different for the second generation (Waters et al. 2010, 1169). Thus, segmented assimilation highlights three possible outcomes, emphasizing that there are different adaptation patterns that occur among second-generation immigrants. While the one replicates the long-standing depiction of growing acculturation and parallel integration into the white middle class, the second, in the opposite direction, leads to perpetual poverty and lower-class assimilation. Third, rapid economic progress is associated with the preservation of the values of the immigrant community. This opens up new ideas about how the process takes place and how the opposing results of assimilation can be explained (Portes and Zhou 1995, 90). Classical assimilation models try to explain these different results with individual or structural determinants. However, segmented assimilation theory focuses on the interaction between the two, unlike the classical framework in terms of the effects of these determinants (Zhou 1997, 984).

Another important concept related to the assimilation debate is neo-assimilation. In the 1990s, Alba and Nee (1997) proposed a new approach to assimilation, basing the concepts of integration on classical assimilation theory and taking into account the different criticisms and research made up to that time (Unterreiner and Weinar 2017, 4). Based on Robert Park and other classical writers of the Chicago School, this new view acknowledges that the process can take many different forms (Portes and Rumbaut 2014, 77). Thus, Alba and Nee (2003) formulate a new version of linear assimilation for post-1965 immigrants and, having many key insights from earlier theorists, argue that

second-generation immigrants will experience increased social integration and upward mobility. Alba and Nee reject the overly prescriptive assertion that not only will many second-generation immigrants experience “downward assimilation” in contrast to the fragmented assimilation, but that, unlike linear assimilation, the second generation should adopt “American norms” (Waters et al. 2010, 1171) and according to them, assimilation is a two-way process rather than a one-way process (Portes and Manning 2018, 789). So, the immigration debate in the USA has evolved from a linear assimilation idea to a two-way integration debate.

Similarly, in the last few years, there has been a shift towards integration discussions in immigration policies in European states that have abandoned assimilation policies and adopted a multicultural model (Anthias, Morokvasic-Müller, and Kontos 2013, 4). In Western Europe, “integration” is the most common concept used to describe the target of post-migration policies. This can be taken as a good indication that synthetic, transnational statements by international and intergovernmental organizations were widely accepted in the late 1990s, rather than that every political figure or intellectual in every country loved the term (Favell 2010, 374–75). The past and recent histories of policy debates in nation-states reflect this success. In France, for example, integration became a logical location for older assimilationist ideas, cultural differences, and racism, dissociating itself from both xenophobic nationalism and radical anti-systemic rhetoric (Favell 2010, 375). A similar example can be seen in Britain because of the emergence of new immigration questions surrounding the admission of asylum seekers and integration has been at the center of immigration policy as the most comprehensive term for designing resettlement policies (Castles et al. 2002, 105–6). In other European countries, such as Austria, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden, we can see many examples of the concept of integration used in immigration policies (see Heckmann and Schnapper 2003; Zincone, Penninx, and Borkert 2011). Therefore, As Alba and Nee (1997) stated, integration overshadows “assimilation” as the basic sociological concept (Favell 2010, 376).

As a result, the concept of assimilation became taboo when it was understood that in the classical understanding of assimilation, the idea that immigrants would leave their own

culture after a few generations and adopt them into the culture of the host society was not valid. The one-way linear idea of assimilation policies was criticized and replaced by multiculturalism discussions. Policies implemented with multiculturalism have also started to lose their popularity since the desired results have not been achieved and have been replaced by integration discussions. Contrary to assimilation, integration allows cultural differences as a two-way process, and immigrants are not expected to be assimilated. Contrary to multiculturalism, it allows for differences and ensures the visibility of immigrants in the public sphere. In a word, integration has begun to replace assimilation and multiculturalism in migration studies. In this context, as Kontos (2011) points out, integration has started to form the basis of immigration policy (Anthias, Morokvasic-Müller, and Kontos 2013, 5).

### **1.2.2 Integration theories**

Integration literature goes back to the 1920s to classical assimilation theory. Social differentiation and integration theories, another area related to integration, are associated with the work of Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, and especially Emile Durkheim in the second half of the 19th century. Therefore, in this section, the theories of the mentioned thinkers about integration will be briefly explained.

The theories of social differentiation and integration are based on the classical sociological themes of Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, and Emile Durkheim. It has also been the subject of not only theorists such as Parsons, David Lockwood but also Habermas, Giddens, and Mouzelis (Gough and Olofsson 1999, 1).

To make it clear, Durkheim and Marx are the thinkers whose understanding of order and conflict has had the most profound influence on the general and specific treatment of these issues in modern sociology. So their theories were naturally the starting point. In this regard, while Durkheim emphasizes a common framework of norms and values as the basis of social order, Marx underlines that the integration of capitalist societies is based on the class polarization between productive forces and relations of production (Lockwood 1992, ix).

Also, Durkheim analyzed both the forms and effects of social differentiation in his Division of Labor study and the lack of integration that causes anomie in his analysis of suicide. Thus, he developed a theory of social integration ( see Durkheim 1984) because Durkheim's focus was on the transformation of a traditional social order based on status hierarchies into a society with an increasing division of labor, class conflicts, and lack of integration principles. How social order is possible in a differentiated and individualized society was his central question. While Spencer's answer to this question was that society would dissolve without political interference by its own “invisible” forces, Durkheim envisioned a new “organic solidarity” rooted in moral experience stemming from contemporary work roles and supported by the development of law and government institutions (Gough and Olofsson 1999, 2).

When we came to the 1940s, inspired by Durkheim's work, Parsons detailed Durkheim's analogy of the organism, which sees social systems as living, holistic, organic systems, and perpetuates a complex interdependence of parts for the survival of the whole (Casey 2002, 49). And he developed a theory of differentiation /integration, emphasizing that the primary form of integration was a system of norms shaped in a civic and political culture within the framework of stable institutions and a modern state. Parsons' theory can be seen as an argument for the integration of society based on consensus and pluralism on fundamental civil, political and social rights. In this sense, not only Durkheim but also Parsons saw moral values and the human being as the primary motivation for social integration (Berkel and Moller 2003, 4).

When we came to the 1960s, Lockwood, through the work of Durkheim and Marx, added a different dimension to the discussion of social stratification and social order (Scott 2006, 162). In 1964, the article “Social Integration and System Integration” by David Lockwood was published. After that, a new discussion started, such as distinguishing between systems integration and social integration. According to Lockwood, who says that conflict theories focus on social integration problems; the problem of social integration is based on the order between the parts of the social system. According to him, social integration is about regular or conflictual relationships

between actors, while system integration is about regular or conflicting connections between parts of a social system (Mouzelis 1991, 49).

Lockwood explained the difference between social and systems integration by referring to the relationships between actors and systems integration, the links between institutions or 'institutionalized parts' of the social system. This was the separation between 'action' and 'system' in general. But in particular, it was a distinction that would play a crucial role in theoretical discussions on the connections between Marxist and Durkheimian/Parsonian approaches. On the basis of this distinction, Lockwood criticized the Parsonian type of sociology, following the Durkheimian tradition, for focusing only on institutional dissonances and ignoring power relations and social conflict as the main mechanism of social transformation. On the other hand, looking at his work as a whole, Marx's works provide a more balanced framework for the study of social change, and it combines the social and systems integration approach because Marx not only combines social and systems integration approaches but also raises questions about class consciousness and conflict in capitalist societies (Mouzelis 1993, 572).

In the 1980s, Lockwood's seminal work on systems integration and social integration in 1964 influenced Habermas, Giddens, and Mouzelis (Perkmann 1998, 491). Habermas (1981) analyzed Lockwood's concepts and related them to his famous concepts of the system world and life world. However, Habermas, who has a different understanding of social integration from Lockwood's, stated that integration is on the basis of social cohesion as a particular type of communication between micro and macro that takes place in a specific part of social participation of individuals or groups in part. He interpreted social integration as seeing people as a part of society along with each other and the community. Habermas saw social integration as the reproduction of the lifeworld or, more precisely, the reproduction of life, cultural meanings, solidarity, social norms, and the ability for personal security and identities (Berkel and Moller 2003, 17–18).

Following Lockwood's classification, Anthony Giddens (1984) associates social integration with face-to-face interaction, while system integration relates it to connections between those who are not physically present (Misztal 2002, 137). Unlike Lockwood, Giddens focused on face-to-face interaction and macro-analysis levels, relationships between individuals or groups in general. He made Lockwood's normative-functional distinction in the field of social/system integration at the micro/macro level. For Giddens, social and systems integration are closely interconnected, essential to daily routines and the most elaborate forms of social organization. In contrast to indirect relationships, Giddens' social and system integration focuses on face-to-face relationships with the dimensions of time and space (Gough and Olofsson 1999, 5).

In the 1990s, although Mouzelis (1991) takes his starting point from David Lockwood's original definition of social integration and systems integration in his book "Back to Sociological Theory," he reinterprets these concepts. Mouzelis criticized Lockwood for failing to clearly define how the concept of 'parts' in the definition of systems integration should be understood. According to Mouzelis, while Lockwood claims that productive forces are something other than institutions, an institution is difficult to know as he leaves the term undefined. Nicos Mouzelis' work has focused on the social integration of collective actors. Here, institutions are at the periphery, and actors are at the center. Thus, the main focus of analysis is on collective actors, as opposed to rules clustered into roles or institutions (Mouzelis 1991, 52).

Also, according to Mouzelis, macro actors are not only collective actors where decisions are made through some form of representation but also 'single individuals whose economic, political or culturally based social forces make the consequences of their decisions widely felt. Therefore, Mouzelis considers the role of macro actors to be quite crucial in social integration because macro-actors occupying positions that require control of essential resources tend to use policies of exclusion or closure (Mouzelis 1991, 107). In a word, for Giddens, effective social integration is about how face-to-face encounters take place, whereas, for Habermas, it is about the unhindered reproduction of communicative competence within the lifeworld. For Lockwood and

Mouzelis, on the other hand, it is about the strategic action of collective groups such as those representing capital and labor (Gough and Olofsson 1999, 5).

To sum up, while for some thinkers of integration, such as Habermas, the micro-macro dimension plays a central role, other thinkers, such as Lockwood and Mouzelis, open the actor-structure dimension as the most appropriate distinction. On the other hand, thinkers like Giddens focus on face-to-face versus indirect relationships. One could easily go on to catalog many other and different meanings besides the integration understanding of thinkers such as Lockwood, Mouzelis, Habermas, and Giddens. However, the above-mentioned literature is sufficient to illustrate the point at which many different conceptions of integration coexist. As a result, the concept of integration is used in many different ways in contemporary political debates and in numerous empirical studies, from the integration of immigrants and the unemployed into the rest of society through labor market integration to the integration of new nation-states into the EU (Berkel and Moller 2003, 18). So, as Berkel and Moller pointed out, the concept of integration can be applied in various contemporary political debates and empirical studies, such as immigrant integration, which is the focus of this study. Therefore, Syrians in Turkey can be examined through the concept of integration.

### **1.2.3 Dimensions and indicators of integration**

Moving from an abstract discussion (discussed above) to a concrete level in understanding the concept of integration, even today, there is no consensus on the definition of the concept of integration. As Bauböck (1994) states, integration is an abstract concept with various meanings and theoretical uses in academic circles (Sardinha 2010, 33), and the conceptual debate continues hotly (Castles et al. 2002, 114). So, in research on migration and integration beginning from the 19th and 20th centuries, various terms such as assimilation, acculturation, incorporation, insertion, accommodation, toleration, and absorption have been used to describe the process of newcomers to society (see Hamberger 2009; Penninx 2009). Although all these terms are critical in examining the process, the term “integration” will be used within the scope of this study, although not only the definition of the term but also its indications are mixed because “integration” is not only the most popular way to conceptualize the

evolving relationship between host societies and “ethnic” immigrant populations, it is also the best tool to frame the advocacy of political means to deal with the consequences of migration. Although many similar concepts are used to describe the process of social change that occurs when immigrants “integrate” into their new societies, none come with such frequency or all-encompassing scope of the idea of integration (Favell 2010, 371–72). However, since there is no idea about the concept of integration, there are also differences between the dimensions and indicators of integration. On the other hand, regardless of the definition or concept of integration applied, the integration process between immigrants and the host society has at least three fundamental dimensions: social, economic, and cultural (CoE 1997, 12). Therefore, examining the dimensions and indicators of integration will be more useful in terms of better understanding the process because although the conceptualizations used to explain the integration process are different, they all examine the same issues under different headings.

For instance, Penninx tries to explain integration's legal/political, socio/economic, and cultural/religious dimensions. As the first dimension conditions, the others in two ways, the legal position, and rights of immigrants can have significant positive or negative consequences on their behavior and integration efforts. The second socio-economic dimension concerns whether migrants have equal access to institutional facilities to find work, housing, education, and health services. It is relevant to the participation of immigrants when compared to local people with the same or similar qualifications. The third cultural-religious dimension concerns not only the perceptions and practices of immigrants and the receiving society but also their reciprocal responses to differences and diversity. These three dimensions are not entirely independent from each other because the legal-political dimension affects the socio-economic and cultural-religious dimensions. However, this third dimension is more challenging to measure the particular position of migrants and migrant groups because of perceptions and mutual normative considerations of what is defined as different and the consequences of such classifications, rather than related to differences and diversity such as ethnic, cultural and religious. Also, because classifications and mutual perceptions manifest differently at different levels, such as the individual, collective, and institutional levels, their results

may also differ. Although their effects are limited, interactions can be disturbing if contacts between individuals involve prejudice. On the other hand, the consequences for immigrants can be pretty harmful if interaction at the institutional level is based on stereotyped or biased perceptions and procedures (Penninx and Garcés-Mascreñas 2016, 14–16).

Moreover, according to Esser (2000), there are four primary forms of social integration: acculturation, placement, interaction, and identification (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 3). Acculturation (also called socialization) is a precondition for placement and is about “the process by which an individual acquires the knowledge, cultural standards, and competencies needed to interact successfully in society.” Placement is not only about the individual's position in society in educational or economic systems but also about the acquisition of rights related to certain positions and the opportunity to establish social relations and gain cultural, social, and economic capital. Interaction is about social actions in daily life. Relationships such as friendships, romantic relationships or marriages, or membership in more general social groups develop in the process of interaction. Since identification refers to the individual's identification with a social system, the person sees himself or herself as part of a collective society. Identification has not only cognitive but also emotional aspects. These four forms of social integration relate to the definition of dimensions of immigrant integration (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 3).

Finally, when we look at the indicators of integration, Ager and Strang (2004, 2008), which will be considered in this study, created a framework consisting of four main topics. They point out ten essential areas under four headings that shape the understanding of integration. These categories: “markers and means” such as employment, housing, education, health, “social connections” such as social bridges, social bonds, social links, “facilitators” such as language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability, “foundation” such as rights and citizenship categories are essential indicators for integration (Ager and Strang 2008, 170).

Firstly, the title with markers and means includes four sub-titles as “employment, housing, education, and health.” Referring to the integration categories adopted by the Council of Europe (1997), it is emphasized that these are essential areas of public activity. On the other hand, Ager and Strang stress that success in each of these four domains should be seen as “means” of integration rather than as “outcomes” of integration. In addition, achievements in these areas, which are defined as the “public face” of integration, affect success in other areas and are affected by success in other areas. For example, “outcomes” in areas such as employment depend on language proficiency and social connections (Ager and Strang 2004, 3–5). For this reason, the achievement in these areas both shows progress towards integration and supports success in other areas because success in these areas is not only an indicator of positive integration results but also helps the more comprehensive integration process because markers and means are not only key areas for the participation of refugees in the life of communities but also key areas that help achieve other integration-related things (Ager and Strang 2004, 3).

Secondly, “social connections” contains three sub-titles “social bridges,” “social bonds,” and “social links.” Social bonds relate to connections within a community defined by ethnic, national, or religious identity, while social bridges relate to members of other communities. On the other hand, social links relate to institutions, including local and central government services (Ager and Strang 2004, 3–4). Social connections allow you to communicate with people who share your own experiences and values through ethnicity, religion, or country of origin, as it includes different social relationships and networks that aid integration. They also act as bridges when establishing connections with other groups and provide access to services. In a word, they all provide to connect immigrant groups to the broader community (Ager and Strang 2004, 13).

Thirdly, under the heading “Facilitators,” which are essential skills, knowledge, and conditions, there are two areas, “language and cultural knowledge” and “safety and stability,” which represent key facilitating factors for the integration process (Ager and Strang 2004, 4). They help immigrants to be active, involved, and safe in the host

community, as they include basic skills, knowledge, and conditions (Ager and Strang 2004, 13). Thus, they support social cohesion between different groups by building bridges, and cultural understanding provides opportunities to expand economic opportunities (Ager and Strang 2004, 18).

Lastly, under the title of “Foundation,” there is a sub-title of “rights and citizenship,” which represents the basis of expectations and obligations for the integration process (Ager and Strang 2004, 4). It is about principles, including the rights granted to individuals and the expectations and responsibilities of citizenship, define not only what you have a right to expect from the government and other members of your communities but also what is expected of you (Ager and Strang 2004, 13). This area provides an official recourse by granting immigrants the right to stay (Ager and Strang 2004, 23).

#### **1.2.4 The legal definition of refugees in Turkey**

Theoretically, refugees' settlement outcomes are often complex, as they depend on a number of interrelated factors. Factors influencing settlement are not only due to the characteristics of the refugees themselves but also directly as a result of national policy or what Weiner (1996) termed “immigrant policies.” Immigrant policies are related to the attitudes of the host country towards immigrant settlement. More specifically, it concerns the extent to which immigrants are granted full citizenship rights (Bloch 2002, 97).

As Castles points out, the best way for successful settlement and good community relations depends on establishing policies that accept the permanent settlement because policies that try to make a sharp distinction between immigrants and citizens by denying the fundamental rights of immigrants lead to a divided society (Castles 1995, 306). For this reason, as Ager and Strang (2004) point out since political, economic, and socio-cultural fields are interconnected, legal obstacles cause immigrants to face barriers not only in political or legal areas but also in economic and socio-cultural fields. Therefore, in this section, I will briefly explain the legal situation of refugees in Turkey through the example of Syrians, as the legal status of refugees affects not only

the legal field but also other areas such as work, education, health, and participation in socio-cultural activities.

According to Keely (2001), the refugee regime was shaped by two major international events, the Second World War and the Cold War (Castles, Haas, and Miller 2014, 225), and because of the intense population movements that took place during and after the wars made the refugee law one of the most critical issues in the international arena. In this context, the primary documents regarding refugee law in the international arena are the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (Nicholson and Kumin 2017, 16). Similarly, since Turkey has always had significant population movements due to its geography, it ratified the 1951 Refugee Law Convention and the 1967 Protocol, but Turkey did not make a general regulation on refugee law for a long time. On the other hand, Syrians who came to Turkey after April 2011 made it necessary to make a regulation on this issue.

Although Turkey has historically been a country of immigration and emigration, the general opinion is that international migration started in the early 1960s. However, the reality is that migrations such as internal migration, forced migration, population exchange, asylum seekers, and external migration, one of the most critical dynamics of the social, political, and economic structure, continued both in the Ottoman period and in the Republican period (Sirkeci and Erdoğan 2012, 298). Thus, the acceptance of Syrian refugees in Turkey as immigrants is based mainly on a discourse of tolerance and philanthropy stemming from ethnocultural and religious premises that date back to the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in the 1920s. The vocabulary used to describe Syrian refugees represents a kind of continuity in the terminology of “immigrant,” “guest,” and “foreigner” since the first days of the Republic. For instance, the 1934 Settlement Law is one of the primary legal texts determining how the Turkish state defines newcomers to the country. In the Republic's first years, the Settlement Law was adopted regarding the arrival of ethnic Turks in the country. Moreover, it remains the primary legal text on immigration, “determining who can enter, settle and/or apply for refugee status in Turkey” (Kaya 2021b, 129). Therefore, the first of the two essential documents regulating the flows of immigrants and asylum seekers in Turkey is the Settlement Law of 1934, which

includes the immigration of people of Turkish origin and culture, while the second document is the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Additional Protocol on the status of refugees. However, as Turkey maintains a geographical limitation on granting asylum to Europeans, a significant proportion of “non-Turkish or non-Muslim” immigrants to Turkey are defined as “illegal” by Turkish law (İçduygu 2015, 4).

It is not considered positive that only those who are of Turkish descent and adhere to Turkish culture are recognized as immigrants or refugees. Turkey, on the one hand, tries to limit international migration to only the migration of “Turks” within the understanding of the nation-state, while on the other hand, it tries to keep up with the new migration conditions brought by globalization. However, trying to keep up with this is often faced with the reflex of a conservative nation-state understanding and difficulties in the governance of new migration movements (İçduygu, Erder, and Gençkaya 2014, 61). Therefore, due to the increasing national and international developments and the discussions on the issue of asylum for those coming from outside Europe, Turkey had to make a legal regulation on the issue. For this reason, the 1994 Asylum Regulation was put into effect. According to Kirişçi (2002), the first example of attempts to harmonize Turkey's migration and asylum regime, related policies, and practices with the current administration, policy, and practices in the world under changing conditions is the 1994 Asylum Regulation (İçduygu, Erder, and Gençkaya 2014, 61). Therefore, the 1994 Regulation, which includes the definition of refugee and is the essential resource for refugees, was another significant development. In the 1994 Regulation, two types of protection status were given as a basis for Turkey's geographical restriction into the 1951 Convention. While those who met the conditions of the definition of refugee status specified in the 1951 Convention due to events occurring outside of Europe were described as “asylum seekers,” those who met the same conditions due to events that took place in Europe were described as “refugees” (Öztürk 2015, 372–73).

In 2011, when the 1994 Regulation was in force, some Syrians came to Turkey because of the civil war in their country, Turkey implemented an open-door policy for Syrians, but there has been a significant increase in the number of Syrians in Turkey over the

years. Since the 1994 Regulation was insufficient in solving the problems that arose with the rise in the number of Syrians, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (YUKK) numbered 6458 was put into effect on 11.04.2013, but the provisions of the YUKK on international protection entered into force on 11.04.2014, one year after the publication of the Law (Öztürk 2015, 378) and it has brought with it the concepts of “refugee,” “conditional refugee” and “secondary protection” as types of international protection. Until the YUKK, Turkey defines people who come from Europe and have a reason for asylum as “refugees” and those who come from outside Europe and have a reason for asylum as “asylum seekers.” Since the YUKK, those coming from Europe continue to be defined as “refugees,” while those coming from outside Europe have started to be defined as “conditional refugees.” Therefore, there was no difference in the definition of “refugee status” before and after the YUKK. However, the status defined as “refugee status” before the YUKK was defined as “conditional refugee” in the YUKK. Also another situation that has not been legally regulated before is the situation defined as “secondary protection” in the YUKK. According to the YUKK, “secondary protection” can be individual, or it can be applied collectively as “temporary protection” (Demirel 2015, 56–58).

As stated earlier, “refugee” corresponds to legal status in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Additional Protocol. Considering the conditions of this status, since Syrians do not come from a European country, they are not defined as “refugees” due to geographical limitations. On the other hand, official asylum applications of Syrians who came to Turkey after April 2011 are not accepted. Therefore, it is impossible to evaluate any individual application and grant them the legal status of “asylum seeker.” In addition, with the entry into force of the YUKK, it is impossible to give them the status of “conditional refugee.” These constraints and the increase in the population of Syrians in Turkey caused the official discourse to change and define Syrians as “guests.” The word “guest” has no legal meaning. Therefore, to be a “guest” also brings with it the deprivation and exemption of legally determining rights and responsibilities in the status of “refugee” or “asylum seeker.” After the “guest” and “refugee” discourses, the final official discourse is that Syrians continue to be in Turkey legally under the “temporary protection” that came into effect with the YUKK (Demirel 2015, 60–61).

In sum, Turkey tried to manage the “refugee” issue with the legal status in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Additional Protocol, but considering the conditions of this status, Syrians were not defined as “refugees” because they did not come from a European country. In addition, it is impossible to grant the status of “conditional refugee” to Syrians due to the entry into force of the YUKK. Because of these restrictions, the term “guest” was used for Syrians in Turkey. However, the word “guest” has no legal meaning. Therefore, Syrians are legally defined within the “temporary protection” scope enacted by the YUKK.



## **2. THE FUNCTIONS OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) IN MIGRANT INTEGRATION**

Since integration is a dynamic, chaotic process, it involves many stakeholders. Therefore, integration is a phenomenon that concerns not only society as a whole but also its parts, such as groups, institutions, and organizations (Apap 2006, 31). In this respect, although states are responsible for the migration process, such as the integration process between the local population and Syrians in Turkey, institutions and organizations are also involved in this process. Therefore, not only state institutions but also non-governmental organizations can be influential in the integration process of Syrians in Turkey with local people. In addition to that, integration depends not only on security, legal, and economic aspects but also on socio-cultural aspects. And the works of NGOs not only in security, legal and economic fields but also in socio-cultural fields are of vital importance in the migration and integration process. Thus, both state institutions and non-governmental organizations should take part in this process (especially in socio-cultural fields). In this sense, I will examine the relationship between the artistic and cultural practices of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which is related to socio-cultural fields and integration in this section. For this purpose, I will focus on the social and cultural functions of NGOs in the integration process in the cities where Syrians live heavily. So, the focus of my analysis of the situation of Syrians in Turkey will be on the artistic and cultural practices organized by NGOs and their functions in the migration and integration process. In accordance with this purpose, after explaining why NGOs should take a role in the Syrian migration process, I will briefly talk about the concept of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Later, I will briefly explain the development of NGOs in Turkey. Finally, I will account for the functions of artistic and cultural practices organized by NGOs in the integration process of local people and Syrians in line with my work.

The first migration wave of Syrians in Turkey took place in 2011, and the Turkish State followed an “open door” policy (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016, 60). In Turkey, in addition to state aid, many NGOs in different fields played crucial roles in meeting the basic needs of migrants from Syria, but since almost all of the Syrians stayed in the camps

until 2013, AFAD (Disaster And Emergency Management Presidency) was the leading actor of the Syrian migration management at the beginning of the process (İçduygu 2015, 1). According to İçduygu, as the Syrian migration is an unprecedented event, it makes it difficult for Turkey to manage it legally and financially. Moreover, there is no comprehensive legal framework to govern this process. Therefore, policymakers need to focus on innovative reforms in the field of migration (İçduygu 2015, 12). Thus, Turkey should increase its capacity by working with other states, international organizations, and NGOs (İçduygu 2015, 13). This new situation has shown that both state institutions and NGOs need to work in the field as not only state institutions but also NGOs (especially most of those established after Syrian migration) focused on social services after the mass entry of Syrians into Turkey. Since NGOs carried out studies that complement the work of the public authority during and after the migration of Syrians to Turkey.

On the other hand, one of the most critical problems in Turkey is that the communication of the state with NGOs is not generally egalitarian. Some NGOs working in fields such as education, health, and social service establish closer relations with the state. In addition, professional associations and business associations are in constant dialogue with the state (TÜSEV 2006, 75). So, communication of NGOs with the state is very limited in Turkey, and the state tends to supervise NGOs rather than consult NGOs (İçduygu and Dane 2005, 24). However, recently, cooperation opportunities have been developed between local governments, municipalities, other state institutions, and NGOs in terms of both policy-making and social services in Turkey (TÜSEV 2006, 66). As can be seen, cooperation opportunities between local governments, municipalities, other state institutions, and NGOs affect public policies, the ability of the State and NGOs to respond to social issues and meet the social needs of citizens (TÜSEV 2006, 95). In this context, when we consider NGOs' ability to respond to social phenomena and meet which social needs of citizens, NGOs play an essential role in social processes such as migration and integration. In such processes, they undertake essential duties not only in areas such as cash aid, psychosocial support, employment, and legal consultancy but also in areas such as social services, health, education, and vocational training. In addition to that, NGOs play a role in effective

communication between immigrants and the host community through cultural and artistic activities in such processes. Hence, NGOs play important roles not only in economic and political fields but also in social and cultural fields in the migration process. Therefore, in this section, I will explain the functions of NGOs in social and cultural areas in the integration process in the cities I have chosen in Turkey, such as İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Gaziantep, and Adana. The reason why I chose these cities is that they are the most populated cities, both by local people and Syrians. Thus, they are the cities where the interaction between local people and immigrants is most intense. To clarify, Istanbul is the city with the most significant Syrian population in the country. After Istanbul, provinces such as Gaziantep, Hatay, Mardin, Şanlıurfa, Adana, İzmir, and Ankara are the cities with the most significant Syrian population in the country (RASAS 2021). Therefore, in this section, I will talk about the functions of NGOs in the integration process between local people and Syrians. However, before go in further detail, I will briefly explain the concept of NGO.

## **2.1 What are Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)?**

The term NGO is used not only in a narrow sense but also in a broad sense. NGOs are organizations such as specially formed companies, commercial, voluntary organizations, and charities that may or may not profit. In other words, all non-state organizations can be defined as NGOs (Lewis and Kanji 2009, 10). According to Charnovitz, NGOs are groups of individuals organized for many reasons, which include human imagination and hope (Charnovitz 1997, 185). On the other hand, such definitions may technically be valid, but there are comprehensive definitions for NGOs and people interested in development. Therefore, to put it briefly, NGOs are organizations associated with social, political, and economic change and the concept of “development.” This is based on the fact that an NGO is an institution dealing with development or humanitarian aid at the local, national and international levels (Lewis and Kanji 2009, 11). Therefore, the term “NGO” or “non-governmental organization” is used today broadly to refer to non-profit organizations working in areas such as international relations, the environment, human rights, humanitarian aid, and development (K.Anheier and A.List 2005, 173). Hence, NGOs are organizations that are related to the concepts of “change” and “development” in terms of social, cultural,

political, and economic aspects at local, national, and international levels, with many phenomena such as the environment, human rights, humanitarian aid, and development. One of the most encountered situations today is the phenomenon of migration, which has national and international effects. For this reason, NGOs with national and international influences should be involved in the migration and integration process. As Trbola and Rákoczyová (2011) emphasize, as the integration process is complex, many stakeholders need to be involved, from the EU level to municipalities and NGOs, because mutual cooperation and coordination of stakeholders are necessary for a successful integration process. Therefore, at the local level, the integration strategy should be formulated and implemented by a range of stakeholders such as municipalities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Trbola and Rákoczyová 2011, 85). In this section, I will briefly account for the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Turkey, as I focus on the integration process between local people and Syrians at the local level.

## **2.2 The Development of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Turkey**

The increasing role of civil society organizations (CSOs) or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the local level, namely in Turkey, in dealing with immigrants started in Turkey in the 1920s. As Binnaz Toprak (1983) stated, non-governmental organizations in Turkey emerged as a constitutional right with the 1908 Constitution for the first time. In addition, in 1923, the independent Republic of Turkey emerged as a modern nation-state. In this period, the state saw civil society as a tool to reinforce modernization within its ideological apparatus. For this reason, it is difficult to say that non-governmental organizations develop from below. In this context, as Binnaz Toprak (1996) emphasized, the state implemented and supported an organizational life suitable for modernization; on the other hand, it prevented the development of a corporate life contrary to its own agenda. A similar situation is observed in the later periods of the Republic (İçduygu, Meydanoğlu, and Sert 2011, 55). Also, civil society in Turkey, which has grown since the 1980s, especially in the 1990s, has been active in many fields such as human rights, democratization, peace, and the environment. According to Nilüfer Göle (1994), thanks to the increasing role of civil society in Turkey, especially in the 1990s, an “autonomous social space” was opened, and “relative autonomy of

economic activities, social groups, and cultural identities” was achieved (Keyman and İçduygu 2003, 221). When we came in the 2000s, the most important historical development at the beginning of 2000 was the acceptance of Turkey's candidacy for the European Union. The development of Turkey-EU relations has created an understanding of citizenship that includes dimensions such as rights, freedom, and responsibility, depending on the democratic reform process in society. In addition, as the progress reports in which Turkey is evaluated, it is accepted by both parties that civil society plays a vital role in shaping the future of Turkey-EU relations. In this sense, the deepening of Turkey-EU relations in recent years has contributed to the development of civil society, but at the same time, civil society has played an essential role in shaping these relations. In other words, the interaction between Turkey-EU relations and civil society is a reciprocal one. In addition, it has pushed the state administration to restructure on the basis of efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and responsibility. This situation opens new fields of action for civil society and NGOs (Yeğen et al. 2010, 39–40).

Another significant development in the 2000s is the great earthquakes in Turkey. These earthquakes caused NGOs to increase their impact both in terms of quality and quantity. To clarify, in the 2000s, the most significant changes and transformations in this context are the 1999 Marmara Earthquake, which killed nearly twenty thousand people, and the Kaynaşlı Earthquake that followed it (Bikmen and Meydanoğlu 2006, 38). In addition to that, another critical factor that increases the number of NGOs in Turkey is the increase in the number of NGOs working for disadvantaged groups and humanitarian issues. As İçduygu, Meydanoğlu, and Sert (2011) state, in recent years, it has been witnessed that the fields of NGOs that previously worked in areas where disadvantaged groups in society, such as the disabled, were more prominent have expanded over issues such as street children, homeless people, immigrants, and refugees (İçduygu, Meydanoğlu, and Sert 2011, 64).

On the other hand, the qualitative and quantitative increase of NGOs or CSOs in Turkey has increased their activities not only locally but also internationally. For instance, the NGOs in Turkey played an important role in humanitarian issues, especially in Gaza,

Iraq, Bosnia, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Bangladesh, Philippines, West Africa, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Iran (Bulut 2016, 9). As can be seen, the effectiveness of NGOs increased in the 2000s, both nationally and internationally. Finally, in Turkey, there has been a significant qualitative and quantitative increase in NGOs since 2011, with the migration of Syrians to Turkey. For example, in Turkey, the number of active associations, 88,646 in 2011, increased to 109,482 in 2016 (Mackreath and Sağnıç 2017, 29). The number of NGOs has led to a rise in the number of people working in this field. According to Erdoğan, after 2011, Turkey experienced an extraordinary increase in capacity, especially in refugee rights and field operations. The number of people working in international institutions, NGOs, UN institutions, and solid local NGOs operating for refugees in Turkey has approached 50 thousand (Erdoğan 2019).

As can be seen, with the intensification of migration in recent years, NGOs working in this field in Turkey have increased in quality and quantity. Thus, NGOs have essential duties, especially in the migration process. In this sense, if we look at the responsibilities of NGOs in the migration process, the services provided by NGOs to immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees are not only in economic and security areas but also in social and cultural areas. Due to the ease of access to NGOs, these organizations have played an active role not only in the functioning of protection procedures but also in the participation of refugees in social and cultural life, in line with their needs. For this reason, local NGOs and international NGOs have become indispensable elements for asylum seekers as they can respond more quickly to regional and local requirements. In this direction, NGOs provide communication between local people and immigrants through cultural and artistic practices in both social and cultural fields because cultural and artistic practices provide opportunities for intercultural exchange, communication, interaction, and recognition of “new” identities between immigrants and host cultures. Therefore, this section focuses on the functions of artistic and cultural activities in NGOs' social and cultural fields in the integration process.

### **2.3 The Functions of Artistic and Cultural Practices Organized by NGOs in the Integration Process**

As I explained above, since the 1980s, issues such as human rights, democratization, peace, immigration, and the environment have led to the development of civil society in Turkey (Keyman and İçduygu 2003, 221), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are organizational activities aimed at finding solutions to some social issues (Keyman 2006, 15). Thus, especially with the intensification of immigration in recent years, NGOs can play an essential role in the integration process of immigrants and local people. Because considering that the integration process is quite complex, stakeholders such as NGOs have crucial functions in this process, such as training courses, language learning, shelter support, entertainment and supporting multicultural activities, philanthropy and humanitarian activities, civil rights, and lobbying activities (Trbola and Rákoczyová 2011, 93–95).

In addition to that, NGOs not only undertake practical functions such as accommodation, education, employment, and access to legal services, language schools, and vocational training, but they can also be very effective in integrating immigrants into a new society through cultural and artistic practices. So, NGOs work for integration by building bridges between immigrant communities and local people and by creating opportunities for communication between local and immigrant communities in their daily interactions (Jacobsen 2001, 20) because integration includes not only economic and legal aspects but also social and cultural aspects. In this context, I will briefly explain why the integration process should focus not only on financial and legal but also on social and cultural areas. Later, I will present the findings that I have obtained as a result of my research.

As I mentioned before, Ager and Strang point out ten essential areas under four headings that shape the understanding of integration. These categories: “means and markers” such as employment, housing, education, health, “social connections” such as social bridges, social bonds, social links, “facilitators” such as language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability, “foundation” such as rights and citizenship categories are essential indicators for integration (Ager and Strang 2008, 170). As Ager and Strang

pointed out, integration is a complex process involving multiple components. To make it clear, one of the most critical factors affecting the integration process is the legal identification of immigrants because immigrants who do not have legal status cannot participate in economic life or social and cultural life. In this regard, examining the link between legal status and refugee integration in the UK context, Lomba stressed that legal status is essential for integration as it shapes one's legal environment (Lomba 2010, 415) because legal status covers access to services such as residence, employment, education, health. This causes legal status to become highly relevant to integration (Lomba 2010, 419).

In the light of this information, when we look at the Syrian example in Turkey, one of the biggest problems in the social integration in Turkey is the legal status of Syrians because instead of legal definitions for the protection of Syrians in Turkey, there is a hegemonic discourse on the protection of Syrians in Turkey based on Islamic teachings such as “Ansar” and “muhajir” and emphasizing the historical processes of supporting refugees instead of legal definitions (Aras and Mencütek 2021, 44). As Jacobsen pointed out, the way the local people perceive refugees is influenced by the meaning attributed to the word “refugee.” Cultural, historical and religious factors are the most influential in these meanings (Jacobsen 1996, 668). In this regard, one of the biggest obstacles to the integration process between the local people and Syrians in Turkey is the Syrians' lack of legal rights because while Syrians are deprived of legal rights, they are deprived of economic and social life. Just to clarify, Syrians, who do not have any legal status, are very difficult to find a place in economic life. However, they can have a place in economic life as informal and cheap labor force. Kemal Vural Tarlan, Kırkayak Culture general coordinator, expressed this problem with the following words:

When we look at the economic and living conditions of Syrians in Turkey, there are approximately 4 million Syrians in this country, and there are close to 1.5 million Syrian refugees in the labor market in Turkey. Among those people, only 60000 have work permits. The Syrians, over 95 percent of the rest, do not have a work permit, and these people primarily work in informal areas, and their living conditions continue to be insecure. (Kemal Vural Tarlan, Kırkayak Culture General Coordinator)

The fact that Syrians can take part in economic life as unregistered and cheap labor leads to the emergence of nationalist discourses, with the threat of immigrants affecting the jobs and wages of the host country's citizens. As Erdoğan (2020) points out, indeed, Syrian refugees do not notably prefer to be a cheap labor force. However, their willingness to accept any wage out of necessity is exploited by employers. Therefore, unregistered employment of Syrians may lead to an increase in discriminatory discourses against them. Still, according to Erdoğan, in such mass humanitarian movements, the most disturbing aspects of the local community, especially the concerns of “losing their jobs due to cheap labor,” have generally not materialized. Syrians have not only made their living economically but also did not engage in actions that would disturb the peace of the society, especially in the border region, except in areas with excessive density (Erdoğan 2020, 21). Also, if we consider that the integration process is complex and lengthy, only legal definition or economic opportunities are insufficient. As the Swedish and Norwegian migration experiences show, factors such as financial, shelter, and education provided to refugees alone do not ensure a successful integration process (Marko and Bunar 2010, 479). Therefore, drawing on her fieldwork in Amsterdam and Rome, Korac states that integration is not just about functional aspects such as education and employment but also about other aspects of social life because her fieldwork shows that refugees need to be a part of accepting societies by establishing closer relationships with the settled community and preserving their distinct identities (Korac 2003, 21). As seen, Syrians’ not having legal status causes them to work as cheap workers in economic life. This situation causes the Syrians to face adverse reactions in social life because of the perception of “they took our job” by the local people. Legal status affects economic status, and financial situation affects social life. For this reason, it is necessary to approach the integration process not only economically, legally, politically, but also socially and culturally. Thus, in this section, I will focus on the social and cultural areas, keeping in mind that the integration process should be approached holistically.

The massive arrival of Syrian refugees has triggered many new debates about immigration in Turkey, which is now hosting the world's most significant number of refugees as a result of its open-door policy. However, we can see that the word “crisis”

does not exist in contrast to European discourses, the way in which political institutions and actors frame migration. This shows that the state power carries traces of the management of the “refugee problem” through various mechanisms (Sert and Daniş 2020, 1). Similarly, as I explained earlier, as a result of using historical, religious, and cultural references such as “Ansar” and “muhajir,” Syrians in Turkey were defined as “our religious brothers, sisters,” “our siblings,” “our guest,” “under temporary protection” in the state discourse. This situation affects the way local people perceive Syrians in social life. Thus, this discourse aims not only to manage the phenomenon of migration in Turkey politically but also to manage social life by creating a “cultural affinity” phenomenon between local people and immigrants. As Baglioni (1964) points out, the host society's affinity for immigrants is conditioned by the degree of cultural affinity, particularly concerning race, language, and religion, and by political and emotional attitudes in the host society (Baglioni 1964, 127). It can be thought that these concepts are used for purposes such as creating sympathy for Syrian refugees in the Turkish public opinion, reducing the potential tension between host communities and Syrians, and preventing them from being marginalized in a permanent residence situation (Aras and Mencütek 2021, 47). However, even if such discourses are influential in the beginning in order to manage the migration process, it is seen that their impact decreases as the discourses that the Syrians will be permanent in Turkey begin to increase. Ezgi Kaplan explained this situation with the following sentences:

Since seventy percent of the people living in Sultanbeyli are conservative, with Islamic tradition, and have similar beliefs, more balanced studies were carried out on Syrians, but after 2016, questions such as when Syrians would go to their country began to be asked. (Ezgi Kaplan, Mülteciler Association, Social Cohesion Coordinator)

Although cultural proximity discourses are influential in the migration process at the beginning, it loses their effect over time. According to Erdoğan, the “alienation” of Syrian refugees is due to the gradual decrease in social relations with the local people. While the social relationship should increase gradually, the communication between the local people and the Syrians is decreasing slowly (Erdoğan 2020, 64), and Turkish society has a severe social distance and “alienation” tendency toward Syrians. This situation is seen in the opposite way for Syrians. Syrians believe that they are already

very well integrated into society, while Turkish society is highly concerned (Erdoğan 2019).

Therefore, even if the cultures are the same or imitate each other, the discourse of the “other” may still exist. Defining culture not only as similarity but also a threat, Bhabha (1994) argues that “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference” (Bhabha 1994, 122). Simply put, it highlights the fact that immigrants will never indeed be recognized as equals with the local population, even if immigrants live as the host society wishes, that is, even if the immigrants assimilate.

Almost the same but not white: the visibility of mimicry is always produced at the site of interdiction. It is a form of colonial discourse that is uttered inter dicta: a discourse at the crossroads of what is known and permissible and that which though known must be kept concealed; a discourse uttered between the lines and, as such, both against the rules and within them. The question of the representation of difference is therefore always also a problem of authority.” Thus, “the difference between being English and being Anglicized; the identity between stereotypes which, through repetition, also become different; the discriminatory identities constructed across traditional cultural norms and classifications, the Simian Black, the Lying Asiatic – all these are metonymies of presence” (Bhabha 1994, 128).

Thus, as Herzfeld stressed, the term cultural affinity is not related to the simple idea of meeting a culture (Herzfeld 2013, 491). According to him, cultural intimacy is “the recognition of aspects of a cultural identity that are recognized as an external source of distress but still provide security of common sociability to insiders” (Herzfeld 2013, 3). What Michael Herzfeld calls cultural proximity is a kind of assurance for Syrian refugees to stay in Turkey despite social-economic difficulties, deprivation of immigrant rights, exclusion, and abuse in the labor market and in everyday life (Kaya 2021b, 133).

On the other hand, although the Syrians have historical and religious similarities with the local people, the sense of cultural affinity towards the Syrians is gradually decreasing. As Erdoğan states, despite the border neighborhood and ethno-religious affinities, the feeling of cultural affinity towards Syrians in Turkish society is strikingly low. That is, there is a serious marginalization in this regard. Only 17 percent of local people stated that we are culturally similar to Syrians (Erdoğan 2014, 7). In addition to that, one of the common beliefs in integration studies is the approach of “adaptation will be easy if there is cultural affinity.” Syrians in Turkey, along with other examples worldwide, show that this is not very realistic. Cultural proximity is only one of the elements of ensuring harmony, and the primary determinant is numerical sizes and success in process management. Therefore, achieving harmony with an emotional approach by relying on cultural affinity may initially be a form of solidarity, but it is not sustainable. Numerical quantities should be considered, and process management should be carried out independently of sentimentality (Erdoğan 2019, 17). Also, as Zimmerman points out, differences between ethnic groups may diminish over time but do not disappear quickly. Therefore, understanding how and why ethnic differences persist is vital to comprehending integration processes (Zimmermann 2007, 487). Thus, when we think that the cultures of the two communities, which met as a result of migration, were affected by each other and transformed over time, how this process of change and transformation can be created in a conflict-free and harmonious manner way comes to mind. In this direction, cultural and artistic activities organized by NGOs are the essential practices that allow the differences between ethnic groups to decrease over time, and the process of transformation, communication, and interaction to occur.

We held a photography exhibition and a film festival because we see art as the universal language. The fact that local people and immigrants do not speak the same language is a serious obstacle because it is complicated to communicate with each other when they do not speak the same language. On the other hand, communication can be complicated even when speaking the same language, but you can communicate with the language of art. Even if there is no migration process, you can watch movies made in other countries, and you can understand them because it is a matter of intelligible code in that language which is a universal systematic. In this way, art enables cultures to come closer to each other. Therefore, art can be a language that allows communication between local people and Syrians

during the migration process. (Ufuk Tambaş, Halkların Köprüsü Association, Festival Coordinator)

In this sense, since it is a universal language, local people and Syrians can interact through art, and even if they do not speak the same language, they can become culturally closer to each other through cultural events. Because as Martiniello states, art has the power to build bridges between immigrants and local people because it acts as a tool that facilitates communication and contact between different groups sharing the same space (Martiniello 2014, 6). In this context, Emine Çakır expressed that art can be used as a tool that facilitates communication and contact with the following words:

We use artistic activities to create communication between immigrants and local people. For example, we were opening a piece of cloth so that local people and immigrants could paint together. In this process, there was close contact between Syrians and the local people. Even if they did not speak the same language, they could communicate with facial expressions and smiles because, when one makes flowers on this piece of cloth, the other looks at it and smiles or helps. Thus, new friendships begin to form between local people and immigrants in this process. For instance, there are three people I met and talked to through this artistic activity. (Emine Çakır, Mavi Kalem Association, Former Employee)

As can be seen, cultural and artistic practices are shown as tools that enable different ethnic groups to communicate in social life even if they do not speak the same language because social interaction includes not only verbal communication but also many forms of nonverbal communication, such as the exchange of information and meaning through facial expressions, gestures, and body movements (Giddens 2009, 252). In this regard, as Dippert, Gelles, and Merrick (2017) state, non-profit organizations have recognized the potential of art as a universal language to bring communities together (Dippert, Gelles, and Merrick 2017, 493) because, as Sooudi points out, when words, guidelines, and knowledge fall short, art provides another form of communication language (Sooudi 2010, 224). In this sense, Ezgi Kaplan states that they use art, artistic and cultural practices as a universal language to bring different groups and societies together:

We do not focus on culture and arts; we use these activities to bring them (Syrians and local people) together and communicate. We organize courses, festivals, theaters, and educational workshops depending on the budget. In line with this, we have one-off events such as theatre, cinema, and concerts. On the other hand, we have long-term projects such as skill courses and workshops like ceramics. (Ezgi Kaplan, Mülteciler Association, Social Cohesion Coordinator)

Institutions' interviews showed that artistic expression could play a vital role in the integration process, even if immigrants face linguistic barriers (DiMaggio and Fernández-Kelly 2010, 4) because art allows immigrants and local people to meet and communicate by creating a common language. Thus, arts and culture contribute to promoting a shared vision for society by building society, building a common and more equitable future, and ensuring harmony in a pluralistic society (Rose, Daniel, and Liu 2017, 4). Moreover, institutions' interviews demonstrated that such activities not only provide communication but also make visible the experiences of refugees during the migration process as O'Neill stressed that migration experience includes losses such as loss of family and friends, loss of homeland and culture, loss of socioeconomic status, loss of personal belonging, loss of support networks, loss of "lifestyle" (O'Neill 2010, 225). Such events document the resilience and courage of those subjected to forced migration by making visible the harrowing experiences of migration and journeys. Thus, immersion in the life worlds of immigrants with these experiences facilitates the understanding of emotions by the host society. While explaining how the refugee film festival started, Ufuk Tambaş stated that the main reason is an art as a universal language and expressed the importance of telling the migration process of refugees and their stories through art with these words:

When we talk about people and turn them into numbers, nobody empathizes with anybody, and nobody understands anybody, but when you narrate the situation or story, people can empathize with "other" people. For instance, when you say there are 250,000 Syrians in Izmir, nobody cares, but when you tell the stories of these people, it changes dramatically; for example, when you said when he was in Syria, this man was wealthy; he had inns and baths, and he was helping everyone there. Now, when you say that he is shoeblack here, empathy can be felt. (Ufuk Tambaş, Halkların Köprüsü Association, Festival Coordinator)

In this sense, arts and cultural events are portrayed as tools that create opportunities for communication between local people and immigrants and offer an opportunity to understand such experiences. Thus, it creates spaces to see, understand and interact with different lives. It also allows women to share their experiences, connect, communicate and develop cultural citizenship (O'Neill 2010, 224). Rya Karaca stated that how Syrian women struggle with the migration process can become visible through such activities:

Social cohesion activities and rights-based studies were conducted in cooperation with immigrants and local people. For example, On Refugee Day, there was an activity where the children did maracas together by inviting people from the local community and, within the scope of March 8, International Women's Day, we held an event where women's rights were explained, and women dyed fabrics and planted plants together. The women were talking about how they tried to cope with difficulties by going to the stage. In this way, awareness has been raised that whether they are migrant women or women from Turkey, they all have the same challenges and responsibilities. (Rya Karaca, Mavi Kalem Association, Former Employee)

As Rya Karaca emphasized that the most frequent programs to promote good inter-communal relations between cultural groups are special days, cultural festivals, food fairs, multicultural days, festivals, and art projects (Dunn, Hanna, and Thompson 2001, 1581). These activities have a vital role not only for women but also for children and youth in the process of contact and communication with the local people and in the process of integration into a new society. Talking about the situation of Syrian youth in Turkey, Metin orabatır, the manager of the İGAMDER Association, expressed how art plays a vital role and how it provides communication and interaction between local and Syrian youth:

Especially Syrian youth are very lonely. International institutions carry out projects for children, women, and the elderly. So, the most neglected group was the youth, but they are a group in need of exceptional support due to their age. Many of the Syrian youth have been traumatized, and as we know that it is accepted as a method of art therapy, we used art. We brought together Turkish and refugee youth with a universal common language, such as music. The group we targeted was between 13-14 and 18-19. We did such a good job that there was a lot of participation. To create public

opinion, the children worked hard and learned very quickly. They gave concerts on Refugee Day and on different special occasions. There were about 70 students in total. At first, they talked in groups, but they became good friends over time. Thus, a small integration group was formed. We are making a couple of new songs and attending events. We participate in special days such as women's day and health workers' days. (Metin Çorabatır, İGAMDER, Association Manager)

Institutions' interviews demonstrated that art and artistic events provided spaces for Syrian and local youth to come together and communicate. Additionally, it provided them with the opportunity to work and produce together. So, as Lake emphasizes, being part of the group makes it easier for young refugees to integrate into the new society (O'Neill 2010, 202–3). Moreover, art and cultural practices such as food and dance are used for intercultural communication (Dunn, Hanna, and Thompson 2001, 1577). Kemal Vural Taylan explains the importance of art and cultural activities such as food for intercultural communication as follows:

We realized that the other meeting point was the kitchen. That's why we have a very famous kitchen workshop. It is an area where Turkish and Syrian people can try to live together. And in this field, women carry out various activities and productions, from culture and arts to research to food. And we are an institution that works to expand these living spaces together. Here we see that the newcomers and the old ones come together, and friendships begin between them. Especially our culinary program is a crucial example in this respect because Turkish and Syrian women produce different things together here. (Kemal Vural Tarlan Kırkayak Culture General Coordinator)

As can be understood from the explanations above, the discourse shows activities such as music, art, culinary festivals, multicultural artistic activities, volunteering, and cultural activities as tools that facilitate the mutual understanding of the cultures of immigrants and target communities predominates, as such activities provide different groups with spaces for intercultural communication and allow them to get to know each other. In this direction, cultural practices, such as projects or festivals, can encourage minorities to maintain their origin culture and reduce the mutual negative attitudes and prejudices of local people and immigrants. Thus, a well-organized multicultural society can be built (Son, Lee, and Arcodia 2012, 2–3). Moreover, cultural activity and creative

expression enable identity formation at the individual and the community level. The ability of refugees to participate in cultural and creative activities both benefits them as individuals and communities and can contribute to social inclusion (O'Neill 2010, 227). However, one of the points to be considered here is that “the integration process takes time” (Suarez-Orozco 2019, 310). In this regard, since integration is a dynamic process that can take several generations, such cultural and artistic practices should be increased over time, both qualitatively and quantitatively, because growing cultural and artistic practices both qualitatively and quantitatively over time prevents the decrease in interaction between local people and immigrants and ensures that the communication between them becomes stronger by increasing. However, there are some economic obstacles to the increase in quality and quantity of such cultural and artistic practices over time. So, the fact that such activities cannot be long-term due to financial difficulties is shown as the reason that affects the integration process negatively. Ezgi Kaplan, the activities and social cohesion coordinator, expressed this problem with the following words:

We have a budget problem right now, and we are coming to the end of our project. Previously, we were working with four or five people on this project, and currently, we are working with two people due to both the pandemic and the budget problem. (Ezgi Kaplan, Mülteciler Association, Social Cohesion Coordinator)

As it can be understood, not only financial problems but also the problems experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic process (explained in detail in the fourth section) are the biggest obstacles to the longevity of such projects. Moreover, one of the most critical problems I encountered in this process was that artistic and cultural practices were not seen as a basic need because, in terms of integration, meeting the needs of shelter and security, participation in employment, benefiting from services such as education and health are perceived as priority issues. In this sense, as Erdoğan pointed out, with regard to immigrants and especially refugees, host countries generally do not prefer to implement their cohesion policies because of the uncertainty of the situation and, more importantly, because of the “encouragement of refugees to persist in the host society” (Erdoğan 2020, 22). Therefore, as Danis and Nazlı (2018) explain, Turkish authorities avoided using terms denoting permanent settlement as they defined the

presence of Syrian refugees in the country as a temporary phenomenon (Danış and Nazlı 2018, 2). The Turkish government “deliberately preferred the term “harmonization” rather than “integration,” which reflects a very cautious approach to integration issues” (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016, 62). This situation causes the integration of Syrians in Turkey to be perceived as “basic needs” such as shelter and security needs, education, and health rather than social and cultural needs like artistic and cultural practices. Ezgi Kaplan explains the negative impact on the integration process that organized artistic and cultural events are generally not seen as basic needs such as shelter, security, health, or economy, or as secondary needs:

Since the priority is security and economy, no one comes directly to our unit (Social Cohesion Unit) from local people and refugees. We, as a unit, contribute to the process later. In addition, immigrants have priorities such as protection, security, health, economy, and language courses, but since social cohesion is different from these, it has difficulties. The fact that it is not seen as a basic need creates problems. (Ezgi Kaplan, Mülteciler Association, Social Cohesion Coordinator)

Thus, as Şimşek (2019) stated, the way to achieve a successful process in the integration of Syrians is through rights-based policies (Şimşek 2019, 185) because the fact that the approach toward Syrians is evaluated only in line with basic needs rather than being rights-based causes them to be perceived as people in need of help. So, according to Göksel (2018), generosity and hospitality discourses based on the perception of refugees as “guests” are among the serious obstacles to the integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey (Göksel 2018, 158–60). Kemal Vural Tarlan explains the importance of the Syrians' rights-based approach for integration rather than hospitality as follows:

It should not be forgotten that April 29, 2021, is the 10th anniversary of the arrival of Syrian refugees in Turkey. In other words, there is still a conservation program in the country for ten years, and everything is built on it. And if little is being done about integration and social cohesion, I think it's actually a pretty dark and bad thing for the future. Because conservation programs always make people look in need of help. For this reason, this area is quite difficult for rights-based institutions like us to work on this issue

because sustainability in this area is quite difficult. (Kemal Vural Tarlan Kırkayak Culture General Coordinator)

As Kemal Vural Tarlan stated, the approach toward Syrians in Turkey is still based on the protection program, where culture and arts are not seen as basic needs. On the other hand, Ufuk Tambaş noted that after a certain period of time, interest in the fields of culture and art, which were defined as secondary, increased.

In general, immigrants had been assisted in housing, security, health, and work. However, after reaching certain saturation, we focused on the cultural and art fields defined as secondary. (Ufuk Tambaş, Halkların Köprüsü Association, Festival Coordinator)

As Ager and Strang (2008) stated in the refugee integration scheme, not only “tools and markers” such as employment, housing, education, and health, but also “social connections” such as social bridges, social links and bonds, “foundation” such as rights and citizenship, and “facilitators” such as language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability are required for integration to occur. For this reason, some interviewees stated that among the factors that help the integration process between Syrians and local people are not only “tools and markers” factors such as security, education, and health, but also “social connections” factors such as cultural and artistic practices are needed. So, like Ufuk Tambaş, Rüya Karaca, and Emine Çakır also stated that although they are not seen as basic needs such as employment, accommodation, and education, cultural and artistic activities have increased in recent years with the following words:

There have been more intensive works in artistic and cultural fields for 2-3 years. In the first place, there were works such as protection, access to basic needs, and registration process, but now these are replaced gradually by arts and cultural activities. (Rüya Karaca, Mavi Kalem Association, Former Employee)

Especially in the last five years, the situation has changed, and importance has been given to cultural and artistic activities, but more artistic activity needs to be done because art strengthens communication between local people and Syrians and increases the visibility of immigrants. (Emine Çakır, Mavi Kalem Association, Former Employee)

Although social and cultural phenomena such as artistic and cultural events and projects have increased in recent years, they are not seen as a basic need. Therefore, not only social and cultural phenomena such as artistic and cultural events and projects are not seen as a basic need, but also economic problems in such areas are among the most important reasons that negatively affect the integration process.

In sum, institutions' interviews with IGAMDER, RASAS, Mavi Kalem, Halkların Köprüsü, and Kırkayak Culture Center showed that both the government and other partners such as government agencies and NGOs should take an active role in the process of integration which takes a long time. In addition, it has shown that areas such as economy, politics, law, and cultural and social impact should not be considered independently of each other since each area affects one another in the migration and integration process. In other words, in my interviews, as Ager and Strang (2008) put forth, it is the dominant discourse that we should approach the integration process holistically since not only the fields such as economy, health, and education but also cultural and social fields are part of the integration process. In this context, artistic and cultural activities and projects carried out by NGOs are of vital importance, given the complexity of the integration process, because such social activities ensure social integration and define and develop economic, legal, health, and education rights. In addition, my interviews have shown that social activities such as artistic and cultural activities between the Syrians and the local people create common areas and contribute positively to the communication and interaction of the two peoples in the social integration process. Because the participants stated that even if the local people and Syrians do not speak the same language, they provide interaction, communication, and contact on special days and during artistic and cultural activities such as music and painting. In addition, they stated that there is communication, contact, and recognition between the local people and the Syrians by both producing together and listening to each other's stories through activities such as food events, movies, and music.

On the other hand, interviews showed that there are some problems that affect this process negatively. One of the most critical problems is that art, artistic and cultural activities are not seen as basic needs. For this reason, in the integration process between the local people and Syrians, priority is given to areas such as security, economy, education, and health. Therefore, the interviewees emphasized that seeing such activities as a secondary need prevents them from increasing in quality and quantity, and this affects the integration process negatively. In addition, artistic and cultural projects carried out by NGOs to ensure communication, interaction, and contact between local people and Syrians are short-lived due to budgetary problems. However, since integration is a long process, the short-term nature of such activities shows that this process is negatively affected. Moreover, the other most severe problem regarding Syrians in Turkey is the implementation of projects produced by NGOs in the field without integrity. The more efficient realization of these projects will only be possible if they are part of a comprehensive plan or strategy. For this reason, instead of the “short-term solutions process dominated by projects,” it is necessary to switch to the period of “projects implemented in the area outlined by the strategy” (Erdoğan 2020, 215).

### 3. THE MISSION OF ART CENTERS IN MIGRANT INTEGRATION

This section will explain the mission of art in the integration process between Syrians and local people. In this context, I chose centers which are Arthere, Uniq Gallery, Hamisch, Pages Café in İstanbul, Kırkayak Culture Center in Gaziantep (Art Center), Her Yerde Sanat Association (Sirkhane) in Mardin, which carries out artistic and cultural activities for immigrants and local people to gather information about the artistic and cultural practices of Syrians to integrate into a new society but before I go into detail, I will briefly talk about the results of global research on the use of art as a tool for intercultural dialogue to learn how to understand the promotion of intercultural dialogue through art in the international arena.

As a result of a global study by Cliché & Wiesand (2009) has highlighted that the majority of the participants focused on the following five options, although the way intercultural dialogue is viewed through art has regional differences.

#1 A means to promote understanding and relationships between diverse ethnic, religious or language communities in my country: This option was selected most often by respondents from around the world; however, more often by respondents from North America (threequarters) than by those from Latin America and the Caribbean (less than half).

#2 A core objective to promote (project) cooperation between artists from different countries: This received a very high response rate from respondents in Africa and Asia and less so from Europe.

#3 A process of exchange between artists from different cultural communities living in my country: Higher response rate from Australia, New Zealand, and Europe and less popular in Asia, Africa or Latin America and the Caribbean.

#4 An inherent feature of official bilateral cultural exchanges: High rate of response from Africa, low in North America and in Australia and New Zealand.

#5 A result of special events to educate the public about the traditions of other cultures:  
This option was selected above average in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and below average in Australia and New Zealand (Cliche and Wiesand 2009, 8).

In this context, it is crucial to explore the idea that artistic practices can help build bridges to facilitate encounters between immigrants and locals because considering that integration is a dynamic and chaotic process, under what conditions cultural and artistic practices can become a means of communication and dialogue between different members of different groups will be a fundamental question. Thus, in this section, I will try to explore the mission of art and art centers in the integration process in cities such as Istanbul, Mardin, and Gaziantep in Turkey. The reason why I chose these cities is that the first contact with Syrians coming to Turkey is especially in the border provinces such as Mardin and Gaziantep. In addition to Mardin and Gaziantep, Istanbul is one of the cities with the highest Syrian population. Therefore, I will talk about the mission of art and art centers in the integration process in these cities, where the interaction between local people and immigrants is most intense.

Although the academic literature on the integration process in the phenomenon of migration covers a wide variety of topics related to economic, social, political, and cultural areas, there are not enough studies on the integration process in the migration phenomenon in developing countries. The integration literature is almost entirely concerned with migrant cases in the West (Danış 2006, 7). A wide variety of issues linked to immigrants' economic, social, political, and cultural integration has been extensively researched in Europe and the USA since the 1980s. However, there are also neglected issues in these areas. The neglected issues in these fields are the role of various art types such as fine arts, music, visual arts, theatre, literature, and performing arts in the integration process and the mission of these art types in the socio-cultural process such as dialogue, relationship, interaction and recognition between local people and immigrants. For instance, the book “Art in the Lives of Immigrant Communities in the United States,” which comprehensively highlights the importance of art in the lives of immigrants in the United States, was published in late 2010 (DiMaggio and Fernández-Kelly 2010). One of the most critical problems in the literature in both developed and developing countries is the relative neglect of specific issues, such as the

relationship between art and the integration of immigrants and their culture. Thus, it is vital to examine how the participation in the artistic practices of immigrants and host society members affects the integration process.

Art is not an anti-social product because it is created by networks of people acting together (Demos 2013, 370), and it is a means of communication located in a particular context (Gonçalves 2016, 3). Also, it is social because it is opposed to the society in which it is located. The only condition for it to gain this position is that it can be autonomous. Art achieves its sociality not by reflecting its society but by maintaining its autonomy within it and keeping its potential to question it (Dellaloglu 2003, 29). Art, which is a social communication tool, is opposed to the society it is in, and at the same time, it is autonomous. Therefore, art provides existence by creating an independent space for individuals and groups defined as “the other” in society because as Theodor W. Adorno points out, art, in general, can give certain autonomy to the “particular” in the “whole” (Dellaloglu 2003, 28). In this context, art can play an influential role in the integration process by creating autonomous and safe spaces between Syrians and local people. Still, before moving on to the art part, I need to clarify how Adorno explains the “whole” and the “particular.”

As Dellaloglu (2003) points out, the main effort of Adorno and Horkheimer is to provide a space for the particular in general (whole) in which it exists. Moreover, they aim to try to break the hegemony of the general over the particular (Dellaloglu 2003, 18). What is meant to be expressed by “general here is “social structure,” “totality,” and “order?” On the other hand, “particular” includes an interval that can expand from “individual” to “class” in the sense of a part or parts of this whole. The particular has to exist in general; an existence outside of it is impossible for the particular. However, thanks to this autonomy, the particular can maintain its own existence in general without surrendering to it and can force the general to change in the direction of its own preferences (Dellaloglu 2003, 18). Thus, a fundamental thesis of Adorno is that art can provide certain, albeit limited, autonomy to the particular in general. Art is a space where people can hide their utopia, hope, and dreams. Admittedly, this is no small thing. For, as the domain of the “intangible,” art also represents the weakest possible

moment of the domination of the general over the particular. The weakest point of this sovereignty is the most fertile place where hope can flourish. Art is the field in which human is strongest against the “false whole” (Dellaloglu 2003, 28–29). Therefore, not only in the past but also in the recent migration process, art has been a powerful tool for maintaining different identities, rescuing unity, and negotiating inclusion in the host society. Art provides a freedom that other forms of communication do not have. Thus, as the immigrant situation is often restrictive, art allows immigrants to use their imaginations to cross borders (DiMaggio and Fernández-Kelly 2010, 3).

In addition to that, as O'Neill (2008) argues, there is a tension between the discourse about the exclusion of the “Other” like immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees and the discourse that speaks of human rights, responsibilities, and possibilities for multicultural citizenship. This tension often stems from the discourses created in the media about immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees (O'Neill 2008, 5). Therefore, immigrants have to represent themselves in other fields. Representation of immigrants through artistic practices can provide a space for communication, recognition, and belonging to the new society. Our relational and cultural environment contributes to changes in the sense of belonging. Thus belonging has an essential role in connecting individuals to the social (May 2011, 368). A sense of belonging can develop due to participation in the core institutions of the host society (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 10).

As Pratt points out, art can be a contact zone. It refers to “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt 1991, 34). We can say that there is an asymmetrical power relationship between local people and immigrants, as immigrant groups are faced with colonialism and slavery in the modern world. Migrants face modern slavery, especially when immigration management approaches such as restrictive immigration policies and arbitrary changes in asylum procedures in some countries are combined with low-paid immigration (David, Bryant, and Larsen 2019, 10). Therefore, refugees face many constraints seeking safety and passageways while

fleeing persecution, violence, and brutality. Also, upon arrival in receiving communities, they often face isolated areas and precarious existence. This leads to more significant power asymmetries between the locals and refugees, limiting refugees' access to specific resources and rights (Kaurin 2020, 1) and, in this interaction, the local people have more power and prestige (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 11).

So, conflicts like cultural conflicts can occur in multicultural societies. In such processes, intercultural dialogue also becomes a difficult situation. For such tensions, community organizations such as charities, schools, municipalities, cultural centers, art centers, galleries, and ethnic and recreational associations are needed for social and cultural contact. Such organizations often focus on social, cultural, educational, and artistic activities and concerns. Therefore, people can feel free in such “safe” environments and easily express their feelings, thoughts, and identities. Thus, such organizations work well as places for intercultural dialogue (Gonçalves 2016, 8). Cultural acquaintance, meetings, and understanding related to integration processes can be created in areas such as cultural centers, art centers, and galleries. Kemal Vural Tarlan explains that the Kırkayak Cultural Center is a meeting, communication, and contact space between the local people and Syrians in the integration process with the following words:

Since 2012, we have made our institution an open space for Syrian artists, Syrian rights activists, rights-based institutions, and initiatives. In other words, we organized exhibitions of Syrian artists. They came to our institution, produced their works, and held their meetings. In addition to that, we are an institution that carries out migration studies with the idea that we should learn to live together from the first day. Our main goal is how can we live together, how can society live together? (Kemal Vural Tarlan Kırkayak Culture General Coordinator)

Galleries, arts, and cultural centers can provide contact, interaction, and communication by creating spaces for local people and immigrants. Thus, through such spaces, immigrants can become involved in the core institutions and relations of the host society. In addition, such places contribute positively to the integration process by creating many opportunities such as learning about each other's cultures, gaining rights and responsibilities, accessing social status, and creating a sense of belonging. As I

mentioned earlier, integration is about the inclusion of immigrants in the core institutions and relations of the host society, and it can be defined as an interactive process between immigrants and the host society. At the same time, the process of learning a new culture, acquiring rights and obligations, accessing positions and social statuses, establishing personal relationships with members of the host society, and creating a sense of belonging to that society means integration for immigrants, opening institutions and giving equal opportunities to immigrants mean integration for the host society (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 11).

Syrian artists, who left their country and settled in Istanbul because of the war, established the art center named Arthere in İstanbul in 2014. Established under Syrian photographer Omar Berakdar, Arthere's feature is that it hosts both the cafe gallery and the production processes of various art branches. Berakdar says that thanks to Arthere, prejudices against Syrians will be broken, and this place will allow the two cultures to meet. He mentions that they have already received a lot of positive feedback and adds, now we know each other through art (Sümer 2015).

Therefore, the role of arts in fostering intercultural dialogue is a crucial mechanism for fostering interaction, understanding, and collaboration. Intercultural community art projects put this mechanism into action at the community level (McIvor 2016, 189). In this sense, Kemal Vural Tarlan explains why they focus on culture and art in order to encourage intercultural dialogue and create communication and contact areas with the following words:

In fact, in a country in the world, immigrants and people who are citizens of that country live in the same place. But everyone lives parallel lives in such a way that they do not touch each other. While living these parallel lives, we have seen that people come together voluntarily at specific points. We realized that the most critical areas among these contact points are culture and art. And we started to concentrate our work on culture and arts, that is, on those points of contact where people voluntarily come together. (Kemal Vural Tarlan Kırkayak Culture General Coordinator)

Art practices enable us to initiate social relations and explore forms of cultural exchange in public spaces (Mathur 2011, 161). Also, participatory projects with refugees and the host community, including the arts, have a wide range of social impacts, such as social and community cohesion, community development, and

capacity building, and challenging the negative representations of refugees and asylum seekers (Kidd, Zahir, and Hybrid 2008, 31). Kerim Kürkçü explains that art can initiate social relations, provide cultural exchange in public spaces and challenge the negative representations of Syrians in Turkey as follows:

We can say that there is no exhibition in Turkey, and even if it does, no one comes. Thus, we thought it might be an open invitation to open an exhibition in Turkey. We wanted five Turkish and five Syrian artists to share the same space and make artistic productions together. We wanted it to be the same place because we wanted to communicate with the artists first. For example, s/he looks at the paint and asks, “Are you doing this?” and contact occurs between them. Foreign people participated in the workshop we held, and curators also attended. The press showed great interest in this situation. Our workshop continued for two weeks, and Syrian artists had the opportunity to be represented more accurately. (Kerim Kürkçü ,Founding Partner Uniq Gallery)

Interviews with the Kırkayak cultural center and the Uniq gallery emphasized that art practices and spaces enable social relations between local people and Syrians and cultural exchange between the two groups in public spaces. Also, as O’Neill emphasizes, artistic and cultural practices displayed in galleries and community centers help challenge attitudes, prejudices, and stereotypes about “immigrants” and “refugees” (O’Neill 2010, 114). Moreover, the potentially transformative role of art is in changing consciousness. And all cultural spaces are places where this change can happen on a small or larger scale (Wolff 1981, 92). So, supporting cultural activities that can help immigrants feel at home in a new country is very important for integration (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 15).

Gulnar Hajo, one of the founders of Pages Cafe, says maybe this is the first Arab bookstore in Turkey, and she adds that not only Syrians but also Arabs from many different countries live in Istanbul. First, we found this place, and then we opened the bookstore. This is not just a bookstore; it has become a cultural center where we can organize many events. Here we organize music nights, language lessons, cinema, and workshops for children. I am organizing a children's workshop titled art therapy. We do drawings and readings together. Thus, this place is not only a bookstore but also a library, book-cafe and cultural center. In addition, we mainly aimed to reach young Syrians. Our motto when opening this place was “This is Your Home.” In addition, many people come here from both Europe and local people; Pages is a place where local people and Syrians know each other (Bilir 2017).

Syrian artist Samer Al Kadri, another founder of the cafe, states that Pages is the first Arabic bookstore in Istanbul but that this is everyone's home, and he adds, we also consider Turks to be part of our audience. One of the Pages' goals is to connect Syrians, Turks, and other Arabs. For instance, we have a different band from a different country perform every week. We're planning to invite Syrian and Turkish musicians to jam together and create culturally blended music. And at that point, it won't matter much if they cannot communicate through language because they will develop an alternative way of communicating through music. For instance, a group of Turkish musicians was here while a Syrian trio played. They were impressed by their music and offered to collaborate with them. This is exactly what we aim to achieve (Mahmoud 2015).

One of the most important points here is interactive integration. Interactive integration is about the acceptance and inclusion of immigrants in the host society's primary relationships and social networks. Social networks, friendships, partnerships, marriages, and membership in voluntary organizations are among the indicators of interactive integration (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 10). One of the most critical factors for immigrants to feel "at home" is establishing close relationships with people they encounter daily and being recognized and greeted by members of the local community in the neighborhood. Small acts of friendship have a positive effect on perceptions. Therefore, friendship with local people helps refugees feel more secure. Conversely, perceived hostility negatively affects other successful aspects of integration (Ager and Strang 2008, 180).

Syrian artist Omar Berakdar emphasizes: when people start to get to know you when you say "hi" to them, all boundaries begin to break down. Integration does not mean that people go from one place to another and eliminate them in that place. Integration is to build bridges where you are (Girit 2017).

Art is shown that one of the most important means of building these bridges and providing communication and contact between local people and Syrians because art plays an essential role in communication protocols, and it has always been a communication protocol that can reconstruct the human experience beyond differences and conflicts, as it is the best tool to build bridges between people of different countries, cultures, different genders, different social classes, ethnic groups or positions of power (Castells 2009, 429). Syrian artist Khaled Akil explains the importance of art in this process as follows:

I think artists are significant for connecting to people regardless of being refugees or immigrants, or someone else. Art is the only thing we can connect with; music is the way only we can feel; dancing is the only way we can join. By looking at museums or going to exhibitions, we can reach people. That's how you get people together. There is no other way to bring people together; the only solution for people to come together is through art with some activities; it is not a political activity. If you want to bring Syrian and Turks together, million of Syrian live in Turkey now, and the Syrian have become part of Turkey; they don't want to go back to their country, as the same Albanians and Circassians they become Turkish. Turkey, the Ottoman Empire, was always made by people from all around the world. Emigration is a part of Turkey, and it is part of this country. And now at 21 century, we have another emigration here: Syrian immigration; I think the only way to get Syrians and Turks together is through art, music, exhibitions, and language away from politics, away from news, TV, and magazines. Language is pure art. (Khaled Akil, Syrian Artist)

According to Anderson (2010), art can encourage people to leave familiar spaces, discover new answers, seek further questions and provide spaces for self-expression and communication (Anderson 2010, 97). Also, it is a way of approaching the "other" and expanding our comfort zone. We know from cross-cultural psychology, sociology, and history that intercultural relations are continually significant. Therefore, identity, lifestyles, attitudes, beliefs, and values will be affected in this process, resulting in mixed results. Slowly, smoothly, and invisibly, our multiple inner identities are changing as we visit cultural and artistic centers and international art exhibitions, watch foreign films, listen to world music, or travel and explore art practices such as festivals, architecture, and street art. Therefore, we influence other cultures and are influenced by the cultures of the Other (Gonçalves 2016, 6). Since art is a field of encounters with the "Other," it is a tool for overcoming stereotypes and prejudices between those who see each other differently (Crespo and Romero 2016, 71). Therefore, when individuals or groups collaborate in various fields of the arts, they help legitimize their position as interlocutors and benefit all segments. Thus, areas of deep recognition of individuals and groups can be created (Crespo and Romero 2016, 81).

Gülnur Hajo states that local people's perception of Syrian refugees has changed through artistic and cultural activities. I think it will be a small step, and everyone can do positive things. I believe that not only Syrians but everyone needs this beautiful way of thinking. War makes things worse, and people who produce art and beauty in this environment give hope (Bilir 2017).

In addition, when artists and curators use art to spread ideas and knowledge, galleries around the world become places where cultures and multiculturalism are showcased and recognized, and they become places where discrimination, prejudice, and social injustice are questioned and answered. Moreover, it is ensured that the voices of immigrant artists or minority groups are heard through the exhibition of their work (Gonçalves and Majhanovich 2016, 12).

According to Syrian artist Omar Berakdar, founder of Arthere, “art and humanity extend far beyond nations, countries, and borders,” and according to him, despite the proximity of Turkish and Syrians and the cultural and historical ties between them, the new generations know very little about each other. Therefore, Arthere was an attempt to close this gap, increase awareness and enable interaction between Turkish and Syrian artists and Syrians in general. We acted on the connections between artistic approaches and ideas to develop the project. Taking into account world events and the political environment, which can be both a threat and an advantage at the same time, we hope to create high-quality works of art that will have an impact on the local community. To make the subject easier to grasp, we approach the subject from an artistic point of view rather than academic means of expression. We hope that this unique content and visual approach will provide an authentic environment for debate and accessible information between the peoples and artists of Syria and Turkey. We believe this will be more subtle than the stereotypical judgments in mainstream news (Sanaç 2016).

Thus, the role of art is significant in re-evaluating the function of imagination in the construction of reality (Papastergiadis 2012, 11). Also, the most critical projects presented to society through these organizations are sports competitions, cultural events, art exhibitions, free education activities, and inclusion projects. The spaces created through these projects are not real social-political-economic arenas where power imbalance, social injustice, discrimination, and economic differences are created and maintained. Therefore, these areas can be used as contact areas with the “other,” and art can be used as a teaching and learning tool in these fields (Gonçalves and Majhanovich 2016, 9).

### **3.1 Art as a tool for Intercultural Communication**

Art has an essential mission in establishing and recognizing connections between various groups in society because artistic and cultural practices create dialogue, cultural exchange, communication, contact, rapprochement, and a sense of belonging between

immigrants and local people. In this regard, I will first explain the concepts of culture, communication, and intercultural communication. Later, I will talk about the role of art in this matter.

According to Li, “culture is best conceived of sociologically as a way of life which people develop in the process of adapting to some given material and social conditions” (Li 2008, 367), and it is a symbolic system that carries the possibility of communication (Gonçalves 2016, 5). According to Hall, cultural identity is inevitably constantly changing. In this context, culture is no exception and is continuously transforming (Hall 2014, 257–58). When we think that culture is a phenomenon that can change constantly, we should talk about multiculturalism. Multiculturalism relates the concept of culture to the fact that there are no “pure,” “original” cultures, but instead that each culture contains elements of other cultures, and cultures are a process of interaction and constant change. From this point of view, the cultures of immigrants are an element that enriches the cultures of the host societies. This form of multiculturalism can be seen as the possible richness of the host culture and some aspects of immigrant culture, such as folklore, food, and lifestyles (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 7). Also, “Culture is a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor 2016, 1). So, not only folklore, food, religion, language, rituals, and traditions, but also the fine and performing arts are the main components of the field of culture (Li 2008, 367).

On the other hand, even at the most superficial level, communication relies on three elements. A communication encoding that sends the message receives and decodes the message and is used to send the message between the two thousand messages. We call the sender of the message the source, the target audience, and the notification sent in the communication as a message. The source may sometimes be a single human being or maybe non-human, such as a newspaper, agency, radio, or television channel (Oskay 2011, 10). The fact that this process includes an encoding and decoding process requires the existence of common codes. These codes can be verbal and non-verbal codes. Culture, a phenomenon that reflects verbal and non-verbal codes, is the world of the standard meaning tool. Intercultural communication is made through these verbal

and nonverbal cultural components such as words, behaviors, customs, gestures, and facial expressions. It is not possible to consider culture and communication separately in this context. Also, our actions become social and meaningful through culture. It also enables us to understand and see harmony in other people's actions through culture. Meaning is what results from this dynamic cultural process of encoding and decoding. Therefore, culture is a common communication phenomenon (Gonçalves 2016, 5). In this regard, intercultural communication dialogue has become critical, and we need to understand what intercultural dialogue is. According to the Council of Europe, “Intercultural dialogue is understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage based on mutual understanding and respect” (CoE 2008, 10). Based on this definition, it is necessary to establish an intercultural dialogue based on mutual recognition, understanding, and respect during the integration process between immigrants and local people. In this context, art can be the most critical element of this process as it creates safe and autonomous spaces because art is an element of both communication and culture. To clarify, art as a part of culture is a matter of everyday communication because there is neither culture without art nor art without culture. This is the reason to explain how art is a powerful tool for intercultural communication. We can say that art has a feature that makes it a unique activity and a human effort because it tells about our fluid, dynamic and imaginary world and communities (Gonçalves 2016, 6), and art can be a means of communication and social restructuring simply because it is art, without having any institutionally determined role and without trying to do anything special (Castells 2009, 430). Since “art” is a product of culture, it is not only affected by cultural change, interaction, and communication processes but also affects these processes. As culture and art are used by the whole society to discover and maintain their identities, cultural dialogue, exchange, communication, and exchange processes are observed in the integration process between local people and immigrant communities. As Durrant and Lord point out, how “people forcibly exiled or relocating themselves and their cultures bring aesthetic traditions into host cultures which, in turn, can both reject and appropriate these traditions” (Durrant and Lord 2007, 11). Since both the dominant culture or the culture of the receiving countries and the culture of the immigrant community will change with the migration process, it is very important to

analyze artistic practices in the integration process between local people and immigrants. Therefore, this part focuses on the mission of artistic practices as intercultural dialogue in the process of integration or social inclusion.

Immigrants are faced with a different process of cultural and social interaction from the moment they arrive in a new country. It cannot be claimed that the borders formed between ethnic groups depend on the lack of mutual communication, information exchange, and relationship. These boundaries are related to the presence of social processes such as exclusion and inclusion (Barth 1994, 12). In this context, artistic practices can facilitate the social inclusion of newcomers because “art is one of the most easily internationalized cultural products that are more easily exported and appreciated from various cultural perspectives” (Gonçalves 2016, 4). In addition, artistic and cultural activities increase social cohesion or integration when they include the culture and arts of not only the host society but also immigrants. For example, Netto (2008) emphasized that ethnic communities in Scotland are interested in art, mainly when art practices are associated with their home country (Netto 2008, 54). These art events encourage different identities to come together and communicate. Therefore, holding art events involving immigrants plays a critical role in the integration process. Kemal Vural Tarlan explains that art, cultural and artistic activities enable local people and Syrians to come together and communicate:

Since 2011, we have included our new compatriots and new neighbors living in this city. Since 2011, “Kırkayak Kültür” has been carrying out cultural and artistic activities for its newly arrived compatriots, who make up a quarter of the city and its neighbors. We are working to include them, and for this purpose, we have used Arabic as a second language in all our publications from 2011 to 2012. (Kemal Vural Tarlan Kırkayak Culture General Coordinator)

Moreover, cultural integration does not require immigrant groups to give up their own culture (Bosswick and Heckmann 2006, 10). As Netto (2008) points out, ethnic identity can affect an individual's interest in artistic activity. These activities provide them with information about their own heritage and traditions and the opportunity to meet others who have a similar cultural background and encourage a sense of culture and belonging

(Netto 2008, 55). Also, the artistic encounter takes place between groups or individuals with different cultural values. Rather than being a problem, this is an opportunity for creativity and inclusion (Crespo and Romero 2016) because “art is a universal language, a global language that recognizes no boundaries, nations, or wars. That is why it is able to unite very different or conflicting cultures” (Latar, Wind, and Lev-er 2019, 33). Syrian artist Khaled Akil explains that art is a universal language with the following words:

There is a positive thing about being an artist in general because art is a global language. Art can make people closer together and connect more effortlessly with each other. Being an artist helps me talk with people in an art language that is peaceful and easy. (Khaled Akil, Syrian Artist)

Therefore, art is displayed as a universal language based on established feelings because art transcends verbal expression and comprehension. One of the highlights was that participation in cultural and artistic practices played an essential role in networking between immigrants and host community members. Many interviewees expressed this situation.

We have immigrant friends we met during events. In addition, most of our colleagues are immigrants, and we do not speak the same languages, but there is also a universal language of such public art in the social circus. We also communicate with our colleagues in Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish, spoken in the distinct region, and English. (Pınar Demiral, Director of Her Yerde Sanat Association / Sirkhane Social Circus School)

I think art projects or activities are inclusive, and that’s all that matters. The ultimate goal is to unite people regardless of where they come from and encourage them to live peacefully and express themselves through arts and culture instead of violence. (Sahba Aminikia, Iranian American music composer, Festival Director Her Yerde Sanat Association / Sirkhane Social Circus School)

It is emphasized that participation in arts events offers opportunities to make friends and expand the social circle. Also, It is stated that art helps us discover and interpret our stories by bringing communities closer together, and it provides information about how

other people see and interpret the world. In this context, artistic and cultural activities are shown as vital in terms of integration or inclusion because art both holds a mirror to the world and can be a part of the process in which we begin to see, understand and interact with our world(s) (O'Neill 2010, 227). Therefore, immigrants need to reach the visibility of their experiences through artistic and cultural practices in order to overcome the negativities experienced in the migration process. Places, where artistic and cultural practices are relatively "safe" in encounters with the "other" are shown as tools that can be a solution to the problem of "otherness" in terms of discovering and interpreting experiences and stories.

I think art and cultural activities are incredibly effective tools for connecting very different people who come from very different ideological backgrounds, and it is effective beyond what, for example, religion or politics are. I don't think the art world realizes how effective it can be in more vulnerable areas. (Sahba Aminikia, Iranian American music composer, Festival Director Her Yerde Sanat Association / Sirkhane Social Circus School)

The discourses of the interviewees demonstrate that art practices are tools that enable intercultural communication; in this respect, the participation of local people and Syrians in artistic practices can contribute positively to the integration process. However, participation in such artistic practices may be limited when immigrants do not know the host country's language. Therefore, language differences can be an essential barrier to the access of ethnic minorities to art practices. As Netto points out, some Chinese do not have access to art practices in Scotland due to their inability to speak or understand English (Netto 2008, 56). In societies where immigrant groups live intensely, they perform artistic activities only in the language used by the local people, which prevents immigrants from participating in such activities. Such barriers indicate that access to the arts, in general, can be significantly more difficult for minority groups than for the majority population. As seen in the examples above, given the limitations of the arts in promoting inclusiveness and improving quality of life, it is necessary to use not only the dominant language but also the language of immigrants. In this context, Kemal Vural Tarlan emphasizes that they publish not only Turkish but also Arabic works:

We are doing activities to include Syrians, and for this purpose, we have used Arabic as a second language in all the works we have published since the Syrians came to Turkey. For example, we have made the international “Zeugma” film festival, which we will organize for the tenth time this year, multilingual. We have made sure that the movies are watched with Arabic subtitles. Apart from that, we also publish all our materials in Arabic because we believe that if we have opened our doors, opened our borders, to the newcomers, we should know that our own rules are no longer valid. We have to create the rules again with them, the rules for living here, the rules for living together. In this respect, the “Kırkayak” cultural center is an area where immigrants and local people live together in the city. (Kemal Vural Tarlan Kırkayak Culture General Coordinator)

Moreover, cultural and artistic practices are displayed as tools that can solve other social problems while providing intercultural communication because it is used not only to integrate society and general well-being but also to help solve various societal issues (Anttonen et al. 2016, 8). For instance, art can be used as a tool to resolve the traumas caused by war. Since art can transfer traumatic experiences to another field, to another language, art can be a tool for coping with these experiences, but it should not be forgotten; recovery from trauma is a long-term, multi-layered process that requires the involvement of different areas of expertise. Of course, artistic methods do not claim to heal trauma by themselves, but it is a fact that they make an essential contribution to the healing process and help open doors that other tools cannot open (Ergin and Koman 2021, 48).

Pınar Demiral, one of the founding partners of the circus association in Mardin, stated that they believe in the healing and transformative power of art and said: Until 2016, we organized regular and continuous activities throughout the year in order to convey the activities of the association to all children in Mardin and the surrounding cities by going through an active volunteering process with the participation of international and local volunteers. We especially started with festivals and youth exchange projects. After a while, we saw that these international projects had a short-lasting impact, but we found that children needed a longer-lasting effect. On top of that, we wanted to create a more permanent, more organic environment. For this, we established the “Sirkhane” social circus school. Here, the children came at different times, received circus training, contributed to their personal and social development, and started to

overcome the difficulties and traumas they experienced to some extent. From this point of view, we can say that art has healing power and can provide a visible improvement and a positive transformation in the traumatic effects it creates on immigrants. (Pinar Demiral, Director of Her Yerde Sanat Association / Sirkhane Social Circus School)

As can be seen, art is represented as a tool that makes experiences, hopes, and ideas visible. Therefore, it is a reflective field (O'Neill 2008) because we use art to express our identities and concerns, preserve/produce memories and express ideas and ideals, and we can also use it to explore, understand and better recognize cultural, social, economic, ideological diversity, and dialogue because art produces new possible worlds and realities by stimulating thinking and changing minds (Gonçalves 2016, 6) since art is not a representation of the world, but rather the act of creating a world that subtly changes the configuration of the cultures in which we live (Durrant and Lord 2007, 13). In addition to that, art can be used not only by immigrants to interpret their own experiences to themselves and their communities but also by institutions in the host society to interpret the immigrant experience for themselves and host societies (DiMaggio and Fernández-Kelly 2010).

Flying Carpet is an artistic platform/residency, through the process of which we select around 30-40 artists from different disciplines and from other countries to the city of Mardin. The artists are chosen from a pool of 300-400 artists that generally apply to the festival. We accommodate them, and they need to form collaborations between themselves, other artists, and children in our center towards a public performance that usually occurs in the festival's second half (week). In the festival's second half, artists and children perform seven nights of concerts and performances at the most remote and isolated villages and cities. The festival also contains hundreds of international artists' creative workshops for children during the summer. (Sahba Aminikia, Iranian American music composer, Festival Director Her Yerde Sanat Association / Sirkhane Social Circus School)

To sum up, as Adorno stated, art provides a certain autonomy to individuals and groups in society, and thanks to this autonomy, individuals and groups can maintain their own existence without surrendering to society or to the “whole” because “art embodies something like freedom in the midst of unfreedom” (Adorno 1992, 248). Also, as Adorno points out, art is the example and tool of possible peace and integration (Tunalı

1998, 127). Therefore, art and art practices are demonstrated as tools that provide spaces for intercultural exchange, communication, and interaction in the integration process of immigrants and the host community since the work of art is the model of possible conventions (Tunalı 1998, 128). In addition to that, art is shown as a means that contributes to the social inclusion or integration of both communities by providing opportunities to recognize “new” identities between the host society and the immigrants. As Berry points out,

Integration can only be “freely” chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity. Thus, a mutual accommodation is required for integration to be attained, involving the acceptance by both groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples. This strategy requires non-dominant groups to adopt the basic values of the larger society, while at the same time, the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions (e.g., education, health, labor, social, cultural) to better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the plural society (Berry 1997, 10).

As Bennett points out, intercultural communication, communication between people from different cultures, is not about a simple assumption of similarity. Instead, it includes languages, behavior patterns, and values of different cultures, encouraging consideration of the differences. That is, intercultural communication is a difference-based approach, not a similarity-based approach (Bennett 1998, 2). Institutions’ interviews show that one of the most important ways to achieve this is through art because art has critical importance for all societies, and therefore it can be used to promote tolerance and diversity as cultural, religious, political, and philosophical norms are explored, expressed, and evaluated through art (Wexler and Sabbaghi 2019, 9). Also, art is a field of encounters with the “Other,” like immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, and it gives us the chance to observe how personal, situational, and cultural factors are expressed creatively. It also provides an opportunity for one’s social and cultural self-awareness. So, institution interviews’ display that art can be used as a privileged tool for constructing a society based on the social, political, and cultural project of interculturalism, as it provides a fertile ground for cooperation and mutual learning (Crespo and Romero 2016, 81).

### **3.2 The Problems Experienced in the Integration Process**

According to Baglioni, the reason that triggers the migration affects the immigrant's image of the new society (Baglioni 1964, 126). As I mentioned before, when we look at the situation of Syrians in Turkey, at the very beginning of the migration of Syrians to Turkey in April 2011, the Turkish state-provided temporary protection to Syrians consisting of three elements: an open-door policy for all Syrians; no forced return to Syria (non-refoulement principle); and unlimited stay in Turkey. Syrian immigrants were previously described as “guests” by Turkish state actors, and this political discourse framework was later complemented by the “Ansar Spirit” discourse, which had a predominant religious side (Kaya 2021b, 114). Thus, when Syrians came to Turkey, the official discourse on temporary protection was based on religious discourses. In the discourse on protection in Turkey, a hegemonic discourse based on Islamic teachings such as “Ansar” and “muhajir” and emphasizing the religious symbols and historical processes of supporting refugees draw attention (Kaya 2021a, 364). In general, the discourse of “humanitarian-civilized country” and “religious-based Ansar-muhajir” is used complementary to each other. Discourses such as the concepts of religious and conscientious responsibility and the impossibility of being indifferent to the humanitarian suffering in Syria have been. They are frequently used to legitimize and make Turkey's open-door policy visible. As a result, Turkey's response to the mass refugee movement is defined as “hosting Syrians” rather than the rights accorded to refugees. In this context, the protection of Syrian refugees is presented as a religious duty, as proof of humanitarianism, generosity, and hospitality. All these concepts are supported by intense religious and historical connotations (Aras and Mencütek 2021, 46). This does not mean long-term permanent integration of equal partners, representing a purely rights-based integration approach, even though the state's philanthropic and hospitality discourses welcome immigrants (Rottmann 2021, 199). Following the implementation of the Temporary Protection Regulation, which characterizes refugees as temporary, some discursive shifts have been witnessed regarding the changing attitude of state actors in the media that at least some Syrian refugees will be permanent. These discursive changes have so far emphasized the persistent nature of the problem; Discourses such as the introduction of work permits, the inclusion of Syrian students in public schools, the establishment of a quota for Syrian students in

higher education institutions, and the granting of citizenship to Syrians at the beginning of 2016 show the changing attitude that Syrian refugees will be permanent (Kaya 2021b, 139–40). Therefore, the end of the period when immigrants were considered as guests and they were seen as settlers brought up the question of how the integration process would take place.

As seen, when it comes to immigrants, the way they are perceived and evaluated by the host society provides important clues about the social position of immigrants. The host society primarily answers the question of who the immigrants are; because they are majority and locals, while immigrants refer to minority social groups. For this reason, immigrants are often described as the other because, as we have seen in the example of Syrians in Turkey, Syrians are defined as people “who are not one of us,” “guests,” or “people with temporary protection status.” Therefore, Syrians are legally defined as the “other” who are not one of us. In this context, as Penninx (2004) said, newcomers to the society it is generally perceived as the “other,” that is, the person who does not belong there (Penninx 2004). Also, an essential feature that distinguishes immigrants from people such as tourists, travelers, and members of the host society is that the status and presence of immigrants in the society are uncertain. A foreigner is not like a traveler who comes today and leaves tomorrow, but like a traveler who comes today and stays tomorrow. That is, he is like the potential traveler who has not fully attained the freedom to come and go, although he will no longer go any farther. The stranger is fixed within a particular space or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries. The stranger is an element of the group itself, as are the poor and various “internal enemies”; belonging to the group is an element that includes both being outside of it and confronting it (Simmel 2009, 149).

In this sense, the way immigrants participate in artistic and cultural practices in the integration process is still dependent on the legal rights granted to immigrants. How people with a migrant background participate in artistic and cultural practices depends on the existing political structure in areas such as access to political and civil rights and the degree of openness of political parties and non-governmental organizations. Political institutions need to approach the country's multicultural reality appropriately

and effectively, as much of the conditions under which immigrants can participate in society depend on implementing inclusion/exclusion mechanisms by the state and other civil society actors (Jacobs, Bousetta, and Gsir 2005, 16). This case shows that art and cultural institutions are affected by political practices in the integration process.

Özhan Önder, one of the founders of Hamisch, a Syrian cultural house, explained the establishment process as follows: “We tried to make Syrians be called Refugees. Their refugee status was not recognized. Rights arising from refugees were not recognized. In addition, shelter, nutrition, mother tongue, and cultural rights were not granted to Syrians in Turkey, and our country did not fulfill its criteria, and the process was not carried out over social rights. We explained the process through benevolence hospitality, we feed the visitors, but Syrians who came to Turkey have rights. That's why Hamisch was founded”. Also, Özhan stated that since the Syrians in Turkey do not have legal status, the legal responsibility of the association was taken by them, and said, “We took all legal responsibilities. Then we made a call to Syrian artists and founded Hamisch”. (Özhan Önder, Turkish artist and Musician, co-founder of Hamisch)

As seen, art is one of the channels through which a community can be accessed, even if immigrants do not hold any formal acceptance or citizenship (Damery and Mescoli 2019, 1). In this context, art enables immigrants to exist in society and participate in social life by creating new ways, despite government policies. It also provides the opportunity for immigrant artists to participate in economic life by establishing cooperation with local artists. However, since such solutions cannot be long-term, legal recognition of immigrants causes them to encounter problems in both economic and socio-cultural life in the long run. Özhan Önder, one of the founders of Hamisch, explained why it was closed with the following words:

Many of our Syrian friends still continued to migrate because they could not receive an honorable reception here. They learned the language, but they didn't even have a passport and did not reach any rights. In other words, we have failed as a country in this regard. We labeled Syrians as guests, but if we are going to talk about integration, we must first equate ourselves with them, rather than a hierarchical position that always helps, but the landlords do not want Syrians even as tenants. For this reason, there are Syrian artists who go to Germany, where they have a relatively safer life. In addition, they have economic and social security there. On the other hand, there is an

arrogant, over-the-top view of Syrians in Turkey. For example, when Syrian artists play the piano, was greeted with surprises such as “Oh, do Syrians play the piano?” (Özhan Önder, Turkish artist and Musician, co-founder of Hamisch)

Therefore, the integration process has not only legal and economic problems but also political and cultural problems, such as cultural domination, aesthetic standards of the dominant group, and devaluation of minority art due to the legitimization of Western values through orientalism and racial stereotypes (such as the perception of Syrians as “backward” despite their abilities).

### **3.2.1 Identity and discourse of art value**

According to Wolff, “art is a social product” (Wolff 1981, 1), and emphasizing that art is socially produced necessarily requires elucidating some of how certain groups have value attributed to them in specific contexts, such as various forms, genres, styles (Wolff 1981, 7). According to Joseph Costanzo and Fatima Zibouh (2014), when there are institutional complexities in the field of culture, immigrant and immigrant artists find it challenging to access the creative spaces of the dominant culture. In addition, they argue that there is a gap between the artistic production of artists from different backgrounds and their recognition by public cultural authorities (Costanzo and Zibouh 2014, 55–56). Moreover, cultural domination imposes the aesthetic standards of the dominant group and creates the institutional framework for reproducing minority art, culture, and heritage in forms and styles appropriate to sustaining the hegemony of the dominant group. In the process of asserting European dominance around the world, which began in the 16th century, the concept of race and its cognate culture has critical importance because this has played a vital role in legitimizing a hegemonic ideology that includes Western values and aesthetics. When capitalist development in Western Canada came into direct contact with oriental workers and European settlers, a social and cultural hierarchy began to appear that supported Occidental values and standards, and it came to be widely accepted as the legitimate and natural social order. Thus, European cultural hegemony formed the basis. The claims implied by this situation are naturally the logic of excluding people who are considered inferior. Accordingly, non-white Canadians and their culture have been stereotyped and devalued. In this sense, at

different times and in many versions, the race of color and its cultural representation was viewed by the public as inferior to the Western race (Li 2008, 369). In this context, Khaled Akil, the Syrian Artist, explains that he has difficulties in doing art projects in Turkey:

I have difficulty doing a project in Istanbul because people and art galleries don't care about Syrian artists here; they prefer French, British or American artists. I had one experience with the art project "Pokemon GO" in Syria. All around the world, from Japan to Colombia, contacted me for interviews; everywhere around the world were in contact with me for interviews to take permission to use the pictures. Only Turkey, not even one magazine or newspaper or gallery, contact me for an interview. I found that it is extraordinary because I live here, and the project was trendy, so that showed me that's the thing. (Khaled Akil, Syrian Artist)

The race of color and its cultural representation was seen as inferior to the Western race by the people at different times and in many versions, which Li (2008) has also stated, once again brought to light the functions of Orientalist discourses. If I need to specify the main function of Orientalist discourses, the primary function of Orientalist discourses, which makes the West an object of knowing and managing "others," is to establish the West as political, economic, and cultural unity and the Western subject as a dominant universal norm and center. For example, the modern West, which discovered that the earth rotates, has fixed geography, places, and directions by centering itself in the most rigid way (Keyman, Mutman, and Yeğenoğlu 1996, 10). In addition to that, we can see the centrality of the West not only in geographical discoveries but also in politics, artistic and cultural fields. As Artun (2008) points out, the relations between art and politics developed within the hegemony of the Western (European) culture on a global scale (Artun 2008, 40).

Among the Syrian artists we talked to, there were artists such as graphic designers, painters, and directors. While talking about their troubles and difficulties, these artists complained of cheap labor. They were talking about problems such as low wages and working without insurance. The painters said that "when we participate in the exhibitions, first the names of the local people are written, then the names of the European artists are written, and lastly, our names are written, or our works are exhibited." They also said that "we spent money there, but we could not sell it." I told them; actually,

this situation is not about you; even the problem of Turkish artists is like this. I said that art does not have much value in Turkey. But if your name were European, you would be more popular. For example, if your name were Joseph, you would be more popular. (Kerim Kürkçü ,Founding Partner Uniq Gallery)

Art's current responsibility of social integration reflects what Groys puts forward: "the political dimension of art thus precedes its production" because artwork "has to do with certain technical and political decisions for which their subject can be made ethically and politically responsible" (Groys 2013, 138). In this context, although art as a product of consciousness cannot be reduced to ideology, it is also intertwined with ideology. And to this extent, what the author or artist wants to say in the artwork is the expression of a social group and its worldview (Wolff 1981, 119). In this context, Kerim Kürkçü's words about the problems faced by Syrian artists show that art is intertwined with ideology.

Afterward, when we looked at the artists we worked with, we saw that they immigrated to Germany, Canada, and America. They got a visa and went there because being an artist in Turkey is very difficult, even for Turks, and it is even more difficult for immigrants to be an artist in Turkey. They can make a living abroad by making art, realizing their art, and selling their creations. One of the artists who immigrated to Manhattan said that your work is sold when you denigrate the Middle East and the country you came from abroad. It's sold when you make a movie that says they ruined everything in Syria, but you can't sell it to anyone when you affirm the Assad regime. In this sense, art also has a political aspect. (Kerim Kürkçü ,Founding Partner Uniq Gallery)

Since art encodes values and ideology, it is never innocent of the political and ideological processes in which discourse is formed (Wolff 1981, 143). Therefore, examining art and artistic practices helps us understand the social construction of art and culture, its practitioners, audiences, theorists and critics, and their products. It is important to note that ideological forms are embodied not only in ideas, cultural values, and religious beliefs but also in cultural institutions such as schools, churches, art galleries, legal systems, political parties, and in cultural artifacts such as texts, pictures, buildings and discourse (Wolff 1981).

Of course, everyone is not the same, but the problem in our countries is the problem in the Middle East, as the difficulties in Syria and Turkey. In these countries, we look at art as something Western because we think of the idea of art as a painting, a camera, or an art tool that came from the West to the East or Western inventions. So, we always look at art as something Western, and western art is always perceived better than ours. So, when artists come from countries like us, we don't take them seriously. We always want to look at Western things, the artistic products of the white person, and we think that he or she is better than us. And this is the case in Syria, Turkey, and the whole Arab world; that's why I love Turkey and Istanbul because I feel the home, and it is not surprising, but it is a kind of dilemma. If a French artist shows an exhibition in my country, everyone can go, but if an artist from Iraq comes to my country and opens an exhibition, no one can go there. They love European ones. However, that's pretty sad because when you look at Göbeklitepe, which works of art have been produced from the very beginning, and you can see that art has been here from the very beginning. (Khaled Akil, Syrian Artist)

As a result, institutions' interviews displayed that the Turkish state is trying to manage the migration of Syrians as a process of "hosting Syrians" rather than the rights that should be given to refugees, with the religious discourses of "Ansar" and "Muhajir" because they think that the local people in Turkey cannot remain indifferent to the humanitarian suffering due to their religious and conscientious responsibilities. However, although the state's philanthropic and hospitality discourses have produced short-term solutions, they cannot provide long-term permanent integration without adopting a fully rights-based integration approach. Therefore, when immigrants are accepted as guests, the end of the period means the beginning of a long-term integration process. In addition, since the integration process is a whole, it has brought with it the process of recognizing legal, economic, social, and cultural rights; because legal rights affect economic life, and economic life affects socio-cultural life. Thus, in the integration process, social and cultural fields such as arts and arts activities should not be considered independent from economic, political, and legal areas since the way immigrants participate in artistic and cultural practices in the integration process depends on the legal rights granted to immigrants. Institutions' interviews with "Uniq Gallery" and "Hamisch" showed that Syrian artists were able to reach the host community institutions through local artists, but it also showed that art, which is a social product, is formed through political and ideological discourses such as orientalist

discourses, and the aesthetic standard of the host society through orientalist discourses, non-Western cultures have been stereotyped and devalued. In this sense, non-Western races and cultural representations are seen as inferior to Western races and cultures at different times and in many versions, as we see today in the case of Syrian artists. Accordingly, the productions of Syrian artists, who are seen as “the other,” become worthless as the value of art is intertwined with ideology, and the production process of art is not independent of political and ideological processes.



#### **4. THE EFFECT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE INTEGRATION PROCESS**

During my research, one of the most critical factors affecting integration, which is a dynamic process, was the COVID-19 pandemic that affected the whole world, but before I go into more detail about the findings I have obtained as a result of the research, I need to explain this process briefly. The first Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) case emerged in China in December 2019 and soon affected the whole world (IOM 2021, 1). Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected every aspect of social life worldwide, both at local and global levels, both individuals and societies, because; pandemics are not only a serious public health problem but can also lead to social, economic, and political crises in countries. Vulnerable groups such as immigrants are often the most affected by such crises or epidemics. Because people who migrate due to war, conflict, and humanitarian crises always face more risks and difficulties compared to the general population during global epidemics and similar processes. And although they face more risks and challenges compared to the general population, they are often neglected. It is not only the difficulties in accessing information due to the language barrier but also the already existing difficulties in accessing livelihoods that are exacerbated in the case of the epidemic, causing financial problems. Additional health risks caused by living together and working in large numbers, inadequacies in accommodation, food and hygiene conditions, and interruption of access to fundamental rights and services are other significant problems. In addition, physical barriers to access to facilities, especially health care units, are among the other leading causes of these vulnerabilities (SGDD-ASAM 2020, 4).

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global epidemic and asked countries to take strict measures to stop the spread of the virus. Also, on the same date, the Turkish Ministry of Health announced the first case of COVID-19. Considering that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused devastating social and economic disruptions worldwide, in countries hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees, such as Turkey, the epidemic poses new challenges for vulnerable people, both causing difficulties in maintaining their livelihoods and limiting access to sources

of income (Kattaa, Kebede, and Stave 2020, 1). Therefore, it has affected Syrians in Turkey in many areas, from education to health, from economy to social life. And these effects in fields such as health, education, and work also affect artistic and cultural fields.

When we look at the issue of access to education, we can see that the majority of children who attended school before the COVID-19 pandemic were disrupted or unable to continue their education because the children who were officially registered in the school could not participate in the online education due to the lack of technical equipment. In addition, in the process of the Covid-19 pandemic, as face-to-face education in schools started to be carried out on online platforms, artistic and cultural activities began to be done online. Therefore, children who do not have equipment such as computers, tablets, phones, and the internet are deprived of educational opportunities and cultural and artistic activities organized by NGOs online. Emine Çakır explains the inability of Syrian children, youth, and women to participate in online artistic and cultural activities with the following words:

It is complex for children to continue their education during the pandemic process because most of them do not have equipment such as computers and tablets. Sometimes children come to the association and say, let's play games, but when the same event is on digital, most of the children do not participate in online activities. It was challenging for them to reach digital areas during the pandemic because they usually lived in crowded families. I can say that there is at least a twenty percent decrease in participation. In addition, the timing of the events may not be suitable for them sometimes. For example, some women could not participate in such online activities because they did housework during the event. Their habits of staying in their own country can also prevent them from participating in such online activities. Since the weather is scorching in their home country, they are generally more active in the evening hours. They continue this habit here as well. Therefore, sometimes the time may not be suitable for such events. (Emine Çakır, Mavi Kalem Association, Former Employee)

The COVID-19 pandemic process has an impact on economic life as well as on education. If we look at the financial consequences, decisions such as travel bans, curfews, and social distancing during the pandemic have affected local and global

economies, but this has affected the immigrant population the most (Sorrell and Ferris 2021, 122). Thus, it seriously affects Syrian refugees' access to fixed income sources and livelihood opportunities because the quarantine measures caused the temporary closure of businesses, which brought low demand levels in the market. For this reason, it has become more difficult for Syrian refugees to meet their household expenses in Turkey. Also, as I mentioned before, political, legal, economic, and social fields are not independent of each other, and they affect each other. In this context, as Metin Çorabatır points out, some of the many who participate in social cohesion activities are forced to leave their social cohesion projects when the economic conditions of their families deteriorate.

When the fathers of Syrian children are unemployed, they have to work, and they have to leave the events like music choir. (Metin Çorabatır, İGAMDER, Association Manager)

As seen, Syrians are one of the disadvantaged groups that are first affected by the problems in economic life. Issues in this economic life also affect social life, as in the example of Syrians' children having to work when their family members lose their jobs. Moreover, “Limited socialization” and “End of social life” were among the most significant adverse impacts of COVID-19 on immigrants’ social lives, regardless of age, gender and location. Due to the preventive measures for COVID-19, lack of socialization and, over time, cause a “sense of loneliness” and “feeling of being isolated” (IOM 2021, 13). Of course, this situation generally causes the relationship and communication between the host society and the immigrants to decrease or to come to a breaking point because, as Rüyâ Karaca stated, artistic and cultural activities that lasted all day before the pandemic process are held with fewer people and in a shorter time during the pandemic process. This situation causes a lack of communication, interaction, contact, and socialization between the local people and the Syrians.

During the pandemic, activities are done online with shorter and fewer participants. People are unhappy and more reluctant because the target group, especially children and women, prefer activities outside the home to socialize. It is a significant change for us that the artistic and cultural events that lasted all day before the pandemic lasted only one hour in the digital

environment. Also, it is not very realistic to set more goals in a short time because the target group's difficulties with technical issues such as phones, tablets, computers, and the internet affect all our work. (Rüya Karaca, Mavi Kalem Association, Former Employee)

For this reason, while the quality and quantity of artistic and cultural events should be increased during the integration process between local people and Syrians, factors such as the decrease in such events during the COVID-19 pandemic and the shortening of the duration of online activities caused the communication and interaction between local people and Syrians to decrease to a large extent. The following sentences of Ezgi Kaplan show that the impact of cultural and artistic activities has reduced during the pandemic process, and accordingly, communication with the target group has decreased.

We tried to continue artistic and cultural events online during the pandemic process. Before the pandemic, we met face-to-face as small groups; it's much more productive when events are done face-to-face. When activities are online, it becomes complicated, and reaching children is more difficult. Some of them cannot attend such online activities due to the lack of equipment such as telephone and internet, and the children participating in the activity have difficulty adapting. S/he can be offline whenever s/he wants or because the house is very crowded, there is a lot of background noise. However, before the pandemic, we could directly reach children and their families. For example, we used to go to schools and contact them directly, but now the situation is very different. Also, while long-term projects are face-to-face, they cannot be done online. Thus, now we can only meet once every two weeks for two hours, and when we meet, we do children's workshops. (Ezgi Kaplan, Mülteciler Association, Social Cohesion Coordinator)

Due to the fact that it has become impossible to hold artistic and cultural events face-to-face during the pandemic process, such events have been tried to be continued online, but many of them have been canceled, and the institutions that implement such events have also been closed. As Daniel points out, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused both global societies and audiences to be unable to engage in art in lively environments and forced the closure of institutions and the cancellation of festivals and events (Daniel 2021, 99). Kemal Vural Tarlan states that they closed their art centers due to the pandemic and that they are trying to continue the cultural and artistic activities online:

Due to the pandemic, our art center is currently closed, and we are doing cultural and art events mostly on digital platforms. (Kemal Vural Tarlan, Kırkayak Culture General Coordinator)

So, the COVID-19 pandemic process has caused both cultural and artistic events to be canceled or held only on digital platforms. On the other hand, Syrian artist Khaled Akil's words about the COVID-19 pandemic reveal the conditions immigrants are trying to live during the pandemic and the migration process.

The pandemic is the best time for me; I love the last two years, which are my best years. For me, suddenly the whole world is like me, no one can travel, and everyone is forced to be online, everyone to be forced zoom meeting, connect online, and suddenly I found myself ordinary, I found myself connecting with everyone because before it I could not connect anyone, I could not travel. I was missing lots of exhibitions; I was missing lots of galleries, missing a lot of things; now I am missing nothing because everything is online, so in this sense, it is better for me. I am now spending more time in my studio than before, working more for the last two years. Overall I am affected positively by my art during the pandemic. (Khaled Akil, Syrian Artist)

To sum up, one of the most important factors that negatively affected the integration process during my research was the COVID-19 pandemic process because the COVID-19 pandemic process has caused a significant decrease in communication and interaction between immigrants and local people. During the pandemic, decisions such as travel bans and curfews caused the cancellation of cultural and artistic events that provided communication between local people and Syrians. Despite this, some cultural and artistic events were wanted to be held on online platforms. Still, the lack of technical facilities such as computers, tablets, mobile phones, and the internet caused the targeted efficiency of online activities not to be achieved, as they were one of the biggest obstacles in front of such activities. In addition, reasons such as the fact that online communication is different from face-to-face communication affected the communication and interaction between the local people and Syrians and prevented such activities from being effective in this process.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In this study, I examined the interaction of three crucial phenomena: migration, integration, and perception of art and culture through a case study of Syrians in Turkey. For this purpose, to find answers to my research questions, I interviewed professionals such as coordinators, managers, employees, and artists in art centers and NGOs that use cultural and artistic activities to communicate between local people and immigrants in provinces where Syrians live heavily in Turkey.

There are various theoretical conceptualizations of the concept of integration. On the other hand, although the integration process covers a wide range of issues related to economic, social, political, and cultural fields, the role of various cultural practices and arts such as sports, special day events, food events, fine arts, music, visual arts, theater, literature, and performing arts in the integration process is one of the neglected issues. Therefore, the research discussed and analyzed how discursively artistic and cultural activities can be communicative tools under the label of “social bridge.” The discourse of art and culture for the integration process claims that since these events are social products and created by people acting together, they initiate and maintain integration between the host community and the local population. This portrayal carries the possibility of communication, art, and art practices as a universal language, providing a point of contacts with the “other” like migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in situations where words and information are insufficient. In this context, individuals or groups could cooperate in various fields or spaces and share and understand mutual stories. So, cultural practices and art can be a contact area and a communication tool in the social conflict or resolution process.

To make it clear, I have interviewed NGOs, art centers established by local artists, and Syrian artists in Turkey to understand the envisioned role of art and artistic and cultural practices in the integration process. In interviews with institutions, NGO members such as directors, experts, and administrators stated that art and artistic and cultural activities provide communication, interaction, contact, and recognition between local people and Syrians because they underlined that they see art as a universal language and use it to

bring local people and Syrians together through activities such as photography exhibitions, film festivals, music, cinema, concerts, ceramics, painting, and food. Therefore, these members stressed that they use artistic and cultural events for interaction, dialogue, and communication between local people and immigrants, as intercultural dialogue becomes difficult in processes such as migration.

In this respect, institutions interviews with Halkların Köprüsü and Mavi Kalem showed that even if the local people and Syrians do not speak the same language, they communicate, interact and learn each other's stories through artistic and cultural festivals such as photography exhibitions and films. Likewise, despite the language barrier, local people and Syrians communicated with facial expressions and smiles just by opening a piece of cloth so that they could paint together. In addition, some other NGO members stressed that they provided interaction, communication, and contact by bringing local people and Syrians to special events. Institutions' interviews with IGAMDER and Mavi Kalem association demonstrated that events organized on special days such as Refugee Day and 8 March International Women's Day provide interaction, communication, and contact by bringing local people together, especially women, children, and Syrians. These NGO members underlined that such activities also raise awareness that they all have the same challenges and responsibilities, whether they are migrant women or women from Turkey. Additionally, NGO members of IGAMDER and Kırkayak Culture center emphasized that local people and Syrians expand their living spaces and discover stories by producing activities such as music and food and social relations such as new friendships between the two groups started and developed. Therefore, NGO members such as managers, employees, and administrators have positively interpreted the instrumentalization of art and culture in the integration process.

On the other hand, the interviews showed that the problems such as seeing art as a secondary need and lack of budget in the fields of culture and arts affected the integration process negatively. Therefore, institutions' interviews demonstrated that one of the most critical problems affecting this process negatively is that the needs such as security, education, economy, and health are seen as basic needs, while the needs such

as art and culture are seen as secondary ones because they stressed that since art is not seen as a basic need, the budgets allocated to artistic and cultural activities are limited and with these limited budgets, short-term artistic and cultural events can be organized instead of long-term ones. However, they stated that despite such difficulties, artistic and cultural activities provide communication, interaction, contact, and recognition as a “social bridge” in the integration process between local people and Syrians. Thus, the NGO members underlined that art and culture should be seen as a part of the integration process, such as security, health, education, and the budget allocated to culture and arts should be increased, and artistic and cultural activities should increase in quality and quantity depending on these.

Similarly, institutions' interviews with art centers also showed that art provides communication, interaction, and contact between Syrians, Syrian artists, and local people, and artists. Uniq Gallery and Kırkayak Cultural Center members emphasized that artistic and cultural places such as cafes, galleries, and art centers provided interaction, dialogue, and communication between local people and Syrians as a contact area and underlined that they came together voluntarily and shared each other's stories through artistic and cultural activities and made artistic productions together in these areas. Like Uniq Gallery and Kırkayak Culture Center, Pages Cafe has shown a similar situation. As the founders of the cafe stated, Pages Cafe is not just a bookstore but a cultural center where many events like organizing music nights, language lessons, cinema, and workshops were held. Also, this cafe, with its motto “This is Your Home,” was a place where Syrians and local people met and communicated. Despite the language barrier, Syrian and Turkish musicians came together to create culturally blended music by creating an alternative way of communication. Moreover, Syrian artists, the founders of Arthere, like Pages Cafe, stated that such spaces provide the meeting of two cultures and that prejudices against Syrians are reduced through such spaces.

Besides, institutions' interviews with Hamisch, Her Yerde Sanat (Sirkhane Social Circus School), and Kırkayak Culture demonstrated that even though immigrants do not have any official recognition or citizenship, they access the institutions of the host

society through art. In this context, although Syrians in Turkey are not legally recognized as refugees, art has created new ways for Syrian artists to exist in society and participate in social life. In this way, local artists founded Hamisch, a center for art and culture, together with Syrian artists, and Syrian artists participated in not only social life but also economic life by establishing collaborations with local artists. Hence, removing structural barriers to the participation of immigrant artists in the artistic and cultural sectors and their employment as cultural professionals impacts the integration process positively. Also, my interviews with Sirkhane and Kırkayak Cultural Center displayed that people who speak different languages, such as Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkish, which are regional languages, use the universal language of art when these languages are insufficient. Thus, when immigrant artists are not interested or do not know local languages, they participate in artistic activities, make artistic productions, and organize exhibitions in these art centers through the common language provided by art.

On the other hand, although the interviews showed that art creates new ways for Syrian artists to exist in society and participate in social life, some of them continue to migrate because they face problems in both economic and socio-cultural life in the long run. Institutions' interviews displayed that Syrian artists face issues such as cheap labor, low wages, and uninsured work due to such problems as the aesthetic standards of the dominant group and the inferiority of minority art and culture. This has shown once again that art is not independent of politics and ideology. In this regard, it shows that in which non-Western values, aesthetics, and cultures are represented as inferior and worthless in terms of race, and cultural representations like the orientalist thought still persist in many versions in our age because my interviews with art centers like Uniq Gallery and Hamisch, have shown that even today, Syrian artists encounter different versions of the ideology, such as “Western artists are better,” created by the Western-centered understanding of art and orientalist thought. Thus, institutions' interviews with Uniq Gallery and Hamisch illustrated that the political and ideological dimensions of art precede its production, with statements by Syrian artists such as “Western artists' products and names, then local artists' products and names, and finally our products and names are shown in any art event.” And despite their abilities, stereotypes such as

“undeveloped” and “backward” spoken by the locals for Syrians showed that political and ideological ideas such as Orientalism still continue in Turkey, which is assumed to be a part of Middle Eastern history or an Eastern country. Therefore, the interviews displayed that since art is not independent of political and ideological processes, problems in the legal, economic and political fields affect the participation of Syrians in socio-cultural life. However, the discourses of the interviews demonstrated that despite all these negativities, art provides communication, interaction, contact, and recognition between the local people and the Syrians because since art, artistic and cultural practices are used as a tool to overcome such obstacles, it enabled Syrian artists who had never met local artists to come together, communicate with each other. In this way, they are accepted and included in the direct relations and social life of the host society, such as friendship, partnership, and co-production in voluntary organizations through artistic, artistic, and cultural activities.

All in all, institutions interviews demonstrated that art, artistic and cultural activities have an essential role in the integration process because they bring people from different countries, cultures, and different social groups together, as in the example of Syrians and local people and provide communication, contact, and interaction beyond conflict. Besides, in the interviews with the institutions, the instrumentalization of art in the integration process has been interpreted as positive because these members of the institutions highlighted that places such as art centers, cultural centers, art cafes, NGOs, and galleries that carry out artistic and cultural activities contribute positively to the integration process as they enable immigrants and local people to come together, interact, and communicate. It is emphasized that they potentially enable small or large-scale change to occur and change consciousness since such places are spaces where encounters and rapprochement with the “other” are created and developed because the interviewees underline that arts, arts, and cultural events encourage people to get out of familiar places, get to know new identities, ask more questions and discover new answers through all these contact areas. Therefore, interviewees emphasize that such places and events contribute positively to the integration process by enabling local people to recognize “new” identities and helping immigrants feel at home in a new country. Also, interviewees emphasize that since such places are not places where

power imbalance, social injustice, discrimination, or economic and socio-cultural differences are created and maintained, arts, art, and cultural events held in such places are used as a learning tool to understand and recognize the “other” such as migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the integration process. Thus, I agree with the discourse that arts, artistic and cultural practices, and places such as art centers, cultural centers, NGOs which are implementing artistic and cultural activities, and galleries can make a positive contribution to the integration process for reasons such as immigrants and local people coming together, interacting and communicating, getting to know and understanding each other and helping change prejudices about each other.



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